

CIRCULAR 3 OF 2024



To: Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
MECs of Provincial Departments responsible for Local Government
Chairpersons of National & Provincial Houses of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders
President of South African Local Government Association
Chairperson of Electoral Commission
Mayors of affected Metropolitan, District and Local Municipalities

Cc: Speakers of all Metropolitan, District and Local Municipalities
HOD's of Provincial Departments responsible for Local Government
PEO's of Electoral Commission of South Africa
Municipal Managers Metropolitan, District and Local Municipalities
Chief Surveyor General
Chief Electoral Officer
Chief Executive Officer of SALGA
Statistician – General
Members of extended Boundaries, Powers and Function Committee
Members of Local Elections Technical Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

CIRCULAR 3/2024: DELIMITATION OF WARDS 2024-2025 IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

PURPOSE

1. To inform Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) stakeholders about the 2024-2026 ward delimitation programme with; and
2. Provide an update regarding the municipal boundary re-determinations process and the deferred cases.

BACKGROUND

3. In terms of section 157(4)(a) of the Constitution read with Schedule 1 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (MSA) as amended, the MDB has the sole responsibility to delimit wards for every new term of office of municipal councils.

This requires that the MDB, after consultation with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) and, for purposes of an election, must delimit all metropolitan municipalities and all local municipalities that must have wards, into wards. Municipal wards are reviewed every five (5) years.

4. Accordingly, the review of municipal ward boundaries needs to be completed on time before local government elections to allow sufficient time for the IEC to make necessary preparations for the elections.

SUMMARY OF THE MUNICIPAL WARD DELIMITATION PROCESS

5. Considering lessons learnt in the previous ward delimitation process and having observed that most community members and stakeholders lack adequate comprehension of the process, the MDB has taken the decision to initiate an education and awareness campaign before the commencement of ward delimitation in the current period.
6. The abovementioned campaign is included as part of the broader ward delimitation programme and is planned to take place between July and September 2024.
7. This will involve, visits to municipalities by MDB officials to deliver, presentations to municipal stakeholder IGR forums, provincial IGR forums, IEC party liaison committees, National and Provincial Houses of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders etc. A myriad of media publications and broadcasts will be carried out, including social media posts and MDB website and partner websites to amplify the campaign.
8. Prior to the commencement of the ward delimitations, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) is required, in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, to determine and publish a formula for determining the number of councillors for each municipality by notice in the Government Gazette.
9. After the formula is published by the Minister, MEC's responsible for local government must determine the specific number of councillors for each municipality, and to then publish same in their respective provincial gazette. The MDB urges the MEC's to prioritise this process by ensuring that they determine and publish the number of councillors for their municipalities immediately after publication of the formula by the Minister.

10. Following the publication of the number of councillors, the MDB will divide the total number of councillors by two to determine the number of wards per municipality.
11. Once the number of wards has been determined, MDB must calculate the norm (*average number of registered voters per ward*), which account for 15% variances. Thereafter, the MDB must embark on a process of delimiting wards in all local and metropolitan municipalities.
12. The MDB envisages that the ward delimitation process will be completed by October 2025.

BROAD TIME FRAMES FOR DELIMITATION OF WARDS

13. The table below outlines the different activities that make up the ward delimitation process. The ward delimitation process will be carried out in four phases.
14. In **phase 1**, the MDB will conduct the education and awareness sessions between July and September 2024.
15. The awareness and education programme will involve visits to municipalities by MDB officials, presentations to municipal stakeholder IGR forums, provincial IGR forums, IEC party liaison committees, National, Provincial and Local Houses of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders etc. A myriad of media publications and broadcasts will be carried out, including social media posts, MDB website and partner websites. This is a pre-ward delimitation process, as the MDB will only be providing information about the ward delimitation process, to empower stakeholders and members of the public as and when they participate in the process. In this period stakeholders and communities can organise themselves and invite the MDB to present on the ward delimitation process, however, due to limited financial and human resources, the MDB prefers the usage of virtual platforms as far as possible.
16. As outlined in the table below, after the **Phase 1**, the MDB will commence with the technical consultation sessions, which will mark the commencement of Phase 2.
17. From October 2024 to February 2025, the MDB will conduct technical sessions with Planning and GIS officials from each local municipality.

18. These sessions are intended to provide officials with an opportunity to make inputs and configure the first set of draft wards for their municipality. This is a critical stage of the process because it allows the MDB to gather local, technical, and practical insights about geographical challenges on proposed draft wards before public consultations on the determination of wards.
19. These sessions will be held at the local municipality. Planning and GIS officials are encouraged to participate in the process. While municipal participation in this process is crucial and beneficial to municipalities, failure to attend will not stop the MDB from proceeding with the ward delimitation process.
20. After the preparation of draft wards, as part of phase 3, the MDB will start with the public consultation process. Note that draft wards are solely for consultation purposes and do not have any legal standing.
21. The MDB will map the first set of draft wards and present these at the public consultation meetings between April and May 2025 where members of the public and stakeholders will be able to make comments on the first set of draft wards or alternatively submit their own proposals. It is to be also noted that this is not part of the current legal obligations, but MDB's own initiative. This will be conducted at municipal level i.e. one public meeting per municipality and anyone from any of the wards in a municipality may attend.
22. These public meetings will be at suitable venues as may be recommended by the municipality in consultation with the MDB.
23. Details of these public meetings will, as far as possible be published in community newspapers and broadcast via community radio stations to drive maximum reach and participation.
24. Following the public meetings, the MDB will consider all inputs received, configure, and determine wards and publish in provincial gazettes inviting objections in terms of schedule 1, item 5 of the MSA within 14 days of publication.
25. The gazette details will, as far as possible be published in community newspapers and broadcast via community radio stations.
26. The publication of notices in provincial gazettes forms part of Phase 4 of the ward delimitation process. This is the final part of the process, which culminates with the MDB considering all objections received and taking of final decision of ward.
27. After considering objections received, the Board has two options. The may either confirm for objections or vary its decisions as published. The final decision will,

thereafter, be published in provincial gazettes. This marks the end of the ward delimitation process. The MDB will not be able to perform any further ward delimitations nor amendments at this stage.

28. Final ward boundaries for the 2026 local government elections will then be handed over to the IEC.

Table 1: Broad municipal ward delimitation plan (MDB reserves the right effect changes to this as and when necessary)

PHASE	ACTIVITIES	DATES	RESPONSIBILITY
PHASE 1	RECEIVE CERTIFIED VOTERS ROLL FROM IEC	MARCH 2024	IEC
	MDB CONSULTS WITH IEC	JUNE/JULY 2024	MDB/IEC
	PRESENT WARD DELIMITATION PLAN TO MAYORS AND SPEAKERS	JULY – SEPT 2024	MDB
	PRESENT WARD DELIMITATION PLAN TO HOUSES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS	JULY – SEPT 2024	MDB
	PRESENT WARD DELIMITATION PLAN TO IEC PLC	JULY – SEPT 2024	MDB
	ESTABLISH WARD DELIMITATION COMMITTEES	JULY – SEPT 2024	MDB
	WARD AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS FOR PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDERS	JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024	MDB
	PUBLICATION OF THE FORMULAE TO CALCULATE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS	AUGUST 2024	MINISTER OF COGTA
	PUBLICATION OF NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS BY PROVINCIAL MEC'S RESPONSIBLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT	SEPTEMBER 2024	PROVINCIAL MEC'S RESPONSIBLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
	CALCULATION OF THE NUMBER OF WARDS AND THE NORM FOR EACH MUNICIPALITY	SEPTEMBER 2024	MDB
	MEDIA BROADCAST OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WARD DELIMITATION PROCESS	SEPTEMBER 2024	MDB
PHASE 2	TECHNICAL CONFIGURATION OF DRAFT WARDS IN CONSULTATION WITH GIS AND PLANNING OFFICIALS OF MUNICIPALITIES	OCTOBER 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025	MDB
	FINALISE DRAFT WARDS FOR ALL MUNICIPALITIES	FEBRUARY 2025	MDB
	PRESENT DRAFT WARDS TO THE BOARD	MARCH 2025	MDB

PHASE	ACTIVITIES	DATES	RESPONSIBILITY
PHASE 3	SCHEDULE AND CONFIRM PUBLIC CONSULTATION SESSIONS	MARCH 2025	MDB
	MEDIA BROADCAST OF CONSULTATION ON DRAFT WARDS	MARCH 2025	MDB
	PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT WARDS	APRIL – MAY 2025	MDB
	FINALISE DRAFT WARDS AFTER RECEIVING INPUTS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND/OR SUBMISSIONS	JUNE 2025	MDB
	PRESENT DRAFT WARDS TO THE BOARD	JUNE 2025	MDB
	PUBLICATION OF DRAFT WARDS FOR OBJECTIONS	JULY 2025	MDB
	MEDIA BROADCAST FOR PUBLICATION OF DRAFT SET 2 WARDS FOR OBJECTIONS	JULY 2025	MDB
PHASE 4	PROCESS OBJECTIONS RECEIVED	AUGUST 2025	MDB
	PRESENT OBJECTIONS TO WARD DELIMITATION COMMITTEES	AUGUST 2025	MDB
	PRESENT OBJECTIONS TO BOARD	SEPTEMBER 2025	MDB
	PUBLISH FINAL WARDS	OCTOBER 2025	MDB
	MEDIA BROADCAST FOR PUBLICATION OF FINAL WARDS	OCTOBER 2025	MDB
	PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO OBJECTORS	OCTOBER 2025	MDB
	WARD HANDOVER TO IEC – PRESS RELEASE	OCTOBER 2025	MDB

IMPACT OF THE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY RE-DETERMINATION PROCESS ON WARD DELIMITATION.

Deferred/Outstanding cases Municipal Boundary Re-determination

29. In February 2024, the MDB completed the municipal boundary re-determination process. As communicated through Circular 2 of 2024, the MDB deferred several municipal boundary re-determination proposals pending further research and stakeholder engagements (**See Annexure A**).

30. In this regard, the MDB is will be continuing with the research and stakeholder engagement process between July 2024 and end of March 2025. Thereafter, if the MDB is of a view that municipal boundaries should be re-determined, the municipal boundary re-determination process will be conducted between April 2025 for completion by September 2025.
31. It should be noted that, the ward delimitation process for the municipalities affected by these municipal boundary redetermination proposals (**See Annexure A**) will be conducted on completion of this process. In this regard, ward delimitation is tentatively planned to take place between October and December 2025. However, all this is dependent on the outcome of the municipal boundary re-determination process, which could be completed earlier that September 2025. The MDB will keep all affected stakeholders updated on the progress regarding the municipal boundary re-determination process for the deferred cases and the subsequent ward delimitation process.

Municipalities affected by the municipal boundary re-determination process completed in February 2024.

32. After publication of its final determinations as outlined in Circular 2 of 2024, the IEC has, in terms of section 23 of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act (MDA), determined and published its views if the municipal boundary change will have material impact on affected municipal councils or not. Thereafter, the MDB has forwarded such details to the MECs responsible for local government in each province to, in terms of section 23 of the MDA determine the date of effect. MEC's determinations are still outstanding.
33. However, the MDB will delimit wards according to the new municipal boundaries. This includes, in instances where the creation of a new municipality was an outcome of the municipal boundary re-determination process.
34. Note that activities regarding the official establishment of municipality and relevant transitional arrangements are responsibilities of the MEC responsible for local government in terms of section 12 of the MSA.

CONCLUSION

35. The MDB will endeavour to provide everyone with an update should there be any changes to the programme.

36. The MDB would like to thank municipalities for the continued support and hope to continue with the partnership during the ward delimitation process. The support and active participation of MDB stakeholders, especially municipalities is critical to make this process successful. The municipalities are requested to formally deploy municipal officials to focus on coordinating municipal activities regarding the ward delimitations process and serve as contact persons between the municipality and the MDB. The municipality is hereby requested to complete the attached form and urgently return to the MDB by not later than the 15th of July 2024
37. We wish to assure everyone that the MDB is committed to meaningful citizen engagement and urges all stakeholders to assist in ensuring that affected members of the public are empowered to participate in this process.

Regards



MR TM MANYONI

CHAIRPERSON: MUNICIPAL DEMARCATION BOARD

DATE: 26.06.2024

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Municipal Demarcation Board

Private Bag X123

Centurion

0046

South Africa

Telephone: 012 3422481

Fax: 012-3422480

E-mail: registry@demarcation.org.za

Contact details of provincial staff members:

PROVINCE	CONTACT	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Eastern Cape	Ayanda Ntamo	0871504423
Free State	Fazel Hoosen	0871504424
Gauteng	Hester Marais	087150 4430
Kwazulu-Natal	Mthobisi Manzini	0871504431
Limpopo	Tshifhiwa Nethanani	0871504427
Mpumalanga	Hester Marais	0871504430
North West	Liz Mazibuko	0871504434
Northern Cape	Smiso Dlamini	0871504432
Western Cape	Naomi Ramakgopa	0871504433