

Lesego Gaegane

Governance & Climate Resilience Leader | Sustainability

Professional summary

Strategic governance and sustainability leader with over 16 years of experience advancing public interest outcomes through institutional governance, sustainability, infrastructure resilience, policy implementation, and societal impact initiatives. My work has focused on addressing systemic challenges affecting the realisation of fundamental human rights, particularly in relation to water security, environmental sustainability, climate resilience, equitable development, and institutional accountability. I bring extensive experience in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, sustainability governance, and cross-sector collaboration across public institutions, academia, private sector, and international organisations. My experience reflects a strong commitment to advancing dignity, equality, environmental justice, and accountable governance through practical interventions that improve lived outcomes.

Board, leadership & governance experience

Board member, Southern African Energy Efficiency Confederation (SAEEEC) (2024 – Present)

- Chairperson: Marketing & Communications Portfolio
- Led the development and implementation of a national marketing, communications and stakeholder engagement strategy to strengthen transparency, stakeholder engagement, sector collaboration, and institutional credibility
- Supported industry dialogue and public awareness initiatives relating to sustainability, energy efficiency, and climate action

Advisory board member, IFAT Africa (2025– Present)

- Provide strategic guidance on sustainability, infrastructure resilience and sector positioning

Advisory board member, DEVAC Infrastructure Summit (2026 – Present)

- Contribute to strategic dialogue on infrastructure development, sustainability, governance and inclusive growth

Committee member, South African Females in Energy Efficiency (SAFEE) (2015 – 2024)

- Advanced inclusion, mentorship and capacity development initiatives supporting women in the energy sector

Mentor, Energising Women to Advance the Energy Transition in the SADC Region Mentorship Programme (GWNET) | 2026 – Present

- Selected as a regional mentor under the Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET) and SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) mentorship programme
- Support the development, mentorship, and capacity building of emerging women professionals advancing the energy transition and sustainable development agenda across the SADC region
- Contribute to regional knowledge-sharing, leadership development, and inclusive participation within the energy and sustainability sectors

South African lead, Lesotho–South Africa Transboundary Committee (2023 – Dec 2025)

- Facilitated bilateral cooperation on shared water resource management, supporting equitable and sustainable governance of transboundary resources

Areas of expertise

- Human rights-based development approaches
- Governance, accountability and institutional oversight
- Water security, environmental sustainability and climate resilience
- Climate justice and equitable development
- Monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment systems
- Institutional governance and societal impact
- Sustainability reporting and accountability frameworks
- Institutional transformation and strategic initiatives
- Public policy engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Socio-economic development and resource equity
- Programme leadership in complex public-sector environments
- Strategic communication and public interest advocacy

Selected leadership contributions

- Led a national programme addressing water security and infrastructure resilience, and sustainability contributing to the progressive realisation of the constitutional right to water and energy

- Developed and implemented an institutional sustainability and governance strategies accountability alignment with national development priorities and global frameworks
- Facilitated transboundary cooperation between South Africa and Lesotho on shared water resource management, promoting equitable and sustainable resource governance
- Established monitoring and evaluation systems to strengthen accountability, transparency, and programme performance
- Advanced capacity-building and skills development initiatives supporting inclusive participation within the sustainability and water sectors through developing siltation management skills programmes
- Contributed to policy dialogue and stakeholder platforms addressing climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development
- Led cross-sector partnerships involving government institutions, academia, civil society, and international organisations

Professional experience

Senior Manager: Strategic Initiatives – University of Johannesburg | June 2026 – Present

- Lead cross-functional institutional initiatives focused on Environmental, Social and Governance, sustainability, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integration across academic and operational portfolios
- Provide strategic oversight on sustainability, societal impact, and governance integration within institutional planning and operations
- Develop and implement monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems to strengthen accountability and institutional performance
- Conduct data analysis, benchmarking, and impact assessments relating to sustainability, social impact, and institutional transformation objectives
- Support institutional alignment with international sustainability and accountability frameworks, including GRI, PRME, SDSN, and Times Higher Education Impact Rankings
- Draft strategic reports, governance documents, policies, and institutional sustainability frameworks
- Establish partnerships with government institutions, NGOs, academia, and international organisations to support collaborative development outcomes
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement platforms, workshops, awareness initiatives, and capacity-building programmes relating to sustainability, governance, and climate resilience

Senior Project Manager - Water Research Commission (WRC) | Nov 2020 – 31 Dec 2025

- Led initiatives addressing water security, climate resilience, and infrastructure sustainability, with a focus on equitable access to resources and strengthening community resilience
- Directed the National Dam Siltation Management Programme, contributing to the progressive realisation of the constitutional right to water
- Developed institutional sustainability strategies aligned with national policy priorities and global sustainability frameworks
- Designed governance systems, KPIs, and monitoring frameworks to assess programme impact and institutional performance
- Engaged policymakers, communities, and stakeholders to address systemic challenges affecting resource access and environmental resilience
- Led partnerships with government, academia, and international organisations to support inclusive and sustainable development outcomes

Senior Project Manager - Bumbali Consulting, Johannesburg | Dec 2018 – Nov 2020

- Led sustainability and resource efficiency projects across public and private sectors
- Conducted socio-economic and sustainability assessments to support evidence-based decision-making and equitable resource management
- Developed strategies addressing environmental, social, governance, and sustainability challenges

Key Account Manager – Bidvest Services, Randburg | Jul 2016 – Oct 2018

- Managed strategic stakeholder relationships across national client portfolios
- Supported service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and operational performance initiatives

Climate Change Monitoring & Performance Tracking Specialist - WRI, Pretoria | Apr – Jun 2016

- Supported South Africa's climate policy by mapping mitigation projects, developing M & E guidelines and applying the GHG Protocol Policy and Action Standard to track climate action impacts

Energy Consultant – Madikela Engineering Solutions, Johannesburg | Jan – Apr 2016

- Conducted energy and water efficiency assessments supporting sustainability and resource optimisation initiatives

Energy Key Accounts Manager – National Business Initiative, Johannesburg | Nov 2013 – Nov 2015

- Supported implementation of sustainability and energy efficiency initiatives within the Private Sector Energy Efficiency Programme
- Engaged stakeholders across government, development finance, and industry sectors
- Contributed to sustainability reporting, stakeholder coordination, and programme impact monitoring

Project Coordinator & Intern – CSIR, Pretoria | Mar 2009 – Nov 2013

- Coordinated the Industrial Energy Efficiency Project activities, managing work plans, audits and progress reporting.
- Supported implementation of energy management systems and optimisation projects, contributed to GHG calculations, targets and case studies

Chemical Engineer Trainee – Mintek, Johannesburg | Aug 2008 – Feb 2009

- Supported pilot plant trials, process optimisation, technical reporting for mineral processing projects

Chemical Engineer Development Operator - South African Mint, Pretoria | Feb – Jul 2008

- Operated electroplating production line, researched and implemented a new electroplating methodology

Public interest & human rights contribution

- Work directly linked to water and energy as a constitutional right, focusing on access, quality, sustainability, and resilience
- Contributions to climate resilience and environmental justice, particularly within vulnerable communities
- Development of monitoring and evaluation systems supporting accountability, transparency, and institutional effectiveness
- Participation in policy and stakeholder processes influencing equitable and sustainable development outcomes
- Capacity building initiatives supporting skills development, inclusive, and public participation

Professional affiliations

- Member, Circular Economy Club (CEC) (2022 – Present)
- Member, International Association of Sedimentologists (2023 – Present)
- Member, Southern African Energy Efficiency Confederation (SAEEC) (2011 – Present)
- Member, South African Institute for Chemical Engineers (SAICHE) (2006 – Present)
- Member, Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) (2022 – Present)
- Member, Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition – (2022 – Present)

Education

- PhD (Candidate) in Governance / Sustainable Development (*in progress*), University of the Witwatersrand, 2026–Present
Research focus: environmental sustainability, climate resilience, governance and adaptive capacity in South African cities
- Masters in Energy Leadership, University of the Witwatersrand, (Golden Key International Honour Society), 2023
- Postgraduate Diploma in Chemical Engineering (Oil & Gas Engineering), University of the Witwatersrand, 2017
- Certificate in Project Management (NQF 6), University of Pretoria, 2011
- Baccalaureus Technologiae: Chemical Engineering, Tshwane University of Technology, 2011
- Matric, Hoërskool Gerrit Maritz, 2004

International Development Training

- Learning Programme on Climate Change: Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience, DFC, Denmark, 2024
- Sustainable and Climate Resilient Water Cycle Management in Africa, DFC, Kenya, 2025