

MUNICIPAL DEMARCATION BOARD

RESEARCH POLICY

Applicable to all Board members and Employees of the Municipal Demarcation Board

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1. PURPOSE

To provide a framework for the research function within the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- 2.1. To provide for effective management of research conducted within the Board.
- 2.2. To clarify mechanisms for conducting research within the MDB.
- 2.3. To clarify the roles and responsibilities for different role players.
- 2.4. To ensure preservation of accountability for performance in research projects.
- 2.5. To guide the implementation of the approved Research agenda.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. The policy applies to all the research initiatives which are conducted in the MDB. Initiatives include:
 - a. Research topics as approved by the Board.
 - b. Short, medium to long-term research initiatives that exist within the MDB as listed in the research agenda at a given time; and
 - c. In-house and outsourced research; and
 - d. Municipal Capacity Assessments

4. REFERENCES

- 4.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996).
- 4.2. Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act 27 of 1998) (MDA).
- 4.3. Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) (MSA).
- 4.4. Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) (PAIA).

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5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Act** means the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, as amended from time to time.
- 5.2. **Annual Performance Plan** means a plan that sets out what the MDB intends doing in the particular financial year to implement its Strategic Plan.
- 5.3. **Board** shall mean members of the Board as appointed by the President of the Republic of South Africa in accordance with section 8 of the MDA.
- 5.4. **Committee** means a committee of the Board established in terms of section 18 of the Municipal Demarcation Act.
- 5.5. **Constitution** means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 5.6. **EXCO** means Executive Committee of the MDB comprised of top management team.
- 5.7. **In-house research** shall mean research conducted by the Municipal Demarcation Board internal research team.
- 5.8. **R and KM Committee** means the Research and Knowledge Management Committee appointed by the Board in terms of section 18 of the Municipal Demarcation Act.
- 5.9. **MANCO** means Management Committee of the MDB comprised of top management team and middle managers.
- 5.10. **MDB** shall mean the Municipal Demarcation Board established in terms of section 2 of the MDA.
- 5.11. **Ops and Research Division** shall mean the division within the Municipal Demarcation Board responsible for Operations and Research functions comprising the Core Operations, Operations and Technology, Advisory and Research and Stakeholder Management and Communication units.
- 5.12. **Outsourced research** shall mean research conducted by the Service Provider(s) on behalf of the Municipal Demarcation Board.
- 5.13. **Reference group** shall mean a group of specialist individuals nominated to provide technical guidance on a specific research project.
- 5.14. **Research agenda** shall mean a plan or a set of research areas or topics identified and approved by the Board for prioritisation over a specific period of time.

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5.15. **Research panel** shall mean people with diverse experiences who often help researchers to develop and design research projects at the early stages.

5.16. **Service Level Agreement** means a commitment between a service provider and a client regarding particular aspects of the service to be delivered.

5.17. **Service Provider** means public and private organization, or individual offering a service to others in exchange for payment.

5.18. **Stakeholder** means public and private establishments or, and any other person or institution that may be affected directly or indirectly by the actions of the Board.

6. RATIONALE FOR MUNICIPAL DEMARCATION BOARD'S RESEARCH

6.1 As part of the MDB's strategic outcomes, the MDB aims to improve access to research and spatial information hence a need for the research function to be well established. Research is also identified as a critical tool with which to provide enough information for sound decisions about spatial transformation and gaining spatial intelligence in the boundary determination processes.

6.2 Besides the objectives for the research policy, research is important for the MDB, because it:

- a) Enables the Board to participate in the production and sharing of knowledge, and eventually to have the ability to make sound and informed demarcation decisions.
- b) Provides information to enhance decision making by the Board.
- c) Allows the Board to fulfil its advisory mandate on matters related to its work.

7. RESEARCH AGENDA SETTING

7.1 Prior to the beginning of every new financial year, the Research Unit will identify possible areas of research (Research agenda) and table with Research and Knowledge Management (R & KM) Committee for

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consideration and recommendation for approval by the Board. This is applicable if there is no pre-approved research agenda.

- 7.2 The proposed research areas are therefore prioritised as approved by the Board. In case there is a need to reprioritise the Board still approves the new priorities. Given the dynamic circumstances under which the MDB operates, the focus of research may change depending on the issues prevailing at a given time that may require urgent attention by the Board.
- 7.3 The MDB research agenda is to be confined within the constitutional mandate of the Board and those are:
 - a. Determination of municipal outer-boundaries;
 - b. Delimitation of municipal ward boundaries;
 - c. Assessments of municipal capacity; and
 - d. Rendering of advisory services to stakeholders.
- 7.4 A multi-year research agenda might be approved by the Board as may be necessary.

8. THE MDB RESEARCH PANEL

The following constitute the research panel:

8.1 Research Unit

- a) Is responsible for identifying areas of research, formulation of research problems and ultimately development of research topics.
- b) After the topics are approved by the Board, the research team starts embarking on research tasks in line with quarterly and annual targets as outlined in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) of the financial year in question.

8.2 R & KM Committee

The Committee considers the proposed research topics and recommend research agenda for approval by the Board.

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8.3 The Board

The Board approves the research agenda.

8.4 Reference Group

- a) The CEO may establish a reference group for any research project.
- b) Reference Group may be comprised of members of the Board and representatives from MDB stakeholders and other experts as may be identified.
- c) The mandate and responsibilities of the Reference Group are:
 - i) To review work performed by service providers on behalf of the MDB;
 - ii) Assist in monitoring the performance of service providers in line with the Terms of Reference of the project;
 - iii) Monitor the quality of the reports expected at each milestone;
 - iv) Provide guidance to the service provider(s) on the content and help in steering the project, and
 - v) Assist the MDB in defining the parameters of the project before commissioning.

9. CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH PROJECTS CONDUCTED

9.1 In-house research

- a) These are research activities that are conducted by the MDB internal research team.
- b) The initial phase is that of drafting the Research Proposal pertaining to the research topic in question.
- c) The research proposal outlines the framework for conducting the research starting with the research problem, research methodology to be employed up to the dissemination of the research findings.
- d) The nature of the research problem dictates the research methodology to be employed when conducting research for various research topics.

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9.2 Outsourced research

- a) These are research activities within the MDB that are outsourced to the Service Providers,
- b) In such cases, the Terms of Reference are developed in line with MDB supply chain policy signed and approved by the CEO.
- c) Ultimately, the Service Level Agreement is signed between the MDB and the successful bidder prior to the commencement of the outsourced research project(s).

10. REPORTING STANDARDS

10.1 Reporting standards for internal staff relating to the in-house research

- a) Monitoring the progress and status of the research project(s) conducted internally is reported to MANCO and EXCO as may be necessary.
- b) The drafts of research report(s) produced are firstly circulated to Operations and Research Divisional Managers for inputs before they are tabled at EXCO and/or MANCO for inputs and consideration.
- c) Final research reports must be tabled with Research and Knowledge Management Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Board for approval.
- d) Once the research reports are approved by the Board, they must be uploaded to the MDB website to serve as sources of information to be utilised by the Board for improved and better decision-making on demarcation processes. Other reports may serve as sources to influence policy development and legislative amendments in government.

10.2 Reporting standards for Service Providers relating to the outsourced research

- a) The Service Level Agreement which is a signed contract between the MDB and Service Provider(s) for a particular project provides detailed information pertaining to reporting standards.

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- b) The MDB Project manager, who normally is the head of research or anyone as might be delegated by him or her will constantly update the management about the status of the outsourced project(s).
- c) The MDB team, that is, a team established specifically for a particular project that works together with the Project team assigned to the project by the Service Provider tables the progress and status of the project (s) with the Reference group.
- d) The Reference Group to perform function referred to in paragraph 8.4 (c) (i) to (v).
- e) Finally, once the project is finalised then all the project reports are submitted to the Board by the Service Provider(s) for approval as well as the close-out report for consideration by the CEO.
- f) Once the research reports are approved by the Board, they must be uploaded to the MDB website to serve as sources of information to be utilised by the Board for improved and better decision-making on demarcation processes as well as to influence policy development elsewhere in government and legislative amendments.

/end