EMALAHLENI
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Emalahleni Sustainable Development Goals

VLR report

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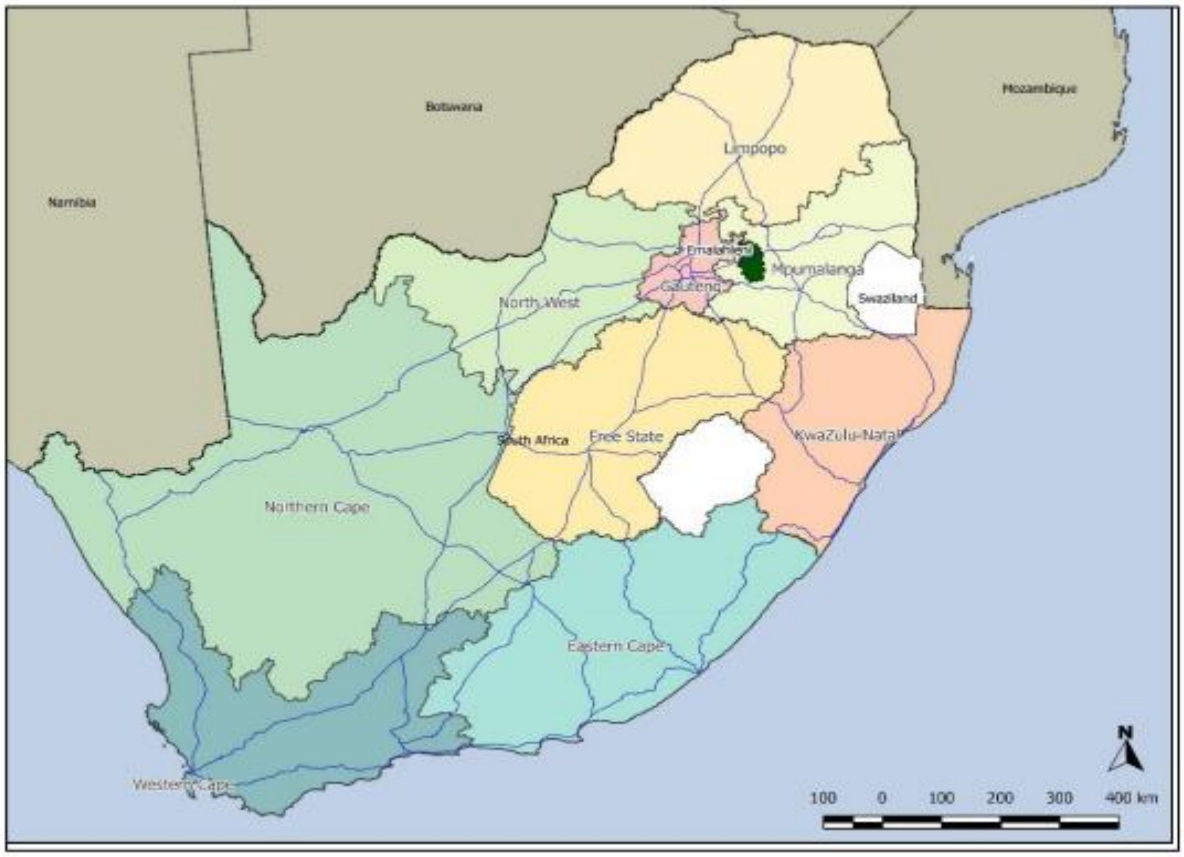
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

1. EMALAHLENI CONTEXT

The Emalahleni Municipal area, which is referred to as the "place of coal." In 1903, the municipality of eMalahleni was founded. It was named after an outcrop of white granite that is situated in close proximity to the current railway station. During the initial years, this ridge served as a commercial post and a resting location for transport vehicles. eMalahleni is presently facing a threat from accelerated development, which is threatening its extensive collection of heritage assets. Emalahleni is likely the most industrialized municipal territory in Nkangala, and its landscape is primarily characterized by opencast and subterranean coalmines. The country's highest concentration of power stations is located in this region. The region's heritage sites are indicative of its mining and industrial past. This encompasses graves, architectural/engineering, military history, and industrial history, all of which should be safeguarded and preserved.

Map of eMalahleni



Emalahleni Local Municipality is situated in the jurisdictional area of the Nkangala District Municipality and is situated within the Mpumalanga Province. The district is situated in the northwest region of the province and is the shortest district in terms of land mass (21%). It also has the second highest population concentration in the province (35%). It occupies an area of approximately 2677.67 km².

The Municipality functions as a gateway municipality and settlement into the province for eight of the nine provinces of South Africa. The municipality benefits from its proximity to the Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and Tshwane Metropolitan Municipalities, which collectively comprise the country's largest economy.

The road infrastructure that connects Emalahleni to the rest of the country is also well-maintained and serviced by logistics freight activities. Consequently, the municipality's importance in the country's Industrial Development and Transportation strategies is acknowledged. The municipality is linked to the rest of the country by the substantial road infrastructure, which includes the N4 and N12 freeways, as previously mentioned. The N12 commences at eMalahleni town, where the N4 and the N12 converge. Subsequently, the N4 continues to Maputo and Nelspruit.

A rail line that connects Gauteng to Maputo via eMalahleni is parallel to the N4. The Maputo Corridor, a Southern African initiative to connect Walvis Bay (on the west coast of Africa) and Maputo (on the east coast of Africa), has identified this substantial rail and road infrastructure.

These critical transportation and freight linkages are essential for the enhancement of trade between Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, and Mozambique. Rail connections and roadways to the south of the municipality connect eMalahleni to Richards Bay and Maputo Harbour, thereby creating substantial logistical opportunities for the coal that must be exported through the harbors.

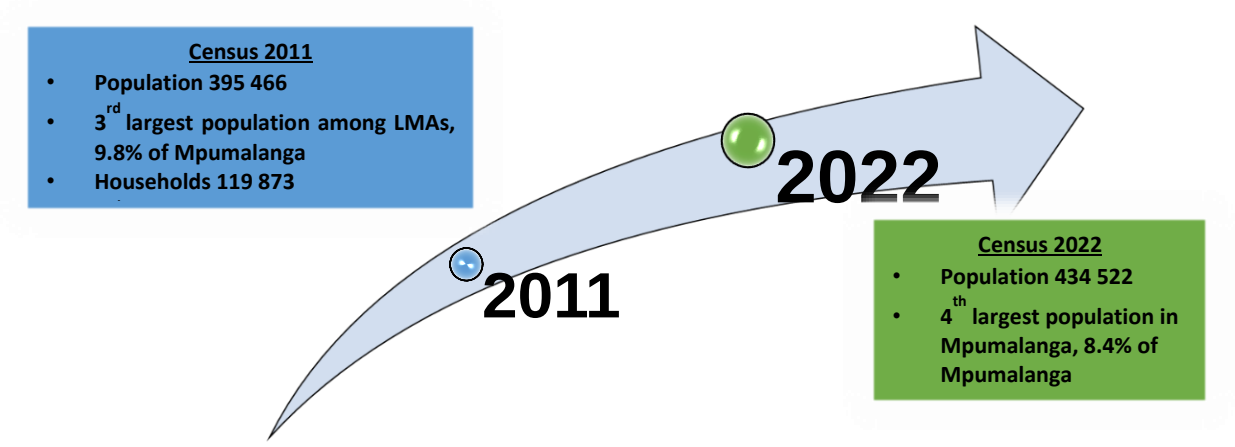
Due to its abundance of coal reserves and power stations, including Kendal, Matla, Duvha, and Ga-Nala, the southern regions of the Emalahleni Municipality are referred to as the Energy Mecca of South Africa. The new Kusile power station is situated a few kilometers east of Phola. The eMalahleni area is connected to the Richards Bay and Maputo harbors by the Southward road

and rail network, which provides export opportunities for the coal reserves.

Similar to all other municipalities in the country, Emalahleni Local Municipality (ELM) continues to grapple with the profound spatial challenges of the past, which result in communities living in isolation. Despite efforts to relocate impoverished communities closer to the hubs of economic activity, land availability continues to impede the program.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Emalahleni population/household



2030- MTDP/five-year provincial economic targets

- **Growth of at least 3% pa**
- **Unemployment rate of 25% (60 000 new jobs pa)**
- **Poverty rate of 35%**
- Improve income inequality, poorest 40% of households ≥10% of income. Gini-coefficient less than 0.60

Emalahleni's population, which was 395,466 in 2011 and 434,522 in 2022, is the fourth largest in the province and accounts for 27.3% of the Nkangala population, as reported by Statistics South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2022). The provincial population is comprised of 8.4% of the Emalahleni population.

The young, who are aged 0–34, comprise the plurality of the population, accounting for 62.4% of the total. The elderly (60 years of age and older) make up 7.4% of the population. The number of individuals aged 60 and older has increased in comparison to 2011, indicating that the mortality rate is decreasing and life expectancy is increasing. The municipality should plan for youthful people aged 0–34, as they constitute the plurality, according to the population statistics. The number of households in Emalahleni increased from 119 873 in 2011 to 164 573 households in 2022, the third highest in the province. This represents an average annual household growth of 3.1% per year, an increase of 44 700 households.

The aforementioned exerted pressure on infrastructure, domestic services, and economic and employment opportunities. Between 2019 and 2024, poverty levels in Emalahleni experienced a modest decline. The proportion of the population residing below the lower-bound poverty line (LBPL) increased from 28.9% in 2019 to 30.2% in 2024, suggesting that a greater number of residents were experiencing poverty during this time.

Although it remained the third lowest in the district, the official (strict) unemployment rate rose from 26.3% in 2019 to 27.7% in 2024. The rate of female unemployment also worsened during this time, rising from 32.1% in 2019 to 34.0% in 2024. This suggests that women continued to encounter more significant obstacles in obtaining employment opportunities.

RED FLAGS

- The population growth is generally greater than the economic growth, which places a strain on fundamental services and infrastructure.
- Informal dwellings, piped water, and electricity connections are experiencing significant and/or deteriorating backlogs.
- Poverty and unemployment are deteriorating.
- The high reliance on coal mining and the closure of power stations over time

- The negative economic impact of COVID-19 and the low historic economic growth rate

MUNICIPAL TOP CHALLENGES AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

CHALLENGES	REMEDIAL ACTIONS
Dilapidated Infrastructure and high distribution losses	○ Mobilisation of resource ○ Installation of individual electricity and water meters, ○ Energy Efficiency Programme ○ Water conservation water demand management ○ Update and implement infrastructure and replacement strategies/sector plans
Cash Flow and Weak Balance Sheet	○ Strengthen implementation of Financial Recovery Plan ○ Community awareness ○ Data cleansing
Bulk services Account in Arrears (Water and Electricity)	○ Alignment of the Eskom and Municipal payment cycle ○ Alignment of tariff to cost of supply with the assistance of NERSA ○ Implementing the signed payment plan between Eskom and the municipality ○ Negotiating on the interest charge plan as set by Eskom and DWS and mining service providers ○ Engage political intervention strategies with ward councilors (Khokha kuzobancono) ○ Enforcement of credit control policy and debt collection
Vandalism and theft of municipal infrastructure	○ Conduct and implement security analysis for the municipality ○ Investigation of less vulnerable equipment and spares ○ Marking or coding of all municipal assets ○ Engaging law enforcement agencies ○ Roll out and monitor awareness programmes. ○ Regularisation of informal traders ○ Protective Structures/ Advanced technology in material ○ Installation of CCTV
Persistent land invasions	○ Enforce informal settlement by-laws
Culture of non-compliance and payments for municipal services	○ Communication and awareness programmes (operations Ziveze and khokha Kuzobancono) ○ Law enforcement roll-out ○ Improve service standards ○ Implementation of incentive schemes ○ Debt collection
Lack of public confidence in the municipality	○ Feed -back mechanisms ○ Various communication tools. ○ Create platform for engagements with interest groups ○ Improve on customer satisfaction survey

Low economic performance	○ Effective Implementation of LED strategy ○ Create an enabling environment ○ Strengthen strategic partnerships and IGR

GREEN FLAGS

- Potential for the development of critical industries, including the establishment of a Mining Museum and a Mining and Metals Industrial Technology Park/SEZ
- Mining as an anchor industry and its potential for mineral beneficiation
- Just Energy Transition (JET) - Green Economy/Renewable Energy Opportunities (also used as a Hub in this context – REDZ?)
- Prime location in relation to the Maputo Corridor and the N4
- A strong educational foundation

3. INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNANCE

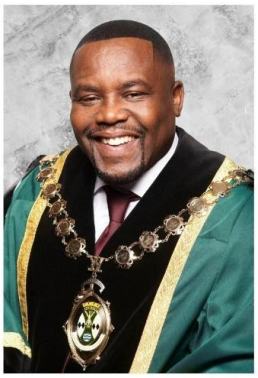
Emalahleni Local Municipality is a Category B municipality that combines a ward participatory system with a mayoral executive system. The Council, which is comprised of 68 councillors, is the municipality's ultimate decision-making structure.

3.1 POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

The Council of EMalahleni is composed of elected Councillors. The Municipal Council is composed of 68 councillors, including 34 ward councillors and 34 proportional representative councillors. The African National Congress (ANC) holds a majority of 49 Councillors, while the Democratic Alliance represents the official opposition with 18 Councillors. The Freedom Front + has a solitary representative.

Cllr. N.M Shabangu

Council Speaker



Cllr. V.J Nhlapho

Executive Mayor

Cllr. G.S Koko

Council Whip

3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE

An administration headed by the Municipal Manager and six Executive Directors are responsible for the implementation of Council and Mayoral Committee resolutions

Number of employees as at end of January 2026 is as follow

Directorate	Total Positions	Budgeted Positions	Permanent Positions Filled	Vacant Positions Budgeted	Vacant Positions Unbudgeted	% vacant Rate Budgeted
Office of the Municipal Manager	82	64	50	14	18	21.8%
Corporate Services	100	61	54	7	39	11.4%
Development Planning	181	90	66	24	91	26.6%
Environmental & Waste Management	717	274	247	27	443	9.8%

Community Services	819	292	223	69	527	23.6%
Financial Services	318	236	199	37	82	15.6%
Technical Services	1 421	556	464	92	865	16.5%
TOTAL	3638	1573	1303	270	2065	17.1%

*****TOTAL (HOW MANY FUNDED (= 1573) HOW MANY VACANT (= 270))**

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Mr H.S Mayisela

4. MUNICIPAL SDGs PRIORITIES

This report offers a comprehensive examination of the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) framework for the Emalahleni Local Municipality. It assesses the degree of local alignment with the 2030 Agenda, with a particular emphasis on the critical targets of SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Energy), SDG 8 (Economy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), SDG 13 (Climate Change), and SDG 17 (Partnerships).

4.1 SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Local Context: The municipality is situated in a water-stressed region that is known for its high evaporation and relies on augmentation catchments. Service delivery backlogs and water losses continue to be significant obstacles. As per the 2022 Census conducted by Statistics South Africa, the proportion of households without access to piped water increased from 5.2% in 2011 to 11.4% in 2024, indicating a decline in water access. As a result, the municipality was ranked as the sixth worst-performing area in the province. The percentage of households lacking a lavatory facility decreased from 2.5% in 2011 to 0.8% in 2024, earning Emalahleni the second-best ranking in the province. In the same vein, the municipality's proportion of households lacking access to a flush or chemical toilet decreased from 28.5% in 2011 to 20.3% in 2024, thereby making it the eighth-best municipality in the province.

4.1.1 Localized Targets, Goal and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	GOAL	INDICATOR
Target 6.1: Safe and Affordable Drinking Water	Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.	**6.1.1** - Proportion of the municipal population using safely managed drinking water services (accessible on premises, available when needed, and free from contamination).
Target 6.2: Adequate Sanitation and Hygiene	Achieve equitable access to sanitation and hygiene for all, ending open defecation by 2030, focusing on vulnerable populations.	**6.2.1** - Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation, including hand-washing facilities.
Target 6.3: Water Quality and Wastewater	Improve water quality by 2030 through reducing pollution, halving untreated wastewater, and increasing safe reuse.	**6.3.1** (safe treatment of wastewater)
		6.3.2 (good ambient water quality).
Target 6.4: Water-Use Efficiency	By 2030, increase efficiency across sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals to reduce water scarcity.	**6.4.1** (change in efficiency)
		6.4.2 (level of freshwater stress).

Target 6.6: Water-Related Ecosystems	Protect and restore ecosystems like mountains, forests, wetlands, and rivers by 2020.	**6.6.1** (change in the extent of ecosystems over time)

4.1.2 Progress on plans and programmes

WATER SUPPLY

According to the Water Services Act number 108 of 1997, Emalahleni Local Municipality (ELM) is a Water Service Provider (WSP) and has been appointed as a Water Services Authority (WSA) by the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWAS). In accordance with the Constitution Section 152 "Objects of Local Government," the purpose of WSP is to deliver water services to the local municipality that are sustainable, efficient, of high quality, and promote local economic growth.

The following are the responsibilities of WSA:

- Guarantee that all consumers have access to water services that are sustainable, economical, affordable, and efficient.
- Develop a water services development plan (WSDP)
- Develops and enforces regulations
- Determine the methods for the provision of water services.

The Water and Sanitation Department is responsible for the provision of water and sanitation services, including the management of raw water retaining structures (municipal dams), bulk raw water abstraction, potable water treatment, potable water and distribution reservoirs, water reticulation system, water meters, sewer reticulation, and waste water treatment plant. The department is responsible for the following water services authority functions: the enhancement of water security, the monitoring of water quality, the development of bylaws, the development of WSDP and other statutory sector plans, and the assurance of compliance.

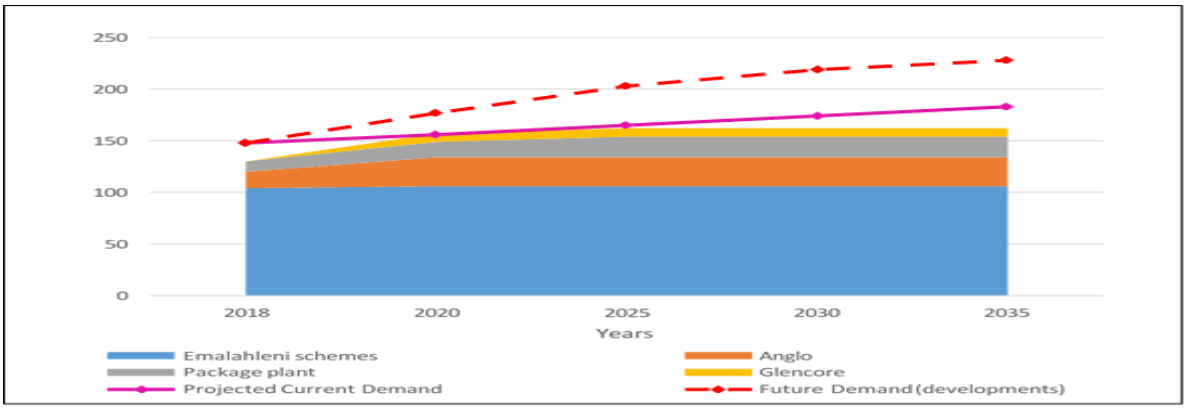
ELM is situated in the Upper Olifants River catchment, which spans approximately 3540 km2. The resource's water quality is deteriorated by the deposition of contaminants (acid mine drainage) in

the catchment land-use activities, which are inundated with coal mining, energy generation, and agricultural activities. Consequently, the resource contains a high concentration of manganese during rainy seasons, which poses a potential health risk and deleterious aesthetic impact when consumed in high quantities.

Climate change has resulted in unpredictable disasters, which have a negative impact on the purity of resource water, causing it to exceed 2000% of its normal level. However, the municipality has made substantial strides in enhancing water quality by adopting risk-based process flow analysis, optimizing proactive process operations, designing water treatment compounds that are appropriate for specific conditions, and enhancing operational efficiency.

ELM is a mining region that is water-stressed and faces the challenge of an exponentially increasing water demand, which poses a hazard to water security. The municipality has limited access to alternative water sources due to the low abstraction yield for subterranean water exploitation and the contamination of the minimal water available by coal mining operations, which disrupts the geohydrological flow. The municipality is also unable to contemplate inter-catchment transfer due to the absence of adjacent water-endowed sources. The region's minimal rainfall precipitation severely restricts the potential for rainwater harvesting.

The Olifants River is the primary source of surface water supply to the municipality, providing over 80% of the municipality's potable water supply. Population growth and water consumption/utilization patterns are among the factors contributing to the municipality's elevated water demand in comparison to its available supply. The installed capacity is 130Ml/d, and the current water demand is approximately 150Ml/d (excluding 35% water losses). According to the high development scenario, ELM is anticipated to have a future water demand of 260Ml/d by 2035 (see the figure below for future projections).



Witbank, Ga-Nala, and Rietspruit are the three municipal water supply schemes that are currently operational in the municipality. These schemes provide potable water to the social and commercial institutions, as well as the communities within the municipality. Glencore, Anglo, Package Plant, and Eskom are the four external schemes that are presently being used to supplement the potable water supply in various regions of the municipality. These schemes are charged at a premium rate. The municipal schemes' operational and design capacities can be summarized as follows:

Source	**Scheme name**	**Design capacity (Ml/d)**	**Operational Capacity (Ml/d)**	**Status**	**2021/2022 Progress**
Witbank Dam	Witbank water treatment plant	75	90	Over capacity.	Application for increasing the Water Use Licence is at 80% complete, funding for the upgrade stalled due to municipal commitment on MIG.
Rietspruit Dam	Rietspruit water treatment plant	4	3.5	Being upgraded to 4Ml/d.	Project is 100% completed

Usuthu scheme (DWS)	Ga-Nala water treatment plant	15	6.7	Below design capacity.	Business plan and funding request submitted to DWS awaiting the department to finalise appointment of term contractors.
Witbank Dam	Modular package Plant (NuWater)	20	15	Operating at contracted capacity.	Contract has been extended for further 12 month expiring end of September 2022. New service provider has been appointed and project is at initiation stage
Mine water effluent	Anglo mine water reclamation plant	28	16	To be upgraded to 28Ml/d.	Contract has been extended and operating within contractual agreement
Usuthu scheme (DWS)	Eskom- Kendal Power Station	2	2	To be terminated upon commissioning of the bulk water line between Phola and Wilge and sustainable supply and improved	Bulk line from Phola reservoirs to Wilge reservoir installedand complete. Additional water supply required

				capacity from the mine.	to meet the demand.
Mine water effluent	Glencore mine water reclamation plant	15	8Ml/d	Operating at contracted capacity.	Operating at contracted capacity
Improve water security by introducing the following schemes	30Ml/d modular package plants 20Ml/d at Benfluer 10Ml/d at Point E	30	30	Appoint service provider for augmentation of bulk water provision	Service provider appointed for 30 MLD, commissioned 10 MLD at Ben fleur incremental to 20MLD, Finalising contractual process Point E awaiting (10MLD) finalization of Agreement with Highveld and funding from DHS
Develop a new scheme Doornpoort	10Ml/d Doornpoort scheme	10	10	Augment water supply for the community of Siyanqoba/ Klarinet	Installation of bulk in progress to be completed in 2023. Service provider appointed for the package plant and procurement for the pump station

					and rising main in progress.
Reuse of treated sewer effluent for industrial supply	Reduce water demand and improve sustainability of water provision	10	10	Construct new bulk supply infrastructure to the industrial areas around Ferrobank WWTP	Municipality and DBSA engaging on the private Sector Participation Plan to sought legal and financial implications
Improve water quality	Improve water quality monitoring	n/a	n/a	Appointed external service provider to conduct accredited water quality monitoring	Extended contract for service provider for a further 3 months (June 2022- August 2022) Procurement process is underway for appointment of service provider to conduct water and effluent quality monitoring

The municipality has, however, considered integrated water supply management in order to enhance water security and augment water supply. This management plan includes the following: water supply through mine water reclamation systems, optimization of available resources through modular package plants, water conservation and water demand management (WCWDM), and water recycling/reuse through industrial water supply and surface water recharge.

The municipality experiences substantial water distribution losses as a result of its outdated infrastructure, unlawful connections, theft, and a lack of water pressure monitoring and regulation devices, as well as the absence of sufficient trade instruments. Intermittent water supply, protracted water disruptions, high water interruptions, revenue loss, and dissatisfied consumers are the consequences of the situation. A water conservation and water demand management (WCWDM) study was conducted and adopted by the municipality with the objective of identifying solutions to reduce water losses, water squandering, and consumer awareness. Furthermore, in partnership with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the Municipality has developed a Bulk Water Condition Assessment Report to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the water infrastructure system. The report identifies short-, medium-, and long-term intervention projects aimed at reducing water losses, improving water service delivery, enhancing infrastructure reliability, promoting sustainable water management and improving water quality.

Several initiatives have been undertaken to leverage available funding, including the installation of water meters (domestic, bulk, and businesses) to facilitate volumetric quantification and precise billing, as well as the implementation of pressure control management through the installation of bulk smart meters and pressure reducing valves at strategic locations within the infrastructure networks.

In order to address infrastructure backlogs and ensure that future demands are met, the municipality is initiating a vigorous initiative to investigate proposals for the solicitation of municipal service provision mechanisms, such as partnerships, funding (grant, benefactor), and facility acquisition. The reduction of water distribution losses is contingent upon the replacement and refurbishment of outdated infrastructure. However, this process is both time-consuming and costly, and it often leads to temporary disruptions in the water supply.

The 2022 census conducted by Statistics South Africa revealed that there were 6,273 households in Emalahleni without access to potable water in 2011, compared to 18,713 in 2022. This represents a decline from 5.2% to 11.4%. Households lacking piped water are supplied with water through communal stand pipelines, affixed JOJO tanks, and water vehicles. Water utilization by sector within the municipality is illustrated in the following table:

Total Use of Water by Sector			
Financial Year	Water produced	Total sale (Industrial /Domestic)	Unaccountable water
2022/2023	42 876 852 kl	23 512 596 kl	19 364 256 kl
2023/2024	45 139, 715 kl	21 703 882 kl	23 435 833 kl
2024/2025	44 131 020 kl	20 600 769 kl	23 830 251 kl

The aforementioned initiatives will be realized with a lasting impact if the necessary resources, regulatory requirements, and delivery mechanisms are obtained in accordance with the plan outlined above. The importance of community ownership must be reemphasized and concretized, as the majority of initiatives are disrupted by sabotage during and after their implementation.

Water Service Delivery Levels:

Description	Households 2022/2023	Households 2023/2024	Households 2024/2025
Piped water inside dwelling	94 344	132 515	**135 523**
Piped water inside yard	36 535	26 190	28 500
Communal stand pipes within 200m	3709	23946	23 946
Beyond 200m and below minimum service level	18 793	13 506	**10 621**

A total of 294.3 million liters has been conveyed to approximately one hundred and fifty-one (151) informal settlements and areas lacking substantial infrastructure, at a cost of R47.3 million. The municipality, in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Human Settlement, is currently engaged in an Upgrading of Informal Settlement Strategy. This initiative will result in the formalization of distribution and reticulation networks for approximately 25,000 households, with 15,000 of these networks already completed and 10,000 still pending. Included in the program

will be the development of bulk infrastructure supplies that are intended to facilitate the development process.

Water Service Policy Objectives

Additional HH provided with minimum water supply	Target	Remaining HH	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Number of Households	15276	4422	10 053	2637	2310
Improvement in turnaround time during water interruption	4 hours	N/A	4-12 hours	12-48 hours	12-48 hours
Reduction in water loses	20%	N/A	48%	51%	45 %

Supply chain processes, inadequate funding, protracted implementation periods (community stoppages, concerned groupings, sub-contracting), inclement weather, developed areas, and substandard performance are among the factors that impede the attainment of these policy objectives. A total of 2565 water infrastructure faults were attended within 24 hours; however, there are still challenges, including the necessity of apparatus, equipment, financing, and skilled staff to effectively address water supply outages.

Grant funding is the primary source of funding for capital projects within the municipality. These projects are implemented and reported on in accordance with the terms of the grant funding agreement. Some of the initiatives that the municipality has implemented to resolve the backlogs and unlock both residential and economic development are as follows:

Implementation of the Water Capital Project

The Department of Human Settlement's assistant has connected a total of 15,000 households to the water network, and the program is currently in progress. Areas that were serviced include:

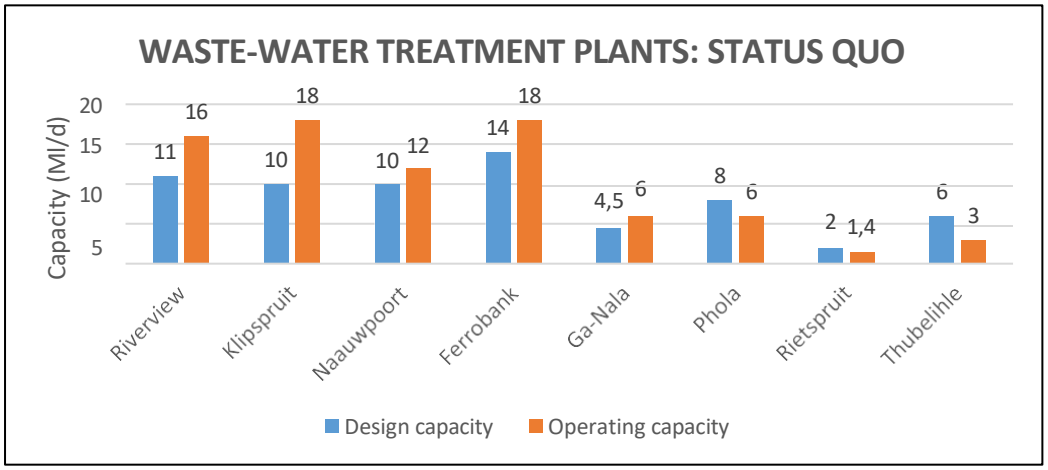
- Extensions Empumelelweni
- Eraq extensions (Phola)
- Thubelihle ext, 6&7

Provision of Waste Water (Sanitation)

There are eight wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) owned by ELM. Municipal WWTPs are intended to process domestic refuse in a manner that satisfies the Water Use Licenses (WUL) or River Water Quality Objectives (RWQO) specifications. The Water Use License mandates that five of the eight WWTPs treat sewer effluent to meet special limits, which are nearly equivalent to the potable water standard. The following technologies are being employed by the municipality to treat wastewater effluent:

- Activated Sludge System
- Pond System o Tinkling (Bio-filter) System

The design and operating capacities of municipal WWTPs can be summarized as follows:



It is evident from the illustrative diagram above that five waste water treatment facilities are operating at or above their design capacities. This could result in a potential environmental impact, which could impede development in those areas, as well as the need for financing and the possibility of directives and litigation.

The following are the primary priorities for sanitation services:

- Improve waste-water treatment facilities and bulk infrastructure Update Klipspruit from 10 to 24 ml/d.
- Increase Ferrobank productivity from 10 to 32 ml/day
- Maximize Naauwpoort from 10 to 30 ml/day
- Revamp the wastewater pump facility
- Old sewer pipelines are being replaced.

In order to alleviate the sanitation services backlog and provide bulk infrastructure, the following initiatives are currently underway:

- The sewer outfall wastewater line from the CBD to the Ferrobank STW will be upgraded.
- The Klipspruit Waste Water Treatment Works will undergo an upgrade and refurbishment.

The method by which approved funds are disbursed for implementation impedes the execution of high capital-intensive projects, such as the upgrade and refurbishment of waste water treatment works. The approved grant funding can only support a protracted phased approach method that is advantageous to project implementation and life cycle, as the municipality is confronted with numerous competing requirements, high backlogs, and revenue constraints. This can lead to high escalating costs that may be equivalent to the initial project value and the works conducted in the initial phase being absolute when reaching further phases.

The mushrooming of informal settlements has negatively impacted the municipality, which has a backlog of 51103 households without formal sanitation. This poses a challenge in terms of wastewater spillages and unhygienic living conditions. The construction and occupancy of RDP houses before the upgrading of bulk infrastructure continue to be a significant issue, as it places a burden on the existing infrastructure and leads to unnecessarily provocative community demonstrations. The municipal sewer system was connected to a total of 3265 households (approximately 6.4%) during the 2019/2020 financial year. Despite the challenges encountered, a total of 6563 faults were attended.

Sanitation Service Delivery Levels

Description	Households 2017/2018	Households 2018/2019	Households 2019/2020	Households 2020/2021
Flush Toilets	83474	103 552	106 817	111 207
Septic tank	2390	2398	2408	2415
Chemical Toilets	40	60	25	35
Pit Toilets (ventilated)	5553	5432	0	33 598
Below minimum service level	19051	28567	47838	13 181

Waste Water (Sanitation) Service Policy Objectives

Additional HH provided with minimum sanitation	Target	2018/2019	Remaining HH	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of Households	28567	120	28 447	150	28297

The municipality's capital projects are funded through grants, which are implemented and reported in accordance with the specific conditions of the grants. The Municipal Infrastructure Grant is the primary grant utilized by the municipality, with a total expenditure of R117,684,000.00. The local communities were provided with ninety (90) employment opportunities as a result of the implementation of these projects:

Internal Sewers for the Empumelelweni Extensions

The construction of Phase 1, which encompassed 300 sewer connections, was completed as part of this endeavor. The initiative was executed at a cost of R 3,240,274.53, resulting in a total of 12 job opportunities.

Fig 1: Damaged 75mm existing water line

Fig 2: Partially backfilled trench for compaction

Upgrading of Klipspruit Waste Water Treatment Works:

The project is a multiyear program that is being implemented in phases and is designed to construct 20Ml waste water treatment works. In lieu of 67% overall progress and 40% of the construction of the Reactor outer walls and floor sections, R 12,330,352.44 was expended during the fiscal year 2021/2022. The project has generated a total of 17 local employment opportunities, and a primary subcontractor has been selected to execute the project, in addition to 23 local business opportunities.

Pic: Upgrading of Klipspruit Waste Water Treatment Works Earthworks for Reactor

WASTE WATER (SANITATION) SERVICE POLICY OBJECTIVES

Additional HH provided with minimum	Target	2018/2019	Remaining HH	2019/2020	2020/2021

sanitation					
Number of Households	28567	120	28 447	150	28297

4.1.3 Challenges

Water & Sanitation	Sanitation
Water security (demand high than supply);	Rapid population growth resulting in overloading of systems,
Intermittent water supplies due to shortage of water supply;	Aged infrastructure
Deteriorating raw water quality	Outdated (obsolete) technology
Aged infrastructure	Lack of proper maintenance teams (civil and mechanical)
Vandalism and theft	Theft and vandalism of infrastructure
Poor customer satisfaction leading to low revenue collection	Lack of bay-law enforcement
High water loses	Lack of Protection and safeguarding of municipal assets
	Mushrooming of informal settlements
	Emptying and maintenance of long drop and VIP toilets

4.1.4 Solutions / interventions

The following are the primary water service provision priorities and initiatives that are intended for implementation in response to the challenges previously mentioned:

Improve water security by introducing the following schemes:

- 30Ml/d modular package plants
- 20Ml/d at Ben Fleur

- 10Ml/d at Point E
- 10Ml/d Doornpoort scheme
- Reuse of treated sewer effluent for industrial supply
- Reduction of water losses by implementing Water Conservation and Water Demand Management strategy:
- Replacement of old pipes
- Installation of pressure reducing valves
- Installation of meters, telemetry and SCADA
- Improve water quality
- Improve water quality monitoring
- Refurbishment of Witbank Water Treatment

4.2 SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Local Context: The most extensive concentration of coal-fired power stations in South Africa is located in Emalahleni. Nevertheless, sustainability is impacted by energy losses resulting from illegal connections and grid constraints. The proportion of residences without an electricity connection decreased from 26.3% in 2011 to 15.9% in 2024, indicating an improvement in access to electricity during the 2022 census. Emalahleni continues to have the greatest proportion of households without electricity access in the province, despite this progress.

The global objectives of SDG 7 have been localized to align with the priorities of municipalities during a Voluntary Local Review (VLR). The metrics have been modified by the ELM to emphasize energy efficiency in public infrastructure, urban energy access, municipal renewable energy generation, and localized clean culinary initiatives.

4.2.1 Localized Targets, Goal and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	GOAL	INDICATOR
Target 7.1: Universal Energy Access	Ensure universal, affordable, and reliable access to modern energy services.	Percentage of households connected to the formal municipal electricity grid.
		Percentage of households utilizing clean, safe, and sustainable fuels and technologies for cooking and heating.
		Number or percentage of informal settlements provided with

		formalized, safe electrical connections.
		Average duration (in hours) of unplanned electricity supply interruptions per month.
Target 7.2: Renewable Energy Transition	Substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the local energy mix	Percentage of total municipal electricity sourced from renewable energy sources (e.g., solar, wind, hydro).
		Installed renewable energy capacity (in MW) within the municipal boundaries.
		Percentage of municipal buildings and facilities powered by on-site renewable generation.
		Annual reduction in municipal greenhouse gas emissions attributed to renewable energy generation.
Target 7.3: Energy Efficiency	Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency at the local level	Percentage of municipal streetlights upgraded to energy-efficient LED technology.
		Average energy consumption (kWh) per square meter in municipal buildings.
		Percentage of public transport fleets running on electric or hybrid engines.
		Total annual energy savings achieved through local energy efficiency retrofits or policies.
Target 7.a: Clean Energy Infrastructure and Investment	Enhance local collaboration and promote municipal investment in clean energy research and infrastructure.	Amount of local capital investment allocated to sustainable energy infrastructure.
		Number of local green jobs created in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors.
		Number of partnerships established with private enterprises or academic institutions to promote clean energy research

Initiatives

Strengthening energy supply, maintaining infrastructure, and working toward a long-term "just energy transition" away from exclusive coal dependence.

4.2.2 Progress

Municipal campaigns to prevent energy theft are being implemented in conjunction with the municipality's efforts to guarantee consistent energy delivery in order to attract investment.

ELECTRICITY PROVISION

As stipulated in the license conditions, the Municipality is a licensed distributor of electrical energy for specific distribution regions set forth by NERSA. From command substations to distribution substations within the demarcated distribution areas, electrical components and equipment facilitate electricity distribution. There are numerous factors contributing to the dilapidation and decay of the electrical infrastructure networks, including age, unauthorized connections, and unregulated development. It is evident that the demand exceeds the supply, as the nominal maximum demand (NMD) for the municipal intake points from ESKOM is 250MVA, while the Municipality utilizes 300MVA. This is the outcome of exceptional municipal growth, thievery and vandalism of infrastructure, outdated technology, ageing infrastructure, and illicit connections. This circumstance has a pervasive impact on cost implications, energy management, network management, and consumption management.

<u>The primary objectives of the electrical department are indicated below:</u>

Increasing the nominal maximum demand at Eskom intake points and establishing new intake points to accommodate expansions and new establishments will upgrade the bulk infrastructure. Refurbishment and upgrading of network equipment within the electrical reticulation infrastructure, including terminals, transformers, substation switchgear, and ring feed cables The expansion of revenue-generating initiatives, including the installation of protective kiosks, the deployment of smart meters to customers, and the implementation of smart meters.

The public lighting network will be refurbished and upgraded, and energy-saving initiatives, such as solar illumination, will be implemented. The reduction of energy losses can be achieved by implementing and instituting programs to address the scourge, such as the removal of illicit connections, the implementation of zero sales initiatives, and the installation of meters.

The municipality is confronted with a significant challenge in the form of electricity distribution

losses. In order to identify the primary locations of these losses, the municipality implemented an electricity meter audit function to identify no meters, low or no electricity sales, and by-passed/bridged meters within the system. The Municipality has begun the installation of the newly developed Split Pre-Paid meters to prevent by-passing or bridging of electricity meters, as well as to eliminate illicit connections and provide a management report. These meters are not susceptible to manipulation.

The municipality is confronted with a significant challenge as a result of a trend of theft of electricity, tampering with electricity meters, and infrastructure vandalism, which has led to electrical distribution losses. The municipality has recorded a twenty-eight (28) percent increase in electricity distribution losses, which is equivalent to R287 million, according to the Auditor General's report. This has a detrimental impact on municipal revenue collection, service delivery, death, and property damage.

An essential infrastructure or component of the essential infrastructure that provides fundamental municipal services is subject to tampering, which involves altering, cutting, disturbing, interfering with, interrupting, manipulating, removing, or uprooting by any means, method, or devise. Consequently, the municipality suggests that residents and consumers refrain from engaging in the illicit activity, as it is considered to be a violation of essential infrastructure.

Capital has been allocated to the municipality for the implementation of protective structures that guarantee the cessation of unlawful activities. Additionally, the Credit Control and Debt Collection Policy mandates the implementation of operations to eliminate illicit connections and impose penalties on perpetrators. In the event that the necessary resources, such as funding, are available, these interventions will simultaneously alleviate the excess on the existing electrical network and increase the Municipality's revenue. Another matter of concern is the misguided endeavors of certain communities to dismantle these structures, thereby reversing and rendering pointless the municipality's efforts to establish a safe and dependable electrical supply.

The Greater Witbank, Ogies, Phola, Ga-Nala, Thubelihle, and Rietspruit make up the Emalahleni Local Municipality. The infrastructure of services is approximately fifty years old and has reached the end of its intended lifespan in all cases. Materials and apparatus implemented in the infrastructure have become obsolete and redundant as technology has evolved over the past fifty years. The infrastructure is comprised of a variety of technologies. The theft and vandalism

of electrical infrastructure in pursuit of copper-bearing components have increased significantly over the past year, resulting in supply interruptions, the exposure of the public and municipal staff to peril, and the compromise of the integrity of electricity supply networks. On these grounds, we respectfully implore the community to assume responsibility for the maintenance and stewardship of municipal infrastructure, and we request that law enforcement agencies strengthen security.

In total, the municipal intake points from ESKOM have a nominal maximum demand (NDM) of 250 MVA, with the municipality utilizing 300 MVA. In order to rectify this circumstance, the municipality has submitted a request to upgrade all intake points that are operating at a Nominal Maximum Demand that exceeds the contracted level.

Eskom's implementation was impeded by the municipality's substantial debt, which rendered financing from the municipality a problematic issue. In this regard, Eskom has declined municipal applications for the increased nominal Maximum Demand at the Leewpoort substation to supply the Siyanqoba (Strategic Development Area) areas.

The NMD will continue to be overloaded and exceeded, resulting in an exorbitant increase in Eskom's debt and a thwarting of both residential and economic development. In order to satisfy the energy mix requirement, the municipality is investigating various energy sources, including solar and waste-to-energy.

Intake points submitted to ESKOM for the upgrading of the NMD's and progress are detailed in the following table:

Number	Name (Intake point)	Capacity Requirement	Progress
1.	Doornpoort Substation:	from 60 to 80 MVA	**(Eskom exploring alternative feeder point Project on hold)**
2.	Phola Substation:	from 16 to 20 MVA	**NMD approved to 20 MVA.**
3.	Clewer Substation:	from 2, 25 to 5 MVA	**(the project is currently at implementation stage 95%)**

4.	Leeuwpoort Substation – New:	40 MVA	**Project at planning stage. Application declined.**
5.	KwaGuqa 132kV Substation:	from 30 MVA to 60 MVA	**(Project is currently at implementation stage95%)**
6.	Ga Nala Substation	from 20 MVA to 30 MVA	**(Budget Quotation submitted to municipality and is at budgeting stage)**
7.	**Duvha Park Extension 2**	**20 MVA**	**(Proposal submitted to Eskom for preparation of a Budget Quotation of R5.16m received)**

Currently, the Municipality is revising the Nominal Maximum Demand at the following intake points with the help of funding from the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy to facilitate the growth and development of the identified areas.

- New Intake Point at Leeuwpoort Substation (Declined by Eskom)
- Clewer substation: declined

The financial position of the municipality necessitates grant support for the implementation of capital projects. The Department allocated financing for the implementation of electrification projects through the Integrated National Electrification Program. The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy allocated R30,000,000.00 to the Emalahleni Local Municipality in the 2020/21 financial year for the implementation of both electrification and bulk supply projects.

The local communities have been provided with eighty-one (81) job opportunities as a result of the implementation of these initiatives. Empumelelweni Extensions - 389 connections Phase 3 of the Siyanqoba Bulk Project:

- the planning and design phase Siyanqoba Electrification – 411 connections
- Thubelihle Extension 5 – 500 connections.
- Hlalanikahle Extension 2 comprises 150 connections.
- Phola (Makause) - 250 connections
- The installation and commissioning of three new passenger elevators

The municipal electricity grid has been connected to a total of one thousand seven hundred (1700) new households, which is the most significant accomplishment in addressing the electrification

backlog. This necessitates that communities and consumers respect their municipal accounts in order to ensure that electricity services are adequately maintained and extended.

The funding agreement conditions regarding financial performance and the time factor have not been met, resulting in the municipality receiving notices of intention to invoke Division of Revenue Act, Section 18 and 19 to withhold or stop funds. The implementation of these projects has been delayed to an extent. Supply chain processes, concerned groupings (Construction mafias), business forums, project stoppages by communities, disputes with local labor and subcontracting, substandard performance, and COVID-19 are the primary causes of implementation delays.

Description	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2019/20**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**
	Actual No.:	**Actual No.:**	**Actual No.:**	**Actual No.:**	**Actual No.**
Energy: (Above minimum level) Electricity (at least min. service level) Electricity – prepaid (min. service level) Minimum Service Level and Above sub-total Minimum Service Level and Above Percentage	1905 1700 100%	2118 345 100%	1740 340 100%	463 0 100%	1700 0 100%

Pic: Electrification of 1176 stands in Siyanqoba

Pic: Electrification of 1000 stands in Empumelelweni

4.2.3 Challenges

- Old and dilapidated infrastructure
- Increased demand as results of expansions and illegal connections which causes the electricity infrastructure (such as transformers) to be overloaded and explode.
- Challenges of supply and demand particularly during winter season aggravated by load shedding and load reduction
- High electricity losses
- Theft and vandalism of municipal infrastructure in particular cable theft
- Public lighting maintenance and installation of new high-mast lights remain our apex priority however, the existing ones are being vandalized

4.3 SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Local Context: The objective of SDG 8 is to ensure that all individuals have access to respectable labor, full and productive employment, and sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. The ELM has tailored global targets to the city level for a Voluntary Local Review (VLR), with a particular emphasis on secure working conditions, youth employment, and local business growth.

4.3.1 Localized Targets, Goals and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	GOAL	INDICATOR
Target 8.3: Support for Enterprises and Job Creation	Focuses on development-oriented policies fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and the growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.	**8.3.1:** Proportion of informal employment in total employment.
Target 8.6: Youth Employment and Training	Target: Aims to significantly reduce the rate of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET).	**8.6.1**: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24) that are NEET
Target 8.9 - Implementing policies for tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture.		

Initiatives: Revitalizing local industrial areas (e.g., Ferrobank, Klarinet), supporting SMMEs, and promoting township economies.

4.3.2 Progress

The revised Local Economic Development (LED) strategy will be implemented to capitalize on emerging economic sectors, including the beneficiation of fly ash and the establishment of a convention center.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development and Tourism Unit is responsible for the coordination of all essential Local Economic Development (LED) stakeholders and role actors in order to unlock economic opportunities and promote private sector-driven investment. The ultimate objective is to generate reasonable employment opportunities for local residents. Local economic development (LED) is designed to enhance the quality of life for all by enhancing the economic capacity of a local area. It is a collaborative effort among public, corporate, and nongovernmental sector stakeholders to establish more favorable conditions for employment generation and economic growth.

The Local Economic Development forum cultivates the stakeholders' engagement platform by facilitating the exchange of ideas regarding socio-economic development. Upon the presentation of a perspective, the local Economic Development strategic framework was developed through stakeholder consultation seminars.

Local economic development can be implemented at various geographic scales. LED strategies are pursued by local governments for the advantage of their entire jurisdiction. However, communities and regions within a local government's jurisdiction may also pursue LED strategies to enhance their economic competitiveness. These strategies are most effective when implemented in conjunction with local government strategies.

LED is dedicated to the continuous improvement of the investment climate and business facilitating environment in communities to increase their competitiveness, retain employment, and increase incomes. The Council has authorized the LED Strategy of the eMalahleni Local Municipality for the 2024-2034 period. The Council has developed and approved the Tourism

Strategy for the 2020-2025 period. The SMME and Cooperatives strategy 2020-2025 has been authorized by Council and is currently in effect.

Objectives of the eMalahleni Economic Development and Tourism Unit
Evaluate the local economy in the context of sectoral development and obstacles
Identification of LED opportunities and development initiatives that must be implemented by key stakeholders and role actors.

- Identification of LED programs and initiatives that will enhance the quality of life in local communities.
- Execution of the LED strategy
- Fostering the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives
- Development and expansion of the tourism industry
  Boost the in critical strategic sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, and coal extraction.

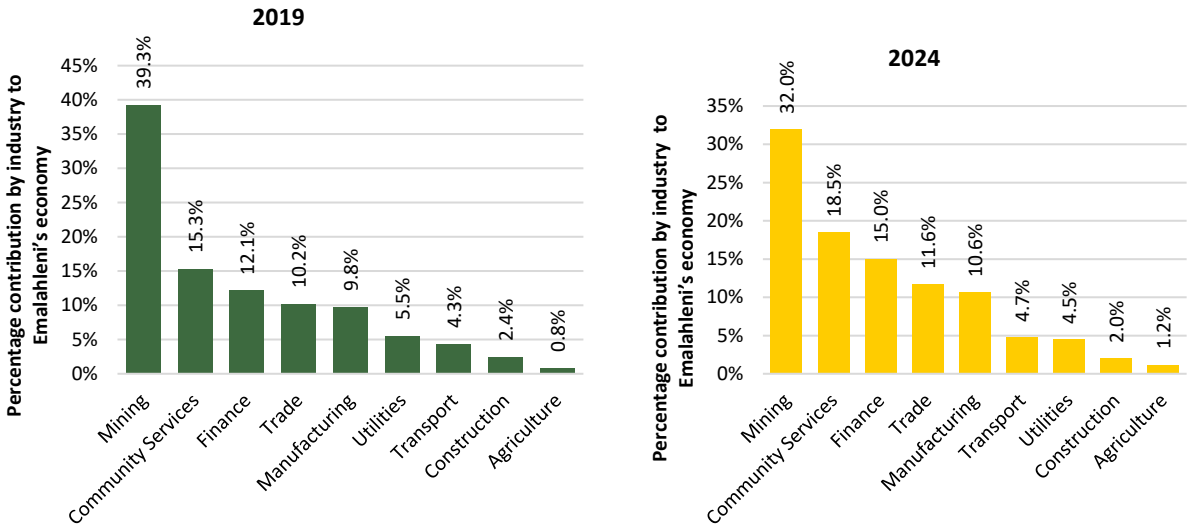
As with all other South African municipalities, eMalahleni is confronted with the challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, with youth unemployment at 57.1% in 2024, in addition to the aforementioned objectives. In addition to the aforementioned obstacles, the municipality is also confronted with the following:

- Failure to completely capitalize on tourism,
- Inadequate support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) results in ineffective development and sustainability.
- The underutilization of available agricultural land is a result of insufficient support for emerging producers.
- Poor business relationships and a lack of shared vision among businesses and other institutions.
- Inadequate marketing efforts to attract substantial investments, Institutional structures and arrangements that are inadequate for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of LED programs and projects (e.g., LED unit structure and LED Forum).

Green Flags for the Local Municipality of eMalahleni Potential for the development of critical industries:

- the establishment of a Mining and Metals Industrial Technology Park and the Mining Museum.
- Good location in relation to the N4 and Maputo Corridor, Close proximity to Gauteng markets, Mining as the anchor industry, and the significance of power generation.
- Warning Signs for the Emalahleni Local Municipality
- Pressure on fundamental services and infrastructure due to an exceptionally high population growth rate. A high rate of destitution and unemployment,
- A general decline in the quality of household services,
- Inadequate youth development strategies to address the high youth unemployment rate, and Further economic contraction is anticipated, in addition to the historically low economic growth rate.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY



Source: S&P Global – ReX, April 2025

Mining was the primary contributor to the municipality's economy from 2019 to 2024, with community services and finance following in that order. Emalahleni municipality contributed 17.0% to the Mpumalanga economy in 2024, which is the second largest economy in the province, according to S&P Global – ReX April 2025. Additionally, the municipality contributed 46.3% to the District economy in 2024. One of the quickest expansions in the district is the estimated average annual growth of 2.3% from 2024 to 29. The district's average annual economic growth from 1996 to 2024 was 1.7%, which was the fourth greatest growth rate. An average annual economic

increase of 0.5% was recorded between 2019 and 2024, which was the second-slowest development rate in the district.

Responses to the challenges outlined above should centre around:

- Economy, Investment and Unemployment Cluster:
- Economic development and Tourism
- Agriculture, rural development, Land and environmental affairs
- Public Works, roads, and transport

Comment on local labour market/local Job opportunities:

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY:

Sector	**2019**	**2022**
Mining	22.2%	19.7%
Trade	17.4%	17.4%
Community Services	17.7%	16.4%
Finance	11.6%	11.5%
Construction	8.1%	8.7%
Manufacturing	8.1%	8.6%
Private households	7.9%	6.9%
Transport	4.3%	4.3%
Utilities	3.8%	3.8%
Agriculture	2.5%	2.8%

According to S&P Global-ReX, the strict unemployment rate in Emalahleni was 27.7% in April 2025, a 3% increase from 26.3% in 2019. The average annual employment decline between 2019 and 2024 is -0.2%, which is worse than 1.3% per year. expansion between 2014 and 2019. In 2024, the unemployment rate for women was 34.0%, a 1% increase from 32.1% in 2019, and for young people aged 15 to 34, it was 57.1%, a 9% increase from 55.9% in 2019. The fourth greatest level of youth unemployment in the Nkangala District Municipality was observed in Emalahleni.

The high proportion of unemployed adolescents and females is a cause for concern, as it appears to be a disparity between the demand for education and skills and the supply available in the labor

market. Additionally, there is a lack of investment in job creation. The province's employability should be enhanced through the provision of quality, pertinent education and training that aligns with its economic requirements. Additionally, the province should prioritize the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new investment to address the aforementioned concern.

Jobs created between 2022 to20250 by LED Initiatives (Excluding EPWP projects)				
Total jobs created / Top 3 initiatives Jobs created during the implementation of SLP projects.	Jobs created	Job lost / displaced by other initiatives	Net total jobs created in year	Method of validating jobs created/ lost
Year – 2022/2023	407		407	Temporary jobs created through SLP and Capital projects.
Year -2023/2024	663		663	Temporary jobs created through SLP and Capital projects
Year -2024/2025	717		717	

4.3.3 Challenges

- Lack of land availability for agricultural purposes which will benefit Cooperatives
- Lack of funds to train SMMEs and Cooperatives by Municipality
- Economic growth rate too Low comparison with the relative high population growth.
- Lack of diversification of economic sector
- Lack of investor confidence
- Lack of funding
- Lack of knowledge and skills which prevent people from venturing into business to explore various economic opportunities across sectors.
- Reluctance by the youth to venture into agriculture and lack of proper youth development programmes

- The influx of people from other parts of the district, province and countries; compound the unemployment challenge within the locality.
- Training,incubation, coaching and mentoring of SMMEs
- Equipment and machinery for establishing and running businesses across different sectors
- Development of bankable business plans that are capable of getting finance.
- Tourism not fully exploited.
- Inadequate support of SMMEs leading to ineffective growth and sustainability
- Insufficient support or emerging farmers leading to underutilization of available agricultural land
- Poor business relationship and lack of common vision amongst business and other institutions

4.4 SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Local Context: The Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) is designed to ensure that human settlements and cities are sustainable, resilient, secure, and inclusive. Localized metrics are employed by cities to monitor progress during a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) in accordance with the official UN targets and indicators. In addition, the management of accelerated urbanization, the reduction of spatial fragmentation, the mitigation of land invasions and informal settlement growth, and the management of waste and transportation. There was only a slight improvement in refuse removal services in 2022, as reported by Statistics South Africa. Continuing service delivery challenges are indicated by the modest decrease in the percentage of residences without weekly or less frequent refuse removal from 31.4% in 2011 to 29.9% in 2024.

During the 2022 census, there was a significant improvement in housing conditions. In 2024, the percentage of households residing in informal residences decreased from 19.3% in 2011 to 11.2%. The municipality maintained the fourth greatest percentage of informal dwellings in the province, despite the significant progress that had been made.

4.4.1 Localized Targets and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	INDICATOR
Target 11.1: Safe and Affordable Housing	**Indicator 11.1.1:** Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing

Target 11.3: Inclusive and Sustainable Urbanization	**Indicator 11.3.2:** Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management
Target 11.5: Disaster Resilience	**Indicator 11.5.1:** Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per \ (100,000\) population
	Indicator 11.5.2: Direct economic loss in relation to global GDP, damage to critical infrastructure, and number of disruptions to basic services attributed to disasters.
Target 11.6: Reduce the Environmental Impact of Cities	**Indicator 11.6.1:** Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal solid waste generated.
	Indicator 11.6.2: Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g., \(PM_{2.5}\) and \(PM_{10}\)) in cities.
Target 11.7: Provide Access to Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces	**Indicator 11.7.1**: Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age, and persons with disabilities.
	Indicator 11.7.2: Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by age, sex, disability status, and place of occurrence.

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4.4.2 Progress:

The ongoing enforcement of the Emalahleni Land Use Scheme is intended to enhance urban management and harmonize development patterns. This includes taking decisive actions to ensure that the CBD remains clean and lawful.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

In comparison to the province and district as a whole, Emalahleni encounters distinct opportunities and challenges with respect to housing. The municipality's industrial center status draws a diverse workforce, resulting in a wide range of accommodation requirements. The demand for affordable housing remains a pressing issue, despite the fact that Emalahleni offers a variety of housing types, such as traditional dwellings and contemporary developments. This is especially apparent

when contrasted with the broader province and district, where housing availability and affordability may fluctuate.

The historical context of Emalahleni further complicates the housing situation. Workers from a variety of provinces were once attracted to the mines in Emalahleni. The closure of the mines led to the retention of a significant number of laborers, which in turn led to the establishment of 73 informal settlements. The government, private sector stakeholders, and communities must collaborate to ensure that all residents have equitable access to secure and affordable housing options in order to address the housing challenges in Emalahleni.

The Province granted the municipality Level 1 Accreditation functions in the field of housing, which enable it to perform functions such as Beneficiary Administration and Project Planning. The Municipality's objective is to enhance the quality of domestic life and establish sustainable human settlements in close proximity to employment opportunities by expediting the delivery of housing and access to essential services. The municipality is obligated to provide accommodation to communities within its jurisdiction in accordance with the National Human Settlements Principles for Human Settlements Development.

The principles of human settlements are as follows:

- Integration from entirely subsidized housing ("RDP") to affordable to middle/upper cost.
- The transition from high-cost to middle-income to affordable housing.
- In-situ upgrading of informal settlements and integration from lower middle to fully subsidized housing.

Sectional Objectives:

- To establish sustainable human settlements that offer a variety of housing options.
- To encourage the development of in-fill.
- To guarantee that the present accommodation conditions for the vulnerable are enhanced.

Summary of the Housing Backlog:

In 2021, Emalahleni experienced a housing backlog of 60,728 households, as well as accelerated population and household growth and significant service backlogs in water, sanitation, electricity, and roads (aged, overburdened assets; limited funding; in-migration;

informal expansion). Mpumalanga Province has the highest recorded housing backlog, with an estimated current demand of approximately 45,920 units. The following sources of demand are included in the backlog.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING BACKLOG

Informal Settlements	**Backlog**	**%**
Housing Needs Register (Waiting List) not Informal Settlements	22,823	49.7%
Multiple Families	7, 000	15%
Backyard Dwellers	13,850	30,1%
Other (Farm Dwellers, etc)	1,973	4%
Informal Settlements	23,097	50,3%
Total Demand	45,920	100%

There are 61 informal settlements in Emalahleni Municipality, with 23 097 units registered on these informal settlements.

HOUSING BACKLOG SUMMARY

DEMAND/BACKLOG TYPE	**NO. OF UNITS REQUIRED**	**%**
Informal Settlements (approximately 61)	23,097 Units	50,3%
Housing Needs Register (Waiting List) not Informal Settlements (Backyard and Farm Dwellers)	22,823 Units	49,7%
Total Demand	**45,920 Units**	**100%**

Source: Source: National Housing Needs Register 2025

The Emalahleni Local Municipality is currently engaged in the implementation of a variety of housing programs and initiatives, some of which are being led by the Department of Human Settlements and others in partnership with private developers. These initiatives are essential for resolving the current backlog. These programs encompass the following:
The Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (USIP) and the Integrated Residential

Housing Programme (IRDP).

Projects implemented in response to the housing backlog:

- IRDP: Siyanqoba Housing Projects
  UISP: Empumelelweni Extensions, Hlalanikahle Extensions, Kwa-Guqa Extensions, Thubelihle, and Phola
- Resettling households and allocating stands: Iraq and Empumelelweni Ext 7 and 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 (12 000 stands) in accordance with the approved layout plan
- Issuance of Title Deeds: Klarinet Extensions, Kwa-Guqa Extensions, Siyanqoba, Lynville, Hlalanikahle Extensions, Empumelelweni Extension 3, Thushanang, Phola, and Thubelihle; Enumeration of informal settlements.

Projects for the years 2025–2026:

- Infrastructure enhancements at Emalahleni Central (R75M)
- Social Housing Possibilities and Community Resource Units
- Klipfontein GAP Housing (R50M)
- Schoongezicht GAP Housing (R70M)
- Spring Valley ISUP (R25M plus R30M)
- Township establishment: Phola Ext 17, Portion 19 (Aangewys), Nooitgedacht Ptns 3/97/98/99/100
- Units Delivered / Planned: Approximately 570 units are anticipated.

Projects for the years 2026–2027:

- Hlalanikahle amenities evaluation
- Zoning compliance at Reyno Ridge
- Road improvements throughout the entire municipality (R200,000) CRUs: KwaGuqa and Nooitgedacht (R17.5M and R10M, respectively)
- Township establishment: Bankenveld, Duvhapark, Empumelelweni Ext 13 & 16, Phola Ext 6/18

2024/2025 Objectives:

- The Siyanqoba, Hlalanikahle, Sinqobile, and Tushanang Integrated Residential
- Development Project has only completed and occupied 38 houses.

- After the formalization of informal settlements in the Empumelelweni Extensions, 607 households were resettled and allocated stands.
- 768 title deeds were issued to the proprietors of RDP houses in Klarinet Extensions, Kwa-Guqa Extensions, Siyanqoba, Hlalanikahle Extensions, Thushanang, Phola, and Thubelihle.
- Developed a proposed plan to demolish Highveld Hostel 4 in order to create way for a mixed-use development.

In order to prevent and restrict future land incursions, it is necessary to monitor and patrol informal settlements and demolish illegal structures. This is known as the illegal occupation of land. One informal settlement (MNS) was counted. In February 2025, the Management and Control of Informal Settlements and Land Invasions By-law was reviewed and promulgated. In April 2025, the Council authorized the initial draft of the Housing Sector Plan that was under review.

HAND OVER OF RDP HOUSES TO BENEFICIARIES IN SIYANQOBA

RE-BLOCKING/RE-SETTLING: EMPUMELELWENI EXTENSIONS

HANDOVER OF TITLE DEEDS AT SIYANQOBA AND SINQOBILE

Environmental and Waste Management

The Department's mandate is derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, specifically Part B, Schedule 4 and 5. According to the Constitution, municipalities are constitutionally entitled to perform the following environmental management functions as custodians of the natural environment:

- Regulation of air and noise pollution.
- Regulation of public nuisances.
  Street trading.
- The regulation and licensing of organizations that distribute sustenance to the general public.

- Crematoria, funeral parlors, and cemeteries.
- Municipal parks and recreational areas.
- Cleansing of the streets.
- Waste management services, including solid waste disposal, refuse landfills, and refuse removal.

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The waste Management Department is accountable for the collection of refuse from households and businesses, its final disposal at an appropriate waste disposal facility, and the maintenance of a clean city. The waste management section is divided into the following sub-units: landfill management, street and municipal sanitation, and waste collection.

It is accountable for the management of waste in accordance with the National Environmental Management; Waste Act, Act No 59 of 2008; and the prescriptions of Section 24 of the Constitution of South Africa, with a particular emphasis on the implementation of the waste management hierarchy and sustainability regulations. Among others, the waste management unit is guided by strategic documents, including:

- Study report on Integrated Waste Management, Section 78
- Waste Management By-Law and Policies; Integrated Waste Management Plan
- Waste Management Collection Standards
- Waste collection standard operating procedures
- Operating conditions for landfill licenses
- Additional legislation from the national government

The waste collection Section of the Department is responsible for the weekly collection of refuse from the curbside of all formal residential and commercial premises in the municipality. Refuse collection in informal areas is conducted through the use of 6m3 mass containers, which are strategically located and collected on a weekly basis. The refuse collection schedule is consistently updated to include newly developed areas as a result of the availability of additional resources.

Categories of waste collected are as follows:

Waste Category	**Description**
COMMERCIAL	Commercial and industrial waste (non-hazardous) that is collected by ELM,

INDUSTRIAL	including subcontractors
GARDEN	Discarded plant/tree trimmings, grass cuttings, tree branches, and trunks
INERT	Discarded non-hazardous material that originated from building or demolishing projects. Includes fragmented concrete, broken bricks, and blocks
MUNICIPAL	Domestic waste collected by ELM

The waste management unit operates a fleet of approximately 23 operational refuse collection vehicles, such as Rear End Loaders (REL) that are fully functional, and three Load Lugger Trucks. Regrettably, these RELs are occasionally unavailable simultaneously as a result of failures or other downtime-related issues, which results in disrupted service delivery. The unit possesses an asset base that includes 3 landfill sites, 4 cargo luggers, and over 50 x 6m3 skips, some of which are rented out and some of which are used as part of the bulk container removal schedule. The provision of additional RELs has resulted in the reduction of refuse collection backlogs and the expansion of the service to additional residences that were previously not served.

Only 68.1% of households in the municipality receive a regular waste management service, according to Statistics SA. Some formal areas, particularly newly developed townships, are not receiving kerbside refuse collection services, and some areas have been experiencing refuse collection backlogs. However, the Municipality is still using 6m3 refuse mass containers to provide the service. The following are some of the challenges that remain:

- Old and dilapidated, the majority of the fleet
- Budgetary constraints in the implementation of alternative refuse management methods.

Some of the areas which do not receive consistent waste collection include the following:

AREA	**STANDS (Residential service points)**
Marikana	8 010 stands
Masakhane	3 300 stands
Old Coronation & Lekazi	2 500 stands
Spring Valley	4 078 stands

Mbheki	200 stands
Tsietsi	180 stands
Thala informal settlement	630 stands
Sizanani	495 stands
Mpondozankomo	500 stands
Iraq	1 638 stands
MNS	1 573 stands
Total	**23104 stands**

The above-mentioned areas are currently serviced through the mass container collection schedule.

The Recycling and Landfill Management

The administration of three landfill sites, which are administered by a service provider, is the responsibility of this departmental section. All landfill locations are fully operational and licensed. Plans are in place to upgrade landfill sites in order to increase compliance from 40% to 80% within the next two years. The municipality, businesses, and community all dispose of all collected refuse at these landfill sites. The following is a list of the waste volumes that were deposited at the three municipal landfills during the financial year.

MONTHS	LEEUWPOORT LANDFILL SITE	GA- NALA LANDFILL LANDFILL SITE	PHOLA LANDFILL SITE
Jul 2024	6451.75	221.20	0
Aug 2024	5832.95	789.55	556.65
Sep 2024	5308.85	499.55	690.85
Oct 2024	6673	535	819.30
Nov 2024	5168.95	773.50	501.15
Dec 2024	5515.30	831.45	385
Jan 2025	5272.30	859.65	618.05
Feb 2025	8296.60	1147.05	540.95

Mar 2025	8296.60	1147.50	540.96	
Apr 2025	4545.80	852.60	980.15	
May 2025	5661.40	995.50	525.95	
June 2025	5312	1030.90	614.90	
TOTAL:	**72335.5**	**9683.45**	**6773.91**	**88792.86**

As a result of the shattered and damaged palisade fencing that encircles the facilities, all landfill sites within the municipality are presently facing substantial access control challenges. Uncontrolled entry into landfill sites has been the consequence of the compromised fencing, which has generated a variety of operational, environmental, security, and health and safety hazards. Some of these include the potential for theft and vandalism of infrastructure, increased scavenging activities, exposure to hazardous refuse, and the risk of incidents involving unauthorized persons.

The municipality has deployed spotters and access control personnel at all landfill sites in order to address these issues. These interventions are designed to enhance operational governance, protect municipal assets, prevent unauthorized disposal, and guarantee adherence to relevant waste management regulations and site permit conditions.

Recycling and the Circular Economy

Currently, the municipality is not effectively promoting recycling and the development of a circular economy. In the ELM, recycling is primarily controlled by private organizations, with minimal municipal involvement. Although the municipality has eighteen (18) recycling facilities, only nine (9) are formally registered on the municipal Waste Information System (WIS). Consequently, there are inaccuracies in waste data accuracy, monitoring, and reporting.

Mainly, recyclable materials are collected by private recycling companies from commercial and mining operations. Also, recyclable material is reclaimed on a daily basis at all municipal landfill sites in an informal manner. The recyclable materials are collected and extracted by waste reclaimers, who subsequently sell them to private recycling companies. For numerous reclaimers, this is their primary source of income, which functions as a contribution to the informal recycling economy.

The Clean City and Street Cleansing Program

Street cleaning is implemented in accordance with a street sanitation program that primarily covers the Central Business District and primary entrance routes. The city's cleansing also encompasses the elimination of illicit disposal sites. Through the Adopt-a-Spot program, the Department has embarked on initiatives with communities to address the issue of illicit dumping in a more sustainable manner. The clean city program, which is part of the municipality, is responsible for the eradication of illegal dumping areas and the support of communities in the adoption of illegal disposal sites.

Examples of different areas that were cleaned during the period under review:

The regular cleansing of all streets and the significant backlog in the clearing of unlawful dumping areas are both hindered by a lack of resources, which impedes the implementation of street cleansing and clean city initiatives. The EPWP program is significantly relied upon by the unit to address the cleaning of certain far-flung streets and pavements.

The Environmental Management and Compliance Unit is accountable for the preservation and administration of the environment within the eMalahleni Local Municipality. Our efforts guarantee that communities reside in an environment that is legally compliant, sanitary, and healthy.

Key responsibilities of the unit include:

- Enforcing environmental laws at the national, provincial, and municipal levels, including local by-laws.
- Preventing public nuisances in line with municipal by-laws. This includes addressing activities that negatively affect public health, the environment, or community wellbeing.
- Managing environmental complaints from the public—especially those related to air pollution, waste, and general environmental concerns.
- Conducting regular inspections to monitor compliance with environmental regulations, including inspections at businesses and other facilities.
- Monitoring and enforcing air pollution control, ensuring that individuals and companies follow rules to reduce harmful emissions.
- Ensuring compliance in solid waste management, including the storage, collection, transportation, and disposal of waste.
- Licensing businesses through the review and issuance of Business Trade Licenses, particularly for operations that impact the environment or public health.
- Environmental education and awareness, aimed at encouraging responsible behavior and promoting sustainable practices in the community.
- Collaborating with other government departments and stakeholders to strengthen environmental governance and share best practices.

Through these endeavors, the unit is instrumental in promoting sustainable development, enhancing the quality of life, and guaranteeing that environmental standards are maintained throughout the municipality

INDICATOR	QUANTITY
Notices issued for non-compliance	14
Fines issued for non-compliance	8
Number of inspections conducted	306
Land use development applications reviewed	89
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) applications reviewed	11
Vehicle emission testing conducted	99

Business Trade Licenses issued	71
Waste Permits issued	11
Adopt-a-Spot permits issued	25
Education and awareness campaigns conducted	4
Intergovernmental/Stakeholder meetings on environmental issues	5

Education and Awareness

The Environmental Management and Compliance Unit is dedicated to the promotion of environmental education and awareness on a variety of environmental themes throughout the eMalahleni Local Municipality. The issuance of permits that enable residents to adopt areas that have been impacted by illicit waste and neglected public spaces is a critical initiative. This encourages communities to assume a proactive role in the preservation of their environment, thereby reducing litter and cultivating a sense of civic pride and ownership.

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Primary education awareness in Siyanqoba

The Adopt-a-Spot program is the foundation of this endeavor, which motivates residents to convert neglected areas into public parks, gardens, or sports facilities. The visual appeal and

practicality of the area are both improved by these enhancements, which provide healthier and more pleasant environments for community members. Moreover, the program fosters long-term environmental conservation by directly engaging local residents in the upkeep and preservation of these shared spaces.

In the previous fiscal year, the entity has enhanced its influence by implementing a number of critical endeavors. It authorized the submission of new Adopt-a-Spot applications, conducted monthly assessments of all municipal landfill sites, and conducted air quality inspections in accordance with environmental legislation. Furthermore, the unit enhanced route inspections and worked in conjunction with the local magistrate to establish a sanction schedule for violations of business trade and public nuisance by-laws. This endeavor ensured improved compliance and safer, cleaner communities for all.

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Image of Adopt a spot beneficiary in Del Judor

The unit is responsible for greening, landscaping and cemetery management functions. In terms of statistical information, the unit managed to achieve the following targets:

Number of trees planted	Number of areas landscaped	Number of parks upgraded	Number of trees distributed to members of the	Number of graves allocated	Number of cemeteries cleaned	Ha of overgrown grass cut (m2)	Number of trees cut

			public				
1000	1	1	601	2006	14	7 596 315	109

INDIGENOUS AND FRUIT TREES PLANTED

LANDSCAPED AND BEAUTIFIED OF MAIN ENTRANCES

TRANSPORT AND LICENSING

The Traffic Section is mainly focusing to promote road safety and education. The section managed to conduct 24 major roadblocks in conjunction with the SAPS and Mpumalanga provincial Traffic Control.

The Objective:

- Is to provide visible patrol within eMalahleni Local Municipality.
- To render 24 hours – 7-day service delivery to the community.
- To have proper management system of parking in the CBD.

Functions and Achievements

- Managed to appoint a service provider to assist with speed cameras that will reduce road accidents caused by over speeding;
- Managed to train 3 traffic wardens and they have qualified as traffic officers

- Appointed a service provider that will provide us with a system that will help us manage the parking at the eMalahleni CBD

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The objectives of the Planning Section in the municipality are as follows:

- To identify and stimulate development opportunities through spatial framework planning;
- To monitor and regulate land uses;
- To ensure integrated human settlement in line with the spatial development framework and integrated development plan.
- To facilitate the disposal and management of Council owned land

The Spatial Planning Department is responsible for the management of land use, processing all development applications, guide and advice developers who are interested to invest within the municipality. The Department also administers the alienation and disposal of temporary and permanent municipal land through the disposal and acquisition of immovable municipal property policy. Furthermore, the department is responsible for the management and control of outdoor advertising, as well as building control activities within the eMalahleni jurisdiction.

The Planning Department engages with various stakeholders who are interested in housing development, commercial development, industrial development and public institutions. It is a function of the department to identify suitable land for the various uses and to ensure also that the principle of integrated human settlements is achieved. The department through the assistance of DBSA is in the process of reviewing the Spatial Development Framework with which the municipality is using to identify and stimulate development and management of land use within its area of jurisdiction. The review of the Land Use Management Scheme was completed and gazetted in March 2020. The Department has started with the implementation of SPLUMA, the by-law is developed and gazetted and the process of establishing a new Municipal Planning Tribunal is currently

underway. Pegging and Survey of all the previously approved townships has been completed.

The department consists of the following sub-units:

- Spatial Planning
- Land Use Administration
- Building Control
- Property Management

ACHIEVEMENTS

COUNCIL PROJECTS/ FORMALIZATION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS 2024/25		
DESCRIPTION	**STATUS**	**APPROVAL NUMBER**
APPLICATION FOR REZONING (AMENDMENT SCHEME 2791), CONSOLIDATION AND SUBDIVISION: PORTIONS 116, 117 AND 118 OF ERF 11259, KWA-GUQA EXTENSION 1	APPROVED	SLDO.138/24 DATED 17 SEPTEMBER 2025
APPLICATION FOR REZONING (AMENDMENT SCHEME 2791), SUBDIVISION AND CLOSURE: REMAINDER OF ERF 817, KWA-GUQA EXTENSION 2	APPROVED	SLDO.144/24 DATED 11 OCTOBER 2024
APPLICATION FOR REZONING (AMENDMENT SCHEME 2610) ON ERVEN 10025 AND 10026 KWA GUQA EXTENSION 16	APPROVED MAP 3 FOR PROCLAMATIION	APPROVED UNDER SLDO.065/23 DATED 28 JUNE 2023
APPLICATION FOR REZONING (AMENDMENT SCHEME 2485) ERVEN 4659,4561 AND 4558 EMPUMELELWENI EXTENSION 7	APPROVED MAP 3 FOR PROCLAMATION	APPROVED UNDER SLDO.028/22 DATED 25 MARCH 2022
APPLICATION FOR SUBDIVISION OF ERF 1478 HLALANIKAHLE EXTENSION 2	APPROVED MAP 3 FOR PROCLAMATION	APPROVED UNDER SLDO.065/22 DATED 30 JUNE 2022
APPLICATION FOR TOWNSHIP ESTABLISHMENT FOR THUBELIHLE EXTENSION 8, 9, 10,12	PROCLAIMED	APPROVED UNDER SLDO.136/21 DATED 21 DECEMBER 2021

CURRENT UISP PROJECTS

The municipality through the assistance of Mpumalanga Human Settlement Department has appointed service providers to carry out the formalization of informal settlements in

eMalahleni under the National Informal Settlement Upgrade Program (NUSP) under the following areas:

No.	PROJECT NAME	PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS
1	Empumeleweni X13	The Remainder of Portion 5, Remainder of Portion 16, and Portions 68 - 74 of the farm Nooitgedacht 300-JS
2	Phola Extension 19	A Portion of the Remainder of Portion 37 Wilderbeestfontein 327-JS
	Empumelelweni Extension 7	Erven 4649, 4561 and 4558 Empumelelweni Extension 7
5	Enkanini	Erf 2597 and Portion 1 of Erf 2596 Phola Extension 1
6	Empumelelweni Extension 16	Portion 4 of the Farm Nooitgedaght 300 JS
7	Spring Valley Proper	Portion 4 and 5 Spring Valley 321- JS
8	Emsagweni	Portion 393 of Erf 11254, Kwa-Guqa Extension 1
9	Empumeleweni X14	Portions 89, 90 and 91 of the farm Nooitgedacht 300-JS
12	Mthimunye	Erf 4134 Hlalanikahle Extension 4
13	Hlalanikahle Extension 2	Remainder of Erf 1521 Hlalanikahle
15	Emthofi	Erf 8117 Kwa-Guqa Extension 17
16	Erf 12 Kwa-Guqa X2	Erf 12 Kwa-Guqa Extension 2
18	Erf 6655 Kwa-Guqa	Erf 6655 Kwa-Guqa Extension 10
19	Power Mall	Remainder of Erf 1521 Hlalanikahle Extension 2

OTHER (CONTROL OF PUBLIC NUISANCES, ANIMAL LICENCING AND CONTROL, AND DISASTERS)

The Emalahleni Local Municipality offers Fire and Rescue services and disaster management services to prevent and safeguard property and human life. On November 30, 2023, the Disaster Management Plan was reviewed and adopted.

- Detection of hazards or disaster threats
- Developing a Plan for Contingency and Preparedness
- The prioritization of hazards in the development of a disaster risk reduction plan
- Creation of a Coordinating Forum for Disaster Management

The following hazards have been identified by the eMalahleni Local Municipality:

- Poor infrastructure (such as defective traffic signals) and mist are the primary causes of road accidents.
- Illegal motor racing, lawlessness, and potholes
- Pollution of the atmosphere
- Sinkholes
- Violent gusts
- Flash floods
- Runaway flames and unplanned fires
- Illegal Disposal
- Chemical releases Gas escapes
- Fires in shacks
- Bomb hoaxes
- Unrest in the community
- Protests Regarding Service Delivery
- Collapse of a building or structure
- Fireworks Uncontrollable veld flames

PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE:

- Acquiring an emergency communication system that is efficient
- Establish a toll-free number and publicize it to the community.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT							
Service Objections/ Service Indicators	**Outline Service Targets**	**2021/22**		**2022/2023**		**2024/25**	
		Target	**Actual**	**Target**	**Actual**	**Target**	**Actual**
		Previous					
Disaster Risk and Vulnerability assessment	16 X Disaster Risk and Vulnerability assessment	16	15	4	4	16	16

Awareness campaigns	12 x Awareness campaigns	17	16	20	27	20	28
Advisory Forum	4 x Advisory Forum	4	0	4	4	4	4

4.4.3 Challenges

Transport and licensing	**Spatial planning**	**Disaster Management, Fire and Rescue & Climate change**	**Human Settlement**	**Environment and Waste Management**
The section has insufficient fleet, broken vehicles and other vehicles are old	Land invasion by squatters	Unreliable Emergency Communication System (Radio communication & Telephones due to, amongst other challenges, load shedding and poor internet network)	Limited Economic & Social Infrastructure in formal / Informal Settlements: Communities in informal settlements on the urban periphery (e.g., around Witbank, Ogies/Phola, and Ga-Nala) lack access to local income opportunities and essential services, causing socio-economic isolation	No ambient air quality monitoring stations
Lack of personnel to cover the whole jurisdiction of eMalahleni	Decline in potential key growth points due to illegal mining activities	Location of the Call Centre.	Persistent Housing Backlog (approximately 45 000) & Slow Delivery	Shortage of waste trucks due to aging fleet resulting in constant breakdowns and unavailability of mechanical parts

Sick leave bookings from personnel	Poor communication between Provincial and Local Government	Skills gap	Scarcity of Suitable Land for Development: There is significant pressure on available land, with competing uses like mining and urban growth limiting suitable plots for housing expansion.	High level of illegal dumping
Traffic congestion in our main roads	Construction of Illegal buildings	Lack of budget for awareness campaigns, research and relief material	Inadequate Basic Infrastructure in Development Areas: Many formalization zones and expansion areas lack critical services like potable water and adequate sanitation systems, delaying settlement upgrading.	Shortage of Burial space
	High rise of illegal land uses		Incomplete Township Establishment Processes: Administrative delays in finalizing township registrations, opening registers, issuing title deeds impede formal housing roll-out and investment.	Vandalism of tombstones and palisade fencing in Cemeteries
	Non-operational Geographic Information Systems (GIS)		Increasing incidents of land invasions particularly where upgrading of informal settlements projects are undertaken;	
	Lack of investors due to		Lack of serviced land for non-qualifying	

	unavailability of municipal bulk infrastructure		beneficiaries (Gap Market);	
	Budgetary Constraints		Slow contractor progress in the construction of RDP houses	
			Abandoned houses by Siyanqoba beneficiaries due to insufficient provision of services such as water, sanitation and electricity;	
			Dilapidated hostel buildings;	
			Selling of vacant stands and RDP houses	
			Slow implementation of the title deed restoration programme due to high occupants'municipal debts	

4.5 SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Local Context: Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) localize SDG 13 by translating global climate action into city and municipal-level interventions. For an effective VLR, a local government should adapt the official UN targets by focusing on localized disaster resilience, municipal greenhouse gas (GHG) tracking, and community-driven climate awareness. This localized breakdown outlines the standard SDG 13 targets alongside the adapted, actionable indicators tailored for VLR reporting.

Initiatives: Developing municipal climate change and adaptation strategies aligned to the national framework.

4.5.1 Localized Targets, Goals and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	INDICATOR
Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, focuses on disaster risk reduction and protecting vulnerable populations.	**13.1.1** Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected individuals attributed to local disasters (e.g., floods, droughts, heatwaves) per 100,000 population.
	13.1.2 Status and implementation of a municipal or district-level Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy aligned with the Sendai Framework.
	13.1.3 Proportion of local capital budget allocated to climate adaptation and resilience infrastructure (e.g., stormwater drainage, resilient housing, early warning systems).
Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into local policies, strategies, and planning Focuses on local decarbonization, policy integration, and lowering the carbon footprint.	**13.2.1** Extent to which local climate action plans (e.g., climate neutrality or emissions reduction strategies) are integrated into local development plans and spatial frameworks.
	13.2.2 Total annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the municipal boundary (measured in \(CO_{2}\) equivalent) and per capita emissions.
	13.2.3 Proportion of municipal operations (e.g., public transport fleets, municipal buildings) running on renewable energy or utilizing energy-efficient technologies.
Target 13.3: Build knowledge, awareness, and human and institutional capacity on climate change, focuses on education, stakeholder engagement, and early warning.	**13.3.1** Extent to which local environmental education and sustainability programs are integrated into the curricula of municipal schools and youth development centers
	13.3.2 Number of local community awareness campaigns, green-skills training workshops, and stakeholder engagement forums held annually
Target 13.a: Implement commitments made under global climate frameworks .	

4.5.2 Progress

Collaborations with the CSIR GreenBook to map out municipal risk profiles. Focus on drought-tolerant landscaping and reducing urban runoff.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Environmental Management and Compliance Unit is responsible for overseeing matters concerning regulatory adherence and environmental stewardship. This entity is governed by the competencies delineated in Part B of Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution and operates under the mandate provided by Section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), as amended.

The licensing and regulation of businesses governed by the Mpumalanga Business Act, 1996 are among the primary responsibilities of the Department: Environmental Management and Compliance. Pollution control is one of these responsibilities. It investigates complaints regarding environmental management violations, such as noise and air pollution, and encourages the establishment of illicit disposal sites to foster a clean and healthy environment through active community engagement.

The Department also collaborates with the District Municipal Health Services to manage the control of public nuisances, grants permission to businesses transporting refuse for profit, and conducts compliance inspections at large industrial facilities. Furthermore, it evaluates all applications for new developments from an environmental management perspective to guarantee compliance with regulatory and sustainability standards.

A variety of policies and bylaws were established to facilitate the department's objectives. These regulatory instruments were intended to address our primary delivery priorities, which include the resolution of complaints regarding illicit disposal, noise pollution from taverns and churches, and environmental degradation.

SERVICE STATISTICS FOR POLLUTION CONTROL:

FUNCTION	STATISTICS
Issuing of trade licences	15
Issuing of waste transportation permits	09
Review of applications for land use and new development	150

Review of application for Environmental Impact Assessment	17
Compliance inspections for industrial operations	12
Compliance inspections for businesses and smaller operations	63
Processing of applications for Adopt-a-Spot	43 applications received
Compliance notices issued	41

BIODIVERSITY; LANDSCAPE (INCLUDING OPEN SPACE)

During routine inspections, biodiversity protection is monitored. The review process for land use applications screens new developments that may have a detrimental impact on biodiversity. In the majority of cases, conditions are imposed prior to the commencement of such development, such as the minimization of the impact on indigenous species and the replacement of species that could have been removed during the development.

The Local Economic Development and Tourism unit manages and supervises a nature reserve within the municipality. Consequently, the report from the LED & T unit shall include information regarding the nature reserve's biodiversity preservation efforts.

SERVICE STATISTICS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE:

The Parks department is accountable for the administration and maintenance of the landscape, which encompasses the development of parks, the planting of trees and flowers, and the cutting of vegetation. The Parks department's report contains statistics regarding the number of trees planted and the areas that have been cleared.

The Department's implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy is a critical component of its response to climate change. This approach directs local initiatives to mitigate environmental hazards and enhance community resilience. The Department is committed to ensuring that local initiatives are in alignment with the overarching climate objectives by actively engaging in national and regional forums,

including the Presidential Climate Change Commission, the Provincial Climate Change Forum, and the Nkangala District Air Quality Management Forum.

Image of Provincial Air Quality Stakeholders Forum

In order to mitigate emissions, the Department has implemented a Vehicle Emission Testing Strategy that concentrates on diesel-powered vehicles, which are a significant contributor to greenhouse gases and air pollution. This initiative contributes to national emissions reduction targets and promotes enhanced air quality. The Department remains dedicated to supporting local initiatives that promote renewable energy, environmental justice, and green employment creation as the country transitions toward a just and sustainable energy future, **ensuring that no community is left behind**.

Vehicle emission testing programme

In order to ensure that the input of eMalahleni residents is taken into account when making decisions, the Municipality is involved in solely energy initiatives. The department in these forums is of the opinion that the just energy transition must address the following challenges in order to be perceived as fair:

It is imperative to create employment opportunities that are both sustainable and suitable. Improve the health and well-being of the community and establish a local economy that is inclusive.

4.6 SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Local Context: Promoting collaboration among local communities, international organizations, the private sector (such as mining and utilities), and the government. SDG 17 functions as the localized framework for the mobilization of local data, the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships, the securing of municipal finance, and the bridging of the digital divide in a Voluntary Local Review (VLR). The 19 UN global targets are adapted to the city or regional scale by VLRs.

Initiatives: Enhancing institutional capacity by enhancing community participation frameworks and fostering intergovernmental relations.

4.6.1 Localized Targets and Indicators for VLR Reporting

TARGET	INDICATOR
Target 17.1 (Municipal Resource Mobilization): Strengthen local revenue collection and capacity.	Own-source revenue generated; proportion of the municipal budget financed by local tax
Target 17.3 (Multi-stakeholder Financing): Mobilize additional financial resources for local projects from multiple external sources, including the private sector.	Amount of funding leveraged through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and international development grants.
Target 17.6 (Knowledge Sharing and Tech Access): Enhance local access to science, technology, and innovation.	Local Indicators: Proportion of municipal services accessible via digital/smart city platforms; number of knowledge-sharing partnerships with universities or other cities.
Target 17.8 (Information and Communications Technology): Fully operationalize technology and internet capacity for local communities.	Local Indicators: Percentage of households with high-speed internet access; number of public Wi-Fi hotspots deployed in marginalized communities.
Target 17.9 (Local Capacity Building): Enhance effective and targeted capacity-building to support local plans to implement all the SDGs.	Local Indicators: Number of municipal staff trained on SDG localization; funding allocated for community-based capacity-building initiatives.
Target 17.14 (Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development): Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development at the local level.	Local Indicators: Integration of the SDGs into the city's official long-term strategic master plan
Target 17.17 (Effective Partnerships): Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.	Local Indicators: Number of active participatory governance platforms, community councils, or civil society agreements collaborating on local SDG initiatives
Target 17.18 (Data Availability): Enhance the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable disaggregated data.	Proportion of local SDG indicators with disaggregated data (e.g., by gender, age, race, and geographic ward); status of a localized municipal open-data portal
Target 17.19 (Measurement of Progress): Build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development.	

4.6.2 Progress

In an effort to facilitate Local Economic Development (LED), climate resilience, and a Just Energy Transition (JET), the Emalahleni Local Municipality is currently engaged in the implementation of partnerships. It is the objective of these collaborative frameworks to diversify the local, coal-dependent economy, mitigate environmental risks such as Acid Mine Drainage (AMD), and establish sustainable, green-sector employment.

Governance & Key Partnerships • Presidential Climate Commission (PCC): Promotes social compacts and public dialogues to guarantee a Just Transition that protects livelihoods and ensures that no community member is left behind in the transition away from coal. • Private Sector Partnerships: To facilitate infrastructural development and construct package factories, mining companies (including Seriti) are collaborating with the municipality through Social and Labour Plans (SLPs). • Civil Society & Labor: Current discussions among trade unions, investors, and experts to establish a localized consensus on socio-economic planning.

Finally, the ELM participated in seminars sponsored by SALGA and the UN to draft and evaluate the municipal VLR, which helps to align local progress on a global scale.

5. POLICY COHERENCE

Aligning the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget of the eMalahleni Local Municipality with SDGs 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, and 17 is necessary to ensure policy coherence for the Voluntary Local Review (VLR). Equitable service delivery is the objective, which is achieved by resolving systemic trade-offs, such as the choice between pursuing climate action and utilizing coal energy. For instance, the adaptation of municipal policies to the National Just Transition framework in order to promote the Just Energy Transition. It

ensures coordinated service delivery, economic resilience, and climate adaptation by translating these global objectives into localized, actionable, and monitorable metrics.

The framework explicitly connects global objectives to the immediate socio-economic and environmental landscape of Emalahleni in order to render the VLR meaningful:

5.1 LINKING LOCAL FRAMEWORKS TO THE SDGS

5.1.1 SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

The Emalahleni Local Municipality is currently faced with the challenge of managing severe water scarcity and infrastructure failure. Water demand frequently exceeds supply, and 35% to 46% of purified water is lost due to leakage. Devastating public health and environmental consequences have resulted from inadequate coordination with the administration of the Olifants River catchment. The crisis is being addressed by the municipality and national departments in the following manner:

a) *Infrastructure Budgets and Catchment Management*

The Upper Olifants River catchment is the primary source of fresh water for the municipality, providing approximately 70% of its requirements. Nevertheless, the quality of water is significantly impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD) and agricultural effluent, which pose a significant threat to this supply.

- *The Court Mandate:* The Mpumalanga High Court imposed a historic R650 million fine on the municipality after years of severe environmental dereliction that led to the pollution of the Olifants River and Witbank Dam by millions of litres of untreated effluent.
- *Budget Reallocation:* The court mandated that R500 millions of this sanction be directly ring-fenced from municipal budgets to rehabilitate and enhance damaged wastewater infrastructure by 2031.
- *Treatment Upgrades:* In order to address the issue of deteriorating unfiltered water, the municipality has installed a pre-

oxidation facility and refurbished filters that are specifically designed to handle high manganese concentrations.

b) Resolving Non-Revenue Water and Leaks

Every quarter, Emalahleni undergoes billions of litres of water loss due to ruptured pipes, aging asbestos cement pipelines, illegal connections, and unmetered consumers.

- *Leak Reduction Initiatives:* The municipality is currently implementing meter replacement programs, installing pressure relief valves, and replacing antiquated network valves to prevent pipe breaches. These initiatives are funded through maintenance budgets.
- *Maintenance Interventions:* The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) have intervened, providing multi-million Rand financing for refurbishments at facilities such as the Ferrobank Wastewater Treatment Plant to increase capacity.

c) Impact on Public Health and Livelihoods

Public health and local livelihoods are directly impacted by the confluence of poor water quality, disintegrating infrastructure, and scarce resources.

- *Water Restrictions:* In order to maintain the network's equilibrium, the municipality periodically implements water restrictions and shutdowns due to the fact that demand substantially exceeds the available treatment capacity.
- *Community Distress:* Residents have experienced chronic shortages, at times relying on contaminated open wells, streams, or municipal water tankers.
- *Water Quality Monitoring:* In order to augment the municipality's daily monitoring, independent laboratories are conducting fortnightly tests to guarantee that the safety standards of SANS 241 are met by the treated water.

5.1.2 SDG 7 (Clean and Affordable Energy):

A localized Just Transition and climate risk strategy is being developed by the Emalahleni Local Municipality to manage its energy transition. Nevertheless, the high reliance on Eskom, grid constraints, and infrastructure sabotage continue to pose a significant challenge in ensuring a continuous power supply. Consequently, municipalities must implement aggressive revenue and tariff restructuring.

5.1.2.1 Just Transition Planning and Renewable Energy

- *Policy Adaptation:* The municipality is in the midst of developing a Just Transition Plan, a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions inventory, and a climate vulnerability assessment review.
- *Regulatory Framework:* The ELM has established municipal by-laws and Small-Scale Embedded Generation (SSEG) guidelines to facilitate the installation of rooftop solar and the distribution of excess electricity back into the local grid for residents and investors. In order to guarantee network safety, standardize invoicing, and guarantee a stable municipal grid, it is mandatory for all grid-tied and off-grid rooftop solar systems (under 1 MVA) to be officially registered and authorized. Additionally, the municipality is actively engaged in the promotion of renewable energy initiatives within its bounds.
- *Economic Diversification:* eMalahleni, which is located in the Mpumalanga coal region, is under significant pressure to transition away from coal. The municipality endorses the implementation of green economy initiatives, such as waste-to-energy projects and localized skills development programs, to accommodate displaced coal workers.

5.1.2.2 Guaranteeing Investor Confidence and Continuous Power Supply

- *Network Instability:* The municipality is highly susceptible to supply interruptions as a result of its complete dependence on Eskom's 132kV bulk network, which is frequently subject to pylon vandalism and cable theft. Areas such as Reyno Ridge, Ben Fleur, and Tasbet Park continue to experience frequent localized disruptions.
- *Reducing Losses:* In order to safeguard grid capacity and ensure a consistent supply for large commercial power consumers and investors, the municipality has implemented a stringent policy regarding illegal connections and non-paying businesses.
- *Revenue and Tariff Restructuring:* In order to finance infrastructure maintenance, eMalahleni has implemented revised tariffs, which include new minimum monthly service charges for prepaid commercial and domestic users. Furthermore, in order to guarantee precise accounting and mitigate network saturation, businesses are transitioning to Smart Metering Technology.

5.1.3 SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):

Emalahleni Local Municipality integrates its Spatial Development Framework (SDF) with LED anchor initiatives to promote job creation by aligning spatial planning and Local Economic Development (LED). This method invigorates the green economy, revitalizes industrial parks, and stimulates the economies of townships:

5.1.3.1 Economic Integration and Spatial Planning

- *Spatial Concentration*: The ELM has directed infrastructure investment and land-use management toward designated nodes and corridors, ensuring that businesses are situated in close proximity to residential areas and transportation routes.
- *Economic Revitalization of Townships:* The ELM designates specific land uses in townships and rural utility nodes for commercial enterprise, transforming historically disadvantaged areas into active economic centres rather than mere "dormitory towns."

- *Industrial and Technology Hubs:* The ELM is committed to the development of the Mining and Metals Technology Park, the revitalization of Highveld Steel into an industrial park, and the establishment of the proposed Industrial Park.

5.1.3.2 Initiatives for a Green Economy

- *Fly Ash Beneficiation:* Concentrates on the transformation of mining and industrial refuse into commercially viable products in order to establish a circular, environmentally friendly economy.
- *Climate Change Adaptation:* Collaborates with provincial and national entities to create climate change adaptation and response strategies that promote sustainable, eco-friendly industries.

5.1.3.3 SMME & Cooperative Support

- *Incubation & Development Policies:* Offers customized mentorship, training, and business connections to both formal and informal enterprises through the municipality's formal SMME Development and Incubation Policies.
- *Infrastructure Provision:* The implementation of broadband Wi-Fi in strategic public zones (such as taxi ranks and parks) and the rehabilitation of Township Industrial Parks are planned and facilitated to support informal and emergent businesses.
- *Supply Chain Opportunities:* Promotes meaningful economic engagement by enhancing the ability of local SMMEs to effectively compete for municipal procurement and local anchor initiatives.

5.1.4 SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):

The Emalahleni Local Municipality employs its Spatial Development Framework (SDF) to sustainably manage urbanization by directing spatial development into designated urban nodes and rigorously delineating the urban boundary to prevent unchecked urban sprawl. The municipality implements the following strategic initiatives to address urbanization, informal settlements, and fundamental service delivery:

- *Informal Settlement Formalization & Upgrading:* Emalahleni implements its Informal Settlement Upgrading Policy in collaboration with the Department of Human Settlements under the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP). Where these settlements are habitable, the SDF prioritizes their formalization, while simultaneously designating unliveable, geotechnical-risk zones for relocation.
- *Integrated Human Settlements & Corridors:* The municipality prioritizes densification and mixed-use development along designated mobility routes and corridors over isolated peripheral housing to guarantee proximity to economic opportunities.
- *Targeted Basic Service Delivery:* The SDF functions as a spatial blueprint that directs the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and capital expenditure. The SDF prioritizes infrastructure investments in water, sanitation, and electricity to improve informal areas and serve dense, historically disadvantaged townships.

5.1.5 SDG 13 (Climate Action):

The Emalahleni Local Municipality implements climate resilience and disaster risk reduction primarily through its Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and Integrated Development Plan (IDP). These policies require the development of catastrophe management plans and land-use zoning that are based on risk in order to reduce the impact of local hazards, including sinkholes, acid mine drainage, and extreme weather. The municipality's specific strategies for incorporating resilience into infrastructure and planning are as follows:

- *Spatial Planning and Land-Use Management (SPLUMA):* SPLUMA principles are implemented by the municipality, which mandates that all new land development and infrastructure applications be evaluated for environmental sustainability, spatial resilience, and climatic hazards prior to approval.

- *Disaster Risk Management Plans:* The municipality maintains and annually evaluates a localized Disaster Management Plan that delineates prevention, early-warning systems, and response protocols for natural and man-made hazards.
- *Green Economy and Air Quality:* Resilience is associated with more comprehensive climate adaptation strategies that prioritize the green economy and enhanced Air Quality Management (AQMP).
- *Informal Settlement Upgrading:* In response to the substantial influx of residents, the municipality and the Department of Human Settlements are implementing upgrading initiatives to relocate vulnerable households from high-risk environments, such as abandoned mining areas and floodplains.

5.1.6 SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):

Through these critical, targeted initiatives, the Emalahleni Local Municipality (ELM) promotes active community engagement, establishes intergovernmental relations (IGR), and secures international support:

5.1.6.1 Participation in the Community

- *Ward Committees and Speaker's Oversight:* The Office of the Speaker is responsible for community engagement. The Public Participation Unit and Ward Committees conduct public meetings, hearings, and formal petition processes to address local grievances and process feedback.
- *IDP & Budget Forums:* Prior to the annual budget being passed, the municipality conducts forums for budget representatives and integrated development planning (IDP) to gather the priorities of community and stakeholder groups.
- *Youth and Civil Councils:* In order to provide marginalized groups with a direct input, youth councils (such as the Emalahleni Youth Council) are incorporated into local decision-making.

5.1.6.2 Intergovernmental Relations (IGR)

- *COGHSTA Alignment:* ELM directly aligns its 5-year strategic plans and IDPs with the frameworks of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement, and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA). The municipality submits its IDPs and strategic planning outcomes, including the most recent 2026 Strategic Planning sessions, to COGHSTA and provincial treasuries for evaluation on a regular basis.
- *Consolidated Forums:* The municipality convenes frequent consolidated municipal forums, such as the Safety, Initiation, and IGR Forums, to coordinate planned infrastructure and service delivery projects among local, district, and provincial departments. Additionally, the ELM is involved in the District Development Model.

5.1.6.3 International Investment and Support

- Investment Attraction Policies: ELM's primary objective is to attract external national and international investment in order to develop its Mining and Metals Technology Park, fly ash beneficiation, and local industrial zones.
- Global Partnerships: In order to support local economic development (LED), the municipality capitalizes on global partnerships, international trade missions, and alignment with international policy frameworks.

6. MECHANISMS FOR STRATEGIC POLICY COHERENCE

The municipality has implemented the subsequent strategies to ensure the cohesive execution of these objectives:

- *Evidence-Based VLR Metrics:* In order to enhance local-level data collection for SDG monitoring, the municipality must work in conjunction with provincial and national departments.

- *Alignment of Integrated Budgeting and IDPs:* Cross-reference departmental performance plans to guarantee that infrastructure expenditure on water (SDG 6) directly supports sustainable housing (SDG 11) and climate adaptation (SDG 13).
- *Synergy Mapping:* Conduct an ongoing assessment of potential trade-offs. For instance, the expansion of economic growth (SDG 8) should not be prioritized over climate targets (SDG 13) or water resources (SDG 6).
- *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (SDG 17):* Incorporate civil society, traditional leaders, and SALGA into the VLR process. Local ownership and transparency in development priorities are guaranteed through consistent community engagement.

7. MECHANISMS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VLR

It is important to emphasize that the ELM SDG VLR must establish structured, actionable governance processes in order to improve policy coherence, rather than relying on isolated reports.

I. Comprehensive Approach: Dismantle municipal silos to enable urban planners, environmental agents, and economic development leaders to collaborate on policy development.

II. Trade-off Analysis: Employ the VLR to identify and resolve policy conflicts. For instance, guaranteeing that the purity of local water (SDG 6) is not adversely affected by the expansion of industrial zones (SDG 8).

III. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: To guarantee accountability and identify synergies, actively engage academia, civil society, and the private sector.

IV. Standardized Data Tracking: Accurately assess the progress of VLR by connecting existing municipal reporting tools to SDG indicators (e.g., monitoring the proportion of households with access to piped water versus illicit connections).

V. Risk and Trade-off Assessments: Mandatory to conduct a formal "Coherence Review" for any new municipal by-law or infrastructure project. For instance, any new housing development must simultaneously address localized environmental risk mitigation, energy, and water.

VI. Environmental By-law Enforcement: Enhance the enforcement of integrated waste management policies to mitigate illicit disposal, which obstructs drainage and exacerbates climate-related flooding.

VII. Localized Indicators: Adjust global SDG targets to the unique circumstances of ELM. This will be employed in the future to monitor the spill over impacts of local policies. It is imperative to enhance data collection, nurture multi-stakeholder partnerships, and integrate SDG indicators into its core strategic planning.

a. Harmonization of SDBIP and IDP

- Integrating Targets: Connect Emalahleni' s Key Performance Areas (KPAs) in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) to specific SDG indicators (e.g., matching infrastructure objectives to SDG 9 or water provision to SDG 6).
- Performance Management: Integrate SDG KPIs into the municipal Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) to ensure that directorates are held accountable for their progress.

b. *Monitoring and Evidence Driven by Data*

- *Local Data Integration:* Work in conjunction with Stats SA to guarantee that local data pertaining to demographic changes, service access, and unemployment are scientifically validated.
- *Reporting Tools:* Employ GIS mapping and data dashboards to provide continuous monitoring of

human settlements, service infrastructure backlogs, and informal settlement enhancements.

c. *Partnerships Among Multiple Stakeholders*

- *Community and Civil Society Engagement*: Enhance stakeholder forums for Ward Councillors and engage traditional leaders to guarantee that the "leave no one behind" principle is applied to the vulnerable rural and mining communities of Emalahleni.
- *Private Sector & Institutional Partnerships:* Foster durable infrastructure development and economic empowerment among youth through partnerships with academic institutions and local mining companies (SDG 8).

d. Institutional Governance and Oversight

- SDG advocates: Designate senior municipal officials or IDP Officers as specific "SDG champions" to supervise cross-departmental collaboration.
- Annual VLR Compilation: Generate an annual, publicly accessible VLR report that evaluates the implementation gaps, reviews the highlights of municipal strategic planning, and modifies budget processes.

7.1 THE "LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND" PRINCIPLE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The incorporation of Emalahleni' s diverse communities is necessary for policy coherence:

- Public Participation Platforms: Employ alternative consultation methods, such as community radio, social media, and community perception surveys, to gather grassroots input.

- Youth and Civil Society Inclusion: Collaborate with organizations like the Emalahleni Youth Council to guarantee that the VLR accurately represents the lived experiences of marginalized communities.

7.2 CYCLES OF DATA COLLECTION, REPORTING, AND REVIEW

Baseline Assessments: Utilize municipal administrative data and pertinent CSIR Greenbook climate risk metrics to establish a quantitative and qualitative baseline for the selected objectives.

Annual Reporting: In conjunction with the Annual Report, compile VLR progress reports to transparently monitor spatial, environmental, and socio-economic improvements.

7.3 THE EMALAHLENI CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUAL ALIGNMENT

The municipality must ensure that its understanding of sustainable development is consistent across all directorates in order to prevent conflicting departmental policies:

- *SDG 6 & 7 (Water & Energy):* Address infrastructure backlogs, illicit connections, and elevated electrical and water losses. Ensure that municipal assets are safeguarded while ensuring consistent, sustainable utility delivery.
- *SDG 8 & 11 (Economy & Settlements):* Formalize economic support systems and establish sustainable human settlements (e.g., Siyanqoba development).
- *SDG 13 & 17 (Climate & Partnerships):* Create partnerships with global, provincial, and academic institutions to enhance local capacity and implement localized climate resilience strategies.

8. THE POLICY COHERENCE MATRIX

In order to identify and manage trade-offs, this matrix depicts key municipal objectives against the specific SDGs:

SDG Focus Area	ELM Municipal Challenge	Primary Synergy	Cross-Sector Trade-Off
SDG 6: Water/Sanitation	Severe water losses, ailing infrastructure	Supports **SDG 11** by improving community health and sanitation access	Over-extraction strains municipal power capacity (**SDG 7**)
SDG 7: Energy	Load management, illegal connections	Drives **SDG 8** (business productivity) and **SDG 11** (safety)	High costs and traditional generation increase carbon footprints (**SDG 13**)
SDG 8: Decent Work	High unemployment, slow economic growth	Generates revenue to fund sustainable municipal infrastructure (**SDG 11**)	Job creation in heavy industries can worsen local air pollution (**SDG 13**)
SDG 13: Climate Action	Weather vulnerability, flooding, and droughts	Mitigates damage to infrastructure (**SDG 11**) and protects water sources (**SDG 6**)	Stricter environmental policies may temporarily increase compliance costs for local businesses (**SDG 8**)

9. COHERENCE IN FINANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS (SDG 17)

The financing of localized SDGs necessitates strategic financial alignment:

- *Synergistic Budgeting*: the ELM is under a duty to ensure that capital expenditure for essential services (water/energy) is in accordance with provincial and national grant financing, given the financial challenges that the municipality has faced over the years.
- *Collaboration* with the Nkangala District Municipality, SALGA, and neighboring private sector stakeholders has been heavily fortified by the ELM to improve data collection and capacity development.
- The municipality is utilizing local Ward Committees to identify localized requirements and safeguard public infrastructure, ensuring that the community is directly involved in VLR planning. This is known as Community Co-creation.

10. THE GOALS OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE INTERCONNECTED AND INTERRELATED

In the context of a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) for eMalahleni Local Municipality, these SDGs are inherently interconnected. Directly dependent on strategic partnerships and municipal infrastructure are economic growth, climate action, and energy security. A targeted linkage of SDGs 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, and 17 is provided below to facilitate the development of eMalahleni in a local, integrated manner.

10.1 SDG 6: PROVISION OF CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- The Relationship: The provision of a dependable bulk water supply and sanitation safeguards the ecological infrastructure and the health of the Emalahleni community.
- Integration with other SDGs: Required for SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) to prevent informal settlement water crises, and for SDG 13 (Climate Action) to mitigate the impact of mining on raw water quality through the implementation of climate strategies eMalahleni.

10.2 SDG 7 (CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY)

- The linkage: It is imperative that eMalahleni ensures universal energy access. Energy strategies have been developed in collaboration with the municipality to improve embedded generation and electrification.
- Integration with other SDGs: Drives SDG 8 (Decent Work) by supporting local enterprises and reducing dependence on illicit connections, which is consistent with SDG 11.

10.3 SDG 8 (DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH)

- The Relationship: Mining has historically been the primary source of employment in Emalahleni, accounting for approximately 59% of employees. Township economies must be revived and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEEs) must be supported in order to achieve sustainable economic growth.
- Connection to other SDGs: Promotes inclusive economic development, which is essential for the advancement of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), and is associated with SDG 7 by generating employment opportunities in the renewable energy and mining-rehabilitation sectors.

10.4 SDG 11 (SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES)

- The Linkage: Aims to enhance spatial planning, human settlements, and essential services in eMalahleni. Community well-being is contingent upon SDG 6 (water/sanitation) and SDG 7 (energy) in terms of connection to other SDGs. Climate resilience against inundation and infrastructure backlogs is also a requirement for sustainable urbanization, as detailed in SDG 13.

10.5 SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

- The Linkage: In order to mitigate local vulnerabilities, such as environmental degradation and the socio-economic consequences of post-mining land use, eMalahleni necessitates comprehensive climate change strategies.
- Connection to other SDGs: Aligns firmly with SDG 11 by mitigating risks and integrates with SDG 8 to generate "green jobs" during the transition away from coal.

10.6 SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

- The Linkage: In order to achieve its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and VLR objectives, eMalahleni depends on partnerships with universities, private entities, and the government itself.
- Connection to other SDGs: The primary enabler for the realization of SDGs 6, 7, 8, 11, and 13. To secure funding, share technical expertise, and encourage investment, strategic multistakeholder partnerships are necessary.

Three categories can be used to further categorize the linkages:

A. Core Infrastructure Nexus o SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation): Reduces water losses, manages effluent treatment, and extends water and sanitation services.

- SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy): Encourages the integration of renewable energy sources and grid electrification to prevent illegal connections.
- SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities): Addresses the formalization of human settlements, the improvement of road infrastructure, and spatial planning.
- spatial alignment of housing locations is necessary to unlock the SDG 11 Spatial Development Framework, which enables the municipality to efficiently route SDG 6 water infrastructure and SDG 7 electrical utilities to marginalized or expanding areas.

B. *The Socio-Economic Engine*

- *SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):* Ensures that job creation, localized mining beneficiation, and support for SMMEs are prioritized in order to mitigate unemployment.
- Linkage: Sustainable local environments are essential for progress. The provision of reliable aggregate infrastructure by SDG 6 (water) and SDG 7 (energy), as well as the urban planning and housing strategies of SDG 11, is essential for the creation of sustainable economic opportunities and green jobs (per SDG 8).

C. Governance and Resilience

- SDG 13 (Climate Action): Incorporates regional climate strategies to foster resilience against natural hazards, mitigate environmental degradation, and reduce pollution.
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): Encourages partnerships with intergovernmental bodies, international entities, and higher education to enhance municipal capacity, data systems, and revenue management. Linkage: Strategic funding and comprehensive data are essential for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies in accordance with SDG 13. The foundation for these essential partnerships with academic institutions, provincial treasuries, and global development actors is established by SDG 17, which seeks to finance infrastructure maintenance and climate resilience.

11. MAP FOR STRATEGIC VLR ALIGNMENT

These SDGs are explicitly linked to the municipal governance of Emalahleni, as demonstrated in the following table as follows:

SDG Goal	Emalahleni Local Context	VLR Actionable Linkages
6. Clean Water & Sanitation	**Frequent water quality concerns, illegal connections, and industrial pollution.**	**Implement regular pollution monitoring, wastewater reuse, and catchment management.**
7. Affordable & Clean Energy	**High reliance on coal, power instability, and energy loss.**	**Expand household electrification, promote energy efficiency, and explore renewable alternatives.**
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth	**Mining sector decline, high unemployment.**	**Support SMMEs, stimulate the Ferrobank industrial node, and drive youth employment initiatives.**
11. Sustainable Cities	**Spatial fragmentation, informal settlements, and basic service backlogs.**	**Implement the Spatial Development Framework for integrated human settlements and sustainable waste management.**
13. Climate Action	**Vulnerability to extreme weather and environmental degradation.**	**Develop and enforce a municipal climate change strategy to mitigate industrial carbon footprints.**
17. Partnerships	**Funding constraints and capacity challenges.**	**Foster partnerships with the private sector (mining houses), NGOs, and utilities for sustainable service delivery.**