



cooperative governance  
& traditional affairs

Department:  
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## RESEARCH REPORT

# **The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Pilot District Development Model in Waterberg District Municipality, Limpopo Province**

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Study Conducted by Planact.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

BLM	Bela-Bela Local Municipality
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CoGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DDM	District Development Model
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IG	Intergovernmental
GTAC	Government Technical Advisory Committee
LLM	Lephalale Local Municipality
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
M-MLM	Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality
MLM	Mogalakwena Local Municipality
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NES	National Evaluation System
PCO	Programme Coordination Office
PSC	Presidential Steering Committee
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
TLM	Thabazimbi Local Municipality



## Executive Summary

The South African Government has adopted the District Development Model (DDM) as an operational model for improving cooperative governance and building a capable, ethical and developmental state. In his 2019 Budget Speech, President Cyril Ramaphosa concluded that the poor coordination within government departments results in incoherent planning (silo approach), and poor monitoring and implementation of programmes. Subsequently, Cabinet approved the model, and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) began piloting the DDM in three districts – eThekweni, OR Tambo and Waterberg District Municipalities – in 2019. The model's implementation is based on 'One Plan', a long-term 25-30 year strategic intergovernmental plan guiding investment, development and service delivery in relation to each of the district and metropolitan spaces, which has to be characterised by collaborative research, evidence and solution (CoGTA and NDP 2020). The main aim of this study is to identify current practices in the Waterberg District regarding participation of CSOs in the development of the Municipality's One Plan and explore possible areas of collaboration between the state and CSOs. It employs qualitative research methods and triangulation to increase the validity of the data.

The One Plan process guidelines highlight that all relevant institutions and actors including, civil society organisations, need to be involved. While the guidelines are important, they do not sufficiently address how the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) can be actively facilitated in the various stages. The absence of processes for systematic engagements with CSOs specifically in One Plans for each district, and the subsequent failure to integrate their views into the document, suggests that service delivery and investments will remain misaligned with their needs. Ideally, CSOs should actively participate in the seven stages of developing the One Plans, namely: 1 Diagnostic, 2 Vision setting, 3 Strategy formulation, 4 Implementation commitments, 5 Draft One Plan, 6 Approval and Adoption of Final One Plan 7 Implementation, Monitoring and Review.

Certainly, CoGTA has realised that the technical aspects of intra and inter-departmental coordination at the expense of other district levels, and the exclusion of non-government actors, limit the success of the DDM to result in change in communities. This is also contrary to South African law such as the Constitution of 1996 (section 152), which promotes involvement of communities and community organisations in local government. Similarly, the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (section 5) highlights the importance of effective coordination between the three spheres of government (national, provincial and local government) and coordination and alignment of priorities, objectives and strategies.



This study demonstrates that most civil society organisations surveyed did not participate in the earlier stages of the Waterberg District One Plan and the gap is likely to be witnessed in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages if left unaddressed.

*The study finds that the current practices of Waterberg local municipalities do not effectively promote inclusion of CSOs in the DDM.*

A summary of the findings is as follows:

**Most of the consultations for the One Plan occurred at a high level, thereby missing most organisations based in communities.**

The consultations did not reach many CSOs, instead it focused on inter- and intra-department engagements. Consequently, more than 90% of CSOs were not aware of the DDM and did not participate in the stages of the One Plan. For example, in Thabazimbi Local Municipality, only two of the 30 participants were fully aware of the DDM.

**Under-consultation of municipalities concerning the One Plan resulted in their passive response and engagements with CSOs.**

The municipalities observed that the Waterberg District failed to properly integrate the One Plan into the local municipalities' systems. This has contributed to the exclusion of CSOs in the One Plan in the sense that municipalities had not planned for tailor-made awareness and education programmes and did not engage them specifically on the One Plan.

**Civil Society Organisations consider the diagnostic, vision-setting and strategy formulations as critical stages warranting their active involvement.**

Greater involvement in the diagnostic, vision setting and strategy formulation stages would have helped ensure that the CSOs, and the communities they represent, had a sense of ownership and a stake in helping to realise the One Plan vision.

**There is scope for much greater efforts by municipalities to consult civil society organisations (CSOs) comprehensively.**

Notwithstanding the fact that municipalities are not allocated specific funding for involvement of CSOs in the One Plan, broadened community engagement processes are required to facilitate the participation of community-based organisations (CBO). Such an effort should not require substantial additional skills or resources.

**Engagement with communities is critical and must go beyond inclusion of CSOs only.**

Not all community members are represented by CSOs in terms of their needs, experiences, and ideas. Municipalities need to make a concerted effort to create alternative spaces of



engagement to reach such communities and to facilitate their meaningful input into the development of the One Plan.

**Existing local government processes for participation are ill-equipped to effectively promote CSOs' engagement in the One Plan.**

Few initiatives were undertaken by municipalities to create an effective relationship with CSOs and, as such, consultation for the development of the DDM One Plan for Waterberg Municipality mainly utilised the standard Integrated Development Plan (IDP) consultative process. The traditional spaces of participation (which are already weak) were further constrained by the Covid-19 pandemic-related lockdown restrictions, which limited movement of people and interaction.

**Lack of an inclusive CSO network exacerbates the marginalisation of CSOs in the District Hub.**

The study finds that the municipalities lack a vibrant CSO network, which could catalyse the involvement of its members in the One Plan and the District Hub. Critical success factors for strengthening collaboration in the pilot site include educating the community around the DDM One Plan, facilitating the creation of an inclusive network of CSOs and supporting their representation in the Waterberg District Hub.

**Many CSOs lack the resources to participate in local government processes. Therefore, even if they were aware of the DDM, their participation would have been limited.**

Currently, municipalities are only funded for the operation of the DDM Hubs, thus suggesting that municipalities have limited funding to support CSOs' participation in the DDM. Municipalities need to leverage the existing resources and develop mechanisms for attaining this mandate. The alternative mechanisms do not seek to replace the existing local governance processes such as the IDP and Municipal Budgeting, which have been poorly implemented, resulting in apathy from CSOs.

**Highlights of recommendations**

1. CoGTA and municipalities should create an enabling environment by developing comprehensive guidelines for involving CSOs in the One Plan development process.
2. Provincial CoGTA and district municipalities should develop a comprehensive DDM awareness-raising programme aimed at reaching many more CSOs, with the inclusion of community-based organisations (CBOs) in particular.





3. Provincial CoGTA and the district municipality should establish an intergovernmental public participation forum comprising all the local municipalities to implement the awareness-raising programme about the DDM aimed at reaching all the CSOs.
4. Provincial CoGTA, district and local municipalities should (possibly utilising the intergovernmental forum outlined above) mobilise CSOs and facilitate a network that will actively engage and represent CSOs in the development, implementation and evaluation of the One Plan.
5. Drawing on support from the Hub, district and local municipalities should provide technical support (such as legislative compliance, planning and budgeting, and outcome assessment) to CSOs during the engagement on each stage of the One Plan to maximise the CSOs' capability to meaningfully contribute to the plan.
6. District and local municipalities should mainstream One Plan consultation processes with disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth and people with disabilities, and encourage awareness of rights and solidarity in preventing attempts to divert benefits.
7. In consultation with the local municipalities and other stakeholders, the district municipality should conduct a comprehensive stakeholders mapping exercise and create and constantly update a central database of CSOs active in the Waterberg area.
8. Currently, municipalities are only funded for the operation of the DDM Hubs. National Government (Treasury and CoGTA) should make funds available to municipalities to enable them to undertake much broader civil society engagement. Such funds need to be ring-fenced specifically for community engagement around the One Plan.
9. At the same time, municipalities must make civil society engagement around the One Plan a top priority and should maximise the use of their existing resources towards this objective.
10. CoGTA and DBSA should publish a report or develop a clear mechanism of publishing and implementing changes emanating from the public consultation, with regards to the One Plan. Such mechanisms will help restore the confidence of CSOs in local government and promote their participation in the DDM.
11. Municipalities should ensure that public participation occurs earlier in the development of the One Plan, in particular the diagnostic and vision setting stages.



12. CoGTA (National and Provincial) and DBSA should develop a training manual on the DDM (adaptable to differing conditions in local municipalities) to improve municipalities' capacity to understand and implement the One Plan and facilitate CSOs' inclusion. The training manual should be employed to develop the capacity of councillors, municipal officials and CSOs to engage meaningfully in the One Plan.
13. Municipalities should ensure that all members of ward committees are trained on the DDM One Plan and that they have the mechanisms to engage CSOs on One Plan development.
14. Monitoring and evaluation tools for the One Plan must be designed to capture the views of the different stakeholders, thereby broadening civil society inputs.
15. Municipalities should maximise the use of technological communication including social media, to allow easy access of CSOs, and, in particular youth, women's and people with disabilities organisations, for information and engagements. However, municipalities should also make provisions for face-to-face consultations with those CSOs with limited access to technology.
16. CSOs should make every effort to map out opportunities available for providing input into local government policy making, including the development of the One Plan and the IDP.
17. The scope of the DDM Hub should be extended to include a strong focus on facilitating CSO participation. Provisions should be made for greater CSO representation on the Hub.
18. It cannot be assumed that all people who could have valued inputs into One Plan are affiliated with, or represented, by a CSO. Municipalities need to create alternative spaces of engagement to ensure that civil society engagement in the development of One Plan includes community members directly in addition to CSOs.



## PART I: Introduction

This report presents the findings of a study on the relationship between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the government in the District Development Model (DDM) introduced by the South African government in 2019. The experience of the Waterberg District Municipality in Limpopo Province, one of three municipalities country-wide in which the DDM has been piloted, is utilised in this report as its case study. In 2022, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in partnership with Twende Mbele – an associate programme at the University of Witwatersrand – commissioned a study on the DDM piloted in the Waterberg District. The main purpose of this study is to develop a consensus on the role of civil society organisations in the DDM, in particular their contribution to the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the DDM ‘One Plan’.<sup>1</sup> Through the DDM model, the Government of South Africa seeks a paradigm shift whereby 52 District and Metropolitan Municipalities in South Africa are to develop and implement ‘One Plan’ to improve coordination of state institutions in infrastructure development and service delivery.

In Waterberg District Municipality, Planact conducted the research for this study over a three-month period. A total of 136 people representing 113 civil society organisations across all five local municipalities participated in the study.

The study focused on six thematic issues, which served as a basis of reporting the findings, namely:

- ❖ Awareness about the District Development Model (DDM);
- ❖ Awareness of the Waterberg One Plan;
- ❖ Modes of communication about the DDM and One Plan employed by the municipalities;
- ❖ Extent and quality of civil society involvement (including the DDM Hub);
- ❖ Challenges and opportunities regarding involvement of the civil society organisations in the One Plan; and
- ❖ Possible strategies that can improve the participation of civil society organisations in the development of the One Plan.

This study has four objectives:

1. To identify current practices in Waterberg District in Limpopo regarding the participation of civil society in the formulation and implementation of the Waterberg District One Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> To clarify: The DDM is the national programme while the One Plan is developed by each municipality pursuant to the DDM. The One Plan therefore operationalises the DDM in each municipality.



2. To explore possible areas of collaboration between the Waterberg District and CSOs necessary to improve the implementation and evaluation of the One Plan.
3. To identify mechanisms/tools/ideas concerning collaboration in the DDM, that can be scaled and tested nationally.
4. To develop recommendations for strengthening the collaboration between Metro/District Municipalities and civil society in developing the 'One Plan'.

This study will serve as a basis for the development of the mechanisms that support productive and sustainable government–civil society collaboration within the national monitoring and evaluation system. While this project examines the subject in the context of the Waterberg District, the main users of the research will be local government officials and other state institutions involved in facilitating the DDM. Other target audiences include civil society organisations and communities eager to understand their role in the DDM.

This report consists of six parts. Part I provides the executive summary and the background to the study. Part II covers the profile of Waterberg District Municipality. Part III presents the literature review. Part IV covers key findings from the five local municipalities that constitute the Waterberg District Municipality. Part V discusses the analytical themes based on the overall findings. Part VI provides the conclusion and the recommendations, which could guide the participation of civil society organisations in the DDM.

### Definition of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) refer to the following formations: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), voluntary organisations (VOs), social movements (SM) and unions. Of the six formations under the CSOs, it is only the NGOs that have a known classification. The classification is in three categories as follows: (a) professional development NGOs, (b) relief and rescue NGOs, and (c) charity and social welfare NGOs.

NGOs in *professional development* provide services to vulnerable groups of people in society by advocating innovative and or alternative approaches to processes of government and public development programmes, for transformation purposes. These NGOs apply advocacy and or activism interventions.

NGOs in *relief and rescue* (from disasters) provide services to groups of people, who are in distress of different kinds. This could be earthquakes, floods, fires, and war situations.



NGOs in *charity and social welfare* provide an on-going service to vulnerable groups of people in society and animals e.g. institutional homes for abused women and children, health care centres, old age homes, animal welfare etc.

#	NGO Category	Type of service provided
(a)	NGOs in <i>professional development work programmes</i> .	Provide services to vulnerable groups of people in society by advocating innovative approaches to processes of government and public development programmes for transformation purposes. This is done after evaluating the targeted programmes for evidence. Such NGOs apply advocacy and or activism intervention approaches.
(b)	NGOs in <i>relief and rescue work programmes</i> .	Provide services to groups of people, who are in distress of different kinds. This could be earthquakes, floods, fires, and war situations.
(c)	NGOs in <i>charity and social welfare work programmes</i> .	Provide an on-going service to vulnerable groups of people and animals within society e.g. institutional homes for abused women and children, health care centres, old age homes, animal welfare etc.

This study has been undertaken by an NGO in professional development and the CSOs that participated in the study came from various formations of CSOs.

### Background and Context

South Africa is signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which seeks to end poverty and promote peace and prosperity for all people (The Presidency, South Africa 2019). The localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a successful realisation of the goals requires 'collaboration that cuts across disciplinary, sectoral as well as organizational boundaries' (Croese 2019:25). The SDGs, therefore, serve as a useful basis in terms of the integration of existing and planned local processes and priorities aligning with local government and cities. Consequently, the City of Cape Town underscores the need for partnerships between different departments and levels of government, academia, civil society organisations and the private sector in SDGs (Croese 2019). The District Development Plan (DDM) could potentially serve as a tool, if one of many, for South Africa to achieve some of its SDG obligations.

South Africa's cities and towns are an integral part of the developmental system of local government that comprises 278 municipalities. The South African Constitution of 1996, in particular Chapter 7, section (e) of the Constitution, requires local government to involve



communities and community organisations in matters of local government. In addition, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (amended 2011) mandates the involvement of the local community and makes community engagement in IDP development mandatory at the local level. In tandem with the foregoing frameworks, transforming local government has been a key concern of the democratic era government. A new developmental agenda for municipalities was outlined in the Local Government White Paper (1998), and the Municipal Structures Act (1998). The White Paper (1998:6) highlights that local government should work “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”. In response to this mandate and over the years, the Government has piloted a number of integrated development interventions to improve service delivery. The most recent is the District Development Model (DDM), an intergovernmental approach in 52 district and metropolitan spaces for more effective joint planning, budgeting, and implementation over multi-year planning and electoral cycles (CoGTA 2019).

The DDM One Plan and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) are not one and the same and cannot be referred to interchangeably. Promulgated every 5 years to align with the municipal election cycle, the IDP is the broad, overarching plan for each municipality that provides a framework for development. The future of the municipality’s development plans is mapped in a range of areas including human settlements, spatial planning, disaster management, economic development and finances. As demonstrated in Waterberg, the One-Plan is an integral part of the IDP and has the specific focus of guiding state and private investment in the municipality over long term (25-30 years). Unlike the IDP, the One Plan is not a comprehensive or detailed strategy which covers the full range of all departments and all municipal responsibilities.

The president of the Republic champions the DDM, which is indicative of the importance placed on the model. The Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) is responsible for managing the institutionalisation of the model within the cooperative governance system of the country. CoGTA conceptualised the DDM in 2019, and subsequently the Cabinet approved it as an operational model for improving cooperative governance and building a capable, ethical and developmental State at subnational level. The department’s Circular No 1 of 2021 stipulates that:

*“The DDM also focuses on building state capacity through the stabilization of Local Government with a view to improving cooperative governance, integrated planning, and spatial transformation, and inclusive economic development where citizens are empowered to contribute and partner in development (CoGTA 2021:2).”*





The above statement suggests that the three spheres of government (local, provincial and national) and state entities should work collaboratively to improve performance and accountability for coherent service delivery and development outcomes. Currently, the model is piloted in three districts, including the Waterberg District Municipality in Limpopo.

The DDM is based on two interrelated processes: spatialisation and reprioritisation. Spatialisation refers to translations of development priorities and objectives into spatial locations. CoGTA (2021) defines reprioritisation as “the process of reviewing and changing plans and budgets of all three spheres of government as necessary to realise the desired physical impacts”. The desired impact is described in terms of the positive impact of the plans on the lives of the residents.

The model’s implementation is based on a One Plan, long-term 25–30-year strategic intergovernmental (IG) framework guiding investment, development and service delivery in relation to each of the district and metropolitan spaces (CoGTA 2020). In essence, One Plans must outline the development commitments and expected impacts of projects implemented by the various municipalities. The One Plan Process guidelines stipulate that the different categories of municipalities located in a particular geographic space must develop the One Plans jointly. This collaboration should include, among other factors, intergovernmental planning sessions, reflection on research and innovation-oriented dialogues.

### The role of the DBSA in the DDM

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) was appointed by CoGTA in 2020 to serve as an implementing agent responsible for providing management support to CoGTA and developing One Plans (CoGTA 2020). It provides technical advice to municipalities and facilitates the establishment of Programme Coordination Offices (PCOs) and District Hubs. In its latest annual report (2021), DBSA reports that they have been supporting CoGTA rollout of the DDM through developing an information management system and have contributed R28 million towards PCO and the District Hubs. CoGTA (2020:4) clarifies that “the Hubs are not municipal structures falling under municipal administration”. Instead, they must facilitate a functional network of support and partnerships necessary to ensure effective implementation of the One Plans. This role suggests that CSOs can either be part of the Hub or have a viable partnership with the Hub and enable their participation in the DDM.

Critically, civil society organisations (CSOs) should be engaged, and their views incorporated in the One Plan. Also, CoGTA highlights that a catalytic network of support must be established to facilitate collaboration among the various state institutions, and between CSOs and the government. Another important instrument underpinning the One Plan is the Content Guide which outlines the elements of content comprising the One Plan, thus



promoting uniformity and quality control. The One Plan is typically constituted by the following standard:

- i. Demographic Change/People Development
- ii. Economic Positioning
- iii. Spatial Restructuring and Environmental Sustainability
- iv. Infrastructure Engineering
- v. Integrated Service Provisioning
- vi. Governance

The One Plan should be aligned with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the formulation/review of sector strategies, departmental strategic plans and annual performance plans, and municipal growth and development strategies, spatial development frameworks (SDFs) and IDPs. Notably, at the centre of these documents are the needs of communities, which is a clear indicator of the indispensability of the role of civil society organisations in the One Plan.

The One Plan Process Guidelines stipulate seven stages of developing the One Plan, and highlights that all relevant institutions and actors including civil society organisations need to be involved (CoGTA 2020). The diagram below (Figure 1) shows the seven stages of a One Plan, and the requirement for public participation in stages one to four is indicated.

As set out in the One Plan Process Guidelines (2020), the process consists of the following stages:

The objective of the diagnosis stage (1) is to undertake a situational analysis and develop a shared understanding of each district (or metro) space, identifying key issues, challenges, improvement measures and development opportunities.

The Vision Setting phase (2) involves developing a common vision for each district while setting out the desired measurable outcomes and impacts.

The Strategy Formulation phase (3) should see the development of innovative strategies for each district or metro in order to achieve the development outcomes and impacts.

The objective of the Implementation Commitments phase (4) is to formulate draft projects, actions and commitments (including resource budgets) to implement the strategies and reach the targets.

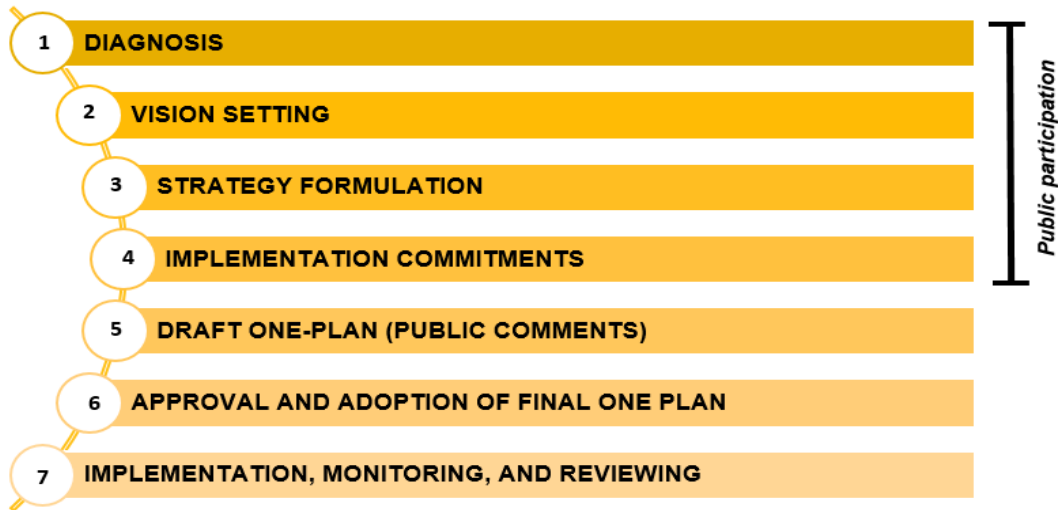
Phase 5 involves the drafting of the One Plan.

The adoption of the One Plan occurs at phase 6, while phase 7 sees the implementation of the One Plan followed by the undertaking of the 5-year review (One Plan Process Guidelines: 2020).





## STAGES OF THE ONE PLAN



**Figure 1:** Stages adapted from CoGTA, 2020

The process guideline stipulates that institutions have to be involved in the formulation and implementation of plans. Specifically, the One Plan Process Guidelines mandate that stakeholder and community society participation should be facilitated in stages 1 to 4 (outlined above) (CoGTA 2020). However, the Guidelines provide inadequate information regarding the participation of CSOs. This study, therefore, investigates the nature of the participation of CSOs in the Waterberg District One Plan in relation to these stages outlined in the One Plan Process Guidelines.

The Waterberg District is diversified in its approach to service provision. It utilises a variety of resources and technologies in a multitude of ways to excel in providing municipal services, integrated human settlements management and a sustained maintenance of assets and resources. The Waterberg District Hub is deployed to bring together different role players, and to facilitate interaction that is focused, and driven towards solutions that will improve service delivery.

### Status of the Waterberg District Municipality's participation in the DDM

The Implementation of the One Plan is realised through programme and project commitments and interventions, planned initiatives, policy reforms, capacity reforms and institutional arrangements (CoGTA 2021). The Waterberg District One Plan has undergone the diagnostic, vision-setting and strategy stages. Following the finalisation of the strategy, the One Plan is currently at the implementation stage. A total of 387 investment commitments



and planned initiatives highlights were allocated to the different spheres of government, namely: National (161), Provincial (72), and municipal or local (128). CoGTA notes that some projects are commitments and are under construction, while others (26) are either unspecified or in the concept phase and should be developed further by the responsible entity, municipality, sector, department, or state-owned enterprise (SOE). Notably, commitments augment existing projects implemented by the municipalities.

### The Problem Statement

Despite being positioned as a framework to improve intergovernmental and integrated planning and budgeting, and improved involvement of other actors in local government, participation of civil society organisations has not yet been realised in the DDM One Plan system. The framework inadequately stipulates processes for systematic engagement with civil society in developing plans for each district. Correspondingly, the Government Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) review indicates that few players within the DDM network of government players consider the DDM as a social compacting tool. The technical aspects of intra- and inter-departmental coordination come at the expense of other district-level coordination activities and processes, and the exclusion of non-government actors further limits the potential success of the DDM to affect change in communities. Khawuleza Forums have been the primary tool used to access community members/civil society to date. However, the process for mapping an ongoing role for civil society, and how to implement it systematically, have not formed part of these forums.

Similarly, previous work conducted by Twende Mbele and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results – Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) identified several barriers to CSO-government collaboration in the institutionalisation of evaluation, such as:

- 1. Adverse government sentiments towards CSOs:** In several African countries, the relationships between CSOs and governments are characterised by mistrust and misaligned goals. CSOs who are often funded by international development cooperation agencies and donors are consequently often seen as beholden to foreign interests and promoting foreign values. Where this sentiment exists, interventions will be necessary to build relationships of trust between government agencies and CSOs.
- 2. Limited platforms for engagement:** Platforms for engagement provide space for CSOs and governments to share ideas and collectively solve problems. However, such platforms do not always exist. To ensure the successful participation of CSOs in National Evaluation Systems (NES), governments need to establish platforms for engagement. This could be in Technical Working Groups established to oversee the development and maintenance



of the NES. It could also be through Evaluation Steering Committees established to manage individual evaluations.

- 3. Limited Resources:** Collaboration and building relationships require resourcing. Both CSOs and African governments are likely to not have additional resources to allocate to interventions to aid the participation of CSOs in NESs or other institutionalised mechanisms. Development partners have an important role to support and resource collaboration between CSOs and government. It is in the best interest of development partners to support learning and sharing between government and CSOs as this can promote the localisation of lessons learned in donor-led monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and ensure the sustainability of donor-led interventions.

### Planact's experience in civil society engagements and social accountability mechanisms

Since its establishment shortly after the transition to democracy, Planact has demonstrated its commitment in responding to the weak state response especially at local government level in South Africa. Over the past thirty years, Planact has continued to place empowering vulnerable communities at the centre of its two programmes, namely *Strengthened Grassroots Voices* and *Responsive Living Environment*. This has been achieved through employing the social facilitation methodology, participatory approaches, and accountability mechanisms. The latter includes social audits and studies. Planact's most recent works include the following:

- ❖ Conducting studies in local government public participation processes in South Africa.
- ❖ Conducting a pilot social audit project on Phase 4 of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in three municipalities of South Africa: The City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng province, and Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and Nkangala District Municipality, both in Mpumalanga province.
- ❖ Conducting four social audits on sanitation in City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan to improve the accountability of municipalities and monitoring of sanitation by informal settlement communities.

### Rationale

The need for meaningful civil society and local community consultation and input into municipal processes, policies and programme development are well established under South African law and public policy. For example, the Municipal Structures Act (1998) mandates that decision-making in the local government sphere must be based on the needs of the people and that municipalities need to develop community consultation mechanisms. The Municipal



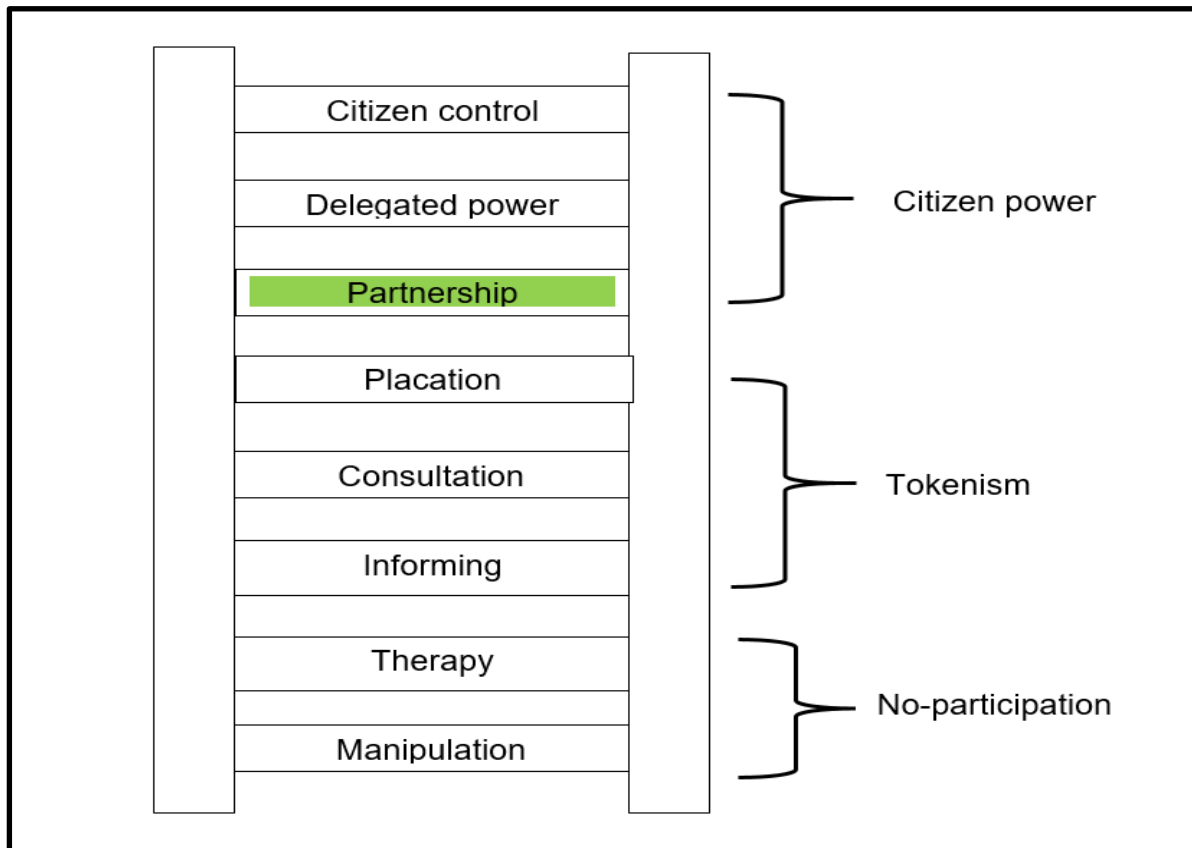
Systems Act (2002) provides for a system of participatory governance where citizens have a right to contribute to decision-making processes. Likewise, the National Development Plan (2013-2030) commits the local government to build relationships of trust with communities in order to establish lasting partnerships.

These mandates are of prime importance if core provisions of the DDM are to be delivered successfully through the municipal One Plans. The Waterberg One Plan will only possibly be effective if a deep understanding of the needs of the affected communities is fully integrated into the Plan's objectives and delivery methods, and this can only be achieved through in-depth engagement with the communities themselves. Furthermore, success of a number of strategies outlined by the Waterberg One Plan, such as skills development, tourism development, land tenure, and others, will depend heavily on the level of community buy-in and participation. Communities must feel a sense of inclusion and ownership of such initiatives in order to participate in them.

This study, therefore, sought to evaluate the depth and quality of civil society and community participation in the development of the Waterberg One Plan in order to identify lessons learned to inform the inclusive, integrated and participatory role of the DDM across the country.

### Conceptual Framework

Research demonstrates that the benefits of citizen participation in its ideal form include citizen power, and clearly identifies the various forms of participation and "non-participation" that do not meet this ideal (Arnstein 1969). This research project employs the Arnstein Ladder of Citizen Participation, which provides a continuum of participatory power that moves from non-participation to *citizen participation* (actual power).



**Figure 2:** Arnstein Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein 1969)

This ladder shows that citizen power is achieved when there is delegated power, citizen control and partnership. The scholar asserts that partnership occurs when there is negotiation between power holders and citizens and sharing of planning and decision-making responsibilities. Regarding partnership of collaboration, Amisi and Kawooya (2021) identify three areas where success factors for collaboration might be found within a national evaluation system (and which are further expanded in the guideline):

- 1. Enabling environment** is where there is government and non-governmental commitment to launch M&E exercises, and there are resources to support the development of M&E, and a commitment to accountability and good governance.
- 2. Capacity to demand and use M&E evidence** refers to the capacity within government to demand M&E evidence. It requires the government to be clear about when and how M&E information can be used to inform decisions. It also requires the existence of adequate incentives for policy makers/actors to demand and use M&E, in some cases for compliance, but also for learning.



- 3. Technical capacity to supply M&E** refers to the technical capacity to do evaluation or generate monitoring data that can be used to inform decision-making. The capacity can be within the government, such as government-owned research centres and other institutions. It can also be outside of government, such as that in universities and non-academic sources exemplified by consultancies. This also includes the existence of systems and processes to ensure the systematic, comprehensive, and credible approach to M&E such as the existence of M&E policies and guidelines.

### Research methodology

The researchers employed qualitative research methods in order to understand the role of civil society organisations in the DDM. The qualitative approach provides a deeper understanding of the issue under study by describing phenomena and explaining how and why they occur, and under what circumstances (Dawadi et al 2021: 27). The research methods included a desktop review and in-depth interviews with three stakeholder groupings: national department officials, municipal officials, and civil society organisations.

This study employs a transformative worldview, which is concerned with ‘an action agenda for reform that may change lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work and live or even the researchers’ lives’ (Creswell 2013). For this reason, triangulation or a combination of different research methods was necessary to increase the credibility of the data. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for gathering views on a focused topic and for background information and enable in-depth interviews to understand the experience from a personal perspective (Hammarberg et al. 2016). This study benefited from the experience of the participants.

The desktop review increased the study’s understanding of policy frameworks and guidelines underpinning the project, such as those about the DDM and the Waterberg District One Plan, and other related subnational government policies and legislation. The research team also reviewed literature about civil society input into programme development, particularly CBOs operating at the local level.

The team conducted fieldwork for six weeks – from mid-May to the end of June 2022. This period did not include all interviews with municipal and national officials, some of which were undertaken in July and August 2022. In preparation for the fieldwork, Planact obtained letters of introduction from CoGTA and the Waterberg District Municipality to comply with research ethics.

The first set of engagements with Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) provided useful insights into the Waterberg District One Plan. Six Planact representatives participated in a



half-day preliminary focus group discussion with the DBSA, which is a key institution providing technical assistance and expertise in the development of the DDM One Plan for the Waterberg Municipality. The team sought to obtain an in-depth knowledge of the actors involved, the processes, and the role of the DBSA as overarching facilitator, Hub participant and technical advisor. The key information collected from DBSA included the contact details of one of the main civil society organisations, which participates in the One Plan, and those of Waterberg District municipal officials who participate in the Waterberg Hub.

The research team developed three standard key informant interview guides to inform the purposive sampling study and capture the views of the identified stakeholder groups, namely:

- Senior national government officials (Cogta).
- Senior municipal officials, including those from the Waterberg district and all five of the local municipalities within the jurisdiction of the District; and
- Civil society organisations, most of which were community-based (CBOs) and had operations in at least one of the local municipalities or the district municipality as a whole.

The comprehensive questionnaires included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Some participants expressed a preference to complete the questionnaires themselves. The three semi-structured questionnaires used in this study are appended to this report (marked as Appendix 1, 2 and 3).

The study used a purposive sampling approach to promote the participation of different categories of CSOs and the relevant municipal officials. The CSOs comprised various categories: CBOs, religious organisations, traditional leaders, taxi associations, pre-school managers, foundations, social movements, business association, association for persons with disabilities, youth association and ward committees. The categories covered representatives of vulnerable communities (such as informal settlements), women's organisations, youth, and the business community. A total of 113 CBOs participated in the study. Table 1 below 13 breakdown of participants per municipality.

<b>Name of Municipality</b>	<b>Total number of organisations</b>	<b>The total number of participants</b>
Bela-Bela Local Municipality	32	32
Thabazimbi Local Municipality	16	30





Modimolle-Mookgopong Local Municipality	26	30
Mogalakwena Local Municipality	22	23
Lephalale Local Municipality	17	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>136</b>

**Table 1:** Breakdown of participants per municipality

Appendix 4 of this report lists all the organisations that participated in the study.

Twenty research assistants were recruited and offered orientation on the DDM and the data collection methods to ensure the generation of quality data. Most of the research assistants were university graduates who had previous exposure to research methods. Planact ensured that suitable qualified young people had the opportunity to work on the project in the local municipality in which they resided.

The fieldwork occurred within the five local municipalities with a contingent of four to five research assistants each. CoGTA determined the project site selection. Planact's understanding of the actors who were involved in the DDM One Plan informed the selection of research participants.

A total of 136 interviews were conducted in the five municipalities and the research assistants undertook interviews with representatives of CBOs. Planact's team of five, including two professionals contracted for this specific task, supervised the research assistants in the various municipalities.

Participants in the study were CSOs which were eligible to be involved in the One Plan or affected/likely to be affected by the One Plan. A wide range of CSOs had to be involved in developing the One Plan of the DDM in Waterberg District Municipality. Their participation was necessary because they often represent marginalised communities and groups in local government. However, the participation of the state institutions – CoGTA, district, and local municipal officials – was necessary given their roles in driving and coordinating local government.

A total of four municipal managers who are either involved in managing the DDM, or in promoting citizen participation at municipal level, participated in this study. The municipal





managers provided deep insights regarding participation of CSOs, the efforts made by municipalities to promote active involvement and the challenges thereof. Two of the officials were from the Waterberg District Municipality while one each were from Bela-Bela and Lephalale Local Municipalities. The municipal officials' participation in the study was necessary given their close proximity to the DDM and their role in local government including service delivery.

Nevertheless, efforts to interview participants from three municipalities – Thabazimbi, Modimolle and Mogalakwena local municipalities – were not successful despite employing different modes of communication in an effort to obtain their cooperation. Similarly, only one CoGTA National official has participated in the study and Provincial CoGTA did not participate at all despite being invited to do so.

### Research questions

The terms of reference for this study are appended to this document (see appendix). The study is guided by the following research questions:

#### Main research question

How can civil society organisations effectively collaborate with state institutions in South Africa's District Development Model value chain?

#### Sub-research questions

1. What is the current nature of relations between government and civil society, as it relates to the DDM?
  - a. To what extent does civil society know about the DDM?
  - b. To what extent does civil society view the DDM as an effective mechanism to meet citizens' needs?
  - c. What DDM-related initiatives from the government have been taken into consideration to create an effective relationship with CSOs?
  - d. How well or to what extent have these initiatives added value to the process of developing the 'One Plan' and other key steps in the DDM rollout?
2. Which parts of the DDM value chain are most amenable to CSO–government collaboration?
  - a. Are some aspects considered more impactful and/or sustainable?
  - b. Where has collaboration/engagement happened?
  - c. Where could it have happened for effectiveness and why?
3. What are the critical success factors for strengthening collaboration in the pilot site (Waterberg District), and that might be able to be expanded (and supported by literature) to ensure that the DDM Implementation plan also has critical success?



4. What contextual factors determine the success of the government–CSO collaboration?
5. What existing tools/platforms/systems can be built upon to harness existing resources for government–CSO communication and collaboration?

### Data capturing and analysis

Three Planact staff members undertook the data capturing over an aggregate of three days. The team captured the data on google forms which enabled ease of analysis and sharing of data with the research team. The research team identified emerging themes and cross-cutting issues from the data. In accordance with the purpose of the study, the analysis focused on views and experiences of the CSOs concerning their involvement in the DDM/One Plan. Municipal officials' views on the same subject were also analysed in relation to the findings obtained from the CSOs.

### Limitations of the study

Owing in part to the COVID pandemic, many of the CSOs based in the Waterberg Municipality, to which the researchers were referred, apparently no longer exist. In addition, many community-based networks and organisations may be prone to a relatively short lifespan as leaders move on and the issues change. Anecdotal evidence also suggested that some CSOs whom the researchers tried to contact, had not survived the COVID pandemic. Nevertheless, 136 participants representing 113 CSOs were interviewed.

Time constraints meant that the sample (of 113 CSOs) had to be manageable to ensure that the study was completed in time. Yet some of the potential participant organisations were not readily available during the month of the interviews. In effort to address this limitation, the team managed to sample from similar categories of CSOs.

The poor understanding of the DDM and the One Plan by CSOs meant that they struggled to differentiate between the two, therefore, the two terms were sometimes used interchangeably. In this study, efforts have been made to separate the responses in accordance with the relevant questions.

Closely related to the above-mentioned limitation is the fact that some municipal officials did not distinguish between civil society participation related to the DDM and the IDP. This may have clouded their views regarding participation of CSOs in the DDM. However, efforts were made to seek clarity on the issue and some of the officials emphasised that, so far, CSOs have only participated in the IDP, a local government process closely linked, but separate to, the One Plan.



The researchers made every attempt to engage municipal officials in the study at Waterberg and all five local municipalities through face-to-face visits, formal letters, e-mails and, where possible, follow-up phone calls. However, the process of securing interviews with the municipal officials derailed for approximately two months as most of them indicated that they had competing tasks which required urgent attention.

Another limitation concerned the fact that some officials either did not respond or honour arrangements for the formal interview. To address this limitation, some of the officials were requested to complete the questionnaire on their own and email it to the organisation. However, four senior municipal officials (managers either from the departments responsible for planning or community participation in local government) participated in the study in virtual interviews. Nevertheless, efforts to interview municipal officials from Modimolle, Mogalakwena and Thabazimbi Local municipalities were not fruitful, thus depriving the study of their insights into the model. In addition, the Presidential Steering Committee (PSC), which coordinates the DDM, did not participate in the study.

The One Plan was introduced in 2021 and, therefore, the researchers did not find previous scientific studies on the Plan. This study therefore drew largely on the technical document prepared by CoGTA. This limitation has been addressed by consulting a scientific body of literature on other government-driven programmes in South Africa in other contexts. However, the conceptual framework used for this research is widely utilised by other studies.

## PART II: Profile of Waterberg District Municipality

The largely rural Waterberg District is made up of five local municipalities: Bela-Bela LM, Lephalale LM, Modimolle-Mookgopong LM, Mogalakwena LM, and Thabazimbi LM. The district is also made up of 80 wards, 6 towns, 11 townships, 216 villages, and 30 informal settlements. The district has 11 Traditional Councils with about 47% of the district's population living in traditional authority areas (IDP 2021). Below are brief profiles of the municipality generated from municipal documents including their IDPs.

### Thabazimbi Local Municipality

Thabazimbi Local Municipality (TLM) is a category B municipality, located in Waterberg District Municipality within the Limpopo province. The TLM council consists of 23 councillors. The municipality has a population of approximately 96,232 people, comprising 40% of the district's total population. The main economic sectors in this municipality are mining, agriculture, and tourism. In 2016, the employment rate was 51% and the youth unemployment rate was 26.9%. Only 37.5% of the population matriculated and the



approximate population of children between the ages of 15-17 in the child labour force is 22.3%. In TLM 28.4% of the households in informal settlements are child-headed households. The municipality reports that 71% of the population has access to clean running water, 72.2% have access to chemical or flushing toilets, and 82.9% have access to electricity. CSOs in this municipality include, among others, Thabazimbi Community Based Organisation and the Youth Development Organisation.

### Mogalakwena Local Municipality

Mogalakwena Local Municipality (MLM) is a category B municipality, located in Waterberg District municipality within the Limpopo Province. This municipality has a population of 325,292 people, 49% of the population are females. The main economic activities are mining and agriculture. In 2016, the municipality had a low employment rate of 26.2%, and only 32.9% of people matriculated from high school. A percentage of 3.7% of households in informal settlements are child-headed households. There is inadequate access to water and electricity, with 71.1% of the population having access to clean water and 95.6% having access to electricity. Almost three out of ten residents, therefore do not enjoy access to water which is indicative of the fact that the municipality does not meet the most basic needs of all the residents. The municipality is struggling to deliver on adequate sanitation: only 27.4% of the population has access to flushing or chemical toilets. Examples of CSOs include Timyne Victim Empowerment Centre, Gilead Victim Support, Mahwelereng, Bob Moola Home Based Care and Drop-in Centre, Bophelong HCBC, Bophelong Home Based Care, Christian Beyond Aids Support Education Trust, and Potties Circuit Forum.

### Bela-Bela Local Municipality

Bela-Bela Local Municipality (BLM) is one of the five municipalities in the Waterberg district, located in the southern borders of Limpopo province and sharing borders with Gauteng, North-West, and Mpumalanga provinces. In 2016, the municipality had a population of 76,296 people and 49% of the population were females. The main economic sectors in BLM are tourism and agriculture. The 2016 census indicates that the official employment rate was 47.2% and 9.9% of the labour force were children between the ages of 15-17. 17.4% of households in informal settlements are child-headed households. The municipality has adequate delivery of basic services with 81.5% of the population having access to clean water, and 88.2% having access to electricity and chemical or flushing toilets. Some of the civil society organisations operating in this municipality are Bela-Bela Development Association, Aganang Support Centre – NPO and Agang Setshaba Foundation.

### Lephalale Local Municipality

Lephalale Local Municipality (LLM) is one of the five municipalities in the Waterberg district, located in the Limpopo province. LLM has a population of approximately 140,240 and 44% of



the population are females. Six percent of households in the informal settlements are child-headed households. The municipality has an employment rate of 43.5% and a youth unemployment rate of 27%. The main economic sectors are mining and quarrying. 73.2% of the population has access to clean water, 90.8% has access to electricity, and a low 42.6% of the population has access to chemical or flushing toilets. Examples of civil society organisations are Tomburke Victim Empowerment and Lephalale VEP.

### Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality

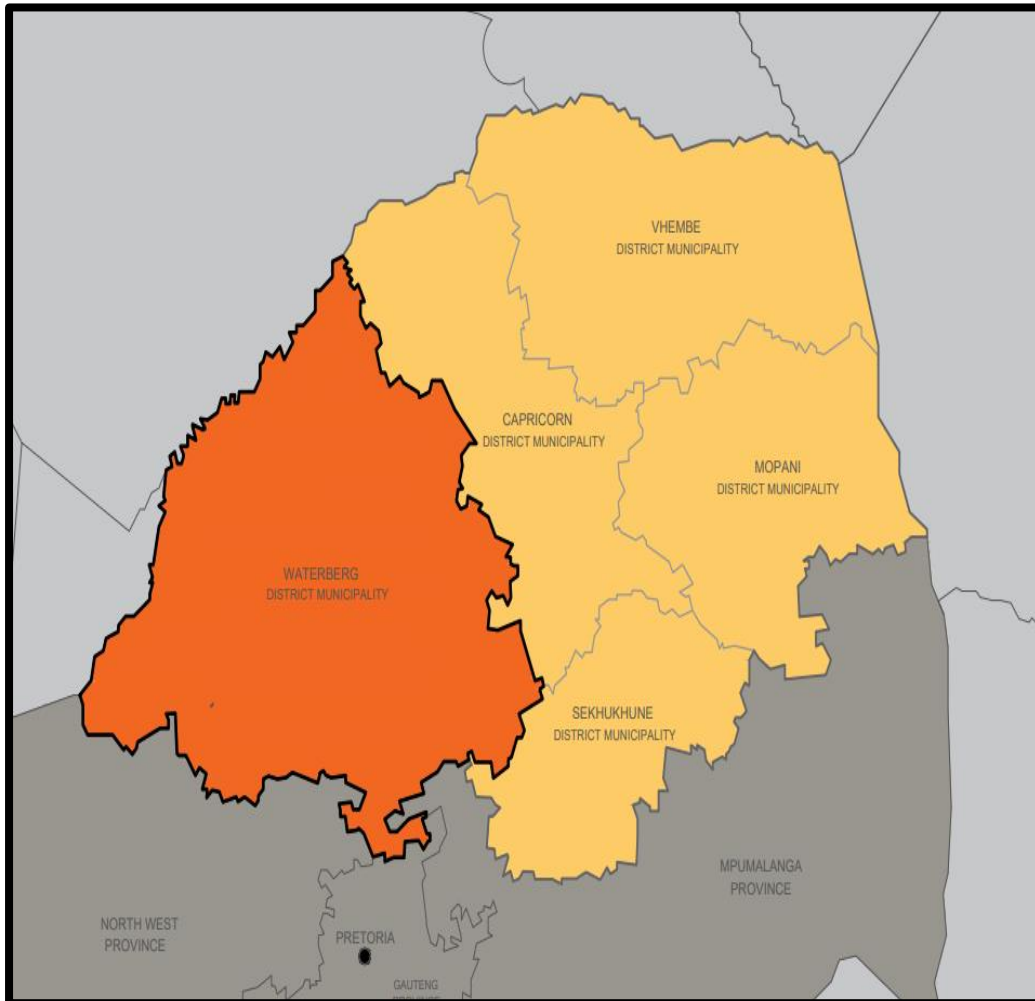
Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality (M-MLM) was established in 2016. In 2016 this municipality had a population of 107,699 people with females making up 49% of the population. In the informal settlements of this municipality, 32.3% of the households are child-headed households. M-MLM had an employment rate of 46.9% in 2016, with the main economic sectors being business services, agriculture, etc. 13.5% of the labour force were children between the ages of 15-17. With regard to access to basic services, 85.7% of the population had access to water, 89.9% had access to electricity, and 72.6% had access to chemical or flushing toilets. CSOs established in this municipality include Victim Support Centre Modimolle, Victim Support Centre of Mookgopong, Waterberg Welfare Society, and Mookgopong Aerobics Club.

Figure 3 below shows the location of the Waterberg District Municipality and the other four District Municipalities, and Figure 4 shows the location of the five Local Municipalities within the Waterberg District Municipality.



cooperative governance  
& traditional affairs

Department:  
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

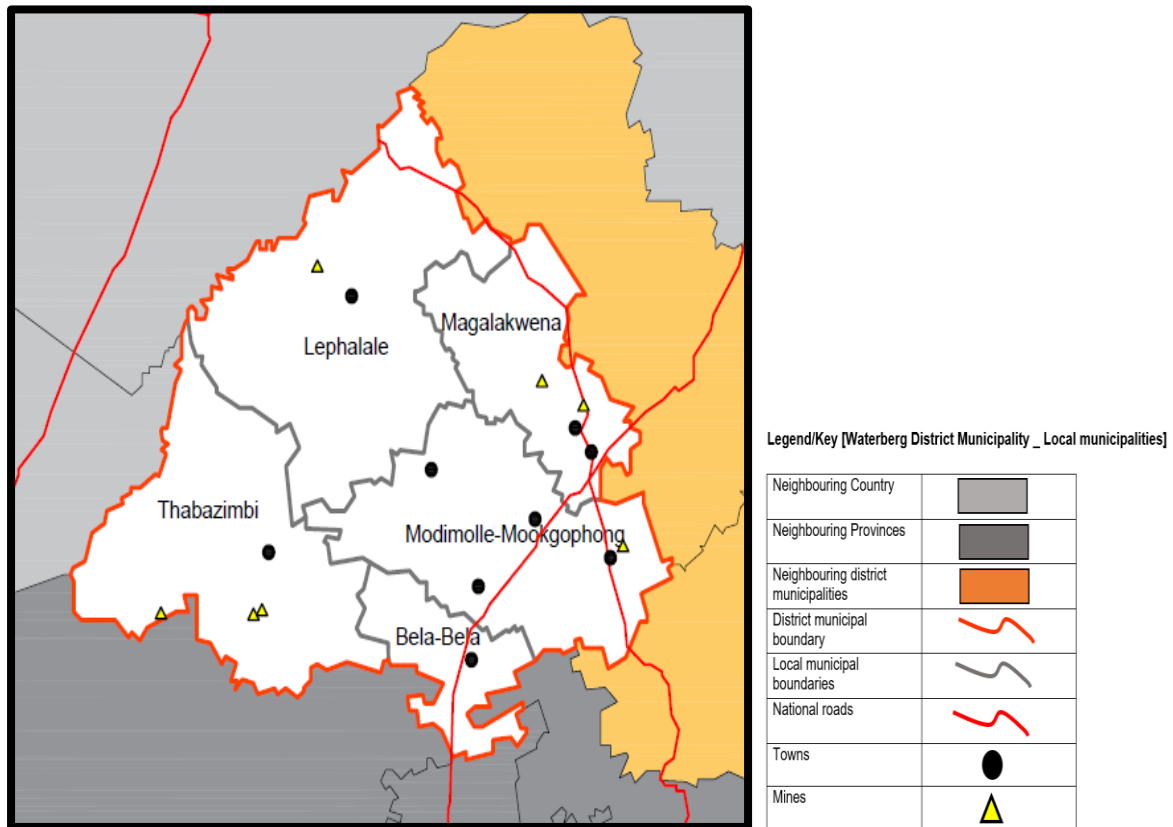


Legend/Key [Locating Waterberg municipality \_ Provincial scale]

Provincial Boundary	
Neighbouring provinces	
Neighbouring countries	
Municipal Boundary	
Waterberg District Municipality	
Neighbouring district municipalities	
Pretoria	

**Figure 3:** Map showing the location of Waterberg and other district municipalities  
Adapted from Google Maps by Planact





**Figure 4:** Map showing the location of local municipalities within the Waterberg District Municipality (adapted from Google Maps by Planact)

### PART III: Literature Review

The important role of civil society on helping shape municipal policies and practices that are pro-poor is also emphasised by CALUSA (2019:1) and asserts that:

*“The marginalised and disadvantaged people of a community benefit when civil society is engaged in shaping policy, particularly when engagement is legitimate and well-informed.”*

Genuine community participation is a process in which people, and especially disadvantaged people, influence resource allocation and policy and program formulation and implementation (Imparato and Ruster 2003:42). This suggests that people should be involved in all stages of development planning and project design. Arnstein’s definition of participation is critical because of its ability to recognise the role of power in distributing resources. Linked to the scholar’s observation is that participation serves as both a means and an end in itself (Cornwall 2008).



In South Africa, public participation is an integral part of local democracy, and, as such, valuable to all citizens (Madumo 2012). For this reason, South African local government must facilitate the involvement of communities and community organisations given its relevance to democracy (De Visser 2005). Furthermore, South Africa's position as a Developmental State warrant that the local government sphere commit to achieve 'participation of the citizens in determining the quality and quantity of services delivered' (Madumo 2012:44). Effective public participation results in empowerment of the disadvantaged and creates a sense of ownership of the development process (Mubita et al. 2017; Chambers 2005).

Meaningful community participation provides important opportunities for greater transparency and accountability for municipalities. In turn, these builds trust and sets the stage for productive collaboration with civil society. Maximising opportunities for community input can result in the municipality gaining a more in-depth understanding of residents' needs and can thus lead to initiatives and solutions that are more responsive and impactful. In turn, this can result in more cost-effective service delivery (Isandla Institute 2019). Meaningful civil society engagement also enhances transparency and accountability as communities can help monitor implementation and impacts, which, in turn, can lead to improved municipal performance.

The Isandla Institute (2019) argues that civil society and community participation is at the heart of developmental local government and is the foundation for building sustainable neighbourhoods. Beyond simply informing and consulting, Isandla Institute advocates for the concept of *co-production*, which aims to provide citizens with greater influence to affect planning, implementing and monitoring. The co-production model aims to facilitate community members and municipal structures "work(ing) together to create plans and interventions aimed at addressing pertinent issues" (Isandla Institute. 2010: 9).

The World Bank opines that a spectrum of citizen engagement includes consultation, collaboration/ participation, and empowerment. The observation is relevant to the DDM One Plan, which should clearly articulate the role of civil society in the DDM. This assertion invokes the debate on the relevance of CSO–state partnerships. Salamon and Toepler (2015) emphasise that a framework for state actors to catalyse effective partnerships between CSOs and government. Likewise, Brinkerhoff (1999) concurs that a well-organised partnership between the state and CSOs helps in effectively delivering services, capacity building, and various forms of technical expertise in addressing social challenges. Nevertheless, Friedman and McKaiser (2009) caution that civil society participation requires a range of capacities and resources including the ability to gain access to government institutions.





However, some scholars (including Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2004) criticise CSO–state partnership on the basis that power imbalances compromise the effectiveness of the CSOs. Despite this critique, in some countries, the participation of civil society in planning processes remains central. For example, public participation in India has evolved to include citizen groups and non-government organisations to ensure effective representation of the public in planning (Kumar and Prakash, 2016). In Brazil, participatory budgeting processes are central in planning and are well documented. When it comes to development processes and regional-scale planning, the process preferred is power-sharing (Avritzer 2012). Nonetheless, poor regional citizen engagement presents challenges: for example, the Sao Paulo Master Plan faced many complications in its citizen engagement process due to the lack of norms of participation and engagement at that level (Falk 2005). South Africa therefore can draw lessons on such international experiences concerning citizen engagements.

Research demonstrates that civil society organisations actively contributed to the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. However, in the post-apartheid era, CSO contributions to developmental local government is challenged by lack of resources and government support. Hence, the need for government to consider partnership ventures with CSOs (Asuelime 2017:194). Furthermore, there is poorly regularised structuring of opportunities for relevant civil society to participate and provide feedback interventions in service delivery (Planact 2016). The core focus of strategic planning in the municipalities has been the development of IDPs. The IDP is supported by sectoral plans such as SDFs which highlight the developmental vision and priorities of municipalities (Du Plessis 2014). The IDP consists of an annual statement of priorities linked to budgets, and is expected to provide an important basis for accountability to citizens and stakeholders in a municipality (Planact 2020; Thebe 2016).

According to the Isandla Institute (2019:13) most municipalities are not sufficiently equipped “to engage in and process robust forms of social accountability and engagement.” They identify an important challenge and goal for the local government sphere to expand its capabilities so as to be able to facilitate civil society input and collaboration. This may require substantial changes to municipal structures and systems, ensuring that there is sufficient understanding of the local civil society landscape, an enabling framework and sufficient resources.

CALUSA (2019) emphasises the great importance of municipalities recognising that South African civil society has a specific and very valuable contribution to make in policy formulation and implementation processes. The authors assert that partnerships with civil society should not be seen as a threat to the municipality but should rather be developed in such a way as to respond to the needs and service requirements of communities. They add that strong



partnerships with civil society organisations can help local authorities to build their own capacities and achieve better outcomes.

One innovation has been the use of community-based planning methodology as a way of developing a coherent ward plan. The ward committee becomes the custodian of the plan. However, the platforms have not always resulted in effective communication and CSO participation (Nyalunga 2006; Malabela and Ally 2011). Similarly, ward councillors remain out of touch with communities, and they are unable to effectively communicate with communities, thus there is a continued lack of trust (Molefe and Overton-de Klerk 2021). The researchers concluded that this is the case in the Waterberg District, at least with regard to the development of the One Plan. Hence, there are increasing levels of protest against local councillors and municipalities (Booyesen 2016). The DDM is an innovative model which may potentially address poor communities' participation in local government.

## PART IV: Empirical findings by municipality

### Thabazimbi Local Municipality

The survey determined that the level of civil society awareness of the DDM One Plan and the level of consultation in Thabazimbi Local Municipality were low. Of the 16 CSOs surveyed (involving 30 participants), only two were aware of the DDM and two were partially aware. Only two of the organisations stated that they had been consulted in the development of the DDM. Yet, 11 of the CSOs had been involved in some form of advocacy with the municipality, which would indicate that there was fertile ground for much more involvement. The topics for the advocacy undertaken by the 11 CSOs suggest that they would have had valuable input. These included land and infrastructure, the needs of young people, the needs of the elderly, and suggestions for improved municipal governance and improved basic services, all of which are highly relevant to the objectives of the DDM.

However, the responses of five organisations indicate that there was at least some attempt by the municipality to engage CSOs around the DDM, even if such efforts were small scale. Such efforts included hearing about the DDM at an imbizo, through a ward councillor, a municipal official and social media. It is also worth noting the two CSOs that had been involved both rated the municipality's efforts to educate civil society around the DDM as "very good". Possibly indicative of the value that more CSOs could have brought to the planning of the DDM in Thabazimbi was that 28 of the 30 participants responded to the question as to what stage of the DDM development process CBOs should be involved in. While answers varied, 16 of the 28 felt that the diagnostic stage (situational analysis) presented the best opportunity for CSO input.



### Lephalale Local Municipality

The survey of CBOs in Lephalale revealed a low level of awareness of the DDM and a low level of participation in the formation of the DDM One Plan. Of the 17 organisations surveyed (21 respondents), only two were aware of the DDM One Plan and only one (a CBO representing businesspeople) was consulted. However, the Lephalale Local Municipality's experience of civil society consultation for the One Plan was extremely different. The municipal official interviewed maintained that there had been consultations with business formations, labour organisations, civic associations, traditional leaders, CBOs, NGOs, environmental advocacy groups and others. This suggests that while there had been significant consultation with civil society groups, very few of them included small CBOs operating in Lephalale.

Rating the level of CSO involvement in the One Plan development as "high", the municipality affirmed that CSOs had helped identify "pressing environmental issues in local municipalities and had assisted in identifying developmental projects for poverty alleviation within specific communities". However, of the 21 CSOs interviewed, only one rated the effort to include CBOs as "very good", and two as "average". A very high 19 out of the 22 organisations interviewed felt that CBOs should be involved in the diagnostics stage of the One Plan development.

The Lephalale example seems to suggest that while CSOs that operate on a district-wide level were consulted quite broadly, fewer smaller groups that operate only at the local level were included. The municipal official emphasised that "community participation is restricted to personal experience in terms of challenges of inclusive development". This suggests that while some individual community members relate their personal experiences, there is a lack of organised, broader inputs by CSOs as organisations. Most importantly, the official also asserted that municipalities should create a conducive environment for CSOs to meaningfully participate.

### Bela-Bela Local Municipality

The study revealed that both the awareness level of the DDM among CSOs in Bela-Bela municipality, and the level of consultation towards the One Plan development, were low. Of the 32 CSOs surveyed, only one was fully aware of the DDM while one was only aware of it "in part". Of the two who knew of the DDM, one had heard of it through social media while the other had heard through a District Municipal official. The latter of these two CBOs was the only one that had been consulted. Of the 31 CSOs that responded to the question, 29 were dissatisfied with the level of CSO involvement in the development of the One Plan, while two were satisfied "in part". Only two rated the efforts to involve civil society in the development of the One Plan as "good."



At least 11 of the CSOs surveyed already have some level of involvement with municipal developmental processes such as the IDP, budgeting and others. The foci of such organisations included educational support, sport, basic community services, health, HIV & AIDS, economic development and work skills, all of which are highly relevant to the DDM.

All 32 of the respondents indicated the stages of the DDM One Plan in which they thought CSOs should be involved, 14 of these citing *strategy development* and nine citing the *diagnostic (situation analysis)* stage. A further eight affirmed that the monitoring and review stage would be suitable for CSO involvement. The 100% response rate to this question suggests a willingness among the respondent organisations to be involved at various stages of the development of the DDM. It is noteworthy that 28 of the 31 respondents weighed in on the question as to possible strategies to help strengthen collaboration with civil society in the Waterberg District One Plan. Such suggestions included utilising community mapping, organising youth events, using digital platforms and other media, and holding community meetings.

The Bela-Bela municipal official interviewed for the study asserted that public participation units called meetings at municipal level and a road show was done to ensure that people understand the One Plan at local level. However, it is clear that such efforts did not reach the vast majority of the CSOs interviewed for this study. The official also maintained that some CSOs were not responsive but the CSO surveys undertaken showed that the vast majority of CSO had not heard of the DDM or the One Plan and therefore had had no opportunity to respond.

### Modimolle–Mookgophong Local Municipality

Of the 26 CBOs surveyed in Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality, three were aware of the DDM, and three were aware of it “in part”. Yet a very high total of 17 of the CBOs interviewed had been involved in some form of the municipal consultative process – most commonly the IDP. These organisations undertake a very wide range of activities including skills development, psychosocial support, basic service delivery, education, disability, children and youth. This may indicate something of a missed opportunity to involve organisations that understand municipal processes and a wide range of issues relevant to the development of the One Plan.

All interviewees responded to the question of which stages CBOs should be involved in the development of the DDM One Plan, with more than half of them citing *diagnostics (situational analysis)*. Again, this suggests a high level of interest in the initial stages of One Plan development and a possible missed opportunity for informed input. Two of the 26 were



satisfied with efforts to include CBOs while one was satisfied “in part”. A high 24 of the respondents weighed in on possible strategies to improve citizen involvement in the DDM One Plan and these included stakeholder imbizos and workshops, social media and road shows. Again, this suggests a high level of interest in participation.

It is instructive to note that a relatively high eight of the 26 respondents in Modimolle were aware of the existence of the South African DDM (as a national programme) but this considerable level of awareness had not extended to the Waterberg District One Plan.

### Mogalakwena Local Municipality

Awareness and participation in the development of the One Plan in Mogalakwena Local Municipality was low, but slightly higher than other local municipalities. Five of the 22 CBOs were either aware or aware “in part” of the DDM as a national programme and only two were aware of the Waterberg DDM One Plan. Two stated that they had been consulted in the development of the One Plan, while another two said they had been consulted “in part”. Unsurprisingly, therefore, only two interviewees responded that they were satisfied with the level of CSO involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan, while one was satisfied “in part”.

Surprisingly, while awareness of One Plan itself was relatively high, the level of participation of Mogalakwena-based CBOs in municipal processes, such as having inputs into the IDP and in undertaking advocacy, was very low, with only one of the 22 respondents engaging in such activities. Similar to others, however, the foci of most of the CBOs interviewed was highly relevant to the DDM One Plan and such foci included skills training, agricultural development, child and youth services, poverty alleviation, food security, disability and services for the aged. Twenty of the respondents weighed in on the question as to which phases of the DDM CSOs should be involved, with eight of them indicating *diagnostics (situational analysis)*. Again, this indicates some appetite on the part of CSOs to bring their knowledge to the table in order to help identify issues that the One Plan should address.

Table 2 below provides selected key questions that were posed to the participants and a summary of the findings per municipality. Comprehensive instruments used in this study are appended to this report.



**Table 2:** Selected key questions and summary of the findings

Local Municipality	Theme	Questions	Response (%)			
			Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
Bela-Bela	<i>Information about the participant organisation</i>	Does your organisation participate in integrated developmental planning, municipal budgeting or space for citizen participation?	32,2	9,7	58,1	
		Does your organisation undertake any other kind of advocacy to the municipality?	22,6	9,7	67,7	
	<i>Awareness about the DDM</i>	Are you aware of South Africa's District Development Model?	3,2	3,2	93,5	
		Do you know the objectives of the District Development Model?	6,9	0	93,1	
		Has your organization been consulted regarding the Waterberg District One Plan	0	3,4	96,6	
		Are you aware of the Waterberg District Development One's Plans?	3,3	3,3	93,3	
		Are you aware of a network of support comprising government, private sector and other organisations known as the DDM hub?	6,5	0	93,5	
		Were you satisfied with the level of civil society organisations' involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan?	0	6,5	93,5	
			<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
	<i>Quality of civil society organisation's involvement</i>	How do you rate the effort by municipality or government to educate civil society on the DDMM/Waterberg One Plan	0	6,5	19,4	74,2
		How do you rate the quality of civil society organisations' participation in the Waterberg One Plan	0	6,5	22,6	71
			<b>Yes</b>	<b>In-part/Not sure</b>	<b>No</b>	
	<i>Rating and recommendations</i>	Overall, do you consider the Waterberg One Plan as a useful mechanism to promote collaboration between the different spheres of government and civil society?	48,4	25,8	25,8	



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Mokgalakwena

		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Information about the participant organisation</i>	Does your organisation participate in integrated developmental planning, municipal budgeting or space for citizen participation?	4,4	30,4	65,2	
	Does your organisation undertake any other kind of advocacy to the municipality?	4,5	4,5	90,9	
<i>Awareness about the DDM</i>	Are you aware of South Africa's District Development Model?	8,7	13	78,3	
	Do you know the objectives of the District Development Model?	0	0	100	
	Has your organization been consulted regarding the Waterberg District One Plan	11,8	11,8	76,5	
	Are you aware of the Waterberg District Development One's Plans?	8,7	13	78,3	
	Are you aware of a network of support comprising government, private sector and other organisations known as the DDM hub?	4,5	0	95,5	
	Were you satisfied with the level of civil society organisations' involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan?	9,1	4,5	86,4	
		Very good	Good	Average	Poor
<i>Quality of civil society organisation's involvement</i>	How do you rate the effort by municipality or government to educate civil society on the DDM/Waterberg One Plan	0	13,6	4,5	81,8
	How do you rate the quality of civil society organisations' participation in the Waterberg One Plan	0	4,5	13,6	81,8
		Yes	In-part	No	
<i>Rating and recommendations</i>	Overall, do you consider the Waterberg One Plan as a useful mechanism to promote collaboration between the different spheres of government and civil society?	9,1	13,6	77,3	





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Lephalale

		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Information about the participant organisation</i>	Does your organisation participate in integrated developmental planning, municipal budgeting or space for citizen participation?	9,5	9,5	81	
	Does your organisation undertake any other kind of advocacy to the municipality?	65	0	35	
<i>Awareness about the DDM</i>	Are you aware of South Africa's District Development Model?	5	0	95	
	Do you know the objectives of the District Development Model?	10	0	90	
	Has your organization been consulted regarding the Waterberg District One Plan	4,8	0	95,2	
	Are you aware of the Waterberg District Development One's Plans?	5	0	95	
	Are you aware of a network of support comprising government, private sector and other organisations known as the DDM hub?	5	0	95	
	Were you satisfied with the level of civil society organisations' involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan?	5	0	95	
		Very good	Good	Average	Poor
<i>Quality of civil society organisation's involvement</i>	How do you rate the effort by municipality or government to educate civil society on the DDM/Waterberg One Plan	5	0	10	85
	How do you rate the quality of civil society organisations' participation in the Waterberg One Plan	5	0	10	85
		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Rating and recommendations</i>	Overall, do you consider the Waterberg One Plan as a useful mechanism to promote collaboration between the different spheres of government and civil society?	66,7	0	33,3	





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Mogalakwena

		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Information about the participant organisation</i>	Does your organisation participate in integrated developmental planning, municipal budgeting or space for citizen participation?	4,4	30,4	65,2	
	Does your organisation undertake any other kind of advocacy to the municipality?	4,5	4,5	90,9	
<i>Awareness about the DDM</i>	Are you aware of South Africa's District Development Model?	8,7	13	78,3	
	Do you know the objectives of the District Development Model?	0	0	100	
	Has your organization been consulted regarding the Waterberg District One Plan	11,8	11,8	76,5	
	Are you aware of the Waterberg District Development One's Plans?	8,7	13	78,3	
	Are you aware of a network of support comprising government, private sector and other organisations known as the DDM hub?	4,5	0	95,5	
	Were you satisfied with the level of civil society organisations' involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan?	9,1	4,5	86,4	
			<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>
<i>Quality of civil society organisation's involvement</i>	How do you rate the effort by municipality or government to educate civil society on the DDM/Waterberg One Plan	0	13,6	4,5	81,8
	How do you rate the quality of civil society organisations' participation in the Waterberg One Plan	0	4,5	13,6	81,8
		Yes	In-part	No	
<i>Rating and recommendations</i>	Overall, do you consider the Waterberg One Plan as a useful mechanism to promote collaboration between the different spheres of government and civil society?	9,1	13,6	77,3	



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**Modimolle-Mokgopong**

		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Information about the participant organisation</i>	Does your organisation participate in integrated developmental planning, municipal budgeting or space for citizen participation?	32,2	10,7	57,1	
	Does your organisation undertake any other kind of advocacy to the municipality?	46,4	21,4	32,1	
<i>Awareness about the DDM</i>	Are you aware of South Africa's District Development Model?	17,9	14,3	67,9	
	Do you know the objectives of the District Development Model?	11,1		88,9	
	Has your organization been consulted regarding the Waterberg District One Plan	14,3	14,3	67,9	
	Are you aware of the Waterberg District Development One's Plans?	85,7	14,3	0	
	Are you aware of a network of support comprising government, private sector and other organisations known as the DDM hub?	14,8	0	85,2	
	Were you satisfied with the level of civil society organisations' involvement in the development of the DDM One Plan?	12	84	4	
		Very good	Good	Average	Poor
<i>Quality of civil society organisation's involvement</i>	How do you rate the effort by municipality or government to educate civil society on the DDM/Waterberg One Plan	10,7	7,5	7,5	75
	How do you rate the quality of civil society organisations' participation in the Waterberg One Plan	7,1	3,6	14,3	75
		Yes	In-part/Not sure	No	
<i>Rating and recommendations</i>	Overall, do you consider the Waterberg One Plan as a useful mechanism to promote collaboration between the different spheres of government and civil society?	73,1	7,7	19,2	



## PART V: A discussion of empirical findings

### Awareness about the District Development Model and the One Plans

The DDM cannot be divorced from local government processes. CoGTA (2019) notes that One Plans must be aligned with other municipal frameworks such as the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). For this reason, the IDP and municipal budgeting processes are critical spaces for civil society organisations to participate and inform the plans. Equally important is that municipalities promote inclusive local government and support civil society in terms of capacity building and other resources necessary to promote active participation. Conversely, this study revealed that a majority of citizens do not participate in the local government processes. For example, 66.7% of the participants in Thabazimbi municipality, 65.2% in Mogalakwena and 81% in Lephalalale, indicated that they do not participate in the IDP. These figures may point to participants/residents' poor understanding of their role in local government processes and lack of political/civic education. However, it may be suggestive of the fact that the CSOs do not think that the municipalities prioritise their views. Yet, their participation in local planning is paramount to express their needs.

Similarly, the DDM is a mechanism for more integrated planning and problem-solving between state and non-state actors. CoGTA (2020) considers the DDM as a 'whole of society' approach to solving district-level challenges: to leverage the resources of all social partners to meet developmental needs. This important aim suggests that civil society organisations that predominantly represent the voice of communities, including marginalised groups, are expected to be actively involved in the DDM. Arnstein (1969) observed that citizens can reach stage six of the ladder of citizen participation and be able to negotiate and consider trade-offs with power holders. This observation applies to the CSOs whose involvement could be possible if they understand and are aware of the DDM. However, this study reveals that civil society organisations are largely not aware of the DDM or the One Plan.

Closely related to the lack of awareness regarding the DDM is the CSOs' widespread lack of awareness and understanding of the One Plan, which is supposed to serve as the most significant output of the model as well as social compact (CoGTA 2020). According to the Government Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC) review, few players within the DDM network of government players consider the DDM as a social compacting tool. The poor participation of non-government actors is bound to limit the potential of the DDM to improve the living conditions of communities. Certainly, the role of civil society has not been integrated into the development of One Plan or the rollout of the DDM. This study



found that an overwhelming majority of the residents were not aware of the Waterberg One Plan. Poor awareness contributes to the exclusion of the CSOs and their needs are likely to be overlooked.

Furthermore, the findings point to the fact that CSOs in this district require further support in terms of capacity building and financial support to be able to optimise available spaces of engagement, such as the One Plans. Such support could enable them to effectively advocate the implementation of projects likely to improve the living conditions of marginalised communities and groups. As observed by Brinkerhoff (1999), a well-organised partnership between the state and CSOs helps in effectively delivering services, capacity building, and various forms of technical expertise in addressing social challenges.

The institutions responsible for promoting CSOs' involvement invoked the pandemic and other factors as constraints to their efforts to facilitate CSOs participation in the One Plan. Paradoxically, the participant municipal officials stated that participation of CSOs was high and that they conducted virtual IDP engagements. They pointed out that poor internet connectivity and lack of data bundles/phones impeded the CSOs' participation. Nonetheless, all the participating municipal officials acknowledged the importance of CSOs' participation in the One Plan. One municipal official expressed concern that the CSOs are mainly unorganised and often lack the financial resources to participate in local government. A Waterberg District municipal official noted that "there has been a collapse of civil society in South Africa and most of them do not have funds to participate in local government" (Interview 2022).

On the one hand, the assertions of the municipal officials are rational and reflect the challenges posed by the pandemic. On the other hand, the findings reveal that most municipalities focused mainly on the IDP process. While the IDP is one of the instruments, which supports the translation of the One Plan into practice, it is not equivalent to the One Plan stages. In fact, one of the participant municipal officials observed, "the One Plan is not something within our control, when you talk One Plan, we talk IDP". Waterberg District Hub develops the One Plan based on the IDP. The limited involvement of CSOs compromises the aim of the One Plan and perpetrates the technocratic and silo approaches to planning which the DDM seeks to redress.

### Quality of civil society involvement (including DDM Hub)

Underlying the importance of civil society inputs into the development of the DDM One Plan, the official Implementation Guidelines mandate stakeholder and community involvement in the following stages:



- Diagnostics (situation analysis);
- Vision Setting;
- Strategy Formulation; and
- Implementation Commitments.

However, the Waterberg District One Plan document (2021) acknowledges that civil society engagements in the formulation of the One Plan were limited both in terms of the number of meetings held and the number of people who attended. This was, in large part, due to the necessary observance of COVID protocols. Consequently, few people attended the IDP representative forums whereby the draft Waterberg One Plan was presented and discussed, along with the IDP. The Plan concluded that, therefore, that broad public engagements were not conducted to the expected scale, standard and norm. This assertion has been verified by the exhaustive survey of CSOs undertaken for this evaluation.

As the data set out in detail in Part IV shows, this study has determined that the consultation process for the development of the Waterberg District One Plan involved very few CSOs operating within the five local municipalities. It must be concluded, therefore, that the quality of Civil Society involvement – at least to the extent of involvement of locally based organisations – was poor. Very few CSOs knew of the existence of the DDM as a national programme, and fewer still of the Waterberg One Plan. Of a grand total of 113 CSOs surveyed, only seven said that they were consulted regarding the Waterberg One Plan while four said that they were consulted “in part”.

Many, if not most, of the CSOs interviewed focused on issues of great relevance to the development of the One Plan. These included, but are not limited to, land and infrastructure, youth and children, agriculture, poverty alleviation, educational support, food security, disability, skills development, and many others. The facilitation of meaningful input from many of these organisations (as mandated in the guidelines) would have strengthened the stages of the rollout of the One Plan as set out above. Diagnostics (situational analysis) in particular may have been enriched. Most of the CBOs are not only highly knowledgeable in their areas of specialisation but are also deeply immersed in their communities and have an in-depth understanding of service shortcomings, delivery deficiencies and other factors informing a solid situational analysis for the One Plan. Of the various stages of One Plan in which respondents expressed their option as to which ones CSOs should be involved, the most popular was diagnostics.

Greater involvement in the vision-setting stage would have helped ensure that the CSOs, and the communities they represent, had a sense of ownership and a stake in helping realise the One Plan vision. Similarly, greater involvement in strategy formulation and implementation commitments by the CSOs may have made more impactful. The Process



Guidelines assert that “stakeholder and community engagement” is a core enabling feature of implementing One Plan projects and actions. Implementation of One Plan initiatives was cited by numerous respondents as a phase in which they think CSOs should be involved.

Many CSOs were already involved in some form of municipal consultative process or were undertaking some form of advocacy to the municipality. In Bela-Bela, for example, at least 11 of the CSOs surveyed already have some level of involvement with municipal developmental processes such as the IDP, budgeting and others. Having had such experience, and given their knowledge of how the municipality functions, such CSOs could have made valuable inputs into the One Plan.

One municipal official, who claimed that most of the CSOs are “not properly constituted” and are not necessarily organised, underlined the difficulty for the municipality to engage CSOs on the development of One Plan. Unlike the private sector, there is no local forum where representatives or different groups can be engaged at the same time. The official underlined that there is no organisation representing community-based groups with which they can engage, but only individuals. It is noteworthy that, increasingly over the years, many CBOs have lost overseas funding and that this has greatly diminished their ability to work closely with government entities and engage with policymaking processes. Another challenge is that the municipality has found that some people claim to represent a certain group when, in fact, they are not accredited to do so by such an organisation.

When asked for their opinion on the findings of this study, a civil society specialist emphasised that many people do not belong to any organisations, not because they do not care but because taking part in organisations is not easy for people engaged in a daily struggle for survival. He emphasised that these citizens need to be heard and expressed concerns that they will be bypassed if conscious efforts are not made to engage them through alternative non-bureaucratic platforms. The emphasis was that CSOs alone might not be able to identify the most pressing needs of the most marginalised communities.

### Participation of the CSOs in the Waterberg District Hub

Each District Municipality is required to develop DDM Hubs with broad representation of stakeholders. The Hub’s function is to undertake stakeholder engagement, contribute to the formulation of the One Plan, and oversee its implementation through coordination of the local municipalities. However, one stakeholder asserted that there seems to be confusion between the role of the DDM Hub and that of the Waterberg District



Municipality. She explained that the latter provides a facilitative and oversight role in the implementation of the One Plan.

The study also found that, among the CSOs surveyed, there was a low level of awareness and participation. However, a total of 12 of the 113 CSOs surveyed were aware of the DDM Hub and each of the local municipalities, with the exception of Bela-Bela, had one CSO, which was involved to some extent in the Hub.

As detailed in the previous section, most CBOs surveyed had not heard of the Waterberg DDM One Plan and fewer still had participated in the process of its formulation. However, once having been informed of One Plan by the research assistants, many CBOs asserted that they would have liked to participate. This came with the realisation as to just how critical One Plan was to the future of service delivery and socio-economic development in the areas in which the CBOs operate. Several stakeholders expressed the sense that they felt excluded from the process and that they would have had a great deal to contribute if they had been afforded the opportunity.

Having learned about the overall objectives of the DDM One Plan, respondents were asked why they thought the participation of civil society was important and were given a range of possible answers. The most popular answer by far was to *influence development planning*, however many also cited the following:

- Work in or conduct projects in partnerships;
- Obtain funds;
- Exercise constitutional rights; and
- Exchange information and ideas.

Respondents suggested a range of strategies to reach CBOs and the communities they serve or represent. While many made generalist or broad suggestions such as “awareness campaigns”, “facilitate involvement” or “marketing”, some also made more specific suggestions such as going door-to-door, holding imbizos, e-mail, direct calls, having stalls at public events such as sports, local and community radio, and (most popularly) the use of social media. On the issue of social media, one stakeholder pointed out that many CBOs and community networks have WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages and other electronic forums, which could be used to engage leaders and reach a broader audience. Such groups include (but are not at all limited to) business forums, religious organisations, and crime prevention forums (CPFs). It should be noted, however, that some CSOs have limited access to social media, as they do not always have the funds for the necessary data.





While municipal interviewees generally acknowledged that it is primarily the role of local government to educate the community around the DDM One Plan, it needs to be remembered that the scope and breadth of the DDM One Plan goes well beyond the municipal sphere. Indeed, the core purpose of the DDM is to bring together the different foci and resources of the different spheres of government to help improve the services provided by all of them. This strongly implies that agencies at the provincial and national level (especially provincial and national departments of CoGTA) affected by the DDM should also have a significant role in educating communities about the DDM or, at the very least, should support municipalities towards the objective of broadening education and awareness efforts. The sense of this was summed up by one official who asserted:

*“Local government is chiefly responsible. It is the main educator but may need assistance from provincial and national government institutions. Consulting is not only on basic services but all services at different spheres of government including Home Affairs.”*

A core finding of the study was that in undertaking consultation for the development of the DDM One Plan, Waterberg Municipality mainly utilised the standard IDP consultative process. One municipal official concluded that:

*“The Municipality realised that they cannot go straight to communities or CSOs as such. Instead of going directly to civil society they used existing consultative processes.”*

It is possible that, in doing so, the processes became confused to the detriment of the One Plan. Furthermore, it is the experience at many municipalities across the country that the IDP process often falls under the radar of many CSOs, especially small CBOs. The standard IDP consultative process, therefore, is not an appropriate one for the DDM One Plan if the input of CSOs is to be substantial and representative of a broad set of communities and interests, particularly poor and marginalised groups. It can be concluded that there has been very limited consultative institutionalisation of the DDM, in large part because the municipality has relied on the same structures as the IDP process.

This is not to say that the Waterberg District Municipality made no attempts to engage CSOs in the development of the One Plan. Senior officials described efforts to reach CSOs such as through electronic communication but only realised later that many CSOs had no data to undertake such communication. Many also had technical limitations and could not, for example, access Zoom. One official maintained that some of the more developed civil



society groups such as taxi associations and traditional councils were consulted, and, even if only in a few cases, this was borne out by the survey for this study.

The study found that most of the consultations for One Plan occurred at a higher level, thereby missing the vast majority of organisations based in communities. Nevertheless, some local municipalities also felt under-consulted, with one official asserting that the district municipality “is now doing broad participation instead of participation in favour of local municipalities”.

### Lack of funding for civil society engagement

One municipal official asserted that “The municipality does not have an adequate budget for their stakeholder involvement and that becomes an issue” It is telling that all DDM One Plan consultation that took place was funded under the otherwise unchanged IDP budget. Municipalities would claim, therefore, that it is not feasible for them to undertake comprehensive engagement with CSOs (especially small CBOs) on the Plan without additional funding.

Another official noted that:

*“The implementation of the One Plan relies on existing municipal resources. No budget was allocated for this component. So far, CoGTA has not yet addressed the gap or developed any mechanism to do so soon.”*

District and local municipalities felt, therefore, that they were simply not sufficiently capacitated to undertake comprehensive and meaningful consultation with local CSOs, let alone facilitate their inputs into phases 1 to 4 of the One Plan development. In noting that municipalities tend to be inadequately capacitated for community consultation, one national official noted that even the IDP offices are linked to political entities such as the Mayor’s office, which may have political interests and other priorities other than the One Plan. The official noted the importance of placing more emphasis on, and better capacitating, the public participation units at the municipalities. The provincial CoGTA departments should take responsibility to help link up the units at the provincial level.

One civil society specialist, however, questioned whether additional funds are needed for municipalities to “identify people who are in touch with local opinion and ensure that they are heard.” If municipalities are able to engage with traditional leaders and private sector representatives around the One Plan, (which Waterberg has done) then they should also be able to do so with grass-roots CBOs without requiring significantly more resources. The stakeholder asserted that a reason why traditional leaders and businesspeople have been included in the development of the One Plan is because the municipality knows who they



are and where to find them. However, it appears that the district and local municipalities do not have such knowledge in respect of most grassroots CSOs.

It may be, therefore, that the lack of engagement with CSOs in the development of the Waterberg One Plan was not so much due to a lack of resources as a lack of knowledge of who the groups are and how to contact them, and the fact that it was simply not a policy priority to try and do so. It should not take a substantial layout of resources or great technical skills to locate CSOs and community networks based in the municipality to engage them around One Plan. This very study is a case in point. The resources required for the researchers to locate 113 CSOs and to undertake a comprehensive survey with each of them were not substantial. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that the experiences and views of many communities are not entirely represented by a particular organisation(s). To reach unrepresented communities and ensure that they have the opportunity to contribute to the One Plan, municipalities may have to develop alternative spaces of engagement currently not created or facilitated by any CSO. This may require the municipality to be innovative and have access to at least some additional resources.

#### **A critique of the overall DDM in relation to civil society participation**

Despite the benefits that may be realised through the DDM, there is a need to critique the model given South Africa's experience with other programmes and the continued poor responses by local government to the needs of citizens, including community participation and accountability. All the municipal officials and CoGTA officials interviewed for this study explicitly indicated the value of the DDM as improving intergovernmental coordination. The responses of the officials regarding the DDMs assumes that the work of all three spheres of government will be improved if they coordinate. However, the DDM requires other elements beyond co-operation.

This evokes the issue of transparency and accountability within and between departments/municipality and between municipalities and CSOs. Furthermore, implementation of the strategies require much concerted efforts and commitment on the part of the municipal officials and the relevant state institutions.

Furthermore, poor performance of local government in civil society engagement is not necessarily a consequence of low capacity but other factors such as political will. In major metropolitan areas, local government may have greater capacity than their provincial equivalents. As per the observation of the civil society specialist who reviewed this document (in draft form), local government in rural and peri-urban areas has severe capacity constraints but it does not necessarily follow that these will be remedied by adding the capacity of other spheres. In fact, the DDM could potentially incapacitate local



government further by exacerbating bureaucratic processes thereby continuing to exclude local communities.

It could be argued that simply identifying immediate constraints to serving citizens well and finding ways to remove them would better serve municipalities than grand plans which are complex. As pointed out by a municipal official ‘our documents can be very complex’, an assertion pointing to the need to simplify written materials. Additionally, the Process Guidelines and the Content Guide suggest that a linear approach will exist in the One Plan. Whereas the One Plan is characterised by many stakeholders, a number of projects and long timelines is likely to result in overly complex processes. Thus, requiring special project management skills. Undoubtedly, over-complexity in projects can lead to project failure (Cristobal et al 2018, Parsons and Liu 2005).

The reliance on complex plans and the overemphasis on capacity at the expense of other factors requires attention because they affect the prospects for effective citizen participation in One Plans and DDM initiatives. In Waterberg, the One Plan was prepared by DBSA which is at odds with the DDM guidelines mandating the inclusion of multi-level stakeholders comprising CSOs. Whilst this study is cognisant of the fact that the Waterberg District One Plan is a pilot project, the marginalisation of the CSOs and other stakeholders meant that some of their specific needs were neglected. Hence, falling into the same de facto modus operandi (including local government processes) that has perpetuated silo-approaches in government and exclusion of civil society.

## PART VI: Conclusions and implications

The DDM, which seeks to improve intergovernmental relations, has not yet achieved this result in Waterberg District. Instead, poor intergovernmental communications among the different departments or between the local and district municipalities have characterised the process of the One Plan development. This factor has contributed to the inadequate awareness of CSOs about the DDM and the One Plans and has affected the quality of the engagement with civil society organisations. Illustratively, two local municipalities asserted that the One Plan was not properly introduced to them. A municipal official lamented that “this thing” (referring to the One Plan) was not well enshrined into the municipal system by the district municipality. He further expressed his frustration about the fact that they are expected to contribute to the main Waterberg District One Plan despite this limitation.

As noted in the Conceptual Framework section, this study included consideration of the Arnstein Ladder of Citizen Participation, which provides a continuum of participatory power that moves from non-participation to *citizen participation* (see page 11 for diagram).



The researchers have concluded that non-participation has characterised the development of the One Plan in Waterberg.

The study demonstrates that the culture of participation has not been inculcated in the DDM/One Plan. Instead, a majority of the grassroots CSOs were excluded in the diagnostic, vision-setting, and strategy development stages. As of August 2022, the One Plan was at the implementation stage. Whilst CSOs can still participate in the implementation stage, they have missed the early critical stages of the One Plan. Many of the CSOs interviewed indicated that, in particular, they would have liked to have been involved in the *diagnostic (situational analysis) phase*.

The One Plan is an important model, which seeks to translate community participation into tangible outcomes. It explicitly defines the stages in which the public can engage and highlights budgets for practical projects. However, there must be systematic facilitation of CSOs' involvement in the development and implementation of the One Plan. Furthermore, a commensurate budget needs to be allocated to the municipalities for effective engagement with CSOs and communities. The District Municipality did not receive funds for this purpose.

The findings also reveal that the Waterberg District One Plan is characterised by limited accountability to CSOs/communities regarding the implementation of projects and programmes. Reporting occurs in Council committees, as well as other spheres of government, but this information does not necessarily filter through to non-governmental organisations and communities. Other municipal officials mentioned that the Ward Committees represent the communities and have been informed about the DDM. The anticipation is that the ward committees share the information with the communities. In Bela-Bela, the Public Participation Officer clarified that the ward Committees' secretaries had input into the One Plan. Whilst the existing structures are critical, efforts are required to engage other CSOs. Nevertheless, some of the municipal officials also expressed their dissatisfaction concerning the poor responses of CSOs to local governance processes.

The Municipal Public Participation Officer also lamented the lack of knowledge retention as new councillors are appointed. Indeed, the new ward committees interviewed for this study did not know about the DDM and, overall, only 2 out of 12 Ward Committee members were aware of it. The officer's observation concurs with one participant CSO who opined, "at the local level, the problem is that every 5 years, a new council is elected, and some staff are moved to different departments". This indicates that the institutional knowledge, so important for the effective implementation of the DDM One Plan, may be lost over a relatively short period of time.



The Waterberg District Hub provides a critical platform to enable the participation of CSOs at least through representation. The municipal officials gave scant information on how the Hub operates. It is not fully staffed, nor does it provide adequate support to municipalities. The Waterberg District Hub must include CSOs representing diverse marginalised groups and communities, among other stakeholders. This is necessary because the DDM “roots development within communities and brings government closer to the people” (DPME 2020:9). Unfortunately, the aspirations espoused by the DDM and One Plan in relation to the District Hub have not yet materialised.

Other relevant state institutions active at the district level should also be represented in the Hub. These could include provincial departments such as Public Works, Social Development and Human Settlements as well as SOEs. Other national agencies with a stronger social development focus – possibly including the National Development Agency – could look at having a presence in, or at least provide support to, the Hub.

In its efforts to facilitate participation in the development of the One Plan, the municipality utilised its existing processes and methods to develop the IDP in a parallel way. While, as usual in the development of the IDP, this brought in many important stakeholders (among them the private sector, academics and traditional councils), the IDP consultative process is not a very effective one in terms of including small CBOs. The study revealed that it was such very organisations that were largely excluded – however unintentionally – from participating.

It must be recognised that the municipality went to significant lengths to invite public participation including radio, notices in libraries and utilising its website. However, the severe under-resourcing of most CSOs (and the fact that many are poorly organised), meant that such communication efforts did not reach most of the CSOs interviewed for this study. A more effective method may have been to approach such groups directly, although the district municipality would claim that it did not have the resources for this. In fact, the municipality claimed that it did not have the funds to reimburse travel costs for CSO representatives to attend DDM-related meetings.

The roles of the Political Champions in ensuring sector and government-wide participation in the development and implementation of One Plan (DPME 2020) remains only partly fulfilled. When asked about the political champions, the DBSA senior official indicated that they had little information on how the champions function in practice. Noteworthy, is that the President is the key political champion, thus, many of his speeches contain statements





about the DDM. It is unclear how the other political champions, including mayors, promote wider participation.

The fact that some of the municipal officials who participated in the study indicated that they generally have inadequate knowledge about the One Plan is a concern. One participant explained that all municipal officials in strategic departments should be trained to improve coordination and minimise impediments within the municipalities. Of the CSOs surveyed, only one had heard about the One Plan from a ward councillor, and neither of the ward councillors surveyed were well informed about it. This suggests that a much stronger effort needs to be made to educate ward councillors about the One Plan and to support them in the role of engaging their constituents around it.

Similarly, the institutions involved in the DDM have not yet maximised their efforts. For instance, the DBSA mentioned that the Covid-19 pandemic hampered their efforts to reach out to CSOs. The DBSA is CoGTA's client mandated to facilitate the implementation of the One Plan in the district municipalities. Arguably, they have the responsibility to support municipalities in actively promoting the involvement of CSOs. This responsibility also lies with the National and Provincial CoGTA, institutions that have not yet participated in this study.

Critically, the designing, implementation and monitoring of any socioeconomic development programme, not least the One Plan, should take into cognisance the special needs of, inter alia, women, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups. Chambers (2014) uses the case study of India to emphasise the importance of encouraging awareness of rights, solidarity, and collective power of these groups in monitoring a programme.

The findings also show that CSOs are experiencing research fatigue and many expressed their scepticism about participating in the study. They lamented that previous studies on participation have not yielded the expected substantive results. For example, one participant asked the question "what happened to the results of the previous studies"? The sentiments demonstrate that CSOs have less confidence in local government interventions. This may be one factor also discouraging them from engaging with the municipality on local government issues, leading in turn to even greater alienation from democratic decision-making processes.

The fact that CSOs have less confidence in municipalities warrants the creation of mutual trust, and developing partnerships, between community, CSOs and municipalities. Raising awareness of the DDM and educating the CSOs regarding the One Plan is one way of cultivating trust and improving the confidence in local government. Such efforts are





necessary because some of the CSOs have gained grassroots legitimacy. As observed by Planact (2016:45): “when community members know that their actions will be taken seriously they tend to make time for engagement”.

Notably, and as observed by Planact (2020), communities are not routinely equipped with relevant information and insights to participate in a deliberative process of determining priorities and trade-offs. This study has demonstrated the same phenomenon concerning CSOs in the Waterberg District One Plan. There is also usually a lack of feedback to communities once consultative processes have run their course. The Waterberg District One Plan is characterised by both poor information and inadequate consultation.

The One Plan comprises target projects and, therefore, understanding the stages and educating the CSOs on the targets could serve as a basis for their monitoring during the implementation and evaluation stages. Municipal officials observed that the monitoring and evaluation of the One Plan has not yet included civil society organisations. While it is true that One Plan is less than two years old, some form of monitoring by CSOs should have already taken place. However, the CSOs are largely not aware of the One Plan so it is not possible for them to play any such role.

However, this study takes cognisance of the factors, which municipal officials and DBSA highlighted as having constrained effective engagement with CSOs. Impeding factors were the pandemic and the lock-down restrictions and lack of access to the internet, which made it difficult to employ virtual platforms. Whilst such factors are important, this study concludes that much more effort and support could have been provided to CSOs to participate in the different stages of the One Plan.

An engagement plan cannot be “one size fits all”. The Municipality should undertake an assessment as to which sorts of innovative alternative spaces it could create with CSOs to best facilitate their understanding of, and input into, One Plan, spaces (and methods) that are adaptive to various types of CSOs. The CSOs’ poor awareness regarding the Waterberg District One Plan is indicative of the fact that the vast majority did not make comments on the One Plan before finalisation.

Existing IDP consultative mechanisms are not working in terms of including a wide range of CSOs in DDM One Plan consultation. Community-based organisations (CBOs) in particular need to be reached out to and engaged with directly.

Among other factors outlined in this report, the study found that the use of technology in local government is likely to improve the flow of information and interaction between



municipalities and the CSOs regarding the One Plan. The use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Skype give these communities a voice in the comfort of their homes. CSOs should be given the opportunity to use social media platforms and virtual meeting spaces to provide inputs into municipal budgeting and IDP development processes (in addition to One Plan).

However, methods of engagement must also be established for CSOs whose access to social media is limited. This may include greater efforts to meet representatives of such groups face-to-face in their communities in the same way that municipal representatives went directly to traditional leaders to undertake DDM One Plan consultation.

While acknowledging that most of the CSOs surveyed for this study have very limited resources, they should also be proactive in terms of educating themselves as to how they could make a policy impact at local level, at least to the extent that their capacity allows. This would necessitate CSOs mapping local government participatory development structures and supporting each other in order to make such an impact.

As previously noted, the One Plan Process Guidelines (CoGTA 2020) mandates civil society participation in stages 1 to 4 of the Plan's development. This study, however, finds that there is a strong will among many of the CSOs interviewed to be involved in stage 7, namely, *implementation, monitoring and reviewing*. Some of the literature, such as Isandla Institute (2019), outlines the benefits of municipalities involving CSOs in activities such as these. Many CSOs are well placed to collaborate with the municipality on implementing monitoring and review activities. Being close to the ground, many will have unique skills and insights, which they can bring to enhance these stages.

While the DDM is progressive in terms of enshrining community participation in the One Plan, especially in the diagnostic, vision setting, and strategy development stages, translating it into practice requires conscientious effort on the part of the multi-level stakeholders. The findings of this study revealed that more than 90% of the CSOs interviewed were not aware of the DDM and the One Plan. Such findings suggest limited engagements were conducted with civil society organisations concerning the One Plan. Yet the stages provide critical opportunities for community engagements.

The study also concludes that there should be more interactions between national CoGTA and political champions. Ministers and deputy ministers are deployed by the President and assigned specific DDM responsibilities and CoGTA is responsible for coordinating the work of these political champions. Such ministers and deputy ministers must find a space to unblock challenges to the implementation of One Plans at the municipal level. This could



include, for example, challenges in implementing road improvement commitments. Once aware of the challenge, the champion should (in this example) engage directly with the transport minister to address it. Ministers and deputy ministers appointed as political champions should be reporting their DDM activities to CoGTA, but that department is not receiving such reports.

It must be understood that the DDM is not just a CoGTA programme – it is an all-of government initiative. Other departments in all three spheres must utilise the civil society networks and consultative processes they already have in order to incorporate engagement around the DDM, and work more closely with CoGTA concerning such engagements.

## PART VII: Recommendations

While the following recommendations are applicable to the Waterberg District Municipality moving forward, they are mainly intended for the many targeted municipalities which have not yet begun the process of developing their One Plan.

1. CoGTA and municipalities should create an enabling environment by developing comprehensive guidelines for involving CSOs in the One Plan.
  - The guidelines should include clear agreements and systems to guide the partnership between the government institutions and the CSOs.
  - CSOs should be given equal rights in the One Plan and ensure that their contributions are validated where necessary and not excluded.
  - The guidelines should be flexible enough to recognise that the nature of civil society engagement may differ between municipalities given differing levels of CSO organisation, as well as demographic, cultural and socioeconomic differences.
2. Provincial CoGTA and district municipalities should develop a comprehensive DDM awareness-raising programme aimed at reaching many more CSOs, with the inclusion of CBOs in particular.
  - Provincial Cogta and district municipalities should establish an intergovernmental public participation forum comprising all the local municipalities to implement the awareness-raising programme about the District Development Model aimed at reaching all the CSOs.
  - The programme should be inclusive of technological modes and innovative methods of raising awareness.



3. Provincial CoGTA, district and local municipalities should (possibly utilising the intergovernmental forum outlined above) mobilise CSOs and facilitate a network that will actively engage and represent CSOs in the development, implementation and evaluation of the One Plan.
4. Drawing on support from the Hub, district and local municipalities should provide legislative, planning and budgeting support to CSOs during the engagement on each stage of the One Plan to maximise the CSOs' capability to meaningfully contribute to the plan.
5. District and local municipalities should mainstream One Plan consultation processes with disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth and people with disabilities, and encourage awareness of rights and solidarity in preventing attempts to divert benefits.
6. In consultation with the local municipalities and other stakeholders, the district municipality should conduct a comprehensive stakeholders mapping exercise and constantly updated central database of CSOs active in the Waterberg area. As part of this exercise, the municipality could also classify the organisations according to their sectorial focus.
7. Currently, municipalities are only funded for the operation of the DDM Hubs. National Government (Treasury and CoGTA) should make funds available to municipalities to enable them to undertake much broader civil society engagement. Such funds need to be ring-fenced specifically for community engagement around the One Plan.
8. CoGTA and DBSA should develop a clear mechanism of publishing and implementing changes emanating from the public consultation. Such mechanisms would help restore the confidence of CSOs in local government and promote their participation in the DDM and the development of the One Plan.
9. Municipalities should ensure that public participation occurs earlier in the One Plan, in particular the diagnostic stage to vision setting.
10. CoGTA (National and Provincial) and DBSA should develop a training manual on the DDM (adaptable to differing conditions in local municipalities) to improve municipal capacity to understand and implement the One Plan and meaningfully facilitate CSOs' inclusion. The training manual should be employed to develop the capacity of councillors, municipal officials and CSOs to engage meaningfully in the One Plan.



11. Municipalities should ensure that all members of ward committees are trained on the DDM One Plan and that they have the mechanisms to engage CSOs on One Plan development.
12. CoGTA should ensure that the design of monitoring and evaluation tools for the One Plan are designed to capture the views of the different stakeholders and thereby broadening civil society inputs.
13. Municipalities should maximise the use of technology, including social media, to allow easy access of CSOs, and, in particular youth, women's and people with disabilities organisations for information and engagements. However, municipalities should also make provisions for face-to-face consultations with those CSOs with limited access to technology.
14. CSOs should make every effort to map out opportunities for input into local government policymaking, including the development of the One Plan and the IDP.
15. The scope of the DDM Hub should be extended to include a strong focus on facilitating CSO participation. Provisions should be made for greater CSO representation on the Hub.
  - The Hub should aim to improve openness and sharing of information within the Hub and with partners
  - The Hub and the CSOs should develop an alliance with the Sustainable Development Knowledge Hub based in Pretoria to share information and innovative solutions relevant to the One Plan.
16. Acknowledging that the views and experiences of many communities are not necessarily represented by CSOs, municipalities need to develop or facilitate alternative spaces of engagement with such communities around the One Plan. There is a strong case for the Treasury to provide municipalities with some additional funding for special initiatives such as these.
17. The political champions should report their DDM-related activities to CoGTA on a regular basis. They should also intervene with the relevant ministers as necessary as possible, in order to address blockages in implementing specific One Plan objectives.



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18. Ministers should utilise any CSO consultative networks they currently have for their portfolios for the purposes of DDM and One Plan engagement.



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