

WWF-SA launches Earth Hour City Challenge

The Earth Hour City Challenge (EHCC) competition in South Africa has recently been launched by WWF South Africa (WWF-SA), in collaboration with ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability - Africa.



The challenge is designed to highlight and reward cities that are prepared to make substantial long-term efforts to combat climate change, and invites cities around the world to submit inspiring and credible urban development plans for building, transport, energy and food systems - solutions that will make a city greener, cleaner and improve living standards for residents.

Cities will be asked to register their data on the carbon Cities Climate Registry (cCCR), an internationally recognised carbon reporting platform managed by ICLEI which will be open for reporting until October 2013. Strategies will then be evaluated by an international jury, and in March 2014, the city with the highest overall score will be awarded the title Global Earth Hour Capital.

Winning is irrelevant

eThekweni Municipality (Durban) has already signed up to the challenge. Head of the Energy Unit, Derek Morgan explains: "eThekweni Municipality has taken a concerted stance on the fight against climate change and has been reporting its greenhouse gas emissions and accompanying mitigation and adaptation plans on the cCCR for a number of years. Whether eThekweni Municipality wins or loses the EHCC is irrelevant. Climate change does not know Municipal boundaries and it is therefore important that all Municipalities, be it metro, district or local, join hands to collectively tackle climate change."

Only a handful of metro's in South Africa are eligible to take part in the challenge this year because of the energy or climate change targets they have committed to. Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City, Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, the

City of Cape Town and the City of Johannesburg have all been invited to take part. It is hoped that other municipalities will be able to participate in the next round of the challenge.

"Municipalities across South Africa have been taking steps to respond to climate change and promote decentralised renewable energy for many years, but there needs to be massive up-scaling of commitment and action. We call on municipalities to develop energy strategies in the coming year so that South Africa can proudly showcase many more eligible cities taking part in next year's EHCC in 2014/2015," says ICLEI Africa project manager, Steven Bland.

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