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Assessment of the Integrated District Development Model in South Africa With Reference to the Eastern Cape: A Design Perspective

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This study investigated and assessed the design of the Integrated District Development Model (IDDM) in South Africa with specific reference to the Eastern Cape Province in order to catalyse the provision of government services. In spite of the existing legislative development frameworks and the established spheres of government, district municipalities continue to be faced with socio-economic development challenges due to a lack of integration in respect to the planning and implementation of governmental programmes. As a catalyst for improved integration and coordination at a district level, in 2019 the President of the Republic of South Africa introduced the Integrated District Development Model (IDDM), with the OR Tambo District Municipality forming one of the DDM pilot sites.

This study deals with how the provincial government departments and municipalities functioning within the local government sphere are collaborating through the Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) platform in a bid to confront the various under-development and service delivery challenges manifesting at the municipal level. The aim of the model is to bridge the coordination and integration gap between all spheres of government, and to ensure the structured integration of development resources for the improved advancement of sustainable development and provision of services. In line with this model's aim, the Eastern Cape Provincial Government has been assigned the unique obligation of ensuring the successful implementation of the IDDM (also sometimes referred to as the District Development Model [DDM]) in the development of the OR Tambo District Municipality 'One Plan and One Budget' – all of which are aimed at realising IDDM objectives.

Keywords: Integrated development, District development, Developmental local government, Socio-economic development, Service delivery, Effectiveness and efficiency.

Introduction

The pattern of operating in silos is a challenge which has led to lack of coherence in planning and implementation and has made monitoring and oversight of the government's programme difficult. (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2019)

This study examines the design of the Integrated District Development Model (IDDM) in regard to facilitating integrated governmental planning and the delivery of government

services at the district municipal level. The disintegration in planning and coordination of governmental service provision programmes manifests in various forms, such as widening of the inequality gap, unemployment, and poverty that in turn negatively affect ordinary citizens (Republic of South Africa, 2019). Access to services is not a privilege but a right and it should, therefore, be regarded as a constitutional obligation on the part of the government to ensure that all its spheres provide services to all citizens.

The Eastern Cape Province has 39 municipalities, which are categorised into six districts, two metropolitans, and 33 local municipalities. In terms of section 40(1) of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), government is recognised as national, provincial, and local spheres of government. The Constitution further confirms the interrelatedness, distinctiveness, and interdependency of all three spheres of Government. The OR Tambo District Municipality (ORTDM) is located in the local governmental sphere and forms one of the municipalities classified as 'rural', owing to its geographical environment and high infrastructure backlog, which make it difficult to correct the 'non-vibrancy' of local economies. Improving the local economy in the district would necessarily lead to sustainable local economic development (LED) which could, in turn, respond effectively to local communities' social and economic needs (Freud, 2014).

The ORTDM is one of the district municipalities confronted by immense challenges associated with infrastructure development backlogs, under-development, inadequate services delivery, unemployment, and poverty (Eastern Cape Province, 2014). In recent years, the municipality has also been faced with serious political instability, which has led to the invocation of section 139(1)(c) of the Constitution after the section 154 support that was initially given to the municipality. Despite these forms of intervention and support, the municipality continues to report deficiencies, particularly in relation to the implementation of infrastructure development programmes that are meant to contribute to the acceleration of LED and service delivery (Nkohla, 2021).

The IDDM endeavours to use the existing legal frameworks and executive machinery, which incorporates the Intergovernmental Government Relations [IGR] Framework Act (13 of 2005) that stipulates that the Minister responsible for cooperative governance create "a framework for coordinating and aligning development priorities and objectives between the three spheres of government" as well as for the development of "indicators for monitoring and evaluating" the execution of the established framework.

According to President Cyril Ramaphosa, this plan could change the "pattern of operating in silos" that has to date led "to [a] lack of coherence in planning and implementation and has made monitoring and oversight of government's programme difficult" (National State of Address, 2019).

Per the Constitution, both the national and provincial governments are mandated to strategically coordinate and facilitate IGR throughout the governmental system in order to provide the most needed public services to communities. Apart from the three