



Zululand District Municipality

Audit report for the year ending 30 June 2021

Report of the auditor-general to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature and the council on the Zululand District Municipality

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Zululand District Municipality set out on pages xx to xx, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of financial performance, statement of changes in net assets, cash flow statement and the statement of comparison of budget information with actual information for the year then ended, as well as notes to financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.
2. In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Zululand District Municipality as at 30 June 2021, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the South African Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (SA Standards of GRAP) and the requirements of the Municipal Finance Management Act of South Africa, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) (MFMA) and the Division of Revenue Act of South Africa, 2020 (Act No. 4 of 2020) (Dora).

Basis for opinion

3. I conducted my audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor-general's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.
4. I am independent of the municipality in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' *International code of ethics for professional accountants (including International Independence Standards)* (IESBA code) as well as other ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit in South Africa. I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code.
5. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of matters

6. I draw attention to the matters below. My opinion is not modified in respect of these matters.

Restatement of corresponding figures

7. As disclosed in note 59 to the financial statements, the corresponding figures for 30 June 2020 were restated as a result of errors in the financial statements of the municipality at, and for the year ended, 30 June 2021.

Material impairment – trade receivables from exchange transactions

8. As disclosed in note 4 to the financial statements, the municipality increased the provision for impairment on trade receivables from exchange transactions to R115,60 million (2019-20: R107,42 million) as the recoverability of these amounts was considered to be doubtful.

Material water losses

9. As disclosed in note 32 to the financial statements, material water losses of R299,84 million (2019-20: R258,48 million) was incurred, which represented 72% (2019-20: 71%) of total water purified. The contributing factors to these losses were due to rural areas mainly being indigent where water is supplied through subsidised schemes as well as water leaks, illegal connections and ageing infrastructure.

Other matters

10. I draw attention to the matters below. My opinion is not modified in respect of these matters.

Unaudited disclosure notes

11. In terms of section 125(2)(e) of the MFMA, the municipality is required to disclose particulars of non-compliance with the MFMA in the financial statements. This disclosure requirement did not form part of the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on it.

Unaudited supplementary schedules

12. The supplementary information set out on pages xx to xx does not form part of the financial statements and is presented as additional information. I have not audited these schedules and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion on them.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

13. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the SA Standards of GRAP and the requirements of the MFMA and Dora, and for such internal control as the accounting officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
14. In preparing the financial statements, the accounting officer is responsible for assessing the municipality's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the appropriate governance structure either intends to liquidate the municipality or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor-general's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

15. My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an

auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

16. A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in the annexure to this auditor's report.

Report on the audit of the annual performance report

Introduction and scope

17. In accordance with the Public Audit Act of South Africa, 2004 (Act No. 25 of 2004) (PAA) and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information against predetermined objectives for the selected objective presented in the annual performance report. I performed procedures to identify material findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.
18. My procedures address the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information, which must be based on the municipality's approved performance planning documents. I have not evaluated the completeness and appropriateness of the performance indicators included in the planning documents. My procedures do not examine whether the actions taken by the municipality enabled service delivery. My procedures do not extend to any disclosures or assertions relating to the extent of achievements in the current year or planned performance strategies and information in respect of future periods that may be included as part of the reported performance information. Accordingly, my findings do not extend to these matters.
19. I evaluated the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information in accordance with the criteria developed from the performance management and reporting framework, as defined in the general notice, for the basic service delivery and infrastructure objective in the municipality's annual performance report on pages xx to xx for the year ended 30 June 2021.
20. I performed procedures to determine whether the reported performance information was properly presented and whether performance was consistent with the approved performance planning documents. I performed further procedures to determine whether the indicators and related targets were measurable and relevant, and assessed the reliability of the reported performance information to determine whether it was valid, accurate and complete.
21. I did not identify any material findings on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information for the basic service delivery and infrastructure objective.

Other matters

22. I draw attention to the matters below.

Achievement of planned targets

23. The annual performance report on pages xx to xx contains information on the achievement of planned targets for the year.

Adjustment of material misstatements

24. I identified material misstatements in the annual performance report submitted for auditing. These material misstatements were in the reported performance information of the basic service delivery and infrastructure objective. As management subsequently corrected the misstatements, I did not raise any material findings on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information.

Report on the audit of compliance with legislation

Introduction and scope

25. In accordance with the PAA and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report material findings on the municipality's compliance with specific matters in key legislation. I performed procedures to identify findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.
26. The material findings on compliance with specific matters in key legislation are as follows:

Financial statements

27. The financial statements submitted for auditing were not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the requirements of section 122(1) of the MFMA. Material misstatements of contracted services and commitments identified by the auditors in the submitted financial statements were subsequently corrected, resulting in the financial statements receiving an unqualified audit opinion.

Procurement and contract management

28. Some of the quotations were accepted from bidders whose tax matters had not been declared by the South African Revenue Service to be in order, in contravention of supply chain management (SCM) regulation 43.
29. Some of the invitations to tender for procurement of commodities designated for local content and production stipulated a lower minimum threshold than that prescribed for clothing and textiles, as required by the 2017 preferential procurement regulation (PPR) 8(2). Similar non-compliance was also reported in the prior year.
30. Some of the commodities designated for local content and production were procured from suppliers who did not meet the prescribed minimum threshold for local production and content, as required by the 2017 PPR 8(5).
31. Persons in the service of the municipality who had a private or business interest in contracts awarded by the municipality failed to disclose such interest, in contravention of SCM

regulation 46(2)(e), the code of conduct for councillors issued in terms of the Municipal Systems Act of South Africa, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) (MSA) and the code of conduct for staff members issued in terms of the MSA.

Expenditure management

32. Reasonable steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure of R17,92 million disclosed in note 54 to the annual financial statements, as required by section 62(1)(d) of the MFMA. The majority of the irregular expenditure was caused by non-compliance with municipal SCM regulation 43 and expired contracts.

Other information

33. The accounting officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report. The other information does not include the financial statements, the auditor's report and the selected objective presented in the annual performance report that has been specifically reported in this auditor's report.
34. My opinion on the financial statements and findings on the reported performance information and compliance with legislation do not cover the other information and I do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion on it.
35. In connection with my audit, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and the selected objective presented in the annual performance report, or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.
36. I did not receive the other information prior to the date of this auditor's report. When I do receive and read this information, if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request that the other information be corrected. If the other information is not corrected, I may have to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report as appropriate. However, if it is corrected this will not be necessary.

Internal control deficiencies

37. I considered internal control relevant to my audit of the financial statements, reported performance information and compliance with applicable legislation; however, my objective was not to express any form of assurance on it. The matters reported below are limited to the significant internal control deficiencies that resulted in the findings on compliance with legislation included in this report.
38. Leadership did not exercise adequate oversight responsibility regarding financial reporting and compliance with legislation. The accounting officer did not adequately monitor the checklist and other controls to support financial reporting and compliance with legislative requirements.

Other reports

39. I draw attention to the following engagements conducted which had, or could have, an impact on the matters reported in the municipality's financial statements, reported performance information, compliance with applicable legislation and other related matters. These reports did not form part of my opinion on the financial statements or my findings on the reported performance information or compliance with legislation.

Investigations

40. At the request of the municipality, an independent consultant investigated an allegation of procurement irregularities highlighted in the 2017-18 audit report tabled by the auditor-general, which covered the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The investigation was concluded in January 2020 and resulted in criminal proceedings against three employees. The recommendations of the investigation had not been implemented at the date of my audit report.
41. The Member of Executive Council for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs commissioned an independent consulting firm to investigate allegations of maladministration, fraud and corruption at the municipality, which covered the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The investigation was conducted in terms of section 106(1)(b) of the MSA. The municipality applied to the provincial high court for a review of the report. These proceedings were still ongoing at the date of my audit report.

Auditor General

Pietermaritzburg

30 November 2021



AUDITOR - GENERAL
SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

Annexure – Auditor-general's responsibility for the audit

1. As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout my audit of the financial statements and the procedures performed on reported performance information for the selected objective and on the municipality's compliance with respect to the selected subject matters.

Financial statements

2. In addition to my responsibility for the audit of the financial statements as described in this auditor's report, I also:
 - identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control
 - obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the municipality's internal control
 - evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the accounting officer
 - conclude on the appropriateness of the accounting officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements. I also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Zululand District Municipality to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements about the material uncertainty or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion on the financial statements. My conclusions are based on the information available to me at the date of this auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause a municipality to cease operating as a going concern
 - evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation

Communication with those charged with governance

3. I communicate with the accounting officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.
4. I also provide the accounting officer with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and communicate all relationships and other

matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on my independence and, where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.

