



**DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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PRESS STATEMENT: For immediate release

Cabinet approves Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS)

Pretoria, 3 December 2009 - Cabinet approved a comprehensive Local Government Turnaround Strategy on Wednesday the 2nd of December 2009.

The Strategy was presented to Cabinet yesterday by the Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Sicelo Shiceka.

It is underpinned by two important considerations. The first is that a “**one size fits all**” approach to municipalities is not useful or acceptable. Each municipality faces different social and economic conditions and has different performance levels and support needs. Thus a more segmented and differentiated approach was required to address the various challenges of municipalities.

Cabinet recognized that the problems in Local Government are both a result of **internal factors** within the direct control of municipalities as well as **external factors** over which municipalities do not have much control.

The internal factors relate to issues such as quality of decision-making by Councilors, quality of appointments, transparency of tender and procurement systems, and levels of financial management and accountability. The external factors relate to revenue base and income generation potential, inappropriate legislation and regulation, demographic patterns and trends, macro and micro-economic conditions, undue interference by political parties and weaknesses in national policy, oversight and Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR).

The twin over-arching **aim** of the Turnaround Strategy is to:

- Restore the confidence of the majority of our people in our municipalities, as the primary delivery machine of the developmental state at a local level.

- Re-build and improve the basic requirements for a functional, responsive, accountable, effective, and efficient developmental local government.

The **five strategic objectives** of the LGTAS are to:

- Ensure that municipalities **meet basic needs** of communities.* This implies that an environment is created, support provided and systems built to accelerate quality service delivery within the context of each municipality's conditions and needs;
- Build **clean, responsive and accountable** local government.* Make sure that systems and structures and procedures are developed and enforced to deal with corruption, maladministration and ensure that municipalities communicate and account more to communities;
- Improve **functionality, performance and professionalism** in municipalities.* Ensure that the core administrative and institutional systems are in place and are operational to improve performance;
- Improve **national and provincial policy, support and oversight to local government.**;* and
- Strengthen **partnerships** between local government, communities and civil society.* Ensure that communities and other development partners are mobilized to partner with municipalities in service delivery and development.

The **key interventions** under these five strategic objectives focus on ensuring that:

- National Government (including state enterprises) organizes itself better in relation to Local Government;
- Provinces improve their support and oversight responsibilities over Local Government;
- Municipalities reflect on their own performance and identify their own tailor-made turnaround strategies;
- All three spheres of government improve Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) in practice;
- Political parties promote and enhance the institutional integrity of municipalities; and
- A social compact on Local Government is put in place where all citizens, including public officials at all levels, those in the private sector, trade unions, professional bodies and traditional leaders are guided in their actions and involvement by a common set of governance values.

Some of the immediate implementation priorities of the LGTAS (pre-2011 LG Elections) are to:

- Address the immediate financial and administrative problems in municipalities;
- Promulgate regulations to stem indiscriminate hiring and firing in municipalities;
- Tighten & implement a transparent municipal supply chain management system;
- Ensure that the programmes of national and provincial government and SOEs are reflected in municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs); and

- e) Overcome “one size fits all” approach by differentiating responsibilities and simplifying IDPs.

Some of the main post-2011 priorities of the LGTAS include the following. These are part of *Vision 2014*:

- a) Infrastructure backlogs should be reduced significantly;
- b) All citizens must have access to affordable universal basic services;
- c) Formalisation of all informal settlements;
- d) Clean cities, through the management of waste in such a way that it creates employment and wealth; and
- e) A single election for national, provincial and local government (key benefits include: single manifesto, one financial year, single public service, common 5 yr medium term planning, aligned human resource and budgeting frameworks).

The LGTAS will be managed driven through a **National Coordinating Unit** in the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) that will serve as a “Nerve Centre” for implementation. A number of working structures to guide, steer and oversee the LGTAS will be established including a Ministerial Advisory Committee, Civil Society Reference Group, and an Intergovernmental Working Group.

Cabinet agreed that the Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs should convene the Ministers responsible for the National Planning Commission, Performance Monitoring & Evaluation, and Finance look at the necessary funding and resource mobilization to ensure the successful implementation of the LGTAS.

An immediate task of the LGTAS is that agreements will be reached with each province on the roll-out programme in the context of the different provincial needs and capacities. This will guide how municipalities will be supported to prepare and implement their own tailor-made turnaround strategies that must be incorporated into their IDPs and budgets, by **March 2010**. Key stakeholders and ward committees will be mobilized early in 2010. By July 2010, all municipalities will be in full implementation mode of the national and their own Turn Around Strategies.

The implementation of the LGTAS presents the entire country and all communities with an opportunity to work together with their municipalities in improving and accelerating service delivery.

The LGTAS will reinforce the good and best practices in municipalities whilst at the same time ensuring that the root causes of problems impacting on municipal performance are confronted effectively.

The Local Government Turn Around Strategy recognizes that “*Local Government is Everyone’s Business*”.

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