



## GEF FynbosFire Project outcomes showcased

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) recently hosted an event showcasing the innovative outcomes of the GEF FynbosFire Project. The event was held on 15 March 2018 at the Protea Fire and Ice Hotel in Cape Town with FynbosFire Project coordinator, Tessa Oliver, leading the event.

DEA's Dr Christo Marais said in his presentation that the results of the FynbosFire Project were far reaching. "Congratulations to Val Charlton, Tessa Oliver, the FynbosFire Project team and working groups," said Dr Marais.

Val Charlton, managing director of Landworks NPC, explained the name change from Kishugu NPC to Landworks NPC and said that the FynbosFire Project took a lot of effort even prior to the funding.

The key note address by Walid Badawi, UNDP country director for South Africa commended the project steering committee on their sincere commitment adding that the "FireWise project portrays disaster risk reduction in action. Advocacy for disaster risk reduction is everybody's business."

Delegates also had the opportunity of meeting the four new FireWise

community project leaders from Kranshoek in Plettenberg Bay, Goedverwacht in Piketberg, Clarkson in Tsitsikamma and Sir Lowry's Pass in the Cape Peninsula. International guests included Michele Steinberg, division manager wildfire at the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in the US and Lucian Deaton, project manager, International Partnership Development, Wildland Fire Operations, NFPA US.

With funding provided by the Global Environment Facility's Special Climate Change Fund, the FynbosFire Project is aimed at developing sustainable interventions to radically reform the approach to managing wildfires and to implement strategies to reduce wildfire risks. These strategies include FireWise training and exploring risk-reduction strategies with the insurance industry.

In collaboration with a number of partners, the project has encouraged the implementation of integrated fire management practices and to anticipate the impacts of climate change on wildfires. The project has supported communities living with wildfire to undertake good fire and land management practices, encouraging neighbours to work together and to take strategic action

to prevent losses. This will lead to a reduction in the damage to life, property and the environment by wildfires, which in turn leads to reduced poverty and increased security.

### FynBosFire Project

South Africa's draft Second National Communication (SNC, 2010) predicts the following general climate change trends for South Africa: (i) Assuming a moderate to high growth in greenhouse gas concentrations, by 2050 the coast is likely to warm by around one to two degrees Celsius and the interior by around two to three degrees Celsius. After 2050, under emissions scenarios that assume little mitigation effort, the rate of warming is projected to reach around three to four degrees Celsius along the coast and six to seven degrees Celsius in the interior and (ii) Rainfall projections for the summer rainfall region of the country show a tendency towards wetting and for the winter rainfall region towards drying.

While wildland fires are a natural feature of fire-driven ecosystems in the country, changes in climate are having adverse effects through altering the future occurrence of wildland fires and the area burned, in various ways that involve weather conditions conducive to combustion,

fuels to burn and ignition agents. The wildland fire situation has worsened significantly across South Africa during the past several years. There have been major and catastrophic fires in many areas. Land use patterns are also changing rapidly under the influence of diverse factors, including the expansion of towns and cities, causing an expanding wildland urban interface (WUI) and exposing more assets to the hazard of wildland fires.

The Fynbos Biome is identified in South Africa's Initial National Communication (INC, 2003) as the most vulnerable region in the country with respect to disaster risks from wildland fire due to patterns of urbanisation, agriculture and potential impacts upon water catchment areas. Project activities are thus spatially focused in the Fynbos Biome.

The project develops the adaptive capacity of:

1. Fire protection associations (FPAs)
2. The individual members of these FPAs
3. Communities at risk in the WUI, to more effectively manage the risks associated with an anticipated increase in impacts of climate-induced wildland fires in the Fynbos Biome.

This adaptive capacity will be improved, as a result of the following suite of complementary project interventions:

1. Expanding FPAs across the landscape and rationalising their configuration and governance arrangements
2. Adopting Integrated Fire Management (IFM) as a strategic adaptation approach to the increase in and impacts of climate-induced wildland fires

3. Equipping, resourcing, staffing, financing and training of FPAs and FPA members to implement IFM
4. Improving the quality of weather data, fire danger forecasting, early fire detection information and fire spread models
5. Mapping of annual pre-fire season risks to facilitate the implementation of mitigation measures to reduce environmental, social and economic risks
6. Developing and implementing a suite of incentives to encourage a behavioural change in landowners and communities at risk
7. Improving the information and decision-support tools required to support the implementation of IFM.

Video clips of the four new FireWise communities sharing their experience are available at:

[www.fynbosfire.org.za](http://www.fynbosfire.org.za) 

