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**Investigating Environmental Practices and Behaviour in Manufacturing
SMMEs in South Africa
A Survey in the Port Elizabeth Metropolitan Area, Eastern Cape Province**

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ABSTRACT:

The paper presents findings from a survey among 200 SMMEs in the Port Elizabeth Metropolitan Area, Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. It is an attempt to address the situation that little knowledge so far has been gained concerning small manufacturing enterprises and their environmental practices and performance, especially in a developing economy context. The survey shows that the use of cleaner production technologies (CPT), waste management (WM) and environmental management systems (EMS) are rather limited. There is a clear correlation between the size of the companies and the use of environmental practices. The medium-sized companies have a much higher percentage use of CPT, WM and EMS than the small and especially the micro companies. The only sector with a more widespread use of environmental management systems is the transport equipment sector, partly due to that it is a part of the global supply chain. The awareness of environmental costs was found to be rather low and the perception of the impact of environmental costs similarly regarded as insignificant. A number of factors contributing to the present situation are discussed. There are signs of changes in terms of new environmental legislation being implemented as well as a growing focus on the potential of sufficient environmental behaviour, especially in relation to cost savings. There seems to be growing pressure as the South African industry becomes more and more integrated in the global economy in terms of competitiveness.