

# Ekurhuleni empowers farmers in drive to grow economy

The City of Ekurhuleni has released 56 farms valued at R120m to local smallholder and subsistence farmers to improve food security, increase tax and revenue, expand food export and attract new investment to the city.



Image source: [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)

The city said it is steaming ahead with its rapid land release programme, an initiative which will also enhance the quality of livelihoods and increase job opportunities in the region.

Over 1,000 hectares of land will be released to beneficiaries in a programme that will generate about R200m in revenue for the city through medium-term leases.

The key milestones and timeframes in relation to the programme are as follows:

- The advertisement of the tender calling for prospective beneficiaries of the 56 farms to bid was released on 13 September 2019.
- A briefing session for the candidate beneficiaries will be held on 4 October 2019 at the Germiston City Hall from 9am.
- The city will hold the Ekurhuleni Agriculture Summit from 7 to 8 October 2019 to thrash out how it will use agriculture to boost its economy.

“The city’s agriculture development and support programme, which the rapid land release is part of, covers five key elements that will transform and grow the agriculture and agro-processing sector in Ekurhuleni.

“Farmers will be assisted with access to council-owned land, technical support, skills development, access to funding and access to markets and off-take agreements,” City of Ekurhuleni spokesperson Nhlanhla Cebekhulu said.

Cebekhulu said the city is in the process of finalising economic partnership agreements with private sector companies, government agencies, development financial institutions, industry bodies, farmers’ associations, research institutions and training organisations.

The collaboration will support the city’s goal to position Ekurhuleni as the preferred investment destination for urban agriculture and agro-processing. This will strengthen the city’s competitiveness in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), direct domestic investment (DDI) and ability to create jobs.

“About R14m has already been budgeted in the current financial year for services of researchers and economists, who will provide support to the programme,” Cebekhulu said.

During his 2019 State of the City Address earlier this year, Mayor Mzwandile Masina announced that the city would release agricultural farms to stimulate economic growth, create jobs and contribute to development of emerging farmers, while transforming the sector.

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