



REPORT: GKSDP Partnership Network Meeting 2023 for the K2C ‘Cluster’

Collective Action, for Collective Impact to unlock Collective Finance
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KRUGER TO CANYONS
BIOSPHERE REGION

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Figure 1: World Café discussions about livelihoods.



1. Introduction and Context

The Greater Kruger includes a vast conservation area that is embedded in landscape that includes a mosaic of land uses, Protected Areas, and Strategic Water Source Areas. Natural Resources are increasingly under pressure. There is a growing need for multiple compatible land uses to balance the demands of both people and nature. Therefore, the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Programme (GKSDP) was developed and launched in 2020.

The GKSDP promotes sustainable and responsible development in the region while conserving its natural and cultural heritage. It recognizes the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental factors in achieving sustainable development in the Greater Kruger Landscape and it is a partnership between the South African Government, the private sectors, and local communities.

The Kruger to Canyons (K2C) Biosphere Region¹ is one of the ‘coordinating’ clusters in the Greater Kruger Landscape. In November 2022, the K2C and partners in the landscape hosted the first cluster networking workshop. The 2022 theme was *“Reflecting on, Sharing and Celebrating Partner Contributions”*. It was proposed to have a follow-on workshop in 2023.

The November 2023 Workshop proposed to build on the outcomes of the 2022 GKSDP Partner Network Workshop and provide updates relating to the finance strategy. The meeting was held on 14 November 2023 at the Greater Kruger Hotel School. This report provides a summary of the proceedings of the 2023 K2C Cluster Network Meeting. The 2023 theme was *“Collective Action, for Collective Impact to unlock Collective Finance”*.

“Aspire for radical interdependence leadership, rather than being a hero” - Lorna Davis TED Talk

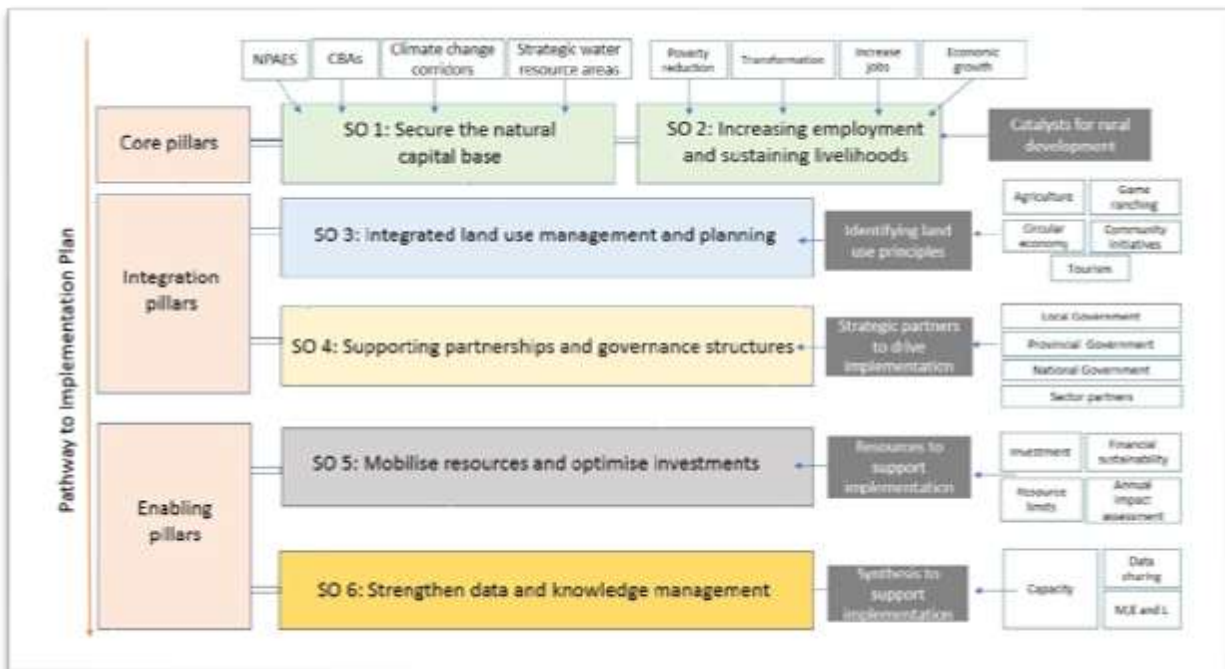


Figure 2: Graphic depicting the six strategic objectives of the GKSDP.

¹ [[Kruger to Canyons | Biosphere Region \(kruger2canyons.org\)](http://Kruger to Canyons | Biosphere Region (kruger2canyons.org))]

The 2023 K2C Cluster meeting was very well attended. There were 90 people who RSVP'd online for the workshop, of these 72 actually attended the workshop. However only 14 of the participants have completed the feedback form. If it is the only thing you do, please complete the feedback form [FILL OUT FORM](#) so that we can strive to improve engagement in the Greater Kruger landscape. Remember the K2C cluster is only one of seven clusters in the GK area, so the idea is that similar engagements will take place in the other clusters in the future. The Vhembe Biosphere is likely to hold a workshop for the northern GK stakeholders in the foreseeable future.



Figure 3: Participation stats at the K2C Cluster networking workshop.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

The primary objective of this workshop was to **further catalyze collaboration among various stakeholders** including NGOs, community-based organizations, government agencies, private enterprises, and individuals. *'By pooling resources, knowledge, and expertise, the initiative seeks to achieve larger-scale conservation outcomes that address pressing environmental and developmental challenges in the Greater Kruger region'.*

This year the purpose was to revisit and update inputs into five of the Strategic Objectives, understanding different partners' contributions, plus addressing SO5 by sharing the findings of an appointed consortium of for the Development of the Greater Kruger Finance Strategy commissioned in 2023 by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and South African National Parks (SANParks) attached as previously shared: <https://kruger2canyons.org/unlocking-finance-for-greater-kruger-2/>.

3. What is the Vision of the GLTFCA for the next 5 years?

Richard Napier, Vice Chairperson of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) Cooperative Agreement presented to the workshop participants.

Context: There is a Cooperative Agreement between the SANParks ([Media Release: SANParks becomes a proud signatory to the GLTFCA Cooperative Agreement - News - SANParks](#)) and 16 private, community and state protected areas open to the Kruger National Park (KNP). Signatures initiated from 5 December 2018. This agreement is based on five key management pillars:

- Governance,
- Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental management,
- Commercial activities and socio-economic beneficiation,
- Safety and security, and
- Land inclusion

Why do we need the agreement?



The Agreement ensures a uniform framework for the protection, management and sharing of socio-economic benefits within our shared open system.

It addresses a number of current and anticipated risks facing everyone with a stake in conservation (such as the persistence of rhino poaching).

Through the Agreement, all stakeholders in the landscape now cooperate to address significant risks, to develop more opportunities and economic benefits for landowners, management authorities (such as SANParks, Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency and LEDET), and communities neighbouring the GLTFCA

Figure 4: Credit R. Napier

The process to date: 'Where have we come from and where are we going':

- 2001: Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) Treaty between South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe was signed.
- Phase 1 of Cooperative Agreement: Regularising [the process of ensuring that all protected areas are declared under the current legislation of NEMPAA (National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act)] open conservation areas,
- Phase 2: Wildlife economy expansion (launching the GKSDP)
- Phase 3: Integrated land use and sector approach

4. What is the Vision of the KNP for the next 5 years?

Danny Govender, General Manager of Conservation, KNP, SANParks shared some thoughts on the way forward in the landscape.

Danny noted that the loss of biodiversity continues to be a global issue. We as global citizens have not achieved what we set out to do with the Aichi Targets. Now there is the new goal of 30-by-30 (30% of the planet's terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems are under 'protection' by 2030: <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/30-by-30-key-takeaways-cop15-biodiversity-summit-2022-12-19> & [30 by 30 - Wikipedia](#)). To come close to achieving this, Danny suggested:

1. We need to think out of the box, have a different approach to achieving the goal,
2. Make use of collaborative partnerships, events and initiatives like the GKSDP, and
3. Seek collective financing (to achieve collective impact).



Figure 5: Dr Danny Govender addresses the workshop.

5. Feedback from the World Café: Reflections and Update on 2022 Workshop

In 2022, the participants split into four groups. The groups were formulated around five of the strategic objectives (with SO3 & SO4 combined in one group):

- SO1: Securing natural capital - Group 1,
- SO2: Increasing employment & sustaining livelihoods - Group 2,
- SO3: Integrated Land use management and planning & SO4: Supporting partnerships and governance structures - Group 3,
- SO6: Strengthen data and knowledge management - Group 4

Questions posed to the groups in 2022:

1. Where do you want to fit in to GKSDP?
2. How can we better engage to capitalize on added value?
3. How can we better track our contributions towards a common agenda?
4. How do you want report back to benefit you?

Each group had to answer four questions relating to their group theme (refer to adjacent text box). This year during the World Café, there were also the same four groups, but participants could visit several of the groups. The task was to determine if they agreed with what was captured last year, and if they had anything else to add. Feedback was consolidated and given to the workshop participants. The following summarizes the discussion points noted by each of the groups.

Group 1: SO1: Securing Natural Capital (Facilitated by Romy)

Group 1 agreed with what was said previously and added to the discussion.

1. Where do we fit in?

- Alternative financing strategies.
- Developing enabling communities of practice.
- Organizations have multiple/ different objectives - need better communication between us.
- Broader ecosystem/ habitat protection- broader "nature "credits"/broader buy-in values- local livelihoods.

2. Capitalize on added value.

- Focus on/ fast track succession/ restoration in degraded areas.
- PES type initiatives "downstream" users
- Integrated / circular approaches.
 - Landscape approach.
 - Corridors.
- Better awareness & education
 - Improved/ local level empowerment interims of decision-making & capacity building.
 - Innovative mechanisms beyond PA's- OECMS etc.

3. Tracking

- Theory of change with indicators.
- Citizen Science/ on the ground tracking/ monitoring.
- Incentivization caves with beneficiation.

4. Report back

- Recognition for effort being put in at various levels.
 - Local
 - Regional All levels of stakeholders Identified during mapping require different mechanisms- all get feedback.
 - National
- Keep stories simple.
- How we better share our data & coordinate & share knowledge.
 - Put a value.
 - Celebrate collective successes.

5. Take-away Key points:

- Data rich landscape- need to value/finance the coordination of all of this. Improve feedback etc.
- Crosscutting issues across objectives so difficult to focus on only one SO.



Group 2: SO2: Increasing employment & sustaining livelihoods (Facilitated by Cindy & Shoki)

1. Where do we fit in?

- Those involved in Socio- economic benefits, tourism (Economy and Jobs) sectors, including:
 - Social infrastructure.
 - Health wellness.
 - Agri + education (Multi sector specific) synergy with other pillars.
 - Big focus on green/ circular economy.

2. Capitalize on added value.

Be realistic (and consider Who is driving it?)

- Have Standardized reporting.
- Ensure Transparency
- Smaller groups/ smaller targets- specific focus groups platform to connect (Stakeholder roles in reaching out/sharing)

3. Tracking

Start with organization's own database first.

- Incl. M+E stats
- Use tech out there- to measure impact against SDG's.
- Targets.
- standardized impact report
- "Membership Structure" {Outsourced research + evaluations}

4. Report back

Basic informed statistics to use for reports/ funding applications.

- Showcasing collaborative actions.
- Visual reporting- tangible (Maps & Graphs)



Group 3: SO3: Integrated Land use management and planning & SO4: Supporting partnerships and governance structures (Facilitated by Vusi & Dima)

1. Where do we fit in?

- More mapping & proper coordination.
- Trust, value add, collective accountability.
- Enough warm bodies- identify champions.

2. Capitalize on added value.

- Education & Training (Youth) as a channel.
- Spatial (SDF) at Municipal level adopted by councilor to zone things correctly.
- Land use and land restitutions (CPA), RLCC.
- District Development Model inclusion in both provinces.
- Training and workshop on Municipal framework.
- Who is the go-to person?

3. Tracking

- How we prioritize to achieve e.g., Financing framework- Build trust.
- Ownership of collective initiatives.
- Legitimacy of devolved structures (GKEPF, CPF)
- Impact assessment frameworks- Enabling tool for tracking.

4. Report back

- The idea of 'No obligation' needs to change.



Group 4: SO6: Strengthen data and knowledge management (Facilitated by Louise)

Group 4 had a diverse discussion, not necessarily specific to the questions.

- Conservation alpha- Build impact financing products for conservation
 - Chris B: - Data management to inform investments- SO.5, 3, 4)
 - Impact measurement> Governance of data.
 - Link with relevant re Financial viability.
- GKEPF- Supporting partnerships- NB. Safety & Security.
Luke Haynes: - Partnerships- exist: Capitalizing: Making most of
 - Collaboration partnerships, cooperation (SO.4)
- Kids in the wild -SO6- Strengthen data & knowledge management.
 - Junior FGASA.
 - Eco pods- Baretta school.
 - Global- Courses: - re conservation: online
 - Social media- create links.
 - SO5 resources.
 - 8-12 years- (young & older)
 - Timbavati- eco-pods: after school.
 - (Mini- Museums)
- Global WL. Prot. Trust - Lions, Land, People
 - Purchase land for conservation.
 - Communities- NB do conservation.
 - Harmonies existence with nature.
 - SO1, SO6- education about value of conservation.
 - 5 properties.
- DFFE- Mukona:
 - WFW- Control of alien invasive plants- Bushbuckridge & Thabachweu- 2/7pp: 5-year circle
 - SO2 & SO1
- Hoedspruit Hub - SO2 & SO3
 - Thias - Agricultural training- subs- commercial farmers.
 - Formal & Informal, Soft & hard skills- numeracy & Literacy - maths is just a language- basic repetitions.
 - Employment.
- Link to biodiversity sector skills plan: Opportunity.
- Link to Karin Wikens: GKSDP - Share (Biodiversity SP)
- Rationale for today: To understand better about how we back everyone's contributions.
 - Database
 - Can't monitor everything.
 - Within GKSDP- what indicators are NB?
 - Monitoring Plan: - M+E framework e.g., WWF Khetha.
 - Objectives- Scale.
- Trade-off- research time makes us need management.
- Co-design research time.
- To be part- needs to report on SP things.



6. GKSDP Finance Strategy - Key notes

Justine Ganess presented the GKSDP Finance Strategy to the workshop. In short, the project was initiated, because there was a need for innovative solutions to narrow the gap and unlock finance at large-scale, specifically in the GK landscape. The financing strategy is a first attempt to unlock such finance at a landscape-level, for conservation across multiple land-uses.

The aim for the strategy is twofold: 1. To be able to sustainably manage natural capital resources, and 2. Improve livelihoods and support local communities at landscape level in the GK area.

The timeline for the development of the strategy has taken place between January 2023 and August 2023. There have been four main steps:



The ‘How’ of the financial strategy is about bridging the gap between funders and projects that need financing and matching the two, so that both meet their objectives.



There are seven financing themes:



The final steps to develop the strategy involve: 1. In-depth unpacking of finance themes, 2. Example case studies. 3. Feasibility testing with funders, and 4. Suggested prioritization and implementation plan.

Some Key Lessons:

- Nature-positive investing is gaining popularity: this is innovative and forward-looking.
- Potential to scale up and/or replicate: useful starting point for other landscapes (& clusters in GKSDP)
- Reiterates the importance of collaboration: bridge the gap between top (finance) and bottom (on-the-ground implementation)

7. Mapping Collective Impact

During a working lunch, all organizations were requested to capture the activities they are involved in, their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and where they operate from in the Greater Kruger Landscape (their head office / main base). They were required to pin this on the wall map (Although some are based out of the K2C footprint).

This exercise illustrated two things: 1. It is very tricky to capture such information. And 2. That the many organizations are already having a collective impact (see figure below), but it could be so much better coordinated! Especially if the aim is to be collectively more effective and efficient in the landscape.

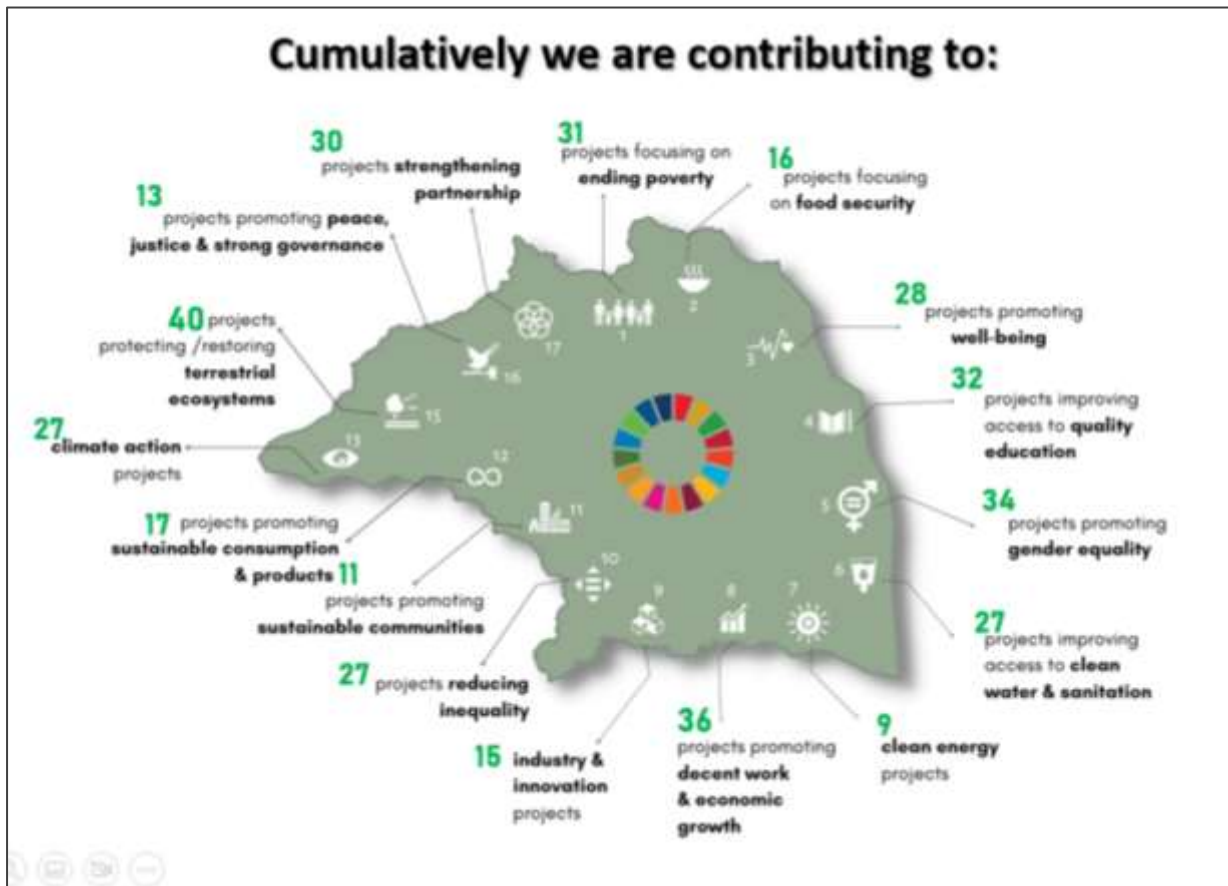


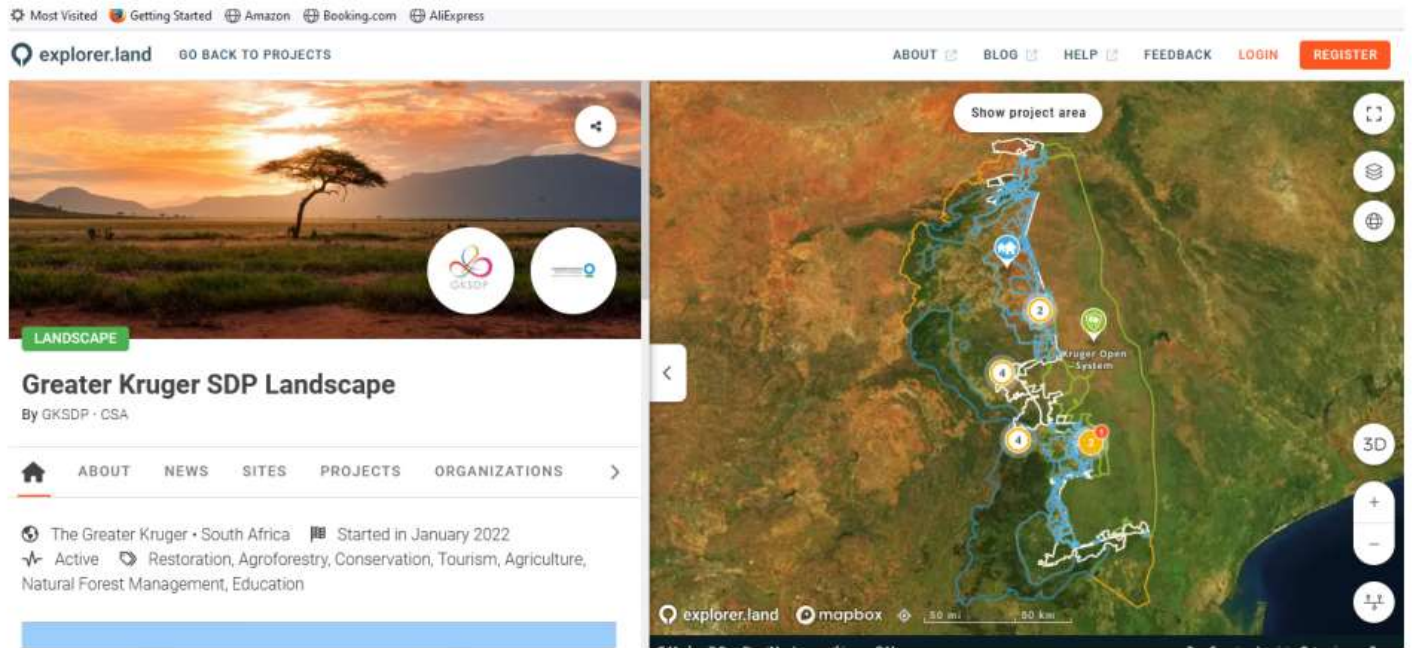
Figure 6: A snapshot of the projects taking place in the K2C (and broader GK) area and the alignment with SDGs

At the start of the GKSDP initiative, we were using a cumbersome excel data sheet to try and capture all the role players’ projects in the landscape. But of course, organizations and projects are dynamic. Therefore, other platforms were considered and Explorer.land was found to be the most appropriate for the needs of the GKSDP. This platform allows for capturing projects, areas of operation, etc. This means that it is easier to determine opportunities for collaboration, and a quick understanding of which organizations or partnerships would match potential / existing funding opportunities. This will result in maximum use of the available funding and contribute to being more effective and efficient with resources available.

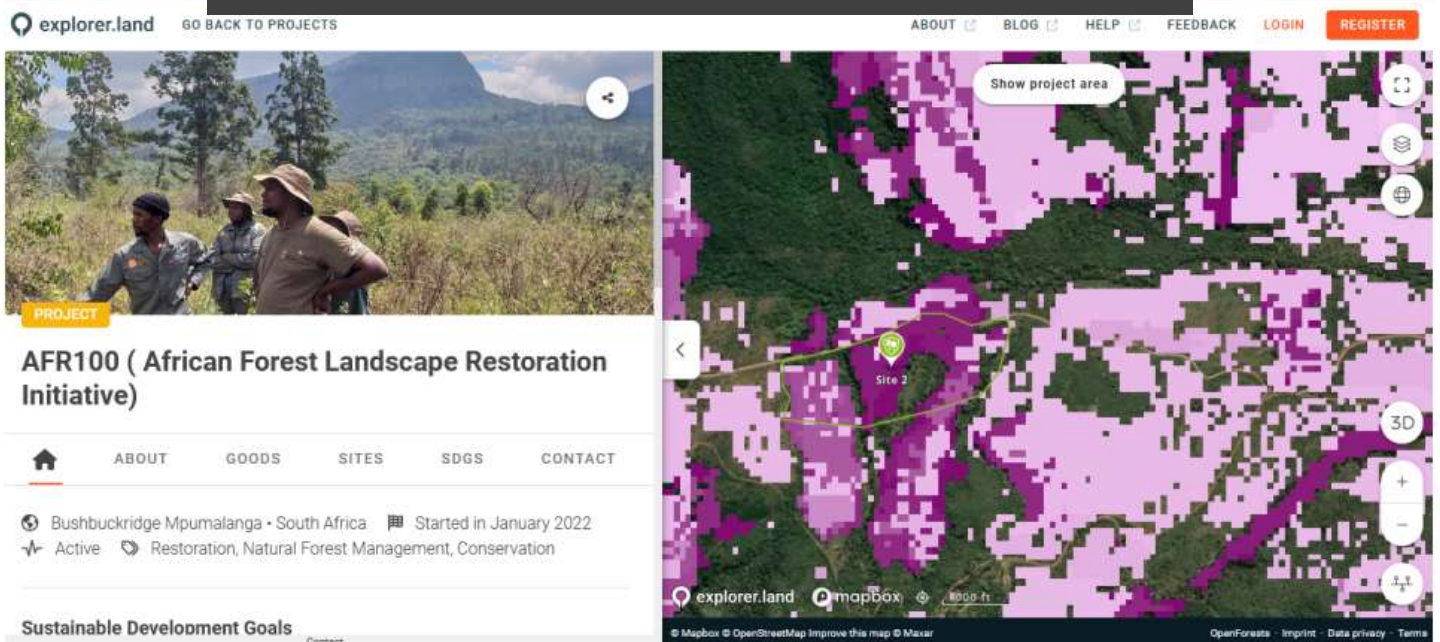
During online registration for the network meeting, participants were encouraged to log onto the platform and start capturing their information. During the network meeting we connected online with the explorer.land developers. The Explore.Land team compiled a folder for participants, which contains the recording, Alex’s presentation (with active links) and an onboarding guide.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_V5neXCyARbfFkLLWn7tg5WdAnamo5rw?usp=drive_link.
 Make sure you have joined the platform, there is also a video tutorial to assist you, with a short explanation of explorer.land and a "how to" create a project in more detail.
https://youtu.be/fNua_KfT4bk.

Explorer.land: Powering restoration & conservation with #maps, #data, #storytelling



Figures 7 & 8: Illustrate some of the ways the platform can present data.



8. Panel Discussion

The last session of the workshop was a panel discussion. Questions were posed to the panelists to initiate broader discussions with the workshop participants.

Justine Ganess of CSA -

- *“What Financial mechanisms were set up already and what did it take to align them to GKSDP?” -*
- *There are quite a lot of existing finance mechanisms and funding opportunities, but not specific to the K2C/ GKSDP. So, the first step is to look at whether the financiers / investors etc. align with SOs of GKSDP projects / organizations. Therefore, it is important to capture your organization’s information correctly to make the matching process easier.*

Nick Theron of K2C BR

- *“How did CIP benefit from GKSDP Finance framework?”*
- *It has been a long process, so the history has helped, and the existing partnerships already established. Consistency is key!*

Noki Maier of SANParks -

- *“Where does the responsibility of the GKSDP sit (who has to drive it)?”*
- *- The GKSDP belongs to this landscape, and all of us - not one entity! Although political oversight (across provinces) is needed, we need to take responsibility and accountability. There are different layers / strata that will drive implementation, but it ultimately requires Collective Action!*



Figure 9: Justine addresses the workshop about the finance strategy.

Richard Napier of GLTFCA

- *“What sort of momentum has the GKSDP created in the broader GLTFCA?” -*
- *Champions are critical to achieving and maintaining momentum, so the existing champions have played a valuable role in this process.*

Danny Govender of SANParks

- *“Kruger has a brand how do we build up the Greater Kruger brand?” -*
- *Suggests collaboration needs to be incentivized, but how? Could learn from the ‘KNP’ brand, which is well known, it is trusted and there are no royalties.*

All - "what in your view is the next action items for this group"? - Some additional comments:

- To keep momentum, we also need to change our mind set - especially government entities.
- It would be valuable to have a 'warm body' to assist with GKSDP co-ordination etc.
- During the pandemic (COVID), tourism took a really big knock (KNP especially), so need alternative funding opportunities in the landscape to build resilience. - Look at different revenue streams.
- Suggest the GKSDP has a secretariat and strive for political buy-in.
- The GKSDP 'home' must be 'mobile' not set up / constrained by bureaucracy etc.
- We are not collaborating enough! And it is not resulting in collaborative action - enough.
- Community involvement in GKSDP needs more attention.
- Vhembe Biosphere is also in GK area (and also a cluster of GKSDP) - keep this in mind with activities and implementation.



Figure 10: World Café discussions with Vusi regarding integrated landscapes

9. Reflections & Closure by Marisa Coetzee

We were very honored to have Dr Marisa Coetzee join the workshop. Marisa initiated the GKSDP and several related projects when she worked as the Regional Integration Manager for KNP - SANParks but has since taken up a position in Zambia. Marisa kindly closed the workshop and shared some reflections.

Marisa noted that the partnership journey with the GKSDP began by partners arriving at a shared direction and vision for change in the landscape. Partners in the GK agreed on the supporting steps along the way and acknowledged that there will be various levels of involvement, and different role players for the different clusters.

It is valuable to build a culture of learning. Growth and change require stewardship from distributed leadership, which means both top down and bottom-up leadership.

MERL: Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting & Learning key to the process

Steps and processes to consider when getting started with MERL:

1. **Identify where learning and evaluation may help.** *This may relate to challenges in communicating your partnership's unique value; attracting new partners; securing financial resources; making decisions about what to do more of, less of, or to stop.*
2. **Foster champions: go where the energy is,** *find those partners who are interested, capable, or engaged in learning work and bring them together.*
3. **Start small:** *gather information to hand; celebrate achievements; find and share examples from other partnerships invested in learning and evaluation.*

10. Acronyms and Abbreviations

- AWARD Association of Water and Rural Development
- CIP Catchment Investment Programme
- CSA Conservation South Africa
- DCA Damage Causing Animals
- DFFE Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
- FGASA Field Guides Association of Southern Africa
- GEF Global Environmental Facility
- GK Greater Kruger
- GKEPF Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Forum
- GKSDP Greater Kruger Strategic Development Programme
- GLTFCA Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area
- GLTP Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park
- IFC International Finance Corporation
- K2C BR Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region
- KNP Kruger National Park
- LEDET Limpopo Economic Development Environment and Tourism
- LM Local Municipality
- MTPA Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
- NEMPAA National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act
- OECMS Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures
- PA Protected Areas
- SAEON South African Environmental Observation Network

- SANParks South African National Parks
- SAWC Southern African Wildlife College
- SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
- SO Strategic Objective
- SP Social Projects
- UNDP United Nations Development Program
- UNESCO United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- WFW Working for Water
- WWF World Wide Fund for nature