

# Tackling climate change on a local level

CARLA THOMAZ | FEATURES WRITER

**G**round engineering and environmental consultancy group Golder Associates is working with a number of public- and private-sector organisations to tackle issues related to climate change and the potential effects that it could have on their plans and operations.

"There is significant global debate around the causes of climate change. However, changes in global weather patterns such as increases in temperature, extreme weather events, such as flooding

and droughts, rising sea-levels and rainfall variability, are already evident, and have resulted in the need for the protection of assets, infrastructure, communities and natural ecosystems," says Golder Associates climate change scientist **Catherine Hughes**.

Golder Associates has been working with the eThekweni municipality to enable the city to adapt or implement measures to protect communities, its infrastructure and natural resources. The municipality, together with

Golder Associates, is developing community-based adaptation strategies through community participation, and is making use of traditional knowledge and reactions to floods, temperature changes and food security issues.

Increasing temperatures and changing rainfall patterns could also affect maize production, which is the staple diet of many, says Hughes. Thus, Golder Associates is undertaking a community project on behalf of the

municipality that trial-tests the planting of other crops, such as cassava and sorghum, that could potentially be used as a source of food by local communities. The project, which is being funded by Danish funding agency Danida, has held two community-based cook-offs that allow community members to try new recipes using the different crops.

Apart from introducing potential new crops to local communities, the municipality is also trying to supplement the communities' water supply through rainwater harvesting projects.

"Water availability is predicted to become less reliable with climate change, and therefore the municipality is piloting the use of tanks that will collect rainwater," Hughes concludes.

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