

The Weekly

BILLIONS SET ASIDE FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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Building the province ... Free State MEC for Cogta, Olly Mlamleli

The government will focus on the formalisation of informal settlements, the upgrading of services and installation of the necessary social infrastructure

Free State MEC for cooperative governance, human settlements and traditional affairs (Cogta), Olly Mlamleli, announced on Tuesday that her department has set aside 91 percent of its 2013/14 budget allocation to tackle challenges related to housing in the province.

The department has been allocated R1.2-billion for the 2013/2014 financial year, R1.1- billion of which has been committed to wiping out housing problems and thus contributing to the realisation of the Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSGDS), or Vision 2030.

The department will be focussing on the upgrading of informal settlements; 9 047 sites have been planned and surveyed in various areas of the province.

“We have already moved forward by finalising the appointment of service providers in 2012 for the creation of 26 915 sites in 19 areas of the province. The process is already underway to finalise development plans regarding these areas,” said Mlamleli.

The department has its own ‘Human Settlements Vision 2030’, a specialised adaptation of the provincial vision document, which states that: “by 2030, most South Africans will have affordable access to services and quality environments. New developments will break away from old patterns and significant progress will be made in retrofitting existing settlements”.

Mlamleli said key to this process is the formalisation of informal settlements, the upgrading of services and installation of the necessary social infrastructure.

She said the department will also focus on demolishing two-roomed houses in the Mangaung Metro Municipality; The Nala, Matjhabeng, and Ngwathe local municipalities.

“We will also rectify the one-door houses in Bluegumbosch in the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality and other areas,” said Mlamleli.

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She said one of the department's focus areas will be to consolidate and complete 9 655 incomplete and outstanding RDP houses under various projects.

"This will provide adequate shelter to beneficiaries who have been waiting for their houses for a very long time. But in an effort to minimise the risk of incomplete projects, we have appointed E'tsho project and construction management company, and Mafuri consultants to enhance the department's engineering capacity. We have also commenced with a process of establishing a reliable and credible database for contractors, which will assist the department to select capable contractors to do the job well," said Mlamleli.

Mlamleli said Cogta has budgeted R7-million to strengthen the provincial disaster management centre because of the growing need to develop the system and campaigns of preventing and mitigating disasters.

"During the year under review, the province was besieged by a number of disaster incidents which have a detrimental impact on our communities and we are in the process of rehabilitating the township of Tlholong in Kestell after the destruction of over 70 houses by tornadoes and thunderstorms."

Furthermore, the province has been allocated R129-million from the Intergraded National Electricity Programme funds to connect electricity to 7 435 households and to also install bulk infrastructure.

An amount of R1.7-billion has been allocated for the implementation of municipal infrastructure grants (MIG) projects in the 2013/2014 municipal financial year while R15-million has been set aside for urgent infrastructure interventions.

The MEC said the department will monitor municipalities to make sure that they increase the employment of women during the implementation of MIG projects.

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