

How the Replenish Africa Initiative aims to secure billions of litres of water over the next decade

The Coca-Cola Foundation's Replenish Africa Initiative (Rain) funds five major projects in South Africa - each received \$1.25m in grants in 2019, and have collectively cleared 3,400 hectares of alien plant species which will help replenish an estimated 1.5 billion litres annually for the next 10 years.



Image supplied

“These important water catchment areas feed our communities, towns and cities, yet thirsty alien invasive plants are consuming millions of litres of this precious resource unnecessarily from these areas each year,” says Beatriz R. Perez, chair and president at The Coca-Cola Foundation. “As part of our broader water stewardship programme, Rain is helping to rehabilitate thousands of hectares of land and replenish water while economically empowering families.”

Sustainable economic opportunities

Most of these strategic water sources are located in remote areas, with limited economic or skills development opportunities. In addition to the environmental benefits these projects bring, they also focus on creating jobs, upskilling individuals, and providing support and training for sustainable economic opportunities. Collectively, these projects created 389 jobs in South Africa’s rural, priority catchment areas.

The five projects are spread across South Africa and focus on involving local communities, while addressing water security on a larger scale. Implementing partners provide development expertise and additional resources required to implement the projects sustainably.



Women making waves in water conservation with Rain

25 Aug 2020



The five implementing projects include the following:

Wemmershoek Dam, serving the Greater Cape Town area: Working with The Nature Conservancy, this project cleared over 2,500 hectares on the upper slopes of the Wemmershoek Dam catchment, creating 202 jobs, specifically empowering 62 women and youth.

uMzimvubu Watershed Restoration, Matatiele, serving East London in the Eastern Cape: Working with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) South Africa, this project cleared 115 hectares of invasive alien plants and created 60 jobs, empowering 32 women and 39 youth. Additionally, this project protected five natural springs, improving the community's access to spring water. Working with local traditional authorities, livestock management was improved and grazing rotations were established, economically empowering 437 people through grazing association memberships and access to cattle auctions.

Wolseley Wetlands Restoration, serving Wolseley and the Greater Cape Town area: Partnering with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) South Africa, this project cleared invasive alien plant species from a critical biodiverse wetlands area in the Upper Breede River Valley in this important agricultural region. The project cleared 470 hectares and created 94 jobs, empowering 42 women and 39 youth.

Algoa Water Fund, Diep River, Eastern Cape serving Nelson Mandela Bay: Working with implementing partner Living Lands, this project cleared thirsty invasive alien plant species from the Impofu Dam, a key upstream catchment area for the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. Additionally, the team worked with local landowners to create a cohesive and collaborative long-term catchment management plan for the area. This project cleared over 260 hectares of invasive alien plants and created 21 jobs in an extreme rural area with high rates of unemployment.

Soutpansberg Mountains of Limpopo, serving Kutama, Limpopo Valley and Musina: Working with the Endangered Wildlife Trust, this project cleared 32 hectares and created 12 jobs, empowering five women and youth. To complement their ecological work, the team trained 701 local school children on hygiene and water conservation. In addition, the project team also worked with local landowners on the proclamation of the western Soutpansberg Nature Reserve to protect 4,000 hectares under improved conservation management with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme.

A further \$500,000 from The Coca-Cola Foundation will be invested for an additional 12 months for three of these projects - the Greater Cape Town Water Fund in Atlantis, Matatiele in the Eastern Cape and the Soutpansberg Mountains of Limpopo.