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Reference	SSDI4/2/6/1/1/1_Procedures_DevApplications
Date	25 June 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

CAPENATURE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

CapeNature is the statutory custodian of biodiversity in the Western Cape¹ and commenting authority concerning potential impacts on biodiversity and ecological processes. Our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts of a development application. This letter and Annexure A outline guidelines for land-use applications, to be considered in the planning and submission of applications to CapeNature alongside the legislative requirements. Land-Use applications refer to applications related National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), NWA (National Water Act), Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA), Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act (PDALA), and municipal by-law applications.

Preventing biodiversity loss in the Western Cape

CapeNature's role is to provide official comment to Competent Authorities on biodiversity related constraints on development in terms of the principles of ecological sustainability indicated in the Western Cape Biodiversity Act (Act 6 of 2021) (WCBA).

In addition to biodiversity related constraints, CapeNature comments on the consistency of spatial development frameworks and applications for environmental, water, agricultural and mining authorisations with the objectives of the Biodiversity Spatial Plan (BSP) that is contemplated in section 34 of the WCBA. Furthermore, as per the WCBA, CapeNature provides advice to landowners to improve biodiversity or the conservation of the environment on their land.

It must be ensured that any threats to biodiversity that may result from a proposed development including impacts on mapped BSP areas, ecological corridors and ecological infrastructure are adequately addressed. CapeNature encourages against developments that result in irreversible loss of habitat and ecological functioning in ecologically sensitive areas and threatened ecosystems as

¹ Section 9, Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act 15 of 1998 & Section 9, Western Cape Biodiversity Act No. 6 of 2021.
The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board trading as **CapeNature**
Board Members: Ms Reyhana Gani (Chairperson), Dr Wendy Annecke, Mr Tom Blok, Mr Neil Jansen, Ms Ayanda Mvandaba, Ms Vuyiswa Ndzakana, Prof Nicolaas Olivier, Dr Razeena Omar, Ms Chwayita Shude-Mareka

identified in the latest List of Ecosystems that are Threatened and in Need of Protection promulgated under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)(as amended) (NEMBA).

If a land-use activity results in negative impacts on the environment and their ecological processes, then the impacts must be addressed in terms of the Mitigation Hierarchy (DEA&DP 2011)². It must be ensured that alternatives are considered and such alternatives should be reasonable and feasible.

Applications should demonstrate how the proponent intends on complying with the principles contained in Section 2 of NEMA, which, among others, indicates that environmental management should:

- In order of priority aim to avoid, minimise, or remedy disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity
- Avoid degradation of the environment
- Avoid jeopardizing ecosystem integrity
- Pursue the best practicable environmental option by means of integrated environmental management
- Protect the environment as the people's common heritage
- Control and minimise environmental damage; and
- Pay specific attention to management and planning procedures pertaining to sensitive, vulnerable, highly dynamic, or stressed ecosystems.

These principles must underpin decision-making concerning matters that may affect the environment. As such, it is incumbent upon the proponent to show how proposed activities would comply with the above-mentioned principles and thereby contribute toward the achievement of sustainable development as defined by NEMA.

Specialist assessments form an important component of CapeNature's review of NEMA EIA applications. It must be ensured that the application is compliant with the *Procedures to be followed for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting of Identified Environmental Themes in Terms of Section 24(5)(A) and (H) of NEMA* (Government Gazette no. 43855, notice 1150; Government Gazette no. 49028, notice 3717), and any amendments to these procedures.

Status of CapeNature's comment

CapeNature may be consulted to discuss any aspect of the development application, during the public participation process. However, verbal discussions are not considered as formal correspondence and only written comment from CapeNature following a review of a development application is considered formal communication. We do reserve the right to revise our initial comments on any new information that may be received, and we may request additional information if required.

² Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning. 2011. EIA guideline and Information document series: Information document on biodiversity offsets.

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Format of notifications/requests to review development applications

Please help us provide you with a timely response by supplying all information in a readily accessible format as per the below.

Notification guidelines

1. Email notifications and digital copies of documents to be reviewed are preferred.
2. Include the following information in the notification:
 - The Farm/Erf numbers and/or 12-digit Surveyor General code
 - Local municipality
 - Competent Authority reference number

Document guidelines

1. Include a link to all respective reports including the main report, locality maps, all alternative layout plans, and all biodiversity related specialist reports.
2. Include Google Earth KMZ files or QGIS shapefiles of the development footprint. Please note that only these formats of locality spatial data will be accepted. Spatial data may be included in the abovementioned link or attached to the notification email.
3. Please save all reports and appendices as separate files and not one combined file.
4. To facilitate assessment of potential impacts, we request that maps of proposed development layouts be overlaid with identified environmental features of a site. If provided separately, maps should be produced at the same scale.
5. Please ensure that we receive the documents for review at the start of the official commenting period to ensure we are afforded the timeframes for commenting according to the legislation. If applications are received late, we reserve the right to request an extension.

Contact details for providing comment

Land Use Planning, Development applications, Environmental Management Frameworks, policies, and legislation for review can be directed to the following CapeNature officials according to local municipal area.

Local Municipality	Responsible person	Contact details	Component
City of Cape Town Swartland Bergriver Saldanha Bay Cederberg Matzikama	Ismat Adams	iadams@capenature.co.za 087 087 3188	Conservation Operations: Landscape Conservation Intelligence Management Unit
Breede Valley Drakenstein Stellenbosch Witzenberg	Alana Duffell- Canham	aduffell-canham@capenature.co.za 021 866 8029	Conservation Operations: Landscape Conservation Intelligence Management Unit
Beaufort-West Bitou George Kannaland Knysna Laingsburg Mossel Bay Oudtshoorn Prince Albert	Marienne De Villiers	mdevilliers@capenature.co.za 087 087 6085	Conservation Operations: Landscape Conservation Intelligence Management Unit
Cape Agulhas Hessequa Langeberg Overstrand Swellendam Theewaterskloof	Rhett Smart	rsmart@capenature.co.za 087 087 8017 / 072 835 8741	Conservation Operations: Landscape Conservation Intelligence Management Unit

Yours sincerely,


Mr Mbulelo Jacobs
Executive Director:
Conservation Operations

26/06/2026
Date