



PRESS RELEASE

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The National Business Initiative (NBI) positions youth at the centre of South Africa’s green economy

Johannesburg – South Africa’s transition to a green economy is creating new demand for skills, services, and enterprises, but for many young people in township communities, barriers continue to limit access to these opportunities, making meaningful participation difficult.

The [National Business Initiative \(NBI\)](#) is addressing this gap head-on through digital tools and demand-led skilling, entrepreneurship support, connecting youth and small businesses to opportunities in the green economy.

At the heart of this approach is a focus on the [Installation, Repair and Maintenance \(IRM\) sector](#) – a fast-growing industry linked to renewable energy, infrastructure, sustainable services, domestic appliance and e-waste. This sector holds significant potential to create jobs, support township enterprises, and enable young people to build sustainable livelihoods, where opportunities are accessible and connected to real demand.

Through this work, the NBI aims to grow small businesses by linking them to local market opportunities, thereby driving demand for skilled labour and creating employment opportunities for young people.

The Organisation has developed an integrated ecosystem of tools and platforms designed to remove barriers such as access to information and markets. These include:

- [Green Economy Toolkit](#)
A practical guide for youth and SMMEs to understand, enter, and grow within the green economy.
- [IRM Hub Portal](#)
A business support platform connecting township enterprises to funding opportunities, compliance support, and market access.
- [IRM Learning App](#)
A mobile-first platform offering accessible training, micro-learning, and pathways into certification and employment opportunities.

Taking opportunity into communities

The NBI is working directly within communities and has partnered with TVET colleges in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape to bring opportunities through the tools closer to young people.



“Our approach ensures the green economy transition is inclusive and locally impactful. There is significant potential to create jobs and support enterprise growth, while fostering inclusive economic participation and sustainable development in local communities.” said Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze, Head of Economic Inclusion at the NBI.

“By aligning skills development and enterprise support, with market demand, we are positioning young people to be active participants in South Africa’s transition,” Gugu added.

About the National Business Initiative (NBI)

The National Business Initiative (NBI) is a not-for-profit development organisation working with business, government, and civil society to address South Africa’s most pressing challenges. Established in 1995, NBI focuses on driving inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social transformation through collaborative, practical solutions.

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