



Addressing socio-economic needs – the Nongoma Abalimi Phambili Project

In conjunction with the occupational health project being undertaken in a collaborative effort between the Chamber of Mines, the Department of Health and the National Union of Mineworkers (*See case study: The former working mineworkers and making ODMWA work project – one year on – www.aga-reports/07/Nongoma.htm*), Teba Development has initiated the Abalimi Phambili Programme at Nongoma in KwaZulu-Natal.

Modelled on the successful Abalimi Phambili Programme that has been running in the Eastern Cape since 2002, the Nongoma-based project was initiated in August 2006. Owing to delays in start-up, it has been funded by Xstrata. Once the ODMWA project starts, it is envisaged that the Nongoma project will be the first pilot site and additional funding from the gold mining industry will be channelled into this project.

The Nongoma local municipal district was selected as a key target area for the broader mineworkers project as it is a major labour-sending area in the country. This too made it an ideal target for the socio-economic development project, added to the fact that agriculture is a primary source of income for the region and that the area has high and diverse agricultural potential.

About the Nongoma region

The Nongoma district in KwaZulu-Natal has a population of around 26,000 people, of whom an estimated 71% are unemployed. The estimated dependency ratio (of 1:15), which is ratio of the number of dependants to a breadwinner, is one of the highest in southern Africa. Nongoma is the home of the Zulu Royal family and has 296 traditional wards and 19 municipal wards.

Location of the Nongoma district



Says David Cooper, of Teba Development, "The primary goal of the project is to stimulate the local economy by the provision of support services to around 800 farmers over a period of two years. Agriculture is a primary source of income in the area and it is vital that the high-potential agricultural resources are exploited and used successfully, efficiently and sustainably."



Addressing socio-economic needs – the Nongoma Abalimi Phambili project *continued*

Four key sub-objectives have been and remain:

■ The identification and implementation of projects

Interviews were conducted with local stakeholders to understand their needs and to develop a broader understanding of existing structures, resources, infrastructure and markets. A local project steering committee was established to oversee the project implementation process and to ensure alignment with local integrated development plans. The committee meets on a quarterly basis and is well attended by local stakeholders. Negotiations were concluded with agricultural input suppliers (feed, seed, nursery and fertiliser suppliers) to reduce delivery costs. Around 460 farmers have benefited from the programme, with around R2.7 million having been generated in revenue.

■ The creation of linkages with markets and support systems

Farmers are now selling their produce – mostly vegetables, livestock and poultry – on a large scale to the local community at a local market and additional markets are being identified.

■ Capacity building, technical training and management support at local level

Contracts are being put in place with more formal business sectors (hospitals, correctional services and local hospitality establishments). Training in basic business management skills, project management and financial record-keeping has been carried out. Eight school gardens have been established and teachers and learners have been trained in organic gardening practice and now produce food for vulnerable children. (These schools have a collective enrolment of 3,277 children, of whom 830 have been identified as orphans).

■ Extension of credit facilities to farmers in need

Technical training in poultry and vegetable farming has been provided to local farmers to assist them in increasing yields and hence sales plans are in place to establish a Revolving Credit Fund, which will provide farmers with a revolving credit facility to buy agricultural inputs and equipment.

Says David Cooper: “We have set a number of key performance targets over the two-year period and I am pleased to report that we have made good progress in the first year. Apart from improving the livelihoods of over 460 individual farmers (and hence at their extended families), the programme has brought into production over 400ha of arable land, and has created valuable linkages with markets, supplier and support systems.