



PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BRIEFING ON THE STATUS OF STATE NURSERIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

31 OCTOBER 2023

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ACRONYMS

- APP : Annual Performance Plan
- DFFE : Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
- DPSA : Department of Public Service and Administration
- EPWP : Expanded Public Works Programme
- Ha : Hectares
- SOP : Standard Operating Procedure
- PPE : Personal Protective Equipment



INTRODUCTION

- The Department owns seven (7) State nurseries distributed geographically as follows: Bloemhof and Mahikeng (North-West Province), QwaQwa (Free State), Rusplaas (Limpopo), Ulundi (KwaZulu-Natal), Upington (Northern Cape), and Wolseley (Western Cape).
- The nurseries have a combined total area of 18.1 hectares with a potential about 880 000 plants per annum and they are currently producing 289 167 plants per annum.
- The nurseries have a staff compliment of 49 with 34 posts filled and 15 vacant.



INTRODUCTION ...CONT...

- The nurseries are currently not producing optimally because of the following reasons:
 - Lack of proper and adequate operating procedures
 - Dilapidated infrastructure
 - The fading of nursery practice skills over time
 - Stocking of species that do not support the implementation of the National Greening Programme
 - Lack of personnel – had to be recreated in the new structure
 - Lack of security and fencing
 - Water availability and irrigation
 - Lack of nursery inputs and supplies



| Province | Name of nursery | Size (ha) | Current Production Level (trees/annum) | Potential Production Level (trees/annum) | Personnel |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| North West | Bloemhof | 2 | 50 000 | 100 000 | 4 Permanent |
| | Mahikeng | 4 | 50 000 | 100 000 | 2 Permanent |
| Free State | Qwaqwa | 1.2 | 32 000 | 110 000 | 14 Permanent |
| KwaZulu-Natal | Ulundi | 6 | 49 167 | 80 000 | 1 Permanent 3 Vacancies |
| Northern Cape | Upington | 2 | 80 000 | 400 000 | 10 Permanent 8 Vacancies |
| Western Cape | Wolseley | 2.4 | 18 000 | 30 000 | 3 Permanent 1 Vacancy |
| Limpopo | Rusplaas | 2.5 | 10 000 | 60 000 | 0 Permanent 3 Vacancies 15 EPWP |



MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PRODUCTION LEVELS

- Management of nurseries to support the Greening Programme
- Development of a Policy and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure uniformity in all nurseries.
- Development of the refurbishment plan that will be implemented over a period of two years –
 - Year 1 - focuses on nursery inputs and supplies such as Personal Protective Equipment, Gardening Tools, growing medium, chemicals and fertilisers.
 - Year 2 - focuses on infrastructure related issues such as boreholes to secure water availability, irrigation systems and renovation of buildings and other infrastructure.
- Increase staff capacity (permanent and EPWP workers) to enhance production levels.



PROGRESS ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PRODUCTION LEVELS

❑ Development of a Policy and SOP

- The development of Nursery Policy is underway to be finalised by 31 March 2024 – it will also address the species to be propagated in the nurseries as part of the Greening Programme.
- The SOP has been developed, approved and is being implemented.

❑ Strengthen management

- A holistic approach being undertaken in the refurbishment of State nurseries to avoid a piece-meal approach and deal with the identified challenges experienced per nursery as circumstances may differ – this includes staff issues.
- Internal Audit process is undertaken, and Action Plan is being implemented.
- Newly approved Branch structure is being implemented to ensure synergy nursery management and greening issues – managed in one Directorate.



PROGRESS ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PRODUCTION LEVELS...CONT...

- ❑ Increase capacity of the staff at nurseries – filling of posts expected to be finalised by the end of the 2023/24 financial year
 - Appointment of a Director and Chief Director is underway - letters to be issued as soon as concurrence from DPSA is received.
 - Fifteen (15) permanent vacant posts:
 - ✓ Bloemhof – Foreman commenced work on 1 October 2023;
 - ✓ Ulundi – nominations for Foreman and 4x Forest Service Aids concluded – letters to be issued as soon as concurrence from DPSA is received;
 - ✓ Wolseley – Foreman post advertised; and
 - ✓ Eight (8) posts have been included in the motivation for critical posts submitted to DPSA.
 - A total of 186 EPWP workers have been employed at all the nurseries, 85 of these are in the nurseries earmarked for refurbishment in line with the 2023/24 APP



PROGRESS ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PRODUCTION LEVELS....CONT....

- ❑ Development of a refurbishment plan - the plan was developed following site visits to all nurseries by the new management team. The plan has been approved and being implemented – based on the plan, the APP targets were crafted.
- ❑ Procurement of tools required for production materials has commenced – these include:
 - Gardening tools and equipment;
 - Chemicals and fertilisers;
 - Shade nets for nursery infrastructure; and
 - Growing media.
- ❑ Security – process has been initiated through collaboration with Facilities Management – in the meantime, monitors have been employed for access control into the nurseries. In the Wolseley nursery – security has been appointed.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

- ❑ The refurbishment plans are starting to pay dividends.
 - The performance of the Branch, in terms of the APP target on nurseries, was fully achieved in the first quarter.
 - Even though the second quarter does not have a milestone, procurement of materials for the nurseries have commenced and these should be in place during the third quarter to assist with the increase in production.
 - In general, there is an increase in plant stock in terms of quantity and quality of trees and the nurseries are now contributing to the greening programme, e.g. the Ulundi Nursery has improved production from over 40 000 to 72 000.



THANK YOU!

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Thank You



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