



A sustainable transport model for South African cities

THE URBAN TRAN:SIT Programme focuses on sustainable transport and energy issues in the context of South African cities. Transport has been highlighted as a key determinant of sustainable cities, particularly in terms of energy consumption. The transport sector in South African cities represents between 40% and 55% of total energy consumption. This energy consumption has major impacts on CO₂ emissions and local air pollutants, which contribute to climate change.

Although the need for action in the transport sector has been realised, the South African transport system remains generally inefficient, with increasing private vehicle use. Local government capacity is stretched and officials are often focused on dealing with more immediate pressures on the transport system, with the result that sustainability is neglected and problems escalate over the years. It is critical, however, that sustainable planning and implementation be given adequate attention and resources if we were to break this cycle.

The aim of the Tran:SIT programme is to build capacity in local government to develop more sustainable transport policy, strategy and implementation in order to reduce global emissions, improve air quality and improve the economic efficiency of the sector.

The programme is currently based in Cape Town through a partnership between the City of Cape Town (CCT)'s Transport Department and Sustainable Energy Africa,

although there is a network of interested partners throughout South Africa. The three-year project has been funded by the British High Commission to facilitate sustainable transport planning and implementation in Cape Town. The programme aims to work from within the department through the appointment of a sustainable transport professional, who is working through plans and projects that promote sustainable transport and will direct policies and strategies toward sustainable transport. The professional acts as a change agent within the Transport Department and, together with the Tran:SIT team, works through sustainable transport dilemmas and practical local government challenges in order to mainstream sustainable transport thinking. The partnership includes the Urban Transport Research Group at the University of Cape Town, who provide content support and advise on technical issues. One of the successes of the programme is the strong partnership that has developed through these three key partners.

One of the key aspects of the Tran:SIT Programme is capacity-building: not only in the Transport Department, but throughout the city and – more broadly – in other local authorities, government departments and other stakeholders. A multi-layered network has been developed as part of the capacity-building process, which comprises the following elements:

- A local network made up of City of Cape Town departmental and provincial government representatives who discuss sustain-

able transport on a local level and how it should be integrated with the City of Cape Town projects

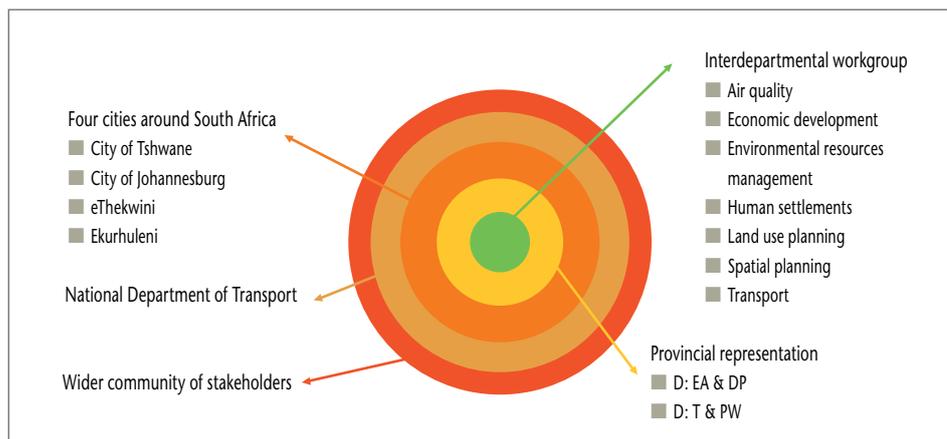
- A city network of key cities throughout South Africa which will focus on sharing information around project implementation and lessons learned from these experiences. The city network will include focused workshops and seminars on relevant aspects of sustainable transport
- The third network will consist of any stakeholders who are interested in sustainable transport. This is a virtual network, with information dissemination taking place through the website and other means discussed below

The Tran:SIT Programme includes information development and dissemination in order to increase knowledge around sustainable transport and assist in its implementation in South Africa. Various methods are used to share this information, including a website dedicated to the project (www.sustainable.org.za/transit), a bimonthly newsletter which focuses on a different sustainable transport theme for each edition and printed information booklets on different aspects of sustainable transport. Monthly seminars will be held at the City of Cape Town offices focusing on planning for sustainable transport on a city level. These will consist of an expert presentation on a specific topic followed by a question and answer session.

The project was initiated in September 2006 and the sustainable transport professional joined the City of Cape Town in January 2007. The programme is moving along steadily. With sessions taking place with key stakeholders and plans for demonstration projects finalised, the interest in the project is increasing. The key challenge is to ensure that interest and awareness are seen in implemented projects and policies and strategies with a strong sustainability focus, both in their objectives and their budget and project allocations.

The Urban Tran:SIT Programme is not seen as the solution to integration of sustainable transport within all transport planning activities, but is the first step in a longer process of changing thinking, planning and implementation of transport activities. □

► Visual representation of the urban Tran:SIT programme networks



Source :

[http://www.saice.org.za/downloads/monthly_publications/2007/
CivilEngSept2007/#/0](http://www.saice.org.za/downloads/monthly_publications/2007/CivilEngSept2007/#/0)