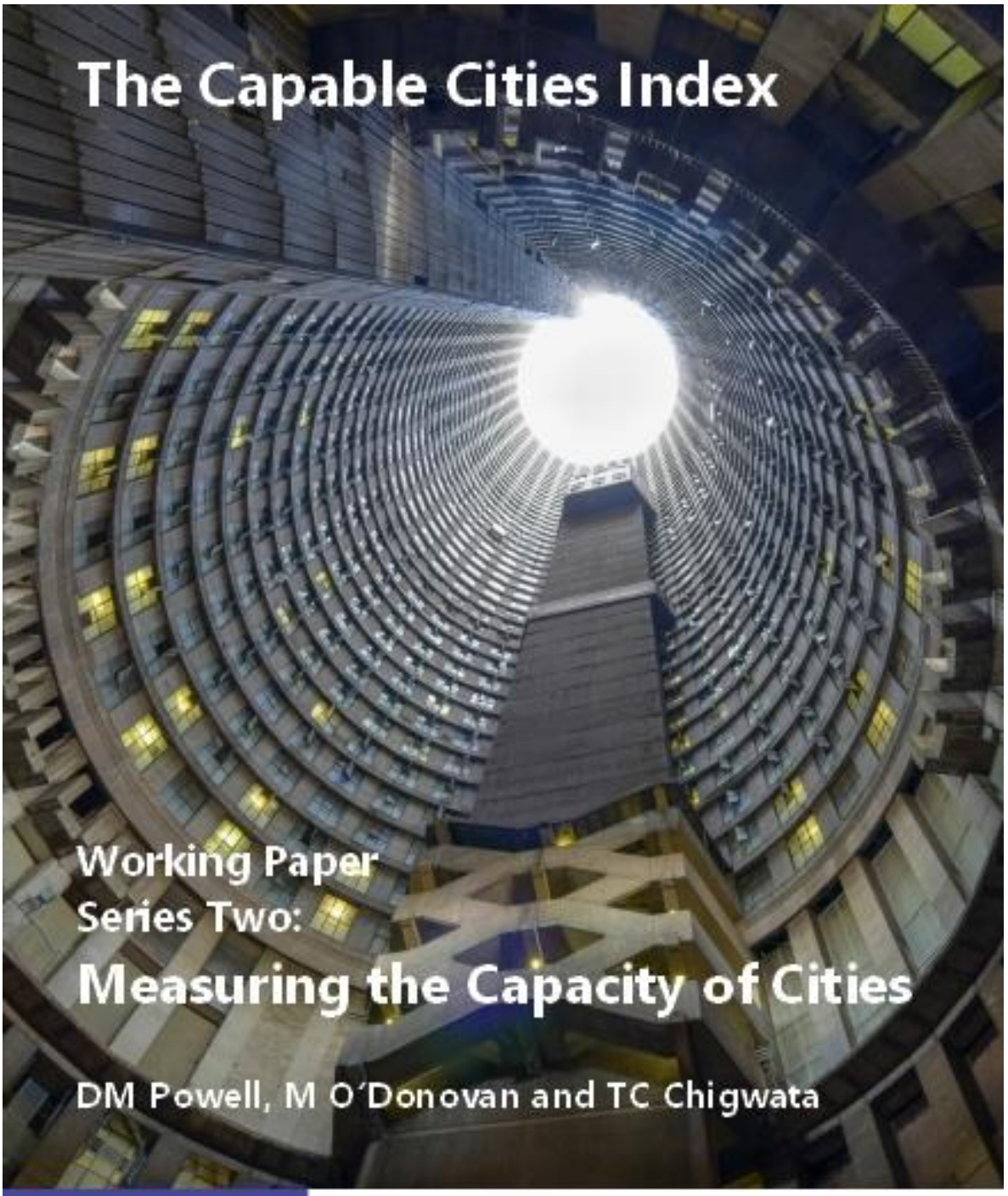
The Capable Cities Index



Working Paper Series Two:

Measuring the Capacity of Cities

DM Powell, M O´Donovan and TC Chigwata

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

APPLIED CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES LABORATORY

DULLAH OMAR INSTITUTE
FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Capable Cities Index
Working Paper Series Two

Measuring the Capacity of Cities

This project was made possible with the assistance of the Ford Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Open Society Foundation.

Cover image: The iconic Ponte City Building in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Photo credit: 123RF/demerzel21

Table of contents

List of diagrams

About the Capable Cities Index Working Paper Series

Purpose of the Capable Cities Index

The Capable Cities Index (CCI) provides a methodology for measuring and ranking the capability of South Africa's municipalities on the basis of their consistency in maintaining high levels of capacity, performance and compliance, with a focus on the 27 largest cities. Local government generally, and the major cities in particular, are crucial actors in the country's development and in building a capable state in line with the National Development Plan (NDP).

The major cities play an essential role in the country's economy and public life. According to the NDP, 'The proportion of South Africans living in rural areas has fallen by about 10 percentage points since 1994. Today, about 60 per cent of the population lives in urban areas and slightly more than half of the poor live in cities. By 2030, about 70 per cent of people are likely to be living in urban areas.'[1] The legacies of apartheid social engineering, however, are still highly visible and deeply embedded in the spatial geography of cities and their unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity. Today, urban development and the role of cities in promoting economic growth and greater equity have risen to the top of the policy agenda. This is evident in the publication of the government's first comprehensive urban policy, the *Integrated Urban Development Framework.*

Building a capable state is a key priority in the NDP, which uses the term 'capability' in two different senses. The first refers to human capability, defined as 'the conditions, opportunities and capabilities that enable people to lead the lives that they desire'.[2] Human well-being is at the heart of the country's development, in line with Amartya Sen's thoughts on freedom as human capability.

In the second sense, 'capability' is understood more broadly as the capacity of the state to enable human capability: 'If we are to address the twin challenges of poverty and inequality, a state is needed that is capable of playing a transformative and developmental role. This requires well-run and effectively coordinated state institutions staffed by skilled public servants committed to the public good and capable of delivering consistently high-quality services for all South Africans.'[3]

Given the urbanisation of the drivers of economic growth, poverty and inequality, state capability cannot be achieved without capable local government, in particular capable city governments. To achieve that objective, the government introduced a 'Back to Basics'[4] policy to address problems of basic capability in local government.

There is not yet a generally agreed measure of capability in local government. In public debate, claims are often made about the capability or dysfunction of municipalities, but usually without credible supporting data about the causal factors. There is also a great deal of terminological clutter. Different concepts, such as capacity, capability, viability and dysfunction, are used interchangeably and seldom

1 National Planning Commission (2011) *National Development Plan: Vision for 2030* (Pretoria: NPC), 7.
2 Ibid, 5.
3 Ibid, 365.
4 See http://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Back-to-Basics-Approach-Concept-Document.pdf (accessed 24 October 2017).

defined precisely. Furthermore, the debate on capability tends to be cast in the negative, and so the claim is often made in policy documents and public debate that local government is dysfunctional.

But how do we know a city is either capable or in distress at some level? What are the proxies that signal the one condition or the other? What are realistic ways to measure capability, and over what time period should these be measured? The CCI does not seek to provide a comprehensive assessment of local government capability, but rather to probe these kinds of questions and suggest a possible approach to measuring the capability of cities.

Underlying assumptions of the CCI

The CCI makes two analytical assumptions. First, ***the measurement of capability must focus on variables that are to a significant degree under the operational control of municipal governments themselves.*** All municipalities have control over three sets of functions. They can decide to staff their establishments with skilled professionals (they control their own internal capacity). They can take decisions related to discharging their service delivery responsibilities (they control their own performance). They can decide to comply with statutory reporting obligations (they control their compliance with the law). Capability thus consists of three related functional elements that can be measured and weighted: ***capacity*** (municipal conduct focused internally), ***performance*** (municipal conduct focused externally), and ***compliance*** (municipal conduct in relation to the law).

For each of the three elements of capability, the CCI selects variables corresponding to the basic functions a municipality must discharge for it to be effectively operational within the rule-bound system of local governance. As the CCI focuses on capability as an internal operation of the system of city government, it does not consider environmental factors which cities interact with but do not control. Examples include the socio-economic drivers of economic growth, poverty and employment, which are largely beyond the control of municipalities.

The second assumption is that ***capability must be measured as a trend in capacity, performance and compliance levels over time.*** International research shows that in contexts similar to South Africa's it can take decades for institutions to develop systemic resilience. Accordingly, institutional fragility cannot be reliably measured over short periods. The CCI measures the period 2010-2016.[5]

---

[5] This series of barometers relies heavily on the notion of 'consistent performance'. Statistically, this requires that anomalies are discounted. Consistency is indicated by the normative behaviour of the administration over a number of years. For example, if an administration which has been getting good audit outcomes suddenly fails to submit the required documentation, the pattern remains that of an 'unqualified' audit rather than a 'failure to submit'. This rating changes, of course, if the administration repeatedly fails to submit documentation. The question then becomes: What length of time is needed to determine a 'consistent' pattern? In general, this is indicated by two factors:

- The period should be within the tenure of the current administration and not straddle the tenure of a previous administration. This factor became more important in 2016 when a significant number of municipalities fell under the administration of a new political party or coalition.
- The period reviewed has to be sufficiently long so as to exclude anomalies in performance, even if the tenure of the previous administration has to be included in aggregations.

The rule of thumb is that the period considered is between three and five years. In some instances, the

Impact of the CCI

Since its publication in 2015, the CCI has made a significant impact. Most notably, it was cited in the South African Cities Network's 2016 *State of South African Cities Report*. A public entity and the leading source of policy thinking on urban policy in the country, the South African Cities Network played a central role in developing the state's urban development framework. The 2016 *Report* drew extensively on the major findings of the Index: that capacity varies across municipalities, that senior management positions in municipalities need to be filled as promptly as possible by the right people, and that different cities will require different strategies to reach full capacity.[6] We are pleased that our research has contributed to public and policy debate on the capacity and quality of governance in cities and become a fixture in the seminal review of the 'strategic problems and opportunities' facing South African cities.[7]

How we measure the capacity of cities

The Capacity Index 2nd Series (CI-2), covering 2013 to 2016 (CI-1 dealt with the period 2010 to 2013), is a composite ranking of all municipalities (categories A, B and C) against three measures of capacity: the aggregate proportion of all municipal posts filled; the aggregate proportion of all senior municipal posts filled; and whether or not both chief financial officer (CFO) and municipal manager posts were filled by a permanent appointment in the latest period for which data are available (2016).

Municipalities are scored on each variable between 0 (the lowest, least desirable level) and 1 (the highest, most desirable level). For example, if neither the CFO nor municipal manager post was filled by a permanent appointment in 2014, the municipality receives a score of 0. If both posts were filled, the municipality receives a score of 1 for component 3 above. The three components are then aggregated to give a composite capacity index (CI) for the municipality. The data were sourced from Statistics South Africa's non-financial census of municipalities (p9115 data series), personal correspondence with Statistics South Africa and the National Treasury's Municipal Finance Management Act database.

---

aggregation of trends over a few years is not called for and doing so detracts from the information available. This occurs when:

- The trend can be expected to last for some time. In this instance, a 'long' period would be the tenure of the administration.
- When changes in administration induce the observed changes. An example of this is the appointment of a municipal manager. Municipal managers are contracted for a little longer than the elected administration's tenure. When a permanent appointment is made, the individual is very likely to occupy the post until a new administration is in place.

In these instances, consistent performance is better indicated by the latest available data than by aggregating trends over a number of years. In the compliance index, CI-2 indices are based on a four-year period, except for the component reflecting whether or not the chief financial officer and municipal manager posts are filled by permanent appointments. For these posts, the status of the post at the time of the latest audit submissions are used.

6 South African Cities Network (2016) *State of South African Cities Report*, South African Cities Network, Johannesburg, see pp. 218-219.

7 South African Cities Network (2016), pp. 1.

Key Findings

- **The capacity of municipalities has significantly improved**

  In recent years, there has been a significant improvement in the extent to which municipalities have filled available posts. This translates to a general improvement in municipal capacity as measured by the CI and, in particular, to a substantial improvement in those municipalities that performed worst under CI-1 (in 2015).

- **45 municipalities did not have a permanent municipal manager and CFO**

  Between 2013 and 2016, the number of municipalities that did not have CFO and municipal manager positions filled by permanent appointments dropped from 79 to 45. The proportion of senior management and general posts that were vacant also dropped, contributing to improvements in the CI-2 scores.

- **Intervention under section 139 of the Constitution can improve municipal capacity**

  The improvements in CI-2 can be partially attributed to section 139 interventions by provincial governments. To date, almost one-third of the 100 municipalities with the lowest CI-1 scores have been subject to provincial intervention at some stage.

- **30 per cent of municipalities would still require external assistance to reach full capacity**

  Currently, municipalities fall into two main groups. The first (containing 70 per cent of municipalities) can rely on incremental decreases in vacancy rates to approach full capacity. The second group is defined by capacity deficits, stemming largely from demand constraints.[8] For these municipalities to improve their CI scores, they need support in addressing labour demand constraints.

- **Cities are now performing better in filling vacant positions of senior managers**

  Almost all CFO and municipal manager posts in the 27 major cities were filled by permanent appointments. In municipalities where this is not the case, higher vacancy levels in general are apparent, suggesting that filling executive posts with permanent appointments is central to municipalities realising their full capacity.

- **Being a metropolitan municipality does not necessarily mean improved capacity**

  In terms of vacancy rates, metropolitan municipalities do not fare significantly better or worse than other city municipalities. This finding of CI-1 has not changed significantly in CI-2.

- **Mangaung requires external support to reach full capacity**

  Only one metro falls into the group of municipalities requiring external intervention. The CI-1 established that Mangaung metro had capacity levels below that of category B and C municipalities. The capacity deficiencies in this metro have, therefore, persisted into CI-2, suggesting that problems are unlikely to be rectified without external intervention.

---

[8] The rapidity with which CFO and municipal manager posts were filled between 2014 and 2016 indicates that even these posts, which require highly skilled candidates, can be filled with relative ease. This suggests that supply constraints are less of a factor in filling posts than demand-side impediments, such as poor budgeting and internal resistance to appointments.

The Capacity of Municipalities

The capacity of municipalities has improved

Diagram 1 (see page 7) illustrates the spectrum of CI scores for the 278 local, district and metropolitan municipalities. Municipalities with greater capacity are indicated by higher scores. The detailed graphics focus only on the 27 major cities (category A and B1 municipalities) and omit those municipalities which do not contain a city. The diagram reveals the following general trends:

- Only one municipality received a score of 1 (that is, all senior and other posts were filled for the period 2013 to 2016 and permanent appointments were made to the CFO and municipal manager posts in 2016) – Dannhauser in KwaZulu-Natal. In CI-1, four municipalities achieved a score of 1.
- No municipality received a score of 0 (the score reserved for a municipality that has the highest vacancy rate and has not filled either the CFO or municipal manager post with a permanent appointment). This was the same result as in CI-1.
- The median score for all municipalities was 0.9 – half the municipalities received higher scores than this value. The median score in CI-1 was significantly lower (0.8), indicating that there has been a general improvement in municipal capacity since the first CI was published. The level of improvement is indicated by the lowest CI now being 0.41, which is almost double the minimum for CI-1 (0.23).

The increase in CI scores is attributable to the more regular filling of CFO and municipal manager posts by permanent appointments and lower vacancy rates for senior management and general staff. For example, the number of municipalities where either the CFO or municipal manager post was not filled by a permanent appointment dropped from 79 to 45. As shown below, this had a knock-on effect on the vacancy rate in the municipality as a whole.

Wide variations in capacity among two groups of municipalities

In CI-1, there was a wide variation in capacity, with three clear trends. These trends correspond to:

- Group 1: the 164 municipalities (64 per cent) with a score higher than that received by Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (0.75 on the CI and the point at which the trend line first changes direction);
- Group 2: the 107 municipalities (38 per cent) that received a lower score than 0.75 but higher than 0.35 (the point at which the trend line changes direction for a second time); and
- Group 3: six municipalities (2 per cent) that received a score lower than 0.35.

In CI-2, the picture changed considerably, as the third group was eliminated and all municipalities attained scores higher than 0.35. Only two trends are now evident:

- Trend 1: The 170 (70 per cent) municipalities fall into Group 1 and have a CI of 0.85 or higher. This group is marked by relatively low variation in their index ratings, with a gradual decline from best to worst. This indicates that a consistent level of capacity has been achieved among the members of the group. The group's rate of performance is shown in diagram 1 in by

sloping green line.

- Trend 2: The 73 (30 per cent) municipalities in Group 2 display wide variation in capacity, ranging from 0.41 to 0.85. Their trend line declines more steeply, indicating both lower levels of capacity and a more rapid fall-off in that capacity.

The two distribution profiles suggest that there are optimal and sub-optimal strategies for building municipal capacity, depending on in which group a municipality falls:

- A strategy that pushes for all posts to be filled across the board is sub-optimal and an unrealistic objective for many municipalities in Group 2.
- While raising the municipalities to the highest levels may be a viable strategy for Group 1, it is not a viable strategy for Group 2. In Group 1, the trend line is shallow and the distance between the best-and worst-ranked municipalities is relatively small. The benchmark set by the best performers is attainable by all other municipalities in the group. The better performers (such as eThekwini) can be expected to improve their rating to 1 (usually by ensuring that no junior posts are vacant).
- There appears to be equilibrium in capacity among the first group of municipalities, which suggests that attaining the minimum rating of Group 1 (0.85) is a reasonable aspiration for municipalities in Group 2.
- Given that municipalities of every type consistently exceed a score of 0.85, this objective is attainable irrespective of municipality type and, for example, whether the municipality has a major town that functions as an administrative core. Building capacity to the level currently attained by Ekurhuleni can, thus, be seen as a reasonable minimum target for every type of local government.

Metros do not necessarily have the highest level of capacity

The metropolitan municipalities are not, as might be expected, concentrated among those municipalities with the highest CI scores. While eThekwini is, once again, the highest-ranked metro, a large number (49) of smaller municipalities received higher CI scores. Three-quarters of the municipalities that received a better score than eThekwini are largely rural and do not have a large town that functions as an administrative core.

Increased use of section 139 may in part explain improvements in CI

A key issue identified in CI-1 was how to deal with the third group of six municipalities that were largely dysfunctional. The steep trajectory they faced indicated that strategies which aimed to raise members of Group 3 to the minimum target of 0.75 (which was then the lowest rating in Group 2) were not the answer. Improving the functionality of Group 3 municipalities through corrective intervention was discussed, including, where necessary, provincial intervention in terms of section 139 of the Constitution. At that stage, there was a relatively poor correlation between these municipalities and section 139 interventions.

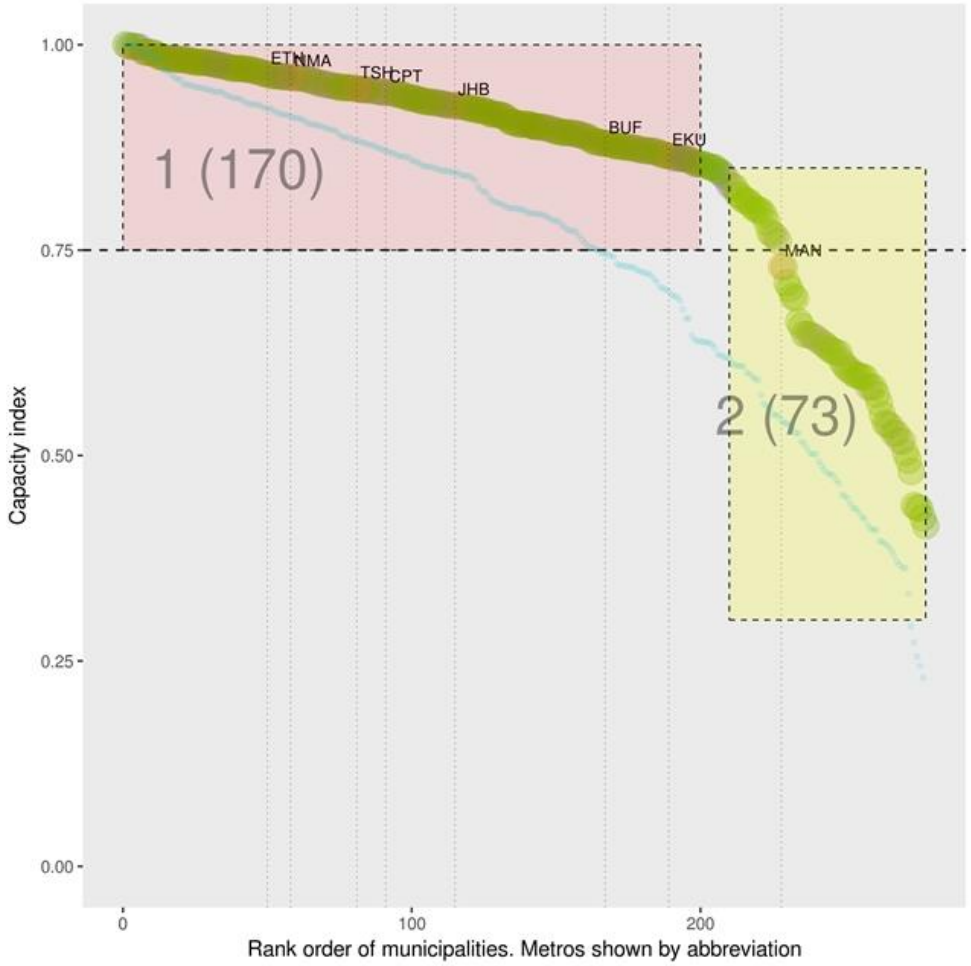
That picture has changed since the publication of CI-1. Four of the six municipalities in Group 3 have now been subject to section 139 interventions. One has been subject to three such interventions. Moreover, of the 100 municipalities with the worst CI scores in CI-1, almost one-third (31) have been

subject to a section 139 intervention at some stage. These interventions will account for at least part of the improvement in CI scores since the first iteration.

Is the amalgamation of municipalities a solution?

An alternative to direct intervention is to amalgamate incapacitated municipalities with larger adjacent municipalities. Indeed, a significant realignment of municipalities took place with the August 2016 local government elections. Although it is unclear how this redemarcation will impact on capacity, the data suggest that this strategy is not optimal, as indicated by the low rating of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, which was a product of redemarcation but consistently ranks lowest on the CI of all metros.

Diagram 1: The capacity rankings for all municipalities



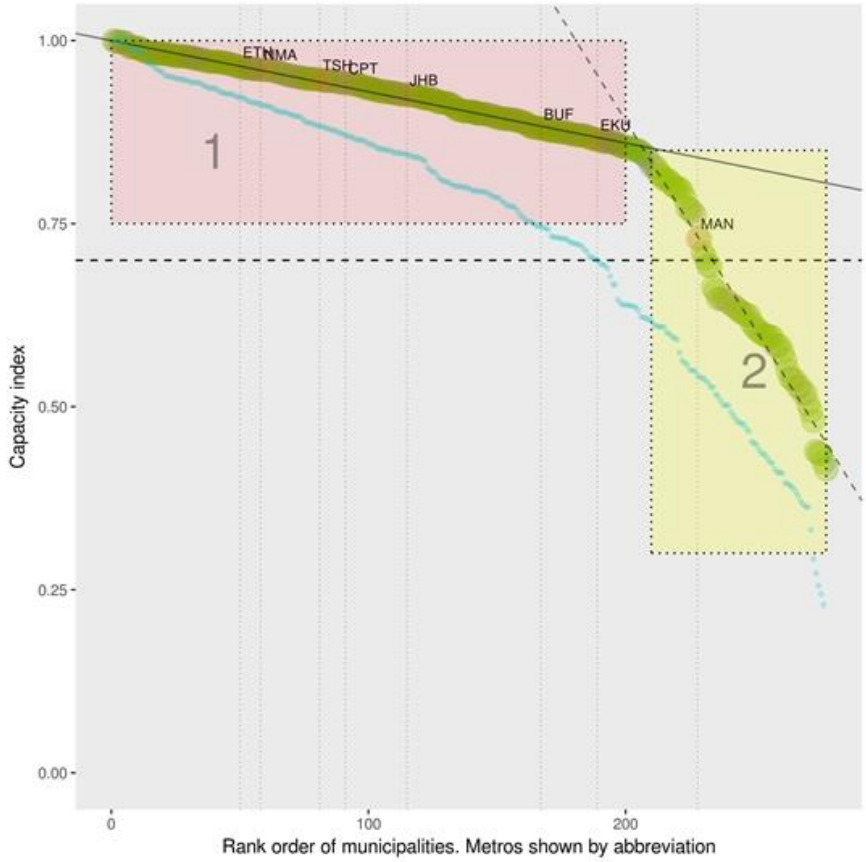
Key to Diagram 1: The position of *metropolitan* municipalities on the capacity spectrum is highlighted in the diagram by the letters (e.g. TSH = Tshwane).

Metros are increasingly likely to fall into the higher end of the spectrum (i.e. Group 1). The increase in the capacity of metros is most clearly evident in the cases of Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City, both of which leap-frogged Mangaung in CI scores, with Nelson Mandela now rivalling eThekwini for top spot among metros.

The downward-sloping black line on the diagram shows the trend line among Group 1 municipalities. The dotted line shows the steeper trend faced by Group 2. In the short term, narrowing the gap between Group 1 and Group 2 municipalities is probably a more productive strategy than attempting to lift all Group 2 municipalities to a CI score of 1. One reason for this is that the biggest gains are more likely where the capacity deficit is greatest.

There has been a general elevation of CI ratings across the board from CI-1 (2015) to CI-2 (2017). This trend can be seen in Diagram 2 below. (The trend line for CI-1 appears as a blue line below the current trend line.)

Diagram 2: Comparing CI-1 and CI-2



Comparison of CI-2 and CI-1 shows municipal capacity is improving

Diagram 2 above compares the rankings of CI-2 to those in CI-1. CI-2 values reflect an improvement across the full range of possible values. As indicated above, Group 1's capacity issues can be addressed through incremental improvements. As vacancy rates drop in these municipalities, their CI values will move ever closer to the desired score of 1. The operational focus of this group can be as much as on filling posts as ensuring that quality appointments are made and that the posts are used effectively.

Group 2 is in a direr situation, as incremental improvements will still result in sustained capacity deficits. More drastic improvements are called for. In CI-1, there was ample scope for capacity gains

to be made by ensuring that executive positions were filled by permanent appointments. As shown below, this is no longer the case, and far fewer CFO and municipal manager posts are now filled by permanent employees. The focus for this category of municipalities has to be on the filling of all other posts – particularly those at senior management level.

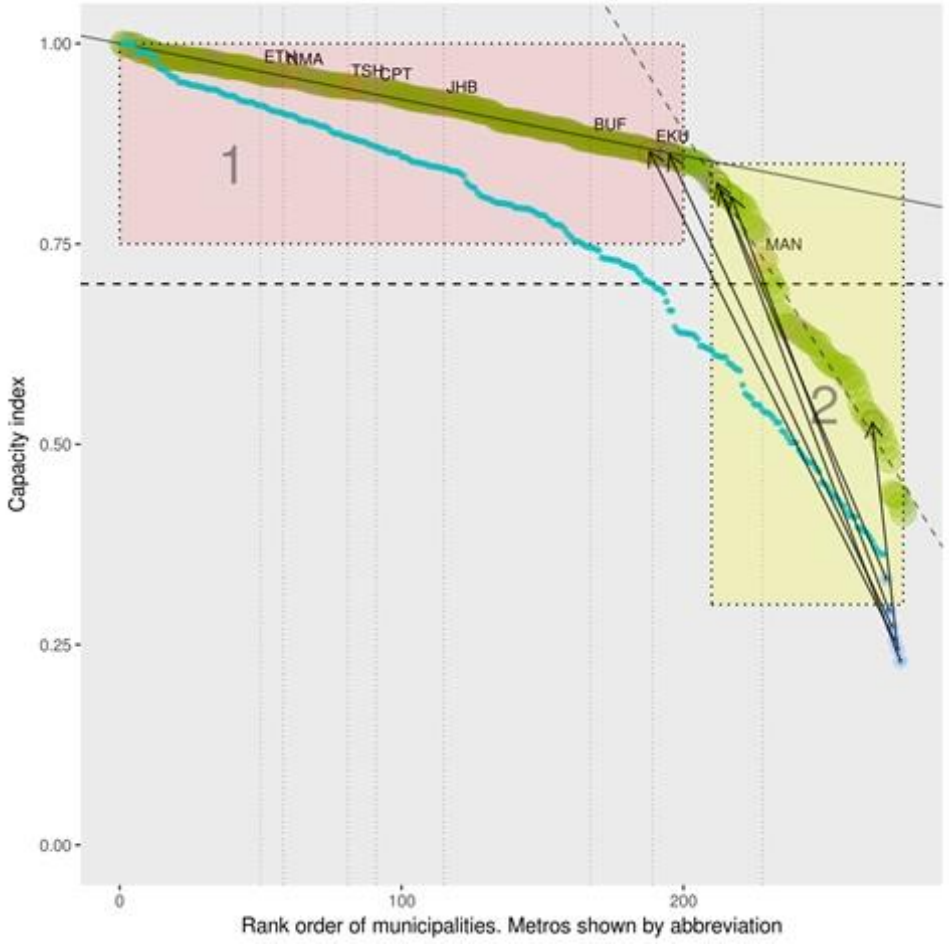
In the current economic climate, labour supply tends not to be a significant issue and the main constraint to filling municipal posts almost certainly lies on the demand side. Significant demand-side constraints to filling posts include poor budgeting, the misallocation of the wage budget, and internal resistance to some appointments. Group 2 municipalities require support in addressing these impediments.

Section 139, among other mechanisms, can improve municipal capacity

The differences between the CI-1 and CI-2 values also show that marked improvements in CI scores are possible over short periods. This is illustrated, *inter alia*, by the elimination of Group 3 municipalities from

CI-2. Through section 139 interventions and other support, the CI of all Group 3 municipalities rose to the extent that the grouping has dissolved. The arrows below illustrate how the scores of the six municipalities have risen between CI-1 and CI-2.

Diagram 3: The utility of section 139 interventions



The capacity of the 27 major cities

The diagrams below represent three dimensions of capacity:

- Diagram 4 compares the CI ratings of cities to permanent appointments in the positions of municipal manager and CFO.
- Diagram 5 compares permanent appointments in the positions of municipal manager and CFO to appointments of senior management.
- Diagram 6 compares permanent appointments in the positions of municipal manager and CFO to appointments to overall establishment.

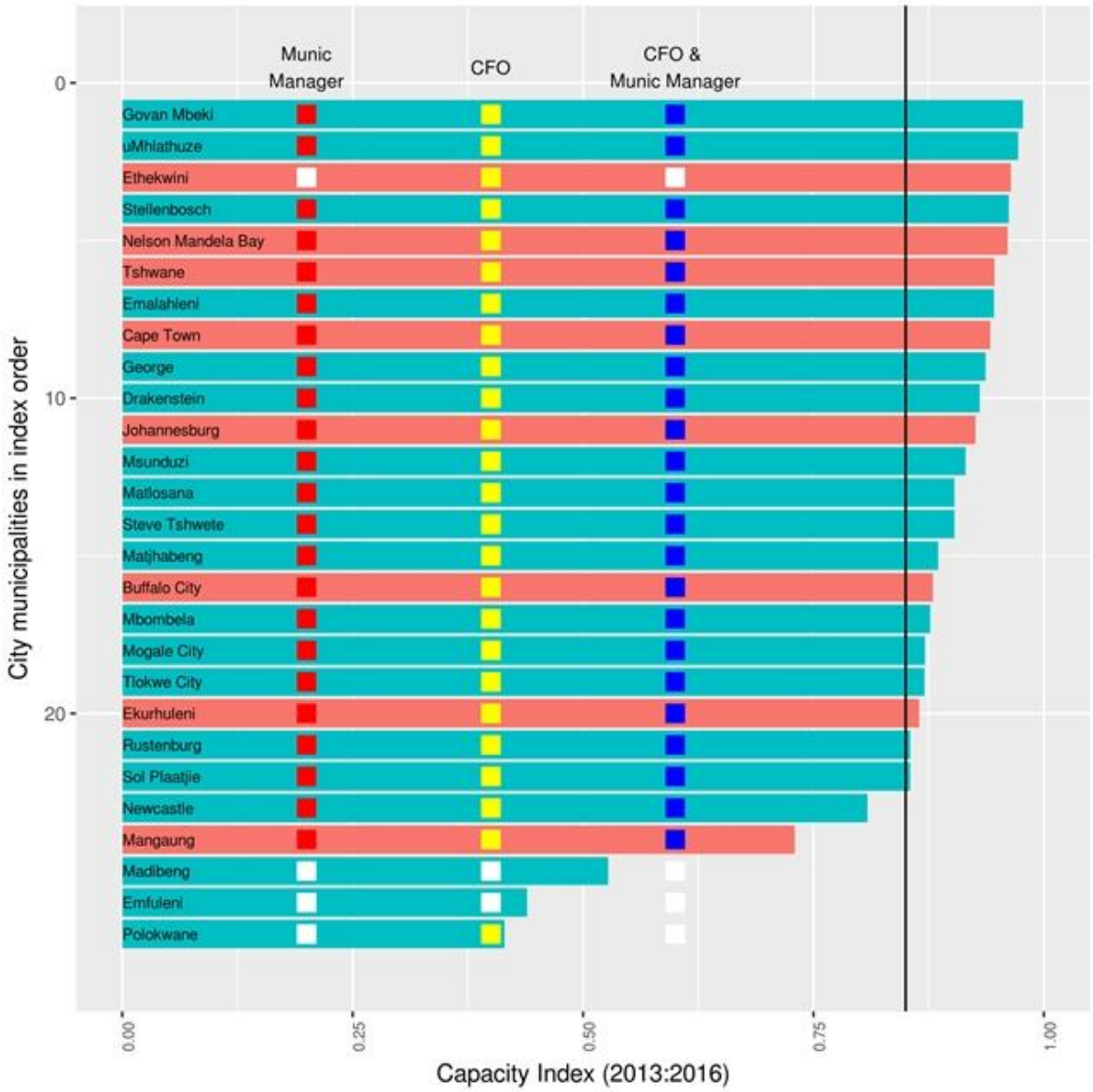
CI ratings compared to municipal manager and CFO appointments

Strong correlation between permanent municipal manager and CFO positions and capacity ratings

Diagram 4 below indicates the CI score of the cities. It shows whether the municipality had a permanently appointed CFO (yellow square), a permanent municipal manager (red square), and if both posts were filled by permanent appointments (blue square). If, as in the case of Mogale City, both posts were filled by permanent appointments, the bar on the graph has blue, yellow and red markers. The following trends can be observed:

- Four of the 27 cities did not have municipal manager and CFO positions filled by permanent appointments. This is a substantial improvement from CI-1, where one-third of the cities did not have permanent appointments in these positions. There has clearly been marked progress in ensuring that both of these posts are filled. In 2014, one-quarter of metropolitan municipalities did not have permanent CFOs. Now, all cities, and all but two B1 municipalities, have permanent appointments in that post.
- The relationship between the filling of executive posts and the CI score is illustrated below. With the exception of eThekwini, cities with unfilled posts had particularly low CI scores.
- During the period 2013 to 2016 (CI-2), an average of 14 per cent of senior manager posts were not filled in the 27 largest cities (i.e. category A and B1 municipalities). This was a slight improvement on the 16 per cent of the period 2010-2014.
- In the most severe cases, up to 40 per cent of senior management positions were vacant.
- In almost 40 per cent of cases (3), the vacancy rates in metros were higher than the average for all the cities.
- There was little difference in the overall vacancy rates of metros compared to B1 municipalities

Diagram 4: CI rankings and permanent municipal manager and CFO posts – cities only



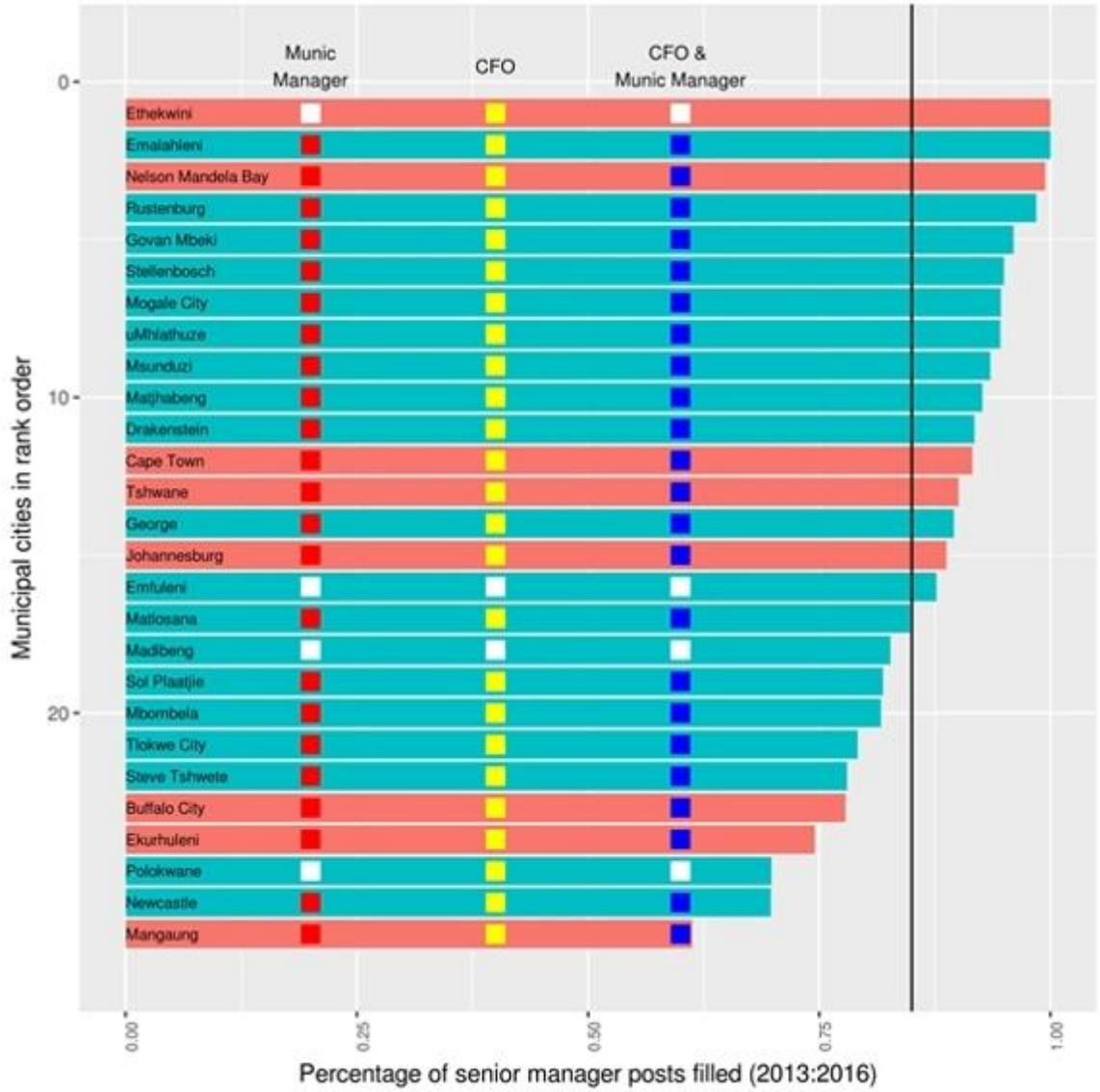
Senior management appointments

Municipalities in which one of the two posts is not filled by a permanent appointment tend to have higher vacancy rates among senior management.

The correlation of permanent executive appointments to vacancy rates among senior managers is replicated in the case of municipal posts in general. In city municipalities, an average of 15 per cent of all municipal posts (including senior managers) were vacant for the period 2013-2016 (CI-2). This was a significant improvement on the 20 per cent vacancy rate for 2010-2014 (CI-1). In the latter period, the vacancy rate ranged from as little as three per cent to as much as 56 per cent. In metropolitan municipalities, the overall vacancy rate was 12 per cent, which is unchanged from 2010-2014. By contrast, the vacancy rate in B1 municipalities is more than twice as great (26 per cent).

As indicated by Diagram 5 below, there was great variation in the rate at which posts were filled. The vacancy rates ranged from as little as two per cent to as much as 56 per cent.

Diagram 5: CI ratings and permanent municipal manager and CFO posts - all municipalities



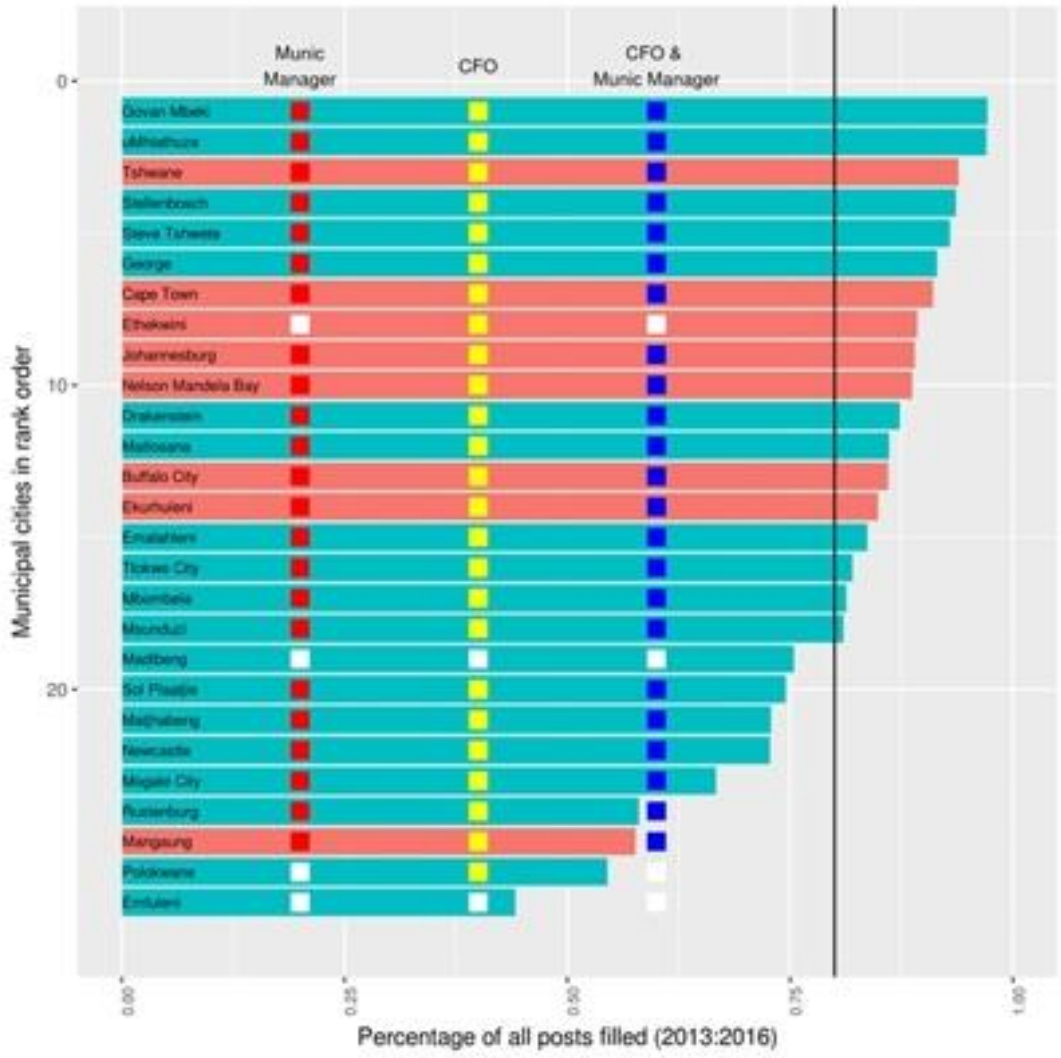
Overall establishment

Diagram 6 below shows the correlation between permanent appointments to municipal manager and CFO positions and vacancy rates in the overall establishment.

The failure to fill CFO and municipal manager posts negatively impacts the extent to which other posts are filled. In CI-2, municipalities without permanently appointed CFOs and municipal managers have, once again, higher vacancy rates in general, at 48 per cent. In contrast, cities with permanent appointments in these positions have a vacancy rate of 13 per cent. In the same cities, the senior management vacancy rate was 14 per cent. In cities where either of these posts was not filled by a permanent appointment, the senior management vacancy rate was 23 per cent.

Although very few city municipalities have failed to make permanent executive appointments, it remains the case that the failure to fill CFO and municipal manager posts with permanent appointments has a negative impact on the extent to which other posts are filled.

Diagram 6: CI rankings and percentage of all posts filled



Filling senior posts with permanent appointments is crucial in improving municipal capacity. Filling top management posts with permanent appointments seems key to ensuring that senior management and general posts are filled and thus to developing local government capacity. One reason for this may be that the job security of a permanent appointment helps to insulate CFOs and municipal managers from pressures that could compromise their ability to ensure effective and efficient local government.

Observations

- The government's 'Back to Basics' policy has made gains and remains the right policy.

A capable municipality is one that fully and consistently discharges its constitutional mandate for local government and pays close attention to maintaining its operational capacity do so. Most of the decisions that determine the operational capacity of a municipality lie within the control of the municipality. Ultimately, it is the municipality that decides whether to fill vacant posts with permanent appointments or muddle along with acting appointments, and to appoint people who are qualified to do the job or people who are not. The 'Back to Basics' policy introduced in 2014 recognises that capacity matters to performance and accountability. The comparison of CI-1 and CI-2 findings confirms that policy focus over a short period can result in marked improvements in municipal capacity.

- Ensuring that municipal manager and CFO posts are filled by permanent appointments clearly improves municipal capacity in general.

The improvements evident in the data stem largely from ensuring that top posts are filled by permanent appointments. Such appointments seem to have a snowball effect, resulting in fewer senior managements posts being vacant as well as, in turn, fewer posts in general being vacant.

- Tailored interventions are needed to support municipalities and enforce compliance.

Incremental changes and interventions have resulted in ever fewer municipalities being in an emergency situation with respect to capacity. Despite the improvements between CI-1 and CI-2, there is still a need for differentiated support and intervention by provincial and national governments in line with the 'Back to Basics' policy's *differentiated* approach. The CI-2 shows that there are two largely distinct groups of municipalities which have vastly different capacity profiles. Therefore, a uniform strategy for all municipalities is simply not feasible and will not lead to improvement.

- The improvements in the CI data now allow for the focus on capacity development to shift.

These shifts take can be in a number of directions, including the following:

  - Increasing the focus on demand-side constraints to filling posts. The ability of municipalities to fill top posts clearly indicates that the supply of candidates is not the dominant constraint to improving municipal capacity. Support for municipalities should thus focus on addressing the barriers to making appointments.
  - Focusing more on the quality of such appointments than simply filling posts. This is relevant for most municipalities (i.e. Group 1).

- It is too soon to tell what effect amalgamation and change of government has on capacity.

The reconfiguration of local government in 2016 resulted in a number of municipalities being merged with neighbouring municipalities. Whether it will result in improvements to the overall administrative capacity of local government remains to be seen and will need to be tested. The 2016 election also provides an opportunity to examine the impact of political shifts on municipal capacity.