

South Africa (Working for Wetlands)

South African pro-poor wetland rehabilitation projects

SUMMARY

South African government-funded wetland rehabilitation projects carried out by vulnerable social groups. This is borderline Government-led programme aiming at the provision of wetland services. In theory the private sector will be approach to become an active participant, but until now it is Government led.

MATURITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Ongoing since 2000

DRIVER

The main driver is the government's concern to reduce poverty through the creation of work opportunities in government-funded wetland conservation and water quality protection projects.

STAKEHOLDERS

Supply

Wetlands located in private, communal and public lands. There are in total 50 wetland rehabilitation projects

Demand

National Government and corporate business

Intermediary

Direct negotiation between the Working for Wetlands programme (National Biodiversity Institute) and the local contractors that carry out the rehabilitation work.

Facilitators

Working for Wetlands administered through the National Biodiversity Institute, under the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, in partnership with the departments of Water Affairs and Forestry and of Agriculture. WWF

MARKET DESIGN

Service

Water quality

Commodity

Rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems, for example by reflooding wetlands that had previously been drained for peat mining, agriculture and irrigation.

Payment Mechanism

Direct negotiation between the Working for Wetlands Programme and the landowners in whose land the rehabilitation project is to take place.

Wetland offsite compensation: In 2005, the Working for Wetlands programme also began carrying out wetland projects on behalf of companies required to offset their adverse impacts on wetlands. . For example, to obtain mining permission, the company Anglo Coal had to agree to compensate the loss of wetlands caused by its new open cast mine by funding the rehabilitation of equivalent wetlands in the same catchment, . Working for Wetland carried out the 46ha-project on the company's behalf in Dunns farm and Thubalihle wetlands.

Terms of Payment

Project activities are carried out and financed by the Working for Wetlands programme. Unclear whether if in private land, the landowner receives any compensation.

Funds Involved

Annual budget of R30 million (about US\$ 4 million), originating mainly from the Poverty Relief fund.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS

Economic

The total value of these projects and supporting activities amounts to R65 million for 2005/6.

Environmental

Over 80 wetlands are to be rehabilitated in 2005/6. Rehabilitation works include: gabion construction, the removal of invasive alien plants in the immediate area, surveying of flood irrigation furrows, construction and placing of grass bale gabions and levelling of drainage furrows.

This results in higher amounts of sediment trapped by erosion control structures and progressively gives way to the re-establishment of the normal wetland hydrological and biological dynamic.

Social

Employment benefits: the project engages mainly with the groups most affected by poverty and unemployment, focusing on women, youth and disabled individuals. It provides work for up to two years, and so far the project has benefited over 2000 people.

Skills Development: For every month worked, each worker has the right to 2 days training in vocational and life skills- these courses include: primary healthcare, basic adult education, gender equality, family planning, HIV/AIDS, first aid, safety, swimming, fire fighting, and financial management.

“The combination of temporary employment, income generation, acquisition of new skills, and the raising of personal self-belief and self-esteem gives workers an opportunity to escape the vicious circle of poverty.” WWF (no date)

LEGISLATION ISSUES

The project is embedded in the Government's pro-poor interventions, through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

MONITORING

No information

MAIN CONSTRAINTS

No information

MAIN POLICY LESSONS

This project builds on the works of a previous wetland rehabilitation project – the Mondi Wetlands Project- established by WWF/ Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA).

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT

REFERENCES

King, N et al .2005. An Inventory of current ecosystem service payments, markets and capacity building in South Africa. Document presented at the Eighth Public Meeting of the Katoomba Group- Building Foundations for Pro-Poor Ecosystem Services in Africa 1

IIED. 2005. Fair deals for watershed services: learning from new attempts to develop pro-poor payments for watershed services. Draft Discussion Paper. International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

WWF (no date). Working for Wetlands, South Africa. Managing Rivers Wisely Series. Living Waters Programme, World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
<http://assets.panda.org/downloads/mrwworkingforwetlandscs.pdf>

South African Government Information website- Environmental Programmes:
<http://www.info.gov.za/issues/govtprog/environ.htm#wat>

**Watershed
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LINKS

<http://www.ccw.ac.za/wetlands/rehab.htm>

<http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/Wetlands/>