



**national planning
commission**

Department:
The Presidency
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

SALGA

Inspiring service delivery

The National Planning Commission and SALGA discuss the implementation of the Climate Change Act

The [National Planning Commission](#) (NPC) and the [South African Local Government Association](#) (SALGA) hosted an online discussion between local government representatives and academic and research bodies on 2 July 2025. The discussions were based on the NPC's [advisory note](#) published in January 2025 that addressed the challenges that municipalities may face in implementing the [Climate Change Act](#) (No. 22 of 2024) and proposed ways to support local government. The workshop convened **over 100 delegates** from all three spheres of government, alongside representatives from academic institutions, civil society organisations, national departments, and international partners.

The NPC is an independent advisory body appointed by the President to advise government, Parliament, and society on the implementation of the [National Development Plan](#) (NDP). The NPC has the responsibility to mobilise the whole of society around the objectives of the NDP, which remains the country's cross-cutting long-term plan for national development.

SALGA is an autonomous voluntary association of all 257 South African local governments that represents, promotes and protects the interests of its members. SALGA represents the interests of local government in the intergovernmental relations system by providing common policy positions and voicing local government interests. SALGA is mandated to provide, *inter alia*, a systematic provision of support and facilitation of capacity building that can enable municipalities to better deliver their constitutional and developmental mandates. In this regard, since 2020, SALGA has prioritised the development and implementation of two comprehensive programmes: Municipal Sustainability Support Programme and Cities Sustainability Support Programme, which are focused on climate change, environmental management that includes biodiversity and conservation, air quality management, as well as disaster risk management.

The Climate Change Act, which was initially introduced in 2018 following the 2011 National Climate Change Response White Paper, was signed into law by President Ramaphosa on 22 July 2024. However, the implementation of the Act has been delayed pending the finalisation of regulations and the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan. The Act legislates the country's greenhouse gas emissions reduction trajectory and will take precedence over other climate-related laws. While it will require all government policies and measures to align with its goals,

it expects provincial and local governments to develop climate response strategies that will align with the national and global commitments to reduce carbon emissions and respond to climate change.

The workshop was convened in recognition of the vital role that municipalities play in building climate resilience and driving a just transition. As the level of government closest to communities, local authorities are central to the realisation of South Africa's adaptation and mitigation goals. However, as highlighted in the discussions, this role is often constrained by systemic gaps in institutional design, technical capacity, political support, and access to finance.

Using the NPC's advisory note as a basis, the discussions were aimed at understanding the challenges faced by local governments; providing national government departments such as the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and National Treasury with an opportunity to indicate what support mechanisms are available; and how research and academic institutions can assist by providing data and skills.

Participants engaged in structured dialogue around the opportunities and barriers faced by municipalities under the new legal framework. Panel discussions and breakaway groups identified a complex "web of gaps" that impedes effective action, ranging from the misalignment between planning instruments and climate responsibilities to the limited diffusion of climate knowledge within municipal structures. The importance of cross-sectoral coordination, improved data access, political continuity, and capacitation of senior municipal leadership emerged as key priorities.

The discussions concluded with the understanding that while managing climate change should be everybody's responsibility in general, the assignment of the tangible actions to the local government sphere means that ongoing support should be targeted here specifically. While this support includes practical measures such as financing and skills development, these can only be effectively addressed through effective leadership and political support.

The NPC and SALGA welcome the constructive participation and spirit of collaboration shown throughout the day. Insights from this dialogue will inform the Commission's ongoing work to support the Presidency, including efforts to strengthen climate governance, integrate climate considerations into long-term planning, and ensure that no municipality is left behind in South Africa's transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon future.

The National Planning Commission remains committed to its constitutional advisory role in promoting inclusive, long-term, and coordinated development in the national interest. The NPC and SALGA agreed that the discussions about the nature of the support required and the importance of collaboration and partnerships in this regard would be an ongoing one, and that the two entities would engage on the details further in future.

For media enquiries, please contact:

NPC: Dr Zarina Rahman at +27 82 345 2919 or Zarina@dpme.gov.za or Ms Sandisiwe Mapine +27 71 3701048 or Sandisiwe.Mapine@dpme.gov.za

SALGA: Dorah Marema at +27 73 177 1817 or dmarema@salga.org.za

