

# Safi furniture directory launched to stimulate local procurement

The South African Furniture Initiative's (Safi) furniture directory will be unveiled at the SARCEA Expo, which is being held at the Gallagher Estate in Gauteng from 22 August to 25 August 2019.



Bernadette Isaacs, CEO South African Furniture Initiative

The digital database will list South African furniture manufacturers and designers and the range of products that they design and manufacture. This will form the basis of Safi's future interaction with local and international furniture buyers.

## Hub for local manufacturers

"There is a new impetus from the South African government to support the furniture manufacturing sector, primarily through enforced local procurement and also through the development of the furniture industry master plan," says Bernadette Isaacs, chief operating officer of Safi.

"Our furniture directory is the next step in our efforts to ensure that all local manufacturers have access to the new opportunities that will flow from the increased local procurement and that they will have their say in the creation of the master plan."

Safi estimates that local and national government departments, state-owned entities and enterprises such as schools and public hospitals spend an estimated R2bn annually on furniture and décor.



## SA's furniture industry to unveil its master plan by 2020

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At the same time, efforts by Safi and organisations such as Proudly South African and the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) sector desk have seen large corporate buyers, large banks and government departments sign a buy-local pledge. This has the potential of doubling the potential local market for furniture and décor.

“The furniture directory will become a hub for local manufacturers to link with representatives from the entire procurement value chain. This includes developers, architects, buyers and financiers,” says Isaacs.

### Assisting small and medium-sized business

The furniture manufacturing sector represents approximately 1% of the national gross domestic product, but unlike other manufacturing sectors, it has a disproportionately large number of small and medium-sized enterprises. Safi estimates that there are 2,200 manufacturing plants in South Africa with an average employment per plant of 13 workers.

“Many of the small and medium-sized organisations in the furniture manufacturing sector cannot market their product range on a national or even international scale, nor are they able to access data on the latest market trends or manufacturing techniques. We hope that the new furniture directory will help us showcase these members and share trends and best practices with them,” adds Isaacs.

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