



# Partnership lessons from the One Cape Data project

Prepared by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP)

## Introduction

This case study seeks to illustrate the valuable lessons learnt through the process of partnership undertaken by the One Cape Data (OCD) project<sup>1</sup> in their attempt to develop a set of regional indices that are intended to improve the economic intelligence of the region. These indices would allow stakeholders to monitor and evaluate progress in the transformation of the regional economy in accordance with the OneCape 2040 vision. In order to develop performance indicators that are both useful and accessible, this case study will illustrate why the involvement of all stakeholders, from the onset, is of vital importance in shaping and developing tools of this nature, highlighting in particular the value of consultation and relationship building.

## Background

The One Cape Data (OCD) project is an initiative led by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP). Initially, the intention was to develop a regional competitiveness index for the Western Cape. The motivation for the formation of this index was based on the premise that the socio-economic problems within the region could be tackled through generating robust economic growth, which would then “trickle down” to all stakeholders within the regional economy.

Upon conducting an academic survey on a variety of competitiveness indices, a set of guiding principles was developed. While noting research published in the World Economic Forum (WEF)’s competitive report<sup>2</sup>, often regarded as the global benchmark for this index, the OCD team found the index used by the WEF was beyond the capacity of the initiative. Furthermore, the index itself had severe short-comings in its formulation as it is perception based, whereas the Western Cape Government is attempting to shift more towards more evidence-based economic analysis.

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After further investigations of the Australian and Vietnamese regional competitiveness indices, the OCD team realised that there were strong commonalities between the WEF, Australian and Vietnamese competitiveness indices but that competitiveness alone does not fully reflect the issues facing the South African economy. Furthermore, there would be little value added by developing a competitiveness index unless it allowed for comparison between regions, which meant that the exact theoretical model would need to be applied in other regions in order to allow for global comparisons.

In the absence of comparative competitiveness indices elsewhere, the OCD team returned to the OneCape 2040 vision of the Western Cape. Using this vision as a lens it became clear that the envisaged future was not simply about strong economic growth, but also about creating a more inclusive and resilient economy .

Given that these are three distinct goals, these require three separate tools to measure their progress in these separate, but related, areas. The OCD team set about creating a dashboard of indicators for each of these goals.

The One Cape Data model, with its three pillars, now comprises a set of indicators that are applied at a provincial and municipal level depending on the applicability and the availability of the data set in question. With the data available the indicators could be used to benchmark the province against the national performance and with the national objectives as articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP). The long-term objective of the OCD team, however, is to measure these indicators from provincial to municipal level.

In short, the OCD team developed a series of dashboards built on the following principles:

- Competitiveness

- Inclusivity
- Resilience (Economic and Environmental)

However, the international debate has shifted in recent years towards an acknowledgement that goals like poverty and inequality will not be addressed by growth alone and instead these are separate goals which require different policies and indicators. Thus it was decided to create three separate groups of indicators, measuring progress toward the goals of growth, inclusivity and resilience.

Once the dashboards were established the challenges in implementation came to the fore. A great deal of data from various provincial government departments was required in order to map the Western Cape region. It had become apparent that many of these offices operated without much inter-departmental communication. Limited access to information proved to be a major impediment to the timeline of the investigation.

The OCD team reflected on their interactions with local government and affirmed the importance on building relationships. They also noted the importance of taking cognisance of the actual process of relationship building, highlighting that trust between the parties is vital to sustainable cooperation and that trust takes time to develop.

In an attempt to engage with various stakeholders, the OCD team holds quarterly meetings with stakeholders from local government, the City of Cape Town, Special Purpose Vehicles (including Wesgro and GreenCape) and academia. This grouping, known as the Economic Intelligence Consortium (EIC), allows all stakeholders to share their research and intelligence. The objective of this collective is to, over time, construct a shared understanding of the structure and dynamics of the Western Cape Economy built up on an all-inclusive process.

While EIC members are currently predominantly drawn from the public sector, it is the intention that invitations will be extended to the private sector, a broader range of academics and civil society in the remaining half of 2014.



Furthermore, in a partnership that proved to be the highlight of the investigation, the OCD team worked with the Drakenstein Municipality. A wealth of past research and information had been assembled, which proved useful in mapping the economic landscape of the municipality. Drawing on all the research currently generated by various government departments and public institutions, it was possible to map economic activity and employment spatially across the Drakenstein municipality. Whilst no new research was required, by sharing the information discovered during engagements with stakeholders, it was possible to provide a comprehensive overview of the economy of the Drakenstein municipality.

The Drakenstein research project provided an opportunity to engage with a broader group of stakeholders. The second phase of the Drakenstein project aims to understand the economic linkages between Drakenstein and Stellenbosch municipalities and the City of Cape Town. This prompted the OCD team to initiate a meeting between the Drakenstein municipality, the City of Cape Town, a UCT academic and CityThinkSpace, an urban design and city planning company.

Drakenstein Municipality has committed itself to building a “Place of Excellence” which includes the development of a thriving economy that will enable strong sector growth and jobs for all communities within the area.

In 2013 the Municipality embarked on an economic development growth path to achieve the following:

- Create a common vision for Local

Economic Development through effective stakeholder participation;

- Facilitate sustainable economic empowerment for all through developing an inclusive agenda for action;
- Understand our local economic development landscape;
- Enhance our competitive advantage so that we can maintain our status as the leading economy outside of the Cape Metro.

Critical to this growth path was the establishment of key multi-stakeholder partnerships with private- and public-sector organisations.

“As the Municipality, we acknowledge that the economic success of our region cannot happen in isolation and therefore a strategic partnership with the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership was critical to ensure the success of our growth trajectory. Although the partnership is still at an infancy stage, we have definitely benefited significantly from the calibre of expertise available to assist us in shaping our economic growth agenda. Over the next few months we are looking forward to a robust consultative process with the EDP to further assist the Municipality to develop an inclusive economic growth plan with the establishment of strong local economic partnerships across silos, spheres of Government, institutions and other geographical boundaries in our area.”

Cheryl Phillips  
Drakenstein Municipality

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The OCD project has thus far generated limited interest from the private sector as the research has been seen to add little value, at this point. Currently financial institutions and investors tend to focus more on national and international economies than regional. While the importance of regional economies is better understood globally, in South Africa the benefits of focusing on a regional economy has yet to be embraced. The Western Cape has a further challenge in that the provincial government is led by an opposition party, making any attempt to focus on the region - rather than the national economy - potentially politically sensitive issue. This political framing could stand as an impediment to the intended neutrality of this initiative.

## Conclusion

While the One Cape Data project has faced a number of challenges it has made positive strides towards developing practical metrics to benchmark progress in the planned economic transformation in the Western Cape. As the team continues to build relationships with the various stakeholders they will seek to

contribute to an improvement in the sharing of information across all sectors. As has been done with the various levels of local government, greater efforts towards achieving higher levels of ownership and participation from civil society and private sector entities will be crucial to extend the practical use of this model over time.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> WCEDP – One Cape Data. 2014. WCEDP – One Cape Data. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.onecapedata.co.za>. [Accessed 18 July 2014]
- <sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum – World Economic Forum Reports. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.weforum.org/reports>

## Acknowledgements

The EDP would like to thank Sandra Gordon (researcher), The Drakenstein and Stellenbosch municipalities, The City of Cape Town, University of Cape Town and CityThinkSpace for their work in compiling this case study.



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