

PRESS RELEASE

NBI launches campaign to unlock skills, jobs, and growth in township economies

Johannesburg – The [National Business Initiative](#) (NBI) has launched the [Installation, Repair and Maintenance](#) (IRM) Initiative Campaign, a nationwide drive to connect township youth, TVET students, and small enterprises with skills and opportunities in the **green economy**.

The IRM Initiative works within local ecosystems to unlock demand for skilled labour, align training supply with emerging opportunities, and unlock opportunities for township enterprises. By focusing on the fast-growing installation, repair, and maintenance sector — particularly in the green economy — the campaign aims to create conditions for inclusive and sustainable growth.

A digital ecosystem for growth

At the centre of the campaign are three integrated digital tools that provide practical, accessible support:

- Green Economy Toolkit – guiding township SMMEs and youth from awareness to action with practical resources for business growth and innovation for empowerment and increased participation in the green economy
- IRM Hub Portal – an SMME development platform connecting small businesses to financial opportunities, providing compliance support, and enabling them to expand their business.
- IRM Learning App – a mobile-first platform offering the exchange of training and business data, designed to engage learners on an interactive level. With topics ranging from the green economy to micro IRM training, this coaching is designed to overcome data costs and access barriers. Users stand to gain certification and pathways into green careers.

Together, these tools form a digital ecosystem that supports township youth, artisans, and entrepreneurs with opportunities for skills development, enterprise growth, and green economy participation.

“South Africa’s economy cannot grow without unlocking the potential of its township enterprises and young workforce,” said Zwelidumile Magano, Senior Project Manager: Skills & Inclusive Workplaces, at the National Business Initiative. “The IRM Initiative is about aligning training with real demand, supporting small businesses to scale, and enabling youth to find pathways into sustainable work. This campaign is the next step in taking these opportunities directly into communities.”

Community outreach

Over the next two months, the initiative aims to register over 100 000 township youth and TVET students to the Green Economy Toolkit and IRM Learning App, and onboard various township SMMEs to the SMME development platform.

The NBI team will visit various campuses and embark on community engagements to create awareness about the initiative. This campaign will also be available on NBI social media platforms and [SAYouthMobi](#) platform through our collaboration with Harambee Youth Accelerator.

The campaign will be activated in Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, Standerton, Mandeni, Cape Town, and the Garden Route (George, Mossel Bay, and surroundings).

About the National Business Initiative (NBI)

The National Business Initiative (NBI) is a not-for-profit development organisation that works to address South Africa's most pressing social and environmental challenges. We are an independent and voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses, launched in 1995 by the then President Nelson Mandela. Through initiatives like the IRM, NBI partners with business, government, and civil society to advance inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social transformation.

The campaign is being managed by Sakaza Afrika.

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