



Low Emissions Development Program

SUCCESS STORY

Addressing climate change through sustainable integrated urban planning

Municipalities and civic organizations are working to meet South Africa’s climate change mitigation commitments through equitable and sustainable development



Liana Strydom, left, in a breakout session at a workshop on the EcoDistricts Protocol

“If we don’t work on these guidelines that actually start talking to the commitment to climate change [mitigation] the city has made, we will lag behind”

--Liana Strydom, assistant director for regional planning for the City of Johannesburg

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Photo: SA-LED

Responding to South Africa’s national and sub-national call for sustainable infrastructure planning, municipalities are working to integrate ecologically sound design into their service delivery and development processes. This process can, however, prove difficult given limited resources and experience in how to mainstream sustainability practices in planning processes. Liana Strydom works in the City of Johannesburg’s planning department as assistant director for regional planning and is responsible for managing and implementing the City’s planning mandate. The USAID South Africa Low Emissions Development (SA-LED) Program has engaged EcoDistricts to support and train planning and development officials and practitioners on the [EcoDistricts Protocol](#), a comprehensive framework to guide equitable and sustainable urban and community development projects. Liana was one of 70 attendees at a 2018 workshop in Johannesburg, which focused on training municipal staff on the EcoDistricts Protocol and increasing their ability to support green district and neighborhood-scale projects. Trainees were equipped with the knowledge and tools to plan and execute urban development initiatives that align with South Africa’s low carbon emission goals.

On the training, Liana expressed, “This is starting to build the capacity of the planning department, to change the way we are planning, to have planners that are better versed in sustainability practices like energy efficiency, climate change mitigation, and what it means for the work that we do.” Since the training, Liana has been able to integrate principles of the EcoDistricts Protocol within the City of Johannesburg’s current planning and policy-making activities. She is introducing green design principles into spatial and land use polices and creating a community of planning professionals to support green integrated urban precinct design, while engaging the private sector, communities, and other key stakeholders. She is also leading a team in drafting the city’s first green building policy that speaks to the City’s commitment to climate change mitigation and is expected to be completed in 2020. With these guidelines in place, the City is one step closer to comprehensively addressing South Africa’s national climate change commitments.