

Provincial framework for public participation in Gauteng

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Making towns & cities work for people



Structure of the Presentation

- ❑ Background to the Project
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- ❑ Way forward

Background

Project Objective:

To maximise public participation and community involvement in matters of local government, and to foster and strengthen public participation processes and structures, through the development of a Provincial Framework on Public Participation

Methodology

- ❑ Theoretical and conceptual framework
- ❑ Evaluation of actual participatory practice
 - Review of municipal, provincial and national documentation
 - Field research
 - 84 interviews (approx 6 officials per municipality)
 - 6 focus group sessions (62 participants)
- ❑ Development of Provincial Framework
 - Informed by conceptual framework and evaluation findings
 - 3 presentation meetings for discussion
- ❑ Limitations
 - Time-frames
 - Self-evaluation by officials

Document Outline

Executive Summary

Part A – The concept of public participation

(Chapters 1-3)

Part B – The foundation for a Provincial Framework

(Chapters 4 -5)

Part C – The Provincial Framework on Public Participation

(Chapters 6-9)

Part A : The concept of Public Participation

Working Definition:

“The participation of all residents of a country, including citizens and non-citizens, in the decision-making process of all three spheres of government”

(Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation, DPLG, 2007)

- Conceptual Underpinnings and Current Debates
- International Trends

Part B : Laying the foundation for a provincial framework

❑ Explores 2 foundational bodies of knowledge:

- Policy framework (minimum legislative compliance required)
- An evaluation of current public participation practice in Gauteng municipalities

❑ Structure of the evaluation:

- Are the basics in place?
- How effective have these efforts been so far?
- General conclusions from municipalities themselves

Part B : Are the basics in place?

- 50% of municipalities have official public participation policies/strategies
- All municipalities have dedicated public participation staff (who usually sit within the Speaker's Office)
- Financial and infrastructure resources available (limited)
- Limited training and continuous learning opportunities on public participation for officials
- Interpersonal skills – key requirement needed
- Range of structures and systems in place - Ward committee structure in all municipalities
- Limited formal evaluations

Part B : How effective have these efforts been?

- Structures, Systems and Processes

□ Ward committees, ward councillors, CDWs

- Largely effective : high levels of functionality; good working relations with the municipality; informed and engaged communities
- Major challenges : role clarity and cooperation; limited resources; political affiliation; impact and report backs to municipality

□ Engaging civil society

- The majority indicated that they do so through public meetings; imbizos; IDP processes; special projects; business summits

Part B: How effective have these efforts been? - Structures, Systems and Processes

❑ Participation in the IDP process

- Encouraged by all municipalities
- Attendance at IDP public meetings increased since 2006
- Emergence of community-based planning (CBP) in Gauteng
- Service delivery complaints dominate meetings
- Actual influence?

❑ Participation in the Budgeting process

- Public merely informed about already crafted budget
- Not always clear link betw IDP content & annual/medium term budgets
- Accessibility limitations

❑ Participation in Service Delivery decisions

- Little public input into strategic decisions - service levels, quality, & new infrastructure investment
- Technical Services officials feel that public consultation through the IDP process is sufficient
- Limited customer satisfaction surveys and poor responsiveness to complaints

Part B: How effective have these efforts been? - Structures, Systems and Processes

❑ **Public oversight of the municipality's performance**

- 60% of municipalities involve the public; 40% - no formal mechanisms
- Involvement through IDP process; suggestion/complaint boxes; imbizos; media; ward meetings; access to annual reports published
- Internal performance gaps: communication systems; limited skilled and experienced staff; not all staff levels monitored

❑ **Municipal communication systems**

- The communication function and public participation
- Popular communication initiatives to promote public participation
- Addressing language barriers

❑ **Dealing with Petitions and Protests**

- Formal petitions systems in place but not being used effectively
- No standard methods (protests) – depends on issue and municipality
- Protest as a form of public participation requiring appropriate response mechanisms

Part B: How effective have these efforts been? - Skills and Resources required

- Interpersonal skills
- Management and administrative skills
- Infrastructure resources
- Financial resources
- HR capacity
- More continuous learning opportunities

Part B: General conclusions from municipalities themselves

❑ 49% of respondents considered public participation to be largely effective:

- High turn-out at public meetings and imbizos
- Designated units focusing on public participation
- Relatively functional ward structures
- Tangible service delivery outcomes

❑ 40% thought that public participation was not effective:

- Organizational weaknesses (coordination and communication)
- Limited staff skills and resources
- Lack of political will and commitment
- Community understanding of municipal processes and apathy

❑ 11% were not sure:

- No real indicators to measure effectiveness
- Community assessment required

Part B: General conclusions from municipalities themselves

☐ **Most effective initiatives:**

- Ward committees
- Public meetings
- Mayoral imbizos
- People's assemblies; roadshows; IDP; Petitions

☐ **Largest obstacles:**

- Limited budget
- Lack of service delivery
- Communication with communities
- Low attendance levels
- Staff capacity; lack of coordination and planning; political interference

Part C: Provincial Framework – A few basic principles

- Coordination among different spheres and levels of government is important and should be inclusive of local processes and structures, including ward committees
- District municipalities should use local municipality structures for public participation, limiting their involvement to a coordinating role to avoid duplication
- The IDP process is the primary vehicle for the state to formulate sector-based development plans that affect local communities
- Participatory systems and processes need to be contextualised within specific municipal life-cycles
- Public participation efforts should be directed at the inclusion of the most marginalized sectors of society through existing structures and systems.
- Formally sanctioned government structures for participation do not replace organic civil society structures and processes
- Spaces must be opened up for both government-organised *and* spontaneous behaviour from residents themselves

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

- ❑ Municipal structures to encourage public participation (mandatory and recommended)
- ❑ Municipal systems and processes to encourage public participation (mandatory and recommended)
- ❑ Roles and responsibilities of different actors within a municipality

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

Mandatory municipal structures

- Ward committees

Recommended municipal structures

- District coordinating forums
- IDP forums
- People's Assemblies
- Stakeholder Forums
- Ad hoc consultative forums
- Petitions Committees

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

Mandatory municipal systems and processes

- Public participation in the crafting of the IDP
- Public participation in the crafting of the municipal budget
- Public participation in CBP processes
- Channelling sector-specific issues from ward committees and the general public to relevant government response structures
- Public input into strategic decisions on service delivery and new infrastructure investment
- Public oversight of the municipality's performance
- General responsiveness to public complaints and issues
- Establishing and resourcing public participation roles and responsibilities

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

Recommended municipal systems and processes

- Host government izimbizos and other public meetings regularly
- Host stakeholder summits and briefings
- Use a variety of media to disseminate information about their activities
- Use a variety of channels and events to gain feedback on municipal activities

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

Roles and responsibilities of different actors within the municipality

- Speaker
- Mayor
- Ward councillor
- Ward committee
- Municipal manager and HoDs
- Traditional leaders
- Community Development Workers (CDWs)

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of municipalities in enhancing participation

Beyond structures and systems: developing a substantive relationship with civil society (including academia)

*“Municipalities should build on existing civil society groupings ...
as this is where there is already energy and interest”*
(Draft National Framework, DPLG, 2007)

- Recognise and effectively engage civil-society initiated spaces / forms of participation
- Stakeholder register of organised civil society
- Advisory committees
- Partnerships for developmental projects
- Support organisational development of civil society formations

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of provincial departments in enhancing participation

□ **Public Participation Programme for DLG - Strategic objectives:**

- To strengthen municipal practice through critical reflection
- To monitor municipal performance and determine support required
- To build up a body of knowledge
- To capacitate municipalities for more effective performance
- To promote cooperative governance
- To deepen the relationship between government and civil society

□ **Programme beneficiaries and stakeholders:**

- Relevant provincial and national departments, and parastatals
- Municipalities
- Organised civil society formations (including academia);
- Residents in the province

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Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of provincial departments in enhancing participation : Key Projects

1. Monitoring and evaluation of municipal public participation practice:

- reviewing annual plans and quarterly municipal reports, providing recommendations, designing appropriate interventions
- annual survey to test community attitudes re: effectiveness of municipal participation efforts

2. A knowledge management and shared learning system:

- collect, package and disseminate information eg. case study documentation; expertise database; guidelines; website section; conferences; learning exchanges, etc.
- establish a community of practice - a forum bringing together officials; frontline role-players; civil society practitioners (including academia) to exchange learning, and build relationships.

3. A skills development and capacity building programme:

- skills audit, development and implementation of a training and assessment plan; sourcing service providers; support to municipalities.
- directed support for municipal CBP processes

Part C: Provincial Framework – The role of provincial departments in enhancing participation : Key Projects

4. Establishing a Provincial Coordinating Forum on Public Participation

- regularly bringing together provincial officials from various departments and municipal staff representatives involved to coordinate public participation efforts

5. Building an ongoing relationship with civil society

- supplementing municipal initiatives; supporting engagement through government-provided and civil society-initiated spaces of participation; involving civil society in an advisory capacity; initiating partnerships in developmental projects

6. A province-wide petitions and issue-based response management system

- to ensure a coordinated government response to petitions and issues raised by communities through effective channelling among government spheres and departments

Recommended Monitoring / Way forward

- The DLG should undertake a community assessment of public participation in the Province, the findings of which will also inform the finalisation of the Framework
- Recommendations are developmental in nature - strongly encouraging constant engagement towards improvement
- Recommendations are minimalist guidelines to work with in terms of implementing incremental changes as required
- Continuous consultation between municipalities and provincial government departments are strongly encouraged
- Regular annual review process is recommended to assess the framework with municipalities in order to determine areas for improvement as required