

FINDING THE RIGHT MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL

When trying to engage with your municipality, it can be difficult to find the right official and to get the information you need. Here is an approach that has proven successful. This approach was used by residents of three informal settlements in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, with support from Planact and the International Budget Partnership. The three communities had been struggling with serious sanitation issues for some time, when they decided they needed to find the correct person in the municipality, and engage with them in a constructive way about the specifics of their sanitation struggles.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

National Treasury

Local Government
Budget Analysis Unit

City Support
Programme

Why try VERTICAL channels of access?

Parts of National Government have specific support and/or oversight functions in relation to the metropolitan municipalities. For this reason, an introduction into a metro through a relevant national department can be a great starting point.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ekurhuleni Metro

Finance
Water & Sanitation

Budgets Internal audit Supply Chain Management Operations

City of Cape Town Metro

Finance
Budgets

Why try HORIZONTAL channels of access?

Different parts of a metro may interact with their counterparts in the other metros. For example, officials from the City of Cape Town finance department may communicate with officials from the Ekurhuleni finance department at National Treasury events.

1
st
attempt
MAY 2016 –
JAN 2017

City Support Programme in National Treasury = Dead end

We first connected with the **Core Governance Lead** in the City Support Programme (CSP), who had indicated that CSP could help us connect with officials in Ekurhuleni. He connected us with:

- the **Strategic Support Manager** in CSP, also:
- the **interim Ekurhuleni Coordinator** at the time, who subsequently passed us on to:
- the **new Ekurhuleni Coordinator**.

Due to various factors, none of these contacts were able to connect us directly with anyone in Ekurhuleni Metro. Upon realising this, we began trying other lines of entry into the municipality.

2
nd
attempt
JAN – FEB
2017

City of Cape Town = Dead end

We contacted the **Manager of Performance Budget** in the Finance Directorate in the City of Cape Town. She gave us:

- the **name of the Divisional Head of Budget** in the Ekurhuleni Finance Directorate, but she wasn't able to put us in contact with him.

3
rd
attempt
JAN – FEB
2017

City of Cape Town → Ekurhuleni = Dead end

We contacted the **Manager of Inter Services Liaison** in the Finance Directorate in the City of Cape Town. He passed us on to:

- the **Manager of Revenue** in the Cape Town Finance Directorate, who was able to put us in contact with:
- the **Divisional Head of Internal Audit** in the Finance Directorate in Ekurhuleni. She then passed us on to:
- the **Divisional Head of Governance and Compliance** in the Ekurhuleni Water and Sanitation Department, who wasn't willing to help us connect with other relevant officials in the department.

4
th
attempt
JAN – FEB
2017

Ekurhuleni = Dead end

Having developed a good relationship with the relevant ward councillor, we requested that he set up a meeting with:

- the **mayoral committee member for Water, Sanitation and Energy** in Ekurhuleni.
- This meeting did not materialize.

5
th
attempt
JAN 2017

National Treasury → Ekurhuleni = SUCCESS!

We contacted the **Chief Director** of the Local Government Budget Analysis Unit in National Treasury.

He put us in touch with:

- the **Unit official** responsible for the municipalities in Gauteng. This official from National Treasury was able to put us in touch with:
- the **Divisional Head of Budget** in the Ekurhuleni Finance Directorate. The Ekurhuleni Divisional Head of Budget put us in contact with:
- **two people**.

FIRST, the **Divisional Head of Supply Chain Management (SCM)** in the Ekurhuleni Finance Directorate.

Through the Secretary to the Divisional Head of SCM, we managed to set up a meeting with the Divisional Head himself. For various reasons the meeting was postponed a few times, and ultimately we met with a junior official in SCM. We didn't take this line further.

SECOND, the **Divisional Head of Budget** in Ekurhuleni put us in touch with:

- the **Head of the Ekurhuleni Water and Sanitation Department**. This Head of Department passed us on to:
- the **Divisional Head of Water Operations**, and with the help of his Executive Secretary, we had various in-person meetings with the Divisional Head where we established that:

he was the correct official!

Through his subsequent engagements with the residents of the three relevant informal settlements in Ekurhuleni, this Divisional Head of Water Operations was able to address some of the sanitation issues faced by the community.

* We were not able to get the documents we needed directly from the Ekurhuleni Water and Sanitation Department, so we accessed them through a Manager in the Ekurhuleni Tender Office.