

Eden DM Council approves MOU with Stellenbosch University

Thursday, 07 December 2017

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After numerous meetings between Eden District Municipality (Eden DM) and representatives of Stellenbosch University, both institutions have decided to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Collaborative research will be conducted to resolve issues relating to the growth of the district. Future collaboration concerning research and capacity building, will, in turn, enhance service delivery to communities.

Councillor Memory Booyesen – Eden DM Executive Mayor and Professor Nico Koopman – Vice Rector for Social Impact and Transformation and Personnel at Stellenbosch University, signed the MOU at a Council meeting on 5 December 2017.

Before the Council meeting, Eden DM top management had the opportunity to share the importance of involving Stellenbosch University in the public participation processes relating to the Eden DM Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Spatial Development Framework (SDF). Stellenbosch University was also requested to form part of a steering committee which will meet on a quarterly basis.

Before to the Council meeting of Eden DM which was held on 5 December 2017, Executive Managers and Senior Officials of Eden DM had the opportunity to discuss pressing issues with Stellenbosch University representatives. Pictured are (front, fltr): Prof Nico Koopman – SU: Vice-Rector of Social Impact, Transformation & Personnel, Mr Monde Stratu – Eden DM Municipal Manager, Mr Clive Africa – Eden DM Executive Manager: Community Services. (Back, fltr): Dr Jerome Slamat – SU Senior Director: Community Interaction, Dr Antionette Smith-Tolken – Acting Director: Social Impact, Dr Leslie van Rooyen - SU Senior Director: Social Impact and Transformation and Mr Johan Compion – Eden DM Senior Manager: Environmental Services and Municipal Health.

At the Eden DM Council meeting, the MOU was signed by Cllr Memory Booyesen – Eden DM Executive Mayor (front, right) and Prof Nico Koopman – SU: Vice Rector of Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, while representatives of Eden DM and SU observes.

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During the discussions, Mr Monde Stratu – Eden DM Municipal Manager, said: “I want us to work together to develop a long-term Growth and Development Strategy for the district. The University’s experience in research and strategic planning will be of benefit to us.”

Mr Stratu also said that he would like a more detailed analysis of all the business sectors in the district, which is something that is currently lacking.

Dr Jerome Slamat – SU Senior Director: Community Interaction explained that by entering into a MOU with Stellenbosch University, Eden DM would have a direct entry point expertise and “people power”. In closing, he said: “We are in the business of teaching, learning and research” therefore it is important for us to look at the projects in the Eden district and see where we can assist.”

MOU: TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND RESEARCH

The following potential research questions and technical support, relating to the functions of Eden DM, are listed in the MOU:

- Mercury [Lead Pb] levels in fish in the South Cape coastal fishing waters.
- Green energy initiatives on Eden DM properties (solar and wind).
- Impact of lead in drinking water on children.
- Asbestos prevalence in Knysna and Bitou.
- TB, MDR, XDR in baboons at the Ladismith waste dumping site.
- Radon exposure prevalence in Oudtshoorn.
- Antibiotics in milk (Riversdale).
- Research about Antibiotics in meat.
- Labelling of genetically modified organisms/food [GMO].
- Ethics regarding the feeding of animal waste (chicken) to sheep, cattle or pigs.
- Labelling regards to grain fed pigs vs pigs who eat animal waste.
- Feeding of food waste to pigs.
- Cadmium presence in chicken livers in the Eden district.
- Hormone levels and chemical substances " Crystal Methamphetamine [Tik] in drinking water.
- The relationship between Avian Influenza and climate change in the Oudtshoorn region.
- Bromate prevalence in drinking water (Bromate can affect a person's kidneys).
- The prevalence of "superbugs" in hospitals and clinics in the District.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

SU will submit funding applications for specific projects and research on behalf of Eden DM to international donors, at no cost to Eden DM.

This MOU is important because it will broaden the social impact that Universities have on communities and the municipal environment. Currently, Stellenbosch University also has a MOU with the City of Cape Town and Stellenbosch Municipality.