



Capacity Development for Sustainable Forestry Management

PROJECT SUMMARY



Project partners

The Institute of Natural Resources

The Institute of Natural Resources (INR) is an applied research organization. The INR is a recognized knowledge provider, strategic and operational supporter, capacity developer, and advocate for the natural resource and environmental management sectors in southern Africa.

Partnering with government, civil society, the private sector and other leading research organisations develops cutting edge solutions to support the resolution of natural resource challenges; provides advice to practitioners, researchers and policy makers; integrates effort; builds the capacity of graduate professionals to operate effectively in the workplace; and advocates an environmentally secure future for all. The INR is an independent, non-profit, public benefit organization committed to serving the people of southern Africa.

Organisationally work is arranged into a series of interlinked thematic areas:

- Adaptation and Resilience
- Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods
- Environmental Governance and Sustainability
- Ecosystem

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Introduction

Direct and indirect impacts from plantation forestry operations in the Blyde and Klaserie sub-catchments of the Olifants Basin are recognized to have significant negative impacts on biodiversity and water resources in these catchments, which undermines resilience.

It is important to understand the history of afforestation authorizations in the country. All afforestation before 1972 was undertaken without any form of authorization. Subsequent to the introduction of the National Water Act (NWA) in 1998, existing afforestation is deemed to be lawful but growers were required to register their water use in terms of the NWA. The onus was on the grower to prove that the plantations were planted before 1972 (typically done by consulting aerial imagery). Afforestation between 1973 and 1998 was authorized under the various forest acts and during this period the authorizations were referred to as Afforestation Permits. Afforestation was brought under the NWA in 1998 and all plantations were declared a Stream Flow Reduction Activity and required to be licensed in terms of the NWA.



Plantations should comply with delineation recommendations and the guidelines developed by Peter Roberts and Keith Snyman (2004) and taken over and updated by (then) Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (2008). All plantations are considered to be water-users and the NWA requires registration accordingly, irrespective of when established.

An extract from Chapter 3 of the National Water Act of 1998 (NWA)

The NWA “permits the continuation under certain conditions of an existing water use derived from a law repealed by this Act. An existing lawful water use, with any conditions attached, is recognised but may continue only to the extent that it is not limited, prohibited or terminated by this Act. No licence is required to continue with an existing lawful water use until a responsible authority requires a person claiming such an entitlement to apply for a licence. If a licence is issued it becomes the source of authority for the water use. If a licence is not granted the use is no longer permissible.”

Definition of existing lawful water use:

“32. (1) An existing lawful water use means a water use -

- (a) which has taken place at any time during a period of two years immediately before the date of commencement of this Act; or
- (b) which has been declared an existing lawful water use under section 33, and which -
 - (i) was authorised by or under any law which was in force immediately before the date of commencement of this Act;
 - (ii) is identified as a stream flow reduction activity in section 36(1); or
 - (iii) is identified as a controlled activity in section 37(1).

(2) In the case of -

- (a) a stream flow reduction activity declared under section 36(1); or
- (b) a controlled activity declared under section 38, existing lawful water use means a water use which has taken place at any time during a period of two years immediately before the date of the declaration.”

Project Purpose

To develop the capacity for enhancing sustainable forest management (SFM), in particular to ensure compliance and monitoring of the South African national standard for SFM by plantation forestry operations.

The objectives of this project included:

1. Collectively understanding the constraints and barriers in the forestry operations in the Blyde and Klaserie sub-catchments of the Olifants Catchment that are contributing to biodiversity loss and water resource degradation, and challenges with compliance with national standards and best practice for SFM in South Africa
2. Collectively identifying interventions and opportunities to develop capacity of stakeholders that would enhance compliance with standards and best practice for sustainable forest management in South Africa and thereby reduce negative impacts of forestry operations and enhance resilience
3. Developing capacity building materials and implementing collaborative training and capacity development among key forestry stakeholders in priority areas in the Blyde and Klaserie sub-catchments
4. Reviewing impacts and outcomes of capacity development in the Blyde and Klaserie sub-catchments and developing recommendations for upscaling capacity development to enhance SFM and resilience building in further areas in the Olifants Catchment



Activities

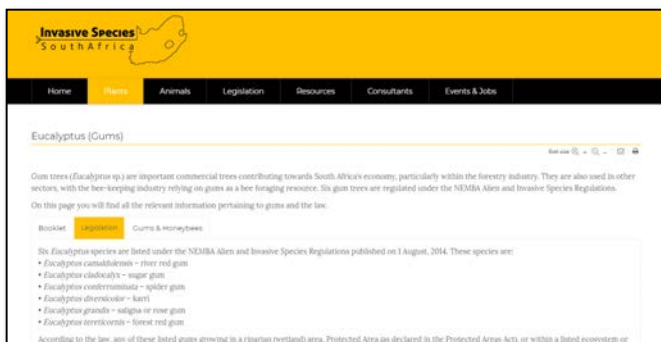
Project activities were designed around achieving the goal to enhance capacity within the forestry sector to implement best practice and comply with national standards for the SFM, with a focus on biodiversity conservation and water resource management.

The project activities were divided into two phases:

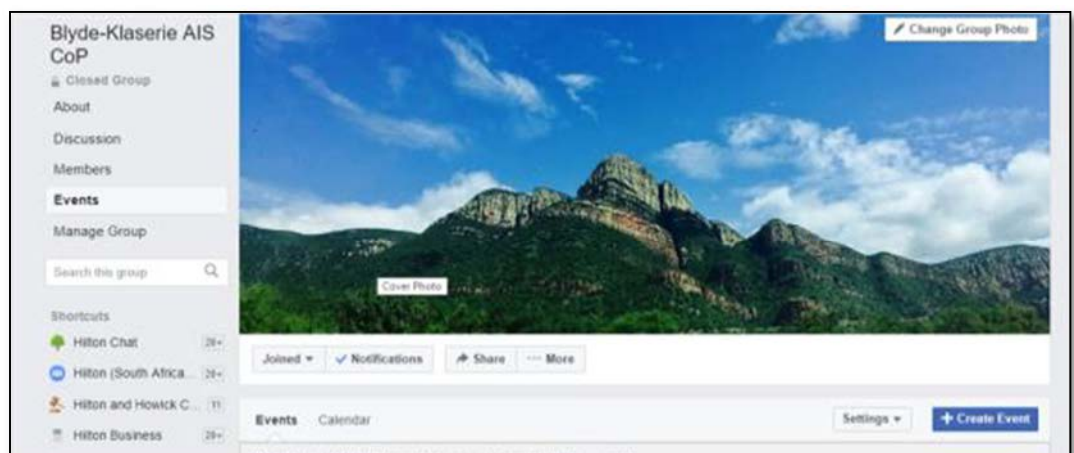
1. Situation assessment - this phase primarily involved a situation analysis to collectively understand the environmental challenges (in particular alien invasive species and water resource management) associated with plantation forestry in the Blyde and Klaserie sub-catchments, and align these with the compliance, monitoring and enforcement requirements prescribed in South Africa's National Standard for SFM and further relevant legislation.
2. Planning and capacity development - this phase focused on collaboratively developing capacity among
 - (i) relevant authorities to monitor and enforce the requirements of the South African national standard (and relevant legislation), and
 - (ii) forest owners and managers and other relevant environmental programmes to comply with the requirement of the national standard for SFM.



Workshops to identify and discuss constraints and challenges experienced in achieving sustainable forest management (SFM) by key forestry stakeholders - Department of Agriculture, Forest & Fisheries (DAFF) and Komatiland Forestry (KLF)



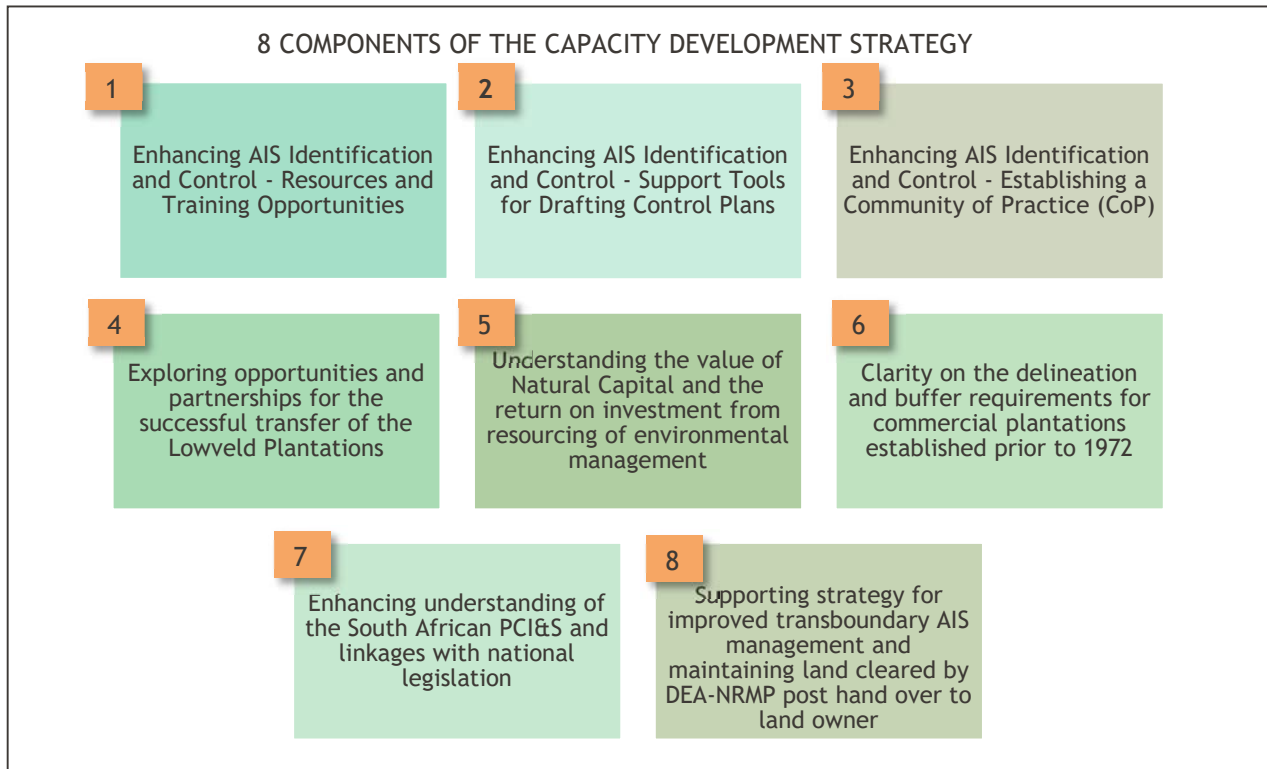
Clearing of alien invasive species (AIS), Invasive Species South Africa website and using Facebook as an inter-organisational community of practice (CoP) platform



Results



It is evident that the most common institutional challenges experienced by all type of stakeholders are the lack of adequate financial resources to undertake IAS management and biodiversity conservation; inadequate capacity and planning; and poor communication and poor collaboration between stakeholders (including with and between government departments).

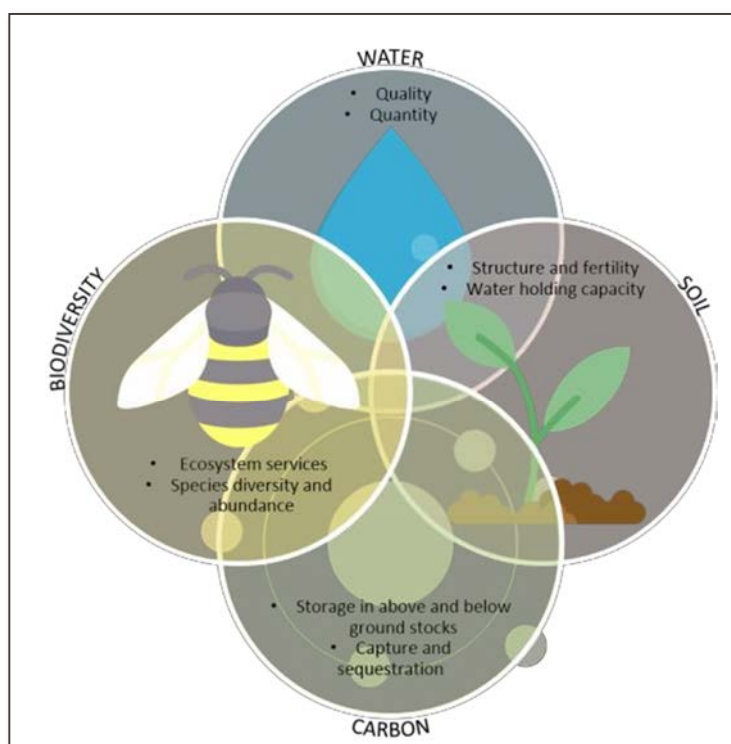


Capacity development materials were developed to address the eight components of the capacity development strategy. Stakeholders have a greater understanding of why AIS control, water resource management and biodiversity conservation are key issues in the area.

Recommendations

Enhancing *resilience* in the forestry sector requires better *understanding* and *measurement* of the environmental and commercial impacts of sustainably managing natural resources.

Promoting appropriate *action*, exploring applied *research* and *collaborating* with stakeholders can support the sector in addressing its environmental management challenges.



Commercial forestry, which includes timber as well as pulp and paper, is fundamentally dependent on natural capital such as water, biodiversity, soil and carbon. It is, however, possible for the sustainable management of the ecosystems (production landscapes) to simultaneously benefit natural resources and build resilience in the commercial forestry sector. Better understanding of how commercial forestry impacts and depends on natural resources will facilitate appropriate action going forward.

The capacity development materials that have been developed are designed as standalone documents that can be widely distributed beyond the time frames and direct activities of this project. It is recommended that the finalised capacity development materials be made available via the Resilim O website so that they can be a resource accessed by stakeholders beyond those directly engaged through this project.

It appears that the DAFF stakeholders have become more confident and motivated to try to facilitate the resolution of the land transfer process at Lowveld Plantations, however it is anticipated that AWARD will continue to have a big role to play in this process.

Finally, it is recommended that (as far as possible) the AWARD RESILIM-O Restoration and Rehabilitation programme continues to engage with the core partners that have participated in the activities of this sub-grant. This request for continued engagement, particularly for inter-organisational workshops and sharing, has come directly from the stakeholders.



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The Association for Water and Rural Development

AWARD is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory, research-based project implementation. Their work addresses issues of sustainability, inequity and poverty by building natural-resource management competence and supporting sustainable livelihoods. One of their current projects, supported by USAID, focuses on the Olifants River and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems to sustain livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment.

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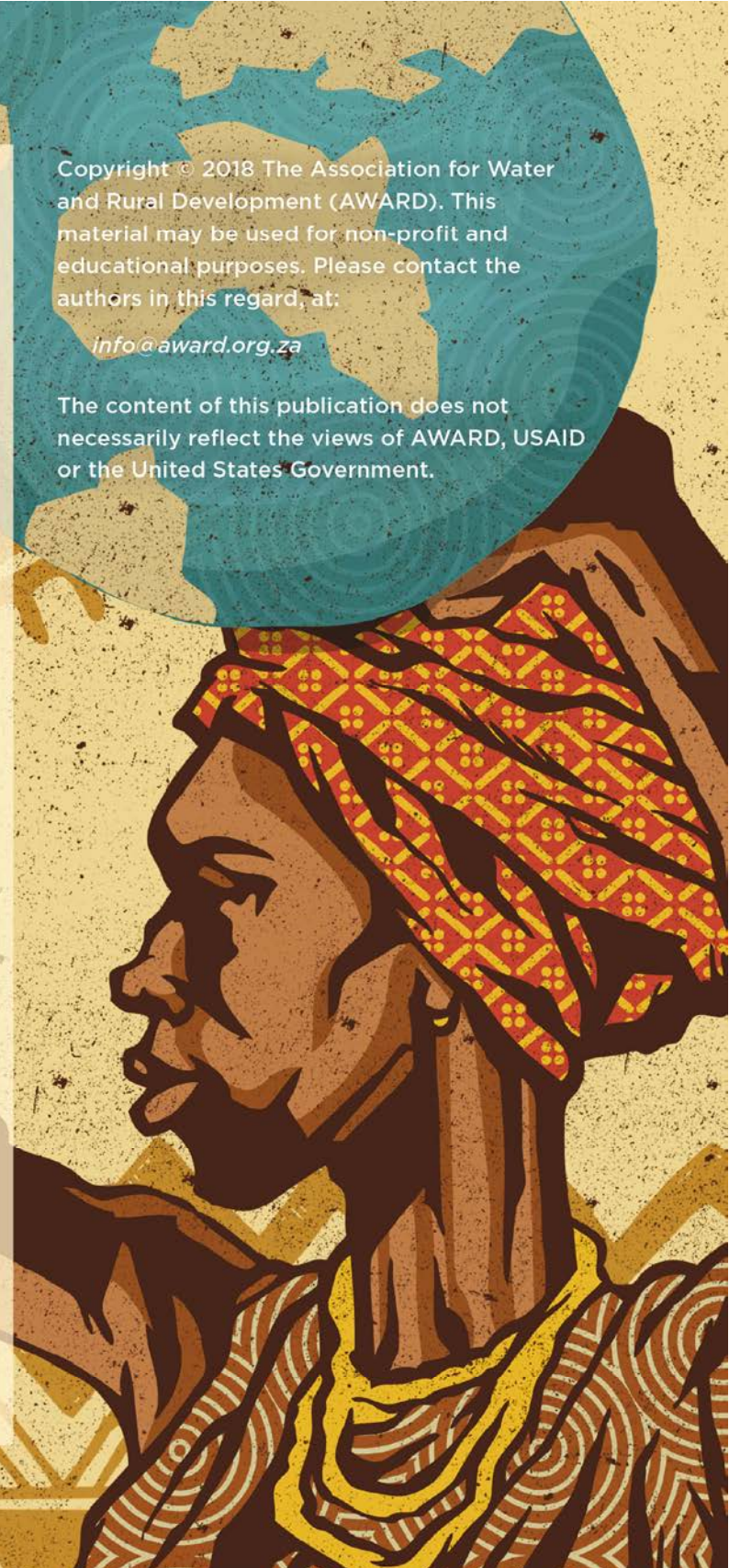
About USAID: RESILIM-O

USAID: RESILIM-O focuses on the Olifants River Basin and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment. The 5-year programme, involving the South African and Mozambican portions of the Olifants catchment, is being implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and is funded by USAID Southern Africa.

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