



REPORT BACK FROM THE ECOTOURISM COMMISSION 27 March 2024

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CHALLENGES

Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited access to funding.• Inadequate investment into eco-tourism infrastructure.
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflicting land use practices.• Miscommunication and corporation by organs of state on land claims processes.• Current land restitution and Protected Areas Act do not respond to community empowerment.• Lack of access to protected/conservation areas for consumptive (harvesting medicine) and non-consumptive use (spiritual, cultural, heritage activities/purposes/practices) .
Human capital development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity to develop and implement sustainable programmes.• Lack of knowledge and awareness on processes to access land- funding.
Communication and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No meaningful community consultation from the inception stages of policy development and projects initiation.• Language used in the sector is complex and not understandable by communities, which limits their participation.

CHALLENGES

Governance and Regulatory frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government viewed to be working in isolation.• Traditional healers organizations are fragmented.• Community conflicts.• Lack of alignment of infrastructure development projects with municipal Integrated Development Plans.• Limited supports and participation from the municipalities (Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act). <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current co-management not effective.• Current policies are not aligned to indigenous conservation practices.
Market access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of access to markets.• Limited marketing of ecotourism offerings and products.• Limited clustering of complementing activities and products that diversify the value of choice.
Training and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of training/acknowledge on sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants.• Lack of skills for sustainability of community-projects.

SOLUTIONS

Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable funding dedicated to advance implantation of biodiversity economy – Biodiversity Fund. • Explore mechanisms to ensure communities benefit from Concessions (ringfence ecotourism business opportunities for communities. • Communities to be capacitated and mentored to package bankable business concept to attract investment • Commercial and economic infrastructure gaps to be identified and developed. • EPIP to consider supporting community based eco-tourism-based projects.
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit of the Protected Areas Estate and earmark transformed areas for other effective means of conservation. • Explore partnership and create enabling environment for access to protected/conservation areas for consumptive and non-consumptive us.
Human capital development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth empowerment and training to actively participate in the Ecotourism sector • Lack of knowledge and awareness on processes to access land- funding
Communication and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful engagements with communities, traditional practitioners, and leaders organization (bottom-up approach).

SOLUTIONS

<p>Governance and regulatory frameworks (policy review and implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of government initiatives in the Ecotourism sector – policy alignment, priority areas, collaborative functions (environment & tourism days). • Review institutional arrangements and their role (traditional leaders, healers, communities, etc). • Support community participation in the IDP process and SPLUMA implementation – infrastructure development projects. • Review and improve policy considerations on indigenous conservation practices.
<p>Market access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism market Analysis (demand and the statistics), 5As Attractions, Access, Accommodation, Amenities, Awareness of Assets.
<p>Training and capacity building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on sustainable harvesting in collaboration with Traditional healers. • Holistic approach to awareness campaigns (inclusive of information from all Departments) and profiling best practices. • Develop train the trainers and mentorship programmes.

WAY FORWARD

- Establishment of nurseries dedicated to cultivating and harvesting plants for traditional use.
- Establishment of Biodiversity Investment Fund – incubation of projects.
- Promote Public Private Partnerships – investment, development, resources, sustainability.
- Research and development – science-based evidence for decision-making processes.
- Seminar on sector departments for collaboration.
- Mapping of cross-cutting thematic areas:
 - potential financial sources.
 - land availability and access.
 - training and capacity building.
 - scientific support.
 - communication and advocacy.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION BY CD:BESU

Collective action for
thriving nature and people



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DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Action Description	Expected Outcome	Link to NBES Goals/Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Collective action for thriving nature and people



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