

# ANNEXURE 7: PARTNERSHIP SETUP

## Table Mountain Water Source Partnership



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# Table Mountain Water Source Partnership – its setup and lessons

## INTRODUCTION

The report documents the different steps that occurred over the partnership formation period. Key lessons are shared on the process of setting up a multi-stakeholder partnership for water/groundwater governance.

It is written from the perspective of WWF, which had two distinct phases of involvement. In the first phase WWF functioned as the original facilitator of the partnership formation until the partnership launch. In the second phase WWF's involvement shifted to have two clearly defined and distinct roles: one as a founding partner and the other as host of the Partnership secretariat.

The document serves as a learning product to guide other similar partnership establishment processes – both internally and externally.

## WHY A PARTNERSHIP?

The need for a partnership on groundwater in the Table Mountain Strategic Water Source Area arose due to the convergence of three key motivating factors:

1. There is a supportive national policy framework. The critical importance of water source areas (WSAs) for water security has been recognised through national policy documents. Water source areas are areas of very high annual run-off or recharge. In response, the mandated authorities are now exploring how WSAs can be secured, and they recognise that collaborative governance is a critical component. Indeed, the groundwater strategy of South Africa specifically supports the idea of local partnerships to govern groundwater.
2. In response, WWF, which was deeply involved in the creation of awareness of the importance of strategic water source areas (SWSAs), concretised its efforts in SWSAs and ensured that its new internal strategy prioritised securing strategic water source areas. The WWF 2025 strategy not only aims to respond to policy, restore ecological infrastructure and embrace water stewardship, but specifically highlights the importance and intention to collaboratively develop management strategies for WSAs through functional and capacitated community-public-private partnerships (ensuring the involvement of the relevant mandated institutions with stakeholders).
3. The Cape Town drought experience, termed “Day Zero”, created a particular urgency to look at alternative water sources and thus groundwater definitely shifted into focus. It therefore made sense to build a partnership around groundwater in the Table Mountain Water Source Area.

### **Key learning: A gap in groundwater governance**

At the outset there was a relative vacuum around collaborative groundwater governance. This is not surprising because groundwater is an invisible resource, which is often accessed individually, rather than through bulk infrastructure. It is notoriously difficult to monitor and manage groundwater, both globally and nationally. There were only a few players and platforms engaging with groundwater, but given the increasing pressure on the resource, there were converging, good reasons to catalyse local collaborative action. The combination of a clear institutional gap and pressing urgency to manage the groundwater resource more sustainably meant that it was opportune and necessary to foster the creation of a partnership.

## **WHAT MADE IT POSSIBLE?**

An initial baseline project was started between WWF South Africa and WWF UK with AB InBev (now SAB – AB InBev) as the primary funder. The drought surfaced the shared concern about sustainable groundwater use for AB InBev and WWF. A pilot-phase funding agreement was signed on 1 October 2018 and the project ran until October 2020. As one of the project outputs, the aim was to initiate a partnership to support collaborative governance in the Table Mountain Strategic Water Source Area. A flexible approach was adopted and there was a recognition that establishing collaborative governance structures is an emergent process that cannot be dictated by external parties.

Building on the partnership and the priority activities during the SAB – AB InBev-supported process, further funding was secured from the Royal Danish Embassy. Priority groundwater projects focused on building awareness, monitoring, data management, policy review and governance strengthening.

### **Key learning: To catalyse action, funding and a common interest or need are required**

SAB - AB InBev's Newlands brewery is fully spring water dependent and the Day Zero period saw them sharing spring water with the public. They were at the centre of several politicised opinion exchanges and directly got to appreciate the business risk associated with unsustainable groundwater use in Cape Town. This made AB InBev a perfect private-sector partner to fund and explore a groundwater pilot study.

SAB - AB InBev is also a longstanding partner to WWF and through the years has adopted an adaptive management approach that allows projects to address what is current and relevant to meet the priority needs.

The pilot study generated much interest and showed tremendous promise. With a keen interest in groundwater and as a strategy priority in the South Africa-Denmark engagement, the Danish government then generously supported the implementation of the priority actions and continued to support the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership process. The process was given a tremendous boost by Danish funding for both the partnership secretariat and project activities. This proactive, phased approach to securing funding sustained momentum and increased impact significantly.

# MAPPING POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND MAKING INITIAL CONTACT

Potential partners were considered by WWF based on their experience of local stakeholders, key players in the water sector in Cape Town, key governance bodies responsible for groundwater, private-sector partners and funders, who have a specific focus on groundwater (see Table 1). All these were carefully identified, listed and consequently contacted. groundwater (see Table 1). All these were carefully identified, listed and consequently contacted. However, this was not done in the form of a full stakeholder-mapping exercise.

## INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

WWF engaged with all potential partner institutions, ensuring careful identification of entry points and committed one-on-one engagement. At each meeting, WWF presented the rationale for the development of a partnership in the Table Mountain Strategic Water Source Area with a groundwater focus, but was never prescriptive and provided much room for discussion and testing the interest of others. All were encouraged to contribute to the thinking and evolution of the Partnership. This was done through the identification of common priorities and potential for alignment with institutional mandates and operations.

### **Key learning: Continue to be inclusive, non-prescriptive and build on interest because co-creation is critical**

A key learning was that co-creation can start with a solid group of partners, but that the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership will have to undertake a thorough stakeholder-mapping exercise along its evolution to ensure it continually strives to be an inclusive partnership.

**TABLE 1: ORIGINAL LIST OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS CONTACTED**

Potential partner institutions	Representative	Mandate/role/expertise
AB InBev	André Fourie / David Grant	Industrial water user of Albion Springs; funder and concerned stakeholder
WWF South Africa	Dr Klaudia Schachtschneider Caroline Gelderblom	Convenor of partnership WWF representative
Water Research Commission (WRC)	Dr Shafick Adams	Geohydrological research at national level
Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)	Fanus Fourie	Geohydrological expertise / national government (DWS) representative
City of Cape Town (CoCT)	Barry Wood	Bulk Water data communication
GreenCape	Claire Pengelly	Advisers for enterprise development and resilience, including water
Royal Danish Embassy	Jorgen Erik Larsen	Denmark is a country with very high groundwater dependence and knowledge. It has had a Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) with the Department of Water and Sanitation since 2015 and has supported a Strategic Water Sector Programme in South Africa
University of Cape Town (UCT)	Prof. Kevin Winter	Water Futures Unit / urban landscapes and water use / research/ database location
University of the Western Cape (UWC)	Dr Jaco Nel	Geohydrology/research

**Key learning: Building consensus is a first crucial step and only once a critical mass is in agreement, can one proceed**

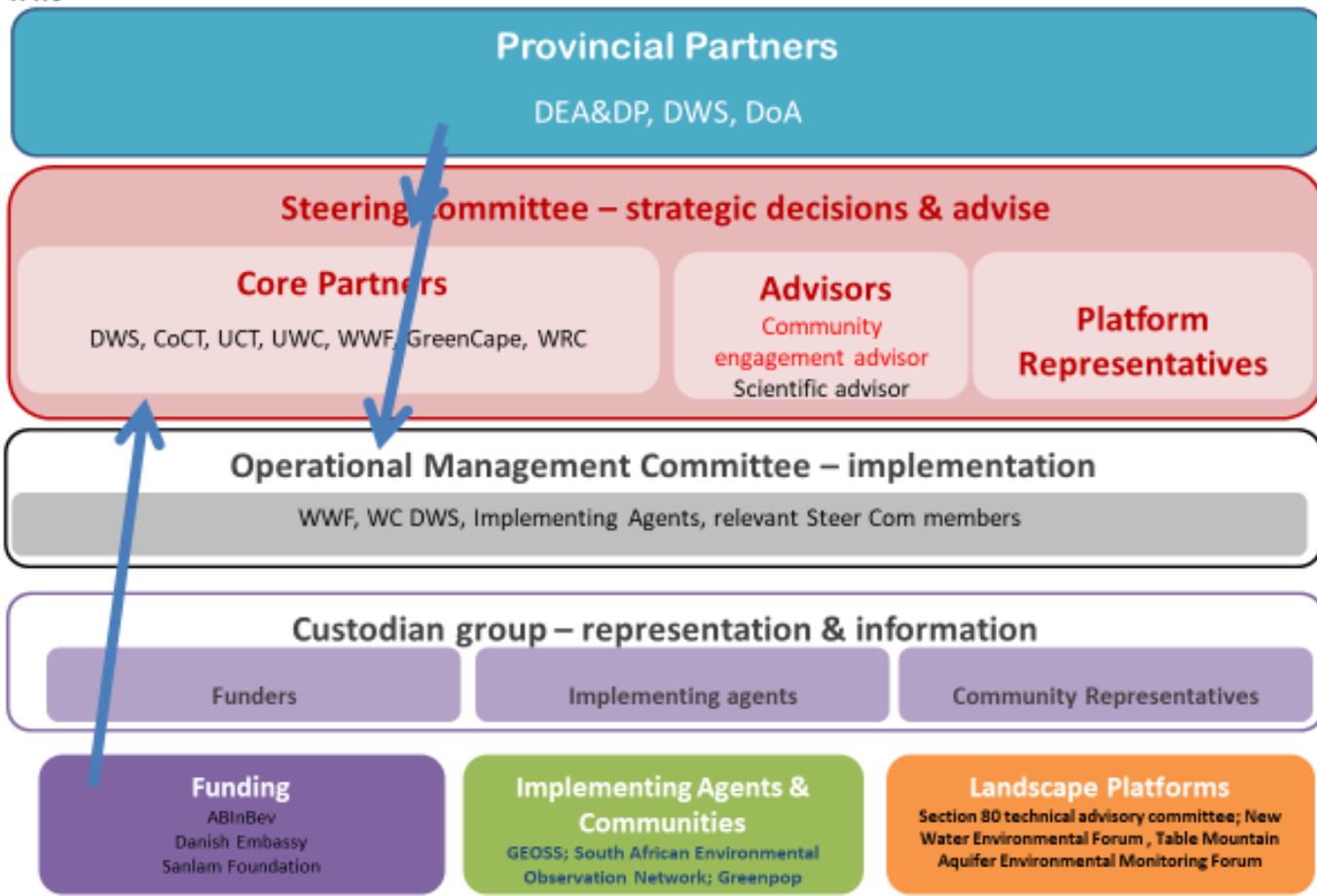
**Scoping:** At the outset, it is important to select partners strategically to ensure that the primary threats and opportunities are addressed. Good stakeholder knowledge or research is essential in order to understand key players and their mandates, and to identify potential champions within each institution.

**Initial engagement:** One-on-one engagements are key to ensure that partner mandates and priorities are understood and that preliminary concerns and needs for clarification are addressed. This also facilitates the establishment of a personal relationship and trust and creates space for sensitive issues and quieter voices before a group meeting.

**Representation:** Governance bodies operate with different departments or at different scales. If there are different and essential roles and responsibilities to cover and represent, carefully is needed to decide at what level and in what capacity a person should represent an institution.



## Proposed Water Source Partnership Structure



**Figure 1:** Proposed partnership structure presented for discussion by WWF (arrows indicate potential partner representation in different committees)

## ESTABLISHING THE PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

As part of the Danish supported project activities, an initial draft structure for the Partnership was presented for discussion to kick-start the governance structure and functioning process (see Figure 1).

The **first draft partnership structure was** suggested by WWF, in line with promoting the community-public-private-partnerships model in SWSAs.

### Proposed structure

As the **mandated institutions** in water and environment, it was deemed appropriate to have overall oversight of the Partnership by the government partners from the Western Cape (Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, the Department of

Agriculture) and the regional office of the national Department of Water and Sanitation. These government partners oversee the Table Mountain, Groot Winterhoek and Boland water source areas in the Western Cape and ideally should participate in all the partnerships and platforms for these SWSAs.

The steering committee (SC) should be representative of the core partners and it was envisaged that funders be offered a temporary seat on the SC, depending on their time of active project engagement and support.

Advisers and platform representatives were considered as SC member additions, on a rotational or needs basis.

An operational management committee would oversee implementation of all the projects under the Partnership banner. Based on the interest and involvement of the SC members, funders and core SC members in project implementation, they would also be welcome on the operations committee. A custodian group, consisting of funders, implementing agents and community representatives, would be responsible for information exchange and representation.

## **Actual structure and its co-creation**

This proposed structure was never fully implemented. First, it was appropriate to allow the partnership to shape itself, away from WWF strategy as only WWF was to be neutral facilitator of the process.

By the time of the Partnership launch in November 2021, the SC members became the founding members of the Partnership. In the case of the City of Cape Town, the institution was found to be so large and fulfilled such different roles that multiple people from different departments had to represent the City. Regarding government involvement, the SC prioritised the Department of Water and Sanitation. It was also decided that the partnership should include regional representation of the national Department of Water and Sanitation, as well as the national groundwater representation in recognition of their different functions and roles.

Advisers were never called upon as all partners were learning together and shaping the structure through need and experience. The project did, however, appoint a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team consisting of external consultants, who took on an invaluable facilitation and observation role.

The platform representatives were only partially identified and need to be mapped in more detail. Hence they are not yet represented on the SC to date. It may be that as the governance structure and systems evolve and mature, that the platform representatives become signed-up members and as the partnership grows, the partners decide on SC membership and establish rules for partner inclusion and rotation of SC members.

The operational management committee (OMC) did exist through the period of the active Danish project. The OMC included implementing agents of the priority projects (on awareness, monitoring, etc.), some SC members, WWF project staff and the MEL team. They met regularly every two months. Clearly, there was a need for project implementers to

get together, track progress, share related implementation lessons and find joint solutions to address challenges.

The custodian group never materialised, probably because the envisaged role was already being fulfilled by the SC and OMC. It was also the time of Covid-19 lockdowns, during which communication had to be readjusted. As a result, a significant amount of communication material was produced by partners, the Partnership and implementing agents (see Annexure 9, Appendix B), primarily done by OMC.

Overall, the original draft structure served to bring the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership to life, but in effect was only used as a catalyst. The necessary partnership structure has evolved and will continue to do so, based on the Partnership's experiences and need, as well as with the well-considered recommendations by external experts, such as OneWorld and the MEL team.

## **MANAGING PARTNER ROLES IN TRANSITION**

### **Separation of roles**

During the initial phase of the Partnership co-creation process, the WWF project implementation staff for the SAB - AB InBev pilot and the Danish project initially also played the roles of facilitator, chair and secretariat. As the Partnership formation process matured, it was recognised that these roles needed to be divided among different people and organisations. At the 5th SC meeting, the MEL team therefore took a one-off, overt role of face-to-face workshop facilitator, enabling a transition to elected management. This allowed WWF to be represented by the lead of its Freshwater Programme as an ordinary SC member. At this meeting the SC suggested the election of a rotating chairperson. At the 6th SC meeting, the SC elected the representative of the Department of Water and Sanitation as chairperson, relieving WWF of this position going forward. It was also decided at this meeting that it would make sense for the two WWF project implementation staff members to continue to function as the secretariat for the immediate future (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2: NEW LIST OF PARTNERS AT LAUNCH IN NOVEMBER 2021**

<b>Partner institutions</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Mandate/role/expertise</b>
AB InBev	Alyssa Jooste	Industrial water user of Albion Springs; funder and concerned stakeholder
Water Research Commission	Dr Shafick Adams	Geohydrological research at national level
	Yazeed van Wyk	Replacement if required
Department of Water and Sanitation	Fanus Fourie	Geohydrological expertise / ministerial representative and chairperson
City of Cape Town	Candice Lasher-Scheepers	Bulk Water
	Tamsin Faragher	Resilience Department
GreenCape	Ashton Mpofu	Advisers for enterprise development and resilience – including water
Royal Danish Embassy	Jorgen Erik Larsen	Funders and Strategic Water Sector Cooperation with South Africa
UCT	Prof. Kevin Winter	Water Futures Unit / urban landscapes and water use / research / database location
UWC	Dr Nebo Jovanovic	Geohydrology/research
WWF South Africa	Ruth Beukman	SC member and partnership specialist
	Dr Klaudia Schachtschneider	Project management & secretariat
	Marlese Nel	Project management & secretariat

## Learning

**Managed transition:** Roles and responsibilities shift and grow as the partnership crystallises. Flexibility is required to shift from initial driving implementer or facilitator to different people taking on the responsibilities of secretariat, partner representative, chairperson and even facilitator. Otherwise lines can get blurred between roles and that can be a cause for confusion or even tension among partners.

**Separation between project and partnership:** Where a long-term partnership is established through a project, it is critical to clearly separate the two, and ensure that the partnership takes on a supervisory role for the project as soon as possible. This role may be driven by contractual donor obligations and short-term deadlines. The donor needs to be aware of the roles played by the contracting organisation (in this case WWF) and understand project implementation under an evolving partnership arrangement. The overall responsibility of the partnership is critical for long-term sustainability and independence.

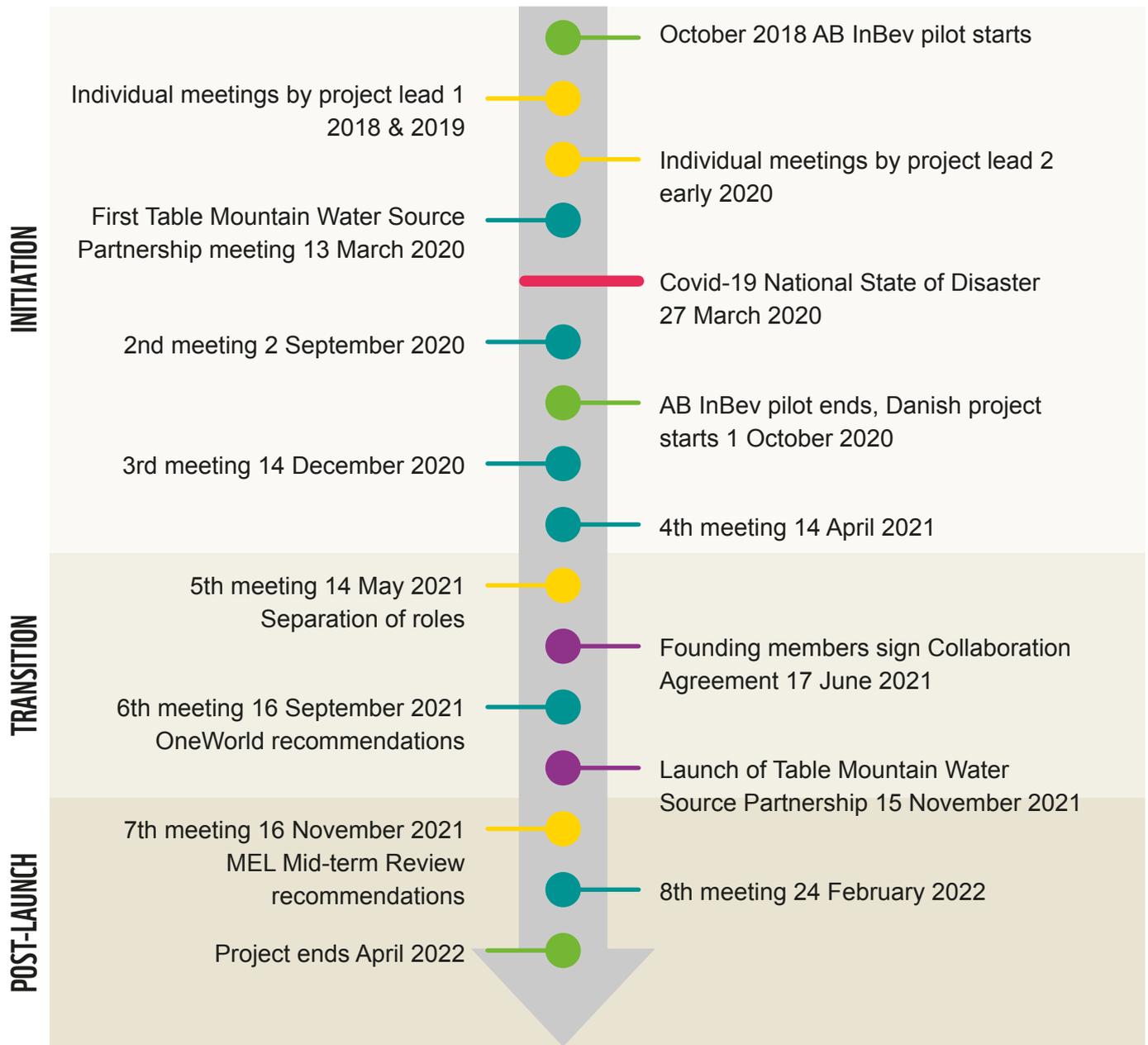
# PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The progress of the partnership is depicted in the timeline below. Depicted are meetings, as well as key project events. By the end of the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership project, the founding members of the SC had officially met eight times.

Partnership formation was directly dependent on funding from AB InBev and further subsequent funding from the Royal Danish Embassy. The future functioning of the partnership, for project activities as well as hosting of the secretariat, will require further and continuous funding to sustain the important actions and relevance of the Partnership.

The development of the Partnership was and remains a co-creation process. With every meeting, different partnership aspects were discussed and decided upon, where possible. The key topics under discussion for every SC meeting are outlined in Table 3 to demonstrate the process of establishing the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership. The timeline is shown in the infographic on the next page.

# PROJECT TIMELINE



- project events
- online events
- face-to-face
- challenge
- key turning points in partnership

## FOUNDING MEMBERS



**TABLE 3: KEY TOPICS FOR EACH SC MEETING**

<b>1st meeting: 13 March 2020</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote  <b>Roles:</b> Interim WWF chair and secretariat roles</p> <p><b>To crystallise a Partnership Vision, purpose and identification of partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced partners to one another, each indicating why the Partnership interests them and what their stake was in groundwater and what role they might play in the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership.</li> <li>• Sought agreement on the first steps towards co-creating a partnership and identification on who was not yet included. It was agreed that DWS regional would need to be added to the SC.</li> <li>• Shared the draft vision and potential structure of Table Mountain Water Source Partnership (WWF also shared the vision and draft structure in the one-on-one meetings prior to the 1st SC meeting).</li> <li>• Jointly worked towards a shared vision and identified initial points of agreement towards an MoU. It was decided to rather build a non-binding “Collaboration Agreement”, as the process of an MoU would be too onerous, especially with the larger institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<i>Structure of Collaboration Agreement drafted and circulated for comment.</i>
<b>2nd meeting: 2 September 2020</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote  <b>Roles:</b> Interim WWF chair and secretariat roles</p> <p><b>To further work on the Collaboration Agreement and to get a joint impression on progress, signing timelines and sticking points.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual meetings were scheduled to address issues with respective partners.</li> <li>• Every partner introduced groundwater – related projects they were engaged in or were planning around Cape Town. An overt invitation was expressed to contact each other for deeper information sharing on projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<i>Individual institutions engaged with legal departments in order to get the Collaboration Agreement ready for signature.</i>

<b>3rd meeting: 14 December 2020</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote <b>Roles:</b> Interim WWF chair and secretarial roles</p> <p><b>To continue refining the collaboration agreement and deal with IP rights (of particular importance to the academic institutions), as well as expectations of the SC members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On request by committee members, the time requirements for members on the Steering Committee were defined, as SC members were not being remunerated for time dedicated to the Partnership tasks and meetings.</li> <li>• Quarterly SC meetings of one-and-a-half to two hours were considered the maximum that SC members would be required to attend. These meetings would serve to provide a high-level overview of ongoing projects as well as networking opportunities. Any further engagement beyond that would be on a voluntary basis.</li> <li>• With the Danish-funded project having just kicked off in October 2020, the project with all its different outcomes and activities was introduced to the SC. The SC was asked to indicate if any of the Danish project activities had a strong overlap with any of their mandates, and to express their interest in being engaged in the respective activities.</li> <li>• The first tension was created here because the partnership was, as yet, unofficial and already SC members were invited to give input to “WWF-run projects”. It raised the question if the SC was there to oversee WWF projects, or if this was part of a temporary and unfolding setup while the Partnership was still being formed – as part of one of the project deliverables.</li> </ul>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<p><i>Ironing out Collaboration Agreement details.</i> <i>Commencing the signature process.</i> <i>Interested partners engaged on specific project components.</i></p>
<b>4th meeting: 14 April 2021</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote <b>Roles:</b> Interim WWF chair and secretariat roles</p> <p><b>The purpose was to welcome new SC members, WWF staff relevant to the Partnership and to check if all were on board regarding the Vision and agreement.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New SC members and WWF staff were announced and welcomed to the Partnership. These included the project manager for the Danish project (who had been appointed early March); the official WWF SC representative – the Freshwater &amp; Policy Lead (with her extensive experience in partnerships and governance) and the MEL team for the Danish project. Since the co-creation of the partnership was one of the deliverables for the Danish project, the MEL team was tasked with observing the SC meetings as part of the partnership development progress.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key discussion point at this meeting was whether everybody in the SC was on the same page in terms of the partnership vision and its purpose. It was also discussed whether partners, at this stage, saw a distinction between the partnership and the SC. The engagement made it clear that further in-depth discussions on the topics were needed and that this would not be ideal in a remote meeting. A face-to-face meeting was recommended soonest.</li> </ul> <p>This meeting marked the end of the “initial phase”.</p>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<p><i>MEL team interviewed SC members on the current status of the partnership. Collaboration Agreement signature process ongoing.</i></p> <p><i>Interested members engaged with components of the Danish-funded project.</i></p>
<b>5th meeting: 14 May 2021</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Face-to-face</p> <p><b>Roles:</b> MEL team as facilitators; WWF as secretariat and partner; no chairperson</p> <p><b>To engage with the MEL team and their observations engaging with the partners on a number of partnership aspects.</b></p> <p>This meeting also marked the onset of a “transition phase” for the Partnership, and a clear shift in roles for WWF.</p> <p>It was the first time that WWF stepped away from the facilitation and chair role, functioning only as the minute taker and as an equal partner at the meeting.</p> <p>At this meeting the facilitation role was taken by the MEL team, who were external neutral players to the SC.</p> <p>Feedback from the MEL team based on the interviews that they had had with each SC member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The points of commonality and tension were laid out, providing a clear overview of where the Partnership had got to in its initial phase.</li> </ul> <p>The following key points were addressed in team discussions, with the aim of bringing greater clarity and cohesion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Scoping</b> the problem – significant threats to groundwater in the TMSWA</li> <li>Clarifying the <b>vision</b> and intention – what does sustainable management and the use of groundwater, at scale, look like?</li> <li><b>Confirming the purpose</b> and <b>composition</b> of the Partnership</li> <li>Clarifying how <b>projects</b> contribute to achieving this, including the Danish-funded groundwater-monitoring project</li> <li>Identifying what else was needed.</li> </ul> <p>A big win from this meeting was the ability to spend a day together and to meet face-to-face and gain depth in discussion. It was an essential trust-building exercise.</p>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<p><i>Interviews with OneWorld for the groundwater policy and governance review report.</i></p>

<b>6th meeting: 16 September 2021</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote <b>Roles:</b> DWS as chair; WWF project team as secretariat</p> <p>To raise a diversity of pressing and practical issues <b>such as the launch and logo of the Partnership as well as fundraising and sustainability issues.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was the official election of the new rotational chair, taken up by DWS national.</li> <li>• A presentation of the first draft of the Groundwater policy and governance report, was done by OneWorld. A key component of the report focused on recommendations on the future structure and functioning of the partnership. This still needs to be discussed in detail in a future partnership forum after April 2022.</li> </ul> <p>The ensuing discussion confirmed the support for the Partnership and highlighted the lack of representation of the Breede Gouritz Catchment Management Agency at the SC.</p>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<i>Launch of Table Mountain Water Source Area Partnership on 15 November 2021.</i>
<b>7th meeting: 16 November 2021</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Face-to-face <b>Roles:</b> DWS as chair; WWF project team as secretariat</p> <p><b>To debrief after the launch as well as engage with the MEL team findings on the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting followed one day after the launch and provided a good platform for a launch debrief. At the launch, the absence of top management from some institutions was palpable. An interesting debate arose on whether SC representatives should be passionate technical staff, enabling them to engage on groundwater content issues or whether it was deemed more important to have the appropriate approval authority and public support from top management. It was agreed that the latter was pivotal in order to give the partnership required weight.</li> </ul> <p>The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) results were presented by the MEL team. The following recommendations were raised and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To define and create an independent secretariat function and appoint a secretariat. <i>The general consensus was that WWF should keep the secretariat role in the interim, and that a secretariat structure would be required.</i></li> <li>• On the topic of funding it was recommended to set up a funding matrix – approaching different funders and getting input from partners – to support the generation of new projects and the continuation of the Partnership. <i>This was revisited in meeting 8.</i></li> <li>• <b>A MEL facilitator should continue to provide process and learning support to the Partnership going forward, augmenting the secretariat.</b> Process support will facilitate the <b>inclusion of missing stakeholders</b> (such as representatives from the community), <b>provide continuity</b> to the Partnership, hold a space for <b>diverse voices</b>, and ensure that the</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Partnership remains relevant to all key stakeholders.</b> The partners generally appreciated the role of MEL in this project and agreed on the importance and continued funding of this role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a Partnership meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities of partners and the Partnership as a whole, in light of policy recommendations and discussions to date. This should include a facilitated discussion on how to bring community voices into the Partnership. <i>This will be a post-April meeting, including the recommendations made by OneWorld in the policy and governance analysis.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<p><i>Submission of proposal to SAB - AB InBev.</i></p> <p><i>Review of partnership launch video.</i></p>
<b>8th meeting: 24 February 2022</b>	
<b>Key purpose and outcomes of the meeting</b>	<p><b>Format:</b> Remote</p> <p><b>Roles:</b> DWS as chair; WWF project team as secretariat</p> <p><b>To start discussing key recommendations of the MTE presented by the MEL team and seek input from SC members on World Water Day and various tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The upcoming activities for World Water Day were highlighted by all partners, providing valuable information-sharing and participation opportunities.</li> <li>• A draft secretariat setup process was presented by WWF, as per recommendations from the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) presentation at the 7th meeting. Consensus was reached on the communication format and a task group was set up to oversee the creation of secretariat terms of reference.</li> <li>• An initial conversation on partner roles and interests, as per the MTE recommendation. Each partner expressed clear interest in particular fields (awareness, monitoring, data, governance, groundwater/surface water interaction and protection of the resource). The roles were divided into funder, implementer and collaborator. This provided a rough guide to the secretariat on partner involvement during proposal writing.</li> <li>• A funding matrix was drawn up for the SC partners, discussing potential funding or implementer interests. Although this needs to be extended to funders beyond the partners, it does provide a first level of insight with which the secretariat can adopt in their approach for future proposals.</li> </ul>
<b>Between meetings</b>	<p><i>Design completion for communication materials of partnership.</i></p> <p><i>Attending WWF, Royal Danish Embassy and Water Research Commission World Water Day events.</i></p> <p><i>Submission of funding proposal 2.</i></p> <p><i>Finalisation and submission of Stockholm World Water Day webinar topic.</i></p> <p><i>“Walk and talk” with Danish Minister on Table Mountain on 4 May 2022.</i></p> <p><i>Inauguration of murals at V&amp;A Waterfront on 5 May 2022.</i></p>

# WHERE TO FROM HERE?

There are number of pertinent issues highlighted below, that will need the attention of the SC in the immediate period ahead.

Suffice to say that ...

***“Deep impact requires sustained engagement and support from a diversity of sources”***

## CONTINUED COMMITMENT

The establishment of the SC and successful completion of the initial projects have established significant initial momentum. It is critical that all SC members maintain their engagement in this platform for collaborative governance in order to ensure aligned implementation of the project. Also, all representatives need to ensure that they continue to maintain buy-in at the highest levels from their respective organisations in terms of continued engagement and commitment of resources. Should there be a change in representation, the outgoing member needs to ensure that an alternate is appointed and briefed.

The question “Who **needs** this Partnership to exist and function” remains to be answered with conviction. There is overall consensus of the value and benefit of the Partnership, especially by the SC representatives, who remain enthusiastic and committed to it. However, at some level the urgency of “need” is missing, at least from the top management of some partner institutions. The “need” was more tangible during the drought, due to situational urgency. Appropriate urgency from the top management of governance bodies, who hold the mandate of groundwater governance, could add to the sense of “need” and provide the energy to promote long-term institutional engagement that would bring about deep change.

## DIVERSIFIED PARTICIPATION

The strength of the partnership depends on its diverse membership, with the government, private, academic and NGO sectors all making unique contributions. It was noted at the 5th steering committee meeting that the diverse representation is a first for any groundwater partnership.

The partnership will, however, have to examine and commit to supporting meaningful community engagement. To date, community engagement was through the individual activities, but meaningful community representation at the SC level remains difficult due to the diverse urban population of Cape Town. The partners have suggested a mapping of environmental groups in Cape Town, as a start. But groundwater likely touches on residential groups, activists and others. The partnership will be enriched by community voices, but how those voices are brought into the governance of the Partnership needs further guidance. In the interim, the community will continue to be engaged at the interface with project implementers.

The OneWorld report recommendations made it very clear that the SC requires a representative from the Catchment Management Agency as another mandated institution that water source partnerships must work with.

As the partnership considers its structure, the involvement and presence of the private sector and businesses need to be considered. A partner decision needs to be made if funders, once projects are at an end, step out of the SC, but possibly find representation in another partnership layer.

## **SUSTAINED RESOURCING**

In recognition of the challenge of maintaining the momentum, the Partnership secretariat hosted by WWF has developed and submitted two new funding proposals for projects since the 8th steering committee meeting. In future, other partners will also need to take long-term responsibility for securing resourcing, for support for a secretariat and projects. This can happen through external funding applications and realignment of internal resources. Members of the Partnership need to continually seek to promote the incorporation of sustainable groundwater management and use into their internal planning frameworks, budgets and project development.

## **MAINTAINING A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

As part of the secretariat communication, a set of materials has been designed with the Partnership logo, in order to appropriately represent the partnership going forward. This includes a letterhead, PowerPoint presentation template and email signatures. This collective identity needs to be used consistently to maintain visibility of the Partnership's work both within individual partner organisations and externally.

Since the launch, the Partnership has entered a self-governing stage rather than a "facilitated stage" by funders and WWF. Receiving funds and maintaining baseline activities, a functional and effective secretariat, having a MEL component and a greater interconnectedness of partners through projects will push the Partnership into much meaningful action and proper self-governance.

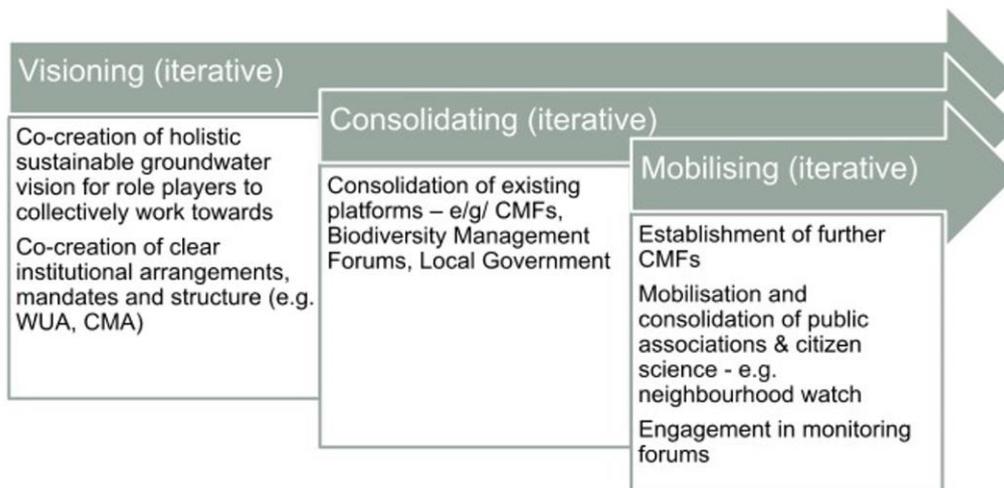
# **RECOMMENDATIONS ON STRUCTURE AND PROCESS – TAKING IT FORWARD**

Some of the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) recommendations on structure and process already received attention at the 8th steering committee meeting. More will be discussed at the upcoming SC meetings.

A wide-ranging set of policy information and partnership recommendations was received from OneWorld and their "Current status of groundwater policy and governance in South Africa" report (Annexure 6). OneWorld provided guidance on the incremental stages of visioning, consolidating and mobilising the partnership (see Figure 2).

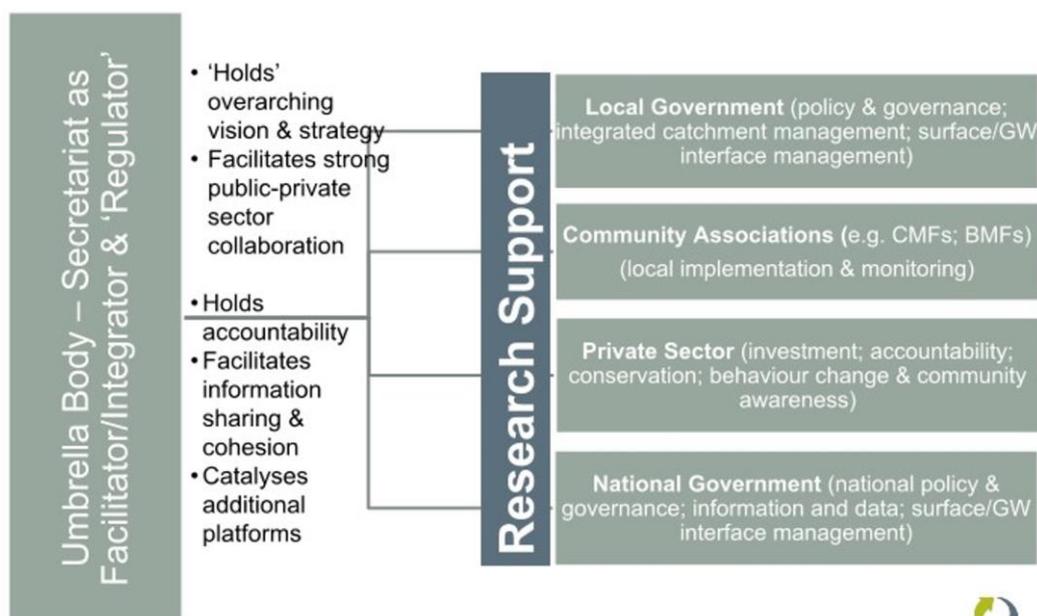
## ONEWORLD EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP PROCESS AND FORMAT

### Possible stages in an incremental trajectory



**Figure 2:** OneWorld example of the Partnership process and format

### An emerging Partnership framework



**Figure 3:** OneWorld recommendations on the roles of the secretariat and research partners

OneWorld also made recommendations on the role of the secretariat and research partners (see Figure 3). Their particular set of recommendations were presented to the SC, to WWF and at a Danish event. However, the SC still needs to set aside time to grapple with these recommendations as a matter of urgency.

## **OVERALL LEARNINGS**

### **DEFINING COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION**

A key challenge remaining is the impossibility of getting SC representation at community level, as would be required for a “community-public-private partnership”. The Table Mountain Water Source Partnership operates in an urban environment that contains a great diversity of residents. Community inclusion is possible at the project implementation level, but at a partnership and SC level, the SC will need to seek guidance on what the appropriate action is.

### **OBTAINING GOVERNMENT BUY-IN**

Another challenge is to find the right level of representation in government institutions. Commitment at top management is hard to secure and time consuming to obtain, while support from the operational level is easier, the Partnership will be hamstrung without top management sanctioning and buying in to plan for and leverage resources.

### **WORKING THROUGH TENSIONS**

The MEL team has been instrumental in surfacing and neutrally tabling points of confusion or tension. As neutral external entities voicing these issues, the MEL team enabled constructive discussion by the SC as well as enable the SC to address some of the tension points. While there may be many issues to unpack and resolve, it is understood that not everything can be addressed at once but through the MEL team, the correct ‘tone’ for tabling tensions, has been generated and can hopefully be continued. The continued presence of a MEL representative would be of tremendous benefit to the Partnership.

### **CHANGE OF PROJECT LEADER**

A key complication arose once the first project leader left WWF and placed the responsibility of further building the partnership in the hands of a new person. She had to go back to the drawing board and hold initial individual discussions with each potential partner institution. The new person had to rebuild the trust, revisit the key salient points and reasons for the partnership, internalise this information and then bring it to the point of first meeting. This significantly delayed the starting of the partnership.

A lesson learnt from this is that it is critical to have shared knowledge and ownership of partnership development processes so that everything does not depend on one individual.

## **COVID-19**

The initial partnership meeting took place a week before the first global Covid-19 lockdown. Subsequent Partnership meetings all had to be held online. It took over a year before the parties could meet face-to-face again. It was at that meeting that that kind of synergy and partnership spirit became evident. Not being able to meet face-to-face definitely affected the pace and made the partnership cohesion a little more hesitant. The sense of connection that can be forged at in-person meetings is particularly important in the initial phases of a project. It is equally important in order to sustain the trust needed to address difficult issues and to engender the energy required to maintain commitment and momentum. That being said, it was nevertheless a significant feat that despite a year of only virtual engagement, the commitment of the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership partners was and is so strong.

## **FUNDING CYCLES AND FUNDER PREFERENCES**

A key constraint the Table Mountain Water Source Partnership will have to continue dealing with is funding. Funding is typically provided in project cycles, yet a partnership is meant to be a long-term engagement of parties with continuous interaction, which requires resources for every partner's time and travel. This resourcing needs to be taken into account especially for the secretariat, which must keep the Partnership wheels moving. It is often not in the primary interest of many funders in the water space to fund ongoing partnership development activities. The continuation of a secretariat and a partnership is therefore far more difficult to "sell". Equally, much more corporate water stewardship funding goes into the actual net positive water targets and not necessarily into the larger collective action and governance improvements. Obtaining funding for ongoing partnership functioning therefore remains a key challenge. In the long term it would be ideal if this secretariat role could either be taken up and/or resourced by mandated authorities.

WWF is promoting the concept that any net positive water work should include a component that supports partnership development or strengthening, thus ensuring that this type of governance work is funded into the future and that all the other activities have a long-lasting impact. For long-term sustainability, it is also critical that government funding is provided to support these structures. Water tariffs also provide for support of catchment management agencies, but this funding is insufficient. The need to raise appropriate funding for water source areas is recognised, but as yet largely not operationalised.

## **THE SPEED OF FINDING CONSENSUS AS A PARTNERSHIP**

Several topics, such as funding, community engagement and partnership structure and visioning have been addressed at more than one SC meeting. The partners have had valuable discussions and made headway on these complex topics. However, some of the topics will require repeated deepening of the discussions until a consensus can be reached. This takes time and careful navigation. Partners use their valuable time to attend the

meetings and doggedly returning to the same topics will slow down motivation. Pushing things along may provide a timeline-driven project with a deliverable, but could lead to superficial partnership decisions that do not rest on true consensus. A careful balance between these two “speeds” needs to be maintained.

## **IMPORTANCE OF A CONTINUING SECRETARIAT**

This Partnership has understood that a secretariat is essential to act as the glue for the partnership, to look for funding, coordinate actions and share information. The secretariat is needed to stay engaged with each partner, to arrange meetings and to keep a finger on the pulse between meetings to keep the momentum going. The activities between meetings are the unspoken of hard work that often defines the momentum and cohesion of a partnership, and play a crucial role in the level of trust that other partners have in the partnership process. The full set of responsibilities for the secretariat is to be tabled for SC discussion at its next meeting.

## **STEERING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND THE CHAIR POSITION**

Building the Partnership started as a project task. The implementer and facilitator of that task was WWF. With the launch of the Partnership, WWF needed to adjust its role and responsibilities from the initiating driving force, to blending in as one of the partners in the partnership. Electing a chair from the Department of Water and Sanitation was a key shift in power towards achieving this adjustment. The Partnership has indicated that this role should be a rotating position every two years to ensure shared ownership, but also emphasised that, in order to ensure continuity, the rotation should not be too rapid.

WWF will most likely take on the role of secretariat, but will need further clarification of what that role entails going forward. It is understood that partner institutions may come and go on the SC and that representatives will remain fluid too. The Partnership opts for top management sign-off, but operational representation will be critical going forward to ensure the continued uptake and engagement within each organisation.

## **VALUE OF THE MEL PROCESS IN THE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Engaging the MEL experts right from the beginning of the Partnership project has been a learning worth taking forward to other partnerships in future. The MEL team observed and recorded the maturation of the project, from the Partnership’s birth as a project component, to the structure that is set to take over project and governance support in future. The MEL reports have documented the different challenges and convergent points in the complex partnership development process, and have communicated these clearly and regularly to the SC. It is recommended that this MEL role is taken into the future for this Partnership, and also for others.

In addition, the MEL team also provided critical neutral facilitation, which supported the sensitive transition of the project from one managed by parties identified by donors to one managed by parties elected by the collective.