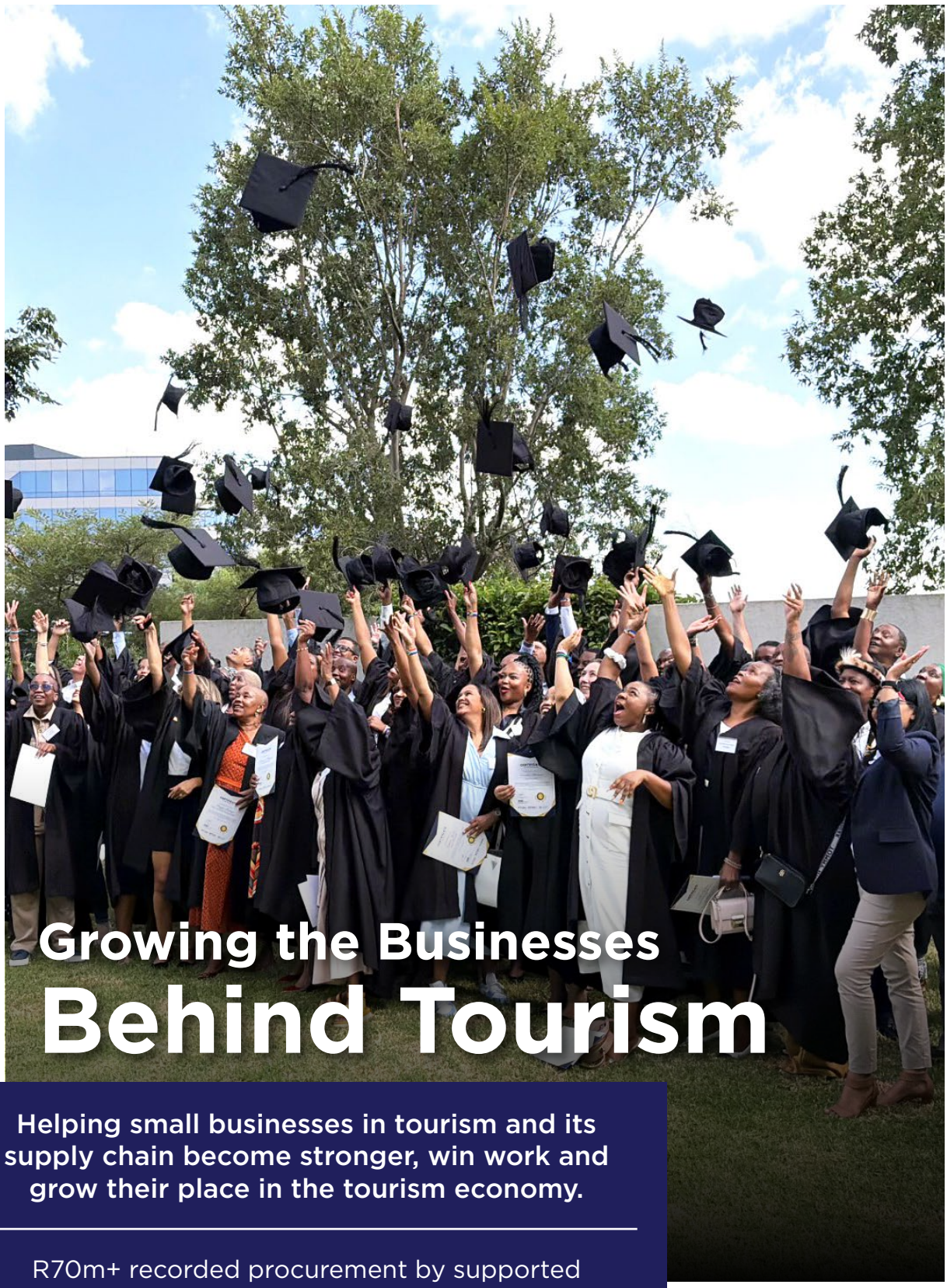


Growing the Businesses Behind Tourism

Helping small businesses in tourism and its supply chain become stronger, win work and grow their place in the tourism economy.

R70m+ recorded procurement by supported businesses over four programme years

2022–2026

SATSA
Tourism Business Incubator

Implemented by

SIGMA INTERNATIONAL

About the programme



Helping small businesses grow with tourism

The SATSA Tourism Business Incubator was launched in 2022 to help Black-owned businesses strengthen how they operate and gain access to buyers, finance and industry networks.

SATSA brings the industry. Its members, events and relationships connect smaller businesses with tourism companies and the people who buy from them.

Sigma International developed and implements the incubator's needs-based business support model. It works with each business owner to agree a practical growth plan and coordinates support around what the business requires. That may mean mentoring, stronger financial systems, specialist advice, equipment, finance or an introduction to the right buyer. Corporate partners fund places and can also become part of what happens next. Some buy from supported businesses. Others provide finance, expertise or access to their own networks.

Four years of the SATSA Tourism Business Incubator

102 enterprises supported	**8+** corporate sponsors	**R70m+** procurement recorded from incubatees	**400+** permanent jobs sustained	**R6.2m** in grants to incubatees	**R9.65m** in interest-free loans

"Tourism spend reaches much further than the businesses a visitor sees. When a hotel buys locally, that spend supports suppliers, jobs and communities across the value chain. SATSA's role is to help more small businesses get a fair shot at that work.

David Frost, CEO, SATSA

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01

The businesses behind a hotel stay

Follow one night at a City Lodge hotel back through its supply chain and you meet the incubators' businesses along the way.

City Lodge Hotels has supported every programme intake since 2022. Its role has gone beyond funding places. The group has also bought from supported businesses and provided finance where suppliers needed capital to grow.

Over four programme years, City Lodge has supported 60 different businesses. Thirty-six have supplied the group.



> *Enterprise development works when small businesses become part of the industry's supply chain. Every procurement decision is an opportunity to support an entrepreneur, create jobs and help build businesses that can stand on their own.*
>
> **Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo, Chief Operating Officer, City Lodge Hotels**

	Front of House	Back of House
	Free-range eggs at breakfast	Thabane Eggs supplies selected City Lodge hotels
	Coffee in the lobby	Asmara Coffee supplies coffee, maintains machines and trains baristas
	A kitchen that keeps running	Organic Matters maintains grease traps and sewer sumps
	Clean windows	Gauteng Window Cleaning Services cleans 15+ City Lodge hotels in Gauteng
	A glass of wine with dinner	PaardenKloof wines are approved for listing
	The tour and transport the next morning	Green Apple Tours provides transport and tours

The impact reaches further

Tourism directly employed 953,981 people in South Africa in 2024 *(Source: Statistics South Africa)*. But much of the activity generated through tourism sits outside the businesses a visitor sees.

Hotels, tour operators and travel companies buy food, transport, cleaning, maintenance, uniforms, wine, technology and many other goods and services. Helping smaller businesses compete for that spend allows tourism income to reach more South African businesses, employees and households.

02

How the incubator works

Every business enters the programme with different needs. Sigma starts by sitting down with the owner to understand how the business operates, where it wants to go and what is holding it back.



Work out what needs attention first

The initial assessment identifies where support will make the most difference. A business looking for national clients may first need reliable management accounts. Another may already have the demand but lack the equipment or working capital to fulfil larger orders.

Sigma and the owner use that starting point to agree a practical growth plan.

The learning happens inside the business

Owners develop their skills while running their businesses. The questions are immediate: what should I charge, can I afford this order, do I need another person, what will this buyer expect?

> *I sometimes describe it as a practical MBA built around your business. You cover finance, operations, people, sales and strategy, but everything relates to decisions you are making in your own business right now.*

Akash Singh, CEO and Co-Founder, Sigma International



People investing in people

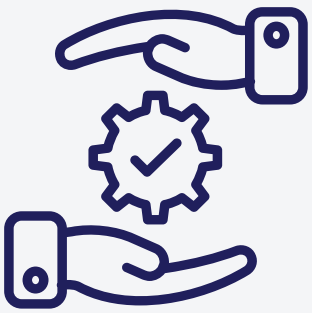
Much of the support happens one-on-one, with mentors working alongside business owners on the problems in front of them.

When Ledikana Creations needed to improve online sales, Sigma designed, managed and monitored a website campaign. When Roska Artisan Ice Cream needed help managing leave and overtime as its team grew, a mentor helped set up a leave register and simplify overtime payments.

Support can also take mentors into the business, whether that means visiting a site, preparing an owner for an important meeting or accompanying them to meet a potential buyer.







Support and opportunity have to come together

Better financial systems will not create sales on their own. An introduction to a buyer will not help much if the business cannot price the work properly, meet the standard or afford to fulfil the order.

The incubator works on both: strengthening the business while helping it reach commercial opportunities.

The goal

The aim is a business with the skills, systems and customers to compete, make sound commercial decisions and continue growing after the programme ends.

GAUTENG WINDOW CLEANING SERVICES



Knowing what the work is worth

BEFORE
Jeppe Jestin started her business with two employees, no clients and no formal business training.

THE SUPPORT
She received mentoring, equipment, business development support and introductions to potential buyers. Financial mentoring helped her understand what her services cost to deliver and how to price contracts profitably.

NOW
Her company cleans more than 15 City Lodge hotels in Gauteng and competes for larger contracts. She operates from her own office and employs people from communities, including Diepsloot and Alexandra.

> *The moment that really stands out for me is realising how far I had come from being a housewife with no business background to someone other women now come to for business advice and guidance.*

Jeppe Jestin, Gauteng Window Cleaning Services



03

Market access

Meeting the right people can open doors that small businesses cannot open on their own

Once a business is ready to compete, it still has to reach the people who can buy what it sells.

For a small supplier, the procurement manager of a hotel group or an established inbound operator may be several relationships away. SATSA gives the incubator access to an industry network that can take a business years to build.

In tourism, business often comes through relationships and referrals. Hotels and tour operators need to know they can rely on the suppliers they recommend. An introduction through SATSA gives the conversation context and can help a smaller business reach a buyer it may struggle to access alone.



> *We can help a business become professional, competitive and ready to supply the industry, but that means very little if nobody gives it an opportunity. The measure of success is when an introduction turns into a contract that allows that entrepreneur to grow.*

David Frost, CEO, SATSA



The programme creates reasons for people to meet

It goes further than paying for a trade-show ticket. At WTM Africa and the SATSA Western Cape Chapter meeting, PaardenKloof and Siwela Wines hosted tastings, giving members the chance to taste the wines and meet the producers.

At Africa's Travel Indaba, Tourvest displayed Ledikana Creations' garments and accessories on its own stand. Sigma also hosted a networking event for around 70 sponsors, current and former incubatees and senior industry representatives.

Sigma prepares businesses for these conversations and coordinates introductions, so owners arrive knowing whom they want to meet and what they need to say.

The conversations continue after the event

After Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, Sigma surveyed 26 businesses across its SATSA and Wine Arc programmes.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER INDABA

16 held follow-up meetings

11 had concrete prospects

9 submitted proposals or pitches

18 identified partnership or collaboration opportunities

What happens when a small business gets in front of buyers

BEFORE

Tshepiso Branding Solutions, an eco-friendly branding and promotional products business, joined the incubator in 2024/25 as Tourvest's supported business. City Lodge Hotels continued to support the business the following year.

THE OPPORTUNITY

A place at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, with preparation beforehand and matchmaking with buyers on the show floor.

NOW

The business left Indaba with more than 20 hospitality-sector connections and a pipeline of sustainability-focused leads.

> *Strategic matchmaking was well facilitated. Ongoing support from Sigma beyond the event adds significant value.*
>
> Sarah Motshwane Sebetola, Tshepiso Branding Solutions

TSHEPISO BRANDING SOLUTIONS



04

Procurement



Landing its first customer can help a business prove it is ready for more

Market access gets a business into the room. Procurement gives it the chance to prove it can deliver.

For a small supplier, that first contract can do more than bring in revenue. It gives the business experience of working to a larger buyer's standards, evidence that it can deliver consistently and a reference it can take to the next buyer.

Corporate partners can play a different role here. Beyond funding places in the incubator, they can invite businesses to quote, give them a trial order, list a product or bring them into their own supply chains.

Over four years, City Lodge Hotels spent more than R70 million procuring goods and services from 36 businesses supported through the incubator. In the 2026 intake, eight of the 16 businesses supported by City Lodge supplied the group.

Buying from a small supplier can change what happens next

Green Apple Tours, a black-owned transport and touring business supported through the incubator by City Lodge Hotels, says its work with the hotel group strengthened its reputation and gave other hotels, tour operators and travel partners confidence to work with it.



ASMARA COFFEE

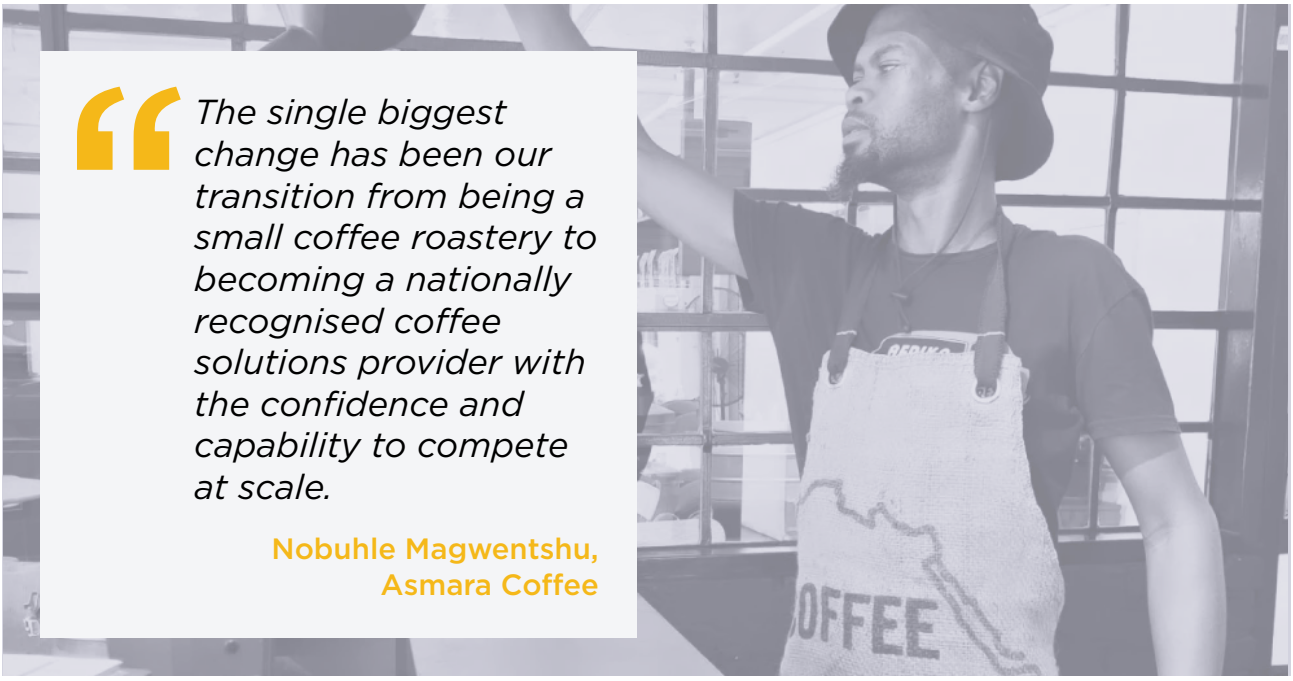


One hotel customer became a national account

BEFORE
Asmara Coffee began as a small artisan roastery supplying one City Lodge hotel.

THE SUPPORT
As the business worked more closely with hospitality clients, it developed beyond coffee beans. With support through the incubator, Asmara expanded its offer to include coffee machines, technical maintenance, barista training and complete coffee set-ups.

NOW
Asmara supplies City Lodge across South Africa and into Namibia. The business says its customer base now also includes airlines, corporate clients, retailers and cafés.



> *The single biggest change has been our transition from being a small coffee roastery to becoming a nationally recognised coffee solutions provider with the confidence and capability to compete at scale.*
>
> Nobuhle Magwentshu, Asmara Coffee

What procurement can open up for a small supplier

First order
The business gets its first paying customer.

Delivers well
It meets standards and delivers consistently.

Earns a reference
The buyer becomes evidence the business can be trusted.

Wins the next buyer
The first customer makes the next sales conversation easier.

05

Finance

Sometimes the opportunity is there before the money is

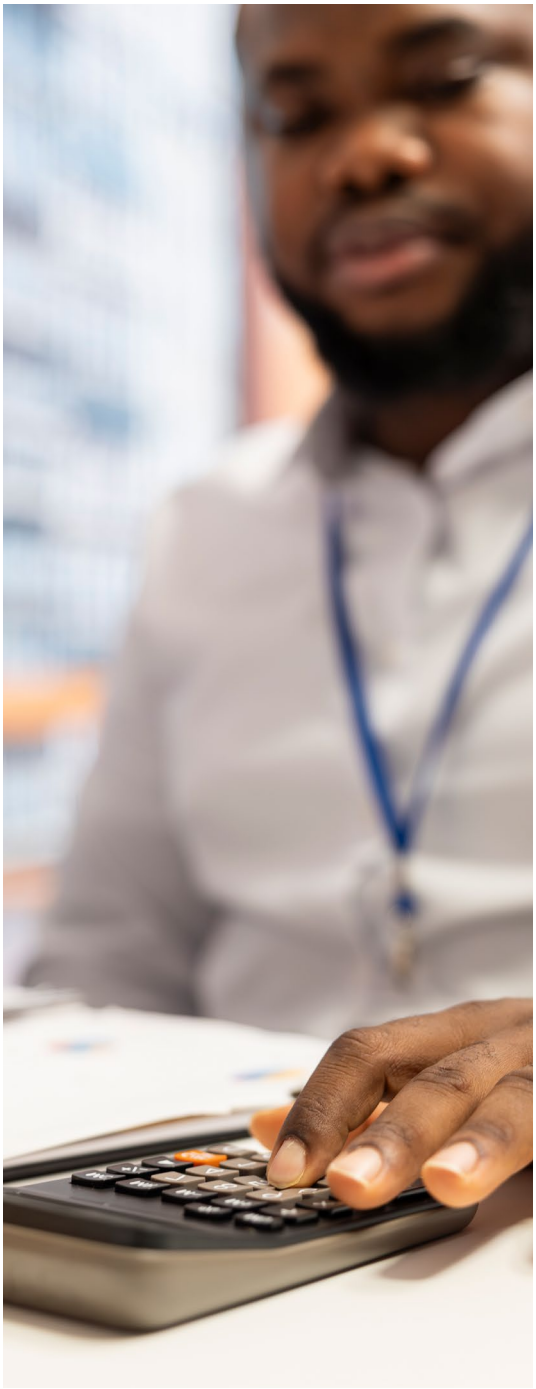
Winning work can create a new problem. A small supplier may need to pay for stock, equipment, staff or production capacity before the customer pays. Without the cash to bridge that gap, growth can stop.

The incubator helps businesses access finance where it is needed. That has included supplier-development grants and interest-free finance from programme sponsors and other corporate partners.

The finance differs from business to business. Sometimes it pays for equipment or stock. Sometimes it gives an owner enough working capital to take on a larger order.

Funding is often paired with mentoring and financial management support so the business can manage what follows.

> *Finance can remove an immediate constraint, but it also changes the business. The owner needs to understand what that investment has to earn, what new costs it brings and whether the business is ready to manage the growth that follows.*
>
> **Akash Singh,**
> **CEO and Co-Founder, Sigma International**



Growth brings its own costs

A new machine may increase production, but the owner then has more volume to manage. A larger vehicle may make a contract possible, but it brings running costs, staffing and scheduling. Working capital can help fulfil an order, but the business still needs to price the work properly and manage cash flow.

THABANE EGGS



Finance created room to grow

BEFORE

Thabane Eggs started as a small poultry operation producing a few thousand eggs a day. As it expanded to supply selected City Lodge hotels, cash-flow pressure began to limit further growth.

THE SUPPORT

Finance through City Lodge Hotels' Enterprise and Supplier Development programme gave the business room to invest in production. Mentoring covered production indicators, biosecurity, financial management, compliance and planning.

NOW

Thabane Eggs continues to invest in production capacity, with stronger financial management and systems for running a larger operation.



> *The money helped us grow, but the mentorship taught us how to manage the growth.*
>
> The Thabane Eggs team

What finance can open up for a small business

Demand is there
The business has an order, customer or clear chance to grow.

Finance fills the gap
Funding helps cover equipment, stock, working capital or added capacity.

The business can deliver more
It can take on the work without putting the rest of the business under strain.

Growth becomes manageable
With mentoring and stronger systems, the owner is better placed to manage the bigger operation.

06

Bringing it together



How one supplier grew from one property to all nine provinces

Organic Matters shows how several parts of the incubator can come together around one business: a customer, finance, specialist expertise, business support and access to the industry.

Founded by Siya Sigcau, Organic Matters started small, servicing grease traps, sewer sumps and other back-of-house systems for hotels. Its work with City Lodge Hotels began at a single property.

As that relationship grew, so did the business. Regular work from City Lodge gave Organic Matters the confidence to invest in vehicles, technology and compliance systems. Development finance helped bring expansion plans forward. Experts from PUM Netherlands, a Dutch non-profit that provides voluntary business support, helped improve management systems and planning, while an upgraded website and industry networking helped the business reach new customers.

Today Organic Matters works with City Lodge across South Africa and operates in all nine provinces. The business says prospective customers now see the City Lodge relationship as evidence that it can deliver at scale.

A supplier that can serve us nationally creates value well beyond one contract. As it expands into new provinces, it employs more people, builds local capability and keeps more of the hotel's spend in the places where we operate.

Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo, Chief Operating Officer, City Lodge Hotels



The partners at work

Sigma International
Business development support and coordination

SATSA
Access to tourism industry relationships and networking opportunities

HOW ONE SUPPLIER GREW

Supplying one hotel became national reach and a bigger team

1 Property
Organic Matters began by servicing one City Lodge property.

9 Provinces
The business now operates across South Africa.

From 20-50+ employees
The team expanded as the business grew.

One customer relationship became the base for national growth.

07

People

When a business grows, the impact reaches further than the owner

Tourism is a people business. Guests may see the guide, driver, barista or hotel team, but behind them are many more people whose jobs depend on the businesses that supply the industry.

Across the incubator, businesses have shared examples of employees moving into management, gaining qualifications, taking on supervisory roles and using more stable income to improve life at home.

> *Investment in a small business is also an investment in people. When that business grows, it creates jobs, builds skills and gives employees the chance to earn more and take on more responsibility. In South Africa, that is one of the most important effects of enterprise development: the impact reaches into families and communities, not just the business itself.*
>
> **Akash Singh, CEO and Co-Founder, Sigma International**



The ripple effect of a growing business

GREEN APPLE TOURS

Green Apple Tours shared the story of Luvuyo, who started out washing dishes before joining the business as a porter. He progressed through operational roles and is now the company's General Manager, with a company vehicle.

ASMARA COFFEE

Asmara Coffee shared the story of Siviwe, who was working as a supermarket security guard when she met founder Nobuhle Magwentshu. She spent her days off learning at the roastery, later joined as a full-time barista, bought her own motorbike and started a small delivery business alongside her job.

BRAQ UNI

Braq Uni, a Gauteng uniform and apparel manufacturer, hired Nomsa with no experience in pattern making or cutting. She qualified as a skilled cutter, now mentors other members of the team and uses her income to support her daughter and pay school fees.

ORGANIC MATTERS

Organic Matters shared the story of an employee who joined in a junior operational role. The company supported his training and paid for his Code 14 licence. He is now Operations Manager, earns substantially more, has bought his own vehicle and is building a home for his family.



The ripple reaches beyond the workplace

At Gauteng Window Cleaning Services, one employee who earned his learner's licence is now training to mentor in local schools.

PaardenKloof has seen employees move from seasonal work into permanent hospitality roles, while another member of staff is training for a skilled cellar role.

TEAMS THAT GREW

Asmara Coffee

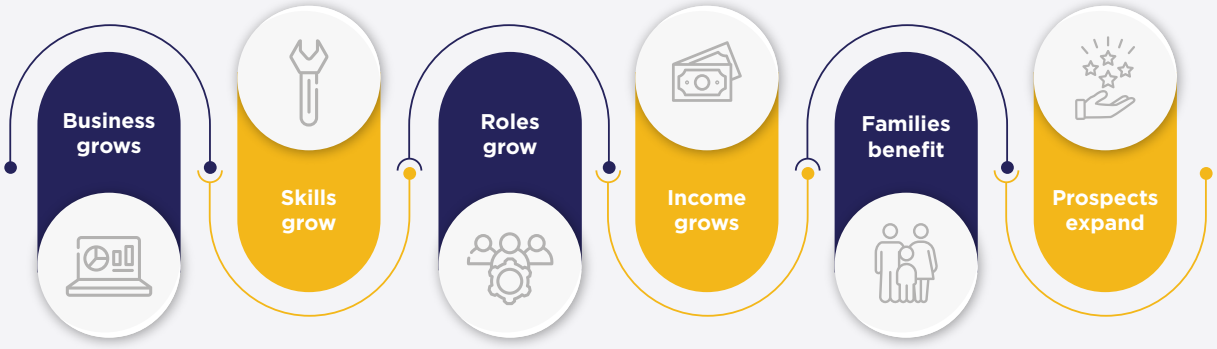
5 to 16 permanent staff

Thabane Eggs

9 to 15 staff

Roska Artisan Ice Cream

8 to 15 staff



08

Graduation



Meet the class of 2026

On 11 February 2026, 41 SMMEs graduated at the joint SATSA/ASATA Graduation and Supplier Day at City Lodge Hotel Waterfall City.

They came from across the tourism supply chain, including accommodation, transport, food and beverage, manufacturing, cleaning, security and design.

They had not all reached the same commercial point. Some had established supplier relationships. Others had strengthened their systems, secured finance or built new industry relationships that were still developing into business.

The day also became a supplier event, with current incubatees exhibiting alongside graduates and meeting corporate buyers and industry representatives.

The graduates contributed towards the cost of the event themselves. It was a small but telling change: businesses that had entered looking for support were now helping to support the network around them.

> *Graduation marks the end of the formal programme, but it is not the end of the relationships. What matters now is that these businesses keep trading, keep learning and increasingly become part of the network that helps the next group coming through.*
>
> **Akash Singh, CEO and Co-Founder, Sigma International**

The graduating businesses

Asmara Coffee
Baki Travel
Bethel Guesthouse
CJ Makua
Extreme Adventure Camp
Gabriel on the Go
Gauteng Window Cleaning Services
G's Jams
Green Apple Tours
Indi Wash
Inkezo Industrial Supplies
JC Security
Khayelitsha Cookies
Kumbula Mouldings
KZN Contracting
Ledikana Creations
Letsatsing Lodge
Magauta Designs and Projects
Morake Deco
Mzansi Travel
Nexus Phoenix
Novamour Catering Service
Olive Ridge Holdings
Peak Brands
Peggy Queen Lampshades
Organic Matters
Point Squared
Purple Infinity
PWC Transport
Quatre Saisons
Roska Artisan Ice Cream
STL Travel Trading and Projects
The Arte
Tlhari Travel Agency
Travelbug
Tsheole Shuttles
Tshepiso Branding Solutions
Ubizo Events and Tours
Vomba Tours
Wazisa Green Solutions
Zintokazi Afrika

THANK YOU TO THE PARTNERS WHO HAVE BEEN PART OF THE JOURNEY

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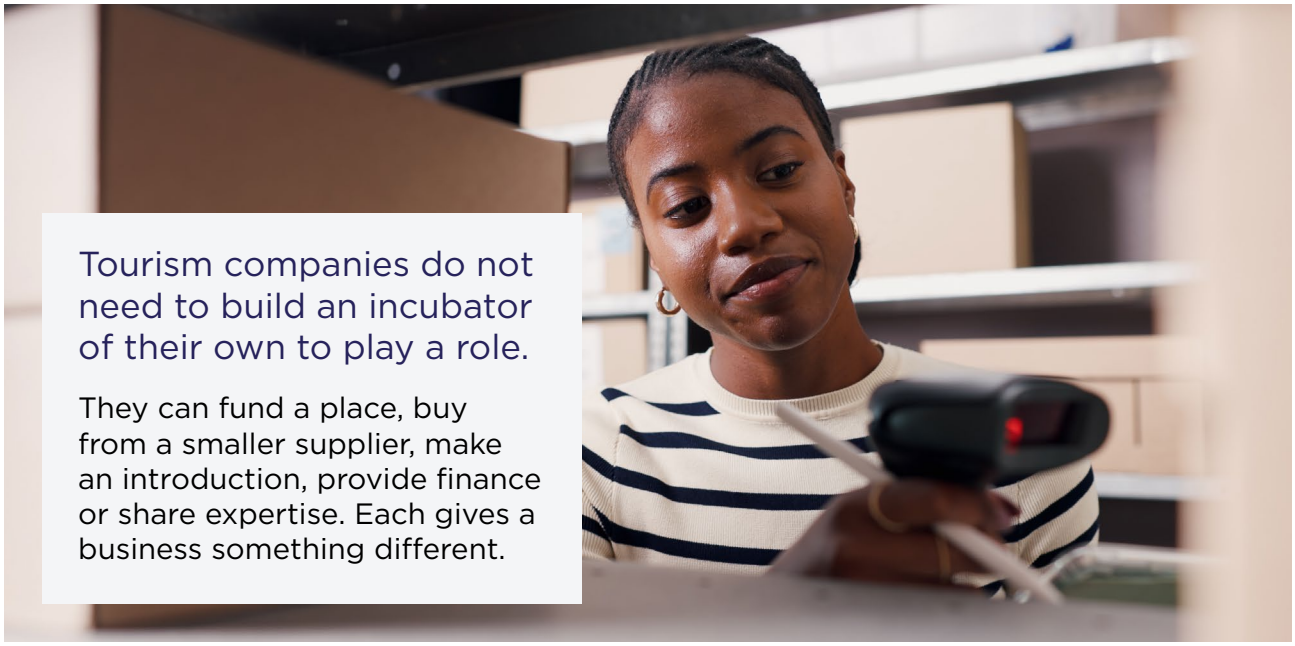
nf. New Frontiers Tours

PROTEA HOTELS MARRIOTT

DREAM HOTELS & RESORTS

09

Five ways tourism companies can take part



Tourism companies do not need to build an incubator of their own to play a role.

They can fund a place, buy from a smaller supplier, make an introduction, provide finance or share expertise. Each gives a business something different.

Fund a place

Sponsor a business through a future intake and give another entrepreneur access to the programme. This contribution counts towards the enterprise development and supplier development components of the B-BBEE scorecard.

Buy

Look at what your company already purchases and where a supported supplier could compete for the work.

Open a market

Make an introduction, list a product or give a smaller business space on a platform or stand you already use.

Provide finance

A business with demand may still need working capital, equipment or stock before it can fulfil a larger order.

Share expertise

Some problems need a specialist. Senior experts, accountants, labour-law advisers and other partners already contribute knowledge alongside the programme.

PARTNER WITH SATSA AND SIGMA

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Tourism Business Incubator

SIGMA
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Visit our website
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