



UCP 30th QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2020

Time: 10:00 - 12:00

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Ayanda Cele (WWF), the UCP deputy chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Opening prayer by Chief Kuali

Apologies: Dr Botai (SAWS), Pumla Mzazi (DEDEAT), Chief Moshoeshoe; Mr Tozamile Lukhalo (DRLLRD)

2. Summary of meetings this year (Nicky McLeod, ERS)

27th quarterly session in January, discussions - living catchment project, update on implementation activities; wattle clearing, spring protection, rangeland management, the grazing plans - challenge in January due to FMD breakout, drought then covid. Link with FSC - driving the biomass value adding. Possible establishment of a Ramsar site...

Convened 2 virtual meetings, 28th April & 29th August - main focus 'how do we cope with covid'. Local implementing partners, ERS, CSA, Lima, Meat naturally got essential services working permit and were able to host 4 mobile auction – observing all the safety protocols. 65% of the sellers in these auctions indicated that selling livestock was their only source of income during covid. Collaborative proposals, two to Greentrust - both approved for spring upgrade in response to urgent potable water need; EFTEON proposal for landscape into long term monitoring.

3. MoU revision and new partners signing (Joyce Loza, MDTP)

In 2019 - revision of the 20-year strategy - implemented in 5 year phases. Institutional arrangement and legalities - forum not a programme or a legal entity rather a partnership forum - unanimous decision to remove the “p” for programme. In the MoU point 5, if by consensus, parties agree to amend the MoU or extend its duration, secretariat shall request all parties to give written consent within a period of not less than 2 months. Receiving requests from partners with interest to join through signing the MoU, but need to first identify issues that need to be rectified in the MoU, context has not been changed just the name. Allow partners who want to sign the current MoU as it might take long to consult with all partners.

Questions & discussions

Limiting factor for potential new partner's participation – will circulate and notify all partners before making changes - rejuvenating element for existing partners to remind them of the UCP activities

Suggestions: - having different categories/ forms of partners - active local implementing partners, donor partners, strategic thinking partners, organs of state partners, people who come to meetings, people actively sharing.

- classifying partners in the document, present partners, and their roles
- dedicated meeting as other partners are not represented, MoU has not been circulated, the request to review is also not known. Agree on dates to circulate letters and MoU requesting revision.
- Chairpersonship is one year, consider rotating for other partners to chair. Ms Loza was appointed in November 2018 and has been in office for 2 years.
- Core to arrange and discuss this

4. Updates, reports and inputs from partners

a) Launch of Living Catchments project (Dan'sile Cindi, SANBI)

Second phase of the RDI platform project that was funded by DSI, ERS coordinator for uMzimvubu, Living lands for berg 'n breede - supporting communities of practice, enabling collaboration and co-learning that is informed by science and research. The living catchment project - phase 2, expanding and exploring into two new catchments (Tugela & Oliphants), funded by DSI, managed by WRC

Aims of the projects. 3 components or clusters: -

- Cluster 1: - Enabling collaboration and co-learning, informed by research, innovation and best practices.

- Cluster 2 & 3:- render the science and transformative social learning, facilitation bringing practitioners together to ensure their work is visible and recognised, lead - Tanya
- Cluster 3;- Expansion and strengthening our practice of policy advise and mainstreaming capabilities, lead - Alex Marsh

Also has student support element. Have appointed 4 catchment conveners, for the uMzimvubu – ERS. Presidential public stimulus package - to create 349 jobs, via DEA NRM - working through existing partnership. ERS, to work closely with Environmental Vanguard in hosting 61 ecochamps in the upper and lower uMzimvubu catchment.

Comments and questions

- Advert for students not specific, additional students will focus on research needs identified in our research meetings, will also consider type of applications being received.
- DEDEAT has a research unit, requesting to get feedback from students already doing research and adverts – to incorporate in the development for possible collaborations
- Research colloquium – about current student's projects. Also Tsitsa science management meeting with research updates – can also be accessed through the website

(i) Ecochamps programme - uTugela catchment (Xolani Sibiyi, MDTP)

Employment of 15 Eco-Champs in the Tugela River Catchment in response to the Government stimulus fund aimed at stimulating the economy and job creation in response to COVID-19. Recruitment approach is guided by EPWP – addressing inclusivity, transformation and redress, empowering women & youth. Implementation approach recognises the SWSA and focuses on aspects which encapsulate the protection of Water Sources Areas. Key performance areas: Grazing & Livestock Management; Fire Management; Climate Resilient Agriculture; Invasive Alien plant management; resilient, sustainable water-based community livelihood projects

Progress to date: Community Food gardens AmaZizi, training in grazing vegetation assessments

Questions and comments

A lot of diversity in the activities in these catchments – showcasing differences in the landscape, catchments and how they doing different capacity developments

- Upper uMzimvubu Catchment (Phumla Nyembezi, Ecochamps)

22 Ecochamps from 6 Traditional Authority areas under the proposed stewardship protected. Key performance areas:- Protection of springs in communities; Grazing management; Alien plant management; Assist with consultation for MTTM protected environment; Maintain effective communication - liaising with communities, share on social media and do covid awareness; Clean-up and other awareness with communities

Comments and Questions

- Waste management highlighted as a big issue – need to work with communities and do awareness & discuss possible opportunities especially for youth
- View waste management as a collective problem, bring different stakeholders and role-players together to make sure we keep these discussions and work collectively
- How is DAFF involvement? Are awareness and training done in schools? DAFF has extension officers in the regions
- The local municipality appreciates all the support and assistance especially in communities where they don't provide waste management services - trying to provide the service to the rural area. Ecochamps work will assist a lot and the municipality will employ 60 more interns through the green deeds programme.
- There is an opportunity for research, preserving the data for scientific evidence maybe to influence policy.

- Lower uMzimvubu Catchment (Sinegugu Zukulu, Environmental Vanguard)

- Building onto existing initiatives – working on tourism development – building a lodge at KwaNyana river mouth - hosted DEDEAT scientific team to form partnerships with research on the freshwater streams surrounding that lodge and 2 of the ecochamps are based within that site in order to build a database of information
- 4 KPA's; research and interviews on biodiversity; governance on communal land; Biodiversity surveys on communal land; Propagation of the endemic plants; Research on medicinal traditional plants within Pondoland - are species disappearing, are they still there, are they becoming extinct locally? - opportunity to be able to enhance and to build a foundation for the greater future for the ongoing work

Comments and questions

- How do we arrange a learning exchange between the upper and lower uMzimvubu catchment ecochamps? – this can be done through catchment conveners who will be convening the learning platform twice a year, can include this as an exchange for youth, bringing build and EI together. Still have catchment-based indaba, this is for the inter-catchment learning, champions from catchment come together through the LCP not PES.
- How do we bridge the gap between the legislation and the traditional governance, ensure its recognised and respected

b) Matatiele Watershed Stewardship Update (Nicky McLeod, ERS)

Securing 54 000 hectares the upper uMzimvubu catchment, along the Lesotho border. Process driven by residents (traditional authorities) in the landscape not imposed by outsiders. Core team driving the MTTM - local NGO's, contralesa, ANDM, local municipality, ECPTA, MDTP, DEDEAT – responsible for liaising, outreach, biodiversity assessment and importantly working in the buffer zone - management plan underway by Conservation outcomes. Management defined by land right users and holders - ecochamps doing spring protection, grazing management, alien clearing etc. Have FSC groups and corporate funded alien clearing teams. More than 80 properties in the proposed area for declaration - DRDLR involved in the community resolution as it is a communal area - Yonela doing outreach for co-creation of the management plan, through traditional authorities and communities

c) Freshwater Health Index: Stakeholder Engagement (Silindile Mtshali, CSA)

- Tool to assess the basin health - combines ecological integrity with ecosystem services and water governance
- Key elements of the FHI - 3 different pillars:-
 - ecosystem vitality – specific elements in the landscape - EI
 - Ecosystem services – what are the benefits, are they adequate and enough
 - Governance and stakeholders to evaluate how is the water related governance in the landscape doing

Goals: assess the freshwater health status and strength. Vision: - to help and implement the freshwater health goals; assimilate all relevant existing data; assemble a committee to calculate indicators; contribute to ensuring the state of the basin report – planning to do the assessment every 5 years; support organisations that want to apply FHI in other landscapes

Timeframe: started April 2020, covid slowed down the process. Planning to have a technical report by May 2021. Circulating a government survey

d) WWF Water security support project (Chris Jackson, Lima)

- Lima, ERS and CSA have partnered with WWF Greentrust - targeting to secure 20 springs across the 6 traditional areas and each spring has an estimate cost ranging from of R25k to R150k - includes structure, technical skills to build, also includes capacity development, building of governance around water. CSA driving the development of the spring protection toolkit. Start with hydrocensus, then map out household needs, and distances, from the spring, capture data on quality, flow rate and threats to the spring – then select prioritising different springs - build a resilient system
- Have created a PSC committee and first PSC meeting has given an idea of what is happening in the catchment, where are the existing systems, where are the gaps, place we need to target

Comments: Need to include the municipality in these conversations e.g waste management. Need to address issues at a local scale

e) Alien plant management

(i) Clearing with DEFF NRM & WWF funding

- ERS - Lima joint venture (Mafube & Mzongwana), other partners working in the catchment such as CSA - recruitment process according to EPWP policy –
- Challenges with the department of stop and starting – affects communities and follow up
- Provide skills development (accredited training), conduct environmental awareness
- Challenges: targeted cleared areas for rangelands, communities building houses
- Lessons: need traditional leaders and communities to understand the reason for clearing; more research. Also acknowledge the use of wattle as a resource in these areas

FRF – WWF funding

- A catch up for the previous financial year - working in Sibi traditional area – 31 beneficiaries – EPWP recruitment process - Target to clear 225 ha in 20 months with 1 beneficiary trained in chainsaw
- Incorporating with livestock owners as land users for follow up – ensure cleared areas are completely restored for grazing including small stock farmers – also doing sheep shearing – included in the conservation agreement which ensures compliance - introduced different incentives including ecorangers – assist livestock owners to monitor rested areas, trained in livestock vaccinations

Comments and questions

Was the community involved, what was the agreement when you started as they are now building houses on the cleared areas? – usually before we start working with communities we consult and allow them to identify areas they use as woodlot and those that they would like to be cleared, they identify patches that thieves hide, where its dangerous for children to pass when going to school but also we look for areas that we can manage from spreading

(ii) FSC Inhlabathi (Amohelang Sibi, Inhlabathi)

Inhlabathi facilitates solutions on how to ensure long term success for companies using alien plants as biomass – introducing SMME's into the green economy - operate and driven by green economy, environment, and social responsibility. Identified SMME's from FRF and WfW – buyers of FSC approved charcoal, ensure access to markets. Partnered with ERS, Avocado vision, WWF to assist in resourcing of finance - loan agreements (to be repaid) with SMME's, no grants.

Challenges and lessons learnt: Charcoal is a tricky commodity – applications for emission license costly and time consuming; training costs; infrastructure. Long term goal – green business economy for future industries

f) Rangeland Management including auctions (Mama A, CSA)

- Rangeland management work involves working with grazing associations –ERS, Lima and others
- Working in the middle catchment with 22 grazing associations that are in Ndakeni, Mvenyani, Thaba Chicha and Mount Fletcher – through conservation agreements – tool to negotiate. Map GA's rangelands, rested area and be able to monitor for compliance - in exchange to incentives. Capacity building and skills development to strengthen the GA as a governance unit - oversees the stewardship. Working with a student, looking at wattle as livestock fodder
- Auction during covid, R1.79 million, 246 animals out of 305 – survey administered – auctions within the village very important, no travelling – good source of income for the family
- Continuing with signing conservation agreements; training on sheep shearing and wool sorting; vaccinating small livestock); Revisiting structure of Conservation Agreements (ongoing dialogue): Potential future partners/collaborators (Matat LM, DRDAR, ARC)

g) M&E and Rangeland Restoration (Nompumelelo Tenza, ERS)

- Process - done throughout the project or programme lifecycle and after the project has ended
- Additional resources used: scientific research, baseline monitoring (done quarterly), indicators -area protected and well managed, human benefit, species condition and amount of carbon stored, change detection (time series analysis). Compare sites – through mapping and remote sensing.
- Progress: mapped grazing associations' conservation agreements - to understand movement of livestock, implications for compliance and impact monitoring

- Monitoring at CSA: vegetation survey (Jan – Feb in EC) – use veld monitoring protocol. Have developed a photographic herbarium – using ODK app - compare, do analysis then plan moving forward - cultural significance and beliefs of subsistence farming is very important
- Working with partners ERS, LIMA, EKZNW, WWF, EWT, SANBI, Matatiele Municipality, Environmental Affairs - Best Practice - (with e.g. Y4Y/Herders/EcoChamps/DEA)

Ntate Kuali: EGM organised by SA water caucus in Vaal on the 09 – 11 November 2020 through WWF.

Lessons: need to take water issue serious and form water caucus committee in our area. ERS assisted when tackling issue of fracking, also did awareness. Crisis of water that the government want to privatise - water needs to be protected from the catchment, including springs. Working with the 6 TA's. Need to engage with the municipality. Plan water actions in Matatiele area

5. Announcements from partners

- 2nd national Indaba on Ecological Infrastructure - 24 & 25 February 2021 (virtual)
- Auction Thaba Chicha (26 Nov 2020) – Paul for more info
- Lessons learnt stakeholder workshop in conservation agreement (Dec 2020)
- CA Implementers Learning Exchange (Nov 2020?)

6. Any other item and setting the next meeting date

7. Closure and Lunch

All presentations are uploaded on the UCP website under meeting records: www.umzimvubu.org