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Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node

 **Master Plan
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CLIENT DETAILS

Client:	South African National Parks (SANParks)
Contact person:	Mrs. Naledi Mneni
E-mail:	Naledi.Mneni@sanparks.org

CONSULTANTS DETAILS

Consultants:	Greg Martindale, Kevin McCann and Dr Kiéra Schoeman
Contact person:	Dr Kiéra Schoeman
E-mail:	kiera@thecollective-impact.com / 063 684 4682

CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries The mission of the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) of the Republic of South Africa is as follows – to create a prosperous and equitable society that lives in harmony with our environment.

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Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency ECPTA is a governmental organization responsible for managing protected areas and promoting tourism in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The agency oversees the conservation of biodiversity within provincial nature reserves, while also working to develop sustainable tourism initiatives that contribute to the region's economic growth. ECPTA aims to enhance the visitor experience by preserving natural heritage, supporting community involvement, and marketing the Eastern Cape as a premier destination for nature-based and cultural tourism.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

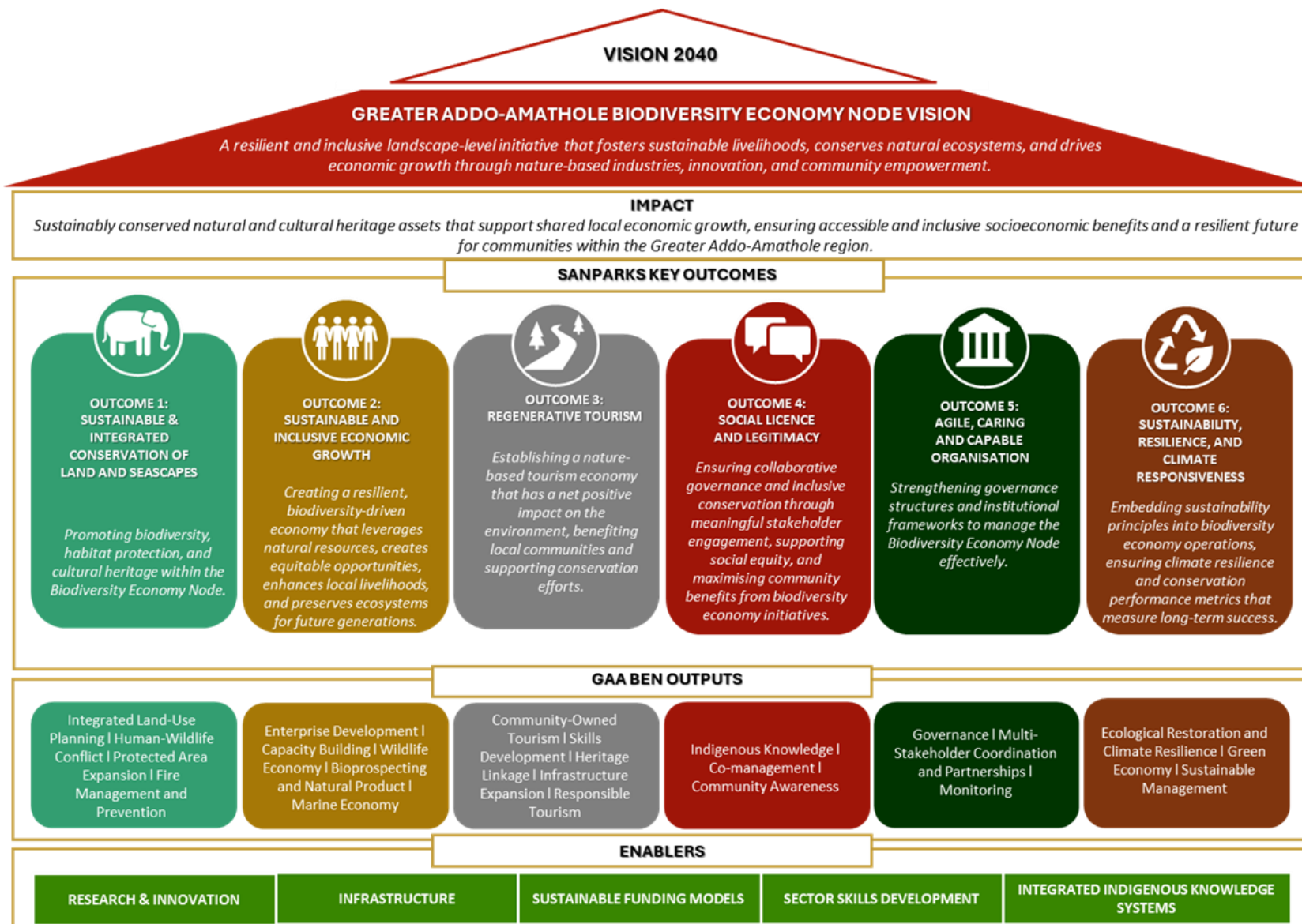
The Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Master Plan serves as a strategic blueprint for integrating economic development with biodiversity conservation, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, ecosystem resilience and long-term prosperity. It provides both a spatial guideline for the development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node and identifies the key enablers required to support the establishment and development of the biodiversity economy. This includes:

- The governance and institutional arrangements required to support the establishment and development of the biodiversity economy node.
- The identification of key industries and sectors linked to the biodiversity economy, where they may best be developed, how they may be linked and how they can be strengthened through collaboration.
- The enabling environment required to ensure that the biodiversity economy sectors can be established and grow in an effective and efficient manner.

The overarching strategy of the GAA BEN Master Plan is to catalyse a sustainable biodiversity economy by promoting synergies between conservation, community development, and economic sectors (i.e. wildlife, tourism, agriculture, and bioprospecting). The strategy is structured around integrated spatial clusters (i.e. zones delineated to support ecotourism, marine and coastal livelihoods, agri-business, and urban development). These zones form the basis for a place-based beneficiation model and collaborative investment in infrastructure, skills, and market access.

The master plan is intended to provide a tool for all partners including those in national, provincial and local government, businesses, local communities, NGO partners, researchers and others to guide the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node.

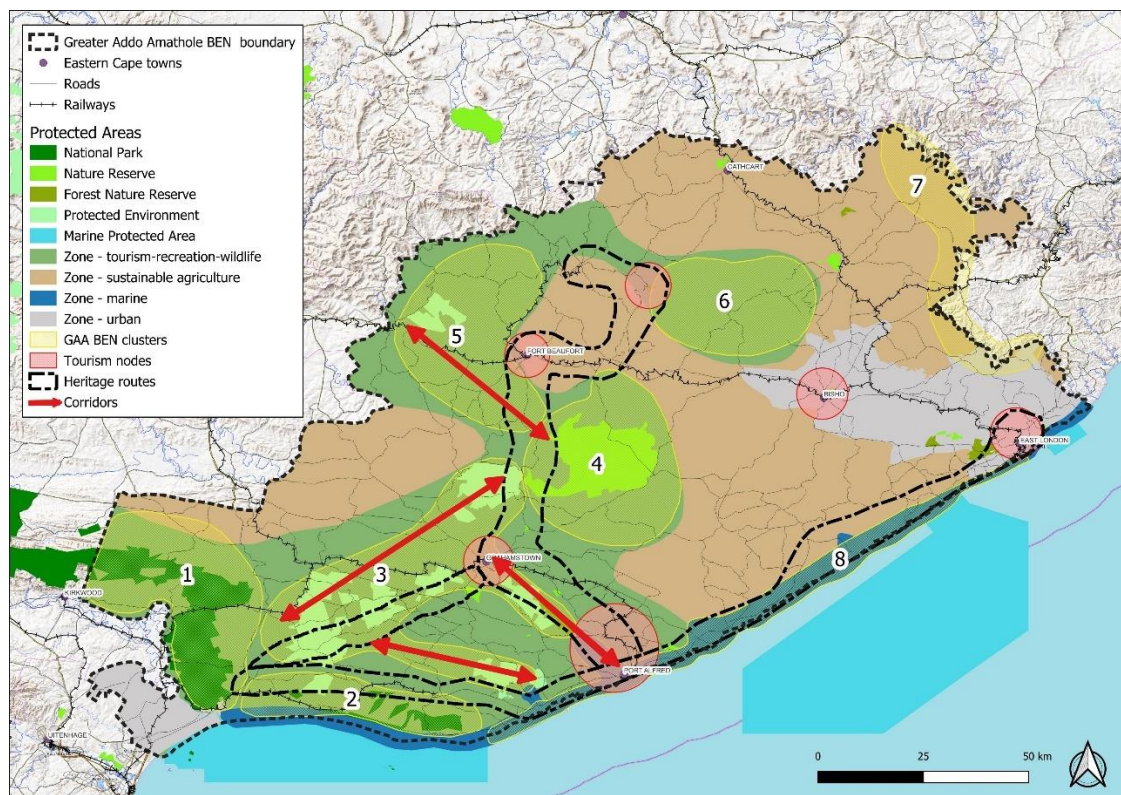
The Master Plan has been developed in the context of this and is closely aligned with the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity (2023) and the draft National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (2024). Furthermore, it is considered a key mechanism to enable South Africa to achieve its obligations in terms of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and SANParks Vision 2040. It has been designed to balance ecological conservation with sustainable economic development. Rooted in Vision 2040 principles, it seeks to ensure long-term prosperity for both people and nature through biodiversity-based industries, community empowerment, and conservation-driven innovation.



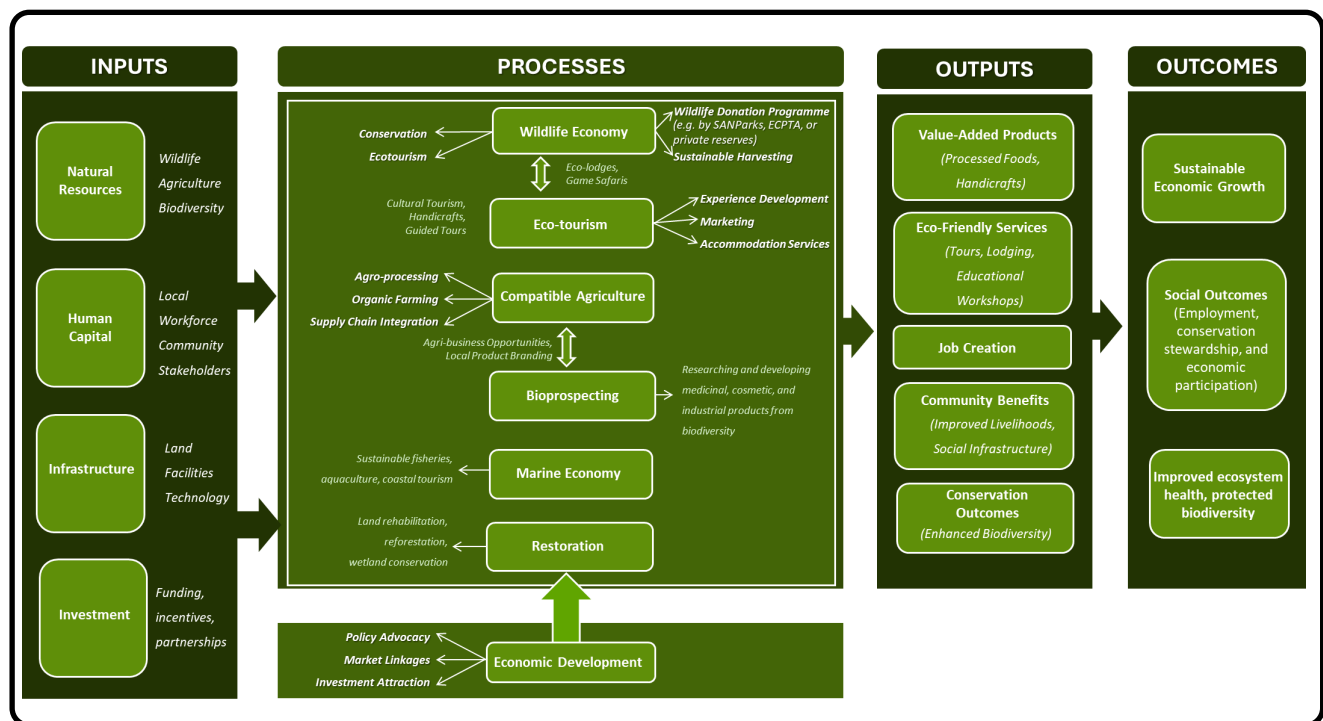
The informants for the spatial prioritisation of the biodiversity economy node have included:

- Existing terrestrial and marine protected areas.
- Biodiversity priorities, in particular the presence of Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs).
- National and provincial protected area expansion priorities.
- Vegetation types, including threatened vegetation types.
- Principles of ecological connectivity and scale.
- Known conflicting and compatible land uses.
- Tourism potential.
- Priority areas for ecological restoration.
- Water resources, including strategic water source areas.
- Climate risk mitigation and adaptation.
- A series of zones that encompass tourism/wildlife, agriculture, marine and urban zones.

Based on these informants, clusters within the biodiversity economy node were proposed as a means of creating meaningful and viable collaborations at a local level. These were presented at a Multistakeholder Forum meeting and the inputs from stakeholders were integrated into the spatial planning, ultimately resulting in an integrated prioritisation map.



The beneficiation model for the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node is designed to drive sustainable economic growth by leveraging the node's natural resources, such as its wildlife, agricultural potential, and tourism assets. This model integrates the wildlife, agriculture, and tourism sectors to encourage their contributions towards achieving a cohesive and resilient biodiversity economy. The model seeks to transform raw materials from these sectors into value-added products and services, as means to promote job creation, local entrepreneurship, and regional prosperity. Ultimately, the goal is to create both short-term economic benefits for all stakeholders (including the local communities) and long-term sustainable development.



The outcomes of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node reflect the long-term, transformative impacts of the master plan, which extend beyond immediate outputs to achieve sustainable development, resilience, and inclusivity across the region. These outcomes span economic, social, and environmental dimensions, demonstrating the broader significance of the initiative.

Economic Outcomes

The successful implementation of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node will result in a thriving, diversified regional economy. Local businesses will flourish, with increased market access for value-added agricultural products, game meat, and ecotourism services. The region will attract substantial domestic and international investment, further enhancing its economic resilience.

Job creation will be a foundation outcome, with sustainable employment opportunities generated across multiple sectors. The development of key infrastructure will ensure long-term economic stability and community empowerment. Additionally, the node's positioning as a biodiversity economy hub will enhance its reputation as a leader in sustainable development, boosting competitiveness and economic visibility.

Social Outcomes

The Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node will significantly improve the quality of life for local communities, creating inclusive and equitable development opportunities. Education and skills training will empower residents, enabling them to access higher-quality jobs and participate actively in the region's evolving economy.

A core component of social empowerment in the node is the preservation and celebration of cultural heritage. The GAA BEN is home to many culturally significant heritage sites, including several heritage routes, significant sites and caves that serve as both natural wonders and cultural heritage sites. These sites are deeply embedded in the histories of indigenous resistance, including associations with the Frontier Wars, a series of nine defining conflicts from 1779 to 1879 between the Xhosa people, European settlers, and other indigenous groups such as the Khoikhoi and San. These conflicts, primarily over land and cattle, represent one of the longest-standing resistance movements to European colonisation on the African continent and continue to shape the collective identity of local communities (SAHO, 2018).

In recognition of this legacy, the master plan integrates cultural heritage into biodiversity-based development by supporting heritage preservation initiatives. In collaboration with SANParks and heritage experts, sites like the caves linked to the Frontier Wars will be enhanced to provide safe, informative, and immersive visitor experiences. These efforts will not only honour stories of resistance and resilience but also contribute to the growth of cultural tourism, creating economic opportunities while fostering a deeper understanding of the region's history.

Empowered communities will be a key outcome, with inclusive governance structures and participatory decision-making processes ensuring that local stakeholders have a direct voice in the region's development. Gender equity and opportunities for marginalised groups will be central, breaking down traditional barriers and enabling meaningful contributions from all members of society.

Environmental Outcomes

The Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node will serve as a model for balancing economic development with environmental stewardship. Outcomes will include the restoration and preservation of ecosystems, as well as the creation of interconnected biodiversity corridors that enhance habitat connectivity. The node's natural capital will be safeguarded through sustainable resource management practices, ensuring that future generations benefit from the ecosystem services provided by healthy landscapes.

Measurable environmental outcomes will include enhanced protection of threatened vegetation types and species, increased populations of key wildlife species, improved water quality, and reduced carbon emissions due to reforestation and conservation initiatives. The integration of wildlife-based land uses as a central economic driver will highlight the viability of conservation-linked development, inspiring similar initiatives across the country.

Holistic and Systemic Outcomes

At a broader level, the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node will act as a catalyst for systemic change in the region. Its success will demonstrate the potential of biodiversity economy nodes and mega living landscapes to drive sustainable development, influencing policy at national and provincial levels. The initiative will strengthen institutional capacities and collaboration between government, private sector actors, and local communities.

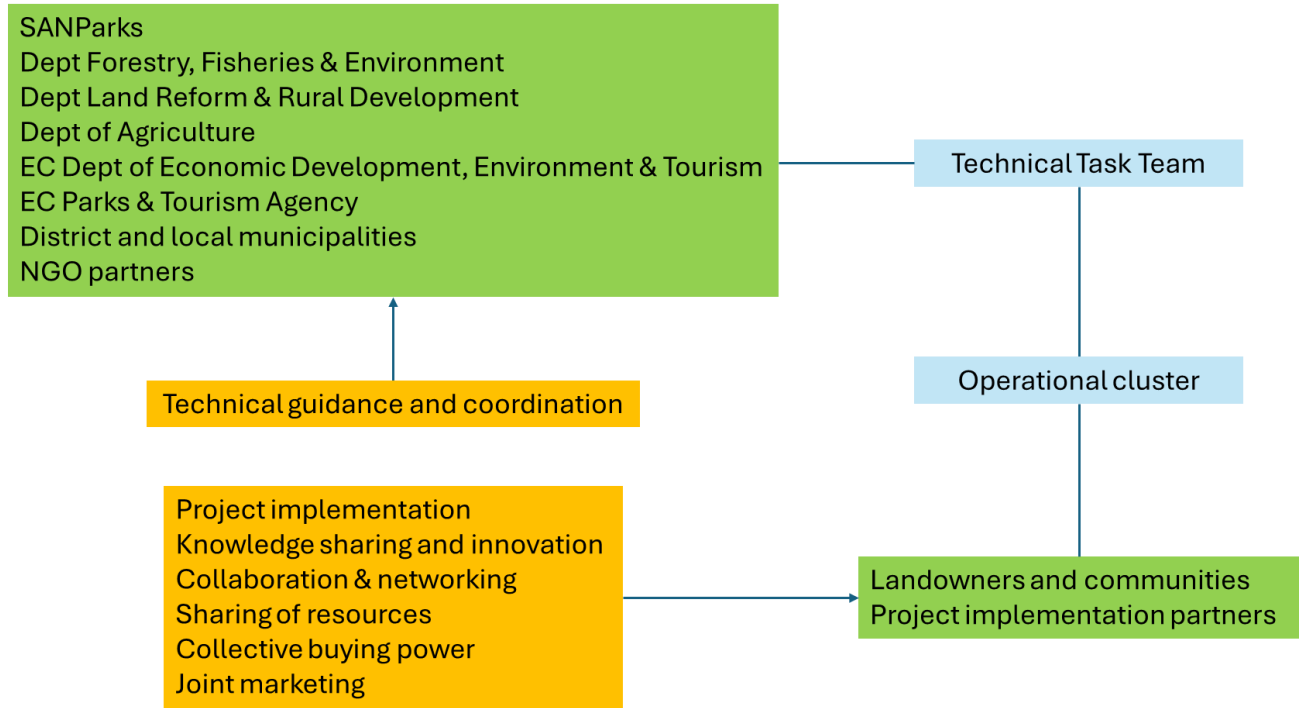
Furthermore, the outcomes will align with global sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to poverty alleviation, environmental conservation, and inclusive economic growth.

Implementation plan

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Implementation Cluster	
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
1. Sustainable and Integrated Conservation of Land and Seascapes	Integrated Land-Use Planning												All the clusters
	Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Strategies												Cluster 1, 7: Wildlife management
	Protected Area Expansion Programme												Cluster 1: Ecotourism Development
	Fire Management and Prevention Strategy												Cluster 7: Wildlife Management
2. Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth	Back to School Programme												Cluster 5: Tourism (Adventure & Cultural)
	Enterprise Development and Capacity Building												Cluster 1, 3, and 5: Ecotourism development Cluster 4: Bioprospecting (SMME development)
	Wildlife Economy Development												Cluster 3: Ecotourism, Crafts, and Game Management
	Bioprospecting and Natural Product Development												Clusters 5, 6, and 7.
	Marine Economy Development												Cluster 3: Marine Economy
3. Regenerative Tourism	Community-Owned Tourism Models												Cluster 4: Tourism
	Tourism Skills Development and Training												Cluster 1, 3, 4, 5, 8: Ecotourism development
	Heritage Route Linkage												All clusters
	Infrastructure Expansion												Cluster 4: Tourism
	Responsible Visitor Management												Cluster 1, 3, 4, 5, 8: Ecotourism development
	Community Tourism												Cluster 3, 4, and 5.
4. Social Licence and Legitimacy	Indigenous Knowledge Conservation Framework												All clusters
	Co-creation & Co-management of Resources												All clusters

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Implementation Cluster	
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035		
	Community Awareness on Wildlife Conservation												Clusters 1,3 and 7
5. Organisational Agility and Innovation	Strengthening governance structures and institutional frameworks to manage the GAA BEN												All clusters
	Multi-Stakeholder Coordination and Partnerships												All clusters
	Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring												All clusters
6. Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Responsiveness	Ecological Restoration and Climate Resilience												Cluster 5 and 7: Agri-forestry
	Circular Economy and Waste Management												Cluster 5 and 7: Agri-forestry
	Sustainable Agriculture Development												All clusters
	Sustainable Rangeland Management												Cluster 2: Livestock Farming

It is essential that effective governance and institutional arrangements be instituted and maintained if the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node is to be effectively established and developed over time. Such arrangements and the forums established must ensure participation by all key role players and stakeholders and must provide a platform for cooperation, collaboration and the provision of technical support and expertise to projects and other initiatives established under the auspices of the biodiversity economy node. There are examples of the types of institutional arrangements that have been established for other landscape-level biodiversity conservation initiatives that are relevant in this context, notably the Upper Umzimvubu Catchment Partnership, the arrangements established in support of the creation of the Grasslands National Park and those established in support of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) Cooperative Agreement. Through a review of these structures, recommended institutional arrangements have been developed for the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node (see the following figure).



Institutional arrangements required to support the GAA BEN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DDM	District Development Model
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EC DEDEAT	Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism
ECGMA	Eastern Cape Game Management Association
ECPTA	Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency
GAA BEN	Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economic Node
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
MEAM	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management framework
MLL	Mega Living Landscapes
MP	Master Plan
NCCAS	National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
NCCRP	National Climate Change Response Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIP 2050	National Infrastructure Plan 2050
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NSDF	National Spatial Development Framework 2050
OECMs	Other effective area-based conservation measures
SANParks	South African National Parks
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAT	South African Tourism
SATSA	South African Tourism Services Association
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
WRSA	Wildlife Ranching South Africa



SECTION 1: WHY?

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of South Africa's Biodiversity Economy, as informed by the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity (2023) and the draft National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (2024) is intended to unlock sustainable economic opportunities linked to the country's biodiversity whilst enabling socio-economic transformation, especially in historically poor rural areas. The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy has been developed "to optimise biodiversity-based business potential across the terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine, marine and coastal realms, and to contribute to economic growth with local beneficiation, job creation, poverty alleviation, and food security, whilst maintaining the ecological integrity of the biodiversity resource base, for thriving people and nature." It is within this context that the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node is being established.

This master plan has been developed as a framework to guide the further development of the biodiversity economy node through a shared vision for a conservation compatible integrated land use system, fostering sustainable socio-economic development whilst preserving the rich biodiversity of the region. It represents a multi-institutional and multi-sectoral endeavour, characterised by cooperation and collaboration across various levels and with a diverse array of partners.

1.1.1 VISION 2040

The establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node is aligned with SANParks Vision 2040, which was revealed on the 26th of September 2024. It must be noted that the terminology linked to South Africa's biodiversity economy is evolving. The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy no longer refers to biodiversity economy nodes but instead uses the term 'mega living conservation landscapes.' This is consistent with SANParks Vision 2040, which has adopted the concept of Mega Living Landscapes.



Figure 1: SANParks Vision 2040

SANParks Vision 2040 represents a paradigm shift for the organisation in which people are placed at the heart of conservation. This is a radical departure from a

historic fortress conservation approach that has largely been focussed on keep people out and separate from national parks. This historically inward-looking approach to biodiversity conservation requires a cultural shift within the organisation that is far more outward-looking, focussed on providing benefits to both people and nature. This is consistent with the White Paper and the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy and is also aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its targets, such as Target 3, which seeks to secure 30% of the planet's surface area for biodiversity conservation and biodiversity compatible land use.

1.1.2 BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY STRATEGY GOALS

The revised draft National Biodiversity Economy Strategy builds upon the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity (the White Paper) and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). It is framed to provide strategic direction for the development of the country's biodiversity economy.

The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy is explicit about the sustainable use of biodiversity, but also emphasises the linkage to ecosystem restoration, as well as the importance of ecological infrastructure. It includes enablers that are aligned with the White Paper and the implementation of the GBF, including explicitly considering financing, capacity development, and the need for cooperation and partnership. It is underpinned by two cross-cutting imperatives:

- **Cross-cutting imperative 1:** Leverage the biodiversity economy to promote conservation and species and ecosystem management, thereby ensuring a positive feedback loop.
- **Cross-cutting imperative 2:** Promote growth and transformation of the biodiversity economy.

The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy sets out to achieve four strategic goals:

- **Goal 1:** Leveraging biodiversity-based features to scale inclusive ecotourism industry growth in seascapes and in sustainable conservation land-use.
Impact Statement: This will grow sustainable and inclusive eco-tourism-based businesses by 10% per annum through marine-based ecotourism activities and expansion of the conservation estate from 20 million ha to 34 million ha by 2040 (4,2 million ha from declared protected areas and 10 million ha from Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures-OECMs).
- **Goal 2:** Consumptive use of game from extensive wildlife systems at scale that drive transformation and expanded sustainable conservation compatible land-use.

Impact Statement: This will increase the GDP contribution for consumptive use of game from extensive wildlife systems from R4.6 billion (2020) to R27.6 billion by 2036.

- **Goal 3:** Consumptive use of wild and produced marine and freshwater resources that drives inclusive coastal socio-economic development.

Impact Statement: Grow sustainable consumptive use of marine, coastal, estuarine and freshwater resources, including through aquaculture, by 10% per annum by 2036.

- **Goal 4:** Well structured, inclusive, integrated and formalised bioprospecting, bio trade, and biodiversity-based harvesting and production sector that beneficiates communities.

Impact Statement: This will increase the GDP contribution of the bioprospecting/bio trade from R1,85 billion (2020) to R11,6 billion by 2036 through local beneficiation (finished pharmaceutical, cosmetics and food supplements products), and the development of SMME based production systems for restoration and sequestration.

To achieve these goals, the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy requires implementation of four key enablers:

- **Enabler 1:** Effective and Efficient regulation and policy implementation.
- **Enabler 2:** Increased capacity, innovation and technological support.
- **Enabler 3:** Financial support sustains conservation and grows the biodiversity economy.
- **Enabler 4:** Market access for communities and previously disadvantaged individuals (PDI).

These enablers are key components for the successful establishment of the biodiversity economy. The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy emphasises the need to grow and sustain conservation land and seascapes while promoting and facilitating inclusive biodiversity-based businesses that drive transformation of the biodiversity sector. It provides increased opportunity to contribute to achieving more elements of the National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, as it emphasises the importance of sustainable use of biodiversity as key to inclusive socio-economic development, especially when effectively mainstreamed into cross sectoral planning.

One of the key actions of National Biodiversity Economy Strategy is the establishment of five mega living conservation landscapes through voluntary involvement of suitable state, private and community areas. This is consistent with the intentions of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node as the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy envisages these mega living conservation landscapes as a mosaic of conservation and productions systems under different legal and management arrangements. This

should include integration of terrestrial, estuarine, coastal and marine elements. The mega living conservation landscapes build upon the concepts of biodiversity economy nodes and the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy identifies that there are a number of these that are being established.

The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy includes actions that focus on the development of infrastructure, an increase in the number of animals available for commercial and recreational hunting and the growth of the game meat industry from extensive wildlife systems. The development of game meat value chains is aligned with the national Game Meat Strategy. Other actions include a focus on the consumptive use of marine and freshwater resources, including through aquaculture, and the development of a bioprospecting, bio trade and biodiversity-based harvesting and production sectors that benefits communities.

In addressing the cross-cutting imperatives of leveraging the biodiversity economy to promote conservation and species and ecosystem management, the actions identified include a need to expand the area of land under conservation land use through acquisition, partnering, stewardship and other effective area-based mechanisms (OECM, as defined in Target 3 of the GBF). In promoting growth and transformation of the biodiversity economy, the actions include an imperative to develop and implement innovative partnership arrangements and context specific business models that create economies of scale and effective enterprises for communities and PDIs. Other actions under this cross-cutting imperative include:

- The identification and alleviation of key barriers of entry into large and commercially scaled biodiversity-based value chains (ecotourism, trophy and recreational hunting, game meat harvesting) to enable a shift to large areas of community owned conservation land-use.
- The development and implementation of innovations, strategies, mechanisms and tools to stimulate capacitate and develop SMMEs within communities and with PDIs.
- The development and implementation of a framework with mechanisms and tools for a strong role of traditional authorities in conservation land-use management and sustainable biodiversity-based enterprises.
- The development and implementation of benefit-sharing agreements that are more inclusive/participatory for communities, and that support effective ecosystem management and conservation of community land.

- The development and implementation of innovative benefit-sharing agreements, through access and benefit sharing, that leverage private sector funding and/or non-monetary support of conservation compatible land-use and management as a foundation for localised value add.
- The development and implementation of innovative mechanisms to include Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) type activities into conservation and environmental management rehabilitation through cross-subsidisation.
- The development and implementation of co-management agreements that enhance participation of communities in biodiversity economy programmes, based on conservation land use, including incorporation into larger contiguous areas.
- The development and implementation of mechanisms and tools developed to ensure access, empowerment and participation of communities and PDIs in inland fisheries and recreational fishing.

The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy provides important guiding policy for protected area expansion and for the development and implementation of interventions associated with the biodiversity economy. It also lays the foundation for Mega Living Landscapes in general, and the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node specifically, as envisaged in SANParks Vision 2040.

1.1.3 MEGA LIVING LANDSCAPES VISION

The recent approval of the White Paper and the Launch of SANParks Vision 2040 herald the beginning of a paradigm shift that seeks to enable the country to change from its current trajectory to one where nature is understood to be the bedrock of the economy. Mega living landscapes will assist in breaking the barriers blocking both the expansion of protected areas and pro-nature economic development that benefits local communities. It is envisaged that mega living landscapes will contribute to a dynamic reimagined national conservation vision for South Africa that will become an integral part of the country's sustainable development and nature positive economic future, resulting in thriving people and nature.

The South African Government has made an international commitment to contribute towards the achievement of the targets of the GBF, particularly Target 3, which strives to conserve 30% of the planet's terrestrial, inland water and marine areas by 2030. This commitment requires a change in terms of conservation approach, scale of activity and the involvement of a much larger range of role players and stakeholders. People and communities lie at the centre of biodiversity conservation, as rural economic development is re-shaped, on a sustainable trajectory. Instead of ring-fenced conservation areas, the

proposed approach is the deliberate creation of large, interconnected areas which can be formally protected or not, and include state, private, and communal land which will each pursue activities to achieve land management compatible with conservation objectives. Mega living landscapes acknowledge the interconnectedness between biodiversity protection, climate resilience, income generating activities and the wellbeing of all South Africans. People need to connect more consciously with and understand the value of a well-managed environment for our health and wellbeing (for our social, ecological, agricultural and economic systems).

1.1.4 UNLOCKING BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY NODES

South Africa's biodiversity is a national asset that contributes to human livelihoods, economic prosperity and climate resilience. It is fundamental to human wellbeing, underpinning food production, medicine, energy, clean air and water, security from natural disasters and supporting many recreational and cultural pursuits. It supports all systems of life on earth. As highlighted in the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity, "there are diverse successful approaches and enterprises associated with the biodiversity economy, many of which leverage value from otherwise marginal production landscapes, and this diversity enhances the resilience and offers further potential for growth." At the time of its publication, the White Paper highlighted that biodiversity-related jobs in South Africa numbered approximately 418,000 and the biodiversity-based tourism industry was worth over R30 billion per year.

The protected areas that secure biodiversity are the backbone of South Africa's biodiversity economy, driving tourism, the wildlife ranching sector and other related industries. Iconic protected areas such as Table Mountain National Park and the Kruger National Park are primary drivers of international tourism and the foreign exchange flows that they bring into the country. Both the state and privately-owned protected areas in the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node play a similar role and have the potential to further drive local and international tourism in the region.

The establishment of landscape-level conservation initiatives that incorporate protected areas and conservation compatible land uses frequently results in multiple other benefits, in addition to protecting biodiversity. There are outstanding examples of protected area on communal land being primary drivers of rural economic development providing jobs and business opportunities for the community members involved. The establishment of biodiversity economy nodes or mega living landscapes and the protected areas and conservation compatible land uses embedded within them provide the opportunity to re-frame

rural economic development in South Africa, placing it on a sustainable trajectory that can lead to meaningful improvements in livelihoods and social well-being.

Landscape level initiatives such as the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node and the protected areas and OECMs within them provide the obvious platform when considering initiatives linked to the biodiversity economy, sustainable rangeland management and other forms of agriculture, ecological restoration linked to the provision of essential ecosystem services and new and emerging forms of innovative finance such as the provision of carbon and biodiversity credits. They provide security for the types of investments made and an ability to leverage further investment and grant funding linked to biodiversity economy ventures.

The White Paper and other key policy documents such as the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy are re-framing the character of biodiversity conservation and protected area expansion in South Africa. This has been acknowledged by SANParks through its Vision 2040. Through such initiatives new and innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation are being developed, which lead to meaningful benefits to the communities associated with them. Innovations linked to wildlife ranching and sustainable rangeland management, have opened market access and opportunities for communities to produce and market their products, often supported by the production of certified products and linked to other sources of funding such as carbon finance.

The business case and value proposition for biodiversity economy nodes and mega living landscapes that encompass landscape-level conservation initiatives that include protected areas and large areas of conservation compatible land use entails much more than the conservation of biodiversity. They provide a platform for completely re-shaping rural economic development in South Africa, leading to far greater, equitable benefits for the rural poor.

1.2 POLICY MANDATE

The GAA BEN aligns with South Africa's national development priorities, sectoral policies, and institutional frameworks. The Master Plan is guided by key national strategies and policy instruments aimed at promoting sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, economic transformation, and climate resilience.

National Development Planning Priorities

<p>National Spatial Development Framework 2050 (NSDF)</p>	<p>The NSDF provides a long-term spatial vision for South Africa, aiming to promote spatial justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. The GAA BEN aligns with the NSDF’s objectives by fostering biodiversity-based economic opportunities within a well-integrated regional landscape.</p>
<p>National Infrastructure Plan 2050 (NIP 2050)</p>	<p>The NIP 2050 prioritises infrastructure development that supports economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. The Master Plan seeks to leverage strategic infrastructure investments to enhance connectivity, tourism, and economic activities within the biodiversity economy.</p>
<p>District Development Model (DDM)</p>	<p>The DDM advocates for a coordinated, integrated approach to local economic development and service delivery. The GAA BEN aligns with this model by fostering collaboration between government, private sector stakeholders, and local communities to implement inclusive and sustainable development initiatives.</p>
<p>National Climate Change Response Policy (NCCRP) and National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS)</p>	<p>These frameworks provide a policy basis for addressing climate risks and ensuring ecosystem resilience. The GAA BEN incorporates climate adaptation measures, carbon sequestration opportunities, and sustainable land-use practices to mitigate climate change impacts.</p>
<p>The White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa’s Biodiversity (2023)</p>	<p>This policy underscores the importance of conservation and sustainable resource use in achieving economic and social benefits. The Master Plan integrates biodiversity conservation with responsible economic activities such as eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, and wildlife economy initiatives.</p>
<p>The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (2024)</p>	<p>This policy outlines strategies for the growth of the tourism sector, particularly nature-based tourism, to contribute to economic transformation. The GAA BEN aligns with this vision by enhancing ecotourism offerings, community-based tourism enterprises, and conservation-linked economic opportunities.</p>

Revised National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (2024) This strategy promotes biodiversity-based industries such as bioprospecting, sustainable wildlife utilisation, and community-driven conservation enterprises. The Master Plan supports these objectives through strategic investment in the wildlife economy, indigenous plant industries, and sustainable harvesting practices.

Environmental Sector Plan 2024-2029 This plan sets out environmental priorities, including ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, and biodiversity protection. The GAA BEN contributes to these goals through ecological infrastructure investments, green job creation, and sustainable land-use planning.

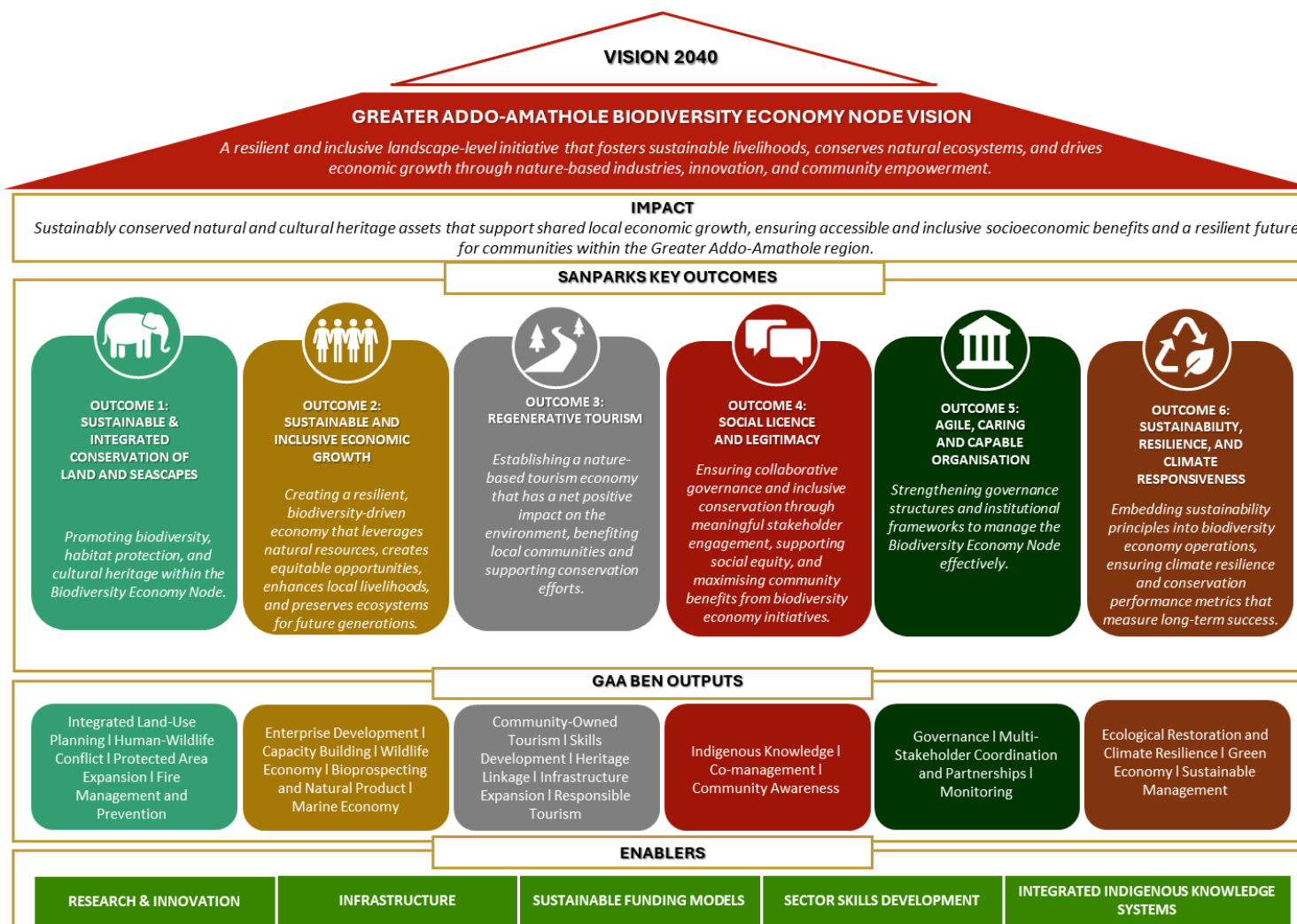
Tourism Growth and Recovery Plan 2022-2030 This plan aims to revitalise the tourism sector post-COVID-19, with a focus on sustainability and inclusivity. The Master Plan supports this vision by enhancing tourism infrastructure, promoting responsible tourism practices, and developing cultural and nature-based tourism products.

Tourism Sector Master Plan (2023) The plan promotes the sustainability of tourism offerings, improve product quality, develop new routes, invest in infrastructure, implement targeted marketing initiatives, and build stakeholder capacity through skills development, governance, innovation, and partnerships.

The alignment of the GAA BEN with these national policies and strategies ensures a coherent and integrated approach to biodiversity economy development. This Master Plan advocates for a balance between conservation, economic growth, and social inclusion, as reinforcing South Africa's broader sustainability and transformation objectives by leveraging policy support.

1.3 GAA BEN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The GAA BEN is a landscape-level initiative designed to balance ecological conservation with sustainable economic development. Rooted in Vision 2040 principles, this framework seeks to ensure long-term prosperity for both people and nature through biodiversity-based industries, community empowerment, and conservation-driven innovation.



During the stakeholder engagement processes undertaken in developing the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Master Plan, much of the discussion centred on the desired state of the biodiversity economy node and what it should achieve for the people and communities associated with it. From these discussions various themes emerged, and principles linked to them were identified. The themes and their associated principles are:

- The natural environment:
 - Biodiversity, the ecological functions and processes that underpin it and the ecological integrity and resilience of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node are the bedrock of the biodiversity economy and must be adequately protected and sustainably utilised.
- The economy:
 - The Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node provides opportunities to develop a multi-faceted biodiversity economy that leverages natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity sustainably to create economic opportunities, particularly for local communities and previously disadvantaged individuals, whilst ensuring conservation.
 - The biodiversity economy approach balances ecological health and resilience with economic growth, benefiting both people and nature.
- Society:
 - The biodiversity economy is a powerful tool for social progress, improving livelihoods, fostering social equity, and enhancing resilience to environmental change, creating a more inclusive society.
- Collaboration:
 - Effective collaboration amongst government, businesses, communities and other partners and stakeholders is central to the success of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node.
 - Collaboration maximises impact through combining expertise, resources and networks.
 - Collaboration ensures equity by involving communities and marginalised groups to ensure that they benefit from the biodiversity economy.
 - Collaboration encourages innovation through scientific, technological and business advancements that thrive in collaborative environments.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Master Plan serves as a strategic blueprint for integrating economic development with biodiversity conservation, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, ecosystem resilience and long-term prosperity. It provides both a spatial guideline for the development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node and identifies the key enablers required to support the establishment and development of the biodiversity economy. This includes:

- The governance and institutional arrangements required to support the establishment and development of the biodiversity economy node.
- The identification of key industries and sectors linked to the biodiversity economy, where they may best be developed, how they may be linked and how they can be strengthened through collaboration.
- The enabling environment required to ensure that the biodiversity economy sectors can be established and grow in an effective and efficient manner.

The master plan is intended to provide a tool for all partners including those in national, provincial and local government, businesses, local communities, NGO partners, researchers and others to guide the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node.

1.5 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The key elements of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Master Plan are:

- The overall governance and institutional arrangements required to support the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node.
- Spatial prioritisation for the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node, setting out the areas which are best suited to particular types of sectors, activities and initiatives and how these areas link up and are spatially aligned with each other.
- An outline of the sectors linked to the biodiversity economy and the types of initiatives and activities that may be implemented in the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node, within the context of the spatial priorities.

- An implementation framework that provides the detail for the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node, the priority areas and projects and indicative timeframes for their implementation.

An aerial photograph of a wide, unpaved dirt road stretching into the distance. The road is flanked by green fields and clusters of trees. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text.

SECTION 2: WHERE?

2.1 PRINCIPLES OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN BENS

South Africa continues to experience significant socio-economic challenges, which impacts on the quality of people's lives (through their livelihoods) and very often results in over-exploitation of natural resources. Growing South Africa's economy in the most sustainable manner is essential for several reasons, as it directly impacts the well-being of its citizens, the stability of the country, and its future potential. By growing the economy inclusively and sustainably, South Africa can address pressing challenges and unlock its full potential, ensuring a brighter future for all its citizens.

An economy encompasses all of the activities related to the production, consumption, and trade of goods and services in an entity, whether the entity is a nation or a small town. The South African economy is very closely intertwined with the environment and biodiversity, as many of its key sectors rely on natural resources, ecosystems, and the services they provide. However, unsustainable practices, habitat loss, and climate change threaten these natural systems. Sustainable management of biodiversity and the environment is essential to safeguard the economy and ensure long-term prosperity.

Historically the South African economy has relied on a small number of focused sectors, such as mining, agriculture and some service sectors (especially government services). Despite the extensive knowledge of the importance of South Africa's biodiversity (3rd most bio-diverse country in the world, with unique and endemic ecosystems and species), the environment (and by default all biodiversity, with these terms being used interchangeably going forward) has always been seen as a "barrier" or "hinderance" to development, or the development of the economy. In a system where economic return takes precedence, the resulting development agenda has impacted extensively on the environment. This is surprising considering that the contribution of tourism to South Africa's GDP has increased from 3.8% to 8.8% over the past 5 years, which is essentially reliant on our incredible natural environment – Table Mountain National Park and Kruger National Park essentially being two of the key drivers of international tourism. As a result, it has become important to change our relationship with the environment and no longer place it outside of our economy, but rather to bring it into the fold.

The DFFE drafted the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy, which was Gazetted in 2024. In essence, the biodiversity economy of South Africa encompasses the businesses and economic activities that either directly depend on biodiversity for their core business or that contribute to conservation of biodiversity through their activities. The ambit of the biodiversity economy includes bioprospecting (i.e. research on or development/application of, indigenous biological/genetic resources for commercial or industrial

exploitation and includes: the systematic search, collection or gathering of such resources or making extractions from such resources; the utilisation of information regarding any traditional uses of such resources by indigenous communities; and the research on, or the application, development or modification of such traditional uses for commercial exploitation; the trading in and exporting of indigenous biological/genetic resources in order to develop and produce products, such as medicines, industrial enzymes, food flavours, fragrances, cosmetics, colours, extracts and essential oils), tourism sector, the wildlife sub-sectors (i.e. live sales of indigenous wildlife; sale of game meat and the hunting industry) and sectors that utilise natural resources (fisheries, grazing systems, etc.).

The Biodiversity Economy Strategy must be under-pinned by well-considered spatial planning, as it provides a foundation and framework to balance biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resource. By guiding where and how human activities occur, spatial planning ensures that biodiversity is conserved and used sustainably, laying the foundation for a thriving biodiversity economy.

2.1.1 BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AS A PRIORITY TO UNDERPIN THE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY

In developing the spatial plan for the GAA BEN, the following principles were applied:

Principle: Understand the biodiversity values of the region and manage activities to ensure these biodiversity assets are maintained and where possible improved.

Protecting biodiversity within a biodiversity economy node is crucial as it forms the foundation for sustainable economic activities such as ecotourism, bioprospecting, and sustainable resource harvesting. Healthy ecosystems support essential services such as pollination, water purification, and climate regulation, which are vital for economic stability and resilience. By safeguarding biodiversity, we ensure the longevity of natural assets, foster community livelihoods, and maintain ecological balance. This protection also enhances the node's appeal for investment and tourism while securing resources for future generations.

What follows includes the spatial layout of priority biodiversity assets within the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy node (GAA BEN), creating the characteristics of the region.

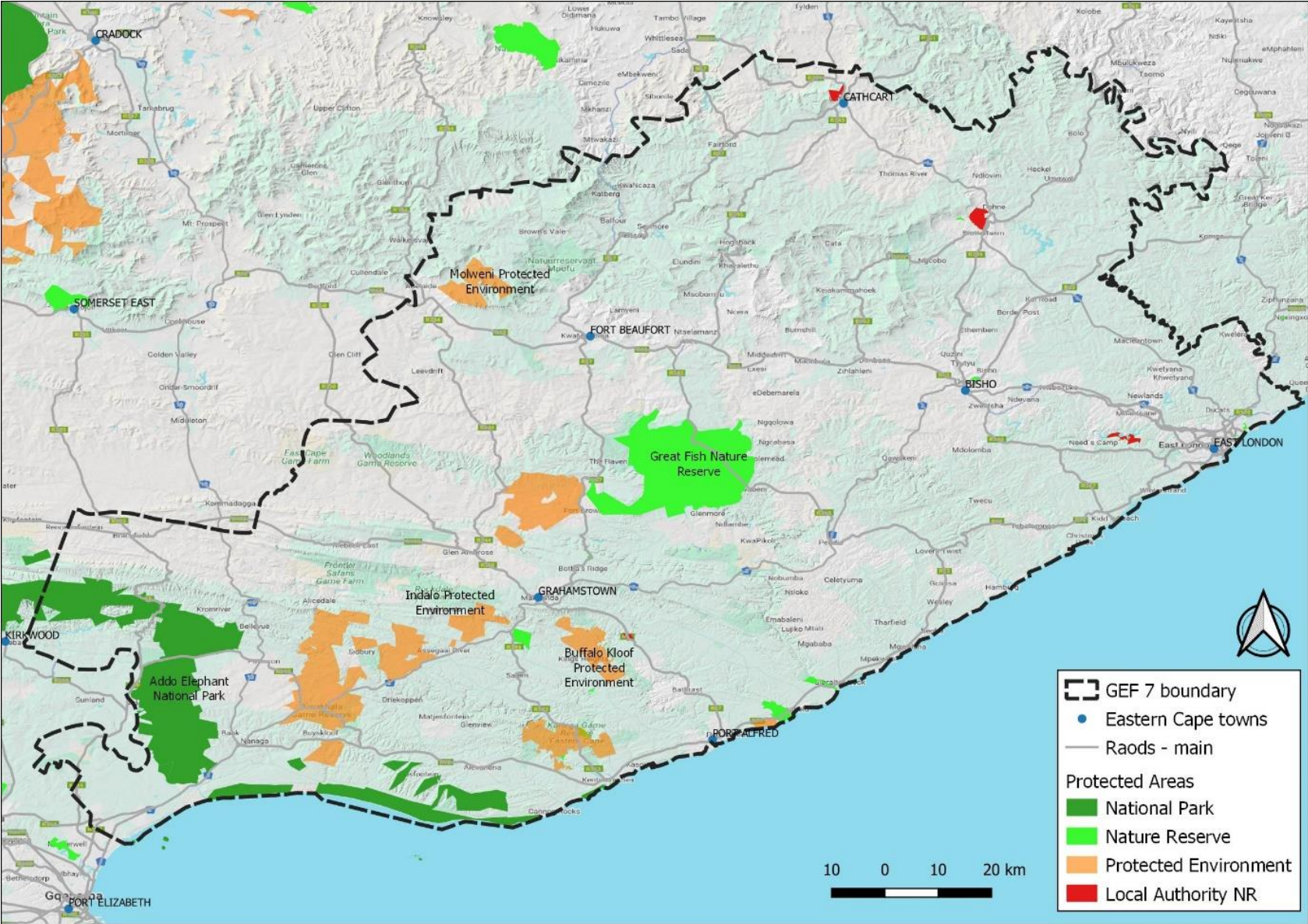
2.1.1.1 PROTECTED AREAS

According to the Register of Protected Areas of South Africa (www.dffeportal.environment.gov.za), there are a number of declared protected areas within the GAA BEN (declared on state and private land). The formally declared protected areas in the GAA BEN are shown in Table 1 and Map . This includes the Addo Elephant National Park, a number of provincial and local Authority nature reserves, several Forest Nature Reserves (under the mandate of the Forestry Department of DFFE), and three privately-owned protected environments.

Table 1: Declared protected areas within the Greater Addo MLL

Protected area name	Type of protected area	Area (Ha)	Date of declaration
Addo Elephant National Park	National Park	152,355 ha	3 July 1931
Great Fish Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	45,000 ha	25 September 1987
Thomas Baines Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	1,047 ha	19 December 1980
Blaawkrantz Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	198 ha	1 February 1985
Ecca Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	127 ha	1 February 1985
Kap River Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	263 ha	23 November 1990
Bridle Drift Dam Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	553 ha	21 December 1973
Stutterheim Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	1,166 ha	26 August 1983
King Williamstown Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	109 ha	21 December 1973
Quenera Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	81 ha	18 November 1988
Merville Private Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	290 ha	23 August 1988
Tharfield Private Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	1,420 ha	8 June 1973
Great Fish River Mouth Wetland Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve	210 ha	19 February 1988
Waters Meeting Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	4,055 ha	8 February 1985
Gulu Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	330 ha	23 December 1983
Grey Dell and Fort Grey Forest Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	2,426 ha	11 December 2020
Fort Pato Forest Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	673 ha	6 July 1973
Qacu Forest Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	441 ha	31 March 1994
Auckland Forest Nature Reserve	Forest Nature Reserve	202 ha	16 September 1983
Indalo Protected Environment	Protected Environment	76,076 ha	13 April 2018

Protected area name	Type of protected area	Area (Ha)	Date of declaration
Buffalo Kloof Protected Environment	Protected Environment	20,640 ha	13 April 2018
Molweni Protected Environment	Protected Environment	6,970 ha	8 May 2015
TOTAL		314,632 ha	



Map 1: Declared protected areas within the GAA BEN

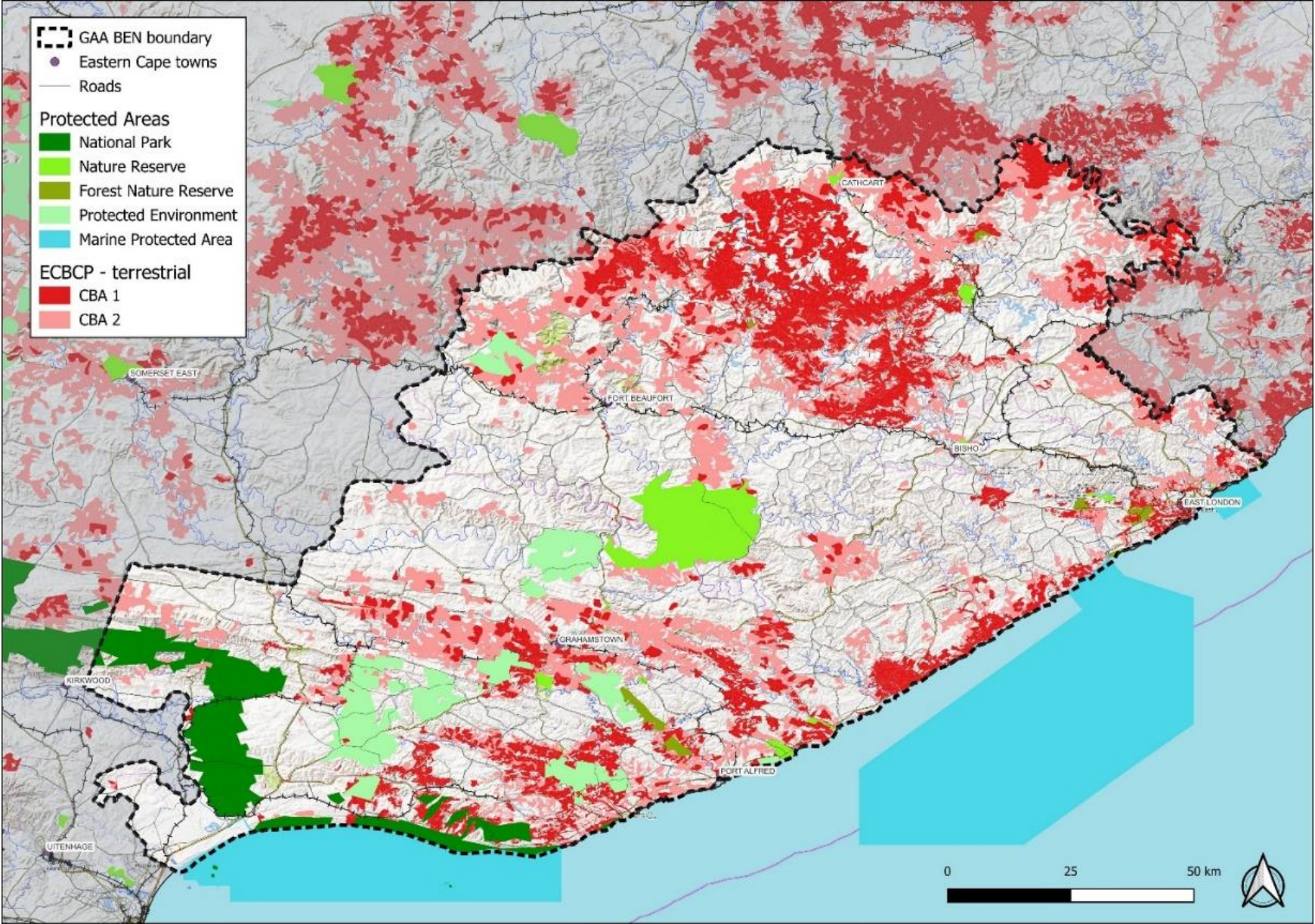
2.1.1.2 BIODIVERSITY PRIORITIES

In terms of the provincial Biodiversity Conservation Plan, there are considerable areas within the GAA BEN that are classified as Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA). These can be found particularly within the following regions of the BEN, as seen in Map 2:

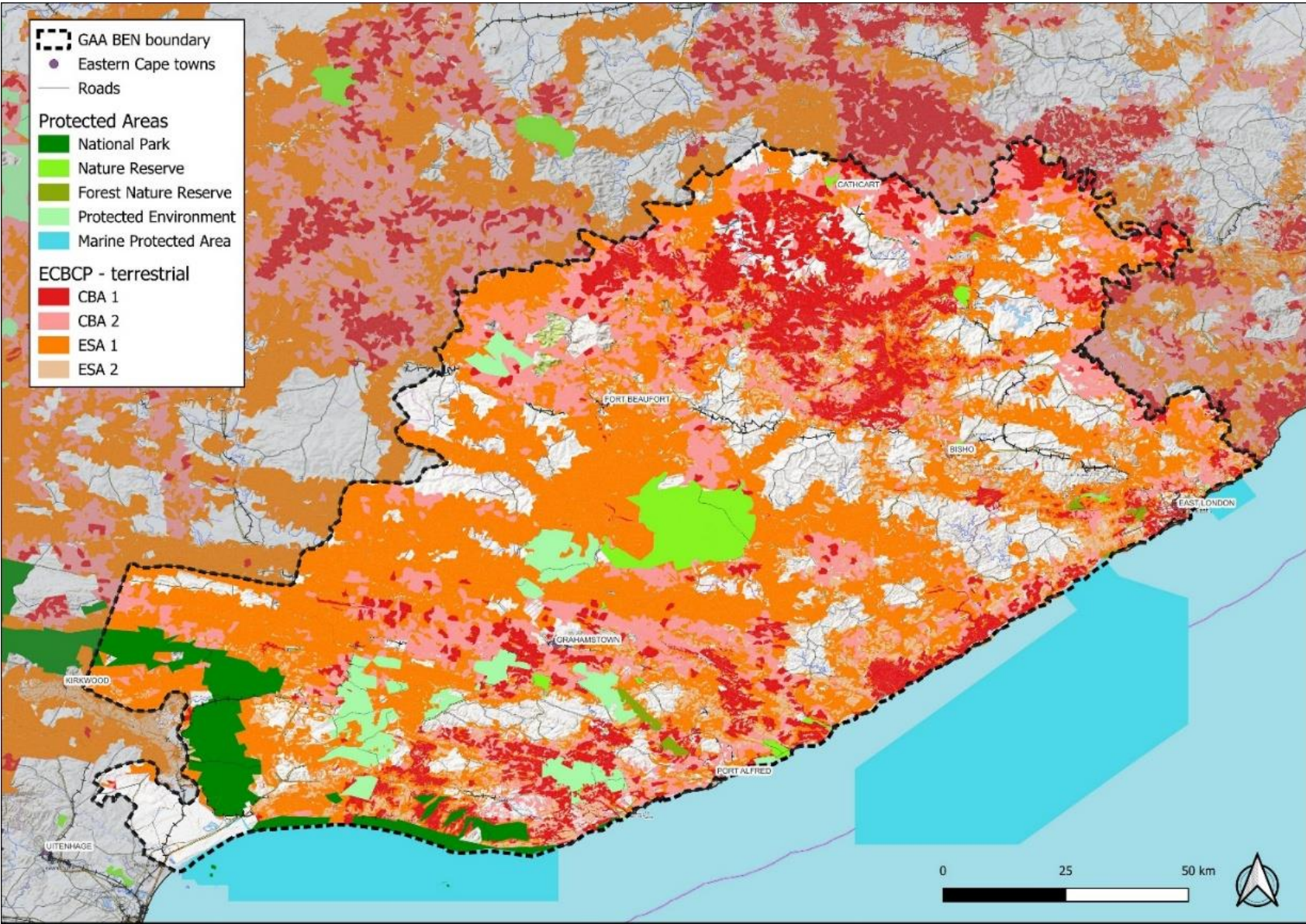
- a. Along and around the Amathole Mountains, centred around Hogsback.
- b. The areas along the coastline from Port Alfred through to East London.
- c. Along east-west and north-south corridors along river systems between Addo Elephant National Park and Great Fish Nature Reserve.

In terms of systematic conservation planning Critical Biodiversity Areas are considered irreplaceable, meaning that their loss through habitat transformation or degradation cannot be compensated for through the protection of another area of habitat. As such they are considered irreplaceable and essential for the achievement of biodiversity targets and form the foundation of any Biodiversity Economy Node.

In addition to the CBA layer, the Biodiversity Conservation Plan highlights Ecological Support Areas (ESA). This layer creates large buffer areas around existing declared protected areas, including north-south corridors and large tracts of land between Addo Elephant NP and the Great Fish Nature Reserve (Map3). These are likely to include key focal areas for protected area expansion and the creation of conservation compatible land uses within the Biodiversity Economy Node.



Map 2: Critical Biodiversity Areas within the GAA BEN



Map 3: Ecological Support Areas within the GAA BEN

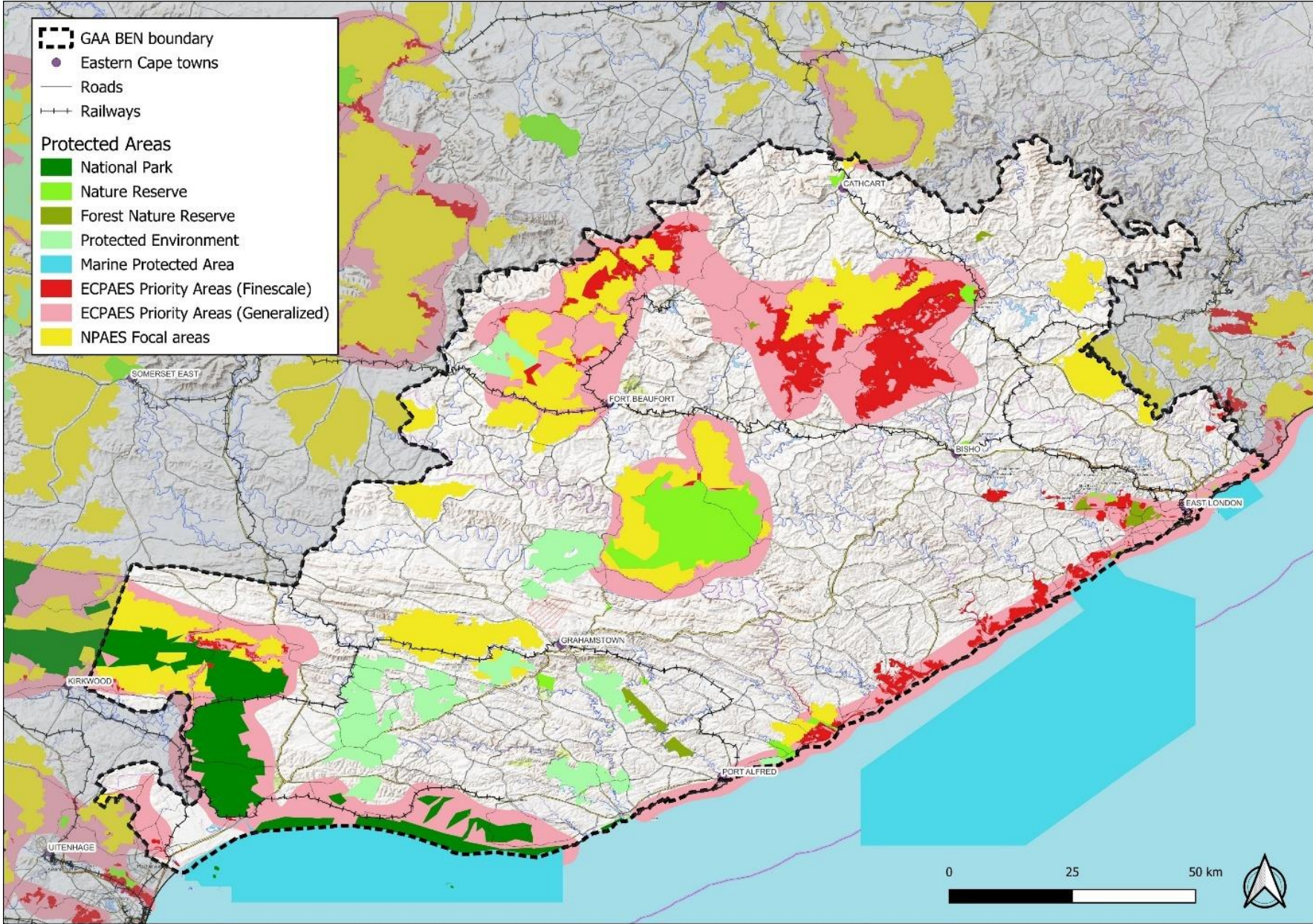
2.1.1.3 NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION PRIORITIES

In terms of the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) and the Eastern Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES), there are considerable areas within the GAA BEN that are identified as national and provincial priorities for protected area expansion (Map 4).

The national priorities are focused on the following areas:

- The direct expansion of the Addo Elephant National Park and the Great Fish Nature Reserve.
- A corridor towards the northern regions of the Indalo Protected Environment.
- Northern areas of the Amatole Mountains, extending westwards into the Klein Winterberg Mountains.

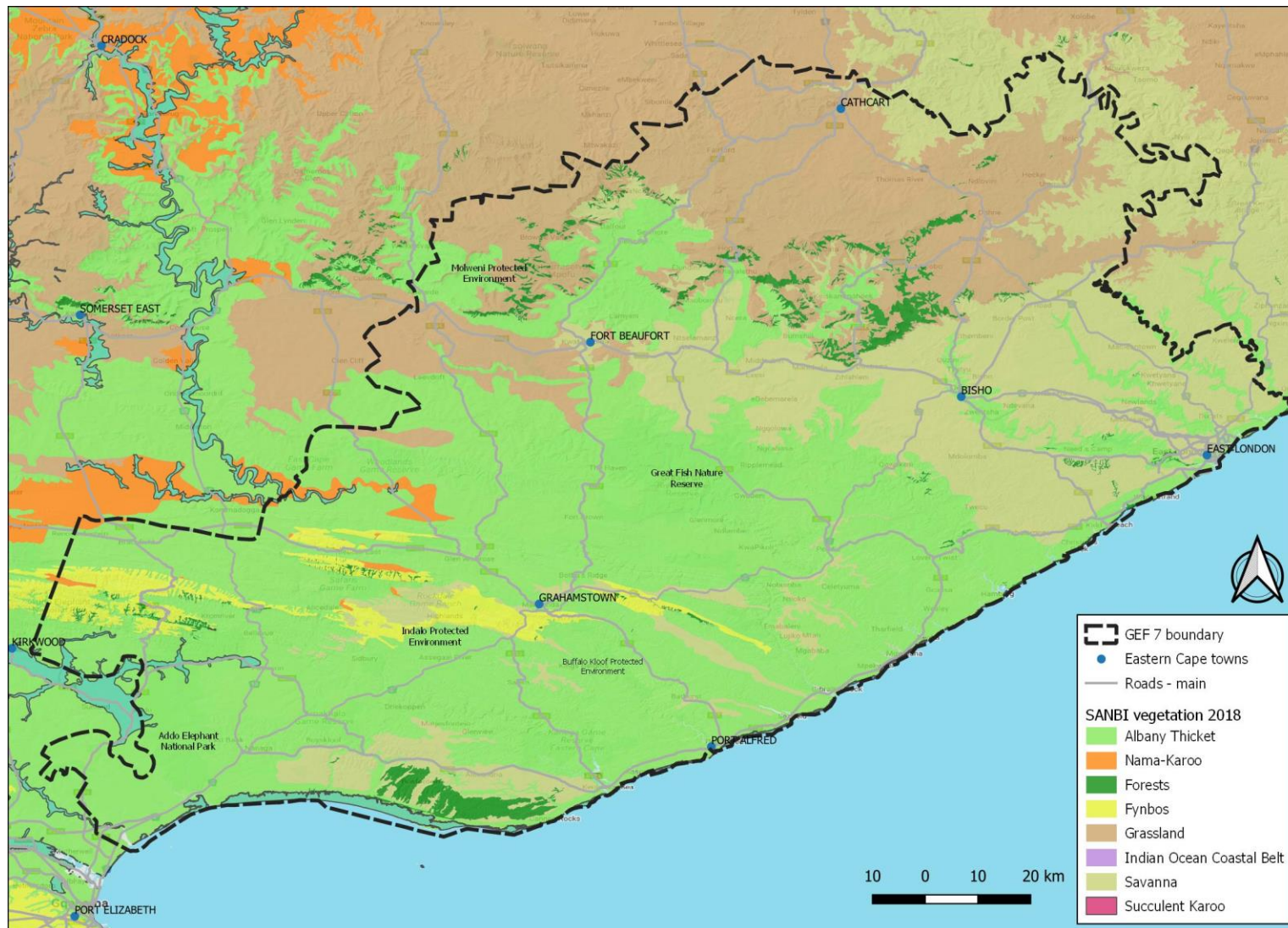
These national priorities are supported by further provincial priorities, including more extensive areas across the entire Amatole Mountain range and along the coastline between Port Alfred and East London.



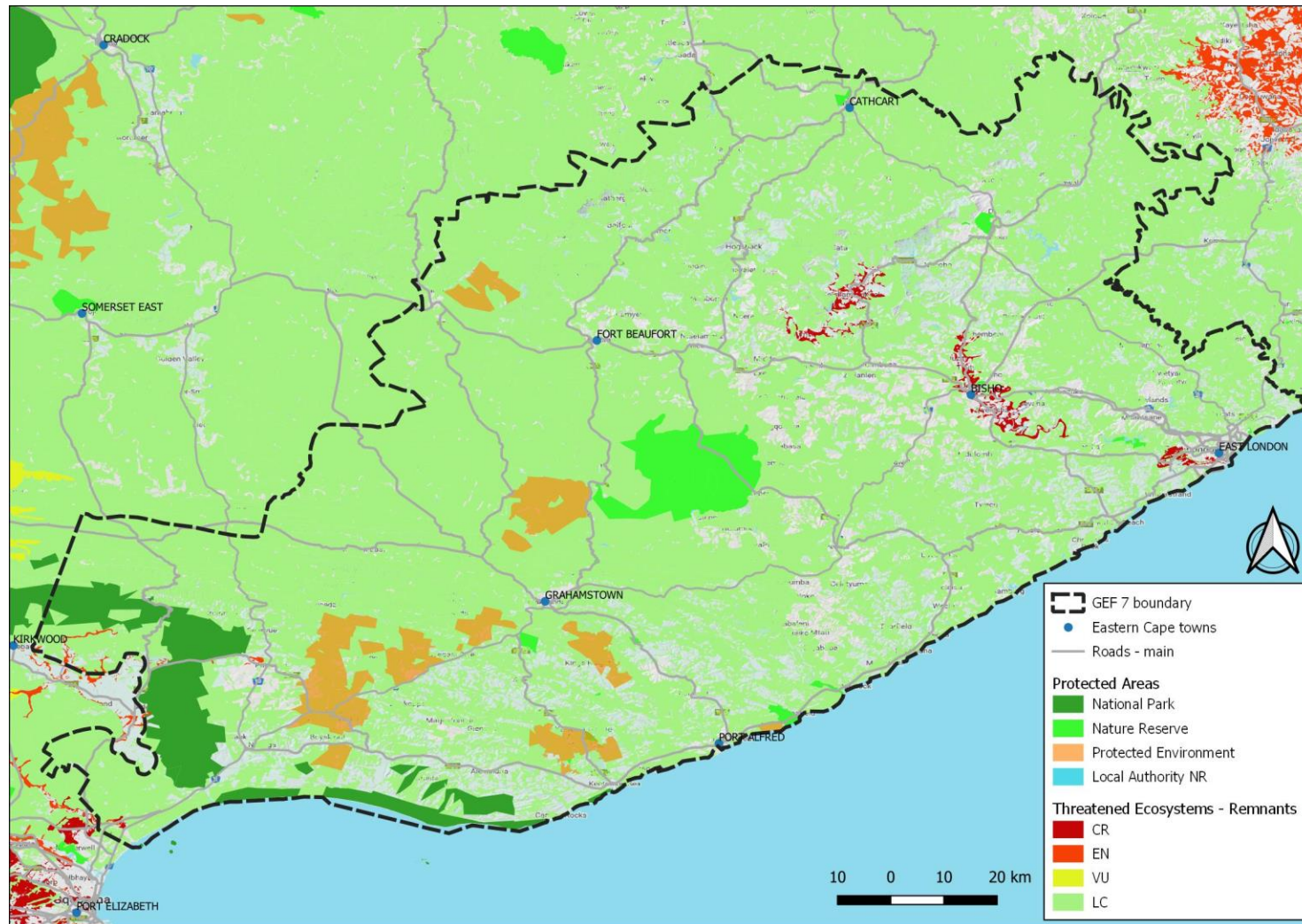
Map 4: National and provincial protected area expansion priorities within the GAA BEN

2.1.1.4 VEGETATION TYPES

According to Mucina and Rutherford (2012), there are seven different biomes represented in the GAA BEN, including the Albany thicket, grassland, fynbos, Nama Karoo, succulent Karoo, forest and Azonal vegetation biomes, represented by an array of 48 different vegetation.



Threatened ecosystems are listed in terms of Section 52 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004 - NEMBA). The vast majority of ecosystems within the GAA BEN are classified as Least Concerned (Map 6), except for a small and isolated area of Buffels Valley Thicket, an endemic vegetation type along the Buffalo River, which is listed as Critically Endangered.



Map 6: Threat status of vegetation types within the GAA BEN

2.1.1.5 MARINE RESOURCES AND PROTECTED AREAS

Found in the GAA are estuaries and marine protected areas (MPA), which play a critical role in the sustaining and protecting the coastal biodiversity and contributing to the unique offering of the BEN.

An estuary is a partially enclosed, coastal water body where freshwater from rivers and streams mixes with salt water from the ocean. Estuaries, and their surrounding lands, are places of transition from land to sea. Three important characteristics include the fact that estuaries are physically confined, estuarine waters are a mix of seawater and freshwater, and estuaries are a habitat for species that are naturally tolerant to stresses caused by temporal and spatial variations in salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity, and bottom sediment. Estuarine ecosystems are therefore relatively poor in species, but these species can be very abundant. They provide a wealth of food and ecosystems which support fish, birds, and other wildlife and contribute significantly to the quality of life for humanity. Estuaries are said to be among the most productive natural habitats on earth.

An estuarine functional zone (EFZ) is a designated area that includes the estuary itself, as well as the surrounding areas that support its health and function. The EFZ is a sensitive area that requires significant protection in order to maintain the functioning of the estuary. The location of the estuaries and their function zones is shown in Map 7.

Further, two MPAs are within the boundaries of GAA, which are designated regions in the ocean where human activities are regulated to protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity. MPAs are established to conserve critical habitats, protect endangered species, and maintain the health of marine environments. They can include various types of ecosystems such as coral reefs, estuaries, and coastal waters.

2.1.1.5.1 AMATHOLE MPA

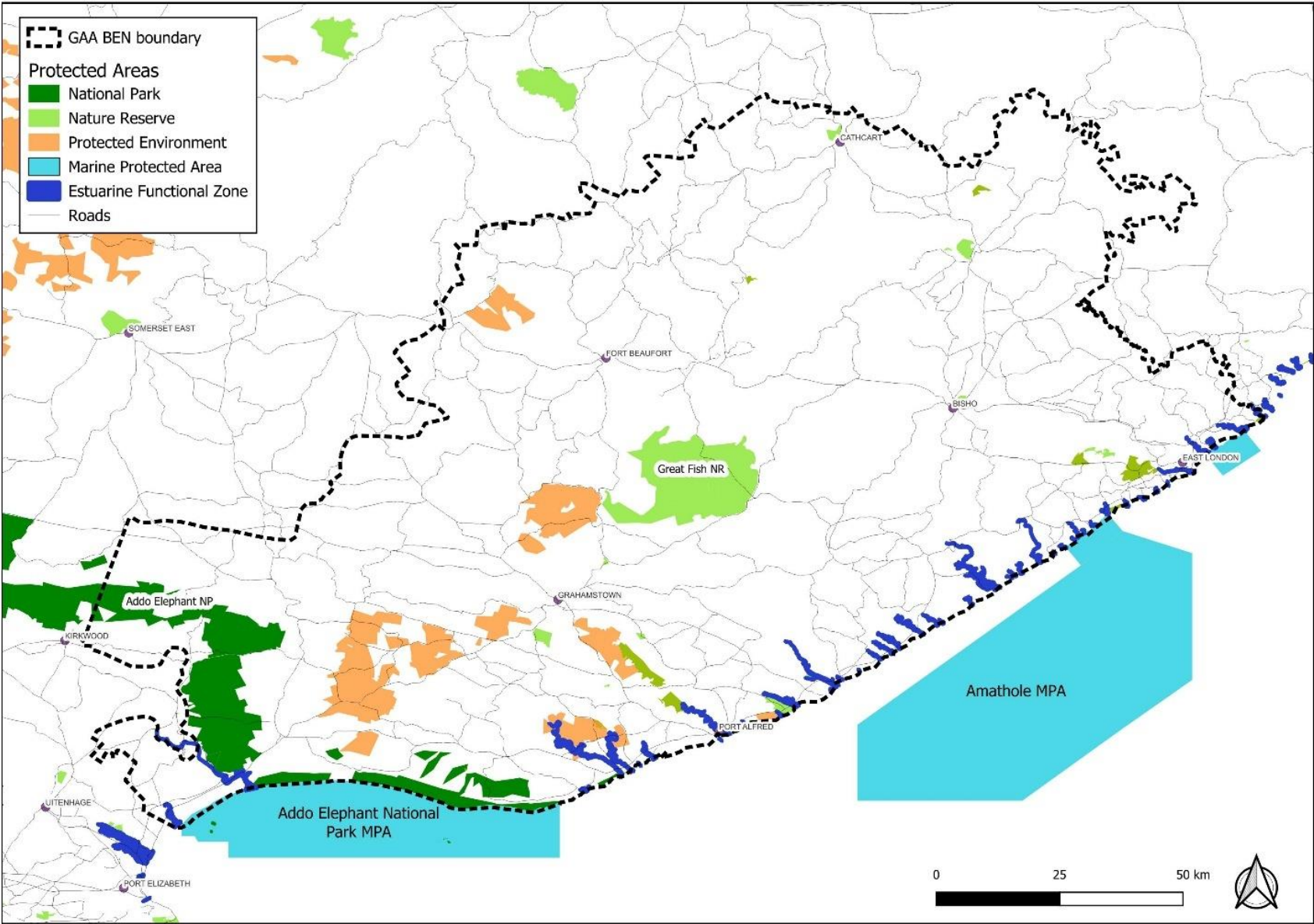
This 246.5 km² MPA consists of three separate areas; Gxulu (between the Gxulu River and Christmas Rock), Gonubie (between Gonubie Point and Nahoon Point) and Kei (between the Kei and the Nyara River). This MPA is 246.5 km² and its primary aim is to protect the endemic reef fish, such as Red Steenbras, Seventy-four, Black Musselcracker and Dageraad, which have all been heavily overexploited. Recent research noted that to increase the effectiveness of these areas, protection needed to be extended offshore to include deep rocky reefs. This led to the design and establishment of the Amathole Offshore MPA. Managed by the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, this MPA primarily restricts offshore boat-based fishing. Boats passing through must stow fishing gear and may not stop in the MPA, except when

launching or beaching. The MPA only protects the offshore marine areas and excludes the shore and estuaries. Shore-based angling, spearfishing and bait collecting activities are allowed in parts of the MPA.

2.1.1.5.2 ADDO MPA

Nelson Mandela Bay has the highest percentage of endemic marine invertebrates and seaweeds along the entire South African coastline. This 1200 km² MPA was proclaimed in 2019 and expands on the original Bird Island MPA established in 2013. The MPA protects a wide range of ecosystems, including sandy beaches, rocky shores, reefs, an estuary and islands. Protection of the estuary and reefs are important for the recovery of valuable fisheries resources such as Abalone and Kob. The MPA increases the Big Five - found within the Addo Elephant National Park - to the Big Seven through the protection of Great White Sharks and Whales (Brydes, Minke, Humpback and Southern Right). The MPA protects important feeding areas for the 9,000 pairs of endangered African Penguins breeding at St Croix Island and the 60,000 pairs of endangered Cape Gannets breeding at Bird Island. Being close to the city, the MPA facilitates nature-based tourism and serves as an outdoor classroom for educational activities.

The location of the marine protected areas is shown in Map 7.



Map 7: Marine Protected Areas and estuaries (and their functional zones) within the GAA BEN

2.1.2 CONNECTIVITY TO MAINTAIN ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES – VIABILITY OF BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES

Principle: Spatially plan the implementation of biodiversity economy activities to ensure that areas are connected within the landscape.

Ecological connectivity is vital in developing a biodiversity economy node as it allows species to move freely between habitats, ensuring genetic diversity and ecosystem resilience. Connectivity supports vital ecological processes, such as pollination, seed dispersal, and climate adaptation, which underpin sustainable economic activities like agriculture and ecotourism. By linking fragmented habitats, connectivity enhances the health of ecosystems, reduces the risk of biodiversity loss, and strengthens the node's capacity to provide long-term environmental and economic benefits, essentially acting as "bridges" to connect different ecosystems and mitigate the negative effects of habitat fragmentation caused by human development.

2.1.3 SCALE

Principle: Create clusters of compatible biodiversity economy activities as a means of creating scale, and thereby ecological and economic viability.

Developing a biodiversity economy node at scale is essential to unlock the full potential of natural resources for sustainable economic growth while conserving ecosystems. Scaling such nodes enables greater investment in sectors like ecotourism, bioprospecting, and sustainable agriculture, creating jobs and improving livelihoods for local communities. It promotes ecosystem restoration, enhances biodiversity protection, and strengthens climate resilience. By integrating conservation with development, scaled biodiversity economy nodes can drive inclusive economic opportunities, foster global competitiveness, and ensure long-term environmental and social sustainability.

2.1.4 ALL SECTORS TO CONTRIBUTE AND AVOID CONFLICTS

Principle: Spatially plan the biodiversity economy activities to take advantage of the characteristics of the landscape and reduce the impact with competing land uses.

2.1.4.1 RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS

South Africa has made significant strides in developing renewable energy facilities, marking a pivotal shift towards sustainability and energy independence. The country's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) has been instrumental in this transformation, attracting investments and fostering partnerships in solar, wind, and biomass sectors.

The Eastern Cape is already a renewable energy powerhouse, hosting **573 MW of installed wind capacity** across five operational plants, with **631 MW currently under construction**. The province's strategic location and strong wind potential make it a cornerstone of South Africa's clean energy future. South Africa's wind energy sector is a critical stakeholder in the GAA BEN landscape, offering potential opportunities through its wide array of socio-economic and environmental benefits that are reshaping the country's energy landscape. These benefits include:

Energy Security & Sustainability

- Wind energy provides a clean, renewable source of electricity, reducing dependence on coal and imported fossil fuels.
- With over 3.5 GW of installed capacity from 37 wind farms, wind contributes significantly to the national grid.
- The Eastern Cape is gearing up for a major wind energy expansion, with 790 MW of new grid connection capacity approved for the province. This boost comes through Eskom's congestion curtailment strategy, which allows more renewable energy projects to connect to the grid despite existing transmission constraints.

Economic Growth & Job Creation

- Wind projects have attracted over R250 billion in investment into South Africa, with 21 new projects in the pipeline.
- The sector supports local manufacturing, especially of turbine components, and stimulates industrial development.
- Thousands of jobs are created in construction, operations, and maintenance, particularly in rural areas.

Community Development & Social Equity

- Developers have invested over R898 million in socio-economic initiatives, including education, healthcare, and infrastructure.
- The South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) promotes community engagement to ensure shared benefits and transparency.

Environmental Protection

- Wind energy produces no greenhouse gas emissions during operation, helping combat climate change and improve air quality.
- Unlike coal-fired plants, wind farms require no water for operation, conserving South Africa's scarce water resources.

South Africa's wind energy journey is more than just a shift in power—it's a catalyst for inclusive growth, environmental stewardship, and a resilient future.

Renewable energy facilities in South Africa, while cleaner than fossil fuel alternatives, can still have some environmental impacts that need careful consideration:

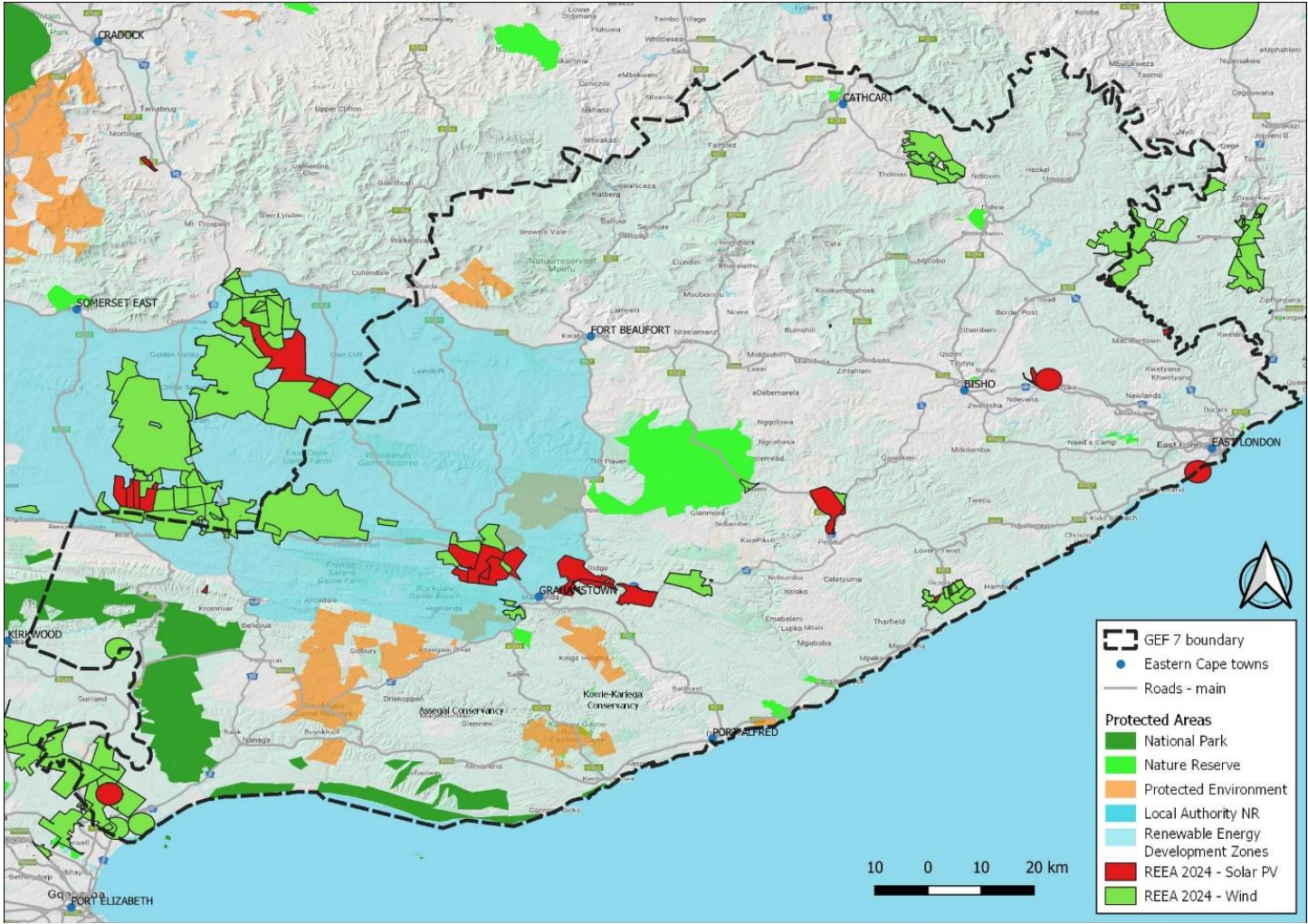
1. **Land Use and Habitat Disruption:** Large-scale renewable energy projects, such as solar farms and wind turbines, can occupy significant amounts of land, potentially affecting local ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity. Careful site selection and environmental impact assessments are crucial to minimize these effects.
2. **Visual and Aesthetic Impact:** Wind farms and solar arrays can alter the visual landscape, particularly in scenic areas or areas of cultural significance. Public perception and community engagement are important to mitigate these impacts.
3. **Noise and Electromagnetic Interference:** Wind turbines can generate noise and electromagnetic interference, which may affect wildlife behaviour and nearby communities. Proper planning and technology advancements can help minimize these effects.
4. **Potential for Indirect Impacts:** The development of renewable energy infrastructure can lead to indirect environmental impacts, such as increased road construction, transportation emissions, and changes in local air quality and microclimates.

To address these environmental impacts effectively, regulatory frameworks, environmental assessments, and stakeholder engagement are essential. Implementing best practices in project siting, technology deployment, and mitigation measures can help maximize the environmental benefits while minimizing negative impacts associated with renewable energy development in South Africa.

The Eastern Cape has become an attractive region for the development of renewable energy facilities. Map 8 below highlights the relevant Renewable Energy Development Zones (REDZs) within the BEN. These REDZ are designated areas specifically identified and prioritized for the development of renewable energy projects. These zones are chosen based on criteria such as solar or wind potential, existing infrastructure, environmental considerations, and local community support.

In addition, wind energy projects typically allocate a portion of operational revenue to local socio-economic development initiatives. To maximize impact, a portion of these contributions can be directed toward programmes and projects that reinforce the biodiversity economy. Wind energy development projects ought to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Careful consideration of cumulative impacts, coupled with the application of best-practice mitigation measures (especially avifaunal safeguards) ensures alignment with the precautionary approach to development.

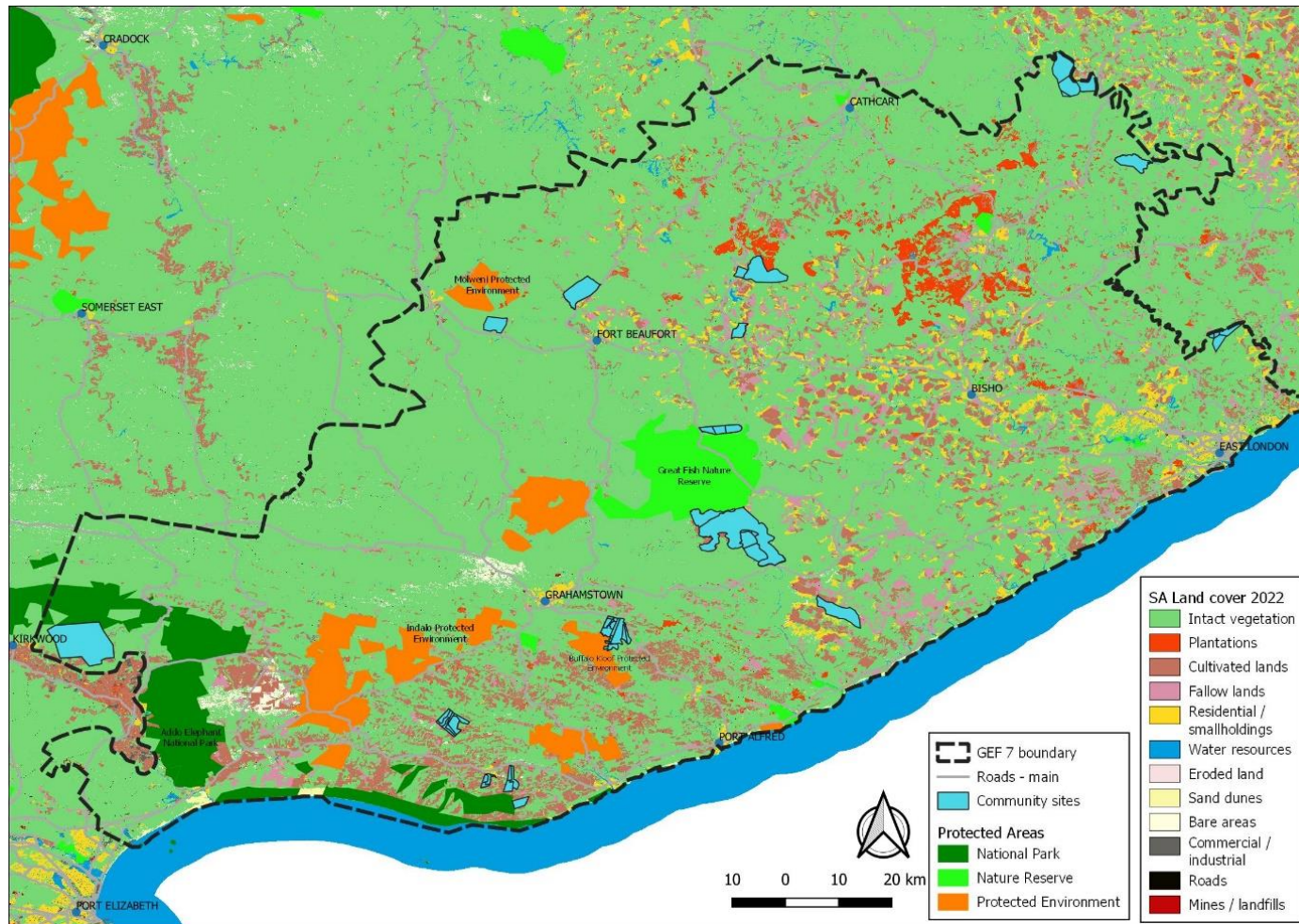
In addition, Map 8 further highlights the various “approved” renewable energy development projects by DFFE, which have the potential to impact on the ability of the GAA BEN to achieve its objectives. Although not an exclusively incompatible land use, it is important to be aware of the potential impacts to tourism activities close to renewable energy developments.



Map 8: REDZ and approved renewable energy facilities across the GAA BEN

2.1.5 SUSTAINABLE AND COMPATIBLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Principle: Spatially plan the biodiversity economy activities to take advantage of the ecological capabilities of the landscape to ensure the most cost-effective approach to land use.



Map 9: Current (2022) land cover across the GAA BEN

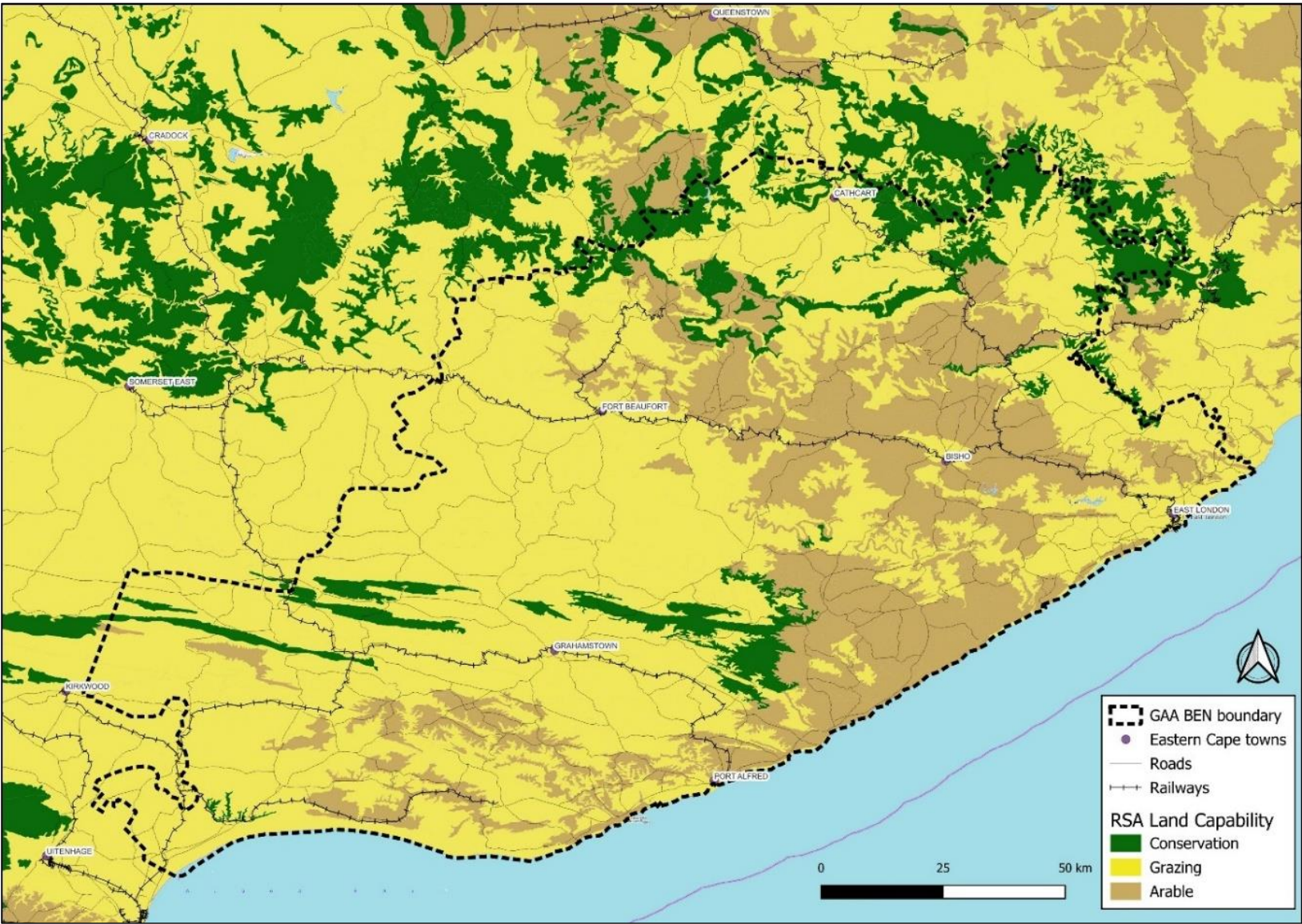
Managing land according to its capability involves using the land in ways that align with its natural characteristics, such as soil type, topography, climate, and vegetation. This approach ensures sustainable use, prevents degradation, and maximizes productivity while maintaining ecological balance. By assessing the land's capacity for activities like agriculture, grazing, or forestry, and implementing appropriate conservation practices, land managers can preserve soil health, reduce erosion, and enhance biodiversity, ensuring the land remains viable for future generations. Map 9 indicates the currently landuse across the GAA BEN, essentially highlighting the significant extent of “intact” vegetation and the specific location of transformed land.

2.1.5.1 AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITIES

The Eastern Cape province has diverse agricultural capabilities, owing to its varied climate, topography, and soil types. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economy of the region, providing livelihoods for many rural communities and contributing to food security.

The GAA BEN is characterised by several agricultural capability gradients, with a west – east gradient moving from a semi-arid to a wetter region, while the north-south gradient moves from a drier inland region to a wetter coastal region. The coastal areas of the Eastern Cape, with their mild and relatively wet climate, are suitable for a variety of more intensive crops, including subtropical fruits like citrus, pineapples, and bananas. The region also supports dairy farming due to its favourable conditions for pasture growth. The inland areas, particularly around the Karoo and interior plateau, experience a semi-arid climate, which is more conducive to livestock farming, especially sheep and goat farming. These areas are less suitable for intensive crop production due to lower rainfall.

Map 90 highlights the relative agricultural capabilities of the GAA BEN. The vast majority of the BEN is not viable from an arable agriculture perspective that focuses instead on livestock grazing and wildlife. Only a small portion of the BEN represents areas of marginal to moderate potential for arable agriculture, particularly in the eastern regions of the BEN from the coast inland.



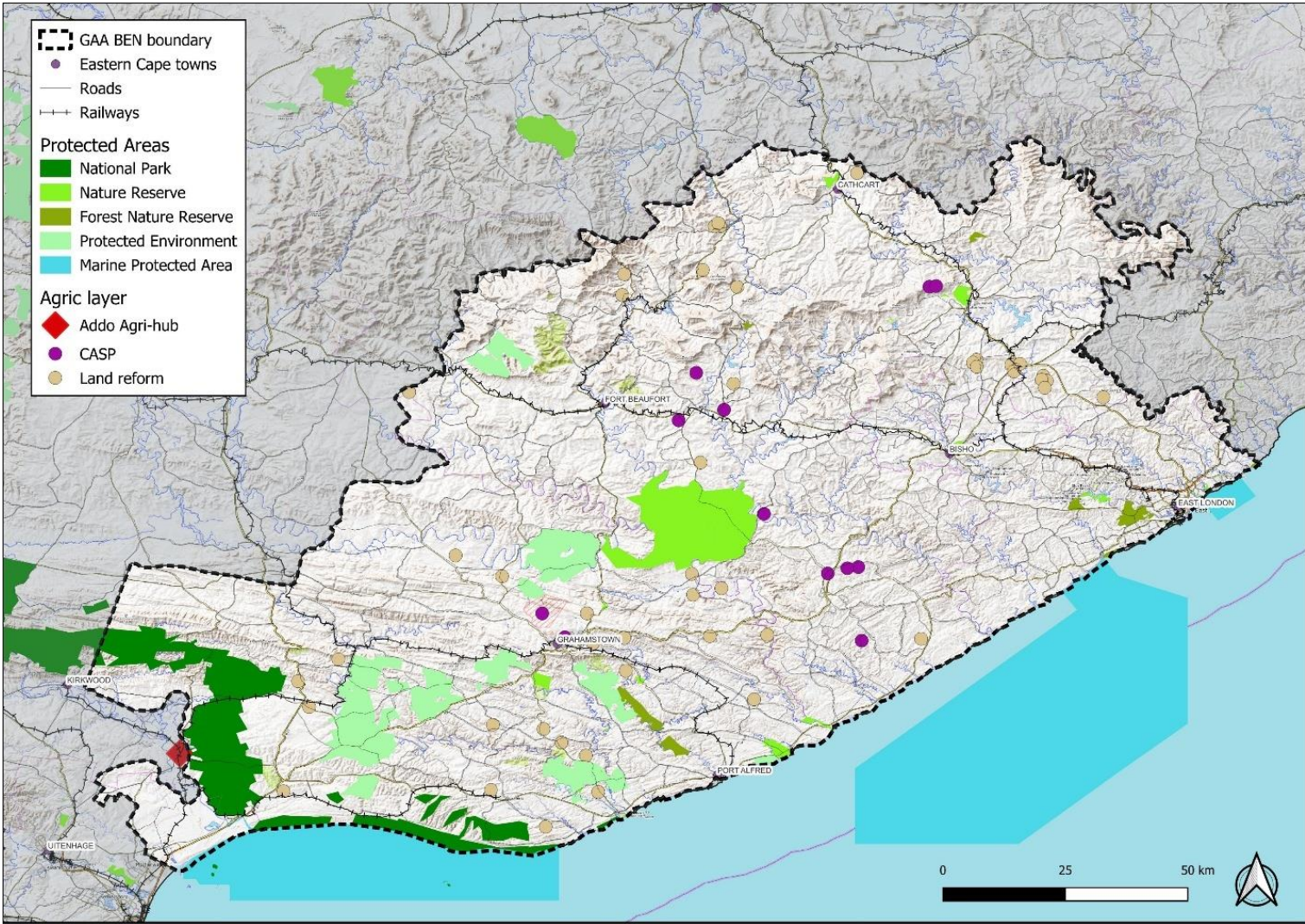
Map 90: Agricultural capabilities across the GAA BEN

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development coordinates the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), which provides conditional grant to black farmers through the provincial Departments. It is a programme aimed at expanding the provision of agricultural support services and promoting and facilitating agricultural development by targeting subsistence, smallholding and black commercial farmers from a previously disadvantaged background. It aims to improve productivity, create on-farm and off-farm jobs and increase wealth in the rural economy. It promotes ecologically sustainable farming activities. While the programme had made progress in certain areas, insufficient progress was made in promoting commercialisation, market access, food security and employment.

The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) implements support via 6 pillars -

- On-farm and off-farm infrastructure support.
- Knowledge and information management.
- Technical and advisory services.
- Training and capacity building.
- Market and business development support.
- Financial services through the Mafisa funding programme.

Map 101 below highlights the location of DALRRD CASP support programmes provided to land reform beneficiaries. It is recommended that the GAA BEN institutional and cluster structures engage with the Department of Agriculture to highlight the value of integrating CASP opportunities into the structured BEN approach, providing an additional layer of resource mobilisation and management.



Map 101: Location of land reform beneficiaries and the DALRRD CASP programme support

2.1.5.2 WILDLIFE RANCHING CAPABILITIES

More recent years have seen a shift from traditional agriculture to wildlife ranching in the Eastern Cape, reflecting broader changes in land use and economic strategies in the region. This transition is driven by various factors, most notably environmental conditions affecting the economic viability of traditional agriculture. These key aspects are highlighted below:

- **Land Degradation:** Traditional agriculture, especially overgrazing and monoculture practices, has led to soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, and degradation of the natural landscape. Wildlife ranching is seen as a more sustainable land use option that can help restore and maintain the health of ecosystems.
- **Water Scarcity:** The Eastern Cape faces challenges related to water availability, which can limit the productivity of conventional agriculture. Wildlife ranching typically requires less water compared to intensive crop farming and livestock production.
- **Economic Diversification:** Wildlife ranching offers a diversified income stream compared to traditional agriculture. Revenue can be generated from game hunting, eco-tourism, and the sale of live animals, which can be more profitable than conventional farming in certain areas. Wildlife ranches further can attract both domestic and international tourists interested in game viewing, photography, and hunting. This can create jobs and generate income for local communities.
- **Value-Added Products:** There is potential for developing value-added products such as game meat, hides, and eco-friendly tourism packages, which can increase profitability and support local businesses.
- **Market Demand:** There is increasing demand for wildlife products, including game meat and trophies, as well as for nature-based tourism experiences, which can provide higher returns than traditional farming.
- **Government Support:** South Africa's government and provincial authorities have shown support for wildlife ranching as part of broader efforts to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use. Incentives and grants may be available for farmers looking to transition.

- **Climate Resilience:** By maintaining natural vegetation and ecosystems, wildlife ranches can enhance the resilience of the landscape to climate change, including extreme weather events and shifting rainfall patterns.

Over the past few years, SANBI have coordinated a Sustainable Livestock Management and Wildlife Economy Pilot Survey (SWEP) within the Eastern Cape, which surveyed several revenue-generating activities within wildlife ranching properties, to better understand the economic models of livestock and wildlife ranching. The properties involved in the survey are shown in Map , highlighting the following key messages:

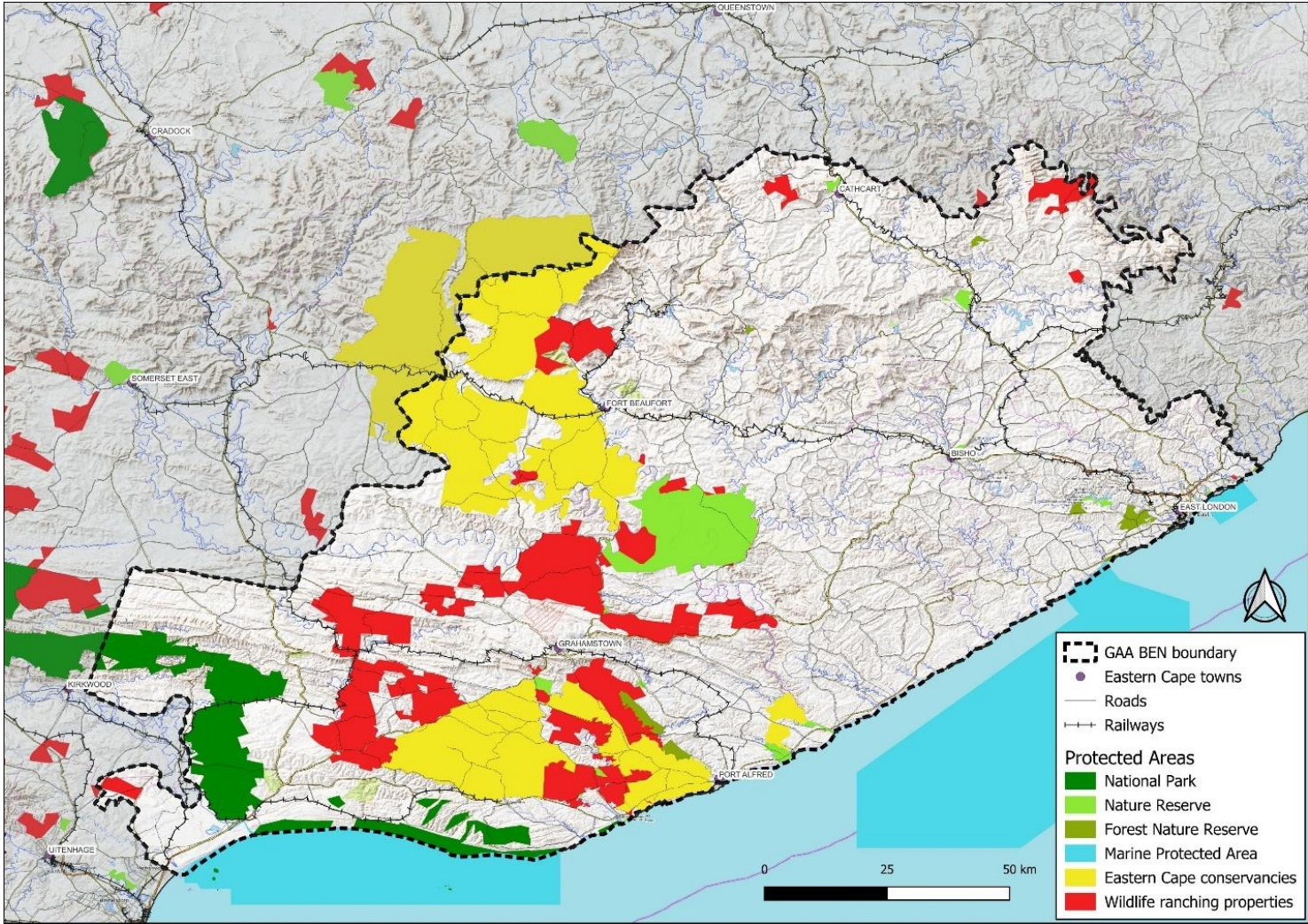
- Wildlife ranches provide more job opportunities per hectare than livestock farms. Ecotourism ranches provide the most jobs (0.011/ha), while other ranches are more comparable with livestock farms.
- Wildlife ranches employ a high proportion of permanent workers and a high proportion of female employees, which contributes to various targets under the Sustainable Development Goals.
- International hunting is the largest contributor to revenue and thus very important for making the wildlife economy (and habitat conservation) viable.
- There is potential for game breeding, biltong hunting and game meat production to be significantly upscaled with the right infrastructure and marketing investment.

Resilience of wildlife lands:

- Wildlife ranches lost significantly less revenue than state protected areas during COVID due to their diverse economic portfolio and ability to adapt revenue models.
- Different business models had different responses, the least impact being the agro-ecological based models and mixed farms.
- Implications for new market entrants and appropriate investment into business models to build rural resilience.
- New market entrants can boost supply of wildlife and gain market access through established client networks.

Opportunities:

A key opportunity is to link these activities to functioning conservancies within the region. Map 12 highlights the location of conservancies across the GAA BEN.



Map 12: Geographic extent of conservancies and wildlife ranching properties across the GAA BEN

2.1.5.3 ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

Ecotourism is a valuable land use that promotes sustainable development while conserving natural and cultural resources. It generates economic benefits for local communities through job creation and revenue from tourism activities, providing incentives for preserving ecosystems and biodiversity. Ecotourism encourages environmental education, raising awareness among visitors about the importance of protecting natural habitats. It also supports the preservation of cultural heritage by showcasing indigenous practices and traditions. Unlike extractive or intensive land uses, ecotourism minimizes environmental impact by promoting low-impact infrastructure and responsible visitor behaviour, making it an ideal option for areas with ecological and cultural significance.

Eastern Cape offers a variety of tourism opportunities that showcase the region's natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage. The GAA BEN has a number of key tourism nodes, including:

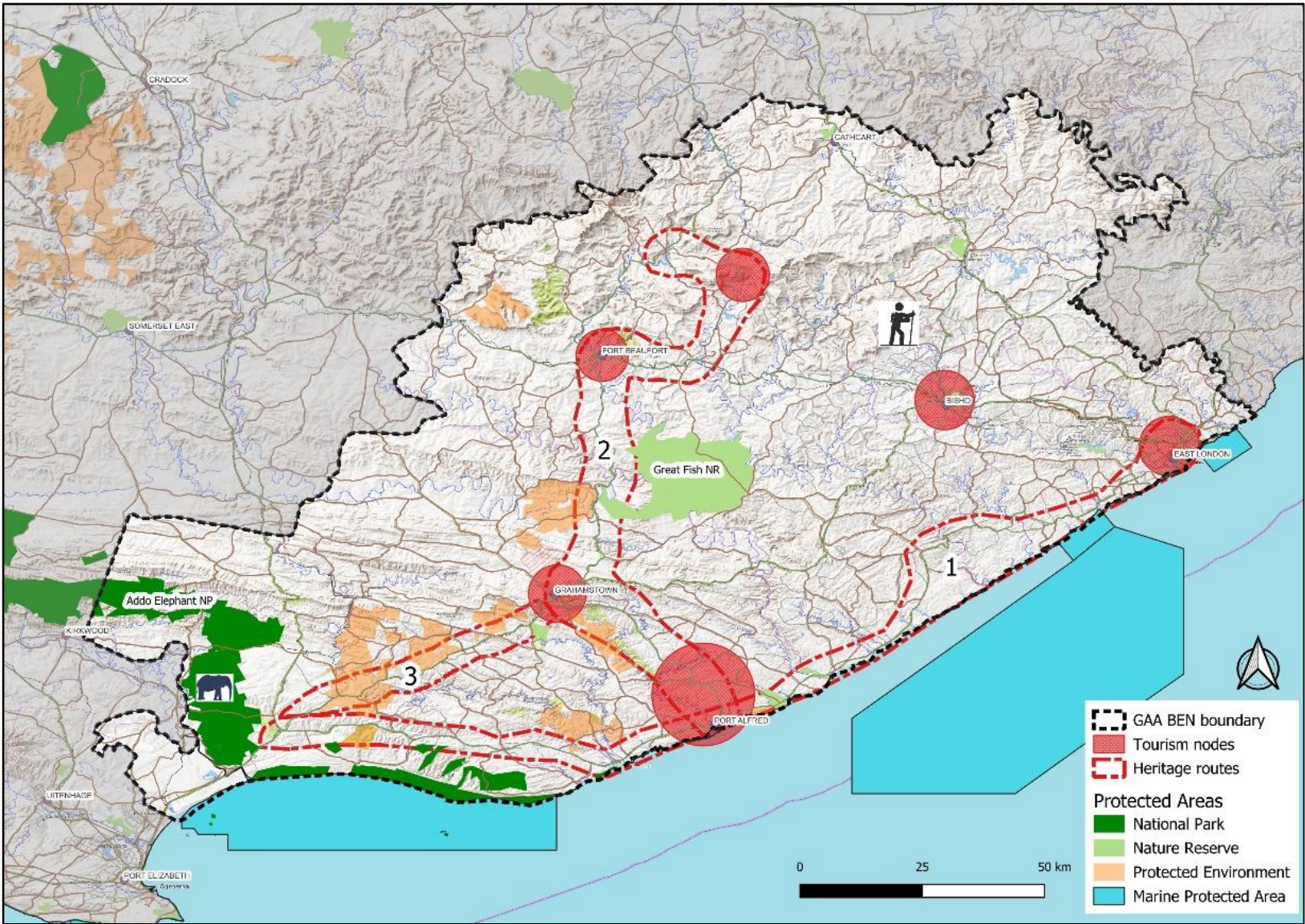
- 1. Addo Elephant National Park:** This National Park becomes the cornerstone of this broad landscape initiative. Managed by SANParks, it is home to over 600 elephants, as well as lions, buffalo, black rhinos, and various antelope species. The Park offers game drives, guided tours, and hiking trails, providing an immersive wildlife experience.
- 2. Makhanda:** Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown), is a city with significant tourism value due to its rich history, vibrant cultural scene, and proximity to natural attractions. Often referred to as the "City of Saints" for its many churches, Makhanda serves as a hub for heritage tourism, education, and arts. Makhanda's blend of cultural, historical, and natural attractions creates a unique tourism appeal that draws local and international visitors. The National Arts Festival alone significantly boosts the local economy, while its proximity to game reserves and conservation areas adds ecotourism value.
- 3. Great Fish River Nature Reserve:** Located along the Great Fish River, this Nature Reserve encompasses a variety of habitats, including grasslands and dense bushveld. It's a prime spot for game viewing, birdwatching, and experiencing the region's biodiversity.
- 4. Amatola Mountains and Hogsback:** The Amatola Mountains, particularly the village of Hogsback, is a well-known tourist destination, known for its mystical forests, waterfalls, and artistic community. Hogsback offers a unique blend of natural beauty, outdoor activities (hiking trails), and cultural experiences.

5. Coastal Towns of Kenton-on-Sea and Port Alfred: These charming seaside towns offer pristine beaches, water sports, and vibrant local markets. Kenton-on-Sea is known for its beautiful estuaries and boat cruises, while Port Alfred boasts a picturesque marina and rich maritime history.

6. East London: This large Eastern Cape town is located on the extreme eastern side of the GAA BEN, where you can explore attractions such as Nahoon Beach, the East London Museum, and the East London Aquarium. The city offers a mix of cultural, historical, and natural sites to enjoy.

These core tourism destinations are linked via a number of heritage routes, as indicated in Map13, These routes are highlighted below:

- The **Sunshine Coast Route** is a scenic and diverse tourism route in the Eastern Cape, stretching between Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha) and East London. Known for its year-round sunny weather, pristine beaches, and abundant wildlife, this coastal route offers a mix of relaxation, adventure, and cultural exploration. It's a favourite destination for beach lovers, nature enthusiasts, and those seeking tranquil retreats. Notable beaches include Kariega Beach (Kenton-on-Sea), Kelly's Beach (Port Alfred), and the rugged Riet River beaches. Key towns along the route include –
 - **Port Alfred:** Known as the "heart of the Sunshine Coast," this charming town boasts a picturesque marina, watersports, and golden beaches.
 - **Kenton-on-Sea:** Nestled between two estuaries (the Kariega and Bushman's Rivers), it offers boating, canoeing, and tranquil river cruises.
 - **Bathurst:** A quaint village known for its historical charm, including the Big Pineapple (a giant structure celebrating the region's pineapple farming industry).
- The **Frontier Country Route** is a scenic and diverse tourism route between Port Alfred, inland towards Fort Beaufort. It travels through a remarkable diversity of towns, with extensive history showing the strength and character of the Khoi, Xhosa, Boer and British cultures who once clashed in mighty battles across the region. This route has Makhanda at its centre, with the area being well known for its range of game and nature reserves and the new trend of returning farmland to its original condition is on the rise.



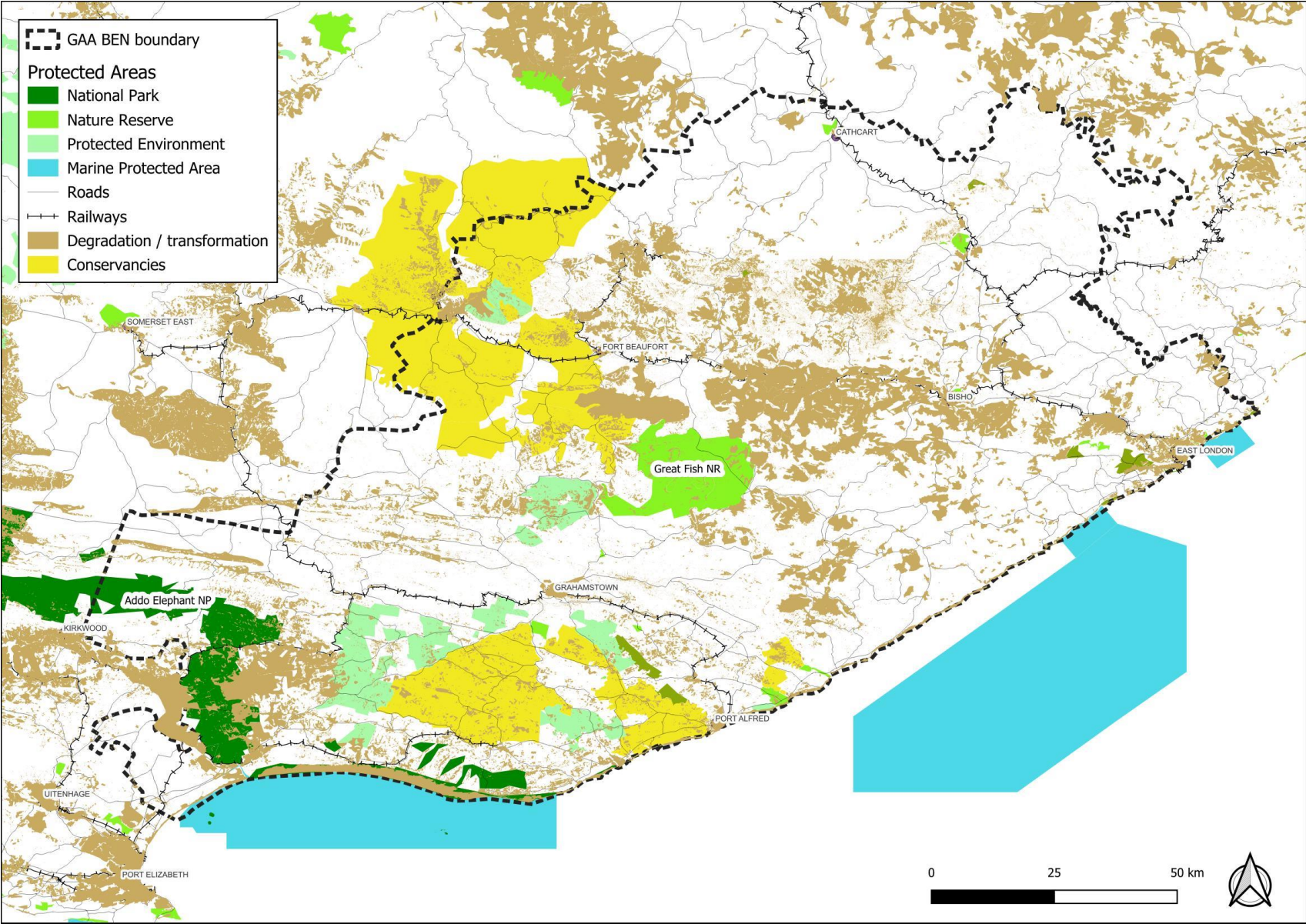
Map 13: Heritage routes in the GAA BEN

2.1.6 RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Principle: With extensive areas of the GAA BEN having been degraded in the past, biodiversity economy activities should focus where possible on the restoration and rehabilitation of areas, thereby improving the biodiversity values and potential for biodiversity economy benefits.

Restoration activities are crucial in developing a biodiversity economy node as they revive degraded ecosystems, enhancing their ability to support biodiversity and provide essential services like water purification, carbon storage, and soil fertility. Healthy ecosystems underpin sustainable economic activities such as ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, and bioprospecting. Restoration also strengthens climate resilience, mitigates disaster risks, and increases the value of the biodiversity economy node by ensuring the long-term availability of natural resources for economic and community benefits.

The GAA BEN should also explore the opportunity of building restoration and rehabilitation activities as a broader activity, potentially creating significant employment opportunities and even second product development from cleared biomass. This could be achieved through the increasing use of carbon credits as a funding mechanism for these activities.



Map 14: Spatial extent of degradation across the GAA BEN

2.1.7 ENHANCE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

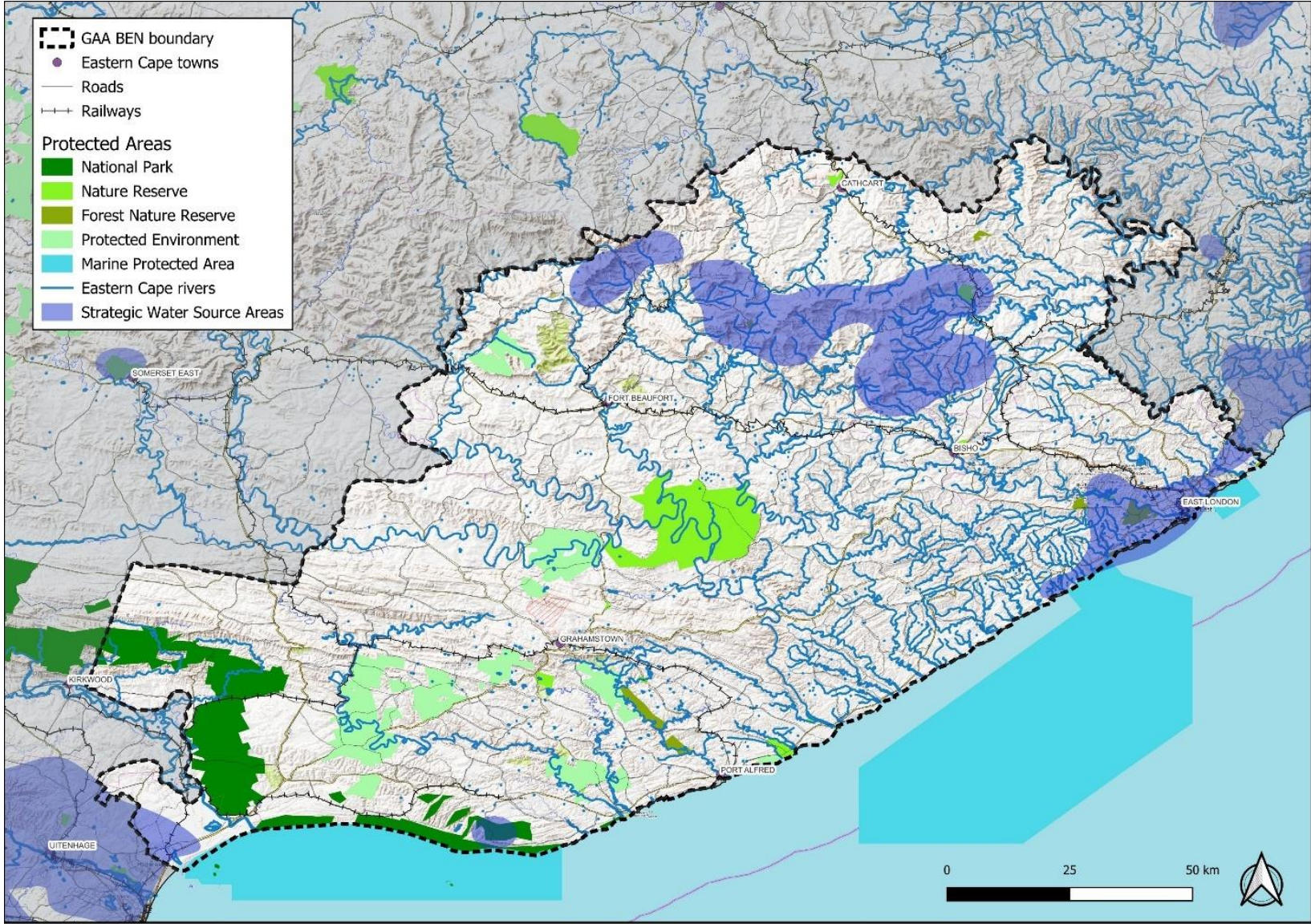
Principle: Being a water scarce country, any activity carried out must consider the water resources and ensure adequate protection of these water resources.

Enhancing water resource management is essential in developing a biodiversity economy node because water is a critical resource for both ecosystems and sustainable economic activities. Effective management ensures the availability of clean water for agriculture, industry, and community use while maintaining healthy aquatic habitats that support biodiversity. It reduces the risks of water scarcity, pollution, and ecosystem degradation, strengthening the resilience of the node to climate change. By safeguarding water resources, we secure the foundation for long-term economic growth, biodiversity conservation, and community well-being.

2.1.8 STRATEGIC WATER SOURCE AREAS

The GAA BEN is located within a moderately wet area of South Africa, at the junctions between the summer and winter rainfall areas. It is drained by a number of primary rivers, including the Boesmans River, the Great Fish River, the Buffalo River and the Kei River, being the most easterly river of the BEN (Map15). There are several very small and isolated National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (NFEPA) wetlands throughout the BEN. NFEPA rivers and wetlands are nationally recognised as important water resources and are considered priorities for biodiversity conservation.

Two main Strategic Water Source Areas occur within the BEN, including the Amatole Strategic Water Sources Area and a small portion of the Great Kei Strategic Water Source Area. A very small Strategic Water Source Area, namely the Alexandria SWSA is located very close to the Alexandria section of the AENP (Map). Strategic Water Sources Areas make up approximately 10% of South Africa's land area but supply a disproportionate quantity of mean annual surface water runoff in relation to their size, providing more than 50% of the country's water runoff, and are considered nationally important both ecologically and economically. Strategic Water Source Areas are a national priority for protected area expansion and the achievement of the 30x30 target.



Map 15: Hydrology within the GAA BEN

2.1.9 CLIMATE RISK MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION –

Principle: Considering that climate change effects are already being felt, all biodiversity economy activities must consider future climate change scenarios, and plan in an adaptive manner to climate-proof these activities.

Addressing climate change risks is critical in developing a biodiversity economy node because climate change threatens ecosystems, species, and the sustainability of economic activities. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events can degrade habitats, reduce biodiversity, and disrupt livelihoods. Proactively mitigating these risks through adaptive strategies, such as ecosystem restoration and sustainable resource use, ensures the resilience of the node. By addressing climate risks, we protect natural assets, secure ecosystem services, and support long-term economic and environmental stability.

2.2 SPATIAL PLANNING AND ZONING

Spatial zoning is a valuable tool for managing land use and mitigating land-use conflicts by designating specific areas for particular activities based on their suitability and environmental characteristics. It helps balance competing demands, such as agriculture, urban development, conservation, and recreation, by ensuring that each use occurs in its most appropriate location. Zoning minimizes conflicts between incompatible activities, such as industrial operations near residential areas, and protects sensitive ecosystems from overuse or degradation. By providing a structured framework for land allocation, spatial zoning promotes sustainable development, efficient resource utilisation, and harmonious coexistence among diverse land uses.

The objectives of land-use spatial planning include:

1. **Promoting Sustainable Development:** Ensure land is used efficiently and responsibly to balance economic growth, environmental protection, and social well-being.
2. **Reducing Land-Use Conflicts:** Minimise clashes between competing uses (e.g., agriculture, urbanization, conservation) by allocating land based on suitability and compatibility.
3. **Protecting Natural Resources:** Conserve biodiversity, water sources, forests, and other critical ecosystems through planned conservation and protection zones.
4. **Mitigating Environmental Risks:** Reduce risks from natural disasters, such as floods or landslides, by identifying and avoiding high-risk areas in development plans.
5. **Supporting Economic Efficiency:** Optimise land allocation to support industries, agriculture, and infrastructure in a way that maximizes economic productivity.
6. **Encouraging Equitable Access:** Promote fair and inclusive access to land and its benefits for all stakeholders, including marginalized communities.

These objectives collectively guide land use to achieve long-term sustainability and harmony between human activities and the environment.

In order to develop the spatial prioritisation model for the GAA BEN, the following analysis and engagements were undertaken -

- i) Stakeholder engagements – various stakeholder engagements were undertaken during the formulation of this Master Plan. Deliverable 3 provided a breakdown of these engagements, including evidence of presentations, attendance registers and minutes of each meeting.
- ii) Municipal engagements – both District and Local Municipalities were engaged directly to obtain relevant information on the zonation systems within the municipalities, land ownership, specifically relating to Municipal land ownership and any biodiversity sector plan information available.
- iii) GIS planning, based on principles – the most recent national conservation planning GIS information was obtained from SANBI, via the Biodiversity GIS portal, as well as DFFE’s eGIS portal.

2.2.1 DELINEATION OF ZONES

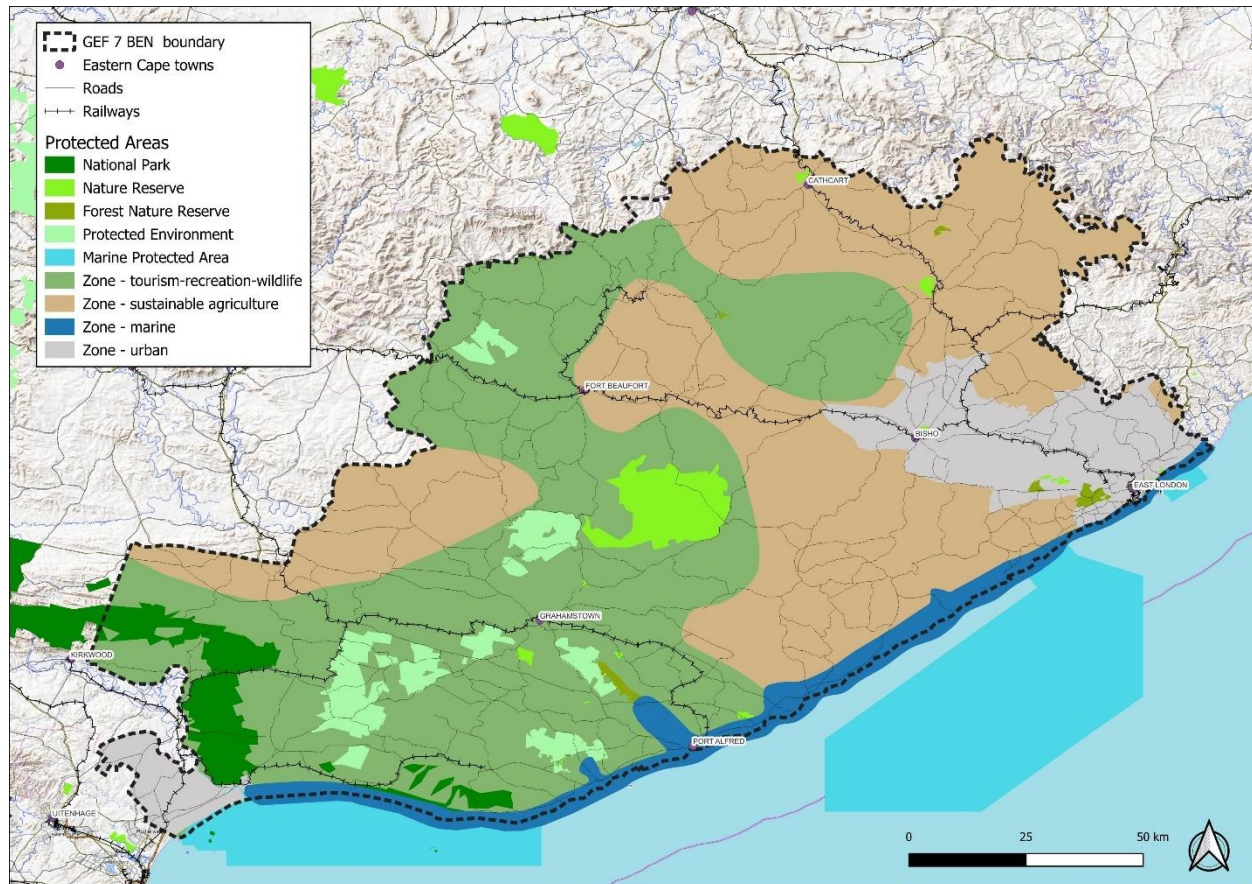
As a result of the stakeholder engagements and extensive analysis of biodiversity-related information, it is recommended that the Greater Addo Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node be zoned into the following broad land-use zones as shown below in Table 2 and Map 16.

1. Urban zone
2. Agricultural zone
3. Marine zone
4. Tourism / recreation / wildlife zone

These zones will provide a broad indication of the types of biodiversity Economy activities that should be carried out, encouraging compatible land-uses and avoiding potential land-use conflicts.

Table 2: The broad areas of the different spatial planning zones

Zonation	Area (hectares)
GAA BEN	2,854,841 ha
Tourism / recreation / wildlife zone	1,404,022 ha
Agricultural zone	1,022,156 ha
Marine zone	161,756 ha
Urban zone	266,907 ha



Map 16: Land-use planning zones within the GAA BEN

2.2.1.1 TOURISM / RECREATION / WILDLIFE ZONE

- **Purpose:** These areas are designated for biodiversity economy activities focused on extensive wildlife ranching and game management, coupled with eco-tourism and recreation activities. A primary consideration in all these activities must be the conservation of biodiversity assets (habitats, ecosystems, species, ecological process and ecosystem services), as these correspond to areas of high biodiversity value.
- **Activities:**
 - Establishment of new protected areas, or the expansion of existing protected areas.
 - Wildlife conservation and management (e.g., protected areas, game ranching, wildlife management for tourism).
 - Ecotourism activities on wildlife areas, including accommodation, guided safaris and nature walks.

- Establishment of tourism nodes, connected by tourism routes.
- Research on biodiversity and climate resilience.
- **Key Considerations:**
 - Transformative activities should be avoided as much as possible to conserve the natural aesthetics of the area to maximise its tourism value.
 - Strict controls on human activities to prevent habitat destruction.
 - Buffer zones around conservation areas should be created to minimize external pressures.
 - Encourage the re-establishment of threatened species on these protected areas as additional tourist attractions to the area (e.g. Black Rhino Range Expansion Programme).
 - Tourism operations should collaborate to maximise tourism opportunities.
 - Collaboration between stakeholder should focus on establishing SMMEs around wildlife management, ecotourism and hospitality.
 - Skills training opportunities should be provided to enhance the products provided within the sector.

2.2.1.2 AGRICULTURAL ZONE

- **Purpose:** These areas are designated primarily for agriculture-based activities as it corresponds with more intensive land-use practices, with the land capability supporting this land-use. The Department of Agriculture has a large number of support programmes, but specifically the Community Agriculture Support Programme (CASP), but also supports many of the land reform properties. Within the Biodiversity Economy, there are components of agriculture that can contribute, primarily sustainable livestock grazing and elements of bioprospecting.
- **Activities:**
 - Sustainable livestock grazing, following the principles of the Herding for Health model.
 - Where appropriate, encourage mixed livestock and wildlife management, to enhance revenue generations from the property.
 - For large agricultural developments, encourage appropriate certification schemes, allowing for market-driven improvements to environmental management.

- Encouraging appropriate bioprospecting activities based on ecological principles if harvesting within the natural environment is enabled (e.g. *Aloe ferox* harvesting).
- Research on biodiversity and agriculture integration and climate resilience.
- **Key Considerations:**
 - The focus should be on utilising the existing transformed areas for any intensive crop agriculture.
 - Where livestock grazing is undertaken, ensure that the grazing is carried out according to best practice ecological principles and stocking rates, so as to maintain long-term viability of the grazing resources.
 - Encourage mixed livestock and wildlife management systems.

2.2.1.3 MARINE ZONE

- **Purpose:** These areas are located along the coastline between the Sundays River estuary and the Kei River estuary. The primary focus within the Biodiversity Economy is to support small-scale fisheries, appropriate development of aquaculture operations, and encourage tourism development.
- **Activities:**
 - Implementation and support to small-scale fisheries, ensuring capacity building and sustainable fishing operations.
 - Development of centralised fish processing hubs, supported by training opportunities and collaborative market-access.
 - Support to proposed aquaculture developments, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.
 - Encouraging the development of tourism opportunities along the coastline, creating collaborative marketing strategies to enhance viability.
 - Supporting the maintenance of Blue Flag beaches, which supports tourism experiences.
- **Key Considerations:**
 - Extensive areas along the coastline are designated Marine Protected Areas. These have been formally and legally designated by the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and

Environment, primarily as a means of securing the relevant marine ecosystems and species.

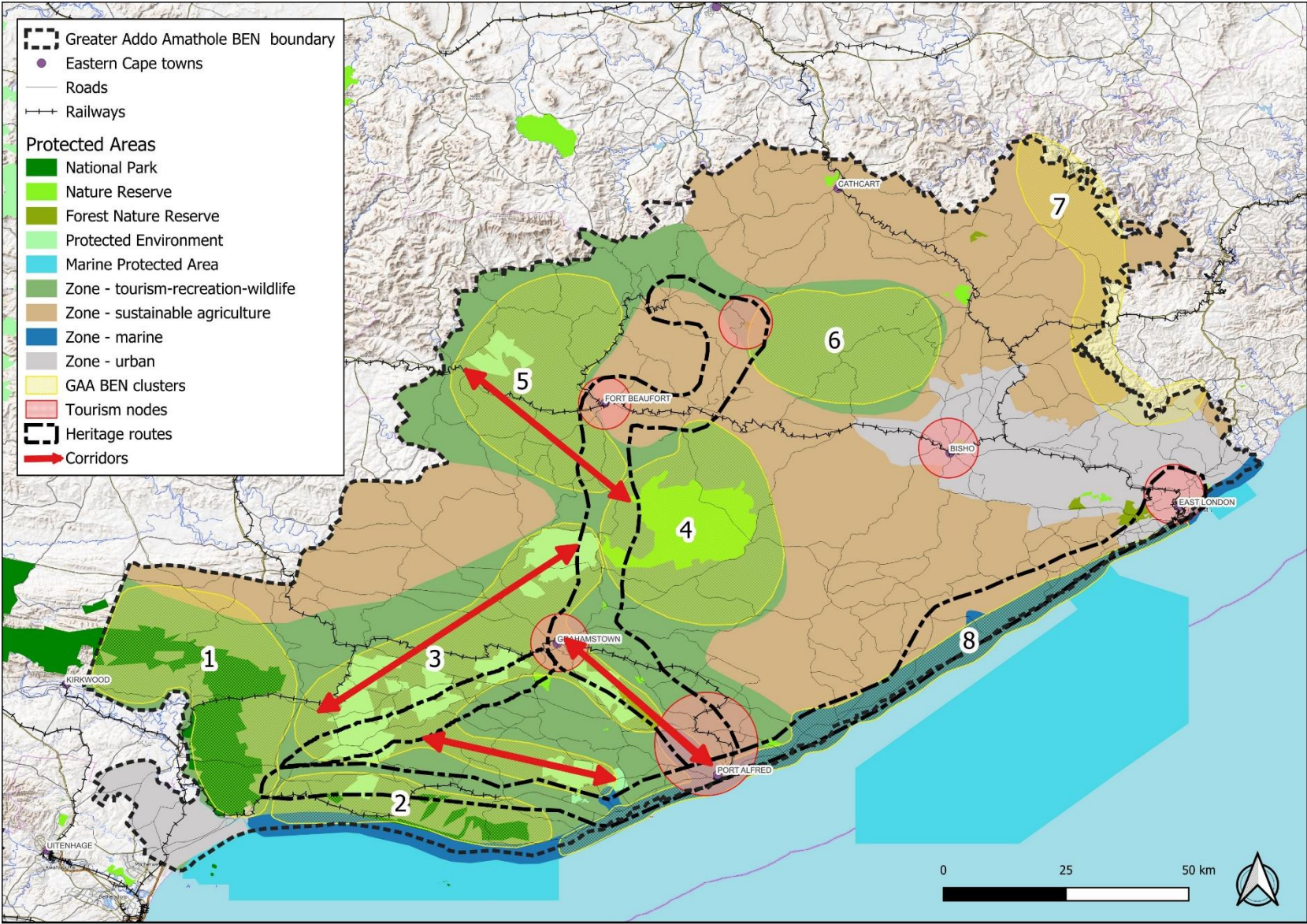
- Specific attention should be given to conserving the estuarine ecosystems within this zone, as these are critical as nursery areas for fish stocks. These areas could also be developed within the tourism strategy as they have significant value from a recreation and birdwatching viewpoint.

2.2.1.4 URBAN ZONE

- **Purpose:** These areas comprise the urban areas of Gqeberha and Buffalo City respectively. They are characterised by very high levels and density of human population, extensively developed for housing and retail / commercial infrastructure. The Biodiversity Economy activities are therefore very limited and confined to small-scale intensive tunnel agriculture and urban tourism.
- **Activities:**
 - Implementation and support to small-scale permaculture or plant nursery activities.
 - Implementation of urban or township tourism, to supports tourism experiences in these urban areas.
- **Key Considerations:**
 - Integrate these activities into the relevant municipal zoning schemes.

2.2.2 INTEGRATED PRIORITISATION BEN MAP

The following map (Map 17) serves as a strategic tool to identify priority areas for conservation, sustainable economic activities, and integrated land-use planning within the GAA BEN.



Map 17: Integrated prioritisation BEN map

2.2.2.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTEGRATED PRIORITISATION

To ensure that the biodiversity economy is effectively prioritised, the following key spatial and planning considerations must be addressed:

- Formal adoption of Protected Agricultural Areas (PAAs) under the new Agricultural Bill to ensure that agricultural activities are aligned with biodiversity conservation.
- Subdivisions and land-use plans must be aligned with protected area declarations to prevent ecological fragmentation and support biodiversity objectives.
- Updated spatial planning frameworks incorporating multiple biodiversity and economic layers (e.g., ecosystems, protected areas, economic zones) to ensure balanced development.
- Integrated land-use planning to enhance ecological connectivity between protected areas, agricultural lands, and tourism zones, ensuring sustainable land-use compatibility.
- GAA BEN integration into municipal planning tools, including Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), to formalise its strategic role in local and regional development.
- Infrastructure and resource access (e.g., roads, water supply, and vegetation management) must be sufficient to support wildlife tourism, sustainable agriculture, and community-led enterprises.
- Environmental Management Frameworks (EMFs) should be effectively applied to guide land-use decisions and mitigate environmental risks in development projects.
- Cultural and spiritually significant sites (e.g., heritage sites, burial grounds, circumcision sites) must be identified and incorporated into spatial planning to preserve community heritage and traditions.
- Clear zoning regulations in municipal spatial plans to prevent informal encroachment into conservation areas, ensuring long-term ecosystem protection.
- Sustainable economic activities must be strategically aligned with biodiversity conservation and local community needs, fostering a balanced biodiversity economy.

2.2.2.2 KEY CHALLENGES AND AREAS OF CONCERN

Despite efforts to integrate conservation and economic development, several challenges hinder the effectiveness of the biodiversity economy node:


- Informal use of PAAs without formal legal adoption weakens conservation efforts and increases the risk of unsustainable land practices.
- Potential misalignment of land subdivisions with protected area declarations, leading to unintended environmental degradation.
- Fragmented land-use patterns and lack of coordination between different protected areas, agricultural activities, and adjacent land uses, reducing ecosystem connectivity.
- Limited recognition of biodiversity conservation priorities in municipal planning tools, hindering coordinated land-use management.
- Insufficient infrastructure and access to natural resources (e.g., water, roads, grazing lands) limit the viability of biodiversity-based economic activities.
- Outdated provincial conservation planning documents, such as the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan, fail to reflect current ecological and socioeconomic realities.
- Inconsistent implementation of EMFs across municipalities, leading to gaps in environmental regulation and development control.
- Overlooking cultural and spiritual sites in planning processes, leading to potential conflicts and loss of heritage assets in rural communities.
- Lack of zoning enforcement for conservation areas, making them vulnerable to informal settlements and incompatible land-use activities.
- Existing economic activities may conflict with biodiversity conservation goals, requiring better integration of conservation-friendly business models.

2.2.2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing these challenges presents opportunities to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the biodiversity economy node:

- Legal establishment and enforcement of PAAs to strengthen biodiversity conservation and sustainable agricultural planning.
- Developing clear land-use subdivision guidelines that ensure alignment with protected areas and biodiversity conservation goals.
- Refining and finalising spatial plans to clearly identify priority areas for biodiversity economy initiatives.

- Strengthening land-use coordination between protected areas, agricultural lands, and tourism zones to enhance ecosystem services and wildlife corridors.
- Integration of the GAA BEN into municipal and provincial planning frameworks, ensuring alignment with local economic development and conservation priorities.
- Investing in infrastructure and resource access (e.g., roads, water systems) to support wildlife tourism, sustainable agriculture, and community enterprises.
- Updating conservation and spatial planning documents to incorporate the latest ecological and socioeconomic data, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.
- Standardising EMF implementation across municipalities to enhance environmental governance and responsible development.
- Recognising and incorporating cultural and spiritual sites into biodiversity and land-use planning, fostering heritage conservation and community involvement.
- Strengthening zoning and land-use regulations to protect biodiversity-critical areas from informal settlements and incompatible development.
- Aligning economic activities with conservation principles, ensuring that agriculture, tourism, and resource-based industries contribute to long-term sustainable development.



SECTION 3:
WHO?

3.1 GAA BEN POPULATION PROFILE

The figure below provides an overview of the municipalities that host the GAA BEN region.

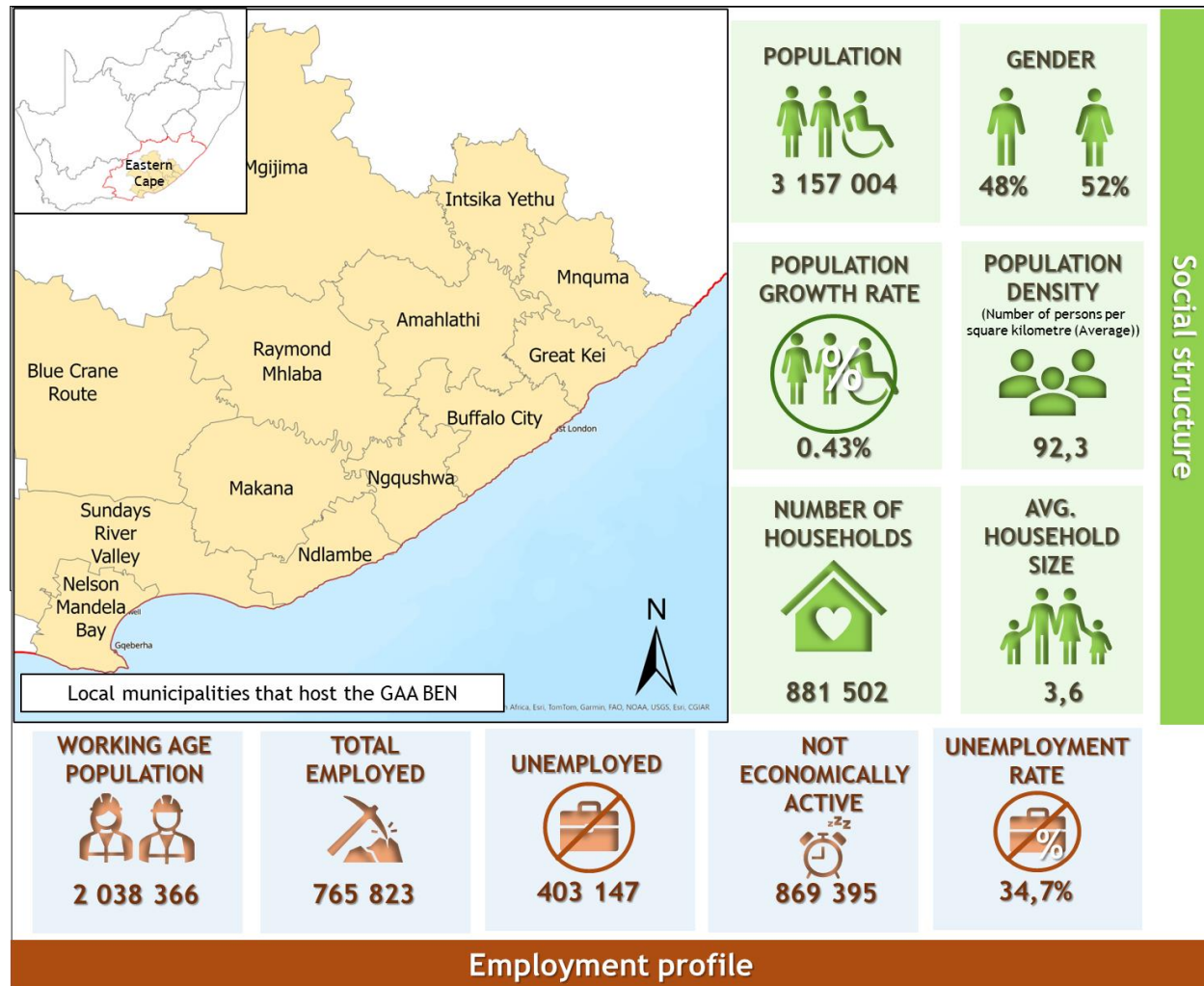


Figure 3: Socio-economic profile, 2022

Source: Quantec, 2024

The GAA BEN encompasses thirteen host municipalities with a total population of 3.1 million residents. Within this population, the proportion of females is higher at 52% compared to males (48%). The area comprises 81 638 households, with an average household size of 3.6 persons.

Focusing on the working-age population, which totals 2 038 366 individuals, a substantial portion is engaged in economic activities. Of this group, 765 283 individuals are employed, showcasing active

workforce participation. However, the region also faces significant employment challenges, with 403 147 individuals classified as unemployed. This results in an unemployment rate of 34.7%.

Overall, the GAA BEN demonstrates a diverse economic landscape with both active employment and notable unemployment challenges, reflecting the broader socio-economic conditions of the region. The average household size of 3.6 persons provides insight into the demographic structure that impacts the area's socio-economic environment.

3.1.1. POPULATION PROFILE

The population dynamics of the GAA BEN is characterised by a collective total of over 3.1 million inhabitants across thirteen host municipalities. Most of the population (64%) resides in the metropolitan municipalities of Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay. The remaining 36% of the population lives in Blue Crane Route, Makana, Ndlambe, Sundays River Valley, Mngquma, Great Kei, Amahlathi, Ngqushwa, Raymond Mhlaba, Intsika Yethu, and Enoch Mgijima Local Municipalities (Quantec, 2024).

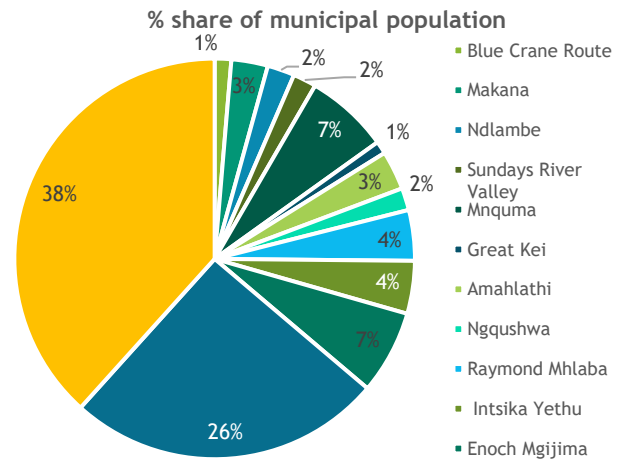


Figure 4: % share of municipal population
Source: Quantec, 2024

The concentration of the population in metropolitan areas suggests higher urbanisation and potentially better access to infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities. This urban majority may lead to greater environmental pressure on metropolitan areas, necessitating effective urban planning and sustainable resource management to maintain biodiversity and ecological balance.

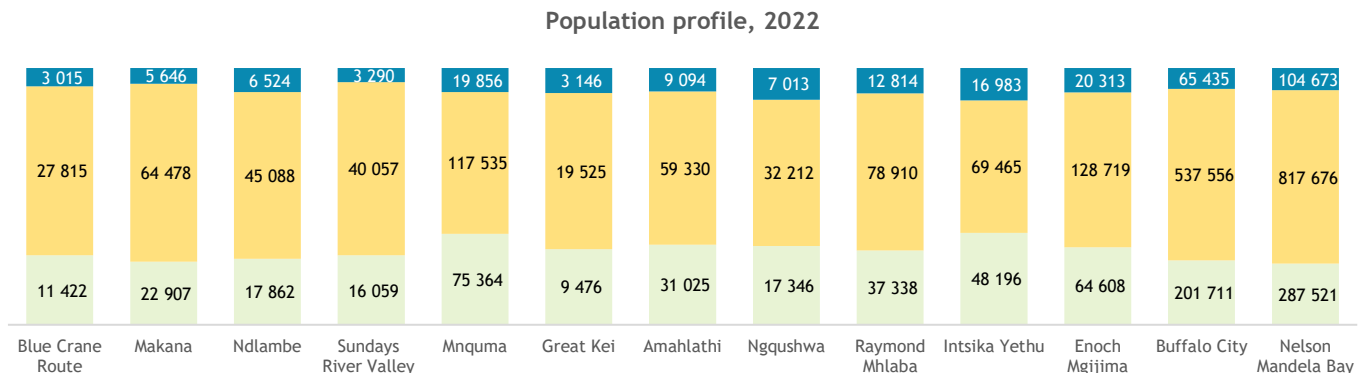


Figure 5: Population Profile
Source: Quantec, 2024

The working-age group accounts for 65% of the total population in the region, which is slightly lower than the national average of 66% (Quantec, 2024). This slight disparity suggests a need for economic strategies focused on job creation and vocational training to attract and retain working-age individuals. Creating employment opportunities and improving economic conditions within the GAA BEN could help bridge this gap, thereby promoting a more dynamic and productive workforce.

The child population in the region stands at 27%, slightly lower than the national average of 28% (Quantec, 2024). This indicates a growing need for educational resources, childcare services and recreational facilities. Investment in these areas is crucial to support the development and well-being of the younger population, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities necessary for future success.

POPULATION GROUPS PROFILE

The GAA BEN project holds significant promise for advancing social equity and economic empowerment among previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Black African communities comprise 82% of the population within the region, followed by Coloured (11%), White (7%), and Indian/Asian (1%).

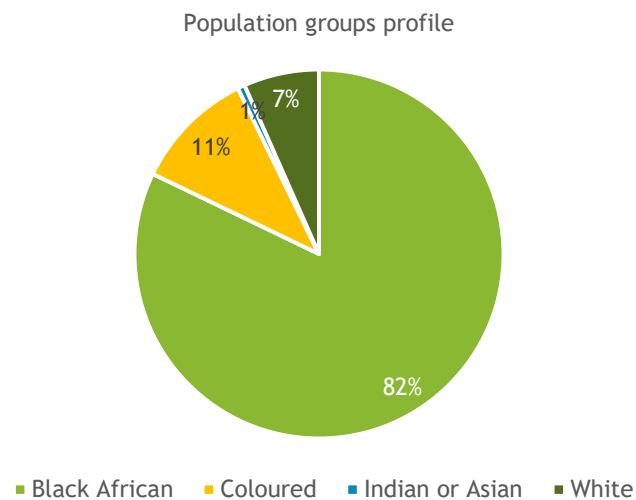


Figure 6: Population groups profile

Source: Quantec, 2024

Historically marginalised groups, particularly the Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian populations, stand to gain substantially from the region's efforts to promote sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and economic opportunities. Further, the BEN's emphasis on community engagement and participatory governance ensures that the voices and needs of these diverse populations are central to the planning and implementation processes. This approach not only strengthens the social fabric but also

enhances the long-term sustainability of conservation efforts by aligning them with the interests and well-being of local communities.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER

The diagram below provides a breakdown of the gender-age profile for the region.

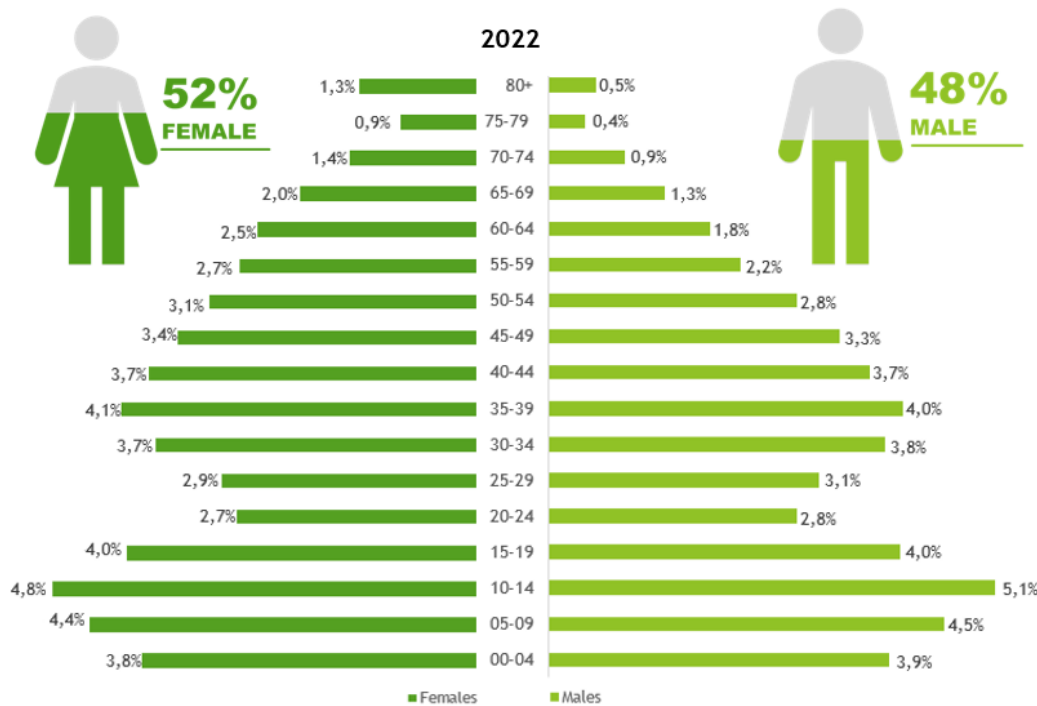


Figure 7: Population Distribution by Gender

Source: Quantec, 2024

The population distribution by age in the GAA BEN region reveals a balanced demographic with a slight predominance of females. Overall, males constitute 48% of the population, while females make up 52%. This gender ratio is reflected across different age groups, showcasing distinct characteristics in the working-age, child, and elderly populations.

The working-age population, which is critical for economic productivity and growth, comprises 32% males and 33% females. This nearly equal distribution indicates a robust workforce potential, with women slightly outnumbering men. The presence of a substantial working-age population is advantageous for the region's economic activities and sustainable development initiatives.

In the child population category, males account for 14%, while females represent 13%. This relatively even distribution suggests a balanced future labour force and highlights the importance of investing in

education and health services for both boys and girls to ensure equitable opportunities for all children as they grow.

The elderly population, although smaller in proportion, shows a more pronounced gender disparity. Males constitute 3%, whereas females comprise 6%. This difference may be attributed to various factors, including life expectancy and health conditions. The higher proportion of elderly females underscores the need for gender-sensitive policies and programs that address the unique challenges faced by older women, such as healthcare, social support, and economic security.

3.1.2. HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS

The GAA BEN exhibits a diverse range of household living conditions, reflecting both modern and traditional housing structures (see figure below).

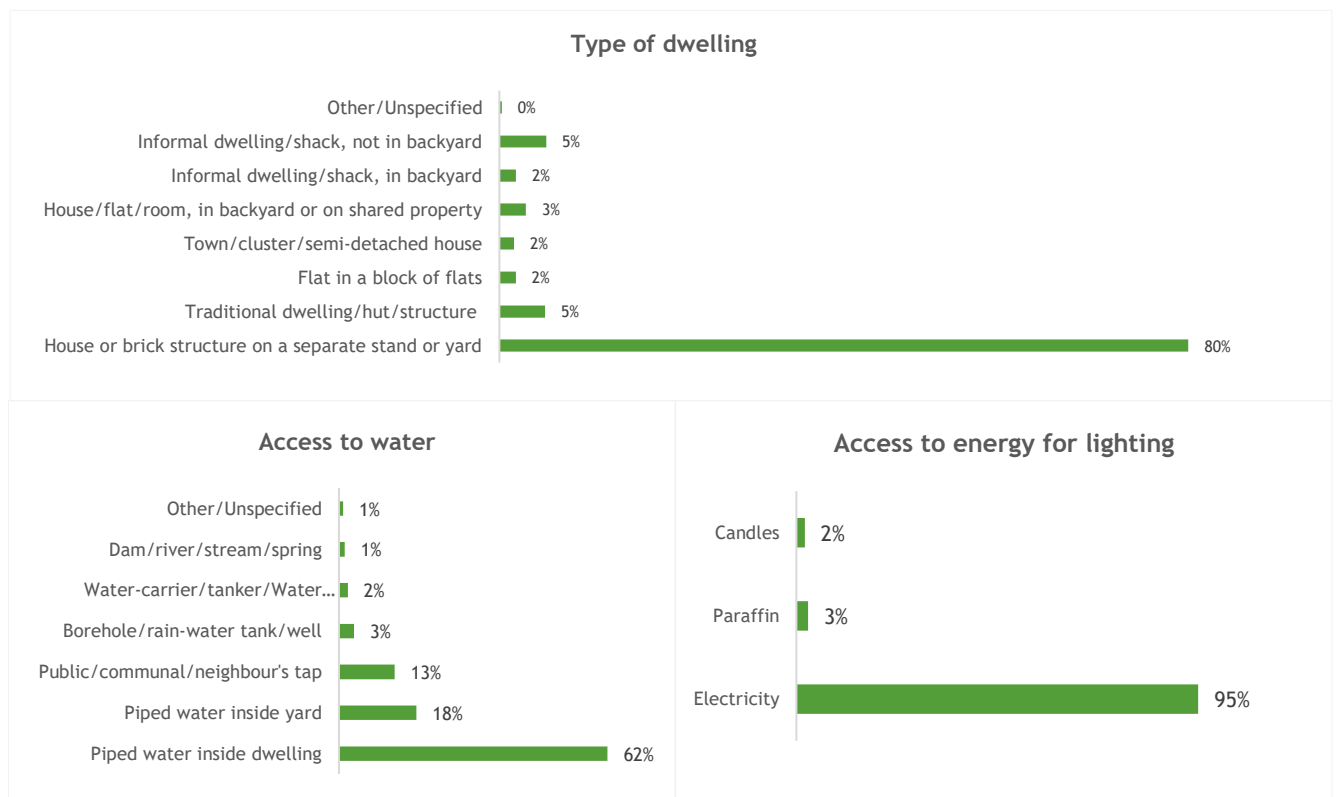


Figure 8: Housing and basic services in the GAA BEN
Source: Quantec, 2024

A substantial majority of households (80%) reside in formal housing, characterised by houses or brick structures situated on separate stands or yards. Traditional dwellings, often reflecting cultural heritage,

account for 5% of the residences. Similarly, informal dwellings also make up 5% of the housing landscape, indicating a presence of settlements that may lack formal recognition or infrastructure. Additionally, a small minority (2%) of households live in flats within blocks of flats, showcasing urban style living within the area.

Water access within the node varies significantly, with most households enjoying relatively modern amenities. Specifically, 62% of households have piped water directly inside their dwellings, facilitating ease of access and daily convenience. Another 18% have access to piped water within their yards, although not directly inside their homes. Public or communal taps serve 13% of households, indicating a reliance on shared water sources. A minor 3% of households depend on boreholes for their water needs.

Energy access for lighting is predominantly secured through electricity, with an impressive 95% of households utilising this resource. This high rate of electricity access shows that the nodal region has a well-developed energy infrastructure. However, a small fraction of households rely on paraffin (3%) and candles (2%) for lighting, highlighting areas where electricity access may be inconsistent or unavailable. This diversity in energy sources reflects varying degrees of development and resource availability across the GAA BEN.

POVERTY DIMENSIONS

- *AVERAGE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME*

The average annual household income in the Eastern Cape is ±R90 156 per annum per household (Longe, 2021). This indicates the financial constraints faced by local communities, which has important implications for the GAA BEN. This income level suggests that any projects within GAA BEN must be designed with affordability in mind, ensuring they are accessible to households with this average income. Project strategies should focus on cost-effective solutions and community engagement, potentially requiring external funding or subsidies.

- *DEPENDENCY ON SOCIAL GRANTS*

Households in the Eastern Cape, like in other provinces in the country, depend on social grants provided by the government to sustain livelihoods. In the Eastern Cape, there is a cumulative total of over 2.8 million grant dependents as of the end of May 2024 (SASSA, 2024). The details of the grants are provided in the tables below:

Table 3: No. of Social Grants beneficiaries in the Eastern Cape

Grant Type	Begin. of Apr.24	End of Apr.24	End of May 24
Care Dependency Grant	24 626	24 718	24 809
Child Support Grant	1 956 118	1 955 294	1 954 111
Disability Grant	175 412	175 453	174 061
Foster Care Grant	54 798	55 754	56 267
Old Age Grant	625 600	626 820	628 444
War Veteran's Grant	1	1	1
Total	2 836 555	2 838 040	2 837 693

Table 4: Number of beneficiaries by grant type, Region and gender as of the end of May 2024

Grant Type	Female		Male	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Care Dependency Grant	23 365	1%	922	0%
Child Support Grant	1 051 068	52%	29 986	1%
Disability Grant	79 650	4%	94 411	5%
Foster Care Grant	39 063	2%	2 784	0%
Grant-In-Aid	39 110	2%	19 474	1%
Old Age Grant	400 585	20%	227 859	11%
War Veteran's Grant	0	0%	1	0%
Total	1 632 841 (81%)		375 437 (19%)	

Overall, females constitute a dominant 81% share of the total grant recipients, while males represent only 19%. This distribution indicates a significant gender skew, suggesting that females are more reliant on grants. This trend reflects broader socio-economic dynamics, such as gender-based disparities in access to employment opportunities, and the role of social grants in addressing these inequalities. The predominance of female grant recipients emphasises the critical role that social grants play in supporting women and addressing gender disparities in the Eastern Cape.

EDUCATION PROFILE

- *OVERVIEW*

The figure below presents the educational profile for the GAA BEN.

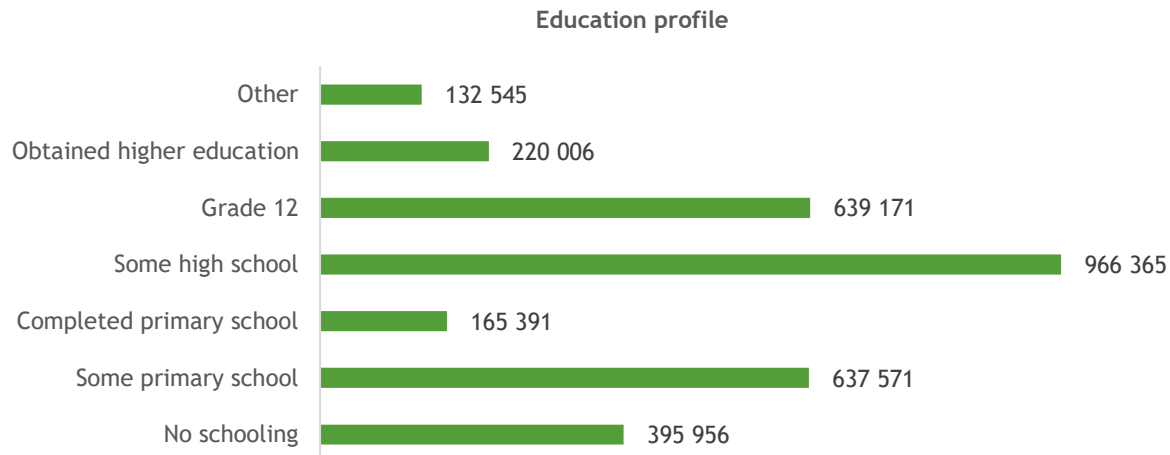


Figure 9. Education profile for the GAA BEN
Source: Quantec, 2024

The education profile in the GAA BEN presents a diverse landscape of educational attainment among its residents. A significant portion of the population, totalling 966 365 individuals, attended high school but did not complete it. This substantial figure highlights a potential area for educational intervention and support, as these individuals may lack the qualifications necessary for higher-paying jobs and further education opportunities. Conversely, 639 171 residents successfully completed high school, indicating a reasonable level of secondary education completion within the node. This group represents a crucial segment of the population that can potentially contribute more effectively to the local economy, provided there are adequate opportunities for further education or vocational training.

Primary education statistics reveal that 637 571 people attended but did not finish primary school, and 165 391 individuals completed their primary education. These figures emphasise the need for support mechanisms to ensure higher completion rates, which could lay a stronger foundation for subsequent educational achievements.

In terms of higher education, 220 006 individuals obtained qualifications beyond high school, reflecting a smaller, yet significant, portion of the population with advanced skills and knowledge. This group is vital for driving innovation and growth within the biodiversity economy, emphasising the importance of creating and maintaining pathways to higher education.

A concerning statistic is the 395 956 individuals with no formal schooling. This lack of education could be attributed to various factors, including family responsibilities, where pupils may have left school early to support their households. This segment represents a significant challenge, as a lack of education can severely limit employment opportunities and socio-economic mobility. Addressing this issue through adult education programmes and basic literacy initiatives could be crucial for inclusive economic development.

- *EDUCATION PROFILE BY GENDER*

The figure below presents the education profile for the GAA BEN.

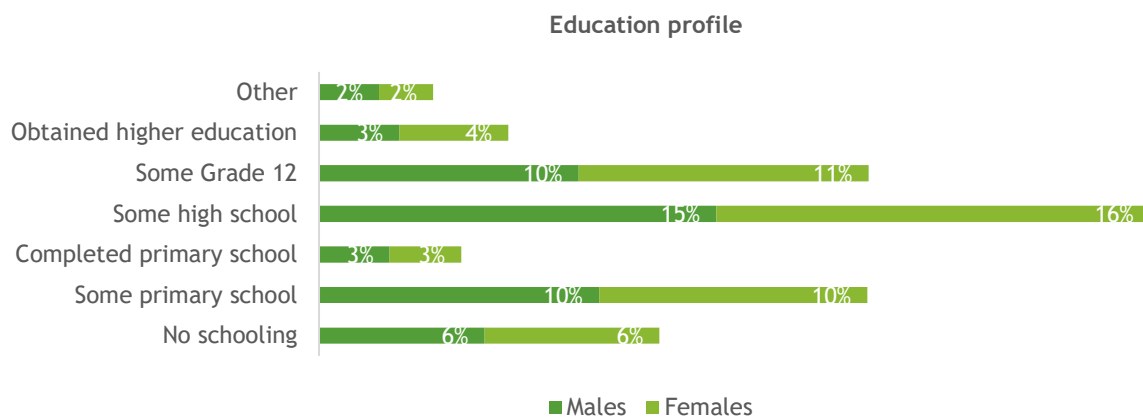


Figure 10: Education profile by gender in the GAA BEN

Source: Quantec, 2024

The educational profile in the GAA BEN reveals distinct patterns and challenges. A significant portion of the population has attended high school but did not complete it, with 15% of males and 16% of females falling into this category. This indicates a notable dropout rate at the high school level, which could be attributed to various socioeconomic factors that need to be addressed to improve retention and completion rates.

In terms of high school completion, only 10% of males and 11% of females have successfully graduated, highlighting a critical area for intervention to enhance educational outcomes. The primary school attendance data shows that 10% of both males and females attended but did not complete primary school, while a mere 3% of each gender completed primary school. This suggests early educational challenges that likely contribute to the overall low educational attainment in the region.

Higher education attainment remains limited, with only 3% of males and 4% of females having obtained higher education qualifications. This disparity underscores the need for increased access to and support for higher education opportunities to foster greater academic achievement and professional development.

Furthermore, the data indicates that 6% of both males and females have received no schooling at all, reflecting barriers to educational access that may be rooted in historical, economic, or cultural issues.

- *NEW SKILLS ATTAINMENT LEVELS*

In 2022, local universities in the Eastern Cape reported a total enrolment of 88 024 students, with a gender distribution of 42% males and 58% females. Furthermore, the number of graduates for the same year was 21 030, comprising 39% males and 61% females. This data reveals a higher participation and completion rate among female students compared to their male counterparts (see the figure below).

The higher enrolment and graduation rates among females suggest a significant gender disparity in favour of women in higher education within the Eastern Cape. This could be indicative of various socio-economic factors, including gender-targeted educational programmes/strategies, increased awareness of the importance of education among women and possibly better support systems for female students. The data implies that efforts to promote gender equality in education may be yielding positive results, although it also highlights the need to investigate the barriers that male students might be facing.

The higher number of female graduates could lead to a more female-dominated workforce in the near future. This shift, which may be beneficial to the development of the GAA BEN, necessitates the creation of inclusive work environments that can leverage the strengths of a diverse workforce.

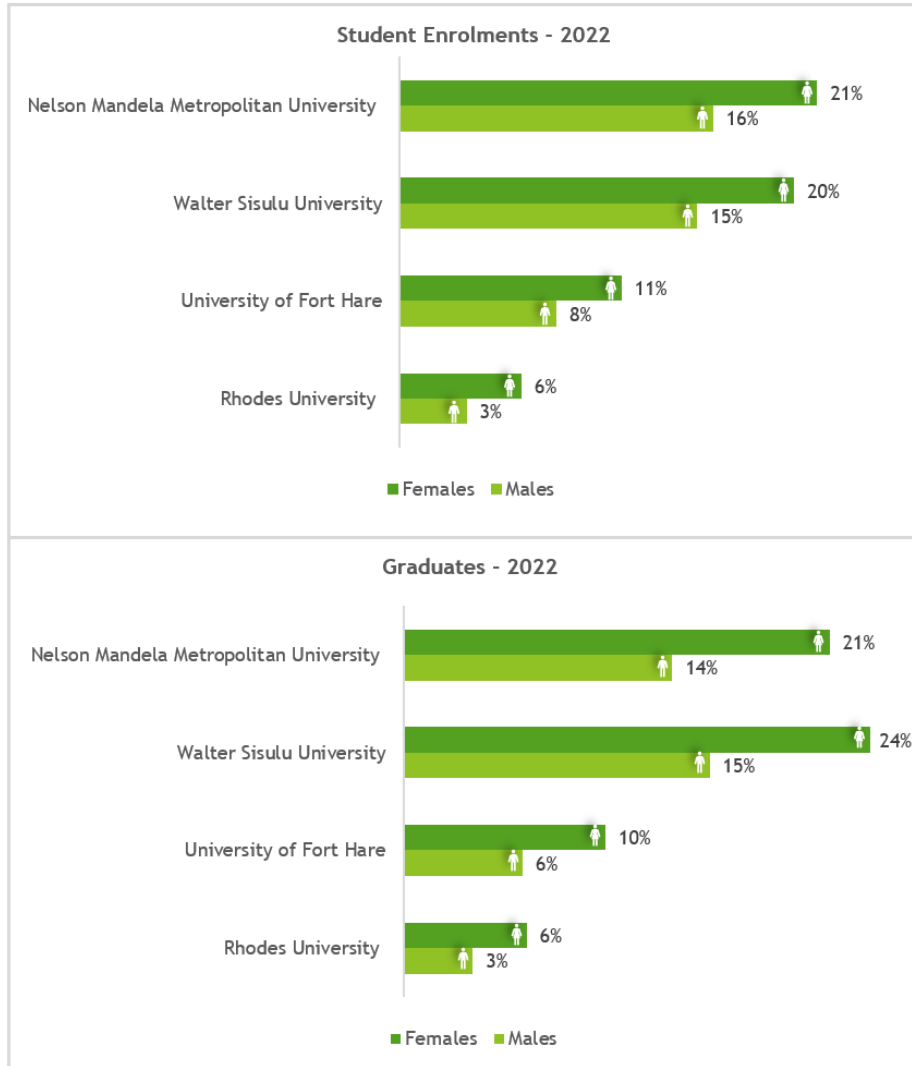


Figure 11: New student enrolments and graduates, 2022

Source: Quantec, 2024

3.1.3. OVERVIEW OF THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The GAA BEN municipal region has an Economically Active Population (EAP) of just over 2 million (see figure below).

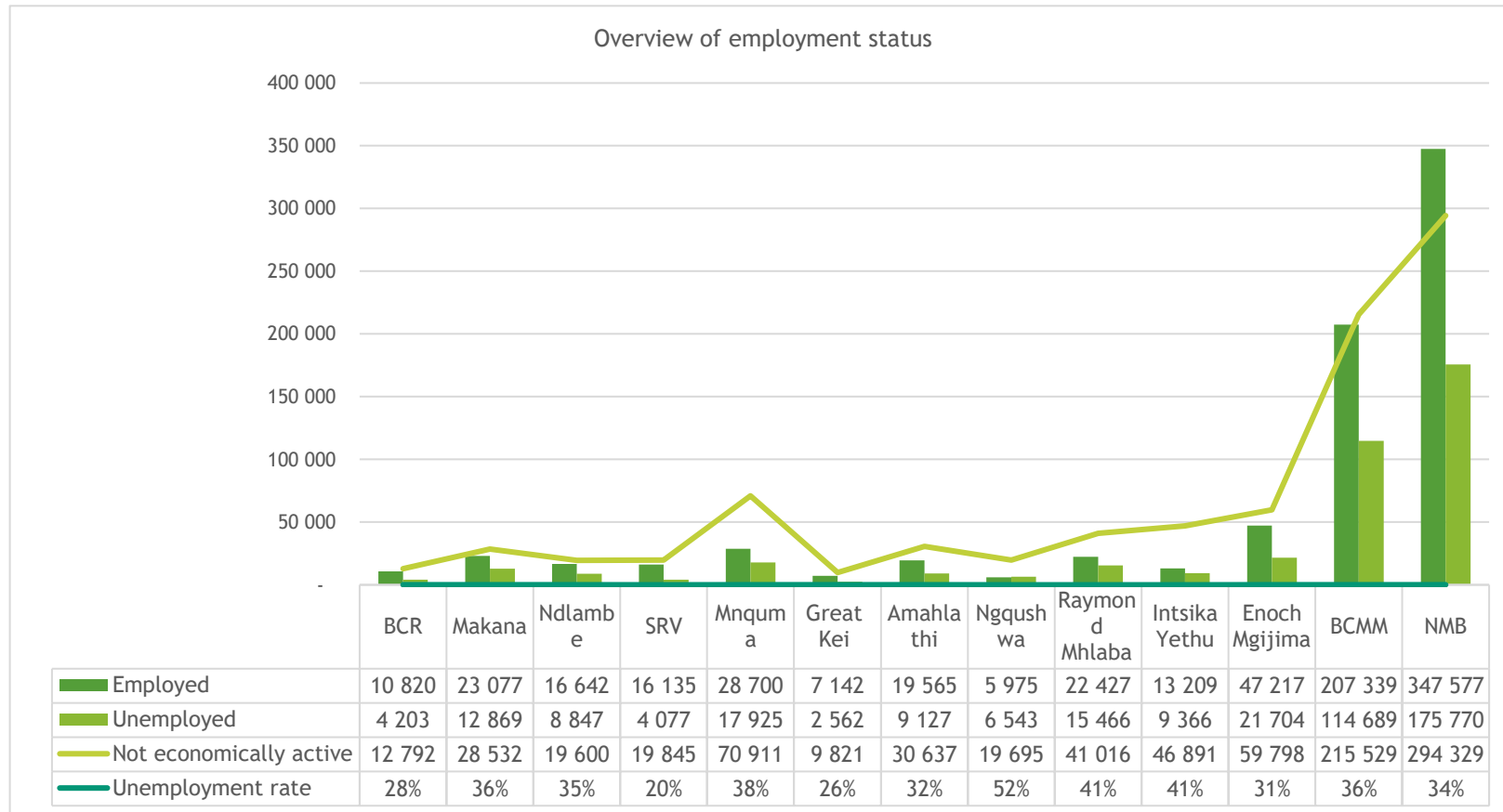


Figure 12: Overview of employment status across host municipalities

The employed segment of the EAP, comprising 765 823 individuals, indicates a significant portion of the workforce is engaged in productive activities. Most people in the region work in the two metropolitan municipalities (i.e. BCMM and NMB). This employed population supports local economies and sustains community livelihoods. However, the relatively low employment rate suggests limited job opportunities and highlights the need for economic diversification and investment in job creation initiatives.

Gender-based inequality persists in the employment practices of GAAP BEN region. For instance, in the AENP most employees work in accommodation roles such as room attendants, waitresses, and cleaners, positions predominantly held by women. Consequently, there were more female employees than males, reflecting the prevalence of jobs traditionally viewed as women's work. Conversely, game drives and horse rides were reported to be the only roles primarily occupied by men. Education likely played a role in this disparity, raising the question of whether development programs are effectively addressing such social issues. Education and skills development are crucial for empowering locals to attain better positions, yet implementation on the ground remains insufficient. As a result, many remain in low-paying jobs with little opportunity for growth or improvement in their quality of life (Mlungu & Kwizera, 2020).

In terms of unemployment, 403 147 individuals in the region are actively seeking work, and the unemployment rate stood at 34.7% in 2022 (Census EasyData, 2024). This 2022 unemployment rate is notably higher than the national unemployment rate during the same period, which was 28.84% (Statista, 2024). High unemployment can lead to economic and social instability, reducing the overall quality of life and increasing dependency ratios. This segment represents untapped human potential that, if harnessed effectively, can drive regional economic growth.

The population group classified as 'not economically active', comprising 869 395 individuals, includes those who are not actively seeking employment due to various reasons such as education, retirement, or caregiving responsibilities. This segment represents a diverse group that may contribute to the economy in non-traditional ways, such as through informal sectors or volunteer work. This population group can play a role in the Addo-Amathole region on a part-time voluntary basis.

3.1.4. LOCAL ECONOMY

GVA GROWTH TRENDS

A region's economic performance is measured by the growth of its Gross Value Added (GVA) for each of its economic sectors. GVA may be broadly defined as the total value of all goods and services that were produced within a specific geographical area during a specific period. The figure below presents the GVA growth trends of South Africa, Eastern Cape province and the GAA BEN.

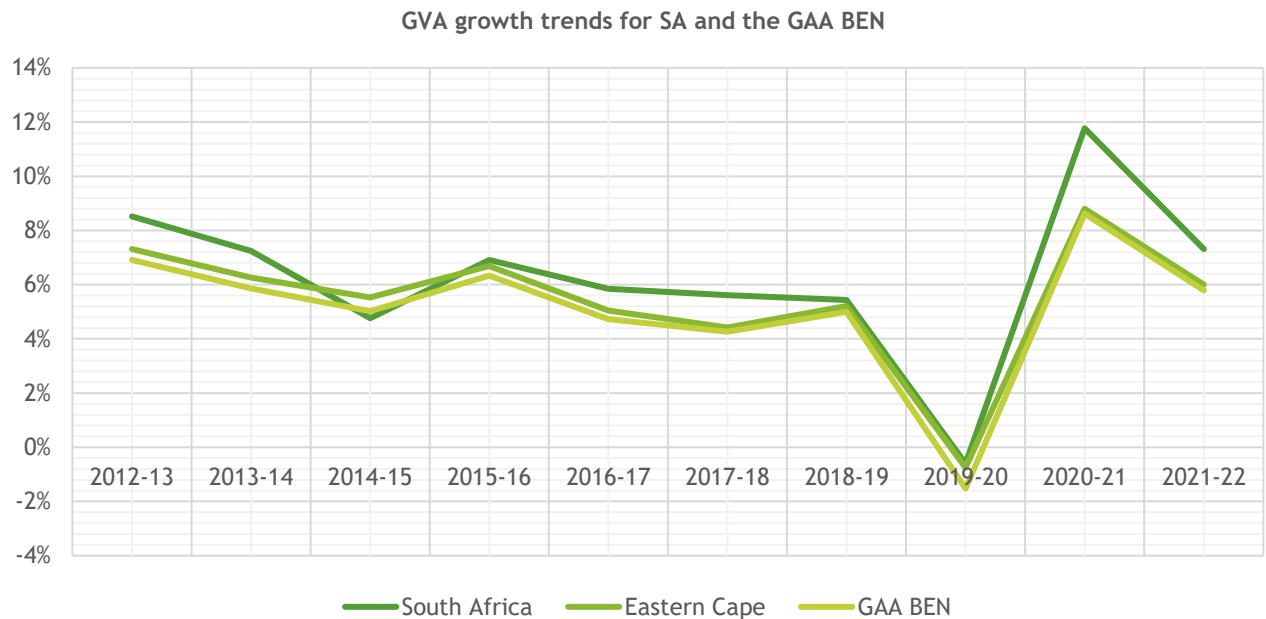


Figure 13: GVA growth trends for SA and the GAA BEN

The GVA growth trends in the GAA BEN have shown significant fluctuations over the past decade, reflecting a mix of economic challenges and resilience. Between 2012 and 2022, GVA growth in this region demonstrated notable variability, influenced by both local and broader economic conditions. From 2012-13, the GAA BEN saw a robust GVA growth rate of 9%, followed by a moderate decline to 7% in 2013-14 and further to 5% in 2014-15. However, the growth rate dropped to 4% in 2017-18, indicating a potential plateau in economic activities or external pressures affecting the region's economy.

In the subsequent years, GVA growth in the GAA BEN remained relatively stable, with a 5% increase in 2018-19. The economic impact of broader regional trends became evident in 2019-20, where the region experienced a negative growth rate of -1%, reflecting an economic downturn, due to the rise of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, a strong recovery was observed in 2020-21, with GVA growth rebounding to an impressive 12%, driven by economic recovery efforts and possibly increased

investment in the biodiversity economy sector. The growth rate then moderated to 7% in 2021-22, indicating a stabilisation of the economic recovery.

Specifically, the GAA BEN's GVA increased from R435.9 million to R466 million in 2012-13, representing a 7% growth. The growth continued at 6% in 2013-14, and at 5% from R493.3 million to R513.1 million in 2014-15. The region maintained a 4% growth rate in 2017-18 and saw a 5% increase in 2018-19. However, in 2019-20, the GVA decreased by 2%. A significant recovery was observed in 2020-21, with GVA rising from R622 million to R675.7 million, marking a 9% increase. The GVA growth continued at 6% in 2021-22, reaching R714.7 million.

When examining the Eastern Cape's GVA growth trends during the same period, similar patterns emerge. The Eastern Cape experienced a 7% growth in 2012-13, followed by a slight decline to 6% in both 2013-14 and 2014-15. The growth rate further decreased to 4% in 2017-18, slightly improved to 5% in 2018-19, and encountered a negative growth rate of -1% in 2019-20. A recovery followed in 2020-21, with a GVA growth of 9%, and a stabilization at 6% in 2021-22.

Overall, the GVA growth trends in the GAA BEN Node reflect the region's economic resilience and the impact of broader economic conditions. While there have been periods of decline, the region has demonstrated a capacity for recovery and growth, driven by investments in the biodiversity economy and sustainable practices.

REGIONAL GVA BY INDUSTRY

The following provides an overview of the regional GVA by industry for the GAA BEN.

Table 5: GAA BEN GVA, 2024

Economic sector	GVA output at basic prices (R' Million)	% share
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	15 333	2%
Mining and quarrying	1 898	0%
Manufacturing	196 271	27%
Electricity, gas and water	12 870	2%
Construction	26 238	4%
Wholesale and retail trade, catering, and accommodation	109 843	15%

Economic sector	GVA output at basic prices (R' Million)	% share
Transport and storage and communication	72 482	10%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and business services	143 833	20%
General government	47 461	7%
Community, social and personal services	88 559	12%
TOTAL GVA	714 788	100%

Source: Quantec, 2024

In the GAA BEN, the manufacturing sector emerges as the leading contributor to the GVA, with a substantial contribution of R196.2 million, accounting for 27% of the region's total GVA. This dominant sector underscores the region's industrial capacity and its pivotal role in driving economic growth and employment. Following manufacturing, the finance, insurance, real estate, and business services sector significantly impacts the regional economy, contributing R143.8 million to the GVA. This sector's robust performance highlights the importance of financial and professional services in the region's economic landscape. Closely trailing is the wholesale and retail trade, catering, and accommodation sector, which adds R109.8 million to the GVA, reflecting the vibrant commercial activities and the critical role of tourism and hospitality in the local economy.

The community, social, and personal services sector also plays a vital role, contributing R88.5 million, or 12%, to the GVA. This sector's contribution highlights the importance of social services and the well-being of the community in the region's economic fabric. Additionally, the transport, storage, and communication sector contribute R72.4 million, representing 10% of the GVA, highlighting the significance of infrastructure and connectivity in supporting economic activities.

The general government sector, with a contribution of R47.4 million, or 7%, emphasises the role of public administration and services in the regional economy. Further, the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector, although contributing a smaller portion of R15.4 million (2%) to the GVA, remains an essential component of the region's economic diversity and sustainability.

Overall, the GVA of R714.8 million in 2022 reflects the economic output of the local economy across various sectors.

3.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND COLLABORATION IN BENS

Effective stakeholder engagement and spatial planning are critical to the success of Biodiversity Economy Nodes. Stakeholder engagement ensures inclusive decision-making, while spatial planning provides a structured approach to balancing conservation, economic activities, and sustainable land use. The table below integrates these principles to demonstrate their interconnectedness:

Table 6: Guiding principles

Principle Category	Stakeholder Principle	Spatial Planning Principle
Transparency and trust	Engaging openly with stakeholders to build trust and ensure clarity in project goals.	Understanding and maintaining biodiversity values to sustain the economy.
Collaboration and inclusion	Establishing partnerships to create a shared vision for ecotourism and conservation.	Ensuring activities are planned to maintain ecosystem processes and landscape connectivity.
Effective communication	Using accessible language and visuals to ensure information is understood by all stakeholders.	Aligning biodiversity economy activities with landscape characteristics while avoiding land-use conflicts.
Inclusive decision-making	Ensuring all stakeholders are included in decision-making and that their voices are heard.	Grouping biodiversity economy activities to enhance ecological and economic viability.
Prioritisation and impact	Identifying key stakeholders and addressing their concerns.	Planning activities based on ecological capacity to ensure efficient land use.
Capacity and empowerment	Strengthening stakeholder skills and knowledge for meaningful participation.	Prioritising degraded areas for ecological and economic restoration.
Adaptive and resilient planning	Ensuring engagement processes remain flexible and responsive to changes.	Designing biodiversity economy activities to withstand climate change effects.
Resource management	Encouraging stakeholders to take an active role in sustainable resource use, through awareness creation efforts.	Protecting and efficiently managing water resources in all activities.

This detailed approach aligns with the principles outlined in the table above, which integrates stakeholder engagement and spatial planning considerations to guide the sustainable development of GAA BEN.

3.2.1. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

The GAA BEN requires a structured, multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement and participation framework to ensure effective governance, coordination, and implementation. Given the region’s ecological significance and economic potential, stakeholders are comprised of government institutions, private sector players, local communities, civil society organisations, and research institutions, summarised as follows:

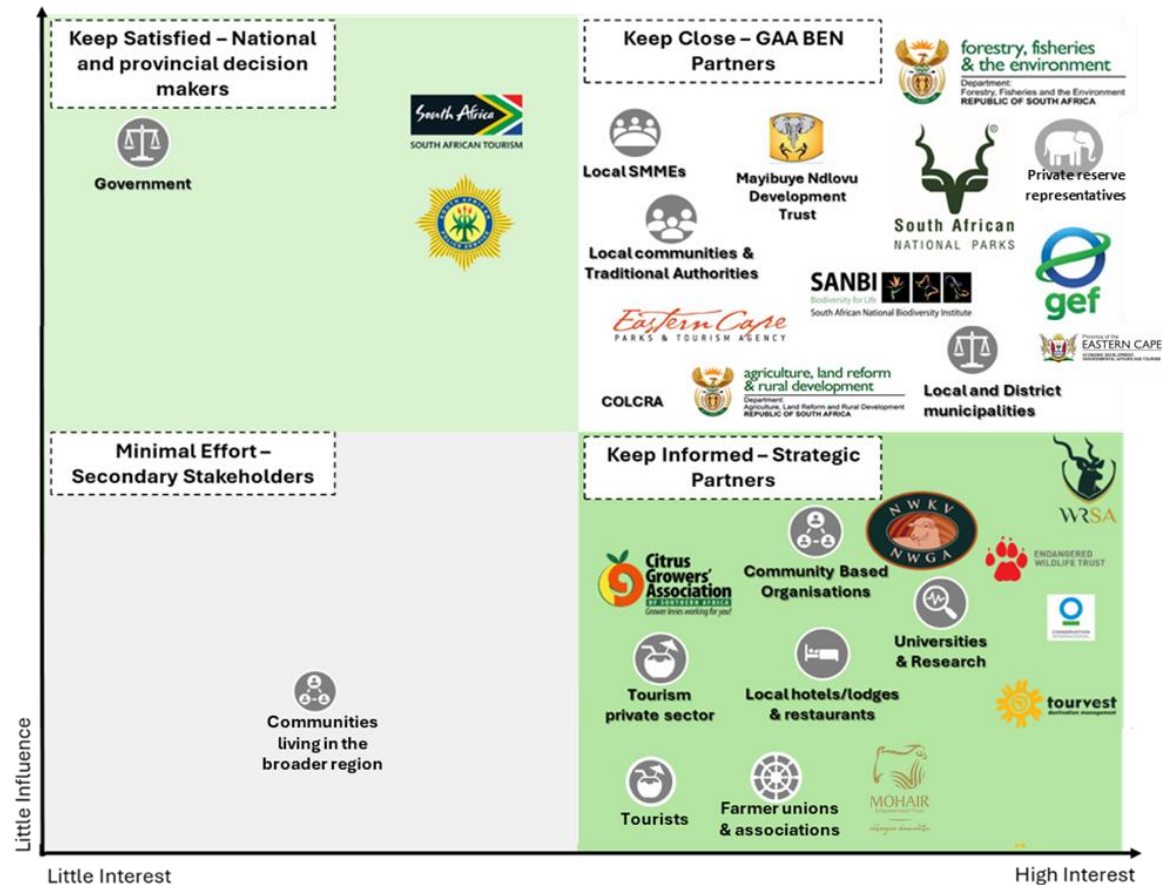


Figure 14: Stakeholder mapping

The level of engagement with the types of stakeholders is dependent on their ability to influence decision-making and action within the GAA BEN, and their interest level in terms of their mandate and resources. Each stakeholder category should be engaged at a different level as illustrated below.

Table 7: Stakeholder engagement channels

Stakeholder Type	Level of Engagement	Communication Channel
GAA BEN Partners	Partner	Partnerships Committees Agreements
National and Provincial Decision-Makers	Involve	MEC forums Working groups Lekgotlas
Strategic Partners	Consult	Workshops Open communication channels Direct contact
Secondary Stakeholders	Inform	LED/ Chamber/Community Forums Traditional and online media

The following table suggests the type of engagement level to be applied for the key stakeholders associated with GAA BEN.

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
SANParks - Addo Elephant NP	GAA BEN Partners					Key actor managing Addo Elephant NP, essential for GAA BEN planning and implementation.
Agri Eastern Cape	Strategic Partner					Represents agricultural stakeholders whose land use practices impact biodiversity and economic activities.
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	GAA BEN Partners					Responsible for environmental regulation and biodiversity conservation policies.
Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development	GAA BEN Partners					Guides agricultural land use and rural development in alignment with biodiversity objectives.
National Department of Tourism	GAA BEN Partners					Supports integration of biodiversity with tourism development.
Department of Economic Development	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					Facilitates regional economic growth.
Department of Basic Education	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					Could support environmental education and local awareness-raising efforts.

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
Department of Employment and Labour	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					Could support by ensuring that employment opportunities created align with fair labour practices.
South African Tourism	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					Could provide support by marketing GAA BEN as an eco-tourism destination.
Departments of Correctional Services and South African Police Service	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					Given its expertise in security and law enforcement, DCS and SAPS could collaborate with SANParks and partners in the GAA BEN to strengthen security measures within the GAA BEN. This could involve deploying trained personnel to support anti-poaching efforts, conducting joint patrols, or sharing intelligence to combat illegal activities such as poaching and wildlife trafficking.
Department of Water and Sanitation	National and Provincial Decision-Maker					DWS would provide expertise in managing water resources within the landscape targeted by the project.
Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency	GAA BEN Partners					Part of the GEF7 Implementation team and a key partner in the development of the MP.
Eastern Cape Province – Departments of Economic Development; Environmental Affairs and Tourism; Education; Social Development; Rural Development and Agrarian Reform; Local Government and Housing.	GAA BEN Partners					Potential policy engagement with regards to BENs.
District municipalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Baartman District Municipality Chris Hani District Municipality 	GAA BEN Partners					To work with local municipalities to integrate the GAA BEN and related activities into local planning and implementation frameworks.

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amatole District Municipality 						
Local municipalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sundays River Valley Local Municipality Blue Crane Route Local Municipality Makana Local Municipality Ndlambe Local Municipality Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Amathole District Municipality Mnquma Local Municipality Great Kei Local Municipality Amahlathi Local Municipality Ngqushwa Local Municipality Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality Chris Hani District Municipality Intsika Yethu Local Municipality Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality 	GAA BEN Partners					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand priorities and challenges in the local municipality, with specific referent to LED opportunities. Council to support the GAA BEN Incorporation into IDP and SDF processes
Traditional Authority representative	GAA BEN Partners					<p>Active participation through the following structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Parks structures

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional council meetings Local government engagement structures
Congress of Traditional Leaders (CONTRALESA)	Strategic Partner					Provide inputs into potential community involvement in the Addo MLL.
Mayibuye Ndlovu Development Trust	GAA BEN Partners					Trust was established in 2005 with a unique profit-sharing agreement that ensured communities received tangible benefits from the Park derived from the Mathyolweni Rest camp in Addo Elephant National Park.
Indalo Protected Environment	GAA BEN Partner					Indalo PE spans over 90 000ha within the GAA BEN and plays an important role in community upliftment, conservation expansion and driving the implementation of the GAA BEN MP.
Tourvest	Strategic Partner					Potential for development of appropriate tourism business opportunities across the GAA BEN.
SA Tourism Services Association (SATSA) – Eastern Cape	Strategic Partner					Understand potential training opportunities that could be provided in the GAA BEN
Wildlife Ranching South Africa	Strategic Partner					A key stakeholder group in the GAA BEN.
Farmers unions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samenkomst Farmers union Central District Farmers Union Fish River Farmers Union 	Secondary Stakeholder					Farmers unions can promote sustainable farming practices that align with the BEN's goals.

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
Private reserve representative	Decision-Makers					Private reserves play a vital role in the GAA BEN by expanding conservation areas, supporting ecological connectivity, and advancing the wildlife economy.
Tourism private sector	Strategic Partner					The tourism private sector is a crucial partner in the GAA BEN as it drives the development of a thriving wildlife and eco-tourism economy. These businesses can help generate income for the BEN by promoting the area's unique biodiversity, cultural heritage, and conservation efforts. They provide employment opportunities for local communities and support capacity-building initiatives to enhance service delivery.
National Wool Growers Association	Strategic Partner					Important to understand their programmes, resources and priorities in the area, and how they can support the implementation of the project.
Conservation South Africa	Strategic Partner					Conservation South Africa plays an essential role in the GAA BEN by promoting the integration of conservation and sustainable development. They can assist in creating partnerships between communities, landowners, and businesses to implement best practices in conservation, while also facilitating access to funding for environmental projects.
Eden to Addo	Strategic Partner					Key learnings and possible model expansion in the GAA BEN

Name of Stakeholder	Type	Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner	Rationale
Citrus Growers Association	Strategic Partner					Key to understand their operations, expansion plans and landowner support processes. Potential stakeholder for stewardship and conservation areas in the BEN.
Eastern Cape Game Management Association (ECGMA)	Strategic Partner					ECGMA has a very strong membership base in the GAA BEN.
Eastern Cape Development Corporation	Strategic Partner					Explore opportunities for collaborative funding opportunities based on provincial development priorities.
Birdlife South Africa	Strategic Partner					Potential stakeholder for stewardship and conservation areas in the GAA BEN
Universities: Rhodes University Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University University of Fort Hare University of South Africa (UNISA)	Strategic Partner					Potential for developing research partnerships in the GAA BEN

A summary of the key stakeholders in the GAA BEN is provided in Annexure A.

To optimise collaboration and resource allocation, the District Development Model (DDM) is applied, to ensure that all levels of government and key stakeholders work together within a single, integrated framework. This approach facilitates a cohesive planning environment, where inclusive biodiversity conservation and economic growth align with national, provincial, and local development objectives.

Case Study: The Indalo Protected Environment within the GAA BEN provides a compelling example of how private game reserves can drive socio-economic transformation through wildlife-based tourism. Consisting of eight private reserves, Indalo supports an average of 181 jobs per reserve,

with 85% of employees serving as primary breadwinners—each supporting an estimated 5.5 dependents. This means nearly 1,000 people per reserve benefit directly from employment, alongside additional support in the form of housing, food, and transport. Indalo’s member reserves also fund community upliftment initiatives, including early childhood education, youth development, and women’s empowerment, often through dedicated foundations. With an average of 65,710 visitors annually—83% of whom are international—each reserve generates approximately R65.7 million in gross income, stimulating local economies through procurement, infrastructure, and service demand. Despite challenges such as staffing shortages and limited public access due to the high-end ecotourism model, Indalo exemplifies how conservation-led tourism can foster inclusive economic growth, skills development, and environmental stewardship within a biodiversity economy framework.

Source: Howarth (2023)

3.2.2. PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The success of GAA BEN relies on a robust partnership approach that aligns various stakeholders with a shared vision of economic and environmental sustainability. To ensure alignment and effective implementation, key partnerships in the GAA BEN are focused on key thematic areas to enable stakeholders to drive sustainable economic development, conservation efforts, and community benefits. The node focuses on six key sectors: Wildlife Economy, Eco-Tourism, Compatible Agriculture, Restoration, Bioprospecting, and Marine Economy. These sectors are designed to align biodiversity conservation with economic opportunities, ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth in the region.



Wildlife Economy Expanding wildlife-based enterprises, including game ranching, ecotourism, and sustainable hunting, to generate economic benefits while conserving biodiversity.

Eco-Tourism Enhancing tourism offerings through conservation-based experiences, cultural heritage, and nature-based attractions to create employment and stimulate local economies.

Compatible Agriculture Promoting agricultural practices that align with biodiversity conservation, such as agroecology and sustainable rangeland management, to ensure sustainability.

Restoration Undertaking ecosystem restoration projects that address ecological degradation, improve land productivity, enhance climate resilience, and create green job opportunities.

Bioprospecting Exploring the potential of indigenous plants and biological resources for pharmaceuticals, and natural products, ensuring benefit-sharing with local communities.

Marine Economy Leveraging the coastal and marine resources of the region for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and blue economy initiatives.

The GAA BEN can potentially benefit from key international collaborations and global biodiversity economy networks. Partnerships with international organisations, conservation agencies, and funding bodies support sustainable finance mechanisms, ecosystem-based adaptation strategies, ecotourism development, and wildlife conservation. Special emphasis is placed on aligning GAA BEN with global frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Key departments involved include the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the Department of Tourism, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). These institutions provide policy guidance, regulatory frameworks, and funding mechanisms that enable the

effective implementation of biodiversity economy initiatives. Interdepartmental coordination is essential to ensure that conservation objectives align with socio-economic development goals.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial authorities play a critical role in facilitating the implementation of the GAA BEN by aligning it with regional development strategies. The Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT) is a key driver in promoting biodiversity-based economic opportunities, ecotourism, and conservation-compatible enterprise development. Other relevant provincial bodies include the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), and the Department of Health, which supports initiatives linked to community well-being and nature-based livelihoods.

DISTRICT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

At the district and municipal level, governance structures are instrumental in ensuring the integration of biodiversity economy priorities within local development planning. The Amathole and Sarah Baartman District Municipalities, along with their respective Local Municipalities, are key stakeholders in land-use planning, natural resource management, and economic development. The implementation of the GAA BEN framework is supported through municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), ensuring that conservation-driven economic activities benefit local communities.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES, CPAs, AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

Traditional leadership structures and local community organisations are central to the sustainability and long-term success of the GAA BEN. Traditional Authorities play a crucial role in land governance, cultural heritage conservation, and community-driven tourism initiatives. Community Property Associations (CPAs) and landholding trusts represent communities with tenure rights over key conservation areas, ensuring that biodiversity economy activities generate inclusive benefits. Additionally, various community-based organisations, such as cooperatives, eco-tourism associations, and youth conservation groups, contribute to skills development, enterprise creation, and heritage tourism. Platforms for structured engagement, including People and Parks forums, ensure that local voices shape decision-making processes.

The Table below categorises stakeholders into relevant clusters, to highlight their roles and contributions:

KEY SECTORS				KEY INSTITUTIONS & INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES	LAND: DECISION-MAKERS & RIGHT HOLDERS
ZONE 1: TOURISM/RECREATION/WILDLIFE	ZONE 2: AGRI-ECOLOGICAL	ZONE 3: MARINE	ZONE 4: URBAN		
1: ADDO CLUSTER	<p>Ecotourism Development: Development of SMMEs providing services like hospitality, outdoor adventure, and cultural heritage tours.</p> <p>Projects: Wildlife management, and ecotourism services.</p> <p>Opportunity: Restoration economy through sustainable tourism and conservation.</p>	Citrus		<p>Key partners: SANParks, DFFE, ECPTA, universities, WESSA, Addo Elephant National Park management; Witrivier CPA, Community: Enon Barsheaba.</p> <p>Stakeholders: Longhill, Addo wildlife, Sable rich group, Bloukrans on R75, COLCRA, cheetah farm rehabilitation.</p> <p>Champion: Sarah Baartman and Ndlambe Municipalities.</p>	Witrivier CPA, SANParks, Nyathi, Strathomers.
2: WOODY CAPE CLUSTER	Livestock farming, crop farming and grazing	<p>Projects: Anglers (Fishing rights allocation)</p> <p>Opportunities: Sustainable fishing practices.</p>		<p>Key partners: DRDLR, DWS, ECPTA, SANParks, DFFE, DEDEAT, Chris Hani District Municipality,</p> <p>Communities: Glennis Moyle, Kruisfontein, Longvale, Hopefield</p> <p>Champion: Chris Hani District Municipality</p>	Ilifaletu Cooperative; Indyebo Trust. Fishing Cooperatives
3: INDALO CLUSTER	<p>Ecotourism, Crafts, and Game Management: Establishment of cultural tourism experiences alongside game management (eco-tours).</p> <p>Projects: Existing tour operators offer nature hikes and walks.</p>	<p>Projects: Pineapple farming, poultry farming,</p> <p>Opportunities: Expansion of farm-based processing facilities (meat processing, vegetable processing), value-added enterprises (e.g., native bamboo cultivation), mixed wildlife livestock, and tannery.</p>		<p>Communities: Alicedale, Salem, Seven Fountains.</p> <p>Hunting Reserves: Barlings (Warrick Barhardt), Valkrans (Barry Burchell), and game breeding programs.</p> <p>Champion: Indalo P.E., Makana Local Municipality.</p>	Yandella community, Bathurst community, Matjiesfontein, Mhala TA, conservancies.

	KEY SECTORS				KEY INSTITUTIONS & INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES	LAND: DECISION-MAKERS & RIGHT HOLDERS
	ZONE 1: TOURISM/RECREATION/WILDLIFE	ZONE 2: AGRI-ECOLOGICAL	ZONE 3: MARINE	ZONE 4: URBAN		
4: GREAT FISH CLUSTER	<p>Ecotourism and Bioprospecting: Development of tourism alongside bioprospecting (Aloe production, Beekeeping, and wildlife conservation).</p> <p>Opportunities: Integrating cultural heritage tourism with natural resource management (e.g., Aloe production at Tyefu, beekeeping).</p>	<p>Agriculture: Livestock poultry farming, mixed livestock wildlife.</p>		Fishing	<p>Community: Brakfontein (Likhayaletu)</p> <p>Key Institutions: SANParks, DFFE, DEDEAT, Private game reserves.</p> <p>Champion: Ngqushwa Municipality</p>	Mhala Traditional Authority
5: FRONTIER CLUSTER	<p>Adventure Tourism and Cultural Tourism: Focus on hiking trails, game drives, cultural tourism experiences.</p> <p>Opportunities: Development of wildlife viewing areas, ecotourism lodges, hiking trails, and abattoir facilities.</p>	<p>Agriculture: Small-scale bioprospecting, agri-forestry, and livestock farming.</p>			<p>Key Institutions: DRDLR, DWS, ECPTA, SANParks, DFFE, DEDEAT.</p> <p>Champion: Lowerbrink (Maqoma) community.</p>	Lowerbrink (Maqoma)
6: AMATHOLE CLUSTER	<p>Wildlife Management and Game Ranching</p>	<p>Agriculture and Poultry Farming: Focus on the agricultural sector, with a particular emphasis on macadamia, citrus, livestock, and poultry farming.</p> <p>Opportunities: Expansion of local food production and value-added enterprises, such as poultry processing.</p>			<p>Key Institutions: DRDLR, ECPTA, SANParks, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.</p> <p>Champion: Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality</p>	Sompondo community, Khaya Lethu

		KEY SECTORS				KEY INSTITUTIONS & INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES	LAND: DECISION-MAKERS & RIGHT HOLDERS
		ZONE 1: TOURISM/RECREATION/WILDLIFE	ZONE 2: AGRI-ECOLOGICAL	ZONE 3: MARINE	ZONE 4: URBAN		
7: STUTTERHEIM CLUSTER	<p>Wildlife Management and Game Ranching: Development of sustainable game ranching practices, including trophy hunting, alongside tourism-based wildlife experiences.</p>	<p>Agri-forestry: Integration of forestry practices with inclusive conservation.</p>				<p>Key Institutions: SA Fine Tuned, Captone, Indwe Game Farm, Amathole Forestry Company.</p> <p>Communities: Amahlathi/Amazizi Traditional Authority, local landowners.</p> <p>Champion: Amathole District Municipality</p>	Amahlathi/Amazizi TA
8: SUNSHINE COAST CLUSTER	<p>Tourism and Game-Based Experiences: Focus on providing accommodations, eateries, cultural activities, and game-based experiences (e.g., freshwater fishing, hiking trails).</p>	<p>Agriculture: Crop and livestock farming.</p>	Fishing activities by local businesses and communities	Alexandria		<p>Key Institutions: SANParks, ECPTA, DRDLR, DWS, ECPTA, SANParks, DFFE, DEDEAT, Kariega Foundation.</p> <p>Champion: Ngqushwa Local Municipality</p>	Ngxakoshe community, fishing cooperatives.

3.3. BENEFICIATION MODEL FOR THE BEN

The diagram below provides a summary of the beneficiation model for GAA BEN.

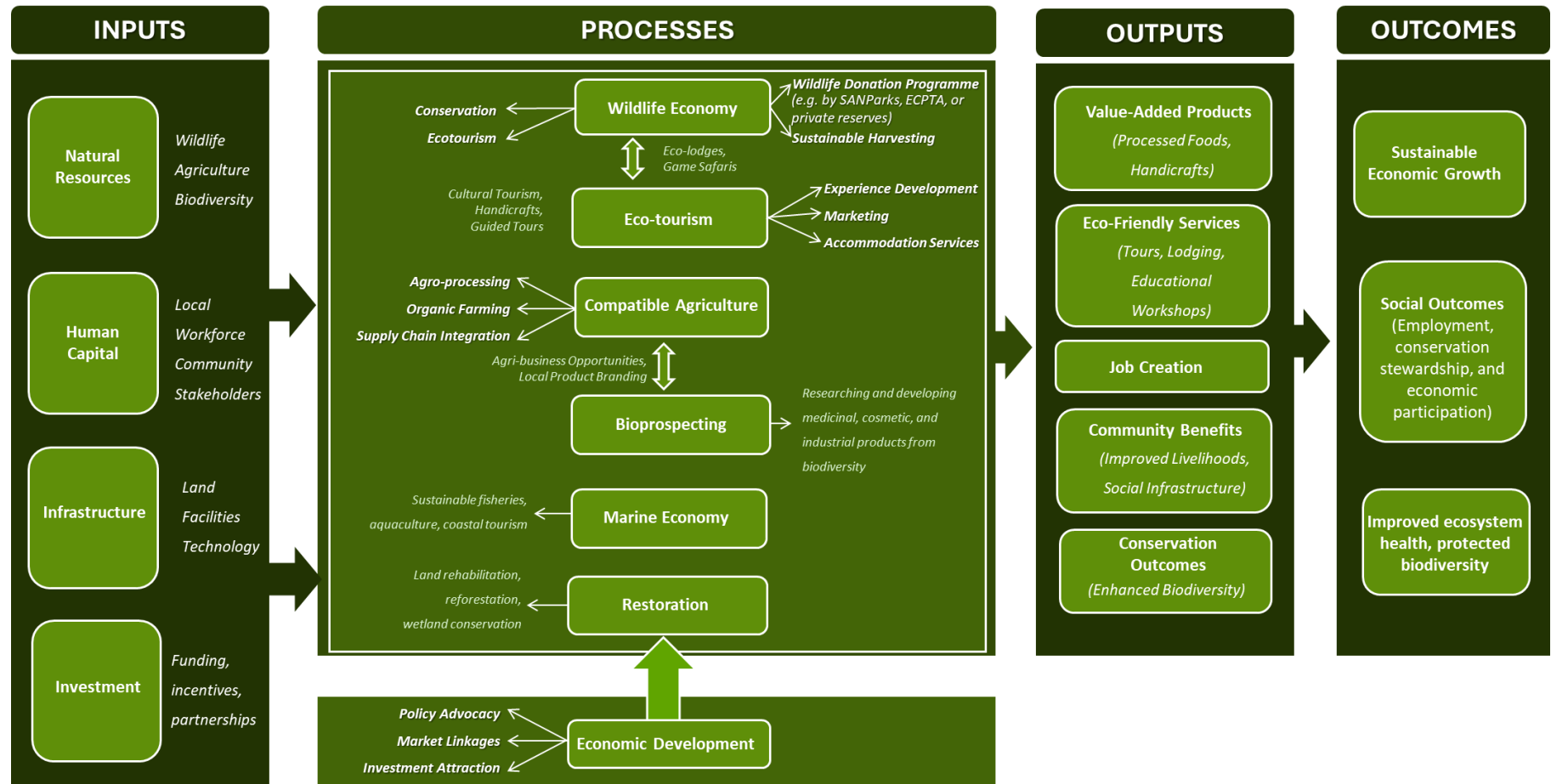


Figure 15: GAA BEN Beneficiation Model

The beneficiation model for the GAA BEN is designed to drive sustainable economic growth by leveraging the node's natural resources, such as its wildlife, agricultural potential, and tourism assets. This model integrates the wildlife, agriculture, and tourism sectors to encourage their contributions towards achieving a cohesive and resilient biodiversity economy. The model seeks to transform raw materials from these sectors into value-added products and services, as a means to promote job creation, local entrepreneurship, and regional prosperity. Ultimately, the goal is to create both short-term economic benefits for all stakeholders (including the local communities) and long-term sustainable development.

3.3.1. INPUTS

The model inputs, as presented in this section, provide the foundational resources and conditions upon which all processes and outcomes depend. These inputs ensure that the GAA BEN's potential is harnessed effectively and sustainably, guiding the implementation of the master plan.

3.3.1.1. NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife resources as catalysts for ecotourism and conservation

The GAA BEN is home to iconic wildlife, including the Big Five, alongside a rich diversity of game species, which firmly establishes the node as a premier ecotourism destination. This biodiversity provides a competitive edge in the tourism market, laying the groundwork for the development of targeted ventures such as guided safaris, wildlife photography expeditions, and conservation-focused tourism. These initiatives can generate substantial economic activity, creating jobs, attracting local and international investment, thereby supporting sustainable livelihoods for surrounding communities.

Beyond ecotourism, the wildlife economy offers diverse opportunities for sustainable utilisation that extend well beyond traditional tourism. Initiatives such as hunting, game meat production, live wildlife sales, and extensive wildlife ranching represent avenues to maximise the economic value of the node's natural assets. Sustainable models within the wildlife economy are most effective when diversified, leveraging multiple income streams to enhance resilience and adaptability. For example, properties adjacent to protected areas and within strategic corridors offer prime opportunities for wildlife ranching ventures, while existing ranches in the landscape present potential for scaling up through value-added activities.

Wildlife ranching presents another viable economic strategy, combining responsible wildlife management with commercial benefits. It must be noted that in many instances wildlife ranching is compatible with other forms of land use, particularly livestock-based production, providing opportunities to diversify income streams. The GAA BEN aims to invest in infrastructure and training programmes to support and promote responsible wildlife ranching practices. This commitment will not only boost the economic returns from wildlife resources but also reinforce the region's conservation goals, creating a balanced and sustainable model.

Agricultural potential and food security

The GAA BEN is rich in agricultural potential, supported by expansive arable land, dependable water resources, and a favourable mix of wildlife, livestock, and human settlements that contribute to the landscape's unique character. These elements provide a solid foundation for diverse agricultural activities that can be tailored to the node's strengths. To harness this potential effectively, a strategic approach incorporating key sustainable practices is essential:

- **Sustainable rangeland management** is a cornerstone of the GAA BEN's agricultural strategy. Mixed livestock systems, including cattle, sheep, and goats, offer an opportunity to optimise grazing patterns and ensure balanced utilisation of rangelands. This approach not only supports livestock productivity but also promotes soil health and biodiversity. Initiatives such as "Herding for Health" programmes link sustainable grazing practices to carbon markets, providing dual benefits of climate mitigation and economic empowerment for local herders.
- **Rotational grazing systems** and other regenerative agriculture techniques will further enhance livestock farming while protecting the land from overuse and degradation. These practices align with the ecological balance required in a landscape where wildlife and livestock coexist, enabling farmers to sustain productivity without compromising biodiversity.
- **Crop cultivation** also stands to benefit from the region's fertile soils and favourable climatic conditions. Precision farming techniques, such as drip irrigation and soil nutrient mapping, can optimise crop yields and reduce the environmental footprint of farming. Expanding the adoption of these technologies will improve efficiency, lower input costs, and contribute to food security.
- **Aquaculture** also presents an untapped opportunity to diversify agricultural outputs in GAA BEN. There lies an opportunity of existing aquaculture operations to be boosted and another

opportunity to establish new ones. This can provide an economic and nutritional benefits, offering a sustainable source of income for local communities while enhancing the region's food supply.

To fully realise the potential of agricultural productivity in the GAA BEN, investing in agro-processing facilities will be essential. These facilities will add value to raw agricultural products, transforming them into higher-value goods that can meet local, regional, and international market demands. Thus, the node can reduce its reliance on raw exports and strengthen its local economy by developing value chains for processed goods, such as dairy products, preserved fruits, or packaged meats. This shift to value-added production will also create new employment opportunities in processing, packaging, and distribution, further supporting economic growth.

Biodiversity as a core asset

The biodiversity of GAA BEN is not only a critical ecological resource but also a powerful economic asset that can drive growth in various sectors, particularly eco-tourism. The region is home to a range of unique ecosystems that include rare and endemic species, making it an ideal destination for nature-based activities. These ecosystems offer rich opportunities for eco-tourism experiences, such as birdwatching, hiking, and botanical excursions, all of which can be packaged into attractive tourism offerings. The integration of these experiences into GAA BEN's tourism strategy will enable the node to attract visitors, thereby creating demand for services such as local guides, accommodation providers, and transport operators. This, in turn, will stimulate local economies and provide employment opportunities for community members.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of these biodiversity-driven opportunities, it is crucial to implement practical conservation measures. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the establishment of more community-driven conservancies. These conservancies empower local communities to take an active role in preserving the region's natural resources while directly benefiting from eco-tourism revenues. Further, engaging local stakeholders in biodiversity monitoring programmes ensures that conservation efforts are aligned with the needs and interests of the people who rely on the land for their livelihoods.

Collaboration with research institutions (i.e. universities) will also be vital in maintaining the delicate balance between biodiversity conservation and economic utilisation. These partnerships will provide the technical expertise required to monitor biodiversity health, assess the impact of tourism, guide sustainable land use practices, and support marine and coastal conservation efforts.

3.3.1.2. HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital is at the heart of the GAA BEN's development strategy, serving as both a driver and beneficiary of its economic potential. The communities within the node bring invaluable skills, knowledge, and cultural heritage, which are key resources for shaping sustainable development. Realising this potential, however, requires deliberate investments in education, training, and inclusive participation to ensure that all residents are empowered to contribute meaningfully to the region's growth.

To achieve its greatest economic potential, the development of the GAA BEN requires a diverse workforce that encompasses individuals to be engaged in agricultural, eco-tourism, and conservation-related activities. Currently, 34.7% of the population faces barriers to employment due to limited access to formal education and skills training. Addressing these challenges is essential in creating a skilled labour pool that can meet the demands of expanding industries. Investments in capacity-building initiatives, such as vocational training in sustainable agriculture, ecotourism services, and wildlife management, will enable local residents to access higher-value employment opportunities. Tailored training programmes, designed in collaboration with industry stakeholders, can ensure that skills development aligns with the specific needs of emerging projects within the node.

Further to formal skills training, the cultural knowledge and traditions of local communities offer unique opportunities for economic integration. For example, indigenous knowledge of the land, wildlife, and ecosystems can be incorporated into conservation and eco-tourism initiatives, creating authentic experiences for visitors while promoting cultural preservation. Similarly, traditional agricultural practices that align with sustainable methods can enhance productivity while minimising environmental impact. Leveraging this cultural capital requires a participatory approach, ensuring that local voices are central to decision-making processes and that community members feel a sense of ownership over development initiatives.

3.3.1.3. INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure serves as the cornerstone of development within the GAA BEN, as it offers the foundational support needed to unlock the node's economic potential. A well-planned and sustainable infrastructure network is essential to boost the key sectors of agriculture, ecotourism, and conservation, while also improving the quality of life for local communities. Although the node currently faces infrastructural

challenges, these can be addressed through targeted investments and strategic planning, transforming obstacles into opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth.

The node boasts a variety of ongoing and planned initiatives that highlight the potential of strategic infrastructure investments. In the tourism sector, eco-friendly lodges and visitor accommodations such as the Lendlovu Lodge and the lodge at Likhukho CPA (Mthonsi) are examples of infrastructure projects aimed at attracting both domestic and international visitors. Similarly, the Umtiza Nature Reserve, which extends from Alexandria to Buffalo City, holds untapped potential for cultural tourism. Its Frontier War Site and Woody Cave can form the basis for rich, historically informed tourism experiences. These assets, combined with sustainable infrastructure such as tented camps and chalets like those planned at Brakfontein Nature Reserve, can significantly enhance the node's tourism value proposition.

Agricultural infrastructure also holds transformative potential within the GAA BEN. Existing efforts to support emerging farmers, such as those in Woodlands near King William's Town, highlight the need for technical assistance and targeted investments in processing facilities, cold storage units, and distribution centres. These facilities will enhance agricultural value chains, ensuring that farmers can access broader markets while adding value to their products. Additionally, the Amathole Forestry Company and the Amahlathi/Amazizi TA are leveraging their vast forestry lands to create job opportunities and facilitate farming activities, with 25 000 hectares earmarked for agricultural development.

GAA BEN's wildlife economy is similarly supported by infrastructural projects aimed at enhancing conservation and sustainable utilisation. Capstone, with its 1 590 hectares of wildlife-rich land, demonstrates the value of investments in lodges and trophy hunting facilities, while Brakfontein Nature Reserve's planned tree chalets and abattoir exemplify how diversified infrastructure can drive economic growth. SA Fine Tuned, a privately owned venture, epitomises the potential of strategic partnerships. With R20 million in EPIP funding and commitments from SANParks and ECPTA for game donations, this initiative aims to establish a 20 000-hectare conservancy, featuring a game meat abattoir, tented camps, and a lodge.

Technology also presents a transformative opportunity for enhancing infrastructure in GAA BEN. The integration of smart technologies can optimise resource management, improve connectivity, and streamline operations across sectors. For instance, precision farming technologies can be employed in agricultural projects to increase productivity while minimising environmental impacts. Digital platforms can facilitate marketing and distribution for agro-products and wildlife-related ventures, opening access

to broader markets. Further, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map and monitor biodiversity and wildlife corridors can aid in strategic planning and conservation efforts.

In essence, GAA BEN can develop an integrated infrastructure network that supports its broader economic goals. This infrastructure will not only enhance the region's competitiveness in agriculture, ecotourism, and conservation but also lay the groundwork for long-term, sustainable development.

3.3.2. PROCESSES

The processes in the GAA BEN beneficiation model detail the activities that transform inputs into tangible outputs. Each sub-sector's processes are tailored to maximise value creation while contributing to sustainability and community engagement.

3.3.2.1. WILDLIFE SECTOR

The wildlife sector leverages the node's rich biodiversity to drive conservation and sustainable economic activity. Processes in this sector are summarised below:

Table 8: Wildlife sector

Processes	Description	Role players
Conservation efforts	Conservation efforts will focus on GAA BEN's Addo Elephant National Park, along with other protected areas and private game farms, with a special emphasis on maintaining wildlife populations and biodiversity corridors connecting habitats. The development of premium ecotourism experiences, such as integrated safari packages that combine game viewing with guided nature walks, will help diversify the tourism offerings. Sustainable harvesting will include carefully regulated hunting packages that attract high-value clientele while supporting ecological sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANParks • ECPTA • Private protected area owners • Conservation NGOs • Local communities • Conservancies
Ecotourism development	Wildlife is a cornerstone of tourism in the node, attracting visitors for safaris, game drives, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities

Processes	Description	Role players
	photographic tours. Developments such as Lendlovu Lodge and the lodge at the Lukhukho CPA (Mthonsi), along with guided safari experiences, create high-value, low-impact tourism opportunities. These initiatives promote responsible tourism practices while ensuring financial returns for the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector investors • SANParks • ECPTA • Hospitality businesses
Sustainable harvesting	Sustainable wildlife utilisation, such as controlled hunting, wildlife product sales, and conservation fees, can provide revenue streams. Such activities must be carefully regulated to ensure they do not compromise biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANParks • ECPTA • Private game farms • Farming businesses • Local entrepreneurs • Abattoirs, tanneries, butcheries, veterinary services
Wildlife ranching	Wildlife ranching initiatives are key to increasing populations of target species for conservation and sustainable use. These efforts focus on species of high ecological and economic importance, such as blesbok, hartebeest, and buffalo. Partnerships with key stakeholders could facilitate game donations and technical support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private protected area owners • ECPTA • SANParks • Wildlife NGOs • Conservancies • WRSA • Private ranchers
Community-based conservation	Engaging local communities as custodians of wildlife through employment opportunities, training programmes, and profit-sharing models is central to the success of the wildlife sector. These initiatives build community buy-in and enhance their role in conservation and sustainable wildlife management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities • Conservation NGOs • Government agencies • Private sector

Processes	Description	Role players
Value chain development	Developing upstream and downstream opportunities within the wildlife economy, such as processing game meat, producing leather goods, and exporting wildlife products, enhances the sector's economic sustainability. Investment in infrastructure like abattoirs and tanneries, combined with market linkages, is critical for value chain expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local entrepreneurs Private investors Government agencies Development partners

3.3.2.2. AGRICULTURE SECTOR

The agriculture sector in GAA BEN aims to promote sustainable farming practices, improve food security, and create economic opportunities.

Table 9: Agriculture sector

Processes	Description	Role players
Sustainable rangeland management	Adoption of practices like rotational grazing, controlled stocking densities, and reseeded to maintain land productivity and ecosystem health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging farmers Agricultural NGOs Government agencies Conservancies Wildlife ranchers Farmers associations
Crop cultivation and diversification	Supporting farmers to grow a range of high-value crops suited to local climatic conditions, including indigenous plants, to enhance resilience to climate variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local farmers Research institutions Agribusinesses
Agro-processing development	Establishment of agro-processing facilities for value addition, such as milling, canning, and packaging, to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-processors Private investors

Processes	Description	Role players
	increase marketability and shelf life of agricultural products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development agencies
Technical training and capacity building	Equipping farmers, especially emerging and small-scale farmers, with skills in modern agricultural techniques, pest management, and water conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural colleges • Extension officers • NGOs
Market linkages and cooperatives	Facilitating the formation of cooperatives to improve farmers' access to markets, bulk purchasing, and collaborative farming ventures for greater economies of scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives • Farmer associations • Private sector buyers

3.3.2.3. TOURISM SECTOR

Tourism in GAA BEN focuses on leveraging natural and cultural assets to create high-value, sustainable experiences for visitors.

Table 10: Tourism sector

Processes	Description	Role players
Cultural tourism development	Developing tourism experiences that highlight GAA BEN's rich history, such as the Frontier War sites, Woody Cave, and the Amahlathi Forest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage NGOs • Local communities • Tour operators
Accommodation and hospitality	Establishing eco-friendly lodges, tented camps, and guesthouses, including those at Lendlovu Lodge and Lukhukho CPA, to cater to a variety of tourist preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANParks • ECPTA • Private sector • Local businesses • Local communities

Processes	Description	Role players
Guided tours and experiences	Promoting guided nature walks, safaris, and community-led tours to showcase the region's biodiversity and cultural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANParks • ECPTA • Tour operators • Community guides • Private tourism operators
Adventure and eco-tourism	Expanding adventure offerings, such as hiking, mountain biking, and birding trails, to attract a diverse range of tourists interested in outdoor recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure tourism companies • NGOs
Marketing and branding	Developing a strong brand identity for GAA BEN that highlights its unique offerings in wildlife, culture, and adventure tourism to attract both local and international markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANParks • ECPTA • Private sector • Marketing firms • Municipalities • Tourism associations

3.3.2.4. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Technology and innovation are cross-cutting enablers that enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and scalability of processes across sectors.

Table 11: Technology and innovation

Processes	Description	Role players
Digital infrastructure	Developing reliable broadband and mobile connectivity to support smart farming, digital tourism platforms, and e-commerce for wildlife and agricultural products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT companies • NGOs

Processes	Description	Role players
Smart farming solutions	Introducing precision agriculture tools, such as drones, and remote sensing, to optimise land use, crop yields, and livestock management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritech companies • Agriculture agencies • NGOs • Research bodies
E-commerce platforms	Creating online marketplaces for local products, such as organic produce, game meat, and artisanal crafts, to reach broader consumer bases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs • IT developers • Buyers (e.g. private reserve collectives) • Local communities

3.3.3. OUTPUTS

The outputs of the GAA BEN reflect the tangible, measurable results of implementing the master plan, emphasising the node's integrated approach to achieving sustainable development. These outputs span economic, social, and environmental dimensions, demonstrating the multifaceted benefits of the initiative and its contribution to regional transformation.

3.3.3.1. ECONOMIC OUTPUTS

This master plan prioritises stimulating diversified income streams by developing key sectors such as ecotourism, agriculture, and the wildlife economy. This will result in the establishment of operational ecotourism facilities, including lodges, campsites, and visitor centres, catering to both local and international tourists. Agro-processing facilities will further enable farmers to transition from primary production to creating value-added products for domestic and export markets. These economic activities will generate significant employment opportunities across various skill levels, ranging from guides and hospitality workers to agricultural labourers and conservation professionals.

The tourism sector, in particular, will see an increase in visitor numbers, extended stays, and greater tourist spending. Initiatives such as curated tourism packages, enhanced infrastructure, and targeted marketing campaigns will drive these outcomes. The wildlife economy will yield outputs such as the establishment of new protected areas, community-driven conservancies, and diversified value chains,

including game meat processing, leather tanning, and ecotourism services. The integration of properties such as Capstone and SA Fine Tuned into the landscape will catalyse these outputs, showcasing successful examples of conservation-linked economic models.

3.3.3.2. SOCIAL OUTPUTS

Improving the quality of life for local communities is a core focus of the GAA BEN. Outputs in this dimension include increased access to education and training programmes that equip residents with skills to participate in the evolving economy.

Capacity-building initiatives will empower communities through inclusive governance structures and cooperative models. The establishment of community-driven conservancies and cooperatives will ensure that residents have a direct stake in the node's economic activities, promoting ownership and shared responsibility. These outputs will address inequality and promote gender equity by creating opportunities for women and marginalised groups to participate meaningfully in economic activities.

3.3.3.3. ENVIRONMENTAL OUTPUTS

The environmental outputs of the GAA BEN will focus on conservation and sustainable resource management. Key outputs will include the expansion of protected areas, biodiversity corridors, and ecological restoration projects that enhance ecosystem resilience. These efforts will lead to measurable improvements in ecological integrity and resilience, protection of threatened habitat types, protection of threatened and endemic species, increased populations of key wildlife species, enhanced water quality, and greater carbon sequestration. The reintroduction of threatened species and the integration of sustainable land use practices will further solidify the region's environmental contributions.

The establishment of wildlife-based conservancies and partnerships, such as those with SANParks and ECPTA, will boost conservation efforts. Projects like the planned conservancy at SA Fine Tuned and the tree chalets at Brakfontein Nature Reserve exemplify how conservation outputs align with economic goals, promoting a balance between development and environmental stewardship.

3.3.3.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OUTPUTS

To ensure accountability and adaptability, the GAA BEN will develop robust data and reporting systems to track progress and refine implementation strategies. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will measure employment rates, tourist arrivals, agricultural outputs, and biodiversity metrics. Continuous monitoring

and evaluation will provide actionable insights, enabling responsive decision-making and ensuring that the node remains dynamic and aligned with its overarching goals.

3.3.4. OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the GAA BEN reflect the long-term, transformative impacts of the master plan, which extend beyond immediate outputs to achieve sustainable development, resilience, and inclusivity across the region. These outcomes span economic, social, and environmental dimensions, demonstrating the broader significance of the initiative.

3.3.4.1. ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

The successful implementation of the GAA BEN will result in a thriving, diversified regional economy. Local businesses will flourish, with increased market access for value-added agricultural products, game meat, and ecotourism services. The region will attract substantial domestic and international investment, further enhancing its economic resilience.

Job creation will be a foundation outcome, with sustainable employment opportunities generated across multiple sectors. The development of key infrastructure will ensure long-term economic stability and community empowerment. Additionally, the node's positioning as a biodiversity economy hub will enhance its reputation as a leader in sustainable development, boosting competitiveness and economic visibility.

3.3.4.2. SOCIAL OUTCOMES

The GAA BEN will significantly improve the quality of life for local communities, creating inclusive and equitable development opportunities. Education and skills training will empower residents, enabling them to access higher-quality jobs and participate actively in the region's evolving economy.

Empowered communities will be a key outcome, with inclusive governance structures and participatory decision-making processes ensuring that local stakeholders have a direct voice in the region's development. Gender equity and opportunities for marginalised groups will be central, breaking down traditional barriers and enabling meaningful contributions from all members of society.

3.3.4.3. ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The GAA BEN will serve as a model for balancing economic development with environmental stewardship. Outcomes will include the restoration and preservation of ecosystems, as well as the creation of interconnected biodiversity corridors that enhance habitat connectivity. The node's natural capital will be safeguarded through sustainable resource management practices, ensuring that future generations benefit from the ecosystem services provided by healthy landscapes.


Measurable environmental outcomes will include enhanced protection of threatened vegetation types and species, increased populations of key wildlife species, improved water quality, and reduced carbon emissions due to reforestation and conservation initiatives. The integration of wildlife-based land uses as a central economic driver will highlight the viability of conservation-linked development, inspiring similar initiatives across the country.

3.3.4.4. HOLISTIC AND SYSTEMIC OUTCOMES

At a broader level, the GAA BEN will act as a catalyst for systemic change in the region. Its success will demonstrate the potential of biodiversity economy nodes and mega living landscapes to drive sustainable development, influencing policy at national and provincial levels. The initiative will strengthen institutional capacities and collaboration between government, private sector actors, and local communities.

Furthermore, the outcomes will align with global sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to poverty alleviation, environmental conservation, and inclusive economic growth.

In conclusion, the outcomes of the GAA BEN will create a legacy of sustainable development, resilience, and inclusivity, transforming the region into a thriving, vibrant, and equitable landscape that balances economic prosperity with environmental stewardship.

A photograph of a herd of elephants in a savanna landscape. The elephants are standing in a line, facing towards the right. The background shows green trees and a grassy field. The foreground is a dry, sandy area with some small plants. On the left side of the image, there is a decorative border with a red and yellow pattern at the top and a green and yellow pattern at the bottom. A semi-transparent dark blue rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "SECTION 4: HOW?".

SECTION 4: HOW?

4.1. BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY SECTORS

In establishing and developing the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node there will be a focus on specific sectors, especially those linked to the wildlife economy, tourism development and other broader components of the biodiversity and marine economy but also linked to complementary and compatible land use activities such as ecological restoration and sustainable rangeland management. These sectors and the land uses associated with them form the basis for the development of the biodiversity economy node, the establishment of new and emerging businesses, job creation and the improvement of rural livelihoods within the region.

4.1.1. WILDLIFE ECONOMY

The wildlife economy encompasses several activities associated with the utilisation of wildlife and wildlife products, including:

- Wildlife-based non-consumptive and consumptive tourism including commercial hunting.
- The breeding and live sale of wildlife.
- The development of wildlife product value chains utilising game meat and secondary products such as skins and horns.

It must be noted that during the Sustainable Wildlife Economies Project (SWEP) conducted by SANBI, of the wildlife ranching ventures surveyed in the Eastern Cape, many of which are within the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node, over half consisted of mixed wildlife/livestock ventures, which suggests that there is potential to further grow the wildlife economy in ways that are compatible with conventional livestock agriculture.

The development of new sources of income through wildlife product value chains provides the opportunity for meaningful economic benefits to be realised in the wildlife economy. The national game meat strategy for South Africa (Government Gazette, 18 July 2022) stated that for growth and transformation to take place in the game meat industry, a clear strategy is needed to overcome current and future challenges as well as to achieve goals towards expanding the game meat footprint.

One of the goals stated in the Game Meat Strategy is to increase the number of thriving previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs), women and youth ranchers and other game meat value chain actors

from the current <4% to >25% by 2030. It has a deep history in South Africa that is linked to colonial power, apartheid, and land ownership with only about 4% of all value chain actors being PDIs.

Transformation revolves around the need to generate new value, to unlock new opportunities, to drive new growth and to deliver new efficiencies to create a wildlife economy where everyone can improve their skills, knowledge, and education. In aligning with the vision for the game meat industry for South Africa; “a formalised, thriving and transformed game meat industry that contributes to food security and sustainable socio-economic growth”, an opportunity presents itself for the development of a more inclusive (race and gender) game meat value chain. With attention and efforts placed on skills development, awareness, and knowledge through the entire value chain, from best practice during harvesting, to meat inspection, to consumer awareness, marketing and sales efforts and culinary skills, the impact on the production and consumption of game meat in South Africa can be improved and another goal towards enabling growth in the industry can be achieved: “to grow job opportunities in the game meat sector by 10% per annum”.

4.1.2. ECO-TOURISM

A successful ecotourism strategy for GAA BEN requires a structured approach that integrates sustainable tourism principles, community engagement, integrating cultural heritage values, environmental conservation, and economic viability. The implementation framework will focus on infrastructure development, responsible visitor management, community participation, and conservation efforts, ensuring long-term benefits for both the environment and local stakeholders.

4.1.2.1. TOURISM IN THE GREATER ADDO-AMATHOLE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY NODE

Tourism in the Addo to Amathole region offers a unique blend of natural beauty, wildlife, and rich cultural heritage. Visitors can explore the renowned Addo Elephant National Park, home to the Big Five, and venture into the scenic Amathole Mountains, ideal for hiking and eco-tourism. The region is also steeped in Xhosa cultural traditions and historic sites linked to the Frontier Wars and South Africa’s liberation struggle. Cultural villages, museums, and heritage trails provide immersive experiences, making the region a compelling destination for both local and international tourists seeking nature, history, and culture.

1. Tourism Routes

The GAA BEN should focus on building initiatives along specific and established tourism routes that highlight its diverse offerings—from wildlife and nature to cultural heritage and historical landmarks. These routes connect key destinations, providing a rich and varied travel experience (see Map 18).

1. The Sunshine Coast Tourism Route, often referred to simply as the Sunshine Route, is a scenic and culturally rich travel corridor along the Eastern Cape’s coastline, stretching from Addo in the west to areas near Keiskammahoek and Amathole in the east. It is part of the broader Addo to Amathole tourism region and offers a mix of coastal beauty, heritage attractions, and rural experiences.
2. Frontier War Heritage Route – this tourism route follows the key sites of the Frontier Wars (1779 – 1879), and includes Grahamstown (Makhanda), Fort Beaufort, King William’s Town, and Alice. The route features museums, mission stations (like Lovedale), battlefields, forts, and graves of historical figures such as Chief Maqoma and Makana, offering insights into Xhosa resistance and early colonial conflict.
3. Amathole Mountain Route - a scenic route through the Amathole Mountains, rich in biodiversity, hiking trails, and waterfalls, and includes Hogsback, a mystical village popular for its forests, art, and spirituality. It is ideal for eco-tourism, birdwatching, and mountain retreats and connects to traditional Xhosa villages where cultural experiences are offered.

4.1.2.2. CULTURAL HERITAGE LINKAGES IN THE GREATER ADDO-AMATHOLE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY NODE

The Addo to Amathole region holds immense cultural heritage significance, rooted in its diverse history, rich indigenous traditions, and the legacies of conflict, resistance, and cultural resilience. Spanning from the Addo Elephant National Park in the south to the Amathole Mountains in the north, this region is a cultural corridor that connects significant historical sites, sacred landscapes, and living communities.

Regions cultural heritage values -

- i) Cradle of Xhosa Culture and Identity - The region is central to the history and identity of the Xhosa people, one of South Africa's major ethnic groups.
- ii) Site of Colonial Encounter and Resistance - The Addo to Amathole region was a frontline of the Frontier Wars, where Xhosa warriors resisted Dutch and British colonial expansion. The Frontier Wars also known as the Xhosa Wars or Cape Frontier Wars, were a series of nine conflicts that took place between 1779 and 1879. These wars were fought primarily between the Xhosa people and the

expanding colonial settlers, first under the Dutch East India Company and later the British colonial government. The Eastern Cape, especially the area around the Fish River and later the Kei River, became a volatile frontier zone where cultures, economies, and territorial ambitions clashed violently. The Frontier Wars deeply shaped the political, cultural, and geographic landscape of the Eastern Cape and laid the groundwork for future resistance movements against colonial and apartheid rule. The Frontier Wars hold significant cultural heritage and tourism value for South Africa. They represent a powerful narrative of indigenous resistance, colonial expansion, and cultural interaction, and are increasingly being recognized as a critical part of the nation's history that should be preserved and shared with both South Africans and international visitors.

iii) Sacred and Natural Heritage

- The Amathole Mountains are spiritually significant, associated with ancestral veneration and traditional healing practices.
- The landscape is dotted with sacred sites, rivers, and caves used for rituals and spiritual retreats.
- Addo Elephant National Park, beyond its ecological value, protects land that once held deep meaning for indigenous communities.

iv) Missionary and Educational Legacy - The region saw the establishment of influential mission stations and schools, such as Lovedale College and Healdtown, which became centers for black education during colonial and apartheid eras. These institutions played a key role in nurturing African leaders, including Nelson Mandela, who was educated in the broader region.

v) 5. Living Heritage and Language - The Xhosa language (isiXhosa) is widely spoken and preserved in local literature, music, and education. Traditional music (e.g., uhadi and mouth bow instruments), dance, and praise poetry (imbongi) continue to reflect and celebrate cultural memory.

The Addo to Amathole region is a cultural heritage heartland—a place where landscape, history, and living traditions converge. It tells the story of resistance, adaptation, and continuity from precolonial times through colonization and into democratic South Africa. Preserving and promoting this cultural heritage is essential for national identity, reconciliation, and sustainable tourism.

4.1.2.3. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure development in GAA BEN must balance modernisation with the preservation of the region's distinctive cultural, historical, and ecological value. Integrating sustainable design principles, infrastructure will enhance visitor experiences while ensuring minimal environmental impact. In partnership with SANParks, heritage NGOs, and local communities, key sites such as caves, battlefields, and homestays will be improved to align with sustainability objectives and strengthen linkages with the tourism sector.

Table 12: Sustainable infrastructure development

Infrastructure Component	Sustainable Approach
Accommodation	Eco-lodges constructed using local, sustainable materials with energy-efficient systems, strategically placed near cultural heritage sites such as the Battlefields of the Transfrontier Wars and community-led homestays.
Transport	Improvement of road and rail infrastructure, which supports the various economic activities, including tourism, wildlife ranching and sustainable agriculture within the GAA BEN. Development of shuttle services, cycling routes, and pedestrian-friendly trails to improve access to heritage sites while reducing vehicular congestion and carbon emissions.
Visitor centres	Culturally themed centres with sustainable designs that showcase local history, traditional practices, and conservation efforts.
Signage	Informative and interpretive signage providing historical context on the Transfrontier Wars, King Plato's legacy, and the region's biodiversity.

4.1.2.4. RESPONSIBLE VISITOR MANAGEMENT

A well-structured visitor management plan is essential for maintaining the integrity of cultural and ecological sites within GAA BEN. To ensure responsible tourism, visitor engagement will focus on

promoting awareness and respect for local history, cultural traditions, and natural heritage. Immersive cultural experiences, such as storytelling sessions by local elders and guided historical tours, will provide enriching educational opportunities while strengthening community participation in the tourism economy.

Table 13: Responsible visitor management

Visitor Management Strategy	Implementation method
Controlled access	Online booking systems and visitor limits at sensitive cultural and ecological sites to prevent overcrowding and degradation.
Guided tours	Training local guides to offer historical, ecological, and cultural interpretation, enhancing visitor understanding and appreciation.
Cultural Code of Conduct	Developing and enforcing visitor guidelines to promote responsible behaviour and heritage conservation.
Educational programmes	Interactive exhibits, storytelling sessions, and conservation workshops to deepen visitor engagement with GAA BEN's heritage and biodiversity.

4.1.2.5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Community participation is central to the success of GAA BEN's tourism and conservation efforts. Local communities will be directly involved in managing tourism experiences, particularly through the development of traditional homestays. These homestays will offer visitors authentic cultural immersion, from traditional meal preparations to craft workshops and storytelling sessions led by local elders.

Through partnerships with SANParks and heritage NGOs, communities will receive training in hospitality, sustainable business management, and guiding services. This approach ensures that tourism revenue is reinvested in local development projects such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Table 14: Community engagement and economic empowerment

Community Engagement Initiative	Implementation Approach
Skills training	Providing hospitality and business management training for homestay operators and community tourism guides.
Local sourcing	Encouraging communities to produce and supply crafts, food, and cultural artefacts for the tourism market.
Cultural heritage experiences	Developing tourism products around the history of King Plato, the Transfrontier Wars, and traditional Xhosa customs.
Cooperative tourism model	Establishing community-run ecotourism enterprises where profits are reinvested in local economic development.

4.1.2.6. CAVES EXPERIENCES AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

The GAA BEN is home to several historically significant caves that serve as both natural wonders and cultural heritage sites. These caves are deeply embedded in the histories of indigenous resistance, including associations with the Frontier Wars, which were a defining series of nine conflicts spanning from 1779 to 1879 in the Eastern Cape. These wars involved the Xhosa people, European settlers (initially Dutch and later British), and other indigenous communities such as the Khoikhoi and San. The primary driver of these conflicts was the contestation over land and resources, particularly cattle and grazing areas, as colonial forces encroached upon indigenous territories. The wars, marked by intense periods of warfare and brief truces, represent one of the longest-standing resistance movements to European colonisation on the African continent (SAHO, 2018).

The heritage significance of the Frontier Wars is especially profound for the communities within the GAA BEN. These conflicts not only transformed the region's political and social landscapes but also left a lasting imprint on the collective identity of the local populations, including the AmaXhosa, BaThembu, and other indigenous groups. The wars led to widespread dispossession, the dismantling of traditional governance systems, and cultural upheaval. Today, the legacy of this era is honoured and preserved through curated heritage sites, interpretive centres, and educational programmes. In collaboration with SANParks and local heritage experts, the caves associated with this history will be enhanced to provide safe, informative,

and immersive visitor experiences. These efforts aim to ensure that the stories of resistance, resilience, and identity embedded in the landscape continue to educate and inspire future generations.

Table 15: Caves experiences and historical interpretation

Cave Experience Initiative	Implementation Method
Historical caves tour	Curated guided tours focusing on King Plato's warriors, indigenous resistance strategies, and cave archaeology.
Interpretation centres	Establishing educational exhibits at cave sites to provide historical and cultural context.
Local guide training	Equipping local guides with knowledge and storytelling skills to interpret the significance of the cave sites.

4.1.2.7. CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

To protect GAA BEN's unique biodiversity and historical assets, revenue generated from ecotourism will be directed into both environmental and cultural conservation. Working with SANParks, efforts will be focused on the preservation of ecosystems surrounding historical sites, particularly those related to King Plato's strongholds.

In addition to habitat restoration, partnerships with conservation and cultural preservation groups will ensure the protection of sacred battlefields, memorials, and the indigenous sites that make GAA BEN a valuable area of interest for ecotourism.

Table 16: Conservation and biodiversity protection

Conservation Strategy	Implementation Method
Habitat restoration	Restoring degraded landscapes around battlefields and caves, focusing on indigenous vegetation.
Anti-poaching measures	Training local communities in anti-poaching and environmental stewardship efforts.

Cultural heritage preservation	Partnering with heritage organisations to protect and maintain sites linked to King Plato and the Transfrontier Wars.
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4.1.3. COMPATIBLE AGRICULTURE

Compatible agriculture is an important complementary land use to wildlife economy and will remain a primary driver of socio-economic benefits in the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node. It is a primary land use in the region and should be the focus of improved the sustainability of agricultural practices, improving animal production and other agricultural outputs, and providing better access to markets for premium agricultural products.

In many instances sustainable agriculture may be a compatible land use with biodiversity conservation and activities associated with the biodiversity economy. This is particularly true of sustainable rangeland management, based on livestock agriculture on natural rangelands, utilising species such as cattle, sheep and goats. Unsustainable livestock grazing, involving over-grazing and selective grazing, can lead to ecological degradation, the loss of ecological integrity and resilience, which in turn leads to poorer animal production and reduced revenues for livestock farmers. Ecological degradation, associated with over-grazing and selective grazing may be prevalent in communal areas, particularly if there are relatively large numbers of animals placed with limited access to grazing, and an appropriate grazing management system is not implemented. The drivers of ecological degradation associated with livestock agriculture are:

- Grazing too many livestock on insufficient areas of land – exceeding carrying capacities, leading to overgrazing.
- Grazing systems that do not provide adequate rest periods for grazing resources to effectively recover from grazing.
- Changes in species composition associated with overgrazing and selective grazing – resulting in the loss of palatable species.
- Loss of basal cover leading to exposed soil – loss of soil organic matter and accelerated soil erosion.

There are however good examples of how such unsustainable practices have been addressed leading to improved ecological condition of the grass sward and improved animal production and increased revenue for livestock owners. Several NGOs and social enterprises have successfully implemented sustainable

rangeland management initiatives on communal land. WWF-SA, Environmental Rural Solutions (ERS), Conservation South Africa (CSA) and Meat Naturally, which is a social enterprise, are working with communities to enable improved rangeland management and more sustainable land use practices in various places in South Africa.

In most cases, sustainable rangeland management initiatives implemented by these NGOs and social enterprises involve entering into conservation or rangeland stewardship agreements with livestock owners. These agreements stipulate minimum ecological requirements for livestock management and then enable market access through the provision of mobile auctions, the provision of mobile abattoir services and in the case of sheep the provision of mobile shearing services. The agreements entered into envisage the livestock owners in a particular region combining their livestock into a single managed herd although individual ownership will still be known and recognised through identification markers such as ear tags or brands. Once the livestock are combined into a single herd, herders are then employed from within the community and trained as eco-rangers through the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC). They are then employed by the livestock owners' association and play the primary role of herding cattle and provide basic extension support, which includes observing and reporting on particular issues linked to animal health, snaring, other environmental issues and in assisting in some areas of extension support such as the removal of invasive alien plants. Through this approach, effective rangeland management can be implemented, including ensuring specific areas of rangeland are adequately rested by keeping livestock out of these areas and through the integration of livestock management with fire management and annual burning regimes. Such interventions lead to marked improvements in habitat condition through limiting over-utilisation of areas, minimising selective grazing and through ensuring key ecological issues such as fire management are integrated with livestock management. They in turn lead to far better animal production outcomes as animals tend to feed more efficiently and animal health is more effectively addressed, leading to healthier animals, higher reproduction rates and better returns in the sale of animals, meat and hides.

In some instances, certification processes are applied in undertaking these approaches. For example, communities implementing such initiatives in the Eastern Cape, utilising sheep, undertake their grazing management practices in accordance with the Responsible Wool Standard, which is a certification supported by the South African Wool Growers Association. Linked to this, there are then efforts to improve market access for the community members for the sale of their livestock and livestock-related products.

There is considerable scope to implement the types of sustainable rangeland management initiatives with the communities within the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node, as have been implemented in other parts of South Africa, including other parts of the Eastern Cape. Such initiatives have led to significant increases in revenue and income for livestock owners whilst addressing issues of ecological degradation and sustainability.

4.1.4. RESTORATION

There are challenges related to issues of ecological degradation that must be addressed in the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node. The most prevalent form of degradation is due to infestations of invasive alien plants but there are issues associated with over-grazing, bush encroachment, accelerated anthropogenic erosion and others. The restoration economy has significant potential to provide employment and the development of SMMEs whilst addressing the fundamental ecological foundation upon which society depends for its livelihoods and wellbeing.

Establishment of the restoration economy in the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node must not be seen as primarily a source of job creation alone but must be seen as fundamental to addressing sustainable economic development and ensuring resilience in the economy and society within the region. In this regard, opportunities must be explored in the use of the biomass provided by invasive alien plants and in the means of improving animal production on areas that are significantly degraded and must be restored. Ecological restoration is not just an environmental imperative, it is a strategy for building resilience in both economies and societies. By restoring ecosystems, the natural capital upon which human livelihoods and economies depend can be safeguarded, the impacts of climate change can be mitigated, and communities can be better equipped to handle environmental, economic, and social challenges.

Strategic investment in ecological restoration efforts should include traditional sources of funding such as those provided through government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and linked to this SANParks Biodiversity Social Projects (BSP) but it should also explore opportunities linked to corporate socio-economic development (SED) and enterprise development (ED) obligations as well as emerging opportunities linked to the environmental, social and governance (ESG) obligations of the private sector, as well as corporate programmes like the Youth Environmental Services (YES) Programmes. Strategic investment in ecological restoration should also be used to attract private sector investment partners where there are opportunities to profit from the use biomass (e.g., through the production of charcoal,

biochar, woodchips, etc.) and where there are opportunities to generate carbon credits and potentially biodiversity credits and biodiversity impact bonds.

4.1.5. BIOPROSPECTING

Bioprospecting, the exploration of biological resources for commercial and scientific purposes, plays a significant role in South Africa's biodiversity economy. The country is one of the world's most biologically diverse, with unique ecosystems and a wealth of indigenous knowledge that has attracted global interest. From medicinal plants to microorganisms and marine organisms, South Africa's biodiversity offers vast potential for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, agriculture, and biotechnology industries.

One of the key drivers of bioprospecting in South Africa is the rich indigenous knowledge associated with traditional medicine. Indigenous communities have long used plants such as **Rooibos**, **Hoodia**, and **Devil's Claw** for their medicinal properties. Many of these species possess medicinal, nutritional, or industrial properties that have been used for centuries by indigenous communities such as the **San, Khoi, and various African ethnic groups**. Traditional medicine is a vital part of South African culture, with indigenous knowledge playing a crucial role in identifying plants and natural compounds with therapeutic benefits. Scientific research has confirmed the therapeutic benefits of many of these plants, leading to their commercial exploitation. However, concerns about biopiracy—where multinational corporations exploit local knowledge without fair compensation—have prompted legal frameworks to ensure benefit-sharing.

The **National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) of 2004**, along with its Bioprospecting, Access, and Benefit-Sharing (BABS) regulations, governs bioprospecting in South Africa. These laws require companies and researchers to obtain permits before accessing biological resources and to establish agreements ensuring that local communities benefit from commercial gains. This aligns with the **Nagoya Protocol**, an international treaty ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources.

South Africa has made progress in implementing fair bioprospecting practices. A notable success story is the **Hoodia case**, where a partnership between the San community and pharmaceutical companies resulted in financial compensation and development programs for the San people. Similarly, the **Rooibos industry** reached a historic agreement in 2019 to share profits with the **Khoi and San communities**, recognizing their traditional knowledge of the plant.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Many indigenous communities **lack awareness** of their rights, and some companies attempt to bypass regulations. Bureaucratic delays in obtaining permits and enforcing benefit-sharing agreements also slow down progress. Additionally, overharvesting of valuable species poses a threat to biodiversity, highlighting the need for **sustainable harvesting practices**.

Looking ahead, South Africa has the potential to become a global leader in sustainable bioprospecting. For bioprospecting to be a sustainable and equitable industry, **stronger enforcement of regulations**, increased community participation, and better collaboration between the government, researchers, and local groups are needed. Investing in research, technology, and sustainable practices will ensure that South Africa benefits economically while protecting its biodiversity and honouring indigenous knowledge. If managed responsibly, bioprospecting can contribute significantly to conservation, economic growth, and social justice.

4.1.6. MARINE ECONOMY

Sustainable marine resource use refers to the responsible utilisation of resources from the world's oceans, seas, and coastal areas while ensuring the long-term health and productivity of marine ecosystems. It involves practices that maintain the balance between human needs and the conservation of marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

Key principles of sustainable marine resource use include:

- **Ecosystem-based approach:** Recognizing the interconnectedness of marine species and habitats, management decisions are made considering the entire ecosystem rather than focusing on individual species. This approach helps to protect biodiversity and maintain ecological functions.
- **Conservation and restoration:** Protecting vulnerable marine habitats, such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves, and restoring degraded ecosystems is essential for sustainable resource use. These habitats provide breeding grounds, nurseries, and shelter for numerous marine species.
- **Fisheries management:** Implementing effective fisheries management strategies is crucial to ensure the long-term viability of fish stocks. This includes setting catch limits, regulating fishing gear and practices, and establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) to allow fish populations to recover and maintain their reproductive capacity.

- **Aquaculture practices:** Responsible and sustainable aquaculture can reduce the pressure on wild fish stocks by providing an alternative source of seafood. Sustainable aquaculture involves minimizing environmental impacts, preventing disease outbreaks, and sourcing feed and broodstock responsibly.
- **Marine spatial planning:** Careful planning and zoning of marine areas help to avoid conflicts between different uses, such as fishing, shipping, tourism, and conservation. This approach ensures that each activity is appropriately managed to minimize negative impacts on the marine environment.
- **International cooperation:** Sustainable marine resource use requires collaboration among nations to address shared challenges, such as illegal fishing, pollution, and climate change. International agreements and organizations facilitate cooperation and promote sustainable practices on a global scale.

By adopting sustainable practices, we can ensure the long-term availability of food, livelihoods, and economic opportunities while preserving the rich biodiversity and ecological integrity of our oceans for future generations.

Communities can play a pivotal role in sustainable marine resource use by implementing practices that balance their socio-economic needs with the preservation of marine ecosystems. The GAA BEN, known for its rich biodiversity and pristine coastal areas, is home to numerous communities that rely on marine resources for their livelihoods and cultural heritage. Here are some ways in which these communities can promote sustainable marine resource use:

Community-Based Fisheries Management: Implementing community-based fisheries management systems empowers local communities to take an active role in conserving and managing their marine resources. This approach involves setting fishing quotas, regulating fishing practices, and establishing no-take zones or marine protected areas (MPAs) to allow fish stocks to replenish and ecosystems to recover. By involving community members in decision-making processes, their traditional knowledge and expertise can contribute to sustainable fishing practices.

Responsible Fishing Practices: Encouraging responsible fishing practices is crucial to prevent overfishing and minimize the impact on non-target species and habitats. Communities can promote the use of selective fishing gear that reduces bycatch, such as turtle excluder devices (TEDs) for trawlers and circle

hooks for longline fishing. Implementing seasonal fishing closures during sensitive breeding periods and using size limits for harvested species helps protect juvenile fish and sustain fish populations.

Sustainable Aquaculture: Communities can explore sustainable aquaculture practices as an alternative or complementary source of seafood. This involves promoting responsible farming methods that minimize environmental impacts, such as using recirculating systems, reducing reliance on wild-caught fish for feed, and ensuring the responsible disposal of waste. By embracing sustainable aquaculture, communities can meet local seafood demand while reducing pressure on wild fish stocks.

Coastal and Marine Conservation: Engaging in coastal and marine conservation efforts is crucial for Wild Coast communities. This can include participation in beach clean-up campaigns, establishing community-led conservation initiatives, and engaging in coral reef restoration projects. By actively protecting critical habitats like coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds, communities safeguard important breeding grounds and maintain healthy ecosystems that support sustainable fisheries.

Sustainable Tourism: Many communities depend on tourism as an economic activity. By promoting sustainable tourism practices, communities can minimize negative impacts on marine resources. Encouraging responsible snorkeling and diving practices, advocating for the protection of sensitive areas, and providing education about marine conservation to tourists can help preserve the marine environment while generating income and employment opportunities.

Environmental Education and Awareness: Building environmental literacy and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable marine resource use is essential. Communities can organize workshops, awareness campaigns, and school programs to educate community members, especially youth, about the significance of marine conservation and the role they can play in protecting and managing their marine resources sustainably.

By adopting these practices, communities can ensure the long-term viability of their marine resources, safeguard their cultural heritage, and promote the overall well-being of their communities. Sustainable marine resource use not only supports the livelihoods of local residents but also contributes to the preservation of marine biodiversity and the resilience of coastal ecosystems.

4.2. OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCING

In many instances, sources of finance that will emerge through the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node are embedded within the biodiversity economy sectors and other complementary sectors described above. Conventional and innovative sources of finance can be achieved through the establishment of wildlife value chains and sustainable agricultural initiatives linked to certification schemes and preferential access arrangements. It can also be achieved through ecological restoration programmes aimed at arresting ecological degradation and improving ecological integrity and resilience. Finance opportunities may emerge through the development of new tourism ventures and the creation of diversified markets, focussed on natural, cultural and historic components of the landscape. This can also apply to bioprospecting and the development of new products and technologies linked to them.

Other emerging sources of finance that may be explored within the GAA BEN include the development of carbon markets, the development of new emerging markets such as those linked to biodiversity credits, the role of biodiversity offsets as sources of long-term funding to secure and effectively manage key biodiversity assets and the potential to develop partnerships with the private sector through corporate social investment initiatives and those linked to other corporate obligations such as ESG (Environment, Social and Governance obligations).

4.2.1. CARBON MARKETS

There are a growing number of examples of opportunities linked to carbon markets, which are associated with ecological restoration efforts and improved land management practices that lead to improved habitat condition and enhanced carbon stocks, often in the form of soil carbon. Ecological restoration efforts are often focussed on addressing infestations of invasive alien plants and other issues such as anthropogenic soil erosion. Eradicating and controlling invasive alien plants often involves utilising the biomass of the plants, which can be made into inert carbon products such as biochar, which enables significant amounts of carbon to be sequestered, generating carbon credits. The removal of invasive alien plants and addressing soil erosion through the re-establishment of vegetative cover, allowing for recovery of natural systems, leads to significantly increased soil carbon levels, which also allows for the generation of carbon credits. Improved land management practices such as addressing issues of selective and over-grazing, allowing for more effective rest of rangelands and addressing issues of effective fire management can also lead to significantly increased soil carbon levels and the generation of carbon credits. These

activities are all compatible with the efforts to establish wildlife economy ventures, sustainable rangeland management initiatives and to drive the restoration economy in the GAA BEN.

4.2.2. BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS

Biodiversity offsets are conservation actions intended to compensate for the residual negative impacts of development projects on biodiversity. The goal is to achieve "no net loss" or even a net gain of biodiversity by restoring, enhancing, or protecting ecosystems elsewhere to balance out the damage caused by a project. There is considerable scope for the use of biodiversity offsets to fund conservation initiatives in the GAA BEN, linked to large-scale initiatives such as renewable energy developments in the region. Such offsets would provide sources of sustainable finance for the establishment and long-term management of protected areas and could also be strategically developed through the establishment of a biodiversity offset bank. A biodiversity offset bank is a system that provides pre-established, measurable conservation credits that developers can purchase to compensate for biodiversity loss from their projects. Such banks may be established by securing large areas of critical biodiversity and then selling credits to developers for the cost to secure and manage the areas in the long-term, to enable them to meet their biodiversity offset obligations.

4.2.3. CORPORATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Many companies, particularly those listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and on international stock exchanges, are required to apply the principles of environmental, social and governance (ESG), which seeks to embed responsible and sustainable development within a company's culture. This is often aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Although all the SDGs are relevant to the GAA BEN, goal 15 is one that could be a clear focus for ESG linked initiatives and projects. The goal is to "protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss." Each of the sustainable development goals has indicators attached to it. The indicators set out under goal 15 that are the most relevant in the context of the GAA BEN include:

- 15.1: Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems – ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in line with obligations under international agreements.

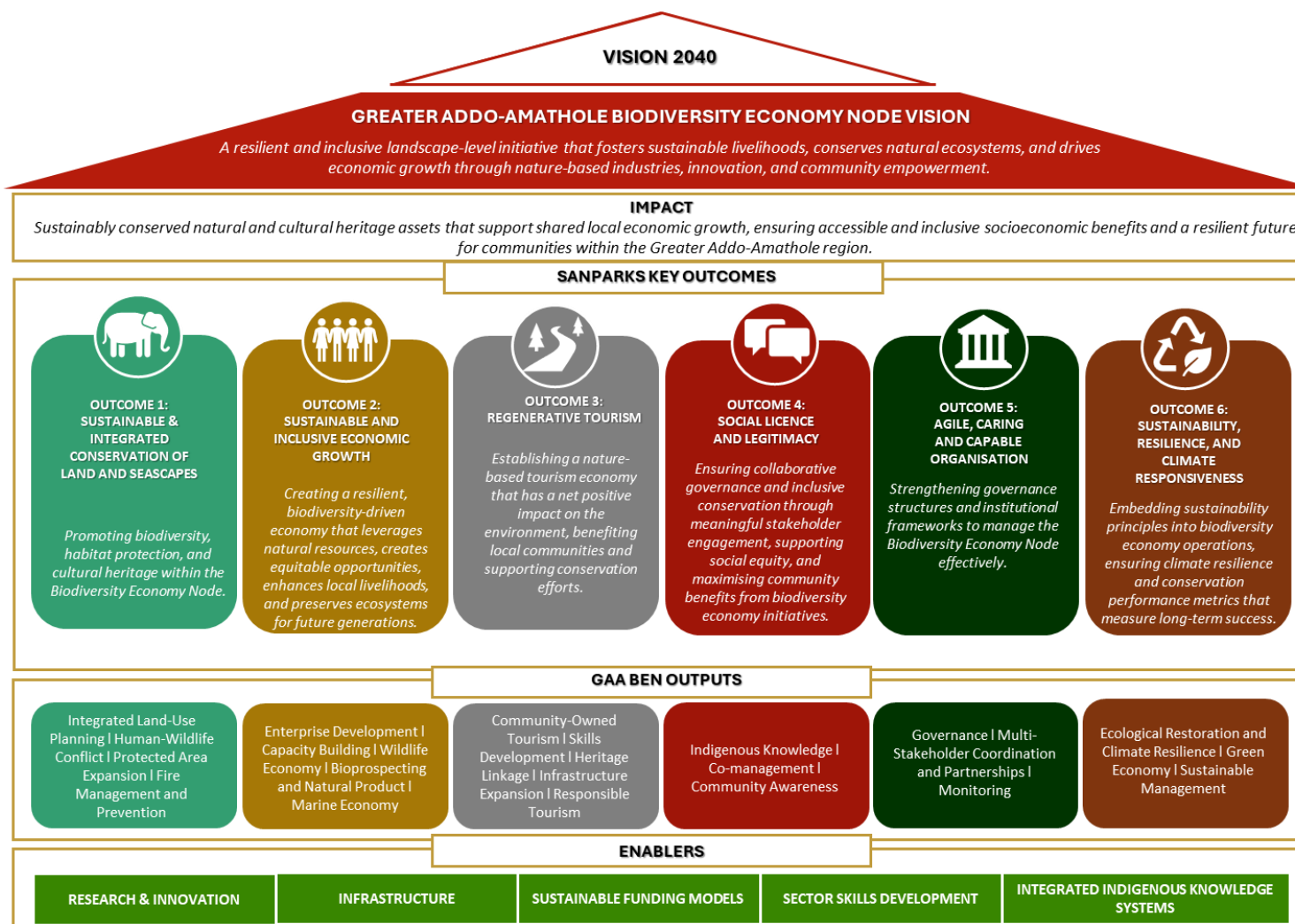
- 15.3: End desertification and restore degraded land – combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil and strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world.
- 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2030, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.
- 15.7: Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.
- 15.9: Integrate ecosystems and biodiversity in government planning – integrated ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.
- 15.a: Mobilise and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.
- 15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.

These are all issues that are central to the GAA BEN, related to securing the conservation of its biodiversity whilst enabling meaningful benefits to the community members living within it. Initiatives linked to Goal 15 of the SDGs would form an obvious basis for the development of ESG projects in the GAA BEN.

In meeting their ESG obligations most companies are required to commission independent audits to verify ESG compliance. These are often based on reporting initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This is an international independent standards organisation that helps businesses, governments and other organisations understand and communicate their impacts on issues such as climate change, human rights and corruption. Such reporting standards provides a clear framework for private sector partners to integrate a proactive approach towards biodiversity conservation and management into their ESG reporting, in the context of initiatives they support in the GAA BEN.

4.3. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The GAA BEN framework involves a diverse set of stakeholders across its cooperative zones, to ensure that conservation, economic development, and community benefits are effectively integrated. It is also aligned to the SANParks strategic direction and Vision 2040 outcomes.



4.3.1. CONSERVATION AREAS MANAGEMENT

Outcome 1: Sustainable and integrated conservation of land and seascapes

4.3.1.1. AMBITION

The primary ambition for conservation areas management is to ensure the long-term sustainability and integration of land and seascapes through a holistic approach that balances environmental protection with human development. The goal is to maintain and restore biodiversity while promoting community engagement and responsible resource use. This includes protecting existing natural habitats, restoring degraded ecosystems, and expanding protected areas to safeguard critical biodiversity. Key to this ambition is the involvement of local communities, integrating conservation efforts with their economic activities while promoting a sense of ownership and stewardship.

4.3.1.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for conservation area management in the GAA BEN.

Table 17: Priority Areas for conservation area management in the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
1. Sustainable and Integrated Conservation of Land and Seascapes	Integrated Land-Use Planning	Agricultural expansion and infrastructure development pose threats to conservation areas.	Develop and enforce land-use frameworks that balance conservation priorities with development needs, ensuring ecological corridors and buffer zones are maintained.	SANParks, ECPTA, Provincial Planning and Environmental Departments, local and district municipalities, local industries
	Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Strategies	Communities living near protected areas often face challenges with wildlife movement, particularly in buffer zones where large mammals, such as elephants and predators, damage crops or threaten	Develop and implement conflict mitigation measures such as wildlife-proof fencing, compensation schemes, and community-based monitoring initiatives to support co-existence.	SANParks, ECPTA, local communities

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
		livestock. This fuels negative perceptions of conservation efforts.		
	Protected Area Expansion Programme	Land claim challenges, habitat degradation, ecological fragmentation, long delays in declaration process	Expansion and formal protection of conservation areas to maintain biodiversity and ecological integrity.	SANParks, ECPTA, Private Landowners
	Fire Management and Prevention Strategy	Arson fires, poor fire management capacity	Development of a coordinated fire prevention and response plan, including training and infrastructure.	SANParks, ECPTA, Forestry Companies, Local Municipalities, NGOs, local communities
	Restoration of high priority areas	Intensive nature of activities and high costs	Implement a strategic restoration programme within high priority areas	SANParks, Dept Agriculture, DFFE NRM, private sector (carbon credit developers)

4.3.1.3. ENABLERS

The following enablers are crucial for the successful implementation of conservation area management:

- Strengthen collaboration between government, conservation agencies, the private sector, and local communities to enhance investment in conservation initiatives, share expertise, and promote joint management models.
- Strengthen the legislative framework and its efficiencies, to enable the formal protection of high biodiversity priority areas, securing the foundation of the Biodiversity Economy Node.
- Deploy cutting-edge technological tools such as GIS mapping, remote sensing, artificial intelligence-driven biodiversity monitoring, and smart tracking systems to enhance conservation decision-making, enforcement, and adaptive management.

- Establish research partnerships with universities and conservation organisations to generate data-driven insights for adaptive conservation planning. Develop a central knowledge-sharing platform to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Invest in conservation training programmes for local communities, land managers, and ecotourism operators. Establish skills development initiatives focused on eco-enterprise development, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring.
- Scale up Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiatives that empower communities as conservation stewards, enabling them to derive direct benefits from sustainable resource use and biodiversity economy opportunities.
- Establish diverse funding streams, including conservation levies on tourism, environmental impact investments, and locally managed conservation endowment funds, ensuring long-term financial viability.

4.3.2. INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Outcome 2: Inclusive economic growth through sustainable use of biodiversity and conservation-linked opportunities.

4.3.2.1. AMBITION

The ambition for biodiversity economy and conservation-linked livelihoods within the GAA BEN is to establish a thriving, inclusive economy that leverages the region's rich biodiversity assets while ensuring ecological sustainability. The goal is to create economic opportunities for local communities through sustainable industries such as ecotourism, wildlife economy initiatives, bioprospecting, and the sustainable harvesting of natural resources.

4.3.2.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for inclusive economic growth in the GAA BEN.

Table 18: Priority Areas for inclusive economic growth within the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
2. Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth	Back to School Programme	Shortages of skills	Educational initiatives to equip local community members (especially youth) with biodiversity economy-related skills and knowledge.	SANParks, Department of Education, Universities, Conservation NGOs, Private Sector
	Enterprise Development and Capacity Building	Many local entrepreneurs lack the business acumen, financial literacy, and technical expertise needed to run successful biodiversity-based enterprises.	Implement targeted training programmes in eco-enterprise management, marketing, and sustainable production techniques. Establish business incubation hubs focused on conservation-linked industries.	SANParks, ECPTA, SATSA, Private Sector, Incubator Programmes
	Wildlife Economy Development	Poaching, lack of investment in wildlife tourism	Developing game meat production, live wildlife sales, and sustainable hunting ventures to benefit local communities and biodiversity conservation.	SANParks, Private Sector, DEFF, WRSA
	Bioprospecting and Natural Product Development	Limited research and market access	Research and development of natural products for commercial use, leveraging local biodiversity for sustainable economic development	DFFE, SANParks, Universities, Private Sector, Local Communities
	Marine Economy Development	Illegal fishing, habitat destruction, limited infrastructure	Developing sustainable marine resource management strategies and supporting local marine economies.	SANParks, Coastal Communities, Private Sector, NGOs

4.3.2.3. ENABLERS

The successful implementation of conservation-linked economic growth in the GAA BEN will be supported by:

- Strengthen collaboration between government, conservation agencies, the private sector, and local communities to enhance investment in conservation initiatives, share expertise, and promote joint management models.
- Invest in conservation training programmes for local communities, land managers, and ecotourism operators. Establish skills development initiatives focused on eco-enterprise development, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring.
- Establish diverse funding streams, including conservation levies on tourism, environmental impact investments, and locally managed conservation endowment funds, ensuring long-term financial viability.

4.3.3. REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Outcome 3: Regenerative tourism that enhances ecosystems, heritage, and local livelihoods.

4.3.3.1. AMBITION

The ambition for regenerative tourism within the GAA BEN is to establish a nature-based tourism model that actively restores ecosystems, protects cultural heritage, and generates long-term socio-economic benefits for local communities. This goes beyond sustainable tourism by ensuring that tourism activities contribute positively to conservation, biodiversity restoration, and cultural preservation.

Regenerative tourism in GAA BEN is built on three key principles:

- 1. Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation:**

Tourism activities must actively support biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration, ensuring minimal environmental impact while funding conservation efforts.

- 2. Cultural and Heritage Preservation:**

Tourism should celebrate and protect the rich cultural heritage of the region, empowering indigenous and local communities to share their knowledge and traditions while benefiting economically.

3. Community-Led and Inclusive Growth:

Local communities must be central to the tourism economy, with equitable access to opportunities, skills development, and direct participation in ownership and management of tourism ventures.

4.3.3.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for regenerative tourism in the GAA BEN.

Table 19: Priority Areas for regenerative tourism in the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
3. Regenerative Tourism	Community-Owned Tourism Models	Many tourism operations are owned and managed by external investors, with minimal local economic benefits.	Support the development of community-run lodges, guided experiences, and eco-tourism enterprises. Facilitate access to training, financial support, and market linkages to enhance local ownership and benefit-sharing.	SANParks, ECPTA, Department of Tourism, Tourism Concessions
	Tourism Skills Development and Training	Limited training in hospitality, guiding, and conservation tourism reduces service quality and employment opportunities for locals.	Establish training academies and vocational programmes focused on regenerative tourism, guiding, eco-hospitality, and cultural interpretation.	SANParks, ECPTA, Department of Tourism, SATSA, CATHSSETA
	Heritage Route Linkage	The area is rich in cultural and natural heritage but underdeveloped as a commercial resource	Development of a visitor immersive experience within the proposed heritage routes linked to the protected areas.	SANParks, ECPTA, ECPHRA, SAHRA, Department of Tourism, Department of Sports, Arts and Culture
	Infrastructure Expansion	Limited facilities for ecotourism	Establishing eco-lodges, visitor centres, and other necessary infrastructure to promote sustainable tourism.	SANParks, ECPTA, Private Investors, local communities

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
	Responsible Visitor Management	Providing access to ecologically or culturally sensitive areas poses a threat to the preservation of the areas if left unmanaged.	A visitor management plan is essential for maintaining the integrity of cultural and ecological sites; linking to controlled access, guided tours, cultural code of conduct, and educational programmes.	SANParks, ECPTA, Tourism Operators
	Community Tourism	Lack of active community participation in the tourism sector.	Local communities will be directly involved in managing tourism experiences, such as traditional homestays and associated cultural immersive experiences.	SANParks, ECPTA, Department of Tourism, SATSA

4.3.3.3. ENABLERS

The successful implementation of regenerative tourism in the GAA BEN will require:

- Strengthen collaboration between conservation agencies, tourism operators, government, and local communities to drive responsible tourism development.
- Leverage digital tools for visitor management, conservation education, and immersive tourism experiences (e.g., virtual eco-tours, AI-driven interpretation apps).
- Provide targeted training for community members in guiding, eco-lodge management, cultural storytelling, and conservation-integrated tourism models.
- Ensure systems to maintain safety and security in the landscape.

4.3.4. SOCIAL LICENCE AND LEGITIMACY

Outcome 4: Social licence and legitimacy through collaborative governance and inclusive conservation.

4.3.4.1. AMBITION

The ambition for collaborative governance and inclusive conservation within the GAA BEN is to create an enabling environment where conservation efforts are co-designed and co-managed with local communities, traditional authorities, private sector actors, and government institutions. The goal is to secure long-term social licence for conservation by ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly local communities, see tangible benefits and have meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

This ambition is built on three core principles:

1. Participatory Governance and Co-Management:

Strengthening inclusive decision-making platforms that integrate diverse voices, including communities, landowners, and conservation agencies.

2. Equitable Benefit Sharing and Local Empowerment:

Ensuring conservation initiatives create direct economic and social benefits for local communities, reinforcing long-term support for conservation objectives.

3. Trust Building and Institutional Accountability:

Enhancing transparency, conflict resolution mechanisms, and good governance practices to foster legitimacy and sustained stakeholder engagement.

4.3.4.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for collaborative governance and inclusive conservation in the GAA BEN.

Table 20: Priority Area for collaborative governance and inclusive conservation in the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
4. Social Licence and Legitimacy	Security of land tenure	The uncertainty of land tenure	Engagement with the Dept of Land Reform to enable effective land reform processes	DALRRD, Provincial Departments, DMs and LMs
	Indigenous Knowledge Conservation Framework	Exclusion of indigenous knowledge form traditional conservation practices	Collaboration with traditional authorities to incorporate indigenous knowledge, customary laws, and cultural heritage into conservation frameworks.	SANParks, ECTPA, People and Parks, Traditional Authorities
	Co-creation & Co-management of Resources	Inadequate relationship and management structures with CPAs	Capacitating CPAs through co-creation and co-management programmes.	SANParks, ECTPA, DALRRD, CPAs
	Community Awareness on Wildlife Conservation	Poaching threats, lack of understanding of biodiversity value	Education and outreach on wildlife conservation and sustainable hunting benefits to foster community involvement.	SANParks, ECPTA, NGOs, local communities

4.3.4.3. ENABLERS

The successful implementation of collaborative governance and inclusive conservation in the GAA BEN will be supported by:

- Establish local conservation councils, roundtable discussions, and grievance resolution mechanisms to ensure all stakeholders are heard and involved.
- Work with traditional authorities to co-create conservation frameworks.
- Strengthen local conservation governance structures that empower communities to co-manage protected areas and biodiversity resources.
- Use digital tools such as mobile apps, SMS alerts, and online platforms to enhance communication, report conservation issues, and improve public participation.
- Support research on best practices in inclusive conservation governance and advocate for legislative reforms that institutionalise community-led conservation.

- Secure funding for governance programmes through public-private partnerships, donor grants, and conservation trust funds to ensure long-term viability.

4.3.5. ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY AND INNOVATION

Outcome 5: Organisational agility and innovation to manage integrated landscapes and drive impact.

4.3.5.1. AMBITION

The ambition for organisational agility and innovation within the GAA BEN is to establish a responsive, efficient, and technologically advanced governance framework that enables effective landscape management, conservation-driven economic growth, and sustainable resource use. The goal is to create a well-coordinated, knowledge-driven institutional structure that promotes collaboration, streamlines decision-making, and leverages digital innovation to enhance operational efficiency and impact.

This ambition is built on three key pillars:

1. **Adaptive and Collaborative Governance:**

Strengthening institutional coordination, policy coherence, and stakeholder engagement to ensure integrated decision-making.

2. **Digital Transformation and Data-Driven Decision-Making:**

Leveraging technology to improve conservation planning, monitoring, and service delivery.

3. **Agile and Impact-Oriented Institutional Frameworks:**

Promoting flexibility, responsiveness, and performance-driven management to enhance conservation and economic outcomes.

4.3.5.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for organisational agility and innovation in the GAA BEN.

Table 21: Priority Areas for organisational agility and innovation in the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
5. Organisational Agility and Innovation	Strengthening governance structures and institutional frameworks to manage the GAA BEN	Governance structures within community trusts and other structures require improvements.	Enhancing the governance structure for effective management of the GAA BEN and ensuring sustainable implementation of activities.	Community cooperatives and Trusts, and other community structures
	Multi-Stakeholder Coordination and Partnerships	Conservation resilience requires collaboration across sectors, but there is often fragmentation between conservation authorities, local governments, private sector players, and community stakeholders.	Establish cross-sectoral conservation resilience platforms to facilitate knowledge-sharing, joint planning, and co-investment. Integrate conservation objectives into regional economic planning frameworks to ensure alignment with broader sustainability goals.	SANParks, Strategic Partners, Chambers and Associations, Committees
	Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring	The success/pitfalls and impact of programmes need to be monitor before, during and post implementation.	Establishment and continued monitoring of a Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment for the targeted clusters or programmes	SANParks, ECPTA, NGOs, Associated Partners, Beneficiaries

4.3.5.3. ENABLERS

The successful implementation of organisational agility and innovation in the GAA BEN will be supported by:

- Develop clear governance structures that integrate conservation, economic development, and land-use planning under a unified strategy.
- Enhance collaboration between government, private sector stakeholders, and civil society to drive investment in governance innovation, digital transformation, and institutional strengthening.

- Invest in digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven data analytics, and blockchain-enabled conservation finance to improve governance efficiency and transparency.
- Establish data-driven decision-making processes, develop integrated knowledge hubs, and promote open data sharing to enhance policy and programme effectiveness.
- Upskill government officials, conservation managers, and local stakeholders in digital governance, policy innovation, and adaptive management techniques.
- Implement a results-based management approach that aligns organisational objectives with measurable impact indicators, promoting accountability and continuous improvement.

4.3.6. SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Outcome 6: Sustainability and resilience integrated across operations and conservation performance metrics.

4.3.6.1. AMBITION

The ambition for sustainability and resilience in conservation operations is to embed climate-smart, resource-efficient, and adaptive management approaches across all biodiversity conservation efforts within the GAA BEN. The goal is to ensure that conservation practices are not only environmentally sustainable but also financially viable and institutionally resilient.

This ambition will be realised by:

1. **Mainstreaming Sustainability in Conservation Practices:**

Ensuring that land, water, and biodiversity conservation activities align with global best practices in climate adaptation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable resource use.

2. **Strengthening Institutional and Financial Resilience:**

Enhancing governance, long-term financial planning, and risk mitigation strategies to secure the sustainability of conservation initiatives.

3. Developing Performance-Driven Conservation Metrics:

Establishing a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework to track ecological health, economic impact, and community benefits, enabling data-driven decision-making.

4.3.6.2. PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priority areas aim to advance the intended outcome for sustainability and resilience in the GAA BEN.

Table 22: Priority Areas for sustainability and resilience in the GAA BEN

Outcome	Output	Challenges	Action	Partners
6. Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Responsiveness	Ecological Restoration and Climate Resilience	Land degradation, invasive species	Restoration of degraded ecosystems, alien vegetation removal, and implementation of climate adaptation strategies to enhance resilience.	SANParks, ECPTA, Conservation NGOs, Forestry Companies
	Circular Economy and Waste Management	Waste pollution, lack of recycling infrastructure	Developing restoration and waste economies through bioprospecting, upcycling, and recycling initiatives, reducing environmental impact.	SANParks, Private Sector, Local Municipalities
	Sustainable Agriculture Development	Soil degradation, water scarcity, unsustainable farming practices	Promoting climate-smart and sustainable farming techniques, increasing food security while preserving biodiversity.	SANParks, DALRRD, Agriculture Associations
	Sustainable Rangeland Management	Overgrazing, poor market access, lack of carbon finance	Promoting mixed livestock systems and linking rangeland conservation to carbon markets.	DALRRD, Communal Areas, Livestock Farming

4.3.6.3. ENABLERS

To effectively integrate sustainability and resilience across GAA BEN conservation operations, the following enablers will be essential:

- Enhance governance frameworks, clarify roles and responsibilities among conservation agencies, and ensure transparency and accountability in conservation management.
- Leverage artificial intelligence, blockchain, and satellite monitoring for real-time tracking of biodiversity trends, resource use, and conservation impact assessments. Expand the use of digital tools for climate risk modelling and adaptive management.
- Develop blended finance models that combine donor funding with private investment, green bonds, and ecosystem service payments to ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- Train conservation professionals and community stakeholders in climate adaptation, green technologies, risk management, and financial sustainability strategies to strengthen resilience at all levels.
- Ensure conservation goals are embedded in broader land-use and economic development policies, strengthening the link between environmental sustainability and socio-economic resilience.
- Establish an open-access conservation data repository to improve decision-making, facilitate adaptive management, and promote collaboration between conservation practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

4.3.7. SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES AND LINK TO CLUSTERS

Each outcome is supported by a set of specific outputs and activities, which are operationalised through a detailed implementation plan (presented in the next section) structured by community clusters. These clusters represent geographically communities and serve as focal units for intervention delivery.

Activities such as wildlife conflict management, protected area expansion, and fire management are implemented through Clusters 1 and 7. Enterprise development and value chain support for bioprospecting, natural products, and the wildlife economy are enabled by Clusters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Regenerative tourism outputs are broadly supported across all clusters.

The implementation framework also integrates cross-cutting enablers such as co-management governance structures, indigenous knowledge systems, biodiversity monitoring, and sustainable resource management. These are not tied to a single cluster, but are executed through coordination across all clusters, to ensure regional coherence and equity. A detailed implementation plan is provided below.



SECTION 5:
WHEN?

5.1. TIMELINE AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Table 23: Implementation plan

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implement- ation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
1. Sustainable and Integrated Conservation of Land and Seascapes	Integrated Land-Use Planning											Local and district SDFs, town planning applications, environmental monitoring	All the clusters	Local and district municipalities, DEDEAT	Government policy & enforcement
	Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Strategies											Policy development, capacity building, community engagement and exchange platform	Cluster 1, 7: Wildlife management	SANParks, ECPTA, DFFE, DEDEAT	Government grants, conservation funds, private investments
	Protected Area Expansion Programme											Policy support, landowner agreements, funding	Cluster 1: Ecotourism Development	Addo Elephant National Park Management, Witrivier CPA	Government grants, conservation funds, private investments
	Fire Management and Prevention Strategy											Firefighting equipment, training, funding	Cluster 7: Wildlife Management	SA Fine Tuned, Indwe Game Farm, Amathole Forestry Company	

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implementation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
2. Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth	Back to School Programme											Curriculum development, scholarships, mentorship programmes	Cluster 5: Tourism (Adventure & Cultural)	Lowerbrink (Maqoma), Department of Education, Private Sector	Government education funds, CSR funding, scholarships
	Enterprise Development and Capacity Building											Enterprise development programmes, supplier development programmes, preferential procurement policies	Cluster 1, 3, and 5: Ecotourism development (SMME development). Cluster 4: Bioprospecting (SMME development)	SANParks, Indalo Inclusive	Enterprise and Supplier Development
	Wildlife Economy Development											Market access, investment incentives, community buy-in	Cluster 3: Ecotourism, Crafts, and Game Management	SANParks, DRDLR, WRSA, Central Albany Farmers Association	Government and international donors (sustainable tourism grants), private investment
	Bioprospecting and Natural Product Development											Research funding, processing facilities, market development	Clusters 5, 6, and 7.	Lowerbrink (Maqoma), Sompondo, Khaya Lethu, Amahlathi/Amazizi TA.	Bioprospecting grants, innovation funding

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implement- ation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
	Marine Economy Development											Technical expertise, infrastructure investment, policy support	Cluster 3: Marine Economy	Coastal Communities, Marine Conservation Organisations	Blue economy grants, fisheries investment funds
3. Regenerative Tourism	Community-Owned Tourism Models											Co-management, ownership and benefit sharing schemes, community-based auxiliary services	Cluster 4: Tourism	SANParks, ECPTA, Private Reserves, Tourism Concessions and Operators	Tourism Equity Fund, ownership or benefit sharing scheme
	Tourism Skills Development and Training											Vocational/ occupational training, continuous learning programmes	Cluster 1, 3, 4, 5, 8: Ecotourism development	SANParks, Department of Tourism, ECPTA, Department of Education.	CATHSSETA, SATSA, Department of Tourism
	Heritage Route Linkage											Route packaging and marketing, interpretation centre or information boards, guided tours	All clusters	SANParks, Department of Tourism, ECPTA, local communities.	ECPTA, ECPHRA, Department of Tourism, Department of Sports, Arts and Culture
	Infrastructure Expansion											Investment funding,	Cluster 4: Tourism	Ngxakoshe, Conservation	Government grants, NGOs (conservation)

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implementation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
												destination marketing		NGOs, Local Government	education funding)
	Responsible Visitor Management											Visitor management plan, access control, cultural code of conduct, educational programmes	Cluster 1, 3, 4, 5, 8: Ecotourism development	Department of Tourism, ECPTA, local government	ECPTA, Department of Tourism, Local and District Municipalities, Tourism Associations
	Community Tourism											Cultural immersive experiences, homestays, hiking trails, packaged tours	Cluster 3, 4, and 5.	Department of Tourism, ECPTA, local government	ECPTA, Department of Tourism, Local and District Municipalities, Tourism Associations
4. Social Licence and Legitimacy	Indigenous Knowledge Conservation Framework											Knowledge sharing platforms, change management, revised conservation framework	All clusters	GAA BEN Partners	Government grants
	Co-creation & Co-management of Resources											Co-management agreements and monitoring,	All clusters	SANParks, ECPTA, Traditional leaders and	SANParks, ECTPA, DALRRD

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implementation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
												exchange programmes, CPA board, CPA operational staff and training, CPA project plans & implementation		local communities.	
	Community Awareness on Wildlife Conservation											Awareness campaigns, educational materials	Clusters 1,3 and 7	SANParks; Addo Elephant National Park management; Witrivier CPA DRDLR; WRSA; Central Albany Farmers Association; Matjiesfontein; Peace & Parks forum in Salem Indyebo Trust; Yandella community Amahlathi/Amazizi TA SA Fine Tuned, Captone, Indwe Game Farm, Amathole	Government and international donors, private investment

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implementation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source		
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035						
																Forestry Company.	
5. Organisational Agility and Innovation	Strengthening governance structures and institutional frameworks to manage the GAA BEN												Capacity building, policy frameworks, collaborative platforms	All clusters	SANParks, ECPTA, Traditional leaders and local communities.	Government grants	
	Multi-Stakeholder Coordination and Partnerships												Technical committee and coordinators, information sharing and engagement platforms, feedback channels	All clusters	GAA BEN Partners	Government grants	
	Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring												Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Indicator Framework, Data Collection Tool, Annual Impact Assessment Reports, 3-year	All clusters	GAA BEN Partners	Government grants	

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implementation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
												comparative reports			
6. Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Responsiveness	Ecological Restoration and Climate Resilience											Technical expertise, funding, research partnerships	Cluster 5 and 7: Agri-forestry	Lowerbrink (Maqoma), SA Fine Tuned, Captone, Indwe Game Farm, Amathole Forestry Company. Amahl athi/Amazizi TA	Government grants, private investments
	Circular Economy and Waste Management											Investment, infrastructure, skills development	Cluster 5 and 7: Agri-forestry	Lowerbrink (Maqoma), SA Fine Tuned, Captone, Indwe Game Farm, Amathole Forestry Company. Amahl athi/Amazizi TA	Government grants, private investments
	Sustainable Agriculture Development											Training, investment funding, technical support	All clusters	SANParks, ECPTA, DALRRD, local communities.	Government grants, NGOs, private investment and donors.

Outcome	Output	Timeframe										Required Resources	Implemen- tation Cluster	Role-Players	Funding Source
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035				
	Sustainable Rangeland Management											Technical expertise, funding, community training	Cluster 2: Livestock Farming	Communities: Glennis Moyle, Kruisfontein, Longvale, Hopefield	Government grants, private investments, NGOs

5.2. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management (MEAM) framework for the GAA BEN ensures that all conservation, economic, tourism, governance, and sustainability initiatives are effectively tracked, assessed, and refined over time. This framework provides structured performance measurement, continuous learning, and informed decision-making to enhance long-term impact and resilience.

Table 24: Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Management

Outcome	Output	Key Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Reporting Mechanisms	Adaptive Management Processes
Sustainable and Integrated Conservation of Land and Seascapes	Integrated Land-Use Planning	Municipal SDFs prioritising protected areas and buffer areas	Review of local and district SDFs	Municipal public engagement sessions, town planning committees	Provisional inputs into SDFs and town planning approvals, EIA Applications or Objections
	Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Strategies	Number of poaching incidences managed, Number of animals caused damages managed	Incident and mitigation reporting	Monthly human-wildlife conflict reporting, managing committee/ task team	Improvement of Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Strategies, redefine the punishment vs benefits paradigm
	Protected Area Expansion Programme	Number of protected areas expanded; Reduction in habitat degradation.	Remote sensing, biodiversity surveys.	Quarterly conservation reports, annual biodiversity impact assessments.	Refinement of land-use planning, stakeholder engagement for land acquisition.
	Fire Management and Prevention Strategy	Number of fire incidents managed; Effectiveness of fire response.	Fire incident reports, satellite monitoring.	Annual fire management reviews.	Improvement of fire prevention strategies, investment in fire response training.

Outcome	Output	Key Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Reporting Mechanisms	Adaptive Management Processes
Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth	Back to School Programme	Number of students trained; Employment rates in biodiversity-related sectors.	Training records, employment statistics.	Bi-annual economic impact reviews.	Adjusting curriculum content, strengthening mentorship programmes.
	Enterprise Development and Capacity Building	Number of developed enterprises reaching maturity, Number of developed suppliers reaching maturity	Pre- and post-enterprise development evaluations	3-year enterprise development tracer studies	Enterprise and supplier development programme adjustments
	Wildlife Economy Development	Revenue from wildlife tourism; Community involvement in wildlife-based enterprises.	Financial reports, market analysis.	Annual wildlife economy performance reviews.	Investment in sustainable wildlife-based ventures, capacity building.
	Bioprospecting and Natural Product Development	Number of bioprospecting initiatives launched; Market value of developed products.	Research project tracking, market analysis.	Annual bioprospecting performance reports.	Strengthening research collaborations, improving market access.
	Marine Economy Development	Increase in sustainable fishing initiatives; Reduction in illegal fishing incidents.	Fisheries monitoring, compliance tracking.	Annual marine economy impact reports.	Refinement of marine resource management strategies, investment in sustainable practices.
Regenerative Tourism	Community-Owned Tourism Models	Number of beneficiaries in ownership/ benefit-sharing scheme	Concessionaire / operator monthly/ annual contractual feedback and reporting	Annual contract performance reports	Revision of contract management plan, adaptation of existing and future contracts.

Outcome	Output	Key Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Reporting Mechanisms	Adaptive Management Processes
	Tourism Skills Development and Training	Number of successful skills development programme participants, number of participants absorbed into the economy	Pre- and post-skills development evaluations	3 year skills development tracer studies	Adaptation of skills development programme, improvement of participants absorption rate
	Heritage Route Linkage	Number/ success of cultural/ heritage experiences associated with protected areas	Consumers experience feedback, awareness campaign/ study	Perception and awareness study	Improvement of experience, market access, marketing
	Infrastructure Expansion	Increase in ecotourism infrastructure; Visitor satisfaction rates.	Infrastructure development tracking, visitor surveys.	Annual tourism infrastructure reviews.	Adjusting investment strategies, enhancing visitor experiences.
	Responsible Visitor Management	Visitor numbers, visitor awareness level	Access control, feedback channel, incidences and complaints reporting	Monthly visitor numbers and feedback reporting	Revision of responsible visitor management approach
	Community Tourism	Number of successful community-based tourism activities	Pre- and post-development evaluations	Quarterly exchange platforms, 3 year development tracer studies	Improvement of experience, market access, marketing
	GAA BEN Brand and Marketing Strategy	Brand and marketing strategy developed Platform established An increase in brand awareness	Social media analytics Focus groups Surveys	Quarterly dashboards Multistakeholder feedback loops Digital portal	

Outcome	Output	Key Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Reporting Mechanisms	Adaptive Management Processes
		Number of participating partners Media reach through a sentiment analysis of brand mentions			
Social Licence and Legitimacy	Indigenous Knowledge Conservation Framework	Protected Areas with Indigenous Knowledge Conservation Framework	Establishment and monitoring of framework	Technical committees	Improved community relationships and social licence
	Co-creation & Co-management of Resources	Execution of co-management agreements	Monitoring and evaluation of co-management agreements	Annual performance reports	Application of MEAM per agreement
	Community Awareness on Wildlife Conservation	Number of outreach events; Change in community perception.	Surveys, participation records.	Bi-annual community engagement reports.	Strengthening educational outreach, improving communication strategies.
Organisational Agility and Innovation	Strengthening Governance Structures	Efficiency of governance mechanisms	Institutional audits, stakeholder meetings.	Annual governance performance reports.	Enhancing institutional coordination, streamlining decision-making.
	Multi-Stakeholder Coordination and Partnerships	Stakeholder engagement levels	Stakeholder engagement sessions and feedback channels	Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Plan	Revision of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Outcome	Output	Key Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Reporting Mechanisms	Adaptive Management Processes
	Biodiversity and Socio-Economic Impact Monitoring	Reduction in habitat degradation, Improvement of socio-economic status of targeted beneficiaries	Biodiversity awareness level, socio-economic impact survey	Annual Biodiversity Awareness and/or Socio-Economic Impact Report, 3- year comparative report	Application of MEAM for the GAA BEN
Sustainability and Resilience	Ecological Restoration and Climate Resilience	Number of restoration projects completed; Impact on ecosystem health.	Ecosystem health monitoring, restoration project tracking.	Annual climate resilience assessments.	Refining restoration techniques, strengthening climate adaptation measures.
	Circular Economy and Waste Management	Waste reduction rates; Number of recycling initiatives implemented.	Waste audits, project progress tracking.	Annual circular economy impact reports.	Scaling up recycling initiatives, improving infrastructure for waste management.
	Sustainable Agriculture Development	Adoption of climate-smart practices; Increase in sustainable agriculture outputs.	Farmer surveys, production tracking.	Annual agricultural sustainability reports.	Enhancing support for farmers, refining climate adaptation strategies.
	Sustainable Rangeland Management	Increase in sustainable grazing areas; Participation in carbon markets.	Market assessments, grazing monitoring.	Annual sustainability reports.	Refinement of livestock management strategies, improved market access support.

5.3. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is essential that effective governance and institutional arrangements be instituted and maintained if the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node is to be effectively established and developed over time. Such arrangements and the forums established must ensure participation by all key role players and stakeholders and must provide a platform for cooperation, collaboration and the provision of technical support and expertise to projects and other initiatives established under the auspices of the biodiversity economy node. There are examples of the types of institutional arrangements that have been established for other landscape-level biodiversity conservation initiatives that are relevant in this context, notably the Upper Umzimvubu Catchment Partnership, the arrangements established in support of the creation of the Grasslands National Park and those established in support of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) Cooperative Agreement. Through a review of these structures, recommended institutional arrangements have been developed for the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node (Figure 5).

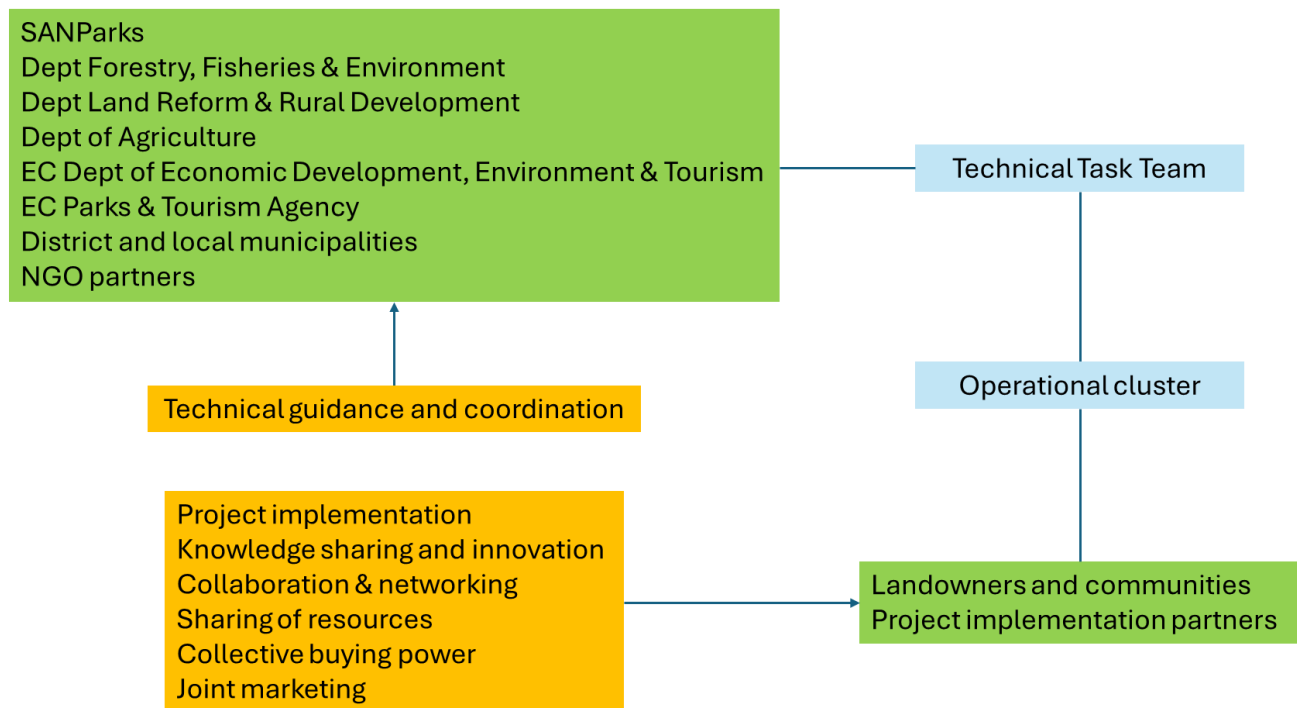


Figure 5: Institutional arrangements required to support the GAA BEN

5.3.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL TASK TEAM

It is proposed that a GAA BEN Technical Task Team be established as an important step towards enhancing biodiversity conservation and driving sustainable economic development in the region. The task team will address technical and operational challenges related to the BEN, natural resource management, conservation and community development. The following provides a Terms of reference for the proposed Technical Task Team.

Table 25: TOR for the GAA BEN Technical Task Team

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support for the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node. • Support project teams in the process to consult and engage with landowners, interested and affected parties and stakeholders in the landscape. • Provide technical data and guidance for decision-making on projects and initiatives. • Investigate opportunities for collaboration across the biodiversity economy node. • Assist in prioritising resourcing for project implementation and ongoing support. • Provide feedback and consider inputs to and from broader public forums (consisting of interested and affected parties and stakeholders). <p>Assist in identifying and accessing funding opportunities for supporting the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node.</p>
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<p>Composition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SANParks - DFFE - DEDEAT - ECPTA - NGO partners - District and local municipalities - Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) - Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) - Tourism Department - Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) - South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) <p>As and when required, the Task Team may invite other experts and various partners to present on technical matters relating to the establishment and development of the Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node and co-opted only where their role proves to be essential going forward.</p>
<p>Frequency and governance of meetings</p>	<p>The frequency of meetings is biannual, but should urgent matters arise, then extraordinary technical task team meetings may also be held.</p>
<p>Chairmanship</p>	<p>SANParks serves as a chairperson of all technical task team meetings and fulfils the administrative and secretarial role.</p>

5.3.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF OPERATIONAL CLUSTER FORUMS

to organise and streamline various activities it is proposed that each identified cluster have its own operational structure. The purpose of the operational clusters will include:

- **Knowledge aggregation and shared learning** – sharing of knowledge, development of best practices, sharing of insights and lessons learnt.

- **Increased efficiency and reduced costs** – sharing of resources, collective problem solving, joint marketing.
- **Innovation through collaboration** – cross-disciplinary collaboration and mentorship.
- **Collective voice** – advocating for joint issues.
- **Talent development and capacity building** – peer learning, mentorship and exposure to different areas of expertise.
- **Creating a network where individual contributions strengthen the whole.**

Examples of the need for such operational clusters include:


- **Wildlife economy:**
 - Removal of fences and consolidation of areas – creating larger connected areas in the landscape.
 - Shared resources and infrastructure – e.g., abattoirs, tanneries, staff, etc. – economies of scale.
 - Joint marketing:
- **Sustainable agriculture**
 - Shared resources – e.g., extension support.
 - Agricultural hubs – shared facilities, joint retail outlets (e.g., farm stalls) – economies of scale.
- **Restoration economy**
 - Shared resources – rehabilitation teams.
 - Collective projects – e.g., carbon projects.
 - Joint buying power.
- **Bioprospecting**
 - Hubs – shared facilities, joint retail outlets – economies of scale.
 - Joint buying power.

The following provides a Terms of reference for the proposed Technical Task Team for proposed Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Operational Clusters

Table 26: TOR for a proposed Greater Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economy Node Operational Clusters

<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate effective cooperation within operational clusters on matters of mutual interest. • Decisions shall be made by consensus. • There shall be a Chairman and Vice Chairman who shall be elected for the period of office by the other members of the operational cluster forum. • The forum shall meet not less than twice per annum. The meetings shall be held at any time and place convenient to members in the opinion of the Chairman and convened by the Chairman. • The forum shall be entitled to invite any other stakeholder or other suitably qualified person(s), to meetings. • Operational cluster forums shall co-operate with other operational cluster forums on matters of joint interest.
<p>Composition</p>	<p>The operational cluster forums shall consist primarily of local stakeholders, located within a cluster, supported by strategic partners from government, NGOs and the private sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landowners and land rights holders (e.g., CPAs) - Traditional authorities - District and local municipalities - Strategic partners, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs partners - SANParks - DEDEAT - ECPTA - Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) - Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) - Tourism Department - Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)

Frequency and governance of meetings	The frequency of meetings is biannual, but should urgent matters arise, then extraordinary technical task team meetings may also be held.
Chairmanship	The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall hold office for a period of two years but may stand for re-election for a further two years. Should either resign within that period the operational cluster members shall be entitled to elect a new Chairperson or Vice Chairperson to serve until the end of that office period.



SECTION 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The GAA BEN is positioned as one of the key drivers in South Africa's transition towards a regenerative and inclusive economy. The development of this node aligns with the SANParks Vision 2040, which represents a paradigm shift for which people are placed at the heart of conservation. Realising this vision requires deliberate and coordinated action. Strategic investments in regenerative tourism, sustainable agriculture, and conservation-led enterprises will be essential to unlocking long-term economic and environmental benefits. To achieve this, partnerships between government, private sector, local communities, and conservation agencies must be strengthened, to ensure that biodiversity economy opportunities are equitably distributed.

The recommendations that follow outline the key strategic actions needed to transform GAA BEN into a thriving biodiversity economy node.

Table 27: Recommendations

Category/zone	Strategic recommendations
Tourism / Recreation / Wildlife Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage partnerships between private reserves (e.g., Sable Rich Group, Cheetah Farm Rehabilitation) and community stakeholders to maximise conservation and tourism benefits. • Train local SMMEs in ecotourism, wildlife tracking, and hospitality to enhance service quality. • Strengthen wildlife corridors between key protected areas to enhance species movement, ecological integrity, and visitor experiences, while offering community-led wildlife monitoring programmes.
Agricultural Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote sustainable agriculture and mixed-use land practices to balance biodiversity conservation and economic development. This can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementing the Herding for Health model for sustainable livestock grazing in communities in clusters 2, 4, 5, and 8. ○ For large agricultural developments, encourage appropriate certification schemes, allowing for market-driven improvements to environmental management.

Category/zone	Strategic recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging appropriate bioprospecting activities based on ecological principles if harvesting within the natural environment is enabled (e.g. Aloe ferox harvesting). • Invest in research on biodiversity-agriculture integration and climate resilience, informing policy decisions and adaptive farming strategies in response to climate variability.
Marine Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish small-scale fishery development zones along the coast, supporting community-based fisheries with infrastructure, training, and regulatory compliance frameworks. • Develop regional fish processing hubs, ensuring value-added opportunities for local fishers and linking them to premium seafood markets. • Promote coastal tourism diversification, linking marine-based experiences (e.g., guided estuarine tours, marine wildlife excursions) with broader regional tourism marketing strategies. • Strengthen partnerships for Blue Flag beach certification, ensuring coastal ecosystem protection while enhancing the tourism appeal of key coastal destinations.
Urban Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position urban areas (e.g., Gqeberha and peri-urban hubs) as enablers of the biodiversity economy, integrating urban greening initiatives, eco-cultural tourism, and sustainable livelihoods.
Cross-Cutting Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration between key institutions, including SANParks, ECPTA, DRDLR, DFFE, DEDEAT, municipalities, and local communities, to ensure coordinated implementation of the Master Plan. • Enhance the role of CPAs and traditional authorities in decision-making processes related to land use and economic development.

Category/zone	Strategic recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed climate adaptation and risk mitigation strategies across all land-use planning processes, ensuring resilience against climate variability and extreme weather events.

For GAA BEN to realise its full potential, long-term institutional commitment, community engagement, and investment in biodiversity-based enterprises will be essential. The node's rich natural capital, strategic location, and cultural heritage provide a strong foundation for a thriving biodiversity economy that can serve as a model for similar landscape initiatives across South Africa.

Looking ahead, the success of GAA BEN will not be measured solely by conservation gains, but by its ability to transform livelihoods, empower local communities, and create a more resilient and inclusive economy. The opportunity now is to move from planning to action, to translate Vision 2040 into a tangible, lasting impact.



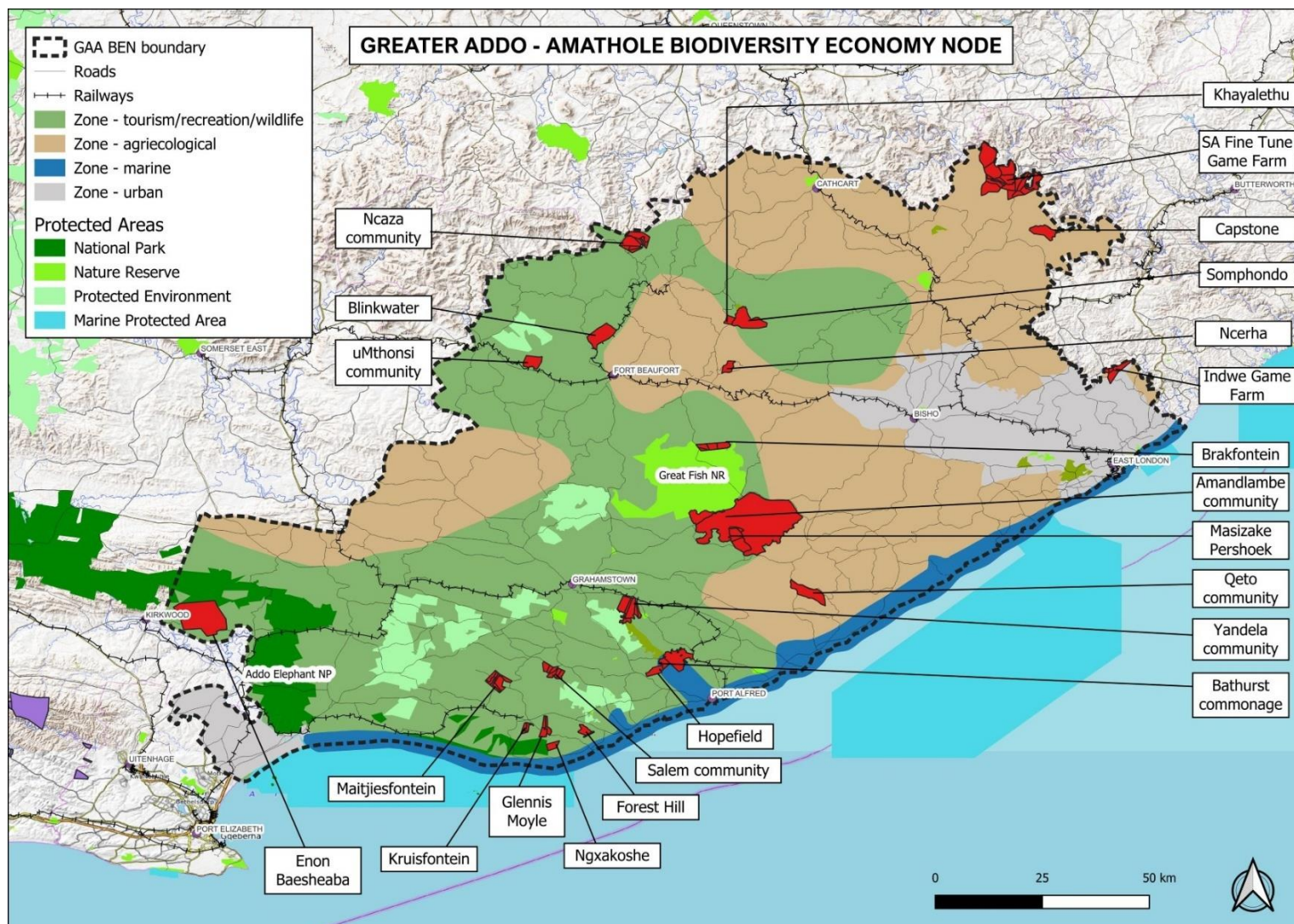
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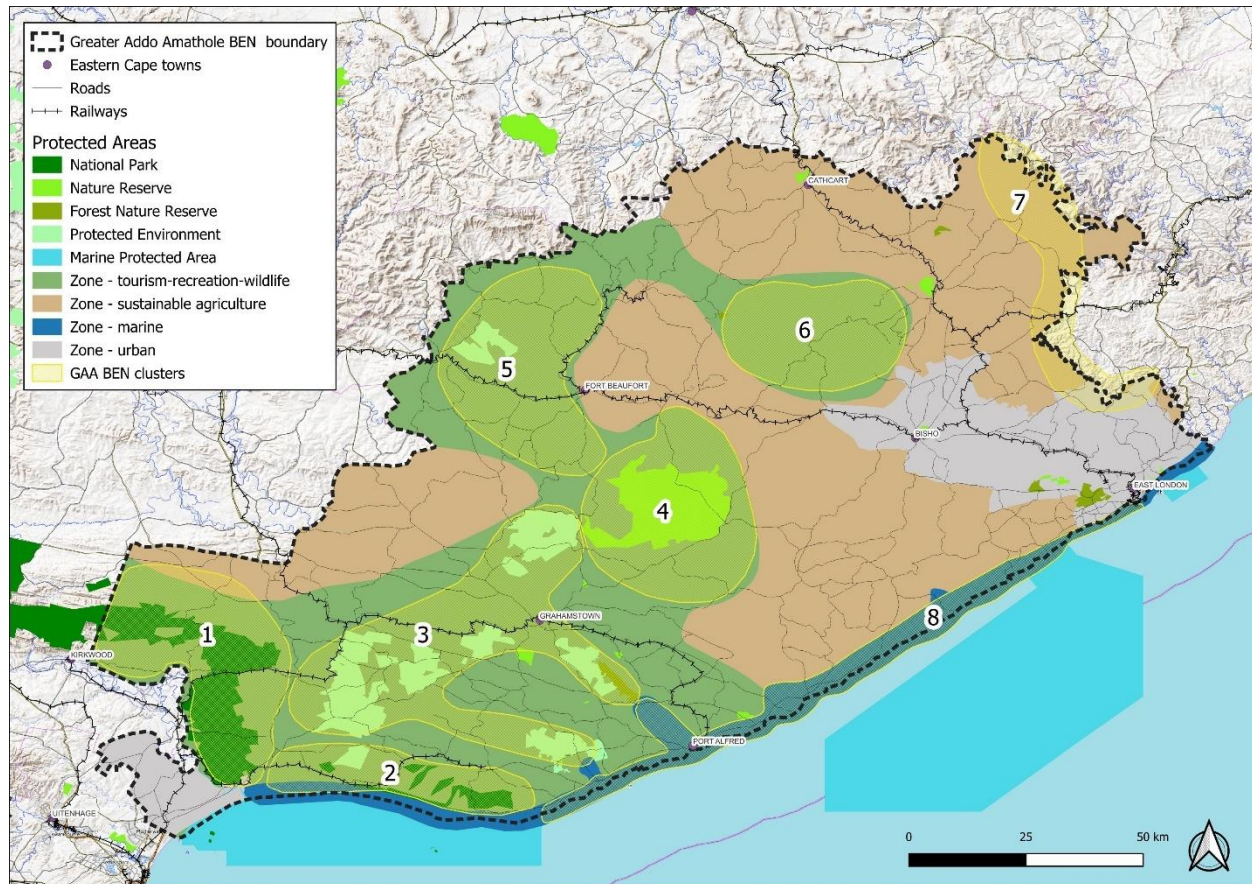
ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: BEN SPATIAL CLUSTER OPPORTUNITIES



Map 19: Community sites in the different opportunity zones across the GAA BEN

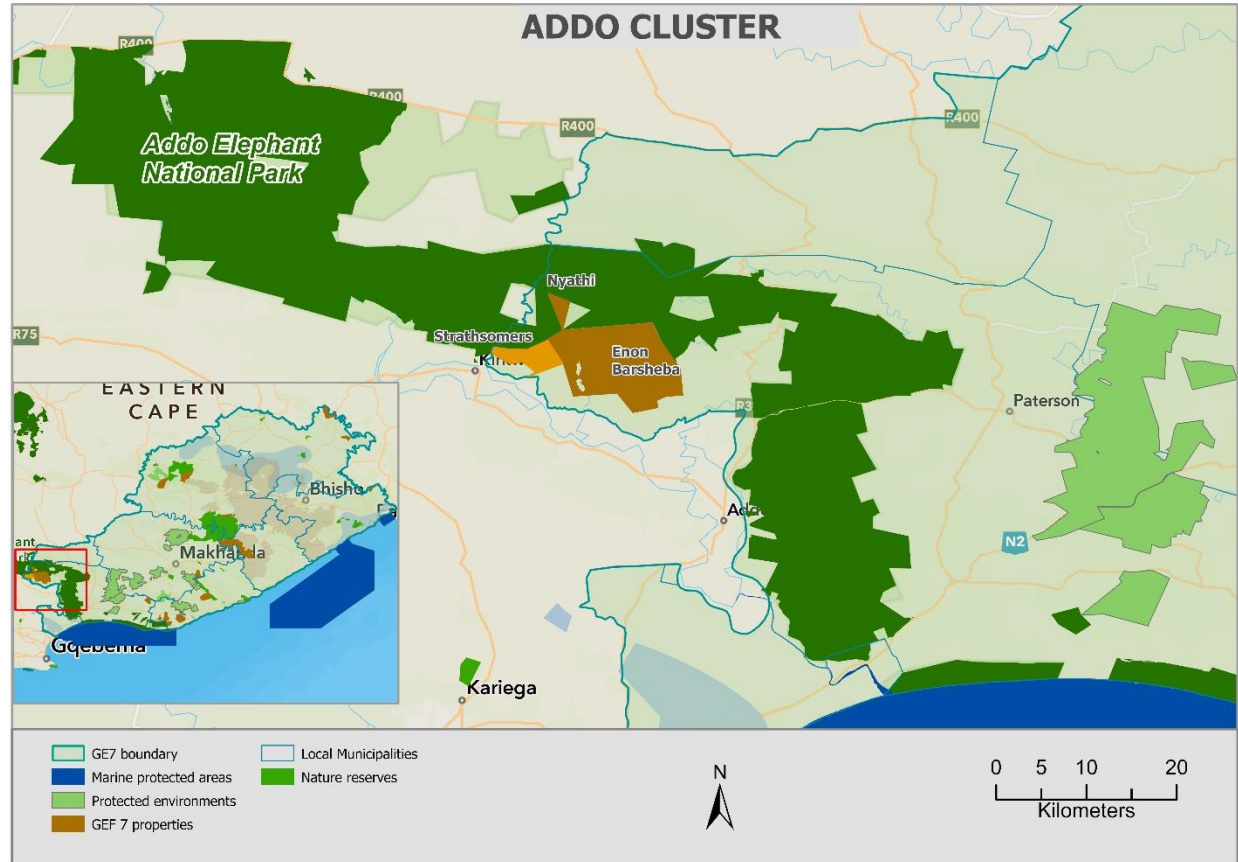
Following the development of broad spatial zones across the GAA BEN, specific “clusters” were then proposed as a means of creating meaningful and viable collaborations, utilising existing relationships and partnerships to enable implementation at a local level. These initial clusters were presented at a Multistakeholder Forum meeting in Port Alfred on 6 February 2025. The inputs from stakeholders were then integrated into the spatial planning, resulting in an updated “cluster” layout, as shown in Map 20120 below.



Map 2012: Land-use planning zones within the GAA BEN

8.1.1.1. CLUSTER 1 - ADDO CLUSTER

This cluster is centred around the Addo Elephant National Park, and takes advantage of the National Park attraction, and the extensive ecotourism activities within and around the National Park. The biodiversity economy activities associated with this cluster include ecotourism development, with the associated development of SMMEs providing facilities or services within the hospitality industry.



Map 131: Addo cluster

ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK ABATTOIR AND MEAT PROCESSING FACILITY

A feasibility study and business plan are to be developed for an abattoir and meat processing facility in Addo Elephant National Park. SANParks needs to appoint the preferred service provider and procure the project through the World Bank. Part of the feasibility study will include assessing existing infrastructure.

ENON BARSHEABA

Community history

Enon Barsheaba is a small town and is named after the biblical place mentioned in John in 1818 by the Moravian Missionary Society to serve as a buffer between the Xhosa, Tembu and Fingo tribes living outside the Cape Colony and the European farmers and towns inside the Cape Colony. The community land was granted to the Missionary Society in trust, to be administrated on behalf of the Cape Colony in

the interests of residents of the missionary station. The community land is adjacent to the Addo Elephant National Park and in centre of a billion-rand citrus area which immerse potential for the community.

Project support package from SANParks

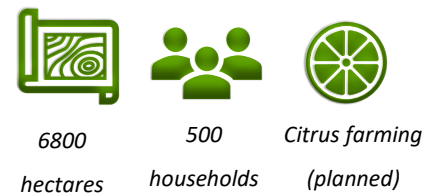
- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Resource mobilisation/ catalysing finance for infrastructure and business support
- Business plans for planned ventures
- Management plans through Biodiversity stewardship – sustainable grazing and livestock production
- Market access for current activities



Figure 6: Enon Barsheaba

WITRIVIER CPA (ENON BARSHEABA)

The site in question spans 6800 hectares and accommodates 500 households. The land has officially been titled, providing clear ownership and rights for its intended development. A variety of activities have been planned for the site, including the establishment of citrus farming operations, alongside sand and gravel mining. The remaining area will be designated for conservation purposes, ensuring a balance between productive land use and environmental protection.



Governance of the site is in the process of being strengthened, with a new committee being appointed to oversee operations. This committee is also tasked with the development of a comprehensive business plan, which will guide the site's future activities and management. This structured approach is aimed at promoting sustainable development and ensuring the long-term viability of the land's various uses.

8.1.1.2. CLUSTER 2 - WOODY CAPE CLUSTER

This cluster is centred around the Woody Cape section of the Addo Elephant National Park. Several land reform properties are being developed within this area, with the possibility of linking them as corridors to the AENP Woody Cape section. Due to the small size of the properties and the historical transformation of many of these areas, support should be provided to these landowners in developing sustainable livestock grazing initiatives, linking them to viable livestock markets. This could be supplemented by secondary processing such as tanneries or the development of small-scale ecotourism facilities in the intact thicket vegetation (such as the Africamp model).

GLENNIS MOYLE

Glennis Moyle is a 765-hectare farm managed by the Ilifaletu Co-operative, which comprises eight beneficiaries. The farm engages in both crop and livestock farming, although a significant portion of the land (i.e. approximately 538 hectares) remains underutilised. Recent efforts have focused on vegetable farming, with 30 hectares prepared for maize cultivation. However, concerns have been raised about the short growing season, which affects the crop's viability. The farm has also experimented with chicory cultivation. In addition to crops, livestock farming plays a key role in operations, with cattle, goats, and pigs being raised on-site. There is also a local market for poultry, presenting an opportunity for small-scale commercial expansion.



765
hectares



Ilifaletu
Cooperative



8
beneficiaries



Livestock
farming



Crop
farming

The long-term vision for Glennis Moyle is to develop it into a financially sustainable agricultural enterprise that provides a stable income for its beneficiaries. To achieve this, efforts are being directed towards addressing vegetation and alien plant infestations to make more land available for productive use. Expanding market access is also a priority to ensure improvements in sales and profitability. Youth involvement in farming activities is also noted as a priority, both to secure long-term sustainability and to facilitate skills transfer to the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs.

KRUISFONTEIN FARM

The Kruisfontein Emerging Cattle Farmers Co-operative, located in the Eastern Cape, initiated the Kruisfontein Emerging Cattle Farmers Herd Improvement Programme in 2016. This initiative was funded by an enterprise development programme with the primary objective of enhancing the genetic quality of their cattle herd. The project aimed to transform the co-operative's herd from poor genetic quality and low-value animals to superior quality and high-value animals. The funding facilitated the acquisition of superior genetic bulls, a crucial step toward achieving this goal.



Photo 1: Kruisfontein Farm

Source: Jeffreys Bay Windfarm, 2018

Since the introduction of the new superior bulls, the Co-operative has observed significant improvements in their cattle. The first crop of calves, now reaching weaning weight, demonstrates marked increases in quality and vigour. These calves weigh substantially more than those sired by the previous inferior bulls, with an average weight of 190 to 220kg at seven months, compared to the previous range of 130 to 170kg for calves of the same age (Jeffreys Bay Windfarm, 2018).

The programme has also positively impacted productivity metrics, such as the number of female animals in calf, calving rates, mortality rates, and weaning percentages. Since the programme's inception, approximately 100 calves have been born, and 195 cows have been confirmed in calf to the new bulls. The success of the programme is evident through measurable outcomes, such as birth weight and weaning weight comparisons between the programme's calves and those from other rural herds. This structured approach to management has also improved the overall conception rates. The Eastern Cape, known for being the country's premier livestock province, faced challenges due to drought. However, the co-operative's decision to replace their own bulls with eight new superior bulls has positioned them to meet the 'Beef and Droughtmasters standards.'

Provincial government support and the development of niche markets in high-value meat cuts further bolster the Co-operative's efforts. These markets are now more accessible to local farmers due to the improved genetics of their herds.

LONGVALE FARM

Longvale Farm, governed by the Indiwabo Farming Trust with 9 beneficiaries, spans 557 hectares. The farm is comprised of 160 hectares of cultivated land and the remainder as natural veld. Of the cultivated portion, 155 hectares are used for grazing, while five hectares are allocated to crop farming. Historically, the farm produced chicory and currently supports livestock farming, including approximately 80 head of cattle (of which only 13 belong to the Trust) as well as goat farming. Previous agricultural efforts have included vegetable cultivation, where potatoes were successful, but maize failed due to drought. An attempt at pig farming also proved unsuccessful. The Trust aims to enhance the farm's productivity by producing hay for livestock feed, ensuring a sustainable fodder supply.



557
hectares



Indiwabo
Farming



Livestock
farming



Crop
farming

Despite its potential, Longvale Farm faces several challenges, including limited farming expertise and a lack of knowledge in animal husbandry, which has led to an ageing cattle population. Further, the encroachment of woody acacia species threatens grazing land, and multiple unsuccessful farming ventures have impacted progress. However, the Trust envisions a financially sustainable future through viable agricultural enterprises. Key to this vision is the revival of a previously operational butchery, which could serve as a significant revenue stream. There is also consideration of reinstating yoghurt production, which was once sold through the butchery, as a means of generating income and improving market access.

HOPEFIELD

Hopefield Farm, a 700-hectare property, was acquired by DALRRD to support livestock farming. Its effective utilisation has been hindered by several challenges, including the absence of proper fencing and infrastructure has led to issues such as poaching, vandalism, and a general lack of control over the land. These challenges have made livestock management difficult, particularly in maintaining the necessary separation between cattle and wildlife.



700
hectares

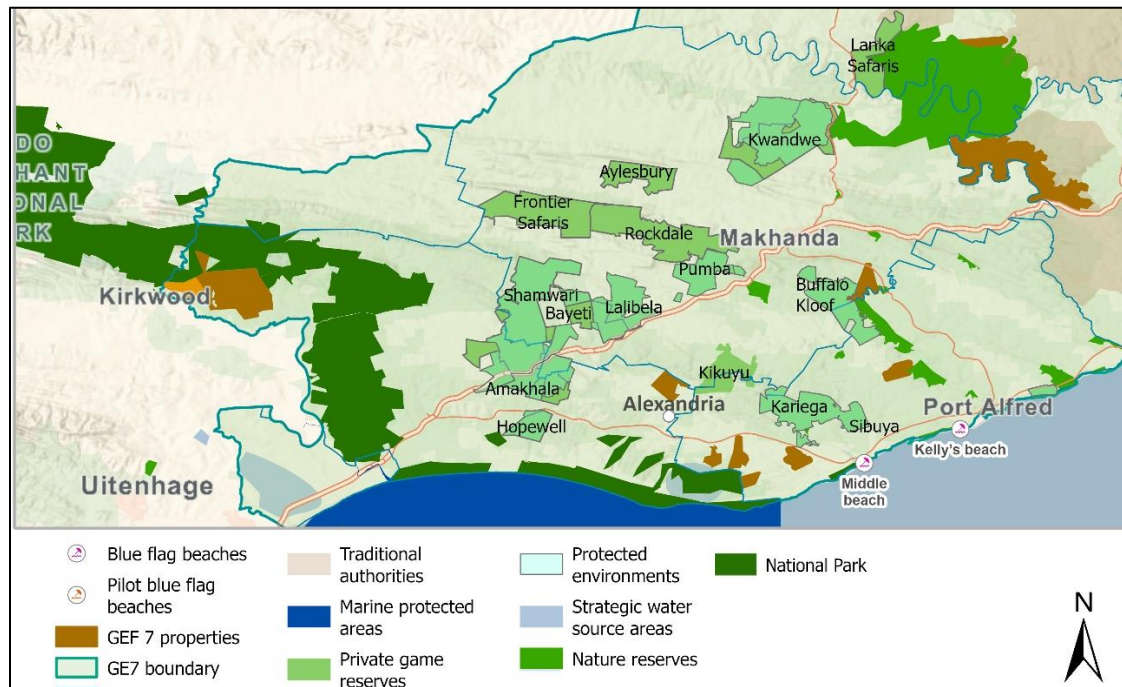


Livestock
farming

Historically, the farm was used for hunting, and relationships with hunters remain in place. However, its current poor condition has severely impacted the viability of hunting activities. To revitalise the land, a structured governance framework and a comprehensive business plan are required, particularly one that integrates both wildlife and livestock farming. The long-term vision for the property includes the establishment of a wildlife economy venture, incorporating lodges, improved fencing, and the revival of commercial hunting operations. The farm has the potential to develop into a sustainable enterprise that balances agricultural productivity with conservation and tourism opportunities.

8.1.1.3. CLUSTER 3 - INDALO CLUSTER

This cluster is centred around the privately-owned properties of the Indalo Protected Environment, extending along two inland-to-coast corridors, the one being between Lalibelela and Kariega, through the Tanglewood property, while the other being the linkage through Buffalokloof Protected Environment to Bathurst. The biodiversity economy activities will focus on protected area establishment, together with the associated activities of ecotourism and game management. This will include the integration of community-owned land into these new protected areas and ownership structures that allow them to be shareholders in the benefits of these initiatives. This will be accompanied by extensive training opportunities through a newly established conservation training facility just outside Makhanda (managed by the SA Wildlife College and the Kariega Foundation).



Map 22: Indlalo cluster

YANDELLA FARM

Community history

The Yendela Community is an LRAD beneficiary and occupies a property adjoining the Buffalo Kloof Conservancy. In 2015, the community to incorporate a section of their land into the conservancy – an area of pristine, biodiverse Albany Thicket on steep land unsuited to agriculture. The resulting long-term lease agreement has created a mutually beneficial relationship between Buffalo Kloof and the Yendela Community. The community currently has a dragon fruit farm, a piggery, vegetable gardens and a small poultry farm.

Project support package by ECPTA

- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Tannery feasibility study
- Chilli Farm
- Small Grant- Furnishing and refurbishing of existing guesthouse
- Biodiversity stewardship and sustainable livestock and crop farming



Figure 7: Yendela Farm project details

BATHURST COMMONAGE

Bathurst Commonage, located in the Ndlambe Municipality, spans approximately 800 hectares and serves a variety of purposes, including livestock grazing and waste disposal. However, the management of the commonage faces several challenges, primarily due to the lack of an overarching

management plan. The municipality has not consistently implemented lease agreements, and there is



insufficient accountability in managing the area, which has led to safety concerns. Livestock, if not properly managed, often escape and roam onto public roads, resulting in impoundments that require owners to cover the cost of retrieving their animals. Additionally, the commonage has become a site for both legal and illegal waste dumping, exacerbating waste management issues. The presence of invasive species, such as Lantana and Inkberry, further complicates the land's upkeep.

To address these issues, it is crucial to strengthen partnerships between the key stakeholders, including the Ndlambe Municipality, livestock owners, and other user groups. Each group currently operates independently with its own committees, but there is a need for greater collaboration and shared responsibility. Establishing a representative management committee, composed of members from each interest group, would provide the necessary governance to ensure more effective management. The municipality must also take a more proactive role, improving communication and awareness among the different user groups and facilitating skills transfer, particularly between livestock owners and medicinal healers. Moving forward, the vision for Bathurst Commonage is to transition towards commercial livestock farming, requiring more structured and cooperative land management practices.





MATJESFONTEIN FARM

Community history

Longvale is an LRAD farm obtained in 2002 for 16 beneficiaries at the time, most of them were employed by the previous owner of the farm. The community currently engages in chicory and vegetable farming. In Addition, they own over 100 cattle. Contrary to the successful farming activities, the farm is very impoverished and lacks proper housing.

Project support package by SANParks

- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Management plans through Biodiversity stewardship for sustainable grazing
- Market access to current activities
- Grant funding/ resources mobilised for extension of game fence
- Introduction of game for mixed wildlife ranching

	Land area	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES  Agriculture
	556 Hectares	
	Legal entity	
	Indyebo Trust	
	Beneficiaries	
	9 households	

AMATHOLE HUB

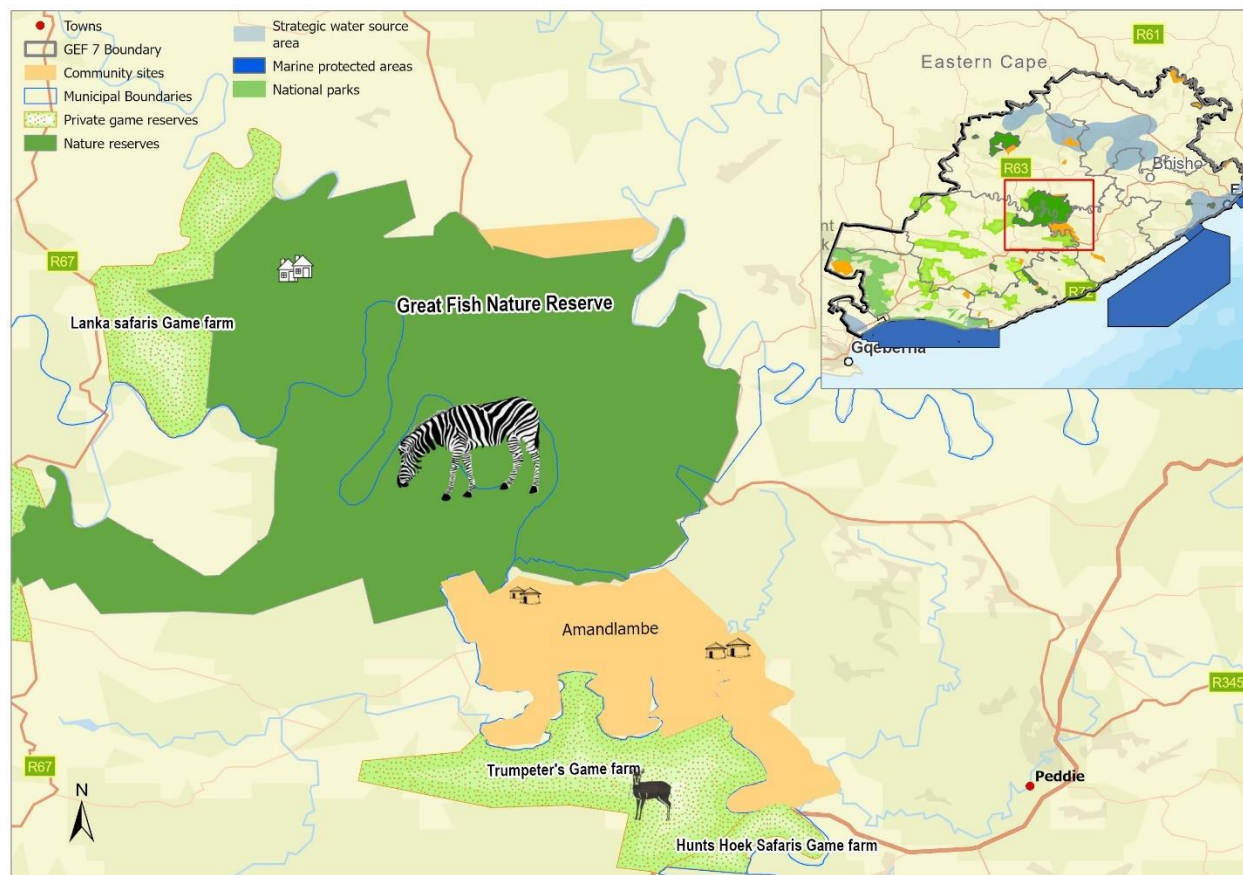
The Amathole Hub, strategically positioned along the Fish River, is an initiative with a strong emphasis on youth development, tourism, and sustainable agricultural practices. The tourism and hospitality sector of the project envisions the development of accommodation facilities catering to hunters from neighbouring commercial farms. With the support of the DFFE and SANParks, there are plans to revitalise chalets, though a bankable business plan remains essential. Additionally, there is a need for training in homestay tourism initiatives to enhance community participation. The project aims to establish a link to a mountain cave trail, further boosting eco-tourism potential. Collaborative efforts with SANParks and the ECPTA are being sought to strengthen these developments.

Beyond tourism, the project has significant potential in game farming, aquaculture, and agriculture. There is notable community interest in game farming, alongside an exploratory initiative in trout farming. In agriculture, 120 hectares of pomegranates are under cultivation, though the trees require urgent rehabilitation. Moreover, a revival of the water licence is crucial for effective irrigation, particularly to support the potential cultivation of 150 hectares of lucerne. Small-scale vegetable farming, currently led by local women, presents an opportunity for expansion in collaboration with other Traditional Authorities. The area's strong potential for irrigated agriculture underscores the need for commercial development

within a structured value chain, ensuring long-term sustainability and economic growth for the community.

8.1.1.4. CLUSTER 4 - GREAT FISH CLUSTER

This cluster is centred around the Great Fish Nature Reserve, managed by ECPTA. The biodiversity economy activities will focus on the inclusion of community land into the protected area where possible, allowing ecotourism and wildlife management activities, taking advantage of the cultural heritage sites within the area. This will be supplemented by the development of sustainable bioprospecting activities, beekeeping and small scale farming, specifically within the Tyrefu community.



Map 2314: Great Fish cluster

BRAKFONTEIN - HUNTING AND GAME MEAT PROCESSING

The infrastructure at Brakfontein is complete, with R300 000 worth of furniture donated by the Indalo Association. Operational start-up capital and a management/governance structure, including a business

plan, are in place to commence operations. The aim is to mentor the community to operationalise their business, avoiding the creation of a "white elephant".

SANParks will collaborate with Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA) to get the project running. ECPTA will act as a transactional advisor, reserving resources for the project.



Photo 2: Hunting and Game Meat Processing facility

BRAKFORTEIN (LIKHALETHU)

Brakfontein Nature Reserve, situated in Alice in the Eastern Cape, spans approximately 1400 hectares and is managed under the governance of Likhalethu CPA. The reserve's administration is overseen by a committee comprising 12 members, with five executive members elected in 2018. Efforts are currently underway to have the area formally declared a protected reserve. Wildlife conservation remains a key focus, and the reserve has benefited from game donations facilitated by the ECPTA, including buffalo populations consisting of two bulls and three cows. However, challenges persist, particularly concerning infrastructure, as the fencing remains incomplete in its first phase. This presents potential difficulties in introducing additional species to the reserve.



1400
hectares



Likhalethu
CPA



264
beneficiaries



Livestock
farming



Tourism

Funding for the reserve is supported by the GEF, which is contributing to planned developments such as the construction of an abattoir and the introduction of tree chalets to enhance tourism offerings. Collaboration with Kariega Game Reserve is also strengthening conservation efforts, while the local municipality is providing assistance in training personnel. Employment initiatives are in place, with rangers and a reserve manager already engaged, although further measures are needed to boost security, particularly in addressing anti-poaching requirements. The reserve's ongoing development and

partnerships aim to ensure its long-term sustainability while creating economic and environmental benefits for the local community.

MHALA TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

Community history

The Mhala traditional council comprises 60% royal members and 40% appointed community members. Mhala Great Place, the royal home of chief Makinana is in Ndlambe Location, a village 30km from Peddie. This area bears the brunt of the Eastern Cape wars of dispossession spanning from 1779 to 1878. This era marked a challenging period for the Xhosa people, as colonial frontiers were fortified to displace the native inhabitants from their traditional lands. The area and chieftaincy hold cultural significance that can be developed into a potential tourism offering, creating a cultural hub within the node that connects to the areas in the AENP where the frontier was extended.

Project support package by SANParks

- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Grant funding- Furniture and refurbishment of existing Huts for tourist accommodation
- Enhance tourist activities on offer
- Biodiversity stewardship and business plans for current activities

	Legal entity Traditional Authority	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES  Fishing
	Beneficiaries 4 Villages	 Tourism  Crafts  Agriculture

8.1.1.5. CLUSTER 5 - FRONTEIR CLUSTER

This cluster is focused to the west of the Amathole mountains, with several community land reform properties, integrated within a number of conservancies. The primary biodiversity economy activities will include the development of small-scale agriculture (specifically bioprospecting), agri-forestry and tourism (specifically adventure and cultural tourism). These activities should integrate into the conservancy

structure to enable activities at scale and provide additional opportunities around wildlife management (game meat, abattoirs, hunting).



LOWERBLINK WATER - MAQOMA

Community history

The community is a small village in Maqoma, which was a private farm that was later bought for the dwellers as part of the LRAD programme. The land is under custodianship of chief Maqoma, the descent of the fallen Chief Maqoma, the warrior of the War of Mlanjeni, formerly known as the Eighth Frontier War. During the War of Mlanjeni (1850-53), Maqoma used his expertise as a general and strategist to lead a guerrilla war in the forested mountains and valleys of the Waterkloof to defend the land of his forefathers against the skilled colonial army of Britain.

Project support package by ECPTA

- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Management plans through Biodiversity stewardship for sustainable grazing
- Market access to current activities
- Grant funding/ resources mobilised for extension of game fence
- Introduction of game for mixed wildlife ranching

	Land area 2200 Hectares	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES 
	Legal entity Traditional Authority	
	Beneficiaries 2 Villages	

8.1.1.6. CLUSTER 6 - AMATHOLE CLUSTER

The Amathole Cluster is centred around the Amathole Mountains, a region rich in biodiversity, cultural heritage, and economic potential. This cluster focuses on bioprospecting, agri-forestry, and tourism as key drivers of sustainable development, leveraging the natural and cultural assets of the area. The anchor

project for this cluster is agri-tourism, which integrates agriculture with tourism to create immersive experiences that support local livelihoods and conservation efforts.

Secondary projects include bioprospecting, which explores the commercial potential of indigenous plants and natural resources, as well as agri-forestry, livestock agriculture, and the development of a tannery to support value-added production. These initiatives provide a diversified economic base, ensuring resilience and long-term sustainability.

The cluster presents a wide range of opportunities, including wildlife-related enterprises, the establishment of an abattoir to support livestock farming, and the development of hiking trails and adventure tourism activities. Cultural tourism is also a key focus, offering visitors unique experiences rooted in the traditions of local communities. Additional opportunities include beekeeping, which supports both biodiversity and local economies, as well as the establishment of ecotourism lodges to cater to visitors seeking sustainable travel experiences in the Amathole Mountains.

SOMPONDO COMMUNITY

Sompondo is a village within the Amakhuzeni Tribal Authority, located in Alice, Eastern Cape province. This region, historically significant for its ties to the Xhosa people and early missionary activities, receives 450 to 600 mm of rainfall annually and has average temperatures ranging from 19°C in winter to 28°C in summer. The local vegetation includes Amathole Montane Grassland, Bisho Thornveld, and Eastern Cape Escarpment Thicket (Finca et al, 2023).

Agriculture is the dominant activity in Sompondo. Grazing practices, involving both herded and free ranging cattle, focus on areas near homesteads, arable fields, and the communal rangelands' foothills and slopes. This agricultural emphasis is crucial for the local economy and sustenance.

Alice, the nearest town, is notable for housing Fort Hare, the first black university in Africa, which has educated many prominent African leaders. The district around Alice is known for producing wool, mohair, citrus, tobacco, timber, livestock, and milk, indicating a robust agricultural heritage that extends to villages like Sompondo.

Sompondo is also part of the GAA BEN initiative through the integration of the Sompondo Community site, which spans 2 194 hectares.

CAPE PARROT PROJECT

The Cape Parrot Project is a vital initiative aimed at restoring forests and conserving the critically endangered Cape parrot, which boasts a population of fewer than 2 000. This endeavour, a partnership between the Cape Parrot Project, the Wild Bird Trust, and Fairtree, focuses on restoring yellowwood trees, the primary habitat for the Cape parrot, in the Amathole Mountains of the Eastern Cape. The project empowers community members to collect, plant, and germinate seeds, nurturing the trees until they are suitable for replanting in degraded areas. This is achieved through the establishment of local tree nurseries. This initiative not only provides a habitat for the parrots but also offers a source of income for 28 community growers (Ngcuka, 2022).



Photo 6: Cape Parrot and some project team members

According to the project director, the project has three primary objectives: conducting research on the parrots, reforesting their habitat, and empowering the community. The historical logging that destroyed the parrots' habitat over a century ago has necessitated long-term efforts to restore these forests, with yellowwoods taking 50 to 100 years to grow. The project's success hinges on community involvement, which has led to the establishment of micro-nurseries and community nurseries equipped with water tanks to mitigate water shortages (Ngcuka, 2022). By buying back seedlings from community members, the project not only sustains the community but also helps conserve the Cape parrot population by reducing poaching incidents through increased community awareness and involvement.

The project's emphasis on restoring indigenous trees and empowering local communities aligns the GAA BEN's broader environmental and socio-economic goals. Thus, by educating the community on the importance of indigenous plants and trees and their role in maintaining ecological balance, the project promotes sustainable practices that can be replicated across the region. Additionally, the project's efforts to manage alien vegetation and plant indigenous trees support the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's mandate to monitor and preserve forests.

KHAYA LETHU

Khaya Lethu is a community-driven initiative that integrates poultry farming, livestock farming (sheep), and beekeeping. Despite strong cohesion among community members, market access remains a significant challenge. This necessitates a need for a comprehensive land use management plan to ensure

long-term sustainability. One of the critical issues affecting the initiative is the absence of a clear governance structure, which has led to conflicting land use. Some grazing areas have been allocated for housing, reducing the available land for livestock farming and threatening the viability of agricultural activities. The poultry farming enterprise is managed by 8 cooperative members, operating a single chicken house dedicated to meat production. Livestock farming consists of 22 members collectively owning 400 sheep, although the animals are only brought together for shearing, and management remains largely independent. Ultimately, wool is sold as means to generate revenue. Beekeeping is conducted by 5 business members under the Tshuma Valley initiative, utilising 10 hives donated by the municipality.



*Poultry farming
managed by 8
members of a
cooperative*



*Livestock
farming (sheep)
managed by 22*



*Citrus farming
managed by 5
members*

While these ventures have significant potential, the community faces several persistent challenges. Access to reliable markets remains a major constraint, limiting growth opportunities. Unpredictable weather patterns negatively affect livestock and crop productivity, while security concerns and inadequate fencing further undermine the sustainability of farming operations. Nevertheless, Khaya Lethu remains a resilient community committed to overcoming these obstacles. Their cooperative approach demonstrates the potential for sustainable development, provided that governance structures, land use management, and market access issues are effectively addressed.

8.1.1.7. CLUSTER 7 - STUTTERHEIM CLUSTER

This cluster is focused along the Kei River, north-west of East London. The biodiversity economy activities will focus on wildlife management, specifically game ranching and hunting (including trophy hunting). This will be supplemented by agri-forestry and tourism (adventure tourism, hiking trails, freshwater fishing and cultural tourism).

SA FINE TUNED

SA Fine Tuned, a privately owned company and a member representative of WRSA, is actively pursuing a lease arrangement with the DRDLR for the use of its land. This process, which has spanned eight years, could have benefited from a more expedited approach. Having completed the planning stage, the project is currently at the bidding phase, with R20 million in EPIP funding already secured to support its development.

The project is awaiting the issuance of a Certificate of Adequate Enclosure, which will only be granted once the fencing is complete. Commitments from SANParks and ECPTA have ensured game donations, and the necessary Environmental Impact Assessment has been concluded. Planned developments include a lodge, a game meat abattoir, and tented camps, which align with the company's vision to commercialise agricultural practices. Further, the project takes into account the ESTA rights of former labour tenants, with two families directly involved in its implementation, ensuring both social and economic considerations are addressed.



AMATHOLE FORESTRY COMPANY

Amathole Forestry Company manages an extensive 14 700-hectare area of forestry land under a lease agreement with the state, with rental payments directed to the government. However, not all of this land is utilised for forestry, with 11 000 hectares remaining unplanted. Furthermore, the leased land is subject to claims by various Traditional Authorities (TAs), adding a layer of complexity to its management. Despite



14700
hectares



Forestry



1500 employed
in silviculture
and sawmilling

these challenges, the company remains committed to sustainable operations while navigating the intricate land tenure arrangements.

A crucial aspect of the company's operations is its engagement with the 85 communities surrounding its holdings. To enhance cooperation, dedicated committees and liaison structures have been established, ensuring effective communication and mutual support. These initiatives include awareness and education campaigns, as well as controlled grazing programmes aimed at mitigating fire risks. The company also plays a significant role in local employment, providing jobs to approximately 1 500 people in silviculture and sawmilling. However, arson fires pose a persistent challenge, with as many as 20 incidents occurring within a single week. Given these risks, the company's ability to function effectively is linked to maintaining strong relationships with the local communities, whose support is essential for sustainable operations.

CAPSTONE

Capstone Farm was established by Ms Ellinah Nomanesi Ndevu, a resilient entrepreneur from Coffee Bay, Mqanduli. After a successful career in construction, during which she founded and expanded Capstone 1248cc, Ellinah transitioned into farming in 2015. She initially began with a small herd of cattle before expanding her operations in 2018 by leasing Farms Garland No. 181 and Kirby No. 181 in Stutterheim RD.



CAPSTONE FARM
Nearest Town: Stutterheim Eastern Cape

The expansion of the property towards a total of 5 000 hectares is progressing steadily, with an additional 1 600 hectares earmarked for acquisition. Plans are also in place to secure another state farm and establish a conservancy in collaboration with neighbouring properties to enhance wildlife ranching. Currently covering 1 590 hectares, the property has been stocked with wildlife through game donations from the ECPTA since 2020. However, there is a prevailing concern that the land remains under-stocked, highlighting the need for further wildlife introductions.

A key element of the project is the development of a 12-bedroom lodge designed to accommodate up to 24 guests, primarily targeting international hunters. The property focuses on game farming, particularly trophy hunting, with key species including blesbok, hartebeest, and a small number of buffalo. Under the

management of an experienced farm manager specialising in wildlife ranching and hunting, the property continues to face challenges, particularly conflicts with neighbouring landowners when buffalo escape. Additionally, poaching has become an increasing concern, with incidents involving snaring and dog hunting. A lack of awareness among poachers regarding the economic and ecological value of wildlife exacerbates the issue, and evidence suggests that poaching spikes during school holidays, often involving schoolchildren.

INDWE GAME FARM

Game farm history

One of the beneficiaries of Land Reform, Mr Litha Makubalo is passionate about conservation and game farming. Mr Makubalo frequently participates in game auctions and has benefited from the game donation programme to transition from a cattle to a mixed cattle-game farm. Furthermore, he has installed his own game fence and refurbished the infrastructure.

	Land area 1209 Hectares	GAME FARM ACTIVITIES   		
	Legal entity PDI Ownership			
	Beneficiaries TBC	Tourism	Wildlife	Agriculture

AM AHLATHI/AMAZIZI TA

The Amah-lathi/Amazizi Traditional Authority has identified forestry land as a key resource for job creation within the GAA BEN. As part of this initiative, approximately 25 000 hectares of land have been earmarked for farming activities, presenting a significant opportunity for local economic development, employment generation, and sustainable land use. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to enhance biodiversity-linked livelihoods while ensuring the productive utilisation of available land resources.

8.1.1.8. CLUSTER 8 – SUNSHINE COAST CLUSTER

The Sunshine Coast cluster is strategically positioned along the coastline between East London and the Addo Elephant National Park Marine Protected Area, offering a diverse range of economic and

conservation opportunities. This cluster leverages its unique coastal and terrestrial ecosystems to drive wildlife-based tourism, agri-forestry, and sustainable land use. The anchor project within this cluster is wildlife ranching, which serves as a catalyst for conservation-driven economic growth. Secondary projects include agri-forestry and ecotourism, further enhancing the cluster's role in fostering biodiversity-linked livelihoods.

There are numerous opportunities to develop supporting industries and attractions, such as the establishment of an abattoir to support wildlife ranching, the creation of hiking trails, game drives, and freshwater fishing experiences, as well as expanding adventure and cultural tourism offerings. These initiatives aim to attract both domestic and international visitors while promoting environmental sustainability and job creation.

Key partners involved in the development and implementation of projects within this cluster include the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the ECPTA, SANParks, the DFFE, and the DEDEAT. Their collaboration ensures a multi-sectoral approach to the sustainable development of the Sunshine Coast, aligning economic growth with biodiversity conservation.

NGXAKOSHE FARM

Community history

Ngxakoshe Farm is an LRAD farm obtained in 2023 and were employed by the previous owner of the farm. The community currently does individual vegetable garden and collectively have around 250 cattle. The community is adjacent to the marine section of Addo Elephant National Park with very fertile land. The area has a potential of sustainable mixed system and becoming a tourist destination due to its proximity to the park and to the sea.

Project support package by SANParks

- Community governance, leadership and capacity building
- Management plans through Biodiversity stewardship for sustainable grazing

- Market access ton current activities




	Land area 356 Hectares	CURRENT ACTIVITIES  Agriculture
	Legal entity CPA	
	Beneficiaries 35 households	

Figure 9: Ngxakoshe Farm



*Towards establishing a unified and sustainable
Biodiversity Economy within the Greater Addo-
Amathole landscape that balances conservation
with socio-economic development.*