

**Pre-Project Visit**  
**Project Title: Improvement of ecosystem health and water quality by  
implementing a Source to Sea based approach to tackle marine litter in five  
priority river systems in Durban, KwazuluNatal, South Africa**  
**Technical Report – TG Andrew, February 2020**

**Introduction:**

The Nairobi Convention Secretariat (NCS) undertook a pre-project visit from 6-7 February 2020 to meet with project proponents, partners, and communities to gain first-hand information about the problem that the project intends to address, mechanisms and approaches to be used, how the identified issues are associated with the livelihoods of beneficiaries, and what benefits the project will bring them. The NCS conducted a “due diligence” to ensure proponents have and will consider community sensitivities, potential stumbling blocks, and leadership/ownership of the project. This serves as a “baseline” of the situation at the start of the project to which comparison can be made at the project’s conclusion. In addition, visuals/interviews (of both the site and some partners), were captured for storytelling and communications purposes.

From a technical perspective, the visit entailed the following:

1. Assessing institutional preparedness for project implementation
2. Meeting with key partners indicated in the proposal
3. Discussions around project implementation and coordination arrangements
4. Potential challenges and mitigating actions during implementation

A set of pre-determined questions were developed as a tool to guide discussions in the field and to provide the information needed to address these four aspects. This tool will be used in all demonstration project visits to allow for a standardized approach. Stakeholders were engaged during a meeting of potential partners and a visit to several sites in the uMngeni River catchment within the eThekweni Metro, which was hosted by Dr Yazeed Peterson and Mr Yamkela Mngxe from the lead institution (National Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) – Oceans and Coasts Branch). The Nairobi Convention Secretariat team was accompanied by representatives from the eThekweni Metro Municipality, Provincial Departments, NGOs, and the private sector. It should be noted that this project intends to focus on 5 priority rivers in the Durban area, but it was only possible to visit representative sites on the uMngeni River due to time constraints.

The visit entailed a meeting of partners to discuss the four key elements listed above, and on-site observation and discussion of potential intervention sites in the uMngeni catchment. It is envisaged that similar approaches and methodologies, and criteria for the selection of sites will be used on the other four rivers identified in the project proposal.



**Figure 1.** Representatives from the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, several government departments, NGOs and the private sector inspected an existing litter boom installed by the NGO, Durban Green Corridors, on a tributary of the uMngeni River in Durban.

**Assessment:**

**1. Institutional preparedness for project implementation**

Significant progress has been made by several partners from government and NGOs to address the central issues around marine litter emanating from the Durban area. This demo-project will play an important role in bringing these initiatives together in the eThekweni Metro so that a comprehensive and coordinated programme can have greater cumulative impact. The institutional arrangements for this project are complex in that the lead institution is a national department headquartered in Cape Town, while on the ground implementation will be carried out by local stakeholders based in Durban. This will require careful liaison between the project leader based in Cape Town and the structures set up for project implementation at site level. The lead institution is well prepared for the demo-project which fits within various national programmes and are supported by appropriate legislation and policies, including a Presidential initiative on litter and waste. The project falls within the national Source to Sea Initiative and the targeted rivers have been identified as priority sites within this programme. The challenge will lie in ensuring the local structures are able to implement activities effectively with the support of national and provincial structures. This will be enabled by the recruitment (by the lead institution) of a dedicated Project Coordinator to oversee demo-project activities.

**2. Engagement with key partners provided in the proposal**

Some potential partners as listed in the proposal were met in order to discuss the project and to ensure that they were aware and supportive of the proposed activities. The stakeholders were well informed and significant progress has already been made in bringing them together prior to the start of the project. This has been assisted by the fact that the Source to Sea Initiative has recently

been launched and some preparation has been made. It is envisaged that the demo-project will play a key role in ensuring effective coordination and implementation of national initiatives at a local level in the eThekweni Metro, and compliment these other existing efforts. This can occur at a practical infrastructure level through adding to the network of litter booms (either in place, or planned for through the Source to See Initiative), or through the strengthening of institutional support for the process of addressing marine litter issues emanating from land-based sources.

The project proponents indicate that partnerships will include Plastics SA (Private Sector body), with which the Department already has a close working relationship, and other external partners such as recycling companies, packaging companies, NGOs such as Durban Green Corridors, WESSA (Coastwatch), waste pickers, community leaders and Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) representing the Port of Durban. While some of these partners were not present during the pre-project visit, it is apparent that engagement has already taken place and there are strong indications that these partners will come together to form an effective coordination structure.



**Figure 2.** A simple litter boom constructed of Polypropylene pipe in use across a tributary of the uMngeni River in Durban. The effectiveness of the boom can be judged by the quantity of litter in the foreground collected during a single day. The boom is cleared by local communities on a daily basis.



**Figure 3.** Litter collected from the boom is packaged into large bags (right of photo) on site by local community members, and these are transported on a weekly basis to a sorting and recycling facility. In the background is a good example of an informal settlement on a steep slope with poor sewage and refuse collection services; a situation that contributes significantly to the pollution of rivers and streams in the Metro, particularly after heavy rains.

### **3. Project implementation and coordination arrangements**

The project proposes to establish a coordination committee (or similar) made up of key stakeholders. Under the direction of the national Project Manager, and with assistance with the Project Coordinator (to be appointed), it is believed that this multi-stakeholder structure will be able to effectively implement and coordinate this project. The coordination committee will be chaired by the national Project Manager who would ensure that this WIOSAP demo project is implemented according to contractual commitments.





**Figure 4.** A litter boom installed by a community with support from the Durban Green Corridors NGO. In addition to functioning as an effective trap for litter that would otherwise eventually be deposited into the ocean, exotic water hyacinth can be seen trapped in the foreground. This provides the opportunity to remove this potentially devastating invasive species before it becomes established in waterways.

#### **4. Potential challenges and mitigating actions during implementation**

Although this project has been well-prepared and will benefit from existing momentum, one of the challenges that will need to be mitigated is ensuring the meaningful inclusion of communities living in the areas where on-site interventions will take place. The envisaged booms will need to be managed at a local level and awareness raising and recycling efforts will take place within communities. It is therefore recommended that links be established with existing Metro and NGO initiatives to engage communities in the affected areas (e.g. with existing Waste Management Forums). This will require working with recognized elected local government structures and other community groups. This approach will be essential to increase the likelihood of sustainability of on-site activities to be achieved after the demo-project period.

Another challenge that needs to be actively addressed is that of ensuring that communities attach a value to the collection and recycling/management of plastics and litter, besides the less obvious environmental benefits. This is an area where the experience of Plastic SA needs to be harnessed. Apart from the direct returns that are possible from supplying waste plastic to recycling companies, there are opportunities to establish a network of ‘swop shops’ where recyclable material is exchanged for food, clothing or other useful household products. This is an area where NGOs have made good progress in other parts of the country and these lessons should be drawn upon in the demo-project.

Lastly, one of the key stakeholders from the eThekweni Municipality (ie. the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation) was not present at the pre-project meeting, and it is recommended that this body is engaged with as soon as possible.

## 5. Summary of technical assessment

Overall this demo-project has been well designed and carefully thought through, as demonstrated in an excellent proposal. On-site engagement corroborated this with a high level of enthusiasm and commitment displayed by the stakeholders met. The project fits well into, and compliments other local, national and international initiatives aimed at reducing plastic pollution in our oceans. The proposed coordination structure appears to be feasible and will benefit from a dedicated Project Coordinator.

Considerable progress has been made that will benefit this demo-project. For example, suitable sites for placing litter booms in the network of rivers have already been identified through a spatial planning process led by the eThekweni Metro Municipality. Once funds are released for this demo-project it is likely that implementation will be rapid. This bodes well for this intervention that has a limited timeframe of two years.

### List of Stakeholders engaged with during the visit

Name	Designation and affiliation	Date met
Mr Yamkela Mngxe	DEFF (Oceans and Coasts)	7 February 2020
Dr Yazeed Peterson	DEFF (Oceans and Coasts) – Project Manager	7 February 2020
Ms Mpho Ligudu	DEFF(Oceans and Coasts)	7 February 2020
Mr Siphwe Rakleabale	Field Worker – Durban Green Corridors (NGO)	7 February 2020
Ms Phewa	Durban Green Corridors	7 February 2020
Mrs Nusrath Davids-Anders	DEFF (Oceans and Coasts)	7 February 2020
Mr Terry Stewart	Parks and Natural Resources, eThekwini Municipality	7 February 2020
Mr Russell Stow	Environmental Management, eThekwini Municipality	7 February 2020
Mr Dyantyi	DEFF (KZN)	7 February 2020
Mr Douw Steyn	Plastics SA (Private sector)	7 February 2020
Mr Kenneth Mabila	Parks and Natural Resource Management eThekwini Municipality	7 February 2020
Ms Ntsakisi Malabie	CNB Solutions	7 February 2020
Ms Mcobongwana	eThekwini Municipality	7 February 2020
Ms Funeka	DSW, eThekwini Municipality	7 February 2020