DEMOCRACY WORKS FOUNDATION | CLIMATE FOR GROWTH



NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Energy Nature Weather Heritage

NAMAKWA DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE

Climate for Growth (CfG)

Democracy Works Foundation | 2026

democracyworksfoundation.org

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full term
CBO	Community-based organisation
CERG	Climate, Energy and Resource Governance
CfG	Climate for Growth
DWF	Democracy Works Foundation
ED	Enterprise development
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IPP	Independent Power Producer
IPPPP	Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme
LED	Local economic development
MW	Megawatt
NCPD	National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities
NPC	Non-profit company
NPO	Non-profit organisation
REIPPPP	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SED	Socio-economic development
SEDFA	Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency
SMME	Small, medium, and micro enterprises
SPP	Surplus People Project
WoMin	WoMin African Alliance

Executive Summary

Democracy Works Foundation's (DWF) Climate for Growth (CfG) project strengthens participation and coordination in climate and energy governance in the Namakwa District of the Northern Cape. It focuses on three local municipalities, Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland, and works with local government, government departments, Independent Power Producers (IPPs), civil-society organisations and communities. The project starts from the view that renewable-energy investment, local economic development (LED) and climate resilience are closely connected but are seldom planned together.

This needs assessment informed the project's design and implementation. The assessment combined a review of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), LED strategies, climate and vulnerability assessments and renewable-energy policy with stakeholder consultations. Stakeholders validated the preliminary findings in Springbok on 21 September 2026.

Context

Namakwa is South Africa's largest district municipality by land area, covering about 126,836 km², yet it has only 148,935 residents. The district is arid, and its settlements are widely dispersed, which raises the cost of delivering services, participating in public processes, and reaching markets. Mining, agriculture and tourism remain central to the economy. Renewable energy has grown quickly: by March 2026 the Northern Cape hosted 51 projects under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), with 3,921 megawatts (MW) of procured capacity.

These opportunities sit alongside persistent development challenges. In the second quarter of 2026, the official unemployment rate in the Northern Cape was 28.5 per cent overall and 39.8 per cent for young people. Only 26.2 per cent of Namakwa's population has completed Grade 12 and 6.2 per cent has a higher education qualification. Water supply is unreliable, with 56.1 per cent of Northern Cape households reporting interruptions of at least two days in 2025, and climate projections point to higher temperatures, lower rainfall and more frequent drought.

The district has established planning systems, active institutions and a growing number of renewable-energy projects, but these are not consistently connected. Municipal, IPP and climate planning share many priorities, such as water security, infrastructure and youth employment, but follow different cycles and lines of accountability. As a result, available investment is not always directed towards agreed local priorities.

Priority needs

Need 1: Coordination between municipalities, IPPs and communities. No consistent district-wide arrangement links municipal planning, project investment and community engagement. Participants reported uneven forum attendance, poor information sharing, unclear responsibilities, and limited follow-through.

Need 2: Local economic participation and inclusive livelihoods. Residents and local enterprises face practical barriers to taking part in the renewable-energy economy, including shortages of relevant skills, limited access to finance and procurement information, and compliance costs. Young people, women, small-scale farmers and emerging businesses are particularly affected.

Need 3: Institutional and stakeholder capacity. Municipalities and local organisations have limited staff, technical resources and systems to plan, manage partnerships and secure funding. The district has one official responsible for several environmental functions, and none of the three local municipalities has a designated climate-change official.

Need 4: Community participation, communication and trust. Consultation arrangements exist, but participation is uneven. Participants described consultation fatigue, historical mistrust, slow feedback and uncertainty about the roles of municipalities, IPPs and community trusts. Information is not always provided in accessible language, including Afrikaans.

Need 5: Climate resilience in planning and investment. Municipal plans increasingly recognise drought, water scarcity and infrastructure vulnerability, but seldom translate these risks into funded projects with assigned responsibilities. The district's Climate Change Response Plan has been approved, yet project identification under the plan is listed as an unfunded activity for 2026/27.

Recommendations

CfG should work through established structures and complement the mandates of municipalities, IPPs, and civil society, rather than creating parallel processes.

- Strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination by supporting existing forums, such as the District LED Forum, with clear terms of reference and follow-up on agreed actions.
- Improve alignment between municipal planning and IPP investment so that costed municipal priorities inform IPP economic-development plans, supported by a shared district project register.
- Strengthen local economic participation by linking skills, enterprise and supplier development to documented demand.
- Build institutional and organisational capacity in municipalities and community organisations, particularly in planning, governance, compliance and fundraising.
- Strengthen inclusive community participation through accessible language, local channels such as community radio, and regular feedback to participants.
- Promote integrated climate-resilience planning by turning climate priorities into investable projects in water security, resilient infrastructure and livelihoods.
- Establish a monitoring, learning and knowledge-sharing framework to track collaboration, participation and local outcomes, and to adapt the project as evidence emerges.

SECTION 01

Introduction

South Africa's energy transition is reshaping the economic and institutional context for local development. In the Namakwa District, renewable energy projects have expanded alongside established mining, agricultural and tourism activities. These investments create opportunities for employment, enterprise development (ED) and community benefit. However, their contribution to local development depends on how well they align with municipal planning and community priorities. The district's dispersed settlements, infrastructure constraints, uneven access to skills, and growing exposure to drought make it harder to coordinate development across the region.

DWF's CfG project seeks to strengthen this connection. The programme works with local government, government departments, IPPs, civil society organisations and communities to improve participation and coordination in climate and energy governance. It focuses on three local municipalities within the Namakwa District: Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland.

The programme treats climate governance, LED and renewable energy investment as related areas of policy and practice. Municipalities identify development priorities through their statutory planning processes, while IPPs make socio-economic development (SED) and ED investments in host communities. Civil society organisations and community structures also undertake development work and represent local interests. However, these activities are not always planned together, which can lead to duplication, gaps in provision and uncertainty about the responsibilities of different institutions.

This report presents the findings of a needs assessment undertaken to inform the design and implementation of the CfG programme. The assessment examines the district's development context, the institutions and stakeholders involved, existing planning and coordination arrangements, and the barriers that limit collaboration. It also identifies existing structures and relationships that the programme can build on. The report is intended to help DWF determine where its activities can best contribute to more inclusive local development and climate resilience.

SECTION 02

Democracy Works Foundation

DWF is a Southern African non-profit organisation (NPO) that works to strengthen democratic institutions, public participation and accountable governance. Its work includes research, stakeholder facilitation, capacity strengthening and support for collaborative approaches to public decision-making.

CfG forms part of DWF's Climate, Energy and Resource Governance (CERG) programme. It builds on DWF's previous work with municipalities, civil society organisations and renewable energy stakeholders. It aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society and municipal institutions, improve coordination between public and private investment, and support the inclusion of community priorities in local climate and development planning.

CfG works through existing institutions and planning processes wherever possible. This includes municipal IDPs, Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) and LED processes, as well as established stakeholder forums and community structures. The aim is to improve how these mechanisms work and connect, rather than creating parallel structures that would place further demands on institutions with limited capacity.

SECTION 03

Purpose and objectives

The needs assessment was undertaken to provide DWF with an evidence base for selecting and designing programme activities. It aims to identify the development and climate-related needs shared across the target municipalities, assess the institutional arrangements through which these needs are addressed, and determine where the programme can strengthen existing capacity and cooperation.

The assessment addresses five principal questions:

- What development and climate resilience priorities are shared across Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland?
- To what extent are municipal planning priorities, community needs and IPP investments aligned?
- What institutional, governance and capacity constraints limit cooperation between municipalities, IPPs, civil society organisations and communities?
- Which existing forums, partnerships and community structures provide a basis for stronger coordination?
- Which interventions should CfG prioritise to support inclusive local development and climate resilience?

The assessment provides a planning baseline for the programme. It is intended to guide the selection of activities, partnerships and stakeholder engagement methods. It also identifies matters that require further consultation during implementation, particularly where the available evidence does not adequately reflect the experiences of communities or particular social and economic groups.

SECTION 04

Methodology

The assessment used a qualitative research design combining document review, targeted stakeholder consultation, participation in district-level workshops and validation of the preliminary findings. Evidence from these sources was compared to identify recurring priorities and areas of agreement and difference between formal plans and stakeholder experience.

Document review

The document review established the policy, institutional and socio-economic context of the assessment. It included municipal IDPs, LED strategies, climate change and vulnerability assessments, spatial and development planning documents, REIPPPP documentation, and relevant national policies and legislation.

The review also considered academic and applied research on renewable energy governance, community participation, LED and climate vulnerability. This helped to identify formally recognised priorities, clarify the responsibilities of different institutions and compare local experience with wider findings on the developmental effects of renewable energy investment.

Stakeholder consultation

The assessment gathered stakeholder evidence through targeted engagements with representatives of local and district government, IPPs, civil society organisations, and academic institutions. These engagements provided information on existing programmes, institutional relationships, coordination practices and the practical constraints experienced by participating organisations.

The assessment also drew on the Namakwa LED validation workshops held in July 2026. These workshops provided evidence of priorities raised by participants from different parts of the district, including skills development, access to economic opportunities, water security, infrastructure, institutional coordination and the accessibility of municipal planning processes.

The consultations were purposive. Participants were selected for their institutional roles, knowledge of the programme area, or involvement in local development processes. The consultation process was therefore intended to provide informed institutional and stakeholder perspectives rather than a statistically representative account of public opinion.

Data analysis

The evidence was analysed thematically and organised around recurring development priorities, institutional constraints, stakeholder relationships, and opportunities for collaboration. Findings were compared across sources to determine whether they represented a consistent pattern, a concern limited to a particular institution or locality, or an issue requiring further investigation.

The analysis distinguished between existing assets and unmet needs. It considered existing forums, partnerships, planning processes and examples of cooperation alongside weaknesses in coordination, capacity, participation and accountability. This allowed the assessment to identify where CfG can strengthen existing arrangements and where additional support may be required.

Validation of findings

The preliminary findings were presented at a validation workshop held in Springbok on 21 September 2026. The workshop included a presentation of the assessment, a plenary discussion and rotating group discussions on coordination, local economic opportunities and the relationship between climate resilience and local development.

Participants broadly confirmed the five needs identified in the preliminary assessment. They also identified important gaps and qualifications. Participants argued that the assessment did not adequately convey the severity of drought and water insecurity. They noted that farmers, Indigenous communities and residents across the target municipalities were under-represented in the initial consultations. Participants also emphasised the need for communication in accessible language, engagement methods suited to dispersed rural communities, greater inclusion of young people and persons with disabilities, and clearer accountability for commitments made through stakeholder forums.

The validation workshop also highlighted the relationship between participation and trust. Participants reported consultation fatigue, limited feedback following public engagements and uncertainty about whether development commitments would be implemented. These observations informed revisions to the needs analysis and the recommendations presented in this report.

Methodological limitations

The team formally engaged with a limited number of IPPs when preparing the preliminary assessment. The findings concerning the renewable energy sector therefore draw on a combination of direct consultation, available programme documentation and published research.

The assessment also did not include representative community surveys or direct consultation across all wards in the three target municipalities. The validation workshop confirmed that the perspectives of farmers, Indigenous communities and some rural residents require further attention. The report therefore sets out the main institutional and development needs identified during the research, but it is not an exhaustive account of community experience.

These limitations have implications for programme implementation. Community climate dialogues, literacy activities, and continued engagement with civil society, municipalities, and IPPs will provide opportunities to test, refine, and expand the findings. Future engagement should include groups and localities that were not adequately represented during the assessment.

SECTION 05

Context

Namakwa District Municipality occupies the north-western corner of the Northern Cape and comprises six local municipalities: Nama Khoi, Kamiesberg, Richtersveld, Karoo Hoogland, Khâi-Ma and Hantam. CfG focuses on Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland. The district's economy relies mainly on mining, alongside agriculture, tourism and a rapidly expanding renewable energy sector. These opportunities exist amid high unemployment, uneven educational attainment, dispersed settlements and service constraints. The concentration of REIPPPP projects has brought substantial investment. Still, it has also raised expectations regarding employment, local procurement and SED that have not always translated into sustained local benefits.[1]

Namakwa is South Africa's largest district municipality by land area, covering approximately 126,836 km², yet one of the least populous, with 148,935 residents, equivalent to approximately 1.2 persons per km². Population centres vary widely, with Nama Khoi home to 67,089 residents, compared with 11,691 in Karoo Hoogland and 8,510 in Khâi-Ma.[2] This combination of scale and low population density raises service costs and makes economic connections across the district more difficult. The district is semi-arid to arid. Climate projections indicate declining rainfall, rising temperatures and increasing agricultural and meteorological drought, placing additional pressure on water-dependent livelihoods and municipal infrastructure.[3]

Namakwa's economy is structurally concentrated in extractive activity. Mining and quarrying account for 39.8 per cent of district gross domestic product (GDP).[4] Agriculture remains important for employment and exports, while tourism draws on the district's biodiversity, coastal landscapes and astronomy assets. Renewable energy has emerged as an additional economic sector, supported by exceptional solar and wind resources, the investment these have attracted and prospective green-hydrogen infrastructure.[5]

1 Ramabina Mahapa and Shannon Bernhardt, "Conflict Analysis: Methodology for Understanding the Root Causes of Conflict between Stakeholders in the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme in South Africa," chap. 14 in Community Agency in Mineral Resource Governance (2026), 393–425.

2 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027 (Springbok: Namakwa District Municipality, approved May 26, 2026), 27–31.

3 F. A. Engelbrecht, A. Maviza, J. Steinkopf, C. Vogel, G. von Maltitz, P. Yose, and M. Barnett, Sub-national Climate Change Fact Sheets for South Africa: Namakwa District Municipality (South African National Biodiversity Institute and University of the Witwatersrand Global Change Institute, 2025), https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16962181.

4 Socio-Economic Profile: Namakwa Municipality 2021 (2021), 20, sectoral data based on Quantec and Urban-Econ calculations; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027, 39–40.

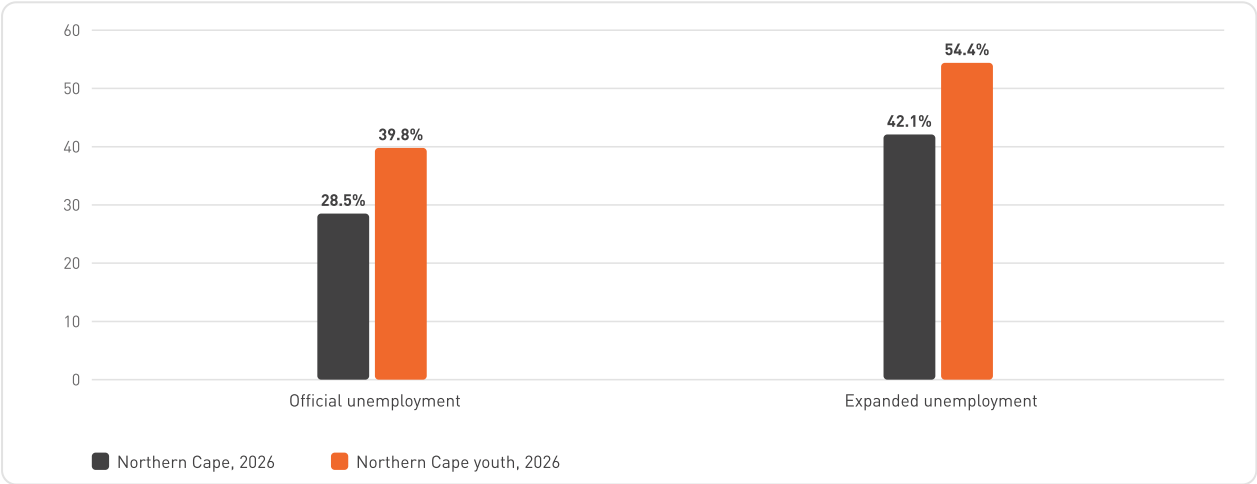
5 Namakwa District Municipality, Namakwa District Municipality Investment Prospectus (2023), 4, 7–9.

Unemployment is a persistent challenge for the district. Namakwa recorded an unemployment rate of 28.0 per cent in 2022.[6] In the second quarter of 2026, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey recorded an official unemployment rate of 28.5 per cent for the Northern Cape and 39.8 per cent for youth; the corresponding expanded rates are approximately 42.1 and 54.4 per cent.[7] These rates have worsened markedly since 2016, despite substantial investment in renewable energy.

TABLE 1 Unemployment

Indicator	Northern Cape, 2026	Northern Cape youth, 2026
Official unemployment	28.5%	39.8%
Expanded unemployment	42.1%	54.4%

FIGURE 1 Unemployment rates, Northern Cape, 2026 (%)



Educational attainment also constrains access to emerging economic opportunities. Across Namakwa, 44.9 per cent of the population had some secondary education, 26.2 per cent had completed Grade 12, and only 6.2 per cent had higher education.[8]

6 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027, 39.

7 Statistics South Africa, National Census 2022.

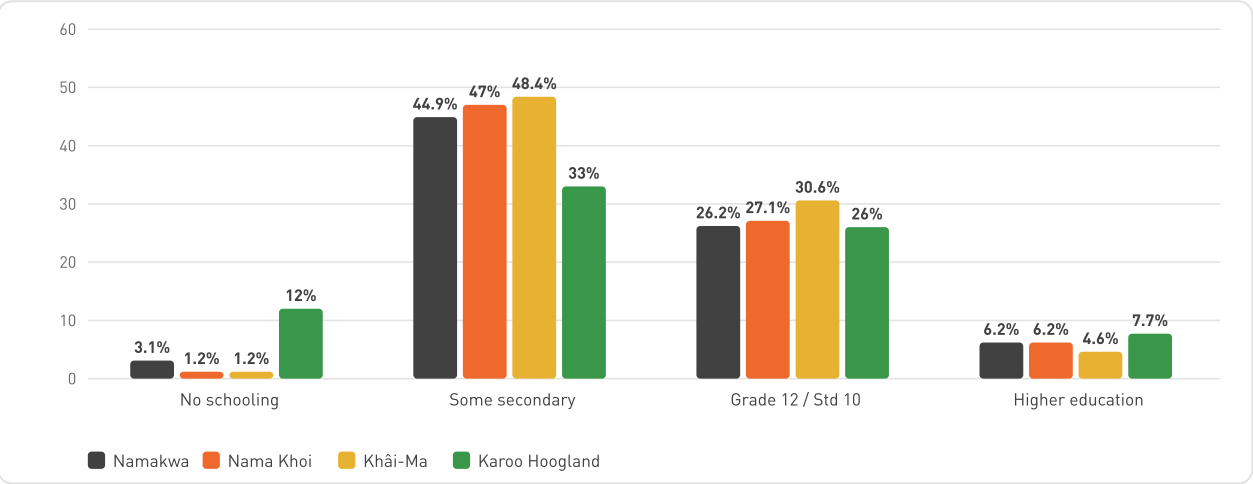
8 Statistics South Africa, National Census 2022; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027, 35–38.

TABLE 2 Educational Attainment

Highest educational attainment	Namakwa	Nama Khoi	Khâi-Ma	Karoo Hoogland
No schooling	3.1%	1.2%	1.2%	12.0%
Some secondary	44.9%	47.0%	48.4%	33.0%
Grade 12 / Std 10	26.2%	27.1%	30.6%	26.0%
Higher education	6.2%	6.2%	4.6%	7.7%

Source: Census 2022.[9]

FIGURE 2 Educational attainment by area, Census 2022 (%)



Basic-service coverage is high, but access does not equal reliability. Census 2022 reported that 76.8 per cent of Namakwa households had piped water inside the dwelling and a further 21.8 per cent inside the yard; 96.7 per cent used mains electricity for lighting.[10] However, provincial data show that disruptions are common. In 2025, only 29.4 per cent of Northern Cape households reported no water interruption during the preceding year, while 56.1 per cent reported interruptions lasting at least two days. Mains electricity access reached 95.6 per cent.[11] These constraints are particularly significant in an arid district where water insecurity is identified as a binding constraint on economic activity and where climate change is expected to intensify drought conditions.[12]

Established in 2011, the REIPPPP procures private renewable energy generation while pursuing economic development objectives through employment, local content, ownership, preferential

9 Statistics South Africa, National Census 2022; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027, 35–38.

10 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026–2027, 41–44.

11 Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey 2025, Statistical Release P0318 (Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2026), 29–35, 43–47.

12 F. A. Engelbrecht, A. Maviza, J. Steinkopf, C. Vogel, G. von Maltitz, P. Yose, and M. Barnett, Sub-national Climate Change Fact Sheets for South Africa: Namakwa District Municipality (South African National Biodiversity Institute and University of the Witwatersrand Global Change Institute, 2025), https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16962181.

procurement, ED and SED. For Bid Windows 1–5, the minimum SED commitment was 1 per cent of revenue, with a 1.5 per cent target; the ED target was 0.6 per cent.[13]

By March 2026, 104 REIPPPP projects had reached financial close, representing R239 billion in investment and 7,825 MW of procured capacity. The Northern Cape hosted 51 projects and 3,921 MW. Operational IPPs in the Northern Cape had spent R2.263 billion on SED and R675.8 million on ED nationally.[14]

TABLE 4 REIPPPP

Indicator	South Africa	Northern Cape
Projects reaching financial close	104	51
Procured capacity	7,825 MW	3,921 MW
SED expenditure, inception to March 2026	R3.8 billion	R2.263 billion
ED expenditure, inception to March 2026	R1.1 billion	R675.8 million

Source: IPP Office, Quarter 4 2025/26.[15]

The developmental outcomes are more uneven than these aggregate figures suggest. REIPPPP research identifies skills mismatches, employment concentrated in construction, limited operational jobs, delayed returns to community trust, constrained local procurement and weak coordination between IPPs, municipalities and communities.[16] These conditions can raise unrealistic expectations and erode trust.[17]

Namakwa's socio-economic conditions show both the opportunities and the constraints of the district's emerging low-carbon economy. Renewable energy investment has brought significant new capital and development commitments to a region characterised by persistent unemployment, uneven educational outcomes, service-delivery pressures, and climate vulnerability. The extent to which these investments contribute to inclusive and durable local development will depend on closer alignment between IPP investment, municipal plans, and community priorities, as well as better participation, transparency, and coordination in allocating SED resources.

13 Independent Power Producers Office, Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme: An Overview as of 31 March 2026, IPPPP Quarterly Report, Quarter 4 2025/26 (2026), 17–18, 26.

14 Independent Power Producers Office, Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme: An Overview as of 31 March 2026, IPPPP Quarterly Report, Quarter 4 2025/26 (2026), 17–18, 26.

15 Independent Power Producers Office, Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme: An Overview as of 31 March 2026, IPPPP Quarterly Report, Quarter 4 2025/26 (2026), 17–18, 26.

16 Ramabina Mahapa and Shannon Bernhardt, "Conflict Analysis: Methodology for Understanding the Root Causes of Conflict between Stakeholders in the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) Programme in South Africa," Chapter 14 in Community Agency in Mineral Resource Governance (2026), 393–425.

17 Mahapa and Bernhardt, "Conflict Analysis," 421–425.

SECTION 06

Stakeholder Analysis

CfG works in an environment where authority, financial resources, technical knowledge and community legitimacy are spread across different institutions. Municipalities exercise statutory authority over local planning and service delivery; IPPs control significant project-level investment; civil-society and community organisations contribute local knowledge and representative networks; and provincial and national institutions shape the wider regulatory and policy environment. Businesses, research institutions and vulnerable groups have distinct interests and capacities within this system. Inclusive and climate-resilient development therefore depends on both what each group contributes and the quality of the relationships between them.

Local Government

The Namakwa District Municipality is responsible for district-wide coordination, integrated development planning, LED, disaster management, environmental coordination and support to local municipalities. Its interests include attracting investment, implementing the district LED Strategy, improving infrastructure and improving coherence between municipal, private-sector and government programmes. The District Municipality exercises influence through the district IDP, the District Development Model and the intergovernmental and stakeholder forums that it convenes.[18]

The District Municipality has expressed support for closer alignment between municipalities, IPPs and civil society. However, the District Municipality does not provide most services directly, and implementation must involve the relevant local municipalities.[19] District-level support can therefore help with strategic alignment and access to local institutions, but it cannot replace local municipalities' participation.

The capacity of district structures to coordinate stakeholders is constrained by uneven attendance, inconsistent information-sharing and limited follow-through. At the June 2026 Integrated Forum, several municipal representatives were absent, while Karoo Hoogland raised concerns about companies commencing activities without adequately informing the municipality.[20] These difficulties show that formal structures alone do not ensure coordination. Their effectiveness depends on regular participation, clearly assigned responsibilities and mechanisms for monitoring agreed actions.

Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland Local Municipalities have direct responsibility for local planning, service delivery, land-use management, LED and community participation. Their principal interests include water and sanitation, infrastructure maintenance, employment, skills development,

18 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027 (Springbok: Namakwa District Municipality, 2026).

19 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 2," stakeholder meeting minutes, 9 July 2026.

20 Namakwa District Municipality, "Namakwa District Integrated Forum," meeting minutes, 30 June 2026.

local procurement and securing lasting community benefits from renewable-energy and mining activity. They exercise substantial formal influence through their IDPs, SDFs, municipal approvals and relationships with residents. However, their capacity to engage strategically with investors is limited by staffing constraints, competing service-delivery demands, and uneven technical resources.

During a meeting with an IPP, it was stated that Municipal, district and project-level forums provide opportunities for cooperation, while IPP partners have implemented education, health, skills, infrastructure and enterprise-development initiatives in the area. The relationship shows the value of sustained engagement, but also the effects of institutional instability. Changes in political and administrative leadership, including reliance on acting senior managers, have affected continuity and the municipality's ability to make long-term commitments. IPP development expenditure is also not systematically incorporated into the municipality's capital programme. Cooperation therefore remains more visible at project level than within an integrated municipal investment framework.

Khâi-Ma has a particularly dense private-sector environment, with several renewable-energy projects and mining operations active in the area. The municipality participates in an Industrial Development Corporation-led community-development forum involving IPPs, mines, government departments and community organisations. Its IDP also records private-sector contributions to municipal development, including a solar IPP's support for a sanitation initiative.[21] This concentration of actors brings significant investment, but it also increases the risk of duplicated interventions, inconsistent communication and unclear responsibilities. IPPs have reported slow municipal turnaround times and limited understanding of their planning and approval cycles, while the municipality must respond to numerous actors working under separate mandates and schedules.

Karoo Hoogland's planning documents identify renewable energy as an important development opportunity, particularly around Sutherland. The municipality's IDP records support by a wind-energy IPP for the upgrading of a sports facility in Sutherland.[22] Karoo Hoogland also formed part of DWF's earlier programme work. However, the current assessment gathered comparatively little direct evidence from the municipality and its communities. Its extensive geography and dispersed settlements increase the cost of engagement and service delivery, while attempts to engage municipal representatives remotely were not consistently successful. Further direct engagement is therefore required before the municipality's renewable-energy relationships and institutional needs can be fully assessed.

Across all three municipalities, a recurring problem is the weak connection between municipal planning and private-sector investment. Municipal IDPs set priorities over multi-year periods, while IPPs and other investors operate on separate corporate, contractual, and budgetary cycles. Municipalities do not always communicate implementation-ready priorities early enough to influence private-sector plans, while developers do not always engage municipalities and communities sufficiently early in project design. This misalignment reduces opportunities to combine resources and increases the likelihood that investments will remain fragmented.

21 Karoo Hoogland Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027 (2026), 132; Khâi-Ma Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27 (2022), 36, 53.

22 Karoo Hoogland Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027 (2026), 132; Khâi-Ma Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27 (2022), 36, 53.

Civil Society

Civil-society organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), farmer associations, advocacy groups and community media play an important intermediary role between communities, government and the private sector. Their roles include community mobilisation, public education, advocacy, service provision, capacity building and representation of groups whose interests may be insufficiently reflected in formal planning. Their principal interests include accountable government, inclusive development, environmental and climate justice, sustainable livelihoods and meaningful public participation.

The Surplus People Project (SPP) is an established civil-society organisation with an office in Springbok and networks across the district. It works with small-scale farmers, farmworkers and rural communities through advocacy, political education, agroecology, community organising and climate-justice initiatives. SPP also coordinates the Namaqua Land Producers' Platform Forum, which includes elected representatives from more than eight communities. The forum is organising to engage the District Municipality on water, infrastructure and land.[23]

SPP's community relationships, local presence and experience in rural development give it the capacity to support climate dialogues, policy literacy and engagement with small-scale producers. The Namaqua Land Producers' Platform Forum has considerable local knowledge and represents a range of communities, but it needs more reliable access to municipal planning and decision-making if its members' priorities are to influence climate, agricultural and infrastructure initiatives.

The validation workshop identified several other civil-society actors. The SA Youth Council presented a proposal for hubs that would connect municipal IDPs, IPP investment and communities. The Unmute Coalition called for more direct engagement between civil society and municipalities. WoMin African Alliance (WoMin) emphasised the social and environmental costs of development and criticised the limited consultation with communities, farmers and Indigenous groups. National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) highlighted the difficulty of reaching people with disabilities and residents of remote settlements.[24] These organisations represent different constituencies and have specialist knowledge that could strengthen programme design, although their relationships with formal planning structures are still developing.

Radio NFM 98.1 is an important community-media stakeholder. Because it provides locally relevant information and a platform for public discussion, it can broaden participation across geographically dispersed communities. The station has encouraged community members and organisations to use its airtime to raise local concerns, while a local wind farm has supported an internship at the station.[25][26] Community radio could support climate literacy, publicise planning and procurement opportunities and provide feedback on development initiatives. Its role should go beyond broadcasting institutional announcements to creating space for questions, dialogue and accountability.

23 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 3," stakeholder meeting minutes, 20 July 2026.

24 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

25 Namakwa District Municipality, "Namakwa District Integrated Forum," meeting minutes, 30 June 2026.

26 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

Civil society's influence generally comes from community relationships, public legitimacy, advocacy and specialist knowledge, not from formal decision-making authority. Capacity varies considerably. Established organisations may have strong facilitation and programme-management capabilities, while smaller community organisations frequently depend on volunteers and have limited administrative and financial systems. Weak governance documentation, tax compliance, financial management and reporting prevent some organisations from accessing IPP, government or donor funding.

Civil-society participation should therefore involve more than invitations to occasional workshops. Organisations require defined roles in planning, implementation and monitoring, as well as reliable access to municipal and private-sector decision-makers. At the same time, engagement with civil society cannot replace direct engagement with communities. No single organisation should be assumed to represent the diversity of interests across the three municipalities.

Communities

Communities are the principal rights holders and intended beneficiaries of municipal development and renewable-energy investment. Their interests include reliable services, employment, infrastructure, education, skills, local procurement, transparent decision-making and an equitable share of development benefits. Communities also have detailed knowledge of local livelihoods, environmental conditions and previous development interventions.

Communities have limited influence over formal decisions compared with municipalities, IPPs and government institutions. Participation generally occurs through IDP consultations, ward committees, traditional structures, community meetings, civil-society networks, community trusts and project-level IPP engagements. These mechanisms provide potential channels for participation, but their effectiveness varies considerably.

Validation workshop participants reported that municipal and development information does not consistently reach residents and that communities often receive inadequate feedback after consultations. IDP issues may be discussed repeatedly without visible implementation, contributing to mistrust and declining participation.[27] Historical exclusion, unmet expectations and a strong immediate demand for employment also shape how residents respond to renewable-energy and development projects.

Consultation fatigue is a significant problem. Communities may be approached separately by municipalities, IPPs, consultants and civil-society organisations, with each institution requesting similar information. Where these processes do not produce visible outcomes, residents may become reluctant to participate in subsequent engagements. CfG should therefore coordinate its community engagement with existing processes, explain how it will use information, and provide feedback on decisions and implementation.

27 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

Accessibility is also important. Formal meetings may exclude residents of remote settlements, people who cannot afford to travel and those who are not comfortable participating in English. Communication should use appropriate local languages and multiple channels, including community radio, door-to-door outreach, churches, schools, municipal offices, ward structures and trusted community organisations.

Community trusts are another way in which renewable-energy benefits may reach residents. Their effectiveness depends on representative governance, active trustees, regulatory compliance and clear communication with beneficiaries. Evidence from the assessment indicates that difficulties in recruiting trustees, incomplete boards and low participation in nominations and annual meetings have delayed implementation in some cases. Where residents do not understand the distinction between the trust, the IPP and the municipality, uncertainty about responsibility and access to benefits may further weaken trust.

Independent Power Producers

IPPs are among the most influential private-sector stakeholders in the target municipalities. Their primary mandate is to develop, construct and operate renewable-energy facilities in accordance with applicable licences, contracts and regulatory obligations. Under the REIPPPP, they must also meet economic-development commitments relating to employment, local content, ownership, preferential procurement, ED and SED.[28]

IPPs' principal interests include regulatory compliance, operational continuity, community acceptance, a stable social licence to operate, and evidence that their development expenditure is producing credible results. Their financial and technical resources give them substantial influence over development activity in beneficiary communities. However, their contractual obligations limit this influence. IPPs operate within defined geographic areas, approved budgets and corporate planning cycles and cannot assume responsibility for municipal service delivery.

A wind farm operating in Nama Khoi has established comparatively structured community-development and stakeholder-engagement processes. Its programmes include education, health, skills development, infrastructure, biodiversity, enterprise support, social welfare and community media. An asset-based community development approach, annual community workshops, a quarterly community forum and a board-approved three-year plan inform its economic-development planning.[29]

The wind farm has nevertheless identified several implementation and relationship difficulties. Changes in municipal leadership can disrupt cooperation and delay decisions. Many local CBOs, NPOs, and enterprises also cannot access project funding because they lack complete governance, tax, or compliance documentation. Although these organisations may have viable ideas and community knowledge, their limited institutional readiness prevents them from entering formal financial relationships with the IPP.

28 Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme Bid Window 7: Economic Development Information and Returnable Schedules (Pretoria: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, n.d.).

29 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1," stakeholder meeting minutes, 5 June 2026.

Another IPP is an important stakeholder in Khâi-Ma, where it implements initiatives relating to education, health, skills development, environmental management, livelihoods and ED. This IPP chairs an informal forum through which local IPPs exchange information and attempt to reduce duplication. It also participates in the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)-led Khâi-Ma Community Development Coordination Forum.[30]

These structures show a willingness to collaborate, but inconsistent attendance, weak action tracking, and unclear accountability weaken them. Municipal delays may require IPPs to redirect planned expenditure, while weak communication leaves communities uncertain about which institution is responsible for services or development needs. Community expectations may also exceed what IPPs are contractually permitted or financially able to provide.

Business

Business stakeholders include mines, agricultural enterprises, tourism operators, contractors, local suppliers, cooperatives and small, medium and micro-enterprises. Their role is economic rather than statutory: they create employment, purchase goods and services, invest in productive assets and contribute to the district's revenue base. Their interests include profitable, stable operations; reliable infrastructure; market access; an appropriately skilled workforce; and predictable municipal and regulatory processes.

The influence and capacity of business actors vary substantially. Large mining and energy companies have significant financial resources, technical expertise and access to government decision-makers. By contrast, small local businesses and cooperatives often have limited working capital, weak administrative systems and restricted access to procurement information. This imbalance affects which firms can respond successfully to municipal, mining or IPP procurement opportunities.

The assessment identified strong interest among local businesses and unemployed residents in participating in renewable-energy, mining, agricultural and tourism value chains. However, local enterprises face barriers relating to registration, tax compliance, financial management, tender documentation and access to finance. Procurement opportunities are not always communicated in accessible or timely ways, while short-term contracts do little to support sustained business growth.

Skills development is also not consistently connected to business demand. Training may be provided without a clear route into employment, procurement or entrepreneurship, while IPPs may design training primarily around their immediate project requirements. Business associations, employers, municipalities, training institutions and IPPs should therefore collaborate to identify realistic local value-chain opportunities and link training to real demand.

Relationships between established companies and communities can become strained when residents believe outside contractors or workers receive most of the economic benefits. Transparent procurement criteria, supplier-development pathways and reporting on local expenditure would help manage expectations and make the distribution of opportunities more visible.

30 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4," stakeholder meeting minutes, 3 August 2026.

Provincial and National Government

Provincial and national government departments, the IPP Office and public development agencies shape the regulatory, financial and policy environment within which local development occurs. Their mandates include energy procurement, environmental governance, cooperative government, water and sanitation, economic development, education, health, social development and infrastructure investment. They have substantial formal influence because they determine policy, allocate funding, issue approvals and provide technical support.

The national renewable-energy procurement framework sets IPPs' economic-development obligations, while provincial and national departments support municipalities through sectoral programmes, grants, and technical assistance. The IDC plays a direct coordination role in Khâi-Ma through the Community Development Coordination Forum. Other departments participate in district, municipal and project-level structures to varying degrees.

The distribution of responsibilities across several departments can result in fragmented decision-making. Local stakeholders may be uncertain about which institution is responsible for a particular approval, funding stream or programme. Stakeholders also reported inconsistent departmental attendance and limited follow-through within local coordination forums. This can leave municipalities, IPPs and communities without the technical decisions or institutional support needed to advance initiatives.

Provincial and national institutions should therefore participate in local coordination structures through appropriately mandated representatives. Agreed actions should be incorporated into departmental planning and reporting systems, rather than relying only on informal commitments made at meetings.

Research Institutions

Research institutions, universities and training providers contribute evidence, technical expertise, innovation and skills development. Their interests include applied research, regional development, knowledge production and improving education-to-employment pathways. They can influence policy and programme design by producing evidence on climate risks, economic opportunities, community priorities and the performance of development interventions.

Sol Plaatje University has played a prominent role in the Namakwa District through its involvement in the research and validation process for the district LED Strategy. The University has supported stakeholder consultation, economic analysis and discussion of emerging development sectors. It also participates in regional innovation initiatives intended to strengthen municipal LED planning.[31]

Research institutions can improve evidence-based planning, but research does not automatically lead to implementation. Municipalities may lack the staff or financial resources required to act on research findings, while communities may not receive research outputs in accessible formats. Stronger links

31 Namakwa District Municipality and Sol Plaatje University, "Namakwa District LED Strategy Validation Workshops," workshop reports, 6 July 2026.

are needed between research findings and municipal budgets, IPP investment decisions and community priorities.

Universities, technical and vocational education and training institutions and other providers also have an important role in addressing skills mismatches. Training should be informed by credible labour-market and value-chain analysis and should provide recognised qualifications, practical experience and realistic pathways into employment or enterprise. Research and training institutions should work with employers and communities instead of designing programmes based only on their own assumptions about local needs.

Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable and under-represented groups include young people, women, people with disabilities, unemployed residents, small-scale farmers, Indigenous communities and people living in remote rural settlements. These groups are not homogeneous, but all face a higher risk of exclusion from information, decision-making and economic opportunities. Their interests include accessible services, employment, education, secure livelihoods, recognition of cultural and environmental rights and meaningful participation in decisions that affect them.

Young people are directly affected by unemployment, skills mismatches and limited pathways into the district's emerging economic sectors. However, their formal influence remains limited and young people are often consulted only after priorities have been substantially determined. They should also be involved in the design, governance and monitoring of skills, enterprise and employment programmes.

Women may experience the effects of inadequate services, environmental degradation and insecure livelihoods differently from men, while remaining under-represented in planning and investment decisions. WoMin's contribution to the validation workshop highlighted the need to examine the full social cost of development and to stop viewing residents only as potential employees. Women's organisations should be involved in assessing community ownership, livelihoods, care responsibilities and the distribution of development benefits.

People with disabilities face barriers relating to transport, information formats, meeting venues and dependence on limited household income. NCPD emphasised that conventional communication and consultation methods may not reach people with disabilities in remote settlements. Accessibility should therefore be incorporated into the design and budgeting of all CfG engagements and not treated as a separate or later intervention.

Farmers and Indigenous communities have a direct interest in climate planning because their livelihoods and cultural practices depend on land, water and natural resources. The validation workshop found that these groups had not been sufficiently consulted during the initial assessment. This omission weakened the analysis of drought, land degradation and the social and cultural

consequences of development.[32] Direct engagement with these groups is needed to ensure that local environmental knowledge informs climate-resilience and investment decisions.

Limited participation by vulnerable groups should not be interpreted as a lack of knowledge or interest. Participation is constrained by distance, language barriers, inaccessible communication, financial costs, mistrust, and previous engagements that did not produce visible results. Targeted consultation, accessible information, appropriate languages and representation requirements will therefore be needed.

Across all stakeholder categories, the main problems in stakeholder relationships are fragmented coordination, unequal access to information and resources, unclear institutional responsibilities, misaligned planning cycles and weak accountability for agreed actions.

SECTION 07

Planning Processes

Municipal planning, renewable-energy investment and climate planning direct substantial public and private resources within the Namakwa District. These processes identify many of the same priorities, including water security, infrastructure, employment, skills development, enterprise support and resilient livelihoods. However, they operate under different mandates, decision-making cycles and accountability arrangements. This section examines how these processes work, who participates, the information used to make decisions, and where coordination and participation remain weak.

Integrated Development Planning

The IDP is the principal statutory instrument through which a municipality establishes its development priorities and links them to its budget, spatial framework, sector plans and performance-management system. Each municipality adopts a five-year IDP for the term of the municipal council and reviews it annually to reflect changes in community needs, available resources and implementation progress. The Municipal Systems Act requires the District Municipality to establish an integrated planning framework for the district, while the local municipalities must align their IDP processes with that framework.[33]

The planning cycle begins with adopting a process plan and timetable that specifies the review stages, opportunities for public participation, and arrangements for coordination with other municipalities and government departments. Municipal officials and councillors then review development conditions,

32 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

33 Republic of South Africa, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, secs. 25–29 and 34; Republic of South Africa, Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, secs. 16, 21 and 23–24.

service backlogs, institutional performance and community priorities. The mayor generally tables the draft IDP and budget by the end of March, at least 90 days before the start of the municipal financial year. The municipality must invite public comment and consider submissions before the council adopts the final IDP and budget, ordinarily by the end of May and before the financial year begins on 1 July.[34]

Participants can include elected councillors, municipal officials, ward committees, traditional leaders, residents, organised business, civil-society organisations, provincial and national departments, public agencies and development partners. The process draws on population and socio-economic data, ward priorities, infrastructure and service-delivery assessments, the SDF, sector plans, financial projections, previous performance reports and legislative requirements. Climate-risk information, environmental assessments and private-sector investment plans may also inform the IDP, although they are not consistently integrated.

The Namakwa District Municipality performs a strategic and coordinating role. Its IDP, District Development Model responsibilities and LED Strategy provide a district-wide account of development priorities and identify projects that require cooperation across municipalities or sectors. The District Municipality also supports the local municipalities and convenes intergovernmental and stakeholder structures. However, it does not deliver most local services directly. Responsibility for water, sanitation, local roads, waste services, community facilities, land-use management and local public participation generally rests with the relevant local municipality.[35]

Communities and development partners do not always clearly understand this division of responsibilities. District structures can identify shared priorities and bring stakeholders together, but implementation requires a local municipality, government department, public entity or private partner with the authority and resources to deliver the project. During DWF's engagement with the District Municipality, the Executive Mayor emphasised that engagement with the three local municipalities was essential because the District Municipality could not replace local service-delivery institutions.[36]

The IDPs of the District Municipality, Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland show considerable agreement on the main development problems. All identify infrastructure constraints, unemployment, skills shortages, limited local economic participation, water insecurity and exposure to climate-related risks. This consistency provides a basis for joint planning. However, the plans tend to repeat the same diagnoses without always converting them into a consolidated district project pipeline that identifies the responsible institution, location, cost, implementation stage and potential partners. Shared diagnoses therefore do not necessarily lead to coordinated implementation.

Nama Khoi's IDP identifies water, infrastructure, unemployment and climate vulnerability as central development concerns. It also recognises renewable-energy investment as part of the local economy. However, IPP socio-economic and enterprise-development expenditure is not systematically reflected in its five-year capital programme. The municipality engages with a local wind farm mainly through

34 Republic of South Africa, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, secs. 25–29 and 34; Republic of South Africa, Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, secs. 16, 21 and 23–24.

35 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027 (Springbok: Namakwa District Municipality, 2026), 4–9 and 59–61.

36 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 2," stakeholder meeting minutes, 9 July 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

project and stakeholder forums rather than an integrated municipal investment process.[37] Changes in senior municipal leadership have also affected continuity and the municipality's ability to enter longer-term partnerships.

Khâi-Ma's IDP provides clearer examples of private investment supporting municipal plans. It records a solar IPP's contribution to an Expanded Public Works Programme sanitation project that the municipality could not complete from its own allocation. It also records a council-approved solar-development application near Aggeneys and identifies private-sector Social and Labour Plans as a development opportunity.[38] These examples show that private contributions can align with municipal priorities. However, they remain individual projects and do not amount to a comprehensive system for coordinating investment from the five IPPs and mining operations reportedly active in the area.

Karoo Hoogland's IDP identifies the expansion of wind-energy development south of Sutherland as a strategic initiative and notes support from a wind-energy IPP for upgrading a sports facility in Sutherland.[39] This shows that renewable energy is recognised in both economic and infrastructure planning. However, as in the other municipalities, the connection remains project-specific and there is limited evidence that renewable-energy investment is systematically incorporated into the municipal budget, implementation plan or performance indicators.

The IDP process has several institutional strengths. It is legally mandated, repeated annually, linked to the municipal budget and provides an established channel for public participation. It also offers a common planning reference for government departments, private investors and communities. Its weaknesses stem mainly from uneven participation, limited municipal capacity and the gap between identifying priorities and preparing implementable projects. IDPs are often lengthy and technical, and residents may be consulted after key assumptions have already been made. Stakeholders at the validation workshop reported that communities do not consistently receive feedback on how their submissions influence final decisions.[40]

IPP Socio-economic Development and Enterprise Development

REIPPPP projects must meet economic-development commitments alongside electricity generation. Compliance forms part of the contractual relationship between the project company and the state and is monitored through the Independent Power Producer Office and the project's reporting obligations.[41]

Individual IPPs translate these commitments into economic-development plans, implementation programmes and expenditure decisions. The IPP's economic-development or social-performance team normally undertakes planning, which it approves through corporate or board governance

37 Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027 (Springbok: Nama Khoi Local Municipality, 2026), 39–41 and 107.

38 Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27 (Pofadder: Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, 2022), 36, 51 and 53.

39 Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027 (Williston: Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 2026), 92, 132 and 144.

40 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 2," stakeholder meeting minutes, 9 July 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

41 Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Request for Qualification and Proposals for New Generation Capacity under the Seventh Bid Submission Phase of the REIPP Procurement Programme, Part C, Volume 1: Economic Development (Pretoria: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, 2023/24).

processes. Community liaison officers, implementation partners and community trusts may also participate. Planning information can include regulatory commitments, the project's beneficiary area, previous programme performance, community needs assessments, stakeholder consultations, and the IPP's own investment priorities.

The timing and duration of IPP planning differ from municipal planning. A Nama Khoi wind farm follows a board-approved three-year Economic Development Plan, reviewed annually and informed by community workshops and a quarterly forum.[42] An IPP operating in Khâi-Ma prepares an annual Economic Development Plan informed by needs assessments and issues identified through community engagement. During its August 2026 engagement with DWF, this IPP reported that its plan for 2027/28 was due for submission by 30 October 2026.[43] These decision points do not necessarily coincide with the municipal IDP and budget cycle.

Municipalities, civil-society organisations, local businesses and community representatives may participate in IPP consultations, but the nature and timing of their involvement vary between projects. Municipal input may include providing an IDP, identifying projects, or approving agreements after an initiative has already been designed. Communities may be consulted through meetings, needs assessments or community forums, but they do not necessarily have a say in how the full economic-development budget is allocated. Corporate approval processes also mean that priorities raised through consultation may not be reflected immediately in funded programmes.

The Nama Khoi wind farm provides an example of a comparatively structured process. It also participates in district stakeholder processes.[44] This allows investment to respond to local evidence over more than one year, although the approved plan and available budget limit how far new requests can be accommodated.

Khâi-Ma has two relevant coordination mechanisms. Local IPPs participate in an informal forum, chaired by one of the IPPs, where they share weekly updates, identify possible areas of cooperation, and try to avoid duplication. The same IPP also participates in the Khâi-Ma Community Development Coordination Forum convened by the IDC. The IDC forum can include IPPs, mining companies, the municipality, government departments, community trusts and civil-society organisations.[45]

The IDC forum is a practical attempt to align development activity across sectors. It gives participants access to information about other programmes and creates a space to identify overlaps. However, its effectiveness is limited by inconsistent attendance, particularly by government departments, and poor follow-through on agreed actions. Participants reported that responsibilities were not sufficiently formalised, actions were not linked to organisational performance systems, and the forum lacked a reliable mechanism for holding members accountable.[46] The informal IPP forum faces similar limitations because it depends on voluntary participation and has no authority over members' individual budgets or corporate decisions.

42 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1," stakeholder meeting minutes, 5 June 2026.

43 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4," stakeholder meeting minutes, 3 August 2026.

44 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1," stakeholder meeting minutes, 5 June 2026.

45 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4," stakeholder meeting minutes, 3 August 2026.

46 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4," stakeholder meeting minutes, 3 August 2026.

These constraints are evident in the relationship between IPPs and municipalities. IPPs reported that limited municipal capacity and slow agreement approvals sometimes force them to redirect expenditure. Municipalities, in turn, may not receive sufficiently early or detailed information about planned IPP programmes to identify duplication or propose joint projects. The Namakwa District Integrated Forum has also recorded municipal concerns about companies starting operations without first informing the relevant municipality.[47]

There is no shortage of investment or consultation in the IPP planning process. Its main weakness is the lack of a common mechanism that connects project-level economic-development plans to municipal priorities and other IPPs' plans. The REIPPPP framework requires each project to meet its own commitments. Still, it does not establish a district planning process through which IPPs must coordinate their development expenditure with municipalities or with one another.

Climate Change and Resilience

Climate planning in the Namakwa District is undertaken through national legislation, district climate-response planning, municipal IDPs, disaster-management arrangements, environmental plans and sector-specific programmes. The Climate Change Act provides for provincial and district authorities to assess climate needs and responses and prepare implementation plans. Municipal climate considerations must also be integrated into IDPs, SDFs, infrastructure planning and relevant sector plans.[48]

Climate projections, vulnerability assessments, disaster records, environmental data, infrastructure conditions, socio-economic information and community experience inform climate-planning decisions. Participants can include the district and local municipalities, provincial and national departments, research institutions, conservation organisations, farmers, civil society, communities and private investors. Decisions about implementation are generally made through municipal IDP and budget processes, disaster-management plans, departmental programmes and individual infrastructure or adaptation projects.

The Namakwa District Municipality also coordinates climate planning in the district. Its 2026/27 IDP states that the District Climate Change Response Plan was reviewed and approved in 2023, that climate considerations have been incorporated into relevant sector plans, and that the Disaster Management Plan has been amended to reflect climate risks and vulnerabilities. The district has identified veldfires, floods, sandstorms, extreme temperatures and water scarcity as threats to settlements, livelihoods and municipal infrastructure.[49]

A substantial evidence base supports district climate planning. The 2015 district vulnerability assessment projected rising temperatures and identified heightened risks for inland municipalities, including Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland. The 2023 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and

47 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4"; Namakwa District Municipality, "Namakwa District Integrated Forum," meeting minutes, 30 June 2026.

48 Republic of South Africa, Climate Change Act 22 of 2024, sec. 15; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 72–75 and 88.

49 Republic of South Africa, Climate Change Act 22 of 2024, sec. 15; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 72–75 and 88.

Response Plan identify water security, agriculture, human health, settlements, infrastructure and biodiversity as major areas of vulnerability.[50] These assessments provide information that could guide municipal priorities and private investment.

However, the link between this evidence and implementation remains weak. The District IDP lists identifying projects under the Climate Change Response Plan as an unfunded activity for 2026/27. Environmental and climate responsibilities are also concentrated among a small number of officials. The district reportedly has one official responsible for several environmental functions, while Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland do not have dedicated climate-change officials. This limits their capacity to develop projects, coordinate departments, pursue climate finance and monitor implementation.

Nama Khoi has progressively expanded its treatment of climate change in successive IDPs. Its 2026/27 IDP describes climate change as connected to development, disaster risk, infrastructure and urban resilience and identifies water scarcity and soil salinity as significant constraints. However, the municipality acknowledges that it has not adopted a dedicated climate-change policy, strategy or action plan. It also reports limited financial resources, ageing infrastructure and insufficient internal capacity to develop the required plans and adaptation measures.[51] Climate risks are therefore recognised, but responsibilities, budgets and measurable actions remain underdeveloped.

Khâi-Ma's current IDP identifies climate change, drought and low rainfall as threats but does not include a dedicated municipal adaptation plan. The municipality relies on participation in the District Municipality's climate-planning process. Its investments in the Pofadder and Pella water systems are directly relevant to resilience, even though they are framed primarily as service-delivery projects.[52] The gap lies in linking district climate priorities to clearly assigned and funded actions within Khâi-Ma's own IDP, budget and implementation systems.

Karoo Hoogland's successive IDPs recognise the relationship between climate change, water availability, agriculture, human settlements and municipal infrastructure. The current IDP maintains this emphasis, but dedicated budgets, implementation responsibilities or measurable adaptation outcomes do not consistently accompany the identified risks.[53] In practice, much of the municipality's climate response will occur through water security, drought management, infrastructure maintenance, agricultural support, spatial planning and disaster-risk reduction rather than through projects labelled specifically as climate interventions.

Participation is a further weakness in climate planning. Farmers and Indigenous communities are not sufficiently consulted, despite their direct experience of drought, land degradation and changing environmental conditions. Participants considered the assessment of drought impacts incomplete

50 Andrea Bourne et al., A Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for the Namakwa District, South Africa (Conservation South Africa, 2015); Namakwa District Municipality, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Response Plan, draft version 5 (2023).

51 Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 39–41; Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27, 51–66 and 106; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027.

52 Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 39–41; Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27, 51–66 and 106; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027.

53 Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 39–41; Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27, 51–66 and 106; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027.

without this local evidence.[54] Climate planning based mainly on technical studies and municipal documents may therefore overlook differences in exposure, livelihood impacts and locally developed responses.

The district has attracted substantial renewable-energy investment because of its contribution to climate-change mitigation, but considerably fewer resources are directed towards local adaptation. Municipal plans continue to identify unfunded water, infrastructure and disaster-resilience needs in areas hosting major energy investments. As a result, renewable-energy development and local climate resilience are linked in broad policy objectives but only weakly in project selection, budgeting and implementation.

Alignment in Processes

The four planning systems already intersect at several points. Municipal IDPs identify development needs that are relevant to IPP socio-economic and enterprise-development programmes. Municipal planning documents record direct private contributions. IPP community-engagement processes and the informal IPP forum in Khâi-Ma also create points of contact. The IDC-led Khâi-Ma Community Development Coordination Forum, the District LED Forum and the District Environmental Management Forum provide further opportunities to connect municipal, private-sector, departmental and community planning.

These points of connection do not yet form a coherent planning system. Municipalities, IPPs, government departments and civil-society organisations maintain separate project lists, consultation processes and reporting arrangements. Several IPPs may operate within the same beneficiary area without a complete view of one another's programmes. Municipalities may know that investment is taking place but lack information on the amount, timing, beneficiaries and intended outcomes. Conversely, IPPs may have access to published IDPs but not a prioritised pipeline of costed, implementation-ready municipal projects.

Repeating water, employment, skills and enterprise priorities across IDPs and IPP programmes can give the impression of alignment while hiding duplication. Separate organisations may fund similar training or enterprise initiatives without addressing gaps in progression, market access or long-term sustainability. The validation workshops found that training was not consistently connected to employment or procurement pathways and that projects often ended without adequate provision for continuation.[55] Uncoordinated consultation also contributes to the consultation fatigue, which arises when communities are asked similar questions but receive limited feedback.

The processes can also produce conflicting priorities. Municipalities are accountable for broad service-delivery and development needs across their entire jurisdiction, while IPPs must comply with project-specific commitments, beneficiary boundaries and corporate approval requirements. Communities may prioritise immediate employment, ownership and basic services, whereas IPPs may favour

54 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," 21 September 2026.

55 Namakwa District Municipality and Sol Plaatje University, "Namakwa District LED Strategy Validation Workshops," workshop reports, 6 July 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," 21 September 2026.

programmes that can be delivered within available budgets and reporting periods. Climate planning emphasises long-term adaptation and preventive investment, while immediate service and infrastructure pressures frequently absorb municipal budgets. As a result, renewable-energy expenditure supports national mitigation objectives without necessarily addressing host communities' local adaptation needs.

Information barriers compound these differences. IDPs and climate plans are technical and may not be available in accessible language or formats. Community members may not understand the respective responsibilities of municipalities, IPPs and community trusts. IPP economic-development plans and performance information are not consistently shared in a form that allows municipalities and communities to compare commitments with implementation. Local organisations and enterprises may also lack timely information about funding, procurement and partnership opportunities.

Better coordination requires aligning the decision-making calendars of the four processes. Municipalities should identify a limited number of costed and prioritised projects before IPPs finalise their annual or multi-year economic-development plans. These projects should specify the responsible institution, location, intended beneficiaries, implementation readiness, climate implications and opportunities for co-funding. This would allow IPPs to assess potential contributions before their plans and budgets are approved, rather than receiving municipal requests after funds have been committed.

A shared district investment and project register would support this process. It should record planned municipal projects, IPP socio-economic and enterprise-development initiatives, relevant departmental programmes and climate-response priorities. Participating stakeholders should have access to non-confidential information on location, beneficiaries, budget status, responsible institution and implementation progress. The register would not replace members' statutory or corporate approval processes, but it would make duplication and funding gaps more visible.

Existing forums should be strengthened rather than duplicated. The District LED Forum can provide strategic alignment across the district, while the IDC-led forum and IPP forum in Khâi-Ma can coordinate local investment and implementation. Clear terms of reference, appropriately mandated representatives, action registers, deadlines, and reporting arrangements would allow decisions made in these forums to carry into municipal, departmental, and corporate systems. Where a forum cannot make a binding decision, it should identify the institution with authority to do so and record the required next step.

Community participation should also be coordinated across the planning processes. Municipalities, IPPs and programme partners should share consultation schedules where possible, use local languages and accessible formats, and work through ward structures, community radio and trusted civil-society organisations. Feedback should explain which proposals were accepted, deferred or rejected and why. Direct engagement with farmers, Indigenous communities, young people, people with disabilities and remote settlements is necessary where existing representative structures do not provide adequate coverage.

Climate considerations should be applied across the shared project pipeline. Municipal infrastructure and IPP development projects should be screened for their contribution to water security, drought resilience, livelihoods, disaster preparedness and infrastructure durability. This would direct a greater

share of available development resources toward adaptation while retaining the distinct legal and contractual responsibilities of municipalities, departments, and IPPs.

The central task is therefore to connect existing decisions, not to create another planning process. Better sequencing, shared information and accountable follow-through would allow municipal budgets, IPP investment, climate evidence and community priorities to support a common set of development outcomes.

SECTION 08

Needs Analysis

Five interrelated needs emerge from the document review, stakeholder consultations and validation workshops. They concern the coordination of planning and investment, access to economic opportunities, institutional capacity, the quality of community participation and the integration of climate resilience into development decisions. These needs should not be treated in isolation. Weak institutional capacity affects coordination and participation, while limited community involvement reduces the likelihood that economic and climate interventions will respond to local priorities.

Need 1 Strengthened Coordination Between Municipalities, Independent Power Producers and Communities

A consistent mechanism is needed through which municipalities, IPPs, government institutions, civil-society organisations and communities can align their priorities, investment plans and implementation responsibilities. Considerable public and private resources are already directed towards development in the Namakwa District, but these resources are planned and implemented through separate institutional processes. Stronger coordination is needed to direct them towards agreed local priorities and reduce duplication.

The evidence shows broad agreement on the district's development priorities. The Namakwa District Municipality and the three target local municipalities identify water security, infrastructure, unemployment, skills development and local economic participation as persistent concerns. IPPs are required to invest in SED, ED and skills within their beneficiary communities. Despite this overlap, municipal capital programmes do not consistently incorporate IPP investments, while IPP economic-development plans are not routinely developed through municipal planning processes.[56]

56 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027 (Springbok: Namakwa District Municipality, 2026); Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027 (Springbok: Nama Khoi Local Municipality, 2026); Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27 (Pofadder: Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, 2022); Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027 (Williston: Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 2026).

The problem is particularly visible in Khâi-Ma, where five IPPs and mining operations reportedly work within the same municipal area. The informal IPP forum and the IDC-led Khâi-Ma Community Development Coordination Forum improve access to information, but inconsistent attendance, weak action tracking and the absence of formal accountability limit their effectiveness.[57]

The need affects the Namakwa District Municipality, Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland Local Municipalities, as well as IPPs, community trusts, civil-society organisations and communities. Khâi-Ma faces an immediate coordination challenge because of the concentration of IPPs and mining operations. Nama Khoi has comparatively structured engagement with a local wind farm, but this relationship is not fully integrated into municipal budgeting and implementation. Karoo Hoogland's planning documents record renewable-energy activity, although direct evidence about coordination between the municipality, developers and communities remains limited.

The underlying causes are both structural and institutional. The REIPPPP does not establish a municipal or district process for IPPs to align their economic-development commitments with IDPs or coordinate with one another. Municipal and IPP planning cycles also differ. Municipal capacity constraints, leadership changes and delays in approving agreements further impede cooperation. National research has similarly identified weak alignment between community-benefit requirements, participatory development and municipal planning.[58]

If this need is not addressed, development resources will continue to be dispersed across short-term or project-specific initiatives. Different organisations may fund similar training, enterprise or community programmes while infrastructure, adaptation and livelihood priorities remain unfunded. Municipal delays may cause IPPs to redirect planned expenditure, and communities may continue to receive conflicting information about opportunities and institutional responsibilities. This would reduce the developmental return from renewable-energy investment and reinforce perceptions that major projects deliver limited local benefit.

Several existing structures provide a basis for improvement. These include the District LED Forum, the Namakwa District Integrated Forum, the District Environmental Management Forum, the IDC-led forum in Khâi-Ma, the informal IPP forum, municipal IDP processes and project-level forums convened by IPPs. Municipal documents also record examples of IPP contributions to municipal projects, and some IPPs use structured community engagement to inform multi-year plans.[59]

The programme should connect these existing mechanisms rather than establish a parallel structure. This should include completing a current map of IPPs, community trusts, programmes and beneficiary areas; establishing a shared register of planned investments and municipal projects; and creating an annual alignment window before municipal and IPP budgets are finalised. Municipalities should prepare a limited pipeline of prioritised projects that identifies the responsible institution, estimated cost, location, beneficiaries and implementation readiness.

57 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4," stakeholder meeting minutes, 3 August 2026.

58 Lucy Tait, Holle Linnea Wlokas and Ben Garside, Making Communities Count: Maximising Local Benefit Potential in South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 2013), 11–14; Merle Borchardt, "Dust in the Wind: Renewable Energy and the Limits of South Africa's Developmental State," New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy, no. 99 (2025): 57–58.

59 Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27, 36 and 53; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027, 132; Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1," stakeholder meeting minutes, 5 June 2026.

This need is an immediate and high priority. It is feasible because existing planning instruments, forums and relationships provide a foundation for action. Improvements in information-sharing, meeting governance and planning calendars can be introduced in the short term. However, sustained alignment will depend on participating institutions incorporating forum decisions into their own approval, budgeting and performance-management systems.

Need 2 Strengthened Local Economic Participation and Inclusive Livelihood Opportunities

Residents need better access to employment, enterprise, procurement and sustainable livelihood opportunities arising from renewable energy and the district's other economic sectors. The Namakwa District has attracted substantial investment, but unemployment remains high, and many communities experience limited access to the resulting opportunities. Skills and enterprise-development interventions need to connect more closely to labour demand, procurement opportunities and viable local markets.

The district LED workshops and needs-assessment validation process identified skills shortages, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance, weak business support and poor access to information as recurring barriers. Participants reported that training was often delivered without a clear pathway into employment, practical experience or enterprise activity. They also observed that IPPs may train participants to meet immediate project requirements instead of preparing them for longer-term opportunities in the wider local economy.[60]

Local enterprises and community organisations face additional obstacles. Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) may lack the registration, tax, financial-management and tender documentation required to access procurement and funding. During engagement with one IPP, incomplete compliance documentation was identified as the main reason that otherwise viable organisations could not obtain funding or enter formal partnerships. Another IPP similarly reported difficulty identifying young people who met the academic requirements for available bursaries, despite significant demand for education and employment support.[61]

Those most directly affected include unemployed residents, young people, women, local suppliers, small-scale farmers, cooperatives, community organisations and emerging enterprises across Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland. The need is especially pronounced in rural settlements, where distance, limited transport and weak digital access restrict participation. Communities hosting renewable-energy and mining projects are also affected by expectations that these investments should generate employment, procurement and ownership opportunities.

Underlying causes include a mismatch between available skills and employer requirements, weak coordination between training providers and employers, limited information about procurement opportunities, and the short duration of many project-based interventions. Construction creates

60 Namakwa District Municipality and Sol Plaatje University, "Namakwa District LED Strategy Validation Workshops," workshop reports, 6 July 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop," workshop minutes, 21 September 2026.

61 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1"; Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4."

temporary jobs, while operating renewable-energy facilities requires fewer workers. Small local markets and long distances constrain enterprise growth, while compliance costs and limited working capital prevent local businesses from competing for larger contracts. Development programmes also tend to address training, mentorship, finance, procurement, and market access separately instead of connecting them.

If this need is not addressed, renewable-energy and mining investment may continue to coexist with high unemployment and limited local ownership. Employers may recruit workers and suppliers from outside the district because local candidates are not prepared for available opportunities. Training without employment or enterprise pathways may deepen frustration rather than improve livelihoods. Businesses and community organisations may remain dependent on short-term grants, while the economic benefits of major projects continue to be distributed unevenly.

The district already has relevant capacities and initiatives. One wind farm supports skills development, enterprise and supplier development, community funding and employment through its biodiversity programme. Another IPP is conducting a local skills-needs assessment and provides business development, mentorship and selected resource support. The Namakwa Digital Hub supports digital skills and entrepreneurship, while the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA) provide registration, compliance, financial-management and coaching support. SPP and the Namaqua Land Producers' Platform Forum provide networks through which small-scale producers can be reached.[62]

The programme should connect these initiatives around credible economic pathways. A district opportunity and skills assessment should identify current and anticipated demand in renewable energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, construction, waste management and related services. Training should link to recognised qualifications, workplace experience, procurement opportunities or enterprise plans. Local suppliers and community organisations need practical support with registration, tax compliance, governance, costing, tender preparation and financial management. Municipalities and IPPs should publish procurement and enterprise-development opportunities through accessible local channels and explain eligibility and selection criteria.

This need is a high priority, although feasibility varies by intervention. Improving access to information, compliance support and coordination among training and enterprise-support providers is achievable in the short term. Creating sustained employment and viable enterprises is a longer-term task that depends on market demand, infrastructure, finance and employer participation. The programme should therefore distinguish between support it can provide directly and economic outcomes that require commitments from employers, funders and government institutions.

62 Namakwa District Municipality, "Namakwa District Integrated Forum," meeting minutes, 30 June 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 3," stakeholder meeting minutes, 20 July 2026.

Need 3 Strengthened Institutional and Stakeholder Capacity for Collaborative Climate Governance

Municipalities, civil-society organisations, community structures and other local stakeholders need stronger technical, organisational and governance capacity to participate effectively in climate and development planning. Many institutions are already active in the district, but their ability to plan, coordinate, access resources, implement projects and monitor results is uneven.

The Namakwa District Municipality's IDP identifies support to local municipalities, improved administrative and financial capability, good governance and stronger intergovernmental relations as strategic priorities. Capacity limitations are most evident in environmental governance. Climate and environmental functions rest with very few officials: the district's single environmental official also covers air quality and waste management, and the three local municipalities assign climate functions to officials with other responsibilities.[63]

Capacity constraints also affect civil-society and community organisations, many of which lack the governance, financial or tax documentation needed to access IPP funding or formal partnerships. One IPP has responded through capacity-building activities addressing organisational and tax compliance, but many organisations still need support.[64]

The need affects district and local municipal officials, councillors, civil-society organisations, ward structures, community trusts, local enterprises and community leaders across the three target municipalities. Smaller organisations and municipalities with vacant or overstretched posts face the greatest constraints. Provincial departments, organised local government, research institutions and IPPs are also affected because weak local capacity makes it harder to establish partnerships, obtain approvals and sustain joint initiatives.

Several factors underlie this need. Municipalities operate with limited budgets, specialist vacancies and frequent changes in political or administrative leadership. Climate planning, renewable-energy regulation and development finance require expertise that may not be available locally. Capacity-building initiatives are also often delivered as one-off workshops without ongoing mentoring or an immediate opportunity to apply the knowledge gained.

If these constraints are not addressed, municipalities may continue to adopt plans that they lack the capacity to implement, finance or monitor. Climate and development responsibilities may remain concentrated among a small number of officials, creating institutional vulnerability when staff leave. Community organisations may remain excluded from funding and implementation partnerships, while private-sector actors may struggle to identify suitable local partners. Collaborative structures may continue to depend on individual relationships rather than durable institutional arrangements.

Existing capacities include municipal planning and environmental structures, the District LED Forum, the District Environmental Management Forum, the Namakwa Digital Hub and the Innovation Champions for LED programme. Sol Plaatje University, provincial departments, the South African

63 Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 59–61.

64 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 1."

Local Government Association, SEDFA, IPPs and established civil-society organisations can provide technical knowledge and institutional support. One IPP's compliance initiative also provides a practical model for capacity building linked to funding opportunities.

The programme should provide practical and sustained institutional support. Municipal support should focus on climate mainstreaming, project preparation, stakeholder coordination, partnership management, monitoring and integrating climate priorities into IDPs and related plans. Civil society and community organisations need support with governance, compliance, financial management, proposal development and reporting. Capacity building should combine training with mentoring and application to actual projects, funding opportunities or planning processes.

This need is a high priority and is moderately feasible. The programme can strengthen organisational systems, provide technical support and connect stakeholders with specialist institutions. It cannot, on its own, resolve municipal staffing vacancies, infrastructure backlogs, or structural funding constraints. Its most realistic contribution is to strengthen the skills and systems needed for collaboration, while helping institutions secure additional technical and financial support.

Need 4 Strengthened Community Participation, Communication and Stakeholder Trust

Communities need earlier, more accessible and more influential participation in municipal, IPP and climate-related decision-making. Existing processes provide formal opportunities for consultation, but participation is often uneven, information does not consistently reach residents, and communities receive limited feedback on how their contributions have affected decisions.

Stakeholder consultations showed significant barriers to participation. One IPP reported that community involvement in Khâi-Ma is affected by historical mistrust, consultation fatigue, unmet expectations and a strong immediate demand for employment. It also reported low participation in community-trust nominations and annual meetings. Validation workshop participants stated that municipal information does not consistently reach communities and that IDP matters may be discussed repeatedly without visible implementation.[65]

The assessment also found that several groups were inadequately represented. Young people, persons with disabilities, farmers, Indigenous communities and residents of remote settlements were not sufficiently included in the initial research and consultation. Presentations and documents delivered mainly in English raised further accessibility concerns. Distance, transport costs, limited digital connectivity and inaccessible meeting arrangements add to these barriers.

This need affects residents throughout Nama Khoi, Khâi-Ma and Karoo Hoogland, but the barriers are most severe in small and remote settlements. Young people need a stronger voice in skills, employment and enterprise programmes. People with disabilities need accessible information and participation arrangements. Farmers and Indigenous communities need direct involvement in discussions about drought, land degradation, water and development affecting natural resources.

65 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 4"; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop."

Community organisations, ward committees and traditional leaders are also affected because they often serve as intermediaries between institutions and residents.

Causes include fragmented consultation by different organisations, inaccessible information, unclear institutional responsibilities and limited feedback after engagements. Residents do not always understand the different mandates of municipalities, IPPs and community trusts. Consultation may also take place after priorities or programmes have already been largely decided, limiting the practical influence of community input.

If this need is not addressed, consultation fatigue and mistrust are likely to deepen. Communities may withdraw from formal processes or turn to protest and informal pressure when established channels appear ineffective. Unrealistic expectations may contribute to conflict around employment, procurement, community-trust benefits and service delivery. Programmes designed without meaningful community input may also fail to reflect local barriers or reach intended beneficiaries.

Several structures can support stronger participation. Municipal IDP processes, ward committees, community trusts, IPP forums, schools, churches, civil-society networks and community radio provide established channels. Radio NFM can reach communities across dispersed settlements. SPP and the Namaqua Land Producers' Platform Forum have relationships with farmers and rural communities. The SA Youth Council, WoMin, NCPD and the Unmute Coalition bring experience in youth engagement, environmental justice, disability inclusion and community participation.[66]

The programme should treat participation as an ongoing process of information, dialogue, feedback and visible follow-through. Engagement should take place early enough to influence decisions and use appropriate local languages and accessible formats. Community radio, ward structures, schools, churches and trusted organisations should be used to reach residents who cannot attend central meetings. Consultation schedules and feedback on proposals should be coordinated across institutions.

This need is a high priority and is feasible through existing communication and participation structures. Improvements in language, accessibility, consultation timing and feedback can be introduced in the short term. Rebuilding trust will require sustained delivery over a longer period. The programme should therefore combine improved engagement with a small number of visible actions that show how community participation has influenced implementation.

Need 5 Strengthened Climate Resilience Through Integrated Development Planning and Investment

Climate risks need to be translated into funded, assigned and measurable development interventions. Climate change is widely recognised in district and local planning documents but plans often stop at identifying risks and do not reach implementation. Climate resilience should be integrated into

66 Democracy Works Foundation, "Meeting 2," stakeholder meeting minutes, 9 July 2026; Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop."

infrastructure, service delivery, livelihoods and private investment and not treated as a separate environmental activity.

The district has an approved Climate Change Response Plan, a climate-informed Disaster Management Plan and a substantial base of vulnerability assessments. However, project identification under the Response Plan remains an unfunded activity for 2026/27.[67]

Conditions differ across the local municipalities: Nama Khoi has yet to prepare a dedicated climate policy, strategy and action plan; Khâi-Ma relies on the District Municipality's climate-planning process; and Karoo Hoogland's recognised risks are not consistently matched by budgets, responsible officials or measurable outcomes.[68]

The need affects all three municipalities but is particularly significant for inland and rural settlements exposed to higher temperatures, drought and water insecurity. Small-scale farmers, farmworkers, Indigenous communities, women, older residents and low-income households are especially affected because their livelihoods and wellbeing depend on climate-sensitive services and natural resources. Municipalities also face increased pressure because climate-related infrastructure failures and disasters create additional expenditure within already constrained budgets.

The underlying causes include limited municipal technical capacity, insufficient adaptation finance and the separation of environmental planning from infrastructure and economic-development decisions. Climate assessments identify broad risks but do not always produce projects that are costed, assigned to an implementing institution and ready for funding. Renewable-energy investment is directed primarily towards mitigation, while local adaptation needs remain underfunded. The limited inclusion of farmers and Indigenous communities in the initial assessment is a further gap.[69]

If this need is not addressed, drought, water shortages, infrastructure deterioration, land degradation and declining agricultural productivity will place increasing pressure on communities and municipalities. Municipalities may spend more resources on emergency repairs and disaster response than on preventive investment. Livelihood losses may deepen unemployment and poverty, while vulnerable households bear a disproportionate share of the costs. Renewable-energy development may contribute to national mitigation targets without improving host communities' resilience.

The district has a strong foundation to build on. This includes the District Climate Change Response Plan, the District Disaster Management Plan, climate-vulnerability assessments, municipal IDPs, the Environmental Management Forum and established community and farmer networks. Water-infrastructure investments in Khâi-Ma and environmental programmes supported by IPPs already contribute to resilience, even where they are not described explicitly as climate projects. The presence of renewable-energy developers and their economic-development resources creates potential for co-investment where projects fall within their mandates and beneficiary areas.

67 Republic of South Africa, Climate Change Act 22 of 2024, sec. 15; Namakwa District Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 72–75 and 88; Namakwa District Municipality, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Response Plan, draft version 5 (2023).

68 Nama Khoi Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, 39–41; Khâi-Ma Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan 2022/23–2026/27, 51–66; Karoo Hoogland Local Municipality, 5th Generation Integrated Development Plan 2022–2027.

69 Democracy Works Foundation, "Needs Assessment Validation Workshop."

The programme should help municipalities convert climate priorities into an investable project pipeline. Each intervention should identify the risk addressed, responsible institution, location, beneficiaries, estimated cost, funding status and measurable outcome. Climate considerations should be incorporated into IDP projects, spatial planning, infrastructure maintenance and IPP development programmes. Direct climate dialogues with farmers, Indigenous communities and other affected groups should complement technical assessments. Opportunities for co-funding should be explored for water security, resilient livelihoods, ecosystem restoration, community preparedness and infrastructure protection.

This need is a high priority, but feasibility differs between planning and implementation. Integrating climate screening into existing planning processes, improving community evidence and preparing investment-ready projects are achievable in the short to medium term. Major water and infrastructure interventions require longer timeframes and funding beyond the programme's resources. The most feasible contribution is to strengthen project preparation, coordination and access to potential funders while ensuring that immediate programme activities are climate responsive.

SECTION 09

Conclusion and Recommendations

The needs assessment finds that the Namakwa District has many of the institutional, policy and investment foundations required to support inclusive and climate-resilient local development. Municipalities have established planning systems that identify local priorities, renewable-energy investment continues through the REIPPPP, and civil-society and community organisations remain active in local development and climate resilience. Existing structures, including municipal planning processes, the District LED Forum, environmental forums and project-level stakeholder platforms, provide a basis for stronger collaboration.

The district does not lack plans, institutions or investment. The main challenge is that municipal planning, renewable-energy investment, climate-resilience initiatives and community-development processes continue to operate largely in parallel. This reduces opportunities for collaboration and limits the collective value of available resources. As a result, communities continue to experience unemployment, limited economic participation, institutional capacity constraints and inadequate involvement in development decisions, despite significant public and private investment in the district.

The assessment identifies five priority needs: stronger coordination between municipalities, IPPs and communities; improved local economic participation and inclusive livelihoods; stronger institutional and stakeholder capacity; improved community participation, communication and stakeholder trust; and better integration of climate resilience into local development planning and investment. These needs are interdependent and should be addressed through connected programme activities rather than separate interventions.

The findings suggest that DWF should work through existing planning processes, stakeholder relationships and coordination platforms. Its role is to facilitate collaboration, strengthen stakeholder capacity, improve access to information and support more inclusive participation. DWF should not take on the responsibilities of municipalities, IPPs, government departments or business-support institutions. Programme activities should enable these stakeholders to fulfil their respective mandates more effectively.

Strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination

The Namakwa District Municipality, local municipalities, IPPs, civil-society organisations and community representatives should engage regularly through existing planning and coordination platforms, particularly the District LED Forum and relevant local stakeholder structures.

Improve alignment between municipal planning and IPP investment

Municipalities should communicate the development priorities contained in their IDPs, LED strategies and related plans to IPPs. Renewable-energy developers should consider these priorities when planning SED, ED and skills-development activities.

Strengthen local economic participation

Municipalities, IPPs, business-support institutions, employers and training providers should support ED, supplier readiness, local procurement, skills development and pathways into employment. These activities should respond to opportunities in renewable energy and other priority sectors identified through municipal and district planning.

Build institutional and organisational capacity

Municipalities, civil-society organisations and community structures need practical support to participate effectively in planning, implementation and partnership development. Priority areas include climate governance, stakeholder coordination, organisational governance, compliance, financial management, project planning and monitoring.

Strengthen inclusive community participation

Municipalities, IPPs and other development actors should use coordinated engagement processes, accessible communication and regular feedback to strengthen community participation and rebuild trust. Attention should be given to young people, women, people with disabilities, farmers, Indigenous communities and residents of remote settlements.

Promote integrated climate-resilience planning

Municipalities, provincial departments, IPPs and civil-society organisations should connect climate adaptation with municipal planning, infrastructure investment, local livelihoods and renewable-energy development. Water security, resilient infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and disaster preparedness should be treated as shared development priorities.

Establish a monitoring, learning and knowledge-sharing framework

Monitoring and learning should inform adjustments to programme activities throughout implementation. Findings should also be shared with municipalities, IPPs, civil-society organisations, communities and other partners to strengthen accountability and support wider learning about local climate governance and renewable-energy development.

SECTION 10

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SECTION 11

Meeting Minutes

The following minutes of stakeholder meetings convened by Democracy Works Foundation informed this assessment.

Meeting	Date	Type of Stakeholder
Meeting 1	5 June 2026	Independent Power Producer
Meeting 2	9 July 2026	Local Government
Meeting 3	20 July 2026	Civil Society
Meeting 4	3 August 2026	Independent Power Producer



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