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# SYNTHESIS EVALUATION OF THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL (DDM)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	1
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	2
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4
<b>1.1 Background</b> .....	4
<b>1.2 Core goals of the DDM</b> .....	5
<b>1.3 Problem statement</b> .....	7
<b>2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION</b> .....	8
<b>2.1 Scope of the evaluation</b> .....	8
<b>2.2 Key evaluation questions</b> .....	9
<b>3. EVALUATION DESIGN AND APPROACH</b> .....	9
<b>3.1 Development of a Theory of Change and Logical Framework</b> .....	10
<b>3.2 Data sources and analysis</b> .....	10
<b>3.3 Limitations of the evaluation</b> .....	14
<b>4. FINDINGS</b> .....	15
<b>4.1 Effectiveness of the DDM</b> .....	15
<b>4.2 Implementation coherence</b> .....	18
<b>4.3 Efficiency of the DDM</b> .....	22
<b>4.4 Outcomes and impact of the DDM</b> .....	24
<b>4.5 Strengths, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT) analysis</b> .....	27
<b>5. KEY INSIGHTS</b> .....	28
<b>6. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	28
<b>7. CONCLUSION</b> .....	32
<b>8. REFERENCES</b> .....	32
<b>Annexure 1: One Plan commitments and progress for Provincial departments as of 2023</b> .....	33
<b>Annexure 2: DDM revised Theory of Change</b> .....	32
<b>Annexure 3: Proposed additions to DDM – Logic Framework</b> .....	34
<b>Annexure 4: Codebook for thematic synthesis</b> .....	37
<b>A. Governance, roles and coordination</b> .....	37
<b>B. One plan design and implementation</b> .....	38
<b>C. Financial resource and allocation</b> .....	38
<b>D. DDM hub, capacity and technical support</b> .....	39
<b>E. Data, monitoring, evaluation and learning</b> .....	39
<b>F. Stakeholder participation and community voice</b> .....	39
<b>G. Implementation, delivery and results</b> .....	40
<b>Annexure 5: Evidence → Recommendations Mapping Table</b> .....	40

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organisations
<b>CDD</b>	Community Driven Development
<b>CoGTA</b>	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DCOG</b>	Department of Cooperative Governance
<b>DDM</b>	District Development Model
<b>DVM</b>	Department of Military Veterans
<b>DPME</b>	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>EPWP</b>	Extended Public Works Programmes
<b>IDP</b>	Integrated Development Plan
<b>IGR</b>	Intergovernmental Relations
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>SALGA</b>	South African Local Government Association
<b>SMMEs</b>	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises
<b>TASEZ</b>	Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The District Development Model (DDM) aims to enhance intergovernmental coordination, improve service delivery, and promote socio-economic development across South Africa. Since its introduction in 2019, the DDM has achieved progress in fostering collaboration among government entities and the private sector. The model further aims to integrate economic planning at all levels of government to improve performance and accountability for service delivery and development outcomes while triggering efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness across spheres.

However, this evaluation highlights that the implementation of the model has been fragmented due to weak intergovernmental coordination, governance inefficiencies, and financial constraints. Despite notable successes in infrastructure projects and increased private sector participation, disparities in service delivery persist, particularly in underdeveloped districts.

A key finding of the evaluation is that while the DDM has facilitated engagement between stakeholders, there remains a limited impact on strengthening intergovernmental relations. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, and limited financial and human resource capacity have impeded effective implementation. Additionally, strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems inevitable to ensure greater accountability and data-driven decision-making. Without robust oversight mechanisms, tracking the progress and impact of the DDM remains a significant challenge.

The progress of DDM catalytic projects highlight a mixed picture, with some projects demonstrating significant advancement in areas like infrastructure development, particularly in water and sanitation access, while others are at various stages, the planning or initial implementation stages, with challenges related to coordination, funding, and capacity building within different government spheres. Significantly, overall focus remains on improving service delivery by facilitating collaboration between national, provincial, and local government levels.

The evaluation concludes that the DDM represents a critical step toward integrated governance, but significant gaps must be addressed for it to realize its full potential. Improved intergovernmental coordination, enhanced financial planning, and community engagement are essential to maximizing its effectiveness. Furthermore, institutionalizing standardized monitoring frameworks will be crucial to ensure transparency and informed decision-making at all levels of government.

To enhance the effectiveness of the DDM, this evaluation recommends strengthening governance mechanisms to improve coordination among national, provincial, and local governments. Ensuring financial sustainability through dedicated budget allocations and streamlined funding processes is also necessary for successful project implementation. Additionally, expanding capacity-building initiatives for government officials and civil society organizations will improve implementation. Finally, institutionalizing a standardized M&E framework will enable better tracking of outcomes and ensure that projects align with national development priorities. By addressing these challenges, the DDM can become a more effective and sustainable model for local development in South Africa.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## I.1 Background

South Africa continues to grapple with persistent service delivery failures, with many municipalities struggling to meet basic citizen needs. These challenges stem in part from fragmented governance, where disjointed planning and implementation across national, provincial, and local spheres exacerbate inefficiencies. To address systemic fragmentation, the South African government introduced the DDM in August 2019. The DDM serves as an integrated governance framework designed to harmonize planning, strengthen intergovernmental cooperation, and improve service delivery across all 52 districts and 8 metropolitan spaces. It specifically targets services such as water and sanitation, energy, housing, roads, health, education, and public transport.

Rooted in constitutional principles of cooperative governance (Chapter 3) and local government’s developmental mandate (Chapter 7), the DDM advances a proactive alternative to reactive interventions like Section 139 of the Constitution. Unlike Section 139, which enables provincial oversight only during crises, the DDM institutionalizes collaborative problem-solving through structured partnerships between government spheres and social partners. It builds on the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, which prioritizes institutional transformation to empower municipalities as drivers of development. In line with the Municipal Systems Act (MSA), which requires municipalities to develop integrated development plans and promote cooperative governance, the DDM has been integrated into national monitoring frameworks. According to Statistics South Africa’s 2023/24 Annual Report<sup>1</sup>, the DDM is now embedded within the Integrated Indicator Framework, enhancing accountability and alignment across government spheres.

Central to the DDM is the *One Plan*—a long-term, district-specific strategic blueprint that aligns budgets, investments, and service delivery with local priorities. By consolidating efforts under a unified vision, the model aims to reduce duplication, enhance oversight, and foster economic growth through targeted spatial interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics South Africa. 2023. Annual Report 2022/23. Pretoria: Stats SA.

At the National Local Government Summit held on 28–29 September 2022<sup>2</sup>, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized that South Africa no longer needs more diagnoses of municipal failures but practical, implementable solutions. He affirmed that municipalities must take direct responsibility for driving local economic development, cautioning against over-reliance on consultants. He reiterated that the DDM must translate into visible change at the household level, with mayors and councillors leading economic planning and implementation. The President stressed the importance of professionalising municipal administrations, stabilising political leadership, and eliminating corruption to build ideal municipalities that are investment-ready. He linked service delivery and infrastructure quality to investor confidence, noting that poor governance and instability drive businesses away. Crucially, he called for a shift from policy intent to measurable outcomes, asserting that the DDM's success hinges on fixing systemic weaknesses and delivering tangible improvements to people's lives through developmental local government.

## **1.2 Core goals of the DDM<sup>3</sup>**

The model's transformative agenda is anchored in six core goals:

- a) **Mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19** through adaptive governance.
- b) **Catalyse innovative solutions** to entrenched challenges by reimagining socio-economic paradigms.
- c) **Transform local conditions** by prioritizing people-centred development, spatial equity, and inclusive economic growth.
- d) **Strengthen national resilience** by fostering sustainable prosperity.
- e) **Promote institutional responsiveness** through capacity-building and change management.
- f) **Embed programmatic cooperation** across government tiers to dismantle silos.

### **1.2.1 Core objectives of the DDM:**

- a) **Enhance Intergovernmental Coordination**

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<sup>2</sup> Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. 2022. Speech by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the National Local Government Summit. 28–29 September 2022. Pretoria: The Presidency.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG). 2020. District Development Model: One Plan Process Guideline. Pretoria: DCOG.

- *Purpose:* Dismantle silos between national, provincial, and local governments through structured collaboration.
- *Actions:* Establish cross-departmental task forces, leverage digital platforms for real-time data sharing, and formalize joint decision-making protocols.
- *Outcome:* Streamlined resource allocation, reduced duplication, and harmonized service delivery.

**b) Drive inclusive local economic growth**

- *Purpose:* Catalyse sustainable economic development by leveraging district-specific strengths and empowering SMMEs.
- *Actions:* Designate economic development zones, incentivize private-sector partnerships, and prioritize skills development for marginalized groups.
- *Outcome:* Job creation, economic diversification, and reduced spatial inequalities.

**c) Optimize integrated service delivery**

- *Purpose:* Deliver seamless public services (e.g., healthcare, education) through sectoral alignment.
- *Actions:* Develop unified service delivery plans and deploy integrated project management systems to monitor sectoral progress.
- *Outcome:* Holistic citizen-centric service provision, minimizing bureaucratic bottlenecks.

**d) Strengthen governance and social inclusion**

- *Purpose:* Embed transparency and inclusivity in decision-making processes.
- *Actions:* Implement participatory accountability frameworks, prioritize gender-responsive budgeting, and integrate marginalized voices into planning.
- *Outcome:* Enhanced public trust, equitable resource distribution, and reduced corruption risks.

**e) Address capacity and spatial disparities**

- *Purpose:* Equip municipalities with technical and administrative competencies to manage development and reduce urban-rural gaps.

- *Actions:* Deliver targeted training programs, upgrade rural infrastructure, and incentivize public-private partnerships for underserved regions.
- *Outcome:* Empowered local institutions, balanced regional development, and improved rural livelihoods.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Despite the South African government's efforts to improve service delivery through various developmental frameworks, municipalities across the country continue to face persistent challenges in meeting the needs of citizens<sup>4</sup>. Fragmented governance, weak intergovernmental coordination, and financial constraints have resulted in inefficiencies that hinder effective service delivery, particularly in underdeveloped districts. The introduction of the DDM in 2019 was intended to address these systemic issues by promoting integrated planning, enhanced coordination, and improved intergovernmental relations<sup>5</sup>. However, the implementation of the DDM has been slow and inconsistent, with limited impact on intergovernmental cooperation, stakeholder engagement, and service delivery improvements. Key challenges affecting the effectiveness of the DDM include unclear governance structures, bureaucratic delays in statutory processes, weak financial planning mechanisms, and capacity deficits at the municipal level. Although the One Plan was developed as a strategic framework to align planning, budgeting, and service delivery within districts, its operationalization has been constrained by amongst others a lack of legal clarity, resource limitations, and duplication of existing frameworks such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). It is known that the IDP processes are legislated and therefore DDM becomes a complimentary tool to enhance the process to improve local government planning and service delivery by ensuring that catalytic are implemented.

Additionally, M&E systems remain weak, making it difficult to track the progress and impact of the model. While some successes have been recorded, such as infrastructure development projects and increased private sector involvement, these gains have been unevenly distributed, with rural and marginalized communities continuing to experience gaps in service delivery,

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<sup>4</sup> Isaac Khambule (2021). The District Development Model: Towards a Capable Local Developmental State in South Africa. [https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/ejc-jpad\\_v56\\_n3\\_a8](https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/ejc-jpad_v56_n3_a8)

<sup>5</sup> Mamokhere, J., & Kgobe, F. K. L. (2023). One district, one approach, one budget, one plan: Understanding District Development Model as an initiative for improving service delivery and socio-economic development in South Africa. University of Limpopo.

poverty, and economic exclusion. The absence of structured community participation further weakens the model's ability to be inclusive, responsive, and locally driven.

Given these ongoing challenges, there is an urgent need to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and long-term sustainability of the DDM. Addressing governance inefficiencies, strengthening institutional capacity, improving funding mechanisms, and embedding participatory decision-making will be crucial to ensuring that the DDM fulfils its mandate of transforming local government and enhancing service delivery for all South Africans.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**

This evaluation aimed to synthesise studies on the DDM to:

- Assess the alignment of district development initiatives with the DDM framework (Effectiveness and Coherence).
- Identify bottlenecks and enablers in intergovernmental coordination (will be addressed through the SWOT analysis and the challenges).
- Evaluate the impact of planning and implementation on community outcomes (Impact).
- To highlight key insights from the documents and recommend improvements to the model's application across spheres of government (Key insights and Recommendations).

### **2.1 Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation involved a systematic evidence synthesis of studies, reports, and data generated during the DDM implementation period (August 2019 – June 2024). It also included an analysis of statistics on local government service delivery, literature on integrated planning and service delivery models, both within South Africa and internationally, to provide a broader perspective.

The evaluation examined key policy documents, strategic plans, and various reports relevant to the DDM, including the National Development Plan, Provincial Development Strategies, and various district and local development plans. The sourcing of materials was limited to those available in repositories accessible to the DPME at the time of data collection.

## **2.2 Key evaluation questions**

The evaluation of the DDM focused on four critical dimensions:

### **2.2.1. Effectiveness**

- a) To what extent has the DDM achieved its intended objectives?
- b) What mechanisms ensure consistent implementation of the DDM across diverse districts and communities?

### **2.2.2. Implementation coherence**

- a) **Policy integration:**  
How effectively is the DDM aligned with the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP), Provincial Development Strategies and IDPs?
- b) **Stakeholder engagement:**  
What roles have key stakeholders (e.g., local governments, private sector, NGOs) played in operationalizing the DDM?

### **2.2.3. Efficiency**

- a) Has the DDM been implemented in a cost- and resource-effective manner?
- b) Are funding allocations (financial, social, capital) proportionate to the model's operational requirements?

### **2.2.4. Outcomes and impact**

- a) What measurable outcomes has the DDM generated, and how do these align with its stated goals?
- b) What systemic challenges (e.g., institutional, logistical, financial) hinder effective implementation, and what evidence-based recommendations could address these gaps?

## **3. EVALUATION DESIGN AND APPROACH**

This evaluation synthesizes findings from key policy documents, reports, implementation reports and academic studies on the DDM, covering the period from 2019 to 2024. The focus

is on identifying trends, challenges, and successes in its implementation across South African districts and municipalities. The analysis is based on secondary sources, including government publications, evaluation reports, case studies, and journal articles. The limitation of the synthesis is that no administrative records such as data and implementation reports by DCOG and other implementing institutions were reviewed.

### **3.1 Development of a Theory of Change and Logical Framework**

The evaluation acknowledges the DDM existing theory of change and logical framework which enlist indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes, however, document review has revealed that many of these indicators are not currently being tracked at either district or metro level and a further lack of baseline information presenting an opportunity for performance related consequences such as lack of evidence to guide decision making and effective planning and implementation of projects.

To strengthen the existing theory of change and logical framework, the evaluation has introduced amendments to strengthen the implementation of the DDM including the impact, outcomes and outputs to be realised. These two tools were used in the synthesis to inform the analyses and draw findings from these documents. The additional proposed TOC and log frame are attached as annexures 2 and 3 of this report. To improve TOC/logframe, the evaluation identified a recommendation mapping table (Annexure 3) for every causal link in TOC, listing which sources support it, the quality score of the source, and the level of confidence (high/medium/low). Secondly, ensuring every indicator in the logframe has baseline (or “no baseline” flagged), SMART target, data source, and frequency of reporting. Guideline requires clear indicators and baselines. Thus, the department to strengthen the TOC by adding these going forward to improve clarity, accountability, and evidence quality of the DDM results.

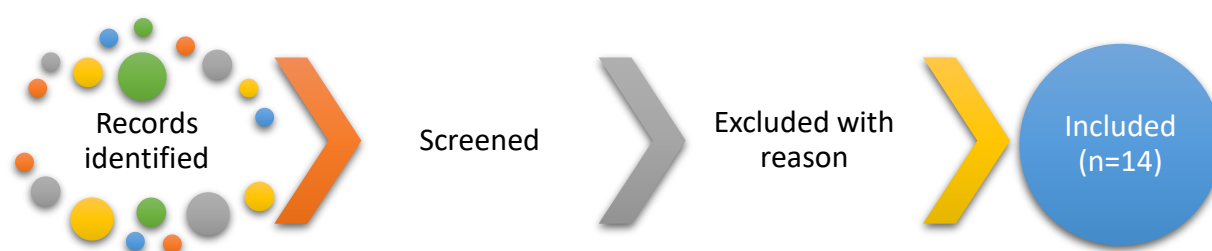
### **3.2 Data sources and analysis**

The evaluation draws on multiple sources. Fourteen (14) key documents were the primary references, selected for their direct relevance to governance, service delivery, and intergovernmental coordination under the DDM. In addition, the synthesis draws on both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources. All documents were screened for relevance and quality before inclusion. This approach allows timely evidence from government, civil society, and research institutions to complement academic literature.

### 3.2.1 Search and selection strategy

Searches covered 2019 to 2024 across the DPME Evaluation Repository, provincial COGTA libraries, the SALGA knowledge portal, Google Scholar, UNDP policy archive, EBSCO for scientific literature, Policy Commons for think-tank research and JUTA for relevant legislative material. Grey literature included municipal reports, provincial IME reviews and CSO evidence papers. The search used the terms District Development Model, DDM Evaluation, one plan, intergovernmental coordination and service delivery monitoring. Records moved through identification, relevance screening, full review and final inclusion.

Figure 1 shows the process flow:



### 3.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion Standard	Exclusion Rule	Purpose
<b>Relevance</b>	Evidence-based evaluations and reports directly focused on the DDM	Municipal governance material with no DDM linkage	Keep scope aligned to the evaluation
<b>Method quality</b>	Documents with clear methodology and stated data sources	Opinion pieces, commentary or unverifiable claims	Strengthen credibility of evidence
<b>Scope of content</b>	Material covering One Plans, coordination, IME or service delivery under DDM	Broader policy documents unrelated to DDM implementation	Prevent dilution of findings

### 3.2.3 Quality appraisal and weighting

Quality was assessed using a three-level mixed methods appraisal tool scoring scale (0 low, 1 medium, 2 high). These scores help determine how strong or reliable each study is where higher scores indicate stronger, more trustworthy study quality and lower scores stating otherwise. A quality-weighted evidence matrix is included in Annex 4. Higher-quality sources were weighted more heavily in synthesis.

Source	Approach Used	Quality Rating (0–2)	Key Observation
<b>HSRC 2022</b>	Mixed-methods evaluation	2	Strong design, but evidence mostly from urban areas
<b>SALGA 2021</b>	Case-based synthesis	1	Useful but dominated by metro experiences
<b>National Development Agency (NDA) 2024</b>	Formal evaluation study	2	Methodologically sound and well-documented

### 3.2.4 Coding and thematic synthesis protocol

Coding followed an iterative process and based on three stages: line-by-line coding, descriptive category grouping, and final thematic synthesis. Two coders completed independent coding. Differences were resolved through joint reconciliations.

The evidence was coded into seven themes covering governance, one plan quality, financing, hub capacity, monitoring and evaluation, participation, and implementation. Governance captured coordination and mandate clarity across spheres. Meanwhile, one plan quality reflected alignment with planning cycles and measurable indicators. Financing, capacity, M&E strength, participation and implementation progress showed the main drivers shaping DDM performance. Codebook is attached as Annex 4.

**Table 2: DDM related sources used.**

No.	Author / Institution	Year	Title
1.	Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG)	2020	District Development Model: One Plan Process Guideline
2.	Khambule - University of Johannesburg (UJ)	2021	The District Development Model: Towards a Capable Local Developmental State in South Africa
3.	Sausi, Kanyane, and Davids - Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)	2022	Evaluating the District Development Model: A Review, With Case Studies
4.	South African Local Government Association (SALGA)	2021	Lessons from pilots of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, OR Tambo & Waterberg Districts Municipalities
5.	Twende Mbele	2022	The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Pilot District Development Model in Waterberg District Municipality, Limpopo Province
6.	Department of Military Veterans (DMV)	2023	Annual Performance Plan 2023/24
7.	Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC)	2023	Reviewing the District Development Model in the Eastern Cape
8.	Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and	2023	Provincial Report on the District Development Model

	Traditional Affairs (Gauteng COGTA)		
9.	Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)	2023	Annual Report 2022/23
10.	Mzwandile Teti, Ogochukwu Iruoma, Nzewi, Sithenkosi Lungisa - University of Fort Hare (UFH)	2023	The District Development Model as a Catalyst for Improved Integrated Development Planning.
	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	2023	Evaluation of Service Delivery under the District Development Model in Rural Eastern Cape
12.	Mamokhere, J., & Kgobe, F. K. L. University of Limpopo (UL)	2023	One District, One Approach, One Budget, One Plan: Understanding District Development Model as an Initiative for Improving Service Delivery and Socio-Economic Development in South Africa
13.	Department of Cooperative Governance Results Management Office (DCOG RMO)	2024	District Development Model – Implementation Evaluation Study
14.	National Development Agency (NDA)	2024	District Development Model Evaluation Report

The sources provide a balanced, nuanced and rigorous analysis of the DDM and its implications for local governance. The foundational policy framework is established by the Department of Cooperative Governance (2020) through its One Plan Process Guideline<sup>3</sup>, which sets out the model’s operational principles. Scholarly depth is provided by Mamokhere and Kgobe (2023), whose research examines the DDM’s impact on service delivery and socio-economic development<sup>5</sup>, and by Sausi, Kanyane, and Davids (2022), who assess governance and developmental local government in the DDM context<sup>6</sup>.

Municipal governance expertise is reflected in the South African Local Government Association’s review (2021), which offers critical insights from pilot implementations in eThekweni, OR Tambo, and Waterberg<sup>7</sup>. Provincial application is illustrated by Gauteng COGTA (2023), which details strategies for translating policy into actionable programs<sup>8</sup>. The International perspective comes from United Nations Development Programme (2023),

<sup>6</sup> Sausi, K., Kanyane, M., & Davids, Y. (2022). Evaluating the District Development Model: A review, with case studies. Human Sciences Research Council.

<sup>7</sup> South African Local Government Association. (2021). Lessons from pilots of eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, OR Tambo & Waterberg Districts Municipalities.

<sup>8</sup> Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Gauteng COGTA). 2023. Provincial Report on the District Development Model. Johannesburg: Gauteng COGTA

whose independent evaluation of rural Eastern Cape coordination highlights systemic barriers and opportunities<sup>9</sup>.

Further evidence is contributed by the DCOG Results Management Office (2024), which evaluates monitoring and evaluation alignment under the One Plan<sup>10</sup>, and by ECSECC (2023)<sup>11</sup>, which analyses socio-economic impacts in the Eastern Cape. National context is informed by Statistics South Africa’s Annual Report (2023) and the Presidency’s address at the National Local Government Summit (2022)<sup>2</sup>. Civil society perspectives are provided by Twende Mbele (2022), which emphasises community-driven accountability in pilot districts<sup>12</sup>. Teti et al. (2023) bring political governance insights relevant to DDM implementation<sup>13</sup>, while the National Development Agency (2024) outlines aligned development initiatives<sup>14</sup>.

Collectively, these sources—spanning government, academia, private sector, and civil society—provide a multi-faceted and evidence-based understanding of the DDM’s successes and challenges. In addition, the study considered comparative international experiences of long-term planning in subnational spheres of government in China, Malaysia, and Uganda.

### 3.3 Limitations of the evaluation

While this evaluation provides valuable insights, certain constraints should be noted and these include:

**Table 3: Evidence inclusion criteria and associated limitations**

Dimension	Inclusion Standard	Exclusion Rule	Limitation	Explanation of Limitation
Relevance	Evidence-based evaluations and reports directly focused on DDM	Municipal governance material with no DDM linkage	Limited case coverage	Most evidence originates from the three pilot sites, reducing generalisability across

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2023). Evaluation of service delivery under the District Development Model in rural Eastern Cape.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Cooperative Governance Results Management Office. 2024. District Development Model – Implementation Evaluation Study.

<sup>11</sup> Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC). 2023. Socio-Economic Impact Assessment: District Development Model in Eastern Cape. East London: ECSECC.

<sup>12</sup> Twende Mbele. 2022. Strengthening Results-Based Management through the District Development Model.

<sup>13</sup> Mzwandile Teti, Ogochukwu Iruoma, Nzewi, Sithenkosi Lungisa. 2023. The District Development Model as a Catalyst for Improved Integrated Development Planning.

<sup>14</sup> National Development Agency. 2024. Annual Performance Plan 2024/25. Pretoria: NDA

				44 districts and 8 metros.
<b>Method quality</b>	Documents with clear methodology and identifiable data sources	Opinion pieces, commentary or unverifiable claims	Reliance on secondary data	Evidence relies on published reports with uneven quality and no new primary validation.
<b>Scope of content</b>	Sources covering One Plans, coordination, IME or service delivery performance under DDM	Broader policy or governance documents without DDM application	Potential stakeholder bias	Many reports rely on officials and CSO voices, with limited grassroots representation.
<b>Transferability of evidence</b>	Sources referencing comparable reforms in other countries to support contextual learning	Purely theoretical models with no governance analogy	Comparability with international models	External examples offer insight, but differences in fiscal and administrative systems limit direct adoption.
<b>Data system suitability</b>	Reports assessing monitoring systems, indicators, implementation and outputs	High-level policy commentary without performance data	M&E gaps	Indicators are not systematically tracked, reducing ability to measure outcomes and impact over time.

## 4. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings, structured around the four critical dimensions of the evaluation: effectiveness, implementation coherence, efficiency, and outcomes/impact. Each section addresses the main and sub-questions, drawing on evidence from the sampled data sources and case studies to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the DDM's performance towards improving service delivery.

### 4.1 Effectiveness of the DDM

*Main Question: To what extent has the DDM achieved its intended objectives?*

*Sub-Questions: What mechanisms ensure consistent implementation of the DDM across diverse districts and communities?*

The DDM was introduced to address fragmentation in governance and service delivery by fostering integrated planning, strengthening intergovernmental coordination, and promoting socio-economic development<sup>3</sup>. To assess its effectiveness, the evaluation examined four areas:

coordination within intergovernmental relations (IGR), integration of service delivery, governance and social inclusion, and the capacity and spatial equity of municipalities.

Findings indicate progress in establishing mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination, integrating planning processes, and fostering collaboration between spheres of government. In several metropolitan areas, integrated planning structures and cross-sphere coordination mechanisms have been institutionalised, supporting more coherent service delivery and resource alignment<sup>3,4</sup>. Improvements have also been noted in targeted infrastructure delivery and the inclusion of sustainability considerations in selected initiatives<sup>10,5</sup>.

Despite these developments, significant gaps remain. Gains are unevenly distributed, with rural districts continuing to face severe service delivery backlogs, resource limitations, and weaker institutional capacity compared to urban centres<sup>11,3</sup>. This urban-rural disparity reflects persistent differences in fiscal allocations, technical skills, and access to planning and monitoring tools.

### **Mechanisms for consistency**

The One Plan framework provides a unified, district-specific strategy intended to guide planning and coordination across government spheres<sup>3</sup>. Its application remains inconsistent, constrained by limited capacity, unclear role definitions, and fragmented governance systems. Only a minority of municipalities have fully aligned their monitoring indicators with the One Plan Process Guideline<sup>3</sup>. Existing digital platforms, such as the DDM Dashboard, offer opportunities for real-time monitoring but are underutilised, particularly in rural areas where technical infrastructure and skills are lacking<sup>5</sup>.

Weak M&E systems and limited uptake of the existing District Development Model Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation (IM&E) Framework, which includes a Process & Procedures Manual and M&E Plans at One Plan level, undermine evidence-based decision making. Data gaps and inconsistent reporting processes reduce the reliability of impact measurement, with independent verification revealing discrepancies in official service delivery claims<sup>9</sup>.

### **DDM hubs: Successes and challenges**

DDM hubs were established as institutional mechanisms to support the formulation, adoption, implementation, monitoring, and review of One Plans<sup>3</sup>. Where adequately resourced and

supported, hubs have improved coordination between government spheres, enhanced transparency in planning processes, and facilitated stakeholder engagement<sup>5, 8, 1</sup>.

However, hub performance varies considerably. Many lack the technical tools, skilled personnel, and stable funding required for effective operation<sup>13</sup>. Engagement with the private sector and civil society remains stronger in better-resourced urban areas, while rural hubs often struggle to build and sustain such partnerships<sup>8, 12</sup>.

### Persistent constraints

Across contexts, common challenges include inadequate and inequitable funding<sup>12</sup>, weak cross-departmental coordination<sup>3</sup>, limited understanding of the DDM at local government level<sup>4</sup>, insufficient capacity-building initiatives<sup>4</sup>, political interference<sup>9</sup>, and limited structured stakeholder participation<sup>12</sup>. These factors collectively undermine the DDM’s potential to deliver integrated, equitable, and sustainable development outcomes.

The above analysis shows that consistency in DDM implementation is ensured through integrated planning (one plans), intergovernmental coordination, performance monitoring, leadership commitment, capacity support, stakeholder engagement, and aligned funding mechanisms. However, effectiveness depends on political will, institutional capacity, and the ability to adapt to local contexts.

- Evidence statement: The DDM has achieved pockets of coordinated planning and service integration, but rural–urban disparities, weak capacity, poor M&E and fragmented governance continue to limit its overall effectiveness.
- Confidence level: 11/14 documents

Supporting Sources	Key Evidence	Quality Score	Notes
<b>HSRC 2022</b>	Weak intergovernmental coordination, uneven implementation, rural capacity gaps	2	Strong mixed methods design
<b>SALGA 2021</b>	Rural–urban disparities in service delivery, uneven uptake of One Plans	1	Metro-heavy evidence base
<b>ECSECC 2023</b>	Severe rural backlogs, weak district capacity, poor M&E	2	Strong provincial analysis
<b>UNDP 2023 (Rural EC)</b>	Weak M&E, unreliable data, rural service deficits	2	Independent evaluation

<b>Gauteng COGTA 2023</b>	Fragmented governance, misaligned planning and budgeting	1	Provincial administrative focus
<b>DCOG RMO 2024</b>	Indicators not tracked, hubs inconsistent, governance fragmentation	2	Robust national evaluation
<b>NDA 2024</b>	Uneven implementation, capacity gaps, limited community participation	2	Methodologically strong
<b>UJ (Khambule) 2021</b>	Coordination weaknesses, limited district capacity	1	Academic synthesis
<b>UFH 2023</b>	One Plan inconsistencies, planning misalignment	1	Focuses mainly on IPD linkages
<b>UL</b>	Weak community engagement, uneven uptake of DDM	1	Qualitative analysis
<b>Stats SA 2023</b>	Governance constraints and data quality gaps	2	High-quality administrative source
<b>CSO verification (Waterberg PPE, electrification check)</b>	Rural service gaps larger than reported; weak monitoring	1	
<b>Presidency Summit Speech 2022</b>	Acknowledges governance fragmentation, capacity constraints	2	High-level political evidence

## 4.2 Implementation coherence

*Main Question: How effectively and seamlessly is the DDM aligned with national and provincial plans (NDP, IDP, etc), and what roles do stakeholders play in its operationalization?*

The DDM's success depends on alignment with national and provincial plans and on effective stakeholder engagement. Evidence shows uneven policy integration and participation, which weakens overall coherence<sup>3</sup>. The One Plan is designed to align with the National Development Plan, but vertical silos and misaligned budgeting across spheres still hinder resource allocation and coordinated delivery<sup>3</sup>. Evaluations also note overlapping local economic development strategies across tiers, indicating weak harmonisation between provincial and municipal planning processes<sup>1</sup>.

Stakeholder engagement remains uneven. Urban metros report stronger cross-sphere coordination and more consistent collaboration with partners, while many rural districts lack inclusive platforms for participation by marginalised groups<sup>12,13</sup>. Private sector partnerships are more common in better-resourced areas; smaller or rural municipalities face

administrative delays and weaker investment pipelines<sup>6</sup>. Civil society organisations have supported transparency and accountability in pilots, but participation is sometimes limited to consultative roles rather than shared decision-making<sup>8</sup>.

Comparative literature highlights relevant lessons from decentralised models in countries such as China, Malaysia, and Uganda, including the value of linking local economies to national supply chains and embedding community-level participation. Direct transferability is constrained by South Africa’s governance arrangements and fiscal structure, so these insights inform adaptation rather than replication<sup>13</sup>.

Overall, the DDM is well-aligned with the NDP 2030 in principle, and it provides a framework to harmonize provincial strategies and IDPs. However, effectiveness is constrained by implementation challenges: siloed planning, weak intergovernmental coordination, capacity gaps at municipal level, and limited budget alignment. Strengthening joint planning, fiscal integration, and monitoring mechanisms would deepen alignment and accelerate progress toward achieving the NDP targets.

**Table 4: Comparative analysis of decentralized governance models (Adapted from Sausi et al, 2022; Twende Mbele, 2022)**

Country	Model & Key Features	Outcomes Achieved	Critical Enablers	Key Constraints	Lessons for DDM Adaptation
<b>China</b>	Provincial–county coordination with strong central oversight. Five-year plans integrate local targets into national objectives. Performance contracts for local officials.	High infrastructure delivery rates, rapid urban–rural integration, consistent fiscal flows to priority projects.	Central–local fiscal alignment, strict performance monitoring, policy continuity.	Limited community input; strong top-down control may reduce flexibility.	Integrate municipal One Plans into provincial and national budget cycles to ensure resource alignment. Use measurable performance contracts for district leadership while maintaining participatory forums.
<b>Malaysia</b>	District Transformation Programme links local development hubs to national supply chains. Sector-specific corridors (e.g., agri-processing) receive targeted investment and skills support.	Job creation, increased rural incomes, stronger SME participation in value chains.	National funding earmarked for district projects, clear investment incentives, business–government partnerships.	Risk of regional inequality if investment clusters are too concentrated.	Target DDM investment to sectors with comparative advantage in each district, supported by national procurement and market access. Ensure balanced geographic spread of catalytic projects.

<b>Uganda</b>	Community-Driven Development (CDD) channels funds directly to parish-level councils for planning and implementation. Strong emphasis on citizen oversight.	Improved local service access, higher citizen satisfaction, reduced project delays.	Direct fiscal transfers, legally mandated community monitoring committees, transparent procurement.	Variable capacity at local level; vulnerability to elite capture.	Strengthen ward-level budget allocations under DDM, with mandatory community oversight structures and public reporting. Provide targeted capacity support to rural municipalities to prevent capture and ensure quality delivery.
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The comparative analysis highlights that South Africa’s District DDM integrates features from multiple decentralised governance models while navigating challenges specific to its governance and fiscal context.

Malaysia’s District Transformation Programme illustrates how targeted investment in district-level economic hubs, linked to national supply chains, can generate employment and strengthen rural–urban economic linkages<sup>6</sup>. Its success is enabled by earmarked national funding, clear investment incentives, and business–government partnerships. The DDM mirrors this approach in initiatives such as Agri-processing zones in Limpopo. However, South Africa’s vertical governance silos, including overlapping LED mandates between spheres of government, undermine similar synergies and lead to resource misallocation<sup>5</sup>.

Uganda’s CDD model demonstrates the value of direct fiscal transfers to community-level structures and legally mandated grassroots oversight, which have improved local service access and reduced project delays<sup>6</sup>. While the DDM promotes citizen participation through mechanisms such as the Presidential Imbizo, its fiscal framework remains more centralised than Uganda’s, limiting direct funding for ward-level initiatives and constraining genuine community-driven development<sup>12, 8</sup>.

China’s provincial–county coordination system, underpinned by centralised fiscal control and performance contracts for local officials, offers lessons on achieving infrastructure delivery at scale and ensuring policy continuity. These enablers come at the cost of limited community participation and reduced local flexibility. The DDM’s participatory ethos helps avoid this pitfall, but South Africa’s weaker performance monitoring systems reduce its ability to replicate China’s consistency in delivery<sup>3</sup>.

Taken together, these comparisons suggest that the DDM’s effectiveness depends on its ability to combine Uganda’s bottom-up accountability with Malaysia’s strategic sector targeting, while adopting selected elements of China’s coordinated planning. Success will require closing South Africa’s policy and budget alignment gaps, strengthening fiscal decentralisation for local priorities, and improving performance management systems to ensure accountability and delivery across diverse municipal contexts.

- Evidence statement: Evidence shows uneven policy integration, stakeholder engagement and participation mostly in rural districts and DDM success will require tighter policy–budget alignment and stronger fiscal decentralisation to ensure accountable, effective delivery across diverse municipalities.
- Confidence level: 8/14 documents

Supporting Sources	Key Evidence	Quality Score	Notes
<b>HSRC 2022</b>	Weak alignment between spheres; siloed planning; limited integration of district and provincial strategies	2	Strong mixed methods design
<b>SALGA 2021</b>	Metros show stronger alignment; rural districts experience weak coordination and poor participation	1	Metro-heavy evidence base
<b>ECSECC 2023</b>	Provincial–district misalignment; weak integration of DDM with IDPs; rural disparities	2	Strong provincial analysis
<b>UNDP 2023 (Rural EC)</b>	Misaligned planning cycles; limited community participation; weak integration with provincial priorities	2	Independent evaluation
<b>Gauteng COGTA 2023</b>	Overlapping LED strategies; poor horizontal integration; budget misalignment	1	Provincial administrative focus
<b>DCOG RMO 2024</b>	Inconsistent adoption of One Plans; poor indicator alignment; weak cross-sphere coordination	2	Robust national evaluation
<b>NDA 2024</b>	Uneven implementation, capacity gaps, limited community participation	2	Methodologically strong
<b>UJ (Khambule) 2021</b>	Vertical silos and misaligned implementation responsibilities	1	Academic synthesis

### **4.3 Efficiency of the DDM**

*Main Question: Has the DDM been implemented in a cost- and resource-effective manner?*

*Sub-Questions: Are funding allocations proportionate to the model's operational requirements?*

*What systemic challenges hinder effective implementation?*

The DDM's efficiency is constrained by structural weaknesses in budgeting, capacity, and accountability. Misaligned financial planning, under-resourced institutions, and fragmented oversight mechanisms reduce its ability to deliver cost-effective, integrated development.<sup>3,4</sup>

#### **Funding structure**

Despite the DDM's emphasis on cooperation and coordination across the three spheres of government, and its intended goal of spatialising national and provincial budgets, requiring departments to indicate where and how their money is spent in order to identify overlaps and service delivery gaps. However, the DDM does not operate within a clearly defined or legislated funding model<sup>4</sup>. While it is positioned as a tool for driving catalytic development, its financing depends on multiple autonomous stakeholders, including provincial departments, municipalities, and state-owned entities, whose contributions are neither guaranteed nor enforceable<sup>6</sup>. This results in delays or cancellations when stakeholders fail to commit resources.

Funding inequities further undermine efficiency. Rural municipalities such as Alfred Nzo receive substantially less per capita funding than urban metros, reinforcing spatial disparities<sup>14,11</sup>. Conditional grant structures restrict the flexibility of rural districts to reallocate funds toward urgent local priorities such as road maintenance or health facilities<sup>5</sup>. These constraints weaken the model's responsiveness to context-specific needs and limit its ability to address rural underdevelopment effectively.

The perspectives of the National Treasury and DCOG still need reflection on this finding. Current understanding, subject to verification, holds the DDM as not a standalone initiative with a dedicated funding stream but, a model shaping coordination across planning, funding, and implementation. Thus, the focus rests on approaches such as one plan and one budget. This signals a shift from fragmented practices toward a more coherent and aligned system of government action.

## Capacity deficits

Technical and human capacity shortfalls remain a significant barrier. A large proportion of municipalities lack staff trained in integrated planning, budget alignment, and project management<sup>4</sup>. This limits their ability to operationalise the One Plan effectively and to coordinate multi-sectoral initiatives. Capacity constraints are especially pronounced in rural areas, where institutional support structures are weaker and staff turnover is higher<sup>12</sup>. These challenges are compounded by limited targeted capacity-building programmes and political interference, which disrupt institutional stability<sup>9</sup>.

## Accountability gaps

Weak accountability mechanisms contribute to inefficiency and financial mismanagement. Oversight processes are often under-resourced or inconsistently applied, increasing the risk of irregular expenditure<sup>1</sup>. In some cases, poor interdepartmental coordination and limited transparency have eroded stakeholder trust and hindered the establishment of long-term partnerships needed for integrated service delivery<sup>8</sup>.

The absence of a coherent funding framework, inequitable resource allocation, persistent skills shortages, and insufficient oversight collectively limit the DDM's efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Addressing these systemic issues—through clearer funding arrangements, targeted capacity support, and stronger governance frameworks—is essential to ensure that integrated planning translates into tangible development outcomes.

- Evidence statement: While the DDM provides a framework for aligning district planning with national and provincial priorities, weak coordination, siloed budgeting and absence of funding protocol, exacerbated by technical and human capacity deficits, uneven stakeholder participation and rural–urban disparities continue to undermine coherent alignment and effective operationalisation.
- Confidence level: 9/14 documents

Supporting Sources	Key Evidence	Quality Score	Notes
<b>HSRC 2022</b>	Weak intergovernmental coordination increases inefficiency; capacity shortages prevalent	2	Strong mixed methods design
<b>SALGA 2021</b>	Capacity gaps, supply chain delays and uneven funding affect metros and rural districts differently	1	Metro-heavy evidence base

<b>ECSECC 2023</b>	Rural districts underfunded; restricted grant flexibility; weak institutional capacity	2	Strong provincial analysis
<b>UNDP 2023 (Rural EC)</b>	Severe rural resource constraints; fragmented funding streams; weak oversight	2	Independent evaluation
<b>Gauteng COGTA 2023</b>	Misaligned budgets and fragmented financial planning hinder integration	1	Provincial administrative focus
<b>DCOG RMO 2024</b>	Indicators untracked; hubs under-resourced; accountability gaps reduce efficiency	2	Robust national evaluation
<b>NDA 2024</b>	Persistent capacity deficits, insufficient funding for DDM activities	2	Methodologically strong
<b>UJ (Khambule) 2021</b>	Structural capacity weaknesses and financial misalignment at district level	1	Academic synthesis
<b>DCOG 2020 (One Plan Guideline)</b>	Calls for coordinated funding but no legislated model exists		Highlights absence of framework

#### 4.4 Outcomes and impact of the DDM

*Main Question: What measurable outcomes has the DDM generated, and what systemic challenges hinder its effectiveness?*

*Sub-Questions: What are the possible gaps/challenges hindering effective implementation?*

*What evidence-based recommendations can strengthen the DDM?*

The DDM has delivered positive outcomes in selected contexts, yet systemic constraints continue to limit its overall impact. Reported gains include targeted economic stimulation, improved access to services, and enhanced coordination in some pilot districts<sup>5, 13</sup>. However, these benefits are uneven, with rural districts continuing to lag behind due to persistent structural and institutional challenges<sup>12</sup>.

Despite these constraints, examples of resilience and innovation have emerged. In the Western Cape, some DDM hubs have used data-driven tools such as GIS mapping to better target health and infrastructure investments<sup>1</sup>. CSOs have played an important role, with initiatives such as the Waterberg Women’s Collective distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) during the pandemic, creating 1,200 temporary jobs in the process<sup>8, 6</sup>.

The DDM has demonstrated potential to improve service delivery and stimulate local economies, as it has generated clear structural and planning milestones, such as one plans, recovery plans, creating institutional platforms, and a few infrastructure projects, but its social impact will remain limited unless governance silos are dismantled, M&E systems are standardised, and resource and capacity gaps are systematically addressed.

### **Systemic challenges**

Governance silos and gaps in M&E remain central barriers to achieving sustained impact<sup>7,3</sup>. The absence of fully integrated planning and reporting systems makes it difficult to align resources and interventions across sectors to address complex challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and infrastructure deficits. Overlapping mandates between national and provincial departments dilute accountability and fragment resource allocation<sup>4,3</sup>.

Inconsistent and unreliable data further weaken impact measurement. Fragmented implementation of reporting frameworks and the lack of independent audits reduce the credibility of performance information<sup>8</sup>. Evidence from civil society organisations (CSOs) shows that official figures sometimes overstate achievements. For example, in Waterberg District, municipal reports claimed full electrification, yet CSO surveys revealed that 35% of households still relied on informal electricity connections<sup>6</sup>.

### **Capacity and resource constraints**

Capacity deficits remain a cross-cutting constraint, particularly in rural municipalities<sup>12,4</sup>. Limited technical expertise, insufficient staffing, and inadequate infrastructure slow the translation of plans into measurable results. Partnerships with academic institutions, such as the Durban University of Technology, could be leveraged to improve technical capacity and operational efficiency. Adaptive strategies, including mobile outreach units, could also help bridge the digital divide in underserved areas<sup>12</sup>.

Resource allocation disruptions have compounded these challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, R12.3 billion initially earmarked for DDM infrastructure projects was redirected to pandemic relief, delaying critical initiatives such as rural water schemes and electrification<sup>12</sup>.

- Evidence statement: The DDM has produced targeted gains in coordination, planning and service improvements in selected districts, however its overall impact remains

constrained by persistent rural disparities, weak M&E systems, fragmented governance and severe capacity and resource gaps.

- Confidence level: 12/14 documents

Supporting Sources	Key Evidence	Quality Score	Notes
<b>HSRC 2022</b>	Limited systemic impact; uneven benefits across districts; governance silos weaken outcomes	2	Strong mixed methods design
<b>SALGA 2021</b>	Pilot metros show gains, rural districts lag; coordination improvements not uniform	1	Metro-heavy evidence base
<b>ECSECC 2023</b>	Rural districts face severe backlogs; weak institutional capacity slows outcome realisation	2	Strong provincial analysis
<b>UNDP 2023 (Rural EC)</b>	Weak M&E, unreliable data, slow impact realisation in rural areas	2	Independent evaluation
<b>Gauteng COGTA 2023</b>	Fragmented planning reduces outcome consistency; misaligned roles weaken delivery	1	Provincial administrative focus
<b>DCOG RMO 2024</b>	Indicators not tracked; weak reporting systems; outcomes cannot be measured reliably	2	Robust national evaluation
<b>NDA 2024</b>	Uneven service improvements and socioeconomic gains across districts; rural deficits persist	2	Methodologically strong
<b>UJ (Khambule) 2021</b>	Structural governance limitations reduce long-term developmental impact	1	Academic synthesis
<b>UFH 2023</b>	Weak integration of planning instruments results in slow or uneven outcomes		Highlights absence of framework
<b>UL 2023</b>	Lack of participation and weak district capacity reduce effectiveness of interventions	1	Qualitative but aligned
<b>DCOG 2020 (One Plan Guideline)</b>	Framework defines intended outcomes but implementation gaps remain	1	Normative rather than empirical

<b>Stats SA 2023</b>	Structural inequalities and municipal weaknesses constrain service delivery improvements	2	High-quality administrative data
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#### 4.5 Strengths, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT) analysis

The SWOT analysis below draws directly from the evaluation findings in sections 4.1 to 4.4. It consolidates patterns, removes duplication, and links each point to concrete evidence from the case studies, stakeholder inputs, and comparative analysis. The purpose is to provide a clear, actionable snapshot of the DDM’s enabling factors, constraints, and external conditions affecting its implementation. This framing also aligns each opportunity and threat to relevant recommendations in section 6, ensuring that the SWOT is not only diagnostic but also strategic.

**Table 5: DDM SWOT analysis**

Strengths	Evidence / Examples	Related Recs
<b>Effective infrastructure delivery in selected pilots</b>	TASEZ boosted local economic activity (SALGA 2021, quality 1); Waterberg electrification improved access by 30% (ECSECC 2023, quality 2)	R2, R3, R4
<b>Enhanced stakeholder collaboration in some metros</b>	Durban Automotive Hub attracted private investment (SALGA 2021, quality 1)	R1, R6
<b>Inclusion of sustainability practices in select projects</b>	Maxxliving piloted green development practices (case evidence cited in draft)	R4, R7
<b>Use of hubs for intergovernmental coordination</b>	Vaal River sanitation rehabilitation enabled through coordinated interventions (SALGA 2021, quality 1)	R1, R3

Weaknesses	Evidence / Examples	Related Recs
<b>Coordination gaps across spheres</b>	Sedibeng wastewater delays due to misaligned budgeting (Gauteng COGTA 2023, quality 1); overlapping LED strategies (HSRC 2022, quality 2)	R1, R4, R8
<b>Weak M&amp;E systems</b>	Poor indicator alignment (DCOG RMO 2024, quality 2); rural water points overstated by 40% (UNDP 2023 + CSO verification, quality 2)	R5, R8
<b>Financial instability &amp; inequitable allocations</b>	Alfred Nzo receives 35% less per capita funding than metros (Stats SA 2023, quality 2); conditional grants limit local prioritisation (ECSECC 2023, quality 2)	R2, R3
<b>Procedural bottlenecks</b>	Slow land acquisition and rezoning across districts (HSRC 2022, quality 2; SALGA 2021, quality 1)	R1, R4, R8

Opportunities	Evidence / Examples	Related Recs
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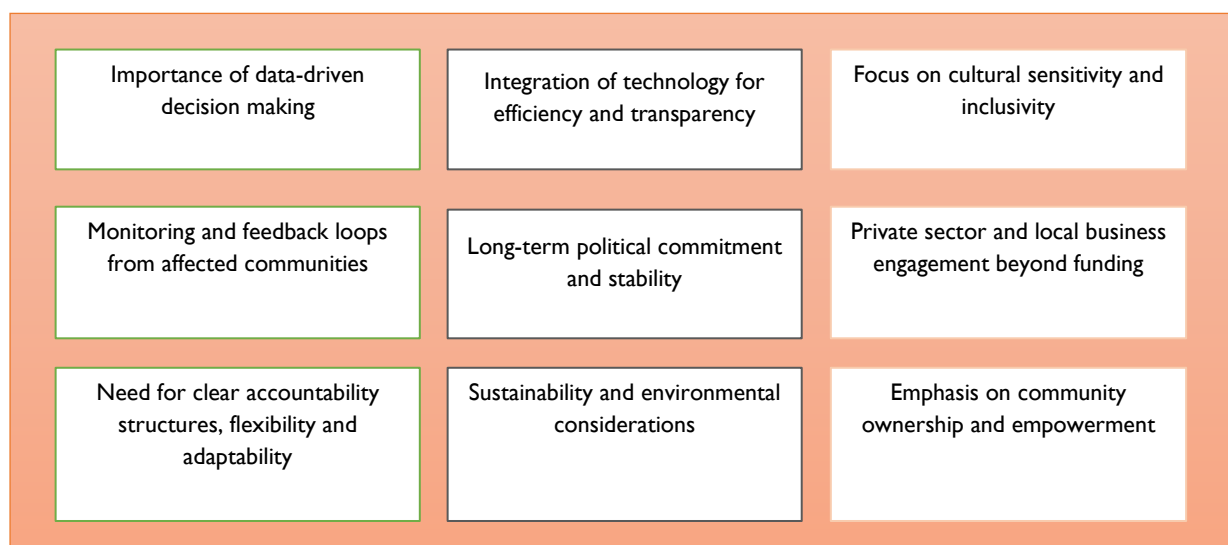
<b>Strong potential for integrated digital monitoring</b>	Use of GIS tools in Western Cape hubs to target infrastructure better (case evidence, quality 1)	R5, R7
<b>Private sector interest in catalytic projects</b>	Investment patterns in Durban Automotive Hub and TASEZ (SALGA 2021, quality 1)	R2, R6
<b>Space to leverage CSO oversight and community monitoring</b>	Waterberg Women's Collective participation improved transparency and job creation (UNDP 2023; CSO evidence, quality 2)	R6, R8
<b>Lessons from international best practice</b>	Malaysia's district hubs, Uganda's community-driven oversight, China's coordinated planning (HSRC 2022; Twende Mbele 2022; UNDP 2023)	R1, R2, R5

Threats	Evidence / Examples	Related Recs
<b>Persistent rural-urban disparities</b>	Rural municipalities underfunded and under-capacitated (ECSECC 2023, quality 2; UNDP 2023, quality 2)	R2, R3
<b>Institutional fragmentation and overlapping mandates</b>	Duplication between provincial and local LED mandates (HSRC 2022, quality 2)	R1, R4
<b>Weak data reliability undermines decision-making</b>	Conflicting official vs CSO-reported outcomes (Waterberg electrification audit, quality 1)	R5, R8
<b>Fiscal shocks and external disruptions</b>	R12.3 billion diverted during COVID-19, delaying DDM infrastructure (ECSECC 2023, quality 2)	R2, R3

## 5. KEY INSIGHTS

The following key insights emanating from the findings of the synthesis evaluation of the DDM should be considered to enhance its effectiveness and improve its overall functioning.

**Figure: DDM key insights**



Importance of **data-driven decision-making** in the DDM cannot be overstated. A more explicit emphasis on robust data collection and analysis is critical for improving the planning, execution, and monitoring of development projects. Currently, there is a noticeable gap in how data is utilized to inform decision-making. When decisions are made based on solid evidence, it helps ensure that the development projects are not only responsive to the current needs of the communities but are also aligned with real-time conditions. By using effective data analysis, decision-makers can anticipate challenges, allocate resources more effectively, and monitor progress with greater accuracy. This can lead to more targeted interventions that improve project outcomes, ultimately enhancing the success and sustainability of development initiatives.

**Embedding technology** is another critical area that requires attention. Although some case study recommendations emphasize improved coordination and monitoring, the potential of technology platforms and communication channels to enhance efficiency and transparency has not been fully explored. The use of technology, especially through centralized information-sharing platforms, is essential for improving collaboration among stakeholders at all levels of government. It allows for real-time updates on project status and facilitates communication, which can reduce delays and miscommunication. Technological integration can streamline processes, enhance transparency, and improve the accountability of all actors involved in DDM projects, thus creating a more efficient and responsive model for development.

Empowering local communities through **community ownership and empowerment** is another vital lesson for the success of the DDM. Although recommendations emphasize the importance of bottom-up planning and community participation, there is a broader need to ensure that communities take ownership of the development initiatives. When local communities have the authority, resources, and tools to manage their own development, they are more likely to implement sustainable projects that reflect their needs and aspirations. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility and commitment to the project's success, as communities feel invested in the outcomes. A model that encourages and facilitates community involvement is crucial for achieving long-term success in DDM initiatives.

The **monitoring and feedback loops** from affected communities are equally important for ensuring the success of development projects. While monitoring and evaluation systems are often discussed, the crucial element of creating feedback loops from the communities directly impacted by DDM initiatives is frequently overlooked. Establishing such feedback mechanisms

allows for early identification of challenges and provides a platform for communities to voice their concerns and experiences. This real-time input can help adjust and improve projects, ensuring that they are more responsive to local needs. Furthermore, these feedback systems ensure accountability, as communities can hold project implementers accountable for their actions and outcomes.

**Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity** are fundamental in South Africa's diverse social landscape, yet they are often not emphasized enough in development projects. While inclusivity is mentioned in various recommendations, cultural sensitivity especially in the planning and implementation phases is crucial for ensuring that projects are well-received by local populations. South Africa is home to a wide range of cultures, languages, and traditions, and failure to account for these differences in project design can lead to misunderstandings and resistance and exacerbate contestations amongst local communities. Such challenges may delay the implementation of projects or lead to total collapse of projects. By embracing cultural sensitivity, development projects can foster greater community cohesion and acceptance while ensuring that all voices are heard and respected throughout the process.

The focus on **sustainability and environmental considerations** is another critical aspect that requires more attention. Although sustainability is mentioned, there is no clear commitment to making environmental sustainability a core principle of the DDM. Development projects that fail to consider environmental impact are often less resilient and more vulnerable to long-term challenges, such as climate change or resource depletion. Environmental sustainability must be integrated into every phase of the DDM, from planning through execution, to ensure that projects are not only beneficial in the short term but also capable of delivering lasting benefits to future generations. Through incorporating sustainable practices, development initiatives can contribute to the broader goal of environmental stewardship, fostering resilience and long-term success.

There is a clear need for **clear accountability structures** within the DDM. While strengthening governance is often discussed, the establishment of transparent and enforceable accountability structures is crucial for ensuring effective project execution. Clear accountability frameworks help to track progress, ensure that all stakeholders are held responsible for their actions, and allow for the identification of issues early on. Without these structures in place, there is a risk of inefficiencies, corruption, or neglect, which can undermine the success of the DDM. Accountability must be embedded in every level of governance and

project implementation to ensure that all parties, whether governmental or community-based, are accountable for their roles in the development process.

Another essential aspect of the DDM is its flexibility and adaptability. The dynamic nature of development means that circumstances are often subject to change, whether due to economic shifts, unexpected crises, or new technological advances. However, there is little mention of the need for the DDM to remain flexible and adaptable in the face of such changes. Flexibility allows for the quick adaptation of development plans to address unforeseen challenges, ensuring that the DDM remains relevant and effective over time. An adaptable approach ensures that development initiatives are not derailed by unexpected changes and can continue to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

**Private sector and local business engagement** are often viewed solely in terms of financial investment, but its potential extends far beyond funding. The recommendations mention partnerships with the private sector and CSOs, but there is insufficient emphasis on how the private sector can contribute in other ways, such as through knowledge transfer, capacity building, or facilitating innovation. The private sector should be viewed as a multifaceted partner that can bring new ideas, technological solutions, and resources to the table. By fostering collaborations that go beyond just financial contributions, the DDM can benefit from innovation, enhanced capacity, and sustainable practices that improve the overall success of development projects.

**Long-term political commitment and stability** are vital for the consistent and effective implementation of the DDM. While governance and leadership are often discussed, the importance of sustained political commitment over multiple administrations is not always emphasized. Political instability or shifting priorities can disrupt the continuity of development projects and lead to inconsistencies in policy implementation. Long-term political commitment ensures that the DDM model is not dependent on any single administration or leadership style, providing stability and direction for ongoing development efforts. It also reinforces the commitment to the model's long-term goals, even in the face of changing political landscapes.

In conclusion, these lessons learned or key insights point to the need for a more integrated, flexible, and inclusive approach to development within the DDM. Each of these elements—data-driven decision-making, technology integration, community ownership, cultural sensitivity, environmental sustainability, accountability, adaptability, private sector

engagement, and political commitment—play a crucial role in ensuring that development projects are successful, sustainable, and impactful in the long run.

**Table 6: Challenges identified in the various studies**

<b>Thematic Category</b>	<b>Authors &amp; Year</b>	<b>Core Challenge(s) Identified</b>
<b>Intergovernmental coordination</b>	DCOG (2020); Sausi, Kanyane & Davids (2022); Mac Master & DCOG RMO (2024); Gauteng COGTA (2023)	Weak coordination across government spheres; siloed operations delaying project execution; reliance on voluntary mechanisms; need to strengthen IGR framework and integrated planning; statutory process delays (e.g., land acquisition, rezoning).
<b>Strategic planning &amp; policy coherence</b>	UNDP (2023); SALGA (2021)	Inconsistent implementation of the strategic framework for catalytic projects; incoherent planning and implementation processes; difficulty in monitoring and oversight.
<b>Service delivery deficits</b>	Mamokhere & Kgobe (2023); UNDP (2023)	Chronic under-provision of municipal services, especially in rural areas; overstated service delivery data.
<b>Conceptual Clarity &amp; Understanding of DDM</b>	Sausi, Kanyane & Davids (2022); Mamokhere & Kgobe (2023); NDA (2024)	Limited understanding of DDM principles at local level; misunderstanding among partners; lack of legislative framework to embed DDM practices.
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>	Twende Mbele (2022); Teti, Nzewi & Lungisa (2023)	Limited consultation with CSOs and some municipalities during One Plan development; non-cooperation among stakeholders; political interference affecting collaboration.
<b>Capacity &amp; resources</b>	Mamokhere & Kgobe (2023); Teti, Nzewi & Lungisa (2023); Stats SA (2023)	Shortages in technical skills, staffing, and institutional support; resource constraints in data collection and reporting; supply chain management delays.
<b>Funding &amp; fiscal environment</b>	ECSECC (2023); NDA (2024); Teti, Nzewi & Lungisa (2023)	Macro-fiscal constraints; insufficient budgets for DDM activities; inability to secure consistent funding; funding gaps affecting implementation.

<b>Data systems &amp; oversight</b>	Mac Master & DCOG RMO (2024); Stats SA (2023); UNDP (2023)	Weak DDM information management systems; lack of standardised indicators; discrepancies between official reports and independent verification.
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### **Intergovernmental coordination**

Persistent siloed operations, fragmented planning processes, and weak collaboration between government spheres are identified as the most significant coordination challenges. These issues delay project execution, limit integrated planning and reduce the efficiency of statutory processes such as land acquisition and rezoning.

### **Strategic planning, policy coherence and conceptual clarity and legislative framework**

The inconsistent application of cohesive frameworks for catalytic projects and incoherent implementation processes undermines the ability to monitor and oversee DDM programmes effectively. Such strategic gaps contribute to duplication of effort and wasted resources across government spheres.

A lack of deep understanding of DDM principles at the local level undermines consistent implementation. Thus, the absence of a formal legislative framework to institutionalise the model, its uptake remains uneven and largely reliant on the commitment of individual leaders.

### **Funding, fiscal environment and stakeholder engagement**

Persistent funding gaps, macro-fiscal constraints, and unpredictable resource flows have hindered effective implementation. These challenges are most noticeable in rural municipalities, where constrained budgets limit the capacity to address urgent needs and further entrench spatial inequalities.

Under-consultation of civil society organisations, municipalities, and local actors in the One Plan process has resulted in low ownership and passive participation. Inadequate engagement processes also risk creating misaligned priorities and eroding trust among stakeholders.

### **Capacity, resources, data systems and oversight**

Shortages in technical skills, staffing, and institutional support continue to limit the translation of plans into tangible outcomes. These capacity deficits are most severe in rural municipalities,

where institutional support is weaker and staff turnover is high. Political interference further erodes governance effectiveness.

Additionally, weak monitoring systems, inconsistent indicators to track performance, and discrepancies between official reports and independent verification undermine the credibility of performance data. Such weaknesses limit evidence-based decision-making and hinder the assessment of long-term impact.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The DDM is a viable framework for integrated development in South Africa, but its effectiveness is limited by coordination issues, such as insufficient community engagement, and a lack of capacity-building initiatives. Addressing such challenges is critical to maximizing the DDM's ability to stimulate economic growth and improve service delivery across municipalities. To overcome the stated obstacles, increased coordination and strengthening corporation at all levels of government, active participation from civil society, and explicit monitoring and evaluation systems to assist in developing programmatic strategies and streamlined objectives leading to specific activities to achieve the DDM overall goals would be required. The DDM can increase its effectiveness, overcome its current challenges, and better address the socioeconomic disparities and service delivery issues it is meant to pursue. The DDM has enormous potential, but its effective implementation requires seamless integration with other key plans and strategies, improved coordination, wide-stakeholder involvement, financing mechanisms, and ongoing learning and adaptation.

The DDM's effectiveness in improving service delivery, promoting socio-economic development, and achieving integrated governance can be significantly enhanced through the following recommendations presented as actionable activities, with clear roles for relevant stakeholders. The evidence to mapping recommendation table is attached is below as annexure 5.

**Table 7: Consolidated recommendations**

Rec No.	Thematic Area	Problem & Evidence Basis	Root Causes	Recommendation	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Risks & Mitigation	Monitoring Indicators
1	<b>Governance, Oversight &amp; Role Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented governance and duplication of coordination structures.</li> <li>• Unclear roles between spheres; inconsistent political ownership of One Plans.</li> <li>• Findings 4.1–4.3; SWOT p.42.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlapping mandates.</li> <li>• Weak vertical/horizontal coordination.</li> <li>• Limited executive leadership at district level.</li> </ul>	<b>Develop a DDM Governance and Role Clarification Framework</b> setting mandatory roles for each sphere; establish unified district coordination structures; harmonise national support protocols.	<b>Lead:</b> DCoG <b>Support:</b> DPME, Provinces, SALGA, NT	<b>Short-term:</b> Framework approval <b>Medium-term:</b> District rollout	Moderate (coordination, legal review)	<b>Risk:</b> Resistance to role shifts. <b>Mitigation:</b> Secure political champions (Premiers, Mayors).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework approved</li> <li>• % districts implementing</li> <li>• Reduction in duplicated structures</li> </ul>
2	<b>Financing, Resource Alignment &amp; Catalytic Investments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misalignment between One Plans and budgets; no dedicated DDM funding.</li> <li>• Fragmented conditional grants; uneven district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ring-fenced funding mechanism.</li> <li>• Weak provincial–municipal budget alignment.</li> </ul>	<b>Create a DDM Financing Framework</b> including a catalytic funding window; budgeting protocol aligning budgets to One Plans; annual district resource mapping tool.	<b>Lead:</b> NT <b>Support:</b> DCoG, DPME, Provincial Treasuries, SALGA	<b>Short-term:</b> Framework design <b>Medium-term:</b> MTEF rollout	High (fiscal modelling, catalytic funds)	<b>Risk:</b> Fiscal pressure limits funding. <b>Mitigation:</b> Phased catalytic allocations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding window established</li> <li>• % budgets aligned to One Plans</li> <li>• District resource maps published</li> </ul>

		resource access. • Findings 4.2–4.4.							
3	<b>Institutional Capacity &amp; Hub Functionality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity varies across districts; hubs lack technical skills and stability.</li> <li>Shared-services models weak.</li> <li>Findings 4.1 &amp; 4.4.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High turnover.</li> <li>Insufficient technical and analytical skills.</li> <li>Hubs often poorly integrated.</li> </ul>	<b>Implement a Capacity Strengthening Programme</b> with minimum staffing standards, recruitment/retention plans, provincial shared-services, and professionalisation alignment (DPSA).	<b>Lead:</b> DCoG <b>Support:</b> DPME, DPSA, LGSETA, Provinces, SALGA	<b>Medium-term:</b> 12–36 months	Medium–High	<i>Risk:</i> Low retention. <i>Mitigation:</i> Career pathways + blended funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% districts meeting capacity standards</li> <li>Hub staffing levels</li> <li>Annual competency assessments</li> </ul>
4	<b>Planning, One Plan Quality &amp; Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One Plans inconsistent in quality; poorly aligned to APP/IDP cycles; limited SOE/provincial integration.</li> <li>Findings 4.1–4.3; Limitations p.33.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps in templates and guidance.</li> <li>Weak executive buy-in.</li> <li>No annual review process.</li> </ul>	<b>Standardise and Institutionalise One Plan Development</b> through revised templates, annual reviews, statutory approval (DIF/PROVEX), and harmonisation with IDP/APP cycles.	<b>Lead:</b> DCoG <b>Support:</b> Provinces, SALGA, NT, Municipal Managers	<b>Short-term:</b> Template revision <b>Medium-term:</b> Integration into 2026/27 cycle	Low–Medium	<i>Risk:</i> Conflicts with existing planning laws. <i>Mitigation:</i> DCoG–NT harmonisation circular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% One Plans meeting quality benchmark</li> <li>Annual reviews completed</li> <li>% One Plan priorities in IDPs/APPs</li> </ul>
5	<b>Monitoring, Reporting &amp; Evaluation (IM&amp;E)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of standard DDM indicator set;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No standardised IM&amp;E package.</li> </ul>	<b>Develop a DDM IM&amp;E Package</b> including core indicators, data	<b>Lead:</b> DPME <b>Support:</b> DCoG,	<b>Short-term:</b> Indicators & portal	Medium	<i>Risk:</i> Digital capacity gaps. <i>Mitigation:</i> Phased rollout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% districts reporting core indicators •</li> </ul>

		weak data quality; no evidence portal; inconsistent reporting. • Findings 4.2; Limitations p.33.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak district data systems.</li> <li>• Lack of digital infrastructure.</li> </ul>	protocols, digital tools, quarterly reports, and a DDM Evidence Portal.	Stats SA, Provinces, Municipal M&E units	design <b>Medium-term:</b> Full rollout		+ intensive training.	Evidence portal operational • Data quality improvements
6	<b>Stakeholder Participation &amp; Social Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community and CSO involvement; weak ward-level structures; top-down approach limits legitimacy.</li> <li>• Findings 4.4; stakeholder bias in Limitations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak social accountability systems.</li> <li>• Poor communication and limited participation channels.</li> </ul>	<b>Institutionalise Community Participation</b> by creating district participation frameworks, piloting citizen monitoring committees, and publishing quarterly community-facing reports.	<b>Lead:</b> DCoG <b>Support:</b> DPME, Provinces, SALGA, CSOs, Ward Committees	<b>Medium-term:</b> 12–36 months	Low–Moderate	<i>Risk:</i> Public distrust. <i>Mitigation:</i> Transparent reporting + co-creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community monitoring committees</li> <li>• Quarterly public reports published</li> </ul>
7	<b>Change Management &amp; Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials and leaders lack common understanding of DDM; messages inconsistent across spheres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No national change management strategy.</li> <li>• Poor internal communication.</li> </ul>	<b>Implement a DDM Change Management &amp; Communication Strategy</b> with a shared toolkit, behavioural interventions, and	<b>Lead:</b> DCoG <b>Support:</b> GCIS, DPME, Provinces, SALGA	<b>Short-term:</b> Toolkit development <b>Medium-term:</b> Behavioural	Low–Medium	<i>Risk:</i> Behavioural resistance. <i>Mitigation:</i> Leadership-driven change & incentives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % officials trained</li> <li>• Learning exchanges held</li> <li>• Annual understanding survey results</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited learning platforms; behavioural resistance noted.</li> <li>Findings 4.1–4.3; SWOT p.42.</li> </ul>		peer-learning platforms.		interventions			
8	<b>Implementation, Improvement Planning &amp; Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No management response mechanism; uneven district implementation; weak follow-through on findings; limited accountability.</li> <li>Section 5 insights; Limitations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No improvement plan process.</li> <li>Poor tracking and escalation.</li> </ul>	<b>Implement a DDM Improvement Plan &amp; Accountability Framework</b> requiring: 1) 30-day management response; 2) 90-day improvement plan; 3) biannual tracking; 4) escalation for non-performance.	<b>Lead:</b> DPME <b>Support:</b> DCoG, NT, Provinces, Municipalities	<b>Short-term:</b> Management response & IP <b>Long-term:</b> Biannual tracking	Low	<i>Risk:</i> Weak compliance. <i>Mitigation:</i> Escalation mechanisms + Premier/Mayor enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management response submitted</li> <li>Improvement Plan approved</li> <li>% actions implemented</li> </ul>

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the DDM is a promising model towards promoting integrated and sustainable development in South Africa, there are significant problems and limitations in its implementation. The evaluation's key findings underscore the importance of clearer role definitions, improved intergovernmental cooperation, and stronger community participation. Furthermore, the significance of good monitoring, capacity training, and financial planning cannot be overemphasized.

However, beyond the recommendations provided, several critical areas demand further focus. These include strengthening the integration of data-driven decision-making, leveraging on technology to improve efficiency, and embedding environmental sustainability across all development initiatives. Moreover, fostering cultural sensitivity, accountability, and deepening private sector engagement will be essential to ensuring that DDM can effectively respond to the diverse needs of South African communities.

DDM is a new initiative for the South African government, therefore, it requires thorough research to determine how districts can best design and implement long-term development plans. Currently, municipalities are required to develop one plans tied to political electoral cycles, which undermines long-term and sustained development. In contrast, international lessons from the China practice highlight multi-generational planning and the importance of long-term horizons. As the DDM progresses, it must be adaptable and flexible, anchored on long-term political commitment, community empowerment, and inclusive development. By addressing these gaps and applying lessons, the DDM can strengthen its impact and make a meaningful contribution to South Africa's socio-economic development, ultimately improving the quality of life for all citizens.

Although studies show greater consensus that DDM will sustain and complement the integrated planning within the municipalities, its alignment with other key development strategies and plans remains uncertain. This highlights the need for deeper integration of the model to fully unlock its potential impact.

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**Annexure I: One Plan commitments and progress for Provincial departments as of 2023.**

<b>Province</b>	<b>One Plan Adoption Status</b>	<b>Coordination Structures Established</b>	<b>Progress Highlights</b>	<b>Key Challenges / Next Steps</b>
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	One Plan adopted and under implementation	Provincial DDM Hub and District Hubs functional	Active alignment of plans across spheres; catalytic projects identified	Strengthen monitoring and reporting consistency
<b>Free State</b>	One Plan adopted	Provincial DDM Hub established	Integration with provincial planning underway	Improve coordination between districts and province
<b>Gauteng</b>	One Plan adopted	Fully functional coordination structures	Provincial DDM Hub links to city plans; reporting improving	Enhance implementation tracking and feedback loops
<b>KwaZulu-Natal</b>	One Plan adopted	Provincial DDM Hub established	Coordination across 11 districts in place; regular updates to Presidency	Need stronger integration of sector departments
<b>Limpopo</b>	One Plan adopted	Provincial DDM Hub functional	Focus on catalytic projects and infrastructure	Improve data flow to National Strategic Hub
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	One Plan adopted	Provincial DDM Hub operational	Joint planning sessions completed	Strengthen monitoring of early-warning systems
<b>Northern Cape</b>	One Plan adopted	Coordination structures in place	Integration across sparse districts achieved	Build analytical capacity for reporting
<b>North West</b>	One Plan adopted	DDM structures functional	Ongoing inter-sphere coordination	Improve accountability mechanisms
<b>Western Cape</b>	One Plan adopted	Provincial DDM Hub established	Alignment with provincial growth strategy confirmed	Strengthen cross-sphere institutionalisation

## **Annexure 2: DDM revised Theory of Change**

The DDM theory of change aims to improve service delivery by reducing poverty, boost employment, and promote inclusive development by institutionalizing the DDM model, implementing coordinated “One Plans,” and improving municipal performance.

### **Impact (Long-term change)**

A unified, inclusive, and responsive local governance system that drives sustainable development, economic growth, and equitable service delivery across all districts in South Africa.

### **Outcomes (Medium-term results)**

- 1. Streamlined intergovernmental relations (Improved joint planning and efficient coordination)**
  - Improved coordination and reduced duplication of efforts across spheres of government.
  - Efficient and collaborative resource allocation and service planning.
- 2. Inclusive economic growth**
  - Targeted district economic support
  - Growth of district-based economies through support for SMMEs and local industries.
  - Increased employment and reduced poverty in targeted areas.
- 3. Integrated public services**
  - Citizen-focused, seamless access to essential services such as healthcare, education, basic services such as water, sanitation, etc and infrastructure.
  - Improved quality and efficiency of public service delivery.
- 4. Enhanced governance and social equity (Improved governance and community participation)**
  - Improved transparent, accountability, and participatory local governance.
  - Increased trust in government and equitable access to decision-making.
- 5. Improved municipal capability and reduced spatial disparities in weaker districts**
  - Strengthened municipal capability in underserved regions.
  - Reduced gaps between rural and urban areas in service access.

## **Outputs (short-term deliverables)**

- Functional cross-governmental task forces and joint planning mechanisms.
- Operational economic development zones and SMME support programs.
- Integrated one plans with service delivery arrangements and integrated monitoring dashboards.
- Established participatory frameworks and gender-responsive budgeting guidelines for use in district planning.
- Trained municipal officials and upgraded rural infrastructure for underserved districts.

## **Activities (core actions)**

### **1. Intergovernmental Coordination**

- Establish cross-departmental task forces, formalise and operationalise DDM joint planning structures.
- Use digital platforms for real-time data sharing.
- Formalize joint planning and decision-making protocols.

### **2. Local Economic Development**

- Create economic zones aligned to district strengths.
- Develop feasibility assessments and activation plans for economic zones.
- Incentivize private sector collaboration.
- Develop skills in marginalized populations.

### **3. Integrated Service Delivery**

- Develop cross-sectoral service delivery components within One Plans.
- Deploy integrated project management and tracking systems.

### **4. Governance and Social Inclusion**

- Apply and implement structured participatory accountability frameworks.
- Use gender-responsive budgeting.
- Facilitate community engagement and planning inclusion.

### **5. Capacity and Spatial Equity**

- Conduct targeted training for municipal staff.
- Develop and implement infrastructure improvement plans in rural areas.
- Promote investment in disadvantaged districts.

## Inputs (resources and enablers)

- Political will and legislative support.
- Financial resources from all levels of government.
- Technical and digital infrastructure.
- Human capital, including skilled planners, facilitators, and service providers.
- Strategic partnerships (private sector, civil society, academia).

## Annexure 3: Proposed additions to DDM – Logic Framework

Hierarchy of Objectives	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions	Inputs
<b>Goal / Impact</b>  <b>Unified, inclusive, and responsive district-level governance enabling sustainable development and equitable service delivery.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in service delivery quality (e.g., health, education, basic services indices).</li> <li>• Increase in local economic growth rates (Improved district economic performance linked to DDM-supported interventions).</li> <li>• Reduction in spatial inequality metrics (urban-rural, gender, youth).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and provincial development reports</li> <li>• Stats SA data</li> <li>• Development indices</li> </ul>	Continued political commitment and intergovernmental collaboration.	Sustained national support and policy alignment
<b>OUTCOMES</b>				
<b>I. Enhanced Intergovernmental Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of joint planning initiatives</li> <li>• Reduction in overlapping projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IGR reports</li> <li>• Departmental reviews / audits</li> </ul>	Political and administrative commitment across government levels  Mandates for coordination are clear  Active participation by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination platforms</li> <li>• ICT systems for data sharing</li> <li>• Skilled facilitators</li> </ul>

Hierarchy of Objectives	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions	Inputs
			government spheres.	
<b>2. Inclusive Local Economic Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in SMME creation/support</li> <li>• Increase in local investment</li> <li>• % increase in SMME activity</li> <li>• Employment rates in targeted zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LED reports</li> <li>• Business registries</li> <li>• Stats SA Labour force surveys</li> </ul>	<p>Economic conditions support entrepreneurship</p> <p>Market and investment conditions remain stable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment incentives</li> <li>• LED strategies</li> <li>• SMME support tools</li> </ul>
<b>3. Integrated Service Delivery</b>	<p>Citizens satisfaction with access to basic services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of sectors contributing to One Plan service delivery components</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Integrated service reports</li> <li>• Departmental performance reports</li> </ul>	<p>Sectoral alignment is enforced and supported</p> <p>Sector departments align systems and data sharing mechanisms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sectoral integration tools</li> <li>• Interoperable service systems</li> </ul>
<b>4. Strengthened Governance &amp; Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of community participation in planning</li> <li>• Gender-responsive budget allocations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participations logs, meetings records and Forum reports</li> <li>• Budget analysis</li> </ul>	<p>Civil society and marginalized groups engaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic education campaigns</li> <li>• Gender budgeting tools</li> <li>• Communities engage in planning forums</li> <li>• Districts support community inclusion processes.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Reduced Capacity and Spatial Disparities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of trained municipal officials</li> <li>• % increase in rural service access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training reports</li> <li>• Infrastructure development records</li> </ul>	<p>Rural municipalities are willing and able to absorb support</p> <p>Adequate funding and skilled trainers available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building funds</li> <li>• Training providers</li> <li>• Infrastructure investment packages</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUTS</b>				
<b>1. Cross-sphere coordination structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of task forces established</li> <li>• # of joint plans adopted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoUs</li> <li>• Task force minutes</li> </ul>	<p>Legal and administrative clarity provided</p> <p>Structures are supported with clear mandates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandate documents</li> <li>• Facilitation teams</li> <li>• Digital collaboration tools</li> </ul>
<b>2. Operational economic zones and SMME programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of economic zones established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project reports</li> <li>• Zone development /</li> </ul>	<p>Districts have sufficient economic potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial mapping data</li> <li>• Public-private engagement frameworks</li> </ul>

Hierarchy of Objectives	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions	Inputs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of SMMEs supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activation stats or reports</li> <li>• SMME registries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private sector willing to invest locally.</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Unified service delivery plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of integrated delivery plans created (one plans)</li> <li>• # of departments aligned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans and sectoral MoUs</li> <li>• Monitoring dashboards</li> <li>• One plans documents</li> <li>• Implementation reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments commit to integration.</li> <li>Timely coordination and agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning templates</li> <li>• Monitoring software</li> <li>• Technical support teams</li> </ul>
<b>4. Inclusive governance frameworks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of participatory forums</li> <li>• % of plans influenced by community input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting records or Participation logs</li> <li>• Stakeholder feedback reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are mobilized and informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach resources</li> <li>• Civil society partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>5. Strengthened municipal capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of trained staff</li> <li>• # of projects implemented in rural areas</li> <li>• # of infrastructure upgrades completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training records</li> <li>• Infrastructure completion / assessment reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to experts and technology</li> <li>Training is needs-based and ongoing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for training</li> <li>• Curriculum modules</li> <li>• Infrastructure materials</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>1. Establish intergovernmental task teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of active task teams</li> <li>• Task forces established and operational</li> <li>• Number of meetings held</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting schedules</li> <li>• Action plans</li> <li>• Official gazettes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active coordination commitment</li> <li>Stakeholder buy-in and facilitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled conveners</li> <li>• Digital tools for communication</li> <li>• All spheres attend and contribute</li> </ul>
<b>2. Designate economic zones and support SMMEs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of zones launched</li> <li>• # of Partnerships signed</li> <li>• # of zones identified and activated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zone reports</li> <li>• Business registry Spatial planning documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses ready to engage</li> <li>Alignment with local economic strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility studies</li> <li>• Investment promotion materials</li> </ul>
<b>3. Develop unified service delivery plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of plans finalized</li> <li>• # of stakeholder endorsements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed plans and protocols</li> <li>• Progress reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely and inclusive planning processes.</li> <li>Stakeholder consensus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector data</li> <li>• Planning workshops</li> <li>• Decision-making protocols</li> </ul>

Hierarchy of Objectives	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions	Inputs
<b>4. Implement participatory governance models</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community sessions held</li> <li>• Gender-inclusive budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance records</li> <li>• Feedback reports</li> <li>• Budget analysis</li> </ul>	Communities trust and feel empowered to engage with the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue access</li> <li>• Translation/interpreter services</li> <li>• Gender analysts</li> </ul>
<b>5. Train municipal officials and develop infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of training sessions held</li> <li>• # of infrastructure projects launched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training materials</li> <li>• Attendance and evaluation forms</li> <li>• Infrastructure progress logs</li> </ul>	<p>Municipalities prioritize learning and infrastructure</p> <p>Capacity building aligns with real needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• Logistics support</li> <li>• Engineering expertise</li> </ul>

#### Annexure 4: Codebook for thematic synthesis

This codebook guides uniform coding of documents included in the evidence synthesis. Codes reflect the core domains of the District Development Model, recurring patterns in implementation, and systemic drivers that shape outcomes. Each code contains a definition, sub-codes, indicators to look for, and example text.

##### A. Governance, roles and coordination

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>GOV-1 Role clarity</b>	How functions, mandates and responsibilities are divided across spheres	Legal mandates, administrative roles, duplication, accountability	Any text showing confusion or overlap of roles in DDM structures	“Responsibilities of provincial COGTA and hub staff appeared unclear during implementation.”
<b>GOV-2 Coordination effectiveness</b>	Quality of cross-sphere working relationships and alignment	Vertical coordination, horizontal collaboration, intergovernmental platforms	Reports of poor collaboration, weak buy-in, fragmented execution	“Departments operated in parallel, resulting in duplicated interventions.”
<b>GOV-3 Political leadership</b>	Strength and presence of political stewardship	MEC oversight, Mayor involvement, Executive buy-in	Mentions of political support or weak commitment	“Limited visibility of political champions slowed rollout.”

### B. One plan design and implementation

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>OP-1 One Plan quality</b>	Strength, completeness and feasibility of district One Plans	Indicator completeness, target realism, budget alignment	Quality issues, inconsistencies, missing data	“Some indicators were included without baselines or targets.”
<b>OP-2 Integration into planning cycles</b>	How One Plans align to IDPs, APPs and budgeting	APP alignment, SDBIP integration	References to planning misalignment	“One Plans were not embedded in provincial budget cycles.”
<b>OP-3 SOE and sector alignment</b>	Sector departments and SOEs contribution to plans	Commitments, infrastructure alignment	Mentions of national departments not integrating at district level	“Limited participation from national SOEs weakened implementation.”

### C. Financial resource and allocation

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>FIN-1 Funding adequacy</b>	Availability and sufficiency of DDM financing	Grant structure, funding gaps	Statements on under-resourcing	“No dedicated funding stream exists for DDM implementation.”
<b>FIN-2 Budget alignment</b>	Whether funding reflects One Plan priorities	MTEF alignment, capital allocation	Budgets not matching plans	“Projects listed in One Plans remained unfunded.”
<b>FIN-3 Resource equity</b>	Distribution fairness between districts	Rural-urban disparities, spatial justice	Mentions of uneven resource access	“Rural hubs struggled to secure technical resources.”

#### D. DDM hub, capacity and technical support

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>HUB-1 Capacity sufficiency</b>	Staffing, capability and stability of hubs	HR gaps, turnover, skill shortages	Capacity constraints affecting implementation	“DDM hub lacked data analysis skills.”
<b>HUB-2 Support models</b>	Technical, advisory and shared-service models used	Training, support packages, secondments	Where support improved or hindered processes	“Provincial shared-services boosted reporting quality.”

#### E. Data, monitoring, evaluation and learning

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>M&amp;E-1 Indicator consistency</b>	Standardisation and measurability of DDM indicators	Data definitions, indicator availability	M&E framework gaps	“No common indicator set existed across districts.”
<b>M&amp;E-2 Evidence use</b>	How evidence informs decisions or planning	Feedback loops, sense-making	Evidence not used to drive action	“Reports were produced but seldom applied to planning.”
<b>M&amp;E-3 Data quality</b>	Completeness, timeliness and reliability of information	Missing data, outdated stats	Weak verification or quality issues	“Administrative data lacked verification mechanisms.”

#### F. Stakeholder participation and community voice

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>STAKE-1 Participation quality</b>	Degree of inclusion of citizens and CSOs	Ward structures, oversight bodies	Weak citizen involvement	“Public engagement was limited to consultation rounds.”
<b>STAKE-2 Transparency &amp; accountability</b>	Disclosure practices and oversight	Community reporting, monitoring forums	Public access to progress information	“Community reporting mechanisms were absent.”

G. Implementation, delivery and results

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Apply When You See	Example Extract
<b>IMP-1 Implementation readiness</b>	Conditions enabling execution	Planning maturity, leadership availability	Implementability constraints	“Delays stemmed from institutional readiness gaps.”
<b>IMP-2 Early results</b>	Evidence of progress from DDM	Output delivery, coordination gains	Tangible change reported	“Two districts improved joint budgeting outcomes.”
<b>IMP-3 Barriers</b>	Constraints that slow or block delivery	HR shortages, data gaps, finance	Clear obstacles to model functioning	“Turnover disrupted continuity and slowed learning.”

**Annexure 5: Evidence → Recommendations Mapping Table**

No.	Recommendation	Evidence from DDM Synthesis Report	Section / Page Reference
6.1	<b>Strengthen Governance, Oversight and Role Clarity Across All Spheres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent fragmentation and duplication of structures across spheres.</li> <li>• Overlapping mandates between DCoG, Provinces and Municipalities.</li> <li>• Districts lacked clarity on executive and administrative accountability.</li> <li>• Weak political ownership of One Plans in several districts.</li> <li>• SWOT shows governance and coordination as a key weakness and threat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.1–4.3</li> <li>• SWOT Analysis (Table 5)</li> <li>• Governance insights (Section 5)</li> </ul>
6.2	<b>Institutionalise a Dedicated DDM Funding and Resource Alignment Mechanism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misalignment between One Plans and budgets.</li> <li>• No dedicated or ring-fenced DDM funding stream.</li> <li>• Highly uneven resource access among districts; fiscal fragmentation persists.</li> <li>• Provinces and national departments not budgeting according to district priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.2–4.4</li> <li>• Section 5 Key Insights</li> <li>• SWOT “Weaknesses” – resource gaps</li> </ul>
6.3	<b>Strengthen District-Level Capacity and Hub Functionality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity uneven across DDM Hubs.</li> <li>• Hubs lack minimum staffing, analytical expertise, and stability.</li> <li>• Districts with persistent institutional fragility cannot drive One Plans effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.1; 4.4</li> <li>• Capacity insights in Section 5</li> <li>• SWOT (Table 5)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared services and technical support models absent or inconsistent.</li> <li>• SWOT identifies capacity as core impediment.</li> </ul>	
6.4	<b>Improve the Quality, Functionality and Institutionalisation of One Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Plans vary widely in quality, completeness and feasibility.</li> <li>• Limited linkages between One Plans and provincial/municipal planning cycles.</li> <li>• No uniform template or standardised process across districts.</li> <li>• Limited integration of SOE and provincial commitments into One Plans.</li> <li>• Annual review processes not institutionalised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.1–4.3</li> <li>• Limitations (Section 3.3)</li> <li>• One Plan issues in Section 5</li> </ul>
6.5	<b>Institutionalise a Standardised DDM Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation (IM&amp;E) System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No consistent indicator framework across districts.</li> <li>• Weak data collection and poor data quality at municipal and district levels.</li> <li>• No unified performance dashboard or evidence portal.</li> <li>• Reporting inconsistent and not used for decision-making.</li> <li>• Limitations highlight data bias and lack of verified performance evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.2</li> <li>• Limitations (Section 3.3)</li> <li>• IM&amp;E insights in Section 5</li> </ul>
6.6	<b>Institutionalise Community Participation and Social Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder participation limited and uneven across districts.</li> <li>• Community feedback not systematically captured or integrated.</li> <li>• Weaknesses in district support team structures, ward committees and CSO engagement.</li> <li>• Top-down implementation reduces legitimacy and buy-in.</li> <li>• Synthesis notes stakeholder and community participation as a critical gap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.4</li> <li>• Limitations (stakeholder bias)</li> <li>• Section 5 insights on participation</li> </ul>
6.7	<b>Strengthen Change Management and DDM Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of common understanding of DDM among officials and political actors.</li> <li>• Inconsistent messaging across spheres.</li> <li>• Limited dissemination of lessons and learning.</li> <li>• Behavioural resistance and institutional inertia identified as implementation barriers.</li> <li>• SWOT lists communication and change management as weaknesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings 4.1–4.3</li> <li>• Insights in Section 5</li> <li>• SWOT (Table 5)</li> </ul>
6.8	<b>Develop and Implement a DDM Improvement Plan and Accountability Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No formal management response to evaluation findings.</li> <li>• No improvement plan tracking mechanisms.</li> <li>• District implementation uneven; accountability diffuse across spheres.</li> <li>• Lack of structured follow-through on evaluation recommendations historically.</li> <li>• Evidence shows need for escalation, tracking, and consequence management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 5 Key Insights</li> <li>• Limitations section</li> <li>• Findings on uneven implementation</li> </ul>