



Overview of the Climate Change Act

What are the main objectives of the Act?

To create an integrated system to:

- ☞ reduce emissions,
- ☞ build climate resilience, and
- ☞ ensure a **just transition** in South Africa

Moving away from high-carbon activities (like coal-based energy) to cleaner, sustainable systems in a way that **protects workers, communities and vulnerable groups**



**GO GREEN, BUT DON'T
LEAVE PEOPLE BEHIND!**

Structure of the Act

Foundation layer



1: INTERPRETATION AND PRINCIPLES

- Definitions
- Objectives
- Principles



2: POLICY AND INSTITUTIONS

- Policy alignment
- Govt coordination
- Institutions

Structure of the Act

Government Action



3: PROVINCES AND LOCAL

- Risk assessments
- Climate plans
- Local response

Structure of the Act

Climate response core



4: ADAPTATION

- National strategy
- Sector plans
- Resilience



5: MITIGATION

- Emission targets
- Carbon budgets
- Monitoring
- Reporting

Structure of the Act

Implementation



6: GENERAL MATTERS AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

- National strategy
- Sector plans
- Resilience



SCHEDULES

- Sectors listed
- Responsibilities
- Legal amendments

What the Act does



OBJECTIVES

- Create a coordinated response to climate change
- Ensure the country is ready for climate changes and is able to recover quickly
- Shift to a cleaner economy in a fair way
- Meet international obligations
- Protect current and future generations



KEY PRINCIPLES

- Sustainable development
- Fair treatment for everyone in climate issues
- Making choices based on facts and data
- Protection of vulnerable groups



GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- Climate action must be taken by all levels of government
- Requires coordination between:
 - National departments
 - Provinces
 - Municipalities
- Integrates climate into all policy areas

What the Act does



ADAPTATION SYSTEM

- Every level of government must:
 - Assess climate risks
 - Develop and implement response plans
- Focus on sectors like water, agriculture, health, infrastructure



MITIGATION SYSTEM

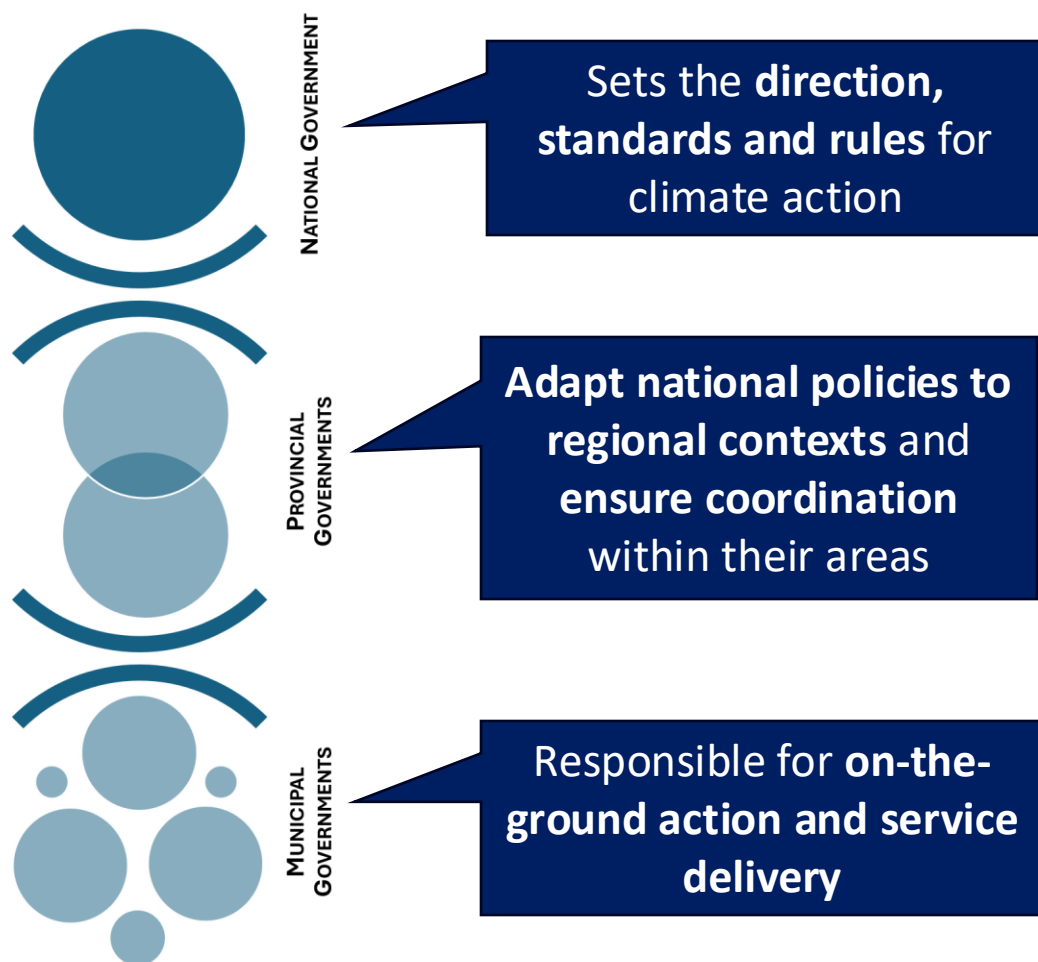
- Introduces tools to cut emissions:
 - Carbon budgets for large emitters
 - Sectoral emissions targets
- Creates accountability through monitoring and reporting



JUST TRANSITION

- Central concept:
 - Shift to a low-carbon economy
 - While ensuring jobs, inclusion, and poverty reduction

Roles and responsibilities in the Act



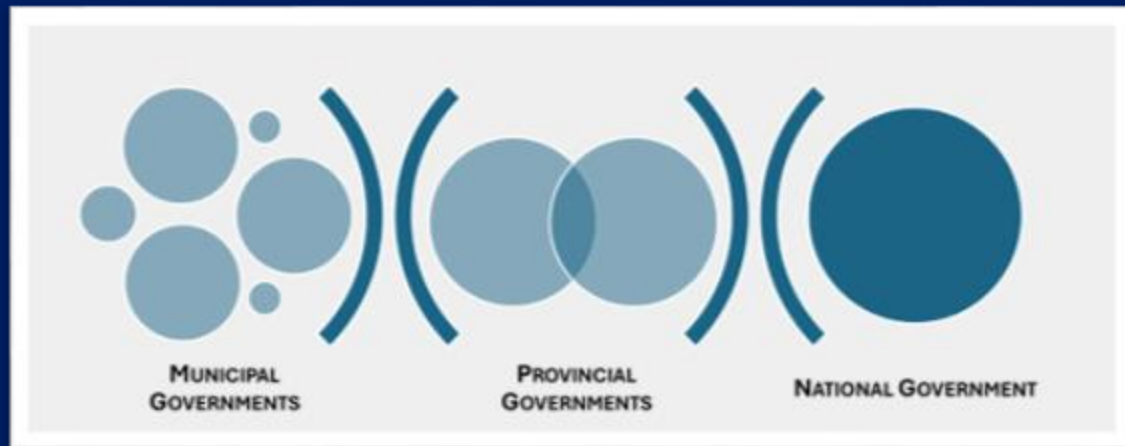
Cooperative governance



Mandatory
cooperation
across all
levels of
government

- Policies and plans must be **aligned vertically**
- Climate action is a **shared responsibility**
- Each level must **support and coordinate** with the others





Responsibilities of Provinces and Municipalities

Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

- Chapter ensures climate change action not only a national responsibility
- Also **requires into on-the-ground planning and implementation** at provincial and local levels,
 - Accountability,
 - Integration into broader planning processes,
 - Financial support

Two sections:

- Section 17 – Climate change response: To ensure provincial and municipal governments **systematically assess climate risks, plan appropriate responses, mainstream climate action into existing plans, and update those plans regularly**
- Section 18 – Finance mechanisms:

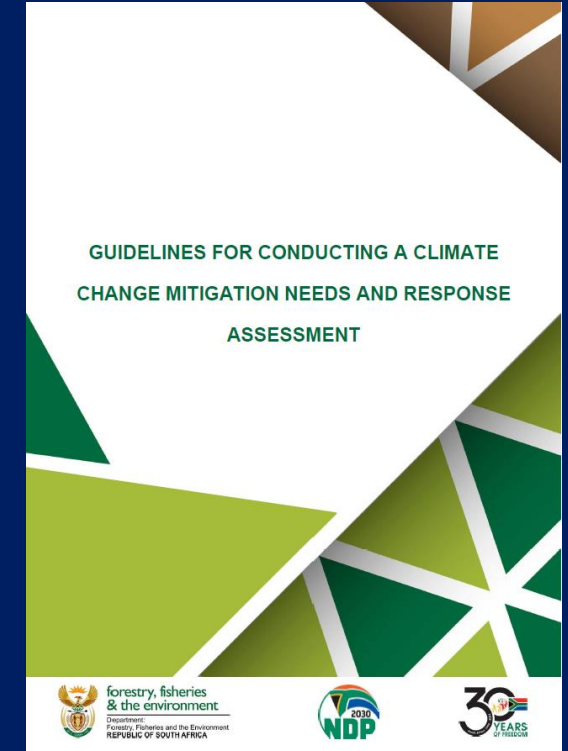
Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

Section 17 – Climate change response

Provincial and municipal responsibilities are:

- Climate change needs and response assessment:
 - **Member of the Executive Council** for a province and **mayor** of a metropolitan or district municipality must, **within 1 year** of publication of the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan, **undertake a climate change needs and response assessment** for their area (province, metropolitan, or district municipality)

- Assessment must look at:
- *How climate change affects constitutionally mandated functions, and*
 - *Identify steps to address those effects*



Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

Section 17 – Climate change response

Provincial and municipal responsibilities are:

- Climate change needs and response assessment;
- Review and publication of the assessment:
 - The assessment must be reviewed at least once **every 5 years**.
 - If necessary, it must be amended and published in the Government Gazette

Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

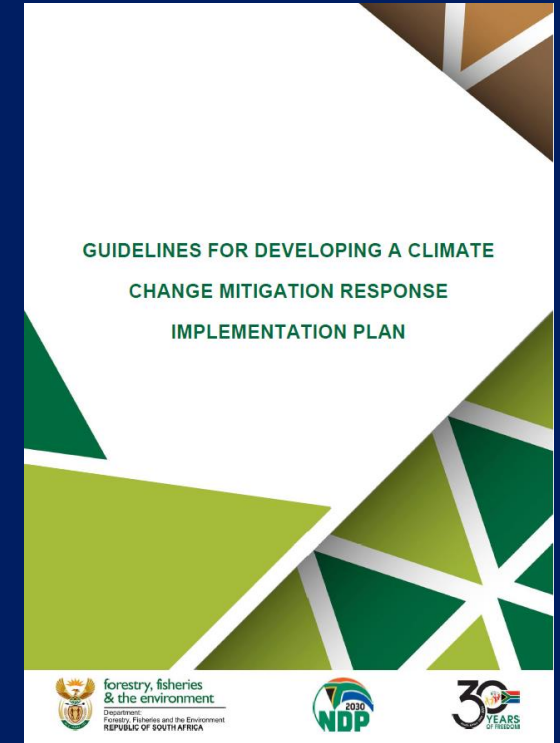
Section 17 – Climate change response

Provincial and municipal responsibilities are:

- Climate change needs and response assessment;
- Review and publication of the assessment;
- Climate change response implementation plan:
 - Within **two years** of completing the needs and response assessment, the MEC or mayor must **develop, implement, and publish a climate change response implementation plan**

Implementation plan must:

- *Be informed by the Needs and Response Assessment,*
- *Include both adaptation and mitigation measures, and*
- *Comply with requirements prescribed by the Minister*



Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

Section 17 – Climate change response

Purpose of this section:

- To ensure that provincial and municipal governments **systematically assess climate risks, plan appropriate responses, mainstream climate action into existing plans, and update those plans regularly**

Provincial and municipal responsibilities are:

- Climate change needs and response assessment;
- Review and publication of the assessment;
- Climate change response implementation plan;
- Integration into planning instruments:
 - For provinces: the response implementation plan must be incorporated into the province's environmental implementation plan required under the **National Environmental Management Act**.
 - For municipalities: it must be incorporated into the municipality's **Integrated Development Plan (IDP)** under the Municipal Systems Act

Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

Section 17 – Climate change response

Provincial and municipal responsibilities are:

- Climate change needs and response assessment;
- Review and publication of the assessment;
- Climate change response implementation plan;
- Integration into planning instruments;
- Ongoing review:
 - The implementation plan also must be **reviewed and, if necessary, amended and re-published at least every five years** to ensure it stays relevant and effective

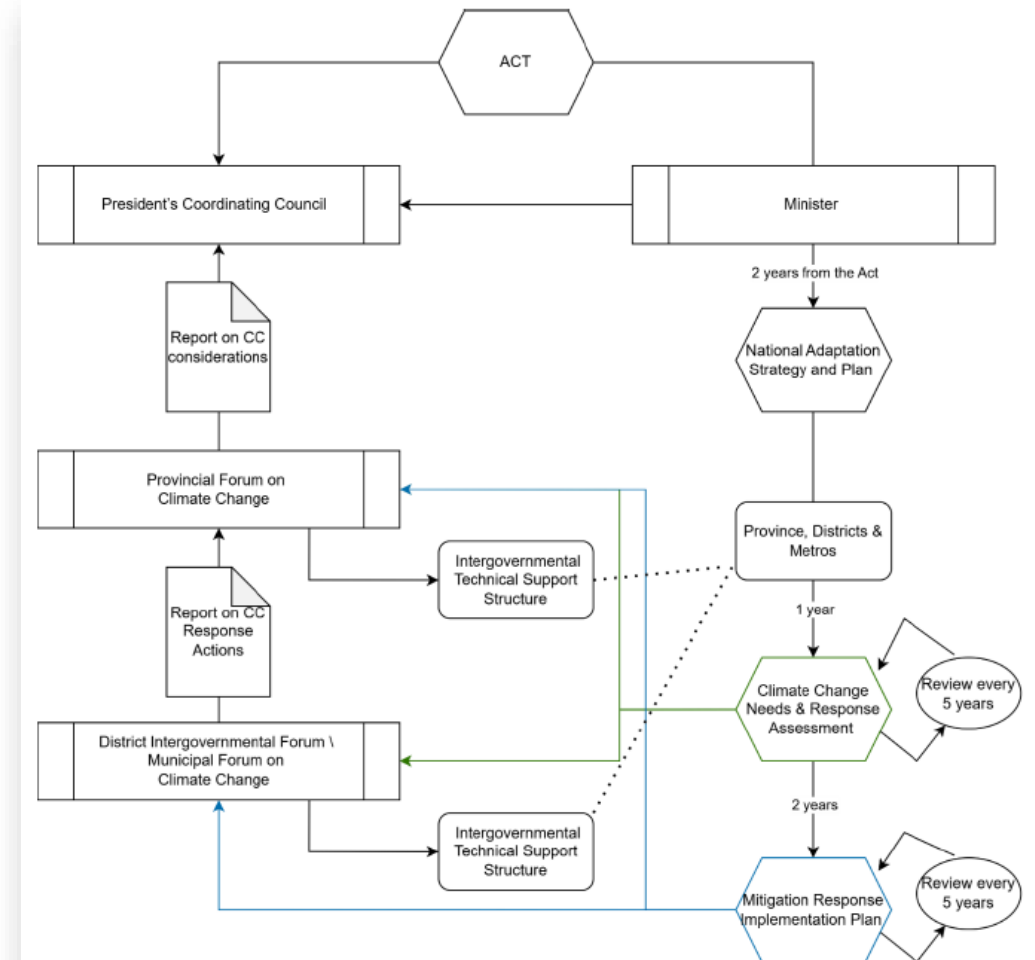


Figure 1: Flow diagram representing the Act's requirements for sub-national governments

Chapter 3: Climate change response: Provinces and Municipalities

Section 18 – Finance mechanism

This section requires the Minister to set out a financial support mechanism to help governments implement their climate plans:

- The Minister of Environment must, in consultation with the **Minister of Finance, prescribe a mechanism to support and finance climate change response, planning, and implementation** by national, provincial, and local government.
- This finance mechanism is intended to **enable the response measures required by the Act**, ensuring that governments at all levels have access to funding and support to carry out their climate duties.

SETs and carbon budgets

Chapter 5: GHG emissions and removals

Chapter 5 makes provision for establishment of:

- **Sectoral Emissions Targets (SETs)** for sectors and sub-sectors as prescribed by the Minister that must:
 - 4(b) be aligned with the national greenhouse gas emissions trajectory..; and
 - 4(c) include quantitative and qualitative greenhouse gas emission reduction goals for the first five years, the subsequent five to 10 years and for a 10 to 15 year period thereafter
- **Carbon budgets** for individual emitters conducting specified activities. Where a carbon budget is allocated, a mitigation plan must be presented for remaining within that budget.



GEDSI and the Just Transition in the Act



Setting the Scene

Climate Change, Inequality & the South African CCA

Climate change is a justice issue. Those who contribute least to emissions are often affected the most.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

-  Women - especially poor and rural women
-  Youth and children
-  Persons with disabilities (~7.5% of SA)
-  Informal and agricultural workers
-  Mining-affected communities (within KZN)
-  People living in poverty

What is GEDSI?

Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion- Core Concepts & Ambition Levels

GEDSI ensures all people can fully participate in and benefit equally from development and governance.



Gender Equality

Equal rights & opportunities for all genders. Women disproportionately employed in climate vulnerable sectors (agriculture, informal economy).



Disability (Inclusion)

Persons with disabilities participate fully and on equal terms. SA disability prevalence ~7.5%; barriers to accessing government services are acute.



Social Inclusion

Improve participation for those disadvantaged by age, poverty, race, or other status. Informal workers and youth face compounded climate vulnerability.

THE MOST COMMON LEVELS OF GEDSI AMBITION

GEDSI NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL **GEDSI BLIND/NEUTRAL** **GEDSI SENSITIVE**

Refuses to acknowledge
Acknowledges GEDSI issues without actively addressing them

GEDSI EMPOWERING

Actively empowers underrepresented groups through targeted interventions

GEDSI TRANSFORMATIVE ★

Shifts power dynamics & root causes of inequality - this project's ambition

GEDSI and the Climate Change Act: Section 3

3(c) Fair & Shared Responsibility

- All countries share climate responsibility
- Each contributes based on capacity & circumstances
- Wealthier nations are expected to do more

3(d) Just Transition

- Move to low-carbon economy fairly & inclusively
- Green jobs must be decent & accessible to all
- Reduce poverty - leave no one behind

3(e) Integrated Decision-Making

- Climate factored into ALL major decisions
- Policies across sectors must consider climate impact
- No decision can ignore this lens

3(f) Protecting Vulnerable Groups

- Women, especially poor & rural women
- Children, infants & child-headed households
- The elderly, sick, disabled & poor communities

3(k) Public Awareness & Participation

- Communities at all levels must be engaged
- Climate causes & impacts actively promoted
- Everyone has a role- not the just government

3(l) Ecosystems = Economy

- Strong economies depend on healthy ecosystems
- Protecting nature is economic policy
- Sustainability across environment & society is essential

Responsibilities & Stakeholder Roles: Section 7

7(1) Organs of State: Mandatory Duties

Every government body whose work is affected by climate change MUST:

- Review and revise their policies, laws, programmes and decisions
- Coordinate & harmonise actions across their mandate
- Ensure climate change risks and vulnerabilities are factored in
- Give effect to the principles and objects of this Act

WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?

- Any organ of state exercising powers affected by climate change
- Bodies entrusted with protecting a sustainable environment

7(2) Stakeholder Participation

The following stakeholders MAY advise on South Africa's climate change response:

Organised Labour

Civil Society

Business

Traditional Leaders

Other Stakeholders

- South Africa's overall climate change response
- Mitigation of climate change impacts + Adaptation to effects of climate change
- Achieving a just transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy & society

GEDSI & the Just Transition

Who Wins, Who Loses? Mitigation Co-Benefits for Marginalised Groups

South Africa's shift to a low-carbon economy will create winners and losers. A Just Transition ensures marginalised communities are protected and benefit.



RISKS - UNJUST TRANSITION

- Women lose livelihoods tied to coal/mining without alternatives
- Youth unemployment worsens without green skills pipelines
- Persons with disabilities excluded from green economy training
- Low-income households bear higher energy costs
- Mining communities face double vulnerability

Mitigation focus: Renewables • Energy efficiency • Sustainable land use • Waste management

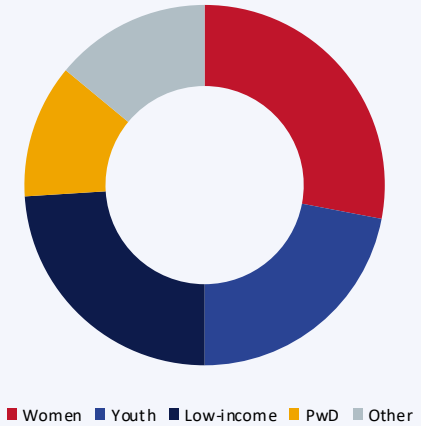


ELEMENTS - JUST TRANSITION

- Inclusive guidelines / tools : assess differentiated impacts on marginalised communities
- GEDSI-flagged mitigation actions with green economy co-benefits
- Inclusive participation from underrepresented groups
- Women-led and youth centred green employment
- Reduced energy poverty in informal settlements

Co-benefits: Women-led and Youth green jobs • Accessible retrofitting • Lower energy poverty

Who Bears Climate Burden?



Focus on GEDSI within the Just Transition

Key Commitments & Actions

GEDSI transformative mitigation planning is both a legal obligation and an opportunity to deliver better outcomes for everyone.



MUNICIPAL & PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS

- Integrate GEDSI into guidelines and tools (CCMNRA, CCMRI) and stakeholder engagement plans
- Keep track of and be deliberate about GEDSI disaggregated participation data at all climate events
- Allocate budget for inclusion-oriented activities and accessible materials
- Champion women and youth voices in climate governance structures



CSOs, NGOs & COMMUNITY VOICES

- Demand inclusive processes: municipalities/province have obligations under Section 7 of the CCA
- Actively participate in consultation workshops
- Document and amplify voices of marginalised communities
- Engage with the Climate Change Act Support Platform (CCASP) at launch
- Share this workshop's learning with your networks and communities

Key Takeaways



Climate change is a justice issue: the CCA legally requires equity in all climate responses



GEDSI Transformative benchmark is the ambition: shift power, not just participation



Mitigation must deliver co-benefits for marginalised groups : women, youth, persons with disabilities



Inclusive planning means better CCA compliance + better climate outcomes for all



A Just Transition is only just if planned WITH communities, not just FOR them