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# Low Emissions Development Program

## CASE STUDY

# Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool for Climate Action

The USAID South Africa Low Emissions Development (SA-LED) program is a USAID funded initiative that has supported the implementation of low emissions development (LED) projects. SA-LED, through its capacity building support to municipalities, recognized the need to standardize its approach to assess organizational

capacity in order to meet the climate change agenda of municipalities. The program therefore made use of the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) to do just that.

The OCAT was developed with the view that it would be applied in its original design for pre- and post information collection. Through application of the OCAT, it was determined that the use of the tool was most useful for the collection of baseline data, but not as applicable in its standard format for the post-assessment of the baseline data. To this end, SA-LED adapted the OCAT and designed a version of the tool that would assess the capacity of municipalities to plan financially for and implement climate action projects.

This case study focuses on exploring how the OCAT was tailored to accommodate the post-implementation data reporting to fit municipal realities.

## PRE-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The process of the organisational capacity assessment (OCA) itself consisted of conducting and facilitating an initial two-day climate change workshop with officials from various sections/departments within a municipality. During the workshops, officials shared information about climate change initiatives, progress made, barriers preventing implementation of initiatives, recommendations for advancement, priorities to consider and development of a baseline against which progress could be measured. Six thematic areas and domains were used to encourage discussion and sharing of information among officials (as shown in figure below).

The SA-LED Program, launched in 2015, has strengthened the capacity of the public sector to plan, finance, implement, and report on low emissions development projects and to accelerate the adoption of low emissions technologies in South Africa.

*Thematic Areas: There are six thematic areas and domains*

<b>Thematic Area 1: Governance and Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain One: Legislative Framework and Mandate</li> <li>Domain Two: Leadership</li> </ul>	<b>Thematic Area 2: Policies and Service Delivery;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain Three: Operational Policies and Procedures</li> <li>Domain Four: Service Delivery</li> </ul>
<b>Thematic Area 3: Strategy and Resources;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain Five: Strategy</li> <li>Domain Six: Resources</li> <li>Domain Seven: Organisational Structure</li> </ul>	<b>Thematic Area 4: Programme development, information and data analysis monitoring and evaluation and reporting;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain Eight: Program Development</li> <li>Domain Nine: Information, Data and Analysis</li> <li>Domain Ten: Programme Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>Domain Eleven: Programme Reports</li> </ul>
<b>Thematic Area 5: Financial Management;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain Twelve: Budgeting</li> <li>Domain Thirteen: Financial Reporting</li> </ul>	<b>Thematic Area 6: Internal Functions.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domain Fourteen: Marketing and Communication</li> <li>Domain Fifteen: Knowledge Management</li> </ul>

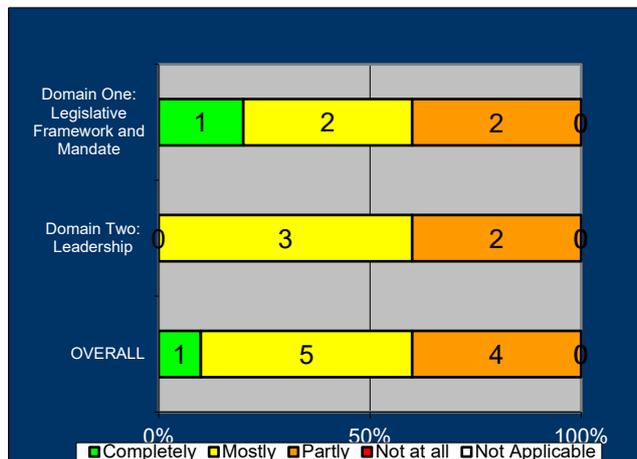
Data was analysed according to the thematic areas and key priorities identified to take forward as support actions. Table I, below, was then used by facilitators to capture the information that workshop participants shared.

*Table 1: Example table used in OCAT workshop to track information*

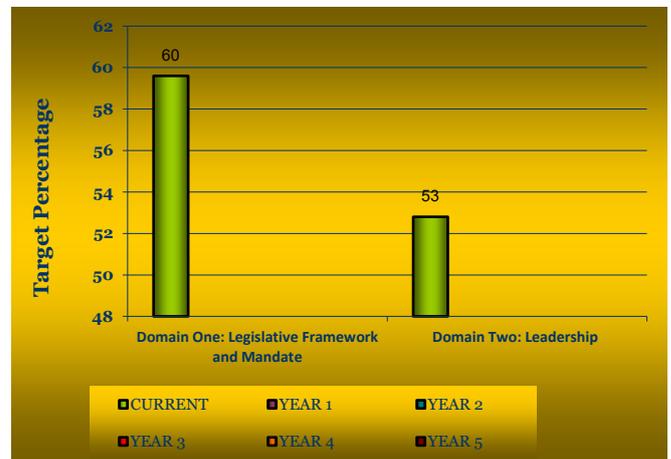
Components of the Organisational Assessment							
Thematic Area One: Governance and Leadership	Answer	Evidence	Comments				
			Strengths	Gaps	Recommendations	Action Steps	
<b>Domain One: Legislative Framework and Mandate</b>							
1.1							
<b>Domain Two: Leadership</b>							
2.1							

Next, the results from the workshops discussions were then analysed and presented in the format examples below.

*Presentation Format: Dashboard*



*Presentation Format: Targets*



*Presentation Format: Indication of availability*

Subsection	POINTS					PERCENTAGE					AVERAGE
	Completely	Mostly	Partly	Not at all	Not Applicable	Completely	Mostly	Partly	Not at all	Not Applicable	
Domain One: Legislative Framework and Mandate											
Domain Two: Leadership											
<b>OVERALL</b>											

## POST-ASSESSMENT PROCESS: ADAPTED FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY

SA-LED supported the various municipalities in crafting actionable steps based on key priority projects determined from the results of the OCAs. SA-LED also provided technical support for these projects for approximately 12 months before the post-assessments were conducted. During this 12-month period, the team realised that an OCA in its comprehensive standard format would not be relevant for the post-implementation assessment. It would make better sense to tailor the OCAT to only concentrate on the interventions to which support was provided and to then assess the post-implementation progress. The adaptation of the tool reduced the contact time from a two-day workshop to half-day session. The information was pre-populated, which helped discussions to be focused and specific. The same officials attending the initial workshop were then invited to participate in the post-assessment workshop, which ensured consistency and validation of information documented. Finally, the municipality's information was pre-populated and presented to the municipal officials using the adapted OCA data template (see table 3). The post-assessment template served multiple functions, as it can be used as the OCA post-assessment results template, used to assess the impacts as well as a capacity building plan report for the municipality.

*Table 3: Adapted Post-Implementation OCAT*

Thematic Area	Capacity Gap identified	Action	Progress
<b>1. Governance and Leadership</b>			
<b>2. Policies and Service Delivery</b>			
<b>3. Strategy and Resources</b>			
<b>4. Programs, Data Analysis, M&amp;E and Reporting</b>			
<b>5. Financial Management</b>			
<b>6. Internal Functions</b>			
<b>Progress related to capacity building plan</b>			
<b>Lessons Learnt</b>			
<b>Further Support Needed</b>			

## THE ADPATED OCA PROCESS IN PRACTICE

The initial organisational capacity assessment (OCA) training workshop was conducted with three municipalities: Govan Mbeki Municipality in Mpumalanga, Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM) in the Eastern Cape, and Polokwane Municipality in Limpopo during 2017. During these workshops, officials from different departments in the municipalities identified climate change related capacity building gaps and needs. This information formed the baseline against which SA-LED provided technical and advisory services and capacity building support to the three municipalities. Municipalities identified a list of actions that they wanted to take forward but the OCAT assisted in highlighting the critical priorities that ultimately received implementation support from the program. In the case of Christ Hani, for example, SA-LED provided capacity building through an embedded technical advisor. The OCA post-implementation review highlighted notable achievements realized by CHDM as a result of the embedded advisor. Chris Hani is also the only municipality out of those supported by SA-LED that has taken their climate change strategy through all stages of proposal, approval, and implementation. The municipality now has in place: i) Climate Change Strategy; (ii) Environmental Management Plan and (iii) Air Quality Management Plan; as well as (iv) Funding for the Rural Sustainability Villages Project.

Polokwane municipality, similar to Chris Hani District Municipality also received an embedded technical advisor that filled the capacity gap that the municipality had. The allocation of this support resource assisted the municipality in finalizing their Green Goal Energy Strategy and managing the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's Energy Efficiency and Demand Side Management Program.

In the case of Govan Mbeki Municipality, the OCA process resulted in the drafting and finalizing of the climate change mitigation strategy and action plan in May 2018. In addition, a greenhouse gas inventory was also developed and presented to the municipality. Both documents have now been included in the municipal 2019/20 Integrated Development Plan, which was approved by Council and this is available on the municipality's [website](#).<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, through applying the adapted OCA with various municipalities, key lessons and outcomes include:

- Using tools and standardized methodologies to gather or assess information can be highly useful if applied correctly.
- It is necessary to recognise the strengths and constraints of tools and methodologies and be flexible enough to make changes and adaptations to benefit the overall project objectives.
- The use of this methodology brought together officials from different departments to jointly focus on the municipality's climate change agenda, thus significantly increasing the likelihood of successful project implementation.
- The information gathered during the OCA engagements assisted municipalities in operationalizing their respective climate actions, including through the development of climate change strategies and increasing the energy efficiency of their building facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.govanmbeki.gov.za/wp-content/strategic\\_documents/draft\\_idp\\_2020.pdf](http://www.govanmbeki.gov.za/wp-content/strategic_documents/draft_idp_2020.pdf)