LESSONS FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE OF CITIES REPORTING PROCESS

1.   INTRODUCTION

The 2004 and 2006 South African State of Cities reports were both impressive products that had a significant impact. Based on the experiences of producing and disseminating these two reports, there are many lessons that can be learned as to how to undertake State of Cities reporting processes and how the process for the next South African State of Cities report can be improved. These lessons and recommendations need to be seen within the context of a vision of an ideal State of Cities reporting process.

> **Vision**
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> *The State of Cities process has an appropriate institutional home and a clearly defined purpose/target audience. The reporting process is inclusive and incorporates the views of a range of key urban stakeholders.*
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> *The analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative indicators/ data that are relevant and reliable, and on an analytical framework that is appropriate to the context and easily-understandable.*
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> *The end products, which are appropriately presented for the purpose and target audience, contain an appropriate analysis of relevant qualitative and quantitative information, provide an understanding of the dynamics of cities within their broader context, and have clear conclusions and recommendations regarding key urban development challenges. The end products are widely disseminated to relevant urban stakeholders in easily-usable formats at appropriate times, and have a real impact on policy and practice.*

The recommendations, which are summarised in the table below, are discussed in more detail in the rest of the report under the headings of the eight key topics.

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations

TOPIC	Recommendations for third State of Cities report (2010/2011)	Recommendations for fourth State of Cities report and beyond
Institutional home	The South African Cities Network (SACN) provides a good model of an institutional home for a State of Cities reporting process, and should continue to be the institutional home for the South African State of Cities reports.	In the long term, a network of Local Urban Observatories and a National Urban Observatory, i.e., programmes for the ongoing collection and analysis of city-level data, should be established as a joint venture with other key stakeholders.
Purpose/ target audience	The purposes and target groups of the South African State of Cities reports provide a good model for other State of Cities reports. The purposes and target groups should stay the same, but clear priorities should be set in terms of purposes and target groups.	
Reporting process	There should be engagement with the political leadership (at all levels), private sector and civil society to ensure that a range of issues relevant to all are reflected in the final State of Cities report.	
	The State of Cities report would benefit from having two parts. In addition to the comprehensive overview, there should also be a section which goes into greater depth on key issues/themes (which should be identified through the reporting process).	

TOPIC	Recommendations for third State of Cities report (2010/2011)	Recommendations for fourth State of Cities report and beyond
	The approach of having a core writing group under an editor-in-chief is appropriate, and should continue for future South African State of Cities reports, but the writing group should not be too large. In addition, a small, independent editorial committee should be established to have final editorial oversight.	
	It is important that there is an adequate budget and sufficient time (it has been suggested that at least 18 months is necessary from the generation of the data to the handing over of the draft to the publisher).	
Indicators/ data	Strategic and well-defined indicators should be selected for each theme (including internationally-used indicators, such as the UN-Habitat ones, where possible). It should be noted, however, that in many cases indicators will cut across themes, and these cross-cutting indicators will be should be clearly presented as such.	-
	The availability, reliability and consistency of data on the selected cities should be assessed, and a decision should then be made on which of the above indicators should be used in the short term.	In the longer term, there should be a move towards using as many of the identified key indicators as possible.
	Municipalities should start collecting data for agreed-upon essential key indicators for which reliable and consistent data are currently not available.	In the longer term, data for other key indicators should be collected. This should start with, in the medium term, engagement with other stakeholders (such as national statistical agencies, e.g. Statistics South Africa). In the long term, a network of Local Urban Observatories and a National Urban Observatory should be established to co-ordinate the collection of city-level data.
Analytical framework	An analytical framework such as the one used in the South African State of Cities reports is useful for analysis, but it is not necessarily useful as a way of structuring the entire report. The definitions of the themes in the South African analytical framework should be refined for future reports (for example, to align them with urban policies) and there should be an explicit recognition that the traditional sectors (e.g. housing) cut across all of the themes in the analytical framework.	
End products	The South African State of Cities reports show the value of having a substantial and comprehensive State of Cities report, and there should continue to be an approximately 200-page report that provides a comprehensive overview of South African cities and which has a statistical almanac at the back. Data need to be more appropriately integrated into the text, though (with avoidance of overly large and complex tables in the main body of the report). The design and format of the 2004 South African State of Cities is a particularly good model.	

TOPIC	Recommendations for third State of Cities report (2010/2011)	Recommendations for fourth State of Cities report and beyond
	State of Cities reports need to focus on the largest and most important cities in a country, but it may be useful to expand the scope of the report to include more secondary cities, for the purposes of comparison. This should ideally be done in a separate section which aggregates data for groups or categories of cities to simplify understanding.	
	A summary report of not more than about 20 pages should be produced to supplement the full State of Cities report and extend its impact.	
	Dissemination of State of Cities reports through a website is important. The State of Cities report should continue to be lodged on the SACN website, and background papers and the data should also be put on the website. The website should be regularly updated with new information (e.g. new data).	In the long-term, searchable databases of updated city-level statistics should form part of the National Urban Observatory and Local Urban Observatories websites.
Dissemination	The dissemination process for the South African State of Cities reports is comprehensive and effective and should continue, but there should be increased emphasis on workshops for municipal staff below senior management level.	
	There should be publicity events to raise broader public awareness about the important role of cities (e.g., an art competition).	In the long term, SACN should participate in the development of a broadly based campaign to raise public awareness about the important role of cities.
	There should be monitoring and evaluation of the dissemination process and its impact.	
Timing	The data/analysis of the 2010/2011 South African State of Cities report should come out in late 2010 in time to influence the next round of Integrated Development Plans (either through the full report being released well before the 2011 local government elections, or through the draft information being released before the elections and the full report being released after the elections).	Future editions of the report should be timed in order to make use of major new data releases and to ensure that national/ provincial/ local political leaders can be involved in the reporting process and subsequently act on conclusions/ recommendations emerging. The fourth South African State of Cities report should be released in time to allow use of the data from the 2011 Census (i.e. the report would probably need to come out in 2014).
	The regular updating of information on the website (new theme papers, new data, newsletters, etc.) will help give the State of Cities reporting process greater continuity.	

2.   INSTITUTIONAL HOME

As an autonomous body with strong links to local and national government, the South African Cities Network (SACN) is an appropriate institutional home for a series of reports intended to give a comprehensive overview of issues facing large cities and raise the awareness of decision-makers about the urban agenda. The State of Cities reports ideally should be based on the ongoing collection and analysis of data relating to cities, though, and the SACN is not necessarily the best institutional home for co-ordinating this ongoing data

collection and analysis (which should involve a range of organisations involved in the collection and analysis of various types of data).

In the long term, it is proposed that a National Urban Observatory and extended network of Local Urban Observatories (LUOs), modelled on the UN-Habitat's Global Urban Observatory, be set up to collect and hold relevant data relating to cities. In South Africa, agencies such as the CSIR, HSRC and Statistics South Africa, and university-based institutions, should be involved in the establishment of the LUOs in the various cities and the National Urban Observatory as a joint venture. Other stakeholders who are involved in the collection of city-level statistics (such as municipalities and various other government bodies) should also be involved in some way. The National Urban Observatory should build on existing LUO initiatives (such as those in Gauteng and the Western Cape) and be hosted by existing institutions. The South African Cities Network should have a close relationship with the National Urban Observatory, and be able to input into the data that it collects and holds, and have unquestioning access to its data.

Although the collection and management of the data should be centrally co-ordinated, the accompanying programme for the analysis of the data and production of thematic reports based on the data should involve a wide range of researchers based at universities and research institutes (ideally through some form of competitive selection process). The State of Cities Report, which should continue to be produced by the SACN, would then be able to draw on a base of relevant, reliable and up-to-date data and in-depth analysis of the data and to new datasets and understandings produced for one-off research at the universities.[1] SACN should be part of the steering committee of both the data collection/management programme and the research programme, so that it can input into the selection of data that is collected and the identification of research projects and selection of researchers.

The consolidation of existing funding sources and/or acquisition of new funding sources, especially those which can commit for several years (say the full preparation period of a SoCR) would be required to fund the proposed programmes.

SACN's Indicators Project presents an opportunity for exploring how a National Urban Observatory could be set up, how it would be funded, how it would function and what data it should be collecting.

3.   PURPOSE/ TARGET AUDIENCES

The main objectives of the State of Cities reporting process should continue to be:

- To maintain and improve the profile of cities in national debates and policy-making;

- To highlight the importance of big cities in South Africa to national government bodies, parastatals and provincial government, i.e. that "Cities are the most productive sites in the national economy as well as areas that accommodate the largest numbers of poor people"[2];

- To get large municipalities thinking about key issues they face and the way they operate (the process is particularly important for this, but having clear evidence-based conclusions and recommendations in the final report may also be useful);

- To compile and disseminate reliable and consistent statistics for cities in South Africa, for use in South Africa and internationally;

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[1] The close relationship with universities should also help to identify emerging issues and trends which might form themes or boxes in the SoCR.

[2] SACN, 2006, p. 2-2.

- To contribute to the body of knowledge on South African cities and other cities in the Global South.

The main target groups should therefore be:

- National government departments (the political heads, senior managers and data analysts/ planners);

- Provincial government departments (the political heads, senior managers and data analysts/ planners);

- Parastatals/ government-established agencies, including both the large national parastatals, such as Eskom and Transnet, and regional or city-specific organisations, such as Joshco (senior management, data analysts/planners);

- Large municipalities (political leadership, senior management, data analysts/ planners);

- Other key role-players in South African cities (such as SAPOA, COSATU, political parties, etc;);

- Researchers on urban issues in South Africa and other cities (especially those in the Global South).

There should, however, be some prioritizing of these purposes and target groups, as it is impossible adequately to address all these purposes and target groups simultaneously. In particular, there should be clarity on the extent to which the report is targeted at raising the urban agenda with national government versus improving the way municipalities go about their work, as the two objectives have very different implications in terms of timing, process and content. By producing a summary report to supplement the full report, however, in may be easier to address all the objectives and target groups simultaneously.

4.   THE REPORTING PROCESS

The key recommendations with regard to the reporting process relate to:

- Engagement with other stakeholders;

- Focusing on specific themes (in addition to the comprehensive overview);

- The writing/ editing process;

- Setting realistic timeframes and budget based on previous experience;

Engagement with other stakeholders:

The focus of the State of Cities reporting process should be broadened out a little, to more than just municipal issues. It is essential that national government and the new political leadership (post the 2009 elections) are included in the process as much as possible. Key national government departments such as the Office of the President, the National Treasury and the Department of Provincial and Local Government must be able to participate in the process (for example, as reference group members and workshop participants). There also should be some engagement with the private sector and civil society in the process of producing the report, to ensure that their issues are, at least to some extent, reflected. A methodology such as Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) may be useful for helping to identify a wider range of issues. Possible entry points for engagement with the private sector and civil society include organisations such as the South African Property Owners' Association (SAPOA), the Banking Association, the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP) and NGOs such as Planact.

Table 2 suggests potential ways of ensuring inclusivity at various stages of the State of Cities reporting process through engaging with a range of stakeholders.

Table 2: Ensuring Inclusivity in the State of Cities Reporting Process

Step	Description	Ensuring inclusivity
A. Formulating terms of reference	Setting the terms of reference for the State of Cities reporting process, including selecting institutional home, selecting cities to report on, and outlining the overall reporting process.	Partner organisations in the State of Cities reporting process would need to agree on common goals/objectives and the outline of the process.
B. Selecting/ designing analytical framework/ indicators	Selecting/ adapting analytical framework and selecting key indicators (which would need to be based on a preliminary scan of data availability).	Comment from various stakeholders and experts should be obtained, either through an ongoing reference group or at a workshop.
C. Data compilation/ information gathering	Compiling quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources. The reliability and consistency of the data would need to have been verified. This stage should also include direct engagement with a range of key stakeholders at city level.	The information gathering process would need to include various stakeholders. A participatory methodology such as UN-HABITAT's Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) methodology, which involves having city-level workshops for various stakeholders, is a good way to ensure that a diversity of views are reflected.
D. Data analysis/ identifying key issues	Analysing quantitative and qualitative data in order to be able to identify trends and key issues, and writing this up.	The analysis of the data, and the identification of key issues, by the writers group should be presented for comment from various stakeholders (either through an ongoing reference group that includes various stakeholders and experts, or at a workshop attended by various stakeholders and experts).
E. Formulating conclusions/ recommendations	Formulating conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the data.	The conclusions and recommendations formulated and written up by the writers group should be presented for comment (either through an ongoing reference group that includes various stakeholders and experts, or at a workshop attended by various stakeholders and experts).
F. Producing end products	Finalising content of full report and summary report, and designing and producing the reports. Designing the content of the web site.	The range of end products would need to cater for different target audiences. Some form of "peer review" by experts is desirable for the full report.
G. Dissemination	Disseminating the key findings of the process through distribution of reports, through seminars/workshops through the media and through the website.	The dissemination strategy should be aimed at various target audiences.

Focusing on specific themes:

Having a comprehensive overview of South African cities is an essential component of the State of Cities report and should be continued. In addition, more in-depth discussion on specific themes, identified during early stages of the process as being of particular importance, would be a way of taking the issues raised in the reports further and helping ensure that each State of Cities report has new things to say. During the interviews for the review, respondents suggested the following themes as possibilities for future editions of the State of Cities report:

- The global competitiveness of South African cities (comparing South African cities with their global competitors);

- The energy crisis (electricity, oil) and the shift to a low-carbon environment;

- Water scarcity;

- Inclusivity/ xenophobia;

- Informality/ the challenge of upgrading informal settlements;

- Urban spatial growth patterns/ the dynamics of urban sprawl;

- Transport as an anti-poverty measure;

- New demographic trends;

- Inter-governmental relations;

- The delegation of built environment functions (housing, land, transport) to metropolitan municipalities.

Writing/editing:

There should be a small core group of writers under an editor-in-chief, all involved early in the process and influencing decisions about main messages, themes, etc. Although it is important to have a range of writers with different expertise and perspectives, experience suggests that the writers group for the 2006 report (more than 30 writers) was too large.

The (small) editorial committee should have the final say. The editorial committee ideally should be independent, for example, not to include current mayors and city managers (but SACN staff should continue to play a role on the editorial committee and as members of the writing team). Municipalities should be involved in identifying key issues and verifying data, but the editorial oversight ideally should have a degree of independence from narrow municipal interests. Acknowledgement of who wrote what should be more direct; it is possible that this will lead to better quality.

Budget/time:

The size of the task should be estimated realistically based on the 2006 process, in order to ensure that there is a sufficient budget and that timelines are adequate. Sufficient time should be allowed for, firstly, collecting a reliable and useful set of statistics from which the writers can work, and, secondly, for peer review and debating the draft content of the report (amongst the writers group and the editorial committee). The publishers should be given adequate time to produce a qood quality, high standard product. Where feasible, some of the graphical content, which might require special preparation, should be sent in advance of the textual content. Time to respond to queries from the publishers should also be factored in.

It has been suggested (by the editor-in-chief of the 2006 report), that a period of 18 months from inception to launch is required.

5. INDICATORS/ DATA

It is essential that a small number of strategic indicators are selected for each theme, that they are appropriately defined, that reliable data is available for them. The data should be available in good time for the writers (at least a year ahead of the publication date), so that debate, analysis and writing can occur on the basis of reasonably reliable and consistent data.

The main indicators to be used for the next State of Cities report should be resolved as a matter of urgency. Two processes should occur in parallel:

- Selecting strategic and well-defined indicators for each theme. Where possible, these indicators should be consistent with internationally-used indicators.

- Assessing the availability and reliability of statistics on South Africa's large cities, which will then determine which of the selected indicators can be used in the short term and what data collection gaps should be filled in the long-term.

Through convergence of these two processes, a small number of key indicators, for which there are reliable and consistent data, should be selected for the next State of Cities reporting process. It should be noted, however, that there will often be some problems with the available data (e.g. in terms of reliability and consistency), And it is essential that all reservations and potential problems with data are noted in footnotes to the statistical tables (blanket disclaimers are necessary, but are not sufficient on their own). In some cases, where there are competing data sets of a similar degree of reliability, both data sets should ideally be used (with accompanying notes on the differences).

It is important that internationally-used indicators are used for the South African State of Cities reporting process where possible, as these have been developed, defined and tested over time and their use will facilitate international comparison and lesson-sharing. UN-Habitat's indicators for the Millennium Development Goals and Habitat II Agenda[3], which include both quantitative indicators and qualitative indicators (checklists), are worthwhile to look at in the process of developing indicators for future State of Cities reporting processes (the checklists would be of particular value, as they would complement the largely quantitative indicators previously used for the South African SoCRs). The UN-Habitat indicators for "Economic development", "Environmental management" and "Governance" respond quite closely to the SACN themes of "Productive cities", "Sustainable cities" and "Well-governed cities".

■ The UN-Habitat indicators for "Economic development" are:

  – Key indicator 17 (informal employment);

  – Key indicator 18 (city product);

  – Key indicator 19 (unemployment).

■ The indicators for "Environmental management" are:

  – Key indicator 11 (urban population growth);

  – Key indicator 12 (planned settlements);

  – Key indicator 13 (price of water), Extensive indicator 8 (water consumption);

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[3] UN-Habitat, 2004

- Key indicator 14 (wastewater treated);
- Key indicator 15 (solid waste disposal), Extensive indicator 9 (regular solid waste collection), Extensive indicator 10 (houses in hazardous locations);
- Key indicator 16 (travel time) and Extensive indicator 11 (transport modes).

■ The indicators for "Governance" are:
- Key indicator 20 (local government revenue), Extensive indicator 12 (voter participation) and Extensive indicator 13 (civic associations).

Many of the UN-Habitat indicators for "Shelter" and "Social development and eradication of poverty" are of relevance to SACN's "Inclusive cities" theme, for example:

- Key indicator 2 (overcrowding);
- Key indicator 3 (secure tenure), Extensive indicator 3 (evictions)
- Key indicator 4 (access to safe water);
- Key indicator 5 (access to improve sanitation);
- Key indicator 7 (under-five mortality);
- Key indicator 8 (homicides), Extensive indicator 5 (HIV prevalence);
- Key indicator 9 (poor households);
- Key indicator 10 (literacy rates), Extensive indicator 6 (school enrolment) and Extensive indicator 7 (women councillors).

It should be noted that it will often not be possible to allocate specific indicators to one theme only. In some cases, indicators will be relevant to more than one theme or may cut across all themes. It may, therefore, be useful to distinguish between indicators for specific themes and indicators which cut across a number of themes (which are probably likely to be "asset indicators"). The UN-Habitat indicators that are cross-cutting could include: literacy rates; school enrolment; urban population growth; travel time; and transport modes.

It is essential that municipalities are involved in the process of developing the key indicators and that there is agreement amongst municipalities on what the key indicators are, and that municipalities start collecting these data (and municipalities which lack data collection capacity may need some support for this). In the long-term, as discussed above, it would be desirable to establish a National Urban Observatory, i.e., a joint venture of institutions such as Statistics South Africa, the CSIR and municipalities, to collect and hold useful and comparable data on South African cities. Although, in the longer-term, it is desirable to move towards a joint venture in which a variety of institutions (including municipalities) are involved in regularly collecting consistent and comparable city-level statistics in South Africa, in the short term there is some scope for SACN to appoint interns to collect additional available data on an ongoing basis from a range of sources for the State of Cities reports (although a statistician should verify the reliability and comparability of the data).

6.   ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Although using the analytical framework as a structure for the contents of the report has often been problematic, the analytical framework used for the South African State of Cities reporting processes has been useful as a more strategic way of analysing cities (as opposed to the traditional sectoral way), and could be kept more-or-less the same for the sake of continuity. Some of the quadrants should be better defined, however. It should be kept in mind, moreover, that, although the analytical framework is important as a way of helping analyse cities and the challenges they face, the inevitable overlap between the themes in

any analytical framework means that it may not necessarily be the best way of structuring all the contents of the report.

Table 3 shows suggested redefinitions for the four quadrants of the analytical framework. The suggested definitions are for discussion purposes – they show how the existing programme philosophies and objectives can be expanded by adding elements from South African urban policy documents (for example, the Urban Development Framework).

Table 3: Suggested definitions

Productive city:[1]	**Inclusive city:**[2]
An integrated industrial, commercial, residential, information and educational centre with a local economy that provides the majority of residents with opportunities for making a reasonable living.	Spatially and socio-economically integrated, and free of racial, gender and other forms of discrimination; residents have the opportunities and capacities to share equitably in the social and economic benefits of city life, and people can live and work in safety and in peace.
Sustainable city:[3]	**Well-governed city:**[4]
Social and economic development responds appropriately to natural and other resources, and promotes equity and efficiency. There is a balance between quality built environment and open space and between consumption needs on the one hand and renewable and non-renewable resources on the other.	Managed by democratic, efficient local government in close co-operation with civil society. Decision-making and governance are innovative, inclusive, and proactive.

1. Rephrasing of programme philosophy in 2006 SOCR plus an additional clause from the 2020 urban vision in the Urban Development Framework 2. Rephrasing of programme philosophy in 2006 SOCR plus two additional clauses from the 2020 urban vision in the Urban Development Framework

3. Rephrasing of programme objective in 2006 SOCR, plus an additional clause from the 2020 urban vision in the Urban Development Framework.

4. Rephrasing of programme objective in 2006 SOCR plus an additional clause from the urban vision in the Urban Development Framework

It is important to emphasise that the analytical framework cuts across traditional sectors such as housing and transport. Locating specific sectors solely within specific quadrants is severely constraining and limits the usefulness of the analytical framework. In order to avoid specific sectors only being seen as being in one quadrant, the analytical framework should be accompanied by a matrix which shows how various sectors cut across the four quadrants. The suggested intersection of three selected sectors (housing, transport and education) with the four quadrants is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Suggested intersection of various sectors and themes

Sector	Productive city	Inclusive city	Sustainable city	Well-governed city
Housing	The contribution of housing supply and the housing sector to employment and economic growth, and the extent to which the location of residential areas facilitates or hinders economic growth.	Patterns of access to/ exclusion from access to security of tenure, basic services, durable housing, well-located land, etc.	The extent to which residential development is contributing to urban sprawl, and the energy efficiency and environmental impact of new residential development.	The management of public rental housing by the municipality, and the development of new subsidised housing.
Transport	The extent to which transport facilitates or hinders economic growth.	The affordability, efficiency and spatial accessibility of public transport.	The energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of the dominant modes of transport, and the extent to which more sustainable forms of transport (such as walking and cycling) are being promoted.	The management of the public transport system and the maintenance of transport infrastructure.
Education	The extent to which education is providing people with relevant skills for the economy, and the contribution of the education sector to the economy.	Patterns of access to education (both spatially and in terms of affordability), and the contribution of the education system towards creating a more integrated society.	The extent to which the education system is raising awareness around issues of energy efficiency and environmental sustain-ability.	The management of educational institutions.

7.   END PRODUCTS

The three main end products of State of Cities reporting processes should be:

- The full State of the Cities report (similar to the two previous ones);
- A summary report which has the key indicators and summarises the key issues;
- A State of Cities web page on the SACN web site.

Full report:

The full report should continue to contain a comprehensive overview of South African cities and a statistical almanac. In addition it should also contain a section highlighting one or more key themes and examining these in more depth. The main structure of the report would therefore be:

- Comprehensive overview of South African cities (with a few important indicators);
- Identification and discussion of key themes facing South African cities (with the indicators relevant to the themes);
- Statistical almanac of all chosen indicators.

There should be a focus on the broader dynamics of cities outside of those under the direct control of municipalities. A broader range of issues, for example, from the private sector and civil society, should be reflected in addition to municipal issues. The report cannot be, and should not attempt to be, a consensus report reflecting the views of all sectors of society on city issues, but it should attempt to reflect a broader diversity of views than it does at present.

More reference should be made to research on urban issues in South Africa. There should be acknowledgement of a diversity of views, for example, if there are credible research projects that reflect a negative view of a particular government programme, then these cannot be ignored. One potential way of making sure that the report builds on current relevant urban research in South Africa is to engage published subject specialists to write detailed background papers that synthesize relevant current research work in their field, and for the State of Cities report then to draw on these background papers. The background papers could then be available on the website for those who require more detail on specific themes (this is the technique used in compiling the Global Reports on Human Settlements).

If additional urban centres outside the current nine member cities are included, there should ideally be a separate chapter highlighting the issues facing secondary cities for the purposes of comparison. Although secondary cities are important, it should be noted that the entire tier of 15 secondary cities[4] contributes only 10.2% to South Africa's economy, compared to the 58.6% contributed by the six metropolitan areas, so it is important that the report does not focus on secondary cities at the expense of the primary cities. In addition, it should be kept in mind that the three non-metro cities in the SACN are probably more similar to the secondary cities outside the SACN than they are to the metros, and some logical way of defining the primary cities and secondary cities should be used. The other potential problems of expanding beyond the current 9 cities are that there is likely to be less data from the municipalities, many of the municipal areas of the secondary cities include substantial rural hinterlands (which may hinder real comparison) and the processes of engagement in formulating the report should change to be able to accommodate more than twice as many municipalities.

For the full report, something similar to that of the 2004 State of Cities report would be suitable: A4 size, perfect-bound, about 200 pages, with two-page chapter title spreads, colour-coded chapters, and with strategically-selected photographs, maps, diagrams, tables and case study boxes integrated into the pages of text, and with a section of statistical tables at the back. The layout and design should integrate text, tables, graphs, diagrams, photos, maps, boxes, etc., appropriately for the target audience. Only highly strategic data should be presented in the text, in as user-friendly a format as possible (i.e., with not more than three significant figures in any number and with not too many columns and rows). The detailed statistics should all go into the almanac at the back of the report. The cover of the report should be bright and attractive and should highlight that it is produced by SACN, as with the 2006 report.

Summary report:

Although part of the value of the State of the Cities report is that it is an integrated report that includes a comprehensive overview plus a comprehensive set of statistics, the reality is that a 200+ page document is not likely to be widely read by decision-makers. It would therefore make sense to produce a summary report (of not more than about 20 pages) in parallel with the full report, in order to supplement the full report and broaden its impact (and it would also

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[4] The "top 21 Functional Urban Areas" identified in the 2006 State of Cities Report, other than the 6 metropolitan municipalities: Bloemfontein, Buffalo City, Emfuleni, Evander, Kimberley, Middelburg, Midvaal, Mogale City, Nelspruit, Pietermaritzburg, Richards Bay, Rustenburg, Sasolburg, Stellenbosch, Witbank.

be useful as a public relations tool). The short version should summarise the key issues from the full report. A glossy design and layout, similar to that of the 2006 State of Cities report, would be suitable for the summary report. It should be noted that the summary report should not be a replacement for the full report – the full report should still be widely disseminated.

Website:

The State of Cities website should complement and supplement the hard copy publications. Research and policy updates could be posted on the website. Frequently-updated statistics should ideally be available on a user-friendly database, as with the State of English Cities reporting process (updated data on English cities is publicly available at www.socd.communities.org.uk). In the long-term, collecting data and maintaining such a database should ideally become the function of the proposed National Urban Observatory.

8. DISSEMINATION

There should be a clear strategy to disseminate each State of the Cities report and raise awareness of the key issues emerging from each. The approach should combine multiple media dissemination pathways, each selected for its suitability to the needs and resources of the particular target audiences concerned.

The target groups that should be reached through the dissemination process include:

- National government: President, Deputy President, Cabinet Ministers, and senior managers and data analysts/ planners (especially those in key departments such as the Office of the President, the National Treasury, the Department of Provincial and Local Government, and the National Department of Housing).

- Provincial government: Premiers, MECs and senior managers and data analysts/ planners (especially those in key departments such as Local Government and Housing).

- Local government: Mayors, senior management and data analysts/ planners.

- Parastatals/ government-established agencies.

- Other key roleplayers in South Africa (such as SAPOA, COSATU, political parties, etc.).

- International development agencies/international and local NGOs with an urban agenda and working on urban issues. The biennial World Urban Forums should be targeted for presentations and document dissemination.

- South African media (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio).

- Other countries, especially those interested in undertaking State of Cities reporting processes (Cities Alliance would be the key dissemination channel for this).

- Researchers on urban issues in South Africa and elsewhere would be reached primarily through putting the full report and background papers on the SACN website and depositing copies of the full report in all South African university libraries.

Dissemination should be approached through multiple channels. These could include the following:

- Presentations to national government departments, parastatals, provincial government departments, municipal leadership (as is already the case). Dissemination to levels of staff below senior management is important, as having a holistic overview of urban issues would be very valuable for middle managers and

practitioners. In circumstances where middle managers are not routinely exposed to urban data on this scale, the process could be very good professional development.

- Processes to facilitate internal debate about the findings of the State of Cities reports following the above presentations, such as participatory workshops and seminars.

- The production and dissemination of a summary version of the State of Cities report which highlights the key issues in the State of Cities report (as many decision-makers would be more likely to read a brief summary rather than the full document, and the summary would probably be more suitable as a PR document).

- Short focused papers on particular themes.

- Events to publicise the launch of the State of the Cities report amongst the general public. An example would be the art competition held as part of the Built Environment Support Group's "Right to adequate housing" campaign in 1999. A competition was held for adults and children of various age groups, with substantial prizes. The prize-giving was widely-covered in the media, and 12 selected entries (paintings/drawings showing the participants' imaginings of integrated human settlements) were published in a large full-cover calendar that was widely circulated, and the paintings/drawings also appeared in various newspapers and magazines. A similar competition on the theme of "city life" would help raise general public awareness about SACN, the State of Cities report and the city agenda.

- Press releases.

- Ongoing updating of statistics and news on the SACN website. Material such as background papers could also be put on the website.

The impact of the State of Cities report and the dissemination campaign should then be measured. It is proposed that the evaluation of the impact should include an e-mail/telephonic survey aimed at selected individuals at various levels within targeted organisations (large municipalities, relevant national government departments, etc.). Minimum core questions in this survey should include:

- What is your view of the last State of the Cities report in terms of: content (statistics/analysis/conclusions/recommendations); format (length/presentation/style): and user-friendliness (readability/usability)?

- Was the dissemination process for the last State of the Cities report adequate? If not, why not?

- Has your organisation made use of the last State of the Cities report? If so, how?

- How can the next State of the Cities report, and the processes for producing it and disseminating it, be improved so as to make it more useful for your organisation?

The State of Cities reporting process could ultimately feed into a large-scale public awareness campaign (newspaper/TV/radio adverts, posters, pamphlets) to raise awareness about "cityness", the benefits of cities and the challenges facing cities amongst the public in general (in order to highlight the urban agenda amongst society as a whole). Such a campaign should be driven by a broader coalition, though, not just SACN.

9.   TIMING

The best timing for State of Cities reports would seem to be so that the current national government and local government leadership are able to be involved in the process and are able to action the conclusions/ recommendations afterwards. Releasing the report immediately before or after elections is not ideal.

Releasing the next South African State of Cities report in 2010/2011 will allow sufficient time for the new post-2009 national/provincial political leadership to be adequately involved in the process. The 2010/2011 period is not ideal in terms of local government, as the local government elections will be in 2011, but the report should ideally be released in time to influence the process of formulating the next round of 5-year IDPs (which will start in late 2010). If this period coincides too closely with the local government election campaign period, it may be more appropriate to disseminate the relevant data and draft analyses/ conclusions to municipalities as soon as possible so that they can use these for their IDP processes if desired, and then release the full report after the local government elections.

The fourth South African State of Cities report should be timed so that it can be based on the 2011 census data (which will probably only start being released in 2013). The fourth State of Cities report therefore ideally should come out in 2013/2014.

Future State of Cities reports should be timed so that they are appropriately aligned with national and local elections and the release of new Census data.