

“Taking Adaptation to the Ground: A Small Grants Facility for Enabling Local Level Responses to Climate Change”¹

¹ This project has been developed by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and SouthSouthNorth Trust, respectively the implementing and the executing entities. The project receives financial support from the Adaptation Fund.

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Having left CCB in July 2014, after 2 wonderful, very enriching years working with Mickey on Disaster Risk Reduction issues, I recently joined ACDI as a Postdoctoral Researcher on Climate Change Adaptation in Southern Africa. One of my main tasks during the next 2 years will be to work on a Small Grant Facility (SGF) initiative recently endorsed by the Adaptation Fund, with a starting date in 2015.

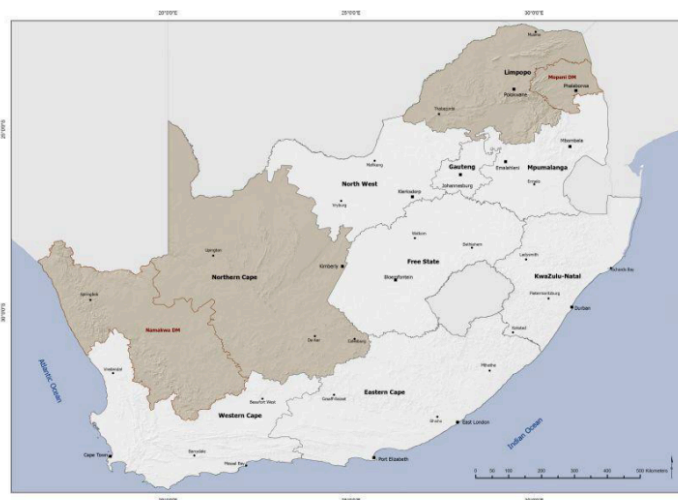


Figure 1: Map of South Africa showing Mopani District and Namakwa District, located in Limpopo Province and Northern Cape Province, respectively.

About the project

Research on climate trends and change have demonstrated that Limpopo and the Northern Cape, respectively located north east and north west of South Africa, will be affected by increasing temperature and changing rainfall patterns. This is of major concern as water is already scarce in these regions. Climate variability and change usually have stronger impacts on poor, vulnerable communities that mainly rely on natural resources for livelihood subsistence. With increasing climate change related threats, it is imperative to ensure that climate finance for adaptation activities reach those most at risk. This is all the more important as the poor, vulnerable communities often lack the capacities to access adaptation funding and to implement well-informed adaptation measures.

In order to address adaptation gaps at the local level, SANBI in partnership with SouthSouthNorth Trust has developed a project proposal to the attention of the Adaptation Fund (AF). This project aims to implement small grant finance mechanisms for poor rural communities located in the Mopani District (Limpopo) and the Namakwa District (Northern Cape) of South Africa with the objective to better answer their adaptation needs.

The Small Grant Facility (SGF) approach is expected to foster direct work with local stakeholders and the direct beneficiaries of the adaptation projects, the communities. The main goal is to enhance livelihood resilience in the face of anticipated impacts of a changing climate. To achieve this objective, the project includes three main components: 1) providing local communities with small financial means to implement adaptation options with tangible benefits; 2) increasing local institutions' ability to identify adaptation needs and to formulate and implement adaptation responses; and 3) compiling lessons learned from local adaptation experiences to share them and facilitate replication in other villages.

About the related opportunities



In addition to providing opportunities to experiment and, possibly, replicate a local approach for adaptation funding, the SGF initiative raises important research questions. For instance, it will be of interest to compare conception, application and results from this grass-rooted approach with top-down or sectorial adaptation finance mechanisms, such as those used to support NAPAs (National Adaptation Programmes of Action), in terms of efficiency (what are the tangible benefits for the community involved?) and sustainability (are long-term impacts possible with small grants?). Furthermore, the project is an opportunity to assess: the level of community and local stakeholders' involvement in formulating and implementing adaptation options; the need for capacity building among local institutions and the community in order to enable preparation of adaptation options; or the conception of CCA projects by local actors compared to scientific- or policy-driven adaptation plans.

In sum, this original initiative opens up interesting and, yet, not so well studied, research path, while at the same time, allowing for implementation of tangible adaptation activities. Compiling, sharing and learning lessons from the first experiences in pilot communities will certainly be an important part of this initiative.