



environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# ***Working for Wetlands***

*Capacity-development workshop on restoration of  
forests and other ecosystems to support the  
achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets*

4 October 2017

Durban



**EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME**  
Creating opportunities towards human fulfilment



# FOCUS of this workshop

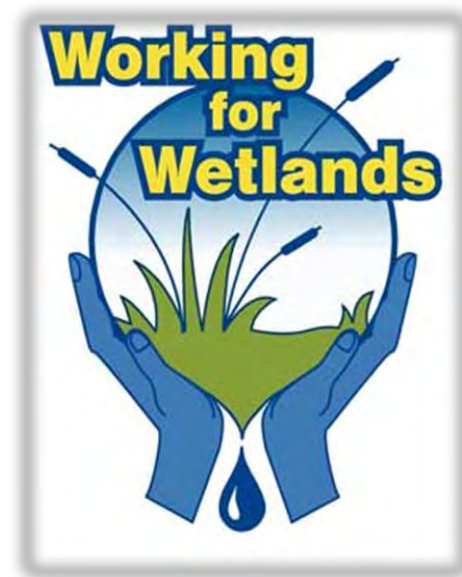
Review of national commitments

Drivers for restoration and best practice from wetlands work

Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem functions into activities

South-south exchange of experiences and knowledge

Mobilizing domestic and international public and private resources.



# Overview

- Reading the road map
  - What we are in the business of doing...
- Rearview Mirror
  - How much have we done
  - Where have we worked
- Windscreen
- Anxiety of the trip
- Conclusion



# Wetlands provide various ecosystem services



water supply  
streamflow regulation  
erosion and flood mitigation  
water quality enhancement  
maintenance of biodiversity  
products (fish, grazing, building and crafts material)  
cultural attributes  
recreation and tourism  
maintenance of natural processes





# Wetlands in South Africa

The 2011 National Biodiversity Assessment reveals that

- 65% of our wetland types are under threat, of which
- 48% critically endangered,
- 12% endangered and
- 5% vulnerable.
- Only 11% of wetland ecosystem types are well protected,
- with 71% not protected at all



Plantations



Mining in wetlands



Pumping wetlands dry:  
Vazi Pan

# Reading the Roadmap

- What are we in the business of doing?
  - Knowing where the wetlands are in SA, and finding out the state they are in,
  - Determining where the important wetlands are for biodiversity and water security purposes,
  - Finding where degraded wetlands are,
  - Fixing them with cost effectiveness,
  - Keeping an eye on the “interventions” to protect the investment.

Drivers for restoration and  
best practice from wetlands  
work

# How it's done...

- 15 people- 7 based in Pretoria & 1 in each Province
- DEA –NRM budget of US\$8.8m (2017-18),
- WfWet does the Planning, Environmental Impact Assessment applications, landowner engagements and monitoring of project,
- Project are completed by “Implementers” who are contractually engaged,
- Strong focus on biodiversity and water quality objectives – driven by providing jobs.



# Working for Wetlands





An aerial photograph of a dry, brown landscape. A winding river or stream flows through the center of the image. Several small white structures, possibly tents or small huts, are scattered along the riverbank. The terrain is arid and sparsely vegetated.

South-south exchange of  
experiences and  
knowledge



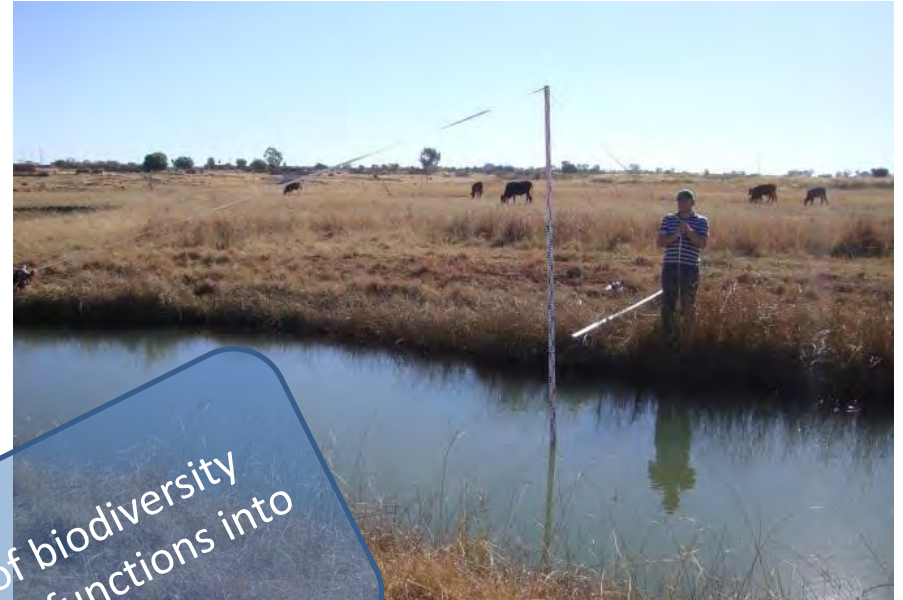








# Site visits and designs



Integration of biodiversity  
and ecosystem functions into  
activities





# Oribi Loop wetland – preparing the site.

Note the nick point in the gully



# One year later





# 5 years later (winter)



## Zoarvlei, Mpumalanga

After...



Before...





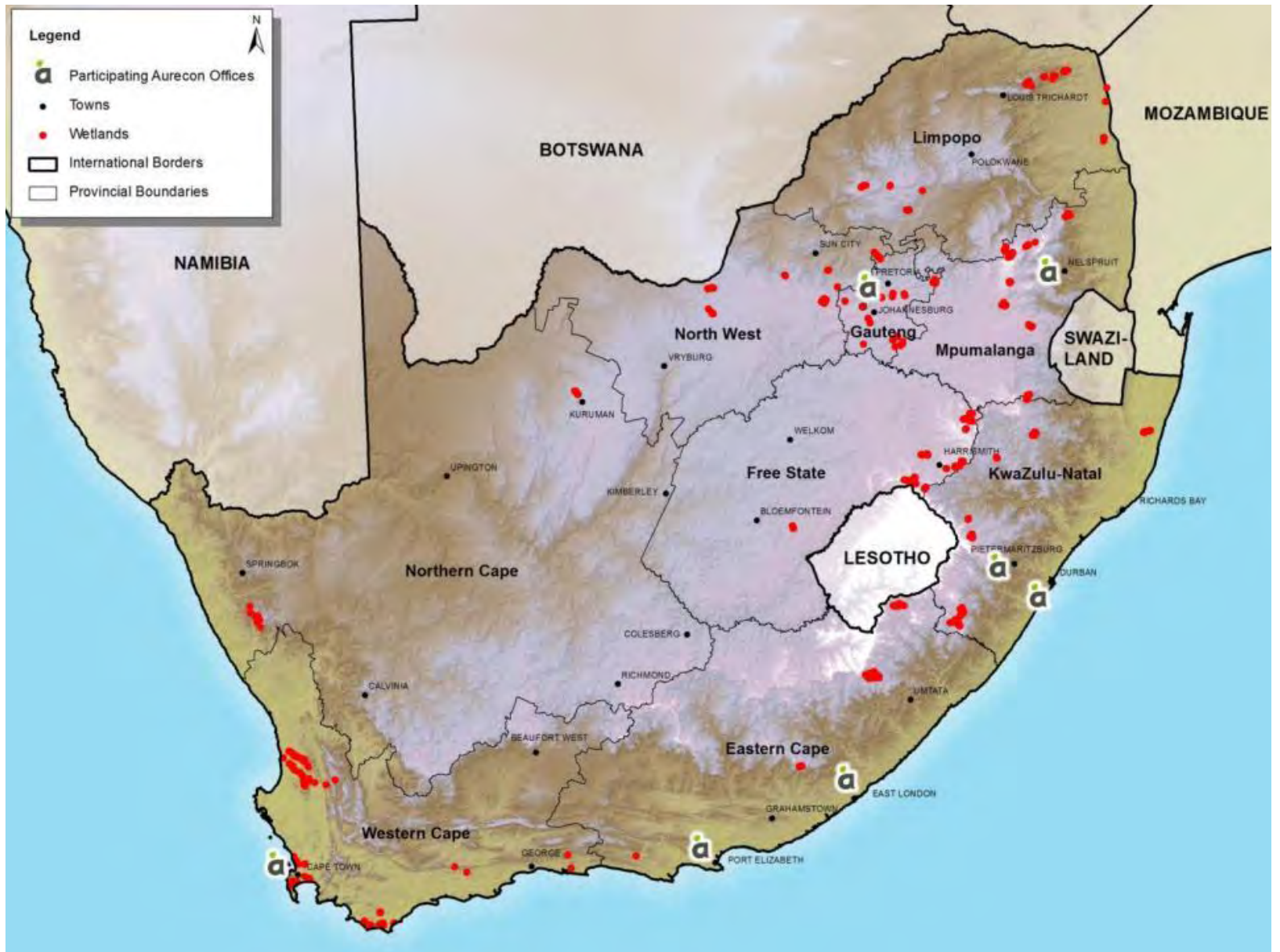




# Rear-view Mirror

*Review of national commitments*

- How much have we done? From 2004-2017
  - Worked on 1 360 Wetlands (about 68 000 ha thus far),
  - South African target by 2030 is 61 900. Doing roughly 5 000 ha per year on current budget.
  - Spent R1 billion (approx. US\$ 100 million)
  - Average spend per wetland US\$ 72 500
  - 27 000 jobs created, 250 000 person days of skills development
- Where have we worked?
  - All 9 Provinces
  - 80 wetland systems worked upon (roughly 35 working projects per year)
  - As per map..





# WfWet “cubby hole treasures”

- Over the years, much has been “learnt” by the Programme through trial and error and scientific input, resulting in application of methods that are working,
- There are scientific reports available for many of the sites that we have worked on and these can be used as benchmarks for future work,
- WfWet has, over the years grown very good experience in both wetland and dry land restoration work – experience that can be shared,
- Rehabilitation protocols that are tried and tested for 17 years now – which is a valuable starting point to any new comer in the sector.

# Windscreen

- We look at spreading the work we do on a wider landscape / catchment scale,
- We would like to work ourselves out of the rehabilitation business (!?!?).
- Spread work to compliance field, linking with stewardship, vibrant communication and really knowing which wetland resources to conserve in SA.



# Conclusion

- The WfWet Programme is eager to take the work it has started to a level where it claims back more than it did in the last 16 years,
- It hopes to enlist partners, scientific input, new energy / people to embark on this journey.
- We wish to harness regional and other partnerships, where possible.



## KZN MIDLANDS





# Thank You ...

