



22 March 2022

Business and government partner in honour of World Water Day to hand over foot-operated standpipes and handwashing units to promote hygiene in response to COVID-19

The 10th of March 2022 saw the official handover of 35 foot-operated standpipes and 15 handwashing units in the Walter Sisulu local municipality in the Eastern Cape. This event was a key collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure safe handwashing and hygiene, in celebration and anticipation of World Water Day. World Water Day, held on 22 March every year since 1993, celebrates water and raises awareness around the 2 billion people worldwide living without access to safe water.

The units handed over to the community were developed by a South African water engineer working with the **National Business Initiative (NBI)**, with the important support of the **Eastern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)**. With a limited surface area ensuring the prevention of contamination, the foot-operated standpipes and handwash units offer an effective solution to enable safe access to water and improved hygiene.

The standpipes and handwash units have been provided by NBI member company PepsiCo's philanthropic arm, the **PepsiCo Foundation**. As part of PepsiCo's holistic *Net Water Positive* vision to deliver safe water access to 100 million people by 2030, the Foundation has announced programs that will bring much-needed access to water and sanitation for thousands of people in South Africa. The PepsiCo Foundation believes in the importance of using a local approach to solve global problems and has invested a total of R6 million in access to water initiatives across South Africa ranging from affordable washing units in homes, handwashing stations in high density areas and water saving flush toilets, to the rehabilitation of natural springs.

Commenting on the partnership, Bridgitte Backman, Vice President, PepsiCo says, “This initiative supports PepsiCo Positive, our Strategic end-to-end transformation, with sustainability at the centre of how PepsiCo will create growth and value by operating within planetary boundaries and inspiring positive change for the planet and people. With respect to our water goals, as PepsiCo we believe that wherever in the world we operate, water resources will be in a better state because of our presence.”

The Units were field-tested to ensure durability of the technology. The NBI assisted in facilitating the manufacturing and installation of the foot-operated taps and hand washing basins for **Joe Gqabi District Municipality**, targeting **Walter Sisulu Local Municipality**.

Business and Government Collaboration

The foot-operated taps and handwashing units are provided as part of a collaborative relationship between the Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in the Eastern Cape and the NBI’s Technical Assistance, Mentorship and Development (TAMDEV) Programme. This partnership was born out of the establishment phase of the Programme Management Unit (PMU) within COGTA, to enhance the service delivery capacity of municipalities in terms of section 154 of the constitution of RSA.

“This relationship is premised on a shared common commitment to the promotion and building of municipal capacity, in identified municipalities across South Africa,” explains NBI CEO, Joanne Yawitch. Ruth Troskie (NBI Head: TAMDEV & Building of State Capacity) emphasises how the objective of this partnership is: “The provision of support to strengthen the Municipal Financial, Infrastructure and Local Economic Development systems and the overall capacity of municipalities, including technical, leadership and professional development and the transfer of key skills.”

Bridgitte Backman of PepsiCo notes, “We cannot achieve our goals on our own and we collaborate with like-minded organisations to improve the lives of local communities. We are therefore proud to be working with our various partners on the ground to bring this infrastructure to the Maletswai community, particularly at this time as we all continue work to improve hand hygiene to prevent the spread of Covid-19.”

Handover Event

The launch event was hosted by NBI and PepsiCo, in partnership with Eastern Cape COGTA, Joe Gqabi District Municipality, the Walter Sisulu Local Municipality and Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). The event was hosted with the support of both local and district mayors, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of COGTA, business leaders, community members, and traditional leaders.

The event is crucial in highlighting the need for cross sector partnerships and collaboration for the enhancement of development and local governance.

Safe Water Access

Currently, over 3 million people in South Africa do not have access to a basic water supply services, and 14.1 million people do not have access to safe sanitation according to the **National Water and Sanitation Master Plan**.

The installation of these units addresses a long-term need for safe hygiene within communities, that goes beyond the pandemic.

The units’ longevity makes them suitable for hygiene access at schools, clinics, informal settlements and anywhere where safe public handwashing is needed.



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The National Business Initiative (NBI) is an independent and voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses launched in 1995 by the then President, Nelson Mandela.

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