

# District Development Model as a Panacea to Poor Performance in Local Government Municipalities in South Africa



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## ABSTRACT

An examination of the District Development Model (DDM) aims to assess how the cooperative governance framework in South Africa can integrate and be coordinated to operate collaboratively and enhance service delivery at local and district levels. Subpar performance in South African local government persistently undermines the nation's socioeconomic progress, prompting the creation of the District Development Model to enhance the attainment of public sector service delivery goals. The study employed a qualitative research approach, including literature review and document analysis. The findings indicated that the District Development Model can enhance and fulfil the objectives of Section 153 of the South African Constitution by delivering quality basic services sustainably and fostering socio-economic development through the engagement of business stakeholders and communities. Various communities ought to assume ownership of public involvement procedures within local municipal frameworks to exercise supervision and ensure accountability of local government officials in enhancing the quality of public services. The District Development Model aims to implement a change management strategy that institutionalizes effective monitoring, evaluation, and consequence management in instances of evident poor performance and mismanagement by accounting officers and officials in local government municipalities.

*Keywords: District Development Model, Panacea, Poor Performance, Local Government, Service Delivery.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Masters indicates that South Africa's policy reform and development process commenced between 1993 and 2000.<sup>1</sup> The democratic framework initiated the transition to democratic changes. This allowed citizens to actively participate in the formulation of diverse legislations, proclamations, white papers, and municipal regulations presented for action from 1994 to 1999. Numerous legislative advancements have directly impacted district growth.<sup>2</sup> South Africans persistently experience inadequate service delivery from local government authorities. This occurs notwithstanding the elevated municipal rates and taxes that individuals remit. Chapter 4 of the Constitution delineates the principles of cooperative governance, urging all spheres and organs of state to "secure the well-being of the people of the Republic; and provide

<sup>1</sup> D.M. Masters, "RDP, GEAR, and ASGISA," 2019, <https://hiredspace.wits.ac.za>.

<sup>2</sup> S. B. Koma, "Issues, Trends, and Alternatives in Developmental Local Government in South Africa," *African Journal of Public Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2012): 108.

effective, transparent, accountable, and coherent government for the Republic as a whole"<sup>3</sup> The Constitution assigns developmental responsibilities to local government in section 153, mandating that local governments: “provide democratic and accountable governance for local communities; ensure sustainable service provision to communities; promote social and economic development; and foster a safe and healthy environment.” Promote the engagement of communities and community organizations in local government affairs.”<sup>4</sup> The Constitution mandates national and provincial governments to collaborate with local government in enhancing cooperative governance: Section 154 states, “The national government and provincial government, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions.”<sup>5</sup>

It is essential to examine the implementation of the District Development Model to foster synergy and coordination among the three tiers of government—national, provincial, and local—to enhance service delivery quality in alignment with the National Development Plan's objective of establishing a capable state.<sup>6</sup> The National Planning Commission recognizes the ineffective utilization of public resources and the insufficient awareness among political and public officials at municipalities to connect their performance activities with South Africa's developmental objectives. The failure to deliver quality services that are sufficient, equitable, unbiased, and responsive to citizens' needs constitutes a significant challenge that must be confronted. Masiya et.al. delineate various factors that impede performance: an unsupportive institutional milieu, detrimental power conflicts, excessive regulation, political meddling, a strained and bureaucratic atmosphere, inadequate management systems, absence of a culture of excellence, suboptimal skill utilization, ineffective oversight mechanisms, limited capacity for collaboration, and a deficit of trust among councillors from disparate political factions.<sup>7</sup> The identified difficulties cannot be addressed by a singular intervention. The causes contributing to the poor performance of municipalities are more extensive than they appear. The primary inquiry persists: "Can the district development model serve as a remedy for inadequate performance?" The district development is anticipated to be overseen and implemented by the same personnel responsible for the shortcomings of prior service delivery models. This paper addresses the following components: Introduction, Background on the District Development Model, Literature Review, the rationale for the District Development Model, research methodology, the District Development Model as a Catalyst, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

## METHODOLOGY

The study process comprised a review of literature and documents. A literature review was done to elucidate how the district development model might improve performance in local government municipalities. Essential documents were examined to address the research inquiries. The documents provide progress reports. The report encompassed the Steering Committee report issued by the Presidency for 2021. The literature review entailed a comprehensive examination and assessment of pertinent materials due to their validity and relevance to subpar performance and the district development model. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify themes from the examined literature.<sup>8</sup>

## Overview of the district development paradigm in South Africa

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation developed the Local Government Management Improvement Model (LGMIM) to support and improve the performance of municipalities from 2014 to 2019. The second objective for implementation of the LGMIM was to strengthen the National Development plan chapter on a Capable and Developmental State that is aimed at a developmental local

<sup>3</sup> South Africa, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No 108 of 1996* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> South Africa, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No 108 of 1996*.

<sup>5</sup> South Africa, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No 108 of 1996*.

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Commission, *National Development Plan 2030: Actualize Our Future* (Pretoria: National Planning Commission, 2012); C. Ramaphosa, “President Cyril Ramaphosa: State of the Nation Address 2019,” *South African Government Newsroom*, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable>.

<sup>7</sup> T. Masiya, Y. Davids, and M. Mangai, “Determinants Influencing the Efficacy of Municipal Authorities in South Africa: Viewpoints of Stakeholders,” *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* 25 (2021): 97–115.

<sup>8</sup> J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2014).

state that is accountable, focused on citizens' priorities and capable of delivering high-quality services.<sup>9</sup> LGMIM was found to be ineffective, and of great concern was the issue of sector plans not being updated and formally approved for implementation. This challenge had negative implications for how well municipalities can do realistic forward planning and budgeting for service delivery. The gaps in LGMIM necessitated the development and implementation of the District Development Model.

The District Development Model was inaugurated by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa during the 2019 State of the Nation Address.<sup>10</sup> The President recognized the siloed operational structure as a challenge, resulting in a deficiency of coherence in planning and implementation, hence complicating the monitoring and oversight of government programs. The absence of systematic planning among governmental institutions hinders the efficient implementation of the government's goals and programs at national, provincial, and local levels.<sup>11</sup> The result has been suboptimal service delivery and reduced effectiveness in addressing the trifecta of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. The District Development Model (DDM) is an innovative, integrated district-centric strategy aimed at tackling service delivery issues through localized procurement and job creation that foster and sustain local enterprises while engaging local populations. It advocates for a unified district approach encompassing a singular plan and budget.<sup>12</sup>

The District Development Model seeks to expedite, harmonize, and consolidate service delivery through a unified development plan for each district or metropolitan area, collaboratively formulated by national, provincial, and local governments, alongside business, labour, and community stakeholders within each district.<sup>13</sup> It additionally guarantees that national issues, including economic growth, jobs, and improvements to living standards, are addressed. Mashapha asserts that it is imperative to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty, with towns playing a pivotal role in achieving these objectives.<sup>14</sup> The local area addresses the struggle against crime and corruption, as well as the improvement of educational performance. Von Holt cautions that inadequate governance and corruption provide further obstacles to municipalities in delivering sufficient services.<sup>15</sup>

The District Development Model is significant in South Africa's developmental trajectory as it unites various institutions and societal sectors, including political leaders, government officials, citizens, and businesses, to collaborate systematically and enhance their service delivery performance. Nonetheless, it is challenging to ensure the success of the District Development Model in contrast to previous strategic plans and development frameworks, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), which have faltered due to insufficient political will for implementation and a deficiency in professional skills among government officials, hindering the cultivation of a professional work ethic and a culture of accountability.<sup>16</sup> This district development strategy guarantees the integration and alignment of planning and expenditure across the three tiers of government, ensuring that each district or metropolitan plan is formulated with community interests and input prioritized from the outset. DDM entails shifting to a framework that prioritizes the development of more functional, liveable, and economically sustainable villages, towns, and cities, rather than merely concentrating on the provision of outputs like housing, educational institutions, and municipal services.

<sup>9</sup> Monitoring, and Evaluation Local Government Management Improvement Model (LGMIM) Department of Planning, *Key Performance Area 2: Service Delivery 2014 TO 2019* (Pretoria: Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, 2019).

<sup>10</sup> Ramaphosa, "President Cyril Ramaphosa: State of the Nation Address 2019."

<sup>11</sup> *Overview of the District Development Model - A Framework for Collaborative Service Delivery* (Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020).1.

<sup>12</sup> Ramaphosa, "President Cyril Ramaphosa: State of the Nation Address 2019."

<sup>13</sup> Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, *Presentation Regarding the District Development Model and Associated Service Delivery Challenges before the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water, and Sanitation* (Pretoria: Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020); Monitoring, and Evaluation Department of Planning, *Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2020-2024* (Pretoria: Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> M. C. Mashapha, "The Execution of the Destitute Policy in the City of Tshwane: Challenges and Alternatives" (North-West University, 2015).13.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Von Holdt, "The South African Post-Apartheid Bureaucracy: Inner Workings, Contradictory Rationales and the Developmental State," *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges* 2010 (2010): 239.

<sup>16</sup> R. Hausmann, "Conclusive Recommendation from the International Panel about ASGISA," *CID Working Paper Number 161* (Harvard: Center for International Development at Harvard University, 2008); Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development: The Government's Strategy for Comprehensive Change* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1994).

## DISCUSSION

Khambule contends that the district development model emerged due to the nation's inability to realize the objectives of a competent developmental state, attributed to significant capacity gaps within the local government system.<sup>17</sup> South Africa, as a nation, is marked by its inability to effectively provide social and economic development services to the millions of citizens suffering from poverty and unemployment. Despite the national and provincial governments possessing strong capabilities, the local government sector is weak and underperforming due to an intrinsic inability to plan, coordinate, and achieve developmental outcomes. Khambule asserts that the District Development Model (DDM) aims to establish the necessary capacity at the district municipal level to coordinate and deliver social and economic development results.<sup>18</sup>

The former Member of Executive Council of Cooperative Governance in Gauteng, Maile, asserts that “the future is the district development model, as cities are the epicentres of humanity’s most significant contemporary challenges, yet also the engines from which solutions arise.”<sup>19</sup> The Department of Science and Technology asserts that the DDM creates an environment conducive to economic advancement and innovation-centric district revitalization through an inclusive policy framework, fostering discourse that integrates state and district development programs, all driven by innovation.<sup>20</sup> The model is considered a framework for executing the Decadal Plan to facilitate economic development and recovery.

Koma asserts that the towns established during the transitional phase faced a multitude of intricate challenges.<sup>21</sup> Numerous issues stem from addressing the legacy of apartheid, characterized by segregated and inequitable development, as well as inadequate services for the disenfranchised black population. Most towns have encountered various issues related to their administrative personnel to varying degrees. Numerous communities have indicated a deficiency in abilities due to the departure of several adept and seasoned municipal managers from council positions. These towns have encountered persons who have become Ward Councillors despite lacking any prior employment experience. These individuals are responsible for approving plans at the Council for implementation. Andrews et.al. assert that performance is a result of organizational decisions rather than external factors.<sup>22</sup> This indicates that mismanagement, rather than tragedy, is the principal cause of failure in public service. Masiya et.al. caution that inadequate performance by municipal authorities adversely affects municipal service delivery.<sup>23</sup> Makole agrees with Masiya et al. that significant deficiencies in the performance of local and district municipalities stem from the appointment of unqualified municipal and financial managers who lack essential professional understanding of their constitutional and legislative responsibilities to ensure quality basic service delivery within local government and to maintain operational and managerial coherence and synergy.<sup>24</sup>

Mpehle performed an exploratory study across various provinces (KZN, Gauteng, and North-West) from 2009 to 2010, comprising 180 municipal service users, to assess the justifiability of service delivery protests in democratic South Africa.<sup>25</sup> The customers of municipal services expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of municipal operations.<sup>26</sup> This encompasses the appointment of unskilled, unqualified, and inexperienced individuals to municipal management roles, the accumulation of wealth by politicians' associates, insufficient revenue due to centralized funding, and the lack of

<sup>17</sup> I. Khambule, “The District Development Model: Advancing a Competent Developmental State in South Africa,” *Journal of Public Administration* 53, no. 6 (2021).

<sup>18</sup> Khambule, “The District Development Model: Advancing a Competent Developmental State in South Africa.”

<sup>19</sup> L. Maile, “The Future Lies in the District Development Paradigm,” 2021, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2021-11-09>.

<sup>20</sup> Republic of South Africa, “Department of Science and Technology,” *DSI’s District Development Model Strategy & Initiatives*, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Koma, “Issues, Trends, and Alternatives in Developmental Local Government in South Africa.”

<sup>22</sup> Rhys Andrews, George A Boyne, and Gareth Enticott, “Performance Failure in the Public Sector: Misfortune or Mismanagement?,” *Public Management Review* 8, no. 2 (2006): 273–96.

<sup>23</sup> Masiya, Davids, and Mangai, “Determinants Influencing the Efficacy of Municipal Authorities in South Africa: Viewpoints of Stakeholders.”

<sup>24</sup> K. R. Makole, “From Cadre Deployment to the Professionalization of Public Service in South Africa: A Reflective Approach to Enhancing Service Delivery,” *African Journal of Development Studies, Special Issue*, 2022, 21–38.

<sup>25</sup> Z. Mpehle, “Are Service Delivery Protests Warranted in Democratic South Africa,” *Journal of Public Administration* 47, no. 1 (2012): 213–27, [www.engineeringnews.co.za](http://www.engineeringnews.co.za).

<sup>26</sup> Mpehle, “Are Service Delivery Protests Warranted in Democratic South Africa.”

effective revenue collection systems by municipalities, all of which have adversely affected municipal operations.

Lodi underscores that the strategy aims to enhance collaboration across the three levels of government.<sup>27</sup> The three sectors currently operate autonomously, which is occasionally misconstrued by leadership as permission to act without restraint. Individuals should be the focal point of all governmental endeavours. The DDM is an operational framework designed for the three levels of government to collaborate in addressing the ongoing issues South Africa encounters in providing municipal services. DDM has been implemented in three districts to date: the Waterberg and OR Tambo district municipalities, and the eThekweni metropolitan municipality.<sup>28</sup> The municipalities have been analysed with an emphasis on a full array of indicators for each, derived from datasets about the population of individual districts; poverty, crime, and education levels; citizens' health status; and infrastructure needs.<sup>29</sup> The competencies of staff in the impacted municipalities, the systems available to them, and the condition of their infrastructure were also examined. COGTA asserts that local government staff must prioritize capacity-building initiatives to ensure a coordinated response to the capacity constraints encountered by municipalities.<sup>30</sup>

This section examines the justification for the adoption of the district development model paradigm. This will aid in cultivating a comprehensive awareness of the rationale behind the model's existence. This section examines how DDM can include key ideas from the South African constitution, pertinent policies, and legislation to enhance performance at local and district municipalities in South Africa.

### The Justification for DDM

DDM is implemented to address inadequate service delivery and developmental effects, encompassing the provision of essential services such as garbage removal, water, sanitation, and electricity. Figure 1 below encapsulates the justification for the existence of DDM. It emphasizes that the concept is fundamentally oriented towards enhancing service delivery and development.

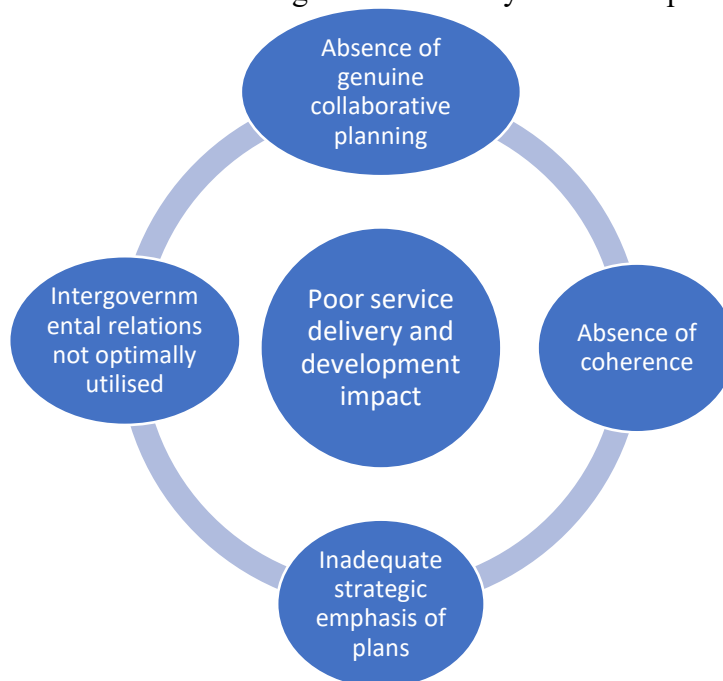


Figure 1: The service delivery difficulties that require the development and deployment of DDM.

Source: Authors

<sup>27</sup> J. D. Lodi, "Execution of the District Development Model," 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Planning, *Key Performance Area 2: Service Delivery 2014 TO 2019*.

<sup>29</sup> Statistics South Africa, "An Evaluation of the Factors, Limitations, and Prospects for Addressing Poverty and Inequality in South Africa," 2018, [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za).

<sup>30</sup> Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, "What Is the District Development Model?," 2022, [www.cogta.gov.za](http://www.cogta.gov.za).

### **Absence of Genuine Collaborative Planning**

It has been challenging to unite local municipalities, districts, provinces, and the national government for collaborative planning. Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME ) cautions that successful planning is hindered by institutional challenges, including the fragmented constitutional authority to implement planning, which is distributed among the three tiers of the South African government.<sup>31</sup> This fragmentation arises from the allocation of powers and functions to different governmental realms within the Constitution Act and is recognized as a significant aspect for DPME planning reform. The absence of collaboration across the three branches of government yields detrimental consequences. Anarchy flourishes alongside inadequate service delivery, leading to societal dissatisfaction and disillusionment, which in turn incites disturbance and violent protests stemming from the absence of essential services. The educational system occasionally

### **Absence of Coherence**

The majority of municipal units function in isolation due to insufficient communication and coordination that delineates how units synergistically benefit communities. Fenton and Gustafsson assert that municipalities, due to their local nature, possess significant potential to function as anchor tenants, thereby promoting and fostering collaboration and partnerships to enhance citizens' lives more effectively than at the provincial or national levels.<sup>32</sup> The absence of coherence reveals tensions and deficiencies, as it fosters a culture of mediocrity that undermines high-quality service delivery, oversight, coordination, and cohesive planning among departments.<sup>33</sup> This indicates that municipal authorities perceive no benefit in partnerships and persist in unproductive silos.

### **Inadequate Strategic Emphasis on Plans**

Asha and Makalela assert that local authorities are grappling with the inadequate execution of integrated development plans, leading to disruptions in service delivery. They also indicate that inadequate emphasis on plans may result from a lack of resources, including human resources. Insufficient community engagement, political interference, and constrained capacity.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the municipality has not completely fulfilled its implementation strategy and service delivery. The municipality should prioritize enhancing community participation in the planning and implementation process, given the challenges. The municipality must prioritize expanding its institutional organizational capacity to optimize resource usage, hence improving implementation and service delivery.

### **Intergovernmental Interaction Procedures are not Optimally Utilized**

The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act delineates the fundamental principles and objectives of intergovernmental relations.<sup>35</sup> The emphasis is largely on the results that the system must attain:

- i. Consistent governance
- ii. Efficient delivery of services
- iii. Oversight of policy and legislative implementation
- iv. Implementation of national priorities

Malan asserts that the achievement of development objectives in South Africa is significantly reliant on a robust system of intergovernmental relations (IGR) and the extent to which governmental institutions can function with mutual trust, good faith, and institutional harmony.<sup>36</sup> Government

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<sup>31</sup> Republic of South Africa, "Policy Framework for the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation or Integrated Planning," 2022, <https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusarea>.

<sup>32</sup> P. Fenton and S. Gustafsson, "Transitioning from Abstract Terminology to Concrete Initiatives: Governance for Urban Sustainability in Municipalities," *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Masiya, Davids, and Mangai, "Determinants Influencing the Efficacy of Municipal Authorities in South Africa: Viewpoints of Stakeholders."

<sup>34</sup> Aklilu Asha and Kagiso Makalela, "Challenges in the Implementation of Integrated Development Plan and Service Delivery in Lepelle-Nkumphi Municipality, Limpopo Province," *International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies* 12, no. 1 (2020): 1–15.

<sup>35</sup> Department of Cooperative Governance, *Preliminary Green Paper on Cooperative Governance* ( Pretoria, 2011).28.

<sup>36</sup> L.P. Malan, " Intergovernmental Connections within South Africa. A Modified Policy Strategy for Collaborative Governance," *African Journal of Public Affairs* 5, no. 4 (2012): 115.

institutions and state organs across the three tiers of government must coordinate their actions and engage appropriately when exercising statutory power or implementing policies that necessitate collaborative efforts or concurrent functions.

Intergovernmental relations pertain to the structuring of interactions among the three tiers of government. The Constitution asserts that "the three spheres of government are distinctive, interdependent, and interrelated."<sup>37</sup> Local government constitutes an independent realm of governance and is no longer merely a functional or administrative extension of national or provincial government. Despite the autonomy of the three spheres of government, they operate within a unified South Africa, necessitating collaboration in decision-making, budget coordination, policy formulation, and activity, especially for functions that span across the spheres. Mzini identifies three realms of government in South Africa: National, Provincial, and Local.<sup>38</sup> South Africa is presently demarcated into nine provinces and 279 municipalities. Municipalities in South Africa constitute a segment of local government, positioned one tier below provincial government, hence representing the most fundamental level of democratically elected governance in the nation.<sup>39</sup> Co-operative governance entails the collaboration of the three sectors of government to deliver a full array of services to residents. Should a single model be adapted to accommodate all 279 municipalities despite their differences?

### **District Development Model as a catalyst for enhancing performance accountability**

The DDM aims to enhance the coordination of services among local government municipalities and the provincial governance area, fulfilling a constitutional requirement for effective cooperative governance to promote cohesiveness and accountability. The Development Bank of Southern Africa posits that the District Development Model should be conceptualized as a comprehensive governmental strategy aimed at enhancing integrated planning for service delivery across all three levels of government.<sup>40</sup> The DDM's logical theoretical framework proposes that the planning, execution, and evaluation of governmental developmental initiatives should be centred around a unified 'One Plan,' aimed at enhancing technical competencies to influence 52 developmental zones throughout South Africa.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the DDM recognizes that although local economic development within municipalities is a vital catalyst for enhancing citizens' quality of life, it is impeded by inadequate or deficient basic services, including roads, electricity, water, and other municipal infrastructure.<sup>42</sup> Inadequate service delivery issues at local and district municipalities became significantly evident during the Covid-19 epidemic starting in March 2020 (Munzhedzi & Phago, 2020). Numerous services were limited or diminished, leading to insufficient water supply and inadequate drainage systems, which were essential for South Africans to regularly wash their hands to prevent virus transmission, particularly in impoverished townships, informal settlements, and rural regions.

### **District Development Model for the institutionalization of performance management systems in local and district municipalities**

The methodical execution of the DDM involves performing a cost-benefit analysis via feasibility studies to determine its likelihood of success in trial district towns. This strategic change method was based on the premise that short-term victories in the early stages of implementation will invigorate participants over its potential for success, thereby fostering a coalition for change through champion teams. The Development Bank of Southern Africa identifies several drivers and advantages of the DDM, including a strategic response to the socio-economic repercussions of Covid-19, economic recovery and resilience, innovative paradigms for addressing inadequate service delivery in municipalities, and the integration of a programmatic approach within cooperative governance in South Africa.<sup>43</sup> The DDM underscores the necessity of establishing long-term performance indicators to be included in the performance management

<sup>37</sup> South Africa, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No 108 of 1996*.

<sup>38</sup> L.B. Mzini, "The Correlation between Accountability and Customer Satisfaction in the Sedibeng District Municipality, South Africa," *A Multinational Conference on Enhancing the Quality of Public Services in Moscow, Russia. June 27 to 29, 2011*.

<sup>39</sup> Electoral Commission of South Africa, "Local Government Elections Report" (Pretoria: IEC, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Development Bank of Southern Africa, "Water and Sanitation: Every Drop, Every Bit Counts," 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Development Bank of Southern Africa, "Water and Sanitation: Every Drop, Every Bit Counts."

<sup>42</sup> Human Sciences Research Council, "Youth Unemployment and Skills Development," *HSRC Monographs*, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Development Bank of Southern Africa, "Water and Sanitation: Every Drop, Every Bit Counts."

systems of local and district municipalities for the purpose of monitoring and assessing performance targets and achievements.<sup>44</sup> This logical and strategic approach can facilitate and institutionalize performance enhancement within the cultural framework of local government municipalities. The DDM must be guided by sufficient performance metrics and data to pinpoint service delivery issues and address deficiencies in local municipalities. Enhanced and efficient coordination within the local governance framework can be realized when the district development model amalgamates the local government performance management system with departmental performance objectives and activities that contribute to individual employee performance expectations and metrics. Table 1 will depict the district development model in relation to performance management within municipalities.

**Table 1: The district development concept and its significance for municipal performance**

<b>District Development Model</b>	<b>Relevance to performance in municipalities</b>
Strengthens the framework for co-operative governance.	The needs of communities should inform integrated development planning that is well aligned to the annual performance plans of both provincial and national governments. The official's performance should be geared towards intergovernmental relations among the three spheres of government.
Reinforce proximity of local government to communities.	Democracy is about government by the people. The municipal officials should uphold principles and values that ensure that they are always in touch with the communities that they are rendering services to.
Build on lessons from implementing previous similar and existing good Practices.	The municipal officials should always reflect on the gaps of previous models so that they don't repeat the same implementation errors that are costly, amidst limited public resources.
Reconfigure integrated planning responsibilities and institutional arrangements.	The reconfiguration process will clarify and reiterate the roles of officials. This will guide everyone in terms of the timeframes and expectations from communities and the employer. In a way, all affected officials will be compelled to meet frequently to take stock of service delivery gaps and successes.
Common Spatial Development Strategy for the sector department and state-owned entities	Improved service delivery can only be achieved with collaboration and cooperation among all sectors.
Comprehensive Diagnostic Assessment	Through monitoring, evaluation and reporting, service delivery will be assessed comprehensively, and this will enhance teamwork because failure/ success will reflect the whole municipality. A proper risk plan will be in place to mitigate unnecessary challenges.

Source: Authors

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the implementation of DDM as a panacea to poor local government performance, the government can combine different local government service delivery models. This will contribute towards a better experience by communities, cost efficiency, innovation, and improved service quality because the municipality will be responding to the specific needs while leveraging the strengths of different methodologies.

Municipal officials must wholeheartedly embrace the concepts of the district development model to ensure that implementation is not enforced. They must advocate for this paradigm in a way that convinces the communities that no superior implementation model exists beyond district development. The model should prioritize the needs of the impoverished and vulnerable individuals.

<sup>44</sup> Development Bank of Southern Africa, "Water and Sanitation: Every Drop, Every Bit Counts."

Municipal authorities should be consistently trained to effectively, efficiently, and economically address the increasing requirements of communities. The training must address the developmental requirements of authorities while remaining pertinent to the changing dynamics of the communities. Communities ought to be granted ownership of the district development model via active engagement in municipal frameworks, as this will mitigate accountability when issues arise. The distinction with the DDM lies in the fact that communities would have crafted it for themselves.

## CONCLUSION

This study has investigated how DDM may enhance subpar performance in municipalities. It also sought to demonstrate how current regulations might enable the seamless execution of the plan. South Africa possesses a robust legislative framework designed to enhance municipal service delivery, as delineated in the Constitution. The difficulty persists in that identical individuals, methods, and methodologies are utilized to execute various service delivery models. It is essential to cultivate the environment, develop human resources, and, furthermore, reshape employee attitudes to restore their sense of servanthood. The DDM is one of the change management strategies that the South African government adapted to combat widespread performance inertia in local government towns. For DDM to prevail where other developmental strategies and models have faltered, there must be robust monitoring, appraisal, and consequence management in instances of evident poverty and mismanagement among accounting officers and officials in local government towns.

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