

## **SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

### **A KEY COMPONENT IN BOSCHENDAL'S GROWTH STRATEGY**

The new owners of the 2,000 ha Boschendal estate near Franschhoek have in the three years since taking over helped local residents establish new self-owned enterprises in security services, cabinet making and egg and poultry production.

These new businesses, all of which are now up and running, are (1) Silvermine Protection Services, now employing 36 people, (2) Classic Furniture a cabinet making business with a manager and two trainees and (3) Integriegg, a four man business that provides 1,500 eggs per day and 2500 broiler chickens per month, all nurtured on free range pastures.

Other business activities currently run as part of the estate's operations, e.g. alien vegetation clearance and trail building, mushroom, honey and trout cultivation, if successful, will be privatised in due course and will be followed up by further self-owned enterprises.

The question he is now often asked, says Rob Lundie, CEO at Boschendal, is why his team have chosen to go this route and how they all benefit from it.

"In general," he said, "our aim, as stated at the outset, is to have a genuinely beneficial impact on the community and environment in which we live and to operate in a way that is sustainable. To understand our motivation and mind-set you have to appreciate that from the time I started working I have been an entrepreneur and self-employed" (although South African, Lundie ran a property development company in London for 8 years). "I am, therefore, a firm believer in the benefits of private enterprise. People work harder and

At Boschendal, said Lundie, it became clear to him and his team that there were skills in the local communities which, if developed, could bear fruit.

“Any involvement with local people will reveal that in our nearby Pniel, Kylemore and Lanquedoc villages there are men and women with specialist talents. As we see it, our task is to help such people become established in business. To do this in most cases it is necessary not only to provide work premises but also a viable market at Boschendal for their goods or services. It is usually also absolutely essential to set up support systems and to help the new entrepreneur to find other clients or other markets.

“We at Boschendal benefit from getting our services and goods at agreed prices and in the form we specify. We also benefit from living in a community which now has improved prospects and more hope. The entrepreneur, for his part, benefits from receiving greater rewards and satisfaction than he could ever achieve as an employee.”

Lundie stressed that there is absolutely nothing paternalistic or talk-down about Boschendal’s attitude.

“We are here to make a profit and to help those we support also to be profitable. What we have found is that most of them initially lack business know-how and in some cases business discipline, e.g. as regards delivery times.

“Initially it may be essential to provide considerable business guidance and to handle the admin and accounting aspects ourselves but the plan is always to coach them to a point where they become totally self-sufficient and take over such activities themselves. We monitor performances and work together on any new initiative and on new negotiating new contracts to ensure that they avoid the problems that can so easily beset these. It could in some cases be quite easy to grow too quickly and then lose control. Our close involvement also helps protect and control the Boschendal brand of which these new businesses are so very much a part.”

Lundie added that the new owners' approach and attitude are breathing new life into Boschendal and its surrounding communities, the members of which had often become demoralised as a result of low wages and insufficient work opportunities. Already, he said, Boschendal has been able to increase its own work force from 50 to close on 450 and additional self-employed enterprises fostered by his team will further contribute to the welfare of all in the Dwars River valley.