

# A Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development

In terms of UNESCO's  
Man and the Biosphere  
(Mab) Program



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Man and  
the Biosphere  
Programme



Cape Winelands  
**BIOSPHERE  
RESERVE**

With a focus on the Greater Stellenbosch located  
in the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve.  
Western Cape, South Africa



Prepared by Dennis Moss Partnership  
18 September 2012





In recognition of the 5th anniversary of  
the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve  
on 18 September 2012.

*“Biosphere reserves can become theatres  
for reconciling people and nature; they can  
bring knowledge of the past to the needs  
of the future; and they can demonstrate  
how to overcome the problems of the  
sectoral nature of our institutions”*

(UNESCO Seville Strategy 25 March 1995).



# Overview





## Overview

The purpose of this report is two-fold. On the one hand, it provides a perspective on, and summary of the current statutory and policy frameworks within which sustainable development should be considered and promoted in the Stellenbosch municipal area (having regard for its location in the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve). On the other hand, it addresses a structured methodology (model) for the private sector to help give effect to sustainable development through project planning, design and implementation.

The methodology, developed by this office, is referred to as a Sustainable Development Initiative (SDI). The premise for the SDI model is that sustainable development does not take place on its own – it is given effect and is funded by initiatives taken by individuals, organizations or institutions. The degree of success depends on the degree of inclusivity.

Sustainable development is defined in different ways, but is generally considered as development that improves human well-being and the integrity of the environment through the efficient use of resources. The efficient use of resources should include the just appropriation of such resources, as this provides the ethical foundation for resource use.

In this report it is argued that sustainable development can be effectively and justly promoted through projects which are planned and implemented with sustainability as a central goal. Sustainable development cannot be optimized in a 'business as usual' environment - a structured intervention and co-operation is required to achieve optimal efficiency. The implementation of projects creates opportunities for people to work together, to build trust and to develop a greater understanding of how to address the sustainability challenges that local people face in a global context.

The need to recognize socio-economic development and the fragility of the physical environment in developmental processes is well documented in international literature. However, the ethical

environment which determines human behaviour and its impact on sustainability is neglected and requires constant vigilance. This needs to be taken into consideration in the planning, design and implementation of projects.

A leading international programme for sustainable development, which encapsulates a holistic and integrated planning and implementation approach, is UNESCO's<sup>1</sup> Man and the Biosphere (MaB) Programme that has been evolving over the past 41 years. The latter is a programme of international, strategic planning and co-operation that deals with people-environment interactions across the globe. It is given effect through inter alia the establishment and efficient management of biosphere reserves which are terrestrial and/or marine areas internationally recognised for their unique environmental qualities. Biosphere reserves provide a framework for the creation of partnerships for knowledge sharing, research, monitoring, education, training, and participatory decision-making.

The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve was listed by UNESCO on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves on 18 September 2007. This followed on the endorsement of an international agreement to this effect by the Western Cape Government, Stellenbosch Municipality, as well as all the other local authorities located within the biosphere reserve.

The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve is one of 598 biosphere reserves currently forming the World Network of Biosphere Reserves across 117 countries. The establishment of the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve has created a unique opportunity for the people of Greater Stellenbosch and environs to promote and give practical effect to sustainable development within an internationally-endorsed policy framework incorporating clear direction for decision making.

Sustainable development in the biosphere reserve should be considered in context of government

policies and programmes on the national, provincial and local spheres. National Government has, through the Department of Environmental Affairs, promoted the implementation of the MaB Programme nationally since 1994. The Western Cape Government has likewise implemented the programme since that time and has formally integrated the objectives of the MaB Programme into its socio-economic and spatial/design policies since 2001.

The promotion of sustainable development should be considered in context of the most recent United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly known as the Rio + 20 (20-22 June 2012). Rio+20 provides an international context within which the South African National Framework for Sustainable Development and associated policies and strategies should be considered. This is similarly applicable to a range of policies and strategies of the Western Cape Government pertaining to sustainable development. In the latter regard the Western Cape Government's 110% Green Initiative, that has the objective to develop the province as the Green Economic Hub of Africa, provides provincial direction.

A number of co-operative agreements between the Stellenbosch Municipality, Stellenbosch University, and community organizations have been concluded over the years. From a partnership and co-operative perspective, the Hope Project of Stellenbosch University, which is rooted in three core functions – i.e. teaching and learning, research and community interaction, and academic initiatives that serve human needs, is of significance.

This inspirational initiative demonstrates how sustainable development can be promoted in a manner that has profound positive and measurable impacts that are scalable from the local to the international level. Furthermore, both the municipality and Stellenbosch University are large investors into infrastructure, building projects and the improvement of human well-being and the natural environment in support of sustainable development in Stellenbosch

municipal area. Projects are co-ordinated and aligned by the municipal and university departments responsible for planning and implementation on an ongoing basis in terms of formal agreements. To the above must be added broad-based initiatives to promote inclusive socio-economic development such as the Stellenbosch 360 Heritage project initiated and promoted jointly by the municipality, university and local communities.

Greater Stellenbosch is home to a number of national and international companies of high standing who have made, and are continuing to make, outstanding contributions to the well-being of the area. Their initiatives and support are often aligned with a range of municipal, university and community initiatives and projects. The SOS (Strengthen Our Society) initiative recently launched by Remgro and the Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust, which aims to assist community and welfare organizations with financial, strategic planning and associated systems and intends to create a framework for broad based business and community participation, is most encouraging.

Greater Stellenbosch can be proud of the many community and environmental initiatives, programmes and projects that have been undertaken by community organizations, and people from all walks of life over the years. Having regard for the decisive role the natural and built heritage plays in the promotion of sustainable development in the area, the unique contributions that Stellenbosch Heritage Foundation has made over decades towards promoting a culture of care and responsibility and which has great practical value, are recognised as exemplary.

Having regard for the above, two clear common denominators present themselves. Firstly, the sharing of the bedrock values for sustainable development is broad-based and, secondly, Greater Stellenbosch is located in an international biosphere reserve which provides the international context within which sustainable development can be promoted locally. A unique opportunity exists to co-ordinate socio-economic and environmental initiatives, aimed at promoting sustainable development, within the framework of the MaB Programme.

The alignment of core objectives, interests and action plans would, in the above context, contribute greatly to the development of a culture of sustainability locally and further afield. It is imperative to recognize that the values upon which sustainable development is built is, in essence, ethical. The MaB Programme subscribes to the notion that ethical values<sup>2</sup> form the basis of decision-making and action in accordance with an ideal accepted in a given moral system. It is accepted that, what makes ethical values different from all other values, is their overriding character. They articulate an imperative, or a 'must', that cannot be escaped by anyone who subscribes to them and they are converted into practice through principles and rules (UNESCO 2010).

Two of the pillars of sustainable development i.e. the promotion of human well-being and the enhancement of the integrity of the natural environment, are founded on ethical values. The principles through which these values should be given effect, include the just and efficient use of resources (capital) in accordance with legislative and official policy frameworks.

An ethical domain therefore forms the keystone for sustainable development. In the UNESCO publication entitled *The Ethical Implications of Global Climate Change* it is argued that, if the imperative or 'must do' that flows from an ethical value is denied, then that value and its importance itself is denied. Such a denial is therefore not a matter of arbitrary choice. Accordingly, as is stated in the above publication, the ethical domain is circumscribed not only by the value choices made by humans, but also by the critical weighing of the expected consequences of their choices.

The above principles are encapsulated in the concept of Ubuntu which, as a moral system, is embedded in South Africa's Constitution and therefore also in public policy. This view is borne out by a Constitutional Court judgment<sup>3</sup> a number of years ago when the court resolved that public policy is informed by the concept of Ubuntu and that 'notions of fairness, justice and equity, and reasonableness cannot be separated from public policy. Public policy takes into account the

necessity to do simple justice between individuals'. The approach adopted in this report is both supportive of and consistent with public policy and with the MaB Programme. In forward planning, the point of departure is therefore, in essence, a strategic value-based and pro-active one<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, the core interests and objectives that are required to attain sustainable development are identified and then it is demonstrated how best to achieve them.

In this report it is argued that the efficient implementation of sustainable development is an imperative for the achievement of long-term global sustainability. For humanity to succeed in creating a state of sustainability, global climate neutrality is required (i.e. the absence of the forces of climate change). A climate-neutral strategy and its practical implementation is therefore a decisively important dimension of sustainable development. A conceptual framework for the planning and implementation of such a strategy is included in the SDI methodology described in the report.

Sustainable development projects undertaken in the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve are potentially unique in that they are undertaken in the international arena in accordance with an intergovernmental and international agreement between UNESCO and South Africa. Accordingly, they could serve as global models of excellence as well as evidence of the achievements of local people. Exemplary projects could instil local, provincial and national pride that will be inspirational for all concerned.

Having regard for the fact that Stellenbosch Municipality endorsed the international agreement that gave effect to the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve, a unique opportunity exists for the Greater Stellenbosch to become a global partner of excellence in promoting and giving effect to sustainable development, as is contemplated in the MaB Programme. A major challenge therefore lies ahead for the Greater Stellenbosch to demonstrate, on a practical level, how sustainable development can be successfully achieved on the local scale in a manner that would set new benchmarks for provincial, national and international good practice.

The focus of this report is on Stellenbosch municipal area. However, the values, principles and objectives described in this report are global imperatives for long-term sustainability and are therefore applicable to all places and circumstances. UNESCO's MaB principles and strategies for sustainable development apply across the entire biosphere and not only in the biosphere reserves listed by UNESCO. A common point of view is therefore promoted – one which is based upon a shared understanding of what is good and what makes sense to do locally and globally.



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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization  
<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, 2010: The Ethical Implications of Global Climate Change. COMSET. SHS-2010/WSJ.1. France, Paris.  
<sup>3</sup> Constitutional Court, C Barkhuizen v Napier 2007  
<sup>4</sup> UN HABITAT Planning for Climate Change: A Strategic value-based Approach for Urban Planners (2010)