**CALL FOR STUDENT SHORT FILM CHALLENGE**

The eThekwini Municipality, through the Durban Film Office, invites **film and television students** to participate in the **Blue Economy Student Short Film Challenge** under the theme:

**“Beneath the Surface – telling untold stories of the ocean, marine life, coastal activities and communities, and/or ocean-based careers.”**

EThekwini Municipality, as a leading coastal and port city in South Africa, is strategically positioned to leverage the Blue Economy for inclusive economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development. The Indian Ocean presents immense economic opportunities across sectors such as maritime transport, ocean-based tourism, fisheries, coastal agriculture, marine biotechnology, and offshore renewable energy.

However, the city is facing mounting challenges relating to Coastal and Marine pollution, coastal erosion, and habitat degradation are intensifying due to climate change and unregulated urban development; Youth unemployment in the region remains high, especially among graduates with digital and technical skills who lack access to innovation platforms and entrepreneurship support; Fragmented sectoral innovation, weak industry-academia collaboration, and limited adoption of emerging technologies (AI, IoT, GIS, etc.) in the maritime sector slow down the pace of digital transformation and sustainability efforts; Local innovation ecosystems in eThekwini remain underdeveloped to fully capture the opportunities provided by blue Economy.

The Blue Economy represents a critical frontier for sustainable development, particularly in coastal cities like Durban. With its thriving port, marine biodiversity, and growing creative industries, Durban is ideally positioned to champion awareness, innovation, and career pathways through ocean-based initiatives.

The Durban Blue Economy Week aims to raise awareness, inspire innovation, and empower youth through a dynamic fusion of marine science, storytelling, and technology. Hosted at the iconic Durban Harbour, this initiative brings together students, creatives, technologists, and conservationists to explore the ocean's economic and ecological potential.

This challenge aims to:

* Encourage creative storytelling around ocean and coastal resources.
* Raise awareness on sustainable practices that support economic development, environmental sustainability, and improved quality of life for the people of eThekwini.
* Contribute to inner-city regeneration through film and storytelling.

**Competition Details**

* **Format**: Short films (5–10 minutes) created by teams of **no more than 8 students**.
* **Genres**: Open to all genres, but films must **include the ocean, coastal activities, and economic development** as mandatory elements.
* **Support**: Mentorship sessions with filmmakers and marine scientists will be provided during the challenge period.
* **Finale**: Top 3 films will be screened at the **Bat Centre, Durban Harbour** on **25 September 2025**.
* **Prize**: The winning team will receive **training and an opportunity to participate in the NEWF Story Lab at Sodwana Bay**.

Click here to read more and download entry form.