INTRODUCTION

Through the development of the Provincial-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (PWMES), it is noted that one of the fundamental aspects to any M&E system, regardless of the approach taken, is a key set of indicators used for the purpose of measuring the achievement of an organisation against its objectives. A set of key measurable indicators not only provide a quality assessment but also allows for efficient improvement guided by the information presented.

For the purpose of Provincial-wide Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the Western Cape, indicator frameworks are essential tools for the measurement of the progress the province is making in relation to the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP), provincial strategies and policy areas. The frameworks are periodically updated and aligned to ensure progress is measured in the context of the provincial strategic priorities.

RESULTS-BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is well documented that the principle of results based management is an approach ensuring that all projects and programmes contribute to the realisation of clearly stated results. In the case of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC), all departments contribute towards the achievement of the Strategic Objectives of the PSP. M&E for the PGWC is done through the PWMES which has adopted the Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) approach.

The PWMES is a also an indicator-based system which at its core measures the progress and monitors the outcomes of the PGWC against its developmental and strategic agendas. Key to the PWMES are indicator frameworks which essentially serve as the measuring frameworks of these developmental and strategic agendas.

The results-based monitoring and evaluation approach used to develop key indicators to measure “results”, which means measuring outcomes, meant that the PWMES indicators had to be aligned and clustered to a policy area or statistical theme which had relevance to global and national imperatives. This provides a means of verifying the effectiveness and progress of government policies towards achieving its intended purpose.
DEVELOPING THE INDICATOR FRAMEWORKS FOR THE PWMES

National clusters and statistical themes

The existing compendium of indicators for the PWMES was used as a reference point. The Development Indicator publication of the Presidency and the statistical themes used for statistical production by Statistics South Africa were also used as reference points. The existing compendium of indicators was aligned and clustered to the following themes:

1. Economic Growth and Transformation
2. Prices
3. Employment, job creation and decent work
4. Life circumstances, service delivery and poverty
5. Health
6. Education
7. Sustainable Resource Management

For the purpose of deriving baseline data to measure results as a departure point, only the outcome indicators for which data was accessible was used.

Further, outcomes and output indicators were disaggregated to make sure that the suggested indicators are relevant across multi-sectors and cover the core thematic areas of relevance to this province. It focuses on the poor and addresses the concerns of multiple stakeholder groups.

Selecting indicators

The ambitious scale of the PWMES means that the selection of appropriate indicators is a difficult and intricate exercise. Indicators at a provincial level are often too distant from the source of development at an operational level in terms of tangible links. However, an effective indicator framework that monitors the developmental effects at a provincial level is of high importance and therefore the development of an appropriate indicator framework was undertaken.

The methodological soundness of the indicator development process in selecting good development indicators was essentially a set of criteria as identified within the requirements of the National Statistical System (NSS) of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and also the methodological soundness of data quality.

Thus, the criteria for selecting appropriate indicators was based on the relevance of the indicators, how clear and unambiguous the indicators are, the availability of the indicators and how adequate the indicators are to provide a sufficient base and a trend analysis to serve as strategic management information. The criteria were also based on the reliability, accuracy, accessibility and timeliness of the indicators.

Furthermore, as indicators should be reliable and valid to ensure that what is being measured at one time is what is also measured at regular intervals, and that which is measured is actually what is intended. Caution was exercised in setting indicators according to the ease with which data could be collected or how readily available the data is. Much emphasis was placed on
how important the PWMES compendium of indicators are in measuring the extent/state of development in the province of the Western Cape taking into account the global and national imperatives and taking cognisance of level of measurement required for the data trends in measuring results for the Provincial Strategic Agenda of PGWC, with due consideration to the availability and accessibility of the data.

**Type of indicators**

The PWMES has undertaken to provide outcome indicators and analysis thereof as dictated by using a results-based management approach. The outcome indicators provide a base in studying the progress of the PGWC against its intended developmental goals.

The quantitative indicators selected are based on the reporting in terms of the number, the mean, the median or percentage concerned. The latter was either in a particular outcome category, below a target outcome or above a target outcome. It was also noted that the number (in positive) does not relate to the rate of success, and the percentage (increase or decrease) does not relate to the size of the success.

On the other hand, the qualitative indicators implied the qualitative assessment, compliance with quality, extent of and level of an outcome. The indicator development process acknowledges that despite there being a role for qualitative data, it is more time consuming to collect and harder to verify because it often involves subjective judgements about circumstances at a given time.

**Pre-design and proxy indicators**

Sometimes it is difficult to measure the outcome indicators directly, so proxy indicators are needed. Indirect, or proxy, indicators were considered during the indicator development process. This process was only considered when it was evident that:

- the data for the direct indicators is not completely unavailable,
- data collection would be too costly, or
- it is not feasible to collect data at regular intervals.

However, caution was exercised in using proxy indicators, because there has to be a presumption that the proxy indicator is gaining at least approximate evidence on performance. The significance of proxy indicators is witnessed during the process of data sourcing where data against a specific indicator is not accessible and hence the use of a proxy indicator is necessitated.

The use of the pre-design indicators from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the GWMES was considered in the situation where indicators could be aggregated across similar policy themes. This would reduce costs of building multiple unique measurement systems for the PWMES. It was noted that sometimes pre-design indicators do not address the specific policy imperatives of the province, that it is viewed as imposed or top-down and that it could lead to the adoption of multiple competing indicators.
Technical consultative process

Constructing indicators is regarded as time consuming and needs sufficient and effective participatory engagement with critical role players to do justice to the process.

As indicators should also be clear, easy to understand and not ambiguous in its application, the Indicator Development process for the PWMES included workshop sessions with the Provincial-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Forum of the PGWC to test the ease of conceptualising and understanding. On completion of such participatory engagements and analysis of comments, the Indicator Framework for the PWMES would serve as the platform against which data would be collected and updated annually.

As indicators should be monitorable, (meaning that they can be independently validated or verified), in-depth and technical workshops served as a verification of the compendium of indicators. Key elements within the in-depth technical consultative process ensured consensus on the following:

- Ensuring that the measurable outcome indicator for the respective policy and or statistical theme is correctly aligned and clustered.
- Ensuring that the PWMES indicators:
  - Are substantially feasible, technical, do-able and policy relevant
  - Are relevant and reliable
  - Test and validate the phrasing of the quantitative and qualitative indicators to ensure that the indicators measure the intended outcomes

INDICATOR AND DATA RELEASE

Reporting on the indicators and data sourced for the indicators is done annually through the Indicator and Data Release produced by the PWMES. It is important to note that indicators serve as an approximation of the achievement of the intended goals and objectives. Indicators do not provide the reasons for success or failure in achieving results but they do provide the base for analysing these reasons of success or failure.
# Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>M &amp; E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Statistical System</td>
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<td>PGWC</td>
<td>Provincial Government of the Western Cape</td>
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<td>PSP</td>
<td>Provincial Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>PWMES</td>
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