

# SA RISK AND VULNERABILITY ATLAS E NEWSLETTER

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## District officials learn how to use the Atlas in local planning

*Miriam Murambadoro, CSIR Natural Resources and the Environment*

District municipality environmental officers attending the 2011 SRRP training workshop were introduced to the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas (SARVA) as a vital tool for local planning and resilience.

Organised by the Department of Environmental Affairs' local government support programme, the workshop was aimed at raising awareness among district environmental officers of environmental issues such as biodiversity in decision making at local authority level, policies such as environmental frameworks, and other planning tools. Workshop delegates are a target stakeholder group of the SARVA project.

In their presentation, SARVA team members Kristy Facer and Miriam Murambadoro introduced delegates to the concept of global change, its impacts on livelihoods, biodiversity and the economy, and demonstrated an example of how risk and vulnerability assessment has been used to better understand the implications of global change in the Eden District on the Southern coast, one of the case studies contained in the Atlas.

### Local government support officials' response to the Atlas

Workshop participants enthusiastically agreed that the Atlas could be used to inform and prioritise relevant planning tools at the district and local level; that it had the potential to provide relevant information for Integrated Development Plans, Air Quality Management Plans and other environmental tools in municipalities; and that the information in the Atlas could be used for disaster risk reduction workshops.

Questions from the floor included:

- > Will the spatial portal be compatible with old computer programmes such as Windows 98?
- > Could the information be presented at municipal forums?
- > Would the SARVA team be available to visit municipalities by invitation to give presentations to councillors (as the key decision makers in local government)?

Some of the concerns raised related to the need for further training on the use of the Atlas and how the data available on the SARVA portal could be linked to local level data to avoid contradictions.



Delegates were shown how to enhance resilience in communities through the case study of Eden District, one of the case studies contained in the Atlas.



Workshop participants pointed out that the information in the Atlas could be used for local disaster risk reduction.

### SARVA workshops

All the delegates indicated that they would be interested in participating in the full-day SARVA workshops



SARVA's Miriam Murambadoro introduces district municipality environmental officers to the South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas.

scheduled for early next year, and undertook to identify appropriate local municipal officers and personnel to attend the workshops as well. They pointed out that district and municipal officials needed to be made aware of global change in general, and that planned workshops should include case studies that officials could relate to.

Plans are underway to organise provincial or district level SARVA workshops based on the feedback provided by this group.

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