

REPORT DEPUTIES NEEDY CHURCHES (ARTICLE 11)

May 2024

Mandating Synod: Belhar 2021

Receiving Synod: Mamelodi 2024

1. MANDATE

The formal mandate as issued by the synod is as follows:

- To increase the collections from local FRCSA churches to Article 11 from the current R100 000 to at least R250 000 per year in order to decrease the loss that is incurred every year.
- To resolve the issue of the funds that were borrowed by Deputies Theological Training and therefore to increase the collection with an additional R200 000 per year in the next 3 years.
- To assess the churches as follows: for 2021 R 100 000, for 2022 R 277 200, for 2023 R 334 832 and for 2024 R 392 922.
- To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between synod 2021 and the next synod.
- To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

The grounds that synod considered for this mandate were:

- As per the budget, from 2021 Article 11 funds will decrease with R450 000 – R550 000 per annum, so in 2023 / 24 there will be less than half the funds left if we work on the scenario that in 2021 there will be two needy churches.
- Consideration also needs to be given to shortfalls of ministers' retirement provision which may place an unnecessary burden on congregations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

3. MEMBERSHIP

The deputies appointed were:

- Sr Talitha Maite
- Br Roelof Middeljans
- Br Ruan Snijder
- Br Erik Raimond (Convener)
- Br Riaan van Alten

Br Riaan van Alten did not accept his appointment.

The synod's mandate for the Deputies was issued on the 24th August 2021 after which the new deputies could start their work.

A meeting was held with the outgoing deputies on the 25th August 2021, where the outgoing

deputies gave a good overview of their work, background and provided advice about the continuation of their work.

The outgoing deputies provided their historic documentation spanning their work of approximately 10 years. These documents provided very good insight into the background and history of the work of the previous deputies and was very helpful to ensure a smooth transition in the work.

4. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

4.1 Support

The deputies Article 11 have received and approved two new applications for support to:

- FRC Soshanguve North
- FRC Wesbank

The final arrangements pertaining to the support to FRC Wesbank is still being finalised by the date of this report.

The deputies Article 11 have reviewed its support to churches annually. FRC Belhar has annually provided their financial statements and requests for increases in support which were reviewed and approved.

FRC Soshanguve North have shown their gratefulness for the support received, but have not asked for annual increases in support, yet.

4.2 Collections

Article 11 can gratefully report that they have received the increases in collections annually as per the Synod mandate.

4.3 Loan to Deputies Theological Training

A meeting was hosted by Deputies Theological Training involving other Deputyships in early 2023 to discuss future financial positions and funds needed. During this meeting the plan for the repayment of the loan was also discussed.

At the end of 2023 the loan was fully repaid.

4.4 Collaboration with other Deputyships

Deputies Theological Training, Theological Students, Mission and Needy Churches met in 2023 to discuss a proposed combined budget and approach churches abroad for combined funding.

In early May 2024 a meeting was held between Article 11, Mission Deputies of South Africa and the FRC Pretoria-Maranata mission to better understand the current financial expenses of Missionaries that operate in recently instituted churches.

It was decided that the treasurers of affected deputyships will set up a combined budget based on a number of scenarios of instituted churches calling ministers and requesting

support from Article 11. This work is still underway.

5. **DETAILED ACTIVITIES**

5.1 Support

At the time that the new deputies were appointed, only Belhar FRC received support from Article 11. It was clear from the previous deputies that the relationship between the deputies and Belhar FRC was at times difficult due to various reasons.

The new deputies decided to appoint br. Erik Raimond as the local contact with Belhar FRC and a meeting was held with the Belhar FRC Consistory to introduce the new deputies to them and also discuss what can be done to iron out issues of the past. One of the challenges has always been that Belhar FRC has to apply in October of each year for the next year's funding. In October they do not yet have their full years financials ready (December year-end) which means that they must finish all bookkeeping up to and including the third quarter and then estimate their full year figures in order to prepare their budget. This normally caused delays and resulted in them applying in January / February only. It was suggested that support applications in future be done from July to June, which gives Belhar FRC sufficient time to finalize their financials for the previous year and compile their budget. It was agreed that Belhar FRC then apply in April for the next year of financial support (running from June to July).

The financial support for Belhar FRC is shared approximately 50/50 by Mission (Pastor Abrahams is working 50% of his time in Mission at Leiden) and Article 11.

One of the Synod's concerns was with regards to shortfalls of ministers' retirement provision and the burden which this may place on congregations. Belhar FRC has approached brother Herman van der Linden from Bellville FRC to assist in facilitating the financial analysis of the retirement provision for Reverend Abrahams. **This process is still underway.**

Soon after the new deputies were appointed, in September 2021, the Lord blessed the congregation of Soshanguve North GG with a new Pastor, Reverend Matlhokoane. Soshanguve FRC applied for assistance from Article 11 for their pastor's stipend. The congregation does partially contribute to their pastor's remuneration but has applied for additional support due to the financial need within the congregation.

Since the application process started with the outgoing deputies, their last task in conjunction with the newly appointed deputies was to approve the application and send formal communication to the Soshanguve FRC in this regard. An amount of R 240 000 per annum was approved on the 26th of August 2021.

Sister T Maite was appointed as the local contact for Soshanguve North.

On 14 April 2024, Deputies Article 11 received a further request from FRC Wesbank for financial support to help the church to pay the basic expenses of proponent Jaco de Beer.

The requested support amounts to R 180 000 per year. The request has been provisionally approved subject to some further discussion and clarity.

5.2 Collections

We are grateful to report that the churches of the FRCSA have faithfully contributed to deputies Article 11 and have increased collections as per the Synod's instructions.

The collections have amounted to R 273k in 2022, just short of the mandated collection of R 277k and R 332k in 2023 just short of the mandated R 335k.

Year	2023	2022	2021
Collections	R 331 962	R 273 399	R 98 629

We pray that churches will continue to fund the work of providing for Needy Churches and that Deputies Article 11 will receive the R 393k in 2024 which the Synod has mandated.

We also thank the Synod Treasurer for writing to all churches within the FRCSA to urge them to pay all their mandated contributions in full.

5.3 Loan to Deputies Theological Training

We are grateful for the cooperation of Deputies Theological Training (DTT) with regards to the loan amount of R 720 000. As mentioned in 4.3, DTT took the initiative to hold a meeting where the repayment of the loan amount was also discussed.

DTT received sufficient funds from the FRCA in 2023 and fully repaid the loaned amount before the end of 2023.

5.4 Future Funding

Though Synod hasn't specifically mandated the Deputies to provide solutions for the eroding financial position of Article 11, the annual shortage of income to expenses within the Deputyship has long been anticipated.

The Article 11 Deputyship's Current Assets have decreased by approximately R 500k in two years and will continue to decrease:

Year	2023	2022	2021
Collections	R 1 471 615	R 1 698 516	R 2 030 640

The annual funding contributions of Article 11 have been as follows which is more than our annual collections mentioned in 5.2:

Year	2023	2022	2021
Contributions to Churches	R 654 010	R 639 996	R 443 980

Our funds are expected to be depleted within the next three years depending on the number of churches supported:

Additional Churches Supported	+1 church	+2 churches	+ 3 churches
Years of Funds Available	~ 2.5 years	~ 1.8 years	< 1 year

In 2024 we are expecting to be in the scenario of *+1 church* with the additional application of Wesbank and thus the remaining funds are expected to be used completely by the end of 2026.

In this light, the Mission Deputies of South Africa (MDSA) held a meeting in May 2024 to discuss the future financial implication of churches within the FRCSA instituting and requiring support for their ministers' stipend from Article 11. It is expected that some missionaries currently funded by MDSA will be called as ministers to instituted churches who might request funding from Article 11 which is why it was proposed that future funding needs be discussed collaboratively between affected deputyships.

The proposed plan is that another combined budget be drafted between affected deputies involved in Mission, Theological Training and the support of Needy Churches that reflect several different foreseeable short-term scenarios and to propose some solutions to the Synod. This work is ongoing and should be completed within the next few months.

6. CONCLUSION

We are thankful that the Lord has provided sufficient funds to support the Needy Churches over the past three years.

Though our funds are quickly being depleted we pray and trust that our Lord will continue to provide funding opportunities so that the ministry of His Word can continue within the FRCSA.

May the Lord bless the work of the Synod in considering this report.