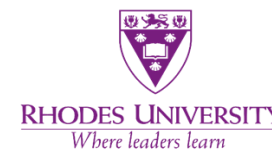




# The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa

Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
SA Agronomist's Association Conference,  
Durban, 24 October 2019



# Conservation Agriculture in rural South Africa

## An introduction

- Terminology and definitions...more of the same?
- Difficulty in achieving sustained impact
- Why aren't we getting it right?
- What should be done differently?

Insights from the GEF5 SLM Project



**The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa**

Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
SA Agronomist's Association Conference,



**CSIR**  
our future through science



ENDANGERED  
WILDLIFE TRUST  
Protecting forever, together.



RHODES UNIVERSITY  
Where leaders learn



UN  
DP



gef



## Conservation Agriculture

- Conservation Agriculture (CA) is advocated as a sustainable farming method to improve soil health, increase crop yields and food security, while reducing input costs.
- In South Africa, a country with low rainfall, limited agriculture lands and a large smallholder farming community, implementing CA is imperative.

**The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa**

Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
SA Agronomist's Association Conference,



# Overview of the GEF5 SLM Project

## SECURING MULTIPLE ECOSYSTEMS BENEFIT THROUGH SLM IN THE PRODUCTIVE BUT DEGRADED LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH AFRICA

### OBJECTIVE

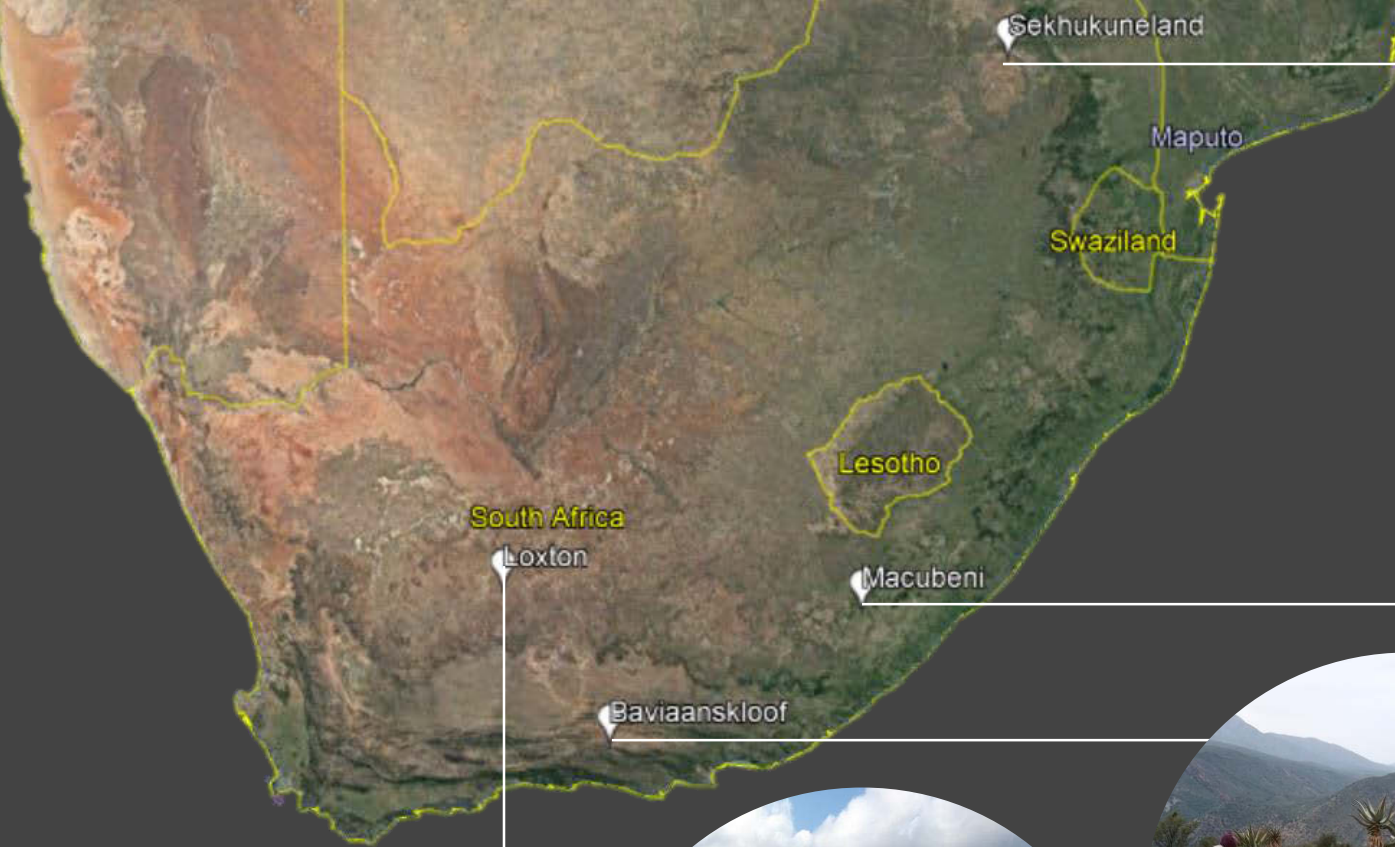
- Provide an **enabling environment** for the
- adoption of **knowledge-based SLM models**
- for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation
- in support of the **green economy** and **resilient livelihoods**
- through **capacity building, improved governance** and **financial incentives**
- demonstrated in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes



**The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa**

Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
SA Agronomist's Association Conference,





# Project landscapes

**The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa**  
 Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
 SA Agronomist's Association Conference,



# Opening statements

- Governments, bureaucracies, and funders of social, economic and environmental development have attempted to "normalize" community development over the past 30 + years, especially within neo-liberal contexts
- there has been movement away from "human" development towards "things" development, from getting people to do the rights things voluntary and with long support to paying them to do things for the sake of job creation



**The status of conservation agriculture in rural South Africa**

Presented by Lehman Lindeque, UNDP  
SA Agronomist's Association Conference,



# Challenges in sustained long term CA / SLM solutions that foster community development

- Effort to build trust with land users to adopt CA/SLM
- Understanding the underlying social ecological systems
- identify the reasons for system failure - BI
- Government job creation programmes versus ‘equip communities with knowledge and skills’
- The challenge to maintain the institutional knowledge we have built,
- Governance and financial mechanisms to create an enabling environment for CA
- Coordination and facilitation of initiatives for better synergy and learning
- Sustainability = the ability to be sustained, supported, upheld, or confirmed.



# Community development

*“The United Nations (UN) defined community development, in the post war period, as 'a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation' (UN, 1955).*

Community development is a process where the community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems

Participation, representation and communication by people at the margins of civil society, their relationship to government and to development agencies and the ways in which such communications and representations are received and responded to, can be seen as lying at the heart of development.

The strength of Australian Landcare is that community groups and networks, with government and corporate support, conceive their own visions and set goals for local and regional environmental action. Working from the ground up to achieve these goals creates freedom and flexibility, giving communities a great sense of purpose.



# Long term SLM solutions that sustain community development – what should we do different?

- A long-term endeavor
- Well planned – organize and plan together
- Inclusive and equitable – become more responsible – empower themselves
- Holistic and integrated into the bigger picture
- Initiated and supported by community members
- Of benefit to the community – develop healthy lifestyle options, improve quality of life, create employment and economic opportunities
- Grounded in experience, local knowledge that lead to best practices – Champion Farmer Initiative

# The Champion Farmers Programme (CFP)

- CFP addresses the conventional and unsustainable farming practices
- CFP is a mentoring program
  - values formation
  - technical skills training
  - that envisions creating a middle-class of farmers, those who recognize is not only to plant and keep livestock, but to build soil fertility and farm with grazing plants rather than animals
- The idea is to scout for farmers who have demonstrated living in harmony with nature, with commendable character who can handle transfer of technology and become the army of change in the field of Sustainable Land Management



# A new way of thinking

- Instead of developing rehabilitation projects with clear targets of the number of hectares of degraded land we want to rehabilitate.

INSTEAD.....

We initiate through the work of community catalyzation, different “Communities of Action” and provide through our programme and project funding and technical support, an impetus for community action towards SLM and securing a healthy natural resource base for sustainable livelihoods .

# Community Development Practitioners / Facilitators in SLM Projects

- Help a group of people identify common bonds and to build relationships of trust from which the group can act.
- Be purposeful, assess what the group values, help the group identify and communicate shared values.
- The community developer helps groups build on their strengths while mitigating their weaknesses.

Overall, the building blocks of community are the connections that unify or bind a group of people together, establishing collective agency.



# Our challenge: The decade of ecosystem rehabilitation

On 1 March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 – 2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity.

What are we as SA Agronomist Association going to contribute towards the decade of ecosystem rehabilitation?

6.1 Active access to safe drinking water for all  
6.4 Increase water-use efficiency  
6.5 Implement integrated water resources management  
6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems



15.1 Ensure conservation of ecosystems and their services  
15.2 Promote sustainable management of forests  
15.4 Ensure conservation of mountain ecosystems  
15.5 Reduce degradation of natural habitats  
15.8 Reduce impact of invasive alien species  
15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values in policy



13.1 Strengthen resilience to climate-related hazards  
13.2 Integrate climate change measures in policy



1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty  
1.2 Halve % of people in poverty  
1.4 Ensure equal rights to resources, ownership over land  
1.5 build resilience, reduce vulnerability



2.1 End hunger  
2.2 End all forms of malnutrition  
2.3 Double agriculture productivity and incomes  
2.4 Ensure sustainable food production systems

12.3 Halve per capita global food waste



7.2 Increase share of renewable energy

# 15.3

Achieve a land degradation neutral world by 2030

LDN as an accelerator of the Sustainable Development Goals'



# Acknowledgements



**Cobus Theron, James Gambiza, Jean-Marc Mwenge Kahinda, Rebecca Powell, Kyra Lunderstedt, our colleagues at DEFF especially Michael Braack, Livinglands and the communities where we work**