



Overview

This project addresses two priorities of South Africa's **National Skills Development Strategy 2011-2014**, namely:

- Rural development, especially by increasing agricultural production
- Support for commercially viable business co-operatives

Between January 2012 and December 2014, SSACI will assist groups of aspiring young farmers from historically-disadvantaged communities in the Mbombela district in Mpumalanga to establish commercially viable vegetable-farming businesses.

Objectives

The primary objective of the project is to develop a replicable model for supporting small-scale commercial farming co-operatives that comprises technical skills training and business- and market-development services.

A secondary objective of the project is to create at least 40 new, sustainable, small agri-businesses that provide permanent, full-time employment to at least 120 people and seasonal or part-time work to another 300.

Strategy

Through our implementation partner, **Timbali Technology Incubator** in Nelspruit, SSACI will over three years assist participating farmers to:

- Identify and 'plug into' markets not yet saturated, nor likely to be in the next 5-10 years
- Organise themselves into business cooperatives that spread risks and the costs of shared services
- Produce high-value crops that generate good returns even when grown in small quantities
- Source loan finance for seed, fertilizer, production equipment, etc.
- Brand and market a steady supply of their produce
- Access technical and market information, and new technology
- Assure the quality of their produce

These costs of these services will progressively be borne by the farmers from their profits.

Progress to date

- First group of 11 aspiring young farmers with access to suitable land enrolled in the programme in May 2012
- Suitable crops identified (short-stem broccoli, baby asparagus, baby mielies)
- Markets secured through buyers for large chain-stores
- Access to pack-houses, refrigerated storage and transport secured
- Brand name (*AmaVeg*) and logo selected
- Twenty hectares of additional land on which to locate crop-incubators and training sites leased
- Loan finance obtained
- Crop production under way, accompanied by technical skills training
- First crops harvested and sold