

Sustainable development



Water: Current and projected climate change effects, exacerbated by the fact that South Africa is a dry country. However, agriculture currently consumes over 70% of national water supply, while contributing to about 4% of GAP, even though volumes of farm produce have increased, along with revenues. The sector also employs 8.

5% of the national employment figure. Energy & oil price increases have negative impacts on farmers, who struggle to make increasingly thinner profit margins in order to survive. Soil fertility: Unsustainable soil practices compromise the nutritional value of food.

Global economy changes – pressures exerted by global retailers on food prices have artificially lowered food prices, leading to the global downward trend in farming, which is now globally one of the professions with the highest suicide rates in both small scale and commercial scale farmers (Pate, 2007 in Swilling et al, 2010: 95). In South Africa the existing policy for food security and agriculture do not support a green oriented economy and mainly focuses on commercial agriculture and not on small scale farmers (Swilling et al, 2010: 96). .

1. 5 soil Due to the soils in South Africa being eroded and containing low levels of organic carbon, agricultural activities are difficult and costly. Soil is further being degraded due to erosion by water and wind. Soil fertility is an ecosystem service which serves as the foundation for viable agriculture and food security (Swilling et al 2010). More focus should be placed on soil fertility in South Africa due to the fact that soil degradation impacts on the economic growth of the country.

Swilling et al (2010) states that policy that incentives soil health restoring and maintaining land use activities and agricultural practices are required, based on resource rental evaluations of soil, should be used to help stimulate and expand the introduction of greener soil practices. Likewise, land-use activities that have a high degrading impact on valuable soil resources should only be viable if they can meet the resource rentals that reflect the true scale of the costs of ecosystem services provided by fertile soils.

Soil quality can be restored and resuscitated by increasing the carbon content. Mechanisms and programmers should be put in place that will achieve this by bringing the CEO-system back to life egg: attracting insects that will help strengthen the soil. 2.

2 South Africans approach to renewable energy the World Summit on Sustainable Development which was hosted by South Africa in 2002.

In the white paper it is stipulated that “ Renewable energy that is produced from sustainable natural sources will contribute to sustainable development. As most of the sources are indigenous and naturally available, energy supply is afforded security and is not subject to disruption by international crises or limited supplies. Mitigating the use of fossil fuels through the implementation of renewable energy will contribute to emission reductions while providing incremental financial resources to stimulate sustainable development”.

Koura (2011: 3) indicates that “ South Africa is faced with opportunities and obstacles by a renewable transition and spite the presence of numerous lobbying bodies and strong international interest in developing renewable potential across the country, confusing regulatory and investment signals

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have been sent out, as the numerous individuals that must come together to confirm the final components of the renewable energy policies remain disjointed.

Thus, entrenched power dynamics amongst this constellation of actors in the South African energy sector are also deeply imbued with uncertainty’.

Koura (2011: 5) further states that “ In addition, the country is still struggling with numerous domestic problems. First and foremost, issues surrounding poverty are hindering business development and present a challenge for development experts and the country stability, as Eskimo feels little pressure from the country impoverished majority, a group that is largely ill-equipped to lobby government.

Furthermore, many of the country renewable energy developers do not have access to the financial markets and investment streams that are available in other countries. The global financial community has treated the country as both an emerging market and a third-world nation, creating unequal access to credit among potential renewable energy entrepreneurs, promoting widespread stagnation, and allowing for existing energy providers that rely on traditional methods of energy generation, transmission, and distribution to become more firmly embedded.

Second, corruption, graft, and a lack of transparency are pervasive problems that make it difficult for systemic change to occur”. However, the white paper has attempted to put mechanisms in place that points out the essential elements for renewable energy implementation.

These are stipulated as follows: Enabling the Environment – By creating an enabling environment through the introduction of fiscal and financial support mechanisms within an appropriate legal and regulatory framework to allow renewable energy technologies to compete with fossil-based technologies.

There is also a need for Government support for renewable energy to help establish initial market share and demonstrate the viability of renewable sources, after which economies of scale and technological development take over. Electricity Sector – Due to the fact that Eskimo is currently the only organization that generates and transmits electricity in South Africa, the electricity corporations of Eskimo and the formation of six new regional electricity structures. The Central Energy Fund should assist the implementation of renewable energy through the extension of its operational support.

Renewable Energy Technologies – In order for South Africa to succeed in renewable energy through technological use, it is necessary to consider which technologies can be promoted by measures to stimulate the market.

In the short-term it is important that technologies that are currently available in South Africa are implemented. The local content of equipment needs to be maximized in order to minimize the costs associated with implementation and operation, as well as the promotion of employment opportunities.

The establishment of technology support centers within existing research and development institutions will facilitate the promotion and ongoing development of technologies and will assist Government in the certification of systems. 2. 3 South African Government's Responses: Are they

appropriate and adequate? Although the South African government does have monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems in place, it needs to be strengthened to be an integrated mechanism that measures performance in respect of sustainable development targets effectively and across all spheres and sectors.

Gaps also exist in respect of monitoring tools. There is for example no agreed to sustainable development ‘score card’ (similar to that used by the tourism and agriculture sectors) for measuring performance of social partners and Government’s performance is audited only in terms of financial compliance, not qualitatively in terms of ecological sustainability. Collecting and collating reliable and accurate information coherently at different institutional levels remains a major challenge. CONCLUSION Sustainable development is crucial to the existence of the planet as well as its inhabitants.

However, action has to be taken in order to save what’s left of the planet and reverse the damage that has already been caused by human development. Drastic measures need to be taken in order to address the threats and challenges to CEO-system as discussed above. The global population needs to be made aware of the impact that human demands have on the planet. Actions should be taken to alleviate the inequality of resource distribution among the global population as the poor are adversely affected by the demands of the rich which impacts on climate change and the deteriorating environment.

In order to sustain the planet, the global