



cogta

Department:
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Implementation Evaluation on Departmental training provided to Municipal Public Accounts Committees

Evaluation report

Evaluation Directorate

27 November 2017

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. BACKGROUND.....	8

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3. RESULTS CHAIN OF MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE TRAINING	8
4. SUMMARY OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	11
4.1 The problem statement	11
4.2 Summary of the evaluation plan	13

EVALUATION FINDINGS

5. HOW THE TRAINING DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY RESPONDED TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK.....	15
5.1 The extent to which the training design and methodology responded to issues raised by the Auditor General.....	15
5.2 How the Department ensured that the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements were incorporated into the training provided.....	16
5.3 How the Department ensured that Auditor General matters and the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements were incorporated into the training provided.....	17
6. HOW THE TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES WAS ROLLED OUT AND IF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES HAD BEEN MET IN THE DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT MUNICIPALITIES FACE	18
6.1 Introduction.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2 Intended approach by the Department on the rollout of the training provided to MPACs and noted outcomes	18
6.3 The training rollout from the perspective of the participants	19
6.4 The training roll out and its outcomes to recipient MPACs.....	25
7. HOW THE TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNT COMMITTEES ENABLED ITS MEMBERS TO SUSTAINABLY PROVIDE OVERSIGHT IN MUNICIPAL PROCESSES	27
7.1 Conclusion.....	27
7.2 Recommendations.....	28



cogta

Department:
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the evaluation conducted on training provided for Municipal Public Accounts Committees (hereafter referred to as MPAC), between the periods of October 2016 and March 2017. The Evaluation conducted was an implementation evaluation, to which the findings will be used to establish if there are any areas of improvement in trainings provided to MPACs.

The approach used involved the rollout of One day training sessions per district and consisted of two parts. The first part covered the roles and responsibilities of MPACs, whilst the other part covered the assurance of financial documents.

How the Department ensured that Auditor General Findings and Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements were incorporated into the training provided

Within the 2015/2016 Auditor General report, areas were noted as contributing factors to MPACs not functioning effectively. These are seen in the table below.

Auditor General findings	
1.	Members of Public Account Committees did not understand their roles and responsibilities.
2.	Members of the Public Account Committees did not understand financial processes.
3.	Municipal Public Accounts Committees did not have fully functional committee meetings on a regular basis.

The Auditor General also suggested recommendations that would enable MPACs to function effectively. These are seen in the table below.

Auditor General recommendations	
1.	New Committee members needed to undergo thorough induction on their roles, responsibilities and skills to perform their assigned duties.
2.	In addition to the induction of new members, there was a need for ongoing training to enable Municipal Public Account Committee members to provide valuable inputs in assurance of Municipal documents.
3.	There needed to be portfolio specific training to ensure that Committees can play their oversight role effectively. An example is project management training for the Service delivery issues, so as for a member to better understand the construction processes and enable them to properly engage with presented information.
4.	There was a need for Municipal Public Account Committees to be persuasive in requesting performance information and financial information from Audit Committees for assurance.

The Local Government Handbook which was developed in 2011 and revised in 2016 also noted a set of prerequisites that would ensure that MPACs function effectively. These are seen in the table below.

Prerequisites for MPAC functionality	
1.	Functioning Portfolio Committees
2.	Functional Audit Committee
3.	Functional and frequent reporting systems
4.	A supporting administrative support system/committee clerk who is reliable
5.	A communication strategy to engage the public and ward committees

The table below presents the extent to which the training was responsive to the areas raised by the Auditor General and the functionality prerequisites found in the Local Government Handbook.

Training content responsiveness to Auditor General matters and the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements			
Auditor General findings & recommendations	% of training response	Local Government Handbook: Prerequisites for MPAC functionality	% of training response
Auditor General Findings	100%	Prerequisites for MPAC functionality	100%
Auditor General recommendations	42%		
	71%		100%

It was noted that the training addressed 71% of the Auditor General's findings, and covered 100% of the MPAC functionality prerequisites found in the Handbook. Though most of the Auditor General's findings were addressed, the recommended approaches were not given a thorough focus. Tabled below are the recommendations that were not fully addressed and how the Department responded to them.

Auditor General Recommendation	Departmental response to the recommendations
New Committee members needed to undergo thorough induction on their roles, responsibilities and skills to perform their assigned duties.	1 day training was provided, but was not intense due to limited time.
There needed to be portfolio specific training to ensure that Committees can play their oversight role effectively. An example is project management training for the Service delivery issues, so as for a member to better understand the construction processes and enable them to properly engage with presented information.	Training only focused composition and functionality issues. The training only focused on the financial processes and not on service delivery specific matters.
There was a need for Municipal Public Account Committees to be persuasive in requesting performance information and financial information from Audit Committees for assurance.	Training only covered financial information and not performance information

As much as the prerequisites for MPAC functionality were noted, they were not mentioned in detail and were not emphasised as prerequisites for MPAC functionality.

While it is good to note that the training content was fully aligned to the policy documents, there was a need for the content to have supplementary information that would provide detail on the functionality prerequisites.

How the training provided to MPACs was rolled out and the extent to which intended outcomes were met in light of the dynamic environment municipalities' face.

The Intended approach by the Department on the rollout of the training provided to MPACs and noted outcomes

The approach

In as much as training for MPAC members was paramount, the Department noted that there was a need for MPAC members to understand their roles and responsibilities. This was because many of the councillors were new to the

local government field, and they needed to understand areas such legislative prescripts, membership matters, delegation matters and the reading of financial statements. The Department used an awareness approach to enlighten MPAC members of their powers and functions in matters such as the appointment of professionals to conduct investigations. The Department noted that a blanket approach was used as they felt that municipalities faced the same issues at the same scale.

Outcomes noted by the Department

Even though the Department felt that MPACs should be able to function after the training provided, they still saw the need for more hands-on training and ongoing Departmental guidance for them to perform their functions effectively. The Department also noted that for MPACs to function on their own it was important to provide constant training.

The rollout of the training from the perspective of municipalities

The training responding to municipal environment

While many participants were satisfied that training responded well to the dynamic environment of municipalities, they did however feel that the training was not provided at the right time and that its duration was too short.

The experience of the training

While that majority of the municipalities interviewed were satisfied with the training venue used and its facilitation, all of them were satisfied with the training method used.

The effects of the training provided

It was noted that the majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% were able to provide feedback to their respective municipal councils and engage with their respective audit committees. It was however noted that essential areas such as knowledge of roles & responsibilities and the assurance of municipal documents were new practices attained to only 20% of the municipalities interviewed.

While the Department noted that the training targeted new councillors and intended to ensure that MPAC members understood their roles and responsibilities, it acknowledged that the training period used was too short to achieve the intended outcome. It was noted that the both the Municipalities and the Department agreed that more intensive training and support was needed to ensure that MPACs function effectively.

It was noted from the findings that the training provided had the following strengths and weaknesses:

- The training was strong in the following areas:
 - Feedback to the full municipal council (noted by 60% of municipalities)
 - Engagement and feedback with the Audit Committee (noted by 60% of municipalities)
- The training was weak in the following:
 - Community engagements (noted by 40% of municipalities)
 - Assurance of municipal documents being financial and performance information (noted by 20% of municipalities)
 - Understanding roles and functions (noted by 20% of municipalities)

The strength and weakness findings revealed two issues, the first issue being the packaging of the training and the other being the training intensity. In terms of packaging the training provided was not packaged in a way that would ensure the implementation of all elements within training content, hence the noted strengths and weaknesses. In terms of intensity, the findings indicate that the least intensive training was provided to a majority of municipalities that required highly intensive training and post-training support. Even though it was noted that the training targeted new councillors, the findings indicate that pre-training functionality assessments of MPACs are needed to enable the provision of adequate support where needed.

The noted outcomes indicate that the training design needs to be revisited. A combined approach in the provision of training and post-training support was needed to ensure that MPACs are able to function on their own. Additional activities such as benchmark assessments are needed to assist the Department in understanding the status quo of MPACs and the level of support needed to ensure that they can function of their own.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in light of the evaluation conducted:

- Extension of the duration of the training to ensure that intense training is provided: In light of the agreed view from both the Department and the municipalities that the training period provided was too short, it is recommended that Training needs on this topic needs to be more than a one day session to ensure that issues are discussed thoroughly.
- Development of an ideal MPAC structure model as a base of support: In light of the Municipal MPACs being functional at different levels, it is recommended that a model of a fully functional MPAC structure be developed. Support before during and after training must be based on the municipality's functionality against the model. This would enable the Department in its support to address functionality gaps and prioritise MPACs that need intense support. This would also ensure that trained MPACs are able to function effectively within their environments post training.



cogta

Department:
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the evaluation conducted on training provided to Municipal Public Accounts Committees, between the periods of October 2016 and March 2017. The Evaluation conducted was an Implementation evaluation, to which the findings will be used to establish if there are any areas of improvement in the training that is provided to Municipal Public Accounts Committees.

2. BACKGROUND

Municipal Public Accounts Committees (Hereafter referred to as MPAC) are a structure established by Municipal Councils as per the prescripts of section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 and the Local Government Councillor Handbook developed in 2011, amended in 2016. Both documents which are were previously mentioned detail the following functions of Municipal Public Accounts Committees:

- They must able to hold the Municipal Executive and administration to account.
- It must ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.
- It must be able to review public accounts of the Municipality on behalf of Council.
- It must be able to review the Auditor General's Reports.
- It must be able to take action on the Auditor General's reports and make its findings known without fear or prejudice.

Amongst the deliverables of the MPACs is the development and presentation of the Oversight report, in terms of section 129 of the Municipal Financial Management Act, No 56 of 2003. This is report is crafted after the Annual Report is presented to the MPAC, to which it is forwarded to council for consideration with either the following opinions:

- That it had approved the report with or without uncertainties
- That it had the rejected the annual report
- That it referred back the annual report for the revision of certain comp1nts

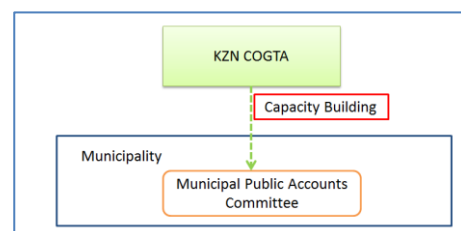
This Evaluation looked into the training provided to MPACs and established if the training provided had indeed enabled these Committees to play the oversight role in the municipalities they serve.

3. RESULTS CHAIN OF MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE TRAINING

The MPAC training result chain in informed by 4 processes

Process 1: Capacity Building of Municipal Public Accounts Committees

The Department provided training to MPACs on their roles and functions, to ensure that they are able to provide adequate oversight to Municipal processes. This was to ensure that they were able to hold the Municipal Executive and Administration to Account.



Processes 2: Enhanced functionality of Municipal Public Accounts Committees

The training aimed to enable MPACs to perform their functions.

Functions included the following:

- Provide full assurance of performance information and financial information
- Engage and provide feedback to communities and ward committees
- Thorough engagement with Audit Committees on the audited documents
- Hold Municipal Executive and Administration to account
- Feedback to Municipal Councils

End Result: Enhanced and sustained good governance

The role played by the MPACs and Audit Committees would then aid in promoting accountability within Municipalities. The role would also enhance and maintain good governance within the Municipality

Feedback loop Process: Auditor General Assessment process

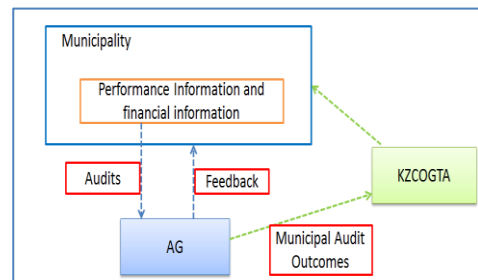
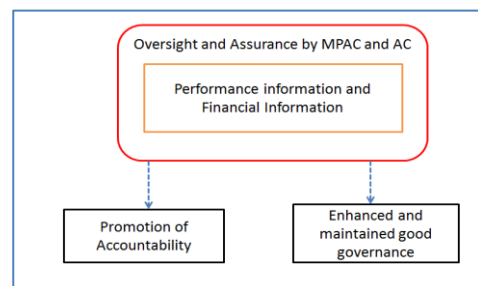
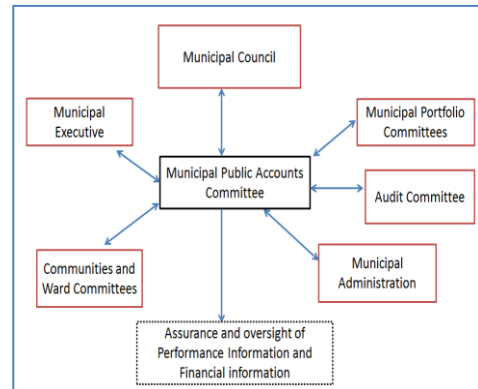
The Auditor General assesses the performance information and financial information of Municipalities. Amongst other elements the Auditor General also assesses the following areas:

- Assurance levels of MPAC
- Assurance levels of Audit Committees
- Level of governance
- Quality of submitted financial statement
- Quality of submitted performance information

Feedback from the Auditor General Report would then enable the MPACs to reviews findings and take necessary actions.

Auditor General Findings also provide valuable information to stakeholders such as the Department and SALGA, that would assist them in understanding the status quo in local governance environment and provide tailor specific support.

The diagram below presents the Municipal Public Accounts Committee results Chain which was used as a base for the evaluation.



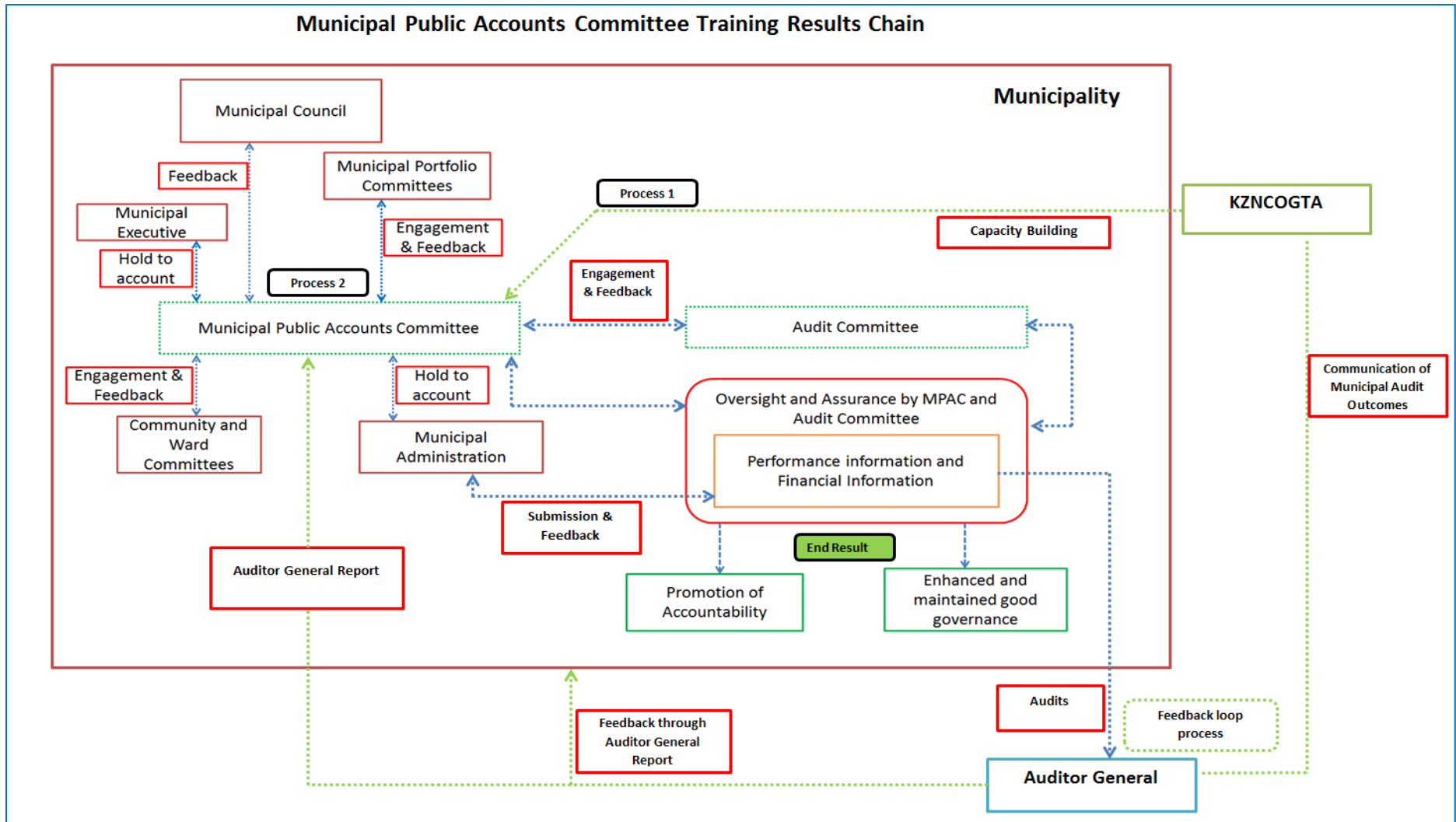


Diagram 1: The Municipal Public Accounts Committee Results Chain

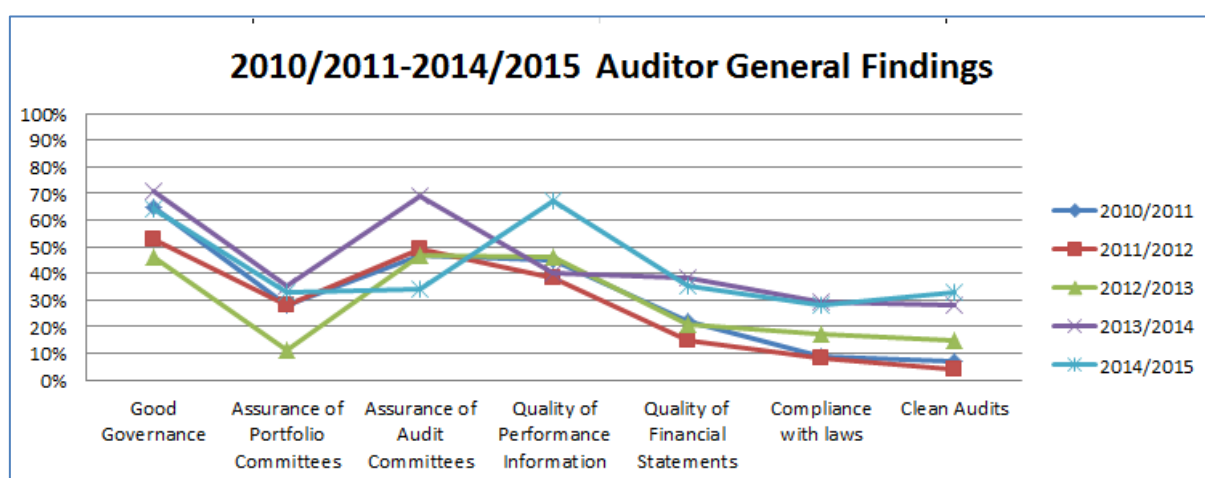
3.2 SUMMARY OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1 The problem statement

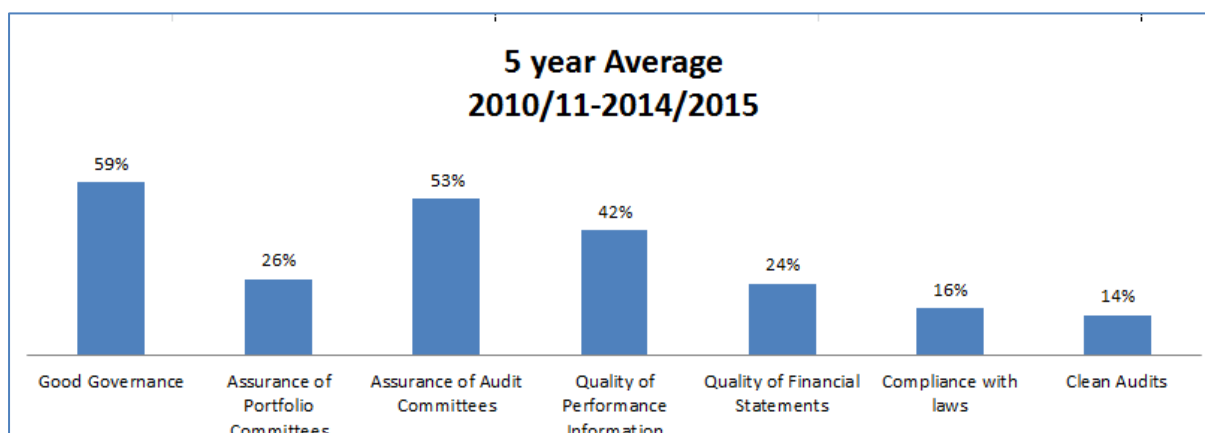
The problem statement is informed by 3 areas being:

- *The importance of Municipal Public Account Committees (hereafter referred to as MPAC) in contributing to positive audit outcomes*
- *Council oversight as an essential role to Municipal Governance*
- *Support provided by the department in strengthening councillor oversight*

The importance of MPACs in enhancing good governance and contributing to positive audit outcomes



In assessing the KwaZulu-Natal Audit outcomes between the 2010/2011 and 2014/2015 financial years, the Auditor-General noted the gradual increase in the number of municipalities obtaining Clean Audits, recording a 26% growth over the years.



In as much as a large number of municipalities were noted to have established good governance structures, it was observed that an average of 26% of Municipalities had MPACs which could fully assure performance information and financial statements.

Even though an average of 53% of municipalities had Audit Committees which were able to fully assure Municipal documents such as performance information and financial statements, the auditable quality of the aforementioned documents submitted to the Auditor General was not found in all municipalities mentioned in the earlier average.

The Auditor General noted that Municipal oversight structures such as the MPACs and Audit Committees played an important role in assisting Municipal Councils in making decisions, by providing assurance to planning and reporting documents. In light of this the Auditor General noted factors that inhibited Municipal Public Account Committees from fully practicing council oversight which were as follows:

- Members of Public Account Committees did not understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Members of the Public Account Committees did not understand financial processes.
- Municipal Public Accounts Committees did not have fully functional committee meetings on a regular basis.

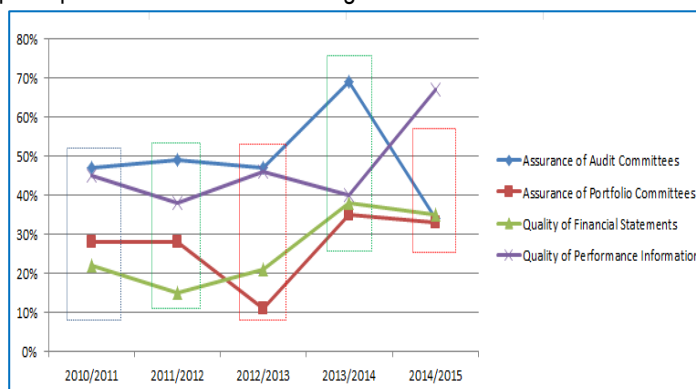
From these factors the Auditor General provided the following recommendations:

- New Committee members needed to undergo thorough induction on their roles, responsibilities and skills to perform their assigned duties.
- In addition to the induction of new members, there was a need for ongoing training to enable Municipal Public Account Committee members to provide valuable inputs in assurance of Municipal documents.
- There needed to be portfolio specific training to ensure that Committees can play their oversight role effectively. An example is project management training for the Service delivery issues, so as for a member to better understand the construction processes and enable them to properly engage with presented information.
- There was a need for Municipal Public Account Committees to be persuasive in requesting performance information and financial information from Audit Committees for assurance.

Council oversight as an essential role to Municipal Governance

The Department developed a Local Government Councillor Handbook in 2011 and revised it in July 2016. Amongst the areas the Handbook covered was the role of Oversight structures, their functions and prerequisites that would ensure that they play their function effectively. The prerequisites included the following:

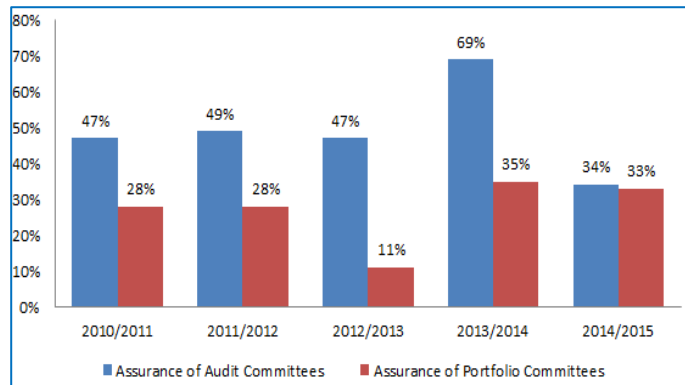
- Functioning Portfolio Committees
- Functional Audit Committees
- Functional and frequent reporting systems
- A supporting administrative support system/committee clerk who is reliable
- A communication strategy to engage the public and ward committees



In noting the Auditor General findings, there was a relationship between the assurance of audit committees and the assurance of MPACs, in a sense that the increases and decreases noted in Audit Committees affected the MPAC assurance capabilities. This also affected the quality of performance information and financial statements submitted to the Auditor General. The aforementioned issue raises the question as to if there is an enabling environment (aligned to the preconditions of the Local Government Councillor Handbook) that enables MPACs to implement their new skills after receiving training.

Support provided by the department

The Department has over the years provided training to MPACs. The Auditor General noted that the outcomes of the training initiated in the 2013/2014 financial year, resulted in the percentage of municipalities with MPACs providing full assurance, increasing from 11% to 35%. Even though there was a significant increase in the number of municipalities with



Portfolio Committee assurance abilities, the number of municipalities dropped from 35% to 33% in the 2014/2015 financial year. This raised the question of the sustainability of new practices after the training has been provided.

In light of the presentation of the aforementioned areas the following questions arose:

- To what extent has the training design and methodology responded to issues raised by the Auditor General?
- How does the Department ensure that there is an enabling environment for MPACs to implement their practices after receiving training?
- In light of the fact that the training enhances the assurance capability of MPACs, does it enable them to sustainably implement new practices on their own? Is constant Departmental support needed to sustain their new practices?
- In as much as MPACs are being trained, is the environment enabling for them to implement their new skills, as per the prerequisites of the Local Government Councillor Handbook?

3.3 Summary of the evaluation plan

- **The purpose of this evaluation**

To establish if the training provided to MPACs enables its members to sustainably provide oversight in Municipal processes.

- **Evaluation Question**

In light of the fact that the training enhances the assurance capability of MPAC members, does it enable them to sustainably implement new practices on their own? Is constant Departmental support needed to sustain their new practices?

Objectives and evaluation questions

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- **To understand how the training design and methodology responded to the issues raised by the Auditor General and the Local Government Councillor Handbook**
 - To what extent has the training design and methodology responded to issues raised by the Auditor General?
 - In as much as MPACs are being trained, is the environment enabling for them to implement their new skills, as per the prerequisites of the Local Government Councillor Handbook?
- **To understand how the training provided to MPACs was rolled out and if the intended outcomes had been met in the dynamic environment Municipalities face.**
 - How is the training design and provision adapted to the dynamic environment of municipalities?
 - How was the training relevant to the needs of the MPACs?
 - What approach was used in the rollout of the training MPACs? To what extent is there a correlation between the approach used and the issues raised by the Auditor General?
 - What are the noted outcomes of the training provided? In terms of the realisation of outcomes, are Municipal Public Accounts Committees able to:
 - Perform their allocated roles and functions?
 - Provide full assurance to Municipal documents (Performance Information and Financial information) presented before them?
 - Engage and provide feedback to communities and ward committees?
 - Provide feedback to Municipal Councils to which they were appointed?
 - Engage and provide feedback to Audit Committees?
 - If these outcomes are not realised, what are the factors that inhibited the attainment of these outcomes?
 - Are MPACs able to perform these functions on their own? Or do they need Departmental assistance to sustain their new practices? If they need Departmental assistance, what are factors that contribute to Municipal Public Accounts Committees not conducting their new practices on their own?

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology used a combination of 3 methods which were as follows:

- Desktop review: A desktop review using the training material, the Auditor General findings and the Local Government Handbook were used to assess training alignment.
- In-depth interviews:
 - In-depth interviews were conducted with the Departmental officials from the Municipal Governance and Municipal Finance Units to establish the approach used and noted effects
 - Interviews were also conducted with MPAC chairpersons to establish their perspective of the rollout and the noted effects.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

4. HOW THE TRAINING DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY RESPONDED TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK

5.1 The extent to which the training design and methodology responded to issues raised by the Auditor General

This section looks into the extent to which the training provided was aligned to the issues raised by the Auditor General and the prerequisite elements for a functional MPAC found in the Local Government handbook. In terms of the 2015/2016 Auditor General Audit report, the following factors were noted as issues that inhibited the functioning of Municipal oversight structures:

- Members of MPACs did not understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Members of the MPACs did not understand financial processes.
- MPACs did not have fully functional committee meetings on a regular basis.

In light of the aforementioned factors the Auditor General made the following recommendations:

- New Committee members needed to undergo thorough induction on their roles, responsibilities and skills to perform their assigned duties.
- In addition to the induction of new members, there was a need for ongoing training to enable MPAC members to provide valuable inputs in assurance of Municipal documents.
- There needed to be portfolio specific training to ensure that MPACs play their oversight role effectively. An example is project management training for Service delivery issues, so as for a member to better understand the construction processes and enable them to properly engage with presented information.
- There was a need for MPACs to be persuasive in requesting performance information and financial information from Audit Committees for assurance.

In response to what was noted by the Auditor General the Department developed and implemented a one day training session that was district based and consisted of 2 areas. The first area focused on establishment and operations of MPACs. whilst the second area emphasised on specific financial training. The training was provided between October 2016 and March 2017 in light of the Local Government elections that were held in August 2016. The training was also provided because the majority of the councillors elected were new to the local government field and had no background in the performance of oversight. The main purpose of the training was to capacitate MPAC members on their roles and responsibilities and to enable them to perform oversight activities. Table 1 looks into the extent to the training provided responded to the Auditor General findings.

Table 1			
Auditor General findings	Departmental response to the Auditor General findings	Correlation %	
Factors that influence MPACs not being able to conduct proper oversight			
Members of Public Account Committees did not understand their roles and responsibilities.	Training aimed to train members on their roles and responsibilities	100%	Full correlation
Members of the Public Account Committees did not understand financial processes.	Training also aims to enable members to understand financial processes, enable them to analyse financial statements and audit plans. Moreover, to enable them to analyse Annual reports and prepare oversight reports	100%	Full correlation
Municipal Public Accounts Committees did not have fully functional committee meetings on a regular basis.	Training provided requirements on the meeting frequency being a minimum of quarterly engagements	100%	Full correlation
Recommendations in light of the Auditor General findings			
New Committee members needed to undergo thorough induction on their roles, responsibilities and skills to perform their assigned duties.	1 day training was provided, but was not intense due to limited time.	50%	Partial correlation
In addition to the induction of new members, there was a need for ongoing training to enable Municipal Public Account Committee members to provide valuable inputs in assurance of Municipal documents.	Ongoing training is provided based on preparation of certain events such as preparation of events	100%	Full correlation
There needed to be portfolio specific training to ensure that Committees can play their oversight role effectively. An example is project management training for the Service delivery issues, so as for a member to better understand the construction processes and enable them to properly engage with presented information.	Training only focused composition and functionality issues. The training only focused on the financial processes and not on service delivery specific matters.	0%	No correlation
There was a need for Municipal Public Account Committees to be persuasive in requesting performance information and financial information from Audit Committees for assurance.	Training only covered financial information and not performance information	50%	Partial correlation

Table 1 indicates that the training provided responded more to the factors influencing MPACs in not performing their functions effectively, than the recommendations provided by the Auditor General on how the situation can be remedied. This is seen in the training focusing more on roles and responsibilities, financial oversight activities and the regulation of the structures. The training was however not designed to provide a thorough induction on the roles and responsibilities of MPAC members. Moreover the training content was limited to financial processes and not on performance information and portfolio specific areas such as project management.

4.2 How the Department ensured that the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements were incorporated into the training provided

The Department developed a Local Government Councillor Handbook in 2011 and revised it in July 2016. Amongst the areas the Handbook covered was the role of Oversight structure, their functions and prerequisites that would ensure that they play their functions effectively. The prerequisites were as follows:

- Functioning Portfolio Committees

- Functional Audit Committees
- Functional and frequent reporting systems
- A supporting administrative support system/committee clerk who is reliable
- A communication strategy to engage the public and ward committees

An analysis was conducted in which the training content was analysed against the noted prerequisites. This was to understand if the prerequisites were considered in the training provided. Table 2 presents the findings of the analysis.

Table 2			
Prerequisites for MPAC functionality	Aligned areas found in the training content		In Detail or in summary
Functioning Portfolio Committees	Yes	Mentioned in the Oversight report: MPAC tasks	In summary
Functional Audit Committee	Yes	Mentions roles and responsibilities of the audit committees	In summary
Functional and frequent reporting systems	Yes	Mentioned in the Reporting and accountability section	In summary
A supporting administrative support system/committee clerk who is reliable	Yes	Mentioned in the Support to MPAC section	In summary
A communication strategy to engage the public and ward committees	Yes	Mentioned in the Oversight report: MPAC tasks	In summary

It was noted that the training content was aligned to 100% of the prerequisites found in the Local Government Handbook. While the training content covered areas aligned to the prerequisites, it was noted that these areas were mentioned in summary and not emphasized as key foundation elements for the functioning of MPACs.

4.3 How the Department ensured that Auditor General Findings and the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements had been incorporated into the training provided

Table 3	
Training content responsiveness to Auditor General matters and the Local Government Councillor Handbook requirements	
Auditor General findings	Prerequisites for MPAC functionality
71%	100%

Table 3 presents extent to which the training was responsive to the functionality prerequisites and found it responded more to the Local Government Handbook at 100% than the Auditor General Findings at 71%. Though most of the Auditor General's findings were addressed, the recommended approaches were not given much focus.

While it is good to note that the training content was fully aligned to Departmental policy documents, there was a need for the content to have supplementary information which provides detail on the functionality prerequisites.

5. HOW THE TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES WAS ROLLED OUT AND IF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES HAD BEEN MET IN THE DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT MUNICIPALITIES FACE

The purpose of this section is to present the findings on the training rollout from the perspectives of the Department and supported municipalities.

5.1 Intended approach by the Department on the rollout of the training provided to MPACs and noted outcomes

- **The approach:**

In as much as training for MPAC members was paramount, the Department noted that there was a need for MPAC members to understand their roles and responsibilities. This was because many of the councillors were new to the local government field, and they needed to understand areas such legislative prescripts, membership matters, delegation matters and the reading financial statements. The Department used an awareness approach to enlighten MPAC members on their powers and functions, such as their capabilities to appoint professionals to conduct investigations. The Department further noted that a blanket approach was used as municipalities faced the same issues at the same scale.

- **The timing:**

The Department felt that the training was provided at the right time considering that 80% of councillors were new because of the 2016 Local Government elections and that they had no background as to how they should conduct oversight.

- **The use of venues:**

The Department noted that Council chambers were used for training because the participants use the same venues to implement their practices.

- **The training method used:**

The Department noted that they used both the presentation and interactive methods. This was because the methods utilised enabled the use of scenarios, which allowed participants to engage and ask further questions. Departmental officials facilitated the training sessions, which included Specialists in the Municipal Governance and Municipal Finance areas.

- **Training intensity**

The Department noted that the training intensity was light but inadequate. One of the reasons was that SALGA offered more detailed training over three days and exposed them more on roles and responsibilities. The other reason was that due to the notion that many of the councillors were new to the local government field, intense training could not be provided in a period of one day.

- **Noted Effects of the training**

The Department noted the following effects:

- Whilst MPACs are expected to function after the provision of training, there was a need for more hands-on training and ongoing Departmental guidance for MPACs to function effectively.
- It was noted that MPACs were functional at different levels, which required different levels of training to accommodate their levels of ability.
- It was noted that for MPACs to function on their own constant training was needed.

Recommendations from the Department

The Department noted the following recommendations:

- In view of the circumstance that both the Department and SALGA provide MPAC orientation trainings to the same councillors, it was recommended that there was a need for the development of an integrated approach that would prevent duplication of support to the clients that they serve.
- Considering the point that MPACs were noted to be unable to perform allocated functions on their own, it was recommended that constant training was needed to reach the point of independent functionality.
- In view of less intense training provided to new MPACs on their roles and functions, it was recommended that the time allocated for training sessions be extended. This would enable the Department to provide more detailed MPAC training within 2 days and above.
- Considering that MPACs were functional at different levels, the Department recommended that training should be customised to the oversight capabilities of municipalities.

5.2 The training rollout from the perspective of the participants

5 MPAC chair persons of various municipalities were interviewed. In which they were part of the training provided in the period of October 2016 and March 2017. The MPAC chairpersons of the following municipalities were interviewed

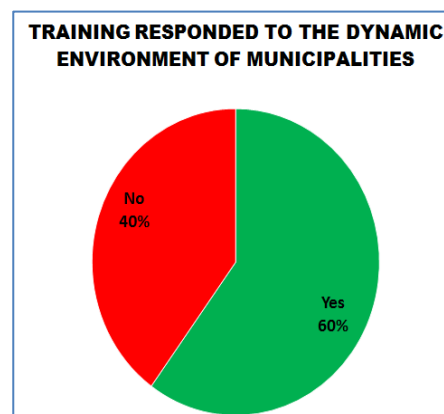
- Abaqulusi Local Municipality
- Jozini Local Municipality
- Umkhanyakude District Municipality
- Amajuba District Municipality
- Mthonjaneni Local Municipality

The following was found:

- **Training responsiveness to participants**

- Training responded to the dynamic environment of municipalities

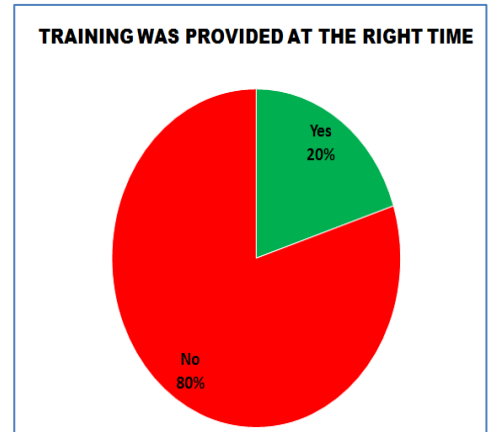
The majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% noted that the training responded to the dynamic environment of municipalities. A major reason for this was that they felt that the training topic and agenda was needed by new councillors in understanding their roles and responsibilities. The remaining 40% did not feel that the training responded to the dynamic environment of the municipalities as they felt the topics covered within



sessions were too general and there was no emphasis on MPACs. While it was felt that the topics in the training were too general, emphasis was pointed to the depth of the topics discussed and the training method used, to which it was recommended that the training method used by SALGA needed be emulated.

- The timing of the training

The minority of the municipalities interviewed at 20% noted that the training was provided at the right time. The remaining 80% noted that the training was provided too late citing that the timing did not enable participants to conduct oversight on the Annual report within time. It was also noted that the training provided would have been useful if it was provided straight after the Local Government elections.



- The duration of the training

All municipalities interviewed noted that the one day training duration was not adequate, citing that the training agenda was too packed for a one day session and felt that this was an information overload. The MPAC chairpersons also felt that such a training topic needed a three to four day training duration.

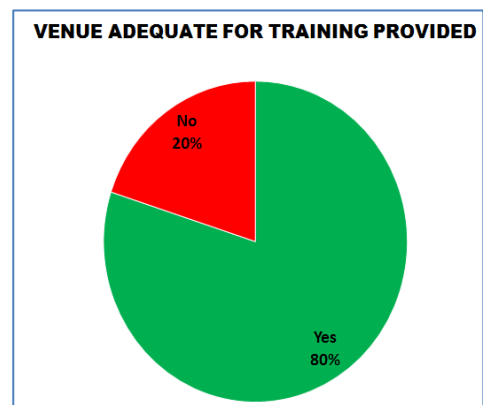
- **Overall summary of the Training responsiveness to participants**

While the majority of the municipalities interviewed were satisfied that training responded well to the dynamic environment of the municipalities, they did feel that the training was not provided at the right time and that its duration was too short.

- **The training experience**

- Venue of the training

All Municipalities interviewed noted that the training was provided in municipal council chambers. The majority of the municipalities interviewed at 80% felt that the venues used were adequate for the training provided. The remaining 20% of the municipalities visited felt that the venue used was not adequate citing that it was better if they were trained away from the municipal council chambers. By doing this, it would ensure better focus and less disturbances for participants.

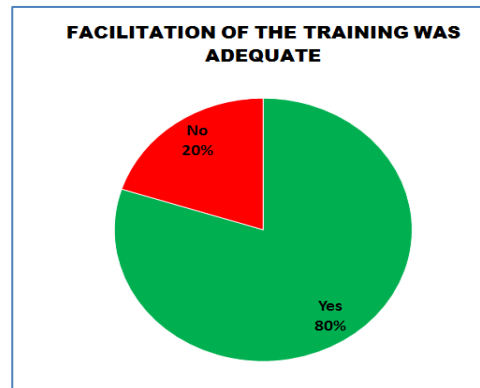


- Training method used

The Municipalities interviewed noted that the training provided used an interactive approach. All municipalities interviewed noted that the method used was adequate as it enabled them to engage with the facilitator and have thorough engagements on training topics.

- Facilitation of the training

The Municipalities interviewed noted that the training was facilitated by Departmental officials. 80% of the municipalities interviewed felt that the right facilitators were used for the training, noting that they were well experienced in the topics covered and were able to give relevant examples on issues discussed. The remaining 20% felt that the facilitation was more of a rush-rush session, to which it was noted that there was more of an urgency to complete the training content within a set hour, than facilitating with the objective of enhancing skills.



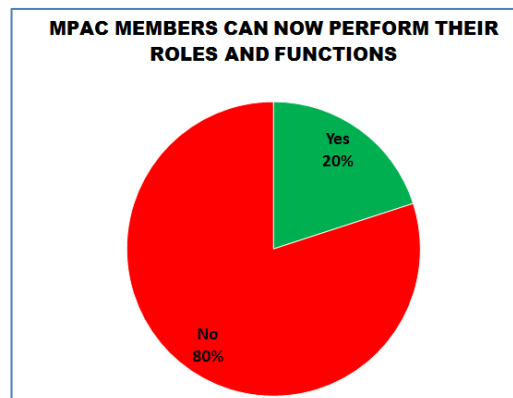
- **Overall summary of the Experience of the training**

While that majority of the municipalities interviewed were satisfied with the training venue and facilitation method used, all of them were satisfied with the training method used.

- **Effects of the training provided**

- MPAC members can perform their allocated roles and functions

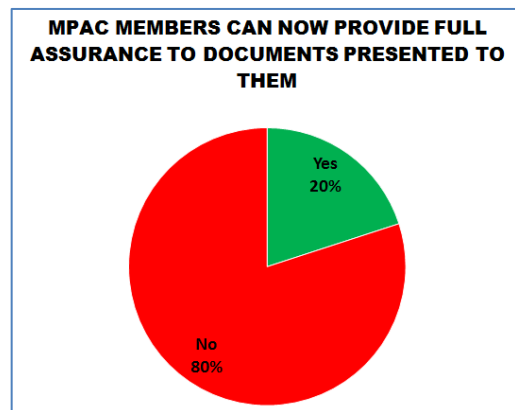
The minority of the municipalities at 20% noted that their MPAC can now perform their allocated roles and functions. The municipalities interviewed also noted that MPAC members which were associated with other Portfolio Committees often lacked objectivity on matters assessed. An example was in Amajuba District Municipality where it was noted that some MPAC members lacked objectivity on service delivery matters as they were part of



Technical Services Portfolio Committees. The remaining 80% of the municipalities interviewed noted that their MPACs cannot perform their functions, citing that members still did not know how to perform their roles and responsibilities. Another noted reason was that MPAC members were now performing functions that were not in their scope without the necessary skills. An example was noted in Jozini Local Municipality where MPAC members were observed to be conducting activities similar to forensic investigators and often conducted intervened in matters without following the necessary protocol.

MPAC members can now provide full assurance to municipal documents (Performance Information and Financial information) presented to them

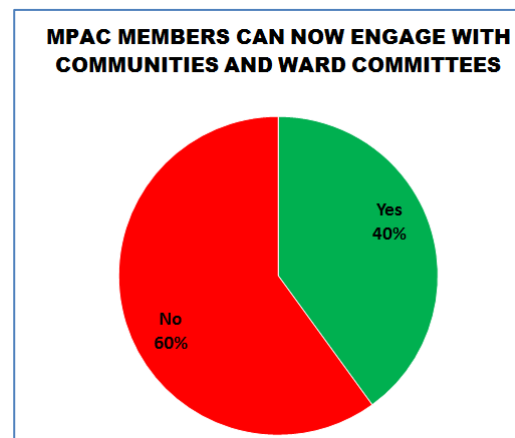
The minority of the municipalities at 20% noted that their MPAC can now provide full assurance to municipal documents presented to them, to a point that they are able to produce an oversight report. Mthonjaneni Local Municipality noted that could now provide full assurance to a point that they can produce an oversight report on their own. The remaining 80% of the municipalities noted that



could not provide full assurance to municipal documents presented to them, citing that they needed more training on assessing performance and financial information. Another reason was that their municipal administration staff was supporting the MPACs in providing assurance of documents presented to them. An example was seen in Umkhanyakude District Municipality where it was noted that the senior management in the municipality were involved in the assurance of municipal documents.

- The MPAC can now provide feedback to communities and ward committees

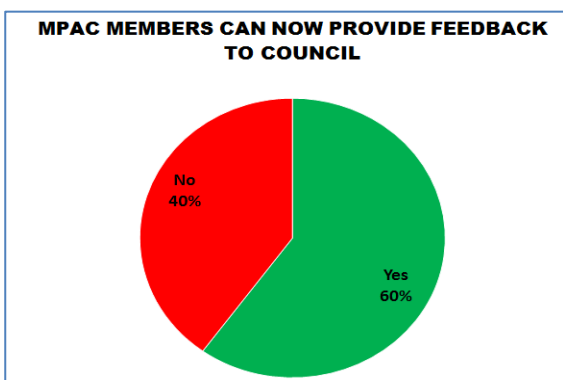
The minority of the municipalities interviewed at 40% noted that their MPACs can now engage with communities and ward committees, through annual and quarterly community meetings. Amajuba and Umkhanyakude District Municipality noted that they conduct community engagements on a regular basis. The remaining 60% noted that they were not able to engage with communities and ward committees citing that the lack that MPACs did not have a budget for such an exercise. The



municipalities interviewed also noted that they could not engage with communities as they did not know that engaging with communities was part of their functions. An example was noted in Abaqulusi Municipality where they were not aware that meeting with community members on oversight matters was part of their function. Jozini Local Municipality noted that they did not have the adequate budget for community engagements.

- MPAC can now provide feedback to the Municipal council

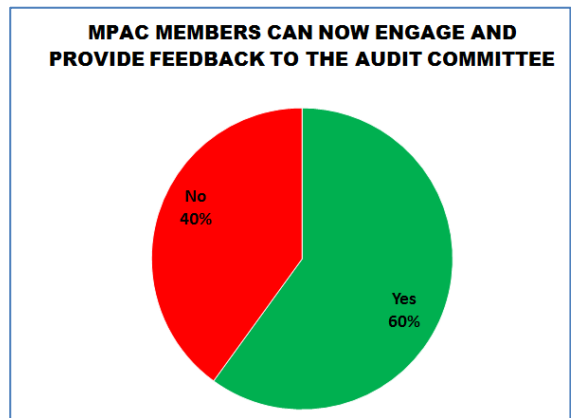
The majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% noted that their MPACs can now provide feedback to their Municipal Councils. The remaining 40% differed citing that they were not given platforms to provide feedback. Abaqulusi



Local Municipality noted that in light of the fact that they are part of opposition parties, they were not given platforms to provide feedback to council on matters assessed by their MPAC. Another reason was that MPACs had not reached the stage of providing feedback to the Municipal Councils.

○ The MPAC can now engage and provide feedback to Audit Committees

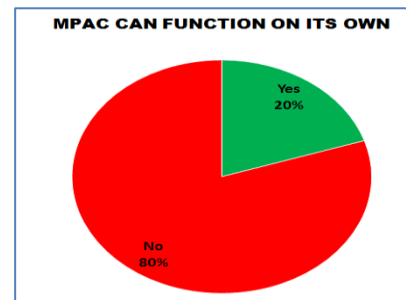
The majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% noted that their MPACs can now engage, and provide feedback to their respective Audit Committees. The remaining 40% noted that they could not engage with their Audit Committees citing that audit structures had recently been established. This was noted in Umkhanyakude District Municipality. The other reason was that the



MPAC was not able to engage with the Audit Committees, which was noted in Abaqulusi Local Municipality.

○ The MPAC can function on its own

The minority of the municipalities interviewed at 20% noted that their MPACs can function on their own, but with constant monitoring from the Department. The remaining 60% of the municipalities interviewed felt that their MPACs cannot function on their own citing that support was needed from the Department to ensure that the intended goal is met. The means to this support is noted in their recommendations.



○ Recommendations from the municipalities

The Municipalities interviewed recommended the following:

- In view that the approach used in training was not in-depth, municipalities recommended that more intense training and on-site support was needed to ensure that MPACs are stable.
- Considering that the majority of the municipalities interviewed could not assure documents due to lack of skills, it was recommended that trainings on specific topics such as reading of financial statements and assessing performance information needed to be included in the rollout of MPAC trainings.
- In light of detail that MPACs did not understand their roles and functions, municipalities recommended that Departmental support must enable MPACs to work with municipal managers and address risk management issues.
- In light of the municipalities feeling that the MPAC training provided was too general, it was recommended that such trainings be scenario based empowering. This would encourage MPACs to work towards full functionality.

- In view that municipalities felt that the training provided was not in depth, it was recommended that the training period of between two to four days would be sufficient to meet its intended purpose.
- Considering that the municipalities interviewed felt that they could not function on their own, it was recommended that training must be based on a MPAC's level of functionality.

- **Overall summary of the effects of the training provided**

It was noted that the majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% were able to provide feedback to their municipal councils and engage with their respective audit committees. It was however noted that essential areas such as knowledge of roles & responsibilities and assurance of municipal documents were new practices attained by 20% of the municipalities interviewed.

Table 4	Abaqulusi	Jozini	Umkhanyakude	Amajuba	Mthonjaneni
MPAC members are able to perform their allocated roles and functions	X	X	X	√	√
MPAC members can now provide full assurance to municipal documents (Performance Information and Financial information) presented to them	X	X	X	X	√
The MPAC can now engage and provide feedback to communities and ward committees	X	X	√	√	X
The MPAC can now provide feedback to the Municipal council	X	√	X	√	√
The MPAC can now engage and provide feedback to Audit Committees	X	√	X	√	√
The MPAC its functions on its own	X	X	X	√	X
Functionality Total	0	2	1	5	4
Functionality percentage	0%	33%	17%	83%	67%

Table 4 presents a summary of the status of effects per municipality interviewed. The findings presented indicate that the municipalities can be grouped to 3 different categories, which are as follows:

- **Category 1:** Establishing group: This group cannot perform most of its functions and requires intense Departmental support that would ensure its functionality. The Category range would be between 0%-45%
- **Category 2:** Developing group: This group can perform some of its functions and would require medium level of support in addressing noted gaps of their functionality. The Category range would be between 46%-75%
- **Category 3:** Fully functional group: This group can perform most of its functions on their own and would require light support in addressing noted gaps of their functionality. The Category range would be between 76%-100%

In light of the presented categories the interviewed municipalities fall under the following groups as found in table 5

Table 5		
Category	Number of Municipalities in category	% of total municipalities
Category 1	3 out of 5	60%
Category 2	1 out of 5	20%
Category 3	1 out of 5	20%

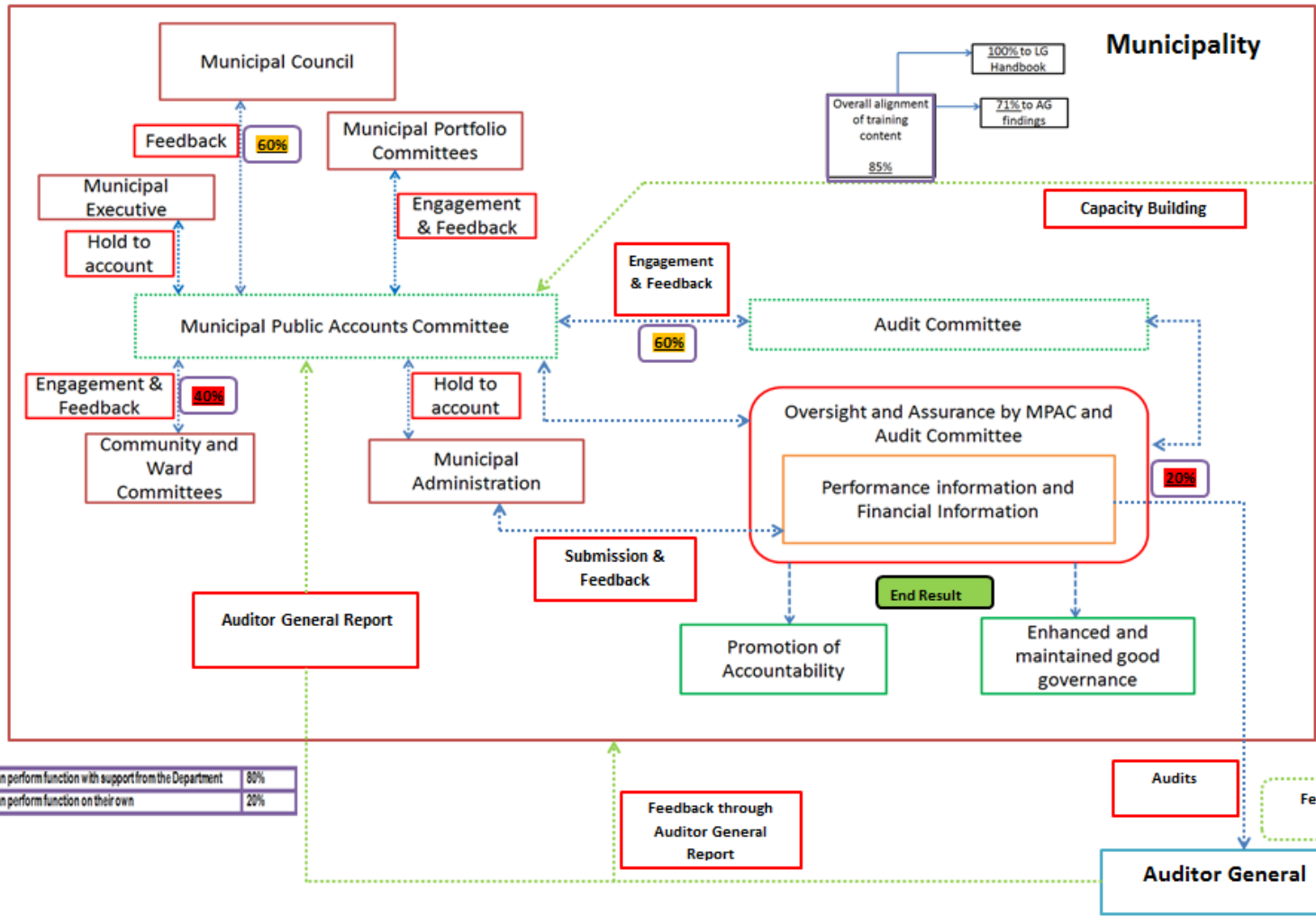
Table 5 indicates that a majority of the municipalities interviewed at 60% fell under Category 1, to which they required intense Departmental support in ensuring that they function on their own. The minority of municipalities interviewed fell under categories 2 and 3, required light and medium support for full functionality.

6.4 The training roll out and its outcomes to recipient MPACs

While the Department noted that the training targeted new councillors and intended to ensure that MPAC members understand their roles and responsibilities, it acknowledged that the training period used was too short to achieve the intended outcome. It was noted that both the Municipalities and the Department agreed that more intensive training and support was needed to ensure that MPACs function effectively. In assessing the findings against the value chain the following was found as seen in the diagram.

Municipal Public Accounts Committee Training Results Chain

Actual results



The analysis indicates that the training was aligned to the Auditor General Findings and Local Government Handbook at 85% alignment. The following strengths and weaknesses were noted from the results:

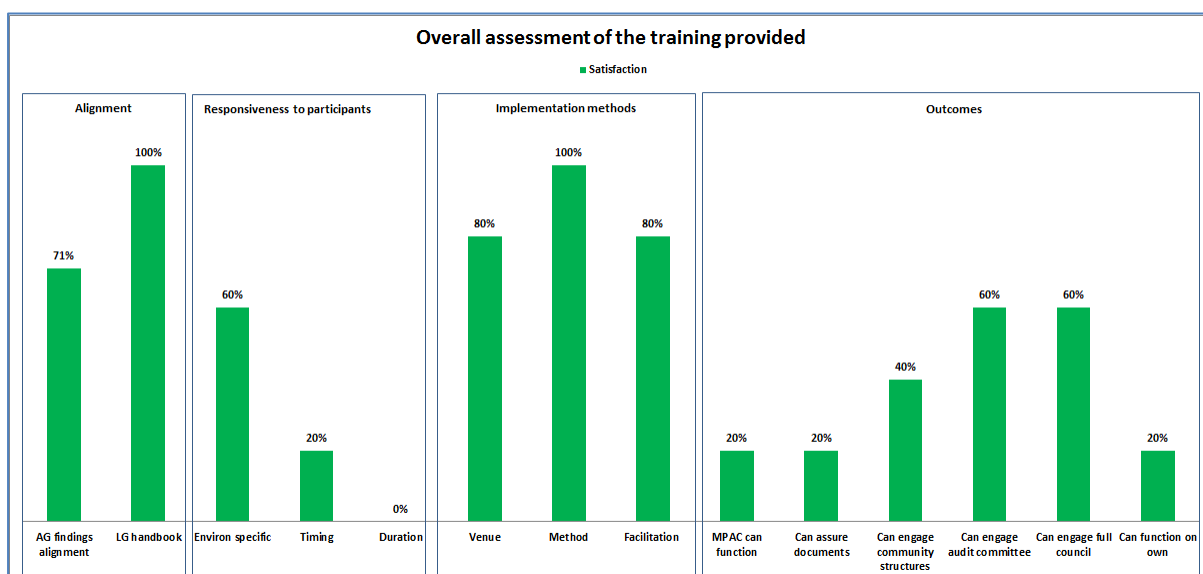
- The training was strong in the following:
 - Feedback to the full municipal council (noted by 60% of municipalities)
 - Engagement and feedback with the Audit Committee (noted by 60% of municipalities)
- The training was weak in the following:
 - Community engagements (noted by 40% of municipalities)
 - Assurance of municipal documents being financial and performance information (noted by 20% of municipalities)
 - Understanding roles and functions (noted by 20% of municipalities)

The strength and weakness findings reveal 2 issues, the first issue being the packaging of the training and the other being the training intensity. In terms packaging the training provided was not packaged that would enable implementation of elements found in the training contents, as seen in the strengths and weaknesses. In terms of intensity, the findings indicate that the least intensive training was provided to a majority of municipalities that required high intensive training and post-training support. Even though it was noted that the training targeted new councillors, the findings indicate that pre-training functionality assessments of MPACs are needed to ensure that the right amounts of support are provided where needed.

6. HOW THE TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNT COMMITTEES ENABLED ITS MEMBERS TO SUSTAINABLY PROVIDE OVERSIGHT IN MUNICIPAL PROCESSES

7.1 Conclusion

A question arises from the assessing the findings: *In light of the fact that the training aimed to address the Auditor General findings by enhancing the assurance capabilities of MPACs, did it enable them to sustainably implement new practices on their own? Is constant Departmental support needed to sustain their new practices?*



The training did not enable the majority of municipalities to implement practices on their own. Categorised support and constant monitoring would ensure that municipalities sustain their newly acquired practices once attained.

As noted in the previous section, a majority of municipalities interviewed noted that their MPACs were not able to perform their roles and functions on their own. Moreover they could not provide full assurance to municipal documents, despite being able to engage with audit committees and municipal councils.

In view of the issue raised above, there is an indication that the approach used on the training subject was too light for the support needed by the majority of municipalities. The need for thorough training intensity as recommended by the Auditor General is echoed in the evaluation findings, that the duration used for these workshops was not adequate in enabling MPACs to understand their roles and functions. Moreover the findings indicate the need for pre-training assessments of MPACs, so as to provide the necessary support where needed and to prevent non-implementation of skills due to overlooked environmental factors MPACs face.

While the implementation methods were satisfactory to the participants, other root causes of these outcomes lay with the alignment issues and training responsiveness to its users. It was also noted that as much as the training content was 100% aligned to the prerequisites found in the handbook, it seems that it was not packaged in a way that would make it environment specific, and enable the use of needed training methods to meet set objectives.

The noted outcomes indicate that the training design needs to be revisited. A combined approach in the provision of training and support is needed to ensure that MPACs are able to function on their own. Additional activities such as benchmark assessments are needed to ensure an understanding of the status quo of MPACs, and to establish required levels of support that would ensure that they can function of their own. Moreover support it should be categorised to levels of intensity so as to ensure that MPACs at different levels of functionality are able to obtain customised support.

7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in light of the evaluation conducted:

- Extension of the duration of the training to ensure that intense training is provided: In light of the agreed view from both the Department and the municipalities that the training period provided was too short, it is recommended that Training needs on this topic needs to be more than a one day session to ensure that issues are discussed thoroughly.
- Development of an ideal MPAC structure model as a base of support: In light of the Municipal MPACs being functional at different levels, it is recommended that a model of a fully functional MPAC structure be developed. Support before during and after training must be based on the municipality's functionality against the model. This would enable the Department in its support to address functionality gaps and prioritise MPACs that need intense support. This would also ensure that trained MPACs are able to function effectively within their environments post training.

SIGN OFF OF EVALUATION REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES (OCTOBER 2016 TO MARCH 2017)

SUBMITTED BY

M. SOGWAGWA
DIRECTOR: EVALUATION

DATE

SUPPORTED/ NOT SUPPORTED

MS A. SEKHESA
CHIEF DIRECTOR:
STRATEGIC PLANNING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DATE

SUPPORTED/ NOT SUPPORTED

MS H. KHUNOETHE
CHIEF DIRECTOR:
CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY

DATE

SUPPORTED/ NOT SUPPORTED

MS H. KHUNOETHE
ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR:
MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

DATE

SUPPORTED/ NOT SUPPORTED

MS J. KRISHNAN
CHIEF DIRECTOR:
MUNICIPAL FINANCE

DATE

SIGN OFF OF EVALUATION REPORT: IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF DEPARTMENTAL TRAINING PROVIDED TO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES

SUPPORTED/ NOT SUPPORTED

MR L. PIENAAR
ACTING DDG: LOCAL GOVERNANCE

DATE

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

MR. T. TUBANE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DATE

