

ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Prof. P. Robinson, J. Ellingson & M. Hlongwa

Summary

A substantial amount of effort and resources have been put into regional and sub-regional planning in KwaZulu-Natal over the last five years. At a time of demarcation changes and the advent of new rounds of planning for the incoming District and Local Councils, it is appropriate to take stock of what has been achieved, and to consider what changes will be required to meet future local government needs.

The objectives of this research project were to investigate the recent regional and sub-regional planning that has been undertaken in KwaZulu-Natal; to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these integrated development plans; to assess how useful and effective they have been in guiding development and investment; to identify examples of good practice in methodology and content; and to make recommendations as to how these plans can be modified to meet the requirements of the new Councils.

Opsomming

Daar is baie moeite en inspanning gebruik die afgelope vyftig jaar in die streeks en substreek beplanning van Kwazulu-Natal. Deesdae, met die veranderde afbakening en dus nuwe beplanning in die Distrik- en Plaaslike Rade, is dit noodsaaklik om te kyk wat reeds bereik is en watter veranderinge nodig is om die behoeftes van die toekomstige plaaslike regering aan te spreek.

Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsingsprojek was om die huidige streek- en substreekbeplanning in Kwazulu-Natal te ondersoek; die sterkpunte en tekortkominge van die saamgestelde ontwikkeling te identifiseer; wat die bruikbaarheid en effektiwiteit daarvan rondom ontwikkeling en

belegging was; identifisering van goeie voorbeelde vir metodologie en inhoud en om aanbevelings te maak om hierdie planne aan te pas vir die vereistes van die nuwe Rade.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1996, considerable effort has been put into regional planning in KwaZulu-Natal. A Primer and Manual on regional planning were produced. Integrated development plans were generated for seven regions and about 30 sub-regions covering most areas of the province. There are, however, questions as to how useful and effective regional and sub-regional plans are in their current form, and whether the form of regional planning needs to be altered. In order to address these and related questions, the Town and Regional Planning Commission appointed Consultants to undertake an assessment of regional and sub-regional planning in the province (see Figure 1).

The study aimed to determine what kind of regional planning has been undertaken in the province over the last four years; to assess its strengths and weaknesses; and to ascertain whether the plans that have been produced can be modified to meet the requirements of the new Category C District Councils and Category B Municipalities.

This paper reports on the findings of the assessment and reflects upon the implications for future planning at District scale. It starts by outlining the methodology used and the purpose of regional and sub-regional plans, then proceeds to discuss the research findings before drawing conclusions in terms of what was expected of these plans in the 1996 - 2000 period. The final section identifies the most significant implications for planning at District scale in the coming years with recommendations for good practice.

The methodology involved two types of research: a detailed analysis of nine case studies and interviews with key roleplayers in the sub/regional planning process. The selection of case studies was based on the following criteria:

- cover the range of urban and rural environments found in the province
- include both inland and coastal sub/regions
- include those straddling the principal development corridors as well as the shadow corridor and deep hinterland areas
- include what are regarded as the best of the regional and sub-regional plans
- include plans prepared by different teams of consultants so as to pick up variations in style and approach
- include at least one regional or sub-regional plan from each region.

The assessment of each plan was based on a detailed check list as well as interviews with key roleplayers. These included the Chairpersons of the Demarcation Board and the Development Tribunal, a representative of the Development Bank of Southern Africa who had been involved in five of the regional planning initiatives, and a key person in each of the Service Providers Forums. In addition the consultant team drew on their combined experience based on involvement in other regional and sub-regional plans which have been prepared in the province during the last few years. The research findings were presented at a Workshop involving Regional Councils and other key roleplayers in the regional and sub-regional planning process.

2. THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF REGIONAL /SUB-REGIONAL PLANS

In essence the regional and sub-regional plans needed to provide the Councils with strategic direction in the form of a long term vision and strategic objectives. These were to be achieved by

means of a number of action plans, based on available human and financial resources.

Overall, regional plans were expected to provide the following:

- A rationale for the way the region is to be developed
- A mechanism for managing development in a proactive and integrated way
- A link between planning and the budget by means of an implementation programme
- Policies for the Regional Council about:
 - What kinds of development should be encouraged/discouraged
 - Where it should be located
 - How it should be implemented and managed
- A reasoned basis for prioritization
- Criteria and guidelines for making investment decisions and responding to development applications
- A mechanism to assist the Regional Council (specifically the CEO and Exco) as well as other roleplayers in deciding how resources should be allocated and where investments should be located.

Development Plans were expected to contain the following elements:

- An integrated picture of the region using quantitative and qualitative measures
- Identification of needs, challenges and opportunities
- Vision
- Strategies for achieving the vision
- Spatial development framework and a land use management system
- Implementation programs indicating where to start and in what sequence to proceed
- A framework for monitoring progress and reviewing the plan periodically

The legislative context within which the regional and sub-regional planning has been undertaken is set primarily by the following;

- Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995
- Local Government Transition: Second Amendment (Act 97 of 1996)
- Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998
- KwaZulu-Natal Planning and Development Act .N 5 of 1998

Other legislation provides policy guidelines for specific sectors, while policy papers such as Agenda 21; the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (and its associated policies); and the current research on appropriate land use controls in KwaZulu-Natal, compliment the legislation to establish a comprehensive policy environment for planning at this scale.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the assessment process relate to five categories:

- The context within which the plans were prepared
- Institutional aspects
- The form and content of the plans
- Consultation processes
- Use of the plans to date

3.1 Context within which the plans were prepared

3.1.1 Response to the new policy environment

The preparation of regional and sub-regional plans by all Regional Councils in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) between 1996 and 2000 responded to an ever evolving policy environment set by the Development Facilitation Act (1995) (DFA) and a host of subsequent legislation set at national and provincial levels. The approach to planning at this scale, as well as the form and content of the plans followed the guidelines set by this legislation.

These plans were characterised by the following:

- attempts to be more integrated in scope and content
- involvement of a combination of technical and consultative processes
- combination of sectoral, spatial and institutional aspects
- the setting out of a long term vision with strategies for how to achieve it
- establishment of various institutional arrangements to implement and monitor the plans (e.g. Ward development committees, Planning committees, Service Providers forums (SPF))
- attempts to take the plans beyond proposed strategies to the formulation of an implementation programs and linking these to budgets.

All the Regional Councils in KZN followed these guidelines and accepted the opportunity (and obligation) offered by the legislation to prepare plans that would be linked to budgets. With few exceptions, the implementation programmes that emanated from this round of regional plans were fairly clear. Certainly they were a significant advance on what had existed previously.

Another feature of the policy environment that emerged during the late 1990s was a plethora of Green and White papers on various aspects of development that needed to be taken into account by the Planners. Partly due to the rate at which new ideas were being thrown into the regional development arena, and partly due to lack of clear guidance by the Regional Councils commissioning the plans, there was a tendency to quote widely from these Papers, without adapting the core policies to the particular needs of each Regional Council.

Possibly the most significant aspect of the emerging policy environment was the way it brought successive waves of new emphasis to the requirements of the regional (and later the sub-regional) plans. It is informative to recognise the historical sequence of influences on regional/sub-regional planning since about 1996.

Regional plans needed to provide the overall strategic direction for the Regional Councils. This is how it was conceived in the Manual which the Department of Local Government and Housing gave to the Regional Councils. Sub-regional plans were seen to provide a more detailed (and finer grained) strategy.

Then Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) became the focus of attention which led to sub-regional plans being influenced by the CSIR/GTZ Manual and an increased emphasis on projects.

Next was the emphasis on sub-regional plans providing a Land Use Management System.

Then the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) became interested in using land reform as an explicit integrating component of the sub-regional plans (and DLA put a

considerable amount of funding in to support this approach). DLA wanted to ensure that their decisions about projects could be taken within an integrated framework.

About the same time the Local Economic Development (LED) programme came into being and it was agreed that LED should be another explicit component of the plans.

This was followed by attention to Coastal Zone Management in the wake of the completion of the national study. This became another required component of sub-regional plans for coastal areas.

The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 set the tone for the next set of changes which would come into being after the demarcation of boundaries of District and Local Councils. This will be discussed in section 4 below.

Yet another factor which characterised the changing policy environment was the emergence of a fairly large number of sources of funding from national government (mainly) but also provincial government for development projects. Regional Councils depend on these sources of funding for most development projects. The criteria, funding cycles and application processes are, however, complex with Councils often being notified of funding opportunities at short notice thus making it difficult for them to respond adequately.

3.1.2 *Unsynchronised planning*

The timing of regional and sub-regional planning initiatives was unsynchronised in three respects:

- planning was started in advance of the availability of a reliable data base, which in the current era needed to be on GIS;

- in a number of cases sub-regional planning commenced prior to the completion of the regional plans, within which they were supposed to operate;

- the entire planning process was undertaken at a time when all regional and municipal boundaries were being changed through the demarcation process, which means that all the plans will need to be modified.

It is recognised that delivery imperatives were driving the planning process but the lack of adequate preparation and the unsynchronised context has been a constraint.

3.1.3 *Pressures to prepare the regional plans within a short time*

The current round of regional planning runs from 1996 to the present. At the beginning of this period all the Regional Councils in KwaZulu-Natal embarked on the preparation of regional plans. At present these have all reached completion at a technical level at least, while some have been formally adopted by the Regional Councils and in use for some years. From the outset there were pressures to get this planning done as quickly as possible in order to provide Regional Councils with an integrated picture of their regions, some idea of a long term vision and strategic direction. This pressure was driven by the country-wide priority of getting delivery processes into motion in support of the new government's RDP and other development targets.

The time span for regional plans was generally in the order of 18 - 24 months with budgets ranging from R450 000 to R600 000.

Due to the rushed process (the short time periods allocated for these plans should be seen in international contexts where preparation of regional and sub-regional plans span a number of years), the data base for the plans involved a lot of collating of material from readily available sources, with relatively little primary research being undertaken. Another outcome of the rushed process was the recognition that the regional plans would not provide the necessary level of guidance for local level planning. As a result it was decided to embark on a subsequent round of sub-regional planning in all regions. This commenced in about 1998. To date these sub-regional plans are being, or have been completed for all sub-regions throughout the province. It was intended that the sub-regional plans would provide a more thorough development perspective, a finer grained analysis and clearer guidelines for local planning. In all respects, however, the sub-regional plans were prepared under the

same overall guidelines and time constraints as the regional plans.

Sub-regional plans have been prepared in periods ranging from about 9 to 18 months, with budgets ranging widely from R 125 000 in one region to R 250 000 in another. Despite these differences the product expected was essentially the same. In the case of sub-regional plans, in three of the regions budgets were allocated explicitly across different phases of the planning exercise to ensure that adequate resources were devoted to implementation aspects. This proved an effective mechanism and will be discussed further in the recommendations.

At the time the regional and sub-regional plans were being prepared the results of the 1996 population census were not available in a sufficiently reliable and disaggregated form. This lack of spatially disaggregated and accurate data on population distribution (especially the number of people and households living in each locality) hampered the establishment of the fundamental data base and resulted in generalisations about the existing situation as well as the subsequent absence of projected needs.

3.1.4 *The planning process*

All the regional and sub-regional plans were prepared by teams of consultants appointed by the Regional Councils. The reason for this normally public sector activity being out-sourced was the almost total lack of internal planning capacity within the Regional Councils.

Senior staff in the Regional Councils and the then Department of Local Government and Housing prepared the Terms of Reference but there is little evidence of these having been workshopped at lower levels within the Regional Councils. Responsibility for managing and monitoring the planning consultants often became an additional responsibility for already over-loaded senior staff. The perception that the planning process was in the hands of consultants had implications later on when trying to link plans to budgets. There were reports of politicians viewing the plans as "belonging to consultants" and

expressing reluctance to take ownership of them.

The Terms of Reference all emphasised the strategic nature of the exercise, yet due to the additional aspects to which the plans needed to respond as time went on, there was a contradictory pressure towards more of a comprehensive approach. This applied particularly to the assembly of the data base.

The planning processes followed fairly similar courses in each case, but a well structured process emerged from some of the later sub-regional plans. This approach was found to be effective both by the client, Regional Councils and by the planning consultants. It is based on the notion that sub/regional planning is essentially a public sector function and that even if the plan preparation (and other) work is being out-sourced, the processes should approximate as closely as possible the situation if the planning was being done in-house. This would involve three main phases:

- A pre-planning phase in which the Regional Council staff, Councillors, community structures and other roleplayers would be thoroughly briefed as to the purpose of the planning, their roles and expected uses of the plans.
- A plan preparation and consultation phase (itself divided into a number of stages) culminating in the adoption of the plan by the Regional Council.
- Communication and implementation phase involving wide-spread communication of the plan, implementation by means of a series of "annual work programmes", regular monitoring and review. This is a critical phase which needs the attention of a senior member of staff within the Regional Council to ensure that the plan recommendations are put into practice.

Although this process was intuitively present, it was only applied explicitly in a few cases.

Some of the more recent sub-regional plans recognised that the product emerging from the planning process needed to take three forms:

- A concise version of the Plan covering all essential components that could be used by a variety of roleplayers. This should include an integrated development perspective and identify challenges facing the sub/region, followed by a long-term vision and strategies for achieving it. It should contain the spatial development framework and projects arranged in a five year implementation framework with particular focus on "lead" projects.
- A "popular version" written in simple English and Zulu accompanied by a large (A 0) descriptive map which summarises the plan and would be widely distributed.
- A management report containing all the detailed research, analysis, assumptions and sub-consultant reports on particular sectors. This is a vital resource document for the Regional Council and other technical role players. It is intended that specialists involved in the preparation of sectoral plans such as water, transport, etc. would use these detailed reports to inform their own sectoral plans.

Due to delivery pressures and the need to produce the plans quickly, planning teams experienced problems in getting adequate data on certain matters (of which population distribution was the most serious) and in spending adequate time on consultation processes.

These will be discussed below, but it should be noted here that it was more effectively done in regard to traditional authorities and communities, than within the Regional Council structures themselves. As a result there was a view (held by Regional Council staff as well as the consultants) that the production of the plan was an end in itself, rather than part of a longer process. This perception was exacerbated by having plan preparation done by consultants.

However, the realities of the situation are that Regional Councils (and their successor District Councils) will have to depend on consultants for many years. It is therefore essential that Consultants are used in ways that are optimum

for the Regional Councils. Ideally, it requires a Planner in senior position in the Regional Council (on a par with the Directors of Technical Services, Finance and Administration), to co-ordinate the entire process and monitor both the consultants and linkages with other organisations within and beyond the Regional Council.

One mechanism for achieving this, and one that was adopted in three regions, was the appointment of an experienced Planner to act on behalf of the Regional Council as co-ordinator of the sub-regional planning process. Reports from clients and consultants involved in these arrangements confirm its effectiveness as a mechanism for improving the process. DLA also appointed an experienced Planner to act on their behalf in relation to the sub-regional planning. Experience from such co-ordination has been positive and led to the identification of possible areas for improvement.

These arrangements worked well in managing the consultants, but was less effective on the in-house side of co-ordination within Regional Councils, as this can never be done effectively by outsiders. The arrangement was most effective where there was someone within the Regional Council who had some degree of dedication to the planning process.

3.1.5 Sources of possible disjuncture

The research revealed a number of points in the planning process that were particularly prone to disjuncture. The most significant were the following:

- Overall development process vs plan preparation phase
- Integration of planning tools (eg. GIS, SSDS model, projections) into the planning and decision-making process
- Failure to use projected needs to identify projects
- Failure to incorporate current projects in the implementation projects
- Failure to link proposed projects to funding programmes
- Lack of buy-in from Service Providers
- Absence of links between regional priorities, as expressed

in the plan, and provincial and national priorities.

3.2 Institutional aspects

3.2.1 Capacity of the Regional Councils

Capacity at the Regional Council level has been , and continues to be affected by the following:

- Process of adjustment to new integrated approaches to development (in contrast to the previous focus on sectors and emphasis on development control)
- Realignment and incorporation of different authorities into the Regional Council
- Shortage of capacity in the sense of skills and experience to deal with the shift in focus
- Lack of capacity among Councillors to understand technical issues and to find a balance between local and regional interests - an aspect which has also seen progress over the years, but it tends to have been limited to members of the Exco and Planning Committees, without filtering through to all Councillors
- Failure to take up opportunities build in house capacity within the Regional Councils due to severe internal staff shortage.
- Failure to link the plans to the day-to-day activities of Regional Council staff.

3.2.2 New institutional forms associated with regional planning

One feature of the plans was the community and political involvement in the planning process and the combination of this with a technical planning process which was broader and more integrative in scope than before. The processes also led to the establishment of institutional arrangements within each Regional Council (not all exactly the same) which were designed to bring the technical and community/political sides together not only for the preparation of the plans but on a continuous basis to contribute to implementation and monitoring. These took the form of statutory planning committees as well as voluntary organisations such as the Service Providers Forums (SPFs). In general the composition of these institutions were designed to include:

- Traditional structures including members of the Regional Authorities
- Development committees
- Key service providers including the government departments
- Organised business and other key commercial bodies
- Adjoining local councils

Over the last four years, these institutions have increasingly begun to come up with practical solutions to development issues in their regions. Again these have not been uniformly successful, but have provided useful experience.

Service Providers Forums were set up as a mechanism to counter the sectoral focus and to promote integrated development and co-ordination. Generally all the SPFs started out as reporting fora, which provided an initial amount of interest for the participants who, for the first time, were able to find out what each other were doing in the region. However, this limited focus has proved to be unsustainable and the more successful SPFs have introduced a strategic focus and moved into more of a problem-solving mode. Yet the very fact that these have been set up in all regions and have been operating for some years is a significant step forward. Some SPFs are working more effectively than others . Common problems are lack of representation by all service providers; lack of head office support for field staff who attend SPF meetings; difficulty or inability to locate projects or explain the criteria upon which funding is allocated.

It should be recognised, however, that the SPFs are voluntary associations whose members are primarily responsible to line function departments/agencies. For this reason there remains a tendency for service providers to retain their own criteria for determining investment location and priorities, and a nagging reluctance on the part of some to use the plans as the framework for decision-making.

The SPFs have also been the nexus for the development of new tools for planning at regional scale. Notable examples are the field verification of data and the Spatial Data Support System (SDSS) which was developed initially for Zululand (and

now adapted into a model (Dalisu) which will be available for use by all regions in KZN). The pro-active way in which Mhlatuze Water has embraced the opportunities of the SPFs in Zululand and Uthungulu, both for its own needs and as a contribution to the development of these regions, is another example.

3.2.3 Lack of integration

Research revealed that despite fairly strenuous attempts to achieve integration, the following problems remain:

- Tendency for line function departments to focus on the interests of their particular sector rather than integrated development
- Lack of co-ordination between planning at regional and provincial levels
- Non-alignment of regional and departmental boundaries
- Lack of co-ordination between the plethora of bodies set up under different pieces of legislation and departmental functions of the Regional Councils

The lack of effective integration manifests itself in two ways. Firstly, there is a tendency for some departments to continue with their own planning in isolation of other line function agencies and without cognisance of the integrated planning initiatives being undertaken by the Regional Councils. Secondly, there is a risk of the sub/regional planning processes becoming dominated by the interests of one or other department.

For example, concern has been expressed about the way in which DLA involvement in the planning process has led to a tendency for a disproportionate amount of attention to be devoted to land reform. This occurred in spite of the stated position by DLA at the outset that their aim (and the purpose of their financial input) was to achieve integrated development plans for the Regional Councils, and not a plan for DLA. The biggest risk is that in other circumstances different departments may be inclined to attempt to drive the planning process.

It needs to be recognised that the sub/regional plans are tools for the

Regional Councils to manage development in a balanced and integrated way and not a replacement for detailed sectoral plans eg. transport and water plans.

3.2.4 Planning consultants

During the course of preparing regional and sub-regional plans, consultants recognised that the achievement of integrated planning involved more than having a multi-sectoral team. Team leaders have an important role to play in getting integrated input from the necessary range of specialists. In cases where this role was not played by a Planner, integration was often lacking in process and product, but the presence of a Planner in this position did not always guarantee successful integration. Some planning teams also appeared initially to have been unfamiliar with strategic concepts and methodologies.

There are examples of planning teams engaging in capacity building, with less experienced planners receiving guidance from more experienced colleagues. This happened within firms and between firms. While this is a positive outcome, much more could have been achieved and it is an aspect that needs to be addressed in the post demarcation revision of plans.

3.2.5 Frail political environment

It needs to be recognised that planning at both regional and sub-regional levels has occurred within a frail political environment. This has manifested itself in the following ways:

- An inherent tension between local interests and the broader regional interests. Local politicians and community leaders continue to be pressured into prioritising local ahead of regional needs in order to demonstrate their effectiveness in local government.
- A lack of a understanding of the different roles of councillors and officials and the existence of inter-departmental jealousies. In volatile situations, where roles are unclear, and imbalances exist in power bases, there is the risk of powerful individuals (either

councillors or officials) dominating decision-making processes, or overthrowing previous policy directions.

- Internal differences among the officials of the Regional Council have also had a significant effect in the planning process. This was generally about the “perceived” extent of involvement of different units /departments of the Council as well as the extent of acceptance of particular individuals who took on the role of “champions” driving the planning process from the Regional Council. This impacted on lines of accountability as well as the roles and responsibilities of various internal departments. In most Regional Councils there is no evidence of a process to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different internal units in relation to the plan. More typically, it was a matter of emphasizing the need for integration and the need for developing the plans which would be used as the basis of suggesting and initiating various programs. While all units showed initial enthusiasm, this interest diminished over time in most cases. As a result different functions increasingly occurred in conflict with the emerging plan proposals, at times resulting in duplication of activities. The effect has been that a few individuals are perceived as “owning the plan” and nobody else is interested.
 - -Service providers including government departments have their own set of objectives and criteria which are not necessarily in line with those suggested in the regional plan. Despite attempts to overcome these problems through the SPFs there remains a tension between the objectives of the regional plan and those of the individual service providers.
- The implications of the above are that the effort and expense which went into preparing the regional and sub-regional plans could be wasted (at worst), or not used to full effect if the plans become subject to bureaucratic and political infighting.

3.3 Form and content of the regional and sub-regional plans

3.3.1 For whom were the plans intended?

In the context of continuing tensions between local and regional interests, the sub/regional plans aimed at providing decision-makers with a rational and technically sound basis upon which to make decisions about projects. It was intended that the regional and sub-regional plans be presented in a way that would make them useful to a range of organisations and stakeholder groups including the following:

- -The Regional Councils
- -National and provincial government departments and neighbouring Regional Councils
- -Standing Committees, Planning Committees and Development Committees at local level
- -TLCs and Traditional Authorities
- -Local communities
- -Service Providers
- -Private investors, developers and sectoral promotion organisations (such as industry, tourism, etc)
- -Authorities which are responsible for making decisions about development and changes in land use (including the Development Tribunal).

3.3.2 Lack of a standardised approach

With the exception of some of the recently produced sub-regional plans, the planning documents were presented in a variety of different formats which made comparison difficult. The research confirmed the widely expressed criticism that planning documents are complex and difficult to use. In reality, these documents need to reflect the complexity of the situations under investigation which inevitably results in substantial reports.

However, where standardised approaches and formats were introduced into the sub-regional planning processes in Ilembe, Ugu and Zululand the planning reports were considered to be far more accessible.

3.3.3 Form and content of the plans

Most of the plans covered the following:

- -Development perspective
- -Synthesis of key issues
- -Vision
- -Development strategies
- -Spatial development framework
- -Implementation programs
- -Monitoring and review framework.

The sub-regional plans all nested within the policy context set by the regional plan. Some did not draw sufficiently on the regional strategies; but in other cases it exposed weaknesses in the regional strategies. Most of the sub-regional plans used a combination of demographic data from the 1996 Census and from Eskom, but all had to make certain assumptions as to the distribution of population at the locality level.

The regional and sub-regional plans all showed an imbalance towards rural issues and needs. This was not a bad tendency given the historical neglect of research and planning for rural areas. However, the lack of linkages between the sub/regional plans and the planning being undertaken by the TLCs is a weakness and has meant insufficient attention being paid to potential problems regarding future land use on the fringes of the existing TLCs. These are issues which will need to be addressed in the revision of plans for the new Category C District Councils and Category B municipalities.

Another general weakness of the plans is that the implications of some critical issues have either not been addressed, or not given sufficient direction. These include:

- migration and movement of people within and beyond the regions;
- local economic dynamics and linkages;
- the impact which AIDS will have on local and regional development;
- calculation of backlogs;
- projections of future needs based on performance criteria;
- areas in which future settlement should be encouraged;

- realistic models of service delivery; and
- how capacity is to be built to implement the plans.

There are, however, plans in which some or most of these issues have been well handled, providing the Regional Council with clear strategic direction.

3.3.4 Development Perspective

The Development Perspectives were generally effective in providing, in a single document, an overall and integrated picture of the region or sub-region. While this was noted as being of particular use by some CEO's, Development Perspectives tended to be comprehensive in nature. In a number of cases the relevance of the data included was not clear; in other cases the aggregated nature of data was of little value in explaining the development context. In many cases assumptions were used, but seldom made explicit, but there were some examples of this being well done.

The Development Perspectives also reflected the lack of readily available data, the unreliability and unsuitability of published data (eg. CSS, census data, etc.) and the reluctance of some organisations and departments to share their information. One of the most common difficulties was the inability to match data to settlement patterns. In the Zululand region this problem was overcome by undertaking a verification exercise which provided data about place names and location of facilities.

Other respects in which most, but not all, the Development Perspectives were lacking were:

- Quantification of needs by locality
- A statement of the planning norms or performance criteria to be used to determine amount and location of service provision.

The work done in Zululand in regard to working out "hardship indices" as inputs for the SDSS model is the best developed example of how this can become a decision making tool.

In cases where the Development Perspective was well done, the synthesis of key issues added

considerable value by way of providing an integrated perspective, a clear focus for the strategies and identifying possible linkages.

3.3.5 Visions

The vision statements for regions all displayed similar elements, which is not surprising. Most attempted to include some degree of regional specificity. However, where the plans tried to define layers of visions for sub-regions, or to formulate visions for different sectors, the result was confusing. It would be better practice to retain a single vision for a region and to define development goals and objectives for sub-regions and sectors.

A variety of methodologies were employed in the visioning process. One of the best examples was the use of stakeholder interviews in Uthukela to identify matters of commonality and areas of conflict. These were used to derive a negotiated vision. This methodology could have been carried forward into subsequent phases with good effect.

3.3.6 Development Strategies

The development strategies provide the vital link between the building blocks established in the Development Perspective/synthesis, the Vision and the projects in the implementation programs. In general, strategies covered a range of facets which provided the essence of an integrated approach for moving towards the long term Vision. These included economic development, infrastructure and service provision, environmental management, institutional and spatial issues. For the most part these strategies responded to regional or sub-regional priorities. The strategies of most plans went some way towards identifying linkages between different strategies and finding ways to re-enforce them. This was most prevalent in regard to economic and spatial strategies.

There were some examples of strategies being vague or poorly formulated. This was often due to inadequacies in the development perspective.

Weak strategies invariably resulted in the poor identification of projects

in the implementation phase. In addition, there were cases where potential conflicts between environmental and economic strategies were not resolved. Another deficiency was that few of the plans gave adequate policy guidance to the Regional Councils (or other users of the plans) in regard to how investment or land use decisions should be made.

3.3.7 *Spatial development framework*

Most of the better plans used the conventional framework for analysis of the space economy, namely:

- areas of relative welfare/need/opportunity
 - nodes and concentrations of people and activities
 - networks, flows and linkages
- but there was not enough information on existing settlements (their population, economic base, role and function)

Standard spatial concepts such as rural service centers and development corridors were widely used, but often in a somewhat crude form. Some plans did, however, make effective use of these concepts to indicate the type, form and intended ways in which development should be promoted in different centers, or corridors.

What did cause considerable confusion at all levels was the wide variety of terminology used in regard to spatial concepts. This needs to be addressed by means of standard use of terms. In addition, the generally poor identification of linkages within and beyond the sub/regions, created the erroneous impression of regional islands!

3.3.8 *Implementation Framework*

The implementation framework involves three components:

- identification of projects
- rationale for prioritization
- implementation programme and link to budgets

Overall, strategies were effectively converted into action plans and projects and arranged into a coherent implementation framework.

However, in quite a number of cases projects were not derived from the full range of sources (on-going projects, SPF, community

consultation, the Regional Plan, private sector, and those following logically from the strategies) and in particular were not informed by a systematic analysis of future demand on the basis of projected population (or households) and a set of norms. In some cases project identification was dominated by community requests rather than a combination of technical and community based factors. In part this defect reflected the lack of a clearly worked out and explicitly stated rationale for prioritization. Nonetheless, there were several good examples of innovative approaches to project prioritization.

The identification of projects was often left at the level of a one line description. This is inadequate. Some of the later plans went to some length to ensure a fuller description of projects, including allocation of responsibility for implementation. The more recent sub-regional plans, in particular, culminated in a rolling Annual Work Programme (AWP) within a 5-year implementation programme.

In most cases there was insufficient contact between the planners and the Council's Finance Director on the costing of projects and funding sources. However, some plans provided examples of good practice in this regard.

For the most part implementation programmes contained a lot of important and relevant projects, for which estimated costs and times frames had been worked out, and "lead projects" identified. However, this solution was not always well motivated, nor adequately worked through with Council staff. Many of the annual implementation programmes were also unrealistic given the available financial and human resources. Again this reflected the outsider role of the consultants and the absence in internal counterparts with whom to work.

The actual linking of projects to the annual budget involves interaction between Regional Councillors and officials as part of the budget preparation process. The Development Plans are being used to different degrees by Regional Councils to enforce this process.

The implementation frameworks of the more recent sub-regional plans

have gone some way in translating the spatial framework into land use management systems, using the draft reports produced in November 1999 by the TRPC's consultants working on appropriate planning and land use controls. Two of the regional plans included a specific environmental management plan.

3.3.9 *Monitoring framework*

The legislation provides for an annual review of the regional and sub-regional plans. Most of the regional plans contained guidelines for monitoring, and provision for an annual review without much detail about how this was to be done. The more recent sub-regional plans addressed monitoring, evaluation and review in more detail and provided useful guidelines for the Regional Councils.

These distinguished programmatic monitoring (an audit of whether projects had been implemented according to the AWP) and impact monitoring (to evaluate projects using key performance indicators [KPIs] in regard to lead projects). On the basis of feedback from these the plan is to be reviewed annually. This process will concentrate on selection of projects to be included in the upcoming AWP. Experience from other major urban development projects suggest that it may be appropriate to move towards a two year version of the AWP. To date there is little evidence that much formal monitoring has taken place, even in the earlier plans, with the result that it is still too early to ascertain the effectiveness of the proposed monitoring measures.

3.4 **Consultation processes**

Overall, the importance of consultation was recognised by all planners not simply because it was something that had to be done as part of the contract but as an important means of assessing needs and determining priorities.

3.4.1 *Success factors in community consultation*

The approach to consultation adopted by the various consultants differed with some teams undertaking the consultation themselves while in others specialist consultants were used. Although there is no clear evidence

that one was better than the other, the employment of field workers from the local community to assist with consultation and information gathering tended to result in higher levels of participation.

Essentially, the success of the consultation process was determined by the way in which consultation was undertaken. Where consultants tried to use a highly structured approach and deal with a full scope of issues at a single meeting they were generally less successful in engaging with communities. In contrast, those consultants that adopted a more flexible approach and concentrated initially on the identification of needs and priorities, tended to achieve not only a higher level of buy-in from the local communities but were also able to sustain community interest and momentum throughout the planning process.

The selection of meeting venues was also important. Consultants who held single meetings at central venues tended to achieve less than those who held a number of smaller meetings targeted at different groups of stakeholders in venues throughout the region. However, the latter approach requires a significant amount of time and is obviously more costly. Thus while the majority of consultants felt that this was a better approach, they claimed that time and budgetary constraints simply did not allow for this level of consultation.

A further significant factor in determining the success or failure of the consultation process was the commitment and visible support from the facilitation department of the Regional Councils. Where this was lacking consultation tended to be less successful.

A number of consultants also felt that there needed to be some continuity in the consultation process. They argued that consultation should not end with the completion of the plans as sustaining the consultation process would enable communities themselves to become the pressure groups for ensuring implementation.

3.4.2 Consultation with other roleplayers

Consultants complained of a reluctance on the part of key

organisations, service providers and adjoining formal areas (TLCs) to share information and to engage fully in the regional planning process. Consultants argued that they lacked the authority to overcome these problems.

3.4.3 Realistic choices

One of the most significant weaknesses of the consultation process was its failure to confront relevant stakeholders with realistic choices. In practice consultants tended to engage with communities around visions, needs and priorities but failed to link these to budgets and time frames.

3.5 Use of the plans

3.5.1 Limited but increasing use of the plans

The plans are being used to different degrees by roleplayers such as EXCOs, Regional Councils, Traditional Authorities and Service Providers, but to a significantly lesser degree by the TLCs. In the best cases, the plans are starting to be treated as the agenda for decision-making. However, in other cases the use of the plan is confined to a few senior officials or councillors. In a recent incident a service provider denied any knowledge of prior participation in the formative stages of the plan (although he had been present) and when faced with the plan recommendations reported that his department had its own plan, its own approach to prioritization, and that their projects for the year did not coincide with the plan proposals.

One of the reasons for limited use of the plans has been the complexity and volume of documentation. Other problems relate to the use of jargon and confusing terminology. Steps have been taken to remedy this in some of the more recent plans.

3.5.2 Impact on investment patterns

It is still too early to determine whether or not the plans have started to influence investment patterns. But there have been a number of initiatives by Regional Councils to start using the plans to direct allocation of expenditure.

The process of identifying cluster projects in Zululand, Indlovu and Umzinyathi was substantially influenced by the availability of such technical information. In another case the plan was used as a means to obtain funding from DBSA for a local economic development study. However, there are other instances where Councils have waited for the sub-regional plans to be completed. In many cases the process of project identification and prioritization still lies with the Standing Committees - a process which has not yet been influenced by all the planning which has occurred.

3.5.3 Communication

Communication of plans has been undertaken by means of presentations and workshops, with ExcOs, Councillors, Standing Committees, communities, SPFs and other roleplayers. In addition, in some cases, notably Ugu, a simplified English/Zulu type of Executive Summary has been widely distributed. Other means of communication include informative A0 wall maps for sub-regions. The plans have also been communicated through one-on-one meetings.

Although efforts at communicating the plans are still at an early stage, the overall finding was that communication of the content and intent of the plans has not yet been really effective. This, notwithstanding the proposals in many of the plans about the importance of communication.

3.5.4 Links to planning at provincial and national levels

There is little evidence to date of the plans being formally linked to provincial and national planning processes, although there have been some requests from these levels for copies. The current review of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) identifies the need for such links and should take advantage of the regional and sub-regional plans in this regard.

3.5.5 Links to national funding programs

During 1999 a study was initiated at national level to devise ways of co-ordinating all the funding

programmes into a type of "one stop shop" where Regional Council applications could be processed efficiently. The outcome of this study has yet to have an impact at Regional scale. The present lack of co-ordination causes considerable difficulty for the under staffed Regional Councils and results in inadequately prepared applications and inefficient use of these funds.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Expectations of the plans 1996 - 2000

Overall, the plans have met the broad expectations for the 1996 - 2000 period. They contain a vast amount of very useful information and for the most part have succeeded in providing the following:

- an integrated picture of the sub/region;
- a long term vision;
- strategies about how to start moving in the desired direction; and
- a spatial framework and a set of projects arranged in a phased implementation programs.

Some of the plans at both regional and sub-regional scale achieved this more effectively than others. There is significant room for improvement in the methodologies used, as well as in the form and content of the plans produced. But what has come out of all the regional and sub-regional plans of the last five years is a considerable amount of experience of planning at this scale, in a predominantly rural context as well as a host of examples of good practice covering virtually every aspect of the planning process. There are also examples, particularly of sub-regional plans, where all these elements have been pulled together into highly coherent and useful plans.

4.2 Future purpose and functions of district plans

The legislative basis for planning at regional scale in the post demarcation and local government elections era lies in section 84 of the Municipal Structures Act (1998). In terms of this a District Council (Category C) will be responsible for integrated development planning for the district as a whole, including a

framework for integrated development plans for the local municipalities within the district, taking into account the integrated development plans of those local municipalities. The area of responsibility of these local municipalities (Category B) has been enlarged considerably in the demarcation process to include the former TLC and its rural hinterland. The new form of integrated development planning will be District Development Plans (akin to the Regional Plans) and Local Development Plans (which will represent some combination of the sub-regional plans and TLC IDPs).

The thinking behind this section of the Act is informed by a philosophic shift which increasingly moves away from legislation designed to facilitate government activities, to one of facilitating governance in a broader sense, including civil society and the private sector. The thinking has also been influenced by the fact that many plans produced in the early years of the new government (and before), were not properly integrated; many also contained unrealistic concepts which could not be implemented.

The plans are to be the integrating instruments for co-ordination at three levels:

- Co-ordination between government at national, provincial, district and local levels, as well as between various localities. There needs to be a 5 year plan to guide development in an integrated way, linked to medium term budgets. The DDPs and LDPs will become the primary plans of local government.
- Co-ordination within each sphere of governance (in this case the District) which will indicate the responsibilities of the District Council; the responsibilities of the Local Councils; and agreement on strategic priorities.
- Co-ordination of government plans with those of private sector role players reflecting a shift from development being focussed only on government funded programmes.

The new approach involves a shift from emphasis on annual budgets to a 3 - 5 year budget cycle, acknowledging that targets may be

changed on an annual basis. It also involves increased emphasis on building capacity to implement the plans. This capacity cannot come solely from government but by means of various arrangements such as Municipal Services Partnerships and Public-Private Partnerships.

In the new legislation the view of integration is seen to extend beyond the building of facilities to include all financial, economic, administrative and social aspects and how facilities are operated, maintained, and used by the community. Another dimension of the new thinking is to ensure that the IDPs are owned and fully integrated into the plans and daily activities of the Councils.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A serious potential implication of the new demarcation is that it appears to have caused a loss of momentum in implementation of the plans. One informant commented that this could result in a 2 -3 year slackening off of implementation. It would be unfortunate if this were to occur given the considerable amount of work put into the planning and implementation processes to date. The intended beneficiaries of the plans, namely the local communities, will suffer most. This is an area that warrants urgent attention at all levels

5.1 Use of the plans and modification to new local authority boundaries

In response to the concern about the demarcation process it was agreed by DTLGA and Regional Councils that the plans would all be completed according to the original boundaries. Now that the new boundaries of Districts and local municipalities have been finalised, these plans will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Given the nature of the changes this should not prove a difficult task and, in most cases, Regional Councils have started to assess the necessary changes. The new District Development Plans (Category C) will need to set clear strategic directions; provide a co-ordinating framework; identify projects of a district wide nature;

and pay more attention to urban issues.

Similarly the sub-regional plans will need to be modified in terms of the new Category B boundaries and blended with IDPs which are being, or have been, produced by the TLCs. This is likely to be a more difficult exercise. The complexity will vary depending on the extent of interaction between the sub-regional and TLC planning teams and the extent to which local IDPs conceptualised their hinterland linkages and responsibilities.

It is recommended that the Office of the Premier take responsibility for ensuring that departmental and service provider boundaries are realigned to the new district and municipal boundaries within a four month period after the demarcation has been finalised.

The implications of these new areas of emphasis are significant for future planning in the new Districts. None of the aspects listed above call for a major change in the direction or approach to planning for integrated development as found in the best practice examples of the regional and sub-regional plans examined. Rather it draws attention to new areas of emphasis and an increasing focus on plans setting more realistic targets and building implementation capacity from a broad base of government, civil society and the private sector. The fundamental nature of integrated plans will not need to change, but the way in which they are prepared and modified to adjust to new boundaries, will have to concentrate on achieving far higher levels of “buy-in” by roleplayers across the spectrum, than before.

The plans, which have, or are in the process of being adopted by Regional Councils, provide strategic guidelines for the preparation of current budgets. They can be used as the framework to guide development until such time as revised plans are formulated by the new district councils and municipalities. It should be recalled that plans are subject to an annual review at which stage project priorities can be reviewed.

In its recommendations the research report argued for the plans be used to inform the inclusion of projects in the current and

upcoming annual work programmes to ensure that implementation momentum is not lost over the election period and that the flow of investment into basic needs projects in the regions is maintained.

5.2 Value of a Manual

It is recommended that a new edition of the Regional Planning Guidelines Manual be undertaken to assist in the revision of the above-mentioned plans and that this be known as the District Development Planning Manual. In either case the guidelines should be far less complex than the current CSIR/GTZ manual but should provide more direction than the current regional planning Manual. If this is not feasible within the time scale it is recommended that standard forms of planning be adopted as indicated below. Any revision to the regional planning manual should cover the following issues:

- New policy and planning context
- Philosophy of integrated development and planning
- Planning process and phasing
- Strategic methodology and planning tools
- Form and content of the plans
- Consultation

5.3 Planning and the on-going development process

In order to emphasize the continuous nature of the development process (which involves far more than the mere preparation of the plans) it is recommended that the following phasing and stages be adopted for District and Local Development Plans:

Phase I Pre-planning

Phase II -Strategic Development Framework

- Stage 1 Development Perspective
- Stage 2 Core issues, vision and goals
- Stage 3 Development strategies
- Stage 4 Spatial development framework

Phase III Implementation Framework

- Stage 5 Project identification and prioritization
- Stage 6 Project implementation programme

- Stage 7 Annual and five year budgets

Phase IV-Monitoring Framework

- Stage 8 Monitoring, evaluation and review arrangements

Phase V-Adoption and communication of the plans

Phase VI-On-going implementation and review

5.3.1 Pre-planning phase

It was strongly recommended that considerable attention be given to the pre-planning phase in the future. This phase should deal with the following:

- identification of key roleplayers within the Regional Council, their respective roles and responsibilities, and the ways in which their day-to-day activities will relate to the planning process.
- formulation of an action plan to involve these roleplayers in the planning process in a manner that enhances internal capacity
- workshopping of the terms of reference for plan preparation and resources required agreement about the time and required budget
- discussion and agreement of the roles of external roleplayers in the process.

5.3.2 Strategic development framework

In addition to the technical aspects of plan preparation involved in this phase it is recommended that every opportunity be taken to build internal and external capacity. Regarding the external capacity, this phase of the process needs to be used to demonstrate practical linkages between the community identified needs and the technical core issues and strategies of addressing them. Within the Regional Councils and District Councils, it is advisable that the relevant departments be more “visible” and more involved in the discussions with the communities when the core issues and strategies are being developed. This would add value to the community discussions and help to manage expectations. At this level all constraints and opportunities are to be workshopped and more ideas exchanged on various options.

This would further assist participants to relate the planning process to the “current”needs/

projects being channelled through to the district Council or municipality, rather than these being considered as mutually exclusive processes. Realistic discussions could include discussion around what the spatial framework promotes or discourages and also testing certain key projects against such spatial frameworks.

5.3.3 Implementation framework

It is recommended that specific attention be given to the re-orientation of internal department plans (eg. Engineering Services, Housing, etc.) as well as those of service providers in support of the integrated development plan. This is essential to refining the budgets and making them much more realistic. A concurrent process is to ensure that day-to-day activities of District Council personnel also be linked to the plans.

5.3.4 Monitoring framework

In order to achieve uniformity it is recommended that a common province-wide approach be adopted for monitoring and review of the District Development Plans by each Council. This should involve an annual audit of projects against the Annual Work Programme; assessment of the impact by means of key performance indicators; and a review of the entire plan at least once every five years. It is also recommended that the service providers be institutionally linked into this monitoring and review process (see 5.11.3 below).

5.4 Components of the plan

5.4.1 Pre-requisites for integrated development planning

The quality of development Plans can be improved if the Regional/District Councils take responsibility for making up to date data available on GIS and mobilising support from Service Providers in sharing information. It is recommended that the Councils (with support from province) take steps to put in place the following pre-requisites:

- 1996 census in a disaggregated form
- verification of settlement data and location of facilities
- common approach to the formulation of "hardship indices" (which are more sensitive than conventional

planning standards) and the criteria for allocation of project funding

- testing the Dalisu model as an approach to project prioritization

5.4.2 Strategic approach

It is recommended that the methodology for preparing development plans change from one of collecting a substantial amount of conventional data at the outset of a planning study, to a more strategic approach in which an initial scan (including a key stakeholder assessment) identifies a problem statement and a number of key issues facing the District/Municipality. These provide the focus for detailed research and the basis for the formulation of a development perspective.

5.4.3 Development perspective

The Development Perspectives could have been improved and given a sharper focus had they concentrated on fundamental ingredients such as:

- Who are the region's residents and what are the primary target groups requiring development inputs?
- Where do people live and what settlement patterns are there?
- How do they meet their basic needs; what services are provided, how and at what cost?
- What are their sources of income; where do people of the region work?
- What are the main modes and patterns of travel about the region?
- What physical infrastructure exists; what is its condition and how is it maintained?
- What institutional arrangements are operational?
- What is the economic base of the region and its localities?
- How are land and natural resources used and managed?
- Who are the main stakeholders in the region and what is the nature of their interests and power bases?
- Key changes and dynamics affecting the economy and settlement patterns
- What criteria and norms are to be used to determine levels of service provision?

It was recommended that these be regarded as minimum requirements

of a Development Perspective in addition to the issues referred to above.

5.4.4 Spatial development framework

There are four recommendations about spatial development. The first is to encourage an interpretation that extends beyond the traditional settlement hierarchies and service provision to rural areas, to one that embraces the notion of spatial service plans in a region resembling a net of places where services are provided, linked by interconnected roads¹³. These are not entirely new ideas and have been used in two recent reports on rural service centres and systems in the province. The second is to standardise terminology particularly about settlement hierarchies.

The third is to accord the spatial development framework a fundamentally more important role in integrated development plans. This applies to its contribution to the development perspective in providing an integrative view of the space economy. Equally it applies in the strategy formulation and project identification stages in providing an integrated picture of the desired settlement and development patterns. It is also a vital dimension for prioritising projects and for monitoring implementation. For these reasons it is a part of the planning which warrants more focussed attention than it received in a number of the plans.

The fourth recommendation is that the following elements be regarded as the minimum expectation of a spatial development framework.

- a basic description of the existing and intended future space economy clearly indicating
 - areas of relative welfare /needs/opportunity
 - concentrations of people and activities
 - networks, flows and linkages

¹³ Harrison, P and A. Todes "New forms of spatial planning for regional development in South Africa". *Regional Studies Association Conference: Regional potentials in an enlarging Europe, September 1999*

	10. 5 – year implementation programme	11. Annual programme work	
	8. Project cycle Project preparation Project planning + feasibility studies Construction or implementation	9. Prioritization Criteria Approach or model	
5. Project reference system Municipality Locality Programme Project Funding source	6. Programme reference system Enabling environ. Institutional support Communications Transportation Water supply Electricity Storm water mangt. Sewage disposal Solid waste disposal Telecommunication	6. Programme.. cont. Housing Land reform Education Health Community facilities Recreation & sport Safety & security Agriculture Tourism Local econ. dev. Industry/commerce	7. Project description Name, ref., location Task Objective Responsibility Duration Estimated cost Likely funding source First steps
1. Terminology Projects Programmes Clusters	2. Demand analysis Pop + household distribution by locality Backlogs + projected demand Planning stds. or hardship indices SDSS model --> scenarios	3. Phasing Current = on-going Short = 1-2 years Medium = 3-5 years Long = 5 + years	4. Projects In pipeline From regional plan Consultation Standing com. Service Providers Dev strategies

FIGURE 1 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR OPERATIONAL PLANNING

- criteria and principles to guide location of facilities and investment below the levels of towns and rural service centres
- guidance as to the future settlement pattern
- guidance for land use management

5.4.5 Building blocks for operational planning

It is recommended that the operational elements of the plan are put together as shown in Figure 1. This figure should be read from the bottom left hand side upwards. These building blocks provide the basis for generating a five year implementation programme and an annual work programs

5.5 Standard Table of Contents

In order for non-planners to understand and use the plans effectively it is recommended that a standard Table of Contents be adopted. This makes plans more readily comparable and more user-friendly to the range of roleplayers for whom they are intended. It is therefore recommended that the following be adopted as minimum requirements for a District Development Plan. This should be

treated as a firm guideline for District Councils, but should not preclude the introduction of modifications should particular circumstances warrant a variation.

5.6 Institutional arrangements

5.6.1 Linking the Planning Committee to the Service Providers Forums

In order to achieve closer links between the planning and implementation processes it is recommended that the Regional Councils and the new District Councils establish a link between their planning committee and the service providers forums. The purpose of the link is to make effective use of the plans and to monitor implementation on an on-going basis. This will promote co-ordination in situations where there are unco-ordinated planning committees at sub-regional level within one Regional Council.

5.6.2 Co-ordinating the planning done by line function departments

In order to achieve better alignment of departmental planning and the District Development Plans (DDPs),

it is recommended that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that the release of funds from line function departments and other service providers only be approved if these are consistent with the District Development Plans.

5.6.3 Service Providers Forums (SPFs)

In order to secure consistency between the plans and implementation by service providers and to get full value of the existence of the SPFs it is recommended that:

- SPFs and their members adopt the sub/regional plans as the framework for decision-making
- the implementation programmes of these plans be adopted as the agenda for SPF meetings
- the SPF activities also be focussed around specific elements of the plan eg. pilot rural service centres
- the SPFs take explicit responsibility for monitoring the progress of each service provider in terms of the plan.

5.7 **Link between DDPs and a Provincial Plan**

It is recommended that the current review of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy be closely aligned with the priorities expressed in the sub/regional plans and the forthcoming DDPs and LDPs to ensure policy consistency and expedite flow of development funding to the Districts.

5.8 **Relation between DDPs and LDPs**

Successful integration of development within each District depends on there being appropriate working relationships between the DDPs and the LDPs.

Accordingly it is recommended in the short term that informal mechanisms be set in place for this purpose and that in the longer term consideration be given to including these in the regulations of the PDA.

5.9 **A "champion" to manage implementation and monitoring**

It is recommended that each Regional/District Council identify a senior person to play the role of "product champion" to drive implementation in terms of the plan and undertake the monitoring function. Ideally, this person should be placed at the director level.

6 CONSULTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Consultation is a fundamental part of the development process therefore it needs to occur throughout the pre-planning, plan formulation, implementation and monitoring stages. In this way communities and other stakeholders themselves take on a role in monitoring implementation

APPENDIX A : LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWP Annual Work Programme
CEO Chief Executive Officer
CSIR Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSS Central Statistical Services
DBSA Development Bank of Southern Africa
DDP District Development Plan
DFA Development Facilitation Act
DLA Department of Land Affairs
DTLGA Department of Traditional and Local Government Affairs (KZN)

Most plans appear to have been guided about levels of consultation, either from the project Steering Committee or from the Regional Council themselves. However, the fact that consultation has been more successful in some cases than in others, points to the need for the consultation process to have clearly defined outcomes. It is therefore recommended that guidelines for consultation be developed and incorporated into the District Planning Manual clearly setting out the expected inputs and outputs of different phases of the development process. This would assist to address the inevitable imbalances which exist in the levels of organisation of different communities and roleplayers. It would also indicate realistic time frames and budgets for consultation.

6.1 **Capacity building.**

Now that most sub/regional plans have been completed and are available for use in guiding decisions (even during the process of communication and adoption), attention needs to be given to ways in which Regional Councils can use the planning process to build capacity. A study is being commissioned by the DLGTA to formulate a management system for municipal development planning. In parallel with this, and in preparation for its use, it is recommended that Regional Councils proceed with a range of training measures based on the plans and ingrain them into the thinking and operations of the Councils and their service providers. In this way the full values of the plans can be realized.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the plans were found to have met the broad expectations for the 1996 - 2000 period, as outlined above. They contain a vast array of useful information and for the most part have succeeded in providing:

- an integrated picture of the sub/region,
- a long term vision, strategies about how to start moving in the desired direction,
- a spatial framework and a set of projects arranged in a phased implementation programs.

Some of the plans at both regional and sub-regional scale achieved this more effectively than others. There is significant room for improvement in the methodologies used; the form and content of the plans produced; and the ways in which the plan-making stages are integrated into the on-going development process and into the daily operations of the Councils.

Overall, the regional and sub-regional plans produced during the last five years have yielded a considerable amount of experience of planning at this scale, in a predominantly rural context. In addition, there are a host of examples of good practice covering virtually every aspect of the planning process. There are also examples, particularly of sub-regional plans, where all these elements have been pulled together into highly coherent and useful plans. For this reason, the study recommended that a follow-up workshop be held including all the consultants who had been involved in the planning initiatives, together with the client bodies and potential users of the plans, so that the lessons and experience could be shared.

PGDS Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme
SDSS Spatial Data Support System
SPF Service Providers Forum
TLC Transitional Local Council
TRPC Town and Regional Planning Commission