

The Mabopane-Centurion Development Corridor: A historical analysis of successes and constraints and proposals for improvement

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Studies on development corridors are very limited in number. This creates the impression that development corridors have not been studied in the past. This is probably as a result of implementation taking place over a long period of time and that the assessment of the corridor developments can only be done once the results have been recorded. Thus, the success emanating from development corridors is not easy to determine, unless such corridors existed for a period of 20 to 30 years. The corridors in Curitiba (Brazil), for example, were initiated 30 years ago and are now regarded throughout the world as a prominent development corridor model. The real value of its advantages/disadvantages can, therefore, only now be assessed/appreciated.

It must also be stressed that the search for study material revealed that, except for material compiled during the planning and implementation processes of the respective development corridor projects, locally and abroad, only limited material exists for the evaluation/assessment of development corridors.

This dissertation is, as a result of the above, considered to be a lead study on development corridors, with a specific focus on the Mabopane-Centurion Development Corridor (MCDC)-project. With regard to the latter, a number of different dissertation approaches could be used. For the purpose of this dissertation, the successes and constraints experienced by the MCDC-project are discussed. The latter is further backed by a discussion of international development corridors and the formulation of a theoretical framework used to evaluate the corridor and prepare proposals for the improvement of the MCDC-project.

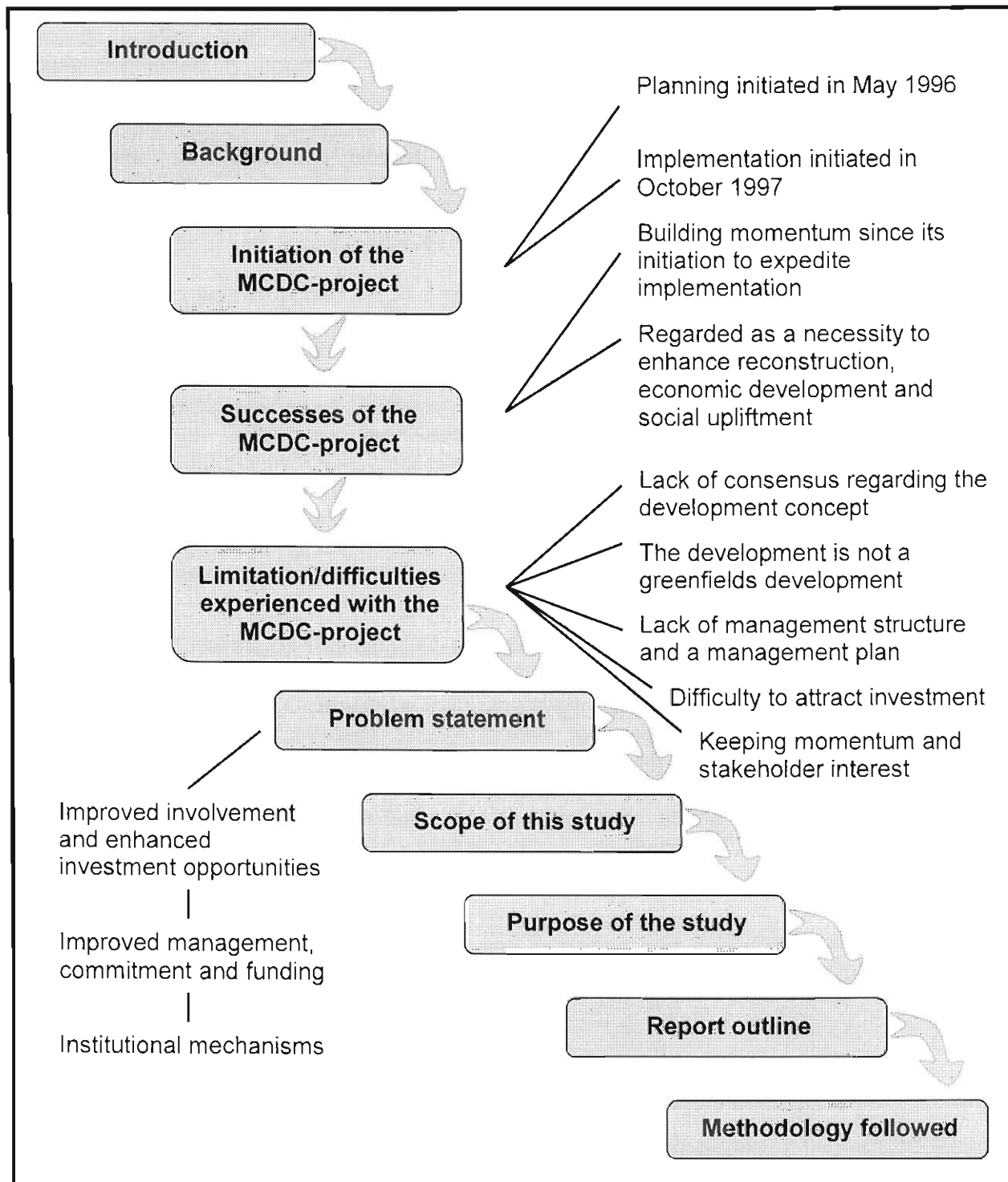
As indicated in Diagram 1 below, this chapter focuses on a background discussion regarding the initiation of the MCDC-project, the successes of the MCDC-project and the limitations/difficulties experienced with the project. Following thereon is a discussion of the scope for the project, the problem statement guiding the dissertation focus, and the purpose of the dissertation. Other aspects addressed include the report outline and the methodology used to address the problem as stated.

1. Background

Development corridors are regarded as one of a number of "*urban elements*" that can be used in the development of a city, with a specific focus to "*integrate natural environments and man-made communities into a sustainable whole*" (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, unknown).

With regard to the definitions of development corridors, there is a vast difference in terms of composition and terminology (definitions are further discussed in Chapter Two, paragraph 1.1 on page 10). However, most of these definitions reflect a number of common characteristics about development corridors, viz. that they are linear in nature, focused on land-use and transport integration, promote mixed land-use development, enhance economic development and promote connection and mobility.

Diagram 1: A schematic illustration of the contents of this chapter



The MCDC is in terms of these characteristics, no different. It is also linear in nature, as its integrated development concept consists of:

- ◆ a “*mobility spine*”, which serves connection and mobility (north-south direction);
- ◆ an “*activity spine*”, which serves accessibility and economic activity, to promote local economic development (also north-south direction);
- ◆ a mix of different order “*development nodes*” and “*inter-modal facilities*”, which are linked through the “*mobility*” and “*activity spines*”, to further promote economic development, as well as to promote the use of public passenger transport; and
- ◆ “*access spines*” (east-west directions), which direct regional movement towards the above-mentioned components of the development concept, and assisting with the integration of the corridor area with the rest of the city (Urban-Econ Development Economists, 1997b). The MCDC-concept is described in more detail in Chapter 3. Figures are also used to illustrate the concept.

1.1. The initiation of the MCDC-project

The MCDC-project was launched on 17 September 1997 with the following words of the then Mayor of the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council (GPMC),¹ Joyce Ngele: “*Let us build the MCDC into the best development corridor in the whole of Southern Africa – if not the world*” (Snelco Pro, 1997). The process implemented to enable this announcement in September 1997 was initiated in 1995 and resulted in a “*Memorandum of Agreement*” signed between the former GPMC and the National Department of Transport, so as to initiate, manage and develop the MCDC-project (Department of Transport, 1997). To ensure that the former GPMC fulfilled its contractual obligations, an official was appointed as a dedicated project manager, to ensure progress with the execution of the MCDC-project processes (GPMC, 1996a). A Steering Committee, consisting of all relevant role-players, was also established to ensure stakeholder² involvement and progress with the project processes.

1.2. The successes of the MCDC-project

The successes of the MCDC-project lie in the involved stakeholders’ ability to make progress with the implementation of strategic and supportive strategies (either in the form of further planning activities or project implementation), so as to build momentum to get the MCDC established. However, regardless of the fact that the MCDC-project is regarded by its stakeholders as a necessity to revitalise the western parts of the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area by “*promoting/unlocking economic development*”, “*redressing inequities*” and to “*foster integrated development*”; the MCDC-project is not without limitations and difficulties.

¹ The former GPMC was a local authority structure of a metropolitan level and was established on 8 December 1994 in terms of the Local Government Transitional Act (Act 209 of 1993).

² Stakeholders in this case include representatives of the National Government (Department of Transport), the Gauteng Provincial Government, all former local authorities (City Council of Pretoria, Town Council of Centurion and the Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Sub-Structure) situated within the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area, Planning Zone Forums, representative industrial and business institutions, representative transport and public transport institutions, skills academies and training institutions (Afrosearch, 2000).

1.3. The constraints experienced with the MCDC-project

The initial planning results and the progress with the implementation of projects since October 1997 were constantly evaluated by the former GPMC. These evaluation processes were, amongst others, executed through stakeholder interviews in 1999, which revealed that the MCDC-project was not without obstacles, limitations and difficulties, as can be gathered from the summarised extraction from the study and information below:

- ◆ A lack of consensus among stakeholders that:
 - the MCDC development concept is indeed a development corridor; and
 - the MCDC-project will really attract investment;
- ◆ The MCDC is considered not to be a "greenfields" development: The eastern part of the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area is regarded as a "greenfields" development, whilst the MCDC-area is regarded as an existing urban area that needs upgrading (in fact total revitalisation), which, of course, imposes its own challenges. Oranje expands on this view. He regards the MCDC-area as an area of "deprivation", characterised by "black townships", "homeland sleeper towns" and "informal settlements" with "little economic growth" (Oranje, unknown). Therefore, the MCDC-project is challenged with the harmonising of the diverse development, infrastructure and basic needs of the MCDC-stakeholders through the implementation of the MCDC Integrated Growth and Development Implementation Strategy (IGDIS). As proposed by Urban-Econ Development Economists³, this could actually be done through the establishment of "a committed organisational structure", being referred to as the "MCDC Development Body". This proposed "committed organisational structure" should be "assigned with the responsibility to initiate, co-ordinate and manage the development process" of the MCDC-project (Urban-Econ, 1997b). It should also be in a position to receive funds from government and to source grants to execute its functions. The establishment of this proposed "committed organisational structure", as a critical implementation strategy to get the MCDC established, is addressed in more detail in Chapter Three;
- ◆ Comprehensive co-ordination and management is needed: A "coherent integrated project management and development framework" was considered a necessity to co-ordinate and manage further development and investment in the MCDC-area; and
- ◆ It is critical for the development of the MCDC not to lose "momentum, stakeholder interest and commitment": The MCDC-project established a fair level of momentum, stakeholder interest and commitment since the initiation of the planning activities, which started in May 1996 (Afrosearch, 2000).

Critics such as Oranje, are of the opinion that the MCDC-project is experiencing difficulties related to aspects such as the lack of the provision of high density housing, the development of a fully-fledged inter-modal public transport system and the expected infill development needed to address urban fragmentation and segregation. He, however, also acknowledges that the poor availability of finance in all spheres of government is a major stumbling block for real implementation in the MCDC-area.

³ Urban-Econ Development Economists is a company of development economists appointed by the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council as Project Leaders for the execution of Project Phases 1 and 2 of the Mabopane-Centurion Development Corridor project. See Chapter Three for more detail on the MCDC-project phases. A multi-disciplinary core team, as well as a sub-consultant team supported Urban-Econ Development Economists.

2. Problem statement

Concluded from the background provided above, the MCDC-project has been implemented for only three and a half years and already some progress can be recorded (of which some is documented as background in this dissertation). However, the project is also experiencing constraints which hamper fast track implementation. These constraints have a serious effect on the physical development, economic growth and social upliftment in the MCDC area, as well as reaching the overall goals of the MCDC-project. The real challenge for this dissertation is therefore to find solutions for the improvement of the following problem issues, viz:

- ◆ What are the problems?
- ◆ What planning mechanisms/approaches could be implemented to increase and enhance opportunities for investors (communities) to invest in the MCDC area?
- ◆ What means/mechanisms/concepts exist in other development corridors which can within the ambit of a theoretical framework for development corridors be used to promote the development of the MCDC area through improved management, commitment and funding?
- ◆ Which institutional mechanisms exist in other development corridors which could be used to enhance budget allocation to address priority catalyst projects in the MCDC area and to sustain stakeholder interest in the MCDC-project?

3. Scope of this study

This study is not focused at determining the feasibility/economic viability of the MCDC-project, as it will require a different focus (for example cost and cost-benefit analysis, input-output modelling, all measured against alternative urban planning alternatives).

This dissertation *does* focus on a historic overview of the MCDC-project, research of other development corridors to compile a theoretical framework for development corridors and lastly to use the theoretical framework to formulate proposals for improving the MCDC-project.

More specifically, this dissertation is focused on:

- ◆ determining the rationale behind the use, planning and implementation of development corridors, development concepts and strategies implemented to address own development problems;
- ◆ formulating a theoretical framework for general guidance, to enhance and promote the establishment of development corridors;
- ◆ giving a historical analysis of the focus areas, project strategies and institutional frameworks of the MCDC-project;
- ◆ identifying and describing progress and the difficulties experienced with the establishment of the MCDC-project;
- ◆ determining lessons that can be learnt from other international development corridors for potential application in the MCDC area; and
- ◆ preparing proposals for addressing the constraints experienced with the MCDC-project, concluding with specific recommendations for consideration and implementation by the appropriate authority.

4. Purpose of the study

4.1. Main goal

The main goals of this dissertation are to:

- tell the story of the MCDC-project;
- explain what has worked and what not in the MCDC-project;
- research other development corridors, locally and abroad, to find solutions to improve the problems of under-performance in some of the strategies of the MCDC-project.

4.2. Objectives

The objectives of the dissertation are to:

- give an overview of the MCDC-project events, the project processes, results and progress of implementation activities;
- give an overview of the successes experienced by the MCDC-project;
- give an overview of the constraints experienced by the MCDC-project;
- study international development corridors;
- formulate a theoretical framework for development corridors; and
- formulate and prepare proposals for potential application in the MCDC-project.

5. Report outline

The outline of the dissertation is schematically illustrated in Diagram 2 below and further discussed in the paragraphs to follow.

- ◆ Chapter Two: The chapter focuses on international perspectives and experiences on corridor or related development projects. As an introduction to this chapter, definitions of the term "*development corridor*" are provided, following with a description of the decision guidelines used to select from a number of international development corridors found world-wide.

The introduction is followed by a discussion of each development corridor. Each of these discussions represents research on issues such as:

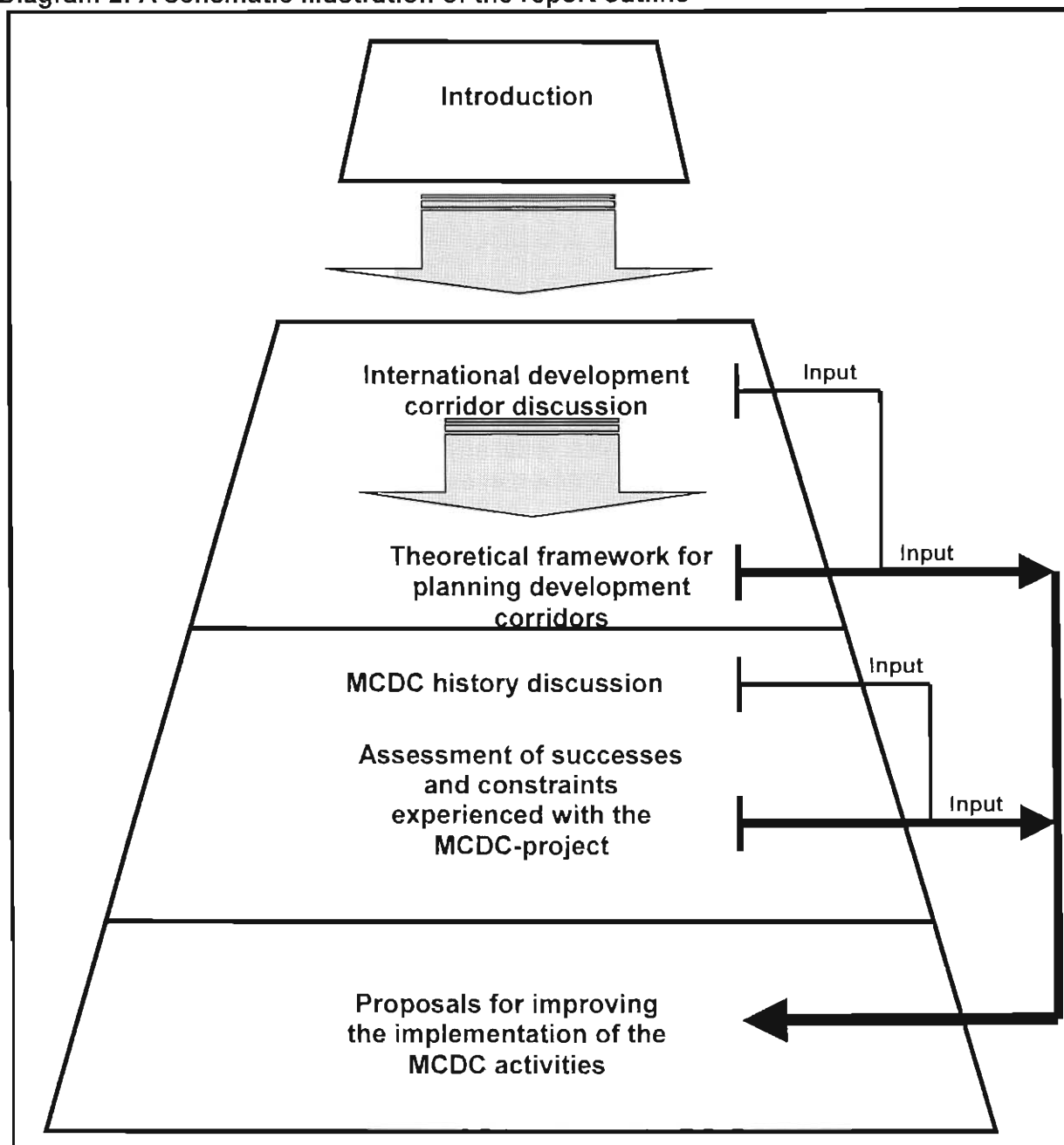
- a basic *background* description of the project/study;
- the *key focus areas* of the international development corridors, so as to understand the reason for its existence;
- the *project strategies* implemented to get the development corridors established, especially where it relates to difficulties experienced by the MCDC-project;
- the *success stories* that these development corridors have for potential application in the MCDC-area; and
- the *institutional structures* established by international development corridors to manage and expedite implementation.

This chapter is concluded with a potential theoretical framework for development corridors, explaining:

- a possible *definition* of a development corridor;

- *principles* used for the planning and implementation of development corridors;
- the *design elements* of development corridors; and
- the *preconditions* for establishing successful development corridors.

Diagram 2: A schematic illustration of the report outline



- ◆ Chapter Three: This chapter provides information on the MCDC-project. It starts with a description of the historic sequence of events since the idea of the MCDC-project was initiated in November 1995. Following thereon, the following issues are covered:
 - What is the MCDC?
 - What did the MCDC-project processes involve?
 - What are the focus areas of the MCDC-project?

- What are the strategic issues pertaining to the MCDC-project?
 - Who was involved?
 - Who is responsible for implementation?
 - How was co-ordination with other projects dealt with?
 - What structures have been established to deal with the MCDC-project?
 - What success stories emanate from the MCDC-project?
- ◆ Chapter Four: This chapter provides detail on some of the critical limitations/difficulties that are experienced with the MCDC-project. These limitations/difficulties relate to aspects which include, amongst others, the lack of political will, the implementation of strategies such as the integration of land-use and public transport in the MCDC's activity spine and the lack of appropriate quasi-public institutional structures to enhance the establishment of the MCDC-project.
 - ◆ Chapter Five: This chapter is structured to reflect the potential application of the lessons learned from the international development corridors on the MCDC-project, including an overall summary of the results of the entire research processes, and concluding with recommendations formulated to enhance the incorporation of the results of the research into the MCDC-project processes. The latter includes the implementation processes aimed at enhancing the overall development of the MCDC-area.

6. Methodology followed

The research methodology followed for this dissertation follows a broad outline of the scientific method described by Leedy⁴. Reviewing the related literature reveals that the research is primarily theoretical in nature and conducted through different research methodologies⁵ throughout the different chapters. The research methodologies adopted for this dissertation are further discussed below:

- ◆ Chapter Two: The research for Chapter Two is primarily documentary (Leedy, 1997) in nature and focuses on local and international development corridors. The literature research includes:
 - an Internet search for international development corridors;
 - available reports and publications;
 - written reports on the findings of foreign study tours;
 - marketing material (i.e. brochures, leaflets);
 - journalists' impressions given in newspapers and other technical publications; and
 - academic publications.
- ◆ Chapter Three: As the chapter represents a purely MCDC-focus, the research is based on a chronology-in-historical-research-method (Leedy, 1997) and consists of a literature search which relates to:
 - technical multi-dimensional background research reports compiled to formulate the

⁴ Leedy defines the term "research methodology" as a way of thinking, which represents "...the manner in which we attempt to solve problems in a systematic effort...to confirm the validity of the solutions to the problem others have presumably resolved" (Leedy, 1997).

⁵ As the research material dictates the research methodology, in this dissertation "methodology" reflects but "...merely an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly" (Leedy, 1997).

MCDC's IGDIS report;

- MCDC-project reports;
 - technical project reports;
 - minutes of MCDC Steering Committee meetings;
 - Council resolutions;
 - marketing material, press releases and editorials; and
 - professional and sector-specific publications and newspaper clippings.
- ◆ Chapter Four: Chapter Four is based on the same literature study-methodology as Chapter Two. However, the same literature material is used as in Chapter Three above.
- ◆ Chapter Five: This chapter is purely theoretical in nature, as it is based on a developmental-research-methodology (Leedy, 1997). Through the application of this research methodology, applications are found for the lessons learned from the international development corridors, so as to address the MCDC-difficulties. Recommendations are backed by literature sources such as:
- official government reports;
 - marketing material, press releases and editorials;
 - professional and sector-specific publications and newspaper clippings;
 - available reports and publications on the international development corridors; and
 - written reports on the findings of foreign study tours.

