

Comparative Sustainability Assessment as a Gauge of Sustainable Community Development in South Africa

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Abstract : High levels of urbanisation and the lingering effects of Apartheid have caused South African municipalities to experience difficulties in planning for sustainability and, more specifically, sustainable community development. Sustainable community development is needed in order to achieve more integrated and sustainable towns and cities with an improved living environment and a higher quality of life. Due to this, sustainable community development is of particular relevance to South Africa. Although policies and legislation exist at international, national and local level, there is a lack of suitable planning instruments to guide sustainable community development. Tlokwe Local Municipality is researched in this paper as study area to test and develop planning instruments for sustainable community development. A comparative assessment matrix of sustainability indicators is linked to Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) and applied to identify the themes and sub-themes applicable to sustainability in which intervention is required to improve the sustainability rating of the municipality. The result of the comparative sustainability assessment is that the Tlokwe Local Municipality is considered to be relatively sustainable, performing overall better than the three spheres of government against which it was measured. It is recommended that municipalities use the comparative assessment matrix method to determine its level of sustainability when developing respective sectorial plans (SDFs, ITPs, EMFs and IDPs). Areas in which there is a lack of sustainability are highlighted and can consequently be addressed through intervention strategies. The comparative assessment matrix method is a valuable planning instrument with which to achieve sustainable community development.

Keywords : sustainable community development, sustainability indicators, comparative sustainability, urbanisation, development planning, urban management

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