



Consultation draft African environmental assessment legislation handbook

Includes 26 country systems
English • French • Portuguese
4th Edition



**HANDBOOK ON
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
LEGISLATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

Fourth Edition

CONSULTATION DRAFT

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Foreword

Publication of the 4th edition of the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) Environmental Legislation Handbook could not be more timely. We are in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and environmental degradation has been identified as a key causative component.

The current health crisis has already resulted in significant economic and financial damage worldwide. Africa is particularly vulnerable to such negative shocks and progress towards the creation of critical infrastructure, the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 has undoubtedly been delayed.

This document underlines the DBSA's commitment to exemplary environmental practices in order to co-create a prosperous and sustainable Africa. In our determination to get out of the current crisis, it is vital that we engage with the challenge of not aggravating the factors that (at least partly) provoked it. Among the many lessons that we can take from this setback is to henceforth properly value ecological services and to place environmental sustainability at the centre of our development efforts. As the world recovers from the pandemic, we must ensure that livelihoods are based on resilient and sustainable activity.

Looking back over the previous editions of the Environmental Legislation Handbook I can see that three themes emerge and give an encouraging account of the development journey that we are traveling together. In the first, 2007 edition, only the then member states of the Southern African Development Community were included. Now, in the fourth edition, coverage has expanded to include 26 national environmental management systems. This growth reflects the wider development mandate granted to the DBSA by the Government of South Africa to work with partners across Africa and the continental islands.

At the DBSA we are aware that environmental and social regulations are under constant development worldwide. In Africa, there have been many recent revisions to national regulations to include climate change considerations. It is encouraging to see such environmental development goals taking their rightful place alongside (and as an integral part of) commitments to gender, labour, social and cultural heritage matters.

The DBSA's commitment to an inclusive, coherent and practical cross-continental development strategy is demonstrated by this document's linguistic inclusivity. The 2020 edition of the African Environmental Legislation Handbook has been published in the three official languages of the African Union for all the relevant member states.

It has been said that every crisis contains within it the potential for progress and change. I am confident this handbook will be a valuable introductory tool for every individual striving to achieve sustainable development, be they a government official, environmental professional, community member, investor or financier. We can and must come out of the Covid-19 pandemic greener and stronger with a collective commitment to an environmentally sustainable, equitable economic recovery.

Patrick Dlamini
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