

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT: A PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY IN RURAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of the national policy to provide basic services to all South Africans, the effectiveness of service delivery and returns on infrastructure investments have become a point of growing concern, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas as well as small rural towns. An increasing awareness of the discrepancies between what is expected and required of government in terms of service delivery and what is actually being provided is reflected in the public unrest erupting in local authorities suffering from service delivery blockages and failures. Questions over the reasons for under-delivery, the locus of backlogs in municipalities and the viability and ability of municipalities to deliver services have thus never been more acute. The paper profiles a variety of policy interventions that have sought to reverse the situation with mixed results. It singles out amongst other missing ingredients the importance of visionary leadership and strong management. With the help of a case study – the KSD Presidential Intervention Program – this paper argues for a project management approach undergirded by extensive training and capacity development to addressing service delivery blockages in municipalities characterized by capacity problems and governance issues.

Key Words: *Service delivery, project management, integration, developmental governance, capacity building, poverty eradication, job creation, sustainable rural and urban development*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, “*quality infrastructure and service delivery*” has come to encompass much more than just product or process conformance for both central and local governments (Dettmer, 2000:1). Perhaps one of the greatest constraint for improving service delivery and local government management is an inadequate supply of managerial human capital. In this hierarchy of service delivery constraints the next most important constraint is inadequate worker skills, and informational barriers – not knowing what changes to make completes the factors (BIS, 2011: 2).

In South Africa post 1994, a bundle of policy and legislative sticks covering all spectrums of growth and development have been implemented as part of wider efforts to reduce poverty, inequality and unshackle what could legitimately be termed “*arrested development*”. Many observers and commentators have noted that contemporary South Africa is not in short supply of noble and well-written policy and legal instruments. Far from that, the country has been seen to suffer from a failure to translate the policy and legal instruments into transformative high impact projects that permanently and positively change livelihoods of the greater majority of South Africans.

The observed gap between policy making and sustainable project implementation has been partly attributed to the relatively widespread service delivery protests in the country. The State of Local Government Report that resulted in the Local Government (LG) Turnaround Strategy identified a number of capacity constraints facing local government in the implementation of the system of developmental LG. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report recognises the needs for improved capacity (individual, institutional and environmental) and skills for both councillors and municipal officials. Municipalities have poor skills base and lack of training and career-pathing. In addition, lack of skills development programmes or committed training in many municipalities has come strongly to the fore during the assessment.

Finally, under-investment in people, particularly where technical, management and leadership skills are required has been the norm rather than the exception (SALGA, 2010).

Institutional capacity refers to the degree to which new modes of governance effectively inhibit or resolve societal and/or administrative problems and challenges (Chakwizira & Mashiri, 2009). It is connected with such factors as the power, information and knowledge which different forms of governance have in order to undertake and tackle societal and administrative problems. However, in different countries, political cultures and geographic areas, partnerships work in very different styles and with very different results. Local governance not only forms a territorial alternative to sector based policies, but also advances endogenous development by building the capacity of communities to adapt to external changes. It is important for local governance structures to have the capability and competence to network and interact in order to act where necessary with other regions, and to build coalitions and partnerships directed to specific goals. However, encouraging interaction between regions can lead instead to interregional competition and thereby inhibit valuable flows of knowledge between actors in competing regions. To be effective, though, it is essential that local governance arrangements relate to multi-level governance structures. Of late, state-local level power dynamics have dominated the governance structures, but increasingly private and civic sector actors have become increasingly involved. (ESPON, 2009: 16-17). Development and project management innovation entails novelty, that is, new things being done, or old things being done in new ways. A more formal definition is *the application of technological, institutional and human resources and discoveries to productive processes, resulting in new practices, products, markets, institutions and organizations that are improved and efficiency-enhancing*. A simple model of rural development innovation processes involves recognition of need, articulation of demand, design of the innovative solution, implementation, replication, and scaling-up, the latter stages of which, in particular, have entrepreneurial characteristics.

1.1 Aim of the Paper

With the help of a case study, this paper seeks to show that service delivery challenges can be circumvented if the appropriate interventions are implemented despite capacity challenges experienced at the coalface of development endeavours – local government. The paper also aims to demonstrate that one instrument that has been empirically tested is a project management approach to policy planning and implementation.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a mixed method approach involving reviewing grey literature – including a basket of policy interventions intended to improve service delivery, discussion with project management practitioners and a case study to illustrate the nature of “arrested development” and the suite of intervention options that could provide a stimulus for sustainable development.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the intersection of literature from the management sciences and mainstream transport policy planning and implementation with a view to unravelling what value add it brings to development planning and service delivery practice.

3.1 Intersection of Management Theories and Service Delivery Practices

In Economics, theories and many notions of “management practices” abound. For purposes of this discussion, three distinct approaches that are amenable to being embedded into a simple production function (or service delivery) framework, are analyzed briefly, where output, Q , is produced as indicated in equation (1) below:

$$Q = G(A, M, X) \quad (1)$$

Where A is an efficiency term (often called productivity), X are conventional factors of production such as labour, capital and skills, and M is management quality.

The equation suggests that national, provincial and local government management whose outcome is service delivery is a factor of production at par with labour or capital. The deficient supply of this factor of production particularly at local government level has, in part, resulted in significant service delivery backlogs.

3.1.1 *Project management as a technology*

Empirically, there is some evidence to suggest that on average, well-managed governments do deliver services better, which to some extent implies that there is no substitute for good management and quality assurance. Indeed management science literature is replete with examples of management best-practices which can be employed to improve government performance through focused training and practice. This more anecdotal literature also strongly suggests that such management approaches to government (national, provincial or local) is and should be conceptualized as a type of technology that institutions can adopt (Winters, 1982). The policy response to this view of management is to seek to encourage and foster the spread of management best practices through exchange programs, twinning programs, management interactions and government-supported management education programs. What often reduces the impact of such programs is the omnipresent spectre of employee turnover (which is itself a manifestation of the capacity challenges in terms of adequate numbers of a cadre of capable officials) especially at the local government level leaving very little institutional memory.

3.1.2 *Project management as design (contingent management)*

The third class of management models is called the design approach (also known as contingency theory in management science). This approach analyses the circumstances under which different designs of national and local governments could improve service delivery and overall productivity, for example, through decentralization, incentive pay, or outsourcing, the use of information and communication technologies (Bloom et al, 2010). Through various initiatives, some of which are the subject of Table 1 below, the South African government has sought to ramp up service delivery with varying degrees of impact.

3.2 Constraint Management and the Emerging “Arrested Development” Theory

Constraint management is an outgrowth of the Theory of Constraints (TOC), a set of principles and concepts introduced in the 1980s by Eliyahu Goldratt (Dettmer, 1997). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the meteoric rise of the quality movement reinforced the idea that success lay in continuous refinement of processes. Systems thinking and innovation were considered as critical in unlocking the full potential of local and national governments (ibid) largely because of the belief that they enhanced service delivery and performance optimization.

3.2.1 Definition of a constraint

A constraint is *anything that limits a system (company or agency) in reaching its goal* (Goldratt, 1990, pp. 56-57 in Noreen et al, 1995). This is a very broad definition, because it encompasses a wide variety of possible constraining elements. Constraints could be physical (equipment, facilities, material, people), or they could be policies (laws, regulations, or the way we choose to do business – or choose *not* to do business). What is interesting is that frequently, policies cause physical constraints to appear (Dettmer, 1997).

3.2.2 Range and types of constraints

Identifying and breaking constraints becomes a little easier if there is an orderly / systematic / scientific way of classifying them. Given that system constraints can be conceptualized and manifest broadly as physical or policy, Noreen et al. (1995) distinguish seven basic types of constraints that militate against service delivery (refer to Table 1 below).

Table 1: Range and types of constraints

Constraint Type	Description of Constraints
Nation & local government market	Not enough demand for a product or service to be provided in specific segments requiring innovative delivery models to happen
National & local government resource	Not enough people, equipment, or facilities to satisfy the demand for products or services in the area of jurisdiction
Material	Inability to obtain required materials in the quantity or quality needed to satisfy the demand for products or services Supplier/vendor. Unreliability (inconsistency) of a supplier or vendor, or excessive lead time in responding to orders
Financial	Insufficient cash flow to sustain an operation. For example, a local authority that cannot produce more or offer a service until payment has been received for work previously completed, because they might need that revenue to purchase materials for an order that's waiting
National & local government knowledge / competence	Information or knowledge to improve local government business performance is not resident within the system or organization Competence: People do not have the skills (or skill levels) necessary to perform at higher levels required to remain competitive in the local government arena
National & local government policy framework	Any law, regulation, rule, or business practice that inhibits progress toward the system's goal

An analysis of the preceding sections leads to the emergence of the arrested development concept. Arrested development is defined here as a bundle of missed development opportunities that relate to obstacles, barriers and development deficits retarding areas from realizing their full development potential. Figure 1 presents the concept of arrested development and the transport sector “big push” and “big movers” role.

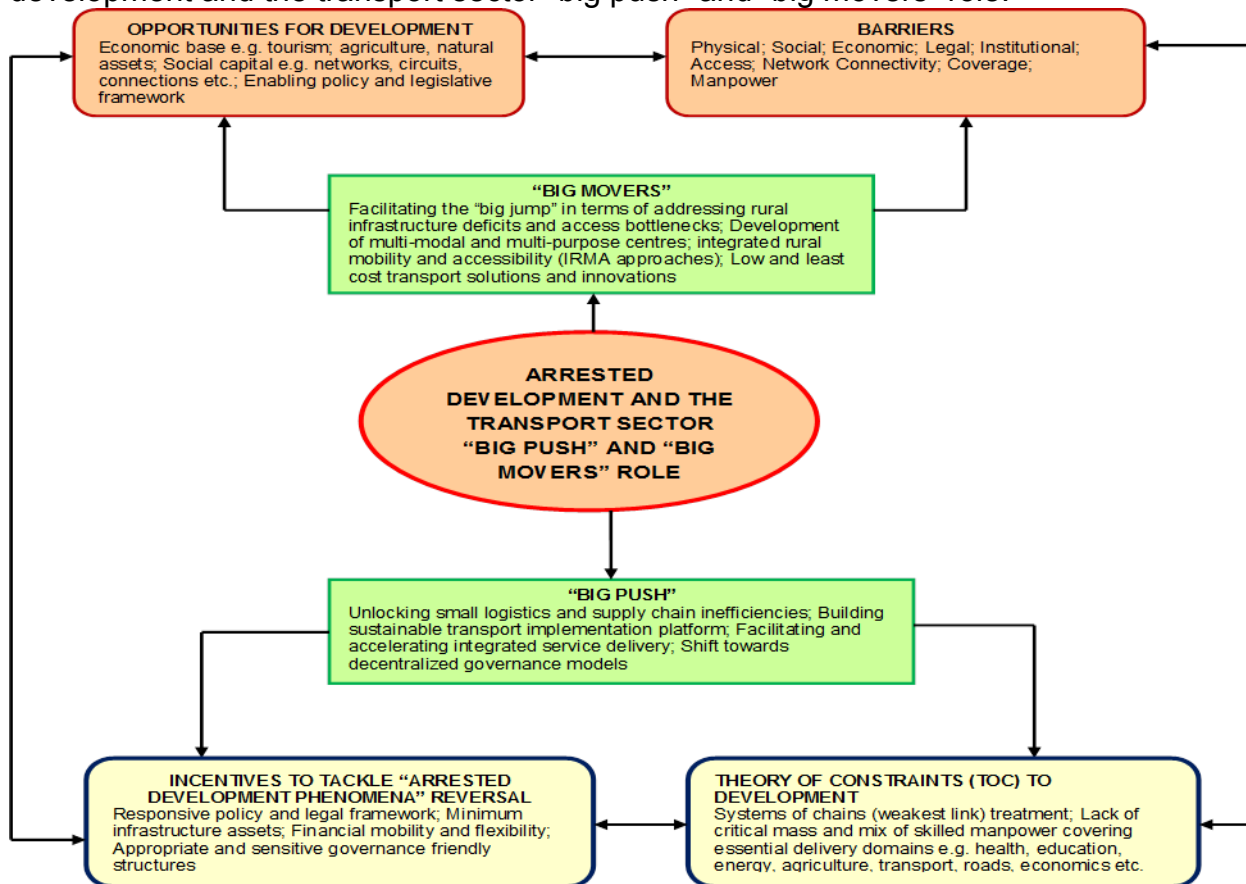


Figure 1: Concept of ‘arrested development’ in relation to the transport sector “big push” and “big movers” role

Given the foregoing, it is imperative to review some of the mainstream interventions that can be applied to remedy areas and institutions suffering from “arrested development” challenges.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Review of Initiatives to Address Service Delivery Blockages

This section reviews some government initiatives meant to strengthen service delivery. However, the jury is still out regarding the impact of the strategies as it is still too early for a policy implementation assessment (refer to Table 2 below).

Table 2: Review of selected initiatives to address service delivery blockages

Lead Agency	Description of Initiative	Service Delivery Gap Addressed
South African Planning Institute (SAPI)	Establishment of a Training Institute	Skills & continuous professional development
Department of Rural development & Land reform (DRDLR)	Training programs to facilitate the implementation of the Spatial Planning & Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) (2013)	Address & integrate spatial planning themes with the wider transportation, urban & regional development themes
Department of Transport (DoT)	Training of new employees	Create a critical mass of transport experts in the country & for the Department
Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)	The DBSA has a Development Fund, which provided for expertise, grant funding, development facilitation & local economic development initiatives.	Some of the challenges faced by municipalities included insufficient funds for projects to address infrastructure backlogs, lack of efficient financial management & billing systems, low revenue bases, non-compliance of supply chain management & procurement processes, high vacancy rates & a lack of planning capacity.
	Siyenza Manje deployed experts to low-capacity municipalities, The Siyenza Manje programme ensured that capable human resources were deployed to municipalities, with the purpose of building institutional & human capacity and unlocking service delivery blockages	The funding for the programme came from the National Treasury as well as the DBSA. The key driver for the programs budget was remuneration. Capacity development areas of this programme included finance, technical, planning, institutional capacity building & institutional turnaround.
	Vulindlela offered accredited training to municipalities & government departments & Agencies assisted donors & development partners to implement development initiatives, and there were also programmes for Rural Development & Community Development	Analysis undertaken into socio-economic & institutional backlogs had shown that unemployment stood at 28% & the poverty rate stood at between 40% & 70%. In addition, 54% of municipalities produced poor quality audit reports. 20% of municipalities had been declared to be in financial distress. Vacancy rates in municipalities stood at 33%. The backlog

	Facilitation.	for operations & maintenance backlogs totalled R122 billion.
Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA)	MISA is one of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) targets meant to introduce a turnaround mechanism in dealing with the provisioning, refurbishment & maintenance of municipal infrastructure.	MISA becomes the direct successor in responsibility to the support programme that the DBSA was providing through the Siyenza Manje project. The programme involves the following among others, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipal Capacity Development – this involves the building and/or strengthening of the in-house capacity of municipalities to be able to develop, operate & maintain their infrastructure on their own in the medium to long term. 2. Sector capacity and skills development interventions – this refers to interventions designed to enhance the technical capacity of local government. These include skills development programmes such as bursaries, learnerships & internships for infrastructure development as well as partnerships with tertiary institutions & professional bodies.
South African Local Government Association (SALGA)	SALGA said that it was necessary to address capacity constraints of the poor skills base, lack of career pathing, lack of skills development programmes, & under-investment in technical, management & leadership skills. This stems from the understanding there had been serious leadership & governance challenges & inadequate human resource capital. SALGA described its capacity building projects, & the P3 programme to facilitate interaction between local authorities & non-state role-players.	These included the poor skills base, lack of career pathing, lack of skills development programs & under-investment in people, particularly where technical, management & leadership skills were required. There were serious leadership & governance challenges, as well as inadequate human resource capital.

	<p>The key strategic pillars anchoring SALGA's program were to facilitate thought leadership, advocacy, coordination & authentication. Its P3 Program was aimed at facilitating interaction between local authorities & non-state role-players, in different contexts, & at supporting an increased role for local authorities in the decentralisation process, while strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations & local authorities. Implementation was undertaken in selected municipalities in the Eastern Cape, Free State & the Western Cape.</p>	<p>SALGA's capacity building projects included Local Democracy & Local Governance (LODLOG), Gender Mainstreaming & Local Governance (GEMLOG) & Local Labour Forum (LLF). In the latter project it partnered with LGSETA, while LODLOG & GEMLOG were done in partnership with Swedish partners. Other projects were the Municipal Skills Development Programme, Councillor Induction (in which it partnered with COGTA & LGSETA) & Councillor Development (where it partnered with LGSETA).</p>
	<p>Capacity building programs were needed for politicians & officials, & career-pathing & other incentives were needed for municipal staff, while the Siyenza Manje program needed to be extended to more municipalities, & more creative responses to the skills shortage were required. Political interference & influence needs to be guarded against when appointing staff</p>	<p>There was a need to invest in accredited capacity building programs for politicians & officials. It was also necessary to provide attractive career paths & associated incentives for municipal staff, as well as to ensure that officials possessed the requisite skills. Political interference & influence needed to be actively discouraged when appointing staff, especially when this happened at the expense of acquiring the requisite skills. More creative responses were required to address the skills shortage.</p>
<p>The Department of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs (COGTA)</p>	<p>The purpose of the Municipal Systems Improvement Grant, is to build in-house capacity & stabilise institutional & governance systems, through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, which would support capacity building through Project Management Units.</p>	<p>COGTA's Municipal Systems Improvement Grant (MSIG) was aimed at assisting municipalities in building in-house capacity in order to perform their functions, as well as stabilising institutional and governance systems. The Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) was aimed at supporting capacity building through Project Management Units. COGTA had sector partnerships with National Treasury, DBSA, & the Department of Water & Environmental Affairs</p>

		(DWEA). Challenges in relation to capacity building included the fragmentation of initiatives, limited progress in respect of key indicators such as filling of vacancies across municipalities, & a lack of critical skills in engineering, town planning and financial management. Although a range of interventions had been initiated, & many successes recorded, challenges still remained.
	Capacity building was hindered by fragmentation of initiatives, limited progress on key indicators, & a lack of critical skills.	COGTA's Local Government Turnaround Strategy was aimed at restoring the confidence of people in municipalities as the primary delivery vehicle of the developmental State at local level. It also sought to re-build & improve the basic requirements for a functional, accountable, responsive & efficient developmental local government, as well as move toward a differentiated approach to municipal planning, finances & support.
	Operation Clean Audit aimed to establish effective leadership involvement & oversight, & effective governance.	COGTA's Operation Clean Audit aimed to ensure adequate leadership involvement & effective oversight, effective governance arrangements & financially conducive environments. In future, COGTA would focus on a differentiated approach to municipal support & capacity building, & would also focus on ensuring a single window of coordination in providing support and intervention strategies in provinces and municipalities.

Sources: (COTGA, 2010 - 2012; SALGA, 2010-2011; DBSA, 2010).

4.2 Capacity Challenges

A review of capacity issues in municipalities across the country indicates that capacity constraints abound across all spheres of government but the impact of the staff shortages is felt more keenly at the local level. This is confirmed by literature from the South African cities' network; the Auditor General; Treasury and various local government documents such as IDP reviews, Annual Plans/Budgets (COTGA, 2010 - 2012; SALGA, 2010-2011; DBSA, 2010). A case in point is the Siyenza Manje program which was conceptualised to support Government's hands-on capacity building initiatives. The Siyenza Manje Objectives were two fold, namely: to deploy capable human resources in municipalities with the purpose of *building institutional and human capacity and unlocking service delivery blockages* and to enable distressed municipalities deliver basic services by unblocking and fast-tracking expenditure of Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funding. In aligning with Government programs, Siyenza Manje deployment strategy prioritised:

- Low capacity category B and C municipalities with water and sanitation infrastructure backlogs
- Municipalities with low MIG expenditure, and
- Municipalities with financial management challenges identified by Provincial Treasuries and COGTA.

The foregoing review suggests that capacity is spread thinly on the ground, such that even if the government allocates significant funding to these municipalities, service delivery problems will remain. This is also corroborated by the fact that money continues to be returned to National Treasury because local governments fail to use the money owing to capacity and capacity related issues. Table 3 presents a summary of local government challenges as identified by the Local Government Turnaround Strategy.

Table 3: Local government challenges

Factor	Description
Systemic Factors	Two tier system; limited revenue base; demarcation.
Legislative Factors	Inappropriate legislation; over- and under-regulation.
Political factors	Inter- and intra-political conflicts and polarization.
Accountability Systems	Lack of performance management systems; poor oversight; poor community participation mechanisms.
Capacity & Skills	Lack of capacity in small & rural municipalities.
IGR support & oversight	Fragmented national & provincial support; weak oversight.
Intergovernmental Fiscal Regime	Poor grant design & limited impact; grant dependency.

COGTA, 2010

5. KSD PIP: WHAT THE CASE STUDY TELL US

5.1 Contextual Realities

Mthatha's sphere of influence is geographically much wider than the administrative boundaries of King Sabata Dalindyebo municipality (KSD). Mthatha is thus a regional rural town servicing a hinterland characterised by significant structural problems that tend to impede the rural poor from accessing services, resources, markets and information (Mashiri et al, 2013). In order for the regional rural development agenda to take root, KSD needs to carve out a pragmatic and proactive leading role for Mthatha in support of shared growth for KSD and the region. KSD needs to nurture and accentuate the role of Mthatha as a regional centre offering not only higher order services, but also significant employment opportunities to a potential growth region underpinned by appropriate investment packages (ibid). The challenges that Mthatha is facing tend to inhibit its potential.

It is not surprising that Mthatha was declared a Presidential priority program in August 2009 following concerns about the visible state of decay in the urban fabric of Mthatha – a town that was once a vibrant economic hub of the former Transkei. The main key concern were challenges relating to infrastructure backlogs and historically poor management systems and negative impacts this has on the provision of basic services and the general quality of life of the people that reside in Mthatha. Table 4 presents the KSD Presidential Intervention Program's (PIP) rationale for intervention in greater detail (Safiri, 2012).

Table 4: KSD PIP – Rationale for Intervention

Airport	Roads	Housing
<p>Lack of leadership in the development of the airport Inadequate Airport infrastructure, Short & narrow runway, Small apron, Old & dilapidated terminal building. Limited number of flights into & out of Mthatha Airport One airline which services one route i.e. OR Tambo International Airport</p>	<p>90% of Mthatha surfaced road network has deteriorated beyond pothole repair requirements. Pavement conditions vary from fair to very poor in the CBD Pavement maintenance is very seldom with potholes being very common Roads do not cater for the large number of pedestrians Gridlock-type congestion in the CBD</p>	<p>Huge backlogs, resulting in massive growth in informal settlements Development in KSD land claim issues that may result in further delays (Zimbane) Bulk infrastructure dilapidated for the current situation – not catering for growth & further developments</p>
Water	Sanitation	Electricity
<p>Raw Water Pipe Line in Disrepair Water wasted due to leaks No water supply when pipe line is repaired. Danger to life should the 600mm line burst Water Purification Works Under capacitated to accept volumes required for any new development. Needs to be upgraded from 60ML to 80ML.</p>	<p>Untreated sewer effluent which drains into the river and in some cases connected to the storm water drainage system Old sewer infrastructure Non-functional pump stations Sewer spillages High demand vs. plant capacity</p>	<p>Three sub stations running at 20-30% overload High voltage distribution lines dilapidated & regularly collapse in storms Regular electrical outages causing frustration with businesses & residents alike. Electrification backlog.</p>

Thus central to the PIP was the need to address infrastructure backlogs and service delivery challenges underpinned by a strong management ethos with a view to revitalizing Mthatha. In order to drive the implementation of the PIP and ensure overall coordination, the President reconstituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), chaired by the Minister of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency. A Technical IMC was also established, to be chaired by the Director-General in the Presidency. The IMC and the Technical IMC worked with the Office of the Premier which would provide oversight and facilitate implementation through the Provincial Cabinet Committee. A Provincial Working Group, chaired by the Superintendent General: Local Government and Traditional Affairs, was established to drive the implementation process.

5.2 PMU Scope of Work: Motivation for a PMU

One of the major challenges faced by the KSD PIP was the lack of coordination among the various role players expected to contribute to the intervention program to ensure sustainable impact. In addition, there was a revolving door in respect of personnel assigned to the program by the different stakeholders enumerated above, which meant lack of continuity and by extension, the loss of institutional memory, slowing progress significantly. Another drawback was inadequate funding vis-à-vis the many deserving projects requiring financial injection.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) was expected to undertake the following tasks:

- **Skills transfer and capacity development:** Capacitate the KSD Municipality with project management skills
- **Systems development:** Develop working tools that will enable KSD to compile and tracking of all project's documents
- **Strategy development:** Capacitate officials with strategy development skills
- **Structure development, process management and project management:** Institutional arrangements, reporting lines between different structures of spheres of government upon receipt of report from the PMU
- **Risk management:** Adhere to internal control measures
- **Measurable benefits and tangible recommendations:** Finalize project plans.

Besides secretariat duties and managing the wide array of resource persons, the PMU was expected to generate management reports (for example, project and funding plans, implementation strategies, stakeholder engagement plans, project sustainability plans and exit strategy) for consideration and approval by the various structures up to IMC as indicated in Figure 2 below.

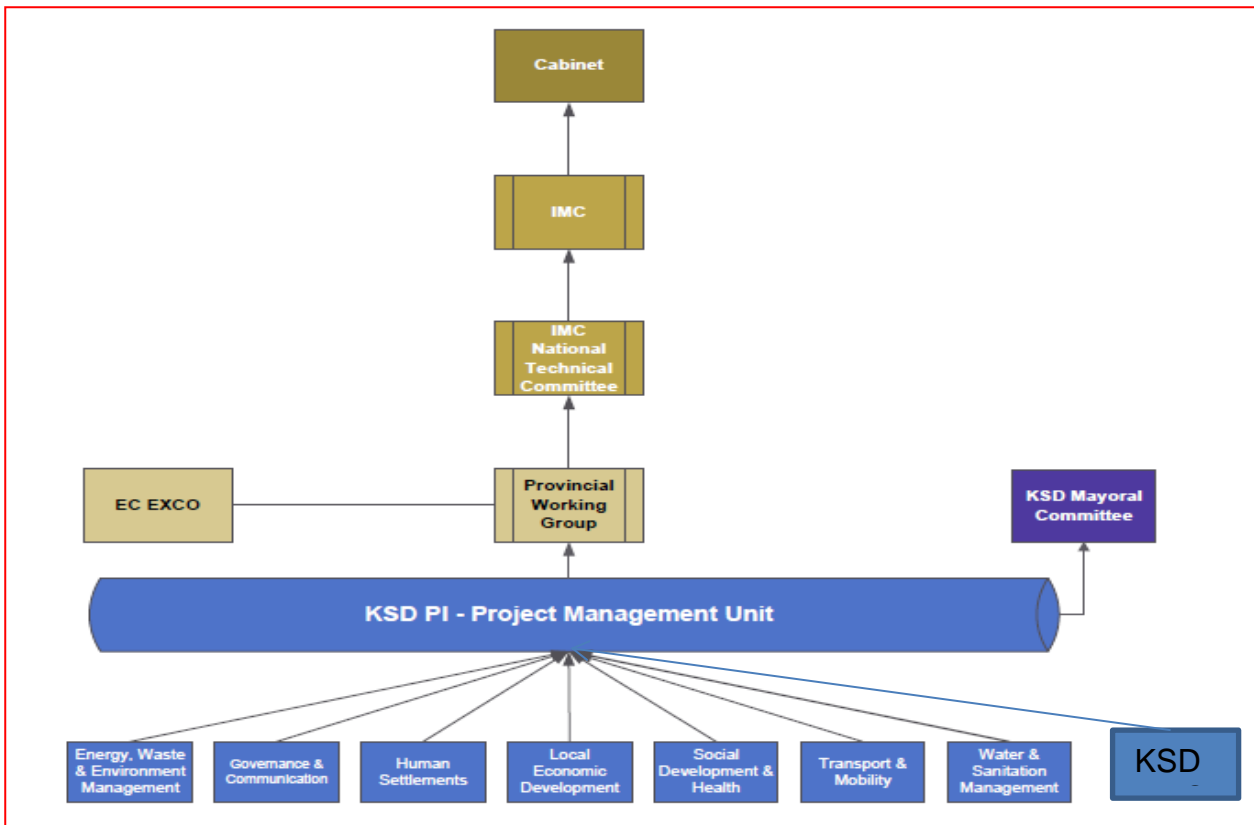


Figure 2: KSD PIP governance structure (Source: Safiri, 2013)

The PWG structure meets on a monthly basis to assess project progress and make decisions that require governance process intervention. The PWG is made up of representatives from the Presidency, the Office of the Premier, Heads of Departments, District and Local Municipalities, and the State Owned Entities. A PWG report is also developed to be presented to the TIMC committee.

5.3 Program Governance Structure

The program governance structure relies on work streams which are made up of all the departments that are implementing projects in line with the focus of the respective stream. These work streams are coordinated by the PMU which sees to the efficient management of this initiative. Through this PMU, the Work Streams report on a monthly basis on progress to the Provincial Working Group (PWG). The PWG is a coordinating structure at the provincial level which is comprised of the KSD Municipality, The OR Tambo District Municipality, Provincial Departments, National Departments and various Agencies of Government. The PWG in turn reports to the Technical Inter-Ministerial Committee, which is a committee made up of Directors-General (DGs) from the nominated national Departments, the Eastern Cape Premiers Office, the Eastern Cape Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, the KSD Municipality as well as the OR Tambo District Municipality.

5.4 Project Prioritisation

The IMC approved the prioritization of catalytic investment areas to revitalize Mthatha. A provincial working group (PWG) chaired by the Superintendent-General: Local Government and Traditional Affairs, was established to drive the implementation. The investment areas were categorized into work streams that coordinate work packages, monitor and report on progress. These priority investment areas (workstreams), which were approved by the IMC, are enumerated in Table 5 below. Each workstream had selected catalytic projects.

Table 5: Investment areas / workstreams

Work-stream	Catalytic Projects
Transport and Mobility	Development and upgrade of roads, bridges, and Mthatha Airport
Energy	Electrification of houses and upgrade of the electricity network
Environmental & Waste Management	Environmental management, waste management
Water & Sanitation	Development & upgrade water & sanitation infrastructure
Governance & Communication	KSD LM Institutional & governance issues
Human Settlements	Construction of houses & upgrade of informal settlements
Local Economic Development	Development & support of SMME businesses within the municipality and ensure that the local communities benefit from the KSD PI
Social Development & Health	Construction & renovations of Social Development & Health Institutions and ensuring food Security

5.5 Work-stream Alignment

Projects that are aimed at achieving a common goal necessarily have interdependencies. Often departments tend to work in silos, which also complicates and slows down the pace of implementation given the inherent interdependencies that have to be navigated with an eye on alignment. As an example, the construction of houses requires alignment in terms of planning with the departments of Human Settlements, Energy, Water and Sanitation and Roads and Transport. Without synchronization of actions, then the houses might end up without electricity, or water, or transport access. Alignment is a collective effort and therefore all stakeholders should be on board.

To this end, strategies developed to ensure alignment of work-stream effort include:

- Monthly work-stream meetings that are attended by members from other work-streams. This is to ensure that all information is shared on time and that all concerns and issues are resolved timeously
- Generation of an interdependency matrix that highlights the dependency between the work-streams. This matrix assisted in the planning phase of any project by enumerating the role players and what is expected of them. This information allowed stakeholders to align their plans for the common good.
- Monthly project site visits are conducted by all work-stream members where project progress is profiled and challenges are discussed, and
- Consolidation of work-stream project plans into one program plan so as to provide at a glance an overview of the work being done and also being planned.

5.6 Funding Strategy

The success of the PIP depends to a large extent on the successful implementation of all the catalytic projects that have been identified. However, a review of the status of the PIP revealed that a significant number of priority projects had not secured funding. To this end the KSD PIP embarked on a strategy to mobilize funding as indicated in Figure 3 below.

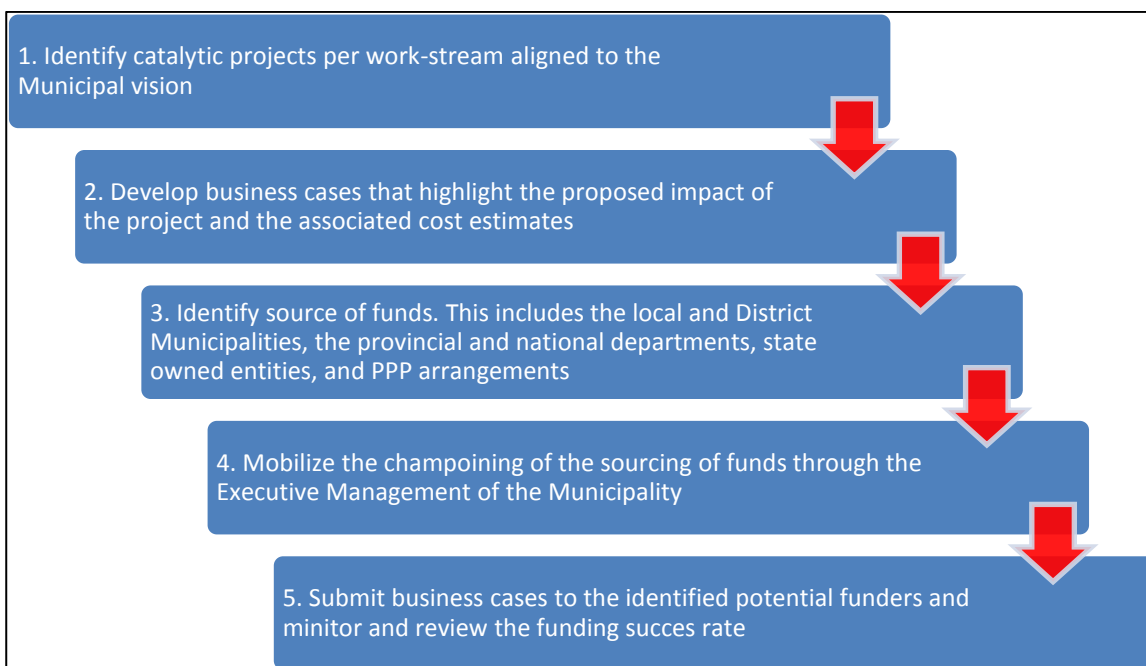


Figure 3: KSD PIP funding strategy (Source: Safiri, 2012)

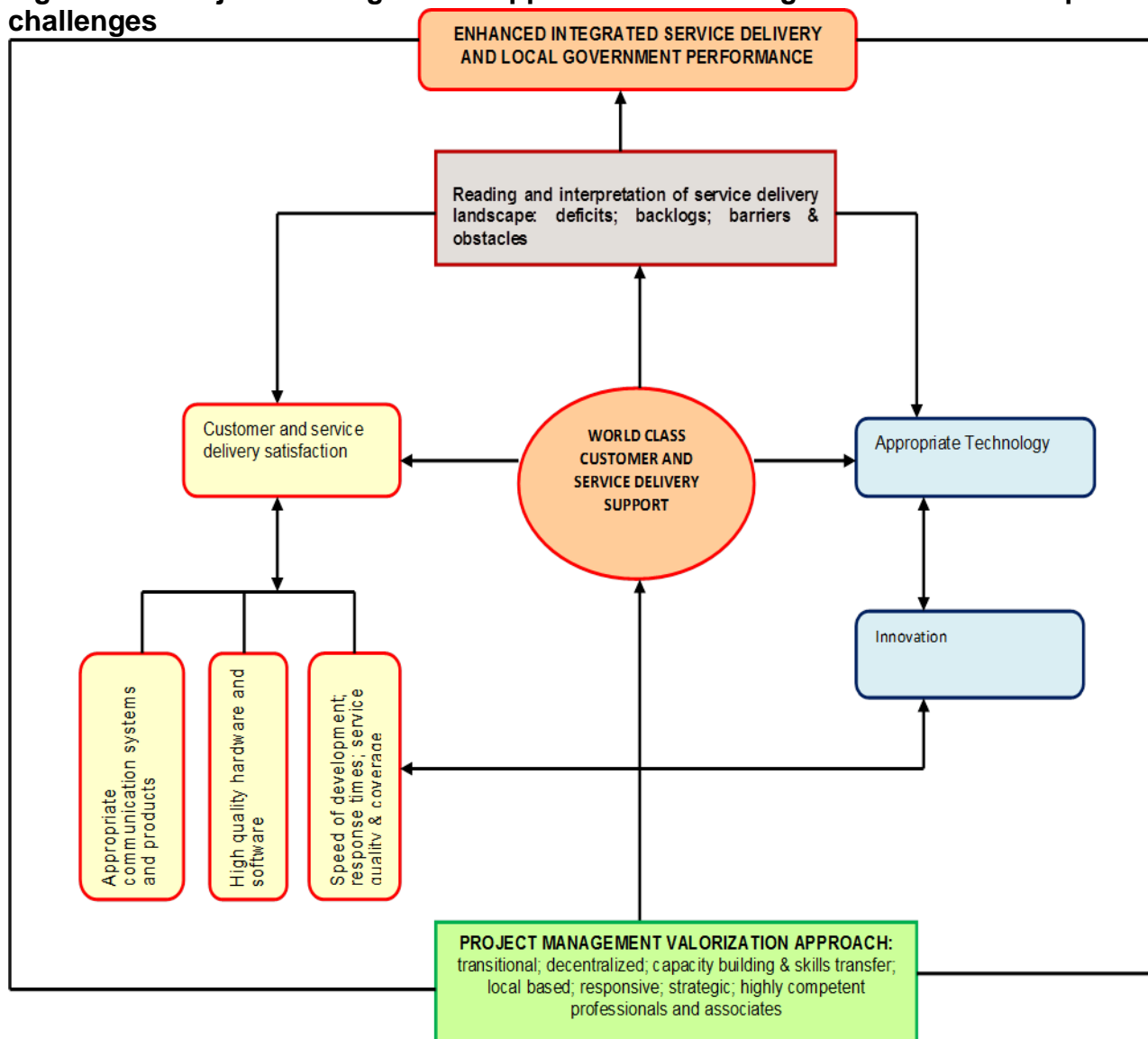
5.7 Strengthening Integrated Planning

The operations and the outputs of the different work-streams have to be coordinated so as to achieve a comprehensive delivery output. Even though the work-streams have different projects to deliver, it should be understood that all the different projects from the different work-streams are developed and implemented to achieve a common goal. The work done by the work-streams has a direct impact on the KSD municipality and requires the support of provincial and national departments, as well as state owned entities. The coordination of the work of the work-streams also requires program management expertise in terms of centrally ensuring coordination, quality deliverables, and completion of projects within budget and timelines.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa has embarked on numerous initiatives aimed at pushing back the frontiers of poverty and in the same vein, stimulating economic growth and development. However, many of these efforts have largely not delivered the results envisaged as the greater majority of municipalities face other challenges that hamper and frustrate development endeavours. A Project Management Approach in the mould of “Siyenza Manje” (spearheaded by the DBSA) has been strongly recommended. Such an approach was employed for the Presidential Intervention Project in Mthatha – the capital of OR Tambo District Municipality. The only major difference was that this was led from the Presidency – which gave it added impetus. The project management approach is often constituted of a multi-disciplinary team that looks at a cross-section of problems that often have to be tackled as a suite to ensure better impact. This is because a significant number of the service delivery problems are interrelated. The approach has the added advantage that it brings to bear on the municipality with immediate effect – seasoned professionals giving advice and undertaking project work, – thereby scaling the capacity problems. Figure 2 presents a schematic representation of how the recommended approach will assist in catalysing and reversing “arrested development” scenarios in any municipality in the country.

Figure 2: Project management approach to solving “arrested development” challenges



7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In summary, “*arrested development*” often manifests itself as constraint management challenges which can be tackled by way of adopting a systems management methodology such as encapsulated by the project management approach to fast-tracking delivery discussed in this paper. In addressing arrested development obstacles, barriers and bottlenecks it is essential to separate the “critical few” from the “trivial many”. Such an approach allows for structured focus on high impact and intervention delivery areas. It is critical to highlight that in order to enhance service delivery and sustain high performance, focusing attention on the critical few factors that determine and are instrumental in system performance and service delivery yields greater returns. The KSD PIP was moribund and lethargic until a PMU had been put in place to rally stakeholders and focus program implementation efforts in a systematic and deliberate manner yielding substantial results for the benefit of the inhabitants of Mthatha. With significant infrastructure investment and strategic plans in place, it is argued that development impulses will be unleashed that will eventually break the shackles holding Mthatha’s and indeed, the region’s development back.

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