

9 Capacity building in a municipal environment: what have we learned over the last five years

GFB Slabbert (Pr Eng)*; M Dlulani**; M Esterhuizen***

*Director: UWP Consulting (Pty) Ltd

**Director: UWP Consulting (Pty) Ltd

***Principal Development Planner: UWP Consulting (Pty) Ltd

ABSTRACT

Much has been said about poor service delivery of Municipalities in South Africa. UWP Consulting (Pty) Ltd (UWP) has Provided Capacity Enhancement Services to a number of municipalities across the RSA since 2005. Different models of Capacity Building have been applied with varying degrees of success.

Three approaches to Capacity Building in a Municipal environment are assessed within the constraints existing in the Municipalities. The lessons learned are summarised for consideration going into the future dealing with Capacity Building towards improved service delivery.

The service delivery and capacity building situation in local government

South Africa experienced a wave of protest action as a result of poor service delivery across most provinces since March 2010 (polity.org.za 2010). The number of municipalities affected was more than 20 of the 237 metropolitan and local municipalities. This was followed by the municipal workers' strike. Many of these protests have turned violent and there were secondary effects impacting on people's lives such as xenophobia. The dissatisfaction with the delivery of basic municipal services such as potable water, improved sanitation and access to electricity, together with unemployment, high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure and the lack of housing, added to the growing dissatisfaction of communities.

This has been a recurring theme with every election since 1994. Similar demonstrations occurred in 21 local communities in different parts of the country after the 2004 elections for the same reasons namely poor service delivery. In this regard it is perhaps also worth considering that the South African elections normally take place in the April/May period, immediately before winter when its harsh realities exacerbate the absence of life's immediate necessities.

A number of other reasons for public protests are often provided. These include allegations of rampant corruption and nepotism within local government structures. Some protesters blame poor service delivery on the deployment of ANC 'comrades' to positions for which they are not qualified. The Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Sicelo Shiceka, speaking to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in East London on 22 April 2010, admitted that 'many of our municipalities are in a state of paralysis and dysfunction'. It is probably accurate to describe service delivery protests as symptoms of socio-political instability.

The solution to the problem lies in speedy solutions to the socio-economic conditions that prevail in many communities.

Urgent interventions in relation to the conditions that bedevil the efficient and effective functioning and service delivery of municipalities are crucial. Politicians and municipal officials need to take much more responsibility for the performance agreements they sign and the expectations they create.

Municipalities face the on-going challenge to provide services to their

areas of jurisdiction. This requirement is entrenched in the statutes of the Constitution of South Africa and the relevant acts and regulations relating to Service Provision. Delivery of services forms an essential part of the economic development of a region, ensuring growth and sustainability in the interrelated activities of job creation, development of community facilities and the promotion of investment in the area. Each municipality has different characteristics and resources to address the challenges of service provision.

Service delivery is the cornerstone of city governance and includes access to service infrastructure, human settlement development, community health and environment and financial management. The reliability, quality and cost efficiency of equitable services to all areas of the municipality is the primary responsibility of local government and is the most tangible result for which the community will hold their elected officials accountable.

Programmatic Considerations towards Service Delivery

At least five important aspects need to be considered when planning and providing for infrastructure services (makingcitieswork.org/urbanThemes 2002). These are listed below and briefly explained in the following paragraphs:

- The Enabling Environment;
- Increasing the Coverage of the services to the poor;
- Service Delivery Methods;
- Region-based or Community-based service provision; and
- Accountability.

The Enabling Environment

Municipalities are autonomous in terms of the various regulations concerning the areas of service delivery. They may set tariffs and user fees and have access to finance mechanisms, determine the mix of service delivery and design the delivery methods, including the use of the private sector. National legislation sets the health, environmental and technical specifications and standards, which guide municipalities in their planning of service delivery.

Increasing the Coverage of Services to the Poor

Affordability of services across the area of jurisdiction of the municipality has always been a concern for all levels of government. It is appreciated that the poor cannot afford to pay for services and expanding services to cover business and industry demands need to be balanced with the availability of funds and the cost of providing the services. Municipalities need to recover the cost of the service provision and increase the service coverage through carefully targeted subsidies and appropriate tariffs.

With financially sustainable tariffs in place, municipal councils can meet with communities in planning the service delivery mix in the municipality. Information concerning the cost and timing of service delivery needs to be shared with customers in order to educate them on the costs involved and the requirements to maintain such services.

Service Delivery Methods

Municipalities have the option to choose a mechanism for service delivery, be it an in-house or external mechanism. The private sector as external mechanism may be involved in the process of service provision. The methods for private sector involvement are:

Contracting in of services to ensure the service is provided in accordance with predefined contractual performance and output;



Corporatization of the service where government keeps control through the procurement of the technical expertise;

Leasing and concessions when the private sector carries the financial responsibility and risk concerning the quality of the service provided – generally a long term commitment beyond five years; and

Privatization of the service when a well developed regulatory framework can ensure fair pricing and guarantee quality of service provision.

Region-based or Community-based Service Provision

Municipalities may find it economical to manage service provision from a level higher than that of the area of jurisdiction of the municipality. The opposite may be that service provision could be effective at a community level through the empowerment of user groups or citizen associations to develop and manage their own cost effective services solutions.

Accountability

Accountability often refers to the relationship between city officials and their constituents, but also includes the relationship between contractors with municipalities and service providers with municipalities. One way of measuring performance is to compare output produced or outcomes accomplished with inputs provided.

The use of contractors for service delivery makes performance measurement much easier and helps developing efficiency measures as costs are clearly defined.

Performance benchmarks help detecting problems, but also build confidence as improvements are tracked over time. When considering the above five factors, it is clear that municipalities have a great task in not only selecting appropriate projects, but also in deciding how a particular project should be implemented, considering the various pieces of legislation, regulations and guidelines. It deals with the capacity or ability within the organisation. How big is the service delivery problem in South Africa? According to the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), the backlog in water supply to communities in 1994 was approximately 14 million people and 21 million people were without a basic sanitation service at the same time (DWAF 2004). This has changed to 1,65 million people without water supply and 10,6 million without sanitation service in 2010. From this statistic, it is clear that great strides have been made.

The Department concluded that much is still needed to remove the backlogs and specifically mentions the challenges related to sanitation services provision. Since 2004, UWP Consulting (Pty) Ltd (UWP) got actively involved with support within municipalities to capacitate municipalities with project planning and implementation.

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

- Present case studies of capacity building support projects conducted by UWP between 2005 and 2010;
- Present lessons learned from these projects for implementation of future capacity building projects.

DEFINING CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building has a number of interpretations. Some definitions are considered.

In 1991, delegates attending the symposium 'A Strategy for Water Sector Capacity Building' in Delft, defined 'capacity building' as:

- the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks;
- institutional development, including community participation (of

women in particular);

- human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems (gdrc.org/uem 2008).

Capacity building is defined as the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world" (Philbin 1996).

The United Nations Development Programme defines Capacity as the "process by which individuals, organizations, and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve goals premised on ownership, choice, and self-esteem". Capacity building is the "sustainable creation, retention, and utilization of capacity in order to reduce poverty, enhance self-reliance, and improve people's lives". (Whyte 2004)

Capacity Building is much more than training and includes the following:

- Human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively;
- Organizational development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community); and
- Institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities (gdrc.org/uem 2008).

Infrastructure development can be considered as "Economic Capacity Building" as it increases the capacity of any developed or developing society to improve trade, employment, economic development and quality of life, should the development be sustainable.

Where institutional capacity is limited, infrastructure development is probably also constrained. According to Dado, for effective service delivery to be achieved, capacity building should focus on, among other, the following (Dado n.d.):

- Strategic Management and Change Management;
- e – Government and Management Information Systems;
- Policy Development and Management;
- Team Building;
- Performance Management;
- Time Management;
- Ethics of Good Governance;
- Customer Care;
- Human Resource Development and Management;
- Service Delivery, Performance and Customer Focus;
- Target Setting and Benchmarking;
- Problem solving and Decision making;
- Project management;
- Effective Communication Skills;
- Monitoring and Evaluation;
- Total Quality Management;
- Entrepreneur development;
- Business Forces Re-engineering;
- Crisis Management;
- Poverty Alleviation; and
- Creative Thinking;
- Investment Appraisal.
- Reform Management;

For organizations, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work.

BACKGROUND TO CASE STUDIES RELATED TO CAPACITY BUILDING

Three case studies are presented to allow a comparative assessment of the Capacity Building support provided, how these impacted in the local government sphere and what benefits were derived or retained after the particular Capacity Building programme or intervention was completed.

As far as possible, the following five aspects are presented for each case (not necessarily in this order or to the same detail):

- Project Scope;
- Status before support commencement;
- Challenges due to the situation and the municipality; and
- Specific capacity building achievement.
- Status after project completion.

Lessons learned from each of the case studies are summarised as an overall assessment in section 4.

Three cases are considered and listed below:

- Lonmin / International Finance Corporation (IFC) Advisory Programme Support to Madibeng Local Municipality: Private Sector - Local Government (UWP_Consulting, Lonmin IFC Advisory Support Programme 548827 2010);
- Anglo Platinum support to Rustenburg Local Municipality: Private Sector - Local Government Support (UWP_Consulting, Rustenburg Platinum Mines - Rustenburg Section: Planning and Programme Management Support to Rustenburg Local Municipality 2008); and
- North West Province Water Services Support: Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and North West Department of Local Government and Tradition Affairs - Local Government Support (UWP_Consulting, The Preparation of Water and Sanitation Projects in North West: Bojanala Platinum, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti and Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipalities 2010).

Each of the above is described in sufficient detail to learn from those experiences.

Lonmin / IFC Support to Madibeng Local Municipality Project Scope

The purpose of the project was to provide support to the Madibeng Local Municipality (MLM) as part of the Lonmin / IFC Advisory Programme (Programme) conducted between December 2009 and July 2010. The Programme aspired to provide services and capacity building to the Madibeng Local Municipality in order to enhance service delivery to the residents in the municipality in which the mine currently operates. The Programme activities identified during 2009 in which the MLM would derive the benefits from such an initiative were the following:

- Develop a municipal profile: Record the current organisational structure to identify gaps or possible gaps in human resources, influencing service delivery. Establish the status (quality and applicability) of documents or plans as required by legislation, related to service delivery;
- Determine master planning status quo: Alignment of current sector plans or documents as required by legislation, identifying overlaps or gaps in planning activities, influencing the municipal Integrated Development Planning process;
- Assist with the funding application and scoping of an Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan: Assist the MLM in the drafting of suitable Terms of Reference (TOR) for the development of an Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan; assist with the tender adjudication process,

evaluating responses to the TOR; ensure financial support from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA);

- Update the Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan (CIP) in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA);
- Review the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process: Evaluate the current IDP revision process and suggest ways to improve the process, ensure engagement with the community and alignment with the other sector plans in the MLM as updated or reviewed;
- Review the Programme Management Unit (PMU): Evaluate the structure and performance of the PMU in order to ensure the appropriate management and expenditure of funding towards service delivery;
- Provide oversight during the Geographic Information System (GIS) implementation: Provide technical oversight and coordination functions to the MLM and its GIS service provider towards the implementation of the project;
- Beyond June 2010/DBSA Siyenza Manje Programme: Through the project activities and effective engagement, identify mechanisms whereby the MLM would be able to continuously improve and provide services to its residents through partnership programmes such as Siyenza Manje Programme;
- Assistance for the next Blue Drop and Green Drop Assessment: Through developing a Water Safety Plan; and
- Initiate a sanitation (and health and hygiene) awareness programme: Community awareness of health, hygiene and sanitation technical options available to ensure sustainable services and healthy communities.

Formal and informal training, capacity building as well as “learn and share” experiences were provided.

These were achieved through having a close working relationship between the qualified staff from UWP and the MLM. Arrangements were made for suitable formal certified courses considering their specific training requirements and site visits to relevant neighbouring municipalities.

Challenges of the Support Programme

The challenges faced before and during the project were as follows:

- Shortened project timeframe compared with original expectations: This placed the team of municipal officials and service provider under pressure to ensure that deliverables were timeously met. This was managed carefully through total commitment from all involved.
- The North West Provincial Government (NWPG) through invoking the Constitution, Section 139 (b), put the MLM under administration. This meant that the powers and functions of the Executive Mayor and Council were revoked and that an Administrator was appointed.
- The Municipal Manager and some of the Section 57 managers were in acting positions.
- The MLM faced service delivery protests and was also affected by the municipal strike during the project period. The senior municipal officials though did their best to cope with the increased work load and unstable political environment.

Status before Project Commencement

Generally, the municipal officials at Director or managerial level from the different Departments and Divisions executed planning and implementation of projects in isolation to each other. This was not helped



by the MLM being put under administration and with it the general cancellation of the regular Council, Portfolio or Strategic Management meetings. The following specific examples are cited:

- The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) did provide some reflection of the planning status related to service delivery, but either referenced outdated planning information (more up-to-date information was available, but for some reason not appeared in the IDP) or did not provide a comparative overview of service delivery planning between departments.
- The MLM improved the content of their Geographic Information System (GIS) between 2008 and 2009, but it was limited to use by only one or two officials. The intranet management information system (Papyrus) was only used in the Town Planning department.
- The MLM was not enrolled in the DBSA Siyenza Manje Programme that provides technical and capacity building support to municipalities. The areas of intervention required were identified, but not documented.
- The MLM did poorly with the last Blue Drop assessment and did not participate in the Green Drop Assessment. One of the Blue Drop assessment criteria is to have a Water Safety Plan, which the MLM did not have at the start of this project.
- The MLM, as the Water Services Authority, needs to have a programme in place to promote health, hygiene and safe sanitation practices - no programmes or initiatives were active. This requirement also applies when implementing sanitation projects funded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). It also needs to align with the national initiative WASH (water, sanitation, health and hygiene), driven by the National Sanitation Unit.

Status after the Project Completion

An improved liaison process was evident and staff had an improved understanding of the impact one department's decisions and actions had on another.

The project activities allowed the sharing of information and the documenting of information that provided an insight into the operation and administration of the municipality.

The following specific benefits were achieved:

- The municipality received a document reflecting the required and available status of planning documentation such as the IDP, Water Services Development Plan, Housing Sector Plan and Electricity Master Plan.
- The Master Planning Status Quo highlighted the planning status concerning housing development and infrastructure services, indicating the areas of overlap or gaps in service delivery.
- The evaluation of the IDP and Programme Management Unit (PMU) processes highlighted aspects of improvement required (especially related to project selection and spending of MIG funds) to assist with service delivery.
- The GIS oversight assisted the MLM to bring the GIS and Papyrus to the attention of various Departments in the MLM as well as the District Municipality. Formal and informal training in the GIS software package was provided and its use was improved.
- Information was provided to the MLM on the DBSA Siyenza Manje programme, and an application for enrolment was submitted. The project report related to this programme and support requirements far beyond the scope of the support, provided a unique insight into the operational limitation within the municipality. It

highlighted the areas of support requirements that would assist the MLM to prioritise future intervention strategies. Targets were listed in the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) of the MLM.

- The MLM has a Water Safety Plan (WSP) as required for the next Blue Drop Assessment. The WSP has already served in the motivation for support and funding in addressing potable water challenges and to identify targets for implementation during the Siyenza Manje programme.
- The MLM officials were introduced to the WASH concept and organisational matters from a local authority, district authority, provincial and national perspective. The Community Development Workers (CDWs) are now closer to the municipal officials, having been previously not engaged with the service delivery divisions at all.

Achievements

This project intervention assisted not only the municipality, but also the Provincial and National Departments (Water, Human Settlements) in identifying and ring-fencing the specific needs of the municipality. It provided the means, capacity and people skills to assist the existing officials in responding to the day-to-day and longer term service delivery challenges.

Through persistent efforts and the establishing of a close relationship with the municipality based on respect and trust, the MLM:

- Is now in a more advanced stage in applying for funding and implementation of an Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan;
- Has a closer awareness among officials of planning aspects impacting on service delivery, is able to present the planning aspects to interested and affected parties such as provincial and national government, the mining sector, local community groups and the business sector;
- Has applied to the DBSA to enrol in the Siyenza Manje Programme and has already been assessed by the DBSA to provide the necessary support to the MLM;
- Has gained more visibility as a municipality with the Provincial Departments;
- Has a Water Safety Plan;
- Has an improved GIS;
- Has the EDAMS water management system back on-line (previously implemented during 2005, but not in use since 2007);
- Has received formal and informal training related to water services and WASH, and learned to share experiences relevant to the needs of the officials; and
- Is able to utilise the resultant reports and deliverables in the application of funding, prioritisation of projects, identification of staff requirements and motivation of support in order to address service delivery challenges.

Anglo Platinum Support to Rustenburg Local Municipality Project Scope

In February 2007, Rustenburg Platinum Mines - Rustenburg Section (RPM-R) pledged project management support to the Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) in response to their request for assistance through support of their Directorate: Infrastructure to expedite the expenditure of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) Funding within the Programme Management Unit (PMU). The support programme ran

from February 2007 to December 2009. Initially the focus was on keeping track of all documentation concerned with the various MIG projects. Controls were put in place through implementing a project filing system, where a file was opened for each MIG funded project and indexed and an invoice tracking system to track each stage of approval of invoices and thereby improve the turnaround time for payment. Once the process of tracking documentation was implemented, the focus was expanded to assist in the management of projects and the following measures were put in place:

- An electronic project expenditure tracking system as a reporting tool to keep track of:
 - Actual monthly expenditure;
 - Contact details of project consultants;
 - The status of potential or current MIG funded projects for all directorates;
 - Reported problems/challenges on current projects;
- The initiation and convening of monthly progress meetings with all the Professional Service Providers (PSPs) involved with the Municipality's projects. The PSPs were requested to submit monthly progress reports and any arising issues were dealt with at these meetings. Coordinating and administrative support for these meetings were provided while an RLM official chaired the proceedings;
- Regular site visits to projects under construction were conducted to provide additional technical support in the construction phase of projects.

During the support programme, as interventions yielded results, and to ensure the capacity built was applied under supervision, the following actions were taken:

- A number of administrative and coordinating tasks were transferred to an appointed administration officer, among them keeping the project files up to date and coordinating the PMU – Inter-directorate meetings;
- The site visits to projects were split among the RLM Project Coordinators and the support team.

Challenges and Situation before Support Commenced within the PMU

The matters identified for attention which, once addressed, would lead to improved project expenditure, were the following:

- Factors that lead to delays in project execution, inclusive of:
 - Insufficient forward planning;
 - Contractor performance – impacting on project expenditure;
 - Consultants' performance; and
 - RLM staff's low experience levels.
- Factors that lead to delays in project award, inclusive of:
 - Time to prepare technical reports by service providers for consideration by the unit managers;
 - Quality of technical reports tabled at the Bid Committee for consideration in making the awards; and
 - Delays in providing information required in making the award from other departments within the RLM.

Additionally, the following early warning and proactive decision-making facilitation measures, as part of the support to the PMU, were identified:

- Mitigation actions that need to be considered to ensure improved programme management:
 - The compilation of detailed project lists with realistic cash

flows considering input from unit managers and other key officials;

- Improvement and standardisation of progress reporting to allow proactive decision making and identification of blockages and problems that require intervention;
- Improvement of communication between the PMU and the individual infrastructure unit managers concerning progress and reporting.
- The tracking of tender submissions as they move through the various departments for approval is of importance, to ensure documents are not lost or delayed.

Status after Support Project

Although the process of improvement of municipal activities is ongoing, the following can be reported:

- The PMU has taken a more pro-active role in the compilation of planning documents to allow for improved forward planning of project budgeting and expenditure;
- The PMU is liaising with the other departments in the municipality to obtain information on backlogs in service delivery;
- The role of the PMU Manager in the municipality is being re-defined, so that he has greater involvement with activities such as project identification and budgeting;
- There is improved liaison with the Infrastructure Directorate to allow clear and timeous decisions on technical matters.
- A procedure manual has been prepared containing:
 - Standards and Specifications such as SABS 1200, the 'Red Book' and the General Conditions of Contract;
 - Specific breakdown of PMU activities and tasks, the timing and the responsible officials;
 - Filing procedures for PMU projects and related documentation;
 - MIG and DWA Reference Documents;
 - Contact details of relevant persons at external organisations;
 - Other relevant procedures for the proper functioning of the unit.

Achievements of Support

The following notable achievements were made:

- The interventions implemented have assisted in improving project expenditure. This grew from R54 million in the first year of support to R74 million in the second and to R108 million in the third.
- Overall communication between important role-players improved, notably between the municipality and service providers and within the municipality between departments.
- Staff skills, managerial, technical and financial, were improved through on-the-job and short term training.
- Improved management systems and structures were put in place and are being used.

North West Water and Sanitation Projects Support Scope of Project

The North West Department of Developmental Local Government and Housing (DDLG&TA) and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) formed a partnership in 2006 to address the backlogs of water and sanitation services. Phase 1 of this partnership started with a Sanitation Programme to address the eradication of bucket sanitation



systems. This programme has been completed successfully. One of the key lessons learned in Phase 1 – Sanitation Programme, was that municipalities had other backlogs of water and sanitation services, which were not quantified and costed. This lack of information made planning and costing for water services infrastructure delivery difficult, especially when mobilising resources. Hence, it was necessary to move into the phase of undertaking the preparation of individual water and sanitation project business plans based on a specific backlog study prior to Phase 3 of the partnership. These business plans were prepared to a bankable level where the municipalities are able to mobilise resources necessary to carry out the implementation.

The focus area for the study was municipalities within the North West Province. This case study refers to the Bojanala Platinum, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipalities. The scope of work was to prepare bankable water services project business plans for all the local municipalities, targeting the water services backlog areas by addressing the following:

- A comprehensive familiarisation with the results of the water and sanitation backlog study in each of the District Municipalities;
- Identification of current and on-going water and sanitation projects in each of the municipalities and the prioritisation thereof;
- Outlining the planning, funding, implementation and contract management issues around the ongoing projects that will provide some valuable lessons learned which might be applicable to the proposed projects;
- Identification of potential or planned water and sanitation projects in each of the municipalities and the prioritisation thereof. This included identifying the refurbishment and upgrade needs of bulk infrastructure;
- Assessment of the sustainability of the ongoing projects and the proposed potential projects with respect to cross-cutting issues, such as population growth/migration; municipal capacity to implement the projects; the quality of source documents, etc;
- Preparation of business plans for three bankable projects per local municipality;
- Reviewing of the business plans of ongoing projects for the purposes of aligning with proposed potential projects to identify the impact of these projects on the proposed potential projects, and for strengthening the capacity to mobilise sustainable resources;
- The identification of policy-related issues concerning the funding of municipal infrastructure that require urgent review by National Government; and
- An assessment of the institutional capacity to implement the identified projects.

Institutional Challenges related to Water Services Authorities (WSAs)

The specific constraints that have been found to have an impact on the ability of the WSA's to deliver infrastructure services were as follows:

- Lack of municipal infrastructure policies:
 - Acceptable service levels: Most of the communities opt for higher service levels that later result in a financial burden on WSAs to operate and maintain the infrastructure.
 - Technical quality standards: Some of the infrastructure designs were not compliant with respective technical norms and standards. Infrastructure life cycle management was not utilised.

- Lack of adequate infrastructure planning information:
 - Differences in the definitions of backlog or historic backlogs; historic backlogs are not determined and are not time referenced; inaccurate information on existing backlogs and future needs.
 - Integrated communities with different service levels (differentiating between basic levels of service and higher levels services).
 - The current IDP does not always provide a realistic basis of planning the future development of the municipality. Sector Master Plans and development plans not available or up to date, not accurate enough, or not aligned with the IDP.
- Deterioration of existing water supply infrastructure:
 - Poor or no allowance for maintenance (technically or financially).
 - Significant water losses (non-revenue water).
 - Limited conservation and demand management.
 - Pollution of water resources.
- Institutional arrangements:
 - Lack of suitably qualified and trained staff (or insufficient number of staff in the technical departments).
 - Roles and responsibilities not clearly defined between sector departments, provinces and municipalities.
 - Limited or no service quality monitoring (e.g. drinking and effluent water quality, etc).
- Funding and financial concerns:
 - Lack of metering (either pre-paid or conventional) of water and energy consumption.
 - Lack of revenue management, indigent policies and credit control.
 - Grants not aligned and lack of expenditure of grants received.
 - Private sector investors and lenders not attracted to invest in infrastructure roll-out.

Status before Project Commencement

Due to the lack of capacity at municipal level, the partnership between DDLG&TA and DBSA was expanded to conduct a Water and Sanitation Backlog Study. The aim of the backlog study was to provide information on existing backlogs including the availability of bulk water services, the capacity of sewerage systems and the challenges that municipalities face in service delivery. The backlog study led to Phase 2 of the DDLG&TA/DBSA partnership, which started dealing with the implementation of individual water and sanitation projects. During the appraisal of these projects, it was found that most projects were not adequately prepared and ready for implementation. The above forced the Phase 3 of the programme.

Status after Completion and Achievements

The successful execution of this project resulted in the following achievements:

- The on-going water services projects were assessed concerning planning, funding, implementation, contract management and sustainability, resulting in the identification of immediate interventions that could be put in place to assist municipalities in improving service delivery implementation;
- The identification of extensive lists of potential water services projects for each local municipality within the district municipalities that could be earmarked for business plan development that would assist municipalities in moving beyond the preparation of

- only three business plans that are ready for implementation;
- The development of 45 implementation-ready water services project business plans and technical reports that can be registered with MIG or attract potential funding interest; and
- The identification of institutional interventions required at each municipality to ensure they have the capacity and ability to deliver infrastructure projects. Typical interventions identified, were :
 - The development of water services policies and by-laws;
 - The use of infrastructure asset management principles;
 - The implementation of conservation and demand management programmes;
 - Suitable staff training programmes; and
 - The implementation of credit control and revenue collection programmes.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CASE STUDIES PRESENTED

In order to implement successful capacity building support, the following are important lessons learned in assessing the three case studies presented:

- Support requirements of a municipality must be identified through joint input from the municipality and the potential project (capacity building) sponsor. The anticipated project activities must therefore have the blessings or approval of the Council in order to ensure the cooperation of municipal officials during the implementation process;
- Political and high level acceptance that support is required and/ or the scope of support provided must be obtained and agreed in writing through the signing of a formal agreement prior to capacity building support being provided. This prevents the creation of expectations or misunderstandings of objectives to be met during the process;
- The appointment of a competent service provider with the appropriate experience and necessary skills is paramount to the success of such a project in this type of environment;
- Capacity building support has to consider:
 - Enhancing staff skills. There is a need to give more emphasis to on-the-job and short-term training,
 - Improving management systems and structures: The systems targeted for improvement included those for human resources, financial and information management.
 - Improving the work environment. Elements of this have been identified to include raising budgetary allocations for operations and maintenance expenditure, office equipment and establishing of information management systems (GIS, EDAMS, etc.).
- Capacity building projects requiring inputs from various people and organisations often start slowly in order to establish the necessary relationships and to collect the required information, but once these have been addressed, the project can progress at a productive rate.
- The timing of capacity building support should take into account the timing of municipal activities or deadlines for example the schedule of Blue and Green Drop Assessments, IDP (project identification and selection), approval of the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan or MIG expenditure linked to provincial and local government financial years.
- Capacity building projects require tactful persistence. This is required to maintain momentum and ensure continued progress;
- Capacity building project scope timeframes require some type of flexibility to deal with unexpected or expected delays due to official availability, information sourcing or cooperation from stakeholders. However, overall progress must be maintained in order to keep the momentum and meet the final deadline and support objectives;
- Capacity building projects involving stakeholder engagement between officials from different organisations, will take longer than anticipated due to:
 - The availability of officials from the different institutions;
 - The time and effort it takes to agree on approaches and procedures and build an understanding between the parties; and
 - The need for a champion or driver from the municipality to take responsibility for and ensure progress during stakeholder engagement.
- Consideration of the political environment and stability of a municipal entity: the frequency and regularity of Council and management meetings - impacting on the decision-making abilities of the unit receiving capacity building support, specifically where interventions are required;
- The importance of establishing the status quo or municipal profile illustrating the organisational, operational and planning status of the municipality cannot be underestimated to ensure the capacity building support is provided at the appropriate level or intensity and focus;
- Municipalities do respond positively to challenges facing them once capacity building support is provided;
- The scope of capacity building support needs to be flexible in the sense that it should be aligned to the status quo and municipal process and not the other way round, without ignoring the budgetary constraints or the support objectives;
- Service delivery is successful on a partnership arrangement, in most instances between Organs of State and the Private Sector. Success is dependent on collective and united efforts of the municipality, the funding agent and the service provider to bring economic success and developmental sustainability and growth to a municipality. This is the strategic objective that Central Government is driving at;
- With appropriate training and mentorship, municipal officials are capable of improving and sustaining delivery of services. Where training has been provided there is a remarkable improvement in commitment, service delivery and spending of allocated budgets;
- Constraints facing rural municipalities in particular appear to be similar, specifically inadequate capacity to provide services;
- Service providers must avoid the temptation to do the work for the officials in achieving the desired objectives but rather to work with them;
- Working with and through municipal officials provided a vehicle to mentor and train the officials on a variety of municipal duties, inclusive of project and contract management.
- Understanding or awareness is required of the potential impact of external parties' requirements related to the capacity building processes. The donor of the support programme may have its own regulatory framework that needs to be met in terms of report content and frequency, expenditure, cash flows or staff expertise;
- Capacity building support needs to:



- establish a trust relationship between the service provider and benefiting municipality,
- demonstrate early results and honour commitments made,
- be accountable and transparent,
- stay within the budget allocated and prevent scope creep,
- consider the organisational objectives that it is supporting,
- acknowledge limitations from both sides - the provider of capacity building support may have budgetary constraints, while the receiver may lack experience, failing to understand the processes involved,
- remain committed to the objectives of capacity building as many obstacles may be encountered during the support process,
- have an integrated systems approach,
- build and strengthen the organisation being supported, and
- positively influence the institution receiving support as a whole.

A FINAL WORD

Non mihi, non tibi, sed nobis - Not for you, not for me, but for us - the foundation of a good relationship. As Engineers involved in the municipal environment, we need to take hands with Municipalities in serving communities. As Municipal Officials, we need to start seeing the Engineering fraternity as their partners in serving communities.

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