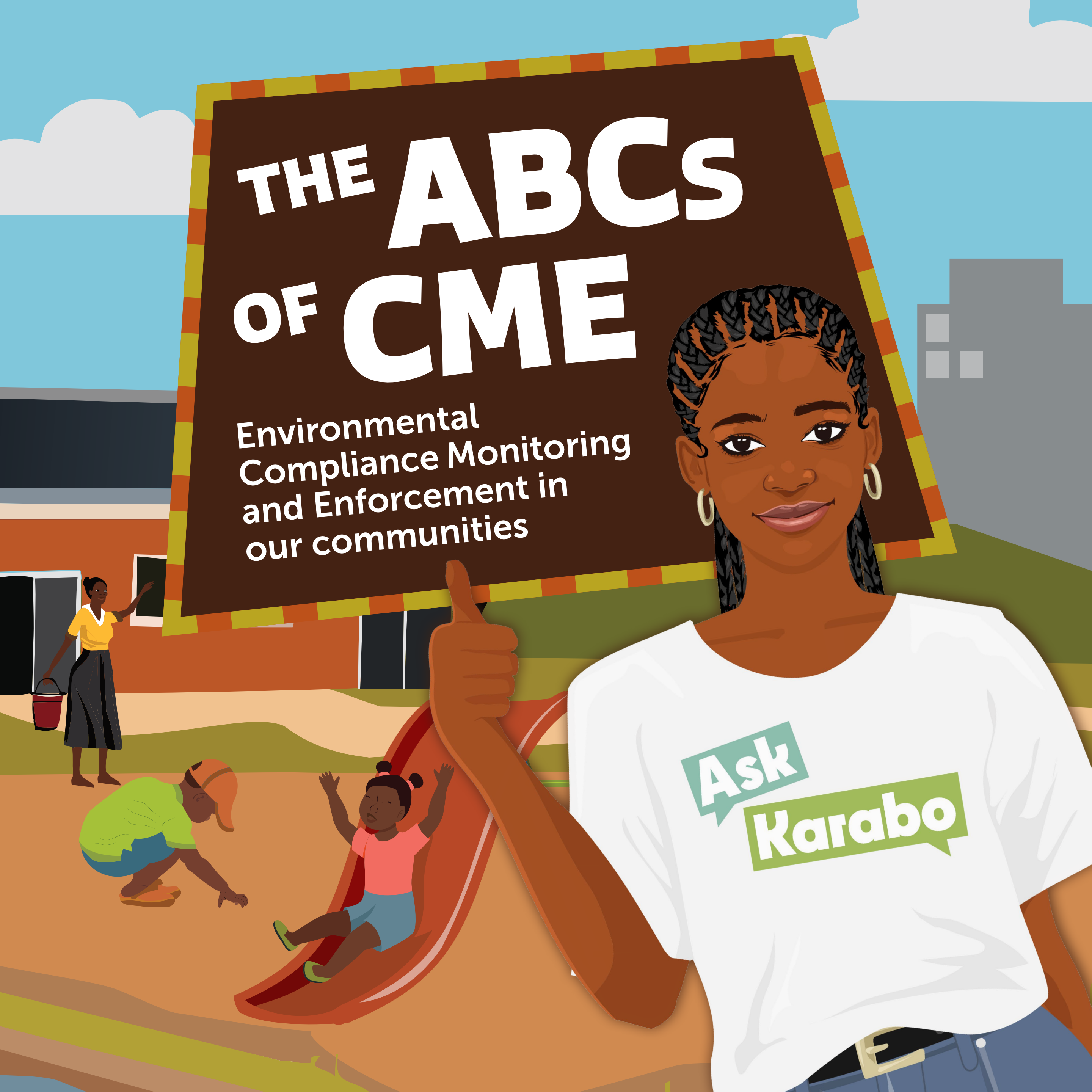


# THE ABCS OF CME

Environmental  
Compliance Monitoring  
and Enforcement in  
our communities

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# **What is environmental CME?**

## **Environmental Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME)**

is how the government checks and makes sure that people and businesses follow environmental laws and regulations designed to protect our environment and natural resources.



Government officials such as **environmental inspectors, the police and state departments** are responsible for CME. They should make sure that environmental laws, regulations and permit conditions are adhered to.

**Compliance Monitoring** entails regularly checking that people, businesses, and government agencies are following environmental regulations.



**Compliance Enforcement** happens when someone breaks these rules and officials take action to fix the problem.





# Why is CME important?

Strong environmental compliance monitoring and enforcement is key to safeguarding public health and community well-being, protecting people's rights, and ensuring sustainable development.

**CME works by...**

- 1. Protecting our environment** and making sure we take care of the basic things we need to survive – like fresh air, clean water and healthy soil.







- 2. Reducing harmful impacts of environmental damage on our health through proper monitoring and action.**
- 3. Upholding the law to ensure that individuals, companies and the state follow environmental rules.**
- 4. Deterring damage to our environment by taking strong enforcement action – such as fines, imprisonment or legal action.**
- 5. Protecting the rights of affected communities by ensuring environmental justice and protecting them from preventable environmental dangers.**



# Who is responsible for environmental CME?

National and provincial government departments and local municipalities oversee and implement environmental laws and policies.

- **Government inspectors:** Environmental Management Inspectors (EMI) or Environmental Minerals and Petroleum Inspectors (EMPI) are appointed under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, to conduct inspections, investigate environmental crimes and enforce compliance with environmental laws.
- **Criminal Justice System:** The South African Police Services (SAPS) assists in enforcing environmental laws, especially in cases involving environmental crimes such as poaching, illegal mining and pollution. They work with EMIs and the National Prosecution Authority to prosecute environmental crimes.
- **You!** Without the eyes and ears of community members, it is hard to be aware of environmental impacts.





## What can you do?

Active citizenship and community involvement are essential in keeping our environments safe and clean! Here are a few things you can do:

- 1. Report** harmful incidents such as pollution, illegal dumping and deforestation to your municipality, ward councillor or police station.
- 2. Participate** in decision-making processes by getting involved in environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and licensing decisions.
- 3. Take legal action** against violators or government departments that fail to protect our environment.
- 4. Partner** with civil society organisations who can provide legal, technical and financial support to address violations.



# In a world without strong CME...

The absence of effective environmental CME can have serious environmental, social and economic consequences.

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**Risk to human health:** Without CME, businesses can put pollutants into our air, water and soil – causing respiratory diseases, waterborne illnesses and other serious health conditions.





**Environmental degradation:** When pollution is not properly checked, our environment suffers – we lose plant and animal species, our water gets dirty, ecosystems are destroyed, and climate change consequences get worse.







**Legal implications:** Lack of proper enforcement creates a culture of lawlessness in which there are no consequences to breaking the law.







**Community well-being:** Communities near industrial operations and mines get sick from hazardous air pollution, toxic waste exposure and unsafe drinking water – which further increases inequality.



**Report a violation**

For more information:

[www.cer.org.za](http://www.cer.org.za)



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# Take action!

- National Environmental Crimes & Incidents Hotline (24 hours): 0800 205 005
- Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Hotline: 0800 200 200
- Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE): 021 402 3173
- Department of Minerals and Petroleum Resources (DMPR): 021 447 1647
- Visit your local municipality and report.
- Contact your ward councillor about any environmental concerns.
- Speak to others in your community and get organised.



**Report a violation**

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Centre *for*  
Environmental Rights

Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa