

Helping African cities address climate change

The recent [report](#) by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) once again confirms the risks and opportunities associated with climate change, particularly for Africa. A key finding highlighted in the report is that the latest climate modelling studies for Africa reveal that the likely increase in temperature due to climate change is higher than for previous models.



Source: Supplied.

Following the release of the report, the world's attention will now focus on Glasgow, Scotland when the UN will host 26th Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) from 31 October to 12 November 2021.

The COP26 summit brings together a range of global stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Paris Agreement aims to keep the average temperature increase to below 1.5 degrees Celsius and reach zero net global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

Developing Johannesburg's Climate Action Plan

This has motivated several cities like Johannesburg to set more ambitious climate change targets. Johannesburg's Climate Action Plan (CAP), developed between 2018 and 2020, aims for net-zero emissions and a resilient city by 2050. In this work, the city has been supported by the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group through its Climate Action Planning Programme and Zutari, a local engineering consultancy firm.

The Johannesburg CAP notes that, prior to the Paris Agreement, the city was already at the forefront of low-carbon development and resilience planning. Its long-term vision, known as the 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (GDS), made provision for a resilient, liveable, sustainable urban environment, compatible with a healthy natural environment and underpinned by infrastructure supportive of a low-carbon economy.



South Africa adopts more ambitious emissions target before climate summit

Alexander Winning 27 Sep 2021



Zutari says its “involvement with the CAP report was a showcase of its broader climate change capabilities” which the firm sees as a definite area of growth and development. The company recently established its Sustainable Development unit under manager Pieter Scholtz to highlight the importance of communication and stakeholder engagement in developing sustainable solutions for underlying socioeconomic problems that many local communities are faced with.

According to Zutari, the CAP was compiled for the most feasible scenarios to achieve the adaptation and mitigation targets that were identified: “The process kicked off with a climate change risk and vulnerability assessment in the form of detailed mapping of climate change risks and various temperature and precipitation scenarios and how those related to flooding, temperature increases and also water-supply issues.

Some modelling was also undertaken to understand the impact of the various risks, followed by identifying specific actions to be undertaken, and a scoring of those actions against multiple criteria”



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Helen Reid 28 Sep 2021



Mitigation scenarios to help fight climate change

The mitigation scenario modelling determined possible means and targets for Johannesburg to achieve its net-zero emissions goal by 2050. Three scenarios were produced, namely a ‘business as usual’ (BAU) scenario, an existing and planned actions scenario and an ambitious actions scenario.

The BAU scenario assumes no actions are undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The existing and planned actions scenario was informed by current national, regional and local policies and programmes, as well as market trends, adjusted downwards based on certainty of implementation. The ambitious actions scenario, on the other hand, was informed by discussions, iterative follow-up communications and check-ins with relevant departments and other entities to identify an ambitious but realistic set of key actions that can be implemented.



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Under the BAU scenario, emissions for Johannesburg are projected to grow by 133% by 2050, with the fastest growth in stationary energy, followed by transport. Existing and planned actions will see emission reductions below the 2016 base year of 3% by 2030, followed by a 2% increase in emissions by 2040 and a 17% increase in emissions by 2050.

With ambitious yet achievable actions, Johannesburg's emissions can be reduced to 43% below the BAU scenario by 2030, 70% by 2040 and 81% by 2050, representing a 57% reduction of total emissions from the 2016 base year. Johannesburg has committed itself to pursuing the ambitious action scenario and has adopted the following emission reduction targets: 25% by 2030, 75% by 2040 and 100% (net-zero emissions) by 2050, as compared to the 2016 baseline.

Zutari added that it supports a unique alliance of organisations and independent specialists comprising the Future Cities South Africa (FCSA) initiative, in conjunction with PwC (UK and South Africa), Open Cities Lab, Palmer Development Group, Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading and the Isandla Institute, among others.



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The FCSA is the delivery partner for the South African component of the Global Future Cities Programme, managed by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and aims to support Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town with the urgent challenges of sustainable development.

“This has resulted in the scoping and delivery of several projects, with Zutari overseeing the development of a Strategic Area Framework for Soweto (SSAF) under Monique Cranna, technical director: urban planning at Zutari, which is also integrating some of the recommendations from Johannesburg's CAP,” the company said.

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