

RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA'S LOCAL SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

Local government, pre – 1994 in South Africa was characterised by a strong *top-down* approach. There was little perceived need for gathering information or for directly involving the community in the process of governance. Information about the living conditions or opinions of the majority of the citizens was not required to inform policy directions. The official statistics produced were often of unknown representation and made it difficult to draw broader conclusions from their findings. The findings were often manipulated to reinforce and persuade international onlookers to a particular view of the country rather than to inform or provide feedback about the living conditions of the majority of the country's citizens. The state invested in *information* as a propaganda tool and as a result, the regime has left no legacy of monitoring the effectiveness of local government.

Municipalities have undergone rigorous change following the democratic elections of 1994 (MAC, 2001: 7; Ntshulana-Bhengu, 2004: 1). Not only has this been expressed by structural changes in the organisation of municipalities, but the roles they have to play have increased over time. Through all the programmes that are implemented in the municipal sphere of government in South Africa, the views of local players on major key performance areas that a municipality delivers on, are important. Municipalities, as open systems, operate in an ever-changing environment, and therefore, need to conduct research in their municipal areas of jurisdiction in order to inform their future strategies. The components incorporated as part of the research in municipal sphere of government need to be of interest to the target group. This would not only assist municipalities in identifying challenges to which they will be able to proactively respond to, but will assist in sourcing new facts and opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the complexity and multidimensional nature of the challenges (Malefane, 2008(a): 1) that government is faced with, research remains an important facet of service delivery in South Africa. Major development interventions and programmes of government are informed by the findings of research across a variety of sectors; and governments spend large amounts on the implementation of such findings. As opposed to apartheid practices in which statistics were collected and manipulated to reinforce and persuade international onlookers to a particular view of the country, there is a need, in the municipal sphere of government, to inform or provide feedback about the living conditions of local communities. The core principle presented in this article is that research is an essential element of an operating system, be it government or private sector companies.

The first part of the article provides the discussion of the reasons that necessitate the institutionalisation of research in the municipal sphere of government in South Africa. The concept of research is discussed in the second part of the article. The scope and limitations of the article are discussed in the third part whilst, the fourth presents the reasons that qualify research as part of the operations of municipalities. In this part municipalities are seen as operating as open systems, the reason for which they are expected to adapt as terms dictate. The IDP is seen as an instrument with which municipalities can respond to terms dictated by environmental forces. The fifth part identifies the different components of the research agenda. These components are identified as of interest to local players in a municipal jurisdiction. Lastly, this article provides practical guidelines on how municipalities can institutionalise research.

BACKGROUND

The initiation of the institutionalisation of the research as a participatory instrument in the municipal sphere of government came as a result of two important activities the author has been involved in. The first was the involvement in the household and socio-economic survey of both the City Council of Tlokwe (then known as Potchefstroom) in the North West Province, whilst the second was the conference that hosted municipal managers from different parts of South Africa. Although the conference targeted municipal managers, its theme served as an important source of attraction to a proportionate number of mayors. The institutionalisation of municipal research, as a participatory instrument was discussed as sub-themes during the proceedings of the Conference. From both these activities the feedback was extremely positive. The recipients (municipalities) in response to the household and socio-economic survey reported the ease with which the information could be handled and its usefulness for the purpose of planning. The recipients also reported the ease with which development projects could be identified for various units of their municipalities. This article uses both the questionnaires constructed for the purposes of the household socio-economic surveys mentioned above as a frame of reference and a starting point (*cf.* Annexure A & B). As discussed later in this article, specifically under the

components of the research agenda, the components are not fixed and can be altered to meet specific information requirements of the municipality.

NECESSITY AND RELEVANCE OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

Municipalities are accurately positioned to execute certain projects because of their proximity to their electorate. They reflect special local wants and expectations within their municipal jurisdictions (Gallagher, 1999: 4). Six basic essential aspects that necessitate the need for the institutionalisation of research have been identified for this article and discussed below.

Review of municipal IDPs

Although there is legislative support for broader participatory roles that afford municipalities continuous interaction with their environment, there are currently no practical methods, procedures and structures designed to enable inputs from within (institutional), local business and other sectors of the municipal environment. It is also not known how municipalities are coping with the obligation. There is a need for gathering information that will assist municipalities in the review of their IDPs, and research is best suited to bridge the gap. Apart from it being utilised to identify challenges, it can be used as a source to obtain new facts and opportunities.

Complex nature of challenges faced by municipalities

Municipalities are faced with multidimensional and complex challenges (Malefane, 2005: 11), for which finding remedies cannot be reduced to current paper exercises and office-based planning arrangements. Responding to the challenges require constant interchange with external environment.

Scope and relevance of statistical data

Although broad statistical data, periodically published by Statistics South Africa, might be of use, its scope and relevance to municipalities are limited to initial planning stages, and for the purposes of the reviews of IDPs, monitoring and impact assessment, the scope of the data becomes irrelevant. In addition, the statistical data takes time before published, and do not reflect on changes that have taken place within a municipal area of jurisdiction. The statistical data is inconsistent with the developments taking place in the municipal sphere of government, and more useful to national and provincial sector departments.

Lack of capacity to plan and implement

Owing to the current debates around municipal underperformance, lack of skills and incapacity to implement and deliver on development programmes (Ntshulana-Bhengu,

2004: 2), dependence on statistical data and PIMSS projections raise concerns over whether municipal officials would be able to comprehend the sets of statistical data (Malefane, 2008(a): 2) to an extent to which they would be able to act upon.

Credibility of research findings

Despite heavy dependence on statistical data, municipal strategies are often informed and therefore based on the findings of small-scale research conducted by unknown research organisations and individuals. The extent to which the findings of such research are credible, objective, reliable and valid are questionable (Malefane, 2005: 217). In addition, the extent to which municipalities are able to benefit from such findings is unknown.

Challenges facing municipal ward committee system

The municipal ward system, from which many policy makers and practitioners had hoped for positive results, is failing. The reasons for the failure of the system have been linked to constricted, superficial and its under-representative composition of the municipal ward system (Malefane, 2007: 1), which makes it incapable of attracting broader inputs from other sectors of the environment.

The municipal ward system is inconsistent with the objective of democratic principles since it is often manipulated to focus on vested interest of municipal councillors. Furthermore, the operation of the municipal ward systems is biased because of existing confusion between participation and the process of providing feedback. Even though initiatives for participation are said to be carried out, they are in the form of providing feedback about the development projects rather than *initiative seeking* and *role playing* from the part of local players, especially local communities. The phenomena limit the amount of input from local players, and often limit local players to spectators in the development process. Furthermore, these initiatives are often concluded with local communities, and exclude other major role players (e.g. local business).

It is from this basis that the article identifies the need for the institutionalisation of research, as part of the operations of municipalities in South Africa. An important element of the research proposed by this article is that research findings provide experience rather than data sets.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

Although this article identifies the need for research that cuts across all the sectors of the environment, its scope will be limited to research that aims to enhance community participation. The article identifies the components that can be useful in an interchange between municipalities and members of the public. It is based on the assumption that the needs, wants and expectations are wider, in terms of scope, and change over time. The needs, wants and expectations of communities are not constant, they change with time.

The design and structure of the components for the purpose of enhancing community participation and input into municipal strategies can be used as a framework in designing tools that incorporate concern from other parts of the external environment of a municipality. The components identified by the article are not fixed, but allows for flexibility in terms of structure and content. The components can be changed to suit specific municipal information requirements. The research advocated in this article is practical and development research that can be of benefit to the municipalities and local players in all the sectors of the environment within which the municipalities operate.

It is research that intends to substantially improve insights and to gather inputs from participants from various sectors of the environment within which municipalities operate. It does not intend to gather statistical sets or data for which municipalities would lack capacity to deal with or comprehend, but instead it informs municipal strategies about local players' experiences. It excludes the development of teaching material that does not embody original research.

CONCEPT OF RESEARCH

From the discussions presented above, it becomes evident that research is an important element of the operations of municipalities. In order to inform their strategies about the complexity and multidimensional nature of challenges they face, municipalities have to keep abreast of the changes in their operational environment. Besides the identification of challenges, they are also able to source opportunities that are made available by the same environment.

The nature of research proposed is simple development research that can be useful to municipal planning. In a nutshell, it is based on the fact that research findings are strategically set to inform the process of reviewing municipal IDPs. Research can be defined as (WCB, 2008: 1).

...an attempt to experiment, study, observe, analyses and record information to discover new facts, knowledge and information in order to significantly improve existing applications.

Research is identified and advocated as an important element in the processes undertaken by municipalities to review their IDPs. It is regarded as

...an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding of the broader needs, wants and expectations of local players.

It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, public and voluntary sectors. It refers to the invention and generation of ideas on how local players perceive the performance of a municipality over a specific period of time. These ideas and knowledge are better suited to lead to new or substantially improved insights that would enable the development or adjustment of municipal intervention strategies, and to monitor the progress that has been made over time.

A municipality should be able to cater for the needs, wants, and expectations, it has to design an instrument with which the needs, wants, and expectations are gathered and recorded over time. After gathering the information, the municipality will be able to act. There is a continuous interaction between the municipality and its environment. This interaction will assist the municipalities in achieving what has been termed *the dynamic homeostasis*. Therefore, research in this instance, anticipates to:

- generate ideas on priority needs and issues;
- inform municipal strategies of the state of environmental affairs;
- assist the municipality to act;
- assist the municipality to identify threats and opportunities;
- builds on trust between the municipality and role players in different sectors (of the municipal environment);
- develop the sense of recognition, ownership, partnership and commitment of all stakeholders and in this way it reduces the probability of confrontations between the municipality and local players;
- provide municipalities with experience rather than data or pieces of information often uneasy to interpret and act upon; and
- assist in monitoring the effectiveness of municipalities.

MUNICIPALITIES AS OPEN SYSTEMS

Systems can be defined as either open or closed. A system is a dynamic and complex whole interacting as a structured functional unit. A holistic system is any set (group) of interdependent or interacting parts (Heylighen, 1997: 1; Van der Waldt & Helmbold, 1995: 16; Wikipedia, 2008: 5). Parts are generally systems themselves and are composed of other parts, just as systems are generally parts or *holons* of other parts. According to Van der Waldt and Helmbold (1995: 16), an open system is viewed as a system that exchanges information, energy or material with its environment. An interdependent relationship therefore exists between an organisation and the environment within which it functions. A closed system does not have such interaction with the environment.

If a system wishes to survive, it must attain a condition in which it absorbs sufficient inputs from the environment to compensate for outputs. The condition, if it is attained, is known as a stable or dynamic homeostasis. In order to attain dynamic homeostasis, there must be feedback in the form of information input which will indicate to the system whether it is attaining a stable condition and is not running the risk of destruction. Government institutions, as systems must therefore also receive inputs from local players (in the environment) in order to attain a dynamic homeostasis (Van der Waldt & Helmbold, 1995: 16).

The fast changing environment in which municipalities operate requires not only a thorough environmental awareness, but continued adaptability in approach. Like business, government institutions do not operate in a vacuum. The recognition of municipalities as open systems is brought into play by constant interchange taking place between them and the environment in which they exist. They can be regarded as a creation of their

environment in that their assets, income, problems, opportunities and survival depend largely on the environment (Kruger, 1997: 51). Municipalities, in their roles as open systems, are seen as united, purposeful systems consisting of a number of interdependent parts (departments or units), with particular mutual relationships. This means that for a municipality to deliver on its mandate there has to be a mutual interaction among its departments. The ability of a municipality to achieve its mandate depends largely on the strength of existing co-operation and relations among departments or units. As open systems, the leaders of municipalities should consider a municipality as a whole (unit) but within a greater system, the environment, in which municipalities represent a subsystem. The municipality represents an open system which is in continuous interaction with its environment.

MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT

The discussion of municipalities as open systems has over-emphasised the importance of the interchange of the system and its environment. From these discussions, it became evident that in order to achieve, the state of dynamic homoeostasis, municipal leaders have to keep abreast, adapt their strategies to meet the requirement of changes in the external environment. Figure 1 below shows both institutional and external environments within which municipalities operate.

Figure 1: Municipal institutional and external environments

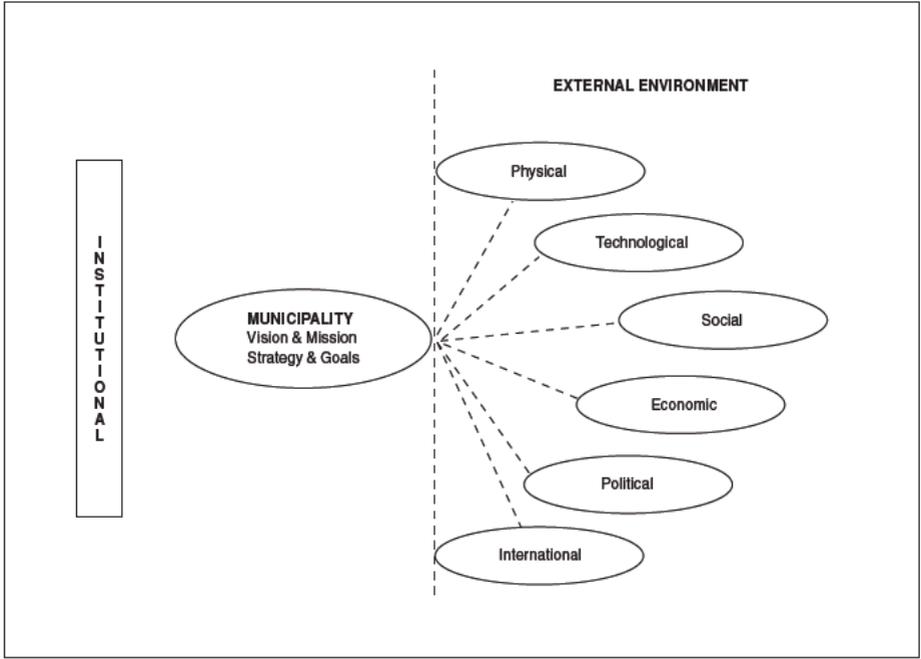


Figure 1 makes a distinction between the two environments within which municipalities operate, namely, the institutional and external environments. The institutional environment refers to forces within the municipality itself and necessitate intragovernmental relations between key individuals in a municipality. These relations, whether they take place vertically or horizontally, are major contributing factors for achieving municipal outcomes (Malefane, 2008(b): 21), and strengthens the municipality to better respond to pressures emanating from the external environment. The institutional and external environments are interdependent (Malefane, 2005: 306).

As shown in figure 1, the external environment of a municipality includes the social, technological, social, economic and political environment. The municipal environment affects municipal decisions, strategies, processes and performance. The external environment consists of factors and forces which are beyond the control of municipalities, and therefore municipal leadership has to keep abreast with the changes in the external environment to enable them to achieve the dynamic homeostasis. The technological environment encompasses new work methods and procedures, new technological innovation, new products, the state of technology for maximum inputs and outputs, the obsolescence of technology and the dynamic changes that frequently occur in technologies which enable organisations to get a competitive advantage. Few examples of factors in the technological environment include availability of electric power, telecommunications, roads and highways and public transport (Wikipedia, 2008(b): 1).

The political environment includes regulatory burden and red tape, taxes, levels of political stability, labour market regulations and policy predictability. The legal environment plays a very important role. The laws of the country, the judicial system, and laws which affect the operation of municipalities are important. The economic environment consists of the demand dynamics, supply situation, pricing factors, degree of competitiveness and financing decision. Since municipalities are assigned to implement Local Economic Development (LED) strategies to deal with economic and social challenges within their municipal jurisdiction, the economic environment within which they operate is also of critical importance. The physical, often referred to as the natural environment comprises living and non-living entities that occur naturally. Examples of these include for instance the geographical area in which municipalities are located, natural resources and physical phenomena that lacks clear-cut boundaries, such as air, water, climate, as well as energy, radiation and electric charge. A more prominent example of the influence of physical environment on municipal strategies is that they are now assigned to develop disaster management strategies that will form part of their IDPs. The social environment refers to how people and communities conduct their relationships, education and occupation, and the conditions in which they live (Wikipedia, 2008(b): 1; Health-EU, 2008: 1). It is important to note that the elements of the social environment overlap and interact with the natural environment, and the health status of communities (Health-EU, 2008: 1). The manner in which these influence the operation of municipalities is powerful, and therefore participants from these sectors of the environment have to be seen as partners in crafting and developing municipal strategies.

In the municipal sphere of government, the course of action of adapting strategies to meet the requirements of a changing environment is highlighted in the IDP cycle. The IDP cycle calls for the review of municipal performance. The phenomena itself represent the need for an annual research or surveys that incorporate testing the perceptions of how local players perceive municipal performance over a specific period of time. Local stakeholders are also important sources of input in determining the strategic direction of a municipality. The belief behind this is that by continually scanning or interacting with the environment, municipalities would be better positioned to achieve a state of dynamic homeostasis. The discussion of the IDP and research follows in the subsequent section.

Integrated development planning and research

The review of municipal IDPs, as outlined by the IDP cycle, was noted among the reasons that necessitate the institutionalisation of research in the municipal sphere of government in South Africa. Change in the municipal sphere of government has not only been articulated in terms of state organisational structure adjustments, expansions and roles, but also in terms of orientation and commitment to honouring the expectations of local communities (Malefane, 2008(b): 1; Local Government Transition Act, 1993). The introduction of new legislation and leadership in the municipal sphere of government provided signals for change towards accountability (MAC, 2001: 7; Ntshulana-Bhengu, 2004: 1). The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* (2000), provided *inter alia* the legislative framework to curb racial distortions in business and residential areas; reverse spatial inequalities; rectify inequalities in infrastructure delivery and sprawling informal settlement that came as a result of apartheid planning (Malefane, 2005: 118).

The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act*, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) conveys the need for municipalities to focus on data, indicators and performance (Malefane, 2005: 87). Thus, it advocates measurable evidence in the fields as diverse as municipal performance, environmental effects, poverty and developmental goals. The Act not only assigns municipalities the responsibility to be people-centered and development-driven, but also provides a total change in the manner in which municipalities conduct their business (Malefane, 2005: 106; Pretorius, 2001: 11; Sekhesa, 2001: 35). It enjoins municipalities not only to provide services to all, but to be fundamental in orientation. Furthermore, it considers the fundamental aspect of the new local government system to be based on active engagement of communities in the affairs of municipalities and in particular planning, service delivery and performance management (Gumede, 2001: 20; Kroukamp, 2001: 22; Makgetla, 2001: 16; Ahmed, 1999: 80; Khuzwayo: 3).

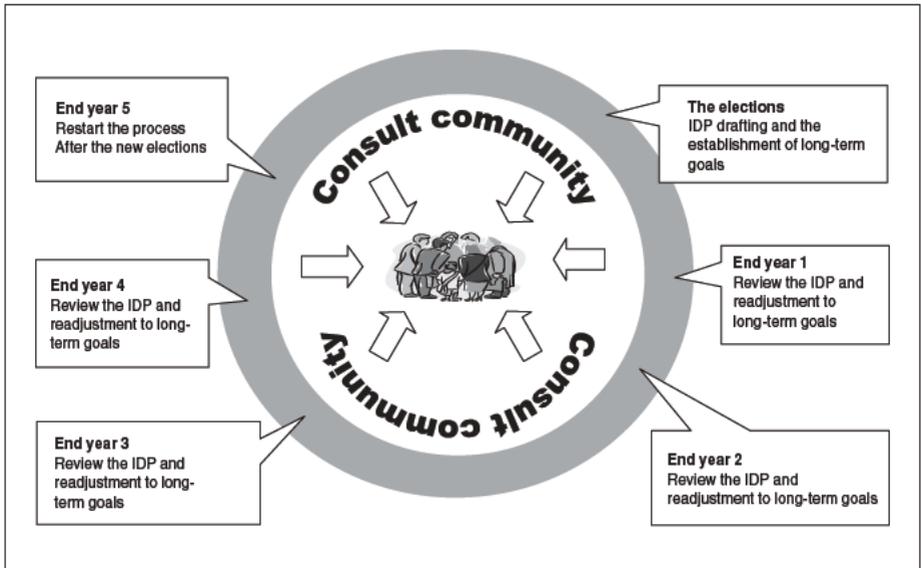
Integrated Development Planning is one of the key tools for local government to cope with its new developmental role. In contrast to the role which planning has played in the past, Integrated Development Planning is now seen as a function of municipal management, as part of an integrated system of planning and delivery. The IDP process is meant to arrive at decisions on issues such as municipal budgets, land management, promotion of local economic development and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner. Integrated Development Plans, however,

will not only inform the municipal administration; they are also supposed to guide the activities of any agency from the other spheres of government, corporate service providers, NGOs and the private sector within the municipal area. The development of IDP represents a major policy shift in South African local government, and holds the leaders of municipalities paramount in development (Malefane, 2008(b): 3).

The IDP process by its nature requires that the planning profession categorically disbands its former constraining and socially unresponsive role of being *value neutral*, apolitical and bureaucratic (Buthelezi, 1999: 36). The planning profession recognizes the political context of planning and attempts to represent a more socially responsive planning approach. Apart from meeting a range of developmental objectives, the IDP process promote the objectives of developmental local government and facilitates local processes of democratisation; empowerment and social change (*cf.* Malefane, 2005: 129). The IDP process also supports the objectives of the RDP, to mobilise the country's people and resources towards the final eradication of apartheid planning.

The bond between IDPs and research is embodied in the IDP cycle. The IDP cycle represents a five year strategic plan that calls for an annual review. The adjustment of performance standards of various municipal departments and units, and ultimately the entire municipality have, to be based on the small-scale research conducted within a municipal area of jurisdiction. It is through this small-scale research, that the municipality would identify the challenges, expectations and opportunities presented by its external environment. The IDP cycle endeavours to promote interaction within the municipality, its immediate and macro environment. Figure 2 below illustrates IDP cycle, and most

Figure 2: The IDP cycle



Adapted from (Louw, 2002)

importantly how the cycle necessitates annual research activities within areas of municipal jurisdiction.

The major contention of the IDP cycle is that it necessitates a continuous effort by the leaders of municipalities to review their IDPs. The IDP cycle starts with the election of a new municipal council. During the first year after the election the IDP is established and work-shopped with all the role players. The long-term goals are established for the municipality, after which objectives on how to achieve the goals are set out. After the IDP has been drawn up and accepted by all the role players, the budget is compiled. More important to this research, from the second to fifth years, the IDP is annually reviewed and the long-term goals are readjusted.

The essence of research is necessity for an annual review of municipal IDPs. The requirement is based on the fact that the reviewing process is not an office or paper based activity which the leaders of municipalities can conduct independently. Since it is reciprocal, it requires an input from a variety of local stakeholders within the municipal area of jurisdiction. Municipalities, through existing participatory guidelines at their level of competence, are better positioned to activate these through the institutionalisation of research. However, the components that have to be incorporated into the research agenda have to be developed and structured in such a way that they focus on matters of interest of the stakeholders and local players. The components of the research agenda forms an integral part of this article, and are discussed in the following section.

DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA

It is important that any research in the municipal sphere of government focuses on areas that are of interest to local communities and broader local players. Municipal research ought to generate research findings that are able to shape strategies intended to deal directly with problems experienced within communities. As opposed to broader statistical data and representations often generated by a census, the components suggested in this article generates experience, and the manner in which beneficiaries and other local players such as the business sector perceive the performance of a municipality over a specified period of time. Since the research components generate experience, public officials would find the research results easy to work with, as opposed to the difficulty they often face while trying to deduce meanings from statistical data generated by a census (Malefane, 2008(a): 3). As part of the research agenda in the municipal sphere of government, this article suggests four major components, namely, basic socio-economic indicators, satisfaction with life and emotional wellbeing; satisfaction with municipal services; and performance. The components are discussed in subsequent sections of the article.

Biographical data

The biographical data is the first part of the components intended for research in a municipal area, and includes gathering data such as marital status, age, home language, and respondents' period of residence in a municipal ward and whether they are property

owners or tenants. The essence of gathering biographical data using these components is that they may provide hints in the interpretation of the research findings. They also are important instruments with which data sets can be tested for reliability, and are useful in conducting biographical profiles of residents of a municipal area of residence (*cf.* Section A of Annexures A & B).

Basic socio-economic indicators

The basic socio-economic indicators, (*cf.* Section B of Annexures A & B) include the information that is used to determine both social and economic levels of respondents within municipal areas. The indicators include the following:

- type of dwelling and quantity of each;
- number of household members, their employment status and economic sectors in which they are employed, and whether household members are unemployed or are pensioners;
- income sources and total monthly incomes of household and occupational categories of household members;
- economic sectors within which household heads are employed;
- distance between home and place of work and the mode of transport used; and
- type of businesses household-heads think are needed in their area of residence.

Satisfaction with life and emotional wellbeing

The third research component focuses on household satisfaction with life and emotional wellbeing. This section uses internationally recognised scales (ranging from 1-7) to measure the life satisfaction and emotional wellness of households. The satisfaction with life and emotional wellness are important subjective indicators of quality of life (*cf.* third part of Annexure A).

Satisfaction with municipal services and performance

The section on satisfaction with municipal services on performance measures the level of satisfaction of households with the municipal services and performance. It collects information on the degree to which households are satisfied with various services of the municipality. In this section, approximately 12 questions relating to both satisfaction with municipal services and council's performance over a specified period are asked. Perceptions on crime incidences and the payments of council rates and taxes (service accounts) also form an integral part of the questions asked. (*cf.* fourth part of Annexure A)

General remarks

As a research component, the section on general remarks is the last, and provides an opportunity to respondents to provide information about the items they think were

omitted while compiling the research questionnaire. In general, it enquires on matters that they consider relevant, and in most instances, they would provide additional information that might be of relevance, and that might assist in shaping the interpretation of the entire findings of the research (cf. last parts of Annexure A & B).

Having deliberated on components of the research agenda, it then becomes essential to focus on the institutionalisation of research within the operations of a municipality. Like other operational activities, the research function requires commitment and accountability. It is an essential function that relates to the planning, evaluation and assessment of impact development programmes have over communities to all local players an environment conducive to all local players. The discussion of the institutionalisation of research follows in the next section.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF RESEARCH IN A MUNICIPALITY

The major logical question addressed in this article, subsequent to its proposition of various components of the research agenda, is where to locate research activity within a municipality. It must however, be emphasised from the onset that though the article locates research as an institutionalised component, measures to ensure linkage of the research component with various research institutions and individuals need to be guaranteed. This action will assist in the circumvention of role duplication. The subsequent discussion that highlights an embodiment of research in the IDP cycle suggests the location of the research component. The research component, this article suggests, should be located within the IDP centre, and be inter-linked to related units (PIMSS centre) and all units within the municipality.

This article considers the district municipality as a strategic location and host for the research component of category B and C municipalities. Local municipalities that reside within the municipal jurisdiction of the host district municipality should be seen as major stakeholders in the undertaking of annual research projects. Major reasons underlying the location of the research component in the district municipal sphere are that the district municipalities, as opposed to local municipalities, are better positioned to effectively plan, organise, and co-ordinate all research activities. In addition, the district municipalities are better positioned to attract sources of funding and other resources than local municipalities (MAC, 2001: 8). In this way, the required amount of funding to cater for the number of vacancies, as a result of the institutionalisation of the research component, will be minimal, as opposed to the condition in which local municipalities were to serve as hosts of the centre.

Apart from the issues relating to the location, one important question remains unanswered. Where to locate the research function within the overall operation of the district municipality? Is it a political or administrative function? Although the political sector of the municipality will be able to source information that would be beneficial in redirecting municipal performance standards of different units, the research function remains an administrative function. The district municipal manager will have to oversee and be held accountable for matters relating to the research component. The

institutionalisation of municipal research is seen as part of the continuing transformation geared towards meeting considerable challenges in the municipal environment. The process cannot succeed unless municipal leaders, organised labour and other stakeholders develop a common vision and work together to achieve it.

CONCLUSION

Based on challenges that the South African government is faced with, particularly municipalities, research becomes an even more important part of service delivery. For government to meet the expectations of the broader society, it requires information that will enable it to make informed decisions. The role of Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), and other research organisations emerged to bridge this gap. However, lack of capacity to translate the statistical data into meaningful operational plans by municipalities and other associated challenges, suggest alternative ways in which municipalities could keep abreast with the changes in their environment.

Not only must the institutionalisation of research inform development decisions in a municipality, but should serve as a means in which the broader community, business and local players, participate directly in activities of a municipality. The undertaking of research in municipal sphere of government will assist municipalities achieving the true principles of democracy, giving power to local communities. Since it also would assist in identifying opportunities in the external environment, this article identifies the need for research on other aspects of the external environment of municipalities in South Africa.

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ANNEXURE A: SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SURVEY

POTCHEFSTROOM - CITY COUNCIL



SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SURVEY

GIS ID				ACCOUNT NUMBER				WARD			
0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	4	5	6	7	4	5	6	7
8	9	0	1	8	9	0	1	8	9	0	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

ARE YOU A SA CITIZEN	
<input type="radio"/> Y	YES
<input type="radio"/> N	NO

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use an HB pencil, black or blue pen only.
- Answer questions as they relate to you and members of your family.
- Colour the bubble most applicable to members of your household.

CORRECT MARK

INCORRECT MARKS

BASIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

TYPE OF DWELLING AND QUANTITY OF EACH	
1 Formal House	1 2 3 4 5
2 Informal House	1 2 3 4 5
3 Backyard Shack	1 2 3 4 5
4 Flat/Hostel	1 2 3 4 5

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	
Number of people in dwelling	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Number of people in household	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD	
R 0 - 1000	1
R 1001 - 3500	2
R 3501 - 5000	3
R 5001 - 10000	4
R 10000+	5

EMPLOYMENT OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Husband, wife & children > 19y)					
	Unemployed	Employed			Pensioner
		Formal	Informal		
Male	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Female	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

WHAT IS THE MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME FOR THIS HOUSEHOLD	
Informal sector activities: e.g. hawking, trading, odd jobs, etc.	1
Small business, working for own account	2
Social pensions and grants (old age, disability, child grant, veteran, etc.)	3
Remittances, alimony, gifts in cash or kind	4
Private pensions, insurance etc	5
Rental	6
Salary, wage	7

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE YOU TO REACH YOUR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT?	
Less than 15 minutes	1
Between 15 and 30 minutes	2
More than 30 minutes but less than 1 hour	3
More than an hour	4
Not applicable? Do not work	5
Not applicable? Work from home	6

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

THE FOLLOWING ARE STATEMENTS OF LIFE SATISFACTION THAT YOU MAY AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH. IT IS EXPECTED OF YOU TO INDICATE YOUR AGREEMENT WITH EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS BY COLOURING THE APPROPRIATE CIRCLE, USING THE 7 POINT SCALE BELOW.

STATEMENTS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. In most ways my life is closely to my ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The conditions of my life are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am not satisfied with my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. In my community people do not support each other at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My health and the health of my family is generally very bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

STATEMENTS	All of the time	Most of the time	A good bit of the time	Some of the time	Hardly ever	Never
1. How often do you feel happy, calm and peaceful?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Do you have someone you can turn to in times of stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6

SATISFACTION WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICES

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING SERVICES IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD? ARE YOU VERY SATISFIED, SATISFIED, NEITHER SATISFIED NOR, DISSATISFIED, VERY DISSATISFIED?

SERVICE	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither / Nor	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A Refused
1. Water supply	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Electricity supply	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Roads	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Maintenance of planted areas, trees and verges	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Signposting of roads	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Road safety for children in the neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Noise pollution control	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Air pollution control	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Refuse removal	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Storm water drains	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Sewerage	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Street lighting	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Transport	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Housing delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Convenience shops / stores	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Safety and security	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Understanding from the Ward Councillor	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Transparency of Council decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Involvement in ward committee	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Involvement in Council decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Recreation and sporting facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

HAVE YOU SEEN ANY IMPROVEMENTS IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD THE PAST YEAR?	
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

DURING THE PAST YEAR, HAS THE CRIME SITUATION IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD GOT BETTER OR GOT WORSE OR STAYED THE SAME?	
Better	1
Same	2
Worse	3

IN YOUR OPINION DO MOST PEOPLE IN THIS AREA PAY RATES?	
Yes, I think that most people pay rates	1
No, I don't think that most people pay rates	2
I don't know	3

WOULD YOU AGREE THAT IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO TO PAY FOR SERVICES?	
Yes, I agree that it is the right thing to do to pay for services	1
No, I don't agree that it is the right thing to do to pay for services	2

HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE POTCHEFSTROOM CITY COUNCIL OVER THE PAST YEAR IN:

STATEMENTS	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither / Nor	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know / Refused
1. Attracting investment to Potchefstroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Making Potchefstroom beautiful with attractive parks and gardens	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Keeping Potchefstroom free of litter	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Controlling air pollution in Potchefstroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Attracting tourists to Potchefstroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Promoting the cultural and art life of Potchefstroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Listening to the needs of ordinary Potchefstroom citizens	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Keeping the Potchefstroom city centre commercially viable	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Solving the city's housing problem	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Assisting small business	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Involving the Citizens in the IDP process	1	2	3	4	5	6

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