



THE MKHUZE RIVER CONSERVATION PROJECT

WHAT DID WE DO?

The Mkhuze River forms the southern boundary of the 22,000 ha Somkhanda Game Reserve, which is situated within a Key Biodiversity Area as well as being located along a very important biodiversity corridor. Somkhanda supports a large number of species of both fauna and flora, including cycads, wild dogs, black and white rhino, leopard and about 220 bird species.

South of the Mkhuze River are number of deeply rural villages who depend largely on the river and surrounding natural resources for their survival. Living in such a remote location makes service delivery difficult, there is limited infrastructure and job opportunities are severely limited. Whilst these

communities play a vital role in the safeguarding of biodiversity in the area, they often see little benefit from conservationist's values and activities, which seemingly focus their benefits on outsiders and not the local people.



The MRCP engaged in a process of relationship building with the relevant stakeholders and aimed to connect them with external socio- and economic resources that would be beneficial to them, and in turn, would involve them in environmental protection.

During the project, ACT successfully raised funds to build a rainwater harvesting shelter and provided accredited agro-ecological training to 16 persons (funded by the German Federal Foreign Office) from the region. We also recently installed solar lighting systems in 3 communities.

The result of this engagement process is that persons living within the MRCP area are now committed to a course of action which has resulted in community agreements that improve land use and promote environmental sustainability.

WHO WERE THE PROJECT FUNDERS?

The 18 month project was funded by the [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund](#).

