

**ALOE BENEFICIATION PROGRAMME; EXPORT TRANSITION OUT  
OF POVERTY FOR THE RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE EASTERN  
CAPE SOUTH AFRICA.**

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## Abstract

This document outlines a Poverty Reduction Strategy to reduce poverty through strategic partnerships that will contribute to the Eastern Cape Aloe Beneficiation Programme's socio-economic growth in the rural areas. The long-term results of the success of the strategy will make an even more attractive Private Sector Investment for both local and International. The Aloe Ferox Beneficiation Programme is to create and grow a diverse communities from across Eastern Cape rural areas committed to exploring, challenging and testing ways to unleash the potential of the indigenous plants within their environment to substantially reduce poverty and ensure a good quality of life for all its citizens.

Its principles of sustainability use recognize the biological imperatives of renewable resources use, the benefits that natural plant resources offer to humankind and the concomitant value placed on resources sustaining livelihoods globally. Increasingly, rural communities are seeking new ways of doing things. The Aloe Ferox Beneficiation Programme is one example to that call. I have a strong belief that the rural communities in the Eastern Cape can significantly reduce poverty by using this programme as a pilot, if we make five cultural shifts on how we approach the issue:

- Away from a culture that emphasizes alleviating the efforts of **poverty** towards a culture that focuses on reducing **poverty**;
- Away from a culture that promotes quick fixes to reduce **poverty** towards a culture that thinks comprehensively about **poverty** and strives to address its roots causes.
- Away from a culture of individual, isolated efforts towards a culture of multisectoral collaboration, weaving together skills, knowledge, resources and efforts;
- Away from a culture of blaming different people and sectors for **poverty**, towards a culture that recognizes that everyone is part of the problem and everyone is part of the solution;
- Away from a culture that emphasizes cautions, short-term responses to **poverty** towards one that emphasizes innovations, risk-taking and long –term change

Poverty is a complex issue that is broader than not having enough money to cover basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter. It also means not having social, human, physical, personal, as well as financial assets to access opportunities to participate fully in one's community. Women bear a greater burden to poverty. Older people children, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups are particular vulnerable. It has economic, social and political dimensions and eradication of poverty can be possible if the underlying structural causes are addressed.

The Eastern Cape Aloe Ferox Beneficiation Programme wants everyone in the rural areas to benefit from the current and future robust economy. It will help reduce the tax burden for social assistance programs, strengthen employment opportunities and create more personal and household wealth for re-investment into the secondary economy of the Eastern Cape.

## Introduction

As one of the biologically most diverse countries in the world, South Africa's resources base offers countless plant species on interest to both domestic and foreign consumers. Arguably the most extensive individual consumption of indigenous plant resources is that of rural South African households who facilitate a domestic medicinal plant market that is among the highest in the world. Indigenous plant resources are an important part of rural livelihoods strategies in South Africa because of the impact of direct use not only on households, but also on the production of household incomes. Despite the significance of these resources in lives of rural people, their sustainable use and management face several challenges. Trade in this sector involves several hundred thousand individuals operating in largely unregulated and informal trade and harvesting environments.

## Looking To The Future

For the last six months ITC has been fully involved in assisting the training of the Aloe leaf [tappers] harvesters with the management and conservation of Aloe Ferox plant resource and the communities response to the national sustainable use and conservation priorities and obligations. This is to combat the risks of the indigenous plant population viability, particularly in the absence of effective regulation and monitoring in harvesting Aloe Ferox leaf for bitters and other by-products.

Progress is also being made in terms of development of knowledge, availability of information and in terms of research into indigenous plant use in South Africa. IPUF [Indigenous Plant Use Forum] is a multidisciplinary initiative between academics, professional and practitioners that aims to facilitate the establishment of enterprises through sustainable use of indigenous plants in rural communities. One of the principal objectives is to tackle the lack of information and networking opportunities in the sector. As for the Aloe Ferox Beneficiation Programme the model of the [Tri P's] is an answer in addressing unemployment in the rural areas as well as addressing urban influx; it allows local communities to be involved in decision making and benefit from the natural resources that exists in their surrounding. The Eastern Cape Province has over 80% of South Africa's aloe ferox resources, which creates huge job potential prospects for the rural areas.

The process of the Aloe Ferox Tapper Beneficiation Programme is about building community capacity to achieve shared community business goals. The desired goals cannot be achieved by any sector, but must involve capacity building among all sectors. This is the true essence of collaboration. The following table outlines various attributes by sector that will enable change in the Aloe Ferox Tapper Beneficiation Programme initiative.

Business: Influence and leverage

- Access to leadership role
- Influence
- Access to capital and in-kind resources
- Drive for results and focus

Organizations: Community Process

- Diversity of program offerings
- On the ground experience
- Source of social innovation
- Understanding process brings Engagement

Government: Serving the public

- Access to leadership
- Ultimately responsible for people
- Large delivery systems for service programs

People in **Poverty**: Grounding solutions

- Interprets the realities
- Surface the contradictions
- Advise on the practical implementation strategy
- Mobilizes passion and commitment

The Aloe Ferox Tapper Beneficiation Program is the means to engage all sectors in a common purpose to address unemployment and poverty in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

Lastly but not the least identifying what individuals have and need in the five asset building blocks- financial, social, human, personal and physical- is vital to a successful transition out of Poverty. Partnerships can make change in addressing poverty



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