
JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

THEME: TOPICS IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

Concept Note

The Centre for Local Economic Development (CENLED) is celebrating its 10th year since it was founded in 2008. As part of this celebration a special issue of the Journal of Public Administration (JOPA) focussing on topics in Local Economic Development will be published. The journal is accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

It is generally believed that municipalities are the foot-soldiers of local economic development (LED). However, this seems to be a myth as municipalities in South Africa have not yet fulfilled this mandate and have been struggling for several years to implement LED initiatives (Davids, 2007:3). Communities have become frustrated about the lack of LED and service delivery protests form part of our daily lives (Nashira Davids: 2012). It is evident that municipalities fail in LED partially because of a lack of expertise and partially due to the lack of a suitable organisational arrangements to promote and undertake LED in a municipal area (Rabie, 2011:6).

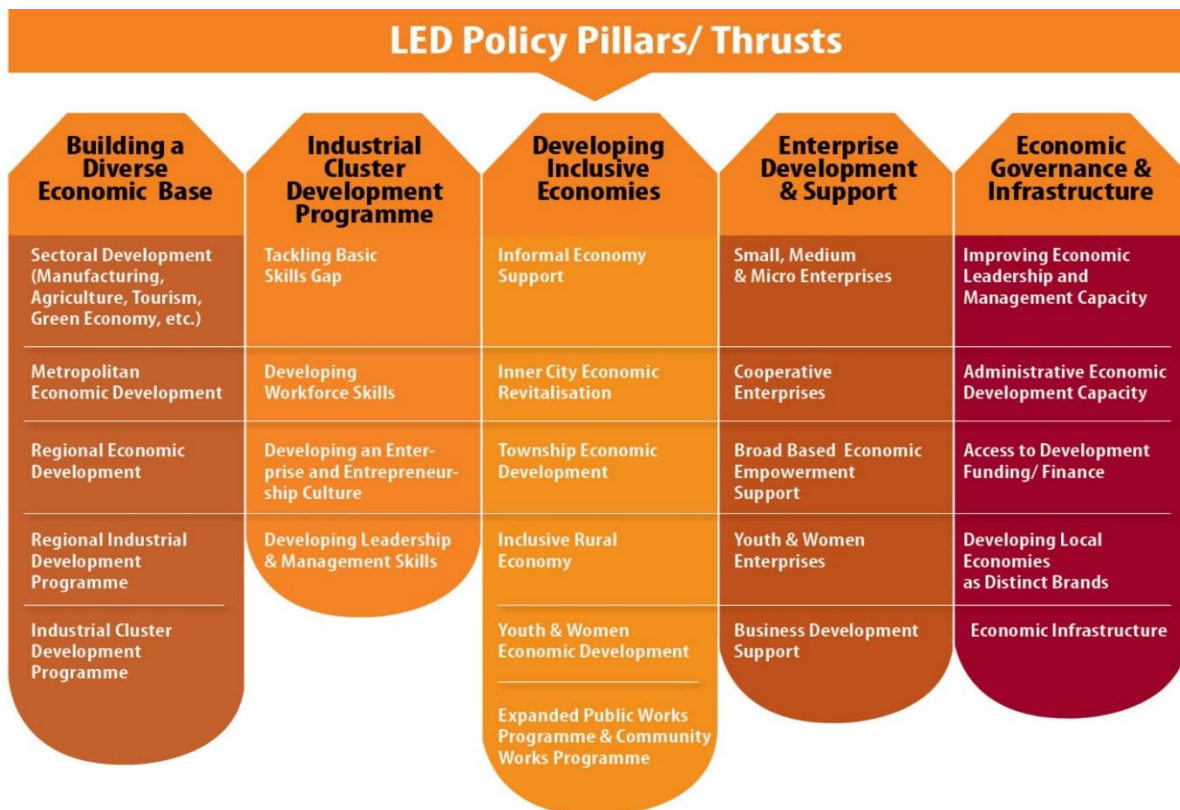
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 specifies in sections 152 and 153 that municipalities must be structured in such a way that one of their objectives is to promote social and economic development (Rabie, 2011:5). Calitz refers to the restructuring of the public sector that took place after 1994 to introduce the development function of government (Black, Calitz & Steenekamp, 2005: 5). The White Paper on Local Government (1998) introduced the concept of LED as part of the term 'developmental local government', defining it as: "Local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to

meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve the quality of their lives” (Patterson, 2008:7). According to the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA, 2012:4) LED can make a unique contribution to national development through the effective implementation of government’s economic policy at the local level, and the importance of LED is characterised by the fact that it is at the local level where all economic activity takes place and jobs are created.

There are various definitions of LED but for the purpose of this note the definition of Swinburn, Goga & Murphy (2006: 1) was refined: “LED occurs when a community consciously decides to improve the economy of the area where they live, by getting all stakeholders such as the public, private and non-governmental sector in that specific area to work together using their local assets in a manner that it creates decent jobs which will improve local living conditions ensuring a sustainable economic future”.

In 2013, The New Local Economic Development Framework was introduced. As a Framework, the focus is on creating a common shared understanding of global and national economic challenges facing South Africa as well as strategic LED challenges. The successful implementation of the Framework depends on the full participation of all LED role-players: government, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions, and others. The core pillars are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: LED Core Pillars



Source: *The National Framework for Local Economic Development 2014-2019*, p. A 18

The objectives of the LED Framework are:

- To shift towards a more strategic approach to the development of local economies and overcome challenges and failures in respect of instances where municipalities themselves try to manage litany of non-viable projects or start-ups.
- To support local economies in realising their optimal potentials and making local communities active participants in the economy of the country.
- To elevate the importance and centrality of effectively functioning local economies in growing the national economy.
- To wage the national fight against poverty more effectively through local level debates, strategies and actions.
- To improve community access to economic initiatives, support programmes and information.
- To improve the coordination of economic development planning and implementation across government and between government and non-governmental actors.

- To build greater awareness about the importance and role of localities and regions which globally are playing an increasingly significant role as points of investment, facilitated by supportive national policies.

South Africa's Vision in terms of the Framework is that local economies should be inclusive, world-class and dynamic places and brands in which to invest, work, learn, visit and live; and the most successful in creating wealth that is widely shared and benefiting the majority of its local people.

The following are examples of topics that have been identified in terms of the new National Framework for LED that this special issue, will inter alia want to contain:

- Sector Support Programmes: focussing on the Industrial Policy Action Plan and the National Development Plan prioritised sectors;
- Industrial Clustering;
- Tackling the basic skills gaps: to address low levels of basic skills in partnership with educational institutions and sector education and training authorities;
- Development of Workforce Skills: to deal with the need for up-skilling or reskilling existing workforce in light of the advances, transformation and restructuring that the economy is going through,
- Enterprise and Entrepreneurship development, including incubation, women empowerment,
- Economic inclusion of all communities,
- The Informal Economy,
- Inner City Economic Revitalisation,
- Public investment in infrastructure,
- The Township Economy,
- An inclusive and integrated rural economy,
- Youth Economic Empowerment,
- Sustainable Development Goals and LED,
- Professionalisation of the careers of persons working in LED.

Important dates:

1. Closing date for full article submissions: 31 August 2019
2. Acceptance/ Rejection date: 20 September 2019
3. Publishing date: December 2019

Send your submissions at: mventer@uj.ac.za

