

# FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION

## CALL FOR ENTRIES 2025



**the dtic**

Department:  
Trade, Industry and Competition  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**the dtic - together, growing the economy**

the dtic Customer Contact Centre: 0861 843 384

the dtic Website: [www.thedtic.gov.za](http://www.thedtic.gov.za)



Are you a South African professional designer or design student?

Do you believe furniture should improve our quality of life, be functional, and complement the space in which it is located?

...then enter the Furniture Design Competition now!

**ENTRIES CLOSE**

**30th September 2025**

the Department of Trade and Industry (the dtic), the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), Industrial Development corporation (IDC), Proudly South African and their industry partners.

Join them on this journey.

## ***Theme - "ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES OF WOOD"***

### **OUR AIM**

- To raise and nurture the design capabilities within this country.
- To raise the image of the South African Furniture Design and Manufacturing Industry, locally and internationally.
- To advance local industry through the introduction of new products.

### **The Context**

York Timbers, the dtic and the University of Pretoria hosted the second annual Timber Design Competition. The focus of the 2024 competition shifted from the rural to the urban, investigating the possibilities and potentials of timber construction in cities.

The brief challenged participants to 'graft' a new home for the **Forestry and Agriculture Biotechnology Institute (FABI)**, embracing the dual meaning of the word - to both extend and to integrate. This challenge extended beyond a superficial architectural endeavour to explore timber as a material that is not only deeply rooted in our past but also a sustainable resource that can play a central role in our future cities.

Competitors were invited to reimagine the existing FABI II building on the University of Pretoria's Hatfield Campus, utilising engineered timber construction techniques to merge new with old, fostering an environment that balances innovation with nature. The competition served as a platform to showcase the role of timber in creating striking architecture, enhancing an urban environment, and illustrating the ecological benefits of a carbon-negative material such as wood.

### **The Brief**

#### **THE THEME**

'Design an item of wooden furniture for the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) on the Pretoria University Hatfield Campus that can be used either indoors or outdoors. **You must look at the abridged brief for the Timber Design Competition and the winning student design above, as the item you are designing will theoretically be used in this space.** The piece **MUST have a South African theme** and must be manufactured from **any alien invasive species of wood** currently found in South Africa such as pine; gum; wattle (blackwood) and poplar. Furntech will supply a list of invasive species and will assist the finalists to source the timber)

#### **Further to the brief please note the following;**

- A South African theme can include the use of colour and pattern but could be more inclusive of aspects of the whole environment i.e. our rich tapestry of culture, symbols, artefacts, language, fauna and flora, landscape and geography, minerals, oceans and many more. A word of advice though, be selective rather than indulging in too many aspects of our heritage.
- Use your research gleaned from bullet point one above to develop a concept. We are not living in the past, but in the present to produce ground breaking furniture designs for the future with a special South African identity.
- Be true to the qualities of the wood you choose when making your prototypes. Analyse the texture, colour, grain and any other features it might have. Also analyse the cut through end pieces to see if they could be used as a feature within the design.
- When designing a piece of furniture for this competition try to use unique ways to conceptualise your ideas. As examples, do not design a chair but rather something to sit on, do not design a table but rather a surface to perform various functions, do not design a book shelf but rather an open storage unit, do not design a screen but rather a divider that brakes continuous viewing space within a volume, the list is endless.
- Design for specialist laboratories to freely accessible public spaces.

## CATEGORIES FOR ENTRY

- **Student category**  
Design students must be registered at a South African educational institution at the time of submitting their entry
- **Professional category**  
Professional designers and or manufacturing businesses with design capability, registered and operating within South Africa

## PRIZES

### Prizes include:

#### Student

- One-year internship for the winning student in the furniture industry.
- Profiling of the winner and the winning academic department in relevant publications & related media exposure
- Graphic Tablets/Laptop
- 6 month Furniture Design Incubation Programme by Furntech

#### Professional

- One-year Proudly SA membership
- One-year Institute of the Interior Design Professions (IID) Membership
- An opportunity to participate and exhibit at selected platforms
- Profiling of winners in relevant publications & related media exposure
- Graphic Tablets/Laptop

## ENTRY FORM

- Entry Forms can be downloaded at [www.thedtic.gov.za](http://www.thedtic.gov.za) or by contacting us on [FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za](mailto:FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za)
- No registration fees are required
- It is possible to enter multiple times provided each entry has a separate entry form
- Completed entry forms must be signed and submitted together with the compulsory submission requirements

## COMPULSORY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A digital (pdf) Technical drawing of the product with renderings
  - Technical drawings must include final product dimensions and 3D drawings
- Description of materials and inputs to be used in production
  - The use of locally manufactured materials and inputs wherever possible is mandatory
- A description and presentation of the design, explaining the concept and motivation not exceeding 300 words
- A brief CV if a student; or
- A company profile if a professional.

## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions can be delivered by hand or posted or emailed to [FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za](mailto:FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za)

### By hand

Department of Trade and Industry  
Sectors Branch  
Furniture Sector Desk  
1st Floor, Building A  
77 Meintjies Street  
Pretoria

### Hand delivery:

Industrial Competitiveness and Growth  
Branch  
Furniture Sector Desk  
Department of Trade, Industry and  
Competition  
77 Meintjies Street  
Block A  
Sunnyside, Pretoria

### Courier:

Department of Trade, Industry and  
Competition  
Sectors Branch  
1st Floor, Building A  
Private Bag x84  
Pretoria  
0001



## Adjudication Criteria and Process

The adjudication criteria and weighting thereof is decided by the judges in line with the annual theme and a scorecard will be used.

- The criteria focus on the following areas:
  - Concept behind the product – responding to the theme
  - Functionality / usability of the product
  - Degree of innovation
  - Ease of manufacturing
  - Local materials and inputs used
  - Commercial viability
  - Local & export market appeal

The judging panel comprises industry experts and designers from related fields. Judging is a two-stage process.

- The finalists will be announced on/or before 30th November 2025.
- Finalists will be contacted telephonically and electronically.
- Finalists will be invited to exhibit their pieces at a chosen exhibition.
- Final judging will take place at the exhibition in February/March 2025.
- Winners will be announced at the exhibition.

## Important Dates

Entries open	March 2025
Entries close	30 September 2025
Final judging	February/ March 2026
Winners announced	February / March 2026

## Terms and Conditions

- **the dtic**, and its partners, reserves the right to refuse entry of products that are not eligible or do not comply with applicable entry criteria, or that might put in question the reputation of the competition.
- Only new concepts (designs) are eligible to enter the competition.
- The competition is ONLY open to students registered with South African educational institutions and locally based, registered designers and or manufacturers.
- Established manufacturers includes professional designers and or manufacturing businesses with design capability, registered and operating within South Africa.
- **Only individuals entries will be allowed (no student group entries).**
- If the design has been patented or registered as a design, a copy of the first page of all registration certificates must be submitted with the entry.
- The entry form must be completed in full and all compulsory documents submitted before the closing date to be eligible.
- Entries that do not comply with the competition requirements will be disqualified.
- **the dtic** and its partners will not be held accountable for product performance or design originality.
- The panel of adjudicators and the administrators of the competition undertake to handle all entries in the strictest confidence and not to disclose any information on entries to any other party. However, in the event of a product winning the design may be made public to the media.
- Although every reasonable precaution will be taken to ensure the safekeeping of products submitted, **the dtic** and its partners cannot be held liable for loss or damage to any entry material.
- The decision of the adjudicators is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- By entering this competition and signing the disclaimer the entrant is agreeing to all above-mentioned conditions of entry.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Website: [www.thedtic.gov.za/furnituredesigncompetition](http://www.thedtic.gov.za/furnituredesigncompetition) • Tel: 012 394 1260 / 066 290 6957

Email: [FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za](mailto:FurnitureDesign@thedtic.gov.za)

