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Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



British  
High Commission  
Pretoria



# GSP II Reflection Learning Sharing

## District Governance

### Strengthening district governance for integrated development and service delivery

Local Government in South Africa has followed the 1998 White Paper. The intent was that district level authorities should focus on redistribution to ensure a change in the patterns of inclusion and exclusion as established by the apartheid system. Local government was aimed at reducing costs, broadening the tax base of a municipality, improving access to basic services in rural areas and encouraging economic inclusion. Local Municipalities (LMs) would be responsible for service delivery and District Municipalities (DMs) would perform specific mandates revolving around development planning; bulk infrastructure development and services; building capacity of local municipalities to perform their functions; and equitable distribution of resources.

There is ongoing policy debate and many areas where service delivery is lacking due to confusion and ambiguity around the relevant powers and functions, poor consideration given to the adjustment of powers and functions over the last 18 odd years and that the adjustment framework is insufficient.

Thus, the design of the technical support has focused on strategically positioning the Ehlanzeni District Municipality (EDM) to deliver more effectively on its core mandates and has taken an incremental approach to ensure a coherent and impactful package of support.

### Overview

The provision of technical support has paid cognisance to the approach of the District Development Model (DDM), aiming to harness resources for joint implementation across the spheres of Government and with other key role players such as private sector.

The DDM aims to harness resources for joint implementation across the spheres of Government and with other key role players such as private sector. The DDM posits collaboration in the development of a one plan for a district municipality area and joint implementation. The DDM aims to implement flagship projects based on a long-term trajectory for growth and development of the district.





## Objectives and Approach

The overall objective of the support was to strengthen the responsiveness of EDM to delivering on its core mandates and to strengthen the effectiveness of regional development planning, support to LMs and strengthening of capacities for municipal health and disaster management (particularly noting the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on these functions).

Several different approaches have been used to deliver on the objectives. The support provided was based on needs identified by the municipalities and joint development of the concept to take forward in a Terms of Reference. Continuous capacity development focused on the organisational, the individual and the functional, and the co-creation of project deliverables.

## Output

1. Support the re-positioning of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality in relation to its core mandates, including:
  - An assessment of the current powers and functions.
  - A set of recommendations in the form of tangible products to deliver more effectively on the municipality's core mandates.
  - A legal, financial and performance analysis and determination. The findings informed a holistic organisational review and design for restructuring and implementation support

of the repositioned EDM.

- Strong focus on supporting EDM to play a strategic lead role in integrated development planning for the region as a whole and to support the DDM approach. This included support to establish a Community of Practice and a peer-to-peer learning exchange, particularly focused on municipal health and disaster management
2. Strengthening capacities of district municipalities in their primary functions of Municipal Health(MH) and Disaster Management (DM)
    - This project improved the link between these important functions thereby ensuring that health outbreaks and disasters are mitigated through well-functioning organisational structures, models and improved forecasting, planning and mitigation. Based on capacity development for improved risk planning and forecasting, EDM is in a strengthened position to provide support to its local municipalities on health and disaster management planning and mitigation and to plan, coordinate and monitor integrated (intergovernmental and inter-sectoral) responses to health and disaster challenges.

## Critical Success Factors

- The Support from the municipal management
- Active project champions.
- Joint development process by the relevant officials and the



expert.

- Awareness and training of relevant municipal officials.
- Facilitating structured exchange between the district and local municipal officials to shape and strengthen the process and practice of inter-governmental relations.

## Benefits

- A re-positioned district municipality roadmap supported by tangible products such as a mandate responsive organisational design, standard operating procedures, terms of reference to underpin the rollout of new approaches
- The strengthening of linkages and touchpoints between the key strategic functions of municipal health and disaster management.
- Improving individual and organisational capacity through the development process.
- Enhancing the performance of officials and the municipality thereby contributing to improved service delivery.

## Replication and Upscaling

- An appropriate organisational model that is based on aspiring towards meeting norms and standards for the functions of MH & DM.
- A guideline on how to assess the current situation in regard of these 2 functions to support upscaling and replication in other DMs.
- The development of a methodology to improve integrated risk planning, forecasting and mitigation design across and for the 2 functions.
- Develop a model/process to ensure alignment of over-all disaster responses within the DDM.

The Governance Support Programme (GSP II) is a Technical Cooperation programme co-steered at national level in a partnership between the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG), the National Treasury (NT), the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the latter responsible for the implementation of the German development contributions on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme was co-financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID).

The GSP II provided technical, policy and process advice to support the South African public sector. The programme strengthened capacity for local government planning, financial management and oversight and was executed in the Provinces of Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

Published by  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
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As at  
October 2021  
On behalf of  
Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)