

# Durban Automotive Cluster opens applications for transformative business accelerator

The Durban Automotive Cluster (Dac) is delighted to announce the opening of applications for its business accelerator. This programme is spearheaded by the support of the eThekweni Municipality and automotive industry giants, including Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM), Hesto Harnesses, and Toyota Boshoku South Africa (TBSA).



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The Dac Accelerator is focused on driving localisation, empowering Black industrialists, and developing commercial partnerships with high-potential enterprises in the South African automotive sector. Its ultimate goal is to facilitate positive commercial and transformational outcomes for both lead enterprises and participating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), unlocking growth and fostering economic development.

According to Takalani Rathiyaya, head of the economic development programmes department at eThekweni Municipality, the role of the Dac in driving sector growth is critical. “Initiatives like the Dac Accelerator, in collaboration with the government, play a pivotal role in supporting industry, helping them seize opportunities for sustainable growth.” He adds that he is excited to see the talent that will emerge from the 2024 Accelerator and is confident that, in alignment with the programme's track record of success, this year will be no exception.

## How does it work?

Ballard offers a step-by-step breakdown of what interested SMEs can expect:

1. To qualify, your company must meet the following criteria:

- Currently or aiming to offer products or services to industrial customers
- South African-owned business
- 51% or more Black ownership
- Annual turnover of R50m or less
- Registered with CIPC
- Tax compliant
- Operational for at least two years

2. Aspiring SMEs looking to become suppliers to our participating big customers are encouraged to take note of the criteria being sought in potential, local vendors, including:

- Strong engineering design capabilities
- Reliable Quality Assurance processes
- Healthy cash flow management competencies
- Strong preference for World Class Manufacturing leadership competencies as well as IATF and ISO9001 compliance

3. The SMEs will be screened, with a shortlist of the most promising businesses, invited to several stages of capacity building, culminating in an opportunity to pitch their business to senior decision makers from the participating automotive industry customers, as well as several investors.

4. Where commercial opportunities between high-potential SMEs and the participating lead firms are identified, several phases of upgrading will then follow, focused on unlocking new sales and business scale.

“The Dac has been supporting regional automotive industry growth for over two decades,” says Kyle Ballard, head of the accelerator. “The ongoing support from the eThekweni Municipality, big industry players as well as fellow Dac members is crucial in achieving primary objectives such as employment growth, private sector investment, and enhancing the manufacturing value-add of the local industry,” he concludes.

The Dac Business Accelerator encourages and welcomes all interested qualifying Black-owned SMEs across the country to apply before the closing deadline on 15 April 2024. Just follow this link: <https://bit.ly/3Um8mVA>

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>