

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Launch of Hotel in Tsolo: a new era in Eastern Cape hospitality

[SOUTH AFRICA] – The National Empowerment Fund (NEF) proudly announces the launch of **The Hill Boutique Hotel**, a 100% black woman-owned hospitality enterprise founded by visionary entrepreneur Ms Koleka Cele. The hotel opened its doors this September, coinciding with Tourism Month, emphasising the importance of tourism in economic development and job creation.

### Empowering local entrepreneurship

Located strategically along the N2 highway linking Port Elizabeth, Mthatha and Durban, **The Hill Boutique Hotel** is poised to elevate the local hospitality sector featuring 25 well-appointed rooms, along with two conference centers each accommodating up to 63 guests. The hotel also boasts amenities such as a spa, mini gym, mini bar, and restaurant.

Ms Cele, who has successfully operated four petrol stations – three in Tsolo and one in Mthatha – expressed her excitement about this new venture: “**The Hill Boutique Hotel** represents not just a business opportunity but a chance to contribute to the economic upliftment of our community. I am committed to creating a space that embodies comfort and excellence while providing local employment.”

### Job creation and community impact

The NEF has supported **The Hill** with funding of up to R14.1 million to assist with construction, furniture, fittings, acquisition of two vehicles and working capital. Ms Cele's personal investment of R1 million has already been allocated for land acquisition. This project has generated 20 permanent jobs for the hotel, with at least 70% of those positions filled by women, as well as 100 temporary jobs during the 12-month construction period.

Mr Phakamile Madonsela, the NEF's Rural, Township and Community Development Fund Manager, highlighted the significance of this project: “Investing in businesses like **The Hill Boutique Hotel** not only fosters entrepreneurship but also stimulates local economies. We are proud to support initiatives that empower women and create sustainable jobs in rural communities.”

### Fostering Tourism in the Region

**The Hill Boutique Hotel** will serve as a vital component of the Mhlontlo Municipality's efforts to develop viable and sustainable coastal tourism. The area has been identified as a key tourism node, bolstered by the Wild Coast Meander Route and the designation of Tsolo as a Special Economic Zone. These initiatives will attract visitors and potential clients to **The Hill**, further contributing to the region's economic growth.

### A vision for the future

As **The Hill Boutique Hotel** prepares to welcome guests, it stands as a testament to the potential of local entrepreneurs to transform their communities. The NEF remains committed to supporting such initiatives, ensuring that women-led businesses thrive and contribute to South Africa's economic landscape.

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