

SOUTH AFRICA'S FORESTRY SECTOR INVESTING IN FORESTRY COMMUNITIES

The South African Forestry Industry's commitment to social investment is not new, there are initiatives by Forestry South Africa's (FSA) members that have been on-going for over two decades. Over the years we have seen the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) made by the sector evolve from being charity based – giving when you have a little extra – to becoming intentional efforts to create value and sustainability for broader communities in the rural areas where our plantations are situated. Many FSA members have actively re-engineered their markets, products and value chains to benefit local economic development by creating businesses owned and managed by locals. Traditionally, Forestry Sector CSI initiatives fall into eight core areas, however, this year in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest, a ninth area, Disaster Response, has been added.

Education

By investing in promoting education and artisan skills we are nurturing tomorrow's talent pool. Prioritising funding for Early Childhood Development has been proven to be the most effective means of building capacity in youth from our communities.



Health and Welfare

Focuses on removing the barriers to accessing healthcare services in the rural communities - the home base for the industry's workforce and plantation neighbours - and providing HIV/Aids awareness and management programmes.



Engagement and Upliftment

By providing support, guidance and engagement to initiatives that aid the growth and development in community, ties are being formed between communities and the private sector that will build stronger communities for future generations.



Food Security

Project addressing the availability and access to a healthy diet. Food security in rural communities is a major challenge with adults and children going to bed hungry which negatively impacts performance at work/school, quality of life and their health.



Enterprise and Supplier Development

To remain healthy in business requires investment in smaller suppliers. By assisting communities to establish forestry-related businesses creates all forms of enterprises that deliver numerous products and services to forestry companies and communities.



Community Infrastructure

Focusing on projects that service rural communities through the construction and maintenance of roads, low-profile bridges, educational facilities like classrooms, laboratories and libraries, residential infrastructure and churches.



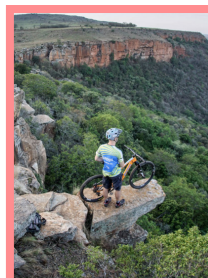
Environment

Properly managed and developed the patchwork forestry landscape that includes great swathes of natural ecosystems, could have a key role in the protection and conservation of ecological services and biodiversity, benefitting future generations.



Recreation

Increased emphasis is being placed on being outdoors in nature and improved mental and physical health. The forestry landscape provides many forms of outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities that promote wellbeing.



Disaster Response

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest, many forestry businesses have launched some form of disaster response initiative, stepping up when the communities they neighbour need them the most.



"Although our CSI initiatives may not hold value in the joint industry's profit and loss statement, to us and our neighbours, it is one of the most tangible and easily recognised brands of who we are – *the socially-caring and environmentally-friendly Forestry Sector*". - **Michael Peter, Executive Director, Forestry South Africa**