



FACT SHEET

Local voices, climate choices: advancing the Just Transition through dialogue

As a collaborative intermediary supporting cross-sector dialogue and innovation for inclusive development, the EDP partnered with the South African Local Government Association and others to convene the Local Just Transition Dialogues that positioned local voices at the heart of national climate policy.

CONTEXT

South Africa's local governments are increasingly on the frontlines of climate impact – facing energy poverty, food insecurity and frequent disasters. Yet, many municipalities lack clarity and capacity to lead a Just Transition. The Local Just Transition (LJT) Dialogues, a partnership between EDP and SALGA, created structured spaces across nine provinces where local voices shaped potential transition responses rooted in lived experience and local context. Over 400 stakeholders, including municipalities, communities, traditional authorities and the private sector, participated. This project marks a shift from consultation to co-creation, building readiness, shared understanding and long-term partnerships for implementing a Just Transition at a local scale.

When the LJT Dialogues began, most municipalities were unclear about what the Just Transition meant for their roles or how to act. The EDP-SALGA project created inclusive, province-specific dialogues that brought together diverse local actors to reflect and co-create strategies. These conversations lay the foundation for municipal ownership of a Just Transition.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To equip municipalities to lead South Africa's Just Transition by building shared understanding, surfacing local opportunities and challenges, and fostering cross-sector partnerships through inclusive provincial dialogues, resulting in nationally recognised pathways for sustained local climate action.

INNOVATION

Unlike traditional consultation processes, the LJT Dialogues prioritised inclusion, lived experience and co-creation. By grounding climate discussions in provincial contexts and fostering peer-based learning, the project moved beyond talk to readiness. It also embedded local voices into national policy, creating a replicable model for collaborative, municipal-led dialogues.

STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

The project followed a three-phase approach:

- **Preparation (early 2024):** Co-designed provincial dialogues with SALGA using a flexible workshop framework that reflected each province's realities.
- **Delivery (Sep 2024–Mar 2025):** Facilitated nine provincial dialogues with over 400 participants; combined technical panels with participatory discussions on issues like energy transition, disaster risk and informal economies.
- **Post-dialogue (Mon 2025 – Mon 2025):** Synthesised insights, cross analysis, learning and recommendations

Dialogues centred lived experiences and local priorities into a national conversation about how to implement the Just Transition. Requests emerged for continued learning platforms and partnership structures, signalling momentum toward sustained local climate leadership.

PARTNERS

- South African Local Government Association
- Heinrich Böll Foundation
- African Climate Foundation
- New Economy Hub



EXPECTED RESULTS

Overall, the project initiated a shift: from fragmented consultation to coordinated action; from confusion to clarity; and from isolated initiatives to a shared, locally-led climate response.

Also, the project:

- Increased municipal awareness and ownership of the Just Transition
- Enhanced understanding of local challenges, opportunities and readiness for climate leadership
- Strengthened cross-sector relationships, including between government, traditional authorities, youth, civil society and business
- Consolidated local insights ready to inform national policy
- Sparked demand for continued peer-learning, mentorship, and practical support, possibly through a Champions Learning Network and climate project accelerator

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