SOUTH AFRICA
CLIMATE CHANGE FACT SHEET

South Africa’s dependence on coal as a primary fuel source for electricity generation makes it one of the top 15 greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters in the world. Net emissions in 2015 were estimated at 512 Mt CO2eq, an increase of 20 percent from 2000. The energy sector represents roughly 80 percent of gross emissions, with energy industries (~60 percent) and transport (~12 percent) as the top sources.

Climate change is already altering South African ecosystems, economies, and livelihoods. Since 1990, the national average temperature has increased twice as fast as global temperature. Climate impacts on water security are particularly severe, with more frequent drought and water shortages resulting in water scarcity in parts of the country. Flora and fauna are also adversely affected by climate change. The country’s unique coastal fynbos vegetation range is projected to decrease by up to 65% and the marine habitat, which supports approximately one percent of the country’s GDP, has suffered degradation.

GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA CLIMATE PRIORITIES

South Africa’s climate priorities span climate adaptation and mitigation. The South African Cabinet has approved key climate actions including the creation of a Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission, South Africa’s Low Emissions Development Strategy, a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and a carbon tax. To ensure the economy can benefit from green economy technologies and industries, the National Employment Vulnerability Assessment and Sector Job Resilience Plans focus on five value chains: coal, metals, petroleum-based transport, agriculture, and tourism.

In its updated draft Nationally Determined Contribution, top adaptation goals include increasing institutional capacity, governance and legal frameworks, development of the scientific basis for strengthening the national and provincial governments’ readiness to respond, mobilizing funding for adaptation, and implementation of the national adaptation plan. Key sectors identified for mitigation are: energy, waste, industrial processes and product use, and agriculture, forestry, and other land use.

USAID’S CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM: OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

USAID supports the Government of South Africa’s (GoSA) development and climate priorities through bilateral and regional programs and partnerships addressing climate adaptation and renewable energy.

ADAPTATION

USAID is building more resilient and water-secure southern African communities and ecosystems in one of the most climatically vulnerable regions in the world through improved management of transboundary
natural resources and increased access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. USAID has helped:

- Support nearly 2,500 people to adapt to climate change across southern Africa in FY20.
- Train South African National Parks managers and other stakeholders on Climate Risk Informed Decision Analysis, a collaborative climate impacts assessment tool for water resources.
- Develop the Flood Forecasting Early Warning Systems (FFEWS) to improve resilience within the Limpopo River Basin and its national member states, including South Africa.
- Enhance climate responsiveness in the integrated water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector by improving interpretation and integration of climate-related data and considerations into municipal water safety plans and processes.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

USAID is helping the GoSA achieve its goal of shifting the power sector to 42 percent non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 and reducing overall GHG emissions in line with Paris Agreement targets. In partnership with national and sub-national authorities, USAID is accelerating large-scale and distributed renewable energy deployment through technical assistance and capacity building. USAID has helped:

- Bring 27 procurements to financial close under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Program, resulting in 2,200 megawatts (MW) of new renewable energy generation and approximately USD $4 billion in investment through support to GoSA.
- Finance small-scale renewable energy projects through a 15-year (2016-2031), $200 million loan portfolio guarantee to South Africa’s Industrial Development Corporation.
- Support projects that will cut GHG emissions by nearly 860,000 metric tons by 2030.
- Develop a “green economy” reference library to support municipalities working on renewable energy, energy efficiency, financing clean energy, green transport, and solid waste management.

**KEY USAID PROGRAMS**

Resilient Waters Program is a regional WASH and biodiversity program, building more resilient and water-secure southern African communities and ecosystems through institutions, information systems, and innovative practices ($32 million, 2018-2023).

Southern Africa Energy Program (SAEP) provides technical assistance and capacity building to South Africa’s clean energy sector as a Power Africa-funded regional Program ($69 million, 2017-2022).

South Africa Low Emissions Development Program assisted South Africa in developing the skills and resources needed to build a more sustainable and green economy ($15 million, 2015-2020).