

Local government

A KEY PLAYER IN THE BUILD-UP TO 2010



With the FIFA World Cup in Germany now over, four billion eyes (the estimated international audience) will turn to South Africa and its cities to judge their readiness to host the prestigious event in 2010. Over 350 000 visitors are expected to descend on the country to join 2.7 million local spectators for 43 days to watch some of the best national soccer teams in the world.

Time is short, though. Contrary to popular belief, South Africa must be ready by June 2009, not 2010, for the FIFA Confederations Cup (the 'mini World Cup'). This is the precursor to the World Cup and involves the hosts, world champions and six other continental champions. The date of this trial run tournament leaves less than three years to have everything ready.

Challenges and opportunities

Experts predict R12.7 billion in direct World Cup expenditure, with a R21 billion contribution to the country's GDP and 160 000 new jobs. The South African government has committed R375 billion for 2010 development, including R242 billion for infrastructural development. Of this, the government will spend R5 billion on building and

renovating World Cup stadiums, R5.2 billion on upgrading the country's airports and R3.5 billion on improving the rail and road network.

What is the role of local government in all this? And how much of the cost must municipalities cover?

The World Cup falls within the term of current municipal councils and will mark a decade of elected local government in South Africa. Local government will have a critical role to play in preparing for and hosting this event. The magnitude of both the challenges and opportunities are exceptional and represent a symbolic test – for us and the world – of how far our democratic local government has evolved.

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KEY POINTS

- The South African government has committed R375 billion for 2010 development, including R242 billion for infrastructural development.
- This is a great opportunity for local politicians to prove that local government works.
- The IDP and intergovernmental forums are central means through which development for 2010 can be used to accelerate poverty reduction.
- The World Cup will prove the ultimate test of the system of cooperative governance in South Africa.

Nomatyala Hanga, Deputy Minister for Provincial and Local Government, stressed, informed strategic planning and high levels of executing precision will be the order of the day. But municipalities should not panic and develop unrealistic expectations with regard to what they can do in three years. Jerome Valcke, a FIFA director, argues that “South Africa does not need to do the same as Germany. South Africa must have their own [uniquely South African] World Cup. There are a few things that have to be in place like the improvement of transportation, the availability of enough accommodation, adequate security...and communication infrastructure.” South Africa must therefore set realistically achievable goals and targets within its own limits and not based on the unrealistic standard of first world Germany.

Strategy

Most of all, 2010 is about extremely tight design, planning and construction deadlines. It should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather an opportunity to accelerate and change future development. The critical response to meeting these challenges lies in careful strategic planning for the IDPs and aligning the budget to include projects earmarked for 2010. These include transportation systems, roads, hospitality and other support services. If the desired strategic plans are in place, municipalities will be well placed to maximise the boon of hosting the world’s most prestigious sporting event.

Local government is a key player in a number of critical areas. Transportation is critical for moving spectators to and from games. Municipalities must work with national and provincial governments to develop integrated transportation plans, from national projects like the ‘Gautrain’ and taxi recapitalization, to pedestrian-friendly CBDs and road safety measures. Disaster management is another important area, in which municipalities must assist the other spheres of government by providing services such as ambulances, fire-fighters and police. Construction of stadiums and other buildings will also require a big commitment from local government. With only three years left, municipalities should already have a clear picture of their role, powers, responsibilities, limits and desired outcomes.

The ‘beautiful game’

Local government is not alone. All spheres of government – national, provincial and local – must work together to foster effective intergovernmental relations within the framework of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (IRFA). The overlapping functional areas are quite evident. For example, while municipal public transport, roads, traffic, local tourism and regional planning are concurrent local government competencies, urban and rural development, public transport and road traffic regulation are concurrent national and provincial competencies. As the current debate over the proposed stadium in Cape Town illustrates, municipalities, provinces and national government may not always agree. Regardless, municipalities must work cooperatively with the other spheres of government without necessarily compromising their own views.

Even intra-municipal relations will be critical. While the games will be focused mainly in the six metropolitan areas, some districts surrounding those metros will form part of their metros’ local organising committees. Their support may be required in areas such as disaster management and traffic, as well as accommodation and hospitality. While districts and local municipalities will share the metros’ responsibilities, they also share the benefits. The World Cup will prove the ultimate test of the system of cooperative governance in South Africa.

Don’t panic!

South Africa stands to gain a massive growth in investment. As one economist noted, “The indirect impact may be more

meaningful for a sustainable economic lift in subsequent years...it will change the perceptions that a large number of foreign investors hold of South Africa and Africa.” In his State of the Nation address, President Mbeki warns against taking this gift for granted, saying, “In return for these irreplaceable benefits, we owe it to FIFA and the rest of the soccer world to prepare properly for 2010”.

Municipalities have much to do before South Africa hosts the continent’s first World Cup in 2010. When planning for the event, they should remember that the World Cup is a means to an end, the end being poverty reduction. Councillors and municipal officials must ask themselves how they can use the once-off investments to create long-term benefits for the poorest of their constituents. For example, how will upgrading transportation ease commuting from poorer neighbourhoods to places of work? Also, can new sanitation and water services, built to handle the World Cup visitors, be used afterwards towards the constitutional rights of those in need? The IDP and intergovernmental forums are central means through which development for 2010 can be used to accelerate poverty reduction.

A successful World Cup in 2010 will shine a light on South Africa, as well as stoke economic growth. Local

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government is a key role-player in this cooperative effort. But the host cities will only be truly successful if they can translate FIFA’s gift into an enduring legacy for their most deprived citizens. The world is watching.

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While this article introduces the role of local government in the preparation for the 2010 World Cup, future issues of the *Bulletin* will focus on its specific roles/functions before, during and after 2010.

