

# A critical analysis of IDP on achieving socio economic development of communities in South Africa



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ability of Integrated Development Plan in achieving socio-economic development of communities in South Africa. The triumph of Integrated Development Plan is considered vital in improving the socio-economic development of communities in South Africa. South Africa has a reasonably new democratic arrangement that focuses on promoting an enhancement of communities, over projects which should be affiliated with the Integrated Development Plans of local municipalities. Nevertheless, local municipalities continue to perform inadequately which results in local communities' unhappiness with the poor quality of services provided to them. The paper gathers information in respect of various scholars' notions on IDP and achieving socio-economic development in integrated development planning from related articles, journals, and books. The paper is based on the literature review. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a cornerstone of local governance in South Africa, designed to foster socio-economic development and enhance service delivery across municipalities. The IDP aligns municipal planning with national development priorities, offering a comprehensive framework to address local needs through participatory planning and decision-making. However, despite its objectives, the effectiveness of the IDP in achieving socio-economic development has been questioned, with implementation challenges hindering its success in many areas. A high number of populations in the upcoming years will be in developing countries, whose schemes are ill-prepared to deliver services to their local communities, and therefore more emphasis needs to be placed on municipal development projects. The study recommends that local governments shift towards a commercial line, to smooth socio-economic development. This is because the contemporary commercial tactic has moved from concentration on generating revenue to a concentration on making of worth and reimbursements for diverse sponsors, and, as such, administrative lineups and ventures must be established to accomplish this objective. The study recommends that local governments adopt a more commercial approach, to enhance socio-economic development, including specific policy recommendations such as municipal staff training programs, participatory governance enhancements, and improved performance tracking systems.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the aptitude of Integrated Development Plan in achieving socio-economic development of communities in South Africa. The triumph of Integrated Development Plan is considered vital in improving the socio-economic development of communities in South Africa (Fourie & Van Der Walde, 2021). South Africa has a reasonably new democratic arrangement that focuses on promoting an enhancement of communities, over projects which should be affiliated with the Integrated Development Plans of local municipalities (Sooryamoorthy, 2020). Nevertheless, local municipalities continue to perform inadequately which results in local communities' unhappiness with the poor quality of services provided to them. Numerous municipalities struggle with inefficient service delivery. Basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation remain inadequate in many communities, particularly in rural areas. The inability to deliver these essential services hampers socio-economic development (Sibanda, 2015). This tendency acquired rich terrain for viable representation and application, within a progressive local government regimen that encourages an integrated development planning technique. The new indulgence of local government in South Africa has escorted in an autonomous directive, that is devoted to a new revelation of progressive local government working with residents to confirm public and economic development of local communities (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2023).

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Local governments aimed at to deracialize, change and serve local communities, in line with the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, which is the supreme law of the land (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022). The South African government developed a recent way of preparation, that is the Integrated Development plan, which is encouraged by the Municipal Systems 32 of 2000. Integrated development planning, whose product is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) stresses the need for local governments to plan in partnership with their local communities and pertinent participants for the purpose of noticing and considering the needs of the immediate local communities, particularly to advance social and economic growth. Integrated Development Plan can be perceived as the tactical plan of local governments (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022). This is because an IDP is a focal point to the management and enhancement of local communities.

The status of the Integrated Development Plan to a tactical management instrument that should direct all choices and ventures inside local government was raised by legislation (Nhamo, Mabhaudhi, Mpandeli, Dickens, Nhemachena, Senzanje, Naidoo, Liphadzi & Modi, 2020). Nevertheless, despite this and other ingenuities by the South African government since

its evolution to democracy in 1994, majority of local governments are struggling to execute well in terms of delivering to their local communities. Many of the local governments continue to fail in terms of overachieving the development of their residents, despite tactical support the local governments are given provincial and national government (Nhamo, Mabhaudhi, Mpandeli et al., 2020). Due to the continually poor performance of the local governments in terms of improving the socio-economic development of their local communities, the level of poverty continues to rise daily.

Integrated Development Plans could be perceived as an ongoing development venture that is principally bothered by generating worth and reimbursements, in the form of socio-economic development of residents in local communities (Nhamo, Mabhaudhi, Mpandeli et al., 2020; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022). Literature asserted that, it is obligatory to calculate the worth and reimbursements that local communities and diverse shareholders obtain from these plans for the purpose of evaluating whether Integrated Development Plans are getting executed effectively. Therefore, for the purpose of realizing the extent, it is crucial to keep tracking and reporting on improvement that could have been done in the execution of Integrated Development Plans through making the use of administration gears such as the balanced scorecard. The balanced scorecard perceived as a suitable to utilize as a measuring tool (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022). This is because it espouses a performance measurement tactic that utilizes both financial and nonfinancial measures for the purpose of evaluating all features of an organization's processes in an integrated fashion. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the aptitude of Integrated Development Plan in achieving socio-economic development of communities in South Africa.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper adopted Sustainable Development Theory. The theory is relevant for the study because it involves balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability which is part of the focus of the study (Hassanien, Bhatnagar & Darwish, 2020). The IDP reflects this by focusing on long-term solutions that benefit future generations while addressing present challenges such as inequality, unemployment, and environmental degradation (Hassanien, Bhatnagar & Darwish, 2020). Sustainable development theory within the IDP context is vital in ensuring that economic growth does not occur at the expense of marginalized communities or natural resources (Hassanien, Bhatnagar & Darwish, 2020). The paper also adopted the Developmental Local Government Theory (DLG). This is because, South Africa's local government framework envisions municipalities as active agents of development. The DLG model emphasizes that municipalities should not only provide basic services but also contribute to local economic growth and social development (Leigh, 2024). IDPs are a tool

to operationalize this model, connecting local government actions with broader national strategies, such as the National Development Plan (NDP) (Leigh, 2024). These theoretical perspectives guide the understanding of how IDPs are designed to function and the potential barriers they may face in fostering socio-economic development. To further enrich the theoretical framework, the study could benefit from integrating Governance Theory and Institutional Theory. Governance Theory, particularly the work of Karyawati, Subroto, Sutrisno and Saraswati (2020), explores the dynamics of collaborative governance, emphasizing the importance of partnerships and networks in achieving policy goals. In the context of IDP implementation, this theory can illuminate how collaborative governance structures and processes can enhance or hinder the success of IDPs (Karyawati et al., 2020). It can provide insights into the roles and relationships of various actors, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders, and how their interactions influence IDP outcomes (Karyawati et al., 2020).

Institutional Theory, notably the work Risi, Vigneau, Bohn and Wickert, (2023), focuses on the role of institutions in shaping behavior and outcomes. Within the realm of municipal development planning, Institutional Theory can help explain how institutional weaknesses, such as inadequate regulatory frameworks, lack of accountability mechanisms, and inefficient administrative processes, can impede effective IDP implementation (Risi et al., 2023). It can also shed light on how institutional strengths, such as clear mandates, effective leadership, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems, can facilitate IDP success. Integrating these theories can provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to or detract from IDP effectiveness (Risi et al., 2023). To ensure the literature review remains current and relevant, it is essential to incorporate recent empirical studies

on IDP effectiveness in post-COVID-19 South Africa and studies from 2022- 2024 on municipal governance and IDP effectiveness (Risi et al., 2023). This will provide up-to-date insights into the challenges and opportunities facing IDP implementation in the current context

### **Integrated Development Plan in South Africa**

The South Africa's Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 decrees a municipal planning model that the need for development of Integrated Development Plan which must direct change activities of a local government for a period of 5 years (Serge Kubanza & Simatele., 2020). Integrated Development Plans are perceived as the most momentous instrument wherein service delivery and development are undertaken and processed in local governments (Molale & Fourie, 2023). The Integrated Development Plan of a local government is usually a 5-year tactical plan that ought to adjust the headship and administration of local government to realize their developmental accountability and constitutional compulsion (Serge Kubanza & Simatele., 2020). The Local Government Transition Act Second Amendment Act 97 of 1996 as revised, an Integrated Development Plan is a municipal plan intended at cohesive growth and administration of an area of authority in terms of its authorities and responsibilities (Ngubane & Pillay, 2023).

The Republic of South Africa (2000) on Section 26 of the Municipal Systems has put emphasis on the need for an Integrated Development Plan to imitate the vision of local governments, the operative approaches, the positive change primacies and purposes and local economic development purposes (Ngubane & Pillay, 2023). Additionally, the Act stresses the need for IDP to imitate the vision of inner alteration requirements, the spatial development framework, a catastrophe supervision proposal, a monetary proposal, main performance gages, and performance marks (The Republic of South Africa, 2000; Masiya, Davids & Mangai, 2019). Therefore, an Integrated Development Plan should imitate the respective council's vision for long-standing growth of the local government, with the prominence on important progressive and transformational needs of the community (Ngubane & Pillay, 2023). This is because the Integrated Development Plan is supposed to combine all preparation, make financial arrangements and management activities in an explicit municipality. The board of at local government municipality is believed to be mandated to assess the Integrated Development Plan yearly in agreement with a valuation of its performance measurements in terms of the performance administration structure and to the level that fluctuating situations so demand (Horowitz, 2023). This is primarily because local governments are affected by alterations whether inside and the outside surroundings. For instance, the socio-economic setting, whether rise in prices or high unemployment affects local government (Ngubane & Pillay, 2023). Similarly, South Africa's high unemployment proportion has an unpleasant effect on the income base of local governments.

Based on the contests, literature asserted that integrated development planning has the ability to ensure that local governments can efficaciously and excellently reply to variations in the environment as a tactical preparation and administration instrument (Mthembu & Hlophe, 2020). Tactical administration was formerly merged in pragmatic studies investigating public entities in South Africa. Despite acquiescence with the advocated tactical administration framework, delivery of service targets, as set out in the Integrated Development Plan, are rarely accomplished (Snyman, 2020). This is mostly accredited to administration's agreed upon tactical choice and linear tactic to tactical administration, that does not focus on the difficulty and ambiguity of the division's setting and the opinions of participants, administration's ack of aptitude to execute the tactical administration purpose, the absence of a schemes thoughtful approach, and unproductive tactical regulator.

### **The Five Fundamental Phases of the IDP Cycle in South Africa**

Ouwencamp and van der Waldt (2024) indicate that the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) cycle encompasses a duration of five years in South Africa; however, it is subject to annual revisions in the planning document. The fifth generation of the IDP commenced in May 2022 and is scheduled to conclude in June 2027. The IDP cycle comprises five principal phases, as identified by Asha and Makalela (2020), Mamokhere and Meyer (2022), and Ouwencamp and van der Waldt (2024). These phrases are as follows:

**Phase 1:** Analysis (comprehensive examination of the legal framework, socio-economic conditions, institutional structure, spatial context, development priorities, and environmental factors).

Asha and Makalela (2020) elucidate that the initial phase of the IDP process is characterized by the analysis phase. Mamokhere and Meyer (2022b) assert that the analysis phase primarily focuses on evaluating the existing conditions within a specific municipal area, with the objective of identifying and justifying the nature of service delivery, as well as the associated challenges. The analysis phase serves as a critical juncture for municipalities to systematically evaluate the myriad challenges currently confronting the communities and various stakeholders (Ouwencamp & van der Waldt, 2024). Furthermore, in this phase, stakeholders such as community members, are encouraged to articulate their development needs and identify other issues that warrant the municipality's attention. Asha and Makalela (2020) assert that during the analysis phase, municipalities must evaluate the needs of their communities, prioritize these needs, establish goals to address the identified requirements, and implement projects and programs aimed at achieving the specified objectives.

**Phase 2:** Strategies (formulation of vision and mission statements, development of strategies to achieve developmental objectives, identification of key performance areas, and establishment of a value system).

Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a) indicated that strategy development constitutes the second phase of the IDP process. This phase focuses on the formulation of strategic goals, which involves the creation of a shared vision and the establishment of objectives across

short-term, mid-term, and long-term horizons, engaging multiple stakeholders in the process (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022c). According to Asha and Makalela (2020), during the strategy development

phase, municipalities are mandated to formulate a comprehensive vision, establish specific objectives, devise strategies, and identify relevant projects. Moreover, the vision constitutes a formal articulation of the objectives that the municipality aspires to realize (Asha & Makalela, 2020).

**Phase 3:** Projects (identification of capital projects, development of business plans, and alignment with performance management systems).

The third phase of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) application is the project phase, which focuses on the design and specification of projects aimed at addressing the prioritized needs and items identified in the preceding phase (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018; Owencamp & van der Walddt, 2024). In this phase, the municipality develops projects that incorporate comprehensive content to inform these initiatives. The projects are characterized by clearly defined objectives and indicators that facilitate the assessment of individual project performance (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a). Furthermore, the project phase encompasses the formulation of an operational strategy and outlines a comprehensive framework for the design of project proposals. According to Dlamini and Reddy (2018), this process involves the establishment of objectives, targets, and indicators. The municipality must ensure that the proposed projects effectively address the service delivery needs and challenges faced by community members (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018).

**Phase 4:** Integration (harmonization of processes, encompasses institutional restructuring, alignment of organizational objectives, and the development of comprehensive integrated communication plans).

The fourth phase in the implementation of the IDP is referred to as the integration phase. Asha and Makalela (2020) assert that the fourth phase encompasses the screening, adjustment, consolidation, and approval of project proposals. This phase is critical in ensuring a cohesive process that effectively integrates preparation, implementation, and delivery. In a similar vein, Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a) assert that, following the identification of projects, it is essential to conduct an evaluation to ensure that these projects align with the objectives of the municipality and effectively address the identified needs. The integration framework offers municipalities the opportunity to harmonize and coordinate the implementation of various projects and programs by considering their characteristics, geographical context, and temporal dimensions. This approach aims to ensure that consolidated and cohesive initiatives are incorporated into the IDP (Owencamp & van der Walddt, 2024). For instance, Mamokhere and

Meyer (2022a) assert that this phase involves the integration of the diverse projects that were identified and formulated during the preceding phase of the project lifecycle.

**Phase 5:** Approval (alignment with district, provincial, and national frameworks, public consultation, and subsequent final approval by relevant councils).

The fifth phase emphasizes the decision-making process and the endorsement of IDP projects, as articulated by Asha and Makalela (2020). Moreover, upon completion of the draft of the IDP, it is imperative that the document be submitted to the municipal council for their consideration and deliberative process (Asha & Makalela, 2020). Furthermore, the municipal council holds both the authority and the responsibility to evaluate and authorize the IDP. The municipal council will not endorse the IDP of the municipality until the requisite consultation process, as stipulated by legislative regulations, has been duly conducted (Owencamp & van der Walddt, 2024). Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a) assert that, in accordance with section 25(4) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (Act 23 of 2000), municipalities are obligated to issue public notice for comments within 14 days following the adoption of the IDP. It is imperative that community members are afforded the opportunity to provide commentary prior to the council's approval of the IDP. Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2020) assert that community participation is essential to the functioning of local government. Moreover, the IDP ought to be adequately positioned to support the municipality in the formulation of the annual budget. It serves as a strategic framework designed to promote community engagement and improve service delivery, while also informing the budget prioritization processes across diverse communities (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2020).

By adhering to the five phases outlined, IDPs primarily serve to direct municipal actions toward achieving developmental goals and to facilitate community-based planning through ongoing public participation initiatives (Owencamp & van der Walddt, 2024). These phases are considered highly effective instruments for planning, facilitating a transition from ad-hoc, project-based methodologies to a more strategic and integrated approach, especially in the context of developing countries (Ramaano, 2022a). Mulaudzi, Francis, Zuwarimwe, and Chakwizira (2023) contend that IDP serves as a framework designed to promote a needs-based approach. This approach emphasizes the significance of equity, institutional transformation, and participatory management. Furthermore, the authors note that IDP has undergone an extensive period of development characterized by the recycling and recombination of existing political and contextual frameworks. In certain instances, IDP served as a mechanism to facilitate the government's transition from a progressive, state-centric development approach towards the economic principles associated with sustainable livelihoods (Mulaudzi et al., 2023). Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a) contend that the IDP inherently reinforces democratic structures and fosters collaboration among various stakeholders to attain the intended objectives. This phenomenon elucidates the heightened focus that researchers and policymakers globally have devoted to diverse models of development decision-making tools, exemplified by the

IDP framework (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2020; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a; Mulaudzi et al., 2023; Ramaano, 2024; Owencamp & van der Walddt, 2024).

### **Main Stakeholders in the IDP Processes in South Africa**

The IDP process is a multifaceted undertaking that necessitates the engagement of diverse stakeholders (Banda, van Niekerk, Nemaokonde, & Granvorka, 2022). Mamokhere and Meyer (2022b) assert that IDP is inherently an integrative and participatory process, necessitating the involvement of diverse stakeholders throughout its course. It is imperative to recognize that the effective formulation and implementation of IDP are contingent upon substantial stakeholder engagement and community participation (Ouwencamp & van der Walddt, 2024). As noted by Selepe (2023), the stakeholders participating in the IDP process in South Africa encompass community representatives, ward councillors, and members of ward committees. The stakeholders are delineated succinctly in the following manner:

#### **Community representatives**

According to Selepe (2023) community representatives assume a pivotal role in the IDP process, serving as vital intermediaries between the municipality and the wider community. The author further posits that these representatives are instrumental in facilitating effective communication and in addressing the diverse needs and concerns of community members throughout the planning and service delivery processes. Ouwencamp and van der Walddt (2024) assert that diverse representative structures are present within the community, which serve to facilitate interactions with municipal authorities. As emphasized by Selepe (2023), the representative bodies encompass ward councillors, who advocate for their wards; ward committees, which consist of community members collaborating with councillors to identify local needs; and traditional authorities, who hold significant influence in rural and marginalized areas. These structures play a crucial role in facilitating the inclusion of diverse community perspectives, thereby ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders are acknowledged and incorporated into the municipality's development strategies (Ouwencamp & van der Walddt, 2024).

#### **Municipal ward councillors**

In accordance with Section 73(2) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Republic of South Africa, 2000), the role of a Ward Councillor is explicitly delineated as a member of the municipal council, with the mandate to represent the interests and concerns of their assigned ward within the governing body of the council. Ward councillors play a crucial role in the IDP process, serving as essential representatives for their respective wards within the larger framework of municipal governance (Mtholo, 2023). The municipal council serves as the paramount decision-making entity within the municipality, tasked with the critical responsibility of forging a political connection among the executive mayor, the executive committee, and the broader community (Molale & Fourie, 2023). In this context, ward councillors function as essential intermediaries, facilitating the articulation of community concerns and needs within the decision-making process. Furthermore, the active participation of community members in the Integrated IDP process is essential for accurately identifying and integrating their needs, expectations, and aspirations into the IDP framework. This engagement is vital for fostering a development planning approach that is both inclusive and responsive (Maluleke & Maluleke, 2024).

#### **Municipal ward committee members**

As articulated by Selepe (2023), the ward committee serves a crucial role as a representative body within the community. Moreover, it functions as an intermediary, facilitating and coordinating efficient communication between the municipal council and the constituents it serves. This committee serves a pivotal function in facilitating accurate communication of the community's concerns and needs to municipal decision-makers (Selepe, 2023). According to Ragolane and Malatji (2024), ward committee members function as a critical conduit for communication, facilitating the connection between the municipal council usually via the ward councillor and the wider community. Furthermore, within the framework of the IDP process, Palesa, Lusanda, Abongile, and Aaron (2023) underscore that a fundamental responsibility of ward committee members is to identify, recommend, and articulate community needs and inputs to the ward councillor. Selepe (2023) underscores the significant reliance of ward councillors on the contributions made by ward committee members. This collaboration is essential for ensuring that the distinct concerns and developmental needs of their respective communities are accurately represented and effectively incorporated into the IDP framework.

In this context, ward committees are integral to the effective implementation of the IDP, as they safeguard the centrality of community input within the planning framework.

### **Implications of IDP in the South African Local Government**

Masilo and Gershwin (2020) mentioned that majority of local governments continue to operate in a rigid model, which is not unacceptable in the knowledge economy. Rigid models do not enable superiors to pledge cross-functional organizations. Moreover, small regard is allotted to the needs and wants of workers permission, accountability, and culpability. This stresses the need for an evolution from the existing unsuccessful rigid organizational organizations to amalgam enterprise paradigms. Furthermore, the operative of the venture office cannot be overemphasized because it is perilous that every local government assigns a chief portfolio captain at administrative level for the purpose of ensuring suitable IDP that relates with the advice provided by national government

(Ngubane & Pillay, 2023). It is also crucial to recognize that for local government to be effective in its developmental ventures, the balanced scorecard approach should be executed (Masuku & Jili, 2019). This is chiefly because, the balanced scorecard is a universal and amalgamated measurement instrument that has the capacity to manage local government towards achievement.

Executing the balanced scorecard approach will assist local government to accomplish expressive growth, rather than simple acquiescence with directions given by national government (Molale, 2019). Another challenging area in South African local governments is the matter of responsibility. The South African Constitution (RSA 1996) commands local government to be administratively and economically responsible (Gloppen, 2019). This obligation placed on local government suggests that local government should provide evidence of political responsibility, an absenteeism of dishonesty, that boards have been met for the envisioned clusters, and that these clusters are fulfilled with the guidelines that are being executed. Accountability should be ensured to assist local governments to be able to take responsibility for public funds as well as other resources delivered for the purpose of ensuring smooth delivery service and socio-economic development through operative performance administration, as endorsed by the balanced scorecard approach (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

### **Pros and Cons on Achieving the Socio-Economic Development of Communities In South Africa**

The IDP is a crucial tool for promoting socio-economic development in South Africa's municipalities. While it provides a robust framework for planning and aligning local initiatives with national priorities, its effectiveness has been hindered by challenges such as limited community engagement, resource constraints, and political instability. To enhance the success of IDPs in achieving socio-economic development, there is a need for greater capacity-building within municipalities, more meaningful community participation, and improved mechanisms for accountability.

#### **Cons**

**Implementation Failures:** While the planning process may be robust, the implementation of IDPs often faces significant challenges. Many municipalities lack the technical and financial capacity to execute the ambitious plans outlined in their IDPs, leading to delayed or incomplete projects (Ouwencamp & van der Walddt, 2024).

**Superficial Participation:** Despite the emphasis on community involvement, actual participation is often limited. In some cases, consultations with communities are symbolic, with decisions already made by local officials. This disconnects between government intentions and community experiences undermines the participatory nature of IDPs (Malefane & Mashakoe, 2008).

**Service Delivery Inefficiencies:** Numerous municipalities struggle with inefficient service delivery. Basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation remain inadequate in many communities, particularly in rural areas. The inability to deliver these essential services hampers socio-economic development (Sibanda, 2015).

**Persistent Inequality:** Despite the IDP's efforts, inequality remains a significant challenge in South Africa. The uneven distribution of resources between urban and rural areas, and among different socio-economic groups, means that the benefits of IDP-driven development are not equitably distributed (Swilling & Annecke, 2012).

#### **Pros**

##### *Comprehensive planning*

The IDP integrates various sectors—housing, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability—offering a holistic approach to development. This comprehensive planning ensures that development initiatives are aligned with local and national objectives, thereby promoting balanced growth (Ouwencamp & van der Walddt, 2024).

##### *Enhanced community participation*

A key strength of the IDP process is its emphasis on community involvement. Through public consultations and participatory forums, residents can directly influence the allocation of resources and the prioritization of projects, thus ensuring that development reflects their actual needs (Malefane & Mashakoe, 2008).

##### *Alignment with national policies*

IDPs are aligned with national frameworks such as the NDP, which promotes inclusive growth and poverty reduction. This alignment ensures that local projects contribute to overarching national goals, fostering coherence in development efforts across different levels of government (Sibanda, 2015).

##### *Accountability and transparency*

The IDP process provides a transparent mechanism through which local governments can be held accountable. Annual reviews and public participation provide communities with the tools to monitor progress and demand corrective action when needed (Theron, 2010).

## Research and Methodology

The paper is based on the literature review whereby a comprehensive review of existing academic literature, policy documents, and reports from government agencies forms the basis for understanding the IDP's impact on socio-economic development. Key documents such as the Municipal Systems Act and case studies from municipalities across South Africa are reviewed. For example, selected municipalities are used as case studies to examine the outcomes of IDP implementation such as the City of Cape Town and Polokwane municipalities provide examples of both successful and less effective IDP initiatives and how this can assist in achieving socio-economic development in communities of South Africa.

The selection of sources prioritized peer-reviewed academic articles, government reports, and policy documents to ensure credibility and relevance. Case studies were chosen based on the availability of comprehensive data and to represent a range of municipal contexts (e.g., urban vs. rural, well-resourced vs. under-resourced). While the study primarily relies on secondary data, this approach was deemed appropriate for providing a broad overview of IDP effectiveness. However, it is acknowledged that primary data collection, such as interviews and surveys, could offer richer, context-specific insights, and this is recommended for future research.

## Findings and Discussions

The findings or rather the result of the study reveals a mixed picture of the IDP's effectiveness in driving socio-economic development such as infrastructure development in urban municipalities such as Cape Town, IDPs have led to significant improvements in infrastructure, with increased access to roads, housing, and electricity (Masilo & Gershwin, 2020). However, rural municipalities continue to lag in these areas, with persistent challenges in delivering basic services such as water and sanitation (Sibanda, 2015; Masilo & Gershwin, 2020). In terms of community empowerment in most municipalities where participatory governance is taken seriously, communities have reported a greater sense of ownership over development projects. This has led to more sustainable outcomes and improved service delivery in some cases (Masilo & Gershwin, 2020). However, Swillilling and Annecke (2012) stated that economic growth has been uneven, benefiting formal sectors more than informal sectors, where many marginalized communities operate. According to Piertse (2014; Masilo & Gershwin, 2020) political instability and political dynamics, including frequent changes in leadership and administrative inefficiencies, have undermined the long-term planning efforts of many municipalities. Inconsistent leadership often leads to a lack of continuity in IDP implementation (Masipa, 2021).

## Conclusion

Majority of South African municipalities are usually acquiescent as far as IDP Programs are concerned. Nevertheless, since the attention is mostly on acquiescence, the true reimbursements of integrated development planning are infrequently comprehended. This is apparent from the Auditor General reports from some years, which show that most municipalities are still deteriorating despondently, in spite of conforming with the law with honor to integrated development planning. This deprived performance of municipalities is often attributed to an absence of volume, mainly leadership capacity, which poses staid trials to municipalities. Nevertheless, if municipalities do not commit to the whole alteration, integrated development will fail, in the same way that many other government initiatives have failed to indorse socio-economic expansion. The crucial hypothetical involvement of the study is that it advances the current body of acquaintance regarding integrated development planning, by proposing that IDP execution should be assessed from a balanced scorecard viewpoint. Presenting a balanced scorecard viewpoint of IDP seems essential to convert municipalities in South Africa from mostly unproductive and nonperforming entities to financially sound entities that accomplish their mandate of service delivery and socio-economic development. The present approach is evidently unproductive, and it is therefore recommended that municipalities should embrace sound value-adding business philosophies, to accomplish their command as set out in the Constitution (RSA, 1996). The study also recommends the need for municipalities to consider their existing organizational assemblies, in order to establish whether they are still pertinent.

To strengthen the discussion on municipal performance challenges, the analysis should include quantitative data such as budget allocations, service delivery rates, and municipal audit results. This data will provide concrete evidence of the challenges municipalities face and the impact on IDP implementation. For example, including statistics on the percentage of budgeted funds allocated to IDP projects, the number of households with access to basic services, or the outcomes of municipal audits (e.g., financial irregularities, compliance issues) can provide a more comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of municipal performance (Molale & Fourie, 2023).

The paper acknowledges the impact of political instability on IDP effectiveness, but it could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of how political and administrative leadership factors influence IDP outcomes. This could include examining the role of political will, leadership capacity, administrative competence, and institutional culture in shaping IDP implementation. For instance, analyzing how leadership changes affect IDP continuity, how administrative capacity influences project management, or how institutional culture fosters or hinders innovation and accountability can provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between leadership and IDP effectiveness. To improve the coherence and structure of the results section, consider organizing the findings into broader categories such as 'IDP Implementation Challenges' and 'Strategic Opportunities.' This will help to present the information in a more logical and accessible manner, making it easier for readers to grasp the key findings of the study. For example:

*IDP Implementation Challenges*

- i. Limited Community Engagement
- ii. Resource Constraints
- iii. Political Instability
- iv. Service Delivery Inefficiencies
- v. Persistent Inequality Strategic Opportunities:
- vi. Comprehensive Planning
- vii. Enhanced Community Participation
- viii. Alignment with National Policies
- ix. Accountability and Transparency

To enhance the practical implications of the study, specific policy recommendations should be added, including:

- i. Municipal staff training programs to enhance capacity and improve implementation skills.
- ii. Participatory governance enhancements to ensure meaningful community involvement in IDP processes.
- iii. Improved performance tracking systems to monitor progress, identify challenges, and ensure accountability.
- iv. Policy and Practical Implications

The study recommends that local governments shift towards a commercial line, to smooth socio-economic development. This is because the contemporary commercial tactic has moved from concentration on generating revenue to a concentration on making of worth and reimbursements for diverse sponsors, and, as such, administrative lineups and ventures must be established to accomplish this objective.

To provide more specific and actionable policy recommendations, the suggestion that municipalities adopt a more commercial approach needs further elaboration. This could include:

- i. Identifying specific financial models that municipalities could adopt, such as public-private partnerships, revenue diversification strategies, or commercialization of certain services.
- ii. Discussing how municipalities can balance commercial sustainability with their public service mandate, ensuring that essential services remain accessible and affordable to all residents.
- iii. Providing successful case studies of municipalities, either in South Africa or other countries that have effectively adopted commercial approaches to improve service delivery and socio-economic development. To provide a more structured approach to improving IDP implementation, consider proposing a comprehensive policy framework that includes:
- iv. Performance-based funding mechanisms to incentivize municipalities to achieve IDP targets and outcomes.
- v. Stronger municipal accountability structures to ensure transparency, prevent corruption, and promote good governance.
- vi. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure development to leverage private sector resources and expertise.

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