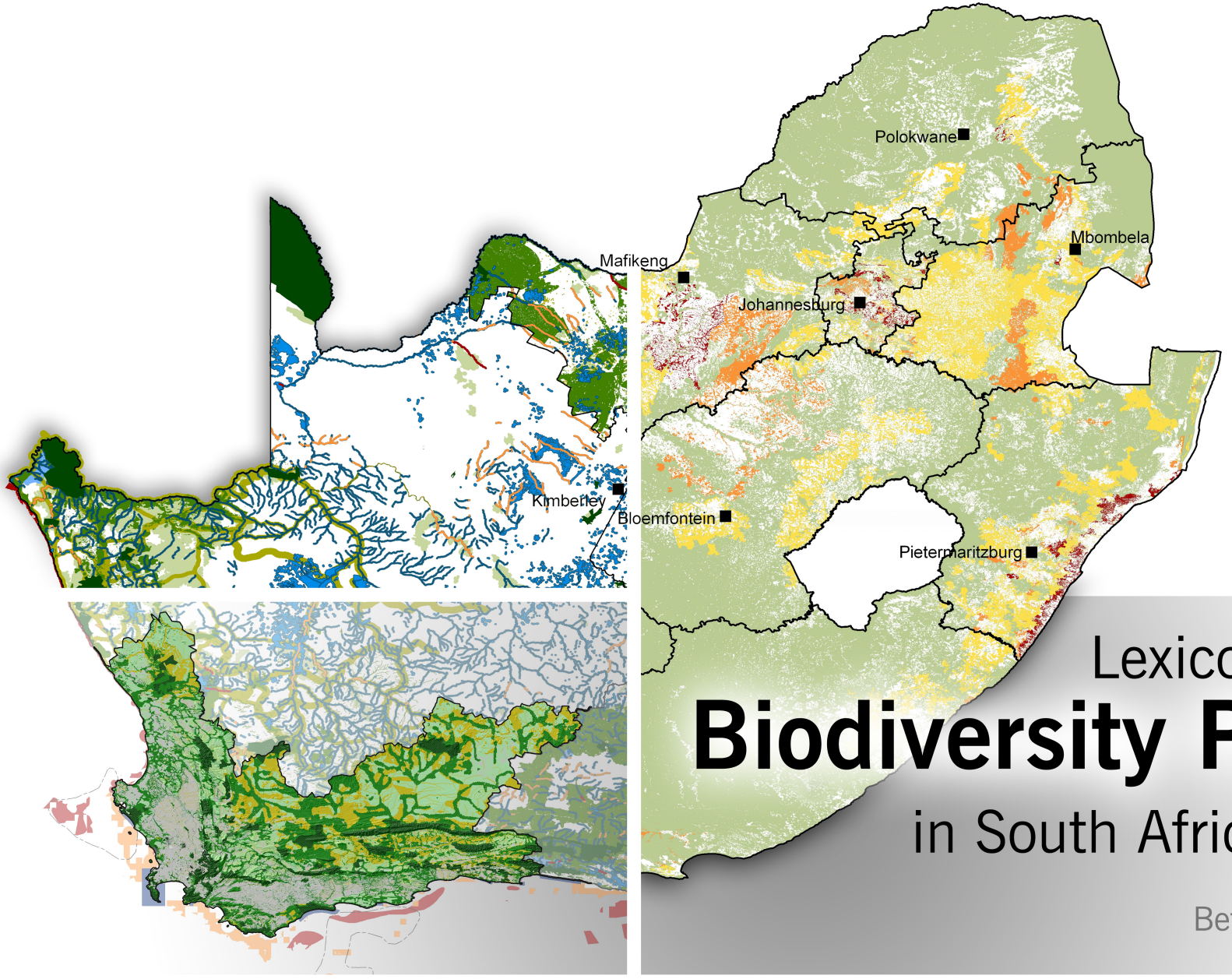


Lexicon of Biodiversity Planning in South Africa

First Edition

Beta Version (June 2016)

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute

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This document was developed by Mandy Driver, in consultation with members of the Provincial & Metro Biodiversity Planning Working Group that has been convened by SANBI approximately annually since 2012, and drawing on the experience of writing and reviewing many documents related to biodiversity planning. It also draws on discussions with the wider biodiversity planning community of practice in South Africa, which gathers annually at the Biodiversity Planning Forum, convened by SANBI since 2004.

Comments, feedback and suggestions for future editions are welcome – please email them to Mandy Driver (m.driver@sanbi.org.za).

Notes on the Beta Version

- This version of the Lexicon is intended for testing and feedback from users.
- The final version will include hyperlinks between terms within the document, and hyperlinks to other documents where possible.

Related resources

- SANBI's Biodiversity Advisor website (http://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org)
- SANBI's Biodiversity GIS website (http://bgis.sanbi.org)

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Acronyms

BGIS	Biodiversity GIS (http://bgis.sanbi.org)
BMA	Biodiversity Management Agreement
BMP	Biodiversity Management Plan
BMP-E	Biodiversity Management Plans for Ecosystems
BMP-S	Biodiversity Management Plans for Species
CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
CR	Critically endangered
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EN	Endangered
ESA	Ecological Support Area
FEPA	Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area
NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment
NBF	National Biodiversity Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NFEPA	National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas project
NNR	No Natural Remaining
NPAES	National Protected Area Expansion Strategy
NSBA	National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment
ONA	Other Natural Area
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
VU	Vulnerable

Acronyms to be used only when an acronym is unavoidable

BDS	Biodiversity stewardship
BDO	Biodiversity offsets
BRP	Bioregional plan
BSP	Biodiversity sector plan
NEBP	National Estuary Biodiversity Plan
NECS	National Ecosystem Classification System
SWSA	Strategic Water Source Area

List of terms included in the Lexicon

1. Agriculture
2. Biodiversity
3. Biodiversity Act
4. Biodiversity Agreement
5. Biodiversity assessment
6. Biodiversity asset
7. Biodiversity feature
8. Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA)
9. Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP)
10. Biodiversity offset
11. Biodiversity offset-related stewardship
12. Biodiversity Partnership Area
13. Biodiversity pattern
14. Biodiversity pattern and ecological processes
15. Biodiversity plan
16. Biodiversity planning
17. Biodiversity priority areas
18. Biodiversity sector plan
19. Biodiversity stewardship
20. Biodiversity stewardship agreement
21. Biodiversity target
22. Biodiversity thresholds
23. Bioregional plan
24. CBA map
25. Conservation
26. Conservation agency
27. Conservation area
28. Conservation authority
29. Conservation estate
30. Contract protected area
31. Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA)
32. Critical Biodiversity Area: Irreplaceable (CBA Irreplaceable)
33. Critical Biodiversity Area: Important (CBA Important)
    Critical Biodiversity Area: Optimal (CBA Optimal)
34. Critically Endangered (CR) ecosystem
35. Cultivation
36. Development
37. Ecological condition
38. Ecological infrastructure
39. Ecological processes
40. Ecological Support Area (ESA)
41. Ecosystem
42. Ecosystem of special concern
43. Ecosystem protection level
44. Ecosystem threat status
45. Ecosystem type
46. Endangered ecosystem (EN)
47. Estuarine functional zone
48. Estuary Management Plan
49. Extensive agriculture
50. Fair ecological condition
51. FEPA map
52. Fish Sanctuary
53. Fish Support Area
54. Focus area for offshore protection
55. Focus area for protected area expansion
56. Forest
57. Free-flowing river and flagship free-flowing river
58. Freshwater ecosystem
59. Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (FEPA)
60. Good ecological condition
61. Guideline for Bioregional Plans
62. Habitat loss
63. Intensive agriculture
64. Irreplaceability
65. Irreversibly modified
66. Least Threatened ecosystem
67. List of threatened ecosystems
68. Listed ecosystem
69. Moderately modified
70. Moderately protected ecosystem
71. National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA)
72. National Biodiversity Framework (NBF)
73. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)
74. National Ecosystem Classification System
75. National Estuary Biodiversity Plan
76. National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPA)
77. National Park
78. National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES)
79. National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (NSBA)
80. Natural or near-natural
81. Nature Reserve
82. No Natural Remaining (NNR)
83. Other Natural Area (ONA)
84. Plantations
85. Poor ecological condition
86. Poorly protected ecosystem
87. Priority estuary
88. Private protected area
89. Protected area
90. Protected area estate
91. Protected area network
92. Protected area system
93. Protected area target
94. Protected ecosystem
95. Protected Environment
96. Protection
97. Provincial conservation authority
98. Rangelands
99. Red Listed species
100. River FEPA
101. Semi-natural
102. Severely modified
103. Special Nature Reserve
104. Species of conservation concern
105. Species of special concern
106. State-owned protected area
107. Strategic Water Source Area
108. Systematic biodiversity plan / planning
109. Threatened ecosystem
110. Threatened species
111. Under-protected ecosystem
112. Unprotected ecosystem
113. Upstream Management Area
114. Urban area / urban development
115. Urbanisation
116. Vulnerable ecosystem (VU)
117. Well-protected ecosystem
118. Wetland cluster (on a FEPA map)
119. Wetland FEPA

1. Introduction

South Africa has a history of about two decades of systematic biodiversity planning. In the last decade especially, there has been tremendous progress in developing biodiversity planning products that are widely used to inform planning and decision-making in a range of sectors, including protected area expansion, land-use planning, environmental impact assessment, classification of water resources, and mining authorisations. Science-based spatial tools such as provincial biodiversity plans, biodiversity sector plans and bioregional plans are referred to in a range of policy and regulations. A community of practice of biodiversity planners has met annually since 2004 at the Biodiversity Planning Forum hosted by SANBI.

Along with the uptake of systematic biodiversity plans in policy and legislation and the development of an energetic community of practice, a vocabulary of biodiversity planning has developed, with gradual refinement and agreement on definitions and conventions for using certain terms. Some of this terminology is formally codified, for example in the Guideline for Bioregional Plans, but much of it has remained informal. As the use of biodiversity planning products grows, standardised and consistent definitions of commonly used terms and concepts become increasingly important.

- The purpose of this lexicon of biodiversity planning-related terms is to provide standard definitions for key concepts related to biodiversity planning, in order to support:
- Consistency in the use of terms and concepts across provinces and municipalities,
- Usability of biodiversity planning products for end-users,
- Credibility and in some cases legal force of biodiversity planning products.

The primary audience of the document is the biodiversity sector, including but not limited to biodiversity planning practitioners.

The document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 consists of a table of common terms related to biodiversity planning, in alphabetical order. A definition is given for each term, as well as acceptable alternatives, common problems and what to avoid, other explanatory notes and related terms.
- Section 3 sets out clusters of related terms from Section 2, as it is not always possible to get a good sense of these groups when the terms are listed in alphabetical order.
- Section 4 lists terms to avoid, as well as the alternative preferred term, especially when writing in a policy or implementation related context.
- Section 5 briefly describes some other naming conventions for which consistency is preferable.

A **lexicon** is the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge.

Codification refers to putting things in an orderly form. In linguistics it means the process of standardising and developing a norm for a language.

2. Common biodiversity planning terms and definitions

The table below includes terms related to biodiversity planning that are used frequently in South Africa. The focus is on terms used in the policy, legislative or implementation context. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive list of all terms used in the biodiversity sector, particularly those for which there are agreed definitions in ecology or international definitions whose use is straightforward.

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
1.	Agriculture	Includes extensive agriculture such as rangelands, and intensive agriculture such as cultivation.	--	Avoid using the term "agriculture" to refer only to intensive agriculture or cultivation. Some forms of extensive agriculture can be compatible with good ecological condition if appropriately managed, while intensive agriculture usually results in irreversible loss of natural habitat. In a biodiversity planning context, it is usually important to be more specific than simply referring to "agriculture".	This definition is from the perspective of land cover or land use, rather than from the perspective of classifying economic activity. For biodiversity planning, we are interested in the ecological impacts of different forms of land cover and land use. *Also see Extensive agriculture, Intensive agriculture, Cultivation, Rangelands*
2.	Biodiversity	The diversity of genes, species and ecosystems on Earth, and the ecological and evolutionary processes that maintain this diversity	--	Biodiversity does not refer only to species diversity. It includes ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Avoid using the term "biodiversity" when referring to "species diversity".	The problem of using the term biodiversity to refer only to species diversity is more prevalent in Europe and North America than in South Africa. It creates confusion especially when "biodiversity" is then seen as a characteristic of ecosystems, rather than ecosystems being seen as a component of biodiversity.
3.	Biodiversity Act	The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004, as amended)	--	Avoid the acronym "NEMBA" as it is not meaningful to most people outside the biodiversity sector. Rather refer to "the Biodiversity Act".	When writing formal documents, the name of the Act can be written in full the first time it is used, followed by "hereafter referred to as the Biodiversity Act" (either as a footnote or in brackets). *Also see Protected Areas Act*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
4.	Biodiversity Agreement	One of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. A Biodiversity Agreement is concluded in terms of contract law and is not recognised in terms of either the Protected Areas Act or the Biodiversity Act. A Biodiversity Agreement is considered a conservation area and contributes to the conservation estate but not the protected area estate.	--	--	Can be a precursor to a Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA) entered into in terms of the Biodiversity Act. A BMA can be entered into only in relation to a Biodiversity Management Plan published in terms of the Biodiversity Act. *Also see Biodiversity stewardship, Biodiversity Management Plan, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Conservation area*
5.	Biodiversity assessment	An assessment of the state of biodiversity, at the ecosystem, species or genetic level. The output of a biodiversity assessment could be, for example, a map of ecosystem threat status or ecosystem protection level.	Spatial biodiversity assessment. In the case of assessment of the threat status of a species based on IUCN Red List criteria, the term "conservation assessment" can be used.	Not to be confused with a biodiversity plan, which identifies explicit spatial priority areas. A biodiversity assessment may be an intermediate stage in the development of a biodiversity plan. Avoid the term "conservation assessment" unless referring to assessment of the threat status of species based on IUCN Red List criteria. If the term "conservation assessment" is used in relation to ecosystems, it is not clear whether it refers to an assessment of threat status or protection level.	*Also see Ecosystem threat status, Ecosystem protection level, Biodiversity target, Biodiversity thresholds.* *Contrast with Biodiversity plan, Biodiversity planning, Systematic biodiversity plan/planning*
6.	Biodiversity asset	Ecosystems, species and other biodiversity-related resources (such as genetic material) that generate social, cultural or economic benefits, including supporting livelihoods, providing the basis for economic activity, and contributing to human wellbeing.	--	--	Often used as part of the phrase "biodiversity assets and ecological infrastructure". *Also see Ecological infrastructure*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
7.	Biodiversity feature	An element of biodiversity included as part of an input layer in a biodiversity plan. A biodiversity feature could be, for example, an ecosystem type, a species occurrence or population, a special habitat, an ecological corridor.	--	--	Biodiversity targets should be set for all biodiversity features included in a biodiversity plan. *Also see Biodiversity target, Biodiversity plan*
8.	Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA)	An agreement entered into in terms of the Biodiversity Act between the Minister or MEC and the implementer of a Biodiversity Management Plan or an aspect of a Biodiversity Management Plan. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement, but not all BMAs are necessarily linked to biodiversity stewardship programmes. A BMA is considered a conservation area and contributes to the conservation estate but not the protected area estate.	BMA	--	A BMA can be entered into only in relation to a Biodiversity Management Plan published in terms of the Biodiversity Act. *Also see Biodiversity Management Plan, Biodiversity stewardship, Biodiversity Agreement, Conservation area*
9.	Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP)	A plan developed and published in terms of the Biodiversity Act, aimed at ensuring the long-term survival in nature of an indigenous species, a migratory species or an ecosystem. A BMP may be developed by any person, organisation or organ of state desiring to contribute to biodiversity management.	BMP-S for Biodiversity Management Plan for Species; BMP-E for Biodiversity Management Plans for Ecosystems.	--	The Minister may enter into a Biodiversity Management Agreement in relation to the implementation of all or part of a BMP. Norms and Standards to guide the development of BMP-S were published in 2009 (DEAT 2009a). Norms and Standards to guide the development of BMP-E were published in 2014 (DEA 2014). *Also see Biodiversity Management Agreement*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
10.	Biodiversity offset	Measurable conservation outcome resulting from actions to compensate for residual negative impacts [of a development project] on biodiversity. Biodiversity offsets are the last option in the mitigation hierarchy (avoid/prevent; minimise; rehabilitate; offset), and should be considered only after options to avoid, prevent, minimise or rehabilitate impacts have been pursued.	BDO, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	Avoid using "offsets" as shorthand for "biodiversity offsets", unless the context makes it extremely clear that the type of offset referred to is a biodiversity offset. Biodiversity offsets are a subset of environmental offsets, which include other types of offsets e.g. air pollution or carbon offsets. There are also non-environmental types of offsets such as industrial participation offsets.	In the South African context, the design and implementation of biodiversity offsets relies heavily on biodiversity assessments and biodiversity plans, to identify when a biodiversity offset is required and to determine the size and location of the biodiversity offset receiving area. Biodiversity offsets are generally concluded as part of an environmental authorisation process in terms of the EIA Regulations, or as part of mining or water authorisations. *Also see biodiversity offset-related stewardship*
11.	Biodiversity offset-related stewardship	A biodiversity offset that involves a biodiversity stewardship agreement to secure the long-term protection and management of the biodiversity offset receiving area.	Reactive biodiversity stewardship, although use of this term is not encouraged.	Avoid "involuntary stewardship". Even if developers are required to implement a biodiversity stewardship agreement as part of the conditions of a Record of Decision, they have the option of not going ahead with the development. The voluntary nature of biodiversity stewardship agreements is a fundamental principle of the biodiversity stewardship model.	*Also see Biodiversity offset, Biodiversity stewardship*
12.	Biodiversity Partnership Area	One of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. A Biodiversity Partnership Area is a non-contractual agreement, and is not recognised in terms of contract law, the Biodiversity Act or the Protected Areas Act. A Biodiversity Partnership Area contributes to the conservation estate but not to the protected area estate.	--	Avoid the acronym "BPA". Previously called a Conservation Area, but this was confusing given the broader definition of "conservation area" in other contexts (see the entry for Conservation area). Avoid using the term "Conservation Area" when referring to a Biodiversity Partnership Area.	*Also see Biodiversity stewardship, Conservation area*
13.	Biodiversity pattern	The compositional and structural aspects of biodiversity, at the genetic, species or ecosystem level.	--	Avoid using the term "pattern" as shorthand for biodiversity pattern, as it has multiple meanings in different contexts.	Often used as part of the phrase "biodiversity pattern and ecological processes". One of the principles of systematic biodiversity planning is to ensure that a representative sample of all biodiversity pattern is conserved. *Also see Ecological processes*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
14. Biodiversity pattern and ecological processes	The combination of the compositional, structural and functional aspects of biodiversity, at the genetic, species or ecosystem level.	--	Avoid using the phrase "pattern and process" as shorthand for biodiversity pattern and ecological processes, as its meaning is unclear given the multiple possible meanings of both the terms "pattern" and "process".	*Also see Biodiversity pattern, Ecological processes*
15. Biodiversity plan	A spatial plan that identifies one or more categories of biodiversity priority area, using the principles and methods of systematic biodiversity planning	Spatial biodiversity plan, systematic biodiversity plan. The term "conservation plan" is an acceptable alternative *only* when writing for the formal literature or in an academic context.	Avoid the term "conservation plan" or "biodiversity conservation plan" when writing in a policy, legislative or implementation context. The term "conservation plan" is often interpreted as being only about spatial priorities for protected area expansion, rather than, for example, spatial priorities to inform land-use planning and decision-making. In addition, in the public sector, conservation is the mandate only of conservation authorities, while biodiversity is of broader concern for all organs of state (e.g. in terms of the NEMA principles and SA's status as a CBD signatory). A "conservation plan" can be interpreted to be of relevance only for conservation authorities, while a "biodiversity plan" is more clearly of relevance to a range of sectors.	The term "biodiversity plan" could have a different meaning in other contexts, for example it need not necessarily mean a spatial plan. However, in the biodiversity sector in South Africa, the term "biodiversity plan" is taken to mean a spatial plan. It is in effect shorthand for "spatial biodiversity plan" or "systematic biodiversity plan". *Also see Biodiversity planning, Systematic biodiversity plan* *Contrast with Biodiversity assessment*
16. Biodiversity planning	The process of developing a spatial plan that identifies one or more categories of biodiversity priority area, using the principles and methods of systematic biodiversity planning.	The term "conservation planning" is an acceptable alternative *only* when writing for the formal literature or in an academic context.	Avoid the term "conservation planning" or "biodiversity conservation planning" when writing in a policy, legislative or implementation context. See explanation in previous row.	The term "biodiversity planning" could have a different meaning in other contexts, for example it need not necessarily mean spatial planning. However, in the biodiversity sector in South Africa, the term "biodiversity planning" is taken to mean spatial planning. It is in effect shorthand for "systematic biodiversity planning". *Also see Biodiversity plan, Systematic biodiversity planning*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
17. Biodiversity priority areas	Natural or semi-natural areas in the landscape or seascape that are important for conserving a representative sample of ecosystems and species, for maintaining ecological processes, or for the provision of ecosystem services.	Areas of high biodiversity importance.	Avoid the acronym "BPA". Stick to lower case "biodiversity priority areas" not "Biodiversity Priority Areas". Avoid the term "high biodiversity areas" or "areas of high biodiversity", both of which are grammatically incorrect. Avoid the term "areas of high biodiversity value" as it is often taken to refer to value in monetary terms. Avoid "priority biodiversity areas". Avoid the term "sensitive" or "sensitivity" as a substitute for importance. A site of high biodiversity importance need not be sensitive to impacts, and sites that are sensitive to impacts need not be of high biodiversity importance.	Biodiversity priority areas are identified using a systematic spatial biodiversity planning process, based on the best available science. Biodiversity priority areas include the following categories – *also see definitions for each of these*: • Protected areas, • Critically Endangered and Endangered ecosystems, • Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs), • Ecological Support Areas (ESAs), • Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (FEPAs), • Strategic Water Source Areas, • Flagship free-flowing rivers, • Priority estuaries, • Focus areas for land-based protected area expansion, • Focus areas for offshore protection.
18. Biodiversity sector plan	A map of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas accompanied by contextual information, land- and resource-use guidelines and supporting GIS data. The map must be produced using the principles and methods of systematic biodiversity planning.	BSP, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	--	A biodiversity sector plan is usually developed for a district or metro municipality, but could be developed for a province or for a local municipality. It represents the biodiversity sector's input into planning and decision-making in a range of other sectors. A biodiversity sector plan for a municipality may be formally published as a bioregional plan in terms of the Biodiversity Act, following the required consultation process and alignment with relevant municipal plans. A biodiversity sector plan for a whole province cannot be published as a bioregional plan – it would need to be sub-divided to the municipal level. *Also see Bioregional plan*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
19. Biodiversity stewardship	An approach to securing land in biodiversity priority areas through entering into agreements with private or communal landowners, led by conservation authorities. Different types of biodiversity stewardship agreement confer different benefits on landowners, and require different levels of restriction on land use. In all cases the landowner retains title to the land, and the primary responsibility for management remains with the landowner, with technical advice and assistance provided by the conservation authority. There are five different types of biodiversity stewardship agreement: • Nature Reserve, • Protected Environment, Biodiversity Management Agreement, • Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area	BDS, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	Avoid using just the term “stewardship” when referring to biodiversity stewardship. “Stewardship” is a broad term referring to management, care or wise use of something. Avoid the term “conservation stewardship”, which was used in the early days of the development of the biodiversity stewardship approach, but is out of date. Avoid the term “off-reserve conservation” in relation to biodiversity stewardship – the top two levels of biodiversity stewardship (Nature Reserve and Protected Environment) constitute formal protected areas that contribute towards meeting biodiversity targets and protected area targets, and form part of the protected area estate.	The objective of biodiversity stewardship is to conserve and manage biodiversity priority areas through voluntary agreements with landowners. This can include formal protection, management and restoration of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Biodiversity stewardship contributes to several broader goals: • Conserving a representative sample of biodiversity , • Involving landowners as custodians of biodiversity, • Contributing to the rural economy, • Investing in ecological infrastructure, • Contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation, • Supporting sustainable development. Conservation NGOs often play a key role in biodiversity stewardship, working alongside conservation authorities. See Guidelines for Biodiversity Stewardship (DEA 2009), and Factsheet on Biodiversity Stewardship (SANBI 2015). *Also see Biodiversity stewardship agreement, Nature Reserve, Protected Environment, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area, Protected area, Contract protected area, Conservation area*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
20. Biodiversity stewardship agreement	An agreement entered into between a landowner (or landowners) and a conservation authority as part of a biodiversity stewardship programme. The five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement are: Nature Reserve, Protected Environment, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area.	--	--	Nature Reserves and Protected Environments declared through biodiversity stewardship are contract protected areas and form part of the protected area estate. Biodiversity Management Agreements, Biodiversity Agreements and Biodiversity Partnership Areas concluded through biodiversity stewardship are conservation areas and form part of the conservation estate. *Also see Biodiversity stewardship, Nature Reserve, Protected Environment, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area, contract protected area, conservation area*
21. Biodiversity target	For ecosystems: The minimum proportion of each ecosystem type that needs to be kept in good ecological condition in the long term in order to maintain viable representative samples of all ecosystem types and the majority of species associated with them. Expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type (measured as area, length or volume). For species: The minimum number of occurrences or populations that need to be kept extant (ideally with some form of protection) in order to ensure the persistence of the species, or the minimum amount of suitable habitat that needs to be kept in good ecological condition in order to ensure the persistence of a minimum viable population of the species.	--	Avoid the term "conservation target" or "biodiversity conservation target", as the meaning of these terms is unclear – they could mean either "biodiversity target" or "protected area target". The term "biodiversity target" should not be confused with "protected area target" – the protected area target for an ecosystem type is usually a subset or portion of its biodiversity target.	Biodiversity targets are fundamental to biodiversity assessment and biodiversity planning. In biodiversity assessment, biodiversity targets are typically used in the assessment of ecosystem threat status and ecosystem protection level. In biodiversity planning, biodiversity targets are an essential input to the identification of biodiversity priority areas. For example, a portfolio of Critical Biodiversity Areas must collectively meet biodiversity targets for ecosystem types and species. *Also see Protected area target, Biodiversity thresholds*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
22. Biodiversity thresholds	A series of thresholds used to assess ecosystem threat status, expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type. The first threshold, for Critically Endangered ecosystems, is equal to the biodiversity target; the second threshold, for Endangered ecosystems, is equal to the biodiversity target plus 15%; and the third threshold, for Vulnerable ecosystems, is usually set at 60%.	--	--	*Also see Biodiversity target, Ecosystem threat status, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem*
23. Bioregional plan	A map of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas accompanied by contextual information, land- and resource-use guidelines and supporting GIS data, which has been published by the Minister or MEC in terms of the Biodiversity Act. The map must be produced using the principles and methods of systematic biodiversity planning.	BRP, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	Use "bioregional plan" to refer to bioregional plans in general; "Bioregional Plan" only when a particular bioregional plan is being referred to e.g. West Rand District Bioregional Plan. Not to be confused with "bioregional programme", which refers to a multi-partner programme at the biome level, for example, Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) in the Fynbos biome, Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme (SKEP) or the Grasslands Programme.	A bioregional plan is usually developed for a district or metropolitan municipality, but could be developed for a local municipality or group of local municipalities. It represents the biodiversity sector's input into planning and decision-making in a range of other sectors. A bioregional plan is always based on an underlying systematic biodiversity plan. In order to be published as a bioregional plan, the CBA map must go through a consultation process to ensure it is consistent with other relevant municipal plans and frameworks. Once a bioregional plan has been published, it must be taken into account in land-use planning and decision-making. The Guideline for Bioregional Plans, which guides the process of developing and publishing a bioregional plan, was published in 2009 (DEAT 2009b). *Also see Biodiversity sector plan, Guideline for Bioregional Plans*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
24. CBA map	A map showing Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas, based on a systematic biodiversity plan. Often forms the basis for a biodiversity sector plan or bioregional plan.	Map of CBAs and ESAs		The term "CBA map" is used as shorthand for "map of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas". A CBA map has five broad categories: Protected Areas, Critical Biodiversity Areas, Ecological Support Areas, Other Natural Areas, No Natural Remaining. *Also see Critical Biodiversity Area, Ecological Support Area, Other Natural Area, Systematic biodiversity plan, Bioregional plan, Biodiversity sector plan*
25. Conservation	Refers to management for explicit biodiversity conservation objectives. May or may not include formal protection.	--	Not to be conflated with "protection", which is a more specific term that implies formal protection in terms of the Protected Areas Act. Conservation could include protection but need not necessarily do so.	The CBD uses the phrase "conservation and sustainable use", distinguishing conservation from sustainable use. Sustainable use could include, for example, sustainable harvesting of biological resources or sustainably managed grazing, which would not necessarily be considered conservation. *Also see Protection*
26. Conservation agency	A national or provincial organ of state whose main mandate is conservation. Includes SANParks, iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, and provincial conservation agencies.	--	Not to be confused with the broader term "conservation authority". Conservation authorities include conservation agencies as well as provincial departments with the mandate for environmental affairs in provinces where a conservation agency does not exist.	In some provinces, the provincial environmental affairs department has established a stand-alone agency with delegated responsibility for conservation-related matters. Some provincial conservation agencies have a mandate to work only within protected areas; others have a mandate to work throughout the province concerned. *Also see Conservation authority, Provincial conservation agency*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
27. Conservation area	An area of land or sea that is not formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act but is nevertheless managed as least partly for biodiversity conservation. Because there is no long-term security associated with conservation areas they are not considered a strong form of protection. Conservation areas contribute towards the conservation estate but not the protected area estate.	--	Not to be used when actually referring to "protected area". Avoid "informal protected areas" – protected areas are by definition formal.	There is no fixed set of sub-categories or types of areas that fall within the broad category "conservation areas". Examples of conservation areas include Biodiversity Management Agreements, Biodiversity Agreements, Biodiversity Partnership Areas, biosphere reserves (excluding those parts that have been formally declared as protected areas), conservancies. *Also see Conservation estate, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area* *Contrast with Protected area*
28. Conservation authority	A national or provincial organ of state whose mandate includes conservation but may be broader than conservation.		Not to be confused with the narrower term "conservation agency". Conservation authorities include national and provincial conservation agencies as well as provincial departments with the mandate for environmental affairs in provinces where a conservation agency does not exist.	A summary term for all organs of state that deal with conservation as their core mandate or as part of their mandate. *Also see Conservation agency, Provincial conservation authority*
29. Conservation estate	An inclusive term referring to all protected areas and all conservation areas	--	Not to be used when actually referring to "protected area estate". Avoid "conservation area estate".	*Also see Protected area, Conservation area,* *Contrast with Protected area estate*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
30.	Contract protected area	A protected area declared through a contractual arrangement between a conservation authority and private or communal landowner(s), who retain ownership of the land. Contract protected areas may form part of biodiversity stewardship programmes, but need not necessarily. The minimum time period for a contract protected area is 30 years; the maximum time period is in perpetuity.	--	Not to be conflated with private protected areas, as contract protected areas may be declared on communal land.	For contract protected areas declared through biodiversity stewardship programmes, the landowner becomes the management authority of the protected area. In other contractual arrangements, the conservation authority may take over the management of the land, as is the case for many contract protected areas entered into by SANParks. Contract protected areas are highlighted as an important mechanism for protected area expansion in the NPAES. *Also see Protected area, Private protected area, Biodiversity stewardship* *Contrast with State-owned protected area*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
31. Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA)	An area that must be maintained in a good ecological condition (natural or near-natural state) in order to meet biodiversity targets. CBAs collectively meet biodiversity targets for all ecosystem types as well as for species and ecological processes that depend on natural or near-natural habitat, that have not already been met in the protected area network. One of five broad categories on a CBA map, and a subset of biodiversity priority areas.	CBA	--	CBAs are identified through a systematic biodiversity planning process in a configuration that is complementary, efficient and avoids conflict with other land uses where possible. The desired state for a CBA is always natural or near-natural, and in almost all cases, an area will be identified as a CBA only if it is currently in this state. In some circumstances it may be necessary to select areas that are moderately modified as CBAs in order to meet biodiversity targets. In rare exceptions, a severely modified area (such as a cultivated field) may be selected as a CBA if it is required to meet a biodiversity target for a threatened species that depends on that habitat. CBAs always include all portions of Critically Endangered ecosystem types that remain in good ecological condition. *Also see Biodiversity priority area, CBA Irreplaceable, CBA Important/Optimal, Ecological Support Area, Other Natural Area, No Natural Remaining*
32. Critical Biodiversity Area: Irreplaceable (CBA Irreplaceable)	An area that is irreplaceable or near-irreplaceable for meeting biodiversity targets. There are no or very few other options for meeting biodiversity targets for the features associated with the site.	CBA Irreplaceable	Avoid using the term “mandatory” in any way in relation to these areas.	*Also see Critical Biodiversity Area, CBA Important/Optimal*
33. Critical Biodiversity Area: Important (CBA Important) OR Critical Biodiversity Area: Optimal (CBA Optimal)	An area that has been selected as the best option for meeting biodiversity targets based on complementarity, efficiency, connectivity and/or avoidance of conflict with other land or resource uses.	Either “CBA Important” or “CBA Optimal” may be used.	Avoid “CBA Best Design”. The term “best design” may be used in an explanatory description of these areas.	*Also see Critical Biodiversity Area, CBA Irreplaceable*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
34. Critically Endangered (CR) ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has very little of its historical extent (measured as area, length or volume) left in good ecological condition. Most of the historical extent of the ecosystem type is in fair or poor ecological condition. The ecosystem type is likely to have lost much of its natural structure and functioning, and species associated with the ecosystem type may have been lost. (Those portions of Critically Endangered ecosystem types that are still in good ecological condition will always be Critical Biodiversity Areas.)	Critically Endangered ecosystem type	--	The Biodiversity Act defines a Critically Endangered ecosystems as "ecosystems that have undergone severe degradation of ecological structure, function or composition as a result of human intervention and are subject to an extremely high risk irreversible transformation" (section 52(2)(a)). This is a legal definition rather than an ecological definition. For biodiversity assessment and planning purposes, the ecological definition (provided in column 2) should be used. *Also see Threatened ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem, Ecosystem threat status, Biodiversity thresholds*
35. Cultivation	A form of intensive agriculture. Includes field crops and horticulture. Includes dryland and irrigated crops. Can be for commercial or subsistence purposes.	Croplands	Not to be used interchangeably with "agriculture". "Agriculture" is a much broader term that includes cultivation and other forms of intensive and extensive agriculture.	In South African ecosystems, cultivation is generally considered to result in loss of natural habitat and severely or irreversibly modified (i.e. poor) ecological condition. *Also see Agriculture, Intensive agriculture,* *Contrast with Extensive agriculture, Rangelands*
36. Development	A broad socio-economic goal, encompassing social and economic factors	--	Avoid using the term "development" to refer to all land uses that are not compatible with the conservation or management of biodiversity.	--

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
37. Ecological condition[1]	An assessment of the extent to which the composition, structure and function of an area or biodiversity feature has been modified from a reference condition of natural.	Ecosystem condition, although ecological condition is preferred.	At the broadest level, ecological condition is assessed as good, fair or poor. Avoid the terms "high, medium and low" in relation to ecological condition. Avoid the term "health" to refer to ecological condition. Many ecosystems that are in a severely or irreversibly modified condition from an ecological perspective may nevertheless be considered "healthy" from other perspectives (for example, an agricultural field or a park in an urban setting).	The broad ecological condition categories of good, fair and poor can be broken down into more detailed categories that are nested within these broad categories. The use of a reference condition of natural does not imply that the desired or recommended condition for all ecosystems or features is natural. *Also see Good ecological condition, Fair ecological condition, Poor ecological condition, Natural or near-natural, Semi-natural, Moderately modified, Severely modified, Irreversibly modified*
38. Ecological infrastructure	Naturally functioning ecosystems that generate or deliver valuable services to people. It is the nature-based equivalent of built infrastructure, and is just as important for providing services and underpinning economic development.	--	Not to be confused with "green infrastructure", which is a broader term that can include built infrastructure. Ecological infrastructure is a subset of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure that is built to mimic ecological infrastructure (such as artificial wetlands) is "artificial ecological infrastructure". Not to be confused with "natural capital", which is a broader term that includes abiotic resources such as air and minerals.	The concept of ecological infrastructure helps to focus attention on the integrity of the underlying stock of ecosystem assets that deliver ecosystem services, rather than simply on the flow of services. One piece of ecological infrastructure may deliver several ecosystem services. Ecological infrastructure need not be in good (natural or near-natural) ecological condition, but should retain at least some of its natural ecological functioning. This usually requires it to be in at least semi-natural (moderately modified) ecological condition. Referred to as "natural infrastructure" in some countries. See Factsheet on Ecological Infrastructure (SANBI, 2013b).

[1] Terms related to ecological condition were under discussion within the biodiversity planning community at the time of writing. The terms and definitions given here are based on discussions to date.

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
39. Ecological processes	The functions and processes that operate to maintain and generate biodiversity. In order to include ecological processes in a biodiversity plan, their spatial components need to be identified and mapped.	Sometimes used as shorthand for "ecological and evolutionary processes".	Avoid using the term "process" as shorthand for ecological processes, as it has multiple meanings in different contexts.	Often used as part of the phrase "biodiversity pattern and ecological processes". One of the principles of systematic biodiversity planning is to ensure persistence of biodiversity, which requires that ecological processes be taken into account in spatial prioritisation. *Also see Biodiversity pattern, Biodiversity pattern and ecological processes*
40. Ecological Support Area (ESA)	An area that must be maintained in at least fair ecological condition (semi-natural/moderately modified state) in order to support the ecological functioning of a CBA or protected area, or to generate or deliver ecosystem services, or to meet remaining biodiversity targets for ecosystem types or species when it is not possible or no necessary to meet them in natural or near-natural areas. One of five broad categories on a CBA map, and a subset of biodiversity priority areas.	ESA	--	ESAs are identified through a systematic biodiversity planning process in a configuration that is efficient and avoids conflict with other land uses where possible. The desired state for an ESA is at least ecologically functional; in most cases an area will be identified as an ESA only if it is currently in at least this state. There may be instances in which an ESA needs to be restored to an ecologically functional state. The fact that ESAs are defined to include areas important for delivering ecosystem services means that ESAs can include ecological infrastructure. This provides a mechanism for incorporating ecological infrastructure in CBA & ESA maps. *Also see Biodiversity priority area, Critical Biodiversity Area, Other Natural Area, No Natural Remaining*
41. Ecosystem	An assemblage of living organisms, the interactions between them and their physical environment.	--	Not to be confused with "ecosystem type" – see discussion under entry on "ecosystem type".	For biodiversity planning purposes, ecosystems can be delineated at a range of spatial scales. *Also see Ecosystem type, National Ecosystem Classification System*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
42. Ecosystem of special concern	An ecosystem that warrants special conservation attention. Includes threatened ecosystems; ecosystems identified as CBAs, ESAs, FEPAs, Fish Sanctuaries or free-flowing rivers; ecosystems that play an important role as ecological infrastructure e.g. Strategic Water Source Areas; ecosystems that form part of focus areas for protected area expansion; ecosystems in buffers or corridors linked to protected areas; ecosystems likely to be important for ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change.	--	--	The term "ecosystems of special concern" is used in the Norms and Standards for Biodiversity Management Plans for Ecosystems (BMP-E) (DEA 2014), as a first filter for identifying ecosystems that might be appropriate for the development of BMP-Es.
43. Ecosystem protection level	Indicator of how well represented an ecosystem type is in the protected area network. Ecosystem types are categorised as well protected, moderately protected, poorly protected or unprotected, based on the proportion of the biodiversity target for each ecosystem type that is included in one or more protected areas. Unprotected, poorly protected and moderately protected ecosystem types are collectively referred to as under-protected ecosystems.	Protection level, when the context makes it clear that this is in relation to ecosystems.	Avoid "ecosystem protection status", "protection status", "conservation status". Avoid the acronym "EPL".	One of two headline national ecosystem indicators, assessed for all national ecosystem types in South Africa. *Also see Biodiversity assessment, Well-protected ecosystem, Moderately protected ecosystem, Poorly protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem, Ecosystem type, Ecosystem threat status.*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
44. Ecosystem threat status	Indicator of how threatened an ecosystem type is, in other words the degree to which it is still intact or alternatively losing vital aspects of its function, structure or composition. Ecosystem types are categorised as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Least Threatened, based on the proportion of ecosystem type that remains in good ecological condition relative to a series of biodiversity thresholds. Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable ecosystems are collectively referred to as threatened ecosystems.	Threat status, when the context makes it clear that this is in relation to ecosystems.	Avoid "ecosystem status" or "conservation status". The term "conservation status" is used by the IUCN Red List for species, but it leads to confusion when used in relation to ecosystems as it is not clear whether "conservation status" refers to threat status or protection level of ecosystems. Avoid the acronym "ETS".	One of two headline national ecosystem indicators, assessed for all national ecosystem types in South Africa. Ecosystems assessed as threatened may be listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act. *Also see Biodiversity assessment, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem, Least Threatened ecosystem, Threatened ecosystem, Ecosystem type, Ecosystem protection level*
45. Ecosystem type	An ecosystem unit, or set of ecosystem units, that has been identified and delineated as part of a hierarchical classification system, based on biotic and/ or abiotic factors. Ecosystems of the same type are likely to share broadly similar ecological characteristics and functioning.	In some environments, ecosystem types take the form of habitat types. For example, in South Africa's National Ecosystem Classification System, ecosystem types in the marine and coastal environment are referred to as "marine and coastal habitat types". Ecosystem types can also take the form of, for example, vegetation types, land classes, wetland ecosystem types and so on. "Ecosystem types" is an umbrella term for all of these.	The distinction between an ecosystem and an ecosystem type is important. For example, a particular wetland might be considered an ecosystem; together with other wetlands with similar ecological characteristics it might make up a wetland ecosystem type. An ecosystem delineated at the landscape scale might include individual examples of many different ecosystem types (such as patches of various vegetation types and river reaches of various different river ecosystem types).	Ecosystem types can be identified and delineated in a range of ways at a range of spatial scales. A nested hierarchy, where national ecosystem types (such as vegetation types) are nested within broader categories (such as biomes) is useful. Biodiversity targets are set for ecosystem types. Ecosystem threat status and ecosystem protection level are assessed for ecosystem types. *Also see Ecosystem, National Ecosystem Classification System*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
46. Endangered ecosystem (EN)	An ecosystem type that is close to becoming Critically Endangered, i.e. that has little of its historical extent left in good ecological condition and is likely to have lost much of its natural structure and functioning.	Endangered ecosystem type	The term "endangered ecosystems" is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to all threatened ecosystems. Threatened ecosystems include Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable ecosystems.	The Biodiversity Act defines endangered ecosystems as "ecosystems that have undergone degradation of ecological structure, function or composition as a result of human intervention, although they are not critically endangered ecosystems" (Section 52(2)(b)). This is a legal definition rather than an ecological definition. For biodiversity assessment and planning purposes, the ecological definition (provided in column 2) should be used. *Also see Threatened ecosystem, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem, Ecosystem type, Ecosystem threat status, Biodiversity thresholds*
47. Estuarine functional zone	The open water area of an estuary together with the associated floodplain, incorporating estuarine habitat (such as sand and mudflats, salt marshes, rock and plant communities) and key physical and biological processes that are essential for estuarine ecological functioning	--	--	The estuarine functional zone has been mapped for each of South Africa's 291 estuaries. The spatial data is available on BGIS.
48. Estuary Management Plan	A management plan for an estuary developed in terms of the Integrated Coastal Management Act (Act 24 of 2008)	--	--	Priority estuaries identified in the National Estuary Biodiversity Plan should be prioritised for the development of Estuary Management Plans. *Also see Priority estuaries, National Estuary Biodiversity Plan*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
49.	Extensive agriculture	Agricultural production that uses small inputs of labour, capital and other inputs relative to the land area being farmed, and that, if appropriately managed, may be compatible with maintaining ecosystems in fair or even good ecological condition. Often associated with rangelands. Includes extensive game ranching.	--	Not to be confused with "agriculture" as a whole, which includes intensive and extensive agriculture.	*Also see Agriculture, Rangelands* *Contrast with Intensive agriculture, Cultivation*
50.	Fair ecological condition	An ecological condition class in which ecological function is maintained even though composition and structure have been compromised. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Moderately modified, semi-natural	--	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category C. *Also see Ecological condition, Good ecological condition, Poor ecological condition, Moderately modified*
51.	FEPA map	A map showing Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas, Fish Support Areas and Upstream Management Areas, based on a systematic biodiversity plan for freshwater ecosystems.	Map of FEPAs	--	See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas, Fish Support Areas, Upstream Management Areas*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
52. Fish Sanctuary	A river reach that is essential for protecting threatened or near-threatened freshwater fish that are indigenous to South Africa. Fish Sanctuaries that are in good ecological condition are FEPAs, and the associated sub-quaternary catchment is marked with a red or black fish symbol on FEPA maps. Fish Sanctuaries that are not in good ecological condition are Fish Support Areas.	--	Not to be confused with Fish Support Areas. Fish Sanctuaries include some FEPAs and some Fish Support Areas. See the separate map of Fish Sanctuaries in the Atlas of FEPAs in case of any confusion.	The sub-quaternary catchments associated with all Fish Sanctuaries are marked with a fish symbol on FEPA maps, whether the Fish Sanctuary is a FEPA or a Fish Support Area. A red fish indicates that there is at least one population of a CR or EN fish species within that sub-quaternary catchment. A black fish indicates the presence of VU or near-threatened fish populations. See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, Fish Support Area*
53. Fish Support Area	A river reach that is essential for protecting threatened or near-threatened freshwater fish that are indigenous to South Africa, but that is not in good ecological condition (i.e. a Fish Sanctuary that is not in good ecological condition) OR a river reach that is important for migration of threatened or near-threatened fish species. Sub-quaternary catchments associated with Fish Support Areas that are Fish Sanctuaries are marked with a fish symbol on FEPA maps; those that are important for migration are not marked with a fish symbol.	--	Not to be confused with Fish Sanctuaries. Not all Fish Support Areas are Fish Sanctuaries. Fish Sanctuaries include some FEPAs and some Fish Support Areas.	See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, Fish Sanctuary*
54. Focus area for offshore protection	Area identified as a priority for representing offshore marine biodiversity, protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems,[2] contributing to fisheries sustainability, and/or supporting the management of by-catch.	--	--	*Also see Protected area, Protected area network, Protected area target, Protection, National Protected Area Expansion Strategy*

[2] The term "vulnerable marine ecosystems" is used in this instance in the international sense, not in the sense of Vulnerable ecosystems as defined in this document, the National Biodiversity Assessment or the Biodiversity Act.

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
55.	Focus area for protected area expansion	Large, intact and unfragmented area of high biodiversity importance, suitable for the creation and expansion of large land-based protected areas (Land-based protected areas can protect terrestrial and inland water ecosystems.)	--	It is not expected that the whole of these focus areas should be incorporated into the protected area network – they simply indicate areas where good opportunities exist for meeting ecosystem-level protected area targets together with other objectives such as resilience to climate change. Priorities for biodiversity stewardship include threatened ecosystems and CBAs as well as focus areas for protected area expansion. Avoid "focal areas".	*Also see Protected area, Protected area network, Protected area target, Protection, National Protected Area Expansion Strategy*
56.	Forest	In the context of biodiversity planning, forest refers to indigenous forests mapped in the Vegetation Map of South Africa or in more detail by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries. The Forest biome makes up less than 1% of South Africa's land area.	Indigenous forest	Not to be confused with forestry plantations.	*Also see Plantations*
57.	Free-flowing river and flagship free-flowing river	A long stretch of river that has not been dammed, flowing undisturbed from its source to the confluence with another large river or to the sea. There are 63 remaining free-flowing rivers in South Africa. Of these 63, 19 have been identified as **flagship free-flowing rivers**, representing the different freshwater ecoregions of the country.	--	--	Free-flowing rivers and flagship free-flowing rivers were identified in the National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas project (NFEPA). See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA*
58.	Freshwater ecosystem	All inland water bodies whether fresh or saline, including rivers, lakes, wetlands, sub-surface waters and estuaries. (Definition from NFEPA)	Inland water ecosystem	The term "inland water ecosystems" is sometimes preferred, as "freshwater ecosystems" may be understood to exclude saline ecosystems such as estuaries and brackish pans and streams.	In NFEPA, the term "freshwater ecosystems" was used in this broad sense. *Also see Inland water ecosystem*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
59.	Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (FEPA)	A river reach or wetland that is required to meet biodiversity targets for freshwater ecosystem types.	--	Each river FEPA falls within a sub-quaternary catchment. The FEPA refers to the river reach, not the whole sub-quaternary catchment.	See the Atlas of Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, River FEPA, Wetland FEPA, Fish Support Area, Upstream Management Area, Fish Sanctuary*
60.	Good ecological condition	An ecological condition class in which composition, structure and function are still intact or largely intact. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Natural or near-natural	Avoid "high ecological condition".	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category A or B. *Also see Ecological condition, Fair ecological condition, Poor ecological condition, Natural or near-natural*
61.	Guideline for Bioregional Plans	Full title: Guideline Regarding the Determination of Bioregions and the Preparation and Publication of Bioregional Plans. A guideline published in terms of the Biodiversity Act to provide guidance on the content of a bioregional plan and the process by which a bioregional plan should be developed and published.	Fine to use short title "Guideline for Bioregional Plans"	Avoid "Guidelines for Bioregional Plans". Avoid using just "the Guideline". as shorthand for "the Guideline for Bioregional Plans", unless the context makes the meaning very clear.	See Guideline Regarding the Determination of Bioregions and the Preparation and Publication of Bioregional Plans (DEAT, 2009b). See Summary of the Guideline for Bioregional Plans (SANBI, 2009). *Also see Bioregional plan*
62.	Habitat loss	Conversion of natural habitat in an ecosystem to a land use or land cover class that results in irreversible change in the composition, structure and functional characteristics of the ecosystem concerned.	Loss of natural habitat	"Loss of natural habitat" is preferred, especially in documents intended for use beyond the biodiversity sector, as the meaning is likely to be clearer.	Associated with the ecological condition categories "Severely modified", "Irreversibly modified", and "Poor ecological condition".

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
63.	Intensive agriculture	Agricultural production that uses large inputs of labour, capital and other inputs relative to the land area being farmed. Usually associated with substantial impacts on ecological condition. Includes cultivation as well as other intensive farming practices such as piggeries and dairies. Can include game breeding and intensive game farming.	--	Not to be confused with "agriculture" as a whole, which includes intensive agriculture and extensive agriculture such as rangelands.	*Also see Agriculture, Cultivation* *Contrast with Extensive agriculture, Rangelands*
64.	Irreplaceability	A measure of the degree to which spatial options exist for meeting biodiversity targets. May refer to a site or to a biodiversity feature.	--	--	Assessed as part of a systematic biodiversity planning process. As irreplaceability map is usually an intermediate output of a systematic biodiversity plan and an important input into identifying Critical Biodiversity Areas. *Also see Systematic biodiversity plan, CBA Irreplaceable, CBA optimal*
65.	Irreversibly modified	An ecological condition class in which the ecosystem has been modified completely, with an almost complete loss of composition and structure. All or most ecosystem function has been destroyed and the changes are irreversible. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Poor ecological condition	Avoid the term "transformed" to describe ecosystems or sites that have been irreversibly modified. Transformation is a widely held positive socio-economic goal in South Africa, so it creates confusion if the biodiversity sector uses it to describe something negative or undesirable.	A subset of poor ecological condition, which also includes severely modified. Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category F. *Also see Ecological condition, Poor ecological condition, Moderately modified, Severely modified*
66.	Least Threatened ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has experienced little or no loss of natural habitat or deterioration in condition.	Least Threatened ecosystem type	--	*Also see Threatened ecosystem, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem, Ecosystem type, Ecosystem threat status, Biodiversity thresholds*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
67. List of threatened ecosystems	A list of ecosystems that are threatened and in need of protection, published by the Minister of Environmental Affairs in terms of the Biodiversity Act.	--	Avoid "threatened ecosystem list"	At the time of writing, a list of threatened terrestrial ecosystems had been published in 2011. No aquatic ecosystems had yet been listed. The identification of ecosystem types for listing should be based on biodiversity thresholds and should align with the NBA. *Also see Listed ecosystems, Threatened ecosystem, Protected ecosystem, Biodiversity Act, Biodiversity thresholds, Ecosystem type*
68. Listed ecosystem	An ecosystem listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Protected in terms of the Biodiversity Act.	Listed threatened ecosystem, for ecosystems listed as CR, EN or VU	--	Threatened ecosystems have been identified across all realms (terrestrial and aquatic) in the NBA. Not all of these threatened ecosystems have been listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act, hence the usefulness in some circumstance of referring to listed ecosystems specifically rather than threatened ecosystems in general. *Also see List of threatened ecosystems, Threatened ecosystem, Biodiversity Act*
69. Moderately modified	An ecological condition class in which ecological function is predominantly unchanged even though composition and structure have been compromised. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Fair ecological condition, semi-natural	--	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category C. *Also see Ecological condition, Fair ecological condition, Natural or near-natural, Semi-natural, Severely modified, Irreversibly modified*
70. Moderately protected ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has between half of and its entire biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas. One of three categories of under-protected ecosystems.	Moderately protected ecosystem type	--	*Also see Ecosystem protection level, Ecosystem type, Biodiversity target, Protected area, Well-protected ecosystem, Poorly protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
71. National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA)	A periodic assessment of the state of South Africa's biodiversity, led by SANBI in partnership with a wide range of organisations, as part of SANBI's mandate to monitor and report on the country's biodiversity.	NBA	Not to be confused with the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan or the National Biodiversity Framework. The NBA is a scientific assessment that underpins the NBSAP and the NBF.	See National Biodiversity Assessment: Synthesis Report (Driver et al, 2012) and several technical reports, available on BGIS together with maps and data. The NBA 2018 was underway at the time of writing. *Also see National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment*
72. National Biodiversity Framework (NBF)	A framework published in terms of the Biodiversity Act to co-ordinate and align the efforts of the many organisations and individuals involved in conserving and managing South Africa's biodiversity, in support of sustainable development.	NBF	Not to be confused with the NBSAP. The NBSAP is a requirement in terms of South Africa's commitments as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), while the NBF is a requirement in terms of national legislation. The NBF 2008 drew heavily on the NBSAP 2005.	The first NBF was published in 2009 (DEAT, 2009c). The Biodiversity Act requires that the NBF is reviewed every five years, so at the time of writing it was due to be reviewed.
73. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	A national strategy for the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity, developed as part of South Africa's commitments as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	NBSAP	Not to be confused with the NBF – see previous entry.	South Africa's first NBSAP was published by DEA in 2005, and the revised NBSAP was finalised in mid-2015.
74. National Ecosystem Classification System	A hierarchical system for mapping and classifying ecosystem types in the terrestrial, river, wetland, estuarine, coastal and marine environments. Factors used to map and classify ecosystems differ in different environments, but in all cases ecosystems of the same type are expected to share broadly similar ecological characteristics and functioning.	NECS, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable	--	South Africa has a well-established classification system for terrestrial ecosystems in the form of vegetation mapping, and much progress has been made in mapping and classifying aquatic ecosystems in the last decade. The National Ecosystem Classification System provides an essential scientific foundation for ecosystem-level assessment, planning, monitoring and management. See Concept Note on the National Ecosystem Classification System (SANBI, 2013a) *Also see Ecosystem type*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
75. National Estuary Biodiversity Plan	A biodiversity plan that identified a set of 120 priority estuaries that meet biodiversity targets for a range of estuarine habitat types and estuary-dependent species. Of the 120 priority estuaries, 58 ideally require full protection, and 62 ideally require partial protection.	NEBP, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	--	The National Estuary Biodiversity Plan was done as part of the NBA 2011, but is also a standalone plan. National priority estuaries should be taken up in provincial biodiversity plans by coastal provinces. See the National Estuary Biodiversity Plan (Turpie et al, 2012) *Also see Priority estuary, Estuarine functional zone*
76. National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (NFEPA)	A biodiversity planning project that identified a set of freshwater ecosystem priorities for meeting biodiversity targets for rivers, wetlands and freshwater fish species of special concern.	NFEPA	--	NFEPA was a three-year multi-partner project that took place from 2008 to 2011, with extensive involvement of the freshwater community. See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, River FEPA, Wetland FEPA, Fish Support Area, Upstream Management Area, Fish Sanctuary*
77. National Park	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Usually managed by South African National Parks.	--	Avoid using just the term “park” or “parks” when referring to National Parks (or protected areas in general). Avoid the acronym “NP”.	*Also see Protected Areas Act, Special Nature Reserve, Nature Reserve, Protected Environment*
78. National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES)	A strategy for expanding South Africa’s network of protected areas. Sets ecosystem-specific protected area targets and identifies important geographic areas for protected area expansion.	NPAES	--	At the time of writing, the revision of the NPAES 2008 was underway. See National Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2008 (Government of South Africa, 2010) *Also see Protected area, Protected area target, Protected area estate*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
79.	National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (NSBA)	The first national assessment of the state of South Africa's biodiversity at the ecosystem level across terrestrial and aquatic environment, undertaken in 2004. Followed by the National Biodiversity Assessment 2011.	NSBA	--	The NSBA 2004 was a spatial assessment of the state of biodiversity. The NBA 2011 included non-spatial thematic elements as well as a spatial assessment, hence the change in title from NSBA to NBA. The NSBA 2004 fed into the development of the NBSAP 2005 and the NBF 2008. See National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment synthesis report (Driver et al, 2005) and several technical reports, available on BGIS. *Also see National Biodiversity Assessment*
80.	Natural or near-natural	An ecological condition class which is natural or largely natural with few modifications.	Good ecological condition	--	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State categories A and B. *Also see Ecological condition, Good ecological condition, Moderately modified, Severely modified, Irreversibly modified*
81.	Nature Reserve	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. Usually managed by provincial conservation authorities OR by private or communal landowners as part of biodiversity stewardship programmes.	--	Avoid the term "private nature reserve". Nature Reserves declared on private land as part of biodiversity stewardship programmes are referred to simply as Nature Reserves or as contract Nature Reserves if a qualifier is essential. The term "private nature reserve" is sometimes used for "old ordinance nature reserves" which were declared in terms of old provincial legislation prior to the Protected Areas Act of 2003. Avoid the acronym "NR".	*Also see Protected Areas Act, Special Nature Reserve, National Park, Protected Environment, Biodiversity stewardship, Contract protected area*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
82. No Natural Remaining (NNR)	An area in poor ecological condition (severely or irreversibly modified) that is not required to meet biodiversity targets for ecosystem types, species or ecological processes. One of five broad categories on a CBA map.	--	--	*Also see Critical Biodiversity Area, Ecological Support Area, Other Natural Area*
83. Other Natural Area (ONA)	An area in good or fair ecological condition (natural, near-natural or semi-natural) that is not required to meet biodiversity targets for ecosystem types, species or ecological processes. One of five broad categories on a CBA map.	--	--	*Also see Critical Biodiversity Area, Ecological Support Area, No Natural Remaining*
84. Plantations	Forestry plantations, almost always of exotic species	Forestry plantations, timber plantations	Not to be confused with indigenous forests	*Also see Forest*
85. Poor ecological condition	An ecological condition class in which ecological function has been compromised in addition to structure and composition. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Severely or irreversibly modified	Avoid "low ecological condition". Avoid the term "transformed" to describe ecosystems or sites that are in poor ecological condition. Transformation is a widely held positive socio-economic goal in South Africa, so it creates confusion if the biodiversity sector uses it to describe something negative or undesirable.	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category D, E or F. *Also see Ecological condition, Good ecological condition, Fair ecological condition, Severely modified, Irreversibly modified*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
86.	Poorly protected ecosystem	An ecosystem type which has between five percent and half of its biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.	Poorly protected ecosystem type	--	With an average biodiversity target of 20%, an ecosystem type with 5% of its biodiversity target included in a protected area has only 1% of its total extent included in a protected area, which is not considered a meaningful level of protection from an ecological perspective. *Also see Biodiversity assessment, Ecosystem protection level, Biodiversity target, Protected area, Well-protected ecosystem, Moderately protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem*
87.	Priority estuary	An estuary that is required to meet targets for representing estuarine ecosystem types, estuarine habitats and estuarine-dependent species, as identified in the National Estuary Biodiversity Plan.	National priority estuary	--	In the National Estuary Biodiversity Plan 2011, 120 priority estuaries were developed. Of these, 58 require full protection and 62 require partial protection. Full protection requires including the estuary in a no-take protected areas and ensuring its freshwater flow requirements are met. Partial protection can be achieved through a range of measures. *Also see National Estuary Biodiversity Plan*
88.	Private protected area	A protected area in which land is privately owned. A subset of contract protected areas, which also include communally owned protected areas.	--	Not to be confused with "old ordinance private nature reserves" which were declared prior to the Protected Areas Act of 2003 and may not be verified.	*Also see Contract protected area, State-owned protected area, Biodiversity stewardship*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
89. Protected area	An area of land or sea that is formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act and managed mainly for biodiversity conservation. Includes state-owned protected areas and contract protected areas.	--	Avoid "reserves" or "parks". Not to be confused or conflated with "conservation areas", which are not recognised in terms of the Protected Areas Act. Avoid the acronym "PA".	This is a narrower definition than the IUCN definition, which includes areas that are not legally protected and that would be defined in South Africa as conservation areas rather than protected areas. One of five broad categories on a CBA map. *Also see Protected area estate, Protected area network, State-owned protected area, Contract protected area* *Contrast with Conservation area*
90. Protected area estate	All protected areas	Protected area network	Not to be confused with "conservation estate", which includes protected areas and conservation areas	*Also see Protected area, Conservation area,* *Contrast with Conservation estate*
91. Protected area network	All protected areas	Protected area estate	Not to be confused with "protected area system"	The term "network" conveys that protected area should ideally be configured as a coherent spatial network. *Also see Protected area, Protected area estate*
92. Protected area system	The system of protected area legislation, categories and governance.	--	Not to be confused with "protected area network" or "protected area estate"	*Also see Protected area, Protected area estate, Protected area network*
93. Protected area target	A quantitative goal for how much of each ecosystem type should be included in the protected area network by a certain date. Expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type (measured as area, length or volume).	--	Avoid "conservation target". Not to be confused with "biodiversity target".	The National Protected Area Expansion Strategy sets protected area targets for ecosystem types. These can be aggregated to provincial or national level. *Also see Biodiversity target*

Term		Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
94.	Protected ecosystem	Protected ecosystems are defined in the Biodiversity Act as "ecosystems that are of high conservation value or of high national or provincial importance, although they are not listed [as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable]" (Section 52(2)(d)). There is no ecological definition of a "Protected ecosystem" – this concept exists only in legal terms.	--	Not to be confused with "well-protected ecosystem", which is one of the protection level categories in an assessment of Ecosystem Protection Level. Not the opposite of "unprotected ecosystem", which is another of the categories of protection level in an assessment of Ecosystem Protection Level. Not to be confused with "Protected Environment" which is one of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act.	To date, protected ecosystems have not been listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act. *Also see Ecosystem protection level, Well-protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem*
95.	Protected Environment	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. Usually managed by a conservation authority OR by private or communal landowners as part of biodiversity stewardship programmes.	--	Not to be confused with "Protected ecosystem", which is one of the four categories of ecosystems that may be listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act. Avoid the acronym "PE".	*Also see Protected Areas Act, Special Nature Reserve, National Park, Nature Reserve, Biodiversity stewardship*
96.	Protection	Refers to formal protection in terms of the Protected Areas Act, and involves the establishment of statutory protected areas that are managed primarily for biodiversity conservation purposes, with sustainable use options where appropriate. Implies long-term security.	--	Preferably not to be used interchangeably with "conservation", which is understood more broadly than protection.	*Also see Conservation*
97.	Provincial conservation authority	Refers either to the provincial department with the mandate for environmental affairs or to the provincial conservation agency with delegated responsibility from the provincial department.	--	Not to be confused with the narrower term "provincial conservation agency". Provincial conservation authorities include provincial conservation agencies as well as provincial departments with the mandate for environmental affairs in provinces where a conservation agency does not exist.	A summary term for all provincial organs of state that deal with conservation as their core mandate or as part of their mandate. *Also see Conservation authority, Conservation agency*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
98. Rangelands	A form of extensive agriculture that can include livestock ranching and extensive game ranching.	--	The term "agriculture" includes rangelands. Use the term "intensive agriculture" or "cultivation" if the intention is to exclude rangelands.	In many South African ecosystems, rangelands can be compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives if appropriately managed. See Grazing Guidelines developed by the Grasslands Programme. *Also see Agriculture, Extensive agriculture, Intensive agriculture, Cultivation*
99. Red Listed species	Any species that has been assessed according to Red List criteria, whether or not the species is threatened or of conservation concern.	--	Avoid using the term "Red Listed species" to mean a threatened species or a species of conservation concern. Avoid the terms "Red Data List" and "Red Data Book" – these are out-dated.	IUCN Red List categories for species include Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, and Data Deficient. Additional categories in South Africa are Rare and Critically Rare.
100. River FEPA	A river reach that is required to meet biodiversity targets for freshwater ecosystems. River FEPAs should remain in good ecological condition.	--	Avoid "FEPA river".	River FEPAs are sub-quaternary river reaches. The river itself, not the associated sub-quaternary catchment, is the FEPA. See the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and the Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas, Wetland FEPA*
101. Semi-natural	An ecological condition class in which ecological function is predominantly unchanged even though composition and structure have been compromised. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Fair ecological condition, moderately modified	--	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category C. *Also see Ecological condition, Natural or near-natural, Fair ecological condition, Moderately modified*
102. Severely modified	An ecological condition class in which loss of composition, structure and ecological function is extensive. Can apply to a site or an ecosystem.	Poor ecological condition	Avoid the term "transformed" to describe ecosystems or sites that have been severely modified. Transformation is a widely held positive socio-economic goal in South Africa, so it creates confusion if the biodiversity sector uses it to describe something negative or undesirable.	Equivalent to DWS Present Ecological State category D or E. *Also see Ecological condition, Poor ecological condition, Moderately modified, Irreversibly modified*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
103. Special Nature Reserve	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act.	--	--	*Also see Protected Areas Act, National Park, Nature Reserve, Protected Environment*
104. Species of conservation concern	IUCN Red List definition: Threatened species, and other species of significant conservation importance: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Near Threatened, Data Deficient In South Africa, the following additional categories are added: Rare, Critically Rare	--	--	*Also see Threatened species, Species of special concern*
105. Species of special concern	Species that have particular ecological, economic or cultural significance, including but not limited to threatened species	--	--	*Also see Threatened species, Species of conservation concern*
106. State-owned protected area	A protected area owned and managed by an organ of state (national, provincial or local)	--	Avoid conflating "statutory protected area" with "state-owned protected area", as many statutory protected areas in South Africa are privately owned and some are communally owned.	*Also see Protected area* *Contrast with Contract protected area*
107. Strategic Water Source Area	An area that supplies a disproportionate amount of mean annual runoff to a geographical region of interest. In South Africa, Strategic Water Source Areas make up only 8% of the country's land area but deliver 50% of mean annual run-off.	SWSA, if the use of an acronym is unavoidable.	Avoid the term "High Water Yield Areas". The Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) used the term "High Water Yield Areas" but this was subsequently changed to Strategic Water Source Areas. The areas themselves were also refined.	SWSAs are a subset of biodiversity priority areas, and a form of ecological infrastructure. See South Africa's Strategic Water Source Areas (Nel et al, 2013) *Also see Biodiversity priority areas, Ecological infrastructure*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
108. Systematic biodiversity plan / planning	A scientific method for identifying geographic priority areas of biodiversity importance. It involves: mapping biodiversity features (such as ecosystem, species, spatial components of ecological processes); mapping a range of information related to these biodiversity features and their ecological condition; setting quantitative biodiversity targets for biodiversity features; analysing the information using software linked to GIS and developing maps that show spatial biodiversity priorities. The configuration of priority areas is designed to be spatially efficient (i.e. to meet biodiversity targets in the smallest area possible) and to avoid conflict with other land and resource uses where possible.	Biodiversity plan / planning. The term "systematic conservation plan / planning" is an acceptable alternative *only* when writing for the formal literature or in an academic context.	Avoid the term "systematic conservation plan / planning" when writing in a policy, legislative or implementation context. Avoid the acronym "SBP" or "SCP".	*Also see Biodiversity plan, Biodiversity planning*
109. Threatened ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has been classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, based on an analysis of ecosystem threat status. A threatened ecosystem has lost or is losing vital aspects of its composition, structure or function.	Threatened ecosystem type	Avoid using the term "endangered ecosystems" to refer to all threatened ecosystems. Endangered ecosystems are one sub-category of threatened ecosystems. Avoid the acronym "TE".	Threatened ecosystems may be listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act by the Minister of Environmental Affairs. The Biodiversity Act includes definitions of CR, EN and VU ecosystems, but does not define the term "threatened ecosystem". It defines listed ecosystems as ecosystems that are listed in terms of Section 52 of the Act. *Also see Ecosystem threat status, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Vulnerable ecosystem, Least threatened ecosystem, Listed ecosystem*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
110. Threatened species	IUCN Red List definition: A species that faces a high risk of extinction in the near future. Threatened species include those assessed as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable.	--	Not to be confused with "Red Listed species" which include all species assessed according to Red List criteria, even if they are not threatened. Not to be confused with "TOPS-listed species" – see Notes. Avoid using the term "endangered species" to refer to all threatened species. Endangered species are one sub-category of threatened species.	Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) may be listed in terms of the Biodiversity Act by the Minister of Environmental Affairs. For species on the so-called "TOPS list", certain activities are prohibited or require a permit. The TOPS list includes some but not all species that have been assessed as threatened in terms of IUCN Red List criteria. See *Threatened species: A guide to Red Lists and their use in conservation* (SANBI, 2010). See www.iucnredlist.org See http://redlist.sanbi.org *Also see Species of conservation concern, Species of special concern, Red Listed species*
111. Under-protected ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has been classified as moderately protected, poorly protected or unprotected, based on an assessment of ecosystem protection level	Under-protected ecosystem type	--	*Also see Biodiversity assessment, Ecosystem protection level, Biodiversity target, Protected area, Well-protected ecosystem, Moderately protected ecosystem, Poorly protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem*
112. Unprotected ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has less than 5% of its biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas	Unprotected ecosystem type	--	*Also see Biodiversity assessment, Ecosystem protection level, Biodiversity target, Protected area, Moderately protected ecosystem, Poorly protected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem*
113. Upstream Management Area	A sub-quaternary catchment in which human activities need to be managed to prevent degradation of downstream river FEPAs and Fish Support Areas. Upstream Management Areas do not include management areas for wetland FEPAs, which need to be determined at a finer scale.	--	--	*Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, River FEPA, Wetland FEPA, Fish Support Area*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
114. Urban area / urban development	A built-up area used for residential and/or commercial and/or industrial activities, associated with cities and towns	Urban expansion, urban sprawl, urban settlement	Not to be confused with "urbanisation"	*Also see Urbanisation*
115. Urbanisation	The movement of people from rural to urban areas. The level of urbanisation is the proportion of the population living in urban areas	--	Often incorrectly used to mean urban development or expansion of urban areas.	Urbanisation is a demographic process not a land cover class or a land use. *Also see Urban area / urban development*
116. Vulnerable ecosystem (VU)	An ecosystem type that still has the majority of its historical extent (measured as area, length or volume) left in good or fair ecological condition, but has experienced some loss of habitat or deterioration in condition. The ecosystem type is likely to have lost some of its structure and functioning, and will be further compromised if it continues to lost natural habitat or deteriorate in condition.	Vulnerable ecosystem type	--	The Biodiversity Act defines vulnerable ecosystems as "ecosystems that have a high risk of undergoing significant degradation of degradation of ecological structure, function or composition as a result of human intervention, although they are not critically endangered ecosystems or endangered ecosystems" (Section 52(2)(c)). This is a legal definition rather than an ecological definition. For biodiversity assessment and planning purposes, the ecological definition should be used. *Also see Biodiversity assessment, Threatened ecosystem, Critically Endangered ecosystem, Endangered ecosystem, Ecosystem threat status, Biodiversity thresholds*
117. Well-protected ecosystem	An ecosystem type that has its full biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.	Well-protected ecosystem type	--	*Also see Biodiversity assessment, Ecosystem protection level, Biodiversity target, Protected area, Moderately protected ecosystem, Poorly protected ecosystem, Unprotected ecosystem, Under-protected ecosystem*
118. Wetland cluster (on a FEPA map)	A group of wetlands embedded in a relatively natural landscape, allowing for important ecological processes such as migration of frogs and insects between wetlands.	--	--	See Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, Wetland FEPA*

Term	Definition	Acceptable alternatives	Common problems / what to avoid	Notes
119. Wetland FEPA	A wetland that is required to meet biodiversity targets for freshwater ecosystems	--	Avoid “FEPA wetland”.	At the time the NFEPA project was undertaken, the national map of had varying degrees of completeness and accuracy in different parts of the country. As a result there is substantial uncertainty associated with Wetland FEPAs, which require ground-truthing. See Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) and Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). *Also see NFEPA, Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area, River FEPA, Wetland cluster*

3. Clusters of related terms

This section summarises groups of related terms that appear in the table above. No new terms are added.

Biodiversity priority areas

Biodiversity priority areas are natural, near-natural or semi-natural areas in the landscape or seascape that are important for conserving a representative sample of ecosystems and species, for maintaining ecological processes, or for the provision of ecosystem services. There are several different types of biodiversity priority areas, summarised in the table below.

Biodiversity priority area	Definition
Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA)	An area that must be maintained in a good ecological condition (natural or near-natural state) in order to meet biodiversity targets. CBAs collectively meet biodiversity targets for all ecosystem types as well as for species and ecological processes that depend on natural or near-natural habitat, that have not already been met in the protected area network.
Ecological Support Area (ESA)	An area that must be maintained in at least fair ecological condition (semi-natural/moderately modified state) in order to support the ecological functioning of a CBA or protected area, or to generate or deliver ecosystem services, or to meet remaining biodiversity targets for ecosystem types or species when it is not possible or no necessary to meet them in natural or near-natural areas.
Flagship free-flowing rivers	19 of the country's 63 remaining free-flowing rivers, representing the different freshwater ecoregions of the country. A free-flowing river is a long stretch of river that has not been dammed, flowing undisturbed from its source to the confluence with another large river or to the sea.
Focus area for land-based protected area expansion	Large, intact and unfragmented area of high biodiversity importance, suitable for the creation and expansion of large land-based protected areas. (Land-based protected areas can protect terrestrial and inland water ecosystems).
Focus area for offshore protection	An area identified as a priority for representing offshore marine biodiversity, protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems, contributing to fisheries sustainability, and/or supporting the management of by-catch.
Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas (FEPA)	A river reach or wetland that is required to meet biodiversity targets for freshwater ecosystems.
Priority estuary	An estuary that is required to meet targets for representing estuarine ecosystem types, estuarine habitats and estuarine-dependent species, as identified in the National Estuary Biodiversity Plan.
Protected area	An area of land or sea that is formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act and managed mainly for biodiversity conservation.
Strategic Water Source Area	An area that supplies a disproportionate amount of mean annual runoff to a geographical region of interest. In South Africa, SWSAs are the 8% of the country's land area that delivers 50% of mean annual run-off.
In addition, those portions of Critically Endangered or Endangered ecosystem types that are still in good or fair ecological condition are considered biodiversity priority areas.	

Biodiversity stewardship agreements

A biodiversity stewardship agreement is an agreement entered into between a landowner (or landowners) and a conservation authority, as part of a biodiversity stewardship programme. There are five different types of biodiversity stewardship agreement, conferring different benefits on landowners and requiring different levels of restriction on land use.

Type of biodiversity stewardship agreement	Definition
Nature Reserve	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. A Nature Reserve forms part of the protected area estate.
Protected Environment	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. A Protected Environment forms part of the protected area estate.
Biodiversity Management Agreement (BMA)	An agreement entered into in terms of the Biodiversity Act between the Minister or MEC and the implementer of a Biodiversity Management Plan or an aspect of a Biodiversity Management Plan. A BMA forms part of the conservation estate but not the protected area estate.
Biodiversity Agreement	A Biodiversity Agreement is concluded in terms of contract law and is not recognised in terms of either the Protected Areas Act or the Biodiversity Act. A Biodiversity Agreement forms part of the conservation estate but not the protected area estate.
Biodiversity Partnership Area	A non-contractual agreement, not recognised in terms of contract law, the Biodiversity Act or the Protected Areas Act. A Biodiversity Partnership Area forms part of the conservation estate but not to the protected area estate.

Nature Reserves and Protected Environments declared through biodiversity stewardship are contract protected areas, and are considered part of the protected area estate. Biodiversity Management Agreements, Biodiversity Agreements and Biodiversity Partnership Areas are conservation areas, and are considered part of the conservation estate but not the protected area estate. Also see “Protected areas and conservation areas” cluster.

Biodiversity targets and thresholds

Quantitative targets and thresholds play an important role in systematic biodiversity planning and assessment. Several related terms are important to distinguish, summarised in the table below.

Term	Definition
Biodiversity target	**For ecosystems**: The minimum proportion of each ecosystem type that needs to be kept in good ecological condition in the long term in order to maintain viable representative samples of all ecosystem types and the majority of species associated with them. Expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type (measured as area, length or volume). **For species**: The minimum number of occurrences or populations that need to be kept extant (ideally with some form of protection) in order to ensure the persistence of the species, or the minimum amount of suitable habitat that needs to be kept in good ecological condition in order to ensure the persistence of a minimum viable population of the species.
Biodiversity thresholds	A series of thresholds used to assess ecosystem threat status, expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type (measured as area, length or volume). The first threshold, for Critically Endangered ecosystems, is equal to the biodiversity target; the second threshold, for Endangered ecosystems, is equal to the biodiversity target plus 15%; and the third threshold, for Vulnerable ecosystems, is usually set at 60%.
Protected area target	A quantitative goal for how much of an ecosystem type should be included in the protected area network by a certain date. Expressed as a percentage of the historical extent of an ecosystem type (measured as area, length or volume).

CBA maps

The term CBA map is shorthand for a map of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas, based on a systematic biodiversity plan. CBA maps form the basis for biodiversity sector plans or bioregional plans. They are usually developed at the provincial level by the relevant provincial conservation authority. In addition, some metropolitan municipalities have developed CBA maps. There are five broad categories on a CBA map, summarised in the table below. Spatial data for most CBA maps is available on BGIS.

CBA map category	Definition
Protected area	Areas of land or sea that are formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act and managed mainly for biodiversity conservation.
Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) (May be subdivided into: • CBA Irreplaceable • CBA Optimal/Important)	Areas that must be maintained in a good ecological condition (natural or near-natural state) in order to meet biodiversity targets. CBAs collectively meet biodiversity targets for all ecosystem types as well as for species and ecological processes that depend on natural or near-natural habitat, that have not already been met in the protected area network.
Ecological Support Area (ESA)	Areas that must be maintained in at least fair ecological condition (semi-natural/moderately modified state) in order to support the ecological functioning of a CBA or protected area, or to generate or deliver ecosystem services, or to meet remaining biodiversity targets for ecosystem types or species when it is not possible or no necessary to meet them in natural or near-natural areas.
Other Natural Area (ONA)	Areas in good or fair ecological condition (natural, near-natural or semi-natural) that are not required to meet biodiversity targets for ecosystem types, species or ecological processes.
No Natural Remaining (NNR)	Areas in poor ecological condition (severely or irreversibly modified) that are not required to meet biodiversity targets for ecosystem types, species or ecological processes.

Ecological condition

Ecological condition refers to the extent to which the composition, structure and function of an area or biodiversity feature has been modified from a reference condition of natural. The use of a reference condition of natural does not imply that the desired or recommended condition for all ecosystems is natural. At the highest level, ecological condition is classified as good, fair or poor. More detailed condition classes may be identified, as summarised in the table below.

As noted in footnote 1, terms related to ecological condition were under discussion in the biodiversity planning community at the time of writing.

Ecological condition: high-level classes	Ecological condition: detailed classes
Good Composition, structure and function are still intact or largely intact	**Natural** Unmodified. No significant changes in composition, structure or function have taken place.
	Near-natural Small changes in **c**omposition and structure may have taken place, but ecosystem functions are essentially unchanged.
Fair Ecological function is maintained even though composition and structure have been compromised	**Moderately modified / semi-natural** Ecological function is predominantly unchanged even though composition and structure have been compromised.
Poor Ecological function has been severely compromised or lost in addition to structure and composition	**Severely modified** Loss of composition, structure and ecological function is extensive.
	Irreversibly modified The ecosystem has been modified completely, with an almost complete loss of composition and structure. All or most ecosystem function has been destroyed and the changes are irreversible.
Lost* Composition, structure and function completely destroyed	**Outright loss** (The result of a hard surface e.g. concrete, as opposed to “irreversibly modified” which may be a soft surface such as irrigated cropland.)

* The inclusion of this additional high-level class was under discussion at the time of writing.

Ecosystem protection level

Ecosystem protection level is one of two headline national ecosystem indicators, assessed for all national ecosystem types in South Africa. It tells us how well represented an ecosystem type is in the protected area network. Ecosystem types are categorised as well protected, moderately protected, poorly protected or unprotected, based on the proportion of the biodiversity target for each ecosystem type that is included in one or more protected areas, as summarised in the table below. Unprotected, poorly protected and moderately protected ecosystem types are collectively referred to as under-protected ecosystems.

Ecosystem protection level category	Definition
Well protected	An ecosystem type that has its full biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.
Moderately protected	An ecosystem type that has between half of and its entire biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.
Poorly protected	An ecosystem type which has between five percent and half of its biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.
Unprotected	An ecosystem type that has less than 5% of its biodiversity target included in one or more protected areas.

Ecosystem threat status

Ecosystem threat status is one of two headline national ecosystem indicators, assessed for all national ecosystem types in South Africa. It tells us how threatened an ecosystem type is, in other words the degree to which it is still intact or alternatively losing vital aspects of its function, structure or composition. Ecosystem types are assessed as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Least Threatened, based on the proportion of each ecosystem type that remains in good ecological condition relative to a series of biodiversity thresholds, as summarised in the table below. Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable ecosystem types are collectively referred to as threatened ecosystems.

Ecosystem threat status category	Definition
Critically Endangered (CR)	An ecosystem type that has very little* of its historical extent (measured as area, length or volume) left in good ecological condition. Most of the historical extent of the ecosystem type is in fair or poor ecological condition. The ecosystem type is likely to have lost much of its natural structure and functioning, and species associated with the ecosystem type may have been lost. * Less than the biodiversity target for that ecosystem type. Biodiversity targets are on average 20% of the historical extent of an ecosystem type.
Endangered (EN)	An ecosystem type that is close** to becoming Critically Endangered. ** Within 15 percentage points of the biodiversity target.
Vulnerable (VU)	An ecosystem type that still has the majority+ of its historical extent (measured as area, length or volume) left in good or fair ecological condition, but has experienced some loss of habitat or deterioration in condition. The ecosystem type is likely to have lost some of its structure and functioning, and will be further compromised if it continues to lost natural habitat or deteriorate in condition. + More than 60%
Least Threatened (LT)	An ecosystem type that has experienced little or no loss++ of natural habitat or deterioration in condition. ++ Less than 40% of the historical extent of that ecosystem type.

FEPA maps

The term FEPA map is shorthand for a map of Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Areas, Fish Support Areas and Upstream Management Areas, based on a systematic biodiversity plan for freshwater ecosystems. FEPAs maps were published in the Atlas of FEPAs (Nel et al, 2011) accompanied by an Implementation Manual for FEPAs (Driver et al, 2011). Spatial data for FEPAs maps is available on BGIS.

FEPA map category	Definition
Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (FEPA)*	A river reach or wetland that is required to meet biodiversity targets for freshwater ecosystems.
Fish Support Area*	A river reach that is essential for protecting threatened or near-threatened freshwater fish that are indigenous to South Africa, but that is not in good ecological condition (i.e. a Fish Sanctuary that is not in good ecological condition) OR a river reach that is important for migration of threatened or near-threatened fish species. Sub-quaternary catchments associated with Fish Support Areas that are Fish Sanctuaries are marked with a fish symbol on FEPA maps; those that are important for migration are not marked with a fish symbol.
Upstream Management Area	A sub-quaternary catchment in which human activities need to be managed to prevent degradation of downstream river FEPAs and Fish Support Areas. Upstream Management Areas do not include management areas for wetland FEPAs, which need to be determined at a finer scale.

* Some FEPAs and some Fish Support Areas are also Fish Sanctuaries – they are marked with a fish symbol on the FEPA maps in the Atlas of FEPAs. A separate map of Fish Sanctuaries is available.

Protected areas and conservation areas

Protected areas and conservation areas play an important role in the management and conservation of biodiversity. Several related terms are important to distinguish, summarised in the table below. Also see cluster of terms related to biodiversity stewardship agreements above.

Term	Definition
Protected area	An area of land or sea that is formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act and managed mainly for biodiversity conservation.
Conservation area	An areas of land or sea that is not formally protected in terms of the Protected Areas Act but is nevertheless managed as least partly for biodiversity conservation. Because there is no long-term security associated with conservation areas they are not considered a strong form of protection.
Protected area estate	All protected areas.
Protected area network	All protected areas.
Conservation estate	All protected areas and all conservation areas.
Protected area system	The system of protected area legislation, categories and governance.
Special Nature Reserve	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act.
National Park	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Usually managed by South African National Parks.
Nature Reserve	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. Usually managed by a provincial conservation authority OR by private or communal landowners as part of biodiversity stewardship programmes.
Protected Environment	One of four main categories of protected area defined in the Protected Areas Act. Also one of five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement. Usually managed by a conservation authority OR by private or communal landowners as part of biodiversity stewardship programmes.
Biodiversity stewardship agreement	An agreement entered into between a landowner (or landowners) and a conservation authority as part of a biodiversity stewardship programme. The five types of biodiversity stewardship agreement are: Nature Reserve, Protected Environment, Biodiversity Management Agreement, Biodiversity Agreement, Biodiversity Partnership Area.
State-owned protected area	A protected area owned and managed by an organ of state (national, provincial or local)
Contract protected area	A protected area declared through a contractual arrangement between a conservation authority and private or communal landowner(s). Contract protected areas may form part of biodiversity stewardship programmes, but need not necessarily. The minimum time period for a contract protected area is 30 years; the maximum time period is in perpetuity.
Private protected area	A protected area in which land is privately owned. A subset of contract protected areas, which also include communally owned protected areas.

4. Terms to avoid

The following terms should always be avoided:

- **Best-design site**, when referring to CBA Optimal/Important (although the term "best design" can be used in an explanatory description of the CBA Optimal/Important category).
- **Biodiversity conservation target**, when referring to biodiversity targets or protected area targets
- **Biodiversity status**, when referring to ecosystem threat status, ecosystem protection level or conservation status of species
- **BPAs** as an acronym for biodiversity priority areas – biodiversity priority areas to be written in full every time, with small letters
- **C-Plan**, unless referring specifically to the C-Plan software or to the Gauteng C-Plan. If referring to Gauteng C-Plan do not shorten to "C-Plan" – C-Plan is a piece of software.
- **Conservation planning**, when referring to biodiversity planning, EXCEPT in the academic literature
- **Conservation status**, when referring to ecosystem threat status, ecosystem protection level of the legal status of a protected area (can be used to refer to the status of species assessed in terms of Red List criteria)
- **Conservation target**, when referring either to biodiversity targets or to protected area targets
- **Ecosystem status**, when referring to ecosystem threat status
- **Ecosystem target**, when referring to biodiversity targets for ecosystem types
- **Ecosystem threat class or classification**, when referring to ecosystem threat status
- **Ecosystem threshold**, when referring to a biodiversity threshold
- **Formal protected area**, when referring to a protected area (protected areas are by definition formal)
- **High biodiversity areas**, when referring to biodiversity priority areas
- **High condition**, when referring to good ecological condition
- **Involuntary stewardship**, when referring to biodiversity offsets-related stewardship
- **Low condition**, when referring to poor ecological condition
- **NEMBA**, when referring to the Biodiversity Act
- **NEMPAA**, when referring to the Protected Areas Act
- **Parks**, when referring to protected areas
- **Pattern and process**, when referring to biodiversity pattern and ecological processes
- **Priority biodiversity areas**, when referring to biodiversity priority areas
- **Private nature reserve**, when referring to a contract protected area or private protected area (the term "private nature reserve" is almost always ambiguous in the South African context – preferable to avoid it altogether)
- **Process**, when referring to ecological processes
- **Red Data or Red Data Book or Red Data List**, when referring to the Red List of Species
- **Reserves**, when referring to protected areas
- **Sensitive or sensitivity**, when referring to biodiversity importance. An area or site can be of high biodiversity importance and at the same time robust or resilient to impacts, or conversely an area or site can be highly sensitive to impacts but of low biodiversity importance.
- **Statutory conservation area**, when referring to a protected area (protected areas are by definition statutory)
- **Stewardship agreements**, when referring to biodiversity stewardship agreements
- **Study**, when referring to a biodiversity planning process, unless it was done simply as an academic exercise
- **Target** (as a noun), when referring to biodiversity targets or protected area targets. Because the word target can be used in different senses, it is almost always important to specify which type of target one is referring to, unless the context is completely unambiguous.
- **Target** (as a verb), when it could create confusion with setting biodiversity targets or protected area targets, e.g. avoid "areas that should be targeted for conservation action" – rather use e.g. "prioritised for protected area expansion" or "maintained in good ecological condition" or other more specific terms
- **Threats**, when referring to legitimate socio-economic activities such as urban development, mining or agriculture
- **Transformation/transformed**, when referring to loss of natural habitat or ecological condition
- **Urbanisation**, when referring to urban areas or urban development

5. Other naming conventions

- Biome names: written with capital letters e.g. Fynbos biome, Grassland biome, Albany Thicket biome.
- Common names for species: written with small letters except where a proper noun is used e.g. hippopotamus, rose, cycad, African elephant, Denham's bustard.
- Bioregional plans: preceded with the name of the relevant municipality e.g. Waterberg District Bioregional Plan, West Rand District Bioregional Plan, Nelson Mandela Bay Bioregional Plan, Ekurhuleni Bioregional Plan.

(Suggestions for additions to this section are welcome.)

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