

## **Chapter 2: Drivers of environmental change**

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Driving forces can be described as the human influences and activities that, when combined with environmental conditions, underpin environmental change (DEAT, 1999). It is important to understand the context of the drivers of environmental change in order to address those practices which result in harming the environment and to encourage those that are environmentally sustainable. Driving forces that impact on the environment of the Eastern Cape Province are international, national and local in nature. They relate primarily to economic, political, social or legislative issues. Some of the relevant drivers of environmental change are described in the following sections. These are by no means exhaustive but serve to illustrate some of the complex inter-relationships between the social, economic and political drivers of environmental change within the Eastern Cape Province.

### **2.1: International driving forces**

#### *Global*

Since 1994 the South African economy has been in a period of great restructuring. Ten years of consistent economic growth has been recorded. Macroeconomic stabilisation has essentially been achieved, enabling an acceleration of the GDP growth rate. South Africa's integration into the global economy means that it is exposed to both the positive and negative forces that constitute the process of globalisation. Globalisation can further entrench existing inequalities and marginalisation but can also contribute to rising output per capita and in so doing encourage production, microeconomic growth and foreign exchange. These in turn contribute to poverty alleviation, income redistribution and employment creation (RSA, 2002).

#### *Continental*

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) is an African initiative, based on a common vision to eradicate poverty and to place African countries, individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development (NePAD, 2001). NePAD thus provides an overarching strategy that will influence all future development, decision-making and management of Africa's natural resource base. NePAD initiatives have a direct bearing on the protection, planning and management of natural resources as well as socio-economic issues in South Africa, and therefore the Eastern Cape Province.

#### *Regional*

The Regional Economic Community that is directly applicable to South Africa is the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This community was established in 1992 and comprises 14 member states. The overall objectives of this community are to achieve *inter alia* development and economic growth, alleviation of poverty, enhancement of the standard and quality of life of the people of southern Africa, support for the socially disadvantaged through regional integration, and the sustainable utilisation of natural resources in order to effectively protect the environment (SADC, 1992). Over the years, South Africa has entered into several regional protocols with its neighbouring SADC countries in order to achieve these objectives. These have a direct bearing on how member countries conduct their affairs in relation to, for example, fisheries, mining, trade, transport, water resources and tourism.

## 2.2: National driving forces

While South Africa is rich in natural resources and has a growing economy, there are still disparities in income, joblessness and poverty. The strategic priorities of the country have been identified as *inter alia*:

- Moving to a faster, job-creating, economic growth path;
- Investing in human resources;
- Rural development and urban renewal;
- Eradicating poverty and expanding access to social services; and
- Fighting crime and corruption (RSA, 2002).

In order to address some of these issues the national government has developed a Programme of Action. The overall goal of this programme is to achieve a better life for all South Africans (RSA, 2002). The Programme of Action comprises a collection of initiatives, policies, strategies and legislation, some of which are described below.

South Africa's main economic policy framework comprises Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). GEAR aims to combine the goals of deficit reduction, reprioritisation of government expenditure to enhance poverty reduction, and embarks on microeconomic reforms to enhance job creation (RSA, 2002). Although many economic indicators point towards further growth in the economy, the rate of growth that has been achieved is believed to fall short of the economy's potential, and of what is needed for a substantial reduction in unemployment and more rapid progress in reducing poverty (RSA, 2002).

The key industrial policies of South Africa centre on a commitment to fostering sustainable industrial development in areas affected by poverty and unemployment. This is pursued through Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), which focus on areas where socio-economic conditions require concentrated government intervention and where inherent economic potential exists (RSA, 2002).

Unemployment remains one of South Africa's serious challenges, and the creation of work opportunities is important to poverty eradication. Job creation is promoted by a number of measures, such as government's macro-economic, industrial, labour market and development policies (RSA, 2002).

In addition, the national Programme of Action focuses on the social upliftment of the most disadvantaged in South African society. It combines direct poverty-alleviation programmes with the broadening of access to social services and infrastructure such as housing, electrification, social development, health, education, water, telecommunications, and sport and recreational facilities (RSA, 2002).

These national imperatives in some way all act as drivers of environmental change within South Africa and the Eastern Cape Province where these policies, strategies and initiatives might be implemented.

### 2.3: Local driving forces

In order to achieve the broad national priorities described above, specific initiatives have to be implemented within the Eastern Cape Province. The primary strategy for economic growth, employment creation, poverty eradication and income redistribution is the *Eastern Cape Strategy Framework for Growth and Development for 2004-2014* (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

Most of the constraints to development stem from the severe poverty faced by much of the Province and the high inequality between:

- Poor, densely populated labour reserves and relatively affluent, sparsely populated commercial agricultural areas; and
- Well-serviced urban centres and under-serviced townships and informal settlements (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

The Eastern Cape Province has set quantifiable targets for growth and development for the period 2004 to 2014, with 2003 as the base year. These are listed as follows:

- To maintain an economic growth rate of between 5% and 8% per annum;
- To halve the unemployment rate by 2014;
- To reduce the number of households living below the poverty line by 2014 by 60-80%;
- To reduce the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2014 by 60-80%;
- To establish food self-sufficiency in the Province by 2014;
- To ensure universal primary education by 2014, with all children proceeding to the first exit point in a secondary education;
- To improve the literacy rate in the Province by 2014 by 50%;
- To eliminate gender disparity in education and employment by 2014;
- To reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate by 2014;
- To reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality rate by 2014;
- To halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2014;
- To halt and begin to reverse the spread of tuberculosis by 2014;
- To provide clean water to all in the Province by 2014; and
- To eliminate sanitation problems by 2014 (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

Some existing initiatives that are contributing to achieving the strategic growth and development goals of the Province and therefore act as drivers of environmental change include those described below.

#### *Development Initiatives*

Development initiatives such as the Wild Coast SDI, the East London Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) and the Coega IDZ are all contributing to job creation and poverty alleviation within the Eastern Cape Province and to the economic growth of South Africa as a whole (ECDC, 2003).

The primary objective of the Wild Coast SDI is to increase income levels and job opportunities by assisting local communities to participate in responsible tourism development and to improve their participation in existing initiatives (SACIC, 2003).

The East London IDZ is part of an initiative endorsed by the South African Department of Trade and Industry to encourage economic growth. The ELDZC (East London Development Zone Corporation) have identified a variety of projects to be undertaken within the IDZ. These include motor component manufacturing, optical fibre manufacturing, metal press stamping mill,

aluminium and magnesium high pressure moulding, pharmaceuticals, ceramics, wood products and textiles (ELDZC, 2003).

The Coega IDZ and deepwater harbour is the single largest infrastructure development project in the country since 1994 and has already attracted R5 billion in committed investment. It aims to make South Africa the hub of all north-south and south-south sea traffic. This initiative will also include all associated infrastructure and is expected to generate 10 000 jobs during the construction phase of the harbour and industrial zone alone (Coega IDZ, 2003).

#### *Tourism*

The development of provincial tourism has high potential to create employment and raise incomes in rural areas through community tourism programmes. The development and protection of existing and new parks and reserves, improvement of infrastructure (especially along the Wild Coast), and the development of a strong marketing brand showcasing a number of core attractions and themes are priorities (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

#### *Poverty Eradication*

An increasingly integrated approach to poverty reduction has developed within the Province, as is evidenced by the Poverty Eradication Programme. This approach has moved away from traditional social grant provision to include mechanisms to reduce the risks faced by the most vulnerable sections of society, and to ensure that household livelihoods are secured (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

#### *Political Boundaries and Land Reform*

The challenges of widespread poverty in the Eastern Cape Province are compounded by the inclusion of two of the former homelands, Transkei and Ciskei, within its boundaries. These homelands were established under apartheid as densely populated suppliers of migrant labour. The Province has inherited these regions which have little economic development and social infrastructure. Critical to improving the livelihoods of the poor in these regions as well as in the rest of the Eastern Cape Province is the land reform process, particularly land redistribution and land tenure reform (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).

#### *Institutional Structures*

Service delivery is increasingly shifting from provincial to local government as powers and functions are transferred. This will require strengthening of the Integrated Development Planning process within District and Local Municipalities to ensure that service delivery targets are achieved (Province of the Eastern Cape, 2003).