Public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa

Review report
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# Summary of lessons

A summary of the lessons drawn from an analysis of five case studies of public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa.

## Motivating cooperative efforts

1. Cooperation is driven by recognition of shared risks faced as a result of ecological change or shared interests in reducing impact on the socio-ecological system.

## Making the case for cooperation

2. Understanding connections between socio-economic and ecological systems helps clarify shared risks and shared interests.

3. Build a case for cooperation that is linked to strategic priorities of each party.

## Common ingredients for cooperation

4. The ways in which private, public and social sector parties cooperate vary and more than one way of cooperating may be employed to address biodiversity and ecosystem management.

5. The nature of cooperative efforts evolves and changes over time, as trust is built and needs are clarified or change.

6. Early cooperative efforts that are limited in duration, formal structure, risk or commitment of partners can be the starting point for building trust and capacity for more formalised, broader, or longer-term cooperative efforts.

7. Make an effort to draw on lessons and experience from other cooperative efforts at the planning stage.

8. Cooperative efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem management can take years to establish, and years to achieve even simple outputs.

## Creating an enabling environment for achieving long-term biodiversity objectives

9. A combination of short-hook interventions to make progress at ground level (improving practices) and long-hook interventions to influence policy (sectoral or national policy reform) are needed for biodiversity and ecosystem management.

10. Leadership of a party working towards long-term biodiversity objectives and capable of adaptive management supports cooperative efforts that are more likely to impact the enabling environment for biodiversity and ecosystem management.

11. Learning networks are important for enabling and strengthening cooperative efforts towards biodiversity and ecosystem management.

12. Good monitoring and evaluation of cooperative efforts should form part of adaptive management of cooperative efforts and strengthen the case for cooperative efforts.

## The right people are key for cooperative efforts

13. Cooperative efforts need the right people involved in solutions-orientated dialogue.
Public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa

South Africa is recognised as one of only 17 megadiverse countries and as such, is exceptionally rich in biodiversity. Biodiversity is not only the variety of species of plants, animals and insects, but includes the variety of ecosystems and the variety at a genetic level\(^1\). This biodiversity is important not only for its own sake but also as a critical foundation of human well-being and economic activity. South Africa’s rich biodiversity provide natural resource assets, living ecosystems, and ecosystem services that have enormous value to society. They can be viewed as a form of natural capital necessary for development.

Management of this biodiversity, particularly at an ecosystem level, requires working beyond the boundaries of protected areas and mainstreaming biodiversity objectives into land-use planning and decision-making, as well as into the policies and practices of all production sectors. This approach to managing biodiversity involves a range of role players in different landscapes working together and sharing the responsibility for biodiversity management\(^2\). As understanding grows around the relevance of biodiversity and the services delivered from healthy, functioning ecosystems to governments, private companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the general public, so too do examples of multi-stakeholder cooperation around implementing biodiversity and ecosystem management interventions. There is a growing body of examples of public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa but they are largely un- or partially documented. These examples present a wealth of knowledge and experience from which lessons can be extracted.

This report provides a summary of five examples of public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa. Through a case study analysis of these examples, the report extracts some of the key lessons and recommendations that have emerged.

This report contributes to a larger body of work under ProEcoServ, a project aimed at demonstrating approaches to using the findings of ecosystem services assessments in policy and decision-making at various scales. South Africa is one of four pilot countries implementing ProEcoServ. ProEcoServ is a GEF funded project, coordinated internationally by UNEP\(^3\).

The target audience for this report is the international development community, as well as national audience, both inside and outside the biodiversity sector. It is hoped that through learning from existing examples of public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management, future cooperative efforts can be strengthened.

**Defining ‘public-private cooperation’**

Defining ‘public-private cooperation’ is important to identifying examples of it, particularly because the designation of organisations as ‘public’ or ‘private’ is not always clear. For instance, would a cooperative effort between a private company and an NGO with a public good objective count as a

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\(^3\) For more information on ProEcoServ, go to [http://www.proecoserv.org/](http://www.proecoserv.org/)
public-private cooperation? A baseline study for this project indicated that NGOs were regularly involved in examples of ‘public-private’ cooperative efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa, often in support of public good interests. So where exactly do NGOs fit in, and what constitutes ‘cooperation’? This section outlines how ‘public-private cooperation’ has been interpreted in this report.

There are three main economic sectors, namely the public sector (government), private sector (business) and a ‘social’ sector (non-profit). The social sector includes civil society and NGOs amongst others and can also be called the third sector, civic sector, non-profit or voluntary sector. A fourth economic sector refers to the knowledge-based part of the economy, which includes education, research, and information technology.

The boundaries between these sectors are blurred as many organisations blend social and environmental aims with business approaches, government-owned entities pursue commercial affairs, and social sector entities support maintenance and delivery of public goods or of small-business development. Therefore, in referring to public-private cooperation, this report does not exclude the social sector, but in the selection of case studies, this report did place emphasis on those cooperative efforts that definitively involved public and private sector parties.

Cooperation between different societal sectors for biodiversity and ecosystem management involves parties from more than one sector of society pooling resources or combining complementary strengths and working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. This encompasses various ways of cooperating, including what many would call ‘partnerships’.

South Africa has a long history of public-private partnerships in order to deliver on mutual areas of interest between project partners, not least of all towards improved ecosystem management. However, South African law specifically defines a public-private partnership (PPP) as ‘a contract between a public sector institution/municipality and a private party, in which the private party assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the design, financing, building and operation of a project’. Due to this very specific meaning, and the coherent legislative and regulatory framework that has developed to govern and regulate public-private partnerships in South Africa, this project will use the term ‘public-private cooperation’ to refer to a broader set of partnerships that may extend beyond those defined in South Africa’s policy.
Cooperative efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem management

There are many examples of public-private cooperation in South Africa. A scan of the public-private cooperative efforts in an earlier baseline report revealed an abundance of examples – some quite similar, some very different; some that have influenced the supply chain and behaviour in a sector and others that have not.

Detailed case studies on five of these cooperative efforts have been developed. The selection covers a range of biodiversity features, ecosystems, ecosystem services, production sectors, combinations of participants, and are at different stages of development. The detailed case studies cover the biodiversity and ecosystem management problem or threat, the drivers thereof, followed by a description of what was done in response through cooperative efforts by public, private, social and sometimes fourth sector participants. The evolution of the cooperative effort is followed by a discussion of its nature and characteristics (including the compatibility of goals, coordination of decision-making, commitment of resources, shared risks and rewards, and the role of champions or convenors). These detailed case studies are available as standalone documents accessible online. Brief summaries of each case study are provided here.

**Shared response to shared disaster risk: the Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study**

This case study highlights a combination of cooperative efforts in response to increased disaster risk in Eden District Municipality: a research-based insurance collaboration to explore what was driving disaster risk and what the insurance sector, and other influencers, could do to increase resilience across landscapes; a partnership to improve disaster preparedness and management at municipal level; and a network coordinating efforts that contribute to successful disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies. Robust scientific evidence of what was driving disaster risk and identification of groups of actors who were responsible for or had influence over these drivers provided a clear understanding of connections between social and ecological systems. This effectively highlighted shared risks and shared responsibilities (compatibility of goals, aligned rewards and risk) between parties, which helped to make the case for cooperation.

**Shared interests for wine and biodiversity: the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative Case Study**

This is a case study of a well-established collaboration between wine industry partners, conservation partners and funders, and farmers (those registered with the Integrated Production of Wine Scheme), to conserve natural areas of outstanding biodiversity value and to promote sustainable agricultural practices in the wine industry. Through the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI) over 130 000 ha in the Cape Floristic Region has been protected and working relationships between government, private landowners, catchment agencies and NGOs have been strengthened. In spite of the high degree of willingness of private landowners, good uptake, awareness and coordination (good enabling factors), sustainability of the Initiative remains a challenge as does greater private sector ‘ownership’.
Forestry, fire and biodiversity at Izanqawe: the Izanqawe Case Study

This case study looks at an example of cooperation around a land reform project in a fire-prone landscape in KwaZulu-Natal where plantation forestry is a major production activity. Landowners and other stakeholders cooperate to manage a complex interplay of environmental, social and economic drivers of fire risk in order to maintain healthy ecosystems, productive landscapes and advance rural livelihoods (biodiversity stewardship and sustainable production practices support resilient livelihoods). The case highlights a recognition of shared risks and responsibilities in ecosystem management at a local level and the potential for significant rewards and benefits for land reform communities and neighbours. It also highlights the challenges involved in sustainable development in a land reform context and the risks this poses to ecosystems and cooperative efforts.

Partnerships for water secure futures through water stewardship: the Water Futures Partnership Case Study

This is a case study of an emerging local level cooperative effort in South Africa as a result of considered and strategic planning and implementation of an approach devised at a global level through the Water Futures Partnership. The Partnership set out to prove the business case for private sector engagement in sustainable management of water resources and has demonstrated the shared interest of partners in seeing this happen to address water-related risks for people, business and ecosystems. It enabled the assessment of water-related risks and identification of response strategies to mitigate them. This was facilitated through a South African Water Futures Partnership, which in turn has laid the pathway for a local level cooperative effort towards water stewardship in the form of the George Water Stewardship Programme.

Shared interest in gaining clarity: the Wetland Offset Guideline Collaboration Case Study

This case study describes the cooperative development of the Wetland Offsets Guideline for South Africa. In the absence of clear guidance on how to implement wetland offsets, a cooperative effort emerged around improving transparency, replicability and consistency in the application of offsets. There was shared interest in gaining clarity in the approach, but the risks of not doing so were slightly different (albeit connected) for different parties. Loss of wetland biodiversity and ecosystem services was the concern for the biodiversity sector. Uncertainty around how best to design and implement achievable, adequate wetland offsets posed risks to mining companies’ reputations and social licence to operate, together with a risk of non-compliance with conditions of authorisation. Lack of consistency in how offset requirements are determined and written into authorisations was a risk for government. The case illustrates the evolution of cooperative effort from something relatively small to something with national impact. It also points to the importance of flexibility in realigning objectives to match emerging needs for biodiversity and ecosystem management.

As each case study was developed it was consistently uncovered that the cases were more complex than initially thought. They offered a wealth of information and insights into how public-private cooperative efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem management in South Africa evolve, their characteristics, successes and challenges. The next section outlines the key lessons and recommendations that are drawn from these examples.
What have we learned?

A. Motivating cooperative efforts with shared risk or shared interests

Cooperative efforts involve pooling resources or combining complementary strengths and working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. The motivation for cooperation between different sectors of society is generally related to addressing a problem, obtaining efficiencies, increasing scope of activities or satisfying a value or mission. The case studies highlight two broad distinctions in the motivation for cooperation between different sectors towards biodiversity and ecosystem management outcomes.

In some cases, cooperative efforts are motivated by a recognition of shared risks, such as disaster risk or water-supply risks, faced as a result of ecological change (dependence on the system). These risks are driven by changes in social and ecological systems that increase the likelihood or consequence of a particular hazard, such as floods or fires, occurring. The drivers that affect the likelihood or consequences of hazards include biophysical changes, such as climate change, land cover change, or loss of healthy wetland ecosystems, combined with socio-economic changes, such as human settlement patterns, disaster preparedness, governance and policy. The drivers of risk are complex in of themselves and as they interplay with other drivers. Reducing risk therefore requires collective action on the part of different sectors of society. Parties that are more closely tied to, dependent on, or embedded in a socio-ecological landscape in which they operate, are more likely to be exposed to risk and ‘feel’ the impact thereof. They are therefore more likely to be motivated to do something about it (see examples in Table 1). A party that can choose to take their interests elsewhere is unlikely to undertake the effort involved in cooperation.

In other cases, shared interest in achieving certain goals can motivate parties to cooperate, such as in gaining clarity around a wetland offsets approach or in improving practices that reduce impact on the environment. Here, the risks of not cooperating are not the same for different parties. While exposure to risk is common, the nature of the risk itself is not shared. The collaboration around the Wetland Offset Guidelines illustrates this point (see Table 1). This is not to say that an understanding of shared risks may not develop over time as the connections between ecosystem management and people or business are better understood. This is what appears to have happened in the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative Case Study.

Table 1. Examples from case studies of cooperative efforts driven predominantly by shared risk or shared interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared risks</th>
<th>Shared interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Izanqawe Case Study, participants recognised shared risks faced as a result of a complex interplay of environmental, social and economic drivers of fire risk. Managing this required cooperative efforts to maintain healthy ecosystems, productive landscapes capable of supporting viable rural livelihoods at a local level.</td>
<td>In the Wetland Offset Guidelines Collaboration Case Study there was shared interest in gaining clarity in the approach, but the risks of not doing so were slightly different (albeit connected) for different parties: loss of wetland biodiversity and ecosystems was the concern for the biodiversity sector, inappropriate practice in implementing wetland offsets posed risks to mining company’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson 1: Cooperation is driven by recognition of shared risks faced as a result of ecological change or shared interests in reducing impact on the socio-ecological system.

4 Hamann et al. (draft) Systemic engagement: How and why companies become agents of positive change for social-ecological resilience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared risks</th>
<th>Shared interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector participants were timber growers who were directly exposed</td>
<td>social licence to operate, reputation, and a risk of fines or non-compliance, contested legislation was a risk to government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to fire risk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <strong>Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study in Eden District Municipality</strong> is an example of cooperative efforts designed around shared response to shared risk of more frequent and damaging disaster events. The shared response was built on an understanding of what was driving disaster risk and what the insurance sector, and other influencers, could do to increase resilience across landscapes.</td>
<td>In the <strong>WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative Case Study</strong>, the cooperative effort was driven by the social sector and public sector involved in biodiversity conservation to stem high rates of biodiversity loss, but was taken up by the private sector because it presented an opportunity to market themselves in a way that might help the industry maintain market access and competitive advantage, particularly in an international market (individual farmers were also motivated by an existing conservation ethic). Recognition of shared risks associated with spread of invasive alien plants (their impact on wildfires and water) has grown as the connections between ecosystem management and the wine industry are better understood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson 2:** Understanding connections between socio-economic and ecological systems helps clarify shared risks and shared interests.

B. Making the case for cooperation through understanding landscape connections

Better understanding of ‘connections’ in landscapes refers to improved understanding and awareness of how we are dependent upon socio-ecological systems and how we impact on them. This is important for clarifying shared risks or interests in managing biodiversity, ecosystems and the services they deliver, and might motivate for collective action to mitigate these.

Gaining a better understanding of connections in a landscape should be an organised process that provides knowledge useful to addressing the problem or issue at hand to the parties involved. The Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study illustrates how this knowledge can be effectively gathered by multidisciplinary and multi-sector teams undertaking assessments of the social, ecological and economic systems. This was achieved through an early research collaboration to understand connections and what was driving shared risk. Expertise was drawn from across a complex range of topics, such as flooding, estuary and coastal dynamics, human settlement and the Santam business operation. Ecosystem assessments and scenario-based modelling of land cover and climatic drivers of natural hazards were used to quantify the effect of climate change and land cover change on natural hazards (floods, drought, sea-storms and wildfires); and this helped to establish a ‘proof of concept’ for the value of an insurance collaboration in Eden District Municipality (see Figure 2). The approach used in the Water Futures Partnership Case Study also illustrates an organised process for assessment and gathering scientific evidence to clarify drivers of risk and understand linkages explicitly.
These cases highlight the importance of investing time and resources in this early ‘assessment’ stage, to understand the connections between people, business and biodiversity and ecosystems. It also highlights the role of the scientific community in this stage. This assessment stage is necessary as a step towards (a) being able to identify different role players in the landscape that are responsible for or have influence over various drivers of change, and (b) identifying tangible short- and medium-term response strategies that could build positive connections and reduce risks in the future. The Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study provides a further example of how this was done (illustrated in Figure 3).

Together, this information should aid in making sense of complex connections between social, ecological and economic systems in a particular area\(^5\). It should do so in a way that helps make linkages to the imperatives of business and government, and build the case for strategic commitment from public, private or social sector parties in subsequent cooperative efforts. It is not easy to cooperate, so there needs to be a clear case for making the necessary investments of time, effort and resources into collective action to address risks. That is not to say that this case is always entirely explicit or proven up front. It will more regularly develop as a joint realisation of shared risks or interests, as occurred in the examples of the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study and Izanqawe Case Study. However the process of developing a case for why parties should cooperate does help to:

\(^5\) Nel, J., B. Reyers and N. Sitas. 2013. The Eden Story: Natural hazards in a changing world. Presentation delivered on 22 November 2013. Available from jnel@csir.co.za
• Clarify what is driving cooperation by some parties (making expectations clear).
• Motivate for cooperation by new parties (help raise the awareness of reasons for cooperation).
• Clarify why some parties may not see a need to cooperate (a weak case for cooperation).

In the case studies the case for cooperation was regularly communicated in terms of avoided risk or opportunities for gain, without this necessarily being translated into a monetized case for cooperation. The case studies reveal many different motivations for public, private or social sector cooperation. Some of the reasons for cooperation for the private sector included reducing business risks including those related to reducing other risks (such as disaster risk or water-related risks; often where there is lack of capacity of the state to address these risks alone), gaining legislative clarity, improving efficiencies or creating market opportunities (such as a unique selling point for wine). For the public sector examples of the case for cooperation were around reducing risks to people and public infrastructure, improving efficiency in service delivery, creating job opportunities, and improving governance capacity. For the social sector, the case for cooperation could be around reducing risks to biodiversity or people (public goods), strengthening capacity to achieve objectives of interest to the social sector parties, strengthening reputation and credibility of the entities themselves.

Where the case for cooperation is tied to strategic objectives of the organisations involved, there appears to be a stronger likelihood of securing strategic commitment of cooperating organisations. Strategic commitment, as opposed to funds from corporate social responsibility budgets, is beneficial as cooperative efforts regularly require commitment over several to many years. Additionally, efforts may need to be scaled up to achieve real impacts and/or may require implementing operational changes in organisations. It is not easy to change institutionalised practices or motivate for investment in what is not core to business or function. The Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study illustrates how scientific evidence was used in motivating for strategic commitment from co-operators, particularly the private sector party. This is most effectively done by individuals from those organisations or sectors, who are able to be ‘translators’ – capable of communicating connections within social, economic and ecological systems. As in the Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study, where a champion in Santam was key to effective communication internally, across different divisions of the business, to get the necessary commitment and involvement of colleagues and managers.

It is noteworthy that several of the cases involved cooperation with an industry body (such as Forestry South Africa, South Africa Insurance Agency or Wines of South Africa). This approach offers several benefits:

• The industry bodies appear more amenable to piloting or testing innovative approaches where the benefit to the industry is likely but not proven.
• Reputational risks of collaboration with private companies may be minimised.
• There is opportunity for industry-wide change.
• They are under less direct pressure from shareholders and may be able to cooperate over longer time periods.

In each case, the number of cooperating parties grew over time. The initial case for cooperation may not convince all potential collaborators, but neither does it need to. Interviewees emphasized that not everyone will cooperate initially, and that the case is often best proven in practice.
C. Common ingredients for cooperation

In each of the cases the cooperative efforts were not simple to explain. They grew and evolved as needed to enable cooperation between participants to achieve various outcomes. To help explain the evolution of cooperative efforts, a schematic of key role players and the different groupings of cooperators was developed for each case study (Figure 4). For instance, in the case of cooperative effort to address increasing disaster risk in the Eden District Municipality a combination of cooperative efforts emerged:

- A research-based insurance collaboration to explore what was driving disaster risk and what the insurance sector, and other influencers, could do to increase resilience across landscapes. The research collaboration involved participants working together on a limited and specific project that helped establish a proof of concept for subsequent collaborations.
- A partnership to improve disaster preparedness and management at municipal level. The BAAM initiative developed as a broad implementation partnership between government and a private sector entity towards achieving a broadly defined general purpose with specific developments or actions jointly decided upon through the formally structured coordinating committees.
- A network coordinating efforts that contribute to successful disaster risk reduction and strategies for climate change adaptation. The Disaster Resilience Learning Network (DRLN) might also be called a dialogue or innovation partnership.

These cooperative efforts differ from each other in a number of ways, such as life span, contribution of resources by partners, coordination of decision-making and commitment of parties. Various typologies may be used to put names to the different forms of cooperative effort that emerge, but more valuable than the specific names put to different ways of cooperating is describing the

Lesson 4: The ways in which private, public and social sector parties cooperate vary and more than one way of cooperating may be employed to address biodiversity and ecosystem management.
cooperative efforts in such a way as to highlight different expectations, risks and commitments of the role players. Looking across the case studies, the cooperative efforts commonly:

- **Began as cooperative efforts of limited duration and/or focused on achieving a specific purpose** (such as the research collaboration in the Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study or Wetland Offset Guidelines Case Study). This indicates that cooperative efforts can start small, and then increase in scale, become more formalised, or involve more co-operators over time.

- **Had less formally coordinated or structured decision-making processes, opting for flexibility**, particularly in the early stages of new cooperative efforts. More formalised agreements or increased commitment by parties evolved once trust has been built and goals clarified (such as in the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study).

- **Were funded substantially by funds from the biodiversity sector.** In several cases, biodiversity sector funding was facilitated through international donor funding for larger projects such as was the case with initial funding for the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative, for forestry development support in the Izanqawe Case Study, and for coordination and technical support in the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study. In the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Initiative Case Study, wine industry funding supported the initiative at critical junctures but a decline in industry funding, in spite of other supportive signs of good uptake and integration by the wine industry, highlights the challenges of sustained funding for cooperative efforts such as this. Innovative evolution of funding sources related to the industry is required, but this case indicates that perhaps conservation sector funds will always be required to support such initiatives, which are at their essence about long-term conservation objectives.

There are fewer examples of very formal partnerships characterised by some sort of formal memorandum of association or understanding that results in strong coordination of decision-making and a strong commitment of partners to work together towards a mutually agreed purpose over fairly long periods of time. Where these have developed they are often built on the back of previous or existing cooperative efforts that were more flexible in nature or limited in duration.

**Lesson 5:** The nature of cooperative efforts evolves and changes over time, as trust is built and needs are clarified or change.

**Lesson 6:** Early cooperative efforts that are limited in duration, formal structure, risk or commitment of partners can be the starting point for building trust and capacity for more formalised, broader, or longer-term cooperative efforts.

Pre-existing relationships between co-operators enable further cooperative efforts and perhaps also greater commitment from participants. This is undoubtedly as relationships of trust grow, and improved understanding between co-operators increase their willingness to take on greater commitments and risk in terms of more formally structured and longer-term partnerships.

This is naturally more so where cooperative efforts were successful. There are several resources, in the academic literature and policy space, providing guidance and frameworks for cooperative efforts and reflections on what makes cooperative efforts successful, including research on what makes for
successful partnerships in South Africa. Many of these are based on lessons from cooperative efforts in other fields but some include examples of cooperative efforts towards biodiversity and ecosystem management. It appears that there is a general convergence of success factors across these and across disciplines (summarised in Box 1). It is apparent that a fair amount can be drawn from this existing knowledge on what makes for successful cooperation. Effort must be made by those involved in cooperative efforts to draw on this knowledge, lessons and experience so as to avoid more common problems and pitfalls. Additionally training on partnerships and change management was recommended by some involved in the case studies.

**Box 1. Success factors in cross-sector collaborations**

As highlighted by Hamann et al. (2011) in a case study analysis of what makes cross-sector collaboration successful, the critical success factors are not new. They have been outlined in literature and partnership tools a decade prior and their analysis of South African cases only added nuance to the success factors already identified. The factors are summarised in the schematic illustration below and feed into each other in mutually reinforcing or constraining ways.

![Schematic illustration of possible virtuous or vicious circle of interaction between diverse partnership success factors.](image)

The case studies highlight that cooperative efforts are dynamic, and that adaptive management is important to their success and sustainability. For instance in the Izanqawe Case Study, weakened governance in one private sector party, combined with delays in funding and insufficient support from government, placed the cooperative efforts towards improved ecosystem management at risk. Other role players responded adaptively as best they could, and in some ways this may have helped to

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**Lesson 7: Make an effort to draw on lessons and experience from other cooperative efforts at the planning stage.**

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strenthen relationships with private sector parties, at least initially. Unfortunately this case highlights that a lack of government support (financial and otherwise) to land reform communities following their settlement poses significant risks to maintaining productive landscapes, managing ecosystems and biodiversity, and presents a range of other risks to land reform beneficiaries and others in the socio-ecological system. Another example is the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study, which points to the importance of flexibility in realigning objectives to match emerging needs for biodiversity and ecosystem management.

Also highlighted in the Izanqawe Case Study was that there can regularly be differences in capacity, skills and competencies of co-operators. It is worth recognising the risk this poses to cooperative efforts and considering appropriate options for plugging capacity gaps in a way that avoids imbalance of power, maintains trust between co-operators, and builds capacity over time. The case studies suggest that addressing this can require:

- An effective ‘facilitator’ or ‘trust broker’ (such as the role played by the mentor in the Izanqawe Case Study).
- Intensive engagements starting early on.
- Greater efforts to learn from cases of successful cooperative efforts.
- Potentially resourcing under-capacitated partners where appropriate.

The time and effort required to address such gaps and build relationships of trust is significant. The case studies each point to the fact that it can take years, not only for effective cooperative efforts to develop, but also for effective cooperative efforts to result in any sort of significant benefits or outcomes in terms of biodiversity and ecosystem management. For instance it has taken about three years for the Business-Adopt-A-Municipality initiative to be formalised. In the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study, examining a large number of test cases, and negotiating agreement around contentious issues towards decisions took significant time and could not be easily rushed. Even fairly specific outputs, like the Wetland Offset Guidelines, can take years to achieve, let alone broader outcomes, such as influencing complex drivers of disaster risk.

Parties working together to achieve biodiversity and ecosystem management objectives need to take cognisance of this. It should be taken into consideration in the design, commitment, management and expectations of such efforts. This contributes to the logic behind first pursuing cooperative efforts that focus on taking small steps along a longer journey towards achieving broader biodiversity and ecosystem management outcomes.

Lesson 8: Cooperative efforts for biodiversity and ecosystem management can take years to establish, and years to achieve even simple outputs.

D. Creating an enabling environment for achieving long-term biodiversity objectives

Biodiversity and ecosystem management outcomes will often require efforts at scale to influence persistence of biodiversity or impact services delivered by ecosystems. Small steps at a local level (such as addressing improved plantation forestry management practices and fire prevention strategies in the Izanqawe Case Study) can do a lot to reduce fire risk locally, but more systemic interventions would be needed to have an impact at the landscape level or at a sectoral level.

This is highlighting the gap between implementing local level biodiversity and ecosystem management interventions (short-hook interventions to practices or on-the-ground) and the enabling environment for these efforts, such as national or sectoral policy reform (long-hook interventions to policy). There
are several examples from the case studies where there are cooperative efforts towards achieving both long-hook (policy) and short-hook (practice) interventions. The examples of where the cooperative efforts tried to influence production sector or national policies include:

- The WWF-BWI worked with the industry to improve the wine industry certification scheme.
- The Izanqawe Case Study collaborative effort to strengthen the enabling environment for small-growers through improved sustainable forestry management and certification that could have implications for small growers nationally (and even in other countries).
- The collaboration around the Wetland Offset Guideline was to influence a national guideline that would in turn influence other biodiversity offset policies.
- In the Insurance Sector Collaboration Case Study, the private sector partner (Santam) is supporting interventions that benefit competitors as well as themselves, despite non-participating competitors sharing none of the costs of collaboration. Rather than avoiding this, Santam is engaging with the South African Insurance Association in order to influence industry-wide changes in the way risks are understood and addressed.

Combining short-hook interventions making progress at a local level and long-hook interventions to influence policy has some important implications in project design. Firstly, long-hook interventions can take even longer to achieve by design. Achieving long-hook interventions often requires opportunistic behaviour, calling for project flexibility and adaptability in both project management and project objectives. For example, in the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study where both positive and negative experiences of the initial pilot project (short-hook intervention) highlighted the need for national guidelines that improved clarity around implementing wetland offsets. Flexibility and adaptability in project management enabled taking advantage of opportunities to influence national policy.

Secondly, the case studies indicate that achieving long-hook interventions regularly involves parties capable of convening a learning network (or a partnership focused on dialogue) working towards a long-term biodiversity and ecosystem management benefit (public good). Examples of this include:

- The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Grasslands Programme in the Wetland Offsets Guideline Collaboration Case Study who were recognised as credible science leaders with neutral convening power and a mandate to engage with government.
- The Disaster Resilience Learning Network convened by the Western Cape Climate Change and Biodiversity Directorate.

Cooperative efforts that encourage facilitated dialogue between different parties, such as through a learning networks, appear to play an important role in:

Lesson 9: A combination of short-hook interventions to make progress at ground level (improving practices) and long-hook interventions to influence policy (sectoral or national policy reform) are needed for biodiversity and ecosystem management.

Lesson 10: Leadership of a party working towards long-term biodiversity objectives and capable of adaptive management supports cooperative efforts that are more likely to impact the enabling environment for biodiversity and ecosystem management.
• Addressing tensions and highlighting paradoxes (inherent in bringing together diverse logics, interests and constituencies).
• Aligning efforts and complementary skills of members.
• Facilitating collaborative learning and strengthening capacity.
• Pooling resources and expertise (such as in the Upper Breede Collaborative Extension Group (UBCEG) in the WWF-SA Biodiversity and Wine Case Study where opportunities to align resources and capacity were identified).
• Helping to support and guide short- to medium-term interventions, while enabling and strengthening cooperative efforts towards longer-term biodiversity and ecosystem management outcomes.

Lessons:

Lesson 11: Learning networks are important for enabling and strengthening cooperative efforts towards biodiversity and ecosystem management.

The convenors of these networks come from the biodiversity sector predominantly, and are either parastatals, NGOs or sometimes government.

Through the case studies it has become clear that there are many different cooperative efforts that encourage dialogue, sharing and communication between parties. Sometimes these have linked or potentially overlapping objectives. Therefore, there is likely to be value in an effort to ‘map’ the different networks to establish linkages, pre-existing relationships, and opportunities for supporting or strengthening public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management (lesson 3).

A challenge exists if these networks are tied to political horizons or limited funding cycles (donor-funding). Planning for the sustainability of such networks will be important in their contributing towards achieving longer-term or broader-scale outcomes.

Finally, there is the need for (and challenge of) good monitoring and evaluation of these projects. Often projects involve working towards longer term outcomes but with short- and medium-term reporting requirements. Also, different co-operators have different reporting requirements and interests. Indicators that capture progress in the cooperative effort itself, as well as progress in the short- and medium-term outcomes are needed.

Lesson 12: Good monitoring and evaluation of cooperative efforts should form part of their adaptive management and strengthen the case for cooperative efforts.

Good monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of cooperative efforts should contribute to strengthening the case for cooperative efforts, learning from experience (feed into learning and knowledge sharing in learning networks), and form part of adaptive management of cooperative efforts. The importance of this was highlighted in a workshop with people involved in cooperative efforts, who stressed the need to effectively resource monitoring and evaluation, to invest in monitoring and evaluation early on, and to be flexible in maintaining good indicators while maintaining clarity on the project goals.

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E. The right people are key for cooperative efforts

Cooperative efforts require participants working together in new ways, and facing a range of challenges associated with establishing novel institutional forms for different types of cooperative efforts. This goes hand in hand with correspondingly innovative approaches to leadership, decision-making, dealing with inequalities of power, and accountability. The case studies and literature repeatedly emphasize the important role played by individuals in convening and championing cooperative efforts.

These people are important to building relationships and trust, facilitating dialogue, and maintaining legitimacy. Having the ‘right’ people championing or convening cooperative efforts is key. The qualities and characteristics of such individuals and what makes for successful partnerships have been explored in literature on the subject but three important points can be made through this case study analysis:

- The ‘right’ people are translators, capable of communicating connections and linkages in socio-ecological systems to different parties.
- The ‘right’ people can be co-opted or inserted into under-capacitated partners if they are able to gain credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of who they are meant to represent (such as the mentor assigned to the Izanqawe Community Trust in the Izanqawe Case Study).
- Cooperative efforts require a considerable amount of time and energy on the part of the individuals involved. They regularly have to devote a lot of time to developing and maintaining inter-personal relationships, being available to navigate complications, having the emotional and social capital to deal with conflicts and paradoxes in ways that keep things moving forward, and doing so both between organisations and often within their own organisation (maintaining vertical coherence within an organisation). Where key people are over-committed, this can put cooperative efforts at risk.

It is also interesting to note that in every case study looked at, there was a public institution (such as SANBI or the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)) working towards biodiversity gains and/or an environmental NGO playing a driving or facilitating role (links to Lesson 10). Certain organisations, and sections within them therefore have growing experience in these types of cooperative efforts. It has been alluded to already that skills and capacity that enable cooperative relationships can and should be strengthened through training and learning from other efforts (Lesson 7).

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Lesson 13: Cooperative efforts need the right people involved in solutions-orientated dialogue.
Conclusion: summary of lessons from the case studies

In terms of what is revealed from the case studies, public-private cooperation for biodiversity and ecosystem management is driven by recognition of shared risks faced as a result of ecological change (dependence on the system) or shared interests in reducing impact on the socio-ecological system (the risks of not doing so might be different for different sectors e.g. reputational risk, social licence to operate) (lesson 1).

It is important to invest time and resources early on to understand connections in socio-ecological systems – with respect to our dependence upon socio-ecological systems and how we impact on them (lesson 2). Gaining this understanding is enabled through gathering knowledge through ecosystem service assessments (linking assessments of the social, ecological and economic systems), involvement of multidisciplinary and multi-sector teams, and consideration of different management or future scenarios. These help to clarify shared risks or interests in managing biodiversity, ecosystems and the services they deliver, which might motivate for collective action to mitigate the identified risks (lesson 3).

The ways in which private, public, and social sector parties cooperate vary (lesson 4), from highly formalised to very informal relationships, driven more strongly by one party or with equal say from all participants, varying commitment of human and financial resources and with varying compatibility of goals. The nature of these cooperative efforts evolves and changes over time, as trust is built and needs are clarified or change (lesson 5). Early cooperative efforts that are limited can help in building trust and capacity for larger, broader, or longer-term cooperative efforts (lesson 6).

A fair amount is known about what makes for successful cooperative efforts, and with the growing body of experience and examples, efforts must be made to draw in lessons and experience at the planning stage (lesson 7). The case studies also highlight that many cooperative efforts can take years to establish, and years to achieve even simple outputs (lesson 8). Achieving broader biodiversity and ecosystem management objectives requires on-the-ground interventions (short-hook interventions) and interventions in the enabling environment for these efforts, such as national or sectoral policy reform (long-hook interventions) (lesson 9). The latter can take even longer to achieve by design, or might be achieved when the opportunity arises if there is sufficient flexibility and adaptability in management (lesson 10) – both considerations that should be recognised in the planning phase of cooperative efforts.

Learning networks or dialogue partnerships are important for enabling and strengthening cooperative efforts, particularly with respect to achieving broader-scale or longer-term biodiversity and ecosystem management objectives (lesson 11). Good monitoring and evaluation of cooperative efforts should contribute to strengthening or solidifying the case for cooperative efforts, learning from experience (feed into learning and knowledge sharing in learning networks), and form part of adaptive management of cooperative efforts (lesson 12).

Across all case studies, different types of cooperative efforts, and phases for cooperation, having the ‘right’ people capable of convening and championing different cooperative efforts is highlighted over and over again (lesson 13). These people are capable of communicating connections and linkages in socio-ecological systems to different parties, building relationships and trust (emotional intelligence), facilitating dialogue (including around tensions and paradoxes), and maintaining legitimacy.
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The opinions expressed and conclusions drawn are not necessarily shared by all members of the cooperative efforts described.

This report is

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