



*There is indeed a large movement to 'build back better' from the pandemic in a way that confronts the climate crisis. Attitudes are changing, but however good our intentions as individuals, it will take determined moves by industry and by national and local government to modify the environment so that we can all build on any attitude changes.*

EMILY KASRIEL

A MASS EXPERIMENT FOR THE CLIMATE,  
25 JUNE 2020, BBC FUTURE PLANET

# CLIMATE

## BUILD BACK BETTER

The efficacy of Conservation South Africa's climate change mitigation efforts hinges on how widely we cast the net in our consultative processes: from grassroots to government, to scientific and technical experts.

### Impact

For the period July 2018 to December 2019, nine municipalities participated in municipal planning discussions with Conservation South Africa team members. In the Namakwa District of the Northern Cape Province, 1,333 people were directly supported in improving their resilience to the ongoing drought and a further 3,901 people benefited indirectly from this support. Across all three demonstration landscapes, 1,637 people attended climate change-related training. Nationally and internationally, Conservation South Africa engaged with seven climate change networks, sharing lessons and building a greater understanding of community-based climate change response strategies.

### Ecosystem-based Adaptation

An Ecosystem-based Adaptation model is integral to our efforts to conserve ecosystems and reduce the consequences of climate change in rural communities. The approach is inclusive and multi-disciplinary, and allows stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, with a range of skills, to contribute to outcomes.

### Climate-smart municipalities

Vulnerability assessments were conducted for each demonstration site to enable us to determine the impact of adverse climatic conditions such as increasingly

variable rainfall, longer periods of little to no rain, rising temperatures, flooding and other extreme weather events. These assessments included Ecosystem-based Adaptation maps, to help prioritise our work.

Ensuring that vulnerability assessments and maps are included in local policy and climate change response strategies is critical. The Alfred Nzo and Namakwa District Municipalities have included environmental profiles in their Integrated Development Plans. In the Kruger-to-Canyons Biosphere Region, Conservation South Africa has offered training to partners, including the local Bushbuckridge Municipality and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

### National policy inputs

Conservation South Africa engages in policy debates at national and local level. In 2018, we contributed to the formulation of the National Climate Change Bill and the National Adaptation Strategy, both of which have yet to be finalised.

## 4 ELEMENTS OF AN ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION APPROACH

- 1. Restore wetlands** for flood protection and water storage to help people adapt to the effects of climate-induced floods.
- 2. Introduce climate-resilient animal breeds** that can cope with extreme temperatures.
- 3. Management grasslands and rangelands sustainably** to enhance pastoral livelihoods and increase resilience to climate-induced drought and flooding.
- 4. Empower vulnerable communities** by restoring or managing ecosystems to enhance livelihoods to help people cope with the impacts of climate change.

## ADAPTATION FUND SMALL GRANTS FACILITY

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries approved the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as the National Implementing Entity for a [Small Grants Facility](#) supported by the Adaptation Fund and executed by SouthSouthNorth Trust. The Namakwa District Municipality gave their support for Conservation South Africa to act as their facilitating agency for a period of four years.

Namakwa District was hit by a seven-year drought that peaked in 2019. Conservation South Africa facilitated the transfer of funds on behalf of the Small Grants Facility to a wide variety of civil society organisations for a total of 16 interventions to promote climate-smart agriculture, climate-resilient livelihoods, and climate-proof settlements. Examples of these interventions and their achievements follow here.

### SaveAct

Twenty savings groups were established by [SaveAct](#) through the Small Grants Facility. These savings groups – spread across Namakwa District and comprising mostly women – enable financial sustainability for vulnerable groups. Many of the small-scale livestock farmers involved in savings groups used their savings to buy fodder during the drought.

### Environmental Monitoring Group

Thirty-seven households in Soebatsfontein and the Suid Bokkeveld area had gutters and water tanks installed to improve their capacity to harvest rainwater. Five water-wise gardens have been built and construction is underway on several others.

Communities also continue to benefit from compost toilets and insulated rooms installed through the project; both technologies are integral to creating climate-proof homes.

### Gondwana Alive

In Leliefontein, five earth dams were refurbished to make them accessible to livestock farmers. Farms in the communities of Leliefontein and Nourivier also continue to benefit from the offspring of 65 rams from climate-resilient sheep breeds introduced earlier on in the project.

The sustainable grazing plan that has been developed, coupled with the skills acquired from training provided by the project, and hardier livestock, have increased the resilience of farms in the area.

### Concordia Landbou Boerevereniging

In Concordia, 12 livestock shelters were built to protect livestock from the increasingly extreme weather conditions in the area. Each structure includes two water tanks to capture and store rainwater for times of drought.

Water tanks were also installed on the commonage to give farmers access to additional water sources, which enables them to implement better grazing practices. In some areas there was no water because of damaged infrastructure and in other areas water was available but could not be stored because there were no facilities.

### Kamiesberg Heritage Foundation

[Mobile shelters](#) allow herders improved access to grazing areas that either have no housing or structures that are in poor condition. The shelters are also designed to harvest rainwater to provide fresh drinking water. In Steinkopf, Swakara Cooperative, the implementing partner for the Kamiesberg Heritage Foundation, acquired three climate-smart caravans and ten domes were installed in Kharkams.

### Heiveld Cooperative

[Heiveld Cooperative](#) connected tanks, water pipes and a solar pump to an existing water source to enable them to pump and store water for processing the organic, hand-picked rooibos tea they produce and package locally. The cooperative has also introduced mulching techniques on 23 hectares of farmland to reduce water loss during drought periods.

### Coastal Livelihoods Foundation

Many fishers are only able to work for a few days a year because of the increase in misty and stormy conditions that have resulted from changing weather patterns.

In Hondeklipbaai and Port Nolloth, the small-scale fishers' cooperative worked with the [Coastal Livelihoods Foundation](#) to develop and implement an improved early warning system and a disaster risk response plan to decrease the risks of fishing and improve safety at sea.

Mentorship and training on the [ICT4Fisheries digital platform, an initiative of Abalobi](#), were integrated into the mechanism for safety at sea, and included training in financial literacy. The hope is that the platform will be used by fishers' cooperatives as a tool to improve market access and financial sustainability.

*We depend on government grants and still maintain a traditional way of life on our farm. It gets very cold and wet here in winter and we lose livestock. These shelters are for us a relief as we could never afford them. We thank the project for the support.*

**JAKOB (JAPIE) AND MAGRIETA (NEENTJIE) CLOETE**  
CONCORDIA LANDBOU BOEREVERENIGING

