



EARTH HOUR CITY CHALLENGE 2014

JOURNEYS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY – CITY OF TSHWANE

Tshwane strives for energy sustainability

The City of Tshwane boasts a number of innovative sustainability initiatives, especially in the areas of energy conservation, solar water heating and public transportation.

The city's many initiatives include its Green Buildings Incentive Scheme, a new bus rapid transport (BRT) scheme, a project to refurbish street lights and traffic lights, a project to retrofit all municipal buildings to make them more energy efficient, a bicycle lane project, a solar water heating scheme, and 13 air quality monitoring stations. Also on the cards is a landfill gas-to-electricity project, currently being assessed for feasibility.

More specifically, Tshwane's Agricultural and Environmental Management Department has already installed energy-saving light bulbs in 3 665 street lights, which has significantly reduced the energy needed to provide this important service. The department has also retrofitted the all of the lights and installed a solar geyser at Mini Munitoria, a satellite civic centre in Atteridgeville, and has done the same at the Balebogeng Primary School in Mamelodi. In the same vein, it is in the process of installing solar-powered geysers in Winterveldt, Rosslyn and Olievenhoutbosch.

In the transport sector, the city is currently constructing more than eight kilometres of bicycle paths in Atteridgeville, and is pushing ahead with its BRT system, which it hopes will get more people out of cars and onto more energy efficient public transport. Like other metros around the country, good public transportation and sustainable infrastructure are a top priority for Tshwane.

In addition to these local initiatives, the Agriculture and Environmental Management Department collaborates on sustainability initiatives at both national and international level. Some of these initiatives include the Sustainable Energy for Environment and Development Programme (SEED), a partnership between a number of South African cities. The programme, which was started in 2003, aims to encourage the integration of sustainable energy and sound environmental principles into the process of urban development throughout the country. The City of Tshwane was invited to join SEED by Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA), an NGO based in Cape Town, and has been involved since 2004.

As part of its commitment to the programme, the city has developed a Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Action Plan, which has been accepted as a fundamental part of its vision and mission by the city council.

The plan is based on five interrelated concepts namely inclusivity, productivity, mobility, sustainability and good governance. It is the administration's aim to develop a city that is accessible to all and reliable in its delivery; a city which provides access to affordable energy, which balances energy consumption with developmental needs, which provides good public transportation, which keeps emissions under control, and which is efficient with resources. The action plan outlines programmes to address all of these goals, and progress is constantly monitored by both the council and the relevant municipal-owned entities (MOEs).

In addition to its participation in SEED, Tshwane is a member of the South African Cities Network, a member of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), and a partner in the Mega City of Gauteng's research-based EnerKey programme. It is also collaborating with the City of Basel in Switzerland to develop a clean development project for implementation in low-cost housing.

Another collaboration includes participation in the City Energy and Climate Change Support Unit (CESU), and SEA initiative. The aim of this unit is to support South African cities in their transition to clean energy and in reducing their carbon footprints. This is done through such mechanisms as capacity building and training, technical support, exchange programmes, and engagement in the national policy development process.

On the climate change front, Tshwane's mitigation efforts are taking place at both policy and operational level. At policy level, mitigation measures are being integrated into every aspect of city management, as well as into all development plans. At operational level, the administration runs an active programme to inform residents about ways in which they can reduce their carbon footprints and save on both electricity and water. A tree planting programme aimed at improving carbon sequestration forms part of the climate change programme too, as does a 'reduce, reuse and recycle' programme.

The city is also in the process of building a new state-of-the-art, energy-efficient municipal centre, Tshwane House. This project is being implemented concurrently with a R7 billion inner city rejuvenation project, which is aligned to the goals of the Tshwane Vision 2055 integrated development plan.

"The City of Tshwane is deeply committed to creating a liveable, resilient and inclusive city," says Executive Mayor, Kgosientso Ramokgopa, "and sustainability is a key feature of our strategy.

"The process of developing Tshwane Vision 2055 was based on extensive public engagement, that brought many new insights and concepts to the table. As we construct our new municipal centre, we enter into a new era in which we intend to be one of Africa's most sustainably managed cities."

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