



FACT SHEET: ONE YEAR OF PROGRESS UNDER MINISTER DION GEORGE

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)

19 June 2025

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Protecting Biodiversity & Conservation

- [African Penguin Victory](#): Court settlement secured island closures to protect critical breeding colonies; new permit conditions implemented in the small pelagic fishery.
- [Bunkering Regulations](#): New laws underway to restrict ship-to-ship fuel transfers near ecologically sensitive areas such as St Croix Island.
- [Rhino & wildlife protection](#): Strengthened anti-poaching enforcement; successful prosecutions; trade of rhino horn and lion bone under consideration.
- [High Seas Treaty](#): South Africa signed the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement – the first global treaty to protect marine biodiversity in international waters.

2. Climate Action & Just Transition

- [Climate Change Act implementation](#): Strengthened legal basis for national climate response.
- [Coastal Adaptation Plan \(CARP\)](#): Targeted strategy to reduce climate risk in vulnerable coastal communities.
- **Global climate leadership**: South Africa led negotiations at [COP29](#) and the [G20](#) Working Group, unlocking investment and reinforcing local green transitions.

3. Regulatory Reform for Growth

- **RESET (Regulatory Efficiency Strategy for Environmental Turbocharge)**:
 - [11 Renewable Energy Development Zones](#) fast-tracked for approvals – reducing application time from 300 days to 147 days.
 - Simplified process for low-sensitivity sites – approvals in under 70 days.
 - Launched [the National Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool](#) to speed up assessments while maintaining protections.



DrDionGeorge



DrDionGeorge



@DrDionGeorge



DrDionGeorge

Call centre: 086 111 2468 | Website: www.dffe.gov.za



4. Strengthening Governance & Accountability

- **Cleared 162 appeals** since July 2024 – improving transparency and fairness.
- **Rooted out inefficiencies** and addressed disciplinary backlogs.
- Revitalisation of key entities like **SAWS** and **SAFCOL** to restore integrity and performance.

5. Economic Growth Through Sustainable Resource Use

- **Agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector:**
 - Q4 2024 growth: **+17.2%**, contributing 0.4 points to national GDP.
 - Q1 2025 growth: **+15.8%**, again contributing 0.4 points.
- **Small-scale fisheries:** 36% increase in fish species allocation, boosting incomes in coastal communities.
- **Harbour revitalisation:** 2,300+ work opportunities created in upgrade projects for small harbours.

6. International Environmental Leadership

- **G20 Presidency:** South Africa hosting environment-focused G20 engagements, using sites like Kruger National Park and Kirstenbosch to showcase biodiversity.
- **High Seas Treaty:** Played a major role in negotiating the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement — known as the High Seas Treaty — the first legally binding instrument to protect biodiversity in areas beyond national borders.
- **SA Agulhas II:** Pioneering research in the Southern Ocean uncovered microplastic pollution patterns, placing SA at the centre of global marine science.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

1. KISS: Kruger-Kirstenbosch-iSimangaliso Icon Status Strategy

- Reforming apex parks and gardens into world-class conservation, tourism, and education centres.
- Highlights include:
 - Kirstenbosch named among the **Top 10 Botanical Gardens in the world.**
 - Launch of the **Children's Edutainment Centre** in Pretoria.
 - Launch of the **Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretive Centre** at Golden Gate Highlands National Park.



2. Carbon Credits and the Green Economy

- Rolling out a national carbon credit framework to unlock green finance and incentivise low-carbon development.
- Enabling biodiversity offsets and compliance markets to stimulate private sector investment.

3. "Money" Project: Addressing Budget Shortfalls

- Comprehensive spending review across DFFE branches and entities.
- Cost-containment measures in place.
- Minister personally engaging international donors to secure funding for anti-poaching, ranger support, enforcement, and green innovation projects.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Deepening marine protection and ratifying the High Seas Treaty.
- Accelerating the carbon credit market framework.
- Advancing anti-poaching strategies using drone tech and cross-border enforcement.
- Restructuring the DFFE to improve service delivery and public accountability.
- Hosting key G20 engagements to spotlight SA's environmental leadership.

For media enquiries, please contact: Thobile Zulu-Molobi: +27 82 513 7154 / tmolobi@dff.gov.za |
Chelsey Wilken: 074 470 5996 / cwilken@dff.gov.za

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Call centre: 086 111 2468 | Website: www.dffe.gov.za

