“From Fortress Conservation to People and Conservation” – SANParks and a Developmental Approach to Conservation in the 21st Century
Cover picture: Women harvesting thatching grass in the Kruger National Park assisted by a SANParks bursary student.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI</td>
<td>Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>AENP</td>
<td>Addo Elephant National Park</td>
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<td>ANP</td>
<td>Agulhas National Park</td>
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<td>CBD</td>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
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<td>CCAs</td>
<td>Community Conserved Areas</td>
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<td>CDP</td>
<td>Contractor Development Programme</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CIDB</td>
<td>Constructions Industry Development Board</td>
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<td>CNPPA</td>
<td>Commission on National Parks &amp; Protected Areas</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communal Property Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANCED</td>
<td>Danish Conservation, Environment and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBSA</td>
<td>Development Bank of South Africa</td>
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<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of Environmental Affairs</td>
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<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
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<td>EE</td>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
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<td>EPWP</td>
<td>Expanded Public Works Programme</td>
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<td>FEFF</td>
<td>Farleigh Eco-Furniture Factory</td>
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<td>HE</td>
<td>Heritage Education</td>
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<td>HPHP</td>
<td>Healthy People Healthy Parks</td>
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<td>ICU</td>
<td>Intensive Care Unit</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Infrastructure Development Programme</td>
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<td>ISCU</td>
<td>Invasive Species Control Unit</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>JMB</td>
<td>Joint Management Board</td>
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<td>JMC</td>
<td>Joint Management Committee</td>
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<td>KGSI</td>
<td>Kudu Green School Initiative</td>
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<td>KIP</td>
<td>Kids in Parks</td>
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<td>KNP</td>
<td>Kruger National Park</td>
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<td>KTP</td>
<td>Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park</td>
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<td>MGR</td>
<td>Mjejane Game Reserve</td>
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<td>MNDT</td>
<td>Mayibuye Ndlovu Development Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEMPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWNOA</td>
<td>Nuwejaars Wetland Land Owners Association</td>
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<td>OSV</td>
<td>Open Safari Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>Organization for Tropical Studies</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>RGBK</td>
<td>Richtersveld Gesamentlike Bestuurs Komitee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANParks</td>
<td>South African National Parks</td>
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<td>SETA</td>
<td>Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>SMME</td>
<td>Small, Micro and Medium-sized Enterprise</td>
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<td>TKNP</td>
<td>Tankwa Karoo National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMACC</td>
<td>Table Mountain Aerial Cablecar Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMNP</td>
<td>Table Mountain National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>University of Pretoria</td>
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<td>WfTC</td>
<td>Working for the Coast</td>
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<td>WfW</td>
<td>Working for Water</td>
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<td>WoL</td>
<td>Working on Land</td>
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vision
South African National Parks connecting to society.

mission
To develop, manage and promote a system of national parks that represents the biodiversity and heritage assets by applying best practice, environmental justice, benefit sharing and sustainable use.

corporate values
In all that we do, we shall:

• Demonstrate leadership
• Embrace, and be guided by, environmental ethics
• Promote transformation both within and outside the organisation
• Strive for scientific and service excellence
• Act with professionalism
• Adopt and encourage initiative and innovation by all
• Treat all our stakeholders with equality and justice
• Exercise discipline
• Act with honesty and integrity
• Strive for transparency and open communication at all times.
Dr Hector Magome and Paul Daphne

It is appropriate to point out that this document, now finally pieced together, has been in existence in various forms since 1994. Indeed, Dr David Mabunda, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of South African National Parks (SANParks), constantly reminds his executive team that SANParks has done a lot of work that has been documented and kept in various reports. It is fitting that such work be fully acknowledged. The first attempt by the previous CEO, GA Robinson (1994) in *Towards neighbour relations: a draft policy and strategy for the National Parks Board*, provided a good base from which to rethink and review strategies. The other publications, produced under Mavuso Msimang, the second former CEO after Robinson, are shown in the box below.

On the right are three publications on the “people and conservation” approach, illustrating the work that SANParks is doing with poor local people and rural communities living adjacent to all national parks.

The publications are:


All these attempts, often categorised as grey literature, are now published in various books, science journals, and scholarly work such as masters and doctoral dissertations. SANParks’ own Drs David Mabunda and Hector Magome have researched and published on some of the transformation attempts of SANParks.

Dr David Mabunda, third CEO after 1994, has set the bar a notch higher and this report is the result of his sterling leadership. His initial two key pages exploded to about 50 pages! He continued to source material using his institutional memory and also commissioned the editors, Hector Magome and Paul Daphne, to piece it all together. The editors, assisted by Sithembile Maseko, could only improve on and re-arrange the hard work of others. SANParks would like to thank and acknowledge all those who provided material. However, with nearly 4 000 core staff and a total of 10 000 waking up daily to work in the national parks, it is not possible to acknowledge all of them individually. All that SANParks can do is to thank all staff who wrote and submitted pieces of information; those that had a camera for the ‘Kodak moment’ and those photographed. SANParks thanks all 10 000 staff members in the forever business of biodiversity conservation in national parks.
It is fitting to pay tribute to our own peaceful revolution of 1994. Today South Africa is part of a global movement and continues to play a significant role in various global events. It is therefore critical that as we move forward on this journey, special effort should be made to move away from our painful conservation past where public institutions were used to implement a well-crafted system of alienating certain spheres of society. Indeed, democratic rule in South Africa signified an incredible change in the history of our country. It ushered in new ways of thinking in the day-to-day running of public institutions, which meant that the country’s resources had to be spread equally among all citizens so that all could contribute towards the building of a new society. However, as we celebrate the country’s achievements, we need to recognise certain challenges that still exist: these include the relationship between protected areas and their neighbouring communities as we re-orientate protected areas away from an isolationist position towards an integrated one.

The role of wildlife in the economy of rural livelihoods is increasingly gaining recognition, as is the importance of traditional knowledge and local natural resource management systems in protected area management. South Africa is an incredibly diverse country as reflected not only in our natural resources and biodiversity, but also in our cultural diversity. History shows that people in this country have been living in harmony with nature for centuries. Our forefathers relied on hunting and gathering natural resources for survival. It is our mission to continue this custom of mutual harmony between people and nature by harnessing the spirit of our communities in the quest for nature-friendly conservation, thus ensuring the survival of our protected areas in South Africa.

South Africa, through its system of national parks, has become the epitome of the progressive movement of 21st century environmentalists, which ensures that every single South African is connected to our national parks. This noble cause of total inclusion has gained momentum by identifying specific activities and processes that address issues at the interface between conservation and communities. We are all working to promote and protect our country’s resources, and also to highlight and implement the rights of communities affected by conservation processes. It is only when we achieve mutual harmony and agreement between all involved parties that we can rightfully call our foundation ‘successful’.
We have a robust People and Parks Programme with strong community involvement, solid policies, and structures and frameworks in place to ensure further success of the programmes in the future. SANParks is the only African Protected Area Agency to join the global board of Healthy People Healthy Parks (HPHP). Ultimately, the SANParks People and Parks Programme reported herein is about making the HPHP concept a reality for all citizens in the dual economy of South Africa. These achievements have paved the way for a culture of developing a reciprocal relationship between protected areas and their neighbouring communities, making national parks a true mirror of our society’s environmental values and its vigorous symbols of the national flag, the national anthem, the coat of arms and the Union Buildings. As part of our new positioning, SANParks has introduced a number of key programmes that enjoy the full support and participation of all South Africans as they reflect the demographics of the nation. This document highlights these programmes.
The concept of a national park is about prestige, but the concept of prestige is difficult to define for it conjures up different human emotions. On prestige, Keytel (2012) wrote on luxury hospitality brands: “Some concepts are beyond the reach of words, because they concern our innermost self and have much more to do with emotions than reason.” It follows that the true and comprehensive meaning of a national park cannot be found in books or in dictionary definitions. National parks are created and understood by the nation, for they are for the whole nation, kept and protected by the nation for all its citizens to enjoy and to cherish within the nationally accepted norms and standards of managing national parks. A national park is a national asset like any other national icon, which evokes emotions that are difficult to define.

This report shows that while SANParks fulfils both the object and the purpose of NEMPA (the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 as amended), it also drives economic development activities designed ostensibly to improve the livelihoods of rural people living adjacent to national parks. National parks fall under the rubric of protected areas, but national parks have a totally different status (prestige) and mandate from other protected areas. Hence the creation and separation of the old National Parks Board, which has been replaced by SANParks, from the former Provincial Administrations, now replaced by the nine provinces. The changes are still endorsed by the Constitution of 1996 and by NEMPA. In the democratic South Africa, national parks are entrenched in Schedule 4 of the Constitution. Activities such as resource extraction and hunting are rarely allowed in national parks as they would be inconsistent with the norms and standards of national parks. As the high courts have a mandate and a status different from those of magistrates courts, likewise national parks have a mandate and a status different from those of provincial protected areas. National parks are the highest brands in a country’s protected area system.

SANParks popularised the concept of Social Ecology, and later changed it to People and Conservation as a vision with the primary objective of creating opportunities for villagers living around national parks so that they can derive benefits from the resources and opportunities available within the parks. In addition to direct and indirect jobs, SANParks has established a number of community ‘contract parks’ with neighbouring communities, inter alia Makuleke, Kgalagadi San, Mier, and Richtersveld contract national parks, where rural communities are directly involved in conservation and ecotourism projects. For instance, the Makuleke built Pafuri Lodge through a SANParks-facilitated partnership with Wilderness Safaris and the lodge employs local people and generates income for community projects. Another example of a community-owned lodge is the Klein Skrij Lodge in the San and Mier contractual area of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

A new innovation has been the involvement of black entrepreneurs in the traditional white-dominated Open Safari Vehicle (OSV) business. Licences are awarded to a few black operators and, with the support of Vuswa Fleet services, OSV vehicles were sourced for the new operators at preferential rates. Curio manufacturing centres have been established in some national parks, providing the community arts and crafters space to produce and trade.
their wares at entrance gates. The Phalaborwa Gate craft centre is the flagship and the most successful of these centres.

In terms of creating access to national parks, SANParks runs the biggest Environmental Education (EE) programme through several projects like Kids in Parks, School Journey Services and My Acre of Africa in the Kruger National Park. About 170 000 school children benefit from these programmes annually, the largest of their kind in Africa. A school is currently under construction near the town of Hazyview to supplement the EE programme conducted from the Kruger National Park to the community schools. Major improvements are under way in other national parks to create EE centres. The impact of awareness and access campaigns such as the annual Kudu Awards and National Parks Week are immense. The Kudu Awards identifies and honours members of the public who are making indelible contributions to environmental protection in their communities. National Parks Week opens the gates of all national parks, allowing the public to enter free of charge and to learn about and enjoy their heritage for the day. SANParks recently launched an aggressive concept that takes conservation education from schools through universities and ultimately to the biodiversity sector. Indeed, national parks are no longer playgrounds of the privileged elite but microcosms reflecting the aspirations and wishes of our diversified society.

2. CONTEXT

It is four decades since the IUCN’s 1980 World Conservation Strategy was published to promote inclusive rather than exclusive approaches to nature conservation. In practice, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is used as the international instrument that binds and encourages nation states to have detailed inclusive biodiversity conservation strategies. The CBD has three key objectives: 1) conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); 2) sustainable use of its components; and 3) the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. The CBD is a key binding legal instrument regarding sustainable development and South Africa is one of its signatories.

In 1994, South African National Parks (SANParks) changed from a purist conservation model to one that promotes a developmental and people-centred approach. In 1995, SANParks introduced what was termed Social Ecology, now renamed People and Conservation, and broadly termed the People and Parks programme. Before Social Ecology was launched, SANParks invested some R30 million in partnership with DANCED (Danish Conservation, Environment and Development) and now DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency). SANParks is now a leading national conservation agency that has a fully integrated biodiversity and people-focused strategy. In fact, SANParks has changed its vision from making national parks the pride and joy of all to national parks connecting to society. This is key, since South Africa’s unemployment figure stands at 26% in a population of 50 million, with 51% of the unemployed between the ages of 18 and 25. Nearly all the national parks are situated in areas that are ravaged by abject poverty and depressed regional economies. As fate would have it, the key viable economic activities that generate jobs and economic growth opportunities in such poor regions are mainly national parks.

However, in South Africa the manner, nature and extent to which national parks, provincial nature reserves and other state-owned protected areas try to meet this challenge
are mostly governed by the constitution and legislation and shaped by international practices. In South Africa the cornerstone legislation is NEMPa (the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 as amended). For this context, one of the key objectives of NEMPa, section 2, is: (c) to effect a national system of protected areas in South Africa as part of a strategy to manage and conserve its biodiversity, and Chapter 2 of NEMPa articulates South Africa’s system of protected areas and makes provision for the norms and standards required to manage each system. This document will show that while SANParks fulfils both the object and the purpose of NEMPa, SANParks also drives economic development activities designed ostensibly to improve the livelihoods of rural people living adjacent to national parks. Before this is done, it is important to understand the concept of a national park or national parks — what is a national park and what is it for?

In their instructive book: Managing Protected Areas — A global guide, Lockwood, Worboys & Kothari (2006:82) reminded us that at the IUCN’s General Assembly held in New Delhi in 1969, a resolution was passed to define national parks as: a relatively large area where one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation. However, in 1974 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) further defined a national park as: a relatively large area that is not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, and where the highest competent authority of the country has taken steps to enforce aesthetic features which have led to its establishment, and where visitors are allowed to enter, under special conditions, for inspirational, cultural and recreational purposes. In 1975, the IUCN decided through its then CNPPA (Commission on National Parks & Protected Areas — note the peculiar name, as if national parks were not part of protected areas) to develop a classification of protected areas (refer to Table below). National parks are IUCN Category II: “protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection, scientific research, wilderness protection, cultural resource protection and tourism and recreation purposes”. In this category, sustainable use is largely confined to tourism and recreation by photographic visitors.

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<tr>
<th>IUCN MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES OF PROTECTED AREAS</th>
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<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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The IUCN has already approved Category VII to allow for Community Conserved Areas (CCAs), as in many parts of the developing world CCAs exist.

In South Africa provincial nature reserves and protected areas are best suited for providing firewood and building material for shelter, harvesting of grasses (*incenca*), fishing, hunting, thatching, and providing traditional medicinal plants. While national parks are managed as reservoirs of biological diversity and the associated cultural assets, this has not stopped SANParks from pursuing a sustainable development approach to fulfil its developmental approach to conservation. SANParks response to the challenge, since 1995, was to create a constituency-building vision with the primary objective of creating linkages and opportunities for villagers living around national parks so that they can derive benefits.

Below is a detailed account of all the key developmental conservation approaches of SANParks since 1994.
As previously stated, and in line with its new vision (2012) of ‘Connecting to Society’, SANParks promotes constituency building to give effect to its transformation mission of facilitating dialogue and mutually beneficial partnerships with most of the stakeholders. For rural poor communities, SANParks is engaged in the implementation of programmes promoting access and benefit sharing, socio-economic development, and improved living conditions for local communities adjacent to national parks. SANParks also enhances the recognition for and appreciation of conservation values. A number of programmes, as outlined below, have been implemented to realise this.

Former Managing Executive of the KNP, Dr Bandile Mkhize, addressing a Park Forum at Skukuza
**Park Forums:** Park Forums provide a legitimate platform to communicate SANParks issues to stakeholders on matters affecting national parks. Ultimately Park Forums facilitate interactions between the national parks and their stakeholders in support of the natural and cultural heritage conservation goals of SANParks. The objective of a Park Forum is to engage stakeholders on all issues affecting the collective good of the national parks and adjacent communities. SANParks is obliged to engage in stakeholder participation processes to foster good relations. However, Park Forums have no decision-making powers. The members participate in all the processes of park management plans where they give input. Park Forums exist for all national parks except for Richtersveld, where the RGBK (Richtersveld Gesamentlike Bestuurs Komitee – or the Joint Management Committee) is in operation. A minimum of four engagements per annum with Park Forums take place in each national park to ensure continuous information sharing.

**Environmental Education (EE):** SANParks, through EE programmes, promotes environmental ethics while facilitating understanding and appreciation of the SANParks mandate. EE enhances understanding and awareness of environmental issues by accessing national parks for participatory learning opportunities within the framework of the school curriculum. By equipping leaders of tomorrow with knowledge and skills required for taking action, SANParks believes that the implementation of EE at the school level will contribute to the development of a cadre of educators, learners and communities that will respect and value national parks. Programmes are implemented throughout all the national parks, attracting over 170 000 learners per annum.

**Kids in Parks (KiP):** Now in its eighth year of implementation, KiP is a partnership programme between the National Department of Environmental Affairs, SANParks and Pick n Pay stores. This programme provides opportunities for learners and educators to use national parks as learning environments. About 5 000 learners per year from disadvantaged backgrounds have visited national parks. Furthermore, learner support materials aligned to the national school curriculum are developed to strengthen the educational experiences of children. KiP entails workshops for educators on topics such as environmental ethics in a three-day sponsored field trip to the national parks. KiP is hosted in EE centres situated in the national parks. Tents are used in areas where there are no EE buildings.

*Learners attending Kids in Parks programmes*
**National Parks Week:** Held annually in September, National Parks Week was launched in 2006 with the objective of cultivating a culture of pride in all South Africans with the theme ‘Know Your National Parks’. The main feature here is free access for all South African day visitors (especially rural communities), and persons under 16 years of age are allowed entry without proof of identity. It is a week dedicated to creating awareness of national parks, raising their public status and educating the public about the need for and use of national parks. This concept has been running for quite some time in a number of other countries, specifically in the United States and the United Kingdom. National Parks Week in South Africa ultimately shows that the national parks system in South Africa is linked to the global national parks movement. A key part of National Parks Week is the Open Access programme. The aim is to encourage all national parks to offer open access days to the public, especially local communities, for the duration of a week. Members of the public are to be given free access to the park and given the opportunity to learn more about the park’s business as they are being guided through the exhibition and other interpretive centres or public facilities in the park. However, open access does not include free access to money-generating tourist activities as it would be prohibitively expensive considering the already discounted rates for the duration of National Parks Week.

**Imbewu (seed):** This is an educational initiative to pass traditional and cultural knowledge from the elders to the youth in a wilderness setting, thereby passing on understanding of connectedness with the earth. The concept is based on discovering and using traditional ecological knowledge and methodologies of learning that Africans used in the past to relate to their environment. Imbewu is a three-day visit to a national park, where a group of eight to sixteen young people are exposed to a wilderness experience. Time is spent with local expert elders as interpretive guides who tell African folk stories in rustic low-impact bush camps. Imbewu envisions that this personal experience will foster attachment to the environment and to national parks. On their return to their communities and schools, the youth are expected to start their own conservation clubs, school or community-based environmental projects. The Imbewu camps are held throughout the year. Over 7,000 youths have been through the programme.
Learners at environmental education programmes in Golden Gate Highlands National Park

**Kudu Green School Initiative (KGSI):** Scientists expect climate change to have an increasing impact on human and natural systems. In a warmer world, accessibility to food, water, raw materials and energy is likely to be affected. Human health, biodiversity, economic stability and national security are also expected to be affected by climate change. Climate model projections suggest that negative effects of climate change will significantly outweigh positive ones. The nation’s ability to prepare for and adapt to new conditions may be exceeded as the rate of climate change increases. Despite the fact that climate change is talked about widely, there has been no evidence of an increase in positive public attitudes and actions towards mitigating climate change.

The KGSI is a SANParks EE programme involving schools and their communities in climate-mitigating projects. The KGSI enables learners to gain an understanding of the magnitude and significance of the effect of climate on society and influences them to adopt responsible lifestyle choices that mitigate against climate change. Seven schools in different parts of Gauteng are involved in the KGSI and the number is increasing. Projects implemented range from waste management, food gardens, recycling, water conservation and greening. Monde Primary School, one of the underprivileged schools participating in the KGSI programme, placed itself ahead of other schools in implementing numerous environmental conservation projects. It has transformed its degraded wetland environment into a healthy living environment, for which the school received the Eco-school platinum award.
Kids in Kruger: The Kids in Kruger programme was initiated through the My Acre of Africa Trust in 2004. Through a National Lottery Grant, 6 000 children per annum from communities within the seven municipalities on the western boundary of the Kruger National Park are bussed into the park for a day of unforgettable educational experiences. Most of them are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have never been to a park. They are exposed to and educated on the importance and relevance of this asset in their own lives. This programme not only makes it possible for the children to visit the park, but also builds effective ongoing relationships between the park and local communities. A total of 40 000 learners and 1 200 adults have participated in the Kids in Kruger programme since its inception. Apart from the benefits of providing school learners with exposure to environmental and conservation issues, one of the aims of the programme is to stimulate a process whereby the children pass some of their experiences and knowledge on to their parents and the communities they come from.

So far the programme has hosted 107 Tshwane University of Technology students to inform them about possible careers offered by SANParks. Educators’ workshops are also held as part of the programme where planning is done around such issues as greening and waste management.
The Kids in Kruger programme, an outreach programme with 35 schools registered for participation, provides assistance in a range of programmes, including building of community nurseries, prevention of soil erosion, and sustainable agriculture. Thirty computers have been donated by sponsors to schools to assist with learning. The Kids in Kruger programme provides a mechanism to involve local schools and communities in the celebration of key events such as Biodiversity Day, Arbor Day, Wetland Day and Heritage Day.

The Science Week programme is presented as one of the special projects within the Kids in Kruger programme, with core activities embedded in EE. The primary aim of Science Week is to give children an opportunity to enjoy, learn and appreciate science at an elementary level. A primary objective of the programme is to encourage a change of mind-set by engaging in practical science-related activities with learners from the communities bordering the Kruger National Park, thereby increasing environmental awareness in general with an emphasis on sustainable living.

Ultimately Science Week aims at achieving:

- Exposure to SANParks’ natural resource management by engaging with local schools.
- Networking and partnerships.
- Understanding science through doing.
- Providing learners and educators with field laboratories (see insert).
For some disadvantaged schools (left), projects such as learners visiting the nursery provide first-hand, on-site learning that:

- Would never be seen in their school yard because of little financing,
- Their own teachers know little of or have not even experienced themselves; these are some of the spin-offs of educating teachers (training trainers) to increase the multiplier effect.

Here national parks also act as field laboratories in a natural and fun environment.
**Junior Ranger programme:** This programme provides conservation ethos for the youth by encouraging them towards service in national parks. Through this programme, the youth are afforded an opportunity to volunteer their services in various projects in national parks. The programme offers structured training that it is hoped will inspire the youth to be committed to conservation, as it challenges them to be actively involved in local community conservation projects. The Junior Ranger training programme is also curriculum aligned, and culminates in the awarding of certificates of competence. The youth recruited for the Junior Ranger programme are from all provinces. They volunteer their services in national parks.
**Heritage Education:** Heritage Education (HE), a partnership between the Department of Basic Education, the National Heritage Council and SANParks, was implemented in 2009 and runs annually. Schools in the nine provinces are given the opportunity to showcase their understanding of cultural heritage issues through heritage projects and topics related to their areas. The ten best-performing schools from the provinces are given a week’s HE camping in a selected national park to explore and discover the heritage aspects of the park, and to research and write about their discovery. The best works are awarded prizes in positions one to three.
Sustainable Resource Use programmes. National parks are increasingly required to contribute to the social and economic well-being of adjacent rural communities. One such mechanism is access to biological resources for traditional, subsistence and commercial use.

In the 2011/12 financial year, the following projects were implemented in five national parks.

- **Agulhas Sour Fig Harvesting**: by the community in the Agulhas National Park from November to March of each year. Progress has been made towards estimating sour fig populations and setting harvesting prescriptions.

- **Indigenous Timber Harvesting**: SANParks forms a partnership where a third party is given the rights to harvest timber in the indigenous forests of the Garden Route for commercial purposes, thus providing down-stream benefits and employment opportunities.

- **Farleigh Eco Furniture Factory**: uses wood from invasive exotic species and off-cuts from indigenous species to produce desks for schools and furniture for SANParks rest camps. The aim of the project is not to make a profit but to sustain employment. At full production, 100 people will be employed at the factory.

- **Medicinal Plant Harvesting and Nursery Development**: the Diepwalle nursery in the Garden Route National Park is used to propagate plants used by traditional healers. The project includes the Rastafarian Rooiwortel (Bulbinelatifolia) project (to be moved to their own nursery), sleepad saplings, orchids from felled trees and research into traditional bark harvesting.

- **Forest Fern (Rumohra adiantiformis) Harvesting**: This project has been awarded the tender to harvest fern fronds within the indigenous forests of the Garden Route National Park both for the local and export flower market. The project employs 120 local people on a full-time basis.

- **Outeniqua Eco Honey Bee Farming**: Beehives belonging to trained local bee farmers are located in national park areas so that they can produce honey and generate an income.

- **Khomani San harvest plants for medicinal purposes in specified areas in the Park. Permits are issued and records of plants and animals harvested are kept. A monitoring project involving the harvesters and SANParks staff has been initiated.**

- **Kruger National Park (KNP) Grass Harvesting**: for selling to the KNP and to outside enterprises.

- **KNP, Warburgia salutaris (Pepper Bark) Nursery Propagation**: A conservation project to mitigate the threats to this endangered, widely used medicinal plant. The project involves building relations with traditional healers and starting a community nursery to cultivate the plant.

- **Mopani Worm Harvesting**: for communities along the boundary of KNP.
Shown here (left) are community members at the Rooiwortel Production Greenhouse in the Garden Route National Park. Initiatives such as these involve much more than some of the community members growing and selling plants commercially. Some benefits are:

- Skills development for the planters as SANParks invests time and effort (resources) to up-skill the planters.
- Access to markets for the community as, again, SANParks assists them with exposure to buyers and also on-site support.

In addition, seven other projects comprising community firewood, nursery, fynbos and thatch harvesting are prioritised for implementation in 2012/13. Over and above the financial benefits, the sustainable resource benefits include improvement of community/park relationships, providing access to resources, advancing cultural values and practices, as well as economic empowerment and social justice.

**Socio-economic Development programmes – Expanded Public Works Programmes:** SANParks is one of the largest and most successful implementers of Government’s Expanded Public Works Programmes (EPWP), having implemented R1.46 bn worth of projects since the inception of the programme in 2001 (see Section 5 below which expands on the EPWP programmes).

**Social Investment programme:** SANParks has initiated a Social Investment Programme for legacy projects within rural communities bordering national parks. Funding for these projects is raised through a community levy charged on all accommodation in national parks. A number of social investment projects are planned, such as the building of an administration block at Dumisani High School and the establishment of computer centres at Masiza and Sindiswa high schools and other high schools around Mapungubwe National Park.
Oom Jakobus de Wet and his wife Anna - goat farmers (veeboere) in the Richtersveld National Park
SANParks has entered into contractual park arrangements with a number of private landowners around several of the national parks. In addition, SANParks has signed contractual park agreements with communities for the incorporation of their communal land into national parks for conservation use and for sustainable economic and cultural activities compatible with conservation principles. SANParks co-manages contractual parks with communities through the establishment of Joint Management Committees, but remains responsible for their conservation management. Contractual parks afford communities the opportunity to exploit and benefit from ecotourism activities associated with national parks for income generation, as detailed below.

4.1 Contractual Community Park: Richtersveld National Park

The Richtersveld National Park is managed jointly by representatives from the Richtersveld community and SANParks through the RGBK (Richtersveld Joint Management Committee – JMC) comprising five members of the Richtersveld community and four from SANParks. The JMC ensures implementation of the Management Plan and community participation. The Richtersveld communal rangeland is key to the household economy of pastoralists (goat and sheep farming) and to biodiversity conservation. The park is managed to maintain its ‘pristine nature’ for biodiversity conservation for those who depend on pastoralism and the use of natural resources for their livelihood. For this reason, the Richtersveld National Park was established in 1991, the first community wholly-owned land to be set aside for national park purposes. Hence greater effort is spent by SANParks on giving more benefits to this community than others.

Richtersveld is the only complete South Africa Contractual National Park under management of SANParks in agreement with the landowner. A 30-year agreement was signed and an annual lease payment of R110 000, linked to inflation, is made into the Richtersveld Community Trust Fund. The fund is used for various community projects, particularly for study bursaries and transport for school children. Contrary to the normal practice of excluding nearly all human land use in national parks, the grazing resources of Richtersveld remain under the communal tenure use of several pastoralists for livestock production. Farmers are allowed to graze with upper limit of livestock (goats and sheep) set at 6 600 small stock units. So far, there is no evidence from either park management or scientific research that livestock farming negatively affects either visitor experiences or the biodiversity conservation efforts of SANParks.
Since worldwide tourism has become a leading economic activity, in the Richtersveld region community tourism is a multi-faceted enterprise and associated with a diverse array of industries and initiatives aimed at creating a sustainable livelihood for communities through positive economic and social spin-offs. The Park provides direct job creation opportunities to the Richtersveld people, with preference for Richtersvelders when vacancies are filled. Job training is part of the criteria since work background and work experience are not specific requirements for the filling of jobs. Youth with secondary certificates are considered for fully sponsored tourism training at the Graaff-Reinet Tourism College before being recruited as tourism interns.

Shown here are members of the RGBK (Richtersveld JMC) meeting at Port Nolloth. In the case of Richtersveld, the JMC has stepped up its involvement in the management of the National Park. The RGBK, comprising representatives of SANParks and the community, meets three times a year to give strategic and operational direction to Park Management.
Richtersveld tourism facilities

Tourism Information
Sanparks Central Reservations: Tel: 012 428 9111
Iahais/Reception (Namibia):
Tel: 002 6463 262045

- Richtersberg
  - 12 Campsites
  - 4 two bed units

- Tatasberg
  - 10 chalets
  - 4 two bed self-catering units

- Pootjespruit
  - 18 sites for tourists

- Kolkerboetkooi
  - 8 Campsites
  - Accommodates 9 people

- Hakkiesdoring
  - 12 Campsites
  - Accommodates 9 people

- Gannakeurtep
  - 4 two bed units

The Richtersveld Community Conservancy also has facilities and routes.
Tel: 027 831 1041

www.sanparks.org
4.2 Contractual Community Parks in the Kruger National Park

**Makuleke:** The origins of the Makuleke Region of the Kruger National Park, formerly known as the Pafuri triangle, can be traced to land dispossession and forced removal in the 1960s so that the land could be incorporated into the Kruger National Park. The Makuleke community regained the title to this 25 000 hectare area in 1998 after a restitution of land rights process. After the land was returned to its original owners (the Makuleke people), the community then decided to retain the land as part of the Kruger National Park to be co-managed by the Makuleke community and SANParks through a Joint Management Board (JMB) for the purpose of conservation and related economic development, in particular ecotourism. The Makuleke region has just been declared as the 18th Ramsar site (Wetland of International Importance) owned by a community.

- **Makuleke electrification:** In 2003, the Makuleke Communal Property Association (Makuleke CPA) electrified the three Makuleke villages, viz. Makuleke, Makahlule and Maviligwe to the amount of R3.9 million.
- **Upgrading of Joas Phahlela Primary School:** In 2004 the Makuleke CPA built an additional administration block and three classrooms for R500 000 on the project.
- **Upgrading of Makahlule Primary School:** The construction of the Makahlule Primary School's administration block in 2005 cost the Makuleke CPA R410 000.
- **Fencing of N’wanati High School premises:** N’wanati High School received R150 000 for its new fencing project in 2007.

It is worth mentioning that the Makuleke CPA is a pioneer in improving the livelihoods of its members through the use, control and management of the Makuleke region as a conservation and tourism hub within a protected area for the benefit of the entire community. To date, the Makuleke CPA has contributed to government’s poverty alleviation plans/goals as well as to the improvement of the living conditions of its members. This is a community of its kind, which was hailed by the world as a winner of the Equator Award 2010 (presented to the Makuleke CPA in New York, US, on 24 August 2010) as a major contributor to employment creation through the use of biodiversity and conservation management. The region’s economic activities generate in excess of R1 million pa in concession lease revenues and more than R3.5 million in employment income annually. The concession revenue and other income is invested in CPA administration and community projects, and is used to improve the livelihoods of community members by providing infrastructure such as water and sanitation, clinics and health services, schools, and recreational and sport facilities.

Apart from opportunities provided by the lodge there are a number of other ways in which economic and job creation opportunities are provided in the Makulele contractual area:

Shown here is the inside of the Pafuri Lodge, a 52-bed, upmarket lodge, on the banks of the Luvuvhu River in the Makuleke region of the Kruger National Park. This camp is operated by Wilderness Adventures. All guest units and public areas are interconnected by a raised wooden boardwalk. The camp also has two swimming pools (one large and the other a small plunge pool) both overlooking the Luvuvhu River. Also run in conjunction with Pafuri Camp is an 8-bed walking trails camp.
**Nkambeni:** The Nkambeni Community has been allocated the use of a portion of state land in terms of Notice No. 1291 published in Government Gazette of 17 August 1962. This land has been fenced into the Kruger National Park. The Nkambeni Community and SANParks wish to afford this land the highest possible conservation status and in the process the community should benefit. A contractual park agreement has been entered into between the Park and the Nkambeni community. The Park is responsible for the management of the conservation land, while the community have also entered into an agreement with the tourism operator who runs the tourism operations with the aim of sharing the benefits. This relationship is managed by a joint management board structure consisting of members of the community, members of SANParks, and a tourism development partner. To date the community are partners in the Nkambeni tented camp which is a tourism facility. SANParks is currently assisting the community to overcome their investor difficulties.

**Mjejane:** The Mjejane Game Reserve (MGR) is arguably one of SANParks long-standing dreams of trying to create a ‘black Sabi Sand’ type of ecotourism on the doorstep of the Kruger National Park. The word ‘black’ is very descriptive of the long history of excluding black communities from the heart of real conservation-related activities, high-level ecotourism development projects. The 4 000 hectare MGR is a result of a successful land restoration project to the Mjejane Trust. Like all land reform projects, the MGR had every promise of success, but lack of capacity and knowledge of the complexities of tourism and development soon beleaguered the community.

SANParks has stepped in to help the MGR by urgently monitoring the progress of the project and assisting it to make progress. SANParks will sign a contract park agreement with the MGR so that the community can leverage the benefits of ecotourism development. Developments thus far are as follows:

- The fence between the Kruger National Park and the MGR has been removed, allowing free movement of the Big 5 wildlife species – elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, lion and leopard.
- The Mjejane Trust has already received over R30 million of dividends from the development.

### 4.3 Contractual Community Parks: Khomani San and Mier Communities

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP), located far from the major cities of all three countries, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa, shows the role and the impact of national parks on rural economies. In all the Mier districts, including areas such as Philandersbron, Rietfontein, Loubos, Klein Mier, Groot Mier, Askham, Andriesvale and Welkom, the closest big town to communities is Upington, 200 km away. Work opportunities in these areas are few, with the result that the workforce constitutes around 92% of the immediate community, which equates to +R9.2 m per annum in salaries. In terms of the agreement signed in 1999, 28 000 ha of land in the park was restored to the San and 30 000 ha to the Mier. These two pieces of land are subject to separate parks contracts with SANParks, and both have a Joint Management Board (JMB) to discuss matters of concern. Over and above being part of the Heritage Park agreement, SANParks donated about R641 000 worth of wild animals to help restock the wildlife-depleted Khomani San farm Erin, which was also part of the original land claim. The two lodges are shown in the photos below, and some other resource benefits that the communities derives are discussed.
**The San community:** The agreement provides for a community lodge within the KTP. !Xaus Lodge is already operational as a public private partnership. The communities benefit directly and indirectly from the management fees and employment opportunities offered by the lodge. Crafts are also produced at the lodge where visitors can see how the crafts are made on site before or while making their purchases.

**The Mier community:** The lodge shown below helped to ensure some financial and economic certainty in an otherwise hostile environment where poor communities live in uncertainty.
SANParks started implementation of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) projects in the late 1990s when the Working for Water (WfW) programme started in South Africa. The EPWP projects are funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs’ Natural Resource Management and Social Responsibility programmes.

Since then, the number of the programmes and the budget allocated to SANParks increased to include following:

- Working for Water: Removal of alien invasive plants
- Working for Land: Removal of bush encroachment
- Value Added Industries: Farleigh Eco-Furniture Factory
- Wildlife Economy: Rehabilitation – Erosion control
- Environmental Monitors: Support to conservation management
- Working for Wetlands: Rehabilitation of wetlands
- Working for the Coast: Cleaning and rehabilitation of the coast
- People and Parks: Infrastructure development and rehabilitation of redundant infrastructure.
- Working for Fire: Fire prevention and control services.

The main focus of the EPWP is to provide income relief through temporary work for the unemployed on socially useful activities. Within SANParks, the programme plays a major role in the social investment in neighbouring communities to national parks, while at the same time addressing some core biodiversity management and strategic infrastructure development objectives for the entity.
Shown at the top is a long queue of the EPWP worker intake at the Golden Gate Highlands National Park for one of the People and Parks projects. Only 10 temporary jobs were advertised, but in the end the Park had to make a plan and employ up to 100 people. Otherwise the disappointment could have been too much to handle for those who did not get temporary jobs.

Social deliverables: A pilot study done of the social impacts of EPWP projects in Agulhas National Park found that “the impact of job creation projects … is of high significance as it addressed a critical need … in an area with few alternatives.” Since most national parks are situated in remote areas, and SANParks is often the only implementer in these areas, it is especially rural communities that benefit directly from the various projects. The table below provides a summary of the social deliverables achieved to date through the implementation of the various EPWP projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Total for 2001/12-2011/12</th>
<th>Average per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>R1.4 billion</td>
<td>R197 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People employed</td>
<td>34 294</td>
<td>5 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person days</td>
<td>5 715 836</td>
<td>716 798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Employment opportunities</td>
<td>24 851</td>
<td>3 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training days</td>
<td>435 966</td>
<td>51 619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMME used</td>
<td>2 944</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount paid to SMMEs</td>
<td>R704 million</td>
<td>R91 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development of SMMEs: The development of SMMEs is an important part of the SANParks EPWP programme. All the people employed and the small contractors used for the implementation of the various projects are from local communities. The development of small contractors is addressed by assisting them to become independent companies that comply with all the required legislation, have a bookkeeping system, exposure to tender for work, and skills that can be used when projects end.

The value chain of infrastructure projects, for example, is used to structure a project to increase the use of SMMEs where possible, i.e. thatch harvesting for roofs; bricks made for buildings, and road curbing and rehabilitation. The biodiversity programmes include WfW and the removal of alien invasive plants – an opportunity was identified to cut poles from alien trees that can be used to construct screening walls in Mata Mata, Kgalagadi, and wood from bush encroachment projects is processed for braai packs.

Projects often start with teams as shown here on the left and right. Teams are trained in a range of skills.

Emerging Contractor Programme in Kruger National Park: The Kruger National Park (KNP) started with its Contractor Development Programme in 1999. The objective was to empower and train groups of individuals from neighbouring communities as emerging building contractors. As part of the objectives the trainees were trained up to NQF 2 level.

To date three programmes have successfully been concluded, and the DEA SRP projects played a major role in the training of these contractors and creating opportunities in the park for work. In total, 38 trainees have successfully completed the programme. Eight of these were women. Trainees were subjected to theoretical training and subsequently were exposed to actual on-site training. Further projects included the construction of new staff accommodation units, upgrading of existing staff accommodation units and tourism accommodation units, construction of the Skukuza Soccer Club facilities, upgrading of the Skukuza Cricket Club facilities, construction of a Grade R classroom at Skukuza, upgrading and reconstruction of the western boundary foot and mouth disease fence and the upgrading of water and sewer infrastructure in the park.

The successful candidates exited the programme as emerging contractors with the ability to tender in the open market for future contracts and projects. Three of these contractors have progressed to a 5GB PE level and can compete for projects to the value of R13 million.
Trevor Homu (shown above) has utilised the opportunity as a WfW contractor to become a businessman in his own right. His progression is as follows:

- Alien clearing contractor in the KNP in 2000.
- Established his own company.
- Alien clearing, waste management and property market.
- Now employs 46 permanent and 20 temporary employees.

**Box 1:** Cynthia Lombo’s success story goes back to when she was part of the Ukuvuka Fire Stop Campaign in June 2005. She mentioned that as leader of the Phakamani team, she was faced with the challenge of transporting her team to the site as she did not possess a vehicle of her own. She sourced a contractor who would assist in the transportation of her team, who proved to be unreliable. Lorraine Bredell, a bookkeeper, advised Cynthia that acquiring her own vehicle was imperative and a priority. Cynthia took Lorraine’s advice to heart and saved the profits obtained from the project. A mere nine months elapsed after Cynthia was able to purchase her own vehicle. Cynthia’s eagerness to be successful, and the advice of her bookkeeper, has led to the acquisition of two additional vehicles and a trailer. One of the vehicles is rented to a contractor, which secures additional income.

**Box 2:** Christo Leukes worked in Tankwa National Park September 2007 as a WfW contractor. During his time as a contractor Christo was planning to become self-employed and started working towards his dream. Over weekends Christo did other jobs such as transporting people and removing garden waste for people to earn extra income, which allowed him to buy a second vehicle. In December 2011 Christo bought an old building and renovated it into a shop which is now rented out. He also does contracting work for the Department of Transport on road construction and has started his own building company named Leukes Builders and Renovators. Christo’s biggest interest is in property development as he believes South Africa’s biggest investments are in property. Christo is supplying work for 10 people and sometimes more, depending on the amount of work he gets. He is very grateful for the opportunity Working for Water has given him regarding the skills and training he has acquired over the years in the project, and plans to take it further in his career.
**Media Centres**: The training of EPWP beneficiaries is compulsory and includes accredited and non-accredited training. Over the past 10 years, some 436,000 training days were achieved in SANParks projects. SANParks further decided to establish media centres that could serve additional needs of beneficiaries and communities, i.e. giving access to information and developing technology skills.

Shown on the right is one of the three media centres established to date in Addo Elephant, Agulhas and Kruger National Parks. These media centres provide a safe learning environment for EPWP beneficiaries and their children, as well as for SANParks staff and their children. Children are able to do research for school projects. Beneficiaries are trained to use computers and related programmes. Contractors in the programmes make use of the centres to do their administration work – all attendance registers, contracts, etc. At least 800 community members benefit currently from these facilities.

Construction training is highly valued by the emerging contractors in SANParks EPWP projects. The training and skills developed can also be used for other private work in their communities. Indeed all the EPWP infrastructure projects go the extra mile to train SMMEs. A model developed by SANParks ensures that small contractors are employed for longer periods of 18 – 24 months. This provides time for training. After a selection process, each SMME has to establish a company and take responsibility for their worker teams in terms of health and safety and workmen’s compensation. Practical on-the-job training and accredited skills training are done by project managers and training service providers.

SANParks identifies small projects and takes a contractor through the process of construction – from foundations to roofs. The contractors are also taught how to price and tender properly for their work, and successful SMMEs register with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). The implementation and development of these SMMEs has resulted in a situation where most parks have a well-established number of small contractors that can be used for maintenance and rehabilitation work in the park when projects come to an end. Having people from neighbouring communities working in national parks has also resulted in more direct involvement in these communities and their social needs. As such, the initiatives implemented focus on community issues, environmental education and addressing social needs.

**Community nurseries**: SANParks, together with communities, identified the need for good health care and nutrition in projects. As a result, three nurseries were created in Addo, Wilderness and Golden Gate National Parks in projects including vegetable gardening. Ten beneficiaries are employed to oversee nurseries, and vegetables are supplied to members of the communities as well as community care projects.
Adopt a School: Each project adopts a school for a year. Regular visits are made to these schools for environmental education and social days.

Sports development: Support of soccer in identified schools, as well as sports events close to the projects. The beneficiaries and project management staff actively participate in these events.

School visits are made by SANParks EPWP project managers

Arts & crafts
**HIV/Aids awareness:** is an important part of the EPWP and a specific social day is part of the annual calendar focusing on youth and nutrition.

**Substance abuse:** The EPWP teams were informed about the impacts of alcohol and drugs. Substance abuse is a real problem in some communities and among some of the project beneficiaries. This problem will receive more attention in certain projects with longer-term interventions to assist people.

**Vehicle safety campaigns:** Awareness of safe driving and the Roads Traffic Act where the contractors are responsible for transporting their teams on a daily basis. Vehicle inspections are done to ensure compliance with safety requirements and campaigns are carried out to create more awareness. Other role players such as the traffic police are involved in educating contractors and beneficiaries on specific aspects.
Environmental days: Environmental awareness forms part of the EPWP project implementation, and as such environmental days are celebrated in the communities. Various Arbor Day, World Environment Day, cleaning campaigns, Marine Day and International Coastal Clean-up Day celebrations are held throughout the year in the communities with their participation.

EPWP contractors contribute to communities: Various contractors from the Working for the Coast (WftC), Working for Water (WfW) and Working on Land (WoL) projects identified the most critical needs in their communities and implemented their own initiatives to help in these respects. Below are some of the initiatives:
Harkerville contractors in the Garden Route National Park have decided to assist schools in the area. They have handed out fruit packages to the children, and asked the Principal to identify those children who are most desperate for help. The principal gave two names of children in desperate need of uniforms, but indicated that three-quarters of the school children have similar needs. The contractors contributed to the uniforms of the two identified children as part of their own community contribution.

Biodiversity and infrastructure deliverables: Here the benefits to SANParks are the opportunity to address biodiversity conservation and infrastructure needs in national parks. The removal of alien invasive vegetation addresses one of the biggest threats to biodiversity, while the rehabilitation of wetlands, cleaning of beaches, erosion control and removal of redundant infrastructure restores the natural environment to what it should be, while at the same time connecting with society by employing neighbouring community members to achieve key performance areas for the organisation. WfW teams have removed 245 000 ha of alien invasive species and have done follow-up clearing of 1 188 000 ha over the past 10 years.
Working for Wetlands teams rehabilitated 75,000 m³ of wetlands since the programme started – an average of 15,000 m³ per annum. The programme employs 140 people per annum.

Working for Coast teams clean 18% or 461 km of South Africa’s beaches on a daily basis. This programme is in the third cycle of implementation, employing 500 people per annum in the eight coastal national parks.

Wildlife economy: The park expansion project incorporated new land into national parks. Previously part of farmland, many old fences and redundant structures have to be removed.

Working for Fire employs 190 people per annum. The beneficiaries are highly trained and fit to enable them to control fires. A great deal of their time is spent putting measures in place to prevent fires. People and Parks projects created and upgraded...
infrastructure, i.e. 1 350 km of fences, 600 km of roads, 520 new tourism beds and 372 staff accommodation units, to name but a few. Below are shown community guest houses which were developed in Richtersveld for Khuboes, Sanddrift, Lekkersing and Eksteensfontein.

Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre

Khuboes Guest House, Richtersveld

The tented camps project in Table Mountain National Park had humble beginnings, where skilled external contractors were appointed to mill the timber. Today this service is provided by in-house development milling teams. Development contractors who honed their building skills on previous tented camps contributed to Smitswinkel Tented Camp to “build a better Park for all”.

TMNP milling team at work

TMNP stone mason at work

Rock wall of a boma

Smitswinkel Tented Camp

Common facility constructed from local stone
On the right are three photos showing the work given to local people to benefit from SANParks. Harvesting of thatch for infrastructure in Agulhas National Park is one such project. SANParks received funding for the DEA SRP programme to develop a new rest camp in Agulhas National Park (ANP). During the planning of the project, it was acknowledged that the park had an abundance of thatching reed (*Elegia tectorum* and *Hypodiscus argenteus*), and that the local community, i.e. Elim is well known for their skills, experience and indigenous knowledge of the harvesting and construction of thatched roofs.

The main focus areas of the projects were:

- Creation of temporary jobs in the Struisbaai area.
- Training and development of beneficiaries.
- Use of local skills in the harvesting of thatch.
- Educating the community regarding environmental awareness.
- Harvesting thatch for roofs for building developments (Agulhas Rest Camp, Rietfontein Longhouse, Renosterkop, Pietie se Punt and Ratelriver homestead).
- Upgrading of historical buildings and conserving the heritage of the area.

Five SMMEs employing 60 people were appointed to harvest thatch in the park for approximately 22 months, achieving 17,387 person days. During this time, 170,000 bundles of thatch were cut and dried. The removal of thatch also had biodiversity benefits as the fuel load was reduced in a high fire-prone area. The small contractors went through a training and systematic development programme to establish their own fully functional companies.
Making bricks for a new rest camp in Tankwa Karoo National Park: A R2.5 million allocation for a small rest camp in the park set the wheels in motion to construct four tourism units at Elandsberg in the park. TKNP is extremely remote and the supply of building materials is challenging. It was decided to construct ‘clay houses’ similar to some of the historical buildings in the area.

The rest camp units in Tankwa Karoo National Park were built with clay bricks that were handmade on site using a clay and straw mixture that was compressed in the form of a brick and then baked in the sun. These clay bricks originated from the slavery period where, because of the locality, it was impossible to transport building material with ox wagons, and the local people had to develop their own construction techniques. The walls built from clay bricks were afterwards plastered with the same clay and straw mixture and then painted with a water and flour mixture to seal them against moisture.
International Award-Winning Mapungubwe Interpretive Centre – from making tiles to sophisticated roof construction by EPWP beneficiaries. The Centre in Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site won an international World Building of the Year Award in 2010. The architect was requested to incorporate the use of local materials into the design, and labour-intensive methods. The architectural design included ancient vaulting techniques and required sophisticated and scientifically sound construction methods. For the construction of this building, SANParks and the professional team opted for the use of handmade tiles produced by EPWP employees from clay soil, cement and water. Each of the 200 000 clay tiles required for the vaulted pavilions were handmade by EPWP workers recruited from the Musina and Alldays communities. Three SMMEs were created, employing 36 people working for a year to make the tiles. A ‘roof construction team’ was recruited and trained on site by the resident structural engineer and they constructed these roofs.

Unemployed people from the local communities played an important role in building this world-class facility, and their training during project implementation turned them into skilled workers who constructed highly complex vaults and roofs. The construction of the Interpretive Centre and other projects that included staff accommodation, camp site and bulk water supply created 979 temporary positions, 131 000 worker person days and used 31 SMMEs over a period of three years. Below are examples of start-up work from making tiles one-by-one to the full construction of a much more complicated building plan and structure than the initial tile making.
Making tiles: ‘one by one’

Constructing the vaults/roofs

Tiles for Africa!

Mapungubwe Interpretive Centre
6.1 Kruger National Park Community Projects

All national parks engage with rural communities and implement community projects. However, the Kruger National Park, being the largest, has a significant number of projects. Over and above the projects implemented in respect of the community contractual park components listed above, a number of other projects are elaborated on below.

**Contractor Development Programme:** The KNP Contractor Development Programme (CDP) fits into the long-term commitment of the KNP to empower and involve the neighbouring communities in the economic and commercial activities of the KNP. The project comprises the development of civil and building contractors from the communities surrounding the KNP who will be able to become involved in the Park’s capital and maintenance works, and at the same time develop entrepreneurs from the communities who will be able to serve tourists to the Park in a professional way. A Management Plan was adopted by the KNP, which structured the development of contractors in a long-term human resources development programme.

Planning is important for community capacity. Here it has provided for:

- Identification and selection of candidates from various communities in an open, transparent, fair and accountable manner that was approved by all the role players.
- Career path development of emerging contractors.
- Accredited managerial training that was integrated and practiced during a training project and followed by advanced management training and informal tenders.
- Simplified and user-friendly contract documents that include the KNP’s special conservation-based conditions to perform work in the KNP.
- Continuous identification of projects on the KNP’s capital budget and other funding opportunities (DBSA, EPWP and IDP) to ensure sustainability of the contractor’s development and the gradual transfer of more and more responsibilities to the contractors.

Once the contractors emerge from the contractor’s development programme, they qualify as CIDB level 1 and 2 contractors. The KNP implemented three contractor development programmes (each programme runs for approximately three years) from 1999 to 2008, and each programme delivered between 12 to 18 SMME contractors. The KNP has also made opportunities available since 2006 to develop emerging contractors from CIDB Level 2 PE to CIDB Level 4 PE.

The objectives of this programme are to:

- Build local capacity in the civil engineering and building fields so that the neighbouring community can benefit from the wealth created by the KNP.
• Build local capacity in the civil engineering and building fields so that the emerging contractors can eventually participate as independent contractors in contracts of the local authorities surrounding the KNP.

• Break oppressive barriers particularly evident in rural communities by dissolving the debilitating and outmoded conventions of ‘men’s work’ as distinct from ‘women’s work’.

• Provide role models for women empowerment in the community.

• Rationalise relationships between communities and the KNP so that all may benefit.

Shown above are examples of small contractor development programmes in two visible settings:

• Unlike many country-wide housing development projects where nearly all the indigenous trees are removed and replaced with exotic plants, here (as shown) the builders are doing their best to incorporate indigenous trees.

• Highly motivated people at work, with little or no supervision, because it is their own small business and they are measured on performance.

Shown above is an example of the capacity building success of small contractor development:

• With a demonstrated project success, the small contractor is then considered for more building projects.

• They become independent business contractors, even becoming project managers in SANParks or elsewhere in other opportunities.

• Highly trained good contractors win opportunities to train or even grow bigger and partner big business.

The number of person days of work created through emerging contractor development programmes is EPWP = 125 361, IDP 1 = 626 670, IDP 2 = 14 912, totalling 766 943 person days created up to 30 December 2011.
The Community Park and Ride project (Park & Ride) was initiated in 2009. The main objective of the project is to ensure that local communities are empowered to participate in the economic opportunities that are presented by the existence of the Park. The project was registered as a cooperative in accordance with the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005. Through collaboration with its partners, the KNP approached Vuswa Fleet Services, which agreed to offer the communities four used open safari vehicles on favourable terms. Communities have 12 months to pay off the cars. The project was launched on 123 April 2011. The project is registered on the SANParks website, thereby assisting the community with marketing. Assistance was also provided in putting up a small office at the Kruger Gate, which provides a base for administration of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of Drives</th>
<th>Income generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April – June</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>R4 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – Sep</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>R45 656.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct – Dec</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>R84 300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan – March</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>R94 200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>R228 156.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than just benefiting the local communities, Park & Ride reduces vehicle overcrowding and its associated negative impacts on roads, wildlife and other visitors while increasing number of visitors.
**Arts and crafts:** These are proving to be one of the most visible outcomes of SANParks’ partnership with local committees. Through the national strategy on crafts and SMMEs by the DACTS and the DTI, the craft sector has been assessed as having the potential to make substantial contributions towards job creation and small business development. SANParks has a role to play in marketing the value of biodiversity, promoting conservation goals working in partnership with other sectors and significantly influencing communities around parks in producing crafts that adhere to sustainable use of resources. It is within this context that the KNP is continually supporting the development of community arts and crafts shops at six of its ten entrance gates. These shops are owned and managed by communities. On average the participating members or those that produce and supply the shops receive between R500 and R2 500 per month. These shops support 400 people, who support their families. Fifteen full-time jobs have been created by these community arts and crafts outlets.

*Shown here are members of the Hlanganani Arts and Crafts Centre in the Kruger National Park. This forum is by far one of the most successful in the SANParks fold as they engage actively in a range of issues relating to the development of the Park, apart from their immediate interest in the development of an arts and crafts industry.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Punda</th>
<th>Phalaborwa</th>
<th>Kruger</th>
<th>Phabeni</th>
<th>Numbi</th>
<th>Crocodile Bridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27 121</td>
<td>550 985</td>
<td>79 039</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>124 533</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>31 433</td>
<td>1 142 905</td>
<td>76 228</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>110 060</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>29 254</td>
<td>1 254 186</td>
<td>106 812</td>
<td>7 587</td>
<td>152 421</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10 559</td>
<td>952 101</td>
<td>96 071</td>
<td>137 159</td>
<td>80 701</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>21 199</td>
<td>1 361 654</td>
<td>144 648</td>
<td>260 945</td>
<td>104 877</td>
<td>25 400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Makuya Traditional Medicines project: The Kruger National Park started to work with traditional healers from Makuya village in Limpopo to make natural resources with medicinal value available to practitioners. The project is about establishing a medicinal plant nursery and garden. The garden is intended to cultivate most of the medicinal plants that are no longer easily found in the region, and where feasible link with the Department of Health for further processing of the medicines. The Park has assisted the community with fencing materials covering 5 ha of their land, and has facilitated the project to the point where it received Global Environmental Facility funding. Water provision is now ensured. It is through this project that further efforts are being made to replant the endemic wurbagia tree (pepper bark).

Members of the Makuya Traditional Medicine Association

Traditional healers believe that through traditional remedies (umuthi) they can make an impact on the reduction of the rhino poaching that is taking place in the Park. They believe that the poachers generally get umuthi from traditional healers before they go on poaching raids, and through this campaign they will discourage their members from giving umuthi to the poachers. Traditional healers are planning to perform a ritual function on 31 August 2012 in Skukuza where the traditional healers of Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces will be represented.

Game farming/tourism activities: The Kruger National Park has donated and translocated animals to two communities: Lomshiyo community in Mpumalanga near Barberton and the Mashishimale CPA of the Ba-Phalaborwa clan in Limpopo province. The donated animals are contributing to the economy of the communities since these two areas are attracting photographic tourism.

Work with concessions: The seven lodge concessions in the KNP are designed to contribute to the socio-economic development of the local communities. The table below shows economic opportunities that have been offered to individuals and business groups in the various communities, where the total annual spend in the 2011/12 financial year was about R1.6 million.
### Concessions - Community spend in the KNP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Awarded to</th>
<th>Apr - Jun</th>
<th>July - Sep</th>
<th>Oct - Dec</th>
<th>Jan - March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff transport, Rhino</td>
<td>JR Transport</td>
<td>94 200</td>
<td>94 200</td>
<td>94 200</td>
<td>94 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff transport, Lukimbi</td>
<td>JE Mabunda</td>
<td>125 400</td>
<td>125 400</td>
<td>125 400</td>
<td>125 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste disposal, Singita</td>
<td>Ntavasi Contractors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43 567</td>
<td>39 089</td>
<td>17 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff transport, Singita</td>
<td>Alfred Mhlongo</td>
<td>139 140</td>
<td>139 140</td>
<td>139 140</td>
<td>139 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shishangaan Staff transport</td>
<td>Maria Khoza</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>1 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Mthlwarheni Co-operative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood supply</td>
<td>Sithole Restoration</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>4 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shishangaan cleaners</td>
<td>Thulusile J. Mhlaba</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night porter</td>
<td>Logik Mkabela General workers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 633</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Brovoplex CC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>14 320</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Fundama</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 companies</strong></td>
<td><strong>364 040</strong></td>
<td><strong>420 040</strong></td>
<td><strong>417 449</strong></td>
<td><strong>383 481</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand total: R1 585 010**

**Greening Projects:** The Park has been involved in a number of greening projects within the surrounding communities in which the park provides fencing materials, seeds, trees and even grass and other plants. A total of 5 000 trees have been distributed for the greening programme.
My Acre of Africa (My Acre) started in 2001 with the wish to conserve and save the natural environment of Africa for our animals and for our future generations. My Acre is a not-for-profit organisation committed to enhancing the health and sustainability of habitats and ecosystems and biodiversity. It is now a worldwide fundraising initiative for southern African conservation and education for sustainability, which aims to protect and preserve the region’s wildlife and wild lands for future generations.

My Acre aims to establish a self-perpetuating endowment fund that will provide ongoing finance for vital Southern African conservation and sustainability projects. Simultaneously, the initiative will provide top-quality environmental education facilities, and intensive learning programmes, to educate tens of thousands of people, in particular young people and school children. Here the proverbial expression applies: "for we cannot expect our children to care about our world’s natural environment if we do not teach them its value." We must involve each of them in preserving our endangered heritage.

Shown here are the 4 pillars of the My Acre project:

- Conservation of environment and natural history
- Education for sustainability
- Creation of jobs and local community upliftment
- Sustainable environment and ecotourism.

These are to be supported by an endowment fund. This reinforces the fundamental principles of how we should interact with our environment by treating it as an endowment which cannot be depleted, and learning to live sustainably through its life-supporting ecosystems and habitats.

Projects and activities: The core project of My Acre is a worldwide fund-raising initiative in which the environmental objectives will be achieved through the sale of over 4.6 million brick pavers to create walkways through the park. Each brick, engraved with information about the sponsor, and representing one acre of the Kruger National Park, will be laid in the My Acre EE centre. The funds raised from brick sales will allow the building of the facility and other conservation initiatives. With initial funding from the Development Bank of South Africa, the Kids in Kruger Centre has already been built and construction of the fencing and roads infrastructure is already under way.

It should be noted that, whereas My Acre of Africa was originally independently managed by the My Acre of Africa Trust, the management of this initiative has now been taken over by SANParks following difficulties experienced by the Trust. A review of the programmes is currently being conducted.
6.2 The MayibuyeNdlovu Development Trust

The MayibuyeNdlovu initiative was created in 1993 to provide benefits to eight communities bordering Addo Elephant National Park (AENP). In 2004, the MayibuyeNdlovu Development Programme was registered as the MayibuyeNdlovu Development Trust (MNDT). Through initiatives such as the Matyholweni profit-sharing agreement with SANParks, the Mayibuye composting project (public-private partnership), the student assistance initiative and SMME development, the MNDT empowers the community to improve its environment through conservation initiatives. With the active support of SANParks, the MNDT aims to enhance the capacity and well-being of the community and to promote ownership of their assets. Membership of the MNDP comprises two democratically elected community representatives from each of the following areas: Wards 5 & 6: Nomathamsanqa; Ward 3: Valencia; Ward 4: Bersheba; Ward 4: Paterson; Ward 7: Enon; Wards 1 & 2: Moses Mabida; Ward 2: Bergsig; Ward 54: Colchester. Below are some key examples of the sterling work done by the MNDT to benefit its members, the community at large, and also the national park — happy communities lead to a happy national park.
The Matyholweni Rest Camp Cottage shown here is the MNDT’s first joint project with SANParks, a profit-sharing agreement which sees a percentage of the turnover of Addo Elephant National Park’s Matyholweni rest camp (on a sliding scale ranging from 6-12%, depending on occupancy levels) being fed into the Trust funds to be used for community projects. This initiative, the first of its kind in SANParks, allows poor rural communities to see tangible benefits from their local national park.

The MNDT now manages several community upliftment programmes within the conservation, tourism and agricultural environment of the Sundays River Valley. Some of the main projects are:

MayibuyeNdlovu Compost Pty Ltd – a joint PPP business initiative between the MNDT and the Sundays River Citrus Company (the MNDT has 70% ownership) where local people produce compost and sell to local citrus farmers and other businesses. A R4.7 million grant from the European Union and ThinaSinako Fund provided the initial capital for equipment. The project produces 8 000 to 10 000 cubic metres of compost a year from alien reeds harvested from the Sundays River (a substantial environmental benefit) and alien trees from farmland. Currently 20 people are employed, and another 30 people have just completed training.

One of the main aims of this project is to target the impoverishment of soil on agricultural lands through composting to ensure sustainable agricultural business in the area, considering that the citrus industry is the main employer of local community members in the valley.

Mayibuye Compost project
The Student Assistance initiative is aimed at enabling disadvantaged pupils to become part of economic activities by empowering them through tertiary education. So far the MNDT has assisted over 101 students to register and link with bursary schemes at local universities and Further Education and Training (FET) colleges since 2009. Career expos have been held at secondary schools and renovation projects implemented at primary schools. The MNDT also provides financial services support for a local pre-primary school.

UmziWethu: In partnership with the Wilderness Foundation, the MNDT is also enabling local community members to venture into new careers within the hospitality, ecotourism and conservation industries through extensive training programmes. The MNDT is currently funding 50% of the costs for four local students in this programme. There is a 90% placement rate of students.

SMME development is also assisting local SMMEs with registration, business plans and tendering for conservation and tourism-related work, e.g. a hydroponics project and two recycling ventures. In terms of tourism, the MNDT is an integral part of the setting up of the local tourism organisation. The MNDT is in the process of securing approval to build a concession lodge in the AENP. The aim is to establish a 3/4 star lodge with a Xhosa/Khoi theme and up to 20 beds. Hence the MNDT is widely regarded as the entity which has buy-in from all the local communities, and is a vehicle for local economic development in the Sundays River Valley area.
6.3 Community Projects: Namaqua National Park (Anatolian Dog Project)

The Anatolian Dog Breeding Project was initiated by the Namaqua National Park with external funding secured. This was a first for SANParks and the project aims to reduce small predator losses on farms adjacent to the park by providing alternative protection measures to farmers/neighbours for small stock. During 2007 pups were sourced throughout the country and given to farmers in Namaqualand to enhance and secure their livelihoods.

Based on the distances and costs involved in obtaining these dogs, Conservation International (CI) requested Namaqua National Park to become involved in breeding the dogs locally, making this yet another partnership project. The main reasons for Namaqua’s involvement were the major problems the park had especially with predatory animals such as leopards, aardvarks and jackals getting killed in traps by the neighbouring farmers and also to provide an environmentally friendly solution.

The dog breeding project started in 2008 and strives, among other things, to inform local farmers about predator control in a less destructive way. Available pups are provided free of charge to the farmers. On-site training takes place on the owner’s land and farmers receive a complete training manual which informs them of how to keep the dogs healthy. SANParks provides overall assistance, and support is also given for injuries, inoculations and illness.

With about 38 working dogs used by commercial and communal farmers, the project provides the following benefits:

- Reduced losses of lambs to predators.
- Use of gin traps by farmers has dramatically decreased.
- Farmers’ annual income has increased and general welfare has improved.

- An Anatolian dog is a status symbol for farmers.

Applications for the dogs are open to all, but community members are given priority. Due to the success of this project at the Namaqua National Park, farmers from all over South Africa and even in Namibia and Botswana have applied for one of these dogs.
6.4 Community Projects: Furniture Factory in the Garden Route National Park

SANParks created the Farleigh Eco-Furniture Factory (FEFF) as a pilot project of an Expanded Public Works Programme – an initiative of the Natural Resource Management Programme of the Department of Environmental Affairs.

This project will have the following key impacts apart from job creation:

- Contribution to clearing of invasive alien plants, with the spectrum of benefits (water quantity, water quality, biological diversity, productive use of land, soil erosion and other benefits).

- The development of products that are needed by government at costs that are very competitive with – and generally lower than – the prices that are being paid for these products (and which are of superior quality and longevity), will have important benefits for the work of the departments.

- Potential for the sale of the products to non-government purchasers. This is particularly a focus of the Eco-coffins, which are intended to reduce the cost of bereavement for the poor.

- Products currently are school desks and benches produced for various government departments.
Furniture for SANParks tourism units: it is envisaged that a great deal of furnishings could ultimately be manufactured to supply most of the needs of SANParks’ tourist facilities. The FEFF was fully equipped during the past two years at a cost of approximately R6 million to make provision for the entire process of furniture manufacturing. There are currently 72 people employed in the factory and this will grow to around 100.
6.5 Community Projects: Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative

The purpose of the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative (ABI): “Biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development on the Agulhas Plain are significantly enhanced through effective management and coordinated multi-sector stakeholder involvement”. Interventions were designed to mitigate threats to the lowland fynbos habitats and wetland environments of the Agulhas Plain by focusing on four complementary outputs: 1) A landscape-level conservation management and planning system with public-private partnerships; 2) Ecologically, socially and ethically sustainable harvesting of wild fynbos; 3) A responsible tourism strategy contributing to sustainable livelihoods; 4) A conservation awareness programme which increased local support for biodiversity conservation.

SANParks, through the ABI Project, instituted innovative new cross-sectoral approaches to conservation management at a sub-regional level, through enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships, facilitated collaboration between a range of local stakeholders representing government, private landowners and the communities living on the Agulhas Plain and ensuring better integration with regional development strategies and programmes. In particular, a close partnership was established between agriculture and conservation, and with the local communities having a strong sense of heritage and ownership of their land, an integrative approach to biodiversity conservation, in which local people continue to make a living from farming, but also conserving important biodiversity, was implemented. One such example is the Nuwejaars Wetland Land Owners Association (NWLOA), who applied to the National Minister of Environmental Affairs for a protected environment with the management vested in them. This significantly reduces the cost of conservation while at the same time continuing to ensure food security and stimulating the regional economy.

As part of this initiative, benefits were created for the community through the natural vegetation and the wetlands, providing clean, high-quality water for the local towns and farming communities. In addition, the natural vegetation of the area supports flower harvesting and the harvesting of thatch.

The ABI project is a good example of the benefits created for the community outside the parks. Shown here are women picking flowers for export to the Marks and Spencer stores in the UK. SANParks and Fauna & Flora International secured a market for sustainable harvesting of flowers and supported training of local women. This created permanent jobs for 110 people, mostly women, and further business opportunities.

There is also a significant tourism industry following a study of all the opportunities. One such an opportunity is the game that used to occur in this area. SANParks supported the communities to re-introduce game, thereby supporting both the local economy and conservation. The community were supported in obtaining funding for rehabilitation and management intervention activities (roads, fencing, rehabilitation of veld and rivers). Over 250 short and long-term job opportunities were created, and about 46 000 ha of land became available for conservation and farming – a living landscape where people can farm and conserve. As the ABI project evaluator remarked, at first it was about “flipping the economy” and at the end it was about “flipping the mind set” as more people, decision makers and partners saw the value and need to balance not just the ecology and the economy, but to “balance them both with the social” and create human well-being and prosperity, and achieve socio-economic growth.
President Jacob Zuma, in his State of the Nation address on 10 February 2011, announced government’s strategy to give a boost to job creation and indicated that all government departments and entities should re-align their programmes with government’s commitment in this regard.

A number of sectors were identified as being areas in which job creation would be focused such as: infrastructure development; agriculture; mining and beneficiation; manufacturing; green economy; and tourism. It was further stated that a R9 bn jobs fund would be set up over the following three years, and that R20 bn in tax breaks would be provided to industries to stimulate job creation. The prime focus of government was to lay the basis to meet the New Growth Path target of creating five million new jobs by 2020.

Within the context of government’s strategic commitment in this regard, SANParks has reassessed its activities and programmes in order to align them to government objectives. The CEO’s opening address to the annual SANParks strategic planning workshop in February 2011 challenged SANParks’ leadership team to come up with programmes which would better align SANParks with the job creation vision of government.

**The Job Creation Project:** was established to harness the energies and creativity within SANParks in order to achieve a number of key objectives around job creation, such as to:

- analyse the history of job creation in SANParks in order to identify areas of strength and weakness,
- analyse the current situation within SANParks in respect of the jobs balance sheet,
- identify mechanisms within the current functional context whereby the creation of jobs can be enhanced through a variety of mechanisms,
- evaluate SANParks EPWP and to contextualise and enhance these within the ‘decent jobs’ paradigm,
- align SANParks Product Development Strategy with job creation programmes of government,
- identify new projects geared towards job creation,
- assess costs and to identify funding sources for job creation programmes,
- support and monitor the implementation of job creation by line divisions in SANParks.
The table above shows that there were 3,738 permanent employees on the SANParks payroll as at 31 March 2012. In addition to this there were 980 temporary/contract personnel in the employ of SANParks, inclusive of the 245 environmental monitors on three-year contracts.
A total of 1,800 staff are currently employed in the concessions, with the largest number (1,543) in the lodges, restaurants and shops – primarily in the KNP. There are also a significant number (303) employed by Cape Point Partnership and Table Mountain Aerial Cablecar Company (TMACC) in Table Mountain National Park. The majority of the 160 staff employed in outsourced functions are in the security/gate control jobs both in the KNP and the other national parks. In terms of the expansion of SANParks’ staff complement, the objective is to expand the number of staff employed in permanent jobs in SANParks. A number of mechanisms are to be utilised in implementing this, such as: insourcing of outsourced functions; converting contract positions to permanent positions; creating new conservation jobs through strengthening the resource security function, and creating new tourism jobs through new product development initiatives.

New Conservation Jobs through Resource Security: A number of initiatives are in process towards job creation in the context of the decision to strengthen the resource security function by expanding the number of ranger positions in a number of situations. Applications have been made to the Jobs Fund to assist with initial costs. Initiatives include the expansion of the capacity of SANParks for resource security and visitor safety. In the KNP 150 additional ranger positions have been created to strengthen anti-poaching in response to the scourge of rhino killing, over and above 57 additional posts created in 2010. As at the end of March 2012, 60 of these 150 posts had been filled.

Table Mountain Visitor Safety: Escalating crime in the Table Mountain area led to a review of the TMNP visitor safety plan which indicated a need for an additional 50 ranger posts to provide capacity in dealing with the crime threat on Table Mountain. These positions were all filled as at the end of November 2011 and there is already a discernible reduction in reported incidents of crime on Table Mountain.

New Tourism Jobs through Product Development include:

- Skukuza Safari Lodge – The development of the new Safari Lodge in the Kruger National Park is expected to create 135 new jobs.
- The Malelane Lodge concession in Kruger National Park will create up to 200 new jobs.
Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) is possibly the best example of the ‘Healthy Parks, Healthy People’ concept where the rehabilitation and maintenance of a sustainable and healthy natural environment provides many opportunities for recreational and other uses of the Park, thereby contributing significantly to the physical and spiritual health of the user population. The Park is largely a free and open access area for recreational users. Its popularity lies in the fact that it is so close to the city and offers a variety of activities for the city dweller. Thousands of Capetonians use the national park for hiking, dog walking, climbing, cycling, horse riding and even paragliding. The last survey revealed that about 175 000 dog walkers and 51 000 cyclists regularly use the mountain park.
Trail running in TMNP

The park is visited by about four million people each year, about half of whom frequent the open access areas. If one considers the average entry fee of R15 charged at pay points, the free access equates to about R30 million of lost income for the park. In addition, the high numbers of users require a substantial investment in footpaths, access points, parking areas and other infrastructure. The cost of these recreational activities is subsidised. Other financial contributions are made by concessionaires operating tourism businesses within the park boundaries. Affordable access at the current pay points is further enabled by means of the Wild Card and local My Green Card. The latter allows local residents access at 1/12 of the normal entry tariff.

The park inherited a number of picnic and braai facilities when land was transferred from the local authority. All of these sites have been upgraded and are managed to the advantage of local residents and not for the financial benefit of the park. A Visitor Safety Programme exists in the interest of the safety and security of mountain users. Over the past season the safety rangers carried out 77 rescues of injured or lost hikers on the mountain.

Education: The park has a diverse educational programme that is geared towards bringing learners from disadvantaged communities to the park. The intention is both educational as well as sharing in the wilderness experience enjoyed by the more affluent people who live on its borders. With the assistance of the City of Cape Town, the park procured two buses with the express purpose of bringing individuals from previously marginalised communities into the park.

Over the last eight years, more than 60 000 learners were beneficiaries of the bus programme. Two educational centres are hugely popular and frequented by about 2 000 learners per year who enjoy the overnight facilities and an educational programme designed to complement the school syllabus. Although learners are expected to pay for this experience, the park carries 75% of the real cost of the programme.

A guided hiking trail gives the youngsters the opportunity to sleep on top of Table Mountain. This is the epitome of an outreach experience for them and about 6 000 learners per year clamour to take part in it. Once again, this life-changing experience is subsidised by the park to an amount of about 75% of the real cost. Groups that arrive with their own educational programmes and own guidance are issued with educational permits that allow them entry at a fraction of the normal entry price. About 25 000 such permits are issued per year, which amounts to an investment by SANParks of about R1.3 million. Lastly, TMNP has had several successful years of developing junior rangers and exposing them to the requirements and skills of conservation management.

Cultural heritage: Due to the rich history of the Cape and the diversity of cultures that settled here over the centuries, the TMNP is home to more than 1 000 sites of heritage significance. They include all cultures of various sizes, sacred and historical, terrestrial and maritime, and span several centuries. Sites are managed to allow access, but mitigate damage and desecration. The park has a Heritage Resources Management Plan and engages with various heritage agencies for the most effective care of these sites. For instance, Micro PPPs were engaged to invest in the
upgrading of a few sites, for the privilege of operating a business on such premises. The Round House restaurant is an example of such a PPP. At other facilities the park invested EPWP funds to upgrade heritage buildings for its own tourism operations, for example the historic Wash Houses.

Events: Over the years the TMNP hosted a number of events intended to attract public participation and buy-in to the park. These events have ranged from marathons, trail runs and music festivals. Internationally renowned events, such as the Argus Cycle Tour and the Two Oceans Marathon are also organised with the cooperation of the park. As both of these events use vast sections of the park along their routes, their organisers have acknowledged that the healthy natural estate enjoyed by the participants has added to the popularity of these major events.

Volunteers: Many volunteer groups are active in the park and make meaningful contributions in kind, and in services and sponsorships. In doing so volunteers both add value to the park and enhance their sense of ownership of their favourite destinations. Several volunteers adopt a part of the park and invest their time in alien growth clearing, footpath maintenance and clean-up campaigns. Others invest in specific projects that will deliver a product or service to the benefit of the park and its users. One exemplary project was the restoration of lower Tokai that had been left desolate after commercial timber harvesting.
Internships: As part of contributing to job creation, SANParks has a number of other programmes, including internships and learnerships. Every year SANParks recruits 50 interns in various fields to expose them to the world of work and prepare them for future job opportunities. A monthly stipend is paid to each intern as assistance towards their monthly expenses.

Learnerships: SANParks has also partnered with Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) for the sector on the learnership programme. In the last three years we have accommodated an average of 16 learners per year as per the SETA’s allocation. Most of these learners are absorbed into full-time positions at the end of the Learnership programme.

Junior Scientist Programme: This programme is a response by SANParks to the critical shortage of qualified black scientists. The programme entails support to postgraduate black science students to provide a mechanism for succession planning and transformation in the conservation space. A minimum of two post-graduate students are recruited through this programme from tertiary institutions that we have partnered with, and these students are offered research opportunities of a high standard. They are also exposed to a mentorship programme in the field of study they want to pursue at PhD level. SANParks has solicited external funding to cover the research material, travelling and accommodation costs and the monthly stipend.

On completion of their PhDs, the students are absorbed into full-time employment.

Bursaries for children of employees: Educational bursaries are made available to children of employees. Every year 50 bursaries are awarded to children of employees. The allocation of these bursaries is biased towards the children of employees at the lower levels of the structure due to their state of affordability. SANParks has also piloted a bursary programme aimed at external students in the conservation field who are not necessarily the children of staff.

Social Science Student Support Programme: A bursary scheme was established in 2011 for students external to SANParks through funding received from the National Lottery. The bursary provides the opportunity to students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds to study for Bachelor’s degrees at the University of Pretoria in any field related to professions considered important for the operations and mission of SANParks. The bursary covers the full period of undergraduate study and pays for tuition, accommodation, books and field costs. Deserving postgraduate students conducting research on themes related to SANParks’ areas of interest are also assisted. Twenty-two students have to date benefited from the bursary scheme. These include fourteen undergraduate students and eight post-graduate students.
As part of its Corporate Social Investment Programme, SANParks, in partnership with the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, handed over a bursary of R1 million to students studying social sciences, conservation and related fields at the University of Pretoria (UP). The bursary scheme is part of SANParks’ Social Science Student Support Programme, a multi-year programme that supports tertiary learning and research. “This programme will go a long way in benefiting scientific research within SANParks and the entire environment and conservation fraternity as a number of professions that relate to fields of study … fit in with SANParks operations, including conservation management and research.” The Social Science Student Support Programme strives to identify, educate and equip students who have the potential to excel and make a significant impact in the social sciences, heritage conservation and related fields. SANParks is committed to contributing to South Africa’s national skills development agenda and is one of the leading conservation institutions in South Africa taking part in social investment through education. The programme started in 2011. In this academic year, 22 students are beneficiaries.

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Some programmes may be initiated and conceptualised from outside along a full chain ranging from schools to universities and ultimately to society. Indeed, some other programmes such as the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative are about preparing for the essential future needs of society.

Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative

Partners in Human Capital Development in the biodiversity sector: In South Africa, as in the rest of Africa, significant challenges include skills shortages in civil society and local institutions, and a widespread struggle to interpret the basic tenets of biodiversity in locally relevant terms. These skills shortages are currently being addressed through a Human Capital Development Strategy for the Biodiversity Sector put forward by SANBI, the Lewis Foundation and Green Matter. As one of South Africa’s leading conservation organisations, SANParks has been identified as a key role player in environmental human capital development. Not only does the organisation have a strong institutional base with significant human capital, but it is also the custodian of some of the country’s most diverse and ecologically important natural capital. Global conservation focus is being increasingly placed on the protection of ecosystem services, but the role of knowledge services (the use of nature for education and the advancement of expert and lay environmental knowledge) is very seldom acknowledged. South Africa’s protected areas make ideal classrooms and laboratories for furthering our understanding of ecosystems and humanity’s role within and around them.
To this end, the world-renowned Kruger National Park (KNP) provides an unprecedented opportunity for advanced environmental training and education. Not only does it have an internationally recognised scientific base, but it also has a deep connection with adjoining rural communities. Issues arising from the management of the KNP reflect many of the current scientific debates around communities and conservation, biodiversity, and climate change. Consequently, it offers a unique training ground for a new breed of earth-system scientists. The programme aims to bridge the gap between disadvantaged communities, tertiary education, and the biodiversity sector, streaming selected students into critical gaps in South African human capital. Through multi-level programming, contribution to long-term research, the linking of existing science training and research in the KNP, and the building of a sustainable education and training facility, this initiative will contribute to a hub for science leadership in Skukuza. The hub will bring together local and international scientists and park managers and ensure that intellectual capital and science skills are transferred to developing South African science students and technicians. This proposal has been made by the Nsasani Trust, the Organisation for Tropical Studies and the Scientific Services division of SANParks in the KNP.

Partners:

Nsasani Trust: An educational non-profit organisation, based in Skukuza, dedicated to the training and empowerment of South African students.

The Organisation for Tropical Studies (OTS), South Africa, in partnership with SANParks, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, has run 16 undergraduate programmes to date, providing students from the US, Latin America and South Africa with holistic science training through experiential learning.

SANParks Scientific Services: A strong internationally recognised existing scientific platform is provided by the KNP’s Scientific Services Division in Skukuza. SANParks have provided a site and institutional support, and will assist in the running of various capacity-building courses associated with the initiative.
Programming concept:

The core programming concept for the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative is depicted below. The streamed, partnered programme, supported by the Skukuza Science Leadership Centre yields three key products: a) Research and monitoring focusing on SANParks research objectives; b) Human capital in the biodiversity sector; and c) community outreach.
Partnerships:

This initiative will only be possible through the joining of expert partners who bring a diverse array of abilities and experience to the table. The relationship organogram outlining the structure and nature of the partnership between SANParks, Nsasani Trust and the Organisation for Tropical Studies is show below.
Facility:

The initiative requires the creation of an inspirational and sustainably built learning space in Skukuza in the Kruger National Park. A flagship centre of the KNP, the facility must not only enhance science education and experiential learning opportunities, but must demonstrate to managers, tourists and students alike the feasibility of low-impact living by showcasing the ways in which design and materials can reduce our environmental footprint in all aspects of daily living.

Through an advisory panel consisting of members from SANParks Technical Services, Scientific Services, OTS and Nsasani, a contract has been awarded to green architects Nick Whitcutt and Kevin Mitchell. The facility they have been tasked with designing will include a lecture theatre, small library and computer lab, kitchen/dining hall, and student and staff accommodations. Master planning is in progress and some preliminary sketches and concepts are displayed below.
National Parks have always been key sources of employment and socio-economic beneficiation in the rural areas within which almost all parks are situated. The role of SANParks in supporting rural economies cannot be overstated. On any given working day somewhere between 10 000 and 11 000 people get up and go to work in a national park. In addition, a far greater number of indirect jobs are supported outside of the park through the provision of goods and services to both the parks and to the tourists passing through who visit the parks. In many depressed rural areas the national park is virtually the only source of jobs and economic opportunities, leading to a situation where the local economy may either fail or prosper depending on the manner in which SANParks engages with the local economy. In this regard, SANParks remains committed to expanding its role in the development and growth of both the national tourism economy and in local economies where there are national parks.
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