LEARNING BRIEF #1

Back to Basics and the IDP: Placing the IDP at the centre of COGTA's Back to Basics programme[1]

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At the end of 2013, the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) produced a Back to Basics document launching a campaign in which they are encouraging municipalities to ensure that they understand and can deliver the most basic of mandated services. To achieve this, they assessed the 278 local municipalities across the country and categorised them. They found three categories; those that were doing well, those that had most of the basics right and required some support to do well, and those that were completely dysfunctional. The back to basics campaign essentially outlines how COCGTA will support all these municipalities, particularly those in the lowest rung, to deliver on their mandate. However, in the entire Back to Basics document there is no mention of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is a cornerstone of development planning in a local municipality.

This paper seeks to first bring this to the attention of the authors of the Back to Basics document. The campaign is incomplete and ill-targeted if it fails to guide resource allocation in local municipalities through the IDP. Secondly, the paper advises on how the IDP could best be conceptualised and approached, proposing a move away from the focus on the IDP as a plan but more on conceptualising it as both a process and a plan. The paper then unpacks this proposed new approach to the IDP; the IDP as a process and the IDP as a plan.

Introduction

The Back to Basics (B2B) campaign[2] of government aims to improve the functioning of municipalities to better serve communities by getting the basics right. According to the B2B campaign[3], about one third of municipalities can be categorized as dysfunctional, in that they are a long way from getting the basics right and need significant intervention and support from provincial

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[1] This knowledge Brief expands on the article by Eglin R and Ngamlana R (2015) *Responsive planning and responsible implementation: improving good local governance in the Integrated Development Planning process*, found in "In Pursuit of Responsible and Responsive Local Governance" published by the Good Governance Learning Network, http://ggln.org.za/2015-solg-publication-in-pursuit-of-responsible-and-responsive-local-governance.pdf

[2] "Back to Basics: serving our communities better! To build a responsive, Caring and Accountable Local Government", CoGTA, 2014 http://www.cogta.gov.za/summit2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/plgsummit-backtobasics-discussion-document.pdf

[3] Drawing on a recent review by COGTA of South Africa's 278 municipalities

and national government; while another third can be categorized as doing relatively fine in that they are just managing to get most of the basics right and require some support from provincial and national government in certain areas; while the final third are doing well, and require very little support from higher levels of government, with government providing the enabling environment for them to get on and do their work.

A municipality that is getting the basics right, according to the B2B campaign, is one where, amongst other things:
(1) the municipal councillors are holding meetings and making decisions;
(2) officials and councillors are adhering to their roles and responsibilities;
(3) ward committees and other public participation structures are functioning;
(4) basic services, including water, roads, refuse removal, etc. are being delivered and maintained;
(5) finances are being effectively managed; and
(6) municipalities have appropriate staff doing their work and being held accountable.

However, nowhere in the B2B campaign does it mention the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This is very surprising as the IDP is the core of the municipal planning process. The IDP is the municipality's business plan, guiding all actions of the institution. Section 25 of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA 32 of 2000) states that:

> "(e)ach municipal council must adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality which – (a) links, integrates and co-ordinates plans and takes into account proposals for the development of the municipality; (b) aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan; (c) forms the policy framework and general basis on which annual budgets must be based; (d) complies with the provisions of this Chapter; and (e) is compatible with national and provincial development plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation."

The B2B campaign document does however make reference to numerous other plans including for example:

- ward level service delivery plans (page 11)
- fundable consolidated infrastructure plans (page 12), and comprehensive infrastructure and maintenance plans (page 14) and multiyear infrastructure investment and maintenance plans (page 21)
- local spatial development frameworks (page 13)
- community engagement plans (page 13)
- procurement plans (page 15) and financial recovery plans (page 15)

The B2B campaign is incomplete without the municipality producing and implementing a basic IDP. Much as we assert this, we also caution that careful consideration is necessary in how a basic IDP is defined as we could fall into the trap of expecting municipalities, especially weaker municipalities, to do too much. We don't want to burden municipalities by expecting them to produce more plans, and we also don't want them to spend all their time and effort in organising and participating in

various inter departmental and public participation processes and never get to the implementation phase.

With this in mind, we propose that there should be two broad elements to a basic IDP, the process and the product.

- The IDP as a process should outline the basic steps involved in producing and implementing an IDP.
- The IDP as a product should outline the content of what should be included in the IDP.

The IDP as a Process

The IDP as a process should cover both the processes leading up to the municipality deciding what will be in the IDP as well the processes where the municipality implements these plans.

A better name for the IDP would be the *Integrated Development Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation* as it goes beyond just producing a plan and in effect should close the whole planning, implementation and evaluation development cycle. Table 1 below summarises the phases we propose should be involved in the IDP process.

Table 1: Proposed steps in an IDP process

Phases of a development planning and implementation process	How activities in the IDP planning and implementation process relate to development planning and implementation process
Understand the past and existing situation	• Conduct situation analysis of the municipality
Develop a long term vision	• Develop a twenty year vision for the Municipality
Set medium term strategic goals	• Prioritise five year targets
Identify and budget for short term actions to achieve goals	• Identify annual projects and budget these projects
Use the fact that you have clear plans and are making progress to achieve your goals in order to leverage in additional resources	• Apply for and co-ordinate input from other government departments, the private sector and communities.
Regularly review progress of short term actions towards medium term targets and make adjustments as necessary	• Use project steering committees to regularly review progress in implementing projects • Use ward structures to monthly/ quarterly review implementation of projects identified in plans • Conduct annual reviews of progress in achieving medium term targets, and make steering measures as needed • Evaluate appropriateness of plans in addressing targets • Draw lessons from previous projects to inform the implementation of future projects
Less regularly evaluate progress towards and relevance of medium term targets in working towards long term vision and modify medium and longer term targets and strategies and long term vision	• Conduct 5 year reviews of IDP/ SDF/ sector plans etc. and determine appropriateness of these plans • Review and develop revised 5 year IDP plans

The development planning and implementation approach outlined in table 1 above draws on recent thinking in relation to the role of planning in complex environments.[4] In a complex environment it is difficult for decision makers to have all the information they need up front on which to base development interventions; it is difficult for stakeholders to agree on what the priority issues are that need to be addressed. As a consequence, there is uncertainty and possible disagreement as to the best approaches to achieve development outcomes; and those responsible for implementation are scattered amongst a range of structures and institutions making it difficult to coordinate implementation.   For these reasons, more conventional goal orientated development planning approaches are not suitable in the context of complex environments.

The development planning and implementation phases in the first column of table 1 also build on the planning and implementation process of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) methodology where development builds on local assets working systematically towards a longer term vision.[5]   In complex environments, drawing on the ABCD approach, development is rather seen as an evolutionary process, where, starting from where people are now, and moving towards a lose and broadly agreed vision, the municipality undertakes tentative initial steps towards this longer term vision, trying out various options and then, through reflection and learning, and regular monitoring and evaluation, modifying subsequent steps and actions to move towards the longer term and broader vision.

The IDP as a Product

In terms of the IDP as a product, the IDP is just one core document with multiple other plans feeding in and out of this core planning document of the municipality. This learning brief does not go into detail on the IDP as a product or the content of the IDP, suffice it to say that an IDP should include, as a minimum, a broad vision, a Spatial Development Framework (SDF) to guide spatial development decisions, sector and ward targets, a list of projects to be implemented by the municipality, budgets, and procedures for monitoring, steering and learning.   The IDP should explain how the municipality will deliver and maintain basic services, and it should explain how transformation will be achieved in the municipality.

A basic IDP needs to be clear and simple in how it conceptualizes and aligns the various plans of the municipality.   There is still some confusion in this regard, and this confusion needs to be addressed. National government needs to clarify which plans are to inform and which are to be an outcome of the IDP process. In this regard it is also important to be clear and consistent in the use of plan terminology and definitions. For, example the B2B campaign document makes reference to the following three plans which are in all likelihood the same: fundable consolidated infrastructure plans (page 12), comprehensive infrastructure and maintenance plans (page 14), and multiyear infrastructure investment and maintenance plans (page 21).

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[4] For a summary and introduction to planning in a complex environment see Hummelbrunner R and Jones H (2013) *A Guide for Planning and Strategy Development in the Face of Complexity*. Background note, Overseas Development Institute. http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8287.pdf (accessed 6 July 2015).

[5] To find out more about ABCD see http://tsdp.co.za/home/tsdp-overview/programmes/assets-based-community-development/, and http://www.abcdinstitute.org/

Plans that inform the IDP include, for example, long term development plans, which are not legislated, but it is advisable that the municipality should develop such longer term (e.g. 20 year horizon) plans. Municipal SDF plans are another input plan to the IDP that are legislated plans (see s26(e) of the MSA and s12(1) of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) number 16 of 2013). Note however that there is some confusion as to whether SDF's should inform IDP's or be a reflection of the IDP's or both. We argue that first and foremost the SDF should inform decision makers when deciding where future projects identified in the IDP should be located in space. Through the IDP process a number of projects will be identified, these then need to be reflected in a spatial infrastructure implementation and maintenance plan.   Other plans that emerge from an IDP are annual IDP plans and budgets, ward implementation plans, sector implementation plans, and project and budget plans for specific projects identified in the IDP.

The following are what we view as the basic institutional structures that are needed as part of the process of developing and implementing a basic IDP:

- An IDP Representative Forum which should at least meet on an annual basis to: 1) reflect on experiences of implementing the previous and present annual IDP, and 2) comment on the final draft of the IDP for the up-coming year prior to it being approved by council.   It is also recommended that the IDP forum establishes an IDP steering committee that meets more regularly to oversee the whole IDP process.
- Ward structures (as legislated according to part 4 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998) need to meet on a regular basis to: 1) at the start of the year comment on the IDP process plan, and reflect on achievements and lessons learnt from implementing the previous year's annual IDP; 2) during the year, monitor and steer the implementation of the current year's annual IDP; and 3) towards the end of the year reflect on the existing and past annual IDP and recommend revisions, if necessary, to the next year's annual IDP.
- Sector forums are not regulated at the moment, but consideration should be given to regulating such structures. These structures should meet at least annually or twice a year, so as to: 1) review the implementation of the previous year's sectors plan and make recommendations as to how the existing and future sector plans can be improved; 2) monitor and steer the implementation of the existing sector plans; and 3) comment on the draft annual IDP for the next year to make sure that these plans reflect sector priorities. On a five yearly basis these sector forums will also play a role in reviewing and revising the five year sector plans. It is advisable that these five year sector planning exercises should be conducted during years where the municipality is not reviewing and developing its five year IDP.
- Project steering committees which are established on a project by project basis and are responsible for ensuring that the project is properly planned and implemented according to the plan.

In other words these structures (except perhaps the project steering committee which is more time bound) should perform three on-going functions:

1) they should reflect on the experience of the implementation of previous pans;
2) they should monitor and steer the implementation of existing plans; and
3) they should input in and contribute towards the content of future plans.

In summary, municipalities need to recognize that they are unable to address all the needs of the municipality at once, so the municipality must use the IDP to prioritise what issues they will focus on first. Municipalities do not have all the information up front on which to base detailed future plans and they cannot claim to have the full answer for what the best way forward in any given situation will be, and as such, the IDP planning process must provide opportunities for learning and improvement over time. Municipalities need to recognise that there will be mistakes and some projects will not work as planned or do not contribute as expected in achieving desired outcomes, but that these less successful interventions need to be seen as part of a process of learning through doing.

Municipalities must ensure that those structures that are established to facilitate community participation and interdepartmental coordination function effectively and consistently. The IDP needs to be the keystone plan around which all other plans are coordinated, but there must not be too many sector and other plans feeding into this IDP, and neither should there be too many implementation plans coming out of the IDP.

The IDP needs to be clear on how the municipality will be addressing a few nationally identified priorities such as contributing to job creation, increasing settlement densities, and improving public transport. The IDP must take into account the potentially weak capacity of the municipality for implementation and as such must both include mechanisms (like training) to build this capacity, and also design implementation plans that recognise lack of capacity (e.g. prioritising provision of basic water and sanitation before venturing into additional and more complicated housing top structure construction). The municipalities budgets must be carefully aligned to the IDP priorities.

In conclusion, all municipalities must be supported to follow a basic IDP planning and implementation process, and produce an IDP that has basic content that meets the above loosely captured criteria. From this basic start, municipalities can incrementally expand and improve the process and the product of the IDP to be more advanced, where an advanced process involves more public participation, and more integration between departments and sector plans; and where a more advanced IDP product has more details, more background information, more learning questions, more ambitious spatial transformation targets, and the use of more technocratic tools like land value capture instruments[6].

It needs to be clear for municipalities what is expected from them when it comes to following the basic IDP process and producing a basic IDP document. Building on this basic development and implementation planning framework, municipalities need to be given the space to experiment in how they deliver these basic and more advanced IDP plans and how they move from more basic to more advanced planning processes and products. In this way, over time, through more iterative and incremental improvements to the process of producing the IDP and improving the content of

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[6] see http://www.urbanlandmark.org.za/downloads/improving_access_city.pdf and http://www.dag.org.za/images/pdf/research-reports/2010_Report_Value%20Capture%20_%20Fiscal%20and%20Regulatory%20Instruments%20for%20Pro-Poor%20Urban%20Development.pdf for more information on Land Value Capture.

the IDP, municipalities will become more responsive to their citizens and more responsible in how they carry out their planning and development functions.