



In South Africa, 48%¹ of wetland ecosystems are critically endangered, despite being high-value ecological infrastructure, providing critical ecosystem services and acting as social safety-nets to the poorest communities.

¹NBA, 2011

Local Action for Biodiversity: Wetlands South Africa

Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB): Wetlands South Africa will enhance the conservation and management of natural wetland resources across South Africa by assisting 11 district municipalities to build institutional capacity and develop local policies for integrating biodiversity across local government departments.

The programme – implemented by ICLEI and key partners, SANBI, SALGA, Working for Wetlands and DEA – is based on the globally renowned LAB Pioneer methodology. The LAB programme recognises the critical role of local governments in biodiversity conservation and the value of biodiversity for delivering ecosystem services and enhancing local climate resilience.

A LAB programme for South Africa

LAB: Wetlands South Africa has been customised to the South African context, where wetlands are the most threatened of all ecosystems and where poverty and the delivery of basic services are critical issues at the local government level.

Biodiversity, and wetlands in particular, contribute to service provision and disaster risk reduction through ecosystem services such as flood attenuation, water filtration and water security, which are

increasingly important in a changing climate.

The programme therefore seeks to enhance the conservation and management of natural wetland resources through increased awareness of wetlands and the integration of biodiversity considerations into local government planning and decision-making.

Where are we working?

Amatole	Waterberg
Bojanala	West Rand
Buffalo city	
Eden	
Ehlanzeni	
Ekurhuleni	
Frances Baard	
iLembe	
Overberg	

Duration

Jan 2015 – Oct 2017

Programme overview

Through enhanced awareness of wetlands, and the integration of biodiversity considerations into local government planning and decision-making, the project will build the capacity of the district municipalities to prioritise and effectively manage wetlands and biodiversity. The programme will focus on mainstreaming biodiversity across government departments and working with community stakeholders to increase awareness and community buy-in.

In the long-term, the programme seeks to contribute disaster risk-reduction and resilience to climate change through effective management of biodiversity and wetland and enhancing ecosystem services.

During the programme, each district municipality will:

1. Improve local government and citizen understanding of the value of biodiversity in the local context.

A core focus of the programme is the provision of training, information and resources that will develop awareness and

the capacity to identify problems and solutions.

Two workshops will be convened in each project municipality, bringing together municipal departments and key community stakeholders, ensuring that citizens are included in the learning process and improving community buy-in and ownership of biodiversity projects.

2. Boost political commitment

A core part of the programme is engagement with the mayor and other high-level officials to emphasise the importance of biodiversity and climate adaptation in the local government context and to promote local government leadership in this regard.

3. Integrate biodiversity into local government planning and decision-making.

Each municipality will be assisted in the compilation of a *Wetland Assessment Report* that will take stock of the municipality's wetland resources and the priorities for management into one resource. The assessment report will provide a basis for the development of a *Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*, which is

a key implementation tool for biodiversity management across the municipality and integrating with the IDP.

Integration of biodiversity considerations across departments is a key factor, and the formation of multi-sectoral platforms within the municipality will enhance understanding and input from all departments.

4. Implement on-the-ground wetland projects and develop project proposals for wetland project funding.

During the development of the Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, wetland project concepts will be developed. As part of the LAB: Wetlands South Africa programme, three municipalities will be awarded funding to implement a project, based on a competition between participants.

Further information

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