

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

Subject: **African Sustainable Development Association partners with GRI to implement the Competitive Business Program in South Africa.**

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The African Sustainable Development Association (A-SDA) has signed a collaboration agreement with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to implement the GRI Competitive Business Program in South Africa. The program, supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, aims to contribute to the better integration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into value chains, through enhanced sustainability performance, accountability and disclosure.

The GRI Competitive Business Program will develop and enhance the capacity of SMEs to manage and report on material sustainability topics related to the value chains they are part of. The Digital Reporting Platform, developed under the program, is tailor made to assist SMEs and new reporters in applying the GRI Standards with relative ease.

In partnering with GRI to deliver the program, A-SDA aims to equip SMEs in the country to be globally competitive and enhance their value chain performance in a number of ways:

- Balancing supply and demand (long term partnership – 5-10 years),
- De-risking supply chain (trust and transparency),
- Increasing competitiveness (operational efficiencies, quality, access to markets, access to finance, profitability, volumes, etc.)
- Leading industry transition to sustainable and inclusive growth (collaboration)

The A-SDA is a South African based not-for-profit organisation that drives an active ecosystem, implementing collaborative projects towards sustainable and inclusive development in South Africa and beyond. The association was born out of the African Sustainability Summit (now in its sixth year) and was formally launched at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 2016.

GRI is an independent, international organization that has pioneered sustainability reporting since 1997. The organization's vision is a thriving global community that lifts humanity and enhances the resources on which all life depends. GRI works towards this vision by empowering organizations to make decisions that create social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone.

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his first State of the Nation Address said: *“Ultimately, the growth of our economy will be sustained by small businesses, as is the case in many countries. It is our shared responsibility to grow this vital sector of the economy. We will work with our social partners to build a small business support ecosystem that assists,*

*nourishes and promotes entrepreneurs...we will continue to invest in small business incubation. We encourage business to do the same."*

The GRI Competitive Business Program offers a platform for business to meet the President's challenge. Partnering with corporate South Africa in operationalizing their Enterprise Supplier Development and Sustainable Procurement Strategies, A-SDA and GRI now enable sustainable value chain performance linking SME's to become part of local and global value chains.

A-SDA will kick off the Competitive Business Program (including training, coaching and mentoring) with key corporate members and twenty of Africa's top SME's in April 2018.

"The A-SDA is very excited to offer this differentiated value proposition to our Corporate and SME Members and urge leading corporates, with their key suppliers to participate in this program and grow the South African economy" says Raldu Nel, Chairman of the A-SDA.

Any interested party can contact the A-SDA at [info@africansda.org](mailto:info@africansda.org).

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**For more information:**

Surisa Nel, A-SDA COO

E-mail: [surisa@africansda.org](mailto:surisa@africansda.org)

Tel: 083 459 1907