

Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB): Wetlands SA Wetland Strategy and Action Planning Workshop Amathole District Municipality

Date: 11th April 2017
Venue: The ADM Calgary Museum, East London
Facilitators: Kirsty Robinson & Ryan Fisher – ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

Workshop Report

SUMMARY:

On **11th April 2017**, Amathole District Municipality (ADM) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Africa) co-hosted the “LAB: Wetlands SA: Amathole District Municipality Wetlands Strategy and Action Planning” Workshop in East London as part of ADM’s involvement in the Local Action for Biodiversity: Wetlands South Africa (LAB: Wetlands SA) project.

The workshop aimed to facilitate the development of the Amathole Wetland Strategy and Action Plan (WSAP). To this end, the workshop had two main objectives: (1) identify and prioritise actions for improving wetland management within ADM and (2) initiate the process for the development of a holistic strategy and action plan to mainstream wetland management into land use planning. The workshop also provided an excellent opportunity to increase stakeholder engagement across the municipality.

The workshop was structured and conducted by means of presentations, break-away group activities and discussions between the attending participants. The discussions were co-facilitated by Kirsty Robinson and Ryan Fisher from ICLEI Africa. The workshop was highly focused and included 16 key stakeholders from key institutions including the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), the Eastern Cape Wetlands Forum, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) as well as representatives from Amathole District Municipality, Raymond Mhlaba, Mnquma and Great Kei Local Municipalities.

The Strategy and Action Planning Workshop was a successful workshop and a clear vision, strong values and focus areas as well as well-defined and realistic long term goals and associated actions were established during the process. These will feed directly into the Amathole District Wetland Strategy and Action Plan going forward.



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WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

The workshop is one of the core components of the LAB: Wetlands SA project (for background, see **Annex 1**) which aims to improve awareness and management of wetlands at the local level. Based on previous discussions with ADM, the workshop was aimed at establishing a clear vision, goals and associated actions for the holistic management of wetlands across the district to feed directly into the Amathole District Wetlands Strategy and Action Plan (WSAP).

The key aims of the workshop were to:

1. Identify and prioritise actions for improving wetland management within Amathole District Municipality;
2. Initiate the process for the development of a holistic strategy and action plan to mainstream wetland management into land use planning.

The workshop also provided an excellent opportunity to increase stakeholder engagement across the municipality as well as for key stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and constraints relating to the incorporation of wetlands and wetlands management into local land use planning within the ADM.

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

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Luyanda Mafumbu from Amathole District Municipality opened the workshop with a short speech to welcome the invited stakeholders and ICLEI Africa to Amathole District Municipality Strategy and Action Planning Workshop. Mr. Mafumbu highlighted the importance of working together local municipalities and key external institutions and requested everyone to freely participate and have ownership of the process and outcomes of the workshop.

Thereafter, with guidance from the ICLEI team, the workshop participants were encouraged to introduce themselves to the room as well as share their expectations of the workshop. These are summarized and included as **Annex 4** of this report.

SETTING THE SCENE

Workshop Purpose and Expected Outcomes:

Kirsty Robinson, Professional Officer at ICLEI Africa, gave a short presentation which outlined the LAB: Wetlands SA project as well as the purpose of the WSAP workshop. The presentation illustrated what progress has been made with project implementation in ADM to date, noting particularly the completion of the wetland awareness raising workshop in November 2015 and the development of the Wetland Report in 2016. The presentation then outlined the purpose for the Wetland Strategy and Action Planning Workshop. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the Action Plan that is developed as a result of WSAP workshop should be realistic, measurable and most importantly attainable.

Highlights of the Wetland Report

The LAB Wetlands SA awareness raising video was streamed and shown to the workshop delegation and was very well received. The online link to the video is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpBCTn1Rge4>.

Ryan Fisher, Professional Officer at ICLEI Africa, gave a short presentation highlighting the findings of the Amathole District Municipality Wetland Report to date. It was noted that the Wetland Report is a core output of the LAB: Wetlands SA project and highlighted how the report is intended to pull together all the existing known wetland related information pertaining to ADM and subsequently provide a gap analysis regarding what is required moving forward in terms of the project. It was additionally noted that the Wetland Report is also intended to act as a stand-alone document to be used as a tool to raise awareness at a political level as well to inform better decision making among the land use planners within the municipalities.

The presentation showcased the identified ecosystem services which have been found to be pertinent to ADM as well as some of the key human activities and impacts which have been found to be threatening wetlands within the region. The presentation then went on to highlight the gaps in wetland management, identified through the drafting of the Wetland Report process, which could be used as a platform to inform the subsequent strategy and action planning process going forward.

BUILDING A SHARED VISION AND ESTABLISHING VALUES

Vision Exercise

According to the LAB: Wetlands SA Work Plan, the 'Vision' of the Wetland Strategy and Action Plan is intended to give direction to the plan as well as provide inspiration. The ICLEI Africa team highlighted how the vision statement should embody the future desired state for wetlands within ADM. Emphasis was also placed on the fact that the established vision should be founded on realism but not be mundane, be ambitious yet achievable and have clear social and economic relevance.



Figure 1: Workshop participant's deliberating and discussing ADM WSAP Vision.

To establish a relevant vision for the ADM WSAP, the participating stakeholders were broken up into three groups to discuss the vision for the district as well as ideal outcomes associated with the vision. After the break-away session, stakeholders were invited to present their thoughts to the room. Following a brief discussion period, a draft vision for the ADM wetlands was finalized as:

VISION: Draft

“Striving towards healthy wetland systems which are managed in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all”

Establishing Values

Once the Vision was established, the original aim of the workshop was to develop Values/ Guiding Principles for the WSAP. The ICLEI team emphasized that Values should represent the broader philosophy that will underpin the approach of the WSAP in all circumstances. The Values should therefore express a set of beliefs that set the tone for the WSAP. After discussion with the group however it was decided that rather than come up with separate Values that are specific to the WSAP, it would be ideal to include in the WSAP the Values that are already included in the established and approved Amathole District Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (2016 – 2021) in order to ensure continuity. The agreed upon Values taken from the ADM IDP are as follows:

Values:

- ✓ *Selflessness*
- ✓ *Pro-poor*
- ✓ *Responsiveness*
- ✓ *Transformative*
- ✓ *Inclusivity*
- ✓ *Dignity*
- ✓ *Respect*
- ✓ *Good work ethics*
- ✓ *Transparency*
- ✓ *Integrity*
- ✓ *Accountability*

FROM VISION TO STRATEGY

Focus Areas

Focus areas were defined by the ICLEI team as the planned, deliberate and focused efforts required to achieve the vision. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the focus areas established by the stakeholders should reflect the priorities of the stakeholders within the context of the established vision. Each individual was given 4 pieces of paper and asked to write down their individually identified focus areas based on their own expertise. Individual responses were then clustered into similar themes by the ICLEI team with the input from the workshop participants. Responses were placed on the wall and the workshop participants were asked to vote in order to prioritise the identified focus areas in terms of importance to the ADM region. The six identified key focus areas for the ADM WSAP were established thereafter as follows:

Focus Areas:

- ✓ *Wetland spatial data management*
- ✓ *Environmental Empowerment (includes education/awareness and capacity building)*
- ✓ *Wetland restoration (rehabilitation)*
- ✓ *Mainstreaming*
- ✓ *Collaborative management*

GOAL SETTING

Developing Strategic Priorities into Goals

The ICLEI team highlighted that goals are well defined targeted statements that give clarity, direction and focus. Emphasis was placed on the fact that they serve to add to the vision and values and must align with the established focus areas as they feed directly into these. Goals should also have clearly defined outcomes and deadlines so that they can be used for measuring progress and performance. It was also highlighted that only two to four goals should be established for each focus area in order for goals to be realistically achieved.

The workshop participants were divided into 5 groups in order to establish goals for each of the focus areas. Following the breakaway discussions and goal setting, the breakaway groups were encouraged to present their findings to the main group thereafter for discussion. Following additional input from the group, the semantics of the final goals were agreed upon for each of the Focus Areas.

Please Note: Agreed upon goals were too detailed for inclusion within this report and instead will only be included in the Amathole District Wetland Strategy and Action Plan.



Figure 2: Breakaway groups discussing and developing goals for the ADM WSAP.

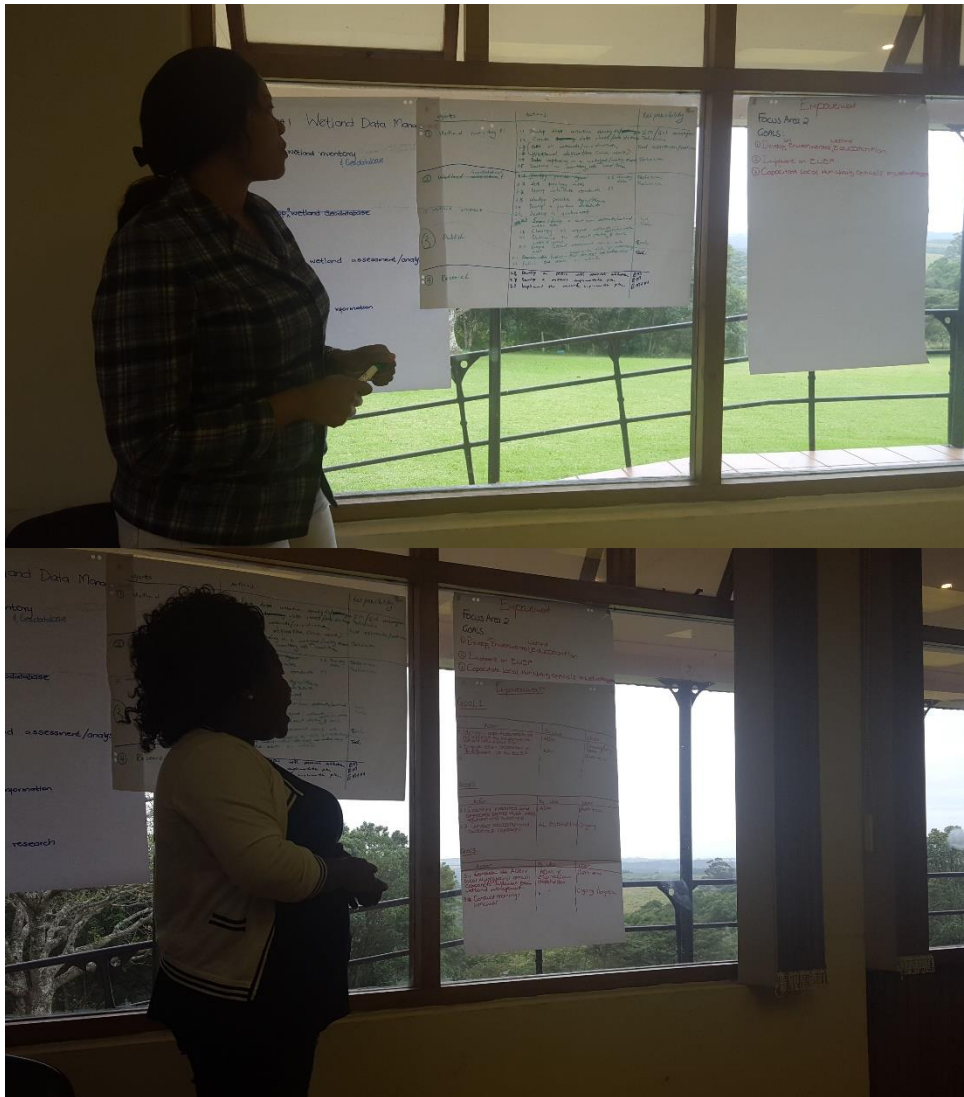
PRIORITISING ACTIONS FOR WETLAND MANAGEMENT

Developing actions for implementing the goals

The final activity for the workshop was to develop detailed actions for implementing the goals on the ground, allocate roles and responsibilities for those actions and establish timeframes for delivering on the actions. The ICLEI team advised that actions going forward would need to be achievable and a clear understanding of how these would be implemented, by whom, by when, and using what resources would need to be established.

The workshop participants were once again broken up into their groups and encouraged to go into detailed action planning to ensure that each goal would be achieved on the ground. These were once again presented to the group and agreed upon before the closure of the workshop.

Please Note: Agreed upon activities, timeframes and responsible persons were too detailed for inclusion with this report and instead will only be included in the Amathole District Wetland Strategy and Action Plan.



Figures 3 and 4: Group participants presenting identified actions back to plenary

WRAPPING UP & WAY FORWARD

Following the development of actions for inclusion in the ADM WSAP, Ryan Fisher highlighted in closing that the next step for ADM in the LAB Wetlands SA project is the compilation and development of the Wetland Strategy and Action Plan (WSAP). The ADM WSAP will pull together all the relevant information included in the Wetland Report as well as all the key outcomes captured during the WSAP Workshop. Ryan also outlined the project key deliverables for 2017, namely the development of Wetland Management Guidelines, a potential awareness raising workshop targeted at political leaders, as well as the development of bankable projects on the ground.

Both the ICLEI team as well as Mr. Mafumbu from Amathole District Municipality thanked the stakeholders for attending and for participating so actively in the workshop. Following a group photograph and completion of feedback questionnaires, the workshop was then brought to a close.



Figure 5: Participants of the Amathole District Municipality WSAP 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



AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY WETLANDS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANNING WORKSHOP AGENDA

Date: 11th April 2017
Venue: The ADM Galgary Museum, East London
Facilitators: Kirsty Robinson & Ryan Fisher – ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

08:00 – 08:30	<i>Registration (Signing of the Attendance Register)</i>	
Welcome & Introductions		
08:30 – 08:40	Welcome by the hosts	Amathole District Municipality
Setting the Scene		
08:40 – 08:50	LAB: Wetlands SA Project Background	Facilitator
08:50 – 09:10	Wetland Awareness Raising & Setting the Scene through the Wetland Report	Facilitator
09:10 – 09:30	Workshop purpose & expected outcomes – What is the WSAP?	Facilitator
09:30 – 10:30	Visioning exercise (Brainstorm in small break away groups with feedback to plenary to cluster small group contributions into common themes & vision statement.)	Facilitator
10:30 - 10:45	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	
Building a shared vision & establishing guiding principles		
10:45 – 11:30	Developing Values (Visual mapping exercise with plenary group)	Facilitator
From Vision to Strategy		
11:30 – 13:00	Prioritizing Focus Areas to support the Vision (Brainstorm in small break away groups with feedback to plenary)	Facilitator
13:00 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
Goal setting		
13:30 – 14:30	Developing Focus Areas into goals (Brainstorm in small break away groups with feedback to plenary)	Facilitator
Prioritizing Actions for wetland management		
14:30– 16:00	Generating high level actions (targets) for implementing the goals (Brainstorm in small break away groups with feedback to plenary)	Facilitator
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	
Wrapping up & way forward		
16:15– 16:30	Way Forward and Closure	Facilitator and ADM
16:30 – 16:35	Group Photo & Signing of ICLEI Questionnaire	
16:35	<i>Day closes</i>	

Key Definitions:

Action Plan: Identifies the priority actions and clearly outlines how these will be implemented, by whom, by when, and using what resources.

Goals: Goals are well-defined, targeted statements that give clarity, direction and focus. They serve to add content to the vision and strategic priorities / interventions. They are an expression of what is to be achieved (i.e. forward looking) in order to give effect to the vision. Goals also provide the basis for measuring progress and performance, thereby enabling the organisation to assess whether the vision is being achieved, achieved to some extent or whether it is not being achieved at all. Goals should be formulated in relation to each strategic priority. It is important not to overload the strategy with strategic interventions / priorities and goals. For example, if the strategic intervention / priority is: Degraded wetlands in areas of conservation priority, then possible goals are:

- To restore priority wetlands that are degraded.
- To facilitate the re-establishment of species of that have been lost in wetlands of conservation priority.

Focus Areas: These are the planned, deliberate, and focused efforts required to achieve the vision. These should reflect the priorities of the organisation / project / programme within the context of the vision. Examples are:

- Degraded wetlands in areas of conservation priority.
- Alien vegetation control.
- Community involvement / support in wetland conservation.
- Mainstreaming wetland conservation into land-use planning.

Strategy: An overarching vision of what will ideally be achieved in terms of biodiversity, including a statement of principles, clearly defined priorities and defined short, medium and long-term goals, as well as a set of targets to help guide implementation.

Values: These represent the broad philosophy and values that underpin the approach of the programme or organisation in all circumstances. Hence, guiding principles serve to express a set of values and beliefs that set the tone of an organisation, programme or plan and provide important parameters for specific goals, targets and actions. Examples are:

- Publicise and Promote Biodiversity - To regularly publicise and promote the work being undertaken to manage biodiversity.
- Effective Implementation - To ensure that plans, strategies and actions relating to biodiversity are being achieved.
- Partnerships and Collaboration - To build partnerships, where appropriate, that will assist in achieving effective resource utilisation and share information and ideas.
- Raising Awareness - To increase the community's understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues that affect the City and can impact on the lifestyles of residents.

Vision: Vision statements give direction and should provide inspiration. The vision should define the desired future state. Effectively it is the 'mental picture of what an organization wants to achieve.' The vision should be founded on realism but not be mundane. It should be ambitious yet achievable, with clear social and economic relevance. It should be succinct / concise, clear and easy to understand.

Annex 3: Expectations

