



**Cultivating a Legacy for
a Thriving Tomorrow**



**Annual
Report**
2022/23



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2022 edition of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) Annual Report.

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) is a South African environmental organisation with a mission to initiate and support high-impact environmental and conservation projects that promote active participation in Earth's care. Over 97 years, we have proactively engaged with the challenges and opportunities presented by our country's unique natural heritage and the social and economic systems that depend on it.

We have emerged as a leading implementer of environmental initiatives, collaborating with schools and educators across South Africa on various local and international programmes aimed at enhancing school curricula through environmental education. These initiatives empower learners to realize their full potential in shaping a sustainable future by taking environmental action within their communities.

Our sustainable tourism programmes, including Blue Flag and Green Coast, serve to recognise and ensure excellence in environmental responsibility and sustainable operations.

Furthermore, our professional training programmes address South Africa's skills shortage, while we actively work on initiatives to develop and empower the youth sector. We are dedicated to supporting the conservation of life-sustaining biodiversity and water resources through ecological infrastructure projects, which involve the removal of invasive alien plants and the rehabilitation and restoration of ecosystems.

WESSA is an integral part of the international environmental community. In addition to being the designated operator in South Africa for five programmes under the Foundation for

Environmental Education (FEE), we are a founding member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). As a UNESCO partner, we actively promote education for sustainable development throughout the Southern African region.

Operating as a membership-supported organisation, WESSA activates a wide range of local conservation initiatives for the environment through our network of branches or friends' groups. The relentless efforts and strong leadership within our membership have been the driving force behind many of South Africa's most significant environmental actions. We remain committed to promoting effective environmental governance by participating in the development of legislation and supporting compliance.

This Annual Report highlights and showcases the substantial accomplishments and successes attained during the preceding financial year.





CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| OUR STRATEGY 2022-2026..... | 6 |
| CHAIRMAN'S REPORT..... | 8 |
| CEO REPORT..... | 10 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT..... | 12 |
| WESSA EDUCATION CENTRES..... | 14 |
| WESSA EDUCATION CENTRES: PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS..... | 16 |
| WESSA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT..... | 18 |
| EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT..... | 20 |
| WESSA ECO-HUBS PROJECT..... | 22 |
| SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: WESSA BLUE FLAG..... | 24 |
| WESSA GREEN COAST..... | 26 |
| WESSA TRAINING..... | 28 |
| ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY..... | 30 |
| WESSA MEMBERS..... | 32 |
| FINANCIAL REPORT..... | 36 |
| DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT..... | 38 |

OUR STRATEGY 2022-2026

WESSA's strategy emphasises the importance of education, advocacy, and action in addressing critical environmental challenges in South Africa. These challenges include climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. We are a leading voice and catalyst for positive change through partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and empowering citizens to act for a healthier planet.

Our Mission, Vision, and Value Proposition

WESSA's mission is to Educate, Advocate, and Act for environmental and social justice, climate action, biodiversity protection, and pollution reduction in Southern Africa.

Our vision is to lead citizen action in the region, supporting climate action, fighting biodiversity loss, and promoting a no pollution tolerance culture.

WESSA's value proposition lies in its actions and partnerships, which lead and enable climate action. These actions protect habitat and biodiversity integrity and reduce pollution.

The State of the South African Environment

South Africa has an ecological footprint per person that exceeds its biocapacity, indicating an overshoot and contributing to environmental challenges.

Water shortages, air pollution, and water pollution are the top environmental concerns in the country but there can be higher levels of concern and awareness

regarding environmental issues in general amongst the South African civil society. WESSA aims to play a significant role in creating awareness and providing platforms for people to act and to get involved in helping to solve environmental issues.

Guiding Principles

WESSA, under its guiding principles, places a strong emphasis on both environmental justice and social justice, recognising the intrinsic interdependence between humanity and the natural world. Our commitment lies in acknowledging the interconnectedness of people and the environment while promoting sustainable development.

Theory of Change

WESSA encourages and support citizen action for a healthier planet.

We focus on education and training, advocacy, and action projects aligned with climate action, biodiversity and habitat integrity, and pollution reduction.

Thematic Areas

Climate Action:

WESSA addresses climate change through mitigation, adaptation, resilience, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement.

Biodiversity and Habitat Integrity:

We protect biodiversity and habitats, working with stakeholders, and supporting sustainable resource utilization.

Pollution Reduction:

We reduce aquatic, terrestrial, and air pollution through programmes, education, advocacy, and clean-up initiatives.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



WESSA has reached a remarkable milestone this year, ninety-seven (97) years of dedicated service to caring for the earth. Approaching the centenary mark is an extraordinary achievement, and I want to express my admiration for the founders who, nearly a century ago, had the foresight to establish WESSA. While foresight set the foundation, it is our organisation's agility and adaptability that have carried us through these ninety-seven years. Most importantly, it's the people who care for the earth that have been the lifeblood of WESSA. Each of you should take great pride in your contributions, which I am confident future generations will thank you for.

The reasons behind the formation of this organisation remain as relevant today as they were ninety-seven years ago, if not more so, given the multiplying and increasingly complex environmental concerns. Furthermore, the escalating environmental problems demand urgent and sophisticated solutions. WESSA has risen to the occasion and having served on the board for the past five years, I have had the privilege of witnessing how WESSA continues to play a meaningful role in the environmental action space.

Now, let's reflect on some of the key initiatives undertaken in 2022/2023 and their impact.

It is evident that one of our central initiatives for this year was the operationalisation of our recalibrated strategy. Following the adoption of this revised strategy at our AGM in 2022, we wasted no time in moving to the implementation phase. I am pleased to report that we have already achieved numerous early wins. One such win is the successful socialisation of the strategy within our membership and among different leadership groups. This has resulted in "Educate, Advocate, Act" becoming our unanimous rallying call. At WESSA, everyone, from volunteers and membership groups to management, now speak with one voice.

"Educate, Advocate, Act" is not just a slogan but a guiding principle. Without delving into the many individual initiatives, we've undertaken throughout the year, it is clear that we have collectively acted upon each of these pillars. For instance, recognising that modern environmental problems demand sophisticated solutions, we have continued to focus on education and awareness. Our initiatives have centred on pollution reduction, habitat and biodiversity preservation, and climate change mitigation. These efforts have been carried out through various projects, including our highly impactful Eco-Schools Programme.

WESSA's impact on environmental education and awareness is beyond dispute. The multifaceted nature of the environmental



Despite the challenging geopolitical and macroeconomic conditions, I am inspired by WESSA's executive team, which continues to demonstrate entrepreneurship in seeking sustainable financial solutions to support our mission.

challenges we face necessitates collaboration, and one of the most effective means to achieve this is through advocacy. We conduct our advocacy work through the Environmental Governance Committee (EGC), a sub-committee of the board. Internally, the EGC is reviewing various WESSA policies to ensure coherent messaging on a range of environmental issues, from energy and water to the sustainable use of biodiversity and climate change. Externally, WESSA is actively engaged in the NGO Coalition, with our CEO playing a coordinating role.

To effectively continue with our vital work and achieve

even greater results, WESSA requires resources. Despite the challenging geopolitical and macroeconomic conditions, I am inspired by WESSA's executive team, which continues to demonstrate entrepreneurship in seeking sustainable financial solutions to support our mission. Complementing their efforts is the remarkable dedication of our members and volunteers, who generously contribute their resources, skills, and time.

As my term of office is ending, I am highly encouraged that I am not leaving a burning platform. We now have a full complement of the board and executive team. A stable leadership team

will take this organisation to the next level. We have one WESSA and a shared strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute and lead this organisation's important work. While, I will no longer be on the board, I will continue to be a WESSA volunteer. I will continue to care for the earth "... by all the means I can, in all the ways I can, in all the places I can, at all the times I can, to all the people I can, as long as ever I can".



Wandisile Mandlana
WESSA Chairman

CEO REPORT

I am pleased to present the annual CEO report for the period of April 2022 to March 2023, which underscores our accomplishments, challenges, and strategic trajectory. This year has marked a significant phase of growth and transformation for WESSA. I take immense pride in the collective endeavours that have propelled us to our current standing.

Executive Summary

The past year has been pivotal for WESSA, as we have reached unprecedented milestones, reaffirming our role as a frontrunner in the environmental sector, both domestically and internationally. Despite encountering various challenges, we have successfully executed our strategic vision, augmented our product and service offerings, and fortified our sectoral footprint.

Our overarching mission remains rooted in advocating, educating, and catalysing action for environmental and social justice, climate action, biodiversity conservation, and pollution reduction. Our vision is to spearhead citizen-driven initiatives across Southern Africa. With an unwavering commitment to conservation, education, and advocacy, we have made remarkable strides in safeguarding South Africa's diverse biodiversity. WESSA's influential voice and role as a transformative agent for positive change persist through strategic partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and empowering individuals.

Our legacy of environmental excellence spans nearly a century. In this Annual Report, we shall spotlight our strategic implementation, partnership synergies, and initiatives addressing today's pressing environmental concerns.

Financial Performance

Our financial performance has not reached the desired threshold set for this year. FY2022/23 witnessed a decline in revenue compared to the previous year, attributed to unrealised project proposals, reduced donations and bequests. Nonetheless, there is compelling evidence that our strategy will yield improved financial outcomes in the forthcoming fiscal year.

Impact

The period from April 2022 to March 2023 saw the approval and integration of our WESSA 2026 strategy into our operational targets. Our focus on environmental and social justice acknowledges the intrinsic link between humanity and the environment, promoting sustainable development.



WESSA's drive to encourage and support citizen action for a healthier planet remains steadfast. Our endeavours concentrate on education and training, advocacy, and action projects aligned with climate action, biodiversity, habitat integrity, and pollution reduction.

New Developments

A significant stride is the launch of WESSA's pangolin-focused programme. This initiative centers on the 3-year Pangolin-Friendly Farm Fences Project, already in progress. Additionally, we are aiding the pangolin rehabilitation community in securing reserves for long-term releases and facilitating the rehabilitation process. Notably, our CEO co-chairs the IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group's Southern Africa Working Group, which is instrumental in formulating a Regional Conservation Action Plan for pangolins. WESSA's pivotal role as a partner in

Our overarching mission remains rooted in advocating, educating, and catalysing action for environmental and social justice, climate action, biodiversity conservation, and pollution reduction.

As vocal proponents and agents of positive change, we shall continue to forge alliances, engage stakeholders, and empower individuals to champion a healthier planet.

this effort is well-recognised. Moreover, we are actively driving the development of a Biodiversity Management Plan for pangolins in South Africa, in collaboration with The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and other pangolin conservation entities. This presents a clear opportunity for WESSA to lead pangolin conservation efforts, focusing on stakeholder engagement, Wildlife-Human Conflict Mitigation, Rehabilitation Support, Education, Awareness-raising, Research, Monitoring, Law Enforcement, Policy Advocacy, Capacity Building, and Regional Conservation Planning.

Special Projects

As we approach WESSA's centenary in 2026, we anticipate celebrating a century of history, transformation, and cherished memories. This milestone offers a valuable occasion to reflect on insights gained from the past and the evolving global landscape.

We have also initiated Project uMngeni Valley, which centers on establishing a support fund and team for the uMngeni Valley home.

Highlights of 2022

A standout achievement this past year is WESSA's role in the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) network. Since 2001, our pioneering efforts have successfully implemented the FEE Blue Flag Programme,

followed by the Eco-Schools Programme in 2003. Our Eco-Schools Programme has garnered both national and international recognition, nurturing environmentally responsible ambassadors and future leaders.

Acknowledgments

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the WESSA Board, our dedicated staff, and our valued Membership for their consistent commitment to WESSA's mission. I am equally appreciative of our devoted team, steadfast shareholders, loyal customers, and diligent partners who have all played pivotal roles in our successes. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones, and I am enthusiastic about WESSA's future prospects.

Our donors and partners continue to be the cornerstone of our existence. Thank you for your unyielding support which has been pivotal in propelling our environmental initiatives forward. Your generosity has created a lasting impact on our work, allowing us to drive positive change and advocate for a sustainable future. With heartfelt gratitude, we thank you for being champions of our cause and partners in making a difference that matters.

Envisioning the Future

WESSA's strategic blueprint underscores the primacy of education, advocacy, and action in confronting critical

environmental challenges in South Africa. These challenges encompass climate change, biodiversity decline, and pollution. As vocal proponents and agents of positive change, we shall continue to forge alliances, engage stakeholders, and empower individuals to champion a healthier planet.

Looking ahead, our strategic emphasis will revolve around:

Innovation: We remain committed to innovative approaches, exploring novel project approaches to be trailblazers in the sector.

Staff Engagement: Our focus on creating an environment conducive to staff growth and impactful contributions remains steadfast.

Regional Expansion: We aim to extend our footprint across Africa, leveraging growth and funding opportunities through our Schools Programme and facilitating new countries' participation in the FEE.

Sustainability: Our commitment to financial sustainability will intensify, with the goal of achieving a surplus by the close of the upcoming financial year.



Helena Atkinson
WESSA CEO

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

In this year's annual report, we take a closer look at the heart of our organisation, as we present the Human Resources report—a testament to our dedicated team's invaluable contributions and our commitment to fostering a sustainable future.

As we reflect upon the highlights of this year, it becomes evident that our collective dedication to environmental education and conservation has kindled fresh vigour and purpose throughout our organisation.

In alignment with WESSA's commitment to progress, we take great satisfaction in announcing Helena Atkinson's appointment as our Chief Executive Officer. This achievement stands not only as a victory for WESSA but also as a triumph for the broader conservation arena. Helena's professional background and her ascent to this pivotal leadership role stand as a testament to her reliable commitment and

visionary outlook. Her positive demeanour and unrelenting determination have breathed new vitality into WESSA, propelling us towards the successful realisation of our dynamic new strategy. With her at the helm, we are poised to usher in an era of impactful conservation efforts, and the anticipation is truly exhilarating!

Undoubtedly, a standout moment for 2022/23 was the "Homecoming" event held in the picturesque Umgeni Valley. This event transcended a mere gathering, evolving into a genuine celebration of our shared affinity for both people and nature. It stood as a testimony to the resilience, passion, and fortitude of the

WESSA team. Throughout this occasion, our entire team had the opportunity to reestablish connections, not only amongst themselves, but also with the very essence of WESSA's vision and mission.

Amidst shared meals, robust discussions, team competitions, and tree planting, one highlight was the profound walk down the valley, completely immersed in nature, as we explored the untamed heart of WESSA's "home." Conquering the challenging ascent back up, we discovered ourselves on a path of unity and renewed determination that was profoundly inspiring.





In March 2023, the culmination of the two-year WESSA Groen Sebenza project marked a resounding success. This initiative provided two hundred and one (201) participants with the invaluable opportunity to acquire vital skills and experience across WESSA and seventeen (17) other host organisations, all focused on professional advancement. The curriculum covered workplace readiness, business acumen, project management proficiencies, sustainable resource management principles, environmental impact assessment, as well as occupational health and safety, alongside first aid training. Our goal remains to empower and motivate these budding professionals to champion WESSA's mission of Earth care across the sector, and we eagerly await their accomplishments.

A source of immense pride stems from the seamless integration of three Groen Sebenza interns into the WESSA team. Felicia Mphasane embraced the role of Education Coordinator, Brilliant Phalane assumed the position of Umgeni Valley Reserve Supervisor, and Nonsikelelo

Mbokazi took on the role of HR Administrator. Reflecting on her experience, Nonsikelelo shares:

"The internship holds a pivotal place in my professional journey, symbolising a crucial step toward my career aspirations. It afforded me a platform for hands-on experience, growth, and learning within an authentic work environment. The internship bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in academia and its practical application in a professional sphere. Being part of an organisation like WESSA offers unique learning prospects related to environmental science, conservation strategies, and sustainable practices. This exposure broadened my skillset beyond conventional HR functions. I've gained confidence, practical skills, and professional maturation. It's a dream fulfilled, and I hold my head high!"

WESSA's internship initiatives represent one of the many avenues through which we cultivate the upcoming generation of environmental custodians. In this spirit, we gladly welcomed an additional twenty-three (23) interns into our fold in February 2023. Their enthusiasm and dedication enrich our work environment, ensuring that WESSA remains at the forefront of pioneering and effective conservation methodologies.

Anticipating the future, 2022/3 financial year end, has set the

stage for sustained triumphs and expansion within the realm of personnel development. Our commitment revolves around creating avenues for growth and progress for our team members, bolstering their capabilities and empowering them to excel. Our focus remains steadfast on nurturing a people-centric, high-performance culture. With the CEO's adept leadership, the support of our team, and their collective enthusiasm, we stand poised to navigate the evolving challenges of our times.

WESSA EDUCATION CENTRES

Discover the transformative impact of our Environmental Education Centres as we unveil their inspiring journey, embodying our dedication to nurturing the environmental leaders of tomorrow.

The Education Centres consist of **uMngeni Valley, Twinstreams, and Treasure Beach**, located in Howick, Mthunzini, and Durban Bluff, respectively. These centres have experienced significant improvements in terms of attracting school visits for curriculum-linked programmes and adventurous, fun-filled activities. The programmes offered continue to draw diverse school groups from different backgrounds across the country. This year, we have successfully attracted international clients from Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Germany, which is truly exciting and reflects our impact in the industry.

Within our unit, we have welcomed two experienced individuals: Seipati Felicia Mphasane and Brilliant Tebatso Phalane at WESSA uMngeni Valley. Felicia serves as the Environmental Education Coordinator, while Brilliant assumes the role of Operations Manager. The addition of these energetic talents has brought stability to our unit. Moreover, we have recruited a team of nine enthusiastic interns.



In addition to our renowned activities such as Mini SASS (river ecology), mapwork, indigenous knowledge, sustainable technology commons, energy, and climate change games, we have enhanced our education programmes by introducing new elements like the obstacle course, Quizzical Trees (tree trail), Terror and Treasure,

and an exciting stargazing experience. Furthermore, we have designed programmes that provide learners with progressive learning strategies as they advance from one level to the next. Below, you will find a high-impact progressive learning model aimed at building learners' knowledge and confidence.

Grade 10:
Introduction to scientific theories and methods

Grade 11:
Implementation of scientific experiments (Microclimate, population dynamics using mark-recapture methods, aspect comparisons etc.)

Grade 12:
Introduction to scientific writing and data handling. Methods to publish scientific literature.





Practical activities aimed at enriching classroom learning

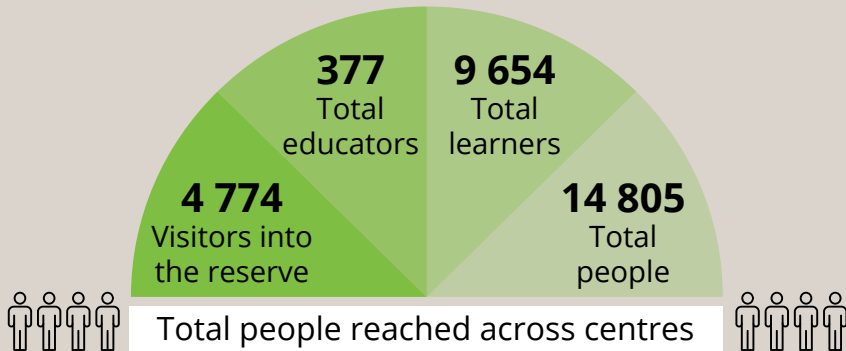
Furthermore, we have enhanced our tertiary component by introducing practical activities aimed at enriching classroom learning. The programme encompasses scientific data collection and analysis, utilizing a wide range of survey techniques and statistical approaches in the fields of Conservation, Environmental Science, and Eco-tourism.

Tertiary institutions such as UNISA, Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), University of the Free State (UFS), Vaal University of Technology (VUT), and two departments from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) have enjoyed their stays at our three education centers.

Our centers were delighted to host the annual Hilton Journey Programme for Hilton College. The 10th-grade students embarked on a 15-day hike covering approximately 200 kilometers. Additionally, this hike provided time for introspection and solitude, allowing each boy to reflect and refocus individually. The boys also had the opportunity to enjoy cycling and paddling across the Albert Falls Dam. They shared inspiring stories of personal growth and transformation after completing the journey.



IMPACT



WESSA EDUCATION CENTRES

Projects and Partnerships

Mthunzini Rotary Project

We have continued our involvement in the Rotary project at WESSA Twinstreams, which is funded by the Canadian Rotary Club through the Mthunzini Rotary Club. The primary objective of this project is to provide curriculum support to disadvantaged local community schools. It offers a comprehensive action-learning process that exposes learners to essential skills and techniques, with a focus on design and engineering thinking. This approach encourages creative thinking and problem-solving beyond the constraints of the formal curriculum structure. One hundred and eighty (180) learners including, twenty one (21) educators benefitted from the programme.

Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) and Hilton Effect Project

This programme covered various regions in KwaZulu-Natal, including Zululand (Twinstreams Education Centre), the Durban area (Treasure Beach Education Centre) as well as the Midlands area (uMngeni Valley Education Centre). Its primary goal is to enhance school curricula through education for sustainable development,



by providing students with critical thinking skills necessary to address challenges in the conservation sector and the responsible utilization of natural resources for the benefit of mankind through environmental education. We have reached two thousand seven hundred (2700) learners through this project.

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) e-STEAM Programme

This collaborative effort between WESSA, UKZN-STEAC, SCIENCE ESKOM EXPO, and CASME focuses on the e-STEAM (Environment Science Technology Engineering Art Mathematics) programme. It took place in Mthunzini and included rural schools within the uThungulu district circuit of the Mthunzini rural area under Umlalazi Municipality. The aim

was to respond to a call made by the UKZN School of Education to partner with WESSA in engaging with learners and teachers.

The programme included teacher training at WESSA Twinstreams Education Centre and aimed to introduce learners to project-based learning. This approach was necessary as these learners found it challenging to solely rely on traditional theory-based learning. We provided practical curriculum support for Natural Sciences, Physical Science, Life Sciences, Geography, Agricultural Sciences, and Life Orientation to under-resourced schools. Additionally, our focus was on enhancing the school curriculum through education for sustainable development and offering curriculum support to schools with limited resources. Two thousand (2000) learners were reached through the programme.

Enhance school curricula through education for sustainable development, by providing students with critical thinking skills necessary to address challenges in the conservation sector and the responsible utilization of natural resources for the benefit of mankind through environmental education



network of trails, granting access to unique landscapes, flora, and fauna. Visitors can enjoy our self-catering accommodations, rock climbing, and hiking trails. Our trails are designed to cater to all age groups and are easily accessible.

uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve serves as an exceptional place for environmental education. Covering nine hundred and seventeen (917) hectares, it is situated in the uMngeni River valley and surrounding areas, extending from immediately below the Howick Falls. The reserve boasts diverse habitats, ranging from Bushveld vegetation inhabited by Giraffes, Zebras, and Wildebeests, to magnificent Sandstone Cliffs interspersed with volcanic intrusions, and Plateau Grasslands where Blesboks, Mountain Reedbucks, and Oribis can be spotted. A network of footpaths intersects the reserve, offering hands-on access to a stunning variety of fauna and flora, as well as remarkable geographical and geological features.



Working on Fire (WoF) Partnership

uMngeni Valley is fortunate to have partnered with WoF for the next five years. The team is responsible for a wide range of tasks, including base maintenance, firefighting, control of alien invasive species, trail clearing, and maintenance.

uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve

uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve is located below the famous Howick Falls, offering a wide range of habitats that vary from bushveld terrain to mist belt grasslands. The reserve provides an opportunity for people to connect with nature through a

The primary vision of the reserve is to restore and protect biological diversity for the benefit of future generations. Every year, thousands of people explore this amazing reserve, making it a hub for those seeking to connect with nature and learn about its wonders.



WESSA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Championing Environmental and Conservation Young Professionals

Explore the seeds of change we've sown in our future leaders through WESSA's Youth Development and Eco Schools Programmes, reflecting our commitment to cultivating sustainable communities.

In pursuit of vibrant and diverse conservation leaders, our all-encompassing youth strategy continues to promote a rights-based conservation approach that places paramount importance on fostering and cultivating the potential of young individuals and communities. This forms the bedrock of our commitment to ensuring the enduring and sustainable safeguarding and stewardship of our natural assets and treasures within the intricate interplay of human and planetary ecosystems. Achieving coexistence within this intricate framework hinges on the holistic well-being of the entire system.

Our investment into the talents of young South Africans revolves around our four interconnected focal points for youth development.

Championing Environmental and Conservation Professionals

With a focus on performance, transformation, and influence within the professional realm, WESSA channels efforts to recalibrate priorities toward inclusive and rights-based conservation. This is actualised through WESSA's impactful youth internships, immersive

work-based placements, and comprehensive professional training. The WESSA Groen Sebenza Project was implemented by WESSA in partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment as a national project across all nine provinces.

Groen SEBENZA

The primary objective of the Groen Sebenza concept is to:

Build capacity and address environmental challenges through sustainable job creation.

By providing graduates with professional development, resource management, and entrepreneurial skills, the project aims to bridge the gap between education and meaningful employment in the green economy.

A total of two hundred and one (201) young graduates enrolled in the WESSA Groen Sebenza Project. Through a combination of accredited and non-accredited courses, WESSA offered

comprehensive training in various competencies, including professional development, sustainability, natural resource management, business skills, and environmental impact assessment.

The project yielded promising outcomes, with 94 participants (46%) successfully transitioning into employment, further studies, or entrepreneurship. This achievement is particularly noteworthy considering the prevailing challenges of youth unemployment in South Africa.

Moreover, the impact of the Groen Sebenza Project extends beyond employment outcomes. Participants have demonstrated personal and professional growth and an increased awareness of critical environmental issues, reinforcing the urgency of effective environmental stewardship.

WESSA extends its sincere gratitude to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and Environment (DFFE) for their generous funding and support throughout the project. The invaluable contribution of host organisations and mentors is also acknowledged, as their dedication played a pivotal role in the project's success.



With a focus on performance, transformation, and influence within the professional realm, WESSA channels efforts to recalibrate priorities toward inclusive and rights-based conservation.

To the 'Groenies', the young professionals who embraced this opportunity, WESSA commends their enthusiasm and hard work. It is evident that these individuals are poised to become the future managers and leaders in the Biodiversity and Environmental sector of South Africa.

Looking forward, WESSA is eager to maintain connections with Groen Sebenza alumni through the forthcoming WESSA Youth Alumni Network. Together, WESSA and its alumni will continue to drive positive change, safeguard the environment, and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Nurturing Resilience and Leadership

The very essence of resilience and legacy-building stands as the focal point of our endeavours. By discerning and amplifying the inherent strengths of young individuals, WESSA diligently cultivates these attributes as foundational skills, illuminating a personalised and supportive pathway for our emerging luminaries.

The nature-positive, resilience building South32 Eco-Hub Project is a beacon of climate action youth engagement. See page 22 for the WESSA-South32 partnership.

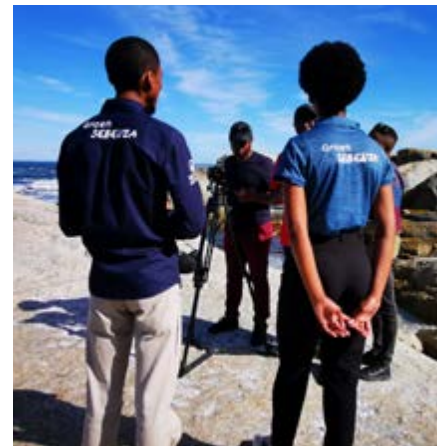


Advocacy and Voice

Young knowledgeable and creative minds stand as a driving force behind impactful advocacy, purposeful action, and the realisation of self-defined futures. The Foundation for Environmental Education's Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) Programme, implemented by WESSA, enables, and harnesses the confident and informed voices of capable young South Africans to champion the cause of people and planet. Profiling through multiple mediums, and with support from intergenerational campaigners and partners such as the City of Cape Town, youth are gaining audience to raise awareness and spearhead action against some of the challenges facing our world.

Education and Training for a Sustainable Tomorrow

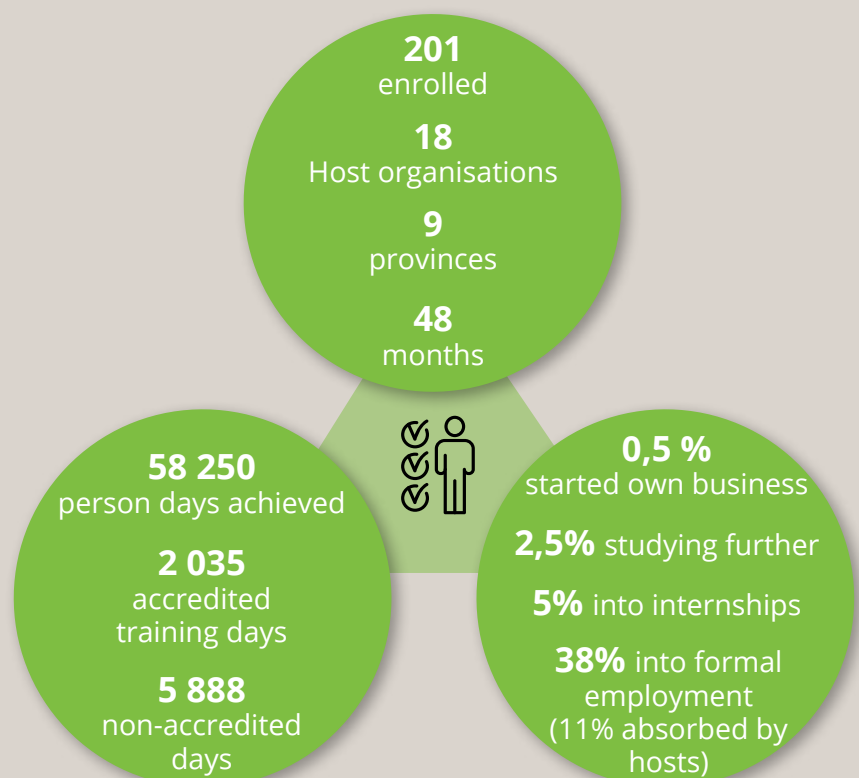
Since April 2019 until March 2023, WESSA has run the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Training and Capacity



Development project across South Africa. WESSA first partnered with the Department Forestry, Fisheries, and Environment (DFFE) in 2015 to implement The NRM Training and Capacity Development Programme. The programme helps Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) NRM participants meet the strategic goals such as the removal of Invasive Alien Plants and promoting water conservation. We have come to the end of another successful year of training over 1800 EPWP Participants across the country.

IMPACT

The Impact and statistics of WESSA Youth Development



EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Inspiring the Leaders of Tomorrow

WESSA's Educational Empowerment programmes signify an enduring commitment to holistic development for individuals and communities, paving the way for a sustainable and empowered future, showcased through our ongoing projects.

In the past year, our reach extended far and wide, with **520 schools** registering for our programs, **22 workshops** successfully facilitated, and a total of **120 impactful environmental lessons** delivered. This resulted in direct engagement with **2,800 learners** and an indirect impact on an astounding 35,600 more. Moreover, our efforts reverberated among **350 teachers**, with an additional 1,200 indirectly benefiting from our initiatives. Our influence stretched even further, touching the lives of **1,400 community members**.

WESSA stands proud as the sole implementer of three International School Programs: **Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment**, and **Learning about Forests**, along with various youth initiatives supported by both government and private sector funders. This collective effort contributes significantly to youth development, annually involving thousands of learners and teachers. We understand that educating the young generation is paramount to building a sustainable future, and these numbers are a testament to our pledge to develop informed and responsible citizens.

Driving Collaboration: Partnerships that Ignite Change

WESSA's impact is magnified through strategic partnerships with esteemed organizations who share our vision. The N3TC Eco-Schools project, funded by N3 Toll Commission (N3TC), stands as a testament

to this synergy, transforming communities like Qalabotjha in Villiers. N3TC's support has enabled us to address environmental, social, and economic challenges in vulnerable communities. Their belief in sustainable education has paved the way for tangible change and enduring impacts.

Equally, the Orion Eco-Schools project, generously funded by Orion Engineered Carbons, radiates success in the Motherwell area. This partnership with WESSA empowers 10 schools to take practical action in addressing environmental concerns. The positive outcomes are not only visible in improved

environmental conditions but also in the enhancement of teachers' and students' skills and knowledge.

The Scouts SA Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) Project, supported by Scouts SA, illuminates our allegiance to shaping young voices as agents of change. Through this collaboration, 22 Scouts Team Members received comprehensive training on designing impactful environmental campaigns. The participants' dedication to environmental conservation is inspiring, as they contribute to the larger community of advocates.



Sun International's Impactful Contribution

Among these impactful projects, Sun International's funding has played a pivotal role in driving positive change. Through the Eco-Schools initiative, Sun International has supported schools like Golden Valley School, Plangeni Junior Secondary School, and Lereko High School. Their partnership has enabled the implementation of various activities that promote environmental awareness, sustainable practices, and community development.

Stories of Transformation: Voices of Gratitude

Beneficiaries of our projects speak volumes about the transformative power of our initiatives. Mr. Ramaoka from Ipontshe Primary School highlights, *"The project is an essential development tool for youth. With WESSA, we can dream, believe, and achieve it."* At Ekukhanyisweni Primary School, Mr. Kok upholds that the project on Substance Abuse enlightened the community and created active engagement. Educators and learners alike, such as Mr.



"The project is an essential development tool for youth. With WESSA, we can dream, believe, and achieve it."

Hlakuva from Buhlebemfundo Secondary, express gratitude for innovative approaches that bring real-world solutions into classrooms.

Partners and Funders- Recognition & Acknowledgement

Our achievements wouldn't be possible without the support of our partners and funders. Together, we've impacted countless lives, designing sustainable communities and furthering a shared commitment

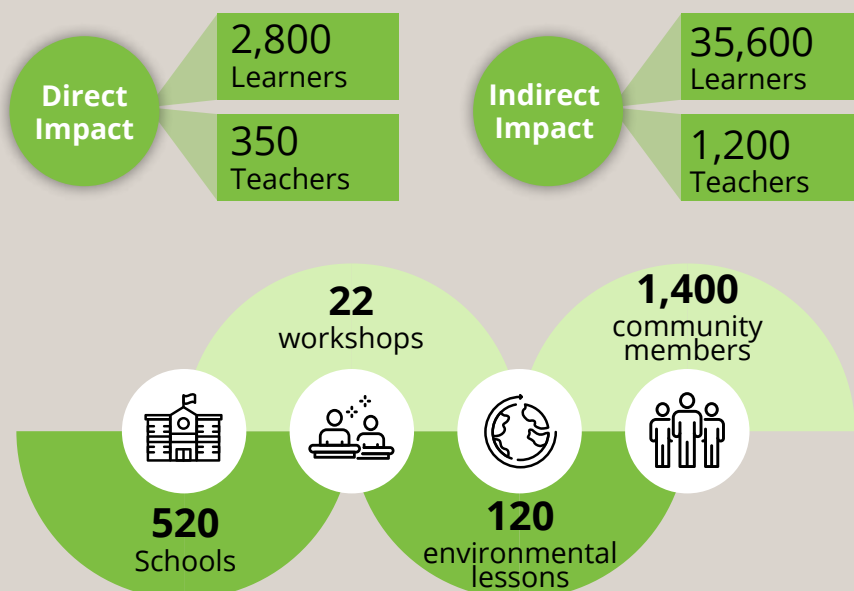
to our environment.

Envisioning the Future

Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities that lie before us. The transformative impact we've achieved thus far inspires us to push further, innovate, and create lasting change. With your continued support, we're confident that our shared vision of a sustainable, vibrant future will become a reality.



IMPACT



WESSA ECO-HUBS PROJECT

Training and Inspiring the Next Generation of Agri-entrepreneurs.

We proudly showcase our transformative projects, dedicated to fostering sustainable growth and employment opportunities for our youth

A high rate of youth unemployment and food insecurity, characterized by poverty and hunger affects communities around Richards Bay. Our South32 Eco-Hub project seeks to avert this situation by contributing to food security, creating employment for youth and improving the local economy of targeted communities through the development of four agricultural Eco-Hubs.

Funded by South32 (Hillside Aluminium Properties Ltd) our Eco-Hub Project has been a catalyst for youth engagement as agents of change and employability in agriculture to ensure climate resilient food



systems in their communities. Starting in early 2022, twenty youth (ambassadors) have been employed and capacitated with knowledge, education and skills to foster sustainable innovation.

They were selected from the following communities: Madlankala (Madlankala Eco-Hub), Nseleni (uMkhoma Eco-Hub), Dlangenzwa (uMhlathuze Eco-Hub) and Mbonambi (Amangwe Eco-Hub). The intention has been to empower these ambassadors to become successful agri-preneurs, who can deliver a multiplier effect where youth move from being job seekers to job creators.



The 2022 Year 1 goal was to:

- Recruit the 20 ambassadors
- Establish and test 4 vegetable gardens and
- Provide farming practice training.

Over this 2nd year, the goal has been to:

- Provide ambassadors with agribusiness SMME development training (WESSA's New Venture Creation Course),
- Expanding the footprint of their Eco-Hubs and
- Fostering the exit paths of the youth with a solid business plan support for tangible self-employment, that will be further developed using an exit fund.



Contributing to food security, creating employment for youth and improving the local economy of targeted communities.

Several local unemployed youths have benefitted from ad hoc labour stints, helping to expand the fencelines and nursery construction. We are currently negotiating with the four landowners and their respective traditional councils to extend the land leases from 5 to 10 years, for added tenure security. This is crucial, as a social impact survey found of that the 20 ambassadors, only four had another adult employed in their households. On average, 9 people were dependent on each of the ambassadors' monthly stipends.

All 20 ambassadors confirmed that this project has provided more food to their households, provided them with new farming skills and knowledge; as well as equipped them with a new understanding of farming business skills and knowledge that they have been able to share with their families and neighbours. Just as important, the stipends and the income derived from selling the vegetables is enabling the ambassadors to afford to send their children to school.



As part of exit strategy for the ambassadors to sustainably and profitably manage the Hubs themselves from 14 December, we have connected our ambassadors with the Siyazisiza Trust, who provide agricultural training, such as the produce grading training course our ambassadors attend in July; and a produce wholesale buying service. All four Eco-Hubs have elected to sign an MoU with the Trust to be their produce suppliers. All the ambassadors have recruited local business and farming mentors to nurture their agribusinesses towards sustainability. We are encouraged by South32's encouraging comments around potentially funding a 3rd phase of new community Eco-Hubs in Richards Bay.



IMPACT



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

WESSA Blue Flag

Blue Flag is one of the most recognizable beach flags in the world. It signifies a commitment to not only clean coastlines but also to the preservation of transparent and unpolluted ocean waters.

The 2022/23 season marked the celebration of Blue Flag status being awarded to fifty-one (51) beaches, four (4) marinas, and two (2) tourism boats along the South African coastline. Our nation stands among fifty-one (51) countries participating globally in this programme and ranks 15th in terms of the number of awarded beaches. This season showcased several highlights and new additions to the Blue Flag Programme. Kings Beach in Nelson Mandela Bay

Metro celebrated an impressive decade of continuous Blue Flag recognition. Preekstoel Beach in Hessequa and De Bakke Beach in Mossel Bay also achieved the milestone of ten consecutive years as Blue Flag beaches, reflecting their dedication to maintaining high water quality and effective beach management. Hessequa Municipality shone brightly as all its designated swimming beaches once again secured the Blue Flag status, a clear reflection



of the municipality's sustained environmental efforts. In an exciting development, KwaDukuza Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal made its debut on the Blue Flag programme with three beautiful beaches - Thompson's Bay, Blythedale, and Willard Beach - all proudly flying the Blue Flag. The Eastern Cape welcomed Middle Beach in Ndlambe Municipality and Marina Martinique beach as new Blue Flag additions. In the Western Cape, Herold's Bay beach in George Municipality made its debut in the programme, adding to the growing network of beaches dedicated to preserving our coastal richness. The 2022/23 season not only acknowledged the accomplishments of longstanding Blue Flag recipients but also welcomed new sites, collectively emphasising the importance of sustainable beach management, and working towards a brighter, cleaner future for our coastal environments.

Throughout the season, at least 60 control visits were conducted at Blue Flag sites across South Africa. Although beaches are generally the most popular focal point of the Blue Flag in South Africa, the programme's influence extends beyond the shorelines to marinas and sustainable tourism boat operators.

As one of our participants in the Blue Flag programme, Offshore



Adventures distinguishes itself as a prominent tourism boat operator, specializing in seal snorkeling experiences within Plettenberg Bay. Their sense of accomplishment in maintaining their Blue Flag status is seen through their dedication to upholding stringent codes of conduct and exceptional environmental standards. Owner Jaco Kruger says, *"We've learned that Blue Flag status helps when it comes to booking sites like, Get Your Guide, as you can use your Blue Flag status to claim your eco badge. In a very competitive market, it helps to stand out. But for all the right reasons. The market demands good and environmentally responsible practices, and Blue Flag helps us achieve this."* One of Offshore Adventure's many

5-star reviewers writes: *"We saw hundreds of sea lions, a unique experience. Care was also taken to ensure that nobody touched the animals. On such an excursion, it is always important to us that the protection of the animals is still valued, and this is always fulfilled here!"*

The Blue Flag Programme's significance lies in its multifaceted benefits and lasting impact on coastal environments and communities.

The programme stands as a symbol of commitment to the sustainable management of coastal sites. By certifying beaches that meet rigorous standards for water quality, safety, environmental management, and environmental education, the programme ensures that visitors can enjoy pristine waters and well-managed coastal areas.



Beyond the immediate benefits of clean beaches, the programme plays a crucial role in raising awareness about marine conservation, plastic pollution, and the importance of preserving sensitive ecosystems. Over time, this heightened awareness translates into positive behavioural changes among both tourists and local communities, fostering a culture of respect for

the environment. Moreover, the Blue Flag Programme catalyzes economic growth by attracting eco-conscious tourists, boosting local businesses, and creating jobs centered around responsible tourism. Overall, the programme's impact is far-reaching, resulting in healthier oceans, engaged communities, and a blueprint for sustainable development that extends well beyond the beachfront.

About the Blue Flag Programme:

Fifty-one (51) countries implement the Blue Flag Programme across 5036 beaches, marinas, and tourism boats accredited worldwide.

South Africa has the 15th highest number of Blue Flag beaches in the world, out of fifty-one (51) countries, with Spain having the highest number of beaches at six hundred and nine (629).

Blue Flag Programme was born in France in 1987.

Sixteen (16) coastal municipalities from three coastal provinces take part in the Blue Flag Programme, including pilot sites and full-status Blue Flag beaches.

Blue Flag Programme was implemented in South Africa in 2001.

South Africa was the first country to join the Blue Flag Programme outside of Europe in 2001, and became an international programme.

WESSA Green Coast

Green Coast endeavours to create a platform by enhancing access, fostering awareness, and nurturing pride in our nation's cherished coastal areas. The responsibility for managing these sites extends beyond local government to encompass every citizen who depends on this invaluable resource.

The WESSA Green Coast Programme is an ongoing award programme that provides a framework for collaborative governance and civil-society participation in Integrated Coastal Management. Successful coastal sites achieve Green Coast status by meeting a set of criteria designed to ensure the continual maintenance and improvement of environmental, developmental, and participatory standards.

The Green Coast Programme encourages effective management of rural or less-developed sensitive coastal environments,

emphasising voluntary compliance, citizen action, citizen science, environmental education, and sustainable tourism promotion.

The Green Coast programme strongly aligns with the WESSA vision and mission, incentivising, organising, and recognising local efforts towards education, action, and advocacy for meaningful and



long-term coastal conservation outcomes.

A highlight of this year was the Green Coast Awards event, combined with the annual Blue Flag launch, which took place in Plettenberg Bay in November 2022.

This year, Green Coast status was re-awarded to three Wild Coast sites and one Western Cape site. The four sites are Blaauwberg, Chintsa, Morgan Bay, and Kei Mouth.

The event generated significant interest in the Green Coast Programme, leading to four new Garden Route sites submitting Green Coast applications for the new season. We are thrilled to welcome Natures Valley and Gwaing Beach as aspiring Green Coast sites. The successful sites will be announced at the Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards Event in Wilderness on the 20th of October 2023.





The potential for the Green Coast model to have a far-reaching impact in coastal conservation and sustainable tourism sectors is truly exciting.

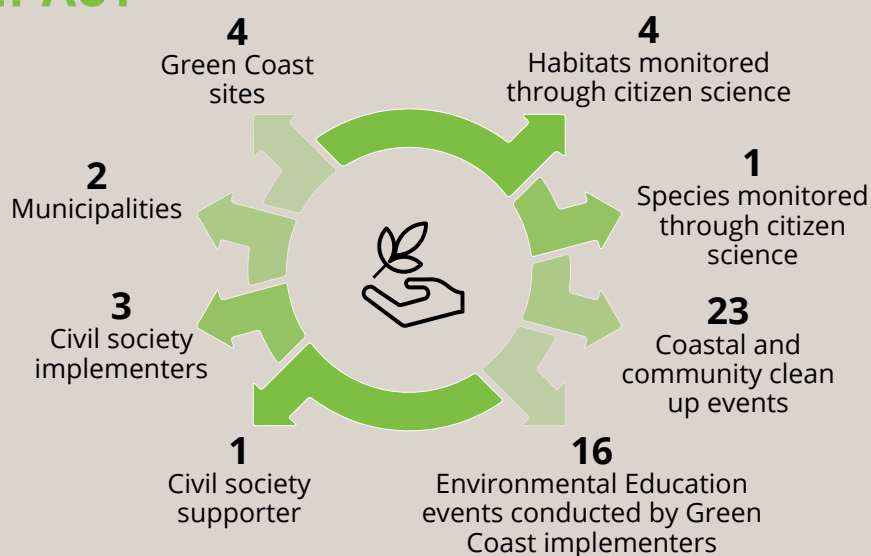
The WESSA Green Coast Programme is steadily growing, and we look forward to establishing new partnerships and expanding the number of sites across South African coastal municipalities. The potential for the Green Coast model to have a far-reaching impact in coastal conservation and sustainable tourism sectors is truly exciting. As we anticipate the upcoming Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards Event, we are eager to continue this journey with our funders and partners, fostering a shared commitment to preserving our coastal assets for generations to come.

Noluvuyo Stofile, a Groen Sebenza intern hosted by WESSA as a Green Coast Steward, helps a National Pollution lab technician to collect water quality data from the Chintsa Estuary. This from part of the Habitat monitoring programme for the Chintsa Green Coast site, which is focusing on estuary health.

Masibulele Thofu collects observational data that supports the water quality monitoring programme at the Chintsa East Green Coast site.



IMPACT



WESSA TRAINING

WESSA's Training, a testament to our commitment to empowering individuals and organisations in the pursuit of environmental excellence.

Training programmes and projects implemented in 2022/23

This year our Training programmes significantly impacted beneficiaries' lives by providing environmental skills and knowledge, enhancing employment opportunities and stepping stones into entrepreneurship.

WESSA Training is versatile and flexible in its skills development training approach, considering both online and in-contact training. Our current statistic shows that this blended approach is highly needed, and we are currently exploring hybrid training solutions for citizens across the country.

WESSA Training introduced a Learner Management System (LMS) in October 2022, providing live and recorded sessions for training. The system received positive feedback, leading to full scale training for one hundred and seventy one (171) Groen Sebenza interns in February and March 2023.

The impact of implemented projects and programmes

We implemented fourteen (14) training sessions, with



the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Conduct Outcome Based Assessments (ETDP SETA accredited) being the most popular. WESSA-certified programmes were the most implemented, accounting for 79% of the total.

WESSA-Certified EIA Course focuses on the strategic and contextual application of the many environmental policies and frameworks in providing solutions or mitigating steps towards environmental challenges like pollution, biodiversity loss, and

climate change, empowering beneficiaries to track causes, impacts, self-correct, and promote sustainable resource utilization.

The ETDP SETA Accredited Course, Conduct Outcome Based Assessments (Assessor's course) offered 2022/23 Groen Sebenza Interns the opportunity to become self-employed or generate income. This course equips learners with skills to prepare, conduct, and review assessments, allowing them to register with the SETA and generate income.



Inspiring success story

During the South32 project, twenty (20) youth ambassadors completed Sustainable Agriculture Training in Richards Bay between May and June 2022. The training focused on theory, practical examples, discussion sessions, and practical application in the WESSA ECO-Hub for crop farming. Pictured right are the South32 youth ambassadors conducting practical work of Alien Invasive Plant identification.

In 2023, the ambassadors completed the **New Venture Creation Training**. They produced business plans focused on agricultural businesses. Some of them sourced partners, combining their strengths for success.

One of the most successful stories is that of Thandeka Myeni who partnered with her sibling and secured three hectares of land to plant and produce organic agricultural products. Being passionate about sustainability, Thandeka is completing her Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Management at UNISA. WESSA Training wishes her the best in her studies and hopes to see more like her.



WESSA Training Funders

Self-funded training at WESSA is at an all-time low, with only 0.40% funding themselves in the 2022/23 financial year. Over 99% of WESSA training was government or privately funded. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) funded 71.29% of enrolments, with one hundred and eighty-seven (187) DFFE beneficiaries. The Department of Tourism contributed 10.78%, with eighty (80) participants successfully completing the Tourism Blue Flag Stewards programme. One hundred and five (105) youth (students and unemployed youth) completed a WESSA-certified EIA course in the financial year, with Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Walter Sisulu University,

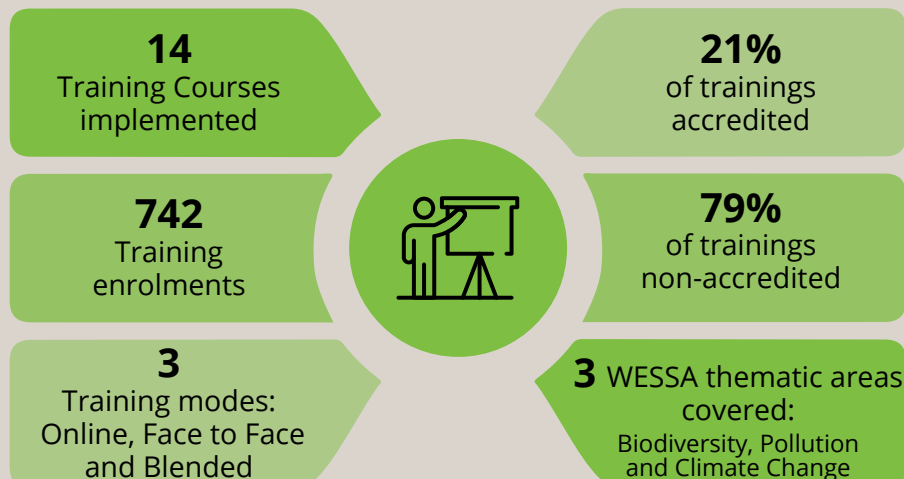
South32, and Balwin Properties being our funding partners. WESSA funded five employees for both accredited and WESSA-certified training.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of WESSA and the beneficiaries of these great initiatives, WESSA Training expresses its sincerest gratitude to all its funders and partners. A positive impact has been made on the lives of people who participated in the initiatives you have supported. May your contributions towards ensuring socio-economic well-being and environmental sustainability have a ripple effect on our societies. WESSA appreciates your support of our projects and programmes.



IMPACT



ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY

Taking up the reins again!

We highlight our steadfast commitment to environmental stewardship, governance excellence, and advocacy efforts, showcasing our collective pursuit of a greener, more sustainable world.

WESSA was founded in 1883 as an advocacy organisation, to act to halt and restore South Africa's dwindling game population, being harvested as bush meat for the burgeoning gold and diamond mines. We successfully campaigned for the creation of the National Parks Board, the proclamation of the Kruger National Park, and advocated for the formation of other national parks, such as Addo Elephant Park. WESSA rallied South Africans in the earlier 70's for the formation of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, and again in the early 2000's when we led the opposition against the threat of it being mined.

Apart from a brief period over 2017-2020, one of WESSA's key focus areas has been our advocacy work: implemented through collaboration between our volunteer and paid staff and our broader network of supporters and partners. The golden thread running throughout WESSA's efforts over 97 years has been our environmental education and activism, which has aimed to inspire, drive and support environmental justice.

Our new Strategy 2022-2026 makes it clear that our Advocacy will be an overarching objective and guiding principle in our work. We aim to "grow WESSA's status as a leading, trusted voice on environmental issues. WESSA is a thought leader, champion expert, and a leading voice for a healthy biosphere where human resource-use is sustainably managed. We want to be involved in critical areas where we can deliver measurable outcomes."



Environmental Governance Committee members bosberaad in February 2023, kindly hosted by the Babanango Game Reserve.

For WESSA to give credence to positioning our driving principle as advocacy, that will influence high level environmental policy, promote close monitoring and compliance work, and to support our members as they Advocate and Act, we have allocated paid staff to form a resurrected Advocacy Unit. The Unit's current staff include Morgan Griffiths who joined WESSA in 2004 as an environmental officer dealing with development, pollution and conservation issues; and who lead WESSA's Environmental Governance Programme over 2014-2017. Over 2017 to 2022 he was tasked with managing three large youth development projects across the country; returning to environmental governance

work when appointed Strategic Lead: Advocacy in September last year. He is assisted by Groen Sebenza intern Shenen Rikhotso. They act in concert with a core group of WESSA advocacy volunteers comprising the Environmental Governance Committee; which has representation from the WESSA Board, each WESSA region, a legal expert and a biodiversity expert. It is currently chaired by Dr Gary Koekemoer; succeeding Patrick Dowling, who chaired the Environmental Governance Committee (EGC) through the 'Covid' years. Additional volunteers, seconded experts and paid staff support the EGC in a wider group known as the WESSA Advocacy Group, which we hope to grow.

WESSA highly appreciates the dedicated, passionate efforts of its voluntary staff, primarily the Environmental Governance Committee (EGC) members, who contribute extensive and valuable hours of expertise to responding to issues (such as the Karpowerships, mining, strategic development frameworks, dams, seismic surveys, marine protected areas (especially for penguins), and nuclear build proposals); as well as researching position statements, some of which have received extensive coverage through Daily Maverick or been presented at Parliament Portfolio Committee hearings.



Each policy is led by a development team, who will be canvassing experts and our members and supports, in reflecting on and discerning the objective, scientific, transformative and strategic intent of each policy, to promote our actions under our three themes. We look forward to your support and involvement in this development course as we seek to advocate, educate and act.

The Advocacy Unit is also intimately involved in a number of conservation collaboration, policy and strategic actions, such as representing WESSA on the IUCN SA National Committee, the (conservation) NGO Alliance and 3 of the task teams heading up South Africa's commitment to achieve the global target of 30% of land and marine spaces conserved by 2030 (the 30x30 Protected Areas target of the Global Biodiversity Framework). This work is expected to connect with our volunteers and staff conservation and advocacy activities, especially citizen science projects, Friends Groups, biodiversity stewardship and conservancies.

The Advocacy Unit is a cost centre under WESSA Support Services. Traditionally WESSA has struggled to raise dedicated funding for its core advocacy work. The Advocacy Unit will be marketing advocacy-related training courses, will fundraise specifically to afford attendance at key conferences (such as COP28), support conservation projects and will be investigating certain donor funding avenues to offset some of our staff and operating costs.



© Andrew Baxter

WESSA MEMBERS

At the heart of our organisation's enduring impact lies a critical component: our members. WESSA's mission to drive climate action, regenerate biodiversity and reduce pollution, is made possible across South Africa through the dedicated volunteer work of our members. Come rain or shine, their unyielding commitment to sustainability is a bedrock upon which we build a better future for all.

Biodiversity regeneration

Our members often stand as the stewards of local biodiversity. Through their local focus on educate, advocate and act, WESSA is able to initiate and sustain critical projects at a local level that safeguard endangered species and habitats, restore vital ecosystems, and promote responsible stewardship of our natural heritage.



Climate change action

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, and our members are to be found at the forefront of adaptation, mitigation and building resilience actions at a local and national level. Through their collective efforts, WESSA is able to champion sustainable practices, advocate for policies that drive climate action (and challenge those that don't), and educate youth and others on the change that is coming and how best we respond.

Pollution reduction

Our members see first-hand the consequences of human waste on local ecosystems and understand the urgency

of building zero-waste communities. Their unending commitment has enabled us to launch impactful initiatives aimed at reducing pollution in our oceans, rivers, and on land. Through their dedication, we are making strides in cleaning up our environment and advocating for responsible consumption and waste management.

At WESSA, we firmly believe that change begins within our own sphere of influence, at home, on our verge, in our local valley or beach, in our schools and communities. Our members are advocates for

positive change and collective stewardship, engaging within their local communities to foster environmental awareness and sustainable living practices. Through building local networks, facilitating educational programmes, coordinating grassroots advocacy, they enable and empower individuals and communities to take meaningful action and build local stewardship capacity.

As we reflect on the year gone by, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our members, who at huge personal cost are the driving force behind many of our successes and learnings.

Together, we are not only (re)shaping the present but also laying the foundation for our children's future where biodiversity is revitalised, climate change is prepared for, pollution is reduced, and communities thrive within their ecosystems.



Volunteers that Educate, Advocate and Act through tree planting.



iNaturalist CNC April-May 2022.



Guiding young hands outdoors.



Water walk, arranged by the Youth.



Making friends, extending the circle.



LAUNCH OF THE BIRDS OF MAGALIESBERG BIOSPHERE E-MAG

HOSTED BY MARGARET ROBERTS HERBAL CENTER

29TH JULY 2023

MARGARET ROBERTS HERBAL CENTRE

ENTER INTO GOOGLE MAPS FOR A PIN

@ 10 .30 am

Refreshments will be served @R55 / person
Lunch will be available afterwards at R 145 per person.

The car entry payable at shop R 20.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL VIA WHATS APP

071 1616441

OUR SPEAKERS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| VINCENT CARRUTHERS | JOHN WESSAN | RENIER BAIT | MARK ANDERSON |
| Opening | The eMag | Debut Mag | Guest speaker |



Mark Anderson, CEO of BirdLife SA, Renier Bait representing WESSA and BirdLife Haries, John Wessan representing Rotari, BirdLife Haries and WESSA, Vincent Carruthers and Glen Ross, current Rotary Club of Brits-Hartbeespoort (D9400) president.

New bird book launched



On Saturday, 29th July 2023, the 'Birds of the Magaliesberg Biosphere' e-book had its grand debut at the Margaret Roberts Herbal Centre, located near the Hartbeespoort Dam in the De Wit area. Over seventy enthusiasts graced the occasion.

Leading the discussion were Vincent Carruthers, John Wessan, Renier Bait, and Mark Anderson. Helena Atkinson, WESSA's CEO from Cape Town made a special appearance.

This e-book is the brainchild of the Rotary Club of Brits-Hartbeespoort (D9400), BirdLife Haries and WESSA Northern areas region, with John Wessan and Renier Bait contributing as authors. Remarkably, this publication is the third in a series. The inaugural book, launched in 2010, was the Rotary Club of Brits-Hartbeespoort's Rotary Centenary project.

It's not just a book. It's an invaluable guide for birders and nature aficionados keen to delve into the Magaliesberg biosphere. It sheds light on unique habitats, birding hotspots, and specific avian species to watch. Additionally, it provides comprehensive insights into the eight sub-birding areas, accompanied by the most recent and verified bird lists, informed by the latest South African Bird Atlas Project 2 data.

Members from all the partnering organisations attended, and heartfelt appreciation was extended to everyone supporting this endeavour.

Keen to get a glance? The e-book is available for free here: <https://bit.ly/2lsWSTo>

Stay tuned, as the e-mag will undergo periodic updates with fresh data, new hotspots and additional ad-visions. For further information, get in touch with PAG John Wessan at jwessan74@gmail.com.



Top: The book cover. Above: President Glen Ross closing the meeting.

Adding to local knowledge.



2022 International Coastal Clean-up.



Volunteers getting their hands dirty... by cleaning up!



Volunteers that use their hands to build and protect.

You Are Invited To Join Us For A

Vulture Day Picnic

GET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL VULTURE DAY

02.09.2023 Ngoka vulture restaurant @9am

Get ready to soak up the sun and relish the joy of the great outdoors! Come one, come all, and join us for an unforgettable experience, nothing formal, just great fellowship with friends. Bring your own picnic basket and chairs and enjoy the vulture sightings. We can't wait to share this wonderful day with you!

Bookings are essential
Email John Wesson
jwesson674@gmail.com

FINANCIAL REPORT

The 2022/23 financial year has been an interesting one, as we embarked on a journey of implementing a new strategy that places utmost importance on good governance, rigorous controls, and steadfast commitment to achieving long-term financial sustainability. Our commitment to good governance has been the cornerstone of our operations since inception. However, this year we elevated our governance practices to unprecedented heights. We believe that robust governance is not just a regulatory requirement but a moral responsibility towards our shareholders, employees, and the broader community. By reinforcing ethical standards, fostering transparency, and nurturing a culture of accountability, we are not only safeguarding our

Our commitment to good governance has been the cornerstone of our operations since inception.

reputation but also fostering an environment of trust that fuels sustainable growth.

A deficit of R249 382 is reported for the 2022/23 financial year, we encountered a challenge as both our income and expenditures experienced a decline compared to the prior year. Total income decreased by 14%, from R29.5m to R26.3m. This is mainly due to a decrease in project income where significant projects like Tourism Blue Flag and African German Youth Initiative came

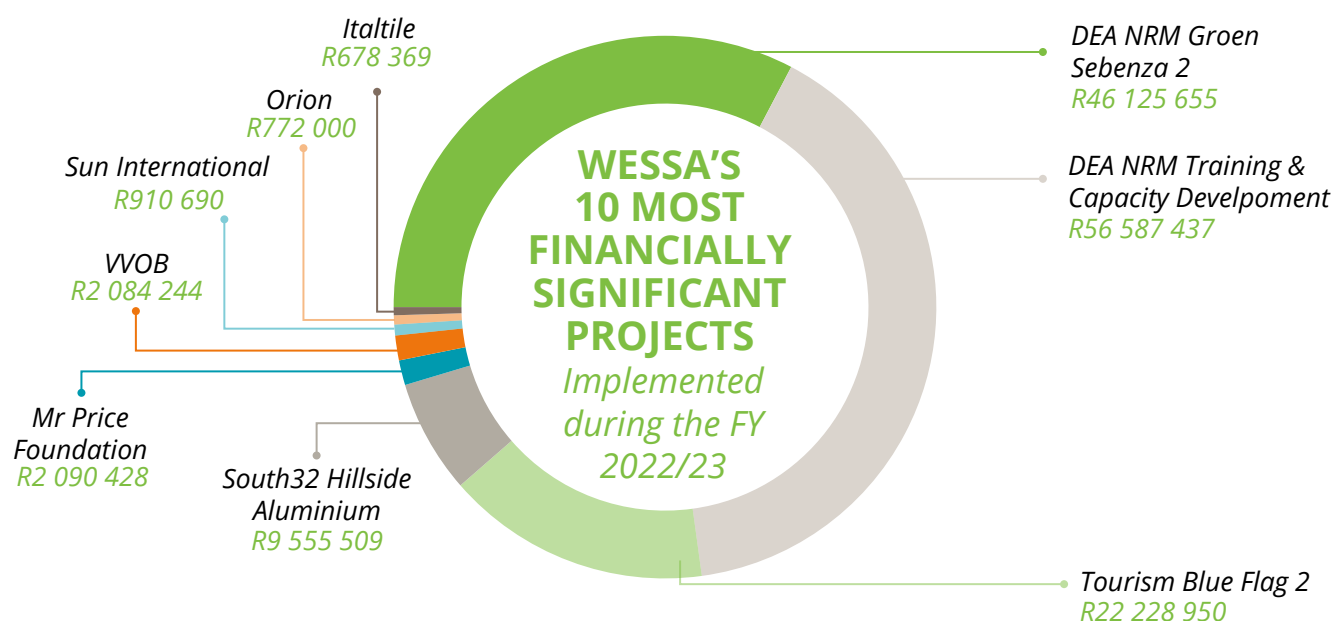
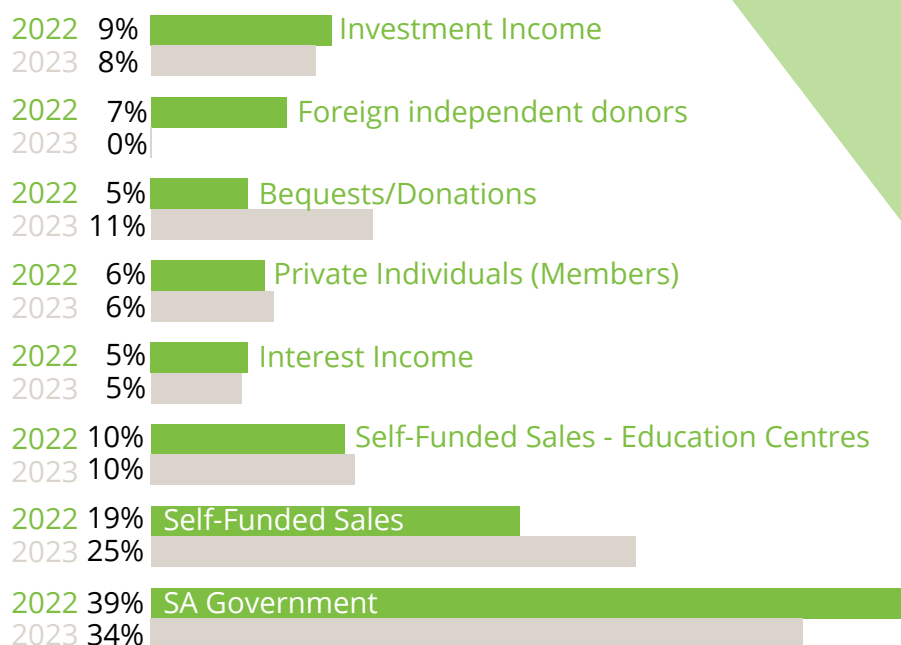
to an end and prior year had a significant number of Accounts payables that were written off because of improved scrutiny of our working capital management. Total expenses also decreased by 7% year on year, mainly because of a decrease in bad debts and salaries and wages. Despite these hurdles, we maintained a steadfast commitment to prudent financial management, ensuring that every resource was optimized to its fullest potential.

GROUP GENERAL FUNDS STATEMENT OF SURPLUS OR DEFICIT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME *for the year ended 31 March 2023.*

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| | R | R |
| Income | 26 285 289 | 29 520 718 |
| Expenditure [^] | (27 419 836) | (29 550 178) |
| (Deficit)/Surplus before impairment | (1 134 547) | (29 460) |
| Impairment reversal/(expense): Related party loan [^] | (658 556) | 476 433 |
| Deficit before tax | (1 793 103) | 446 973 |
| Tax expense | - | - |
| Deficit for the year | (1 793 103) | 446 973 |
| Other comprehensive income/(loss) | 1 646 639 | 2 767 809 |
| Revaluation/(devaluation) of investments to fair value | 1 646 639 | 2 767 809 |
| General funds surplus/(deficit) and other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year | (146 464) | 3 214 782 |
| Specific funds ^{^^} | (102 918) | - |
| Total general funds and specific funds surplus/(deficit) and other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year | (249 382) | 3 214 782 |

SOURCES OF INCOME

This graph highlights the income sources for the 2022/23 financial year and prior year. The distribution of income sources didn't significantly change year on year. We note that donations and bequests increased from 5% in 2021/22 to 11% of total income in 2022/23, self-funding sales increased from 19% to 25% and Government decreased from 39% to 34% of total income due to government project contracts close out. Income from Foreign independent donors was not realised.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the financial report underscores the importance of establishing diverse income streams. The organisation has already put plans and committees in place to drive this initiative forward. With dedicated efforts from management and the implementation of these strategies, the organisation is committed to working diligently towards achieving its set goals for financial sustainability.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Board, members, employees, partners, and all stakeholders who have supported us on this transformative journey. Your trust and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping our progress.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey towards excellence. We remain steadfast in our mission to create value

and pursue growth while maintaining a strong financial foundation. Together, we shall continue to navigate challenges and chart a course towards prosperity.

Sincerely

Nana Msomi
Senior Financial Manager

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THANK YOU

Your firm support has propelled our mission forward, and we extend our profound gratitude. Together, we are making a lasting impact on our planet, ensuring a sustainable and brighter future for all. Thank you for being the driving force behind our success.

Donors that had supported WESSA over the past financial year

Income over R1 million

DEA NRM Groen Sebenza 2
DEA NRM Training & Capacity Development
South32 Hillside Aluminium
Tourism Blue Flag 2

Income R100 000 to R999 999

VVOB
Mr Price Foundation
Sun International - Grand West - 2 Schools
Sasol
Italtile
Orion
Glencore
TBF2 Implementers
HHCT Strategic Review
GIZ Fundisa for Change 2022
Child Safety Beach Project
CDM
IRS – Independently Registered Schools 2022
Wild Birds Trust
Twinstreams Rotary
WWFSA Journalism Training
Nedbank Support 3 Schools for Waste Management
NOVA Institute Support Green Chics Programme
CDHM – Eco Schools Component
N3TC Coordination for ECD Schools along the N3 in Villers

Income R10 000 to R99 999

MRP - 20 Schools in Qwa Qwa
DEA NRM 2nd Cost Centre 1901
Support 5 Afrika Tikkun Centres
De Beers-Support 10 schools in the Blouberg Area
DEA NRM Training & Capacity Development
DUCT Amanzi Ethu Eco Rangers
Glencore Coal
Rustenburg Community Development Trust
CHDM YRE Workshop
Glencore – Support 17 Schools
Mondi TWS Upgrades
Pick n Pay Clean ups 2022
IRS – Independently Registered Schools 2023
RMB
Ceramic Industries
Eco-Campus

Income under R10 000

EDTEACare Project
RMB
MD- GIZ NYRI PARTNER WORKSHOP
Bakwena
CHDM RURAL Sustainable Villages
Support YRE schools in GP for 2021 CDW
Hilton Hotel Group 2022
TBF2 (Phase 1)
YRE Registration Fees
Eco Schools in Eco-Systems Rehab project - 20 Schools
IRS - Independently Registered School 2019

Other funds

Sishen Project
Africa Germany Youth Initiative Phase 2
Go Goals
Tourism Blue Flag Project
Bushpigs Strategic Improvements
GIZ Climate Support Programme
Strategic Investment
AECI Modderfontein
AECI Water project
AECI Water Week Event
ANB Investments
Balwin Rhulani
Ceramic Ind 2021 Water Week and Enviro Week
Impumelelo WC 20 Schools
MRP 1801
MRP 1802
Rose Foundation
SA Scouts
SAIIA Community Diplomacy Week
Suntory Eco School
TGCP Phase 2 Implementers
EDTEACare
Old Closed Projects
South 32 Ambassadors
Giant Sable
Moss Trust
Hilton Effect
EEEEESAY1701
Balwin Project
DEA NRM Training Cost Centre 2
DEA YES FC/NC Implementers
Department of Environmental Affairs NRM Project 1701
Exxon-Mobil
Green Coast Membership Project
National Lotteries
Tourism Green Coast Project
YRE 1801
YRE 1802
SANBI GS
Childhood Foundation

Legacies and Bequest

E L Nicholson
E L PA Marais

THANK
YOU

Educate, Advocate, Act



WESSA

PEOPLE CARING FOR THE EARTH

The Wildlife and Environment Society of
South Africa (RF) NPC
Registration number: 1933/004658/08
Non-Profit Organisation number: 000716 NPO

WESSA Head office
uMngeni Valley Nature Reserve,
1 Karkloof Road, Howick, 3290, KZN



www.wessa.org.za

People Caring For The Earth