

What environmental issues affect Mpumalanga today?

There are a number of different issues facing Mpumalanga today. These issues are considered key to ensuring sustainability in Mpumalanga in the future. The list of environmental issues was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in Mpumalanga. Several workshops were held in different regions of Mpumalanga, during which the list of environmental issues was refined. The issues were then grouped into different themes to simplify reporting on the state of the environment. The issues are displayed here.

WATER

- Intensity of water use per sector
- Pesticides & herbicides
- Wetland destruction
- Alien fish species
- Agricultural pollution
- Abandoned mines
- Alien plant species
- Water consumption by forestry
- Sulphates
- Stream piracy
- Heavy metals
- Cross-boundary water transfer
- Sand mining in rivers
- Biological pollution
- Payment for water
- Water quality
- Water consumption
- Acid mine drainage
- Access to water
- pH
- Sanitation

BIODIVERSITY

- Riparian destruction
- Habitat fragmentation
- Bio-prospecting
- Wetland destruction
- Deforestation
- Resource value of protected areas
- Reduction of resource base
- Decreasing natural vegetation
- Curio trade
- Impacts of tourism on natural resources
- Encroachment of agriculture onto natural land
- Muti trade
- Loss of biodiversity
- Spread of alien species

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Permitting of landfills
- Inadequate land for landfills
- Private waste sites
- Landfill site suitability
- People living near waste sites
- Control of CH₄ emissions from landfills
- Contamination of water points
- Illegal dumping
- Hazardous waste transport
- Waste generation
- Hazardous waste
- Sewage facilities
- Waste separation at collection
- Waste minimisation
- Adequate waste collection services

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- Uncoordinated conservation & land use planning
- Overlapping roles of national, provincial & local government departments
- Private sector support for environmental management
- Uncoordinated approach to the EIA process
- Control of illegal activities
- Government capacity to fulfil their monitoring role
- Government capacity to control activities
- Government capacity for implementation of policies, plans & programs

AIR QUALITY

- Greenhouse gases
- Air pollution
- Visibility (saw dust, fires, burning)
- Pollen
- Vehicle emissions
- Dirt roads
- Domestic coal use
- Reliance on coal for electricity generation
- Respiratory health problems
- Odours
- Ambient particulate concentration
- Asbestos
- Coal dumps
- Abandoned mines
- Industrial & other emissions

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

- Economic development & growth
- Education
- Unemployment
- Literacy rate
- Health care provision/access
- HIV/AIDS
- Typhoid
- Malaria
- Cholera
- Human settlements
- Provision of services & infrastructure
- Health
- Poverty
- Human Development Index

LAND

- Afforestation
- Increasing industrialisation
- Encroachment of agriculture onto natural land
- Land invasions
- Conflicts over land use
- Degradation of natural resources
- Overgrazing
- Land degradation
- Degradation of soil resources
- Soil erosion
- Soil quality

So what is Mpumalanga's environment really like? The following pages outline the seven different reporting themes and the results of our assessment of the state of the environment in Mpumalanga.