



[Accounting for Basic Services: Policy Briefs](#)

In order to improve accountability and to ensure that communities' democratic rights go beyond a simple vote towards active political participation and engagement, efforts need to be made to capacitate and enable citizens to do so. In 2016-2018, Afesis-corporation, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF) Southern Africa Office, Isandla Institute and PlanAct have jointly implemented a project entitled "Accounting for basic services: Tackling the inadequate use of resources by municipalities and building a rights-based approach to service delivery" - referred to as the ABS Project. The project has been supported by the EU Delegation to South Africa.

The ABS Project has developed a number of policy briefs, focusing on key issues that have been identified during the course of the project. The purpose of these briefs is to highlight the issue identified (e.g. inadequate access to basic services), outline the policy and institutional context (including the legal framework, municipal policies, intergovernmental relations, roles and responsibilities), identify challenges, gaps and opportunities, and make recommendations for policy and practice/uptake of policy.

Policy brief 1: Local Government Responsibility to provide Basic Services to Indigent Households

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[Summary version](#)

The Constitution highlights the right of all citizens to have access to basic levels of services. This principle is underpinned by the National Indigent Policy, which says that municipalities must provide free basic services (FBS) to indigent people in a sustainable manner. The Indigent Policy's aim is therefore to alleviate poverty in disadvantaged communities by providing free basic water (at least 6 kilolitres per month), free basic electricity (at least 50 kWh per month), and subsidised sewerage and sanitation as well as solid waste management (up to R50 per month or 100% subsidy to indigent households).

Policy brief 2: The Reality of Insecure Environments

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Rapid urbanisation has contributed to the growth of informal housing on a large scale. The accelerated migration of people from mainly rural areas into urban areas has caused informal settlements to grow beyond the coping capacity of municipal infrastructure, which has resulted in

the deterioration of living conditions and the surrounding environment.

Policy brief 3:

Full version

Summary version