

Public invited to comment on management of protected areas

Members of the public are invited to comment on the prescribed norms and standards for the management of protected areas in South Africa which has been published in Government Gazette no 37802 of 7 July 2014.



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These norms have been developed over the past two years by the Department of Environmental Affairs in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders for the management and development of protected areas as prescribed in Section 11 of the National Environment Management: Protected Areas Act.

The norms and standards for protected areas were developed with the objective of effecting a national system of protected areas in South Africa as part of a strategy to manage and conserve biodiversity and to promote sustainable utilisation of protected areas for the benefit of people in a manner that would preserve the ecological character.

Development of areas

Section 11 of the Act further states that the Minister of Environmental Affairs may prescribe the norms and standards for the achievement of any of the objectives of the Act, including for the management and development of protected areas referred to in Section 9 (a), (b) and (c) and indicators to measure compliance with these norms and standards. It is also required for the management of those protected areas to report on these indicators to the Minister.

There are currently 17 norms for the management of protected areas with standards. It is, however, anticipated that additional norms may be required at a later stage. The norms and standards focus on the relative importance of the protected areas, their objectives, boundary demarcation, law enforcement and financial management amongst other things.

Members of the public and other interested parties are invited to participate by submitting their written comments to the Minister within 30 days of publication of the Gazette. Any enquiries in connection with the draft norms and standards can be directed to Dr G Cowan at 012 310 3701.

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