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BEE MARKET RESEARCH COMPANY WINS ONE OF SA'S BIGGEST CONTRACTS

The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) has awarded a substantial portion of its media industry research contract to a proper BEE company. This dynamic decision has ended a 30 year monopoly of the contract by a single research supplier. The industry has been motivating for change for a number of years now and it is reputed that it was partly the impressive BEE scorecard which enabled African Response to clinch its half of the contract.

As part of the four-year tender contract, African Response, in conjunction with the Shonigani consortium (Plus 94 Harris and Neilson Media Research) will carry out half of the illustrious All Media and Products Survey (AMPS), Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), Products and Brands, and Interest Lifestyle research for the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) - certainly some of the most valuable and prestigious research contracts awarded in South Africa.

African Response, one of the first black South African owned and managed BEE market research companies in the country, was established in 2000 in partnership with Proactive Insight, one of the country's leading market research companies, to build a black-owned research company with skills in government, the developing market and FMCG sectors. Proactive Insight are renowned, among other surveys, for their customer satisfaction studies in the motor industry. In particular the Competitive Customer Satisfaction Survey, which includes the major automotive manufacturers as participants, the results of which are published annually. In addition, Proactive Insight operates in the IT, Telecommunications, Finance and Banking

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industries, as well as FMCG and Retail.

The African Response and Proactive Insight alliance ensures that the contract has been awarded to a partnership that has vast experience in the conducting of tracking studies. Proactive Insight have been market research innovators for the last 15 years and is one of the three largest market research companies in Southern Africa. With the most substantial data collection and processing capacity, this partnership enjoys a national network of offices in Johannesburg, the West Rand, Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth. Its sophisticated IT infrastructure forms the backbone of a smooth communication network and, along with ISO 9001:2000 accreditation, enables it to produce research of the highest quality anywhere in the world.

The partnership is further supported by both local and international alliances. This includes a fusion expert Jonathon Jephcott of Synovate (one of the top 10 global research companies) and the multi-faceted media experience of renowned industry experts Jos Kuper and Gill Wentzel of Kuper Research and Brenda Wortley of Brenda Wortley Media.

According to the well known and respected researcher Beatrice Kubheka, managing director and stakeholder in African Response, this is the perfect opportunity for the company to establish itself as a major force within the South African research community, with a genuine focus on skills transfer. "The SAARF research projects, kicking off in January 2005, are mainly aimed at providing a common currency for the selling of media space and time, and we are delighted to form part of something that has such a vital effect and impact on the industry at large."

The unique combination of research experience, expertise, innovation, data collection and processing abilities, together with an integrated communication network will ensure additional evaluation and interpretation of results and packaging of the findings in an insightful and useful manner. It is envisaged that this newly formed alliance, power-packed with intellectual capital, will revitalise the already valuable SAARF offerings.

"We are able to utilise the infrastructure and brainpower of a 347 strong Proactive Insight team, and have access to a world-class system of standards and the infrastructure to do business efficiently all over the country via our alliances," said Kubheka. "We are determined to show our mettle over the next few years and deliver optimum survey data to the industry".

For any further information, please contact Beatrice Kubheka on (011) 709-7888 or 082 554 2903.

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About African Response

African Response is black owned, black managed. African Response was established in an equity relationship with Synovate, and offers a full complement of research skills.

Headed up by Beatrice Kubheka, a dynamic and well respected figure in the research industry, African Response's leadership lays claim to over 20 years of experience across a broad spectrum of the marketing mix. In particular, African Response prides itself upon an exceptional ability to understand and interpret the needs of the South African black urban and rural consumer.

African Response offers clients customized qualitative and quantitative research, innovative ideas and practical solutions. African Response's vision is to significantly improve clients' business performance and to achieve excellence through utilization of the wide knowledge and experience of our partners.

More information can be found at www.africanresponse.co.za

About Synovate

Synovate is a leading global research company, operating in 46 countries and employing more than 4,000 people. The company generates consumer insights that drive competitive marketing solutions and provides a broad range of market intelligence services using powerful and established methodologies, as well as innovative and tailored solutions.

Synovate in South Africa was formerly known as Proactive Insight.

More information on Synovate can be found at www.synovate.com and www.synovate.co.za

About Aegis Group plc

Aegis Group plc is the holding company for Carat, its media strategy, planning and buying business, and Synovate, its market research business. These two operating groups provide clients with a range of services across media communications, marketing consultancy and market research. Listed on the London Stock Exchange, Aegis is capitalised at around £1.1 billion and operates in 64 countries. More information is available at www.aegisplc.com