COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF GREATER GIYANI MUNICIPALITY WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO MUYEXE VILLAGE
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction........................................................................................................3  
2. Background of Pilot area..................................................................................3-5  
   2.1 Town and settlements..................................................................................3  
   2.2 Economic development in the area............................................................4  
   2.3 Spatial analysis............................................................................................4-5  
3. Comprehensive Rural Development Pilot Project...........................................5  
4. Methodology used in identifying needy communities........................................6-7  
5. Role played by the community.........................................................................7-10  
   5.1 Technical and Spatial analysis/ site visits.................................................7  
   5.2 Social facilitation.........................................................................................7  
      5.2.1 Household surveys..............................................................................8  
      5.2.2 Community meetings and appraisals.................................................9  
      5.2.3 Essays and drawings from schools..................................................10  
6. Needs analysis...................................................................................................10-12  
   6.1 Priorities and needs......................................................................................11-12  
7. Muyexe Spatial Plan............................................................................................12-16  
8. Projects and programmes implemented............................................................16-18  
9. Institutional arrangements................................................................................18-23  
10. Challenges.........................................................................................................23  
11. Lessons learnt..................................................................................................23-24  
12. Conclusions......................................................................................................24-25
1. INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive rural development is one of the key election promises made by the ruling party during the 2009 National and Provincial elections. The African National Congress resolved at its National Conference held in Polokwane in 2008 that rural development needs to be strengthened and that later translated into policy after the electorates have re-confirmed their mandate to the party. As a result, government needed to begin a process to realise that crucial electoral mandate. In our discussion we are going to focus on the following: background of Greater Giyani Municipality, the comprehensive rural development pilot project, methodology used to identify needy communities, role played by the community, needs analysis, Muyexe Spatial plan, institutional arrangements, lessons learnt and conclusion.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Town and Settlements

Greater Giyani Municipality is one of five (5) local municipalities falling within Mopani District Municipality in Limpopo Province. The other four local municipalities in Mopani are Greater Tzaneen, Greater Letaba, Ba-Phalaborwa and Maruleng. The town is located 185km from Polokwane, 100km from Thohoyandou and 550km from Tshwane. The municipality covers approximately 296,727km² area with only one semi-urban area being Giyani. The municipality is demarcated into 30 wards and has 60 Councillors. The municipality has 10 traditional authority areas comprising of 91 villages. Giyani town is the largest centre of population concentration, employment opportunities, shopping and recreational facilities.
2.2 Economic development in the area

The economic activity that mostly takes place in Greater Giyani both formal/informal are: small-scale agriculture (maize, vegetables, tomatoes, and beef), services, transport and retail development. There are however, a number of factors impacting negatively on the economic growth such as geographical location (distance to markets), shortage of skills, poor infrastructure, climatic conditions and diseases (HIV and Malaria). The municipality has potential for tourism and conservation development due to the existing natural heritage sites through the area, mining, abandoned farming schemes, processing of natural products (Mopani Worm and Marula Fruit).

2.3 Spatial analysis

The municipal area is characterised by the following:

- Thirty (30) wards consisting of ninety one (91) villages, three (3) RDP towns, proclaimed township with seven sections which includes the Central Business District (CBD).
- A considerable percentage of land comprises of rivers, grazing land, subsistence farming, irrigation schemes and natural resources (Mopani Worms & Marula Fruits).
- Significant areas of land owned by the State are under the custodianship of Traditional Authorities.
- Large tracts of high potential agricultural land are being utilised for intensive and/or extensive farming activities.
Influx of people to Giyani Town, which is perceived to offer employment opportunities and basic services.

Informal settlement of Mozambican immigrants and South African nationals in the eastern portion of Giyani (Hluphekani), which lacks basic services (roads, water, electricity).

3. THE COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECT

The Greater Giyani Pilot was selected as a Pilot project for the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform. The choice of Greater Giyani as pilot was inspired by an article that the Minister read in a newspaper about the levels of poverty in the Municipal area.

In His State of the Nation address the President made a pronouncement about Greater Giyani Municipality being the pilot area for the Comprehensive Rural Development as contained in the election manifesto of the ruling party. This pronouncement was followed closely by the State of the Province address by the Premier of Limpopo Province.

In order to implement the project a team was deployed to the Limpopo Province to meet with Provincial stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the project. The team had to work within tight schedules between the pronouncement of the President and the actual site selection. The focus of our discussion will be more on the experience we had in rolling out this pilot project informed by the policy directives as outlined above. This will be done in the form of outlining the process undertaken by the National, Provincial and local Governments in implementing the project.
4. METHODOLOGY USED IN IDENTIFYING NEEDY COMMUNITIES

In terms of the policy directives, Greater Giyani Municipality was selected as the pilot area and what was left was for the specific site to be identified. In order to come up with a much closer area as defined in the Presidential pronouncements against the election manifesto, the Integrated Development Plans of both Mopani District and Greater Giyani Municipalities were analysed. The main purpose for these exercises was to clearly pick up a few areas that might meet the defined socio-economic circumstances.

The other documents studied were the Local Economic Development Strategies for both the two municipalities which assisted greatly in picking up a few clustered areas. The methodology focused highly on five key delivery issues and they are infrastructure, income levels, employment, community facilities and existing initiatives. In order to critically analyse these aspects, a team was assembled to conduct a desktop study and spatial analysis as indicated above. The main task for this team was to assess all relevant developmental documents such as the Integrated Development Plan, Spatial Development Framework and the Local Economic Development Plan for both the municipalities. Based on the findings, the three focus areas as identified in the draft comprehensive rural development document being agrarian transformation, rural development and land reform were then matched against the findings. These led to the identification of three sites per focus area which was then discussed broadly including conducting site visits for the verification and discussion of the issues identified with communities and the ultimate result was the selection of a village called Muyexe.
5. ROLE PLAYED BY THE COMMUNITY

In order to assess the current progress it is critical to assess the needs analysis and highlight the processes undertaken to determine the community needs. The process followed a two pronged approach guided by the Spatial and Technical Analysis, site visits and community participation. The diagram below illustrates the process followed.

5.1 Technical and Spatial Analysis / Site Visits

The Technical Team was established composed of officials with knowledge on the spatial planning and Geographic Information System. The key role of the team was to assist with the technical and spatial analysis which must also be matched with the sites visits and the community engagement. In this regard, this team focused mostly
on technical issues with regard to how the space within the identified village was utilised and to point out any potential development and the direction it must take. The team managed to develop some maps which shows the area before and the area after considering some critical projects.

5.2 Social Facilitation

Below is a summary of community participatory processes undertaken in Muyexe which took place even before the Ministerial visit. Various methods of public participation were used to identify community needs. These include household surveys, community meetings and appraisals and engaging school pupils.
5.2.1 Household surveys

A questionnaire was used to do a profiling and to confirm the exact number of households in the village. Thus far, 300 household have been profiled through physical and contact interviews by the team. The study was completed by Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, Community Development Workers and Ward Committee together with 52 unemployed youth. The survey results are currently being analyzed.

5.2.2 Community Meetings and Appraisals

A team of officials from key stakeholders accompanied by the Community Development Workers had several meetings with Muyexe community represented by Traditional leaders, youth, men women, and elderly people. The essence of broadening the representation was to ensure that all key stakeholders within the community have an opportunity to reflect their areas of interest without one sector dominating the other.

In all the meetings water was identified as the main need of the community. Other need identified include roads, clinic, housing, fencing, playgrounds, post office, Tribal Authority (facility for the chief), community hall, police station, shopping mall, wild animals preying on their livestock, hotel/tourism (Bed & Breakfast), dilapidated school class rooms and the toilets, grazing camps, bursaries and library.

The community committed themselves about the identified needs by signing on the flip charts on which the priorities were listed.
5.2.3 Essays and Drawings from Schools

Pupils from primary school were invited to draw pictures on their perception of the village. High school pupils were invited to write essays on the theme: “Muyexe, My village, what I like and what I do not like”. The future plan is that the drawings and essays will be placed in the proposed library in Muyexe.

6. NEEDS ANALYSIS

Based on the technical, spatial and sites visits conducted, the various needs were identified and analysed by the technical team. The table below presents the services as analysed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Findings And Proposed Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road Access</td>
<td>The access road needs to be upgraded to an all-weather gravel road, rebuilding the road crossings over annual flowing streams. At present a bus service frequents the village twice a day. Taxis will not enter the village because of the state of the road. People are forced to use donkey carts as a means of transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal roads</td>
<td>Internal road network needs to be reconstructed to repair the erosion and dealing with the rock outcrops within the road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many of the community have houses alongside their traditional houses. There are some people who do not have a house and their mud houses are dilapidated.

The village has no water reticulation but the infrastructure is in place. To gain access to water, the community is forced to buy water from people who own

### 6.1 Priorities and Needs

Below is a summary of the final list of priorities and needs for the village of Muyexe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITIES and NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation – Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fencing – Grazing camps &amp; arable land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Irrigation Systems for crops          |

| Soil Suitability Analysis            |

| Livestock Farming Analysis           |

| Clinic                                |

| Eradication of Animal Diseases        |

| Infrastructure for Traditional Authorities |

| Soccer Playgrounds                    |

| Business Centre                       |

| Community Hall                        |

| Sports Centre                         |

| Library                               |

| ECD Centre                            |

| Recreational Centre                   |

| Cellphone Network, Land Lines         |

| Veggie Tunnels                        |

| Satellite Police Station              |

| Post Office                           |

| Village Industry (Economic Industries)|

| Wild animal attacking livestock       |

| Skills and Youth Development          |

| Procurement of Tractors               |
7. **MUYEXE SPATIAL PLAN**

The Muyexe Spatial Plan seeks to spatially locate projects that have been proposed in response to the identified needs of the community of Muyexe. The principles promoted in the current legislative framework for spatial development have been adopted to ensure the maximization of resources. This concept is reflected in the proposed location of the Thusong Service Centre (Map 1).

The central location of the proposed Thusong Service Centre improves the service delivery impact as it is accessible to a larger threshold of population. By locating the Thusong Service Centre in this area a greater number of villages will be served. By improving the road networks that link these villages accessibility to this service will be enhanced and the impact of such a service is larger. A regional approach to the development of rural areas is key towards ensuring the sustainable growth of Muyexe. Key issues that impact on the location of projects revolve around:

- Locality
- Accessibility
- Conglomeration of activities.

The existing land use plan (Map 2) depicts the current situation in the village of Muyexe. The Spatial plan seeks to present a vision for the development of Muyexe (see Map 3).
8. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED

After all the planning work was done and the priority list developed, much of the projects have been developed. During the visit of the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform a tree planting project was launched and to date three hundred and fifty (350) trees have been planted within Muyexe village.
The fact that majority of the houses within Muyexe were made out of mud, that demonstrated a need for housing provision. The Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo Province committed to construct RDP housing units and a total of 350 houses have been completed benefitting families who had poor housing facilities. These houses have been developed within the sites that residents were occupying thereby avoiding a lot of movement.

Given the fact that the pilot project has brought a number of stakeholders together, the Independent Development Trust has assisted by developing the Thusong Centre which was one of the needs identified by the community. The centre will be used for a number of community activities including the various government services. This has brought a relief to the community that was in distress.

As identified in the needs analysis, water is one of the major challenges within the area. Mopani District Municipality as a water services authority planned to develop boreholes as a short term measure while the necessary infrastructure will be developed. All the nine boreholes have been drilled, equipped and operational while the reticulation network is at an advance stage. Over and above that, forty (40) JoJo tanks have been setup in the area as well to support the water provision.

The Department of Communication identified the need of setting up a satellite post office due to community members travelling long distance for postal services. This situation created a huge communication problem between family members and the department has finally setup the satellite post office within the village.

When the essays competition was conducted at the two schools, it was discovered that there are no ablution facilities and that was making learning and teaching very difficult. As a result, the Department of Education in Limpopo Province supported by the Department of Water Affairs constructed ablution facilities for the two schools and are completed. This
has improved the decency of life and improved health and hygiene within the two schools. Equally important to note is that the two schools were also given a face lift by the department who renovated them to improve the outlook and safety of the learners.

The Department of Agriculture supported the pilot by providing fencing to the nursery which was always vulnerable for animal invasion thereby affecting the crops. Further than that, the department also supported in conducting soil testing to determine the quality of the soil for food security. On the other hand, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform provided fencing as well for households which they provided some measures of safety.

The challenge of sanitation was both a social and environmental problem looking at the issue of underground water. Mopani District Municipality assisted by the local municipality of Greater Giyani have constructed and completed one hundred and thirty five (135) VIP toilets for the community of Muyexe.

The issue of crime prevention has been a problem within Muyexe village since there was no police station and for people to report criminal related cases they had to travel long distances. This has become a matter of yesterday because the Department of Safety and Security and Liaison have completed a satellite police station and it is functional. All these are some of the projects that have been completed and they were not initially there. This is a clear demonstration of rural development from a coordinated point.

9. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

One of the critical success factors for any project or programme is the issue of the institutional arrangements. In implementing the project within Greater Giyani Municipality
understanding very well that there are various stakeholders with interest in the project, the institutional arrangements were discussed and agreed to by the various members. One of the major decisions arrived at was to ensure consistency with regard to current existing structures in government that deals with issues of intergovernmental relations.

This approach was endorsed given the fact that we may not need to re-invent the wheel but to find mechanisms of utilizing existing coordinating structures adding some of the issues they need to handle. The institutional arrangements developed recognized the role that is to be played by the National Government through the various Cabinet Ministers and the Cabinet Clusters that have been established. In this regard, their role will be more on policy development on comprehensive rural development and monitoring.

The role of the Provincial Government is also articulated in the arrangements such that through the Office of the Premier, they will provide support and monitoring so that they are able to report to the Office of the President regarding the implementation of the programme. It must be understood that this role is still on the policy development level. In this regard, even the traditional leaders within the pilot area are brought on board through the Office of the Premier as a custodian of issues that deals with traditional leaders within the Province.

In order to support both the National and Provincial Governments, the Director General in the Presidency focusing on War Room to Poverty, Director General of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Director General in the Limpopo Provincial Government are organized into a Director General Forum which is charged with the overall administrative responsibility for the project. They serve as the administrative support for the Presidency, Minister and Premier’s Offices as policy decision makers.
The forum of the Director Generals is then supported by the Governance and Administrative Committee for the project which mainly takes the responsibility for coordinating all the activities and report back to the Forum. The membership of this committee is made up of Mopani District Municipality, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Department of Land and Agriculture in Limpopo Province, Greater Giyani Municipality and Office of the Premier in Limpopo Province.

In order to ensure full participation of various stakeholders, a Technical Committee Forum is also established which is composed of members of the Governance and Administrative Committee and all conveners of the various technical teams. The main focus of the forum is to deal with project oversight and coordination as well in an inclusive manner. This means that this forum will discuss all the progress made before the Governance and Administrative Committee consolidate a report to the Director General Forum. It was also agreed that periodically, the extended Cluster Forum will meet where all sector departments and other institutions will attend and this is done to ensure that all institutions are on par with the developments of the project.

Four technical committees have been established and they are the social, economic, infrastructure and Justice and crime prevention. These committees focus on the different aspects of service delivery. The social cluster deals with matters of education, health, community facilities and sports just to mention a few while the economic committee focuses on all matters of economic development. The infrastructure committee focuses on the basic service delivery such as water, electricity and roads; and Justice and crime prevention deals specifically with issues of crime, safety and security. In order to ensure public participation in the project, the ward committee structure for the area is also incorporated into the institutional arrangements. The main role of the ward committee members is to participate in the process on matters that are being discussed by the various technical committees so as to ensure community ownership. Added to that,
village committees were also established focusing on the various aspects as identified in the prioritisation of needs by the community.
The table below outlines the different participants within the technical committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRDP ECONOMIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE</th>
<th>CRDP GOVERNANCE &amp; ADMIN COMMITTEE</th>
<th>CRDP INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE</th>
<th>CRDP JUSTICE, CRIME PREVENTION &amp; SECURITY COMMITTEE</th>
<th>CRDP SOCIAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>roads &amp; transport</td>
<td>mopani dm</td>
<td>public works</td>
<td>safety, security, liaison</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prov treasury</td>
<td>prov treasury</td>
<td>prov treasury</td>
<td>roads &amp; transport</td>
<td>health &amp; social development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local gov &amp; housing</td>
<td>education (chair: social cluster)</td>
<td>local gov &amp; housing</td>
<td>home affairs (prov)</td>
<td>local gov &amp; housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic dev, environment &amp; tourism</td>
<td>roads &amp; transport (chair: economic cluster)</td>
<td>roads &amp; transport</td>
<td>justice (prov)</td>
<td>local gov &amp; housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining (prov)</td>
<td>public works (chair: infrastructure)</td>
<td>mining (prov)</td>
<td>nia (prov)</td>
<td>sports, arts &amp; culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water affairs (prov)</td>
<td>safety, security, liaison (chair: security cluster)</td>
<td>water affairs (prov)</td>
<td>npa (prov)</td>
<td>defence (prov)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy (prov)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chairperson / Convener:

- Roads & Transport: Mopani DM
- Agriculture: Office of Premier
- Prov Treasury: Prov Treasury
- Local Gov & Housing: Education (Chair: Social Cluster)
- Economic Dev, Environment & Tourism: Roads & Transport (Chair: Economic Cluster)
- Mining (Prov): Public Works (Chair: Infrastructure)
- Energy (Prov): SAPS (Prov)
- Health & Social Development
- Roads & Transport
- Local Gov & Housing
- Roads & Transport
- Justice (Prov)
- Mining (Prov)
- NIA (Prov)
- Water Affairs (Prov)
- NPA (Prov)
- Defence (Prov)
- Home Affairs
10. CHALLENGES

The decision by the Presidency to pilot the Comprehensive Development Programme in Greater Giyani Municipality was welcomed by everyone with excitement and enthusiasm. However it must be indicated it will be incorrect to assume that there were no challenges up to the stage where the project is. Some of the challenges encountered are outlined as follows:

- The absence of the framework for Comprehensive Rural development – this implied that everything was going to start from the ground;
- The lack of proper institutional arrangements for the project which at times tend to create confusion and possible tensions amongst stakeholders;
- The poor coordination of the contribution by the various stakeholders which at times led to communities being engaged in isolation from the project drivers and;
- While projects were identified through community involvement, there was no clear indication of available budget resources for some of them.

11. LESSONS LEARNT

The implementation of the pilot project within Greater Giyani Municipality has assisted all the stakeholders to move from an unstructured way of doing things given the speed in which some activities had to occur such as the visit by the Minister. During the early
stages of the project, the institutional arrangements were not clear to all the various
stakeholders and this at times created confusion.

The methodology used to select the specific village for piloting has also added value to
the project in the sense that the socio-economic issues around the villages were
thoroughly analysed and an informed decision was made on the basis of the economic
status of the area and the poverty levels.

Since the establishment of the institutional arrangements things have improved to the
better. This was done in order to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project to the
livelihoods of the identified community and thereby utilizing the scarce resources in a
proper manner. This experience if applied to projects such as this will lead to a more
effective and efficient approach which in turn will lead to the desired outcomes.

It must also be pointed out that the direct involvement of the community through the
household surveys and schools participation also enriched the entire project whereby
some of the inputs made and the essays by the school learners have found expression
into the final document presented before the President during the official launch of the
project.

12. CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of the comprehensive rural development project in
Greater Giyani Municipality has brought some wonderful experience to the municipalities
involved and the sector departments. In this regard, all stakeholders have learnt also how
to interact with one another more and also the mechanism to ensure community
ownership. To this day, a number of developmental projects such as mobile clinic,
renovation of schools and many others have been implemented since the inception of the
project. It is expected that this momentum will pick up once various institutions have clearly set aside budget allocations for the implementation of projects within their area of operations. In the final analysis, the community of Muyexe will be a different one than what they used to be however there is no intention to turn the village into a city because that may not be ideal.

Given our experience in the pilot project, it is important to flag some of the issues that may need to be considered by Countries interested in the rural development initiative:

- There is a need to define the institutional arrangements from the onset because it assist in coordination;
- While there might be mechanisms to engage members of the community, it is very important that there must be a framework which will guide the interactions thereby minimizing possible tension;
- There must be a great consideration of the resources available within a given community such as skills, raw material and many others;
- The need to engage the educational institutions in the planning and implementation of the project. These will assist in creating ownership and knowledge of what their areas is like against the ideal;
- A community is made up of different categories of people and this aspect require good care since it may not be correct to only consider needs from one category against the others. There are needs that are related to elderly people, youth, women, religious group, business and others and;
- It is important to ensure full integration and coordination of all the planned programmes and projects.
REFERENCES


Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005


Greater Giyani Local Economic Development Plan, 2006

Greater Giyani Spatial Development Plan, 2007


Mopani District Local Economic Development Strategy, 2006

Mopani District Spatial Development Strategy, 2006
KEY

1. CRDP - Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
2. DRDLR - Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
3. DM - District Municipality
4. IDP - Integrated Development Plan
5. Prov. Treasury - Provincial Treasury
6. NIA - National Intelligence Agency
7. NPA - National Prosecuting Authority
8. Stats SA - Statistics South Africa