



Taking stock on the implementation of the Biodiversity Economy Program: A case of Umfolozi Biodiversity Economy Node (UBEN)

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Biodiversity Economy In South African Context

The biodiversity economy of South Africa encompasses the businesses and economic activities that either directly depend on biodiversity for their core business or that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through their activities.

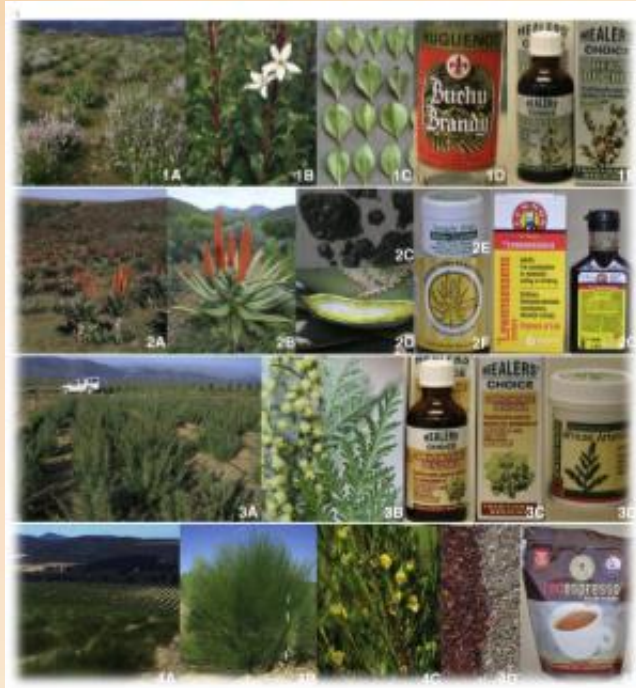
The 3 sub-sectors of the Biodiversity Economy (bio-prospecting, wildlife economy, and eco-tourism) demonstrate the potential for significant future development and growth through their different value chains.

The biodiversity economy, therefore, has an important role to play in generating economic development, growth, and transformation opportunities.

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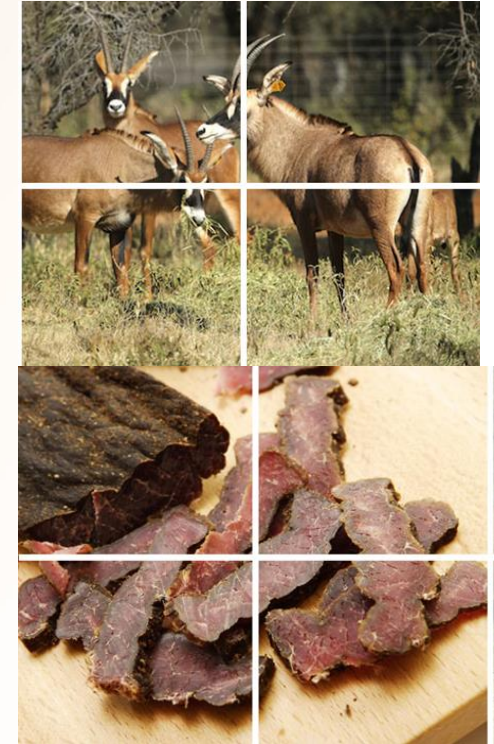
Biodiversity Economy sub-sectors



Bioprospecting sub-sector



Ecotourism sub-sector



Wildlife economy

Figure 1: Depiction of the 3 sub-sectors in biodiversity economy

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Umfolozu Biodiversity Economy Node (UBEN)

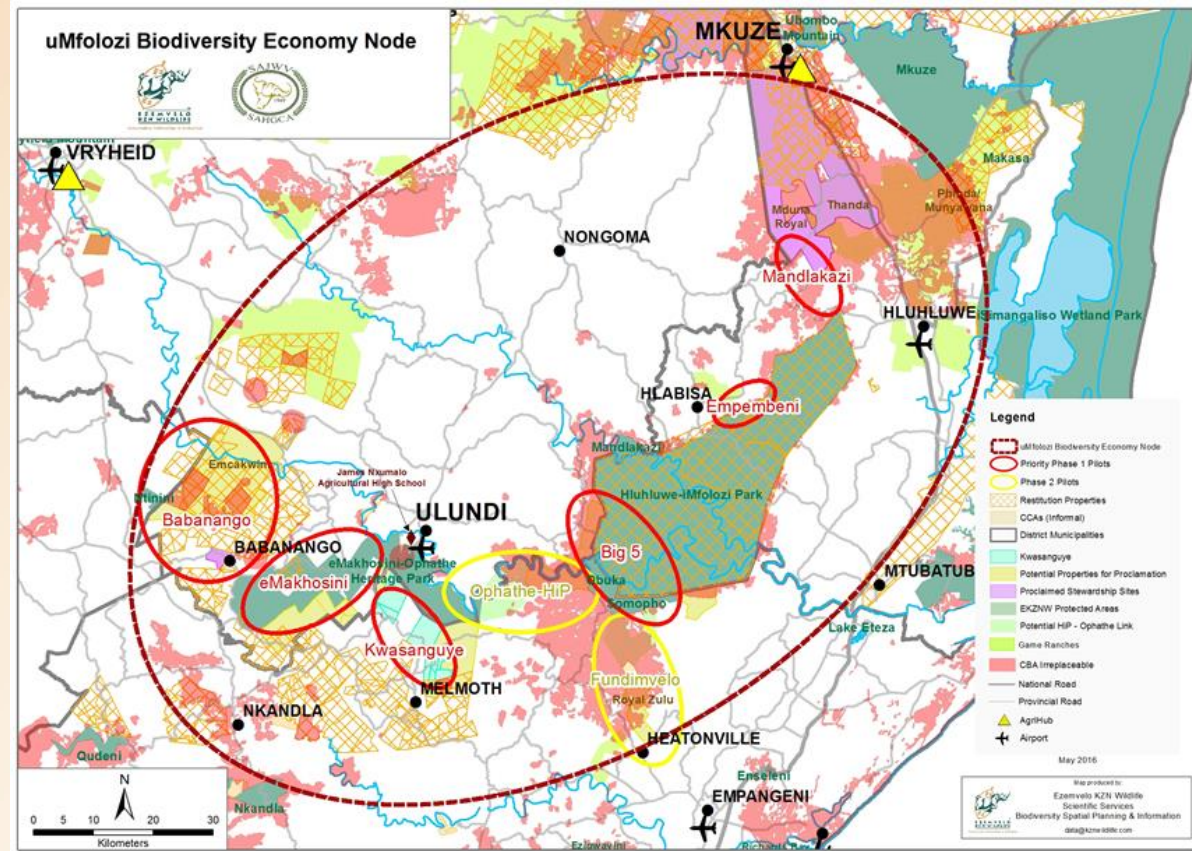


Figure 2: Map showing demarcation of the umfolozu biodiversity economy node area.

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Aims and objectives

- ❖ Foster collaboration and cooperation on ecological, social, and economic aspects between role players.
- ❖ Support the development of community-based initiatives and improve benefit flows to people in and around the UBEN.
- ❖ Support and promote compatible land-use practices within and adjacent to the UBEN.
- ❖ Promote participation and upliftment of youth and women.
- ❖ Promote sustainable and responsible resource-use approaches.

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UBEN projects

Projects at node inception

- ❖ Babanango game reserve
- ❖ Umfolozi Big 5 game reserve
- ❖ eMakhosini/Ophathe
- ❖ KwasaNguye game reserve
- ❖ Mayibuye game reserve

Operational projects to date

- ❖ Babanango game reserve
- ❖ Umfolozi Big 5 game reserve
- ❖ Somkhanda game reserve
- ❖ Kameelkop nature reserve

Number of prospective projects

- ❖ 10

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Protected area expansion

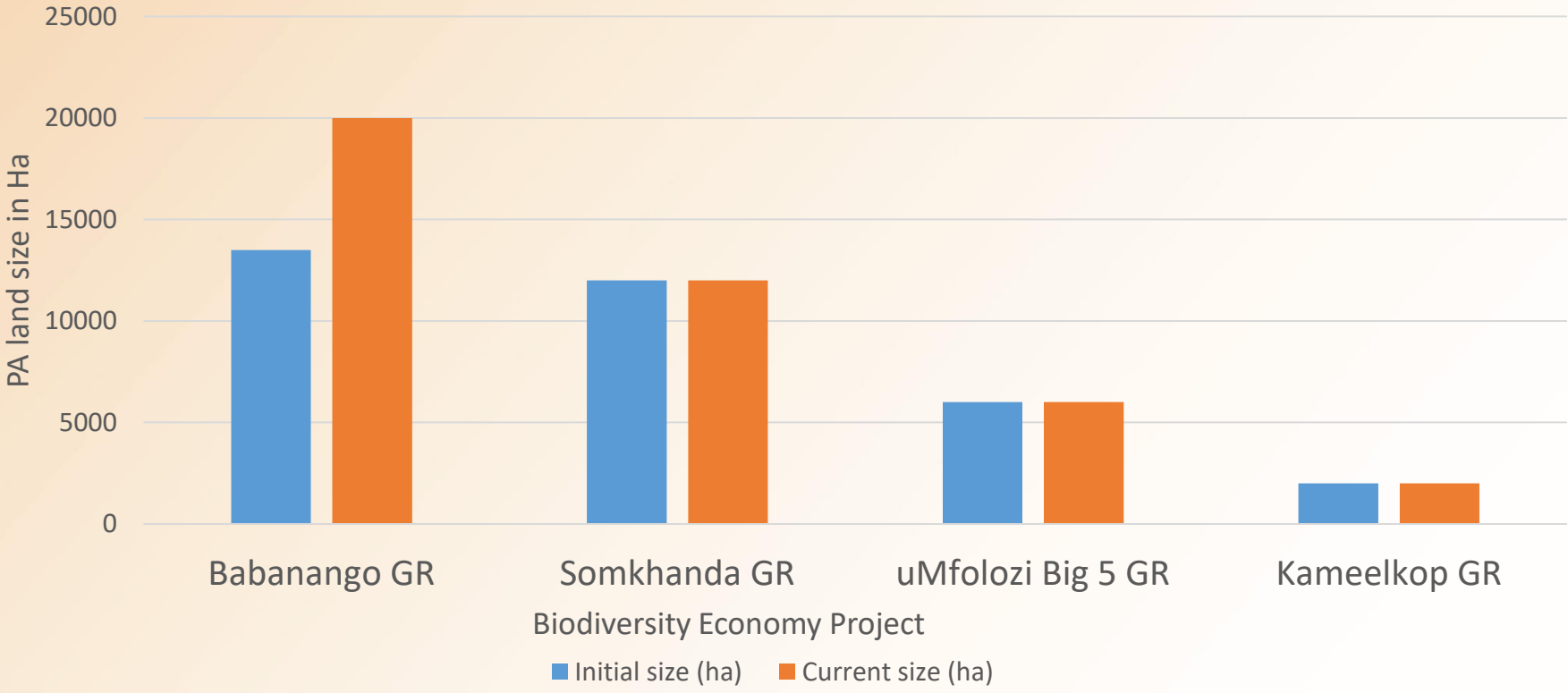


Figure 3: Graph showing size of the project at inception and current size.



Job opportunities created

Table 1: Estimated number of jobs created and nature of employment (%)

Biodiversity economy project	Estimated number of employment opportunities (numbers)	Nature of employment %	
		Permanent	Temporal
Babanango GR	429	20	80
Umfolozi Big 5 GR	369	30	70
Somkhanda GR	165	20	80
Kameelkop GR	7	71	29



Job opportunities created

Gender domination within the different level of employment

- ❖ **Entry level positions** - Dominated by males over females across all projects.
- ❖ **Middle level positions** – Dominated by females in 2 projects and by both genders in 2 other projects.
- ❖ **Senior level positions** - Dominated by males across projects with one project that has both males and females at senior level.

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Ownership

Ownership of assets between communities and private partners

Immovable assets

- ❖ Land and structures are owned by communities across most projects.
- ❖ In 2/4 of projects private partners also own portions of land that they bought and built structures.

Movable assets

- ❖ Vehicles and equipment are mostly owned by private partners across projects.
- ❖ In 1/4 projects the community owns the movable assets in the business.

Conservation improvement

Biodiversity conservation measures

- ❖ Biodiversity stewardship
- ❖ Partnerships with NGOs
- ❖ Dropping fences with neighboring protected areas
- ❖ Biodiversity co-management agreements
- ❖ Game donation to strengthen gene pool

Operational vs conservation management costs

- ❖ It takes years for BE projects to be operational and start generating income.
- ❖ Projects are heavily reliant on investors, NGO partners or government for financial support.
- ❖ Programs such as the NRM, EM and BRREP are also helpful.

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UBEN current status

Information sharing documents

- ❖ Terms of reference
- ❖ Game donation guideline
- ❖ Presentation guidelines for prospective projects
- ❖ UBEN brochure



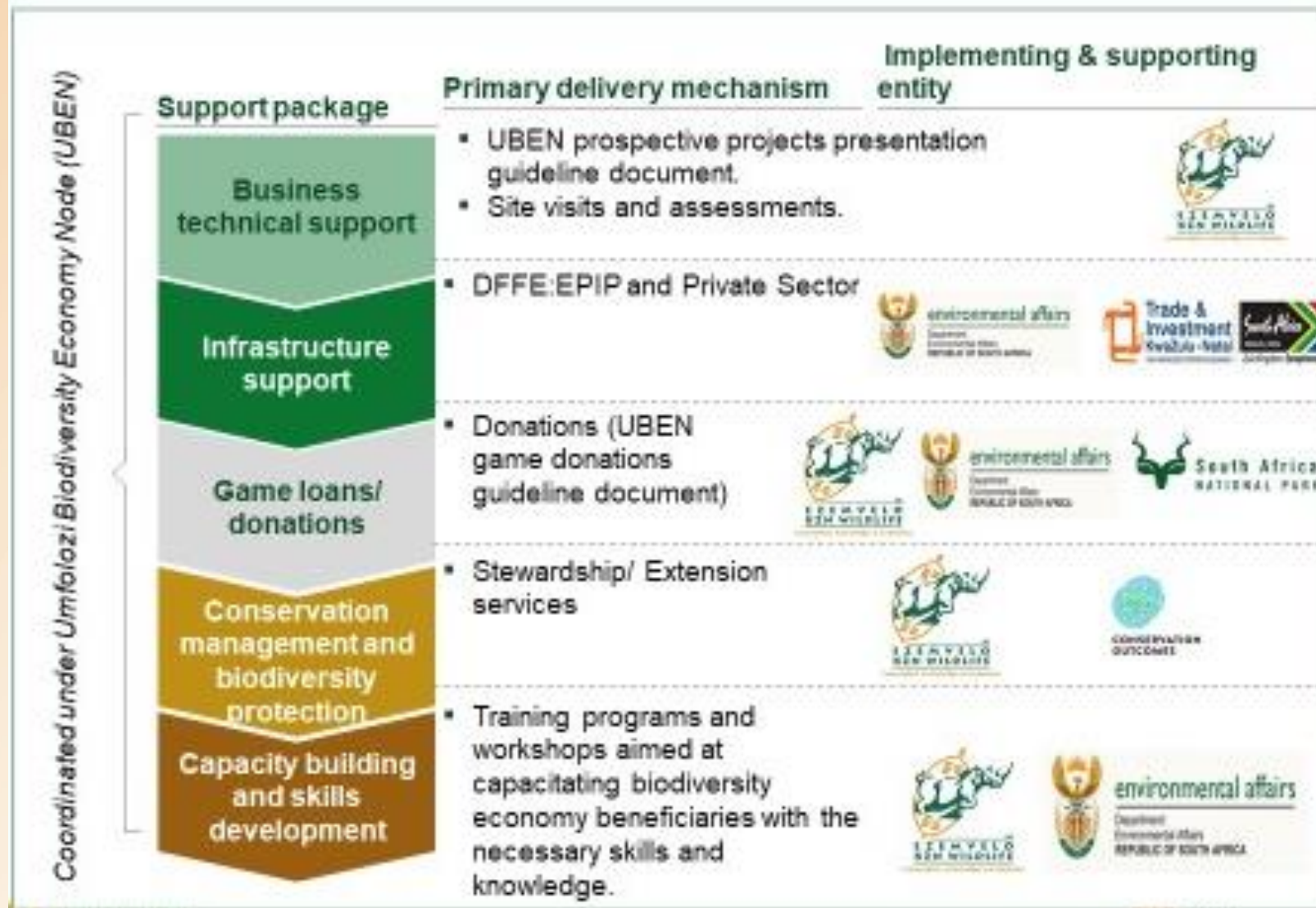
Presenting prospective Biodiversity Economy Projects – Guideline Document

This document is developed to provide guidance to project owners, representatives, NGOs or any other stakeholder with an interest to present a potential Biodiversity Economy (BE) project to Umfolozi Biodiversity Economy Node (UBEN). This guideline document will not only ensure a standard and consistent presentation of potential Biodiversity Economy projects, but will also

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Support mechanisms made available to UBEN projects



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Highlights

Nature conservation

- ❖ Contributing towards conserving nature (indigenous and endangered species).
- ❖ Sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of people.

Empowerment

- ❖ The creation of job opportunities
- ❖ Implementing projects/programs that address immediate community needs.
- ❖ Seeing other economic opportunities that are linked to the project.

Longevity and expansion

- ❖ Expanding on business operation or value chains = revenue generating streams.
- ❖ Sustainable management of the business for long periods despite the challenges.

Partnerships

- ❖ Developing and maintaining good relations with stakeholders/partners.
- ❖ Receiving positive feedback from customers.

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Challenges

Scarcity of Finance mechanisms

- ❖ A lot of banks do not fund tourism initiatives.
- ❖ Government grants are not enough.
- ❖ Communities have to rely of foreign investors.

Lack of skills and knowledge

- ❖ It is hard to find skills and expertise relevant to the projects due to lack of formal education.
- ❖ Most communities are not aware of the economic opportunities that can be unlocked through conservation.

Support from communities and relevant structures

- ❖ Battling to get the community to support the project.
- ❖ Dealing with counter land claims.
- ❖ Lack of support from community structures (ITB).

Slow delivery on basic government services

- ❖ The lack of service delivery in rural communities put a strain on biodiversity economy projects.

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- Nel, Lizanne. “Editor.” SA Hunters - SA Jagters, July 7, 2022. <https://www.sahunters.co.za/index.php/conservation-programs/biodiversity-economy>.

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Thank
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Conservation, Partnerships & Ecotourism