

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) National Executive Committee (NEC) Lekgotla Summary and Outcomes Report.



SALGA's four-day NEC Lekgotla was held from 10 to 13 April 2022 in Franschhoek, Western Cape. The gathering was supported by SALGA NEC members and Cabinet Ministers, who shared their ideas and experiences on how the three branches of government can best work together to tackle unique and shared challenges on a variety of areas including: local infrastructure, improved water quality, climate change and job creation.

Delegates to the NEC meeting also discussed SALGA's long-term vision, which includes the policy priorities, programmes and project plans set out in the organisation's five-year strategic plan. The strategy, which came into effect from 1 April 2022, articulates the organisation's goals and objectives for the period and details annual activities that will support the delivery of these five-year goals and objectives.



SALGA President Cllr. Bheke Stofile addressing delegates to the organisation's NEC Lekgotla

The overall objective of this first sitting of the SALGA NEC following the 2021 local government elections, was to trigger a strategic shift that would enable the organisation to be more proactive and responsive to the needs of local government and to step up its efforts to empower municipalities across the country to champion the needs and priorities of their communities.

The NEC meeting was therefore timely for SALGA and its member municipalities to re-examine how they can promote cooperation between local, provincial, and national government to enable economic, social, cultural, and environmental solutions to the country's most pressing challenges.

NEC Lekgotla highlights

Setting out the aims and objectives of the NEC Lekgotla, newly elected SALGA President Cllr. **Bheke Stofile**, focused on the commitments that the newly elected SALGA NEC had towards the organisation's member municipalities and the communities they served.

“We are duty bound to serve our members and the communities they serve with honesty, diligence, and selflessness. Not only will this place us at the centre of responding to the weaknesses as identified in the problem analysis in the new SALGA Strategic Framework, but more so place us at the epicentre of a local government leadership that positively contribute towards regaining and rebuilding trust and confidence of society in this sphere of government.”



SALGA Deputy President Cllr. Xanthea Limberg sharing her insights on the future of local government with NEC members

The economic, social, and environmental future of South Africa depends on the wise use of land resources.

The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), the new national legislation for all spatial planning in South Africa was enacted in 2013 and implemented nationally from July 2015.

Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), **Thoko Didiza**, told NEC delegates that in its mandate to spatially transform the country, SPLUMA

placed municipalities at the centre of spatial planning and decision making related to land use management.

She said local governments had a crucial role to play in giving effect to the legislation that provides a uniform, effective and efficient framework for spatial planning and land use management in both urban and rural contexts.

“The implementation of the SPLUMA will occur across the entire municipal jurisdiction and all land development applications are to be submitted to each municipality as the

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authority of first instance in terms of Section 33 (1) of the Act. SPLUMA also creates a coherent allocation of powers and functions between the political and administrative components of a municipality,” said **Minister Didiza**

Municipalities need to adopt innovative, technically and economically viable solutions to the country’s water challenges, was the message, **Senzo Mchunu**, Minister of Water and Sanitation, delivered to NEC members.

He outlined his Ministry’s priorities on these issues that included partnerships with local governments to achieve the aim of ensuring the accessibility of clean water that is protected and used and managed efficiently.

- Water availability and provision to match or exceed the demand and ensure qualitative measures through incremental access and quality.
- A National Framework for sanitation in South Africa (“Framework: Sanitation RSA”).
- An enabling environment for water security and services in SA in a sustainable and financially viable manner, comprising partnerships with the private sector and international role players.
- Capability of the State and capacity of the department and the water sector to deliver water equitably.
- Institutional arrangements – clear objectives and necessary capacity.



SALGA Deputy President Cllr. Xola Pakati taking part in deliberations on the organisation’s new strategic plan

“As I conclude, I would like to appeal to your consciences this afternoon, as you prepare to finalise your Strategic Programme of Action – we need to work together in order to ensure that our citizens have access to water and basic sanitation services. We need to better the lives of our people and we can only do so, if we truly focus our attention and dedicate ourselves to doing so,” said **Minister Mchunu**

Significant progress has been made on municipalities being allowed to generate their own energy to be delivered to their communities and local businesses in an affordable and accessible manner, and SALGA has been at the forefront of these efforts.

Mineral Resources and Energy **Minister Gwede Mantashe** spoke about gazetted amendments to the Electricity Regulations on New Generation Capacity, to allow municipalities to embark on their own power generation projects.

“In October 2020, we amended the Electricity Regulations on new generation capacity to enable Municipalities in good financial standing to develop their own power generation projects,” said **Minister Mantashe**

“The Department continues to actively contribute towards sustainable development and economic growth through universal access to electrification in municipalities. We do this by rigorously implementing the Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP), working closely with municipalities.”



SALGA Deputy President and Women's Commission Chairperson, Cllr. Flora Boltman
facilitating a session at the NEC Lekgotla



SALGA CEO, Xolile Gorge, reflected on the performance of the organisation in the last term of office (2016 – 2021) to identify successes, challenges and opportunities for the future.

Human Settlements **Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi** told SALGA NEC members that municipalities had a role to play in solving the country’s social housing crisis and cutting the red tape that would speed up the process to get more houses built, was among them.

“By providing land and incentives such as the elimination of the excessive red tape, municipalities can drive the increase of public/private initiatives in the development of social housing,” said **Minister Kubayi**.

“In municipalities that rely mainly on grants, human settlements development is an important element of creating economic activities that can stimulate job creation and other value chain economic benefits. Managed well, human settlements development in these municipalities can facilitate entrepreneurship and skills development that could become an anchor for economic development in economically depressed areas.”

Road and rail systems and other transportation infrastructure get people and goods moving to where they need to be. Not only are they the foundation of daily life in South Africa but also the lifeblood of its economy.

“We have committed to invest resources towards ensuring that the South African road network, at national, provincial and municipal levels, continues to play an important role of being the lifeblood of South Africa’s economy,” said Transport **Minister, Fikile Mbalula**.

He said SALGA had a critical role to play in assisting the Ministry to accomplish its road maintenance programmes.

“The serious backlogs at municipal level are compounded by the lack of information and decision support systems to guide resource allocation. We are working with 44 municipalities to collect this critical data that will enable us to channel resources where they are needed the most. This is a matter of great concern that we need to tackle with urgency as lack of data makes resource allocation difficult. SALGA must assist us in resolving this challenge,” said **Minister Mbalula**.

Enock Godongwana, Minister of Finance summarised the challenges of local government financial management as leadership and governance failures and constraints caused by legislation, local government revenue generation and collection and challenges in municipal procurement and financial management systems.

He recommended that a proactive approach was needed to manage the intergovernmental system to address these weaknesses in a way that would see all three branches of government collaborate better and act with greater synergy in providing oversight over municipal finances and support to municipalities.



SALGA COO, Lance Joel, outlined the roadmap towards the adoption of the organisation’s new strategic plan (2022-2027), which came into effect on 1 April 2022.



Thembeka Mthethwa, SALGA Chief Financial Officer, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the organisation's financial performance, which gave critical insights into the performance of the organisation and its financial well-being.

SALGA's five-year plan, including its policy priorities, programmes and project plans

SALGA CEO, Xolile George's presentation, among other key issues, detailed the journey South Africa took to transform local government and the challenges and opportunities for municipalities to champion the needs of their communities.

Mr George also spoke about matters relating to good governance in local government and how structures such as Public Accounts Committees were functioning to provide oversight.

He also summarised local government's challenges in four broad areas:

Capabilities governance and leadership- Weakening municipal governance and leadership characterised by poor oversight, limited consequence management, instability at senior management levels, and a lack of skills undermine service delivery and transformation at the local sphere.

Spatial transformation and inclusion- Spatial transformation and inclusive communities undermined by depressed economic conditions, increasing impact of climate change, regressing social cohesion, poor coordination in planning, access to land, bulk services, limited decentralisation in housing delivery, transport challenges and safety and security

Service delivery and infrastructure-

Increase in coverage of basic services but under pressure from widening funding gap for infrastructure, poor life cycle asset management, maintenance, and effective project implementation, as well as lack of technical capabilities.

Fiscal policy and financial management-

Increase of municipalities in financial distress due to many factors like: increase in the cost of services (tariffs), decrease in revenue collection, supply chain management inefficiencies, and irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, low revenue bases, high levels of unemployment & poverty.

SALGA COO, Lance Joel, outlined the roadmap towards the adoption of the organisation’s new strategic plan (2022-2027), which came into effect on 1 April 2022.

He laid out SALGA’s long-term vision, crafted from the organisation’s earlier strategic planning exercise, and detailed its objectives for the next five years as well as the organisation’s annual statement of plans and objectives document that listed annual activities that will support the delivery of these five-year objectives.

The expected five-year outcomes would see SALGA continuing to have a positive impact on the local government sector, provide value to its member municipalities and continue a positive trajectory of being a high-performing, well-managed and value-adding municipal

Thembeke Mthethwa, SALGA Chief Financial Officer, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the organisation’s financial performance, which gave critical insights into the performance of the organisation and its financial well-being.

She further outlined SALGA’s budget, which would be used to run its programmes, where and how the organisation would generate revenue and what the organisation’s expenses would be going forward.

Most importantly, **Ms Mthethwa**, was proud to inform newly elected SALGA NEC members of the organisation’s track record of financial management excellence, seen through an impressive 9 consecutive clean audits from the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA)

She said the audit was indicative of prudent financial management, which allowed SALGA to execute its mandate for the benefit of its member municipalities and she also expected the organisation to continue this trajectory.

Closing the Lekgotla, **Cllr Stofile** said: “Our duty and responsibility is to write a different narrative about local government. That local government is a sphere of government that can be trusted, that is not corrupt, that will not do things illegally and will always continue to do things properly.”

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