

2023 Climate Change Initiative Workshop 3 on 14 September 2023



Unlocking Funders' Potential to See the Climate Impacted World of the Future through a Lens of Possibility

What we wanted to achieve with this workshop

This workshop highlighted future opportunities for funders to support South Africa's transition into the emerging clean energy economy. The presentations and discussions focused on the skills and jobs that are needed to thrive in a world shaped by climate change. The dynamics of risks and opportunities in the transition into a carbon-free future, and the potential for using data to unlock new value chains to balance out potential negative impacts of moving away from a coal-based economy were explored.

Presentations and Panel Discussion

Jarredine Morris, Senior Manager at the Carbon Trust provided background information for the framing of the workshop. Her presentation includes the example of the value chain for renewable electricity, which is only one example of a value chain related to the transition to a low carbon economy. Read it [here](#).



Louise Naude, Presidential Climate Commissioner, focused on transition pathways to a decarbonized economy, which are needed for South Africa to move towards a low carbon economy, in a way that also includes the co-benefits of accelerating job creation. She emphasised that it is essential to reskill and upskill people for low carbon solutions, particularly in the economic sectors which are most vulnerable: Tourism; Agriculture; Coal; Transport; and Metals.

There are opportunities for developing resilience in key priority areas:

- Some geographical areas will be affected more by decarbonisation initiatives or by extreme weather events. Philanthropy can play a role in bringing stakeholders together to develop place-based resilience.
- Nature-based solutions in both urban and rural areas should be explored. Thoughtfully planned natural vegetation projects can be effective, not only in rural areas, but also with helping to cope with heat in cities.
- Organised labour needs support with developing explicit policies related to climate change and decarbonisation. All the major labour union federations do not have plans in place.
- Opportunities also exist for small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) to offer innovative climate solutions, as well as in low carbon manufacturing and investing in low carbon initiatives.

This presentation includes various links to relevant research and initiatives. Read it [here](#).

A checklist for Just Transition projects is available [here](#).



Ziyad Cassim, the South Africa Country Representative for the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) provided insights on the potential role of philanthropy in climate change, specifically in the space of adaptation and mitigation. The following opportunities that could be explored, were highlighted:

- Solutions for outdoor work in more extreme weather conditions
- Diversification of agriculture where there is a high dependence on a single agriculture product
- Hardening infrastructure
- Building of food silos, developing buffering and early warning systems
- Enhancing capacity to plan for, and deal with extreme weather events

There are also opportunities that can benefit SA's unskilled labour force, e.g., in nature-based solutions, such as reforestation, blue carbon (plantations of seaweeds and mangroves), and mining related to renewables. Making better use of these opportunities will also benefit rural populations.

Support is needed for low-income households and municipalities to make renewable energy accessible to all; SMMEs that implement innovative adaptation initiatives need support; and green industry innovators need access to capital. Philanthropy can also support the development of an appropriate regulatory environment.

A summary of market barriers to address and stimulate renewable energy manufacturing in SA is available [here](#).



Conclusion

- Funders should be aware that irrespective of what they fund, their work is related to climate change. Climate change will be (and is already) impacting all sectors and all economic value chains.
- All education, training or skills development programmes must be adapted so that they can help advance SA's readiness to adapt to, and mitigate climate change impacts, and to prepare beneficiaries for active and productive participation in a low carbon economy. It is essential that skills development be aligned, not only to current market demands, but also to the future demands in a low carbon economy.
- SA is at risk of being out of pace with the momentum of global decarbonisation initiatives, and if we do not speed up these initiatives, our economy will be negatively impacted.
- There are opportunities for philanthropy to engage with government initiatives, such as the PCC and the work of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) related to skills development for a low carbon future.
- Risk capital is needed to encourage and fast-track climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience initiatives and innovations. Philanthropy can fill this gap by moving beyond grant funding, and by, for example, providing guarantees, first loss financing facilities, concessional debt, and repayable grants.
- Funders can play a more significant role in the transition to a successful low-carbon economy if they develop a coordinated and strategic approach.

Comments

Workshop participants identified areas of interest for future discussions and information sharing:

- Micro-projects and programmes that small Trusts can potentially get involved in rather than Just Transition macro projects and programmes
- Developing tools for more community awareness
- Gender in the climate transition
- Progress with the establishment of a Just Transition Fund that can receive public sector and philanthropic funds for disbursement to Just Transition projects

Additional Information

Resources

- The [CSIR Green Book](#) is a valuable resource for funders who want to find out more about the likely climate impacts over the next five to 20 years on specific geographies within South Africa.

Further reading

- [Sector Jobs Resilience Plan: The SJRP Toolbox - Summary for policy makers](#)
- [A low-carbon sunrise for the mining industry](#)
- [Towards a Just Transition in the South African Food System: Key issues and competing perspectives](#)
- [Nature-based solutions for a green and equitable recovery in municipalities: Urban lockdown lessons](#)
- [Making a case for investing in nature-based solutions](#)

