

R400m food manufacturing plant launches in Gauteng

The doors have officially opened to a new 22,700m² food production facility belonging to In2food, in the OR Tambo Special Economic Zone in Johannesburg. Described as the largest and most diverse ultra-fresh food facility of its kind in the southern hemisphere, and the second largest CO₂ refrigeration facility in the world, the new Bonaero site will create 600 new jobs.



Delegates tour the factory led by project head, Tim Groucot. Credit: In2food

Present at the opening last week was Zyda Rylands, CEO of Woolworths South Africa, together with the Department of Trade and Industry ('the dti') and the Gauteng Provincial Government. With a total development value of R400m, In2food, Woolworths' largest fresh and prepared food supplier, received over R140m from national and provincial Government.

Richard Cooper, CEO of In2food commented, "The official launch of our new site is a major milestone for us and South Africa. This is the largest capital project ever undertaken by In2food and will create a world-class facility that will be a significant move in terms of capacity, capabilities and quality, both for In2food and our customers.

"With the expansion of In2food, this new facility will create 600 new jobs over the next two years helping ORT SEZ to reach its first 50% of their job creation goal which is 1200 by 2025. In2food will be recruiting within food science, production, engineering, operations and administration roles."

World-class facility

Within the approximately 20,000m² processing area, is housed world-class state of the art food manufacturing equipment imported from around the world as well as quality South African equipment. As an example, the new facility will be producing 2,000 litres of soup and 10,000 pancakes per hour. The In2food factory will increase the export of fresh food products from OR Tambo International to a projected R1 billion by 2025.

The In2food Bonaero site will also be the first registered five-star industrial site in South Africa, as rated by the Green Building Council South Africa using the Green Star Industrial rating tool. The site includes sustainable waste management processes, four boreholes, water recycling and storage, 8000m² of solar panels which produce 25% of the energy requirement, and natural gas is used to run boilers, staff kitchens and ablution geysers.



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Speaking at the launch event, Rylands said, “I am very proud to be opening this world-class food production facility. In2food has been a Woolies Food partner for more than 28 years and this project was a natural extension of that relationship, with the shared goals of driving innovation and job creation.

“This facility will create 600 new job opportunities as well as additional jobs and economic opportunities across the country’s agricultural value chain. Bonaero Drive will allow In2food to expand their technological expertise as well as contribute to the development of the food production industry in the country.”



Woolworths SA's Zyda Rylands speaking at the launch. Credit: Woolworths

Localisation of industry

The OR Tambo Special Economic Zone, in which the new In2food site is situated, is a multi-site development and consists of several industry-specific precincts which will be developed in phases over a 10- to 15-year period.

According to Lionel October, director general at the dti, the launch of the In2food plant is one of the strategic initiatives that will stimulate South Africa’s agriculture production, contribute to the economy of Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, and increase the country’s export earnings. The project will also help in creating much-needed jobs.

Gauteng Premier David Makhura said the opening of this new industrial site is another positive example of how inclusive growth and localisation of industry should work in South Africa.

“The Special Economic Zone model creates the ideal environment for investment into industrialisation. Government is committed to utilising its economic agencies as a platform to strengthen, build and localise large industrialisation programmes, creating not only jobs but thriving communities in the various economic hubs. The handover of the factory to the investor tenant, In2food is a demonstration of Government and private sector working together to successfully deliver economic development and create much-needed job opportunities,” Makhura said.

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