

Call for applications: eThekwini Furniture Cluster Business Accelerator

The eThekwini Furniture Cluster (EFC) Business Accelerator is open for applications from small businesses in KwaZulu-Natal that currently supplies, or could supply, goods or services to the furniture sector. Successful applicants that excel during the pitching process will be in the running to gain a lucrative business contract with South African furniture retailers, @home, CLM Home and Homewood.



Credit: [Daniel Yulianto via Unsplash](#)

The business accelerator provides a unique platform for SMMEs to showcase their potential to large retailers, and also creates the opportunity for local retailers to access previously unseen local suppliers.

The intention of the initiative, according to EFC, is to be a vehicle for industry transformation in the regional furniture sector, to promote small and Black-owned enterprises, and to further develop the sector, the economy and boost employment.

A link to leading retailers

Paige Sherriff, the project manager for the EFC, says that with its focus on linking innovative products and services such as packaging, raw materials, componentry, technology and furniture to larger markets, the Business Accelerator aims to fast track the growth of innovative businesses driven by passionate South Africans.

“KZN is home to an abundance of SMMEs that have innovative business concepts, yet these often go unfulfilled as they simply don’t have the opportunity to engage with large customers or the resources to develop their ideas,” Sherriff explains.

“For these businesses, the EFC Business Accelerator promises to be a gamechanger. It offers a unique platform for high potential SMMEs to pitch their innovative ideas to some of South Africa’s leading furniture retailers. Our panel comprises @home, CLM Home and Homewood who are actively looking for KZN-based businesses to showcase their products and services and unlock their growth potential,” Sherriff adds.



The decade of @home

TFG (The Foschini Group) 20 Apr 2021



Application process

The EFC Business Accelerator is open to all KZN-based small, medium and micro businesses that are current or prospective manufacturers or services providers to the regional furniture industries. To enter, candidates need to submit their innovative ideas and projects by completing an online application by Friday, 14 May 2021. These will be screened and top candidates will be invited to submit a video pitching their ideas.

The top pitches will qualify for an online pitching platform that will take place in mid-June. Sherriff explains how this will work: “This virtual ‘Dragons’ Den’ of sorts will give our retailers the opportunity to engage with the SMMEs and ask them questions about their products or services. After they have reviewed all the pitches, our judges will select the winning companies and they will receive a letter of intent to procure their goods or services from these large customers along with a list of requirements to convert this intent into physical sales.”



DTIC and Proudly South African launch local online furniture portal

28 Apr 2021



In addition to this market opportunity, the winner will automatically qualify to receive intensive mentoring and support from industry professionals with over 30 years of experience, training and development for themselves and their employees, and membership to the EFC for one year.

“We leverage experience, expertise and partnerships to create a winning mentorship programme as this is the magic that will turn the winning idea into a viable, growth-oriented innovation,” says Sherrif.

For more information on the EFC Business Accelerator and to enter, visit <https://furniturecluster.org.za/the-business-accelerator/>. Entries close on 14 May 2021.