

# Agri- entrepreneurs are building a sweet future

ELI Development Services' vision is to catalyse change in South Africa, give hope and grow the economy. ELI delivers skilled entrepreneurs, develops small businesses and supports those small businesses to become sustainable in targeted agricultural industries.

In line with the South African government's strategy of job creation in the small business and informal sectors, the Sishen Wind Energy Facility tasked ELI to develop an agricultural project that will benefit the communities in the Northern Cape that the Facility operates within. The Sishen plant in South Africa is the largest photovoltaic plant built by ACCIONA in the world. Acciona, a global group, develops and manages sustainable infrastructure solutions, especially in renewable energy.

## Why beekeeping?

- There is a market for the produce: South Africa consumes more honey than it is producing
- The input cost is relatively low
- Entrepreneurs are able to participate in the programme in conjunction with other local employment
- The time commitment from entrepreneurs is manageable, as hives do not have to be visited every day



- The area has the appropriate flora to sustain honey production
- Should natural resources be insufficient due to, for example a drought, bees' diets can be supplemented
- Bee farmers do not need to own the land where their hives are placed – in this instance, there is great utilisation of communal land.

People that are affiliated to communal land in Olifantshoek and Dibeng, were identified as candidates for the programme through a process of community engagement. Beneficiaries have been trained in the technical aspects of beekeeping, as well as an elective course on basic business principles. The active entrepreneurs have been organised into groups, based on the location of their communal grounds. These groups will be registered as primary agricultural co-operatives.

The farmers have been capacitated with beekeeping suits, safety equipment, tools, hives and swarms. Great care was taken to identify appropriate sites for the hives – taking into account surrounding flora, weather conditions and distance from other farmers' hives. A honey depot has been established, where harvested honey will be extracted from the frames and weighed for the farmers.

A jubilant training certification ceremony was well-attended and appreciated by the beneficiaries. Ms Dineo Kolberg of the Sishen Solar Facility delivered an inspiring address and handed over some of the certificates, together with the Community Liaison Officer from the Gamagara Local Municipality, Ernest Dithibeng.

The entrepreneurs are gearing up for their first honey harvest in Summer 2022! Regular site visits with a specialist, hive inspections, pest control where necessary, and further capacitation ensure that Nature is given her best possible chance of producing liquid gold for the committed entrepreneurs.

The vision is that each co-operative will be sustainable and contribute to job creation and economic development in the communities. The programme provides a structured market, co-ordination of logistics, administration (including the institutional requirements of a co-operative), finance, technical support and training.

ELI believes that Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play an important role in the economy. They can be drivers of economic growth, innovation and job creation in a community, something ELI is very passionate about.

ELI was founded in 1996, as specialists in training and development within the agricultural sector. The business has grown to cover a broad scope of business development services across various Southern African countries, operating from Somerset West. Three core services are provided: people development, fund administration, and enterprise development. On the enterprise development front, ELI is a specialist at developing people and businesses into agricultural supply chains for corporate processors, government programmes and corporate social investment clients.

**Contact ELI on  
info@eli.co.za for a  
discussion on how  
your enterprise  
development goals  
can be met.**

