

# Improving the Levels of Engagement and Coordination

between the Private Sector (IPPs), the Public Sector and Civil Society around Climate Change Actions



## DEMOCRACY WORKS FOUNDATION

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) is a southern African non-profit company focused on democracy development in the region. With headquarters in South Africa, DWF works through its country offices to provide tools to develop resilient democracies.

As an independent foundation, we build and promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable consensus democracies. We do so by providing tools, platforms and content to strengthen democrats, democratic culture and democracy institutions.

## INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL PERFORMANCE IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) aims to advance the field of social performance in South Africa's renewable energy sector, with the wider goal of becoming a leading platform across the African continent and internationally.

## KD STRATEGIES

KD STRATEGIES was built to support those that are trying to revolutionise the system – even if it's just by complying with regulations built on social consciousness locally – and those who are trying to disrupt the system altogether by redefining what it means to do business.

We exist to catalyse those project that accelerate the pace towards systemic changes in the socio-economic landscape of the global economy.



## INSPIRE

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) is a female-led, practitioner-driven organisation based in South Africa, committed to ensuring that renewable energy deployment delivers equitable and transformative socio-economic benefits for host communities.

With a focus on professionalising social performance, building trusted relationships, and fostering collaboration, INSPIRE plays a vital role in advancing South Africa's Just Energy Transition and influencing global renewable energy practices.

## FOSTERING INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS (FIGCCC) 2019 - 2024

Co-funded by the European Union, this project aims to create synergies between local governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to address climate change collaboratively.

By integrating public and private development priorities with community-driven climate action, this approach aims to enhance the impact of climate change mitigation efforts.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT AND APPROACH

Developed under the FIGCCC Programme and working with Democracy Works Foundation and INSPIRE, KDS has explored the ways of improving the levels of engagement and coordination between the private sector (IPPs), the public sector and civil society regarding climate change actions.

# Introduction

CSOs and CBOs in the Witzenberg and Karoo Hoogland municipalities are essential players in the fight against climate change, but they face significant barriers in terms of resources, capacity, and engagement. This advocacy brief outlines a roadmap for strengthening the role of these organizations in local climate action, focusing on fostering collaboration, reforming municipal processes, and building capacity to ensure that community voices are heard and acted upon. By advocating for these changes, CSOs and CBOs can help shape a more resilient, sustainable future for the communities they serve.



## TITLE

Strengthening Local Climate Resilience Through Strategic Advocacy and Collaborative Action

## AUDIENCE

Local and national government agencies, development partners, private sector stakeholders, and CSOs/CBOs

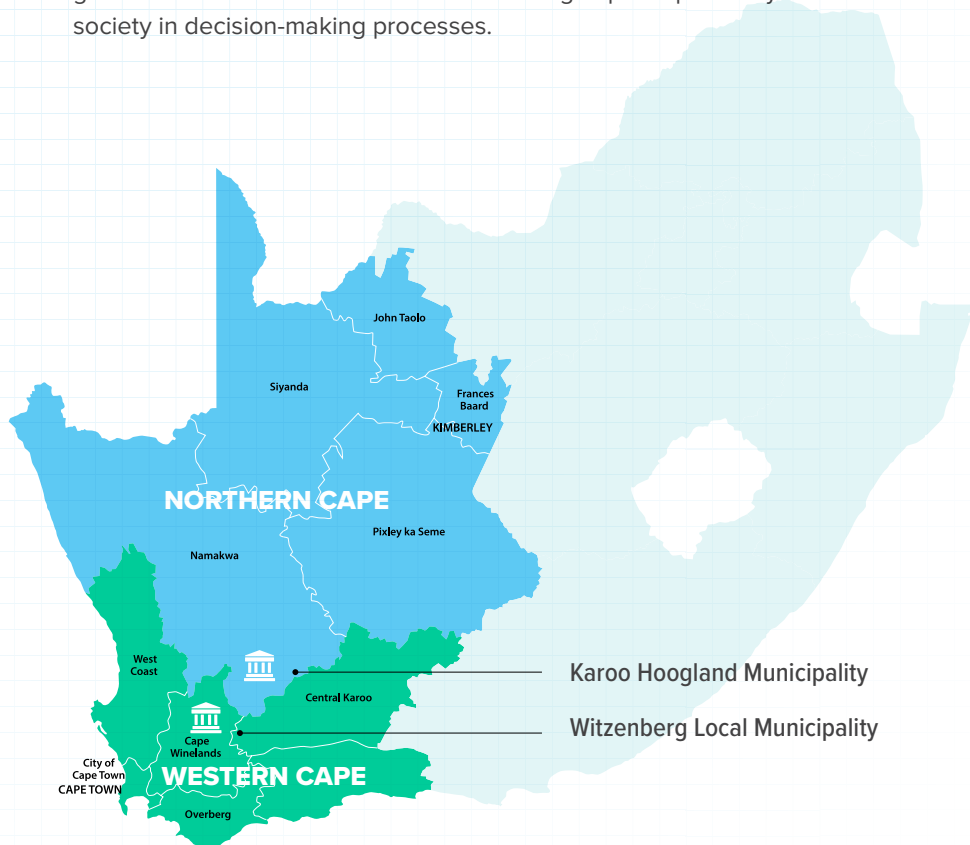


# Challenge

The Witzenberg and Karoo Hoogland municipalities are at the forefront of climate change challenges, facing significant socio-economic vulnerabilities exacerbated by environmental pressures such as droughts and other extreme weather events.

CSOs and CBOs play a critical yet often unrecognised role in addressing these challenges, particularly by supporting community adaptation efforts and providing social services. However, resource constraints, bureaucratic barriers, and inadequate engagement with municipal and private sector stakeholders limit their capacity to drive meaningful climate action.

Given this research's findings, CSOs and CBOs need to adopt a more vigorous advocacy agenda to push for the integration of climate resilience into local development planning and more collaborative governance structures that allow for meaningful participation by civil society in decision-making processes.



# Key Advocacy Objectives

1

## Enhance the Role of CSOs and CBOs in Local Climate Action

- CSOs and CBOs must advocate for a more significant role in the design and implementation of climate adaptation projects at the local level. Currently, much of the focus is on municipal and private sector actors, which can marginalise community-driven initiatives.
- Advocate for formalised participation in municipal planning processes such as integrated development plans (IDPs) to ensure that the voices of vulnerable communities are adequately represented.

2

## Address Bureaucratic Barriers to Innovation in Climate Solutions

- Bureaucratic hurdles, especially in municipal procurement processes, prevent the adoption of innovative, climate-smart solutions that could enhance local resilience. CSOs and CBOs should advocate for procurement reforms that allow for more flexibility in adopting sustainable technologies and encourage the testing of innovative solutions through pilot programs.
- Push for establishing climate innovation funds that local municipalities and civil society groups can access to implement cutting-edge adaptation projects.

3

## Promote Climate Resilience as a Cross-Cutting Development Priority

- Municipalities often view climate change as a secondary issue, separate from their core development priorities, such as infrastructure development, job creation, and service delivery. CSOs and CBOs should advocate for integrating climate resilience into all development planning processes.
- Encourage municipalities to adopt climate-smart infrastructure and land use planning that accounts for future climate risks, ensuring that local development is sustainable and resilient.

4

## Bridge the Communication Gap Between Development and Climate Priorities

- One of the major challenges identified in the report is the disconnect in vocabulary and communication between the private sector, the public sector, and civil society. CSOs and CBOs should work to develop a shared language around climate resilience that incorporates community concerns, business sustainability, and policy frameworks. This strategy may foster collaborative dialogues and ensure aligned climate adaptation efforts across sectors.
- Advocate for creating multi-sector communication platforms where grassroots organizations, local businesses, and government agencies can regularly engage in dialogue about the most pressing climate challenges and potential solutions.

5

## Strengthen Capacity-Building Efforts

- CSOs and CBOs often face capacity constraints, limiting their ability to engage effectively with municipal and private sector actors. Advocating for capacity-building programs that provide technical training, financial resources, and organizational support to local organizations is crucial.
- Improved understanding of private sector project development and public participation mechanisms is crucial to ensuring improved levels of engagement in the short- to medium-term.
- Push for greater inclusion of CSOs and CBOs in climate finance mechanisms at the national and international levels to enable them to implement larger-scale adaptation projects.

# Key Messages for Advocacy

1

## Communities are the Frontline of Climate Change



CSOs and CBOs represent vulnerable communities bearing the brunt of climate impacts. Their voices must be central to the decision-making processes that shape local development and climate adaptation.

2

## Innovation in Procurement is Essential for Climate Resilience



Without reforms to procurement policies, municipalities will struggle to adopt the innovative solutions needed to address climate challenges. Flexible procurement processes allow municipalities to test and implement climate-smart technologies that ensure sustainable development.

3

## Inclusive Collaboration is Key



Climate change is a multi-faceted challenge requiring collaboration between public, private, and civil society. These sectors can develop holistic solutions that protect people and the environment by working together.

4

## Capacity Building Enables Effective Action



To implement effective climate adaptation strategies, CSOs and CBOs need access to the technical skills, resources, and support systems that allow them to lead on-the-ground initiatives. Building their capacity is crucial for long-term success.

5

## Climate Resilience Must Be Embedded in Development Plans



Climate change is not a distant threat but a current reality affecting all aspects of life in the Witzenberg and Karoo Hoogland municipalities. Development planning must incorporate climate resilience as a foundational element to ensure that future growth is sustainable and equitable.

# Recommended Advocacy Actions

01



## Lobby for Formal Representation

Engage with local government and development partners to ensure that CSOs and CBOs have formal representation in all local planning processes, particularly in formulating and reviewing IDPs.

02



## Host Multi-Sector Dialogues

Organise regular forums that bring together municipal leaders, private sector representatives, and civil society to discuss ongoing climate adaptation efforts and identify areas for collaboration.

03



## Develop Policy Briefs

Produce and disseminate policy briefs outlining the challenges local communities face in adapting to climate change and the need for integrated, innovative procurement and development planning approaches.

04



## Engage with Donors and Development Agencies

Advocate for increased funding for climate adaptation projects led by local communities and emphasise the importance of building the capacity of CSOs and CBOs.

05



## Public Awareness Campaigns

Launch awareness campaigns within communities to highlight climate adaptation's importance and build public pressure for more responsive and innovative municipal governance.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of INSPIRE and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

