



From Consumption Hub to Production Powerhouse: Why Gauteng Must Re-industrialise

Gauteng has been the country commercial centre for decades; however, its economic posture has been leaning toward consumption rather than sustainable production.

To secure long-term economic development, the province is making a U-Turn. The province is rebuilding local manufacturing to anchor the 40% of South Africa's industrial output that Gauteng represents.

Gauteng is set to manufacture high-value products capable of penetrating global markets by implementing a sophisticated, multi-tier Special Economic Zone (SEZ) strategy.

By leveraging the specific regional strengths of the five development corridors, the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency (GGDA) is transforming the Gauteng City Region (GCR) into a production engine.

The OR Tambo SEZ serves as the forerunner for this export-oriented vision. Stationed around Africa's largest air cargo hub, it provides the infrastructure for advanced manufacturing and beneficiation. With a world-class Jewellery Manufacturing Precinct already operational and one of the world's largest food factories driving fresh-product exports since 2019, it proves that Gauteng can dominate high-growth niches.

Further south, the Vaal SEZ is steering industrial regeneration. By attracting R2-billion in investment toward the hydrogen value chain and renewable energy components, it is building on the region's historic steel and engineering skills base to meet the "Green Economy" demand.

The Automotive Supplier Park in Rosslyn remains the standard for OEM support, ensuring that the automotive sector retains its continental lead. In the West Rand, where mining output has slowed, new SEZ planning is diversifying the economy into bus manufacturing, agrivoltaics, and pharmaceutical hemp.

These Special Economic Zones create an ecosystem where previously excluded citizens gain access to global value chains. By focusing on areas like avionics, battery energy storage, and New Energy Vehicles (NEVs), Gauteng is ensuring its re-industrialisation is tech-savvy and socially inclusive.

In addition, The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) has launched the Manufacturing Support product, a term loan facility providing up to R5 million to help black-owned SMMEs scale their production capacity. This initiative directly supports the province's re-industrialization strategy by transforming high-growth manufacturing businesses into competitive industrial players. As a strategic precursor to the Gauteng Investment Conference (2026), the fund acts as a pipeline to prepare local enterprises for large-scale private and multinational investment. By focusing on this high-value sector, the GEP aims to stimulate sustainable economic growth and significant job creation across the city region. Ultimately, the program reinforces Gauteng's position as a critical manufacturing hub for both South Africa and the broader African continent.

The transition from a passive consumption hub to an agile production powerhouse is Gauteng's current reality.

