PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2025

QUESTION PAPER FOR WRITTEN REPLY

18. Mr D W Bryant to ask Mr A W Bredell, Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning:

QUESTION:

(1) (a) How many hectares of alien vegetation were cleared in the province in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024 and (iv) 2025 to date, and (b) in which municipalities did the largest clearing projects take place;

RESPONSE:

Table 1 reflects the number of hectares cleared by CapeNature, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) and the five biosphere reserves within the Western Cape. This data is tracked by the Western Cape Government as it reflects activities that are:

- **i.** Directly funded by Provincial Treasury,
- **ii.** Resourced through partnerships that are funded by Provincial Treasury, or
- **iii.** Mandatory requirements of the Western Cape Government in terms of managing the province's conservation estate.

Table 1 therefore does not reflect the sum total of clearing being undertaken in the province by all sectors of society.

Table 1: Annual alien clearing undertaken by WCG, CN and Western Cape Biosphere Reserves.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
CapeNature	11 507	6 092	24 889	12 000	36 043	90 531
WCDoA	3 100	7 400	14 200	15 000	27 405	67 105
Biosphere reserves	1 130	2 433	1 906	1 079	840	7 388

The Western Cape Government, through the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning is developing an Ecological Infrastructure: Investment Monitoring Tool (EI:IMT). This tool aims to capture the total provincial investment in ecological infrastructure

throughout society (which includes activities such as clearing invasive alien plants). The EI:IMT is anticipated to be in operation towards the end of the 2025/26 financial year, and will track metrics such as investment value, hectares cleared, water yield, and work opportunities created. The tool will be spatial in nature, enabling data aggregation by features such as municipal area.

The total hectares cleared for Western Cape Department of Agriculture and CapeNature by district municipal area for the period in question are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2: Alien clearing (ha) by CapeNature and WCDoA by district municipality and year

District municipality	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Cape Winelands	3 722	5 479	14 057	8 113	13 332	44 702
Central Karoo	409	975	1 871	1 977	6 071	11 303
City of Cape Town	0	0	962	0	1 133	2 095
Garden Route	4 075	2 083	10 785	7 267	22 048	46 257
Overberg	5 690	3 567	8 181	6 690	11 753	35 882
West Coast	711	1 388	3 233	2 953	9 111	17 397
TOTAL	14 607	13 492	39 089	27 000	63 448	157 636

Note that the clearing data provided by biosphere reserves does not include an indication of district municipality and was therefore not included in Table 2.

QUESTION:

(1) (a) what impact assessments, if any, have been conducted to estimate the water recovery benefits of alien vegetation clearing in those years and (b) what volume of water has been estimated to be recovered annually as a result;

RESPONSE:

The Western Cape Ecological Infrastructure Investment Framework highlights the role in invasive alien plant clearing in mitigating four priority threats: water insecurity, flooding, wildfires and rangeland degradation. Research based on South Africa's rich history of clearing invasive alien plants has produced valuable tools such as the Le Maitre et al., 2016 calculator, now available as an application, that help estimate the water yields associated with a clearing intervention. These benefits are often emphasised in water-related discussions, particularly in reference to the province's water resilience.

For example, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture estimates that more than 121 million cubic metres of water has been released through their clearing efforts since 2020, which is the equivalent of the capacity of the Berg River Dam. In contrast, CapeNature has not conducted similar assessments, as its clearing initiatives are primarily driven by ecological restoration goals. The EI:IMT, once operational, will automate the estimation of water yields from invasive alien plant clearing, providing an improved understanding of these benefits.

Efforts to quantify the impact of clearing on flood and wildfire risk reduction are also underway, with support from various academic institutions, though these methodologies are still emerging.

QUESTION:

(2) (a) what partnerships or funding mechanisms were used to implement these projects, including municipal collaboration and (b) how many work opportunities were created through these efforts?

RESPONSE:

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture conducts most of its clearing through partnerships with 18 Water Users Associations throughout the province. Other initiatives, such as the 24 Rivers project, include partners with the World Wildlife Foundation – South Africa, CapeNature, the Western Cape Department of Local Government, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and Santam. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture does not partner with municipalities in its current implementation model.

CapeNature implements alien clearing activities both directly and through partnerships. A noteworthy collaboration to mention is the Greater Cape Town Water Fund, which has resulted in the clearing of 81 521 ha in total, which releases approximately 34 million cubic metres of water per annum (as of 2025). The City of Cape Town is a core member within the Greater Cape Town Water Fund and a major investor, with Stellenbosch Municipality reflected as an affiliated member[1]. Beyond the Greater Cape Town Water Fund, CapeNature has achieved their clearing totals outlined in Table 1 through 10 distinct partnerships for the years in review.

Similarly, biosphere reserves rely heavily on partnerships with local communities and businesses to carry out their clearing activities. The number of partnerships involved has not been tracked for clearing data arising from biosphere reserves.

In terms of job creation, approximately 1 186 work opportunities have been created through alien clearing initiatives on CapeNature land from 2020/21 to 2024/25, and approximately 1 720 work opportunities have been created through Western Cape Department of Agriculture's alien plant clearing initiatives in 2024/25 alone. The number of work opportunities created through the biosphere reserves has not been captured to date.

[1] For more, visit the Greater Cape Town Water Fund Decision Support System, here

PARLEMENT VAN DIE PROVINSIE VAN DIE WES-KAAP

VRYDAG, 13 JUNIE 2025

VRAELYS SKRIFTELIKE BEANTWOORDING

***18. Mnr D W Bryant vra mnr A W Bredell, Minister van Plaaslike Regering, Omgewingsake en Ontwikkelingsbeplanning:**

VRAAG:

(1) (a) Hoeveel hektaar uitheemse plantegroei in die provinsie in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024 en (iv) 2025 tot op hede verwyder is, en (b) by watter munisipaliteite die grootste verwyderingsprojekte plaasgevind het;

ANTWOORD:

Tafel 1 toon die aantal hektaar wat verwyder is deur CapeNature, die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Landbou (WCDoA) en die vyf biosfeerreservate in die Wes-Kaap. Hierdie data word deur die Wes-Kaapse Regering gemonitor aangesien dit aktiwiteite weerspieël wat:

- Direk deur die Provinsiale Tesourie gefinansier word,
- Deur vennootskappe gefinansier wat deur die Provinsiale Tesourie ondersteun word, of
- Verpligte vereistes is vir die bestuur van die provinsie se bewaringsgebiede.

Tafel 1 weerspieël dus nie die totale uitroeiing wat in die provinsie deur alle sektore van die samelewing uitgevoer word nie.

Tafel 1: Jaarlikse uitroeiing van indringerplante deur WCG, CN en Wes-Kaapse Biosfeerreservate.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
CapeNature	11 507	6 092	24 889	12 000	36 043	90 531
WCDoA	3 100	7 400	14 200	15 000	27 405	67 105
Biosphere reserves	1 130	2 433	1 906	1 079	840	7 388

Die Wes-Kaapse Regering, deur die Departement van Omgewingsake en Ontwikkelingsbeplanning, ontwikkel tans 'n Ekologiese Infrastruktuur: Beleggingsmoniteringshulpmiddel (EI:IMT). Hierdie hulpmiddel beoog om die totale beleggings in ekologiese infrastruktuur in die provinsie vas te vang (insluitend die verwydering van indringerplante). Die EI:IMT sal teen die einde van die 2025/26-boekjaar in werking wees en sal statistieke soos beleggingswaarde, aantal hektaar verwyder, wateropbrengs en werksgeleenthede monitor. Hierdie hulpmiddel sal ook ruimtelik van aard wees, wat data-aggregasie per munisipale gebied moontlik maak.

Tafel 2: Verwydering van indringerplante (ha) deur CapeNature en WCDoA per distrik en jaar

District municipality	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Cape Winelands	3 722	5 479	14 057	8 113	13 332	44 702
Central Karoo	409	975	1 871	1 977	6 071	11 303
City of Cape Town	0	0	962	0	1 133	2 095
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TOTAL	14 607	13 492	39 089	27 000	63 448	157 636

Let daarop dat data van biosfeerreservate nie per distrik aangedui is nie en dus nie in Tafel 2 ingesluit is nie.

VRAAG:

(2) (a) watter impakbepalings, indien enige, uitgevoer is om die waterherwinningsvoordele van die verwydering van uitheemse plantegroei in daardie jare te beraam en (b) wat die volume is van die water wat gevolglik na beraming jaarliks herwin sou word;

ANTWOORD:

Die Wes-Kaapse Ekologiese Infrastruktuur Beleggingsraamwerk beklemtoon die rol van indringerplantverwydering in die vermindering van vier prioriteitsbedreigings: wateronsekerheid, oorstromings, veldbrande en agteruitgang van weiveld. Navorsing het waardevolle hulpmiddels opgelewer, soos die Le Maitre et al. (2016) kalkuleerder (nou beskikbaar as 'n toepassing), wat help om wateropbrengste van verwyderingsintervensies te skat.

Byvoorbeeld, die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Landbou skat dat meer as 121 miljoen kubieke meter water sedert 2020 herwin is—gelykstaande aan die kapasiteit van die Berg River Dam. CapeNature het egter nie soortgelyke ramings gedoen nie, aangesien hul fokus hoofsaaklik op ekologiese herstel en beskermde gebiedsbestuur is. Die EI:IMT sal outomaties wateropbrengste skat en sodoende 'n beter begrip van hierdie voordele bied.

Pogings om die impak van verwydering op oorstromings- en brandrisiko's te kwantifiseer is aan die gang, met ondersteuning van akademiese instellings, hoewel hierdie metodologieë steeds ontwikkel.

VRAAG:

(3) (a) watter vennootskappe of befondsingsmeganismes gebruik is om hierdie projekte te implementeer, insluitende munisipale samewerking en (b) hoeveel werkge-leenthede deur hierdie pogings geskep is?

ANTWOORD:

Die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Landbou voer die meeste van sy verwydering uit deur

vennootskappe met 18 Watergebruikersverenigings regoor die provinsie. Ander inisiatiewe, soos die 24 Rivers-projek, sluit vennote in soos WWF-SA, CapeNature, die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Plaaslike Regering en Santam. Die Departement werk tans nie saam met munisipaliteite in hul implementeringsmodel nie.

CapeNature voer verwyderingsaktiwiteite beide direk en deur vennootskappe uit. 'n Noemenswaardige vennootskap is die Greater Cape Town Water Fund, wat tot dusver 81 521 ha verwyder het en jaarliks sowat 34 miljoen kubieke meter water vrystel (soos in 2025). Die Stad Kaapstad is 'n kernlid en belangrike belegger, met Stellenbosch as 'n geaffilieerde lid. Meer inligting is beskikbaar op die Greater Cape Town Water Fund Decision Support System hier.

Buiten hierdie fonds het CapeNature hul uitroeiing soos in Tafel 1 aangedui, deur 10 verskillende vennootskappe tebereik. Biosfeerreservate steun ook sterk op vennootskappe met plaaslike gemeenskappe en besighede. Die aantal vennootskappe is egter nie vir biosfeerreservate se data aangeteken nie.

Wat werkskepping betref, is ongeveer 1 186 werksgeleenthede geskep deur CapeNature se projekte vanaf 2020/21 tot 2024/25, en sowat 1 720 werksgeleenthede is deskep deur die Wes-Kaapse Departement van Landbou se inisiatiewe in 2024/25 alleen. Data oor werksgeleenthede deur biosfeerreservate is nog nie beskikbaar nie.