



NEWSLETTER

NEWS. IMPACT. ACTION. FOR A GREENER ESWATINI

BLUE ROOTS *Growing* GREENER FUTURE

EEF and Standard Bank marked Earth Day 2026 at Enhlanhleni Primary School with the launch of the Blue Roots initiative, a programme aimed at planting one million trees across Africa to advance climate action, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable communities.

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Let the planet breathe again.



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BAGS



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PLASTIC
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EARTH DAY 2026;

OUR POWER, OUR PLANET

On 22 April 2026, the Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) partnered with Standard Bank at Enhlanhleni Primary School to commemorate Earth Day under the global theme “Our Power, Our Planet.” The occasion also marked the launch of the Blue Roots initiative, a transformative programme aimed at restoring ecosystems and advancing climate action across the continent.

The Blue Roots programme reflects Standard Bank’s commitment to plant one million trees across Africa, contributing to biodiversity conservation and sustainable community development. The event brought together key stakeholders from government, private sector, and development partners in Eswatini, including officials from UNESCO and the Hhohho Regional Education Office, highlighting a united front in environmental stewardship.

Speaking at the event, Mvuselelo Fakudze emphasized the deeper meaning behind the initiative: “We are here to connect with our hearts, as planting trees is something we have always grown with. The Blue Roots programme is our commitment to planting one million trees and investing in a greener future for Africa.”

Representing the Eswatini Environment Authority Executive Director, Mxolisi Maphanga challenged Standard Bank to sustain the momentum of the initiative by returning annually to support tree planting efforts. He encouraged a vision where every child actively participates in planting trees within schools and communities, strengthening environmental stewardship from a young age.

Lwandle Simelane, from UNESCO, expressed appreciation to Standard Bank for the initiative, noting its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She further emphasized the importance of inclusivity, calling for the active participation of young people living with disabilities in tree planting and environmental programmes.

“Inclusion powers sustainability”



We are here to connect with our hearts, as planting trees is something we have always grown with. The Blue Roots programme is our commitment to planting one million trees and investing in a greener future for Africa.”

- Mvuselelo Fakudze, Standard Bank CE



Delivering remarks on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mbhekeni Nxumalo reinforced national priorities: “This initiative aligns with Government’s call to plant one million trees. The seeds from these trees must be replanted to ensure long-term impact, and we appreciate the continued partnership with the Eswatini Environment Fund in advancing conservation efforts.



Mbhekeni Nxumalo who represented the Minister of Tourism and Environment Affairs also planting a tree on behalf of the ministry



UNESCO's Lwandle Simelane also preparing to plant a tree while the students look on.

GROWING IMPACT THROUGH BLUE ROOTS

Partnership champions environmental stewardship, youth participation and ecosystem restoration through a commitment to plant one million trees across Africa.

As part of the Earth Day 2026 commemoration held at Enhlanhleni Primary School, Standard Bank Eswatini and the Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) reaffirmed their commitment to environmental sustainability through the launch of the Blue Roots Initiative.



Standard Bank's Head Business & Commercial Banking, Mlamuli Hlatshwayo making his remarks

Addressing stakeholders during the event, Standard Bank Standard Bank's Head of Business & Commercial Banking, Mlamuli Hlatshwayo highlighted the importance of collective action in tackling climate change and safeguarding natural resources for future generations. The initiative forms part of Standard Bank's continental commitment to plant one million trees across Africa while promoting environmental education and community participation.

He also emphasized that sustainability is not only about protecting the environment but also about investing in communities, empowering young people and creating resilient ecosystems. Schools were identified as critical partners in nurturing environmental responsibility among future generations.

The event brought together representatives from government, UNESCO, the education sector and environmental stakeholders, demonstrating the power of collaboration in advancing climate action and sustainable development in Eswatini.



Through the Blue Roots Initiative, EEF and Standard Bank continue to demonstrate that meaningful partnerships can drive lasting environmental impact while inspiring communities to play an active role in building a greener and more sustainable future.

“The future of our planet depends on the actions we take today. Through partnerships such as Blue Roots, we are investing in communities, young people and a greener future for generations to come.”

- EEA's DEAC, Mxolisi Maphanga





EEF BOARD TOURS FUNDED PROJECTS

... witnessing first-hand the environmental and socio-economic impact of community-led initiatives funded under the 2024/25 funding cycle.

The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) Board of Trustees recently concluded a three-day nationwide project monitoring tour, visiting eleven community-led environmental initiatives funded under the 2024/25 funding cycle. The visits provided an opportunity for the Board to engage directly with project beneficiaries, assess implementation progress, and evaluate the impact of EEF investments on communities and the environment.

Across the country, the Board witnessed inspiring examples of environmental restoration, climate resilience, waste management innovation, and sustainable natural resource management. Communities showcased projects aimed at rehabilitating degraded landscapes, restoring wetlands, improving waste collection systems, promoting water security, and creating environmentally sustainable enterprises.

Among the projects visited were the Dumako and Khamsile Donga Rehabilitation initiatives, where significant progress has been made in combating soil erosion through the installation of gabions, strategic fencing, and indigenous vegetation planting. The Board also visited the Maphungwane Wetland Restoration Project in Siteki, where rehabilitation efforts are helping restore critical ecosystems while creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

Innovation and entrepreneurship were equally evident during visits to youth-led projects such as Nutriplume Eco Solutions, which is transforming poultry feather waste into organic fertilizer, creating employment opportunities while addressing environmental challenges. In Ngculwini, the Tsab'tolo Co-operative Waste Management Project demonstrated how community-driven waste collection and segregation can improve environmental health while serving thousands of households and businesses.

The Board further witnessed the positive impact of water

conservation investments at Thembelihle High School, where a water harvesting system has transformed access to water and enabled productive gardening initiatives that support both learners and the surrounding community.



The Board posing with the Thembelihle High School students after the tour.

Throughout the tour, project leaders and community representatives shared their achievements, challenges, and future aspirations. The Board commended beneficiaries for their commitment to environmental stewardship and encouraged communities to continue safeguarding project infrastructure and strengthening sustainability measures to ensure long-term impact.

The visits reaffirmed the Eswatini Environment Fund's commitment to supporting grassroots environmental solutions that not only restore ecosystems but also empower communities, create economic opportunities, and build resilience for future generations. Together, these projects stand as powerful examples of how local action can drive meaningful environmental and social transformation across Eswatini.

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The Eswatini Environment Fund Board of Trustees met with community members of the projects to gain first-hand insights into project implementation, achievements, and challenges while reaffirming its commitment to community-led environmental conservation. Here are some of the pictures from the different projects



MAPHUNDWANE BANGELANDS AND WETLANDS MANAGEMENT PROJECT



“Together, we are transforming environmental challenges into opportunities for sustainable community development.”

- Professor Vilane, EEF Board Chairman



Ntugume Lusiba Loluntale Waste management Project



Ngculweni Solid Waste Management Project



Khamile Dunga Rehabilitation Project



Dumakho Dunga Rehabilitation Project



GOVT LAUNCHES E2M CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR 2025/26

The launch was officiated by the Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane, during a well-attended event held at Hhukwini Inkhundla.

The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) officially launched its 2025/26 Call for Proposals on 5 March 2026, marking the beginning of another important funding cycle aimed at supporting community-driven environmental initiatives across the country.

During the launch, it was announced that a total of E2 million had been allocated towards funding projects that promote environmental conservation, sustainable natural resource management, climate resilience, environmental education, and community empowerment. Prospective applicants were given a six-week application window, with submissions officially closing on 16 April 2026.

“Environmental change begins with empowered communities. Through this call for proposals, we are investing in local solutions that will shape a more sustainable future for Eswatini.”

- MTEA Minister

Recognising the importance of reaching communities across all regions of the country, the Fund implemented an extensive communication and awareness campaign to ensure that information about the funding opportunity was widely accessible. The campaign utilised a diverse range of communication platforms, enabling the Fund to engage stakeholders from different sectors and geographic locations.

National television coverage through Eswatini News provided visibility for the launch, with the Executive Director participating in interviews to explain the objectives and requirements of the funding programme. The Fund further strengthened its outreach through print media advertisements and feature articles published in both the Times of Eswatini and the Eswatini Observer.

To reach audiences through radio, the Fund participated in a number of programmes including Letishisako, Tinkhundleni Programme, the Forestry Programme, VOC and English-language broadcasts. These engagements provided an opportunity to answer questions, explain application requirements and encourage eligible organisations and community groups to submit proposals.

In addition, the Fund hosted a webinar and conducted stakeholder presentations to provide detailed guidance on the application process. Digital communication channels, including Facebook, LinkedIn, and the official Eswatini Environment Authority and Eswatini Environment Fund websites, played a critical role in extending the campaign's reach and ensuring that information remained readily available throughout the application period.



Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane delivering her speech of launching the Call for proposals at Hhukwini.

A key priority of the Fund was ensuring that the application process remained accessible and inclusive. Applicants were able to seek assistance through dedicated email and telephone support channels, where Fund personnel responded to enquiries and provided guidance throughout the application period. Comprehensive application guidelines accompanied all application forms, helping applicants better understand eligibility requirements, project expectations and submission procedures.

To further promote inclusivity and broaden participation, all application documents and supporting materials were made available in both English and siSwati. This approach ensured that individuals, community groups and organisations from all parts of Eswatini could access information in a language they are comfortable with, thereby strengthening opportunities for meaningful participation.

The successful rollout of the Call for Proposals reflects the Fund's commitment to transparency, accessibility and community engagement. By creating multiple avenues for communication and support, the EEF continues to empower communities to develop innovative environmental solutions that contribute to the sustainable development of Eswatini.



During the launch, Honourable Minister Jane Mkhonta-Simelane highlighted that application forms and accompanying guidelines would be readily accessible through the official Eswatini Environment Authority and Eswatini Environment Fund websites, as well as at EEA offices across the country. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that all emaSwati, regardless of their location, have equitable access to information and funding opportunities aimed at advancing environmental sustainability and community development. The Minister encouraged individuals, community groups, civil society organisations and other eligible stakeholders to take full advantage of the funding window, noting that

the Fund presents a valuable platform for transforming innovative environmental ideas into tangible and impactful projects.

The Minister further made a passionate appeal for increased participation by women, particularly members of BoMake and other women-led community groups, in future funding applications. She observed that a significant proportion of previously funded projects had been led by men and stressed the importance of achieving greater gender balance in environmental initiatives. Recognising the critical role women play in natural resource management, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods, she encouraged them to step forward with confidence and actively pursue funding opportunities.

The Minister reiterated that empowering women through access to environmental financing would not only strengthen community development but also contribute meaningfully to the country's broader sustainable development agenda.



The Minister greeting the delegation from boMake Rural Projects and the public who attended the event



EEA's Executive Director Gcina Dladla and Board Member, Siphoshe Shiba sharing their remarks.

MINISTER HANDS OVER HHUKWINI PROJECT

The Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane, conducted a ministerial visit to the Hhukwini Planting Trees for the Future Project.

The programme included site visits to tree nurseries established by youth groups within the Hhukwini Inkhundla. Two nurseries are being constructed under the project, located in Dlangeni and LaMgabhi Umphakatsi. These were developed through a collaborative partnership involving BoMake Gone Rural and the Forestry Department under the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.



The Minister taking a picture with The Board, EEA, EEF, project owners and relevant stakeholders after the tour.

The nurseries serve as centres for building green skills among young people, particularly in tree propagation and nursery management, while also contributing to local reforestation efforts. This is especially critical for Hhukwini, an area affected by strong winds and ongoing land degradation.

The visit concluded with the official handover of the project to the Hhukwini community, symbolizing local ownership and long-term sustainability.

The event featured remarks from several key stakeholders, including a representative of the Hhohho Regional Administration, Princess Tsandzile, Hhukwini Member of Parliament Hon. Lushaba, Indvuna Yenkhundla, Babe Khanyile, the EEA Management Board Chairperson Mr. Simelane and the EEF Board of Trustees Chairperson Prof. Vilane.



The Ministering touring through the nursery while EEF officer, Payday Langwenya pose next to the signboard



INCREASING THE FUND VISIBILITY

Engaging communities and stakeholders through national events and strategic outreach initiatives

The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) continued to strengthen its outreach and stakeholder engagement efforts through participation in key national events aimed at increasing public awareness of environmental funding opportunities.

These engagements provided valuable platforms to connect with diverse audiences, share information about the Fund's mandate, and encourage greater participation in environmental and climate action initiatives across the country.

One of the Fund's major outreach activities was its participation in the Marula Festival (Buganu) 2026 held at Hlane. The nationally celebrated event attracted thousands of emaSwati from all regions of the country, creating an ideal opportunity to engage communities, youth groups, entrepreneurs, civil society organisations and traditional leaders. The EEF team shared information on funding opportunities, application procedures and eligibility requirements, while QR codes linked directly to application forms were made available to facilitate easy access to information.

The engagement also enabled the Fund to collect contact details from interested individuals seeking additional support and guidance. The response from the public was overwhelmingly positive, with notable interest from women and young people who expressed a desire to participate in environmental and climate-related projects. Through this initiative, the Fund significantly enhanced its visibility and accessibility while promoting inclusive participation in environmental conservation efforts.

EEF further expanded its outreach through participation in the Mbabane Mayor's Golf Tournament held at the Mbabane Golf Club.

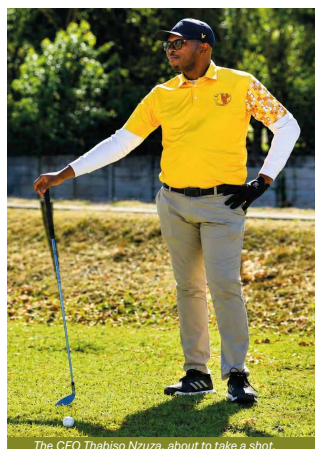


Environment Fund Officers at the Marula Buganu Festival at Hlane

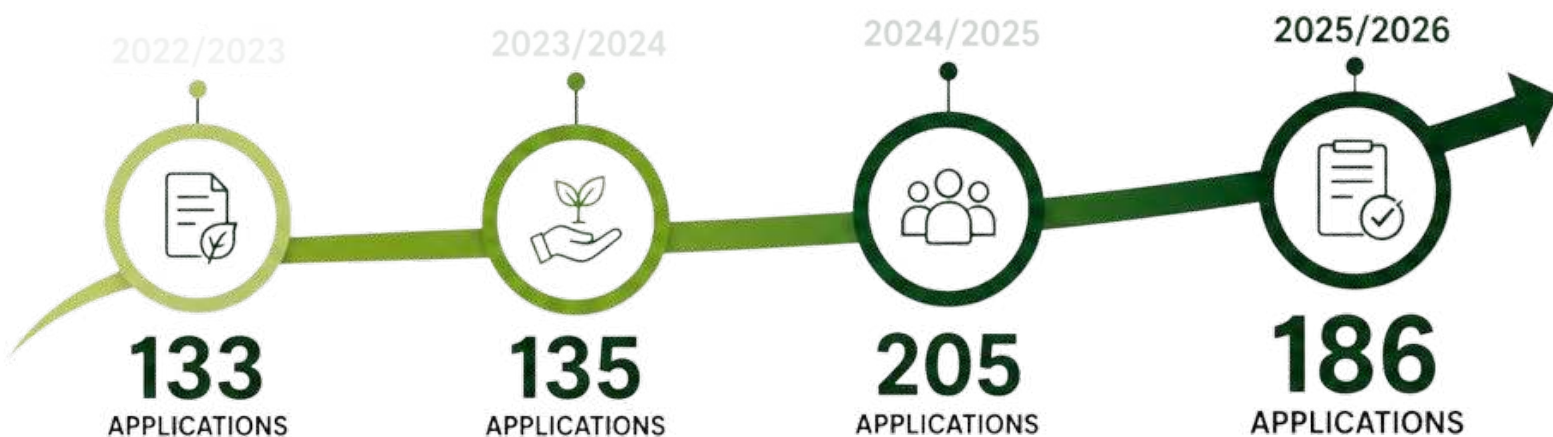
The event brought together stakeholders from government, the private sector and civil society, providing an excellent platform to discuss the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management. Participants were engaged on the role of preserving natural ecosystems and green spaces in supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and community well-being.

Through its presence at both the Marula Festival and the Mbabane Mayor's Golf Tournament, the Eswatini Environment Fund successfully strengthened relationships with stakeholders, increased awareness of available funding opportunities and reinforced its commitment to supporting environmental sustainability across the Kingdom.

These engagements continue to contribute to the Fund's objective of making environmental funding more accessible while inspiring greater community involvement in building a greener and more resilient Eswatini.



The CPO Thabiso Nzuza, about to take a shot.



186 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR 2025/26 GRANTS

Application demand remains strong as the Fund surpasses E12 million in environmental investments

The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) continues to play a pivotal role in supporting environmental sustainability and community-driven conservation initiatives across the country. During the 2025/2026 Call for Proposals, the Fund received a total of 186 applications, demonstrating continued interest from communities, civil society organisations, youth groups and environmental stakeholders seeking to implement impactful environmental projects.

While the 2025/2026 call recorded a slight decrease from the 205 applications received during the 2024/2025 funding cycle, application numbers remain significantly higher than those recorded in previous years. The Fund received 135 applications in 2023/2024 and 133 applications in 2022/2023, highlighting a growing awareness of environmental funding opportunities and increasing public commitment to environmental action.

EEF remains committed to supporting innovative projects that deliver meaningful environmental and socio-economic benefits.



Applications dropping box placed at the Reception at EEA.



Over the years, the Eswatini Environment Fund has invested more than E12 million in environmental projects across the Kingdom of Eswatini. These investments have supported a wide range of initiatives, including ecosystem restoration, climate change adaptation, sustainable

livelihoods, environmental education, waste management and biodiversity conservation.

The sustained level of interest in the Fund reflects the growing importance of environmental stewardship and the willingness of communities to actively contribute towards building a greener and more resilient future for Eswatini. As the evaluation process progresses,



“Every application reflects a community’s commitment to building a greener and more sustainable Eswatini.”

- SisekeloShongwe, EEF Fund Officer



ESWATINI
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Funding Community Action for a Greener Eswatini



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Protect our planet, preserve our future.

THEME

CLIMATE CHANGE

Act Today, Secure Tomorrow.



“
Dongas are silent reminders that when we lose our soil, we gradually lose the very foundation that sustains life itself.”

Mr Bheki Vilane

Eswatini Environment Fund
Board Member

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Application evaluation, project selection and key environmental commemorations ahead

Following the closure of the 2025/2026 Call for Proposals, the Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) enters the next phase of the funding cycle, with a total of 186 applications set to undergo a comprehensive evaluation process.

Beginning in June 2026, the Fund will assess all submitted proposals to determine their alignment with funding priorities, environmental impact, sustainability and feasibility. The evaluation process will be followed by groundtruthing visits, where shortlisted projects will be verified on-site to confirm information provided in the applications and assess their readiness for implementation.

The final stage will involve the selection of projects to receive funding support, ensuring that resources are directed towards initiatives capable of delivering meaningful environmental and socio-economic benefits for communities across Eswatini.

In addition to the funding cycle activities, June has two important environmental commemorations. On 5 June 2026, Eswatini joined the global community in celebrating World Environment Day, the United Nations' flagship environmental awareness event. The commemoration provided an opportunity to promote environmental stewardship and collective action towards addressing environmental challenges.

Later in the month, on 17 June 2026, stakeholders will observe the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, raising awareness about sustainable land management and the importance of restoring degraded landscapes to strengthen resilience against climate change.

As EEF continues its mission of supporting environmental sustainability, these upcoming activities represent important milestones in advancing conservation, climate action and community development throughout the Kingdom of Eswatini.

“
From evaluation to implementation, the next phase focuses on turning promising ideas into impactful environmental solutions.”



ESWATINI ENVIRONMENT FUND

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