
NATIONAL TREASURY URGES PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE PART IN MONEY SMART WEEK SOUTH AFRICA 2020

As government faces increasing financial constraints, the rise in the cost of living outstripping consumers' incomes and the resultant struggles to make ends meet, it is crucial for consumers to be empowered to manage and take responsibility for their day-to-day money management. Against the backdrop of the declining economy, South African consumers are grappling with various financial challenges including over-indebtedness, low savings rates and financial scams. In light of this, it is important that consumers are knowledgeable about finances in a way that is relevant to their lives and enables them to use this knowledge to evaluate products, build resilience and make informed decisions.

Ms Olaotse Matshane, Chief Director Financial Sector Development Unit at National Treasury notes that “When consumers are able to confidently make well-informed financial decisions, their sense of financial wellbeing and their quality of life improves. This in turn, contributes to responsible and sustainable financial inclusion, empowerment of consumers and small business owners to meaningfully participate in the financial sector in a safe and secure way. We all benefit when levels of financial literacy improve”.

In an effort to highlight financial education as an integral part of our lives and convey financial education messages more inclusively, National Treasury in collaboration with the Financial Sector Conduct Authority and the National Consumer Financial Education Committee launched a pilot awareness campaign designed to promote financial education called Money Smart Week South Africa (MSWSA) in 2018. This initiative is aimed at educating consumers about the best financial practices and management and empowering them to get motivated about improving their personal finances.

The inaugural campaign in 2018 limited activities to Mamelodi, Tembisa, Alexandra and Soweto within Gauteng. It is reported to have reached over 5 500 consumers at various activities and reached over 9 million impressions through various media platforms. The MSWSA 2020 campaign aims to reach as many South Africans as possible, to inspire people

to become more financially literate and to educate people about the myriad of structures that exist to provide financial advice.

In contrast to the pilot initiative in 2018 which only targeted Gauteng, MSWSA 2020 will be implemented nationally. The objectives of MSWSA 2020 are to make the general public aware that; financial education is accessible and readily available; qualified institutions and individuals exist to provide informed advice; and controlling their financial situation can have a significant impact on their future, demonstrated through facets of everyday life.

This campaign creates a platform for organisations or individuals, whether they are a community group, Non-Governmental Organisation, (NGO), Public Benefit Organisation (PBO), company, school, university, financial services provider, regulator, policy maker or consumer financial educator, to run their own financial education programs and activities across the country between 23 and 28 March 2020 under the MSWSA 2020 banner.

Progress has been made in improving financial inclusion in South Africa. According to the Finscope South Africa 2018 survey, an estimated 90% of South African adults are served in the formal financial sector. However, more can be done in improving customer outcomes, customer protection and customer value proposition” Matshane says. “It is thus important that as we negotiate our way through the opportunities and risks presented by the financial services sector, we stress the importance of financial education. For as long as people have relatively low levels of financial literacy, they will not be able to meaningfully participate in the financial sector” she says.

The success of the MSWSA relies on it receiving the necessary support of stakeholders, the active participation of a range of stakeholders to amplify publicity and awareness amongst South Africans and ensure that high-quality information and activities are provided. National Treasury urges private, public and social sectors stakeholders to participate in MSWSA 2020 and play their part in this nation building initiative and contribute to a more financially literate citizenry.

Interested organisations can access the participation guideline and application form at <https://www.mswsa.co.za/>. Alternatively please email info@mswsa.co.za.

-Ends-

Issued on behalf of MSWSA 2020 by Creative Space Media.

Leigh Callipolitis

083 264 6563| leigh@creativespacemedia.co.za