

LandCare Initiative

Areawide methodology – Department Agriculture



WARD 2 FORUM
SERVING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

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LANDCARE INITIATIVE – WARD 2 AREA

SUMMARY

Many elements of land degradation are interconnected. Over clearing and overgrazing help, create salinity, soil erosion, biodiversity losses and opportunities for weed invasion. Some cultivation practices cause soil compaction and wind and water erosion. To rectify these problems demands programs based on understanding the links between the natural assets and sustainable land and water use.

Most land degradation problems involve multiple landholdings and affect many others downstream or downwind. Therefore landowners, land managers and local communities must work together to introduce more sustainable management systems.

The combined skills, knowledge and financial and technical resources available within the whole community exceed those of government. Only broad partnerships between government, community and other bodies with useful resources – such as business and the education system – can overcome land degradation and improve productivity. Government therefore plays a very important but not dominating role in improving land management.

By devolving authority to communities, LandCare also strengthens their sense of responsibility. Government and corporate finance, often in large tranches, is allocated directly to networks and groups, which meet and disburse funds to achieve specific catchment objectives, set after substantial consultation.

INTRODUCTION

The LandCare initiative was launched as a national project in 1999 to be in line with international trends and initiatives that are aligned with, and supports, the general objectives of chapter 10 of the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda**, entitled the **Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources**, with the specific aim:

To facilitate allocation of land to the uses that would provide the greatest sustainable benefits, promote a transition to a sustainable and integrated management of land resources.

In doing so, environmental, social and economic issues should be taken into consideration. Protected areas, private property rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, their communities, and other local communities and the economic role of all in agriculture and rural development should also be taken into consideration.

The NGOs and civil society are to complement National Government's efforts in the implementation of the LandCare Programme through provision of additional resources (financial, technical and human). In the face of perceived needs, NGOs will be an important source of technical expertise and offer training to local communities. They will also assist communities in the selection, designing, implementing and monitoring of LandCare projects and provide a link between project initiators, Government and funding agencies interested in LandCare projects.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

South Africa's Constitution provides within the Bill of Rights, that:

Everyone has the right to:

- a. an environment that is not harmful to his/her health or wellbeing; and
- b. have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that:
 - i. prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
 - ii. promote conservation; and
 - iii. secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

LandCare South Africa and the Government's land-care initiatives will be guided by international conventions to which the RSA are signatories. These include the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR), the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Agriculture plays a key role in the development of South Africa as a nation. The Government believes that profitable and internationally competitive agricultural sector will continue to play a key part in South Africa's economic and social well being. The vision of the National Department of Agriculture is to raise the long-term productivity and ecological sustainability of the land resources and thereby ensure a future for the land resources within the agricultural sector. To achieve this, the government will work towards:

- a. All Land users being able to make well informed decisions based on an understanding of full economic, ecological and social costs and benefits of their land use practices;
- b. Institutional
 - arrangements which clearly put the responsibility for addressing land degradation with those who cause it;
 - A research, development and demonstration effort that promotes a sustainable, internationally competitive and efficient agricultural sector in the long- term;
 - All levels of government, community and land users understanding the nature and value of the land resources and working in partnership towards their sustainable use; and
 - Reconciling economic, social and ecological concerns in the management of South Africa's land to best sustain a full range of uses for the benefit of the nation into the future.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAMME

The vision for the National LandCare Programme (NLP) is to have communities and individuals adopt an ecologically sustainable approach to the management of South Africa's environment and natural resources, while improving livelihoods. This means people use the soil, water and vegetation resources in such a manner that their own quality of life is improved and that future generations will also be able

to use them to satisfy their needs. This implies that cultivation, livestock grazing and harvesting of natural resources should be managed in such a manner that degradation (soil erosion, nutrient loss, loss of components of the vegetation, increased run-off of water etc) is curtailed.

To help achieve this, the National and Provincial Department of Agriculture gives support for natural resource management through the National LandCare Programme. Through this programme, community groups, Provincial and local authorities are encouraged to responsibly manage and conserve the land, vegetation, water and biological diversity in their respective local areas.

Furthermore, the national Department of Agriculture seeks to promote its National Policy on Agricultural Land and Resource Management to all spheres of government and other stakeholders by implementing this Programme.

The goal of the National LandCare Programme (NLP) is to develop and implement integrated approaches to natural resource management in South Africa, which are efficient, sustainable, equitable, and consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The NLP objectives are to:

- Promote partnerships between the communities, the private sector and government in the management of natural resources;
- Establish institutional arrangements to develop and implement policies, programs and practices that will encourage the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Encourage skill development for sustainable livelihoods;
- Encourage opportunities for the development of business enterprises with a sustainable resource management focus;
- Enhance the long-term productivity of natural resources.

WHAT IS LANDCARE?

LandCare is essentially a concept involving a process of participation by a group of organisation, individuals and governmental department that focuses on land resource management through the promotion of sustainable use practices.

Fundamentally LandCare involves ***“local people taking local action in their local area”*** to achieve sustainable land use and management. LandCare includes individual and group activities directed at on-ground action. It also provides an opportunity for local landholders to take a leading and responsible role in planning and undertaking activities to conserve their most important assets.

LandCare encourages community interest and action through the formation of LandCare groups. LandCare groups assess local problems, determine priorities to undertake specific actions. Local leadership and initiative leads to a greater understanding of the issues. In this way, the local communities become owners of the solutions.

WHY THE LANDCARE CONCEPT?

Since the origins of modern Agriculture, poor farming practices have led to land degradation for example: Soil erosion, overgrazing, wetland and watercourse destruction and bush encroachment

(particularly Renosterveld). These land degradation problems have been, to some extent, a cost to achieve a highly productive agricultural sector. They are also due to inadequate information being available to land-users regarding the consequences of their land management decisions and also the off-site effects of some land-users' actions on others.

Continued deterioration of the land resource-base is likely to result in further costs to the people of South Africa through the loss of economic production, loss of ecological processes and biological diversity, decline economic opportunities in rural communities, and the degradation of other related resources such as freshwater. These costs may impose a burden on future generations and restrict their capacity to choose how their land and related resources are utilised.

The LandCare concept will be expanded through a communication process and local monitoring of natural resources. LandCare is therefore a grass-roots programme, which is supported by both the public and private sector through networking between a series of partnerships. The challenge is to stimulate partnerships at local level.

The National LandCare Programme also offers practical assistance for land conservation activities, which have been identified, implemented and monitored, primarily by the Provincial LandCare Co-ordinators.

The LandCare Co-ordinators is a multi disciplinary group made up of various sectors of government and some NGO's. We are currently working with the Department of Agriculture, Cape Nature, Department of Water Affairs (Working for Water), World Wildlife Fund, Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning as well as the Theewaterskloof Municipality.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR LANDCARE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

LandCare is aiming to influence the decision-making process in bringing about sustainable land use and to encourage the adoption of agricultural and livestock production systems, which are economically viable, and serve as protection for the biophysical environment.

The need to adopt improved land management practices is widely recognised. The challenge is to increase the adoption of these practices by land-users, while exploring more effective, efficient and equitable ways for ensuring an economically and ecologically sustainable future for our agricultural sector.

By investigating, researching to learn and implementing best practices achieved internationally will greatly ensure efficient and effective achievement of our objectives. The development and implementation of systems of land use and management that will sustain individual and community benefits, now and in the future.

THE WAY FORWARD

The National LandCare Secretariat plans to build on previous experiences to develop the National LandCare Programme. This will increase community awareness and help those, involved in LandCare work towards sustainable land use.

The National LandCare Secretariat seeks to establish a climate that will favour the development of realistic, trans-disciplinary solutions by those who face particular problems. This will require policies and programmes, which encourage desirable actions and discourage undesirable actions, through the balanced use of incentives, standards and penalties.

LandCare is a grass-roots programme, which is supported by both the public and private sector through networking between a series of partnerships. The challenge is to stimulate partnerships at local level. The NLP also offers practical assistance for land conservation activities, which will be identified, implemented and monitored, primarily by the Provincial LandCare Co-ordinators.

To this end, communities are encouraged to form partnerships to work toward achieving the objectives of the LandCare initiative locally.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES TO FORMALISE A LOCAL LANDCARE PLAN

- Integrating economic and environmental goals in policies and activities;
- Focus on trans-disciplinary approaches and socio-economic development;
- Sustain agricultural production over the long term;
- Understanding the nature, extent and importance of land use problems;
- Identifying what information, skills and resources are needed;
- Acquiring the necessary information, skills and resources;
- Using the information, skills and resources to develop and apply practical solutions; and
- Developing a package of incentives to establish a dynamic approach to sustainable land management.

These principles will be best applied to practical land management strategies where the management objective is to meet the needs of the community over the longer term, rather than simply to reap maximum short-term benefits.

PROPOSED THEMES OF THE LOCAL LANDCARE PROGRAMME

Landcare investment is intended to provide resources and incentives that facilitate the achievement of the NLP objectives through focussing on major themes, WaterCare, SoilCare, VeldCare, JuniorCare, and Small Community Grants.

SOIL CARE

This theme will include addressing issues on soil acidity and the reduction in soil fertility caused by the selective removal of fine particles, nutrients and organic matter. This theme will also address issues on soil erosion.

WATER CARE

This theme will include the major problem of soil loss which has damaged the catchments and hydrological systems by accelerating the siltation of dams used for irrigation, reducing infiltration and lowering the water tables. Specific projects aimed at utilising minimum irrigation water usage especially in low rainfall areas – eg drip feeding, hydroponics?

VELD CARE

This will include addressing the issue of over-grazing & reduction in ground cover of grazing lands, exposing soil to erosion, and deteriorating the species composition relative to the nutritional requirements of the grazing animals. Widespread bush encroachment has reduced the livestock productivity of the veld and this theme should concentrate on addressing these broader degradation issues.

JUNIOR CARE

Our children must reap the benefits of our Landcare efforts. Their involvement is an investment that will deliver future benefits. The objectives of Junior Care are to empower previously disadvantaged young people with regard to training in facilitation and leadership skills. This includes the promotion of food security at home and at schools, awareness in sustainable agriculture, stimulating the formation of youth clubs, and small projects that aim to promote other components of Landcare. Junior care addresses the needs of young people, in an integrated way that involves interdisciplinary approaches.

IMPLEMENTATION

Within each of the specific themes identified a component of the objectives below needs to be Implemented:

- Identify the problem areas and challenges identified through an integrated, multi disciplinary and communal approach;
- Address the causes of environmental and resource degradation, rather than the symptoms; Improving the ability of land users to manage their natural resources in a sustainable and self-reliant manner;
- Promoting long term integrated approaches to local catchment and regional planning;
- Demonstrating innovative approaches to natural resource management;
- Encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Addressing the needs of former disadvantaged groups
- Fostering partnerships amongst different sectors of the rural community including government;
- Developing relevant experience, knowledge and skills in the community;
- Encouraging socio-economic or business enterprise development that must link to sustainable resource use and environmental repair;
- Communicating results to other interested individuals and organisations.

The Local Programme will contribute to the Provincial objectives which in turn will inform national objectives of sustainable resource management. For further information refer to the National policy on Agricultural Land and Resource Management, chapter 4 of the national agriculture policy.

These investments and incentives are not intended to be a substitute of the resource management responsibilities, including research activities, of other levels of government or individuals, but they are intended to catalyse action and on-going commitment to natural resource management.

The participation of communities [Non Government Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Local Government, farmer groups], public agencies and interest groups is essential in developing, assessing and implementing this initiative.

WHAT DO WE DO LOCALLY

It is proposed that a local LandCare initiative be started that will include ALL relevant role-players, organisations, associations, civics and individuals to form part of the regional and provincial structure to implement the objectives as stated. The first task would be the identification of all local relevant assets – supportive farmers, rivers, schools, suitable veld areas, conservation societies, experienced individuals, existing products in the area.

EXPECTED OUTCOME & OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL INITIATIVE

- Awareness of the problems of land degradation and the benefits of sustainable land use within the broad community;
- Continuing development and implementation of sustainable land use principles and practices;
- All public and private land-users and managers understanding the principles of sustainable land use and applying them in management decisions;
- All communities within the Ward2 area working together in partnership for sustainable land use; and
- Implementing effective and appropriate economic, legislative and policy mechanisms for facilitating the achievement of sustainable land use.
- Ensuring effective and appropriate measures are taken to protect the natural environment and biodiversity of the region, this to include solid waste, sewage agricultural management

STRATEGIC VISION

To contribute towards local economic development by ensuring and marketing the sustainable use of natural resources at this level through effective communication practice. The objective of the Local Economic Development Programme is to promote local economic development by exposing urban renewal, integrated rural development and poverty relief programmes in a structured programme.

HOW WILL LANDCARE PROJECTS BE EVALUATED LOCALLY

- Surveying community awareness of land degradation problems as well as the associated benefits and costs;
- Monitoring changes in the extent and severity of land degradation;
- Surveying the adoption of more sustainable land use practices;
- Monitoring the nature and levels of production from various land use systems; and
- A regular review, involving community consultation, of the economic, legislative and policy mechanisms affecting the achievement of sustainable land use.

THE LOCAL APPROACH

1. Planning and co-ordination to:

- Better align the administrative processes and implementation of funding for all the LandCare related programmes planned for the region through a collaborative approach by all levels of government;
- Support community groups through co-ordinated and collaborative inter-agency programmes;
- Encourage LandCare groups to define major problems/issues and determine regional priorities in a consultative way; and
- Develop regional LandCare strategies and mechanism for co-ordinating LandCare activities.

2. Group development and action approaches:

- Develop and maintain a LandCare group to focus on individual and community involvement for the improvement of land resource management;
- Encourage groups to set their own goals, objectives and develop strategic approaches to planning and implementing sustainable land use for the area of Ward 2;
- Encourage regional networking of groups and the integrity and independence of groups.

3. Farm improvement and management programmes:

- Increase the adoption of sustainable land use practices; e.g. organic farming
- Encourage all individual land-users to adequately incorporate all relevant economic and ecological factors into their individual land-use decisions;
- Promote an integrated approach to land management planning; and
- Encourage the development of advisory and extension services, which accelerate the transfer of information and technology from researchers to, and between land-users.

4. Community education and awareness activities:

- Change attitudes, knowledge and behaviour so that all residents of the Ward 2 area can contribute towards the achieving the sustainable management of land resources;

- Raise community awareness and understanding of the need for sustainable land use and of the consequences of alternative land management approaches;
- Achieve long term changes so that attitudes and behaviour of individuals and the community in line with sustainable land use;
- Encourage LandCare education programmes that co-operate to share resources in the region of Ward 2;
- Integrate LandCare principles into schools in the Ward 2 area.

6. Resource assessment programmes:

- Stimulate and support the collection of consistent and comparable data that is accessible to land-users to help them address priority issues;
- Co-ordinate resource assessment programmes to promote inter-agency and public access to information;
- Encourage local organisations to undertake local resource assessment, monitoring and form links with other groups undertaking similar work.

7. Research and development activities:

- Direct, integrate and focus research and development efforts to improve the long-term productive capacity and sustainable use of land resources;
- Ensure that adequate research and development activity occurs in areas where there are clear benefits for society in Ward 2 as a whole
- Improve the transfer of research and development information to land management.

PROPOSED BRANDING OF THE INITIATIVE



WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN LANDCARE IN OUR AREA

Everybody has a role to play in achieving the LandCare vision. LandCare continues to be an individual and community based initiative.

Individual land-users can participate by:

- Improving their awareness of land degradation;
- Understanding land use systems and the cause-effect relationships;

- Improving their knowledge and skills so they can make better decisions and improve their own land management practices;
- Managing the knowledge to integrate economic and environmental values;
- Becoming actively involved with the local LandCare initiative;
- Co-operating with, and where relevant, planning activities jointly with neighbours; and

Communities can act through:

- Local group development and action;
- Participating in regional and local initiatives;
- Raising awareness and improving education; and
- Representation on advisory committees.

Non-government organisations have a role through:

- Representing their members' interests;
- Providing their members with information about the Regional LandCare Programme (activities and actions);
- Developing codes and policies that will help attain the LandCare vision; and
- Participating in the further development of LandCare in the region.

Local Governments have a role through:

- Assisting information exchange and with the co-ordination of community activities;
- Acting as a community advocate;
- Providing resources to help local groups;
- Developing and applying local conservation strategies' and
- Exercising statutory planning responsibilities.

Provincial Governments contribute to sustainable land use through:

- Providing a suitable institutional framework;
- Developing and implementing effective policies and programs;
- Providing positive support through financial incentives and assistance schemes as well as appropriate standards and regulations;
- Research and resource assessment;
- Catchment planning and management;
- Education and public awareness;
- Support for land management advisory and extension services; and

- Managing State land responsibly.

CONCLUSION

This serves as a working document that forms part of the Ward 2 Forums overall strategy of initiating and/or participating in specific projects that:

- Stimulate the sustainable socio-economic growth of our region.
- Promotes broad based Local Economic Development
- Protect and enhance the protection of our natural heritage
- Dissemination of relevant information to promote and advocate the areawide methodology and multidisciplinary approach to achieving the LandCare objectives.

Should you wish to receive additional information on projects or wish to participate in these please contact the Ward 2 Forum Team on the email info@ward2forum.org

Or you could also visit our Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ward2forum/>

Or website: <http://ward2forum.org/>



Ward 2 Forum Team