

# ASIVIKELANE

11 APRIL 2024



## WHAT'S GOOD FOR CITIZENS AND CSOs IS GOOD FOR THE AGSA

### Where did our journey with CSOs start?

In 2013, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) team met with civil society organisations (CSO's) in Cape Town. The AGSA team left the meeting with concerns that these organisations were politically aligned and that their service delivery data was not reliable. On their side, the CSOs were unhappy that the AGSA had issued clean audits to the City of Cape Town while social audits had found insufficient and poor quality sanitation in informal settlements.

Fast forward to 2023 and the relationship between the AGSA and informal settlement residents has changed unrecognisably.

Today, the AGSA is welcomed by informal settlement residents all over the country. Audit teams make extensive use of Asivikelane's service delivery data and encourage metro governments to do the same. Asivikelane even invited an AGSA team to be keynote speakers at their annual gathering.



AGSA representatives speak at Asivikelane's annual gathering

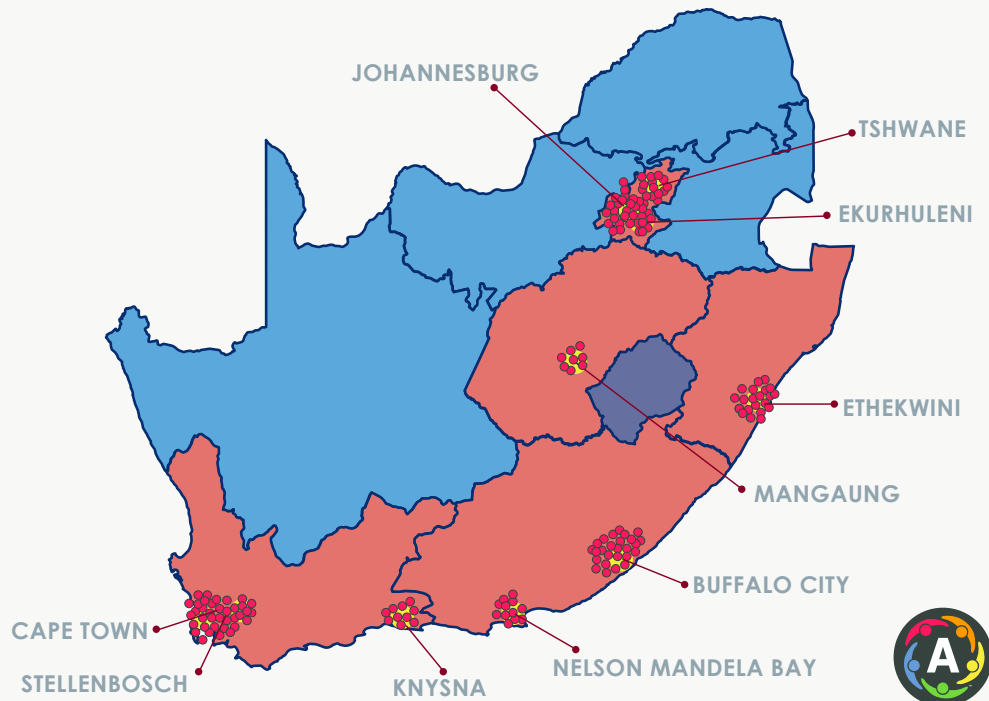
### How did this happen?

Understanding the challenges facing the AGSA, in 2018 Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu reopened the conversation with these same CSO's. Under the leadership of Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke, as INTOSAI Capacity Building Committee chair, developed a guide to supreme audit institution (SAI)-CSO relationships for use in the global market. At the same time, we developed an AGSA-specific framework with the necessary tools and risk management frameworks. These developments were nested within our

#cultureshift2030 strategy that supports our audit teams to explore this new path. Audit teams responded admirably and reached out to Asivikelane even in places as far afield as Mangaung, Sol Plaatje, Polokwane and Mbombela.

During the same period, Asivikelane scaled up to 13 CSOs, all eight metros and several local governments; showed the AGSA that it is non-partisan; and developed a system of data collection that is systematic, quality controlled and impressively regular.

The **500** informal settlements that are part of Asivikelane



As a result of these developments, the work of **Asivikelane and the AGSA** now complements each other in the following ways:

**Greater public support for the AGSA**

- Asivikelane gives us a single point of access to **500 informal settlements, 13 CSOs and 120 community facilitators**.
- They train and prepare residents to engage with us – they trained **18 000 residents** from 2021 to 2023!
- They facilitate site visits by audit teams to informal settlements. Auditors report feeling safe and that the meetings with communities and their leaders are productive and orderly.
- Beyond informal settlements, Asivikelane has the ability to convene other important culture shift coalition partners: national, local and provincial government; government donors; the private sector and other national and international organisations such as C40, NICRO and the SETAs.



**Better informed citizens, better informed audits**

- Asivikelane produces service delivery data at a scale and regularity (often monthly), that no one else does. For example, during the KwaZulu-Natal flood audit, they provided valuable information about the state of infrastructure before and after the floods within two weeks.
- Our auditors also benefit from Asivikelane’s firsthand experience, and knowledge of issues and challenges experienced by citizens. For example, as a part of multi-year audit planning, we use their information to obtain a better understanding of the social and cultural context within which the auditee delivers services which allows audit teams to better identify root causes.
- But our work also informs theirs. For example, in Cape Town, their work on the metro’s C3 notice system assumed that the city was not responding to faults reported in informal settlements at all. We helped them understand that the city was in fact responding, but that the responses were unacceptably slow.



Audit teams visit Cape Town informal settlements

## Better reach and impact of audits

Asivikelane helps to disseminate and explain audit recommendations to the public and mobilise public pressure for their implementation. For example, in eThekweni residents used their knowledge of audit findings to rebuff officials' excuses that audit processes held up service delivery.

They also help us follow up on audit findings. For example, when a 2020-21 performance audit finding in Knysna related to chemical toilets remained unresolved in 2022-23, the audit team corroborated their audit findings with Asivikelane data and included these in the Management reports and discussed them with the municipal leadership.

In an early sign of culture change, during the 2020-21 Tshwane metro audit, officials invited Asivikelane to join the audit team during site visits to informal settlements to inspect water tanks, taps and toilets.

## Increased AGSA capacity

Asivikelane supplements our research capacity. For example, a collaborative effort between Asivikelane and the AGSA resulted in a write-up of the challenges with repairs and maintenance of informal settlement taps and toilets. This helped us to understand the root causes of this problem.



Audit teams visit eThekweni informal settlements



Audit teams visit Tshwane informal settlements

Asivikelane's publications also provide a point of reference in our risk assessments and planning processes. For example, we used their publications to identify and select municipalities with low scores on access to water and toilets during the planning of service delivery audits in the Western Cape.

## What's next?

As the above examples show, engaging with CSOs puts us in touch with citizens and has the potential to change the culture of how things are done by government, CSOs and the AGSA itself.

We can fast-track and enable this process by making the use of civil society's information a standard practice across all AGSA audits.

In this way, we can make such work an institutionalised part of the AGSA's audit processes with a substantial two-way flow of information to empower the work of both CSOs and the AGSA.

Such institutionalisation could enhance the entire audit process and have a significant impact on #cultureshift2030 within the public sector to the benefit of the citizens of South Africa.

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## ASIVIKELANE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

