REVISED SANBI PROTOCOLS FOR NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 1

1. PURPOSE
The purpose of this report is to provide information about the South African National Biodiversity Institute’s (SANBI) revised protocols for National Botanical Gardens under Alert Level 1 of lockdown as per the government regulations and guidelines.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT
SANBI has conducted an organisational COVID-19 risk assessment identifying and responding to all risks and associated mitigation measures across all areas of the operation.

3. FACILITIES PREPAREDNESS
SANBI has embarked on a range of activities to ensure the readiness of its facilities and workplaces to ensure the national botanical gardens across SANBI are ready and safe for staff to return to work, as well as to receive members of the public for garden-related activities. This has included:

- Consistent communication to staff on COVID-19 matters
- Appointment of COVID-19 Compliance Officer
- Establishing COVID-19 Campus Committees
- Deep cleaning and disinfection of its facilities
- Restrictions on face to face meetings
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (including provision of cloth face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer) to staff
- Cleaning and maintenance of ventilation systems
- Placement of physical barriers in appropriate places (including provision of face shields or visors).
- Temperature screening of staff and visitors at entrances and provision of contact tracing registers
- Training of workers in the correct use of scanners, gloves and masks
- Formation of dedicated COVID-19 Campus Committees and Facilities Champions
- Range of Standard Operating Procedures and protocols aligned to COVID-19.

As prescribed by the COVID-19 OHS Guidelines, SANBI is regularly checking on web sites of NDOH, NICD and NDOL for Occupational Health for any additional PPE requirements and recommended guidelines.

4. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS
SANBI is currently implementing a hybrid working arrangement for staff across its campuses according to published regulations and guidelines from both DPSA and DEFF. Social distancing measures that are being adopted include dividing the workforce into groups, spreading the workforce across different areas of the gardens to reduce risk of infections, and staggered working hours to avoid concentration of common areas. Staff who are able to work from home will still be allowed to work from home.

Staff over 60 and those staff with known or declared health issues or comorbidities have been requested to work from home where feasible.
5. REVISED PROTOCOLS FOR NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 1

Following the announcement by the President of South Africa of Alert level 1 as from 1 March 2021 and subsequent publication of Government Gazette Notice No. 44201 on 28 February 2021, the following revised protocols are proposed for SANBI's national botanical gardens with effect from 1 March 2021:

Activities permitted during Alert level 1 are as follows, considering carrying capacity of open spaces and venues in the different gardens:

- Walks, hikes, exercise;
- Picnics, subject to social distancing of a distance of one and a half metres from each other.
- Restaurants and shops open for meals, but must close by latest 23h00 (according to guidelines specified in Government Gazette No. 44201);
- Business conferences and meetings are limited to 50 percent of a venue’s capacity as determined by a venue’s available floor space up to a maximum of 100 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other in the case of an indoor gathering (excluding those who participate through electronic platforms) and under controlled conditions (according to guidelines issued by the relevant Cabinet member) that promote health protocols and social gathering;
- Outdoor concerts and live performances, subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other, and not more than 50% of the capacity of the venue may be used, strict adherence to all health protocols and social distancing measures, as provided for in directions issued by the relevant Cabinet member after consultation with the Cabinet member responsible for health;
- Outdoor concerts and entertainment events, subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other, and not more than 50% of the capacity of the venue may be used, and directions issued in Government Gazette No. 44201;
- Indoor weddings, subject to a restriction of 50 percent of a venue’s capacity as determined by a venue’s available floor space (limited to a maximum of 100 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other), and directions issued by the relevant Cabinet member;
- Outdoor wedding functions, subject to a limitation of a maximum of 250 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other, and directions issued by the relevant Cabinet member;
- Events at function venues, subject to a restriction on the number of persons allowed in such establishments to not more than 50 percent of the available floor space (limited to a maximum of 100 persons or less observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other), and directions issued by the relevant Cabinet member;
- All guest accommodation venues, are allowed full capacity of the available rooms for accommodation, with patrons observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other when in common spaces;
- Guided tours and hiring of golf carts (limited to 100 percent occupancy) during guided activities that require walking, a social distance of one and a half metres must be maintained at all times amongst persons involved in the tour;
- Use of bird hides, limited to 50% capacity of the venue with visitors observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other;
- Use of benches, limited to maximum of two (2) persons;
- Acrobranch Adventure Park in KwaZulu-Natal NBG, subject to strict health protocols and social distancing;
- Farmers Market in the KwaZulu-Natal NBG, subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other;
- Braai facilities, subject to adherence to all health protocols, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other;
- Guided vehicle tours (limited to 100% licensed occupancy per vehicle);
• Daily access will be monitored, and limited if necessary, according to the carrying capacity and available space that promotes social distancing in each botanical garden;
• **Adventure Boot Camp** subject to adherence to all health protocols;
• **Education excursions** subject to a restriction of 50 percent of a venue's capacity as determined by a venue's available floor space (up to a maximum of 100 persons or less indoors) including educators and adherence to all health protocols;
• **Outdoor film and photo shoots** subject to adherence to all health protocols, observing a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other;
• The sale of liquor by a licensed premises for on-site consumption is permitted, subject to strict adherence to the curfew and closing time of botanical gardens and restaurants

Prohibited activities/access areas at alert level 1:
• Parkruns
• The consumption of liquor in public places, **except in licensed on-site consumption premises**, is **not** permitted.
• No activities are allowed to take place in national botanical gardens between 00h00 and 04h00 daily.

Specified activities allowed and prohibited in all national botanical gardens under Alert Level 1. At all times social distancing will be monitored and health protocols applied, as per government regulations; tourism monitors have been assisting in monitoring social distancing and health protocol compliance as from 1 March 2021:

• **Free State NBG, Bloemfontein, Free State Province:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, restaurant open for sit-down meals, picnics, use of braai area, lapa
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 900

• **Hantam NBG, Nieuwoudtville, Northern Cape:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, picnics, guided vehicle tours will be limited to 100 percent licensed capacity of the vehicle
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 500

• **Harold Porter NBG, Betty’s Bay, Western Cape:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, use of conference venues for business purposes, picnics
  Prohibited: Parkruns
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 350

• **Karoo Desert NBG, Worcester, Western Cape:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, restaurant open for sit-down meals, picnics
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 250

• **Kirstenbosch NBG, Cape Town, Western Cape:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, restaurant, tearoom, coffee shop and retail shops open to visitors, conferences and meetings for business purposes (and aligned with restrictions on public gatherings), golf carts will operate at 100 percent capacity, guided tours, Adventure Boot Camp for Women (subject to social distancing of one and a half metres), picnics, outdoor concerts (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or 50 percent of the capacity of the venue that allows social distancing), public events
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 3,000

• **KwaZulu-Natal NBG, Pietermaritzburg, KZN:**
  Allowed: walks/hiking, exercise, picnics, use of braai stands, Acrobranch Adventure Park, Farmers Market (subject to strict health and safety protocols)
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 1,000

• **Kwelera NBG, East London, Eastern Cape:**
Allowed: walks/hiking, cycling, exercise, picnics, angling with permits.

Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 150

- **Lowveld NBG, Mbombela, Mpumalanga:**
  Allowed: walks/hikes, restaurant open for sit-down meals, exercise (subject to social distancing of one and a half metres), picnics (including baby showers, open-air weddings (subject to limitations prescribed under level 1))
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 1,500

- **Pretoria NBG, Pretoria, Gauteng:**
  Allowed: walks/hikes, exercise, restaurant open for sit-down meals, conferences and meetings for business purposes (aligned with restrictions on public gatherings), Boot Camp for Women (subject to social distancing of one and a half metres), picnics, braai area (subject to limitation of 200 persons or 50% of the capacity of the venue), public events (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less), weddings (subject to limitations prescribed under alert level 1), concerts (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less) and social gatherings (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less); organised runs (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less, which includes the organisers)
  Prohibited: Parkruns
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 2,000

- **Thohoyandou BG, Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province:**
  Allowed: walks/hikes, picnics, exercise, photo shoots, private outdoor events
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 500

- **Walter Sisulu NBG, Roodepoort/Mogale City, Gauteng:**
  Allowed: walks/hikes, exercise, photo shoots, private outdoor events, picnics, bird hide, trackless road train, organised runs (subject to a limitation of 250 persons or less, which includes the organisers)
  Garden’s maximum carrying capacity under alert level 1: 3,500

The following health protocols are being implemented:

- No face mask, no entry; a **face mask** is mandatory, and means “a cloth face mask or a homemade item that covers the nose and mouth, or another appropriate item to cover the nose and mouth”
- Children aged **5 years and under** are not required to wear face masks (WHO and UNICEF guideline).
- Physical barriers provided at gates and reception areas
- Online bookings will be encouraged, where feasible
- Temperature screening
- Hand sanitiser for the use of public and employees provided at garden entrances: garden users are encouraged to carry their own sanitisers
- Visitors are urged to refrain from sitting on benches
- Completion of tracing registers required at restaurants and/or tea rooms/coffee shops
- Designated public ablutions will be made available and cleaned regularly throughout the day
- Gate hours will be strictly adhered to
- Daily visitor numbers will be monitored, and daily monitoring patrols done by designated personnel to ensure social distancing is observed and restrictions and limitations are complied with
- Restaurants, plants sales nurseries and shops are open for operations, aligned with published sectoral guidelines.