



**TO:**

- **Directors-General**
- **Heads of Department responsible for local government in the provinces**
- **Chief Executive Officer of SALGA**
- **Municipal Managers**

**CIRCULAR NO. 4 OF 2021  
SOUTH AFRICAN SMART CITIES FRAMEWORK**

1. Following many interactions and engagements with various stakeholders over the last financial year, the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) has, in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research finalised the attached "*South African Smart Cities Framework*" – (SCF).
2. The DCoG would like to thank all contributors for their comments and inputs towards the development of the SCF. All stakeholders are requested to thoroughly interact with the SCF to familiarise themselves with the contents thereof before considering Smart City initiatives.
3. Due regard must be given to limited financial resources and the priority to provide basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, waste removal, health-care and housing, as well as other more critical needs of many communities. Therefore, to make a meaningful contribution to improving the quality of life of all citizens, smart initiatives and interventions should address the key problems that municipalities are facing and must respond appropriately to local challenges.
4. Noting that this is a framework, the SCF serves as a support instrument or as a guide for municipalities and stakeholders that are considering smart city initiatives. It is further intended to -
  - share learning on Smart Cities and perceived limitations of these types of interventions;
  - outline a set of interdependent principles and critical issues to guide decision-making for Smart Cities; and
  - details pre-conditions and enablers when initiating Smart City interventions.

## Six Inter-dependent Principles

3. The SCF provides that for a Smart City to be inclusive, it should adhere to the following six inter-dependent principles (to inform decision-making relating to the identification, planning and implementation of smart initiatives and technologies):

Is smart for all	Initiatives should not be implemented at the expense of, or to the detriment of certain parts of a municipality, or sectors of society.
Uses technology as an enabler rather than a driver	The selection and implementation of technologies should be informed by real needs and requirements rather than the assumption that technology in itself will solve a particular problem.
Is shaped by, and responds to, the local context	An ideal of a smart city should not drive the planning and implementation of smart cities.
Is informed by the real needs of the community	Active participation of community in the identification, development and implementation of smart city initiatives,
Embraces innovation, partnerships and collaboration	Should incorporate a collection of several projects, initiatives and actions.
Is sustainable, resilient and safe	Complementing Sustainable Development Goal 11 (cities to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

## Pre-conditions and Enablers

4. The SCF also requires certain pre-conditions and enablers that must be considered when implementing Smart City initiatives.

<u>Pre-conditions</u> for Becoming Smarter		<u>Enablers</u> for Implementing Smart City Initiatives and Technologies	
<b>Institutional and organisational arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to consider – robustness of current governance structures, levels of intra- and extra-cooperation, policies and by-laws, vacancy levels</li> </ul>	<b>A smart city plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherent effort across municipality</li> <li>What is the intention of the plan?</li> </ul>
		<b>Digital infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there physical assets to operate technologies?</li> <li>How can 4IR technologies be exploited?</li> </ul>
<b>Existing infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves an assessment of existing infrastructure, facilities, amenities – for example, w.r.t. housing, quality or condition, quantities or number per population, age, distribution, backlog, and planned developments</li> </ul>	<b>Skilled people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the people with the right skills and abilities in the right places (and not just the right technology)?</li> <li>Will upskilling be an option?</li> <li>What skills will be required in the future?</li> </ul>

<b><u>Pre-conditions</u> for Becoming Smarter</b>		<b><u>Enablers</u> for Implementing Smart City Initiatives and Technologies</b>	
<b>Capacity of government officials and communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are skilled people available to utilise the infrastructure?</li> <li>• Factors to consider include people's knowledge, skills, competencies, experience, qualifications, attitudes, values and past performance, as well as possible re-skilling and training programmes</li> <li>• Do communities have capacity to participate in and contribute to smart city initiatives?</li> </ul>	<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who should take ultimate responsibility?</li> <li>• How do all Units contribute meaningfully?</li> <li>• How is performance and impact of cross-cutting initiatives measured?</li> </ul>
		<b>Community involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community could refer to all stakeholders (residents, business, universities, government, industry)</li> </ul>

### **Alignment with IDPs, NDP, IUDF and DDM**

5. As the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) remains the overall plan for development at a local level, the SCF requires that any Smart City intervention in a municipality must be incorporated into the IDP process. In addition, such interventions should also be guided by, or support the intentions of the *National Development Plan 2030* (NDP), the *Integrated Urban Development Framework* (IUDF) and the *District Development Model* (DDM). The IUDF and the DDM reflect a cross-government concern with improving the effectiveness of the management of cities and towns.
6. As with the conceptualisation and subsequent implementation of any project, municipalities must ensure that adequate financial resources are available and due processes are followed before introducing any Smart City initiative.

You are welcome to contact Dr Kevin Naidoo, Executive Manager: Municipal Governance by e-mail at: [smartcities@cogta.gov.za](mailto:smartcities@cogta.gov.za), or by telephone at: 0123954616 for further enquiries relating to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



**MS AA WILLIAMSON**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
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