

Actis invests R760m in Food Lover's Market

Actis, a multi-asset emerging market investor with headquarters in London, has announced an investment of R760m (\$54m) in Food Lover's Market. The private equity firm is acquiring a substantial minority stake in the business and backing founders Brian and Mike Coppin, together with the existing management team, who have created a remarkable success story based on a market leadership position in fresh produce retail.



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Food Lover's Market is one of the last few independent food retailers of scale on the African continent. It has a strong brand and a growing footprint across Africa. With over 120 Food Lover's Market stores and a presence in 11 countries, in recent years it has added categories such as bakery, grocery, butchery and deli foods to complement its market leading position in fresh produce. The Food Lover's Market Group also operates over 200 FreshStop convenience stores in Caltex service stations, Market Liquors, a convenience liquor offering, an import export business and has recently acquired artisanal coffee brand, Seattle Coffee. The newly launched Food Lover's Eatery brand with stores in Cape Town and Brooklyn, Pretoria, is testament to the retailer's ever-evolving approach to retail innovation and growth.

Actis' investment in Food Lover's Market includes funding into the business to continue the company's growth in South Africa and other countries within Sub-Saharan Africa. Food retail is the largest retail sub sector in the South African economy, valued at c.US\$35bn (R471bn) having grown historically by 9.5% per annum. Actis has a strong track record of backing high-quality food retail businesses in other emerging markets including supermarket chain, Companhia Sulamericana de Distribuição in Brazil and Nigiris, one of India's best known food retail brands.

This latest transaction is Actis's fourth investment in South Africa in eighteen months, following its recent investments in Coricraft, one of South Africa's leading home furnishings retailers, Tekkie Town, the country's leading independent sports shoe retailer, and CSH a credit bureau and information services business.

Commenting on the investment, David Cooke, Director at Actis, said: "Brian and his team have carved a niche in the South African food retail landscape, offering a distinguished value proposition to aspirational consumers looking for high quality products at real value. We look forward to working together to continue the Group's growth story and expanding further within Africa."

Brian Coppin, CEO of Food Lover's Market said: "I am excited to have Actis on board. What drew us to the firm is its experience of working with family-owned businesses and its deep understanding of sub-Saharan Africa. As a management team, we believe that the firm's knowledge of what it takes to be successful in retail and its proven track-record of having built 15 retail malls in 7 countries, is a great business fit for our growth strategy in the future."

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