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<td>area-based initiative</td>
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<td>ABM</td>
<td>area-based management</td>
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<td>ABMDP</td>
<td>Area-Based Management and Development Programme</td>
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<td>CBP</td>
<td>community-based planning</td>
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<td>INK</td>
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Background to the conference

In 2003, the eThekwini Municipal Authority (EMA) committed itself to piloting its Area-Based Management and Development (ABMD) programme in five selected areas of Durban in order to focus and improve municipal delivery using the principles of area-based management (ABM). The following five ABM sub-structures were set up to manage the programme in the various areas and coordination was tasked to a central Programme Office:

- **the Inner Thekwini Regeneration and Urban Management Programme (iTRUMP)** (in the central business district, the main commercial part of the city)
- **the South Durban Basin (SDB) ABM** (a key industrial zone with a substantial residential component)
- **the Rural ABM** (the rural periphery of the city)
- **the Inanda-Ntuzuma-KwaMashu (INK) ABM/URP** (a major residential area which is in need of renewal)
- **the Cato Manor ABM** (an infill residential area close to the city centre).

The overall objective of the ABMD programme is to contribute to the quality of life of the city’s citizens, and to contribute to the national urban development strategy. The programme is therefore intended to have a broader outcome, using the learning gained at the EMA scale to inform wider initiatives.

The eThekwini ABMD is supported by funding from the European Commission (EC). This support is guided by two principles: 1) learning by incremental implementation, and 2) building the capacity of relevant EMA players throughout the programme. EC support to the ABMD programme is consistent with three areas of co-operation as defined in the European Commission-South Africa Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP): poverty reduction, private sector development and consolidation of democracy.
The city’s 2004/5 review of its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) provides some important background:

“Planning and developing our City in a sustainable way requires thinking that is innovative, holistic and long-term and within the context of our national and provincial mandates. Only this kind of thinking will create sustainable responses to our municipality’s key development challenges. At the same time it is about putting in place short term plans of action that ensure the co-ordinated delivery of our many municipal functions. Finally, planning in a sustainable way involves devising effective institutional and city management mechanisms that give effect to well thought-out plans.”

“As a result of non-developmental and archaic legislation, practices and processes which our officials have often articulated a cause of great concern and a stumbling block to customer-focused service delivery, many of the municipal service providers focus exclusively on their own core functions. Whilst individually the service providers are considered effective service deliverers, there is very little or no horizontal co-ordination, with regard to service delivery and infrastructure development. The inheritance of a silo-based organisational structure and pervading organisational mentality contributed to the fragmented and piecemeal nature of Council service delivery. As part of the transformation process and organisational restructuring, the key challenge has been to address these critical issues.”

The eThekwini Municipality has been a leading South African city in experimenting and piloting area-based management initiatives to overcome the fragmentation and poor service delivery of the past. The five ABM areas selected to pilot the integrated approach present different challenges for integration and local problem solving, as they typify different varied spatial, social and economic scenarios.

In 2006, halfway into the five-year ABMD Programme funding period, eThekwini Municipality decided to stop, reflect and gather the learnings yielded from this pilot programme to date. It did this through organising a national conference from 28–30 June 2006. Approximately 200 delegates participated, including development planning practitioners, community developers, policy and decision makers, sectoral specialists, municipalities, different spheres of government, service providers, social scientists and other interest groups from all over South Africa and abroad (see appendix for details).

The purpose of the conference was to create an opportunity for the eThekwini Municipality to stop and review lessons learned – “What do we know now that worked well or not so well?” – and to share these lessons and remaining questions and challenges with other interested parties as well as to get new views and ideas from their experiences in this field. eThekwini’s ABMD Programme provided the central case study of this three-day event, and the programme included inputs by specialists working in other settings.
Conference design principles

The ABM Programme Office in consultation with various role players including the External and the Internal Reference Groups developed a concept plan for the National ABMDP Conference. Olive Organisation Development and Training (Olive OD&T) consultants were appointed to design and implement a learning and facilitation process for this Conference. In consultation with Olive, the ABMDP Conference Committee, which included the Programme Communication Managers from each ABM office, the Programme Office, Intergovernmental Relations, the Communications Unit agreed on some guiding principles for trying to achieve the purpose of the conference:

- Reflections and lessons learned would form the core of the conference.
- Knowledge sharing would be central to ensure that multiple perspectives were taken into account. Therefore, while the conference would highlight the eThekwini experience, it would also draw in different experiences and different perspectives.
- People learn when they talk; when they put new ideas into their own words. But the conference aimed to take people beyond general talking to explore and highlight what has been achieved and learned from the different contexts represented by the delegates.
- It would be important to stimulate interest about real achievements and challenges. Therefore the topics chosen for conversation would be real work issues that participants are engaged in.
- Active participation would be essential. The conversation groups had to be small enough to allow all participants to challenge ideas and explore the reasoning behind them.
- Relationships are built through face to face contact and the design of the conference space should facilitate relationship-building. This would strongly influence whether delegates viewed themselves as passive listeners or as active participants.
- The conference should be an interactive and fun learning experience, with a balance between input from the front in plenary, and interactive information processing and knowledge generation in small group conversations.
- There should be strong opportunities for networking.
- The conference should explore identified critical issues from the field to ensure that discussion went beyond ‘just talking’ to ‘talking about what really matters’. Olive undertook to help identify critical issues that the eThekwini ABM offices felt should be explored and shared in the conference through the pre-conference workshops.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Knowledge sharing would be central.

The conference should ensure that discussion went beyond ‘just talking’.

People learn when they talk; when they put new ideas into their own words.

It would be important to stimulate interest about real achievements and challenges.

Active participation would be essential.

Relationships are built through face to face contact and the design of the conference space should facilitate relationship-building.

The conference should be an interactive and fun learning experience.

There should be strong opportunities for networking.
Pre-conference workshops: 
Gathering the lessons learned

Identifying lessons learned in the eThekwini ABMD programme would be central to the conference. While the attendance of delegates from elsewhere would add to the learning about ABM generally, a major aim of the conference was to inform the next phase of the ABM Programme through eThekwini ABM and line management staff taking away key ideas about innovation and good practice. To ensure that the aforementioned goal was met, a ‘pre-conference workshop’ was held with each ABM team. It was decided that site visits to each ABM area would be part of the conference.

Conference methodology

The final conference design contained a mix of formal presentations with plenary question and answer sessions; small group meetings around specific questions using the ‘café conversations’ methodology; after-lunch plenary drumming sessions to stimulate creativity in the group and to keep up high levels of enthusiasm; cartoon representations of the conference proceedings to stimulate a different and light-hearted way of looking at the issues raised; and dividing the large group into five smaller groups, each of which would visit one of the ABM areas.

Formal presentations and plenary Q&A sessions

A number of formal presentations were delivered. These were selected according to relevance; a balance of theory and practical experience; and a balance of experience from eThekwini and experience from elsewhere. After each presentation there was a limited time for delegates to question presenters.

Café conversations

The Café Conversation methodology aims to overcome the limitations of big group conferences by offering an informal and creative way of engaging with a subject, triggering reactions from everybody present, and capturing the conclusions on paper. During the café conversation sessions, about 15 different conversations were being conducted at the same time. Participants captured their thoughts by writing them on the ‘table cloth’ that was provided by the organisers. The groups were small enough to allow a high level of participation and each conversation was facilitated by a ‘café host’. Participants were encouraged to speak, and then to write down what they had said on the table cloth.

Cartooning

Four artists from the Durban Cartoon Project were brought in to observe the conference proceedings and provide visual feedback in the form of cartoons. Two of the cartoonists live in the INK area. Their interpretation of key ideas was often humorous or insightful, cutting to the heart of the topic under discussion.

Drumming

After lunch on the first and second day, delegates were each given a drum and participated in a facilitated group drumming session.

Site visits

On the second day participants engaged in site visits to the various ABM projects in order to gain an impression of the issues which the ABM programme is seeking to address. The site visits were an opportunity for each ABM team to share what it had done, to respond to questions, and to ask visitors questions about their own experience.
PRAISE POEM

by Zolani Ngubane

ABM Abantu Bonke Mabathuthuke

Welcome to eThekwini
Where planning is for all communities
Everyone is equal in the eyes of the municipality
Every city is welcome to learn from this municipality
Share in our participative planning, strengthened
Democracy, and build the country
ABM Area Based Management, development is for all
Iqholo lowethula uhulumeni wabantu
Iqhaza lomuphakathi liphuthumisa intuthuko
Iqaqwe inkungu yokungazi kubantu
Iqholoshe imiphakathi ngenthuthuko enhlanganyele nabantu
ABM Abantu Bonke Mabathuthuke
Building of the nation has begun
Communities are ready to support government action
Take a look at the programme; people are developing
Power is at the people, communities are involved
ABM Area Based Management, development is for all
Cities of the world; learn Inner-City development iTRUMP
Urban redevelopment
through INK; rural
upliftment with Rural ABM;
Balancing industrial and
residential development as
being done by SDB,
Cato Manor; lead us in
inner-city housing
eThekwini Municipality,
Development is for all
Amaqhawe akulesizwe
Amaphupho afezwa
ukungacwasi ngobuzwe
Amahobu nezimbongi
bahashe ubuhle
benthuthuko yezwe
Amavila avuseleleke avuke
azithathe asimamise izwe
Yebo ABM Abantu Bonke
Mabathuthuke!
Learning and Reflecting on the Area-Based Management and Development Programme

Keynote address

Dr Michael Sutcliffe, City Manager of the eThekwini Municipality, said, in line with the national government’s priority of increasing economic growth to reduce poverty and inequality, the first strategic thrust of the eThekwini Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is economic development through the port, manufacturing and tourism. There will be massive infrastructural development and expansion of Durban’s port. Transnet Group CEO Maria Ramos has said that the lack of adequate investment in economic infrastructure over the last 10–15 years, especially in port infrastructure, may have lowered South Africa’s current economic growth rate by 2%. Dr Sutcliffe said Durban is one of the few places in Africa where manufacturing is not in decline; in fact, there has been a huge increase in the demand for manufacturing space in the city. Tourism infrastructure is being improved and an increase in tourism is expected, particularly from the domestic market.

The second strategic thrust of the municipality is to create an electronic city – to give people access to technology through improving the electricity network and fibre-optic and wireless networks, with assistance from the private sector. The third thrust is the improvement of public transport, including the construction of a North-South link, and the development of transport hubs across the city. The fourth strand is to provide housing in convenient locations. Some 500 000 people work in the inner city, but very few live there. Unlike some recently built public housing estates which are located far from the economic centre and access to public transport, the people who work in the inner city should be able to live close by.

Fifthly, Durban will aim to make the best of the tourism opportunities offered by the soccer World Cup to be held in South Africa in 2010. Dr Sutcliffe said he had visited Germany and witnessed the level of planning that goes into staging a successful event. The run-up to a match starts three days before when the teams arrive in the host city, and every tiny detail is planned minute by minute to the time when the kick-off finally takes place. Any match is watched by between 500 000 and a billion people the world over, providing a massive opportunity for host cities. Even though the event is four years away, people in South Africa must start to think about maximising exposure to, for example, a high calibre of art, to ensure that visitors have a memorable experience on every level.

He said the city’s ABM programme is a strategic intervention in five contrasting areas of the city. The South Durban Basin (SDB) ABM focuses on this strongly industrial area with a substantial residential component. The Rural ABM works in a 1 500km² rural area located northwest and southwest of the city. The Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) ABM works in this area of adjacent dormitory townships which is the second largest concentration of dormitory residential environments. The Cato Manor ABM works with communities who invaded land left open by forced removals during the apartheid era. As its name suggests, the Inner Thekwini Regeneration Urban Management Programme (iTRUMP) ABM works in the central business district of Durban. Every ABM is unique. Some have focused more on infrastructural development, others have focused more on soft skills to create a sense of identity and ownership. Dr Sutcliffe concluded by saying he hoped delegates to the conference would be able to build on positive experiences of area-based management and learn from what had not gone well.
The European Commission and the ABMDP

Mr Hubert Perr, Head of Development Co-operation of the EU Delegation in South Africa, said before he worked for the European Commission, he had worked as a city management consultant in Austria, his home country. While the level of development varies from country to country, the challenges for cities remain the same the world over: provision of public transport, skills development, access to technology, economic development and job creation. Equally important is engaging in activities which promote participation and democracy; empowerment and identity; a sense of home. All of this helps to ensure that people have a sense of ownership and a desire to make a positive contribution to the success of the city. Tourism is important source of income in Austria and South Africa, and Durban has a lot of undeveloped potential in this regard he said.

The European Commission is South Africa’s biggest development partner and its programme here is one of the largest EU support programmes in the world. The Commission gives about R1 billion in project grants every year in the areas of economic development, job creation, social development, including health and education, and urban development. It has also invested in the development of governance and the integration of South Africa into the Southern African Development Community. The Delegation has focused on the three poorest provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. The R100 million local economic development programme in KwaZulu-Natal has been implemented in municipalities across the province.

Mr Perr said the EU has a long track record in supporting Ethekwini. For example, it provided about €22 million for the Cato Manor Development Project which preceded the ABM establishment. The Delegation wanted to provide support to a broader programme but did not want to create its own programme. Instead it chose to support eThekwini’s own ABM project through sectoral budget support to the municipality and is looking forward at results, for example learning initiatives like the current ABM conference.

The EU struggled to grapple with what its role should be in a country like South Africa that is so well developed and with so much available finance, but is nonetheless struggling with heavy development challenges. The key aspects that the Delegation is looking to support are innovation, learning, systems development and pilot initiatives. The ABM programme fits well into this – it is innovative, and it tries to address the complexities of urban management in a holistic way, not through line departments.

In conclusion, Mr Perr said the Delegation considers the ABM programme to be 100% in line with its objectives, eThekwini has a good track record, and the EU sees its partnership with South Africa as strategically important.

Introduction to the ABM Programme

Mhlengi Gumede of the eThekwini Municipality gave an overview of the ABMDP programme. After describing the details of the agreement, he outlined the five ABM programmes. He concluded by saying the programme is currently undergoing a mid-term review of its achievements with regard to the key result areas: implementing and testing different approaches to ABM; building the capacity of ABM managers, municipal management and staff, councillors, communities and other stakeholders; deepening democracy; improving service delivery; and enhancing economic development.
Prof Ivan Turok of the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow outlined ten emerging principles from international experience about successful area-based initiatives (ABIs): 1) They recognise the distinctive value of people and place, i.e. they are centred around local problems and do not have a sectoral focus; 2) they are flexible so they can be tailored to suit the specific context; 3) they encourage working through partnerships to get the right people round the right tables at the right times with a clear framework of expectations and ground rules; 4) they value the roles and contributions of different actors – the public sector, community, voluntary sector and private sector; 5) they support leadership in different forms; 6) they are action-oriented and balance the necessary strategic, process and practical skills; 7) they have a multi-dimensional approach with clear priorities around physical, social and economic aspects of sustainable communities; 8) they are outward-looking, taking into account that they form part of a larger system and that there is risk of displacing problems into adjacent areas; 9) they have a dynamic perspective, taking into account their time-limited nature and what is required to make them sustainable, including integrating area concerns into mainstreamed sectoral policies; and 10) they have support from city, provincial and national government in terms of commitment to mainstreaming area-based development, a sustained commitment of resources, alignment of funding streams, support to skills development and capacity building, improving the evidence base for ‘what works’, and encouraging sharing of good practice.

Prof Turok concluded by saying ABIs offer a different perspective on development – they are more grounded in local needs and opportunities, doing development with people, not to people; they are important but are not a panacea, especially on their own; they have to be tailored to their purpose and their context; most have a partnership arrangement but there are different models depending on the purpose and context; relationship-building is vital and it takes time; leadership is important and can take different forms; arrangements for delivery may well differ from strategy; and government support is essential.
Community-based planning in eThekwini

Ntsiki Magwaza of the eThekwini Municipality described how community-based planning (CBP) is being used in the city to gain input into the IDP and meet the requirements of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act. Additional benefits of using the methodology are that 1) it takes community participation beyond mere consultation and empowers communities to take ownership of local development; 2) it harnesses the energy and resources of communities to play a role in their own development; 3) it assists the municipality to gain an in-depth understanding of vulnerability and livelihoods; 4) it assists ward committees to play an effective role; 5) it allows the municipality to develop in-house facilitation skills; 6) it provides sectoral departments with an opportunity to better understand the needs of their clients.

The ABM partnership experience in eThekwini

Prof Urmilla Bob of the Discipline of Geography at the University of KwaZulu-Natal spoke about research she had done into the effectiveness of the ABM programme in generating and sustaining partnerships.

Key benefits of the programme included leveraging resources; sharing skills and experience; contributing to knowledge management; networking; minimising conflict by involving stakeholders in dealing constructively with issues which arise; setting a joint vision for an area; integrating service delivery; increasing efficiency; and avoiding duplication.

Key challenges included building ownership of the vision and ensuring buy-in from stakeholders, especially political stakeholders; identifying ‘champions’; integrating line departments into ABM service delivery, taking into account line department capacity and budgets and setting clear roles and responsibilities; broader horizontal and vertical integration; ‘turf’ issues; ensuring active and meaningful participation; addressing expectations; dealing with political tensions; dealing with personalities; playing an implementing role rather than a facilitating one; securing funding and resources; and managing and facilitating partnerships.
SITE VISITS

On the morning of Day Two, participants broke into five small groups and went on a site visit to one of the five ABM areas. Each visit was facilitated by an ABM official from that area. The purpose of the site visits was to give delegates a concrete impression of the issues which the ABM programme is seeking to address. The site visits were an opportunity for each ABM team to share what it had done, to respond to questions, and to ask visitors questions about their own experience. The visits were not just about seeing the sites and hearing the stories, they were intended to involve each ABM team in helping the conference achieve its purpose and learn from the opportunity. The site visits afforded delegates with an opportunity to choose which issues they wished to further explore and to gain real ideas from the innovation they had seen on the ground.

Over the next few pages are shown the impressions of the five cartoonists who each accompanied one of the site visits.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Please note that the responses of the cartoonists represent their own personal viewpoints and, as is normally the case with cartoonists, they focussed their satirical pens on the foibles and idiosyncracies they observed. Their views are certainly not intended to represent the views of the eThekwini Municipality or the ABMD Programme, but we do believe that their insights are both entertaining, insightful and, in some cases, quite valuable.

Site Visit to the Inner City ABM (iTRUMP)

AS TOLD BY ALASTAIR LAIRD

![Cartoon panel showing various scenes and captions related to the Inner City ABM (iTRUMP) project.]

12 Learning and Reflecting on the Area-Based Management and Development Programme
Site Visit to the Cato Manor ABM

As told by Themba Siwela

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**Cato Manor Tour**

"Wow! Look at this beautiful house!
The ABM people moved us from our shack in Cato Manor to this nice Matchbox Township, so that they can clear the shacks away."

"Wow! Look at this beautiful space someone left for me to build a shack!"

It doesn’t matter how many people they move away from here, there’s always more people migrating into town who are happy to build new shacks!

---

**Cato Manor Then and Now**

_Welcome to Cato Manor Museum. My name is Thandi Memela. This was the way..._

_Women used to make a living by breaking umkhumbane (corn) beans, police used to come and arrest them, pretty bad eh?!_

_Women used to make a living by breaking umkhumbane (corn) beans, police used to come and arrest them, pretty bad eh?!_

_...late in the '60s people were viciously attacked to run away and umlazi..._

_My name is Njabulo, our main objective has been to roll out adequate infrastructure and services..._
Site Visit to the South Durban Basin

AS TOLD BY N.D. MAZIN

CONTINUED...
Site Visit to the Rural ABM

AS TOLD BY THUBE KUNENE

RURAL
ABM
HYDROPONIC
TOMATOES

NOW WE PLANT AND SELL. THANKS TO ABM.

FARMER

TAXI!

TAXI RANK

ISITHUMBA ADVENTURE TOURISM
VALLEY OF A THOUSAND HILLS

THE TOURISM PROJECT

ABM

THE RURAL ABM ALSO INVOLVES THE COMMUNITY IN THESE PROJECTS.

KWAXIMBA AREA

THUBE KUNENE 2006
Site Visit to the INK ABM URP
AS TOLD BY SIYABONGA MTHETHWA

A CONTROVERSIAL CARTOON

This cartoon by Themba Siwela caused considerable debate when displayed in the foyer area where delegates gathered for tea. Delegates felt that it misconstrued the role of the ABM Programme, which is certainly not to "parachute" services, jobs and housing to expectant township residents, but rather to involve communities in their own development processes.

However, it was pointed out that this was a common expectation held by a vast number of residents in the ABM areas, and that Siwela, himself a resident of the INK ABM, had succeeded in representing a true picture of people's expectations on the ground. One of the ongoing key tasks of ABM officials was to ensure ongoing and authentic participation of communities in their own development.
LESSONS FROM OTHER PLACES

Lessons learned from the development of the Khayelitsha business district, Cape Town

Ivan Anthony and Andre Human of the Cape Town City Council presented a case study of the development of the Khayelitsha central business district. The area was identified by national government as an urban renewal node. A comprehensive community participation process was initiated and widespread consultation was undertaken to determine a set of guiding principles for development in the area. The land was acquired by the Khayelitsha Community Trust and the community entered into a formal partnership with the private sector (which has undertaken to provide 65% of the necessary finance), and national, provincial and local government. Although private sector interest was initially very low based on a perception of low business potential and of the community involvement element as a burden, Rand Merchant Bank took the plunge. Once a number of anchor projects were completed, other private sector developers have shown an interest.

City improvement districts in Johannesburg

Anne Steffy of Kagiso Urban Management spoke about how her company has been involved in implementing urban renewal through establishing city improvement districts (CIDs) under the Gauteng City Improvement District Act. The Act stipulates that 51% of property owners representing 51% of the property value in a defined area must vote to establish the CID, and 49% have to join. Kagiso insists on a minimum of 60–70% to ensure a high level of commitment. By establishing a CID the owners are bound to pay a higher level of rates. The board of the management body (a Section 21 company) must have property owners in the majority, and there must be one council representative. It is required to enter into service level agreements with council and its utilities. The steps in the process are: getting the basics right (e.g. deal with crime and grime and basic maintenance); create an exceptional sense of place (through appropriate improvements); and managing the relationship with the city on wider-scale issues such as transport, land use regulation, social services and law enforcement. She said there are 21 CIDs in Johannesburg and a steady improvement in investment, security and quality of life in those neighbourhoods of the city.

Lessons from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Julius Maira of the Dar es Salaam City Council said in the early 1990s, the city was in a state of near-collapse, with hopelessly inadequate refuse removal, inadequate trunk infrastructure, invasion of open space, mushrooming informal settlement, uncoordinated development and environmental degradation. The Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) integrated participatory planning process started in 1992 to deal with this situation. Stakeholders were consulted, priorities identified, and working groups established. Although there are still many challenges, a remarkable amount has been achieved, including dealing with solid waste, upgrading unserviced areas, improving public transportation, and improving facilities for the informal sector. The EPM process has built a reliable and permanent bridge between city government and the people and restored mutual trust which was largely lacking before.
INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Institutional arrangements in the eThekweni ABM programme

Prof Alison Todes of the Human Sciences Research Council introduced some of the results of research she had been commissioned to do by the eThekweni Municipality in November 2005. The research was intended to examine and assess the institutional models in operation. It focused on the positioning of ABM in the municipality; the institutional structures of ABM; and the relationships between ABM and line departments. After describing the history of the programme, its institutional structure and location, and some perspectives from line and cluster management, Prof Todes went on to briefly describe the structure and functioning of each of the five ABM area programmes.

She said the introduction of an overarching ABMD programme has ‘boxed’ ABM, but the concept is gaining greater acceptance, and is becoming institutionalised. It is possible that systematisation could undermine the flexibility of ABMs. The model in operation tries to combine ABM with strong line departments. Line departments generally appreciate the focus, co-ordination and community responsiveness of ABMs. Apart from iTRUMP, the ABMs look similar, but vary in size, mandate and orientation, operation, and relationship to line departments.

The various models have different strengths and limitations:

1. iTRUMP’s ‘agile’ embedded model works through close contact with departments and stakeholders on the ground, but is less appreciated by middle management.
2. The SDB ABM’s ‘interventive’ model goes furthest in attempting to shape what line departments do in the area, sometimes leading to resistance.
3. The INK ABM’s ‘enabling’ approach has helped to bring together role players and create links and its projects have enabled the municipality to engage in social development, but some argue that it doesn’t go far enough to manage development in its area.
4. The Cato Manor ABM has several projects which are innovative and are appreciated by communities, but is still seen as ‘outside’.
5. The Rural ABM has been important in enabling the municipality to work in new contexts, but several processes still work in parallel.

Prof Todes said the operation of the various models in part reflect staff capacity, relationships, personality, and institutional histories in eThekweni, but also structural issues linked to the differences between area vs. line modes of operation.
Challenges for the national Urban Renewal Programme

Clive Forster spoke about a mid-term initiative by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, with GTZ and EC support, to strengthen the functioning of the national government's Urban Renewal Programme (URP). The eight nodes where the URP is being implemented are all located in areas that were excluded from development by design. The URP aims to: 1) prioritising the node; 2) mobilise partnerships; 3) deepen participation; and 4) pilot approaches for mainstreaming. The intervention takes the form of provide support through: improving the implementation framework; developing an operational guide for URP practitioners; documenting emerging best practice; and providing technical hands-on support to the nodes. The operational guide aims to provide practical ways of dealing with four basic problems: role confusion/contestation around urban renewal management; overambitious or mistargeted programme planning; difficulties with integrating line and area management systems; and a lack of capacity.
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

Insights, learnings and recommendations

Derived from the Cafe Conversations

Traditional conferences usually intersperse formal presentations with question-answer sessions in plenary. Quite often these conferences end up being very formal, and many participants do not feel safe enough to speak out among experts and more extrovert and articulate participants. Another type of conference design splits the large group up into several sub groups/workshops with report-back presentations to the plenary. The challenge here is to draw the outcomes of the different small groups into a unified whole. All participants will see a part of ‘the big picture’, but nobody sees the whole. Participation in workshops like these is often uneven, with some delegates working hard and others sitting back. Olive and the Organising Committee agreed that the conference methodology had to support learning and sharing by ensuring that delegates participated in as many ‘real conversations’ as possible. The Café Conversation methodology aims to overcome the limitations of big group conferences by offering a unique informal and creative way of engaging with a subject, triggering reactions from everybody present, and capturing the conclusions on paper. During the café conversation sessions, about 5 different conversations were being conducted at the same time. Participants captured their thoughts by writing them on the ‘table cloth’ that was provided by the organisers. The groups were small enough to allow a high level of participation and each conversation was facilitated by a ‘café host’ (a person who had practised the method during a pre-conference workshop facilitated by Olive). Participants were encouraged to speak, and then to write down what they had said on the table cloth.

The final small group discussions were framed around three questions. Responses are summarised as points below each question.

What are the insights and learnings you take away with you?

- As an evolving form of governance, the ABM programme has, not surprisingly, generated a lot of debate. It is generally accepted that ABM can add value by influencing the practice of local government, and can addresses service delivery if implemented and managed effectively.

- It is important to pause from time to time, as this conference has done, to reflect on the programme and make the necessary adjustments.

- ABM relies on good leadership but should take care to ensure that processes are not dominated by individual personalities. While some are driven by a desire for transformation, others are more cautious. For many people, dramatic changes in the way things are been done can be uncomfortable. While it is generally acknowledged that institutional transformation is necessary, it is felt that more time needs to be given to it.
• While ABM presents new challenges for line departments, it is able to unlock potential within departments. However it takes time to build the necessary capacity.

• While the potential of ABM programmes to achieve a lot in a short time is recognised, it was emphasised that project goals must be realistic and sustainable.

• In order to achieve these potentials, close communication between the ABM programme and line departments is essential.

• The ABM programme must respect the existing plans of line departments within the five-year timeframe of the IDP.

• Line departments must be involved early in the ABM planning process to enable them to function effectively and frame achievable goals.

• The ABM programme must understand that there is a substantial ‘lead-in’ period before projects can begin.

• The ABM programme needs to develop a more detailed understanding of the technical issues and capacity constraints faced by line departments.

• The ABM programme needs to understand that line departments are restricted by current policies and that it can take up to two years to implement policy changes. However, it was acknowledged that strategic IDP projects can be fast-tracked.

• Municipalities must create conditions for line departments to be able to function effectively in IDP representative forums.

• ABM sites are recognised as spaces where all stakeholders can share skills and resources and nobody is above anybody else. There is also recognition that both communities themselves and the ABM programme are jointly responsible for ensuring good communication.

• There is however still a long way to go. Community expectations need to be managed so that they fit within what is possible, given municipal systems, policies and resource constraints.

• Ensuring community participation takes more than just holding big meetings. There must be a dynamic interaction between the ABM programme and communities.

• Clear evaluation criteria need to be implemented when assessing the success or failure of a particular programme. It was pointed out, for instance, that smaller municipalities are constrained by smaller budgets.

• It was suggested that the Johannesburg experience of promoting investment districts could be applied in Durban.
How would you apply these learnings to your own situation?

What recommendations would you like to make to the ABM programme?

**BENEFITS OF THE ABM APPROACH**

- ABM helps to identify problem areas.
- ABM is a tool to facilitate co-ordination between the spheres of government.
- ABM promotes planning *with* people, not *for* people as most municipalities do.
- ABM facilitates community participation.
- ABM can be used as a tool to fast-track delivery.
- ABM recognises the importance of dealing with ‘soft’ organisational issues that are critical to service delivery, for example, capacitation and motivation.
- ABM demonstrates that the different areas are faced by common challenges even though projects may be implemented differently.
- ABM provides useful case studies for learning from elsewhere in the country and the world.
- ABM allows for great team building sessions between teams.

**RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNICATION, ROLE DEFINITION AND PARTICIPATION**

- The ABM programme needs to build relationships with line departments so that there are close links between planners and implementers.
- The ABM programme must ensure that line departments are involved early in the planning process.
- Line representation should be encouraged at the conceptualisation stage.
- The roles and responsibilities of ABMs and all the different stakeholders need to be clarified.
- ABM officials should demonstrate their commitment to development by being visible to the community, rather than spending most of their time in their offices.
- ABM needs the support of politicians and the municipal manager.
- Institutional location in the municipal manager’s office needs to be looked at. Relationships are essential for partnerships and sustainability. There needs to be a common vision. Also there are territorial/ownership issues. When projects succeed, who gets the credit?
WORKING WITHIN CONSTRAINTS

- The ABM programme needs to understand the structure and function of line departments, including capacity and policy constraints.
- Operational staff should be drawn from line departments because of their in-depth understanding of line processes.
- Realistic and sustainable delivery goals must be specified.

THEORETICAL AND PLANNING ISSUES

- The one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. Ensure there is local fit.
- Areas with common types of needs should be clustered.
- Clustering is important – avoid silos.
- It is necessary to pilot initiatives before going to scale.
- Note should be taken of the need for skills transfer and the building of institutional memory and continuity.
- Mechanisms for measuring and prioritisation need to be refined.
- Documentation of projects is important.
- Cross-pollination of ideas is crucial. The notion of learning networks should be pursued.
- It is necessary to revisit interdepartmental relations. Issues to do with perceptions, partnerships, effective project championship and other institutional problems need to be addressed.
- There is an ongoing need for effective knowledge management.
- The participation of business and community is also important.
- The perception of ABM as an infrastructure development agency is inadequate and does not speak to the need for mainstreaming the previously excluded areas from council development attention.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

- Working with committees helps to avoid conflict and keep in touch with developments on the ground.
- Communities need to be involved not only in visioning, but also in implementation and monitoring processes.
- Community expectations about what can be delivered in what kind of time, need to be managed.
- Community radio is an existing resource that could be used as a platform for dialogue around issues of development and how these relate to the national agenda.
- ABMs need to reflect more comprehensively on their impact on communities and their institutional capacity and ability to engage.
PROBLEM AREAS

- It is important for ABM to have champions but a programme cannot be too personality driven or too dependent for its success on individuals.
- There could be higher levels of cross-engagement between ABMs.
- Some ABM practitioners are not sure whether the ABM initiative is appreciated by community, line departments, academics and planners.
- When recruiting, internal staff should be used, rather than bringing in external people.

LIFESPAN AND SUSTAINABILITY

- There must be a focus on sustainability, not only on delivery.
- The ABM programme should be limited to five years – this would be short enough to be a focused intervention and long enough to have a sustainable impact.
- The ABM programme and processes need to be brought into line department functioning by the time the programme comes to an end, but how?
- What is an appropriate development timeframe to ensure integration into council work and to ensure sustainability?
- Given that ABMs are of different sizes with different levels of achievement, a blanket lifespan might not be appropriate.
- Hardcore (infrastructure) + softcore (social-economic) = sustainability, so a holistic approach is required.
- The ABM programme needs to look at a medium-term plan.
- The social aspect and social upliftment must be incorporated to make the programme sustainable.
- Ensure that there is a clear exit strategy.
FINAL PLENARY:

Insights and learnings for the way forward

A summary of points made in the plenary is listed below.

- Successful ABM requires the identification of key strategic areas for intervention.
- ABM initiatives must plan with communities, not for them.
- There is a need to fast-track ABM in municipalities.
- ABM initiatives must consciously learn from practice so that they can adapt to changing circumstances.
- Skills transfer and capacity-building is critical for success.
- ABM relies on champions, but it is necessary to avoid heavy dependence on particular individuals.
- Knowledge management is an essential part of the process – active steps must be taken to protect institutional memory so that the initiative is not crippled when key individuals leave.
- ABM initiatives must have sustainability as a key objective, given that they are short-term initiatives. It is necessary to consider what will happen after the initiative has come to an end to ensure that progress continues to be made into the future.
- ABMs must define an exit strategy for themselves.
- At times the ABM initiative is the implementing agent, at times it is just the facilitator. Clarity must be achieved about roles and responsibilities in the broader institutional context to ensure that line departments and ABM initiatives can together achieve success.
- ABM is a holistic systems approach which reflects city-wide dynamics. ABM programmes must be aligned with the Integrated Development Plan to ensure that all parts of the municipality focus on a broader goal, and so that their role is embedded in the work of all roleplayers in the city.
- A good understanding of the pros and cons of ABM is necessary.
- Careful relationship-building between line departments and ABM initiatives is essential.
- Developing institutional capacity and synergy between structures takes time. It may not be realistic to develop this within the limited timeframe of the ABM programme.
- Relevant line departments must be involved in ABM project conceptualisation so that ABM managers not to make promises which go beyond what line departments are able to deliver.
- Partnership is an integral part of the ABM process, so it must be part of the design from the outset. Partnership will help to secure commitment to projects and ownership of projects. This will make it more likely that they will be sustained into the future.
- ABM must be located in an independent, strategic, central position in the municipality so that it begins to be seen as the glue that brings everything together.
SYNTHESIS AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Prof Ivan Turok said he could not possibly do justice to the richness of the discussion over the last three days, but there are three important points that should be emphasised.

1. **ABM adds value to other government policies in various ways.** Perhaps the most important is the series of dynamic tensions that the process of area-based working generates:
   - between areas and line functions
   - between internal organisational processes and external networking/stakeholder engagement
   - between short-term delivery and long-term institutional change
   - between popular expectations and the capacity of government to deliver positive outcomes.

   It is vital that these tensions are resolved in ways that are creative and constructive rather than conflict-ridden and destructive. This requires the people involved to be open to new ideas and amenable to change. Participants also need to be capable of working through these tensions in multi-disciplinary teams. Overall, ABM is likely to be an ongoing process with no simple resolution and no perfect compromise.

   Nevertheless, he said there are two specific issues (discussed below) which would have to be decided sooner rather than later.

2. **The need for some kind of area-based forum and dedicated technical capacity in the five current ABM areas of Durban beyond 2008, when the current programme expires.** Unless decisions are made within the next 12 months or so there is a serious risk that current ABM staff will leave for other jobs and that external stakeholders will lose confidence in the Municipality’s commitment to local development in these places. The case for a more permanent ABM arrangement includes:
   - the high set-up costs of ABM initiatives
   - the scale and complexity of the local challenges faced in each area, which go well beyond a quick fix lasting a few years
   - the very large territory covered by eThekwini Municipality, which is very useful for strategic purposes, but creates something of a vacuum at the local level. ABM can be more responsive to local communities
   - the fact that no other interest group or organisation will take the lead in addressing the development needs of particular localities.

3. **The capacity of government to deliver positive outcomes in the ABM areas and elsewhere is constrained by a shortage of people with the requisite skills and competencies.** Durban is relatively well-equipped with competent people compared with most parts of the country, but there is still a substantial skills deficit, especially bearing in mind the scale and complexity of the challenges faced. There is a range of skills that need to be developed further, including strategic, process and practical skills covering things such as project management, monitoring and negotiation. There are also many issues surrounding
cross-occupational learning to break out of the traditional silos of government and professions. Many of these skills are best acquired ‘on the job’ through familiarisation and practical experience. But some are better developed through more formalised and structured learning. Durban should think about starting a ‘skills academy’, perhaps in conjunction with local colleges and the university to help build capacity in this way. It could be an institution of national significance and would enhance Durban’s external reputation very significantly. Prof Turok concluded by saying that people and organisations in Durban have the experience to make it a great success.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The input and contributions during the conference planning process from members of the Internal Reference Group is appreciated. The role and dedication of members of the ABMD Conference Committee was invaluable in putting together a highly successful conference.

The members of the Conference Committee were:
Ms Zee Nqala, Mr Siphiwe Ngubane, Mr Njabulo Maseko, Mr Xolani Ncalane, Mr Emmanuel Kleinbooi, Ms Fiona Wyman, Mr Sifiso Xulu, Mr Ravi Moodley, Ms Theo Thwala, Ms Theresa Subban and Mr Tshepang Mosiea.

The ability to establish a partnership and strong relationships with all project stakeholders by Mr Tshepang Mosiea, the Conference Project Manager was a resounding success.

A special vote of thanks to the ABM Area Managers, the eThekwini Communications Unit, Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR), Geographic Information and Policy Unit (GIPO), ABM Programme Office, ABM Area Teams and the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) for all the support you have given us.

Sincere gratitude goes to Mr Sogen Moodley for the book well written and for taking advantage to launch the Innovations Book at the Conference Gala Dinner.

The excellent and a professional services provided by the following service providers is also acknowledged:
• Learning, Facilitation and Design Process (managed by Olive Organisational Development team)
• Conference Logistical Arrangements (Ikhono Communications)
• Cartoons and Conference Publication (Artworks Communications)
• Multi-media (Eagleview)
• Exhibition (Expo Group)

The boundless effort and enthusiasm from the following professionals before, during and after the conference has made it possible for us to achieve what we have achieved:
• Prof Ivan Turok
• Prof A Todes
• Prof U Bob
• Mr Clive Forster
• Ms Ntsiki Magwaza
• Mr Ivan Anthony
• Mr Andre Human
• Ms Anne Steffy
• Mr Julius Maira

Thank you!