

## Ensuring business continuity through climate change response planning

**G**older Associates is one of the most respected global groups specialising in ground engineering and environmental services. Golder Associates assists companies, municipalities and large organisations in Africa in assessing their business risk and creating sustainable climate change response plans.

"Climate change has become a heated topic since COP15 in Denmark," says Rob Hounsome, Leader of Climate Change Services at Golder Associates. "We sent six representatives from our firm to Copenhagen, of which two were from Africa. The meetings were challenging, and there were a great deal of expectations. Although some people left the conference feeling disappointed, I think the conference succeeded at a different level, as it created the opportunity for different organisations and companies to come together and share ideas on how they can work together in responding to climate change."

### How climate change impacts businesses

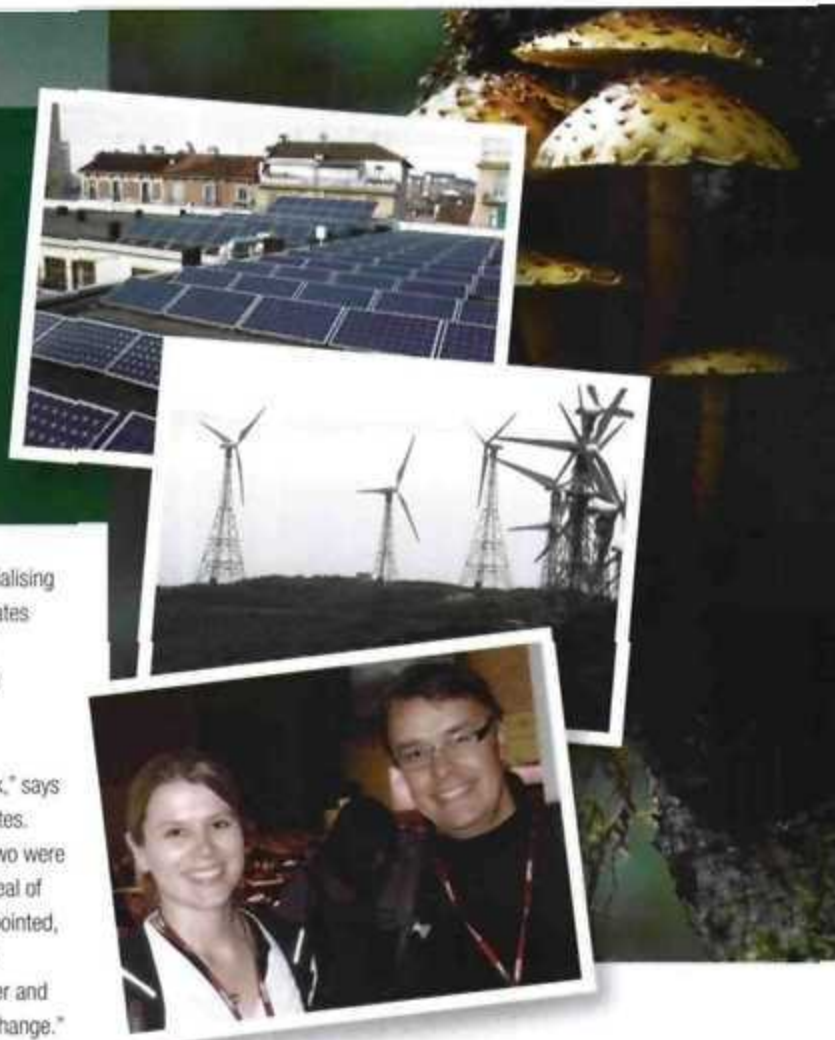
Hounsome explains how businesses are fundamentally affected by climate change. "Many businesses do not realise the extent to which their organisation is impacted by climate change. People mainly think of how increasing energy costs and the decrease of energy security will influence their bottom line, but many companies are influenced by climate change in unconsidered ways," says Hounsome.

"A company dependent on natural resources such as water, for example, may not be able to access this resource as a result of climate change. A company dependent on transport routes may find that floods or varying rainfall will impact their business. The health of an organisation's workforce may also suffer from climate change affects, such as heat exhaustion or increased disease load. It is critical that we stop thinking of climate change as something separate from our businesses, because climate change is not just an environmental issue but a business continuity issue."

### Planning ahead

According to Hounsome, companies will have to plan ahead if they want to effectively adapt to climate change. "We have completed assignments with companies with large infrastructural investments, such as mining operations, on how they will adapt their infrastructure in order to reduce their vulnerability to climate change. This has had an impact on reducing insurance costs," says Hounsome.

"These projects have proven that planning ahead and making sustainable business decisions is far more economically viable than trying to retrofit a building, business or a company's infrastructure when it is already too late," says Hounsome.



Golder Associates has a team of highly skilled engineers, scientists, project managers and other technical specialists which aims to advise companies on the best possible steps to ensure business continuity in the face of a changing climate.

2010 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Golder Associates, founded in Canada in 1960. This employee-owned company with international expertise employs 7 000 people, and operates in 160 offices worldwide. Their clients span the world's major economic drivers, including oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, power, transportation and more.

"Our team assesses the vulnerability, risks and adaptation options available to a company. Our specialist technical engineers have the capability to design infrastructure that incorporates these adaptation options. Our team focuses on building strong relationships and meeting the needs of clients, making it one of the most trusted professional services firms in the world," concludes Hounsome.

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