



a world class African city

Lessons from the City of Johannesburg's review of the Group KM Strategy

***Knowledge Management Learning Exchange
Wednesday, 26th May 2021***

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The year 2020 was unlike any other in history!

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the lives of almost every person in the world – some by just a little, most by a lot.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented in the City of Johannesburg, and was to challenge the City’s capabilities, structures and way of conducting services to its citizens.

It requires a shift of change and adapting to a new normal.



Change is coming.

COVID-19 has not just brought about the need for change, it also points a way forward.



The coronavirus has also revealed something profound about the way societies should treat knowledge.

In 2010 the City of Johannesburg benefited from an incredible learning experience in preparing for and hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, much of which was brought into play during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective handling of large-scale events and responses to natural and manmade emergencies is becoming increasingly vital in today's world.

It is at times like these that capturing institutional memory becomes of huge importance.

Strategic Location and Mandate

Group Strategy, Policy Coordination and Relations (GSPCR) seeks to:
"Thought leadership to enable strategic certainty for city-wide empowerment, service excellence and impact".

GSPCR Business Process



- To ensure the practice and promotion of an effective knowledge management (KM) practice and culture with City of Johannesburg through putting in place processes and systems.
- Custodian of the city's strategic knowledge through a central knowledge repository (better practices, lessons learnt and innovative initiatives) for learning and sharing purposes.
- Facilitation of the strategic collaboration between the City of Johannesburg and three Higher Education Institutions (Wits, UJ & Unisa) by focusing efforts on the positioning of Johannesburg as a Centre of Excellence for Higher Education in Africa. (research agenda production for depts. / entities / thought leadership engagements etc)
- Coordination of knowledge exchange sessions through Joburg conversations which are engagements amongst peers to promote sharing of ideas, City programmes and policies, for collaboration and empowerment opportunities.

KM in the City of Johannesburg

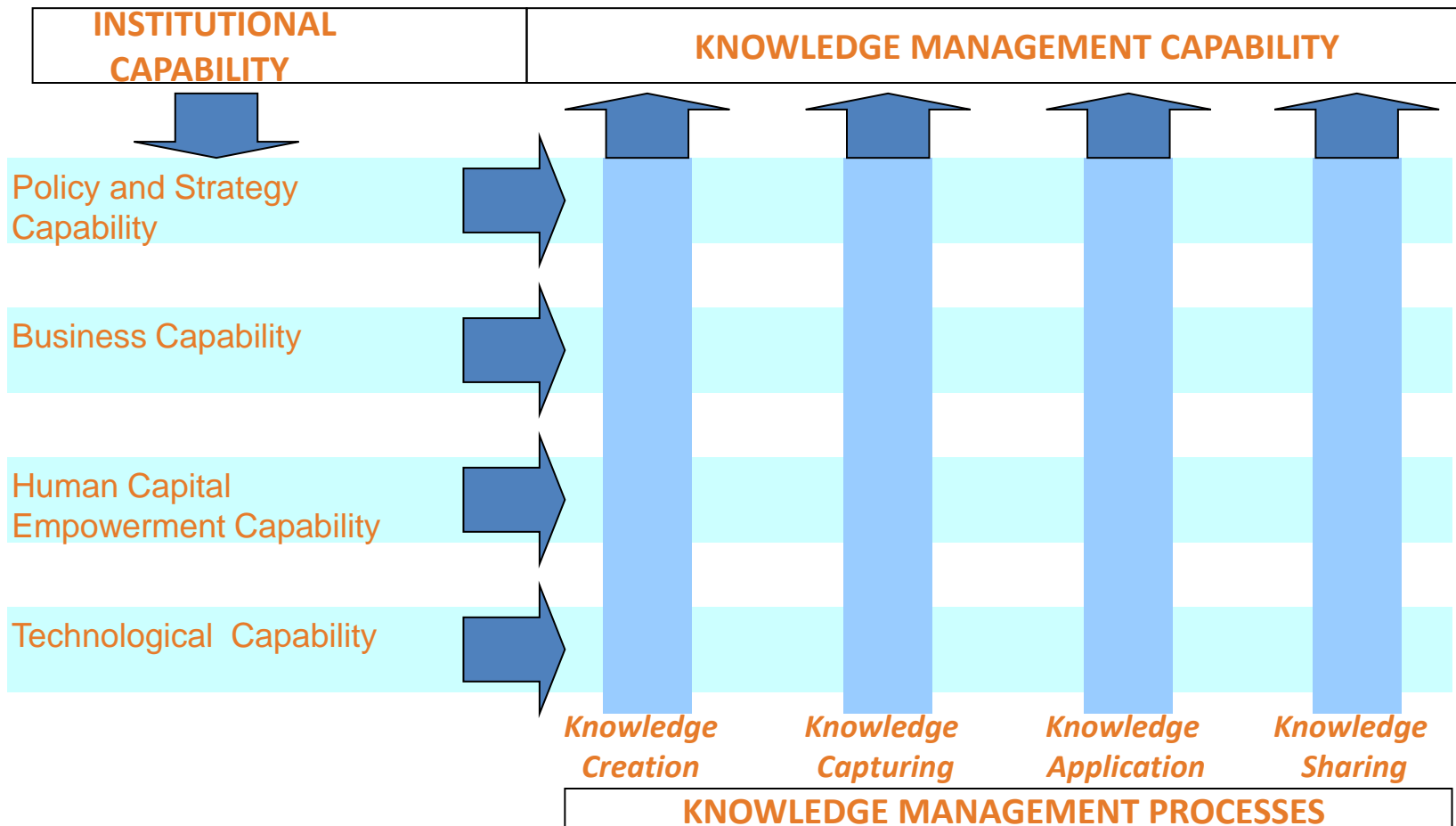
- The City adopted a Group KM strategy to enable CoJ to achieve and sustain its strategic objectives as outlined in the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (GDS), through KM and human capital development. The City of Johannesburg defines KM as:



“Processes used in creating, capturing and sharing of knowledge to increase service delivery efficiency and effectiveness that contribute to the City of Johannesburg as a world class African city”.

KM in the City of Johannesburg

Four important high level pillars for Knowledge Management at City of Johannesburg that would support and facilitate the City Johannesburg’s strategic goals as well as improve policy implementation and outcomes are:



Review of the CoJ Group KM Strategy

① The CoJ approved its first 'Group KM Strategy' in 2013. While much of this strategy remains relevant, there have been some significant changes within both the City and its external environment.

② Within the City, roles, responsibilities, systems and City infrastructures have shifted, while different approaches have been adopted in respect of a number of policies, processes and practices that have a direct bearing on KM.

A large, white, rounded rectangular graphic with a red stamp that reads "TIME FOR REVIEW" in bold, red, uppercase letters. To the right of the stamp is a large black checkmark.

TIME FOR REVIEW

③ The City is also in the process of finalising its review of the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) – the guiding strategy on which the City's five year and annual planning processes rest.

④ Externally, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has also shaped the wider context – with this, and other unforeseen disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic, directly impacting KM possibilities and practices.

Desktop research

Review key CoJ documentation to ensure alignment and relevancy including external KM resources

1

Research and document analysis

Organizational Benchmarks

One on One Interviews

Focus Group

KM Survey

2 virtual sessions (pre and post review)

2

Stakeholder engagements

3

Review of inputs/Rewrite up

4

Consolidation

5

Finalization and approval

Collation of inputs

Review and alignment

Restructure and rewrite the Group KM Strategy

Final draft of the revised Group KM Strategy

Peer review of the revised strategy document through the focus group

Final revised Group KM Strategy & one year supporting implementation plan

Processing through CoJ governance structures for approval (EMT, Sub-Mayoral, Maycom)

Review of the CoJ Group KM Strategy

As part of the process of refining the City's Group KM Strategy, it was important to answer some fundamental questions, including: 'What is KM, in the CoJ's context?' and 'What is it not?'

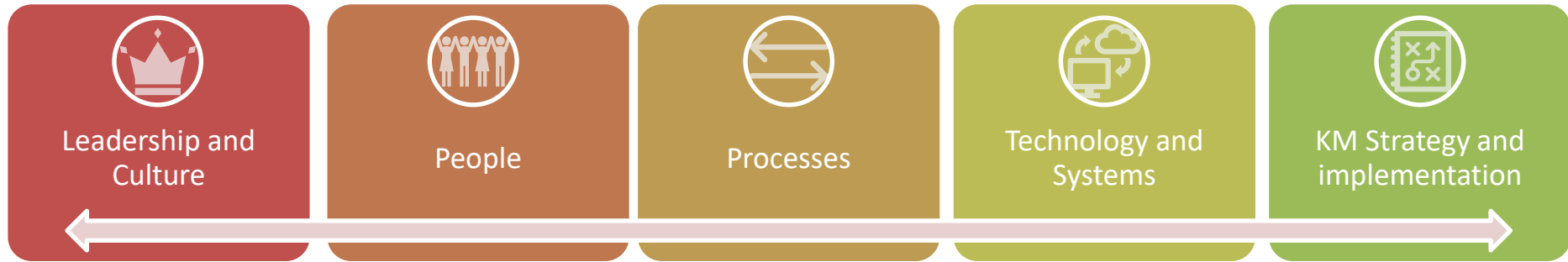
"The creation, collaboration, storage and dissemination of information to the correct users at the correct time and through the correct channels, to help make informed and timely strategic decisions."

"Sharing and capturing relevant experiences and knowledge generated internally and externally."

"Knowledge management relates to all the activities we do in the City to identify key knowledge and share that knowledge, to improve service delivery."

"Technical and organisational initiatives to deal with structured and unstructured knowledge – via lessons learnt and the reuse of knowledge.....
Being able to experience the walk through of a practitioner's experience – and bring in commonalities and learnings, but also build on different experiences...to improve delivery."

"[How we...] manage and enhance the flow of information, knowledge and communication, to retain corporate intelligence, to enhance collaboration, and to break down barriers (the silo effect) in and between the City and its entities."



STRENGTHS

- The strategy is a good base document.
- The organisational benefits and the four KM pillars are articulated well as part of the strategy.
- Knowledge sharing has made it easier for teams to work together and collaborate across departments and entities
- Most departments have KM champions whose role is to assist in the implementation of KM processes and practices
- The implementation of SharePoint has enabled access to documentation and information
- The City is doing well in terms of knowledge generation and capturing.

WEAKNESSES

- There is lack of a common understanding of KM and its benefits within the City and its municipal entities.
- Lack of effective knowledge sharing, leads to failure to learn from other departments and the risk of duplication of effort/initiatives.
- Access to technology is still a challenge within the City.
- The application of knowledge is still area that requires enhancing. Knowledge adds value to an organization if it's applied and reused.

- Positioning of KM is critical.
 - **Strategic positioning** being a KM model that links directly to the vision or strategic agenda; and
 - **Structural positioning** i.e. location of KM in the organization.
- Leadership buy-in to build a common commitment.
- Nurturing an organizational culture supporting the strategy implementation.
- Knowing who holds the information, knowledge and insights is critical in supporting delivery. Ensuring that the relevant knowledge is created, captured, stored and shared amongst employees contributes to better service delivery.
- Recognising the centrality of people to KM. One of the ways in which ‘people’ and KM can be brought together is to reflect on KM in the context of the employment cycle.
- The KM strategy must be seen as a communication tool to guide the organization i.e. concise and simple; ensuring a common understanding across the organization.

- KM is not an end in itself – but instead meant to support and enable the CoJ to deliver the 4 outcomes as depicted in the CoJ long term strategy (shift towards enhanced KM model).
- Understanding that a KM strategy will only receive full support and buy-in- and deliver true value – if it contributes to and enables improved day-to-day delivery, progress in terms of the organisation's mandate and the progressive realisation of its strategic objectives.

“Municipalities with effective KM systems have been shown to be more competitive than others and better able to serve the needs of their residents. KM ensures that the right information gets to the right people at the right time to make the right decisions. It empowers and motivates staff and supports innovation and learning”

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Connect with us

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Thank you