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The effects of the land use management process on small and micro enterprises : a case study of the Rand West City Local Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Despite various efforts to promote inclusive economic growth and sustainability, by means of local and global policies, it is not clear whether SMEs are either being supported or obstructed by land use management processes, especially at a local level. This study explores the effects of land use management processes on small and micro enterprises (SMEs) in the Rand West City Local Municipality (RWCLM). Although SMEs are drivers for productive and inclusive economic growth and development in South Africa, they face various regulatory burdens that are limiting their potential.

Various efforts have been made to promote inclusive economic growth and to ensure that cities are safe, sustainable, resilient and inclusive. On a national level it is stipulated in the *Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act*, 2013 and globally it is encouraged through the UN Habitat's New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. Even though these local and global policies complement each other, it is not clear whether SMEs are either being supported or obstructed by land use management processes at the local level.

A qualitative research methodology was used to determine the effects of land use management processes on SMEs within the case study area. This was done by investigating the extent to which the current land use management processes facilitate establishment and growth of SMEs. The objective was to understand how it influences inclusive economic growth, local economic development, small and micro enterprises and the role of urban planning and regulatory frameworks. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, desktop analysis and visual aids, such as photographs and maps. This approach made it possible for the researcher to explore the data within a realistic environment and assisted in explaining the complexities of real-life situations, contrary to experimental or survey research.

In order to determine how said processes influence SMEs in their developing phase, three themes were explored. The first theme deals with the understanding of inclusive economic growth and local economic development followed by the second theme that relates to small and micro enterprises and economic development. The third theme explores urban planning and regulatory frameworks for the global South.

The study discovered that the current land use management processes, in a local municipal context, creates certain challenges for SME owners, in terms of onerous land development requirements. Finally, a few recommendations were made towards an alternative approach for land use management in the RWCLM.