The National Association of Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (NAACAM) announces the appointment of Renai Moothilal as its new Executive Director as of September 2016. The association has been without a full time leader since last year. Roger Pitot has been advising in a part-time capacity.

A UKZN trained development economist, Moothilal joins NAACAM after spending the last decade at the Department of Trade and Industry, most recently as a senior official in the Automotive policy unit.

During this time he has been instrumental in managing various policy and programme related issues including the transition from MIDP to APDP, institutionalising the Automotive Supply Chain Competitiveness Initiative (ASCCI), as well as laying the groundwork for the (ongoing) development of an Automotive Masterplan from 2020 to 2035. Outside of core policy issues he has been part of several incentive adjudication committees as well as being an advisor to automotive companies on issues related to investment and production in SA. Moothilal's earlier years at the dti were in its Investment Promotion unit whilst he has also previously worked at the National Treasury as well as FNB Corporate and Liberty Group.

Moothilal's appointment comes at a time when NAACAM is looking to enhance its positioning and role within the SA automotive environment to deliver greater value for members. In welcoming him, NAACAM president Dave Coffey said "We are truly pleased at Renai's appointment. He brings a unique set of skills and experience and has, in a fairly short time, made his mark in the automotive manufacturing sector. Renai is respected by its key stakeholders and has a deep and holistic appreciation of the challenges and opportunities faced by different sector players".

Coffey went further to highlight that the sector as a whole was operating in an always changing, highly competitive and challenging environment and that NAACAM had to adapt and grow accordingly. "We are entering an exciting phase of operations for NAACAM and the automotive sector as a whole. Under the leadership of the dti, preparations are firmly underway to develop an Automotive Masterplan and supporting policy framework to optimise growth and economic outcomes from the sector up to 2035. NAACAM wants to ensure that the automotive component supplier base in SA both contributes to and benefits from this growth"

To that extent NAACAM aims to work towards a vision that maximises the localisation opportunities associated with automotive manufacturing for its members whilst actively promoting and implementing activities to support the government's push to increase broad based black participation in the country's industrial landscape. Moothilal noted that "sustainable transformation is an absolute imperative in SA's business environment. It is logical that the country's future economic and industrial policy results will, amongst others, be viewed through its ability to deliver an economic landscape that suits its demographic profile."

Director-General at the Department of Trade and Industry, Lionel October supported Moothilal's appointment into a role that he considers key in terms of the department's automotive sector stakeholder framework. "This is a great example of skills cross-pollination between the public and private sectors, and follows international trends in this respect. Furthermore NAACAM is to be commended for committing itself to a path that delivers outcomes which are both economy enriching and developmental in nature."

NAACAM represents approximately 150 automotive component manufacturing and related service provision companies, spread across more than 220 production sites across South Africa. In 2015, there were approximately 82 000 direct jobs associated with component manufacturing. In the same year companies in this sub-sector invested more than R2.7billion whilst generating sales in excess of R82billion. Whilst the role of vehicle assemblers as value chain drivers is undisputed, the components sub-sector is globally recognised for its ability to generate significant levels of value addition, employment, skills development and other cross cutting economic benefits.