



Press Release

Criterion Africa Partners Exits Peak Timbers (eSwatini) to Strategic Buyer

March 30, 2021

Criterion Africa Partners, Inc. (CAP), a private equity firm investing in the forestry sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, has announced that the forestry and sawmilling business of its portfolio company Peak Timbers (Peak) has been acquired by Shiselweni Forestry Company Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of TWK Investments Limited (TWK or the TWK Group). TWK is a local strategic buyer which trades on the ZARX stock exchange in South Africa.

Peak is an integrated forest products company located in the Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) that includes 20,000 hectares of FSC certified eucalyptus plantations and a sawmill that produces mining timber and lumber. Peak supplies utility poles, lumber, mining timber, pulpwood, and biomass for African markets. As the plantations mature in the coming years Peak's sustainable annual timber harvest is expected to increase from its current harvest of 350,000 cubic meters/year to more than 550,000 cubic meters/year.

Since its acquisition of Peak in 2012, the CAP team has catalyzed additional investment of approximately \$25 million into the rehabilitation and development of the business to enhance productivity and attract interest from prominent strategic players like TWK. The acquired Peak business will continue to have a significant economic development impact in the north-eastern region of Eswatini where it directly employs approximately 550 people and is a significant source of business for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which provide employment to approximately 1,000 people.

CAP is especially pleased with the transaction in that the sale of Peak to TWK will ensure the employees will be retained, its operations will continue to be well-run, and its forest resource will be sustainably managed and in accordance with FSC certification.

About

[Criterion Africa Partners](#) is an independently owned private equity firm investing in the forestry value chain in sub-Saharan Africa. The firm advises two funds with assets of \$275 million on behalf of prominent European Developmental Finance Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks.

[TWK Investments Limited](#) is a diversified group of companies operating primarily in the forestry, agriculture, financial services sectors in South Africa and eSwatini.

Contact:

George McPherson

george@criterionafrica.com