

## 12 WAY FORWARD: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The key performance areas and objectives detailed in the departmental operational strategies in the IDP need to be borne in mind when considering strategic priorities for environmental management in the EMM. The objectives of the Environment and Tourism department (E&T) are to:

- Ensure environmental planning and co-ordination;
- Ensure environmental impact management;
- Ensure environmental law enforcement and quality control involving:
  - The control of pollution;
  - Continual improvement in environmental quality;
  - Ensuring rehabilitation; and
- Ensure environmental education and awareness.

The foundations for achieving these objectives are policy, legislation, programmes and plans. Some policy is already planned, such as the wetlands policy, and key programmes, such as the IEMF, are in the pipeline. It should be noted that the diverse nature of environmental issues and management means that several departments have jurisdictions over different aspects of environmental management. All the relevant departments therefore need to be involved in the development of appropriate policies and to develop their own environmental management plans. The integration of all “sectoral” plans like the SoER, SDF and IDP, Integrated Transport Plan, the Water Development Plan etc, should be high on the agenda of the EMM. It is important that alignment between all plans be achieved to give effect to a truly “integrated” planning approach.

EMM is predominantly urban, therefore the environmental concerns are primarily urban-developmental or ‘brown’ issues. However, the Metro has extensive undeveloped land and agricultural zones, and so it also has considerable conservation, ‘green’ resources and ‘green’ issues. Shortage of funds, widespread poverty and inequality, poor levels of service in some areas, capacity problems in government: these are all issues being experienced by virtually every municipality in the country. EMM is fortunate in its economically strategic position, fortunate because this means it has considerable economic resources and has national and provincial backing to ensure that it succeeds. So while the list of tasks may seem daunting, there are good reasons why the potential to accomplish a good deal of the list is high. The following sections highlight the priorities.

### 12.1 HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Programmes to address developmental and service delivery in the human environment – the fundamentals of a good environmental quality in the human environment – are the core business of many departments of local government; E&T involvement in them must of necessity be secondary, since the department cannot take on the entire gamut of the EMM’s functions and services. Nevertheless, such is the strength of the relationship between poverty and environment, that this is an arena which cannot be ignored by the environmental authorities.

- **Inequality and poverty** in EMM has many environmental and health-related aspects that could be addressed within the ambit of sustainable development:
  - Support for *service delivery* in poor formal townships and informal settlements can be focused on delivery in terms of monitoring of environmental quality parameters, notably water quality and air quality, prompt follow-up when unacceptable levels of pollution are detected and enforcement of standards and regulations with which other agencies must comply. Of particular importance are the health and safety problems associated with indoor and ambient air pollution resulting from the use of wood, coal and paraffin for cooking, heating and lighting; reliance on polluted water; illegal dumping and littering, particularly in open spaces;
  - Development of waste management services in marginalised areas: waste management which focuses on re-use and re-cycling has high multiplier potential in employment creation, and is an area where social development and environmental management objectives coincide nicely. It is a vehicle whereby funds from donors and DEAT's Poverty Alleviation programmes can be carried into the EMM;
  - Input into spatial planning: E&T can address the proximity of informal settlements, communities and some residential areas to *unhealthy/hazardous* areas like JIA, industrial, mining areas and wetlands in integrated planning exercises. GDACEL's buffer zone policy has assisted in quantifying this issue, however the data requires updating, specifically in relation to mining and the location of waste disposal facilities;
- The social and economic impacts of **HIV/AIDS** are well known. Considering that the prevalence rate in the EMM is higher than that for Gauteng, this issue urgently needs to be addressed;
- **Crime** and **unemployment** are arguably the most important issues faced by society in South Africa. E&T can assist in the fight against crime by developing an open space plan and policy which rationalises open space in the metropolitan area, and developing an open space and park management system which makes such areas attractive for recreational use by ensuring public security. There are many ways in which E&T can facilitate employment creating projects, notably in waste management, environmental education, reserve management, outdoor recreation area management;
- A more focused effort in **environmental education** and awareness, particularly in poorer areas where public health and hygiene issues may carry the message, is needed;
- **Tourism** resources need to be developed;
- **Noise** issues related to air traffic need to be addressed in planning. Further attention on ambient noise levels due to industry and transport is required.

## 12.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Further assessment of the status of cultural heritage resources, particularly with regards to **archaeological resources** and **African heritage** and history is required;
- Degradation of **archaeological resources** in Klipriversberg/Meyersdal area requires that management measures be devised and implemented. The area requires formal protection and should possibly be declared a heritage site.
- Raising public awareness of EMM's cultural heritage resources

- Developing public-private partnerships to restore architectural heritage in precincts and to develop commercial, leisure, tourism and business opportunities associated with heritage resources.

### 12.3 LAND AND SOILS

- Programmes/projects to address development plans or lack thereof which are leading to the **unsustainable use of land and open spaces** including:
  - Loss of open space and unplanned uses (an Open Space Plan should be developed, in combination with the biodiversity assessment referred to elsewhere);
  - Areas of moderate to high agricultural potential being subject to other uses including illegal industrial activity and informal settlement developments; remaining agricultural resources and activities need to be protected, including smallholdings;
  - Poor land use practices including illegal dumping;
  - Rehabilitation or development of derelict tracts of land;
- Initiatives to better control **mining activities** and address the tarnished legacy of mining are urgently required. Specific areas and mines need to be prioritised for rehabilitation;
- The need for improved co-operative governance with respect to mining is emphasised and a mining **policy** is required;
- Consideration of **environmental legislation and policy** needs to be given to all developments in this regard.

### 12.4 WATER RESOURCES

- Metropolitan responsibilities in monitoring surface water quality throughout the EMM need to be strengthened, and enforcement promoted;
- Improvement in **flood management** is required. This is associated with illegal land development, specifically in the 1:50 year floodlines of rivers. The following activities are needed for this:
  - Determine “indicative” *flood envelopes* to quantify the flooding problems;
  - Carry out a *flood risk assessment* to prioritise the flooding problems; and
  - Carry out *stormwater master plan* (SMP) studies to determine required flood protection measures;
- Focus should be given to developing a **wetland and water resource management policy** and management plans for priority wetlands;
- The scope to **involve Working for Water** in the EMM needs to be investigated from water resource, biodiversity and social development perspectives;
- The lack of capacity of mines to continue **pumping groundwater** needs to be urgently addressed;
- Groundwater quality and the impacts thereof needs to be studied;
- The control of **discharges** from mines and industry needs to be controlled and legislation enforced, particularly in areas where wetlands are of high conservation and ecosystem function value;
- Discharges and dumping from **informal settlements** and **townships** need to be quantified and addressed;

- The capability to deal with pollution spills/ chemical emergencies needs to be developed and supported on a long term basis, given the extent of the transport network in the municipality;
- Water resource management planning needs to be integrated with **disaster management**.

## 12.5 ATMOSPHERE

- Electrification and alternate energy sources for poorer areas for energy is urgently required to address **indoor** and **ambient air pollution** and resulting health problems. E&T could implement projects promoting the use of solar alternative technology products in townships;
- Air quality monitoring and enforcement of standards needs to be strengthened;
- The impacts of transport emissions (road and air) need to be quantified;
- Air quality by-laws need to be developed.

## 12.6 BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

- There is an urgent need for an **increase in the area reserved/protected** for conservation purposes;
- The **Meyersdal** area needs to be declared a protected area, due to the current degradation of the area;
- **Aquatic habitats** require urgent attention. The following are priorities:
  - A focused management plan should be developed, based on thorough analysis (see biodiversity and habitat assessment and Open Space Plan below);
  - The functionality of corridors between pans and wetlands need to be established and incorporated into the management plan;
  - E&T needs to put in place long-term strategies to fund the management of these important areas.
- A holistic approach to the **conservation of biodiversity** needs to be taken. That is, there needs to be an emphasis and consideration on all components and levels of biodiversity, and not simply at the species level. It is recommended that a full habitat and biodiversity status assessment be done of the EMM's reserves and open spaces (drawing on work already done by GDACEL to avoid duplication), which will establish, in particular:
  - the conservation value and habitat status of all grassland and open spaces;
  - the ecological integrity and conservation importance of wetlands, pans and rivers,
  - the conservation value of agricultural zones.
- The removal of **alien vegetation** is important, especially in many of the mining areas, recreation areas, areas of conservation importance and along water courses.
- Ekurhuleni should support and promote the implementation of GDACEL's conservation policies and conservation plan.

## 12.7 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- The major emphasis of the EMM in terms of environmental management should be on improving **co-operative governance** both internally and externally. Mining and development planning are critical areas requiring attention in this regard;
- Improved sharing and **management of information** between departments within and external to the EMM is required;
- Incorporation of and consideration of **environmental legislation** (specifically NEMA) into planning (IDP, SDF and other initiatives) and enforcement is needed by all authorities regulating activities in EMM; this will promote environmentally sustainable development and integrate environment and development at policy, planning and management levels.
- **Capacity building** and training in environmental management is urgently required in the EMM. Co-operation and assistance from national and provincial authorities is important here;
- It is essential that business and industry become more involved in environmental management in a **co-regulatory** framework of governance. Enforcement and co-operation are required in this regard, particularly with regard to wastes and discharges.
- **Civil awareness** of and involvement in environmental issues needs to be strengthened and addressed through education and awareness campaigns. The small but committed environmental organizations in existence should be actively supported by the municipality.