



# **EA capacity building in Africa – trial, errors and successes**

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# **EA capacity building in Africa – trial, errors and successes**

- **Present Situation for EA in Africa**
  - High level African commitment, but not a political or developmental high priority
  - African capacity still insufficient in quantity and quality and this results in foreign companies doing most EAs
  - The legal basis is good, but enforcement is weak
  - Institutional basis is still weak

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## ■ How it started

- AMCEN meeting in Durban in 1995
- Nairobi meeting in 1998
- The Hague meeting and CLEIAA
- The African Stakeholder Plan for EA Capacity Building
- The African Networks
- Variable donor support
- The Environmental Assessment and Management Capacity Building Strategy for Africa

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## ■ Needs and Demands

- Efforts to establish a demand curve for EA in Africa has failed
- The demand is variable and difficult to estimate
- Industrial development and corresponding need for EA is weak beyond southern Africa
- Donors requirements follows specific priorities and their funding for EAs is variable and small
- Strategic Environmental Assessment is increasingly being prioritized
- Universities can provide sustainable training but requires funding

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- The institutional basis and public awareness
  - EA capacity building is mostly the responsibility of ministries or departments of environment with limited political clout
  - Heavier ministries (Finance, Planning) takes little interest in environment
  - Public awareness and concern for the environment is in general low.
  - Donor's dependence on recipient priorities is a serious obstacle to sound environmental management in Africa

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## ■ Positive Impacts

- Positive environmental impacts of developments and investments are often overlooked, giving the public and developers a negative attitude to EAs.
- Neutral environmental accounting would benefit the profession
- Capacity building must focus on explicitly including positive impacts of EAs

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- Individual initiatives and sustainability
  - EA as a logic tool for environmental sustainability has the ability to create enthusiasm
  - “Champions” of the profession are showing the way in Africa
  - It is only thanks to individual enthusiasts that networks are operating all over Africa
  - There is an urgent need for support to team building around these individuals

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- Sub-regional cooperation and Centres of Excellence
  - Networking of EA professionals is important for contact and learning
  - Networking is important for team building in Africa
  - EA Professionals in Africa are thinly spread out on the continent
  - Sub-regional centres and cooperation is key to maintaining learning and communication above the minimum threshold
  - Africa has excellent examples of working networks



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- Donor support and financial sustainability
  - Donor support has been negatively affected by overriding political priorities
  - Weak recipient requests to donors
  - Local culture and attitude is not conducive to payment of subscriptions and membership fees for professional networks
  - Private enterprise and development key to sustainable market

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## **Conclusions**

- **Slow progress caused by:**
  - Lack of governmental and development investors understanding of the multiple benefits offered by the EA process
  - Lack of adequate public awareness and concern for the environment affects negatively political priorities
- **Rapid progress caused by:**
  - Enthusiastic and concerned individuals
  - A growing understanding of EA as a necessary tool for sustainable development