

**SOUTH AFRICA'S CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE POLICY DESIGN AND  
IMPLEMENTATION AT LOCAL LEVEL: A CASE OF VHEMBE DISTRICT,  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

**GUNDO MULAUDZI (11641113)**

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (MENVSC), DEPARTMENT OF  
GEOGRAPHY & GEO-INFORMATION SCIENCES, SCHOOL OF  
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SUPERVISOR: DR. N.S NETHENGWE

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## Abstract

Climate change is a global problem in that its impacts result in global changes of the earth's climate system causing the occurrence of extreme weather events. These impacts then affect food production, water resources, people's health and livelihood. The rural population in most countries including South Africa is most vulnerable to these impacts due to their low adaptive capacity. Policy development and its effective implementation are seen as one way of responding to the impacts of climate change. Against this background, the study assessed the design of the South African Climate Change Response Policy and implementation at the local level. The specific objectives of this study were to: analyse the extent to which the international and national contexts have informed the National Climate Change Response Policy in South Africa; evaluate the synergy between national policy and provincial/local climate change strategies; assess the extent to which the local government is implementing climate change policy and evaluate challenges experienced with regards to climate change policy implementation at local government.

This is a qualitative study which is descriptive in design that is primarily concerned with process rather than outcomes. In order to achieve the objectives, a mixed method approach was used. The methods of data collection were content analysis and semi-structured interviews; while content analysis was also used to analyse documents, McCrackens 5 step method was used to analyse the semi-structured interviews. Three main findings emerged from the analysis of the data. Firstly, content analysis of the policy documents showed that South Africa's Climate Change Response Policy was largely influenced by the national context rather than the international context. Secondly, positive synergy between national and provincial climate change policy and strategies was evident while a lack of synergy was observed between provincial and local plans. This is because climate change actions have only been well incorporated up to the provincial level. Finally, results showed that Vhembe District Municipalities were failing to adequately implement the climate change policy. Reasons for such failure were attributed to the challenges such as lack of information, lack of interest from officials, and lack of qualified personnel. The gap between the national policy and local implementation was wider than the one between national policy and provincial implementation. Recommendations thereof include the introduction of strong punitive measures for non-compliance; short courses for government officials; development of strong leadership through climate change champions; and introduction of incentives like awards.

**Key words:** Climate change, content analysis, implementation, local government, policy