

Inqo Investments Limited

Company Registration Number 1998/024741/06	Share Code INQO	ISIN Number ZAU 000014391
---	--------------------	------------------------------

Inqo Investments Announce Major New Reforestation Project in the Eastern Cape, South Africa as Part of UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

Inqo Investments, a South African based Impact Investment company listed on the Aquis Stock Exchange (AQSE), recently announce an ambitious new project to reforest over 5,000 hectares of degraded land on the Kuzuko Private Game Reserve in South Africa's Eastern Cape. The project, one of the largest of its kind, will make an important contribution towards climate change through carbon sequestration, whilst restoring habitats to boost biodiversity and creating jobs.

"The project is a direct response to the call for action by the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration for individuals and organisations to rapidly upscale the implementation of ecosystem restoration projects so that hundreds of millions of hectares of degraded land are restored by the year 2030," said Anthony Mills, founder and director of AfriCarbon, a South African based environmental consultancy who are the project developers for the reforestation project. "We are proud members of this global movement that the UN Decade has triggered."

The reforestation project is a partnership between Inqo Investments and AfriCarbon through its subsidiary, Spekboom Trading and has been funded through a long-term agreement with Reforest'Action, a B Corp certified reforestation specialist based in Paris, France. The Kuzuko project is the first step in Reforest'Action's and AfriCarbon's long term vision to plant more than one million hectares of degraded thicket across the Eastern Cape which, if achieved, will be a major contribution towards climate change and biodiversity.

The project, which is set to begin operations on the 15th of August, will see over 25 million spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) cuttings, an indigenous succulent tree that can grow to a height of four metres, planted over the course of 18 months.

"I'm not aware of a restoration project globally, that focusses intensely on restoring the intact original ecosystem, that has operated at anywhere near this size and speed," said Mills. "It's an exciting time for restoration ecologists and I'm itching to get going and see the hundreds of people on site getting spekboom cuttings into the ground."

The land at Kuzuko, like many parts of the Eastern Cape, has been degraded by over 150 years of unsustainable goat farming practices. The land was purchased in 2002 as a rewilding project designed to create jobs in an area of 70% unemployment and has since been operated as a 'Big Five' Private Game Reserve and Five Star lodge. Despite the removal of goats, the indigenous thicket vegetation has not returned in areas where it has been most badly damaged.

Mills, one of the world's leading experts in thicket restoration, has been successfully trialling ecosystem restoration using spekboom for the last twenty years. Spekboom is an ecosystem engineer, a species which modifies its environment creating the conditions for other biodiversity to thrive.

When spekboom is replanted: fallen leaves are trapped by the plant's stems and decompose to form new topsoil; the canopy slows rainwater so reducing runoff and further topsoil loss; stems and root systems allow the ingress of water into the soil increasing moisture content; and the shade from the

canopy reduces the soil surface temperature and slows the rate of moisture loss – all of which allow other species to flourish.

As well as being an ecosystem engineer, spekboom is adept at capturing carbon from the atmosphere, with each hectare of replanted spekboom capturing up to three hundred tonnes of carbon dioxide over a thirty-year period. The Kuzuko project is verified by the VERRA carbon standard so carbon credits can be issued for the carbon sequestered by the spekboom thicket which will be used to repay the initial investment, fund further restoration work and fund additional social initiatives.

An important aspect of the project is job creation. Inqo Investments is an impact investment company which intentionally invests for social returns either through job creation or enterprise-based solutions to service provision for the most vulnerable in society. In addition to the jobs created during the restoration work, a portion of project funds have been allocated to social and environmental projects through the Kuzuko Foundation.

The project will support two schools in the local area with improvements to their IT systems, buildings and landscaping as well as providing environmental education at Kuzuko's education centre. The project will also support the Kuzuko Foundation's ongoing projects including skills training for local communities, provision of work experience opportunities and support for Kuzuko's conservation programmes which include the wilding of orphaned and captive born cheetahs to contribute towards diversifying the genetics of the species.

Further Information:

Inqo Investments Ltd: <https://www.inqo.co.za>

Kuzuko Private Game Reserve: <https://www.kuzuko.com>

AfriCarbon: <https://africarbon.co.za>

Reforest'Action: <https://www.reforestaction.com>

Spekboom Trading: <https://spekboomtrading.co.za>

The Kuzuko Project: <https://kuzukoproject.co.za>

Research:

Mills, A. J., & Cowling, R. M. (2006). Rate of carbon sequestration at two thicket restoration sites in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Restoration Ecology*, 14(1), 38-49.

van der Vyver, M. L., Cowling, R. M., Mills, A. J., & Difford, M. (2013). Spontaneous return of biodiversity in restored subtropical thicket: *Portulacaria afra* as an ecosystem engineer. *Restoration ecology*, 21(6), 736-744.

Contact:

Chris Bertie

Email : cbertie@acland.co.za

Mobile: +27 (0) 836254069