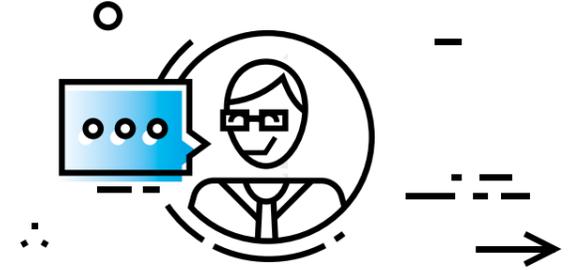
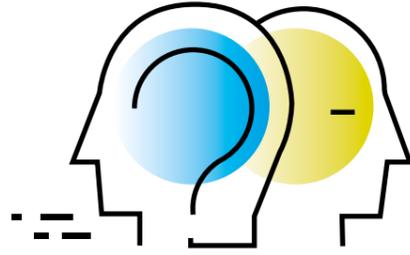
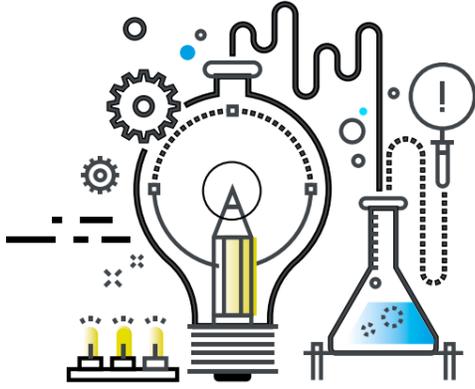


The Centres of Specialisation

Background, Origins and Roles



Q What is a Centre of Specialisation?

A This is a campus of a public TVET College that has been appointed by the National Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to coordinate all national learning and teaching processes for a specific occupation. There are two “partner” campuses for each occupation in the different provinces and they share learnings and continuously improve processes and courses.

Q Where does this idea come from?

A Parallel to the development of the local A21 dual system process, the National Minister of Higher Education and Training set up a special projects unit in his Department that has progressively developed the Centres of Specialisation Programme.

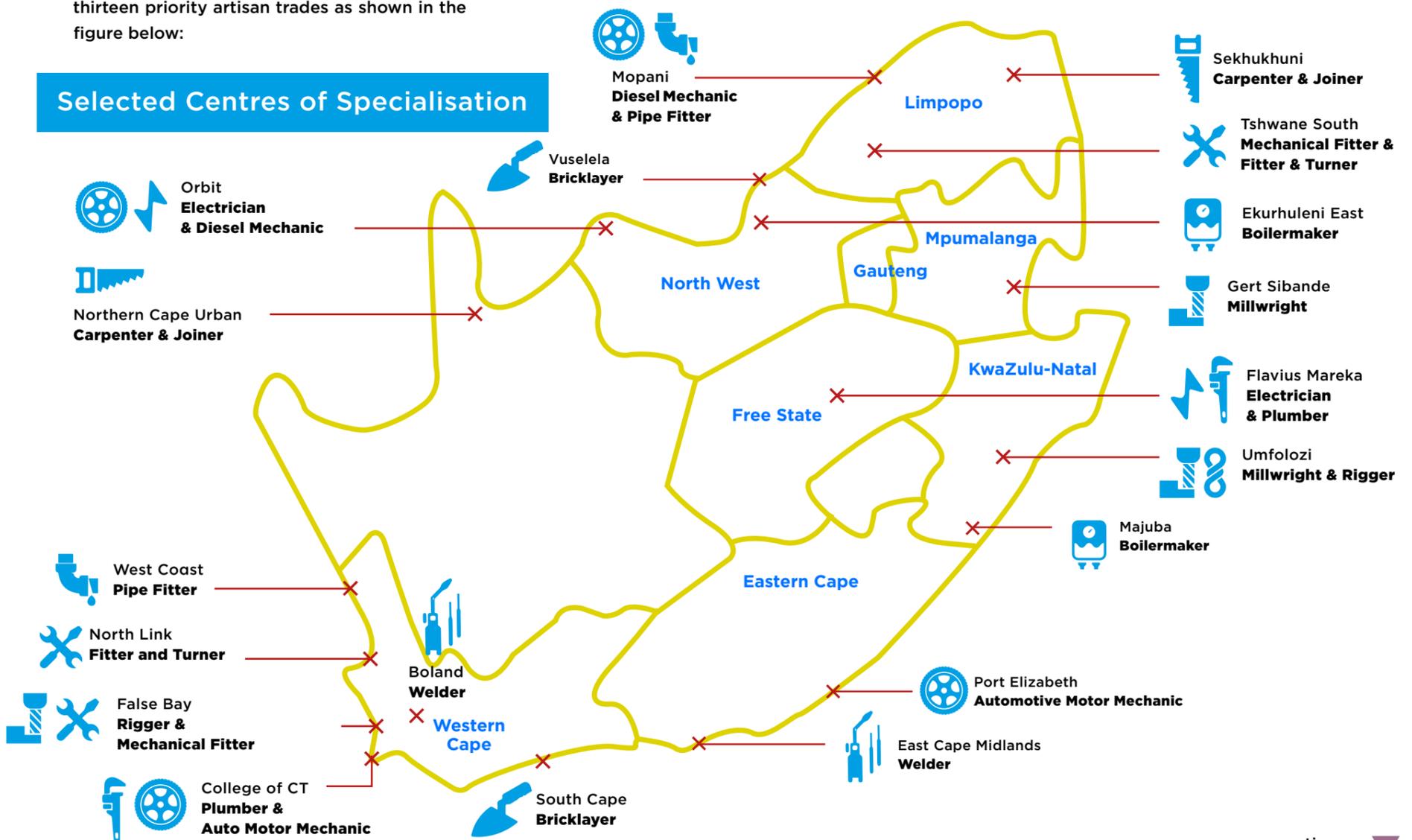
Q What made the Minister decide to do this?

A The initiative is designed to meet two objectives simultaneously: firstly, to address the demand for priority trades needed for the implementation of government’s National Development Plan in general and its National Infrastructure Plan more particularly; and secondly to contribute towards the building of the capacity of its public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College system to deliver trade qualifications with employer partners.

Q How many Centres are there?

A At the moment, nineteen centres look after the thirteen priority artisan trades as shown in the figure below:

Selected Centres of Specialisation



continue

Q But why public TVET Colleges?

A The Centres of Specialisation Programme aims to uphold and support the ‘White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System’ which states: ‘Since the main purpose of the TVET colleges is to prepare students for the workplace and/or self-employment, it is essential that they develop and maintain close working relationships with employers in their areas of study. Close partnerships between colleges and employers will assist the colleges to locate opportunities for work-integrated learning and help them to place students when they complete their qualifications.’

Q How were those occupations selected?

A The thirteen priority trades have been identified as being in strong demand for the national infrastructure or Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) programmes as well as for other strategic programmes like the National Department of Environmental Affairs’ ocean economy programme, or Operation Phakisa.

Q What types of programmes will be implemented by the Centres?

A The development of the thirteen priority trades will be through the implementation of the new Quality Council for Trades and Occupation’s (QCTO) trade qualifications. This will be a major step up from the past as they are national qualifications - no longer sector-specific - and will be delivered using the A21 dual system approach, which sees learners moving between a college and a workplace over the duration of their studies and prior to taking their trade test.

Q Who are involved in the Centres and the A21?

A A wide range of stakeholders, from a selected number of TVET colleges chosen to be Centres of Specialisation for one or more of the thirteen priority trades, to employer associations and occupational teams with special expertise in the priority trades. These principal actors will be supported by the DHET and the seven dedicated policy-focused teams whose function is to develop national guidelines for the roll-out of these qualifications.

Q What is this Quality Council for Trades and Occupation (QCTO)?

A The QCTO is a one of three statutory Quality Councils, responsible for developing and registering qualifications in South Africa. They are responsible for occupational qualifications that include workplace-based or on-the-job training. These occupational qualifications are perfectly suited for dual system apprenticeships in particular because they are modular based.

Q What is the QCTO’s role with Centres of Specialisation and A21s?

A The QCTO will also play a central role in developing the occupational qualifications, accreditation of the Centres and for quality assuring assessment processes that will eventually result in the certification of learners.

Q Who issues the Certificates?

A Only the QCTO is legally mandated to issue occupational certificates so these will be national certificates that are already replacing the sector or SETA-based certificates currently in use.

