

EMPLOYMENT

Funding secured for jobs

The City of Cape Town has secured R50.4m in funding for the creation of nearly 1300 green jobs over the next three years.

The opportunities are intended for entry-level job-seekers who will assist the City with the removal of invasive species, and so forth. The City recently signed a three-year Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Natural Research Management (NRM) Programme. The MoA is part of the Working for Water (WfW) project, a flagship project at the NRM which is being managed by the National Department of Environmental Affairs.

The initiative is aimed at supporting the integrity of South Africa's natural resources through a range of public employment programmes including Working on Fire, Working for Wetlands and Working for Water. Under the MoA, the City will receive funding for a wide range of green jobs. These jobs will be managed by the Invasive Species Unit (ISU) which falls within the City's Environmental Management Department. The project will focus on the removal of invasive species and the ecological rehabilitation of local ecosystems.

"The ISU will receive R15m in this financial year alone which will assist us to create 699 jobs. However, the total funding from the NRM amounts to R50.4m over three years. We estimate we'll be able to employ a minimum of 1 293 people over this period. One cannot overstate the importance of this programme – firstly, for those who will benefit through job opportunities and access to training; and secondly, for the City to improve the condition of our freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems," says Mayco member for spatial planning and environment, Marian Nieuwoudt.

The green jobs are aligned with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which provides opportunities to entry-level job-seekers. The EPWP provides opportunities to women, in particular young people between the ages of 18 and 25 and people with special needs.

"Those who are employed through the EPWP get the opportunity for on-the-job training. Thus, once they leave the programme, they have new skills that will make it easier for them to find permanent employment or to earn an income with the new knowledge they've acquired," she says.

The ISU will implement invasive species programmes to remove water-thirsty pine and eucalyptus species in the catchment areas feeding the Wemmershoek and Steenbras Dams. "To the north of the city, teams will work in the catchment area of the Atlantis Aquifer. Working alongside a host of partners and stakeholders, City teams will assist in clearing 100 hectares of invasive plants in the aquifer's primary recharge zone. The ultimate aim is to replenish at least 60 million litres of water to the Atlantis Aquifer and thus secure City's long-term water supply," says Nieuwoudt.

Various other green jobs will be implemented. Among these are the removal of invasive plants, wasps, house crows, mallard ducks, and guttural toads, all of which poses a threat to Cape Town's indigenous flora and fauna.

The City and WfW have a long history of environmental cooperation. WfW is globally recognised for its environmental conservation initiatives on the continent and enjoys sustained political support for its job creation efforts and the fight against poverty. The development of people is an essential element of environmental conservation and the NRM works in partnership with local municipalities and marginalised communities to provide green jobs.

Since its inception in 1995, the WfW programme has cleared more than one million hectares of invasive alien plants, providing jobs and training each year to approximately 20 000 people from among the most marginalised within our communities.