

Spotlight on Kingdom of Lesotho

By [Tshepiso Seopa](#)

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The textile and clothing industry has grown significantly over the past few years, and has helped with investments and job creation, in Lesotho. There are still however many investment opportunities in the knit fabric mills, laundry facilities, electronic and electrical appliances, call centre and diamond mining industries.

Delegates attending this month's edition of the Intra-Africa Business Breakfast hosted by Upbeat Marketing at the Michael Angelo Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg had a glimpse of the kingdom's potential.

While selling brand Lesotho to South African businessmen and women, the CEO of Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), Pete Molapo said, "The Kingdom of Lesotho boasts skilled and dependable workforce, English- and Sesotho-speaking, who are well motivated with a labour force that have a tradition of manual dexterity at competitive wage rate.

"Lesotho's major natural resource is water, often referred to as white gold by Basotho; there are a lot of opportunities in bottled water. There is a need for investment in knitted fabric mills, trims and finishing facilities, process measurement and control, water recycling, chemical substitution and new product development using waste material," says Molapo.

One of the challenges that the LNDC is faced with is a lack of infrastructural development. The institute also lacks the financial capacity needed to develop commercial retail and residential properties.

"We encourage joint partnerships with local companies. Lesotho needs foreign direct investment to help with, amongst other things, the development [of] an 80 hector Tikoe industrial estate, which is based in Maseru, the estimated cost to develop the estate is US\$25, 66 million," says Molapo.

Aranda blankets

The Basotho are known for wearing tribal blankets, while Aranda Textile Mills is known for producing blankets that cater for a diverse market. The company has set aside a budget amounting to over M500 000 to market its products in Lesotho this year. Aranda is the fourth generation Italian-owned business based in Randfontein, South Africa; the company has been producing blankets and throws since 1953.

"We have launched a heritage project called the Tsa Khale Collection after discovering photographs that must be between 50 to 60 years old, depicting traditional Basotho blankets; those designs form the basis of the heritage collection," says Tom Kritzinger, marketing and sales director for Aranda Textile Mills.

Kritzinger also says that his company is looking at expanding its product offerings with the Basotho tribal blankets. “Aranda will be opening a dedicated store within a store that will be called the Aranda Blanket Boutique in the LCS flagship store at the new shopping centre in Maseru,” says Kritzinger.

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Tshepiso Seopa was a junior journalist at Bizcommunity.com

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