



The COMPACT Programme

Presentation to ePPMOSA E-Participation Learning Forum, 28
August 2025

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Co-funded by
the European Union

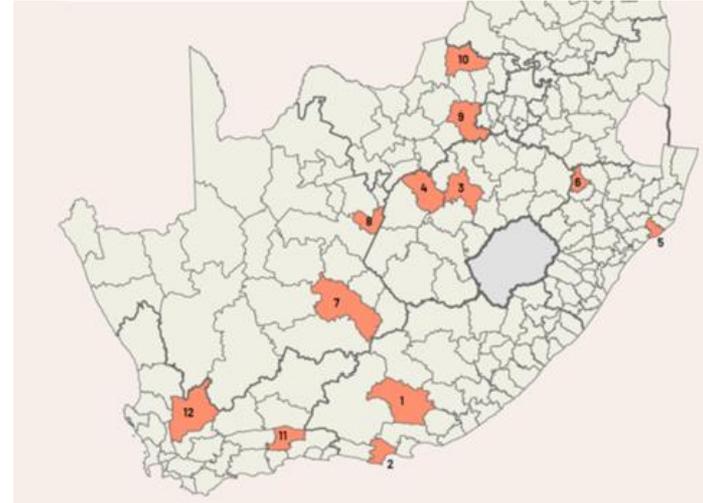
What is COMPACT?

- The COMPACT programme is aimed at **enhancing local government accountability through public participation and planning**, particularly around the integrated development planning (IDP) process
- **3 implementing partners:** Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI), South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and Integrity Action
- “COM” refers to **community** and “PACT” to the **stakeholder relationship**
- **12 partner municipalities** across 6 provinces in South Africa

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Partner municipalities

Free State	Matjhabeng Tswelopele	LM LM
KwaZulu-Natal	Newcastle Umhlathuze	LM LM
North West	Moses Kotane JB Marks	LM LM
Western Cape	Oudtshoorn Witzenberg	LM LM
Eastern Cape	Blue Crane Kouga	LM LM
Northern Cape	Sol Plaatje Emthanjeni	LM LM



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Action research

- **Phase 1:** Interviews and focus groups were held with senior politicians and directors, municipal officials, ward councillors and ward committee members (2022)
- **Phase 2 :** Citizen engagement workshops with community leaders, representatives from CSOs and CBOs and ward committee members (2023-2024).
- **12 individual municipal reports** presented to partner municipalities in mid-2024
- **Consolidated technical findings report** developed and published in November 2024



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Key thematic areas

1. IDP public participation process
2. Ward committees
3. Communication
4. Operational planning
5. Performance management
6. Political-administrative interface

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Findings

- Public participation is often viewed as merely a **compliance or ‘tick box’ exercise** by municipalities
- **Public participation meetings:** poor organisation of meetings, declining attendance, very low participation of youth
- **Quality of participation:** IDP process not properly understood, challenges with information/data, feedback to communities
- **Ward committees** are often not functional
- **Gaps in the relationships** between municipalities and key stakeholders, especially civil society and community organisations
- Meaningful **performance management** is lacking

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Opportunities

- Fostering a **culture of public participation** in municipalities
- Improving the **practices and mechanisms of participation in the IDP process** (advertising, organisation, structure, quality, feedback)
- Improving **communication** between municipalities and communities
- More resourcing, support and capacity-building to **strengthen ward committees**
- Better **collaboration** between all stakeholders in local government
- **Community-based monitoring** of performance and service delivery

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Use of ICTs

- Some municipalities have **embraced ICTs for IDP public participation** – hybrid meetings livestreamed, online feedback channels etc
- But the use of technology is still “**very old school**” – community members want both old and new school methods of engagement
- Most municipalities have **challenges of funding and capacity** for communication
- Often **municipal websites are not functioning** properly or under construction
- Social media: **use of Facebook but challenges with moderation**
- **WhatsApp**: crucial organising and communication tool, how to build on this?
- **Youth are not participating**: how to bring them into municipal planning?
- **Digital divide: affordability of data and access to Wi-Fi** are major impediments

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COMPACT Toolbox



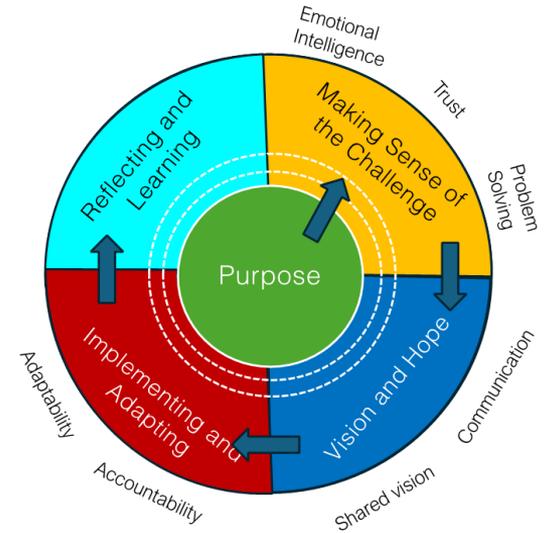
- COMPACT is **co-producing tools and resources** with partner municipalities → the **COMPACT Toolbox**
- Different tools are being developed and piloted in different municipalities
- The tools that are developed are **flexible and adaptable** – not a “one size fits all” approach to implementing tools
- There is ongoing **discussions and feedback on the tools being piloted** with municipalities
- Finalised tools for **wider dissemination and use** by other municipalities and civil society in South Africa in 2026 - website hosting all relevant tools for easy access

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COMPACT Toolbox



1. Citizen-Based Monitoring (CBM)
2. Local Government Collaboration Model
3. COMPACT Community Participation Index
4. Civic Education (LG Guide and Pamphlet Series)
5. COMPACT Toolbox Talks
6. IDP Participation Resources and Value Chain
7. Strengthening of Ward Committees
8. Enhancing Youth Participation
9. Municipal Performance Management Technical Digest
10. E-Participation Toolkit and Peer Learning (HSRC/SALGA)
11. Financial Transparency Webinar (National Treasury)



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