

FORMAT FOR A NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

All national park management plans are required to follow the same broad format. This will not necessarily reflect the process or sequence of developing the content of the plan – as this may proceed slightly differently for different parks.

BOX 5: Outline of the contents and layout of a park management plan

BACKGROUND TO AND FORMULATION OF PARK DESIRED STATE

- The fundamental decision making environment (Vision, Context, Values and Operating Principles)
- Vital attributes underpinning the value proposition of the park (Determinants and evaluation of attributes)
- Setting the details of the Park desired state (Objectives Hierarchy, TPCs/conservation targets, Conservation Development Framework)

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED STATE

- Biodiversity and heritage conservation
- Sustainable tourism
- Building cooperation
- Effective park management
- Corporate support

ADAPTIVE AND INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN THE DESIRED STATE INITIATIVE

- Key prioritisation, integration and sequencing issues
- Steps to operationalisation
- Key ongoing adaptive management and evaluation interventions

Points 1-5 make up ~10% of the full length of the report of ~100 pages for a large park, excluding appendices.

1. Title page with logos (we agreed to drop the word ‘strategic’ as qualifying park plans)
2. Authorisations and signatures (incl. ministerial) – 1 page
3. Executive summary (3-5 pp.)
4. Table of contents (~2 pp.)
5. List of acronyms used; glossary of definitions of selected words (~2pp.)

1. BACKGROUND TO & FORMULATION OF PARK DESIRED STATE (~35%)

This section emulates DEAT requirements for the adaptive planning cycle.

1.1 The fundamental decision-making environment

- 1.1.1 **Vision/Mission** (for impact, this could be placed before 6.1.2 & 6.1.3 but marked as inter-related; also mentioning briefly *public processes* leading to this.)
- 1.1.2 **Context.** Key details of all relevant administrative and legal frameworks; park and regional history; geographical, biodiversity, cultural and socio-economic descriptions. {One can derive a sub-classification here as needed 6.1.2.1 ... etc.}
- 1.1.3 **Values and operating principles** Includes all higher-level SANParks framing context (the SANParks mission and short reference to SANParks values, policies etc); Although there may be park-specific emphasis (e.g. park policies, briefly) this vital section may be fairly generic across SANParks national parks.

1.2 Vital attributes underpinning the value proposition of the Park

- 1.2.1 **The vital attributes**, listed using a V-STEEP approach, and their **determinants** (i.e. what strengthens and weakens each of these?). **Evaluation** of the vital attributes (reflecting prioritisation, grouping and interactions)

1.3 Setting the details of the Park desired state

- 1.3.1 **An objectives hierarchy** for the park, based on vital attributes. As for the mission statement, this will reflect biophysical, economic and social desired states
- 1.3.2 **Thresholds of concern / exact conservation & other targets for the park**, reflecting the objectives hierarchy. In the biophysical domain, these will describe biodiversity outcomes as mandated by NEMA:PAA. In the environmental management (implying compliance), social, economic, institutional and other domains, existing standards (such as hospitality standards) should be specified. Several of these (even some of the biophysical ones) will be generic across parks.
- 1.3.3 **Conservation Development Framework**. This acts as a central tool for later zonation; and for balancing tourism/development cf. biodiversity needs

2. POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED STATE (~45%)

These will often be close to the normal content of conventional management plans. However, because these will now be *strictly guided by* the objectives and TPCs/CDF in the desired state specified above, some may be added, deleted or differently emphasized. Also, the linkages to objectives should be explicit. The programs are divided into five core components and typical headings will be:

2.1 Biodiversity and heritage conservation

Zonation programme
Park expansion Programme
Transfrontier Programme
Bioregional Programme
Sustainable/Natural Resource Use Programme
Alien Species Programme
Herbivore Management Programme including Elephant Management Programme
Problem Animal Programme
Rare Species Programme
River Wetland and Groundwater Programme
Atmospheric change programme
Fire Programme
Erosion Control Programme
Cultural Resource Programme ... etc.

2.2 Sustainable tourism

Tourism Programme/ Commercial Development Programme ... etc.

2.3 Building cooperation

Co-operative Governance/Community Participation Programme
Environmental Interpretation Programme
Constituency Building Programme ... etc.

2.4 Effective park management

Environmental Management Programme (includes waste, energy, water, NEMA compliance)
Security and Safety Programme
Infrastructure Programme

Malaria Control Programme
Staff Capacity Building Programme ... etc

2.5 Corporate support

Institutional Development and Administration Programme
Financial Sustainability Programme
HIV/AIDS Programme ... etc

Programmes can normally have research, development (including policy development), information technology, management and monitoring components, the latter normally to check that TPCs defining the desired state are being met. Parks should have reasonable freedom (i.e. be allowed some flair) to group and arrange the headings in the list above the way that makes most sense for them, reflecting them as such in their management plans. Appropriate detail from policy, as relevant to particular programmes, should be freely referred to under programmes, and if policy is deficient, policy development can be included as a program deliverable or prerequisite. Sometimes, putative policy guidelines can be stated as assumptions, until further formal policy is in place. Programmes should have broad resource specifications and timelines to guide further detailed projectising which will invariably follow.

3. ADAPTIVE AND INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN THE DESIRED STATE INITIATIVE (~10%)

With the emphasis on adaptive management and on holism, an explicit concluding section with the following components is recommended:

3.1 Key Prioritisation, Integration and Sequencing Issues

This section should help unite, sequence and cross-link programmes. It should emphasise priorities which should already have become largely evident from the objectives-setting exercise.

3.2 Steps to operationalisation

This section will outline ways in which the above programmes will now be turned into annual plans of operation, a process which should have been made as straightforward as possible from the way in which the plan above is formulated. However, a synthetic section giving the essence of this will be useful here, including embedment in key performance areas via the scorecard.

3.3 Key ongoing adaptive management and evaluation interventions

This section should highlight, both generically and for this park, which feedback loops regarding which issues are going to be crucial in supporting reporting, adaptation and learning. This section should assist managers in meeting requirements of the adaptive management cycle and the adaptive evaluation cycle as per DEAT submission – indeed this is what DEAT is likely (along with the adaptive planning cycle, see 6 above) to be checking under the Protected Areas Act. Managers and stakeholders should be encouraged to practice reflection, and hence leverage the potential learning offered, in a structured way. For instance, users should be encouraged to use the State of Biodiversity Reports as constructively as possible, and to continually self-audit their performance in terms of TPCs etc. The section should include scheduling for anticipated reporting to various levels, making this streamlined and meaningful, and will necessarily give attention to levels of achievement of the desired state. It should thus also refer to departmental and other performance appraisals, and to the review cycles for the plan itself.

4. APPENDICES