

# Eskom's business investment competition is open for entry

In its 12th year running, the Eskom Development Foundations' Business Investment Competition (BIC) has provided a platform for South African owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to become part of a community of like-minded entrepreneurs as they look to build on their businesses' solid foundation and realise their true potential. Entries for this year's competition are now open.



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In 2019, the competition named Beren Damons as its runner-up in the agricultural category. As first runner-up in the agricultural/ agro-processing sector, and founder of Tesselaarsdal Wines, Damons has shown that coming second still pays off and this is evident in the changes she has made since. "My business grew in terms of volume and I am starting to develop my land for the planting of grapes," said Damons.

With prize money consisting of R75,000, Damons has made plans to pay for her grapes for wine production and has increased her production from five tonnes to 10 tonnes.

Based in Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, Hermanus, Western Cape, Tesselaarsdal Wines has been in operation since 2015. Damons boasts about how her work in the wine industry since 2001 nudged her curiosity in wine production and thus inspired her to start her own business.

## Increasing production and sales

Going in blind, Damons was not sure what to expect when she entered the BIC. However, a year later she is adamant that it was a positive move to take part. "It was such a great experience and very professional. Since we ended as first runner-up, we have managed to increase the production and sales of our wine."

"The BIC adjudicators are looking for candidates in agriculture or agro-processing who show not only perseverance and bravery by starting their own businesses, but also have a keen understanding of farming systems and the agricultural environment. If you have been operating in this sector for at least two years and are a registered business, enter and you could win," said Cecil Ramonotsi, CEO of the Eskom Development Foundation.

Even though there has been a Covid-19 pandemic this past year that has damaged export sales and cash flow, Damons has managed to develop her property by sinking a borehole and conducting a soil analysis. It has been the highlight of her year in taking her one step further to growing her own grapes.

Her advice to other SMMEs who want a recipe for success is: "Save money, engage constantly with the markets and increase your export markets."

SMMEs can enter the competition by visiting [www.eskombic2020.co.za](http://www.eskombic2020.co.za). For support and assistance, small business owners should email Grounded Media on [bic@groundedmedia.co.za](mailto:bic@groundedmedia.co.za).

Entries close on 12 February at midnight.

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