

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

---

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Management (KM) as a discipline is still in its infancy, particularly in the public sector, evidenced by some discussions that emanated from the recent South African Cities Network [SACN] KM Reference Group meeting in Msunduzi Municipality, as well as little discussion in the current KM literature (Asoh & Belardo, 2002, OECD, 2004). Hence there are still many issues, which are not known. However, governments are realizing its importance for running the Public Sector and starting to practice KM. Issues, challenges and opportunities exist in the process of implementing it. It is for this reason that Public Sectors including Local Governments have to face these by taking a proactive attitude and make it happen in order to reap benefits. To succeed in this endeavour, special considerations to lack of awareness, Public and Local Governments need to develop a generic KM Framework. The ensuing discussion from the meeting proposed key issues which should be taken into account before the KM Framework can be implemented in all South African Cities Network [SACN] Member Cities.

## 2 MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY REFERENCE GROUP MEETING.

A workshop with a focus on the 'Revival of the SACN Knowledge Management (KM) Reference Group' was held on the 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> October 2007. In attendance at the workshop were:

- Buffalo City Municipality
- City of Cape Town
- City of Johannesburg
- Msunduzi Municipality
- South African Cities Network (SACN)
- South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

## 3 GOAL & OBJECTIVES OF THE KM REFERENCE GROUP MEETING

In terms of goals and objectives, the point emphasized by Mr Mbanga was that, during the deliberations of the following 2 days, the group present needs to present a case for the existence of a KM reference group which is going to support the SACN in terms of its overall themes of **Productive; Sustainable; Inclusive**; and, **Well-Governed Cities**. The 2 key objectives therefore being: (i) is there significant purpose for the existence of a SACN KM reference group; & (ii) if so, a clear programme of action needs to be developed for such a reference group.

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

---

## **4 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION**

The delegation was warmly welcomed by Executive Mayor, Zanele Hlatshwayo, of Msunduzi Municipality who gave a brief overview of the importance of KM. Furthermore, she encouraged Member Cities and other relevant stakeholders to exchange information, knowledge, best practices on urban development as well as strengthening of Local Government. She also announced that Buffalo City Municipality's Executive Mayor was elected Chairperson of the SACN at their Annual General Meeting held in Cape Town on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

The participants introduced themselves and the SACN CEO, Mr Sithole Mbanga, as well as SALGA Manager, Mr Charles Tlhoale, expressed concern at the non-attendance of such an important meeting by some Member Cities. Both organizations informed the meeting that the establishment of KM Units were as a result of a political decision taken by the SALGA in 2000. The SALGA representative requested the SACN CEO to liaise with the City/Municipal Managers of the Municipalities that were not represented at the meeting to give a detailed report about the current status of their KM Units. These municipalities are as follows: Tshwane Metro, Ekurhuleni Metro, Ethekewini Metro, Nelson Mandela Metro and Mangaung Municipality.

## **5 SACN PRESENTATION**

A brief overview of SACN was outlined by the CEO of SACN who also stated the objectives of the meeting as well as raised the delegation's goals and expectations for the session. He commended the leadership of the above municipalities for implementing the KM initiatives as well as commitment shown by KM Managers for sharing knowledge without a "driver" from the SACN. A detailed background of how SACN was established to create three chambers of knowledge sharing for District Municipalities, Local Municipalities and Metros was given. He said that the SACN was established in 2002 by the South African Minister for Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) in collaboration with the Mayors of South Africa's largest Cities and the SALGA, as an independent Section 21 Company, with the mandate to:

- Promote good governance and management in South African Cities;
- Analyze strategic challenges facing South African cities, particularly in the context of global economic integration and national development challenges;
- Collect, collate, analyze, assess, disseminate and apply the experience of large City government in a South African context; and
- Promote shared-learning partnerships between different spheres of Government to support the management of South African Cities.

The founding SACN Member Cities are the nine largest Cities in South Africa, and are located in five of the nine provinces. They are:

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

---

- Buffalo City Municipality (East London)
- City Of Cape Town
- Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (East Rand)
- City of eThekweni(Durban)
- City of Johannesburg
- Mangaung Municipality (Bloemfontein)
- Msunduzi Municipality (Pietermaritzburg)
- Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (Port Elizabeth)
- City Of Tshwane (Pretoria)

The SACN functions through a Secretariat that derives its operational guidance from a Board of Directors constituted by City/Municipal Managers and leaders from its Member Cities and senior representatives of the DPLG and Local Government and SALGA.

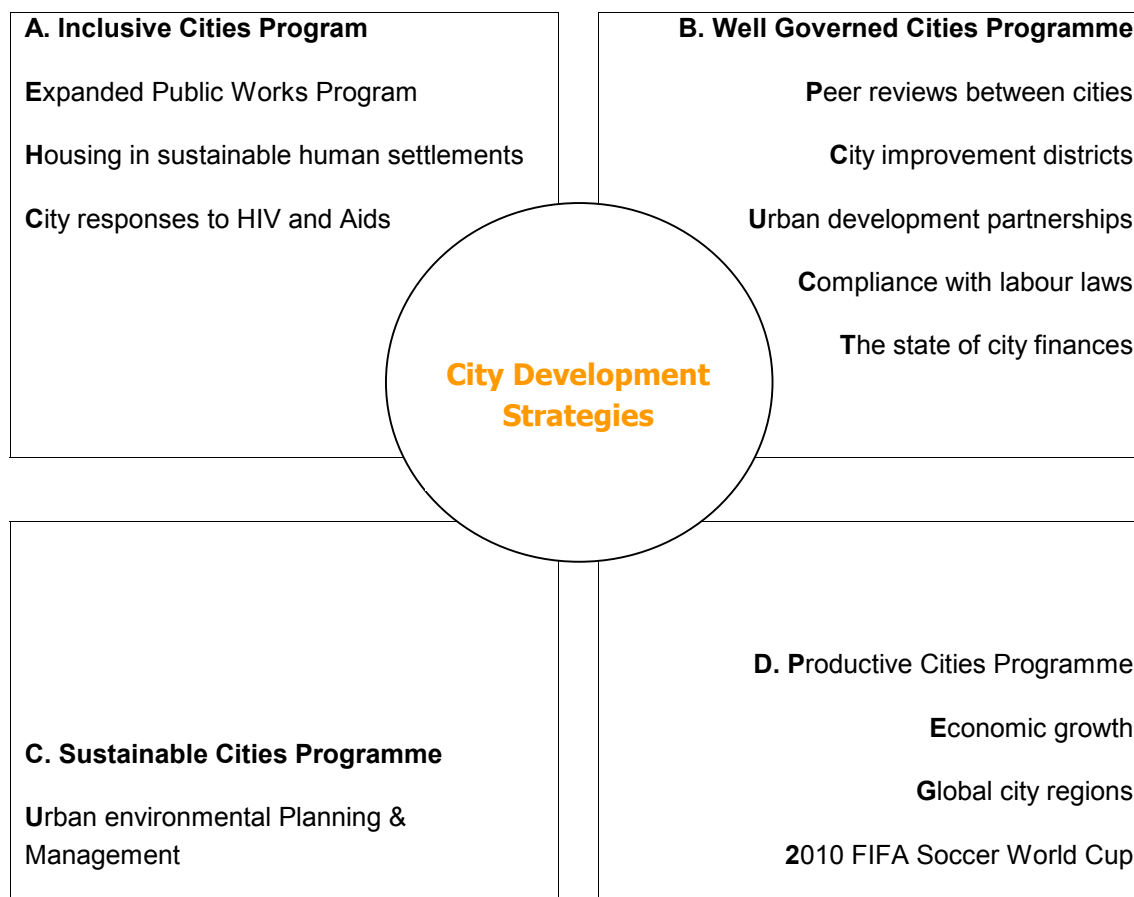
The following main knowledge-sharing strategies employed by the SACN were highlighted:

- Information exchanges (workshops, conferences, seminars, communities of practice, briefings, study visits, on-site learning)
- Technical guidance (guidelines, toolkits, secondment, coaching, mentoring, exchanges, and consultancies)
- Research (databases, case studies, comparative analysis, scenarios, documentation of leading practice and benchmark data)
- Electronic correspondence (a monthly newsletter, events notification, calendar, contacts, member profiles, useful links)
- Peer Review (strategy, programme, sectoral issues)
- Networking (communities of practice, partnerships, meetings with key stakeholder groups)

Mr Mbanga further elaborated that the SACN is not only providing intelligence or knowledge internally, but also dealing with external partners as depicted in the Diagram 1 below.

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

**DIAGRAM 1 SACN'S EXTERNAL PARTNERS**



Within these thematic areas, the SACN focuses on three key functional focus areas:

- Providing strategic guidance and inputs to (and on behalf of) Member Cities;
- Undertaking monitoring and evaluation of city performance and development trends; and
- Providing technical assistance at the request of Member Cities.

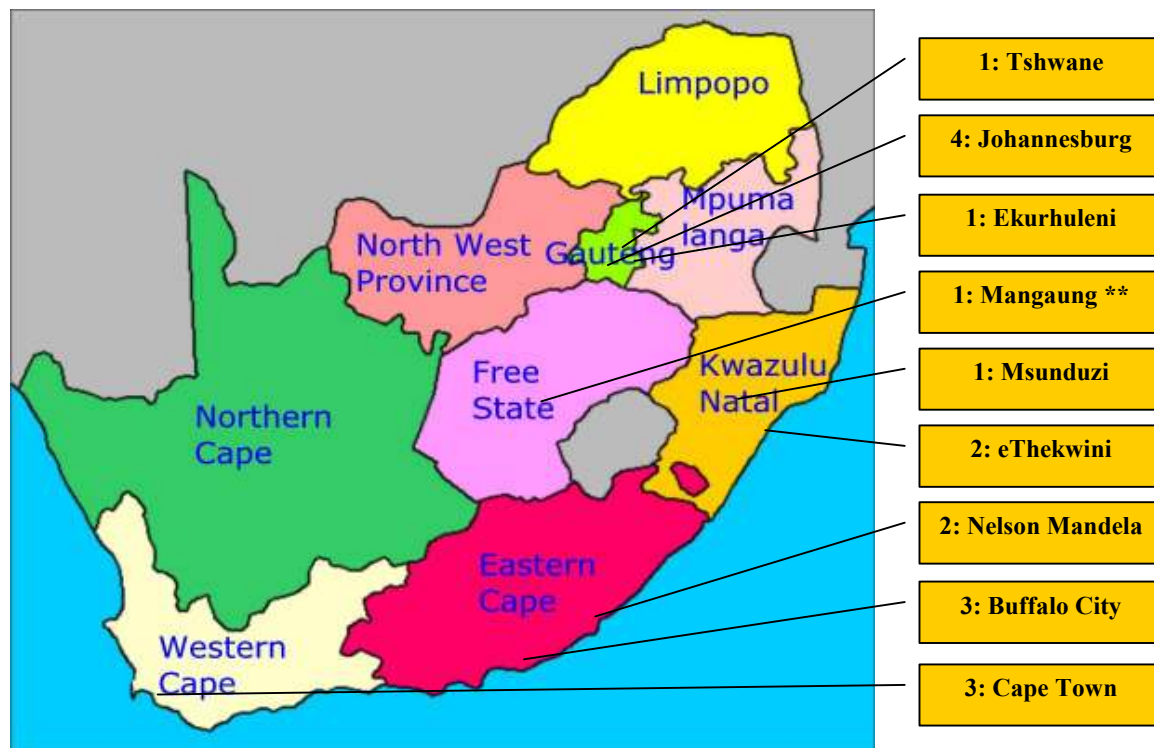
Continuing, he also stated that KM should be seen as an important tool to help Executive Mayors, City/Municipal Managers as well as the organs of municipalities to take appropriate decisions. Furthermore, he suggested that management of knowledge has to produce sharp tools such as user-friendly Guidelines, Templates for KM implementations. He also mentioned that the Jo'burg Metro has started establishing formal rewards and recognition for KM by providing incentives to its employees who share their special knowledge with others.

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

---

Mr Mbanga also mentioned that while the SACN Secretariat is able to monitor the quantity and quality of its knowledge products and services, it is less clear how this knowledge is taken up and applied by its Member Cities, or what the resulting operational efficiency gains are. The KM Units within the Member Cities are a key link in the distribution chain for SACN's knowledge products and services. There are capacity and institutional constraints in these KM Units. The Figure 1 below gives a summary of the level of KM activity and institutional integration that shows that four of the Cities do not yet have independent KM teams with dedicated capacity.

**Figure 1: Levels of KM activity & institutional integration in the SACN Member Cities**



**Level 1:** No independent structure in place, KM is 'add on' task.

**Level 2:** Start up; staff recruited, structure in place, resources allocated

**Level 3:** Basic programmes have been initiated, unit functioning between 6 months to a year

**Level 4:** KM Programmes, yield products and services, unit functioning for 2- 4 years

**Level 5:** KM programmes and functionalities are integrated into city indicators; KM becomes a shared responsibility at a departmental level.

**Level 6:** KM methods and systems are entrenched and voluntarily accessed by a range of users.

# REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007: REPORT

---

Mr Sithole gave a progress report about additional joining the SACN. These municipalities are as follows: Rustenburg, Polokwane, Emfuleni, City of uMhlathuze, King Sabata Dalindyebo, Sol Plaatjie, Matjhabeng, Mbombela and Mogale City

## **6 SALGA & MEMBER CITY PRESENTATIONS [Annexures 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F' attached]**

Following discussion and consensus reached on Mr Mbanga's objectives above, presentations were delivered by:

1. Mr Charles Tlhoale: SALGA Knowledge Sharing Programme (KSP)
2. Buffalo City Municipality;
3. City of Cape Town;
4. City of Johannesburg; &
5. Msunduzi Municipality.

A detailed SALGA presentation was led by Mr Charles Tlhoale, Manager SALGA Knowledge Management Program. The Aims of the presentation were as follows:

- Encourage documentation of examples of good local government practice.
- Revive SACN Knowledge Management Reference Group
- Promote and facilitate greater levels of peer learning between local government practitioners and, where relevant, their private sector counterparts.
- Promote practical learning methods within the municipal sector

Whilst SALGA presented on its current Knowledge sharing Programme (KSP), each of the cities presented on the state of KM within their respective municipalities.

## **7 WAY FORWARD**

Following on from the presentations of the previous day, consensus had been reached that yes, indeed there is significant need for a KM reference group. Day two therefore, focused on developing a programme of action for a KM reference group. The main focus of such programme being to: 'maintain a revived network of Knowledge Managers and Knowledge Management across SALGA, District and Local Municipalities and the SA Cities Network.'

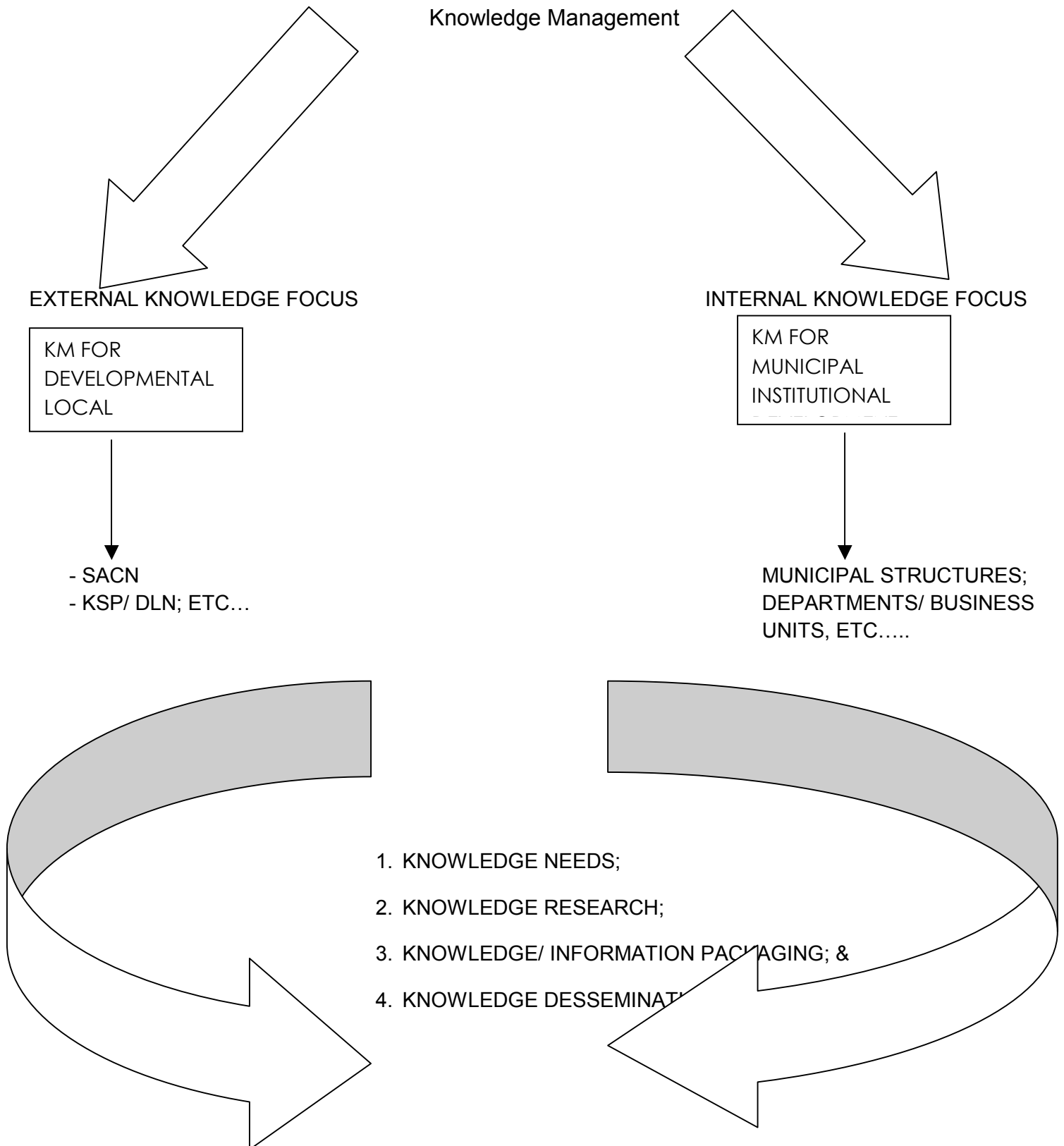
The programme of action has been developed based on the following illustrative KM approach:

REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT  
REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI  
MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007:  
REPORT

---

REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT  
REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI  
MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007:  
REPORT

---



**REVIVAL OF THE SACN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT  
REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP HELD AT MSUNDUZI  
MUNICIPALITY ON 25TH-26TH OCTOBER 2007:  
REPORT**

---

The programme of action that has been developed for the KM reference group is summarized in the following table:

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE THE DECISION-MAKING AND POLICY PROCESS OF COUNCIL	
ACTIVITY 1:	EACH CITY TO GENERATE KM UNIT BUSINESS PLANS: BUSINEES PLANS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE SACN SECRETARIAT EARLY NEXT YEAR (2008)
ACTIVITY 2:	REVITALIZE THE KSP WEB-SITE: SACN TO DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE [TOR] AND RAISE FUNDS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A WEBSITE
ACTIVITY3:	A FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ACRIVITY 4:	A FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & LIBRARIES
ACTIVITY 5:	A FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL INTERRELATIONS

The next KM reference group meeting is to be held at Buffalo City Municipality in the early months of 2008.