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## Responsible Business in South Africa

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The call for responsible business comes from increasing consciousness of a strong tendency in business for undesirable activities in pursuance of the profit motive. Observed activities such as misleading shareholders, exploiting workers, deceiving consumers, paying bribes and short changing communities in which business is located do not serve the strategic interests of communities. Businesses however have a strategic stake to nurture in their communities because a stable business environment has a bearing on business profitability and sustainability. Corporate social responsibility is an opportunity for building social capital and achieving business growth through ethical practices. Businesses also realize that they owe society and their shareholders a duty to act ethically and exercise the responsibility not to cause harm. Better still; businesses derive value from providing beyond their regular goods or services, solutions to problems affecting society. As corporate citizens, they owe a debt to society to make it a better place.

In South Africa, the amended Company's Act number 71 of 2008 requires greater accountability on what companies are doing to ensure socially responsible business. Companies now more than before have to develop social responsibility programs whose effectiveness and impact are verifiable. Section 72 places greater accountability on what listed companies are doing to ensure socially responsible business. The requirements virtually set a standard for all growth-oriented businesses. They include setting up structures that monitor business activities bench marked by international best practice concerning:

- Social and economic development
- Good corporate citizenship
- Environment and public safety
- Consumer relations
- Labor and employment

Act 71 of 2008 challenges business paradigms and horizons regarding

- Comprehensive responses
- Quality of responses
- Significance of responses
- Verification of responses and impact
- Growth of response scale

Many companies are still to fully understand and implement the requirements of the amended Act. STA Performance in conjunction with the James Social and Ethical Consultancy (JSEC) uniquely offers its technical expertise to enable corporate enterprises to design and implement holistic and sustainable corporate responsibility solutions that make business sense and consistent with the standard laid down in the law.

STA Performance and JSEC have developed proper tools, standards, and procedures for effectively processing and checking social investment performance. Their corporate social audits examine the moral health of the corporation. The consultancies also provide any other related consultancy and training including an opportunity for scale up of care management programs through a Sap/Windchill online delivery administrative platform. The system addresses issues about the efficiency, transparency, security and blockages associated with social service provision. This benefit also enhances the BBBEE impact rating of clients and extends the scale and impact value of each rand invested four fold.