

Evaluating the Efficacy of Municipal Policy Implementation in South Africa: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Municipalities in South Africa are charged with the responsibility of identifying needs of the local communities through various platforms, including public meetings, imbizos, ward committees and petitions. Policies are then developed in the form of integrated development plans (IDPs) and municipal budgets are allocated to respond to the identified community needs. It is a legislative requirement that all municipalities in the country develop and approve such plans in order to adequately respond to the needs of their respective communities. The challenge for most municipalities is that they lack requisite capacity and political will to implement such policies. This paper seeks to evaluate the efficacy of policy implementation in South Africa's municipalities using the 7-C protocol as an assessment framework of the various municipal plans, including but not limited to, IDPs and municipal budgets. It is concluded that the implementation of municipal policies is not effective or efficient, hence the continuous backlog often witnessed in municipal service provision. It is further noted that many set targets and objectives are not achieved in most municipalities. To this end, several measures are proposed with the aim of appropriately addressing the challenges that hinder the adequate implementation of municipal policies in South Africa. Such measures include inculcating a sense of political will in the municipal executives by their respective political parties as well as punishing offenders of municipal prescripts to address corruption and maladministration.

Keywords: policy, implementation, commitment, capacity, service delivery



Introduction

Public policies, including those at the local sphere of government, become significant only when implemented, usually by appointed municipal officials who originally participated in the formulation of policy (Hanekom, 1987:56; Phago, 2012; De Coning, Cloete & Burger, 2018). Municipal officials play a significant role in the policy formulation stage, including drafting the initial document with the directive of their political principal as well as advising them. Mentoor (1995:37) posits that policy implementation takes place after it has been authorised by the political office-bearers who are in this instance councillors at a municipal council meeting. This actually means that a municipal policy that is not implemented is as good as non-existent in that such a policy would not often result in municipal service delivery. Different Public Administration scholars define policy implementation differently. De Coning, Cloete and Burger (2018) view policy implementation as encompassing those actions by municipal officials that are directed at the achievement of the municipal objectives set out in the policy prescripts and decisions. Cloete (1995:38), on the other hand, refers to policy implementation as carrying out of law, regulation, rule, command or other directives by municipal officials working under the direction of a municipal political office-bearer. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1999:211) concur with these assertions and argue that policy implementation entails the carrying out or execution of plans. Thus, in the end, the public manager has a responsibility to determine who must do what, when and how in the implementation of a set municipal policy.

According to Cloete (1994:108), policy implementation requires the performance of all activities that constitute public administration, namely, generic administrative, the auxiliary and the instrumental activities as well as functional activities. Throughout the years, numerous work methods and techniques have been devised in order to improve policy implementation. Examples of such methods and techniques include programme budgeting, strategic planning, project evaluation, work procedure and institutional development (Cloete, 1995:108). In order to have an effective policy implementation, performance of municipal officials responsible for execution of such plans or objectives have to be assessed and evaluated. This will assist the institution in identifying challenges associated with inadequacy in the implementation of the programmes or objectives. Policy implementation encompasses whatever is done to carry a law into effect and to achieve the goals and objectives of such a law (Anderson, 2006:200). Policy implementation is more concerned with the agencies and officials involved, procedures to follow, techniques to employ, political support and oppositions that are encountered during such implementation. Day-to-day operations of government projects, activities or programmes is what implementation is all about. In the context of a municipality, policy implementation manifests itself through continuous municipal service delivery. The implementation of an IDP and municipal budget by some of the municipal policies within the local sphere of government is evident by the local communities receiving the delivery of basic municipal services that the local communities wanted. Such needs are identified in the IDP and budget processes through various participation forums. It can, therefore, be claimed that there can never be good municipal services delivery without



effective and efficient public policy implementation. Effectiveness refers to the achievement of set goals and objectives or just doing what is right while efficiency is defined as the achievement of predetermined goals with minimum resources (Mafunisa, 2004). These resources include human, material and financial resources.

This paper seeks to evaluate the efficacy of policy implementation in the South African municipalities. Relevant existing literature is reviewed with a view to assess the application of the 7-C protocols during the implementation of the various municipal policies, including but not limited to, IDPs and municipal budgets. The paper concludes that the implementation of municipal policies is not effective and efficient, hence the continuous backlog as far as municipal service provision is concerned. Several measures are proposed at the end with the ultimate aim of appropriately addressing the challenges that hinder the adequate implementation of municipal policies in South Africa.

Municipal policy implementation

There is a general understanding in public administration that the government's main responsibility is to improve the livelihoods of its citizens by addressing their basic human needs (Mnculwane, 2008; Phago, 2012: 62; Thornhill, 2012; Sadie, 2017). These needs could be either individual citizens' needs or collective community needs through regular and sustainable service delivery provisions; governments undertake to address these identified needs. It is also necessary for the existing political parties (governing and opposition) to use the same societal needs as argued by Phago (2012:62) and Sadie (2017) to convince their electorate about the programmes of action they will apply to address the said societal needs or service delivery shortfalls. Phago introduces a service delivery model that also argues that there is a link between societal needs and political parties and government and service delivery/realisation when pursuing a public service delivery agenda within public administration. However, there are many constraints that prohibit municipalities from effectively implementing their policies and ultimately failing to provide basic municipal services. The challenge does not start with implementation but with various other factors during the development of the policy as well as implementation.

South African communities are characterised by backlogs regarding the provision of essential municipal services (Hilliard, 2006:3; Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:455). As a result, each community has distinct communal needs such as the need for clean water, garbage removal and electricity. With the introduction of technology, many municipalities, particularly the metropolitan ones, offer Wi-Fi and internet services to their communities at selected centres, including municipal libraries. Any given society has needs that have to be addressed by the government of the day. However, such needs could only be known if there is active participation by the local communities and all stakeholders within those communities. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to, ward committees, traditional leaders, community development workers (CDW) and interest groups. Community participation involves the role played by communities and stakeholders in the policy making and implementation processes of a municipality (Mfenguza, 2007:22; Mafunisa & Xaba,



2008; Munzhedzi, 2016). These include involving communities in various activities, such as policy formulation, budgeting, identification of needs, implementation and monitoring of projects and strategy formulation. An IDP of any municipality is devoid of reality without the community participation (Valeta & Walton, 2008:380; Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008; Maphunye & Mafunisa, 2008; Hofisi, 2014).

The advantages of successful community participation are that local communities understand the local government sphere and the constraints under which it functions. In the South African context, various mechanisms have been put in place to foster community participation. Participation may also mean the creation of opportunities to enable community members and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development (Midgley, 1986:24). In the South African context, various mechanisms have been put in place to foster community participation but institutions do not follow the constitutional processes when facilitating participation in their legislative processes (Khuzwayo, 2009:12). Ward committees are proposed as the main channels for community participation in local government in order to identify community needs. Community participation currently constitutes an important element of the South Africa government's policy framework in the integrated development planning process (Van Rooyen, 2003: 126; Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008). Participation promotes legitimacy and public support for the policies and programmes of the municipality and thereby ensures that there is democratic stability (Khuzwayo, 2009:12). It is, therefore, crucial that people be conscientised about the possible change they can achieve through active participation in the democratic processes in their respective local communities. Van Donk (2007:489) contends that community participation is a fundamental feature of the integrated development planning and budgeting processes. This is supported by the view that an "educated citizen is enabled to exercise his or her judgement, contribute to the debate about planning and is aware of local community problems and the difficulties of finding solutions to them" (Khuzwayo, 2009:20; Mphahlele, 2010).

The ANC government, as the ruling party for the majority of municipalities in South Africa (other municipalities are ruled by the Democratic Alliance and Inkatha Freedom Party), has developed policies and programmes with a supposed intention of realising the objectives set in the manifesto, which was influenced by societal needs identified during needs identification process. From societal needs to municipal service delivery, there is a need for a concerted effort to effectively implement municipal plans and policies (Phago, 2012:65). This value chain from the identification of community needs to the actual municipal service delivery is necessary in that the governing party may be voted out of power for not fulfilling its promises. What has happened in Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan municipalities could be a case in point. The assumption is that ruling parties (ANC, DA and IFP) are elected into power because the electorate like and identify with their election *manifesto* and it is believed that they will implement it. Public policies are often developed by the government of the day to realise (supposedly) service delivery promises they made in their political parties. It should be the governing party's objective to meet the societal needs, which they get to know because they are part of the community

they serve. As discussed in the preceding part of this article, political parties get to be apprised of such needs through different means of community participation discussed above, including interest groups, CDWs, public meetings and ward committees. However, the question becomes whether the governing party priorities meet societal needs or whether relevant interventions such as municipal policies were developed to address the societal needs.

However, the active citizenry should hold the political parties (particularly the governing one) accountable. They must question the existing public policy, including the IDP of the municipality, and ask in whose interest the specific public policy is developed. The IDP document of any municipality should represent the aspiration and needs of its local populace. The activism should not only start during policy implementation but during needs identification and policy formulation. Are services to the community addressing the societal needs identified or are the municipal decisions relating to the IDP always in the best interest of the local community, are the questions to ask?

It is imperative that government seeks the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the formulation of the municipal IDP and in addressing societal needs (service delivery). These stakeholders must not only be involved in the formulation but in the implementation, review, analysis and evaluation of these policies as well. The legislative framework such as *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) makes it a requirement for South African municipalities to develop a culture of participatory governance. It is also the responsibility of government to ensure that the local communities are empowered so that they may make a meaningful and informed contribution. The ensuing section of the paper discusses the theoretical framework underpinning policy implementation.

Theoretical framework

The New Public Management (NPM), which has its origin in the Public-Choice Theory and managerialism, has been adopted because of its applicability in this paper. There has been arguments the world over by scholars of Public Administration and other social science disciplines alike on whether NPM is a theory or not. Maserumule (2011) also claims that the epistemic imperative of NPM remains a subject of aggressive contestation. A substantial number of scholars believe it should not be considered a theory (Gruening, 2001; Bourgon, 2007; Diefenbach, 2009; Osborne, Radnor & Nasi, 2012). However, Osborne, Radnor and Nasi (2012) believe that like all other theories, NPM is a theory with its own flaws. Maserumule (2011) in agreement claims that NPM is part of modernism, which actually has many ideological, philosophical, theoretical and empirical contestations in the greater body of knowledge in recent times. Diefenbach (2009) on the contrary claims that NPM has far greater contributions that it made to the discourse than the purported inconsistencies stated. Gruening (2001) is of the view that NPM has many theoretical components and it is itself a valuable theory that made an enormous contribution to governments' productivity, performance and public expenditure, just to mention a few. A safe argument can be made that NPM is a theory with its own weaknesses like other theories.



Bardill (2000:103) posits that the South African public sector experienced reforms that were largely necessitated by growing global competition, the worsening economic crisis in the developing world, the impact of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes, and the failure of centralised state-dominated development strategies. In essence the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) in 1996 also sought to implement a more budget-driven paradigm with an emphasis on measures such as cost-cutting, right-sizing and privatisation, which were in line with the provisions of the NPM (Bardill, 2000:106-107). However, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and South African Communist Party (SACP) were at odds with Government for such a policy (Maserumule, 2017:103).

In adherence to the NPM approach, the South African government passed various legislative frameworks, including but not limited to, the *Public Finance Management Act, 1999* (Act 1 of 1999), *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003* (Act 56 of 2003) and *Local Government: Municipal System Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000). These frameworks are emphatic on the principles underpinning NPM's approach, including but not limited to, decentralisation, performance management and outsourcing. For example, *Local Government: Municipal System Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) and *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003* (Act 56 of 2003) make mandatory provisions to seek the participation of stakeholders such as local communities in the integrated development planning and budgeting processes. Accounting officers (municipal managers) and their respective managers have also been given greater responsibilities and control over budgets and expenditure. However, these managers are held accountable for all operations, expenditure, performance, resource management and overall implementation of municipal policies, including the IDP. The NPM makes provision for decentralisation of powers, participatory planning, effectiveness and efficiency, performance management, financial service reforms, outsourcing and contract appointments. These provisions were introduced in the South African municipalities with the intention of effectively implementing municipal policies to enhance the management and the rendering of municipal services to the local communities. Unfortunately, most municipalities, particularly those that are largely rural, lack the requisite political will, skills and capacity to develop and implement their own municipal policies (Munzhedzi, 2019). Munzhedzi (2019) further claims in his finding that corruption and maladministration also characterise many municipalities in South Africa. Those that contravene policy frameworks do not suffer the consequences of their actions, hence the perpetual deterioration in as far as municipal policy implementation is concerned (Ababio, Vyas-Doorgapersad & Mzini, 2008; Munzhedzi, 2016). This inaction occurs, even when there are several institutions established by the State to ensure public accountability, including but not limited to, municipal councils and municipal public accounts committees (MPACs), the Auditor-General and Public Protector among others (Mfene, 2013; Mathebula & Munzhedzi, 2017). The lack of effectiveness and efficiency in these institutions has a negative effect on the implementation of municipal policies. The ensuing section of the paper discusses the 7-C Protocol, and interlinked variables to be considered as an when public policies are being implemented.

Policy implementation studies: 7-C Protocol

Scholarship on public policy implementation is diverse, complex and broad (Brynard & De Coning in Cloete, Wissink & De Coning, 2006:194). This public policy implementation is a multifaceted concept attempted at various levels of government and pursued in conjunction with private sector, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), hence the introduction of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). In other words, policy implementation is often for the multiplicity of actors (Scharpf, 1978:347). Brynard and de Coning in Cloete, Wissink & de Coning (2006: 182) maintains that a common theory on policy implementation still has to be constructed, however, there are explanatory variables identified by scholars of the field. They are seven interlinked variables also known as the 7-C Protocol, namely, content, context, commitment, capacity, clients and coalition, communication, and coordination. These variables are discussed below.

Content

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973:xv) view implementation as a seamless web or a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve those set goals and actions. In this regard, Brynard and de Coning (2006:196) consider policy as either characterised by distributive, regulatory or redistributive approaches. Distributive approach refers to sharing for general welfare whereas a regulatory approach specifies rules to be followed without failure, and redistributive policies attempt to change the allocation of resources or power from one group to another. The most important aspect to note in the content variable is that governments function by coercion. The policy specifies the level and type of coercion to be applied by government. The content of the IDP as a public policy in this case seeks to ensure that there is a long time planning for the specific municipality and a prioritising of scarce resources of the municipality in the provision of basic municipal services (Craythorne, 2006; Mnculwane, 2008). In essence, municipalities, like the government in its entirety, are often required to do a balancing act to ensure that scarce financial, human and material resources are distributed equitably, as required by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (hereafter referred to as the 1996 *Constitution*). Municipalities often have to consider the content of the policy like an IDP, particularly during implementation so that the outcome of the implementation of the policy would have addressed what the policy purported to achieve during its development. It is paramount that the outcome of the IDP as a policy of the municipality is what the municipal council sought to achieve during development and approval. However, most municipalities in South Africa are unable to implement their IDPs due to a multiplicity of reasons, including capacity and corruption (Munzhedzi, 2019). The initial intention of a policy are often not achieved, hence a high number of service delivery protests, negative audit opinion as well as huge service delivery backlog in most municipalities (Koma, 2010:114; Maserumule, 2017).



Context

Context in relation to an IDP refers to the consideration of the environmental factors that underpinned the policy document during its development as well as its implementation. There are social, economic and political factors that play a significant role in the development of a policy or an IDP in this case (Mnculwane, 2008). It is commonly accepted that a context-free theory of implementation is less likely to produce significant explanations or accurate predictions (Berman, 1980:206). Unlike in content policy, the focus here is on institutional context, which is shaped by a larger context on social, economic, political and legal realities (de Coning, Cloete & Burger, 2018). It is important to note that context of a policy is crucial in that the success of such a policy is not certain because it lacks accuracy in its predictions. The most important issue to note is that each municipality develops its IDP based on its own circumstances and environments. The environmental factors that influence Polokwane Local Municipality, which is largely urban and semi-urban, are totally different from Collins Chabane Local Municipality, which is largely rural, small and new (Collins Chabane Local Municipality was established after the 2016 municipal elections). The political factors of urban municipalities with bigger budgets may never be like that of a small municipality, which is rural. Most importantly to note is that the environmental factors are essential in that they differ from one municipality to the other. Minnaar (2010) in concurrence posits that all state institutions, including municipalities, must give consideration of all environmental factors as and when policies are being developed and implemented. Consideration of these environmental factors has not been successful in that small municipalities that are largely rural continue to struggle and implement their own policies (Munzhedzi, 2019). One of the challenges is that South African municipalities possess a uniform approach in dealing with all the issues in their localities. The protocol of context seeks to suggest that every municipality is different based on its situations and environment. It, therefore, means that the IDP and the municipal budget of each municipality must be informed by the environment with such a municipality.

Commitment

Government may be the most logical and pass with flying colours in terms of cost-benefit analysis, but due to the unwillingness of policy implementers (appointed officials) to carry out allocated responsibilities (implementing government policies), projects may not come to fruition (Warwick, 1982:135; Mafunisa, 2013). Brynard and de Coning in Cloete, Wissink and de Coning (2006:199) and Mafunisa (2013) concur that commitment by policy implementers (administrators) plays a significant role in the achievement of goals and objectives. Brynard and de Coning further provide that although commitment may be influenced by content and capacity, more influence comes from the institutional context. Without enough commitment in terms of policy, implementation from relevant roleplayers will result in Government not achieving its policy goals and objectives. For

example, a well-crafted IDP without necessary commitment by roleplayers may result a failure to achieve its set performance targets. Munzhedzi (2013) is of the view that commitment and political will are very minimal in many municipalities in South Africa. This lack of commitment is seen when perpetrators of maladministration, fraud and corruption are not punished to avoid future occurrences (Ababio, Vyas-Doorgapersad & Mzini, 2008). Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPAC) often consider performance reports from the executive as well as audit report from the Auditor-General highlighting severe deviations and underperformances. However, there are no consequences to those who perpetuate the these anomalies as a way of curtailment. Munzhedzi (2019) posits that without requisite political will and commitment, no effective implementation of municipal programmes and policies could be effected.

Capacity

Capacity refers to the ability or authority of a person or an institution to perform a specific or higher graded function (Cloete, 1995:16). The capacity of the public sector is seen in terms of the structural and functional ability to implement public goals and objectives of government. The capacity in the context of an IDP as a public policy is about the municipality being able to harness all available resources of the municipality through its IDP to deliver its basic municipal services. It is essentially the ability of the municipal government to deliver those services, which make the lives of ordinary citizens better than before (Mnculwane, 2008). The milieu within which public policy actions are taken must be conducive to successful policy implementation (Grindle & Hildebrand, 1995:446). Capacity also means that the implementers of public policy must mobilise all available resources (including human and financial) in order to produce the best possible results or policy objectives in this case. Effective implementation coupled with capacity is a key variable. However, the government may decide, where necessary, to provide services itself or to adopt the role of facilitating, enabling, coordinating the delivery of services by the private sectors or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (World Bank, 1997:162). These may also depend on whether there is privatisation in the provision of services or not. The capacity of implementers of public policy may also be increased by either offering them training or beefing up the performance management system to enhance institutional performance. Capacity in municipalities should be holistic in such a way that they should be able to develop a credible IDP and a municipal budget as well as being able to implement the two and all other municipal programmes. Equally, the IDP of the municipality should be able to address problems and challenges of its local communities. Simply put, the IDP of a municipality should ensure that there is economic development, infrastructure development, employment creation as well as protection of the environment. However, many municipalities lack requisite capacity to develop and implement their own policies (Ababio, Vyas-Doorgapersad & Mzini, 2008:6; Munzhedzi, 2019). In addition to the lack of capacity in most municipalities, infighting between administrative officials and politicians and the lack of an efficient ward committee system is prevalent (Munzhedzi & Phago, 2013:44). Many municipalities are actually characterised by a lack of a revenue base, skills and technical capacity.



Clients and coalition

Coalition generally refers to coming together of persons or institutions with common interests or goals. Government may, in the provision of certain services or implementation of a particular public policy, join coalitions with groups or actors who may support a particular course. Brynard and de Coning in Cloete, Wissink and de Coning (2006:203) contend that government may identify and determine potential influential clients and assist to form a coalition from the larger cast of characters in the implementation theatre. However, it is crucial that clients and coalitions are kept to a minimum as opposed to many unidentifiable actors. When choosing the kind of clients that it wants to make a coalition with, Government should also look at the capacity of such clients. Section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 makes a provision that municipalities ought to work with local communities and community-based organisations in the development and implementation of both their policies and programmes (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Ward committees, traditional leaders, local communities and community development workers are some of the stakeholders that must be allowed to make significant inputs in the municipal policies. The environment must also be conducive for such participation to take place. Nevertheless, most municipalities facilitate the process of community participation only to comply with legislative prescripts hence the lack of active participation by stakeholders (Hofisi, 2014; Madumo, 2014; Mautjana & Makombe, 2014). It therefore means that the community participation in some municipalities is not as prescribed by legislation.

Communication

In addition to the original 5-C protocol that has been discussed in the preceding part of this paper, communication has been added as the 6th variable (Burger, 2015:30). Communication plays a critical role in policy implementation (de Coning, Cloete & Burger, 2018:212). Communication is used for interaction between municipalities and their stakeholders such as ward committees, traditional leaders and local communities. Interactions also take place between supervisors and their subordinates and vice versa. There are many methods of communication in the municipal setting, namely, written, verbal and non-written. The situation and the stakeholder to be communicated with dictates the type of communication method to be used. Most important to note is that implementation of policies can never be effective without proper and established communication structures and processes. However, there are many barriers that prohibit effective communication in municipalities such as difference in perception, meaning, organisational structure, emotions, language, non-verbal cues and filtering (Cameron & Stone, 1995). These barriers make municipalities unable to implement their existing policies, let alone to develop a credible communication strategy. There cannot be good implementation when municipal employees do not know what is expected from them as well not knowing the consequences for missing such targets.

Coordination

In addition to communication as a 6th variable of the 7-C Protocol, the seventh and final variable is coordination (Burger, 2015:94). Coordination plays a paramount role in as far as successful implementation of municipal policies is concerned. There must be a strengthening of relationships between municipal stakeholders as well as within the municipal officials for proper coordination (Robinson, Hewitt & Harriss, 2000). In essence, supporting a fellow official or a subordinate in the course of implementing municipal policies and programmes must be like second nature. Municipal councils offer their support through availing the needed resources and budget to the officials, while officials advise the municipal councils on the development and implementation of the policies. Furthermore, municipal councils are transformed with the responsibility of listening to the inputs of the local communities and other relevant stakeholders within their jurisdiction. However, there is lack of coordination within municipalities in South Africa, hence the continuous protest from communities citing that they are not being listened to, there's minimal support for officials as well as passive participation in community matters (Munzhedzi, 2019). De Coning, Cloete and Burger (2018: 214) maintain that this lack of coordination often gives rise to failure in creating proper alignments and partnerships during the implementation of municipal policies and programmes.

The foregoing variables in policy implementation identified by scholars in the field of Public Administration are interrelated; they do not function independently. For example, commitment to provide required services at a particular municipality without capacity may amount to nothing. Of paramount importance is that these 7-C protocol variables are interlinked (Cloete & De Coning, 2011; De Coning, Cloete & Burger, 2018). One variable cannot function without the others. The applicability of these variables has to start not only from the implementation of the municipal IDP and the budget but also from their development through to the evaluation and analysis state. It is for this reason that the development and implementation of the municipal IDP and budget demands the participation (coalition) of all relevant stakeholders, including the participation of sector departments. After the implementation of all public policies, the analysis and evaluation of the implementation of such policy commences. Furthermore, without proper coordination in the entire public policy process (including implementation), there may never be a fruitful communication between stakeholders (de Coning, Cloete & Burger, 2018:212). Even when municipal officials are committed to achieving the set objectives, lack of requisite skills and capacity often derail the public policy implementation process. A study by Valeta and Walton (2008) claims that most rural municipalities lack the capacity to collect revenue and to spend their allocated budget. One of the reasons for that is the lack of skills and capacity as well as the lack of commitment by the municipal leadership. Equally important is the lack of proper understanding of the content and context of the municipal policies. Policy analysis and evaluation is discussed in detail in the ensuing section of the paper below so that implementation of municipal policies may be further contextualised. There may never be an effective and efficient implementation of policies without evaluation and analysis.



Policy analysis and the evaluation process

It is often assumed in public administration that once a law or policy is passed, bureaucracy is created to implement it and money is spent so that the purpose of the law is achieved (Thornhill, 2012; Rabbie & Cloete, 2018). It is also assumed that once a government adopts a particular policy position and allocates appropriate monies, hires people, carries out activities (implementation) towards achieving the policy, then the effect of the policy will be felt by the society (Dye, 2011:323). While these activities may be necessary, the fact of the matter is that every policy must be subject to continuous analysis and evaluation (Thornhill, 2012:114). A policy is usually developed to address current needs of the society. Policy analysis includes the following:

- Studying the existing policy or lack of policy
- Identifying the dysfunctional situation that has developed because of the lack of policy or despite the existing policy
- Studying the outputs of the existing policy to establish what factors caused the failures, like finding out whether the policy was inapplicable or whether the inputs provided for its implementation were appropriate or not
- Forecasting the future with the use of technologies, brainstorming and scenario building to determine the issues that have been met by new or adapted policies
- Preparing possible new or amended policies for further action by the administrators and the political executive office bearers (Cloete, 1994:109; Thornhill, 2012:144)

These preceding factors about policy analysis are paramount in that they assist the public sector institutions, including municipalities in determining the shortcomings regarding a particular public policy. Knowing the shortcoming of the policy helps in developing appropriate remedies or correcting the situation. Dye (2011:323) refers to policy evaluation as learning about the consequence of public policy or the overall assessment of the effectiveness of a public policy in meeting its own objectives. Analysis and evaluation of public policy does not only occur during the policymaking stage, but becomes part of the whole process, even during implementation. Thornhill (2012:145) postulates that an analysis of a public policy may lead to the termination of the policy. Some public policies never reach a state of approval in that the public or other actors such as policy experts, interest groups and local communities may reject such a policy during the public debate stage. However, it is of outmost importance for Government to continuously analyse, monitor and evaluate its public policies (Thornhill, 2012:145; Rabbie & Cloete, 2018). These evaluations should not only be on policies but on the actions and performances of both political and public office-bearers.

The maximising of human potential in the performance of responsibilities also has to do with the efficient, economic and effective use of resources, as provided for by section 195 (1) (b) of the 1996 Constitution (Munzhedzi, 2011:23). The 1996 Constitution makes provision for the effective performance of administrative functions (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1999:384). It is important to link individual performance to that of the municipality in that it is the collective responsibility

of the individual employees to achieve the municipal objectives and targets. Equally important is that there must be regular evaluations of performances and policies as well as strategies of the municipalities. These evaluations of both the policies and performances could assist in establishing whether the shortcomings are with the policy or the implementers of a particular policy. A policy may be good in all respects, but the inadequate performance of the implementers affects the success of the entire public policy impact and success.

Conclusion

It has been discussed in this paper that the South African legislative framework has developed mechanisms of identifying the needs of local communities within respective municipalities. These mechanisms include ward committee meetings, public meetings as well as IDP forum meetings. Such needs are then used to develop municipal policies, including IDPs and budgets. NPM has been adopted as a theoretical framework in this paper in that it makes provision for decentralisation, participatory planning, performance management, effectiveness and efficiency in the public policy implementation processes. This paper discussed that many of such policies are not effectively and efficiently implemented. This basically means that most of these policies do not achieve their intended set objectives. Some of the variables relevant in the public policy implementation such as content, context, commitment, coalitions, capacity, communication and coordination were also discussed. All of these variables are paramount in the implementation of public policies, including in the local sphere of government. The functionality of these variables are interlinked during the implementation of policies, which often manifests in the provision of municipal services. For example, there cannot be a good coalition between municipal stakeholders without constant communications. The major challenge is that many municipalities in South Africa lack requisite resources, capacity, political will and commitment to implement their own policies. Without necessary communication and coordination between relevant stakeholders in the local government sphere, achievement of policy objectives is not probable. It is also concluded that monitoring and evaluation of the service delivery project implementation is lacking in many municipalities. This fundamentally means that there is no good performance management system to detect deviations and anomalies so that corrective measures could be recommended.

Recommendations

Public policy is often developed to better the lives of the citizens, including that of local communities within municipalities. Similarly, a municipal IDP is crafted with an intention of helping the municipality to focus on the most important needs of local communities, taking into account the resources available at respective municipalities (Leboea, 2003:15). NPM theory, as discussed above, also accentuates decentralisation, participatory planning, performance management, effectiveness and efficiency to improve the implementation of government programmes and policies like the IDP. The improvement of such implementation also enhances service provision. However, even with the introduction of NPM in the municipal systems in South Africa, many municipalities still



have backlogs in as far as the provision of municipal services is concerned (Ababio, Vyas-Doorgapersad & Mzini, 2008:6; Koma, 2010). This paper recommends the following as a way of addressing some of the policy implementation challenges that exist in many municipalities:

- Municipalities should recruit and appoint qualified and experienced officials who possess the necessary skills and capacity to implement municipal policies. All senior officials of the municipalities should at least have a postgraduate qualification in the relevant field, including but not limited to, Municipal Administration, Engineering and Accountancy. Municipalities should develop their capacities to collect more revenue so that their *fiscus* could be enhanced for them to be able to fund their IDP implementation.
- Credible IDPs with quantifiable, achievable targets should be developed. Municipalities should develop IDPs that they will be able to implement by considering their individual capacities (financial, human and material resources) when doing such.
- Municipalities ought to conduct awareness campaigns to local communities to improve their understanding of both the integrated development planning and the budget processes, and ultimately their participation. Local communities with a good understanding of these processes are more likely to offer well-informed inputs during the participation processes.
- Financial resources to municipalities from higher spheres ought to be increased so that service delivery will ultimately increase. If more resources are pumped into municipalities, service delivery may increase because the local sphere of government is closest to the people.
- Maximum stakeholder participation needs to be ensured by encouraging activism and always inviting them to contribute. The participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, the business sector, interest groups and community-based organisations is paramount. Multiplicity of views should be encouraged by welcoming all kinds of contributions from participants.
- The provisions of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act, 2004 (Act 12 of 2004) and Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) should be implemented accordingly to ensure that corruption and maladministration is curtailed within municipal governance. Offenders who contravene legislative provisions regarding corruption and maladministration must be punished to discourage future offenders.
- Ruling political parties in respective municipalities must instil a sense of political will to effectively implement municipal programmes and activities. This could be done by ensuring that those mayors and members of the municipal executives are held to account by their political parties for failing to implement municipal programmes and not punishing contraveners of legislative provisions.

The most fundamental tenet in municipal administration is that the development and implementation of municipal policies must be undertaken with the participation of relevant stakeholders. The recommendations advanced herein may sufficiently address some of the challenges identified



during the discussion in this paper so that needs of the communities are adequately identified, processed and achieved.

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