

What is this report about?

A State of the Environment (SOE) report is used to highlight changes in our environment, the causes of these changes and what we can do about it. The SOE report is put together by asking some simple questions.

What is happening to the environment?

Why is it happening?

What are we doing about it and what can we do about it?

What will happen if we don't act now?

SOE reports provide a link between scientists and the general public. The report can be used by anyone wanting to know more about Mpumalanga's environment. We collect the information presented in this report from people who work in different parts of Mpumalanga, as well as people working in national government departments.

The 2003 Mpumalanga SOE report is based on the South African SOE report produced in 1999. We use a reporting framework to organise the information in the report. The framework most commonly used in South Africa is called the DPSIR framework.

DRIVING FORCES:

Human influences and activities that, when combined with environmental conditions, underpin environmental change.

PRESSURES:

These are exerted on resources and ecosystems as a result of human activities (driving forces).

STATE:

The condition of the environment resulting from driving forces and pressures.

IMPACTS:

The consequences or results of pressures on the current state of the environment.

RESPONSES:

These are the societal actions taken collectively or individually to ease or prevent negative environmental impacts, correct environmental damage or conserve natural resources.

The DPSIR framework uses indicators to describe the pressures, state, impacts and responses surrounding certain environmental issues. Environmental issues are important topics that will influence the sustainability of the province. The report contains 7 themes of information that describe different aspects of the current state of the environment in Mpumalanga. Within each theme several indicators have been identified for monitoring changes in specific environmental issues. The same indicators will be used in subsequent years of SOE reporting to track trends in environmental change.

