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Challenges of implementing Municipal Infrastructure Grant in Greater Letaba Local Municipality

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A mini dissertation submitted in fulfilment of Master of Management in the School of Governance (Monitoring and Evaluation in the Public Sector)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

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2025

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Modipane Pheagane.Trott, declare that this study “challenges of implementing MIG in Greater Letaba Local Municipality” is my own work and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication or any other purposes. All the sources of information used are duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The challenge of infrastructure backlog is widespread in most municipalities across South Africa. The infrastructure backlog presents a challenge for basic service delivery to take place in communities, particularly those with elevated number of poor households. The importance of infrastructure on service delivery and development is highlighted in the National Development Plan (NDP). The Greater Letaba Local Municipality is one the many municipalities across South Africa with persistent infrastructure backlog and underdevelopment, it is also the focus of the study. This study wants to identify challenges that are encountered in the implementation of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant as a policy instrument, in reducing the infrastructure backlog to enable the delivery of basic service. This study employs the qualitative research methodology in the collection of data and the thematic approach in the analysis of the data to derive some meaning. The techniques that will be used include semi-structure interviews, document analysis and the Greater Letaba Local Municipality will be our case study.

In an endeavour to identify the challenges, it has come to light that although the municipality is able to implement MIG as a policy instrument without major challenges in the implementation phase, however the limited funds allocated to the municipality do present a serious hurdle in dealing decisively with the infrastructure backlog. This compels the municipality to looks for other ways to funds infrastructure projects, like PPP, own revenue, and infrastructure prioritization.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AG	**Auditor General**
BOT	**Build Operate and Transfer**
CoGHSTA	**Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs**
CoGTA	**Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs**
DBSA	**Development Bank of South Africa**
DPLG	**Department of Local Government**
DWS	**Department of Water and Sanitation**
EIB	**European Investment Bank**
EPWP	**Expanded Public Works Programme**
FET	**Further Education and Training**
GDP	**Gross Domestic Product**
GLLM	**Greater Letaba Local Municipality**
HRM	**Human Resources Management**
IDP	**Integrated Development Plan**
IMF	**International Monetary Fund**
INEP	**Integrated National Electrification Plan**
LGAM	**Local Government and Municipal Manual**
LGTT	**Loan Guarantee Ten – Transport**
MIG	**Municipal Infrastructure Grant**
MISA	**Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency**
NDP	**National Development Plan**

NPM	**New Public Management**
OECD	**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**
PAB	**Private Activity Bond**
PBI	**Project Bond Initiative**
PMU	**Project Management Unit**
PPP	**Public Private Partnership**
RBIG	**Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant**
RDP	**Reconstruction and Redistribution Plan**
RRAMS	**Rural Roads Management Systems**
RSFF	**Risk Sharing Finance Facility**
SCM	**Supply Chain Management**
SOP	**Standard Operating Procedure**
SOE	**State-Owned Entity**
TIFIA	**Transport Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act**
UITC	**Urban Investment and Trust Corporations**
UK	**United Kingdom**
WSIG	**Water Services Infrastructure Grant**

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Most South African municipalities are rural with low levels of basic infrastructure and limited economic activities. However, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) obligate these municipalities to provide their residents with basic services like water, electricity, waste management, etc. Since the inception of the democratic dispensation, the delivery of basic services in rural areas has generally improved. Even with the considerable improvement, the country's target levels for basic service delivery are still considerably below what should be provided to its citizens (Makale, 2015).

A key component of creating an environment that is conducive to investment, economic growth, poverty reduction, and improving the provision of health and other services is adequate infrastructure. Despite this and the considerable improvement since the commencement of the democratic dispensation, there are glaring spatial inequalities between regions of the country. Infrastructure inadequacy exists in many rural parts of the country, where many people live and work (Emily and Muyengwa, 2021). This spatial inequality has a historical background; it is rooted in the apartheid policy and legislative framework. Nel and Rogerson (2009) noted that rural areas, which made up most of the apartheid's homelands, are still heavily influenced by the separate development and by previous political institutional arrangements, and this presents a serious challenge to the development of these areas.

This is also the case with Greater Letaba Local Municipality (GLLM) in Mopani District, Limpopo Province of South Africa. The GLLM incorporates the towns of Modjadjiskloof and Ga-Kgapane, which are both situated in the extreme south of the municipal area, and Senwamokgope, located towards the northwest of the area of jurisdiction, and there are also 132 rural villages within the borders of the municipality (Greater Letaba Local Municipality Annual Report 2021/2022). The dynamics in the GLLM as the focal point of the study are that Modjadjiskloof is the affluent town where basic infrastructure is observable, followed by Kgapane town, which is semi-urban and is surrounded by many

rural villages where basic infrastructure is very low or close to being non-existent. This skewed spatial development and the rural character of the municipality make an ideal case for this study, particularly given its level of infrastructure and location.

While South Africa lacks an overarching spatial development policy framework, there are fragmented policy instruments and laws that have been put in place to address the spatial imbalances inherited from the pre-1994 dispensation. These include the White Paper on South African Land Use Policy (1997), the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management White Paper (2001), the Development Facilitation Act (1995) and the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (2013). These have facilitated several initiatives and programmes within government that are aimed at addressing the prevailing spatial inequalities.

Among these was a grant system introduced by the national government to effect equitable transfers from the nationally raised revenue. These grants are both conditional and unconditional transfers, with the aim of these transfers contributing to the government's developmental objectives and achieving its service delivery mandates. These transfers are meant to help larger municipalities continue to provide and improve their services to communities while also allowing under-resourced municipalities, such as the GLLM, to overcome infrastructure and service delivery backlogs (Oosthuizen and Thornhill, 2017).

Due to spatial inequalities being more prevalent in rural areas, particularly those that were previously homelands, rural municipalities receive more than twice as much funding from the Treasury as metro areas per household (Nel and Rogerson, 2009). This is partially attributable to the metro areas' strong economic foundation, which allows them to collect revenue and invest in infrastructure (National Treasury, 2017).

Even though this is the case, the pace with which the government is addressing these infrastructure and service delivery backlogs has been rather lethargic at best. This has brought dissatisfaction among various communities. As a result, protest action escalated, especially from 2004 onwards (Managa, 2012). In some cases, protest action has led to the destruction of the very public infrastructure in which backlogs are notable, i.e., roads,

schools, and clinics. This is also the case in the GLLM, as there have been instances of community protests where community members blocked roads (Capricornfmnews, 2022).

The dire infrastructure challenges in the GLLM have had an adverse impact on the quality of life and the municipality's economic activity. Infrastructure is important to the economic activity and livelihoods in the GLLM (Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP, 2022). For instance, agricultural activity and tourism form the backbone of GLLM's economy and as such addressing the infrastructure backlog would promote increased economic activity and address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP, 2022).

Out of the municipality's 46,644 economically active residents—those who are either employed or unemployed but actively seeking employment— 40.3% are unemployed. Moreover, out of 24 633 economically active youngsters (15–35 years old) in the area, 49.9% do not have a job (Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP, 2022). This reality makes it clear that infrastructure development is important to address the socio-economic hardships confronting the 134 villages within the municipality. As captured in Manggat et al., (2018: 2), Yusoff et al. (2011) posits that "basic infrastructural facilities such as roads, clean water supply and communication are the main keys to the well-being of a community, notably those in the rural areas".

The prevailing challenge of infrastructure backlog persists despite the infrastructure grant allocation and transfers to the GLLM. Factors that have led to the lackluster pace with which the infrastructure challenges are addressed, particularly the optimal utilization of equitable transfers through the grant system in the GLLM, remain murky. The reason for non-utilization of MIG funds may be due to, as Ncube and Tullock (2015) advance, the embezzlement or theft of funds, public officials demanding bribes, public contracts being improperly awarded, and public services being inadequately provided, or services not being provided at all. This view points to a dysfunctionality within municipalities and indicates the plausible reasons that underpins the failure to provide services.

Based on this premise, the study aims to assess ways in which service delivery, particularly the delivery of infrastructure, could be accelerated in the GLLM by identifying the potential bottlenecks to the optimal utilization of the infrastructure grants, more specifically the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) as a policy instrument. The study seeks to identify challenges in the implementation of MIG in GLLM.

1.2. Background

Consolidation of the Municipal Infrastructure Program, Local Economic Development Fund, Water Service Capital Grant, Community Based Public Works Program, Building for Sports and Recreation Program, and Urban Transport Grant were the multi-sector grants that merged to form the MIG in 2004–05. As part of the reforms to be adopted to improve service delivery, the MIG program was developed to enhance the coordination of the multi-sector infrastructure funding (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007). Majali (2019) has captured the essence of MIG according to COGTA (2018) as he highlighted that “the MIG aims to eradicate municipal infrastructure backlogs in poor communities to ensure the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, roads, and community lighting”.

COGTA's framework describes the duties and responsibilities, cross-sector links, and program administration; at the national level, it offers explicit policy principles that regulate the MIG program's implementation, objectives, and conditions for usage. (Department of Provincial and Local Government,2007). At a provincial level, all provinces are required to monitor and support municipalities to implement MIG as per the policy principle and guidelines. And lastly, at the local government level, municipalities as implementing agents are required to implement MIG as per policy principles and guidelines to achieve the predetermined objectives. This is a response by the South African government to the spatial inequalities and infrastructure backlogs that are prevalent in most rural municipalities that infringe the rights of many communities who cannot access basic services.

1.2.1. Spatial Framework and Policy

As it currently stands, the South African government lacks a comprehensive spatial development framework. Instead, there are several programmes that are aimed at eradicating spatial inequalities that serve as a legacy of apartheid. Bond, *et al.* (2010), highlighted that:

> *"The main post-apartheid infrastructure policies through which we can trace the influence of neo-liberal advice are the Housing White Paper of November 1994 (Department of Housing), the Water Supply and Sanitation White Paper of November 1994, the Urban Infrastructure Investment Framework of March 1995 (RDP Ministry), the Urban and Rural Development Strategies of October 1995 (RDP Ministry), the Urban and Rural Development Frameworks of May 1997 (Departments of Housing and Land Affairs), the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework of July 1997 (Department of Constitutional Development)".*

Since the advent of democracy, a range of spatial programmes have been introduced, but in a fragmented and inconsistent way. The government's generally noncommittal attitude toward South Africa's territory has prevented the severe uprooting and harm to communities that has previously occurred, but it has failed to provide fundamental social stability in the process.. No consistent effort has been made to change the path-dependent pattern of economic growth in the direction of, say, a more employment-intensive trajectory or to correct and reengineer the spatial legacy of systematic exclusion. (Bhorat & Mayet, 2013; Black, 2016).

The lack of an overarching spatial policy to combine disparate government programs has diminished the national government's influence in dealing with spatial inadequacies. Given the persistent spatial divides inherited from apartheid, it is surprising that there is no national territorial plan or framework (Turok, 2018). Turok (2018: 11) further indicates that the national government "needs to embark on the difficult task of formulating a spatial vision and framework to encourage development into suitable locations for human settlement, considering economic realities as well as pressing social needs and no-go areas for the natural environment". With this point, Turok (2018) stresses the importance

of an overarching spatial framework that drives the actions of all agencies of government towards a common goal in an aligned manner. This will also ensure that infrastructure delivery find expression in the provincial plans and ensure consistency in terms of planning and delivery.

The current reality indicates that South Africa's post-democratization period which was marked by a significant decentralization of economic decision-making and service delivery, has resulted in a system of local government that is constitutionally responsible for the economic and social development of their areas (Krugell & Naudé, 2005). As a result, the type of service could differ based on whether the population was spread out among numerous communities or concentrated in one area. In any event, the outcome has been a comparatively quick roll-out of municipal services (such as people-centred programs), including water, sanitation, and power in previously underserved areas with significant backlogs (Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014).

To manage social expectations, environmental concerns, and public investment, the government requires a single spatial plan that spans its silos. Instead of treating each location separately, this plan must acknowledge the connections and interdependencies among them. Planning for both urban and rural areas must consider the strong flows of people and resources across administrative borders and consider the city-regional environment (Turok, 2018).

1.2.2. MIG as a policy instrument

It is challenging for many South African municipalities to allocate and implement their MIG grant allocations and transfers in an efficient manner each year. Such inefficient use of the grants results in the ongoing issues of inadequate service delivery by the municipalities and the inability to clear infrastructure backlogs (Oosthuizen & Thornhill, 2017). The full implementation of MIG is not only impeded by the institutional shortcomings of the municipality but also by a lack of coherent plans at the provincial and national levels, particularly when it comes to spatial planning and development.

From a policy perspective, it is important to note that that "policy instruments must be selected, customized to the nature of the problem to be solved as well as its causes, and

combined in mixes with complementary policy instruments" (Edquist, 2013: 6). In the case of MIG, it is a policy instrument that was customised to deal with infrastructure backlog at the local government level - with a focus on particularly on basic infrastructure which is an enabler for service delivery. More than that, the MIG presents an opportunity to address the prevailing spatial inequalities.

While there is a clear consensus on the need to address the skewed development patterns that have led to spatial inequalities, the MIG deals with the 'how?.' The MIG serves a key role in addressing the spatial inequalities. As a policy instrument, the MIG can be framed in the context of subsidies. Capano and Lippi (2017: 9) make an interesting observation around the selection of policy instruments in general, they posit that "there has been an increasing degree of adoption of the same instruments (i.e., subsidies), albeit decentralised to the local level". The subsidies in this case are related to grants that are distributed to local municipalities to fund the implementation of infrastructure projects.

Policy instruments are a key component of policy implementation. Policy instruments are frequently the outcome of mediation throughout the policy-making process – they are a product of compromise and consensus emanating from this complex institutional reality (Capano and Lippi, 2017). There is also generally an urge by policymakers to decentralise centralised policy tools – leading to policymakers giving the local authorities control over centralised policy instruments like subsidies (Capano and Lippi, 2017). Something akin to the implementation of the MIG is being carried out by the local sphere of government, albeit being funded by the national government.

1.3. Problem statement

The separate development approach adopted by the apartheid government shaped South Africa's historical political economy. One of the key features of this historical political economy is spatial inequalities. In the post-apartheid epoch, spatial inequalities have persisted largely due to the economic agglomeration process, as much economic activity is concentrated around urban areas (Von Fintel, 2018). These historically entrenched spatial inequalities, as noted by Nel and Rogerson (2009), still influence the

development patterns in rural areas that were previously part of the apartheid homelands.

Despite a plethora of policy frameworks aimed at addressing the spatial inequalities, particularly through placing an emphasis on infrastructure development, there are rural areas in which infrastructure backlog remains a reality. This backlog creates challenges as limited and subpar infrastructure hinders the achievement of critical economic growth and consequently stunts development (European Commission, 2010).

Cognizant of this, South Africa's government, at a national level, established a grant program to help mostly rural municipalities address service delivery and infrastructure backlogs (Oosthuizen and Thornhill, 2017). The GLLM also receives these infrastructure grants from the National Treasury. These include the Municipal Infrastructure Grants (MIG), the Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP) and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). As captured in their reports in terms of performance on grants, the municipality is performing satisfactorily in terms of expenditure of these grants and implementation of infrastructure projects (Greater Letaba Local Municipality Annual Report 2021/2022).

Even though the municipality's expenditure on MIG has been above 80 per cent (Ncube and Tullock 2015), this still does not always equate to optimal utilisation of the grant, given the prevailing infrastructure backlog in that municipality. It is worth noting that even years after the introduction of MIG, 75 % of households do not have household taps, only 10.2 % have household taps, and approximately 9.3 % have no access to piped water and rely on natural sources. In terms of sanitation, 71 % of the households in the municipality do not have proper sanitation facilities, and when it comes to roads and stormwater, the municipality has a total of 1213 Km road network, 91. 08 Km is paved through MIG, but there remains a backlog of 696.08 Km of road that needs to be paved or tarred (Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP, 2024). From the IDP (2024) of the municipality, the noticeable improvement that could be noted is that 96.6 % of the households in the municipality have access to electricity, but the grant used is not MIG; it's INEP (Integrated National Electrification Programme). From this analysis, it becomes

clear that there are challenges to be identified in the implementation and optimal utilisation of MIG, particularly to eradicate the infrastructure backlog.

Given that the GLLM has a glaring infrastructure backlog challenge that results in residents not accessing basic service delivery, it is interesting to establish what challenges are encountered in the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument to deal with infrastructure backlog, particularly aimed at addressing the prevailing spatial inequalities. As such, the question then arises, what are the challenges constraining the GLLM to utilise the MIG fully and optimally in addressing the infrastructure backlog that persists in the municipality?.

1.4. Research purpose

To effect change or manage activities of a community or a group, the government or organisations implement policies with predetermined goals. It is common cause that along the policy implementation process, several challenges might be encountered - emanating internally or externally from the locality of implementation. It is in this light that the study seeks to identify and understand the challenges that GLLM faces in terms of implementing MIG as a policy instrument. As highlighted earlier, the GLLM is a rural municipality with a significant infrastructure backlog. This study endeavours to identify and understand these challenges, with the aim that the municipality and others may be better placed to implement MIG optimally and successfully.

In terms of the research gap that the study seeks to uncover, the challenges that confront the municipality in terms of optimal utilisation of MIG (effective use), the problem of persistent infrastructure backlog that still remains, which might be contributing to the resulting service delivery outcomes. The research objectives in the main is to ascertain if there are challenges, if the persistent infrastructure backlog is because of a lack of optimal use or other factors, the rational here is that the municipality might be implementing MIG as a policy instrument effectively or optimally, but this persistent infrastructure backlog might as a result of the internal or external factors (policy environment) which have a bearing on optimal utilisation on MIG, as a policy instrument which seeks to eradicate infrastructure backlog.

As such, the study aims to identify and understand the constraints to the optimal implementation of the MIG as a policy instrument to address infrastructure backlogs in the GLLM. Through creating this understanding, the study seeks to contribute to efforts geared towards fashioning an enabling environment for the provision of service delivery.

1.5. Research Questions

The main research question is: “What are the challenges to the optimal implementation of MIG as a policy instrument in Greater Letaba Local Municipality?”

Sub questions:

- How is the municipality making sure that it implements MIG as per the prescribed implementation guideline?
- Is the municipality able to implement MIG successfully without challenges?
- If there are challenges, what are they, and how does the municipality deal with the challenges encountered in the implementation of MIG?

1.6. Report outline

Chapter One

Chapter one of this research report is an introductory chapter that is concerned with giving a contextual background to the study. The chapter seeks to give context to the research topic, which is concerned with the challenges confronted in the implementation of Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) as a policy instrument, particularly in Greater Letaba Local Municipality (GLLM). The background to the report includes the spatial inequalities and infrastructure backlog experienced by the municipality, the lack of a spatial development framework, and a policy instrument to deal with these inequalities. The problem statement endeavours to elucidate how the spatial inequalities and infrastructure backlog hamper the development of rural communities and the livelihoods of the local population. , and the purpose of the study is to uncover challenges to the full implementation of MIG as a policy instrument, which then give rise to our main research questions and sub-questions.

Chapter Two

This chapter evaluates literature on the topic of our study, the theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins this study including discussions from various scholars in the academic space and how their work relates to our study. The Literature review will use books, journals, articles, reports, government publications, research reports and scholarly inputs.

Chapter Three

In this chapter, we look at the type of research methodology employed which is the qualitative research methodology, the research methods that are being used to collect data that will be used in the study include a case study method, the case study being Greater Letaba Local Municipality. Sami-structured interviews will be conducted with officials working on MIG and data analysis from reports on MIG in the Municipality.

Chapter Four

This chapter involves data collection, employing the research methods to collect and the presentation of the data. This chapter involves a detailed presentation of how the data was collected and what it is that was found from the data. Also in this chapter, data is being analyzed to derive some meaning from it and how it impacts on the research topic. This chapter seeks to derive some meaningful understanding from the data, this the chapter where proper analysis takes place, and we begin to see the patterns, problems and answers to the questions raised by the study in the first chapter.

Chapter Five

This is the chapter where conclusions are drawn in what the study has unearthed and new insights on the research topic are, and recommendations based on this new information are provided. This recommendation and insights are drawn from the previous chapter**.**

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter has given the introductory context of the study. It has highlighted the infrastructure challenges in the GLLM, and how these are situated in the broader context of South Africa's political economy landscape. The case for the GLLM as a suitable case study is also made in this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter articulates the problem statement which spells out what the study intends to investigate in relation to the infrastructure backlog challenges, the utilization of MIG in the GLLM and the policy role this grant seeks to satisfy. The research purpose is also stated in this chapter along with the research questions. The research questions stipulated are intended to define the scope and focus of the study. Lastly, this introductory chapter provide the outline of this study.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at two aspects which are the literature review and the conceptual framework underpinning this study. In terms of the literature review, the chapter discusses various issues that are interrelated and aid in arriving at the objectives of this study. Issues such as infrastructure provision, spatial inequalities, infrastructure financing, the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation are discussed. These issues provided are pivotal in establishing the important role played by the MIG. Furthermore, the focus on policy implementation is informed by the framing of the MIG as a policy instrument in this study i.e., this study views the MIG as a programme through which policy objectives are pursued. Linkages between the MIG funded infrastructure projects and IDP processes are discussed as at the MIG is not only earmarked to address spatial inequalities, but to also ensure the provision of services through the provision of infrastructure. The chosen theoretical framework that anchors the analysis in this study, the smith's model of policy implementation, is also discussed. The applicability and suitability of the chosen model is also addressed.

2.2. Infrastructure Provision

Numerous studies examining the link between infrastructure endowment and economic development have been carried out since the end of the 1980s. Although the degree and direction of the relationship between basic infrastructure amenities and economic success are in dispute, this theory has gained widespread acceptance (Maciulyte-Sniukiene and Butkus, 2022). Even with the dispute, it is still understood that Infrastructure provision is also important for enabling communities to access other services like health services and education that are essential for improving the quality of life, especially in rural areas.

Infrastructure makes it easier for people to live better lives, to fulfill their potential as individuals, and for economies to thrive. This suggests that policy considerations of economic growth, job creation, and environmental sustainability are considered when

making decisions about infrastructure (DBSA,2000). It is this premise that underscores the importance of the MIG in ensuring the provision of infrastructure to communities.

In 2004, the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Program, Local Economic Development Fund, Water Service Capital Grant, Community Based Public Works Program, Building for Sports and Recreation Program, and Urban Transport Grant were merged to form the MIG program. The MIG program was established as one of the measures to be done to enhance service delivery to better coordinate the multi-sector grant (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007). According to COGTA (2018), to guarantee the availability of essential services like water, sanitation, roads, and power, the MIG seeks to eliminate municipal infrastructure backlogs in underprivileged neighborhoods.

As a sphere of government closest to the people, the local government sphere is crucial in the delivery of infrastructure, and this is where citizens may hold public leaders accountable for spending, decisions, and infrastructure quality, and they receive basic services (Ncube and Tullock 201). According to the South African constitution, municipalities are supposed to provide citizens with basic services (Makale, 2015). Basic services include water supply, sanitation, refuse disposal, electricity or gas supply, health services, roads and storm water drainage, street lighting, parks, and recreation (Local Government, 2003).

Albeit the role of local government being clearly stipulated in South Africa's legislative and policy framework, rural municipalities in Limpopo province are characterized by a weak economic foundation, inadequate infrastructure, significant service delivery bottlenecks, dispersed human settlements, and high levels of poverty (Emily and Muyengwa, 2021). For improved quality of life, rural populations must have access to essential amenities, including water, electricity, sanitation, and waste removal (Makale, 2015).

2.2.1. Spatial Inequalities and Infrastructure Backlogs

Researchers have employed numerous terms to signify the importance of the local aspect in regional growth and disparities, such as locality, local context, local agent, local condition, and even region and space, which are sometimes used interchangeably with place (Achten and Lessmann, 2020). Spatial inequality pertains to the unequal allocation of income or other factors across different geographical areas (World Bank 1999). Geography influences development by the interplay of the environment, space, and society. Consequently, differences in living conditions can be found both within and among different areas, as these factors change across locations (Achten and Lessmann, 2020)

Shorrock and Wan (2005) as captured in Madu (2006) highlight that “spatial location is often not of interest itself, but rather because of its association with many other important influences, such as natural resources, weather conditions, infrastructure, cultural traditions and even institutional arrangements, some of which may contribute positively to the between group component of inequality”. Infrastructure delivery is essential to addressing spatial injustices that exists in any geographical area as this has a positive impact on others socio-economic factors which are essential for human development (Bernard, *et al*. 2023).

More infrastructure is urgently needed in South Africa, both for basic services to clear the backlog and for growth-enhancing infrastructure above the level of basic infrastructure. Despite huge improvements since the advent of democracy, there is still a significant infrastructure backlog in South Africa (Liebig, *et al.* 2008). Infrastructure is not merely an enabling catalyst for service delivery to take place but is also service delivery. It is both economic infrastructures such as electricity, roads, water and sanitation and social infrastructure such as health and education that contribute to this development (Liebig, *et al.* 2008). The impact of infrastructure on development is realized on the one hand through directly reducing poverty, and on the other hand through enhancing economic growth; again, this is essential to reduce poverty (OECD 2006).

Addressing infrastructure backlogs was estimated to cost $93 billion per year globally by various multilateral organizations a decade ago (Wentworth and Makokera, 2015). Furthermore, developing new public assets are fundamental to the continued growth story of Africa (Wentworth and Makokera, 2015). For socio-economic subsistence, travel, trade, and investment, physical infrastructure assets like roads, rail, air, and seaports, as well as water and sanitary services, power, and communication networks, are crucial and on the other hand, social infrastructures such as housing, healthcare, and education are equally crucial for the domestic economy to guarantee a populace that is secure, knowledgeable, and healthy (Wentworth and Makokera, 2015).

Turok (2018) highlights that spatial inequality in South Africa has received insufficient attention over the past twenty years, even though racial segregation was fundamental to both colonialism and apartheid, Turok (2018) further points out that the government's inconsistent and uncertain stance on spatial divides has left the remnants of history unchanged. The failure to address the spatial aspects of poverty and inequality implies that individuals' attempts to dismantle the spatial legacy of apartheid go unacknowledged and overlooked.

Von Fintel, (2018: 83) posits that:

> *"The Land Act of 1913 is well-known for restricting land ownership by the black African majority to only 7% of South Africa's land area; this was subsequently increased to 13.5% by the Land Act of 1936. These designated regions were then transformed into homelands during the apartheid era".*

Due to restrictions on the migration of black Africans, populations have continued to be densely concentrated in these areas; nonetheless, these regions have faced severe poverty and sluggish industrialization, going against the forecasts of new economic geography (Von Fintel, 2018).

Lowenberg (1997: 83), as captured in Turok (2018), highlights that "under-investment in homelands infrastructure continued into the apartheid era. Coupled with political uncertainty, this limited the success of decentralised border industries". Additional

elements contribute to the continuation of these patterns, such as concentrated economic influence, rigidity in the constructed environment, and ongoing disparities in institutional capacity throughout the nation (Todes and Turok, 2017). Since 1994, the topics of space, place, and territory have not been given the focus they warrant. For instance, the government has shown uncertainty regarding internal population shifts, even though there is growing evidence that such changes can assist in alleviating poverty and enhancing income mobility (Turok, 2018).

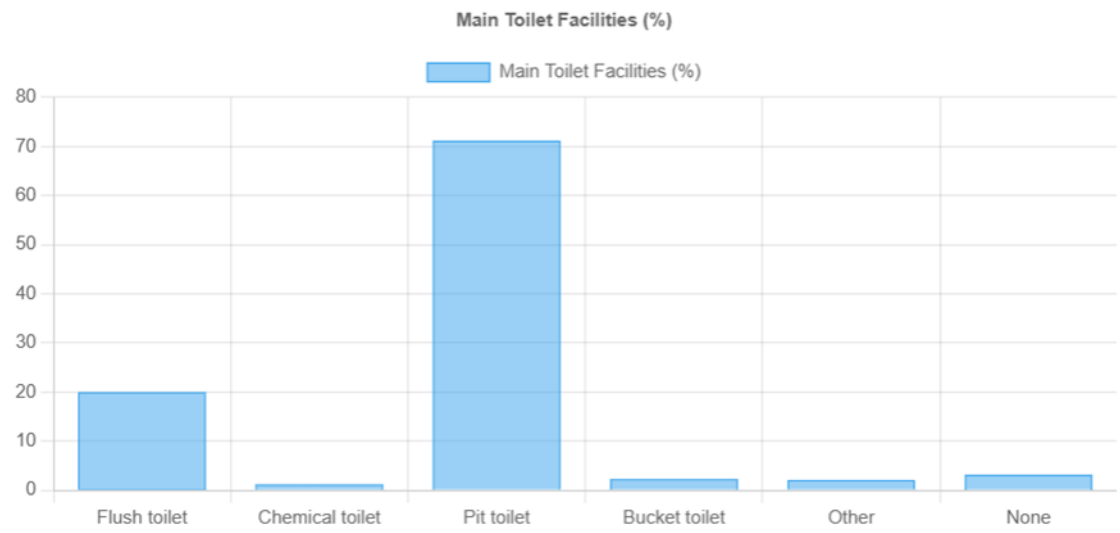
In the context of local government in South Africa, the term "service delivery" refers to the provision of infrastructure, housing, water, electricity, sanitation, and other essential services to the public (Ndebele and Lavhelani, 2017). Infrastructure backlogs that exist, particularly in South African municipalities are rooted in several challenges. These include the choice to pursue fiscal decentralization, poor administration, fraud, an inability to serve communities, and a lack of citizen involvement in important municipal decision-making (Mbazira, 2013).

Limpopo Province

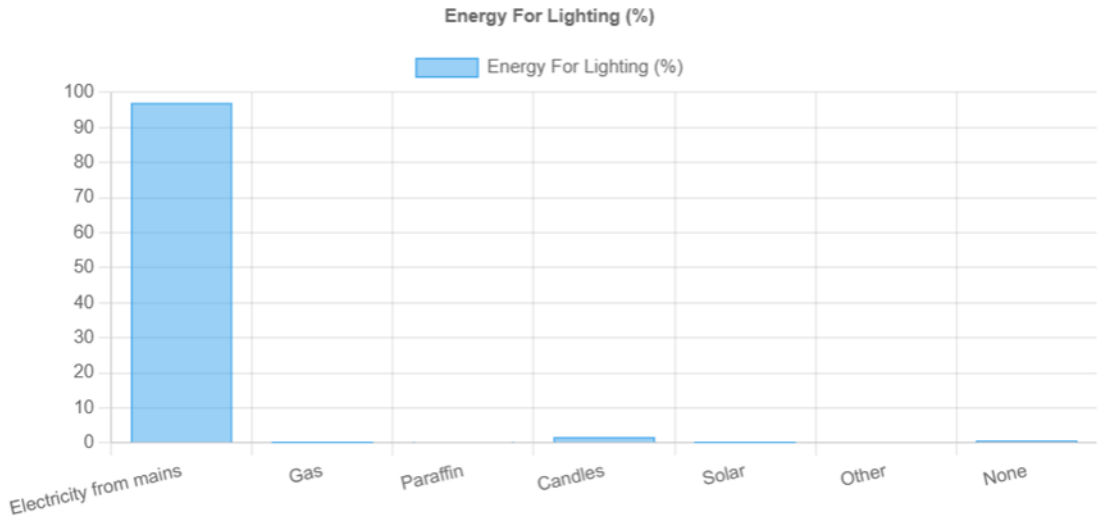
Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP (2024,61) indicates that:

> "*There is a need to address shortage of bulk water through the upgrading of existing purification plants; refurbishment of some resources; provision of package plants and drilling or equipping of additional boreholes as a temporary relief measure. The percentage of households with access to tap water inside the yard is 34.9 %. It is worrying that 9.3% households in the Municipality still rely on springs, rain-water tanks, stagnant water or dams, rivers and vendors as primary sources of water which may cause health hazard to the resident*".

Approximately 71% of the residences in the municipality lack sanitary facilities or have inadequate toilets, including chemical toilets, bucket 64 systems, and those without ventilation. The 71% number is a serious backlog, which suggests that the provision of sanitary facilities has not advanced to a suitable level (Statistics South Africa, Census 2022).



Census 2022 About 96,6% of the households in Greater Letaba Municipality have access to electricity.



The municipality has a backlog of stormwater drainage in all gravel streets and roads, the backlog is estimated at 696 Km of Road including stormwater drainage. The upgrading of some internal streets from gravel to concrete paving blocks in various villages and townships is continuous (Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP, 2024).

Road and stormwater projects are funded by MIG and in a rural municipality like GLLM, this kind of backlog must be eradicated.

Greater Letaba Local Municipality IDP (2024,63) highlights that…

“Transportation infrastructure makes a major contribution to the facilitation of economic activities. The assessment of the Municipal Road Network completed by the Department of Transport in 2020 revealed that the municipality has a total road network of 1213km. Most gravel roads are internal streets in rural areas which require intervention to improve access to houses, businesses, and public amenities”.

2.2.2. **Infrastructure financing in Africa**

Currently, public sector budgets serve as the primary funding source for infrastructure in Africa and abroad. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates from 2015, African nations fund roughly 65% of their infrastructure investments from the general budget, or close to $60 billion, or about 4% of (Sub-Saharan) African GDP (Wentworth and Makokera, 2015).

Low intra-African commerce (11.9% of total trade in 2017), poor integration into global value chains, and the continent's poor economic performance have all been attributed to inadequate infrastructure, particularly in the areas of energy, transportation, telecommunications, water and sanitation, and irrigation (Juma, 2015). The poor state of infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa reduces firm-level productivity by as much as 40% (Ondiege, Mbabazi Moyo and Verdier-Chouchane, 2013). Investments in top-notch infrastructure are partially responsible for the robust performance of South Africa's and Mauritius' manufacturing export industries (Ncube, 2017).

From the forty-five sub-Saharan African countries, Kodongo and Ojah (2016) find that Growth is positively impacted by expanding access investments in infrastructure. GDP per capita growth rates can increase by up to 0.74 percentage points for every 10% increase in public gross fixed capital formation; the effect is greatest for low and lower-middle-income countries.

Development finance institutions (DFIs) and international financial institutions (IFIs), like the World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), have historically played a major role in infrastructure investment in African nations (Collier, 2014). Projects in South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire in 1990 marked the beginning of PPP development in Africa, although it has advanced slowly. Despite extremely liquid global capital markets and extremely low interest rates in recent decades, private investment in African infrastructure projects is generally lacking (Gutman and Chattopadhyay, 2015).

Attracting foreign capital inflows requires a strong institutional framework that includes property rights, openness, and investor-friendly legislation (Ahmed, 2016). In contrast, underinvestment in infrastructure is shown to be largely caused by political unpredictability, a lack of technology, ineffective financial markets, and lax enforcement of regulations in many developing nations (Babatunde et al., 2015; Kwofie et al., 2016).

Notwithstanding a decline in PPI in low- and middle-income nations worldwide, PPI in sub-Saharan Africa is still expanding strongly. Over the last ten years, the PPI in sub-Saharan Africa has grown by an average of 9.5%, over double the region's GDP growth rate of 4.5%. Currently, PPI represents over 1% of the local GDP (Gutman and Chattopadhyay, 2015).

Gutman and Chattopadhyay (2015, 19) further indicate that “In 2013, PPI in all sub-Saharan Africa grew by 16 per cent to reach $14.9 billion (from $12.8 billion in 2012), its highest level since the financial crisis in 2008. In fact, over the 2009-2012 period, South Africa and Nigeria received PPI worth $11.6 billion and $10.0 billion, respectively (and $9.3 billion and $14.5 billion, respectively, in 2005-2008).

Official Development Finance (ODF), conventional multilateral and OECD bilateral assistance have historically been the primary source of foreign funding for infrastructure in developing countries; the World Bank and regional development banks have been important participants in this effort (Ahmad and Ehtisham, 2014). In Sub-Saharan Africa, traditional bilateral and multilateral projects remain an essential source of funding. The benefit of such finance, especially from the World Bank and the AfDB, is its flexibility

in handling countries and circumstances that are outside the risk tolerance of the private sector. (Ahmad, et al. 2014).

Over 37% of all external commitments made to these fragile governments between 2009 and 2012 came from ODF. Compared to PPI, ODF is the single biggest source of external obligations. It has continuously backed investments in transportation and made major contributions to water and sanitation (Ahmad and Ehtisham, 2014). These nations if investments in the telecom sector are not included. Unlike PPI, ODF has continuously backed investments in transportation and made major contributions to water and sanitation. This growth is constant throughout the area, even after subtracting funding for Eskom in South Africa (Gutman and Chattopadhyay, 2015).

2.2.3. Infrastructure financing and delivery in the South African context

There are various forms of financing being implemented within South Africa to dela with the infrastructure backlog and spatial inequalities confronting the country. The first mechanism, Calitz and Fourie (2010) assert that the national, provincial, or local budgets can be used to pay for the infrastructure in cash (row a), which essentially reflected the South African government's pre-2009 stance funds which are raised through taxes. Secondly, both the government and government-owned businesses, with or without government guarantees, may employ loan financing. Using risk capital and matching money, equity instruments promote private, voluntary contributions (Phalatse, 2022), an example of this is the DBSA's investments in a few underfunded municipalities in every province in South Africa have raised the socioeconomic standing of communities and enhanced service delivery (Seema and Kibuuka, 2017).

Thirdly, Calitz and Fourie (2010), posit that while ring-fenced project loans are an option, debt financing will inherently involve bulk lending for a composite collection of projects. The financiers in both situations are private individuals or businesses. Seema and Kibuuka (2017) further indicate that this is usually the case with public enterprise investment programs. Another way to get money is through equity investments. An example of this is the loan provided to the government to invest in renewable energy.

PPPs are a well-known approach to funding infrastructure in South Africa, and they are anticipated to grow significantly over the coming years. To facilitate PPP setup and draw in private investors, efforts are being made to deregulate the PPP framework (Phalatse, 2022). Lastly, grants lower the cost to whoever must pay for the infrastructure if donors provide a source of funding (Calitz and Fourie, 2010).

While there are funding provisions for infrastructure development by the public sector in South Africa, the funds have not been optimally utilized. Ncube and Tullock (2015) highlighted that. “The main challenges with infrastructure grants in the South African local government context has been that of underspending and reasons for underspending are poor capacity, weak oversight institutions and poor planning and budgeting”. The Greater Letaba Local Municipality’s expenditure on infrastructure grants indicates that the municipality has been performing well for several years, its expenditure has also been above 80 per cent on grants (Ncube and Tullock 2015).

Local government sphere receives allocated infrastructure grants to develop their infrastructure. The National Treasury allocates two types of infrastructure grants – recurrent grants and specific purpose grants.

On recurrent grants, municipalities are allocated these grants to enable them to function according to their legislative mandates, these grants are focused on enhancing the governance and operationality of municipalities. These grants include the Urban Settlements Development Grant, Integrated City Development Grant, Municipal Demarcation Transition Grant, Energy Efficiency and Demand Side Management Grant, and Expanded Public Works Programme, and others (National Treasury, 2018).

Municipalities get Municipal Infrastructure Grants (MIG), Integrated National Electrification Programme Grants (INEP Grants), Rural Roads Asset Management Systems Grants (RRAMS), Water Services Infrastructure Grants (WSIG), and Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grants (RBIG) for their infrastructure (Oosthuizen and Thornhill, 2017). Greater Letaba Local Municipality as a local municipality also receives MIG, INEP (Oosthuizen and Thornhill, 2017). These two grants received by the Municipality are for

the implementation of infrastructure projects that are implemented by the municipality to address infrastructure backlog and provide services to municipalities.

Several programs have been started to promote infrastructure investment, support social and economic goals, and boost the economy since President Cyril Ramaphosa was elected. These programs seek to reverse a troubling trend: Infrastructural spending by the government decreased from 3,5% of GDP in 2015 to 2,7% of GDP in 2019, while spending by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) decreased from 3,8% to 2,7%. This unfavorable trend is due to capacity issues in the public sector as well as budgetary challenges (National Infrastructure Plan, 2022).

2.3. Public Policy Formulation

Since the study focuses on the MIG as a policy instrument and its implementation as policy implementation, it is necessary to give an overview of the public policy formulation process. The pre-decision stage of the policy-making process includes policy formulation. To solve an issue, it entails determining and/or creating a set of policy alternatives, then whittling down that list of options to arrive at the ultimate policy conclusion. A certain period is identified during the policy-making process by prevailing notions about the issue at hand, the people impacted, and the appropriate role of the government (Sidney, 2017). Howlett and Mukherjee (2017) also assert that “policy formulation is part of the process of developing public policies and involves government and other policy actors asking and answering questions about how societies can deal with various problems and conditions affecting citizens and organizations in pursuit of their goals”.

As indicated in earlier discussion in this study, MIG is a policy instrument that seeks to implement the policy on addressing spatial inequalities and infrastructure backlogs. Its formulation is as a response to a prevailing condition that needs urgent attention. Vedung (1998) is captured in Sidney (2017) that government authorities use a range of tactics called policy instruments, sometimes referred to as government tools, policy instruments, or the tools of government, to try and secure support and bring about change.

According to Cairney (2012), policy formulation consists of “setting objectives; identifying the cost” as well as examining the concrete remedies that this program will provide. As a result, this phase of the policy cycle explains the suggested course of action and the legislators' goals.. As highlighted above by Majila (2019) and COGTA (2009), one of the set objectives and principle is “to meet the basic infrastructure needs of poor households, through the provision of suitable bulk, connector and internal infrastructure in key services by fully subsidizing the capital costs of providing basic services to poor households”.

According to Meier (2000), as cited in Tebele (2016), Distributive policies prioritize problem-solving, which is why they typically function best in politically advantageous environments. Distributive policies operate in an environment that is defined by a "robust clientele; knowledge; leadership and cohesion." It involves taking action to address issues raised by the public.

2.3.1. Policy Implementation

For this study, attention will be focused on the process of policy implementation and its dimensions, approaches and challenges. Ajulor (2016) defines the process of turning a written policy into reality is known as policy implementation. It offers the functional operating area needed to carry out the public policy announced by the appropriate authority and the mix of human, material, machine, and money is necessary in the implementation of public policy.

Public policy is a guide to action, and it relates to a broader framework that involves putting into operation a philosophy, principle, vision, and decision that are translated into various programmes, projects, and activities (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). A policy entails the broad pronouncement on future goals, actions and expresses the means of attaining them. It is a framework of governmental intervention and covers a variety of activities. It is a series or pattern of government activities or decisions designed to remedy certain social problems (Tebele 2016). Ajulor (2016) further indicates that the process of public policy formulation in the national sphere of government for implementing the policy in the local sphere is very much protracted.

2.3.2. What Does Policy Implementation Involve?

Mthethwa (2012) posits that the procedures, assets, and connections that connect policies to program action are referred to as policy implementation. More precisely, it means to carry out, execute, fulfill, generate, or finish a specified task. Naturally, the policy itself serves as the foundation for an evaluation of its execution. Whether or not the required material is in place to facilitate effective implementation depends on the policy's content, formulation process, and dissemination reach (Khan and Khandaker, 2016), the process might be outlined as follows.

1. **Planning:** Developing operational strategies to execute the policy.

Planning and the mobilization of enough resources are necessary for effective execution. As plans and guidelines are created, the tough choices that may have been avoided during the policy-drafting process must be made (Fischer and Miller,2017). Effective work plans, budgets, operational instructions, and strategic action plans are frequently the missing pieces that connect the creation of policies with their real-world application. Experiences from other countries show that implementation advice can vary from a detailed plan to relatively ambiguous calls (Pülzl and Treib, 2017).

2. **Resource Allocation:** ensuring the availability and effective use of technological, human, and financial resources.

Insufficient resources not only impede the process of formulating policies but also restrict their efficient execution. Fischer and Miller (2017) highlight that policymakers will be dissatisfied with the outcomes regardless of how explicit the implementation orders are if the staff members in charge of implementing policies lack the resources necessary to do their jobs well. Without resources, the implementation of policy which has been referred to as the effective phase may become the ineffective phase (Ajulor, 2018). Furthermore, policies cannot be deemed effective on their own or be put into action simply by being stated; in other words, they cannot function on their own without personnel, information access, and authority (Hussien, 2018).

3. **Communication:** distributing information to the public, implementers, and agencies who are involved.

The first prerequisite for successful implementation is that individuals in charge of carrying out a decision must be aware of their responsibilities and decision-makers' goals must be accurately, consistently, and clearly stated in orders to implement a policy (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). Laws, proclamations, regulations, official guidelines, and other official documents should be so carefully worded that political office-bearers, public officials, and lay members of the public can quickly see what actions are planned or underway, according to a top public administration scientist in Southern Africa (Tebele, 2016).

4. **Coordination:** coordinating with various governmental bodies, businesses, or interested parties to guarantee successful execution.

Tebele (2016) asserts that coordinating public policies is a major challenge for contemporary governance, in democratic countries, which has attracted constantly the attention of researchers. Effective coordination ensures that choices are implemented correctly and aids in the creation of complementary public policies that do not conflict or overlap (Ajulor, 2016). The public policies coordination context is described both, by public administration reform features (Andrei, et al. 2009).

To be more effective and have fewer duplication programs, all governments generally require an intra-governmental coordination structure at the national level. About this element, as well as the fact that numerous specialist studies and regulatory acts stipulate that the following principles guide the formulation of public policy, transparency, and participation, cooperation, and coherence; accountability; continuity and coordination; and good governance (Matei and Dogaru, 2013).

5. **Execution:** Carrying out the actual tasks, programs, or regulations as outlined in the policy.

The most crucial phase in the creation of public policy is execution. Policy either succeeds or fails at this moment. It is the process of turning material and human inputs—

such as informational, technical, human, and supportive—into outputs, such as products and services (Agbazuere, 2020). Several governmental decisions and acts that aim to make predetermined mandates a reality make up the implementation process. Public policy outcomes, like money or the actual services being provided, are a part of this process (Pülzl and Treib, 2017), they further allude that according to this concept, the government in power must have political will and have workable administrative institutions for policies to be implemented effectively.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously assessing the progress and impact of the policy to ensure its objectives are being met.

It should be noted that control and procedures are also known as SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures] and follow-up, Therefore, the ancient proverb "men, money, and machinery" holds true throughout the implementation phase just as it does during the policy-making phase. Edwards and Shakansky (1978) as captured by Marume, et al. (2016). Not surprisingly, those who hold political office also believe that the enabling roles are important. A lot of work may still be required to guarantee the implementation of a policy even after it has been deemed lawful (Tebele, 201).

Marume, et al. (2016) highlight that organizational arrangements would be required, funds need to be made available, recruitment of officials must take place, training, and use employees, develop work methods and procedures, which might call for rules and procedural manuals or codes, and implement control measures to ensure that policy goals are being met and policy outcomes are assessed.

2.3.3. Approaches to Policy Implementation

1. **Top-Down Approach:**

Fischer and Miller (2017) argue that rigorous adherence to the original plan is necessary for policy effectiveness and places a strong emphasis on clear goals, instructions, and control from higher levels of government. The difference between the stages of policy design and implementation has been clearly defined by the top-down approach, This makes it possible for the genuine comparison of public policies' goals and results to occur

(Knill and Tosun2012), According to Knill and Tosun (2012), The top-down model is used to measure whether the actual policy objectives and policy outcomes align, since the degree of goal accomplishment acts as an indicator of implementation success.

This method's drawback is that it might ignore context-specific problems and intricate details. This strategy has a flaw in that it overvalues the notion that tracking the advancement of the policy's goals is an easy undertaking (Tebele,2016). When factors like "power relations; conflicting interests and the value system shared between individual actors responsible for making and implementing PPI" are not considered, it becomes problematic (Fischer and Miller, 2017)

2. **Bottom-Up Approach:**

This approach emphasizes how stakeholders and implementers at the local level can influence the implementation process, encouraging flexibility and adaptability (Tebele, 2016). Bain (1992) as cited in Tebele (2016) asserts that the "integrationist model of policymaking and PPI" is another name for the bottom-up approach. Pülzl and Treib (2007:92) state that the bottom-up model, which focuses on identifying the top-down model's flaws and coming up with solutions to address them, first appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a reaction to it (Brynard et al., 2011). Many of the theories originating from the top-down paradigm were refuted by the bottom-up approach, which "abandoned the divide between policy formulation and implementation" (Knill & Tosun, 2012). In terms of the approach’s challenges, Fischer, and Miller (2017) state that it may result in different results and departures from the initial objectives of the strategy.

3. **Hybrid Approach:**

This approach recognizes the value of central directions while permitting flexibility for local adaptation by combining aspects of top-down and bottom-up approaches (Tebele, 2016). To further advance the theoretical principles of both the top-down and bottom-up models, the hybrid model combines the top-down and bottom-up approaches of PPI (Knill & Tosun, 2012). As Knill and Tosun (2012), The goal of the hybrid approach is to connect the "micro-world of the policy implementers" with "the macro-world of the

policymakers”. The hybrid model's proponents believe that factors found in both the top-down and bottom-up models ought to be balanced and cooperative (Pülzl and Treib, 2017).

2.3.4. Challenges in Policy Implementation

1. **Ambiguity in Policy Design:** Goals that are unclear or contradictory may cause difficulties when being implemented.

Most of the time, the creation of such ambitious programs is done merely to stroke the political leaders' egos rather than out of a real or earnest attempt to bring about swift and dramatic change. (Ajulor.2016). Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013) highlight that policies that have as their primary goals the complete elimination of poverty among the populace or the provision of free health care or education to all are examples of such policies. According to Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013), the public administration typically lacks the manpower and material resources necessary to carry out such initiatives.

2. **Resource Constraints:** Execution may be hampered by inadequate facilities, staff, or funds.

There are several reasons why the public bureaucracy's ability to carry out policies and initiatives efficiently is diminished due to a lack of knowledge and qualified staff (Tebele, 2016). Poor working environments, especially at the local level, are evident in low salaries, subpar housing, and lack of sufficient facilities like computers, cars, and phones that are frequently broken. The public bureaucracy is unable to recruit and retain quality personnel (due to these poor conditions of service), (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013). It is challenging for sectors to offer sufficient and ongoing assistance for the implementation of policies and projects due to the restricted availability of funding (Ajulor, 2016).

3. **Bureaucratic Inefficiency:** Complex administrative processes and rigid structures can slow down implementation.

Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) posit that:

> “The high turnover rate of key financial and accounting positions, technical staff, as well as project managers, in various municipalities has resulted in poor financial performance of some of those municipalities, either overspending or underspending of allocated monies. Unfortunately, these key employees end up either not replaced or replaced with less qualified, less experienced officials”.

Lack of understanding of supply chain management procedures and commitment to set processes and timelines often result in delays (Tjebana and Rachidi, 2018).

Lack of knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise is a problem and a challenge in the implementation of public policy (Tebele, 2016). In relation to MIG, the capacity to execute MIG programs, particularly institutional capacity, has been an issue in many municipalities located in rural areas. (Matabane, 2017). (Maake, 2017) highlights that “Municipalities needs to be capacitated for them to be able to handle municipal finances and projects. They should be financially capacitated and have human capital”. In government institutions policies and services programmes are realized by means of projects. To put it differently, projects and project management serve to implement policy programs and achieve strategic goals for service delivery. Therefore, coordination among various levels of government is crucial for successful policy execution (Tebele, 2016).

4. **Stakeholder Resistance:** 1. Barriers may be erected by opposition from political actors, local communities, or interest groups.

Groups or individuals in charge of implementation, those who might be impacted favorably or unfavorably by the policy's execution (or lack thereof), and officials and experts held accountable for accomplishing policy objectives are all considered policy stakeholders (Tebele, 2016). The degree and timing of policy implementation will depend on how leaders and other policy stakeholders agree on the policy's content and necessity (Fisher and Miller, 2017). However, Ajulor (2016) asserts that people or organizations that spearheaded the creation of the policy may not monitor its execution, or other parties may oversee executing the directions. Tebele (2016) highlights that “In some cases,

stakeholder groups and organizations that may be unrelated, or are not always committed to the same outcomes, must reach agreement to support implementation. Stakeholders may also enter the fray in ways not planned by the policy".

5. **Coordination Issues:** Inefficiency may arise from a lack of coordination across several government entities or levels.

Lack of leadership, communication, coordination, and collaboration in the design and implementation of policies and projects provide a significant challenge to the public bureaucracy (Hussein, 2018). Inadequate coordination and teamwork result from inadequate communication, which makes it more difficult to implement policies and projects. A lack of collaboration, and sectoral and ministry approaches that are more individualistic than comprehensive are to blame for this (Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka, 2013).

6. **Cultural and Social Factors:** Policies may not take public sentiments or cultural norms into consideration, which could result in low approval.

The disposition, attitudes, and behavior of public workers directly affect the implementation of policies or projects, either positively or badly. In other words, there is a lack of commitment to the implementation process if they have a poor opinion of the policy. (Hussien, 2018). Inadequate planning, political unpredictability, bureaucratic bottlenecks, the willful imposition of policies, and total plan modification if it is unfavorable to the implementers or civil servants tasked with carrying them out are all potential causes of policy implementation difficulties in Africa (Ajulor, 2016).

2.3.5. Policy Context

Context plays a key effect in policy implementation. The way policies are implemented, and their performance is greatly influenced by several factors, including political stability, institutional capacity, cultural norms, socioeconomic situations, and local requirements (Fischer and Miller, 2017). Tebele (2016,06) indicates that "countries have different political systems and forms of government, in addition to various social, cultural, and economic systems and levels of development. For example, a democratic and

authoritarian government will apply different methods of policymaking and implementation".

Hussien (2018) also point out that local governments may modify policies in decentralized systems to suit their unique situation. Effective implementation may be hampered by security concerns in places that are prone to conflict and that the degree to which the policy is in line with local interests and values frequently determines public support and engagement.

It is impossible to isolate the environment of policymaking and execution from it. Along with varying socio-economic systems, cultural, and levels of development, nations also have varied political systems and governmental structures (Ajulor, 2018). Tebele (2016) alludes that effective policymaking processes necessitate democratic public engagement, in which the public and policymakers share benefits and obligations, continuously discuss issues, and consider how decisions may affect core values. To lessen political pressure on the government, other stakeholders should be involved on a national level.

In summary, converting policy objectives into tangible actions is a dynamic process known as policy implementation. Careful planning, resource allocation, collaboration, and context-specific flexibility are essential to its success. Achieving the intended policy objectives requires comprehending and resolving issues while implementing a contextualized strategy.

2.3.6. Public Policy Implementation in South Africa

The process of turning a developed policy into reality is known as policy implementation. It offers the operational domain needed to carry out the public policy that the appropriate authorities have declared. The utilization of human, material, mechanical, and financial resources is imperative in the implementation of governmental policy (Ajulor, 2016). When South Africa moved from the old Apartheid regime to the democratic dispensation, some policies were thus reformulated, and some had to be drafted anew to reflect the

new democratic dispensation South Africans found themselves. South Africa is still a developing nation and a new democracy (Mthethwa, 2014)

South Africa is a developing nation; thus, many aspects need to be considered while creating and carrying out its policies. Taking socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political elements into account is one of these considerations (Cloete, 2011). Tsheola and Sebola (2012) They go on to say that in addition to protracted public protests, the South African government's inaction in enforcing policy has resulted in "civil disturbances, death and the impairment of existing government properties and those of politicians."

The National Development Plan (NDP), for example, is a well-crafted national policy created to end the social evils that have been afflicting South Africa as a nation; but, no plan of action is provided for how to put these policies into practice (National Development Plan 2030, 2012).

The above assertion is augmented by Mkhize (2015) who explains that some systematic problems relating to the lack of consultation and participation around policy choices in many areas of government are the cause of many of South Africa's difficulties putting its public policies into practice (national; provincial and local government). Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) highlight that one of the challenges related to MIG is that Sometimes communities do not provide municipalities with feedback regarding the services they receive or about changes in the requirements and expectations of the community. There are typically demonstrations from the community in municipalities where public engagement is not incorporated into the planning process.

In terms of implementation of a public policy, especially on like MIG programme, the application of policies leaves some groups burdened while providing benefits to others. To do this, policy designs must provide resources and incentives for certain populations to engage in public life. (Sidney, 2017).

2.4. MIG Utilization

According to COGTA (2018), the MIG seeks to eliminate municipal infrastructure backlogs in order to guarantee the availability of essential infrastructure in underprivileged areas, with provision of community lighting, roads, water, and sanitation. Many South African municipalities struggle each year to spend or utilize their MIG allocation. Such underutilization of the funding leads to inadequate municipal service delivery and a persistent problem of not clearing infrastructure backlogs.. (Oosthuizen & Thornhill, 2017).

According to the DPLG (2007), MIG program can be used to build new infrastructure or improve old infrastructure for delivery of basic service for the poor, as well as to repair existing infrastructure. The following, are three categories of infrastructure which MIG funds :

- one focuses on households, for the provision of electricity, water supply, sanitation, storm-water management, roads, refuse and waste removal and community street lighting.

- two comprises of public facilities, public transportation (such as municipal airports, harbors, and public transportation), emergency services (such as fire stations), and community service (such as childcare centers, beaches, and amusement centers), cemeteries, fencing, local amenities, local sports facilities, municipal health services, and public spaces).

- three comprises of establishments outside of public municipality, such as clinics, schools, police stations, places of worship, and recreational centers. Electricity, water supply, sanitation, storm-water management, municipal roads, garbage collection, and street lighting are among the services that would be offered to these public organizations.

COGTA (2014), in its review of MIG, highlighted several challenging areas regarding the implementation of the grant:

- It is difficult to make sure that municipalities follow the MIG framework, for example, by keeping track of grant outputs.
- Some municipality's backlogs cannot be cleared with the amounts allotted; as a result, municipalities must utilize their own cash to close the gap.
- Municipalities find it difficult to obtain loans and their own money to enhance the MIG's funding.
- There is a lack of ability to engage in the monitoring and reporting activities as well as providing direction to municipalities on the needs for infrastructure investment, planning, norms, and standards.

2.4.1. Shortcomings of MIG as a Policy Instrument

As already alluded to earlier in our discussions the municipality has a constitutional obligation to deliver basic services to people living within its jurisdiction, it is also worth noting that these services need funds that will facilitate their delivery. In the case of GLLM as a rural municipality, more funds are indeed needed because of the infrastructure backlog that exists. Basic infrastructure remains a precursor of service delivery, as such more must be done to eradicate the backlog.

One obstacle to this endeavour is the austerity posture to public spending taken by the South African government, as Sibeko and Isaacs (2019) assert that "in South Africa, the current phase of austerity is a dangerous echo of the immediate post-Apartheid period which saw stringent limits on government spending in an attempt to curb perceived high levels of debt". The goal of South Africa's intergovernmental economic policy is to align with the Bill of Rights, namely Chapter 13. Second-generation (socio-economic) rights, such as the rights to social security, housing, healthcare, and food, are included in the Bill of Rights, (Sibeko and Isaacs, 2019). It is the responsibility of the government to guarantee the immediate or gradual realization of these rights. Budgetary expenditure is a key tool in this respect.

In terms of monitoring and ensuring accountability, Matabane (2017) points out that the Provincial Government has a responsibility to support and monitor, coordinate technical support to municipalities and their Project Management Units and recommend relevant sanctions for under-performance to DCoG. MISA on the other hand has a responsibility to provide technical support and advice to municipalities that have been identified collaboratively with DCoG and its provincial counterparts as needing assistance.

2.4.2. Strength of MIG as a Policy Instrument

All too frequently, policy and program evaluations focus on results (like the quantity of individuals educated) or outputs (like trainees' enhanced knowledge) but overlook the policy-implementation process, which could reveal the obstacles to successful implementation (Mthethwa, 2012). MIG has unambiguous guidelines that need to be followed, making the policy instrument very is to implement.. These views are supported by the fact that the South African Government established a Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA) to support the policy, its coordination and the implementing agents which are municipalities. It is MISA's responsibility to provide technical guidance and assistance to municipalities to maximize the provisioning of municipal infrastructure. MISA is expected to carry out the following tasks to carry out this mandate:

• Support local municipalities to plan their infrastructure wisely to provide sustainable services.

• Supporting and helping local governments carry out infrastructure projects as specified in their integrated development plans (IDPs).

• Assist and support local governments in the management and upkeep of their infrastructure.

• Enhancing municipalities' ability to manage, operate, and efficiently plan for municipal infrastructure.

• Perform any function that may be deemed ancillary to those listed above(Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency, Annual Performance Report. 2022/23).

2.4.3. Which Projects are funded by MIG?

The IDP is the municipality's five-year strategic plan designed to make sure that the desired results align with the goals of service delivery and community requirements. Planning, budgeting, management, and decision-making are the main goals of the IDP, and it should be aware of the difficulties in fostering participation in a municipality (Khawula, 2016). To promote sustainability, equity, and community empowerment, the IDP aims to combine the institutional, financial, social, and economic facets of local government (Thebe, 2016). Infrastructure planning that is completed by municipalities themselves and the key role in coordinating development activities and funding allocations are linked to Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), all basic infrastructure grants are combined into one under the Municipal Infrastructure Grant method (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007)

Khawula (2016) asserts that “an IDP is a super plan for an area that gives an overall framework for development. It aims to co-ordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in an area. It should consider the existing conditions, problems, and resources available for development”. The strategy ought to consider the region's social and economic development. According to the Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000), all municipalities (i.e., metropolitans, district municipalities and local municipalities) must undertake an integrated development planning process to produce IDPs. According to the DPLG (2007), “if the municipality is unable to prepare an acceptable IDP that is responsive to the needs of the poor, that municipality will not be able to identify and prioritize MIG projects. This is a serious capacity constraint, which must receive urgent attention”.

The municipality can obtain funding and foreign investment thanks to the IDP. It outlines the path for growth that the municipality is in favor of. The municipality keeps cooperative links with its people and stakeholders through the IDP process. The IDP document can be used by the municipality to track how officials and council members are performing.

The IDP process gives officials a way to interact with their constituents and gives them the information they need to make wise decisions. Council members can evaluate their work in relation to the IDP paper (Majila, 2019)

A substantial amount of funding is made available to fund the earmarked projects identified by the IDP process. These are carried out with the national and provincial agencies. The municipality has instructions on where to devote its resources and where its services are needed thanks to the availability of the IDP document. The South African government links democracy to community involvement in the IDP process (Khawula, 2016).

Even though the IDP has helped in many ways, like making sure that communities receive services effectively, much more needs to be done because some people are still left out of them, there is still a backlog in municipalities, and there are still those who are dissatisfied with local government and resort to protesting (Manzini, 2016). Regular monitoring of the municipal IDP is necessary for municipalities to guarantee that funding is distributed in accordance with project plans and linked to performance and budgets (Majila, 2019)

The same is true, since many individuals continue to lack access to jobs and economic possibilities that might raise their level of living, particularly in smaller areas. An annual implementation/budgeting tool, the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP), can be evaluated and enhanced to involve businesses and communities in prioritizing their requirements while keeping the quantity of resources in mind. (Manzini, 2016).

2.5. Conceptual Framework Underpinning This Study.

2.5.1. Conceptual framework

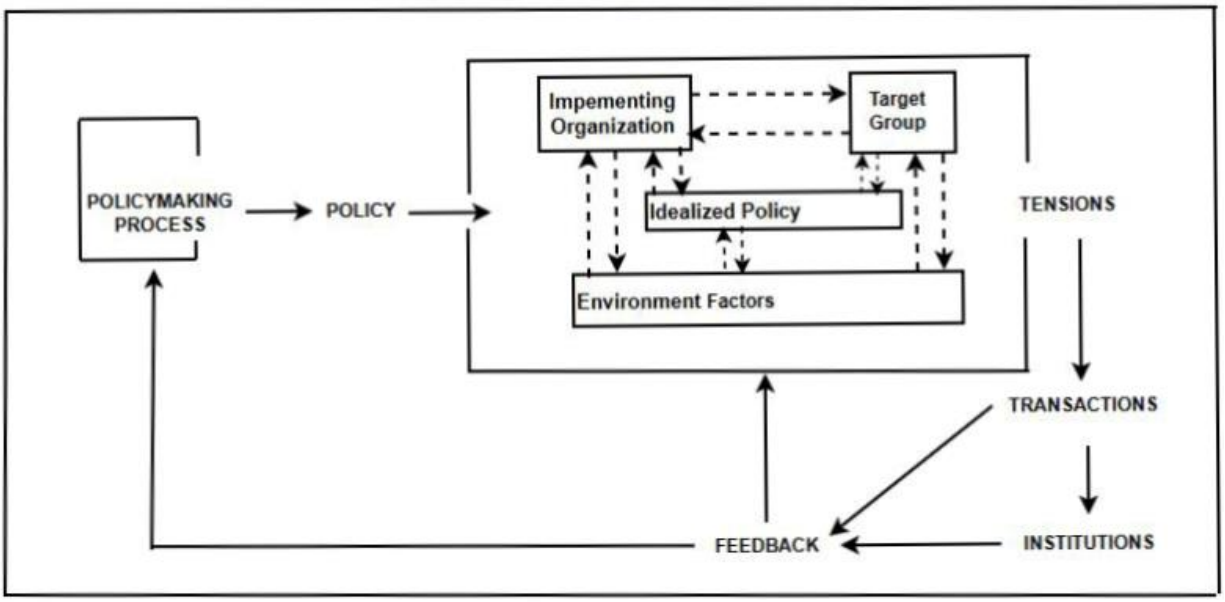
To describe or anticipate an event, or to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest, or simply to address a research topic, a conceptual framework may be characterized as the outcome of the integration of several linked concepts (Imenda, 2014). A conceptual framework often has a narrow range, is meticulously

constructed in the form of a conceptual model and is directly applicable to a specific subject along with aiding the researcher in properly understanding the key variables and concepts in a particular study. It helps the researcher collect, analyze, and explain the data while also interpreting and explaining the data if there is no dominant theoretical viewpoint (Imenda, 2014).

The theoretical framework this study adopts is rooted in the interpretation that the inability to fully utilize the allocated MIG by the GLLM is a policy implementation challenge. This is so because the MIG can be construed as one of the policy instruments through which governments intends to address spatial inequalities. As such, the analysis approach will be anchored in policy implementation perspective.

Implementing policies is one of the many crucial phases or steps in the policy-making process. (Lasswell, 1956). He further suggested that it has too often been done top-down or by the ruling elite, and its study and application would benefit greatly from its practitioners adopting a more participatory, and a directly democratic orientation. To date, the debate ensues, as Khan and Khandaker (2016), point out that it should be noted that such guidance is intended to come from the relevant theories of policy implementation and that unfortunately, academics agree that "policy implementation" suffers from the lack of sound, reliable, and generally recognized imposing or good theories. As a result of the scholarly tensions in policy implementation theory, this study will employ Smith's Policy Implementing-Process framework. also known as the "Smith Model"

Figure 1: The Smith Model of Policy Implementation



(Smith, 1973).

The Smith Model is one model of explaining the policy implementing process and the central core of the policy implementation process (Smith, 1973). As a policy is executed, interactions among and within the system's components produce tensions and inconsistencies that lead to transaction patterns, which are temporary patterns relating to the policy's objectives (Smith, 1973). In terms of this study, the model is employed to identify factors that may, or are, impeding the full utilization of MIG as one of the policy instruments to address spatial inequalities through the provision of infrastructure, particularly focusing on the GLLM.

These factors may be, according to the model, tensions that arise when implementing the policy addressing spatial inequalities through the MIG. These tensions would be the discrepancies in the implementing of this policy in the implementing organisation. Smith (1973) argued that tensions could arise due to a multiplicity of factors such as the administrative unit tasked with the implementation of a policy being confronted with inadequate personnel in numbers, lack of skills for policy execution, and, or the demands from the targeted group which delays implementation. In this research’s context, the

targeted group could be community members and other stakeholders that have a direct interest in the implementation of the policy coming to fruition.

2.5.2. Smith's Policy Implementing process framework Model and the MIG

Older institutions and patterns of interaction are eliminated or changed by the application of governmental policies, while new institutions and patterns of action are established. Governmental policies can be gradual in character, deviating little from previous policies, or they might be intended to bring about radical changes in lifestyles. However, every policy is an effort by the government to alter the ways in which people, organizations, or groups interact with one another.

2.5.2.1. The Implementing Organization

In terms of the policy implementation process of the Smith's Model, the factors that must be considered consideration is the organisation implementing the policy, in this case a policy instrument MIG. Majila (2019) notes that "the national and provincial government responsibility is to create an enabling policy, financial and institutional environment for MIG, municipalities are responsible for planning municipal infrastructure and for utilizing MIG to deliver the infrastructure". According to the DPLG (2007), the National sphere (COGTA) government is accountable to the MIG program for creating an environment that supports the MIG, including finance, support , policy formation, macro planning, monitoring, regulation, and performance evaluation. The duties of the Provincial Sphere (DPLG) include capacity building, oversight and assessment, regulation of certain services, and assistance and advice. (Majila, L. 2019

According to Smith (1973) the implementing organization oversees carrying out the policy. The organization is typically a part of the government bureaucracy.

- The structure and personnel – grasp implementation require a grasp of the structural stability and the qualifications of the staff members who must carry out the policy. Unstable administrative structures and underqualified staff might make it harder to execute (Smith, 1973). Most rural municipalities have struggled with institutional capacity, particularly when it comes to implementing MIG programs.

Other issues that impede the effective implementation and optimal use of MIG include inadequate staffing, poor institutional design, low staff morale, poor accountability, unclear governmental roles and responsibilities, and skills shortages (Tshotshi,2022).

- The organization's leadership- like the target group's leadership, this variable relates to the character and style of the leadership (Smith, 1973). Municipal decision-making is mostly a political process. Usually, political influence, stakeholder dynamics, and ideology have a greater influence on decisions than pure reason (van der Walt, 2010).

Van der Walt (2010) further notes that “politicizing of the bureaucracy of a municipality has certain consequences for the project governance function as well as the functional responsibilities of municipal officials acting as team members and politicians may ‘invade’ the operational, administrative domain of project managers and as a result the neutrality of the scientific bases of project management practices could be sacrificed”.

- The implementing program and capacity- Smith (1973) posits that “the program and capacity of the implementing organization refers to the intensity and care taken to organize for the implementation and to the general capacity of the organization to meet the objectives of program implementation”. According to Majila (2019) It's crucial to remember that municipalities may create project management units (PMUs) to handle MIG project management for them to carry out their duties of implementing the MIG as previously stated. Within the municipality, the PMU is a ring-fenced unit tasked with overseeing capital projects related to infrastructure.

2.5.2.2. The Idealized Policy

Smith (1973) characterizes idealistic policy as the desired interactions that policymakers hope to foster, four relevant categories of variables of the idealized policy.

Formal Policy - the official policy, legislation, or initiative that the state is trying to put into effect. What shape does the policy take, in brief? MIG is a government program implemented nationwide in all non-metropolitan municipalities (Majila, 2019).

- **The type of Policy – identified in three categories**:

(a) Policies may be complex, or simple in nature.

MIG remains one of the most complex programmes to implement because of the many differences like institutional capacities municipalities, spatial inequalities, infrastructure needs and backlogs, political environment and varied financial resources available to municipalities… just to mention a few.

(b) Policies may be organizational or non-organizational.

A formal organization must be modified, or established, to comply with an organizational policy. Conversely, non-organizational policies demand the creation of interaction patterns outside of the official organizational framework. (Smith,1973). As mentioned above MIG is formal organizational policy in that it requires, as Majila (2019) indicates, the creation of a PMU unit with the municipality to be responsible for the implementation of MIG projects.

C Policies may be distributive, re-distributive, regulatory, self-regulatory, or emotive-symbolic in orientation..

MIG is a distributive program, as one of the objectives is capture (COGTA,2009) as “to meet the basic infrastructure needs of poor households, through the provision of suitable bulk, connector and internal infrastructure in key services by fully subsidizing the capital costs of providing basic services to poor households”.

- **The program -there are three aspects of the program of the policy:**

(a) **Support Intensity**

The extent of the government's commitment to carrying out the policy (Smith,1973). Since the government strongly supports the MIG program, the Municipal Infrastructure

Support Agency (MISA) was established to give municipalities technical assistance so they may successfully carry out MIG projects. (Tjebana and Rachidi, 2018).

(b) **Source of the policy.**

Was the policy created with little support or demand from the public, or is it necessary to meet needs and demands in society? (1973, Smith). One of MIG's goals is to fully subsidize the capital expenses of supplying basic services to low-income homes, thereby meeting their demands for basic infrastructure in the form of appropriate bulk, connector, and internal infrastructure in critical services (COGTA, 2009).

(c) **Scope**

Is the policy focused on a limited geographic or topic area or is it broad and universal in scope? In terms of scope MIG is not broad in nature as the focus is on provision of basic infrastructure and services, not universal but national and implemented in a few large geographical areas.

(d) **Image of the Policy**

It is crucial to consider the perceptions that the policy evokes in society; those who are impacted by the policy and those who carry it out hold the greatest significance. (Smith, 1973). Matabane (2017) highlighted in one her findings that “75% of the officials described the role of MIG as the main source of funding to provide basic service delivery to communities as the municipality does not collect enough revenue to provide services to its communities and her community representatives indicated that the communities benefit from the projects by being employed in the projects”.

2.5.2.3. Target Group

The persons inside organizations or groups most impacted by the policy are considered the target group; they are those who the policy requires to adopt new patterns of interaction (Smith, 1973). Majila (2019) highlights that to execute the MIG program, towns with institutional incapacities must set up PMU units. The officials will need to adapt to the new patterns of engagement that will arise inside the municipality.

As new projects are built, the communities will also need to adapt new patterns of interaction. For example, installing streetlights will enhance people's movement and economic activity in a community during the late hours of the night. The impoverished households in rural communities that lack access to essential infrastructure and services, significantly affecting their ability to support themselves, constitute another significant target category (Tjebana and Rachidi, 2018).

2.5.2.4. Environmental factors

The variables that can affect or be affected by the implementation of a policy are known as environmental factors. Environmental issues might be viewed as a kind of restrictive corridor that needs to be passed to compel policy into action (Smith, 1973). In terms of MIG these factors include the relevant stakeholders i.e., communities, municipal and departmental officials, sector departments (Public Works, Water and Sanitation) and the municipality itself, and National and Provincial Government.

Furthermore, the different cultural, social, political, and economic contexts may be present for different types of policies or adjustment to how the same policy is implemented in varying contexts. For instance, in developing countries, basic cultural and social norms at the village level may constitute a significant environmental barrier to local self-government programs.

2.5.2.5. Tensions

Tensions may arise from both within and between the four component categories of idealized policy, implementing organization, target group, and environmental factors.

When a bureaucratic unit is given instructions to implement policy but lacks the manpower or expertise to carry it out, there is a disparity in the implementing organization. This is an example of a within component tension.

Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) posit that one of the serious tensions created in the implementation of MIG is that in some municipalities, poor financial performance, which includes either overspending or underspending of assigned funds, is a result of the turnover and vacancy rates of key financial and accounting roles, technical staff, and

project managers in different municipalities. They further indicate that, unfortunately, these key employees end up either not replaced or replaced with less qualified, less experienced officials (Tjebana and Rachidi, 2018).

When policymakers anticipate that a policy will be well-received by the target group and the outcome is negative, a between-component tension may arise between the ideal policy component and the target group (Smith, 1973). National Treasury Report of 2015 indicates “that municipalities must get input from communities on what they think of the services they are receiving and any changes in the needs and expectations of the community. Municipalities that do not implement public participation as an integral part of planning usually experience community protests” as captured in Majila (2019). The formal structural level is another place where tensions can be found. For example, any office that wants to implement a policy needs to have enough qualified staff to do the work.

2.5.2.6. Transaction Patterns

Smith (1973) asserts that transaction patterns can be identified from uncrystallized patterns of interaction.. These patterns are reactions to the conflicts, pressures, and strains that exist both within and between the various elements that make up the framework of policy execution. Majila (2019) that “The MIG programme was started in 2004/05, through the merger of the following multi-sector grants: Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme; Local Economic Development Fund; Water Service Capital Grant; Community Based Public Works Programme; Building for Sports and Recreation Programme; and Urban Transport Grant”. After consolidation of grants and implementing the MIG programme new patterns are formed which might from the idealized policy are unclear because they have brought about new tensions and stresses. From inception the MIG programme was characterized and confronted with many challenges, which Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) identified to be “poor planning, especially long-term planning, lack of cooperation and coordination of services amongst sub-departments within municipalities, political intervention resulting quite often in implementing projects

that were not planned or delaying procurement of service providers, just to mention a few".

Smith (1973) asserts that these uncrystallized patterns do not have the institutional durability. A policy instrument like MIG which is implemented as programme will take time to be implemented as idealized by the policy makers and gradually some of the transaction patterns will eventually fall of and new ones emerge which might be or might not resemble characteristics of the idealized policy.

2.5.2.7. Institutions

Smith (1973) posits that since the policy implementation process is an ongoing process, it is difficult to determine when (if ever) interaction patterns become firmly crystallized into institutions**.** Matabane (2017) in her study on '*The impact of municipal infrastructure grant on basic service delivery: a case of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality in Limpopo province'*, posits that "100% of officials agreed that the municipality demonstrates its accountability in terms of the administration of MIG by submitting monthly reports, annual reports, implementation plans, cash-flow budget to the national office through provincial office and by submitting financial statements to Treasury". From this finding one can discern the level of institutionalization in the municipality, although not all municipalities are the same in terms of compliance with MIG, to a certain extent most municipality have crystallized interaction patterns, however as Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) highlight that at times its political interventions that affect the crystallized patterns, where politicians dictate which, project must be implemented, and which one must not.

The exact degree of institutionalization is difficult to determine, but several measures can serve as guidelines (Smith,1973). These are:

1. **The institution's ability to survive within its environment**

The institution's survival is aided by the fact that municipalities receive additional capacity-building grants in addition to MIG, including the Municipal Emergency Housing grant, the Local Government Financial Management grant, the Infrastructure Skills Development grant, the Municipal Systems Improvement grant, the EPWP Integrated

Grant, the Energy Efficiency and Demand-side Management grant, the Municipal Disaster Relief grant, and the Municipal Emergency Housing grant. (National Treasury, 2018).

2. **The extent to which the institutions are viewed by surrounding communities to be of value** (both autonomy and influence)

Matabane (2017) in her research, which found that the community representative lacked a solid understanding of the budgeting process for the projects supported by MIG; nonetheless, the same community valued the projects' local delivery. One issue that Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) raised is the lack of proper consultation and public participation by municipalities when implementing MIG projects.

3. **Whether the relationship patterns become normative for other community structures**

In terms of these guidelines, it would be difficult to ascertain if the patterns have been normalized because as already indicated, policy implementation is an ongoing process and MIG itself has been ratified from time to time. Alesch & Petak (2001) as captured in Mthethwa (2012) highlight that because as policies are put into practice, they frequently undergo revisions and interpretations in response to the practical realities of execution. Mthethwa also cite Brinkerhoff & Crosby (2002) as they indicate that coordinating with other organizations, even ones that may not have had prior experience working together, is another aspect of implementing policies at the operational and service levels. This coordination can either positively or negatively impact the quality of services provided.

2.5.2.8. Feedback

They can behave as sources of stress once transaction patterns start to appear, or institutionalization takes place. However, the target group, implementing organization, environmental conditions, and the idealized policy's implementation matrix are not necessarily directly related to the conflicts (Smith,1973). The challenges and impediments that affect the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument as identified by Tjebana and Rachidi (2018) and Tshoshi (2022) can be described as feedback in the

implementation process. It is from this feedback that new transaction can be introduced in the implementation to refine the implementation process even further. This corroborated by Kellogg (2004), Kuye (2010) and Brynard (2011) in Mthethwa 2012 that “By receiving feedback and using information on how policy implementation progresses, policymakers and implementers will be in a better position to assess interim achievements, make necessary course corrections, and consider themselves as part of a larger effort”.

Tensions may arise from the establishment of new institutions and patterns, which may result in additional systemic changes. In this sense, there is no guarantee that the system will return to its previous state (Smith,1973).

2.6. Conclusion

The chapter provided a literature review using articles, journals, books, and reports which are evaluating the current debates are the issue of infrastructure provision, MIG and policy implementations. This also looked at how the Smith’s Policy Implementation Process framework or model relates to MIG as a policy instrument, how features of the model relate to MIG process. The next chapter looks at the methodology of the study and research design.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is discussing the methodology that is used in conducting the study> This entails the discussion on the approach to the research inquiry, the research methods, and data collection tools which the study uses in gathering of data. This chapter also discusses how the research is designed from inception up to finalization, the sample size and sampling technique will be explained, and justification provided. In terms of analysis the analysis process and approach will be discussed together with the issues of ethical considerations of the study. Limitations, feasibility, and positionality are also given serious attention in this chapter and lastly, we discuss the issue of validity, reliability, and dependability.

3.2. Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative research methodology. In qualitative research, there is a need to pay more attention to understanding why individuals think and behave the way they do rather than counting the number of people who think or behave that way. It excels at managing and streamlining data without erasing complexity or context (Mohajan, 2018). In this research study we will collect data with regards to the challenges encountered in spending the allocated infrastructure grants optimally in improving the level of infrastructure in Greater Letaba Local Municipality. To comprehend people's social realities, qualitative research emphasizes how people interpret and make sense of their experiences. It uses open-ended questionnaires, interviews, diaries, notebooks, classroom immersions and observations, as well as content analysis of visual and textual resources and oral history to collect, analyze, and interpret data (Zohrabi, 2013), (Mohajan, 2018).

Qualitative research is typically inductive (theory development), as opposed to quantitative research, which is typically deductive (theory testing). Social scientists are not objective observers of the world they study; they do not merely find or discover

knowledge. Instead, they actively create knowledge by creating apparatuses and tools for gathering and processing data. (Sadovnik, 2017).

Sadovnik (2017) further highlight through Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) provide a useful discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research:

Strengths

•. The information is derived from the participants' own meaning categories.

• It is helpful for thoroughly examining a small number of situations.

• It is helpful in explaining intricate occurrences.

• Offers details on specific cases.

• Able to perform analysis and cross-case comparisons.

Weaknesses

• The knowledge generated might not apply to different individuals or contexts; that is, the conclusions drawn might only apply to the small number of participants in the study.

• Quantitative forecasting is challenging.

• Testing theories and hypotheses is more challenging.

• It could not be as credible in the eyes of some program commissioners and administrators.

• In general, data collection takes longer than in quantitative research.

• Analysing data takes a lot of time.

3.3. Research Design

Kothari, (2004) asserts that... “A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure, and that the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for

the collection, measurement and analysis of data". As the study will be conducted using the case study method, this research method together with semi-structured interviews and document analysis will enable the study to be conducted with fewer complexities and provide an effective environment for collective data.

Research design refers to the systematic planning of the procedures to be used for gathering the necessary data and the methodologies to be applied for their analysis, while considering the purpose of the study, the personnel, resources, and financial constraints. The research design should be created with great care as any mistakes within could cause the study to fail (Kothari, 2004). In terms of this study, the data that will be collected from officials working in Greater Letaba Local Municipality and the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), interviews to be conducted on sampled officials and documents analysis to be done on a period of the last ten years, which is two terms of government.

A research design logically connects the research questions to the results by outlining the procedures followed in the gathering and processing of data. Research questions, pertinent concepts and hypotheses, the unit of analysis, the reasoning connecting the data to the propositions, and the standards for interpreting the results should all be covered in the research design, which is essentially a "blueprint" for the project. (Sadovnik, 2017).

3.4. Research Data Collection

3.4.1 The Setting of the Study

The study will undertake to establish the challenges with utilizing the allocated infrastructure grants optimally in ensuring that Greater Letaba Local Municipality has improved the level of infrastructure it has in the past ten-year period. As such, the case will be an institution in this instance. The justification for choosing this municipality as the focus of the study is that it is one of the many rural municipalities with a serious infrastructure backlog and limited economic activities, relying mainly on agriculture as

the main economic activity but with the potential to grow into other sectors like tourism and agro-processing.

3.4.2 Document analysis

It is very important for the study to have a detailed picture of the state of Greater Letaba Municipality with regards to every aspect or indicators related to the infrastructure grants, the state of service delivery, infrastructure and its challenges, the level of improvement in the past ten years of Local government. This information can be accessed through the municipality's annual reports, reports by the provincial departments and other stakeholders which have a vested interest in service delivery.

Morgan (2022) cites Merriam & Tisdell (2016) who highlight that researcher can obtain data through document analysis that would otherwise need a great deal of time and effort to gather. In the case of this study access MIG reports and performance related documentation will be less strenuous and less time consuming as this document are public record which are readily available to the public.

Corbin & Strauss, (2008) define document analysis as a methodical process for studying or assessing documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Document analysis requires data to be reviewed and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain insight, and build empirical knowledge, much like any other analytical method in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). The meaning to be derived from analyzing documented reports will thus provide that understanding that will help in concluding the data collected from the other methods and techniques.

3.4.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

To collect in-depth knowledge about the effectiveness of the grants on infrastructure on addressing backlogs and the level of improvement since the rollout of grants, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with municipal and departmental officials who are implementing working with grants. According to Kothari (2004), semi-structured interviews are simple to administer and relatively inexpensive to analyze. The interview method of collecting data involves the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and replies in

terms of oral-verbal responses. This method can be used through personal interviews and, if possible, telephone interviews. The flexibility and feasibility of this method means research can also utilize the latest technology like virtual platforms like MS Teams which would be cost and time effective.

3.5. Sampling

An established strategy for drawing a sample from a certain population is known as a sample design. This phrase refers to the method or process the researcher would use while choosing the items for the sample. The sample's size, or the number of objects that will be included in the sample, may also be specified in the sample design. Before gathering data, the sample design is chosen (Kothari, 2004). In terms of sampling in this study, purposive sampling will be used to draw a sample of respondents.

(Saunders. *at al*, 2019) Purposive sampling is described as the process of choosing examples that will best allow you to respond to your research questions and achieve your goals. When working with relatively small samples, such as in a case study, and when you want to choose particularly instructive cases, purposive sampling is frequently used. Officials of the municipality and the departments working with infrastructure funds make up most of the respondents in this study, making up a very small and purposeful sample. This sampling technique is informed by research design, methodology, and method, particularly that of "case stud. At the municipality, it would be the Project Management Unit Manager, Development and Town planning Manager/Director and the Technical Service Manager/Director, Department officials monitoring and supporting the municipality to administer the grants which are Project Managers.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a dynamic process that incorporates material learned from the literature, recognizing emergent themes, and identifying significant ideas or units of meaning. Only when all the data has been gathered and prepared should an exhaustive data analysis begin. We carefully read every transcript in its entirety. At this point, the goal is to think

with the data, and one searches for any potentially interesting patterns, Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) as captured in Mohajan (2018).

In some ways, qualitative can be likened to the process of completing a jigsaw puzzle in which pieces represent the date. These pieces of data and the relationships between them help us as researchers to create a picture of what we think the data is telling us. (Saunders*. et al*, 2019). This study will be implementing a thematic approach to analyzing data gathered through the data collection methods and the methods used will assist the research to identify the pattern and themes that will be used to make through analysis and logical understanding of the state of reality of the topic under investigation. The thematic analysis involves a researcher coding her or his qualitative data to identify themes or patterns for further analysis, related to his or her research question (Saunders. *et al*, 2019).

The process of creating codes and themes from qualitative data can be easily understood and methodical with the help of thematic analysis, the smallest analytical unit that can be used to identify intriguing aspects of the data that may be related to the study issue is a code. Building pieces known as codes serve as the foundation for themes, which are (bigger) patterns of meaning supported by a common organizing principle (Clarke and Braun, 2017). (Clarke and Braun, 2017) further point out that ‘thematic analysis, often known as "experiential," research since it aims to comprehend participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, can be used to find patterns in and across data pertaining to participants' lived experiences, viewpoints, behaviours, and practices”.

3.7. Limitations, Feasibility & Positionality

Any study has limitations, which are potential flaws that are typically outside the researcher's control and are strongly related to the research design used, the limitations of the statistical model, the lack of financing, or other variables (Theofanidis and Fountouki, 2018). With regards to the research to be undertaken, the limitations involved relate to the methods to be used, case study, semi-structured interviews and document analysis which have their weaknesses.

The aim of the study is to identify the impediments and challenges to the full utilization of Municipal Infrastructure Grants to address infrastructure backlogs in the municipality, ultimately enabling the provision of service delivery. Without mentioning those weaknesses, what the study focuses on is the effectiveness of the infrastructure grants in so far as in dealing with infrastructure backlogs, as such the limitations are inherent to the objective and goals of the research and its research design.

The research is designed in a way that it would be easy to collect qualitative data from these various respondents and the documents to be analyzed are readily accessible to the public and for this research, thus this research endeavor is very feasible. As an employee working with those who are working the infrastructure grants as mentioned above and would be respondents of the research study, I will make sure that I am objective with how I conduct the interviews, for example being formal in conducting those interviews. I believe that any policy or programme being implemented must be able to justify its implementation through the positive impact it makes on an organisation and community.

3.8. Ethics

The research will be conducted with strict adherence to confidentiality and privacy, respondents will be treated with anonymity, personal information will not be shared by the respondents and a consent form will be filled out before an interview is conducted. Interpersonal relations that may be in place will have to be treated with caution during the research purpose as this might be comprised of the quality of the information gathered.

3.9. Validity, Reliability, Dependability

The issues of validity, reliability and dependability are very important to avoid biases in the research findings, they can be circumvented by implementing the processes of the research design and techniques. The research will adopt the triangulation strategy to ascertain validity and reliability using the case study, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis methods in the collection of data and make sure the strict data

analysis is followed. As this is a qualitative study thematic data analysis will be adopted which will also assist with addressing dependability issues.

3.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided the background in terms of the methodology of the study, the research designs, the process of how the study will unfold and provided methods and tools which will be used in the study. Under process analysis this chapter has provided an insight into how data will be processed and analyzed to derive some meaningful understanding. Finally, this issues of ethics, limitations, feasibility, positionality, and validity, reliability and dependability are dealt with.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation Of Data and General Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter we will be looking at how data is collected as indicated in the previous chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to serve as a canvas for data analysis, looking at the inputs from participants and various documents assessed throughout the research. What will be captured in this chapter is basically the lived experiences of participants as they were participating in the research to identify the challenges of implementing MIG as a policy instrument in Greater Letaba Local Municipalities.

4.2. Data collection experience

The research instruments used in the collection of data include semi structured questionnaires and documents analysis, the setting of the study is the Greater Letaba Local Municipality in Mopani district of Limpopo province. As indicated in earlier chapter that semi-structured interviews will be conducted with official implementing MIG in the Municipality and those supporting the municipality at the Provincial level at the Department of CoGHSTA, and those providing Technical Support from MISA.

The experience as far as collecting information has been very educational and informative as I got to interact with various officials at different capacities and institution on how they view the MIG, how they understood it from a policy implementation perspective and the challenges encountered in the implementation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in face to face and virtually through MS teams, with the municipal and MISA officials it was virtual interviews and while Department officials, the interviews were face to face. The virtual interviews were because of the municipality being located a distant from the resident of the researcher's place of residence and work, and the fact that these officials are always on the road.

When it comes to document analysis, which in the main included MIG annual, Business plans and approved IDPs for the last five financial years (2018/2019 to 2022/2023), these documents were easily accessed from the Project Management Unit of the municipality's

records and its website. The participants of the research participated fully in the interview and in providing documents on MIG, and all of them signed the consent forms and did not have a problem with recording of the interviews and MS teams virtual meeting, although some virtual interviews with conducted after working hours because of work commitments. It is also with noted that an approval was requested and granted from the Municipality and the Provincial Government for the research to be conducted.

4.3. Profile of participants

In terms of participation, 5 participants participated in the research.

4.3.1. Gender

Gender	Number
Female	**2**
Male	**3**

Although this was purposeful sampling, the official identified was as per the position they occupy in their respective organization’s organogram and not influenced by anything beyond that.

4.3.2. Age group

The participants of the research are relatively old, with ages ranging from 40 to 55, the lack of youth in the participation of the research is a result of the vast experience that is required by the position that these officials occupy in the Municipality, Department and at MISA. This field is dominated by old officials as there is not enough effort being put to capacitate young people to occupy positions of responsibility within the South African public sector. Since democratisation in 1994, the South African government has made great strides toward creating a thorough legislative framework for human resource management. Nevertheless, despite the legislation's broad character, (Lee and Van der Waldt, 2020). The National Development Plan: Vision 2030's declared goal of creating a "democratic developmental state" can only be realized with adequate consideration

given to the important role that talent management might play in this regard. (Saurombe and Barkhuizen, 2022). It is important that municipalities and government department invest in the younger workforce that will be able to be at their disposal to longer period for continuation of work being done and knowledge management, in our case the sample indicates to a situation where those implementing MIG at the municipality might be lost to the system soon.

4.3.3. Education and experience

Participants of this study have civil engineering qualifications and at a postgraduate level with various certificates in project management and maintenance. From this point, these participants are well equipped with the relevant qualification but also do not just hold minimum qualifications, they also possess postgraduate qualification that are relevant in the field of occupation. This is very important because most municipalities need such professionals, given the challenges they face. Mehlape (2017) indicates that “training and development is regarded as one of the roles that human resources play in improving or advancing municipal services. Adopting New Public Management (NPM) may have opened the possibility of managers acquiring or developing sophisticated HRM techniques. In concurrence with the assertion made above, Kaufman (2014) captured in Mehalpe (2017) highlights that the Skills Development Act of 1998 was passed, and the Skills Development Act required businesses to spend at least 1% of payroll on workforce training to increase skill levels in the workplace. The amount of money that South African businesses invest in training has increased thanks to this Act. Although the sample of participant identified do have the necessary education required by the positions they occupy, constant skills development is a must to keep up with current developments in their respective fields.

In terms of this theme, the participants were asked about their educational and occupational background and current occupation, this was to understand the skill set and experience of the participants in relation to the implementation of MIG. The responses received indicated that the skill set, and experience of these participants were relevant and required for one to be able to be in a better position to put them to good use in the

implementation of MIG. A conclusion can be made that the necessary qualifications and skills acquired by the officials can be put to good use by the municipality, Department and MISA in the implementation of MIG without difficulties.

4.3.4. Work experience

When it comes to work experience, all participants have vast experience working within the construction sector and have particularly worked in the delivery of public infrastructure. They spent most of their previous occupation years working within the municipality environment as PMU manager and technician, Project manager and Construction project manager, and technical support for an average of more than ten years. This is an indication that work experience is more adequate work experience for these participants to discharge their responsibilities, as such capacity is not an issue.

4.4 Key findings

This section of the report is concerned with presenting findings from the collected data for a proper analysis to be carried out, as already highlighted in the research methodology, thematic approach to analysing the data collected. This thematic approach will include identifying codes and themes from the data collected, which will be the framework for arriving at deriving meeting to the data collected. The two techniques used for data collection, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, have provided the following information as presented in the codes presented below.

4.4.1. Themes identified from the responses to specific questions.

From the responses received from the study, various themes were identified that spoke to the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument in Greater Letaba Local Municipality.

4.4.2. GLLM is a rural municipality that is in dire need of basic infrastructure.

Given that GLLM is a rural municipality, the matter of basic infrastructure became a prerequisite for the municipality to be better placed to deliver basic services to its communities, which are found in the many villages within the municipality. The participants highlight that there is a serious need to improve the level of basic

infrastructure, such as roads and stormwater, water and waste management, infrastructure that is funded by MIG. Participants can be captured as follows.

> "*MIG looks at trying to assist the poor of the poorest in so much as access to infrastructure…. Providing basic infrastructure for the poor households and at the same time also providing infrastructure such as sports facilities, places of public interest like your taxi rank and, as well as the issue that pertains to electricity where we can be doing high mast lights with solar panels and so forth, while also ensuring that there is job creation in the process*" (Participant B)

Matabane (2017) asserts that it is crucial to only build new infrastructure where it is required, leaving the rest intact to guarantee that access is determined by the availability of facilities and the quality of the service being provided. Matabane (2017, 26) highlights that "one of the most important indicators in assessing the transformation of local government is the experiences and perceptions people have of service delivery in their day-to-day lives, more specifically whether they perceive an improvement in the services delivered to them."

4.4.3. Poor households are targeted by MIG

In responding to the question on the objectives of MIG as a policy instrument, the participants are clear that MIG's main target is poor households and rural communities; hence, urban municipalities receive a different grant altogether.

This is captured from one participant who posits that.

> "*MIG was constituted from the combination of various grants, and the objective of the MIG is to provide basic services like your water, your roads, and public lighting, which will be your high mast lights, to the community in terms of the goals. The Targeted Household: the MIG targets poor households. It means from the municipality side, where they have big towns and townships, they cannot use their MIG to provide services"* (Participant C)

From this response, which is like most of the responses that were received from participants, one is able to discern that these participants understand the objective of MIG**. "**This is a financial grant aimed at assisting the poor to gain access to infrastructure; therefore can only be used for infrastructure for the basic level of service. National and provincial infrastructures are excluded from MIG" (DPLG, 2004: 9), as captured by Matabane (2017). Officials need to clearly understand the policy that is being implemented to avoid neglect and the miscarriage of responsibilities and duties. From this understanding, it becomes easy for them to deal with challenges encountered in the implementation phase of the policy.

4.4.4. Infrastructure projects funded by MIG

The MIG framework is clear in terms of what kind of infrastructure projects in municipalities, CoGTA (2004) indicates that the focus is on the infrastructure required for a basic level of service: the MIG programme is aimed at providing only basic infrastructure, and this infrastructure includes water and sanitation, roads and stormwater, households' electrification, and waste management services. The above statement is offered concurrence by one of the participants.

> "*The objective of the MIG is to provide basic services like your water, roads, and some public lighting, which will be your high-mast lights…..basic services as listed in the MIG framework and also in terms of water, we only provide the reticulation systems through MIG*" (Participant D)

From the findings of participants, it was clear that there was no ambiguity about what MIG funds are in terms of infrastructure projects; as such, it could be expected that projects identified for implementation will comply with the MIG framework.

4.4.5. Basic infrastructure backlog in GLLM

In the endeavour to answer the research question, one must also try and understand the prevailing conditions at GLLM, so that the proper recommendations can be made. It is with this premise that we ask the participants about the level of infrastructure and backlog that might exist in the municipality. Municipalities get the MIG mostly to support and

promote social organisations and microenterprises, as well as to eliminate infrastructural backlogs for the impoverished (Tjebane and Rachidi, 2018).

As captured already in the problem statement and the fact that the municipality is receiving infrastructure grants and that the municipality is a rural one, it is thus important that the participants categorise this level of the infrastructure and the backlog.

Participant D, from the municipality, when asked about the level of infrastructure, highlighted that the municipality is a rural municipality and as a result, there would be an infrastructure backlog like roads and stormwater, and also that the municipality has two townships which are small and the rest is rural villages, this has made the municipality to prioritize roads project as they have done a lot of sports complex projects in previous financial years.

When it came to the question of infrastructure backlog, another Participant, A, responded to this effect:

> "*Yes I will say that and maybe through MIG, because Greater Letaba Local Municipality does not have a lot of ratepayers, there's a lot of villages here, so grants such as MIIG are very important for us to implement the capital projects and where I am under PMU, I will say almost 92% of our new project have been implemented through the MIG and a lot has been done, the access roads that I've seen, the stadiums, look into the grant has assisted the municipality big time*".

This response confirms the assertion by the National Treasury (2007) that rural municipalities are likely to have revenue challenges and cannot adequately fund infrastructure development on their own. Furthermore, the percentage of capital projects funded through the MIG in the municipality indicates the importance of the MIG in addressing spatial inequalities for this rural municipality.

4.4.6. Compliance with the MIG framework

Implementation of MIG as a policy instrument requires that the municipality implement it according to the prescribed guidelines, with submission of implementation plans, business plans and timely reporting. Participants were thus asked if the municipality is implementing MIG as per the prescribed guidelines, and the participants have a consensus on the fact that, to a great extent, the municipality does implement according to the guidelines.

Participant A, from the municipality, posits that:

> "*Yes, remember, in this grant, you are not really in charge of it as the municipality; there are watchdogs. It is being administered by the Province COGHSTA and COGTA nationally, so they check if you submit an implementation plan with the MIG framework that you must implement your project in line with. They check the finances every month, they check your progress report, they can visit the project anytime, and they also do what they call the intervention meetings. So, it's not about the municipality, per se, it's about this grand and its nature, it is a well-watched grant, so you just don't implement it".*

From this response above, the municipality will find it difficult to deviate from the prescribed guidelines and such a deviation will lead to non-implementation and present the municipality with challenges, as funds might not be transferred to them or withdrawn. Furthermore, this reality emphasises the need for policy revisions due to practical realities of execution as highlighted by Alesch and Petak (2001). The limited to non-existent room for deviation in the implementation of the MIG might ignore the need for revisions. This is more so given that different localities have different environmental contexts. These varying contexts serve as the backdrop of the restrictive corridor that Smith (1973) alluded to.

Implementing policy successfully requires the navigation of the various and different environmental factors present in every locality in which the policy, in this case the MIG,

is expected to be implemented. Without room for deviation, policy implementors at the local level may find it difficult to pass through the restrictive corridor, and that may hinder optimal policy implementation. There may be a need to incorporate aspects of the bottom-up approach in the implementation of the policy as articulated by Tebele (2016) and Pülzl and Treib (2007).

4.4.7. Inefficient coordination and collaboration

In trying to identify coordination issues between the various stakeholders from within government, Participant A from the municipality responded to the question in this regard:

> *The challenge of getting approvals from sector departments that provide services in the municipality. For example, Eskom must provide approval for an electrification project that will be connected to their grid, the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture needs to approve a sports complex, and the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (LEDET) need to approve a waste management project. Failure to approve on time will affect the MIG implementation plans of the municipality, as such a project will not be implemented, leading to funds not being utilised and communities not receiving services*" (Participant A).

Another challenge that was identified by participants is that of the SCM process, which manifests in two ways. Firstly, there is the procurement challenge where service providers (contractors) are not procured on time, which will then affect the implementation plan of that financial year, resulting in funds not being spent and delays in project delivery.

This is supported by the response from Participation B, from the Department, which alluded to:

> "*Normally, on our side, it will be disappointment from service providers (contractors) that we get, as I said, as the municipality. We make sure that our administration is run perfectly. During implementation processes, we might fail to implement according to the implementation plans, and the communication*

with that service provider might take time, which will then delay the project. In some cases, the process must start afresh where another service provider is procured".

4.4.8. Delays caused by target groups

Every policy is implemented within a setting. To this end, Smith (1973) posits that "environmental issues might be viewed as a kind of restrictive corridor that needs to be passed to compel policy into action". In line with this perspective, other challenges in the case of GLLM include the exploitation of the preferential procurement legislation. Members of the target group may invoke preferential procurement legislation to demand a certain portion of the project phase to be implemented by them. Although this is not a prevalent issue in the municipality, the municipality has decided to appoint social facilitators to circumvent these kinds of challenges.

Participant B indicates how the issue of preferential procurement legislation might be utilised by stakeholders and ultimately present challenges to the successful implementation of MIG:

> *"It's just a matter of supply chain processes that can be an issue, with a community demanding to subcontract, this might take some time, it's time-consuming in terms of implementing such kind of projects, especially dealing with MIG because it's regulated, there are time frames. So, we might find during the time off in initiation of the project, there are those delays which we normally encounter when dealing with the Community*" (Participant B).

This response from some sections of the community indicates the negative response Smith (1973) referred to. It causes tension between processes aimed at the implementation of the policy and the recipient population. It is thus important that the institutions put mechanisms in place to manage expectations from stakeholders and make them aware of their internal processes.

4.4.9. Institutional arrangements for successful implementation

Tebele (2016) highlights that “those administering the policy should be able to interpret the policy document, which will make the application of the policy less vague. Furthermore, when a policy consists of clarity and consistency and is well communicated and understood, it halts features such as vagueness and ambiguity from being impairments to policy failure and a policy resulting in bad execution”. In a similar vein, Smith (1973) makes reference to the type of policy, whether a policy is complex or simple to understand. It is important that those implementing the policy, and in this case MIG, are better equipped with an understanding of what is required as inputs for the policy and its intended outputs. From the responses of the two participants below, one can be convinced that those implementing the policy are well-equipped with the knowledge, experience and understanding of processes.

Participant E further indicated that:

“*currently with as a team in terms of the intervention, the appraisal Committee has been set at a provincial level, where it includes different stakeholders, it's one of the measures that we try to monitor and assist the municipality to ensure that they implement their projects within the budgeted amount and also from the department, as you are away from our side as MISA, we have deployed an engineer that is supporting the municipality so that he can support the municipality on areas of project management and contract management to ensure that he established the Design Review Committee. To look at the designs that the consultant would have put in place, and so we have the monitoring stuff like cash flow every month*”.

Participant E, further alludes that the team seats with the municipality, and the municipality will report on the progress made in terms of their MIG implementation and indicate other challenges that they are coming across as municipalities and from the Provincial Treasury they have the budget assessment that is conducted twice a year where we also check in terms of the project that they are aligned to this service delivery programs as outlined on the IDP. We also provide training to municipal officials on technical courses. Issues like project management, designs on infrastructure, maybe

roads, electricity, and other infrastructure that they need to implement, and those are some of the measures that we have put in place.

As already alluded to earlier in our discussions, there is a lack of theory as far as policy implementation is concerned hence the study has adopted Smith's model for policy implementation as a framework. A policy can be well formulated, but other aspects must be in place for successful implementation, like the institution implementing the policy, human resources, financial resources, and a receptive target group; all these and not limited to, are essential for successful implementation. It is in this regard that we ask the question to the participant "What are the conditions that must be in place for the successful implementation of MIG as a policy instrument?

Smith (1973) characterises idealistic policy as the desired interactions that policymakers hope to foster. The interaction mentioned relates to the different stakeholders that have an impact on the success of the policy objective. The participants of this study highlight several issues or conditions that must be in place for successful implementation, and they are captured below.

- A fully staffed PMU
- Registered projects
- Approved Implementation Plan
- Approved Business Plan
- Proper Procurement planning
- Timely reporting

4.4.10. MIG desired outcome

Wollmann (2017) posits that "ongoing evaluation has the task of identifying the (interim) effects and results of policy programs and measures while, in the policy cycle, the implementation and realisation are still underway". This view by Wollman correlates with that of Participant C, that there must be a bi-annual costing review of project deliverables, as this presents a challenge for municipalities as input costs change over time because of inflation, thus presenting implementation challenges over time.

The view by Participant C is further supported by Wollmann (2017) when he indicates that “the essential function of “ongoing” evaluation is to feed relevant information back into the implementation process at a point and stage when pertinent information can be used to adjust, correct or redirect the implementation process or even underlying key policy decisions”.In the implementation stage, a public policy may be expected to change such as modification; further elaboration of the public policy and even negation during this stage, (Hill & Hupe, 2014). monitoring can be seen as an (ongoing) evaluative procedure which aims at (descriptively) identifying and, with the help of appropriate, if possible operationalized, indicators, at “measuring” the effects of ongoing activities, (Wollmann 2017).

From a policy perspective, one can say MIG is implemented in municipalities with varied conditions and infrastructure challenges, which require a flexible approach in terms of infrastructure delivery. Wollmann (2017) captured this assertion clearly when he highlights that “while (rigorous) evaluation aims at giving a comprehensive picture of what has happened in the policy field and project under scrutiny, encompassing successful as well as unsuccessful courses of events, the best practice approach tends to pick up and tell success stories of reform policies and projects, with the analytical intention of identifying the factors that explain the success, and with the applied (learning and pedagogic) purpose to foster lesson drawing from such experience in the intranational as well as in the inter- and transnational contexts”.

4.4.11. MIG budget/expenditure and projects completed.

In the last five financial years, R56 460 00.00 was allocated in 2018/2019, R57 608 000 in 2019/2020, R57 229 000.00 in 2020/2021, R60 856 000.00 in 2021/2022, and R65 707 000.00 in 2022/2023. The municipality has prioritised roads and street paving (39 projects), sports complexes and stadiums (6 multi-year projects), and bridges (5 projects), and the municipality was able to spend 100 % of the allocated funds. In terms of roads and street paving projects, and bridges, the scope of work has been completed on time in the respective financial year. When it comes to sports complexes, they were

also completed on time; it's only stadiums that were not completed in the respective financial year because they are multi-year projects.

What is of particular interest is that in terms of the number of kilometres that the municipality has paved, that is approximately 60 kilometres. As previously indicated, there is a road infrastructure backlog of 696.08 km, meaning that it would take the municipality a considerable number of years to eradicate this backlog, at a time when there is a growing number of new settlements in the municipality. The municipality is a rural municipality with a limited amount of allocation, but with a serious infrastructure backlog. This backlog would make it difficult to create a situation where other services are easily delivered, e.g., waste management and transportation.

4.4.12. Limited MIG funds allocated to the municipality.

One of MIG's goals is to fully subsidise the capital expenses of supplying basic services to low-income homes, thereby meeting their demands for basic infrastructure in the form of appropriate bulk, connector, and internal infrastructure in critical services (COGTA, 2009). Participant B indicated that one of the weaknesses of MIG in relation to the municipality is the limited amount of funds allocated for the implementation of infrastructure projects, particularly for rural municipalities like GLLM, where there is little revenue collection. The view is also echoed by Participants C and E, as they posit that additional funds are needed in the municipality for the eradication of the infrastructure backlog. Participant E further indicates that the formula used for allocation must be reviewed, as most rural municipalities like GLLM depend on MIG to fund their infrastructure projects. In substantiating the need for additional funds, Participant C also points to the fact that the municipality can implement MIG and overcome most of the institutional challenges and spend above the threshold of 80 per cent.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter is the most interesting chapter of the study as it is where the data collected is used to draw conclusions and make recommendations from the data collected, the data collection process was presented and the findings were presented, and an analysis

is thus made from the data. In terms of the profile participants, they were purposively sampled as the officials who are implementing MIG in GLLM, as the case study, their insights are critical to understanding the challenges faced by the municipality in implementing MIG as a policy instrument. What has been discovered by this chapter is that GLLM is confronted with the challenge of limited resources, particularly the MIG funds, which are budget related, SCM issues where contractors don't deliver as per requirements, and sector departments do not provide approval letters for projects in their sector and community protests that must be managed.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introductions

From the several scholars who have written on MIG from the point of underspending, Tshoshi (2022), Tjebane and Rachidi, (2018) and its impact on service delivery by Matabane (2017) and Majali (2019). The purpose of this study as alluded to in earlier discussions is to identify the challenges encountered in the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument in Greater Letaba Local Municipality, with a focus on the implementation processes in the municipality. This study deviates from the previous study as it looks more into the policy aspect of MIG, not its formulation and evaluation but rather its implementation as a policy instrument.

5.2. Summary of key findings

The background and the problem statement of the study highlighted the infrastructure backlog that persists in many local municipalities in South Africa and our point of focus being GLLM in Limpopo province. It is important to note that indeed a lot can be said about the situation in the municipality and from the literature point of view a lot has been written about infrastructure financing, different methods of financing, and their experiences, with policy implementation. Although policy implementation lacks an academically accepted theory that can be a guide to policy implementation, this study has adopted Smith's model of policy implementation as a guiding framework for MIG implementation as a policy instrument.

The assertion made that South Africa lacks a comprehensive spatial plan to deal with the historical apartheid legacy of spatial planning and the current spatial inequalities that must be studied and how the objectives of MIG are trying to address those inequalities. This study has uncovered several findings that will be discussed below, these findings emanated from the research's main questions and sub-questions of the study.

The main research question is: "What are the challenges of successful implementation of MIG as a policy instrument in Greater Letaba Local Municipality?"

Sub questions

- How is the municipality making sure that it implements MIG as per the prescribed implementation guideline?
- How does the municipality deal with challenges encountered in the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument?
- Has the municipality overcome some of the challenges faced when implementing MIG?
- Is the municipality able to implement MIG successfully without challenges?

5.2.1. The Policy environmental context to which the MIG is implemented.

Smith (1973) alludes that environmental issues may be identified as some kind of constraining path that compels policy to go through, this might include stakeholders, locality, communities, government and private institutions or legislative frameworks. As already indicated in the previous discussion in this study, GLLM is a rural municipality with only towns and as many as more than 100 villages with serious infrastructure backlog that need to be addressed. This is the context that presents a challenge for MIG as a policy instrument in GLLM, this because there is a formular at which MIG is distributed to municipality as Majila (2019) has indicated.

Participants in the study all agree that the level of infrastructure backlog is an overwhelming reality within the municipality and as such the amount of funds allocated do matter in eradicating the serious backlog. This environmental factor is important as it creates tensions within the implementation process, this tension is created by the slow pace at which the infrastructure is being rolled out, the slow pace can be attributed to the municipality's inability to implement MIG optimally, the lack of adherence to guidelines, lack of consultation and public participation.

When there are unclear transaction patterns of transaction as Smith (1973) posits, it leads to conflicts, pressures, and strains in the policy implementation process, for example, service delivery protests may arise because of the slow pace at which

infrastructure is being rolled out and the lack of understanding of MIG, and not implementing MIG as policy instrument optimally.

5.2.2. Implementing MIG as per the prescribed implementation guideline

As it can be summed up by the responses of participants that the municipality finds it difficult to implement MIG infrastructure projects as per the prescribed timelines because of various factors such as getting approval from sector departments on time which talks to policy coordination between spheres of government, underperforming contractors which delay the completion of projects which is a supply chain issues within the municipality, and making sure that multi-year projects in time. It must also be indicated that these challenges are intertwined as not adhering to timelines will lead to hostile environments in the municipality where communities will embark on service delivery protests as discussed above, which will present a challenge of optimal implementation.

5.2.3. Project management and Contract management

Expertise and Experience are very important to policy implementation and MIG as a policy instrument is no different, it requires that the officials implementing MIG have the know-how of implementing MIG optimally using its framework and guidelines. As alluded by participants at times the municipalities do not get approvals from sector departments on times and this speaks to the issue of planning which needs to be given attention, proper planning is a very important aspect of project management. The municipality must make sure that projects are planned well in advance and approval letters are received in time from sector departments.

In terms of contract management, the municipality must make sure that its SCM processes are arranged in a manner that allows the municipality to track the performance of its contractors and put measures in place to deal with underperforming contractors, and on time to mitigate serious delays in project completion. The municipality must also make sure that it procures contractors that can complete projects in time and within the stipulated budget and quality.

5.2.4. The Challenge of Stakeholder Management

Successful policy processes require democratic public participation; where policymakers and the public continually engage in dialogue, examine the consequences for fundamental values, as well as share burdens and benefits (Mthethwa, 2012). The issues of community protest and requests for sub-contracting by local business forums should be well managed to avoid disruption and delays in the completion of MIG projects. Stakeholders must made aware and educated on the policy objectives, frameworks and timelines, this aspect should not be done at the IDP level only but also in communities where projects are being implemented. So that the benefiting community can also take ownership of the project to assist and participate in its successful completion.

5.2.5. Lack of flexibility from the MIG guidelines

As already alluded to in earlier discussions, MIG is a conditional grant. Typically, a conditional grant is a sum of money designated for a particular program, such as agricultural extension, water supply, roads, primary education, or primary health. These grants cannot be used for programs for which they have not been approved (Majali, 2019). The MIG framework guides how the grant maybe utilized through a formular, and it is from this formular that a municipality may be able to identify which infrastructure projects to be implemented subject to being part of an approved IDP (Tjebane and Rachidi, 2018). The rigid requirements for implementation that makes it difficult for rural municipalities like GLLM not to be able to target a specific infrastructure in dealing with its backlog before focus on others, like the issue of roads that are needed in the municipality.

5.3. Implementing MIG successfully without challenges

Implementing MIG without challenges is something that is an ideal situation, but Smith (1978) has alluded that policy is implemented within an environment with a setting and time, as such changes in the environment will have an impact on the implementation of the policy. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, COGTA (2020) included amendments in its guidelines that.

- Amount spent by a municipality on urgent repairs and upgrading of water and sanitation infrastructure to restore functionality.
- The amount that a municipality spends sanitizing public transportation and other municipal facilities, such as temperature scanners, handwashing stations, hand sanitizers (according to the Department of Health's standard), personal protective equipment for municipal and public transportation workers, and physical distancing measures.

The ideal situation for successful implementation includes a fully staffed PMU, registered projects, approved implementation plans, approved business plans, efficient and effective SCM processes, and timely reporting as per the MIG guidelines, but also external issues like sub-contracting must be given serious attention.

5.4. Conclusions

Bikam, *et al.* (2015) posits that “the current review of the MIG design must include elements of a performance-based grant system that will allow municipalities to address local objectives in line with the IDPs. Whilst the funder ‟s requirements must also be addressed; they must not be the main feature of the grant system as it penalizes municipalities that have limited capacity to address them”. Greater Letaba Local Municipality is characterised to be a rural municipality with many villages which do not have basic infrastructure making delivery of basic services almost impossible.

Consequently, Bikam, *et al.* (2015) suggested that the input-based, frequently burdensome grant transfer system be replaced with a performance-based award transfer system. This kind of approach to the allocation of MIG funds will be to the advantage of the municipality as it has been spending 100% of its allocation in the period of this study, 2018/2019 FY to 2022/2023 FY.

5.5. Recommendations

In recommending the course of action for the municipality it will be prudent that we take into cognizance the fact that MIG is a policy instrument implemented across the country and as such it is a national policy. This means whatever recommendation that can be

made will be to a great deal restricted to what the municipality can do as it implements MIG,

- **Institutional arrangement**

For a sustained expenditure of 100%, the municipality must make sure that critical positions in the municipality and the PMU are always filled and the is a retention strategy for those officials. A sustained 100% expenditure required that the PMU be fully staffed, they are a technical director in the municipality because these are the positions that are critical to infrastructure delivery in a municipality.

- **Project Management and Contract Management**

The municipality must make sure it gives the aspect of planning within the project management circles serious attention so that the timeframes of implementing MIG projects are not delayed by approval letters and the appointment of contractors. It would be difficult for a municipality to determine which contractors will not deliver as per agreement, which results in delays in the completion of projects, the municipality must take measures to mitigate and control the underperformance of the contractors. This they can do by blacklisting underperforming contractors and having a multiyear panel of contractors that they can be able to appoint in case one contractor underperforms rather than having to start the process afresh which will take time.

- **Public Private Partnership (PPP)**

One avenue that the municipality must explore is that of PPP where they will invite private investors into financing infrastructure that would be beneficial to both parties, major economic activities in the municipality include farming, and this presents an opportunity for collaboration with the private sector. MIG funds are not distributed to municipalities in abundance and as such the avenue of PPP would go a long way in assisting the municipality to address the infrastructure backlog it has.

- **Multiyear projects**

From the analysis of the data collected, it is evident that the municipality needs to properly plan for multiyear projects, particularly when it comes to road projects, and when it comes to projects that need approval from sector departments, they will have to make sure that they plan those projects in outer years so that they are not delayed by approvals. This is to make sure that MIG projects have the desired impact, as such they must be more kilometers that are constructed within a ward before the municipality can implement them in the next ward.

- **Policy evaluation**

On the issue evaluation of MIG as a policy instrument, CoGTA must make sure that an evaluation of the policy takes place bi-annually so that issues of cost analysis and inflation affect the pricing of certain construction materials and new technologies that can be used to save cost. This is very important because from this study it has come to light that indeed inflation and changes in the cost of certain materials present a challenge in the implementation of projects within the municipality.

5.6. Conclusion

What this study has been able to achieve is to identify the challenges faced by Greater Letaba Local Municipality in terms of implementing MIG as a policy instrument, these challenges faced do not negate that the municipality was able to spend 100% of its allocation consecutively for five financial years. The challenges identified include the limited funds that are allocated to the municipality to implement infrastructure projects that will enable the municipality to deliver basic services as the main challenge. Other challenges identified include SCM planning issues where the municipality is not able to appoint contractors on time or appoint incompetent contractors that do not deliver, and the local business forums that want to participate in the construction phase and disrupt projects.

The research methodology adopted, and the techniques used proved to be beneficial to the study as the participants were able to provide in-depth information on the

implementation of the MIG as a policy instrument, the conceptual frame applied by the study proved to be appropriate as it allowed the study to analyze MIG from a policy implementation perspective. From the findings of the study, we can conclude that there are challenges to the implementation of MIG as a policy instrument but also point out from a policy perspective that the municipality can implement MIG as per prescribed guidelines. The major takeaway from the study is that more funds are needed in Greater Letaba Local Municipality to enable the municipality to eradicate its infrastructure backlog and deliver services to the poor households as envisioned by the objective of MIG.

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