



CLIMATE CHANGE COASTAL ADAPTATION RESPONSE

provided by
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*On behalf of Sedgfield
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The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dr Dion George, has officially launched South Africa’s inaugural Climate Change Coastal Adaptation Response Plan (CARP) in commemoration of this year’s World Environment Day.

CARP is a groundbreaking national adaptation strategy to build resilience across the country’s coastal areas, ecosystems, and communities in the face of climate change. It represents a bold and proactive step towards securing the future of South Africa’s coastlines and the people who depend on them. Designed to respond to increasing risks posed by sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and ongoing development pressures, the Plan is a first-of-its-kind, sector-specific adaptation framework grounded in science, inclusivity, and local relevance.

“Our coastline and coastal cities are at the frontline of climate change, facing severe and multifaceted complexities that threaten livelihoods, communities, economies, infrastructure, and ecosystems,” said Minister George. “These issues require integrated, inclusive, and well-funded strategies that prioritise nature-based solutions, community resilience, and sustainable urban planning to safeguard our coastal assets.”

South Africa remains highly vulnerable to climate change due to its geographic exposure, developmental complexities, and pre-existing environmental stresses.

Rising temperatures, floods, and droughts are threatening food security, economic stability, and ecological integrity.

CARP responds to these complexities by:

- Taking a targeted, element-based approach across five critical components: ecosystems, communities, infrastructure, livelihoods, and governance.
- Delivering 21 measurable climate response outcomes supported by over 150 practical interventions to enable localised adaptation.
- Placing ecosystems at the centre, prioritising the restoration and protection of critical coastal habitats including blue and teal carbon sinks—as nature-based buffers. Teal carbon refers to carbon stored in freshwater wetlands. Most discussions about carbon storage focus on “blue carbon” which is carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems like mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes or “green carbon” which is carbon stored in land, primarily grasslands, croplands, and forests. Teal carbon, in particular, highlights the importance of inland, non-tidal freshwater ecosystems in capturing and storing atmospheric carbon.
- Aligning with key legislation and global frameworks, including the Climate Change Act (No. 22 of 2024), the Integrated Coastal Management Act, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Mainstreaming adaptation across all spheres of government, ensuring integrated planning and execution.
- Mobilising diverse financing mechanisms, including public, private, and international climate finance such as the Green Climate Fund.
- Promoting inclusive and gender-responsive action, rooted

in community participation and indigenous knowledge systems.

- Providing a clear implementation and monitoring framework to drive progress, ensure accountability, and adapt over time.

The Plan was developed through extensive consultation with over 700 stakeholders between 2023 and 2024, ensuring that its priorities reflect real-world conditions and the voices of those most affected.

CARP is firmly aligned with the objectives of the White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa (2000), particularly Goal C5, which emphasises responsible coastal planning to minimise exposure to natural hazards and support resilient development. As South Africa faces the interconnected challenges of climate change, urban expansion, and environmental degradation, CARP provides a comprehensive roadmap for protecting coastal assets, enabling equitable adaptation, and unlocking new opportunities in the blue and coastal economy.

While supporting the World Environment Day 2025 theme “Beat Plastic Pollution”, the Minister highlighted the undeniable benefits that plastics bring - from energy savings to material conservation. However, he acknowledged the growing crisis of plastic pollution, which is incrementally threatening both planetary and human wellbeing. “Plastic pollution is a global crisis affecting nature and human health, though plastics have benefits when used responsibly” the Minister added.

For decades, plastic pollution has contaminated our water, food, and air. Combating this issue leads to cleaner environments, healthier ecosystems, and stronger economies. Eliminating plastic pollution is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate action, sustainable production, ocean protection, and biodiversity conservation. “This launch, befittingly on World Environment Day, reminds us of the unprecedented convergence of the interconnected environmental complexities of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, with adverse ripple effects on coastal environments. We call on all sectors, government, business, civil society, and individuals, to join hands in the implementation of this vital plan,” said Minister George.

The Climate Change Coastal Adaptation Response Plan is an important document and we, the ratepayers, should hold the Knysna Municipality and our Councillors accountable through CARP which can be downloaded at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/strategy_framework/oceans/climatechange_responseplan_oceanssector.pdf

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