



CapeNature



**Western Cape
Government**

Environmental Affairs and
Development Planning

Draft Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2021 - 2025



Draft Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy



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Foreword

CapeNature is proud to present the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy (WC PAES) for the 2021 - 2025 period. Habitat loss, climate change and degradation are among the most pressing threats to biodiversity globally and this is equally true for the Greater Cape Floristic Region, the world's smallest floristic region and a global biodiversity hotspot. A strong network of private and state protected areas has proved to be an important mechanism to conserve biodiversity and improve land management.

The WC PAES is aligned to the South African National Protected Area Expansion Strategy, the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act and the CapeNature Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The identification of priority areas for the protection of biodiversity is informed by the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WC BSP) of 2017.

CapeNature is mandated to conserve the valuable and unique biodiversity of the Western Cape on behalf of the people of the region, the nation, and the international community. The existing protected area network provides extensive protection to mountain catchments and encompasses over 60% of South Africa's Strategic Water Source Areas which are located within the province. However, the historic focus on mountains has left lowland areas under-protected, with 20% of lowland vegetation types not protected at all. The updated strategy addresses the need to urgently protect priority threatened ecosystems.

To support functional ecological processes and climate change adaptation, CapeNature implements a landscape-scale conservation approach. The emphasis is moving from protected area-centric conservation to bridging divisions between geographies, jurisdictions, sectors, and cultures to safeguard ecological, cultural, and economic benefits for all. This approach enables stronger focus on strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as local municipalities, provincial and national departments, NGOs, other conservation agencies, landowners, and communities.

Dr Razeena Omar
Chief Executive Officer



Executive Summary

Why a provincial Protected Area Expansion Strategy?

The formal declaration of lands and waters as protected areas remains the cornerstone of any biodiversity conservation programme worldwide. Once declared, protected areas represent the strongest and most secure level of statutory protection that can be afforded to biodiversity. It is only at the stage of declaration that the biodiversity contained within an area can be considered protected from inappropriate land use and can contribute to biodiversity targets.

Approximately 14.2% (1 840 568 hectares) of the Western Cape Province is deemed protected in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM: PAA)¹. However, this is only meaningful if appropriate areas are protected, and that protection affords the environment the level of security intended by NEM: PAA.

Historically, protected areas in the Western Cape were predominantly proclaimed in mountainous landscapes associated with little to no land use competition. This has resulted in an inadequate representation of the highly diverse ecosystems of the province with a significant bias towards mountain fynbos ecosystems and the near exclusion of lowland ecosystems within the protected area network. Also, only approximately 40% of the protected areas deemed protected under NEM: PAA are fully compliant² with legislation and properly regularised³ in terms of having an appropriately assigned management agency, a described boundary and being verified in terms of continued environmental security.

The primary focus of this strategy is therefore:

1. To expand the Western Cape protected area network to include a better representation of the diverse ecological systems of the province.
2. To ensure the appropriate legal protection for these areas.
3. To regularize existing protected areas to ensure effective protection.
4. To ensure ongoing support to management of declared protected areas.

Priority areas

Priority areas for protected area expansion in the Western Cape Province are informed primarily by the Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) differentiation which is outlined in the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP). CBAs consist of terrestrial and aquatic features that need to be kept in a natural to near-natural state to retain a reasonable and representative proportion of all biodiversity ecosystems that are both ecologically functional and viable both now and into the future. The prioritisation of CBAs for formal protection is informed by both the importance of the biodiversity and the urgency to protect it. An area is considered important for the expansion of the terrestrial protected area network if it is one of the best remaining examples of a critically endangered ecosystem, contributes to meeting biodiversity thresholds for under-protected terrestrial or freshwater ecosystems, maintains ecological

¹ <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-environmental-management-protected-areas-act>.

² Have an assigned management authority, approved management plan, and title deed endorsement.

³ To establish (a hitherto temporary or provisional arrangement) on an official basis.

processes, contributes to climate change resilience, provides essential habitat for threatened and under-protected taxa, or a combination of these. Urgency is determined by the extent to which spatial options for meeting targets (and optimal protected area design) persists, which is often linked to the degree of competing land or resource uses in an area. The specific spatial priority areas for focussed landscape-scale protected area expansion in the Western Cape are identified in a Conservation Action Priorities map (CAP map). This CAP map is underpinned by the CBA information and by comprehensive operational data related to objectives, mechanisms, responsible organisation, and capacity.

Protected Area targets

Previous provincial protected area expansion strategies adopted targets to formally protect 60% of the biodiversity thresholds⁴ for all terrestrial ecosystems by the year 2030. This target addresses both ecological requirements (biodiversity thresholds) and political commitments (area committed to by the government of South Africa in terms of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Aichi Target 11⁵). The Western Cape Protected Areas Expansion Strategy 2021-2025 incorporates the targets defined in the 2010 and 2015 PAES and continues to aim to secure 60% of the biodiversity threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by 2030⁶, and additionally, to protect 10% of the marine environment by the year 2030⁷.

During the 2015-2020 WC PAES (5 years, ending March 2020), 63 stewardship site agreements were signed which added 127 809 ha to the conservation estate. The declaration of these signed nature reserves agreements is a priority for the 2020 – 2025 strategy. To reach the target of protecting 60% of the biodiversity threshold by 2030, an additional 1 087 480 ha is required. This equates to securing approximately 8.4% more of the total land surface area of the province for conservation by 2030. This strategy aims to also significantly increase the proportion of protected areas that are regularised⁸ and compliant with NEM: PAA, from approximately 40% to 50%, resulting in the improved legal status and administration of the protected area network.

Mechanisms for protected area expansion

This strategy focuses on the following expansion mechanisms:

- **Formal protection of privately owned conservation-worthy lands through biodiversity stewardship:** Biodiversity stewardship is an approach to protecting important biodiversity features on private or communal land by working with landowners to formalise their involvement in conservation.
- **Transfer of forest exit lands and other state-owned lands into conservation custodianship:** Securing publicly owned lands with high biodiversity value as protected areas; including the transfer of forestry exit lands which are not viable for forestry into conservation custodianship. This includes other state lands not currently legally declared or vested with a conservation agency.

⁴ Biodiversity thresholds (for terrestrial ecosystems) represent the percentage of the original extent of a vegetation type which needs to be maintained in a natural state to ensure that 75% of the species contained within that vegetation type survive. Biodiversity thresholds are based on actual plant diversity surveys or *relevé* data which estimate the parameters of species-to-area relationships.

⁵ Aichi Target 11 aims to achieve protection of 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas by 2020.

⁶ Note that although the network will ultimately deliver on the Aichi target, the date of delivery is ten years later than that stipulated by Aichi.

⁷ Adopted from Aichi Target 11 which aims to achieve 10% protection of coastal and marine areas by 2020.

⁸ To establish (a hitherto temporary or provisional arrangement) on an official basis.

- **Purchase of land in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs):**

Where funding is available from trusts and donors, land can be purchased and declared as protected areas.

- **Purchase of land:**

Land acquisition for conservation through purchase by the state, has decreased significantly, due to budget availability. The conservation sector is thus increasingly dependent on alternative and contemporary mechanisms to increase the formal protected in alignment with the CBD targets.

- **Declaration of Marine Protected Areas:**

In support of the national initiative, led by the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Operation Phakisa, aimed at unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans, declared priority marine habitats as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) protecting 10% of South Africa's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Protected area regularisation and NEM: PAA compliance

In addressing historical irregularities in protected area administration and increasing NEM: PAA compliance, the focus will be on the appropriate vesting of state lands currently managed for conservation, the translation of local and private nature reserves into NEM: PAA-compliant nature reserves, and appropriate means of effecting meaningful protection to private Mountain Catchment Areas (MCAs).

Financial tools for protected area expansion

This strategy acknowledges the significant financial limitations for securing additional land for conservation and provides a guideline for the alignment of resources, by agencies and organisations involved in protected area expansion, through the development of integrated landscape implementation plans.

Who implements and monitors the strategy?

The goal of biodiversity conservation is shared by many organisations and the province relies on partnerships to deliver on a shared vision. While CapeNature is the lead implementing agent for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy, success undoubtedly depends on a combined effort across various spheres of government, the private sector, and NGOs. CapeNature monitors and reports against predetermined objectives in its Annual Performance Plan (APP) and against national Biodiversity Sector Indicators identified in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) to the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. The strategy is also monitored through the State of Conservation Report which is published every year.

Implementation framework and efficiency

The protected area targets and priority actions⁹ address increasing the size and representivity, as well as improving the legal status of the network, relying on a partnership approach. Successful collaborations and partnerships in conservation are integral for the exploitation of further opportunities to achieve key biodiversity outcomes, increased representivity and security of protected areas for the benefit of the people of the province.

⁹ See [Table 4](#) in Chapter 5

Acknowledgements

CapeNature expresses its thanks to the Western Cape Department for Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, the City of Cape Town, WWF-SA, Birdlife South Africa, the Table Mountain Fund, Conservation Outcomes, the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust and the Grootbos Foundation for support and collaboration on this strategy and the continued support in the pursuance and achievement of protected areas expansion targets in the Western Cape.

CapeNature also thanks Ms Deshni Pillay, Dr Andrew Skowno and Mr Mthobisi Nzimande from the South African National Biodiversity Institute for the review and guidance provided in the updating of this strategy.



Acronyms

CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
BioNet	Biodiversity Network
C.A.P.E.	Cape Action Plan for the Environment
C@W	Conservation at Work
CAP	Conservation Action Priorities
CFRPA WHS	Cape Floral Region Protected Areas World Heritage Site
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CR	Critically Endangered
DAFF	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development
DCCP	Dassenberg Coastal Corridor Partnership
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEA&DP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
DFFE	Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment
DoTP	Department of the Premier
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EN	Endangered
ESA	Ecological Support Area
EWT	Endangered Wildlife Trust
GCFR	Greater Cape Floristic Region
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
ha	Hectares
IBA	Important Bird Area
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LHSKT	Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust
LT	Least Threatened
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MCA	Mountain Catchment Area
MEC	Member of the Executive Council – referred to herein as “the Provincial Minister”
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment

NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDPWI	National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure
NEM: BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act
NEM: ICMA	National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act
NEM: PAA	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPAES	National Protected Area Expansion Strategy
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
OECS	Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures
ORCT	Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust
PA	Protected Area
PACA	Protected and Conservation Areas
PAES	Protected Area Expansion Strategy
PAMP	Protected Area Management Plan
PBSAP	Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PDTPW	Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
SATCT	South African Tortoise Conservation Trust
SWSA	Strategic Water Source Areas
TFCA	Trans-Frontier Conservation Area
TMF	Table Mountain Fund
TMNP	Table Mountain National Park
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VU	Vulnerable
WCPAES	Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy
WCBSP	Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan
WCNCB Act	Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act
WfW	Working for Water
WWF-SA	World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa

List of Tables

Table 1:	The legislative framework for protected area expansion in South Africa and the Western Cape	23
Table 2:	Protection targets for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2020 – 2025.	33
Table 3:	Protected area targets and priority actions and for the Western Cape Province from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2025.....	34
Table 4:	Cost estimates associated with declaration of nature reserves and protected environments as of December 2021.....	56

List of Figures and Text Boxes

Figure 1:	The Vegetation Map and Ecosystem status of the Western Cape Province	15
Figure 2:	The protected area network of the Western Cape Province as of March 2020.....	17
Figure 3:	Marine Protected Areas.....	18
Text Box 4:	Representative targets.....	25
Figure 5:	The relationship between ecosystem status, biodiversity thresholds and our protection targets.....	25
Text Box 6:	How do the targets compare to the Aichi target 11?	26
Figure 7:	The various stewardship levels assigned to land based on its biodiversity value.....	38
Text Box 8:	The role of World Heritage sites in the protected area network	39
Text Box 9:	Types of state forest currently managed by CapeNature.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Text Box 10:	Potential risks to CapeNature managing land that is not vested and declared	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Text Box 11:	WWF-SA land-acquisition trusts and funds	41
Figure 12:	Process for declaration of Protected Areas.....	57
Figure 13:	Map of the Western Cape Province indicating the CapeNature Landscapes and Landscape Units.....	58
Text Box 12:	OECMs – A Description and interpretation in terms of the PAES Strategy.....	59

Table of Contents

Preface.....	3
Foreword.....	4
Executive Summary	5
Acknowledgements	8
Acronyms.....	9
List of Tables.....	11
List of Figures and Text Boxes.....	11
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	14
1.1 The current Western Cape protected area network	16
1.1.1 Defining protected areas.....	19
1.2 Report back on the previous strategy	19
1.3 Legal mandate and legislative framework for protected area expansion	22
CHAPTER 2: A LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE.....	24
2.1 Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2021– 2025 Principles.....	24
2.2 Defining goals.....	25
2.2.1 Goal 1: An expanded protected area network	25
2.2.2 Goal 2: Regularising the protected area network to ensure NEM: PAA compliance	26
2.2.3 Goal 3: Post declaration support to private protected areas	27
2.3 Provincial objectives.....	27
2.3.1 Critically Endangered ecosystems.....	28
2.3.2 Under-protected ecosystems and strategic landscapes.....	29
2.3.3 Essential habitat for selected species	29
2.3.4 Marine, estuarine, and coastal systems.....	30
2.3.5 Freshwater ecosystems	31
2.4 Conservation action priorities – a map depicting the provincial priority areas	31
2.5 Protection targets and priority actions for the 2020-2025 Western cape protected area expansion strategy.....	32
CHAPTER 3: MECHANISMS TO EXPAND AND SECURE THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK.....	37
3.1 Stewardship.....	37

3.2	The transfer of forest exit land to CapeNature for protected area establishment	38
3.3	The vesting of state lands with CapeNature.....	39
3.4	Purchase of land in partnership with WWF-SA.....	41
3.5	Making local authority nature reserves and private nature reserves NEM: PAA compliant	41
3.6	Declaring admiralty reserves as protected areas.....	43
3.7	Protecting mountain catchment areas	43
3.8	Declaring marine protected areas and extending no-take zones.....	44
3.9	Other mechanisms that contribute to conservation systems of South Africa.....	45
CHAPTER 4: KEY ROLE-PLAYERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EXPANSION OF THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE		46
4.1	CapeNature.....	46
4.2	The Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning.....	46
4.3	The National Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE)	47
4.4	WWF-SA.....	48
4.5	Table Mountain Fund	49
4.6	South African National Parks.....	49
4.7	The City of Cape Town	50
4.8	BirdLife South Africa	50
4.9	Western Cape biosphere reserves.....	52
4.10	The Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust	52
4.11	The Turtle Conservancy / Southern Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust.....	53
4.12	Conservation Outcomes.....	53
4.13	Endangered Wildlife Trust.....	54
4.14	Conservation at Work	54
4.15	Grootbos Foundation	54
CHAPTER 5: PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK		56
5.1	Declaration process of protected areas.....	56
CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AND EFFICIENCY		58
6.1	Landscape protected area expansion implementation plans	59
6.2	Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).....	59
6.3	Operational efficiency	60
REFERENCES.....		61

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The natural landscapes of the Western Cape not only support exceptional threatened biodiversity, but also provide an irreplaceable source of goods and services for people and the economy (Jackelman *et al.*, 2008). In 2017, the existence value of biodiversity in the country was estimated at R6.45 billion per annum. The economic value of ecosystem services¹⁰ were estimated to be worth at least R275 billion per annum to South Africans. The importance and urgency of conserving biodiversity in the Western Cape Province was emphasized in the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) of 2018 (<http://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/221>).

Between 2017 and 2021 there has been a process to update the list of threatened terrestrial ecosystems of South Africa by using the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) framework. The National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) of 2018 (<http://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/221>) applied the IUCN RLE criteria and listed 25 Critically Endangered (CR), 20 Endangered (EN) and nine Vulnerable (VU) ecosystems for the Western Cape. This highlighted the fact that the Western Cape has the highest concentration of threatened ecosystems in South Africa. Although the 2021 RLE is not yet published the improved access to land cover change information and updates to the ecosystem type maps in the national vegetation map assist to influence land-use decision-making and conservation planning in the province (Skowno and Monyeki, 2021).

The latest Red List of South African Plants (SANBI, 2020) further emphasises the extent and severity of ongoing permanent biodiversity loss, with 63.8% of all threatened plant taxa in South Africa occurring in the Western Cape Province. In addition to habitat loss and direct impacts, climate change and global warming are predicted to further threaten the natural ecosystems of the Western Cape. Within this century, the climate is likely to become warmer and drier, with less winter rainfall and more irregular and intense rainfall events (Midgley *et al.*, 2005), which will have serious consequences for the province's economy, ecological integrity, and livelihoods.

Drafting of the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy (WC PAES) was informed by the 2016 National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES), with the goal to achieve cost effective protected area expansion for improved ecosystem representation, ecological sustainability and resilience to climate change" (DEA, 2016). It aligns with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025 (NBSAP) (Government of South Africa, 2015). The management of biodiversity assets is part of Strategic Objective I of the NBSAP with the development of a representative network of protected and conservation areas as a sub-objective. Implementation of the Business Case for Biodiversity Stewardship (SANBI, 2017) is noted in relation to the contribution of stewardship sites to the expansion of protected areas in provinces.

¹⁰ The benefits that people get from nature (ecosystems), such as a regular supply of clean water, flood control, prevention of erosion, pollination (important to the fruit industry, for example), carbon storage (to counteract global warming), stone and sand for building, and clean air vital for our survival. In other words, ecosystem services are 'what nature does for us'.

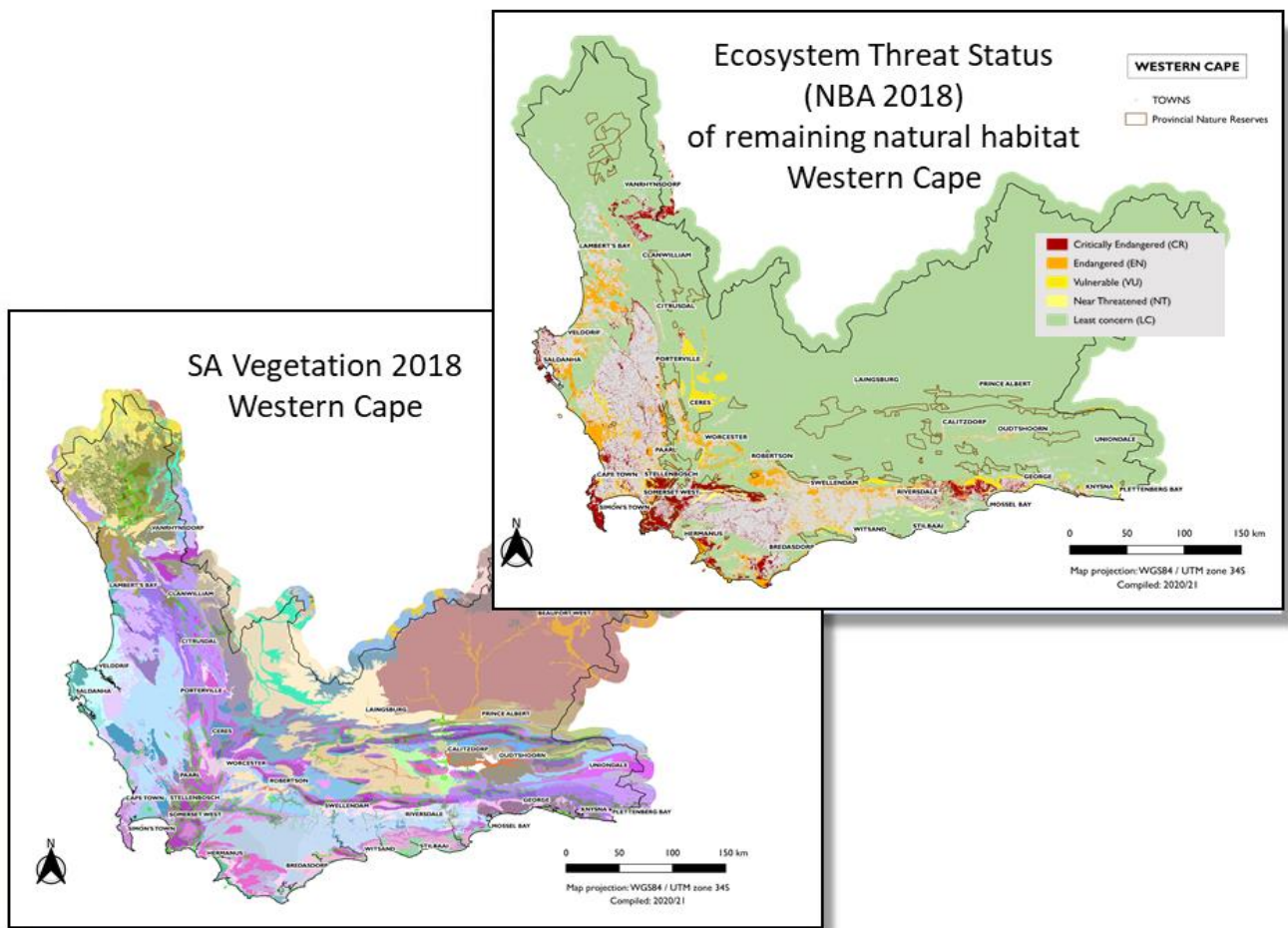


Figure 1: The Vegetation Map and Ecosystem status of the Western Cape Province

Represented in [Figure 1](#), even coarse-scale mapping of South African vegetation types (SANBI, 2018) shows the massive diversity and complex distribution of biodiversity in the Western Cape. The top right figure shows (in pale grey) areas where no natural terrestrial habitat remains within the Western Cape, with remnant natural habitat coloured by Ecosystem Threat Status (Skowno *et al.*, 2019). With up to 95.5% habitat loss in certain ecosystems, more ecosystems are considered highly threatened in the Western Cape than any other province in South Africa. This diversity and threat together mean that the Greater Cape Floristic Region (GCFR) and the Succulent Karoo, which are both located within the Western Cape, are considered a global Biodiversity Hotspots.

Government uses the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) as the basis for monitoring the implementation of the National Development Plan 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012). The MTSF is structured around 14 priority outcomes, one of which is Environment. One of the targets of the MTSF is expansion of the conservation estate from the current 12.96% to 15.7%, as well as gazetting 12 stewardship sites by 2024; with the outcome “to ensure increase in land mass and inshore and offshore marine area under formal conservation and ensure that South Africa’s protected area network is of sufficient size to sustain biodiversity and ecological processes, as well as retrospectivity”.

The drafting and adopting of a provincial strategy for the expansion of the provincial protected area network is a requirement of the Western Cape Biodiversity (Act 6 of 2021, assented to 9 December 2021) and the implementation of the strategy is included as an action of the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-

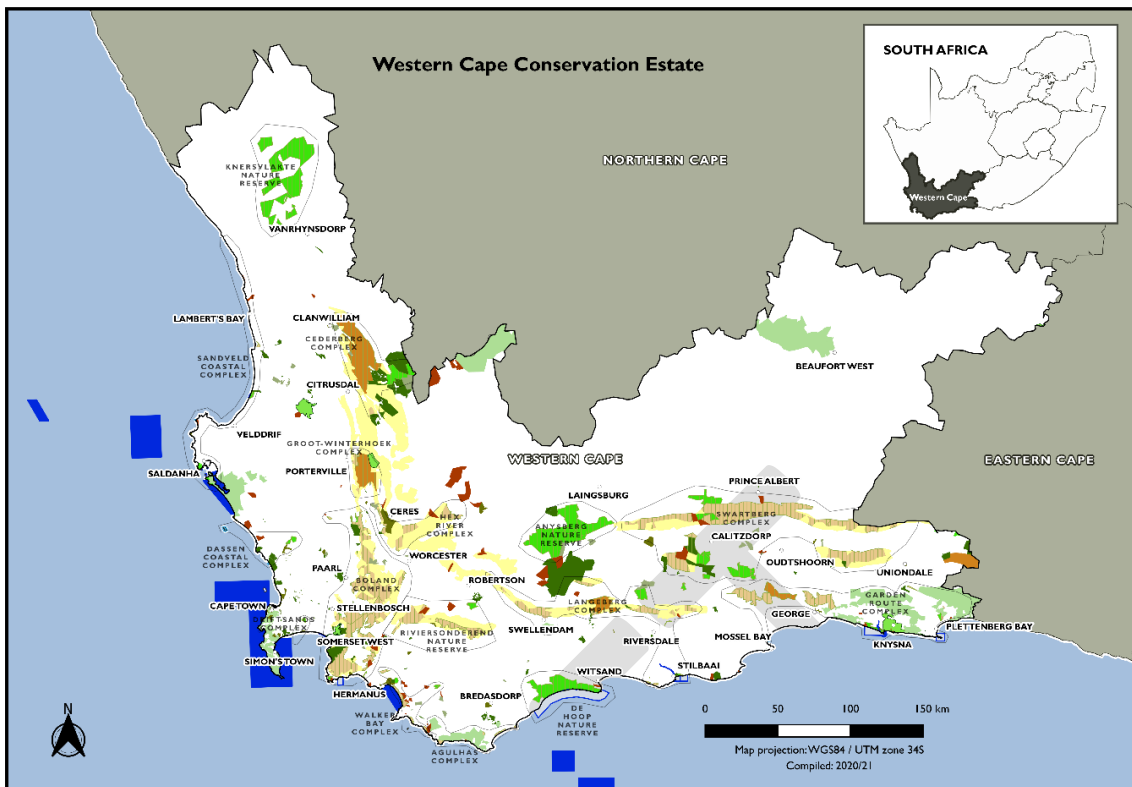
2025 (PBSAP). One of the goals of the PBSAP therefore is the consolidation and expansion of all categories of the province's network of conservation areas.

1.1 The Current Western Cape Protected Area Network

In 2017 CapeNature published the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP) (Pool-Stanvliet *et al.*, 2017). This document and the accompanying Technical Report (Pence, 2017) consists of the Biodiversity Spatial Plan Map (BSP Map) of biodiversity priority areas and contextual information and land use guidelines that make the most recent and most accurate biodiversity information available for land use and development planning, environmental assessments and regulation, and natural resource management.

The BSP Map covers both the terrestrial and freshwater realms, as well as major coastal and estuarine habitats, and identifies areas that are important for conserving biodiversity pattern and ecological processes and are made up of Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) and Ecological Support Areas (ESA).

The province's current terrestrial protected area network totals 1 840 568 ha (excluding private nature reserves which are in process of verification and validation) (Figure 2). This network consists of areas deemed formally protected in terms of NEM: PAA. The protected area network remains unrepresentative of approximately half of the ecosystems contained within it. The positioning of new protected areas in the most appropriated areas, based on systematic biodiversity planning and the WCBSP ensures high confidence in achieving and contributing to national representative biodiversity targets in the medium term.

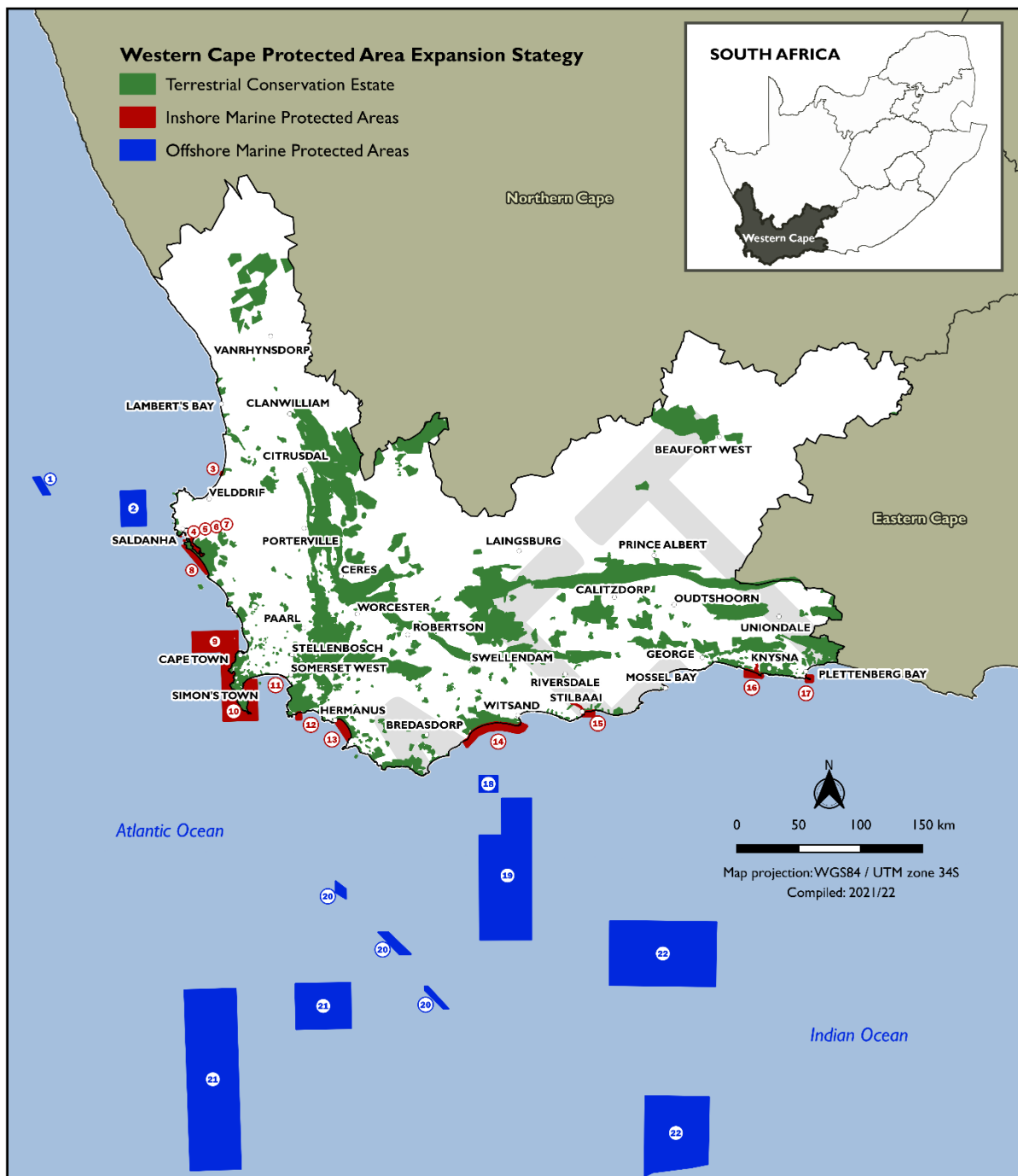


Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| National Park | CapeNature Contract Nature Reserve | TOWNS |
| CapeNature Wilderness Area | Contract Nature Reserve | CapeNature Special Nature Reserve |
| Wilderness Area | Mountain Catchment Area | CapeNature Marine Protected Area |
| CapeNature State Forest Nature Reserve | Biodiversity Agreement | Marine Protected Area |
| Forest Nature Reserve | Local Nature Reserve | CapeNature Island Nature Reserve |
| CapeNature Provincial Nature Reserve | Protected Natural Environment | Protected Area Management Plan Complexes |
| Provincial Nature Reserve | Private Nature Reserve | |

Figure 2: The protected area network of the Western Cape Province as of March 2020.

Inshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) currently account for approximately 1 600 km² along the Western Cape coastline. Of the 20 new MPAs declared in 2019, seven are in the waters offshore of the Western Cape provincial coastline and cover approximately 20 819 km² (Figure 3).



Marine Protected Areas

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 - Benguela Muds | 9 - Robben Island | 16 - Goukamma |
| 2 - Cape Canyon | 10 - Table Mountain National Park | 17 - Robberg |
| 3 - Rocherpan | 11 - Helderberg | 18 - Agulhas Muds |
| 4 - Malgas Island | 12 - Betty's Bay | 19 - Agulhas Bank |
| 5 - Marcus Island | 13 - Walker Bay Whale Sanctuary | 20 - Browns Bank Corals |
| 6 - Jutten Island | 14 - De Hoop | 21 - Southeast Atlantic Seamounts |
| 7 - Langebaan Lagoon | 15 - Stilbaai | 22 - Southwest Indian Seamounts |
| 8 - Sixteen Mile Beach | | |

Figure 3: Marine Protected Areas

1.1.1 Defining protected areas.

Section 9 of the NEM: PAA distinguishes between several types of protected areas, namely special nature reserves, national parks, nature reserves, and protected environments. It also recognises world heritage sites declared in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act (Act No. 49 of 1999); MPAs in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No.18 of 1998) and/or the NEM: PAA; specially protected forest areas declared in terms of the National Forests Act (Act No. 84 of 1998); and Mountain Catchment Areas (MCAs) declared in terms of the Mountain Catchment Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970). Protected areas can include privately-owned areas that have been formally declared as national parks, nature reserves or protected environments under NEM: PAA. Local authority nature reserves, private nature reserves and protected environments are regarded as having been declared in terms of the NEM: PAA [(Section 12 and 23 (5), and Section 12 and 28(7) relating to protected natural environments established under the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act No. 73 of 1989)].

1.2 Report Back on the Previous Strategy

The 2015-2020 WC PAES set an expansion target of an additional 349 800 ha of land to be formally protected¹¹ by 2020. The dispersed distribution of the province's exceptionally high diversity makes this a particularly challenging task. In addition to improving the representivity of the protected area network, it was also important to strengthen the legal framework of the existing protected area network ensuring compliance with the requirements of NEM: PAA. Only 40% of protected areas were compliant in 2014, and the target was to increase this to 50% by 2020. The proposed increase in the terrestrial protected area network would ensure that international (CBD, Aichi) targets are achieved. The targeted Aichi achievement for conservation of 10% of the marine inshore and offshore environments would be addressed through Operation Phakisa.

To achieve the ecological and political target of securing an additional 349 800 ha in the Western Cape over the 2015-2020 period, an additional budget of R9 million per year, based on the model proposed in the Business Case for Biodiversity Stewardship (SANBI, 2017), was estimated. Based on this model, it was estimated that the allocated budget of R3 million per year, would resource the declaration of seven new stewardship sites per year (R1.9 million per year) and an annual expansion of 10 000 ha per year for the five-year period of the strategy.

CapeNature, in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Developmental Planning (DEA&DP) aligned the operational target to 100 000 ha over five years to address the disparity between the overall protected area expansion target and the ability to address the target within the available budget. This included a requirement to appoint additional full-time stewardship staff members at an additional cost of R3 282 000 per year and an additional R532 000 for declaration costs per year based on costs at that time.

During the 2015-2020 WC PAES (5 years, ending March 2020), 63 stewardship site agreements were signed which added 127 809 ha to the conservation estate. The declaration of the signed nature reserves agreements is a priority for the 2020 – 2025 strategy.

¹¹ Therefore, only land that has been declared as of 31 March 2020 has been counted.

South African National Parks (SANParks) declared 8 200 ha during this period (and acquired or contracted an additional 2 150 ha, not yet declared). The City of Cape Town (CoCT) declared 14 756 ha of City land within this period. Birdlife SA facilitated the declaration of the 8 092.6 ha Moutonshoek Protected Environment. Similarly, WWF South Africa's Land Programme, during the 2015-2020 WC PAES, purchased over 17 200 ha of land for conservation, currently in process of declaration.

These additions which are specifically related to the terrestrial protected area network contributed to:

- Improved protection status of 12 of the province's 15 poorly protected Critically Endangered ecosystems.
- Of the 10 most under-protected ecosystems in the province, full protection level target was met for two ecosystems, moderate contributions were made to two ecosystems, and minor contributions to an additional two ecosystems.
- Of the strategic landscapes in the province, full protection level target was met for one landscape, high contributions were made to two landscapes, and moderate contributions to three landscapes.
- Improved protection status of essential habitat for:
 - Cape Mountain Zebra – two protected areas, eight biodiversity agreements.
 - Riverine Rabbit – one protected area.
 - Endemic fish – five protected areas.
 - Endemic butterflies – one biodiversity agreement.
 - Plant hotspots – four protected areas, six biodiversity agreements.
 - Bird congregation sites – one protected area.
- Secured unique freshwater ecosystems in five of the six district municipalities:
 - City of Cape Town – two freshwater ecosystems in three protected areas.
 - Cape Winelands – one freshwater ecosystem in one protected area.
 - Eden (Garden Route) – one freshwater ecosystem in one protected area, one freshwater ecosystem in three biodiversity agreements.
 - Overberg – one freshwater ecosystem in one protected area, two freshwater ecosystems in two conservation areas.
 - West Coast – three freshwater ecosystems in three protected areas.

Marine Protected Area network:

The 2015-2020 WC PAES set a target to formally protect 616 km² of the marine inshore waters located off the Western Cape provincial coastline as well as formally protect 24 600 km² of the marine offshore waters located off the Western Cape provincial coastline through Operation Phakisa (DFFE).

The status of MPAs is:

- Marine inshore = 1 600 km² (MPAs along Western Cape coastline).
- Marine inshore = 2 101 km² (MPAs not along Western Cape coast).
- Marine inshore = 611 km² (Robben Island – Operation Phakisa - still to be gazetted).
- Marine inshore = 17 168 km² (Operation Phakisa – still to be gazetted).
- Marine offshore = 36 205 km² (Operation Phakisa – still to be gazetted).
- Prince Edward Island MPA = 169 699 km²

Of the 20 new MPAs declared in 2019, seven are within the marine offshore waters located off the Western Cape provincial coastline accounting for 20 819 km².

- Agulhas Bank Complex Marine Protected Area.
- Agulhas Muds Marine Protected Area.
- Benguela Muds Marine Protected Area.
- Cape Canyon Marine Protected Area.
- Southeast Atlantic Seamounts Marine Protected Area.
- Southwest Indian Seamount Marine Protected Area.
- Browns Bank Corals Marine Protected Area.

The 2015-2020 WC PAES also set an action to investigate the potential for declaring a second set of priority MPAs not included in Operation Phakisa. CapeNature has prioritised 11 priority estuaries (Olifants, Verlorenvlei, Groot Berg, Klein, Bot/Kleinmond, Uilkraals, Heuningnes, Goukou, Goukamma, Keurbooms, and Breede) in need of improved conservation and protection. An investigation is underway to determine the best legal mechanism to protect priority estuaries.

[No-take zones extended in existing MPAs:](#)

Expansion of no-take/exclusion zones within the Betty's Bay, Goukamma and Robberg MPAs is in the proclamation process with DFFE.

[Regularize the protected area network to ensure NEM: PAA compliance and environmental security:](#)

The second objective of the 2015-2020 WC PAES was to increase NEM: PAA compliance of the protected area network from approximately 40% to 50% to ensure priority state-owned protected areas are appropriately vested. A Land Affairs Officer and GIS Technician were appointed in CapeNature's Legal Services Land Affairs Unit to address the transfer of state land to CapeNature. The process to vest the agreed-upon state owned lands with the Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works and assign management authority to CapeNature has not yet been achieved and remains a priority for to the 2020 – 2025 WC PAES.

[Identify all admiralty reserves which are biodiversity priorities and/or are located either side of a protected area, as a first step towards securing and improving the management of the biodiversity contained therein:](#)

Six portions of admiralty reserve land have been prioritised. These include three portions of admiralty reserve land identified for inclusion into the Robberg Coastal Corridor Protected Environment Phase 3 expansion plan; two portions of admiralty reserve land prioritised between Bokbaai and Koeberg that form a corridor between the two protected areas in the Dassenberg Coastal Corridor; and a portion of Admiralty Reserve land contributing to the Vredenburg Coastal Corridor.

[Ensure existing protected areas are NEM: PAA-compliant:](#)

The objective was to ensure that each of CapeNature's management complexes has a current and approved Protected Area Management Plan (PAMP). Of the 13 Cape Floral Region Protected Areas World Heritage Site (CFRPA WHS)

complexes, seven that resort under the management of CapeNature have approved PAMPs. De Hoop (2017); Anysberg (2018); Boland Mountains (2019); Cederberg (2019); Swartberg (2020), Langeberg (2020) and Riviersonderend (2021). The Hexriver and Groot Winterhoek PAMPs are in progress.

Private nature reserves and local authority nature reserves:

DFFE published norms and standards for the inclusion of private nature reserves into the Protected and Conservation Areas database and has proposed amendments to NEM: PAA to clarify the verification process.

The verification and validation process of all private nature reserves is ongoing. This work is supported by the Table Mountain Fund with the non-profit organisation, Conservation Outcomes implementing the project in partnership with CapeNature.

Several municipalities have been engaged and provided with an information document informing municipalities of the status of their local authority nature reserve in terms of NEM: PAA and requirements for compliance with the NEM: PAA and the Regulations for Nature Reserves. CapeNature provides ongoing support to these municipalities, including the Overstrand, Hessequa, Langeberg and West Coast municipalities.

Mountain Catchment Areas (MCAs):

A section on MCAs has been included in the draft Western Cape Biodiversity Bill to enable the modernisation of the MCA Act and to provide for declaration as protected environments or other forms of stewardship in terms of required regulations the draft bill.

1.3 Legal Mandate and Legislative Framework for Protected Area Expansion

The Provincial Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (Provincial Minister) is responsible for the environmental mandate within the province, including the conservation of biodiversity. The Provincial Minister has appointed CapeNature as the implementing agency responsible for the biodiversity conservation component within the province. This includes the expansion and management of protected areas as well as biodiversity planning and conservation outside of the protected area network.

Protected area declaration is undertaken in terms of the NEM: PAA. In the Western Cape, NEM: PAA is also supplemented by the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1974, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act of 1998, and the Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act (Act No. 3 of 2000). All new declarations of terrestrial protected areas are carried out in terms of the NEM: PAA only.

The Provincial Minister is also delegated to implement the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEM: BA). However, the National Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is empowered to sign Biodiversity Management Agreements under NEM: BA with landowners. In the Western Cape, CapeNature signs Biodiversity Agreements with private landowners under the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act (Act No. 15 of 1998). These areas are not necessarily amended on the title deeds of a property and are

therefore not considered sufficiently secure to be recognised as protected areas but do count towards the conservation area estate (Table I).

Table I: The legislative framework for protected area expansion in South Africa and the Western Cape

LEGISLATION	PROVISIONS FOR FORMAL BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION ON LAND OUTSIDE OF THE STATE-OWNED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM
<p>National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM: PAA)</p>	<p>One of the objectives of the NEM: PAA is to provide for a representative network of <i>protected areas on state land, private land, and communal land</i> (Chapter I, Section 2). NEM: PAA recognises a streamlined set of categories for protected areas and details the legal procedure for declaring special nature reserves; nature reserves; national parks; and protected environments (Chapter 3). The protection of private and communal land is specifically catered for under these categories. It requires the mutual agreement of landowners and the National Minister or the Provincial Minister (depending on the category of protected area).</p>
<p>National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No.10 of 2004) (NEM: BA)</p>	<p>NEM: BA provides important spatial and strategic planning instruments that enable conservation outside of formally declared protected areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the publishing of bioregional plans that identify Critical Biodiversity Areas outside of the protected area system. • the listing of threatened or protected ecosystems and species; and • the development of biodiversity management plans and biodiversity management agreements (e.g., with landowners other than the state).
<p>The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board – WCNCB – Act (Act No. 15 of 1998)</p>	<p>The Act provides for CapeNature to negotiate and cooperate with <i>any other party</i> to achieve its objectives for conserving biodiversity. (Chapter II, Section 9: 1c, d, f) CapeNature may therefore enter into biodiversity stewardship agreements with private and communal landowners as well as the state.</p>
<p>Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance – “the Ordinance” (No. 19 of 1974)</p>	<p>The Ordinance provides for the establishment of nature reserves on private land (see Chapter II, Section 12, 13, as amended in the Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act 3 of 2000). This mechanism has now been replaced in practice by the NEM: PAA.</p>
<p>Western Cape Biodiversity Act</p>	<p>The WC Biodiversity Act assented to on 09 December 2021, is due for gazetting in the 2021/22 year and will replace both the WCNCB Act and the Ordinance. Together with NEMA, NEM: PAA and NEM: BA, the Act will govern biodiversity conservation within the province.</p>

CHAPTER 2: A Long-Term Vision for The Protected Area Network of the Western Cape Province

Targets and implementation strategies are defined by the long-term vision for biodiversity conservation within the Western Cape Province. The 2015-2025 Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) states that: “By 2040, biodiversity, the natural heritage and ecological infrastructure is valued, wisely used, conserved and restored and delivers ecosystem services that improve the quality of life for all people of the Western Cape Province”. Biodiversity conservation is one of the strategic objectives of the province and the country alongside important social and economic imperatives. It is therefore important that collective efforts are directed by a set of principles, as outlined below, and underpinned by defensible science (Section 2.3).

2.1 Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2021– 2025 Principles

- **Protected area expansion must occur within priority biodiversity areas:** Within the Western Cape Province, the spatial depiction of priority biodiversity areas is the CBA Map. All organisations engaged with natural resource management or protection within the province should align their operations accordingly. The declaration of protected areas in terms of NEM: PAA, on land which is not a biodiversity priority or specifically required to meet ecological targets, will be discouraged.
- **Not all hectares are equal:** Not all protected area hectares are equal in importance. Certain ecosystem types have been protected over and above that which is required for the ecosystem to persist. Actively pursuing further protection of already well protected ecosystems, especially at the expense of under protected ecosystems, must not result in the disproportionate representation of ecosystems on protected land in the province. The protection of a hectare of an under-protected ecosystem is far more important than the protection of a hectare in an over-protected ecosystem.
- **Plan for what is needed and align operations accordingly, not vice versa:** The targets which have been set in this 2021 - 2025 WC PAES are based on:
 - a) ecological requirements depicted by the biodiversity thresholds, and
 - b) political commitments.

These are ambitious targets and require partner support for delivery. Operational support, through financial resources, need to be secured to align multi-partner organisational actions with this strategy. The inverse, i.e., setting targets against a confirmed budget, should be applied in individual organisational Annual Operational Plans.

- **Partner up:** Successful delivery relies on collaborative partnerships. All partners involved in natural resource protection and management within the Western Cape Province should work together to deliver upon these targets. Partners should complement each other to ensure maximum achievements. The Western Cape Biodiversity Stewardship Reference Group is the appropriate, agreed forum, established for the sharing of knowledge, alignment of goals, coordination, and collaboration within the community of practice in the Western Cape Province.

2.2 DEFINING GOALS

The 2020 – 2025 strategy focuses on the following three goals:



2.2.1 Goal 1: An expanded protected area network

CapeNature’s first Protected Area Expansion Strategy (2010–2015) adopted a unique target of 60% of the biodiversity thresholds¹² for all terrestrial ecosystems by the year 2030. The 2021 - 2025 WC PAES honours the targets defined by the 2010 strategy (Purnell *et al.*, 2010) and continues to aim to secure 60% of biodiversity threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by 2030. Furthermore, it aims to secure 10% of the marine environment by the year 2030¹³. [Table 3](#) summarizes these long-term targets across the Western Cape landscape and seascape, as well as the five-year targets that are the focus of this 2021 - 2025 WC PAES.

Text Box 4: Representative targets
 Nationally targets have been set per ecosystem type. The configuration of areas forming the protected area network needs to be representative of the full suite of biodiversity contained within Western Cape. The correct siting of protected areas is guided by systematic biodiversity planning and resulting Critical Biodiversity Areas Maps. With 100% efficiency and adequate habitat remaining for each type, 14% of the province would be required. Due to the disproportionate representation of biodiversity, we still require an additional 8.4% of the province.

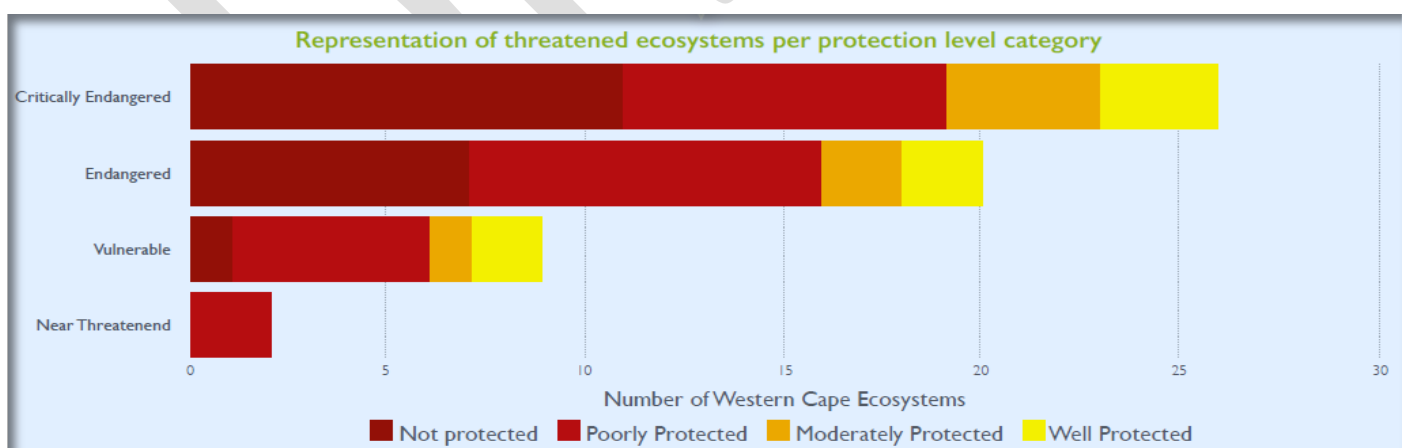


Figure 5: The relationship between ecosystem status, biodiversity thresholds and our protection targets

¹² Biodiversity Thresholds (BT) (for terrestrial ecosystems) represent the percentage of the original extent of a vegetation type which needs to be maintained in a natural state to ensure that 75% of the species contained within that vegetation type survive. Biodiversity Thresholds are based on actual plant diversity surveys or *relevé* data which estimate the parameters of species-to-area relationships.

¹³ Adopted from CBD Aichi targets which aimed to achieve 10% by 2020.

The Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy aims to increase the current representation of threatened ecosystem types in the conservation estate (Figure 5). The Protection Level Categories are: Not Protected (<5% of the Biodiversity Threshold, or BT); Poorly Protected (5-49% of BT); Moderately Protected (50-99% of BT); Well protected (\geq 100% of BT). The overall target for this WC PAES is aimed at protecting 60% of the Biodiversity Threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by 2030, which places the target in the Moderately Protected category.

In addition to the overarching ecosystem-based targets, a set of objectives for Critically Endangered vegetation types, strategic landscapes and corridors, essential habitat for certain species, estuaries, the coast, and freshwater systems, were developed. Section's 2.3.1 through 2.3.5 provide more detail about these objectives and the specific outcomes that the implementation of this strategy aims to achieve.

Text Box 6: How do the targets compare to the Aichi target 11?

The Aichi target 11 is that by 2020, 17% of land and 10% of coastal and marine areas are conserved. Conserved however includes conservation areas (see Section 1.2 above).

The CBD's Post-2020 draft Biodiversity Framework proposed a new area-based target to replace the current Target 11. This new target proposes that protected areas and OECMs will need to cover 30% of land and sea, placing a significantly higher onus on many countries to expand their conservation estates over the next ten years.

This Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy will aim to achieve 60% of biodiversity threshold of terrestrial ecosystems (which equates to a land portfolio approximately equivalent to 17% of ecosystems) by 2030 – but as formal protected areas. This strategy will also aim to formally protect 10% of the marine environment by 2030.

2.2.2 Goal 2: Regularising the protected area network to ensure NEM: PAA compliance

In addition to expanding the protected area network, the regularisation¹⁴ of the protected area network will ensure full NEM: PAA compliance. Largely due to past administrative shortcomings, a substantial proportion of the current protected area network is either not gazetted through an official notice, vested appropriately, assigned to a management authority, surveyed, and adequately documented, or managed according to an approved management plan. Within the next five years, and in cooperation with DFFE, other national departments CapeNature and partners aim to significantly increase the proportion of protected areas compliant with NEM: PAA, from approximately 40% to 50%. As such, some of the strategies contained in this document will not result in an expanded protected area network but rather a more legally and administratively secure protected area network. This regularisation of existing protected areas will better ensure that the costs and benefits of protection flow to the appropriate management authority.

¹⁴ Regularisation refers to the process of establishing a hitherto temporary or provisional arrangement on an official basis; the act of making (something, such as a situation) regular, legal, or officially accepted.

2.2.3 Goal 3: Post declaration support to private protected areas

Investing limited state resources on private or communal land requires some guarantee of the persistence of biodiversity on that land, as well as a formalised management relationship between the landowners/users and government. The use of contractual agreements to secure land is made possible through the legislative framework of NEM: PAA, NEM: BA and South African contract and property law. Key to implementation is the fundamental landowner focus with dedicated landowner extension support which is matched to the level of stewardship agreement entered.

Once biodiversity stewardship agreements are in place, the conservation authorities and partners must ensure sufficient capacity and resources to provide ongoing support to the relevant landowners or users. The maintenance of previous gains and successes is paramount to the long-term success and sustainability of the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategies. Budget reductions and decreasing resources requires a deliberate strategic shift away from growth of the protected area estate through stewardship, with a realigned focus towards ensuring the existing stewardship landowners are adequately supported to maintain the gains achieved in previous years.

Legislative Mandate:

The annual Stewardship Audit and ensuing Audit / Management Report is a legal requirement in terms of section 43 of NEM: PAA and the Regulations for the Proper Administration of Nature Reserves as well as the Norms and Standards for the Management of Protected Areas in South Africa.

Section 2.2 and 2.3 of the standard Protected Area Management Agreement are also of relevance as they contractually bind the provincial conservation agency to assist the management authority with the preparation of a Protected Area Management Plan and the monitoring and review of the management plan.

Section 7.1.2 of the National Biodiversity Stewardship Guideline Document speaks to the process for undertaking oversight and reporting. An annual management meeting and completion of a pro forma set of minutes that includes a review of progress in the implementation the management plan and the achievement of goals in the previous year. If this process is followed it will meet the reporting requirements of the Regulations for the Proper Administration of Nature Reserves.

The completion of a biennial Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) assessment, and the development of a report from this process will ensure that the requirements for reporting in terms of the Norms and Standards for the Management of Protected Areas in South Africa are met.

2.3 PROVINCIAL OBJECTIVES

In the Western Cape, conservation authorities and practitioners have endeavoured to develop a portfolio of expansion priorities that strikes the balance between important and urgent sites, and important and not (yet) urgent sites, but which also focuses on achieving more specific biodiversity outcomes.

The purpose of identifying more specific biodiversity outcomes is to help prioritise sites for protected area expansion, especially as many sites are both important and urgent for meeting the primary protection target in the Western Cape¹⁵. It is useful to think of the specific provincial biodiversity outcomes as a set of more tangible objectives prioritised under an overarching protection target. By developing outcomes that are scaled to the provincial context and linked to familiar landscapes, understanding what the strategy needs to, and can, achieve, is more easily accomplished.

The objectives listed below will achieve multiple biodiversity outcomes as the highest priorities for protected area expansion¹⁶ and are grouped into the following themes:

- 2.3.1 Critically Endangered ecosystems
- 2.3.2 Under-protected ecosystems and strategic landscapes
- 2.3.3 Essential habitat for selected species
- 2.3.4 Marine, estuarine, and coastal systems
- 2.3.5 Freshwater ecosystems

2.3.1 Critically Endangered ecosystems



Objective Statement: Secure at least one 'best remaining' site in each of the province's poorly protected Critically Endangered ecosystems.

Critically Endangered (CR) ecosystems are those vegetation types which have been modified from their natural state to the extent that their biodiversity threshold target can no longer be met; so little natural habitat is left that not only have ecosystem structure and functioning been severely impaired, but species associated with the ecosystem are being lost.

There are 25 CR terrestrial ecosystems in the Western Cape (Skowno *et al.*, 2019). The NBA 2018 assessment adopted the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems assessment framework for terrestrial, marine, and estuarine realms. This approach is different from the NBA 2011 method and thus there are discrepancies in data due to changes in assessment methods. Of the current 25 CR terrestrial ecosystems, seven were previously classified as Endangered, two were Vulnerable, three Least Threatened and two new terrestrial ecosystems were delineated which are CR (NBA 2011). Ten previously listed CR systems have been reclassified as Endangered and one (Overberg Sandstone Fynbos) is now classified as Least Threatened. Four are considered to have the best remaining examples of the type secured in the protected area network (i.e., Peninsula Shale Renosterveld, Cape Flats Sand Fynbos, Lourensford Alluvium Fynbos, and Swartland Alluvium Fynbos). Therefore, given these discrepancies in data a set of best remaining examples were expert-identified and added to the provincial Conservation Action Priorities database.

¹⁵ 60% of the biodiversity threshold for each of the 160 ecosystem types in the province.

¹⁶ Where sufficient data were available to identify specific sites. For some objectives, further work will be required to identify the most effective set and/or configuration of places to achieve the desired result.

For the remaining 15 types¹⁷, a set of best remaining examples were expert-identified and added to the provincial Conservation Action Priorities database.

2.3.2 Under-protected ecosystems and strategic landscapes



Objective Statement: Make a significant contribution towards meeting protected area targets for under-represented ecosystems in the province, including fully meeting protection targets for at least an additional five ecosystems, in strategic locations.

Of the 171 ecosystem types in the Western Cape, only 44 meet their provincial protection target. To meet outstanding targets, over one million hectares are still required across 116 different terrestrial ecosystem types. These numbers indicate a long way to go to reach long-term protection goals, however, there are a handful of places in the province where it is not only within reach to meet targets, but where there are opportunities to create relatively large, protected areas in key landscapes. For example, the Piketberg Mountains where an entire vegetation type, Piketberg Sandstone Fynbos, is essentially unprotected and where the country's most significant 'unprotected and threatened plant species hotspot' is located. Two proposed stewardship projects covering a combined area of over 15 000 ha meet the protection target for Piketberg Sandstone Fynbos and make a substantial contribution to one EN and one CR ecosystem, as well as a suite of important mammal, bird, fish, insect, and reptile species. The most at-risk terrestrial ecosystems in the Western Cape include the CR Cape Flats Sand Fynbos, Garden Route Granite Fynbos and Mossel Bay Shale Renosterveld.

2.3.3 Essential habitat for selected species



Objective Statement: Secure at least one site considered essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the following threatened species or species groups¹⁸:

- Cape mountain zebra
- Bontebok
- Riverine rabbit
- Geometric tortoise
- Endemic fish species¹⁹
- Threatened and unprotected plant species hotspots

¹⁷ Langkloof Shale Renosterveld, Piketberg Quartz Succulent Shrubland, Muscadel Riviere, Swartland Silcrete Renosterveld, Swartland Shale Renosterveld, Western/Central/Eastern Ruens Shale Renosterveld, Ruens Silcrete Renosterveld, Elgin Shale Fynbos, Elgin Ferricrete Fynbos, Cape Lowland Alluvial Vegetation, Garden Route Granite Fynbos, and Knysna Sand Fynbos.

¹⁸ This proposed set of species and species groups emerged from the PAES workshops as those which stand to not only significantly benefit from having portions of their habitat formally protected, but for which formal protection is considered essential to their long-term viability and where significant progress is feasible within the 5-year timeframe of the strategy.

¹⁹ The following species have been flagged as priorities and have had candidate sites selected: Barrydale Redfin, Doringrivier Redfin, Tweerivier Redfin, Spotted Rock Catfish, Verlorenvlei Redfin, Bergrivier Redfin, Clanwilliam Sandfish, Cape Galaxias (Leeu and Haelkraal).

- *Bird congregation sites*
- *Endemic butterfly species of conservation concern*²⁰

Although the provincial protection target is ostensibly linked to ecosystems, the intent is to protect the full spectrum of animals, plants, ecosystems, and ecological processes that occur in the province, in a layout that conflicts as little as possible with economic development and human livelihoods. Ensuring that species' conservation needs are catered for in the WC PAES is imperative; the species/groups listed above were identified because formal habitat protection is considered essential to their long-term viability and the current protected area network is inadequate in meeting their specific spatial requirements.

2.3.4 Marine, estuarine, and coastal systems



Objective Statement: Advance marine, estuarine and coastal conservation in the Western Cape through a set of interventions aimed at addressing key gaps in protection, and by supporting national MPA expansion efforts.

More specifically, this component of the strategy is about:

- Working with DFFE to pursue the appropriate mechanism for enhanced protection and management of existing MPAs and island nature reserves (including ostensibly protected 'rocks').
 - For example, MPA re-zoning to increase the proportion of 'no-take' areas in the Betty's Bay, Goukamma and Robberg MPAs; improved management zones around Bird Island for land-based species conservation (seals and gannets); and laying the groundwork for potential future MPAs around Dassen and Dyer Islands.
- Securing key gaps in the protection of provincial coastal habitats and ecological processes.
 - While approximately 24% of the one-kilometre-wide coastal zone is formally protected, key gaps remain in coastal habitat representation and in terms of NEM: PAA-compliance (mainly local and private nature reserves)²¹, as well as physical gaps between land-ward and seaward protected areas (e.g., admiralty reserve land).
- Increasing the extent and level of protection within the estuarine functional zone of identified core estuaries.
- Management plans for declared MPAs are developed and implemented.

The CR Cool Temperate Predominantly Open estuaries are classified most at risk in the Western Cape (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2019).

²⁰ Individual taxa and candidate sites to be determined.

²¹ See Sections 3.5 and 3.6 respectively

2.3.5 Freshwater ecosystems



Objective Statement: Secure at least one 'special' (i.e., unique, threatened, and under-protected) freshwater ecosystem per District Municipality.

Inland wetlands, rivers and estuaries are predominantly heavily modified, and are in poor condition. These realms are geographically constrained, and pressures are concentrated.

Wetlands are the most threatened of all South Africa's ecosystems and among the least well-protected, despite the relatively small proportion (2.4%) of the landscape that they make up (Nel & Driver, 2012). In the Western Cape, estuaries and rivers are in a poor condition overall. Approximately 28% of estuarine area, 10% of inland wetland area and 42% of river length are in natural/near natural condition. Approximately 28% of seashore ecosystem types are in a good condition. Marine inner shelf and bay ecosystems (beyond the provincial boundary) are in a particularly poor condition in this region ([Figure 3](#)).

To address the gaps in the protected area network for freshwater ecosystems, this WC PAES focuses on a suite of systems of special conservation concern due to their uniqueness, vulnerability, and poor protection status (i.e., representation):

- Peat wetlands;
- Vernal pools embedded in CR Renosterveld;
- The "wet" set of CR ecosystem types and the river systems associated with them, namely: Cape Lowland Alluvial Vegetation, Swartland Alluvium Fynbos, Kouebokkeveld Alluvium Fynbos, and Muscadel Riviere; and
- Strategic Water Source Areas. Water source areas are places such as water catchments, which produce disproportionately greater volumes of water per unit area than other areas and are generally located in high rainfall areas which also have a baseflow of at least 11-25mm/a which is evidence of a strong link between groundwater and surface flow in these areas (Le Maitre *et al.*, 2018).

In addition to targeting these types, the WC PAES aims for better designed protected areas that accommodate entire wetlands and river reaches. Freshwater ecosystems represent high-value ecological infrastructure that provides critical ecosystem services such as water purification and flood regulation (Nel & Driver, 2012). Delivery of these services requires protecting whole, functional systems.

2.4 CONSERVATION ACTION PRIORITIES – A MAP DEPICTING THE PROVINCIAL PRIORITY AREAS

The province's spatial depiction of priority areas for protected area expansion is referred to as the Conservation Action Priorities (CAP) Map. The CAP Map, which is underpinned by a comprehensive database, indicates specific cadastres targeted for protected area expansion according to objective, mechanism, organisation, and urgency. As

such, the CAP Map contains highly sensitive information, and anecdotal evidence of the unintended negative consequences of similar products becoming publicly accessible include:

- a) land prices being artificially elevated so that acquisition for conservation purposes fetches far higher prices than fair market value;
- b) illegal cultivation and development as landowners anticipate potential difficulties in obtaining environmental authorisation; and
- c) applications for prospecting rights being triggered. As a result, the CAP Map will be housed by CapeNature (the lead implementing agent) and will not be publicly available.

The conservation outcomes and objectives which drove the selection of these cadastres are however outlined by this strategy which is publicly available.

To determine various tiers of importance, all candidate sites were first entered into a database and then linked to, and evaluated against, provincial objectives. The resulting CAP Map depicts the priority areas for protected area expansion in the next five years. Importantly, the CAP Map is underpinned by a database that will be updated on a regular basis to inform and prioritise conservation action in the province, based on best available information.

2.5 PROTECTION TARGETS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE 2020-2025 WESTERN CAPE PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION STRATEGY

The current land based protected area network amounts to 14.63% of the province. To achieve a Protected Area network which is fully representative of the ecosystems contained within the province, an additional 8.4% of the province is still required. This will result in a protected area network of 22.5% of the province. The protection target for the marine environment is to formally protect 10% by year 2030. Protection targets for the 2020-2025 WC PAES are set out below in [Table 2](#).


Table 2: Protection targets for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2020 – 2025.

FOCAL AREA	TARGET BY 2030	CURRENT PROTECTED AREA NETWORK	ADDITIONAL AREA REQUIRED TO CONSTITUTE A REPRESENTATIVE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK (long-term)	PROTECTION TARGET 2020 – 2025 (¹ / ₂ of additional needed)
LAND BASED	60% of biodiversity threshold per ecosystem type	1 838 847 ha (14.2%) (Excluding private nature reserves which are in process of verification and validation)	1 087 480 ha (8.4%)	543 740 ha (4.2%)
MARINE INSHORE (km ²)	10%	1 600 km ²	unknown	616 km ²
MARINE OFFSHORE: SA EEZ (km ²)	10%	20 819 km ² (Marine Offshore off the Western Cape Province)	10%	24 600 km ²

[Table 3](#) presents a summary of the protection targets and priority actions for the Western Cape Province for the period 2020 – 2025. Where possible, the lead and/or responsible partner is indicated in brackets. Partner organisations are encouraged to integrate their draft operational/implementation plans with the relevant Landscape Implementation plan which speak to the actions listed below. Commitment letters from each partner organisation should also be signed as a record of their intention to support and deliver on this strategy.

Table 3: Protected area targets and priority actions and for the Western Cape Province from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2025.

*Action points have been grouped per headline strategy and lead responsible partners are indicated in brackets.

 <u>Goal 1: Expand the protected area network to increase its representivity and resilience.</u>
<p>Terrestrial protected area network: Conservation agencies and NGOs aim to formally protect an additional 543 740 ha of the province and specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect at least one ‘best remaining’ site in each of the province’s 18 poorly protected Critically Endangered ecosystems; • Make a significant contribution towards meeting protected area targets for under-represented ecosystems in the province; • Meet the full protection targets for at least an additional five ecosystems, in strategic locations; • Secure at least one site considered essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the following endemic, threatened and under-protected species or species groups: Cape mountain zebra, bontebok, riverine rabbit, Geometric tortoise, Redfin and Galaxias fish species, butterfly species, plant species hotspots, and bird congregation sites; • Secure at least one ‘special’ (unique, threatened, and under-protected) freshwater ecosystem per District Municipality; • Focus on the completion of protected area declarations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Declare State Lands including Ganzekraal Nature Reserve within the Dassenberg Coastal Corridor Partnership (CoCT; CapeNature: SANParks); ○ Declare all properties signed-up to extend the Robberg Coastal Corridor Protected Environment (CapeNature); ○ Sign-up four new stewardship agreements in the Knersvlakte and assist with facilitating land purchase where opportunities arise through the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (CapeNature Phase 2 Stewardship Project); ○ Implement Phase 3 Stewardship Project focussing on the LHSKT Priority hotspots in the Western Cape (WWF-SA; CapeNature); ○ Sign-up stewardship agreements (including nature reserves where appropriate) through WWF-SA’s Sustainable Agriculture Programme in the identified Ceres, Grabouw/Elgin, and West Coast focal areas (WWF-SA; CapeNature); ○ Finalise a stewardship agreement for the protection of Geometric Tortoise habitat secured through the Southern Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust. (SATCT; CapeNature); and ○ Declare all remaining stewardship properties signed-up during 2015 – 2020 (CapeNature). • Including the exit land project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transfer and declare the priority DAFF & forestry exit land previously identified (CapeNature; DFFE, PDTPW, NDPWI).

Marine protected area network:

- Aim to establish formal protection for all estuaries identified in the 2015 WC PAES;
 - Aim to finalise the protected area declarations for Olifants, Verlorenvlei, Berg, Bot, Klein, Heuningnes (extension), Breede, Goukou (extension); Goukamma (extension), Keurbooms (extension), Uilkraals, Palmiet and Rooiels; and
 - Update estuary protection priorities for next 5 years.
- Pursue and support the formal protection of 616 km² of the marine inshore located off the Western Cape Provincial coastline through Operation Phakisa (DFFE);
- Pursue and support the formal protection of 24 600 km² of the marine offshore located off the Western Cape provincial coastline through Operation Phakisa (DFFE);
- Investigate the formal protection of secondary priority MPAs (excluded from Operation Phakisa (SANBI; CapeNature; DEA&DP); and
- Investigate and possibly extend no-take zones in existing MPAs (CapeNature; DFFE).

Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs):

- Prioritise and assess properties and land use as OECMs in the Western Cape;
- Develop the skills of relevant CapeNature staff and private sector representatives to assess OECMs; and
- Pending national adoption of selection guidelines, CapeNature will provide a separate report on OECMs that contribute towards the National Conservation Estate.



Goal 2: Regularise the protected area network to ensure NEM:

PAA compliance and environmental security.

Increase NEM: PAA compliance of the protected area network from approximately 40% to 50% (CapeNature):

- Ensure priority state-owned protected areas are appropriately vested:
 - Vest agreed-upon state owned lands with PDTPW and assign management authority to CapeNature (CapeNature: PDTPW);
 - Ensure that all MPAs have officially and appropriately designated management authorities and active MoAs in place (CapeNature; DFFE); and
 - Identify mechanisms towards securing the admiralty reserve lands which were identified as biodiversity priorities and/or are located either side of a protected area, as a first step towards securing and improving the management of the biodiversity contained therein (CapeNature).
- Ensure existing nature reserves are NEM: PAA compliant:
 - Ensure that CapeNature's management complexes have approved management plans (CapeNature);
 - Ensure that all declared stewardship nature reserves and protected environments have approved management plans in place (CapeNature);
 - Convert private or local authority nature reserves with high biodiversity value and land-owner willingness into NEM: PAA compliant nature reserves (CapeNature; DEA&DP);
 - Investigate the withdrawal of nature reserves with either low biodiversity value or low land-owner willingness (CapeNature; DFFE); and
 - Draft MCA regulations (DEA&DP; CapeNature).



Goal 3: Post declaration support to private protected areas

- Fulfil contractual obligations to support management authorities to fulfil their legislative mandate and implementation of management objectives:
 - Assist the management authority with the preparation of a management plan;
 - Provide ongoing support and advice to management authorities in implementing the objectives of the management plan through site visits, email and per telephone;
 - Facilitate access to technical assistance funding to support management authorities in implementing the management objectives of the management plan;
 - Hold an annual management meeting to review progress in implementing the management plan and the achievement of goals in the previous year;
 - Complete annual stewardship audits / management reports; and
 - Completion of a biennial METT assessment, and report for declared stewardship nature reserves and protected environments.

Improved protected area and conservation area administration.

- Update the Conservation Action Priority Map (CAP Map).
- Gazette the new Western Cape Biodiversity Bill (DEA&DP; CapeNature).
- Maintain a protected area and conservation area register and event log (CapeNature; DFFE).
- Actively review all ad hoc requests for the withdrawal of nature reserves (CapeNature; Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration).
- Finalise a Provincial Biodiversity Offset Policy (DEA&DP).
- Monitoring compliance of all reactive stewardship sites originating from environmental authorisations (DEA&DP).
- Sign an MoU between CapeNature and WWF-SA regarding land acquisition within the province (WWF-SA; CapeNature).
- Sign a Collaboration MoU between CapeNature and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) concerning a collaboration to promote conservation and increase awareness of the critically endangered riverine rabbit habitat within the province (WWF-SA; CapeNature).
- Sign a Collaboration MoU between CapeNature and Conservation Outcomes to promote conservation and secure the biodiversity values of the Western Cape Province through protected area expansion.
- Update the Collaboration MoU between Birdlife South Africa and CapeNature (Birdlife South Africa; CapeNature).
- Update the Collaboration MoU between CapeNature and Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust (ORCT; CapeNature).
- Revive the Collaboration MoU between CapeNature and the Southern Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust (SATCT) (SATCT; CapeNature).
- Draft a monitoring programme for all MPAs managed by CapeNature (CapeNature).

CHAPTER 3: MECHANISMS TO EXPAND AND SECURE THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

The conservation sector has in recent years become increasingly creative at finding alternative and more contemporary mechanisms with which to expand the formal protected area network.

Several mechanisms can be employed to expand protected areas and all potential mechanisms will be considered, although the strategy for the next five years will focus on the following primary mechanisms:

- stewardship via both proactive and reactive means.
- the transfer of desirable forest exit lands and other state-owned lands into conservation.
- the purchase of land with support from NGOs; and
- the declaration of Marine Protected Areas.

In addition to this, the province will also work to better ensure the environmental security of the protected area network by increasing the proportion which is fully compliant with NEM: PAA, focusing specifically on state land which is currently managed for conservation.

3.1 STEWARDSHIP

Biodiversity stewardship is the practice of effectively managing biodiversity outside of the existing state-managed protected area network. It achieves this by placing the responsibility to conserve biodiversity into the hands of private landowners through a variety of contractual agreements.

The motivation for adopting biodiversity stewardship as a core strategy for the province is that the most of conservation-worthy (and under-represented) biodiversity is located on private land in the Western Cape; furthermore, stewardship contracts are widely regarded as one of the most cost-effective and feasible mechanisms for protecting important natural systems across the world (Jackelman *et al.*, 2008 and Stolton *et al.*, 2014).

The development of new stewardship sites is limited by available resources, the number of new sites that can be taken on annually and accrued over time; and the capacity requirements to maintain and audit the accrued sites over time are impacted by financial and resource constraints linked to decreasing budgets. All potential new stewardship sites are presented to the Western Cape Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee to determine the appropriate stewardship level (Figure 7). The current interest from landowners to protect biodiversity through stewardship potentially exceeds the capacity of CapeNature to manage this. Consequently, the focus for the next five years is to further explore the integration of landscape scale conservation to strengthen and expand stewardship partnerships.

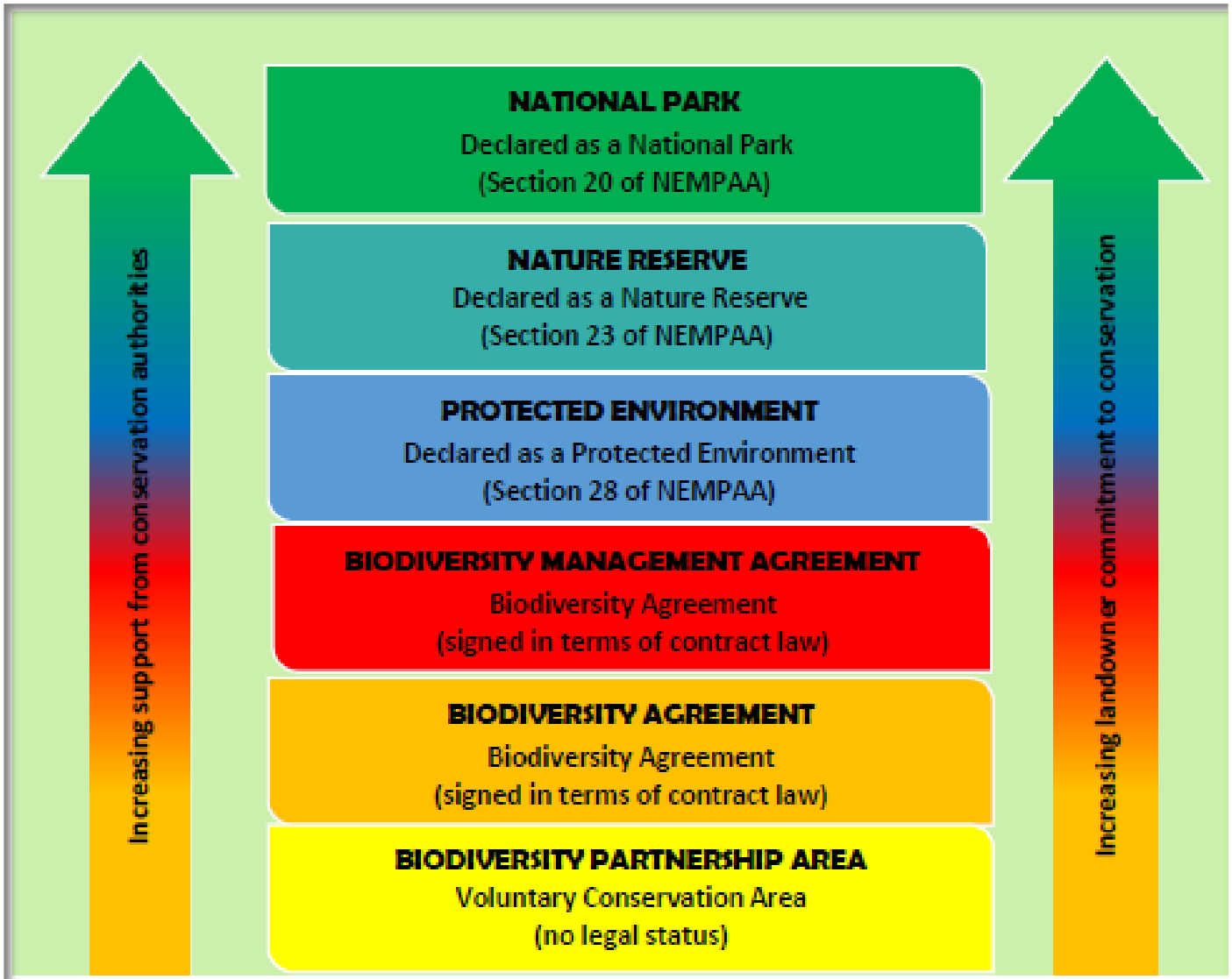


Figure 7: The various stewardship levels assigned to land based on its biodiversity value.

3.2 THE TRANSFER OF FOREST EXIT LAND TO CAPENATURE FOR PROTECTED AREA ESTABLISHMENT

Unprofitable forestry plantations are being redistributed to alternative land managers for more appropriate land-uses. Such plantations, referred to as forest exit areas, are properties that were previously vested with the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and leased to Cape Pine: Forests and Timber Products (Cape Pine). CapeNature has been recognised as one of the potential land recipients, and formal conservation as one of the land uses.

The transfer of forestry exit lands consists of three phases: conversion, rehabilitation, and restoration. Conversion is the initial clearing of the planted trees to a natural vegetation type. Rehabilitation is the medium-term act of transforming the area to its eventual desired state, while restoration is the final long-term goal and is achieved when the area has returned to its pre-planting state or another desired endpoint.

CapeNature assessed the land parcels in the Western Cape Province which DFFE is releasing from forestry. These were assessed on biodiversity merits and whether managing the land could facilitate better overall management

of existing and adjacent protected areas. Properties were assigned to one of three categories: properties CapeNature could accept; properties CapeNature could not accept; and properties CapeNature could accept but with additional funds for management.

Properties CapeNature could accept regardless of whether additional funds²² are received amounts to approximately 11 230 ha. Due to the cost implications of managing the land, this portfolio of land was kept to a minimum. Properties CapeNature could accept but only with additional management funds cover 1 300 ha. The objective is to have transferred and declared as protected areas the exit properties CapeNature has indicated they will accept without additional management funds, within five years.

Text Box 8: The role of World Heritage sites in the protected area network

The CFRPA WHS has been designated by UNESCO in 2004 and extended in 2015. This serial natural World Heritage Site is comprised of 13 protected area clusters, also referred to as complexes, namely Cederberg, Groot Winterhoek, Table Mountain National Park, Boland Mountains, Hexriver, Riviersonderend, Agulhas, De Hoop Nature Reserve, Langeberg, Garden Route, Anysberg, Swartberg and Baviaanskloof, collectively covering an area of more than 1 000 000 ha.

The World Heritage status is of even more significance in this case as much of the land in the World Heritage Site did not have formal conservation status. The declaration of the World Heritage Site had bestowed formal protected area status on these areas as NEM: PAA considers all World Heritage Sites as formal protected areas. This has gone a long way in regularising the state-owned nature reserves in the Western Cape as: a) CapeNature has officially been assigned the World Heritage Site Management Authority for CapeNature's nature reserves contained within the World Heritage Site; and b) completed protected area management plans further ensure compliance with NEM: PAA.

Of the 13 complexes, six that resort under the management of CapeNature have approved protected area management plans: De Hoop Nature Reserve (2017); Anysberg (2018); Boland Mountains (2019); Cederberg (2019); Langeberg (2020); and Swartberg (2020). The Riviersonderend, Hexriver and Groot Winterhoek management plans are in process. Table Mountain National Park (management plan completed in 2015), Agulhas National Park (management plan completed in 2013) and Garden Route National Park (management plan completed in 2012) are managed by SANParks, whereas Baviaanskloof falls under the management of Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency.

In November 2019, consultants were appointed to draft an Environmental Management Framework for the CFRPA WHS. This process is still underway.

3.3 THE VESTING OF STATE LANDS WITH CAPENATURE

Many of the properties currently managed by CapeNature are in fact state forests vested with the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (NDPWI) or the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)²³ and not with CapeNature. Since 1994 however, CapeNature has been administering and managing these areas without the legal authority to do so. This places the organisation at risk. For example, it is doubtful whether it would be able to institute legal proceedings to eject unlawful non-commercial occupiers or to

²² Note that these additional funds refer to the management costs post rehabilitation. The assumption is that all land coming over to CapeNature will: a) either be rehabilitated or b) receive a transfer fee from Cape Pine to cover the rehabilitation costs.

²³ Refer to text box for types of State Forests currently managed by CapeNature

obtain compensation for damage caused by fires negligently started on adjacent land. Furthermore, as only the landowner can declare the property a protected area, most of the land is not declared and remains vulnerable to inappropriate development.

Text Box 9: Types of state forest currently managed by CapeNature

- Forest reserves declared under the National Forest Act, (Act 84 of 1998); and
- State land released by DAFF in 2006 in terms of section 50 (3) of the National Forest Act to the NDPWI for vesting with the Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works (PDTPW). This can include:
 - registered properties with title deeds which can be transferred after the vesting process has been completed.
 - surveyed but unregistered properties; and
 - un-surveyed land which needs to be surveyed by DAFF before the transfer process can take place.

Text Box 10: Potential risks to CapeNature managing land that is not vested and declared

- State forests do not qualify for rates exemption, and rates will continue to be levied on the properties until these areas are formally declared as nature reserves in terms of NEM: PAA.
- Eco-tourism development may be impeded due to land not being vested with CapeNature.
- Accessing lease fees for structures on state forest properties (i.e., radio repeaters on high sites) may be impeded due to land not being vested with CapeNature; and
- Declaration of these areas may be impeded due to land not being vested with CapeNature.

There is a significant risk to CapeNature and the Western Cape Government when managing land as protected areas ultra vires. Not only does this preclude CapeNature from accessing certain land tenure rights, but they would otherwise have been entitled to for example, municipal rates rebates, tax incentives etc. It also limits both CapeNature and the Western Cape Government from taking any legal action in respect of the land at any given time as they do not possess the necessary locus standi as required in law.

These state forest properties need to be vested with the PDTPW and the management thereof needs to be officially assigned to CapeNature. For the properties to be correctly vested and managed, CapeNature has embarked upon a process in partnership with the PDTPW to ensure that all the land is correctly allocated as soon as possible. This does however require the assistance of many departments and is time-consuming.

To legally declare these areas as protected areas in accordance with NEM: PAA, additional funding will be required. CapeNature is currently managing these state forests and wilderness areas with the annual grant funding provided by Provincial Treasury (including Expanded Public Works Programme funding) and National Treasury funding (DFFE: Natural Resource Management). An earmarked allocation for tourism development has also been allocated by Provincial Treasury, to expand the tourism portfolio. No additional funds will be required to manage the land that CapeNature is currently managing, however without an annual increase from Provincial Treasury to compensate for inflation, this does put tremendous strain on the current resources available for operations. The five-year strategy

will thus include a proposal for an increased budget to cover both the declaration process and the increased management funds associated with the management of the new protected areas.

3.4 PURCHASE OF LAND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WWF-SA

CapeNature, conservation NGOs and WWF-SA have worked together in the past to acquire and manage valuable biodiversity in the Western Cape. This is clearly illustrated by the joint CapeNature, WWF-SA and Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust partnership which recently declared the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve.

WWF-SA facilitates the purchase of the land²⁴ through an appropriate donor or trust. CapeNature then declares the land under NEM: PAA and WWF-SA concurrently assigns CapeNature as the management authority. In some instances, where CapeNature is not financially able to manage the site, alternative arrangements for additional financial support from WWF-SA can be made. However, this remains one of the obstacles to acquiring land through purchase.

Within the next five years, WWF-SA and CapeNature are to enter-into a formal MoU regarding land acquisition within the province. In addition to this, WWF-SA is to formally declare land which they have already acquired for conservation purposes but have not yet declared.

Text Box 11: WWF-SA land-acquisition trusts and funds

WWF-SA manages two independent trusts for the acquisition of land, namely:

- Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust which provides funding for the purchase of land which will result in the conservation of the plant diversity of the Succulent Karoo Biome; and
- National Parks Trust which provides funding for the purchase of immovable property which enlarges the existing National Parks or establishes a new National Park or contributes to capital works, such as the building of dams and fencing.

In addition to the above-mentioned trusts, WWF-SA also has earmarked internal funds, not requiring external approval, for the acquisition of land, namely:

- Elizabeth Harding Bequest is to be used to purchase (or enlarge) and maintain nature reserves for the purpose of providing a sanctuary for indigenous and migratory birds in the Western Cape; and
- Fynbos Land Fund for the purposes of protecting fynbos in its natural environment in South Africa.

3.5 MAKING LOCAL AUTHORITY NATURE RESERVES AND PRIVATE NATURE RESERVES NEM: PAA COMPLIANT

Private or local authority nature reserves which have been established under both national and provincial legislation prior to the operation of the NEM: PAA are regarded as nature reserves in terms of Section 23 (5) of NEM: PAA. The requirements for establishing nature reserves under the previous legislation are, however, less stringent than the

²⁴ The site is subject to a review by the Biodiversity Stewardship and Protected Areas Expansion Review Committee. Only sites which qualify for contract nature reserves or protected environment will be purchased by WWF-SA.

requirements set out in the NEM: PAA. The Act now requires: 1) a formally appointed management authority, 2) an approved management plan, and 3) the required title deed endorsement as set out in the NEM: PAA. As a result, although these properties are formally recognised by NEM: PAA as protected areas they remain vulnerable to degradation and/or development and have therefore been targeted for the compliance component of this Strategy.

The DFFE is currently in the process of verifying the legal status of all private nature reserves within the country. This nature reserve verification project aims to verify the declaration (and possibly withdraw) status of private nature reserves. In the Western Cape, this desktop exercise of private nature reserves will then be followed up by a ground-truthing exercise to ascertain the current land-use of the private nature reserves. CapeNature will assist DFFE with this component of the study which aims to establish the biodiversity value and legal status of these private nature reserves.

Once the value, land-use, and legal status of the 181 private nature reserves within the province have been established, CapeNature will assist landowners of priority biodiversity²⁵ who wish to fully secure their properties. In response to this, CapeNature have developed a standard operating procedure outlining how to comply with the three NEM: PAA requirements set out above.

CapeNature will provide technical assistance to ensure that a competent management authority is appointed, and that the management plan of the nature reserve is duly approved by the Provincial Minister. The cost associated with the drafting and approval of the management plan and the drafting and registering of the notarial deed shall however be for the account of the landowner.

The nature reserve status can only be withdrawn by way of an application by either the landowner of the property or CapeNature to the Provincial Minister. Such applications will again be presented to the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration. Only if the biodiversity value is low and the nature reserve no longer meets the requirements of a nature reserve in terms of NEM: PAA will the application for withdrawal be supported by CapeNature. Therefore, all existing private nature reserves are currently in a state of limbo until such point as they are either withdrawn or made NEM: PAA compliant²⁶.

The province hopes to have finalised the regularisation process of all private or local authority nature reserves identified as having high biodiversity value and displaying land-owner willingness into NEM: PAA compliant contract nature reserves²⁷ in the next five years. A plan to inform the process on how to address the nature reserves with either low biodiversity value, low land-owner willingness, or inappropriate land-uses on them (i.e., to withdraw or not) must be in place. In the interim, all ad hoc requests for the withdrawal of nature reserves will need to feed through the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration.

²⁵ Subject to review of the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee.

²⁶ This strategy has been supported by the draft Western Cape Biodiversity Bill which stipulates a time frame for all landowners of private nature reserves to either apply for NEM: PAA compliance or initiate the withdrawal process.

3.6 DECLARING ADMIRALTY RESERVES AS PROTECTED AREAS

Section I of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act – NEM: ICMA - 2008, Act No. 24 of 2008 defines the admiralty reserves as “any strip of land adjoining the inland side of the high-water mark which, when this Act took effect, was state land reserved or designated on an official plan, deed of grant, title deed or other document evidencing title or land-use rights as ‘admiralty reserve’, ‘government reserve’, ‘beach reserve’, ‘coastal forest reserve’ or similar reserve”. Certain sections of admiralty reserve were intended to secure public access to the coast. In the Western Cape Province, it is currently unclear how much of the coastline admiralty reserves constitute, but they often effectively form an unprotected gap between coastal protected areas and the actual coastline, marine environment, or MPA.

Although unconfirmed, the original intention of an admiralty reserve is believed to have been for biodiversity conservation (particularly coastal dune vegetation), geomorphological preservation (providing dune stability and ensuring that the natural coastal processes of sand transport and deposition persist in this dynamic coastal zone) and to ensure that the public continue to have access to the beaches (Forse *et al.*, 2008).

These admiralty reserves are not recognised by NEM: PAA as a type of protected area. Furthermore, as independent cadastres running parallel to the coastline, they at times create an unmanaged divide between a land-based and marine-based protected areas which places substantial burden and risk on the management authorities alongside these admiralty reserves.

The aim is to have identified all admiralty reserves which are biodiversity priorities and/or are located either side of a protected area. Post 2020, we then hope to have: facilitated the transfer of these reserves from the DPWI to alternative legally assigned management authorities; and declared these reserves as Protected Areas in terms of the NEM: PAA. It is important to note that various potential management authorities exist and could include national agencies (e.g. SANParks or DFFE), provincial agencies (e.g. CapeNature), local authorities (where willingness and a competency for biodiversity conservation has been displayed) or even private landowners (in stewardship agreements or private nature reserves).

3.7 PROTECTING MOUNTAIN CATCHMENT AREAS

Private MCAs formally declared in terms of the Mountain Catchment Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970) provide and augment vital linkages between many protected areas. These linkages are extremely important particularly for the support of ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes, not to mention their essential role in the production of water. Furthermore, MCAs are recognised by NEM: PAA as a type of protected area and for MCAs specifically, NEM: PAA does not stipulate that a management authority must be assigned²⁸. The Mountain Catchment Areas Act does stipulate that these MCAs require promulgated regulations limiting development. These have not been developed,

²⁸ Regarding assigning management authorities, Section 38 of NEM: PAA stipulates that the National Minister may for any protected area but must for a National Park and that the Provincial Minister must for a nature reserve and may for a protected environment.

and management plans are not being implemented, the result being that the MCAs are not always being managed for conservation nor water security, and the biodiversity and ecosystem services therein cannot be considered safe.

The WC Biodiversity Act provides for a legal transition and modernisation mechanism for MCAs. An area ceases to be a mountain catchment area if that area is declared as, or included into, a special nature reserve, national park or nature reserve or part thereof, in terms of section 18, 20 or 23 of NEM: PAA.

Through the enabling provisions in the WC Biodiversity Act, we aim to unlock the potential of private MCAs contributing to long-term biodiversity conservation through the Provincial Minister prescribing specific requirements for the management of MCAs and specific activities that are prohibited to ensure that priority biodiversity contained within MCAs is in fact protected and contributes towards the protected area network and ecological infrastructure of the province.

3.8 DECLARING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND EXTENDING NO-TAKE ZONES

Operation Phakisa is a national initiative which is aimed at unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans. A component of this project, which is being led by DFFE, is the formal declaration of priority marine habitats as MPAs²⁹. The protection target of Operation Phakisa is to declare 5% (72 000 km²) of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as an MPA. Of the 20 new MPAs declared in 2019, seven is within the marine offshore located off the Western Cape provincial coastline. The second round of the MPA component of Operation Phakisa will then aim to secure a further 5% - although this is not necessarily scheduled to occur before 2025.

The Operation Phakisa initiative has, to date, not included the protection of any estuaries in the Western Cape. This is a critical gap that needs to be filled. Revised prioritisation of coastal ecosystems within an expanded network of MPAs is being considered because of the NBA.

In addition to expanding the MPA network, the strategy also highlights the need to better protect the existing MPAs. There are currently two categories of MPAs, namely: no-take MPAs and MPAs in which some extraction is permitted. The assignment of extraction rights to MPA zones should be based on the population dynamics and threats to the underlying biodiversity. Although the extension of a 'no-take' zone in an existing MPA does not constitute the expansion of the MPA network, it can translate to a higher degree of protection being afforded to the biodiversity. For this reason, the province will also consider extending the 'no-take' zones in existing MPAs and if deemed a priority, will engage with DFFE to affect the necessary amendments.

Although the declaration of MPAs is a national competency, the management of such areas can be delegated down to provincial level. Such arrangements, however, need to be officially recorded and management authorities need to be adequately funded to carry out such additional responsibilities.

Within the next five years, DFFE, with the support of CapeNature, SANParks and other key agencies active within the province aim to:

²⁹ The formal declaration of MPAs is a national competency and provincial organisations are thus not able to drive such processes. The Western Cape will instead inform and support such processes.

- identify the second set of priority marine areas to be declared.
- effect the extension of no-take zones in existing MPAs.
- ensure that all MPAs have officially designated management authorities and that the authorities have been sufficiently capacitated to undertake the management thereof; and
- management plans for declared Operation Phakisa MPAs are finalised. Furthermore, it is critical that the priority estuaries are protected through the declaration of new MPAs or other relevant protection options, to secure their unique biodiversity.

3.9 OTHER MECHANISMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONSERVATION SYSTEMS OF SOUTH AFRICA

CapeNature will embark on a series of multi-sectoral engagements focussing on the integration and protection of unmodified areas in areas where land-use management objectives can be aligned. For example, there is acknowledgment that there is nature conservation value within certain Protected Agricultural Areas which are currently being proposed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. CapeNature will engage with all relevant sectors to try increase the visibility and need to incorporate the protection of keys areas within their respective prioritisation and legislative processes.

CHAPTER 4: KEY ROLE-PLAYERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EXPANSION OF THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

As the mandate of biodiversity conservation is shared across many organisations, the province relies heavily on partnering to deliver on the shared vision for biodiversity conservation. The following chapter describes the contributions and partnerships of the key role-players in the province that make protected area expansion possible in the Western Cape.

4.1 CAPENATURE

CapeNature is the lead implementing agent for the WC PAES. CapeNature is mandated to act as an implementing agency on behalf of the Provincial Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and delegated with the responsibility for biodiversity conservation within the Western Cape, including Protected Area management. This delegation includes biodiversity planning and biodiversity conservation outside of protected areas.

Implementation of the WC PAES is core to CapeNature's mandate with many parts of the organisation contributing to its implementation, however CapeNature currently has limited budgetary provision and operational capacity for implementing the WC PAES. As a lead partner of the C.A.P.E. programme³⁰, CapeNature had already begun to implement protected area expansion by working with private landowners from 2003 through biodiversity stewardship. It continues to do so at present but its internal capacity to drive biodiversity stewardship is beginning to decrease. This is because CapeNature needs to maintain the contracts it has already entered with landowners and cannot continue to take on more sites indefinitely.

Over and above stewardship, CapeNature will also drive most of the strategies contained within this document. These include the transfer and declaring of specific forest exit lands and state lands into formal protected areas, the translation of private nature reserves and local authority nature reserves into NEM: PAA compliant protected areas and the investigation into admiralty reserves.

CapeNature will not lead the declaration process for MPAs but will support DFFE (especially the protected area component of Operation Phakisa) through management when required and whenever such funds are provided.

4.2 THE WESTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning is responsible for ensuring that the integrity of the natural environment of the Western Cape is maintained. DEA&DP has in this regard developed a Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP). Adopted in March 2016, the PBSAP is a ten-year strategic framework which prioritises and coordinates the collective efforts of the DEA&DP and CapeNature, relevant

³⁰ www.capeaction.org.za

government departments and entities, municipalities, partners, and the local communities. Providing the strategic framework for law reform as well as institutional change management, it aims to ensure that biodiversity and ecological infrastructure in the province is optimally conserved, sustainably utilised and that benefits are equitably shared. The PBSAP responds to the national and provincial economic growth and development strategies as well as other biodiversity-related policies and laws, internationally, nationally, and provincially.

One of the primary ways in which DEA&DP contributes to the conservation estate is by regulating which types of developments can occur where in the province. It is thus paramount that as an offset to residual adverse biodiversity impacts of development, DEA&DP increases the contribution of the environmental authorisation processes to securing priority biodiversity: both formally as protected areas (through partnering with conservation agencies) or informally as conservation areas.

In response to this, DEA&DP revised the Provincial Guideline on Biodiversity Offsets in 2016. However, although the guideline is being held in abeyance awaiting the finalisation of the National Biodiversity Offsets Policy Framework and the National Environmental Offsets Policy, it remains the key informant for effecting biodiversity offsets in the province. Offsets, requiring formal declaration through biodiversity stewardship (i.e., reactive stewardship) will be strongly encouraged and once included in an environmental authorisation, will enable compliance monitoring by DEA&DP. In instances whereby CapeNature is not able to accommodate the site as a nature reserve, CapeNature will recommend that the be zoned for conservation and the landowner instructed (as a condition in an environmental authorisation) to manage the land for conservation. All such reactive stewardship or rezoning for conservation purposes will reported on by DEA&DP as their contribution towards safeguarding valuable biodiversity.

In terms of NEM: ICMA, DEA&DP is the designated provincial lead agency for coastal management. One responsibility of the Provincial Minister is to establish coastal management lines for the provincial coastline. The primary purpose of the coastal management lines is to, inter alia, protect the coastal protection zone, protect coastal public property and properties along the coast and to preserve the aesthetics of the coast. The DEA&DP has undergone a rigorous process to delineate coastal management lines within the Overberg, West Coast and Garden Route District Municipal areas and is currently in the process of establishing these coastal management lines as well as to develop a mechanism to ensure the appropriate application of the coastal management line in land use decisions.

4.3 THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DFFE)

The management and conservation of the marine environment is a national function mandated to the DFFE. The Constitution of South Africa, together with NEM: PAA, dictate that MPAs are to be declared by the National Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment under NEM: PAA. The national competency of managing such areas, can however be contractually assigned to the provinces. As a result, the Western Cape Province cannot drive the declaration of MPAs, instead it can be recommended to DFFE with their priority selection for declaration processes. CapeNature can also be contracted to manage MPAs.

Existing MPAs were declared using the Marine Living Resources Act, hence the need to delegate management down to CapeNature. However, the declaration and management of MPAs has now been moved to the NEM: PAA. Effectively MPAs will now be managed in the same way as terrestrial protected areas, i.e., the management authority will be assigned in the declaration process by the National Minister.

The DFFE and CapeNature have signed two Memoranda of Agreements (MoA). The first MoA is regarding the management of the five MPAs within the Western Cape Province by CapeNature on behalf of DFFE. These include Betty's Bay, De Hoop, Stillbaai, Goukamma and Robberg MPAs. The second MoA is for the management of sea birds on Bird, Dassen and Dyer Islands as well as several 'rocks' (e.g., Vondeling). All these islands/rocks are provincial nature reserves which CapeNature already manage. CapeNature is in the process of developing a monitoring programme for these islands which is in line with national priorities and National Monitoring Programmes and is implemented by the partners. Within the next five years, CapeNature will have a monitoring programme for its MPAs which it manages. It will also support the suggestions of Operation Phakisa and represent the additional priorities highlighted by this strategy to the national MPA forum for consideration in the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy.

CapeNature will engage DFFE in respect of priority marine and estuarine areas, identified through the implementation of this strategy, towards the updating of the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES). Priorities are presented and discussed at the national MPA Forum hosted by DFFE. Once priority areas for expansion are identified, DFFE, in collaboration with its partners, identifies appropriate mechanisms to secure such areas. One such mechanism is Operation Phakisa. By ensuring that the priorities highlighted by this strategy feed into the NPAES, their inclusion in Phase 2 of Operation Phakisa can be facilitated.

DFFE is working with CapeNature on the nature reserve verification project for terrestrial protected areas, which aims to assess and confirm the use and legality of all private nature reserves within the country. It is also envisaged that DFFE will have to play a pivotal role in drafting any MCA regulations which may be required.

4.4 WWF-SA

WWF-SA and CapeNature partner on multiple levels to give effect to protected area expansion in the Western Cape. The one mechanism has already been described under Chapter 3: Purchase of Land in partnership with WWF-SA.

CapeNature also collaborates with the Sustainable Agriculture division of WWF-SA. The WWF Conservation Champion programme in the Western Cape also sign contractual agreements with landowners regarding the better management of biodiversity. The Conservation Champion programme is working with 45 farms that represents 47 000 ha of properties, 23 500 ha of that is conservation area within Fynbos and Succulent Karoo landscapes. In addition to the Conservation Champion programme, the Sustainable Agriculture team are managing a water stewardship project which has resulted in two catchment coordinators (extension officers) being placed within critical biodiversity and water source areas. The Koue Bokkeveld catchment coordinator is already providing extension support for the newly established Twee Rivierien Nature Reserve in the southern part of the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor. Similarly, the Groenland catchment coordinator is providing extension support for the landowners around the Groenland Conservancy who are part of the Groenland Water Users Association. The extension staff of WWF-

SA and CapeNature plan and operate collaboratively in the landscape. WWF-SA is planning to assist CapeNature with the auditing of protected areas while in return, CapeNature will assist WWF-SA with the legal processes of declaring important sites.

CapeNature is currently implementing a Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (LHSKT) Biodiversity Stewardship Project in the Knersvlakte. Funding was received from WWF-SA to sign up four stewardship agreements and assist with the declaration process when properties purchased for the expansion of the reserve.

WWF-SA plays a unique role in supporting partners through project development and funding. WWF-SA mainly operate through project partners i.e., Birdlife SA has received funding from the Green Trust and Elizabeth Harding Bequest to implement projects in the Western Cape Province.

The WWF Land Programme is a partner supporting the establishment of formal stewardship agreements and supporting reactive sites in the Rooiberg-Breederivier Conservancy. Also enabling extension support for improved management of biodiversity features through employing a Conservancy manager who will provide extension support to stewardship sites as well.

Currently WWF-SA and CapeNature do not have a formal MoU regarding land acquisition and management, however a MoU will be finalised shortly as the two organisations continue to engage in a partnership which results in the protected areas of the Western Cape expanding into the appropriate places.

4.5 TABLE MOUNTAIN FUND

The Table Mountain Fund (TMF) is the premier fund for the conservation of the Fynbos and is also recognised as one of the worlds' leading Conservation Trust Funds. The TMF has identified 'supporting conservation on private land' as one of the key activities that needs to occur to secure the GCFR. In 2004, TMF opened the TMF Stewardship Fund, which is dedicated to financing incentives for landowners and projects that support the rollout of biodiversity stewardship across the GCFR. TMF continues to support biodiversity stewardship on an annual basis, and this is directly linked to incentivising protected area expansion.

4.6 SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS

SANParks and the provincial partners collaborate to meet the common provincial targets in the most effective and complementary manner possible. As far as possible, the approach is to not target the same land parcels for expansion but rather complement each other. SANParks' protected area expansion focal areas for the next five years include the West Coast Corridor, a north south corridor that buffers the National Park and stretches into the Dassenberg Coastal Corridor Partnership (DCCP) (the latter corridor is jointly implemented by the City of Cape Town and CapeNature). These two corridors make up the West Coast Node that forms part of the protected area expansion activities funded through the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility 5. Where organisations may be overlapping, e.g., SANParks, CapeNature and the CoCT in the DCCP, the organisations will agree on a joint strategy before approaching the landowner.

4.7 THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN

The City of Cape Town (CoCT) covers 2 461 km² and contains highly threatened and endemic biodiversity. The natural beauty of Cape Town is one of its greatest assets and this needs to be protected to ensure that the CoCT is sustainable into the future. To this end, the CoCT collaborates with CapeNature in the expansion of protected areas within the province, focusing within the Cape Town metropole, by implementing the fine scale conservation plan for the region, the Biodiversity Network (BioNet). The BioNet is a systematic conservation plan which highlights important biodiversity areas within the CoCT boundaries. The BioNet is a key informant in the CoCT spatial plans and shapes the future planned growth of the city. Implementation of the plan is through various mechanisms including pro-active biodiversity stewardship or reactive development facilitation. The CoCT is also a participant in the Provincial Protected Area Expansion Review Committee and presents all its proposals for protected area expansion to the committee to ensure alignment with the province's priority areas. The CoCT also relies on CapeNature for submitting the ministerial submissions for declaration of these areas. Conservation efforts in the CoCT are also greatly assisted by conservation partners such as the Wilderness Foundation, TMF and WWF-SA.

The CoCT has 14 proclaimed nature reserves. There are currently two in process to be gazetted and an additional five that must commence with the process to be proclaimed. These 21 sites constitute 17 946 ha. There are also 16 CoCT biodiversity agreements sites totalling 366 ha with another five in process. Currently there are 12 private perpetuity conservation stewardship sites in the CoCT totalling 2 261 ha. The CoCT and private perpetuity conservation sites tally 20 573 ha or 24.2% of the BioNet. This is an increase in 2.7% since 2015. The CoCT area also included the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) which protects 25 100 ha. The total conserved area of the CoCT amounts to 55 490 ha or 65.28% of the BioNet. While all the CBAs and ESAs on the BioNet are required for conservation, there are specific high priority areas where proactive conservation efforts are directed.

These include:

- Klipheuwel Corridor.
- Schoongezicht Cluster.
- Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership (DCCP) – particularly the consolidation of the Klein Dassenberg Hills.
- Greater Tygerberg Cluster.
- Blaauwberg-Melkbosch Strand Corridor.
- Schapenberg Cluster.
- Macassar East.
- Priority state land (including Steenbras catchment).

4.8 BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA

The Landscape Conservation Programme identifies and works to conserve a network of sites critical for the long-term survival of bird species that are globally threatened, have a restricted range, and are restricted to specific

biomes/vegetation types and congregatory sites that hold significant populations of birds. These sites are also of conservation value for other biodiversity.

This objective is echoed by the WC PAES. Between 2015-2020, CapeNature and BirdLife SA collaborated on the Verlorenvlei Protected Areas (2014-2017) and Western Cape Estuaries Conservation Projects (2015-present and ongoing). These projects coordinated the re-establishment of the Verlorenvlei and Lower Berg River Estuary Conservancies, adding 32 000 ha to the network of Biodiversity Partnership Areas in the province. The Verlorenvlei Protected Area Project achieved the successful declaration of the Moutonshoek Protected Environment in 2018. This protected area of 9 000 ha conserves the Krom Antonies River and its catchment, which is the main tributary of the Verlorenvlei Estuary and is thus essential to its future survival. The Moutonshoek Valley also provides a haven for a variety of species, including the Endangered and endemic plant *Diascia caitliniae*, the Endangered Verlorenvlei redbin fish *Pseudobarbus verloreni*, the Vulnerable Cape leopard and threatened bird species such as the Blue Crane, African Marsh Harrier and Black Harrier. The project also facilitated the training of more than 40 local community members working on environmental management projects in the area.

The Western Cape Estuaries Conservation Project is expecting the declaration of the approximately 7 000 ha Melck Protected Environment at the Berg River estuary to be gazetted in 2021. This site comprises threatened estuarine, strandveld and fynbos habitats and will be the first formal protection for the Berg River estuarine functional zone. As one of South Africa's most important estuaries for conservation, the Berg River estuary will remain a priority for partners going forward, with further protected area expansion on privately-owned estuarine functional zone land planned.

In 2019, BirdLife SA, in partnership with CapeNature, organised and hosted a workshop: "Safeguarding priority estuaries in the Western Cape", which explored the legal mechanisms and other conservation tools available for formally protecting state-owned land at 12 identified key estuarine waterbodies in the Western Cape. The workshop was well attended by national and provincial government, including the DFFE, the NDPWI, and the DEA&DP. A way forward was identified for each estuary, and a final strategy will be produced for approval and execution by CapeNature and partners in 2021.

BirdLife SA has secured funding for protected area expansion along the south bank of the Klein River estuary. The funding will cover all declaration costs, including publication and legal, for several sites, comprising more than 1 500 ha of threatened estuarine and fynbos habitat. The Klein River Estuary South Bank Protected Area Project will launch in 2021 and will run for three years. Going forward, both the Klein River and Berg River estuaries will remain priorities for protected area expansion on privately-owned land. BirdLife SA will also continue to work with CapeNature to identify additional privately-owned land for protected area expansion at the other ten priority estuaries, as well as collaborating to progress increased formal protection of state-owned estuarine habitat at these sites.

BirdLife SA has, in partnership, made considerable strides in identifying alternative area-based conservation mechanisms in South Africa, including Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), a conservation designation for areas that are achieving the effective in situ conservation of biodiversity outside of protected areas. BirdLife SA and CapeNature has recently signed a MOU that supports co-operation and collaboration to look at ways of recognising, assessing, and reporting on OECMs in the Western Cape.

4.9 WESTERN CAPE BIOSPHERE RESERVES

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have five intergovernmental natural and social sciences programmes dealing with environment and sustainable development, one of which is the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. The focus of the MAB Programme is on the establishment of biosphere reserves. Each biosphere reserve is intended to fulfil three basic functions, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing. These functions are the following:

- Conservation (conserving genetic resources and ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity);
- Logistics (an international network of areas related to MAB field research and monitoring accompanied by education and training); and
- Development (associating environmental protection with resource development).

In the Western Cape, the DEA&DP gave prominence to the UNESCO MAB principles and the implementation of biosphere reserves in their operational plan and through the Western Cape Biosphere Reserves Act, 2011 (Act 6 of 2011).

There are five biosphere reserves in the Western Cape namely the Kogelberg, Cape West Coast, Cape Winelands, Gouritz Cluster and Garden Route. The DEA&DP funds the five individual biosphere reserves in the province within a limited budget, mainly for operational expenses, and instituted an oversight committee together with CapeNature to track and support the performance of biosphere reserves.

Close collaboration between CapeNature and biosphere reserves in priority areas benefits protected area expansion through increased extension capacity.

4.10 THE OVERBERG RENOSTERVELD CONSERVATION TRUST

The Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust [trading as the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust (ORCT)] focuses on the conservation of Renosterveld in the Overberg, Western Cape. This Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) promotes the use of conservation servitudes (attached to title deeds and signed in perpetuity) on private land and sources funding to support landowners with improved habitat management and restoration, as a means of providing incentives for landowners to sign.

CapeNature and the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust have entered-into a MoU to formalise the support of each other's land protection initiatives where they are already happening in the Overberg. The ORCT signed over 3 400 ha of Renosterveld into conservation servitudes between 2016 and the end of 2020 and has several other conservation servitudes under negotiation. The organisation also provides extension support on seven of CapeNature's Renosterveld / Lowland Fynbos sites within the Overberg (Rooivlei, Malanskraal, Skeiding, Voorstekop, Dikkopskraal, Erjtiesdam and Pietie Delport reserves), mostly by undertaking biodiversity surveys on these sites and providing report-back to landowners and extension staff (in the form of an individualised, full-colour report) on findings.

The ORCT is also available to assist with locating funds for stewardship sites where management interventions are required and has coordinated such efforts in the past.

4.11 THE TURTLE CONSERVANCY / SOUTHERN AFRICA TORTOISE CONSERVATION TRUST

The Turtle Conservancy is a 501(c) 3 organisation dedicated to protecting the most endangered turtles and tortoises and their habitats worldwide. The Turtle Conservancy have established the Southern Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust (SATCT), a public benefit trust based in South Africa, which is dedicated to the protection of the Critically Endangered Geometric Tortoise in its habitat in the Southwestern Cape.

CapeNature and the SATCT have signed a Collaboration Agreement MoU to form a partnership to promote conservation, restoration and increased awareness of the Geometric Tortoise and associated natural habitat in the Western Cape Province. The Trust has concluded the purchase of approximately 382 ha of some of the last remaining Geometric Tortoise habitat near Worcester in the Western Cape Province and has partnered with CapeNature towards declaring the property a nature reserve. Work is on-going in the region towards the acquisition of additional hectares of land towards the conservation of the Geometric Tortoise and its habitat.

4.12 CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

Conservation Outcomes is a non-profit organisation established in May 2015, that is focussed on the provision of support and services to communally and privately-owned conservation areas across South Africa. The focus of the organisation is on securing remnant biodiversity, ecological integrity and resilience whilst contributing to poverty alleviation and meaningful socio-economic development in rural southern Africa through the development of the conservation and wildlife sector. Conservation Outcomes has been integral to the development of the concept of biodiversity stewardship, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and have been involved in the development of the many innovative tools, procedures, and approaches to conservation on private and communal land in South Africa.

Due to the experience Conservation Outcomes staff have in the implementation of biodiversity stewardship across seven provinces, they are key partners in the implementation of the WC PAES and are committed to supporting landowners with the biodiversity stewardship process, ensuring compliance with the legislative requirements, and addressing all elements of ecological management. A key component of their work is also in the development of innovative opportunities to address financial sustainability of the protected areas, allowing for long-term ecological management. Conservation Outcomes are currently implementing a TMF Funded project in partnership with CapeNature to verify and validate the private nature reserves in the province to ensure compliance with NEM: PAA Norms and Standards for the inclusion of private nature reserves in the Protected Areas Register of South Africa. This component of work contributes to the regularisation objective of the WC PAES, ensuring that the private nature reserve network contributes to protected area expansion targets. In recognising the scale of this task, Conservation Outcomes acknowledges the role of partnerships and collaboration in implementing their work.

CapeNature recently signed a MoU with Conservation Outcomes that establishes a working collaboration that promotes conservation and secure the biodiversity values of the Western Cape Province through protected area expansion.

4.13 ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST

CapeNature and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) have signed a Collaboration Agreement MoU to promote conservation, restoration and increased awareness of the Critically Endangered Riverine Rabbit and associated natural habitat in the Western Cape Province.

This MoU aims to secure habitat for the Riverine Rabbit through biodiversity stewardship or conservation servitude process; share support within the extension sphere with specific focus on research, monitoring and maintenance of stewardship and servitude sites; and share technical support and resources to achieve conservation goals and targets.

4.14 CONSERVATION AT WORK

Conservation at Work (C@W) is an NPO that promotes and supports the conservation of private land in the Western Cape. This is primarily achieved by sharing information with landowners, formalising partnerships with stakeholders and mobilising resources for conservation initiatives.

CapeNature and C@W have entered into a Collaboration Agreement MoU in which the parties agree to jointly pursue the objectives of biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation and enhance the economic, ecological, and social wealth of the people of the Western Cape. C@W co-implements the TMF Incentives programme (also known as the TMF Stewardship Technical Assistance Programme) and provides the administrative and financial management support to the projects implemented.

4.15 GROOTBOS FOUNDATION

The Grootbos Foundation is a non-profit company, established in 2003 with a vision for the conservation of the Cape Floral Kingdom and the upliftment of the communities therein. The Grootbos Foundation is implementing a project to assist the landowners of the Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy to establish an improved protected area network in the Conservancy. This will formalize 20 years of conservation efforts in the area which includes the Walker Bay Nature Reserve, Grootbos Nature Reserve, Platbos Nature Reserve, and several other private nature reserves. The project aims to create a protected environment within the Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy creating an improved conservation status for this unique landscape. The preparatory groundwork includes a floral and faunal survey to determine high priority conservation areas of greatest biodiversity, close interaction with conservation partners and consultation with landowners. This will provide long term conservation solutions within the Walker Bay region,

protecting vegetation types threatened by the spread of exotic invasive tree species, illegal ploughing for agriculture, over-harvesting of wildflowers and too frequent fires. Landscape scale conservation will contribute to the improved protection of a mix of CBAs and a Strategic Water Source Area (ground water) and network of watercourses. This is an important corridor for wildlife and ecological processes will form an important buffer area to the Walker Bay Nature Reserve and the Agulhas National Park.

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CHAPTER 5: PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 DECLARATION PROCESS OF PROTECTED AREAS

To declare, notarise and register a stewardship site cost varies from R263 000 to R342 000. [Table 4](#) provides a breakdown of estimated costs. The procedures for the declaration of nature reserves and protected environments are set out in [Figure 12](#). This process may take several years to complete depending on the nature and complexity of the site as well as the extent of stakeholder involvement.

Table 4: Cost estimates associated with declaration of nature reserves and protected environments as of December 2021.

Process	Cost Estimate
1. Surveyor General Diagram (**n/a when whole property is declared)	R15 000 to R30 000
2. Public Participation Advertising in three national newspapers (R60 000x3)	R180 000
3. Drafting and Registration of Notarial Deed	R6 000 to R10 000
4. Government Gazette Notice	R2 000
5. Public Participation Advertising in three languages (Management Plan, 12 months after declaration)	R60 000 to R120 000 [(R20 000 to R40 000) x 3]

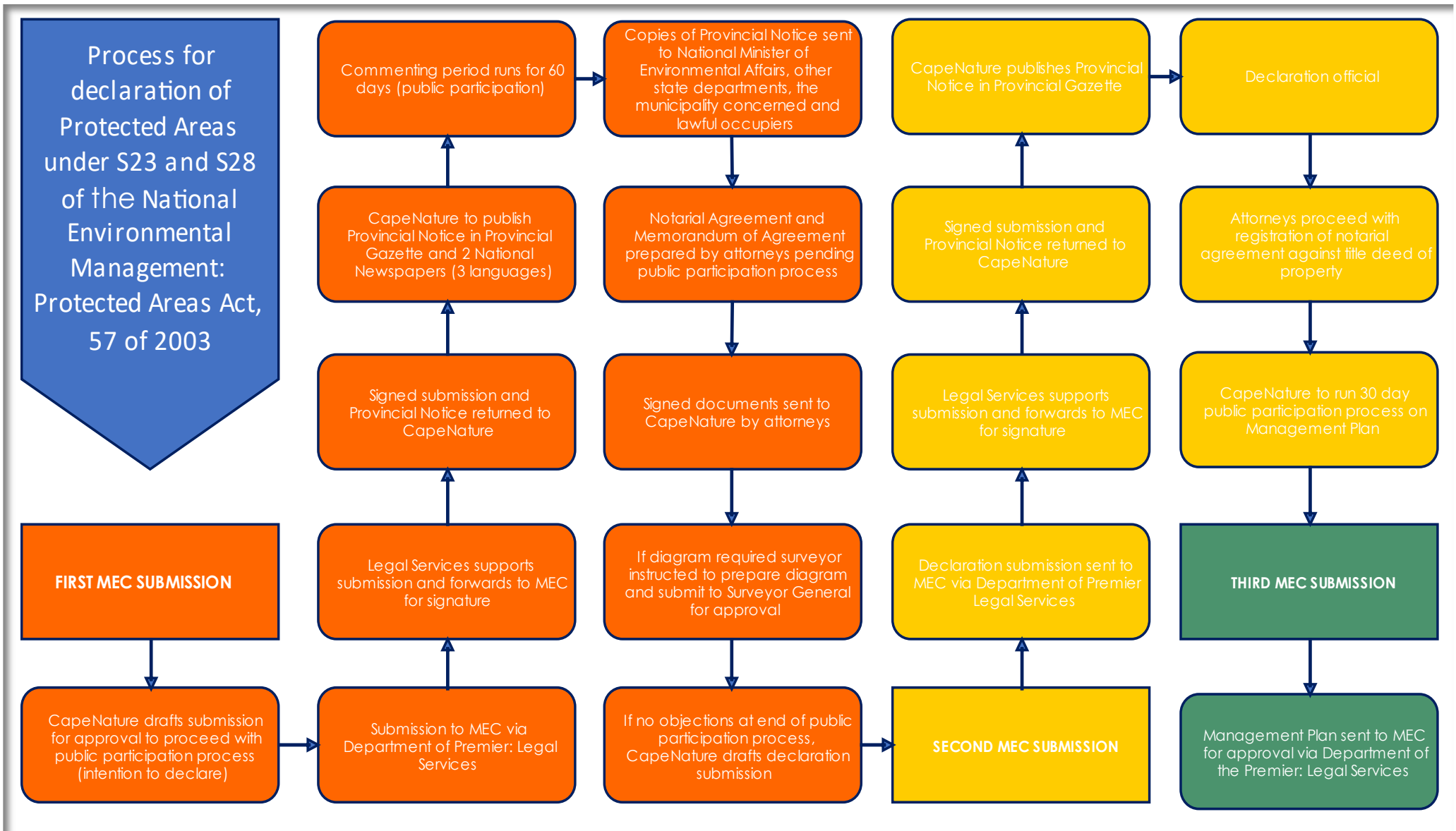


Figure 12: Process for declaration of Protected Areas.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AND EFFICIENCY

CapeNature’s landscape scale conservation approach to biodiversity conservation was informed by the identification of priority biodiversity areas across the province as represented in the WC BSP of 2017 (CapeNature Strategic Plan 2021-2025).

Recognising that ecological processes take place across landscapes, rather than isolated landscape units, CapeNature is implementing a landscape scale conservation approach, moving from protected area-centric conservation to bridging divisions between geographies, jurisdictions, sectors, and cultures to safeguard ecological, cultural, and economic benefits for all. This approach strives for a stronger focus on strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as local municipalities, provincial and national departments, NGOs, other conservation agencies, landowners, and communities. This paradigm also encompasses more efficiency and effectiveness with limited resources.

CapeNature delineated the province into four landscapes, West, Central, South, and East, managed by a multi-disciplinary component including biodiversity capability specialists (technical, scientific, and ecological), servicing both on and off reserve mandates (Figure 13).

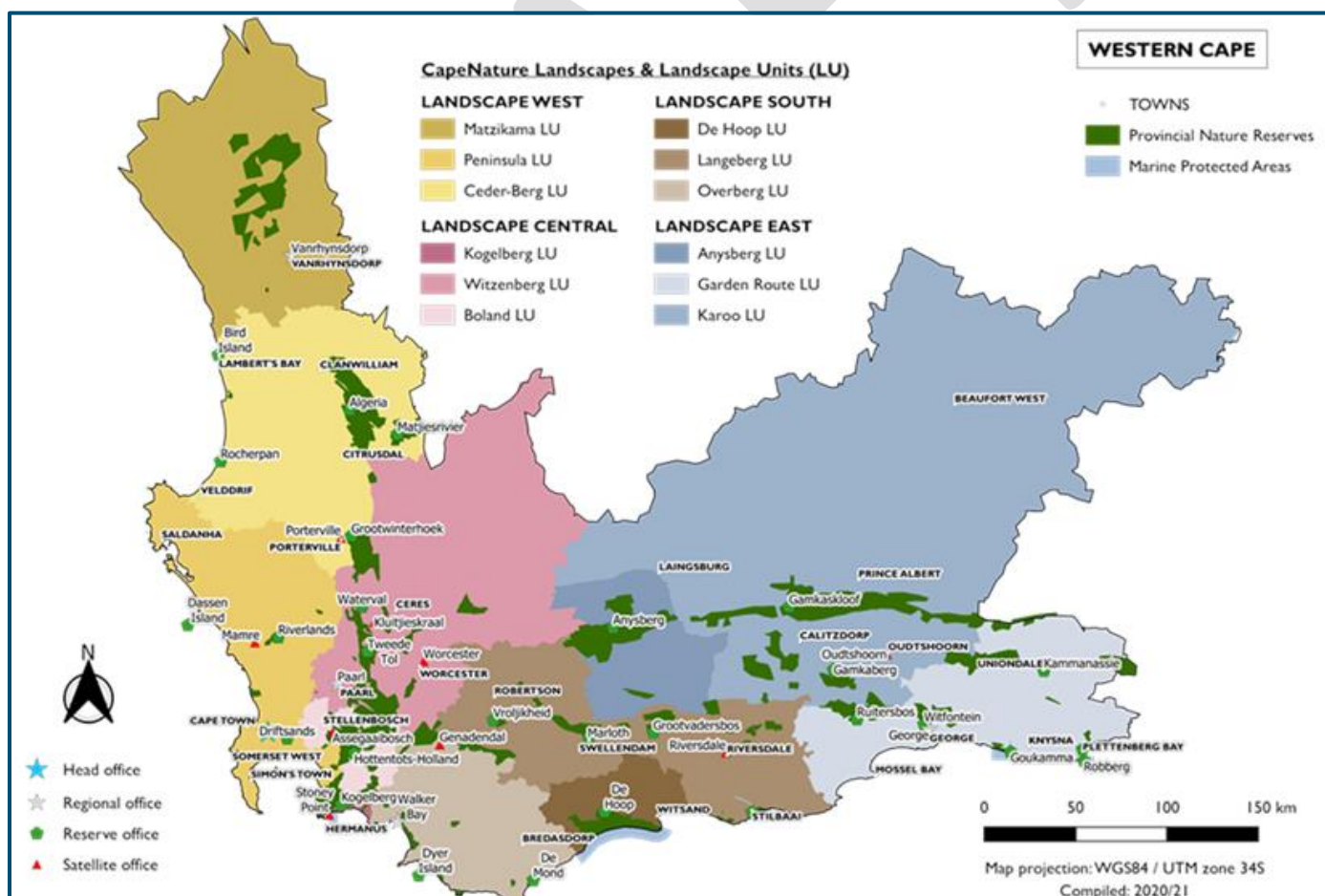


Figure 13: Map of the Western Cape Province indicating the CapeNature Landscapes and Landscape Units.

6.1 LANDSCAPE PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The CapeNature landscape scale conservation model has effectively allocated proportionally more resources to achieving landscape conservation outcomes. In the context of budget constraints and austerity measures, CapeNature channels capacity towards the achievement of key conservation outcomes through engagements and collaboration with partners and stakeholders. The WC PAES aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and landscape resilience, and this strategy is affected in Landscape level Implementation Plans. CapeNature will facilitate the development of these plans in partnership with the relevant key role-players in the landscape to ensure effective implementation of priorities and the efficient use of available resources through a collaborative approach with partners.

6.2 OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMS)

Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are officially defined by the CBD in 2018 as: “a geographically defined area other than a protected area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values” (CBD/COP/DEC/14/8).

Sites that do meet the criteria for OECMs are important conservation areas to engage in further investment of necessary resources. A candidate OECM site could therefore potentially lead to be formally declared as a protected area. OECMs form part of the implementation framework, a conservation tool that will inform conservation planning and contribute towards the conservation system.

Text box 12: OECMs – A Description and interpretation in terms of the PAES Strategy

OECMs are those areas of land which can represent a broader category of land-use that are not formally protected by law, but are informally safeguarded by the current owners and users, and managed at least partially for biodiversity conservation (such as extensive agricultural lands, cultural heritage sites, biodiversity agreement areas under biodiversity stewardship, protected areas without proof of declaration, Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs), botanical gardens and Ramsar sites not declared as protected areas).

Conservation areas are therefore not considered formal protected areas as they are not gazetted in terms of the NEM: PAA and do not allow for long-term security of land tenure. Conservation areas do however contribute towards the ‘conservation estate’ as stipulated by the Outcome 10 targets for 2019 and are considered ‘conserved’ as stipulated by the Aichi target 11. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity in 2010 by the CBD (CBD, 2011), the national protected area database has been expanded to the PACA database.

While OECMs have formed a part of Aichi Target 11 since 2011, it had not been defined by the CBD until 2018 at COP14, and thus very few countries have reported on OECMs to the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Nonetheless, studies suggest that OECMs will contribute significantly to the current Target 11, its post-2020 inheritor, and to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (Donald *et al.*, 2019). OECMs will increasingly become the global framework for recognising, reporting and ultimately for facilitating the conservation of important areas outside of formal protected areas.

6.3 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

All protected areas in the Western Cape follow a declaration process which is administered by CapeNature. As all applications for declaration from a variety of partners in the PAE community of practice are processed through CapeNature's Legal Services. Within the constraints of CapeNature's resources and capacity, partner-lead initiatives are integrated in the relevant Landscape Implementation Plans with provision made for funding relevant administrative processes.

CapeNature's Legal Services and the DoTP Legal Services will investigate the use of using electronic media for advertising to significantly reduce the financial cost associated with public participation. Additionally, alternatives to the channelling the volume of declarations and lengthy and heavy administrative burden through a single entity, will be sought.

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