

“Grasslands Declaration” of Intent and Cooperation concerning the implementation of the National Grasslands Biodiversity Programme

We the undersigned recognise that:

1. The South African grasslands biome is the second largest biome in South Africa, covering an area of 339 237 km². It contains the economic heartland of South Africa and produces the bulk of water needed to sustain human life and underpin economic growth. The grasslands biome provides essential ecosystems services, such as water production and soil retention necessary for economic development, and contains important biodiversity of global and domestic significance and value.
2. The ecosystem services and biodiversity of the grasslands are found across the biome and cannot be secured only through formal conservation areas. The Grasslands Programme seeks to implement an alternative approach of mainstreaming by working in partnership with the agriculture, forestry, urban development and coal mining sectors to secure and sustain grasslands.
3. The grasslands biome is one of the most threatened biomes in South Africa, with 30% irreversibly transformed and only 1.9% of the biodiversity target for the biome formally conserved.

Therefore we the undersigned commit ourselves to:

4. Collaborate in good faith to pursuing the goal and targets of the Grasslands Programme as expeditiously and effectively as possible. The goal is to sustain and secure biodiversity and associated ecosystem services of the grasslands biome for the benefit of current and future generations.
5. Take all practical measure to give effect to the Grasslands Programme when formulating plans, making decisions, or taking actions which are likely to have a significant impact on biodiversity in the grasslands biome;
6. Take active measures to involve a wide range of interested and affected parties, including local communities and resource users, in the management and conservation of biodiversity in the grasslands biome.

Signatories

Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Environmental MECs of Provinces on the Grasslands Biome:

1. Gauteng Member of the Environmental MINMEC
2. Free State Member of the Environmental MINMEC
3. Mpumalanga Member of the Environmental MINMEC
4. Eastern Cape Member of the Executive Council for Finance, Economic Development and Environmental Affairs
5. KwaZulu-Natal Member of the Environmental MINMEC
6. North West Member of the Environmental MINMEC
7. Limpopo Member of the Environmental MINMEC

Signed by:

....., **Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs**

Signature: Date:

Designation:

....., **Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**

Signature: Date:

Designation:

....., **the Gauteng Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

Signature: Date:

Designation:

....., the **Free State Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

Signature: Date:

Designation:

....., the **Mpumalanga Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

Signature: Date:

Designation:

....., the **KwaZulu-Natal Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

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....., the **Eastern Cape Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

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....., the **North West Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

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Designation:

....., the **Limpopo Member of the Environmental MINMEC**

Signature: Date:

Designation: