Local economic development: Lekwa Municipality.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

by

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to Tshwane University of Technology for the degree of Master of Economics in Comparative Local Development has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work in design and execution and that all material used has been duly acknowledged.

X _____

R. Molefe
Student

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Abstract

The *objective of the study* was to investigate the local economic development (LED) in the Lekwa municipality in terms of its compliance with legal and policy guidelines; strategic aim; objectives; structures; resourcing; consultation processes; stakeholder participation; and the resultant outcomes. This entailed (i) establishing compliance with national LED guidelines and IDP formats; (ii) checking the goals and objectives of LED in Lekwa against LED national guidelines; (iii) investigating the processes used to develop the LED strategy with reference to the strategic guidelines provided for LED in the literature; (iv) identifying challenges in LED implementation in Lekwa municipality; (v) assessing the potential role of LED post-COVID-19 and how it could be used for the rebuilding of communities and economies in the Lekwa municipality and the district. The *problem statement* of the study addressed a gap identified in the literature, namely a lack of LED delivery, and sought to establish effective ways to remedy this.

The *study methodology*, the study applied the qualitative method. Qualitative method is used to study people's believes, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions. It produces non-numerical data (Pathak et al., 2013). In this study questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. A total of 32 participants from Lekwa municipality participated in the study; with purposeful and snowballing sampling technique used to locate participants. The *study key findings* revealed that Lekwa municipality's LED targets complied with national requirements; nevertheless, greater precision and measurability were required to track progress effectively. The study identified challenges that hindered the successful implementation of LED initiatives, such as insufficient funding, skilled personnel, infrastructure and support from the national government. Despite these obstacles, the study found that LED success in Lekwa municipality could be enhanced and the study *recommends that* greater collaboration among government, business and community stakeholders; invest in human capital; increased investment in infrastructure development; and identifying new opportunities for economic growth and development could play a major role in LED implementation success.

Keywords: Local economic development, Lekwa municipality, South Africa, Local economic development forum.

Acronyms

DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDF	Local Economic Development Forum
LM	Lekwa Municipality
MSA	Municipal Systems Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFPP	National Policy Framework on Public Participation
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPLG	White Paper on Local Government

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines developments at the local level, using the construct of local economic development (LED). This is located within the overall theoretical framework of development. Development remains a major challenge for many nations, particularly in the African context. South Africa is considered a “developing nation”, yet it has many of the challenges of “under-developed nations”. It has a serious need for development. Chandler (2007) sees development as incorporating material factors and psychological aspects, as they contribute to human well-being. There are broader definitions and approaches to development that measure it according to various socio-economic and political outcomes. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme (2018) emphasises “human development”. Human development focuses on the ability to lead a long and healthy life, measured by life expectancy at birth; the ability to acquire knowledge, measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and the ability to achieve a decent standard of living, measured by gross national income per capita (UNDP, 2018). One set of approaches considers “input factors” such as the skills and capabilities of people and their personal ability to survive and succeed. The other set looks at the macro level: how nations are able to provide health; education; jobs; economic opportunities; etc., for their people and countries and the outcomes of this.

Local economic development has to be seen in the context of this broad approach to development. Logically, local economic development (LED) should lead to the attainment of some of the outcomes or objectives of development, driven from the local level. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) understands LED as: “a participatory development process that encourages partnership arrangements between the private and public stakeholders of a defined territory that enable the joint design and implementation of a common development strategy by making use of the local resources and competitive advantage, with the final objective of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic growth for all” (ILO, 2012:3). The ILO points out that LED is simultaneously used as a particular developmental approach and the results of successfully pursuing that approach – a means as well as an end, in a sense. The

ILO asserts that LED is “one of the potentially most promising strategies for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach for upgrading informal economy workers and economic units and improving their access to mainstream services, social protection and markets” (ILO, 2007:15). This makes it a very useful tool in the South African context.

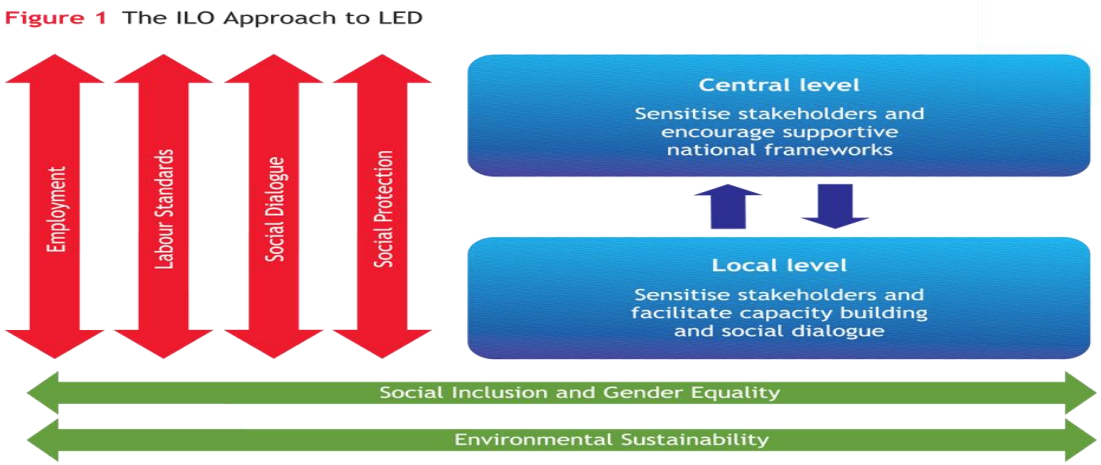

FIGURE 1.1: The ILO approach to LED

Source: ILO, 2012:3

Other approaches to LED focus more on the business or economy aspects, with a “process-type” of an approach. For instance, the World Bank (2005) regards LED as a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. This is more of a “through-put” approach, which identifies the parties that must be involved and the processes, without the outcomes. Beer (2009), on the other hand, attempts to offer a definition of LED that includes the process as well as the outcome, “an economic development approach which allows and encourages communities to work together in achieving a sustainable economy”. Beer (2009) adds the very important dimension of “community involvement” in LED, as well as the outcome, which should be “sustainable economy”. It is very important that

development should be about communities (not just corporates and investors) and the outcomes must be sustainable (not development that harms the communities or harms the environment in the long run).

Consequently, LED ought to be studied within a specific context or environment. In the case of this study, a particular municipality has been chosen as the case study. The Lekwa Local Municipality is situated in the Mpumalanga Province in the Gert Sibande District. Like many municipalities in South Africa, Lekwa is faced with serious developmental challenges, including poor spatial planning, unemployment, poverty, lack of economic opportunities, poor infrastructure and poor access to basic services, mostly in the rural section of the municipality (Lekwa Local Municipality, 2016; AGSA, 2020). Local economic development presents a valuable opportunity to address most of these ills, if implemented correctly and effectively. Hence the significance of this study which enquired into the municipality's LED critically and constructively.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Local municipalities around the world are faced with the same economic challenges in varying degrees (Horn & Lloyd, 2001:59). In the case of South Africa, the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and other regulations require that each municipality must prepare an integrated development plan (IDP). The IDP is a crucial document which contains, *inter alia,* the municipality's five-year strategic development plan (Department of Provincial and Local Government, DPLG, 2001:26). The IDP comprises "a long-term vision, an assessment of the existing level of social and economic development, the setting of development priorities and objectives, spatial framework and land development objectives, operational strategies, municipal budgeting and other resource allocations" (DPLG, 2001:26**).** In terms of the IDP of the Lekwa municipality (Lekwa Local Municipality, 2016), the municipality has been experiencing a continuous decline in its revenue base compounded by poor management of resources; inefficiencies that limit the manner in which the municipality interfaces with the communities; aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance; structural inefficiencies that result in poor service delivery standards; low economic growth and high unemployment rates; and vulnerable environmental assets and natural resources. The

Gert Sibande District Municipality's Rural Development Plan (GSDM, 2017:37) identifies a number of opportunities and strengths for the Lekwa municipality, *inter alia*, economic sector potential in agriculture, mining, construction and finance and business services. It is evident that the municipality is not optimally using its potential to support the development of communities – the municipality has failed to engage in social and economic development opportunities for the benefit of the community. The lack of LED delivery is a gap that has been identified in the literature. This study set out to look into this gap and to identify effective ways of dealing with it.

Ideally, LED ought to follow the structures, processes and systems that are identified below, but the Lekwa municipality's LED falls short of most of them. In order for LED to be successful, it must fulfil the following seven conditions (Trousdale, 2005):

a) Leadership at local government, local business and local community levels
b) An enabling economic environment with access to opportunities for all
c) The involvement of local youth through youth development programmes
d) Job creation potential relating to sustainable jobs
e) Good governance
f) Availability of capacity and skills at all levels of the local economy
g) All efforts geared at poverty alleviation and improvement in quality of life.

From the information available about the LED at Lekwa municipality (Lekwa Local Municipality, 2016; GSDM, 2017:37), as well as the generally poor service delivery record of most municipalities in South Africa (AGSA, 2020), it is clear that the Lekwa municipality is deficient in almost all of the above 7 conditions. This on its own warrants further investigation to identify the exact deficiencies.

Furthermore, there are also key strategic imperatives, structures and systems that must be in place to ensure effective LED. These are summarised below. Their absence or weakness with respect to Lekwa is another rationale for the study and it is also a problem statement on its own.

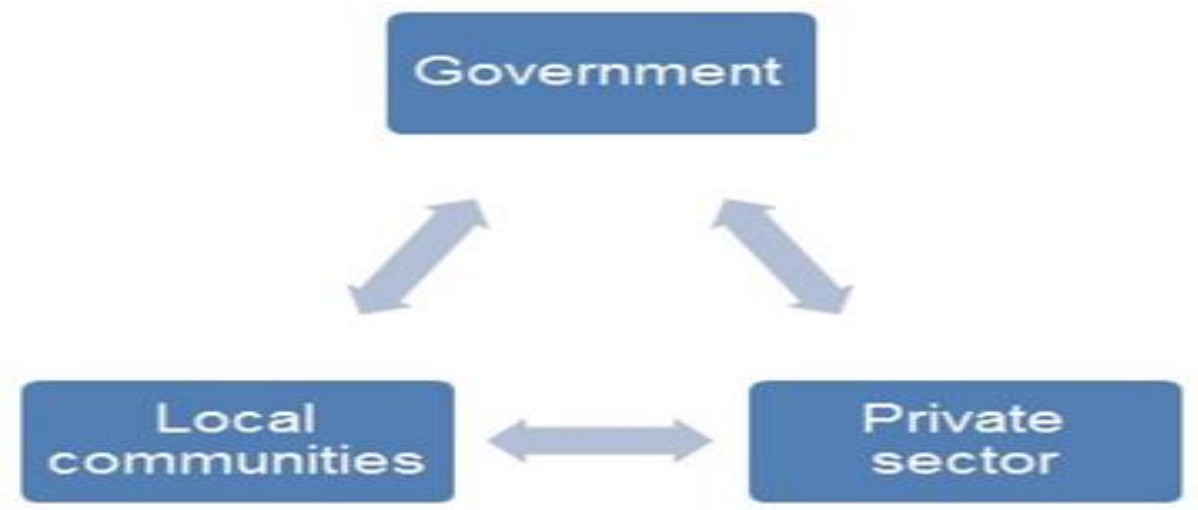

FIGURE 1.2: Service delivery triangle regarding LED

Source: Meyer, 2013 (cited in Meyer, 2014:626)

With regard to the above graph, Human, Lochner and Botes (2008) argue that if municipalities used LED as part of their overall planning for service delivery, they could make a larger impact on local economies. This is not the case with the Lekwa municipality. Its LED is a small outfit and programme rather than an overall strategy or programme.

This study examines LED as a policy and a programme in Lekwa municipality and the extent to which it is able to take advantage of its strengths and the identified opportunities to deal with the developmental challenges that it has also identified.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective

To investigate LED in the Lekwa municipality in terms of its compliance with legal and policy guidelines; its strategic aim; consultation processes; and the resultant outcomes.

Secondary Research objectives

a) To probe for compliance with national LED guidelines and IDP formats

b) To investigate the processes used to develop the LED strategy and check against the strategic guidelines provided for LED in the literature
c) To identify challenges in LED implementation in Lekwa municipality
d) To assess the potential role of LED post-COVID-19, and how it can be used for the rebuilding of communities and economies in the Lekwa municipality and the district.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a) How is Lekwa municipality ensuring that their LED guidelines and IDP formats comply with the national LED guidelines and IDP formats?

b) What are the processes used to develop the LED strategy and how can they be checked against the strategic guidelines provided for LED in the literature?

c) What are the challenges in implementing LED strategy in Lekwa municipality?

d) How has the Corona Virus epidemic of 2020 and its devastation affected the Lekwa Municipality and how can LED play a role in the post COVID-19 revival?

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Local economic development legal and policy framework

The Constitution (no. 108 of 1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998), and the Policy Guidelines for Implementing Local Economic Development in South Africa are only a few of the pieces of law and policy that guide the LED initiatives in South Africa.

A progressive paradigm of local administration is established under the Constitution (no. 108 of 1996). "Municipalities must provide and manage their administration, budgeting, and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of communities" (South Africa, 1996, p. 152) is a constitutional mandate. The Constitution mandates the following responsibilities for local governments (IIED, 2000; South Africa, 1996):

- Provide democratic and accountable government for all communities
- Ensure service provision in a suitable way

- Provide social and economic development
- Promote a safe and healthy environment
- Encourage community participation and investment in matters of the area.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) is the policy document that introduced the concept of local government development. In this policy document developmental local government is defined as “local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve the quality of their lives”. Furthermore, this policy document makes it quite clear that local government is not responsible for creating jobs, but instead for creating an enabling environment for development.

The Policy Guidelines for Implementing Local Economic Development in South Africa identified economic growth and poverty eradication as the key overarching goals of LED (DPLG, 2005). The foregoing are the key legal and policy prescripts that guide LED. There are other guidelines and LED directives that apply at local level which are addressed later.

Different approaches and paradigms of LED

According to Nel (2000), the term "light-emitting diode" (LED) lacks a standard meaning. However, "the discipline of local economic development is a complex mix of concepts, practises, and rhetoric," as pointed out by Rowe (2009:3). Planning for LED in South Africa has historically been heavily impacted by practises in the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA) (Koma, 2013). Doysi (2016), however, argues that "locally owned" LED is essential. As a result, there is no universally applicable framework for this problem. Every area has its own character. Culture, history, and "political requirements to effect fast institutional reform so as to distribute the benefits of economic progress to the broadest section of the population" (Meyer, 2010) are only a few of the factors that will determine the shape and form of LED. "Development theorists have paid insufficient attention to institutional and structural problems and to the power of historical, cultural, and religious forces in the development process," Soedjatmoko (1985) argues. The term "local economic development" refers to a broad concept in the field of development that may be understood in a variety of ways. There is obviously no universal definition of LED.

Some explanations emphasise local/regional specifics. LED is "the process through which local government or community-based organisations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment," as defined by Blakely (1994). In some descriptions of LEDs, the local actors and features of involvement are highlighted. For example, according to Trousdale (2005:2), LED is "a participating process where local people, from all sectors within a specific area, work together to activate and stimulate local economic activities, to ensure a resilient and sustainable local economy." Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra agree on the need of community input and engagement at the neighbourhood level. In their view, LED is a "process where the local actors shape and share the future of their territory by joint design and implementation of strategies" (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005:3). The World Bank defines LED as "a process in which public, business, and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation" (2003:4). Malefane (2009:160) echoes this idea when he writes that "Local Economic Development offers municipalities, the private sector, the not-for-profit sectors, and the local community the opportunity to work together and, aims to enhance competitiveness and this encourages sustainable growth that is inclusive".

LED conceptual frameworks

Looking at other Southern hemisphere experiences of LED (the LED training programme of the United Cities Local Government Association, Asia Pacific, Indonesia), Perai (2016:8) points out that by its nature, local economic development is a partnership between the business sector, community interests and municipal government. He argues that the premise of governmental involvement in LED implies that economic development as a government activity must include an effort to encourage private investment in a particular jurisdiction for the purposes of generating or retaining jobs, expanding the tax base and increasing the general level of economic well-being.

The model below is used by the United Cities Local Government Association, Asia Pacific, Indonesia (Perai, 2016):

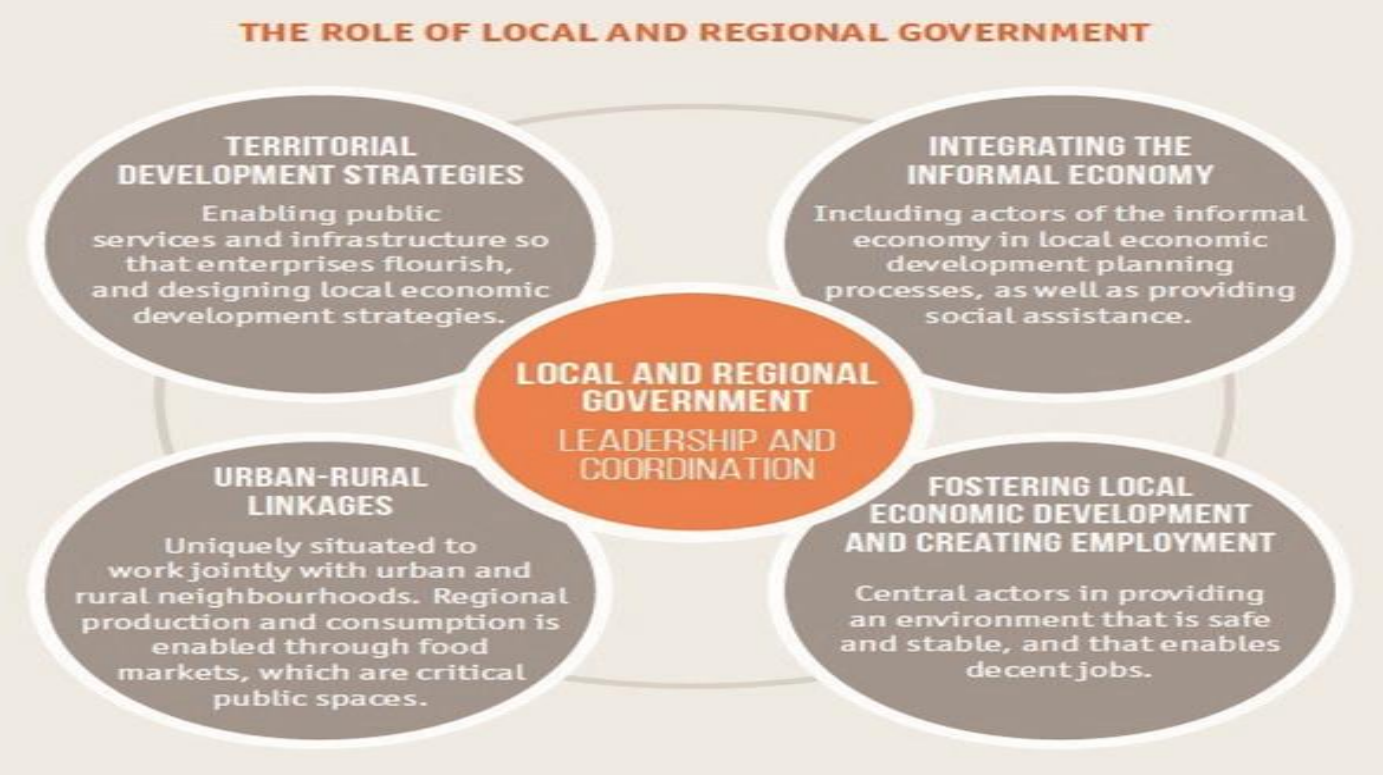

FIGURE 1.3: Asia-Pacific model of LED (Indonesia)

Source: Perai, 2016:9

The Asia-Pacific example of LED shows that LED is crucial to regional growth and needs institutional backing at the state or provincial level. When it comes to the informal sector, LED must both detect and encourage urban-rural links (Perai, 2016). Given South Africa's largely rural character and the predominance of the informal sector, these factors are even more crucial for the South African environment than for Asia-Pacific areas (Stats SA, 2020).

As LED projects need local skills, knowledge, resources, and "local assets and economic advantages to establish adequate employment and viable growth" (Doysi, 2016), it is vital to address the alignment of local human capabilities with local resources. According to Meyer and Venter (2013), local governments have been unable to fulfil their local development mission due to a lack of resources, organisational structure, personnel, and sound policies. Key obstacles to the success of LED in South Africa include a lack of administrative competence, inadequate policy implementation, high poverty and unemployment rates, poor service delivery, and service delivery protests.

Theoretical framework for LED

A "system of concepts, assumptions, and beliefs that support and guide the research plan," as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). In this section, we shall examine the theoretical foundations of regional economic development at a high level.

Meyer (2014:625) states that LED falls within microeconomics, which is a subfield of development economics. To improve the political, economic, and social conditions of developing countries is the primary focus of development economics. Development economists seek to improve the lives of people in the world's poorest countries by analysing health, education, employment, local and international law, and market conditions (Bird, 2019). The World Bank (1991) describes development economics as a strategy to alleviate poverty and improve living conditions. To do so, income must rise, but other factors, such as better health and nutrition, environmental protection, economic opportunity, individual freedom, and thriving cultural life, are all important in reducing poverty.

The importance of LED initiatives in creating jobs, reducing poverty, and improving quality of life is widely acknowledged by academics, development practitioners, and stakeholders throughout the globe. To further stimulate local growth, it is necessary to meet the interrelated economic, social, condition, welfare, environmental, and political needs of communities. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is required for a region to achieve economic progress and prosperity (Rowe, 2009).

Local economic development (LED) initiatives, according to Rodrigues-Pose (2001), provide an alternative to traditional macroeconomic policies by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship at the community level. In addition, Rodrigues-Pose (2001) argues that LED enables and ensures local participation, meaning that local people can play an active role in planning their own economic future, and that local businesses are involved in the process and more open to playing an active role in partnerships with local communities. According to Rodrigues-Pose (2001), local economic development (LED) strategies guarantee that local development is locality based and focused on local comparative advantages, resulting in more resilient local economies and potentially creating local opportunities and local jobs, all of which contribute to an improved quality of life in the local community.

Meyer (2013) argues that partnerships and cooperation are essential for improved LED performance in municipal government. The three sides of the LED service

delivery triangle are represented by the federal government, private businesses, and neighbourhoods. What has been mentioned so far should make it clear that LED defies reduction to a single theoretical paradigm or model. While Beer (2009:63) acknowledges that the concept of LED is grounded in one or more theories of economic development, he warns that the wide variety of theoretical perspectives might lead to confusion among practitioners. However, theories of local economic growth may "be framed as a process that responds to the development challenges that occur at local (subnational) levels and bring together national and local governments, business, community groups, international development partners to work in partnership" (Wekwete, 14:9). The legal and regulatory structure is of paramount importance to this sector or paradigm. This is a real-world strategy, thus it must adhere to all relevant rules and regulations as well as local laws and policies. The next section explains this overarching set of laws and regulations.

LED and a city's approach to it may be evaluated using the International Labour Organization's (ILO) methodology (ILO, 2012:24). The level of commitment to LED was analysed in the Ghanaian case study (ILO, 2012) by looking at it through the lens of "ownership" among various stakeholders. Modifications were made to Wasty's (1993) four-dimensional classification method so that it could be used to LEDs. The subsequent model accounts for these four variables:

a) Locus of initiative
b) Level of intellectual ownership
c) Political will
d) Efforts towards consensus-building.

The ILO then used the model to assess the level of ownership of the LED component by the local authorities in their study. They ranked these levels of ownership on a scale of 1 (very low) to 4 (very high) (ILO, 2012:24-26). This allowed them to determine an “overall ownership rating”, which ranged from low to medium to high (depending on the combination of scores achieved for the individual dimension).

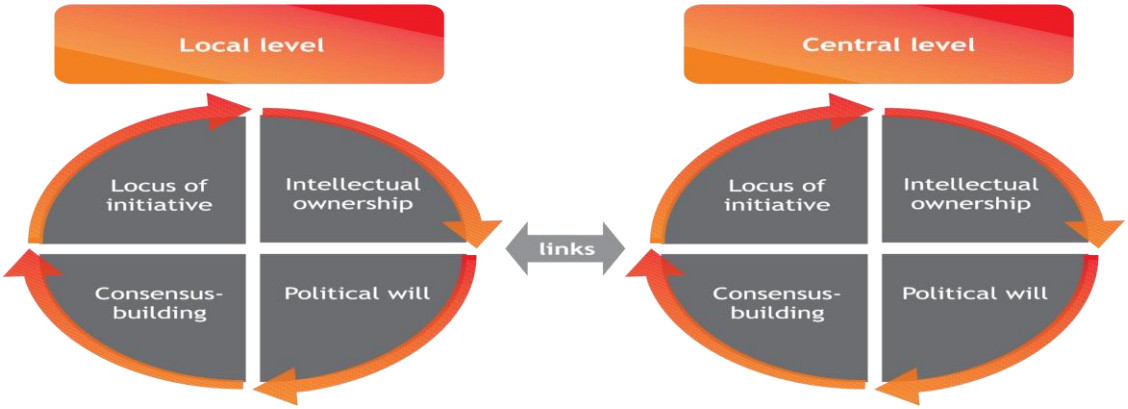

FIGURE 4: Ownership as a measure of institutional and policy impacts

Source: ILO, 2012:24

The above model enables a researcher to establish the level of "ownership" and commitment to LED in all three spheres of government. For instance, the ILO found that there was very high intellectual commitment to LED at national (or central) level but that it did not translate to intellectual ownership at local level. This can be done for districts versus the local municipality. There could be political will at the level of the district municipality which may not be realised at the level of a local municipality (where there could be political coalitions; in-fighting; corruption; and other ills that would hamper effective LED).

Strategic approach to LED

Another framework for analysing LED is based on whether the approach to it is strategic or not and what the elements of such a strategy are. This would then enable a critical analysis of the LED approaches of different municipalities. One of the useful frameworks in this regard is that of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM, 2014). The FCM framework can be used to also critique the processes followed to develop LED.

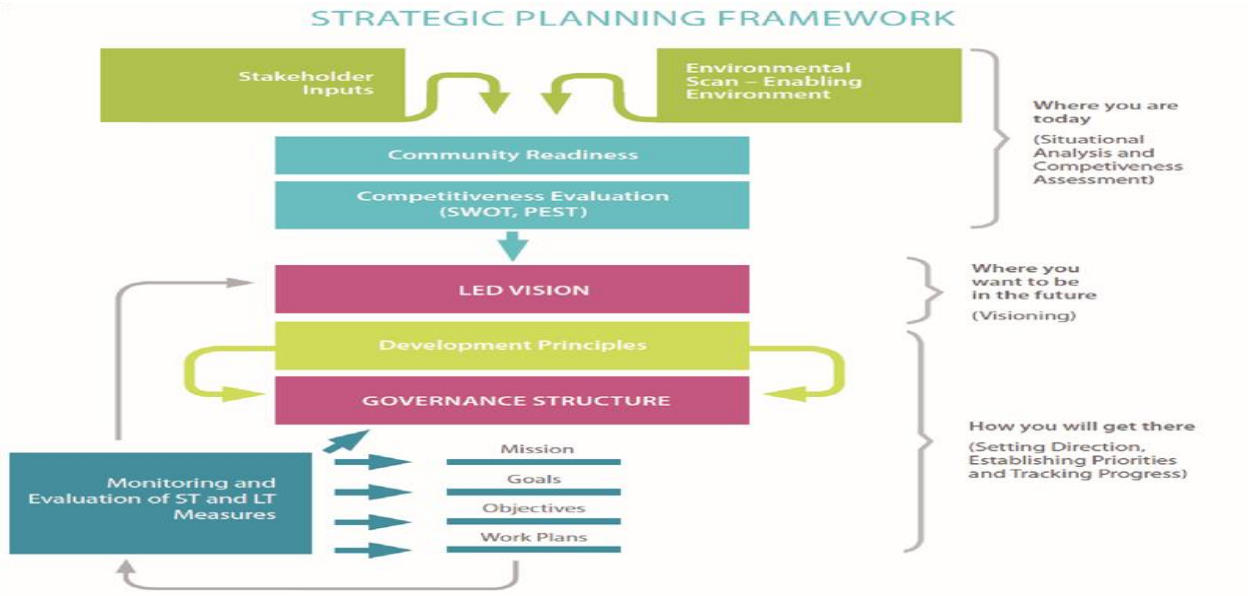

FIGURE 1.5: LED strategic planning framework

Source: Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM, 2014)

The above model enables the researcher to enquire about the short-term versus long-term objectives of LED and how they are monitored, if at all. It includes questions about the environmental scan and/or plans to create an enabling environment in the municipality in that space. The model enables probing about the nature and extent of community involvement in the LED planning and execution all the way up to the governance structures and systems that are supposed to enable effective LED.

Finally, a LED framework also needs to have specific elements that it can probe, over and above the "ownership" elements of the ILO and the "strategic elements" of the FCM. This is where the Asia-Pacific model of LED comes in handy. Perai (2016:27), from the United Cities of the Asia Pacific Alliance, identifies the following components of a LED strategy:

- Expanding employment opportunities
- Strengthening local tax base
- Preserving cultural heritage
- Sustaining the environment
- Creating vocational education opportunities
- Mobilising civic and business leaders
- Strengthening political leadership and stability at the local and regional level
- Promoting economic opportunities in regions outside the capital

- Improving the business climate
- Increasing private investment
- Reducing poverty through MSME development.

Two or three of the aforementioned aspects would enough to warrant further investigation and analysis of LED. It is reasonable to assume that, in the current research or any other municipal case study in South Africa, only a small percentage of municipalities would get high marks on even half of the aforementioned criteria. Most communities wouldn't even pass the bar set in the first paragraph. However, "science" and the empirical tradition call for a departure from speculation. This highlights the need of investigating LED's "on the ground" performance and state of affairs.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In terms of epistemology, this work fell closer to constructivism and phenomenology than positivism and entomology because of its exploratory character. It used a qualitative framework based on case studies. 'Qualitative research entails an in-depth knowledge of human conduct and the causes that drive human action,' says Bryman (2016). It focuses on the causes of events rather than their effects (Bryman, 2012, 2016). The case study is more of a strategy than a specific set of methods (Harrison, Birks, & Mills, 2017; Cresswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014) due to its openness to the incorporation of various technologies. Due to its extensive scope, the case study method lends itself to in-depth research. Thus, case studies may be conducted on an infinite variety of themes and domains, and they can combine qualitative and quantitative approaches (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Stewart, 2014). Constructivist and phenomenological epistemologies, in which novel or complex phenomena are investigated, are more suited to case studies (Cresswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Commonalities among case study methods (Harrison et al., 2017):

- A detailed enquiry into a unit of analysis (in this case the Lekwa municipality)
- The unit of enquiry is approached as a bounded system (LED programme)

- The bounded system is investigated over time (not longitudinal in this case)
- It is investigated within its context (e.g., municipal context; not corporate).

Questionnaires and in-person interviews were the primary means of data gathering in this study's instrumentation. Methods and sources of information were triangulated to ensure reliability and validity (Somekh & Lewin, 2005; Johnson, 1997). The numbers were added up and examined. Data gathering and analysis are referred to be quantitative research when they can be measured (Bryman, 2016). To strengthen the validity and reliability of the results, the qualitative data and results were triangulated with the quantitative data (Bryman, 2012, 2016; Somekh & Lewin, 2005; Johnson, 1997).

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With all municipalities needing to launch recovery programmes after COVID-19, it is anticipated that this research would aid the Lekwa municipality in its future planning and execution of genuine bottom-up development. The study's findings may be used to raise the bar for LED practise and implementation in Lekwa municipality, as well as to illuminate the gaps between the theory and policy frameworks supporting LED and its actual implementation. This should aid in the sustainable growth of South African communities and their surrounding landscapes.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The municipality of Lekwa served as a case study in this investigation. The city was written a formal request for authorization to undertake the study. According to TUT's research ethics rules, the level of risk involved in this investigation was minimal. The research was done according to the standards of the community in an effort to provide reliable results. Due to the sensitive nature of the information gathered in this research, all appropriate precautions were taken to protect the participants' privacy and safety. No one's identity was sought out, and no touchy subjects were investigated. There were no minors, pregnant women, or anyone with impairments included in the study,

and no touchy subjects were discussed, such as HIV/AIDS. All efforts were taken to ensure that participation was voluntary, compliant with South African legislation, required free and informed permission, and kept in confidence. Both the data and the findings of the research were regarded as strictly secret and will never be shared or used for any other purpose. Respondents such as the municipality's LED unit were given access to draughts of the research so that they could raise concerns and provide clarification before the report was finished. This assured that no sensitive material was leaked and that the report included only factual facts. As thus, it provided further confirmation that the facts had been correctly interpreted. It helped make the study's findings more applicable to policymakers.

1.8 RESEARCH OUTLINE

The chapters cover the following:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, importance, and motivation for the study are all addressed in this chapter, which provides a comprehensive overview of the planned research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Academic ideas and insights on how LED might help boost local economies are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter provides an in-depth account of the study strategy and methods used, as well as the results of that research.

Chapter 4: Presentation and interpretation of findings

This chapter first gives the study data, and then analyses and interprets those results.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the results, this section draws some inferences and makes some suggestions. Conclusions and directions for future study are drawn by comparing the results with the cited literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

When a democratic government took power in South Africa after the fall of the apartheid system, it instituted sweeping reforms aimed at improving access to essential services for low-income populations and making amends for past wrongs. The local administration has been tasked with implementing measures to help reduce poverty and improve access to essential services in certain areas. On the other hand, recent demonstrations (primarily owing to inefficient service delivery) in most municipalities in the nation have raised issues about the sustainability and effectiveness of the service delivery initiatives, particularly for impoverished populations.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING LOCAL MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

According to the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, local government structures regulate South African municipalities. Among other things, this law establishes the various municipal classifications and makes provisions for municipal elections. A municipality is "an organ of state within the local sphere of government consisting of political structures, office bearer and administration of the municipality," according to the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. There are three types of municipalities established under the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. There are three levels, designated as "metropolitan," "district," and "local," respectively. There are a total of 278 municipalities in South Africa, including 8 metropolitans, 44 districts, and 226 local municipalities, as reported by the National Treasury (2003). According to the SA Year Book referenced by Ambe & Maleka (2016:660), a district consists of four to six different local municipalities.

National Treasury (2014) provides a comprehensive summary of the many laws, acts, rules, and standards that must be followed throughout the municipal development process:

Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA)
Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000
Preferential Procurement Regulations 2011
Supply chain management: a guide for accounting officers of municipalities and municipal entities 2005.

In order to create and shape supply chain management inside municipalities, the procedure has been designed in compliance with and in cooperation with other pieces of law. Among them is Article 217 of the Constitution, which mandates that all state agencies adopt a supply chain management system that is open to public scrutiny, treats all stakeholders fairly, is highly competitive, and minimises costs. The Supply Chain Management Policy and the establishment of supply chain management units are mandated under Chapter 11 of the MFMA. Bids are evaluated and decided upon using a point system as mandated by Section 5 of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act of 2000. Accounting officers may find a detailed strategy for putting the Supply Chain Management Policy into practise in Treasury Regulation 868 of 2005 and Supply Chain Management: A Handbook for Accounting Officers of Municipalities and Municipal Entities. The participants and responsibilities in municipal supply chain management are outlined in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: Key role players and functions in local government development

National Treasury	Develops policy and oversees implementation of the Act.
Provincial Treasury	Supports municipality to implement the policy and assists in terms of development and capacity building.
Municipal Council	Approves developmental structure and ensures that accounting officers execute the council development policy.
Accounting officer	Establishes a unit under the supervision of the CFO. In terms of Section 165 of the MFMA he/she is required to establish internal audits to examine and report on effectiveness, efficiency and the economic use of

	resources to achieve the objectives of the municipalities.
External auditors	Examine and report on the compliance of municipalities to the mayor of the municipality.
Integrated development planning (IDP) officials	Custodians of the IDP process implement policy and carry out IDP operational activities. External role players are suppliers and community within the municipal jurisdiction.

Source: Adapted from National Treasury, 2005

Municipal development requires the creation of bid committees. The committee to be created includes the bid specification committee, bid evaluation committee and bid adjudication committee. Table 2.2 sets out the structures and roles.

TABLE 2.2: Bid committees, constituents and roles

Bid committee	Constituent of the committee and functions
Bid specification committee	Comprises one or more officials, preferably a manager responsible for the function and external specialist advisor (cross-functional principle); the accounting officer or a delegated official to be appointed as chairperson. Roles: compiles technical specifications, terms of reference, requirements, conditions of contract and evaluation criteria; determines goals and indicates method of procurement.
Bid evaluation committee	Comprises developmental practitioner and technical expert from the department requiring the good or service. Roles: The accounting officer must appoint the chairperson and members, evaluate bids in accordance with the PPPFA, evaluate bidder tax matters, submit a report for

	recommendation regarding the award, check the list of restricted bidders and consult the register for tender defaulters.
Bid adjudication committee	Comprises at least 4 senior managers which include the CFO, one senior SCM practitioner to ensure compliance and a technical expert who is an official to ensure compliance with specifications. Roles: Accounting officers must appoint the chairperson and members; a member of the bid evaluation committee may present its case to the bid adjudication committee; neither a member of the bid evaluation committee nor a person assisting it, or any advisor, may be a member of this committee.

Source: Adapted from National Treasury, 2005

2.3 LEGISLATIVE PILLARS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT

Development in local government occurs in the context of the following pieces of legislation.

The Constitution

The Constitution of 1996 paved the way for South Africa's transition to a fully democratic system. The foundation of this system was the safeguarding of principles like equality, freedom of expression, access to healthcare and education, and civilised customs and discipline (Gossel, 2018). Constitution of 1996, which superseded the Interim Constitution of 1993, does really represent considerable political thought as compared to the apartheid regime's specific development goals (Conmy, 2018). In contrast to the previous constitution, in which parliament was the final authority, the 1996 Constitution is the highest law or "authority" in South Africa (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019). Almost every facet of administration and governance would be affected by such a massive amendment of the constitution (Maphumulo & Bhengu,

2019). The roles of policymakers and decision-makers are being redefined as a result of these changes.

Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA)

The purpose of this act is to ensure municipalities and other local institutions manage their finances in a responsible and long-lasting manner, to set treasury rules and standards for the local sphere of government, and to make other related provisions. In other words, the municipalities should collaborate closely with the department to ensure the agency's personnel continue to provide high-quality service.

Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (Systems Act)

This act aims to provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic development of local communities, and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all; to define the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures; to provide for the manner in which municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed; to provide for community participation; to establish a simple and enabling framework for the core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilisation and change which underpin the notion of developmental local government; to provide a framework for local public administration and human resource development; to empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account by providing a framework for the provision of services, service delivery agreements and municipal service districts; to provide for credit control and debt collection; to establish a framework for support, monitoring and standard setting by other spheres of government in order to progressively build local government into an efficient, frontline development agency capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic development of communities in harmony with their local natural environment; to provide for legal matters pertaining to local government; and to provide for matters incidental thereto. The local level may help prevent the

overcrowding of hospitals that might affect the development process by contributing to the construction of sufficient health care facilities.

Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA)

In 1999, the Public Finance Management Act was approved by South Africa's first democratic government. In 1999, Congress passed the Public Facilities Management Act (PFMA), which codified guidelines for the purchase of infrastructure components by the public sector. As a result, we reaffirm our commitment to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996) and the authority of the National Treasury to take measures to ensure the execution of the Constitution's five principles. According to Section 38 (1) (a) (iii) of the Act, "the accounting officer/authority of a department, trading entity, or constitutional institution shall establish and maintain an appropriate procurement and supply system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost effective."

"the National Treasury may make regulations or issue instructions applicable to all institutions to which this Act applies, concerning the determining of a framework for an appropriate developmental system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost effective" is the meaning of Section 76 (4) (c) of the Accordingly, whether a tender or contract is utilised to obtain goods or services, certain processes must be followed in accordance with Treasury standards under PFMA Section 16A.6. According to Section 38 (1) (a) of the Public Finance Management Act (1999), "the accounting officer/authority of a department, trading entity, or constitutional institution" is responsible for implementing a procurement and supply system that ensures the five pillars are respected. In cases when federal regulations fall short, it is up to the provinces to introduce new ones. The national aims should not be compromised by these regulations. To further aid its many departments in carrying out the development process, a provincial treasury may issue a Practise Note with specific guidelines and instructions. As internal stakeholders, employees have a legitimate interest in adhering to the established rules and procedures that ensure compliance and mitigate risk. Erroneous adherence to rules and procedures may also lead to process risk.

Contradiction between Neoliberal Constitutional Principles and Transformative Perspectives towards Development

Ndlovu (2022) addresses a fundamental contradiction in South Africa's development strategy by highlighting the clash between the neoliberal principles enshrined in the Constitution and the transformative perspectives aimed at achieving social equity and justice. According to Ndlovu (2022), the Constitution is grounded in neoliberal ideologies that emphasize individual rights, economic efficiency, and market-driven solutions. This framework supports privatization and minimal state intervention, aligning with global neoliberal trends that advocate for the market's role in resolving social and economic issues (Merino, 2022). The neoliberal approach seeks to create an environment conducive to economic growth and individual freedom. However, Ndlovu (2022) argues that this neoliberal orientation is often at odds with the goals of transformative perspectives, which focus on addressing systemic inequalities and promoting broader social and economic reforms.

Transformative perspectives, as described by Ndlovu (2022), advocate for comprehensive structural changes to address historical injustices and reduce socioeconomic disparities. These perspectives emphasize the necessity of proactive state involvement to tackle systemic issues such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to resources (Alemparte, 2022). Unlike the neoliberal emphasis on market mechanisms, transformative approaches call for extensive reforms that ensure a more equitable distribution of opportunities and resources (Merino, 2022). Ndlovu (2022)'s analysis depicts a critical tension: while the neoliberal Constitution aims to promote economic efficiency and individual rights, it may not sufficiently support the deep structural changes needed to combat entrenched inequalities effectively.

More so, Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) contribute to this discussion by examining how neoliberal policies impact class, gender, and cultural disparities. Their research suggests that while neoliberalism can drive economic growth, it often exacerbates class inequalities by prioritizing market efficiency over equitable resource distribution. Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) argue that the neoliberal framework frequently overlooks gender-specific challenges, necessitating policies that address gender imbalances and ensure equal opportunities. They also emphasize that cultural inclusivity is often

neglected, advocating for policies that are sensitive to cultural differences to be more effective in promoting social equity.

However, empirical data from various studies supports these critiques. Cumbers and Paul (2022) attested that the market-driven approach seems to benefit those already well-off, leaving the most disadvantaged behind. This concurs with Ndinda and Ndhlovu's (2022) view that neoliberal policies fail to address class disparities comprehensively. Also, Alemparte (2022) argued that despite the focus on individual rights, gender inequality remains a pressing issue that is not adequately addressed by current policies. Concurrently, Ndinda and Ndhlovu's (2022) criticism of the neoliberal framework's neglect of gender issues. Additionally, policies need to be more inclusive of cultural differences to be truly effective in promoting social equity (Alemparte, 2022).

By and large, the raised perspectives suggest that reconciling the neoliberal Constitution with transformative perspectives is essential for achieving a more just and equitable society. Integrating transformative perspectives into the constitutional framework could more effectively address socio-economic disparities, aligning economic growth objectives with a commitment to social equity (Cumbers and Paul, 2022). This reconciliation requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges the limitations of market-driven solutions and embraces comprehensive reforms to address class, gender, and cultural inequalities.

2.4 PRACTICAL STEPS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT

Through evaluation and measurement of municipal performance, planning for local government growth may reveal omissions that must be filled to ensure the municipality's continued viability (Sisco et al., 2010). Further, a municipality has to know the specifics of any gap discovered before offering a plan; this includes being aware of the issue areas, such as the timely supply of essential waste management infrastructure.

2.4.1 Establishing development expectations

It is at this stage that the processes necessary to sustain the expansion of local governments and the responsibilities of their respective leaders must be created (Sisco et al., 2010). From the perspective of a developing local government, this refers to the rules and procedures that govern the purchase of a product or service. Community members should be kept up-to-date and given opportunities to provide input throughout the local development budgeting process. Because the government's expected financial responsibilities would have an impact on the community's social and economic interests. Community priorities are one way to summarise this impact, and public managers should care that these goals are articulated and represented in the government's budget document (Madlala, 2005). Ethical public governance in the conditions described in the declaration requires open debates. Disregard for community interests, disruption of public socioeconomic operations, breaking of cultural links to the land, and abuse of basic requirements like land are only some of the negative outcomes that have been linked to the application of the participatory governance concept (Andrews, 2019). Therefore, it is ethically required to tell the community about the next budgeting effort and to elicit their feedback on whether or not the proposed financial allocations are reasonable.

2.4.2 Determining the scope

Here, local government must evaluate the chances of positive and negative outcomes, as well as the opportunities and risks that arise from them (Sisco et al., 2010). These factors help determine the extent of analysis in local government development planning. For instance, municipalities should look at their operational environments to identify risks such as a sudden lack of funding. First, using scientific and empirical methodologies, a community needs assessment must be conducted and compared to the monetary resources available in the proposed new budget. Needs evaluations, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation would all be conducted by specialists and government authorities before any relocation attempts were launched (Putu, 2006). However, the public's voice may be lost if the participation effort becomes uneven. Budgetary choices that are good for everyone may be made via a participatory budgeting approach in which leaders solicit public feedback.

2.4.3 Engaging with the suppliers

Buyer-supplier relationships and open lines of communication are the foundations of effective supplier engagement, as stated by Blanco and Cottrill (2012:9). This fosters communication between the city and the provider, which in turn helps to strike a healthy demand/supply balance that benefits long-term growth and stability. Municipalities usually need immediate help from experts and manufacturers of equipment, thus maintaining a tight and pleasant connection with these providers is crucial.

2.4.4 Determining roles and responsibilities

Househam and Bombis (2015:51) argue that municipal initiatives that potentially impact implementation should be linked with and closely coordinated with local government development strategies. Because strategic development consists of several subcomponents, this stage requires identifying the functions of each subcomponent and how they will contribute to long-term growth. Acquisition (quote), demand (demand), contact management (contact management), and asset and disposal management (asset and disposal management) are the typical four key parts of a municipality. There are tasks and functions outlined here that are crucial to the long-term success of the development process.

2.4.5 Private industry collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships

Creating a client and supplier relationship in local government growth requires open lines of communication among all of a municipality's stakeholders, as stated by Sisco et al. (2010). Just-in-time (JIT) delivery of an item or rendering of a service is improved by good communication amongst municipal stakeholders, which in turn improves service delivery and contributes to sustainable development.

2.4.6 Establishing goals and tracking communication performance

Sisco et al. (2010) argue that setting attainable objectives is the last phase in local government development planning since it allows the municipality to monitor its

progress. The purpose of this is to ensure that the city's plans for growth are still being followed. Increased compliance and risk reduction are the results of the city's commitment to long-term sustainability in development. This guarantees zero deviation from regulation and maximum efficiency at all times.

2.5 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Definitions of related terms are necessary for a thorough comprehension of the buyer-supplier relationship in the context of local government development and sustainability projects. In order to determine the level of developmental knowledge of municipal workers, the researcher researched the relevant literature to define terms connected with the buyer-supplier relationship. "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," as defined by Smith (2006:23). Thus, we understand that sustainable development is a long-term goal that prioritises humanity, the environment, and the next generation's choices.

Sustainable development requires the interconnectedness of many people, entities, resources, events, and technology across the product life cycle, which starts when a supplier provides raw materials and ends when a customer utilises the final product.

Supply chain management refers to the process of organising, controlling, and monitoring the flow of goods, data, and money from producers to distributors to retailers to consumers (Kahraman, Onar, & ztaysi, 2014, 2015). Planning for the growth of a community at the local level requires the coordination and assimilation of both internal and external flows of information, products, and money (Kahraman et al., 2015). Every government must properly manage its resources if it is to meet its responsibilities to its people. Pretorius and Schurink (2007:2) underline the need of paying close attention to service management and service delivery supervision.

There are urgent global challenges that need to be addressed as the government is working to deliver services to people via the public procurement system, such as dangers to the ecosystem and the environment. It has to listen to the pleas of people everywhere for corporations to stop doing things that harm the environment, such cutting down trees or releasing pollutants into the air, water, or soil. More and more

people are demanding that their governments not only adopt sustainable development policies, but also ensure that all of their vendors do the same.

2.6 SELECTING THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

Kang, Wu, Hong, and Park (2012:1195-1196) state that in today's globally interconnected economy, outsourcing is commonplace due to businesses' use of it as a competitive tool. In 2008, 63% of businesses saw outsourcing as a major strategic management tool, up from 63% in 2006 and 63% in 2000 (Kang et al., 2012). The public sector is no different, as it uses a tender mechanism to outsource its service role to private enterprises in order to better serve the public. The public sector must identify and link itself with the correct suppliers within its development process if it is to deliver to communities within the unique, politically driven context in which it works.

Communities have unreasonable expectations on government, according to Mohr, Louise, and Associates (2015:356). These misunderstandings may originate from the belief that certain public goods and services are beyond the government's financial and administrative capabilities. Some people believe the government always has money because people pay tax, while others believe they should have the services because they are entitled to it; this often results in communities overestimating the government's capacity to deliver certain services, such as the delivery of public services, which are actually free in an absolute sense. As a result of this misunderstanding and the entitlement attitudes it fosters, the government need strategic suppliers that not only help it save money on development policy expenditures, but also support it when it is under intense pressure from communities to deliver. Strategic buying, according to Deshpande (2012), is most beneficial when companies and their supply chains work together to establish and maintain open lines of communication and a shared vision for the future.

2.7 ALIGNING SUPPLIERS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTPLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMES

According to Nicholas and Steyn (2012), local governments may improve the likelihood of a project's success by using stakeholder management to not only identify but also get support from key project stakeholders. In order for the government's pursuit of a sustainability-driven development process and methods for attaining

sustainability via its development process to be successful, it is imperative that suppliers, as external stakeholders, be on board.

Mortensen and Arlbjrn (2012:152) argue that the buyer-supplier relationship is crucial since suppliers contribute more and more to the competitiveness of the purchasing municipality. The inter-organizational setup between a customer and a supplier takes into account the needs and priorities of both sides. As time went on, the purchasers increasingly prioritised their own views and interests in negotiations with vendors. A number of recent theoretical contributions, however (Christiansen & Maltz, 2002; Ellegaard, Johansen, & Drejer, 2003; Hald et al., 2009; Ramsay & Wagner, 2009; Schiele & Krummaker, 2011) argue that buyers need to consider the interests and perspectives of the suppliers to ensure that the supplier delivers in terms of the local government development programme. From a dyadic viewpoint, the customer and the supplier should define the content, method, and structure of an inter-organizational interaction (Mortensen & Arlbjrn, 2012).

The effectiveness and competitiveness of local governments may be improved by careful supplier relationship management that results in a streamlined development process. There has to be harmony between the city's plan and that of its internal and external constituents. This means that there is congruence between the goals, structures, and procedures of various municipal departments and agencies. Conflicting goals, interests, and tactics may be mitigated by stakeholder alignment in development (Lundin & Norrman, 2010).

2.8 STAKEHOLDERS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT

Documents such as the National Policy Framework on Public Participation serve as guidelines for participatory budgeting. To promote public engagement in local government, this book lays the framework for national policy (Mogale, 2003). The liberal government's promise to expand democratic liberties beyond those guaranteed by the constitution receives backing from this. This fits perfectly with the principles of community governance and democratic localism.

The framework, according to Qwabe and Mdaka (2011), guarantees the government's commitment to community engagement, giving communities more freedom and

prevents participation from being reduced to hollow rhetoric. Political parties and other forms of democratic representation are founded on promises of electoral action at the ward level. The government's backing of these groups exemplifies its dedication to local planning (also known as community-based planning). These strategies may then be implemented and tracked by community-based organisations and action groups. The government's dedication to democracy and the value of public participation is reaffirmed in the National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2005:12). According to Ngalunga (2006), the National Policy Framework on Public Participation provides the government with direction on how to include a broad spectrum of consumers, particularly those living in low-income regions, in discussions on key topics like budgeting. A feeling of pride in one's own territory may be fostered via active participation in all development activities.

2.8.1 Internal stakeholders in budgeting

This section discusses the internal stakeholders involved in the development process.

Regulators

Regulators care more about the results than they do about the means by which the strategic goals of the budgeting process will be achieved (Therivel & Wood, 2017). The budgeting process is not complete until the regulators have determined that the community development budgeting project is viable, does not violate the budgeting criteria, and benefits the people it is intended to serve. The regulator, in a participatory effort, must also take into account community preferences (Sapkota, 2017). In order to demonstrate the anticipated effect of the projected budget and development to local lawmakers and the leadership of the communities, the regulator would perform feasibility studies. If the regulator is satisfied, the proposed budget will be approved.

2.8.2 External stakeholders

This section discusses the external stakeholders who are mainly composed of the public.

Legislators

Legislators in government are tasked with considering a wide range of problems related to government initiatives planned for communities, including whether or not

these projects are in line with the interests and goals of the people living in such areas. Because of this, their part in the case study is crucial. The case study's legislators have sway in the policymaking process, weighing the constitutional setting of the participatory budgeting initiative. Legislators should be involved in discussions about proposed budget allocations since it is their job to look out for the public's best interests (Oliviera, 2018). Despite their constitutional role as checks and balances, they continue to play an essential role in shaping public policy. Legislators at the state and regional levels should demand proof of the allocations' need and their predicted effect on the populace.

The public

Consultation with the public comes before budgeting in participatory development. The local communities and their leaders would be included in the decision-making and planning processes that affect their way of life. In consensus with the community, a measure would be developed to quantify the most pressing requirements of the area. Community leaders and members' input throughout budgeting and design phases prevents residents from being taken off guard. The results on the communities' cultural, religious, and social capital will be discussed (Yang, 2016). Community leaders and residents would work together to determine a fair method for allocating development funding.

Community leaders

It will be crucial for community leaders to be involved in the development process so that they may make meaningful contributions to the growth of their community. Important input into the development processes is provided by community leadership's agreement or disagreement with projected expansion (Tan, 2020). Consultative community meetings including information sharing, argumentation, and (hopefully) shared decision-making are essential for facilitating public involvement with community leadership. Churches, imams, youth groups, women's groups, and other community organisations may help bring together the community's leaders and people.

Interest groups

Some examples of such organisations include those concerned with economic responsibility, social action, women's issues, civil rights, and commerce. Associations of workers are another kind of lobbying organisation, as are NGOs in general (Sturman, 2015). To ensure the inclusion of underrepresented communities, these organisations channel their input and criticism into widespread campaign activity, media commercials, and public rallies or marches.

2.9 BUDGETING PROCESSES

The budgets created via participatory budgeting are evaluated based on the monetary benefit they provide to the community members. The societal benefit gained is taken into account as well; for instance, reducing the vulnerability of young people to gang recruitment and substance misuse via the provision of recreational infrastructure. The public becomes less suspicious of the government and more convinced that the government has the best interests of the consumer at heart in providing priority services when value is expressed pragmatically in the budgetary measures proposed and executed. By giving communities a chance to take ownership of the budgeting process, comprehensive participatory budgeting techniques guarantee that the budgeting process is not just top-down. By doing so, public confidence in government procedures may grow along with public support for budgets. In general, holding public discussions may help bring people together and build a feeling of community. Restoring inclusive and equitable governance is facilitated by a democratic platform in which historically marginalised communities, such as black women, people with disabilities, and black people in general, are included; this ensures that all members of society are heard and treated with respect during the crucial planning stages of their communities.

By gaining backing for their economic value propositions, public sector leaders and managers now have more alternatives at their disposal for strategic leadership and management. Because of this, participatory theory may be used to monetary planning (Chohan, 2019). Managers in the public sector are responsible for ensuring that basic services like electricity, water, and education are provided without interference from

the executive or parliamentary branches of government. Despite legislators' central role in what Moore (2013) calls crisis managers' "authorising environment," the participatory budgeting method ensures that elected officials are not granted a monopoly on decision-making authority (Yang, 2016:48).

Moore (2013) discovered that centralised power did not yield desirable outcomes, and that through participatory budgeting, public managers who wanted to achieve their budgetary vision and create public value would be able to engage with many other actors whose support could provide them with a licence as well as resources to promote their public value proposition.

By including affected communities in the budgeting process, budget officials may increase their sway much beyond the bounds of their formal authority (Turkel & Turkel, 2016:114). Moore (2013:105) proposes that this motivates public managers to take a more inclusive approach to meeting community needs, one that takes into account the wealth of knowledge and experience held by members of the general public, women's groups, people with disabilities, people of colour, the legal profession, civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and even regulators. Andrews (2019:53) argues that citizen involvement in government budgeting, decision-making, and execution may legitimise citizens' contributions and agency towards strategic public administration.

Because it promotes the formation of actionable tools for achieving the important financial action, participatory budgeting is the best match method to the South African government budgeting processes. If government crisis managers can't gather the organisational capabilities to execute on public value propositions, then it's pointless to express such propositions and win public support for their execution, according to the public value theory (Hill, 2007:89). Cooperation, therefore, provides a chance to disassociate government plans from their customary pitfalls in execution (Andrews, 2019:53). When it comes to budgeting, managers may manage down and better match resources, human resources, and system capability with the financial response action when they have equitable involvement.

In addition, with widespread involvement, government crisis managers would be able to step back from the situation, assume accountability, and realign the value chain of the budgetary response effort such that concrete deliverables could be auctioned off

among communities (Stoker, 2006:77). Since the provision of budgetary services and the implementation of policy interventions rely on a dispersed operational capability, it is crucial that many stakeholders, including the general public, coordinate their responses.

Following its roots in Stoker's (2006:1) seminal work on the formalisation of local government, equitable governance maintained a heavy emphasis on increasing organisations' ability to get things done. Almost immediately thereafter, Moore (2013) acknowledged much more explicitly that this was too narrow a conception of operational capacity, and, in keeping with the global trend, acknowledged that inter-organizational, co-produced, collaboratively created forms of operational capacity and innovation of that capacity were crucial in today's networked governmental systems (Moore, 2013; Hill, 2007).

2.10 ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING DEVELOPMENT

The rules, values, and beliefs that unite and distinguish an organization's members from those of other organisations are what define its culture, as defined by Louw and Venter (2014:532). A more detailed definition of culture is provided by Ancona, Kochan, Scully, Van Maanen, and Westney (2009): "culture is a pattern of basic assumptions discovered or developed by a group as it learns to cope with the challenge of its external environment and its method of internal integration that is considered valid, as it has worked well for the group, and is now taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive and react to similar challenges."

In conclusion, Louw and Venter (2014) describe culture in the workplace as an ethos consisting of commonly held beliefs and practises. Typically, municipalities will issue a value statement outlining the values and norms that will be upheld, including the kind of objectives that are permissible for members to pursue and the level of conduct that will be tolerated from staff members (Louw & Venter, 2014). The municipality's core values are very important since they provide those outside the organisation a sense of what the municipality is all about. Such norms and ideals may be considered ethical or immoral depending on the community. The transformational leader must shape the municipal culture to reflect appropriate values and norms that do not go against the standards set by the municipality's internal or external stakeholders. To promote a

culture of compliance with municipal rules among internal and external stakeholders, transformational leadership offers the following advantages during leadership and organisational change (Ljungholm, 2014).

Commitment to change

Tolerant of small shifts in employee performance and committed to fostering a positive work environment for everyone involved, transformational leaders function as change agents throughout periods of both gradual and dramatic transition. As a result, staff members have more faith in their bosses' actions and honesty (Ljungholm, 2014). Further, a municipality may reap the following advantages from transformative leadership, as stated by Nusair, Ababneh, and Bae (2012).

Individualised consideration

Leaders who are transformational act as coaches or mentors to those under their guidance, assessing their needs, concerns, and skills before providing them with opportunities and challenges that are appropriate for them. They also encourage growth and development by delegating responsibility and offering constructive criticism to those they guide (Nusair et al., 2012).

Stimulate employees' intellect

Leaders with a transformational style invigorate their teams intellectually, inspire new ideas, and assist in rethinking the organization's approach to old issues and difficulties. They don't openly call out others for making mistakes or failing to follow their own techniques (Nusair et al., 2012).

Inspiring and motivating employees

Optimistic devotion to the organization's mission is fostered, and excitement for overcoming any obstacles that may stand in the way of achieving the vision is stoked by a transformational leader. They make it easy for workers to understand how the company's vision relates to their own ambitions, all while encouraging them to see challenges and setbacks as learning opportunities (Nusair et al., 2012).

2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Total quality management and Batho Pele principles underpin this study. The theories are briefly discussed below.

Total quality management (TQM) and the development process

Valmohammadia and Roshanzamir (2015) define total quality management (TQM) as a complete management attitude that promotes ongoing improvement in every activity at every level of the organisation and is achieved by applying the principle of total quality from the stage of acquiring the service delivery resources to the point of after-sale services to the consumer. Izogo and Ogba (2015) posit that service quality can be measured by subtracting the score of the consumer expectation of the service from the consumer's perception score of such a service; in this way organisations may determine the value or quality they deliver to their clients.

Quality has a role to play in consumer satisfaction, be it in the public or private sector. According to Radojevic, Stanisic and Stanic (2015:14), a customer's perception of service value is regarded as being equal to the perceived service quality relative to the price he/she paid for the service, as well as the total cost of acquiring the service; service quality, on the other hand, is determined by how well customers' needs are met. Understanding the actual need of the customer and delivering service that is of high quality and value to the customer are crucial to any organisation, as service quality has been found to determine customer satisfaction, just as customer satisfaction in turn determines customer loyalty and retention (Jahanshahi *et al.,* 2011).

To emphasise the importance of municipalities providing quality service, which will bring about customer satisfaction and retention, Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012) posit that the cost of recruiting new customers exceeds the cost of keeping existing customers. To deliver services or products which will bring satisfaction to communities, a quality control framework needs to be in place to avoid a variation in how suppliers deliver services to the communities on behalf of the government. Giving consideration to how a municipality pursues and benefits from a quality control framework is important, and equally crucial is to uphold such quality control practices. Gambi, Boer, Cecilio, Jørgensen and Carpinetti (2015) refer to human resources,

measurement, design and discipline as four quality tool groups and state that the quality tool groups impact different areas of quality performance and the overall firm performance of the local government. Davis *et al.* (2014) argue that an organisation which seeks to create a quality improvement culture must ensure commitment from top managers – especially those who are influential and have good relationships with employees – to initiate changes, devising activities with clear performance criteria and institutionalize bedding continuous improvement in all activities carried out in the organisation. This includes everything the organisation does in applying strategies, such as involving more staff in the quality improvement initiatives and developing training interventions which encourage the permeation of a quality improvement competence and culture.

White paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele)

South Africa's public service ethos is encapsulated in the eight Batho Pele principles. Batho Pele is a Setswana/Sesotho expression that translates into *People First* (Rispel, De Jager & Fonn, 2016). The purpose of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Notice 1459 of 1997) was to provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for transforming the public service (Rose & Pfeiffer, 2018). The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery set out principles to transform service delivery in the public sector (Vian, 2020). At the same time, the Constitution contains a very clear broad framework (Section 195) of how services should be provided to the citizens, with a service delivery mandate (Nzimakwe, 2008). The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1997) gives effect to the mandate, which it compartmentalises (Gossel, 2018). If citizens are put at the centre of public service delivery through ensuring a balance between citizens and good governance (Putu, 2006), the Batho Pele principles can be manifested by departments in service delivery that is effective and efficient (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019). The South African Constitution (Chapter 10, Section 1 (a) and the South African Social Security Act are very clear on how the services should be provided to the citizens (Nzimakwe, 2008). The principles will now be discussed in detail.

2.12 CONCLUSION

Municipalities operate in terms of policies and procedures. This chapter analysed some of the critical aspects of local government development, such as public consent during budgeting and the need for feasible developments. The TQM, Batho Pele and participative theoretical perspective of public governance were discussed in the context of local government development. The developmental environment, process design, goals and outcomes shed light on the critical elements of local government development. Legislative pillars for local government development serve as a directive and guideline for local municipalities. These consist of human rights concerning municipal service delivery, the handling of the municipality's financial affairs and social and economic development aspects of the local territory. The study sets out steps that can assist municipalities in planning, following procedures and engaging with suppliers and highlights the importance of roles and responsibilities and the essence of private-public partnership in development. It is evident from the study that there are adequate policies and guidelines in South Africa to drive local development. However, regardless of the policies highlighted in the literature review that target development challenges, these guidelines are not prioritised in most municipalities. Local economic development targets (numbers) are not set by most municipalities in the local sphere of government, which create outcomes like exhausting budgets by repeating activities/tasks, making mistakes and failing to embed sustainable development. In conclusion, Abrahams (2003) states that the impact of LED in people's lives and localities could be verified and improved by the quantity/number of local economic development initiatives intended to address specific local territory economic and social development challenges. Nel (2001) and Meyer-Stamer (2003) assert that initiating LED initiatives is not a simple task. Malele (2018) agrees that LED roles and LED implementation remain a challenge in South Africa. Therefore, it proved necessary to determine compliance with national LED guidelines and IDP formats; assess the goals and objectives of LED in a local municipality against LED national guidelines; investigate the processes used to develop the LED strategy in the context of the strategic guidelines for LED in the literature; identify challenges in LED implementation in Lekwa municipality; and assess the potential role of LED post-COVID-19 in rebuilding communities and economies in the municipality and the district.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore Lekwa municipality's compliance with legal and policy guidelines; strategic aim; objectives; structures; resourcing; consultation processes; stakeholder participation; and resultant outcomes. This chapter outlines the research method that was used in the study. In addition, the chapter describes the rationale behind the method and methodology selection, sampling strategy and study population (including participant selection and data collection strategies); ethical considerations; and strategies to ensure study rigour and trustworthiness. The chapter ends with the limitations and constraints that the researcher encountered in the course of the study. Figure 3 below illustrates the steps followed by the researcher while working on this chapter.

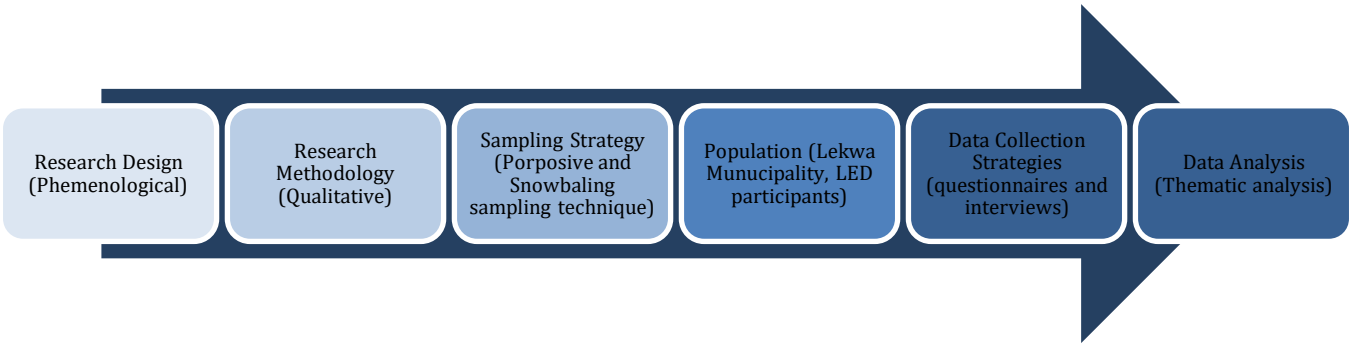

FIGURE 3.1: The research process of Ncube (2018)

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to match the researcher's goal; furthermore, the study followed a phenomenological research design. The goal of the technique is to shed light on the particular issue and discover phenomena by examining how the actors in a situation see them. This typically means using a qualitative method to obtain facts and perceptions in a context that involves people (Greening, 2019). Phenomenological research design is appropriate for "single cases or deliberate chosen sample" (Groenewald, 2004:87). It is simpler to find problems

that demonstrate discrepancies, failures and positive conclusions and to pay attention to particular situations when using such individual studies (Groenewald, 2004). This technique assisted in exploring and understanding the status of LED in Lekwa municipality in terms of compliance with legal and policy guidelines; strategic aim; objectives; structures; resourcing; consultation processes; stakeholder participation; and resultant outcomes.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The paradigm and philosophy of research are vital to data collection. A research paradigm is defined by Johnson and Christensen (2010) as a shared set of beliefs, attitudes, concepts and behaviours. There are different research paradigms, including positivist, interpretivism, realism, pragmatism and post-modernism; according to Bryman (2008), positivism, realism and interpretivism are the most commonly applicable to research in the social sciences. Due to its applicability and fit for the study's objectives, the interpretivism philosophy was selected as the research paradigm for this study. The interpretive paradigm permitted the subjectivity of the in-depth interview and the interpretive research philosophy contributed to the explanation of the phenomenon (LED). In this research paradigm, the researcher interacted with persons and interpreted events to make meaning of them. The interpretive paradigm uses meaning-oriented procedures like interviewing or participant observation to understand the world from people's subjective experiences (Saunders *et al*., 2018). This is justifiable, as the purpose and specific aims of this study necessitated consideration of the subjective opinions and experiences of the participants. Interpretivism has been proven to enable researchers to draw unique conclusions from prior findings and also identify constant factors within changing trends (Bryman, 2016). In addition, the versatility of the interpretivism paradigm also enabled the researcher to give different interpretations to a single data set, while placing a strong emphasis on the subjective experiences and viewpoints of individuals, with the aim of comprehending the significance that individuals assigned to their actions and experiences (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to learn more about a phenomena (Lekwa LED), hence the researchers used a qualitative approach. Literature searches and interviews with professionals and experts in the subject also helped the researcher learn about current events, seek for developing viewpoints, offer questions, and analyse the situation based on further information, facts, and thoughts.

Meanings, symbols, processes, and interactions in society are the focus of qualitative research. Transcribing, coding, and trend and theme analysis are all necessary to assess the descriptive data generated by this study (Saunders et al., 2018). Non-numerical data are used in qualitative social science research to gain insight into social life via the examination of unique persons or settings (Madill & Sullivan, 2018).

It is important for qualitative research to be introspective from start to finish (Lewis, 2015). There is often overlap between the many stages of research, including data collection and analysis, theory development and updating, expanding or narrowing study subjects, and the identification and resolution of validity risks.

3.4.1 Sampling strategy

To paraphrase Fox and Bayat (2007), a study sample consists of "any elements of a subgroup/subcategory of the entire population that can be selected by a particular method," with the intent of doing research on that subset. Sampling is the process by which things of interest to the research are selected. Snowball and purposive selection methods were used to choose the sample for this investigation. Purposive sampling, as defined by Neuman (2011), relies on "the judgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind." Purposive sampling, which selects people based on particular features or attributes that are relevant to the investigation, is the technique used in this sampling method, and it is based on identifying study

participants using specified standards that are pertinent to the study. This method was used to recruit city employees from the LED department who met the study's inclusion criteria. These individuals were specifically selected because of their extensive background knowledge and participation in all municipal LED projects.

The studied population is a tiny sliver of Lekwa municipality as a whole. The research sample consisted of five government officials, fifteen community councillors, five project coordinators, five community committees, two members from the LED forum, and two business representatives from the Lekwa municipality.

Since the researcher was at a loss as to where to find more subjects, the snowball sampling method was used. Researchers had to track down members of the LED forum and private sector leaders with direct involvement in LED since they were dispersed and not in the office every day. It was suitable to use the snowball sampling method, which involves finding one participant who meets the requirements for the population of interest, and then having that person recommend the researcher to another participant who has similar traits, since these people all know one other. With the use of this method, the researcher recruited 32 people who met the study's inclusion criteria and completed interviews and questionnaires.

3.4.2 Study population

Skaberk (2020) defines "target population" as the people, things, or concepts that are the focus of a study. According to McBride (2010), the people a researcher is interested in studying make up the population. The population of the Lekwa municipality is 115 662 as of 2011 (Stats SA). A total of 32 individuals from the municipality of Lekwa were sought for this research. Participants in the research were public servants, community leaders, project managers, community members, members of the LED forum, and members of the corporate sector in Lekwa municipality.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Public materials like annual reports and significant organisational documents like online journals were used to compile the data for this research. Other forms of hard evidence like flyers and magazines were also consulted. Public records, journals, and online government publications were also analysed for this research (such as the public address on Lekwa Municipal Local Economic Development initiatives). The interviews were either completely unstructured or somewhat unstructured, with the former being the norm. Since in-depth data and personal accounts on Lekwa municipality's local economic growth were necessary for the study, researchers opted to conduct interviews with participants using unstructured questions. Participatory observation via fieldwork was used to supplement answers collected from the questionnaires and interviews; information was acquired by seeing and engaging with people in their natural settings (Mikene et al., 2013). Language difficulties, cultural differences, and ethical considerations were just a few of the challenges researchers faced on the field. Getting in touch with possible participants was the initial step in carrying out the fieldwork, and the local language was chosen as the medium of contact since doing so has been shown to make respondents feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a “systematic search for meaning” and is one of the vital stages in the research procedure (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007:564). To analyse the qualitative data, this study employed thematic data analysis. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), thematic analysis is an effective qualitative method for understanding people's viewpoints, behaviours and habits within a certain dataset. Thematic analysis was chosen because it made it possible to combine and evaluate many data sets, providing a full comprehension of the results. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to draw conclusions from the data in a flexible manner (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Thematic analysis enables researchers to discover and examine patterns within the data and

pinpoint emerging themes based on participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thomas, 2006). The data in this study were presented and scrutinised using thematic analysis in conjunction with the interpretivism theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Sandelowski, 2010). Thematic analysis facilitates data analysis by academics with diverse methodological backgrounds (Taylor *et al*., 2017). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique that locates and analyses patterns or themes in the data. The six-step process used in this study for thematic analysis entailed becoming familiar with the qualitative data, developing preliminary codes, looking for themes, examining themes, identifying themes and preparing the final report. Thematic analysis was well-suited for the data sets and enabled the researcher to explore prior individual experiences with access to resources, opportunities and issues (Mohajan, 2018). This study employed qualitative research; themes were supported by data and applied to research issues beyond the scope of a single individual's experience to generate data-based categories. This implies that the interpretation of themes supported by data is applicable to study concerns that transcend an individual's experience and that categories can emerge from data, hence making data analysis easier and quicker.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were briefed on the study's ethical criteria and assured that their anonymity would be protected prior to data collection (Pattern & Newhart, 2017). They were informed of their privileges as research participants, including their choice to discontinue participation at any time. Finally, ethical issues were met by honouring respondents' cultural norms and beliefs, shielding participants' physical and psychological safety, and preserving complete anonymity throughout the study.

3.8 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE STUDY RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Reliability is defined as "the extent to which study results can be extrapolated to other settings and contexts" (Saunders et al., 2012). Qualitative data is shaped by and interpreted in light of the context in which it was gathered. Leung (2015) drew a

connection between the degree of reliability and validity and the care taken in ensuring and maintaining the study's rigour and trustworthiness. While reliability describes how easily the study's findings may be applied to other contexts and how likely they are to be confirmed, rigour describes how thoroughly the study was conducted in terms of its research design, data gathering, and analysis. The following were taken into account to guarantee the study's rigour and credibility.

3.8.1 Credibility

The study's credibility hinges on the research's aim and how effectively the data and analytical methods cater to that objective. This encompasses participant selection and associated issues; include a diverse range of people in a study's sample improves the quality of its data (Graneheim & Lundma, quoted in Ncube, 2018). By selecting an appropriate technique of data collecting and a sufficient sample size, the researcher assured the reliability of the study. In order to reduce the likelihood of human error and missing data, we extracted quotes and themes from the participants' recorded interviews and questionnaire answers.

3.8.2 Transferability

According to Graneheim and Lundman, quoted by Ncube (2018:135), "the extent to which findings can be transferred to other settings or groups" is known as transferability. The study's transferability and results depend heavily on the quality of the data collection and the analysis process. Transferability was used to transfer the collected data by using direct themes and quotes from the participants' responses, making this a qualitative study in contrast to a quantitative study, which could have used generalisations instead of direct quotes from the participants. The use of direct quotations adds credibility to the research by providing concrete examples and supporting facts.

3.8.3 Dependability

"seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced changes," as Graneheim and Lundman write (as quoted in Ncube, 2018:136). Over the course of two months, the researcher administered the same questionnaire and conducted the same interviews using questions derived from the research questions. The researcher asked the same questions several times while knowing that both the data and her own opinions may change. To fix the problem of data inconsistency and strengthen the validity of the research, a new approach was used to data collection.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the data gathered supports the results, interpretations, and conclusions presented in the final report (Loh, 2013). The last step is to compile all of the information, check for errors, and integrate the findings into the report.

3.8.5 Bracketing

In order to study a phenomena objectively, it is helpful to "bracket" one's preconceived notions about it. The researcher thought that bracketing was beneficial in reinforcing the validity of the data since it ensured that any extraneous influences and underlying presuppositions were excluded. The researcher employed a research diary to reflect on her internship with the municipality's LED unit at the Department of Economics and Tourism in the Directorate for Local Economic Development without bringing her own biases or assumptions into the study. Since some of the study's participants were the researcher's former colleagues, they employed bracketing to eliminate the possibility of bias.

This study's rigour and trustworthiness were ensured by using the data triangulation method. This research used triangulation, which includes collecting data from different sources to compare and contrast and build upon one another (Bryman, 2012, 2016; Somekh & Lewin 2005; Johnson, 1997), to assure the validity and trustworthiness of

the findings. After collecting data via observation, interviews, and questionnaires, the researcher employed an in-depth study design that was tailored to the study's goals and allowed for the accurate collection of high-quality data. Furthermore, we ensured that the data was of good quality, since this is what ultimately provides research with credibility and depth. Standardised procedures and verified instruments were used to gather and aggregate data, including the LED plan for the Lekwa municipality, IDP papers, the National Framework for Local Economic Development document, and questionnaires (Noble & Smith, 2015). The legitimacy of the research was enhanced by the use of several sources of information, and qualitative data was coded and topic tracked using Microsoft Excel. Finally, researcher bias was addressed well, which is crucial since it might affect how the results of the study were interpreted based on the participants' responses and their experiences. After giving participants with informed consent papers, the researcher obtained their signatures to confirm their permission to participate.

3.9 LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered limitations and constraints when conducting the study. Firstly, fieldwork requires time and financial support to cover the scope of work or the study sample. For example, at Lekwa municipality the LED unit had to attend meetings back-to-back and work outside the office at times, hindering interaction. The researcher had to visit the office multiple times to complete a single task. Some of the participants from the municipality LED forum found it difficult to comprehend the questionnaire due to their level of education and to linguistic barriers. Then the local language was selected as the medium of communication, as this has been observed to encourage respondents to be more open and confident in their submissions. Subsequently some did understand the questions but did not know how to respond to some of the questions; for instance, questions on the LED budget and LED policy. However, the municipality’s LED officials were able to answer all the questions and it came to the researcher’s knowledge that the LED forum was relatively new. It was launched eight months before and members received training early that year. Lastly,

it was challenging to find those business owners who did not reside in Lekwa; due to financial constraints the researcher was unable to travel to their areas.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed how the research study was conducted and focused on research methodology, sampling strategies, study population (including participant selection) and data collection via observations, interviews, document analysis and questionnaires. In addition, it highlighted how thematic analysis was used while taking ethical considerations into account. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the strategies to ensure study rigour and trustworthiness. The chapter concluded by highlighting limitations and constraints of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research study's data along with an analysis and evaluation of the outcomes and findings. The investigation's main focus was on adhering to legal and policy requirements, strategic goals, objectives, structures and outcomes as they related to the evaluation of the state of local economic development (LED) in Lekwa municipality.

The research objectives were to probe for compliance with national LED guidelines and the integrated development plan (IDP) formats, assess the goals and objectives of LED in Lekwa against LED national guidelines, investigate the processes used to develop the LED strategy and assess them against the strategic guidelines provided for LED in the literature, identify challenges in LED implementation in Lekwa municipality and assess the potential role of LED, post-COVID-19, in rebuilding communities and economies in the Lekwa municipality and the district.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Compared to the scope of LED in Lekwa municipality, the sample size in this study was relatively small, which is characteristic of qualitative research and was chosen based on the researcher’s assumption that the initial phase of literature synthesis would impact the analysis. The demographic profile of the study's respondents comprised 32 participants from Lekwa municipality.

4.2.1 Age distribution of interviewed participants

TABLE 4.1: Age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-35	5	15.625
36-40	8	25
41-45	14	43.75
46-50	2	6.25
51-59	2	6.25
60 and above	1	3.125
Total	32	100

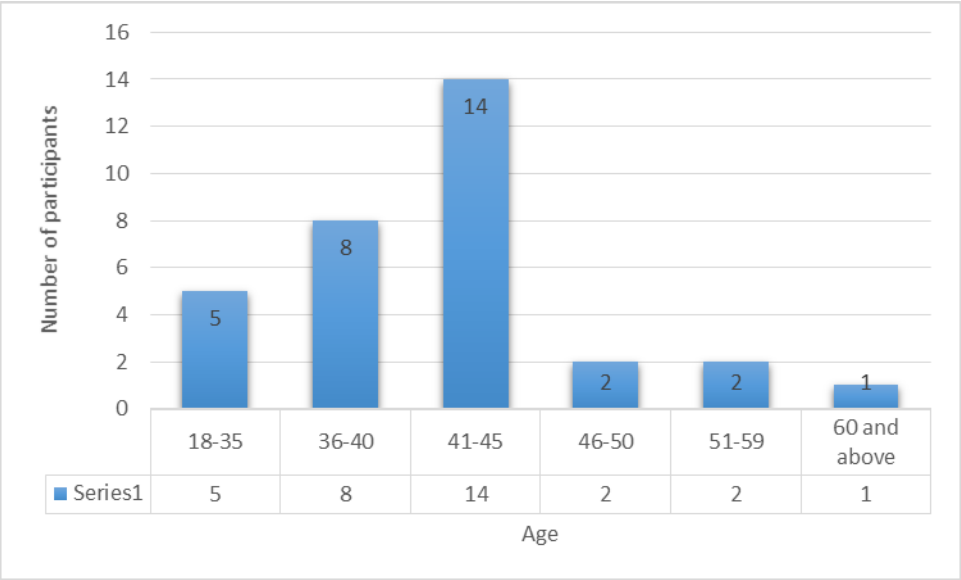

FIGURE 4.1: Age distribution

The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 60 and over, with 14 people being between the ages of 41 and 45. There were people of many various races and ages represented, with black adults making up the majority and just five of the participants (15.6%) being considered to be young adults. According to Table 4.1, just 6.25% of the sample was between the ages of 51 and 59, and only 1.67% of the sample was between the ages of 46 and 50. The older than 60 athlete was really turning 61 in just three days.

This suggests that a larger proportion of adults than young people took part in the survey. There is no consideration of race in the LED criteria for choosing LEDF members. However, they do specify that adults only (18+) may join in the building's construction. This may explain why there are fewer young people working there. While just 16% of African youth participated, this might be due to a lack of interest or understanding about LED among other ethnic groups and the young of Lekwa municipality.

Furthermore, this may suggest that young people in the municipality are not being adequately represented when it comes to decisions on local development.

"I can state that there are young people involve in LEDF, however, we are outnumbered, or I can say the ratio of youth to adults is not balanced….. I can't say that there is lack of interest or knowledge in becoming part of LEDF, I will just talk about my experience. It could've been difficult for me to be part of this structure if I didn't have means to finance my traveling to LEDF meetings and other activities in the structure. LEDF members are not getting paid nor receiving any stipend to supplement the role a LEDF member fully….. We were many at first but once people figure out that we won't be paid they lost interest….so you can just imagine what will attract/sustain an unemployed youth in LEDF structure" (Anonymous, 2013).

4.2.2 Gender distribution

TABLE 4.2: Gender distribution

Male	Female
21	11

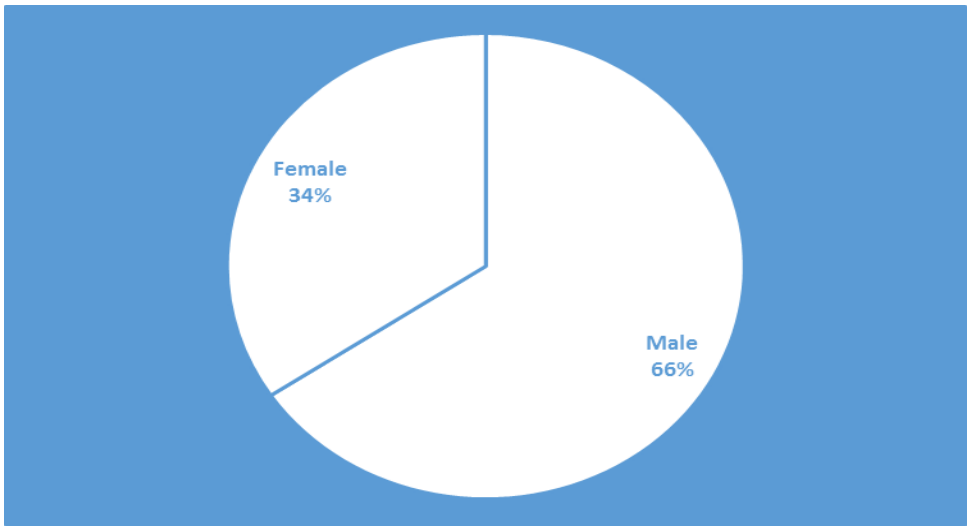

FIGURE 4.2: Gender distribution

The study had 32 participants. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 depict that participants in the study consisted of 34% females and 66% males.

Thus the majority of the participants were male and only 11 participants were female. The female to male ratio in the LED office was found to be (0:2), which illustrates that there were no female participants employed in the LED unit or as LED officials in the municipality. However, there were two LED officials who participated, both male.

LED seeks to address inequality, amongst other challenges, therefore a balance between male and female representation is fundamental to ensure women are included in the development of their locality. One participant in the municipality's LED office stated that:

"There is only two of us in the LED unit, myself (LED officer) and the LED Manager" (David, 2023).

This means that the local economic development unit in Lekwa municipality was a male-dominated space at the time of the study.

4.2.3 Disability distribution

TABLE 4.3: Disability distribution

No	Yes
1	31

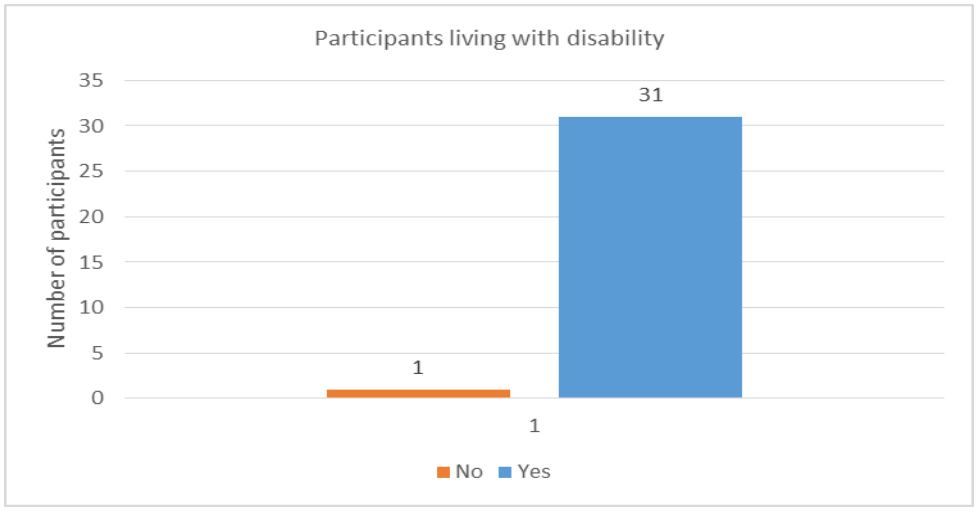

FIGURE 4.3: Disability distribution

Out of 32 participants only one reported a physical disability and 31 participants did not record any disability (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3). This means participants who were not disabled dominated the numbers. The disability of the person reported to live with disability was barely noticeable; his perspective on disability could be biased in terms

of other forms of disability. This one reported disabled person was a male, meaning there was no participant representing females living with disability in the structure. This is another form of imbalance that needs to be corrected for the structure to fully represent the community and its social and economic development challenges.

"I have interest in LED……however, a person with disability needs support, which is not provided in the structure" (Anonymous, 2023).

4.2.4 Education distribution

TABLE 4.4: Education distribution

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Never attended school	2	6.25
Primary school	4	12.5
Secondary school	13	40.625
Vocational training	5	15.625
college	1	3.125
University Level	7	21.875
Total	32	100

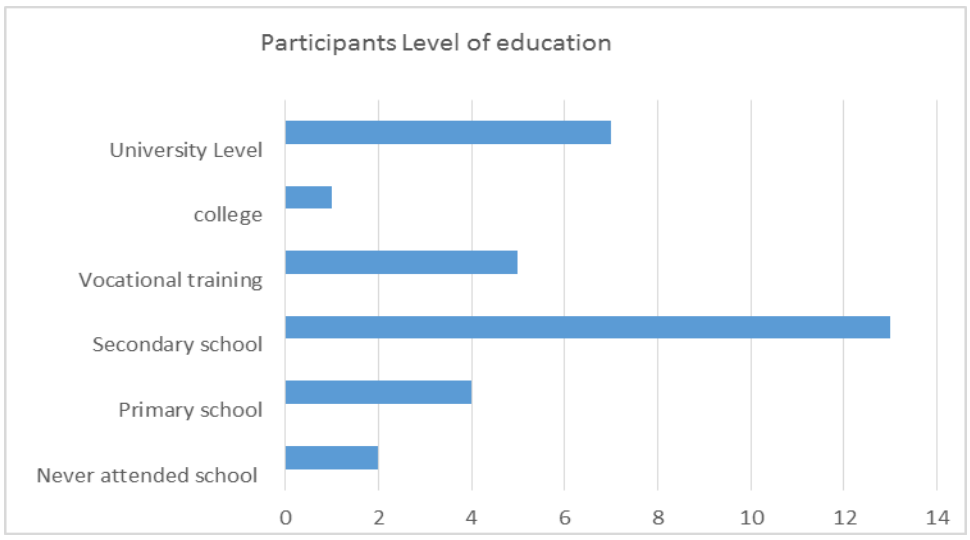

FIGURE: 4.4: Education distribution

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 illustrate the participants' responses in terms of education: 7 (21.9%) participants had a university level education, 1 (3.1%) had attended college, 5 (15.6%) had vocational training, 13 (40.6%) had secondary school education and 4 (12.5%) had primary school education, while 2 (6.25%) participants had not attended

school. As 30 participants had attended school, the majority of the participants in the structure were able to write and read.

Education is important, as being part of the LEDF structure means there are different people from different backgrounds (community, private sector and public sector) and the language used in meetings and public engagements is mainly English. So a basic educational background is important to aid the participants to carry out their duties in the structure. For example, some of the participants had never gone to school and as a result the language used for the questionnaire was difficult to understand. The author had to translate the questions into the local language, which was time consuming.

"Ngiyasizwa isingisi Kuma meeting inkinga isuke ibe ekutheni ngiphendule noma ngisibhale phansi (meaning: I'm able to understand English in meetings, the challenge comes when I'm supposed to respond nor write it down)" (Anonymous, 2023).

4.2.5 Marital status distribution

TABLE 4.5: Marital status distribution

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	7	21.875
Single	21	65.625
Divorced	3	9.375
Widow/Widower	1	3.125
Total	32	100

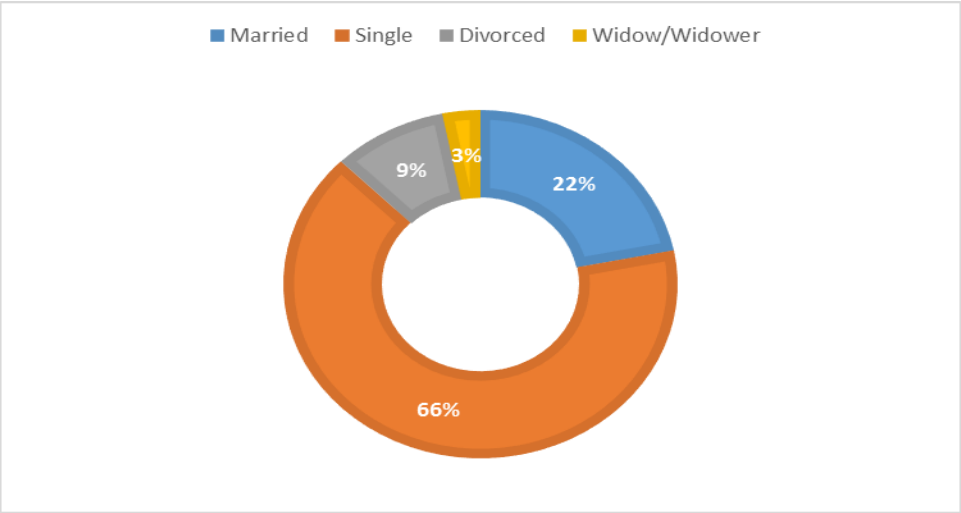

FIGURE 4.5: Marital status distribution

Twenty-one (66%), married seven (22%), divorced three (9%) and a widow or widower made up the rest of the sample.

LED aims to combat poverty, unemployment, and inequality—issues that touch every family in South Africa, but are most acute in smaller communities like those found within the Lekwa municipality. With 66% of participants being single, 9% divorced, 3% widowed, and 22% married, the LEDF is reflective of the diversity of family structures and community issues.

The LEDF attendance log revealed that married members, representing 22% of the total, were more likely to show up for events than their single counterparts. Their attendance was higher than that of singles, divorcees, and widows and widowers. Given that more than 90% of the participants were claimed to be parents, this might signify a variety of things. While others brought up financial difficulties, one person brought up the topic of being a single parent raising two children with little help from extended relatives. However, the participants' household situations and family dynamics significantly impacted their engagement with the training. The urgent desire to improve their economic condition and the quality of life for themselves, their children, and their families sometimes took priority over longer-term goals.

4.2.6 Participants' children distribution

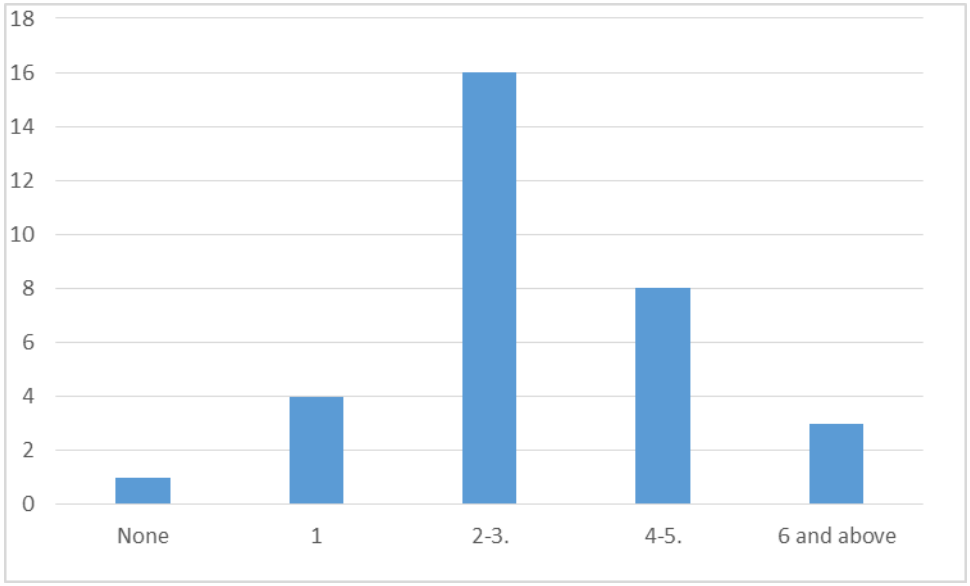

FIGURE 4.6: Participants' children distribution

Participants' family sizes varied widely, from one kid to six or more, with the vast majority boasting between two and three offspring. This means that more than 90% of respondents said they had some kind of dependent, whether direct or indirect. While there is no monetary incentive for participants to participate in the LEDF, those with families showed more loyalty to the programme than those without children.

LED stands for the public, private, and non-profit sectors of society. As much as LEDF mandates a minimum age of 18 for membership, a community may be thought of as a collection of families. Parents and legal guardians made up the bulk of the study's participants. This implies that the needs of children will be taken into account while making choices. Nothing will be done that might put kids in risk or threaten their safe environment.

"…..I have two children and I haven't seen any children participating in the LEDF structure before but we do work with schools and youth structures in the community" (Anonymous, 2023).

4.2.7 LED-related training

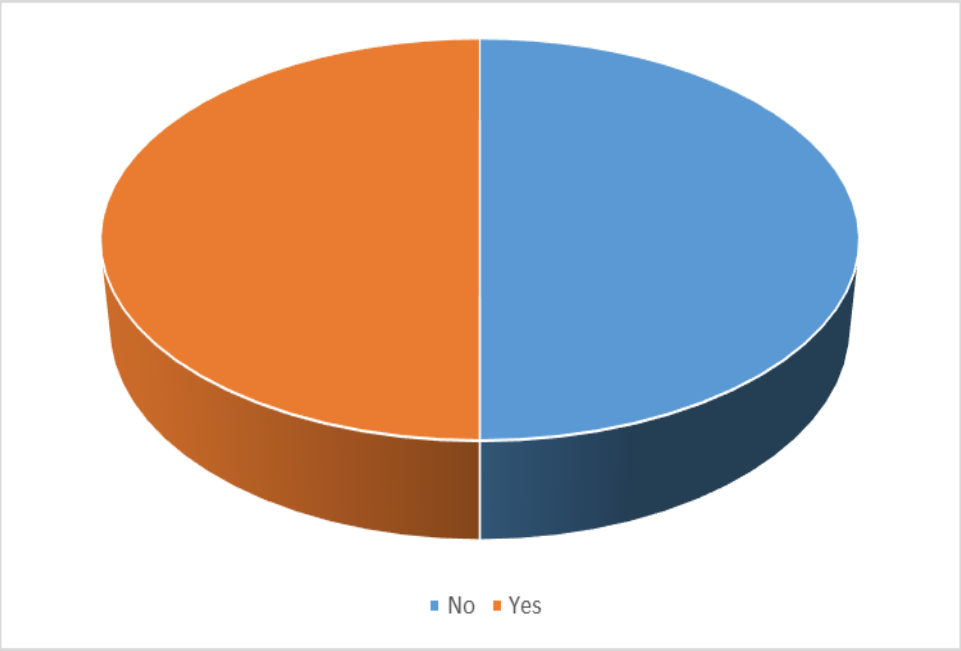

FIGURE 4.7: LED-related training

Half of the people who participated in the research said they had never had any LED training, while the other half said they had attended the SALGA LED practitioners and

councillors' workshop and that two of them had also completed a course on LED. People from the governmental and corporate sectors as well as members of the community all took part. All of these entities play important roles in LED, and it is hoped that they would work together for the sake of their community. In this setup, advancement is enabled by resources like money, information, and training that all contribute to production. When all the participants in a partnership have the tools they need to do their jobs well, the partnership thrives. The city was successful in building coalitions and implementing plans because reportedly half of its residents had gotten training.

"Through partnerships with local mines, we were able to implement several infrastructural programmes such water treatment plant, building of several hydroponics and waste management services" (Rachoene, 2023).

"Lack of capacity / continuous training has led to assumptions that being part of the LED forum you are automatically positioning yourself for a tender, being considered for permanent employment in the municipality or a business opportunity from the municipality" (Stanley, 2023).

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The research used topic analysis to identify pressing concerns about LED in Lekwa municipality. What we give in this chapter is a subset of the themes that were found to be highly saturated throughout the theme analysis. Five overarching topics were identified and discussed throughout the research. Selected quotations used to highlight the results were picked for their brevity and ability to sum up the feedback received from the surveys and interviews employed. The semi-structured interviews yielded five overarching themes and several subthemes pertinent to the objectives of the research.

This part summarises the study's results, discussing their significance for understanding the difficulties and opportunities facing the LED in Lekwa municipality.

This chapter provides a framework for analysing municipal LED challenges, which in turn may aid policymakers and stakeholders in developing efficient municipal LED programmes.

Themes

As they relate to the research aims, the following themes were found through thematic analysis of the data collected in the research study:

TABLE 4.6: Research objectives and themes

Research objectives	Themes
1. Validation of national LED standards and IDP forms.	Theme 1: Compliance with national LED policy and guidelines
2. LED goals in Lekwa compared to LED national recommendations.	Theme 2: Comparison of LED goals
3. The LED strategy formulation process and how it compares to LED strategic guidelines in the literature.	Theme 3: LED strategic implementation and formulation
4. Lekwa municipality's LED implementation challenges.	Theme 4: LED implementation challenges
5. How LED may reconstruct communities and enterprises in the Lekwa municipality and area after COVID-19.	Theme 5: LED reconstruction post-COVID-19

4.3.1 Research objective 1

Theme 1: Compliance with national LED policy and guidelines

Thematically, the study sought to establish whether Lekwa municipality followed the national LED policy and guidelines, as well as whether its LED aims and objectives were informed by them. According to the questionnaire results, Lekwa municipality followed the national LED policy and guidelines. However, further validation and integration of the guidelines into the IDP forms was required. Respondents stated that

the municipality engaged with national guidelines prior to adoption and that they informed the LED aims and objectives.
The need for capacity building and training programmes to guarantee better compliance with the national LED policy and guidelines was one of the significant responses from participants.

According to one respondent,
"*There is a need for capacity building and training to ensure that officials are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement LED strategies"* (Buri, 2023).

This feeling is confirmed by literature, as Khambule (2018) points out that trained LED officials are critical to the development and implementation of LED in a municipality. Capacity building is key to officials carrying out LED strategies and assuring their viability. Again, the Mpumalanga Provincial Strategy Framework for Local Economic Development (2019/2020) emphasises the importance of training for LED forums to ensure effective participation in LED processes.

Based on the questionnaire replies, it is clear that Lekwa municipality had implemented measures to comply with national LED policy and guidelines. The respondents acknowledged that the municipality communicated with key stakeholders before implementing LED plans and that their LED aims and objectives were guided by national norms.

According to a respondent:
"*We have to ensure that our plans and strategies are in line with national standards and policies to ensure that we are achieving our LED objectives*" (David, 2023).

Some respondents mentioned difficulties in adhering to national LED policy and guidelines, such as a lack of resources and a lack of awareness among some stakeholders. Despite these difficulties, it is clear that Lekwa municipality was working to validate national LED standards and IDP forms. The municipality ensured that its LED strategies were effective and aligned with national goals by adhering to national requirements.

As one respondent noted,
"*We understand the importance of complying with national guidelines as it helps us achieve our LED goals and objectives while also contributing to national development*" (Siyabonga, 2023).

Generally most responses suggested that compliance with national LED policy and guidelines was a critical aspect of LED implementation in Lekwa municipality and that efforts should be made to address any challenges that might hinder compliance:

"*There are times when we struggle to comply with national guidelines due to budget constraints and a lack of understanding among some stakeholders about the importance of LED"* (Robert, 2023).

The results of the study indicate that the municipality of Lekwa followed or complied with the national LED policy and guidelines, using them as a basis for its LED goals and objectives. Literature review backs up these results by stressing the need of adhering to national requirements for effective LED deployment (Khambule, 2018; Nel & Rogerson, 2005). However, the respondents did emphasise the need of capacity development and training efforts to improve adherence to national LED policy and standards, which is in accordance with what was found in the aforementioned literature review. Malele (2018) claims that misunderstandings and disagreements prevent effective LED deployment because of a lack of capacity development and training in LED forums.

4.3.2 Research objective 2

Topic 2: Analysing LED Objectives
The second purpose of this research was to analyse the municipality of Lekwa's progress towards its LED targets by contrasting them with national LED recommendations. The topic looked at the specificity, measurable, and public communication of the municipality's LED objectives, and how well they fit in with national LED criteria. The topic also explored the availability of resources and money to support LED projects, as well as the implementation of LED aims into the

municipality's overall development plans and strategies. Some participant perspectives on how to achieve this aim are as follows:

"*The LED goals in the municipality are too general and lack specificity, making it challenging to measure progress towards achieving them*" (Rachoene, 2023).

"*There is a lack of coordination and collaboration among the different departments in the municipality, which is hindering the achievement of LED goals*" (Deli, 2023).

"*The LED goals in the municipality should prioritise the development of local businesses and entrepreneurship"* (Gert, 2023).

According to the literature (Agrawal & Khan, 2019), successful LED deployment requires the integration of LED goals with national LED standards. To properly monitor progress towards LED goals, they must first be specified (Brixiová & Kangoye, 2019). In addition, Ocampo et al. (2010) highlight the need of cross-departmental collaboration in order to successfully implement LED deployment. It has been shown that fostering local business development and entrepreneurship is crucial to the success of LED (Oliveira et al., 2019). Improvements to local infrastructure, which in turn boost local economies, are also important to LED efficiency (Brixiová & Kangoye, 2019). According to Sithole et al. (2019), training and capacity building efforts are necessary to achieve LED goals.

The municipality's LED goals were found to be consistent with national LED requirements; nevertheless, more elaboration and financing are required to bring these goals to fruition. LED should prioritise the development of local enterprises and infrastructure and the improvement of interagency cooperation and dialogue. Additional training and capacity-building initiatives must be implemented if the municipality is to realise its LED goals.

4.3.3 Research objective 3

Strategy development and LED implementation

The purpose and central topic examined the strategies and methods that Lekwa municipality used while implementing LED projects. It also looked at the various stakeholders and how they fit into the implementation puzzle. All 32 respondents stated that the Lekwa municipality has LED targets set out for it. However, details on the intended outcomes were not provided. The existence of a municipal LED strategy was also verified. The technique was not specified, although one person said it was being evaluated.

The participants were asked about their role in the LED implementation process and one participant, a community council member, stated:

"*As community council, we work with the municipality to identify LED projects and ensure their implementation*" (Qhawe, 2023).

Another participant, a LED officer, added:
"*Our role is to oversee the implementation of LED projects and ensure that they align with the municipality's LED strategy*" (David, 2023).

Regarding the processes used to develop the LED strategy, a project coordinator stated, "The municipality consults with stakeholders in the LED forum and considers national LED guidelines and IDP formats when developing the LED strategy". This aligns with the literature, which suggests that stakeholder engagement is critical to successful LED implementation (Waldinger, 2019).

A government official highlighted some challenges to LED implementation, stating:
"*There is often a lack of funding and resources for LED projects, and sometimes a lack of support from other stakeholders, such as the private sector*" (Immi, 2023).

This lends credence to the conclusion that public-private partnerships and collaboration are crucial for the widespread adoption of LED technology (Todaro & Smith, 2014). The need of having a well-defined LED strategy and involving the appropriate stakeholders in its implementation is stressed. For LED deployment to be successful, it is necessary to overcome barriers such as inadequate funding and resources and little corporate sector involvement. The majority of respondents stated

that LED initiatives are not prioritised enough in municipal budgets and that given funds are often inadequate to see projects through from inception to completion.

Several respondents raised concerns about the absence of long-term economic growth and the priority placed on giving urgent relief to the needy. Findings from the literature research, which mention financial constraints and a lack of planning as obstacles to implementing LED solutions in South African municipalities, are consistent with this conclusion. Khambule (2018) asserts that "the availability of adequate financial resources empowers municipalities to independently drive the LED process and promote the successful execution of LED initiatives". Similarly, Nel and Rogerson (2005) contend that LED implementation varies in response to municipal budget levels.

4.3.4 Research objective 4

Theme 4: LED implementation challenges

The LED implementation challenges topic honed focused on the difficulties and benefits of implementing LED projects in Lekwa municipality. Issues mentioned by participants that are preventing the municipality's LED projects from succeeding include a lack of finance, a lack of competent staff, a lack of community participation, a lack of proper community infrastructure, and limited support from the national government. A frustrated participant shared their thoughts on the limited availability of funds for LED projects:

"*We have so many good ideas, but we never have the money to make them happen*."

Another participant echoed this sentiment, remarking:
"*We need more support from the national government to make LED a success in our municipality*" (Mahlatse, 2023).

Despite these challenges, participants pinpointed various opportunities that could enhance the success of the municipality's LED endeavours. These opportunities encompassed increased collaboration among government, business and community

stakeholders; augmented investment in infrastructure development; and the identification of novel prospects for economic growth and development.

Participant 3 emphasised the significance of collaboration, asserting:
"*We need to work together if we're going to make LED work in our municipality. It's not just about the government or the business sector, it's about all of* us" (Pheello, 2023).

Another respondent also underlined the importance of infrastructure development, stating:
"*We need to invest in our roads, our electricity, our water - these are the things that will attract businesses and create jobs*" (Arial, 2023).

The findings reveal that despite significant difficulties, opportunities existed to enhance the effectiveness of LED programmes in Lekwa municipality. By fostering cross-sector collaboration and investing in essential infrastructure, the municipality may be able to attain better economic growth and development and overcome some difficulties in the deployment of LEDs. That's why it's so important for governments to put an emphasis on LED, educate their employees, and finance LED initiatives adequately. Both regional LED objectives and national development goals will benefit from this approach. The primary problem was a lack of financial resources. Respondents also mentioned a lack of political will and dedication as a significant obstacle to LED implementation. As one responder put it:
"*There is a lack of political will towards LED, and this has resulted in a lack of support from the local government"* (Thabo, 2023).

Concerns were voiced about the lack of community engagement, the fragmented nature of the effort, and the incompetence of those in charge of LEDs. Findings including a lack of finance and a lack of political will and commitment are similar with previous studies on LED deployment in South Africa.

According to Molele's (2018) analysis of the adoption of LED in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpopo province, a lack of money is a major impediment to executing

the LED plan. This conclusion is in line with the survey responses in Lekwa municipality, thus it doesn't bode well for the prospects of LED installation there.

Pillars of successful LED implementation

The researcher used suggestions offered and points raised by participants during their interview sessions and questionnaire schedules. Participants discussed challenges and limitations facing the municipality, aiming to find implementable solutions for a functional LED unit. Various common threads in their responses emerged concerning the municipality's LED unit. These are demonstrated in Figure 4.8 below.

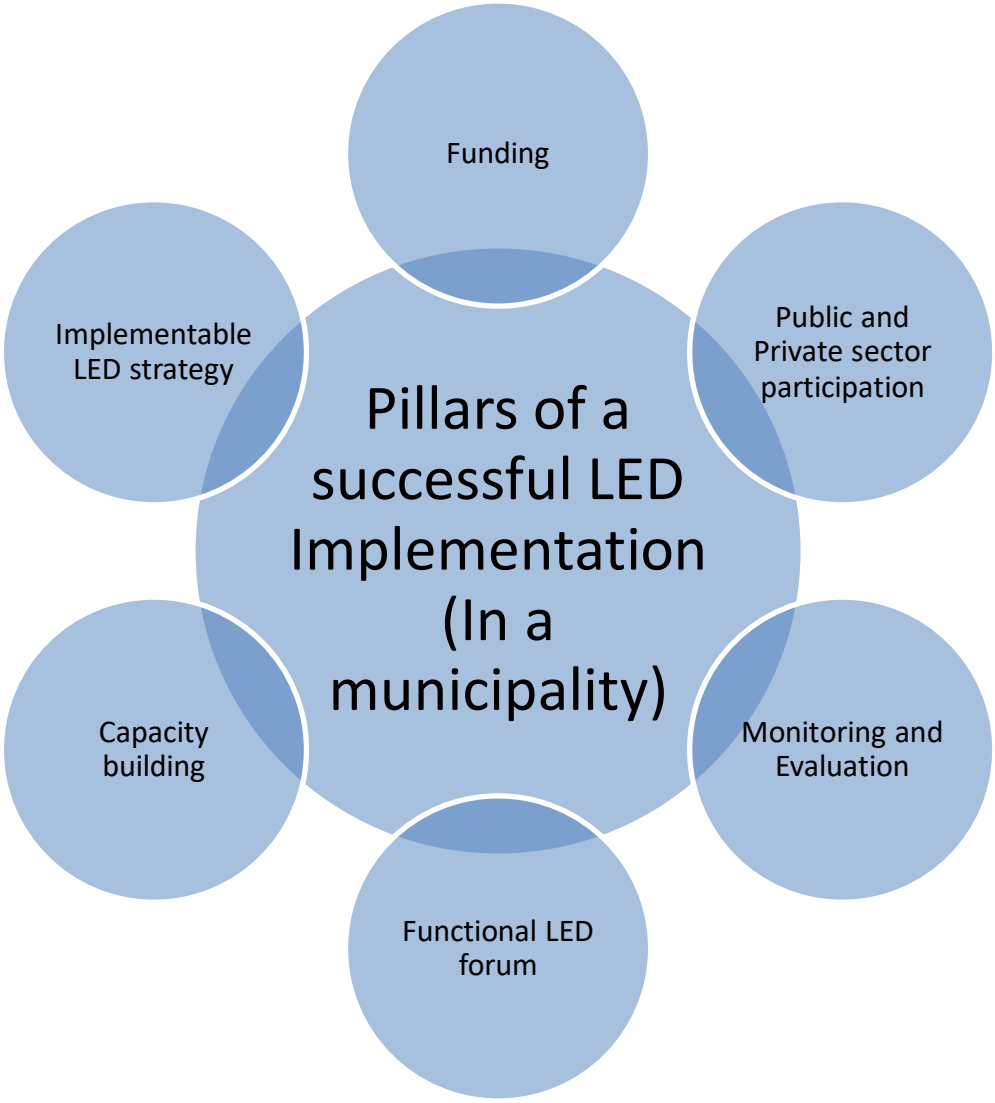

FIGURE 4.8: Strategies for successful LED implementation in a municipality

SUB-THEME	FINDINGS AND	SUPPORTING QUOTES
FUNDING	"Development is a dynamic process that provides an opportunity to pursue a life that is secure and in which basic needs are met" (Semere, 2011); Malele (2018:120) confirms that all kinds of development require funding. Funding can be described as the availability of resources allocated to perform development programmes and projects. Lack of funding is one of the major challenges mentioned by participants in the municipality's LED unit; they also highlighted that LED projects were not given the attention needed to have the impact that was expected, such as creating a conducive environment for job creation and poverty alleviation and addressing inequality in the local sphere.	*"There is lot of challenges in the municipality, I will list a few; lack of understanding of led by political heads, inadequate funding, led being dumping department for redundant employees in the municipality; lack of interest from private sector"* (Buri, 2023). *"We do get financial resources, however, it is not enough to carry out LED plans and projects in the municipality"* (David, 2023). *"Prioritisation of LED as unit by political heads, increased funding, development stakeholder engagement policy, development of investment policy, I believe they can improve the functionality of the unit"* (Immi, 2023). *"Inadequate financial resource to implement programme and initiatives"* (Rachoene, 2023).

SUB-THEME	FINDINGS AND	SUPPORTING QUOTES
CAPACITY BUILDING	Skilled LED officials and funding allocated to LED can play a fundamental role in the success and implementation of LED in a municipality. However, service delivery is prioritised more than LED projects and plans. LED is not "central to the development agenda of a locality" (Lawrence & Hadingham, 2008:45). LED tends to be a "dumping ground" for incompetent officials or can be seen as an opportunity for political / private agendas (Nel cited in Malele, 2018). The effectiveness and efficiency of a municipality can be improved through capacity building. The recruitment of competent LED professionals, adequate funding and ongoing LED forum training will help align the forum with the municipality's LED plans and objectives. Having the former in place may result in better decision-making, better service delivery and improved productivity.	*"…understaffed LED unit, lack of funding for projects and incapacitated human resources"* (Pretty, 2023). *"The absence of training/ lack capacity building creates misunderstanding and an opportunity for conflicts on LED forum perspective"* (Mohlala, 2023). *"Lack of capacity / continuous training has led to assumptions that being part of the LED forum you are automatically positioning yourself for a tender, being considered for permanent employment in the municipality or a business opportunity from the municipality"* (Stanley, 2023). *"There is only two of us in the LED unit, myself (LED officer) and the LED Manager"* (David,2023). *"….inadequate funding, led being dumping department for redundant employees in the municipality; lack of interest from private sector"* (Buri, 2023).

SUB-THEME	FINDINGS AND	SUPPORTING QUOTES
FUNCTIONAL LED FORUM	The interviewed LEDF members confirmed that they had attended one workshop, which taught them their responsibilities in LED. However, they were ignorant of how much had been allocated to the LED unit for the current year and of the planned project plans; only officials were able to respond and give specific amounts. Transparency in the LED unit is vital and will assist the unit to account for progress and the use of financial resources. Continuous training will capacitate the LEDF and create order and the LEDF will be functional in its scope of participation.	*"…Politicians perceive established forums such as LED forums as platforms to exert their influence in the society, with the agenda being hijacked to address issues that have nothing to do with local economic development"* (Local Economic Development Mpumalanga Provincial Strategy Framework 2019/2020**).** *"….Lekwa LED has been used incorrectly in the past and that has let majority of the members of the municipality unsure of the LED objectives"* (Mabanga, 2023).
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION	Public and private partnerships bring investments, create jobs and alleviate poverty. Nel and Rogerson (2005:19) posit that the ability to effect positive and meaningfully change, "on poverty and encourage economic growth" in local municipalities is reliant on the "resources allocated to LED".	*"We need public and private sector partnership in the process to grow the economy of Lekwa through various programmes and resources to create jobs, reduce poverty to improve living conditions for the people residing in Lekwa"* (Buthelezi, 2023). *"Through partnerships with local mines, we were able to implement several infrastructural programmes such water treatment plant, building of several hydroponics and waste management services"* (Rachoene, 2023).

SUB-THEME	FINDINGS AND	SUPPORTING QUOTES
IMPLEMENTABLE OF LED STRATEGY	Lekwa municipality outsourced its LED strategy, so it was being reviewed at the time of the research. The strategy did not cover unforeseen circumstances (such as COVID-19 and floods) and it was a challenge for the municipality to implement the strategy. The former highlights that when a municipality employs a service provider for its LED strategy it should also request training to ensure that officials are equipped to carry out the strategy and bring it to fruition.	*"An Implementable LED strategy is important to provide consistent supply of basic services to its community especially the business sector and to gain confidence of the private sector; and ensure the allocation funds for led projects and programmes"* (Thabo, 2023). *"Lekwa municipality has outsource their LED strategy, whereas the previous LED strategy was a challenge to implement. The strategy lacked a long term perspective, it did not prepare the municipality for unanticipated circumstances such as COVID-19, floods and load shedding…."* (Hlengiwe, 2023).
MONITARING AND EVLUATION	The absence of a LED monitoring and evaluation tool hinders progress in a municipality. It is difficult to establish whether the activities are aligned with the project's initial phase objectives and to evaluate the project at completion phase.	*"….LED monitoring and evaluation tool, can play a huge role in LED as it monitors 1. Processes, 2.Technicals, 3.Assumptions and 4.Finances"* (Gert, 2023).

4.3.5 Research objective 5

Theme 5: LED reconstruction post-COVID-19

The objective and theme examined how LED could be employed to support the rebuilding of communities and economies impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme also evaluated the municipality's LED plans and actions to address post-COVID-19 economic issues, the hurdles experienced in implementing LED projects post-COVID-19 and the potential roles that stakeholders could play in LED reconstruction efforts:

"*Post-COVID-19, LED can play a crucial role in promoting local businesses, creating employment opportunities, and supporting the growth of the local economy"* (Abdul, 2023).

"*The tourism industry has been hit hard by COVID-19, but LED can help revive it by promoting local tourism and developing tourism infrastructure*" (Linda, 2023).

"*LED should also prioritise the development of digital infrastructure to support remote work and online businesses*" (Kwazikwenkosi, 2023).

Research suggests that LED may help communities recover from COVID-19 by boosting local economies and generating new jobs (Kasambala, 2020). LED has the potential to revitalise the travel and hospitality sector, which was hit hard by the pandemic (OECD, 2020). After COVID-19, it was determined that digital infrastructure development and public-private sector partnership were crucial to the continued success of LEDs (Li et al., 2021).

Some of the attendees, however, stressed the need to give LED's healthcare applications more attention than they have gotten thus far. While the healthcare business faces unprecedented hurdles due to the epidemic, some have said that LED support for the sector may be a game-changer. Based on the findings, LED has the potential to be an essential part of the recovery process in the Lekwa municipality and region after the COVID-19 outbreak. The results of the thematic data analysis mirrored those found in the aforementioned literature, namely the need to support small and

local enterprises, revitalise the tourist industry, build out digital infrastructure, and encourage public-private partnerships.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The study reveals that Lekwa municipality largely adheres to national LED policies and guidelines but needs further validation and integration into IDP forms. According to Ndhlovu (2022), the alignment with national standards is crucial for effective local economic development, yet challenges such as resource limitations and stakeholder awareness persist. Also, Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) emphasize the importance of capacity building and training to enhance compliance and effectiveness in LED strategy execution. Strengthening these areas will help ensure Lekwa municipality meets national LED requirements and achieves its development goals, reflecting the need for comprehensive capacity building as highlighted by Ndhlovu (2022).

4.4.1 Compliance with National LED Policy and Guidelines

The study highlights that Lekwa municipality generally adheres to national LED policies but requires more thorough integration into IDP forms. Participants noted: *"There is a need for capacity building and training to ensure that officials are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement LED strategies"- (Participant 1).*

"We have to ensure that our plans and strategies are in line with national standards and policies to ensure that we are achieving our LED objectives"- (Participant 3).

These findings align with Ndhlovu's (2022) assertion that adherence to national guidelines is crucial, yet highlights gaps in capacity building and stakeholder awareness. In this regard, Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) argue that addressing these gaps, particularly those related to class and gender disparities, is essential for effective policy implementation. However, there is a divergence in the extent to which the municipality's current efforts address these socio-economic factors. Ndhlovu (2022) emphasizes that without targeted capacity-building programs, which consider class and gender impacts, compliance alone may not suffice.

4.4.2 Comparison of LED Goals

The study reveals that Lekwa's LED goals lack specificity, complicating progress measurement:

"The LED goals in the municipality are too general and lack specificity, making it challenging to measure progress towards achieving them" (Participant 5).

"The LED goals in the municipality should prioritize the development of local businesses and entrepreneurship" -(Participant 7).

These points align with Ndhlovu's (2022) view that clear, specific goals are essential for effective development, especially when addressing class and gender disparities. Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) also stress the importance of incorporating specific, measurable objectives and prioritizing local business development. However, the study indicates a gap in addressing class and gender impacts explicitly in the goal-setting process. Ndhlovu (2022) highlights that without these considerations, LED efforts might not fully address socio-economic inequalities.

4.4.3 LED Strategic Implementation and Formulation

The research identifies challenges in LED strategy implementation, with participants noting:

"As community council, we work with the municipality to identify LED projects and ensure their implementation" (Participant 5).

"Our role is to oversee the implementation of LED projects and ensure that they align with the municipality's LED strategy" (Participant 6).

Ndhlovu (2022) points out that effective strategy formulation requires comprehensive stakeholder engagement and addressing socio-economic factors. Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) agree on the necessity of integrating class and gender considerations into strategies but note that Lekwa's current practices do not fully reflect these perspectives. Divergence lies in the practical application of these considerations in strategy development and the actual involvement of diverse stakeholders.

4.4.4 LED Implementation Challenges

The challenges identified in the study include financial constraints and lack of community involvement:

"We have so many good ideas, but we never have the money to make them happen" (Participant 2).

"We need more support from the national government to make LED a success in our municipality" (Participant 6).

Ndhlovu (2022) and Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) highlight that overcoming these challenges requires addressing class and gender impacts explicitly. While the study reflects agreement with the need for increased funding and support, it diverges in the application of socio-economic considerations. Ndhlovu (2022) emphasizes that addressing these disparities is critical for effective LED, which is not sufficiently reflected in the current practices observed in Lekwa.

4.4.5 LED Reconstruction Post-COVID-19

The study finds that LED can play a key role in post-COVID-19 recovery, with participants noting:

"Post-COVID-19, LED can play a crucial role in promoting local businesses, creating employment opportunities, and supporting the growth of the local economy" (Participant 7).

"LED should also prioritize the development of digital infrastructure to support remote work and online businesses" (Participant 10).

Ndhlovu (2022) supports the view that LED is vital for recovery, emphasizing the role of targeted strategies addressing socio-economic impacts. Ndinda and Ndhlovu (2022) also highlight the importance of addressing class and gender disparities in recovery efforts. The study reflects agreement with these perspectives but shows a divergence in the extent to which class and gender impacts are incorporated into recovery strategies. Ndhlovu (2022) underscores that without addressing these disparities, LED efforts may not fully support equitable recovery.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The results and their significance were discussed in this chapter. Policymakers, practitioners, and academics interested in LED in the Lekwa municipality may all benefit from the results of this study. Insights into the study's findings and a framework for future investigation were the key focuses of this section. The investigation as a whole shed light on the existing status of LED in the Lekwa municipality and the obstacles standing in the way of its widespread adoption. The results also highlighted the need of prioritising the expansion of local enterprises and infrastructure, increasing coordination and communication across several ministries, and aligning LED objectives with national LED standards for effective implementation. Next, we'll do a deep dive into the data and results, make some conclusions, and provide some suggestions specific to Lekwa municipality.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The following sections discuss regional economic development in Lekwa municipality, including its potential, obstacles, and areas for further research. The discussion section is broken down into five major categories or themes, with analysis and conclusions drawn for each utilising information gleaned from interviews, surveys, and other primary and secondary sources. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further LED deployment in Lekwa municipality, as well as a review of the major results.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Five themes were used to discuss and interpret the results, each of which corresponded to one of the study's five research questions or objectives. These themes were: (1) determining whether or not the municipality of Lekwa complied with national LED guidelines and IDP formats; (2) determining whether or not the municipality's LED goals and objectives aligned with national LED guidelines; (3) determining whether or not the municipality's LED strategy followed strategic guidelines provided for LED in the literature; and (4) determining whether or not there were.

5.2.1 Compliance with national LED policy and guidelines

Findings from this research shed light on the degree to which the municipality of Lekwa adhered to the national LED policy and guidelines. The city made an effort to coordinate its LED programmes with federal mandates and guidelines for effective rollout and LED target attainment. The study also highlighted the need of training and education in enforcing national LED policy and regulations. According to the findings of research, competent LED professionals are in high demand (Khambule, 2018). But the research found that the city was having problems adhering to national LED policy and standards due to a lack of resources and expertise.

Based on their attempts to conform to national LED policy and guidelines, the researchers found that the municipality of Lekwa was serious about following them. The results also emphasised the significance of training and capacity development efforts in equipping

authorities with the information and skills necessary to implement LED plans effectively. By addressing the limitations of limited resources and a lack of understanding among stakeholders, Lekwa municipality might increase the effectiveness of its LED projects and better comply with national regulations.

The effect of local governments' adherence to national LED policy and recommendations on economic development and job creation is an interesting topic for further study. More research on the elements affecting the effectiveness of municipalities in South Africa in complying with national LED criteria and adopting LED plans is required.

5.2.2 Comparison of LED goals

When compared to national LED standards, the LED objectives set by Lekwa municipality were found to be on target. However, there was need for improvement in terms of precision and measurable targets. The effectiveness of LED activities might be hindered by a lack of specificity in LED objectives, which would prevent appropriate assessment of progress. According to the findings, in order for the city to achieve its LED goals, it has to improve coordination and communication across its many agencies.

The results showed how vital it was for LED projects to prioritise local company growth and entrepreneurship in their plans. LED was successful in part because it helped spur regional development via increased investment in infrastructure. In order for the city to realise its LED goals, the study concludes that further training and capacity-building activities need be implemented.

It is recommended that Lekwa municipality revise its LED objectives in light of best practises, such as making them more detailed and measurable, in order to address these problems. In addition to fostering interdepartmental cooperation, encouraging local business expansion, funding infrastructure improvement, and offering training and capacity-building programmes, the municipality should do so to assist LED initiatives.

Setting more concrete and quantifiable LED targets in Lekwa municipality may provide unique problems and possibilities that should be investigated in future research. The successes and failures of other South African municipalities in achieving their LED objectives, as well as the most effective strategies for promoting cross-departmental cooperation, bolstering local enterprises, and building infrastructure, should be

investigated via comparative studies. This research has the potential to inform policy and strategy for effective LED installation in Lekwa, South Africa's municipal government.

5.2.3 LED strategic implementation and formulation

Defining an LED strategy and involving stakeholders in its execution were found to be of utmost importance in the research conducted under Theme 3. The responses to the questionnaire indicated that LED targets, objectives, and strategies were in place in the Lekwa municipality. However, details concerning these tactics were few. The chapter 4 focused on the duties of community councils, LED authorities, and project coordinators in the LED implementation process.

In establishing the LED plan, the municipality consulted with members of the LED forum, as well as considered national LED guidelines and IDP forms, as shown by the statistics. This is consistent with the research, which emphasises the importance of stakeholder participation in the successful rollout of LEDs (Waldinger, 2019). Lack of financial and other resources, as well as insufficient cooperation from other stakeholders, hampered the successful implementation of LED projects in Lekwa municipality.

This research highlighted the significance of including stakeholders in the LED deployment process and developing a comprehensive LED strategy. Lekwa municipality should address issues including inadequate funding and resources and inadequate private sector participation to ensure a smooth rollout of LED lighting. The city should highlight LED projects in its budget, provide sufficient funding to these programmes, and put long-term, sustainable economic development ahead of short-term, band-aid approaches to poverty reduction.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that the Lekwa municipality strengthen its ties to the business community and explore new financing options for LED programmes. Strategic planning and an eye towards long-term economic development should also figure prominently into the municipality's LED strategy. By addressing these challenges and making the most of the opportunities provided by stakeholder involvement, Lekwa municipality can enhance the implementation of LED projects and support local economic growth and development.

5.2.4 LED implementation challenges

The results of the research highlighted both challenges and potentials for implementing LED projects in Lekwa municipality. Financial restraints, a dearth of qualified staff, a lack of community involvement, and inadequate national government assistance were cited as some of the most significant challenges. Previous studies on LED adoption in South Africa have shown similar challenges (Chauke & Aigbavboa, 2017; Makina & Makina, 2016). Lack of funding, lack of political will, and a lack of coordination and cooperation among stakeholders all worked against the municipality's efforts to implement LED projects.

However, the research did indicate opportunities to boost the performance of LED initiatives in Lekwa municipality. The participants underlined the need of government, corporate, and community partners working together, investing in infrastructure, and identifying growth and development hotspots. These results indicated that by seizing opportunities and overcoming problems, Lekwa municipality might enhance the execution of LED projects and promote economic growth and development.

The research uncovered both the challenges and the potential benefits of implementing an LED project in Lekwa municipality. It stressed the need for local government, industry, and communities to work together to overcome challenges and seize opportunities. Lekwa municipality may attain its economic growth and development objectives by collaborating more effectively, raising sufficient funding, participating in capacity building programmes, and enhancing infrastructure.

5.2.5 Post-COVID LED implementation strategies

The research showed that LED might play a significant role in the recovery and rebuilding efforts in the Lekwa municipality and region after COVID-19. LED, participants agreed, might aid post-pandemic economic recovery by bolstering local businesses, creating new employment opportunities, and reviving the tourist sector. These results jive with other studies that have highlighted LED's importance throughout the restoration phase (Kasambala, 2020; OECD, 2020).

Successful adoption of LEDs was also linked to efforts to build digital infrastructure and foster cooperation between the public and business sectors in the wake of COVID-19.

This agreed with other studies that have recognised the increasing importance of digital infrastructure in the post-pandemic era (Li et al., 2021). Some participants' focus on the healthcare sector, which isn't widely explored in the literature, exemplified the complex nature of LED rebuilding efforts and the need of a holistic strategy for meeting the problems faced by the pandemic.

After COVID-19 devastated the Lekwa region, this research demonstrated how LED may aid in recovery and restoration efforts. The results suggest that LED might play a significant role in boosting local economies, providing new employment opportunities, reviving the tourist sector, and extending the reach of the digital infrastructure. The report also highlighted the necessity to emphasise the healthcare sector in LED restoration efforts and the need of public-private partnership. Lekwa municipality may be able to fully exploit LED by adopting these strategies to help in the rehabilitation of communities and economies hit hard by the epidemic.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that the results showed that Lekwa municipality's LED aims met national criteria, the targets needed to be much more specific and measurable in order to allow for efficient progress monitoring. Inadequate financing, experienced staff, infrastructure, and national government backing were only some of the obstacles identified in the research that prevented the smooth rollout of LED programmes. The report concluded that despite these challenges, LED may be improved via more cooperation between government, business, and community stakeholders; capacitate the LED office with experienced and skilled staff; increased investment in infrastructure development; and the identification of new prospects for economic growth and development.

The research provided helpful information on the obstacles and potential solutions associated with using LEDs in the South African city of Lekwa. Lekwa municipality is encouraged to hone its LED goals, promote interdepartmental cooperation, place an emphasis on local business development and entrepreneurship, invest in infrastructure development, and offer training and capacity-building programmes in order to meet these challenges and take advantage of these opportunities. Lekwa municipality may enhance the lives of its citizens, boost the local economy, and ensure its future prosperity by using

LEDs in accordance with these suggestions. Based on the results of this thesis, further study could investigate the most effective methods of interdepartmental cooperation, local business promotion, and infrastructure development in other South African municipalities, among other topics.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Lekwa Municipality and District LED Reconstruction Efforts and Long-Term Socioeconomic Development: A Call for Further Research (Boyd & Walker, 2014). Comparative studies could examine how other towns in South Africa and elsewhere have utilised LED strategies to address the challenges stemming from the COVID-19 epidemic and to support recovery (Miao & Huang, 2020). Studying the most effective LED techniques for post-pandemic recovery and rebuilding might provide important insights to policymakers and practitioners. More research is needed to determine the most efficient ways to raise capital, speed up capacity-building efforts, and encourage cooperation among the many parties involved in LED deployment (Huggins & Thompson, 2015). Comparative studies that examine how other municipalities in South Africa have tackled relevant LED installation challenges will be useful for the Lekwa municipality and other municipalities encountering similar barriers (Yin, 2017). Research of this kind might improve the efficacy of LED projects in South Africa and elsewhere by providing data for more well-informed policymaking and planning.

Future study may look at the details of the LED strategy adopted by the Lekwa municipality, in particular how effectively this strategy aligns with the municipality's goals and objectives, and how best to include stakeholders in the LED implementation process (Noya & Clarence, 2015). To learn from the successes and failures of other South African municipalities in their adoption of LED technology, comparative studies should be conducted (Kim & Cha, 2018). These research might provide useful data for Lekwa municipality, South Africa, and help shape policies and plans for using LED lighting.

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Appendix A: Lekwa municipality research confirmation letter

LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Cnr Dr Beyers Naude & Mbonani Mayisela Streets
P.O. Box 66
STANDERTON
2430

MORGENZON OFFICE
464 Steyn Street
P.O. Box 9
MORGENZON
2315

SAKHILE OFFICES
Cnr Hlongwane & Palmer Streets

Tel. (017) 712 9600
Fax. (017) 712 6808

Email: admin@lekwalm.gov.za

Tel: (017) 793 3002
Fax: (017 793 3206

All correspondences to be addressed to the Municipal Manager

Enq: G. Malinga
Enq.:.....
Ref: 14/3/1
Ref.:.....

Department of Economics and Tourism
13 De Jager
Ermelo
2350

Dear Ms R. Molefe

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

Receipt of your letter dated 29/03/2020 is acknowledged.
Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct your research on "Local Economic Development in Lekwa Municipality". We thank you for selecting our institution for the research and hope to obtain valuable input that would assist in enhancing our performance. The municipality would like obtain a copy of the final research project once the study is completed.

We wish you all the best in your studies.

Appendix B: Participants consent form

Participant consent form to participate in an academic research project

LED IN LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

Dear Respondent

This concern form invite participants, within the area of interest to take part in a study being performed by Roseline Molefe, a student pursuing a master's degree in Cooperative Local Development at Tshwane University of Technology. The study's objective is to investigate the state of LED in Lekwa Municipality. Your identity won't be revealed in any of the research papers that come from this study and all of your responses will be considered as confidential. The study's findings may be published in an academic journal and utilized only for scholarly reasons.

Please email my supervisor if you have any questions or comments about the study.

Supervisor:
Dr E. Makhetha
Tshwane University of Technology
Mail: MakhethaEL@gmail.com

Student:
Roseline Molefe
Tshwane University of Technology
Mail: Molefenr25@gmail.com

Please sign below to indicate your willingness to participate in the study.

I _____herewith give my consent to participate in the study. I have read the letter and understand my rights with regard to participating in the research.

_____ _____

Signature **Date**

Appendix C: Research questions

RESEARCH TOPIC: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENT

Name of respondent

Position in the municipality

1.2 How old are you?

1.3 What is your gender?

1.4 Any physical disability?

1.5 What is you highest level of education?

1.6 What is your marital status?

1.7 How many children do you have?

2. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

2.1 Have you received any LED related training?

2.2 Does Lekwa LM have LED goals and objectives?

2.3 Does the municipality have LED Strategy?

2.4 State LED processes used by the municipality to develop the LED strategy?

2.5 What is your role in LED implementation?

2.6 Which national LED guidelines, and IDP formats does the municipality consult prior Implementations?

2.7 State challenges towards LED implementation in the municipality

2.8 Does the municipality have LED (projects) Monitoring tool?

2.9 Which role is LED playing, post-COVID 19, and how is used to rebuild communities and economies in the Lekwa municipality and the District.

3. LED LINK WITH OTHER SECTORS AND SEGMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY

3.1 Is there any link between LED and other sectors in the municipality?

3.2 Is there any relationship between LED and service delivery in municipality?

3.3 To what extend do Lekwa municipality tourism enterprises contribute to alleviate poverty and jobs creation?

3.4 To what extend do Lekwa municipality Manufacturing contribute to alleviate poverty and jobs creation?

3.5 To what extend do Lekwa municipality Agriculture contribute to alleviate poverty and jobs creation?

3.6 How does infrastructure development impact on LED?

3.7 Is there a relationship between LED and job creation?

3.8 What impact does poor service delivery have on LED (Poverty, unemployment, inequality, underdevelopment)?

3.9 Does Lekwa Municipality play any role on LED Strategic Implementation?

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM

4.1 Does the municipality have functional LED forum?

4.2 Is there any training or capacity building initiative offered to LED forum?

5. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEKWA UNIT (OFFICIALS ONLY)

5.1 As an LED Official, what do you understand by the concept LED?

5.2 What are your roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of LED?

5.3 What are the policies and legislation governing LED within Lekwa Municipality?

5.4 How does Lekwa Local Municipality integrate the policies and legislation into its IDP and budgets?

5.5 What is the status of LED in Lekwa Municipality?

5.6 What is the LED implementation strategy?

5.7 Indicate your role, which unit is responsible for implementation?

5.8 What do you consider the main achievement of the LED strategy?

5.9 How effective has been the Lekwa Municipality in implementing its LED strategy?

5.10 What kind of roles can other stakeholders play towards the effective implementation of the LED strategy?

5.11 What do you see as challenges and limitations of the LED National implementation strategy?

5.12 How can the challenges mentioned in 5.11 above be resolved?

5.13 How can you rate Lekwa Municipality's support concerning the implementation of the LED strategy?

5.14 Are LED projects prioritized in LM?

5.15 What is the total municipal annual amount budgeted specifically for LED in the current year?

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

6.1 Does the municipality comply with National LED Policy?

6.2 Does the municipality consult prior Implementations?

6.3 Does Lekwa LM goals and objectives of LED informed by the national guidelines of LED?

6.4 Which policy does the Municipality use as a guide to purchase resources?

6.5 Does the policy benefit local businesses?

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Have LED created a conducive environment for development to take place in the municipality?

7.2 From the commencement of LED initiative in the municipality, have the LED program being able to assist the municipality to deliver quality over quantity?

7.3 Are there any LED projects which the municipality implement that exist after 5 years?

7.4 Are the LED projects that you support profitable?

7.5 How Lekwa Municipality fund LED activities?

7.6 Which of the following best describes your local municipality's current economic base and primary focus of your economic development efforts?

7.7 Are the LED projects that you support Financial viable or not?

7.8 Comment on the adequacy of the institutional support for LED implementation

Appendix D: Declaration of editing

15 October 2023

Roseline Molefe
Department of Economics
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE
TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Dear Sir/Madam

Declaration of language editing

I, Magrietha Maria Engelbrecht, hereby declare that I personally read through the dissertation:

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LEKWA MUNICIPALITY

by **Roseline Molefe** in October 2023 and highlighted language errors.

Yours sincerely

15 October 2023

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