

---

## NEF funding fuels launch of Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters

[SOUTH AFRICA] – Mageza Service Station, a 100% Black woman-owned and managed enterprise, launched its Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters last Friday in Kwa Mpumuza, a peri-urban settlement in the Msunduzi Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal.

### Empowering women entrepreneurs

The National Empowerment Fund (NEF) provided a concessionary loan to enable investment in this new service station. The application fell under the NEF's Women Empowerment Fund (WEF) product offering, due to it being from a wholly Black woman-owned enterprise.

Mageza Service Station, which specialises in the development and operation of service stations in the township and rural areas of the Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal, is led by businesswomen Ms Zibusile Mbambo and Ms Nompumelelo Mbambo.

Established in 2005, the company currently operates three service stations in Taylors Halt, Mpophomeni and Ridge Park.

### Driving growth and jobs

Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters is poised to bring significant socio-economic benefits to the region. "With a strategic location on the eastern side of the intersection of Dennis Shepstone Drive and Calusa Road, the station will serve as a vital hub for motorists and residents traveling to and from Pietermaritzburg CBD," says Ms Zibusile Mbambo.

"The funding from the NEF has been used to construct a modern service station equipped with a convenience shop, CCTV surveillance, a generator and parking bays, among others. We have also created 58 new permanent jobs with the establishment of Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters while retaining 135 existing ones in the three existing service stations," says Ms Mbambo.

"Mageza Service Station's record of successful operations, coupled with the new outlet's strategic positioning and economic potential, made it a compelling investment opportunity. The investment also aligns with government imperatives to revitalise township and rural economies, fostering growth and empowerment. The NEF's support will catalyse growth, empower black women entrepreneurs and drive positive change in Sweetwaters and beyond," says Imbewu Fund Manager, Ms Eldene Govender.

### Fuelling opportunity countrywide

The NEF has invested over R673 million in service stations countrywide, 44% of which are owned and managed by black women. These investments have supported at least 3 845 jobs to date.

The NEF's WEF was established in 2014 to accelerate the economic empowerment of black women through the provision of financial and non-financial support for start-up, expansion and equity transformation purposes.

Funding is provided from R250 000 up to R75 million across the NEF's diverse spectrum of funding products. These include entrepreneurship, procurement, franchising, acquisition, new ventures, capital markets, rural and township development as well as industrialisation.

"The funding of Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters falls under the NEF's franchise portfolio, within the energy sector which ranks as the most vibrant and successful both commercially and in terms of repayment trends to the NEF," Ms Govender said.

This funding has not only fuelled the station's development but has also ignited a wave of empowerment and prosperity in the heart of KwaZulu-Natal's rural landscape.

**-ends-**

**For Media Enquiries**

Dikatso Mothae on 084 314 6713 / [mothaed@necorp.co.za](mailto:mothaed@necorp.co.za)