

8

The status of public participation

Back-to-basics:

Put people and their concerns first and ensure constant contact with communities through effective public participation platforms

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8. Public participation

Chapter 9 of the MTSF highlights poor governance and accountability as major constraints, with communities often feeling alienated and disconnected from decision-making processes. Much of this stems from factors such as weak political leadership and poor communication with communities as well as weak and ineffective platforms for public participation. It acknowledges that government's approach to citizen participation has 'too often become formulaic and symbolic'.

Chapter 9 of the MTSF further states that sub-outcome 2 aims to address this weakness by ensuring that platforms and mechanisms exist for citizens to participate in decision-making and be kept informed of key issues and developments. The anticipated impact through this sub-outcome is to strengthen the capacity of municipalities, especially at ward level, for deliberate public participation through improved consultation, communication and feedback mechanisms to citizens.

The following indicators and targets are planned for this sub-outcome:

Table 1: Indicators and targets

| Indicators | Targets |
|--|--|
| Number of ward level improvement plans that include basic ward level issues (potholes, non-functioning traffic lights, service interruptions, billing queries, etc.) to be addressed | 1 777 by March 2015 All wards by March 2019 |
| Number of municipalities with established ward committees after 2016 local government elections | All municipalities by November 2017 |
| Number of ward committees supported to play an oversight function in terms of delivery per ward against the SDBIP and ward level service improvement plans | All wards by November 2018 |
| Monitoring report on the number of community report-back meetings convened by councillors for improved communication on service delivery, including IDPs and SDBIPs | March 2015 (ongoing until March 2019) |

These measures are also included in the local government back-to-basics strategy. According to this strategy, CoGTA will enforce compliance with the provisions of the MSA relating to community participation and basic monitoring measures, and focus on the implementation of actions to achieve the targets relevant to public participation as per the MTSF.

As part of our audits of predetermined objectives, we audited compliance with the provisions of the MSA relevant to community participation. The audit results for the past two years are as follows:

Table 2: Audit results for the past two years

| Indicators | Number of municipalities | |
|---|--------------------------|---------|
| | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
| The local community was not consulted in drafting and implementing the IDP | 17 | 22 |
| The local community was not granted at least 21 days to comment on the final draft of the IDP before the plan was submitted to the council for adoption | 33 | 18 |

These audit findings were reported in the audit reports issued to the relevant municipalities.

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