

MARCH
2026

TURNING POINT

A regular newsletter from Productivity SA's Business Turnaround and Recovery programme

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to a new year, a year that is bound to be a rollercoaster of developments, news, emotions and revelations given what the world experienced in 2025.

One thing is certain – it will be another year during which anything will be possible – personally, professionally, economically and societally.

The Business Turnaround and Recovery (BT&R) programme kicked off the year on a promising note, having reached a tally of 368 companies that have benefitted from its expertise and assistance since 2020. Most of these enterprises are back on their financial feet and have new business insight, plans and visions.

During BT&R interventions, companies were provided with an opportunity to take a pause, assess and reevaluate operations to chart a more lucrative course and better way of doing business. Ultimately the interventions enabled the companies to appreciate where improvements were needed.

The late self-improvement pioneer Paul J Meyer once stated: 'Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning and focused effort.'
He could well have been referring to Obee's

Brands and Global Cuisine, BT&R's gold winners in the 2025 Productivity SA National Productivity Awards, announced in October 2025 in Midrand.

These accolades – now in their 46th year – celebrate businesses that embody excellence, efficiency and resilience, driving growth and improving lives across South Africa.

The event has celebrated more than 100 outstanding enterprises in both public and private sectors, applauding their dedication to boosting productivity for the benefit of South Africans and the country..

Obee's Brands was featured in the December issue of Turning Point, while this issue puts the spotlight on Fabrinox, which won gold for BT&R in the 2024 awards.

In this edition, we showcase the awards – the premier event on the Productivity SA calendar – and share some turnaround success stories that have changed the fortunes of business owners, secured the futures of employees by saving their jobs and given those in need of employment a new lease on life.

As you read this issue, we hope you will share in our satisfaction at making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Justice Tshifularo

Justice Tshifularo
BT&R Programme Executive Manager

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BT&R STARS SHINE BRIGHTLY AT THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS

The Productivity South Africa National Productivity Awards switched things up a little in 2025, joining forces with the Africa Kaizen annual conference under the theme 'African industrialisation through fostering competitive firms and value chains on the continent'. The awards recognised enterprises that have demonstrated excellence in productivity and kaizen implementation.

These are companies that have shown resilience, innovation and business acumen in growing their business in difficult economic conditions.

Finalists are judged on product quality, impact on communities, job creation and sustainability.

BT&R was more than well represented, with 11 companies named finalists and two winning big for outstanding turnarounds. Grabbing gold in the small business category was Global Cuisine,

while, among medium companies, Obee's Brands was the standout.

The other nine BT&R finalists were Murendi, Silokothe Holdings, Timesten, Food and Connect, Kimberley Clothing, Drill Rod, Glad Tidings, Expert Autotrim and Vandalamo.

The former is an innovative agro-processing company in Montagu, Western Cape, specialising in high-quality frozen snacks with authentic global flavours.

Certified with FSA ISO 22000 and Proudly South African, the company concentrates not only on food safety and cultural authenticity, but local empowerment.

But it became apparent that growth was stymied through manual production processes, lack of specialised skills and employee tardiness and absenteeism.

In partnership with BT&R, a new era began, which included:



AUTOMATION OF MANUAL TASKS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL TRACKING TO REDUCE DELAYS



A STRUCTURED TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO BRIDGE SKILLS GAPS



VISUAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND LEADERSHIP COACHING TO IMPROVE DECISION-MAKING



OPTIMISED PROCESSES THROUGH DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR MONITORING.

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BT&R STARS SHINE BRIGHTLY AT THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS

The other star performer, Obee's Brands, manufactures and distributes health and skincare products from its facility in Hammersdale, KwaZulu-Natal. The range includes the flagship Obee's HPS immune booster and a popular range of glycerine and tea tree soaps.

However, the company battled with formal marketing, high staff turnover and operational bottlenecks caused by outdated systems. Having sought BT&R's help, the team began to focus intently on these key areas.

It invested in advanced production machinery, boosting productivity by more than 300%, resolving bottlenecks and improving product quality.

With a continuous improvement programme and clear growth milestones, Obee's Brands is now a shining example of what businesses can achieve through innovation, teamwork and productivity excellence.

Read more about Obee's in the December 2025 issue of Turning Point on www.productivitysa.co.za.

In her keynote address at the event, Minister of Employment and Labour Nomakhosazana Meth told guests:

"This is an important platform for building a more productive, competitive and inclusive African economy. Through collaboration, knowledge-sharing and innovation, the continent can accelerate industrialisation and create sustainable jobs."



Drill Rod Specialists was named a finalist after improving its sustainability



Minister of Employment and Labour Nomakhosazana Meth (with trophy) lauded finalists for their tenacity



Acting Chief Executive Officer of Productivity SA, Amelia Naidoo, told guests that the National Productivity Awards recognises organisations and practitioners that have demonstrated excellence in innovation, competitiveness and continuous improvement.



BT&R head office and region 1 team

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BT&R STARS SHINE BRIGHTLY AT THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS



Awards finalists celebrate their successes



A well-deserved toast from the audience



Vandalamo Financial Services acquitted itself well in the BT&R small business category



Recently appointed Productivity SA chairperson, Zola Baba Tshefu (second from left), was a welcome guest at the awards event



Representatives of the Pan African Productivity Association and Japan International Cooperation Agency attended the productivity and kaizen awards ceremony



Western Cape company Food and Connect was a finalist in the medium business category

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SHOWING OFF THEIR WARES FOR ALL TO SEE

People with disabilities invariably experience greater barriers to employment than other citizens and, once appointed, more difficult workplace obstacles.

SEEing this, the Department of Employment and Labour founded its Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE) division to provide meaningful employment to those in need of economic inclusion.

To demonstrate its good work, SEE Ndabeni, Cape Town – one of 13 factories across eight provinces supporting more than 1 000 individuals – opened its doors to a delegation on 31 October 2025 ... not for a Halloween trick-and-treat event, but for a marketing expo and factory tour to showcase its products to generate more business and sustain employment opportunities.

During her keynote address, Department of Employment and Labour Deputy Minister Judith Nemaadzinga-Tshabalala emphasised the government's commitment to driving inclusive growth and job creation. She praised Ndabeni employees for their commitment to production and stressed the importance of stronger partnerships to promote the goods manufactured in the factory, which include office, home and school furniture, and hospitality and health sector linen.



Department of Employment and Labour Deputy Minister Judith Nemaadzinga-Tshabalala with SEE employees



Donald Nkadimeng, new chief executive officer of SEE, addressed guests



Striking the right notes for the occasion – the SEE Ndabeni choir



The Productivity SA delegation (Chantell Beyers, Fulufhelo Madzhe, Thinus de Vos and Bařana Motheogane)

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144 JOBS SAVED

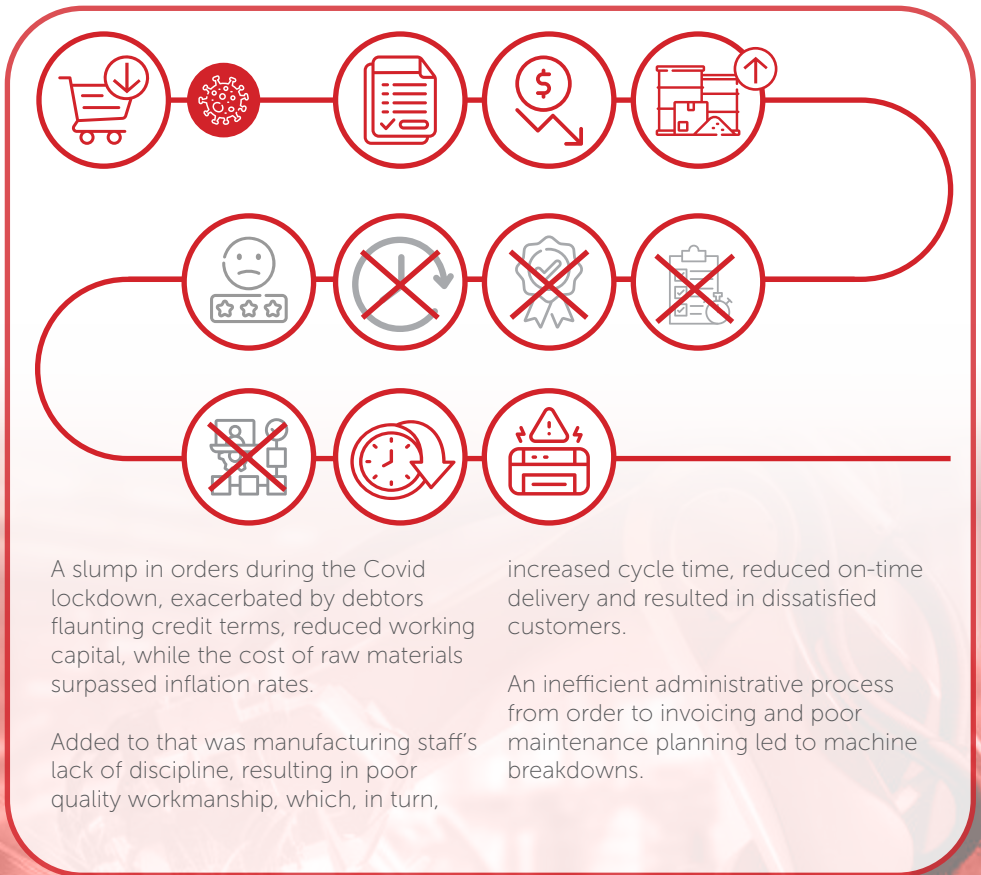
CASE STUDY

FABRINOX CONFRONTS THE KNOCKS WITH BT&R SUPPORT

Established in Paarl in 1993, Fabrinox has built a reputation among corporate giants such as SAB Miller and General Electric for machinery component supply using advanced manufacturing techniques and service solutions.

The business specialises in four core, custom-manufactured solutions:

- components, laser cutting of sheet metal and tubes, bending and surface finishing
- sub-assemblies – assembly of components, including additional value-adding processes such as precision welding, coating and bead blasting
- projects – under-licensing manufacturing, project management, commissioning, procurement and spare parts
- installations.



A slump in orders during the Covid lockdown, exacerbated by debtors flaunting credit terms, reduced working capital, while the cost of raw materials surpassed inflation rates.

Added to that was manufacturing staff's lack of discipline, resulting in poor quality workmanship, which, in turn,

increased cycle time, reduced on-time delivery and resulted in dissatisfied customers.

An inefficient administrative process from order to invoicing and poor maintenance planning led to machine breakdowns.

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FABRINOX CONFRONTS THE KNOCKS WITH BT&R SUPPORT

After a thorough examination of the pitfalls affecting the company, the BT&R team swung into action to restore Fabrinox to its former glory.

The problem: lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, a silo mentality and absence of service level agreements.

The solution: several workshops conducted to establish clear expectations, define measurable performance targets, outline responsibilities and accountabilities of each role and facilitate development of service level agreements.



Teamwork wins out

Collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement drive meaningful organisational enhancements.

Fabrinox's support and cooperation were instrumental in achieving the project's objectives within the desired timeframe and then maintaining a high standard of quality. Active participation from key departments (sales,

components, projects and supply chain) contributed to the success.

A 27% improvement was recorded in supplier scores from the baseline, demonstrating the positive impact of the initiatives.

The inclusion of roles and responsibilities added depth and clarity to the service level agreements, making them comprehensive and transparent,

creating a shared understanding of expectations and ensuring accountability for assigned tasks and deliverables.

By aligning roles with key performance indicators, enhancing cross-functional communication and embedding continuous improvement practices, the organisation achieved significant progress towards operational excellence.



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OUTREACH IN THE OVERBERG

Nothing beats networking and shared experiences when businesses are looking to expand and connect with new stakeholders. And no organisation knows this better than Wesgro – the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and Western Cape – which recently hosted a business investment promotion day in the Overberg.

The initiative, part of its ongoing investment facilitation outreach programme, set out to support commercially viable businesses on a growth path by providing a platform for networking, learning and stakeholder engagement.

The event brought together representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Landbank, Pumpkn (provider of agricultural business loans), Nedbank, Productivity SA and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

Participants explored support programmes for manufacturing

development, business financing and operational growth.

Attendees also gained valuable insights into financing solutions to fund expansion plans and achieve strategic objectives.

The networking sessions allowed local businesses from the agribusiness, food, beverage and manufacturing sectors to share experiences, foster collaborations and strengthen their presence in the district.

Productivity SA was represented by Mxolisi Coki (Competitive Improvement Services) and Marizanne Maritz (BT&R). Their session included presentations on Productivity SA's offerings, accompanied by training

on key concepts such as productivity measurement, 5S methodology and problem-solving techniques.

The event reinforced the year-long partnership between Productivity SA region 2 (Western Cape, Northern Cape, Free State) and Wesgro to fulfil the mandates of both organisations.



Point to Ponder

South Africa's gross domestic product expanded by 0.6% in 2024. In this modest growth environment, BT&R continues to position supported enterprises for resilience, improved competitiveness and long-term sustainability.



Wesgro-promotion-day delegates grow their knowledge during a presentation by Productivity SA's Mxolisi Coki

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PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF)-funded BT&R interventions continue to make a marked difference to the lives and livelihoods of business owners who have encountered obstacles to sustainability and continued success. By assisting floundering enterprises to turn around and transform their fortunes, the BT&R formula saves existing jobs and creates new opportunities for a healthier South African economy and society. Statistics below are for 2020 to end-February 2026.



Cumulative BT&R performance 2020 to February 2026

368

companies nurtured

3 531

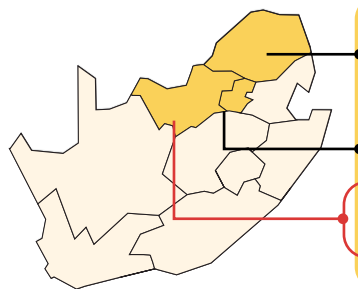
future forum members trained

35 185 jobs retained

3 125 new jobs created

Cumulative region 1

Region 1: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West



155

companies nurtured

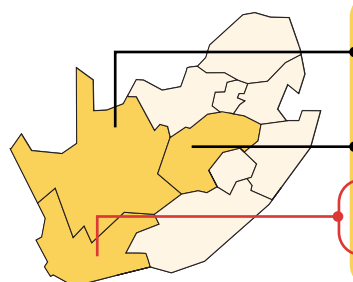
1 161

future forum members trained

17 453 jobs retained

Cumulative region 2

Region 2: Western Cape, Northern Cape and Free State



89

companies nurtured

1 267

future forum members trained

9 213 jobs retained

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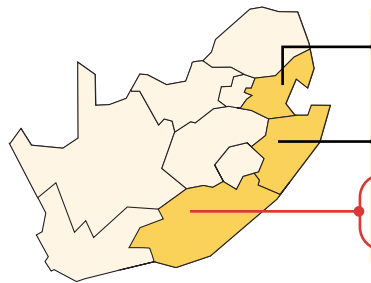
PERFORMANCE SCORECARD



Cumulative BT&R performance 2020 to February 2026

Cumulative region 3

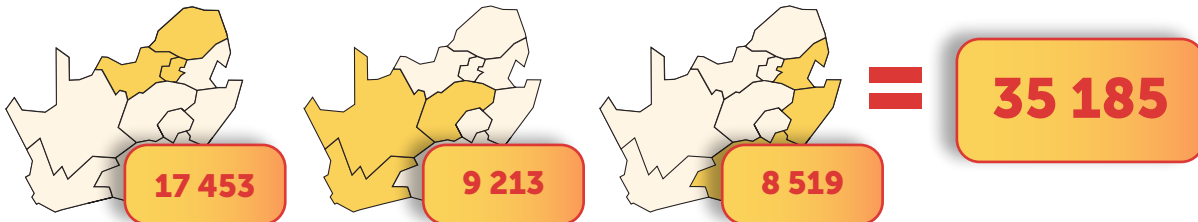
Region 3: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga



124 companies nurtured
1 103 future forum members trained
8 519 jobs retained



Cumulative BT&R jobs created by province 2020 to February 2026

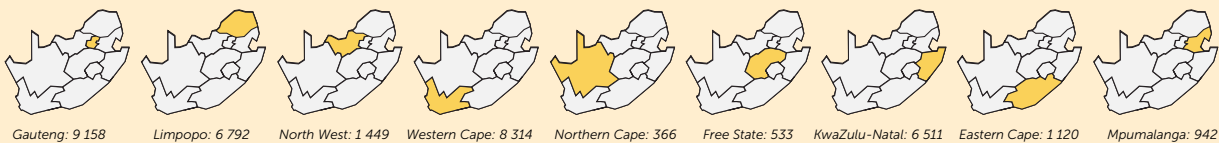


Projects nurtured and jobs retained by province

PROJECTS



JOBS



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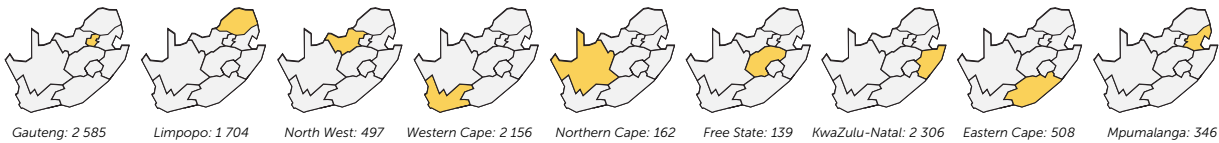
PERFORMANCE SCORECARD



Cumulative BT&R jobs retained for youths 2020 to February 2026

10 403 jobs retained

30%



Cumulative BT&R jobs retained for people living with disabilities 2020 to February 2026

1 432 jobs retained

4.1%



Cumulative BT&R jobs retained by gender 2020 to February 2026

MALE

61%

FEMALE

39%

=

AFRICAN

84%

WHITE

9%

COLOURED

5%

INDIAN

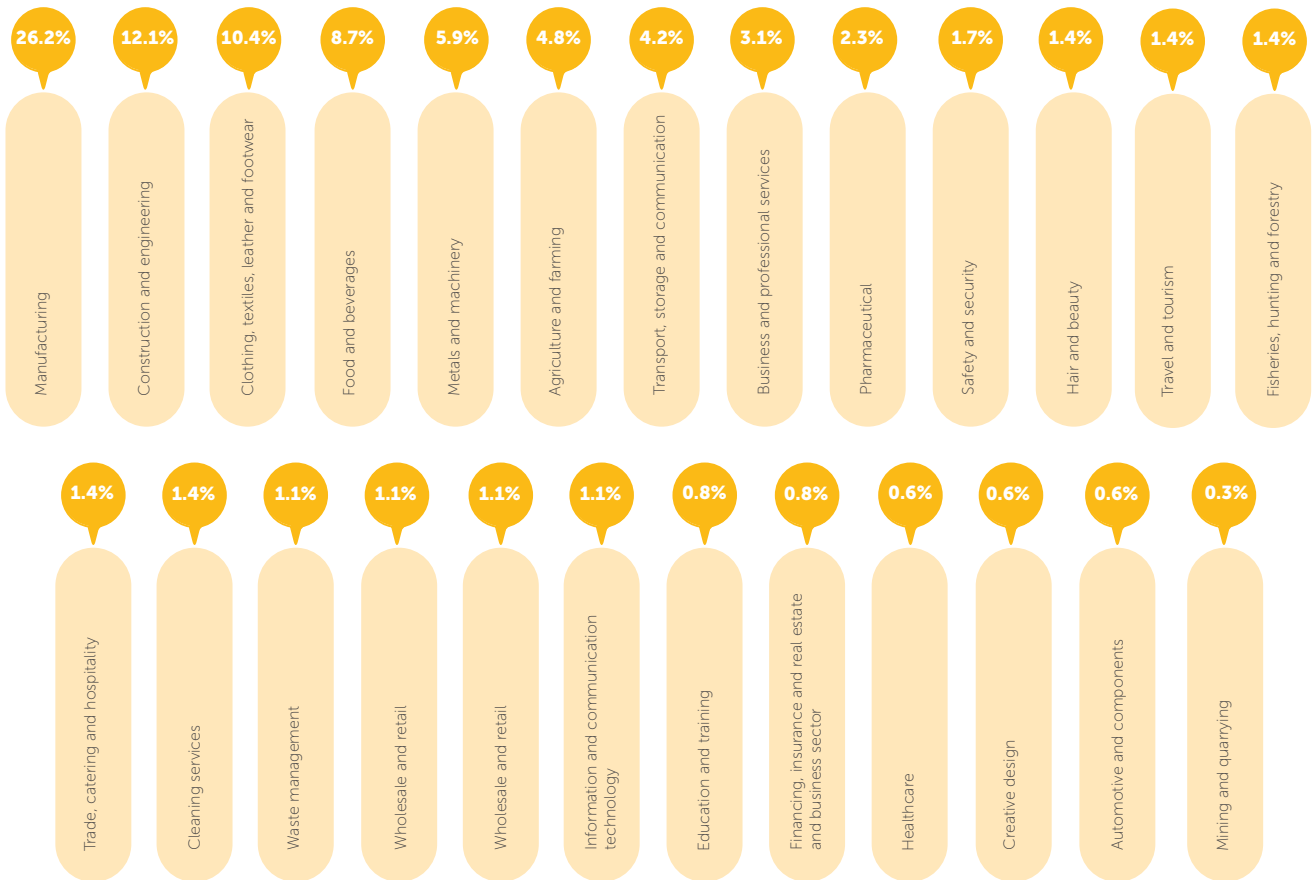
2%

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PERFORMANCE SCORECARD



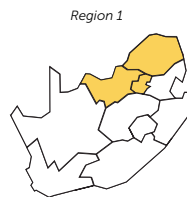
Clients that joined the BT&R programme by operational sector to date



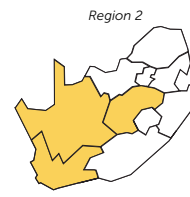
Cumulative BT&R completed projects per region to date

368 Implemented

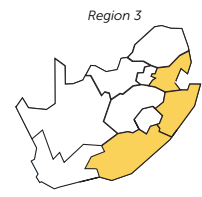
239 Completed



Implemented
155
Completed
88



Implemented
89
Completed
65



Implemented
124
Completed
86

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All the BT&R info you need



Our offering

- Assistance provided across the South African economy.
- Service available to any enterprise in distress, irrespective of size, industry or location.
- No limits to services provided to deserving companies (including skills development and training).



Who we benefit

All businesses that play a role in transforming South Africa and contributing to growth. The country's broad-based black economic empowerment strategy seeks to grow the economy, giving every demographic an equal opportunity to contribute.

Turnaround-assisted businesses

• 61% • 30% • 8%



Businesses of people living with disabilities

• 48% • 13% • 39%



• Men • Women • Multi-shareholder companies

- Operational for at least two years.
- Financially and/or operationally distressed .
- The last two years' financial statements .
- South African Revenue Service (SARS) pin to confirm SARS and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) compliance and validity.
- UIF-stamped UI19 forms/EMP201 full report.



Our top five sectors



26.2% Manufacturing



12.1% Clothing, textiles, leather and footwear



10.4% Construction and engineering



8.7% Food and beverages



5.9% Metals and machinery



Steps to securing support

- Email Productivity SA at turnaround@productivitysa.co.za or visit a regional Productivity SA office (see below).
- A business turnaround practitioner will explain the programme and qualifying criteria, provide the application forms and outline how they must be completed.
- He or she will ask for financial statements, EMP201 full report and SARS pin.
- A comprehensive assessment of the state of the business will be done to determine whether the company is a suitable candidate. This will include a site visit.
- Once all documents have been completed and supporting information received, a further assessment will be done to determine the financial position of the organisation.
- A nurturing report will be compiled summarising the causes for distress and possible mitigation strategies to correct the situation.

**All the preparatory work, from beginning to end, requires full client participation.*



Contact us

HEAD OFFICE

Physical address
International Business Gateway
Office Park
cnr New Road and Sixth Road
Midrand

Contact

T: +27 11 848 5400
E: turnaround@productivitysa.co.za

CAPE TOWN

Physical address
Office 202, Edward III Building
70 Edward Street
(cnr Bloemhof and Mispel roads)
Tyger Valley

Contact

T: +27 21 910 1591

DURBAN

Physical address
Suite 201,
Cowey Office Park
91-123 Problem Mkhize Road
Essenwood

Contact

T: +27 31 268 9770

Any comments and queries about this newsletter should be addressed to:

Productivity SA — Private bag 235, Midrand, 1685 | T: +27 11 848 5400 | E: turnaround@productivitysa.co.za