

# Corporate social investment is essential

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Airports Company South Africa's (ACSA) social investment is based on empowering local communities, particularly those surrounding the airports, and marginalised groups in South Africa. Over the years, ACSA has made every effort to be a responsible and caring corporate citizen, pursuing key strategic projects that have enabled the company to make meaningful contributions towards improving the quality of life of disadvantaged South Africans.

A CSI Committee, comprising senior managers, was established to ensure effective governance and integrity of the CSI budget and processes. The committee reviews the CSI strategy, policies and projects annually to assess relevance against set objectives. The Corporate Social Investment (CSI) programmes focus is on three areas: community upliftment, care for the environment and the physically disabled. Empowerment of women, youth development, education and training, as well as the involvement of ACSA's staff are critical elements of the group's strategic focus.

Community upliftment projects are based around the airports where there is physical presence and impact. They provide an opportunity to contribute towards the redressing of the immense social and economic challenges with which South Africa is faced. The Enterprise Development Strategy leverages the CSI programmes, seeking to foster the dynamic integration of socio-economic elements, and focusing on small business development. The nature of ACSA's business generates opportunities in bulk supplies and services, maintenance, souvenirs and crafts and operational support services.

A project beginning to bear fruit is a community-based bead-making undertaking near

Giyani in northern Limpopo. Believed to be the only producer of small beads in South Africa, the project has considerable potential and currently generates five direct, and fifteen indirect, jobs.

The group continues to give priority to disability by providing access to means of mobility for people with physical disabilities. This is pursued through projects that enhance the integration of physically disabled individuals into society through the provision of mobility aids (such as wheelchairs), infrastructure improvement and accessibility, skills development, education and awareness.

As in previous years, the wheelchair donation project has continued in partnership with the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, as well as with provincial departments responsible for health and social development. To date, a cumulative total of 9 157 wheelchairs have been delivered since the Wheelchair Donation programme started some nine years ago.

Wheelchair Tennis South Africa (WTSA), an affiliate of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), has now been ACSA's flagship mobility project for eight years. This has been a true success story, with the sport going from strength to strength. Every week, about 450 players receive coaching at more than 50 locations around South Africa, bringing a sense of pride and achievement to people whose disabilities had previously excluded them from mainstream society. ■