



South African
NATIONAL PARKS

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPING PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS



OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THIS PUBLICATION

This brochure is for interested members of the public, Park Forum members, collaborators and SANParks employees who need, or wish to understand the stakeholder participation process as practised by SANParks.



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<http://www.sanparks.org/conservation/park-man/>





STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN
DEVELOPING PARK
MANAGEMENT PLANS
FOR SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS

SANParks is the leading conservation agency in 19 national parks around South Africa. A national park is the highest order of protection that a country can accord a conservation area.

Our operations are guided by our vision, mission and values:

- ❖ **SANParks Vision:** SANParks vision: National Parks will be the pride and joy of all South Africans and the world.
- ❖ **SANParks Mission:** To develop and manage a system of National Parks that represents the biodiversity, landscapes and associated heritage assets of South Africa, for the sustainable use and benefit of all.

The following core activities support the SANParks mandate:

- ❖ Conservation management through the National Parks system;
- ❖ Constituency building and people focused initiatives;
- ❖ Eco-tourism management; and
- ❖ Corporate governance and sound business and operational management.



INTRODUCTION

SANParks recognises that National Parks belong to the people of South Africa. As custodians of these national assets, we encourage stakeholder participation processes which strengthen community-park relations by incorporating local communities in support of the management and conservation of our natural and cultural resources.

Stakeholder engagement therefore takes place routinely through the ongoing activities of Park Forums and more broadly, during the development and revision of Park Management Plans.

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Any persons having direct or indirect interests or rights in a National Park may be considered to be a stakeholder. Local communities, non-governmental organisations, special interest groups, business partners, private land owners and local government representatives are amongst the most common stakeholders represented on Park Forums. Park Forum members represent the major constituencies with an interest in the Park and are key role players in the development of the Park Management Plans. The Park, together with the Park Forum members, identify and approach stakeholders to participate in the process. A range of methods, best suited to reaching stakeholder groups in the area, are used to advertise this process.

In addition to the above, additional community leaders that are not involved in the Park Forum should be co-opted by Forum members or nominated by communities to represent them at the Planning Workshops. These representatives, together with the Park Forum Members, will be responsible for feedback to their communities or constituencies.

All stakeholders must register and a register of stakeholders, as well as attendance registers for workshops and meetings are kept. Additional individuals, wishing to participate in the process, must register as stakeholders and should be accommodated to ensure that the process is inclusive.





WHAT IS THE LEGAL MANDATE WITH REGARD TO STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION?

Section 39 (3) of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act No. 57 of 2003 states that all persons who may be interested in, or affected by the plan, are to be given the opportunity to comment on the plan. Section 41 (2) (e) requires that the management plan contains procedures for public participation including participation by the owner (where a contractual agreement exist between the owner and SANParks), any local community or interested party.



PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

A number of principles reflected in the SA Constitution, the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, (Act No. 57 of 2003) and other relevant legislation guides stakeholder participation. The main principles state that:

- the public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- sustainable decisions are to be taken;
- the public participation process will:
 - seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected;
 - announce the opportunity for participation in a number of ways;
 - provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;
 - facilitate the understanding of that information;
 - ensure that processes recognise all knowledge, indigenous and ordinary as well as the diversity of values and opinions that exist between stakeholders;
 - provide various opportunities for comment;
 - provide sufficient time to comment;
 - communicate to participants how their input affected the decision;
 - ensure transparency, honesty and integrity on the part of all involved in the process;
 - recognise budgetary constraints and ensure that the process is cost effective.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL

The goal of the public participation process is to work directly with stakeholders ensuring that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

COMMITMENT TO STAKEHOLDERS

SANParks undertakes to work with stakeholders to ensure that:

- stakeholders are notified of participation processes through appropriate mechanisms;
- the process provides the opportunity for input from all stakeholders within reasonable timeframes, emphasising the sharing of information, joint learning and capacity building;
- processes recognizes all knowledge, indigenous and ordinary, as well as the diversity of values and opinions that exist between stakeholders;
- feedback are provided on the outcome of the process to stakeholders and demonstrate how their inputs have been considered in the decision making process.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who gets to comment on the Park Management Plan?

All persons who may be interested in, or affected by park activities are given adequate opportunity to comment. Calls for stakeholders to register and participate in the process are made nationally and locally. International stakeholders on Park databases are also invited to participate in the process.

What is the best way to comment?

The first stage in the process is to register as a stakeholder. Once on the park database, relevant information, such as where and when to obtain a copy of the Draft Management Plan and relevant contact details can be forwarded to you. If you are a local resident, you could attend a public meeting or open day and have your comments recorded directly. Should this not be possible, the best way to comment is in writing and you may either post, fax or email your response.



What happens to my comments?

SANParks is obliged to consider and respond to all comments and suggestions. Where feasible, comments and suggestions will be incorporated into the Management Plan. Where this is not possible, justification for decisions will be given in the comment and response document. The comment and response documents are made available to all registered stakeholders on the Park Database.

How often are Park Management Plans developed or revised?

In the case of a new National Park section 39 (2) of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act No. 57 of 2003 states that SANParks must, within 12 months of being assigned as the management authority, submit a management plan for the protected area to the Minister for approval.

What process does the Plan go through before approval?

See diagram on last page

Management Plans need to be relevant to be effective. Existing Management Plans are reviewed and where necessary, revised in a five year cycle.



THE DEVELOPMENT OR REVISION OF PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

The development of a Park Management Plan has five stages. Stakeholder participation is required in stages 1, 2 and 4 of the process.

Stage 1.

- Defining the desired state of the Park.
- Developing the objectives and initiatives/actions.

Stage 2

- Participation in focus group meetings to align programmes in support of the objectives.

Stage 3

- Writing of the Draft Management Plan based on the information generated in stages one and two.

Stage 4

- Presentation of the Draft Management Plan for stakeholder inputs and comments.

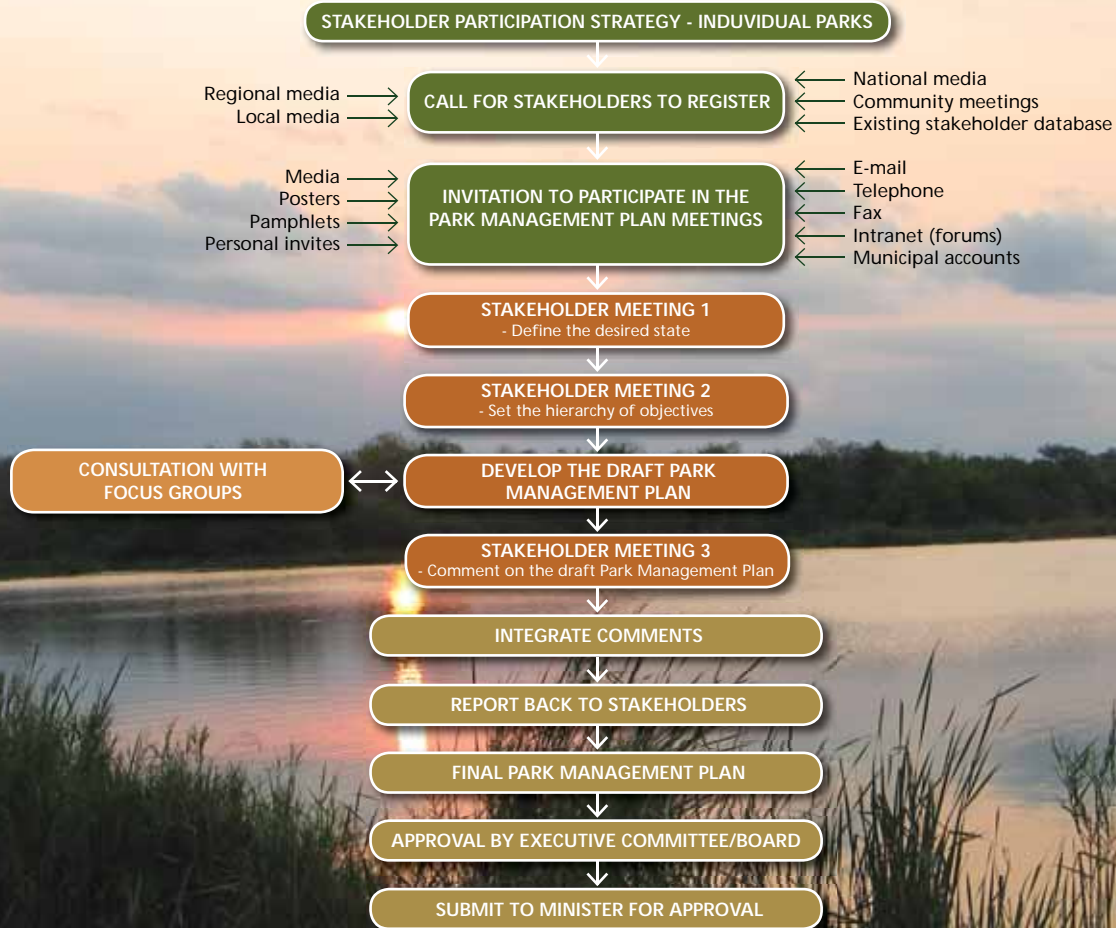
Stage 5

- Finalisation of the Park Management Plan taking comments and input into account.

Progress with the implementation of the Park Management Plans is assessed on an annual and 5 yearly basis and informs the review process.



STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION PROCESS









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