



Reintroducing an endangered tree species

COMPANY IN BRIEF

Based in South Africa, Sappi produces and markets dissolving pulp, paper and biomaterials. It has operations in 19 countries and employs over 12,400 people. Sappi manages almost 400,000 hectares of land.

CHALLENGE

The *Warburgia salutaris*, also called pepper-bark tree, is an endangered tree species found in Eastern and Southern Africa. Habitat loss, overharvesting and poaching threaten the species due to its use for various traditional medicinal functions, such as treating malaria and the common cold.

INITIATIVE

Sappi is leading efforts to protect the *Warburgia salutaris* by reintroducing it into communities, working closely with traditional healers. Sappi focuses on supplying seedlings of the endangered tree ex-situ to reduce the commercial poaching value of the plant from nature.

Since 2015, in partnership with peers and research institutions, Sappi has grown and distributed 65,000 seedlings to communities free of charge and engaged with 200 traditional healers and other community members through workshops on planting, tending and sustainable harvesting based on collaborative research conducted by Sappi and academic partners.

PARTNERSHIPS

In this public-private collaboration, Sappi brings together a variety of stakeholders, including South African National Parks, the Agricultural Research Council, the South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pricillavale Farms and Outdoor Escapes. The initiative has expanded nationally and to neighboring countries Eswatini and Zimbabwe.

IMPERATIVES

The initiative engages local communities through an educational outreach program. In addition, by distributing seedlings and helping communities manage the trees sustainably, it protects and enhances carbon stocks.

BUSINESS CASE

Sappi's operations are deeply seated within the traditional communities of South Africa. This initiative focuses on positive outcomes for nature and people in Sappi's regions of operations, contributing to strengthening its social license to operate. Sappi also depends on healthy forest ecosystems to ensure the long-term supply of the fiber that runs through its operations. For that, biodiversity conservation plays an important role.

ADVOCACY

Sappi's Endangered Species Stewardship Programme funds workshops with traditional healers and communities in South Africa to teach sustainable planting and harvesting methods and to improve knowledge of the use and importance of endangered tree species in communities in South Africa.

NEXT STEPS

Sappi continues collaborating with local NGOs, communities and the government to protect and reintroduce endangered species in South Africa. The company will also continue to raise awareness in local communities and share its research on seed viability with regional partners.

MORE INFORMATION

- [Warburgia salutaris project](#)
- [Reintroducing an endangered tree in Southern Africa](#)

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