

Workshop evaluation and report:

PROCESS AND ROLL-OUT OF A 'BIODIVERSITY ROADSHOW' UNDERTAKEN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, 28 MARCH 2008-24 APRIL 2008

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21 May 2008

This report reflects on:

- The workshops that constituted the 'biodiversity roadshow'
- Responses from participants to these workshops
- Likely changes in work actions arising from attendance of the 'biodiversity roadshow'
- Biodiversity-related Issues and proposed responses
- The broad effectiveness, organisation and implementation of the 'biodiversity roadshow'.

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1. Workshop evaluation

See Appendix 1 for a detailed summary of the evaluation questionnaires. Appendix 2 analyses the responses.

Workshops

Five day-long workshops were held: Elsenburg (28-03-2008), Bredasdorp (03-04-2008), George (17-04-2008), Piketberg (22-04-2008) and Rawsonville (24-04-2008).

Attendance

Altogether 221 individuals attended the five workshops. This figure excludes the three representatives of the service provider (Brownlie, de Villiers and Kruger) and the client's representative, Mr Jeff Manuel.

The breakdown of attendance per venue was:

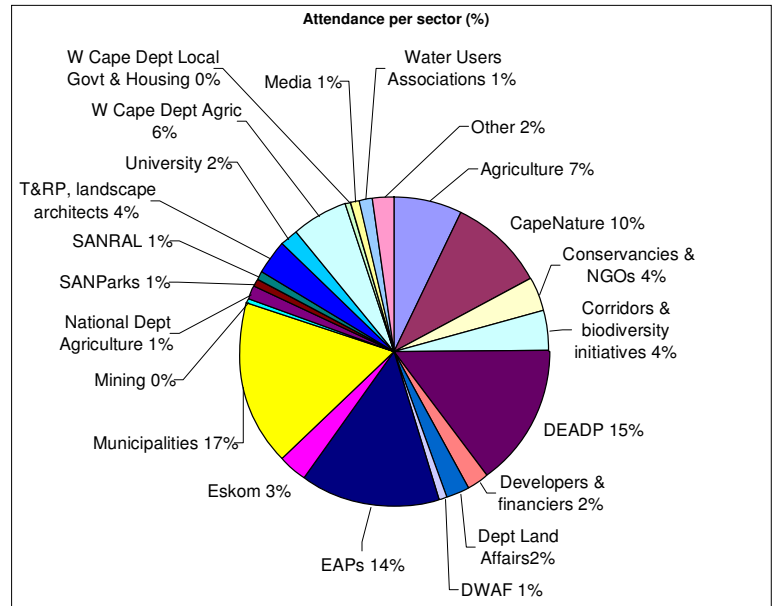
Venue	Attended	Not attended
Elsenburg	62	16
Bredasdorp	34	17
George	55	3
Piketberg	29	10
Worcester	41	9
	221	55

Representation per sector

Workshop participants represented 22 sectors, including a category designated 'other'. The 'top five' sectors as a percentage of the overall number of workshop attendees were:

Municipalities	17
DEA&DP	15
EAPs	14
CapeNature	10
Agriculture	7

Table 1 summarises the attendance of each sector per venue.



2. Responses

(The number of participants who answered each question is reflected as a percentage of the total number who completed the workshop evaluation forms)

Did the roadshow help answer questions around biodiversity and GIS? (83%)

Overall, 89% of answers were positive.

What further support might you need to strengthen your work in land-use planning? (50%)

Altogether 51% of answers (31 individuals) requested GIS training. Another 27% wanted to be updated on new biodiversity information, specifically fine-scale biodiversity plans.

Overall impressions of the workshop? (92%) There was a 100% positive response to this question.

What improvements would you recommend? (50%) The responses varied: 16% wanted more case studies, 14% said sessions must be shorter, and 11% said the day was too long.

What immediate actions are you likely to take in your work after this workshop? (67%)

Responses were: 27% would notify others about planning and biodiversity issues; 20% would use biodiversity plans proactively in EIA to screen projects earlier in the process; 12% said they would use the plans to inform comments on applications and planning.

Table 1: Sectoral attendance per venue

Sector	Bred.	Elsen.	Grge.	Piket.	Worc.	N	Percent.
Agriculture	1	7		4	4	16	7.24
CapeNature	1		4	6	11	22	10.00
Conservancies, env NGOs, etc	2		4	2		8	3.62
Corridors & biod initiatives	2	1	3	3		9	4.07
DEADP	5	11	9	2	6	33	14.93
Dept Land Affairs	1	1		3		5	2.26
Developers & financiers		4	1			5	2.26
DWAF				2	1	3	1.36
EAPs	2	10	13	2	5	32	14.48
Eskom	1	3		1	2	7	3.17
Municipalities	13	12	10	1	2	38	17.19
Mining				1		1	0.45
National Dept Agriculture		2			1	3	1.36
SANParks	1					1	0.45
SANRAL			2			2	0.90
Town & reg planners, architect	1	4	1		2	8	3.62
University			4			4	1.81
W Cape Dept Agriculture	1	5	2	2	3	13	5.88
WC Dept Local Govt & Housing		1				1	0.45
Media	2					2	0.90
Water Users Association				3		3	1.36
Other	1	1	2		1	5	2.26
Totals	34	62	55	32	38	221	100.022

3. Likely changes in work actions per sector in response to the 'biodiversity roadshow'

Encouragingly, workshop participants indicated how they anticipated that exposure to the information and tools presented at the 'biodiversity roadshow' would influence their professional practice and other responsibilities.

Table 2 summarises the likely changes in work actions for distinct sectors, viz: environmental officials, municipal officials, provincial planners, the Department of Land Affairs, environmental assessment practitioners, spatial and town and regional planners, agricultural producers and representative associations, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's LandCare programme, the provincial and national departments of agriculture, SA National Parks and CapeNature, Eskom and non-governmental organisations.

Table 2: Likely changes in work actions

<i>Environmental officials</i>	Apply in reviewing EIAs, will use maps, tools
<i>Municipal officials</i>	Use tools to evaluate development at an early stage before going to DEA&DP; better understanding of – and intention to cooperate better with – DEA&DP's role and objectives for biodiversity; to advise public and proponents to use tools to evaluate biodiversity effects early on in planning; will use BGIS.
<i>Provincial planners</i>	Emphasis on cumulative effects on biodiversity;
<i>Dept Land Affairs</i>	Incorporate biodiversity in sector plans, use plans / guidelines in evaluating projects;
<i>Environmental Assessment Practitioners</i>	Closer liaison with CapeNature; earlier reference to tools and plans; more attention to screening before site visit; extensive use of BGIS Land Use Development Support Tool; look out for fine scale plans to use; proactive input on biodiversity and identification of 'red flags', upfront input from specialists; use of BGIS maps in Notice of Intent and quotes; more and better screening; biodiversity to inform project and its design, and need for specialist studies; facilitate public / community sessions around environmental responsibility, and prepare series of articles.
<i>Planners</i>	Involve ecosystem and biodiversity specialists as appropriate, not just botanist.
<i>Agricultural production, societies</i>	Follow up workshop in deciduous fruit industry, publication of article in SA Fruit journal; look at biodiversity in region, on farms; use in Area Wide Plans;
<i>Agriculture, Land Care</i>	Use BGIS website; use in Area Wide Plans; form group with landowners and share information and knowledge with them;
<i>NDA, PDA</i>	Work on fine scale maps, farm plan level; strengthen partnerships between land users, authority; more informed decisions, taking other stakeholders into account; try to send out message to other departments, NGOs, organised agriculture, etc
<i>SANParks</i>	Inform landowners about biodiversity on their land
<i>CapeNature</i>	Extension to landowners; use Ecosystem Guidelines; BGIS Land Use Development Support Tool when commenting on development; take tool to local municipality, offer landowners up to date info on ecosystem status, etc; advise landowners during farm planning; use and spread word about toolbox, engage with DEA&DP to improve quality of comment and effect on decisions; help in commenting on land use planning, in stewardship planning
<i>Eskom</i>	Convey Land Use Development Support Tool to staff doing route selection, especially wrt fine scale plans; more biodiversity input earlier on, route selections and avoiding Critical Biodiversity Areas, screening before submitting application to DEA&DP; will use ecosystem guidelines;
<i>NGOs</i>	Able to give better advice and inputs to environmental issues; use BGIS website; use toolkit to respond to proposals for development/ get initial information; help in farm planning.

4. Workshop process and rollout

The workshop was planned and executed in terms of the revised terms of reference submitted to the service provider on 18 February 2008.

Participants identified various issues and responding actions that would improve biodiversity mainstreaming in land-use planning and decision making:

1. *Additional target groups*

There was strong recognition for the need to reach the 'unconverted' (in the sense that the 'converted' are being targeted), particularly landowners. It didn't help having biodiversity experts who didn't reach these groups.

Landowners were willing to acknowledge biodiversity issues, but often were not informed about them. In particular, the following sectors or groups should be targeted:

- Municipalities
- Politicians
- Landowners and farmers
- Conservancies, agricultural unions
- Town planners
- Learners - primary and secondary schools, tertiary level curricula.
- Lending institutions

2. *Access to biodiversity information*

Participants said there had to be easier access to biodiversity information. Biodiversity plans had to be made more 'visible' and ways had to be found to update people on changes to plans and new products.

- Participants warned against excessive reliance on the Internet for communicating biodiversity-related information communicate as there wasn't universal access to this medium. It was also emphasised

that biodiversity guidelines and other material, including legislation, needed to be translated into Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

3. *Need follow up roadshows in future.*

Participants identified a general need for further roadshows, particularly in the agricultural, transport, electricity supply and development financing sectors.

In terms of changes to the content of the roadshow programme, participants proposed more case studies and 'less theory'. It may, however, be somewhat challenging to source demonstrable examples of effective biodiversity mainstreaming in the domain of environmental assessment and decision making.

4. *Law enforcement & compliance*

While not specifically a 'biodiversity issue' per se, participants pointed to shortcomings in compliance with environmental legislation and a perceived lack of law enforcement. This was reflected in statements maintaining that illegal activities were rife and that 'the law is toothless'.

5. *Lack of enforcement of environmental legislation, illegal activities rife, law is ‘toothless’.*

Issues raised in this vein included:

- A stated need for simpler application methods
- The need to integrate various authorisations, permits and permissions (i.e. different environmental, planning and natural resources’ laws should be rationalised)
- Reference to delays in departmental responses to queries or other correspondence
- Claims that environmental legislation was much too complicated and expensive for the average citizen

6. *Need monitoring and continual updating of land use, biodiversity, to inform decision making.*

Participants pointed to the need to keep track of biodiversity losses and gains so as to ensure that impact assessment and decision making were informed by the best available information on the state of biodiversity in relation to conservation targets. CapeNature, DEADP and LandCare had a key role in monitoring and recording environmental change.

7. *Need for enforceable biodiversity thresholds*

Participants indicated a need to know when development would be unacceptable because biodiversity was at risk. This had to be backed up by thresholds beyond which further loss of biodiversity would be prohibited. Reference was also made to the need for greater clarity on how to make acceptable trade-offs.

8. *Valuation of natural resources*

The need was expressed for help with the valuation of natural resources, particularly biodiversity. This was articulated by a perceived need to ‘prove’ biodiversity value against the economic value of other land uses.

9. *Biodiversity priority areas must inform EMFs in development ‘hotspots’*

The need was identified for using environmental management frameworks to guide decision making where there was a heightened risk of development pressure on biodiversity. Such situations were particularly prevalent in agricultural and coastal areas, and adjacent to the urban edge.

EVALUATION

Overall, the five workshops were well received and appeared to have met the requirements of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) in all salient respects.

- In terms of participant feedback, the 'biodiversity roadshow' generally seems to have met the information needs of the participants. It also succeeded in identifying future actions that could be to the advantage of biodiversity mainstreaming in land-use planning and decision-making.
- Altogether 14% of participants recorded that they wanted further GIS training. This number could increase if participants are approached directly, and the training is re-advertised. Crucially, a considerable number of participants indicated that the workshops would improve the way in which they considered biodiversity in land-use planning and decision-making.
- In future, presentations could be shorter and more focused on case studies. A longer lead-in would facilitate organisation. If follow-up workshops are held, they should coincide with seasonal lulls in the agricultural sector.
- The DEA&DP 'biodiversity roadshow' has highlighted the value of non-specialist, direct communication as a vehicle for environmental empowerment in the Western Cape. It also identified a clearly stated expectation that the initiative should be extended both geographically and sectorally.
- The methods and approach of the DEA&DP 'biodiversity roadshow' could be fruitfully replicated elsewhere in South Africa.

Acknowledgements

The project team wishes to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the 'biodiversity roadshow':

Ms Sediqa Khatieb *SA National Biodiversity Institute Biodiversity GIS Unit* produced the maps for the practical sessions. Mr Louis de Villiers *DeVilliers Brownlie Associates* provided material for the 'mainstreaming' case studies.

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