



2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba Call for Papers

Strong Partnerships for Restoring Trust in A Capable and
Developmental Local Government: A Clarion Call to Drive the Local
Government Professionalisation Agenda

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The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is convening a Local Government Professionalisation Indaba in March 2023 as a modality towards repurposing the implementation model of the Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013) for the achievement of the developmental objectives of local government and sustainable service delivery. The objective is to pursue a multi-sectoral social compact that symbolically binds all social partners including government departments, professional bodies, communities, and organized labour to meaningfully work together in professionalizing the local government sector. The 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba will be a multi-sectoral gathering.

SALGA invites scholars, researchers, thought leaders and other interested parties to submit abstracts that will be selected as full-length paper presentations for the 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba. Selected papers will contribute to a body of knowledge on the professionalisation of the sector and provide insights that will advance the local government professionalisation agenda. Papers must respond to one or more of the following sub-themes and may include a compendium of recommendations for policy and legislative reform.

Local Government Professionalisation Indaba sub-themes

- Establishing and upholding standards of professional ethics and integrity
- Attracting and retaining high-calibre leaders for local government
- Upscaling outcomes of learning programmes for institutional professionalism
- Revisiting legislation, regulations and policy underpinning local government professionalism
- Improving citizen perceptions to rebuild institutional trust

- Leveraging professional bodies as custodians of good governance
- Strengthening the political-administrative interface
- Developing systems, structures and performance metrics for professionalisation
- Or any related topic

Submission Guidelines

- Abstract submission date: 30 November 2022
- Full-length paper due date: 28 February 2023
- Abstract length: 250–300 words
- Submission link: <https://forms.office.com/r/7uXnxDsfbY>
- Submission Enquiries: Ms Concelia Choma cchoma@salga.org.za or research@salga.org.za

Background Context

The sphere of local government is placed at the centre of the aspirations of a capable and developmental state, where the efficiency and quality of service delivery has a direct influence of the local economy and lived reality of citizens. Chronic challenges of underperformance characterized by poor financial management, political interference, corruption, poor leadership, adverse audit reports and weak oversight are an impediment to development and erode the capability of local government to fulfil its mandate. Professionalisation has been identified as a technique and mechanism to transform the sector and restore trust in local government, where services are sustainably delivered, and both elected and appointed municipal officials adhere to prescribed norms and standards.

Some form of professionalisation has been introduced over the years by various prescriptive role players in the sector including, but not limited to, the Performance Management Regulations (2006) issued by the then Department of Provincial

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and Local Government; the Municipal Regulations on Minimum Competency Levels (2007) issued by National Treasury; The Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013) developed by SALGA, Chapter 13 of National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030; National Implementation Framework Towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service the (National School of Government) and even the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024 Priority One “Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state”. However, the gains of these efforts have yet to be consolidated, mobilized, and evaluated to embed a multi-sectoral local government professionalisation programme of action.

The 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba is one key activity driven by SALGA’s local government professionalisation programme that aims to create a platform for municipalities, public sector regulators, professional bodies & other relevant stakeholders (e.g., institutions of higher education) to give meaningful effect to an implementation model for the professionalisation of the local government sector.

SALGA’s local government professionalisation programme addresses the host of governance related issues that impair the ability of municipalities to deliver sustainable services and erode trust between municipalities and the citizens they service. These issues range from poor oversight and performance management systems to non-compliance with appointment regulations of senior management.

Summary of the Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013)

The premise of the Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013) is that these challenges can be overcome by a system of checks and balances that ensure standards of competence, sound work practices, good ethos, ethical behaviour, and servant-leadership attitudes. However, the current interpretation of the Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013) cannot be solely implemented by municipalities as a silver-bullet to remedy the challenges of the sector. Rather, it requires a repurposed implementation model that sets out clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and measurable milestones for the achievement of a professionalised system of local government.



