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Authors

Notiswa Libala

Andrew Boraine

Jessica Wilson

Coordination

Anda David (AFD)

Getting from Good Intentions to Effective Action: A Proposal for a Just Transition Partnering Implementation Model in South Africa

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Getting from Good Intentions to Effective Action

A Proposal for a Just Transition Partnering Implementation Model in South Africa

AUTEURS

Notiswa Libala

Andrew Boraine

Jessica Wilson

Western Cape
Economic Development
Partnership (EDP)

COORDINATION

Anda David (AFD)

Abstract

The paper calls for implementation plans arising from the just transition framework in South Africa to be based on an explicit collaborative and adaptive approach and proposes a Partnering Implementation Model (PIM) to move from good intentions to implementation. The paper points to recurring patterns of failure to implement policies, frameworks and strategies in South Africa and argues if the proposed just transition implementation plan is going to succeed, it should not only identify state and societal actors necessary for implementation, but, more importantly, adopt a partnering approach that mobilises diverse actors and enables them to work together in practice. The process and practice of partnering, and adaptive management and learning, which forms the basis of the model, is aimed at navigating and managing complexity, especially in low-trust, low-certainty, and low-agreement environments, where no single institution has the whole mandate or resources to resolve the problem on its own, where technical and managerial solutions are insufficient, and where there is a need for human and institutional behaviour change. The partnering model is based on the notion of citizens as potential implementers, rather than passive bystanders in their own development. As such, it specifically challenges the instrumentalist 'state-client' model, which reduces citizens to recipients of public services, and instead views the state as a potential enabler of development, supporting non-state initiatives to play a role in delivering a just transition. The

model prioritises building and sustaining relationships between the bottom-up mobilising environment and the top-down authorising environment, illustrated by a case study of the Social Employment Fund (SEF).

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Keywords

Collaborative intermediation, Common agenda, Implementation, Joint action, Just transition, Partnering Relationships

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Résumé

Ce papier de recherche argumente que les plans de mise en œuvre découlant du cadre de transition juste en Afrique du Sud soient basés sur une approche collaborative et adaptative explicite et propose un modèle de mise en œuvre en partenariat (PIM) pour passer des bonnes intentions à la mise en œuvre. Le document met en évidence des schémas récurrents d'échec de la mise en œuvre des politiques, des cadres et des stratégies en Afrique du Sud et affirme que si le plan de mise en œuvre de la transition juste proposé doit réussir, il ne doit pas seulement identifier les acteurs étatiques et sociétaux nécessaires à la mise en œuvre, mais, plus important encore, adopter une approche de partenariat qui mobilise divers acteurs et leur permet de travailler ensemble

dans la pratique. Le processus et la pratique du partenariat, ainsi que la gestion et l'apprentissage adaptatifs, qui constituent la base du modèle, visent à naviguer et à gérer la complexité, en particulier dans des environnements où la confiance, la certitude et l'accord sont faibles, où aucune institution n'a le mandat ou les ressources nécessaires pour résoudre le problème à elle seule, où les solutions techniques et managériales sont insuffisantes et où un changement de comportement humain et institutionnel est nécessaire. Le modèle de partenariat repose sur la notion de citoyens en tant qu'acteurs potentiels de la mise en œuvre, plutôt que spectateurs passifs de leur propre développement. En tant que tel, il remet spécifiquement en question le modèle

instrumentaliste "État-client", qui réduit les citoyens à des bénéficiaires de services publics, et considère au contraire l'État comme un catalyseur potentiel du développement, soutenant les initiatives non étatiques afin qu'elles jouent un rôle dans la mise en œuvre d'une transition juste. Le modèle donne la priorité à l'établissement et au maintien de relations entre l'environnement de mobilisation ascendante et l'environnement d'autorisation descendante, illustré par une étude de cas du Fonds social pour l'emploi (FSE).

Mots-clés

Intermédiation collaborative, Agenda commun, Mise en œuvre, Action conjointe, Transition juste, Relations de partenariat

Introduction: Implementing the Just Transition

One of the first tasks of the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC), established by President Cyril Ramaphosa in December 2020, was to design a Just Transition Framework (JTF) for South Africa. The framework brings coordination and coherence to Just Transition (JT) planning and implementation in South Africa. The framework was adopted by the PCC in May 2022 and approved by Cabinet in July 2022. The Framework sets out a shared vision for the JT, principles to guide the transition, and policies and governance arrangements to give effect to the transition. It focuses on managing the social and economic consequences of the climate transition and supporting those most at risk: workers in the coal value chain, communities linked to coal mines and power stations, and more broadly, poor people who are vulnerable to the physical impacts of climate change. The framework also focuses on procedural justice, calling for those most affected by the transition to be involved in the substantive decision making around it.

The Framework also highlights the importance of sequencing and aligning economic, social, and mitigation and adaptation measures, which means that the JTF needs to be translated into an implementation plan. The implementation of the JTF requires integration into the planning system of government, specifically the National Development Plan (NDP), the medium-term strategic framework, annual performance plans, and annual budgeting processes (Cabinet approval of PCC JTF, 2022).

In addition to the implementation plan, the PCC has identified the need to develop a practical guide for *who* needs to work together to implement the JTIP, and, more importantly, *how* to work together in practice. To this end, the PCC engaged the services of the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP), a not-for-profit, public-benefit, collaborative-intermediary organisation with over a decade of knowledge and expertise in developing and implementing effective partnering implementation models for sustainable change at different levels and scales.

This paper, based on a report compiled by the EDP for the PCC in February 2023, outlines and recommends a Partnering Implementation Model (PIM). The PIM is an attempt to address the crisis of implementation in South Africa by providing a set of tools to lead and steer change, strengthen delivery processes, address trust deficits, and improve development outcomes. The PIM also focuses on building the required capabilities of actors from all sectors – state, market, community, civil society, labour, science and academia – to work together to achieve collective impact in low-trust, low-certainty, and low-agreement environments, where no single institution has the whole mandate or resources to resolve the problem on its own, where technical and managerial solutions are insufficient, and where there is a need for behaviour change (Gray, 1989; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Collective Impact Forum, 2016).

More specifically, the PIM supports partnering for action and improved results. The Just Transition PIM aims to make the Just Transition Implementation Plan (JTIP), currently under construction, more effective by taking into consideration and addressing implementation risks and by building partnering, adaptive management and learning capabilities. As a capability model, a PIM focuses on the capabilities required for collaborative leadership, partnering, and adaptive management and learning, both inside and outside of the state (McKee, et al, 2008; Heifetz, et al, 2009; Archer & Cameron, 2009; Rod & Fridjhon, 2016).

The PIM follows a systems approach, which incorporates relational systems intelligence into planning and implementation processes at national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels, thus establishing a basis for collaboration (HIVOS, 2015; De Vincente Lopez & Matti, 2016). The model enables participants – leaders, institutions, and organisations – to ‘see’ the system as a whole and their role in the system, to move beyond their own needs, mandates and priorities to work together to make change happen.

The PIM views citizens as potential implementers, not as passive bystanders in their own development (Sen, 1999). As such, it specifically challenges the instrumentalist ‘state-client’ model, which reduces citizens to recipients of state services, and instead views the state as an enabler of development, supporting community, civil society, business, scientific and research initiatives in support of a JT, rather than as necessarily the originator of all activities. The model prioritises building and sustaining relationships between the ‘bottom-up’

mobilising environment and the ‘top-down’ authorising environment.

The PIM provides a framework to help stakeholders across government and society develop a shared understanding of the problem, arrive at a shared vision of the future, and work together in practice despite differences (The Intersector Project, 2014). Future visions are, however, often contested, and it is less easy to get agreement in low-trust, fractured environments. One of the ways to deal affirmatively with difference is to focus not only on a shared vision for the JT, which can be contested and elusive, but on co-creating a common agenda for joint action. The PIM provides an understanding of competing and conflicting interests and power relations, as well as shared or overlapping interests which can be translated into a common agenda. A common agenda helps leaders, institutions and constituencies work together despite ideological, political, cultural or material differences and a lack of agreement, certainty and trust (Tennyson, 2011; Bollier, 2023).

The PIM prioritises stepping into action (Campbell, 2018). While dialogue is a critical part of the process, experience has shown that trust is built more quickly and easily in action. It is not necessary to try and get stakeholders with divergent views to agree on everything before anything can be done. Rather, a common agenda, constructed around a few things that participants may have in common at the start of a process creates the basis for joint action. Enabling stakeholders to act around a limited set of issues improves levels of trust and mutual accountability and provides the basis for partners to implement more ambitious plans together at a later stage.

The PIM emphasises the need for focused partnering efforts (EDP, 2022). Partnering and collaboration between multiple stakeholders is usually not effective unless it specifically addresses the needs of the partners in a focused way. Partnering processes that try to address a wide range of seemingly unrelated issues seldom result in action. It is more effective to focus partnering processes around a specific theme or area, or on resolving a particular problem.

The PIM promotes place and place-making and works simultaneously at different scales – household, neighbourhood, local, district, provincial and national (Campbell, 2018). It asks the question: in this place, with this local context, who needs to work together to make things happen?

The PIM is a mechanism to get from planning to action, through a process of collaboration, learning and adaptation. It eschews traditional linear and rigid planning, implementation and monitoring models in favour of adaptive programming and delivery, where participants can act together, and simultaneously pause, reflect and learn from new data and intelligence generated by the process at regular intervals, to adjust and adapt the plan to make it more implementable, feasible and legitimate. The PIM therefore

prioritises and supports individual and organisational learning techniques (Wylie, 2014), communities of practice, and learning and knowledge-sharing networks in support of programmes. It also supports monitoring and evaluation of complexity, and ways to measure the value-add of partnering processes and partnerships.

The PIM promotes the need for collaborative intermediary organisations (CIOs), independent partnering platforms, and facilitated changemaking, particularly in the case of low-trust, low-agreement environments, to assist potential partners to work together and to sustain partnerships.

Above all, the PIM prioritises the strengthening of relationships, between leaders, between spheres of government, between state and non-state actors, and between institutions, organisations and constituencies.

The PIM is not an implementation plan per se, but is integral to an implementation strategy, in that it identifies *who* needs to work together to implement the plan, and, more importantly, *how* different stakeholders can work together in practice. The 'who' and the 'how' are often neglected in planning processes, yet usually mean the difference between success and failure.

1. The crisis of implementation in South Africa

“Whatever the policy, it is of dubious value when we are incapable of implementing it. We are extremely poor at getting anything done because we don’t adequately cascade broad intentions into the next steps. These include appropriate designs of the solutions, operational policies, processes, procedures, and the careful selection of people.” *Ivan Pillay, former Acting & Deputy Commissioner of SARS¹, Helen Suzman Memorial Lecture, December 2022*

South Africa’s development landscape over the past 25 years is replete with strategies, frameworks, and plans, many of which have only been partially implemented, and some of which have never been implemented at all. While there are many reasons for this lack of implementation, including institutional self-interest, state capture, corruption, and a hollowing out of state capacity, a crucial factor is often the absence of an explicit partnering approach, which pays attention to *who* needs to work together to get things done, and *how* state and non-state actors can work together in practice.

Likewise, there is a crisis of implementation in the global landscape. Nations have been negotiating responses to climate change for over 30 years, since broad agreement was reached on the vision and principles of an international framework to combat climate change. Entrenched vested interests, North-South power dynamics, common but differentiated responsibilities, impact and risk, and a global economic system that is difficult to change have all played their part in limiting action and implementation.

Ivan Pillay, former Acting and Deputy Commissioner of SARS points out that South Africa faces both a crisis of political legitimacy, as well as deep distrust of state institutions, exacerbated by state capture: “...very few people have confidence in the performance of institutions of state to deliver on their mandate and perform the duties assigned to them under the constitution, and relevant legislation. And this mistrust of the state was greatly aggravated by ‘State Capture’. Numerous institutions have been affected by state capture in that many of the services which departments of state were supposed to deliver were put out to tender and in the process of selecting service providers, billions of rand in fraud was committed and monies were wasted and lost without the goods that were needed being provided” (Pillay, 2022).

Pillay also points to the lack of a common agenda: “The three major parts of society – government, the private sector and civil society – are not aligned. They do not share agendas or have a common agenda. With regard to the state and business – each is asking the other to do something the other cannot do.”

This means that firstly, for a JTIP to be effective, it needs to address issues of legitimacy, trust, ethical conduct, and relational qualities such as dignity, solidarity, responsibility and freedom.

¹ SARS – South African Revenue Service

Secondly, given the lack of state capacity, the JTIP cannot assume that once the necessary policies are in place, even with the required funding, they will be executed. Rather, the JTIP itself must be part of the process of rebuilding a capable state and capable society, including state capabilities to partner with itself and with non-state actors.

Thirdly, the JTIP needs to explicitly focus on how to develop a common agenda for joint action, within the state, and between the state and non-state actors.

The PCC's JTF already identifies some of the implementation risks in South Africa, including a weak and ineffective state, poor coordination and alignment, short-termism, and lack of trust in institutions. Further implementation risks can be categorised as follows:

Lack of shared vision and societal consensus

Centuries of racial oppression and disempowerment, including slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, with the destruction of heritage, culture and livelihoods, and an assault on human dignity, has resulted historically in a low-trust, low-agreement environment in South Africa, making it difficult to achieve a shared vision and societal consensus and cohesion.

These historical outcomes have been exacerbated by recent rampant corruption and state capture, a culture of impunity and cover-up, and an overall lack of accountability, increasing societal anger, cynicism, resignation and despair. Poorly designed, top-down and ineffective community engagement processes have added to levels of mistrust. Achieving a shared vision is made more difficult when the political centre of government is itself often divided on key policy issues.

Decades of misinformation about climate change at a global scale have played into existing fault lines in South Africa and created suspicions over the intentions behind decoupling the economy from fossil fuel use. Very real concerns that 'the North' has caused the problem that 'the South' must now pay for, further complicate efforts to reach societal consensus.

Decline in state effectiveness

The South African state has been weakened through the loss of public-sector skills, a culture of suspicion and control flowing from state capture, loss of revenue, collapse of key institutions, political uncertainty, power struggles and competing interests. Real spending on core public services (health care, basic education, criminal justice) has declined over the past decade, while demand for these services is growing. As Michael Sachs points out, over the last decade, there has been a chronic and deepening erosion of the resource base on which public services depend (Sachs et al, 2022). Smaller budgets will reduce the reach of services and deepen inequality. The state has been further weakened by 'siloism' and 'mandatism', a lack of transparency and accountability, poor coordination, alignment, and sequencing, and a system of compliance auditing with perverse outcomes, resulting in accounting officers in the public sector that are risk avoiders, not problem solvers.

Local government crisis

At the local level, closest to communities most affected by climate change, many municipalities are in various states of dysfunctionality. This is due, amongst other things, to fragile and uncertain local government coalitions in hung municipalities, inexperienced councillors, a harsh 'winner-takes-all' political culture resulting in an inability of those in political power to work with those on opposition benches, i.e., bipartisanship, municipal debt, and fragmented governance systems affecting key delivery systems, for example, energy, water, food, transport, and human settlements.

Corruption and state capture

Despite more recent attempts to act on corruption, many drivers of corruption are still entrenched in political and business systems, and society at large. In particular, the merger of criminal and political networks to crowd out legitimate businesses in certain sectors, and the existence of sophisticated international and local criminal syndicates make it difficult to establish norms and standards that are consistent with the Constitution.

Violence and instability

High levels of homicide, violence against women and children, xenophobic attitudes, lawlessness, theft and destruction of public and private property, and the existence of many 'no-go' zones for community, political and business activities, render the delivery of conventional development programmes ineffective.

Volatile, inflationary, contracting economy, with rising poverty and inequality

A low-growth carbon-based economy with unequal benefits and exclusion, an unemployment crisis, particularly for young people, high levels of very visible inequality, underpinned by a persistent catastrophic energy crisis and a growing water crisis, means that achieving the 'just' objectives of a JTIP will be difficult.

Examples of JT-specific implementation problems and challenges

The potential priority interventions listed in the JTF include responding to (i) the need to shift to cleaner and more competitive generation technologies and energy transition; and (ii) coal mining and coal-based electricity plants continue to downsize and retire (PCC 2022, JTF).

The coal value chain has not been exempt from corruption and sabotage, which poses a specific threat to the JT. Examples reported in the media include good quality coal being swapped for poor quality after it has been paid for and before it is delivered at a power plant, fuel paid for but not delivered, coal containing pieces of metal and rubble that damage plants, and the sharing of illicit profits gained through cutting transportation costs between companies awarded a tender and those operating mines closer to power plants.

There are strong indications that this is organised crime (see for example McKay, 2022; Naidoo, 2022; Steyn, 2022; and IOL, 2023).

In Mpumalanga, it can be difficult to identify who owns mineral rights on a specific area of land. Even the landowner might not be aware that mineral rights have been given. Because mineral rights trump land rights, a renewable energy project is at risk if it only reaches agreement with a landowner to install generation capacity. *“A private wind company wanting to install 1000MW has discovered that mining rights exist of which the landowner was not aware, and they are unable to ascertain who to speak to in order to ensure ongoing access to surface rights”* (Participant interview). This is not an isolated incident and requires a specific partnering solution at scale to solve.

Although Eskom conducted a detailed stakeholder plan for decommissioning Komati power station, participants expressed their views that the decommissioning is a missed opportunity - and creates a risk of back-lash against the JT and decarbonisation of the economy. *“The repurposing of Komati power station is already happening, but communities and even people who are working at Komati power station are not aware of what’s happening; they were never consulted, even though there is a detailed stakeholder plan that says people were consulted”* (Participant interview).

2. Barriers to partnering for implementation in South Africa

The process and practice of partnering, adaptive management and learning deals with navigating and managing complexity, especially in low-certainty, low-agreement environments (EDP, 2022). Partnering aims to equip leaders and institutions across diverse sectors with practical tools to collaborate in meaningful and strategic ways. Partnering is not an end in itself, but a means towards achieving collective impact and improved development outcomes, as well as solving complex problems. In other words, partnering is about improved action and implementation and more enduring results (Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Thompson, 2016; The Partnering Initiative, 2017).

Partnering is based on sharing risks and rewards and has the potential to strengthen relationships, build trust and foster mutual accountability between partners. As such, it is a necessary antidote to inefficient and ineffective hierarchical 'command and control' leadership attitudes and behaviours (Heifetz, et al, 2009; Archer & Cameron, 2017).

Partnering can stretch scarce resources further by blending the contributions of different institutions and sectors. Collaborative and adaptive management, which focuses on agile and adaptive programming and delivery processes, and 'learning by doing' makes planning, budgeting and implementation cycles more effective. Furthermore, partnering can sustain impact by focusing on relationships and improving trust in the system.

Managing this complicated transition process in South Africa takes place under exceptionally difficult circumstances, with many implementation risks, and will require the greatest level of coordinated effort from all parts of the state and society. However, to do this, existing barriers to partnering and collaboration need to be addressed, for example:

Lack of collaborative leadership

Experience has shown that having the 'right' leadership is critical to the success of any plan. Many departments, organisations and institutions in South Africa, in both state and society, have leaders that favour 'command-and-control' attitudes and behaviours, making collaboration difficult. In particular, the unwillingness of many party-political leaders to genuinely work together even during times of crisis means that collaborative leadership is seldom role-modelled. There are many instances of competitive behaviours, territorialism, and siloed thinking, not just in government departments, but also in business, universities, community organisations and organised civil society. This includes narrow 'mandatism' and an inability to see the wider system, and particularly at municipal level, a 'race to the bottom' territorial competition for revenue, land uses, jobs, and investments, where municipal boundaries become borders.

State systems, structures and cultures that are not fit for purpose

Over the past 25 years, the South African state, within all three spheres of government, has developed systems, structures and cultures that run counter to a collaborative, adaptive and learning approach. These include rigid and fixed planning, implementation, and monitoring systems, with an inability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, inefficient hierarchies, siloes and compartmentalisation, fuzzy mandates (including competing and overlapping mandates, and unfunded mandates), reporting requirements that don't add value, and inflexible and protracted procurement, human resource, and contracting systems.

“Legislation, regulations, and policies would be the biggest enablers of a just transition. But those are written from a top-down approach and do not support the bottom-up approach. If we still have the legislation as we have it, we will still have missing regulatory issues” (Participant interview).

The concept of ‘good governance’ has been reduced to ‘clean audits’. This has resulted in an inwards-facing system of ‘government for government’, with public sector accountability inwards and upwards to auditors and politicians rather than outwards and downwards to communities and social partners. There are typically few spaces or incentives to act innovatively and take risks, with low institutional learning and adaptation capabilities.

“Getting resources to local people is a huge obstacle- people are living below the poverty line, poor or no access to basic services like water, health, road infrastructure, lack of dignified sanitation” (Participant interview).

Relational challenges

Specific relational challenges include patterns of poor engagement between government and non-government stakeholders, unresponsiveness to citizen- and business-led initiatives, and negative perceptions and hostile attitudes within parts of the state towards the role of business, civil society, and scientists/ academics.

“Communities were supportive and willing to engage in the two engagements convened by the PCC, but few commissioners attended, no ministers were present, and Sasol and Eskom officials did not attend” (Participant interview).

“People are already dealing with the impacts of existing problems such as unemployment, corruption, lack of transparency from the government, huge loss of trust, etc. People are also dealing with the betrayal of not having been properly prepared for the JT while surviving the above issues” (Participant interview).

“The impacted people don't even understand or know the definition of ‘just transition. There should be documents written in the native languages for people on the ground to easily understand the JT concept” (Participant interview).

An 'effective and implementable' plan for the JT therefore needs, at its core, to deal with navigating and managing complexity, especially in conflictual and unstable environments, where technical and managerial solutions are insufficient, where history, memory, identity and culture matter, and where there is a need for behaviour change, both at the level of leaders and institutions, and amongst citizens and society. This requires leaders and institutions to use collaboration, learning, adaptation and complexity-aware monitoring tools, and implementation-intense processes. There is a need to be able to deal affirmatively with difference, through the achievement of a shared vision and a common agenda for joint action.

3. Who needs to work together to make the JT happen?

The PIM is first and foremost a systems approach, which incorporates regular system and stakeholder analysis into planning and implementation processes, at national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels, thus establishing a basis for collaboration (Drimie, et al, 2018; Boraine, 2022). The model enables participants, which include leaders, institutions and organisations to ‘see’ the system as a whole and their role in the system, to move beyond their own needs, mandates and priorities to work together to make change happen.

A PIM views the whole of society as potential implementers, not as passive bystanders in their own development (Sen, 1999; Cels et al, 2012; Harvard Kennedy School, 2014). As such, it specifically challenges the ‘state-client’ model, which reduces citizens to recipients of state services, and instead views the state as an enabler of development, supporting community-, civil society-, business-, scientific- and research-led initiatives in support of a JT, rather than as the originator of all activities. It therefore focuses on building and sustaining relationships between the ‘bottom-up’ mobilising environment and the ‘top-down’ authorising environment (Andrews, et al, 2017; Campbell, 2018).

The service provider appointed by the PCC to compile the JTIP will be required to conduct a stakeholder analysis, to identify the key sectors, social partners, and implementing agencies that will be integral to the success of the JTIP, as well as the key constituencies and actors that need to be consulted in the process of drawing up the plan. Several reports have already done intensive stakeholder mapping, which the JTIP can build on, for example:

Supporting the JT in South Africa report by the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) (2020)

The CIF conducted a thorough stakeholder analysis of the JT space in South Africa, which included international organisations, financial institutions, climate funds, government, research institutions and centres, non-governmental organisations, organised industry and business, and banks and development finance institution (DFIs). This analysis is presented in the following [link](#).

Governance and the Just Transition: policy brief by Neva Makgetla (2021)

Makgetla conducted a detailed stakeholder mapping emphasising the allocation of JT functions or responsibilities between spheres of government (national, provincial, and local municipalities). However, the specific responsibilities of civil society organisations, intermediary organisations, businesses, etc are missing.

Stakeholder engagement plan for the shutdown and repurposing of Komati power station, Urban-Econ Development Economists & Urban-Econ: NIKELA (2022)

Urban-Econ Development Economists & Urban-Econ: NIKELA conducted a detailed stakeholder analysis of the stakeholders, vulnerable groups and other interested parties directly affected by the repurposing of Komati power station. The report further categorised stakeholders according to their levels of interest in and influence over the E-JET Plan.

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of the JTIP (John Snow Inc, 2012; Drimie, et al, 2018). This process should be incorporated at the beginning stages of implementation and continue for the duration of the transition. It should not be done haphazardly. Considering the complexity of a JT with many role players and projects, engaging with existing and potential stakeholders should be done in a considered manner. It is important, for maximum impact, that the engagement process takes partners' needs into account and accommodates both practical and strategic considerations.

The reasons for developing a formal engagement strategy at multiple scales include:

- Ensuring that contact with key stakeholders, funders and sponsors is maintained in a structured and considered way.
- Creating consensus on who the key partners for the planning process are.
- Developing a shared list of priority partners who require a systematic, organised engagement framework.
- Avoiding duplication in engagement activities.
- Ensuring that there is clarity and consensus on the messages being conveyed during these engagements.
- Avoiding the omission of key messages during engagements.
- Ensuring that any reporting or engagement requirements for funders or supporters are met.

Specifically, there is a need to move beyond a conventional 'participation' approach to a 'partnering' approach, and to foster two-way relationships of trust and respect. The EDP's partnering framework provides practical tools that can be valuable aids to JT partnering activities, such as shared problem understanding, governance-delivery, and the establishment of mutual accountability (EDP, 2022).

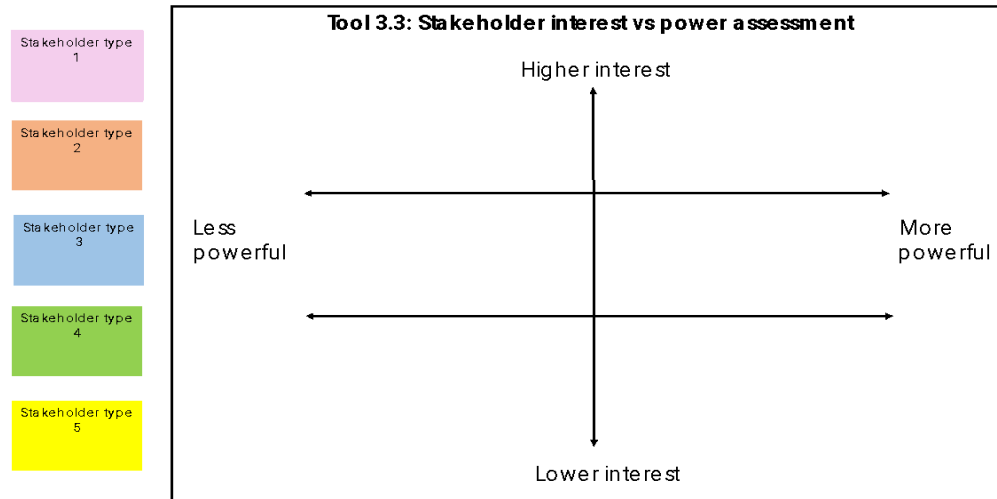
Examples of these types of tools include:

Interest and influence analysis

The JT is a complex space with many different role-players and different levels of interest, influence, and power. It is therefore critical that the JTIP identifies different stakeholders (the political and administrative structures within the organisations seeking to implement actions or change; stakeholders across the spheres of government; external stakeholders such as business, civil society, academic, and research partners) and the level of interest, influence and power that they might have to implement the JT.

This can be captured in an 'interest and influence' diagram, as follows:

Figure 1. Stakeholder types and their interest and influence



Source: The authors

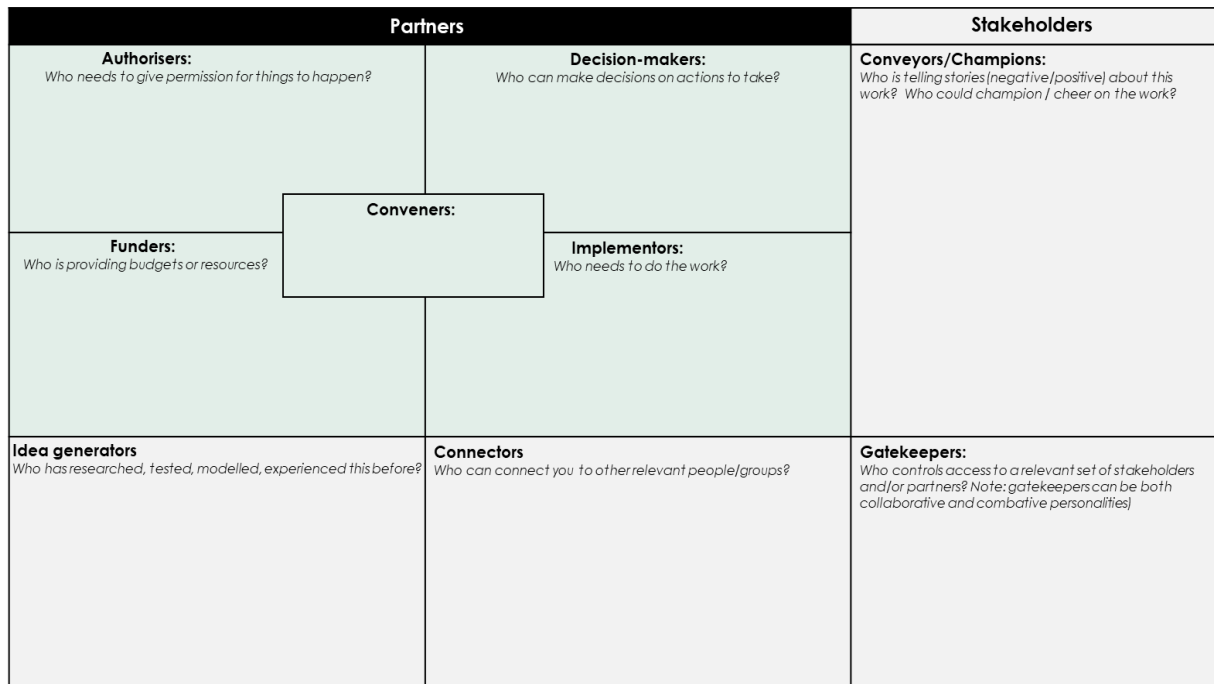
Partner versus stakeholder identification tool

This tool enables organisations to distinguish between partners and stakeholders, as follows:

- Partners: individuals, departments or organisations who are directly involved in the work and can be directly involved in co-implementation.
- Stakeholders: individuals, groups, departments or organisations who have an interest in the work because it will affect them in some way, either positively or negatively. They are not necessarily formally involved but must be considered and consulted.

The chart below is a tool for mapping the role of partners vs. stakeholders:

Figure 2. Partner versus stakeholder identification diagram

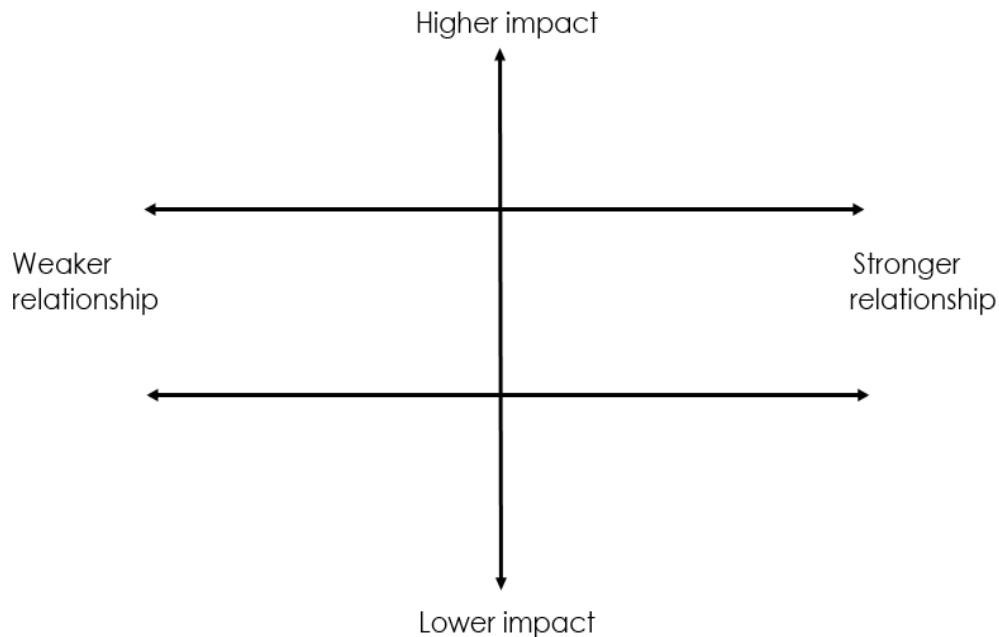


Source: The authors

Stakeholder importance and relationship assessment tool

This tool assesses the existing and potential stakeholders and partners in terms of their impact on the project and the strength of the relationship. Importantly, in complex environments such as the JT, where there are not enough resources or capacity to engage extensively with all stakeholders, it prioritises those who are very important, but with whom a strong relationship does not exist. The stakeholders should be assessed both for their importance to the planning process, and for the strength of the relationship between them and the implementation team. This assessment can be completed using the stakeholder assessment grid below:

Figure 3. Stakeholder importance and relationship assessment



Source: The authors

Using a collaborative approach, stakeholders can be plotted on this grid, with the results used as follows:

- Stakeholders in the top left corner are the highest priority in terms of engagement. These are role-players who are essential to the planning process, but with whom there is not yet a strong relationship. Building these relationships should be a key focus.
- Stakeholders in the top right corner are of equal importance, but an existing strong relationship with them indicates that a less intense engagement approach is required for these entities. These are, however, critical relationships to maintain.
- Stakeholders in the lower left and right corner should not be ignored. However, in a resource-constrained environment, engagements with these partners could be less frequent or of shorter duration, for example, than with the more important partners.
- This grid can also be used to track progress in the planning team's engagement strategy over time. It provides a snapshot of the partnering landscape, and comparing similar analyses a year apart, for example, can indicate where the engagement strategy has yielded results.

Drawing up an engagement strategy plan

Once the key stakeholders in the JT have been identified and prioritised, a plan for strategic engagements needs to be drawn up by the service provider. This can take the form of a stakeholder engagement matrix, as follows:

Figure 4. Drawing up an engagement strategy plan

Who do we need to engage? (Identification)	Why do we need to engage them? (Diagnosis)	How often do we need to engage them? (Strategy)	Who will engage them? (Strategy)	How will we engage them? (Method)	What are we hoping to achieve from this? (Intended impact)

Source: The authors

Once the stakeholders and partners have been identified, one has a shared understanding of what needs to be done, who has an interest in the work, and the roles and responsibilities of the various partners.

4. Working together in practice for collective impact

Partnering and collaboration is key to a successful implementation process, however implementation does not happen on its own. When dealing with complex problems such as the JT, solutions are usually only able to be implemented through the combined actions of a variety of people with different levels of authority, expertise, and resources. Without collaboration, even the best plan remains just that: something developed in isolation with no diversity of input, and – crucially – little or no co-implementation.

Work with a shared vision and common agenda for joint action

The PIM is a framework to help stakeholders across government and society to work together in practice despite differences. It helps stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the problem and arrive at a shared vision of the future. However, future visions are often contested, and it is not always easy to get agreement in a low-trust, fractured environment.

The PIM can provide an understanding of competing and conflicting interests and power relations, and the identification of shared, hidden or overlapping interests, which can be translated into a possible common agenda. A common agenda can therefore help leaders, institutions and constituencies work together despite ideological, political, cultural or material differences, and a lack of trust.

Is there a shared vision for the JT? An agreement that the JT is underpinned by distributive, restorative and procedural justice has been signed off at the highest political level, namely Cabinet, and by key social partners in business, civil society and the trade unions. Likewise, there is high-level agreement on the definition of the JT, which includes a vision of a quality life for all South Africans, net-zero emissions, adaptive capacity, climate resilience and decentralised diversely owned renewable energy systems.

From interviews conducted for this report, it emerged that the shared vision for South Africa is captured nominally in the Cabinet-approved JTF, while consensus or alignment around this vision still needs to be tested.

Although the JT is responding primarily to the crisis of climate change, it also addresses the interrelated crises of energy, including load shedding and Eskom's debt; the economy, including low-growth and unemployment; and a broader environmental crisis including water availability, land degradation and biodiversity loss (PCC, 2022). However, the priority given to these crises differs amongst actors: *“At the national level, it is about people-centeredness, fairness, and inclusiveness. In Mpumalanga, however, it is more about economic development, growth, and diversification. At a district level, where 40% of people depend on coal, their focus is more on post-coal options than on transition as a whole”* (Participant interview).

Yet, while there is political agreement – at least on paper – around the elements of a common vision, participants felt that this hasn't necessarily translated into a common understanding or practices at the level of policy choices or implementation amongst state and non-state actors: *"Workers also have their own vision of what they want to see in the JT, and this is mostly about the jobs they are about to lose and the need for a proper plan for the new jobs. Workers are concerned about what is going to happen to their jobs. They don't see any risks plans. They don't see any opportunities that would still render them employed. All they see and fear is a wave of mass unemployment"* (Participant interview).

"The outcome for ordinary people would be, how do we improve lives? How do I have the kind of electricity that is neither too expensive for me to afford or the type of electricity that doesn't have externalized cost to my health. For business it may be what are the opportunities for them to be still able to profit from this transition" (Participant interview).

Is there a common agenda that can result in joint action?

One of the ways to deal affirmatively with difference is to focus not just on a shared vision for the JT, which can be contested and elusive, but on co-creating a common agenda that results in joint action. For example, during the interviews conducted for this report, participants indicated that the consensus around the JT vision translates into a high-level common agenda to decarbonise the economy and create jobs or livelihood opportunities.

"Labour, business, society, and others agree that JT must be conducted in an orderly rather than chaotic manner; it must preserve more jobs rather than lose them. The need for energy security and training (skills development) is also not controversial" (Participant interview).

"There's been a lot of discussion on how renewable energy can create opportunities for new employment. There is some sort of understanding, but the language has not been very clear, and the process and the result are not clear" (Participant interview).

Participants reported divergence around the timing, scale and prioritisation of the transition, as well as *how* it will happen, including technology choices and financing, which represents a broader divergence on the kind of economic transformation that is envisaged. Disagreements also reflect deep levels of mistrust between social partners – whether government, business, civil society or organised labour: *"There are disagreements around the pace of the shift to renewable energy and a big disagreement on the role of gas in the transition (unclear on the energy mix; lack of clarity on gas; decommission timeline; Eskom's role in the future energy structure). Business representation on PCC is dominated by corporations, fossil fuel industry, and the minerals council, but there are no representatives from the renewable energy industry and small businesses"* (Participant interview).

The interviews conducted and related literature reveal that there are three main interest groups, which advocate three different pathways. The groups and pathways are not mutually exclusive and could have overlapping or competing agendas. The first grouping supports a slow transition away from coal, which includes the use of gas and nuclear energy – what the finance minister refers to as "old reliable technologies". The second supports

transformation towards inclusive small-scale initiatives, renewable energy and circular economies that stay within ecological boundaries. The third can be termed eco-modernisation, which is characterised by decarbonisation and may not include any structural changes to power and the economy.

Interviewees also expressed their views that on the ground there are simultaneously signs of transition away from fossil fuels, of small-scale adaptation interventions, and of business as usual: *“Renewable energy generation is increasing at different scales from household solar to wind farms; and coal mines continue to proliferate, even into strategic water source areas”* (Participant interview).

These actions reflect some of the competing interest groups behind the shared vision and high-level common agenda. The high-level consensus will shatter if these interests are not acknowledged.

It should also be noted that the prominence given to the Just Energy Transition (JET) through financial pledges from the International Partners Group (IPG) has the potential to eclipse or de-prioritise other key aspects of the JT, including adaptation and agriculture. This is an example of the role of financing and how it can shift priorities and what constitutes a common agenda. It also has the potential to disrupt high-level consensus and skew power relations between organisations and stakeholders that need to work together.

Shifting from planning to action

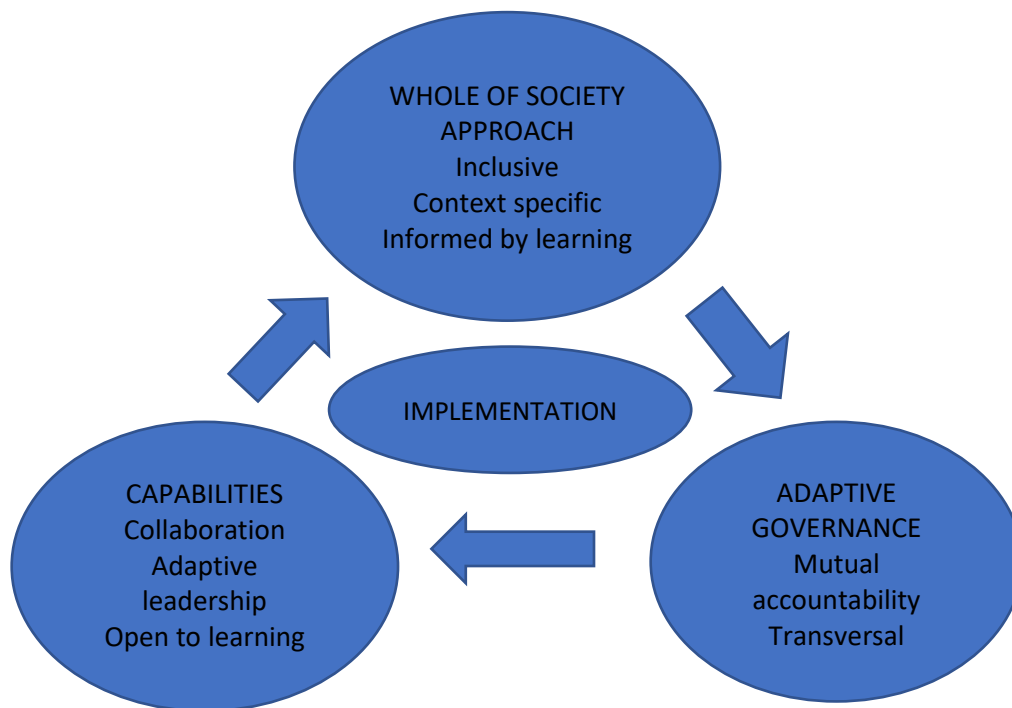
The PIM prioritises stepping into action. Experience has shown that trust is built more quickly and easily in action. Thus, while dialogue is a necessary part of the process, the quicker that partners, or potential partners, can agree to step into action, the better. A common agenda, based on only one or two things that participants have in common at the start of a process, creates the basis for joint action. It is therefore not necessary to try and get stakeholders with divergent views to agree on everything before anything can be done. Rather, the PIM focuses on helping stakeholders to act around a limited set of issues to improve levels of trust and mutual accountability, which then provides the basis for partners to implement more ambitious plans together at a later stage.

The PIM is also about focussed effort. Partnering with multiple stakeholders is usually not very effective unless it can specifically address the needs of the partners in a focused way. Partnering processes that try to address a wide range of seemingly unrelated issues seldom result in action. It is usually more effective to focus a partnering process around a specific theme, or on resolving a particular problem.

The experience has also shown that stepping into action requires a collaborative approach. However, collaboration doesn't happen without strong intention and political will, clear communication, the definition of roles, accountability structures, and the necessary collaborative behaviour. It is vital to remember that humans are responsible for implementing any plan, so their behaviour can support or block any plan, despite its logic. Therefore, the planning of any project needs people's buy-in.

For this reason, to effectively implement a plan, one needs to consider how people work together. This requires a whole-of-society (including whole-of-government) approach, a particular set of capabilities and behaviours which are supported by adaptive governance and mutual accountability (Figure 5).

Figure 5. A whole-of-society approach, partnering capabilities and adaptive governance are all essential for leading and implementing change



A whole-of-society approach

A whole-of-society approach places value on inclusion and input from all sectors. South Africa's Constitution highlights the need for a citizen-centric, whole-of-society approach to development, that incorporates partnering and collaboration across government spheres and in partnership with citizens. This approach should inform all government decisions, especially with regard to the JT, which is centred on social inclusion.

In doing so several factors must be considered, which include:

Identifying stakeholders and developing trusted relationships

A whole-of-society approach demands that a diverse range of stakeholders are invited to participate in the process of co-design and mutual learning and are made to feel welcome and valued. Stakeholder mapping to identify stakeholders will help to find the right people to invite into the process. Understanding the needs of each stakeholder will build relationships that move into the space of mutual support and collaboration, which in turn will result in a greater chance of successful implementation.

“One of the important principles of stakeholder engagement is that it is important to build relationships so that trust, communication, and change can happen” (Participant interview.)

Context specific solutions

A whole-of-society approach acknowledges that solutions applied in other parts of the world are not necessarily the best option in South Africa. Interview participants indicated that relying on international examples that worked elsewhere will not necessarily be applicable in South Africa.

“We use international examples like Germany and Canada, yet those countries are totally different from South Africa; they did not have issues like a high unemployment rate, service delivery issues, etc. Local knowledge should be recognised and should inform any proposed action” (Participant interview).

Iterative process of learning and adapting

A collaborative process of learning and adaptation accepts that many things are unknown at the start of a process, and that through engaging with partners and learning from practice the way forward becomes clearer. For example, an intermediary organisation that runs training for, and provides ongoing support to, municipalities on embedded generation found that *“the process of learning, trust-building and getting to know each other is key. Municipal officials learn from each other. Someone will raise an issue or question on a WhatsApp group and others will respond” (Participant interview).*

Co-design

Any collaborative process needs to be co-designed by the partners and stakeholders to ensure the relevance of the process and the buy-in of the stakeholders. This will ensure a greater chance of successful implementation. Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process, not a tick-boxing exercise. As emphasised in Mpumalanga, for the JTIP to be successful, decision makers, particularly Ministers, Mayors, government department officials, and representatives from Sasol and Eskom should be involved in engagements.

“We need all the departments to come and present their transition plans so that we can work together. What is the plan of shutting jobs down before others created, new jobs might be in short term and in other provinces what’s the plan for permanent employment and moving people from their homes” (Participant, PCC consultative meeting, Mpumalanga, 2022).

Developing the right capabilities for leading and implementing change

A PIM is a capability model which focuses on the capabilities required inside and outside of the state for collaborative leadership, adaptive management and learning, as well as institutional culture change and the creation of intelligent teams. A PIM also prioritises the

strengthening of relationships, between leaders, between spheres of government, between state and non-state actors, and between institutions, organisations and constituencies.

Collaboration, learning and adaptation

The PCC has commissioned work on Climate Resilience Development Pathways, which provide a useful framing for integrating collaboration, learning and adaptation into the JT (Taylor, 2022). A PIM is a mechanism to get from planning to action, through a process of collaboration, learning and adaptation. A PIM eschews traditional linear and rigid planning, implementation and monitoring models in favour of adaptive programming and delivery, where participants are able to take action together, and, on a regular basis, to pause, reflect and learn from new data and intelligence generated by the process, and to adjust and adapt the plan to make it more implementable, feasible and legitimate.

The PIM therefore prioritises and supports individual and organisational learning techniques, and communities of practices and learning and knowledge-sharing networks in support of programmes. The PIM also looks at complexity monitoring and evaluation, and ways to measure the value-add of partnering processes and partnerships.

Build on partnering processes already underway

Despite divergence on the kind of economic transformation that is envisaged as outlined above, there is a lot of work being done on the JT. There are many ideas, plans, projects and funds from public sector, private sector and civil society and there are examples of partnering happening within and between different sectors at national, provincial and local levels (For example, see Drimie et al, 2018; Triologue, 2021; WRC, 2022; WRC, EDP & CST, 2023).

Partnerships are a crucial part of transformation and are essential to finding and implementing solutions to the complex socio-economic challenges facing society. Within the JT, there are several ongoing partnerships that perform a range of essential functions: from contributing to new policies, facilitating local climate action by creating access to data, technology and funding, to providing public infrastructure, demonstration projects and introducing technologies, and supporting technology development.

Some partnerships or platforms include:

- The LAC Open Agenda is an important document and was distributed widely with LAC members who are part of the PCC.
- The Climate Justice Coalition (CJC) is growing and includes labour. They have done work on a 'green' new Eskom.
- Assaf has a JT forum to advise scientists, and modelers have been important in JT.
- LAC has been working closely with communications activists that attend PCC meetings in Mpumalanga and Limpopo. They have set up a climate action group.
- Support to municipalities for embedded generation.

5. Role of collaborative intermediary organisations

The PIM emphasises the benefits of collaborative intermediary organisations (CIOs) and independent partnering platforms, particularly in the case of low-trust, low-agreement environments, to assist partners and stakeholders to work together (Hamann & April, 2013; Crespin & Moser, 2018). CIOs, which deliberately work in the 'in-between' spaces, rather than from positions of representation and power, can support change processes in several ways:

- Working in-between different sectors - government, business, labour, community, civil society, education and research - to align efforts and promote collective impact
- Working in-between long-term strategy and short-term actions, to align means and ends
- Providing independent partnering platforms to help stakeholders to find each other in low-trust, low-agreement environments
- Carrying out activities between stakeholder meetings/ dialogues, to give effect to agreements, to build mutual accountability between the partners and to sustain consultative and participative processes
- Working in-between the 'top-down' authorising environment and the 'bottom-up' mobilising environment to improve relationships and to create a more enabling environment for societal agency
- Working to integrate design and planning with adaptive programming and delivery processes

Collaborative intermediaries can help deliver partnering processes and partnerships at different scales - street, neighbourhood, precinct, ward, municipal, regional, and national. An intermediary can be used to sustain stakeholder motivation and commitment. When the benefits of a collaboration are not immediately obvious, it takes time and effort to maintain stakeholder motivation. A CIO can play the role of a 'backbone' organisation that convenes difficult processes in contested terrain, informs stakeholders of progress and ensures that the right people remain as partners and stakeholders.

There are several intermediary organisations working in the JT space, for example, the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency (MGCA). The MGCA, supported by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism Mpumalanga (DEDT) and GreenCape focuses on fostering collaboration within Mpumalanga to build the green economy in the province. The cluster works at the interface between business, government, and academia to identify and remove barriers to an economically viable green economy catalysing their uptake to enable the region and its citizens to prosper. The cluster contributes to the JT by engaging stakeholders and producing market intelligence for energy, water, agriculture and circular economy.

The PCC itself is a multi-stakeholder body established by the President of the Republic of South Africa "to advise on the country's climate change response and pathways to a low-carbon climate-resilient economy and society" (PCC, 2022).

Since its establishment, the PCC has been actively playing a critical role in convening social partners, engaging with stakeholders, and building trust and relationships. Although the PCC includes key political players and social partners, not all stakeholders are aligned with the JT in practice. This reaffirms the critical importance of the PCC in building consensus and mobilising action. The PCC is well-positioned to continue to play an intermediary role in this space. As such, the PCC needs to strengthen its capacity and plans to build consensus, act in-between meetings and consultations, ensure mutual accountability, and provide guidance on the development of implementation plans.

Interviewees felt that the PCC's role as an 'intermediary organisation' in building a common agenda and sustaining joint action with stakeholders would be strengthened if it were institutionalised and given statutory status, as proposed in the Climate Change Bill. However, it is not yet clear when - or if - the bill² will be finalised and promulgated as an Act.

"To date the PCC has been able to successfully mobilise the science through a process of stakeholder engagement. However, the future role of PCC in implementation is not clear. It could potentially play a collaborative intermediary role, but it will not be responsible for direct implementation" (Participant interview).

Intermediary case study: The Social Employment Fund (SEF)

The Social Employment Fund (SEF) is a Presidential employment initiative launched in 2022 to create public employment opportunities to deliver social value in communities across South Africa. The initiative enables 28 civil society organisations, working on development in urban and rural areas across all nine provinces, to work in partnership with grassroots and community-based partners to recruit and train unemployed people to deliver social value such as teaching arts in schools, early childhood development, community safety and GBV shelters, urban and rural food security, greening and environment, health and care services, etc.

The SEF multiplies social value in communities through a collaborative partnership between the government, contracted civil society organisations known as Strategic Implementing Partners (SIPs), grassroots community-based organisations and networks that collaborate with SIPs to implement the SEF, and 50 000 participants who are paid for the social value creating activities that they provide under SEF-funded programmes.

² Currently, the Climate Change Bill, dated 11 October 2021 states that under Section 10 (1) the President may establish a Presidential Climate Commission and appoint not more than 30 members comprising representatives of government, organised labour, civil society and business to advise on the Republic's climate change response, the mitigation of climate change impacts and adaptation to the effects of climate change towards the attainment of the just transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society, (2) The members of the Presidential Climate Commission may be appointed for a period determined by the President, (3) The Presidential Climate Commission is chaired by the President, (4) The Department is responsible for providing administrative and secretariat support services to the Commission, (5) The Presidential Climate Commission may determine its own procedures to be followed at its meetings.

SIPs are in the best position to implement the SEF since they have long-standing relationships with community organisations and networks, but at the same time have robust enough governance and administrative systems to contract with government. SIPs as intermediaries are therefore enhancing the ability of the public sector to channel resources into the informal and grassroots programmes where the need is greatest, but where the public sector struggles to resource because of regulatory compliance requirements.

Over and above the direct transfer of resources to unemployed participants, the value of work experience and psycho-social impact for participants, and improved capabilities and skills, the additional value-add and impact of the SEF programme, utilising this top-down, bottom-up intermediation model, has become clear:

- Creation of social value and public benefit, and the deepening of social capital, in poor and vulnerable communities. Every SIP has reported a massive upscaling of their delivery programmes.
- Value multiplier through the system: 1 National Fund, administered by the IDC x 28 SIPs x 100s of grassroots and informal organisations and networks x 50 000 participants in year one of the programme.
- Blended finance between public sector funding, SIPs own funds and resources, resources of grassroots and informal structures, private donors, and sponsors.
- The SEF model has deliberately encouraged a partnering approach: 1) between SIPs, 2) between SIPs and grassroots and informal structures, and 3) between SIPs and government which has generated collective impact, as well as enhanced social and community resilience through strengthened relationships.
- Creating spaces and opportunities for innovation has led to new ways of doing things.

The SEF delivery model has been further enhanced by the establishment of a Social Employment Support and Learning Network (SEN), which delivers the following benefits to SEF partners:

- Information sharing and support for bilateral connection, communication and collaboration between SIPs.
- Structured peer to peer learning, which has accelerated implementation and has helped more-resourced SIPs to support those with less resources.
- Joint problem solving between programme partners.
- Co-design of more effective monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Enhanced collaboration between SIPs in the same geographic area and in the same sector.
- Two-way feedback loops between SIPs and the IDC, which has allowed government partners to adjust, adapt and improve the SEF programme on a continuous basis, and SIPs to be more responsive to governance and administrative requirements.
- Case studies on specific SIP programmes, allowing for deeper insights and lessons to emerge.
- Joint communication of SEF achievements.

While the SEF programme has worked successfully in the field of public employment, there is no reason why the same model could not be utilised for a range of programmes initiated through the JTIP. For further details, see [The role of the Social Employment Network in implementing the Social Employment Fund](#)³, and [Social Employment Fund](#)⁴.

³ <https://wcedp.co.za/social-employment-network/>

⁴ <https://idc.co.za/sef/>

6. Resources and financing

How to finance the JT is the subject of many research papers, opinion pieces and international negotiations. A policy brief by Lowitt (2021) on Finance and the JT, argues that it is important to distinguish between JT finance and climate finance, and that projects with higher JT ambitions are less likely to be funded by the existing financial system. The JTF outlines the types of sums needed, as well as how capital can be mobilised. For the JET alone, the JET-IP outlines R1.5-trillion of investment needed in the electricity, electric vehicle and green hydrogen sectors over the next five years.

This paper makes no attempt to summarise this extensive body of work but rather to highlight the critical need to provide dedicated funding to intermediary organisations so that they can play their role effectively.

An example is provided by the EDP, which receives funding from the public sector to perform its public benefit role. This funding stream enables it to work with government and non-state actors as a CIO to build and strengthen partnering processes for joint action and to catalyse change for societal benefit.

A similar model could be used for the PCC to receive dedicated funds directly from the national fiscus via the annual budgeting process, and not indirectly via other government departments or agencies, as is currently the case. Additional resources for the PCC and other intermediary organisations could be mobilised through grants from development finance, climate finance and JT finance sources, although currently most of these financial flows are in the form of loans.

A key role for intermediary organisations in the JT is as a conduit for funding to small, local initiatives that cannot access large-scale climate or JT finance directly because they may lack the internal systems to meet the accountability demands of large funders. An intermediary organisation has the capacity to comply with the monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements of development aid *and* develop accountability mechanisms that are appropriate to a range of small-scale implementing organisations – such as community-based organisations, stokvels, or women-farmer associations. In effect, they interpret and adapt between the top-down and bottom-up environment.

An example of this can be found in the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility which facilitated the flow of finance from the global Adaptation Fund through a national implementing entity, to a national executing entity and thereafter to two regional facilitating agencies who provided institutional support to 12 small grant recipients which were local organisations or initiatives on the ground. The implementing entity, executing entity and facilitating agencies all fulfilled different intermediary functions in the system (Adaptation Fund, 2022).

7. Conclusion

The paper has outlined an explicit collaborative and adaptive approach in the form of a Partnering Implementation Model (PIM) to shift the Just Transition Framework/ Implementation Plan from good intentions to implementation. The partnering model, based on 20 years of practice, is an attempt to address the crisis of implementation in South Africa by providing a set of tools to lead and steer change, strengthen delivery processes, address trust deficits, and improve development outcomes.

The partnering model focuses on two specific questions: Who needs to work together to make the just transition a reality, and, how are we going to work together in practice to deliver collective impact? The paper argues if the proposed just transition implementation plan is going to succeed, it should not only identify state and societal actors necessary for implementation, but, more importantly, adopt a partnering approach that mobilises diverse actors and enables them to work together in practice.

Experience shows that influence cannot be instructed or commanded, and that a collaborative leadership and management style is needed, one which is open to being influenced as much as it influences. Sustained influence is best done through informal and formal networks, coalitions, and partnerships. Additional tools and capabilities to support this are needed such as convening, facilitating, negotiating, mediating, communicating well, dealing with differences, and collaborating across mandates and boundaries. The PIM outlines the required capabilities of actors from all sectors – state, market, community, civil society, labour, science and academia, donors – that are needed to work together to achieve collective impact in low-trust, low-certainty, and low-agreement environments.

The paper points out that formulating a list of prioritised interventions on its own will not automatically lead to collaborative action. The PIM is based on taking a shared vision and turning it into a common agenda to sustain joint action in practice. A common agenda for example addresses both convergent and divergent needs and interests of different stakeholders (inside and outside of government) through which collective action and commitment can be mobilised by focusing on common or complementary interests, despite possible differences. The PIM points to the importance of constructing focused agendas for joint action at different levels – national, regional, and local, based on a shared understanding of the problems we are solving for, and establishing a clear connection between the short-term needs and concerns of diverse communities and constituencies right now, and a long-term transition to a decarbonised economy.

The partnering model is based on the notion of citizens as potential implementers, rather than passive bystanders in their own development. As such, it specifically challenges the instrumentalist 'state-client' model, which reduces citizens to recipients of public services, and instead views the state as a potential enabler of development, supporting non-state initiatives to play a role in delivering a just transition. In other words, everyone is a potential changemaker.

For the successful delivery of the JTIP, the paper argues that the principle and process of stakeholder engagement should shift from 'participation' to 'partnering'. In other words, the outcomes of engagement should be the establishment and sustaining of ongoing two-way relationships rather than once-off 'consultation' meetings. This contributes to procedural justice and builds on the principle 'nothing about us without us' (PCC, 2022). There are many organisations and individuals with agency in strategic places who are actively committed to supporting the JT. Building 'coalitions of the willing' strengthens the voices of those who recognise the deep threat of climate change to society, as well as the risks of decarbonising without justice.

The paper also highlights the role of collaborative intermediary organisations (CIOs) in leveraging societal change and building relationships of trust. Intermediary organisations can play a crucial role in supporting the transition by creating spaces to meet, exchange ideas, learn and strategise, as well as fostering trust-building and organising partnerships for joint action. Intermediary NGOs that have good relationships with grassroots organisations and which are able to simultaneously engage in policy and strategic spaces and have the governance and administrative capacity to receive and account for public funds can play a role in ensuring that state resources are channelled to areas of greatest need.

The PCC itself could consider enhancing its mandate, systems, structures and capabilities to be able to play a collaborative intermediary role, while simultaneously encouraging and supporting other intermediary organisations. This would assist in the creation of an enabling environment for multiple 'bottom-up' initiatives to thrive and to connect with the 'top-down' authorising environment.

The proposed PIM is based on a knowledge-sharing and learning approach to encourage adaptive programming and delivery. More specifically, JT knowledge sharing hubs and learning networks could be established through partners at different levels where implementation agents can come together to gain knowledge and find joint solutions. This would allow leaders and institutions to share their ideas and experiences and create spaces for learning, adaptation and collective action. The sharing of knowledge will enable people to find synergies, identify duplicates, maximise resources, and align JT projects. JT hubs and learning networks at different scales would be useful for distributing information, convening learning exchanges, and enhancing implementation.

Above all, the adoption of a 'learning by doing' approach to delivery, which creates space to pause, reflect, learn, and adapt and adjust, will serve as a necessary antidote to inflexible and risk-averse planning and implementation processes.

List of interviewees

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date of Interview
Anokhi Parikh	Yellowwoods Ventures Investment	8 Feb 2023
Crispian Olver	PCC secretariat	1 Nov 2022
Dudzile Songiga	Department of Agriculture Land and Rural Development	07 Dec 2022
Jesse Burton	E3G	18 Nov 2022
Makoma Lekalakala	Earthlife Africa	13 Feb 2023
Mark Borchers	Sustainable Energy Africa	28 Nov 2022
Mbulaheni Mbodi	NUMSA	15 Feb 2023
Melissa Fourie	Centre for Environmental Rights	13 Feb 2023
Mike Mulcahy	GreenCape	17 Nov 2022
Victor Munnik	GroundWork / Life After Coal	21 Nov 2022
Ziyad Cassim	GEAPP	8 Feb 2023

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