

Green Book readies municipalities for climate change

Municipalities across South Africa can now assess climate risks and growth pressures using an online climate risk profiling and adaptation tool that was recently launched by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).



Image source: www.pixabay.com

“The open access, online tool – named the Green Book – is intended to be an applied knowledge resource for municipalities to address climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in human settlements,” CSIR senior researcher and project lead, Willemien van Niekerk said.

He said the objective of the tool is to assist decision-makers in the local government sphere to better understand the consequences of climate change and how to respond.

“The ultimate goal of the Green Book is to contribute to resilient, sustainable and liveable human settlements through climate change adaptation,” Van Niekerk said.

Assessing climate risks

The CSIR on 8 March launched the state-of-the-art online climate risk profiling and adaptation tool to assist municipalities across South Africa to assess climate risks and growth pressures, and implement adaptation actions towards the development of climate resilient human settlements.

The Green Book is a novel and unique attempt at interdisciplinary, applied sciences combining the expertise of researchers in climatology, demography, disaster risk sciences, environmental sciences, geography, informatics, urban planning, economics, ecology, architecture, anthropology, hydrology and statistics.

The multi-disciplinary nature of the Green Book, combined with the high resolution scientific evidence, makes this one of the most novel, innovative and information-dense research platforms about disaster risk and climate adaptation planning on the African continent.

“The Green Book forecasts to the year 2050 by projecting human settlement growth, combined with quantitative, scientific evidence of the likely impacts that climate change will have on South African towns and cities. Every settlement risk profile proposes customisable adaptation actions to be considered for integration into local plans and strategies that are to be implemented,” the CSIR said.

A practical guide

According to the CSIR, the book offers illustrative examples of adapting to climate change as essential components of urban development and management.

It also reinforces the idea that sustainable development in urban areas must include disaster risk reduction and climate change actions to reduce vulnerabilities.

The Green Book contributes to the climate change adaptation policy environment in South Africa.

The development of the Green Book was funded by the International Development Research Centre in Canada and the CSIR, and partnered by the National Disaster Management Centre.

The Department of Environmental Affairs, the National Disaster Management Centre and Santam are committed to partner with the CSIR in phase II of the Green Book.

“This phase will focus on rolling-out the Green Book for implementation in municipalities most at risk, identifying gaps in research and development of this kind, and building capacity of officials and departments to deal with climate change adaptation. Given the risks, there is a great need for proactive investment in disaster risk reduction in South African urban settlements in order to cope with increasing extreme events in future,” Van Niekerk said.

The Green Book, its resources and tools can be accessed online at www.greenbook.co.za.



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Low-carbon development path

In line with the objectives of the National Development Plan, South Africa is pursuing a path of development that is low-carbon, inclusive and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

On Friday, 8 March, the president launched the Good Green Deeds campaign, an initiative that seeks to mobilise all sectors of South Africa to become more environmentally conscious.

The campaign is aimed at changing people's attitudes and behaviour towards responsible waste management and shift the paradigm to influence people to be environmentally conscious and make use of the available recycling bins.

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