



Vuthela SPARK

IGNITING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ILEMBE

03



EDITORIAL: RE-IGNITING THE SPARK OF INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vuthela in isiZulu means to blow to rekindle a fire. After a litany of serious setbacks – loadshedding, the COVID-19 pandemic, the July 2021 civil unrest and looting, and the recent floods – economic actors in the iLembe District are determined to move forward to a period of rebuilding and recovery.

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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

In the past, local governments dusted off their business continuity plans in the wake of major disruptions caused by incidents such as floods and fires, industrial action, internal fraud and software failures.

The Public Finance Management (PFM) Component of the Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development Programme is in the process of assessing and refining business continuity management within the iLembe District and its family of municipalities.

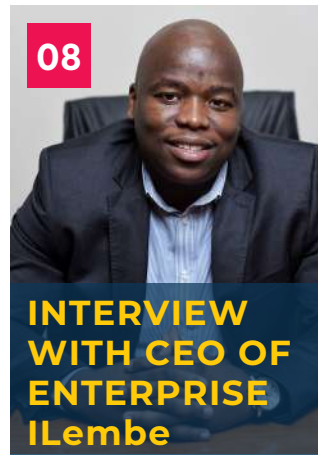
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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

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RE-IGNITING THE SPARK OF INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE iLembe DISTRICT

Vuthela in isiZulu means to blow to rekindle a fire. After a litany of serious setbacks – loadshedding, the COVID-19 pandemic, the July 2021 civil unrest and looting, and the recent floods – economic actors in the iLembe District are determined to move forward to a period of rebuilding and recovery.

The overall objective of the Vuthela iLembe LED Programme is to improve the economic future of the iLembe District and the quality of life for all inhabitants, through sustainable growth of the local economy and creating higher, better and more inclusive employment and income-generating opportunities.

Active in the district over the past four years, the Swiss-funded programme has been supporting various initiatives by the municipal partners in iLembe and other key local economic role players to improve systems around municipal finances, municipal infrastructure, the business environment, skills development, building inclusive growth and local economic partnerships.

Our focus now is on broad engagement at a public level to share the lessons learnt from the programme, both successes and failure, and to promote wider dialogue around some of the persistent challenges that the district faces in achieving inclusive economic growth. Why do these problems and constraints

Our focus now is on broad engagement at a public level to share the lessons learnt from the programme

persist, what needs to take place to resolve them, and who needs to start doing, doing more of, or stop doing what?

Contributions in this edition of *Vuthela Spark* include an examination of how “non-revenue” water and electricity impact on the revenue of municipalities and infrastructure maintenance and development; an update on interventions to support digital skills; the development and application of municipal business continuity and an interview with the CEO of Enterprise iLembe, the iLembe District Development Agency, on current efforts to better position the agency as a leading economic agency in the district.

In the months ahead, *Vuthela Spark* will critically engage with other key economic development issues impacting the district; the complex issue of calculating development contribution charges for infrastructure by developers; establishing a more efficient and integrated customer care and indigent register across the district to strengthen service delivery and municipal financial management; and establishing an effective asset management system to ensure proper infrastructure maintenance.

Also to be highlighted, amongst others,



VUTHELA'S FIVE COMPONENTS

The Vuthela programme is based on five components to improve the local economy and promote inclusive local economic growth:

- 1 strengthen the financial management of the municipalities through better capacity to plan, finance and manage infrastructure investments and the provision of public services, resulting in increased public confidence and a better local business climate;
- 2 reduce infrastructure constraints through technical capacity building measures to plan for infrastructure investments, and through specific infrastructure investments;
- 3 address obstacles to doing business in the district by improving the regulatory environment and supporting skills development;
- 4 support inclusive growth by promoting Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in strategically identified sectors of the local economy through an Installation, Repair and Maintenance (IRM) Hub; and
- 5 strengthen partnerships and local economic governance and improve the Local Economic Development (LED) policy environment.

will be the development of a clear way forward as the Siza Water concession moves towards the end of the concession period in 2029; the installation of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System and Control Room in KwaDukuza to manage and shorten electricity outages and improve the reliability of the electricity network; green energy and energy saving initiatives; digitising development and regulatory approvals in KwaDukuza; and promoting public-private sector dialogue and problem solving.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT AT ILembe DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

In the past, local governments dusted off their business continuity plans in the wake of major disruptions caused by incidents such as floods and fires, industrial action, internal fraud and software failures.

Being prepared 24/7/365 for operational interruptions was approached as a “nice to have” compliance issue rather than an imperative.

With COVID-19 threatening global health and economic activity, the civil unrest that engulfed parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, and the floods that caused loss of lives and damage to property and infrastructure, local governments have had a wake-up call that got them to revisit their business continuity plans. Those that did not have business continuity plans had to develop them.

They have had to ensure the continuity of operations and essential services for residents while enabling remote work capabilities for their employees.

The Public Finance Management (PFM) Component of the Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development Programme is in the process of assessing and refining business continuity management within the iLembe District and its family of municipalities.

The blueprint that emerges from this project can be adopted as a model by other municipalities and similar organisations.

Thantaswa Mpetsheni, Enterprise Risk Manager at iLembe District Municipality, says business continuity management is a holistic management process that is used to ensure that operations continue, and that products and services are delivered at predefined levels whenever disruptive incidents occur.

Also, brands and value-creating activities must be protected, and the reputations and interests of key stakeholders must be safeguarded through business continuity.

She said in the event of a disaster, the following must apply in order of priority: lives must be saved; property and equipment must be protected; operations must be restored; stakeholders must be communicated with; and services must continue to be provided to the community.

When the iLembe District Municipality was affected negatively by the pandemic, unrest and looting and heavy flooding, the Enterprise Risk Management Forum swung into action to assist management and political leadership to proactively manage risks to ensure continuity and to provide services to our communities.



Thantaswa Mpetsheni, Enterprise Risk Manager at iLembe District Municipality



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Installation, Repair and Maintenance Hub

Skills development for market opportunities

Unemployment and access to job markets are critical factors in the development of local economies and the wellbeing of citizens.

To accelerate inclusive growth and income-generating opportunities for inhabitants in the iLembe district, the Vuthela Local Economic Development Programme and the National Business Initiative (NBI) have established an Installation, Repair and Maintenance (IRM) Hub on the Mandeni campus of the Umfolozi TVET College.

Focusing on SMEs and unemployed youth, the project has four key focus areas which aim to:

- Support 10 local IRM SMEs with business development support and coaching;
- Implement the Sappi Suppliers Development Programme with seven Sappi Suppliers onboard;
- Support 10 Mechanical and Electrical artisans with artisanal recognition of prior learning to ultimately obtain their trade tests; and
- Implement the IRM Assistant General Repairer Skills Development programme for 49 Mandeni-based youth.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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Risk assessments were done to identify risks, assess the risks and put action / response plans to address those risks.

A Crisis Management Team was established to drive business continuity. Response plans were devised to ensure business continuity.

To cope with the pandemic, all municipalities within the iLembe District established their local structures that were driving business continuity and they met every week.

Risk assessments were done, and COVID-19 risk registers were developed and monitored weekly. Business continuity recovery plans were developed and monitored by inter-governmental structures on a weekly basis.

Similar procedures were followed during the civil unrest and heavy flooding to ensure security risks were managed

and provision of critical services was continuing.

Mpetsheni said when normal operations are disrupted by events such as COVID-19 or unrest, revenue collection, which is central to the functioning of any business, is affected.

“This impacts district economic growth negatively as ratepayers are unable to honour municipal bills. As a result, to ensure business continuity, the iLembe District and its family of municipalities developed a district-wide economic recovery plan.

“Processes are still ongoing and engagements with management in all municipalities are continuing to ensure that all critical activities are covered through business impact analysis assessments,” she said.



Call to host IRM learners

Mandeni-based businesses with a maintenance unit or who are engaged in the skills being trained for in the programme are invited to host IRM learners for workplace experience for a period of four months between June and September 2022 in the following areas: electrical, plumbing, carpentry, glassworks, carpet repairs and general maintenance skills. This will involve practical workplace learning under supervision or mentorship.

The NBI will handle all administration of the youth, and they will be given a monthly stipend. Businesses are invited to contact sipho@tushiyah.co.za and/or reena@tushiyah.co.za

The National Business Initiative (NBI) manages the Installation, Repair and Maintenance (IRM) initiative in the country, a large-scale programme to expand skills and employment across the infrastructure value chain. Adopted as part of the framework agreement at the 2018 Presidential Jobs Summit, the IRM initiative is embedded in the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and the EERP Skills Strategy.

The aim is to expand opportunities for job retention and job growth in IRM enterprises within a range of industries within the infrastructure value chain including: manufacturing, plumbing, electrical, general maintenance, domestic appliance repair, welding, carpentry and electronics repairs.

The IRM Initiative operates at the interface between supply and demand, unlocking the demand for skills in these various industries and supporting and enabling TVET institutions to respond to this demand through agile and flexible occupational training combined with structured workplace learning.

GENERAL REPAIRER PROGRAMME LAUNCH

While many youth in the communities of Mandeni, Sundumbili, Isithebe and surrounding areas possess trade skills, they don't have formal qualifications which can lead to them being hired only for menial work on an ad hoc basis.

With skills development essential for unemployed youth to break into the job market, a General Repairers programme was launched on 23 May 2022. From over 200 applicants, 49 youth began a journey that could lead to their employment. Interest for the programme was high, with over 200 applicants.

Trades in high demand were selected for the skills development programme with modules developed for repairs, replacements and maintenance in carpentry, carpeting, electrical, plumbing, and painting and glazing.

"By giving the students basic training on these trades, we wish for them to gain the necessary knowledge to either choose

a specific trade and continue with it in the form of an apprenticeship and learnership or to seek employment with their chosen trade," says Namasivayam Perumaul, Education Specialist: Engineering from the Umfolozi TVET College and centre manager.

Ultimately the programme will offer the youth a viable pathway to obtain recognition of skills and competencies as General Repairers as the skills programme is registered with the Quality Council for Trades & Occupations (QCTO).

Split between the Mandeni Training Centre and the Sundumbili campus of the college, the students will be at each site for two weeks during the next month for theory and practicals.

A key component of the programme is on workplace learning to give the youth practical exposure and experience in the trades. The model of the overall IRM Hub project involves the SME beneficiaries who will employ these youth on completing the training programme. Some of the youth will be absorbed in this way while those that show entrepreneurial potential will be taken into an incubation programme.



INCREASING REVENUE AND REDUCE ELECTRICITY LOSSES FOR MUNICIPALITIES



The scourge of energy losses is one that has plagued electricity supply authorities all over South Africa, leading to significant revenue losses in the long run. This upward trend of revenue losses contributes to the poor financial performance of municipalities whilst impacting negatively on service delivery.

To help municipalities with a long-term loss management plan, a study into Non-Revenue Electricity in KwaDukuza and Mandeni Local Municipalities is underway by the Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development Programme.

Both municipalities currently experience technical losses in the distribution of electricity to the order of between 6% and 8%, and non-technical losses at 8% to 10%.

It is believed that there is a significant amount of revenue that is lost due to theft through illegal connections, potentially faulty meters, incorrect billing, suspected meter tampering, as well as inconsistent indigent registers for the provision of free basic electricity.

According to municipal officials, there

may also be a disparity between the bulk cost of electricity and the set tariffs which the municipalities charge to their customers, leading to further revenue losses.

During the study into Non-Revenue Electricity, numerous aspects are being evaluated, ranging from the status of the existing electrical infrastructure and its performance to the public participation and current awareness campaigns on the go, installed metering and meter reading, effectiveness of financial systems, customer databases and tariffs.

An assessment of the existing electricity supply infrastructure network in the municipalities will help to establish the composition, age, quality, general

condition and network modelling.

The status, frequency and adequacy of metering and meter readings for bulk purchases and high usage consumers in the municipal area are also being assessed.

The Vuthela iLembe LED Programme seeks to assist municipalities to develop Non-Revenue Electricity Strategies and Programmes (NRESPs) that will provide guidance on the activities necessary to carry out the efforts to enhance revenue and reduce electricity losses in the respective municipalities.

The NRESPs are strategic tools that could provide critical inputs into the KwaDukuza and Mandeni Local Municipalities' short, medium and long-term strategic infrastructure investment and management plans.

The NRESPs will provide information on how much electricity is being lost, why it is being lost, where it is being lost...

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INCREASING REVENUE AND REDUCE ELECTRICITY LOSSES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The NRESPs will also give the municipalities a holistic overview of the “revenue leaks” in the municipalities’ electricity service provision.

The NRESPs will provide information on how much electricity is being lost, why it is being lost, where it is being lost, and what strategies or interventions can be done to reduce the losses. The programmes will also detail the plans that each municipality will implement to operationalise the strategies and ensure sustainability of the efforts to address non-revenue electricity.

Mr Munya Mutyora, the Municipal Infrastructure Manager at the Vuthela iLembe LED Programme, said the planned future expansion of various developments in the municipalities is informed by their Spatial Development Framework and included in the municipalities’ Electricity Masterplans.

These future expansions would necessitate the upgrade of the existing



electricity infrastructure, implementation of energy conservation and demand management, as well as the installation of new bulk electrical infrastructure.

“The municipalities will not be unable to address these aspects effectively without the strategic information that will be provided through the Revenue Electricity

Strategies and Programmes project,” he said.

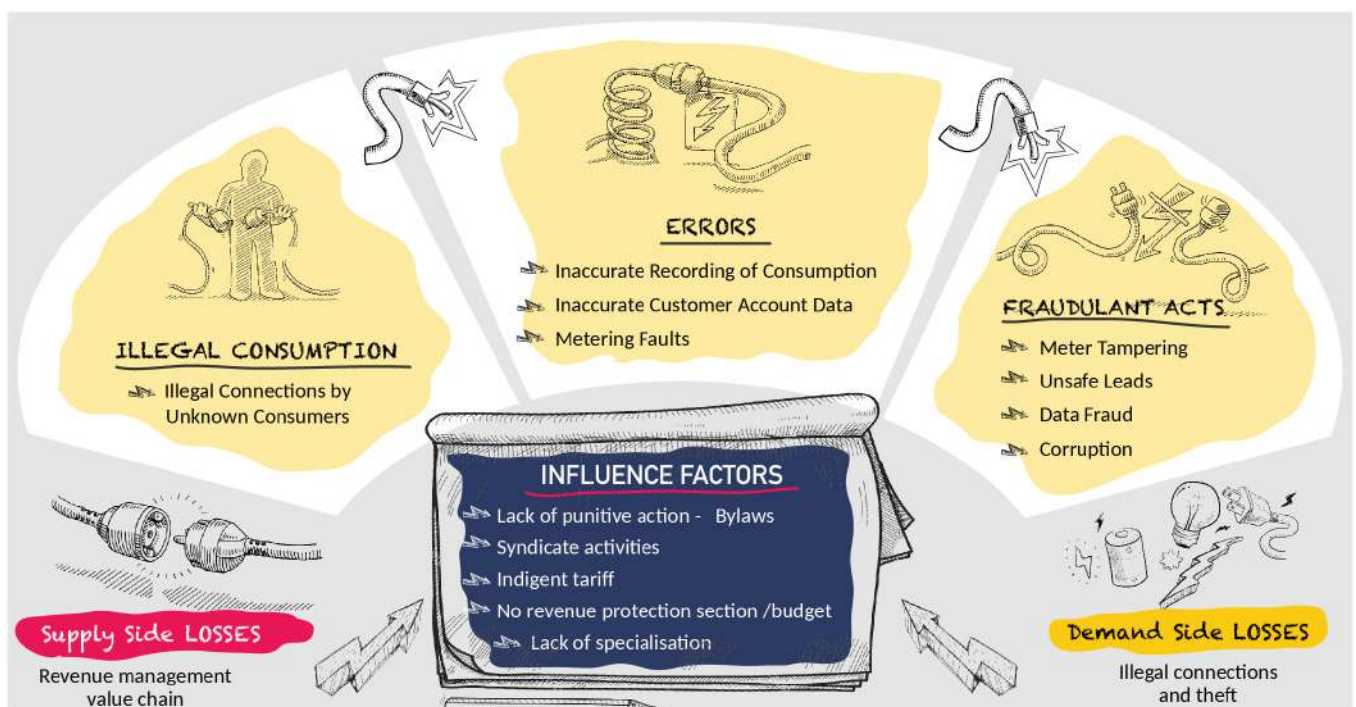
With electricity being a major source of both revenue and expenditure for municipalities and with a rise in metering and billing discrepancies, as well as decreasing debt recovery/ collection rates, Mr Mutyora said the municipalities find themselves in a situation where they are unable to fund the implementation of new infrastructure assets while operating and maintaining existing infrastructure.

“Non-technical losses represent an avoidable financial loss for the utilities and have perverse effects on the overall balance sheet of the municipalities,” he said.

Community awareness initiatives on the dangers and impacts of electricity theft and illegal connections, as well as issues around poverty and inequality, will also need to be taken into consideration during the study.



Non-Revenue Electricity Losses KwaDukuza and Mandeni Local Municipalities



Stree en Energie Reguleerder
Competition and Consumer Commission
KwaZulu-Natal
Natali Kommissie
Public Board of Economic Affairs
KwaZulu-Natal
State Monitor for Economic Affairs, SAMA



PROGRAMME HAS ALREADY YIELDED POSITIVE RESULTS

The CEO of Enterprise iLembe, Linda Mncube, takes a look at progress through the Vuthela iLembe LED Programme

What is Enterprise iLembe?

Enterprise iLembe is the Economic Development Agency for the iLembe District Municipality responsible for trade and investment promotions and local economic development in the region. The vision of Enterprise iLembe is to enable the iLembe district to be the destination of choice for investment, business and tourism.

What is the connection/relationship between Enterprise iLembe and Vuthela iLembe LED Programme?

The iLembe District Municipality, which is one of the three participating/beneficiary municipalities in the programme, is the sole shareholder of Enterprise iLembe. Enterprise iLembe is also a direct beneficiary of programme support through the Partnerships and Coordination component wherein most of the activities are aimed at supporting the entity.

What have been milestones, highlights and impacts thus far of the programme? What are the positive outcomes?

The involvement of Enterprise iLembe in the programme has yielded some positive outcomes which include:

- The preparation and adoption of the Five-year Strategy;
- Initiating of the Human Resource Review and Performance Management Project;
- Assisting The Vuthela Programme in preparing the Economic Recovery Strategy;
- An economic impact assessment of the July 2021 unrest has been conducted; and
- The Vuthela iLembe Programme Manager has facilitated a number of management strategic planning sessions.

Enterprise iLembe is also a direct beneficiary of programme support through the Partnerships and Coordination component...

What is the Vuthela Enterprise iLembe Change Management Process all about?

This process encompassed firstly, an institutional assessment of Enterprise iLembe to determine the capacity of the entity to achieve its mandate, and secondly, the Five-year Strategy was developed as a cohesive blueprint for implementation and sustainability of the entity. The final component was the change management framework which included an implementation plan for the strategy as well as a process for stakeholder buy-in. The two key projects that emanated from the change management process are the Human Resource Review and Performance Management, and the Project Management and Project Finance.



Please elaborate on the Five-year Strategy and Change Management Framework, Human Resource Management and Performance Management Project, the forthcoming Project Management and Project Finance, and the role of these initiatives in terms of Enterprise iLembe's vision to position itself as the leading economic agency in the district going forward.

The Human Resource Management and Performance Management Project aim to produce an organisational structure that aligns to the strategic model as developed in the Five-year Strategy. For instance, the historical outlook and human resources of the entity have been biased towards the agriculture and tourism sectors. Through this project, we intend to build capacity in all the key economic sectors of the district economy viz. agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and property development and construction. The project also aims to develop a performance management system that can be cascaded to all employees – currently, the Performance Management System is confined to management. This will have the ultimate outcome of improving productivity.

The Project Management and Project Finance due to commence soon will, among others, develop a tool for identifying and assessing new projects for the entity and a system for project management. This will also include financial management capacity building and acquiring a project finance system that can be incorporated into the entity's current financial management systems.

How will the Vuthela Programme assist iLembe Economic Development Agency to fulfil its mandate to promote investment for the manufacturing of goods and production of services to boost beneficiation, investment, economic growth and the development of skills and employment; tourism etc?

The Five-year Strategy that has been developed through the Vuthela Programme presents a key starting point as it provides a more focused approach for the entity. The change management projects, once completed, will bolster institutional capacity for the fulfilment of the mandate.

STUDENT FINISHES COURSE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE



Sinenhlanhla Cele, ICT student

Finishing an iLembe ICT course six months ahead of schedule, Sinenhlanhla Cele from KwaDukuza attributes her success to her commitment. “When I commit myself, I commit myself.”

The iLembe ICT project and the Moses Kotane Institute Digital Centre was officially launched in Mandeni on 19 April 2021.



From left to right:

Hon MPP Zungu; Mr Ravi Pillay, KZN MEC for Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs; HE Dr. Nicolas Brühl, Ambassador of Switzerland and Dr Thandeka Ellenson, Chief Executive Officer of Moses Kotane Institute.

Along with 51 other students from the KwaDukuza and Mandeni Municipalities, Ms Cele took part in the ICT project which was rolled out by the Vuthela iLembe LED Programme, funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, and in partnership with the two municipalities, Enterprise iLembe and the Moses Kotane Institute. Beginning in October 2021, this year-long course sees the youth training through the IT Varsity in coding, web and app development. As an accredited course, qualified youth will receive their National Certificate in Systems Development, (SAQA ID: 48872,133 credits).

Ms Cele is clearly someone who loves studying. She has successfully completed her Electrical Engineering (N6) and has done her in-service training at Stanger Hospital. When she saw the advert on the KwaDukuza Facebook page, she had no idea what coding was but decided to try anyway. She persevered through the first few modules which she found new and confusing. Travelling daily to the Enterprise iLembe Incubator to work on her studies, Ms Cele said there was always someone available to assist her, either at the Incubator or from the mentors working remotely.

Her advice to youth who are still involved in the programme: “Never stop learning. Coding is the future and there are many opportunities.”

Her advice to youth who are still involved in the programme: “Never stop learning. Coding is the future and there are many opportunities.” Now with the course under her belt, Ms Cele says she would like to continue her coding journey either through finding employment or by pursuing her studies further.

During youth month, Ms Cele will receive her certificate along with four other students who have recently completed the course: the youth month.



Stemming water losses can increase water revenue

Vuthela Case Study for Municipalities

South Africa is a water scarce country – it cannot afford to waste water resources and incur unnecessary financial expenditure for water not reaching the end consumer.

A case study under the Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development (LED) Support Programme intended to demonstrate to the iLembe District Municipality how to improve revenue generation and curtail non-physical water losses.

Water metering and billing were assessed within a pilot area of Sundumbili near Mandeni as it is one of the typical areas exhibiting high water losses in the iLembe District Municipality.

The study focused on the meter reading cycle and transfer errors which occur during the process of meter reading, meter data management, transfer of the data to the billing system and the billing process based on the meter reading data.

The study also evaluated the actual billing and sales volumes against metered (and estimated where accurate meter readings were not available) water volumes.

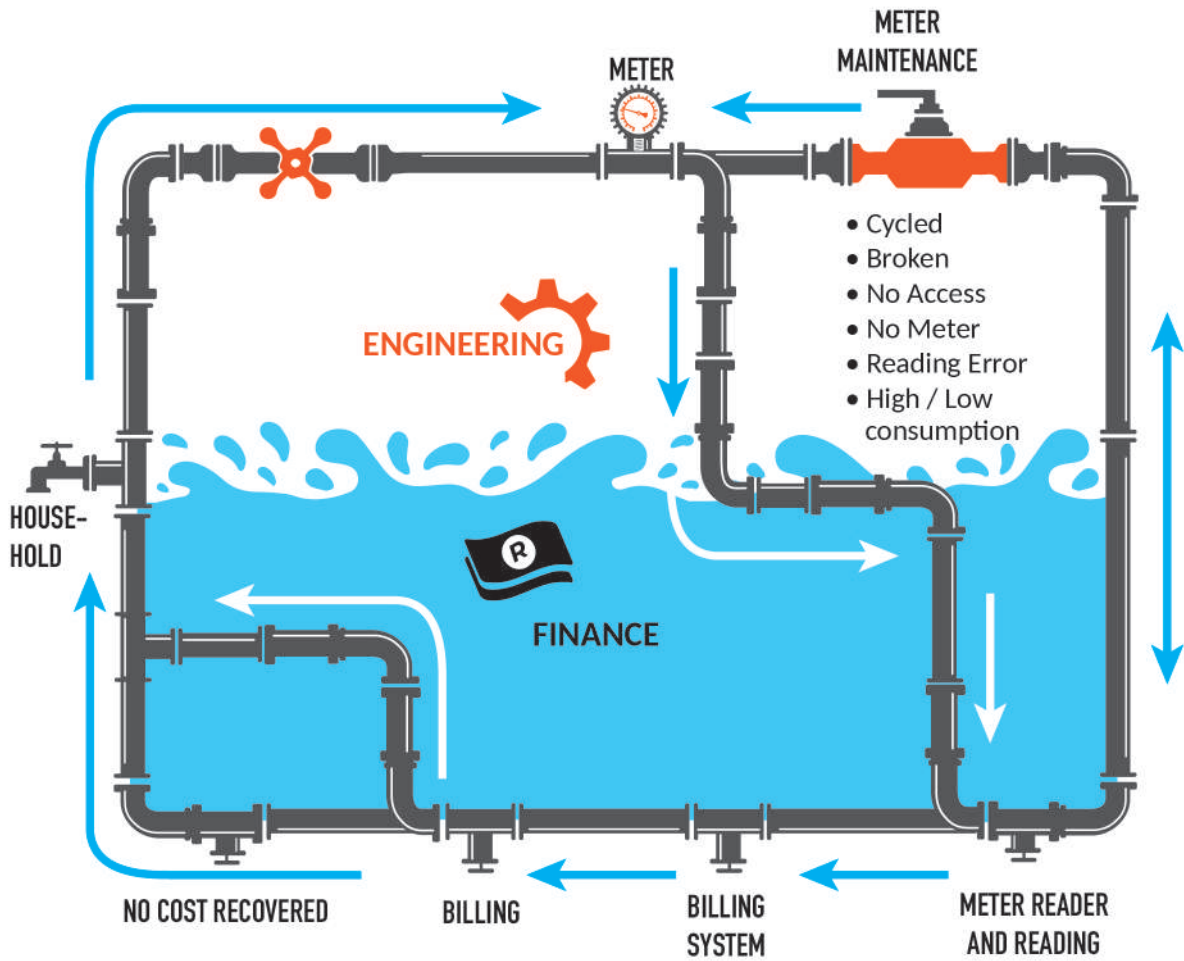
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FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

It was found that there were approximately 20 000 to 25 000 prepaid meters in the iLembe District Municipality which had not been read and only 50% were operational. Sundumbili at the time had 20% to 30% conventional meters with the rest being prepaid meters, in the areas where meters were installed.

At least 50% to 60% of connections were considered illegal and often resulted in leakages. There was unfortunately no active leakage control programme due to budgetary and personnel constraints. Only 46% of the conventional meters in Sundumbili were last read in 2019 with the bulk of the Mandeni prepaid meters last read in 2016.

Furthermore, there were 437 unmetered accounts, which translates into apparent losses of R148 580 per month. There were a number of prepaid meters with no or small amounts purchased for recharge, which needed to be investigated further as to the reasons therefore. Approximately R7 million per month additional income could be generated if all conventional meters were read and billed on a regular basis.



Dukwazulu District Municipality
Gumkhumalo Water
Company
Sole Contributor
Fiduciary and Project Officer
Data Scientist for Economic Affairs (DEA)



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RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

Ideally all consumers with individual water connections should be metered. Accounts should be opened for all consumers, irrespective of whether the consumer does not have a formal connection and meter and irrespective of whether the consumer has a prepaid meter and their details are not on the conventional billing system.

The iLembe District Municipality should consider alternative billing options for unmetered consumers, such as a flat rate instead of block tariffs.

To ensure the correct water volumes are recorded and billed, there should be routine analysis of consumption to iden-

tify consumers with low or zero readings; or high-volume water consumption; or where meters may have cycled, resulting in a meter reading that, unless

The iLembe District Municipality should consider alternative billing options for unmetered consumers...

the maximum digit reading is allowed for in the billing system, may result in inaccurate reading determination. Unauthorised connections and theft-related instances where consumers deliberately tamper with their metered connection to reduce or eliminate flow or when consumers illegally

connect to existing municipal water services, should be located with an advanced programme to detect unauthorised consumption.

From the study, it was concluded that ensuring improved metering, meter reading, record management and analysis, would realise more accurate consumer billing and water balances.

Furthermore, accurate figures will ensure more accurate reporting and developing actions to improve revenue water, improve trust by the consumer in the water services provider and ensure the sustainability of water services.





WHAT IT IS ABOUT

The Vuthela iLembe LED Programme responds directly to the urgent need to address unemployment, poverty and inequality by accelerating inclusive local economic development and growth in line with the National Development Plan, the KZN Provincial Growth and Development Plan, iLembe District Municipality Growth and Development Plan as well as the Integrated Development Plans of the family of local municipalities in the district.



WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

The Vuthela iLembe LED Programme, is a joint initiative of the State Secretariat of Economic Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the iLembe District Municipality, and the Kwadukuza and Mandeni Local Municipalities. The programme includes participation of the Ndwedwe and Maphumulo Local Municipalities.

OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective and expected impact of the programme is to contribute to the improvement of the economic future of the iLembe District and the quality of life of its

inhabitants, through sustainable growth of the local economy, and the creation of higher, better and more inclusive employment and income generating opportunities.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

The programme comprises 43 projects (contracts) across the five components of which 18 have been completed, 12 are in implementation, one is awaiting contracting, one is in evaluation, four are being finalised for contract tendering and seven have yet to commence.



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THE FIVE INTER-RELATED COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

- ▶ **Public Finance Management** - strengthening the financial position of municipalities through better capacity to plan, finance and manage infrastructure investments and the provision of public services.
- ▶ **Municipal Infrastructure** - improved planning and access to infrastructure services for development investment, effective and efficient service delivery, and sustainable growth.
- ▶ **Private Sector Development Component** - greater investment in and growth of Small and

Medium Enterprises, leading to increased employment.

- ▶ **Building Inclusive Growth Component** - inclusive and sustainable growth and employment interventions to support SMEs in growth sectors.

- ▶ **Programme Management, Partnership and Co-ordination Component** - sustained partnerships and capacity for local economic development in the iLembe District, and the replication of the approach in policy elsewhere in South Africa.