

# SA RISK AND VULNERABILITY ATLAS E NEWSLETTER

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## Toolkit for local decision-makers aims to strengthen environmental sustainability

*Miriam Murambadoro and Kristy Faccor, CSIR Natural Resources & the Environment*

Members of the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas (SARVA) were involved in a meeting aimed at the development of a toolkit towards improved integration of climate change into local government's integrated development planning (IDP) processes.

The meeting was hosted by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and was being delivered by Sustainable Energy Africa and the Palmer Development Group – the toolkit developers.

The need for a toolkit was identified by the GIZ and SALGA following an increasing call for local government planning to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation realities. While policy and legislation in South Africa address integration of environmental sustainability into local planning, development and service provision, many municipalities are finding it difficult to incorporate global change into development planning to the same level as other factors. A key factor of this is identifying the right process and tools available to understand what is happening and could happen in a particular municipality in the future – answering the question, for what eventualities must we plan?

Consideration of changing urban, socio-economic and environmental conditions in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) goes beyond having 'green projects' such as nature reserves and eco-tourism. Meaningful analysis of various layers of change – for instance where there is increasing population density and extreme weather events – will require a process of asking questions about risks and areas of opportunity to build resilience. Through this process, planners can begin to see how the environment will influence development options as well as how development options will in turn impact on the environment.

### Toolkit development and roll-out

The toolkit package under development is aimed at providing global change information to local municipal decision makers in various capacities. It is both process and product oriented, helping to identify important areas of consideration, as well as where to find this information. As such, the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas will provide an invaluable resource to toolkit users.

When completed, the toolkit should provide practical planning and management tools that aim to help IDP managers and other municipal officers fulfil their mandate to reduce poverty, provide services in an environmentally sustainable manner, and promote local economic development. There are also plans to include case studies and tips which link to legislated and standardised planning processes such as the IDP, the Spatial Development Frameworks and others.

To ensure user appropriateness, five municipalities from the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo have been selected to pilot the draft toolkit. These include a metropolitan municipality, district municipality and local municipalities (category B2 and B4). Following this process, feedback from each of these groups will be incorporated into a final product.

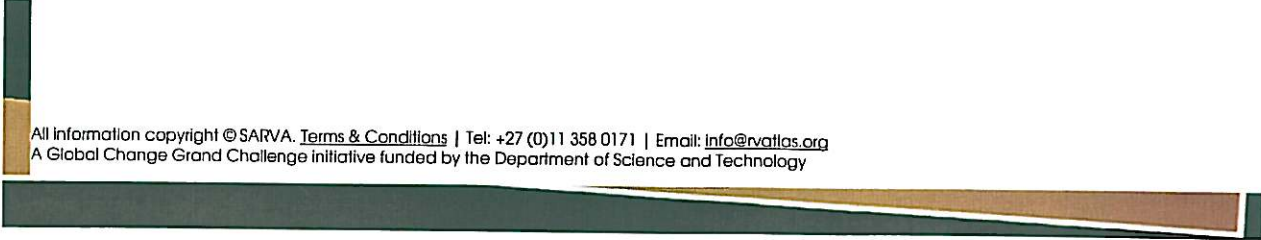
The South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas team welcomes this development and looks forward to participating in the next round of discussions on this interesting project.



Many municipalities are finding it difficult to incorporate environmental concerns into development planning to the same level as economic and social factors.



Practical resources which improve wise use of resources, such as clean air, water bodies and vegetation, and improved quality of life for citizens will help to secure a resilient future for South Africa.



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