

## **A Process of Integrated Governance for Integrated Planning in South Africa**

### **Introduction**

The first democratically elected government of South Africa (after apartheid reign), inherited a fragmented country characterized by, “the stark juxtaposition of developed and developing world conditions in close proximity within the urban environment” (Oelofse & Patel, 2000). Post apartheid thinking, legislation and implementation has valiantly endeavored to address these injustices of the past. The key philosophy in the approach of development with the new dispensation of the country has been integration, through changing the entire structure and functioning of government, its method of planning, service delivery and accountability.

This new viewpoint has had a profound impact on the tradition of planning in the country, as it sought to reinvent itself (from apartheid principles). In the ‘new’ South Africa, and specifically in relation to spatial planning, ‘integration’ was adopted by planners to describe the characteristics of a new spatial planning approach (referring to the physical integration of areas and land uses), but it was a term which also had political currency at the time, as the ANC promoted its vision of a racially integrated, democratic society. The term thus slipped easily between both the planning and political discourses of the 1990’s, serving to reinforce the importance of the urban as a necessary site of political change and the role of planners in assisting this” (Watson in Harrison, Huchzerme & Mayekiso, 2003, 142).

As a result, by the time the new legislation governing local government (LG) was ratified in 2000, the role of planning, and the planner in South Africa had significantly changed. Development planning has now surpassed just spatial issues and has evolved allowing for a system of effective and efficient governance and development. Central to this, is the concept of Integrated Development Planning (IDP). This concept has been legislated and implemented for five years. Key to the IDP process is integration and harmonisation as was explained by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government in his 2006 Budget Speech, when he stated that although Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) were originally conceived as strategic plans of just LG, its potential fulcrum for raising issues to be attended to by all of government has become increasingly important. Clearly therefore, all three stages of the IDP process from conceptualization through to formulation and ultimately to execution, require joint and coordinated inputs for all of government to maximize the impact of utilizing scarce resources for development.

While the focus of this paper will not necessarily be on the concept or content of IDPs per se, it will through a case study focus on the coordination that is required for joint planning, decision making and implementation for all of government. Due to its scope, there is also another extremely important and interrelated concept that will not be discussed in this paper, the involvement of the public in this process. The core focus of this paper will be on government interaction in the IDP process.

The paper will begin by first providing a brief explanation on the governance system of the country. It will then highlight some of the key legislation and policies that guide development planning in the country. The paper will then relate some of the key debates surrounding IDPs and finally it will focus on the case study of coordination as is being experienced by the Province

of Gauteng. But first, the section below will briefly contextualize the discussion by briefly elucidating the governance system of the country.

### **The Governance system in South Africa**

South Africa is a unitary state consisting of three spheres of government (DPLG, 2004). It currently comprises of nine provinces and two hundred and eighty three municipalities within these provinces. The last national election was held in 2004 and occurs every five years. The last LG election took place on 01<sup>st</sup> March 2006, and also occurs every 5 years. This is only the second term of LG in the democratic South Africa.

The challenges facing LG in the country are mammoth and range from service delivery, financial viability, effective municipal management, skills and capacities for the effective governing of LG as well as adequate support, coordination and cooperation from the other spheres of government, to aid LG it achieve its mandate. While this task is daunting as there is a constant move toward the decentralization of government, the need for all three spheres of government to work together has become increasingly important over the last few years, as provincial and national government slowly realize that their work when implemented, translates to space or 'an area of impact'.

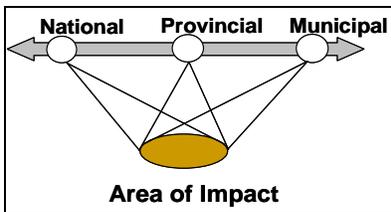


Figure1: The work of government translates to a physical space for impact (the Presidency, 2003).

Although there are several pieces of legislation and policies that affect and influence the planning environment in the country, the following provides a brief overview of specific statutory requirements and key policies on growth and development that influence the IDP and inter-governmental relations (IGR) processes, which are key to this case study.

#### **a) *The Constitution - 1996***

The Constitution is the overarching law of the country which supersedes all legislation to form the key governing law of the country. Chapter 3 of the Constitution clearly states that national, provincial and local government form the three distinctive, interdependent and interrelated spheres of government in South Africa. Each sphere of government has its key responsibilities, but ultimately cooperative governance forms the key to effective government in the country. The objectives of cooperative governance are clearly stated in the Constitution, thus setting the platform for the three spheres of government to work together.

Chapter 7 of the Constitution refers to the concept of Developmental Local Government. This concept provides a huge challenge for local government as its sole purpose is no longer just service delivery, but ensuring that its locality provides opportunities for growth and development in a manner that allows the locality to be viable and sustainable, yet participatory in nature and transparent in its activities. The ability of local government to adequately fulfil this mandate (in terms of skills, capacity, finances etc.) is an issue of much debate in the country.

While the Constitution clearly sets out the distinctive role of both national and provincial government, in relation to LG, its function is one of support, involvement, facilitation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

**b) *The Municipal Systems Act (MSA) – 2000***

The MSA guides the operations of LG in the country. In terms of Section 25 of the MSA, “each municipal council must, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive strategic plan for the development of the municipality”. This integrated development planning process seeks to ensure that appropriate development outcomes are the result of integrated development planning. “It is the principal strategic planning instrument guiding and informing all planning, management, investment, development, and implementation decisions and actions in the local area and supersedes all other plans that guide local government” (Coetzee & Meikeljohn in Hologram, 2003, 28).

The IDP concept implies that integration is also the result of alignment and cooperation between the various spheres of government. This plan needs to be participated, aligned and integrated at all levels of government and between all stakeholders in the municipality. It is seen as a mechanism to allow for policy coherence which involves the integration of agendas between different stakeholders across common issues (Harrison in Harrison et al, 2003, 19).

Section 31 and 32 of the MSA and the Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations (No. R. 796, 2001), state that the MEC (Member of the Executive Council) responsible for LG needs to assist, engage with, facilitate and monitoring the IDP process in municipalities and provide written comments on the alignment of the IDP in relation to Provincial and National plans, policies and strategies. While this piece of legislation, clearly defines the role of the MEC: LG in relation the IDP process, other Departments are not held accountable to being part of the process or supporting LG in the process. The law is also limited in its approach to coordination and alignment, stating the municipal IDP must align to Provincial and national strategies, yet not legislating that it alignment should be a dual result of National and Province taking aligning to LG plans and policies too.

**c) *The Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) – 2003***

The primary purpose of the MFMA is to regularize the municipal budget process. The law is quite clear on ensuring that the budget process in municipalities becomes a more participatory one. Section 17 states that the IDP and budget process must be aligned and simultaneously addressed in municipalities. As a result, planners have to acquaint themselves on budgeting and financial issues, in order to conduct a seamless process.

**d) *The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IGR) – 2005***

The main intension of the IGR Act is to provide an enabling environment for the three spheres of government to interact. In addition to various forums being set up, it also allows for the purposeful discussion on policy issues, alignment and coordination through the three spheres of government, which is essential in the IDP process. It provides the architecture for outcomes based IGR that is focused on local level sustainable development (DPLG, 2004).

**a) *White paper on Local Government***

The White Paper on Local Government reinforces the ideas in the Constitution, MSA & IGR Acts, by detailing that all spheres of government are obliged to observe the principles of cooperative government for government function as a cohesive whole.

**b) *The National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP)***

“The broad intension of the NSDP, is to provide a framework for discussion on the future development of the national space economy by reflecting on localities of severe deprivation and need, of resource potential, of infrastructure endowment and of current and potential economic activity by describing the key social, economic and natural resource trends and issues shaping the national geography” (the Presidency, 2003).

The philosophy of this approach is to identify areas of need and potential and to develop these areas accordingly. Municipalities have not been able to adequately interpret this national perspective, for their localities. While the NSDP is currently under review, a lot of work has to be done to ensure that the NSDP is sensitive to LG needs as well as the implementation of a philosophy that has huge impacts on cities, specifically.

**c) *The Provincial Growth and the Development Strategy (PGDS)***

Although the PGDS is not a statutory requirement, all Provinces have completed them to aid synergy in planning from a national (NSDP), provincial (PGDS) and local (IDP) perspective. These strategies tend to focus on economic growth and make it very difficult to interpret at a local level. It blurs the detail on policy coordination and alignment in terms of content issues. The PGDS for the province of Gauteng is a broad document, which did not allow for wide consultation during its preparation. As a result, PGDS does not enjoy much support.

**d) *The Globally Competitive City Region (GCR)***

Apart from the policies above, the Province of Gauteng has further delved into referring to the province as a city region in terms of its functionality and provision of services. This concept is fairly new and requires more engagement and debate, specifically about how it translates to the issues concerning LG in terms of growth, development and effective governance.

The section above provides a brief overview of the current legislated and policy environment influencing and affecting planning in presently in South Africa. With this background, the key debates surrounding the need for effective intergovernmental relations to allow for clear, effective and successful integrated planning will now be discussed.

**Essential concepts in the IDP process**

As can be noted from above, the statutory framework provides a clear basis from which all three spheres of government in the country can collectively, plan and implement key polices. Yet in practice, the complexity of adequately addressing cross cutting issues, issues from various stake holders and issues at various levels, does make IDP development complex.

The IDP is a comprehensive tool, as the process begins by defining the vision and mission of the municipality. It then proceeds to identify the key objectives, issues and priorities in a

municipality. The municipality then develops various strategies to address the issues and priorities identified. The strategies are translated into projects, which are budgeted for and implemented. This entire process centres on the concept of capital projects for growth, and is thus centred on development. This has implications for while development is needed, and operating budgeting to maintain that development is equally important. This issue is not addressed in the IDP (CSIR, DCD & GTZ, 1998).

This process seems fairly simple, and it should be possible for sector departments to provide information to feed into and contribute to the development of the plan. The IDP process is also a year long process. It would be logical for all sectors to be involved through the process in order to allow for involvement through the various stages of IDP development, ultimately allowing for the development of a document that has been consulted and agreed to by all parties. This should lead joint planning, decision making, resource allocation and implementation (Harrison, 2002).

The role of the planner in this regard is multiple. Planners should be in touch with spatial, budget, development and economic issues. Planners also need to serve as the link to different departments. A planner working in this environment will have to be flexible and accommodating in achieving seamless coordination for integrated planning. Through the case study below, it is possible to understand the practicality of implementing these concepts.

### **The Gauteng Experience with regard to IDP development**

The Province of Gauteng is the smallest province in the country and covers just over 17 000sq km, approximately 1.4 % of the total land surface of the country. It is the most urbanized Province in the country and has a population of approximately 8 million people (www.gpg.gov.za). It is largely an urban province. While it is considered as the economic powerhouse of the country as it contributes 33% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), poverty and unemployment continue to plague the Province (GDS, 2005).

Key issues affecting the Province include large scale migration from the other areas of the country as well as the rest of Africa. The LG structure within the province is made up fourteen municipalities, three metropolitan municipalities, three district municipalities which collectively have eight local municipalities within their areas of jurisdiction. The section below will detail the Gauteng's evolution with regard to coordination, alignment and integration.



Figure 2: A Map of the Province of Gauteng

### ***The Evolution of the engagement process***

While IDP development and implementation at a municipal level has been guided by the legislation over the last five years, the other two spheres of government have been grappling to find a clear role in this process. The evolution of a role and function of the Province in relation to the IDP process in the first term of LG as well as the responsibility of the planner in this regard is briefly explained in the table below.

IDP	Role of province in relation to the IDP Process	Skills / capacity and role of the planner
2000/2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Development Planning and Local Government (DDPLG)</li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial sector Departments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments (legislative requirement for MEC:LG to comment on legislative compliance of IDP and alignment to provincial and national plans):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>○ Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2001/2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Development Planning and Local Government (DDPLG)</li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial Sector Departments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invited to assessment sessions to question municipalities on IDPs</li> <li>○ Some departments made comments on IDPs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Financial – Consultants provided for municipalities unable to do IDPs themselves</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>○ Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2002/2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Development Planning and Local Government (DDPLG)</li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial Sector Departments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invited to assessment sessions to question municipalities on IDPs</li> <li>○ Some departments made comments on IDPs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Financial – Consultants provided for municipalities unable to do IDPs themselves</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attending IDP meetings in LG</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>○ Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2003/2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Development Planning and Local Government (DDPLG)</li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial Sector Departments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invited to assessment sessions to question municipalities on IDPs</li> <li>○ Some departments made comments on IDPs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>○ Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Facilitative               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Convey key issues sector departments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Financial – Consultants provided for municipalities unable to do IDPs themselves</li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Attending IDP meeting in LG</li> <li>o Began to facilitate issues to other Departments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
2004/2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Development Planning and Local Government (DDPLG)</li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial Sector Departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o None</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Attendance of meetings</li> <li>o Began to facilitate issues to other Departments</li> <li>o Began to obtain and distribute information to municipalities on key issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>o Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Facilitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convey key issues sector departments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mediator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mediate between key stakeholders on issues influencing development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2005/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead Department: Department of Local Government (DLG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o After elections, lead Department changed, thus altering the manner of priorities and the manner in which work was done</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Involvement of other national and provincial Sector Departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o None in the IDP process</li> <li>o No comments received</li> <li>o Attendance at the IDP Hearings</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support to municipalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Part of IDP process</li> <li>o Good relationships with all IDP managers at LG</li> <li>o No financial support</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Interaction with municipalities during the IDP process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Attendance of meetings</li> <li>o Began to facilitate issues to other Departments</li> <li>o Began to obtain and distribute information to municipalities on key issues</li> <li>o Mediate discussions between various parties</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ MEC: LG Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Outsourced to a consultant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Collect, copy &amp; distribute IDPs to stakeholders comments</li> <li>o Collate comments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Facilitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convey key issues sector departments</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mediator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mediate between key stakeholders on issues influencing development</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Initiator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Initiated IDP Hearings</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Researcher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Completed a Provincial plan of action for ensuring content issues from various municipalities were discussed</li> <li>o Completed a study on the impacts and effects of long term planning for the province</li> <li>o Completed an evaluation on the performance of LG on the first 5 years of IDP development in the Province</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 1: The evolution of the Provincial municipal engagement process with regard to IDP development

As can be noted from the table above, provincial and national government have not played a clear and effective role in the IDP process. The province has not adequately given expression to the laws and policies that call for greater interaction, coordination and implementation between the three spheres of government. The process of engagements it unfolded in the Gauteng Province for 2006 will now be discussed.

### ***The 2006 IDP engagement process in the Province***

As the importance of being involved in the IDP process came to the fore, the Presidents Coordinating Committee (PCC) in terms of the IGR Act, resolved that all spheres of government were to interact on the content of IDPs in its draft form in order to ensure coordinated support and committed from all three spheres of government to ensure that IDPs were credible. While the debate on what makes an IDP credible is continuing, the DPLG embarked on a process, which Gauteng tailored to suit it, in order to ensure the sectors were involved. The table below provides a brief description of the 2006 IDP engagement process as it unfolded in Gauteng.

ACTIVITY	DATE	LEGISLATION/ COORDINATOR	COMMENTS
<b>SUBMISSION OF DRAFT IDPs</b>	31 March 2006	MFMA (Sections 16 (2) and 17(3)) MSA (Sections 31 and 32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All 14 municipalities in the Province submitted their IDP's by 31st March 2006, providing all stakeholders with an opportunity to engage with IDPs prior to final Council approval (scheduled for May and June)</li> <li>▪ DLG utilised this opportunity to involve national &amp; GPG sector departments in engaging and commenting on the contents of the IDPs</li> </ul>
<b>NATIONAL ANALYSIS WEEK</b>	02-07 April 2006	DPLG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GPG participated in the national IDP analysis week in which provincial and national sector departments analysed the details of IDPs</li> <li>▪ The Gauteng team, comprising of about 30 people, spent time reading and discussing each document. After all IDPs had been read &amp; discussed, sector departments responded to the issues raised by verifying the statements they made and making commitments to address specific issues to improve IDPs</li> <li>▪ It was agreed that all GPG departments would in the following week complete the DPLG assessment template and along with the commitments made during the analysis week, a report would be signed off by the HOD and submitted to DLG. It was also decided that comments would be consolidated and submitted to EXCO.</li> </ul>
<b>MUNICIPAL BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS</b>	18-21 April 2006	DLG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DLG set up meetings with IDP coordinators in each of the municipal structures in the province, with a view to providing feedback on the DPLG analysis week and to prepare for the engagements on 2 – 5 May 2006</li> <li>▪ All municipalities attended these meetings except for Midvaal, Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane.</li> </ul>
<b>PROVINCIAL ENGAGEMENT WEEK</b>	02-05 May 2006	DLG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DLG convened engagement sessions from the 2 – 5 May with each of the municipal structures in the province.</li> <li>▪ The engagement week consisted of a presentation of the outcomes generated by the DPLG analysis week, and a discussion on each of the points therein.</li> <li>▪ There was representation from provincial and national departments. In addition to attendance from all spheres of government, the following stakeholders were also present on various days Eskom, DBSA, Telkom, Public Services &amp; Utilities, Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the University of Pretoria (UP)</li> </ul>
<b>MUNICIPAL APPROVAL &amp; MEC's COMMENTS</b>	Post 05 May 2006	MSA (Section 32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Receipt of Final Council Approved IDPs by 30 June 2006</li> <li>▪ MEC: LG provides comments on IDPs in relation to (a) Issues raised in the April / May engagement process, (b) Highlights key issues addressed as a result of the process and (c) Confirms key issues for continued engagement through 2006</li> <li>▪ Implement a process of joint planning from July to October 2006 (through three spheres of government)</li> </ul>

Table 2: The IDP Engagement process in the Province of Gauteng for 2006

This process has been the most consultative process with regard to IDP development to date. While the province has moved forward in terms of grappling with the realities of coordination and alignment, several lessons have been learnt from the process. These will now be discussed.

### ***Lessons Learnt***

As noted above the broad aims of the IDP engagement process are to contribute towards the harmonisation and alignment of planning, priority setting, resource allocation and implementation across the three spheres of government in respect of a shared area of impact (i.e. the municipal space). The 2006 IDP engagement process in Gauteng Province was significantly stronger than in previous years. However, a number of critical challenges remain, which constrain the ability to realise the level of harmonisation that is sought.

#### ***a) Sequencing and Time Frames***

The sequencing of the planning and budget cycles for the three spheres of government limits the effectiveness of harmonisation through the IDP process. While the statutory processes provides stakeholders with an opportunity to engage and comment on the IDP prior to its adoption, this takes place late in the cycle of IDP development, leaving little time for municipalities to effect changes into the IDPs reflecting the discussions and commitments made.

The sequencing of budget cycles means that the statutory engagement takes place only after the finalisation of national and provincial budgets, thus limiting the scope for creative responses on the part of provincial and national spheres to the issues and problems raised by the IDP process at municipal level. These challenges point to the need for an ongoing process of structured engagement, rather than an annual forum concerned primarily with statutory compliance.

#### ***b) Absence of a shared analysis and common data set***

Aligning operational plans and resource allocation is critically dependent on a shared spatial vision of each municipal area, which is commonly accepted across all three spheres. The 2006 process revealed the extent to which we have not yet been able to articulate a shared vision of development. Lack of alignment between municipal IDPs and key strategic frameworks reflects the absence of a common interpretation of these strategies within each municipal space.

A shared vision depends to a large degree on common and generally accepted analysis of the key social, economic and spatial trends in each area of shared impact. The absence of such a common analysis limits the impact of the engagement process. Although municipalities have attempted to engage with and incorporate these principals, there remains a great deal of uncertainty and disagreement about how to interpret these principles at the municipal level. Provincial and national Departments, especially the departments who have generated these policies and need to sit down and have many discussions about the various plans and strategies to ensure that LG is able to interpret these policies in the area's of impact.

#### ***c) The domination of sector priorities over integrated planning***

A key limitation of the IDP engagement process is the absence of an integrated and harmonised input from provincial and national sector departments. The engagement process tends to encourage each sector department to measure the IDP against their own priorities and

operational plans, rather than providing a forum for strategic input from the perspective of provincial and/or national government as a whole. The result is that the IDP is required 'to align' with a set of uncoordinated sector-plans which may be mutually contradictory themselves, thus undermining the capacity of the IDP to integrate the various interventions in a particular space.

**d) *Absence of Information about key provincial and national plans***

A related problem is the absence of information from national and provincial sector departments regarding their operational plans in the shared impact area. In some instances departments are unable to provide information on a geographic basis. Efforts to build a spatially disaggregated report on the provincial and national budgets have been initiated. But even where aggregated budget information is available the IDP process would still require access to clear and consolidated information from respective sector departments.

The 2006 IDP engagement received no formal input or detailed information regarding key provincial and national infrastructure investments. In this context, it would be wrong to place the onus of alignment solely on municipalities. The section below provides some ideas on how the process can be improved in order to realise integration through the engagement process.

**Improving integrated governance in the Province**

One of the major challenges facing government in its quest to provide basic services to all its people, progressively improve the quality of life and life chances of all South Africans and eradicate the dualistic nature of the South African economy, has been the effective integration, coordination and alignment of the actions of its three constituting spheres.

A key contribution that the provincial sphere of government can make to harmonisation and alignment is to enhance the IDP engagement process (for more regular interaction), so that it can achieve the following objectives:

- To provide strategic guidance to municipalities on provincial programmes, strategies, development directions and trajectories.
- To ensure effective interpretation and implementation of provincial plans at a municipal level.
- To promote the alignment and co-ordination of planning and development priorities and strategic interventions between municipalities.
- To provide a sound basis/platform for municipal and provincial planning, prioritisation and budgeting.
- To build synergy and higher impact in terms of timeous identification of problems, opportunities and development initiatives.
- To identify opportunities for horizontal learning opportunities and best practice sharing.
- To contribute towards building a shared understanding of needs, trends, potential and development trajectories in the province.

To some extent, the current engagement process does contribute towards achieving these objectives. However, given the weaknesses and limitations discussed in the previous section, much more needs to be done. It also provides flexibility for planners to play various roles in order to allow for a consultative and consolidated outcome.

## **Conclusion**

Although the process of intergovernmental planning for effective and efficient service delivery has improved dramatically over the last five years in the Province of Gauteng, this is an iterative process and needs to be implemented as such. All three spheres of government need to actively work at improving IGR in order to improve integrated development planning in the province.

While a lot has been accomplished, key tasks lie ahead in improving, consolidating and sustaining the changes that have been made thus far. The dynamic policy environment provides ample opportunity for experimentation in interpreting and implementing policies within a municipal space. This too, is an iterative process but should continue to strive to create a seamless policy environment in government.

Lastly, this development planning process, allows planners to be innovative in addressing key issues. While the process of integration requires clear conceptualization, the implementation of coordinating sectors, policies and differing agenda's requires commitment. Through this process, planners have the ability to influence the functioning of municipalities and contribute to creating a LG system that is viable, sustainable and developmental.

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