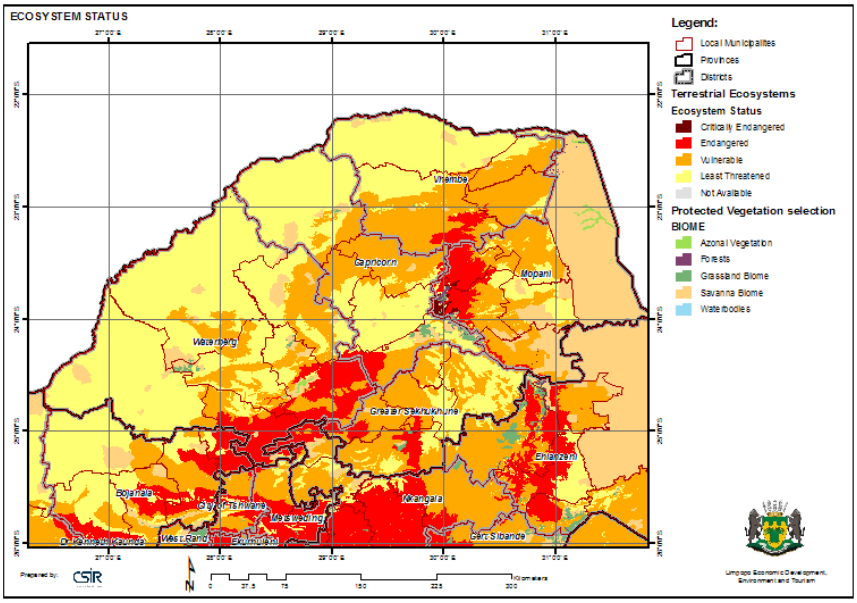
THEME:	**CATEGORY:**
ECOSYSTEM STATUS	**BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEMS**



Ecosystem status of vegetation types was derived from the new vegetation map of South Africa (see Mucina, L and Rutherford, M.C. 2004). Ecosystem status consists of the following categories: critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or least threatened. Ecosystem status was calculated based on the percentage of remaining vegetation area (i.e. not transformed by agriculture, mining, forestry plantations, roads and urban areas) and the biodiversity target set for each vegetation type. The ecosystem status of vegetation types which cannot longer meet its biodiversity target due to habitat transformation was set to "critically endangered" that means the percentage of remaining vegetation type is less than what is required to capture species diversity (biodiversity target). The ecosystem status of other vegetation types was set as follows:

- if % of remaining area <60% of original area then status = endangered
- if % of remaining area <80% of original area then status = vulnerable
- if % of remaining area >80% of original area then status = least threatened.

The protection level quantifies the extent to which vegetation types are protected within conservation areas. The protection level was expressed as the percentage of the biodiversity target met in statutory protected areas (type 1 protected areas). A value of 100% and above means that the vegetation type is adequately conserved in protected areas, while a value of 0 means that the vegetation type is not represented at all in any protected area (SANBI, 2005). "The health of terrestrial ecosystems determines their ability to provide ecosystem services such as water purification, prevention of erosion, carbon storage, supply of medicinal plants and pollination of commercial crops," (NSDP, 2006).

Terrestrial ecosystems are important for continued well-being of the human population in Limpopo

Province and in particular rural populations, which require natural resources to survive. In light of this it is essential to ensure that terrestrial ecosystems are monitored and management plans put in place to prevent adverse effects.

This map contains the following layers:

- Protected Vegetation
- Terrestrial Ecosystems – See above description
- Threatened Ecology
- Primary, secondary, tertiary catchments
- Settlements – settlement polygons created by DWAF
- Homelands – boundaries of previous homeland territories
- Tribal Areas – areas under tribal management
- Mesozones (base layer) – spatial unit type created for GAP for meso-level use.
- Basemap layerset – contains roads, administrative areas etc.

Note: not all layers are active – the user must activate it to be visible.

Source:

South African National Biodiversity Institute, www.sanbi.org.za