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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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Joburg unveils groundbreaking Environmental and Social Management System

The City of Johannesburg has become the first municipality in South Africa to introduce an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), marking a major step towards stronger governance, accountability and sustainable infrastructure delivery.

Developed by the City's Environment and Infrastructure Services Department (EISD) through its Impact Management and Compliance Monitoring Unit, the ESMS manual provides a framework to identify, assess and manage environmental and social risks linked to capital expenditure (capex) projects throughout their lifecycle.

Council approved the framework in March 2026.

The introduction of the ESMS is also a key requirement of international development finance institutions (DFIs), including the International Finance Corporation and Agence Française de Développement, which require borrowers to comply with strict environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards.

Director for Impact Management and Compliance Monitoring Thabang Mokoena said the system is essential to securing development funding and strengthening integrated planning across the City.

"The implementation of the ESMS is not only a loan requirement but a strategic tool that will improve coordination across departments and entities. It strengthens risk management, embeds ESG principles and supports improved service delivery through stronger community engagement, protection of vulnerable groups and proactive climate action," said Mokoena.

He said the manual aligns with the Municipal Systems Act and provides practical guidance for City officials, contractors and service providers on procedures, documentation and compliance reporting.

Training sessions for City of Johannesburg departments and entities were held on 7 and 8 May 2026 to strengthen understanding and ensure effective implementation of the framework across municipal operations.

Mokoena stressed that compliance is mandatory for all departments and entities seeking access to concessional loans and financing facilities.

“Departments and entities must involve EISD from the outset when applying for funding. Compliance is a shared responsibility, while EISD provides oversight and reports to funding institutions,” he said.

Failure to comply could result in the suspension or withdrawal of development funding, delays to critical infrastructure projects and reduced access to future international financing opportunities.

Ends

Issued by the City of Johannesburg

For all media queries, send an email to mediaqueries@joburg.org.za.