



## Local government elections: 3-years on

Three years have passed since the local government elections of November 1, 2021. On this day, South Africans from all walks of life and from all corners of the country exercised their right and civic duty to vote at 23 151 polling stations spread out throughout the nation.

Strong coordination and participation from all parties involved, including the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and government at all levels, made the elections, which took place amid the extraordinary challenges and uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, a success.

For mayors, councillors and local government officials, November, every-year is a timely opportunity for the sector to reflect on its service delivery commitments while also identifying the areas where it has fallen short in fulfilling them.

By critically reflecting on its past successes and challenges, the sector will be able to empower itself to make decisions about how to move forward with greater knowledge and resolve.

### Building and maintaining public trust

Stats SA's 2023/2023 Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey—Victims of Crime Report, which provides data insights on South Africa's experience with corruption, government performance and effectiveness, and trust in public institutions, found that 56.1% of South Africans had trust in national government, followed by provincial government (54.4%) and local government (52.5%).

Trust is the glue that binds people, communities, civil society, and government together, and by being more open, accountable, participatory, and solution-focused, local government and government as a whole will be able to strengthen public trust in public institutions.

### Service delivery

Considerable progress has been made in expanding access to the provision of basic services to communities, despite the severe financial and capacity constraints

municipalities face in meeting the needs of everyone, everywhere.

- The percentage of South African households that were connected to the mains electricity supply increased from 76,7% in 2002 to 89,8% in 2023.
- 87% of households in the country have access to piped water either inside their dwelling or inside their yard in 2023.
- Nationally, the percentage of households with access to improved sanitation increased from 61,7% in 2002 to 83,3% in 2023.
- Nationally, household refuse is removed at least once per week (60,0%) or less than once per week (2,6%). More than one-third (34,9%) of households also use communal or household refuse

(Source: Stats SA 2023)

Although there has been significant improvement in the provision of basic municipal services since 1994, much more needs to be done to strengthen democracy and to improve the quality of life for everyone.



### SALGA turns 28

November 21 is the anniversary of the date SALGA was officially launched at the 1996 National Summit for Organised Local Government in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.



Over the past 28 years, SALGA has achieved remarkable success, including;

- 12 clean audits in a series of 15 consecutive unqualified audits since 2009.
- Establishing Local Government Week together with the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) to advance oversight and accountability in the local sphere of government.
- Cementing labour stability in the sector through the successful implementation of collective bargaining agreements with labour unions representing the local government workforce.
- Occupying positions of influence in the global families of local government, including the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG).
- Rolling out development and capacity building programmes for municipal officials.
- Promoting local government interests in policy and legislative processes and
- Establishing the SALGA Women's Commission (SWC) in 2012 to advance the interests of women in local government

## The work continues

A new era has begun for SALGA. The organisation's delisting as a Schedule 3A public entity took effect on 1 October 2024, and this new chapter grants SALGA greater autonomy and the operational flexibility required to better meet the needs of its 257 member municipalities throughout length and breadth of the nation.

SALGA's influence and impact can be felt throughout the nation, and the organisation looks forward to continuing to advocate for the interests of local government in South Africa in many areas, including but not limited to:

## Energy reforms

SALGA has been working hard to promote new business models for municipalities in the electricity sector on behalf of its member municipalities. To ease Eskom's power generation constraints, the organisation has been advocating for legislative reforms that would allow municipalities to produce their own electricity and buy electricity from independent power producers (IPPs).

## Climate change agenda

In order to help identify the role of local government in addressing climate change, the Just Energy Transition Project Management Unit in the Office of the Presidency, in partnership with SALGA, organised a Just Energy Transition Municipal Conference.

The conference assessed the current electricity distribution landscape in the South African local government sector in the context of the energy transition, distilled key implementation lessons on a just energy transition in electricity distribution, and unpacked the institutional arrangements required to drive the JET municipal portfolio of the Cabinet-approved JET Implementation Plan.

## Urban Forum

SALGA convened the National Urban Forum (NUF), a platform that brought together various stakeholders to discuss and address urban development challenges in the country. The objective of the Forum highlights the strategic importance of managing rapid urbanisation in the context of also responding to other mega trends such as climate change, smart mobility, technology. It facilitates dialogue among government, civil society, the private sector, and community organisations to promote sustainable urban development.

## Cementing labour stability

SALGA and Organised Labour represented at the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (SALGBC) reached a landmark agreement, finalizing salary and wage negotiations with a 6% increase for the current financial year. This Consumer Price Inflation (CPI)-linked agreement spans five years, marking a first in South Africa's public service history.

This unprecedented five-year salary and wage agreement is a historic achievement in both the local government sector and the broader public service. SALGA, representing 257 municipalities nationwide, along with the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (IMATU) all committed to ensuring the successful implementation of this agreement.



## Development and capacity building for councillors and municipal officials

The Integrated Councillor Induction Programme (ICIP) of SALGA, which offers professional development and induction training to newly elected and returning councillors, is still a success.

The programme is essential for developing the skills, know-how, and personal attributes required to be a successful mayor or councillor. The knowledge and experiences gained from professional development activities will be useful as councillors carry out the goals and objectives of their respective municipalities during their tenure in office.

## SALGA Digital: Continuing to Drive Digital, Data and Innovations in Local Government

SALGA Digital is at the forefront of transforming local government through technology. The Unit's focus areas – the SALGA Digital Factory, PULSE Data Solutions, and Innovation – have yielded over 15 solutions addressing 25 critical use cases, garnering recognition in GovTech and public sector innovation awards, and its Data Solutions team remains committed to leveraging data for impactful solutions.

Also worth noting is SALGA Digital's partnership with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT).

To this end, SALGA – as organised local government – is well-suited to be an essential and strategic partner to the DCDT in both bringing the voice and ideals of local government while also being a conduit through which the DCDT can roll out and/or accelerate the implementation of its programmes.

Formal IGR structures (both technical and political) will be established with the department under which collaboration can take place.

## Asisho! Let's Say It!

Asisho! Let's Say It! - is a nationwide SALGA campaign calling on South Africans to engage actively in the affairs of their local communities as municipalities intensify efforts to recover R338.2 billion in unpaid charges for municipal services rendered to households, businesses, and government departments and agencies.

Since the launch of the campaign on 29 June 2022 in Tshwane Metro, municipalities across the country have strengthened their revenue collection strategies, including tighter internal credit controls. Municipalities are also working with metro police at roadblocks, using drivers' licenses and ID numbers to identify and address unpaid municipal bills. This concerted effort amplifies a commitment to financial accountability and sustainable local services.

## What's on for November?

### TID Rollover

The countdown to the TID rollover has already begun and only a few weeks remain until November 24, 2024, when the Standard Transfer Specification (STS) technology update to guarantee that smart meters continue to distribute electricity, takes effect.

SALGA has been helping its member municipalities across the nation expedite the smart meter updating process. The project's objectives include reducing power outages and load-shedding, stabilising electricity infrastructure, and improving and protecting electricity revenue.

### Meter reset information:

- Total meters to be reset: 4040820
- Total meters reset already: 3655847
- Total meters outstanding: 344965





## SALGA Provincial Members Assemblies (PMA's)

SALGA PMA gatherings are currently underway. SALGA provincial annual performance plans and budgets for the financial year, as well as reports from governance structures and other oversight bodies, are among the items to be discussed at PMA's.

## 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that takes place annually from November 25 to December 10. The campaign's goal is to raise awareness and call for an end to violence against women and children.

Given the scourge of Gender-Based violence in the country, which is declared a national address, government is implementing the Emergency Response Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, which was announced by President Cyril in September 2019.

During the 16 Days period, government together with civil society and the private sector will host a series of community and sector dialogues and activities to foster a collaborative effort in dealing with GBVF.

## As the end of the year 2024 draws near.

SALGA looks forward to journeying with all of its stakeholders into the new year. Together, we can build on local government's strong foundation and work tirelessly towards a future where the sector truly serves as a beacon of sustainable, responsive, and people-centered governance.

## FOLLOW HASHTAG:

*#InspiringServiceDelivery, #Kasi2Kasi, #Asisho! #LetsSayIt, #LocalGovTodayEveryday* and look out for more activities on the SALGA website: [www.salga.org.za](http://www.salga.org.za) and all our social media platforms including:

**Facebook:** South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

**X, formerly Twitter:** @SALGA\_Gov

**YouTube:** SALGA TV Instagram: [salga.org.za](https://www.instagram.com/salga.org.za)

