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SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL

[SOUTH AFRICA'S CLIMATE FINANCE LANDSCAPE: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2025 REPORT](#) – The 2025 Climate Finance Landscape Report presents a comprehensive overview of investment flows supporting South Africa's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. It builds on the previous edition (2019–2021) and offers updated insights into the sources, instruments and sectors receiving climate-related funding. The report also provides a baseline for tracking progress toward national climate goals and assessing the impact of the Just Transition Framework.

While climate finance flows are increasing, the report finds that investment must grow two- to three-fold to meet national targets. Domestic sources contribute nearly 60% of total climate finance, with international public finance making up most of the remaining 40%. Private capital remains limited, accounting for less than 20% of total flows.

Energy continues to dominate climate investment, averaging R139.5 billion annually, primarily in renewable electricity generation. However, transmission and distribution infrastructure remains underfunded. Adaptation finance is notably low, representing just 11.3% of tracked flows, mostly from public sources, and falling below regional averages. Other sectors such as water, transport and agriculture, receive less than 10% of total climate finance.

Just transition and climate-aligned investments are emerging, though modestly, with an annual average of R16 billion, largely from government and development finance institutions. Between 2019 and 2023, 18% of private capital was mobilised through guarantees, with R4.4 billion aligned to climate objectives. The report recommends immediate actions to improve climate finance transparency, expand concessional and blended finance and strengthen institutional capacity. Structural reforms are also needed to deepen domestic financial markets, empower municipalities and align infrastructure systems with transition goals. Leveraging international partnerships and finalising a national climate finance strategy are seen as critical next steps.

This report serves as a strategic tool to identify progress, gaps and opportunities in South Africa's climate finance landscape. It calls for coordinated action to ensure a just, inclusive and sustainable transition.

Source: <https://www.saffarazzi.com/news/kusile-power-station-hits-full-throttle-eskoms-9600mw-milestone-lights-up-south-africa/>

SOUTH AFRICA ADVANCES AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ON G20 AGENDA – South Africa placed air quality and environmental crime on the G20's green agenda for the first time this year, under its presidency of the G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministerial meetings. The meetings concluded with the "Cape Town Ministerial Declarations," which reflect growing global recognition of the urgency and wide-reaching impact of these issues. These declarations will contribute to the G20 leaders' statement at the upcoming summit in Johannesburg.

While consensus on a broader declaration addressing global environmental and climate crises was not reached, progress was made on key issues. The air quality declaration commits G20 members to promoting cleaner production, transport and energy systems, improving data and monitoring, and increasing support for communities most affected by pollution. The environmental crimes declaration calls for stronger international cooperation to combat illegal wildlife trade, deforestation, mining, waste trafficking and other transnational environmental crimes. South Africa's non-aligned status enabled broad engagement across geopolitical divides, reinforcing the importance of multilateralism in addressing global challenges.

At the opening of the ministerial meetings, civil society groups and community representatives called for justice and equity in environmental decision-making. Conservation partners highlighted South Africa's leadership in biodiversity protection, noting its progress toward placing 28% of land under stewardship by 2035, close to the global target of 30%. Most stewardship agreements involve private landowners and commercial farmers, with rural communities increasingly participating through incentives such as improved land management, market access and job creation.

Marine protection remains limited, with less than 6% of South Africa's exclusive economic zone under formal protection, despite the existence of 42 marine protected areas. The country is advocating for new marine reserves, including in the Weddell Sea in Antarctica, through ongoing discussions with international partners.

South Africa is also working to strengthen climate data systems, including weather services and early warning capabilities and continues to supply valuable climate data globally. The importance of science and data in shaping climate policy was emphasised, especially in the context of rising global uncertainty. Although the United States has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, other G20 countries reaffirmed their support. As South Africa prepares to hand over the G20 presidency to the US in December, it has encouraged member countries to look beyond national interests and focus on global sustainability. Under the theme of solidarity, equality and sustainability, South Africa has positioned itself as a bridge-builder and advocate for inclusive climate action.

Source: <https://times-e-editions.pressreader.com/1107/20251019/281681146096278>

CLIMATE FINANCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AMONG KEY OUTCOMES EXPECTED FROM COP30 – At a stakeholder engagement session on 20 October 2025, it was confirmed that South Africa's Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group had concluded its work under the country's G20 presidency. The updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), aligned with the Climate Change Act of 2024, is expected soon. It aims to balance environmental integrity with social justice and support an inclusive transition to a low-carbon economy.

COP30 marks ten years since the Paris Agreement and five years to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Updated NDCs will be critical to limiting global warming to 1.5°C. South Africa anticipates progress on initiatives such as the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and the UAE-led Just Transition Work Programme, which promote cooperation between developed and developing nations. Adaptation remains a priority for Africa. South Africa's goals include strengthening infrastructure for water, sanitation, disaster risk management, health systems, food security, and ecosystem restoration. The country supports clear indicators to track progress and ensure support reaches vulnerable communities.

Climate finance is central to achieving these goals. COP30 is expected to advance the New Collective Quantified Goal and the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap, which aim to mobilise \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035. South Africa continues to call for predictable, accessible funding through grants and concessional finance, in line with the Paris Agreement. Operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund is another key priority, with funding requests expected from early 2026. Over 170 entities, including the Development Bank of Southern Africa, have been accredited to provide support. South Africa continues to advocate for recognition of Africa's unique needs and tailored support for adaptation and just transitions.

To ensure impact at the community level, technical agencies under the Santiago Network must be empowered to deliver early warning systems, risk mapping, and social protection. The Just Transition Work Programme is also expected to evolve into a practical tool supporting inclusive transformation beyond energy systems. Finally, the Enhanced Transparency Framework is being developed to strengthen climate reporting. South Africa is calling for a shift from pledges to implementation, with clear plans for financing, accountability, and long-term impact.

Source: <https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/climate-finance-for-developing-countries-among-key-outcomes-expected-from-cop30-2025-10-21>

INTERNATIONAL

WEST AFRICA'S LEOPARDS NOW CLASSIFIED AS ENDANGERED - Leopards in West Africa have officially been reclassified as endangered following a dramatic 50% population decline over the past two decades. According to the latest assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), only around 350 mature individuals remain across 11 countries in the region, including Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal.

These leopards are genetically distinct from their Central African counterparts, with little to no interbreeding between populations. Once widespread, they now survive mostly in fragmented protected areas that are increasingly threatened by agriculture, infrastructure development and other human activities.

The IUCN's decision to move the West African leopard from vulnerable to endangered on its Red List reflects growing concern over habitat loss, declining prey populations and poaching. Leopards are often hunted to reduce competition for bushmeat and for their skins and body parts, which are used in

traditional spiritual and medicinal practices. The assessment highlights the broader ecological impact of their decline, as leopards play a key role at the top of the food chain. Their disappearance signals deeper disruptions in the ecosystems they inhabit.

Conservationists are calling for a coordinated regional strategy to protect the species. This includes strengthening park patrols, launching awareness campaigns to reduce poaching and promoting cultural alternatives to traditional talismans. Collaborative efforts across West African nations will be essential to halt further decline and support leopard recovery.

Source: <https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2025/10/west-africas-leopards-now-officially-endangered-after-50-population-crash/>

SAFEGUARDING AFRICA'S PALM DIVERSITY: A NEW CONSERVATION INITIATIVE - Palm trees are found across Africa, from deserts to rainforests, with Central Africa hosting the greatest variety. Though the continent has fewer palm species than other tropical regions, palms are vital to daily life. They provide food, medicine, building materials and hold cultural significance.

Many native palms are now in decline due to deforestation, overharvesting and habitat loss. Some, like *Hyphaene guineensis* and *Sclerosperma profizianum*, are rare and poorly documented. Their loss would impact both ecosystems and communities. To address this, a new pan-African network of palm scientists has been formed. Researchers from across the continent are collaborating to study palm biology, promote sustainable use, and train future experts. The network aims to assess threats, classify species and map their distribution.

Palm regeneration is slow, with seeds taking months or years to germinate. Some species, such as rattan palms, require decades to mature. Understanding growth cycles is key to developing sustainable harvesting practices. While farmed palms like oil palm, coconut and date palm are well studied, many wild species remain under-researched. These include palms used for starch, fibre, wine and construction. More research is needed on reproduction, germination and genetic diversity to guide conservation.

The network also supports domestication efforts, encouraging controlled cultivation in farms and forests. This can reduce pressure on wild populations and support rural livelihoods through agroforestry. Protecting Africa's palms is essential for biodiversity, food security and climate resilience. The work of the African Network of Palm Scientists will contribute to broader conservation efforts across the continent.

Source: <https://theconversation.com/palm-trees-in-africa-are-in-decline-these-botanists-made-a-plan-to-do-something-about-it->

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3 November 2025- International Day of Biosphere Reserves <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/biosphere-reserves>

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