



# OUR MOST MATERIAL ISSUES CONTINUED

## CASE STUDY

### CASE STUDY: TONGAAT HULETT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The World Health Organization (WHO) first declared COVID-19 a world health emergency in January 2020 and the pandemic rapidly evolved into a global public health crisis. Around the world, governments adopted policies to lock down economic and social activities to contain the spread of the virus. The effect on industry was severe due to the impact of import and export controls, border closures that prevented the movement of people, disruption of supply chains, production halts, reduced consumer spending arising from large-scale job cuts and business closures and the subsequent decline in revenue generation.

Sugar production was classified as an essential service and Tongaat Hulett was permitted to operate through all levels of the lockdowns in all its countries of operation. Very early in the process, we set up a COVID-19 war room to coordinate the company's response and a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was put into place to address the emerging economic and social challenges, and to ensure continuity of operations.

The BCP focused on three priority areas:

#### HEALTHY PEOPLE | HEALTHY COMPANY | HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Our primary objective was to ensure that we protected the health of our employees and in so doing, secured the health of the company. We also recognised that the health of key stakeholders such as contractors and the communities around our operations could have a direct impact on the health of our people and the company. Particularly in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, our operations are deeply integrated with local communities and many of our employees live in these communities. Supporting the health of the people in local communities therefore reduces the risk of infection for our people and the resulting risk to the company.

#### HEALTHY PEOPLE

Our approach to Healthy People included both proactive (preventative measures) and reactive (responses in cases of infection) components. These included:

- Limiting the number of employees physically present at our operations to only those critical to keep operations running and restricting personal and work-related travel.
- Categorising each job in the company by COVID Risk Level (CRL) to assess the risk of exposure for every employee.
- Identifying and implementing appropriate interventions based on each individual's CRL, including daily pre-shift screening, work environment adaptation such as removal of at risk access control systems and insertion of Perspex barriers, and provision of adequate risk appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitisers.
- Capacitating non-essential staff to work from home, including a significant investment in IT capabilities to ensure that people could continue to engage with others remotely.
- Prioritising well being through a Certificate of Fitness process that, through a medical examination and blood tests, identified specific comorbidities and other individual vulnerabilities, such as age profile. This established the Vulnerability Status of all employees in terms of COVID-19 so that their individual risk could be appropriately managed. It also provided support to individuals with uncontrolled comorbidities to better manage their conditions and improve their overall quality of life. In addition, roles and locations within the organisation were changed where necessary, to ensure employee safety.
- Conducting return-to-work screening following the Christmas break where all staff underwent screening and those deemed "at risk" were tested.
- Identifying where specific Human Capital skills and capacities needed to be improved to respond to the ongoing management of CRL. This included:
  - workplace COVID-19 response protocol training;
  - training on antibody, antigen and PCR testing\*;
  - recruitment of additional medical practitioners, doctors, nurses, laboratory scientists and nursing aides.
- Capacitating health services to deal with possible cases through additional facilities and/or equipment, including:
  - developing and equipping seven isolation centres at hospitals in Zimbabwe;
  - ensuring availability of oxygen by installing an oxygen bulk storage tank and air compressor to pipe oxygen to 40 beds at Triangle Hospital in Zimbabwe;
  - installing oxygen generators at Xinavane (Mozambique) and Hippo Valley (Zimbabwe);
  - donating PPE to community clinics and hospitals in Zimbabwe and Mozambique;
  - procuring and donating ancillary equipment, including ventilators and monitoring equipment (e.g. pulse oximeters) in Zimbabwe and Mozambique;
  - installing PCR testing\* infrastructure at Triangle Hospital in Zimbabwe. The facility is WHO accredited;
  - providing rapid test kits at each work site to screen suspected cases and high-risk individuals;
  - in-house design and development of the Tongaat Hulett Bucket Breathing Aid (CPAP Breathing System) to address the shortage of ventilators; and
  - in-house development of Tongaat Hulett Aerosol Boxes to provide additional protection to medical practitioners during assessments (based on an existing design).

\* PCR equipment and PCR testing training were only provided in Zimbabwe as these facilities and capabilities were not available in public health facilities in the region.

### HEALTHY COMPANY

Tongaat Hulett's BCP successfully ensured that our operations could continue to function through lockdown despite the impact of the pandemic. It included:

- ensuring the adequacy of critical supplies for the various phases of lockdown;
- critical staff planning to ensure business continuity;
- succession planning if critical staff were incapacitated by the virus; and
- continuous and transparent stakeholder communication.



### HEALTHY COMMUNITY

We recognised the need to support Healthy Communities and implemented several initiatives including:

- providing access to COVID-19 testing for members of local communities, particularly in Zimbabwe and Mozambique;
- providing PCR testing\* support to government in Zimbabwe, where access to PCR testing\* was otherwise unavailable in the local area;
- improving access to potable water for communities by providing additional water storage tanks in villages and schools, as well as developing a new water treatment facility at Triangle (Zimbabwe);
- donations to government to help develop and equip seven isolation centres at government hospitals in Zimbabwe;
- 740 000 litres of sanitiser donated: 250 000 to South Africa, 410 000 to Zimbabwe and 80 000 to Mozambique, for use in health facilities;
- providing PPE to community clinics and hospitals in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique;
- developing and supporting community awareness campaigns, including educating people about appropriate interventions;
- donating PPE to schools and communities;
- conducting sanitisation of schools in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa before learners returned to classes, particularly for schools where a significant number of COVID-19 cases had been identified;
- distributing food (nutritional support) in and around Tongaat, north of KZN;
- partnering with the Red Cross to distribute food parcels in communities around all sugar and starch milling operations in South Africa; and
- implementing a vaccine roll-out in Zimbabwe, to be rolled-out in both Mozambique and South Africa in the 2022 financial year.

#### Successes and learnings:

- daily screening for all employees and visitors at all Tongaat Hulett sites was implemented before the end of March 2020 and is ongoing;
- rapid response to equipment and facility requirements to ensure management and treatment of COVID-19 cases;
- developing and rolling out COVID-19 communication protocols to maximise employee, contractor and other stakeholder awareness of the risk, and to keep them informed regarding how the company was responding to the pandemic;
- 18 857 people tested as part of the certificate of fitness process;
- all employees screened as part of the return-to-work programme in January 2021, with 143 employees identified as COVID-19 positive through this process;
- tragically our business suffered 20 deaths as a consequence of COVID-19 while 1 049 infections were reported by the business as at 2 May 2021 resulting in a 0.19% mortality rate since the start of the pandemic;
- contact tracing occurred for all positive cases; and
- a total investment of R84.21 million was made by the company in COVID-19 preparedness and response during the financial year ended 31 March 2021.