



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Candice Stevens from BirdLife South Africa and the Government of South Africa Receive International Award for Work on Biodiversity Tax Incentives for South Africa's Protected Area Network

Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 18 November 2018



Candice Stevens and The Department of Environmental Affairs Receiving the Pathfinder Special Commendation Award.

BirdLife South Africa is excited to announce that Candice Stevens, BirdLife South Africa's Policy & Advocacy Programme Manager, and the South African Government (represented by the Department of Environmental Affairs) have been awarded the Pathfinder Award Special Commendation for their innovative work on biodiversity tax incentives. The award was presented at the Pathfinder Award Ceremony at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 14) in Egypt on 18 November 2018.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), as well as WildArk- A Movement

for the Wild, presented the inaugural Pathfinder Award. The Pathfinder Award acknowledges “innovation & excellence in protected and conserved area financing and resourcing” and recognises outstanding and innovative solutions for protected and conserved areas. More than 200 nominations were submitted from all over the world.



The Pathfinder Award acknowledges and recognises outstanding and innovative solutions for protected and conserved areas.

The winners of the award were determined through a rigorous selection process involving experts on protected area financing and a high level panel of international judges. The assessors noted that this collaborative work by BirdLife South Africa’s Fiscal Benefits Project and the Government of South Africa is in particular “achieving the specific application of a tax break for establishing privately protected areas is globally innovative. No other country has a similar solution in place and it is a tremendous achievement”.

BirdLife South Africa’s Fiscal Benefits Project was launched in 2015 by Ms Stevens, a tax expert with specialist skills in incentives, biodiversity finance, and protected area policy. The Project successfully tested biodiversity tax incentives as a benefit for landowners and communities who have declared protected areas through the national biodiversity stewardship initiative. This all began with the achievement of introducing a new tax incentive, section 37D, into the Income Tax Act. Section 37D provides a tax break for conservation commitment. It allows the total value of a Nature Reserve or National Park to be deducted from the taxable income of a landowner or community, reducing the tax burden, increasing sustainable finance for long-term environmental management, and bolstering economic activities synonymous with South Africa’s Biodiversity Economy.



BirdLife South Africa's BirdLife South Africa's Policy & Advocacy Programme Manager Candice Stevens launched the Fiscal Benefits Project in 2015.

This unique protected area finance solution is listed as one of South Africa's official BIOFIN Solutions and is estimated to contribute approximately over R1 billion to South Africa's biodiversity conservation efforts by 2026. This important achievement and global recognition through the Pathfinder Award would not have been possible without the assistance of strategic partners and stakeholders across South Africa. The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), through the Global Environment Facility (GEF 5) Biodiversity and Land Use Project, funds and partners with BirdLife South Africa to mainstream these successes. Key institutional support is received from the Department of Environmental Affairs and the UNDP's BIOFIN Initiative, as well as the National Treasury and the South African Revenue Service. Catalytic seed funding was received from the WWF Nedbank Green Trust which provided the launch pad for what is now a global solution for the planet.

Candice Stevens also works closely with the biodiversity stewardship community of practice in South Africa and the efforts of individuals and organisations, working tirelessly to safeguard South Africa's incredible natural heritage, are part and parcel of this award. Special thanks go to the donors, institutional supporters, and colleagues who have provided continued support and input into ensuring the success of this finance innovation. BirdLife South Africa is proud to be at the cutting edge of globally innovative conservation work.

BirdLife South Africa's Fiscal Benefits Project is a novel approach to biodiversity finance and leads the way in the global use of biodiversity tax incentives. The Project is funded by the GEF in partnership with SANBI.

ENDS



For more information:

Candice Stevens

Manager: Policy & Advocacy Programme

Lead: Fiscal Benefits Project

Tax and Biodiversity Finance Specialist

BirdLife South Africa

Tel: +27 11 789 1122

Candice.stevens@birdlife.org.za

Details of the Full Solution on Biodiversity Tax Incentives for South Africa's Protected Area Network are available here: <https://panorama.solutions/en/solution/biodiversity-tax-incentives-south-africas-protected-area-network>

About BirdLife South Africa

- BirdLife South Africa is the local country partner of BirdLife International. BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation Partnership with more than 120 BirdLife Partners worldwide and almost 11 million supporters.
- BirdLife South Africa is the largest non-profit bird conservation organization in the country. It relies on donor funding and financial support from the public to carry out its critical conservation work.
- Vision: BirdLife South Africa wishes to see a country and region where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably.
- Mission: BirdLife South Africa strives to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity through scientifically-based programmes, through supporting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and by encouraging people to enjoy and value nature.
- Birds are important environmental indicators, the proverbial "canaries in the coal mine". By focusing on birds, and the sites and the habitats on which they depend, BirdLife South Africa's IBA Programme aims to improve the quality of life for birds, other wildlife, and ultimately for people.
- For more information, visit www.birdlife.org.za
- For more information regarding the Fiscal Benefits Project and to access biodiversity tax resources, visit www.birdlife.org.za or www.biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org
- For more information regarding South Africa's biodiversity stewardship initiative, visit www.biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org
- For more information on the UNDP's BIOFIN Initiative, visit www.biodiversityfinance.net