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MSUNDUZI'S FINANCES ARE ON THE DECLINE

CHRIS NDALISO

Msunduzi's financial health is on the decline while its institutional arrangement has been found to be fragile.

A recent assessment by the National Treasury on the municipal budget and benchmark engagement for the 2023/23 medium-term revenue expenditure framework (MTREF) further found that service delivery in the city was also on the decline, while the state of financial governance remained sound.

A report with the assessments' outcomes, which were meant to form part of the recent council confidential agenda items, found its way to the public.

The assessment found that the municipality did not have sufficient cash to pay creditors. However, some improvements were noted. The objectives of Treasury's engagement were to assess the alignment between planning, budgeting, and reporting. It assessed the level of integrated intergovernmental planning; whether the municipality's plans and budget are financially sustainable in the longer term and enable improved service delivery performance; and efforts to address the negative impact of load shedding and its impact on the economy. The institutional arrangement was found to be fragile.

"During the engagement, the municipality indicated that KZN Cogta did not provide valid reasons for the extension of the department's intervention for six months. It was further indicated that the intervention is negatively impacting on the municipality's reputation as it has been ongoing for a number of years," reads the report on the observations. The Treasury also noted that unauthorised, irregular, fruitless, and

wasteful expenditure has decreased from the 2020/21 financial year compared to the current year, due to measures that were implemented which include, among others, the cancellation of contracts that resulted in irregular expenditure. Consequence management was also monitored through the office of the city manager.

"The political leadership has oversight on the planning and the public participation processes. The municipality invests a lot of time in public consultation where the mayor leads the process of engaging the public on the integrated development programme (IDP) and budget. The financial health, however, is on the decline. The risk of theft and vandalism of infrastructure increases when there are power outages, necessitating the presence of visible security clusters during such periods. This has resulted in increased security costs. The litigation against the municipality may have a toll on the city's finances. There is a need for the provision for contingent liability if the court cases are lost.

"The tariffs that were consulted on (2023/24) are not affordable given the current economic climate. The national treasury assessed the tariffs not to be cost-reflective while the municipality indicated that the tariffs were informed by the cost of delivering the services and were previously understated," reads the report.

The treasury recommended that the city revise the assumed collection rate in the final budget to ensure that it is realistic, among other things.

City manager Lulamile Mapholoba said the report was not a true reflection of the Treasury's assessment. He said the report was issued after the city's presentation and receipt of the report with issues of concern. He said all those have been attended to and

"We have since worked on those concerns. We are working continuously with them [treasury]. The issues of finance in the city are a journey and they are going to take longer to resolve," said Mapholoba.

IFP councilor Thinasonke Ntombela said they understood that the city's cash recovery was improving, according to a report by the ministerial representative.

"There is no need for the city to move out of intervention if the Treasury is not happy. Yes, it is frustrating that we have been under intervention for years but to jump out before all is clear is not going to help the situation," said Ntombela.

The ACDP councilor Rienus Niemand said the current cash flow situation in the city was squarely the doing of the administration. Niemand said credit control was applied in a "corrupt" and "discriminatory" manner. "Politically sensitive areas where millions of rands worth of water and electricity is stolen daily are purposely not disconnected under the guise of the consumers being poor. This, while there is a distinct indigency policy that caters to such cases is simply not applied.

"Government debtors are not disconnected for 30 months plus of non-payment under the guise of good inter-government relations to be maintained. Government institutions must adhere to the Management Finance Act and pay creditors within 30 days. It is pure incompetence and dereliction of duty not to do so," said Niemand.

He said Eskom and Umgeni water were owed close to a billion rand by the city. "These departments are mismanaged. The ACDP calls on the auditor general to declare a material irregularity and to hand the matter over to the SIU for immediate investigation.

"The resultant impact of such an investigation will force the administration to execute their mandate efficiently and fairly and the municipality will almost immediately have sufficient cash to focus on their primary purpose of service delivery," he said.

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NOTICE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION PROCESS: EDENDALE TOWN CENTRE HUB

Notice is hereby given of a Public Participation Process (PPP) to be undertaken in terms of the National Environment Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. **EDTEA Reference Number:** To be allocated upon submission of application. Further to this, notice is given in terms of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), to undertake a Water Use License Application. **DWS Reference Number:** WU28036.

Nature and Location of Activity: The Msunduzi Municipality are proposing to develop an Urban Hub Development within the Greater Edendale area of the Msunduzi Municipality through the implementation of the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG). The NDP have identified the Greater Edendale area for a Township Regeneration strategy with the aim of ensuring that the development of an Urban Hub within the Greater Edendale area will assist with the transformation and regeneration of the area and that the spin-offs of this would contribute to the improvement of the surrounding areas.

Applications for a Basic Assessment (BA) process and Water Use License (WULA) for the proposed Edendale Town Centre Hub and associated infrastructure will be submitted to the competent authorities, the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) and the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), for a decision.

To register as an Interested and / or Affected Party (I&AP) and / or to obtain additional information please submit your name, contact details (telephone number, postal address and email address) and the interest which you have in the application to SIVEST as per the details below and please reference the 'Edendale Centre Hub' in your correspondence.

I.T.O POPIA, you hereby declare and confirm that you, as an I&AP providing information, consent for your information to be gathered, stored and distributed for the purpose of this project.

ISAZISO NGENQUBO YOKUGUNYAZWA KWENDAWO: EDENDALE TOWN CENTRE HUB

Isaziso sinikezwa mayelana neNqubo Yokubambiqhaza Komphakathi (iPPP) okumele yenziwe ngokoMthetho Kazwelonke Wokuphathwa Kwemvelo, 1998 (uMthetho we-1998 we-107) njengoba uchitshiyelwe, kanye neMithethonqubo Yokuhlola Komthelela Envelweni (Imithetho ye-EIA), Inombolo yereferensi yeEDTEA: Izokwabelwa ekulathweni kwesicelo. Ngaphezu kwalokho, isaziso sinikezwa ngokoMthetho Wamanzi Kazwelonke, 1998 (uMthetho No. 36 ka 1998), ukuze kwenziwe isicelo selayisense Yokusebenzisa Amanzi. Inombolo Yereferensi ye-DWS: WU28036.

Imvelo kanye Nendawo Yomsebenzi: Umasipala waseMsunduzi uhlonjolo ukuthuthukisa iNqubo yaseMadolobheni endaweni yase-Greater Edendale kuMasipala uMsunduzi ngokusebenzisa i-Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG). I-NDP isihlonze indawo yase-Greater Edendale ukuze kube nesu lokuKusethwa kabusha kwelokishi ngenhloso yokujikeleza ukuthi ukuthuthukiswa kwesizinda seDolobha endaweni yase-Greater Edendale kuzosiza ekugqulweni nasekuvuseleleni indawo kanye nokuthi ukwelula kwalokho kuzoba nomthelela ekuthuthukiseni kwezindawo ezizungezile.

Izicelo zenqubo yokuhlola okuyisisekelo (BA) kanye neLayisense Yokusebenzisa Amanzi zeNdamo (WULA) ehlongozwayo Yesikhungo SeDolobha lase-Edendale kanye nengqalasizinda ehambisana nayo zizothunyelwa kuziphathimandla ezinkhono, eMnyangweni Wezokuthuthukiswa Komnotho, Ezokwakasha NezeMvelo KwaZulu-Natal (EDTEA) kanye noMnyango, wezaManzi Nokuthuthwa Kwendle (DWS), ukuze kuthathwe isinqumo.

Ukuze ubhalise njengeQembu Elinentshisekelo kanye/noma Elinentshisekelo (I&AP) kanye / noma ukuthola imininingwane eyengeziwe sicela ulithe igama lakho, imininingwane yokuxhumana (inombolo yocingo, ikheli leposi kanye nekhele le-meyili) kanye nentshisekelo onayo esicelweni sakwa-SIVEST njengokusho kwakho. Imininingwane engazansi futhi sicela ubhekise 'I-Edendale Centre Hub' ekubhaleni kwakho.

I.T.O POPIA, uyasho futhi uyajikeleza ukuthi wena, njenge I&AP ehlinzeke ngolwazi, uyavuma ukuthi ulwazi lwakho luqogwe, lugcinwe futhi lusathalaliswe ngenhloso yale phrojekthi.

Edendale Town Centre Hub Project Centre Point Coordinates/Izixhumanisi: 29°38'43.54"S 30°20'14.21"E

Contact Details / Imininingwane Yokuxhumana

SIVEST Environmental Division - Contact/Othintane naye: Siphikwukhule Buthelezi / Michelle Nevette
Tel: (033) 347 1600, P O Box 707, Msunduzi 3231
E-mail: sivest_ppp@sivest.com Website: <https://www.sivest.com/>

Correspondence throughout the remainder of the PPP and BA Process will only be distributed to Registered I&APs. Registration is possible throughout the BA and WULA Process.

Ukuxhumana kuyo yonke ingxenywe esele ye-PPP kanye ne-BA Process kuzosathalaliswa kuma-I&APs Abhalisiwe. Ukubhalisa kungenzeka kuyo yonke Inqubo ye-BA/WULA.

A copy of the draft Basic Assessment Reports can be obtained on the SIVEST website at the following address: <https://www.sivest.com/za/download/> or at the Edendale Municipal Offices, 50 Old Edendale Road. The comment period for the Draft Basic Assessments will run from 05 October 2023 to 03 November 2023.

Ikhophi yohlaka lwe-Basic Assessment Reports ingatholaka kusizindalwazi se-SIVEST kuleli kheli elilandelayo: <https://www.sivest.com/za/download/> noma amaHhovisi likaMasipala wase-Edendale, 50 Old Edendale Road. Isikhathi sokuphawula soHlaka LokuHlola Okuyisisekelo siqoqela mhlaba zi-5 kuMfumfu wezi-2023 ukuya kumhlaba zi-3 kuLwezi wezi-2023.