



Case study

Partnership to develop women-owned PPE manufacturer

Tongaat Hulett's Zimbabwean operations continue to live up to the theme of "Sustainable value creation" by increasing and strengthening the participation of local communities in our value chain activities. In March 2018, in conjunction with the Lowveld Business Forum, we identified and capacitated a consortium of eight local women to establish Vavasati (Pvt) Ltd. The company produces personal protective equipment (PPE), namely protective work suits, which it supplies to both Tongaat Hulett Zimbabwe and other organisations within Chiredzi Town and the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe, where our operations are based.

Vavasati is derived from the local Shangaan language and means "the women". It resonates well with our focus on the empowerment of women, which remains integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. Vavasati commenced operations in May 2018 with assets to the value of US\$120 000 (R1,68 million), for both capital and operating cost requirements, of which US\$20 000 (R280 000) was the consortium members' direct injection in the form of cash and equipment. Tongaat Hulett assisted in negotiating concessionary loan funding from banks on the back of product off-take guarantees. Since its inception, Vavasati has established itself as a supplier of choice not only to our Zimbabwe operations but to other large companies in Chiredzi Town.

They have an installed production capacity to produce 25 000 work suits per year and as of 31 December 2018, had produced 12 500 work suits valued at US\$385 000. At its peak, Vavasati employs an average of 42 employees of whom 80% are female. It injects approximately US\$110 000 (R1,32 million) per year into the Chiredzi Town's economy through employment benefits to its staff.

Vavasati is geared for further growth and is now targeting the regional export market. It represents one of the many successful enterprise development and transformative procurement initiatives that our Zimbabwe operations is involved with.