

Mangaung progressing well in its preparations for 2010 FIFA World Cup™ despite some daunting challenges...

Mangaung like most of the other 2010 host cities, and the country at large, is feverishly preparing for the Confederations Cup in 2009 and the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. The preparations for these two mammoth events present the city with a great number of opportunities but also with several daunting challenges. The positive spin-offs from hosting an event of this nature have been widely publicized but how host cities, and in particular the smaller cities, handle the challenges will be the true test for the successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. The job-creation elements of hosting this international event is recognized by many cities as important as many are struggling with high unemployment rates in their areas. Some of the opportunities in terms of job creation will arise in the areas of infrastructure development, the construction of roads, water services, electricity services, etc, building of facilities (e.g. hotels, etc), purchasing of equipment, tourist related activities, security services, services, events management and the volunteer programme. It is estimated that for every R1 million spent at least 10 jobs could be created.

To however, reap these benefits host cities need to mitigate some of risks and deal with the challenges that hosting an event of this magnitude poses. Some of these challenges for Mangaung include *inter alia* adequate resourcing, availability of skilled contractors and service providers, diversified tourism product and balancing the contractual obligation of delivering on the event requirements versus dealing with service backlogs. Clearly preparations for this event can not be dealt with by the city alone. Careful alignment and co-ordination of various programmes relating to the successful hosting of the event by an array of stakeholders therefore becomes imperative.

Mangaung Local Municipality together with the Free State Provincial government established a single committee structure for purposes of preparing for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. The two parties established a joint Political and Technical Committees, both committees led by the City to avoid duplication and to ensure alignment to governance structure established between National Government, the 2010 LOC and FIFA. The committees are supported by various sub committees based on the different aspects of the FIFA requirements (e.g. Stadium, ICT, Marketing & Hospitality, Safety and Security, etc). In addition to the FIFA requirements, there is a Resource Management sub committee tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the Province and City's objectives that relate to economic development, job creation and skills development form an integral part of the 2010 preparations. The Political Committee is chaired by the Executive Mayor of Mangaung, Councilor Gertrude Mothupi and assisted by the MEC 2010 from the Free State Provincial government, Mr. Joel Mafereka. In addition, the Mangaung Local Municipality established the Mangaung 2010 World Cup Office under the leadership of the CEO Mangaung 2010, Mr George Mohlakoana, with direct reporting line to the City Manager.

Progress made...

In terms of the city's progress made to date, key areas of focus at this stage have been the on the upgrading of the stadium upgrade, transportation projects and the hospitality aspects.

The stadium upgrade, which largely involves the upgrading of the grand stand to increase the seating capacity from 38 000 to 46000 will take place in phases. The following is the upgrade schedule:

Approval of final design	– Mar 2007
Tender for principal contractor	– Mar 2007
Selection of principal contractor	– May 2007
Start of construction	– July 2007
Stadium construction completion	– Aug 2008

Start of overlay work – Feb 2009 and Feb 2010
Completion of overlay work – May 2009 and May 2010

The total cost of the upgrade is R241 million. The city received R221 million from national government for the upgrade and the remaining R20 million will be from the city's coffers.

One of the challenges that the city faces in respect of the stadium upgrade relates to finding suitably experienced contractors that will respond to the tender for the upgrade. Many of the big companies have already been contracted by the other cities for the construction of the new stadia.

Transport projects

Having an appropriate and efficient transport system for the Mangaung area is one of the city's key priorities but it has also proved to be one of the more complex projects to implement. The city has completed a number of studies and investigations in support of an integrated transport plan. Challenges relating to transportation in the city include amongst others: Lack of pedestrian facilities and linkages in Bloemfontein CBD; Lack of integration between different public transport modes; Traffic capacity constraints on the primary road network serving the 2010 Sports Precinct; Insufficient public transport services linking the south-eastern areas with the Bloemfontein CBD; No public transport service between the Bloemfontein Airport and 2010 destinations; Insufficient facilities to cater for 2010 demand at Bloemfontein Airport; insufficient traffic guidance sign system; backlogs in the upgrading and maintenance of the Mangaung arterial road network; backlogs emanating from the 2010 Public transport operational & management Plan and backlogs emanating from the Parking Needs assessment for Stadium Precinct

A number of projects have been identified to deal with these challenges. These projects include: the pedestrianization of key streets; the development of an Inter-modal Public Transport Facility; upgrading of the Bloemfontein Airport; Implementation of a proper tourism guidance and traffic sign system; and upgrading and maintenance of the MLM arterial road network. The city has received an allocation from the PTIF for the implementation of some of the transport projects. The securing of resources for all identified projects that will enable timeous implementation of these projects are crucial for the city's preparations in terms of transportation. Inadequate resourcing together with the compliance with the necessary procurement processes could pose a serious challenge in terms of completing the projects on time. The city is looking into limiting these risks through various measures such as ensuring that top-up funding is available in cases where insufficient funds are available to complete identified projects; introduce special processes to streamline time consuming procurement process; and try an limit the outflow of skilled personnel and increase skills base

Tourism & Hospitality

This remains one of the key challenges to be overcome by Mangaung in preparation for 2010. Currently the accommodation database shows the City has about 7000 number of beds, whilst FIFA requires at least 20 000 number of beds given the matches to be allocated to Mangaung as host city. Clearly, a huge task lies ahead to close this gap. The city has started co-operating with Maseru, Kimberley, Welkom, Ladybrand and Welkom in an attempt to augment the number of beds available. Together with these partners the indication is that the number of beds currently available is in the range of 14 000. The challenge, however, is to ensure that these establishments are graded and that the transport system between these accommodation establishments and match venues comply with FIFA requirements. More than 50% of the establishments are currently not graded. The city will also be implementing a regulated home-stay programme, where private home owners will be able to avail their private homes for visitors and tourists for the duration of the event.

One of the city's major challenges is how to position itself as an alternative destination for visitors to the country, who may tend to visit the more well-known and preferred destinations (Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban for example). Translating its unique blend of rural tranquility and vibrant city life into a truly African celebration that will showcase sports, arts & culture and the heritage of the area is a core focus of the city's 2010 marketing plan. Partnering with the Free State Tourism Authority and SA Tourism will be one of key measures to ensure successful marketing of the area.

ICT

The city's preparations in terms of the ICT requirements will be influenced by the national agenda and also external stakeholders. The link with and extensive involvement of stakeholders such as the National Department of Communications, Sentech, Telkom will be critical to ensure the city's readiness on this aspect. Once again, commitments from other stakeholders, budgets and timeous implementation are seen as the main risks that need to be mitigated.

Supporting Infrastructure

Other infrastructure projects that form part of the already approved 2010 business plan for the city will address the following services

- Roads and stormwater network
- Water services
- Electricity network upgrading, including back up power supply at the stadium
- Waste management services
- Emergency services

Financial implications

The city leadership needs to carefully balance the addressing of service backlogs versus 2010 investment. The level of challenges faced by the Host Cities varies from one city to the other. Mangaung, for example, has serious backlogs regarding the provision of basic services. Recent studies have revealed that the Mangaung needs at least R2 billion rand in order to address all the water services and roads backlogs that the City is faced with. Currently at least 80% percent of the annual budget goes to infrastructural services. With the preparation for 2010, it may mean channeling some of the capital investment originally earmarked for basic services provision, to 2010 related projects. Communities who are desperately in need of such basic services may not find this approach acceptable. Thus balancing between addressing service backlogs and 2010 investment will be a key challenge for Mangaung. The extent of the challenge would further be influenced by financial contribution from the provincial government, national government and other stakeholders.

The 2010 business plan for Mangaung indicates that, at least about R1.5 billion is needed to implement key projects (excluding those falling outside municipal competency) to ensure successful preparation for the 2009 Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The City alone, cannot afford to provide the capital investment required. Therefore a partnership approach is required to prepare for the World Cup. Mangaung has to date received an allocation for the Stadium upgrade. The South African Police Service is already working with the city and has made commitments in terms of implementing the Safety & Security Plan within Mangaung. Financial allocations for the other areas such as public viewing areas, ICT etc, are expected to follow. Clearly, these factors impact on the implementation of the city's 2010 business plan.

Conclusion

The city is on track with its preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, in particular the preparation of the Free State stadium and implementation of transport-related projects. However, as highlighted there are several challenges to overcome in relation to the following:

- Financial resources needed to fast track infrastructure development
- Commitment by other stakeholders in areas that fall outside the competency of local government

Notwithstanding the above, the City is very optimistic that there is commitment by all concerned stakeholders to ensure that we will host the 2009 Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ successfully.

Article by Dr Diane Abrahams – General Manager: Economic Development