

Unlocking Climate Finance for Climate Change Adaptation

*The story of the project
through the logical framework*

June 2025



**Government
of Flanders**

SANBI

Biodiversity for Life

South African National Biodiversity Institute



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Foreword

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) expresses profound gratitude for the four years of transformative investment from the Government of Flanders for the Unlocking Climate Finance project. As an institution accredited to access climate finance through the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund for South Africa, SANBI has the responsibility to ensure that the funded projects that it supports are strategic, impactful, and address social, environmental and gender inequalities.

The Government of Flanders provided crucial catalytic funding to support SANBI in undertaking project development, capacity building and climate research in support of climate fund projects. It addressed a gap that funders are rarely willing to venture into and support – core funding for project development processes that enable an institution and country to strengthen its internal capacity and readiness to meet the stringent requirements of the international funds.

SANBI has championed the cause of direct access to climate finance. Lessons from the four years of implementing this project resoundingly affirm the need for direct access across the entire system. The Unlocking Climate Finance project provided much-needed capacity for young professionals, government institutions, civil society organisations and academic institutions involved in the project development pipeline for the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, through SANBI. The funding has empowered the team and its partners to take part in high-level climate change discussions.

The incredible achievements and partnerships built during the project development processes set a solid foundation for implementing anticipated climate change projects. Projects at an advanced stage of development are poised to mobilise as much as US\$90.1 million for climate change adaptation in South Africa in the near term. Each of these future projects has been carefully designed to meet the needs of local communities while drawing on robust climate science from leading academic institutions.

The project also prioritised the development of young professionals in the climate change sector, offering them invaluable career opportunities and actively involving them in learning and experiential activities. These new climate leaders are well equipped to contribute to the climate change sector. Gender has been meaningfully incorporated throughout the project, with a particular focus on empowering young women. Additionally, the climate science work of the project resulted in the development of knowledge resources, specifically municipal-level climate science factsheets that will inform the interventions most suited in a specific municipality.

As the Unlocking Climate Finance project nears its conclusion, it is valuable to reflect on its four-year journey: its goals, its actions, and its achievements. This narrative aims to provide a holistic view, examining the project's targets and the strategies employed to achieve them. The incredible achievements of this project, in spite of the challenges, indicate how important this work is for SANBI, its partners, and society at large. The small team that led the implementation of this project in SANBI is a passionate, hardworking, and dedicated group. Their efforts were crucial in achieving these outstanding results.



Mr. Shonisani Munzhedzi
CEO SANBI

About the project

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), as an accredited entity for the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, has championed the direct access modality for climate finance. Direct access is a way for developing countries to access financing from global climate funds without going through an international intermediary, increasing national ownership, transparency and inclusivity. However, limited core institutional capacity can constrain direct access entities. While readiness programmes support project pipelines, they offer limited opportunities to build lasting internal capacity that persists beyond individual projects. Thus, the goal of the Unlocking Climate Finance project was to build institutional capacity in SANBI, develop a cohort of young climate change professionals, and create a network of partners to work towards securing global climate finance for gender sensitive climate change adaptation responses in South Africa.

Duration	2020 – 2024	
Value	€2.6 million	
General objective	Climate change adaptation responses in support of the just transition to a low carbon economy and climate-resilient society have been implemented in South Africa.	
Specific objective	South Africa accesses funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), in support of its national climate change adaptation priorities and builds and strengthens associated institutional capacities.	
Results areas	1. Direct access	2. Climate science
	Funding proposals are submitted to the GCF through an increasingly capacitated direct access entity, following multi-stakeholder engagement processes.	SANBI's GCF programme of work is informed by climate science, through a coordinated climate change research network.
	3. Capacity and civil society	4. Gender mainstreaming
	Capacity, awareness, knowledge and advocacy for climate change strengthened in young professionals, targeted provinces and civil society.	Gender Mainstreamed into all SANBI GCF proposal development processes, climate change adaptation research and capacity building processes.
Funded by	 Government of Flanders	
Implemented by	    SANBI Biodiversity for Life South African National Biodiversity Institute	
Supported by	 ACDI African Climate & Development Initiative	 THE ADAPTATION NETWORK We're up to the climate challenge!
		 GLOBAL CHANGE Institute

The project in numbers



Logical framework

Result Area 1: Project proposals	Target	Achievement	
Full funding proposals with a total combined budget US\$40 million submitted	US\$40 million	8 in progress total ~US\$170 million	Partial*
Proposal development processes concluded			
Institutions playing leading roles in proposal development activities	8	26	Exceeded
SANBI staff with enhanced capacity to integrate climate change adaptation into programmes of work	16	53	Exceeded
SANBI staff provide leadership direction and financial management support to the GCF proposal pipeline	100%	100%	Achieved
Result Area 2: Climate change research			
Collaboration agreements in place with CSAG and ACDI at UCT and GCI at WITS	2	3	Exceeded
Climate change adaptation research strategy developed and implemented	1	1	Achieved
Percentage of SANBI's GCF project proposal development informed by climate science	100%	100%	Achieved
Oversight of climate science research portfolio in place	100%	100%	Achieved
Result Area 3: Communications and capacity development			
SANBI climate change adaptation Communication and Knowledge Dissemination Strategy developed	1	1	Achieved
Climate change communication and knowledge products developed and circulated	10	208	Exceeded
SANBI presentations at national and international meetings	8	138	Exceeded
Young black professionals placed in SANBI and in its partner institutions, through the Groen Sebenza model	18	47	Exceeded
Relevant fora and events at which the Adaptation Network is represented	100%	100%	Achieved
Education, Awareness and Advocacy products produced and distributed by the Adaptation Network to its members	40	87	Exceeded
Capacity building and awareness events convened by the Adaptation Network and SANBI	15	30	Exceeded
Community organisation members with increased awareness about climate change adaptation	460	945 (64% women)	Exceeded
Oversight of climate change Groen Sebenza internship programme provided	100%	100%	Achieved
Result Area 4: Gender mainstreaming			
Research papers on the vulnerability of women to climate change in South Africa	1	1	Achieved
Factsheet on the vulnerability of women to climate change in South Africa	1	1	Achieved
Training module developed on gender and climate change	1	1	Achieved
Climate change adaptation and gender mainstreaming training events organised, and 50% women participants	4	7 (71% women)	Exceeded
Monitoring tools augmented to include new climate change adaptation and associated gender mainstreaming indicators	1	4	Partial
Public events convened to highlight gender and climate change issues	1	4	Exceeded
Project budget ringfenced for gender related activities	22%	4%	Partial

*When the project closed in December 2024, the target was partially achieved. In July 2025 the US\$ target was exceeded with the Green Climate Fund approving the first project to the value of US\$ 40.1 million.



Result area 1: Direct access

Objective: *Funding proposals are submitted to the GCF through an increasingly capacitated direct access entity, following multi-stakeholder engagement processes.*

The purpose of this result area was to support SANBI to expand its capacity to submit high quality, science-based and gender responsive project proposals. The Unlocking Climate Finance project aimed to have four full funding proposals worth US\$ 10 million each submitted. Projects are developed through a multi-stakeholder engagement process, with national and sub-national institutions playing leading roles.

Project development

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) is accredited as a direct access entity of the Green Climate Fund, the largest climate change fund in the world. It is through SANBI's accreditation that South Africa can access funding to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Funding proposals are submitted to the Green Climate Fund through a comprehensive proposal process, with detailed submission requirements across multiple stages that can last several years.

Eight projects are at various stages in the project pipeline process at the close of the Unlocking Climate Finance project, with four of these at more advanced stages. Not all have yet reached final submission due to the increasing complexity of the Green Climate Fund proposal development system, extensive stakeholder consultation, and lengthy approval processes. However, the significant progress made on these important project proposals would not have been possible without the support of the Unlocking Climate Finance project. It has substantially increased SANBI's capacity to drive the proposal process for the respective projects.

As at the end of the project, three projects (Eco-DRR, EbA-Farm and EbA-Water projects) were in the full funding proposal development phase, with these projects anticipated to be submitted in 2025 and 2026 to the Green Climate Fund board for approval. The total value of these projects will bring US\$ 90.1 million in climate finance to South Africa.

In addition, three projects are in the advanced development stage with partners (Locally Led Adaptation project, the South African Weather Services project, and the Groundwater Recharge project). Submission of these project concept notes is planned for late 2025 and 2026, to the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, with an estimated combined value of US\$ 55 million.

The remaining two projects in the pipeline were at the stage of an abbreviated concept note development.

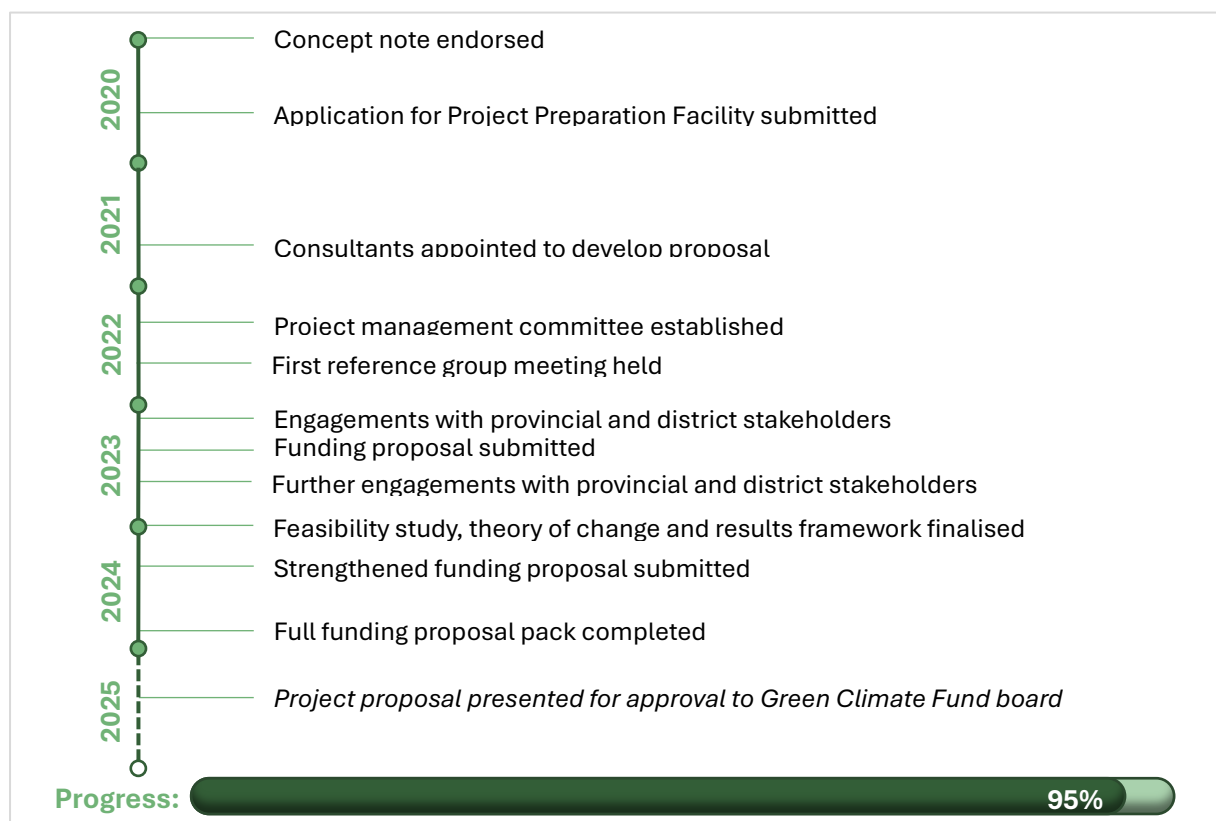


Eco-DRR project

The full title of the Eco-DRR project is *“Scaling up ecosystem-based approaches to managing climate-intensified disaster risks in vulnerable regions of South Africa.”* It aims to help protect vulnerable communities from the effects of extreme weather due to climate change by using proven ecosystem-based adaptation approaches. South Africa is highly vulnerable to drought, heatwaves, flooding, storms and wildfire, which are exacerbated by climate change. Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) refers to the sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems to reduce the risk of disasters to human communities. The project will involve the rehabilitation of catchments, and the integration of Eco-DRR into settlement planning for disaster risk reduction and preparedness. It will also develop pathways for these interventions to be scaled up across the country.



The full proposal was developed over a period of eight years from first inception (see diagram below). It was developed together with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the National Disaster Management Centre, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and their provincial and municipal counterparts, amongst other stakeholders. The project will be implemented in four district municipalities across South Africa’s provinces. The project is requesting US\$ 40.1 million in grant finance, with an additional nearly US\$ 10 million in co-financing from South African partners. The Eco-DRR project was the first in South Africa’s project pipeline for the Green Climate Fund. It was an excellent learning experience that led the way for the project proposals that followed. The proposal will be considered for approval by the Green Climate Fund Board in 2026. If approved, it will be SANBI’s largest donor funded project to date.

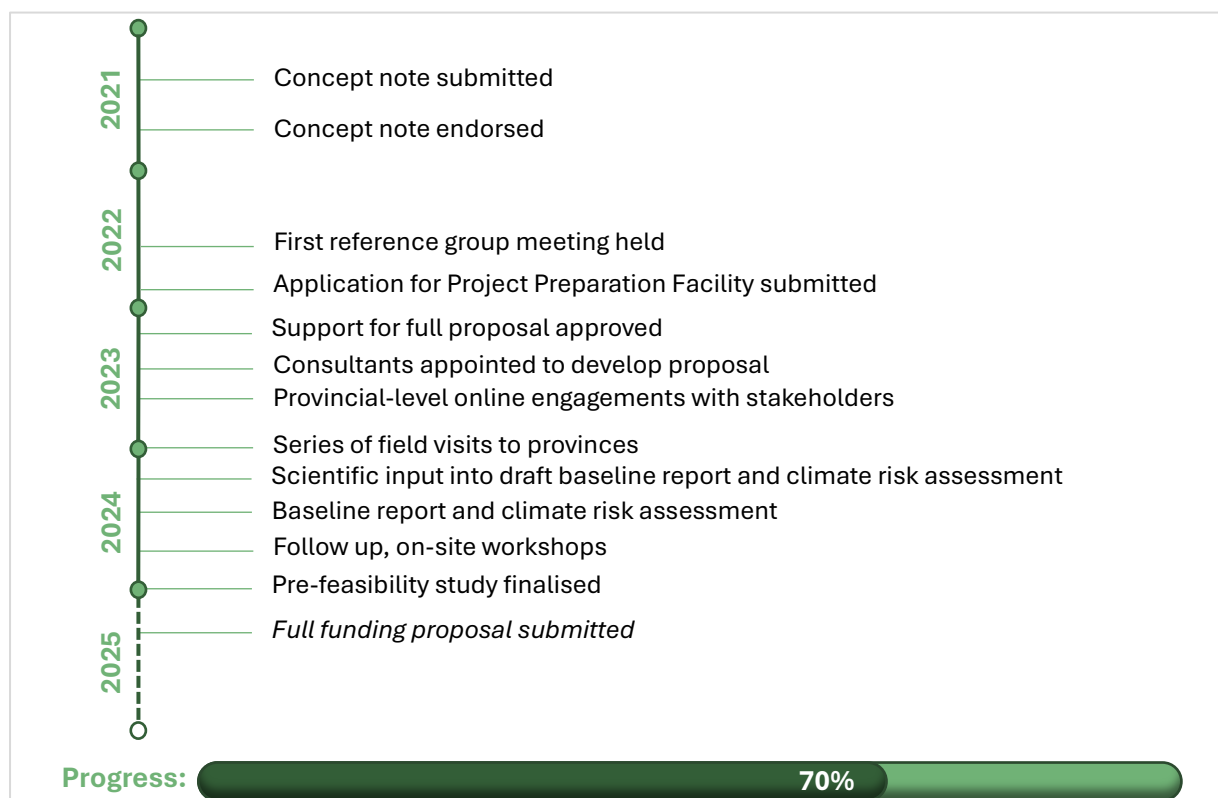


Timeline of the progress and milestones for the Eco-DRR project.

EbA Farm project

The full title of the EbA farm project is *“Ecosystem-based Adaptation for transforming smallholder farming systems that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in South Africa”*. It aims to support climate resilient agriculture for smallholder farmers, who rely on increasingly variable rainfall to grow food. The project will build on and scale up the success of some components of the uMngeni Resilience Project, an earlier Adaptation Fund project implemented from 2015 – 2024 that aimed to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities through early warning systems, climate-smart agriculture and climate-proof settlements.

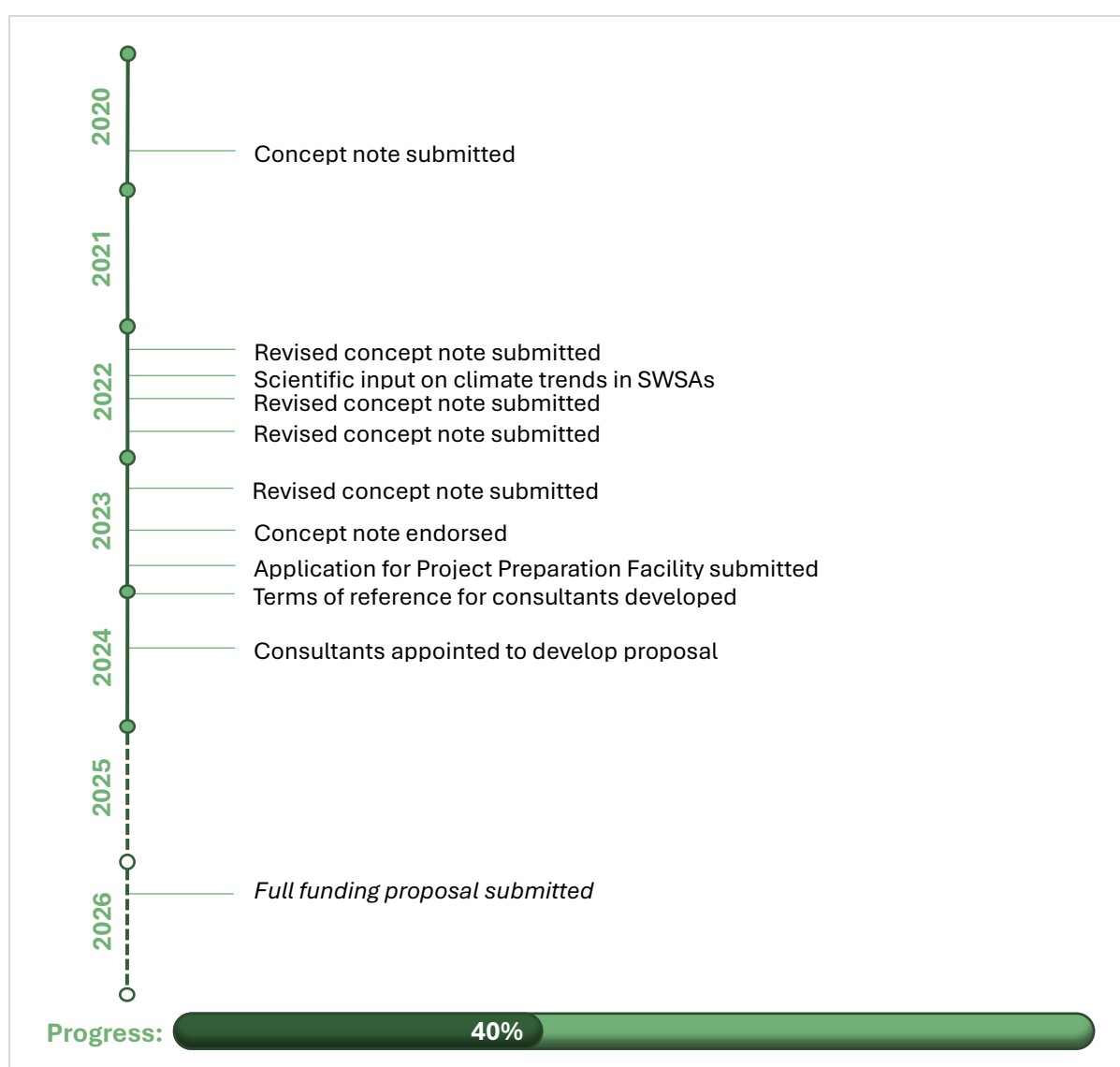
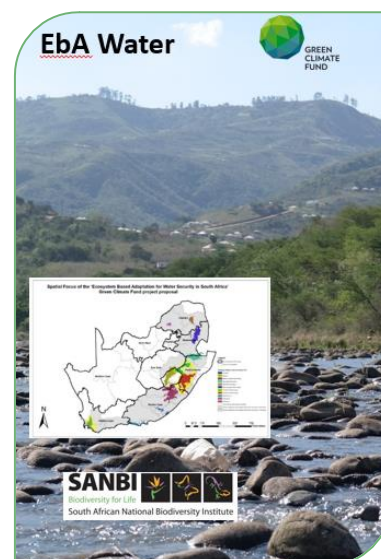
The proposed project focusses on the use of Ecosystem-based Adaptation solutions to transform smallholder farming systems that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It will work across four targeted provinces in South Africa, focussing on vulnerable catchments in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. The project will provide multi-hazard early warning systems for farmers, as well as implementing changes to smallholder farming systems to make them more resilient. The outcomes will be scaled up by increasing capacity, communication and learning across the other provinces of South Africa. The target provinces are all involved in the project proposal. The project is seeking funding of US \$ 25 million from the Green Climate Fund, complemented by US\$ 20-30 million in co-finance. It is the second project in the Green Climate Fund project pipeline.



Timeline of the progress and milestones for the EbA Farm project.

EbA Water project

The “Ecosystem-based Adaptation for water security in South Africa” project is known as EbA Water for short. It aims to secure and safeguard the resource base and strengthen water security in South Africa’s Strategic Water Source Areas (SWSAs). SWSAs are the 10% of the land area of South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini that supply 50% of water to these countries. The project will focus on securing the four to six priority SWSAs, while laying the foundation to secure the remaining SWSAs in South Africa. The Department of Water and Sanitation, and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, are lead partners in the proposal, amongst many other partners that have been involved in work to secure SWSAs. An amount of US\$ 25 million is being requested, with US\$ 10 million in co-financing to be confirmed. The EbA Water project is the third in SANBI’s Green Climate Fund project pipeline.



Timeline of the progress and milestones for the EbA Water project.

Groundwater recharge project

The groundwater recharge project, full title “*Implementing ecosystem-based solutions for groundwater recharge to improve water security in vulnerable climate regions of South Africa*”, is being developed with the provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the Western Cape, in partnership with other provincial governments in the North West and Eastern Cape. Many of these arid provinces rely strongly on groundwater to support water security. An abbreviated concept note was reviewed and endorsed by SANBI for development into a full concept note.

Progress: A green progress bar with a dark green segment on the left, indicating approximately 10% completion.

South African Weather Service project

This project aims to support the South African Weather Service to strengthen capacity and infrastructure to develop Early Warning Systems and Climate Information Services. Upon finalisation of the abbreviated concept note for this project, it will be reviewed per SANBI’s endorsement and approval process for proposal development and submission. This project is seeking funds from the Adaptation Fund.

Progress: A green progress bar with a dark green segment on the left, indicating approximately 5% completion.

Coastal resilience project

The coastal resilience project is being proposed by the Oceans and Coasts Branch of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). The project will take advantage of the hugely beneficial role that coastal ecological infrastructure, like coastal dunes, coral reefs, estuaries etc. can play in reducing the coastal impacts of climate change. An initial abbreviated concept note was submitted to SANBI. Feedback was provided to the development team in March 2023. The updated abbreviated concept note was received for internal review by SANBI and was endorsed for development into a full concept note.

Progress: A green progress bar with a dark green segment on the left, indicating approximately 10% completion.

Landscapes for livelihoods project

The WWF, together with Mpumalanga province, are working on an abbreviated concept note to be submitted to SANBI for consideration. The project will be about improving adaptive capacity and resilience for people and the environment in two district municipalities, through landscape-based jobs and livelihoods, driving a just transition in Mpumalanga province. Once the abbreviated concept note is finalised, it will be reviewed in accordance with SANBI’s Endorsement and Approval Process for GCF Proposal Development and Submission.

Progress: A green progress bar with a dark green segment on the left, indicating approximately 5% completion.

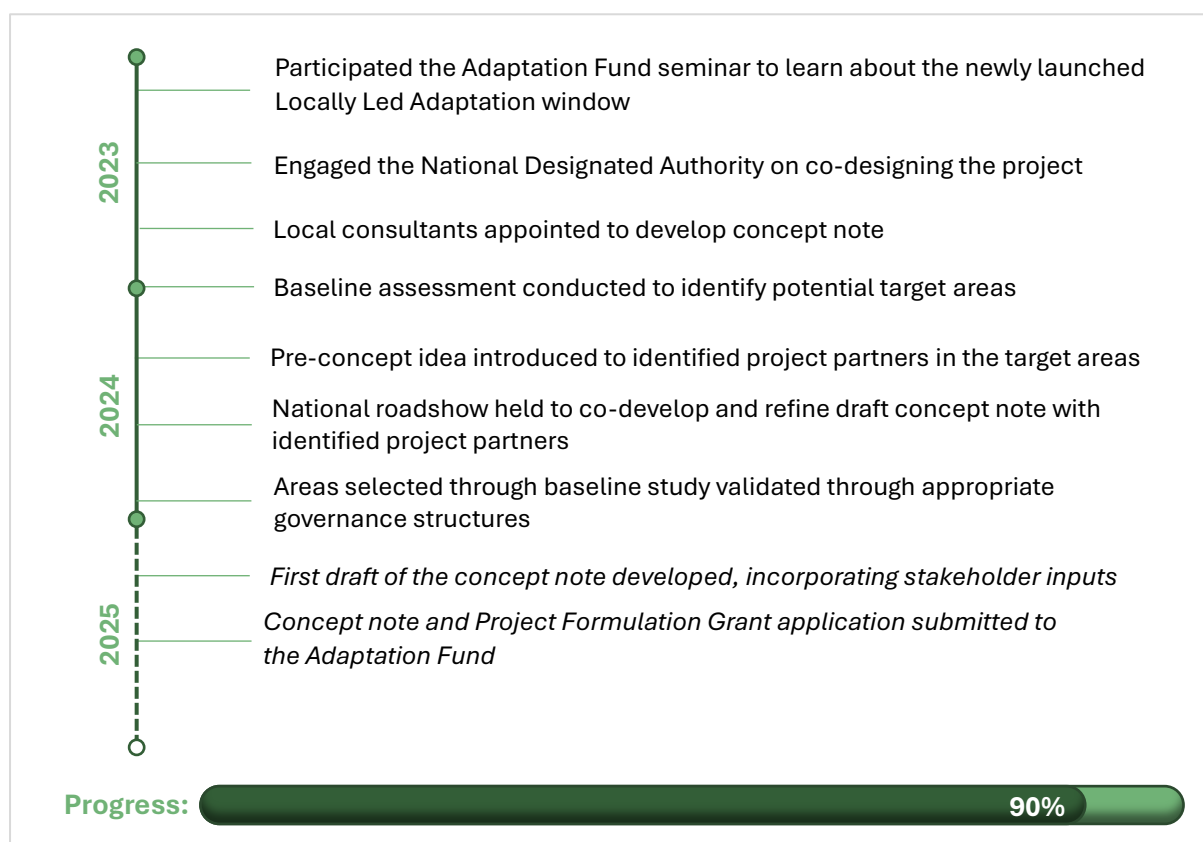
Locally led adaptation project

Unlike the other projects mentioned above, this small-grants project is in the pipeline for the Adaptation Fund rather than the Green Climate Fund. It is worth noting the faster turnaround time that is possible for Adaptation Fund projects.

The full title for the project is “*Upscaling and enhancing the locally led adaptation small grants facility (EDA/LLA-SGF) for South Africa Phase 1*”. The project is aimed at scaling-up the successful *Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility* project that ran from 2016 to 2020, funded by the Adaptation Fund. The previous project provided 12 small grants of approximately US\$ 100 000 to recipients in two district municipalities. These projects delivered a range of benefits to more than 10 000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The subsequent proposal is being developed in response to a specific opportunity for ‘enhanced direct access’ or what is now known as ‘locally led adaptation’, that has been made available by the Adaptation Fund for National Implementing Entities. It will seek US\$ 5 million from the Adaptation Fund, to be paid out to recipients as small grants. SANBI is working with the DFFE, South African Local Government Association, Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, and four target municipalities to design the project.

The Concept Note for the project will be submitted to the Adaptation Fund in 2025.



Timeline of the progress and milestones for the locally led adaptation project.

Institutions leading project development

The Unlocking Climate Finance project aimed to not only support capacity in SANBI as the National Implementing Entity, but also within a number of other relevant institutions to undertake project development. Across the project proposals underway, there are at least 25 government institutions that have been involved in developing the proposals, from national to provincial and municipal level.



Enhancing capacity of SANBI staff

The Unlocking Climate Finance project aimed to enhance SANBI's capacity as a National Implementing Entity to integrate climate change considerations across its programmes of work. This was measured by the involvement of SANBI staff, both within and beyond the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division, in supporting project development.

Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division

The Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division leads SANBI's work on Ecosystem-based Adaptation to climate change. It brings together climate science, policy and project implementation. With partners, the division works to develop climate change adaptation projects under SANBI's accreditation as an implementing entity for the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund. These projects draw on current climate science from leading researchers across a network of partners. The division functions as a co-ordinator of climate change research and capacity development within the country. This, together with the experience gained through implementing projects, is then used to advise on national and international climate policy.

The Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division is comprised of a small core team within SANBI. During the Unlocking Climate Finance project, a Climate Change Adaptation Specialist joined the team, as well as a Deputy Director: Project and Proposal Development. The team was boosted by three interns. The Unlocking Climate Finance project considerably enhanced the ability of this small team to fulfil its functions over the four years of implementation. It helped to fill some serious capacity gaps, particularly in terms of climate science, that made important achievements possible. See *Internal SANBI capacity*.

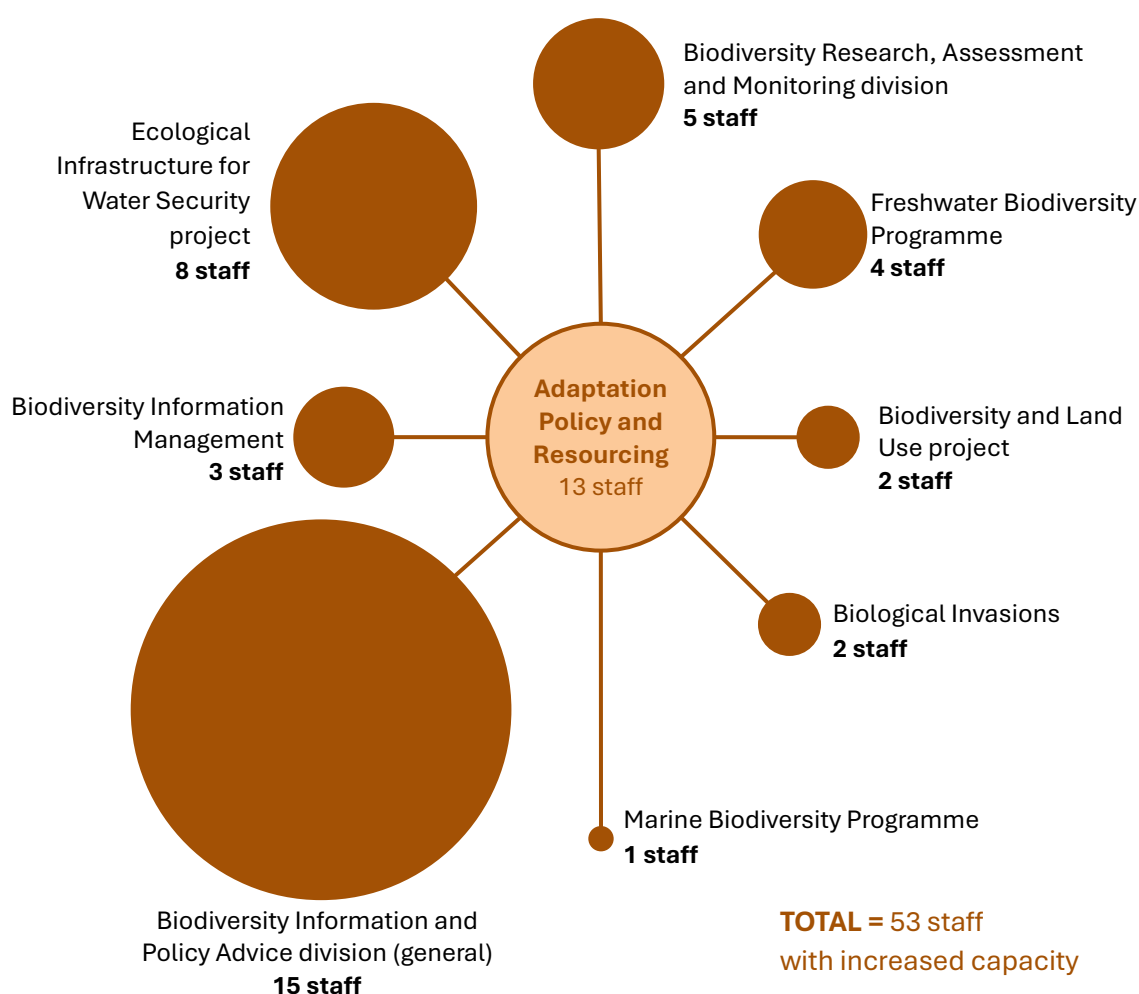
Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division	
Dr Mandy Barnett	Chief Director
Ms Azisa Parker	Director GCF Programming (since left SANBI)
Mr Mike Jennings	Deputy Director Strategic Grants Manager and later Acting Director GCF Programming
Mr Thabang Phago	Deputy Director Project and Proposal Development
Ms Fasloni Martin	Office Manager
Mr. Makganthe Maleka	Grants Coordinator (since left SANBI)
Dr Graham Von Maltitz	Climate Change Adaptation Specialist
Ms Marilyn Martin-Vermaak	Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Gender Coordination
Mr Mpfunzeni Tshindane	Project Coordinator (since left SANBI)
Ms Kirstin Meiring	Senior Programme Officer
Ms Terriann Thavar	Senior Programme Officer
Ms Felicity Shai	Intern: Climate change and gender
Ms Kgomotso Mokono	Intern: Climate Science GIS
Mr Papama Yose	Intern: Stakeholder engagement

Other SANBI divisions

As a biodiversity institute, SANBI's mandate is to explore, reveal, celebrate, and champion biodiversity for the benefit and enjoyment of all South Africans. The other divisions within SANBI are involved with broader research, assessment and policy work about biodiversity and ecological infrastructure in South Africa. However, climate change is highly relevant to their work as climate change impacts on biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides to people. Efforts to better protect and manage biodiversity can in turn contribute to climate change adaptation. Thus, it is important that climate change is seen as a cross-functional theme across the organisation.

The Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division works with other SANBI divisions – such as Foundational Biodiversity Science and Biodiversity Research, Assessment and Monitoring – to obtain scientific information and assessments that inform the development of project proposals. Collaborations with the Biodiversity Information and Policy Advice division facilitates the translation of biodiversity science into policy and action.

A broad range of SANBI staff across many different divisions, programmes and projects have been involved in the project development for the Green Climate Fund projects. They have provided scientific principles, essential spatial data, policy knowledge, networking connections and their own practical experience to enhance the project proposals. By doing so, they are more aware of how climate change relates to their own work and can better align efforts across projects and programmes.





Result area 2: Climate science

Objective: SANBI's Green Climate Fund programme of work is informed by climate science, through a coordinated climate change research network.

Co-ordinating research

The second result area for the Unlocking Climate Finance project intended for SANBI's programme of work on climate change adaptation to be well informed by climate science, through a co-ordinated climate change research network. This was achieved both by boosting internal capacity in SANBI, and also bringing in additional scientific expertise through collaboration agreements with academic institutions. Capacity was also improved through the involvement of all partners in the development of projects.

Internal SANBI capacity

SANBI increased the capability of the Biodiversity Research, Assessment and Monitoring division to co-ordinate climate change research by appointing a new *Senior Specialist: Climate Change Adaptation*. The new position provided strategic direction and leadership in climate change adaptation research, knowledge generation and collaboration. They contributed to human capacity development as a mentor for junior staff and interns, and a supervisor for students and postdoctoral researchers. Following two rounds of recruitment the preferred candidate was appointed and joined the team in August 2022.

The position provided much-needed scientific capacity to support the work of the division and has contributed significantly to the outcomes of the Unlocking Climate Finance project. For example, the production of the climate factsheets for each district municipality in the country was a recognised gap, which could not have been filled without this specialist expertise to co-ordinate their development. See [Communications and knowledge products](#). Similarly, this role made it possible to provide strategic input towards important national climate change laws, policies and plans, as well as supporting research in the freshwater space.

A *Deputy Director: Project and Proposal Development* also joined the team in 2024. The position supported with strategic leadership for the project proposal pipelines, taking projects from concept note through to full proposal development. They also led on stakeholder engagement for project development.

To complement this capacity, an intern was appointed, and two data scientist positions were filled. Three opportunities for post-doctoral fellows were also created:

Post-doctoral fellows		
Bio-carbon	EbA effectiveness	Aquatic ecosystems
2023	2024 – 2025	2024 – 2025
University of the Western Cape	University of Cape Town	University of Stellenbosch
Terminated early due to the incumbent vacating the fellowship. However, the useful work done on terrestrial carbon was presented to several national policy platforms.	Research to understand the effectiveness of Ecosystem-based Adaptation interventions in freshwater ecosystems. The work will result in a review article on Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the South African freshwater sector.	The research is a literature review of best practices and successful case studies, both nationally and internationally, in terms of freshwater ecosystem adaptation, vulnerability and resilience in the face of climate change.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation Research Network

The Unlocking Climate Finance project took up the call for improved co-ordination of climate change research in South Africa. The need for a co-ordinated research network and research strategy had been identified in the national “*Strategic framework and overarching implementation plan for Ecosystem-based Adaptation*”. SANBI, as a National Implementing Entity for climate finance with the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, is uniquely positioned to provide such a co-ordination role. SANBI has a record of effectively co-ordinating research, and facilitating communities of practice, around biodiversity topics. By increasing co-ordination of climate change research, it would also create the basis for projects under development to be more strongly grounded in climate science.

An interim steering committee for the research network was established in March 2023. It was agreed that this group would meet periodically to develop an organisational framework through which to co-ordinate research. They defined the scope of the envisioned research network.

The network has a core science base, since other networks already exist for adaptation more generally. It focuses on the interface between climate, ecosystem services and human well-being. Many researchers are engaging in Ecosystem-based Adaptation activities, but under different names, like land restoration, ecological infrastructure or nature-based solutions. To bring in all of these aspects, as well as considering biological and social aspects of Ecosystem-based Adaptation, the network is multi-disciplinary. A focus of the research network is to provide scientific support for policy development in both SANBI and the DFFE. To do so, it is guided by a co-developed *National Research Strategy for Ecosystem-based Adaptation*, which identifies research priorities and co-ordinates research activities to address research gaps.

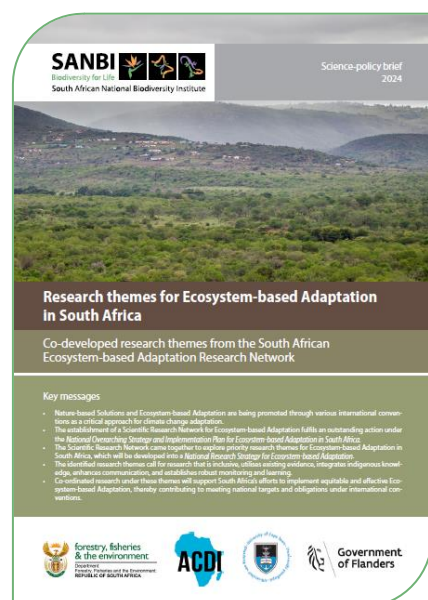
The inaugural meeting of the Scientific Network for Ecosystem-based Adaptation Researchers took place in November 2023. It was a two-day, hybrid event attended by 57 people in person and 77 joining virtually. The first day of the meeting offered the opportunity for a wide range of presenters to share the work that they are doing in Ecosystem-based Adaptation. This created new opportunities for collaboration and alignment of climate change research. The second day of the meeting used a workshopping format. Small groups, clustered around four ‘pillars’ of effective Ecosystem-based Adaptation, were asked to identify the most important research themes. The information gathered would be used as a starting point for the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Research Strategy.



A website for the research network was developed through which to share information:
<https://saebarn.weebly.com/>

National Research Strategy for Ecosystem-based Adaptation

Following the networking meeting, a co-developed science-policy brief was developed to highlight the emerging research themes for Ecosystem-based Adaptation in South Africa across four pillars. The five top priorities for research were identified as:



1. Approaches for *engaged, inclusive, transdisciplinary, collaborative and co-created* research that involves all stakeholders in decision-making processes.
2. Approaches to *synthesise, integrate and scale-up* research to build a body of knowledge for EbA based on scientific evidence.
3. The role of *indigenous and local ecological knowledge systems and practices* to equitably bring different forms of knowledge into EbA research and implementation.
4. Approaches for *effective communication* to facilitate the flow of information at different levels and to different audiences.
5. Robust *Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning* systems to share information, gather evidence, ensure accountability, evaluate effectiveness and ensure continuous learning.

These ideas were further developed into the first National Research Strategy for Ecosystem-based Adaptation in South Africa. The development of such a strategy was a long-outstanding activity of the “*National overarching strategy and implementation plan for Ecosystem-based Adaptation in South Africa*”. Its development will help to ensure that co-ordinated scientific research is used to guide implementation of Ecosystem-based Adaptation in South Africa.

A further important national development that happened during the course of the Unlocking Climate Finance project was that DFFE undertook to review a number of central national Ecosystem-based Adaptation strategies and action plans. The expanded capacity within SANBI and through its academic partners allowed for constructive involvement in the development of the new strategies, which will guide Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the country over the next five-years.

Database of Ecosystem based Adaptation in South Africa

SANBI has also been working towards improving the sourcing, preparation, cleaning, curation and storage of climate change data, as well as analytical workflows to track important trends in biodiversity and the environment. It was found that there is poor current record keeping on restoration and Ecosystem-based Adaptation initiatives at the national level. The National Adaptation Database currently only contains a fraction of existing initiatives, and useful spatial data is seldom collected.

To address this gap, a database was initiated, with academic partners, to consolidate information from numerous sources relating the Ecosystem-based Adaptation and other related restoration initiatives in South Africa. Specifications were developed on how data should be collected into the future to support national learning from the implementation of Ecosystem-based Adaptation. This information will support national and international reporting on Ecosystem-based Adaptation and restoration to the three Rio Environmental Conventions. A scientific paper based on this research is under development.

Collaboration agreements

Collaboration agreements were signed with several of South Africa's leading universities, to draw on the latest climate change science for both the development of project proposals and national policy. Such agreements were a pioneering way for government decision-makers to access the knowledge and expertise of the academic sector, and to give climate change researchers a pathway for their research to be taken up into practice.



University of Cape Town

A collaboration agreement was signed with the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI) of the University of Cape Town for the period March 2022 to November 2024. The ACDI is “a university-

wide institute at the University of Cape Town which supports collaborative research and training in climate change and development.” It conducts innovative research towards low-carbon, equitable and climate-resilient societies. The collaboration agreement allowed SANBI to tap into the expertise and research capabilities of this leading research unit. This work also complemented another project funded by the Government of Flanders, which the unit was leading at the time. The collaboration agreement covered several areas of activity:

1. Provide climate science inputs for the Green Climate Fund project development

Climate change scientists from the University of Cape Town regularly attended the steering committee meetings for each of the Green Climate Fund projects under development. See *Project development*. They were able to provide scientific guidance towards the development of project proposals at various stages of development. The experts also critically reviewed draft reports and provided recommendations to strengthen the scientific foundations of the work. They were available for ad-hoc communications and focussed meetings with the SANBI team and consultants to provide specific information and answer questions. In particular, the scientists helped to strengthen the baseline studies, climate change rationale and climate risk assessment sections of the project proposals. They also participated in stakeholder consultations and in discussions around monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Altogether, over the nearly three years of the project, University of Cape Town scientists provided 23 writing and review inputs, and participated in 18 workshops, towards the development of project proposals. Through these extensive inputs, all of the Green Climate Fund project proposals under development (100%) were robustly informed by climate science.

Drawing on the knowledge gained from the experience, a guidance brief was developed to provide best practice on how to conduct climate risk assessments as part of the project development process:

Guidance brief: Climate risk assessments to support adaptation funding proposals in South Africa

Trisha Patel, Petra Holden, Mark New

African Climate and Development Initiative, University of Cape Town

Climate risk assessments are vital when preparing proposals for funding, such as those submitted to the Green Climate Fund and other climate funds, because they provide a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the potential impacts of climate change on a proposed project. For the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and future potential direct access implementing agencies in South Africa, conducting a climate risk assessment is essential for developing strong funding proposals to the Green Climate Fund and other climate financial sources. This guiding brief provides a comprehensive guide on how to effectively undertake a climate risk assessment, with emphasis on Ecosystem-based Adaptation, and how to integrate the findings into the climate rationale required to justify the additionality of the work proposed by implementing agencies to climate funds.

2. Support the coordination of climate change adaptation research in South Africa

The researchers also contributed towards the establishment of the research network for Ecosystem-based Adaptation and its inaugural meeting. See *Ecosystem-based Adaptation Research Network*. They helped with scoping and conceptualisation of the network, grounding its efforts in international climate change frameworks. They helped to facilitate the inaugural meeting.

The researchers contributed towards a climate change workshop in August 2023 that focused on providing guidance on climate change data to be used in Green Climate Fund proposals, but also for broader uses. As a result, an opportunity arose to provide, partly funded under the Unlocking Climate Finance project, an appropriate regional climate model dataset for use in these instances:

Dataset: Bias-corrected daily regional climate model dataset at a 0.25-degree resolution (~30 km) for Southern Africa

Piotr Wolski^a, Petra Holden^b, Mark New^b, Kwesi Quagraine^{a,b}, Assumpta Onyeagorizi^b

^a *Climate System Analysis Group, University of Cape Town*

^b *African Climate and Development Initiative, University of Cape Town*

This dataset covers nine different climate variables from the CORDEX Africa ensemble, namely: i) surface pressure; ii) specific humidity; iii) near-surface air temperature; iv) surface downwelling longwave radiation; v) surface downwelling shortwave radiation; vi) precipitation rate; vii) surface wind speed; viii) maximum temperature; ix) minimum temperature. The dataset includes ~30 climate model ensemble members covering rcp45 and 85. A set of secondary data variables are based on the daily dataset. These include extreme indices, evapotranspiration, SPI, SPEI, precipitation/evaporation as well as medians, anomalies, upper and lower percentiles and model agreement layers. These will be developed for global warming levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 degrees of global warming (alongside an indication on the average timing of when this warming is reached across the models). The data will be made available via an open access platform for use in future climate risk assessments for Green Climate Fund projects and other analyses by SANBI or other consultants.

Two Masters students, originating from historically disadvantaged institutions, were supervised over the duration of the project and have completed their studies. A further PhD is still in progress. One Masters student was subsequently employed. Six postdoctoral positions were partially funded within the ACDI over the course of the project.

3. Contribute to South African communities of practice in climate adaptation

An *Early Career Climate Conference* was held in collaboration with a number of other South African universities, including several historically disadvantaged institutions. The purpose of the conference was to allow students, early career researchers and practitioners under the age of 35 to present how their research findings show possible leverage points that could address the climate change challenge. It contributed to growing the emerging capacity for climate change research in South Africa.

Over 60 participants attended the hybrid event in March 2023. Travel grants were provided to 30 students from South African universities to attend the event in person. See more about the event at: <https://sites.google.com/view/ecr-conference-2023/home>

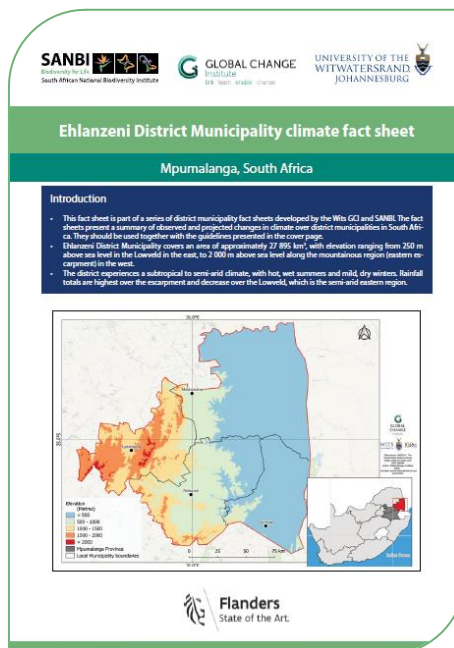
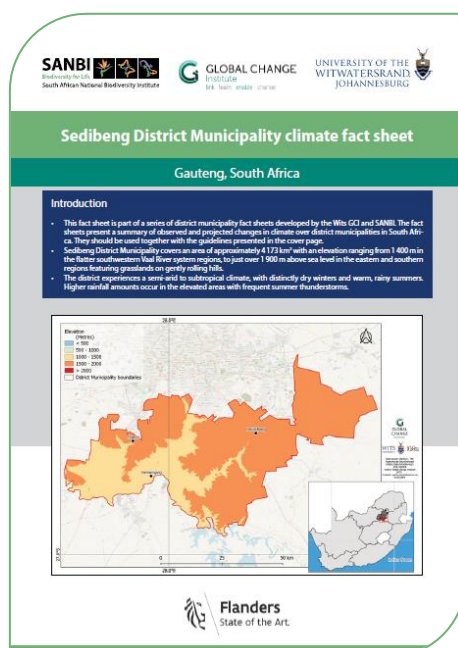
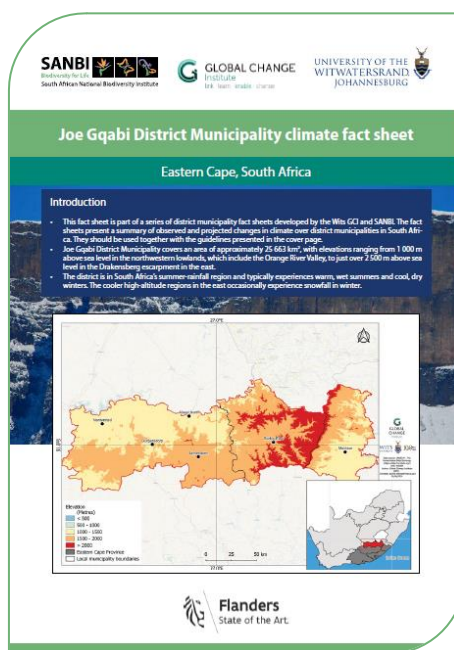
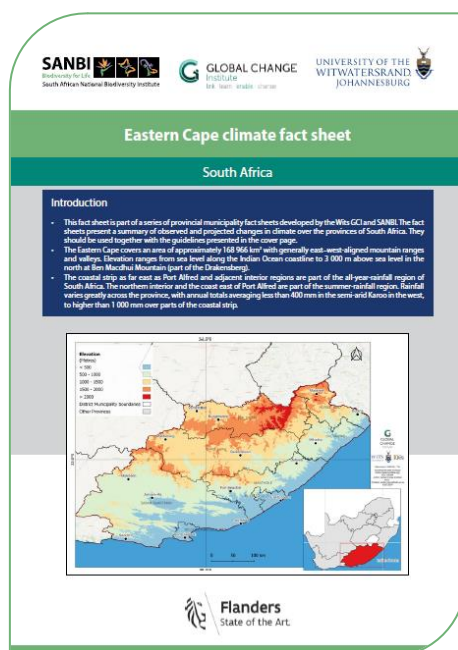


The ACDI researchers also supported the biennial *Adaptation Colloquium* of the Adaptation Network in July 2024. Over 120 participants attended the event, from academia, civil society organisations, public and private sector representatives. The event used a mixed format of presentations, discussions and creative sessions to encourage participants to share their stories across science and practice. The ACDI supported a large cohort of early career researchers to attend and showcase their work. It is continuing to provide mentorship to the group following the colloquium.



platform fostering informed action for adaptation and innovation in the rapidly changing southern African region”.

The collaboration agreement was focussed on delivering a suite of climate change factsheets for each of South Africa’s 44 district municipalities and nine provinces. The factsheets follow the style of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCs) regional factsheets. They give important information and statistics in a short and accessible format that can be used by the municipalities in their activities towards climate change mitigation and adaptation.





University of KwaZulu-Natal

Although only two collaboration agreements with universities were planned under the Unlocking Climate Finance project, a third was signed with the University of KwaZulu-Natal to provide data on the hydrological impacts of climate change. The Centre for Water Resources Research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is a centre of excellence for hydrological modelling and water resources research.

Through the collaboration agreement, it provided updated river flow and wetlands datasets to better answer questions about the impact of climate change on catchment hydrology. A model to calculate current and future river temperatures was integrated into the ACRU hydrological model. The model was run at the quinary catchment level to ascertain the impacts of land use, alien trees and climate on water and sediment yield. This was computed for the entire country and is a first for South Africa.

These datasets will be of use to the SANBI Freshwater Programme and for projects related to catchment management and securing Strategic Water Source Areas. The datasets will make it possible to analyse the anticipated hydrological impacts from Ecosystem-based Adaptation interventions. One PhD student was partly supported through this research. The work has generated at least five scientific papers, either fully or partially funded through this project, that will be published.



Result area 3: Capacity and civil society

Objective: Capacity, awareness, knowledge and advocacy for climate change strengthened in young professionals, targeted provinces and civil society.

The purpose of the third result area was to increase awareness of climate change adaptation and gender by more structured and targeted communications, as well as to build capacity in the sector by mentoring a cohort of young professionals. The work drew on the established Adaptation Network to disseminate information and host capacity development training for civil society organisations and the communities they serve, and through the Groen Sebenza internship.

Communications

Communications and knowledge dissemination strategy

A *Communications and Knowledge Dissemination Strategy*, specifically for climate change adaptation, was completed as part of the Unlocking Climate Finance project. It is being used by the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division of SANBI to guide its communication with stakeholders and the public. The strategy is aligned with SANBI's organisational communications strategy, and drew on the knowledge of SANBI staff from the Marketing, Communications and Commercialisation team, partners and stakeholders.

Externally the strategy provides a framework to communicate climate change adaptation to a diverse audience across international, regional, national and grassroots levels. Internally the strategy assists the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division to communicate its work more strategically, while also strengthening the interconnection across SANBI's different divisions and directorates.

Through the development of the Strategy, an opportunity emerged to devise key climate change messages to be used across SANBI. Two workshops were held to help craft climate change communication messages, with representatives from various divisions participating in a co-creation process, brainstorming climate change communication messages. The result is a set of climate change messages which will be used across the whole organisation to ensure that a consistent and compelling message is being delivered. The strategy thus has broader impact than envisaged when setting the communication targets, by considering the organisation more broadly and not just the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division.



Using these insights, the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division sought an opportunity to co-develop a set of thematic posters for display in South Africa's national botanical and zoological gardens, which SANBI managed as “*windows to biodiversity*”. They are especially important as a way to communicate with members of the public. The posters provide general and themed information on climate change, translating science into language accessible to a wide audience. The co-creation strengthened inter-divisional relationships in SANBI to better communicate about climate change.

The completion of the Communication and Knowledge Dissemination Strategy provided strategic guidance and has increased the communication endeavours of the Adaptation Policy and Resourcing division. Knowledge sharing and communication is now more intentional about what the division wants to communicate, how to do so, and on which platforms.

Communications and knowledge products

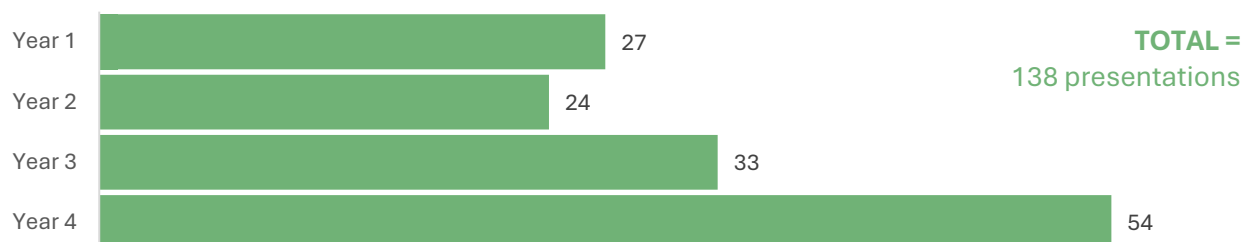
The Unlocking Climate Finance project produced a steady stream of communications and knowledge products over its four-year period, well exceeding the targets for the project. A wide range of media and product types were used to reach different target audiences, from numerous social media posts and news articles to policy briefs, factsheets, case studies and guidelines.



Accreditation for climate funding SANBI: A South African accredited entity for the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund	Ecological infrastructure for climate change adaptation Ecosystem-based Adaptation helps people cope with the impacts of climate change	Several factsheets were developed within the SANBI factsheet series, covering topics of Ecosystem-based Adaption and Accreditation for climate change funding.
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: IT'S TIME TO MOVE FROM POLICY TO INCLUSIVE PRACTICE	Climate talks need to transform into inclusive climate action for women and girls	A series of news articles came out focussed on the first Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue, as well as a YouTube interview with Dr Mandy Barnett describing the aim of the event.
SA Biodiversity @SANBI_ZA Speaking at this event, SANBI CEO Mr Shant Mufuruzi said that "It is still a fight when it comes to securing Adaptation Funding and recognising Adaptation as a socio-economic intervention that impacts the lives of people. Without this support, there is exposure to extreme weather events, which our systems cannot cope with. The Adaptation Fund has played a crucial role in supporting adaptation efforts in South Africa, particularly in agriculture. There is also a pressing need for adaptation in sectors like health, human settlements, and water security." #AdaptationFund	SA Biodiversity @SANBI_ZA He also said that "through partnerships with the Adaptation Fund, we've built a solid foundation to scale up. We're pursuing Green Climate Fund support for 3 major programmes. We are hoping that they will be approved to change the lives of people and build the momentum to support the vision of the Climate Change Act" #ClimateChangeAct	In 2024, the project stepped up its social media presence, using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to showcase inspiring women and youth involved in climate change adaptation, as well as advertise upcoming presentations.

Knowledge exchange on national and international platforms

The Unlocking Climate Finance project shared its work in presentation at many different events, from small local workshops to large conferences on the world stage. Among the topics covered were gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation, information sharing about the Green Climate Fund project pipeline, and lessons learnt from South Africa about the enhanced direct access funding modality, along with many others. Again, the project exceeded its targets by a significant margin.



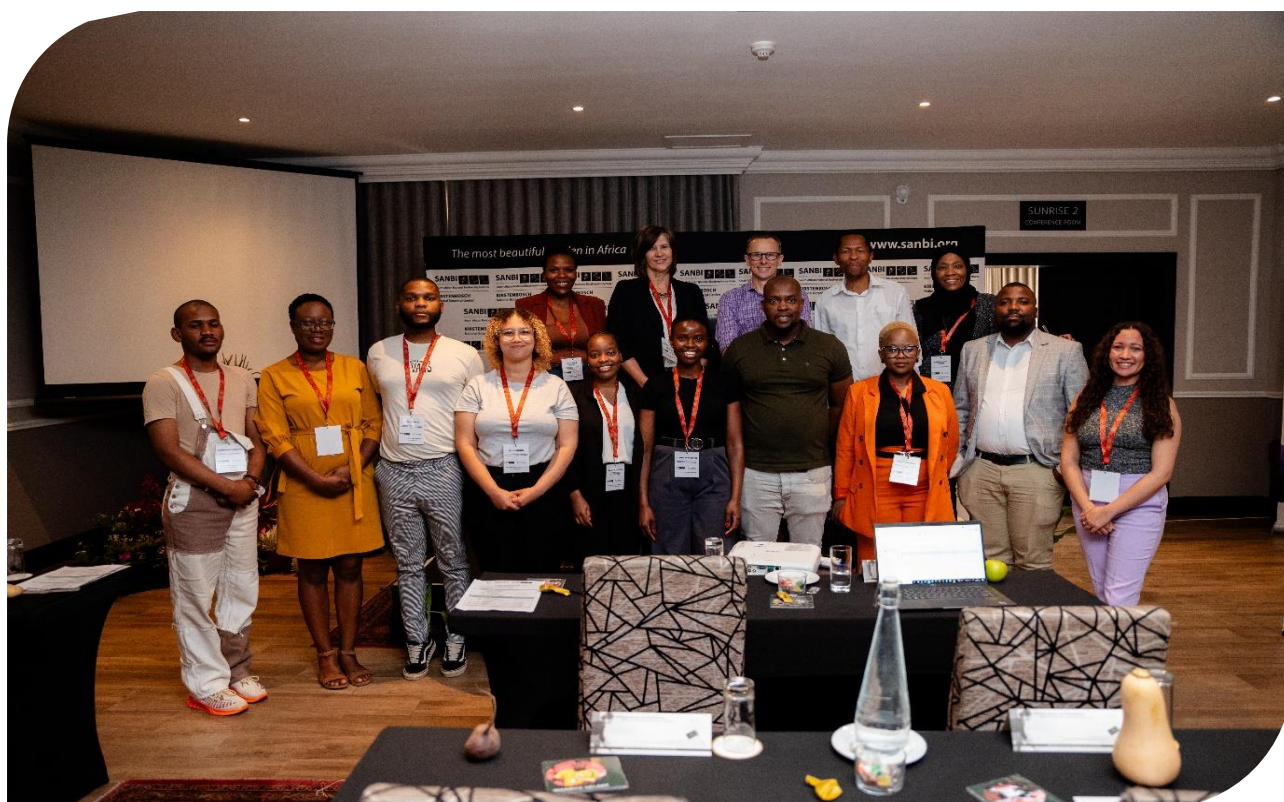
Conference of Parties	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund
		
Participation at the COP26 (Glasgow) and COP28 (Dubai) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including presentations and support for the African Group of Negotiators Experts.	Participation in a number of Green Climate Fund events, including the GCF Regional Dialogue for Africa in 2023, and the GCF community of practice, through presentations, panel discussions and interviews.	Regular participation in the Adaptation Fund's readiness programme for climate finance, which provides support to implementing entities, including through webinars, annual seminars and workshops.
Gobeshona Global	SAF-ADAPT	Local
		
The Gobeshona Global Conference is focused on supporting local communities in implementing solutions for climate adaptation and resilience. Several of the annual events were attended.	The project contributed lectures to the SAF-ADAPT summer school programme. The annual summer school is a research skills programme to build the capacity of postgraduate and postdoctoral students.	Participation in many national events, workshops, conferences, lectures and capacity building sessions, with the DFFE, government research entities and universities.

Capacity building

Young professionals

The Groen Sebenza programme (meaning 'green jobs' in Afrikaans and Zulu) is a substantial capacity development and employment initiative for the biodiversity sector that is funded through the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Now in its third iteration, it works by placing school leavers and recent graduates into internship positions across a broad range of partner organisations across the environmental sector in South Africa, including within government and non-government organisations. In these positions, the young professionals gain much needed work experience and practical training, bridging the gap between tertiary education and work place experience, and addressing a critical National need for youth employment opportunities.

The Unlocking Climate Finance project contributed to the Groen Sebenza programme towards building the capacity of young, black professionals, two-thirds of whom were women, around climate change adaptation. It was the first time that climate change internships had been included in the programme.



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These interns and their mentors also got to attend a celebratory close out event, where they shared their experiences of being in the internship, reflecting on lessons learnt, opportunities and challenges. The interns also received readiness training to prepare them for post-internship opportunities. The close-out event culminated in a celebratory certificate ceremony where both intern and mentors representing the respective host institutions received certificates of participation.

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“My role involved a lot of travel to meet and consult with different stakeholders, which I enjoyed. It was a fantastic opportunity to network and gain diverse perspectives. I also valued the hands-on experience in project development, which expanded my capacity and understanding of real-world climate change initiatives.”



“I’ve gained skills in scientific reporting, report writing, improved communication, organisational, administrative and stakeholder engagement, which have been vital to my professional growth.”



“One of my key highlights was being part of discussions on climate change policy and contributing to reports that informed government strategies. I was also able to attend several climate-related workshops and training sessions, including certifications that would have taken much longer to access on my own. The exposure to professionals in the field has also been invaluable for building my network and mapping out potential career paths.”



“The structured support from my mentors and the exposure to hands-on projects worked really well. The interdisciplinary nature of the work, particularly the integration of climate change with social issues like gender, was eye-opening and allowed me to approach my work from a broader perspective. The trainings and workshops also played a crucial role in enhancing my skills and knowledge.”

“This internship has had a profound impact on both my professional and personal growth. Professionally, it has given me confidence in my abilities and has helped me identify new career paths I hadn’t considered before. Personally, it’s challenged my limiting beliefs and pushed me to be more open to learning. I’ve also gained a greater appreciation for the complexity of climate change and the various ways it can affect society.”



Intern profiles were developed to record their insights, experiences and advise to their peers.

Supporting the Adaptation Network

The Adaptation Network (<https://adaptationnetwork.org.za/>) is a multi-stakeholder platform in South Africa dedicated to knowledge sharing, capacity building, policy engagement and collective learning around climate adaptation and resilience. Established in 2009, it counts over 400 members from more than 160 organisations. It aims to connect researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to share knowledge, develop adaptation strategies, and support implementation on the ground.



Through a collaboration agreement, the Unlocking Climate Finance project provided support to the Adaptation Network to undertake a range of communications and capacity building efforts. The network also shared with its members various opportunities for funding, employment, research, and training, as well as invitations to events and information resources. Through the Adaptation Network, approximately 1 500 people participated in 88 capacity building opportunities, including 45% woman and 23% youth. Over 23 awareness and advocacy products were co-produced through the Adaptation Network.

Participation in policy processes

The Adaptation Network represented its members on the *National Adaptation Fund Advisory Body (NAFAB)*. The NAFAB is an inter-organisational committee to provide project governance and oversight for SANBI's climate finance portfolio. It includes representation from national government departments and entities, as well as non-government and private sector representatives. Representatives from the Adaptation Network attended project development engagements and meetings for SANBI's Eco-DRR and EbA-Farm projects. The Adaptation Network ensured that the voices of community beneficiaries, civil society organisations and small grant project implementers were heard in this important forum. It also reported back to its members on the information shared at the meetings.



The Adaptation Network also attended meetings of the *Presidential Climate Commission*, an independent, multi-stakeholder body established by the South African presidency to oversee and facilitate a just and equitable transition towards a low-emissions and climate-resilient economy. It includes several Working Groups which are tasked with conducting in-depth research, analysis, and policy recommendations on specific climate change-related issues. Through attendance at these Working Group meetings, the Adaptation Network identified several fruitful collaboration opportunities through which its members could contribute to the work of the commission.

The Adaptation Network co-hosted the *National Policy Dialogue on a Just Transition and Adaptation in the South African Food System* in September 2023. The aim of the dialogue was “to build a more co-ordinated voice between civil society, workers, smallholder farmers, and communities on key policy priorities for a just food system transition and to build and strengthen adaptation and resilience in the context of climate change”. Three Adaptation Network member organisations hosted preparatory workshops and were later supported to attend, along with community representatives. A series of factsheets were developed to share information at the conference. See *Publications*. The event led to ongoing formal and informal collaborations around the themes of climate change and food systems. It opened opportunities for the Adaptation Network to provide input towards climate change adaptation and food security policies of the Department of Agriculture.

The Adaptation Network was also represented at several policy engagements hosted by the DFFE, such as the Adaptation Technical Working Group and the Loss and Damage Workshop Series.

Webinars

In 2021, the Adaptation Network identified a need from its members for more information about interacting with climate change policy processes. It held a first ‘Policy and Legislative Engagement Training’ with input from key experts in environmental law and climate change policy in South Africa. The popularity of the event led to further webinars on similar themes, which evolved into a regular ‘*Online Policy Engagement Space*’, held every quarter. The webinars are a way to bring feedback to members on current climate change policy processes that are underway. They regularly attract attendance of more than 20 participants from across government, non-government organisations, the private sector and academia.

The Adaptation Network then held a member training needs survey to identify further training needs. It revealed that the members were looking for information about conducting community-based vulnerability assessments, as well as where to find and how to use climate change information for their area. A series of workshops were held to meet these needs, including by introducing the Tools and Atlas resource. See *Atlas and toolkit*.

Following the Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue held by SANBI in 2023 (see *Gender mainstreaming dialogues*), the Adaptation Network hosted an online follow-up event in honour of National Women’s Day. Speakers from across many different organisations gave their perspective on how issues of gender interact with their work in climate change adaptation, such as food security, social justice, climate activism, public policy, research and more. A total of 81 people attended the webinar, 89% of whom were women. It was generally viewed as a valuable and inspiring online engagement.

In 2024, as part of a larger communications campaign around climate justice, the Adaptation Network hosted an online round table discussion on climate justice. The webinar was moderated by the Centre for Environmental rights and included presentations from experts on climate justice. A total of 30 people from 26 different organisations attended.

THE ADAPTATION NETWORK
Joining up to the climate challenge!

invites you to attend an
online roundtable discussion

Exploring Climate Justice in South Africa

As climate change impacts accelerate, amplifying existing vulnerabilities, the issue of climate justice becomes increasingly urgent.

This roundtable, moderated by **Centre for Environmental Rights** and including speakers from the **Institute of Economic Justice**, **Pan African Climate Justice Alliance South Africa**, and the **groundwork / Life After Coal**, explores the multifaceted nature of climate justice, particularly through the lens of South Africa's unique socio-economic disparities and historical context.

The event will be kicked off by a short video on climate justice introduced by **Human Rights Media Trust/Mycelium Media Colab** producer/director.

REGISTER NOW
adaptationnetwork.org.za

Thursday 25.04.2024 Time 10:00 - 11:30

Logos: LIFE AFTER COAL, HUMAN RIGHTS MEDIA TRUST, MYCELIUM MEDIA COLAB, INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC JUSTICE, PACJA, SANBI, Centre for Environmental Rights.

THE ADAPTATION NETWORK
Joining up to the climate challenge!

invites you to attend

**4th Adaptation Network
Online Policy Engagement Space**

What's on the Agenda?

Dive into the latest climate adaptation policy discussions and feedback at our upcoming webinar session.

Speakers include Dr. Mandy Barnett, Nikki Stuart-Thompson, Dr. Stephen Greenberg, and Dr. Luckson Zvobgo, bringing updates on climate strategies, insights from CSOs, and the latest on international climate agreements.

REGISTER NOW
adaptationnetwork.org.za

Thursday 28.02.2024 Time 10:30 - 12:00

Logos: LIFE AFTER COAL, HUMAN RIGHTS MEDIA TRUST, MYCELIUM MEDIA COLAB, INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC JUSTICE, PACJA, SANBI, Centre for Environmental Rights.

Civil society capacity development workshops

Over the course of the project, the Adaptation Network offered opportunities to its members for support towards capacity development workshops. Some of these included:

Women's Leadership and Training Programme	GenderCC	Embo YakwaNtu
		
Venue: Ixopo	Venue: Johannesburg	Venue: East London
Date: 2023	Date: 2023	Date: 2023
Attendance: 27 (100% women)	Attendance: 24 (50% women)	Attendance: 39 (77% women)
Topic: Preparatory workshop for the National Food Systems Dialogue.	Topic: Preparatory workshop for the National Food Systems Dialogue.	Topic: Preparatory workshop for the National Food Systems Dialogue.
Green Anglicans	Institute of Natural Resources	Association for Rural Advancement
		
Venue: Johannesburg, Gauteng	Venue: uMkhomazi catchment	Venue: uMgungundlovu
Date: May 2023	Date: May 2023	Date: May 2023
Attendance: 25 (40% women)	Attendance: 58 (41% women)	Attendance: 14 (50% women)
Topic: Provide faith leaders with information about climate change to take forward into their communities.	Topic: Create local awareness about increasing resilience of communities to climate change.	Topic: Engage with small-scale farmers around assessing their climate risk.
Seriti Institute	Youth Day Climate Awareness	Women's Leadership and Training Programme
		
Venue: Bela Bela	Venue: Five venues across SA	Venue: Ixopo
Date: May 2023	Date: Youth Day, 16 June 2024	Date: July 2024
Attendance: 26	Attendance: 263	Attendance: 30 (60% women)
Topic: Comprehensive training for small-scale farmers, including practical site visits.	Topic: Five local organisations hosted Youth Day events to create climate change awareness for young people.	Topic: Conducting a community-based vulnerability assessment with community members.

Participatory video training

Participatory video is a type of storytelling media in an approachable visual format. Short videos, photos and interviews are used by participants to tell a story set in their own communities.

The Adaptation Network conducted a series of participatory video training sessions with young participants from several communities. Altogether, 47 participants (83% women and 85% youth) received training at events in the Western and Eastern Cape. The training exposed some important lessons. The youth often had a limited initial understanding about climate change, and conflated climate change with wider environmental issues. They have not yet acquired the necessary content knowledge and experience needed to understand and meaningfully frame their stories about the impact of climate change on their lives. It is possible that other groups, such as small-scale women farmers, would have had more compelling stories to tell. The training resulted in the production of nine videos, and the participants, gained a valuable skill to communicate the work of the communities through an impactful medium which can be used for social media campaigns.

An online follow-up event was held, including those from the first training who were particularly interested, as well as other members who wished to use smart phones to produce video content. A free online 'Masterclass in Mobile Journalism' was held under the banner of 'Elevating your digital storytelling skills'. A total of 16 people attended, 56% of whom were youth. It was specifically aimed at creating content for social media platforms. A second 'Masterclass in Mobile Journalism' was held as part of the annual colloquium, to help attendees produce content from the colloquium for their own use.



Biennial colloquium

The Adaptation Network hosts a Colloquium for its members every two years. Over the course of the Unlocking Climate Finance project, two Adaptation Colloquia were held, first in 2022 and again in 2024.

The 2022 Colloquium was held in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu Natal at the Ukulinga Research Farm in Pietermaritzburg. The theme was “Small-scale farmers and adaptation”. The event included a conference, site visits and a policy messaging workshops. It was attended by more than 180 participants, including academics, practitioners, students and small-scale farmers.

The 2024 Colloquium was a three-day event with the theme “Storytelling for impact”, held in Cape Town. A collaboration with Mycelium Media Colab included creative sessions throughout the programme, which allowed participants to express themselves through different mediums of art, drama and poetry. In addition, the colloquium covered topics of community-based adaptation, decision making, and monitoring, evaluation and learning for adaptation. It also included discussion about the new Biodiversity Bill. A total of 119 people (57% women) attended, including researchers, policymakers, non-government organisations and the private sector.

Watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-nn57paq-o>



Publications

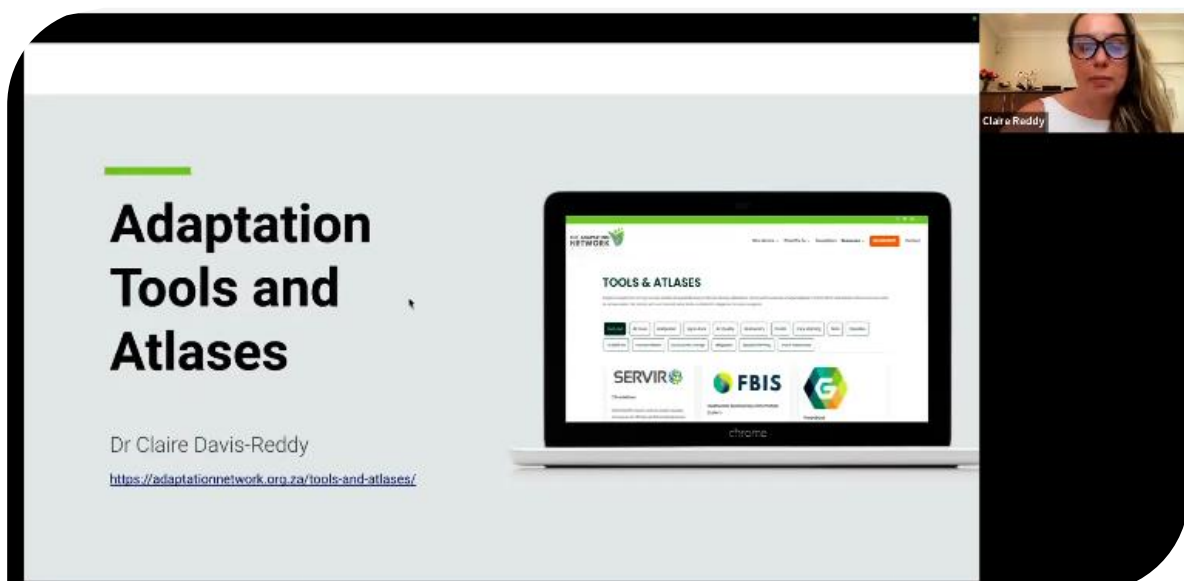
As part of the collaboration around the around 'Adaptation and the Just Transition in the South African Food System' conference, see *Participation in policy processes*, a set of six colourful factsheets were developed in five South African language. They covered topics of the just transition, the South African food system, climate change emissions, impacts on agriculture, agroecology and an overview of the agriculture sectors Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan.



A communications professional was then contracted by the Adaptation Network, and transformed a draft publication on climate justice into a fully co-ordinated campaign that resulted in several publications on the website, as well as social media posts and an online panel discussion. See *Webinars*.

Atlas and toolkit

A service provider was appointed to conduct a review of existing toolkits, atlases and other material that can be used by civil society organisations for climate change adaptation efforts. A survey was done of Adaptation Network members for any resources and materials they would like to share. These were compiled into a full resource kit to be shared to members through the Adaptation Network website. At the same time, the website was upgraded to better curate the resources and help users navigate the materials. The resource was revealed to members through a well-attended online launch that was well-received.



Additional activities

SANBI's National Zoological Garden was able to undertake a suite of climate change activities through the support of this project. The activities were focused on the outreach programme of work with communities, schools and teachers.

Educators from schools around Tshwane attended a workshop at the National Zoological Garden to equip them with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to effectively teach about climate change. Various stakeholders engaged teachers in activities that fostered an understanding of climate change and encouraged educators to inspire learners to act on climate issues.

The 'a re jwaleng' climate change programme aimed to raise awareness about climate change as part of National Arbor Month through a tree-planting initiative. Seventy community members were engaged in climate change awareness activities.

The winners (six learners, 50% female) of the Life Science Competition were rewarded with an excursion to Durban, focused on climate change, environmental education, and marine conservation awareness. The trip inspired their passion for environmental stewardship and climate action, empowering the youth to become future leaders in the environment.

The Mokopane Science Club (ten learners) won the annually held 'Trash Show' competition, which aims to raise awareness about the importance of recycling and encourage citizens to take action to reduce waste and protect the environment. The winners were rewarded with a BioScience Course at the National Zoological Garden, where learners and educators learned about conservation science and how to take care of the environment.





Result area 4: Gender mainstreaming

Objective: *Gender mainstreamed into all SANBI Green Climate Fund proposal development, climate change adaptation research and capacity building processes.*

The final result area of the Unlocking Climate Finance project focussed on acknowledging the disproportionate vulnerability of women to climate change. The principles of gender equality, inclusiveness and good governance were integrated throughout all the project's efforts. The project's gender mainstreaming interventions concentrated on several key activities:

- Building awareness and capacity: Efforts were made to enhance understanding and skills related to gender and climate change among stakeholders.
- Generating knowledge products: The project produced various resources and materials to support gender mainstreaming in climate finance.
- Linking and contributing to national gender processes: The project established connections with key national gender initiatives to ensure alignment and collaboration.
- Providing engagement opportunities: Platforms were created for stakeholders to engage at the intersection of gender and climate change adaptation at a national level.

SANBI is committed to transformation within the sector and gender mainstreaming is part of SANBI's transformation agenda guided by a Gender Mainstreaming Policy that provides principles for gender mainstreaming within SANBI's institutional operations, its projects and programmes. Coordination of gender across SANBI has received more prominence, and the gender efforts of this project have contributed to this. The project supported an internal SANBI Women's Day event in 2024. The event was hosted under the leadership of SANBI's Foundational Biodiversity Science Division with the theme of 'gender mainstreaming'.

All these activities aimed to strengthen the participation of women in the climate change adaptation space.

Mainstreaming gender in project development

The main focus of the project was to provide catalytical support to SANBI as an accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund to develop a pipeline of project proposals. See *[Project development](#)*. Gender was a key focus point in all the project proposal development processes. Mainstreaming gender into project proposals, and throughout the project cycle, is also a requirement of the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.

Gender formed part of the proposal development processes for the Eco-DRR, EbA-Farm and Enhanced Direct Access projects, and will be part of any future project proposals developed by SANBI. Each project under development has a gender assessment and action plan, informed by gender assessments undertaken through desktop studies and stakeholder engagements, the latter of which was always gender aware.

Research paper and factsheet

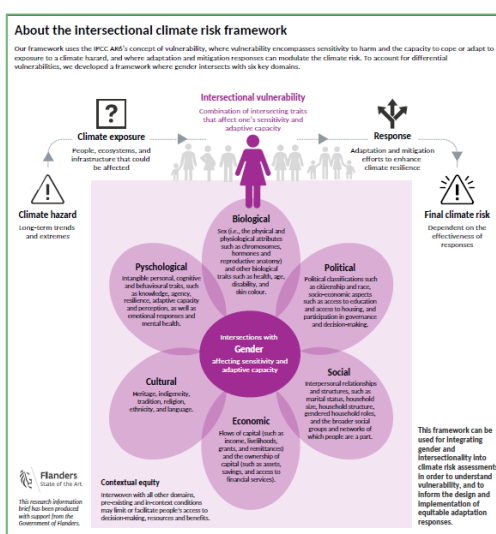
The project intentionally contributed to growing the knowledge creation and information on gender, specifically for the South African context. At the start of the project, assessments indicated that there was very little gender research available that focuses on the South African context. Through the collaboration agreement with the University of Cape Town's African Climate and Development Initiative, a review paper on the vulnerability of women to climate change was researched and written. It has been submitted to the journal WIRES Climate Change Reviews for publication, and is available as a pre-print at <https://doi.org/10.22541/essoar.173152347.75935200/v1>

Integrating intersectionality into climate risk assessments: Review of gendered vulnerability in South Africa

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Understanding how gender inequality intersects with escalating climate change impacts is critical for informing climate adaptation responses that reduce vulnerability and inequality. To better understand gendered vulnerability, we develop an intersectional climate risk framework. We adopt a systematic approach to a literature review and apply the framework to South Africa as a case study. We screened 167 abstracts and included 52 articles for review. Climate hazards in South Africa (such as changing temperatures, droughts and floods) exacerbate conditions of poverty and poor infrastructure and services, with a greater impact on women. Economic aspects such as income and livelihood were found to intersect the most with gender to affect climate vulnerability, followed by women's lower levels of education, knowledge and awareness. Childcare was found paradoxically to increase vulnerability in some ways, yet also decrease vulnerability as women were found to be motivated to overcome hardship by their responsibility towards their children. Responses to climate impacts show households are barely coping, while some community level efforts appear to reduce vulnerability. Gendered approaches to disaster risk reduction including gender-sensitive shelter, early warning systems and information sharing are needed. More broadly, women's economic inclusion must be strengthened, for example with urban planning that supports informal trade. Dismantling patriarchal values that underpin gender-based violence, gendered land ownership and household labour would also reduce women's vulnerability. Gendered vulnerability is deeply entwined with historical and socio-economic factors, and needs nuanced, context-specific approaches beyond binary comparisons to understand how to develop more equitable climate adaptation responses.



The paper was also formatted into a short, visually appealing factsheet to share the findings with a more general audience. It shows that income and livelihoods intersected the most with gender to affect vulnerability, followed by education, knowledge and awareness. The factsheet closes with recommendations for research, policy and practice.

The factsheet is available at: https://zivahub.uct.ac.za/articles/online_resource/An_intersectional_climate_risk_framework_understanding_gendered_climate_vulnerability_in_South_Africa/27716283?file=50466765

Both the research paper and the factsheet were workshopped with experts in the gender and climate change space.

Representatives from government departments, civil society organisation, academia, and private consultants formed part of the expert engagement. The knowledge products were also shared with at the 2024 Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue.

Gender mainstreaming dialogues

The Unlocking Climate Finance project hosted two highly successful *Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogues* in 2023 and 2024. These were hosted in collaboration with the DFFE and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, showing a united front across different government departments. This was the first time that these partners came together under this banner. A strategic tri-lateral partnership made sense as these institutions had mandates around climate change, biodiversity, women, youth and persons with disabilities at a country level.



The first dialogue, themed ‘Women Adapting to Climate Change’, took place on 8-9 March 2023, in recognition of International Women’s Day on the 8th of March. Approximately 130 people were in attendance, including high level delegates from the host institutions. Messages of support were received from donors supporting the respective host institutions. The purpose of the dialogue was to create a vibrant space for a discussion on the gender and climate change nexus, and specifically its impacts on women. As the first dialogue on climate change and gender, it placed an emphasis on learning and capacity building to bring stakeholders with different levels of understanding into the discussions. The dialogue connected with the Commission on the Status of Women international event in New York, through which Advocate Mikateko Joyce Maluleke provided a message of support and highlighted the linkages between the events. The event resulted in a number of articles in the media, further drawing attention to the connections between climate change and gender. See *Communications and knowledge products*.



The second dialogue was held from 23-25 October 2024. Coinciding with 30-years of democracy in South Africa, and 30 years since the global Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it began with a reflective look at the remaining gender disparities. The researchers from the University of Cape Town presented their findings on the gendered vulnerability to climate change. The dialogue was combined with the celebration of the Women in Environment awards, recognising women whose efforts at grassroots level are making a difference towards climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability in their

communities. Deputy Minister Bernice Swarts provided the keynote address and presented the awards.

A special word of appreciation and thanks to the representatives from various organisations for their commitment and generous sharing of their time and expertise in support of the strategic planning and guidance of the 2023 and 2024 Climate Change Adaptation and Gender Mainstreaming Dialogues. Partners included the Association for Rural Advancement, South African Local Government Association, African Climate and Development Unit, Climate Champions for Adaptation, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, GenderCC, Kulima Integrated Development Solutions, Mycelium Media Colab, the Adaptation Network, Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region, Mahlathini Development Foundation and Sonke Gender Justice.



Gender training and tools

Training

A training course was developed and offered in 2024, aligned to the needs of the partners, stakeholders and community representatives who attended the Gender Mainstreaming Dialogue. The gender training, along with the various gender events hosted, provided great opportunities for a range of stakeholders, partners, civil society and the youth to build their capacity through climate change and gender themed presentations, groups discussions and one on one discussions, including the following themes:

Concepts and approaches	Impacts and responses
- Key gender concepts - Human rights-based approach - Unpacking the concept of gender - Linking gender and climate adaptation - Understanding patriarchy and gender (in)equality - Women's empowerment and agency - Intersectionality, gender (in)equality and climate change	- Impacts of climate change on gender (in)equality - Working with women: How and why do responses to climate change differ according to gender? - Gender mainstreaming in evaluation programmes - Gender gap analysis in public policy - Gender in global change research - Reflecting on gender mainstreaming in a 30-year democracy - Climate change implications for gender mainstreaming
Case studies and insights	Experiences and practices
- Gender equity in adaptation initiatives: Key insights from Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Malawi - Beijing Plus 30: National review report focusing on critical area K - Women, climate, and equity: A gender tool for transformative action - Experiences in trying to build inclusivity: The Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security project - Mainstreaming gender in the Greater uMngeni Catchment	- Sharing women's experiences, stories and songs - How to centre women's issues in climate adaptation responses - Gender mainstreaming in practice - Mainstreaming gender in the context of the Small Grants Facility - Gender and climate change priorities in the Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities - Gender mainstreaming in South African Development Community programme of work - Enabling gender mainstreaming, environmental and social safeguards - Gender, climate finance and local adaptation - Government gender machinery
Resources and tools	
- Climate change and gender paper and factsheet - Climate Change and Vulnerability: Strengthening Adaptive Capacity for Health, Women, Children, and People with Disabilities - Toward Gender-Responsive Ecosystem-based Adaptation - The draft Climate Change and Gender Action Plan - Climate Change Adaptation in South Africa and why it's important - International Panel on Climate Change findings on Climate Change Adaptation and Gender - Scoping needs on disaster risk reduction, disability and gender - Youth perspective on climate change impacts and agency - Gender mainstreaming strategy into the environment sector: monitoring and reporting - Findings of vulnerability assessment on how changes in weather patterns impact key livelihoods, activities and gender - The Gender Assessment and Monitoring of Mitigation and Adaptation tool for the assessment of climate change policies	

Monitoring tools

The Unlocking Climate Finance project initially aimed to amend a social tool by incorporating gender aspects into the tool. This would have had a smaller localised impact. During implementation of the project, the gender community of practice emphasised the need to have better alignment of gender at national level, cascading to provincial and local levels. Towards this end, the project shifted to align gender reporting within various international and national reporting frameworks. Participating in these reporting processes was crucial for the project, laying the foundation for future gender work that will be undertaken through SANBI's climate finance projects. The goal was to align future gender interventions with national indicators, ensuring that our current and future work contributes to achieving both national and international country targets.

Nationally Determined Contribution: The project participated in the DFFE-led process to include gender in South Africa's Nationally Determined Contribution. This forms part of the country's commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Nationally Determined Contributions will be updated for 2025 and will be more gender responsive.

National Climate Change Gender Action Plan: A National Climate Change Gender Action Plan was drafted for South Africa in 2022. It aims to ensure that all climate change actions are gender responsive. It addresses climate change activities across various other sectors, including water, agriculture, health, human settlements, disaster risk and more. The National Gender Action Plan has five strategic actions, amongst which are setting the institutional basis for gender mainstreaming, awareness efforts, and sourcing relevant funding. The National Climate Change and Gender Action includes a specific strategic action for robust Monitoring and Evaluation, to measure whether gender mainstreaming is being implemented and resulting in reduced vulnerability for women. The Unlocking Climate Finance project participated in and supported the stakeholder engagements around the draft Action Plan, including with provincial stakeholders.

Gender Mainstreaming Plan for Environmental Sector: The project's gender activities contributed to reporting under the Gender Mainstreaming Plan for the Environmental Sector. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that initiatives and policies in the sector support gender mainstreaming, and that gender analyses are considered in projects throughout the project cycle. It measures gender across many performance areas, such as research projects, mentoring programmes, student financial opportunities, institutional partnerships, awareness events, budget spend, management positions and policy. The Unlocking Climate Finance project contributed several inputs towards the reporting process on a quarterly basis, as part of the organisation's reporting commitments.

Global Biodiversity Framework: The project has also been involved in the process to revise national biodiversity targets to align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and developing gender responsive targets under the framework.

Activities and achievements under this result area established a vibrant community of practice around climate change and gender, with key partners that lead the mandate for gender equality for the country, and in the environment sector.



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