**Introduction**

The incubation programmes operated by Great North Business Incubator provide incubation services to assist technology start-ups in their vulnerable inception stages, enabling them to grow and flourish as medium to large enterprises.

Multi-sector or multi-purpose incubation programmes – waste management, leather and clothing technology, recycling of plastic, card boxes, bottles and tyres, agro-processing i.e. fruit juice making, water purification, manufacturing of sanitary ware, manufacturing of construction materials, plastic bottle and other products manufacturing of jewellery and design, and many other light manufacturing sectors. The main objective is to create sustainable jobs and empower the historically marginalised youth in Limpopo province. This is achievable through encouragement and promotion of innovative –based entrepreneurship by providing relevant assistance and support.

**Program focus area**

SMME companies in the different sectors benefit when they are able to work with related businesses in the same environment. Such technology clustering allows for the cross- fertilisation of ideas and helps companies to share expertise, identify market opportunities and in the longer term, attract potential buyers or investors.

GNBI has adopted a strategy of clustering related technologies together at the incubator. By doing so, we can offer something greater than the sum of its parts to our business partners, and provide a stimulating environment in which companies are most likely to be commercialise their products.

Great North Business Incubator focuses on nine clusters of technologies

* Agro-processing and food technology
* Plastic industry technology- bottles, bins, chairs, plastic bags, plates etc.
* Waste management and recycling- glass bottles, card boxes, plastic, tyres
* Manufacturing of Sanitary products i.e. tissues, panty liners, pads, napkins etc.
* Manufacturing of construction material such as tiles, door frames, etc.
* Foot wear , Leather and clothing technology
* Wood technology
* Jewellery design and manufacturing Technology
* ICT

These clusters not only provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and expertise, but are also those in which GNBI believes have the potential to become world class companies.

To assist the development of these focused clusters , in addition to world class research and development, infrastructure and facilities, we also provide a wide range of support services, including a series of full service incubation programmes to nurture technology start-up companies in different sectors at various stages of development.

**Our Support**

GNBI will provide unique and in depth services focused on business and corporate development including

* Office space and facilities
* Equipment usage
* Technical and Management Assistance
* Learnership programmes in all identified sectors
* Promotion and Development Assistance
* Business Support
* Financial Aid Package
* Access to market

**Office space and Facilities**

During the incubation period, Incubatees will be able to enjoy subsidised ready-to-use workshop space and shared facilities to reduce their cost of business so that they may direct their resources towards the growth of their businesses.

**Equipment usage**

Incubates will use the incubator equipment for production of their unique products at a nominal fee. Equipment purchase by start-up a incubate is has proved very expensive. The use of the incubator equipment will help new SMMEs.

**Technical and Management Assistance**

GNBI explores and bridges Incubatees to technical colleges, Further Education Training colleges and universities expertise and collaboration opportunities through consultancy, project placements, as well as joint research and development projects.

* Business Plan Consultancy Services
* University , colleges collaboration
* Professional qualifications
* Industry collaboration
* Technical and management training
* Technical support services- production planning and management
* Product design, branding and marketing

**Promotion and Development Assistance**

To assist business development of partner companies and Incubatees. GNBI provides different kinds of publicity support services; covering arrangement of pavilions and showcases at major trade fairs and exhibitions, as well as product launch and media liaison for incubates.

* Exhibition services
* Product launch services
* Press release services
* Media interview services
* Legal consultation

**Business Support**

GNBI assists incubates to source funding and build-up strategic partnerships by organising matching events and other support. As part of fostering sustainable development, GNBI is keen to promote talent development as people are the most valuable assets. GNBI provides technology and management training as well as seminars, and training workshops in different technology clusters. GNBI supports partner companies’ talent development with our strong network of local universities and colleges.

* Business plan consultation
* Matching events for Incubatees and potential investors
* Advice in the application of Small Entrepreneur export assistance programme and other related programmes
* Advice in the preparation of business plan for potential investors
* Advice of funding strategy
* Business management training , mentoring and coaching
* Advice matching events for Incubatees, technology partners and product distributors
* Assist in company registrations, tax returns and financial statements
* Sales techniques and access to market training
* Local and International publicity planning and support
* Access to a dedicated professional panel with consultant to advice on business development matters.
* Access to well-connected industry leaders to assist in local and global business development.
* Access to dedicated professional panel with consultation on financial, tax, legal and capital raising matters.

Since its establishment, GNBI has been committed to fostering the innovation and technological growth of the historically marginalised youth of Limpopo province, comprehensive Incubation programmes and supporting services backed by a team of fully-fledged professionals.

**Training and Seminar**

As part of our commitment to fostering sustainable development, GNBI is keen to promote talent development as people are the most valuable asset in SMME development. While reaching out to more technology professionals to expand our talent pool.GNBI provides technology and management training as well as seminars on regular basis to keep engineering professionals in all the identified sectors.

* Programmes related to GNBI’s are available throughout the year in various formats, such as conferences, seminars and training workshops, demonstrating GNBI’s role as a major platform in the province to nurture SMMEs into sustainable entities and engineering talent.
* Partnerships with veteran industry experts, renowned professors and SETAs, executives of mullti –national companies to enhance the quality of these programmes. Strategic partners include, Universities, SEFA, IDC, FETS, Local Economic Development Agencies, Mining captains, PPC, Anglo American, Seda , DTI and many others.

**Talent Pool**

GNBI supports partner companies with strong network of local and global universities as well as professional associations. Our talent include the following:

* Collaboration with local and overseas universities as well as professional associations, bringing career and placement opportunities to industry practitioners and university graduates
* Organisation of career fairs/ talks, exhibitions and exchange programmes to promote career interest and increase entrepreneurship opportunities in the technology field.

**Collaboration**

Collaborations offer best opportunities to accelerate the development of innovation ideas, products and commercialisation, as well as extended outreach to the business network and affiliates.

The business collaboration platform supports below services

* Search of business opportunities
* Offer of business opportunities, technology transfer etc
* Search for the GNBI partner company and expertise

**Legal and Accounting Panels**

GNBI has set up panels of Legal and Accounting firms to facilitate partner companies and incubates to gain access to these professional services. Our panel members, including local and international firms, offer competitive rates to the Incubator community.

GNBI will arrange free chats with Legal Experts and Free Chats with Accounting companies, which allow our partner companies and Incubatees to consult panel professionals, thus gaining knowledge in various legal and accounting areas.

**Angel /VC Financing**

GNBI understands that capital raising may be difficult for start-ups their during their vulnerable inception and early growth stages. Consequently, to help the entrepreneurs secure funding from the angel investors or venture capitalists, GNBI offers free investment support service to the over 500 companies stationed at our facilities, connecting them to angel investors, venture capitalists and corporate ventures.

These free investment support services include access to GNBI Angel Network. In addition, from time to time, angel investors and venture capitalists will be invited to join investment plans to potential investors.

GNBI organises investment Matching Gatherings where entrepreneurs from the GNBI and other partner organisations present their business plans to invited angel investors.