



BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TRANSITIONING SOUTH
AFRICA TO A GREEN ECONOMY

Roundtable Report

Held on 7 May 2013
Vulindlela Academy
DBSA

“

“A green economy is fundamentally different from our current practices and skills. To be able to transition to a green economy we need to improve understanding of what this is and what is required - from this will follow commitment of resources and skills development to make this shift.”

Roundtable Participant

www.sagreenfund.org.za

Building Capacity for Transitioning South Africa to a Green Economy

Roundtable held on 7 May 2013, Vulindlela Academy, DBSA

Facilitator:

Michelle Layte Green Fund

Presenters:

Olympus Manthata Green Fund

Najma Mohamed Green Fund

Participants:

Hugo Allers East London IDZ

Mao Amis African Centre for Green Economy

Jenitha Badul Department of Environment Affairs

Garth Barnes WESSA

Liesel Beires KZN Department of Economic Development & Tourism

Kerry Bobbins Gauteng City Region Observatory

Telly Chauke SALGA

Christina Culwick Gauteng City Region Observatory

Karsten Feuerriegel GIZ

Linda Godfrey CSIR

Mumsie Gumede Rhodes University

Sibusisiwe Hlela Department of Environment Affairs

Ansa Liebenberg merSETA

Heila Lotz-Sisitka Rhodes University

Sandy Lowitt TIPS

Nisaar Mahomed KZN Trade & Investment

Vivian Malema South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)

Thomas Mathiba Department of Environment Affairs

Linda Manyuchi SALGA

Charity Mbileni The Innovation Hub

Daryl McLean Green Matter

Flora Mokgohloa The Presidency

Davina Piek Basil Read

Khaya Qwabe Economic Development Department

Henry Roman Department of Science and Technology

Karen Shippey Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning, Western Cape

Mark Swilling Sustainability Institute

Eureta Rosenberg Green Matter

Christelle Terreblanche Climate Jobs

Mahommed Tilly Green Fund

Keleabetswe Tloune Department of Environment Affairs

Douglas Trotter CSIR

Lindiwe Tshabalala Department of Environment Affairs

Wynand van der Merwe National Cleaner Production Centre

Nomsa Zondi Green Fund

Building Capacity for Transitioning South Africa to a Green Economy

1. Introduction

The Green Fund is a national fund aimed at supporting South Africa's transition to a green economy. The aim of the Green Fund is to provide catalytic finance to facilitate investment in green initiatives - this includes funding green economy project initiation and development; research and development; and capacity building initiatives.

Building capacity to meet the labour and skill demands of the green economy sector is identified as one of the priority action areas in transitioning South Africa to a green economy. The Green Fund seeks to support innovative and strategic capacity building initiatives which will strengthen capabilities (infrastructure, resources and products, skills) to pursue green economy policy development, planning and implementation.

The Fund Secretariat convened a roundtable discussion to discuss and review the policies and programmes which are currently in place to advance green economy capacity building objectives in South Africa. The purpose of the roundtable was threefold:

- To help support the Green Fund mandate to fund capacity building development initiatives in the green economy sector;
- To identify key capacity building areas which require support, and opportunities for partnerships; and
- To provide insights on the formulation and design of Green Fund capacity building support.

Key stakeholders gathered to discuss the capacity building requirements needed to transition South Africa to a green economy. A questionnaire, aimed at analysing existing capacity building interventions, was circulated for feedback. Findings were presented at the roundtable discussion.



“Capacity building within the green economy space is required as the key thematic areas addressed under the green economy may not have or have limited skills which are necessary in order to transition towards a green economy.”

Roundtable Participant

2. The Issues

2.1. Core Issue

Green economy policy objectives are supported by a robust capacity building policy framework in the sector, however, this is largely focussed on skills acquisition and training as opposed to broader institutional capacity building initiatives. Building institutional and organisational capacity to meet the labour and skill demands of the green economy sector is identified as one of the priority action areas in the National Skills Development Strategy III. The Department of Environmental Affairs' *Environmental Sector Skills Plan for South Africa (ESSP)* (2010) further highlights the green economy as one of the key trends impacting upon human capital development priorities in the environmental sector. Several other strategy documents and reports, including the *Assessment of Training Programmes and*

2. The Issues

Capacity Needs for the Water Sector (2007); the *Biodiversity Human Capital Strategy* (2010); and *Green Jobs* report (2011) confirm the National Growth Path's assertion that the green economy is one of the ten "job drivers" in South Africa.

A 2010 country study for the International Labour organisation (ILO), *Skills for Green Jobs in South Africa*, identified a number of key challenges in transitioning to a low carbon economy. These include: a lack of coordination between environmental policy and green skills development, a lack of legislation encouraging green skills development, a lack of coordination in the education and training sector, a knowledge gap around the skills requirements of the green economy, and skills shortages in key areas of the green economy landscape.

The recommendations of the study, i.e. the creation of a green economy skills forum; the mapping of the skills requirements of a green economy; and the establishment of public private partnerships (PPPs) to support the drive for green skills development – were echoed by roundtable participants during discussions.

Participants, on the whole, identified the need for strategic, targeted interventions by the Green Fund which can begin to coordinate green economy initiatives, and effect the systemic changes required to develop the requisite green skills for the transition to a green economy.

2.2. The Green Fund Portfolio: Identifying the Drivers of the Green Economy

The portfolio of Green Fund projects provided an indication on the scope of capacity building activities. Several programmatic areas were identified from the portfolio, such as innovative approaches to waste management, renewable energy, and sustainable land use management models. Gaps in capacity, such as in knowledge sharing on ecosystem services (i.e. in the rural and urban space) and sustainable transport, have also been identified. Private sector involvement and interest in the green economy landscape was also a key learning from the Fund's portfolio, as evidenced from the large number of applications received from the sector for both project development and research. This is vital in harnessing private sector resources in the transition to a green economy.

Participants confirmed that waste, energy and land use management and planning skills were well-represented in the green sector. One of the key points of note is the need to consider that the driving forces in various sectors, e.g. technology-richness, skills, and financial support, differ greatly. The Green Fund is therefore tasked with the decision of either supporting sectors which appear to be spearheading the transition to a green economy, or targeting sectors such as the environmental and natural resource management (ENRM) sector which has the greatest potential for job creation, but which is currently not well-positioned as a driving sector in the green economy landscape.

“

“Capacity building is needed to accelerate sustainability-oriented innovations within the economy, but also in the social sector and across all institutional environments.”

Roundtable Participant

2. The Issues

2.3. Barriers to Green Economy Capacity Development

Lack of knowledge, skills and coordination were identified as the key barriers in building capacity for a green economy. Mapping green economy skills, conceptual clarification of the green economy, and the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in official mindsets, were identified as key knowledge areas which were impinging on the transition to a green economy. In the skills arena, the lack of appropriate learning materials and curricula, limited qualifications development capacity and the absence of a professional body to coordinate green skills development, were highlighted. This links to the third barrier to capacity development, a lack of coordination, which alludes to the cross-sectoral nature of green economy skills development and the need for integration, transdisciplinarity and collaboration. Funding and policy directive were also listed as barriers to green economy capacity development.

2.4. Partnering for the Green Economy

The importance of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) was a recurring theme in the roundtable discussion. This was identified as one of ways of leveraging support, particularly in the ENRM sector. A key consideration raised was the need to build a socially-inclusive transition to the green economy through a process of national dialogue which included all players. To this end, partnerships in the green economy must be built between strategic institutions, in the public, private and civil society sector, which can drive green economy implementation.



“We need capacity building to raise our current base of skills which is too low in some instances, and to build on our existing skills to build new competencies, new ways of doing.”

Roundtable Participant

3. Priority Areas

3 Priorities

The priority action areas for the Green Fund were identified by roundtable participants as follows:

3.1. Green Economy Skills Coordination Mechanism

A coordination mechanism for green skills development and innovation which could strengthen capacity development and deliver a cross cutting service to all green economy sectors emerged as a key recommendation. This mechanism could address green skills development in existing education, training and development practices across sectors and institutions (e.g. higher education, further education and training (FET) colleges and institutions, work-based training) and between the sector education and training authorities (SETAs). Some of the key activities of this coordinating mechanism would be to map the skills requirements of the green economy, inform policy development and

3. Priority Areas

curriculum reform, set standards, coordinate existing professional bodies, and focus on and identify critical interventions that can complement and unlock other processes and funding opportunities. The mechanism, it was suggested, should be well-placed institutionally to maximise its impact and reach - the National Environmental Skills Planning Forum and National Planning Commission were identified as two possible "locations" for the proposed coordinating mechanism.

3.2. Greening Procurement Policy and Implementation

Procurement policy and supply chain management were identified as a strategic intervention which could make the biggest impact at the local level. Government spending was identified as a barrier in the transition to a green economy since environmental considerations were not yet integrated into supply chain management and procurement policies. Participants identified the "greening" of the public procurement system, which includes lifecycle assessments for example, as an intervention which could make a systemic impact and restructure the local economy in particular. Capacity development, through workshops and learning networks for instance, would be required to build capacity in both policy development and implementation related to green procurement. It was noted that green procurement should not be seen as a barrier and in conflict with government objectives such as broad-based black economic empowerment but should be seen as an incentive to support the transition to a green economy.

3.3. Strategic Infrastructure Projects

The implementation of the presidential initiative, the 18 Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIP's) budgeted at R827 billion, is the biggest government initiative in infrastructure development. The SIPs "will improve access by South Africans to healthcare facilities, schools, water, sanitation, housing and electrification" while "investment in the construction of ports, roads, railway systems, electricity plants, hospitals, schools and dams will contribute to faster economic growth". The environmental impact of this infrastructure-build initiative requires multi-level efforts to mainstream green economy considerations in the planning and development of the SIPs. Meeting participants recommended that the Green Fund consider supporting green skills development requirements in the SIPs and also mitigate the environmental impact of these infrastructure projects through robust environmental assessment and monitoring of this initiative.

3.4. Public Sector Governance

Government institutions, as drivers in green economy policy and implementation processes in the country, were identified as a key target group for green economy capacity building interventions. Institutional development of public sector institutions, for instance the integration of green economy in local economic development (LED) plans at the municipal level, can influence budget allocations and support the transition to a green economy.

3.5. National Dialogue on the Green Economy

A national dialogue processes to clarify and share the development of the core body of knowledge on green economy thinking in SA is required. This process will ensure the development of a shared understanding of the meaning of a green economy and can ensure that policy development is rooted

in the socio-economic realities and needs of the country. Social dialogue and learning on the green economy were put forward as notable capacity building areas which require support and coordination.

3.6. Teaching and Learning

Various teaching and learning interventions to support understanding of the green economy concept were suggested. These could involve (1) curriculum development and reform across the skills pipeline (2) research programmes and initiatives at the academic level and (3) professional development programmes which impart the integrated and transdisciplinary approach (and thinking) required for green economy planning and implementation.



“Green Economy will bring substantive structural changes that require new knowledge and skills.”

Roundtable Participant

4. Conclusion

Building capabilities to transition to a green economy, policies, infrastructure, products or skills, will require engagement with new thinking in the environment and development sector. Green innovations and technologies, green planning and procurement skills, and institutional and business models, would in some instances require the acquisition of a whole new set of capabilities. While the Green Fund is currently programmed as a three-year public sector intervention to catalyse the transition to a green economy in South Africa, it has the opportunity to support strategic and systemic interventions to strengthen the green economy sector in South Africa. The roundtable discussion highlighted several priority areas which could impact on building the capacity for this transition.



Published by
Green Fund Unit
Development Bank of Southern Africa

P. O. Box 1234
Halfway House 1685
South Africa

Green Fund Secretariat: +27 11 313 5237 / 3611
Email: enquiries@sagreenfund.org.za
Website: www.sagreenfund.org.za



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Managed and implemented by the
Development Bank of Southern Africa