



## THE GEF 7 PROJECT LAUNCH

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has launched the GEF 7 project titled *Catalyzing Financing and Capacity for the Biodiversity Economy Around Protected Areas*. This project is financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented with support of the World Bank. iSimangaliso Wetland Park (iSWPA), South African National Parks (SANPARKS), and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) are implementing agents of this project for the duration of 5 years.



*From left (Mr. Shonisani Munzhedzi CEO of SANBI, Mr. Sibusiso Bukhosini CEO of iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, Dr. Tsepang Makholela Chief Director for Biodiversity Monitoring & Special Services Department of Forestry and Fisheries, Ms. Asmeen Khan World Bank Manager for Operations, Ms. Flora Mokgohloa Deputy Director General Department of Forestry and Fisheries and Africa Eshogba Olojoba Practice Manager for Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy, World Bank).*

The objective of this project is to increase investment in protected areas and to grow South African biodiversity economy. The launch started on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November and ended on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 in Pretoria, DFFE Conference Centre. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of iSimangaliso, Mr S.E Bukhosini presented his sincere gratitude to GEF 7 and the World Bank for entrusting iSimangaliso Wetland Park with the responsibility of being one of the project implementer. He stressed that this investment will benefit the people living in and adjacent to the Park.



*(CEO of iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Mr Sibusiso Bukhosini).*

He said, “This investment will enhance our country’s resilience to climate change especially in the rural areas where the impact is felt most by the poorest. It will create and increase new business opportunities within the Wildlife and Eco-Tourism sectors. Project participants, beneficiaries, and communities adjacent to Protected Areas will benefit from increased technical skills and capacity building activities”. Amongst the objectives of iSimangaliso Wetland Park is to empower historically disadvantaged communities living in and adjacent to the park. The Park has approved a bundle of benefits as part of its Community Beneficiation Scheme. This GEF 7 investment will also facilitate the implementation of this scheme.

He further mentioned that iSimangaliso has made great strides in improving relations with its neighbouring communities. With its limited resources, it has been able to put in place plans and programs to ensure that it improve the lives of the neighbouring communities through job creation.

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**Statement issued by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority**

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