

## Siyabulela: labour-intensive projects create jobs and promote conservation #12



***Labour-intensive conservation projects can deliver significant benefits to local communities through job creation and skills development. Funding the clearing of invasive alien plants on private land was used by the Siyabulela project as an important incentive for conservancies of the Garden Route.***

One of the fundamental principles of the C.A.P.E. partnership is that the sustainable use of the biodiversity of the Cape Floristic Region should deliver significant benefits to local communities. Undertaking labour-intensive conservation projects is a powerful means of benefiting communities while protecting valuable biodiversity.

The Siyabulela programme was established in 2006 in recognition of the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's March. The Western Cape Provincial Government provided R3 million which CapeNature used to employ teams, comprising predominantly women, to undertake labour-intensive conservation projects. This initiative was so successful that CapeNature continued with the project the following year, extending it into the Garden Route, Boland, Cederberg and Western Boland. Between 2006 and March 2009 a total of 239 people were employed through the Siyabulela programme. The Siyabulela programme provided an exit strategy for contractors trained through the Working for Water programme and focused on providing additional training. In 2008/9 alone, 766 person days were spent on training courses such as that depicted in the illustration on the left.

This case study examines in more detail what was achieved in the Garden Route component of the Siyabulela programme during this period.

### SIYABULELA IN THE GARDEN ROUTE

The Garden Route Initiative was started, with C.A.P.E support, "to conserve and restore the unique biodiversity and sense of place in the Garden Route while supporting the sustainable management of the region and the delivery of benefits to local communities".

The Siyabulela project operated as part of the Garden Route Initiative from 2006 to 2008. During this period it had a very positive impact on conservation efforts in the region. Work on reserves included alien clearing and the maintenance of infrastructure.

The off-reserve work involved the use of three well trained contractors who had been through Working for Water training programmes. These three contractors each employed twelve people, creating 39 jobs in total. The Siyabulela project operated in several areas in the Garden Route:

- Herald Conservancy
- Middle Keurbooms Conservancy
- Malgas River Project
- Sedgefield Island Conservancy
- Dana Bay Conservancy
- Diadisma Nature Reserve
- Great Brak Conservancy

The Siyabulela project worked in a parallel but complementary way with the Working for Water Programme: While Working for Water prioritized areas from a water-catchment perspective, for Siyabulela the primary criterion for site selection was the impact of invasive alien plants on biodiversity.

### CREATING INCENTIVES FOR CONSERVATION

The Garden Route Initiative (GRI) emphasizes the integration of conservation areas with privately owned conservancies as a key mechanism for developing viable corridors through this area of high value real estate and rich biodiversity. There are a large number of conservancies in this area, many of which predated the establishment of the GRI. Through the Siyabulela Project, the GRI was able to provide additional support for conservation in the area, encouraging and supporting active conservancies. Supportive funding the clearing of invasive alien plants provided an important incentive for private landowners to join conservancies.

A good example of the power of this incentive is provided by the **Sedgefield Project**: During the planning process an area linking to the island was identified as a priority for the clearing of invasive alien plants. These invasive alien plants were exacerbating flooding and were also threatening the biodiversity of an adjoining conservancy.

Before Siyabulela agreed to clear the invasive alien plants off this land, the landowner had to sign the standard contract committing to long term follow-up. The landowners, who had been unaware that they owned this property, were tracked down in Johannesburg. After an extensive negotiation process they agreed to join the neighbouring conservancy in order to secure assistance with clearing invasive alien plants on their property. The conservancy agreed to undertake the necessary follow-up operations on the landowner's behalf. In return they made a large donation to the conservancy. In this way a substantial area was added to the conservancy.

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***“Assistance provided to landowners for control of invasive alien plants can provide an incentive for conservation”***

**DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS**

The Siyabulela project has made a significant contribution towards developing partnerships between communities, government and private landowners. Wherever possible the project used local labour to reduce transport costs and also to enhance benefit to the local communities.

The **Malgas River Project** was initiated in response to a request by the local Rastafarian community to have access to the Outeniqua Nature Reserve for spiritual ceremonies. The picnic site at the reserve had become degraded with unmaintained grass and broken infrastructure. CapeNature has drawn up an MOU with the Rastafarian community in which they agreed to restore and maintain the picnic site in return for access for spiritual use. The Siyabulela Project provided support for this restoration work which included assistance from contractors for clearing invasive alien plants from the site. The Rastafarians are constructing a lapa for spiritual ceremonies and are receiving payment for the ongoing maintenance of the picnic site.

In the **Danabay Conservancy** and **Diadosma Nature Reserve**, Siyabulela was able to involve a number of role-players. The Siyabulela project funded 60% of the costs of initial clearing of invasive alien plants and the Mossel Bay Municipality, which owned the land, contributed 40% of the clearing cost. The Danabay Conservancy assisted with publicity.

At the **Great Brak River Project** the Mossel Bay Municipality again paid for 40% of the clearing costs. The Eden Municipality provided the herbicide and some supervision. The Great Brak Conservancy supplied food for the workers, supervision, media articles and signage.

**LEVERAGING/ MAXIMIZING FUNDING**

In all its interventions Siyabulela aimed to maximize their impact by leveraging additional funds. All landowners receiving assistance in the form of alien clearing had to sign a contract committing to undertake all follow-up clearing themselves. The Siyabulela project therefore concentrated on clearing low density infestations (with a density of under 25%) where the level of follow-up would not be too much for the landowners to maintain.

In order to qualify for assistance, private landowners must pay a proportion of the initial clearing costs. This proportion was initially low (10%) but increased annually over the three year period of the project until the CapeNature contribution was 60% of the total (see table below). Local municipalities were also brought on board and contributed funds, supervision and herbicide. In this way the Siyabulela project was able to leverage their original funding significantly. The longer term objective included increasing the landowner contribution to 50%.

**Increasing commitment from landowners**

Time Period	Contribution By CapeNature	Landowner Contribution
2005/6	90	10
2006/7	80	20
2007/8	60	40

Securing a contribution from private landowners towards initial clearing costs also increased their commitment to ensuring that follow-up operations were maintained. This reduced the amount of supervision required to ensure compliance and made the CapeNature investment in clearing invasive alien plants on private land more secure.

**THE INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PROJECTS**

In 2008/2009 a significant increase in funding (R23 million) was secured from the province. These additional funds enabled CapeNature to establish an Integrated Catchment Management Projects. This project has incorporated Siyabulela, and is undertaking labour-intensive conservation projects in reserves over the entire province. The decision has been made to focus initially on fire management and alien clearing within reserves. There is, however, also a need to maintain the momentum established with landowners and privately owned conservancies through the Siyabulela project, working through the Garden Route Initiative.

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**Key Words:**

*Siyabulela, Integrated Catchment Management, Conservation Incentives*