

2nd Catchment-based Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure

Feedback to the UCP

9 November 2021



Science and Innovation
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Water and Sanitation
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
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YAKWAZULU-NATALI



mahlathini
development foundation

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Where do we come from?

South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) hosted the first Ecological Infrastructure Dialogue in **2012**,

- Leading to advances in thinking and experience with integrating ecological infrastructure in a range of sectors
- Opened a scope to upscale and unlock resources to deal with the obvious under-investments in ecological infrastructure
- Initiatives for investment in ecological infrastructure to support the national development priorities of service delivery, job creation and economic growth as well as socio-economic development emerged from those discussions and collaboration became visible.
- SANBI's RDI project funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to establish research, development and innovation (RDI) platforms for ecological infrastructure in two river catchments namely uMzimvubu and the Berg and Breede (2016 – 2019)
- The RDI Platforms supported learning between initiatives over the year, strong collaborations, where research and active communities of practise (CoPs) at the catchments provided core niches for special working groups to explore successful and new ways of doing things.

Linkages between National and Catchment-based Indaba

In 2018 – 1st National Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure

The Indaba drew on delegates from:

- National, regional and local government; academia; research institutions and civil society and presents a moment to draw from collective knowledge, to foster coordination of activities and to deepen and expand relationships.
- Sharing lessons between practitioners and researchers using the Catchment-based EI research, development and innovation (RDI) Platform. As well as strengthening stakeholder commitment.
- Also launched the Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security Project (EI4WS) aimed at unlocking biodiversity and water benefits from investments in water infrastructure.

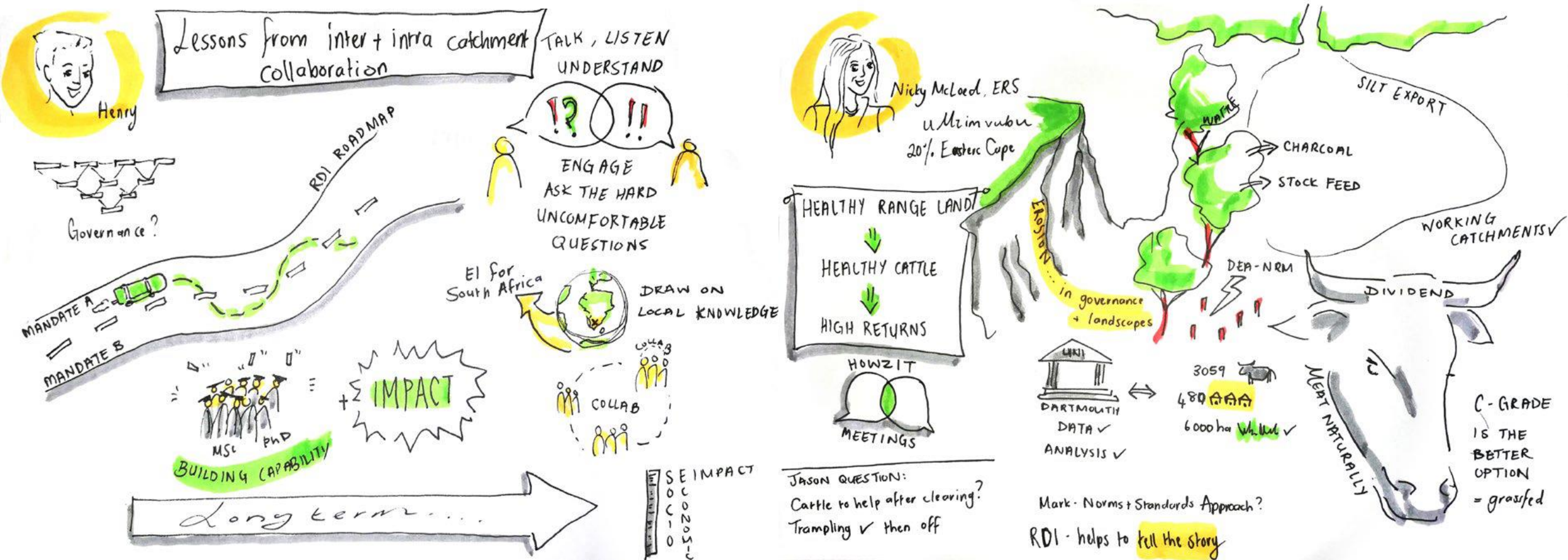
Some of the valuable and eye-opening quotes:

‘Eroded governance leads to eroded landscapes; enhanced livelihoods rely on restored ecosystems requiring restored foundational governance.’

‘Sustainability is a result of stakeholder interaction, not just a technical property of the ecosystem.’



Moving from National to Catchment-based Indaba



First Catchment-based Indaba – 21-23 October 2019

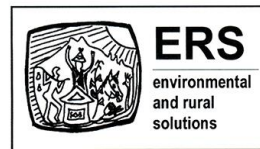
In 2019 – 1st Catchment-based Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure

Under the theme: ***Amanzi aphuma apha* (water comes from here).**

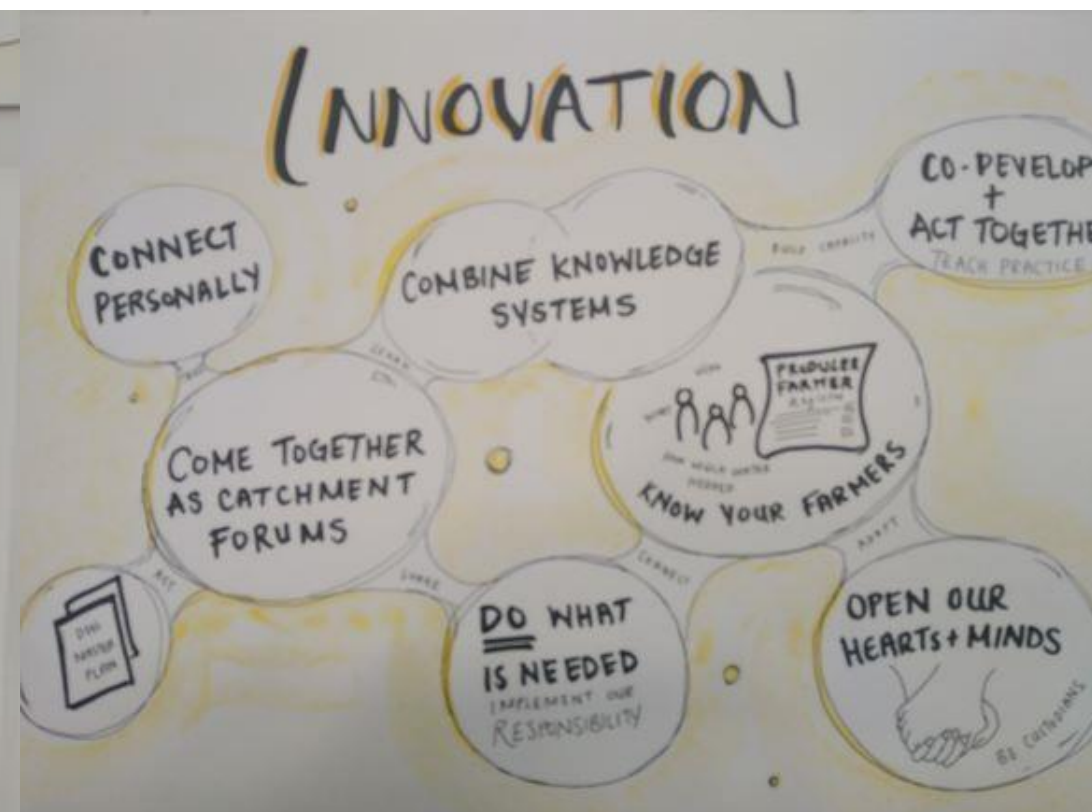
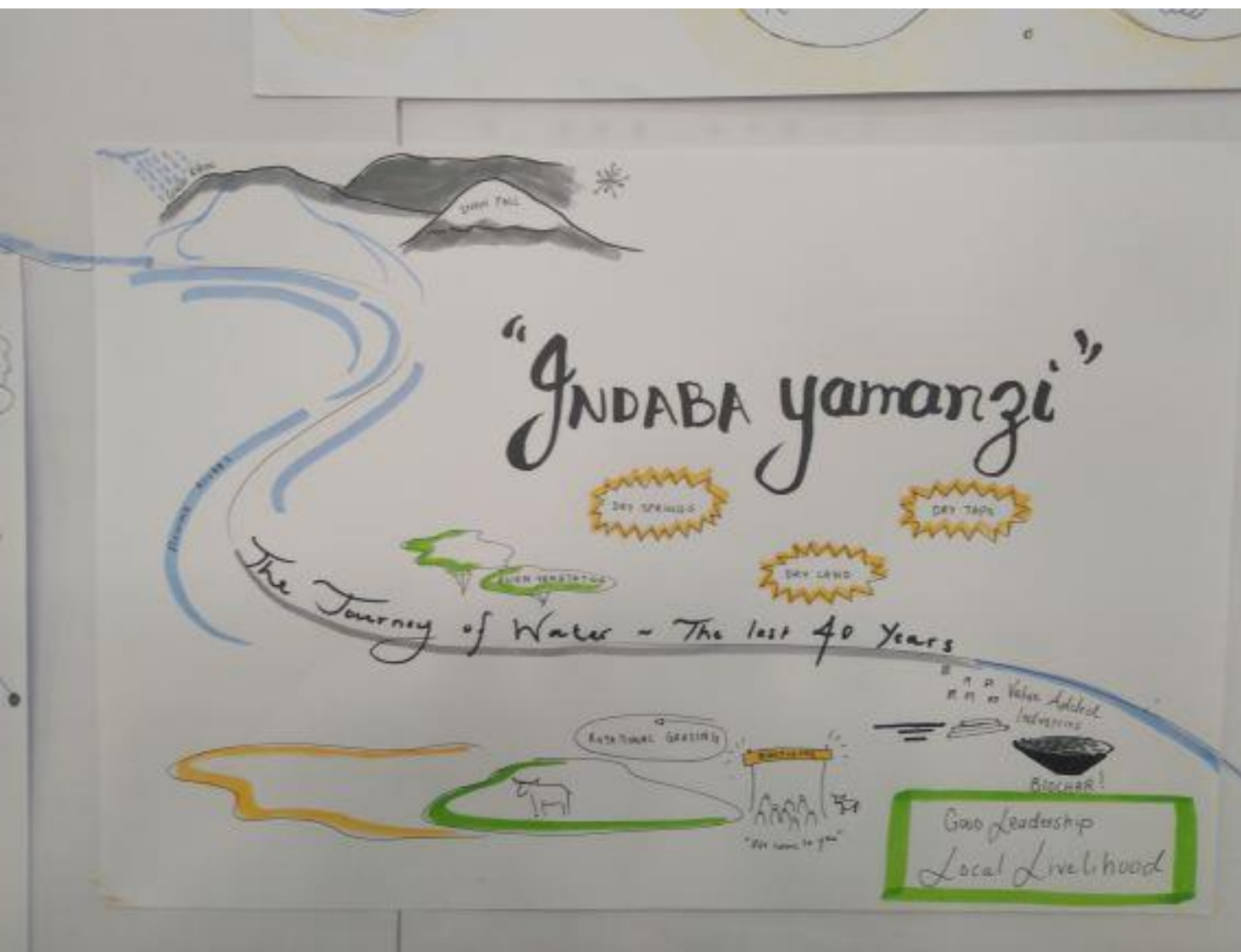
- Showcasing of the concept and enabling learning around the practice of investing in ecological infrastructure,
- Alignment of interventions across water catchment areas to improve water and food security, and rural livelihoods.
- Launched the wider uMzimvubu Catchment Water Source Partnership (WSP) by WWF-SA,
- Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development introduced their Producer/Farmer Register for South Africa, which is aimed at establishing a database of all farmers in the country.



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The journey into the catchments



2nd National Indaba

In 2019 – 2nd National Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure (3-4 March 2021) –held Virtually

- SANBI, with a range of partners, has managed to create spaces to converse about the role of ecological infrastructure in South Africa's development agenda.
- This evolved into a more focused dialogue on the ecological infrastructure and water security nexus and at the nexus of built and ecological infrastructure
- Experiences and lessons learnt from the Catchment-based Indaba held in Matatiele in 2019 built the momentum to convene **the second National Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure**, under the theme of **the built and ecological infrastructure nexus in South Africa's water security agenda**.

The Indaba deliberated on the following impact areas at the nexus of built and ecological infrastructure:

- Policy; Planning and Design, Financing, Practice as well as Research & Innovation



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Second Catchment-based Indaba – 2-4 Nov 2021

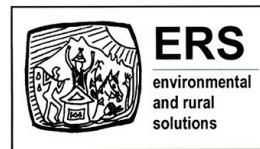
Last week (2-4 November 2021) – 2nd Catchment-based Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure - Hybrid

Under the theme: **Lapho kukhona imithombo yamanzi kunokuphila (Where there's water, there's life)**

- In support of the Living Catchments project, that is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation through the Water Research Commission as part of the implementation of the Water Research Development and Innovation Roadmap.
- The project is aimed at enhancing research, development and innovation for socio-economic impact through engaged Communities of Practice in key catchments associated with Strategic Water Source Areas. It will do this by working through and supporting existing collaborative platforms at catchment level to integrate research, planning and implementation. Through the project, lessons from collaborations aimed at strengthening water governance at a catchment level in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo will be shared.



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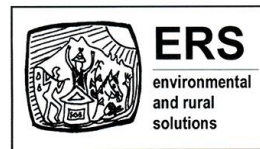
Second Catchment-based Indaba – 2-4 Nov 2021

The aims of the Catchment –based Indaba were:

- To get an understanding of the people and the dynamics as well as processes and culture of the Thukela catchment as they relate to water security.
- To collectively surface a conversation about priorities for water security at the nexus of built and ecological infrastructure at the catchment.
- To deepen our understanding of the different roles that individuals and organizations can play in supporting the priorities for the catchment (i.e., the three spheres of government, academia, research institutions, civil society organisations and community members).
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/152548658@N03/albums/72157720123086366>



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Day 1 - Group 3 field visit on the Use of grey water & drip for irrigation system in household vegetable tunnel production



Day 2 - Youth Learning Exchange



Day 3 – Plenary session



Day 3 – Reflections of past 2 days

Thinking
back on
the past
two days:

What
stands
out for
you?

Stands out - How
women are
empowered and
engaged in the sites
that were visited

Stands out -
Inspiring to see the
collaboration
between
communities and
other partners and
people being
stewards for nature

Stand out-
Communities
around Indaba has
managed to dig
boreholes so that
they have water for
gardening and
doing domestic
work.

Stand out - conflict -
way of life of
community, and the
way of life for
people facilitating
the processes -
difficult to be in the
shoes of the people
on the ground.

Importance of water, and the
need for engagement and
education and brining about
change that improves lives,
availability of food

There is a clear
separation between
reality and
perception. It is
important to do
ground truthing.

What stands out as
really important for
the communities of
the Thukela
catchment? (maybe
for the catchment
spaces we work in
or are linked to)

Stands out - The
collaborative effort
in communities.
People working
together to find
solutions to their
challenges.

Stands out - The
local context is
understood by the
partners - it is not
top down.

The desperation of
people, the issues in
service delivery,
"necessity is the
mother of
invention"

Stands out: is
desperation, issues
of service delivery,
and mismatch of
funding available

Increase forums - funding to
enable people to attend -
involve community

Bergville CMF - Tugela-Vaal scheme -
expansion has impacted lives and
livelihoods

What
surprised
you?

How deeply
emotional the
experience
has been.

What may
have
disappointed
you?

What surprised me -
As much as we
know theoretically
how people and
nature connects it is
really powerful to
see it in action and
be reminded of that
connection.

Over the past two
days I have learnt that
it is important to use
the water in the
correct manner
because a lot of rural
communities have no
water supply due to
climate change.

Disappointed:
That it takes
so long to
focus on "the
people"

Disappointed: There
is not equal value of
service for all
citizens. You should
not have to beg for
something that is
your right.

Bergville CMF - Tugela-Vaal scheme -
expansion has impacted lives and
livelihoods

Words that stay
with us as we leave
Indaba -
collaboration,
women,
communities,
service delivery

What have you
learnt that may
change what you do
or how you do it
when you leave the
Indaba?

Keeping in mind what
I have seen from the
communities and the
reflections from
others, I will think
more carefully about
how I work into the
policy and strategy
development space
and the impact for
people in these

Think about
how we
approach
research
especially in
communities.

Surprised: how
practical people can
be - solution based
thinking. Great to
have talks &
discussion, but we
should find solutions
by the people for the
people.

Surprise: The
innovativeness of
people who don't
have technical
knowledge but are
practical

Disappointed to
note that the people
at the source areas
of our water are
struggling and don't
have adequate
access or quality of
the resource

Reminded to stop and
look, learn, and listen
to those living in
catchments to see the
optimal possibilities
(practical solutions
emanating from lived
realities, not
perceived reality)

Learnt: Partnerships
with University
(tertiary education)
for pilot projects in
rural communities
and learnerships

For me from this is the
importance of
working through
catchments/
community
champions as key to
lay the foundation of
trust with the local
communities to
enable meaningful
engagements and

When I leave Indaba
I want to share the
knowledge I have
gained with my
colleagues so that
learn the important
of using water in a
sustainable manner.

Day 3 – Reflections of past 2 days



Day 3 – Plenary session



Day 3 – Certificate of recognition to participants



Next Catchment-based Indaba – 31 October - 4 Nov 2022

3rd Catchment-based Indaba – 2022

To be hosted by the Olifants Catchment Conveners (Kruger to Canyons Biosphere – K2C)

Planning has begun....



Thank you

