



INSIDE STORIES

on climate compatible development

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Key messages

- The Cape Town and eThekweni Municipalities have been early movers in mainstreaming climate change within their municipal plans, known as integrated development plans (IDPs). The two cities were previously involved in climate change initiatives, which facilitated the inclusion of climate change measures in strategic planning instruments.
- Mainstreaming climate change into IDPs and other local development and spatial plans requires research support, specialised technical expertise, political backing and significant financial and human resources.
- Local government cannot effectively address climate change challenges and opportunities unless it works in partnership with other levels of government, research organisations, civil society and the private sector.
- Mainstreaming climate change into IDPs is essential, but alone is not sufficient to achieve climate-compatible development. Sectoral measures, the implementation of existing laws and the creation of new laws are also important.
- It is anticipated that the integration of climate change into IDPs will facilitate strategic political and administrative momentum for climate-compatible development at the local level.

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South Africa's Municipal Integrated Development Plans

Effective responses to climate change require that climate change considerations be included in relevant social, economic and environmental policies at all levels of government. Municipal governments have a particularly critical role to play in establishing on-the-ground policies that address local opportunities and vulnerabilities arising from climate change. Two South African cities, Cape Town and eThekweni, have done just that, by including climate change interventions into their integrated development plans (IDPs).

The IDP is the principal statutory planning instrument for local governments in South Africa. In both cities, climate change interventions were initiated prior to the inclusion of climate change as a strategic priority in the IDP, which almost certainly facilitated that process. Although it is too soon to measure the impact of climate change mainstreaming with certainty, the experience of Cape Town and eThekweni provides lessons in the development of climate-compatible development processes at local levels. This brief reviews these lessons and highlights the importance of local capacity building, research, political support and decision-making in the pursuit of climate-compatible development.

Mainstreaming climate change has been described as a 'holistic' or 'development-first' approach, whereby adaptation and mitigation objectives

are included in development agendas; this approach has been defined as "the integration of policies and measures to address climate change into ongoing sectoral planning and management, so as to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of sectoral and development investments."

Background

In 2011, South Africa's National Climate Change Response White Paper specified that government departments at all levels and state-owned enterprises must ensure that all policies, strategies, legislation, regulations and plans are fully aligned with the National Climate Change Response by October 2013.

The White Paper identifies integrated planning as a strategic priority, with climate change considerations mainstreamed into

all relevant sectors, national, provincial and local planning regimes, and a range of policies and plans. Local government is seen as playing a crucial role in building climate resilience, for example through: planning human settlements and urban development; providing municipal infrastructure and services; water and energy demand management; and local disaster response. Thus, climate change actions must be built into municipal development planning tools, such as IDPs, spatial plans and municipal service delivery programmes.

Integrated development planning, required of all South African cities, involves the entire municipality in finding the best approaches to achieving long-term development. Cape Town and eThekweni have been among the first cities to include climate change in their IDPs. In both cases, action on climate change began before the decision was made to include it as a strategic priority in the IDPs; this prior work appears to have greatly facilitated mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming climate change into IDPs: overview of the Cape Town and eThekweni experiences

As previously noted, both Cape Town and eThekweni had undertaken climate change activities prior to including climate change considerations in their IDPs. Some of these preliminary activities are described below.

The City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town was one of the first South African cities to adopt an Integrated Metropolitan Environmental Plan (IMEP, 2001): an overarching

Integrated Development Planning in South Africa

South Africa's Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (LGSA) requires all municipalities to prepare an IDP: a five-year strategic plan that guides and informs local decisions on planning, management and development. The IDP establishes targets for local governments on sustainable development, environmental management and disaster mitigation. Its aim is to improve the lives of all people living in the municipality, taking into account existing conditions, challenges and the resources available for local development. All municipal planning and projects are aligned with the IDP and other government departments working in the vicinity should take it into account when making their own plans. IDPs are updated regularly, with the involvement of interested citizens in order to ensure a participatory and integrated approach.

policy framework that addresses all relevant local environmental challenges while complying with national and international regulations.

Based on the 2003 State of the Energy Report, Cape Town adopted an Energy and Climate Change Strategy (2006), setting out the City's vision, objectives and plans for its energy activities. The City acknowledged its dependence on non-renewable resources and the importance of energy for its future development. Given South Africa's electricity supply shortages and the country's climate change and UNFCCC obligations, the City recognised its responsibility to lead a sustainable energy and carbon-constrained future. To support the strategy, Cape Town established an Energy and Climate Change Committee, backstopped by an Executive Management Team Subcommittee on Energy and Climate Change and three crosscutting work streams to address energy security and carbon mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience and communication and education.

In 2006, Cape Town also developed specific response strategies in its Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the City of Cape Town (FAC4T). The Framework provides the basis for assessing the impact of climate change on natural resources, the socio-economic environment and the livelihoods of communities. It was based on recommendations and priorities set out in the IMEP, which was reviewed in 2008. The review identified a number of remaining challenges, including the need for coordinated and integrated environmental accountability and commitment across functional departments. Cape Town's IMEP agenda for 2009–2014 identifies electricity consumption and carbon reduction targets as major priorities, especially as they relate to local development needs.

These strategic actions, and a growing body of research supported by the City, proved instrumental in increasing local political will to respond to climate change and facilitating the inclusion of climate change considerations in the 2007/8–2011/12 IDP, through the so-called 'Focus Area 3: Energy for a Sustainable City'.

eThekwini Municipality

The eThekwini Municipality, which centres on the coastal city of Durban, is recognised as a leader of local environmental management. In 2004, eThekwini's Environmental Management Department established the Municipality Climate Protection Programme (MCP). In 2004, eThekwini's Environmental Management Department established the Municipality Climate Protection Programme (MCP).

In its first phase, the MCP assessed Durban's vulnerability to climate change and the policy responses that might be needed. Following a review of its initial activities, the MCP's second phase saw the launch of a Headline Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (HCCAS, 2006) and both municipal and community-based adaptation plans and mitigation options. (A strong focus on adaptation – as a contributor to development – sets Durban apart from other cities where there is a tendency to prioritise mitigation). The review further identified the need to take a more proactive approach to climate change disaster management, including putting onto place the infrastructure and capacity needed to mount an adequate response.

The third phase, of the MCP, which began in 2007, developed an Integrative Assessment Tool (2007/19) to evaluate long-term plans and policies concerning the impacts of climate change. The fourth phase involves the mainstreaming of climate change concerns into city planning and development and the establishment of the Climate Protection Branch. The eThekwini Municipality based its interventions on the recognition that local resilience to climate change needs to be improved while not jeopardising post-apartheid development gains.

In both cities, internal demands (energy



Foreshore development in Cape Town, some of which includes low-lying land reclaimed from the sea © istockphoto.com.

related needs or, in the case of Durban, climate change risks due to the flooding of coastal areas and heavy storm events) and external pressures (national and international pressure to address climate change at local levels) have brought climate change considerations to the fore. Both cities encouraged the participation of all relevant sectors in research and planning, which led to a clearer understanding of their various needs, responsibilities and roles. Leadership, at both the political and administrative levels, was essential for creating the necessary momentum. Strategic networking also seems to have been a critical factor in the approach adopted by both municipalities.

Current focus areas in climate compatible development planning in Cape Town and eThekwini

Cape Town's IDP recognises the City's responsibility for creating a sustainable energy future and reducing carbon emissions. Managing energy

consumption is the main objective of IDP Focus Area 3A, and the City has committed to reducing its carbon footprint from an estimated 6.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) per capita each year to 5 tCO₂e per capita by 2014. While the IDP is concerned with both adaptation and mitigation, the greater emphasis has been placed on promoting mitigation measures.

Sustainable and integrated social, economic and environmental land use management is the first goal in eThekwini's second IDP (2006–2011). Protecting the municipality from climate change and minimising pollution are seen as important strategies for achieving this goal. To that end, eThekwini is developing appropriate mitigation and adaptation plans within the context of its MCP. The 2011/2012 IDP includes climate protection planning as a stand-alone strategic focus area.

Since the integration of climate change in the IDP, Cape Town has taken action to address its high carbon footprint,

Challenges

- Concerns over the implementation and effectiveness of IDPs and a lack of confidence in the instrument itself. Notwithstanding these concerns, the IDP remains the central planning and development instrument at the local level and is therefore the logical mechanism for incorporating climate change into municipal governance.
- Undertaking the foundational work necessary to achieve strategic mainstreaming and securing the necessary financial and political support for such work.
- Lack of relevant technical and other capacity and poor awareness of the importance of climate change responses by local government.
- Uncertainty over the mandate of local government to respond to the climate challenge.
- The difficulty of linking climate change with the local development agenda. In many instances, climate change is regarded as an issue removed from local circumstances and priorities.
- A lack of initial guidance and support from provincial and national governments meant that progress in Cape Town and eThekweni heavily relied on the proactivity of a single champion, without whom success might never have been achieved.
- The need to identify climate response priorities for individual municipalities.

poor energy security and vulnerability to climate change. Adopted in 2010, the Energy and Climate Change Action Plan (ECAP) seeks to reduce the city's energy consumption and to improve resilience to climate change. Similar measures are underway in eThekweni. However, it is too early to know whether these activities are the result of the mainstreaming process or an outcome of the momentum developed around climate change in both cities over time.

The successful establishment of climate change as a local government priority can be verified by institutional markers, such as: the allocation of sufficient resources to climate action; political and administrative decision-making influenced by climate change considerations; the inclusion of climate change in municipal plans; and political and administrative support for climate change initiatives. However, in the final analysis, the strategic mainstreaming of climate change in municipal governance is a necessary,

but insufficient contribution to climate-compatible development at the local level. Government strategies and action plans must have adequate resources and the capacity to succeed, as well as supporting instruments, such as by-laws, land use management systems, building design and construction standards.

Implications

- Incorporating climate change into municipal strategic planning can play a vital role in identifying climate change issues and challenges as a focus and strategic area requiring resource allocation, development planning and local government attention.
- National-level policy guidance and enabling regulatory frameworks must provide the certainty and impetus to stimulate climate-compatible development policy planning at the local level.
- To facilitate the strategic mainstreaming process, municipalities

must link climate change considerations with existing challenges related to local sustainable development in an adaptive, progressive and flexible manner.

To counter challenges associated with a lack of local expertise and awareness about climate change, municipalities must undertake capacity building programmes for decision-makers, their staff and associated stakeholders. Efforts aimed at mainstreaming climate change into municipal planning should start by utilising existing and relevant statutory development/planning instruments. Addressing climate change continues to be a work in progress for local governments in South Africa. This brief identifies some of the requirements for effectively mainstreaming climate-related objectives in municipal plans, but it will take time before the ultimate impacts of such mainstreaming can be measured.

Key lessons

Information, awareness and buy-in: Experience in Cape Town and eThekweni demonstrates that preliminary research on the local impacts of climate change is critical to ensuring informed strategies for climate action within the context of the respective IDPs. In both municipalities, awareness-building sessions helped to communicate the local implications of climate change and facilitated political and administrative buy-in for the mainstreaming process. Building the capacity of local government personnel to incorporate climate concerns into local planning was another critical activity.

Ensuring local relevance: Climate change considerations must be shown to be relevant to local priorities and circumstances. Developing county governments face many social, economic and environmental challenges and framing climate change action as a response to these challenges enables decision-makers to see such action as contributing to – rather than constraining – development.

Promoting municipal and local institutional change: Significant differences often exist in the institutional abilities of municipal sectors to respond to climate change. In eThekweni, some sectors were already undertaking work on adaptation, while other sectors demonstrated a limited awareness or prioritisation of climate change issues. Capacity issues also impeded the integration of climate change considerations into development planning. Institutional change and restructuring are often necessary to ensure the effective implementation of climate-related programmes and mechanisms. The clarification of roles and responsibilities for taking climate action is also essential for ensuring political and administrative buy-in.

Finding climate change champions at the local level: The identification of trusted and influential champions is key to the successful implementation of climate change programmes. Champions should derive from the political and administrative spheres. It is important that their actions should ultimately make them redundant, once climate action has become institutionalised and no longer relies on a specific person to carry it forward.

Mainstreaming climate change into existing and relevant statutory instruments: necessary but insufficient: Including climate change considerations in the local government's IDP is important for promoting climate-compatible planning. However, while such mainstreaming is necessary, it is ultimately an insufficient response to the climate challenge. Local governments must build individual and sectoral capacities and use a range of other instruments, such as by-laws and sectoral plans, to facilitate or compel action on climate change.

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The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to help decision-makers in developing countries design and deliver climate-compatible development. We do this by providing demand-led research and technical assistance and channelling the best available knowledge on climate change and development to support policy processes at the country level.

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Front cover photo:
The Durban (eThekweni Municipality) coastline has seen unusual tides and flooding at least partly attributable to climate change.
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