



Environmental Affairs Department

PRESS RELEASE



LAUNCH OF A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TO STRENGTHEN SPATIAL BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT, PRIORITISATION AND PLANNING (SBAPP) IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Malawi will launch the Spatial Biodiversity Assessment, Prioritisation and Planning (SBAPP) project on February 23, 2023 at Sigelege Hotel in Salima. This is coming a few months after the regional launch that took place on November 16, 2022 in Maputo, Mozambique. The signing of a financial agreement took place on June 7, 2022, in the presence of the French Ambassador to South Africa, between the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) to implement the project.



AFD and SANBI Representatives during the SBAPP Financing Agreement Signing Ceremony

Mapping the occurrence and status of species and ecosystems in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Malawi will produce information that assists in the development of national strategies and action plans to ensure biodiversity is integrated into the planning and decision-making processes.

The project will run for five years and will terminate in June 2027. Project objectives include in-country assessments of a wide range of different species and ecosystem types that are facing pressure from infrastructure and agricultural development, the over-utilisation of natural resources, pollution, biological invasions and climate change.

The information collected as part of the SBAPP project will be managed by the participating countries and made available to the public. In Malawi, this information will be available at the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) and the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST).

SANBI is the project’s lead implementing agency and MUST in collaboration with the Malawian Environmental Affairs Department will coordinate the project in Malawi.



Mr Shonisani Munzhedzi, CEO of SANBI, expressed that it is vital for countries to know what biodiversity they have, where it is, and what state it is in. He pointed out that this basic information has multiple applications – including for planning how and where conservation action could be prioritised and for policies and cross-sectoral frameworks to support sustainable development. He further noted that SBAPP project has come at a very appropriate time when nations of the world are framing the new deal for nature and people in the form of the Global Biodiversity Framework. He concluded by stressing the importance of SPABB in sound decision-making on appropriate land use, conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.



SANBI CEO, French Ambassador and AFD Head of Operations

The design of SBAPP strongly considers the importance of working regionally with the involvement of stakeholders as key to the project’s success since the four countries share cross-border ecosystem types, are home to similar species communities and face similar environmental pressures. A diverse network of more than 15 partner institutions (government research institutes, non-profit organisations and universities) is involved and is contributing substantial skills and resources.

The project also creates a prime opportunity for expertise and capacity exchange between biodiversity institutes in France, and Southern African countries of Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi and South Africa.

Other local stakeholders, besides the main country coordination partners mentioned above, include the Museums of Malawi, National Herbarium and Botanical Gardens, Biology Department (University of Malawi), Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The SBAPP project will build on the achievements of the predecessor project, the Mapping Biodiversity Priorities Phase I and Phase II, which were implemented between 2017 and 2022.

For more information, contact the National Project Liaison through bchimwaza@ead.gov.mw