REPORT ON THE CITIZENS FORUM HELD IN THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

DECEMBER 2012
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1  
1.1 Background ............................................................................................................................... 1  
1.2 Mandate of the Public Service Commission .............................................................................. 2  
1.3 Aims and Objectives of Citizens Forum ..................................................................................... 2  
1.4 Methodology ............................................................................................................................. 3  

CHAPTER 2: HOLDING OF THE CITIZENS’ FORUM IN WARD 2 OF THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY ................................................................................................................. 5  
2.1 Contextual Background .............................................................................................................. 5  
2.2 Feedback to the community ....................................................................................................... 5  
   2.2.1 National Department of Human Settlements .................................................................. 7  
   2.2.2 Provincial Department of Health ..................................................................................... 8  
   2.2.3 Provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation .................................................. 8  
   2.2.4 National Department of Home Affairs ............................................................................. 9  
   2.2.5 Msukaligwa Local Municipality ....................................................................................... 10  
   2.2.6 Gert Sibande District Municipality .................................................................................. 11  

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD ......................................................................... 12  
3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 12  
3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation ....................................................................................................... 12  
3.3 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 12  

APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK AND COMMITMENTS BY PARTICIPANT STAKEHOLDERS 13
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since the dawn of South Africa’s democratic era, the government has put emphasis on public participation in the delivery of services. To this end, various pieces of legislations were enacted to support the concept of public participation. These, amongst others, include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the White Paper on the Transformation of Service Delivery (Batho Pele) (1997) and the Municipal Systems Act (2000). Primarily, the Constitution (1996) requires the Public Service to involve the public in governance processes. In particular, the Constitution states that “people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”. Furthermore, the White paper on the Transformation of Service Delivery (Batho Pele), 1997, through its eight principles, provides a framework through which public services are to be delivered. The Batho Pele principles guide the Public Service on how it should engage with members of the public, hence they provide a platform for the public to participate in the provision of services.

To give effect to the aforementioned legislative context, various initiatives were undertaken to promote public participation, such as izimbizo, ward committees and the community development workers programme.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has also been proactive in developing participatory mechanisms which include the Citizen Satisfaction Surveys, Guide on developing public participation policy and Citizens’ Forums. The Citizens’ Forum, which was developed in partnership with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, is a distinctly South African method of engaging citizens. It involves government working with citizens to propose practical measures to improve service delivery and focuses on the delivery of a particular programme at a given point. In 2002 and 2003, the Citizens' Forum was piloted in local communities in the Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape provinces, with the focus in the departments of Health and Social development, respectively. The pilot culminated in the development of a Citizens’ Forum Toolkit in 2005.

Citizens’ Forums are educational, empowering and entail partnership-based intervention in which ordinary people speak out about their experiences as recipients of government services. They provide a vision for a way forward – a way of reinvigorating current democratic practices, bringing meaning to people’s participation and fostering a two way dialogue between citizens and government. The forum can therefore deliver very meaningful

and powerful results for the institutions implementing programmes or providing services and bring immeasurable benefits to the community as the recipients of services.

In its 2012/2013 Work Plan, the PSC identified a need to conduct Citizens’ Forums in the Msukaligwa Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province. This report provides progress regarding the Citizens’ Forum conducted at Ward 2 of the Msukaligwa Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province.

1.2 Mandate of the Public Service Commission

The PSC as an independent institution derives its mandate from Section 196 of the Constitution (1996) of the Republic of South Africa. Amongst others, it has the mandate to promote the Constitutional values and principles set out in section 195 and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service.

Amongst these values and principles, the PSC has to ensure that there is accountability in public administration practices, people’s needs are responded to and the public is encouraged to participate in policy making. It is against this background that the PSC has embarked on various initiatives aimed at engaging citizens on matters of service delivery. Citizens’ involvement in governance processes ensures that their experiential and grounded perspectives inform government about their needs and how these needs can be addressed.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of Citizens Forum

In general, the purpose of conducting Citizens Forums is to evaluate the delivery of particular services throughout the country, and to enable the active involvement of people affected by government programmes in service delivery improvement processes. The Citizens’ Forum Toolkit provides for broad aims and objectives of conducting Citizens’ Forums, and these are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Aims and objectives of the Citizens’ Forums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Improved citizen participation in the process of service delivery decision-making and policy formulation.</td>
<td>(a) To evaluate the delivery of particular services throughout the country, and to enable the active involvement of people affected by government programmes in service delivery improvement processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Better understanding of the community social and economic needs.</td>
<td>(b) Citizens Forums assist government institutions to assess policy outcomes as they help determine whether government institutions’ actions are having a negative or positive impact on the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Effective and efficient use of public resources and improved service delivery.</td>
<td>(c) The results of the Citizens Forum should assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Sustainable economic and social transformation.</td>
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Accordingly, the specific aims of conducting the Citizens’ Forum in the selected municipality in the Mpumalanga Province were, therefore, to:

- Assess the delivery of specific municipal services and those of other identified national and provincial departments;
- Improve citizen participation in the planning and implementation of specific municipal services and those provided by the identified national and provincial departments;
- Improve governance and greater accountability in the affected municipality as well as national and provincial departments; and
- Make recommendations to the Council and the affected national and provincial departments on how to improve service delivery.

1.4 Methodology

A Citizens’ Forum is a time-consuming and labour-intensive process which requires thorough planning before the forum can be held. Cooperation from the key stakeholders should therefore be sought through systematic consultations. To this end several engagements between the PSC, the Msukaligwa Local Municipality as well as key stakeholders, ensued in promoting the forum as partnership-based, effective and value-adding public participation mechanism. As a first step, the PSC on 7 May 2012 made a presentation to the Msukaligwa Local Municipality. The focus of the engagement was to explain the purpose of the Citizens’ Forum and to obtain cooperation from the municipality. Subsequently, in a letter dated 30 May 2012 the Msukaligwa Municipal Council informed the PSC of council resolution (Resolution LM188/05/2012) for the implementation of the Citizens’ Forum in Ward 2 at Ermelo.

Pivotal to the success of the Citizens’ Forum is that clear information on the programme or key services to be discussed must be given before the commencement of the forum and the purpose of the forum must be clarified. Sufficient time to deliberate over the identified programme or service must also be allowed so that participants can make informed decisions. In this regard, submissions from the community of Ward 2 on specific service delivery challenges were heard on 15 July 2012 during the Ward 2 community meeting with the PSC as the facilitating agent. The identified challenges were categorized into those that could be given immediate attention and those which require long-term planning, namely-
(a) Challenges which can be given immediate attention:

- Lack of refuse removal by the municipality
- Long queues and operating hours at the MN Cindi clinic
- Need for library service
- Weak electrical transformer
- Obtaining Identity Documents (IDs)
- Unemployment of youth and people with disabilities

(b) Challenges which may require long term planning:

- Storm water drainage
- Lack of sanitation
- Lack of water
- Building of RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses
- The need for grading or maintenance of roads

The next step involved the selection of the Steering Committee on 31 July 2012 comprising members of the Ward Committee of Ward 2 for the purpose of liaising with the community. Agreement was also reached for the Citizens’ Forum to be held on 4 November 2012. The PSC provided training to the Steering Committee on 7 August 2012.
CHAPTER 2: HOLDING OF THE CITIZENS’ FORUM IN WARD 2 OF THE MSUKALIGWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

2.1 Contextual Background

According to the Municipality's 2012/2013 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) the Municipality is predominantly rural in nature with anchor towns such as Ermelo. Furthermore, Mining operations, Timber industries, Agricultural land, Transport and Tourism areas form the main economic base of the Municipality. Ward 2, also called Thusiville, of the Msukaligwa Local Municipality is in Wesselton Township which is approximately five (5) kilometres outside the Ermelo Central Business District (CBD). A further analysis of the IDP reveals that Wesselton's population and households' figures by 2007 were approximately 24270 and 6103 respectively. These figures were projected to be 24465 and 6350 by 2011, which translates to an increase in population and households of 0.8 and 3.9% by 2011 respectively. The area is generally characterised by infrastructural challenges such as shack dwellings, lack of sanitation and water, high unemployment rate as well as lack of proper roads infrastructure. The economic activities mentioned earlier offer development prospects in the area and are crucial to address the observed infrastructural challenges.

2.2 Feedback to the community

The Citizens’ Forum or feedback session to the community of Ward 2 was held on 4 November 2012. The venue for the Citizens’ Forum or feedback to the community was in Ward 2 and at a convenient location for the community.

![Figure 1: Councillor Nkosi welcoming the community of Ward 2](image)

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4 Msukaligwa Integrated Development Plan 2012/2013
The feedback session was attended by approximately 450 community members.

Figure 2: The community of Ward 2 during the Citizens’ Forum.

The representatives or panel of experts from the following institutions provided feedback on challenges raised by the community:

- National Department of Human Settlements
- National Department of Health
- Provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation
- National Department of Home Affairs
- Msukaligwa Local Municipality
- Gert Sibande District Municipality

Figure 3: Msukaligwa councillors and PSC Commissioners as they listen to community concerns.
The PSC facilitated the Citizens’ Forum or feedback session.

Since the Citizens’ Forum or feedback session was an interactive process the community members were invited to ask questions to clarify the responses provided.

The specific feedback provided to the community of Ward 2 is reflected below.

2.2.1 National Department of Human Settlements

The Department informed the community that 10 000 houses in terms of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) were budgeted for the 18 local municipalities in Mpumalanga for the 2012/2013 financial year. The community was further informed that the Department received a request for 216 houses to be built in Ward 2.
However, the Department was highly concerned about reports of the community either selling or renting out RDP houses, as well as children living in the backyards of RDP houses due to illegal occupation of their parents' houses. These practices were hampering departmental efforts to eradicate the challenge of shack dwellings. While these challenges were impacting negatively on the progress of the Department in providing housing in line with its mandate, there were also budgetary constraints faced by the department.

2.2.2 Provincial Department of Health

The Department acknowledged the community’s concerns of longer waiting times before receiving service. An appeal was made to the community not to come to the clinic at times that would expose them to harsh weather conditions and criminal elements. The community was implored to take note of the clinic’s operating hours, i.e. 07:00-16:00.

The community was further informed that the clinic experienced shortage of nursing staff which contributed to longer waiting times. It was however, noted that plans were in place to recruit more staff to improve service delivery. In addition, engagements with the provincial Department of Health were underway for a Community Health Centre to be built in Msukaligwa. The community also noted that regular monthly visits by a doctor at the clinic were hampered by a shortage of doctors at the Ermelo hospital. The community was requested to be patient since there was generally a shortage of nursing staff and doctors in the whole Mpumalanga province.

Incidents of malpractice at the clinic were noted. In this regard, the community was urged to utilise the complaint boxes available at the clinic for reporting of any improper conduct involving the staff of the clinic.

2.2.3 Provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation

The Department was aware of the challenges experienced by the community in accessing available library services. It was noted that the nearest library presently catering for the
community of Thusiville in Wesselton is in the Ermelo CBD and is five (5) kilometres away. Three schools in Thusiville require library services, and students and educators often travel the long distance to access the library which presents a challenge, especially after school hours.

To address the above challenge, the Department made a commitment to render a mobile library service to the community. The Reggie Masuku High School has been identified as the central point for the location of the mobile service. It is envisaged that the mobile library service will be a pilot project for a year. The pilot project should commence in **February 2013** with the operating hours being from **09:00 to 16:00**. The project will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed to assist in the identification of the community’s real needs and come up with a lasting solution.

However, the Department invited the municipality to make a formal request in this regard. The Department also expected the Department of Education and the municipality to sign a service level agreement for the service.

### 2.2.4 National Department of Home Affairs

The community was provided with critical information concerning documents required for the purpose of registration of birth or application of identity documents. In addition, the process to be followed in the case of applicants who no longer had living parents was clearly explained. The Department was concerned about challenges the community was facing such as lack of birth certificates which made the process of applying for identity documents difficult. It, therefore, implored the community to ensure registration of birth of their new born babies within 30 days of birth.

![Figure 8: Feedback by the Department of Home Affairs](image)

The Department made a commitment to provide a mobile service to the community and indicated that a suitable date will be announced in this regard in due course.
2.2.5 Msukaligwa Local Municipality

The municipality acknowledged the concerns of the community regarding lack of proper sanitation, water, electricity, non-functional streets lights and refuse removal. The community was assured that the provision of communal taps and toilets was a temporary measure and that these would be eradicated by the building of RDP houses which will have proper water and sanitation.

A business plan in this regard has been submitted to the Department of Human Settlements for the RDP houses earmarked to be built in Thusivile as earlier indicated.

With regard to the challenge of street lights, the municipality stated that it has already implemented “Operation Khanyisa” to identify and replace the non-functioning street lights by the end of November 2012.

The community was further informed that the electrification of houses fell outside the municipality’s mandate. However, the Department of Minerals and Energy, which was responsible for the electrification service, has been approached to address the challenge. To facilitate the electrification process, the municipality has identified households that do not have electricity and forwarded an application in this regard to the relevant Department. The municipality expected a response from the Department of Minerals and Energy in January 2013.

The lack of refuse removal services was noted. To address the challenge of refuse removal the municipality committed to provide dustbins to all households. However, the community was cautioned that these will be provided at a cost. In this regard, the appropriate levy will be added to the water and lights statements of the affected households to recoup the cost. The municipality also raised concern of illegal dumping of refuse in the area. The community was urged to desist from the illegal practice of dumping refuse at street corners to ensure a clean and hygienic environment.
Concerns about storm water drainages were noted and receiving attention. The municipality announced that a project to clean existing storm water drainages will commence soon. It was noted that the municipality envisaged employing local people for the duration of the project as part of its local economic development programme. It was further noted that the municipality has budgeted for additional storm water drainages. A service provider was expected to submit a project implementation plan.

2.2.6 Gert Sibande District Municipality

Challenges relating to unemployed youth and disabled people were noted. The community was informed that the municipality was building positive relationships with private companies in order to create job opportunities for young people and the disabled in the district. The unemployed youth and people with disability were encouraged to register with the district’s database so that their information can be recorded.

It was further noted that an internship/skills development programme through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and bursaries were in place to provide the community with skills. It was noted that 70 youths have already been trained through the programmes.

Figure 10: Feedback from the Gert Sibande District Municipality

Emanating from the feedback provided particular commitments were made to the community and these are reflected in Appendix 1.
CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

3.1 Introduction

The Citizens’ Forum conducted in Ward 2 of the Msukaligwa Local Municipality has demonstrated that public participation should be an integral feature of public policy and decision making processes to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. Emanating from the deliberations particular commitments were made which should bring about improvement in service delivery in the area and further harness a positive relationship between the key stakeholders involved.

3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSC undertakes to engage the relevant stakeholders that participated in the Citizens’ Forum to commit to timeframes and monitor progress with regard to the commitments made which are reflected in Appendix 1. Furthermore, feedback will also be provided to the community with regard to the progress made in the implementation of the commitments contained in the Citizens Report.

3.3 Conclusion

Lessons learned from the Citizens’ Forum in Ward 2 will certainly assist the Msukaligwa Local Municipality and other spheres of government in the area in their future planning processes for the realisation of their goals. It is therefore imperative that the PSC continues to impress upon the public service in general the value of public participation in effective and efficient service delivery.
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<th>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Progress, Evidence and Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Human Settlements</strong></td>
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<td>The Department made a commitment to build twenty (20) houses in Ward 2 from 05 November 2012 to 31 December 2012. Priority in the allocation of the 20 houses will be given to the aged, disabled and child-headed families.</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Human Settlements</td>
<td>30/11/2012: The Department will provide the PSC with the timeframe on 05 December 2012. 30/01/2013: The Head of Department (HoD) has forwarded a memorandum for the approval of the building project to the Member of Executive Council (MEC) and still waiting for the approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ward Councilor to facilitate the verification process to identify the aforementioned prioritized categories for building of RDP houses and to provide feedback to the Department within a week from 4 November 2012.</td>
<td>Ward Councilor/ Msukaligwa Municipality</td>
<td>30/01/2013: A list of eligible community members was prepared and sent to the Department of Human Settlements on 21 November 2012.</td>
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<td><strong>Provincial Department of Health</strong></td>
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<td>An appointment system in respect of follow-up patients to be implemented.</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Health</td>
<td>30/01/2013: As of January 2013 an appointment system has been introduced for follow-up patients. The service is provided every other Saturday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is envisaged that operating hours will be increased from 8 to 12 hours during the week and 6 hours on Saturdays by March 2013.</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Health</td>
<td>30/11/2012: The District Office of the Department is still awaiting a response from the provincial Head Office regarding the appointment of additional nursing staff at the MN Cindi clinic as well as the increasing of operating hours.</td>
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<td>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</td>
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<td>A proposal forwarded to the Head Office of the department for the construction of a Community Health Centre in the area to relieve the clinic.</td>
<td>District Office and Head Office of the Provincial Department of Health</td>
<td>30/01/2013: As of January 2013 the operating hours have been increased from 8 to 12 hours. The process of interviewing additional staff members for the clinic is also underway.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department committed the clinic to receive and attend to complaints from the community. The community may also contact <strong>Ms D Mofemmere</strong>, Manager at the District Office of the Department, on Cellular Number <strong>0833076988</strong>.</td>
<td>District Office of the Provincial Department of Health and MN Cindi clinic</td>
<td>30/01/2013: The expansion of the MN Cindi clinic to a Community Health Centre is planned for the <strong>2015/2016</strong> financial year. The Msukaligwa Municipality held a meeting with the MEC for Health and during the meeting the Municipality pledged to the MEC that it will make additional land available for the expansion of the clinic. In the meantime, the MEC has also pledged to make freight containers available to make additional waiting rooms for the patients.</td>
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**Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation**

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<th>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Progress, Evidence and Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>A pilot mobile library service to be provided for a year to commence in February 2013. The municipality to make a formal request to the Department in this regard.</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td>30/01/2013: The Department has appointed dedicated staff for the mobile library service. However, the Department is still waiting for the formal request from the Municipality.</td>
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<td>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</td>
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<td>Furthermore, a service level agreement between the Department of Education and Msukaligwa Local Municipality is yet to be signed. The Msukaligwa Municipality committed to forward the required letter of request to the Department of Education by <strong>01 February 2013</strong>. It was therefore, agreed that the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation will commence with the mobile library service project at Thusiville at the beginning of the new financial year <strong>2013/2014</strong>. <strong>04/03/2013:</strong> The Msukaligwa Local Municipality has forwarded the letter requesting mobile library services to the Department on <strong>31 January 2013</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Home Affairs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department to provide a mobile service. A suitable date to be communicated to the community.</td>
<td>Department of Home Affairs</td>
<td><strong>30/01/2013:</strong> On <strong>08 December 2012</strong> the Department provided its mobile service to the community of Thusiville. A follow up service will be provided on <strong>16 February 2013</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Msukaligwa Local Municipality</strong></td>
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<td>A business plan to incorporate water and sanitation infrastructure during the building of RDP houses in Ward 2 has been submitted to the Department of Human Settlements.</td>
<td>Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td><strong>30/01/2013:</strong> The Municipal Manager will report on this matter in the next stakeholder engagement meeting. The proposed date for the meeting is <strong>01 March 2013</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A project named “Operation Khanyisa” was underway to address</td>
<td>Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td><strong>30/01/2013:</strong> The municipality is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</td>
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<td>Progress, Evidence and Impact</td>
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<td>non-functioning street lights by end of November 2012.</td>
<td></td>
<td>experiencing operational challenges in finalizing the project. The Municipal Manager then requested that the date of finalization of the project be <strong>01 March 2013</strong>. The Ward Councilor for Ward 2, Cllr Msezane suggested that the Ward be provided with high mast lights instead of fixing the current street lights due to reports of cables theft in the area. The Municipal Manager then indicated that for now only one high mast light will be provided to Ward 2 by <strong>01 April 2013</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households to be provided with dustbins a once-off nominal cost to be levied against the affected households’ water and lights bills.</td>
<td>Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td><strong>30/01/2013:</strong> The Municipality will request for donation from the surrounding mines for dustbins to be provided to households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrification exercise to be conducted by the Department of Minerals and Energy. The municipality conducted the identification of houses requiring electricity.</td>
<td>National Department of Minerals and Energy and Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td><strong>30/01/2013:</strong> The Municipality is still waiting for a response from the Department of Minerals and Energy. Follow up will be made and feedback provided in the next stakeholder engagement meeting envisaged for the <strong>01 March 2013</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A community cleaning campaign to address challenges of refuse dumping to be undertaken by end of November 2012. The community to desist from illegal dumping of refuse.</td>
<td>Msukaligwa Local Municipality and Ward Councilor</td>
<td><strong>30/11/2012:</strong> The cleaning campaign took place on <strong>21 November 2012</strong>. <strong>30/01/2013:</strong> Since the cleaning campaign refuse is removed twice a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitments or proposals and Timeframes</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Progress, Evidence and Impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>A project to clean existing storm water drainages to commence in due course. Additional storm water drainages to be constructed.</td>
<td>Msukaligwa Local Municipality</td>
<td>30/01/2013: Community Development Workers in the Ward are involved in the cleaning of the existing storm water drainages. A survey for the additional storm water drainages has also been completed.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Gert Sibande District Municipality**

- The unemployed youth and people with disabilities to register with the district’s database and to apply for the EPWP internship/skills development programme and bursaries.
  - Gert Sibande District Municipality and Ward Councilor
  - The District Municipality has initiated the **Phezukomkhono Project** which has so far created employment for 300 youth in seven local municipalities. Five (5) youth members from Ward 2 have since been employed.
  - The District also has a database for youth with cooperatives and 140 cooperatives are registered on the database.
  - A Database for Young people has also been established and 617 youth with skills have been registered on the internship database.
  - The Gert Sibande District Municipality is in the process of ring fencing positions for people with disabilities to be able to meet the National Targets.
  - The District Municipality has concluded appointments of Manager: Library, Librarian and Library Assistant.