



KRUGER TO CANYONS BIOSPHERE REGION

OUR IMPACT 2025/2026

In 2025–2026, the K2C Biosphere entered a period of rapid growth and expanded reach. Supported by catalytic investment from Global Affairs Canada, this growth created new opportunities while also underscoring the importance of strengthening and sustaining these gains into the future.

Through a diverse team and an expanding portfolio of projects, we continue to deliver impact across our key strategic focus areas:

- **Natural Capital Secured**
- **Increased Employment and Sustained Livelihoods**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Data and Knowledge Management**
- **Partnerships**





PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025–2026, K2C's role within the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Platform (GKSDP) strengthened, marking a shift from collaboration to strategic alignment and influence. Through a network of **59 organisations**, including over **25 partners** and more than **7 government departments**, the Biosphere increasingly operates as a coordinating platform that connects investment, implementation and policy. The GAC-funded Restoring African Rangelands project, implemented with Conservation International, exemplified this approach by aligning multiple partners around shared landscape outcomes. This growing network positions K2C not only as an implementer, but as a facilitator of collective impact at scale.



Partnered with:

> 5 Schools

> 12 Traditional Authorities

> 7 Government Departments / Agencies

> 5 Municipalities

> 5 Universities

> 25 Organisations



NATURAL CAPITAL SECURED

This year we made progress from project-based restoration to locally embedded, catchment-scale stewardship, with the declaration of Malachite Nature Reserve and the training and deploying of alien invasive clearing teams in the Blyde, Klaserie and Upper Letaba catchments. In the Upper Letaba catchment, the close-out of restoration work has been underscored by farmers taking ownership of follow-up clearing, signalling a transition from externally driven interventions to sustained local stewardship.



7,259 ha cleared of invasive tree species



609,000 m³/year water replenished



6,142 ha under improved management (agreements)



3,584 ha declared nature reserves



1,120,000 tCO2e emissions avoided

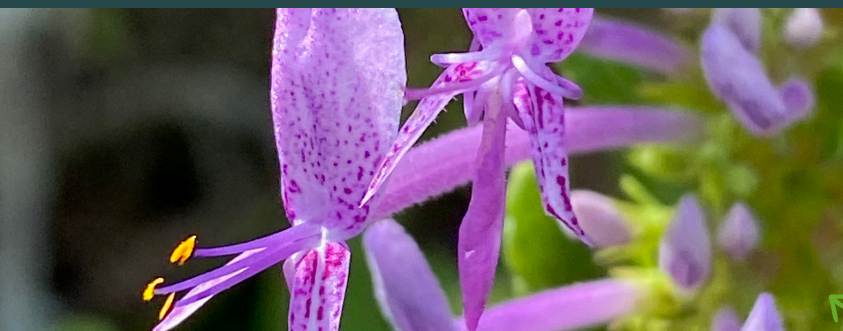


Find out more -
Catchments & Conservation



DATA & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Biosphere's knowledge systems are increasingly supporting decision-making at community and landscape level, marking a shift from data collection to action-oriented insight. During the year, **752 water quality data points** were collected, alongside **26,000 household surveys** and a cumulative **229,470 biodiversity observations** through iNaturalist. This growing evidence base is not only strengthening monitoring, but informing local responses. In communities, access to water quality data has enabled residents to better understand environmental challenges and take action, demonstrating the value of knowledge as a tool for empowerment.



752 water quality data points



26,000 household surveys



229,470 biodiversity observations on iNaturalist (cumulative)



1 New species described (*Thorncroftia coddii*)



CAPACITY BUILDING (PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES)

K2C's capacity building efforts have evolved from training delivery to enabling community-led financial and enterprise systems. Over the year, **110 micro-businesses** were trained and mentored, **24 savings groups** were facilitated, and **635 people** were supported to strengthen their livelihoods. These outcomes reflect a shift towards models that embed financial literacy, governance and collective agency within communities.

The growth of Eco-Savings and Credit Groups has enabled households to invest in opportunities such as reusable hygiene products, while supporting local producers like seamstresses to build viable micro-enterprises.



110 micro-businesses trained & mentored



> 1485 ppl attended K2C Events

Skills Development included:



Chainsaw Training (**10ppl**)



High Altitude Training (**12 qualified**)



Basic Restoration Training (**74ppl**)



Water monitoring (**31ppl**)



Find out more -
Community Solutions



INCREASED EMPLOYMENT & SUSTAINED LIVELIHOODS

K2C's livelihoods work is moving beyond short-term job creation towards more skilled and sustained economic pathways. In 2025–2026, **233 jobs** were created through restoration activities, while 4 SMMEs were supported in alien invasive plant clearing, strengthening local enterprise capacity. A further **110 vendors** were supported monthly through the Farmers Market, and **2 community-based tourism** projects were launched.

Importantly, investment in training has enabled restoration teams to build specialised skills, improving both the quality of work and the longer-term security of employment within the green economy.



233 jobs created



4 SMMEs supported in clearing



110 vendors supported monthly at Farmers Market



2 community tourism projects launched



24 savings groups facilitated



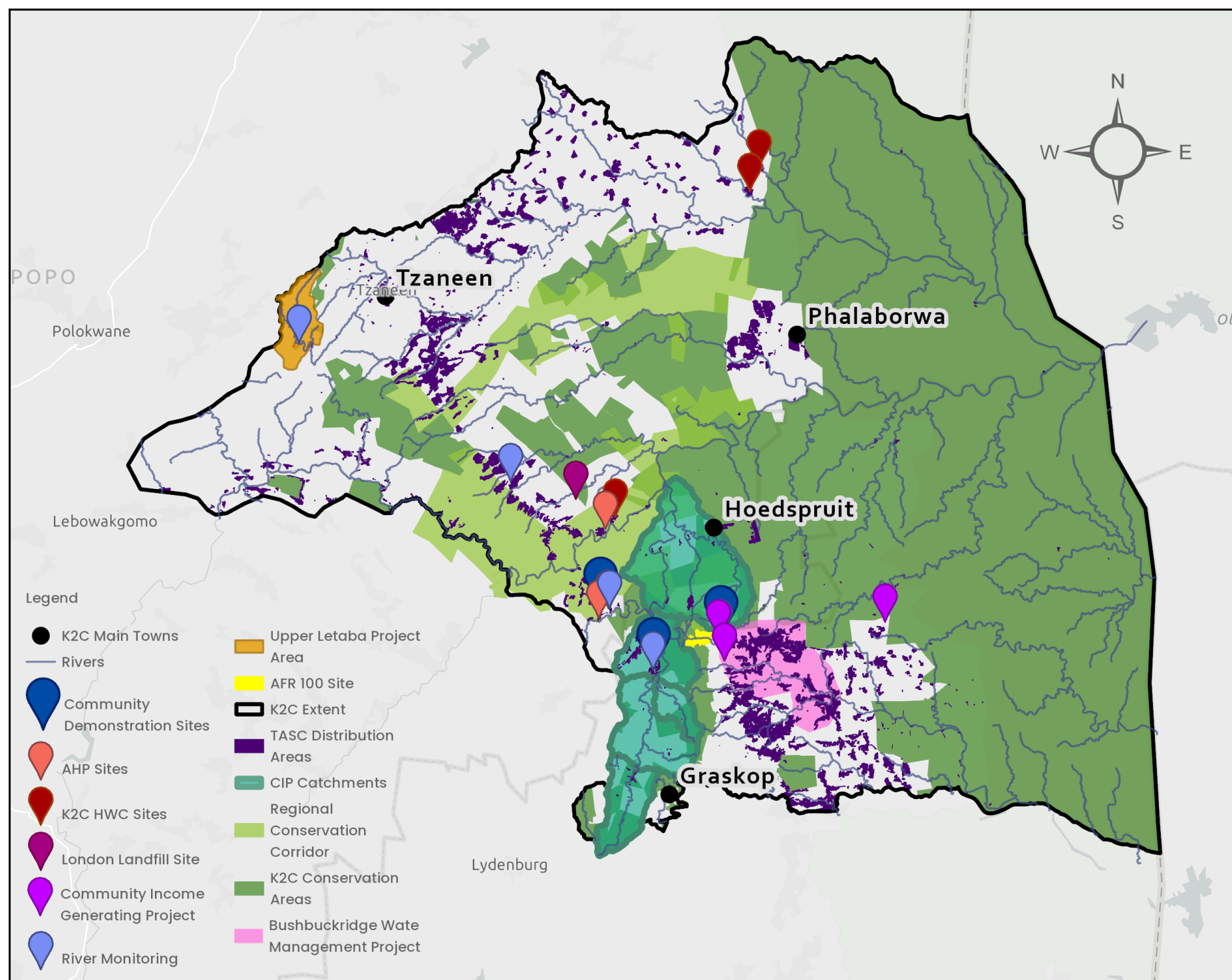
Find out more -
Nature Positive Livelihoods Demonstration

This impact was achieved through the implementation of the following **11 projects** across the K2C landscape.



2025-2026 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

| PARTNERING TO ACHIEVE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL LIFE IN THE K2C BIOSPHERE |



K2C Catchment Investment

This initiative aims to finance and implement a Catchment Investment Program (Water Fund) to protect the state of the Blyde River Catchment, and other key catchments into the future. This will be achieved through a more integrated and collaborative approach to restoring and protecting key catchments in the K2C region that benefit multiple downstream stakeholders. Key implementation initiatives include alien invasive plant clearing, sustainable rangeland management and protected area expansion.

PARTNERS: Conservation South Africa, The Nature Conservancy, Nature 4 Water, Conservation International



K2C Corridor

This initiative works to secure and improve management of key biodiversity and water corridors linking the Greater Kruger to the escarpment and Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve. These corridors will secure critical riparian habitats which provide breeding grounds and migratory routes between the Lowveld and the escarpment for various threatened species. Through this project properties will be better secured through various biodiversity stewardship mechanisms such as the formal declaration of protected areas (nature reserves or protected environments) or more flexible conservation agreements (OECMs). **PARTNERS:** Conservation Outcomes & Private Landowners



AFR100 (African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative)

The AFR100 initiative has been implemented since July 2022 in partnership with Conservation South Africa (CSA). The aim of this project is to restore 600ha of degraded land by clearing Alien Invasive plants in order to promote natural regeneration of indigenous vegetation. The secondary goal of the AFR100 project is to explore potential value chain opportunities such as using the Alien Invasive off-cuts to produce biochar, wood vinegar and wood chips which will support the establishment of SMME's to empower communities adjacent the Protected Area.

PARTNERS: Conservation South Africa & Sabi Sand Pfunanani Trust



Bushbuckridge Waste Management Project

This project aims to assess and improve waste management in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. It includes a Baseline Study to evaluate current waste systems, infrastructure, and challenges, providing essential data on waste generation, collection, and disposal. Additionally, a Feasibility Study will explore the potential establishment of a Beneficiation Centre, which could enhance recycling, create economic opportunities, and support sustainable waste management.

PARTNERS: University of the Western Cape, Aquila Environmental, The Moss Group



Community Demonstration Site (Phiring, Moremela & GaBoelang Villages)

Work in these villages demonstrates how sustainable land-use practices are enhancing eco-system services while contributing to sustainable livelihoods and creating a resilient community. This is achieved through climate smart agriculture, rangeland management & tourism initiatives.

PARTNERS: Conservation South Africa



Upper Letaba Clearing Project

This project focuses on removing alien invasive trees around the town on Haenertsburg in the Upper Letaba Catchment. This is to offset water used in the catchment by Coca-Cola.

PARTNERS: The Nature Conservancy & Coca-Cola



Community Income Generation Programme

This programme focuses on developing sustainable small, micro, and medium enterprises (SMMEs) that align with conservation goals. The initiative encompasses comprehensive planning and implementation of SMME development activities, including targeted training programmes that promote pro-nature livelihoods & monthly Hoedspruit Farmer's Market.

PARTNERS: Wild Impact, Conservation South Africa, Kulani Collective



Cookstove Project

A carbon project distributing & monitoring more than 450 000 improved cookstoves across the K2C region to help reduce fuel loads and as a result carbon emissions across the landscape.

PARTNERS: TASC



Absorbent Hygiene Products Project

The AHP project is a waste management approach, that looks at developing a collaborative governance system suitable for the disposal of diaper waste. The project uses a bottom-up approach of a co-governance model, through multi-stakeholder collaboration in 2x Pilot sites, that will result in the responsible disposal of diapers.

PARTNERS: University of the Western Cape



Human-Wildlife Conflict in the Greater Kruger Landscape

Finding mitigation measures to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and create spaces for Human-Wildlife coexistence for communities living adjacent to protected areas.

PARTNERS: EWT, Elephants Alive



London Landfill Community Recycling

This waste management beneficiation centre, located at the London Landfill site (Maruleng Municipality), aims to stimulate a waste circular economy for waste reclaimers and entrepreneurs within the K2C landscape.

PARTNERS: TASC & Maruleng Municipality

THANK YOU

Thank you to the committed members of the K2C Board for their strategic oversight and support in 2025-2026. This is evident in K2C achieving it's **14th consecutive clean audit**.



K2C managed a total budget of **R28 621 677** for 2025-2026.



Funded by **18** grants.

We gratefully acknowledge the investment of **R 23 437 048,23** from Global Affairs Canada in 2025-2026 through the Restoring African Rangelands Project, implemented by Conservation International together with K2C and other partners. This support strengthened our ability to scale innovative, landscape-level initiatives, deepen partnerships, and deliver meaningful outcomes for people and nature. By unlocking new opportunities and enhancing long-term sustainability, Global Affairs Canada's contribution has been instrumental in advancing our shared vision of resilient ecosystems and thriving communities.



Global Affairs
Canada

Affaires mondiales
Canada

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



Additional support was also given by our dedicated landscape funders and partners



...and the ongoing in kind support from: [ESRI](#) [Microsoft](#) [Letaba Wireless](#) [Canva](#) [Maruleng Municipality](#)



Subscribe to quarterly K2C
Newsletter



@k2c.biosphere



www.kruger2canyons.org