



LEARNING  
*by* **DOING**

---

Scaling up Ambitious Leadership  
**Learning By Doing**  
**South Africa**

---

**ANNUAL REPORT 2021**





LEARNING  
*by* **DOING**

---

Scaling up Ambitious Leadership  
**Learning By Doing**  
**South Africa**

---

**ANNUAL REPORT 2021**



## *Contents*

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Baseline report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>LBD Scrum participation by criteria</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Reporting knowledge insights and findings from scrums in 2021/22</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Spin offs (Other activities 2021/22)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Way forward and conclusions</b>	<b>12</b>



## Introduction

This country report for South Africa describes the key activities undertaken and deliverables achieved in the first year of the Project, Scaling Up Ambitious Leadership: Learning by Doing (LBD) in 2021. The South African team is led by Dr Harald Winkler and Dr Andrew Marquard from the ESRG at UCT and supported by Natasha McDaid from WITS.<sup>1</sup>



---

1



## Baseline report

In March 2021, the South African team released its Baseline Report. This report articulates the starting point for the team's subsequent work, setting the baseline and the background in order to build a credible fact-based narrative.

The baseline report highlights the importance of the concept of a “just transition” (JT) within the development and climate change debate in South Africa. It is a concept embedded in the current discussions but more importantly it engages with the development agenda in the country.

Our baseline report does not attempt to define the term precisely, but rather frames it, stating that: “All the issues of visions of 2/1.5C and how those can be achieved while enabling a ‘good life’ for all South Africans, rich and poor, black or white, and from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, are salient to JT”.

As such, our report is not so much a statement on the baseline of all climate change action in South Africa, but a focus on issues that will be developed or discussed over the life of the project—and which may well inform policy or action initiatives in South Africa as the broader discussion of JT advances.

The baseline report also defines at the outset the key research questions to be explored throughout the life of the project. These are:

1. Why has high emissions development mostly not resulted in well-being for many South African communities and workers dependent on coal?
2. How could SA shift its development pathways to rely more on mutuality, reciprocity, and solidarity, and become increasingly inclusive, equitable, climate resilient and low carbon? (zero poverty, zero net emissions, lower inequality, lower vulnerability). How to change the political economy of the relevant sectors including the public one? What does this mean for regional economic transition planning and their relationship with the central government on the one hand, and local communities and relevant agents and stakeholders on the other?
3. How does the ‘just transition’ become not just another product that financialised capital sells, but a process of virtuous change in specific places driven by active communities and workers? What coalition of change agents should drive a just transition? How to make visible, engage with and transform - in line with a desirable and feasible good life with associated institutions, practices, and virtues - the political hegemonies and systemic structures that currently inhibit just transitions?

We acknowledge in the report that these areas of investigation are not set in stone, but are a starting point to help shape discussions. These areas are malleable and may be revised and/or refined by the series of “scrums” which will take place throughout the life of the project.

Our baseline report also sets out the overarching elements which shape the current climate policy in the country, although we acknowledge that there is no single vision for South Africa and that “there is no single document that is uncontested and supported by everyone”.

Amongst these documents, we highlight a few, such as the National Development Plan and Climate Policy. While the NDP includes a chapter on “environmental sustainability”, the Climate Policy includes actions on adaptation and mitigation.





Our Baseline report stresses that the South African approach to climate change focuses on two key areas of climate action: adaptation and mitigation. In 2020, SA presented its Low Emissions Development Strategy. It is worth pointing out that there is no “carbon resilient development strategy or pathway”, this document gives the political signal committing South Africa to net zero “placed explicitly in the context of just transition”, although, “there is not yet any explicit modelling of mitigation and development pathways to net zero”.

We also highlight in our baseline report the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which was approved in 2020 and which serves as South Africa’s national adaptation plan and is also the basis for the adaption input into SA’s NDCs.

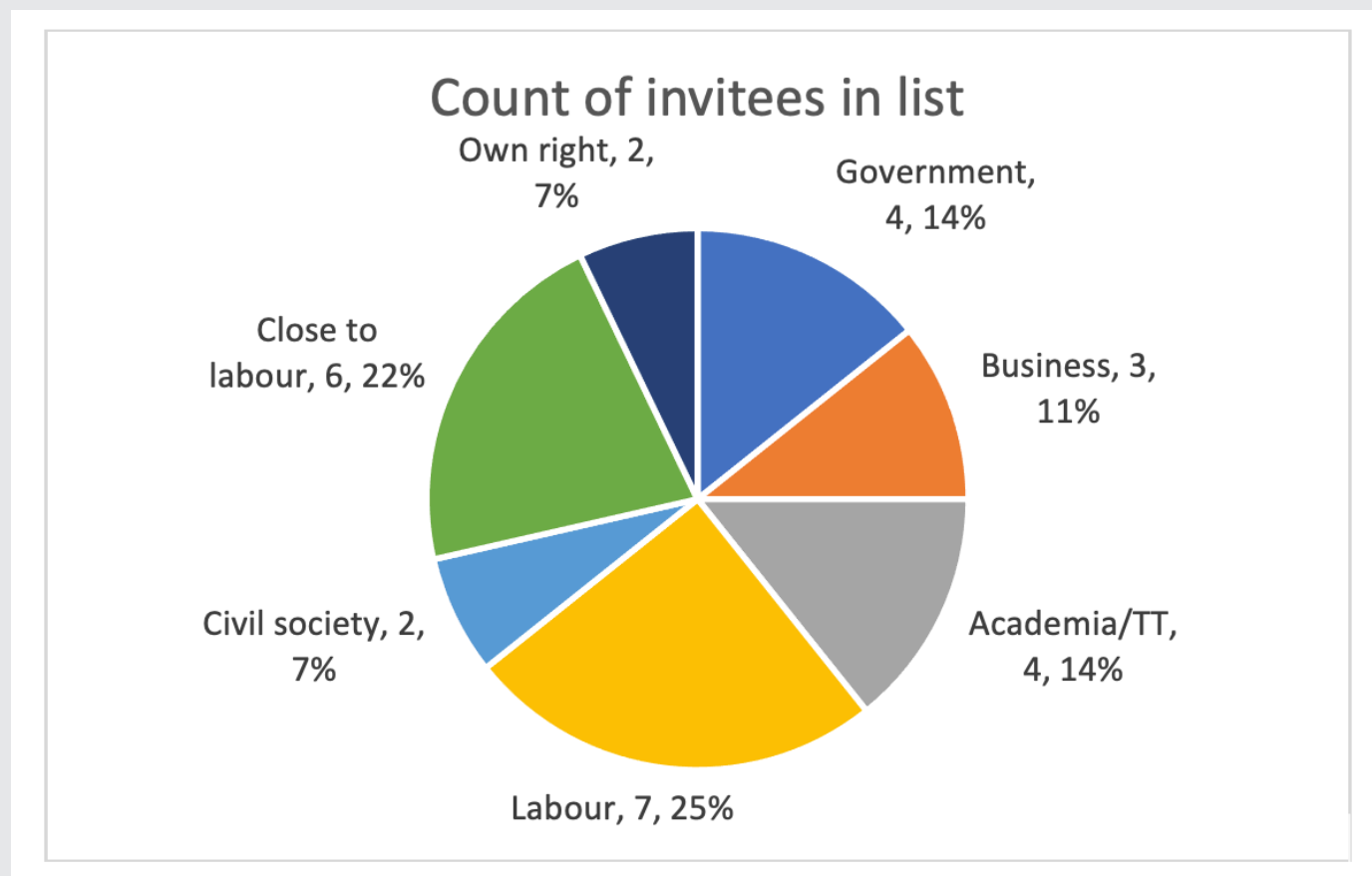
Similarly our Baseline report describes existing or planned initiatives related to a “just transition”, conducted by the different stakeholders.





## LBD Scrum participation by criteria

The South African SCRUM is made up of 28 carefully selected members who create a good mix of private and public sector. This group has engaged in groupwork including writing and presentations by scrum members. The graph below shows the composition of the invitee list to the South African scrums.



Two scrums have been held so far, from 25 to 30 July 2021, and 7 to 10 February 2022; with another two planned in 2022–23. The LBD team obtained advice from Mr Jongikhaya Witi, a key official in the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), in the careful selection of scrum members.

The initial scrum discussions focused on a good life under 1.5 °C. They proved highly generative of ideas. This first scrum was important for the members to gel as a group. This group then began to write the document on *narratives of a 'good life'*.

The scrum in 2021 produced two narratives that outline a vision of a good life in South Africa in 2050 under 1.5 °C conditions; and public affluence. In the first half of 2022, the two narratives are being woven together, following further discussion at SCRUM 2. These activities show that good progress is being made on Task 2 of the LBD project in South Africa, 'Visions to 2°/1.5°C societies'. While the narratives are still work-in-progress, it is expected that combined narratives will be refined during Scrum 3, and then be disseminated more publicly, including in the LBD website and to other partners.





Due to the effort made to include including the labour movement in the SCRUMs, the discussions in in the LBD process have a very clear focus on just transition, particularly in picking people as strategic thinkers. This is a new way of looking at things in SA, and opens an avenue for participants to not start from highly entrenched, polarised, and exclusionary positions.

Indeed the culture and openness of the scrum format has led to a very frank exchange of views from across the social spectrum of South Africa, which the core LbD team has noted as being useful in highlighting insights and points of view which may otherwise have been “blind spots” to policy development and project ideation.

The utility of this approach has been borne out not only by the sustained participation in the meetings in the multi-day, distance formats, but also in the willingness for participants to engage in spin-off discussions. It’s very clear that the format and process of engagement has allowed a very positive exchange of views, opening the way to insights which can be seen as consensually reasonable to very different social actors.







## Reporting knowledge insights and findings from scrums in 2021/22

The South Africa LBD project has also developed thinking about opportunities for cooperation (Task 3). This focuses primarily at the national scale. A rich set of issues is emerging, mindful of what might add be innovative beyond the existing national portfolio, and where this indicates opportunities for multi-lateral cooperation. In the context of a just transition in South Africa, skills, capacity and knowledge at a systemic and institutional level have been highlighted as crucial to implementation. Indeed, the capacity of poor communities and workers to define their own futures if – and to ensuring that the transition indeed is foundational to ensuring that transitions are just. The ‘good life’ cannot be a future vision *only*, the pathways of getting to such a future must become real for local communities.

The Team has so far created four spinoffs for industry and sector specific discussions. They are as follows: the electricity spinoff in which public enterprises as well as businesses provided input into the current state of electricity in South Africa in relation to the scrums objectives of ‘the good life’ below 1.5 degrees in 2050 vision. The second spinoff was on public affluence and resulted in the creation of an overarching narrative for ‘the good life’ under 1.5 degrees that is has now been sent for comment by the scrum members. The Public affluence and land spinoffs are still upcoming and are being led by civil society groups as well as community representatives alongside public and private sector representatives.

The discussions on these specific topics that could have the potential to provide input for a cohesive 2050 national vision for the country that is encouraged by the current government steps to abide by our commitments under the Paris Agreement and from COP26. This has been shown in the Finance ministers announcement of the possibility of an increase in the country’s carbon tax rate in line with COP26 guidelines as well as the Climate Change Bill currently sitting before parliament. The team has also started looking into avenues in which a border community can be brought in to help guide what a diverse vision for ‘the good life’ under 1.5 degrees could look like, such an essay submission call for youth or a poll online.

It can be seen from the above how the learning and knowledge of the LBD project in South Africa is advanced through the scrum. This is salient to Task 4; activities are not limited to the scrum only, but have also generated additional discussion processes, referred to as ‘spin-offs’.



## Spin offs (Other activities 2021/22)

The team is also looking at ways in which modelling can be used to complement the narratives as well as include different scenarios in guidance with the finalized narratives.

The spinoffs are on electricity, public affluence, place-based solutions and the land question.

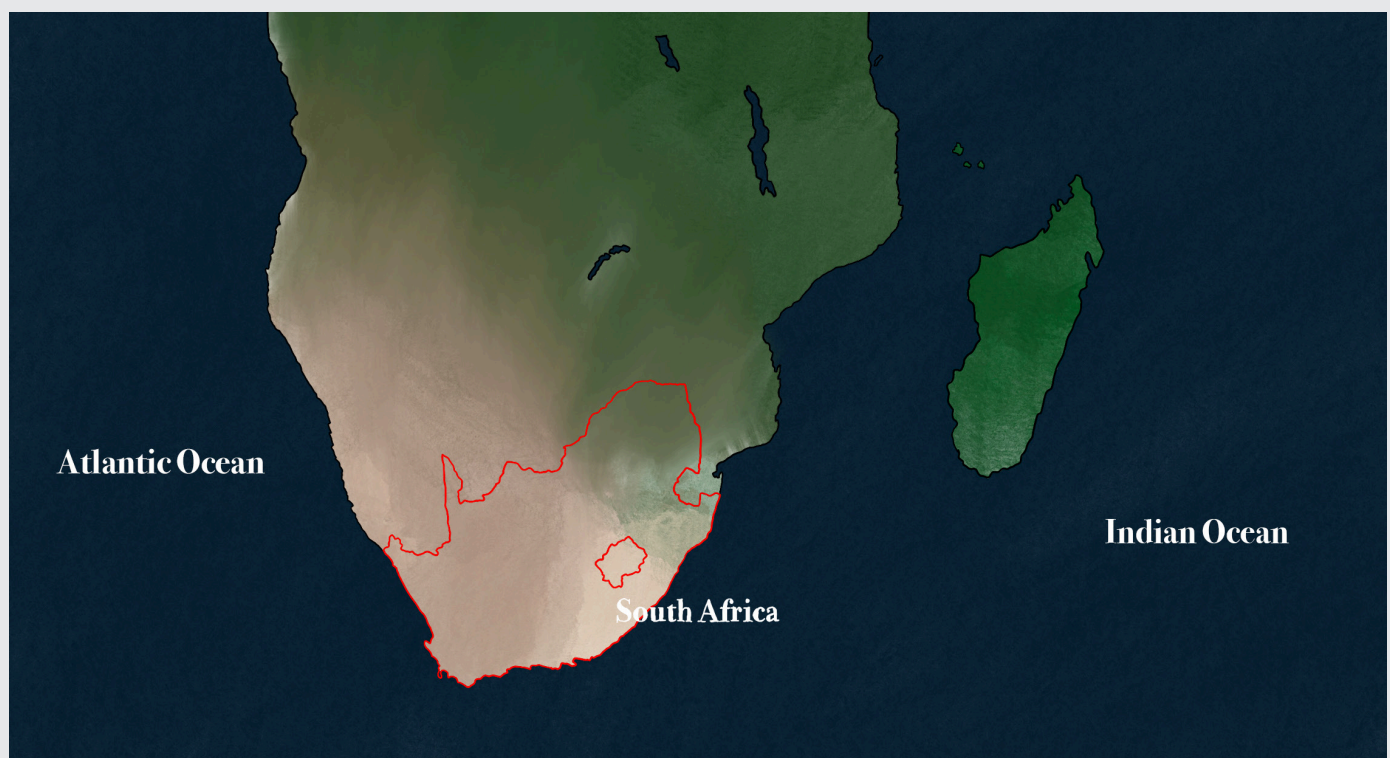
1. The Electricity Spinoff, led by colleagues from Eskom and Toyota, provided insight on the issues such as debt, the just transition and increased energy demand in South Africa from those involved in the sector. It focused heavily on funding from Eskom. This is a hot topic, with the ANC lekgotla in Sept 2021 having with support to an Eskom Just Energy Transition (JET) plan and partnership. Views diverge, and the spin-off may help bring more convergence. Scrum member Richard Worthington was active in initiating this spin-off, in consultation with Mandy Rambharos, holding two meetings. This spin-off has been overtaken by events, with a JET Partnership between SA, four developed countries and the EU being announced in Glasgow.
2. The public affluence spinoff resulted in an overarching narrative for the <good life> under 1.5 °C that the team is currently fine tuning. The other spinoffs are still upcoming but have exciting potential. The second spinoff was on *public affluence*, with two dimensions. In South Africa, Harald Winkler held a spin-off meeting on this concept, after it had emerged in Scrum1, together with Julia Taylor, who brought in other colleagues from the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ). Jose Garibaldi, the LBD international lead, drew on discussions across the consortium, in crafting a narrative on public affluence. This narrative was one of two discussed in Scrum 2. The other was a narrative written by Harald Winkler, drawing on the group work in Scrum 1, imagining a good life in SA under 1.5 °C in 2050. Public affluence is seen as a core basis, and indeed purpose, of cooperation – at multi-lateral, national and local scale.
3. A spin-off on place-based solutions was led by scrum member Mike Levington in April 2022. This spin-off explored concrete renewable energy projects. These may be initiated by private firms, but engage with local communities on socio-economic development. Cooperation at local level emerged as a key theme, providing an interesting perspective of the LBD project.
4. Public debates on land and climate change have been disconnected in South Africa. They have in the past largely been among different groups of people. An innovative element of the LBD scrum has been on cooperation between different communities of practice – in a spin-off on land and climate change. Scrum members Julia Taylor, Melisizwe Tyiso and Dick Forslund organised a first spin-off discussion in July 2022. The first discussion drew in several new voices: Nonhle Mbuthuma: The founder of the Amadiba Crisis Committee who oppose destructive mining projects; Victor Munnik: Associate Researcher at Groundwork and an academic who works on coal dependence and water quality; Matthews Hlabane: Environmental activist and coordinator of Southern Africa Green Revolutionary Council; Michelle Pressend – Lecturer at UCT on environmental sociology; and Siviwe Mdoda – A land rights activist working with PLAAS and Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education. Julia reported on this rich exchange during Scrum 3 (July 2022), and it was decided to hold at least one further spin-off meeting. The potential of local cooperation to inform national policy debates represents outreach.





The project has created spinoff groups on a variety of key local issues to identify in more detail exactly how a Just Transition (JT) is included in the pathway and the vision for a good life in 2050 that is compatible with limiting global warming to 2 degrees. Multi-lateral cooperation on the Just Energy Transition Partnership has the potential to show how multi-lateral cooperation (at least among some countries) can address decarbonisation in electricity – while also supporting social justice. Whether this potential is realised depends on details of the political declaration on the JETP will be implemented in a transformative manner. The President has appointed Mr Daniel Mminele to head a task team, focusing on important financial aspects. In other words, the JETP is being taken up a high level, and while some individual scrum members are involved in further work, the scrum as a group continues its focus on just transition to a good life. The work in the LBD scrum raises broader issues, around electricity, supporting public affluence, the land issue – and ultimately, whether the JETP contributes to a ‘good life under 1.5 °C in South Africa’.

The success of the project can be seen in the fact that spin-offs have been led by members of the Scrum, other than the core team from UCT and Energeia. This speaks to ownership of the LBD process by scrum members of learning and knowledge Activities related to the project (Task 4). It is also in itself participation and outreach , and has potential to lead to further dissemination. The Land and Climate spin-off in particular has included a distinct community of practice. Some scrum members have particular expertise in modelling transport, in various ways, and this may also reach out to other strategic thinkers (beyond the excellent scrum members themselves.)





## Way forward and conclusions

The project is finalising the overarching narrative as well as using the spinoffs to create a specific narrative for a good life in 2050 that can be broken down into sector-specific areas in close collaboration with various stakeholders including a member involved in the Presidential Climate Commission on the Just Transition (PCC). The discussions on these specific topics could provide input for a cohesive 2050 national vision for the country that is encouraged by the current government steps to abide by our COP26 commitments. The LBD team has set up discussions examining land issues in line with a good life in 2050 along with place-based projects. The team has also started exploring avenues in which a broader community of local government and community actors could be brought in to help guide what a diverse vision for 'the good life' under 1.5 degrees could look like.

There remain several challenges on the political landscape, which don't necessarily align with normal thinking on sustainable development pathways. For example, corruption following from legacy institutions and practices has not really been overcome yet. An important opportunity that seems to be opening for the project is work on sectoral emissions targets (SETs).

Insights from participants at Scrum 3, together with those from spin-offs, are expected to provide greater input to the draft combined narrative. The next year of the project (2022/23) expects to back cast pathways towards a 'good life' and consider how the combined narrative might be used further. The SETs are an important policy domain to which SA scrum members, individually and jointly, could a contribution. This may take the form of development pathways, possibly starting with the transport sector – taking a systems approach, connecting this sector also to others.

The Team, has started to look into modelling approaches to complement the narratives and include utopia, eu-topia and dystopia scenarios with narratives are being used as guidance. The project has been able to identify with guidance from members of the Presidential Climate Commission in South Africa that it will be likely be able to provide valuable input for the ongoing just transition policies and dialogue.