

eThekwini Furniture Cluster

Overview of the Cluster



FY25/26

What is the eThekweni Furniture Cluster (EFC)?

Established in 2018, the eThekweni Furniture Cluster (EFC) is **an industry led industrial development initiative focused on improving the competitiveness of furniture manufacturers and value chains in KwaZulu-Natal**. The cluster's mission is to deliver targeted development and support programmes that enhance the competitiveness, sustainability, and growth of the furniture industry, while driving employment creation. To achieve this, the EFC focuses on:

- **Product and process upgrading** through productivity improvement and skills development projects
- Expanding market share for local furniture manufacturers by **facilitating market access** and supporting SME development

A key strength of the EFC lies in its emphasis on shared learning among members. By **fostering collaboration, the cluster generates collective efficiencies and amplifies impact** - outcomes that would not be possible through isolated efforts with the same resources.

Follow us on our Socials:



@efc_cluster



eThekweni Furniture Cluster



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Why clustering? Because firms can't do everything alone

Progress may be slow

Firms will need to find things out for themselves and re-invent wheels

High cost of implementation

Firms will bear the full cost of any initiative

Firms may be isolated

Firms may struggle to upgrade independent of other industry stakeholders

Hard to influence policy

Who will listen to one firm?



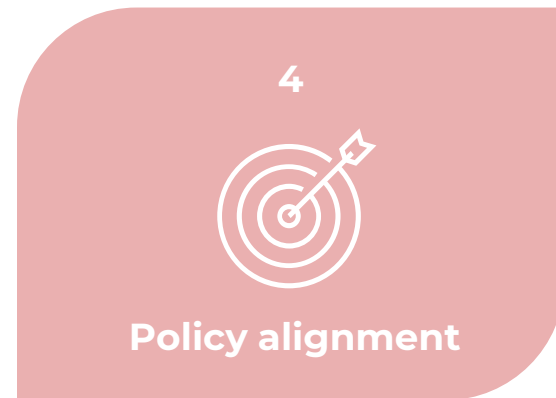
Clustering solves this through collective efficiency

Rapidly identify common challenges, opportunities & pockets of best practice



Share the cost of addressing common needs

Accumulate performance data and intelligence and speak with a collective voice



Grow through collaboration with customers, suppliers and other ecosystem stakeholders

Scaling up: Our three-year strategy to accelerate eThekweni's furniture value chain

ENABLING ACTIVITIES



CLUSTER INFRASTRUCTURE

Financial management, governance and compliance, monitoring & evaluation, resources to deliver on strategic projects



PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR LINK

Public relations, communications, linkages and networking



CLUSTER AS A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

Shared learning and best practice investigation

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES



Engaging the market

Understand the sourcing needs of lead firms, promote the benefits of localisation and communicate requirements to suppliers in industry



Building capacity

Upskill the next generation of business leaders, supporting technical skills development and empowering firms to drive manufacturing excellence in their organisation



Facilitating localisation and investment

Connect high-potential SMEs to specific commercial opportunities in lead firms



Supporting growth

Upgrade SMEs to realise and deliver on commercial opportunities

R20m in new commercial commitment secured by SMEs

Grow industry to 6750 employees



Your Benefits as an eThekweni Furniture Cluster Member



Mailers & SharePoint Access

Stay informed with regular updates and gain exclusive access to a centralised platform for resources, documents, and industry insights.



Market Access Capacity Building

Enhance your business's ability to enter and thrive in new markets through targeted training and strategic support.



Shared Learning Meet-Ups

Participate in virtual and in-person sessions that connect you with industry peers and experts, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing.



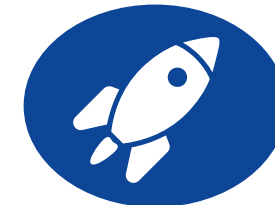
Lean Training and Technical Skills Development

Improve efficiency, reduce waste, and enhance product quality by equipping your workforce with lean methodologies and technical expertise.



Design & Innovation Skills

Cultivate creativity and innovation within your team, enabling the development of unique and competitive products.



SME Business Accelerator

Accelerate your business growth through mentorship, funding opportunities, and exposure to potential clients.



EFC FY25/26 Membership Categories & Fees

Membership category	Description	Membership Fees	Networking	Industry Comms	Shared Learning		Skills Development & Supporting Growth			Facilitating localisation and investment; Supporting Growth
					Online Manufacturing meet-ups	In-person manufacturing meet-ups	Manufacturing Excellence	Design and Innovation	Technical Skills Development	
			AGM, any industry events	Mailers, SharePoint Access	Online Manufacturing meet-ups	In-person manufacturing meet-ups	Manufacturing Excellence	Design and Innovation	Technical Skills Development	SME Business Accelerator (incl. Market Access Capacity Building)
Level 4 manufacturer	Large manufacturer with 150+ employees	R17 808								
Level 3 manufacturer	Medium manufacturers with 51-150 employees	R14 469								
Level 2 manufacturers	Manufacturers with 31-50 employees	R6 678								
Level 1 manufacturer	SME Manufacturer with less than 30 employees	R1 654								
Retailers	Retailer w/ customised support (e.g. localisation support)	R91 232								
Ecosystem *	Service/Equipment Supplier Must present to cluster once a year	R20 000								
Associate membership **	Non-paying member, reduced access	R0								



*Ecosystem: For non-manufacturing service providers or suppliers to the furniture industry who want access to networking, industry communications and manufacturing meet-up (both online and in-person, Must present to the EFC once per annum.

**Associate Membership: Only includes access to online Shared Learning webinars and networking events. Can apply for the Accelerator program which is open to the public.

Overview of upcoming projects

EFC Funding, Finance and Costing Fundamentals Workshop – 17 Sep 2025

What Furniture SME Will Gain:

- **Unlock funding pathways** to fuel growth and build financial resilience.
- **Understand available funding opportunities**, and the applications processes directly from funders such as **IDC, DTIC, SEDFA, National Skills Fund** etc.
- **Forge meaningful connections** with industry peers to share insights and build collaborative opportunities.

Annual General Meeting– 11 Nov 2025

- Attending an AGM hosted by a furniture cluster offers several advantages:
- **Gain Insights into Industry Trends:** Stay informed about market developments and emerging opportunities within the furniture sector.
- **Network with Industry Leaders:** Connect with fellow SMEs, potential partners, and key stakeholders to foster collaborations and partnerships.
- **Influence Strategic Direction:** Participate in discussions and decisions that shape the future direction of the cluster and the industry at large.

September

October

Nov – Dec

Accelerator Dragons' Den – 29 Oct

What Is the Dragons' Den Event?

- The **Dragons' Den** is a premium platform where promising furniture SMEs pitch their businesses directly to top retail and manufacturing decision-makers, including **Mr Price Home, Homewood, Pepkor Lifestyle**, and **Poetry of Living**. This unique opportunity allows emerging businesses to:
 - **Secure commercial contracts**, based on their value proposition and readiness to supply large retailers.
 - **Gain visibility and credibility**, by showcasing their products to industry leaders.



Overview of upcoming projects

Lean, 5S, and problem-solving training - Feb 2026

What Furniture SME Will Gain:

- **Cut costs & boost efficiency** – Lean and 5S eliminate waste and streamline production flows, reducing operating costs and lead times.
- **Improve workplace safety & morale** – A clean, organized workspace minimizes hazards while uplifting staff engagement and pride.
- **Enhance product quality & responsiveness** – Standardized processes lead to more consistent output and faster adaptation to customer demands.
- **Empower employees & foster continuous improvement** – Training builds problem-solving skills and ownership of processes across the team

EFC Study Tour, Apr – May 2026

What Is the EFC Study Tour ?

The EFC Study Tour is an exploration of world-class manufacturers and retailers in the global furniture industry:

- **Site Visits to Leading Manufacturers** – benchmarking against globally competitive operations, gaining insights into advanced production systems, lean manufacturing, automation, and sustainability practices.
- **Knowledge-Sharing Sessions** – facilitated workshops and discussions to contextualise lessons for local firms and identify opportunities for adaptation.

Feb 2026

Mar – Apr 2026

Apr – May 2026

Technical Skill Development Training, Mar – Apr 2026

What Furniture SMEs Will Gain?

- **Improve product quality & competitiveness** – Mastery of key technical processes ensures higher-quality outputs that meet market demands.
- **Increase operational capacity & scalability** – Strengthened technical know-how enables SMEs to expand production and grow sustainably.
- **Empower staff through practical learning** – Interactive workshops foster confidence, knowledge-sharing, and a culture of continuous skills development.



Want to become a member of the EFC ?

[Apply Here](#)

or

Scan the QR Code Below





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