

What is an Integrated Development Plan (IDP)?

An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a super plan that gives an overall framework for development. It aims to co-ordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in an area. It should take into account the existing conditions and problems and resources available for development. The plan should look at economic and social development for the area as a whole. It must set a framework for how land should be used, what infrastructure and services are needed and how the environment should be protected.

Local municipalities in South Africa use IDPs as a method to plan present and future development in their respective areas. It is an approach to planning that involves the municipality officials and residents of those municipalities to find the best solutions to achieve positive long-term development, which acknowledges residents as people who best know what they need.

The IDP has a lifespan of 5 years that is linked directly to the term of office for local councillors, but is reviewed every year to allow for necessary changes to be made. After every local government election, the new council has to decide on the future of the IDP, it can choose to adopt the existing IDP or develop a new one that takes into consideration existing plans.

IDPs are managed by the executive committee of a municipality, but this can also be assigned to the municipal manager if required. The executive committee or executive mayors of the municipality have to manage the IDP. They may assign this responsibility to the municipal manager.

In most municipalities, an IDP co-ordinator is appointed to oversee the process. The IDP co-ordinator reports directly to the municipal manager and the executive committee or the executive mayor. The IDP has to be drawn up in consultation with forums and stakeholders. The final IDP document has to be approved by the council.

Municipalities are responsible for the co-ordination of the IDP and must draw in other stakeholders in the area who can impact on and/or benefit from development in the area, which includes government departments undertaking any project in a specific municipality, business, churches, schools, clinics and any other structure in the municipality.

Take action on IDPs

Demand participation in the IDP process. Make it a document that reflects your community's needs.

Have you seen the IDP for your municipality? A copy is supposed to be available to community members. Get a copy now!

- Monitor government:
 - What are the plans in the IDP and have they been implemented?

- Conduct an assessment of government delays – file a request for access to information (see below).
- Find out the facts! For example, if your municipality has contracted a company to build roads or toilets, find out:
 - Who is the person responsible for the project?
 - Demand a copy of the contract or service delivery agreement
 - How much money has been spent on the project?
 - Who has received the money that has been spent?
 - What work has been completed?
 - How many people are without a particular service in your community?
 - How long have they been waiting for this service?
 - What has government done to provide them with alternatives?
- Build support for the right to service delivery and develop an action plan to use in the following ways:
 - Ask your councillors and mayor to support the plan
 - Get the IDP committee to adopt the plan
 - Present your action plan to municipal council for endorsement
- Nominate candidates from among those individuals who understand and support the plan and help them get elected to the ward committee or municipal council.

Questions you could ask councillors about the IDP on behalf of the community:

- Does my municipality's IDP consider all the major issues present in this community, or does it leave something out? Does it help to preserve or improve the environment?
- Is this plan going to be implemented in a step-by-step way where responsibilities of all those implementing it are clearly stated?
- Is the implementation going according to plan, or are there major blockages that have arisen. What can be done to resolve these?