

Field trip to plan the restoration of wetlands in Vulindlela

The uMngeni Resilience Project includes a component focused on the restoration of degraded grasslands and wetlands (ecological infrastructure) in the Vulindlela project area. Communities living in Vulindlela depend on the grasslands as grazing grounds for their cattle, and on the wetlands as a source of water for household use and for their cattle to drink. The grasslands also play an important role in encouraging water to seep (infiltrate) into the ground, and the wetlands store and purify water flowing through the catchment.

With the expected climate change-driven increases in the frequency of heavy rain storms, as well as longer dry periods, the grasslands and wetlands have an important role to play in buffering the impacts of floods and droughts. They do this by holding and absorbing the flooding rivers, and by providing a slow, constant supply of clean water when river flow is low. However, the grasslands and wetlands in the Vulindlela area are degraded. The grasslands have been over-grazed in places, limiting their ability to absorb rainwater, which results in erosion and deposition of topsoils into the rivers and wetlands. The wetlands are badly eroded in places, and polluted, limiting their ability to store and purify the river water.

In preparation for the implementation of interventions to restore the wetlands, a field trip to the Vulindlela project area was recently held. The field trip was attended by representatives of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality, uMsunduzi Local Municipality, Vulindlela Ward Councilors, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA): Natural Resource Management / Working for Wetlands technical experts, Aurecon Environmental Assessment Practitioners, GroundTruth Wetland Design Engineers and SANBI.

The planned interventions include low weirs to raise the water level and improve the functioning of the wetlands, formalized cattle crossings to avoid cattle trampling the sensitive vegetation, protection of natural seeps flowing into the wetlands, the installations of structures to prevent further erosion and incision of wetland channels, and a range of measures to prevent further erosion of channels feeding into the wetlands. When restored, the wetlands will once again play an important role in buffering the communities at Vulindlela against the impacts of floods and droughts.



uMngeni Resilience Project team members in Vulindlela developing grassland adaptation interventions.

A year in implementation: Local impacts of the Small Grants Facility (SGF) in Namakwa

Several Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility (SGF) projects in the Namakwa District are well underway in building local community resilience to climate change impacts. Amongst other activities, Small Grant Recipients (SGR's) in the Namakwa district are implementing projects aimed at responding to local temperature increases in the district and rainfall variability. The projects have started benefitting rural community members whose wellbeing and livelihoods depends on agricultural activities, settlements and livestock farming.

During an annual site visit undertaken by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), *SouthSouthNorth* (SSN) and Conservation South Africa (CSA) which is the Facilitating Agency in the district, the Small Grant Recipients showcased their project implementation progress and positive impacts brought about by the SGF project.

Through the implementation of the ***"Biodiversity and Red Meat Cooperative – Land and Livestock Adaptation"*** project in Leliefontein village, livestock farmers demonstrated how newly introduced climate resilient Meat master rams and indigenous veld goats are breeding hardier livestock better adapted for the region that are heat and drought tolerant and therefore better adapted for the harsher climate.



Livestock farmers of the Biodiversity and Livestock Cooperative in Leliefontein.

Community members of the Soebasfontein and Niuwoudtville villages demonstrated how the ***"Two communities adapting together"*** project has improved water security after the installation of rainwater harvesting infrastructure to collect and store rainwater. The installation of rainwater gutters and water storage tanks has inspired project beneficiaries to also start food gardens to improve food security.



Demonstrations on the installation of compost toilets and water harvesting infrastructure

Amongst other activities, the project is also introducing compost toilets to reduce water requirements and insulating houses to from extreme temperatures in the region. This has resulted in the development of a “How-To Guide” to upscale and share adaptation responses with other communities.

Within the Suid Bokkeveld region, vulnerable small scale rooibos farmers demonstrated how sustainable climate farming techniques are benefitting rooibos production. The demonstration trials indicate how the farmers are optimising the sustainable use of land and water resources through the introduction of composting and mulching techniques which are adaptation responses of the **“Climate proofing small - scale rooibos production”** project in the region.

Throughout the district, Save Act Trust demonstrated local success stories of promoting Saving Schemes to help rural community member’s access financial resources. Amongst other techniques such as climate saving modules, the **“Building resilience to climate change by promoting saving”** project has developed a game played alongside project beneficiaries. The game profiles certain climate induced conditions in Namakwa such as drought or power outages and how savings can benefit community members to cope with these impacts. The game’s outcome demonstrated how participants may use their savings to purchase mechanisms or assets which would assist them during these scenarios throughout the duration of the game.

Increasing Small Grant Recipient capacity to manage environmental and social risks

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund, working closely with the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) completed its third and final Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) training in the Mopani District.

The ESP training is aimed at building the capacity of local community organisations to comply with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy. The policy aims to identify, mitigate and manage environmental and social risks before and during project implementation. To avoid negative environmental and social impacts, the policy consists of 15 principles that on aspects such as labour, human rights, pollution prevention, promoting resource efficiency, protection of natural habitats and conserving biological diversity amongst others.

The Mopani training workshop which was held in Tzaneen brought together representatives from the six Small Grants Facility (SGF) projects in the district, members of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the Facilitating Agency and representatives from the Mopani District Municipality.



Members of the Mopani Small Grant Recipients, Facilitating Agency and the Technical Advisory Group attending the Mopani Environmental and Social Policy training workshop in Tzaneen.

Mr Fhatuwani Nemalamangwa who represented the Ramotshinyadi HIV/AIDS Youth Guide which is a Small Grant Recipient implementing the **“Enhancing Food Security through Climate-Smart Agriculture”** project in Mamanyuha village indicated that the ESP training is not only important for monitoring project compliance with the principles, but also to promote environmentally sound initiatives and sustainable activities in local communities.

Adaptation Fund annual NIE Seminar held in Costa Rica

Every year the Adaptation Fund (AF) holds a Climate Finance Readiness Seminar that brings together National Implementing Entities (NIEs) from all around the world. The aim of the Seminar is to offer the AF and its community of NIEs the opportunity to share knowledge, skills, experiences and best practices in all stages of the project development and accreditation processes. This year marked the fourth annual Seminar, and the first time it is has taken place outside of the AF's headquarters in Washington D.C. The Seminar took place in the Puntarenas Province in Costa Rica, and was hosted by the Fundecooperacion (the accredited NIE for Costa Rica) in partnership with the AF.

The Seminar was attended by 22 of the AF's 25 NIEs accredited for Direct Access, and took an open dialogue, peer-to-peer format, encouraging the NIEs to discuss their personal project experiences. Topics covered in the Seminar included: the re-accreditation process; project development; complying with the AF's Environmental and Social Policy; applying for technical assistance grants; monitoring and reporting against the AF's Project Performance template; and the NIE Community of Practice.

SANBI shared its experiences on the re-accreditation process with the Adaptation Fund, and about the innovative steps taken to ensure compliance with and report against the AF's Environment and Social Policy. SANBI also shared lessons learned in implementing the uMngeni Resilience Project and Small Grants Facility.

The last day of Seminar was set aside for a field trip to visit farmers benefiting from the AF project in Costa Rica, which is an innovative multi-sector project. It is aimed at helping vulnerable communities adapt to warming temperatures, longer dry periods and increasing rainfall intensity. NIE representatives were given the opportunity to see the project implementation sites and talk to the Project Managers and Beneficiaries, to understand the positive effects the project is having in helping to manage the impacts of climate change currently being felt by the farmers.

The Seminar was very successful in sharing knowledge, fostering collaboration and strengthening relationships between the NIEs, and between the NIEs and the AF. SANBI looks forward to continued collaboration with the AF and fellow NIEs as we continue to implement our AF-funded projects.



Delegates representing international National Implementing Entities of the Adaptation Fund in Costa Rica.

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