



Performance Management and the Integrated Development Plan of the Msunduzi Municipality in South Africa

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Abstract

Poor local government performance has been detrimental to South Africa's development. The study explores the challenge(s) the Msunduzi Local Municipality is facing in ensuring good performance necessary for achieving its planned development. The study argues that flaws in the management of performance lead to poor performance. This research was interpretivist, used a case-study strategy and adopted a qualitative design/approach. Secondary data in the form of municipal publications and primary data in the form of interview information was collected and analysed. The findings demonstrated that there is a lack of alignment between the planned development and the necessary performance to achieve it in the Msunduzi Local Municipality. The Key Performance Areas of top managers were not aligned to the Integrated Development Plan goals; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were internally rather than externally focused; some of the KPIs were too vague to be measurable, and there was no agreement on the top five strategic objectives of the Municipality. This research investigation sought to contribute to the limited understanding of municipal performance and development policy alignment by improving municipal service delivery in developing countries. Lessons have been learnt on the need for policy alignment based on holistic thinking.

Keywords:

performance management, integrated development plan, performance management system, key performance areas, key performance indicators

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1. Introduction

The performance of government institutions has always been controversial, as long as the system of collective goods produced by public authorities has existed (Van der Walddt 2006). Early in the nineties, the concept of Performance Management was introduced as a way of managing the performance of government institutions in an effort to increase the performance of these institutions (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). However, this has not contributed to much improvement in public institutions in both developed and developing countries. The issue of poor performance of government institutions is more severe in developing countries, ironically where effective government performance is the most needed (Reddy et al. 2015). For example, local government's performance in South Africa (SA) has received increased negative attention because its performance post-Apartheid has remained poor. This is evident in the annual reports of the country's Auditor General (AG) (Mafolo 2012), which are compiled by the Supreme Audit Institution of South Africa and by law the only institution that has the authority to audit and also report publicly on how government (at the national, provincial and local government levels) is using taxpayers' money (Auditor General of South Africa/AGSA 2020).

When South Africa became a democratic country in 1994, government embarked on a process of radically transforming all spheres of government in order to position them to provide public services equally to all citizens, regardless of their race, gender and religion in an effective, efficient and economic (EEE) manner. This was aimed at addressing and eradicating the legacy of Apartheid, which promoted segregation and discrimination in the country. To achieve this, New Public Management (NPM) as an approach was embraced, and the concept of performance management and related systems was introduced at all government levels (see Asmah-Andoh 2009). There are three levels in South Africa's government: national, provincial and local government. Local government is broken down into three categories of municipalities in South Africa:

- Category A municipalities: metropolitan municipalities which have exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in their area/s.
- Category B municipalities: local municipalities which share municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality within whose area it falls, and
- Category C municipalities: district municipalities that have municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one local municipality.

(Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, 82).

Public service provision at the local government level entails addressing the basic needs of communities, such as clean water and sanitation, electricity and providing basic infrastructure necessary for socio-economic development, but within the financial and the administrative capacity of a municipality (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996). However, this has not always been the case (see Khumalo, Mthuli and Singh 2019). On many occasions, provincial or national government has had to step in (*as prescribed by the Constitution*) to assist local government, in meeting their Constitutional obligations listed in Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). In addition, there has been an ever-growing spate of public service delivery protests, which have been directed at municipalities due to public outrage over their poor performance, stemming from a lack of EEE public service delivery (see Asmah-Andoh 2009). The Msunduzi Local Municipality has been one of these municipalities in South Africa. The Msunduzi Local Municipality is a category B municipality, within the Umgungundlovu District Municipality, which is a category C municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Thus, the goal of this study was to explore the challenges facing the Msunduzi Local Municipality in ensuring good performance, necessary for achieving its planned development. To achieve this goal, the research methodology applied is highlighted below.

The study was guided by a qualitative research approach adopting a Case study strategy (Creswell and Creswell 2018), using both secondary and primary data. Secondary data pertained to documents relating to the Performance Management (PM) of the Msunduzi Local Municipality and its Integrated Development Plan (IDP). All the secondary data sources, in the form of official municipal documents, were downloaded from the Msunduzi Local Municipality's internet site. Primary data was collected by interviewing six members of the top management of the Msunduzi Local Municipality, with the use of an interview schedule/guide consisting of open-ended questions. Purposive sampling was employed in sourcing these respondents as they comprised the top management of the Municipality, and their job descriptions indicated that they were knowledgeable on the issue being researched. A process of thematic analysis was used to analyse the primary and secondary data. By adopting the funnel approach (ul Haque et al. 2018), the paper begins by reflecting on the challenge of public administration and local government performance globally. This is then followed by an examination of public administration and local government performance and management in South Africa. Subsequently, the findings are presented and discussed, and conclusions made.

2. Performance management at different levels of governance

A wave of global public-sector reforms in the late seventies to the nineties triggered a body of research and knowledge around the management of performance in public administration (Steccolini et al. 2020). Policies of prominent Western gov-

ernments, such as that of Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom (U.K.) and President Reagan of the United States of America (U.S.A.) spearheaded the shift towards managing performance in the public sector, by adopting and applying key private sector principles to it (Hood 1991; Hughes 2012; George et al. 2020). This included infusing economic principles of rationality and result orientation into public practice, aided by tools and processes in the public sector (Hood 1991). It thus came to be known as New Public Management (NPM), which had two main focuses, namely, to limit the role of government in service delivery and, secondly, to improve the performance of public institutions, with the first focus remaining highly debated till today (de Vries and Nemec 2013).

Performance Management (PM) was and still remains the lifeblood of the NPM movement (Olson et al. 1998). NPM stimulated the use of PM practices and research in the public sector (see Steccolini 2019; Steccolini et al. 2020), as well as the use of mechanisms such as systems that would ensure accountability in public institutions, assuming that this would translate to better policy outcomes (Taylor 2009; Kroll 2014). The management and evaluation of performance, however, does not always produce effective results, or worse it may create negative effects (Nemec et al. 2008). Many of these NPM reforms have had little success in both developed and developing countries (see Nemec 2010). The benefits of NPM-driven reforms have not been felt substantially in developed countries because they tend to be centred on “control” and “blame” instead of “trust” and “cooperation” (Osborne 2006; Koppenjan 2012; George et al. 2020; Hood 2011; Nielsen and Baekgaard 2015). In Europe, Nemec (2010) observed that NPM was being misused for cost-cutting, while Plaček et al. (2020) observed in the Czech Republic that reaching for efficiency through cost-cutting negates vital factors, such as the community’s satisfaction and the quality of public services. NPM can be utilised for efficiency, especially post the financial crises of 2008–2009 (Nemec 2010); however, regions in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have had mixed successes and failures (Bouckaert et al. 2011). The performance of public institutions is most critical at the local government level because this is where citizens interact with government.

The performance of local governments around the world has been closely linked to capacity, especially in regions such as Africa and in Europe, where much research has been done on this topic. In CEE, performance has been linked to transformation from Socialism to Capitalism and recently partially likened to “local intellectual capacity” (Nemec 2010). The CEE states adopted various NPM reforms, when they shifted from socialism to capitalism (Bouckaert et al. 2011). Initially, public spending efficiency was an issue (Hronec 2019) in CEE. Furthermore, there were issues around the proper implementation of PM and its systems because it has been “over-politicised” in the public sector, while being challenged by limited resources and a lack of the necessary policy management capacities and PM experience (Nemec et al. 2008). Local governments’ capabilities and performance in CEE is connected to the fact that it is very developed when compared to other regions

in other continents (Nemec and de Vries 2015). This, however, does not mean it is perfect, as there remain many underlying challenges and reduced financial funds after the 2008 financial crises, while municipal obligations remain unchanged or have sometimes increased.

In other areas around the world, such as Australia, government at the local level has remained weak because an increase in the responsibilities of local government has not taken policy centre stage in terms of federalising some functions. There has been:

no concerted policy direction in recent years to devolve greater levels of responsibility for policy making, management, financial autonomy and implementation of national goals to the third tier of government (Ryan and Woods 2015, 244).

In Australia, while the country largely has well educated staff, in terms of the capability and capacity required, there is a huge gap amongst rural and urban municipalities (Ryan and Woods 2015). In other regions, such as Post-Soviet Central Asia and more specifically in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, local governments' capabilities are challenges in addressing citizens' needs and concerns. However, this is particularly complicated as addressing these needs and concerns all relate to aspects of policy that local government cannot address alone, because it is heavily dependent on central government on all aspects of policy at the local government level (Urinboyev 2015).

Africa has not been immune to these problems. According to Mutahaba and Pastory (2015), in the East Africa region consisting of Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, for decades the centralism of government debilitated many institutions after independence. This then has made them incapable of providing services owing to an absence of autonomy and human and financial resources, whilst underdevelopment remains rife in rural areas. In other regions in the continent, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the poor performance of local governments has been connected to insufficient human capacity (Reddy and Kauzya 2015). Botswana has also experienced challenges in the implementation of its Performance Management Systems (Sisa et al. 2015).

The successful international implementation of PM policy is influenced by a number of factors at the local government level (Reddy et al. 2015), such as the prevailing organisational culture (Pearse and Williams 2009), the political situation, lack of resources and capacities (Urinboyev 2015), lack of, or absence of, the necessary experience amongst the elected and the appointed (Nemec et al. 2008). Globally, the good performance of municipalities is key to achieving local government's development goals, making public-service delivery dependent not only on capacity, but also on well-crafted policy and effective policy implementation. The successful implementation of well-crafted policies depends significantly on the effective man-

agement of performance in public institutions, especially in countries such as South Africa, where service delivery remains poor. The next section provides a detailed examination of the challenges in performance and management of service delivery at the local government level in SA.

3. Performance management in south africa: a local government perspective

In South Africa, post-1994, the democratic government's transformation agenda has been pillared on having a culture of performance (Pearse and Williams 2009). However, the poor performance of municipalities in the country is a matter of concern. This is evident in the reports of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) (Mafolo 2012; Magoro 2015). South Africa's attempts to address the needs of the country, especially its majority Black population who were discriminated against under apartheid, has been slow and ineffectual. The performance of local government is very poor in South Africa, and this is further evidenced by the fact that even the Tshwane Municipality, in which the capital city of South Africa (Pretoria) is located was in 2019 placed "under administration". Municipalities are placed under administration as prescribed by Section 139 of the Constitution (1996) when either a local, district, or metropolitan municipality fails to fulfil its executive responsibilities constitutionally. Provincial government then intervenes in local government matters. In KZN, eight municipalities are under Section 139 intervention according to South Africa's Parliamentary Monitoring Group/PMG (PMG 2020a).

In this context and to improve the performance of government institutions at all levels, the use of performance management systems (PMSs) was introduced to support the new transformed local government system post-1994 according to the White Paper on Local Government (Republic of South Africa, 1998) and to ensure that the government was more responsive to the needs of communities (Pearse and Williams 2009). The purpose of PMSs is to facilitate the achievement of planned development as espoused in the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of municipalities, as well as to promote good service delivery at the local sphere of government. Hence, at the community level PMSs seek to improve public service delivery (Magoro 2016), whilst the IDP is a municipality's strategic plan that highlights service delivery priorities (Manyaka and Sebola 2015). The implementation of PM and PM systems, and the monitoring and evaluation thereof, has not fully resulted in positive results at the local government level in South Africa. Performance is the key indicator of the effectiveness of top managements' contribution to achieving the goals of any organisation (Turner et al. 2004). However, it seems that PMSs have only been implemented for regulatory compliance by bureaucrats, and managers have been found not to possess the adequate knowledge of monitoring and evaluating performance necessary to take advantage of the benefits of such systems for managing performance (Govender and Reddy 2014).

In South Africa, the IDP is a policy document which describes the municipality's plan for encouraging development in the area by explicating the municipality's goals, public service delivery and priority areas (Key Performance Areas). Municipal managers are guided by it and work towards achieving the IDP goals and objectives in their municipality. It has to be aligned to National Key Performance Areas, and it is supported by the Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan, the IDP Process Plan and managements' performance agreements.

3.1 The Integrated Development Plan and Performance

The objectives of the IDP are recognised as "strategic objectives" to be achieved by municipalities (Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000). The IDP consists of a "Process Plan" which highlights the milestones and activities that need to be achieved by a municipality. It also plays a vital role in indicating the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) that are necessary to ensure the proper implementation of the IDP (Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000). Thus, the management of performance at the local government level needs to be based on the alignment of the IDP objectives, KPAs (herein referred to as performance areas), and KPIs (herein referred to as performance indicators). This can only be achieved by looking at a municipality's performance in a holistic manner. This notion is supported by Van der Walddt (2006, 133), who proposed that:

The improvement of performance should not merely be seen as a mechanistic process of converting input into output, but the whole question of performance should be managed in terms of a holistic approach. This means that the field of performance management encompasses a host of aspects that can contribute either to its overall success or to its ultimate failure.

The IDP (herein referred to as a planned development policy), requires that municipalities set long-term development goals and align all their business processes to support the achievement of these goals. However, Performance Management Systems (PMSs) (hereafter also referred to as performance systems) in most South African municipalities are unfortunately inconsistent and not holistic (Manyaka and Sebola 2015). It is thus the role of top management in municipalities in the country to ensure the alignment of their performance areas with planned development policy and goals, and there should exist a PM process with a comprehensive performance system in place to direct and achieve institutional performance. Institutional performance is primarily measured by a municipality's ability and progress in meeting planned development policy goals – by way of an example, ensuring Local Economic Development which would cut youth unemployment by a predetermined percentage by a given date. Managing performance is a managerial task which not only ensures that an organisation's goals and objectives are achieved, but also that it occurs in an effective and efficient manner (Mafolo 2012). Hence, the

role of top management cannot be understated in PM, and aligning performance systems to performance indicators and to the municipality's strategic goals is imperative.

While performance has been traditionally defined, in terms of a range of different workplace activities, the current preference is to define performance according to the outcomes of work and the extent to which the outcomes reflect the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals. However, in the South African context, performance systems are generally poorly understood and ineffectively implemented in the public service sector (Munzhedzi and Phago 2014), especially at the local government level.

Various tools are used by top management to manage performance in local government in South Africa, such as the Balanced Score Card (BSC). According to Ndevu and Muller (2018, 1), the BSC:

... as a performance management tool enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into goals or actions.

The use of the BSC to assist in improving municipal performance can, however, only fully generate the desired results if there is transparency and all stakeholders are involved in the review of the performance. Ndevu and Muller (2018) found it to be a challenge in the Joe Gqabi District Municipality, whilst Munzhedzi and Phago (2014) also identified similar challenges in the Limpopo Province in South Africa, where there were biased and subjective performance assessments, and the setting of unrealistic performance targets resulted in low performance levels and targets not being achieved and realised.

Another tool used by some municipalities in South Africa to improve performance is known as Performance Management Agreements (PMAs), which are targeted at managers at senior level. However, despite the implementation of PMAs, a number of municipalities remain challenged with meeting targets in their service delivery as detailed in their planned development policies (Magoro 2015). In the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality Magoro (2015) found that PMAs could serve as mechanisms for planning properly, evaluating and reporting performance as well as allocating resources to reach the desired outcomes. For this to happen, PMAs were dependent on available resources and the political conditions within the Municipality.

There seems to be a link between the political will of the elected leaders and performance in local government in South Africa (see Moshikaro and Pencelliah 2016), although there is a paucity of research in this area in South Africa and globally. In terms of leadership, Dweba (2017, 431) posited that there seemed to be a "link between a leader's behavioural complexity and effective organisational performance", while Isaacs (2016) believed that the ideal choice of leadership style for

PM was transformational leadership. In addition, in South Africa, there tends to exist tension between the political and administrative leaderships within municipalities, which challenges the effective implementation of PM in these municipalities (Pearse and Williams 2009). On the other hand, Manyaka and Sebola (2012) were of the view that poor service delivery and PM in South Africa is a result of high-quality policy ideas being poorly implemented due to a lack of commitment from those in charge.

In addition to effective leadership, the establishment and maintenance of high-performance teams is necessary to achieve an organisation's objectives more effectively and efficiently (Kanyane and Mabelane 2009; Stroh 2005). The ability of team leaders and/or managers to think and analyse situations is important because they must be able to formulate strategies, taking into account the situation, their priorities and the resources at their disposal (Stroh 2005). Erasmus (2008) argued that performance is greatly influenced by the skills of line managers and that certain competencies are necessary for them to execute their duties. Other scholars point to the need for training of managers and general staff, which can improve staff morale and overall managerial commitment (Manyaka and Sebola 2012, 2015; Kubheka and Tshiyoyo 2018). Hence, issues of performance in the public sector are influenced not only by those at top management levels, but by employees at lower levels, as well. This was supported by Sebashe and Mtapuri (2011), who pointed out that performance systems in the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality, in the Province of Limpopo in South Africa, were flawed because there was very limited involvement of employees in the development of PMSs. In addition, there was an absence of the skills necessary to tackle flaws in their performance systems, and performance compensation was not provided to the best performing employees, while most of them did not have an idea of their performance targets. This jeopardised the correct implementation of their performance system, which negatively impacted on the Municipality's effectiveness, efficiency and ability to use its scarce resources (Sebashe and Mtapuri 2011).

PM in South African municipalities is poorly understood (Jooste and Botha 2018), which has resulted in the ineffective implementation of performance systems (Magoro 2016). This is further impeded by incompetent management and poor leadership with regards to PM (Manyaka and Sebola 2015; Isaacs 2016). Kanyane and Mabelane (2009) observe that government institutions in the country cannot yield the same results when managing performance as the private sector, because there are skills inadequacies. The management of performance is not simply about complying with PM policy and having systems and skills in place to ensure performance. Formulating informed performance indicators in order to accurately monitor and evaluate performance is also of utmost importance in performance management.

3.2 The role of indicators in Performance Management

Violent public-service delivery protests and their regular occurrence in South Africa are generally seen as an indicator that something might be wrong in a municipality. This indicates that there is a need to develop indicators to measure the performance of government, but also to act as early warning signs for the prevention of service delivery protests that may end up being destructive. However, the process of developing such indicators must be informed by the community (see Van der Walldt 2006). Policy impact indicators in the past have been insufficiently used in South Africa and, if used correctly, can enable government to successfully evaluate the impact of its policies and programmes (Cloete 2004). The planned development policy of any municipality outlines its development priorities, while also expressing statements of the outcomes expected from the municipality and from individual performance within the municipality (Govender and Reddy 2014). Figure 1 presents this flow and alignment between municipal performance and policy objectives.

Figure 1
Aligning performance areas and indicators with planned development policy



Source: Authors

Managers must determine the performance areas for each job and ensure that the performance areas are aligned to municipal objectives. As indicated above in Figure 1, this requires that a clear flow from the planned development to individual performance be identified. Individual performance can be the achievement of action plans or projects which then directly affect the policy outcomes by reaching what was desired. Nevertheless, for this to truly happen Key Performance Areas (KPA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) need to also align. If there is no

clear flow and alignment, this can lead to poor performance because of a mismatch between policy objectives and policy desires or “negative” policy outcomes.

KPAs are the areas of responsibility associated with each job, and KPIs are metrics that inform employees how well they are doing in their performance areas. A performance indicator is an exact measure that reveals the degree to which an organisation is attaining a particular goal or objective (Parmenter 2012). Thus, if performance indicators are inappropriate or wrong, they can generally have the opposite of the desired effect on an organisation. Performance indicators may consist of direct or indirect indicators (Holloway 2009; Parmenter 2012). Performance indicators can also be used to measure quality (Cohen and Bruijns 2018). Well-constructed performance areas contribute to improved performance by assisting individuals to gain a deeper understanding of their priorities and the outcomes they must achieve and to understand more clearly the connections between their roles and their relationship to the organisation’s strategic objectives. Furthermore, this enables them to set targets and objectives for themselves and to pace their performance, and the focus should be on results, rather than activities (Neely 1999; Parmenter 2012).

Ideally, performance indicators ought to flow in a logical manner from level to level in an organisation as this will assist employees in aligning their actions with the organisation’s plan (Parmenter 2012). In underperforming organisations there could be an inadequate understanding of how performance is accomplished, for example how performance indicators effect outcomes and each other (see Manyaka and Sebola 2015; Jooste and Botha 2018), or a lack of understanding of the relationship between the organisation’s strategic goals and employees’ activities. In the Makhuthamaga Local Municipality in the Province of Limpopo, South Africa, Magoro (2016) observed something similar. He established that there were differing understandings amongst municipal employees of what PM was, and this negatively affected its implementation. Shrinivasan, Dasgupta, Desai and Nallacherry (2012) and Dasgupta, Shrinivasan, Nayak and Nallacherry (2013) cited in Jooste and Botha (2018) note that performance indicators are linked; hence improving one might impair another while in some cases, the effect of a performance indicator can be delayed.

Parmenter (2012) is of the view that performance indicators are usually set by managers either in a way that does not support an organisation’s strategic direction or sometimes is in conflict with it, where they consequently become dysfunctional. Performance indicators in local government are vital, hence choosing the correct indicator to measure each aspect of performance is of utmost importance (Van der Waldt 2014). They highlight some examples as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1
Indicators and measurements of local government

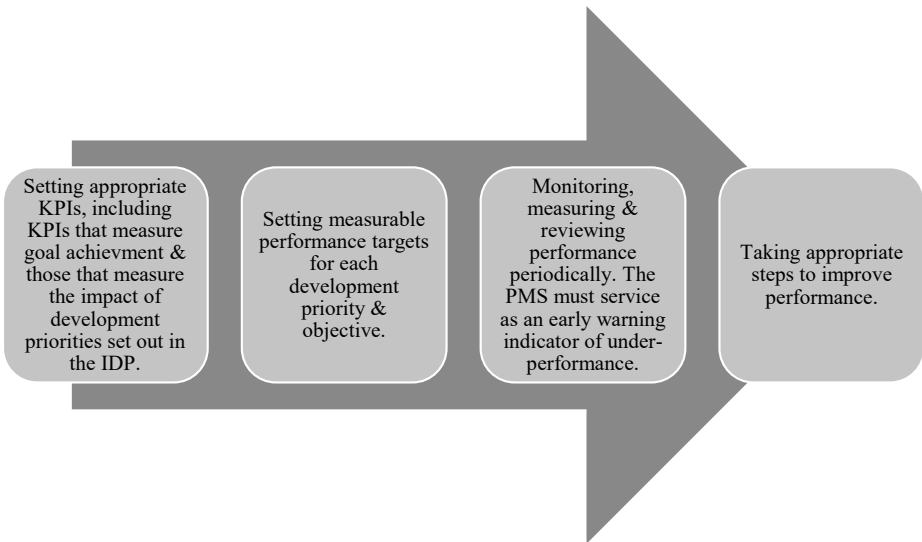
Indicator	What it measures
Input indicators	Quantitative measures of: • Cost-effectiveness in the procurement, use of materials, equipment and personnel. • Efficiency in the use of time and other resources in order to deliver services.
Output indicators	Quantitative measures of whether activities and work procedures produce the desired results.
Outcome indicator	Qualitative measures of whether policies and programmes produce the desired results and impacts.
Process indicators	Quantitative and qualitative measures of whether systems and processes produce the desired results.
Baseline indicators	The current situation and the gap that must be bridged to achieve the desired results.

Source: Van der Waldt (2014, 39)

The table above has presented the different types of indicators and what they measure. The lack of clear expectations or direction of what is to be achieved creates uncertainty and ineffectiveness, and negatively affects the performance of an organisation. For indicators to have a positive effect they need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive); hence good indicators are those that meet the SMART criteria (Doran 1981; Shahin and Mahbod 2007). The figure below illustrates the core components of a municipal performance system.

South Africa's Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations require that municipalities set performance areas that include input performance indicators, output indicators and outcome indicators. A performance indicator must be quantifiable, objective, and exact, especially considering the state of local government in South Africa and the communities' dissatisfaction with its performance. It should not reach a point of community service delivery protests as being indicators of issues in public service delivery. To enhance an understanding of all that has been previously discussed, the case study of the Msunduzi Local Municipality is highlighted below. The study explores the challenges the Msunduzi Local Municipality is facing in ensuring the performance necessary for achieving its planned development as envisioned in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Figure 2
Core Elements of a Municipal Performance Management System



Source: Craythorne (2006, 120–122)

4. The challenge of ensuring good performance for planned development

Local government in South Africa has the right to govern its own local affairs, but is subject to provincial and national laws as prescribed by the Constitution (Constitution 1996). Municipalities tend to perform far worse than provincial and national government and the Msunduzi Local Municipality is no exception. The Municipality, which is in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), was placed “under administration” in February 2010 and again in April 2019. In 2010, the reasons given were weak financial systems and institutional capacity resulting in basic service delivery challenges, as well as overall poor performance (PMG 2010). The Municipality is located in the city of Pietermaritzburg, the second largest city in the province of KZN, home to both the legislative and the administrative capital of the province. The Municipality has an estimated population of 618,536 people with an unemployment rate of 33 % and youth unemployment of 43.1 %. Only 51.6 % of the households have flushing toilets connected to a municipal sewerage system, 53.2 % with weekly municipal refuse removal, 47.9 % with piped water inside the dwellings and 73.7 % residing in formal dwellings, while 91.9 % of the households have electricity (Statistics South Africa 2021).

Recently, in 2019, there were failures in basic service delivery, legal compliance, organisational policies, procedures, systems and governance resulting in poor performance overall (PMG 2020b). This impacted negatively on the Municipality's objectives as found in its planned development policy document, i.e. its *IDP*. The planned development policy document/*IDP* is a blueprint for development and performance systems are fundamental policy monitoring and evaluating mechanisms. The provincial government in addressing the challenges facing the Municipality developed a turn-around strategy that was composed of plans to address financial management, infrastructure development, community participation and good governance for the Msunduzi Local Municipality. Since then, the Municipality has recovered from a state of near bankruptcy, but other challenges remain, such as poor service delivery and insufficient infrastructural development, which appear to have not yet been successfully addressed. This study argues that the Municipality remains challenged with ensuring good performance necessary for planned development to be realised because of flaws in its PM. This study shows that there are shortcomings in the way the Municipality has aligned its objectives, process plans and performance areas with national priorities and local needs, while the implementation of performance systems and indicators are superficial. In examining PM in the Msunduzi Local Municipality, this study identifies these flaws in its PM process as detailed below.

4.1 Flaws in the PM processes of the Msunduzi Local Municipality

The analysis points out that the Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan (SDBIP) of the Msunduzi Local Municipality does attempt to align its strategic objectives to the key performance areas (KPA) of top managers and to their Performance Agreements (PAs). However, the problem identified is that there exists no "tangible" link between the KPAs of the top managers and "tangible" performance indicators. There are also no precise measures or performance indicators that could be used to examine whether and how managers are working towards their KPAs, and this is necessary to ascertain if the Municipality is achieving its specific goals as aligned to managers' PAs. This can be seen as flaws. Table 2 below shows the alignment of National Key Performance Areas (NKPAs) and the Municipality's planned development found in its *IDP*.

The below table shows that the National Key Performance Areas (NKPAs) are given priority as they guide the municipality's planned development (*the IDP strategic objectives*). A municipality usually has performance areas that are departmentally based, for example Local Economic Development (LED) is usually specific to the planning department of a municipality. This study found another flaw, that the performance indicators in place could not quantitatively measure desired results in their performance areas. For instance, when looking at the National Key Performance Area number 3 of Local Economic Development, the Msunduzi Local Municipality's *IDP* strategic objective is to reduce unemployment, increase economic

Table 2
National and local policy alignment

No.	National Key Performance Areas	Msunduzi IDP Strategic Objective	Msunduzi Desired IDP Outcome	Msunduzi Outcome
1.	Municipal Transformation & Organisational Development.	Optimise systems procedures & processes. Increase institutional capacity. Increase performance.	Financially effective & well administered city.	Implement different approaches for municipal financing, planning & support.
2.	Basic Service Delivery.	Increase provision of municipal services. Improve the state of municipal infrastructure. Improve provision of social development services.	Well serviced, accessible, safe & connected city.	Improve access to basic services.
3.	Local Economic Development (LED).	Reduce unemployment. Increase economic activity. Optimise land usage.	Friendly, clean, green & economically sound city.	Implement CWP & support cooperatives.
4.	Financial Viability & Financial Management.	Increase revenue. Improve expenditure & Supply Chain Management.	Financially stable & well managed city.	Improve municipal financial & administrative capacity.
5.	Good Governance & Public Participation.	Strengthen governance. Improve customer experience & public participation. Promote public knowledge & awareness.	Well governed city.	Deepen democracy through a refined ward committee system.

Source: Compiled by author using Msunduzi Local Municipality's IDP and South Africa's National Key Performance Areas

activity and optimise land usage. Thus, the National Key Performance Area can be said to be aligned to the IDP strategic objective to some degree. However, they then state a “Friendly, clean, green & economically sound city” as a desired outcome of this strategic objective. Clearly, this desired outcome seems to not be clearly linked to the strategic objective of reducing unemployment, increasing economic activity and optimising land usage. Furthermore, the wording of these objectives and desired outcomes seems to be vague and unclear, thus the quantitative measurement of them becomes even more difficult, making them flawed.

The Msunduzi Local Municipality’s planned development and desired outcomes seems to not have been realised, even though some of the objectives and desired outcomes have tried to be achieved through various programmes and projects. The inclusion of some of these programmes and projects is superficial because they are not an initiative of the Municipality. They are initiated, funded and coordinated by national government together with provincial government. An example is the implementation of the CWP (Community Work Programme), which is a government job creation programme for temporal (short-term) employment for citizens who are of working age, but unemployed (No. 3 on Table 2 above). Desired outcomes are envisioned by the Msunduzi Local Municipality, as depicted in the right hand-side column in Table 2 above. Implementing the CWP and supporting cooperatives is the vision of the Msunduzi Local Municipality; it is what it hopes to achieve. However, measuring actual outputs have been problematic, and this is evident in the challenges facing the Municipality. Both short-term outputs and long-term outcomes must be measurable for true PM to be achieved.

The Msunduzi Local Municipality was also found to have outcomes that are not measurable. Merely implementing the CWP and supporting cooperatives is not enough; it is superficial to use the support of cooperatives and the CWP as an indicator and measure of the local economy developing. The number of people in these programmes and the broader economic effect this has on them in terms of employment is not realistic. This is due to the fact that employment in such CWPs is neither long-term nor permanent. Therefore, it does not address CWP employees’ long-term needs, such as their desire to purchase a home or achieve sustainable economic security. In addition, when such is measured, it is not a good indicator of an “economically sound” city as envisioned in its IDP because CWP employment is temporal and cannot be seen as a sustainable economic activity that realises long-term LED as it temporarily reduces unemployment and does not lead to a long-term sustained increase in economic activity for the Municipality. In other words, when the money to fund the CWP programme decreases, or even worse dries up, there will be dire consequences for its beneficiaries.

The IDP Strategic Objectives on Table 2 are short- and medium-term and are linked to outputs, while IDP goals are long-term and linked to outcomes. IDP goals are developed by the elected politicians of the Msunduzi Local Municipality in con-

sultation with their respective constituencies in accordance with the Constitution (1996). Hence, the analysis of the documents was also aimed at identifying matches between performance areas, performance indicators, and IDP goals. There were twelve (12) IDP goals, but eleven (11) IDP process plans. Three (3) goals and IDP process plans had no performance areas and performance indicators. In addition, six (6) IDP goals had no corresponding IDP Process Plan goals and four (4) IDP Process Plans had no corresponding IDP goal. The goals in the IDP Process Plan should ideally flow from the IDP goals. Consequently, it should be possible to identify the same number of IDP goals and IDP Process Plans, even if some goals are combined. However, there were no matching IDP Process Plan for 25 % (a quarter) of IDP goals.

The performance areas and performance indicators in the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and Performance Agreements (PA) should ideally flow from both the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the IDP Process Plan so that it is possible to identify performance areas and performance indicators for each goal. However, this study found that the alignment was very uneven in the Msunduzi Local Municipality. The reason for this flaw is likely to be that performance indicators in the PAs of managers are mostly aligned to national performance areas (NKPAs) rather than directly to the IDP goals. National performance areas are set by national government in terms of Section 46 and 47 of the Local Government: Municipal System Act of South Africa. They are important for the purpose of monitoring the performance of municipalities and comparing the performance of one municipality or province with another. Table 3 below shows the ideal and actual weighting of performance indicators (KPIs) of the Msunduzi Local Municipality.

Table 3
NKPAs and Msunduzi Local Municipality's performance indicators weighting

National Key Performance Areas	Ideal Weighting	Number of KPIs	Actual Weighting
Municipal Transformation & Organisational Development	30 %	102	34 %
Basic Service Delivery	20 %	76	26 %
Local Economic Development	10 %	30	10 %
Financial Viability & Management	20 %	73	25 %
Good Governance & Public Participation	10 %	26	10 %
Cross Cutting Interventions	10 %	26	10 %
Total	100 %	333	115 %

[Note: actual weighting percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number]

Source: Compiled by author using the Msunduzi Local Municipality's IDP

The weightings as measured by numbers of indicators are not a good match to the weightings as stated in the performance agreements (PAs) of the top management of the Municipality, another flaw found. An analysis of the weightings revealed that there were more performance indicators for internally focused activities than for externally focused activities. Most of the one hundred and two (102) performance indicators for Organisational Transformation and Development; plus, seventy-three (73) for Financial Viability and Management; plus, twenty-six (26) for Good Governance and Public Participation, are internally focussed. While the seventy-six (76) for Basic Service Delivery and thirty (30) for Local Economic Development were mostly externally focussed. Overall, there were too many performance indicators (333, which is 115 %).

This was an indication of a lack of “operationalisation”, which is required for performance indicators to be effective. Together, there were two hundred and one (201) internally focused performance measures and one hundred and six (106) externally focussed performance measures. That is, there were almost twice as many internally focussed performance indicators. Such a strong internal focus could suggest that the Municipality did not place sufficient emphasis on public service delivery. Many actions do have to be taken internally to facilitate external actions; however, the focus should also be external, that is, on public services to the community. The performance of the Msunduzi Local Municipality is not only misaligned, but also only reflects the internal consumption of funds, with no external benefit to show.

The review of the Msunduzi Local Municipalities’ official documents also showed that some of the performance indicators were too vague to be measurable, for example “increase economic activity”. While data obtained from interviewees finally showed that there was no agreement on the top five (5) strategic objectives of the Municipality, there were opposing views in the interviews about the IDP, its goals, objectives and plans. Interviewees’ responses should have shown a common understanding of the strategic areas and objectives in the IDP, but did not. The lack of alignment found suggests that the Municipality does not have managers who have a common understanding and knowledge of the Municipality’s performance areas, nor have they designed and put in place indicators to manage its performance or achieve its goals through proper monitoring and evaluation. Hence, in examining PM in the Msunduzi Local Municipality, flaws were identified in the PM process, which are further discussed below.

5. Discussion of the findings

Achieving the strategic objectives of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) rests on setting the necessary and most appropriate municipal performance areas (KPAs) and performance indicators (KPIs) and aligning them properly. Achieving positive

policy outcomes (which in this context refers to achieving the strategic objectives of the IDP) is not a simple process in local government. In the developing world, even if municipalities are well capacitated and have an array of development policy documents, things still can go wrong. In the case of the Msunduzi Local Municipality, it was a lack of understanding regarding PM amongst municipal employees that impeded its performance. This study found that there was no alignment between planned development and the performance directed at achieving it. This is a significant finding as alignment has been found to be vital in achieving planned development through necessary policy mechanisms to ensure performance. In the Msunduzi Local Municipality, the document analysis conducted in this study has highlighted the fact that national governments' visions are not well converted into the municipal strategy in its IDP strategic objectives, IDP goals, outputs and outcomes (*desired and actual*).

The findings also demonstrate poor alignment between key policy documents, and none of the performance indicators adequately address qualitative issues. The IDP as a policy and its programmes and indicators therein have not produced the desired impact on the Msunduzi Local Municipality because most are internally rather than externally focused; this is similar to Hronec's (2019) observation in Slovakia, where indicators focused internally, hence reflected the internal use of funds, rather than the benefits of such spending. The Municipality focuses on quantitative measures that are vague, thus not providing much value in both performance outputs and outcomes. This resembles the findings of Hronec (2019) in which he found that there was no value attached to the monitoring of performance outcomes and that targets had no meaningful purpose because they did not address the real-life situations facing Slovaks. Hronec (2019, 201) is of the view that "outcome indicators reflect the positive effect of public spending", but this is not always the case – as can be seen from the document analysis of the Msunduzi Local Municipality. Hronec (2019) further observed that they have been dominated by showing the coverage of public service initiatives, but not their precise impact, which is another shortcoming identified in the Msunduzi Local Municipality's documents indicating that they are not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive) (see Shahin and Mahbod 2007).

The Msunduzi Local Municipality's performance indicators need to be SMART, because good indicators are those that use the "SMART criteria" proposed by Doran (1981). Today, they are greatly used in monitoring and evaluation studies (see Bowles et al. 2007; Van der Grift et al. 2013; Chen 2014; Renmans et al. 2016). Although the IDP process plan does mention a 15-year time horizon for the attainment of some IDP goals, this is not sufficient as the path to reaching such targets is not clear, thus making its PM somewhat superficial. There are no SMART indicators or even worse no indicators at all in some areas. Where they are present, they are sometimes wrong. While the 15-year plan does provide a vision, a clearer articulation of the steps needed to get there is required. In the Msunduzi Local Mu-

nicipality, currently PM is also negatively affected by the fact that performance areas are misaligned, and performance indicators have no real value, thus monitoring and evaluating would be pointless. Considering that indicators are vital for monitoring and evaluation to be truly effective, the Msunduzi Local Municipality situation, although worse, resembles what Hronec (2019, 195) identified in Slovakia, where “goals and measurable indicators were set to provide scope for monitoring and evaluating the fulfilment of objectives ...”, which met with limited success.

The role of ensuring an “alignment” or “dual policy role” seems to be difficult for municipalities because of the lack of the ability to conceptualise PM and the ability to streamline it. In this case, it is as if the one-eyed are leading the blind. Provincial government itself has been found to have capacity constraints in South Africa before (see Asmah-Andoh 2009). In this case, provincial government intervening by placing the Msunduzi Local Municipality under administration by stepping in to address performance issues and implementing a turn-around strategy might only produce short-term solutions, because provincial government has had to intervene twice in the Municipality in less than a decade.

The PM challenges identified by this study are not unique to South Africa; in some European States, specifically Central Eastern European (CEE) States that transitioned from a communist to a capitalist system, mechanisms are in place to ensure PM is working, but such mechanisms operate differently than in developed Western countries (Plaček et al. 2020). The performance of the public sector in CEE, for example, has been further complicated by the fact that NPM reforms underpinning PM were not based on common problems (Bouckaert et al. 2011). Nemec (2010) sees CEE as undergoing a new transition that has yet to conclude, with the transformation from socialism to capitalism. Where CEE had no experience in transitioning to the new government system and PM, mistakes were made and were unavoidable. The introduction of NPM and its PM reforms in CEE was just seen as “house cleaning” (Randma-Liiv and Drechsler 2017) rather than “house building”. This is because there was no “house to clean” in the first place (*house used as a metaphor for the public sector by the authors*) (Plaček et al. 2020). It was a change in a government system pillared on two very different political ideologies, socialism and capitalism, with the latter succeeding the former later on. In South Africa, the transition from Apartheid to democracy and the public administration reforms that immediately followed after 1994 has contributed to many problems in providing public services equally and effectively to all its citizens. Even though South Africa and CEE have all the necessary regulations in place and fully-fledged PM approaches, they have not been able to reach the levels of efficiency and effectiveness similar to those achieved by the U.S.A., the U.K. and Australia (see Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). There are many conditions that impact on local governments’ capacity, which eventually influences their performance, including contextual, institutional, human-resource related and structural conditions (Reddy et al. 2015).

What has been learnt is that while capacity building is imperative for performance, this is currently insufficient at the local government level, and this is not unique to South Africa. It is imperative that for PMs to be truly effective and realised, PM policy must be based on “real-life” circumstances (Hronec 2019). In the case of the Msunduzi Local Municipality, the fact that the Municipality has been placed “under administration” twice in less than a decade is very concerning, bringing into question the use of Performance Information (PI). The integration and alignment of performance systems has received limited attention; some local governments have not attached value to effectively monitoring performance, whilst indicators are merely perceived to “fill space” and are not connected to reality (Kanyane and Mabelane 2009; Špalková and Špaček 2015). Furthermore, there seems to be great difficulty in formulating indicators, which can truly have a positive impact on communities (see Hronec 2019), and this examination of the Msunduzi Local Municipality is just one example of this. This study argues by showing that misaligned policies in local government create flawed and superficial policy outcomes, rendering them ineffective.

6. Conclusions

Globally, the performance of local government in meeting its goals through its respective institutions has been linked to capacity, as well as to commitment. While South Africa has the necessary regulations in place and fully-fledged PM approaches in public institutions, it has not been able to enjoy benefits similar to Western developed countries because of the context in which the PM exists. This study explored the challenges the Msunduzi Local Municipality was facing in ensuring the performance necessary to achieve its planned development, as found in its IDP. The findings revealed that there were many challenges emanating from the fact that the PM was flawed because there was a lack of alignment between the performance of the Municipality and its planned development. There was a lack of alignment between planned development and the necessary performance required to achieve it in the Municipality. Thus, the Municipality’s PM was negatively affected by performance areas that were misaligned as well as the performance indicators that had no real value, rendering the monitoring and evaluating of policy outcomes pointless. Flawed and superficial PM results in challenges that lead to poor performance in realising planned development. This study contributes to the limited understanding of municipal performance and development policy alignment in improving municipal service delivery in Africa, using the case of the Msunduzi Local Municipality in South Africa as an example.

The international relevance of this study is based on its contribution to the existing literature, showing how PM manifests differently and produces varying outcomes in countries around the world. PM tends to produce different outcomes in less developed countries, like those in Central Eastern Europe and developing

countries in Africa, as compared to developed countries in the Western World. The study found that the introduction and implementation of PM tends to ignore characteristics unique to local contexts, such as a country's political characteristics and its level of development. Furthermore, the lack of alignment in PM practices and outcomes in less developed countries could be evidence of severe shortcomings in the understanding of such PM systems amongst those responsible for PM implementation in those countries. Hence, PM and its reforms should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach as this can lead to many challenges, such as policy misalignment, superficial and non-SMART performance indicators, and an overall PM system that does not have a positive impact.

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