



**NDA**

National  
Development  
Agency



## **Izimvo Rural Development Institute**

**CLOSE OUT EVALUATION REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 2014**



***Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive  
Development Programme***



**Submitted by Mbumba Development Services**

**February 2014**



## Executive Summary

### 1. Introduction and Background

In February 2014 Mbumba Development Services was contracted to conduct a close-out project evaluation of the Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme as implemented by the Izimvo Rural Development Institute.

The project was motivated by and designed around Izimvo's core business i.e. rural development through the effective use of all arable land. The Izimvo approach includes agrarian reform, business development appropriate to rural settings and associated strategies to ensure institutional capacitation and development.

Prior to the Izimvo intervention, the 5 villages that form the target community, had their own development plan, facilitated by the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) This programmatic intervention was apparently linked to a Ward Based Planning Information System, instituted by the O R Tambo District Municipality.

### 2. Evaluation Aim and Objectives

The evaluation is intended to assess the design, implementation and results of the project in order to determine its relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in the context of its stated aim.

### 3. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme was conducted using an overview of relevant documentation / desk-top review of project narrative and financial reports. During a site visit, key informant interviews were conducted (NDA Development Manager, 2 Izimvo Board Members, and two field staff.) The social service centre and several household gardens were inspected and photographed.

### 4. Results

The project appears to have involved the intended participants across the five targeted villages. The NDA has assured that through its perusal of project lists and insistence on a portfolio of evidence, it is able to confirm that the intended number of beneficiaries across the various categories was reached. Izimvo was clear on the number of gardens established per village. Generally this was under the target as was the overall number of participants (target was 1875.)

#### *Project preparation and design*

Izimvo was able to draw upon a comprehensive overview of Ward 2 in Mhlontlo Local Municipality when preparing and designing the project. As noted, some of this information

appears to have been drawn from the Ward Based Planning Information System, (WBPIS) operated by O R Tambo District Municipality. The profile developed related to Ward 2 as a whole rather than the 5 targeted villages and included number of households, population, number of villages, economic patterns and services / infrastructure.

The project appears to have been designed around the conventional logic or perhaps even a formula that entails more accessible state services, food security and local organizational development. Hence the logic is one of development driven by the provision of a social services centre that will house pre-school and community meeting facilities as well as office space for various government departments. Coupled to this is the initiative for household food security in the five villages which introduces organic gardening skills and water harvesting techniques.

Izimvo appears to have prioritised those elements in which it excels, namely the large-scale development of food gardens as an accepted supplement to local food security and as a key pillar of social development and health policy. The construction of the social service centre is more questionable as a design / planning feature. The site is very remote and only accessed via an extremely poor dirt road that is unsurfaced and lacks drainage in places. Both Izimvo and the NDA drew the community's attention to this drawback, however, the community participants were insistent upon this location. The functionality of the service centre component is therefore very questionable. Most of the construction completed is *off-plan*.

Overall the design of the project reflects the imperatives of many different state role-players, balanced to some extent by Izimvo's strong footprint in rural development.

### *Relevance*

The food security components of the project are clearly relevant to local conditions and development challenges. In the case of the social services centre, there is less assurance of effective use by the surrounding community, given its location and the large size of certain planned facilities such as the hall. The regular use of office space by government line departments like Home Affairs, Health and Social Development is unlikely given the remoteness of the site and the poor access road.

### *Governance*

Izimvo Rural Development Institute did not demonstrate all the necessary governance attributes and practices required to implement a project of this nature. Its on-site arrangements for project steering were weak. Reporting and accounting systems were only partly effective, in terms of answering to and communicating with the NDA.

The Izimvo Board played a hands-on role in the project particularly when deliverables were behind target and staff numbers dropped. Certain practices of the Board however, were less than exemplary, for example, allowing the management of project funds to become lax. It is also apparent that the Section 21 status of the organisation remains unsecured despite this matter being identified in the March 2011 Due Diligence Report.

### *Effectiveness and Efficiency*

Some project components such as the household food gardens were implemented in an efficient and effective manner although targets for households and participants were not fully achieved. The construction of the service centre has been plagued by pro-longed problems of design, procurement and cash-flow. There is little evidence relating to efficiency and effectiveness in the formal training and mentoring of the Trust. It seems that all the sub-activities were completed but that the functionality of the Trust remains “a challenge.” Izimvo felt that only the chairperson and the secretary of the Trust had been fully capacitated for their responsibilities

### *Impact*

The evaluation found evidence of impact in terms of improving the food security of targeted households within the 5 villages. The gardens are likely to play more of a subsistence role i.e. they will meet food security needs but may not necessarily reach the agro-business level. The broader envisaged economic impacts of the project especially in terms of business / enterprise development were over-ambitious.

Since the service centre has not been completed, equipped or reached any level of operational status, it is impossible to comment on the impact related to *community access to basic social services*.

Regarding impact related to construction activity and agro-economic interventions strengthening the local economy, it appears unlikely that further construction will employ local labour and the construction committee has since dissolved. About 14 people appear to have been hired for tasks such as fencing, food security monitoring, administration and site security

### *Sustainability*

There are serious concerns about the actual usage and likely government presence at the service centre, once it is completed. Izimvo is keenly aware of this and anxious to avoid the risk that the centre becomes a proverbial *white elephant*.

The organic household food gardens appear to be one of the most sustainable components of the project, even given the problems related to water. The actual economic role of these gardens beyond subsistence may need to be more clearly mapped out.

The Tribal Trust will in all likelihood require further support in order to fulfil the role of a local development and coordinating agency.

*Alignment with IDPs and government programmes:*

At the policy level it is evident that the project is consistent with several different policy frameworks for food security and integrated social services. There is obvious alignment with the Mhontlo Municipal IDP and rural development strategies from all three spheres of government.

*Income / Financial Management:*

The project was not soundly managed financially and significant variances from planned expenditure and timeframes resulted in the NDA withholding the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche and limiting the discretion of Izimvo in spending and procurement. As with all projects of this nature, financial and resource planning were made more difficult due to the imperative to seek additional financial inputs / resources from other partners or donors

*Capacity*

The Izimvo staff, as described in the contract / proposal, were appropriately qualified for the project. There were nonetheless, some serious failings in project management and eventually, as a result of poor cash-flow management and expenditure, the project lost all but two of its staff. The Izimvo Board, as noted, are all professional people and the Chairperson and Secretary provided unusually direct support to the project when the project manager resigned.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

The project served the beneficiaries described in the proposal and the contract but probably at a slightly smaller scale than was envisaged and with a lesser spread of economic and institutional empowerment impacts. Variances occurred in the number of households impacted, timeframes for deliverables such as the centre and again in the case of the centre, the actual nature and quality of the deliverable. Claimed impacts in terms of food security can be substantiated simply by viewing the flourishing food gardens. The completion of the centre and its impact on local social services remains the most serious concern.

Lessons and recommendations have emerged in terms of:

- Avoiding the over-sell of impacts at the application / contract development stage

- The need for formal written agreements regarding inputs by development partners especially public sector partners
- The need for constant feedback and frank assessment by the implementing NGO on the practicality of the final project design. Likely variances and risks should be identified and recorded as part of the monitoring / reporting function
- The need for the NDA to clearly and unambiguously confront governance and financial management shortfalls in the operations of the development partner and to define in detail the expected remedy and likely sanctions should the matter not be resolved. The NDA went some way to fulfilling this when it wrote to the project in December 2013 to set the conditions for further expenditure, i.e. that further expenditure would have to be directly approved by the NDA
- The capacity limits of NGOs in terms of planning and procurement related to self-managed construction
- Further construction work on the centre needs to be based on clearly defined design specifications and a common understanding of the costs of completing this work and the budget available
- A revised functionality plan needs to be compiled for the social services centre with measures to ensure that its usage is optimised

Before project close-out, Izimvo and the NDA should meet with the Tribal Trust and any other stakeholders to review the overall status of the project (rather than simply the centre construction). This should include a frank assessment of the various failings, from all sides and the lessons that emerge. All stakeholders should then formulate a simple strategy for continuity / sustainability in the project deliverables but in particular there should be a review of the functionality of the centre in terms of its current design. Such a review should remain open to reformulating the centre design for more practical purposes and, if necessary, re-assigning funds to clear priorities such as water tanks.

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<b>NAME OF PROJECT</b>	Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme	
<b>TYPE OF PROJECT</b>	Rural Development – Food Security	
<b>LEGAL FORM</b>	Non-profit organisation <sup>1</sup>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	Mhlontlo Local Municipality, Ward 2 Villages: Nombodlelana, Mqobisi, Mjika, Ncitshane and Zibungu	
<b>BENEFICIARIES (TYPE &amp; NO.)</b>	Women	1406
	Men	469
	Young people	750
	Disabled	24
	Total	1 875 (375 people per village x 5 villages)
<b>BUDGET</b>	R3 523 300.00 Approved for NDA funding: 2 587 300.00	
<b>FUNDS DISBURSED TO DATE</b>	R2 274 457.00 (calculated from contract – cannot be verified from reports)	
<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	1 September 2011 – 31 August 2013	

## 1. Introduction and Background

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<sup>1</sup> The proposal within the NDA contract indicates that Izimvo Rural Development Institute is registered in terms of Section 21 of Companies Act Registration NO:2011/002911/08 however, during the project visit of 5 February 2014 the Izimvo informants noted that the organization had not succeeded in registering as a Section 21 Company and was registered as an NPO only

Project evaluation is a requirement of a funding agreement between the NDA and all NDA funded organisations. Mbumba Development Services has been contracted to conduct a close-out project evaluation of the Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme as implemented by the Izimvo Rural Development Institute. The evaluation is intended to assess the design, implementation and results of the project in order to determine its relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in the context of its stated aim.

This project was motivated by and designed around Izimvo's core business i.e. rural development through the effective use of all arable land. The Izimvo approach includes agrarian reform, business development appropriate to rural settings and associated strategies to ensure institutional capacitation and development.

The Izimvo Rural Development Institute describes its origins as arising from the efforts of individuals from different rural villages in the Eastern Cape who are committed to 'a better life for all'. The organisation also frames its mission around the political principles of the Freedom Charter i.e. "the people shall govern". Its current programmatic logic apparently arises from the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform's speech to the debate on the state of the Nation Address dated 04<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

Prior to the Izimvo intervention, the 5 villages that form the target community had their own development plan, facilitated by the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) This programmatic intervention was apparently linked to a Ward Based Planning Information System, instituted by the O R Tambo District Municipality. The DRDAR intervention appears to have raised community expectations, particularly in relation to fencing and water tanks. In Izimvo's estimation, these commitments would have required about R5m of project support and were not fully realized. Izimvo therefore sees its role, to some extent as "topping-up" on the DRDAR programme.

The 5 targeted villages form part of Ward 2 which has 12 villages in total and a population of 1 136 spread over 276 households. According to project documentation, this equates to roughly 5 people per household. Citing the use of the Livelihood Analysis (LA) method, Izimvo estimates unemployment at 75% with 5% of the population self-employed and 20% formally employed – mostly as civil servants.

## **2. Evaluation aim and objectives**

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Provide a comprehensive performance overview of the entire project;
- Highlight lessons learned so that the conclusions and recommendations arrived at can assist the applicant organisation in moving forward and becoming more sustainable;
- Highlight project alignment with municipal IDPs and relevant government sector department's programmes;

Further objectives are to assess whether specified objectives / results are being attained, identify failures to achieve project outputs, monitor service quality and identify issues or risks that could negate the success of the project so that they can be urgently addressed.

### 3. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme was conducted using an overview of relevant documentation and a desk-top review of project narrative and financial reports. Key informant interviews were then conducted (NDA Provincial Manager, the Chairperson and Secretary of the Izimvo Board and two project staff.) All the Izimvo interviews were undertaken in the course of a site visit during which the partially completed social service centre and several household gardens were inspected and photographed. There was some contact with the beneficiaries during the site visit, however, this was limited due to the spatial spread of the participating villages.

The research instruments included a questionnaire and interview guide. These consisted of open-ended and generally qualitative questions that were informed by the NDA Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

The main evaluation questions related to:

- i. **Project Preparation and Design:** appropriateness of the planning and design phase
- ii. **Project implementation:** process, progress and outputs/outcome/impact. Organisation's ability to deliver the project/ programme objectives and results
- iii. **Relevance of the project:** the relevance of the objectives, expected results and activities as initially identified. Relevance and suitability of the project in the community in which it operates.
- iv. **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the project interventions have contributed towards meeting the project aim / purpose.
- v. **Sustainability:** resource management, policy support measures, economic and financial sustainability and institutional and management capacity.
- vi. **Overall Project Performance**

The interview with the relevant NDA Provincial Manager happened prior to the site visit and was necessitated by the fact that the NDA Development Manager for Izimvo had left the NDA. Understandably, the Provincial Manager's direct contact with the project had been less than the norm for a Development Manager. The interview nevertheless dealt with various issues that arose during the early and current stages of the project. This interview also helped to frame key issues that were interrogated during the stakeholder / project implementer interaction.

All project evaluation activities were conducted slightly more than five months from the official project completion date, however, it is important to note that neither the NDA nor Izimvo regarded the project as completed. In fact the NDA Provincial Manager noted that ideally the evaluation should have been regarded as "mid-term." Despite this common understanding, there was no record of an official project extension.

## 4. Results



The project appears to have involved the intended participants across the five targeted villages. The NDA has assured the evaluators that through its perusal of project lists and insistence on a portfolio of evidence, it is able to confirm that the intended number of beneficiaries across the various categories was reached. Izimvo was clear on the number of gardens established per village. Generally this was under the target of 60 gardens per village. The smallest number of gardens established was 35 (42% under target) and the highest number was 55 – just 8% under target. Given that less than the target number of gardens were established, it is unlikely that the full number of 1 875 beneficiaries was reached.

The average number of gardens established across all five villages was 46. This seems like a fairly impressive achievement and the original target may have been overly ambitious.

### a. Project preparation and design

Izimvo was able to draw upon a comprehensive overview of Ward 2 in Mhlontlo Local Municipality when preparing and designing the project. As noted some of this information appears to have been drawn from the Ward Based Planning Information System, (WBPIIS) operated by O R Tambo District Municipality. It was therefore possible to profile Ward 2 in terms of:

- Number of villages (12)
- Total population (1 136)
- Number of households (276)
- Employment patterns as per the Livelihood Analysis (LA) tool, e.g. unemployment rate (75%) and 80% of the community depends on grant support from the Department of Social Development.
- Human capital (skills) – listed as roofing, gardening, weaving, knitting, sewing; beadwork, carpentry, brick-making, baking and artisan skills.
- Basic infrastructure and services – poor access roads, partial reticulation of water and sanitation below RDP standards and very limited electrification.

The above is a useful profile of the general area, however, it relates to the ward as a whole rather than the five target villages.

The project appears to have been designed around the conventional logic or perhaps even a formula that entails more accessible state services, food security and local organizational development. Hence the logic is one of development driven by the provision of a social services centre that will house pre-school, community and meeting facilities as well as office

space for various government departments. Coupled to this is the initiative for household food security in the five villages which includes organic gardening skills and water harvesting techniques. An over-arching strategy is the development of local skills and institutional capacity in the form of a tribal trust that is expected to take ownership of the programme and eventually ensure its sustainability.

The different components of the project are well-described and convincingly integrated in the proposal and the NDA contract. In practical implementation the elements are less integrated and seem to be uneven in terms of performance. Izimvo appears to have prioritised those elements in which it excels, namely the large-scale development of food gardens as an accepted supplement to local food security and as a key pillar of social development and health policy.



The construction of the social service centre is more questionable as a design / planning feature. The site is very remote and only accessed via an extremely poor dirt road that is unsurfaced and lacks drainage in places. The road becomes impassable even for all-wheel drive vehicles during any rain. There is little likelihood of public servants reporting for duty at the centre on a regular basis and particularly during foul weather. Both Izimvo and the NDA drew the community's attention to

this drawback, however, the community participants were insistent upon this location. The community hall and early childhood development functions of the centre may be more viable if the local community is willing to assume full responsibility. Other functionality concerns relate to the location of the site, which although central to all five villages, is a considerable distance from the nearest settlement. It is noted that Izimvo built a site office that is separate to the centre and currently used for storage. This was apparently an 'off-plan' development and has been criticised by the NDA as such. If the project is to be sustained through the tribal trust, a local site office used for storage, basic administration and small meetings is likely to be the best-used facility even if it is not within the centre per se.

In the final analysis the project design is a familiar and widely accepted one whose elements are linked more in theory than in reality. The influence of government policy, political imperatives from all spheres of government and indeed the NDA's own need to show a tangible product for its investment has probably outweighed a detailed local analysis of need and functional viability in the case of the centre.

As is the case with many NGOs currently, Izimvo shows particular sensitivity to linking the project with a range of state agencies and their programmes:

*In this exercise Izimvo has also forged partnership with all the stakeholders such as Traditional Local Leaders, Local Development Committee, OR Tambo Department for Rural Development, Department of Social Development and Local Municipality.*

The project therefore reflects the imperatives of many different state role-players, balanced to some extent by Izimvo's strong footprint in rural development. While this may be

necessary to gain official support for the project, it does not always guarantee access to additional resources. In some instances, government agencies like DRDAR (agriculture) do not appear to have committed all the resources they had pledged during their earlier programme involvement.

### *Community consultation and buy-in*

The project is apparently based on previous ward-based planning interventions and DRDAR programmes all of which have participatory methods. However, prior to the current project intervention (pre-interim phase) the Due Diligence report by Histoto found that of the 28 beneficiaries interviewed during the field visit, none was aware of the project and most wanted to be more involved or wished to directly carry out the activities themselves with the funds on hand. The report found, “The Community has yet to be sensitized or organized in readiness to participate in the program.”

The Due Diligence Report recommended “Further preparatory work being done to ensure proper community consultation and commitment to the project. This should be indicated by the allocation of the land contributed by the community upfront before the funding is granted.”

Izimvo subsequently undertook ‘sensitization’ meetings to encourage community support and ownership and committed to building the capacity of the community to take up a leadership role and manage the resources provided by the program. Community mobilisation meetings in October 2011 are confirmed in NDA progress reports. As per the Due Diligence recommendation, land-use agreements (Permission to Occupy) were entered into by the community and are cited as further evidence of participation and buy-in.

Izimvo itself claims to have mobilized and consulted the target communities in order to encouraging community support and involvement from inception. Izimvo claims that this “...created a sense of ownership within the targeted communities.” During interviews, Izimvo secretary Mr. T.K. Kanise claimed that community participation and “mobilization” was one of the strong points of the project.

NDA progress reports indicate that community meetings were held and involved many of the different partner agencies. Input from the community covered substantive matters such as the need to prioritize households that had been left out of the previous DRDAR programme.

The site visit and interviews were unable to confirm the level of local community ownership although the reception of Izimvo project staff at household gardens suggested that beneficiaries are well disposed to the project.

### **b. Relevance of the project**

As noted the three-component project follows a generic rationale related to the importance of food security, accessible state services and the establishment of institutional / organisational capacity within rural / disadvantaged communities. According to information

in the NDA grant application the project has well defined outcomes which would be relevant to any under-developed rural community i.e.

- 52 direct jobs created;
- A well-resourced social services centre operational;
- A functional community development institute registered;
- Community members accessing multiple social services at their door step;
- Households producing adequate and nutritious food.
- 35 community members trained on leadership, governance and financial management.
- 300 household food gardens established;
- 300 community members trained on food production.

Apart from the basic demographic and economic data in the proposal (already described) there does not appear to have been a deeper analysis of the conditions in the five villages that would allow this fairly generic project to be fine-tuned to local conditions. The existence of a previous DRDAR programme in the area, presumably based on a departmental needs analysis, undoubtedly provided some assurance that agriculture-based



food security interventions were relevant to local conditions.

Visually the area seems to be well suited to food gardening, showing signs of high rainfall, fertile soils and well-drained slopes. The remoteness of the area and the poor accessibility of shops and specifically food retailers (Mthatha is a 1.5 hour drive away) further underlines the relevance of sustainable food gardens.

In the case of the social services centre, the question is not so much relevance (nearby social services would undoubtedly make livelihoods much easier) but feasibility. Until the access road to the site is vastly upgraded, regular and reliable government services at the centre is highly unlikely. Izimvo is keenly aware of this and describes the centre as entailing a high *white elephant* risk factor. Izimvo suggests that this can be avoided by establishing a key 'draw card' at the centre e.g. a doctor's consulting room. Given the absence of other public facilities certain centre components, in particular the hall, and an early childhood development facility may be well-used by the surrounding community, provided they can self-sustain. However, the take-up of office space by government line departments like Home Affairs, Health and Social Development etc. is very doubtful and should have been subject to a more focused discussion and formal agreement with these line departments.

### c. Governance

In the project proposal, contract and progress reports, matters of governance are described mainly in relation to the project implementation agent, Izimvo Rural Development Institute. At the time of applying to the NDA, Izimvo had a seven member Board comprising three women and four men all with two years of service on the board. By NGO standards the board was unusually well capacitated – professional competencies included, law, strategic

management, risk management, NGO directorship and auditing. Such a range of skills undoubtedly benefited the work of the institute but may have also meant that Board members had limited time for their oversight duties. At the time of the site visit Izimvo indicated that there had been a few changes within the Board – one member had resigned and at least one had left the region, thus a limited review of membership status seemed imminent.

After project initiation, Adv. Z.G. Conjwa, formerly the treasurer on the Board, became the project manager. According to the NDA, there is a letter dated 29 August 2011 confirming Conjwa's resignation from the Board. Conjwa subsequently left the project to pursue improved career opportunities.

During the site visit it became apparent that the board play an unusually hands-on role in the project – both Mr. G.N. Nelani, the chairperson and Mr. T.J. Kanise, the secretary appear to be closely involved in the project. Mr. Kanise described the oversight and monitoring process as follows, *"The Chairperson of the Board Mr Nelani, myself as Secretary visited the project more often. At Board meetings the Project Manager provided feedback. We held two community meetings for feedback."*

This has proven to be useful as there has been high turn-over amongst project staff. At the time of the site visit, the project manager, the book keeper and both trainers had resigned leaving only the two agricultural fieldworkers as formal project staff. The apparent reason for these departures is that Izimvo has been unable to pay staff salaries due to the delay in the transfer of the NDA 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche. No mention was made of the 8 cluster leaders that appear in the project proposal and budget and in the NDA progress report of 8 November, no expenditure is reported against this item. In general it does not seem that project was able to deploy the anticipated human resources outlined in the proposal. This in turn meant that it did not reach the employment target of 52 people (including temporary jobs in the construction of the centre - brick-makers, labourers and security guards.)

The NDA, on the other hand, notes that the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche was delayed due to slow progress in construction of the service centre and questionable financial practices that included the direct transfer of project funds to a company owned by Adv. Conjwa – according to the NDA Provincial Manager, this was later resolved.

According to Izimvo interviews, a management committee was set up to oversee the project. There were no details available regarding this committee and it appears to have been convened by the project manager. Minutes of this or other oversight meetings were not produced, however, there are minutes of Izimvo Board meetings dealing with project matters such as the opening of a bank account. These minutes e.g. March 2012, also reflect that the project manager tabled reports to the Board. Izimvo were not able to produce project reports to the NDA but board members said that that as far as they were aware, the project manager submitted reports to the NDA. They further noted that no complaints had been received from the NDA in this regard. No evidence could be found of formal financial reporting on the project – instead Izimvo appears to have submitted bank statements and sought written approval for expenditure as per the December 2013 directive of the NDA. A follow-up request to describe financial reporting to the secretary, Mr. Kanise elicited the following explanation, "The Project Manager, Advocate Conjwa submitted a report as per

the requirements by NDA. We also received monitoring visits from NDA Officer, Mpilo who also took photographs of the project activities.”

Regarding arrangements for community oversight of the project, the NDA progress report of 8 November 2011 acknowledge the establishment of a *community coordinating structure* on the 28 October 2011. This interim structure apparently comprised one person per village nominated to the community / tribal trust and three members per village to serve on various working committees dealing with construction, water tanks and food security. The Trust itself comprises 5 members with the two local chiefs acting as the founding members – the terms of reference for the trust were developed by the interim coordinating structure and the deed of trust was due to be signed on 10 November 2011. NDA has subsequently confirmed that the trust was registered. Again no documentation was produced relating to these claims i.e. no schedules / plans of Trust or coordinating committee meetings, workshop programmes etc. Mr. Kanise however, felt that the establishment of the Trust and the pride it created in the community, was one of the key project achievements. The impression created, and this may not necessarily be correct, is that while consultation may have been extensive, any regular and formalized process for project steering involving community responsibilities was lacking.

Despite budgeting for audit expenses the Due Diligence report notes that no mention is made of an internal and/or independent auditor to audit its books of account.

The 2011 Due Diligence report by Histoto makes no findings in terms of the Board’s governance capability or its likely prospects of providing project oversight. Histoto does however, suggest that overall, Izimvo lacks experience in projects of this nature and would require capacitation. Izimvo on the other hand claims experience from 2009 in the facilitation of small-scale farming and community-based development projects. The scale of these projects however, may have been quite modest as the funding declared by Imvizo over the 3 years prior to the application was only R102 500.

<b>Matters identified in Due Diligence Report</b>	<b>Comment and progress at time of site visit (05/02/2014)</b>
Further preparatory work being done to ensure proper community consultation and commitment to the project. This should be indicated by the allocation of the land contributed by the community upfront before the funding is granted.	NDA reports indicate release of land via PTO agreements
Provide the names of the company directors and clearly outline how community representation has been taken care of in the decision making structure of the organization.	The names of the Izimvo Board has always been clear and is separate to the issue of community representation on a project steering structure – the effective operation of the latter cannot be independently verified
The applicant relooks at the budget presented and clarify the anomalies identified	Not possible to assess as Histoto may refer to an earlier draft of the budget
The applicant giving more thought to the logical	A very valid concern that does not appear to have

and sequential implementation of the activities proposed and in so doing present a detailed work plan that will clearly identify milestones for monitoring purposes	been finalised
The applicant needs to clarify their registration status as a company or a Not for Profit Organization or both and under which umbrella it will be implementing this activity.	A serious concern that remains unresolved since the Izimvo Institute stated that they are not in fact registered as a Section 21 company in terms of the Companies Act and are registered only as an NPO – the project documentation is not consistent with this situation.

The table above suggests the existence of significant governance shortfalls that were not resolved in the course of the project. To be fair to Izimvo, no *paper trail* can be found to indicate that the NDA took these issues further or provided formal warning that certain omissions would be considered serious and should be resolved before progressing further with the project. In this respect, the governance and procedural shortfalls cannot be blamed entirely on the grant recipient.

The NDA did, however, justifiably delay the transfer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche, but even this precaution appears to have been subject to ambiguity. In interviews, Izimvo Board members did not appear to accept that this precaution was justified. Imvizo regards the issue as primarily related to a disagreement between the NDA and itself regarding the importance of the centre and certain technical features related to its design. The NDA seems to be concerned about delays in completing the construction and the fact that construction did not conform to a formal plan. Izimvo accepts this but suggests that there was no agreement that the centre had to follow a specific design. However, there are also indications that NDA was concerned about certain financial practises and these concerns contributed to the delay in releasing the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche.

#### d. Effectiveness and Efficiency

During the scrutiny of relevant documentation and the interviews / focus group held during the site visit, the following was established:

- Most of the ***pre-funding activities*** were completed i.e. the consultation with the community, mobilisation and establishment of committees. The planned time-frame for these was within the first month of the project. Some of these activities went slightly over this timeframe. According to NDA progress reports, the establishment of the Trust was completed by October 2011 - this activity was therefore slightly ahead of schedule. Due to the absence of financial records it is not possible to assess whether these were completed within budget. About 190 people attended consultation meetings held across the 5 villages (Progress Report 19/07/2012)

- **Promotion of food security:** this was to commence in the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the project and various sub-activities like *introducing water harvesting* continue throughout the project period at defined intervals. Izimvo regards this activity as one of the major



achievements and indeed the site visit provided visible evidence of many well established and flourishing food gardens. In the absence of more detailed activity and expenditure documentation, it is not possible to fully assess efficiency / effectiveness. As previously noted, Izimvo has frankly explained that there was a shortfall on the target

of 60 gardens per village. The smallest number of gardens established was 35 (42% under target) and the highest number was 55 – just 8% under target. Given that less than the target number of gardens were established, it is unlikely that the full number of 1 875 beneficiaries was reached. According to Izimvo the reason for this was that some households were not prepared to make the required level of labour input to support their gardens.

According to Izimvo, other project role-players, including the NDA, did not always respect the principle of the households having to meet their own contribution commitments e.g. labour or cash. There was also a shortfall on the number of water tanks available as the DARDA did not meet its commitments in this regard – the project resorted to other means of water conservation.

- **Establishment of a Social Services Centre:** the contract / proposal mentions the following steps:
  - Establishing a construction committee;
  - Identifying brick and block makers in the five villages (ECATU bricks);
  - Assessing the quality of bricks and provide training on ECATU specifications;
  - Facilitating certification of locally manufactured building material;
  - Appointing technical team (Architect, Quantity Surveyor, Electrical Engineer, Structural and Civil Engineer);
  - Drawing and approval of building plans;
  - Developing the tender document;
  - Facilitating tendering process;
  - Fencing and securing of the site;
  - Constructing of Social Services Centre (unskilled labour to be 100% locally based);
  - Resourcing of the Social Services Centre;
  - Managing the project;
  - Closing and handing over of the project.

These activities were scheduled to be completed within the 5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> month of the project. The activity entailed both self-managed construction using local labour as well as contracted construction services. NDA progress reports indicate that a partnership was arranged with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to assist in the design and technical side of the project, as early as October 2011. The NDA's auditors later drew attention to the fact that this item was behind schedule.



It appears that the DPW provided a generic plan for the construction of the centre. Izimvo began the construction but did not follow the DPW plan and instead prioritised the construction of a small site office which according to the NDA cost about R200 000. At some point, funds earmarked for this activity appear to have been transferred into the account of a private company owned by the project manager Adv. Conjwa but this was later resolved to the NDA's satisfaction according to the NDA provincial manager. These issues led to the delayed transfer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche and it appears that project staff went unpaid for a period of 8 months – Izimvo point out that despite this, extension services and support to the food gardens was maintained.

Izimvo acknowledge that the construction of the centre was delayed but claim that there was no specific agreement regarding its design or the facilities to be incorporated. Izimvo notes that "The proposal makes it clear that it was just a centre..." Izimvo feels that the NDA became overly fixated with this deliverable and started to prescribe design features that were not part of the contract. Izimvo also claims that there was an agreement that the funds for the centre would be paid over once it reached window height. A further phase of the construction then appears to have ensued which fits part but not all of the DPW plan – the current incomplete works cover about one third of the total floor space indicated in the DPW plan. Izimvo note that the construction committee and the local production of blocks did not prove feasible.

The NDA is obviously and justifiably concerned that the construction followed an 'off-plan' approach and has sought to ensure that the remaining components of the planned centre are completed within the remaining budget. The NDA has therefore indicated that centre should be completed by formal contractors rather than the SMME route and that it (the NDA) will play a 'hands-on' role in procurement. At the time of the site visit, quotes were still being finalised for this process.

Izimvo is correct in noting that the detailed elements, size, facilities and layout of the centre are not defined in the contract. However, the contract includes the *drawing and approval of building plans* and the NDA had the reasonable expectation that these plans would be followed in the construction. In fact had the generic DPW plans been followed, there would have been no need for this item of expenditure. Izimvo claims that the public hall specified in the DPW plans accommodated 2000 people and estimates construction costs for a centre with a hall of this size at R2,9m. Izimvo

feels that the NDA budget for the centre was only adequate for the storage and office space facilities and would not cover the hall.

While it may be that the planned hall was too large to ensure effective usage, it appears unwise to have started construction without agreeing a final plan. It now appears that plans drawn up by a private firm will be used to guide the construction of a centre that is acceptable to all parties. The centre was budgeted at R1.11m including a R30 000 own contribution from Izimvo. Izimvo felt that another 6 months would be needed to complete the construction of the centre provided the area did not receive heavy rain. In December 2012 a 30-day plan was adopted for the remaining construction of the centre – this appears to have had little impact.

- ***Establish and strengthen Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Development Trust:*** this activity had the following sub-activities:
  - Engaging communities on need for establishing a coordinating structure;
  - Develop terms of reference for a community coordinating structure;
  - Establish the community coordinating structure;
  - Assess capacity gaps;
  - Develop training programmes;
  - Establish sub-committees;
  - Training of the committees
  - Mentoring and Monitoring of the Development Trust.

As noted under the governance section, the Trust has 5 members with the two local chiefs acting as the founding members. Terms of reference have been developed by the interim coordinating structure and the deed of trust was registered according to NDA reports. The establishment of the Trust therefore appears to have been completed as per the contract.

There is less evidence relating to the formal training and mentoring of the Trust. Izimvo claims that all the sub-activities were completed but that the functionality of the Trust remains “a challenge.” Izimvo felt that only the chairperson and the secretary of the Trust had been fully capacitated for their responsibilities. Mr. Kanise nonetheless felt that the Trust and the pride it created in the community, was one of the key project achievements

#### **e. Impact**

In the contract / proposal there is a lengthy description of envisaged impact which can be summarised as follows:

- Community access to basic social services through the centre;
- Construction activity and agro-economic interventions and infrastructure development will enhance business prospects through more productive land use and create jobs leading to a stronger local economy;
- Improved financial and managerial skills and experience will be developed allowing a more effective take-up of economic opportunities by community activists acting as a management team

- Izimvo will enhance its capacity and gain valuable experiences in rural community development
- Training and mentoring provided by Izimvo to the various committees will build technical capacities and a strong spirit of community development / ownership while promoting the sustainability of existing project activities



Izimvo pledged that “...an integrated approach on social services to the area is achieved.

... Izimvo would leave behind a skilled and vibrant self-sustainable community that is capacitated enough to take the programme to the next level.”

Since the centre has not been completed, equipped or reached any level of operational status, it is impossible to comment on the impact related to community access to basic social services. However, this impact is perhaps the least likely to be achieved

given the drawbacks already described i.e. poor access road, general remoteness and the absence of any formal commitment by line departments to provide services at the centre.

Regarding impact related to construction activity and agro-economic interventions strengthening the local economy, it appears unlikely that further construction will employ local labour and the construction committee has since dissolved. About 14 people appear to have been hired for tasks such as fencing, food security monitoring, administration and site security. The positioning of the household food gardens in relation to markets and retail opportunities is impossible to assess, however, any movement of produce out of the area is likely to be logistically expensive. Local markets are likely to be limited and the food produced, while possibly significant and of good quality, is likely to play more of a subsistence role i.e. it will meet food security needs but may not necessarily reach the agro-business level. Technical capabilities created within committees or community structures are also hard to assess as there is little documentation or track record related to this impact. Sustained provision of agricultural extension services has undoubtedly contributed to local capacity for organic food gardening.

Visually, the impact of the household gardens using organic methods seems impressive and seems to match the apparent strength of cattle and sheep farming in the area. The managerial and financial skills vested in the Trust are harder to determine and will only be proven over time as the Trust takes up more direct responsibility for the projects and infrastructure created.

## f. Sustainability

As already noted, there are serious issues about the actual usage and likely government presence at the service centre. Izimvo is keenly aware of this and the risk that the centre becomes a proverbial *white elephant*. Izimvo is anxious that a key draw card be identified for the centre but this in itself may be insufficient to ensure sustainability.



The organic household food gardens appear to be one of the most sustainable components of the project, even given the problems related to water. The actual economic role of these gardens beyond subsistence may need to be more clearly mapped out, as certain households may not be prepared to sustain current levels of production simply for own consumption.

The Tribal Trust will in all likelihood require further support in order to fulfil the role of a local development and coordinating agency.

### *Capacity*

The Izimvo staff, as described in the contract / proposal, were appropriately qualified for the project. The project manager was an attorney with project management experience, the bookkeeper had a Bachelor of Commerce (according to the Izimvo secretary) and the trainers / extension officers were qualified specialists who had undertaken courses in organic small scale agriculture. The Izimvo Board, as noted, are all professional people and the Chairperson and Secretary provided unusually direct support to the project when the project manager resigned. The main problem is that apart from the two extension officers, all project staff have since left Izimvo. While some training and mentoring was undertaken for the local coordinating committee, the Trust and possibly cluster leaders, there is insufficient evidence provided to make any assessment of capacity at this level.

Issues of institutional sustainability are impossible to comment on without sight of the skills audit and subsequent capacitation programme aimed at households and committees that formed part of the project approach.

### **g. Alignment with IDPs and government programmes**

At the policy level it is evident that the project is aligned with several different policy frameworks for integrated service delivery and food security. The Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) for example sets out a vision based on *“socially cohesive and stable rural communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable people, who equipped to contribute to growth and development”*.

The project is also consistent with the Department of Social Development’s Integrated Service Delivery Model which entails *“...interdependent relationship between the main programmes of the Department, namely Social Security, Social Welfare and Community*

Development, and provides a framework for the integration of the services of the Department's different programmes.”

The project also fits within the aims of the *Mhlontlo Integrated Development Plan: 2012-2017* which notes that “It is imperative that the municipality explores possibilities of establishing strategic partnerships to ensure provision of service centres to enable easy access to essential services such as telecommunication, police, health, postal services and emergencies/disaster management.” The IDP further outlines the status of the municipality as a rural development and *food security* pilot site. The objectives of this pilot are to:

- Mobilize the whole of government behind all of the rural development pillars outlined in the Provincial Rural Development Strategy (horizontal, and vertical across sphere);
- Develop a quality physical, social and economic infrastructure;
- Ensure availability of land as viable asset to the rural poor;
- Enhance indigenous knowledge and cultural values;
- Ensure vibrant arts and cultural life; and
- Provide the pilot site with access to basic social services, information, communication and technology.

#### **h. Income / Financial Management**

There were very few financial reports or other records available on which to base an assessment of the quality of financial management and income usage. The general impression created is that this was a weakness within the project.

- The Due Diligence report identified certain discrepancies in the detailed project budget related to training costs and centre construction but did not go on to mention any concerns or risks related to financial management
- Izimvo had some difficulty in opening a project bank account in August 2011 due to new FICA regulations
- The Due Diligence report notes general lack of project experience within Izimvo but appears to accept that “The Board will provide strategic supervision and the treasurer and chairperson will approve financial expenditure of the program.” However, as of March 2012, the organisation was still busy with some of its internal governance policies. At the time of the site visit, the chairperson and the secretary were able to describe little of the financial controls and reporting mechanisms in place and appeared to regard this as the role of the project manager (now departed)
- Details regarding how project funds came to be transferred into the private company account of the project manager are lacking and although the matter was subsequently resolved to the NDA’s satisfaction, any such event must remain a concern
- Following a site visit on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the NDA Development Manager recommended the withholding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche due to low expenditure on budgeted activities
- The above report is one of the few to include a financial statement. In this statement there appears to be an underspending on human resource, administration and project costs. Of the R648 000 received for the centre only about R318 000 was

expended. From the first tranche of R1 516 380, the project had reported expenditure of R375 123. The balance in the project account on 20 May 2012 was nearly R964 000

- Izimvo did not succeed in making good on its own financial contribution to the project although minutes suggest that a genuine effort was made to raise funds for water tanks, seed, implements and soil preparation
- NDA monitoring visits in late October 2012 recorded a lack of administrative and financial records on hand and again the lack of progress with the centre
- In November 2012 NDA again met with Izimvo to raise concerns that emerged from audit findings that the centre construction was seriously behind schedule – NDA monitoring visits increased in frequency at this point
- According to the NDA progress report of 25 April 2013 (incorrectly dated 2012) Izimvo ran out of funds in January 2013 (by end of April 2013 it had slightly over R4000 in its account). Izimvo reported that it was therefore forced to stop construction on the centre – at this stage it had received only the first tranche of R1 516 380. Izimvo were unable to produce a financial report at this stage.
- At a further meeting on the 15 May 2013 it was resolved that a contractor would be appointed to complete the centre – quotes were to be obtained
- Once the NDA had identified concerns related to expenditure, it instituted systems for directly approving project spending and began to monitor the Izimvo bank account - by December 2013 the Izimvo secretary was writing directly to NDA to seek such approval.

It appears that Izimvo lacked the capacity or experience to develop and implement a properly managed financial plan that would ensure that project expenditure kept pace with planned activity time frames. While the NDA began a regular schedule of monitoring visits, it may not have been decisive in its efforts to get things back on track e.g. understanding of conditions for the release of the next tranche varied from the registration of the Trust to certain milestones in the actual construction of the centre. Izimvo's feedback was that "...they monitored us closely but could not offer much assistance or advice..."

Overall the project does not give a sense of one that was soundly managed financially and many variances in expenditure are not or only partially explained and do appear to have been decisively managed. As with all projects of this nature, financial and resource planning were made more difficult due to the imperative to seek other financial inputs / resources from other partners or donors.

## **5. Discussion and conclusions**

The motivation and design of the project are strongly shaped by official rural development policy and the programmatic interventions that flow from this including national, provincial, district and local government interventions. There are also specific developmental and political principles to which Izimvo prescribes. The Izimvo Board embodies a wealth of experience in development which clearly shapes its approach to projects, particularly in terms of an insistence that beneficiaries make a contribution to the project.

In the proposal and contract Izimvo appears to have slightly over-sold the broad impact of the project in terms of job creation, business development, institutional capacitation etc.

This is common when NGOs are forced to compete for funding in an increasingly frugal donor environment. However, the trend can lead to unnecessarily negative evaluation findings as the evaluator is forced to assess impacts pledged in the contract.

The relevance of the project is assured by its link to previous ward-based planning interventions in Ward 2 of Mhlontlo Municipality and a previous programme by the DRDAR. The project became, to some extent, a top-up on the shortfall in deliverables expected through the DRDAR programme. Initially the introduction of the project to the local community appears to have been weak and resulted in the limited local knowledge of the project described by the Due Diligence Report. This was remedied by further consultation and 'mobilisation'. The extension of these activities, while necessary, caused some delays in the project activity schedule.

The actual beneficiaries were very loosely those described in the project proposal and NDA contract, namely households and community members. There is very little evidence that the 30 children mentioned in the proposal benefited in any way. Of the other beneficiaries it is likely that the number of households was under target and of the 52 jobs envisaged; only about 14 were provided. The project nonetheless reached all five of the target villages and the scale of the food garden establishment is significant.

Izimvo made every effort to network with relevant government departments, state entities and the tribal authority. The tangible results that should have flowed from this e.g. water tanks and solid departmental agreements to take up responsibility for services at the centre were not forthcoming.

The registration of the Tribal Trust was a key milestone achieved with some difficulty and much leverage from the NDA as the funding partner. The capacitation and sustainability of the Trust and indeed the full community ownership of the project remain questionable. This is the universal dilemma of all rural development programmes – the more effective and well-directed the project is from the facilitator, the less likelihood is that the local community will step up and assume ownership. In this regard Izimvo differed significantly from current government and perhaps even NDA practice, by trying to insist on stronger mechanisms for community ownership. The latter are treated with suspicion in professional project management circles as the procedures are often convoluted with limited tangible outputs.

The project remains highly relevant to the local community and their socio-economic circumstances, especially with respect to productive food gardens at household level. In respect of the service centre function, the project follows a generic rationale related to the importance of accessible and integrated social services in rural / disadvantaged communities. The design of the centre to fit local demands and the realistic prospects of regular government services within it, are more questionable and at this point it seems unlikely that the Trust, on its own initiative and with self-generated resources, will sustain the centre as a thriving hub of community service and development.

Izimvo, despite a well-capacitated and attentive Board did not demonstrate all the necessary governance attributes to manage a project of this nature. While the Board clearly tried to deal with project management responsibilities, effective on-site governance arrangements in the form of a steering committee or similar structure were lacking. At the

very least there was a breakdown in formal reporting and effective administration / financial management at key points – the absence of clear paper trails and reports demonstrates this. In the case of the service centre, Izimvo appears to have moved into the role of a reluctant implementing agent of the NDA itself, rather than an independent and contractually bound project facilitator.

If Izimvo was of the view that the centre was a lesser priority or poorly designed (in terms of DPW plans) for local usage patterns, or indeed, unrealistically budgeted, it should have formally communicated this to the NDA. In turn the NDA would have had an opportunity to adjust requirements for the centre design and assist in procurement, before rather than after the project completion date.

It cannot therefore be said that governance and financial management procedures were adequate and this in turn meant that the project was not completely effective and efficient in implementation. Specific examples include:

- General shortfalls in the targets of scale and impact of the main activity i.e. the food gardens and also in respect of jobs created
- The persistent weakness in the local coordinating structure and eventually the Trust – the reported lethargy of local communities and identified participants should have at least been unpacked
- At some point Izimvo gained the impression that, through NDA’s prioritisation of the centre, the overall project design had skewed in favour of a formula based more on the theoretical function of a service centre rather than consultation or ground-truthing. This issue was never explicitly addressed in the relationship between Izimvo and the NDA.
- There was no realistic review of the likelihood of social services to be provided at the centre and a formal re-assessment of the actual functionality the centre was likely to provide and the implications of this in terms of its design. The NDA could certainly have done more to facilitate such a review
- The transfer of project funds into the private company account of the then project manager. Apparently remedied, there remains no formal explanation for this serious breach of financial governance
- The fact that the NDA was obliged to delay the transfer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche due to under-expenditure or expenditure that was not aligned with the budget. The unforeseen consequence of this was that the project lost all but two of its staff
- There was little evidence that Izimvo followed the recommendation in the Due Diligence Report that a detailed work plan should be compiled showing a “logical and sequential implementation of the activities proposed”
- The legal status of Izimvo remains in question and may be misstated in key project documents – according to interviews during the site visit, it is **not** registered as a Section 21 company in terms of the Companies Act but is registered only as an NPO
- Due to the absence of formal baseline studies, workshop records etc. it is virtually impossible to assess the impact of the project on the capacity and institutional coherence / capability of community structures, project committees and the Trust

It is acknowledged that not all these shortfalls were fully avoidable and certainly Izimvo appears to have tried to prioritise those project elements in which it excels, namely the large-scale development of food gardens as an accepted supplement to local food security.



There were also many positive aspects to the project that should not be overlooked, e.g. the hands-on role played by key Board members during the project and specifically after all the senior staff had resigned. The commitment of the extension officers and local support staff who worked for lengthy periods without pay must also be recognised. There is also the fact that the NDA intensified visits and meetings with the project once it became clear that the centre construction was behind schedule.

There is some argument for a more analytical and flexible approach in NDA monitoring and reporting. For example, if it had been agreed that the centre could be built on reduced scale early in the project, savings might have been generated and directed to the shortfall in water-tanks for the gardens. Similarly, the small site office built by Izimvo may be *off-plan* and un-procedural but if deemed practically useful to the project, as it currently appears, it could be incorporated into the centre design.

## 6. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Many of the project lessons and recommendations are implicit in the preceding sections of this report. The following therefore constitutes a summary of the main lessons and recommendations:

### **Lessons**

- a) NGOs submitting project proposals tend to over-sell project impacts in order to ensure the competitiveness of their application to the funder
- b) Expected but non-secured resources from other development agencies, including government, should not be an essential component on which key project deliverables depend
- c) NDA should avoid prescriptive project elements, e.g. a service centre of a specific size and design, that may prove inappropriate to local conditions
- d) Where possible NDA should contract well-established NGOs as project managers. Where such capability is less assured, contingency plans should allow for direct NDA assistance with key functions e.g. procurement
- e) The project demonstrated that establishing project steering capability within a beneficiary community is far more onerous than general consultation and mobilisation.
- f) The NDA did not always clearly identify and draw attention to governance and financial management shortfalls in the operations of the development partner
- g) The existing format for time-line bound activity plans is too basic and has insufficient detail / is not project management friendly
- h) The lack of a standardised format for financial reporting within progress reports is confusing and makes expenditure against budget difficult to track

## **Recommendations**

- ❖ With regard to Lesson a): the applicant NGO should be cautioned not to over-sell project impacts that are not clearly linked to scheduled and do-able activities. If necessary, the incorporation of the proposal into the contract should include a *weeding-out* of the more unrealistic or impractical impacts
- ❖ With regard to Lesson b): Pledges of support or resources from government departments or municipalities need to be secured in writing and followed up. Memoranda of agreement should be properly documented and circulated to stakeholders as a reminder of their commitments
- ❖ With regard to Lesson c): Project inception and progress reports should include an opportunity for frank input by the implementing NGO on the practicality of the final project design. Likely variances and risks should be identified and recorded as part of the monitoring / reporting function
- ❖ With regard to Lesson e): Clearer distinctions need to be made between basic endorsement and support from the community and the commitment of key persons to play an active role as partners and co-owners of the project.
- ❖ With regard to Lesson f): The NDA needs to clearly identify governance and financial management shortfalls in the operations of the development partner and communicate these distinctly to the partner with an expected remedy and likely sanctions should the matter not be resolved. These measures should be included in project reports
- ❖ With regard to Lesson g): the format of the activity plan needs to be reviewed and adjusted
- ❖ With regard to Lesson h): A standardised format should be adopted for financial reporting within progress reports – this should include anticipated expenditure at key project milestones and variances with actual expenditure
- ❖ Further construction work on the centre needs to be based on clearly defined design specification and a common understanding of the costs of completing this work and the budget available
- ❖ Any discrepancies in the legal standing of a project partner need to be clearly indicated in the project documentation with a clear outline of measures undertaken to resolve the issue
- ❖ A revised functionality plan needs to be compiled for the social services centre with measures to ensure that its usage is optimised
- ❖ Before project close-out, Izimvo and the NDA should meet with the Tribal Trust and any other stakeholders to formulate a simple strategy for continuity in the project deliverables and the management of the service centre.

## **7. References**

- Agreement between the NDA and the Izimvo Rural Development Institute 31 August 2011
- Histoto Consulting International, 2011: Dues Diligence Report: *IZIMVO RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE* March 2011

- Minutes of the IRDI Special Board Meeting 19 August 2011
- Minutes of the IRDI Board of Management 31 March 2012
- Mhlontlo Integrated Development Plan: 2012-2017
- National Department of Social Development, (undated) Integrated Service Delivery Model
- NDA Progress Report 20 September 2011<sup>2</sup>
- NDA Progress Report 28 September 2011
- NDA Progress Report 8 November 2011
- NDA Progress Report 25 April 2012
- NDA Progress Report 19 July 2012
- NDA Progress Report 29 & 30 October 2012
- NDA Progress Report 15 May 2013
- Proposal Summary Sheet (Izimvo Rural Development Institute: Upper Mjika Tribal Authority Comprehensive Development Programme )and Grant Application Form

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<sup>2</sup> The date of these reports (if taken from date of site visit) is sometimes incorrect i.e. 2010

## Annexure A - List of interviewees

Interviews with the following were conducted

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
N. Skeyi	NDA Provincial Manager	0437211226
T.K. Kanise	Izimvo Secretary	0723629693
G.N. Nelani	Izimvo Chairperson	0721776175
L. Tshico	Izimvo Fieldworker	0734330644
L Sobekwa	Project Member	0719563057

## Annexure B – Questionnaire

# Close-out project evaluation of NDA funded projects in the Eastern Cape

## QUESTIONNAIRE

<b>Interviewer's Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name of Project:</b>	
<b>Respondent Name &amp; Position:</b>	

Mbumba Development Services has been contracted by the NDA to conduct a close-out project evaluation of your NDA funded project. The purpose of the study is to

- Provide a comprehensive performance overview of the entire project;
- Highlight the lessons learned so that the conclusions and recommendations arrived at can assist the organisation in moving forward and be sustainable; and
- Highlight project alignment with municipality IDPs and relevant government sector departments programmes

The evaluation team will be considering the following:

- vii. **Project Preparation and Design:** Appropriateness of planning and design.
- viii. **Project implementation** (process, progress and outputs/outcome/impact)
- ix. **Resource management:** Financial, human and material resources made available to the project

The issues above will be assessed within the following framework:

- x. **Relevance of the project:** Extent to which design, implementation and monitoring conforms to needs and priorities of project members and beneficiaries.
- xi. **Effectiveness:** Extent to which the project intervention has achieved its objective.
- xii. **Efficiency:** Extent to which resources invested can be justified by its results
- xiii. **Impact:** Effects of project intervention (positive and negative) during and after implementation
- xiv. **Sustainability:** Continuation and longevity of benefits after cessation of NDA support
- xv. **Overall Project Performance:**
  - Key aspects of how a project is operating
  - Whether pre-specified objectives are being attained
  - Identification of failures to produce project outputs
  - Monitor service quality
  - Identify areas that need urgent attention or potential risks that could negatively impact on the success of the project

The questionnaire below contains both closed and open-ended questions and your patience in answering both is much appreciated

<b>TYPE OF PROJECT</b>		
<b>LEGAL FORM</b>		
<b>LOCATION</b>		
<b>BENEFICIARIES (TYPE &amp; NO.)</b>		
<b>BUDGET / FUNDS DISBURSED TO DATE</b>		
<b>TIMEFRAME</b>		

**1. Project preparation and design**

1.1 What was the intended purpose/objective of the project?

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.....

.....

1.2 Who was involved in the project planning and design?

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.3 Would you change anything if you were to design a similar project in the future?

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.....

.....

1.4 Were there other financial inputs that funded the same or similar objectives in this project? Explain

.....

.....

.....

1.5 Do you think the activities were practical and clearly described? Explain

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.....  
**2. Project implementation**

2.1 Did the project start and end within planned time frame? Explain

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.....

2.2 Were activities implemented according to plan? Explain

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.....

2.3 Explain the activities that were implemented and any problems that were encountered. What has been achieved against what was planned?

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.....

2.4 Do people working on the project have the skills and capacity to implement and manage the project as per the plan? Explain

.....  
.....  
.....

2.5 Has the project received support, direction and advice from NDA staff? Explain

.....  
.....  
.....

2.6 Has the project received all resources on time and as per plan? Explain

.....  
.....

.....

2.7 Do you have governance, management and reporting systems in place?  
Explain

.....

2.8 Is the project viable and sustainable? Explain

.....

**3. Resource management**

3.1 Were resources provided used according to the plan? Explain

.....

3.2 Were resources allocated in a manner that maximises the outputs and  
outcomes of the project? Explain

.....

**4. Relevance**

4.1 Why was this project relevant to the target beneficiaries?

.....

4.2 Did the project respond to beneficiary needs? Explain

.....

4.3 Do you think that the objectives and activities are still relevant? Explain

.....  
.....  
.....

**5. Effectiveness**

5.1 Please explain the extent to which the project activities have contributed towards meeting the project aim / purpose. Have the expected results been achieved?

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.....  
.....

5.2 What challenges were/are being encountered in achieving the objective/s

.....  
.....  
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.....  
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.....  
.....

5.3 Were beneficiaries' livelihoods improved by the project? Explain

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.....  
.....

**6. Efficiency**

6.1 Were project staff trained to perform their functions? Explain

.....  
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6.2 Were any mechanisms and systems to manage resources provided to the project by NDA? Explain

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**7. Impact**

7.1 Has the project achieved the desired effect? Explain

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7.2 Did the participants “cooperate” during the implementation of the project? Explain

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7.3 Do you believe that the participants are satisfied with the implementation and the outcomes of the project? Explain

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**8. Capacity**

8.1 Please list staff members (and relevant skills) involved in the project

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9.4 Does this project relate to any government policies? Explain

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9.5 Did this project create any form of economic and financial sustainability for the beneficiaries? Explain

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9.6 Is this project aligned with municipal IDPs? Explain

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9.7 Were any government / municipal departments involved in the project? Explain

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**10. Overall Project Performance**

10.1 Did you implement all planned activities and produce required outputs? Explain

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10.2 In your opinion is the project successful/unsuccessful? Explain

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10.3 Please explain how you are monitoring the implementation of the project

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10.4 What lessons can be learnt from the project with regards to best practice?

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10.5 Are there any areas that need urgent attention or potential risks that could negatively impact on the long term success of the project?

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11. Any other general comments?

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# NDA

National  
Development  
Agency

## LIMPOPO

Albatross Centre - Suite 8  
19 Market Street  
Polokwane  
0700

Tel: 015 291 2492  
Reception Ext (2201)  
Fax: 015 295 7586  
Email: limpopoprovince@nda.org.za

## KWAZULU NATAL

Suite 1202  
Nedbank Centre  
303 Smith Street  
Durban Club Place  
DURBAN  
4001

Tel: 031 305 5542  
Fax: 031 305 5140  
Email: kznprovince@nda.org.za

## GAUTENG

10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Braamfontein Centre  
23 Jorissen Street  
Braamfontein

Tel: 011 339 6410  
Fax: 011 339 6410  
Email: gautengprovince@nda.org.za

## EASTERN CAPE

The Ridge Building  
Ground Floor,  
3 Berea Terrace  
Berea  
East London  
5214

Tel: 043 721 1226/7  
Fax: 043 721 2096  
Email: ecprovince@nda.org.za

## NORTH WEST

Office 0113A  
First Floor  
West Gallery Megacity  
Mmabatho  
2735

PO Box 6118  
Mmabatho  
2735

Tel: 018 392 6892  
Fax: 018 392 5432  
Email: northwesternprovince@nda.org.za

## WESTERN CAPE

The Chambers Building  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
50 Keerom Street  
Cape Town  
8001

Tel: 021 422 5175  
Fax: 021 422 5180 EXT: 2002  
Email: westerncapeprovince@nda.org.za

## FREE STATE

Quantum Building  
Office No 209 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
172 Zastron Street  
Bloemfontein  
9300

Postnet Suite 131  
Private Bag X 01  
Brandhof  
9324

Tel: 051 430 2024  
Fax: 051 430 3376  
Email: freestateprovince@nda.org.za

## MPUMALANGA

Ground floor  
Biwater Building Office 103  
16 Branders Street  
Nelspruit  
1200

Tel: 013 755 1478 / 013 755 3777  
Fax: 013 753 2244  
Email:  
mpumalangaprovince@nda.org.za

## NORTHERN CAPE

13 Dalham Road  
Kimberley  
8301

PO BOX 390  
Kimberley  
8300

Tel: 053 831 4828/9  
053 831 4831  
053 832 3365  
Fax: 053 831 4824  
Email: northerncapeprovince@nda.org.za



**NDA**

National  
Development  
Agency

## **NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE**

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – Grosvenor Corner  
195 Jan Smuts & 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Parktown North  
Johannesburg  
2193

P.O. Box 31959  
Braamfontein  
2017

Tel: (011) 018 5500  
Web: [www.nda.org.za](http://www.nda.org.za)  
Email: [info@nda.org.za](mailto:info@nda.org.za)



**social development**

Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**NDA**

National  
Development  
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