



Strategy for sustaining the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative

BACKGROUND:

The Northern Drakensberg Collaborative (NDC) is a multi-stakeholder partnership that broadly represents the strategic water source area, with a focus on the upper uThukela Catchment. The platform commits to the principles of inclusivity, equity, respect and diversity.

This process of establishing the partnership was initiated through the Living Catchments Project (LCP) of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and has been continued through an initiative championed by WWF. A coordinating team comprising the Institute of Natural Resources NPC (INR), Mahlathini Development Foundation (MDF) and the Centre for Water Resources Research (CWRR) at University of KwaZulu-Natal, has led the process of operationalising and sustaining the partnership.

VISION:

Collaboration among different entities to conserve and sustainably utilize the landscape and its water, cultural and other natural resources fairly as well as to empower its people, build resilience and achieve sustainable socio-economic growth.

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES:

There are a number of principles that underpin and guide the NDC, namely

- Inclusivity: The operation of the NDC and its activities will be designed to allow for the inclusion of all member groups.
- Equity: The structures of the NDC will represent all member groups.
- Respect: Members will respect the views of others.
- Diversity: The NDC recognizes different races, genders, religions and is apolitical.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

As shown in the figure below, the NDC provides a range of benefits for its members while also requiring certain inputs from them.

The benefits of the partnership for its members can be summarized as follows:

- Networking: Providing a platform for different stakeholders to engage and exchange.
- Monitoring: A vehicle for monitoring the implementation of activities.
- Co-learning: A mechanism for co-learning between stakeholders within and beyond.
- Fundraising: Stakeholders can work collectively to raise funds.
- Sharing: The platform allows for sharing of information through different channels.
- Co-implementation: Members can implement activities collectively.
- Lobbying: The platform provides a voice for its members.
- Supporting research: The platform can support research and share research outcomes.

The inputs required from its members can be summarized as:

- Participate: Members need to participate in meetings, events and discussions.
- Resource: Members need to be willing to provide resources of different types.
- Share: Members need to be open to sharing information and experiences.
- Commit: Members need to commit to the partnership.
- Collaborate: Members need to be willing to collaborate around activities.



Figure 1: Diagram showing key elements of the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative.

The NDC will provide the benefits to its members through the following:

- A stakeholder database.
- Collaborative working groups.
- A website and newsletter.
- Co-opting multiple stakeholders.

PARTNERSHIP PILLARS:

The NDC relies on five partnership pillars:

1. Governance and strategy
2. Networking & communication
3. Learning & sharing
4. Action, implementation & feedback
5. Resourcing

The expected outcomes for each of the pillars, together with activities required to achieve the outcomes are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of outcomes and activities associated with each of the NDC partnership pillars

Pillar	Outcome	Activities
Governance and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal: Effective governance of the NDC partnership External: Effective governance within the SWSA; integrated catchment management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a secretariat for the NDC and CoP theme leaders to drive action. Monitor the effectiveness of the partnership and the impacts on the ground Engage LM about alignment with IDP
Networking & communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal – Enhanced sharing between partners External – Enhanced communication with partners beyond the catchment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance sharing over email and website NDC members to participate in other forums to network information
Research, learning and sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of information and knowledge leads to enhanced impact A shared research agenda for the catchment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make reports and guidelines available on the website Establish a research task team to drive an agenda
Action, implementation & feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions to address challenges are co-developed, tested and assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update map of partner activities Develop a joint database for action
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership resourced for good governance, to network, learn, share and implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to resource NDC activities when no funded convener team Fundraise for partnership Fundraise for action

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership of NDC is open to all organisations with a presence in the Northern Drakensberg Strategic Water Source Area (SWSA) that work/operate in the water-livelihoods-biodiversity space. This includes community structures and Traditional Authorities. Signing of the commitment statement is the first step in the membership process.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES:

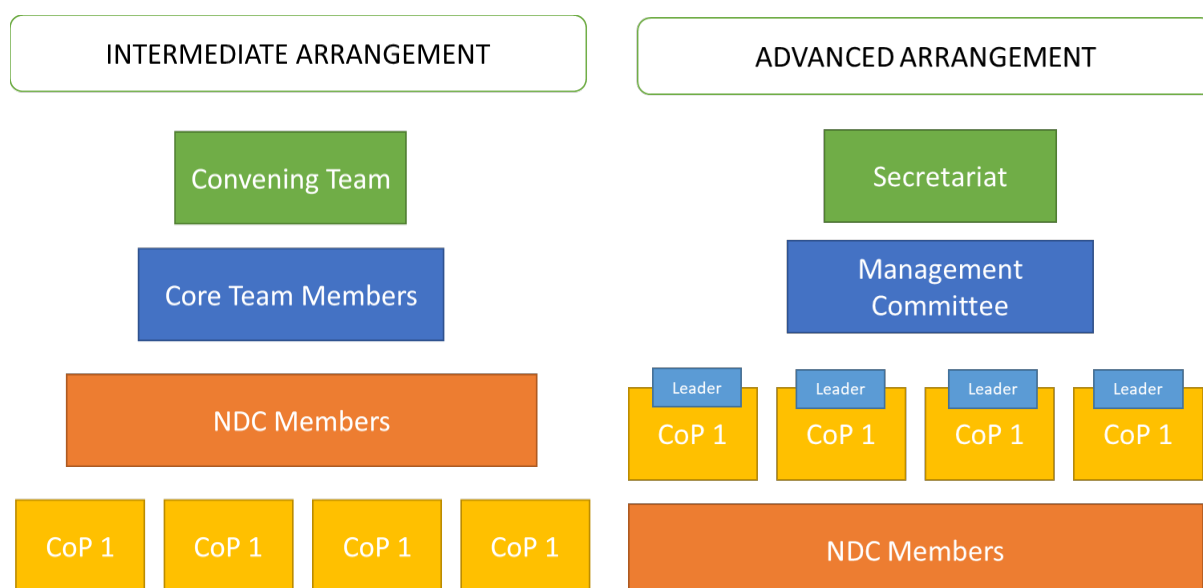
Member activities	Communities	Private sector	Officials	NGOs
Engage in lobbying activities to drive shared agendas.				
Co-implement projects that meets shared objectives.				
Collective raise funds for activities by co-developing concept notes and proposals.				
Implement projects that provide jobs, improve livelihoods and eradicate poverty.				
Promote sustainable land management practices related to grazing, restoration, clearing of alien invasive species.				
Contribute resources that can support landscape management activities				
Invest in the catchment to contribute to companies' sustainability targets.				
Local businesses can create opportunities for communities (e.g. tourism)				
Utilise onatural resources sustainably.				
Collaborate to strengthen governance arrangements for better natural resource management in communal areas				
Co-develop solutions to address issues that affect communities.				
Share knowledge and create awareness about the NDC and its members.				
Share research findings with other members and translate research outcomes into action.				

STRUCTURE:

During the early stages of establishing and strengthening the NDC, there has been an intermediate arrangement that has comprised a convening team, guided by a core team that represents the members of the NDC. There have been efforts towards establishing CoPs or working groups that focus on different topics.

In time, the structure will adopt a different arrangement, where a secretariat will be guided by a management committee that comprises a leader from each of the CoPs/working groups. The CoPs will draw their membership from the NDC members, who would be free to participate in one or more CoPs/working groups.

Figure 2: Graphical representation of the structure of the NDC and how it changes as it matures.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

The monitoring and evaluation process for the partnership is seen as a tool for reflecting on the performance of the partnership itself as well as the contribution it is making to improving livelihoods and the state of the natural resources within the Northern Drakensberg SWSA, with a focus on the upper uThukela Catchment. Given that the vision for the NDC goes beyond the partnership towards having positive impacts on the natural resources and the people that depend on them, the M&E system should consider the different levels as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Different elements that require monitoring and evaluation.

Table 2: Components of the vision to be monitored and evaluated

Relationship to the NDC	Components of the vision	Indicators to track
Within the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Different entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of collaboration • Number and diversity of entities
Beyond the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and sustainably utilize resources fairly • Empower its people • Build resilience • Achieve sustainable socio-economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of projects towards these objectives, tracking, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Areas cleared of invasive aliens ○ Areas under improved management ○ Areas restored ○ Jobs created • Changes in policies / plans towards these objectives • Research undertaken towards achieving these objectives

For the overall partnership, the M&E process can focus on the pillars as shown in Table 3. Later, when gather CoPs/working groups develop their own visions and objectives, the M&E process can be expanded to incorporate them. As shown in

Table 2, there are already some indicators identified that might be allocated to a particular CoP/working group, such as tracking areas of land under improved management.

Table 3: Examples of indicators for monitoring anticipated outcomes for the partnership pillars

Pillar	Anticipated outcomes	Indicators to track
Governance & strategy	Internal: Effective governance of the NDC partnership External: Effective governance within the SWSA; integrated catchment management (ICM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat functioning well • Strategy finalised • Key stakeholders engaging in the catchment towards achieving ICM
Networking & communication	Internal – Enhanced sharing between partners External – Enhanced communication with partners beyond the catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of email exchanges between partners • Participation of NDC members in activities of other catchments
Research, learning & sharing	Sharing of information and knowledge leads to enhanced impact A shared research agenda for the catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events allowing for sharing & learning. • Number of events where research outcomes shared.
Action, implementation & feedback	Solutions to address challenges are co-developed, tested and assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of collaborative projects implemented.
Resourcing	Partnership resourced for good governance, to network, learn, share and implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of concept notes/proposals developed collectively. • Contributions in time and finances by members to support partnership activities.