

Profession urges South Africans to join the challenge and reduce their carbon footprint

Issued by [SAICA](#)

3 Mar 2020

As the world's 14th largest emitter of greenhouse gases, South Africa's carbon footprint is through the roof. While it is true that these emissions are principally due to our heavy reliance on coal (particularly when it comes to our electricity grid), the World Wildlife Fund estimates that our footprint is about 2.8 hectares per person. This is concerning when you consider that the planet can only support an average of 1.8 hectares per person. With this in mind, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants' (Saica) Central Region Office has challenged Saica members and associates across the country to join the call to reduce climate action by taking part in the #spekboomchallenge.

“As a profession that prides itself on being a critical player in creating value, the accountancy profession in South Africa has always contributed its time, and other resources, to projects focused on making South Africa and the world better. Indeed, its stated purpose of ‘responsible leadership’ acts as a continuous challenge for Saica and its members to understand that their work has an impact that extends beyond business. Indeed, while many of our interventions were in place long before the world’s adoption of United Nation’s 2030 Agenda, the profession’s work has since amplified and expanded to ensure that it is playing its part when it comes to meeting the objectives set out in all 17 of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” explains Div Lamprecht, Saica Regional Executive: Central Region.



SDG 13 specifically relates to solutions that tackle climate changes and its impact. And that is where Saica’s Central Region Office hopes its call for members to take part in the #spekboomchallenge will play a contributing role.

Why do accountants care about climate action?

Says Lamprecht: “Like many other developing countries, South Africa is especially vulnerable to the impact of climate change. We all have a responsibility to use environmental resources sustainably to respond to climate change. The Spekboom is a great way to do just that.”

“Dubbed an ‘environmental miracle worker’, the Spekboom has the potential to tackle carbon emissions as no other plant can. According to The Spekboom Foundation, hectare for hectare, this plant is 10 times more effective at removing carbon dioxide from the air than the Amazon Forest. And, being indigenous to South Africa as well as a succulent, it is easy to propagate in South Africa too. Simply snip off a branch from an existing plant, remove the bottom leaves to create a stalk and you’re ready to plant your very own wonder plant.”





Adds Jana Lamprecht (CA[SA]), the senior auditing lecturer at the University of the Free State who challenged Saica to participate when she handed out a Spekboom cutting to each of the third-year and Honours students on the institution's CA-stream programmes: "We are delighted that Saica has heeded the call and accepted our challenge. With such a wide carbon footprint, estimates reveal that every South African should plant 240 Spekboom in order to mitigate their carbon footprint and help to make a substantial and sustained reduction in their greenhouse gas emissions."

If you too want to join in on this sustainable movement to make our world a better place, share a picture of your newly planted Spekboom on social media, tag @saicaza if you are on Instagram, @saica_ca_sa if you are using Twitter or @OfficialSAICA if you are on Facebook and use the hashtag #spekboomchallenge so Saica can see how members get involved. The institute will then publish this information as part of its 2020 Sustainable Development Goals report later this year.

For more about why Saica is getting involved in SDG 13, watch Div Lamprecht's call to action video here:

About Saica

Saica, South Africa's pre-eminent accountancy body, is widely recognised as one of the world's leading accounting institutes. The institute provides a wide range of support services to more than 46,000 members and associates who are chartered accountants [CAs(SA)], as well as associate general accountants (AGAs(SA)) and accounting technicians (ATs(SA)), who hold positions as CEOs, MDs, board directors, business owners, chief financial officers, auditors and leaders in every sphere of commerce and industry, and who play a significant role in the nation's highly dynamic business sector and economic development.

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