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### **R50m set aside for Black SMMEs in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality**

In a major boost for small businesses in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, up to R50 million rands has been jointly set aside by the municipality and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF).

The money that is geared towards the Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) Fund will benefit Black-owned and managed SMMEs in the within the municipality.

The municipality will make a financial contribution of R20 million with the NEF committing R30 million for qualifying transactions on a 40:60 ratio. STLM Municipal Manager, Adv Bheki Khenisa, says this initiative will open up business opportunities for the people of STLM.

“This venture will promote SMMEs, township industrialisation, stimulate and diversify economic growth and industries. We aim at closing economic gaps that were generated by, amongst others, the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative will also ensure that our vision of becoming the number one city in South Africa in service delivery, innovation, good governance and inclusive growth is realised,” says Khenisa.

Khenisa adds that the partnership will promote and foster resolutions taken by the municipality to ensure economic growth and inclusivity in the SMME sector.

NEF Divisional Executive for Strategy, Planning and Significant Investments, Setlakalane Molepo, says in accordance with the partnership agreement concluded with the municipality, the NEF will establish, develop, implement and administer the fund.



“This fund will assist the municipality to accelerate Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment within the municipality by identifying fundable businesses and providing them a range of support interventions including mentorship, to enhance the chances of success,” says Molepo.

He adds that this partnership is significant in that it will advance NEF's key objective of optimising its investment portfolio and presence across the country.

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