

A PRACTICAL VISION FOR COMITES

Honouring Our Heritage. Connecting Our Community. Building Our Future.

Our approach

We would like to see a COMITES that is approachable, inclusive and relevant to Italians across the Western and Eastern Cape. Working within its mandate and alongside existing community organisations, the committee can listen to concerns, encourage dialogue with Italian institutions and help keep our language, culture and traditions alive. Our aim is to build gradually on the good work already being done.

Eight areas of focus

01 LISTEN TO AND REPRESENT OUR COMMUNITY

Seek feedback from residents and community organisations to better understand their needs. Where appropriate, raise shared concerns about rights, welfare and access to services with the Italian Consulate through constructive dialogue. Point citizens towards official information on AIRE, passports, citizenship, voting and pensions, while recognising that these procedures remain the responsibility of the relevant authorities.

02 KEEP OUR TWO PROVINCES CONNECTED

Explore practical ways to stay in touch with Italian communities across the Western and Eastern Cape, particularly outside Cape Town. Depending on interest and resources, this might include volunteer contacts, occasional online conversations or visits. Work alongside established clubs, associations and honorary consular networks.

03 MAKE COMMUNICATION EASIER

Use straightforward, existing digital tools wherever possible to share useful COMITES information and community news. Consider an opt-in update and a simple calendar of activities, without creating unnecessary administration. Keep information accessible to less digitally connected members and respect personal privacy.

04 SUPPORT ITALIAN CULTURE AND PRESERVE OUR HISTORY

Encourage the work of language teachers, schools, Italian associations and cultural groups in keeping traditions alive. Where there is interest, explore a small project to record the stories of Italians who settled in South Africa, with their consent, and share their contribution with younger generations and the wider community.

05 INVOLVE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Invite younger Italians to share ideas on how community activities can become more relevant to them. Where suitable partners are available, explore mentoring, education and career-information opportunities, as well as social and sporting activities that bring generations together.

06 WELCOME NEWCOMERS AND MAINTAIN COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Help newly arrived Italians find community contacts and reliable sources of information. Maintain relationships with relevant associations, patronati and professional services so that elderly or isolated residents, and those seeking assistance, can be directed to appropriate support without duplicating specialist or consular services.

07 BUILD ON LINKS BETWEEN ITALY AND SOUTH AFRICA

Recognise the cultural, entrepreneurial and professional contributions Italians have made to South Africa. Where useful, encourage connections with established educational, cultural and business networks, including organisations already promoting relations between Italy and South Africa, rather than duplicating their efforts.

08 WORK OPENLY AND ACCOUNTABLY

Make space for community feedback and provide periodic updates on the committee's work, in keeping with reporting obligations and available resources. Be open about priorities, progress and limitations, and focus on a manageable number of worthwhile activities.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE

We believe that listening first, working with established organisations and choosing a manageable number of worthwhile projects offer the best chance of making a positive difference. Our aim is to make steady, practical progress and allow the results to speak for themselves.

A proposed direction for discussion by the incoming committee, based on the functions of COMITES under Italian Law 286/2003. COMITES represents, advises and collaborates; it does not replace the Consulate. Any initiatives would be subject to committee agreement, available resources and appropriate partners.