

5. OVERVIEW OF SANPARKS POLICY AND PLANNING CYCLES

The Protected Area Management Planning Framework is the product of applying the principles of participatory Strategic Adaptive Management (Chapters 3 and 4) to the process of managing protected areas within the context of legislation and SANParks mandate, values and organisational structure (Chapter 2). In this chapter the overall SANParks policy and planning cycle is presented and explained. Detailed guidelines for implementing the sequential phases of this cycle for protected area planning are discussed in Chapter 6.

The overall management process is cyclic, involving the following sequential (though often overlapping and/or iterative) major phases of:

- **VISION/POLICY**
 - Process asks: **“Where do we want to go?”**
 - Policy in the form of operating principles developed at both the corporate and protected area level guide the process of vision-building, planning, implementation and review.
- **PLAN**
 - Process asks: **“How do we get there?”**
 - Management options are selected to achieve the objectives that make up the vision.
 - A comprehensive plan for action includes time frames, budgets and human resources.
- **IMPLEMENTATION**
 - Process is one of executing the plan to **get where we want to go**.
- **MONITORING**
 - A monitoring plan is executed alongside the implementation plan to collect data which tell us **how far we have travelled** toward our destination.
- **REVIEW**
 - Process asks: **“Did we get where we want to go?”** and **“Is this really where we want to be?”**
 - Data from monitoring enables us to compare the intended versus actual outcomes of management, and thus to update our knowledge and assumptions and thereby revise the management options, the implementation plan and if necessary the vision and objectives themselves.

SANParks is structured into corporate and park level functions and with this arise different levels of policy, planning and authorisation. Various products/decisions must be approved at different managerial levels. High level policies which aim to create consistent actions and decisions across all national parks are set at the corporate level. There are also policies, goals and plans developed by DEAT and SANBI which apply nationally and regionally and therefore to protected areas. Park-specific policies are developed that set out the vision and objectives for a desired future state for each park.

The overall policy and decision making cycle influencing Protected Area management is depicted in Figure 5.1. The Balanced Scorecard is woven in throughout this framework to assess progress on broad organizational objectives. It does not drive the process but acts as an alignment, measurement and communication tool.

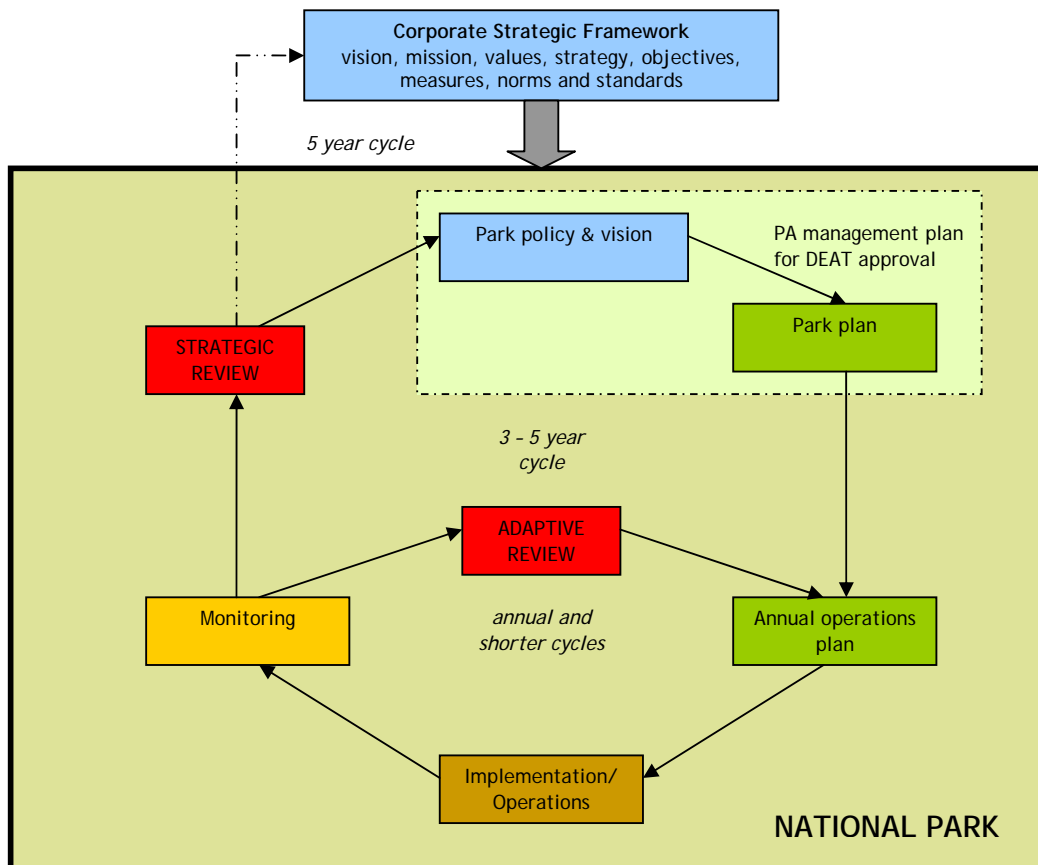


Figure 5.1: Overview of SANParks policy and planning cycles at the corporate and park level

5.1 The park management planning and approval process

Under the Protected Areas Act management plans must be approved by the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Forestry. There are a number of stages in the development of a management plan leading to its ultimate approval by SANParks and DEAT.

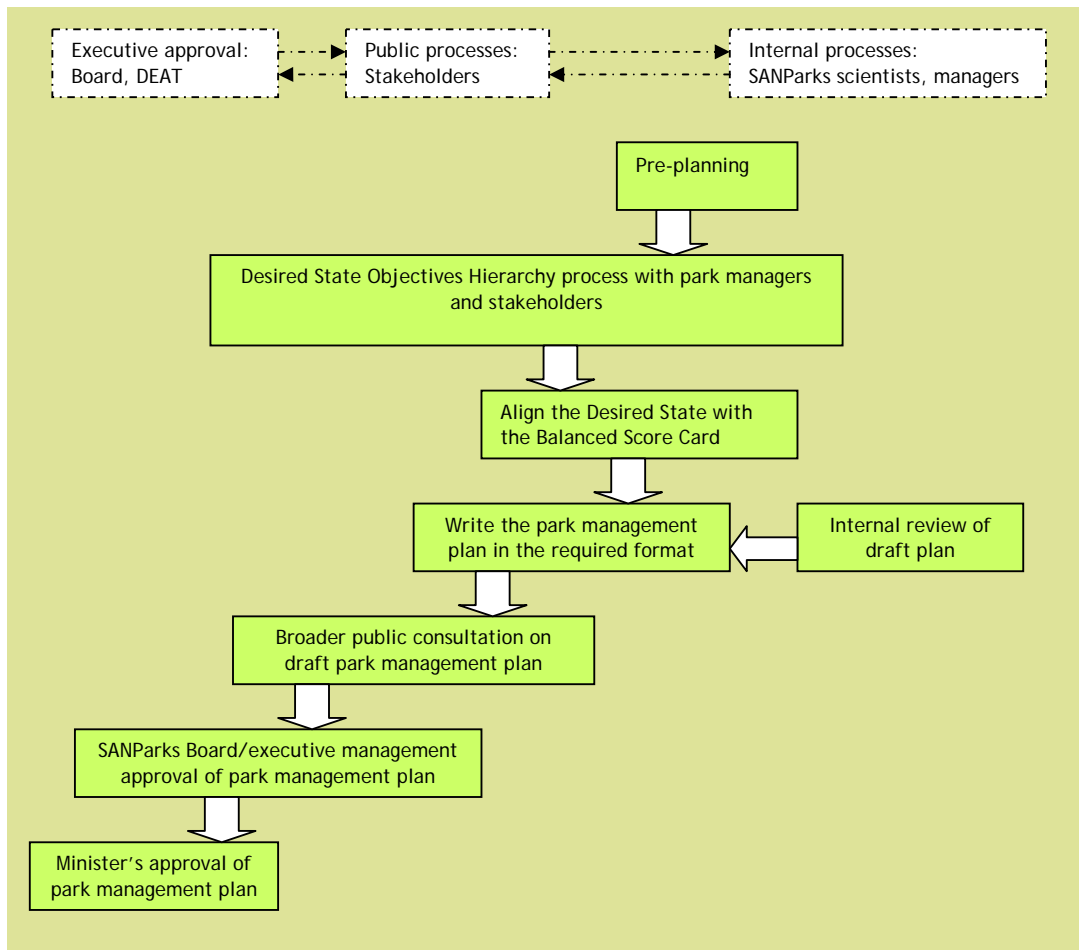


Figure 5.2: The park management planning and approval process

Before commencing with the development of the management plan a **task team** should be formed under the guidance of Park Planning and Development (PPD). Their first task should be to identify task team members (key role players). At a minimum the following members should be on the task team: facilitator (external/internal), coordination (PPD), administrative support, biophysical context (Scientific Services), strategic guidance (park operations) and cooperative governance. A **pre-planning meeting** must be convened to identify missing task team members, clarify roles and responsibilities of the team and members, provide the context for developing the management plan, identify participants for the desired state workshop and convene a desired state workshop.

The **desired state workshop** is held with park managers and stakeholders and following the protocol outlined in Chapter 6. The **park management plan** needs to be written in a **standard format** (presented in Chapter 7) designed to reflect the principles of the SAM process and to ensure that critical aspects of the management process are not overlooked.

Before the draft management plan can be distributed for stakeholder input it must undergo an **internal review** by a person other than the writer of the plan. The reviewer must ensure that the plan:

- Conforms to the criteria as set out in the NEM:PAA
- Conforms to the SANParks standard format
- Is in line with the Coordinated Policy Framework
- Adheres to the Management Plan Framework developed by DEAT (Guidance for the development of management plans in terms of the NEMA:PAA)

The plan is then presented to the public and forms the focus of a **second stakeholder meeting**. Comments are integrated into a final draft of the management plan which is then submitted for approval by the **SANParks executive/board** and then **DEAT**.

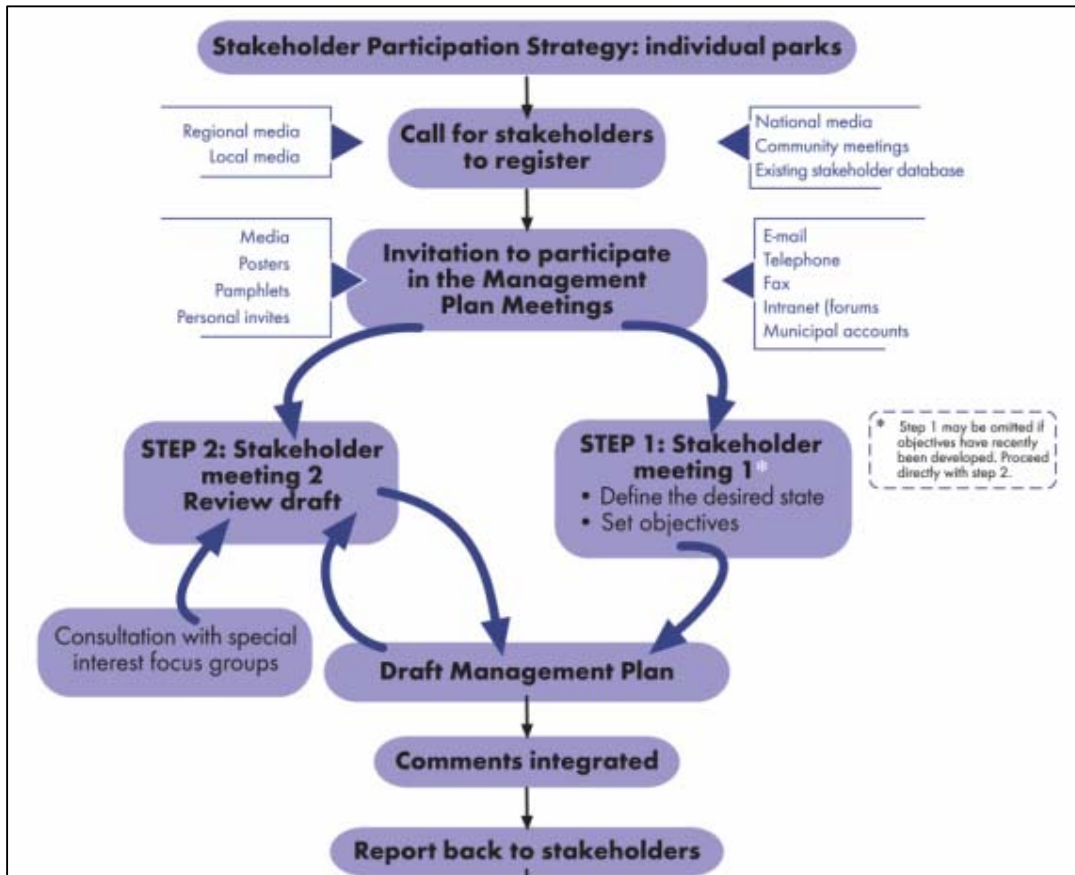


Figure 5.3: Stakeholder participation in the management planning process

BOX 4: Guidelines for administering the planning process

- Stick to a focused group - personnel involved with the park.
- A pre-workshop meeting with park staff can be arranged to assist them with the task at hand.
- A facilitator should be appointed to manage the process; it can be someone from SANParks or an external person. The facilitator must have a good understanding of the adaptive planning process and treat staff and other interested parties as equal stakeholders.
- Arrange a first workshop at which the facilitator takes all the stakeholders through the adaptive planning process to define a desired state for the park.
- Allow enough time to contextualize the adaptive planning processes.
- Proper representation by the park forum and local government will ensure better buy-in. It may be necessary to have separate meetings with local authorities as it is sometimes difficult to get them to workshops.
- In the weeks following the first workshop SANParks scientific staff develops a detailed plan to meet the stakeholders' expectations (desired state) without compromising SANParks mandate. This detailed plan is taken back to the stakeholders for review.
- A second workshop is held to discuss the detailed plan and the stakeholders' reactions to this, with the aim of reaching consensus on the plan's potential to meet the desired state in an adaptive management system.
- To a large extent the outcome of the first workshop provides an agenda for the park forum because it is this body that tracks progress towards the desired state.