

Food Lover's searches for social enterprise to join supplier network

Fresh produce retailer Food Lover's Market has resumed its search for promising social entrepreneurs to join the company as a supplier. This follows the success of the 2021 Seeds of Change Supplier Development Partnership launched last year, which attracted close to 900 applications.



Seeds of Change finalists 2021. Source: Supplied

After a rigorous selection process that included a two-day webinar, assignments, a week-long boot camp for the top 10 social enterprises and a final pitching event to senior buyers and executives, it was Village Market Africa, a social enterprise established to address the decreasing bee populations, that claimed the coveted top spot.

Says Travis Coppin, CEO of Food Lover's Market's retail division: "We are thrilled to be launching Seeds of Change for the second year running as we are very proud of the tremendous success of last year's programme. It is a pleasure to see The Village Market Africa's Noju Honey on our shelves, along with Chuck Chilli and Loxtonia Cider - suppliers who were all in the top ten and impressed us with their pitch, their product and their social impact."

"We are honoured to have been able to partner with these remarkable businesses and see the social impact they make in the communities they serve. It speaks directly to the core values of Food Lover's Market, and their dedication to social impact, quality and innovation are critical to achieving a more sustainable economy. I am so proud to be part of their world and being able to support these enterprises through the Seeds of Change Supplier Development Partnership."



The Village Market Africa triumphs in Food Lover's Seeds of Change initiative

28 Apr 2021



How to enter

Interested businesses with a social impact can [apply online](#) for this year's iteration of the Seeds of Change search. Applications close on 14 March 2022. Once applications close, the top 20 will be selected and will attend a two-day workshop on 8 and 9 April 2022, which will give them a taste of the retail experience and what will be required to become

part of the supplier network.

The top 10 will be announced on 19 April 2022 and will attend a four-day bootcamp between 9 and 12 May 2022, during which they will receive the guidance, mentorship and necessary skills to market their business. They will also be exposed to a macro view of the global and South African retail landscape – including trends, challenges and opportunities within the sector. The top 10 businesses will then do a final 'Fertile Ground' pitch to the Food Lover's Market board on 13 May 2022, and the successful applicant will be announced on the same day.

Seeds of Change will be facilitated by the Social Enterprise Academy (SEA), a specialist learning and development organisation supporting social change organisations in South Africa. With a proven track record globally, SEA has extensive experience of social enterprise models from South Africa and around the world.

Qualifying criteria

Food Lover's Market is interested in social enterprises that fit into the fresh produce and food retail environments. The retailer intends to prioritise applications from businesses that will add value to the Food Lover's Market shopping experience. These include smallholder farmers, freight businesses, commercial services, and produce and products that sit within in-store departments such as bakery, confectionery, groceries and liquor.

Some of the requirements to apply include:

- The business should be operational for 12 months.
- The business should show financial stability.
- The business should have a business plan showcasing successful implementation.

"We are excited to see what the 2022 call for applications will bring. Last year we uncovered a few social enterprise gems, and we believe this year will be no different. Anyone who owns a business with social impact in the communities they serve, and a retail product suitable to be sold at a Food Lover's Market, should consider entering," says Andrew Millson, head of HR and sustainability at Food Lover's Market.



#BehindtheBrandManager: Travis Coppin of Food Lover's Market

Lauren Hartzenberg 30 Apr 2021



As an emerging sector, social enterprises provide an opportunity to solve many of the prevalent social and environmental problems in South Africa while contributing to economic growth and job creation. Unfortunately, this sector is still not prioritised as a key driver in the South African economy. Food Lover's Market aims to challenge this mindset by presenting a unique opportunity for social enterprises to become part of the corporate supply chain.

Millson adds "Often, small businesses do not have access to the supplier networks and marketing tools to grow their business. We aim to provide the opportunity and the means for small suppliers to get the tools and training they need to be successful and operate their business as a sustainable supplier to the retail market - while making meaningful, sustainable and long lasting social and environmental impact in our country."

More information on the application criteria, as well as the application form to enter, can be [found here](#). Applications close on 14 March 2022.

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