

January 2011

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Informal Settlement Developmental Responses: Overview of Main Responses

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1. Primary Housing and Infrastructure Responses

Whilst a range of developmental responses are necessary to address the challenges of informal settlement, DoHS's grants are confined mainly to preparation and planning, basic infrastructural services, top-structures and land and tenure. The responses outlined below are thus focused specifically within this grant funding mandate of the Department. For more information please also refer to the Project Classification Guideline, 'Flow Chart', and 'Summary Scopes of Work and Cost Norms', and Detailed Toolkits'. It is emphasized that, in the delivery of all the following responses, care should be taken to enable integrated, multi-sector development which goes beyond housing and infrastructure and addresses such issues as integrated local spatial planning, key social facilities (e.g. education, health care), public transport, livelihoods (e.g. food security, special needs etc), micro-enterprises and local economic development (see also section 2 below).

1.1. RAPID UP-FRONT PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS AND CATEGORISATION

This is required for all informal settlements within every Municipality in the province (where this has not yet occurred or is incomplete) in order to obtain an adequate profile of settlements and to enable them to be categorized in terms of the appropriate developmental response(s). It is emphasized that, with the notable exception of eThekweni Municipality, most other municipalities do not yet have this information and would therefore typically need to undertake this work as an urgent priority (refer also to PPT Informal Settlement Upgrading Toolkits 6 & 7: Flow chart of determining appropriate responses and categorization guideline). It is important that this is not seen merely as an administrative process but as a critical developmental intervention, without which effective plans and strategies for informal settlement are impossible.

1.2. Planning and Delivery of INTERIM BASIC SERVICES

Interim basic services should be provided to those settlements located on sites which are viable and appropriate for long term full upgrading but where this is not imminent (e.g. due to budgetary, land, or bulk services constraints). This response has the potential to be delivered rapidly, provided it is de-linked from land acquisition and provided that collective tenure security via municipal recognition of settlements is utilized. It is expected that this response could be provided to a significant proportion of all settlements (in the region of 30%-40% of them) within the short term (i.e. within the next 5yrs) if the necessary grant pre-conditions were put in place and if it were pursued with vigor.

1.3. Planning and Delivery of EMERGENCY BASIC SERVICES

Emergency basic services should be provided to those settlements where long term upgrading is not viable or appropriate but where there also no pressing imperative for a relocation (i.e. absence of any imminent threat or risk due to such factors as flooding, slope instability or exposure to toxic waste) and no immediately available and suitably located relocations destination (e.g. available sites on an existing housing project with un-allocated sites). It is expected that this response could be provided to a significant proportion of all settlements (in the region of 30% to 40% of them) within the short term (i.e. within the next 5yrs) if the necessary grant pre-conditions were put in place and if it were pursued with vigor.

1.4. Planning and Delivery of a FULL UPGRADE

A full upgrade (i.e. full services, top-structures and tenure) should be provided to those settlements which have been prioritized for this high level of short term investment and where the other pre-conditions are already in place (e.g. available funding, land, bulk services etc). It is noted that the provision of permanent engineering services may be provided as an incremental first phase of full upgrading. Where there is a scarcity of suitable and available land (e.g. within eThekweni) then careful consideration should be given to maximizing housing densities, principally through the use of double-storey attached top-structures and partially pedestrianised town-planning layouts. Given the high costs and protracted timeframes associated with full upgrading it is expected that this will only be an appropriate response for a small proportion of all settlements (in the region of 10%) within the short term (i.e. within the next 5yrs).

1.5. RELOCATIONS

Relocation should be seen as a last resort for those settlements not only un-viable for long term upgrading but ALSO where there is also a *pressing imperative for relocation* (i.e. imminent threat or risk due to such factors as flooding, slope instability or exposure to toxic waste) as well as an available relocations destination (either an emergency transit facility or an existing housing project with un-allocated sites). Given the difficulties associated with relocations and the protracted timeframes associated with the development of green-fields housing projects, it is expected that that this response will only only be an appropriate response for a small proportion of all settlements (in the region of 5% to 10%) within the short term (i.e. within the next 5yrs). It is emphasized that, whilst the relocations destination may offer better access to basic services and shelter, it may also bring about unintended negative impacts on relocatees, usually resulting from the change in locality and unintended consequential impacts on their livelihoods and survival strategies (e.g. in terms of access to employment, informal income generating activities, jobs, and schools or else disruption of existing social networks).

1.6. LAND IDENTIFICATION AND ACQUISITION

This needs to focus on both land which is already settled as well as potential green-fields sites. It must be remembered that the process of land acquisition is an inherently slow process (usually taking anywhere between a years and four years) and that Municipalities therefore need to plan ahead

accordingly. The following are suggested as the main categories of land which a Municipality may target for acquisition. These would also constitute the main reasons for a municipality wanting to plan for acquire land:

- *Relocations destinations for full housing delivery* (full services, top-structures and tenure).
- *Relocations destinations for transit camps*
- *Strategic acquisitions to 'get ahead of the housing problem'*: I.e. 'banking' land for future projects such as the development of new suburbs or residential precincts in areas of current of projected urban expansion.
- *Serviced land release*: Acquiring land (either settled or green-fields) with the intention of doing basic planning, installing interim basic infrastructural services and making it available to residents of informal settlements or new arrivals in the city/town.

1.7. SERVICED LAND RELEASE

Whilst this is not yet a mainstream / operational programme of government, this is expected to be a response which will receive increasing attention in the years to come. It is already implicit in the provision of interim basic services and its intention is clearly manifest in the DRDLR's SLAG grant mechanism. It is usually assumed that some form of functional tenure will accompany this response. There is also a national 'Land First' movement facilitated by Afesis Corplan which is actively promoting this as an necessary developmental response (refer to <http://www.afesis.org.za/About-LANDfirst/> for more information).

2. Non housing responses

It is critical that informal settlement upgrading is not only focused on housing and related basic infrastructure (relating to water, sanitation, road access, and electricity). In order to enable more integrated and sustainable development other developmental issues need to be addressed and other sectors / spheres of government involved. Communities also need to be more fully involved in the developmental process to meet these ends (e.g. utilizing participative and livelihoods approaches). The role of effective community engagement and up-front assessment of a community in order to better understand the issues, needs, social capital, livelihoods and survival strategies of residents, and settlement formation– need to consider IS in context – ensure not.

KZN DoHS funding during the preparation and planning stages plays a pivotal role in enabling such involvement and participation through appropriate facilitation and planning activities (refer also to the toolkits and summary scopes of work contained in the PPT Informal Settlement Upgrading Toolkit 10).

Some of the critical responses over and above those relating to basic infrastructural services, housing and tenure are:

- basic non-infrastructural services (e.g. fire protection, solid waste removal);
- social facilities (e.g. education & health care);
- livelihoods issues (e.g. food security, HIV AIDS, income generating activities);
- job creation and local economic development.