



Gauteng Biodiversity Stewardship



Overview





Introduction

- Biodiversity is the variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms in the natural environment and the natural processes that allow them to survive
- Biodiversity is essential to human well-being – ecosystems provide goods and services
- Estimated economic value of the services provided by grassland (De Wit 2006)
 - R 9,8 billion (biome) per annum
 - R29 million per km²





Biodiversity of Gauteng

SA's smallest province is rich in biodiversity:

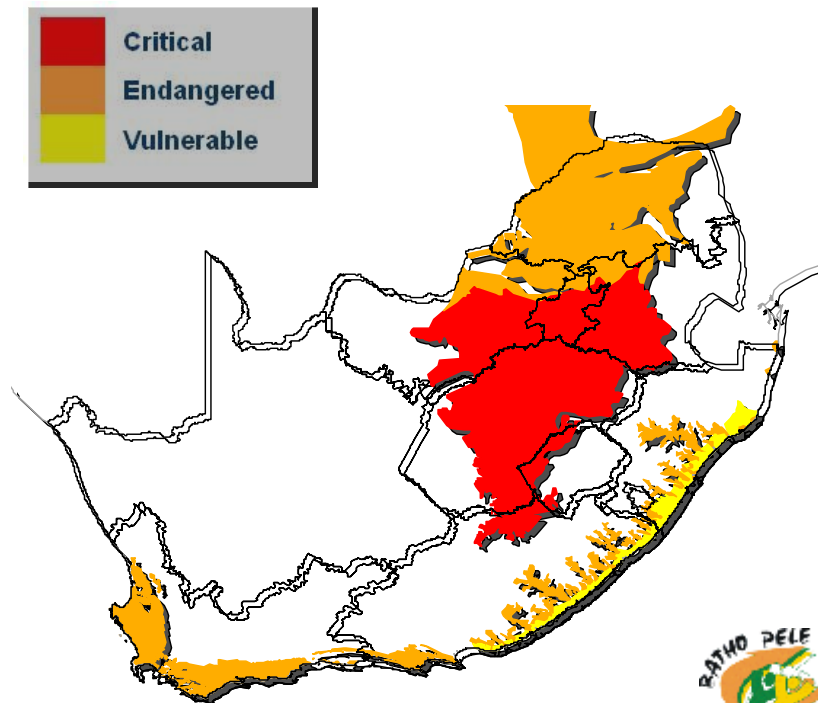
- Grasslands biome – second only to fynbos in species richness
- 83% falls within Highveld Grassland - one of the richest grasslands in the world
- More plant species occur per unit area in Gauteng compared to any other province (3303 plant species)
- 33 species that are **only** found in Gauteng





Gauteng: a crisis ecoregion

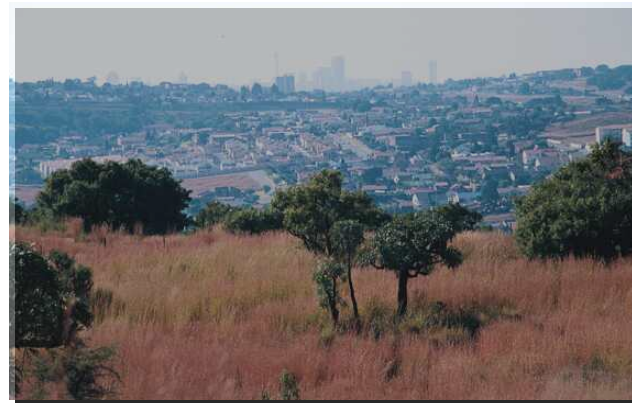
- Gauteng's biodiversity is under threat
- Approximately 70 % of grasslands have been transformed
- The remainder is highly fragmented and highly threatened
- Crisis ecoregion (Hoekstra *et al* 2005)





Reservation status in Gauteng

- Gauteng's biodiversity is poorly conserved
- GDARD manages 8 nature reserves
- These are inadequate on their own
 - Less than 4 % of the province and 1 % of urbanised areas is formally protected
 - Approx. 73 % of biodiversity features are inadequately protected
 - Approx. 44 % of biodiversity features have no protection



Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve





Previous landowner-based approaches

- Previous approaches in Gauteng include models such as: Conservancies, Natural Heritage Sites and Private Nature Reserves
- Previous models shared a number of drawbacks:
 - No legal commitment required, landowners could easily withdraw
 - No enforceable standards set for the management of sites, sites could deteriorate
 - Little tangible support provided to landowners
- The result is that the biodiversity is not formally secured





What is biodiversity stewardship?

- Biodiversity Stewardship is:
“The wise use, management and protection of land by landowners to ensure that natural systems are maintained and enhanced for present and future generations”
- Biodiversity stewardship programmes are a formalized approach to achieve this
- About partnership with landowners





Development of GBS

- Gauteng Biodiversity Stewardship launched in 2010 – GDARD and SANBI Grasslands Programme
- Three frameworks form the backbone of Gauteng Biodiversity Stewardship
 - Legislative framework: the legislative background to biodiversity stewardship
 - Institutional framework: the institutional environment, including the implementing agency and key partners
 - Implementation framework: procedure for implementing the programme, including a set of guidelines and tools





Legislative framework

Legislative framework is due to relatively recent developments in SA legislation, principally the NEM: Protected Areas Act (2003) and NEM: Biodiversity Act (2004).

- NEM: PAA

- Minister or MEC may declare Nature Reserves (S23) and Protected Environments (S28)
- Private land may be declared if the owner has consented by way of a written agreement with the Minister or MEC.

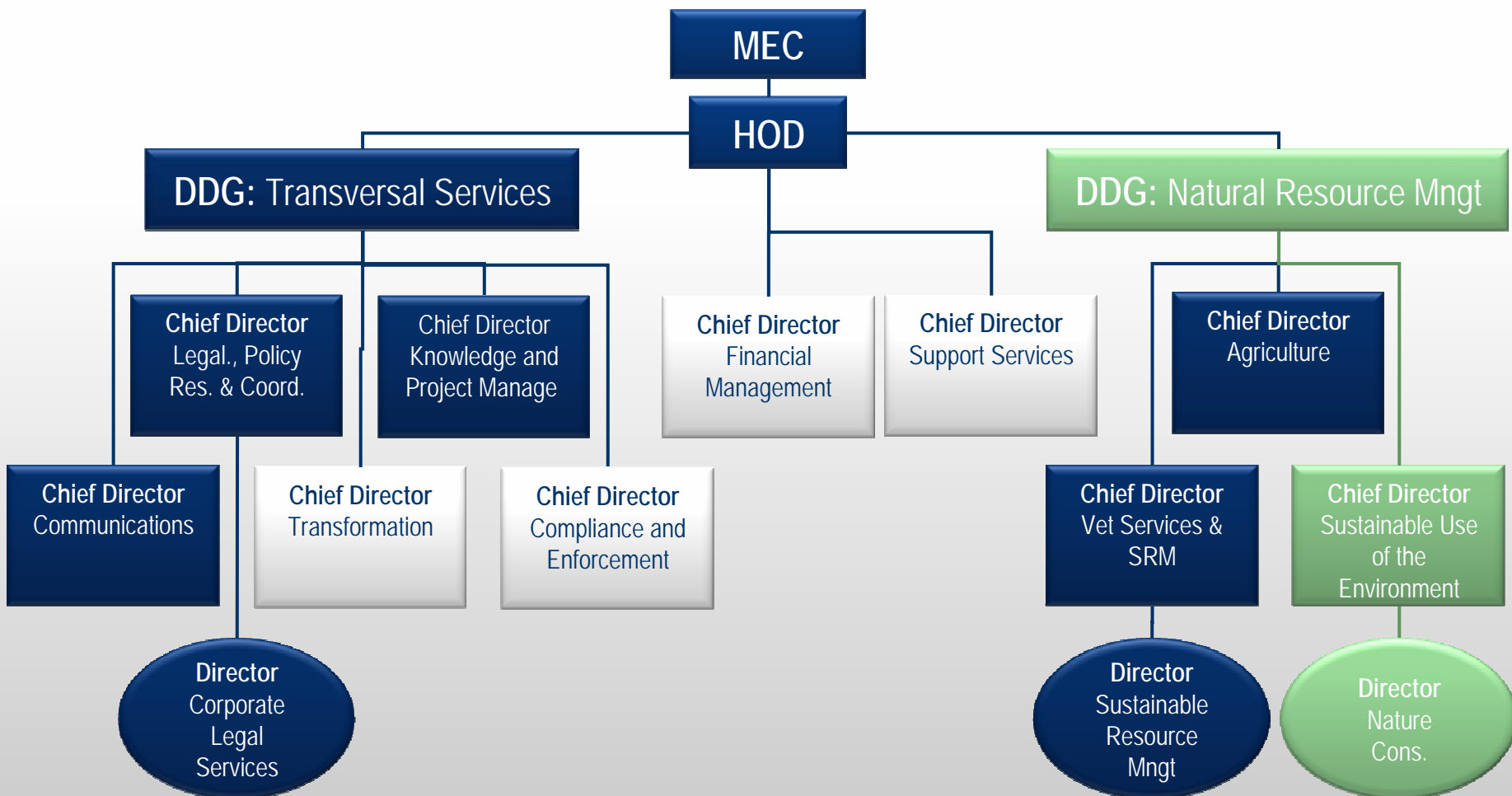
- NEM: BAA

- Minister may enter into a Biodiversity Management Agreement with private landowners to implement a Biodiversity Management Plan.



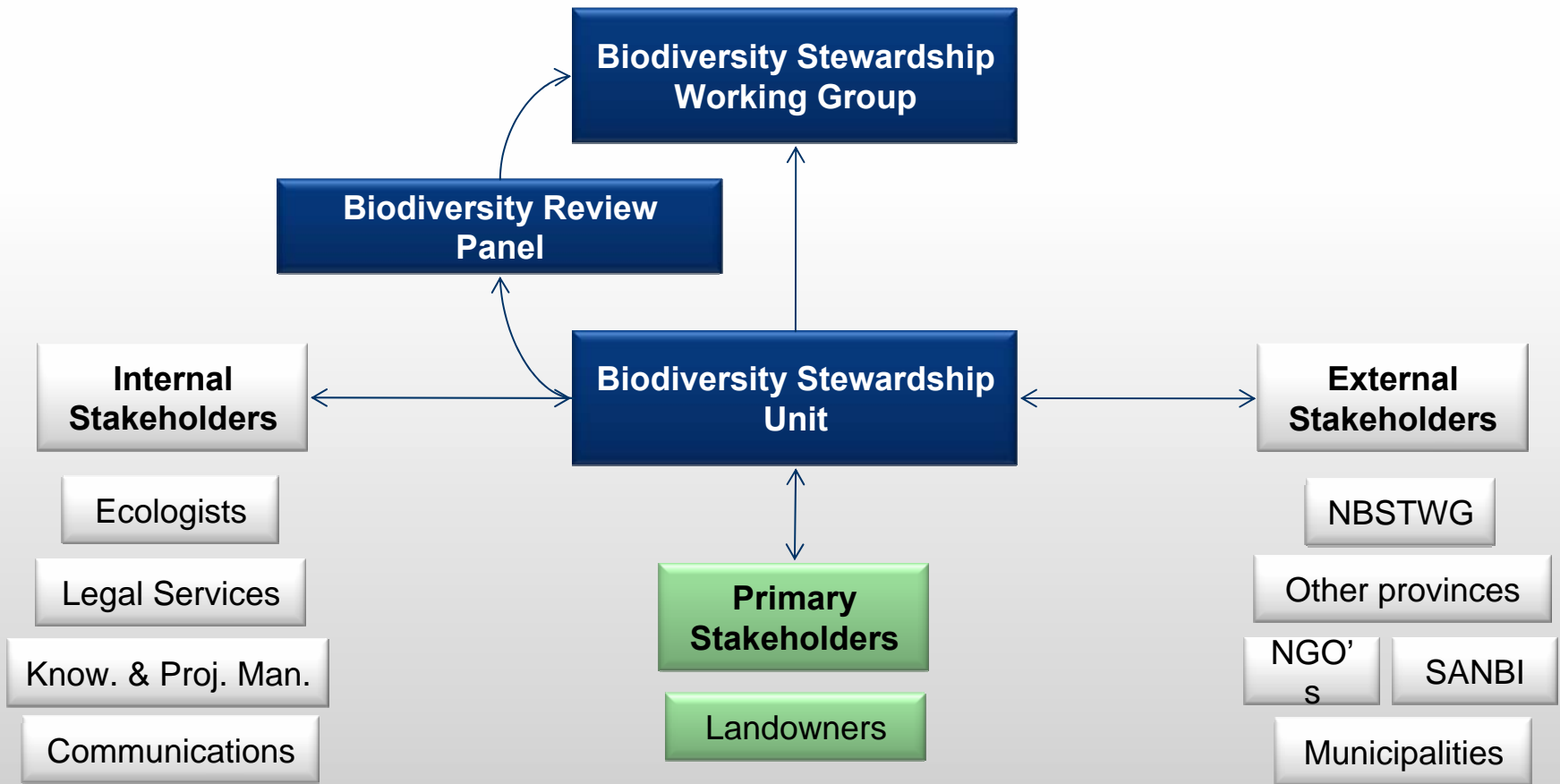


Institutional framework





Institutional framework





Implementation framework

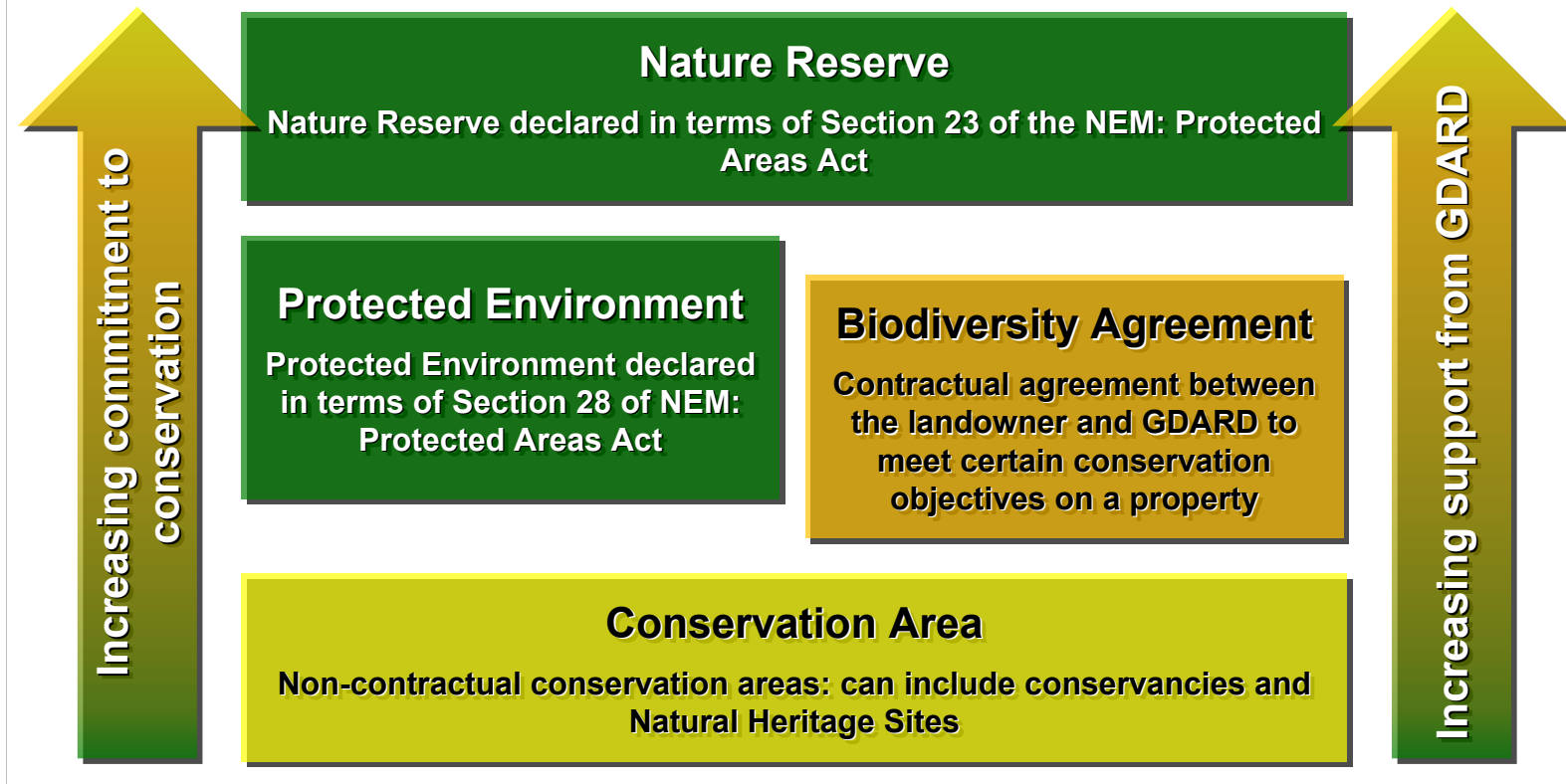
Implementation framework consists of:

- Biodiversity Stewardship Categories – conservation options available to landowners
- A step-by-step procedure for implementing stewardship at the site level
- A set of tools, templates and guidelines to support implementation





Biodiversity stewardship categories



| | Conservation Area | Biodiversity Agreement | Protected Environment | Nature Reserve |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Legal status | None | Contract | Declared S28 NEM: PAA | Declared S23 NEM: PAA |
| Agreements | Registration form | Man. Agreement Management Plan | Decl. Agreement Man. Agreement Management Plan | Decl. Agreement Man. Agreement Management Plan |
| Title Deed Restrictions | Not applicable | If desired by both parties | Required by NEM: PAA | Required by NEM:PAA |
| Duration | Not defined | 5-10 years | 30 years | 50 years to in perpetuity (99 years) |
| Qualification | Must be a <u>valuable</u> site for conservation | Must be an <u>important</u> site for conservation | Must be an <u>important</u> site for conservation | Must be an <u>essential</u> site for conservation |
| Development Restrictions | No legal restrictions, but inappropriate developments could result in retraction of status | Develop. must be consistent with management objectives | Types of developments listed in the gazette notice are restricted | No new infrastructure incompatible with zonation plan; no ploughing, no commercial mining or prospecting Substantial |
| Benefits and support | Recognition and basic extension support | More advanced extension and management support, tax deductions for BMA | More advanced extension and management support, tax deductions | extension and management support, tax deductions, property rates exclusion |



Implementation procedure

| PHASE | NAME |
|--------------------|---|
| Pre-implementation | Identification of potential biodiversity stewardship sites |
| PHASE 1 | Initiation of landowner interactions |
| PHASE 2 | Site Assessment and Review |
| PHASE 3a | Contract negotiation and draft management plan development (with landowner) |
| PHASE 3b | Site approvals and cost analysis |
| PHASE 4 | Proclamation (only for NR and PE) |
| PHASE 5 | Site support and annual audit |





Site qualification

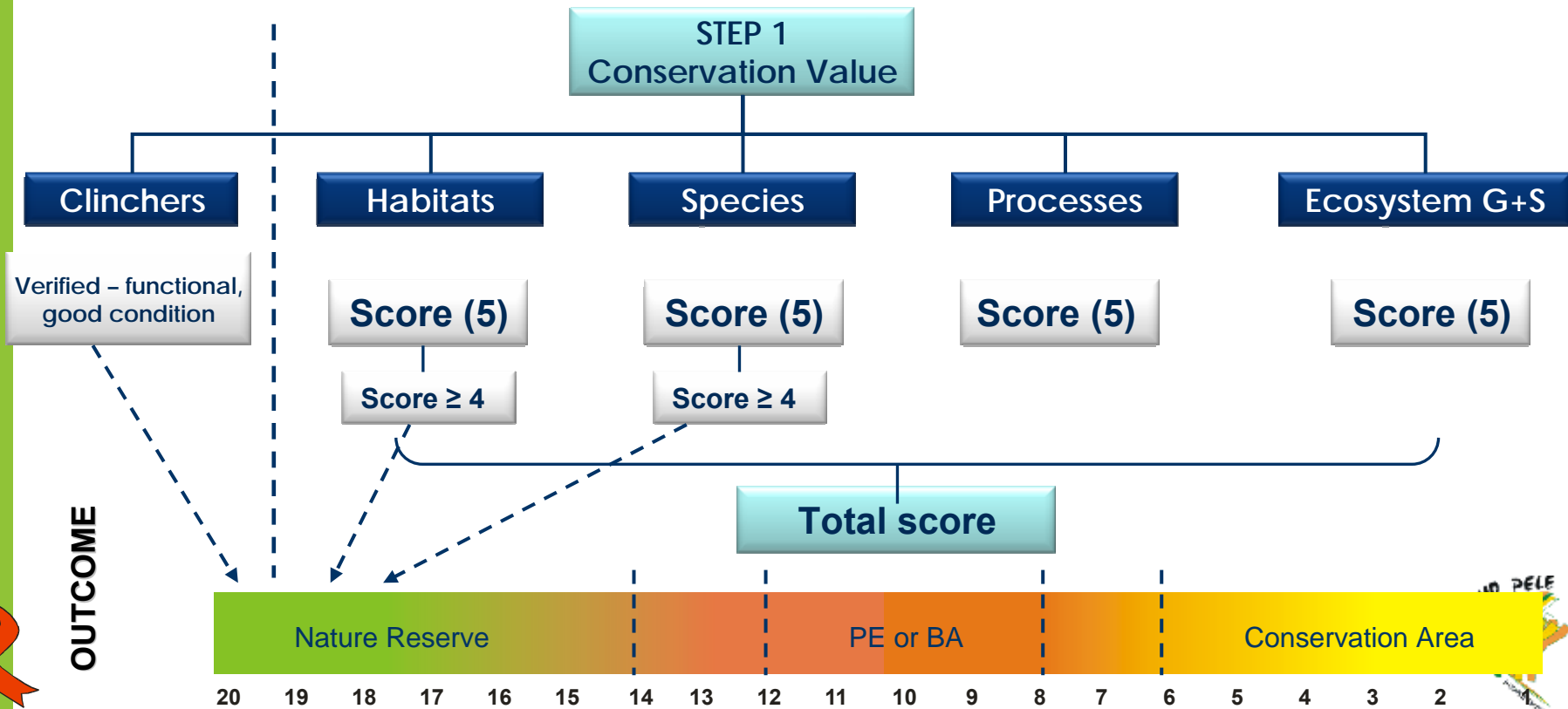
- Categories enable commitment by landowners, but also represent a commitment by GDARD to support landowners
- Higher-level categories require substantial input of GDARD resources
- Because GDARD's capacity is limited, there is also a limit to how many sites can be supported, especially at the higher-levels
- Qualification is based on biodiversity value
- Higher levels (especially Nature Reserve) are reserved for the top biodiversity priority sites





Site review: step 1

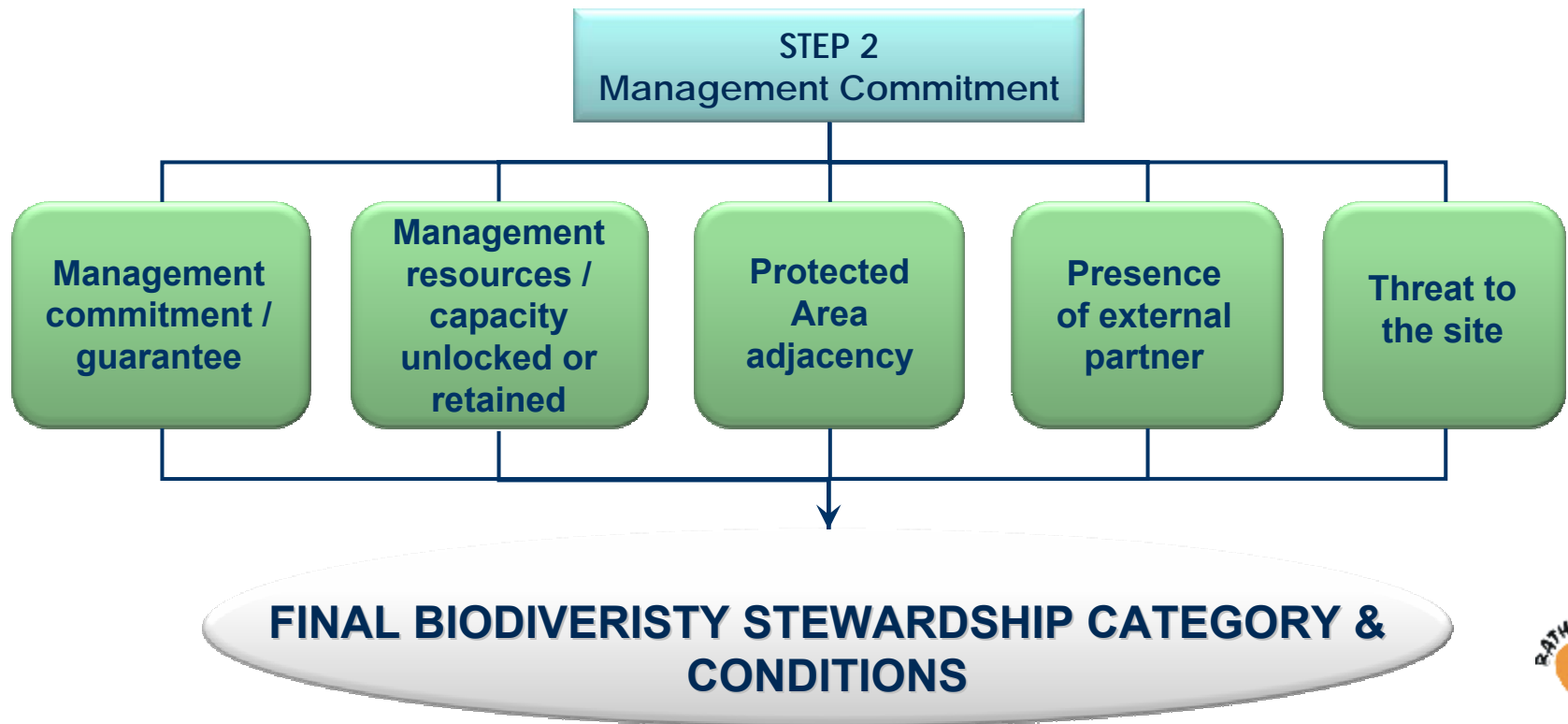
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This step includes an assessment of the potential management commitment or guarantee to management at the specified level, whether the level will unlock or retain resources, allow rehabilitation to improve the condition of the site.

Site review: step 2





Declaration and Management

- Nature Reserves and Protected Environment must undergo a declaration process – with MEC and including a Public Participation Process
- Management plans are required for all categories except Cons. Area
 - Two components: Integrated Management Plan (5 year review – submitted to MEC)
 - Plan of Implementation (annual review – not submitted to MEC)
- Sites must be audited annually





Benefits and support

- Benefits and support is provided to landowners who want to conserve their land
- Level of benefit is proportional to the commitment made by the landowner (i.e. the biodiversity stewardship category)
- Two types: statutory and discretionary
- Statutory - automatically applies to qualifying categories
- Discretionary - negotiated for individually, tailored to individual needs of each site





Benefits of the programme

- Builds a conservation ethos amongst landowners
- People are kept on the land
- Protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services by building functional landscapes
- Contributes to mitigating climate change
- Creating of employment and income-generating opportunities relating to biodiversity stewardship activities
- Skills development and training through biodiversity stewardship activities
- Recreational, cultural and educational opportunities





Conclusion

- Biodiversity stewardship is recognised as one of the most cost-effective mechanisms for conserving land
- Recessionary budget cuts in GPG, will reduce the budget available to GDARD for the programme
- However, the programme will proceed within these constraints
- A pilot programme will be conducted with a small number of sites
- The procedure and tools for biodiversity stewardship will be tested in the pilot phase and refined during the process





Update to the GCSA symposium on 20 August 2010

- GDARD acknowledges the work being done by GCSA members & also contribution to the development of the Gauteng Biodiversity Stewardship Programme (GBSP)
- The MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms. Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, has approved this programme within the budgetary constraints being faced by the department
- A Director for Conservation joined GDARD on 2 August 2010 – Ms. Eleanor McGregor.





Continued...

- Conservancies wish the GBSP will: close mines; stop development; manage neighbours; contribute to work of conservancies; provide incentives from the 'working for...' to rates rebates; etc. Not all possible.
- Difficulties: budget and resources; never have enough and never be fast enough; strategic priorities may not overlap entirely with GCSA; resources need to be directed to the poor first; Conservation holds on tenuously; etc.





Continued...

- Positives: we now have a GBSP approved by the MEC; national programme in place; have a new Conservation Director; have the beginnings of a GBSP conservation team; have energies of the GCSA and other relevant partners; have the capacity for an initial service.
- Let's work together.

