



PROJECT NEWSLETTER

FROM WORDS TO ACTION: YOUR VOICE IS BUILDING A NEW NAMAKWA



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Innovation Champion Spotlight – Rodney Sparks My Role, Real Lessons.



Namakwa LED strategy – At a glance.



Namakwa LED strategy takes shape: Innovation Champions' Corner



Calls – Namakwa Youth Innovators



science, technology
& innovation

Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Innovation Champion

Spotlight



MY ROLE, REAL LESSONS:

By Rodney Sparks, hosted by Karoo Hoogland Municipality

MY ROLE WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY

In my capacity as an Innovation Champion, I have been responsible for supporting and managing the CHIETA Smart Skills Centre as part of the strategic partnership between Karoo Hoogland Municipality and the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA), a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) in South Africa focused on skills development within the chemical and related industries. My role focuses on supporting skills development initiatives within the municipality through the management and coordination of activities at the CHIETA Smart Skills Centre.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORKSHOPS

The direct engagement approach worked well. It gave community members a genuine platform to voice their development vision, which is better than externally imposed solutions. However, low attendance at some workshops may have limited broader representation.

WHAT BUSINESSES TOLD ME:

Businesses face real barriers: SMMEs struggle to register formally, so they can't access municipal supply chains. Funding is another major wall. Communities deal with high unemployment, winter loadshedding, and poor gravel roads that cut people off.

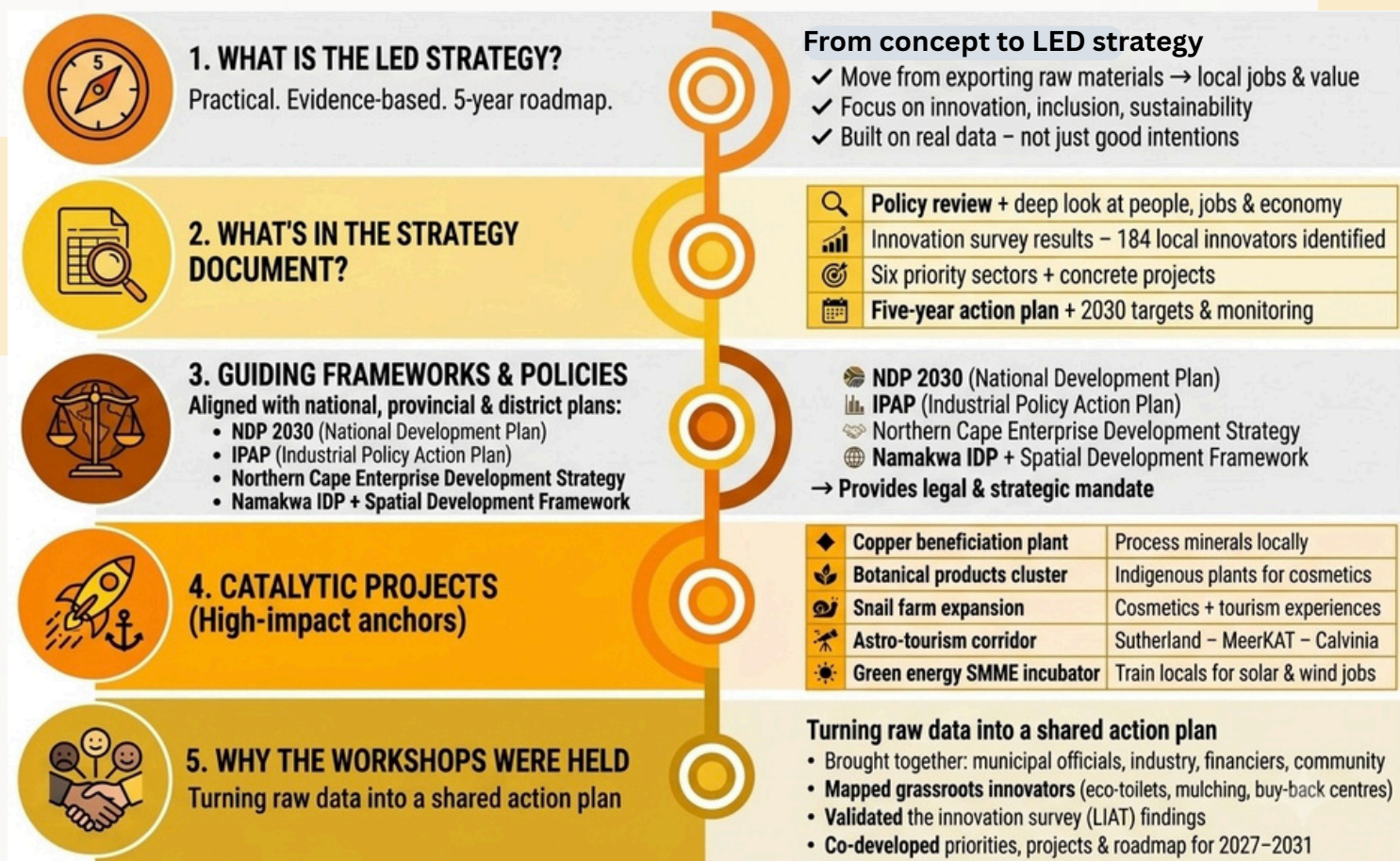
WHAT COMMUNITIES SAID:

Unemployment remains high and directly fuels poverty. Frequent loadshedding – especially in winter – disrupts daily life and economic activity. Poor road infrastructure, particularly gravel roads, continues to hinder mobility and connectivity between towns.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The Draft LED Strategy goes to validation workshops in early July. Final inputs will shape a roadmap for Namakwa as an innovation-driven economy. My hope: we unlock potential and improve lives – but only if we listen to everyone, not just the usual voices.

NAMAKWA LED STRATEGY – AT A GLANCE



This process is critical because it transforms Namakwa's **fragile, resource-dependent economy** into a diversified, resilient one. By leveraging multi-billion rand investments in **green hydrogen, the Boegoebay port, mining beneficiation, and renewables**, the strategy creates sustainable **local jobs** and reduces reliance on raw material exports. It actively includes **women and youth through SMME support**, replaces external consultants with trained local staff, and uses real **innovation data to guide action**.



Ultimately, this process builds long-term **economic self-reliance**, moving Namakwa from exporting value to **retaining wealth** within its communities.

NAMAKWA LED STRATEGY TAKES SHAPE

Innovaton Champions' corner

Shanty Fisher saw firsthand during IVC mapping how farmers, officials, and tourism operators came together around agriculture, mining, and renewable energy. Madelein Pieters noted that data collection was difficult because many community members didn't know the IC4LED Project or what innovation meant—but once explained, cooperation grew and local knowledge shaped real priorities. Themes emerged around employment, entrepreneurship, and local value chains. Yet Shanty Fisher kept asking: are we capturing real local grit, not just clean frameworks? Madelein Pieters agreed: a strategy only works if it sounds like the people it serves. Bonita Draghoender, added that mapping helped understand the local innovation landscape, but communities often have good ideas without support or follow-through. Workshops identified opportunities in agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, construction, and SMME development, alongside needs for skills, collaboration, and entrepreneur support.



Bonita Draghoender noted uneven participation—some communities engaged, others stayed away due to past consultations without visible results. She learned innovation means practical, local solutions. Now it's June. Validation workshops are 6–10 July. The team hopes community members see their own voices. The deadline is tight, but every uncomfortable comment needs tabling.

That's how a strategy becomes theirs.



Namakwa
District Municipality

**INNOVATION CHAMPIONS
FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

NAMAKWA YOUTH SHOW US YOUR HUSTLE!

**THIS YOUTH MONTH, IC4LED IS PUTTING NAMAKWA
INNOVATORS ON THE SPOTLIGHT!**

- Are you between 18-35 + based in Namakwa District (& local municipalities)?
- Did you launch something new/improved?
- Does people already use it / buy it ?
- Does it add value - money, solutions, or community impact?
- Your sector: Food, Crafts, Tech, Green/Environment, Fashion, TVET Skills, Agri, Other

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**WE'LL FEATURE YOU ON OUR SOCIALS! LET'S GROW YOUR VOICE &
YOUR CUSTOMERS.**

WHAT'S NEXT?

A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:

Department of Science, Technology and Innovation; Sol Plaatje University; Technology Innovation Agency; Department of Cooperative Governance; South African Local Government Association; Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism; and Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Now we need you – Youth, women & Previously marginalised, businesses, innovators, community groups, government.

Join the Namakwa LED Strategy VALIDATION Workshops:

Dates: 06 July (Port Nolloth) | 07 July (Springbok) | 08 July (Pofadder) | 10 July (Calvinia)

Time: 08:30–16:30

Confirm with Wendy by **22 June**: wendy.scheffers@spu.ac.za / 0795920158

Queries: Gerda – gerdavidh@namakwa-dm.gov.za / 0718702932

Look out for the next newsletter, and follow Namakwa DM on Facebook & WhatsApp (IC4LED Namakwa DM).

See you there!



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