



Khawuleza: Hurrying Up Service Delivery

1. Introduction

In July 2019, during the Presidency Budget Vote, President Ramaphosa identified the “pattern of operating in silos” in government as a challenge which led to “lack of coherence in planning and implementation and has made monitoring and oversight of government’s programme difficult.”¹ In August 2019 a new approach called the District Development Model (DDM) was adopted by cabinet. The DDM is premised on the idea that a proactive, coherent, and integrated co-ordination of development plans and budgets of all three spheres of government will allow for more targeted service delivery at district level.

The DDM, dubbed ‘*Khawuleza*’, which means ‘Hurry Up’, was piloted in three sites: the OR Tambo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape; the Waterberg District Municipality in Limpopo; and the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. The OR Tambo District Municipality comprises the following local municipalities: King Sabatha Dalindyebo, Nyandeni, Ingquza Hill, Mhlontlo and Port St Johns. Ultimately the model will be rolled out to 44 Districts and 8 Metros.

2. The Model

Government ministries and their departments, and the three spheres of government – national, provincial and local – have often been accused of compartmentalising their work or ‘working in silos’. This has led to inefficient use of available financial and human resources, an inability to deliver services where they are needed, and thus a diminished impact on the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality. It is within this context that the District Development Model

(‘district’ within this model means a locality rather than a District Municipality) was adopted. South Africa has 257 municipalities, but for the implementation of the DDM to be effective, these have been grouped into 44 districts and 8 metros.

The model has so far been implemented in 3 sites, with the rest of the districts to be brought on board by 2021.

The main aim is to respond to district-level service delivery in an integrated, coherent and more impactful manner which would require “social partnership and collaboration with all sectors of society and communities”.² Other objectives of the model include:

- “managing rural/urban migration;
- determining and/or supporting local economic drivers;
- managing spatial form, land release and land development; and
- determining infrastructure investment requirements and ensuring long-term infrastructure adequacy to support integrated human settlements, economic activity and provision of basic services, and community and social services.”³

The vision of the model is encapsulated through the slogan ‘One District, One Budget, One Plan’. The concept is not new. Over the years several policy initiatives and programmes have been adopted and established to facilitate an integrated working relationship between the three spheres of government. For example, the Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Framework Act, which was promulgated in 2005, provides a framework for co-ordinating and aligning

development priorities and objectives between the three spheres of government, as well as the development of indicators for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Framework. In 2016 the Integrated Urban Development Framework policy initiative was adopted to “foster a shared understanding across government and society about how best to manage urbanisation and achieve the goals of economic development, job creation and improved living conditions. . .”⁴ Yet despite these frameworks and policies to guide government, the lack of an integrated work ethic amongst the three spheres of government has continued to curtail service delivery at district level.

3. The Challenges

As yet, details of how the DDM is doing in the pilot sites are not readily available. It is a well-documented fact all South Africa’s municipalities are far from equal when it comes to competence and resources. Disparities in governance capacity, economic development, and monitoring ability will certainly impact the success of the DDM.

The administrative and governance capacity of municipalities is at the heart why municipalities fail at delivering services. Local municipalities ought to recruit the best people to serve their communities, but most of them fail dismally at this. For at least three consecutive years now, the Auditor-General’s reports have pointed to the fact that the failings at municipalities have always had something to do with administrative inefficiencies, technical incapacities, and lack of critical skills. The Auditor-General’s latest report,⁵ titled *‘Not much to go around, yet not the right hands at the till’*, released in July 2020, points to several administrative and governance shortcomings in the majority of the 257 municipalities. Among the shortcomings are the inability to fill vacancies, an inability to manage finances, the flouting of legislated governance frameworks, and corruption. According to the Deputy Minister for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Parks Tau, addressing these shortcomings is “a fundamentally political task about oversight and leadership with regards to what needs to happen”.⁶

The model’s objective of improving and stimulating local economic development is a noble one. However, economic development functions within municipalities are the least resourced and under-capacitated, and thus economic growth at municipal level remains stunted. The challenge is to build capacity within the municipality to create impactful economic development plans. The question is whether the DDM will be able to assist in building that capacity or whether it will simply mean that those functions are outsourced.

To assess and make the necessary adjustments, developments plans must be monitored and evaluated. Different policy models are being tested in various municipalities across the country and all of these local plans and models have been implemented by the government. However, the local municipalities, for whom these plans and models are designed, are not included as active participants in the monitoring and evaluation processes. It is thus imperative that a monitoring and evaluation system for the DDM should include non-state actors who can objectively assess the progress and shortcomings in these local economic development strategies. Regrettably though, such an inclusive monitoring system may not be possible because of a lack of local evaluation and monitoring skills in many of the district municipalities.

4. Conclusion

The stated objectives of the Khawuleza model seem to be just what the municipalities need in order to carry out their mandate: deliver services to the communities they serve. However, we have seen such plans and legislation introduced previously, yet the majority of the 257 municipalities remain dysfunctional. What makes this initiative different from the others? Is it perhaps, as the Democratic Alliance has claimed, an attempt by the governing party to take powers away from local governments? A proper evaluation and critical assessment of the DDM will only be possible when the report on the implementation at the pilot sites is released. Until then, the DDM only looks good on paper.

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¹ The Presidency (2019): *President to launch Presidential District Coordination Service Delivery Model*. Available online at <https://tinyurl.com/yxh8lszk>

² Buhle Lindwa (2019): *Khawuleza: Ramaphosa pilots model aimed at improving service delivery*. Available online at <https://tinyurl.com/yypq4uqw>

³ Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs(2019): *Towards a district development model*. Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance. Available online at www.pmg.org.za

⁴ Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

⁵ The Report details the audit outcomes for local government for the period 2018-2019

⁶ Theto Mahlakoana (2020): *Tau: No excuses for governance lapses highlighted by AG's audit report*. Available online at <https://tinyurl.com/y5yr8w7w>

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