



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION INDABA _____ 2023



“STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESTORING TRUST IN A CAPABLE AND DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CLARION CALL TO DRIVE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION AGENDA”

The Impetus to Professionalise Local Government in South Africa: Issues, Trends and Options



- The paper examines professionalisation of Local Government in South Africa taking into account recent observations and developments resulting from the increasing number of investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of municipal officials throughout the country.
- The paper concludes that these developments have serious effect on the drive to construct a capable, developmental and ethical state as articulated and envisioned in the NDP.
- The paper recommends that a multi-pronged approach comprising of various bodies, mechanisms and techniques aimed at providing a comprehensive response and implementation of accountability and consequence management is required to reshape and reposition local government to become truly professionalised and ethically driven.



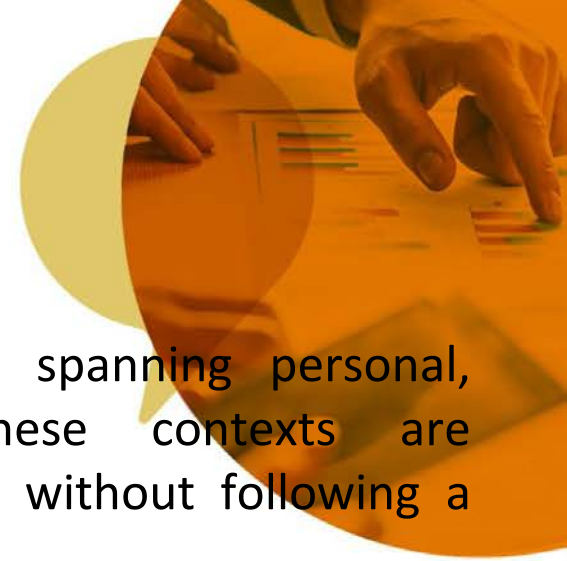
- Professionalisation of the Public Service is on a global agenda.
- The NDP prioritises the issue of professionalisation of local government and clearly states that measures should be implemented to make local government a career of choice.
- South Africa needs to focus on building skilled and professional public service from both the top and the bottom. At the top, recruitment and management should be based on experience and expertise, while at junior levels, the state should focus on producing the skills and expertise that will be necessary for future public service cohorts (NDP 2030:365).

Unpacking professionalism

- Public service professionalism is defined as the overall value that encompasses all other values that guide the public service. They include loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness and impartiality (UN 2000:11).
- Professionalism entails a high work ethic and adherence to standards and principles of specific work, discipline and context and includes qualifications, skills, competencies and values (National Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Sector 2022:27).



- Professionalism is influenced by various contexts spanning personal, organisational, societal, global and legal. These contexts are interconnected, evolve, and influences one another without following a linear, predictable and systematic process.
- **Personal context** – Personal value system.
- **Organisational context** – Code of Conduct; Professional Bodies; Civil society.
- **Societal context** – Role of social institutions.
- **Global context** – UN Convention Against Corruption 2003; AU Convention on Corruption 2003; SADC Corruption Protocol of 2001.
- **Legal context** – Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution; Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Act 3 of 2022 – **Section 54A, Section 71B and Section 2A.**



Ideals of a professionalised Local Government



- The introduction of *Municipal Regulations on Minimum Competency Levels Framework* for finance and supply chain officials by National Treasury in 2013 in accordance with section 83(1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, which provides for “competency levels of professional financial officials” was an attempt to implement professional development in local government.
- The Municipal Regulations on Minimum Competency Levels address the minimum higher education qualifications, work related experience and core managerial and occupational competencies that are required by financial and supply chain management officials.



The Status of the minimum competency levels of CFOs as at 30 August 2018 (11 years after implementation) were as follows

Province	Number of municipalities	CFOs	Number of CFOs meeting minimum competency	% of CFOs meeting minimum competency
Eastern Cape	39	26	11	42.2%
Free State	23	25	13	52.0%
Gauteng	11	25	3	12.0%
Limpopo	27	22	6	27.3%
KwaZulu-Natal	54	41	11	26.8%
Mpumalanga	20	16	6	37.5%
Northern Cape	22	27	7	25.9%
North West	31	11	3	27.0%
Western Cape	30	25	19	76%
TOTAL	257	218	79	36,2%

- The above indicates that as at 30 August 2018:
- 63.8% of municipalities who had CFOs appointed as at 30 August 2018 were not complying with section 83(1) of the MFMA in terms of the prescribed competency.
- This implies that there are factors that may have contributed to this state of affairs, namely, a. effective and appropriate disciplinary steps not taken against officials who failed to meet the minimum competency levels, b. a breakdown in the performance management development system, and a lack of succession planning.
- The ***State of Cities Report of 2021*** flagged the capacity issues in municipalities. It points to challenges that include positions filled based on political allegiance and the lack of skilled financial officers, especially in smaller municipalities, which may have difficulty attracting skilled people and paying appropriate salaries. Poor financial management and a lack of capability result in overspending of operating budgets and the underspending of capital grants (State of Cities Report 2021:266).





The paper posits that these recommendations require a multi-pronged approach comprising of various stakeholders, bodies, mechanisms and techniques aimed at providing a comprehensive response and implementation of capacity, capability, and professionalisation in the context of building a capable, ethical and developmental State.

- a. Development of pipeline of professional talent is crucial to help the sphere of local government to fulfil its constitutional and legislative obligations.
- b. SALGA should forge collaborations with professional bodies and epistemic community of Public Administration and others with a view to have a meeting of the same mind.
- c. The contractual employment of Municipal Managers should be reviewed and changed from the existing five-year term period to ten-year period subject to performance review.

- Designation of Ethics Officers in Local Government – These Ethics Officers should be designated by Municipal Managers and assume significant responsibilities that may inter alia require them to:
 - a. Promote integrity and ethical behaviours;
 - b. Advise employees on ethical matters;
 - c. Facilitate the provision of ethics training in municipalities.



THE END. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

