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## Capacity Building Programme Strengthens South Africa's Path to a Climate-Friendly Future

**A nation-wide training series brought together stakeholders from government and institutions—demonstrating why the transition to a climate-friendly economy can only succeed through collaboration.**

A comprehensive capacity-building programme - which was supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) - has delivered a significant boost to South Africa's transition toward a green, climate-resilient economy.

More than 280 representatives from government, administration and organisations participated in the nationwide training series, which spanned all nine provinces. The programme aimed to strengthen knowledge, build capacity, and promote exchange across different levels of government.

### **Broad participation across government and institutions**

Participants included officials from provincial, district and local government, as well as national departments. Organisations such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) were also represented.

The first training session took place in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga, in May 2024, with the final session held in the North West Province in February 2026—marking a nearly two-year initiative reaching stakeholders across the country.

Participants can continue to access course materials and deepen their knowledge via an online learning platform, even after the conclusion of the in-person programme.

### **Collaboration instead of silos**

A key takeaway from the series is the strong need for enhanced collaboration. Many municipalities still operate in isolation—both from one another and from other stakeholders. The training directly addressed this challenge by creating space for dialogue, peer learning and the exchange of perspectives.

This interaction proved essential for understanding the complexities of the “just transition” approach—a socially inclusive shift to a low-carbon economy—and for developing joint solutions.

### **Complex topics, practical insights**

The programme covered a broad range of topics, including Doughnut Economics; greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon intensity of exports; and pathways to net zero. It also addressed policy frameworks, economic opportunities, and the justice dimensions of the transition.

Particular emphasis was placed on how to operationalise a just transition—and on the risks associated with an unmanaged or uncoordinated transition process.

## **Regional realities require tailored approaches**

One clear insight emerged: one-size-fits-all solutions are not effective. The training highlighted significant differences in the conditions, risks and opportunities across provinces.

Provincial vulnerability assessments were especially impactful, prompting participants to reflect on regional climate risks. The conclusion is clear: successful strategies must be locally grounded and responsive to specific contexts.

As one participant from the Northern Cape noted, the training “deepened understanding of how the shift to a low-carbon economy can be made equitable, inclusive and sustainable.”

## **Contributing to international climate goals**

The capacity building programme directly supports the objectives of IKI's Just Transition to a Decarbonised Economy for South Africa (JUST SA) project. By equipping government actors with the skills to design and implement effective measures, it strengthens climate action—particularly at the subnational level.

Building institutional capacity is key: only capable administrations can effectively reduce emissions and accelerate green economic development over the long term.

## **Looking ahead: strengthening networks and learning**

To sustain momentum, the JUST SA project will place greater emphasis on knowledge sharing and collaboration. A dedicated Community of Practice will foster ongoing exchange among municipalities and provinces.

Further activities are planned, including expanding the online learning platform, launching a provincial podcast series, and organising an international study tour to India in October 2026. The tour will provide selected participants with practical insights into just transition approaches in another country.

## **A programme with long-term ambition**

The IKI-funded project JUST SA supports pathways toward an environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient, low-carbon economy and a just society.

The message of the capacity building series is clear: the path forward is complex—but with the right knowledge, strong institutions and close collaboration, a just transition can be achieved.

**Share link** <https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/NEWS3557-1>

## **Contact**

### **IKI Office**

Zukunft – Umwelt – Gesellschaft (ZUG) gGmbH  
Stresemannstraße 69-71

10963 Berlin

[iki-office@z-u-g.org](mailto:iki-office@z-u-g.org)

## **The IKI in South Africa**

[Find out more about the project work in the country \(/en/south-africa/\).](#)

## What does “Just Transition” mean?

To keep the impacts of climate change manageable, global economies and lifestyles must become climate-neutral by mid-century. This transformation must be socially just. A “just transition” means that the shift toward a climate-neutral and equitable economic and social system includes everyone—leaving no one behind.

[Read more \(German\) \(https://www.bmz.de/de/themen/klimawandel-und-entwicklung/just-transition\)](https://www.bmz.de/de/themen/klimawandel-und-entwicklung/just-transition)

## Further information on the capacity building programme

The programme was conducted by the Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) under the IKI project “Just Transition to a Decarbonised Economy for South Africa (JUST SA)”, which is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

[Find out more \(https://just-sa-tips.trainercentralsite.com/course/just-sa/\)](https://just-sa-tips.trainercentralsite.com/course/just-sa/)

## Related Videos

[South Africa: Gregor Schmorl on the role of the IKI in a just transition \(/en/iki-media/video/gregor-schmorl-iki-suedafrika-erklaert-wie-die-iki-die-herausforderungen-der-just-transition-unterstuetzt-new69ce24c48fb97374067576/\)](#)

[JUST SA project video \(/en/iki-media/video/just-sa-project-video-new6757f7ac79b28557156126/\)](#)

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