Facilitating Urban Strategic Planning Workshops

- A guide -

FOR COMMENTS AND QUERIES

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INTRODUCTION

This Facilitator's Handbook has been designed as a guide for workshop facilitators involved in strategic framework workshops run by the eThekwini Municipality for other municipalities within the Province of KZN, South Africa, the continent and beyond.

It spells out in some detail the content of the Municipal Strategic Planning workshop. For ease of reference, the guide is set out in the form of Modules. This programmes covers a set of eight short modules which are normally covered over a two and a half-day workshop.

It is not meant to be a blue-print for workshops. Instead it is meant as a guide to help facilitators as they design a needs-based tailor-made workshop for participants.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- To produce a strategic and implementable PLAN OF ACTION that will help to turn around targeted municipalities

- To inculcate an appreciation of OUTCOMES-BASED PLANNING and the importance of being strategic

- To begin a process of building a TEAM that is results-focussed

- To identify potential areas for collaboration and co-operation between MILE and the targeted municipality

FACILITATION TEAM

In order to successfully run the workshop, a team of ONE LEAD FACILITATOR and at least TWO SUPPORT facilitators are required. In addition, ONE administrative/logistics person is required.

MODULE ONE: GETTING STARTED

The module spells out the key elements involved in getting a workshop going. It covers even taken for granted logistic arrangements, as these can make or break your workshop.

1.1 SETTING UP AND REGISTRATION

TIP BOX One:

Take time out before the workshop to check out the venue, its size and layout, availability of breakaway rooms, location of restrooms.

Meet the conference centre staff and find out if you have access to their facilities such as printers, extension cords, etc.

1. Arrive at least an hour before your first participant to set up your workshop venue.
2. Make sure that the seating is conducive to participatory engagement. Cinema seating should be avoided, unless the room does not permit it. If possible request for round tables of 8 people seated per table (small groups enhance maximum participation).
3. Put the necessary materials on the tables viz table numbers, koki pens (one per delegate), A5 colour cards, name cards
4. A nice gesture is to have bowls of sweets at the tables (if these are not provided by the conference venue) and water
5. If participants are known beforehand, pre-printing their names is a nice touch. It also demonstrates that you have done your homework and are well prepared – ask the host municipality to organise this.
6. To encourage maximum participation ensure that participants are evenly spread out between tables as per their political affiliation, official designations, etc. (this avoids the clique syndrome). Do this by arranging your register in such a way that participants are already pre-allocated to a group / divide the register into the number of groups e.g. if there are 6 groups then draw up the register with numbers 1-6 so that all who sign on at no. 1 will sit at table 1, etc.
7. Have music playing in the room – this creates a relaxed atmosphere for the delegates as they enter the room. Also put music on during the breaks
8. Try to personally welcome delegates as they arrive – this first touch always helps develop a relationship with delegates which is invaluable for a facilitator
9. Request that tea and coffee is served on arrival. If delegates have travelled from far they might have not had any breakfast so a snack on arrival is always good.

10. Test the laptop and projector to make sure that they talk to each other. The last thing you want is a technical glitch at the beginning of your workshop.

1.2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

This first session is usually opened by the Host who welcomes all participants. Note that in many contexts, even BEFORE the introductions are done the Host calls upon someone to lead the workshop in PRAYER, often in the local language.

The Host then hands the session over to the Facilitation Team to kick off with a round of introductions. Introducing workshop participants offers the opportunity for an icebreaker to make participants relax and get to know each other.

A tried and tested one is for participants to pair up with someone they don't know and to share a little about themselves, including their one HOPE and their one GRIEF in life. The partner then shares this with the entire group.

1.3 AGREEING ON GROUNDRULES

One of the Facilitator's foremost duties in this first session is to help the group agree on a set of commonly shared Ground Rules. These Ground Rules will set the tone for the workshop and

must be enforced throughout. The Rules should be printed clearly in large font and displayed at the front of the venue throughout the workshop. Make sure that when a participant gets out of order, that the ground rule being transgressed is quoted. There is generally no more than Six Key Ground Rules.

If the participants are not forthcoming with important ground rules feel free to suggest rules that you think are important. As long as these are accepted by all, they can be enforced.

Commonly Used Useful Ground Rules

- **Cellphones off**
- **NO HOGGING**
- **NO FROGGING**
- **NO BOGGING**
- **Speak thru facilitator**
- **Keep to time**

1.4 DETERMINING PARTICIPANTS EXPECTATIONS

Often the facilitator's expectations are not the same as the Host or the workshop participants. It is frustrating after three days of work, for participants to have felt that they could have better spend their time.

It is therefore very important to elicit each participant's expectations. As this will take some time, especially where the group is large, it is best to get each participant to write down in bold print the ONE expectation that s/he has for the workshop. These are then collected as they are written up and stuck onto the wall. The Lead Facilitator with get help from the team to group these and summarise the Group's Expectations.

> **Tip Box Two**
>
> Establish during this first session what the language needs of the group are. Sometimes one assumes that a second language is required, only to find out that all participants are happy to continue in one language and might prefer using a local language only for group work .

1.5 MATERIALS REQUIRED

Electronic Equipment

1.   Data Projector

2.   Extension Cord

3.   Double Adaptor

4.   Camera

5.   Slide Changer Pointer

6.   Portable Printer

7.   Speakers / Shox for Sound

8.   Flash drives (1 per group – these should be returned)

Stationery

9.   Brown Paper

10.   A5 Colour Cards

11.   Prestik

12.   Koki Pens (one per participant + 5 extra)

13.   Realm of printing paper

14.   Flip chart paper X 1 realm

15.   Scissor X 1

16.   Exam pad X 1

17.   Pens for registration

18.   Stapler with staples X 1

19.   Drawing Pens

20.   Colour dots X 1 box

Other

21.   MILE Banner

22.   Attendance Register

23.   Table Numbers + Facilitators + Registration

24.   Flip chart stand with paper

25.   Photocopies of two Case Studies – one per delegate

26.   MILE Evaluation Sheets – one copy per delegate

27.   Name Badges / Labels

MODULE TWO: INTRODUCTION TO OUTCOMES-BASED PLANNING

OUTCOMES:

- Participants are familiar with the Durban experience and feel inspired to embark on a similar journey

- Participants fully understand and feel confident and enthused to apply outcomes-based thinking in their everyday work lives

LEAD FACILITATOR PRESENTATION

This module comprises of the facilitator presenting the Durban story in a lively animated way, using powerpoint slides to guide the session. Note that this is a slow and deliberate presentation, but with lots of interaction and questions from group to facilitator and vice versa. The intention here is not so much to convey exactly how the Durban process unfolded, nor its content, but to demonstrate that with good leadership and commitment to a process, an ailing Municipality can be turned around.

GROUP TASK

The facilitator distributes a WORKSHEET that requires participants to form groups of three / four and work out examples of ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, RESULTS and OUTCOMES.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Worksheet with questions to be prepared

- Power point presentation (need to set up laptop, projector and screen)

- AO Sheet giving brief description on Outcome, Result, Output, Activities

MODULE THREE: DEFINING THE CHALLENGES – WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

OUTCOME:

- Participants are able to articulate a set of KEY CHALLENGES that they are faced with in their municipality

- Participants are able to differentiate between INTERNAL challenges and EXTERNAL challenges, and the roles that the municipality can play in addressing the challenges

- Participants are able to PRIORITISE challenges in order of strategic importance.

This module employs the use of a CASE STUDY to help workshop participants to critically reflect on their own municipality's key challenges. Having identified these challenges in groups, they are then expected to rank them in order of priority in a plenary session.

EXPLANATION OF CASE STUDY

The facilitator explains that the Case Study is a fictitious one, and that it has been used many times before in other municipalities. Active participation in the groups is required for success.

GROUP TASK

The facilitator divides the participants into groups with a good mix of Councillors and Officials.

TIP BOX Three:

Colour Code your Case Studies to differentiate between Case Study One and Case Study Two; and between the English and Zulu version.

Where isiZulu Case studies are required, this must be distributed. Groups are normally allocated half an hour to read and answer the questions. The Group must self-manage the process, with them starting off by electing a Scribe and a Repertoire, who will be expected to give a summary of the groups answers.

AGREEING ON MUNICIPAL CHALLENGES

- Having done the Case Study, participants brainstorm what they think their own key municipal challenges are. The facilitator stresses that the underlying causes of the challenge must be addressed, and that the challenges must be regarded as strategic.

- Using power point these Challenges are captured electronically

- The facilitator then asks the Plenary session to PRIOIRITISE these challenges and identify the most critical of all the challenges.

MODULE FOUR: VISIONING AND PURPOSE STATEMENTS

OUTCOME:

- Participants understand the essence of DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Participants are able to design their own PURPOSE STATEMENT and understand who their CUSTOMERS are

- Participants construct a new or revised VISION for their municipality

This session begins with a powerpoint presentation by the facilitator explaining the importance of PURPOSE STATEMENTS in a context of developmental local government.

Examples of Purpose Statements are given, before they construct a Purpose Statement for their municipality.

This is followed up with a discussion on who participants think their customers are.

The third element in this session is around construction of a VISION STATEMENT. A short presentation on Visioning is done, emphasising the importance of making choices. Participants are then requested to write done verbatim what they think their municipality's Vision Statement is. Generally participants' statements vary so much that the point is amply made! Working either in groups or in a Plenary Session, the participants are asked to refine / revise their existing Vision so that it reads better, and becomes a call to action.

MODULE FIVE: SETTING STRATEGIC GOALS – WHAT TO CHANGE TO?

OUTCOME:

- Participants are convinced that strategic planning can offer solutions to their key challenges

- Participants are able to articulate a set of STRATEGIC GOALS for their municipality

This module is a follow on from Module Three and also employs the use of a CASE STUDY to help workshop participants to identify STRATEGIC GOALS for their own municipality. These goals are merely the translation of their challenges into positive goal statements.

Whilst the Case Study is done in Groups from past experience we have found that the goals setting session works best in a single Plenary Session.

EXPLANATION OF CASE STUDY

The facilitator again explains that the Case Study is a fictitious one, and that it has been used many times before in other municipalities. Active participation in the groups is required for success.

GROUP TASK

The facilitator may choose to use the previous groups if this has worked well. If not new groups could be formed. Again, groups are normally allocated half an hour to read and answer the questions. The Group must self-manage the process, with them starting off by electing a Scribe and a Repertoire, who will be expected to give a summary of the groups answers.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Case Studies in appropriate languages

- Flip chart paper

- Kokis

MODULE SIX: DESIGNING STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS - A STRATEIC ROADMAP -

OUTCOME:

- A short, clear strategic roadmap

- Participants are able to articulate a set of STRATEGIC GOALS for their municipality

This is probably one of the most important sessions of the workshop. It is critical that energy in the room is high, as participants may tend to get tired at this point.

Run entirely in Plenary, this session is facilitated using a spreadsheet projected via the projector, and getting the participants to complete the template which asks for the following information:

- Key Challenges - completed earlier

- Underlying Causes of the Key Challenges

- Strategic Goals – completed earlier

- Strategic Action

- Budget

- Responsible Person

- Time Frame

MODULE SEVEN: SIGNING THE ACCORD

OUTCOME:

- An Accord that is signed by all participants who have pledged to work together to implement their strategic plan.

In order that the content of the strategic plan is actually implemented according to the time frames stipulated, and by the responsible persons, an Accord is signed which holds workshop participants accountable for the process.

This has worked very well in workshops undertaken with several municipalities to date. The facilitating team can offer to visit the municipality in six months' time to review progress made.

MODULE EIGHT: EVALUATION AND CLOSURE

OUTCOME:

- Concise feedback on how the workshop proceeded, its strengths and shortcomings

- Participants who feel empowered to take action in their municipality

In order to continually improve the standard of workshops it is highly recommended that the workshop conclude with an evaluation.

It is best NOT to do this verbally but to insist that ALL participants rate the workshop using a pre-prepared questionnaire that is filled in unanimously. An example of an Evaluation Questionnaire can be found in the Annexures.

We normally recommend that the workshop closes on a high, with a powerful, short and inspirational address by the host. Some workshops also close with a prayer. Remember to take a group photo.