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## National ESO Top User

Portia Phahlane

Despite many challenges, including having to work in a rural area where internet connectivity is not always all that good, he is a prolific electronic decision support system user, a system that is dependent on connectivity – Extension Suite Online® (ESO). Not only was he the overall top user during the 2016 calendar year, but also one of the highest score-rated users since 2010!

The person that we are talking about, of course, is Mr Louis Khomola, an Extension Practitioner at Makhado District Municipality, Limpopo Province. His Deputy Director is Ms Eunice Mabasa, who is responsible for five service centres, amongst them Tshitale Service Centre where Louis works.

Ms Mabasa describes Louis as a hard worker who loves a challenge and who likes to find solutions to problems. According to her, Louis is an energetic and committed colleague who is always ready to assist where required. He is the type of Extensionist for whom nothing is ever too much, or outside his field of expertise. He also assists her with preparing monthly and quarterly reports for Limpopo Head Office.

Data and experience both conclude that those who use ESO, use it extensively. It also shows that those who are presented with awards for achievements at congresses, summits and provincial meetings of extension workers, are often also those who use all support structures and devices to increase their effectiveness. Louis is no exception. His 2016 ESO utilisation figures prove that success is mostly the result of cleverly using the right tools for the job.

During 2016, Louis:

- Logged in to ESO 927 times;
- Spent 274 hours and five minutes on ESO;
- Accessed 2 781 ESO pages; and
- Scored a rating of 63 962 in becoming National Top User for 2016.

This shows how Louis really put in an extra effort to gain agricultural knowledge in order to serve his farmers in his working environment – despite poor network connectivity, transport and other challenges. He has proven the adage of: “Where there is a will, there is a way”!

In addition to the prizes that Louis has won during 2016 (camera, mobile phone and tablet), he will also be receiving a cash prize of **R 6 000.00** for his efforts from Manstrat. Well done!



Louis Khomola and his manager Ms Eunice Mabasa

## ESO WALLPAPERS

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE  
DESKTOP WALLPAPER TODAY!

Liven up your computer's desktop with an Extension Suite Online® wallpaper. Download wallpapers directly from the ESO newsletter e-mail or on the ESO media website: [media.esuite.co.za](http://media.esuite.co.za)



## Tips and tools for advisors

### Dealing with Heavy Rains

Portia Phahlane

Rain in agriculture is a much-appreciated resource as that brings much needed moisture to plants. However, too much rain can cause major damage to crops, through water-logging, leaching of soil nutrients, soil erosion, increased pest and disease problems, etc. Farmers cannot control the weather, but they can be pro-active by ensuring good drainage in the fields, and monitoring their crops after heavy rains. They can also:

- Cut and remove snapped and broken branches cleanly to allow the plant to recover and avoid rot.
- Cover roots, exposed by erosion, with soil or compost to prevent them from drying out and the plant subsequently dying.
- Treat fungal and bacterial diseases as soon as they are noticed.
- Plants damaged by rain or hail, should be sprayed immediately afterwards with copper-based chemicals to control bacterial diseases.

## Provincial ESO Top User Article

Portia Phahlane

With this month's interview, we introduce Mthobisi Jackson Zuma, our December 2016 provincial ESO top user from Eastern Cape Province

Mthobisi is a frequent Extension Suite Online user. Here are some of his experiences with the extension fraternity on how useful he finds Extension Suite Online.

Mthobisi is originally from Pietermaritzburg and has been working at the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) for the past nine and a half years. He is based at Ntabankulu local municipality (under Alfred Nzo district municipality) where he is employed as an Agricultural Extension Practitioner. Mthobisi specialises in crop production under the supervision of Mr. N Nkongo (Controller), Mr. A Gqulu (DD) and Mr B Madyibi (District Manager-Director).

We asked Mthobisi how many farmers, community group/co-operatives or associations does he service as an extension official and he told us that he advises 700 farmers, 6 co-operatives, 10 community groups and 5 agricultural associations.

He started using Extension Suite Online in July 2010 after a workshop and has not stopped since - to the extent that he is mostly amongst the top ten user of ESO in his province, with a number of provincial first places under his belt as well. Mthobisi says that ESO is an important tool for any extension practitioner – as important as a gun is to a policeman on duty! Wow!

According to him, he uses the system extensively, as he feels that the quality and relevance of available information that he gets from the system allows him to answer farmer's questions during farm visits - right there where they are, really making the execution of his duties so much easier.

In conclusion, we asked him to describe ESO as an Extension tool. He replied: "ESO is an extension officer's bible that answers all farmers' questions."

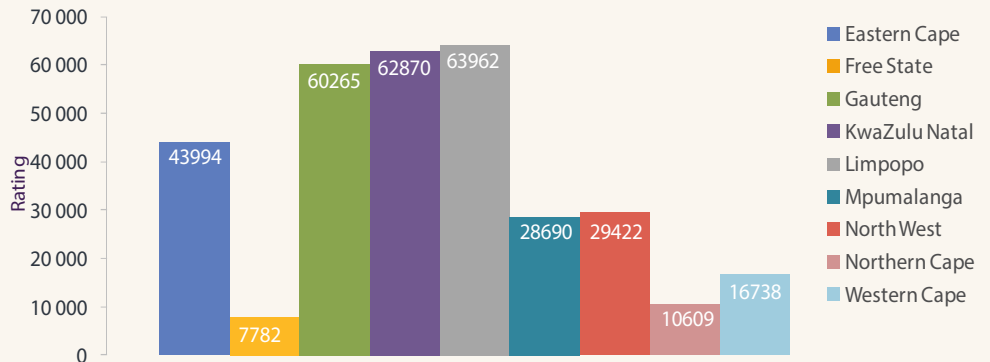


Mthobisi Jackson Zuma

## EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE® UTILISATION: January—December 2016

Extension Suite Online® (ESO) utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the ESO National Top User of the Month.

### ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH

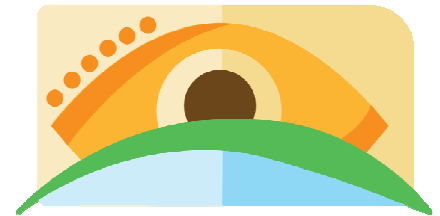


## ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

Province	Name
Eastern Cape	Sindlile Magoda
Free State	Modupe Vincent Mbele
Gauteng	Sizwe Nzuza
KwaZulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
Limpopo	Louis Khomola
Mpumalanga	Lucas Shabangu
North West	Mompoti Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Johan le Roux
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

## CLIMATE WATCH

### Issue #12



The beginning of December 2016 announced the end of the second heat wave over the summer rainfall region and the month was characterised by continual storm and flood warnings over the Gauteng Province. Flooding was reported in Muldersdrift and other parts of the West Rand on 7 December...

Read the full article on the Manstrat AIS website.

[www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch](http://www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch)

## TIPS:

### Social Media Awareness

Thulani Zengele

"Much Depends on Reputation – Guard it with your Life" - Robert Greene and Joost Elffers.

This quote covers part of the dilemma we face with social media and the trouble we can cause for ourselves through an unguarded moment. People often forget how vulnerable they make themselves, by unwittingly sharing personal information on public media. Damage to reputations and relationships suffer, particularly when posts are repeated out of context – often with malicious intent. Carelessness may also lead to unauthorised publication of personal information by a third party – publishers on social media should be aware that anything they publish, can come back to haunt them.

- Protect your password, a BFF today, can turn into a social media enemy tomorrow.
- Don't "like" anything you have not read properly.

- Make sure that your posts are clear and neutral. Try to minimise the chances of misinterpretation and avoid personal comments regarding individuals and groups. An unintended statement or response can be misunderstood and shared, at great personal cost to you, and others.
- Try to avoid being logged-on to multiple platforms simultaneously, i.e.: phone, tablet and PC at the same time as it increases the risk of hacking and unwanted access to your devices.
- Be careful when your location settings are activated – your whereabouts may become known to the wrong people, and leave you, your loved ones and property exposed. It is still good practice to switch location settings off when not in use.
- And remember, anything you post on social media, becomes part of the public domain and you have no control over who has access to it, and who uses it.

**Do you have any technology related questions?** Send them to [newsletter@suite.co.za](mailto:newsletter@suite.co.za), with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.

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