

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Brand South Africa Partners with City of Johannesburg for the Global SME Forums - Africa Edition 2026

Johannesburg, 17 July 2026

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Johannesburg, South Africa - 17 July 2026: Brand South Africa has partnered with the City of Johannesburg as the host destination for the **Global SME Forums International** for its Africa Edition 2026.

Johannesburg has been confirmed as the host city for this prestigious event, reinforcing South Africa's position as a leading destination for investment, innovation, and business collaboration on the African continent.

The hosting rights were secured through a successful bid led by the Johannesburg Convention Bureau, with the announcement formalised on 7 June 2026. The Forum will take place on **23-24 November 2026** at the NH Hotel, Sandton, Johannesburg, under the theme:

**“Catalysing SME Growth Through Global Power Networks.”**

The inaugural Africa Edition will bring together global and African business leaders, policymakers, investors, development finance institutions, entrepreneurs, and industry experts to advance dialogue on SME growth, investment, innovation, and international market access. This strategic collaboration underscores a shared commitment to advancing entrepreneurship, promoting investment, and strengthening the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the African continent.

The two-day programme will feature keynote addresses by global thought leaders, strategic policy dialogues, sponsor-led executive roundtables, curated business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) engagements, an **Investment and Innovation Village**, and a continental SME exhibition showcasing export-ready enterprises and emerging solutions from across Africa.

#### **Leadership Reflections on Strengthening Africa's Investment and Competitiveness Agenda:**

- **Founder of Global SME Forums International, Theresa Al Wadi**, said the decision to host on the African continent reflects Africa's rising global influence: “Africa is not just participating in the future of global enterprise – it is shaping it. Johannesburg provides

the ideal launchpad for embedding the world's SME agenda into the fastest growing entrepreneurial ecosystem on earth."

- **Brand South Africa Chief Executive Officer, Neville Matjie**, noted the strategic significance: "Hosting the Global SME Forums reinforces South Africa's position as a catalyst for regional and continental trade and investment. It strengthens our investment narrative and showcases Johannesburg as a premier destination for global business, innovation, and partnership. As we continue building a globally competitive economy, platforms such as these create meaningful opportunities for collaboration, enterprise development, and inclusive growth."
- **Executive Head: Tourism Strategic Services at the Johannesburg Convention Bureau, Rendani Khorombi**, welcomed the announcement, saying: "We are honoured to bring this global platform to Johannesburg. The Forum aligns with our city's commitment to driving inclusive growth, attracting investment, and elevating African SMEs onto the world stage."
- **Chief Executive Officer of Millvest Advisory, Miller Matola**, noted that the collaboration demonstrated the value of strategic partnerships in advancing Africa's SME ecosystem. "This partnership unites global networks, national brand influence, and deep local insight. The Africa Edition is designed to deliver tangible investment opportunities, meaningful partnerships, and lasting impact for SMEs across the continent."

The Global SME Forums - Africa Edition 2026, hosted by the City of Johannesburg, in partnership with Global SME Forums International and Brand South Africa, with support from strategic public and private sector partners, will bring together government, business, investors, and ecosystem partners to advance SME growth through improved market access, investment opportunities, innovation and global competitiveness.

For programme updates, partnership opportunities, and registration information, visit [the Global SME Forums website](#).

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## About Brand South Africa:

**Brand South Africa** is the official marketing agency of South Africa, with a mandate to build the country's brand reputation and improve its global competitiveness. Brand South Africa's primary focus is to develop and implement proactive, coordinated marketing and communications reputation-management strategies for South Africa. Its main objective is to market South Africa to both domestic and international audiences, positioning the country as a competitive investment destination while inspiring and instilling active citizenship among South Africans.

### Brand South Africa

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