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the dplg

Department:
Provincial and Local Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

GUIDELINES FOR PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WARD FUNDING MODEL

As contemplated in Section 73 of Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) as Amended by Section 6 (b) of the Local Government Laws Amendment Act, 2008

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO   Community Based Organization

CBP   Community Based Planning

CSO   Civil Society Organization

CDW   Community Development Worker

DPLG   Department of Provincial and Local Government

GTZ   German Agency for Technical Co-operation

IDP   Integrated Development Planning

KPA   Key Performance Area

KPI   Key Performance Indicator

LED   Local Economic Development

MFMA   Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act

MSA 1998 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 1998

MSA 2000 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

PMS   Performance Management System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the promulgation of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government in South Africa, enormous strides have been made in deepening local democracy and involving communities in the planning, budgeting and implementation of development projects. In terms of the Municipal Demarcation Act (1998), the country comprises of 283 municipalities that are the conduits for community representation and the frontline for the State's developmental programmes. Six of these are metropolitan municipalities (Category A), 231 are local municipalities (Category B) and 46 are district municipalities (Category C).

Further to this, there are 3895 wards demarcated within the metros and local municipalities that are aimed at ensuring that every community in the country has reasonable access to development processes. Government has also deployed CDWs in each ward to facilitate information and state support at household level. A vibrant Imbizo system involving political leadership of all three spheres of government has also evolved through practice to build the connectivity between government and communities. In addition, the Thusong Service Centres promote access to government-wide information and services.

Among the services which municipalities are required to provide to residents within their demarcated areas are water, electricity, sanitation, street lighting, solid waste disposal, and the construction and maintenance of roads. Additionally, local government is required to promote and encourage the development of local economies and facilitate the reduction of poverty. Central to the role of municipalities to deliver services to residents within their demarcated areas, is the right of citizens to participate in governance and government processes which is enshrined in the Constitution and further protected through legislation and various policy frameworks.

Legislation facilitates the active participation of members of the local community in the affairs of the municipality, including the formulation of integrated development plans (IDPs) and municipal budgets. The Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) requires municipalities to promote public participation and to build the capacity of residents, councillors and municipal officials to engage in participatory processes. As a means of tracking progress in this area, the executive of a municipality is obliged to report annually on the level of public participation in municipal matters.

In 2001 government introduced the ward participatory system as a credible system through which citizen participation in local governance is expected to take place. The Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) requires that all municipalities with ward committees make administrative arrangements to enable ward committees to perform their functions and exercise their powers effectively. Municipalities have broad discretion in framing the local operating policies for their ward committees.

Local government legislation has consolidated and opened up new spaces for citizens to directly participate in their own governance. To date, ward committees have been established in 99% of the municipalities. In short, all the ingredients have been assembled for effective, responsive and participatory local government. Yet, for all the achievements, in 2008 many would argue that local government still has to invest more resources towards promoting participatory governance and in particular towards functionalizing the ward committee participatory system.

While there can be no disputing the impressive scale of service delivery improvements and a strong commitment to the development of a culture of participation, it would seem that most municipalities still have to extend the impact of the ward committees in the community and within the council. The continued countrywide community protests can be viewed as an expression of dissatisfaction within this realm of governance in the country.

Public surveys highlight a number of problems with the ward committee model including a lack of resources available to conduct their activities and difficulties for poor members to participate in ward committee activities. Studies conducted by government indicate that in cases where ward committees function effectively, the municipality has sufficient financial resources to provide support to their ward committees, and to ensure that the 'business' of the ward committees filters through and forms an integral part of the daily processes of the municipality.

The purpose of this document is to provide a National Framework that describes a model with which municipalities can support and fund the operations of their ward committees, in particular regarding the promotion of aspirations, needs, and interests of local communities and their participation in local governance.

The National Framework must, obviously, be seen within the context of government policies on citizen participation in local government, and the effective provision of public services.

This document covers the following issues relevant to the funding model for ward committees:
- The scope for the national framework
- Roles and responsibilities for national, provincial and local government in the implementation of the framework
- Progress and good practice with regard to community participation
- The Legislative and policy framework
- Ward participatory system, functions of ward committees and their funding needs
- The criteria for calculating out of pocket expenses:
  - Guiding principles for the framework
  - Indicators for ward committees functionality and their activities
  - The role of municipalities in supporting ward committees
  - The review process
- The case study analysis

Through this framework and the ongoing **dplg** support programme of the ward committees; all municipalities would succeed in promoting active participation of the members of local communities in their affairs, including the formulation and implementation of integrated development plans, and municipal budgeting.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **The purpose of the National Framework,** is to determine a criteria for the calculation of the out of pocket expenses referred to in Section 73 (5) (b) of Local Government Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998 (Municipal Structures Act) as amended in 2008 and to define the role of provincial government in supporting the implementation of a ward participatory system at municipal level.

1.2 The National Framework must provide mechanisms, systems and procedures to promote holistic and integrated funding model for ward committees through a set criteria for payment of out of pocket expenses, and through impact assessment with regard to the functionality of ward committees. The National Framework should therefore provide norms and standards for all aspects of ward committee funding, and ward development. Section 73 of the Structures Act, requires the National Framework to include the following:

Mechanisms, systems and procedures to:
- Ensure that all municipalities deciding to establish ward committees, establish a ward committee for each ward in the municipality;
- Ensure that municipalities budget for the payment of out of pocket expenses, and pay members of ward committees on a monthly basis;
- Municipal Councils to develop a policy and determine criteria for the calculation of the out of pocket expenses;
- Ensure that the MEC of local government determines a provincial framework for funding ward committees;
- Municipal Council to make arrangements for the payment of out of pocket expenses to members of ward committees in respect of participation by ward committee members in the activities of the ward committees;
- Municipal Council to allocate funds and resources to enable ward committees to perform their functions, exercise their powers and undertake development in their wards within the framework;
- The development of ward profiles and a database of all ward committees for proper management and reporting;
- Monitoring the expenditure of municipalities on the implementation of the ward committee system;
- Evaluation of the impact of the funding model on the functionality of ward committees through 'community perception surveys'; and
- It also serves as a guide for national government in improving the local government equitable share by taking into account the challenges and opportunities related to participatory governance and the requirements of ward-based targeting to impact on household level development.

1.3 The National Framework highlights the obligations of municipalities to prioritise the funding of ward activities from their own budgets, sourced through own revenue, equitable share and the municipal systems improvement grant. It sets out indicators for ward committee

functionality and the related activities. The cost determinants are outlined are based on case studies and other considerations are presented for adaptation to each municipality's circumstances.

1.4   The National Framework addresses existing gaps with respect to deepening local democracy and improving public participation and empowerment. To this end it is not merely providing technical guidance on costs but presents guidance to municipalities to undertake spatially targeted budgeting (ward level focus) so that the reach of local governments' programmes are extended, and so that ward residents are stimulated and supported to be engaged in their own development and upliftment.

1.5   The implications of the National Framework are that it will empower ward councillors to play a greater role in community representation. It will mean that ward councillors have to work more closely with their ward committees. There will be greater community ownership of ward committees and ward councillors will have to be more accountable to the communities and their diverse interests and needs. Municipal councils will have to be more supportive of ward councillors and more responsive to ward-based issues.

1.6   It suggests that the fiscal framework and grant system of government should consider needs of different municipalities and enable the under-resourced municipalities to fulfil their obligations including ward committee support. Additional to this, the framework takes into account the fact that municipal wards are different in geographic and population size, and therefore suggest that municipalities with vast wards must find ways within the legal frame of supporting the 10 ward committee members through the establishment of sub-structures

1.7   The National Framework emphasises that municipalities must prioritize support for ward committees from their own revenue, equitable share and Municipal Systems Improvement Grant (MSIG).

1.8   Scope of the National Framework

1.8.1   The development of the National Framework has been an iterative and integrative process that relies on contribution from a number of stakeholders, as well as contributions from a number of inter-and intra-governmental processes.
1.8.2   Inputs were received from stakeholders during the multilingualism conference which was attended by all municipalities, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Portfolio Committee members, and national government departments.
1.8.3   According to the Structures Act, the term of office for all established ward committees must be the same as that of ward councillors (5 year term).
1.8.4   The scope of the National Framework is developed according to the term of office for ward committees, and must be interpreted within the context of municipal budgeting process.

1.9   Roles and responsibilities for all spheres of government

1.9.1   **The Department of Provincial and Local Government:** The **dplg** is the national lead agent for the implementation of section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (the Constitution), and hence the national framework, and must

therefore provide national norms and standards to ensure coordination, integrated and cohesive approach to the implementation of the national framework. However, the Minister for Provincial and Local Government has a number of exclusive powers as summarised below:

- Establish the National Framework that must determine the criteria for the payment of out of pocket expenses in terms of section 73 (5) of the Municipal Structures Act.
- Prescribe the manner in which the National Framework must be implemented across the spheres of government.
- Publish and document a national list of best performing ward committees and ward councillors in the promotion of community participation and the provision of adequate resources for ward committee work.
- Execute the overarching auditing function to ensure that all municipalities with established ward committees are implementing the National Framework.
- Enforce compliance with the National Framework and any other relevant legislation
- Review the impact of community participation policies of provinces and municipalities, strategies, plans, programmes and actions and ensuring that they conform with relevant legislation.
- Declare certain municipalities a national priority if the Minister reasonably believes that such municipalities require specific action to rectify or support them to implement the National Framework.
- Investigate situations that are likely to create instability or unrest as a result of poor government response to community needs

1.9.2   **Provincial Departments of Local Government**: Provincial departments are the provincial lead agents for implementing section 152 of the Constitution, and hence the Provincial Framework, in each province and must therefore provide, where necessary, provincial norms and standards to ensure coordinated, integrated and cohesive approach to the implementation of the framework. Each provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for local government has a number of exclusive powers as summarised below:

- The MEC must designate an officer in the provincial administration as the senior manager who is responsible for the coordination of all the public participation and ward committee support programmes
- Prepare an annual report providing information on progress regarding the implementation of the National Framework and compliance with the provincial implementation plan
- Process an application for an intervention to aid the municipality to implement the national framework if the applicant is the municipality in the province.
- Declare a municipality a provincial priority if the MEC reasonably believes that the municipality requires specific action to rectify the situation, or support in the implementation of this framework.
- Establish a programme of public recognition of significant achievement in ward based participation

1.9.3   **Municipalities:** As with the **dplg** and the provincial departments, municipalities have a number of responsibilities within the governance cycle towards ensuring the implementation of this framework. In this regard the municipality must:

- Designate a municipal official from its administration to manage the affairs of ward committees
- Develop a municipal ward committee implementation plan for inclusion in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
- Prepare an annual report including progress regarding the implementation of this framework, and compliance with the municipal plan.
- Implement the national framework and carry out the responsibility for performing the functions of establishing ward committees, developing capacity of ward committee members, ward councillors, and funding ward development initiatives.

1.10   Guiding principles

1.10.1   A number of principles that support good governance must be used to direct the implementation of the National Framework. These principles include the following:

- **Accountability:** All organs of state in the different spheres of government should maintain accountability, ensuring that their decisions are not biased and that their responsibility to the communities is retained
- **Communication:** Effective communication between the national, provincial and local spheres of government and communities should ensure access to information and the empowerment of communities to participate.
- **Community well-being and empowerment:** Community well-being and empowerment must be promoted through public dialogues, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and other appropriate means.
- **Conflict of interest:** Actual or potential conflicts of interest between government, and other stakeholders should be resolved through conflict resolution procedures.
- **Decision-making:** Decisions must take into account the interests, needs and values of all interested and affected parties, and this includes recognising all forms of knowledge, including traditional and ordinary knowledge.
- **Effectiveness:** Actions and decisions pertaining to community participation should achieve set objectives in a manner that constitutes efficient use of resources, considering economic, social and environmental costs.
- **Equity:** The vital role of women and youth in community participation and development must be recognised and their full participation therein must be promoted.
- **Sustainable Development:** Development must be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.
- **Intergovernmental coordination:** There must be intergovernmental coordination and harmonisation of policies, legislation and actions relating to community participation.
- **Participation:** The participation of all interested and affected parties in ward development, and governance must be promoted, and the people must have the opportunity to develop the understanding, skills and capacity necessary for achieving equitable and effective participation, and participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged persons must be ensured.

- **Batho-Pele**: Ward governance and development must place people and their needs at the forefront, and serve their physical, psychological, developmental, cultural, linguistic and social interests equitably.
- **Transparency**: Decisions must be taken in an open and transparent manner, and access to information must be provided in accordance with the law.

2.   Legislative and Policy Context

2.1 Background

2.1.1   South Africa has a well established policy and legal framework for public participation and empowerment. **Section 152 of the Constitution** of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996) confirms a number of citizen rights and more specifically, the rights of communities to be involved in local governance. Municipalities are obliged to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government. This obligation extends to the entire way a municipality operates and functions. It is not limited to structures such as ward committees.

2.1.2   The **White Paper on Local Government** together with the Municipal Structures Act and the Municipal Systems Act details the duties of municipalities further. Active participation by communities has to be encouraged at four levels:

   i.   As voters; to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote;

   ii.   As citizens; who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible;

   iii.   As consumers and end-users; who expect value for money, affordable services, and courteous and responsive service; and

   iv.   As organized partners involved in the mobilization of resources for development via businesses, non-governmental organizations and community-based institutions.

2.1.3   Municipalities have to develop mechanisms to ensure community participation in policy initiation and formulation, and in the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation. The following approaches are encouraged and required:

   i.   Forums to allow organized formations to initiate policies and/or influence policy formulation, as well as to participate in monitoring and evaluation.

   ii.   Structured stakeholder involvement in certain council committees, in particular if these are issue-oriented committees with a limited lifespan rather than permanent structures.

   iii.   Participatory budgeting initiatives aimed at linking community priorities to capital investment programmes.

   iv.   Focus group participatory action research conducted in partnership with NGOs and CBOs that can generate detailed information about a wide range of specific needs and values.

v.   More institutionalised structures such as Ward Committees and IDP Representative Forums.

2.14   **Local Government Laws Amendment Act, 2008** requires that all municipalities that have established ward committees must budget for all the 'out of pocket' expenses incurred by ward committee members while performing their council duties. The Act goes further to suggest that municipalities must develop their own policies, guided by the national and provincial frameworks and determine the criteria for calculation of the out of pocket expenses.

2.15   Municipalities are therefore expected to make arrangements for the payment of out of pocket expenses to members of ward committees in respect of participation by ward committee members in the activities of the ward committees, and to allocate funds and resources to enable ward committees to perform their functions, exercise their powers and undertake development in their wards within the framework of the law.

2.16   Municipal by-laws: according to Section 156 (2) of the Constitution, municipalities may make and administer by-laws for the effective administration of matters that fall within their scope of administration. Community participation, and the funding of the ward committees is listed as a matter in which municipalities have authority and national or provincial government may not compromise or impede a municipality's right to exercise its powers or perform its functions. Within this framework and in the context of provincial guidance municipalities may develop by-laws that deal with the criteria for the payment of out of pocket expenses.

3   Progress and Good Practice

3.1   In practice many municipalities have made significant progress with promoting community participation. The positive impact of community participation in local governance is demonstrated by the examples highlighted in the attached annexure (Annexure A) that emerged from the IDP Hearings held with all municipalities in the country as far back as 2005. Since then there has been further improvements. For example, Community Development Workers are now deployed in all municipalities, Thusong service centres have been extended more widely, and the Imbizo programme has evolved with all three spheres of government interacting more closely with communities.

3.2   All municipalities have IDP representative forums to facilitate community and stakeholder participation in the local planning and implementation processes. These forums, which have to be established in terms of regulations, also play a monitoring role. Similarly, ward committees are established in all municipalities in terms of the legislation except in the Western Cape where a different ward participatory system is used in municipalities such as City of Cape Town.

Although there are no comprehensive studies done on the functionality and effectiveness of these structures, they do play a significant role in promoting community participation. One indication of functionality is the extent to which community members are aware of their existence. In all the case studies there appeared to be an understanding that ward committee participatory system can only function properly if supported by Councils, and is

budgeted for on an annual basis. In general where ward committees are receiving administrative support such as the provision of meeting venues, furniture, recording and filing facilities they tend to be more effective.

3.3 Lessons from the field:

3.3.1   Many surveyed municipalities have begun to implement support programmes for ward committees. The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality has about 40 permanent staff members providing technical support to ward committees. A similar approach is also used by the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality which has employed 60 community development officers who are responsible for supporting community participation.

3.3.2   Other small municipalities such as Mbhashe and Nkonkobe Local Municipalities (in the Eastern Cape) have a very interesting support programme for ward committees. In Nkonkobe Local Municipality for example, ward committees receive a telephone allowance of R60.00 per month, R75.00 for meals during their meetings on a quarterly basis. Mbhashe Local Municipality provides ward committee members with traveling allowance of R150.00 on a bi-monthly basis for all their meetings and R200.00 per ward committee member for all Council meetings attended (which is on a quarterly basis).

3.3.3   In the metropolitan municipalities transport allowance is the only and most widely applied form of financial support outside training and capital costs. These municipalities adopted principle of paying a (R100- 00) per ward committee member on a monthly basis to cater for out of pocket expenses.

3.3.4   The case studies indicate that the majority of the small municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province are giving more allowances to ward committee members than is the case with the Metros. Mbhashe Local Municipality spent at least R4 million to compensate ward committee members for out of -pocket expenses per annum; while the surveyed metros spent much less (at least R1,2 million).

3.3.5   Most ward committee members are likely to spend more than R500.00 monthly, on telephone bills than they spend on meals. In municipalities where the ward participatory system is not working properly, it has been found that ward committee members are not adequately supported to meet their transport needs.

3.4 Key Challenges

3.4.1   Despite the progress highlighted above there are many challenges that exist with public
        participation in practice. These challenges with possible responses are summarised below:

Table 1:   Public Participation Challenges

	Problem Statement	Possible Responses
1.	**Local Government structures (IDP forums, ward committees) are not sufficiently facilitating a democratic culture of negotiation at a local level.** The result in many cases is technically or consultant driven outcomes. Some community groups are deliberately not engaging with the formalities of Local Government structures and are finding other means of pursuing their needs and interests. In lower income areas social mobilisation is taking place sometimes resulting in protests. In wealthier areas residents are pursuing their interests through residents associations and lobbying officials and councillors directly. The ward committees are therefore operating at the margins.	Better ownership and leadership of the participatory processes and engagement with technical information by councillors. Adopt facilitation methodologies that are less controlling of the engagement processes and more rigorous in developing strategic choices and options. Improved community ownership of ward committees. Ward committees should be seen to be representing the community's needs as a whole and not only of certain sections. LG Laws Amendment Act may address this matter - regarding role of ward councillor in the ward committee.
2.	**Ward level development is not explicitly and prominently addressed in municipal councils.** The result is that ward councillors that chair the ward committees have limited influence thus making ward committees less relevant.	Make role of wards relevant in council decision-making - link participation more directly to the allocation and control of resources for ward based projects. Reform the budgeting system in municipalities through mandatory provision for ward-based allocations. Municipal budgets could have three elements: • Strategic, municipal-wide programmes. • Allocations per ward based on projects identified through participatory means and determined by Councils. • Discretionary ward funds to be prioritised and used by the ward committees based on

	Problem Statement	Possible Responses
		community vote. "community-voted" funds.
3.	**Municipalities are not supporting ward committees sufficiently in order for them to function properly.**	Capacity building and training programmes LG Laws Amendment Act strengthens the role of municipalities. Funding Model • Guide to municipalities for budgeting for ward functioning • Influence intergovernmental fiscal framework.
4.	**Weak communication and interaction systems that extend beyond the formal participation structures.** The extent and scale of communication with communities is underestimated. The means of communication and interaction, including mayors assemblies, door-to-door campaigns, citizen satisfaction surveys, community radio, use of multilingualism, etc is not sufficiently implemented.	Improve national support to LG communication systems and methods. (LG Communication system established with GCIS) Promote multilingualism. Local Imbizos, Mayor's assemblies, community media, and radio
5.	**Weak or non-existent complaint management systems in municipalities.** This is coupled with **weak monitoring** of Batho Pele at Local Government level and appropriate national response management system.	Guidelines for complaint management systems in municipalities. Local Government Batho Pele hotline/ call centre with tracking and logging system – response management.
6.	**Weak capacity of communities to participate and influence development processes**	Further institutionalising participation forums and structures but more importantly the need to actively build social capital and encourage organisation of communities as key change agents
7.	**Inadequate accountability by all three spheres of government to ward communities**	Implementation of the CDWP, with a specific focus on sector departments' support to the work of CDWs Spatially focused budgeting and reporting by national and provincial line departments

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4. The criteria for the calculation of the 'out of pocket expenses':

4.1 Introduction

4.1.2 This section outlines the factors influencing the funding of wards. These include ward size, population size, and indicators of ward committee functionality with associated ward committee activities.

4.1.3 It further outlines the cost considerations and estimated costs associated with these influencing factors. It deals with funding mechanisms clarifying the central role of municipalities in fulfilling their developmental duties in respect of community participation.

4.1.4 Furthermore, this section addresses how municipalities should approach the funding and budgeting for spatial targeting and ward-based development requirements

4.1.5 In brief municipalities should approach funding and budgeting for wards at three levels:

- Council determines projects per ward: the municipality should identify capital and operational projects per ward together with other interventions in consultation with communities through the IDP process. The final projects are determined by Council

- Discretionary ward funds: the municipality allocates funds for projects to each ward to be used at the discretion of the ward committee in consultation with the communities. The funds do not go to the ward committee; they are spent through the municipal system and procedures. However the prioritisation of what the funds are to be used for by municipality is at the discretion of the ward committee. Council approves the amount per ward but not what the funds are to be used for.

- Ward committee operations: the municipality budget for ward committee operations and functionality. This includes technical support to ward committees, communications materials, and 'out-of-pocket' expenses for ward committee members.

4.2 The Status of Wards

4.2.1 There are 3895 wards demarcated wall-to-wall within the six metropolitan and 231 local municipalities of South Africa. The number of wards per municipality ranges from as few as 10 wards in the smaller municipalities to as many as 109 wards in the larger municipalities such as Johannesburg.

4.2.2 The average number of people residing in each ward ranges from as few as 6 000 in the case of Northern Cape Province to as many as 24 000 in Gauteng. Within each province there are also variations per municipality. The number of people per ward is a factor that influences democratic representation and participation, as well as costs.

Table 2: **Provincial Breakdown of number of wards in the country**

Province	Population	No. of Metros	No. of LMs	No. of Wards	Average no. of people per ward
Eastern Cape	6 527 747	1	38	636	10 263
Free State	2 773 059	-	20	300	9 243
Gauteng	10 451 713	3	8	423	24 708
KwaZulu-Natal	10 259 230	1	50	771	13 306
Limpopo	5 238 286	-	25	513	10 211
Mpumalanga	3 643 435	-	18	365	9 982
Northern Cape	1 058 060	-	27	174	6 080
North West	3 271 948	-	21	365	8 964
Western Cape	5 278 585	1	24	348	15 168
Total	**48 502 063**	**6**	**231**	**3 895**	**12 452**

4.3   The wall-to-wall demarcated wards are the spatial units and building blocks of the democratic local government system. Each ward has an elected local government Councillor (ward councillor) that is responsible for ensuring that the needs, aspirations and diverse interests of the community residing in the ward is well represented in the Municipal Council.

4.4   The ward councillor also serves as a link between the ward community and the rest of government to the extent to which there is proper consultation with local communities with respect to the planning and implementation of provincial and national programmes impacting on the ward.

4.5   The Establishment of Ward Committees

4.5.1   Status Quo

4.5.2   In undertaking the responsibility of proper representation and of facilitating the involvement of communities in their own development, the ward councillor can be supported by a ward committee. The current legislative provision makes allowance for municipalities to establish ward committees. A ward committee consists of the ward councillor who is the chairperson and no more than 10 other persons.

4.5.3   It is left up to the metropolitan or local municipal councils to make the rules with respect to the election procedures for ward committee members. This has to take into account equitable representation of women and the diverse interests within the ward. The term of the ward committee is also determined by the municipal council.

Table 3:   Provincial Breakdown of Ward Committee Establishment as at June 2008

Province	Number of Wards	Number of Ward Committees	Percentage per Province
Eastern Cape	636	6360	100%
Free State	300	2990	99.9%
Gauteng	423	4230	100%
KwaZulu Natal	771	7710	100%
Limpopo	513	5130	100%
Mpumalanga	365	3650	100%
Northern Cape	174	1740	100%
North West	365	3650	100%
Western Cape	348	2430	70%
TOTAL WARD COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED			99%

4.6 Powers of Ward Committees

4.6.1   Ward committees have the power to make any recommendations to the ward councillor and/or through the ward councillor to the metropolitan or local council on any matter affecting the ward.

4.6.2   In addition, the metropolitan or local council may delegate any duties or powers to the ward committee. Some municipalities have supported ward committees to undertake community based planning (ward based plans) to determine ward profiles and to influence the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of councils. This has been accompanied by funding to undertake ward based projects identified in these plans.

4.6.3   The Local Government Laws Amendment Act proposes to strengthen the developmental role of ward committees. The Act proposes that municipalities pay for the 'out of pocket' expenses of ward committee members. In addition, municipalities should budget for ward-based development.

4.7 Objectives of Ward Committees

4.7.1 Ward committees have an important role to play as a bridge between the municipal council and the community. They primarily have a representative role. There are difficulties with entrusting ward committees with an implementation role. The risk is that it may set them up in competition with council delivery programmes, and it may compromise there neutral representative and monitoring function. The other challenge is the accountability of resources which would require further sets of systems and procedures.

4.7.2 However, there is plenty of room for giving ward committees more discretion in the way funds are utilised and how projects are implemented within the ward. This can be done by reforming the budgeting system within municipalities. The main objectives of ward committees are summarised below:

    i.   Create formal unbiased communication channels and co-operative partnerships between the municipality and the community within a ward

    ii.   Ensure contact between the Municipality and the community through the use of, and payment of, services.

    iii.   Create harmonious relationships between residents of a Ward, the ward councillor, and geographic community and the municipality.

    iv.   Facilitate public participation in the process of development, review and implementation management of the IDP of the municipality.

    v.   Act as advisory body on council policies and matters affecting communities in the ward.

    vi.   Serve in officially recognised and specialized participatory structures in the municipality.

    vii.   Make recommendations on matters affecting the ward to the ward councillor or the local council, the executive committee and the mayor.

    viii.   Serve as a mobilizing agent for community action.

    ix.   Monitor development, and plan for and monitor implementation of ward based projects and ward discretionary funds (note control of funds and implementation rests with council).

4.8 The work of ward committees must be aimed at the following outcomes:

    i)   Enhance economic empowerment of communities

    ii)   Improve infrastructure and services

    iii)   Enhance local democracy and accountability

    iv)   Enhance social cohesion, nation building and integration of communities across class, race, culture and religion

Table 4: Indicators for Ward Committee Functionality

No.	Process Indicator	Output Indicator	Verifiable Source/Proof
1.	Number of ward committee management meetings held and percentage attendance by members	Close cooperation between ward committee members and ward councilors	Agendas and minutes of meetings held and filed in the ward committee filing system
2.	Number of ward meetings organised by the ward committee and percentage attendance by the ward community	Community participation in the IDP review sessions, and their involvement in the implementation of projects within the ward	Agendas and minutes of meetings held and filed in the ward committee filing system
3.	Submission and tabling of ward reports and plans to the Council covering: needs and priorities for the Ward, feedback on the performance of the Councils various line/service functions and their impact on the Ward.	Submission of ward plans to the Council for consideration during the IDP review process	Council records
4.	Number of door-to-door campaigns and/or interactions with street committees	Household information and support systems	Reports
5.	Number of complaints, queries, and requests registered from the community and attended to (checklist of met needs against registered needs and turn-around time)	Reduction of community protests	Complaints management system including complaints register
6.	Distributed publications (information brochures, flyers, newsletters, emails, sms, and others) over a period of time	Ward communication plan	Copies of communication material and proof of dissemination
7.	Management and updating of ward profile and database of indigent households	Quarterly reports on the status of the ward	Ward committee filing system

NB: In providing discretionary budget for ward-based initiatives, Municipalities must avoid promoting "wardism". Each ward has different development needs. With limited funds municipalities must make meaningful amount available for each ward.

4.8.1   Activities of Ward Committees

4.8.2   Typical activities of ward committees include the following:

- Organize and attend meetings of the ward committee, council, community and sector consultation and feedback meetings
- Receive and record complaints from the community within the ward regarding service delivery, payment systems and others and provide feedback on council's responses
- Visiting relevant sector organisations and communities for the purposes of information gathering, information sharing, council feed-back, intervention, networking, community mobilization, conflict resolution and other reasons.
- Participating in the stakeholder cluster forums
- Being represented in the council's study groups by their chairpersons
- Coordinating ward programmes
- Participating in IDP Review and Representative Forum:
  - Information gathering
  - Identified priorities/reprioritize/add new projects
  - Attend review exercises
  - Serve on representative forum to liaise with residents

- o Oversee development projects emerging from IDP
- o Attend public IDP meetings
- • Participating in budget processes:
  - o Public hearing per ward
  - o Mayoral Committee and Finance Committee outreach programme
  - o Discussion with ward councillor
  - o Attend budget meetings as community members
  - o Attend community meetings and budget road-shows
  - o First after council to discuss budget
- • Participating in performance management functions:
  - o Monitor performance of ward councilor in specific areas
  - o Engaged in performance review of IDP
  - o Raise concerns regarding off-schedule capital projects and service delivery requests
  - o Included in Key Performance Indicators
  - o Through IDP reviews
  - o Provide written comments on the level of proposed service delivery
- • Execute other functions as delegated by the Municipality

4.8.3 The role of municipalities in supporting ward committees:

4.8.4 There is no standardized way in which municipalities assist Ward Committees. Thus far, support has been given on the basis of what each municipality can afford. The following areas however are where municipalities could be of assistance, based on past experience and future needs:

- • Municipalities could provide an induction process into Local Government for ward committees when they are established /elected.
- • Provide ongoing training in various areas of management in order to assist ward committee members in performing their duties efficiently.
- • Provide relevant information to WC's on an ongoing basis in order to assist them in the implementation of their responsibilities. Such information may include: Copies of relevant legislation, National Guidelines, Council policies on public participation and ward committees; a copy of the demographic data for the ward to assist in the compiling the ward profile; an overview of the municipality's IDP; an overview of the municipality's Performance Management System; a summary of the municipal budget; Information about reporting processes and procedures; etc.
- • Provide for other readily available resources within the municipality such as: venues for meetings, office space, stationery, publications, branding of meetings, telecommunication systems, catering for meetings, and various equipment as needed. This would assist the WC's in that the funding to be received from National Government could then focus on the most critical cost that has been identified: Traveling. The proposed R1000.00 a month for each ward committee member to cover their expenses for their work, in reality is just a minimum to cover traveling, telephone, and refreshment expenses.

- The Municipality could set up a public participation team internally that would facilitate easy liaison with the Ward Committee Members outside of council for easy flow of information, reduced turnaround times, easier access to needed resources, easier access to key government officials needed to address public meetings from time to time and better tracking and monitoring registered public concerns.

- Municipalities could also assist with the project management and events organizing of some of the bigger meetings and events through the deployment of their administrative personnel/teams and provision of resources.

4.8.5   Ward Based Funding and Budgeting

Table: 5 Ward Committee Support

Level	Description
Level 1 Council determined projects per ward	The municipality should identify capital and operational projects per ward together with other interventions. Identification takes place in consultation with communities through the IDP process and final determination takes place by Council.
Level 2 Discretionary ward funds	The municipality allocates funds for projects to each ward to be used at the discretion of the ward committee in consultation with the communities. The funds do not go to the ward committee; they are spent through the municipal system and procedures. However the prioritisation of what the funds are to be used for by the municipality is at the discretion of the ward committee. Council approves the amount per ward but not what the funds are to be used for.
Level 3 Ward Committee operations	The municipality budgets for ward committee operations and functionality. This includes technical support to ward committees, communications materials, and 'out of pocket' expenses for ward committee members.

4.8.6   Ward Committee Support

- **Technical support** (this will include municipal staff dedicated to ward committees, provision of stationery for monthly meetings, training and induction of ward committees, community research surveys and translation of key documents, and the provision of venues for ward committee meetings);
- **Communication Plan** (municipal campaigns to introduce ward committees to communities e.g. know your ward committee campaign, provision of identity cards for ward committees, engaging community radio stations, broadcasting, publishing and dissemination of fliers); and
- **Out of pocket expenses** (these should include traveling expenses incurred, telephone/cellular phone costs, refreshments and meals during ward committee meetings, and other forms of reimbursements due to ward committee members as a result of doing council work).

4.8.7 Factor influencing out-of-pocket expenses

- The **size of a ward per square kilometres and the population size** (the table below indicate the average size per ward in each province, and the average population density in each ward)

Table 6: Average Ward Size Per Province

Province	No. of Wards	Average no. of People per ward	Average ward size (km^2)
Eastern Cape	636	10 263	265.7
Free State	300	9 243	432.7
Gauteng	423	24 708	39
KwaZulu-Natal	771	13 306	122
Limpopo	513	10 211	245
Mpumalanga	365	9 982	209
Northern Cape	174	6 080	3292
North West	365	8 964	291
Western Cape	348	15 168	372
Total	**3 895**	**12 452**	5268.4

The size of each province in square kilometres is indicated below:

- **Eastern Cape** - 168 966 square kilometres
- **Free State** - 129 825 square kilometres
- **Gauteng** - 16 548 square kilometres
- **KwaZulu-Natal** - 94 361 square kilometres
- **Limpopo** - 125 755 square kilometres
- **Mpumalanga** - 76 495 square kilometres
- **Northern Cape** - 372 889 square kilometres
- **North West** - 106 512 square kilometres
- **Western Cape** - 129 462 square kilometres

Figure: 1

Land area by province
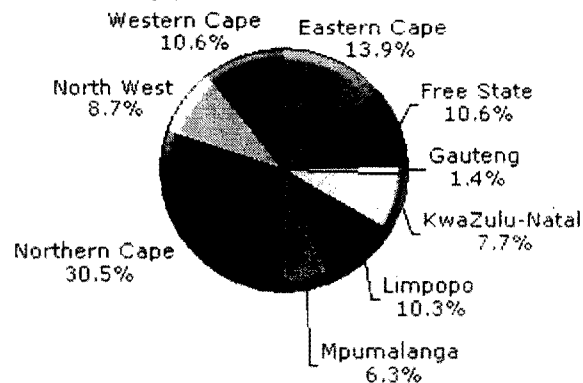
(Data source : Statistics South Africa) South Africa's geography
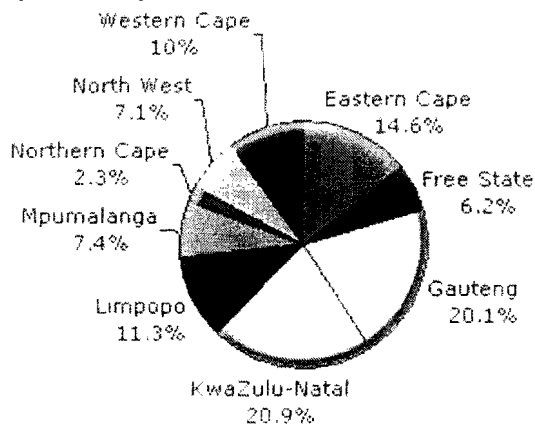
Population

The number of people living in the provinces also varies considerably. KwaZulu-Natal, the third-smallest province, has the largest population, and Gauteng as the smallest province, has the second-largest population. By contrast the Northern Cape, which takes up nearly a third of South Africa's land area, has by far the smallest population.

The mid-2006 population estimates for all nine provinces are:

* **Eastern Cape** - 6.9-million
* **Free State** - 2.9-million
* **Gauteng** - 9.5-million
* **KwaZulu-Natal** - 9.9-million
* **Limpopo** - 5.6-million
* **Mpumalanga** - 3.5-million
* **Northern Cape** - 1-million
* **North West** - 3.4-million
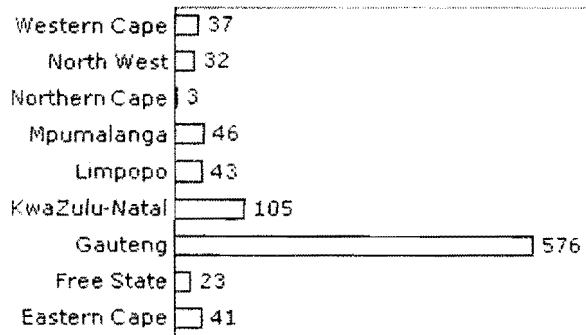* **Western Cape** - 4.7-million

Figure 2:

Population by Province

(Data source: Statistics South Africa)

This variation translates into huge differences in population density. Gauteng has an average of 576 people per square kilometre, while the Northern Cape is sparsely populated, with only three people for each square kilometre.

Population density by province
(Number of people per square kilometre)

Province	Value
Western Cape	37
North West	32
Northern Cape	3
Mpumalanga	46
Limpopo	43
KwaZulu-Natal	105
Gauteng	576
Free State	23
Eastern Cape	41

(Data source: Statistics South Africa)

- Population density correlates with the ward committees' ability to manage social dynamics presented by different population groups, as they relate to service delivery, and social cohesion. Gauteng is the smallest province, with a very high population density. This means that over and above service delivery related programmes, the ward committees in Gauteng will also have to focus on various social cohesion programmes that will ensure that the Gauteng citizens are able to participate in development planning programmes, and empowered to manage their limited resources. This may take the form of community workshops, and training on social and political awareness.

4.8.6   Calculating the out of pocket expenses:
- Municipalities must be guided by Municipal Structures Act, 1998 [Section 73 (5) (a) (c) (d)] as amended which states that out of pocket expenses must be funded from the budget of the municipality. Such expenses may include but not limited to (transport, cellular phone airtime, meal allowances, and access to internet).
- The law places a burden on municipalities to make arrangements for the allocation of funds and resources to enable ward committees to perform their functions, exercise their powers and undertake development in their wards within the framework of the law.
- In setting up a criteria for the calculation of out of pocket expenses the Department has relied on the best practices as summarized in (3.3: Lessons from the field). Most of the surveyed municipalities have an annual budget of not less than R1 million to cover the out of pocket expenses. Taking this into account a reasonable minimum figure for each ward committee member per month can be estimated at R 1000.00. In certain municipalities this amount may not be enough to cover all expenses. Therefore, the framework makes provision for municipalities to consider their ward committee needs, and activities before deciding on the amount.
- The Provincial Departments may advise municipalities with ward committees to take into account the following factors (the ward size, the population size, infrastructure, transport costs, etc) when budgeting for out of pocket expenses.
- The out of pocket expenses should be paid as a monthly allowance to avoid the administrative burden of tracking and managing submission of claims by individual ward committee members. The payment should obviously be linked to a performance management system in respect of ward committee functionality that includes the performance indicators identified in table 4 above.

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Table 7:　The Minimum Costs Implications:

Description	Estimated Costs per person	Total Costs per ward
Transport	R300.00	R3000.00
Telephone	R 500.00	R5000.00
Refreshments/Meals	R 200.00	R2000.00
TOTAL	**R1000.00**	**R10 000.00**

4.8.7　Budget estimates for out of pocket expenses

- The total budget for each municipality will depend on the number of wards within a municipality; in the same way the costs per province will depend on the number of wards in the province. In the case of a municipality with one hundred wards (100), the estimated costs of out of pocket expenses (calculated at R1000 per person per month) will be R1million monthly. The annual budget estimate is R12 million
- For a smaller municipality with about 26 wards, the total costs per month will be R260, 000.00 and the annual budget estimate is R3,1 million
- The size of the individual ward, its population density is another key factor to determine the total costs to municipality for out-of-pocket expenses

Table 8: The table below indicate costs per municipality, and per province.

Province	Population	No. of Metros	No. of LMs	No. of Wards	Annual costs per province R
Eastern Cape	6 527 747	1	38	636	76,3
Free State	2 773 059	-	20	300	36,0
Gauteng	10 451 713	3	8	423	50,7
KwaZulu-Natal	10 259 230	1	50	771	92,5
Limpopo	5 238 286	-	25	513	61,5
Mpumalanga	3 643 435	-	18	365	43,8
Northern Cape	1 058 060	-	27	174	20,8
North West	3 271 948	-	21	365	43,8
Western Cape	5 278 585	1	24	348	41,7
Total	**48 502 063**	**6**	**231**	**3 895**	**467,1 million**

5.　Economic instruments to implement the National Framework

5.1　There are various funding sources for municipalities that will be useful to consider in the implementation of this funding model. These sources include the following:

- Equitable Share and own revenue
- MSIG

5.2　Equitable Share and Own Revenue:

- Municipalities get their income from a variety of sources including service charges (water, electricity, refuse, etc), and rates. Annual basis municipalities receive allocations from the

equitable share. In the 2007/8 financial year the equitable share allocation was at R 20 billion; in 2008/9 financial year the equitable share is at R 24 billion. There has been a significant 20% increase of the equitable share allocations. Municipalities can use a portion of this allocation for the implementation of the ward committee funding model.

5.3 MSIG Support Programme

- The purpose of the MSIG is to assist municipalities in building in-house capacity to perform their functions and stabilize institutional and governance systems as required in Municipal Systems Act. One of the key measurable outputs for this grant is the number of municipalities with strengthened administrative systems for effective implementation of ward participatory system.

- The Framework focuses on the financial viability and management, good governance key performance areas. The output areas for support through the grant will be on activities aimed at strengthening ward committee system, implementation of municipal property rates Act, support on improving municipal fixed asset registers and the programme of the service delivery facilitators.

- A portion of the MSIG allocation to municipalities is specifically for community participation and good governance therefore municipalities are advised to use this allocation for the implementation of this model.

- MSIG unit in the Systems and Capacity Building Branch (dplg) is responsible for the management of the grant. All receiving Municipalities will be expected to comply with the normal procedure followed when applying for the allocation of funds from the MSIG grant.

6.   The National Framework Review Process:

6.1   The publication of this National Framework for the funding of ward committees and its approval by Cabinet will guide provinces and municipalities when developing their community participation and ward committee funding models.

6.2   The National Framework must be reviewed by the Minister at intervals of not more than five years. Before publishing the National Framework, or any amendments to the framework, the Minister must follow a consultative process in accordance with section 73 (5) of the Municipal Structures Act. This will enable municipalities to participate in the review process and to up date the framework to respond to the ward committee needs and priorities as they change from time to time.

Annexure A:

Progress and Good Practice Examples form the IDP Hearings (2005) on Community Participation

a) All municipalities had IDP representative forums that were established in terms of regulations. They allow for community representation and oversight of the IDP process which identifies development programs and projects.

b) Cacadu District Municipality in the Eastern Cape had a participatory process for creating and adopting its Performance Management System. This ensures accountability and transparency in their affairs.

c) In Bophirima District (North West) communication was found to be good as a result of a number of initiatives by the municipalities including, a comprehensive communication strategy complemented by a functional complaint management system and a citizen's satisfaction survey.

d) Some districts dealt with participation of traditional leaders quite pro-actively. Examples include: Central District (North West), Cacadu District and OR Tambo District (Eastern Cape). For instance in Central DM, traditional leaders have seats in the Council and get paid allowances as councillors.

e) West Rand District Municipality (Gauteng) was noted to be one of the leading districts committed to deploying and pursuing the use of CDWs. It had deployed 30 trained CDWs in the district. One of the good strategies is that these CDWs will be used to assist the district with registration of indigent households. The District has also importantly established a 'People's Assembly', which is based on a declaration signed by local government and all CBOs and NGOs. The assembly's purpose is to map out the future of Randfontein, assess aspects of the IDP, and discuss future areas for development.

f) Sisonke District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal has developed a GSIS Office, to bring all services closer to communities.

g) Some municipalities had developed a 'Customer Service Improvement Plan' and established communication units to improve communication.

h) Mangaung Local Municipality (Free State) used community/ward-based planning to inform its planning processes and IDP, (See case study in Figure 1 below).

i) The Ekurhuleni Metro introduced an innovative approach to enhancing community participation, whereby they have reached agreements with senior management

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(executive directors and executive managers) to participate in Ward Committee Structures. Thus, the executives also participate in ward committee meetings.

j) There were various cases of municipalities providing good institutional support and resources to ward committees to enhance their effectiveness. Some municipalities provide administrative support such as a dedicated secretariat and officials supporting ward committees, office premises, budgets, and necessary office equipment and telecommunication mechanisms. Noticeable examples include: Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng, Mangaung in the Free State and Cape-Winelands in the Western Cape.

k) Siyanda District (No Cape) has managed to successfully engage farmers to provide basic services to farm workers.

l) Blouberg Local Municipality (Limpopo) had a roving Council and Exco meeting which deals with official council meetings in the mornings and in the afternoon they meet and interact with members of the community in an imbizo type session. The Mayor has also established a Forum to consult with Traditional Authorities every quarter.

m) In the Western Cape, the Bitou Local Municipality has employed residents who are unable to afford to pay for services to work on labour intensive projects in order to part pay for energy and water service supplies.

Box 1: Mangaung Community-Based Planning Case study

In 2001/2002 Mangaung Local Municipality embarked on an innovative and unique process, based on a major investment in participatory planning processes. Mangaung was part of a project (being implemented in four countries) looking at how to improve participatory planning linked to the IDP process. Mangaung developed a ward planning process and manual, wherein all its 43 wards were involved in a community-based planning process and full plans were developed for each ward. Over 10 000 people have participated in the process, representing 1.2% of the population of the area.

The Plans were based on a principle that the planning must be people-focused and empowering, led and owned by the Ward Committees. The holistic plans are based on the communities' vision and strengths and are meant to promote mutual accountability between community and officials. 30 facilitators were trained in the municipality, provincial departments of Local Government, Housing and Social Development, and Motheo PIMS Centre – as well as 200 ward committee members. IDP priorities have been derived from the wards and planning process, as well as many elements of the municipal plans and IDP projects.

In addition the wards are also consulted with regard to the IDP and budgeting process. The municipality allocates R50 000 per ward, which can be used for discretionary activities and implementing the ward plan. It has been noted that this has promoted massive community action.

Annexure B:

BLOUBERG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Background

Blouberg Local Municipality was established through an amalgamation of three former Transitional Local Councils (TLCs) – the Bochum-My Darling TLC, a large portion of Alldays Buysdorp TLC, and a portion of Moletjie-Matlala TLC. Like many councils with a similar history, the municipality inherited a morass of administrative, financial, economic and political difficulties resulting from the legacy of decades of Apartheid rule. The legal and administrative structures inherited were not intended to service the broad population of the municipalities. The poorer black sections of the municipality, in particular, had no history of participation in decision-making processes that had affected their lives. In June 2001, six months after the establishment of the newly merged Blouberg Municipality, a series of protest marches were held in the area by communities that were unhappy about a number of issues, including the redrawn municipal boundaries and their newly elected councillors. A memorandum submitted to the municipality singled out corruption, and demanded the withdrawal of the elected mayor. The community further demanded immediate delivery of electricity, water, tarred roads, jobs, new schools, new clinics, and new hospitals, among other amenities.

The Blouberg Municipality is classified by the National Treasury as a low-capacity municipality and has eighteen (18) wards.

The intervention

The first action the council took was to amend its original mission statement, which stated in part that the municipality sought 'to become an efficient, effective and sustainable institution geared towards improvement of the quality of life of its choice'. This was changed to a 'Participatory Municipality that turns prevailing challenges into opportunities for growth and development through optimal utilization of available resources'. By so doing, Blouberg Municipality councillors acknowledged that they had not paid adequate attention to the functioning of ward committees; that they had merely set them up for purposes of compliance; and had never ensured that they had capacity and resources to fulfil their mission.

The municipality then had the task to communicate its new mission and vision to all its stakeholders. A new 'Communication Strategy' was also adopted to foster interaction between the communities and the municipality. The challenge, though, remained: How does a municipality ensure that it receives maximum participation from all stakeholders in the council's decision-making processes – notwithstanding the council's limited resources and the populace's high levels of unemployment, poverty and education? The most effective but affordable model of public participation had to be found, and the re-establishment of well-functioning ward committees seemed an obvious starting point. While the Communication Strategy increased the confidence that the public had in council decision-making processes, it was only after the introduction of Project Consolidate towards the end of 2004 that the municipality entered into more open forms of dialogue with its citizens, discovering that only a considerable commitment of time and resources can make genuine public participation possible.

Members of Project Consolidate helped to review and enhance the Communication Strategy. The strategy has led to a wide variety of processes that enabled the public to learn about and have input in governmental decisions. The Communication Strategy identified the following as key objectives:

- to promote a positive image of the municipality and correct the negative public perceptions by consistently communicating council work and challenges to grass-roots level;
- to bring about mutual understanding and interactive communication between the municipality; community structures; community leaders and other customers;

- to promote communication as a central element of service delivery, thus ensuring the allocation of adequate resources for this purpose;
- to educate and obtain the participation of communities on major themes and programmes of the municipality and Government as a whole;
- to forge links and professional work relations with the media and communicators from other spheres of government;
- to promote access to public information in the custody of the municipality to all interested and or entitled parties; and
- to promote transparency and the accountability of the municipality and its office bearers.

The start of the media campaign
The municipality started with its media and advertising campaign using newspapers, radio, billboards, a web site, and a municipal quarterly newsletter – the *Blouberg News* – popularly known as *Fetisa Molaetsa* (meaning 'pass the message'). A number of other innovations were also subsequently implemented, with good results, including regular meetings with Traditional Authorities. There were also advisory committees made up of citizens. With inputs from the public, the municipality recently opened new satellite offices at most of its nodal points. Understanding that lack of access to information is an impediment to meaningful and effective public participation, the Blouberg Municipality ensures that information is widely distributed in either print or electronic format in places that are more accessible and convenient to the public.

These include:
- Traditional Authorities Offices;
- a multi-purpose community centre;
- public libraries;
- Council headquarters and satellite offices;
- Council Customer Service Centres;
- a municipal web site; and
- newsletter distribution centres as approved by Council.

7.1.4 Translation
Given the high rate of illiteracy, and to ensure that it is not only the educated who are able to take advantage of public participation, the Blouberg Municipality also translates information into the different languages that are predominantly spoken in the area. Primary among the plethora of messages that the municipality communicates to the public include:

- the President's State of the Nation Address;
- the Premier's State of the Province Address;
- the State of the Municipality Address (local and district);
- the National and Provincial Budget speeches;
- the Mayor and District Executive Mayor's Budget speeches (Annual and Adjustments budgets);
- regular IDP Performance Assessment reports;
- council resolutions and implementation;
- annual reports;
- Council Committees programmes and performance; and
- municipal by-laws and policies.

Ward Committees
The empowerment and effective functioning of ward committees have been strengthened by:

- Continually and significantly increasing the budget for community participation.
- A strategic approach to the capacity building of ward committee members. The municipality, in partnership with academic institutions, regularly train ward committees on matters of local government.
- The convening of an annual Ward Committees' Forum. From 2003 to date, a total of four annual ward committee forums has been convened, lasting three days. Capacity building, networking and the sharing of best practices are some of the key issues discussed during such forums. The municipality provides workshop material, accommodation, transportation, promotional materials, meals, and handles all logistics for such sessions.
- The provision of transport to council meetings and other related council events and activities. Ward committee members are transported to open and rotating council meetings and other events such as municipal imbizos, ministerial and provincial visits.
- Administrative support to ward committee meetings. A unit has been established to offer all the necessary forms of support for the ward committees. Such support includes, but is not limited to, the following: provision of secretarial support to committee meetings, logistical support such as transport for convening meetings, and the like.
- Council resolutions to the effect that ward committee members be appointed as Labour Desk Officers (Project Community Liaison Officers) in all capital projects have been implemented within the municipality. Given that there is no remuneration for ward committee members and that the majority of them are unemployed, when capital projects are being implemented, ward committees get a chance of being employed as Labour Desk Officers for the duration of the project, thereby empowering them economically and through skills transfer.
- Amongst other major innovations introduced during the 2005/06 budget, ward committee members are now receiving sitting allowances. The allowance does not replace any of the support and subsistence that they are currently receiving. Furthermore, they are provided with identification cards to ease and formalize their interaction with their communities.
- All the structures of the municipality as identified above have been allocated their own budgets to improve and sustain their functionality.

Budgeting for public participation

One of the challenges facing Project Consolidate is the lack of financial resources of municipalities to effectively deliver quality services. To achieve the objectives of 'good governance', about R1 million of the municipal operational budget is annually allocated to community participation programmes. The allocation ensures that all structures of the municipality are financially and administratively supported, particularly ward committees; the Opinion Makers Forum; IDP Representatives Forum; and ward public meetings.

Involvement of traditional leaders

Through Project Consolidate, the municipality has also managed to win the confidence of Traditional Authorities. To date, two traditional leaders participate in the proceedings of the council in terms of Section 81 (2) of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. Traditional leaders are given both communication (cell phones) and transport allowances to attend council programmes and activities. They regularly meet with the mayor on a quarterly basis in a structured manner. All these means play an important role in bringing about cooperation between the community and the municipality, as the majority of the communities owe allegiance to the traditional leaders. The Communication Strategy further requires the mayor to attend the Traditional Courts/Sittings to communicate council decisions and plans and to receive the input of these structures.

Challenges

While the municipality has made great strides in promoting participation of all stakeholders, including ordinary citizens, the municipality acknowledges that there is still room for improvement in some areas. According to the Speaker of Blouberg Municipality, a major challenge is that the municipality cannot

effectively and efficiently enforce ward committees' reporting and accountability to their community as a consequence of limited financial resources. Much as the municipality appreciates and encourages the good working relationship with its traditional authorities, in many instances the ward committees' independence and responsibility are compromised. Procedures and protocols according to which traditional structures run their affairs are not always ideal for the ward committees' business and these pose a serious challenge. Furthermore, during the 2006/07 review of the communication strategy, the following challenges were identified:

- The rural and underdeveloped nature of the municipality limits access to the use of information and communication technologies for sending and receiving messages from the public.
- The vastness and layout of most of the wards, coupled with the councillors' limited resources, impact on their intentions to regularly and effectively communicate with all their constituencies.
- Co-existence and lines of operation between the municipal and lower layers of traditional leadership structures create fears and allegiances that defeat the communicative intentions of the municipality.

Lessons
Some of the lessons that can be identified from this intervention include:

- The power of communication: The protests at Blouberg were eliminated when the municipality started talking to its citizens. Even though some communities are still unhappy about the level of development, the fact that the municipality is communicating its plans results in the communities being more patient because they understand the role of limited resources, and are encouraged by the fact that the municipality has a plan of action.
- Providing quality development is not only about the municipality delivering services, but is equally about allowing the communities to participate in decisions concerning their development.
- Project Consolidate at Blouberg has not only been about the provision of hands-on support, but has also been about a change in the 'mindset' of councillors, officials and communities alike.
- The negative perception attached to Project Consolidate municipalities as being under-performing has motivated Blouberg Municipality to turn around the situation through commitment and innovation.

OVERSTRAND LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Background
The Overstrand Municipality includes the areas of Hermanus, Baardskeerdersbos, Betty's Bay, Die Dam, Die Kelders, Fisherhaven, Franskraal Strand, Gans Bay, Hangklip, Hawston, Hermanus, Houhoek, Kleinbaai, Kleinmond, Mosselrivier, Onrus, Papiesvlei, Pearly Beach, Pringle Bay, Ratelrivier, Rooiels Bay, Sandy's Glen, Silversands, Stanford, Strands Kloof, Sunny Seas Estate, Vermont, and Viljoenshof.

The Overstrand Municipality is classified by the National Treasury as a high-capacity municipality and has ten wards. Their ward committees function effectively. They have at least ten normal meetings, excluding IDP and budget process meetings during the year, and it forms an integral part of the working of the municipality. One of the objectives of the municipality is that the administration of the municipality must enhance the effectiveness of their ward committees and make it an integral part of their work. This objective was included in the SDBIP of the municipality, and in the performance agreements of the staff as a critical performance area. The meetings of the ward committees are furthermore integrated in the monthly programmes of the municipality. The municipality currently has an attendance rate of between 80% and 90% at ward committee meetings.

The municipality did not have any protest actions during the past seven years and, during the imbizo of the Deputy-president, only two questions were asked by the public. When the Deputy-president asked the

community why they did not have more questions, they indicated that their issues are addressed during their ward committee meetings.

The preparation process for establishment and implementation of a ward committee system

The municipality took the decision to optimally utilize ward committees as the main vehicle for public participation and communication with communities. In order to realize this, they knew that they had to plan and manage the establishment and implementation of a ward participatory system with great detail and the utmost dedication in order for municipal staff, as well as the members of the community, to fully participate in the system.

A detailed establishment plan and process map was developed, discussed and communicated with the council, the municipal staff, and the community members of the various wards. All these groups were provided with sufficient time to work through the plan and map in order to make comments and propose suggestions for amendments. All other forums of the municipality, such as their IDP Advisory Committees and Advisory Forums, were disbanded as the ward committees are now utilized for these purposes.

The establishment of a detailed policy document
A detailed policy document with the principles of the ward committees, the procedure for elections, the functioning of the committees, the co-operation with other wards, and the standard rules of order for the committees were developed and agreed upon with the community members of the wards, prior to the election of the ward committee members. One of the issues agreed upon was that members of the community attending the election meeting had only one vote each, so each one could only vote for one member in order to prevent the election of more than one representative from a specific grouping within the community. Comprehensive training was provided to ward committee members, councillors and members of the community during ward committee meetings on a whole range of aspects, such as ward committees, the municipality's own policy document, as well as various other municipal issues. This training was given by the municipal manager him-/herself and/or other municipal officials.

Integrated municipal support
The Overstrand Municipality agreed that the area managers, at a senior level reporting directly to the municipal manager, will be responsible for dedicated support to their respective ward committees in their areas. They have to attend all the meetings, sit in front with their respective ward committee, and ensure that the issues raised by the community during these meetings are addressed. The secretaries of the various area managers were also made responsible for the compilation and distribution of the Agendas and Minutes of the ward committee meetings. The municipal manager and mayor rotate between the different ward committee meetings and all disputes, if and when these arise, are referred to the municipal manager.

The agendas
The agenda items for ward committee meetings are determined by the ward committee members. As and when required, especially during IDP and budget processes, Agenda items will be added by the municipality. Members of the ward committee are required to have a mandate from the group/institution that they represent when decisions are to be taken. Members of the community can also add agenda items at the start of each meeting. If the issue raised by a member of the community is regarded as a normal complaint and relates to service delivery issues (such as potholes and the like), it is not added to the Agenda. The area manager must address these during the meeting and must provide feedback at the following meeting. If no feedback is given during the following meeting, it is added to the formal Agenda of the next meeting. A great number of the normal run-of-the-mill issues are referred to the ward committees, such as planning proposals, applications for land use, sale of land, and so forth. The municipality therefore receives effective feedback and comments from their communities. The municipality also uses the ward

committee meetings with great success to capacitate and empower communities on numerous topics, such as water and electricity reticulation and why they have to pay for these services, and so forth.

Communication
The dates of the ward committee meetings for the year are predetermined and form an integrated part of the monthly programmes of the municipality. These programmes are distributed and made available in all the municipal areas and are also available on the municipal web site. As an additional communication measure to ensure attendance, municipal vehicles with loudhailers drive through the specific wards on the afternoon before the meeting to remind the community of the meeting. They are also currently in the process of putting up electronic bill boards to advertise municipal activities and dates of meetings.

Lessons learnt
The following lessons were learnt by the municipality:
- A municipality must realize the potential and the advantages of ward committees if utilized optimally and take a decision to make it work.
- Comprehensive planning and communication processes and buy-in before implementation are essential.
- Buy-in and cooperation of the council and the whole administration of the municipality is crucial.
- There must be dedicated senior municipal official involvement and support to ward committees.
- Ward committees must meet regularly, at least eight to ten times per year, to ensure that communities do not lose interest in their affairs.
- Service delivery issues raised by members of the community must be addressed during these meetings to ensure and enhance attendance and participation.
- Optimal utilization of ward committees must be driven and fully supported by the whole municipal administration and must form an integrated part of the municipal activities.
- The municipality must utilize ward committees optimally for various other municipal issues in order to strengthen participation.
- Ongoing training must be provided to ward committee members to capacitate and empower them, because it is likely that members may become councillors in future.

Challenges
The only challenge that the municipality currently experiences, is that some members of the community complain that they are not receiving adequate feedback from their ward committee member, but with an attendance rate of between 80% to 90% at meetings, these complaints are limited.

A word from a municipal manager
"Ward committees make local government local again".

Costs involved
One of the principles of the ward committee system in the Overstrand Municipality is that the financial implications need to be limited as far as possible, with the view to limit the operational cost of ward committees to the municipality so that more funding is available for service delivery. This was also communicated and agreed upon by the council and the members of the communities in the different wards. No refreshments are provided during ward committee meetings, and ward committee members are only reimbursed for travel costs at R1.00 per kilometre if they have to travel more than ten kilometres. Other additional costs for which the municipality has to provide, is paper and stationary, as well as for overtime for the secretary of the Area Manager in the instances where he/she has to attend the meetings after hours.