

Nthabeleng Likotsi champions the first majority Black women-owned mutual bank



By [Katja Hamilton](#)

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The Prudential Authority has given notice that Young Women in Business Network (YWBN) Mutual Bank is now registered as a mutual bank in the country.



Source: Own the Bank. Nthabeleng Likotsi, the founder and managing director of YWBN.

This step, which came into effect from 22 January this year, marks the final step in the official registration process for the bank.

Having received its mutual banking license at the start of the year, the bank could potentially launch in 2025.

This will be the fruition of a dream for its founder and managing director, Nthabeleng Likotsi, who has been championing for the formation of South Africa's first majority Black women-owned mutual bank for many years.

Likotsi founded the Young Women in Business Network (YWBN) in 2009 to facilitate the empowerment of women by bringing together a network of Black professionals and business women to share experiences in investing and business.

She then conceptualised the YWBN Cooperative Financial Institution (CFI) in 2015.

Initially announced in 2018, YWBN - then functioning as a cooperative financial institution (CFI) - declared its intent to transition into South Africa's pioneering women-owned bank.

On 1 June, 2021, YWBN made history by launching the Own-the-Bank share scheme, opening its doors to the public and inviting individuals to become shareholders in the initiative. It hit regulatory hurdles, failed to comply with regulations, and it was forced to pay back the money it had raised.

Pioneering a new era in banking

Likotsi went back to the drawing board. Now YWBN mutual bank has a number of firsts to its name: the first women-owned bank, the first black women-owned bank, and the first Cooperative Financial Institution (CFI) to successfully apply for and receive a mutual banking license.

Likotsi indicated that the bank's attention will now turn towards its development phase, encompassing activities such as capital acquisition, network establishment, and groundwork establishment to enhance its outreach to marginalised communities it aims to serve.



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Subsequently, the commercial launch of the bank will ensue; however, she emphasised that no official date has been determined yet.

Once launched, Likotsi stated that the mutual banking license will propel the group to provide savings- and loan products tailored for small businesses, including cash-loan services. The group is especially dedicated to catering to the needs of the unbanked and underserved demographic.

New players on the block

YWBN represents just one of the four newcomers making their mark in the South African banking landscape:

- Old Mutual is currently [in the works](#) of introducing its own comprehensive banking service, poised to rival established retail banks in the nation. Its launch is anticipated sometime in 2024.
- Postbank has recently overcome various obstacles on its journey [to establishing itself](#) as SA's first fully-operational State-owned bank, having disengaged from the South African Post Office to pursue an independent trajectory.

- Furthermore, the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) is [awaiting its license](#) for its SA Innovative Financial Services Cooperative (SAIFSC) from the Prudential Authority.

The South African Reserve Bank (Sarb) reports that there are only a few mutual banks operating in the country. These include Bank Zero Mutual Bank, Finbond Mutual Bank, and GBS Mutual Bank.

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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