



NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE
WHITE PAPER

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DoE	Department of Energy
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
IGCCC	Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change
IMCCC	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRP 2010	Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity Generation 2010
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MRV	Measure, report and verify
NCCC	National Committee on Climate Change
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NEVA	National Employment Vulnerability Assessments
NEVB	National Employment Vulnerability Baseline
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGP	New Growth Path
NRF	National Research Foundation
SAAQIS	South African Air Quality Information System
SARVA	South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SJRPs	Sector Jobs Resilience Plans
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change is already a measurable reality and along with other developing countries, South Africa is especially vulnerable to its impacts. This White Paper presents the South African Government's vision for an effective climate change response and the long-term, just transition to a climate-resilient and lower-carbon economy and society. South Africa's response to climate change has two objectives:

- Effectively manage inevitable climate change impacts through interventions that build and sustain South Africa's social, economic and environmental resilience and emergency response capacity.
- Make a fair contribution to the global effort to stabilise greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that avoids dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system within a timeframe that enables economic, social and environmental development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

This response is guided by principles set out in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the National Environmental Management Act, the Millennium Declaration and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. These principles are detailed in section 3.

The overall strategic approach for South Africa's climate change response is needs driven and customised; developmental; transformational, empowering and participatory; dynamic and evidence-based; balanced and cost effective; and integrated and aligned.

In terms of strategic priorities, the White Paper sets out South Africa's climate change response strategy to achieve the National Climate Change Response Objective in a manner consistent with the outlined principles and approach and which is structured around the following strategic priorities: risk reduction and management; mitigation actions with significant outcomes; sectoral responses; policy and regulatory alignment; informed decision making and planning; integrated planning; technology research, development and innovation; facilitated behaviour change; behaviour change through choice; and resource mobilisation.

See section 4 for details of the elements of the response policy.

In terms of adaptation, the National Climate Change Response includes a risk-based process to identify and prioritise short- and medium-term adaptation interventions

to be addressed in sector plans. The process will also identify the adaptation responses that require coordination between sectors and departments and it will be reviewed every five years. For the immediate future, sectors that need particular attention are water, agriculture and forestry, health, biodiversity and human settlements. Resilience to climate variability and climate change-related extreme weather events will be the basis for South Africa's future approach to disaster management and we will use region-wide approaches where appropriate.

Section 5 expands on the adaptation part of the response policy.

South Africa's approach to mitigation, which is addressed by section 6 of the response policy, balances the country's contribution as a responsible global citizen to the international effort to curb global emissions with the economic and social opportunities presented by the transition to a lower-carbon economy as well as with the requirement that the country successfully tackles the development challenges facing it.

The key elements in the overall approach to mitigation will be:

- Using a National GHG Emissions Trajectory Range, against which the collective outcome of all mitigation actions will be measured;
- Defining desired emission reduction outcomes for each significant sector and sub-sector of the economy based on an in-depth assessment of the mitigation potential, best available mitigation options, science, evidence and a full assessment of the costs and benefits;
- Adopting a carbon budget approach to provide for flexibility and least-cost mechanisms for companies in relevant sectors and/or sub-sectors and, where appropriate, translating carbon budgets into company level desired emission reduction outcomes.
- Requiring companies and economic sectors or sub-sectors for which desired emission reduction outcomes have been established to prepare and submit mitigation plans that set out how they intend to achieve the desired emission reduction outcomes.
- Developing and implementing a wide range and mix of different types of mitigation approaches, policies, measures and actions that optimise the

mitigation outcomes as well as job creation and other sustainable developmental benefits. This optimal mix of mitigation actions will be developed to achieve the defined desired emission reduction outcomes for each sector and sub-sector of the economy by ensuring that actions are specifically tailored to the potential, best available solutions and other relevant conditions related to the specific sector, sub-sector or organisation concerned;

- The deployment of a range of economic instruments to support the system of desired emissions reduction outcomes, including the appropriate pricing of carbon and economic incentives, as well as the possible use of emissions offset or emission reduction trading mechanisms for those relevant sectors, sub-sectors, companies or entities where a carbon budget approach has been selected.
- A national system of data collection to provide detailed, complete, accurate and up-to-date emissions data in the form of a Greenhouse Gas Inventory and a Monitoring and Evaluation System to support the analysis of the impact of mitigation measures.

In addition to the direct physical impacts of climate change, there are also secondary economic impacts where South Africa may be economically vulnerable to response measures - measures taken both internationally and nationally, to reduce GHG emissions. As discussed in section 7, Government will take a multi-pronged approach to addressing and managing response measures, especially in respect of those that may have negative economic impacts.

A suite of Near-term Priority Flagship Programmes consisting of both new initiatives and the scaling up of existing initiatives will be implemented while the first sectoral desired emission reduction outcomes and carbon budgets are being developed and initial adaptation interventions prioritised. This component is addressed in section 8.

For job creation, as described in section 9, the National Climate Change Response aims to limit jobs contraction to those areas of the economy where excessive carbon intensity is unsustainable, whilst promoting and expanding the green economy sectors. The National Climate Change Response also aims to promote investment in human and productive resources that will grow the green economy. To do this, Government will assess the vulnerability of the different economic sectors to climate change and develop Sector Job Resilience Plans.

To mainstream climate-resilient development, section 10 notes that all Government departments and state-owned enterprises will need to review the policies, strategies, legislation, regulations and plans falling within their jurisdictions to ensure full alignment with the National Climate Change Response within two years of the publication of this policy. On the basis of the outcome of these reviews, government will determine what adjustments need to be made to achieve alignment with the goals and objectives of the National Climate Change Response, and will identify any additional legislative or regulatory measures that are needed. The National Climate Change Response itself will be reviewed every five years from the publication of this policy.

All sectors of the South African society will take part in the effort to mainstream climate-resilient development. Existing institutional arrangements, such as the Cabinet Clusters, the National Planning Commission, the Forum of South African Directors-General, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Water and Environment Affairs, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change and the multi-stakeholder National Committee on Climate Change will be used to drive this new policy direction.

Government departments will start communicating with citizens about climate change to inform and educate them and to influence their behavioural choices. This includes setting up and maintaining early warning systems so that people can take specific actions to reduce risks to themselves, their households and property.

South Africa needs to mobilise financial, human and knowledge resources to effectively address climate change. To this end, Government will use existing financial institutions and instruments and it will help to develop new ones. This includes international financial assistance specifically for climate change response actions. During the initial period of transition to a climate-resilient and lower-carbon economy and society, Government will establish an interim climate finance coordination mechanism to secure the necessary resources for priority programmes.

See section 11 for further details on resource mobilisation.

To formulate effective responses to climate change, South Africa needs a country-wide monitoring system to measure climate variables at scales appropriate to the institutions that must implement climate change responses.

13. CONCLUSION

Amongst a range of environmental constraints that are of necessity playing an increasing role in social development planning, climate change represents the most urgent and far-reaching challenge of our time. While every country will have to develop its own adaptive responses to the effects of climate change, mitigating climate change to ensure the disruption caused to human and natural systems is within manageable parameters can only arise out of a global response. Furthermore, responding to climate change is a cross-generational challenge. The effects of action or inaction will not be felt immediately, but will have significant consequences for future generations.

It is within this context, and informed by an appropriate sense of urgency, that the South African government has developed this National Climate Change Response Policy. The current plan represents the first iteration of South Africa's ongoing efforts to adapt to climate change and contribute to the global mitigation effort. In terms of our contribution to the global mitigation effort, the decision to institute sectoral desired emission reduction outcomes and carbon budgets is momentous – it represents a concrete and practical commitment by South Africa.

Realising this commitment will require sustained effort and cooperation from all spheres of government, the private sector and civil society formations, and ultimately will depend on decisions by individual citizens to embrace climate-friendly lifestyles and habits. Everyone is a stakeholder in this plan, and the level of engagement from the public in the process of drafting the National Climate Change Response suggests that there is no shortage of the requisite will to make the far-reaching changes that are required. Government wishes to thank all stakeholders for their contributions to this process, and more importantly, for their commitment to building a climate-resilient South Africa for the current and future generations.