

## **Draft Joint Media Statement**

**DATE: Tuesday, 15 November 2022**

**TO: All Western Cape Regional Media**

**ATTENTION: News Editors/Transport Reporters/All Reporters**

**For immediate release**

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### **TAXI RELIEF WESTERN CAPE REGIONAL ACTIVATION ROADSHOWS**

In its commitment to ensure the success of the Taxi Relief Fund (TRF), the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) will be embarking on another roadshow countrywide to encourage taxi operators to come forward and apply for their once-off relief funding at different venues, before the Government-backed programme ends in March 2023, says the entity's General Counsel, Mr Mziwabantu Dayimani.

"As a vote of confidence in the fund-management and disbursement track-record of the NEF, the Department of Transport (DoT) set aside R1.135 billion to provide once-off financial relief payments to qualifying South African taxi operators to help the sector in response to the devastating effects of COVID-19 lockdowns and to implement additional safety measures," explains Mr Dayimani.

"The NEF was selected by DoT as the implementing agent to manage and administer the Taxi Relief Fund because of the organisation's mandate and unique track-record as a development finance institution that plays a crucial role in supporting black entrepreneurs across various sectors of the South African economy," says Advocate James Mlawu, Director General of the Department of Transport.

He says because of COVID-19 lockdown measures and more employees being encouraged to work from home, the transport sector globally experienced a significant loss of passengers and revenue. Under the first lockdown introduced in South Africa, taxis were allowed to carry 50% of their licensed vehicle capacity and this was later increased to 70% when the lockdown restrictions were eased. The industry also had to contend with the increased cost of procuring cleaning materials for vehicles and sanitisers for passengers.

"The effect of these measures on the industry was a diminished revenue base and an increase in costs, which undermined the financial viability of many operators. South Africa is estimated to have approximately 142 000 valid taxi operating licences as at the start of the nation lockdown," adds Advocate Mlawu.

## TRF Performance milestones

Mr Dayimani says the NEF “has received 33 829 applications representing a total of 80 945 operating licences valued at more than R404 million, and these are at various assessment stages. A total of R363 million or 90% of the value of applications received to date, has been paid by the NEF. With this roadshow we intend to maximise the volume of applications and approvals so that the sector, which is crucial for the economy, can receive the much-needed relief”.

“The TRF will be in operation until March 2023, and we are confident that with increased buy-in from the sector through roadshows across the country, the programme will be implemented successfully. In the effort to combat the unemployment rate, especially amongst the youth, the NEF has since employed eighty (80) trainees as part of the implementation of this important programme, where 50 (63%) are female and 30 (37%) are male throughout its 9 regional offices,” adds Mr Dayimani.

Date	Venue	Time
Tuesday 15 Nov 2022	SANTACO (WC), Suite 805, 8th Floor, Sunbel Building 2, Old Paarl Road, Bellville Cape Town	09h00 – 14h00
Wednesday 16 Nov 2022	SANTACO (WC), Suite 805, 8th Floor, Sunbel Building 2, Old Paarl Road, Bellville	09h00 – 14h00
Thursday 17 Nov 2022	Oliffantsrivier Taxi Off. Kerkstraat 28 Rebunie Gebou, Vredendal	09h00 – 12H00
Friday 18 Nov 2022	Piketberg, LB Wernich Biblioteek Ithala Leenwcadi Library Calendula	09h00 – 12H00

### Qualifying criteria for the Taxi Relief Fund

To qualify for the once-off relief payment:

- Operator must be a South African citizen or permanent resident
- The operator must be registered for income tax.
- Taxi operators must be in possession of a valid operating licence or permit, or a receipt proving they have applied to renew their operating license

“We urge taxi operators to take this opportunity of applying for taxi relief funding. Applications are open until the end of March 2023 and operators with a valid licence and income tax number can apply. The NEF’s TRF team will be assisting operators with the application process for them to receive the funding,” Mr Dayimani says.

Operators can get more information on the NEF website, [www.nefcorp.co.za](http://www.nefcorp.co.za) or visit the help desk when the TRF team is in the region.

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For interviews – Western Cape Province	
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