

Understanding the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) Process

A PHASED APPROACH





UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (IDP) PROCESS: A PHASED APPROACH



CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	ii
1 INTRODUCTION – What is an Integrated Development Plan (IDP)?	1
2 KEY DEFINITIONS	4
3 THE SEVEN PHASES OF THE IDP	6
Phase 1: Pre-Planning	7
Phase 2: Needs Analysis	12
Phase 3: Strategy Development	14
Phase 4: Project Identification and Prioritisation	17
Phase 5: Integration.....	20
Phase 6: Approval	24
Phase 7: Implementation, Monitoring and Review	26
4 CONCLUSION	29
REFERENCES	30
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	30

OVERVIEW OF GUIDE

This guide provides a simplified narrative overview of the different stages of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process in municipalities in South Africa. It complements the poster of the IDP journey that was developed by COMPACT and draws on available guides and materials published about the IDP process. The IDP is the main 5-year developmental plan of a municipality, and brings together community needs, sector plans, ward-based plans, and provincial/national priorities. The IDP must be created together with communities, government departments, and municipal leaders.

This document sets out the seven phases of the IDP process in a municipality, providing information on the objective of the phase, timeline, guiding references, and responsibilities. The seven phases of the IDP process are 1) Pre-Planning; 2) Needs Analysis; 3) Strategy Development; 4) Project Identification and Prioritisation; 5) Integration; 6) Approval; and 7) Implementation, Monitoring and Review. The guide provides detailed information on each phase of the process, includes good practice case studies, and lists important facts about each phase. The IDP is not just a plan on paper; it is a bridge between promises and results, between government and citizens. When embraced fully and implemented effectively through the seven phases, it ensures that local government fulfils its purpose, strengthens democracy, and builds communities that are resilient, inclusive, and empowered.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)?

An **Integrated Development Plan (IDP)** is the main 5-year developmental plan of a municipality. It explains:

- what the municipality wants to achieve within the 5 year period and reviewed annually;
- what challenges exist by the residents within the municipality;
- what projects must be implemented to offset the challenges faced by residents; and
- how the money and resources will be determined, prioritised and utilised.

In simple terms, the IDP is the **master development plan** for the whole municipal area. It brings together community needs, sector plans (such as water, housing, transport, safety), ward-based plans, and provincial/national priorities.

The IDP must be created **together with communities**, government departments, and municipal leaders.

Ultimately, the end goal for development and implementation of the IDP is to ensure that all of government works together in a coordinated manner to achieve the objects of Local Government as set out in **Section 152 of the Constitution (1996)**:

THE FIVE KEY OBJECTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Provide democratic and accountable government

Make sure communities have a say in decisions and leaders are answerable to the people.

2. Ensure sustainable service delivery

Provide services like water, electricity, sanitation, waste removal, and roads in a reliable and environmentally friendly way.

3. Promote social and economic development

Create conditions for businesses to grow, jobs to be created, and communities to thrive.

4. Promote a safe and healthy environment

Protect the environment, manage waste, and keep public spaces clean and safe.

5. Encourage community involvement

Involve residents in planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes.

IDP Roadmap

What is the IDP?

- The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) guides how a municipality plans and delivers services over a 5 year period.
- It is a plan that helps communities to hold their elected ward councillors accountable for meeting the ward's development needs.
- The IDP involves everyone – officials, councillors, communities, businesses, and provincial and national government.
- Each phase has clear roles, timeframes and review objectives.

How is the IDP developed?

- The IDP is developed every 5 years, starting the year a new municipality is established.
- It is developed in consultation with communities at a ward level, business, provincial governments and national government.
- The IDP requires all of government to work together to deliver services at a local level.
- It is developed in the following 6 phases and reviewed each year.

Phase 1

Pre-Planning (July–August)

What Happens?

Officials set up the IDP process and ensure participation from all role players

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Municipal Officials:** Draft and share the IDP Process Plan
- **Council:** Approve the Process Plan and ensure inclusivity
- **Councillors:** Inform communities about the process
- **Communities:** Attend awareness meetings and nominate representatives
- **Private Sector:** Share investment plans for early alignment
- **Provincial Govt:** Support process planning and coordination
- **National Govt:** Issue circulars and ensure alignment with national timelines

Phase 2

Needs Analysis (Sept–Nov)

What Happens?

Identify local needs and development priorities

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Municipal Officials:** Collect and analyse data on services and infrastructure
- **Council:** Oversee data accuracy and fairness
- **Councillors:** Understand community needs and assets from ward meetings
- **Communities:** Share local challenges and priorities
- **Private Sector:** Identify business and job creation opportunities & help officials identify red tape
- **Provincial & National Govt:** Provide data from sectors like Health and Education

Phase 3

Strategy Development (Dec–Jan)

What Happens?

Choose and cost priority projects

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Municipal Officials:** List and assess feasible projects
- **Council:** Approve prioritisation criteria
- **Councillors & Communities:** Vote on ward priorities
- **Private Sector:** Offer partnerships or co-funding options
- **Provincial & National Govt:** Support with funding and policy alignment

Phase 4

Project Identification & Prioritisation (Feb–Mar)

What Happens?

Choose and cost priority projects

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Municipal Officials:** List and assess feasible projects
- **Council:** Approve prioritisation criteria
- **Councillors & Communities:** Vote on ward priorities
- **Private Sector:** Offer partnerships or co-funding options
- **Provincial & National Govt:** Support with funding and policy alignment



What makes the process work?

- Every role matters for a successful IDP.
- Timely participation, clear communication and transparency.
- Together, all stakeholders build better communities.

What is your role?

-  **Communities**
-  **Private Sector**
-  **Municipal Officials**
-  **Councillors**
-  **Council**
-  **Provincial Govt**
-  **National Govt**



Together on a developmental journey

Phase 5

Integration (Mar-Apr)

What Happens?
Link the IDP to budgets, spatial plans and other programmes

Roles and Responsibilities

-  **Municipal Officials:** Align projects with budgets (SDBIP) and spatial plans
-  **Council:** Review integration and ensure coherence
-  **Provincial Govt:** Align IDP with PGDS and SPLUMA
-  **National Govt:** Check compliance with MTEF and DORA
-  **Private Sector:** Ensure business projects align with municipal plans

Phase 6

Approval (Apr-May)

What Happens?
Finalise and adopt the IDP and budget

Roles and Responsibilities

-  **Municipal Officials:** Prepare final IDP and publish for comment
-  **Council:** Adopt IDP after reviewing feedback
-  **Councillors:** Present the final IDP to communities
-  **Communities:** Comment during public participation period
-  **Provincial Govt:** Review and endorse the IDP
-  **National Govt:** Provide oversight and ensure consistency

IDP Review

Annual






What Happens?
Assess what worked, identify gaps and plan improvements.

Roles and Responsibilities

-  **Municipal Officials:** Update IDP and performance reports
-  **Council:** Review achievements and set new priorities
-  **Councillors & Communities:** Share feedback and lessons learned
-  **Private Sector:** Review investment outcomes and renew commitments
-  **Provincial & National Govt:** Evaluate alignment with strategic frameworks

Our Destination

Objectives of Local Government

-  Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
-  Ensure the provision of services in a sustainable manner.
-  Promote social and economic development.
-  Promote a safe and healthy environment.
-  Encourage community involvement in local government matters.

(Constitution, Section 152)

... improve results.

PARTNERS



Co-funded by the European Union

CHAPTER TWO

KEY DEFINITIONS

DDM	District Development Model	A way for national, provincial and local government to jointly plan and support development in each of the 44 district municipalities and all 8 metros.
IDP	Integrated Development Plan	A 5-year plan for improving service delivery in the municipality based on community needs, priorities, and available resources.
INEP	Integrated National Electrification Programme	A national programme that provides funding to municipalities and Eskom to connect households to electricity , especially in poor or rural areas. It supports grid connections and sometimes non-grid solutions like solar home systems.
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework	The IUDF is government's plan for making South African towns and cities work better . It guides how urban areas should grow, be managed, and deliver services. In simple terms: A plan for building <i>well-run, inclusive, safe and productive towns and cities</i> .
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	Measures used to track progress e.g. "number of households connected to water".
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant	A national government grant that helps municipalities build basic services infrastructure such as water pipes, roads, sanitation systems, and community facilities. It is mainly for poor and rural communities to ensure universal access to basic services.
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework	The MTSF is government's five-year plan that turns the NDP's long-term goals into practical actions. It guides what departments must focus on and how progress will be measured.
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework	Government's 3-year budgeting schedule to prioritise how and where money is spent.
NDP	National Development Plan	The NDP is South Africa's long-term plan for reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality and building a better country by 2030 . It sets out the big goals for the nation – such as improving education, creating jobs, fighting corruption, and strengthening the economy. In simple terms , it is a roadmap for what South Africa wants to achieve by 2030.

PTIG	Public Transport Infrastructure Grant	A grant used to develop and improve public transport facilities and systems , such as bus lanes, taxi ranks, intermodal transport hubs, and non-motorised transport infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, cycle lanes).
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy	Each province's main long-term strategy for growing its economy and improving development. It aligns the province's priorities with the national direction (like the NDP). It is essentially each province's big development plan <i>what it wants to achieve and how it will grow</i> .
SDBIP	Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan	A short-term (1-year) plan that aligns the IDP with the budget. It is used to manage the 5-year IDP by breaking down who does what, by when, and with what financial resources for each year.
SDF	Spatial Development Framework	A long-term land-use plan that shows where housing, roads, businesses, and services should be located.
SWOT Analysis		A tool for identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).
Treasury MTEF Circular		A formal instruction document issued every year by South Africa's National Treasury. It explains how government departments must plan, budget, and spend money over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) usually a 3-year period .
USDG	Urban Settlements Development Grant	A grant given to large metropolitan municipalities to support housing and human settlement development . It funds bulk services (water, sanitation, electricity), roads, and infrastructure needed for new housing projects in cities .
WSIG	Water Services Infrastructure Grant	A grant focused on upgrading and expanding water supply and sanitation infrastructure . It helps municipalities address urgent water shortages, repair ageing systems, and improve access to safe drinking water.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SEVEN PHASES OF THE IDP

This section provides a simplified narrative of the IDP phases, including activities, timelines, responsibilities, examples, and public-participation tools. The 7 phases of the IDP process are:



This narrative is linked to the COMPACT IDP Roadmap poster (see pages 2 and 3 of this guide) and provides explanatory notes on how each phase works, who is involved, and what their roles are. The sections below also include some good practice cases and important facts about the IDP Process.

PHASE 1: PRE-PLANNING



Objective: To set the foundation for a strong, inclusive, and well-coordinated IDP process.

Timeline: July – August (Year 0)

Guiding References: Municipal Systems Act (MSA) Sec. 28; IDP Handbook; DDM Framework; Treasury MTEF Circulars

Responsible: Municipal Manager, IDP Unit, Council, COGTA (support)

DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDP PROCESS PLAN

During this phase, the IDP Unit of a municipality is the engine room of the process. They develop the IDP Process Plan (as legally required under MSA s. 28), set the timelines, arrange meetings, plan community participation, and make sure everyone knows what to do and when. They work closely with departments, councillors, communities, and the district municipality. The job of the unit is to ensure that the IDP process is fully functional and maintained and doesn't fall apart.

Each municipal department – like water, electricity, roads, housing, and finance – provides technical information to shape the IDP Process Plan. They outline what data they need to collect, what planning activities must happen, and how their work will fit into the IDP timeline. Without them, the plan would be empty – they fill it with real content and capacity.

While the technical work happens inside the municipal administration, it's ward councillors and ward committees work on the ground. They inform communities about the IDP process, help the IDP Unit organise meetings, and bring community concerns and ideas into the process. They make sure citizens have a voice in the IDP.

The District Municipality makes sure everyone is aligned

If the municipality falls under a district municipality, the district issues a Framework Schedule that all local municipalities must follow. This ensures that no municipality plans in isolation – timelines and steps are aligned across the district. The district also supports smaller municipalities if they need help.

The Mayor provides the direction

The Mayor and the Executive Committee give political guidance. They look at the big picture – what government priorities are, what communities need, and what the municipality can afford. Their role is to make sure the Process Plan is pointing in the right direction, like setting the compass before the journey begins.

The Municipal Manager brings the team together

After Council and the Mayor give the go-ahead, the Municipal Manager (MM) steps in as the leader of the administration. The MM makes sure every department takes part, follows the timeline, and understands their responsibilities. If the municipality were a car, the Municipal Manager would be the one coordinating all the moving parts so the engine runs smoothly.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENS DURING PHASE 1 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Aligning the municipal planning calendar with the National Treasury MTEF cycle

During Phase 1 of the IDP process, **a municipality must make sure its planning calendar lines up with the National Treasury MTEF cycle**, because this is when national and provincial government decide how much money will be available over the next three years. In practical terms, this means the municipality starts its IDP review and community consultation early enough to gather real needs, update data, and shape priorities before National Treasury issues its budget guidelines and budget ceilings. By aligning the municipal timelines with the MTEF, departments can prepare credible project proposals, the Budget Office can link IDP priorities to realistic funding, and Council can make informed choices that match available resources. This alignment helps ensure that what the municipality plans in the IDP is actually affordable, fundable, and in sync with the national budget cycle.

To make sure the municipal planning calendar aligns with the National Treasury MTEF cycle, everyone has a role. At municipal level, the **Municipal Manager, Budget Office, and IDP Unit** work together to set a planning timetable that fits the national budget cycle, while departments prepare early project inputs and Council approves timelines. At provincial level, **COGTA and Provincial Treasury guide municipalities**, give templates and deadlines, and check if municipal timelines match provincial and national planning. At national level, **National Treasury sets the MTEF dates, issues budget guidelines, and monitors whether municipalities follow them**. If this alignment is not done properly, municipal plans may be unrealistic or unfunded, departments miss deadlines, budgets become inaccurate, and important projects cannot be submitted for funding – causing delays, audit problems, and weaker service delivery.

Confirming participation in DDM structures such as district planning forums

To confirm participation in District Development Model (DDM) structures, such as district planning forums, a municipality first identifies the relevant forums where it is expected to have representation. The Municipal Manager or designated officials then formally register the municipality's participation, ensuring that councillors, departmental heads, or IDP coordinators are appointed as representatives. The municipality prepares and submits any required documentation, confirms attendance for scheduled meetings, and actively engages in discussions, sharing local priorities, plans, and challenges. By maintaining records of participation and following up on outcomes, the municipality ensures it contributes meaningfully to integrated district planning and coordination with other municipalities, provincial departments, and stakeholders.

Establishing/activating IDP planning structures

Establishing or activating planning structures begins with the **IDP Steering Committee**, which is usually made up of senior officials from all municipal departments. The Municipal Manager or IDP Manager coordinates its formation, sets meeting schedules, and ensures all relevant departments participate to guide and manage the IDP process.

Once the IDP Steering Committee is operational, the **IDP Representative Forum** is established to include not only municipal officials but also stakeholders such as:

- Provincial departments,
- Traditional leaders,
- Business groups,
- NGOs, and
- Community representatives.

The forum is activated by sending invitations, confirming participation, and scheduling consultations to discuss priorities and projects.

Finally, **ward committees** are activated or strengthened at the local level, with councillors facilitating their formation, updating membership where needed, and ensuring they are trained and ready to collect and communicate community needs. Together, these structures provide a coordinated platform for planning, consultation, and community participation throughout the IDP process.

Creating a stakeholder list (community groups, business, NGOs, government departments)

During the IDP process, municipalities create a **stakeholder list** by first identifying all the groups and individuals who have an interest in local development. The IDP Unit, together with ward councillors and department heads, compiles a list that includes **community groups, traditional leaders, businesses, NGOs, and relevant government departments**. They use existing records, previous IDP consultations, and community inputs to ensure no important stakeholder is missed. Once the list is drafted, it is reviewed, updated, and categorised by type of stakeholder and area of interest. This list then guides invitations to meetings, workshops, and consultations, ensuring that all voices are represented when the municipality plans and prioritises development projects.

Scheduling IDP consultation meetings

Once a municipality has identified stakeholders and established its planning structures, the next step is to **schedule IDP consultation meetings**. The IDP Unit, as the administrative coordinator, first prepares a **meeting calendar** that covers all wards, key community groups, business associations, NGOs, and relevant government (sector) departments. Timing is coordinated to ensure that meetings align with the municipal planning calendar and any district or provincial frameworks. Meetings are communicated using multiple methods: official letters and emails, SMS notifications, social media announcements, municipal notice boards, local radio, and word-of-mouth via ward councillors and community leaders. This ensures that residents and stakeholders are well informed and able to participate.

During consultations, **clear roles are assigned to ensure smooth operation**. The **administrative role is led by the IDP Unit**, which organises venues, prepares agendas, records minutes, and manages follow-up actions. **Technical roles are performed by municipal departments**, which provide information on service delivery, projects, budgets, and technical feasibility of proposals. The **political role is held by the Council or Mayor**, who chairs meetings, provides strategic guidance, communicates priorities, and ensures political oversight. By clearly defining these roles, the municipality ensures that consultations are well-organised, participatory, and productive, and that all inputs are captured for incorporation into the IDP.

Public participation tools

Various public participation tools can be used to ensure maximum participation and inclusion of diverse groups. The [COMPACT Consolidated Technical Findings Report](#) emphasises that municipalities must go beyond formal, “tick box” engagement and deliberately adopt **multiple and innovative participation methods** (e.g., civic education, social media, stakeholder forums) to reach all community members. It argues that structured, well-resourced participation processes (such as inclusive IDP consultations) build trust, promote accountability, and ensure that underrepresented groups – especially youth – are meaningfully involved in decision-making:

- Community radio announcements
- Flyers, school programmes, awareness campaigns
- Community briefing sessions
- Independent facilitators to manage dialogue

MUNICIPALITY IDP STAKEHOLDER LIST CHECKLIST

STEP 1: IDENTIFY CATEGORIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

- Community groups (residents' associations, youth forums, women's groups, traditional councils)
- Local businesses and business associations
- NGOs and civil society organisations
- Government departments (provincial and national)
- Special interest groups (farmers, unions, environmental groups)

STEP 2: GATHER EXISTING INFORMATION

- Check previous IDP stakeholder lists
- Review ward committee records
- Consult municipal databases and records of local organisations
- Gather contact details (emails, phone numbers, addresses)

STEP 3: ENGAGE WARD COUNCILLORS

- Ask councillors to identify active community groups in their wards
- Confirm the reliability and representativeness of groups suggested

STEP 4: VALIDATE GOVERNMENT AND SECTOR PARTICIPATION

- Identify relevant provincial and national departments to invite
- Check sector-specific NGOs and other organisations working locally

STEP 5: DRAFT THE INITIAL STAKEHOLDER LIST

- Include name of organisation or group
- Include type/category of stakeholder
- Include contact person and details
- Include area/ward of operation

STEP 6: REVIEW AND UPDATE

- Share the draft list with IDP Steering Committee and Ward Council
- Remove inactive or unresponsive contacts
- Add missing stakeholders identified during review

Case Study: The City of Matlosana & Mogale City
ENHANCING IDP PARTICIPATION THROUGH MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

The City of Matlosana and Mogale City realised that traditional public participation (ward meetings, imbizos) was not enough to fully engage its diverse community. As part of its IDP engagement strategy, it launched a **two-week communication campaign** using WhatsApp broadcasts, SMS messages, social media (Facebook), and a dedicated online forum / app to notify community members of IDP meetings and solicit inputs. To involve young people, the municipality partnered with local schools to run “development idea” competitions: students proposed projects for their wards (safety, recreation, infrastructure) and these were showcased online and in public meetings.

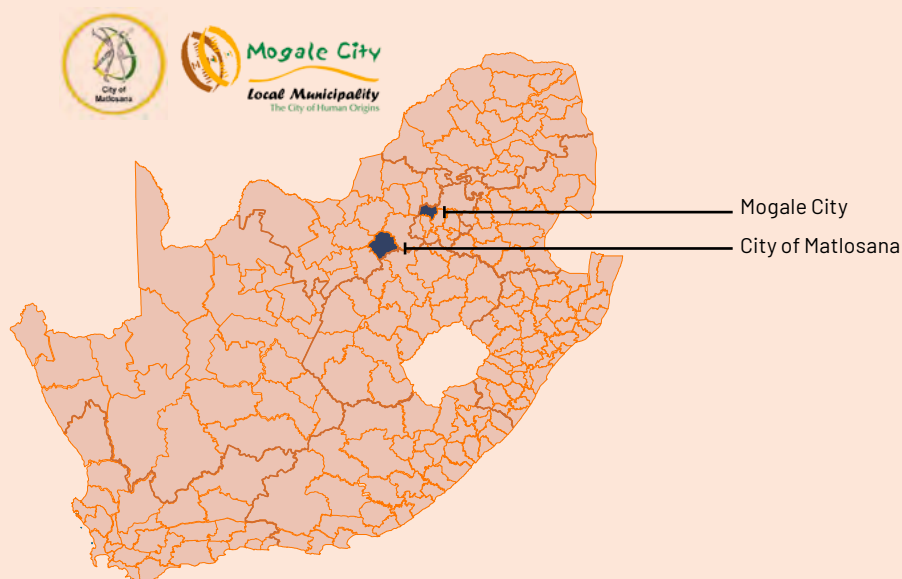
As a result:

- Attendance at ward IDP meetings increased significantly (municipal reports / research notes a measurable rise in turnout compared to previous years)
- Youth led ideas (e.g., safe play spaces, after school programmes) gained more prominence and were integrated into the final IDP priorities
- The use of digital tools made the process more accessible, especially for those who couldn't attend physical meetings
- The municipality has since institutionalised the mixed media approach for subsequent IDP cycles.

This aligns with the PhD recommendation for an “innovative participation model” in Matlosana. Moreover, in Mogale City, the move toward hybrid participation using both traditional roadshows and online engagement mechanisms is documented in local research.

Source: *NWU Repository*

<https://repository.nwu.ac.za/items/fdd72295-8a34-4a5f-abf3-e328f556f55c>



PHASE 2: NEEDS ANALYSIS



Objective: To collect accurate information on community needs, service gaps, and development challenges.

Timeline: September – November

References: NDP 2030, Stats SA, PGDS, National Treasury Budget Review

Responsible: Municipal departments, Stats SA, Provincial Departments

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 2 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Situational analysis

Municipalities in South Africa begin the IDP process by conducting a **situational analysis**, which is simply a detailed picture of what is happening in the municipality at the moment. Officials look at service delivery gaps—such as where water connections are missing, which areas still rely on pit toilets, which roads are damaged, and which communities struggle with electricity supply. They also study demographic trends using census and community survey data to understand how the population is changing. This helps them see whether youth numbers are increasing, whether more people are moving into informal settlements, or whether certain areas have a growing elderly population. A good situational analysis gives a realistic foundation for planning.

To support this, municipalities collect **infrastructure and household data** through the technical departments e.g. water services, human settlements, electricity and roads. Teams may conduct field visits, check GIS maps, verify old reports, and update asset registers. They gather information on which villages still rely on communal standpipes, which areas lack proper stormwater drainage, and where gravel roads need upgrading. This data is important because it identifies the exact technical needs that must be included in the IDP and budget.

Municipalities also **request updated sector information from provincial departments**. This includes data on school enrolment and infrastructure from the Department of Education, clinic statistics from the Department of Health, waiting lists and housing needs from the Department of Human Settlements, and social programmes from the Department of Social Development. These external inputs ensure that the municipal IDP aligns with provincial planning and that plans reflect the full social picture, not just municipal functions.

Conducting a SWOT analysis

Once the information is gathered, municipal officials facilitate a **SWOT analysis**—a simple method that looks at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the municipality. Strengths might include strong tourism potential, weaknesses may be ageing water infrastructure, opportunities could be new economic zones, and threats might include flooding risks or unemployment. This step helps the municipality prioritise realistically.

Ward-level consultations

Municipalities then take the process to communities through **ward-level meetings**. To make participation meaningful, they use practical methods such as community mapping (where residents draw their community and show problem areas), short surveys (paper-based or digital), and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools like problem ranking and focus-group discussions. These tools make it easier for residents—especially youth, elderly people, and people with low literacy levels—to express their priorities clearly. Ward councillors, ward committees, and community development workers (CDWs) support these sessions to ensure all voices are heard.

Summary of top needs

After all wards have participated, municipal officials **summarise the top needs** across the entire municipality. They group priorities into themes such as water, sanitation, housing, economic development, sports and recreation, community safety, roads, and social services.

They look for patterns—needs that appear repeatedly across many wards—and mark these as high-priority issues. Officials also compare community inputs with technical data from engineers and planners to make sure the needs are realistic and align with the municipality's resources and legal responsibilities. The result is a consolidated list of the most urgent and widely shared development needs, which becomes the foundation for deciding on projects and allocating the budget in the next phase of the IDP. This consolidated list becomes the foundation for the next phase of the IDP, where the municipality decides on projects, budgets, and timelines. By following these steps, municipalities ensure that their planning is evidence-based, community-driven, and aligned with both local realities and provincial information.

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

WARD MEETINGS

MAPPING SESSIONS

PRA METHODS



PHASE 3: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



Objective: To define the municipality’s long-term vision, goals, and strategic focus areas.

Timeline: December – January

References: NDP, IUDF, PGDS, MTSF

Responsible: IDP Steering Committee, Executive Mayor, Provincial Planning Commission

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 3 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

After completing the analysis of community needs in Phase 2, municipalities enter **Phase 3 of the IDP process**, where they convert these needs into a **shared vision and measurable strategic direction**. This is one of the most important—but often misunderstood—phases of the IDP process, because it determines the future identity of the municipality and provides the logic behind every project and budget decision that follows.

Drafting a vision statement

The first major task in Phase 3 is drafting a **Vision Statement** using the WARM principle—Written, Achievable, Relevant, and Measurable. Municipal officials begin by reviewing the biggest challenges raised during ward meetings, such as water shortages, poor roads, high youth unemployment, and safety concerns. They then craft a simple, inspiring statement that everyone—from councillors to school learners—can understand. A good WARM vision avoids vague promises and instead commits to measurable improvements, such as “reliable services,” “well-functioning communities,” and “increased youth opportunities.” Senior management and the Mayoral Committee refine it to ensure the wording balances ambition with realistic municipal capacity. The best visions act as a “north star” for the next five years and help guide all municipal decision-making.

Translating needs into strategic goals

Once the vision statement is drafted, officials begin to **translate the community needs into strategic goals**. This step transforms general complaints—like broken roads or long water outages—into clear, focused commitments. For example, instead of simply saying “improve water services,” the strategic goal becomes: “Reduce water backlogs by 40% within five years.” Each department—technical services, LED, planning, community services—works together to ensure that goals are supported by data, engineering capacity, and available funding. This is where departments start thinking ahead about which projects, partnerships, and grants will support these goals.

Ensuring alignment with national & provincial plans

A critical but often overlooked step is ensuring **alignment with national and provincial plans**. Many people believe this step is purely “compliance,” but in reality, alignment helps municipalities tap into bigger funding streams like MIG, USDG, Housing Subsidy, and EPWP allocations. Officials check their strategic goals against the NDP, MTSF, IUDF, PGDS, and the District One Plan. They make sure their goals support national priorities, such as reducing inequality, improving basic services, strengthening local economies, and promoting climate resilience. Proper alignment increases the chances of attracting support from sector departments, especially for schools, clinics, housing, and major roads.

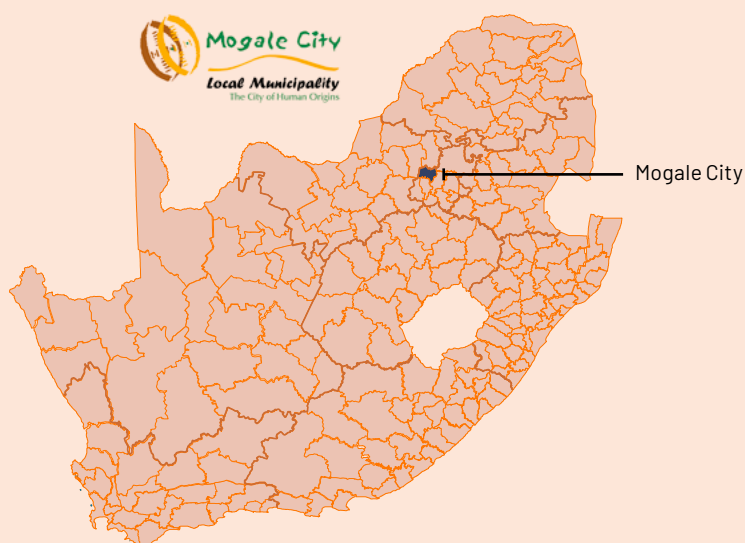
Conducting stakeholder visioning workshops

At this point, municipalities host **stakeholder visioning workshops** to refine the strategy. These workshops bring together ward committees, youth groups, women's organisations, traditional leaders, NGOs, business forums, disability groups, and faith-based organisations. Officials present the draft vision and goals to stakeholders and ask them to comment, challenge, and reshape the strategy. This step ensures that the IDP is not written only by technical staff but genuinely reflects community aspirations. Youth groups, for example, often push for goals related to job creation, Wi-Fi access, and safe recreational spaces. Traditional leaders may emphasise land use issues, rural roads, or agricultural development. These workshops also build public trust because residents see that their earlier inputs were taken seriously.

After all inputs are collected, senior management and the IDP Steering Committee refine the strategy and then **finalise 3–6 strategic objectives** for the IDP. These objectives must guide all municipal activities for the next five years and must be broad enough to capture long-term commitments, but clear enough to guide practical project planning. For example: improving basic services, promoting economic development, strengthening community safety, improving financial stability, and promoting sustainable human settlements. Once approved by the Mayoral Committee, these strategic objectives become the backbone of the municipal IDP, SDBIP, budget, and annual performance plans.

Case Study: Mogale City Local Municipality **STRENGTHENING YOUTH VOICE IN THE IDP**

Mogale City has used a mix of youth councils, consultation forums and targeted capacity-building to increase young people's input into municipal planning. Researchers found that the municipality implemented youth consultation mechanisms (including youth councils and forums) and ran training and outreach to help youth engage more meaningfully in IDP and other decision-making spaces – while also noting challenges such as tokenistic participation and limited resources that still need addressing. At the same time, the municipality's IDP documents show concrete youth-focused programming (libraries with computer centres and internet access, sport and recreation programmes, and a Grant-in-Aid budget line that supports youth clubs, SMMEs and bursaries), and the IDP explicitly records a commitment to scale up public participation and involve youth and other stakeholders in planning. Together, the academic study and the municipality's IDP illustrate a practical model: create youth structures, invest in simple capacity building and outreach, then institutionalise youth priorities into the IDP through existing budget lines and programmes so youth inputs become part of deliverable objectives rather than one-off consultations.



Source: Maphosa, S. & Moyo, P., *Evaluating Youth Participation in Mogale City Local Municipality's Decision-Making Processes (2024)*. (study documenting youth councils, forums and capacity-building).

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF THE IDP PROCESS

- **The Vision Statement must link to the Municipal Performance Management System (PMS).** Few people realise that the vision becomes a measurable part of the Municipal Manager's and Senior Manager's (Directors') annual performance contracts.
- **Strategic Objectives must be auditable by the Auditor-General (AG).** If a strategic objective is vague (e.g., "Improve livelihoods"), the AG can mark it as non-compliant because it cannot be measured.
- **National Treasury reviews municipal strategic alignment during budget assessments.**
Treasury uses the IDP Strategy Phase to determine whether the municipality's budget reflects national priorities—this affects grant allocations.
- **Stakeholder visioning workshops are legally recognised as part of the participation process.** Even though the Municipal Systems Act does not explicitly name "visioning workshops," any structured engagement is considered valid public participation.
- **The number of strategic objectives (typically 3–6) is not random.** This limit comes from practical performance management principles—too many objectives dilute accountability and make performance reporting unmanageable.
- **A weak Phase 3 often leads to unfunded "wish list" projects in Phase 4.** Many municipalities struggle later not because they lack money, but because their Phase 3 goals were not linked to realistic financial capacity.

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

THEMATIC FOCUS GROUPS (YOUTH, WOMEN, DISABILITY SECTOR)

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS



PHASE 4: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITISATION



Objective: To identify feasible projects that support community needs and municipal goals.

Timeline: February – March

References: National Treasury Guidelines; DORA

Responsible: Municipal Departments, Provincial Treasury, Sector Departments

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 4 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Development and submission of ward-level project lists

Once strategic objectives are agreed (Phase 3), each ward (via its ward committee, councillor and community stakeholders) compiles a list of proposed projects. These project ideas come directly from the needs identified in earlier phases: things like water-reticulation, road upgrades, electrification, recreation facilities, sanitation, community halls, informal settlement upgrades, youth skills centres etc. Each ward's list typically includes basic descriptions: what the project is, who will benefit, its location, and any rough cost or resource estimate the ward committee can suggest.

Undertaking feasibility checks

Municipal technical departments (engineering, finance, planning) then carry out **feasibility assessments** for each proposed project. These checks look at:

- **Technical feasibility:** Can the municipality's engineers deliver the work – do the required materials, infrastructure, and skills exist? Are there physical constraints (topography, land ownership, existing services)?
- **Financial feasibility:** What will the project cost, and can the municipality afford it given its capital budget, available grants, and cash-flow constraints?
- **Institutional capacity:** Does the municipality have the staffing, project-management capacity, procurement systems, and maintenance plans needed to implement and sustain the project? If a project requires specialised skills, will they need to hire or contract external support?

These feasibility checks help filter out ideas that are not realistic in the short- to medium-term or that would be too expensive or risky relative to municipal capacity.

Scheduling and costing

For projects that pass feasibility checks, the **municipality prepares basic project plans**. These include: a project start, and end date (or at least a projected timeframe), a breakdown of major cost components (labour, materials, equipment, overheads), and an estimate of cash-flow needs (how much needs to be spent in each financial year). This does not need to be a full business plan yet, but it must be good enough to allow budgeting, resource allocation, and scheduling.

Scoring / prioritising projects

Municipalities typically employ a **priority matrix (or multi-criteria analysis)** to rank the projects. The criteria used often include:

- **Impact:** the expected benefit of the project (number of people served, severity of need addressed, long-term development impact)
- **Cost:** the total cost and possibly cost per beneficiary
- **Readiness:** how "ready" is the project to begin (e.g., land already secured, design done, approvals in place)
- **Alignment with strategic objectives:** how well the project supports the IDP's approved strategic goals (e.g., water access, youth economic development, safe communities)

Each project is scored against these criteria, sometimes with weights attached to reflect the municipality's priorities (for instance, alignment with strategic objectives may carry a high weight). The total weighted scores help rank the projects so that the municipality knows which to fund first, given limited resources.

Developing a Consolidated Municipal Project List

After scoring, all ward-level and sector (departmental) proposals are merged into **one consolidated municipal project list**. This list becomes the basis for the capital programme in the IDP: it sorts out which projects the municipality can realistically implement in the short-, medium-, and long-term, given available funding, technical capacity, and strategic alignment. Projects that score highest and are ready often go onto the first-year budget; others may be planned for later years, or need more preparatory work.

Preparing the capital implementation plan

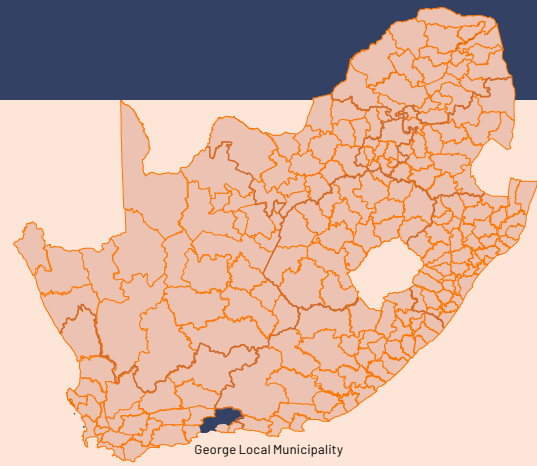
With the consolidated and prioritised list, the municipality develops a **capital expenditure framework (CEF) or multi-year capital programme**. This framework maps out which projects will be done in which financial years, what funding sources will be used (municipal own-income, grants, loans, partnerships), and who will manage them. The plan also ensures the projects reflect both spatial (geographic) priorities and financial affordability.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITISATION PHASE OF THE IDP PROCESS

- **Not all “priority matrices” are created equal** – some municipalities now use software-based prioritisation tools (or decision-support platforms) that automate scoring, weighting, and ranking. For example, there are municipal planning tools that apply multi-criteria analysis (MCA) frameworks, similar to what private-sector project portfolio management uses. These tools can help reduce subjective bias and improve transparency.
- **The “affordability envelope” is a powerful tool** – by projecting a 10-year capital budget ceiling (based on realistic income, grants, debt capacity, and reserves), municipalities avoid the trap of over-promising. It helps ensure that the top-scoring projects also fit within long-term financial capacity. [George Municipality’s](#) use of a 10-year envelope is a good example.
- **Scoring “readiness” can save money** – projects that are “ready” (e.g., design done, land secured) are often prioritised higher, because they typically require less preparatory work, fewer feasibility risks, and can more realistically begin soon. This kind of readiness scoring reduces cancellation risk.
- **Ward-project recognition matters** – Many municipalities ignore small ward-level projects in favour of big infrastructure. But by creating a specific scoring category for ward projects (as George Municipality does), municipalities can ensure community-identified projects are preserved in budgeting, not overshadowed by large-scale programmes.
- **Prioritised project lists are “living documents”** – Even after a project list is approved, it can (and often does) change. Political shifts, new grants, cost variations, or shifts in community priorities may force re-scoring and re-sequencing. Good municipal practice includes annual review of the capital programme, not just “set and forget.”
- **Project prioritisation influences national grant allocations** – The way a municipality prioritises projects (and clearly documents alignment to strategic objectives) can affect its ability to attract national or provincial grants (such as the Urban Settlements Development Grant). When a municipality presents a ranked, well-documented project list, it increases credibility with funders, making it more likely to receive external funds.

Good Practice Case Study: **PRIORITISING PROJECTS IN GEORGE MUNICIPALITY**

George Municipality in the Western Cape provides a strong example of systematic project prioritisation in Phase 4 of its IDP. In its 2022–2027 IDP (and related documents), George Municipality describes a capital programme prioritisation model that uses weighted criteria to rank projects.



Key features from George Municipality's approach:

- The municipality defines **priority criteria** aligned with its strategic objectives (from the IDP), service master plans, risk of deterioration, and urgency of need.
- Projects from wards are evaluated not purely on cost, but on multiple dimensions: strategic alignment, risk (if not implemented), the municipality's ability to spend the money within a financial year, and other dynamics (e.g., whether a grant is already secured).
- George Municipality uses an **"affordability envelope"** over a 10-year period (a long-term financial planning tool) to guide which projects to prioritise and when, so that capital investments do not exceed projected financial capacity.
- The municipality explicitly recognises ward-based projects in its prioritisation model. This helps ensure that smaller, community-identified projects are not crowded out by large infrastructure projects, by giving "ward projects" their own evaluation category.
- Once projects are scored and ranked, George Municipality integrates them into a 10-year Capital Expenditure Programme tied to its Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF), ensuring that development is spatially coherent and financially feasible.

This case shows how a well-designed, transparent prioritisation system helps a municipality make evidence-based decisions, balancing community needs, financial constraints, and long-term planning.

Source: George Municipality, 5th-Generation IDP 2022–2027 (capital programme & prioritisation section)

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

COMMUNITY
RANKING
TOOLS

DIGITAL
VOTING
PLATFORMS

FEEDBACK
APPS



PHASE 5: INTEGRATION



Objective: To ensure that all plans, budgets, and sector strategies align and support each other.

Timeline: March – April

References: SPLUMA; MFMA; SDBIP Guidelines

Responsible: CFO, IDP Unit, Provincial Planning Commission, COGTA

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 5 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Phase 5 of the IDP is where the municipality “pulls everything together.” After all the community needs, strategic objectives, and prioritised projects are developed in earlier phases, the municipality must integrate these into one coherent, fundable, and implementable plan. Phase 5 ensures that the IDP is not just a document of “wishes”, but a realistic roadmap linking the budget, departmental plans, performance targets, and spatial development priorities.

Integrating the IDP with the Municipal Budget (MTEF-aligned)

Once the prioritised project list is completed, the **Budget & Treasury Department** works with all other municipal departments (Engineering, Community Services, Human Settlements, LED, Public Safety, etc.) to allocate money to each project. This is done over a **3-year Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)**, which helps match long-term projects with multi-year funding.

In practice, departments meet with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the IDP Manager to check:

- Does the municipality have enough own revenue to fund the project?
- Can it be co-funded by MIG, USDG, INEP, WSIG, PTIG or other national grants?
- Will the project need to be phased over multiple years?
- Does the project require new staff or consultants (and is this affordable)?

These discussions are often lengthy and involve multiple rounds of negotiation, because community priorities sometimes exceed the budget. Ultimately, the Budget Office produces a **draft Municipal Budget** that directly reflects the IDP’s prioritised projects.

Linking the IDP to the annual Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP)

After the budget is drafted, the **Performance Management Unit** begins translating IDP projects into specific, measurable annual actions. This forms the heart of the **Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP)**, which is basically the municipality’s “annual delivery schedule.”

Municipal officials prepare:

- **Quarterly targets** (e.g. “Design of Reservoir 5 completed by Q3”)
- **Annual performance indicators**
- **Departmental responsibilities**
- **Expenditure plans for each quarter**

Senior managers sign performance agreements based on these SDBIP targets. This ensures that each IDP project is assigned to someone who is accountable for delivery.

Aligning the IDP with departmental plans

Each municipal department must align its own plans with the IDP's strategic objectives and project list. For example:

- Technical Services aligns water, sewer, roads and electricity master plans.
- Community Services aligns parks, cemeteries, and disaster management operational plans.
- Corporate Services aligns human resource planning and ICT needs.
- Local Economic Development (LED) aligns sector support programmes.

These plans are updated to reflect the reality of what will be funded, when, and by whom. This helps eliminate duplication, ensures departments work in sync, and prevents departments from planning projects that are not in the IDP or the budget.

Ensuring projects match the SDF and Provincial Spatial Plans

South African municipalities must ensure that all infrastructure and development projects comply with:

- The Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF)
- The Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF)
- District spatial plans
- Nodal and corridor development strategies

Town planners and GIS technicians verify whether each prioritised project is located in the correct zone (e.g., urban core, growth node, rural settlement). For example, a community hall cannot be built in an environmentally sensitive area, and housing developments must fit within approved settlement boundaries.

This check prevents municipalities from approving projects that contradict long-term spatial planning and national policies like the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA).

Aligning Sector Plans: LED, Housing, Disaster Management, Transport

Sector plans must “speak to each other” during this phase:

- **Local Economic Development (LED):** LED officials ensure that projects support job creation, informal economy support, tourism growth, SMME development, or agricultural development zones.
- **Housing/Human Settlements:** Human Settlements officials check that housing and serviced-site projects align with the provincial housing pipeline and that bulk services (water, sewer, roads) are budgeted for in the same timeframe.
- **Transport and Roads:** To improve mobility, the Roads & Transport unit ensures that road upgrades, taxi ranks, pedestrian routes, and public transport infrastructure align with district and provincial transport frameworks.
- **Disaster Management:** Disaster teams verify that risk-sensitive projects (bridges, flood areas, fire-prone settlements) are integrated into the IDP. If an area is flood-prone, engineers must adjust project design before approval.

Through this alignment, the municipality ensures that integrated service delivery happens along coordinated timelines, reducing delays and unnecessary expenditure.

Finalising Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each project

Municipal Performance Management Systems (PMS) require that every IDP project has a measurable performance indicator. In practice, this involves:

- Setting indicators such as “Number of households connected,” “KM of road surfaced,” “Number of streetlights installed” or “Completion of design phase.”
- Agreeing on baseline data and annual targets.
- Assigning responsible officials.
- Determining how performance will be monitored (site visits, financial reports, completion certificates).
- KPIs turn the IDP from a planning document into a set of concrete deliverables.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE INTEGRATION PHASE OF THE IDP PROCESS

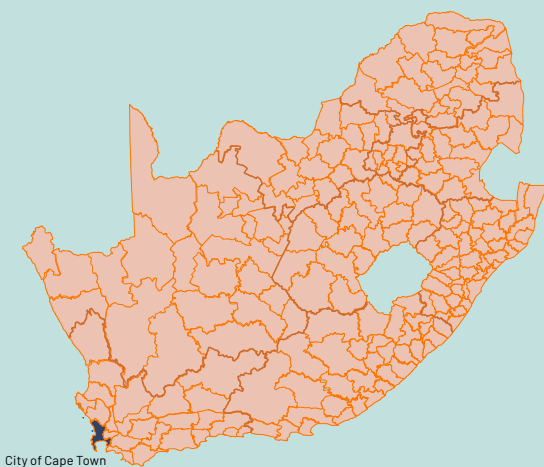
- **Phase 5 is where most IDP problems get exposed.** If earlier phases did not properly cost projects or check feasibility, Phase 5 is where these issues finally surface – often forcing major project reshuffling.
- **The SDBIP is legally binding – the IDP is not.** The IDP guides development strategy, but the SDBIP and budget are what National Treasury and the Auditor-General (AG) enforce. This makes Phase 5 the most critical “accountability phase.”
- **Spatial misalignment can cancel a project entirely.** If a project does not comply with the MSDF or SPLUMA, planners will reject it – even if the community wants it.
- **Sector plans often compete for funding.** Transport, Housing, Water, Disaster, and LED officials battle for limited capital funding, and Phase 5 is where political negotiation intensifies behind the scenes.
- **Performance targets must be SMART by law.** Municipal KPIs must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) – a requirement often missed in weaker municipalities.

Case Study

CITY OF CAPE TOWN: INTEGRATION OF IDP, BUDGET, SPATIAL PLAN & SDBIP

The City of Cape Town demonstrates one of the strongest examples of Phase 5 integration in South Africa. During the development of its 2022–2027 IDP, the City applied a structured integration process involving joint planning engagements between Finance, Spatial Planning, Water & Sanitation, Human Settlements, Transport, and Energy. The City’s SDF, budget, sector plans, and Area-Based Service Delivery model were combined into a single, aligned system. Community validation meetings were held in each sub-council to confirm that prioritised projects aligned with local need. The City also linked every IDP programme to SDBIP indicators, ensuring accountability from senior management. This is widely regarded as one of the most coordinated IDP integration models in the country.

Source: *City of Cape Town IDP 2022–2027* (documentportal.capetown.gov.za)



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS IN PHASE 5 OF THE IDP PROCESS

Even though Phase 5 is largely technical, municipalities must bring communities back into the process to validate the integrated plan.

1. Community Validation Workshops

These are held at ward or cluster level. Their purpose is to:

- Present the prioritised projects
- Show how budget limitations influenced choices
- Validate whether community needs are correctly captured
- Explain why some projects were deferred

These sessions promote transparency and reduce complaints during council adoption.

2. Sector Dialogues

These bring together organised groups such as:

- School Governing Bodies (SGBs), youth groups, disability forums
- Business chambers, farmers' associations
- Environmental organisations
- Taxi associations and transport operators
- Social development NGOs

Sector groups help verify whether the final IDP aligns with sector needs and national/provincial mandates. In well-run municipalities, sector dialogues help correct blind spots – for example, identifying gaps in youth development or environmental risk management that might have been overlooked.



PHASE 6: APPROVAL



Objective: To formally approve the IDP and allow the community to review it.

Timeline: April – May

References: MSA s29; MFMA; Provincial Regulations

Responsible: Municipal Council, MEC for Local Government, Provincial Treasury

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 6 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Once the municipality has completed all earlier phases—collecting community needs, setting a vision, prioritising projects, and aligning the budget—it produces a **Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP)**. This draft reflects everything the municipality intends to do over the next five years, including major projects, funding, service delivery improvements, spatial development directions, and performance indicators.

Publishing the IDP for public comment

Municipal officials then submit this draft to Council for permission to release it. As soon as councillors approve the release, the municipality must, by law, **publish the draft IDP for at least 21 days** to allow the public to comment. During this period, the municipality makes the document widely accessible:

- uploaded to the municipal website;
- printed copies placed at libraries, municipal offices, Thusong Service Centres, and ward councillor offices; and
- summaries in simple language shared via local radio, WhatsApp groups, ward committees, and community outreach teams.

Some municipalities also prepare easy-to-read posters or infographic summaries, especially for residents with limited time or reading capacity. The aim is to ensure transparency—every resident should have a fair opportunity to see what the municipality is planning before it becomes final.

Holding public hearings and collecting written / online submissions

During the 21-day comment period, municipal officials organise **public hearings** in wards, clusters, or sub-councils. These meetings allow residents to directly ask questions, express concerns, and check whether the draft plan reflects the priorities raised earlier in the IDP process. Officials from major departments—such as Water and Sanitation, Roads and Stormwater, Electricity, Human Settlements, Local Economic Development (LED), Environment, and Community Services—attend these hearings to explain specific projects or clarify technical issues.

In addition to physical meetings, municipalities create multiple channels for **written and online submissions**, such as:

- online comment forms on the municipal website
- dedicated email addresses for IDP comments
- WhatsApp or SMS lines for quick submissions
- hard-copy submission boxes at libraries and community halls
- letters submitted through ward councillors or community development workers (CDWs)

Stakeholder groups such as business chambers, NGOs, disability forums, youth groups, ratepayer associations, and religious organisations also submit structured inputs. This multi-channel approach ensures that all sections of society—including those who cannot attend meetings—can participate meaningfully.

Reviewing and incorporating reasonable public input

After the comment period closes, municipal officials consolidate all submissions into a central database and classify them by topic—for example: housing, electricity, roads, youth development, refuse collection, water, safety, or environmental concerns. Each comment is shared with the relevant technical department for review.

Departments then analyse whether the suggestion is:

- **reasonable**, meaning it is valid and aligns with the municipality’s role;
- **financially feasible**, given available funds;
- **technically possible**, based on engineering or planning realities;
- **aligned with the municipality’s long-term strategies** and spatial development plans;
- **within the legal mandate** of local government.

Reasonable and practical suggestions are incorporated into the final IDP. For instance, officials may adjust project timelines, modify ward priorities, add community facilities, or update performance indicators. Where inputs cannot be accommodated—often due to cost, legal limits, or duplication—officials record the reasons in an internal report.

Some municipalities publish a “Response to Comments” summary to show how public participation shaped the final IDP. This transparency helps build trust and demonstrates that engagement is meaningful rather than symbolic.

Tabling the Final IDP and Budget before the Council for adoption

After all valid changes are included, the administration prepares the **Final Integrated Development Plan** and the **Final Budget** for the next financial year. These two documents are closely linked, because the law requires that major IDP projects must be costed and appear in the municipal budget. Similarly, no major capital project should appear in the budget if it is not included in the IDP.

The Municipal Manager and the Mayor then table the final documents before Council. Councillors debate the content, raise issues from their constituencies, and question officials where clarity is needed. Because the IDP and the Budget shape the municipality’s development direction for the next five years, these debates can be detailed and politically significant.

Once councillors are satisfied, the **Council votes to adopt both documents**. Adoption is done through a formal Council resolution and represents the highest level of municipal decision-making. From this moment, the IDP becomes the legally binding development plan of the municipality and guides all programmes, budgets, and performance requirements for the next five years.

Submitting the adopted IDP to the MEC for Local Government

The final step is for the municipality to **submit the adopted IDP to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Local Government** in the relevant province. The MEC reviews the IDP to ensure it:

- complies with the Municipal Systems Act
- aligns with provincial and national development frameworks
- includes all legally required components (such as performance indicators, a spatial development framework, and sector alignments)
- shows evidence of proper public participation
- is financially and institutionally realistic

The province may issue written feedback, known as an **IDP Assessment Report**, recommending improvements for future IDP reviews. The municipality must consider this feedback when preparing the next annual review of the IDP.

PHASE 7: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW



Objective: To deliver projects, monitor progress, and update the IDP annually.

Timeline: July onwards (Annual)

References: MFMA; Treasury Guidelines; MTSF Reports; DDM One Plan Monitoring Tools

Responsible: Municipal Departments, Provincial Treasury, Auditor-General, COGTA

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PHASE 7 OF THE IDP PROCESS?

Phase 7 of the IDP is where municipal planning moves from paper to action. The municipality has already completed all earlier phases—assessing community needs, prioritising projects, aligning with spatial and sector plans, obtaining public input, and adopting the IDP with the municipal budget. Now it is time to implement projects, monitor performance, evaluate results, and report to communities. This phase ensures that municipal promises become real services and infrastructure for residents.

Implementation of projects through the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) Budget

Once the IDP is adopted, municipal officials begin **implementing projects using the SDBIP**—the detailed operational plan that breaks down the IDP into annual targets, departmental responsibilities, and quarterly deliverables. Each department - such as Roads, Water and Sanitation, Electricity, Human Settlements, and Community Services - works according to the SDBIP to deliver on its specific portion of the IDP.

Funding for these projects comes from the **Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)**, which is the three-year financial plan that ensures money is allocated in the right amounts and in the correct financial years. This alignment ensures that what is promised in the IDP is also realistically funded. Departments prepare work plans, hire contractors where necessary, and procure materials while complying with regulations such as supply chain management rules. Ward councillors and project managers often coordinate to ensure local oversight, making sure projects happen in the right areas and serve the communities as intended.

Monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monthly and quarterly

Municipal officials continuously **monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** to track whether projects are progressing as planned. Each project in the SDBIP has measurable indicators—for example, “500 households connected to piped water by March,” or “3 kilometres of road resurfaced by June.”

Monitoring happens **monthly at departmental level and quarterly at management and council levels**. Officials check progress against targets, identify delays or obstacles, and take corrective action where needed. Performance reports are compiled and submitted to the Municipal Manager, the Mayor, and relevant portfolio committees. If, for example, a water project is behind schedule due to contractor delays or procurement issues, adjustments are made, or resources are reallocated to meet the target.

Conducting evaluations and tracking service delivery progress

Beyond KPI monitoring, municipalities conduct **evaluations to assess overall service-delivery performance**. These evaluations may include audits, site inspections, community feedback surveys, and technical assessments. Municipal managers and directors review whether the outputs (roads, housing, electricity connections, recreational facilities) match the outcomes the IDP promised.

Evaluations also consider quality, cost-effectiveness, and impact. For example, installing a water connection is not enough; officials assess whether water actually flows consistently to households and whether residents can access the service safely. This tracking ensures that the municipality is **not just completing projects but delivering meaningful improvements to the community.**

Reviewing the IDP annually and adjust where needed

Phase 7 includes an **annual review of the IDP.** This is a formal process where municipal officials, councillors, and relevant stakeholders assess progress over the past year. They check whether priorities have shifted due to new community needs, changes in funding, or emerging challenges such as drought, floods, or population growth.

If adjustments are needed, the IDP is updated in a transparent manner. For example, projects may be reprioritised, timelines adjusted, or budgets reallocated within the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. These annual reviews ensure that the **IDP remains a living document,** responsive to changing circumstances while still reflecting the strategic vision of the municipality.

Reporting back to communities transparently

Finally, municipalities report back to communities on implementation and service-delivery progress. This reporting happens through **ward meetings, community forums, newsletters, municipal websites, radio, and social media,** and may include visual summaries of progress. Officials explain what has been achieved, what is ongoing, and what challenges remain.

Reporting back is critical for **accountability and trust.** Residents can see whether the municipality is delivering on the promises made in the IDP and budget. It also provides an opportunity for communities to raise concerns or suggestions, which feed into the next annual review. By closing the feedback loop, municipalities demonstrate that planning, implementation, and public participation are part of an ongoing cycle.



Tips on How Communities can Meaningfully Participate in Phase 7 of the IDP Process

Be Informed: Understand the IDP, SDBIP, and budget allocations. Even simple knowledge of project timelines and indicators can make feedback more credible.

Document Evidence: Take photos, note dates, or track whether services promised in the IDP are being delivered. Evidence strengthens submissions.

Prioritise Issues: Focus on high-impact or urgent matters, rather than trying to influence every minor project—this increases the likelihood of municipal response.

Collaborate: Work with ward councillors, local NGOs, and community groups for coordinated input—collective voices are more effective than individual complaint

Request Council Agendas: Ward councillors can provide agendas of municipal performance discussions. Community members can attend council meetings when KPIs are debated and ask questions during public participation slots.

Focus on Solutions: Effective community input doesn't just raise problems—it proposes feasible solutions e.g., recommending alternative locations for a project, highlighting local volunteers to assist, or pointing out cost-saving measures.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW PHASE OF THE IDP PROCESS

- **The SDBIP is legally binding for managers**, meaning that Municipal Managers can be held accountable if projects in the SDBIP are not implemented as planned.
- **Quarterly performance reports are submitted to the Council** and publicly available on municipal websites, but many citizens are unaware they can access them.
- **Annual IDP reviews are often the best predictor of next year's budget priorities**—projects that perform well are more likely to receive continued funding, while underperforming projects may be deferred.
- **Monitoring and evaluation often reveal gaps not caught in planning**—for instance, road resurfacing may be completed, but poor drainage can cause damage later, highlighting the importance of site inspections.
- **Some municipalities now use digital dashboards and GIS mapping** to track progress in real-time, which improves transparency and allows citizens to see exactly where projects are being implemented.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is far more than a 5-year technical document—it is the **roadmap for a municipality’s development and service delivery**, shaped by the voices of the community. When done properly, it allows municipalities to **identify local needs, prioritise resources, plan strategically, and monitor progress** in a transparent and accountable way.

The IDP is the **practical tool that enables local government to achieve its constitutional objectives**: providing basic services, promoting social and economic development, ensuring sustainable use of resources, encouraging community participation, and maintaining good governance. It brings together planning, budgeting, and performance management into a **single, coordinated system**, giving residents clarity on what the municipality intends to deliver and how it will measure success.

By actively involving communities, councillors, municipal officials, and sector stakeholders throughout the IDP process, municipalities can **turn shared vision into real impact**—safer streets, reliable water access, better housing, functioning roads, thriving local economies, and a higher quality of life for all.

In short, the IDP is not just a plan on paper; it is a **bridge between promises and results**, between government and citizens. When embraced fully and implemented effectively, it ensures that **local government fulfils its purpose**, strengthens democracy, and builds communities that are resilient, inclusive, and empowered.

REFERENCES

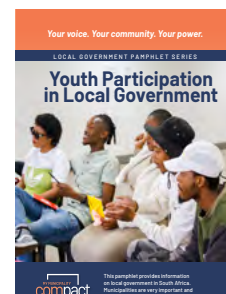
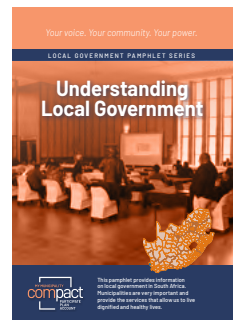
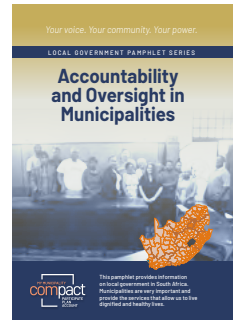
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. (Sections 152 and 195).
- DCoG (2020) District Development Model.
- DCoG (2024) Regulations Framing Institutionalisation of District Development Model in Terms of Section 47(1)(b) of Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005.
- DCoG (2020) District Development Model (DDM) Implementation Framework: Annexure 1: One Plan Process Guideline.
- DCoG (2021) Integrated Development Planning Guideline for Metropolitan Municipalities.
- DCoG (2016) Integrated Urban Development Framework: A New Deal for South African Towns and Cities.
- DCoG (2020) Revised Integrated Development Planning Guidelines for all Categories of Municipalities.
- DCoG (2012) Revised IDP Framework for Municipalities Outside Metros and Secondary Cities.
- Government of South Africa. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003.
- Government of South Africa. Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.
- Government of South Africa. Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013.
- National Planning Commission (2012) The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, Our Future—Make It Work.
- National Treasury 2024 Budget Review: ISBN: 978-0-621-51688-3
- National Treasury (2023) MFMA Circular No. 126, Municipal Budget Circular for the 2024/25 MTREF. 7 December 2023.
- National Treasury (2017) MFMA Circular No. 88, Municipal Circular on Rationalisation Planning and Reporting Requirements for the 2018/19 MTREF. 30 November 2017.
- National Treasury (2005) MFMA Circular No. 13: Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan. 31 January 2005.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was developed by Letticia Naid. Thanks to the IDP managers and others from the 12 municipalities for their time and inputs. Thanks also to the SALGA provincial colleagues for assisting with the research and providing feedback. A number of people contributed to the development of the guide and poster, including Michael Chauke, Collen Rammule, Rebecca Matsie-Makhathini, Hlomani Maswanganyi, Winnie Manganye, Kate Tissington, Girish Daya, Concelia Choma, Jabu Hlatshwayo and Khanyisile Ngqalela.

COMPACT has developed civic education pamphlets on several topics: understanding local government, accountability and oversight, municipal councillors, and ward committees. The *Working Towards Collaborative Local Government* guide provides very useful information about municipalities.

Visit <https://pari.org.za/toolbox>





Website: <https://pari.org.za/compact>

Twitter: @Compact_MyMunic

Facebook: Compact – My Municipality

Email: Girish Daya: girishd@pari.org.za
Winnie Manganye: wmanganye@salga.org.za