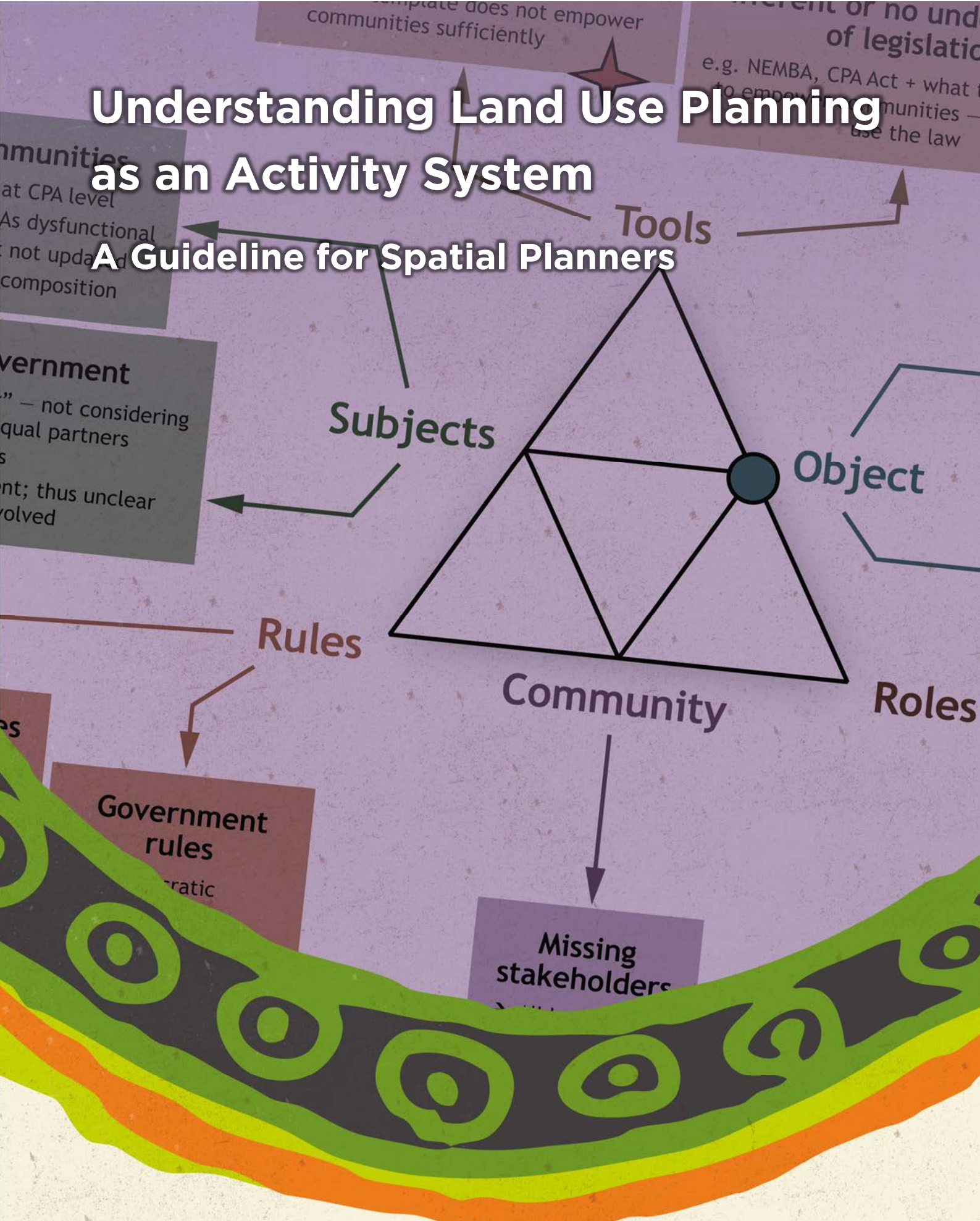


Understanding Land Use Planning as an Activity System

A Guideline for Spatial Planners





Acknowledgements

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Background

The **Municipal Support Initiative [MSI]** is a support initiative aimed at improved capacity within municipal governance structures.

AWARD has been collaboratively working with the Ba-Phalaborwa and Maruleng Local Municipalities in the Mopani District. The Municipal Support Initiative (MSI) is part of the greater RESILIM Olifants project under a grant from USAID: southern Africa (see back page). This particular brochure outlines work the project did in supporting spatial planners integrate biodiversity into spatial planning instruments through adopting an activity systems approach.

Following a series of engagements with municipalities, it was decided a working group would focus on specific tasks. The MSI project hosted a team of specialists as well as **Ba-Phalaborwa's Spatial Planning & Economic Development [SPED]** directorate at their first land use planning working group which took place in Hoedspruit at Rhino Convention Centre from 27-29 October 2016. The working group comprised of specialists in biodiversity, water, climate change and included a legal specialist, municipal town planners and the AWARD MSI team.

SPLUMA - A legal perspective

The **Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act [SPLUMA]** is applicable to both rural and urban contexts. It provides the legal framework for spatial planning and clarifies principles associated with mandates

and obligations. This legal perspective also provides clarity on land ownership and who is legally responsible for land allocations and transfers.



Biodiversity planning

Biodiversity is a precious resource but we need to know where it is located in the landscape so that we can better protect it. The Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) map is a core component of the bioregional plan of a district municipality. The CBA maps and bioregional plans provide two important instruments valuable for decision making in land use planning because they tell us where critical biodiversity is located within municipal. Combining ground truthing with stakeholder workshops can provide additional biodiversity knowledge for the municipality.

Land use guidelines provide recommendations for land use activities in the various CBA categories. More can be read about biodiversity planning at www.award.org.za

The state of spatial planning in local government

Engagements through the working groups provided an in-depth view on challenges (institutional, environmental, and social) facing spatial planners.

Some of challenges:

- The municipality has an outdated SDF which is not highly prioritized in the list of IDP projects
- Land allocations done by traditional authorities are not coordinated with the municipality's spatial plans and has resulted in mushrooming of informal businesses along the buffer zone (R71 road to town)
- Grey areas exist around who is responsible for land allocations: municipality or traditional authorities?
- Land claims on the proposed site for a waste management facility has delayed its development
- Environmental management is limited to parks and solid-waste sites and does not include rural areas
- No collaboration or alignment of land use planning by land use sectors with the municipality (Kruger National Park, Traditional authorities and mines)
- Poor communication links between practitioners and councilors (politicians)
- Relevant government departments not committed to policing environmental legislation: illegal sand mining and illegal dumping occurs in and around the rural residential areas



Land use as an activity system

In order to address the spectrum of challenges listed the MSI team used the CHAT (Cultural Historical Activity Theory) method. CHAT is basically a framework for learning and development focusing on what people are doing (practices). In the context of this work it takes land use planning as an activity system.

For the working group it was useful to approach land use planning as an activity system and for co-creating a way forward for dealing with some of the challenges. In this case it also addressed a particular or desired outcome - the integration of biodiversity into land use planning. Group work tasks were guided by questions in the model below.

Tools (enablers):

- What tools, plans, frameworks, guidelines, strategies can help us to design biodiversity compatible land use plan?
- What knowledge and skills are needed? Can they be sourced? From where? How and by who? How willing are they (spatial planners) to try new tools?
- Are there any additional tools, plans, frameworks, guidelines, strategies that you think are needed?

People (subjects):

- Who should be directly involved in the design of the biodiversity compatible land use plan & why?
- What are the different kinds of person needed?
- What different directorates do you think are relevant?

Rules:

What can limit/constrain/enable the process?

Community:

Who else should be involved/interested/affected by the biodiversity compatible land use plan?

Object(ive):

Designing a biodiversity compatible land use plan

Division of labour:

Who does what in designing a biodiversity compatible land use plan?

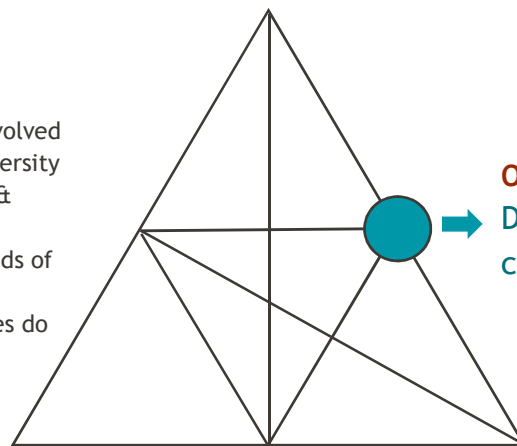


Figure 1. The land use planning Activity System triangle



TABLE 1: CONTRADICTIONS IN LAND USE PLANNING IN BA-PHALABORWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

ACTIVITY SYSTEM VARIABLES	WORKING GROUP ACTIVITY SYSTEM FINDINGS	TENSIONS OR CONTRADICTIONS
SUBJECTS (WHO ARE THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN LAND USE PLANNING?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality ■ Traditional Authorities ■ Working group ■ Municipal Councillors ■ SALGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor links communication between practitioners with councillors ■ Little knowledge with regards to biodiversity and climate change
OBJECT (WHAT IS THE PROBLEM SPACE THAT WE WANT TO WORK ON?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shared understanding of land use planning between municipality, traditional authorities and other ■ Participation by all stakeholders (various levels) in the municipality ■ Outcome: to have an updated SDF that incorporates biodiversity and climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environmental Management is limited to parks and waste sites ■ No sewage management in rural areas ■ High value land is not being appreciated ■ Integrated land use planning in urban and rural areas not happening
MEDIATING TOOLS (WHAT PHYSICAL/MENTAL TOOLS DO WE NEED TO DO LAND USE PLANNING?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spatial Development Framework key to addressing biodiversity and climate change considerations ■ CBA maps will assist with biodiversity planning ■ SPLUMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outdated SDF ■ No compact plans for spatial planning ■ Biodiversity and climate change not integrated in SDF ■ Development of SDF not prioritized in the list of IDP projects. ■ Policies not applied: No regulation of sand mining by provincial government.
COMMUNITY (WHO ELSE SHOULD BE /ARE INVOLVED IN LAND USE PLANNING?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ District Municipality-DEA ■ Local communities ■ Landowners ■ Kruger National Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traditional authorities not involved in municipal planning processes ■ KNP plans not aligned with municipality's SDP
DIVISION OF LABOUR (WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING WHAT IN LAND USE PLANNING?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Municipality to update working group on municipal processes ■ Consultants to provide climate change and biodiversity inputs ■ Working group to prepare communities for public participation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spatial planning directorate has limited power to appoint service provider ■ District municipality not committed to enforcing environmental legislation ■ Traditional authorities not involved in municipal planning ■ Rural areas are neglected
RULES (WHAT FORMAL OR INFORMAL RULES CONSTRAINT LAND USE PLANNING?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traditional authorities issue permission to occupy for land allocations ■ SPLUMA does not recognize traditional authorities as an institution or structure that does land allocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Process of land allocations not well-coordinated between municipality and traditional authorities: zoning violation ■ Proposed developments by municipality are halted by land claims ■ Little time for consultants to work with service provider on SDF



Analysis of an activity system

Subject - Tool - Object:

How do tools enable/constrain subjects to do proper (as defined by SPLUMA) land use planning?

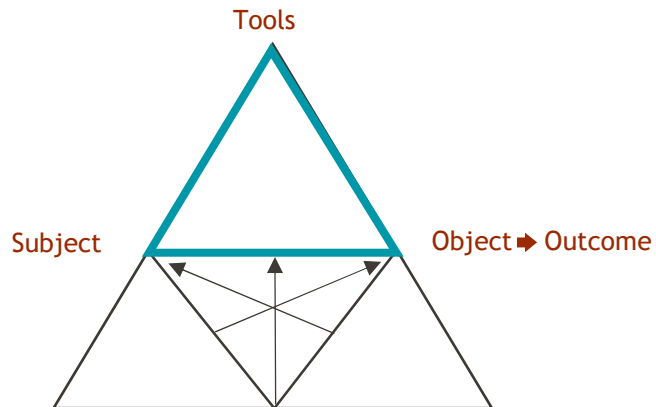


Figure 2: Sub-Activity triangle analysis of the subject-tool-object relationship

TOOLS: Spatial planning tools:

The **Spatial Development Framework [SDF]** is a core component of the Integrated Development Plan (**tool**) for any municipality. The SDF is a legal requirement and informs all decisions relating to achieving the desired spatial form for the development of the municipality (**object**). Ba-Phalaborwa's spatial planners (**subject**) have indicated that the municipal SDF is outdated and not

prioritized in the IDP projects. Without a tool that is prioritized, the municipality will not be able to implement land use plans that addresses spatial challenges or one that integrate or considers biodiversity. It was therefore agreed to work on this tool, taking advantage of the SDF reviewing process underway in the municipality.

Subject - Object - Division of labour:

What is the impact of organizational hierarchy on the management in the adoption of a planning tool?

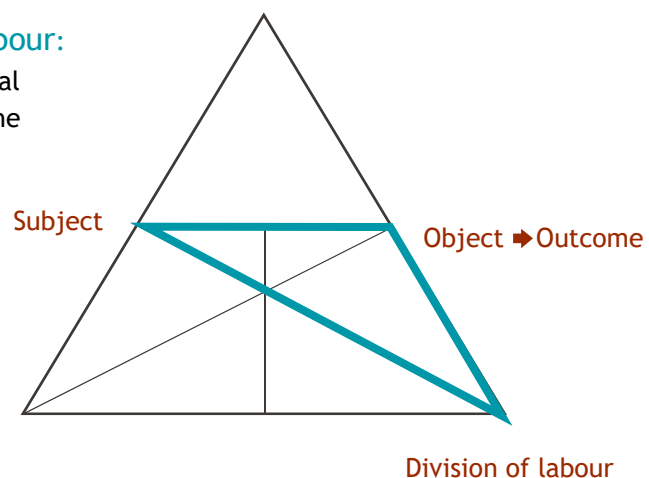


Figure 3: Sub-Activity triangle analysis of the subject-object-division of labour relationship



DIVISION OF LABOUR: Involvement of council in SDF development:

The development of the SDF follows a procedure of approval and adoption before it gets implemented. Council makes decisions on the projects that are undertaken in the municipality. It is important that Council is involved from the onset in the formulation of the SDF in order to keep them informed throughout the process with regular presentations at Council meetings. Currently there is poor communication between planners and councillors. Without support from council for updating the SDF, practitioners are unable to do spatial

planning that complies with legislation. An MOU was signed between AWARD and the municipality; after thus it was recommended that AWARD should have engagements with the Municipal Manager and the Mayor early in the SDF process to have council consider the SDF as a priority.

A six month plan that would be necessary to ensure the completion of the SDF was drafted. The immediate action was to provide inputs to the terms of reference which will be submitted for the development of the SDF.

Involvement of district & provincial government:

To deal with environmental issues requires active involvement of various government authorities. Without poor co-ordination and regulation will continue. For instance, lack of commitment by district and provincial department in the regulation of sand mining in the Selati River was observed.

The spatial planning directorate have submitted notices to district and provincial governments on sand mining; however illegal, unregulated sand mining continues. Methodological implications in this regard is that we have to involve other departments that should collaborate with the local municipality.

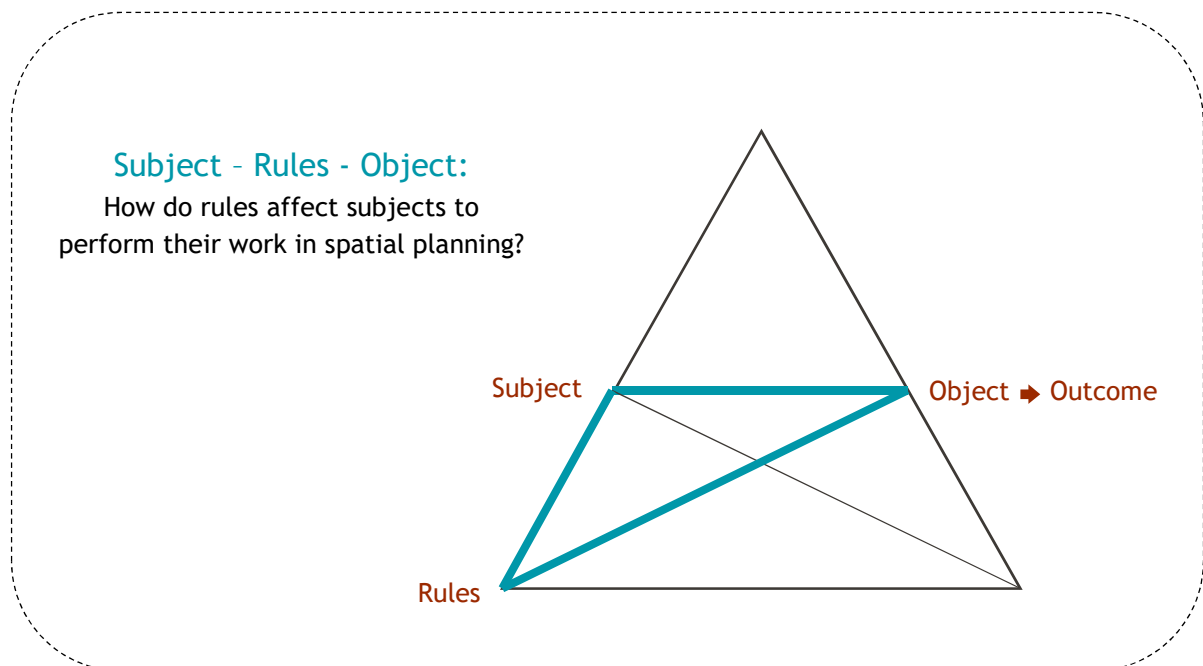


Figure 4: Sub-Activity triangle analysis of the subject-rules-object relationship



RULES: SPLUMA & traditional authorities

SPLUMA gives the legal mandate to local municipalities to make land allocation decisions. However tensions exist between the municipality and traditional authorities. Traditional authorities regard themselves as custodians of communal land, and they continue to issue permission to occupy land.

Land allocations in communal land in Ba-Phalaborwa have resulted in occupation of the urban edge/buffer zone by residential and business sites. The tensions around who is responsible for land allocations are created by a vague understanding of the roles of the TAs and that of the municipality. For this reason, we have committed to work with landowners (TAs and CPAs) in 2017

Purpose of the working group

The purpose of the working group was designed collaboratively with the local municipality and specialists.

1. To look at land use planning and land use zoning in communal/rural areas for addressing environmental issues, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaption;
2. To explore the implications of national legislation (e.g. SPLUMA), regional plans (e.g. biodiversity sector plans), local plans (e.g. IDPs, SDFs);
3. To understand how best to work with other institutions/organizations involved in major land-use practices and zoning (e.g. traditional authorities, CPAs, agriculture, business);
4. Develop two case studies from which we can collectively learn; and
5. Identify potential tools that can assist municipal practitioners (e.g. land use guidelines, biodiversity handbook, land-use incentives plans etc.).

Over three days, the working group engaged on a number of issues highlighted by the municipality. The working group was designed to inputs for consideration and take a systems approach to land use planning using the CHAT method.

Way forward

Key questions which guided planning a way forward were:

- *What are the immediate actions this working group can take to have an influence on land use planning over 18 months?*
- *How do we incorporate climate change into land use planning in the next 18 months?*
- *How does the integration of biodiversity and climate change apply in a rural setting?*

Disturbances were surfaced from each aspect of the activity system. However, the spatial planners recommended that the working

group should focus on contributing to an ongoing process of developing and reviewing the Spatial Development Framework (the tool). Focusing attention and energy on the development of the SDF is critical as information for the IDP is taken from the SDF.

Going forward, the working group committed to working with Ba-Phalaborwa local municipality in 2017. A list of tasks was developed to specify the roles individuals from the working group would be involved in to assist the municipality.



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The Association for Water and Rural Development

AWARD is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory, research-based project implementation. Their work addresses issues of sustainability, inequity and poverty by building natural-resource management competence and supporting sustainable livelihoods. One of their current projects, supported by USAID, focuses on the Olifants River and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems to sustain livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment.

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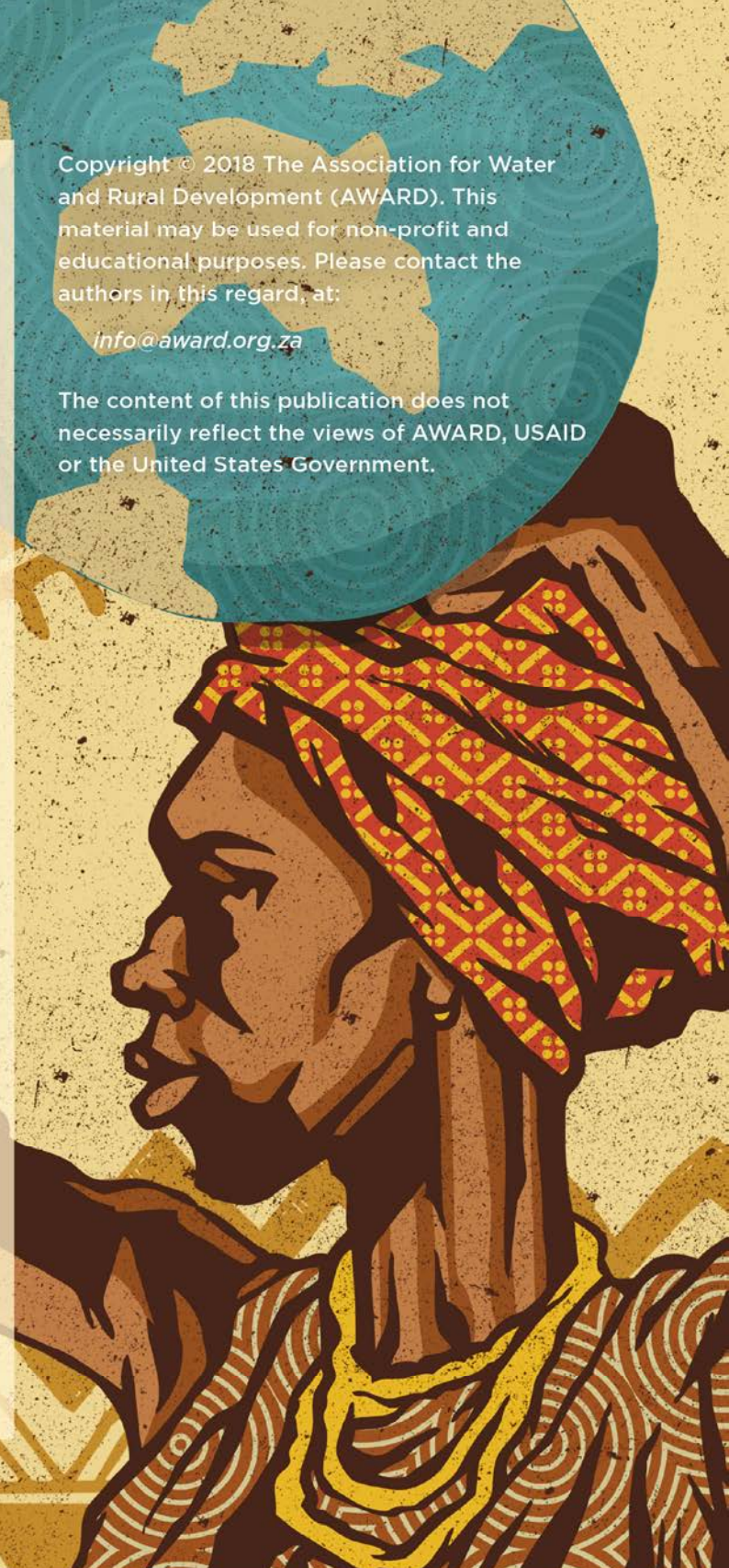
About USAID: RESILIM-O

USAID: RESILIM-O focuses on the Olifants River Basin and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment. The 5-year programme, involving the South African and Mozambican portions of the Olifants catchment, is being implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and is funded by USAID Southern Africa.

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