



## DURBAN RESEARCH ACTION PARTNERSHIP AWARDED MERIT CERTIFICATE AT ECO-LOGIC AWARDS



**The Durban Research Action Partnership team.**

The [Durban Research Action Partnership](#) (D'RAP) was awarded a Certificate of Merit at the recent [Eco-Logic Awards](#) in recognition of its work towards building a sustainable and Eco-Logical environment. The awards, hosted by [Enviropaedia](#), recognise and reward best practices and remarkable achievement by extraordinary individuals and organisations in protecting the natural environment and building South Africa's Green Economy.

D'RAP was one of five finalists in the Municipalities Award category, with 13 categories being awarded. D'RAP is a joint initiative between the [eThekweni Municipality](#) and the [University of KwaZulu-Natal](#) (involving more than 20 academic staff), established to build capacity and increase limited knowledge in key areas related to the environment in the eThekweni region through specific research projects.

'This recognition is great news for all involved and testament to the fabulous work being done by the respective Municipal- and University- based teams,' said Errol Douwes, Manager of Restoration Ecology at eThekweni Municipality.

*Enviropaedia* Editor and host of the awards, David Parry-Davies, lauded the awardees for being "eco-heroes" who take on environmental challenges as opportunities to pioneer solutions and achieve sustainable growth.

Judges came from senior management within the environmental, business, government and media sectors to achieve a broad-based and balanced perspective in the judging process.

D'RAP has pioneered a number of projects aimed at positive environmental change by empowering students with knowledge on biodiversity, climate and people in an increasingly growing urban landscape. It focuses on solution-oriented science helping cities achieve better sustainability, as well as resilience to threats such as climate change. Local leadership and decision-makers in eThekweni Municipality have shown insight in supporting innovative, transdisciplinary research. This led to the establishment of the D'RAP which addresses challenges arising from increasing population and urbanisation; in this context, this partnership is vital in ensuring the best outcomes for Durban's populace and environmental assets.

The D'RAP has pioneered three notable projects: the [KwaZulu-Natal Sandstone Sourveld \(KZNSS\) Research Programme](#), the [Buffelsdraai Community Reforestation Project](#) and the [Global Environmental Change](#) (GEC) Research Programme.

D'RAP is demonstrating value in increasing local research capacity, especially through the training of 51 students thus far – to postgraduate qualifications. This is a resounding achievement in a critically under-skilled environmental and biodiversity arena, where developing capacity and management tools are essential for translation of research into meaningful action.

D'RAP is using its multi-institutional partnership to generate knowledge, build capacity and close the gap between scientific research, policy development and management within a local government setting.

Words by: [Christine Cuénod](#)

Photograph: [Errol Douwes](#)