

Firstwatch Entrepreneur's Challenge winners announced

Following a close competition that showcased some of South Africa's finest young entrepreneurial minds, the Firstwatch Entrepreneur's Challenge winners have been announced.



Siyabonga Ndlela, founder of Ndlela Agri Group, emerged as the overall winner of the 2022 edition of the Firstwatch Entrepreneurs Challenge. | Source: Supplied

Siyabonga Ndlela, founder of a local agricultural business Ndlela Agri Group, emerged as the Firstwatch Entrepreneurs Challenge grand prize winner, walking away with R100,000 cash prize.

Zethu Nyali, founder of Zee Organics, claimed the second, while Phumzile Mthembu, founder of Ingcweti Pty Ltd, was announced as the third prize winner. The second and third place winners were awarded R50,000 and R 25,000 in cash prizes respectively.

In addition to the cash prizes, all winners will receive business support and mentorship from social development enterprise Over the Rainbow for six months.



Black Umbrellas hosts the 9th annual National Enterprise Development Awards

Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation 21 Feb 2022



“With the prize money, I am going to buy some machinery for my business and put up fencing where I plant my vegetables,” Ndlela said. “I give back some of my vegetables to those who need them in my community, so I am happy that I will get to do more of that. My advice to all the entrepreneurs out there is to choose what you love and go for it. Waking up for work becomes so much easier when you do what you love.”

Winners' selection process

The Firstwatch Entrepreneur's Challenge saw 160 candidates invited to attend a two-day workshop hosted in Johannesburg

and Cape Town and facilitated by established local entrepreneurs who provided skills training.

In the next phase, candidates pitched their ideas to a panel of judges to earn a spot in the top 10, who competed for the main prize at the Johannesburg final. The final event took place on 20 February at Disoufeng Pub in Soweto, with contestants being treated to a musical performance from local artist Terrence McKay.



Entries open for SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards

22 Feb 2022



The panel of judges included former Firstwatch Entrepreneurs Challenge winner, Mpho Mohaswa, creator of Ghemere Ginger Beer, businesswoman and winner of the 2019 Firstwatch Whisky Entrepreneurs Challenge, Musa Kalenga, founder of Monatefellaz, Dawn Nathan-Jones, entrepreneur, multiple award-winning business leader and CEO of Over The Rainbow, Carlo McFarlane as well as Bongi Matsolo, former senior brand manager at Edward Snell & Co. Brown & White Spirits.

Lauren Justus, portfolio head for Edward Snell & Co. Brown & White Spirits commented: "I am blown away by the quality and commitment of the entrepreneurs in this beautiful country and by the hunger and passion that every single contestant showed throughout the 2022 Firstwatch Entrepreneurs Challenge."

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