



Local government implementation of policies for integrated water services provision – the practice in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality



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Executive summary

In South Africa multiple water use services have been recognised as an important component for poverty reduction and rural economic development. This has been made explicit in, for example, the Strategic Framework for Water Services. However, this policy isn't yet elaborated into local government guidelines. Likewise, there exists a conducive policy environment for integrated planning and cooperative governance, two key issues to facilitate institutional support to multiple use services. This paper examines to which extent these policies are followed in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, a poor rural area in Mpumalanga Province.

Bushbuckridge is currently struggling with reducing service delivery backlogs. There are many reasons for that, including the pre-democratic governance **and neglect of rural areas**, while others are the institutional confusion that has arisen as a result of changing mandates for water services provision and a lack of staff capacity (both in terms of absolute numbers and skills profile). Even providing Free Basic Water remains a challenge.

One way, in which planning for multiple uses could be improved is through integrated development planning. Although the framework for that is clear, it is followed in a minimal way. Assessment of the village water situation is not done in a comprehensive way, the time of planning is way too short and not all relevant stakeholders, including decentralised line departments are involved. Again, lack of staff and skills, is a main reason for this. But there is also a failure to learn from past mistakes and to see the benefit of true integrated planning, rather than a box-ticking exercise. Although the Municipality is trying to respond to this, by improving its skills profile, in the meantime backlogs will remain and performance of systems will be poor. In such a context, supporting livelihoods, through multiple use services will be a tough call.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AWARD	Association for water and Rural Development
BBR	Bushbuckridge
BDM	Bohlabela District Municipality
BHNR	Basic Human Needs Reserve
BLM	Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
CDF	Community Development Forum
CDW	Community Development Worker
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
CMA	Catchment Management Agency
CMS	Catchment Management Strategy
DM	District Municipality
DoH	Department of Health
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EDM	Ehlanzeni District Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan/ Planning
GA	General Allocations
LED	Local Economic Development
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MSA	Municipal Structures Act
MSysA	Municipal Systems Act
MUS	Multiple water Use Services
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NWA	National Water Act
NWRS	National Water Resources Strategy
MWSA	National Water Services Act
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SFWS	Strategic Framework on Water Services
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SRC	Sand River Catchment
SWELL	Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods
WC	Ward Committees
WDM	Water Demand Management
WRM	Water Resources Management
WSA	Water Services Authority
WSDP	Water Services Development Plan

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1 Introduction

Looking at people's livelihoods strategies, in poor rural communities, it is evident that people require water for both domestic and productive needs. Access to reliable supplies of water is needed for a great number of activities, supporting people's livelihoods (Perez de Mendiguren and Mabelane, 2001). This does require a certain degree of security in access to this water, in terms of quantity of water, its quality and reliability. This, in turn, determines the extent of livelihoods opportunities that the rural poor can engage with. Likewise, limited water security may constrain these options. However, in most parts of South Africa, water services planning has traditionally focussed on meeting basic domestic needs only, in effect reducing water access for multiple needs or uses. This is compounded by poor infrastructure and water resources management, reducing further the water security.

To achieve greater water security at village level, a holistic and integrated approach to water planning is needed; that is based on an understanding of people's livelihood strategies and the role of water within them. In recognising the need to achieve greater water security at community level, an approach called 'multiple-use water services' (MUS) was proposed (Van Koppen et al. 2006). A MUS approach recognises people's multiple water needs which are part and parcel of their multi-faceted livelihoods, and that the need to better meet people's multiple water needs is a main driver for integration within the water sector itself.

1.1 *Integration at intermediate level*

This especially calls upon the so-called intermediate level¹ organisations, such as line departments, local governments, private service providers, community-based and water users' organizations, NGOs, donors and financiers to developed more integrated planning and management procedures to water services provision.

In South Africa several types of actors are involved at intermediate level and perform various functions such as decision-making, service provision, regulation, daily management of utilities, financing, etc. It is a level that allows for community participation while at the same time plays a role of water resources management (WRM), which is an important component of water services provision (DWAF, 2003).

As pointed out by Pollard & du Toit (2005), the basis for integration is the planning instruments for the various departments and sectors. With regards to planning and implementation the intermediate level is the most important level, compared to both national and local levels. For the intermediate level to function

¹ The intermediate level is defined as a set of actors, functions, and required capacity that does not exist at either the community or national level, but somewhere in between. These are the service providers, who construct and maintain systems; who provide finance; who train communities; who carry out audits (Van Koppen et al, 2006).

there should be enabling policies in which the imperatives for working in an integrated way are located. In order to implement policies, the intermediate level institutions must have the skills to carry out their mandates. Institutions must possess skills for proper coordination, adaptive management and participatory strategic management (Van Koppen et al, 2006).

Institutions that are directly responsible for water services provision are the local municipality and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. There are, however, other role players that provide community support activities that require water. These include the Department of Agriculture – which requires water for livestock watering, community gardening and related activities – the Department of Social Development requires water for activities such as backyard gardening.

All institutions have their individual strategic plans through which to meet their envisaged objectives. The common goal is that the different strategic plans for the different institutions seek to provide sustainable services to communities, services which depend on water availability. The basis for this model is that for the common goal can only be realised through the integration of institutional strategic plans into an integrated plan for water services provision. Community members must form an integral part of all this planning, given that they are the ultimate recipients of services. For these communities to meaningfully participate, they should be able to understand the working of local municipality and, as well, be able to articulate their needs through relevant channels.

Despite the crucial role of intermediate level stakeholders, they often have limited capacity to fulfil their role. This is especially true in poor rural areas such as Bushbuckridge, where also government institutions are considered under-capacitated.

1.2 Study area: Bushbuckridge

The Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM) is situated in the North-eastern part of South Africa. It straddles two catchments: those of the Sabie River and the Sand River (Figure 1). The majority of the population in Bushbuckridge resides in the latter catchment. The catchment is classified as a stressed ecosystem (stressed in that the system used to be perennial, drying wetlands, poor forestry practices, soil erosion, etc).

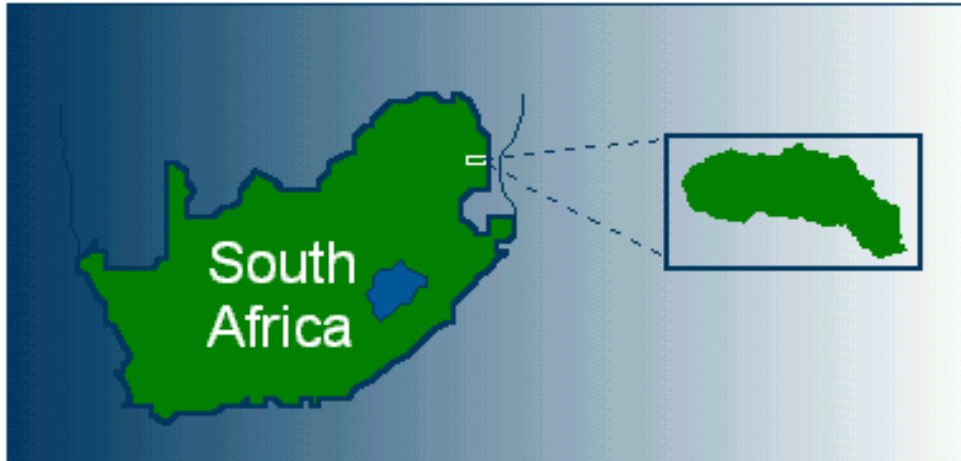


Figure 1: the Sand River Catchment in South Africa

The area is part of two former homeland governments, Lebowa and Gazankulu, which were defined along ethnic lines. The large population is made up of many dislocated communities, often forcibly moved two or three times under Apartheid. There are dense settlements as people were crowded together into densities that far exceed the usual definition of a 'rural' landscape.

South Africa has, in the past 12 years, experienced enormous institutional changes that have brought challenges that are still being dealt with. After the 1994 democratic elections, Bushbuckridge became a disputed area in terms of the demarcation of provincial boundaries between Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. That in itself contributed a great deal to lack of progress in the delivery of basic services to poor rural people. There have been, again, some significant changes in the Bushbuckridge local municipality lately (2006). The local municipality is now under the Ehlanzeni District Municipality (EDM) following the disestablishment of the Bohlabela District Municipality (BDM – previously a cross-border district municipality). Another change following this move to Ehlanzeni is that of the local municipality adopting the status of Water Services Authority (WSA)², which was initially the responsibility of the then BDM. By construction, the EDM is quite a huge municipality significantly bigger than the then BDM, as a result its operations are also quite that different.

These changes have brought with them new challenges, such as how the local municipality positions itself within the new district municipality while carrying the status of being a WSA. Other challenges are with regard to the municipality

² Water Services Authority (WSA) - any municipality, including a district or rural council as defined in the Local Government Transition Act, 1993 (Act No. 29 of 1993), responsible for ensuring access to water services.

executing its duties which are linked to the different channels of communication, planning, financing etc between the local municipality and the district.

1.3 Supporting local government

In response to the challenges faced by communities and local government in providing water services, various initiatives have been undertaken to support those institutions. The Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) is a non-profit company that has been working in the Sand River Catchment (SRC), since 1993. AWARD works to secure water to improve the quality of life of the rural populations as well as to ensure sustainability of the natural resources within the Sand River Catchment. The focus of the organisation has long been one of addressing the links between water security and livelihoods³.

Within the Multiple Use Systems (MUS) project, AWARD has been trying to work with the intermediate level stakeholders to developed methods and approaches to integrated planning for water services, with a focus on enhancing poor people's livelihoods. This ongoing action-research programme called SWELL (Securing Water to Enhance Local Livelihoods), and aims to encourage planning for multiple water uses. SWELL is an approach that employs participatory methodologies in order to engage all stakeholders (including villagers and service providers) in participatory processes of enquiry, knowledge exchange and learning in order to plan for water services (Maluleke *et al.*, 2005). SWELL has been developed and consolidated as an approach over the last few years, and been tested in Ward (the lowest level of planning for the local municipality) of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

During the SWELL process, a huge discrepancy was felt between the official policies, frameworks and tools for integrated participatory planning for water services, and the actual practices of the intermediate level institutions. This report attempts to analyse these experiences in a systematic way.

2 Objectives

The objective of this study was to compare the policy requirements for **integrated planning, including stakeholder involvement**, for water services by local municipalities, against actual practices in Bushbuckridge (South Africa).

In keeping with the MUS approach, 'water services' are defined in the broadest sense to include water for domestic, as well as productive purposes. This is important because it implies that a number of stakeholders need to be involved in

³A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from shocks and stresses and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, whilst not undermining the natural resource (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

the planning process. Also part of the MUS approach involves defining local municipalities, together with sectoral departments, as the 'intermediate level'. The analysis was undertaken for the period 2004 to 2006.

Although it is recognised that a wide range of factors influence the two key issues under examination, namely stakeholder participation and integration this study will focus on the enabling environment and the practices of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

This study was guided by the following questions:

- What are the imperatives and frameworks for planning, decision-making, and financing water services at intermediate level?
- How does the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality actually carry out planning, decision-making and financing?

3 Methodology

In order to respond to the questions at hand, a hypothetical model was developed (Figure 2). All factors that the research team consider to be crucial for stakeholder involvement and integration of plans for water services provision were looked into. The focus was on institutions and the degree of recognition by these institutions of the need for community participation and the involvement of other stakeholders in the planning for water services provision.

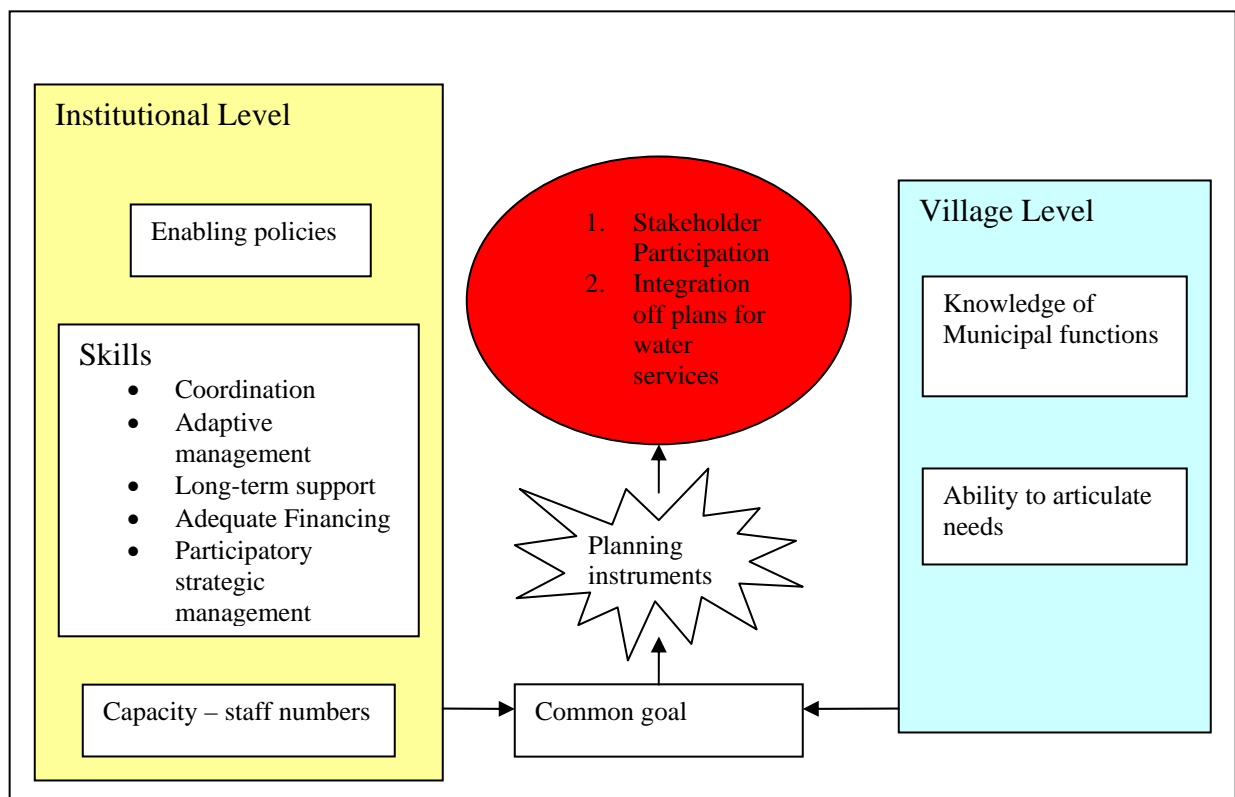


Figure 2: Factors that contribute to the involvement of stakeholders and integration for water services planning

Based on this model, the research was split into two key parts: a policy analysis and an institutional analysis of the actual practices.

3.1 Policy analysis

The point of departure for this aspect of the work was that local municipalities are the key facilitators of integration and stakeholder involvement in water services planning. Therefore the two key acts (the National Water Act and the National Water Services Act) that govern their roles and responsibilities were examined for directives and principles for integrated planning and stakeholder involvement.

Other key policy instruments that focused on integrated planning and stakeholder involvement were also analysed. These include the Municipal Systems Act (MSysA), Act 32 of 2000, a suite of National Policy frameworks for water, for public participation and the White Paper for local government. Key planning instruments – the IDP and the WSDP – were also looked at to form the basis against which practices in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality were analysed.

In addition, in order to understand how financing for water services provision occurs, the different financial streams applicable to local government were looked into, and these are the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, Local Government Equitable share, General funding and other mechanisms.

3.2 Analysis of practices of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

In order to examine this aspect, five focus areas were defined, based on the conceptual model explained above, and the framework for multiple uses defined by Van Koppen et al. (2006). The focus areas include:

- Coordination
- Adaptive management
- Long-term support
- Adequate Financing
- Participatory strategic management

During the period of 2004 and 2005, our experiences with the SWELL process⁴ were systematically documented. Notes from interviews with key stakeholders, workshops and meetings were kept and structured in a systematic way. For the purposes of this study, the work conducted between 2004 and 2006 was reviewed and analysed, on the basis of the framework mentioned earlier

⁴ It is important to note that the SWELL process was conducted in one ward only. However, the officials interviewed oversee all of Bushbuckridge and therefore the issues are likely to be the same throughout.

In addition, individual interviews were held, with the following officials:

- From Bushbuckridge Local Municipality: The IDP officer, Regional Municipal manager, Community liaison officer, Municipal spokes person, technical officer – Sanitation
- From sector Departments: DWAF: Institutional and Social Development officer, Dept of Social Development: Community Development Facilitator.

Also, grey literature from the intermediate level stakeholders was reviewed, including sector departments' plans.

Finally, and most importantly, the results of this synthesis have been validated through our interactions with the intermediate level stakeholders.

3.3 Assumptions and limitations of study

While this work was partially geared towards improving our own understanding of the practices of integrated planning in the Municipality, it was assumed that the Municipality would have a great interest in being pro-actively involved in the work, so to strengthen its performance. Although most of the information collected is based on our work in Ward 16, it is assumed representative for other parts of the Bushbuckridge area.

Despite these assumptions, some limitations were experienced. Many of the staff we hoped to interact with, were not always available for this work, or keen to take recommendations forward. This is partially due to the constantly changing institutional set-up. With the movement of Bushbuckridge into another province and district municipality, some recommendations may not apply anymore. It is too early to fully assess these implications. Likewise, plans for the involvement of community structures such as the Ward committees (WC) and Community Development Fora (CDFs) are still under development. These will define the ultimate role of these structures and have impact on the findings of this work. Another limitation relates to the reluctance by government officials to give information on financing. This paper will therefore be also based on limited information with regard to financing of local activities.

This report gives the state of affairs, of when the data were collected and validated, and must be seen as an input into a constantly changing institutional set-up and not as the definitive understanding.

4 Findings

This section will look at the outcomes of policy review as well as the practices of integrated participatory planning for water services provision in Bushbuckridge local municipality.

4.1 Policy and legal framework for multiple use water services in South Africa

4.1.1 Policies

Constitution

It is stated in the Bill of Rights, chapter two of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, that everyone has the right, amongst other rights, to have access to sufficient food and water; and social security (s. 27). The Constitution further states that all the rights stated in the Bill of Rights must be respected, protected, promoted, and fulfilled by the state.

The Constitution places Local Government at the heart of provision of services to local communities. Section 152 clearly articulates that it is the responsibility of local government to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. It is further stated that a municipality must structure and manage its processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community (s 153)

The Constitution accords everyone the right to have access to sufficient water, and obliges the state to take steps to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. Water and sanitation services are the responsibility of local government, i.e. it is responsible for the planning and delivery of potable water supplies and domestic water and sewerage disposal systems. The constitution also places a lot of emphasis on the importance of participation by communities with regards to planning for services provision.

Water resources

It is stated in the National Water Policy (1997) that National government is the custodian of the nation's water resources. Among a number of key principles that guide water management in South Africa area those that promote "equitable access to water for basic human needs and for disadvantaged groups for productive purposes such as agriculture..." The National Water Policy defines three priorities with regards to water, i.e. water for

- a) Basic human needs,
- b) Environmental requirements and
- c) For international obligations.

Further it highlights the right by all citizens to basic water services or water services which should be regulated within local government framework. Local government has to put into action that all people have access.

The National Water Policy places local government in the centre of ensuring access to basic services by all citizens. The White paper on Local Government, on the other hand, provides municipalities with approaches for becoming developmentally-oriented, i.e. through

- a) the IDP,
- b) budgeting and performance management and
- c) Working together with local people and partners.

Particular emphasis is placed in the potential of the IDP as a mechanism to enable prioritisation and integration in municipal planning processes, as well as strengthening the links between development and Institutional planning. While carrying out its mandate, municipal government should also exercise the role of promoting local democracy, through participation by locals in the development of IDPs and municipal budgets

The 1997 White Paper on Local Government recognises that the state has a duty to regulate water use for the benefit of all South Africans in a manner that ensures fair and equitable access. The state must also ensure that the management and use of water resources is equitable, efficient, and sustainable. The guiding principles of the National Water Act – sustainability, equity, and efficiency – recognise the need to promote social and economic development through the use of water.

The purpose of the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) is to ensure that the nation's water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in ways which take into account factors including the meeting of basic human needs of present and future generations, promoting equitable access to water and redressing the results of past racial and gender discrimination, and promoting the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water for social and economic development.

The Act recognises the need for the integrated management of all aspects of water resources and the delegation of management functions to a regional level so as to enable everyone to participate. Through the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), discussed below, community participation is promoted in the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resources a water management area.

The National Water Act takes into account a number of aspects, which directly support the provision of water for small-scale multiple-uses:

- promoting equitable access to water;
- redressing the results of past racial and gender discrimination;

- promoting the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water in the public interest;
- facilitating social and economic development and, and
- providing for growing demand for water use

A key mechanism for small-scale use is that of

- Schedule 1 – water resources can be used for purposes such as reasonable domestic use, domestic gardening, and animal watering.
- The basic human needs reserve (BNHR) – quantity and quality of water required to satisfy basic human needs by securing a basic water supply, which currently is *25litres/person/day*. This is the same amount of water known as the Free Basic Water (FBW).
- General Authorisation (GA) – a procedure by a responsible authority to permit use of water, without the requirements of a license, but water needed over and above the basic needs and Schedule 1.

The Act clearly differentiates between water use for small-scale/domestic use and commercial use (DWAF, In prep).

Water services

The main objectives of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997) include providing for the right of access to basic water supply and sanitation necessary to secure sufficient water and an environment not harmful to human health or well-being. The Act authorises municipalities to administer water supply and sanitation services.

The Act requires Water Services Institutions (see next section for more details) to take reasonable measures to realise the right of access to basic water supply and sanitation. Specifically, the Act requires every Water Services Authority (WSA) to prepare and adopt a water services development plans (WSDP), taking into account the right to basic access. Provision of water supply and sanitation services are activities distinct from overall water resources management. The WSDP therefore provides a mechanism for consistency with the broader goals of water resources management. If the water services provided by a Water Services Institution are unable to meet the requirements of all its existing consumers, preference must be given to the provision of basic water supply, i.e. Free Basic Water, and basic sanitation services. Every Water Services Authority has a duty to all consumers or potential consumers in its area of jurisdiction to progressively ensure efficient, affordable, economical, and sustainable access to water services.

Although local government is part of cooperative governance, it has the overall responsibility of ensuring that all citizens in its area have access to basic water supply and sanitation services.

4.1.2 Institutions

The following are the key institutions in water services provision.

Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) – the role of DWAF has 3 components in regards to water services, i.e. policy, regulation, and support.

- Policy – overall responsibility for the management of water resources and for water sector policy
- Regulation – monitoring sector performance and making regulatory interventions, and
- Support – support to water services and related institutions.

The department performs an interim role of carrying out in certain areas functions such as operation and maintenance of water services works and implementation of new water services infrastructure (SFWS, 2003). DWAF is therefore an important partner for MUS approach adoption and MUS implementation as it has the authority to promote and support innovative practices.

Water Services Authority (WSA) – A Water Services Authority, defined as any municipality responsible for ensuring access to water services in the Act, may perform the functions of a Water Services Provider; and may also form a joint venture with another water services institution to provide water services.

In providing water services, a water services authority must prepare a water services development plan (WSDP) to ensure effective, efficient, affordable, and sustainable access to water services. The WSDP should be in line with the catchment management strategy of that water management area. The plan provides a linkage between water services provision and water resources management.

The Strategic Framework for Water Services adds that water services authorities should not only provide water services necessary for basic health and hygiene (DWAF, 2003), but try to encourage water use for livelihoods activities. It is important that municipalities facilitate the provision of higher levels of services for domestic users and promote services which support sustainable livelihoods and economic development.

Water Services Provider (WSP)⁵ – The main duty of a water services provider is to provide water services in accordance with the Constitution, the Water Services Act and by-laws of the water services authority and in terms of any specific conditions set by the water services authority in a contract.

⁵ WSP – any person who provides water services to consumers or to another water services institution, but does not include a water services intermediary (any person who is obliged to provide water services to another in terms of a contract where the obligation to provide water services is incidental to the main object of that contract).

The Water Services Act, however, makes no specific mention of water services planning by Water Service Providers which in many instances are local municipalities.

Civil society organisations – As contained in the Strategic Framework for Water Services, “a durable and vibrant democracy needs a strong civil society”. There is commitment on the part of government to promoting the active involvement of civil society in a number of activities such as research and provision of affordable water services.

4.1.3 Planning in relation to water resources and water services

Water resources planning

The National Water Act provides for the development of national and catchment-level water resource strategies. A National Water Resource Strategy (NWRS; 2004) must be put in place, which sets out objectives, plans, guidelines and procedures, and institutional arrangements relating to the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources.

The National Water Act delegates water resource management to the regional or catchment level institution – the Catchment Management Agency – which must develop a Catchment Management Strategy (CMS). The strategy must be in line with the National Water Resource Strategy. The strategy must ensure the protection, use, development, conservation, management, and control of water resources within its water management area. According to the Act, a catchment management strategy must, also, enable the public to participate in managing the water resources within its water management area and take into account the needs and expectations of existing and potential water users.

According to the Water Services Act, each water services authority must draft a water services development plan. This plan articulates plans for that particular municipality. A number of municipalities fall under a single water management area (WMA)⁶ from which a catchment management agency (CMA)⁷ operates. The CMS must be consistent with the NWRS, while it also takes inputs from WSDPs brought forward by the respective municipalities in a WMA. Although not explicitly stated, it may still suffice to say that the CMS is informed to a larger extent by the NWRS and to a lesser extent by municipal WSDPs. This is illustrated by the point in the National Water Act that says that the CMA must develop a CMS which, amongst other things, sets principles for allocating water to existing and new water users.

⁶ Water management area - is an area established as a management unit in the national water resource strategy within which a catchment management agency will conduct the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources (National Water Act 36 of 1998)

⁷ Catchment management agency - is a second tier water management institution, in relation to the water resources management framework (National Water Act 36 of 1998).

Water services planning mechanisms

The focus here is on at planning mechanisms available for water service planning. The Strategic Framework for Water Services (DWAF, 2003) and a water services development plan will be briefly discussed. Further, the Integrated Development Planning will be discussed in detail.

The White Paper on Local Government has set out principles for service delivery. They guide municipalities with regards to the choices they make for delivery.

The principles for service delivery are:

- Accessibility of services.
- Affordability of services
- Quality of products and services
- Accountability for services.
- Integrated development and services.
- Sustainability of services
- Value-for-money.
- Ensuring and promoting competitiveness of local commerce and industry.
- Promoting democracy

The Strategic Framework for Water Services

The Strategic Framework for Water Services places a focus on the imperative of ensuring universal access by households to at least a basic water supply and sanitation service. However, the provision of effective and efficient water services to meet the economic demand of all consumers (domestic and non-domestic) is equally important. The Framework acknowledges that water for small scale multiple uses is necessary for the reduction of poverty and the improvement of livelihoods.

The Framework sets out a comprehensive approach with respect to, and a planning framework for, provision of water services in South Africa. This planning framework is composed of (Figure 3):

- a WSDP, which is the primary planning instrument in the water services sector,
- business plans – local and regional – which will show how the WSDP will be achieved on an annual basis, and
- integrated planning which must inform, and be informed by the WSDP

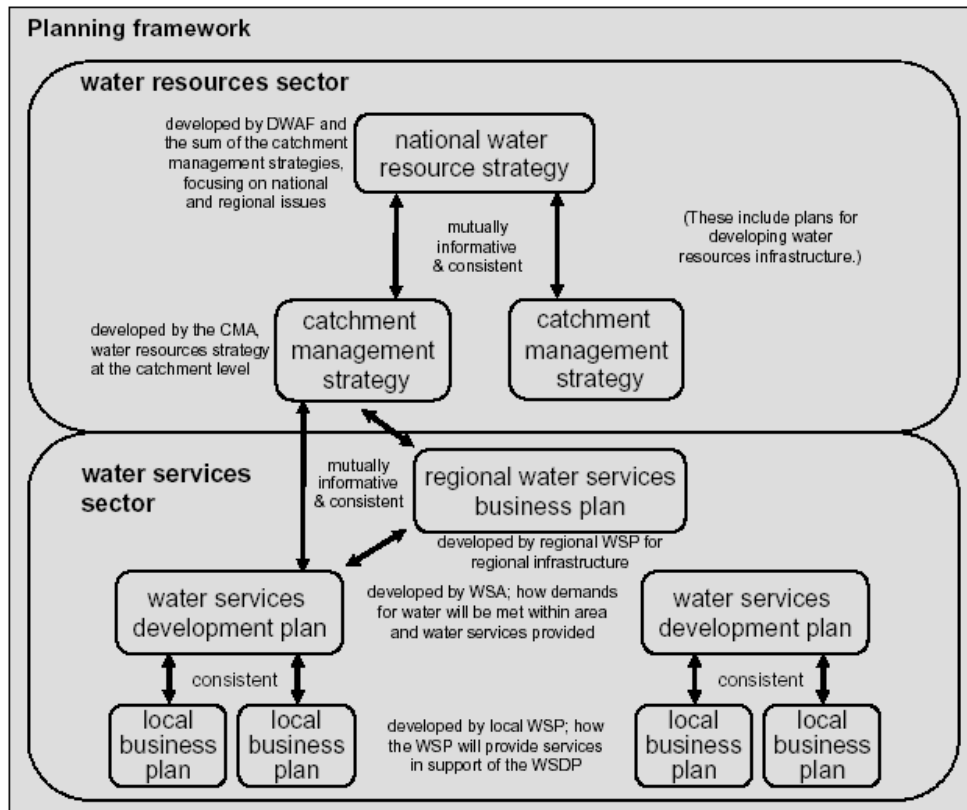


Figure 3: Planning framework for water services. Source: DWAF, 2003

Some key points that support the MUS approach that promotes water systems for both domestic and productive uses are:

- recognition of need to use water for economic development;
- sustained livelihoods for poverty alleviation through the creation of jobs and improved nutrition and health;
- effective, efficient and sustainable water use;
- need for providing more than just basic services (climbing the ladder); and
- state's responsibility to progressively ensure right of access to sufficient water

Water Services Development Plans (WSDP)

The primary instrument for planning in the water services sector is the Water Services Development Plan (WSDP). The primary purpose of the water services development plan is to assist water services authorities to carry out their mandate effectively. The requirement that water services authorities regularly update their plans and report annually on progress against their plans will assist local municipalities and DWAF to assess how well water services authorities are performing, relative to their stated intentions and their capacity. It is the responsibility of the water services authority to develop a WSDP. A set of guidelines exists that assists water services authorities to carry out their functions in the most effective manner.

The Water Services Act requires that a Water Services Authority take reasonable steps to bring its draft water services development plan to the notice of its consumers, potential consumers, industrial users, and Water Services Institutions within its area of jurisdiction and invite public comment thereon. A Water Services Authority must consider all comments received before adopting a development plan and must, on request, report on the extent to which a specific comment has been taken into account, or if a comment was not taken into account, provide reasons for this. This is also in line with MUS principle of stakeholders being at the centre of development initiatives.

Municipal integrated development planning (IDP)

The White Paper on Local Government (1998: s B1) defines developmental local government as being “*committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social and materials needs and improve the quality of their lives*”. The objectives of such a developmentally-oriented local government are:

- (i) to provide household infrastructure and services;
- (ii) to create liveable and integrated cities, towns and rural areas;
- (iii) local economic development; and
- (iv) Community development and redistribution.

These objectives are to be achieved by means of three key approaches, namely:

- a) Integrated Development Planning and budgeting;
- b) performance management; and
- c) Working together with local citizens.

An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is defined, in the Municipal Systems Act, as the principal strategic planning instrument through which all municipal planning, development and decisions are guided and informed.

The purpose of an IDP is:

- To enable a municipality to align its financial and institutional resources behind agreed policy objectives and programmes.
- It is a vital tool to ensure the integration of local government activities with other spheres
- it serves as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level
- it enables a municipality to weigh up its obligations and systematically prioritise programmes and resource allocations

The Municipal Systems Act makes the preparation of an IDP a legal requirement/obligation on the part of municipalities. Being a legal obligation, the IDP legally binds the municipality in the exercise of its executive authority. The Act outlines two principles that are to inform integrated development planning, namely:

- (i) Planning must be developmentally oriented – *i.e.* geared towards fulfilling the objects and duties of sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution⁸ and towards the realisation, together with other organs of state, of the rights to a safe and healthy environment, protection of property, housing, health care, food, water, social security and education, and
- (ii) Planning must take place within the framework of co-operative government – *i.e.* municipal planning cannot take place in isolation but must be aligned with the plans and strategies of national and provincial government as well as with other municipalities.

The IDP is to enable municipalities to manage the process of fulfilling their developmental responsibilities. The IDP is to set out the problems affecting a municipal area and, by taking into account available resources, enable the development and implementation of appropriate strategies and projects for municipalities to address these problems. The IDP is thus to help municipalities make more effective use of scarce resources by focusing on identified and prioritised local needs and by searching for more cost-effective solutions. According to the national IDP guide, this will allow municipalities to address causes of poverty and underdevelopment, rather than just allocating capital expenditure to dealing with symptoms.

⁸ Some of the objects of local government include provision of democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, etc, while the municipality must amongst other things, structure and manage its administration, and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, etc

The content of an IDP and the planning process

The Municipal Systems Act and the national IDP guide outline the minimum content of an IDP (Box 1), without which it cannot be legally adopted.

Box 1: Content of an IDP

- (i) A **vision** for long-term development, with specific emphasis on the municipality's development and internal transformation needs;
- (ii) An **assessment** of existing levels of development, including an identification of communities excluded from services;
- (iii) The development **priorities and objectives**, including local economic development aims and internal transformation needs;
- (iv) The **development strategies**, which must be aligned with national and provincial plans and planning requirements;
- (v) A **spatial development framework**, including basic guidelines for land use management;
- (vi) The **operational strategies**;
- (vii) A **disaster management plan**;
- (viii) A **financial plan**, including a budget projection for at least the next three years; and
- (ix) Key performance **indicators** and key **performance targets**.

The drafting of the IDP must be initiated and managed at the highest political and administrative level of the municipality. A council must adopt a document that sets out how it intends to go about drafting, adopting and reviewing the IDP. To assist municipalities in this regard, the national IDP Guide proposes a 5-phase integrated development planning process – Analysis, strategies and objectives, projects, integration, and approval. The whole planning process involves a number of stakeholders and role-players (Figure 4).

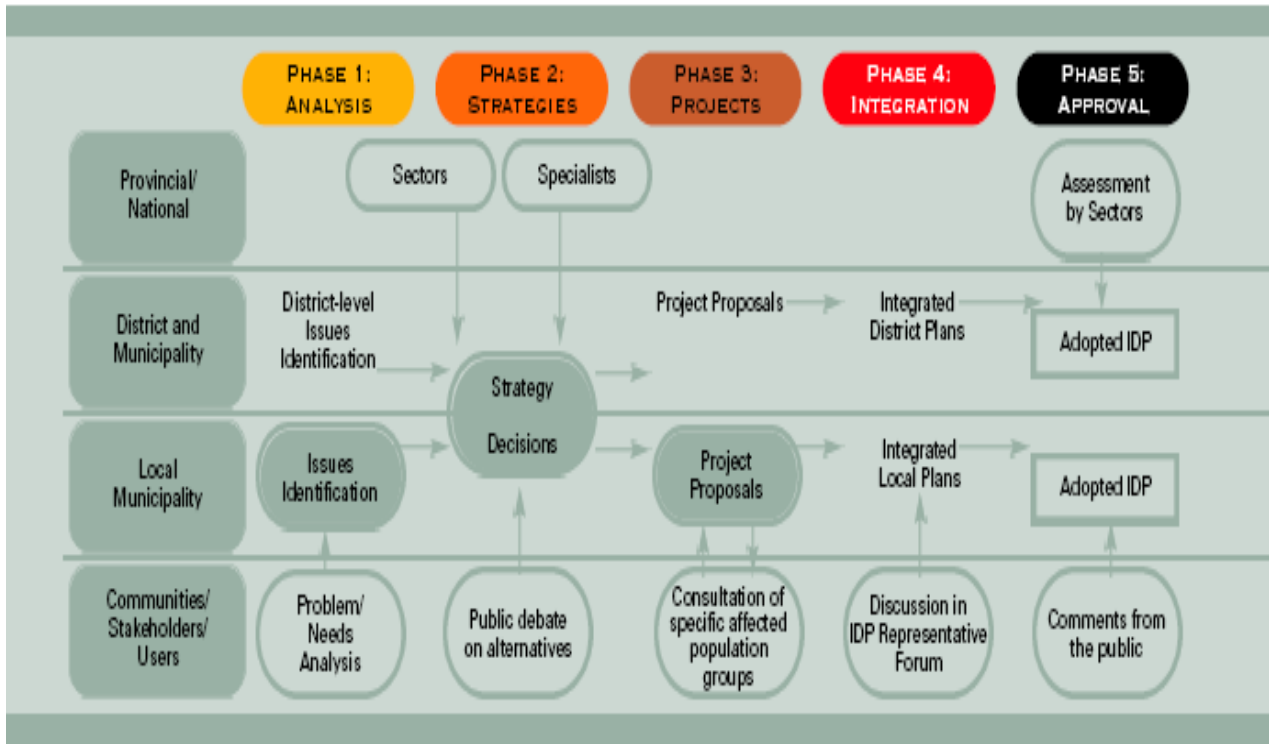


Figure 4: Municipal IDP process. Source: GTZ IDP guides, 2002

4.1.4 Community participation in the planning process

There is a strong legal basis for community participation in municipal-level development planning. Participation is highlighted in the Constitution, the White Paper for Local government, the Municipal Systems Act, and other policy instruments.

The National Policy Framework for Public Participation (DPLG, 2005) defines public participation as “an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making”. It is further defined as a democratic process of actively engaging people in the development and operation of services that affect their lives. The Constitution obliges municipalities to take a leading role in ensuring that participation does take place.

In the policy framework, four reasons for encouraging and promoting public participation have been listed:

- it is a legal requirement to consult;
- to make development plans and services more relevant to local needs and conditions;
- to hand over responsibility for services and promote community action; and

- To empower local communities to have control over their own lives and livelihoods.

These provide the basis for developing interest amongst government institutions in ensuring that it happens. Moreover, some of these reasons are an obligation on the part of government institutions and some are contained and envisaged in the various planning instruments.

A number of guiding principles for institutions tasked with ensuring participation have been developed:

- Inclusivity.
- Diversity
- Building community participation
- Transparency
- Flexibility
- Accessibility
- Accountability Trust, Commitment and Respect
- Integration

This rests squarely on municipalities which, although they are part of co-operative governance, they are also a sphere of government closest to communities.

The **White Paper on Local Government** sets out four principles in which community participation should be embedded:

- accountability by political leadership
- continuous input into local politics by citizens;
- consumer input on level of services delivered
- Additional resources mobilisation through partnerships with civil society organisations.

The white paper clearly articulates the need by municipalities “to be aware of the divisions within local communities, and seek to promote the participation of marginalised and excluded groups in community processes” (sB1 (1.3))

The **Municipal Structures Act (MSA) 117 of 1998**, on the other hand, makes provisions for certain municipalities to annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality.

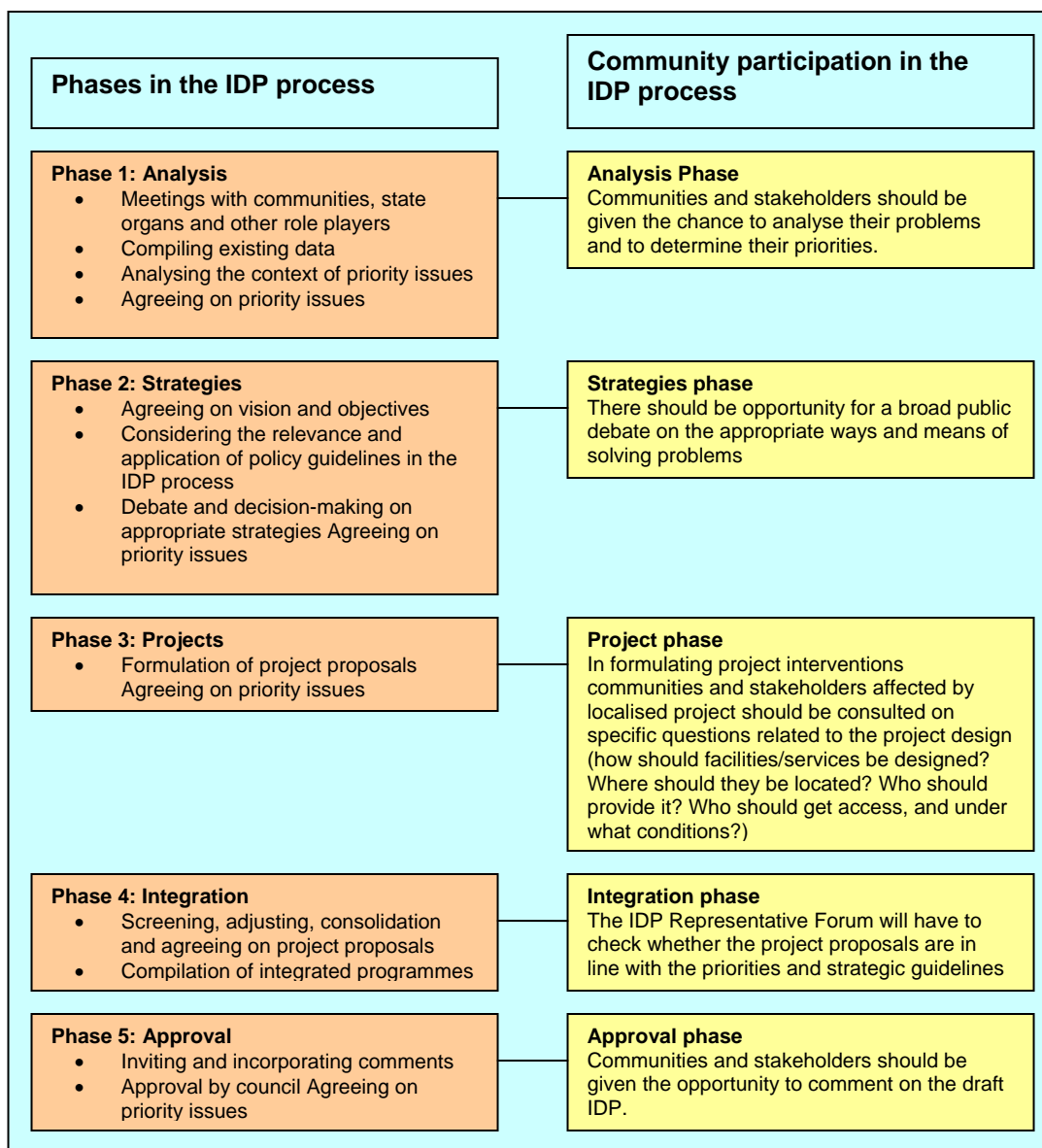
According to the MSysA (chapter 4), a municipality must develop a culture of governance that complement formal governance with participatory governance and as a result must:

- a) encourage and create conditions for community participation in municipal affairs;
- b) must contribute to building capacity of communities to participate and for councillors to facilitate such participation
- c) annually allocate funds for fostering capacity building for, and community participation

Given that participation is given prominence in the Constitution and various policies, it is therefore not surprising that participation and consultation is emphasised in the IDP process. The Municipal Systems Act, on the other hand, provides an environment for integrated planning through the establishment of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which are an integral component of the planning, design and implementation of small scale, multiple water use systems. (Box 2).

Thus, local communities must be consulted in defining the process of planning proposed by the municipality before its adoption, and must be informed of the process after it has been adopted. This adopted process must have a predetermined programme with time frames for local communities to be consulted on their development needs and priorities. The process must also allow for the local community to participate in the drafting of the IDP and must make provision for other organs of state, including traditional authorities, to be consulted.

Box 2: Phases in the IDP process and community participation



According to the Municipal Systems Act, the council must establish mechanisms for assessing development needs in the municipality and inform the council on issues such as maintenance backlogs, the existence of poorly serviced areas, problems experienced with service delivery, etc. In particular, the Municipal Systems Act emphasises the identification of communities that are excluded from service delivery. The Act envisages a councillor as a vehicle for facilitating such community participation. In addition to ward committees, the council may also establish advisory committees consisting of persons who are not councillors. The municipality must enable participation through capacity building in the community

and of staff and councillors, and funds must be allocated and used for the above purposes.

The Municipal Systems Act also sets out a range of mechanisms, processes, and procedures that should be established by municipalities to facilitate community participation. It further states that these systems must be established in all municipalities, and the special needs of women, illiterate people, disabled people and other disadvantaged groups must be taken into account.

The council must, as far as its financial and administrative capacity allows, provide space for the public in its meeting venues. It must determine – in a by-law or a resolution – the circumstances under which council or committee meetings are closed for the public. However, such meetings where:

- (i) A by-law;
- (ii) The budget;
- (iii) An amendment to the IDP;
- (iv) The performance management system; or
- (v) A service delivery agreement is discussed or voted on must always be open to the public.

The Municipal Structures Act states that the function of a ward committee is to enhance community participation in local government.

The participation happens by way of a ward committee making recommendations to the ward councillor who then takes issues up to local council level. These committees are of very high significance since they are the one mechanism through which community participation should happen (Figure 5)



Figure 5: Areas covered by ward committees and their linkages. Source: DPLG, 2005

4.1.5 Financing framework for water services planning:

Finances are an important consideration because they are one of the constraining factors for implementation. This section will briefly outline the sources of revenue for water services provision by municipalities.

Municipalities receive different allocations from national government (Figure 6) in terms of the Division of Revenue Act (Act 1 of 2005). These are as follows

- **Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG):** this is a national grant used by municipalities to build roads, houses, sporting facilities, and infrastructure for water and sanitation. The MIG was formed by consolidating several programmes and grants (Palmer, 2003).
- The **local government equitable share** is also a national grant to assist households to access basic services. Municipalities use part of the equitable share to fund their Indigent Policies. This is the most important source of income because the equitable share 'grant' is considered to be a constitutional right and therefore cannot be made conditional (Palmer, 2003). This is different with MIG and capacity building grants which are conditional and municipalities will have to perform in relation to certain criteria if they are to continue to receive them.
- **General Financing:** The financing structure for each water services authority will be determined through the development of a financial plan as part of the WSDP. Water services authorities are also provided with *capacity building grants* from the national government to improve their capacity and getting municipalities through the current transition phase.
- **Donor funds:** Currently, very little donor funding is channelled directly to local government or NGOs, particularly for capital investment in water services infrastructure. It did, however, play a very important role in the past of transforming the water sector and in improving access to services in South Africa (Palmer, 2003). Nowadays, most donor funds go directly to national government, in the form of basket funding. Out of this basket funding, allocations to local governments are also made.
- **Borrowing:** There are a number areas from which water services authorities and water services providers can borrow money. These are the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the Infrastructure Finance Corporation (INCA).

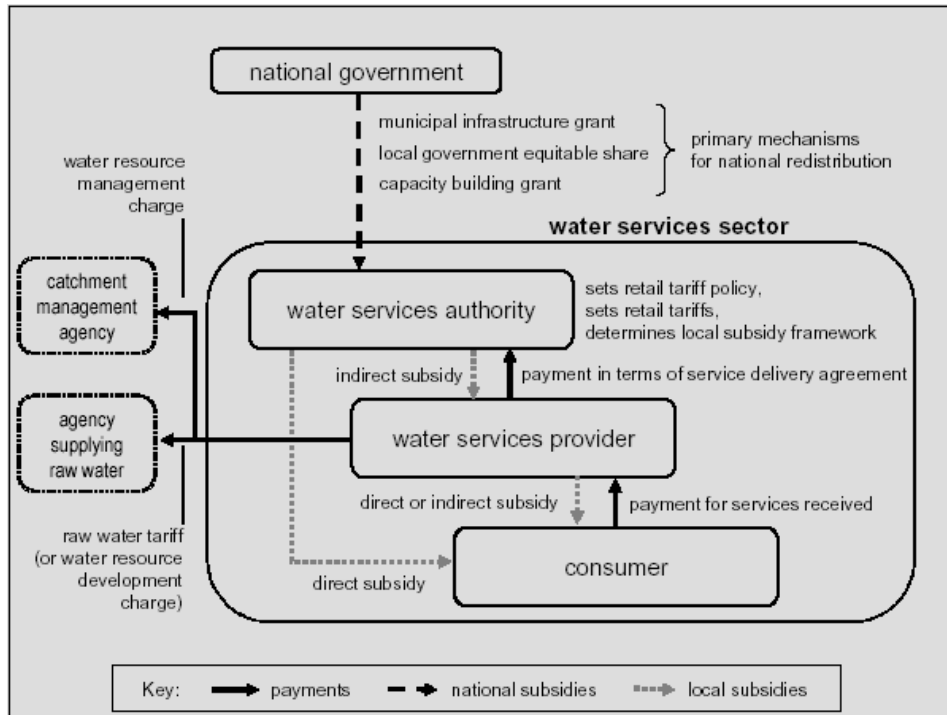


Figure 6: Financial Framework for water services in SA. Source: DWAF, 2003

4.1.6 Reflection

The legal and policy framework provides a clear imperative for local governments to drive and undertake development. More than just an imperative for development, however, this framework prescribes a particular form of development, namely development that is integrated, sustainable, and participatory.

Local government legislation in particular provides strong legal rights and obligations on the part of communities and local government, as far as participation and integration are concerned. A toolbox of methods and approaches, central to which is integrated development planning, is provided to facilitate this.

Although the IDP guide sets out **what** steps to be carried out, there is no clear spelling out of **how** to go about an IDP process, for example, i.e. there is no tying down of activities with a responsible party. Every municipality will follow the same route, leaving space for own interpretation of the process.

For multiple uses particularly, the Strategic Framework for Water Services, provides a very clear policy principle which would support it. Given that the SFWS principles are not yet fully operational, the IDP planning process provides a platform for different sector departments, community structures and individuals, and civil society organisations to meet and share lessons, and inform decision-

making. This at least provides a conducive environment for integrated planning and cooperative governance, for multiple uses can take place.

However, it is important to note that both the local government and water sectors are in transition. The same applies to the associated processes of integrated development and water service planning. These are still emerging systems/frameworks. The legal and policy framework thus represents the ideal to which the country aspires, and provides a framework against which to assess what is actually happening in practice.

4.2 The practice in Bushbuckridge

This section looks at how the Bushbuckridge local municipality responds to policy obligations surrounding water services provision, and what its limitations are in this.

4.2.1 The institutional set-up in Bushbuckridge

In Bushbuckridge, there are a number of stakeholders that have a role in water services provision. These include local sector departments and community level structures such as the ward committee, the CDF and the water committee (Figure 7).

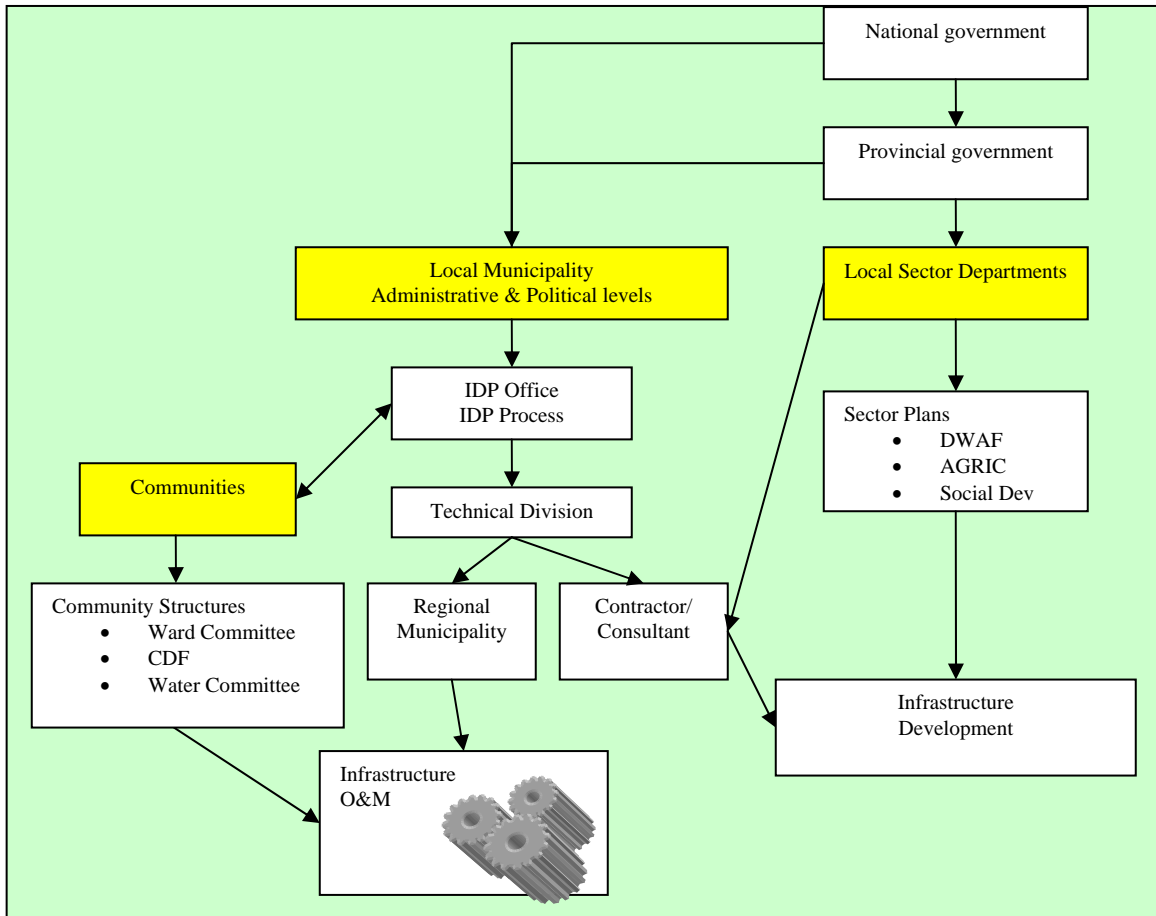


Figure 7: Municipal structures/institutions for water services planning

Each one of these will be elaborated below.

The water board – The Bushbuckridge Water Board (BWB) is the bulk water services provider to the local municipality. The bulk reticulation system is still under development that most villages in the north-eastern end of the municipality cannot access the water. The water board is also battling with ensuring that water reaches as many villages as possible. The primary reason for this failure, as alleged by BWB Distribution Manager, is illegal connections. The water that BWB pumps is enough to reach Hluvukani on a daily basis. But this is not happening because of the issue of illegal connections and local municipality has not dealt with it.

Water services authority –the Bohlabela District municipality was the water services authority, but has recently been disestablished. Bushbuckridge local municipality is now negotiating with Ehlanzeni District Municipality to be given the status of a water services authority. The local municipality is currently undertaking a feasibility study on establishment of village-based water services providers

Water services provider – The Bushbuckridge local municipality is a partial water services provider in the area, i.e. it oversees water services issues in Bushbuckridge, but not necessarily provide such services in the entire area. Bushbuckridge is made up of both deep rural areas communities as well as peri-urban settlements. The local municipality provides water services to peri-urban settlements, while the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry takes care of the rural areas. Central is the local municipality's technical department, which oversees the actual infrastructure implementation, and the IDP office that ensures that water services projects, as contained in the municipal planning document are, executed. These two municipal offices, after planning with stakeholders, are left to carry out the final implementation.

In Bushbuckridge, the line departments that play a role include the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and the Department of Social Development. These departments have their own mandates from provincial and national levels, which are driven by their own *sectoral* plans and Acts. Although each department focuses on its own line of work, the sectoral plans and associated Acts theoretically provide a framework for co-operation between the various government institutions. As required by integrated planning processes, all project activities within a municipality should be included in the municipal planning documents, as such, all sector institutions must have their plans aligned, and *vice versa*, with those of the IDP. The various sector departments are very much dependant on water availability for their activities. The Department of Agriculture, for example, requires water for livestock, for village dipping tanks (tick control) and for community projects such as community gardens, fish production, and chicken farming. The Department of Social Development requires water for caring for the sick, through home-based care activities, such as backyard gardening and chicken farming for egg production. This is evidence that these sectors do carry out activities that require water, as such should actively get involved in the planning for water services in the area.

Other than playing the regulatory role in water resources management, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has also been the water services provider at rural villages in Bushbuckridge. The department concentrated at what is known as stand-alone schemes. These are water supply systems that depend on underground water, abstracted through a borehole and pump. This area of operation is now under the local municipality, but may not be since the Bushbuckridge local municipality is currently looking at the feasibility of village-based water services providers

Civil society organisations (CSO) - Bushbuckridge local municipality relies on consultants for project implementation. There are not very many CSOs in the area, from which the municipality can draw information. Those that exist have a difficulty in ensuring that the municipality utilises their findings. This is a nation-wide, well documented phenomenon not confined to Bushbuckridge alone.

4.2.2 Staffing

Bushbuckridge local municipality is limited to what it can respond to, because of the inadequate numbers of staff members (Figure 8). There are currently only eight individuals between the IDP/LED and Technical offices of the municipality that are responsible for not only water services issues. At the time of writing, the water services department had no staff. Water services functions were performed by the officer in charge of the maintenance office. In one interview the IDP officer commented that *“for us to be able to deliver services, we need to have people on the ground who can oversee project implementation, as well as mobilisation of communities to start owning these projects. Village people do not have a sense of ownership of the projects we implement. As a result these get vandalised.”*

Because of inadequate staff numbers, the IDP officer is in charge of three areas of operation. He did mention that the municipality was planning to employ more people for year 2007. although there is commitment on the side of the local municipality, the issue of staff remains a huge problem. As the IDP officer of the Bushbuckridge local municipality puts it *“the IDP process is not very easy, especially when we have limited staff. You do find that an official holds more than one portfolio which makes it difficult to concentrate your effort on a particular area”*.

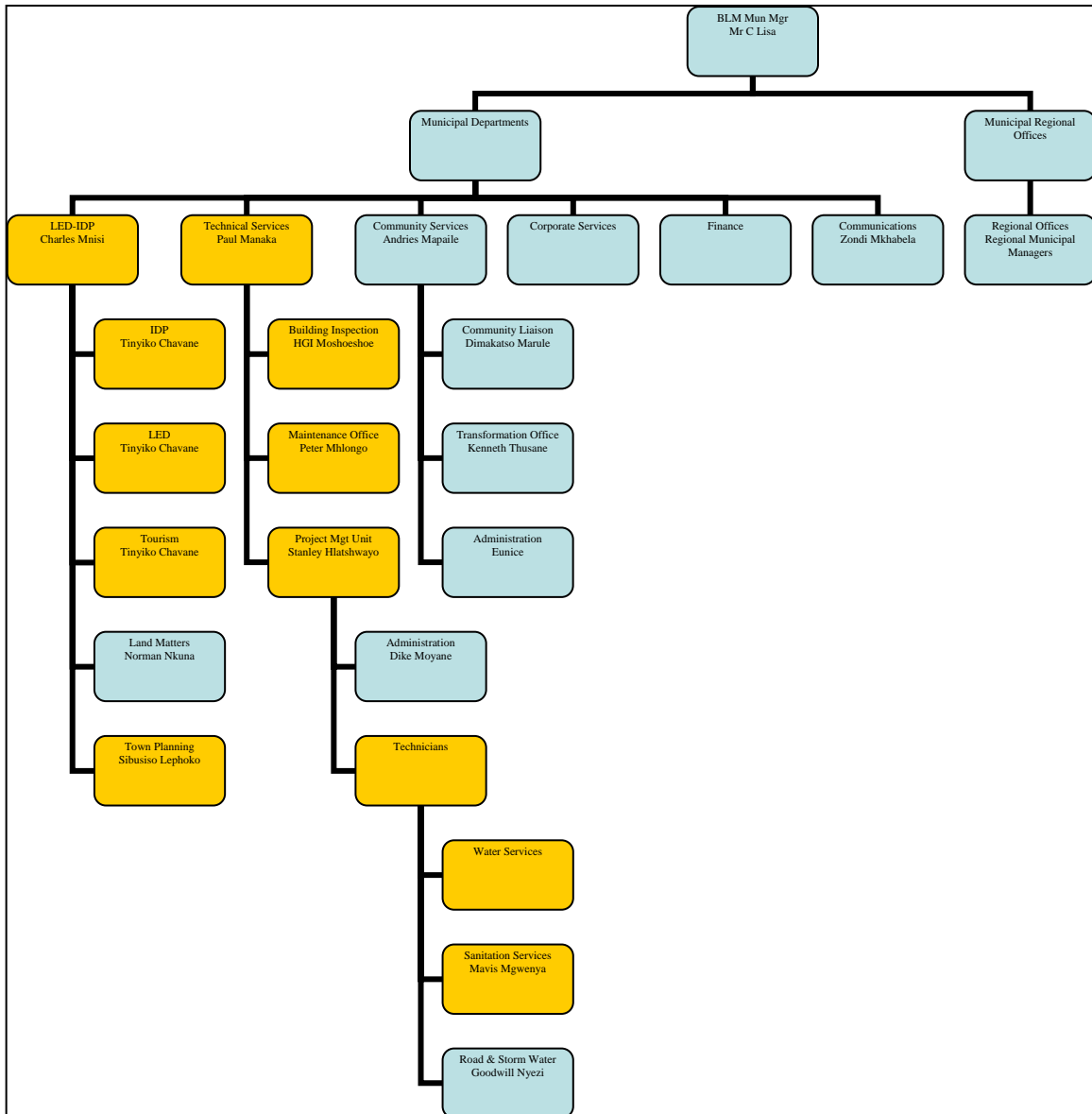


Figure 8: Illustration of current staff (in orange colour) involved in water services planning and implementation. Source: Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, 2006

Although municipal personnel will probably remain limited, there is also an opportunity here, where the process of transferring staff from DWAF is underway (SFWS, 2003). DWAF will no longer carry out any water services provision activities; these will be the responsibility of the local municipality. The municipal council has accepted four hundred (400) former DWAF members into the municipality. The municipality (Corporate Services and the Municipal Manager) is currently holding talks with the department (DWAF) regarding how this process will be executed. The transfer process should be complete by January, 2007. DWAF has a significant number of technical personnel and a fewer Social

Development officers who can still bolster up the municipality's technical department and Community Support Services offices, respectively.

Currently, there are only two officers in the community support services section. One of them has to play a community facilitation role for municipal activities, that range from water issues to roads, schools and clinics, etc. This illustrates that the municipality can make very little progress if there only is one of two people that is tasked with liaising with communities for all municipal departments and activities. The Office of the Premier Limpopo Province has transferred a total number of 8 Community Development Workers (CDWs), specifically to join regional offices of the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. These CDWs are expected to take up the role of community facilitation for municipal activities. Each regional office is in a process of hiring more community facilitators for its operations. The Hluvukani regional office, for example, is planning to add two more staff members to the one CDW that has just started doing work.

The municipality has now taken a position of employing as many people as it can, for the year 2007. One municipal official puts *"The challenge is that, by law, we are required to spend the bigger chunk of municipal funds on service provision not on salaries; but service provision depends, in part, on our staff complement. We need to be able to balance the two"*

On the whole, the municipality is quite content with the level of skills that current staff has, according to the IDP Officer. He continues to say, however, that the municipality is understaffed. There are positive strides towards filling these posts, hence the regular advertising of posts for year 2007. Some of these shortages in numbers of staff do not suggest that there is definitely no one in the municipality that can hold a specific area of operation. In certain areas, for example, the municipality has an electrician but cannot utilise this person because he does not yet have a certificate of competence, therefore cannot practice. The municipality then relies on service providers for such areas of shortages.

4.2.3 Planning mechanisms

Integrated development plans

The BLM is, as stated in the 2005/06 IDP Review document, *"committed to the improvement of the socio-economic and environmental situation of its communities by combating poverty levels and stimulating growth"*. It is stated that these commitments can be achieved by, amongst other things,

- the development of infrastructure and promotion of service provisioning that meets priority needs of the community,
- ensuring fair and justifiable allocation and distribution of resources within the Municipality, informed by community needs

The Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in its vision "strives for development and prosperous life for all". It furthermore states its objective as "to render affordable

and sustainable services by enhancing community participation, accountability, transparency, and responsible governance". As required by the integrated development planning processes, an assessment or analysis of existing levels of development needs in communities should be carried out. This analysis should form the basis on which priorities and objectives for intervention are developed or identified.

In meeting the above commitments and objectives, the municipality engages in what it believes to be an integrated planning process, on which community participation is ensured through the ward committee and councillor. It is in a Ward where individual village priorities are pooled together before they are presented at an overall municipal planning forum. A Ward committee, through the Ward councillor, takes the responsibility of taking issues up to the municipal planning level. This is in accordance with the Municipal Structures Act.

As contained in BLM IDPs, institutional responsibility for the IDP is structured as follows (Lebert, 2005)

The Municipal Council: this is where decisions on all aspects of the DP process and the IDP itself are made, guided by the Mayor and the Speaker.

IDP Manager: the responsibility for the overall management and co-ordination of the whole IDP process lies here.

IDP Steering Committee: The function, roles, and responsibilities of the structure are not elaborated on. This committee is dominated by sector departments, with very little participation from communities and CSOs

IDP Representative Forum: The function, roles, and responsibilities of the structure are not elaborated on. According to the IDP, community representatives, NGOs and traditional leaders are represented on this structure (who exactly these representatives are, is not elaborated). All 33 ward councillors in Bushbuckridge are also represented on this structure. It is not clear when or how often this structure meets.

A schematic overview of how the IDP planning takes place in Bushbuckridge is given below.

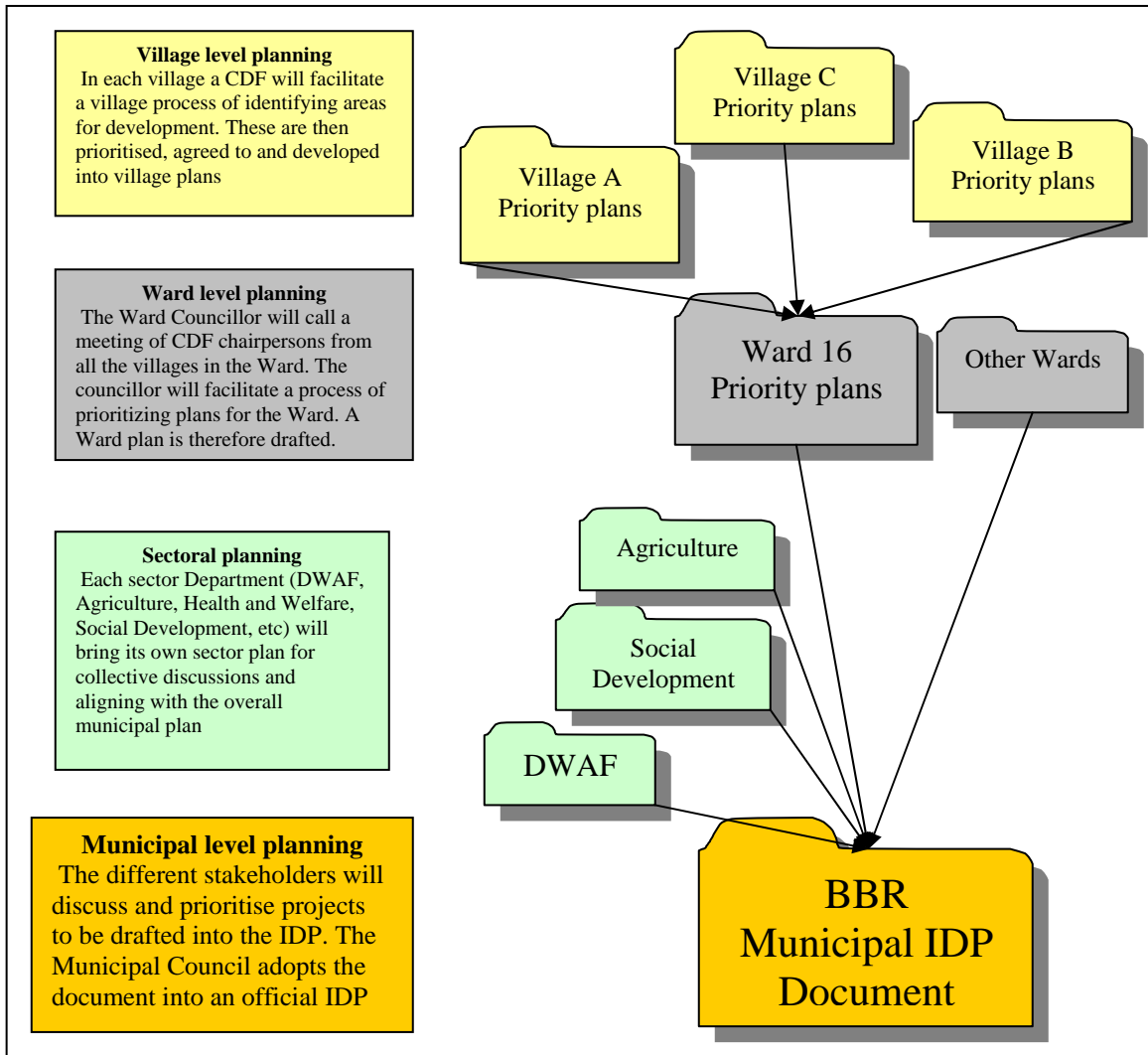


Figure 9: IDP planning process in Bushbuckridge

Water services development plans

In accordance with the Water Services Act, the former Bohlabela District Municipality has, as a water services authority then, developed a water services development plan (BDM, 2003). As a water services provider, this is the plan the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality is currently working under. This plan (WSDP), however, still articulates plans for Bushbuckridge local municipality and those of the other municipality (Maruleng Local Municipality) that fell under the district municipality then. The WSDP therefore needs revision, given that the area has been re-demarcated.

The district WSDP is a more technical document than IDP documents. It does not provide very much detail with regards to any analysis undertaken. There is, however a strong emphasis on income and employment levels, all ultimately with an eye to assessing ability of households to pay. The WSDP acknowledges that free basic water services would remain a huge problem for some time.

The WSDP also notes the complex water infrastructure situation in the district, most of it being the legacy of Homeland Government systems. It does highlight the need for “a logical water development plan”.

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality falls under the first to be established water management area, the Inkomati Catchment Management Agency. A Catchment Management Area (CMA) must operate within a Catchment Management Strategy (CMS). Guidelines for drafting these strategies are under development, as a result there is none that the municipality operates under. Hence, the WSDP doesn't make clear reference to water resources.

4.2.4 Coordination

The IDP process requires role players in a municipality to collectively plan and align their plans and activities in the municipal planning document. In Bushbuckridge, the sort of alignment that exists between sector departments and the municipality, and that gets recognition, is only to the extent of listing different projects to be undertaken in a particular time period by the different players. This happens to be the end of any attempts for collective planning and alignment between the various players in the municipality.

There are other institutions that have taken the initiative to share lessons learnt. This, however, has not yet received any recognition at municipal level. Community Development Facilitators, from the Department of Social Development, do make attempts to rope in the newly transferred municipal Community Development Workers in their daily activities. Since the CDWs are new in the area, they get an opportunity to learn from both their angle and that of Social Development.

Coordination across sectors seems to be elusive. For example, the Local Economic Development (LED) office plans activities and the Technical department plans others, all of which will require community mobilisation. At the moment, mobilisation of communities rests with the Community Liaison Officer (CLO), from the Community Support Services section of the municipality. The one section that could not secure the services of the liaison officer would still go ahead with their plans. The municipality acknowledges this situation, which is also compounded by the fact that they have to cover huge backlogs in terms of water services provision. Because of this pressure, a municipality resorts to just quickly rounding up a few people in the community to “fulfil” the process of having consulted villagers before project implementation.

Learning does also take place in some departments and not in others. Some officials in the local municipality contest that they are struggling to cover backlogs in the provision of water services. With their workload they do not have a lot of room to even consider an angle of learning. As mentioned by one official *“the municipality is not trying to learn lessons, we are trying to provide services”* Struggling with workload could be one reason that contributes to the lack of

continuity in municipal staff attending workshops that are geared towards improving learning between stakeholders. Even though the importance of learning is evident and appreciated by officials, reducing backlogs is of utmost importance.

Sector departments, however, have their own personnel for interaction with communities. Coordination between all institutions in the area can harness the potential to address the development needs of the area.

4.2.5 Financing for water services

This is one area that municipal officials and officials from sector departments were not comfortable discussing. It was, as a result, difficult to thoroughly probe into the financial status of the different government institutions. There was reluctance to providing documentation that reflected this information, citing that such information was not for public consumption.

The local municipality receives funding for water services projects from a variety of sources. The majority of such funding comes from the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). Other sources of funding include the Equitable Share, DWAF, and the Bushbuckridge Water Board. Below is a summary of water services funding as recorded in the various IDP documents of the BLM in the last four years:

- R 111 Million (IDP 2003/4)
- R 325 million (IDP Review, 2004/5)
- R 50 million (IDP Review, 2005/6)
- R 75 million (IDP Review, 2006/7)

It is not clear how much work these funds have covered, or the stage of the various projects that were planned for implementation. It was found in Pollard & Du Toit (2005) that in the BLM 2004 IDP document, 64% of the total municipal budget would be spent on roads, whereas 6% would be on water and 4% on sanitation.

There are also water services projects that get implemented or await implementation, but such projects do not appear in the municipal IDP. Box 3 will attempt to illustrate this unclear project-funding allocation.

Box 3: Projects for implementation, but origins of funding not clear

Example 1: Out of discussions with village CDF and the Regional Municipal Manager, it was learnt that a **Water infrastructure project for Seville A** (a village out of the eleven in Ward 16) was ready for implementation. No other information was made available the two parties above. In the end the two parties concluded that this was a political project which would be difficult to establish its origins and overall significance.

Example 2: Assessment of water infrastructure project. This project was a

direct outcome of the SWELL work. During the SWELL Ward Synthesis workshop, outcomes of eleven village assessments were collectively analysed. Out of this analysis, objectives and project plans were drafted for inclusion into both municipal and sector departments' strategic planning processes, then into their processes.

A municipal council member volunteered to take responsibility of taking this one particular project (**Assessment of water infrastructure project.**) forward. This project then appeared in the IDP document of the local municipality with a R500 000.00 price tag on it. Its source of funding was unclear after several attempts to understand this and to get the project off the ground.

Example 3: Two projects (**Strengthening of Village Water committees, and Strengthening of Free Basic Water supply in communities**) were in the pipeline for implementation. These were under the then BDM. They also did not come to fruition as it was alleged that due process for implementation of these projects was not properly followed. While AWARD tried to get clarity on how to move forward on these, answers were not forthcoming. The research team was sent from pillar to post, leading to frustration. This project also never got off the ground.

Conclusion

Officials were interviewed regarding the source of funding for these projects or their implications to the integrity of the IDP. A final response was that projects like these were politically driven, a statement suggesting that details surrounding these projects lay somewhere else other than the municipal planning process (IDP). Funds for such projects could have been reallocated from other projects or received from donors, outside the IDP budgeting process or provided for in other less clear channels. It is a difficult process to pin down.

A situation like this makes it difficult to trace all costs for water services planning in the municipality. It also poses a challenge for municipal financial planners who are not certain of the exact portion of their budget. Municipalities are also said to not always understand how allocations are made from the MIG, for example. This allocation process is not very transparent to local municipalities (see **Report of the national seminar “Local government implementation of a multiple uses of water approach”**)

Sector departments, on the other hand, receive funding from provincial departments. Each regional office of the Department of Agriculture (known as Service Centres) puts together an estimate of cost for intended work to be submitted to the local office. The local office makes inputs and recommendations, and then sends proposal to the district office for budget allocation. The district receives funds from the provincial department.

4.2.6 Community participation

Communities register their development needs into, and participate in the IDP through the water committee, the CDF, Ward committee and then taken forward by the ward councillor into the IDP process (Figure 9). Theoretically, a CDF in a village calls a community meeting in which water services issues are discussed. Agreements are reached regarding the kind of projects that should be implemented in the village. Participation of communities in planning processes happens through the CDF, ward committee and ward councillor, in that order. It is the assumption of the municipality that these structures do thorough village water assessment in order to understand the village's water services situation, leading to informed prioritisation of projects and plans.

Members of the CDF do not always serve full term, which is equal to that of local government, of five years. Any of the members of the CDF would take up a "piece-job" or casual job opportunity when it arises, therefore leading to that individual having to be replaced. The situation in Bushbuckridge is that employment opportunities are usually outside of the municipality. There are other jobs that are within the municipality, but away from the village in question. A job opportunity will therefore require someone to move to where the job is, and only come back home at certain times/days in a month. They (CDF members) are more in touch with, and well informed in, what is going on in the municipality compared to most villagers, as a result will find out about job opportunities long before the general public knows about it. Members of the CDF tend to prioritise themselves when an opportunity for a job arises. This then means they will be absent from the village for a number of days, some of which may be important for village processes. The majority, if not all, village participation processes take place during working hours, as a result leave out a section of the community, and importantly those members of the CDF that are away.

Sector departments also carry out their own community participation processes. But these are again coordinated by the village CDF, which means even these processes are prone to the problem discussed above.

Another platform for participation is through what is known as Mayoral *Imbizos*. The Executive Mayor undertakes a road show (*Imbizo*) to meet with people in order to hear their wishes with regard to development. These are then taken up by the Mayor into municipal planning processes.

5 Discussion

Having seen the policies and practices of local government's integrated planning approaches; this section will discuss the implications for multiple uses provision. It does so according to the MUS principles at the intermediate level a) Coordination, b) Long term support, c) Adaptive management, d) Adequate financing, and e) Participatory strategic management. By meeting these principles, it is expected that an enabling environment for multiple use services provision is achieved.

5.1 *Coordination amongst sectors and actors*

The IDP process provides in theory, perhaps the first level of coordination between stakeholders. According to the Municipal Systems Act, one of the purposes of an integrated development plan is that it enables a municipality to weigh up its obligations and systematically prioritise programmes and resource allocations. This happens after, amongst other activities, an **assessment** of existing levels of development, including an identification of communities excluded from services has been carried out. The municipality has no ability to do this. The level and intensity of this process in Bushbuckridge is worrisome. At the moment, only one month has been set aside for the whole IDP process. Both the community and the local municipality are *forced* to undertake this process in one month in order to have identified projects ready for discussion during the IDP review process, and for budgets to be allocated. This time pressure tempts the municipality and councillors to accept whatever village "priority" issues that are raised. These are accepted without questioning the mode of gathering this information or if it is at all acceptable. Community projects that are submitted as priority projects may not necessarily be those that were conceived from full village participation or indeed try to address priority issues. Some of these projects may have been informed by input from a selected few people. Is the municipality therefore not paying attention to the accuracy and reliability of the input, i.e. village priority issues, because there would not be adequate time to properly gather this data anyway?

The level of coordination between institutions is not adequate. Heads of sector departments, as well as community representatives and CSOs should constitute the IDP steering committee. These should contribute to municipal planning processes, but the municipality is not fully utilising this platform. This is where input from different angles would be acquired for objective planning. It almost feels like the involvement of this committee is to ensure, on paper, that it was part of the process. Even though the municipality runs the integrated development planning process, managers from sector departments and their counterpart(s) in the municipality do not seem to motivate for this committee to be utilised effectively.

The institutions in the steering committee continue to plan in isolation to one another. The question to this phenomenon is whether top management does not appreciate integrated planning or are just apathetic to the lack of personnel and space to do this.

5.2 Adaptive management

Both management and capacity issues are real. They both require skills and personnel. It became evident in some of the conversations with municipal officers that bureaucracy played a major limiting role in forging positive action. An officer would have to wait for her manager's go-ahead before taking any action, but the manager himself has a lot on their plate. The BDM Technical manager once said "*we eat while we cook*" meaning that while trying to work on one issue, other issues arise leading to their frustration. The PIMMS manager (BDM) also said in a separate interview "*we are caught between a rock and a hard place. Communities need access to basic services, provincial and national government are rushing us to deliver. It becomes very difficult to balance the two*". Officials are required to respond to demands from both sides, yet there are not enough human resources to do this.

Learning by doing also requires "working space" on the part of municipal officials. Local municipality has not yet prioritised learning as an important aspect in management, not because they do not realise its significance, but because they are to still get the ball rolling with regard to basic services provision. "*The municipality is not trying to learn lessons; we are trying to provide services*" BLM officer

Provincial government should not be left out of the process of learning. The tendency may probably be that provincial government sees itself as superior to local government. Interventions from province are sometimes misdirected. An example is of a fish-farming project initiated for Ward 16. Although with good intentions the project has failed to reach desired objectives. Even though materials for construction of fish ponds as well as fish-farming training were provided, and deserving households identified for this opportunity, it still failed. An officer from the regional office of the Department of Agriculture said "*...this area is very hot. These tanks are made of material that heats the water and kills the fish. We are made to implement these kinds of projects. We know they will fail, but no one is prepared to listen. We are required to write reports each and every month and we do highlight issues such as this one... I wonder if anyone reads them at all*".

5.3 Participatory strategic management

The principle of learning-by-doing provides an opportunity for community-based structures to get a handle on management activities. The learning can only happen if there is participation in planning and management processes. An

opportunity for communities to participate in the whole project cycle would enhance learning which would be essential for management that is based on community needs.

Community-based management can happen if opportunities are given to communities to be part of process, currently and theoretically performed by local municipality. This will also help the municipality with its inability to reach communities. Bushbuckridge Local Municipality had by December 2006 started a process of training its ward committees in processes of assessing village water and sanitation situation. These are some of the skills that would be useful for use in further development work. The inconsistency in membership of the CDF (discussed in section 4) causes a problem in terms of continuity and collective understanding of village water issues that sit with this structure. Newer members may not have the understanding required for assessing village development needs.

The municipality is yet to effectively utilise the different platforms in the integrated development planning process, which should contribute immensely to participatory management.

5.4 Long-term support to community multiple use systems

The local municipality is in the process of training ward committees to undertake participatory processes. Part of the training includes understanding of municipal by-laws and processes of reporting to and communicating with both the community and the local municipality. The municipality could benefit very much from seeing this as more than just a once-off activity. Although the feasibility study on village-based water services providers is underway, ward committees could ensure that indeed water services provided do meet more than just domestic needs of villagers.

Community-based maintenance is not yet a consideration by local municipality. As a result volunteers that do any maintenance work at village level are not supported in terms of wages and material for fixing some of the infrastructure. In fact, these people are seen to be performing an illegal activity. In Gottenburg village, for example, a member of the village water committee has taken up the role of fixing broken taps and underground pipes. The community does not see this as an illegal activity. It (the community) justifies having a community based maintenance team, as that responds to technical problems and emergencies much quicker than DWAF or the municipality.

As discussed in section 4 above, a number of Community Development Workers (CDWs) have been deployed into regional offices of the local municipality. Their role has not been officially articulated yet, although it is anticipated that their presence will make a huge difference for the regional offices in terms of reaching communities. Regional officials find this as significant support from provincial

government, since this was an area of great concern for local municipality. *“Most of our projects have collapsed because we did not do any community facilitation processes, as a result, villagers may not have realised the importance of our interventions”* Regional Municipal manager.

5.5 Adequate financing

Given the reluctance by government structures to discuss their financing mechanisms, this discussion is only based on very limited input.

At a given moment, a certain water services project would just spring out and be included for implemented although that project was not contained in the municipal IDP document. It is suspected that this maybe the outcome of the Mayoral Imbizo, where villagers submit to the Mayor plans for development. Municipal planning frameworks (the IDP and/or WSDP) are no more than carried out for compliance with legal obligations. The implication here is that budgets are not necessarily based on thorough project plans. More often, a budget is set aside then a project gets formulated.

Although provincial assistance is useful at local government level, the way it is provided may cause problems (Box 4), especially when such assistance comes across as a demand from above that needs to be attended to by the local level offices. It is important that provincial level leadership allows for input from municipal officers with regard to the choice of projects and activities that must be undertaken.

Box 4: an illustration of unintended problems out of a good intention

Example, the National Department of Agriculture undertook to assist a group of about 100 (one hundred) women in one village to construct underground rainwater harvesting tanks. These would be used for food security through backyard gardening.

Tanks were constructed and gardens started to flourish. A number of problems, however, began to emerge. Some of the women filled their tanks using domestic water supplied by the municipality. This situation was becoming a nightmare for the regional Local Municipality, where community reservoirs were now unable to cater for the entire village due to the draining into rainwater harvesting tanks.

The local Department of Agriculture, although came in later, was not fully involved in the project. The Local Department had to take responsibility and find ways in which to deal with this problem, as the local municipality was threatening to put a stop to rainwater tanks.

One of the outcomes of the ward synthesis process, carried by AWARD in collaboration with Bushbuckridge stakeholders in 2005, were programme responses. One of those was an agreement to take forward a process of

refurbishment of exiting infrastructure along with an approach in line with the agreed strategies. An estimated budget of R500, 000 was proposed. Indeed the local municipality allocated the budget to carry out the work. This encouraging response turned to frustration as the detailed plans to implement this project could not get off the ground because the technical and political processes required to release the said budget became unclear or “*blocked*”.

The R500, 000 was not released, seemingly, due, to lack of capacity of the technical department to process it. A few months later, another opportunity for project funding by the, then, Bohlabela District Municipality came about. This did then not materialize, in that case seemingly due to the district municipality’s failure to follow due process.

6 Conclusions

This report tried to assess the policy and institutional framework in relation to local government implementation of the so-called multiple use services approach. This was contrasted with the way in which intermediate level stakeholders, particularly the Municipality and decentralised line departments, are following the policies and corresponding instruments. Below we discuss the conclusions for taking the multiple use services approach further at local government level.

The Strategic Framework for Water Services does provide a clear framework calling for thinking about water and livelihoods. However, as the specific guidelines for its implementation are still under development, intermediate level stakeholders are not applying these concepts in their work. For example, multiple use services are not prominent in Bushbuckridge's WSDP. In fact, the Municipality is even struggling in providing Free Basic Water, let alone thinking about higher levels of service.

Overall, water services performance is low. One of the main reasons has been the institutional uncertainty that has been predominant in Bushbuckridge, with responsibilities shifting backwards and forwards, and long transfer times. But there is also a general lack of staffing for operation and maintenance services. In contexts of overall poor services performance, the likelihood of users getting involved in productive uses of water are limited. In fact, unreliable supplies may worsen people's livelihoods situation, especially of the most vulnerable.

One way, in which multiple use services could get higher prominence, would be to strengthen integrated development planning. Although there are clear frameworks for that, their actual carrying out is of poor quality. They often end up being box-ticking exercises being carried out in too short a time-span, without sufficient involvement of community structures and insufficient alignment with plans of sectoral departments. There are no thorough assessments done of the water services situation at village level.

Again, lack of staff capacity is at the core of this. The Municipality is trying to improve its capacity, by employing more people. But it will take time before it is up to the required level. Not only absolute numbers of staff is a limitation. There is little space to learn about its own performance, under pressure to reach targets. The result is the contrary: services that are implemented which do not meet people's needs or turn out to be unsustainable. Providing a space to learn and reflect would be key. Coordination and linking up between the staff as it is now can make a huge difference, for example, well-coordinated efforts of community liaison officers from the Community Support Services section with other CLOs from other sections and CDWs.

A second problem is also insufficient understanding of the rationale behind IDPs. Until such time that local municipality appreciates why there should be integrated

planning, it will remain a challenge for the local municipality to attempt to provide water for multiple uses, as it currently is a challenge to provide just for domestic.

There is also the incorrect assumption of the municipality that the Community Development Fora (CDFs), in collaboration with village water committees (VWCs), do thorough village water assessment in order to understand the village's water services situation. Hence, there is no informed prioritisation of projects and plans. Such assessments should also be better timed, well before the IDP process.

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