

The Central KwaZulu-Natal Climate Change Compact, South Africa

A platform fostering multi-level governance for climate change

Created in 2014, the Central KwaZulu-Natal Climate Change Compact (Compact KZN) is a unique model of collaboration between cities of different sizes in the region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This platform fosters both the vertical (across different levels of government) and horizontal (across different organisations at the same government level) integration of climate change governance in South Africa.

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Summary

Compact KZN demonstrates that regional platforms for climate change are key places to foster cooperation between actors from different levels of government and different sectors in South Africa.

The sharing of existing good practices that distinguishes this kind of cooperation supports the objective of the Urban-LEDS II project, which is to enhance multi-level climate change governance in all pilot countries. This case study provides an in-depth look at the institutional arrangements, effectiveness, and replicability of one such example in South Africa. Ultimately, this case study is intended to be a valuable resource for other governments looking to implement institutional arrangements that support multi-level governance for climate action.



Definitions

Multi-level climate change governance: refers to the ways in which different tiers of government work together to achieve their climate objectives. It is the mix of policies, laws, mandates, finance, dialogue, reporting, coordination and capacity that govern how climate change response is implemented at all tiers of government and across all sectors. It encompasses both vertical and horizontal integration of climate change.

Vertical Integration: refers to actor-to-actor interactions across different governance levels, encompassing local, regional, and national governments within the same state, but also supra-national and international scales such as the UNFCCC climate regime. Vertical interactions are a two-way street that can be top-down (i.e. the national and subnational levels will need to empower the local level and encourage local level climate action) or bottom-up (i.e. the local level in turn will need to report on its actions in such a way that it can be incorporated into consolidated national-level NDC reporting, which can then be shared globally).

Horizontal Integration: refers to actor-to-actor interactions at the same governance level, such as national sector forums, regional governance bodies, and bilateral city-to-city cooperation agreements, as well as transnational local government networks.

Facts & Figures

Creation

January 2014

Municipal budget

eThekweni (Durban), Msunduzi, uGu, iLembe District Municipality, KwaDukuza, uMgungundlovu, uMngeni, Ugu, uMhlathuze, Umdoni, Hibiscus Coast and uMshwathi Local Municipalities.

Birth and rise of compact KZN

In 2011, the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Durban, South Africa. On this occasion, more than 700 delegates came together, with the support of ICLEI, to sign the Durban Adaptation Charter (DAC).

One of the direct outcomes of the adoption of this Charter was the creation, in January 2014, of a subnational climate change partnership: the Central KwaZulu-Natal Climate Change Compact (Compact KZN) in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. Inspired by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact located in the Fort Lauderdale, USA, Compact KZN involves several municipalities that are neighbours to eThekweni Municipality.

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The objective of this platform is to:

- promote a subnational collaborative approach to climate change action, especially adaptation;
- create a knowledge-exchange hub at the regional level involving local and national research institutions; and
- promote capacity-building and knowledge-exchanges in the field of climate change amongst its members (DAC, annual report, 2017).

The Durban Adaptation Charter (DAC) was the historic outcome of the Durban Local Government Convention held in Durban, South Africa, in December 2011, during the course of the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

It was unanimously adopted by over 700 high-level delegates from around the world. The DAC commits signatories to ten principles of best adaptation practice that encourage: mainstreaming adaptation as a key informant of all local government development planning; understanding climate risks through conducting impact and vulnerability assessments; preparing and implementing integrated, inclusive and long-term local adaptation strategies designed to reduce vulnerability; ensuring that adaptation strategies are aligned with mitigation strategies, promote the use of adaptation that recognises the needs of vulnerable communities and ensures sustainable local economic development, etc.

Since the signing of the DAC in 2011, eThekweni Municipality, as the Charter Secretariat, has driven the implementation of the DAC, which has resulted in the development of the Hub and Compact approach for implementation. The Hub and Compact approach essentially describes a network of networks engaging in collaborative climate change adaptation action.

In practice, Compact KZN convenes at quarterly meetings organised successively by the different members of the Compact. The attendees comprise the technical staff of all member cities, specifically officials from the energy, climate change, economic development, environmental management and planning departments, as well as political leaders, from time to time.

Since its inception, Compact KZN has convened more than 20 meetings with a sustained participation from the municipalities. These meetings provide members with the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences in the field of climate change, to engage in discussions around the challenges they encounter in implementing climate action and to discuss potential joint activities.



A lab for vertical integration

Compact KZN is a unique platform on the continent that enables collaboration between the three levels of government – local, provincial and national – on climate change issues in South Africa.

The local and provincial levels of government collaborate through the Steering Committee. Established in 2017, this committee consists of metropolitan (eThekweni), district (iLembe, uGu and uMgungundlovu) and local (Msunduzi) municipalities, as well as provincial offices of the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG), and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Engagements between the local and national levels occur, for example, through direct interactions between Compact KZN and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), notably on initiatives such as the [Cities Resilience Forum](#). The communication between the different tiers of government is also facilitated by eThekweni. Crucially, this carries the voice of smaller municipalities to the national level.

A lab for horizontal integration

Member cities of Compact KZN decided to join forces in order to:

- build each other's technical capacity to mainstream climate change
- undertake joint research that benefits several cities in the region
- access funding to implement climate projects and activities
- increase the visibility of their climate action at the international level

Climate change mainstreaming. During the meetings, Compact KZN members share technical knowledge on climate change planning and project implementation. These meetings help cities to find solutions to overcome challenges and replicate good practices. These meetings also play a key role in mainstreaming climate change into municipal policies and strategies, as illustrated by an electronic survey conducted amongst members in January 2017.

'[Compact KZN] has allowed for the inclusion and consideration of climate change and related issues into almost every facet of our work and that of other departments within the municipality (conservation, water, waste, policy development and implementation, disaster risk reduction, infrastructure, health, electricity, building control)'

- Cherise Harris, Msunduzi Municipality.

City-to-city cooperation under the Urban-LEDS II project

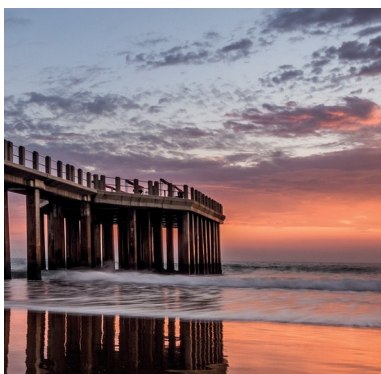
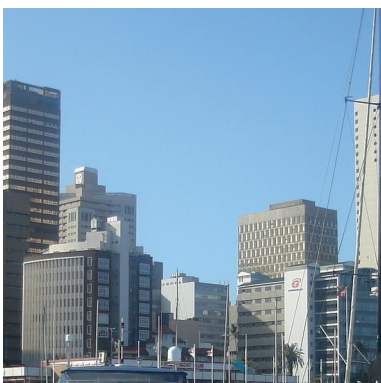
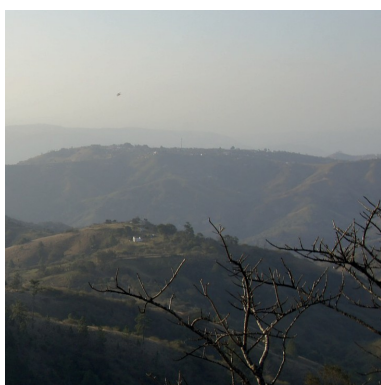
Through the first phase of the Urban-LEDS project, KwaDukuza Municipality developed Green Building Guidelines to outline how buildings can take into account climate change considerations and limit other harmful environmental impacts of buildings and construction. After learning about KwaDukuza's guidelines through Compact KZN, Msunduzi Municipality undertook a similar process and developed its own green building guidelines.

Collaboration with research institutions. Compact KZN has progressively become a platform that facilitates knowledge-exchanges between research institutions and cities.

The [Urban Climate Change Research Network \(UCCRN\)](#), a consortium of over 800 individuals dedicated to analyse climate change mitigation and adaptation from an urban perspective, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with eThekweni Municipality, in 2013. As such, researchers of the KwaZulu-Natal region have since been contributing to UCCRN's reports, and a Knowledge Hub has been set up as part of UCCRN's Global Knowledge Network.

Another example of this is the Research Advisory Committee that was set up to encourage Master's and PhD students to work on topics relevant to the municipalities of Compact KZN.

Compact KZN also works closely with the [Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network \(EPIC-N\)](#), an international non-profit association that connects communities, local governments and universities. In South Africa, the organisation encourages the appointment of embedded researchers, as well as the implementation of research labs within cities.



Access to finance and funding. Compact KZN is a great example of how successful collaboration between different cities can attract climate finance for the implementation of projects that benefit several cities and local governments.

For example, member cities have received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as part of the Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security (GEF 6) Project to be implemented in Greater uMngeni catchment. This project responds to an urgent need to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into planning, finance and development in the water sector in order to improve water security and avoid further loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the KwaZulu-Natal region. The smaller cities of the Compact KZN supported eThekweni to access these funds.

In addition, the cities of Compact KZN recently submitted a joint proposal to the Green Climate Fund, and, as a group, received support from the C40 climate finance facility, a facility generally reserved for C40 metropolitan cities. This collaboration with the C40 finance facility aims to build a compelling business case (based on cost-benefit analysis) to transform some 7 400km riverine corridors into “clean, safe, healthy, useful and pleasant open spaces” that are “resilient to climate change”.

International visibility. Since the COP17 in 2011, members of Compact KZN have been invited to and hosted a large number of international conferences. Most member cities are also active members of international city networks such as ICLEI, C40 Cities and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Furthermore, many of the cities use international online reporting platforms like the ICLEI-CDP unified reporting system (see [CDP's Open Data Portal](#) and on [carbonn.org](#)), which increases the international visibility of their climate commitments and actions. In 2019, four cities in KwaZulu-Natal have reported to this platform, namely KwaDukuza, Msunduzi, uMhlathuze and eThekweni Municipalities.

Adaptation, evolution and sustainability of the compact KZN

Compact KZN progressively strengthening its institutions. Originally the recipient of international funding, the administrative responsibility of Compact KZN remained in the hands of eThekweni, with the support of its multi-stakeholder Secretariat, when the funding stopped in 2017. Meetings are now organised successively by each member municipality, with their own funds and on a rolling basis.

Compact KZN furthermore aims to be a key mechanism and model for collaboration and knowledge-sharing in the Provincial Climate Change Coordination Committee that is expected to be reinstituted with a strong mandate for sectoral and inter-governmental coordination on climate action under the Climate Change Bill.

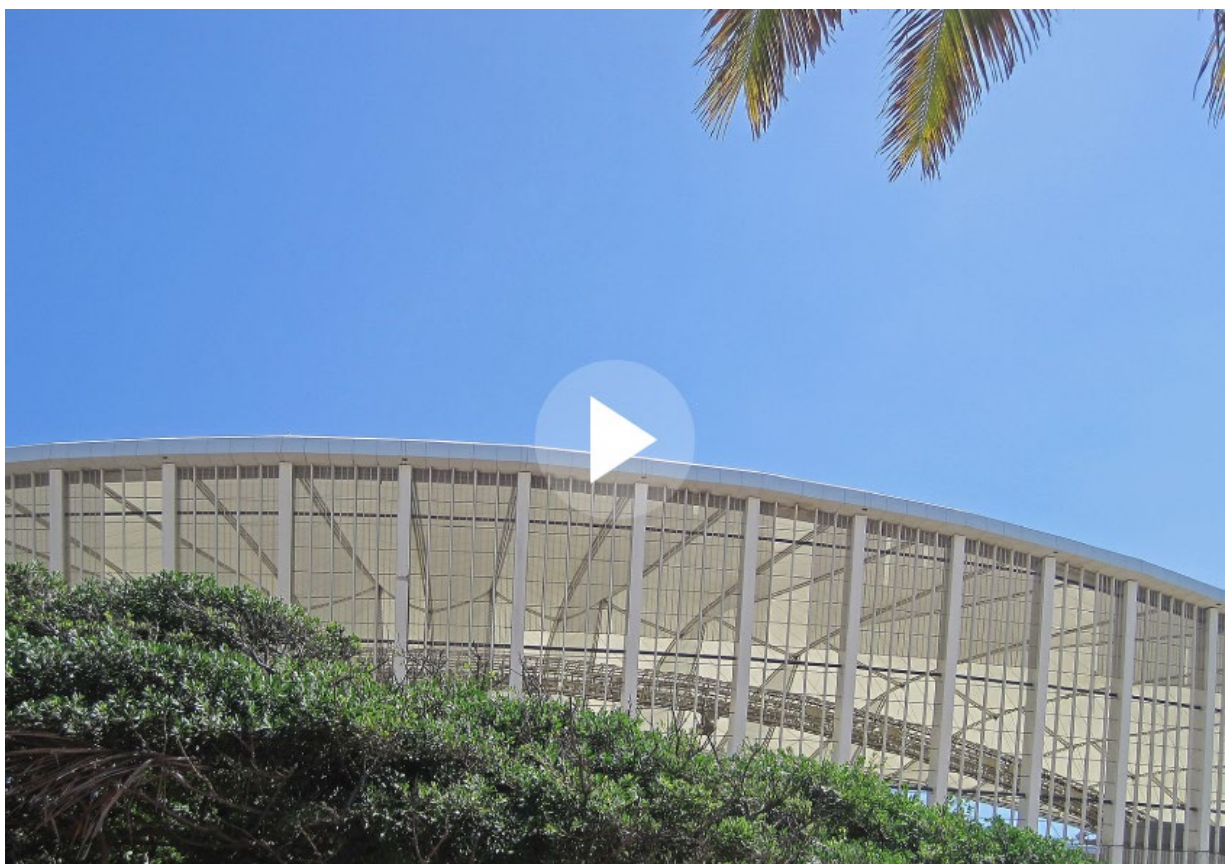
Compact KZN enhances its political support for local climate action. Once the technical Compact KZN consolidated, the Secretariat decided to involve political leaders in its activities. The first action was to try to move the responsibility for implementation oversight of Compact KZN from eThekweni's Climate Protection Branch to the Mayor's Parlour.

In 2018, Compact KZN members, supported by SALGA and ICLEI Africa, invited all Mayors in KZN to establish a Climate Change Compact of Mayors “which is aimed at local government leadership finding solutions to adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change within communities” (Compact KZN Handbook, 2018).

The objective was to create a political structure, aligned with the work of international initiatives such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) and its regional arm, the Covenant of Mayors Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA), as well as supporting the technical work undertaken by officials in municipalities. All mayors in the province of KwaZulu-Natal were invited to sign, freely and voluntarily, the Climate Change Compact Agreement based on the following three pillars:

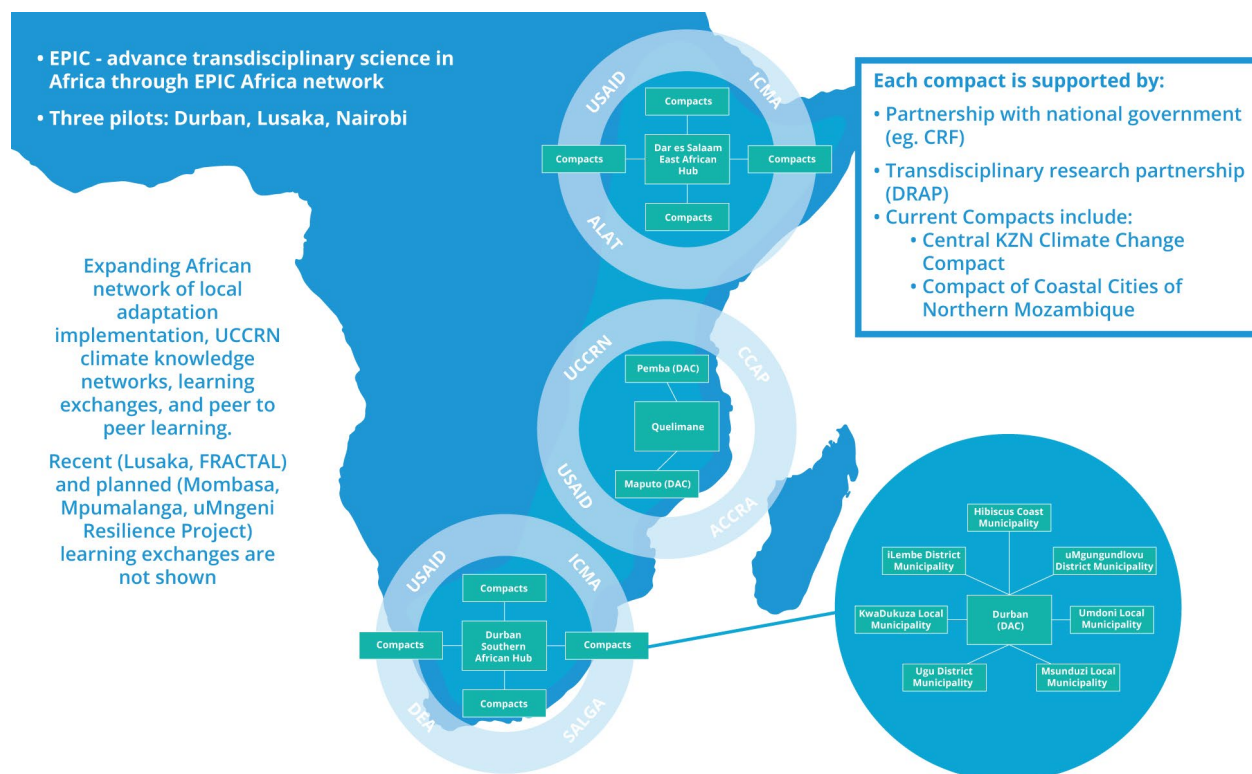
- 1) Universal access to secure sustainable and affordable energy services for all, thus enhancing quality of life and improving energy security
- 2) Strengthening local resilience and adaptation to climate change, thus preparing for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- 3) Contributing to keeping a global temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, in line with the international climate agreement reached at COP21 in Paris in December 2015.

The KZN Compact of Mayors aims to reconvene regularly to track the progress of each of the KZN cities in the field of climate change. This high-level political event will complement the technical platform already in place in Kwazulu-Natal.



[Watch the video of the meeting](#)

The model of Compact KZN replicated in other countries in Africa. Since 2015, the DAC Secretariat has planned to extend the Compact approach to other South African metropolitan cities and their city regions, as well as to other African cities, such as Tanzania and Mozambique.



The Replication of compact KZN model across Africa
 Source: DAC Annual Report (2018)

Compact KZN organised knowledge-exchange activities with officials from different African cities, in charge of leading the development of the Compact approach within his or her home municipality. In 2015, the majority of the local government authorities in Tanzania agreed to organise into Compacts within their subnational regions, under the influence of Dar es Salaam.

In 2017, after a series of exchanges between eThekweni and a number of Mozambican cities, the Compact of Coastal Cities in Northern Mozambique (CCCNM) was launched. This Compact comprises the cities of Emba, Nacala, Quelimane, Mocimboa da Praia and Ilha de Mocambique, plus the District of Palma.

In 2018, Mpumalanga, a province neighbouring KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, expressed interest in replicating the Compact KZN model, as climate action and adapting to the energy transition from coal has become increasingly prioritised by government.

Conclusion

Operating since 2014, Compact KZN keeps innovating and reinventing itself to adapt to the needs of its members. Thanks to the benefits it provides to the municipalities from different sizes in KwaZulu-Natal, these local governments invest time and resources in organising quarterly meetings on a rolling basis. Its replication in other African countries demonstrates that regional hubs for climate solutions are sustainable and adaptable models that do not necessarily rely on donor funding. The Compact KZN model, as a lab for vertical integration is also supported and encouraged by the action of international organisations and city networks.

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