



TIPS marks 25 years of supporting policy development through research and dialogue

Leading economists and policy makers gather in Pretoria on Thursday to celebrate the contribution that the Trade and Industry Policy Strategies (TIPS) has made over the last 25 years to the development of both trade and industrial policy through research and dialogue.

TIPS – which has its origins in the post 1994 period when the country was transitioning out of the apartheid economic structure – continues to play an important role in the post transition period. TIPS executive director Saul Levin reflects on the organisation’s success in the 25th anniversary publication “no organisation gets to this point on its own. It takes the foresight of a group of committed people who saw the need and along the way an equal number, if not more of staff and others, who continued to ensure that this organisation has survived so that it can continue to fulfill its mandate as set out in the months leading up to its establishment in September 1996.”

It was the foresight of leading economists at the time including, amongst others, Alan Hirsch (Emeritus Professor of Development Policy and Practice at UCT), Rashad Cassim (SA Reserve Bank Deputy Governor), Faizel Ismail (Director of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance) and Tshediso Matona (previously head of the National Planning Commission). Whilst they were supported by the Canadian based International Development Research Centre who was very committed at the time to assist in building capacity and research support within the new government which faced challenges at every turn. The then IDRC regional director Marc Van Ameringen (now director of the Geneva based Future Food Platform) says, “we really got it right on TIPS”. Having stated this, neither he nor the early supporters of TIPS were clear about whether the organisation would exist beyond South Africa’s transition period. There was no long-term view of where TIPS would go except to fill a gap that existed at the time in terms of government’s capacity to produce evidence-based research to influence policy.

In reflecting back on the past 25 years, Levin says “it is impressive to see the extent to which the research the TIPS team has produced has fed into and influence the key policy debates of the day. It is not only in the area of evidence-based research that TIPS has made a contribution, the organisation has also created a space for a dialogue of diverse views and input.” A case in point, in more recent years is the role that TIPS is playing in terms of the current debates and policy direction around the just transition.

Jorge Maia, head of economic research and information at the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) points out that whilst TIPS was formed during a transition from an apartheid economic structure to a democratic structure, today the country faces another transition and this process is different – it is now, Maia says, about aspects of global market penetration, labour intensity, social inclusion, exploring new markets and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. In tackling these challenges, government faces similar capacity constraints as it seeks to address many competing pressures and interests.

For Levin the key challenges ahead for TIPS are not only about fresh ideas and thinking but about how to support policymakers in building and growing the economy differently as well as what a future TIPS should look like.

Some of these issues will be touched on during the anniversary event on Thursday by speakers including Rudi Dicks, head of the project management office in the Presidency, former dtic Deputy Director General Garth

CELEBRATING

25

YEARS OF SUPPORTING POLICY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE

DIRECTORS THANDI PHELE | RUDI DICKS | SAUL LEVIN | TSHEDISO MATONA | IMRAAN PATEL | PALESA MOITSE | TEBOGO MAKUBE



Strachan, Tebogo Makube, Chief Director, Industrial Procurement in the dtic and current TIPS Chairperson, and Zukiswa Kimani, Chief Director Industrial Policy, in the dtic.

Issued by: TIPS

For more information, please contact: Saul Levin on saoul@tips.org.za

<p>The anniversary event will take place from 3pm-5pm at the TIPS offices: 234 Lange Street, Nieuw Muchleneuk, Pretoria. Please RSVP to Daphney@tips.org.za or Cinga@tips.org.za</p>
--