LIONS'DEN
BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

APPLICATION FORM 2026

ARE YOU READY TO ROAR?

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The eThekwini Municipality's Business Support, Tourism and markets Unit Launched the Lions' Den Programme in 2006. Over the years, business support has enabled SMME's to benefit from the programme through this competition. The competition is once again running this year, the Municipality is inviting SMME's and Co-operatives with innovative ideas within the eThekwini Region to participate in the Lions' Den Business Plan Competition.

The objective of the competition is to stimulate good business ideas, encourage sustainable entrepreneurship and competitiveness amongst entrepreneurs. It is also to further join the SMME's and Co-operatives with other business development opportunities.

The competition awards will be in the following three categories in which SMME's and Co-operatives can apply:

CATEGORY	QUALITY
Emerging business with viable business ideas.	Businesses with a turnover of less than R100 000 per annum.
Established business in need of venture expansion.	Businesses with a turnover of more than R100 000 below R500 000 per annum.
Businesses that have demonstrated entrepreneurship excellence.	Businesses with a turnover of more than R500 000 per annum and have demonstrated exceptional business practice.

RULES OF THE COMPETITION

1. This competition is run by the eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division.
2. This competition is open to residents who own and run SMMEs and Co-operatives with innovative ideas within the jurisdiction of eThekwini Municipality.
3. As eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division is part of local government, it is specifically recorded that the Directorate is bound by Section 67 of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, and is required to act in accordance with legislation when transferring funds to organisations and bodies outside the government when transferring funds to organisations and bodies outside the government.
4. The competition runs from 23 March 2026 and ends on 30 April 2026 at 16:00. All entries received after the closing date will not be considered.
5. The eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division shall not be held responsible for any lost, incomplete, or illegal entry forms.
6. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into in this regard.
7. The eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division reserves the right to use the images taken of the winner for publicity purposes in any manner it deems fit, without any further remuneration being made payable to the winner.
8. The eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division reserves the right to change any of the prizes at its discretion in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The Directorate reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or similar value.
9. The winner may be required to sign a waiver of liability and indemnity in the form determined by the eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division, at its entire discretion.
10. Neither the eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division, nor its employees, agents, or representatives shall be liable for any loss or damage, whether direct, indirect, consequential, or otherwise, arising from any cause whatsoever, which may be suffered by the entrants participating in the competition.
11. Participation in the competition constitutes acceptance of the competition rules.
12. Previous winners are not allowed to enter.
13. Only typed business plans will be accepted.

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BUSINESS PARTICULARS

Entry category *(Please tick appropriate category)*

Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Entrepreneurship excellence ☐

Business Name

Business Sector

Business Registration number

Tax Number Number of employees

Contact Person

Business address

Telephone Fax

Cellphone Email

Website

FINANCIALS OF THE BUSINESS

What is the businesses average monthly turnover?

(Please provide the following data of your business in the last three years)

Year 2023 Average Turnover

Year 2024 Average Turnover

Year 2025 Average Turnover

To support your entry please provide a copy of a business plan or comprehensive company profile.

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ENTRY CATEGORY

Please describe your business, it is important that you give a clear outline of your proposal here and use the opportunity to sell yourself and your business or your business idea. *(Limited to 100 words)*

Please describe the impact the award would have on your business. *(Limited to 100 words)*

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Who are the intended customers for the product / service?

How will the business make money?

How do you believe that your business / idea / service / product could benefit from the Lion's Den Business Competition if you were selected? *(Limited to 100 words)*

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To support your entry please provide a profile of a business idea / innovation.

Please describe your idea, it is important that you give a clear outline of your idea here and use the opportunity to sell yourself and your proposed business or your business idea. *(Limited to 100 words)*

State an example of a competitor or similar product / service to your business idea.

What makes your idea / innovation offering unique and different to those currently on the market?

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OBJECTIVES

1. To provide awareness of enterprises in the eThekwini Municipal area.
2. To promote successful business role models & success stories of empowerment.
3. To provide practical assistance to emerging SMMEs, Co-operatives and learners.
4. To showcase successful business enterprises and encourage good business practices amongst SMMEs, Co-operatives and learners.
5. To reward and encourage participation in eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division programmes.
6. To improve competitiveness amongst SMMEs, Co-operatives and business concepts from learners.
7. Promote entrepreneurship within the eThekwini Municipal area.

ENTRY

1. SMMEs, Co-operatives and learners must enter using only this application form submission of any forms other than the prescribed will lead to disqualification.
2. Only one application per business in each category is allowed. A company with multiple applications will be disqualified.
3. All competition entries should be accompanied by a detailed business plan not exceeding three pages with the following guidelines:

   • Executive summary
   • Operation Plan
   • Human Resources plan
   • SWOT analysis
   • Marketing Plan
   • Financials: List all your assets

4. SMMEs, Co-operatives and learners must be a resident and operating within the eThekwini Municipality.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. The entry form must be completed in full and approved by a designated authority within the business.
2. All applicants should clearly indicated which category they are entering.
3. All applicants must be submitted in duplicate.
4. Applications will be opened and shortlisted against the agreed criteria by the committee consisting of eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division offices, and credible stakeholder business development practitioners and sponsors.
5. To reward and encourage participation in eThekwini Municipality's Economic Development Directorate, SMME Development Division programmes.
6. All entries should be submitted in a sealed envelope and clearly addressed in the Lions' Den box located on the 7th floor of the Embassy Building or at the Entrance (Security Desk), 199 Anton Lembede Street, Durban (and not any other Municipality Directorate), no later than 30 April 2026 at 16:00.
7. Applications can also be emailded to yanga.nyakeni@durban.gov.za

FOR ANY ENQUIRIES CONTACT:
Yanga Nyakeni (031) 309 8280

BY EMAIL ON:
Yanga.Nyakeni@durban.gov.za

CLOSING DATE
30 APRIL 2026 AT 16:00