



# Emerging Partner Programme

Today's SMMEs can be tomorrow's big inspirations

March 2026



## Programme Description

The Emerging Partner Programme is an **Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) B-BBEE initiative** by Microsoft South Africa

The programme supports the development of **100% Black-Owned Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) in the ICT industry** that are aspiring *Microsoft Solutions Partners\** in their chosen Microsoft Solution Area.

*\*Microsoft Solutions Partners are Microsoft partners that have earned a Solutions Area Designation in their chosen Microsoft Solution Area.*

## Programme Objectives

**To support SMMEs in the attainment of a minimum of one and maximum of two Solutions Area Designations, over a maximum period of 24 months, by:**

- Identifying, recruiting and nurturing emerging partners.
- Supporting and accelerating the development of skills and commercial capabilities of 100% Black-Owned SMME's through:
  - Technical Skills Training
  - Business Development Training
  - Adoption and Change Management Training
  - Access to potential Funding for Microsoft Solution deployments
- Leverage different platforms to expose qualifying and capable partners: potentially featuring on the Microsoft stand at GovTech & showcasing at Microsoft Partner Events.

## Participation Criteria

### Ownership

- **100% Black-Owned** (domiciled in South Africa) **EME or QSE** (turnover below R50m) on entry
- Valid BBBEE affidavit (ICT Sector Template)

### Governance

- For-Profit Business **offering Microsoft Solutions**
- Not ECIF eligible
- CIPC registration certificate
- Valid SARS Tax Clearance Certificate
- Latest Annual Financial Statements showing turnover for two years

### Industry Experience

- Owner must have **5 years of IT experience**
- Company must be **operating in ICT industry for at least 2-3 years**
- At least **4 technical staff** for Instructor-led training
- Successful completion of pre-screening application
- Latest company profile

# Programme Mechanics

- Recruitment occurs once a Financial Year – between April and June
- Recruitment process:
  - The programme is advertised internally and externally
  - SMMEs fill the online form on the registration link to show interest and provide details for pre-screening (<https://www.microsoft.com/southafrica/blackemergingempowermentprogram/>)
  - Prospective SMMEs must attend an online briefing session
  - SMMEs that meet the minimum requirements receive an email from the team requesting supporting documents: BBBEE ICT Affidavit, SARS Tax Clearance Certificate, Annual Financial Statements, CIPC Registration, Company Profile and filled Emerging Partner Programme Application Office form. Successful SMMEs receive communication from the team regarding next steps and onboarding.
  - Unsuccessful SMMEs receive communication stating why they were unsuccessful.
  - An In-Person Onboarding Session is conducted with Successful SMMEs.
  - Successful SMMEs receive a Partner Agreement to sign.

## PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

1. Skilling Support
  2. Business Development Support
  3. Access to Market Support
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# 1. Skilling Support

- Microsoft-sponsored Instructor-led training and Certification Exams through Microsoft Training Services Providers (TSP): **Mecer Inter-Ed** and **Netcampus**.
- Free self-paced training via MS Learn, Exam Vouchers provided (subject to availability)\*\* through a TSP, **Foster-Melliar**.
- Microsoft-sponsored Adoption and Change management training (Prosci Certification)- delivered by **andChange**

*\*\* Proof of Exam Booking Confirmation AND Exam Results will be required for all exam vouchers issued*

## 2. Business Development Support

Supporting SMMEs to build sustainable and profitable businesses.

FY26 Programmes:

- Partner Success Advisory by **Slade Consulting**
- Level 100 Sales by **LGIT Smart Solutions**
- Business Growth & Strategy by **Aurik Enterprise Development**
- Cashflow Management by **Kolano Investment Solutions** (in partnership with **SMEgo**)



## 3. Access to Market Support (1)

### Funding and Market Exposure

- Funding of Microsoft Solution Deployments, subject to budget availability and Statement of Work (SOW) approval.\*

*\*Emerging Partners are required to engage customers for business opportunities. It is the Partner's responsibility to generate leads and close deals with customers. The program does not match Partners with Customers.*

- Creating Market Exposure by showcasing SMMEs on different Microsoft platforms.



## 3. Access to Market Support (2)

### Funding Eligibility Criteria

1. Under the respective Solution Area/s that the SOW covers, partner must have:
  - a) Full SKILLING Partner Capability Score Points (PCS) under **Intermediate Certifications** for Deployments covering **11-300** users/licenses/subscriptions.
  - b) Full SKILLING PCS Points for **Intermediate AND Advanced Certifications** for Deployments covering **more than 300** users/licenses/subscriptions.
2. The customer has the **required & valid licenses/subscriptions** for the deployment
3. SMMEs have engaged the Microsoft Account Executive (AE) for the customer.
4. A **Letter of Intent** (Previously the Award Letter) and **Conflict of Interest Agreement** signed by the customer accompanies the **SOW**.



## 3. Access to Market Support (3)

### Funding Eligibility Criteria

1. SMME has **not previously claimed ECIF**/business is **not ECIF Enabled**.
2. At least **two employees** in the business have completed **Adoption and Change Management Certification**.
3. SMME has been onboarded as a Microsoft Supplier/Vendor. (the team will assist with this)

# Customer Engagement Model

## Identify Customer Need



### Sales Team

- Customers typically engage EPP through their Microsoft Account Executive
- Outline high-level scope of work and measurable success criteria
- Outline Skills/Expertise required for deployment

## Identify Qualifying Partners



### EPP Team

- Identify a list of at least 3 Emerging Partners that meet the CSU requirements and are eligible for EPP funding ([EPP Funding Eligibility](#))
- Liase with partners and get consent to share their information and credentials with customer/s
- Collect supporting documents or information from partners, such as customer references.

## Provide Partner List to Customer



- The list of at least 3 qualifying SMMEs is provided to the customer by AE and customer picks a suitable partner.
- The chosen partner will undergo the EPP Funding Review Process
- Upon approval of funding, EPP team will raise and issue PO to partner

# Programme Journey

## YEAR 1

- Instructor-led training in chosen track to attain full Skilling Partner Capability Score Points for chosen Solution Area:
  - **Modern Work** (4 delegates)
  - **Azure Data & AI** (10 delegates)
  - **Azure Digital & App Innovation** (5 delegates)
  - **Azure Infrastructure** (5 delegates)
  - **Security** (6 delegates)
  - **Business Applications** (5 delegates)
- Adoption and Change Management Training (2 delegates).
- Potential funding of Microsoft Solution Deployments.
- Optional Business Development Training.
- Optional attainment of Solutions Area Designation in chosen Solutions Area.

## YEAR 2

- Instructor-led training in a second Solution Area Track to attain full skilling Partner Capability Score Points:
  - **Modern Work** (4 delegates)
  - **Azure Data & AI** (10 delegates)
  - **Azure Digital & App Innovation** (5 delegates)
  - **Azure Infrastructure** (5 delegates)
  - **Security** (6 delegates)
  - **Business Applications** (5 delegates)
- Potential funding of Microsoft Solution Deployments.
- Attainment of at least ONE Solutions Area Designation.
- Graduation from program.



# Get in touch

## **Emerging Partner Programme Email**

email: [EmergingPartnerSA@microsoft.com](mailto:EmergingPartnerSA@microsoft.com)

## **Thato Moremi**

Acting Programme Manager

email: [v-tmoremi@microsoft.com](mailto:v-tmoremi@microsoft.com)