

NEF: 20 Years of Empowering Economic Transformation and Job Creation

The National Empowerment Fund, a leading financial institution dedicated to fostering black economic development and empowerment, is proud to announce significant accomplishments in advancing entrepreneurship, job creation, and community development across South Africa, including in the Eastern Cape Province.



Mr Mziwabantu Dayimani
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Since inception, the NEF has approved over 1,631 transactions totaling more than R14.3 billion, with over R9.83 billion disbursed to beneficiary companies. Notably, over R5.43 billion has been repaid by investees, demonstrating the program's sustainable impact.

Clean audit

Continuing its commitment to excellence, the NEF has secured clean external audit opinions for 20 consecutive years, affirming its sound financial management practices and transparency.

Jobs created

Through strategic investments and partnerships, the organisation has facilitated the creation of 123 863 job opportunities, with 76 368 new positions. Additionally, 24 strategic and industrial projects, valued at R12.6 billion, have been initiated, with the potential to support over 52 000 jobs.

Community engagement

Community engagement remains a cornerstone of the NEF's mission, with approximately 9,671,825 people reached in villages and townships through 778 community seminars. These seminars focus on topics such as savings, investment, financial discipline, and market literacy, empowering communities to make informed financial decisions.

Non-financial

Furthermore, the NEF has provided business skills training to over 7,686 potential entrepreneurs through 1,109 seminars, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation nationwide.

Women Empowerment Fund (WEF)

Over the years, more than 30% of the Funds' cumulative annual disbursements have been to women-empowered business. In FY 2023, 32% of funds disbursed were to investees with meaningful women equity, and in 2024 WEF disbursements accounted for 37% of total NEF disbursements, showing an improvement over time.

NEF investment stats and facts in the Eastern Cape



Total approved
countrywide
**R14.3
billion**

Total approved in the
Eastern Cape
R2 billion



Total jobs
supported
countrywide
123 863

Jobs supported
in the Eastern
Cape
12 000



New jobs
6 563



Black Women
shareholding
40%



Local businesses
funded
154

One of the biggest challenges for women entrepreneurs has been market access, which makes access to finance a challenge. It is often black women who find it hardest to access business capital and so they cannot pursue growth opportunities or bid for preferential contracts to develop their enterprises into competitive and sustainable businesses, and the NEF's concessionary funding approach aims to mitigate these challenges. The majority of the NEF's investor education and entrepreneurial training beneficiaries, are black women.

Investing in the Eastern Cape

In the picturesque landscapes of the Eastern Cape, the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) has sown the seeds of economic transformation, fostering growth, and opportunity in communities far and wide. With a steadfast commitment to empowerment, the NEF has invested nearly R2 billion in 154 businesses across the region, of which a significant 40% went to women-owned enterprises, amplifying the voices of female entrepreneurs and driving gender equality in the business landscape. These investments serve as a catalyst for job creation and sustainable development, supporting over 12,000 jobs in total, with an impressive 6,563 new positions created. Together, these initiatives illuminate the path towards a brighter, more prosperous future for all who call the Eastern Cape home.

"We are immensely proud of the positive impact the NEF has had on communities and businesses across South Africa. These achievements underscore our dedication to driving sustainable economic growth, fostering entrepreneurship, and creating opportunities for all. Join us as we write the next chapter in South Africa's story of empowerment, transformation, and progress. The NEF: 20 years strong, and just getting started," Acting Chief Executive Mziwabantu Dayimani said.

National Empowerment Fund, Department of Transport, and Provincial Government join Premier and Community Leaders to celebrate AB 350's Transformative Journey



AB 350's Executive Chairperson, Mr Simlindile Hints, delivering his speech at Mthatha Stadium

On Sunday, May 5, 2024, a jubilant atmosphere filled the Mthatha stadium as over 1500 community members, traditional leaders, stakeholders from the transportation fraternity, and esteemed guests gathered to celebrate the 16th anniversary of Africa's Best 350 (AB 350). Among the dignitaries present were representatives from the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the Department of Transport, the Eastern Cape Premier, and Provincial Government officials.

AB 350 Executive Chairman, Simlindile Hints, expressed the significance of the anniversary, acknowledging the company's vital role in providing bus transport services to rural communities in the Eastern Cape. He reflected on the challenges overcome and the invaluable support received from partners.

"Today, we celebrate not just 16 years of AB 350's existence, but 16 years of dedication to serving our communities," Hints remarked. "Our journey, which began in the heart of the Eastern Cape, is a testament to the resilience and determination of our people. Despite the obstacles we faced, we remained committed to

our vision of providing reliable and affordable transportation to those who need it most."

Transport MEC, Xolile Nqatha, hailed AB 350's 16 years of unparalleled service and the Department's commitment to improving transportation access. "AB 350's journey is nothing short of remarkable," Nqatha remarked. "Their steadfast dedication to serving rural communities has had a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals."

Transport Minister, Sindisiwe Chikunga, highlighted the government's successes in delivering reliable transport services and outlined plans for the sector's future. She emphasized the critical role played by the Eastern Cape provincial government in establishing AB 350, affirming the government's commitment to supporting the bus industry's growth.

"Our government recognizes the importance of a robust and efficient transport sector in driving economic growth and improving the lives of our people," Minister Chikunga stated. "AB 350's success is a testament to the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors. We are proud to support initiatives that empower black entrepreneurs and create opportunities for economic advancement."

The Eastern Cape Premier, Oscar Mabuyane, highlighted AB 350's role in economic development, urging collaborative efforts to unlock the province's potential. He commended AB 350's achievements, reaffirming support for transformative endeavors.

"In celebrating AB 350's 16th anniversary, we celebrate not just a company, but a symbol of resilience, innovation, and progress," Premier Mabuyane remarked. "Their success is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our people, and it serves as inspiration for future generations."

Speaking at an evening gala dinner event, the NEF's Post Investment Manager, Morokolo Ramakgapola praised AB 350's entrepreneurship and innovation, expressing anticipation for their continued success. "But behind every innovative idea and entrepreneurial endeavour lies a crucial element: access to finance. Access to finance is not merely about securing capital; it is about unlocking opportunities, fostering growth, and realising dreams. For businesses like AB 350, access to finance has been the lifeline that has fueled their journey from inception to sweet sixteen years of skin in the game. It has empowered them to invest

in technology, expand their fleet, and provide top-notch services to their customers. But more than that, access to finance has enabled AB 350 to weather storms, overcome challenges, and emerge stronger and more resilient than ever before."

Ramakgapola said in looking ahead, we must continue to advocate for more funding, policies that promote financial inclusion, invest in underserved communities, and nurture a culture of entrepreneurship that celebrates diversity and innovation.

In closing, AB 350 Executive Chairman, Simlindile Hintsu, extended gratitude to stakeholders, affirming a commitment to growth and collaboration. The event celebrated AB 350's journey and its impact on communities, marking a milestone in South Africa's economic transformation.

"As we look to the future, AB 350 remains committed to growth and expansion," Hintsu concluded. "With the continued support of our partners and the unwavering dedication of our team, we are poised to shape the future of transportation in the Eastern Cape and beyond."



The community came in numbers to celebrate AB 350's 16th Anniversary, a bus company that has been transporting over 3.6 million people annually across thirteen routes in the Eastern Cape.



NEF-backed Willowvale Shopping Centre Stimulates Growth and Employment in Eastern Cape



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In a significant boost to economic development in the Eastern Cape, the National Empowerment

Fund (NEF) has invested in Willowvale Shopping Centre, located in the heart of the Amathole District Municipality.

The investment, totaling R23 million, was directed towards the establishment of a

modern shopping centre that serves as a hub for local community engagement. Situated just 30 kilometers from Idutywa and 80 kilometers from Butterworth, the Willowvale Shopping Centre plays a pivotal role in providing access to essential goods and services for residents in the surrounding areas.

With Boxer Superstores serving as the anchor tenant, along with Boxer Super Liquors, First National Bank, Old Fashioned Fish and Chips, and a clothing store, the shopping centre offers a diverse range of products and services tailored to meet the needs of the local community.

The investment has not only contributed to the enhancement of retail infrastructure but has also had a tangible impact on job creation in the region. Approximately 110 employment opportunities have been generated through the establishment and operation of the Willowvale Shopping Centre, providing residents with access to sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment.

Qumbu Shopping Centre: A Hub of Economic Growth in Rural South Africa

Qumbu Shopping Centre strategically located in Qumbu within the OR Tambo District Municipality, received funding of approximately R34.5 million for the construction of its initial phase. This investment has been instrumental in providing essential infrastructure and amenities to residents of this rural town, located just 30 kilometers north of Mthatha.

In recent years, the Qumbu Shopping Centre has undergone further expansion with the assistance of an additional R14.5 million in funding from the NEF. This support has facilitated the realisation of phase two, enabling the shopping center to grow and flourish, catering to the evolving needs of the community.

The shopping center boasts a diverse array of tenants, including Rhino Supermarket as the anchor store, alongside Pep Stores,



Rage, Capitec, KFC, and several local shops. By attracting both national retailers and local businesses, it stimulates investment, fosters

entrepreneurship, and contributes to the overall prosperity of the community.

Empowering Communities through Agro-processing: The Success Story of Middledrift Dairy



This agro-processing venture, funded by the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), stands as a testament to the transformative power of agriculture and community involvement.

Established in 2008 with funding of R9.9 million from the NEF, Middledrift Dairy represents a unique partnership between the community, Amadlelo Agri, and the NEF. The dairy farm was built on latent community land belonging to 65

beneficiaries of the Gwebindlala Trust, showcasing a collaborative effort to utilise local resources for economic development.

Agro-processing, a critical component of the agriculture sector, involves transforming raw agricultural products into value-added goods. In the case of Middledrift Dairy, this includes the processing of milk into various dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, and milk powder. By adding value to agricultural produce, agro-processing not

only increases profitability but also creates employment opportunities and stimulates local economic growth.

The establishment of Middledrift Dairy has not only provided a sustainable source of income for the community and ensures that the benefits of economic development are shared equitably among stakeholders, fostering inclusivity and social cohesion.

The NEF and local business set to create 33 new jobs in East London village



Artist's impression

The National Empowerment Fund and a local East London business are set to create 33 new jobs in the tourism sector, targeting unemployed people from the local village.

The NEF has invested R11-million in ZAD Hiring, a 100% black woman owned player in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) subsector of tourism. The funds will go towards the expansion of the business with the construction of a state-of-the-art function venue and a chapel in Kidds Beach Village, East London.

The project aspires not only to elevate tourism in the region, but also to create a cascading effect, benefiting various businesses interconnected within the province's tourism value chain.

ZAD Hiring was established in 2014 by Mrs. Catherine Dunjwa, a Chartered Accountant by profession. The company currently hires out event furniture and décor items, provides floral arrangements for functions as well as décor set up and styling.

"I identified the opportunity to start the business in 2011 when I struggled to find suitable service providers in the Eastern Cape for my own wedding. A few years later I decided to start my own company. ZAD is now known as a high-end decor rental company that keeps abreast with national and international décor trends. During the past years of running the business I've identified a gap in the market for an events venue which I've decided to name - the Amber Venue. So, this expansion through NEF funding will enable us to provide a full suite of services to our clients," Mrs. Dunjwa said.

The tourism sector - a multifaceted arena encompassing Accommodation, Hospitality and Related Services, Travel and Distribution Systems - is a cornerstone of South Africa's economic landscape. Beyond the allure of natural wonders and cultural richness, events and conferences play an instrumental role in shaping the narrative of the hospitality industry, generating substantial revenues and ushering in transformative shifts in business operations.

Whether it be focused on music, sport, learning, events around the world are generating billions

of revenues and changing the way businesses, hospitality organisations and resorts operate. South Africa's meetings, events, conventions, and exhibitions industry is an important sector to attract foreign visitors and investment. In 2019, 11.4% of foreign tourism was attributed to this industry, where about one million business delegates are hosted annually. Factors that contribute to South Africa's success as an events destination are the quality of infrastructure, accessibility, and price.

The NEF's Acting Fund Manager, Nomazizi Siphondo, says that the approval of financial support to businesses like ZAD Hiring is calibrated to address the challenges of transforming the tourism sector head-on.

"By providing vital support and funding to expand small enterprises and facilitating market access, the NEF aligns its mission with the overarching goals of propelling socioeconomic development and fostering sustainable economic growth through the development of black owned enterprises," she said.

Atlantic Glass Sector: Manufacturing

In the heart of Port Elizabeth, where the ocean breeze whispers tales of resilience and innovation, Atlantic Glass & Aluminium stands tall as a beacon of craftsmanship and ingenuity. The company specialises in the manufacture, supply, and installation of glass and architectural aluminium products.

With a staggering investment of R10 million, the company has not only expanded its operations but has also become a catalyst for job creation, breathing life into communities and providing opportunities for growth.

What sets Atlantic Glass & Aluminium apart is not just its scale, but its unwavering commitment to quality and innovation. As the largest aluminium fabrication company in the province, and one of only eleven in the country with a coveted CIBD SG grading of 5 and above, the company has earned its reputation as a leader in the industry. From sleek, modern designs for large commercial and industrial projects to elegant, functional solutions for domestic spaces, Atlantic Glass & Aluminium's products are synonymous with excellence and durability.

As Atlantic Glass & Aluminium continues to grow and thrive, it remains rooted in its commitment to the Eastern Cape community. With 54 jobs created and countless lives touched, the company is not just building structures - it's building futures. And as the sun sets over Port Elizabeth, casting a golden glow over the city, Atlantic Glass & Aluminium stands as a shining example of what is possible when passion, craftsmanship, and vision come together in perfect harmony.



Empowering Women in Transport: NEF Investee Milkway Transport pioneers change

In the heart of Joubertina, Eastern Cape, a trailblazing transport and logistics company is making waves in the industry. Milkway Transport, a proud investee of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), is not just revolutionising the way goods are transported; it's paving the way for gender equality and empowerment in the sector.

As a 100% black woman-owned and managed business, Milkway Transport is breaking barriers and shattering stereotypes in the traditionally male-dominated transport industry.

Led by the visionary Ms. Leoni Damons, Milkway Transport is a shining example of what is possible when passion, determination, and opportunity intersect. With a steadfast commitment to excellence and a drive to succeed, Ms. Damons has transformed Milkway Transport into a powerhouse in the transport

industry, providing vital transportation services for fruit, dairy, and beverage products companies across the region.

The NEF's investment of R10 million has been instrumental in fueling Milkway Transport's growth and success. From expanding its fleet to investing in state-of-the-art logistics technology, the support from the NEF has enabled the company to reach new heights and serve its clients with unparalleled efficiency and reliability.

Currently, Milkway Transport boasts five-year contracts with industry giants Coca Cola South Africa and Woodlands Milk, a testament to the company's reputation for excellence and reliability. These partnerships not only provide stability and growth opportunities for Milkway Transport but also contribute to the economic development of the region.



Avalon Residence: Transforming student accommodation with NEF Support



In the bustling town of Queenstown, Chris Hani District Municipality, lies a haven for students seeking comfort, convenience, and community: Avalon Residence. This student accommodation property, operated by Ava Properties (Pty) Ltd, has

undergone a remarkable transformation with the support of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), reshaping the landscape of student living in the area.

Ava Properties embarked on this journey two years ago when it began renting the property from the previous owner, converting it into a student accommodation facility. Recognising the potential for growth and the opportunity to create a nurturing environment for students, the owner approached the NEF for assistance in acquiring the property outright.

The total transaction value amounted to R10 million, with the NEF providing a substantial investment of R8.3 million. This financial support, coupled with the entrepreneur's contribution of R1.7 million, paved the way for the acquisition of Avalon Residence, marking a significant milestone in the journey of Ava Properties.

Avalon Residence accommodates 152 students, providing them with a safe, comfortable, and conducive living environment conducive to their academic pursuits. With modern amenities, spacious living areas, and a strong sense of community, Avalon Residence sets a new standard for student accommodation in the region.

Empowering Education: NEF Investee Taud Properties transforms student accommodation

In the soul of Queenstown, Livingstone Residence began its journey as a startup with a bold vision to create a nurturing environment for students. With the support of the NEF, the company received funding totalling R6.7 million, enabling the acquisition of a property and its conversion into a student accommodation facility. Led by a dynamic and visionary black woman entrepreneur, who invested R500,000 towards the purchase price, Livingstone Residence embodies the spirit of empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Located in the heart of Queenstown, Livingstone Residence currently accommodates 38 first-year students, providing them with a safe, comfortable, and conducive living environment conducive to their academic pursuits. With plans underway to expand its capacity to accommodate 50 students, Livingstone Residence is poised to meet the growing demand for quality student accommodation in the area.



Franchising: (Food & Petroleum)

- The following are some of the notable franchises the NEF has funded in the EC over the years:
- BP Bashee R6.5m (100% woman owned) – Idutywa
- Engen Wavecrest R5m (100% woman owned) – Jeffreys Bay
- Total Engcobo R4m (100% woman owned) – Engcobo
- Engen Norwood R9m (100 black owned) – Umtata
- Steers, Fishaways R6m (100% black owned) – Umtata
- Caltex R11.4m (100% woman owned) – Flagstaff
- Caltex R3.4m (100% woman owned) – Port Elizabeth
- Mugg & Bean R4.5m (100% black owned) – Umtata
- Shell R14.7m (100% black owned) – Cofimvaba (Under construction)
- Steers & Fisherways R2m (100% black owned) – Butterworth

Service station	Convenience store	Coffee brands	Fast foods	Loyalty reward
			Corner Bakery, Wimpy, Steers and Various QSR's	
			Crispy Chicken, Hooked on Fish & Chips, Grill 'n Go, Pizza Stop and Biltong Bar	
			Steers Diner, Pharmashop and Others	
			Several	
			Mugg & Bean and Others	
			Unknown	

A view of the service stations and their various convenience and reward offerings

