

## NEF's investment in Ladina: weaving growth and empowerment into the fabric of local production

[SOUTH AFRICA] – In a world where every strand of success counts, the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) is proud to invest in Ladina, a trailblazing 100% black female-owned business that is weaving a narrative of empowerment and local innovation.

### From startup dreams to industry triumph

Founded in 2016 by Ms Mpho Dina Monare, Ladina began as an informal venture trading high-end Brazilian human hair products. By January 2017, Ms Monare officially registered the business, and within a year, Ladina secured contracts with major retailers, including Edgars. The company's products were later introduced in other retail stores, Homechoice and Foschini. Today, Ladina is a prominent supplier of Brazilian human hair wigs and extensions, catering to a high-end market and establishing itself as a key player in the beauty industry.

“Ms Monare’s journey is one of resilience and determination. With over 15 years of experience in business communication management, procurement, and product development, she has successfully navigated the competitive beauty market. Her leadership has been instrumental in Ladina’s growth, transforming it into a significant contributor to the local economy and the beauty sector,” says Ms Eldene Govender, Imbewu Fund Manager.

### Strategic investment for expansion

The NEF has invested in Ms Monare’s business to support Ladina’s next phase of growth. This funding has been used to purchase sewing machines, stock raw hair, and acquire a delivery vehicle, allowing Ladina to transition from importing wigs to manufacturing them locally. This strategic move will enhance cost efficiency and expand the company’s market reach.

Ms Monare expressed her gratitude stating, “The NEF’s investment is a game-changer for us. It will enable us to scale up our operations, reduce costs, and meet the growing demand for our products. We are thrilled to advance our local manufacturing capabilities and continue contributing to job creation and economic empowerment.”

### Empowering local production and economic growth through strategic investment

Black African consumers represent the largest market for human hair wigs and extensions. Recognising this demand, Ladina's goal has been to establish a local production facility in South Africa. This strategic move will allow Ladina to offer high-quality hair wigs and extensions at competitive prices for both local and international markets, positioning itself effectively against major Asian manufacturers, particularly those from China and India.

The NEF's investment will not only bolster Ladina's local production and distribution, but also support job creation, which aligns with the NEF's goal of promoting economic inclusion and supporting black-owned businesses in South Africa.

"We are proud to support Ladina's expansion and local production efforts. This investment highlights our commitment to empowering female entrepreneurs and enhancing the competitive edge of black-owned businesses in our country. As we celebrate Women's Month, it is especially meaningful to highlight our dedication to fostering women-led ventures and advancing gender equality in the entrepreneurial landscape," Ms Govender said.

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