

# Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB): Wetlands SA

## iLembe District Municipality

### “Wetlands in the Municipal Context: Natural Solutions to Local Issues” Workshop

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Time:** 09.30 – 16.00

**Venue:** Disaster Management Centre, Stanger



---

## Workshop Report

### SUMMARY:

On 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, iLembe District Municipality (IDM) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) co-hosted the “Wetlands in the municipal context: Natural solutions to local issues” wetlands awareness-raising workshop in KwaDukuza, Kwazulu Natal as part of IDM’s involvement in the Local Action for Biodiversity: Wetlands South Africa (LAB: Wetlands SA) project.

The workshop was aimed at raising awareness of the value of wetlands in the local landscape and aimed to highlight the links between wetlands, disaster management and land-use planning with the goal of highlighting the need for the prioritisation of wetland management and preservation within the landscape thereby ensuring the sustained provision of key ecosystem services in the district.

The workshop was structured and conducted by means of presentations and activities as well as discussion between speakers and participants. Presentations emphasised the importance of wetlands and ecosystem services, the impacts of climate change in IDM and the role of wetlands in adaptation planning, the role of legislation in land-use planning and wetland management and integrating wetlands into land use planning.

The workshop was well attended with approximately 20 participants from various parts of the district ranging from municipal environmental managers and planners to key members of SANBI, COGTA, EDTEA and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. From discussion sessions throughout the workshop, it was clear that there is a need to enhance partnerships moving forward to allow for better collaboration on local initiative and thereby enhance wetlands management and conservation within the district.

## PARTICIPANTS:

No.	Name & Surname	Department/ Company	Position	Email Address	Contact Number	Gender (M/F)
1	Kirsty Robinson	ICLEI AS	Professional Officer	<a href="mailto:Kirsty.robinson@iclei.org">Kirsty.robinson@iclei.org</a>	076 609 9953	F
2	Liz Metcalfe	ICLEI AS	Professional Officer	<a href="mailto:Liz.metcalfe@iclei.org">Liz.metcalfe@iclei.org</a>	073 462 4458	F
3	Nzuzo Ndokweni	EDTEA	Intern	<a href="mailto:nzuzodennis@gmail.com">nzuzodennis@gmail.com</a>	079 809 6120	M
4	Samke Funeka	EDTEA	Assistant Manager: Environmental Planning	<a href="mailto:Samke.funeka@kznedtea.gov.za">Samke.funeka@kznedtea.gov.za</a>	032 437 7500	F
5	Vasigaran Devan	Mandeni Local Municipality	GIS Data Administrator	<a href="mailto:Vasigaran.devan@madeni.gov.za">Vasigaran.devan@madeni.gov.za</a>	032 456 8252	M
6	Thuthukile	COGTA	DFO	<a href="mailto:Thuthukile.zulu@kzncogta.gov.za">Thuthukile.zulu@kzncogta.gov.za</a>	032 551 1035	F
7	Reshnee Lalla	SANBI (Invasive Species Programme)	Regional Coordinator	<a href="mailto:r.lalla@sanbi.org.za">r.lalla@sanbi.org.za</a>	031 207 6482	F
8	Menzi Nxumalo	SANBI (Invasive Species Programme)	Researcher	<a href="mailto:m.nxumalo@sanbi.org.za">m.nxumalo@sanbi.org.za</a>	031 207 6480	M
9	Navendran Govender	iLembe (IDP & GIS Department)	GIS Officer	<a href="mailto:Navendran.govender@ilembe.gov.za">Navendran.govender@ilembe.gov.za</a>	032 437 9442	M
10	Raymund Ganesh	IDM	Manager: Water Quality	<a href="mailto:Raymund.ganesh@ilembe.gov.za">Raymund.ganesh@ilembe.gov.za</a>	083 628 8453	M
11	Bheki Ganesh	iLembe District Municipality	Disaster Management Office	<a href="mailto:Bheki.mkhize@ilembe.gov.za">Bheki.mkhize@ilembe.gov.za</a>	032 437 9594	M
12	Langalakhe Msomi	iLembe District Municipality	Environmental Officer	<a href="mailto:Langalakhe.msomi@ilembe.gov.za">Langalakhe.msomi@ilembe.gov.za</a>	032 437 9456	M
13	Mduduzi Gumude	Imvelo Yefuzo Trust	Founder/ Director	<a href="mailto:mduduzig7@gmail.com">mduduzig7@gmail.com</a>	079 151 5790	M
14	Mbali Mpanza	KwaDukuza Local Municipality	Enforcement Officer	<a href="mailto:mbalim@kwadukuza.gov.za">mbalim@kwadukuza.gov.za</a>	074 873 8477	F

No.	Name & Surname	Department/ Company	Position	Email Address	Contact Number	Gender (M/F)
15	Nokubonga Duma	KwaDukuza Local Municipality	Environmental Officer	<a href="mailto:nokubongad@kwadukuza.gov.za">nokubongad@kwadukuza.gov.za</a>	076 5355390	F
16	Skhumbuzo Kubheka	Ezemvelo Wildlife Trust	Freshwater Ecologist	<a href="mailto:Skhumbuzo.kubheka@kznwildlife.com">Skhumbuzo.kubheka@kznwildlife.com</a>	079 443 3993	M
17	Mahlodi Tau	USAID	Environmental Governance Specialist	<a href="mailto:mtau@usaid.gov">mtau@usaid.gov</a>	012 452 2014	M
18	Selvan Pillay	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	District Conservation Officer	<a href="mailto:Pillays@kznwildlife.com">Pillays@kznwildlife.com</a>	082 554 9284	M
19	Masupha Mathenjwe	iLembe District Municipality	Senior Environmental Officer	<a href="mailto:Masupha.mathenjwe@ilembe.gov.za">Masupha.mathenjwe@ilembe.gov.za</a>	082 218 4737	M
20	Zahid Hoosen	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife	Honoury Officer	<a href="mailto:hoosenz@gmail.com">hoosenz@gmail.com</a>	084 512 6385	M
21	Linda Mncube	iLembe District Municipality	Manager: Planning	<a href="mailto:Linda.mncube@ilembe.gov.za">Linda.mncube@ilembe.gov.za</a>	032 437 9415	M
22	Mbali Kubheka	DEA- Working for Wetlands	Provincial Coordinator	<a href="mailto:mkubheka@environment.gov.za">mkubheka@environment.gov.za</a>	072 819 4895	F

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

The workshop forms part of the LAB: Wetlands South Africa programme (for background, see *Annex 1*) which seeks to improve awareness and management of wetlands at the local level. Based on previous discussions with IDM, the key aims of the workshop were to:

1. Increase knowledge and understanding of the types, value and importance of wetlands and ecosystems services and why this is important at a local government level.
2. Increase knowledge and understanding of climate change and of potential climate change impacts in the IDM and highlight the role of wetlands in climate change impact adaptation.
3. Increase knowledge and understanding of the role of legislation in the management of wetlands as well as how to integrate wetlands into land use planning.
4. Facilitate initial discussions with the stakeholders regarding the impacts of development on local wetlands as well as the information needs and requirements in IDM for better wetland management.

The workshop was an open forum for the stakeholders to learn about wetlands as ecological infrastructure and how biodiversity and wetlands management fit in with the environmental legislation. The workshop also provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and constraints relating to wetlands management within the IDM.

A copy of the workshop agenda is attached as *Annex 2* of this report.

## WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS & AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

### WELCOME BY THE HOSTS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP

Mr. Masupha Mathenjwa, the senior Environmental Manager of IDM, opened the workshop on behalf of the IDM Environmental Management Department. Mr. Mathenjwa welcomed all the attendants and then gave a short speech which highlighted that the iLembe Environmental Management Department seeks to incorporate sustainable environmental management throughout the district. In order to assist with IDM's sustainable environmental management objectives, IDM has entered into a partnership with ICLEI to implement the LAB: Wetlands SA project. It was emphasised that the support and intervention by ICLEI is appreciated by IDM as it will assist with creating greater understanding of the value of environmental resources within IDM, present a number of opportunities in terms of developing better management strategies of these resources as well as creating possibilities for the implementation of necessary tangible and measurable interventions on the ground.

Liz Metcalfe, Project Manager of LAB: Wetlands SA, then gave a brief introduction to ICLEI and highlighted how ICLEI assists with the implementation of concrete actions on the ground through the forming of partnerships and the implementation of projects such as LAB: Wetlands SA. Liz gave a brief overview of the objective and aims of the LAB: Wetlands SA project and also provided a summary of the workshop agenda for the day. Liz then introduced the guest speakers for the day and then invited the workshop participants to introduce themselves and their role within IDM.

The workshop thereon was structured and conducted by means of presentations, an interactive awareness raising activity as well as discussions between speakers and participants. A summary of these are provided below.

## ACTIVITY: Unpacking local perceptions of what a wetland is

Prior to commencing with the first presentation of the day (“What is a Wetland?”), the workshop participants were invited to share their knowledge of what they perceived a wetland to be based on their current knowledge and understanding. The purpose of this was establish a baseline of collective knowledge regarding wetlands.

The workshop participants were encouraged to collectively discuss their thoughts surrounding what they perceived wetlands to be and then anonymously write down key features/ functions of a wetland for discussion with the rest of the room.

Analysis of the responses as well as the discussion thereafter revealed that there is generally a high understanding of wetlands in IDM in that wetlands are largely considered to be areas where the land is water-saturated and are areas that provide a unique habitat for aquatic life (insects, birds, fish and flora). Key ecosystem services identified by the majority of the room were water purification and filtration as well as flood attenuation and water storage capabilities. Whilst knowledge of wetlands and some of the ecosystem services was considered to be high, further discussion revealed that the knowledge base surrounding identification of wetlands and the various different types of wetlands was limited. The discussion set the scene for the opening presentation.



**Figure 1:** Participants of the IDM workshop writing down key features of wetlands based on current knowledge and understanding.

## PRESENTATION: What is a wetland?

Mbali Kubheka from Working for Wetlands (WfW), gave an introductory presentation on wetlands. The presentation opened with the definition of a wetland as per the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998). Emphasis was placed on the fact that whilst water is an essential feature of a wetland, for a wetland to be defined as a wetland the land needs to be able to hold water for long enough for soil conditions to change (mottling as a result of the anaerobic conditions) and the vegetation to respond to these changes.

The presentation highlighted that there are six different wetland types occurring across the country including seeps, depressions and valley bottom wetlands and a hydro-geomorphic classification system exists which assists with their identification based on the underlying geology. Once the wetland type has been established, it can then be categorised as either a temporary wetland (water is held in the soil for approximately one month and the system is dominated by specific grasses), seasonal wetland (water is held in the soil for a season and the system is dominated by certain sedge types) or a permanent wetland (system is saturated throughout the year and dominated by highly specialised plants).

Following the detailed explanation of the different types of wetland and their identification indicators, Mbali then moved on to explain the significant value of wetlands. It was noted that wetlands provide a number of free ecosystem services to local communities including provisioning (e.g. tangible things we can extract from the wetland such as food or medicine), regulatory (e.g. stream flow regulation, water filtration and flood attenuation), cultural and supporting services as well as provide habitat for a huge amount of flora and fauna. The ecosystem services provided come at no cost to the municipality and all that needs to be done to ensure continued provision of these services is to protect and maintain local wetlands.

Despite everything that wetlands provide however, the presentation emphasised that 50% of wetlands in South Africa have been lost already and 48% of the remaining wetlands are critically endangered and degraded. The presentation emphasised that wetlands are continually being degraded and destroyed on a daily basis in the name of development which in turn impacts the functioning capability of wetlands and subsequently the provision of free ecosystem services. It was highlighted that the main threats to wetlands in IDM include construction of housing and infrastructure within wetlands, artificial drainage of wetlands for agriculture, channalisation (exacerbated by farmers walking their livestock along one path each day), erosion and associated downstream sedimentation, spread of invasive alien vegetation and mining on various scales within the riparian zones.

In terms of what can be done, the emphasis was placed on the fact that all stakeholders have a role to play in wetland management. The presentation highlighted that the local government cannot protect wetlands if it is not known where they are. As such, a wetland map needs to be created to understand the spatial distribution of wetlands in IDM. Once it is known where the wetlands are, assessments need to be undertaken to understand the condition and function of the wetlands to assist with prioritising which wetlands need to be protected. It is important to protect the pristine and highly functioning wetlands first, then rehabilitate the degraded wetlands if possible. There also needs to be ongoing monitoring and evaluation as well as continual investment in education and awareness raising to ensure long term sustainability. In closing, it was highlighted that partnerships should be developed to provide cross cutting support skills and expertise in order to increase capacity and current policies should be effectively enforced and built upon to ensure the future protection of wetlands.

## PRESENTATION: Climate change and the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation

Kirsty Robinson, Professional Officer from ICLEI, followed the introductory speaker with a presentation on the impacts of climate change in IDM and the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation. The presentation was not intended to provide detailed downscaled information but rather to provide an overview of climate impacts in the district in order to better inform adaptation planning.

The presentation opened with a brief definition of climate change, its causes and the role of human activities in accelerating the process. Through the use of graphs and pictures, the current climate patterns in the region were also illustrated in order to set the scene.

In terms of climate change and associated impacts in IDM, the presentation highlighted that general warming will undoubtedly occur and whilst future rainfall patterns are uncertain, there will be definite change in rainfall patterns including an increase of rainfall quantity and intensity in the summer months, a decrease in rainfall in the winter months and an increase in inter-annual variability. The presentation illustrated that the consequences of climate change in IDM would most likely result in an increased risk of longer hot dry spells during the winter months resulting in an increased risk of drought and fires during this period; and an increase in the magnitude and frequency of storms would most likely lead to an increased risk of more severe flooding periods and flash floods during the summer months. Emphasis was therefore placed on the fact that the existing climate related impacts historically occurring in IDM will be exacerbated and that climate adaptation planning should take into account historical climate related impacts as well as future projected changes (i.e. plan for an increase drying in winter and flooding in summer).

With regards to the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation, the presentation highlighted that healthy wetlands perform key ecosystem services such as flood attenuation and water storage and flow regulation which can assist the municipality with reducing the anticipated impacts of climate change. Emphasis was placed on the fact that only healthy wetlands can perform these services and as such investing in the maintenance of healthy wetlands and the rehabilitation and restoration of damaged or degraded wetlands can ensure that wetlands perform their ecosystem services to the maximum of their capabilities in order to increase resilience to climate change in IDM.

### **LUNCH BREAK**

## **PRESENTATION: Role of legislation in wetland management**

Following the lunch break, Kirsty Robinson from ICLEI gave a brief presentation on the role of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) (NWA) in the management of wetlands.

The presentation highlighted that in order to ensure effective management and protection of the South African environment, certain activities/ developments require an Environmental Authorisation (EA) prior to commencement in terms of NEMA. Obtaining the EA involves undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

It was highlighted that activities triggering the need for an EA are contained in Listing Notices 1, 2 and 3 of the NEMA. The presentation noted that as per the Listing Notices, any development/ activity occurring within a watercourse or within 32 metres of a watercourse (if no development setback line exists), or any development or activity occurring within 100 metres of a watercourse outside of urban areas would require an EIA process to be undertaken and the issuing of an EA prior to commencement. With regards to the NWA, it was emphasised that the key aim is to ensure that the nation's water resources are protected, used, controlled, managed, conserved and developed in a sustainable and equitable manner, for the benefit of all.

The presentation highlighted that in order to achieve this mandate, any proposed activity listed in Chapter 4, Section 21 of the NWA, requires a 'Water Use License Application' (WULA) prior to

commencement. The two key activities pertaining specifically to wetlands include **Section 21 (c)** – Impeding or diverting the flow of a watercourse and **Section 21 (j)** – Altering the beds, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

In closing, it was highlighted that NEMA and NWA are key pieces of legislation currently in place to manage the local environment. Emphasis was placed on the fact that proceeding with any activity/ development listed in either NEMA or NWA prior to obtaining the required EA or WULA is illegal and consequences could result in a steep monetary fine and/ or imprisonment.

## PRESENTATION: Integrating wetlands into land use planning

Following the presentation on the role of NEMA and NWA in the management of the local environment, Liz Metcalfe, Project Manager of LAB: Wetlands SA, presented on case study examples from Cape Town and Durban North where wetlands are being incorporated into local planning and development through the NEMA EIA process.

The first example given was for the Mt. Prospect site located in Constantia, Cape Town. The presentation illustrated that the Mt Prospect site had been earmarked for the development of a retirement village however upon initial inspection it was noted that two wetlands were located on the site. Specialist input revealed that one wetland (Wetland A) was the headwaters of the Pagasvlei River and required special management whilst the other (Wetland B) had only formed as a result of a broken pipe and had no ecological value. With the development of freshwater specialist guidelines, Wetland A was subsequently incorporated into the development proposal and has now become a key feature of the proposed retirement village. Additionally, by including the wetland in the development proposal ensures the future monitoring and maintenance of the wetland resulting long term protection of this critical wetland.

The second example was for the development of Durban North which was earmarked for the development of mixed use industrial and residential areas. The area is critically endangered area terms of biodiversity, however is degraded and wetlands in the area already impacted. The proposed development aims to incorporate, restore and rehabilitate these areas as well as restore a high level of wetland function and ecosystem services back to the area as part of the development proposal.

The presentation highlighted that pressure to develop is increasing and rather than deeming the case study sites as a 'No-Go' areas due to the presence of wetlands, by incorporating wetlands into the development not only allows the opportunity for development to go ahead but also offers an opportunity to map the wetlands, establish clear site specific maintenance and management guidelines and allows for the continuation/ restoration and improvement of wetland health and associated ecosystem services. The presentation concluded by emphasising that wetland areas can be developed, however the correct environmental process and specialist inputs need to be obtained.

## DISCUSSION SESSION

Throughout the workshop, participants were invited to ask questions and discuss issues or comments raised. A summary of the discussion session is provided below:

### *Defining a Wetland*

Concern was raised that the definition of a wetland does not make any reference to biodiversity and more specifically to the range of key ecological fauna species that are associated with these systems. Whilst it was confirmed that certain species do only occur in wetlands (e.g. certain frog types), fauna are highly sensitive and thus any type of impact be it physical or chemical either within the wetland or upstream results in the key fauna species moving away. Vegetation and particularly mottled soils remain for a far longer period of time and thus are more accurate wetland indicators than fauna and therefore included in the definition.

### *Responding to Climate Change Risks and Impacts*

It was noted that climate change impacts pose a severe risk to the inhabitants of IDM, particularly to the poor people (especially those residing in low lying areas that are vulnerable to flash flooding). Queries were raised as to what can be done now to reduce the risks. From discussions, it became clear that there is a sense of urgency to adapt now and a Climate Change Response Strategy needs to be developed for IDM which takes into account the risks for the areas and focuses on forward planning and implementation of adaptation measures (including ceasing development in wetlands and maintaining existing wetlands upstream). It was also discussed that the development of a district wide Disaster Risk Assessment would be key to highlighting the main risk factors and assist with alleviating the concerning predictions for IDM.

### *Requirement for Wetland Buffers*

It was noted that both NEMA and NWA specify buffers (100 meters and 500 metres respectively) for development near watercourses including wetlands. Sometimes a development will have arguably no impact (e.g. laying of a sewerage pipeline) on these features and thus it was queried if these strict buffers are really necessary in all cases. It was explained that the buffers are there to prevent the impacts of a 'worst case scenario' affecting watercourses. For example, the digging of a pipeline doesn't necessarily cause issues, however if a sewerage pipeline breaks during the operational phase and sewage leaks out, it can cause huge damage to the watercourse within the immediate vicinity and thus the buffers are in place to account for every eventuality.

### *Consequences of Non-compliance with Environmental Legislation*

Concerns were raised regarding whether the sinking of boreholes or sand mining in riparian zones constituted non-compliance in terms of NEMA and NWA and what are the consequences of non-compliance in these instances. It was reiterated that any activity that falls within Listing Notice 1, 2 or 3 of NEMA or Section 21 of NWA requires an EA or WULA respectively. Thus the sinking of a borehole would require approval of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and sand mining within riparian zones would require an EA as well as a WULA. It was also noted that should an activity proceed without prior approval from the relevant authority, not only does the transgressor risk a fine and potential imprisonment but also will be required to undertake a Section 24G process (a type of retroactive EIA process) to obtain the relevant approvals. A concern for the country however is that

there is limited capacity in compliance enforcement and as such it is possible that activities have occurred in the past which have gone unnoticed. Thus it was emphasised that there is a real need for stakeholders to work together across municipalities and for the local municipalities to inform DWS and EDTEA of transgressions to better ensure the protection of the wetland resources.

#### *Private Stakeholders' Roles and Responsibilities in Wetland Management*

Queries were raised as to what degree private landowners are in control of wetlands that are on their properties. In response it was noted that as a private landowner, you are entirely in control and responsible for what happens on the land, however activities that occur on your private piece of land have to be subject to the law. As such should any activities be proposed on that land that trigger a listed activity in NEMA or an activity from Section 21 of the NWA, then the full application process has to be undertaken by law. It was also noted that private landowners have a responsibility to clear alien invasive vegetation from their private land as per the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA).

#### *Managing Wetlands within Sugarcane Farmlands*

It was noted that the majority of IDM's wetlands are located beneath sugarcane fields or adjacent to them. Concerns were raised regarding the current wetland management system within these areas and WfW's influence within the sector. It was noted that there is little engagement between WfW and the sugar cane farmers at this stage and as a result, the stakeholders within the sugarcane sector are largely not being environmentally responsible. A concern regarding compliance and enforcement is the fact that rather than adhering to environmentally conscious rules, the farmers (particularly the smaller ones within rural areas) would rather sell their land and crops than comply, however the damage at this stage is already done which clears the way for more aggressive development as the land is then listed as 'degraded'. It was noted that there is a real need to reach the key people with the knowledge that is required to ensure remaining wetlands are not further degraded or destroyed. Further, it was discussed that mechanisms needs to be established to ensure that companies are *au fait* with the legislation and are accountable for non-compliance.

#### *Role of the Amakhosi in the Management of the Natural Resources within IDM*

One of the biggest obstacles in district wide management of natural resources is the fact that 60% of the land in KZN falls within tribal lands coordinated by the Ingonyama Trust which makes its own decisions regarding land management. It was noted by COGTA that at this stage if a natural resource such as a wetland lies within the boundaries of the Amakhosi land, the Amakhosi do not always comply with environmental legislation, and as such, environmental compliance is these areas if of concern.

In light of environmental transgressions (e.g. constructing houses as well as subsistence agriculture within wetlands), it was noted that there is a real need to work with the Amakhosi for better wetland management. This process needs to be managed carefully.

To that end, it was suggested that the Amakhosi first and foremost need an informative workshop about wetlands to understand what they are about, how to protect them and ascertain why they are important. Secondly, it needs to be established what the Amakhosi are using the wetlands for now and assist with locating other portions of land which can be utilised for the same purpose. This solution based approach has been shown to have positive impacts in the past.

Finally it was noted that engagements with the Amakhosi must not be once off but rather relationships need to be established and there needs to be long term constant and meaningful engagement with the Amakhosi to ensure an inclusive process in managing the wetland areas. To this end, it was suggested that there needs to be investment in capacitating champions within IDM who speak the language, are relatable and who will be known in the Amakhosi areas as a guide for managing the land and particularly wetlands better. Existing relationships also need to be strengthened. Finally it was noted that COGTA can play a key role in assisting with stakeholder engagements and strengthening relationships.

### *General Comments*

It was noted that in order to make clear progress in the environmental sector of IDM an Environmental Form needs to be established where all issues can be discussed and addressed on a monthly basis, new relationships can be established and issues can be tackled in a cohesive manner by multiple stakeholder with a range of expertise.

From overall discussion sessions throughout the workshop, it was clear that there is a need to enhance partnerships moving forward to allow for better collaboration on local initiative and thereby enhance wetlands management and conservation within the district

## **WRAP UP & WAY FORWARD**

In closing, Liz Metcalfe summarised the presentations and discussions and emphasised how wetlands need to be considered in decision-making moving forward in a manner that speaks to local economic development but also protects these natural resources (i.e. improving service delivery and proactive disaster management in a cost effective manner whilst improving biodiversity and wetlands management and planning). Emphasis was placed on the importance of working together both across departments as well as with different organisations, NGOs and Amakhosi within IDM. It was highlighted that creating and maintaining a strong partnership with IDM and ICLEI is key to the LAB: Wetlands SA project moving forward.

Liz advised that the next steps for IDM in the LAB Wetlands SA project is the compilation and development of a Wetland Assessment Report which will pull together all the existing information pertaining to wetlands in IDM and act as a gap analysis of where efforts need to be focused. It was highlighted that the report, along the outcomes of the workshop and future workshops and engagements with other stakeholders in IDM, will feed into the next phase of the project which entails the development of Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan. Liz thanked the speakers and participants for attending and closed the workshop.

## ANNEX 1: Project Background

Wetlands are high-value ecological infrastructure, providing essential ecosystem services such as clean water, clean air, food, medicines, flood regulation, water storage and habitat for biodiversity. Wetlands also play a role in disaster risk reduction, and their effective governance could lessen the negative effects of climate change through, for example, flood risk reduction, temperature regulation and water and food security for communities.

However, wetlands are South Africa's most threatened ecosystems, with 48% of wetland ecosystems critically endangered, resulting in an urgent need to increase awareness of wetland importance; and to develop the capacity of local governments to incorporate natural wetland resource objectives into municipal governance mechanisms and Integrated Development Planning, as well as to implement and fund projects on the ground.

In South Africa, there is a wealth of national environmental policies, however, mechanisms for mainstreaming biodiversity through all spheres of government needs to be strengthened. Lack of staff capacity, budget constraints, absence of participatory governance, lack of political leadership and public awareness and support, as well as deficiencies in relevant guidance, tools and resources, make wetland biodiversity planning and management a neglected component of our country's municipal governance.

The Local Action for Biodiversity: Wetlands South Africa (LAB: Wetlands SA) programme's key goal is to protect priority natural wetland resources, thus enabling the supply of ecosystem services, and promoting resilient communities and sustainable local economies under a changing climate within South African local governments.

The key objectives of the LAB Wetlands SA programme are as follows:

1. To improve local government and citizen knowledge and understanding (at the individual, organisation and policy levels) of the value of biodiversity and wetlands.
2. To initiate the process of integrating ecosystem services and biodiversity into local government planning and decision-making in a coordinated, multi-sectoral, gender-sensitive and participatory way.
3. To implement and pilot on-the-ground wetland projects and promote the development of bankable project proposals.

The LAB: Wetlands SA programme is implemented by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – Africa Secretariat (ICLEI Africa), and funded by the USAID. This programme works in partnership with 9 District Municipalities and 2 Metropolitan Municipalities throughout South Africa.

## ANNEX 2: AGENDA

### ILEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

#### DRAFT WETLANDS AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOP AGENDA “Wetlands in the municipal context: Natural solutions to local issues”

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
**Venue:** Disaster Management Building, Stanger  
**Facilitator:** Liz Metcalfe (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability)

<b>9.30 – 10.00</b>	<i>Registration (Signing of the Attendance Register and Tea &amp; Coffee)</i>
<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b>	
10.00- 10.10	<b>Welcome by the hosts (10 mins)</b> Mr. Linda Mncube – <i>iLembe District Municipality</i>
10.10 – 10.20	<b>Introduction to the day (10 mins)</b> Ms. Liz Metcalfe - <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
<b>Defining Wetlands</b>	
10.20 – 10.40	<b>Activity: Unpacking local perceptions of what a wetland is (20 mins)</b> Ms. Liz Metcalfe - <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
10.40 – 11.05	<b>What is a wetland? (25 mins)</b> Ms. Mbali Kubheka - <i>Working for Wetlands: Kwazulu Natal Province</i>
11.05 – 11.30	<b>Climate change and the role of wetlands in climate change adaptation (25 mins)</b> Ms. Kirsty Robinson: <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
11.30 – 12.00	<b>Discussion Session (30 mins)</b>
12.00 – 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
<b>Wetlands and the Importance of Land Use Planning</b>	
13.00 – 13.20	<b>Role of legislation in wetlands management (20 mins)</b> Ms. Kirsty Robinson: <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
13.20 – 13.40	<b>Integrating wetlands into land use planning (20 mins)</b> Ms. Liz Metcalfe - <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
13.40 – 14.40	<b>Discussion Session ( 1 hour)</b>
14.40 – 15.00	<b>Wrap up and moving forward with the LAB: Wetlands SA project (20 mins)</b> Ms. Liz Metcalfe -- <i>ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability</i>
<i>Signing of the Feedback Questionnaire &amp; Close</i>	