GSP II Reflection Learning Sharing

Long Term Planning

Long-term Planning for Strategic Municipal Outcomes

Amongst other areas, the GSP II supported municipalities to strengthen planning, budgeting, monitoring and performance reporting to improve overall service delivery.

Planning for service delivery is critical to meeting the needs of communities and ensuring that resources are used most efficiently in the procurement for and implementation of service delivery. Planning is largely geared to addressing short to medium outputs over a 3–5-year period and thus the focus is on the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process and the development of an annual Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). This short-term focus restricts the vision for longer term growth and development. In a country such as South Africa where urbanisation is increasing exponentially, long-term planning is essential for managing the increasing population and dwindling resources. With the support of the GSP II, municipalities aimed to shift the planning paradigm to a long-term, developmental paradigm, and take steps to institutionalise the paradigm and planning activities.

Overview

Long Term Planning is a powerful tool for envisaging the future, designing outcomes, and formulating and implementing strategies to realise the outcomes. The GSP II has played a key role in supporting the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) in implementing the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). The programme was able to strategically support Intermediate City Municipalities (ICMs) as well as district and rural local municipalities to start building capacity and capability to do long term planning. GSP supported various long-term planning projects in five municipalities and supported the establishment of an IUDF learning network.

Objectives and Approach

The overall objective of the support on long term planning was to develop a shared understanding of the importance of long-term planning and its benefits and to build capacity and capability for long term planning, including the institutionalisation of such.

Several approaches have been used to deliver on the objectives; and the support provided was based on needs identified by the municipalities and joint development of the concept.

What was Achieved

- A long-term growth and development strategy for the STLM with custom designed capacity development interventions. This long-term strategy is a pathway for STLM to become a globally competitive smart and green industrial city by 2040. A common Vision 2040 enables the STLM to get a strategic handle on service delivery and development. An implementation plan was also produced to steer the implementation of the strategy. This is work in progress and it is in this area that the municipality requires support to institutionalise the actioning and implementation of the long-term planning framework.
- To institutionalise long-term planning in STLM, relevant planning, budgeting and financial frameworks and time horizons were aligned. Support ensured the required systems, processes and to some extent capabilities are in place for successful implementation of the strategy. three manuals and a blueprint have been produced.
- A Methodology for Project Formulation and Budgeting for more accurate and realistic project formulation and budgeting was developed.
- In the Ehlanzeni District Municipality (EDM), a capacity development initiative was in place that focused on an outcomes-based approach. A set of development indicators for EDM and LMs were developed. These will be used to measure progress towards outcomes in the district. A data dashboard is being developed for EDM, which builds further on these indicators and aims to enhance evidence-based decision making and planning. A blueprint is available to guide the implementation of similar solutions in other municipalities.
- In the City of Mbombela (CoMLM) a multi-disciplinary planning team was established and supported to drive long-term planning and provide strategic guidance to the implementation of flagship projects. Support ICMs with the implementation of the IUDF through the establishment and functioning of a peer-to-peer learning network. The aim is to enable munici-

palities to apply the IUDF in a local context whilst sharing knowledge and learning with colleagues in the same situation. As such local approaches can be replicated at a peer-to-peer level based on mutual support. Each ICM participated with a long-term development project, which served as case studies in the form of a living lab approach. Learnings that emerged were spread through diverse channels of the national partners and other networks (including international) to ensure that all IUDF municipalities can benefit from the learning.

- Amathole District Municipality (ADM) was supported to institutionalise long-term planning towards the realisation of its Vision 2058 through the development of outcomes-based indicators that are aligned to the National Treasury Circular 88.
- In Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality (RMLM), scenario planning as an approach to long-term planning was used and futures scenarios for the municipality were developed in consultative and interactive engagements with various stakeholders. The consultative approach took specific account of the Leave No One Behind principles.

Reflection- Critical Success Factors

1. Support from the municipal management
2. Active project champion
3. Joint development process by the relevant officials and the external expert.
4. Paradigm shift to a realisation that planning is everybody's responsibility and function.
5. Awareness and training of relevant municipal officials.

Reflection - Benefits

- A vision for long-term growth and development articulated in a long-term plan with the understanding that various planning cycles, processes and timeframes contribute to the achievement of the long-term vision.
- A long-term planning institutionalisation with "how to" pointers, recommendations and step by step overviews.
- Improving individual and organisational capacity through the development process.
- Enhancing the performance of officials and the municipality thereby contributing to improved service delivery.