

# Greening Soweto — A 200,000-Tree Programme to Close Johannesburg's Apartheid-Era Green Divide

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · South Africa

Quality score: 27/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

## Summary

Greening Soweto planted 200,000 trees by 2010 to redress apartheid-era tree-cover inequality. A 2018 independent field survey found only 43% survived — a rare verified figure in a city whose 'world's largest urban forest' claim is unsupported.

## Key dimensions

| Dimension                                               | Score |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced             | 1/3   |
| Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced    | 2/3   |
| Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control | 0/3   |
| Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced             | 0/3   |
| Governance, certification & transferability             | 1/3   |

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

## Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-26

[City of Johannesburg — Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo \(JCPZ\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-26

[JCPZ Urban Forestry & Nurseries](#) — accessed 2026-09-26

[UNISA: assessment of the trees of the Greening Soweto Tree Planting Project](#) — accessed 2026-09-26

[Africa Check: Is Johannesburg the world's largest man-made forest? The claim is a myth](#) — accessed 2026-09-26

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Cite this — Evidoria. *Greening Soweto — A 200,000-Tree Programme to Close Johannesburg's Apartheid-Era Green Divide*. Persistent ID: f9843d3f-6ab8-4258-ae8c-8f73cc6ab22b.