

Call for township entrepreneurs as tyre programme gains traction

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Driven by the desire to empower young entrepreneurs and create employment opportunities in local communities, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), one of South Africa's leading tyre manufacturers, is on the hunt for 48 township entrepreneurs, who could qualify for startup support to run their own high-quality tyre centres in their local area.

SRSA is manufacturer of the Dunlop brand and has launched the Dunlop Business in a Box concept as an extension of its Dunlop Container store project. The programme offers a plug-and-play solution through which shortlisted candidates are linked up with recommended funders to apply for total funding to set up their own Dunlop Fitment Centres, and to become part of a growing network of over 80 Dunlop Container outlets employing around 400 people across the country.



L to R Sibusiso Ngubane, Deputy Director General in the KwaZulu-Natal Office of the Premier; Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber SA; Victor Mshali, owner of a Dunlop Container in Mondlo township in the Zululand District Municipality, and Itumeleng Mojafi, group business development manager at Sumitomo Rubber SA.

Tackling unemployment

Lubin Ozoux, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber SA, said, “Dunlop has a proud history of entrepreneurship – it’s how the brand was established over 130 years ago. Over the years, we’ve had great success with our Dunlop Container project, which was started in 2012 to drive sustainable township entrepreneurship and promote safety on the road. SRSA is presently the only tyre manufacturing company in South Africa with a township and rural area enterprise development programme, and we are serious about playing a role in tackling high unemployment of around 33%, the majority of which is young people in rural areas and townships.”

The Dunlop Container project, he said, has enabled informal tyre businesses often trading from makeshift, roadside facilities, to be transformed into proper Dunlop-branded fitment centres, where they can offer high quality and affordable tyres and tyre services to their communities, while creating jobs.

Ozoux adds, “Through our new Business in a Box concept, successful applicants will receive the funding and support they need to run their own thriving tyre businesses, offering tyre fitment, tyre repairs, wheel balancing and rotation, and more.

It's all about finding the right entrepreneurs and ensuring they are equipped to be successful and well supported for their journey, including technical, sales, business and back-office training and development.”



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Empowering entrepreneurs

Deputy Director General in the KwaZulu-Natal Office of the Premier, Sibusiso Ngubane, said the province was appreciative of the work Dunlop Tyres was undertaking in empowering entrepreneurs.

“We are very proud to see the offering Dunlop Tyres has created with their Business in a Box initiative. For us, this is not simply about a container business. This concept is about skills development, job creation and sustainability in the retail sector. We are happy to see that Dunlop travels the journey with the entrepreneur with ongoing support and advice. We wish them the best in their programme and look forward to seeing it empower young entrepreneurs.”



Itumeleng Mjafi, group business development manager at Sumitomo Rubber SA, demonstrating the Dunlop Business in a Box.

Township transformation

Itumeleng Mojafi, group business development manager at Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, said the Business in a Box initiative aims to achieve transformation of townships.

“We want to make it easy for our local people to do business selling tyres, and to bring quality, affordable tyres to communities who are in need of safer, more reliable tyre products. More importantly it’s about creating employment and fostering the entrepreneurial spirit that lives within our local communities,” he said.

Victor Mtshali, who owns his own Dunlop Container in Mondlo township in the Zululand District Municipality, commended Sumitomo Rubber SA and Dunlop for the “brilliant concept”. His business employs six people and is active in its local community with revenue growing.

“It makes it easier to own a business when you are backed by a strong brand like Dunlop. You just turn the key and start operating,” he said.



With Dunlop's Business in a Box, successful candidates take ownership of a tailor-made and fully-fitted 12 metre Dunlop branded container complete with equipment, retail software, startup stock and point-of-sale material. It includes a reception area, a workshop with tyre changing equipment, and a storage facility stocked with tyres

Unboxing the concept

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Entrepreneurs will be trained at one of SRSA's technical, training and retail centres to gain the skills necessary for their business to succeed. In addition, they will also receive legal and regulatory support, marketing support and business mentoring. Fully funded training accredited by MerSETA and Sumitomo Rubber Industries is also on offer across four focus areas - Technical Skills, Occupational Health & Safety, Business Acumen and Sales and Customer Care.

Ozoux added, "The longer-term vision is that these entrepreneurs will be able to grow and develop their businesses from entry level enterprises serving the man-in-the-street, to businesses that can support the taxi industry, and government departments, thus creating more job opportunities. This would also positively impact the greater awareness about tyres, and counter the use of dangerous second-hand tyres, through training and education on tyre safety."

"This is all in line with our purpose as Sumitomo Rubber of creating a future of joy and wellbeing for all, by delivering trusted service and driving safety," added Ozoux.

To apply for the Dunlop Business in a Box programme:

- Visit www.dunloptyres.co.za/business-in-a-box
- Complete the required information and upload all the requested documents.
- Applicants must be South African, 18 years old and above.

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Sumitomo Dunlop



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