

# Local SMEs upskilled through enterprise development programme

In an effort to stimulate local economic growth and foster entrepreneurship, six small medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) from the Bergriver Municipal Area have been selected to receive grant funding as part of a comprehensive enterprise development programme.



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This initiative is designed to not only provide financial assistance but also to upskill and equip local entrepreneurs with essential business knowledge and tools necessary for sustainable growth.

The programme, a collaborative effort between Umoya Energy Wind Farm and the Initiative for Community Advancement, focuses on nurturing local talent, promoting innovation, and contributing to the long-term economic development of the region.

"The support we offer goes beyond mere financial aid; it's about investing in our community's future by empowering local businesses. The remarkable progress of our SMMEs fills us with pride, and we believe this funding will further propel them towards achieving their full potential," stated Shariefah Rhodes, community operations manager at Umoya Energy Wind Farm.

Running from July 2023 to February 2024, the initiative targeted SMMEs from Piketberg, Aurora, and Velddrif, providing them with a grant of R25,000 each. This financial boost will enable the beneficiaries to invest in critical areas of their businesses, such as acquiring new equipment, adopting advanced technology, enhancing marketing strategies, and facilitating expansion efforts, all of which are vital for improving their market position and fostering growth.

“I feel fortunate to have been part of the Small Business Support Programme. It gave me valuable insights on how to be innovative in today's business world and pushed me to excel under pressure. Presenting my business to funders was both daunting and exciting. After six years in business, to receive funding for the first time was a humbling experience. I am grateful for the opportunity and extend my heartfelt thanks,” expressed Vernon Klaase, a programme beneficiary.

The culmination of this programme was marked by an awards ceremony in February 2024, celebrating the entrepreneurs' achievements and the positive impact of the initiative on the local economy. By supporting these SMMEs, the programme aims to create a more vibrant, innovative, and sustainable economic landscape within the Bergriver Municipal Area.

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