

SAFAS

SUSTAINABLE AFRICAN FOREST ASSURANCE SCHEME

THE COMMUNITY LABEL



2022/23

SUSTAINABILITY
VBP



PARTNERSHIPS

WITH COMMUNITIES

*FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT*

COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY ENTERPRISES MAKE A VITAL CONTRIBUTION

An estimated 25,000 timber growers living in Tribal Authorities make a substantial contribution South Africa's timber industry. The majority of these growers are over 50 years old and many of them are women. The Tribal Authority areas were former "homeland areas" and as a result are remote and poorly serviced, with very few economic opportunities. While growing timber here is challenging, plantation forestry plays a vital role in the livelihoods of these communities.

Rural poverty in South Africa is extreme and exceptional amongst middle income countries. Financial rating agencies cite unemployment, rural poverty and poor educational standards as South Africa's key economic risk factors. However, if empowered to develop, forestry and agroforestry have the potential to contribute substantially towards addressing these risk factors.

A COMMUNITY LABEL - LEVERAGING FORESTRY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES

Currently many forestry organisations are committed to providing markets and extension support to communities. At SAFAS we believe the key to growing and deepening this involvement lies in community partnerships with forestry organisations. The goal of the community label is to incentivise forestry organisations to become more involved in helping to address the key economic risk factors in South Africa, hereby helping to make rural communities flourish. We believe that a community-centred sustainable forest management programme with certification as a key instrument can play a vital role in supporting development.



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SECURING MARKET ACCESS

WHILE ADDRESSING KEY RISKS

Most timber growers in the communal areas are prevented from complying with some of the laws related to growing plantations by the difficult economic conditions that prevail in these areas. This precludes these growers from being certified and potentially restricts their market access, compounding the risks that they face. Addressing the legal issues, mainly around labour legislation and licensing, requires a systematic approach that is part of a long-term sustainability plan. While this plan is being executed it is essential and just that they continue to have access to the markets.



COMMUNITY LABEL

The community label is designed for forestry organisations that have, or potentially have, community-based timber growers in their supply chain in order for them to demonstrate their commitment to promoting and supporting community development. The nature of the support must be aligned to the communities sustainability risks as determined by a systematic defensible risk and needs assessment, undertaken in consultation with the community. In the process the organisations effectively establishes or deepens its relationship with the community and effectively become part of the community.

This allows compliance with certain indicators in the SAFAS standard namely;

SAFAS 2.2.3: There is a mutual understanding of the resource requirements and other needs within the community and these are met where possible.

SAFAS 2.3.4: Opportunities for local social and economic development are identified through engagement with local communities and other relevant organizations.

THE VALUE-BASED PLATFORM TO ASSESS RISKS AND NEEDS OF PARTNER COMMUNITY

The VBP is a risk management system for forest managers to identify and prioritise the sustainability risks of a forestry or farming enterprise. An assessment using the VBP can be conducted at community level, in consultation with the community to identify and prioritise the risks faced by the community timber growers. The partnering company can then work with the community to address these needs in a consultative and systematic way.

For more on the value based platform visit:

safas.org.za/value-based-platform/

MEETING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

SAFAS promotes the concept of the forestry organisation being part of the greater community in order to engender a sense of mutual responsibility and promote community harmony.

Communal timber growers have low impact forestry techniques and extract value from the entire tree, making in some respects more sustainable than large industrial operations.

The following short films were made to show the role that forestry plays in these communal areas, the difficulties faced by these growers and the pressing need for a bottom-up approach to certification in this context. Watch the following short videos for inspiration:

eMatimatolo's Sustainable Timber

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6okbNJDxdrE>

SAFAS and PEFC - A Forest Certification Approach for plantations of all scales in Africa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvpqtVOz6Tc>

SAFAS Value-Based Platform

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VleLhsiH_ko

Ozwathini - in search of sustainable landscapes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_1eynPXZP0

In order for a forestry organisation to use the community label in its marketing and promotional material they must comply with criteria that speak to the organisations commitment to:

- procuring timber from the communities,
- consultatively assessing the communities sustainability risks and opportunities,
- assisting to addressing these risks and needs in a systematic and inclusive manner and
- achieving and maintaining PEFC certification under SAFAS.





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COMMUNITY LABEL

- Helps community timber growers access the market at prevailing market prices
- Provides vital information to improve management and sustainability.
- Promotes partnerships between communities and forestry organisations.
- Allows organisations to share value and enhance their CSR or SVI programmes.
- Provides the starting point for forest certification under PEFC.
- Facilitates communication between stakeholders

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