

# Fixing the Nexus between Intergovernmental Relations and Integrated Development Plans for Socio-Economic Development

## Case of South Africa

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The South African cooperative governmental system consists of three distinct, interdependent and interrelated spheres (local, provincial and national) of government. The collaboration, coordination and cooperation between them are facilitated by intergovernmental relations. Municipalities provide goods and services through the Integrated Development Plans system, whereas provincial and national governments focus on policies, coordination, technical support and funding. Through public administration research methodology based on literature and policy reviews, this article observes that provincial and national governments are not actively involved in municipalities' planning processes and are thus hampering service delivery. It argues that on its own, intergovernmental relations and the Integrated Development Plans have not facilitated service delivery. The article observes that incorporating the intergovernmental relations within the Integrated Development Planning system can facilitate effective service delivery. The article emphasises the importance of a participative type of governance to facilitate the involvement of the public and other local stakeholders. It then proposes a convergence intergovernmental relations model to facilitate direct and active participation by the local, provincial and national governments in integrated development planning, thus promoting and sustaining service delivery.*

## INTRODUCTION

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* sets out four requirements in section 41(1)(c) to facilitate service delivery through cooperative government (Layman 2003:10). These requirements are meant to support collaboration, coordination and cooperation between the local, the provincial and the national spheres of government through intergovernmental relations (IGR). However, research shows that IGR have not facilitated service delivery in South Africa. Edwards (2008:91) observes that the South African government is inefficient because its three spheres do not work together as one to attain the development goals. The delivery of goods and services happens in the local government sphere through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Yet, Edwards (2008:91) responds negatively to the question of whether IGR add value to the IDP in South Africa.

A report on IGR and service delivery as part of the ten-year review in 2003 observes that, in practice, there was little alignment between plans in the three spheres of government, resulting in national government's development agenda not filtering down to provincial and local governments, according to the then Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (2008:16). Some of the reasons are that national and provincial strategic planning, unlike municipal IDPs, do not have a spatial dimension; provincial growth and development strategies either do not exist, are outdated or do not take note of municipal and national plans; and national and provincial departments do not engage with municipalities regarding the content of their IDPs.

The then DPLG (2008:16) argues that the challenge was to create convergence in the parallel planning processes operating in the various spheres of government and to improve the quality of plans across government. This article emphasises the importance of a convergence IGR-IDP model that can facilitate service delivery.

The essence of IGR is to facilitate service delivery, and considering the current service delivery chaos, it can be argued that collaboration, coordination and cooperation between the three spheres of government do not happen. This lack of interaction has a negative impact on the IDP process and consequently on effective and efficient service delivery. Additionally, the extent to which the provincial and national governments participate in the IDP process is crucial in assessing the role of IGR in facilitating and sustaining service delivery.

This article analyses the current South African IGR system and its impact on the IDP process with regard to the effectiveness and efficiency of goods and services delivered by local government. It argues that the current IGR system does not facilitate the active participation of the provincial and national governments in the IDP process, rendering cooperative government ineffective and, consequently, service delivery unachievable. The article analyses the *raison d'être* of IGR and acknowledges its importance in creating a framework for a cooperative and participative government. It suggests a convergence IGR-IDP model, putting IGR at the centre of the IDP process.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article makes use of a public administration research methodology. Public administration research analyses how public institutions (and public policies) can influence a better future (Box 2005). Henry (2007) emphasises that public administration facilitates the understanding



of the government and its relations with the people it governs as well as how it develops and manages policies that respond to the needs of those people. Assessing the link between IGR and the IDP process and their importance in facilitating service delivery is, therefore, an important public administration research subject. Aligning IGR with the IDP process in order to facilitate and sustain cooperative government and, consequently, service delivery is thus an outcome of public administration research that aims to improve people's living conditions.

This research was done in three of the stages promoted by Perry and Kraemer (1986:216). The first stage consists of the problem delineation. The point of departure of this stage was that service delivery remains a major social problem as many South Africans depend on public goods and services that are supposed to be delivered by the government. The second stage consists of variable identification, through which the researchers discuss factors that hamper the delivery of services and argue that IGR and IDPs seem to exist in isolation, not facilitating service delivery. The researchers therefore analysed IGR and the IDP process and assessed their implication on service delivery. The third stage is the manipulation of causal variables and consists of analysing how IGR could be integrated into the IDP process in order to facilitate cooperative government and, consequently, effective service delivery. Through a modelling technique, the outcome of the three stages is the convergence IGR-IDP model.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The term *intergovernmental relations* (IGR) originated in the United States of America in the 1930s, but it remains a relatively obscure and poorly understood phrase (Wright 1988). It was introduced as a government policy to combat the economic and social chaos during America's Great Depression. From the 1930s to the present, IGR research and practice have been motivated by a strong concern for the effective delivery of public services to clients (Wright 1988:13). The same motivation has prompted the post-apartheid South African government to implement IGR. For Layman (2003), the goal of the post-1994 government is, *inter alia*, to redress inequality and extend services to all. In 1998, then Minister of the Department of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs (DCDPA), Mr Moosa, declared that important strategic policy issues critical to the success of government permeate IGR, and IGR structures make decisions that are critical to the effectiveness with which government can deliver services to the public (DCDPA 1998).

IGR emanate from the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (subsequently referred to as the Constitution) and is organised through the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998*, the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000* and the *Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005*. These pieces of legislation are briefly discussed below.

### **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996**

Section 41 of the Constitution establishes the principles of cooperative government and intergovernmental relations. Section 41(1) stipulates: "All spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must", amongst other things:

- secure the well-being of the people of the Republic

- provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the Republic as a whole;
- respect the constitutional status, institutions, powers and functions of government in the other spheres;
- not assume any power or function except those conferred on them in terms of the Constitution;
- exercise their powers and perform their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government in another sphere;
- cooperate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by fostering friendly relations;
- assisting and supporting one another;
- informing one another of and consulting one another on matters of common interest; coordinating their actions and legislation with one another
- adhering to agreed procedures; and
- avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

## **Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998**

The Municipal Structures Act, 1998 provides for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipality. It establishes criteria for determining the category of municipality to be established in an area, and it defines the types of municipality that may be established within each category. The Act provides for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipality and regulates the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities.

## **The Municipal Systems Act, 2000**

This Municipal Systems Act, 2000 sets out detailed requirements in relation to community participation, integrated development planning, performance management, administration, service provision and debt collection. It also regulates the publication of by-laws and determines the roles of national and provincial government in setting standards and monitoring local government. In addition, the Act governs the assignment of functions to a municipality from another sphere of government.

The two acts discussed above clarify Section 152 of the Constitution, which deals with the “objects of local government”. The objects of local governments consisting of municipalities are to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment; and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

## **Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005**

Section 41(2) of the Constitution stipulates: “An Act of Parliament must establish or provide for structures and institutions to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations; and provide for appropriate mechanisms and procedures to facilitate settlement of intergovernmental disputes”.



In 2005, the *Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005* was passed to ensure that the principles of cooperative government, as stipulated in the above-mentioned section of the Constitution, were effected. The Act provides a framework for the establishment of intergovernmental forums. It sets up mechanisms to coordinate the work of all spheres of government in providing services, alleviating poverty and promoting development. It also establishes a line of communication from municipalities (local government) to provinces (provincial government) and to the Presidency (national government).

IGR reflect a top-down approach in South Africa. The development agenda is set at national level during the cabinet *Lekgotla* before being passed down to the directors- general and provinces for the development of definite provincial priorities and plans, which are then sent to municipalities. Such an arrangement is contrary to the IDP process, which should depend on the participation of local communities and stakeholders. If the essence of IGR is to facilitate the development efforts of municipalities, taking into account the contribution of the provincial and national governments, then a bottom-up IGR approach could be appropriate, as suggested in the convergence IGR-IDP model.

## **INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

According to the former DPLG (2000:14), the IDP is a device used by municipalities to improve the quality of people's lives through the formulation of integrated and sustainable projects and programmes. It is a platform aimed at facilitating community ownership within a municipal area by drawing in stakeholders and coordinating the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to address the needs of the people. The IDP guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making processes in a municipality (DPLG 2000). Through the IDP, municipalities identify their key development priorities; formulate a clear vision, mission and values; develop appropriate organisational structures and systems to realise the vision and mission; formulate appropriate strategies; and align resources with the development priorities.

The delivery of goods and services by municipalities through IDPs has been the subject of various research projects and critical assessments outside and within government. Most of the feedback from these sources has been negative. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:372) express regret that IDPs, which are considered to be local development planning tools to help local municipalities develop a comprehensive and long-term plan to advance development and services, have not adequately served their developmental functions. These authors identify three main reasons for this failure. *Firstly*, the non-participation of communities and local stakeholders means that IDPs are not true reflections of community needs and priorities. *Secondly*, the poor interdepartmental cooperation and lack of horizontal integration (IGR in the case of this article), as well as a shortage of the right skills and capacity, have also undermined effective implementation of IDPs and have contributed to the declining service delivery. *Finally*, active participation of sector departments in planning and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of development activities, will have a significant impact on improving the spirit of collaboration, coordination and cooperation (Madzivhandila and Asha 2012:373).

According to the former DPLG (2008:23), the 2004 Gauteng Provincial Government Report on IDPs highlighted many factors hampering the effectiveness of the IDP process and, subsequently, service delivery. The following are of interest:

- There is no coordination between the actions of the provincial departments and those of the structures within the municipalities.
- There is no common understanding between provinces and municipalities.
- The strategic guidance on key provincial directions to municipalities is limited.
- Municipalities have difficulties in gaining access to and information on provincial plans, policies, budget allocations and strategies.
- Previous hierarchical relations between spheres of government are perpetuated.
- There is a lack of formalised structures or processes to ensure meaningful provincial and national engagements in the preparation of IDPs.

These factors are observed in most municipalities, as demonstrated by the on-going service delivery protests throughout the country. It is therefore reasonable to argue that IGR have not assisted the IDP machinery in delivering services. Thus, an IGR-centred IDP system is suggested.

## **NEXUS BETWEEN IGR AND THE IDP SYSTEM AND IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY**

The success of the planning and implementation of IDPs depend on the collaboration, coordination and cooperation and the full active participation of the three spheres of government, as well as on the direct involvement of the public and other local stakeholders. The type of government that facilitates the participation of the public and other local stakeholders, on the one hand, and an IGR model that facilitates the direct and active participation of the local, provincial and national governments, on the other hand, are the major catalysts of proper planning and successful implementation of IDPs that improve and sustain service delivery.

## **THE PARTICIPATORY STATE**

In a positive relationship between IGR and the IDP process, a type of governance should be considered that facilitates the participation of the public and other local stakeholders. The participatory state type of governance advocated by Peters (1996) is appropriate in facilitating public participation in the IDP process from the management, policymaking and public interest point of view. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:370) argue that for IDPs to be effective in service delivery in South Africa, community participation should take centre stage in order for people to identify their most urgent needs and prioritise those needs. For Peters (1996), participative government challenges hierarchy and empowers employees and citizens, thus facilitating the delivery of services by the government.

The basic premise is that government organisations will function better if the lower levels of the organisations, and perhaps the clients of the organisations, are included more



directly in managerial decisions (Peters 1996:63). As a principal government organisation, municipalities need to involve social interests in governance. Social interests are, therefore, better represented by the public as well as other local stakeholders within the municipality, as advocated by the IDP itself.

With regard to policymaking, Peters (1996:64) argues that the participatory state facilitates decisions crucial to the citizens' claims for services as well as their perceptions of government. For example, in the case of the IDP system, the interest of the public is paramount and the participation of the population critical. Peters (1996) further argues that participation may make government more popular with clients (population), if not necessarily more efficient in delivering services.

A participatory state assumes that the public interest is served (Peters 1996). In South Africa, municipalities play a crucial role in service delivery to fulfil the developmental orientation (Edwards 2008). It is therefore critical that this noble role of municipalities be respected and implemented in order to ensure that the interests of the public and other local stakeholders are served. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:369) argue that in many countries, service delivery is being decentralised to the municipal spheres/levels of government in order to promote and enable local socio-economic development and to facilitate community participation.

The South African government is aware of the need for a participatory government. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:371) agree that, in line with the participatory approach to development, the national government has mandated the local sphere to plan and implement the provision of various basic services.

## **THE CONVERGENCE IGR-IDP MODEL**

A participatory state type of government, as explained above, can facilitate the involvement of the public and other local stakeholders in the IDP process. The second precondition for successful IDP planning and implementation is an appropriate IGR system that facilitates collaboration, coordination and cooperation. In the case of South Africa and considering the importance of the IDP in service delivery, a convergence IGR-IDP model is applicable because it can allow and practically facilitate interdependence among the three spheres of government. Such a system should be based on formal structures for collaboration, coordination and cooperation between the local, provincial and national governments with regard to their respective mandates, roles and responsibilities.

The overlapping-authority IGR model developed by Wright (1998) is relevant in fostering service delivery in South Africa and informs the convergence IGR-IDP model. The latter model is based on the principle that an effective and efficient IDP should be the result of the convergence of planning and actions between the national, provincial and local governments. The model produces three different relationships among the three spheres of government and one special relationship in which the three spheres converge to address issues regarding the IDP.

Analysing IGR concepts and models, Wright (1988:49) argues that hierarchy prevails in the inclusive-authority IGR model, whereas the national and state (provincial in the case of South Africa) governments are equal and autonomous in the coordinate-authority IGR

model. According to the author, these two models inadequately and inaccurately describe how the governmental operations are conducted. He advocates for the overlapping-authority IGR model for three reasons that are valid in the case of promoting the participation of all three spheres of government in the IDP process in South Africa. *Firstly*, substantial areas of governmental operations simultaneously involve national, provincial and local governments. In South Africa, IGR are based on the very same principle of collaboration, coordination and cooperation between the national, provincial and local governments. *Secondly*, the areas of autonomy or single-jurisdiction independence and full discretion are comparatively small. In South Africa, the Constitution, 1996 and other relevant policies determine the responsibilities of each sphere of government. This type of IGR is relevant in facilitating discussions and agreements on roles and responsibilities during the IDP planning process. *Thirdly*, the power and influence available to any of the spheres is significantly limited by this type of IGR. Wright argues that the limits produce an authority pattern best described as bargaining (1998:49).

### **Local-provincial interactions**

Interactions between the local and provincial governments are important in the IDP process. They clarify how the provincial priorities are made, using plans from individual municipalities as well as from the areas of autonomy and those of full discretion. The needs expressed by the public and other local stakeholders must form part of the local plans to be integrated into the provincial priorities.

### **Provincial-National Relations**

The relations between the provincial and national governments include what Wright refers to as the implementation of deregulation, devolution, decrementalism and decongestion. These functions are crucial, not only in determining the roles and responsibilities with regard to the IDP process, but most importantly in constituting the national development agenda using specific provincial priorities that are informed by municipal plans. The functions for each sphere of government need to be agreed upon at this stage in order to prevent conflict.

### **Local-National Bargaining**

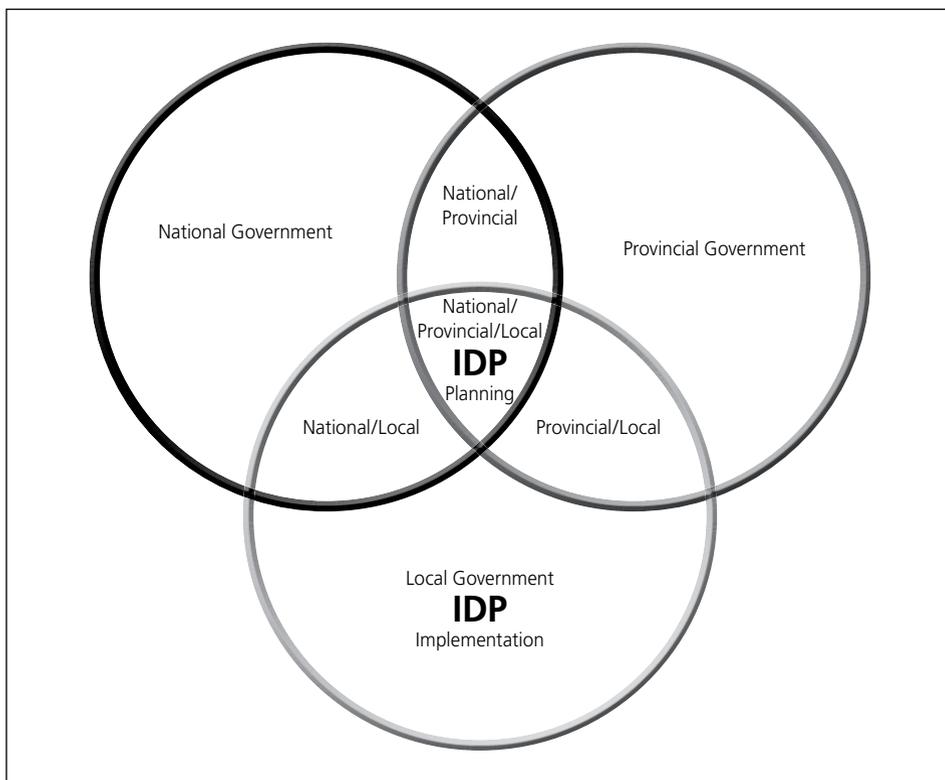
Bargaining between the local and national governments can involve some areas in which national government has full discretion and that are crucial to the IDP process of a particular municipality. Bargaining can, therefore, include a punctual delegation of responsibilities to a municipality on issues pertaining to the prerogatives of the national government.

### **Convergence of local, provincial and national governments**

The fourth and most important relationship is the convergence among the local, provincial and national governments. Through this relationship of interdependence, all issues pertaining to the development of a municipality are tabled in a manner ensuring that all dimensions are covered in order to equip the municipality with appropriate possibilities and resources



**Figure 1: The convergence IGR-IDP model**



(adapted from Wright 1998:40)

to plan for and deliver effective services to its public and other local stakeholders. The convergence IGR-IDP model is depicted in Figure 1.

## **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH**

The success of the IDP process in service delivery depends heavily on IGR as demonstrated in this article. However, the practical application of the suggested convergence IGR-IDP model within the IDP process is not an easy task. This discussion acknowledges that there are various factors, besides the alignment of IGR within the IDP process, that have hampered service delivery. Some of these factors are important and need to be addressed, although they fall outside the scope of this article. They include details of structures and coordination mechanisms for each relationship within the convergence IGR-IDP model, the intricacy of both IGR and the IDP process (or oneness in separateness); skills and capacity shortages (especially in the local government sphere); development planning instruments not being the same in the three spheres of government; and the misalignments of budget cycles (1 July to 30 June for municipalities and 1 April to 30 March for provincial and national governments). These and other limiting factors not mentioned here need particular attention in terms of research and development in order to promote service through an IDP system based on IGR.

## CONCLUSION

In South Africa, service delivery protests demonstrate that IDPs have failed drastically in delivering services in the local government sphere. Similarly, IGR, which could have facilitated the direct involvement of all three spheres of government in the planning, prioritisation and implementation of service delivery plans at local government level, have also proven to be ineffective. Hence, it can be argued that IGR have not added any value to the IDP process, just as the IDP process does not directly emanate from IGR. This means that expecting the current IGR to facilitate service delivery through the IDP process is erroneous as the two are not complementary in their current implementation formats.

This article argues that incorporating IGR within the IDP process can strengthen the planning and implementation of service delivery at local government level. The convergence IGR-IDP model takes into account the bottom-up approach in which the sum of the plans of local governments constitutes the priorities of provincial governments, to which provincial priorities are added to make up the national development agenda.

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