



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION INDABA

ABSTRACT BOOKLET

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

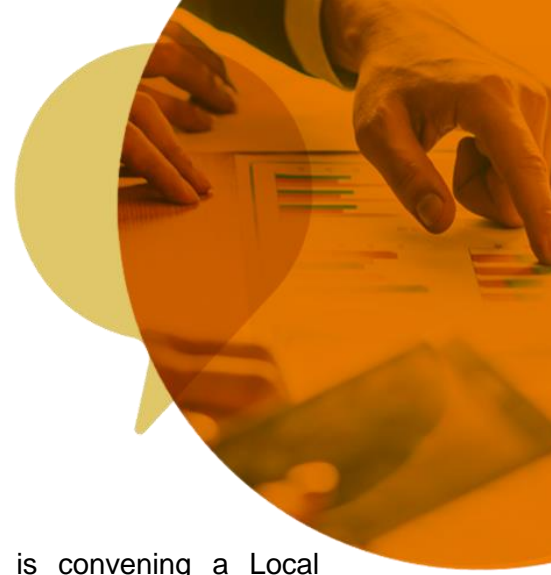
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OVERVIEW

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is convening a Local Government Professionalisation Indaba 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. Drawing from successes recorded by various role-players towards professionalisation of local government, emerging trends, opportunities as well as the persistent threats to an ethical, capable and development oriented local government, the 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba is conceptualised to convene under the theme – “Strong Partnerships for Restoring Trust in A Capable and Developmental Local Government: A Clarion Call to Drive the Local Government Professionalisation Agenda”.

This theme embraces a more inclusive partnering approach to incorporate actors beyond those customary, to foster successful implementation of the multifaceted, repurposed local government professionalisation model pillars. Stressing the need to enhance mutual accountability, transparency in the use of development resources, building resilient municipal administration, improving governance, reputation, and image of local government, provide appropriate professional designation, credentialing and continuous professional development to local government employees as well as promoting adherence to ethical conduct and enforcement of applicable consequences for any misdemeanours.

The Local Government Professionalisation Indaba programme will consist of a combination of presentations based on research papers, panel discussions and invited speakers representing stakeholders in the local government professionalisation agenda. Targeted speakers who represent stakeholders to the professionalisation agenda have identified to share their perspectives and affirm their role and commitment towards local government professionalisation. The programme will conclude with the development and adoption of a social compact as an instrument of commitment and accountability by all stakeholders.

Professionalisation of local government serves as both, the means and ends of SALGAs agenda to capacitating municipalities to be equal to the task of effective and efficient service delivery, since the post 1994 system of local government. Whilst the approaches of building a capable, ethical, and developmental state continues to evolve from one term of administration to the next, professionalization of the state machinery, including local government, continues to occupy the centre stage in government wide discourses and has recently culminated in the adoption by Cabinet of the National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION INDABA CONCEPT

The concept note provides the high-level conceptual approach underpinning the implementation of the 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba. It is informed by the resolutions of the 5th SALGA National Conference, convened on 2 – 4 March 2022. The Conference resolved for an intensive multi-dimensional mobilisation process to be undertaken to secure constituency buy-in and implementation adoption to the local government professionalisation model by municipalities and other relevant stakeholders. This document further supports the resolution, of the same conference, for the development and affirmation of a compact between municipalities, regulators, professional bodies and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., institutions of higher education) on how to work together and give meaningful effect to an impactful LG Professionalisation Model.

The 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 and 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. 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. Therefore, the Local Government Professionalisation Indaba is conceptualised 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. Its 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.



FRAMING THE PROFESSIONALISATION PROBLEM

Despite progress made to date in introducing some form of professionalisation by different role players in the local government environment, this sphere of governance still experiences chronic challenges of underperformance characterized by poor financial management, political interference, corruption, poor leadership, adverse audit reports and weak oversight, among other aspects.

These role players include, but are not limited to, the 2006 Performance Management Regulations issued by the then Department of Provincial and Local Government (Republic of South Africa, 2006); the 2007 Municipal Regulations on Minimum Competency Levels issued by National Treasury (Republic of South Africa, 2007); The Local Government Professionalisation Framework (2013), National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 Chapter 13, National Implementation Framework Towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service the (National School of Government) and Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024 Priority One “Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state”.

In addition to these efforts by government departments, organizations like the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), as well as professional bodies like the Chartered Institute for Government Finance Audit and Risk Officers (CIGFARO), the Institute for Local Government Management (ILGM) and the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) have made important contributions in respect of developing professionalism and building capacity in local government. Despite the plethora of legislations governing public service delivery and professionalisation of local government, they have fallen short in establishing further mechanisms that seek to improve local government competency and capabilities and giving effect to the principles of professionalism.

A serious concern around municipal capacity revolved around the fact that management positions within municipalities were perceived to be unprofessional, having the following barriers:

- The appointment of staff without adequate qualifications, expertise, and experience
- Inappropriate political interventions in the work of officials
- Lack of responsiveness to community needs
- Low staff morale and poor service ethic
- Inadequate implementation of performance management systems
- Financial irregularity
- Non-compliance
- Malpractice and corruption; and
- Adverse findings by the Auditor-General.



In 2012, SALGA identified a range of factors that inhibit the professionalisation of human resources management and ethos in the sector. Despite the efforts over time and at different levels to attempt to achieve more professional local government, the following realities (challenges) but not limited, politicized appointments, inadequate financial management, constrained functional efficiency, weak service delivery systems, impunity and maladministration, and diminished public confidence still exist, in hindering the local government in acting in a professional manner and that they need to be taken into consideration in terms of professionalism as part of current local government practices.

Professional bodies and associations, statutory or non-statutory, were expected to align their codes of conduct to those contained in the Municipal Systems Act (2000) and ensure that their members adhere to the provisions of the code; promote and ensure professional development so as to ensure continuous professional development and life-long learning. Despite range of legislative and regulatory provisions to create an environment conducive for professionalism, not all municipalities are currently living up to expectations due to the above- mentioned realities.

The rationale for professionalisation is based on the conviction that a strong and vibrant local government is essential to the attainment of a society and region in which all citizens have access to basic services; equal opportunities; and have real opportunities to participate in and shape their local communities. Professionalism refers to the competence, work practices, ethos, behaviour and attitudes typically displayed by members of such a profession. Public service professionalism includes values and principles that provide a clear direction and guidance to the public sector. These values include loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, and impartiality.

SALGA, therefore, acknowledges that achieving professionalism in accordance with the vision of the White Paper, requires every organization and stakeholders (elected & appointed officials, sector departments, professional bodies, state owned entities etc.) to undergo a major change in their value system, operations, norms, and standards to embrace values espoused by a repurposed Local Government Professionalisation Framework.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Local Government Professionalisation Indaba is:

- To secure constituency buy-in and implementation adoption of the Local Government Professionalisation Framework by municipalities, regulators, professional bodies, institutions of higher education, community representatives, and organized labour.
- To develop and affirm a compact between all stakeholders on how to work together and give meaningful effect to an impactful Local Government Professionalisation Implementation Model.
- To reassert SALGA as a champion for local government professionalisation, building partnerships with regulators, professional bodies & other relevant stakeholders.
- To create an enabling environment for effective advocacy and constituency immersion on the local government professionalisation implementation model.
- To create an opportunity for paper presentations and in-depth discussions with scholars in the emerging field of local government professionalisation.
- To create an open reflective opportunity for municipalities, regulators, thought leaders, policymakers, institutes of higher learning, research institutes and other partners in local government to identify gaps and offer recommendations for embedding professionalism in the sector.
- To develop a body of knowledge and generate sector intelligence on the institutionalization of the local government professionalisation implementation model, for monitoring and evaluating the transformation of the sector in empirical terms.



ABOUT THE PROFESSIONALISATION INDABA

The 2023 Local Government Professionalisation Indaba will be convened under the theme “Strong Partnerships for Restoring Trust in A Capable and Developmental Local Government: A Clarion Call to Drive the Local Government Professionalisation Agenda”

Below are proposed sub-themes and topics that will be addressed in the Indaba, with insights from researchers, municipal practitioners and thought leaders.



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



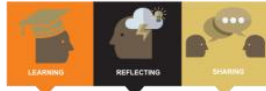
LEVERAGING
PROFESSIONAL BODIES
AS CUSTODIANS OF
GOOD GOVERNANCE



STRENGTHENING THE
POLITICAL-
ADMINISTRATIVE
INTERFACE

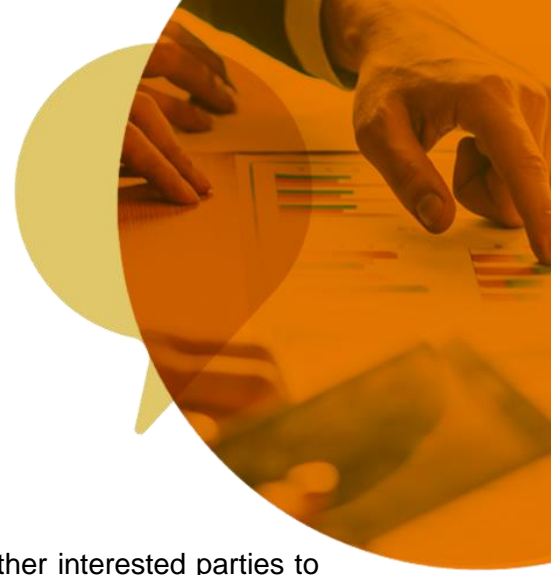


DEVELOPING SYSTEMS,
STRUCTURES, AND
PERFORMANCE METRICS
FOR
PROFESSIONALISATION



CALL FOR PAPERS





RESEARCH PAPERS ABSTRACT

SALGA invited 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.

The following submission guidelines were provided:

- Abstract submission date: 30 November 2022
- Full-length paper due date: 28 February 2023
- Abstract length: 250-300 words

SALGA received a total of 31 abstracts in response to the call for papers. The abstracts were reviewed, shortlisted and nine (9) abstracts were finally selected to be included as part of the Indaba. The authors of the abstracts were formally requested to participate and to submit their full-length paper for publication after the Local Government Professionalisation Indaba. One author withdrew the abstract submitted. A total of eight (8) abstracts included as part of the Indaba.



ABSTRACT 1

Prof Sam Koma
School of Economics & Management Director, University of Limpopo

Sub-theme: Establishing and upholding standards of professional ethics and integrity

Title: THE IMPETUS TO PROFESSIONALISE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: ISSUES, TRENDS AND OPTIONS

This paper addresses the increasing governance lapses taking place in the sphere of local government arising from the recurring poor audit outcomes; accountability regressions, non-implementation of audit recommendations and lack of consequence management as evidenced by the Auditor-General's 2020-2021 Local Government Audit Outcomes report. The Special Investigating Unit's report on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) submitted to President Ramaphosa on 21 December 2021 affirms the observation made in this paper regarding the poor enforcement of accountability and consequence management in public sector institutions. This report inter alia implicated numerous municipalities throughout the country. Furthermore, since 2020 President Ramaphosa has published three additional Special Investigating Unit proclamations related to investigations of allegations of fraud, corruption and maladministration in the Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Mogale City and O.R Tambo District municipality respectively. Compounding this undesirable situation state of affairs, is the increasing number of arrests, prosecutions and convictions of municipal officials executed by various criminal justice institutions throughout the country. The method of the paper is qualitative. Secondary data sources include documentary and literature reviews in this paper. Thematic analysis is employed.

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 National Development Plan – Vision 2030 and the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery plan introduced by the national government in 2021, which in part is based on the premise that the successful economic recovery of the country's economy post COVID-19 pandemic hinges on a form of state, which is capable. Thus, 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 measures in the context of the sphere of local government is required to reshape and reposition local government to become truly professionalised, ethically-driven and accountable.



ABSTRACT 2

Dr Msizi Myeza

Chief Executive Officer, Council for the Built Environment

Sub-theme: Professionalisation of the built environment in the Local government

Title: STRUCTURED CANDIDACY PROGRAMME AS AN ENABLER TOWARDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISATION: A CASE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of this paper is to provide a debate on how built environment candidacy programmes can profusely contribute to the professionalisation of local government. Post 1994 in South Africa, the local government sphere gained its autonomy in various facets of the economy such as, inter alia, infrastructure provision and maintenance to their localities. At the time and beyond, local governments have been grappling with the provision and maintenance of infrastructure due to a myriad of reasons including built environment technical skills shortage. Worthy of note is that built environment professionals such as engineers, quantity surveyors, architects, landscape architects, construction project managers and property valuers are the backbone of South Africa's modern infrastructure. For our local government economy to create opportunities and services for citizens, infrastructure must be nurtured and expanded. However, literature shows evidence that local governments in South Africa have few persons who are registered as 'professionals' with built environment professional councils. This impedes the progressive realization of service delivery and infrastructure development goals embodied in the policy prescripts such as, inter alia, the National Development Plan. Hence attention needs to be channelled towards the development of the built environment pipeline to ensure local governments steadily produce a stream of professionals who can be responsible for critical and complex projects. The pursuance of structured candidacy programmes can provide confidence that built environment professionals have the necessary qualifications and experience. This is a conceptual paper, and it will rely mostly on recent reports and documents to underpin its argument.



ABSTRACT 3

Ms Msizi Gwala

Project Director, South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA)

Sub-theme: Attracting and retaining high-calibre leaders for local government

Title: PROFESSIONALIZATION PERSPECTIVES: PUBLIC SECTOR CAREER MOBILITY FOR SAICA MEMBERS

SAICA as the foremost professional accountancy body in South Africa, has its members serving in various economies and sectors throughout the world, including the South African public sector and local government in particular. SAICA members often provide feedback on experiences and perceptions regarding employment in the public service, their career mobility, attractiveness, and the public service environment. This research represents an undertaking by SAICA to collect and collate data from members, associates and trainees regarding experiences and perceptions on career mobility both into and out of the public service. Data were collected through surveys as well as member and stakeholder engagements. The paper also provides recommendations to some of the challenges, and notes that the primary focus should be to improve the environment and enable professionalization of the public service.

The research finds that there is a negative perception on SAICA members working in the public sector, which affects their career mobility in moving out of the sector. The situation is made more complex by the dynamics of the sector, opportunities, career mobility and progression therein. Such perceptions and experiences pose a significant risk in the long term as less professionals may wish to work in the sector, in the fear of being stuck without progress, recognition and opportunity, thus threatening the professionalization efforts for the public service. Career advancement, mobility and opportunities will need to be a focus for professionalization and to retain talent.



ABSTRACT 4

Dr Olu Ajayi
President

Institute for Productivity, Resource Efficiency & Service Excellence

Sub-theme: Developing systems, structures and performance metrics for professionalisation

Title: DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONALIZATION READINESS AND ASSESSMENT MODEL (PRAM) FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The public sector is the largest service provider, collectively and globally. With the explosion in the use of social media and increasing social activism, public sector customers (citizens) have become more aware of their rights, leading to heightened expectations of public service performance, accountability, and transparency. In South Africa, because of its proximity to the grassroots, the local government is generally mandated by the constitution to provide basic services to the citizens. Since democratization however, and notwithstanding efforts by the government and SALGA, service delivery deficits, lack of institutional capacity, and shortfalls in achieving the developmental objectives of local government linger. With spiralling debts, unfunded budgets, corruption, under-par leadership, and political interference, it is incontestable that public dissatisfaction and distrust, triggered by these factors will persist.

To reverse this trend, professionalization of local government offers hope. However, following the professionalization pathway without a method to decompose the complexity and dynamics of the local government as a socio-cultural system is problematic and short-sighted.

This study presents a scientific approach (and a model – PRAM) to diagnose the professionalization state of readiness of the functional and constructional areas of South African local government with pre-validated performance metrics to assess its professionalization over time.



ABSTRACT 5

Mr Michael Tonhodzai
PhD Student
North West University, Potchefstroom Campus

Sub-theme: Revisiting legislation, regulations and policy underpinning local government professionalism

Title: RETHINKING LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND POLICY UNDERPINNING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Concerns have been raised about the observation that half of the South African Municipalities' senior officials do not meet the government's prescribed minimum competence levels. Lack of professionalism is at the core of local government failures in South Africa in the sense that it affects every aspect of municipal management activity and ultimately service provision. It really affects the operational and optimal efficiency and effectiveness of local governments. President Cyril Ramaphosa conceded in his State of the Nation Address in 2021 that lack of professionalism impacts service delivery and also dents public confidence, trust and faith as well as the social contract. This has led to poor service delivery by local authorities hence government's failure to fulfill the social contract to citizens prompting massive service delivery protests across the nation. There is therefore an urgent need to revisit the legal and policy arrangements for the professionalization of local government as local authorities contribute to national development through provision of essential services to citizens. Local government matters most in this development agenda because it is the face of national government and a professionalized local government will positively contribute towards realizing the National Development Plan's goals of a capable developmental state. The study interrogates the legal and policy frameworks underpinning local government professionalization in South Africa. Through documentary search, this paper describes and explains the legal and policy guidelines put in place to spearhead the professionalization of the local government and how they are being implemented to expedite local government service delivery. The paper will contribute to the professionalization of local government debate through a critique of the existing legal and policy framework and proffering recommendations on what can be done to improve the legal and policy framework for the professionalization of local government.



ABSTRACT 6

Ms Harsha Dayal
Director of Research and Knowledge Management
Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation

Sub-theme: Improving citizen perceptions to rebuild institutional trust

Title: BUILDING CITIZEN TRUST AND STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONALISATION THROUGH COPRODUCTION STRATEGIES

Many governments internationally are seeking to influence trust by citizens positively as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. Theory demonstrates that social trust is built through active citizen participation in decision making, contributing to social cohesion and nation building. Institutional trust is dependent on competence and intentions of government, influencing developmental outcomes and political stability. Building citizen trust, thus requires local government to lead in this space, recognizing its constitutional responsibilities of achieving developmental outcomes; sustainable service delivery; implementing social, economic and environmental policy; promoting safe and healthy environments; and facilitating involvement of communities in their own development. Fulfilling these mandates require local level public officials to be knowledgeable and skilled in public policy analysis. However, levels of citizen trust have been falling, with local government affected the most. An evidence synthesis approach and secondary data analysis was adopted to investigate what factors impact negatively on trust in government; analyse how social and institutional trust is related to development planning; and provide insights on key trust outcomes to be addressed, starting at local levels. Findings reveal that, since trust is both a process (relational) and an outcome (situational), any single trust variable is a weak measure of government performance. A combination of subjective, objective and experimental data sources is needed for the effective use of trust as a measure over long term planning. Thinking through pathways of change around the three characteristics of the State: capable (competence), ethical (fair, accountable, transparent) and developmental (intentions; commitment to social justice) provides a useful analytical frame, with direct implications in the way public officials use information and evidence when engaging citizens meaningfully. Knowledge and service coproduction provide viable strategies to enhance state capacity, thereby contributing to and strengthening efforts in professionalizing the public service.



ABSTRACT 7

Mr Kris Dob

co-authored by Ms Fatima Rawat Senior Manager: Organisational Ethics Associate & Subject Matter Expert

The Ethics Institute

Sub-theme: Strengthening the political-administrative interface & Ethical leadership in local government

Title: OUTCOMES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Local Government Ethical Leadership Initiative (LGELI) is a partnership between The Ethics Institute (TEI), the Department for Cooperative Governance (DCoG), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Moral Regeneration Movement. It has the purpose of developing a Code for Ethical Municipal Leadership that will apply to Councillors and senior officials in all of South Africa's municipalities.

The development process of the Code included a qualitative research component in the form of focus groups and interviews in all nine provinces, as well as a quantitative research component in the form of a national online survey of municipal staff and councillors, with 2500 respondents.

The main research questions were:

- What should ethical leadership look like in local government? What would be the ideal?
- What does it look like?
- What makes ethical leadership difficult in local government?
- What should be done to improve ethical leadership in local government?

The research findings give many insights into challenges of ethical leadership in local government, and these are challenges also invariably impact on levels of professionalism in local government.

Main factors include the politicisation of local government (including the appointment of inappropriate candidates), lack of councillor competence, and lack of / inconsistent consequence management. We propose to give an overview of the research findings, and their implications for ethical leadership and professionalisation of local government.

The paper will also convey the logic of utilising a leadership code as a mechanism for improving ethical leadership and professionalism in local government.

ABSTRACT 8

Dr Daniel Rampai
Integrity Commissioner, City of Johannesburg

Subtheme: Establishing and Upholding Standards of Professional Ethics and Integrity

Title: ESTABLISHING AND UPHOLDING STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Public representatives face sustained pressures to compromise standards of professional ethics and integrity. These pressures are often preceded by weakening ethical cultures leading to a lack of responsive and accountable local government. In retrospect, it is this view about ethics and governance that makes it even more compelling to question if the lack of responsive and accountable local government is the result of inadequate or incomplete provisions on ethical conduct, or non-enforcement of ethical provisions. Creating strong cultures of ethics and integrity requires an active council, knowledge of the governance environment and an accountability mechanism to ensure compliance. An active council bases its governance role and responsibility on five core leadership capacities, namely; moral purpose, commitment, relationships, behaviour and price. Any action that embraces these capacities will represent a tangible expression of political intent to initiate and sustain ethics and integrity reforms. Additionally, council performs its governance role subject to the governance environment which comprises inter alia; the code of conduct, applicable rules, King IV on municipalities and the relevant provisions of the Constitution. Finally, the existence of a core integrity agency similar to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner or core integrity custodian like the Integrity Commissioner or an accountability officer to enforce compliance and hold public representatives and officials accountable is critical.

Firstly, the paper will look at how council – exercising the five core capacities – can ably execute its governance role, and secondly, how as a collective and within the existing governance environment, can demonstrate loyalty and belief and give support to the core integrity agency in the performance of its accountability role. The paper will conclude with a reflection on the effect of interdependence and interrelationships on council, the governance environment and core integrity agency in ensuring high ethics and integrity performance.