



FACT SHEET

Co-creating climate futures: opening South Africa's climate planning to all

Diverse stakeholders co-create accessible, evidence-based climate and economic scenarios and build shared understanding for a more inclusive and implementable Just Transition.

CONTEXT

South Africa faces a transition that is both urgent and contested. Moving toward a net-zero economy means navigating trade-offs between jobs, investment, industrial competitiveness and social equity. However, different sectors of society see these trade-offs very differently.

Technical modelling of future economic and climate scenarios exists and has sat largely out of reach for the people who most need to engage with it: government departments, business leaders, labour representatives, civil society and communities.

Without a shared understanding of what different futures could look like, building the consensus needed to act becomes very difficult.

The Developing Scenarios for Climate-Informed Economic Pathways Through Stakeholder Dialogues project created the space and the tools for that conversation to happen.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Translate complex decarbonisation modelling into accessible economic scenarios
- Build cross-sectoral understanding of the trade-offs involved
- and facilitate structured dialogue that moves toward shared, evidence-based commitments for South Africa's Just Transition.

INNOVATION

Rather than validate fixed scenarios, participants questioned and reshaped them against sector realities and lived experience. Blending quantitative modelling with storytelling and participatory foresight produced socially grounded scenarios, no-regret actions, and stronger stakeholder capacity.

STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

Working through the Presidential Climate Commission's platforms, the EDP coordinated the project team.

There were two rounds of structured engagement that involved roundtables, and co-creation workshops across government, business, labour, civil society and youth.

Between engagement rounds, ESRG's energy-economy model was updated based on stakeholder inputs, ensuring final scenarios reflect both technical rigour and lived social reality.



RESULTS

Two rounds of multi-stakeholder engagement, produced four refined, co-created economic scenarios and pathways grounded in both technical modelling and diverse social perspectives.

A final set of no-regret policy actions and high-level recommendations gave decision-makers something actionable to take back to their sectors. Accessible communication products made the scenarios available beyond the immediate participants.

Together, these outputs give South Africa a shared reference point for conversations about the Just Transition built by the breadth of voices that will need to navigate it.

This approach offers a transferable model for making complex policy decisions more legitimate, inclusive and implementable.

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