GSP II Reflection Learning Sharing

Digitalisation of Service Delivery and Citizen Engagement

Smart Cities for local governance - The Next Dubai can be in the Rural Hinterland

> " Smart Cities are cities and municipalities that want to achieve sustainable urban development through the use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT). "

Around the world, cities and rural municipalities are facing the challenge of providing adequate services and infrastructure to an increasing number of citizens. Smart City approaches can help to meet not only the challenges of urbanisation but also the constraints of rural areas by empowering administrations and citizens to use new technologies and data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of integrated urban development concepts and to align them with the needs of citizens. Smart Cities thus play a crucial role in implementing Agenda 2030 and achieving SDGs.

Why this intervention

As the Governance Support Programme (GSP II) we had to ask ourselves how we can react adequately to our partners needs and help them implement smart city features in small and medium municipalities so that they can harvest the opportunities digitalisation presents. The overall programme centres on capacity building, empowering partners and developing new skills. Another aspect that has been developed over the last years, was the integration of digital solutions to reach these goals. This approach is in line with the current digital local governance strategies of the South African government and follows the recommendations of the presidential commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Their goal as outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa is to become a more technologically driven country that finds solutions to move South Africa forward, with 4IR as a pivot for economic recovery.
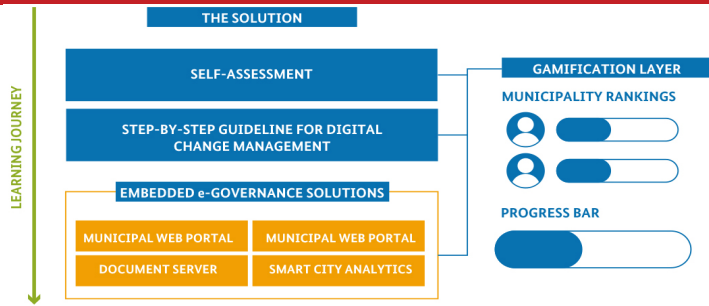
Overview

Smart Cities approaches, strategies and initiatives in South Africa often focus on service delivery as well as human development. These objectives are typically more difficult to achieve in local and rural municipalities. However, the South African discourse mostly hovers around the big picture: How to manage the 4th Industrial Revolution? How to become the next "Dubai"? How to do all at once? In sum, those discourses can be very abstract.

However, the questions that must be asked, should rather focus on people´s needs: What could be an alternative approach, which puts the realities of most South Africans who live in local municipalities, and not Cape Town, into account? What can be done to start a practically impactful Smart City movement in South Africa, which has its

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The driving force behind this strategic approach is a vision to enable our partners to develop and implement innovative and tailormade digital solutions to real world governance challenges in South Africa. The objective is to strengthen the digital interface between local government and citizens by creating digital applications that ease interaction and support municipalities to improve service delivery. At the same time, this approach improves the digital skills of municipal stakeholders. At the same time, this approach improves the digital skills of municipal stakeholders. Moreover better data availability contributes to an increase of transparency and accountability from the municipalities towards their citizens.

The eventual goal for a municipal Smart City approach is that a standardized and strategic digitalisation of the efforts under a smart city umbrella will allow to improve service delivery through more informed decisions, a better understanding of the needs on the ground and the option for preventive action for e.g., when it comes to infrastructure repairs. In line with the core goals of the GIZ and the South African government the ultimate outcome should be to improve the lives of the citizens through better municipal service delivery.

Creating awareness and Impact

Our goal was to create awareness of the opportunities created when bringing digital technology to the local South African space. We intended to especially raise awareness of the importance of data and how to use it. The implementation of digital solutions generates data that becomes more accessible and can thus be used for optimisation. One way was to work with data dashboards to visualise information and fast-track decision making. For example, results from customer care queries are now clustered in a dashboard, financial data is searchable via queries and smart city

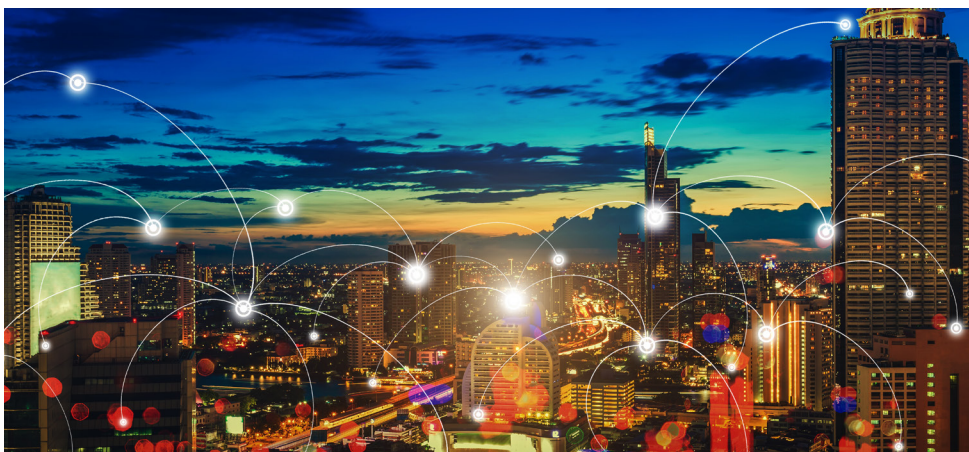assessment results are comparable across the region.

The overall impact can be summarized in a 5 step process every municipality can engage as a general roadmap for their individual smart cities journey. The basic idea behind this is to start small, be aware of your environment and scale up.

- Identification of digital pilots according to programme and partner needs
- Design of pilots that allow for upscaling and integration into a common framework (comparable data streams)
- Integration of pilots into common dashboard
- Development of data strategy
- Training and upskilling within municipal executive team

Examples of Supported SMART CITY processes

The GSP II provided support to different municipal partners in the following main areas:

- Smart City Strategy development
- Dashboard solutions
- ICT Maturity Assessments
- Local Youth Hackathons for piloting technology
- Digitalisation Training for IT practitioners by SALGA and COGTA EC
- Digital customer care systems
- Citizen engagement solutions
- E-procurement approaches
- Digital Tools for Municipal Public Accounts Committees

Reflection

1. Step by step to success

Local municipalities are constrained in resources and capacities. Thus, they must be selective and start small to become smarter. A good way to learn how to benefit from technology is via prototypes. Open-source out-of-the-box solutions offer a great chance, especially for poor and rural municipalities, to build and implement a prototype.

2. Smart City is already here

The terminology of smart cities is nothing new, and the idea of introducing smart technology solutions to manage urban areas more effectively, improving connectivity, sustainability, and liveability is no longer a vision but a reality.

3. Harvest your data

Knowledge empowers everyone, including local governments. Securely stored, understood, and processed data becomes knowledge. One of the most straight forward ways for local municipalities to become "smarter" is to ensure data becomes transformed from paper-based files and forgotten hard drive stores, into a unified virtual space where the data becomes machine-readable and easy to analyse. Better data enables informed decisions.

4. Smart City needs to include all

Technology is not just about shiny things. In developing countries, challenges surrounding topics such as water, sanitation, electricity, waste, transportation, communications, housing, and food security will need to be managed efficiently or "in a smart manner." In other words, Smart City is not only about investing into new technology. It also includes a broader set of measures, such as change management and creating awareness, buy-in and capacity development on all levels, most importantly the development of data analysis skills.

As the Chief Information Officer of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality that successfully implements a Smart City Strategy puts it: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" (Peter Drucker).

References / Resources / Other material / Links

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International Smart Cities Network

https://www.smart-city-dialog.de/en/icsd

Local Governments for Sustainability

https://www.iclei.org/

Smart Africa

https://smartafrica.org/

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