

13 Environmental health

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Environmental health services (EHS) is a function of district and metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. Section 32 (1) of the National Health Act 2003 (Act 61 of 2003),^a as amended stipulates that “Every Metropolitan and District Municipality must ensure that appropriate municipal health services are effectively and equitably provided in their respective areas.” The National Health Act defines the package of EHS that municipalities are required to render as follows:

- ◆ Water quality monitoring
- ◆ Food control
- ◆ Environmental pollution control
- ◆ Vector control
- ◆ Surveillance and prevention of communicable diseases
- ◆ Health surveillance of premises
- ◆ Waste management and general hygiene monitoring
- ◆ Disposal of the dead
- ◆ Chemical safety management

The National Department of Health (NDoH) committed to “improve environmental health services in all 52 districts and metropolitan municipalities in the country”.^b The National Environmental Health Norms and Standards (EHNS) defines standards for effective delivery of environmental health services by municipalities and environmental health practitioners, as well as a national approach to achieve a standardised delivery of these services in the country. The quality of environmental health services can be measured using these standards.

A set of minimum requirements in terms of the national EHNS of 2015 must be met for a municipality to be deemed to be compliant with the national norms and standards. A municipality must have systems in place to:

- ◆ communicate about municipal health services (MHS) within the municipality, monitor client service experience, manage complaints, enable responsive client service and have infrastructure to communicate internally and externally;
- ◆ have the required human resource capacity to respond to service requirements and a communication system required for improved quality of service delivery;
- ◆ have disaster plans for disaster preparedness and response;
- ◆ function as an integral part of a district health system, and collaborate and cooperate with stakeholders on issues of environmental health;
- ◆ implement programmes for the management of vectors, environmental pollution control, waste management, water quality monitoring, health surveillance of premises, and community awareness; and
- ◆ have systems for law enforcement to handle issues of non-compliance.

The NDoH developed an assessment tool in collaboration with municipalities during January 2016. This assessment tool was implemented in February 2016 to assess performance of municipalities with respect to the quality of environmental health services.

The assessment tool is divided into 5 domains: clients rights, operational management, facility and infrastructure, leadership and cooperative governance, and operations. The five domains are divided into 11 components and the components are further divided into 19 sub-components. The sub-components have a total of 246 elements. The tool thus assesses municipalities on 11 components and 19 sub-components, and 246 elements (Table 1).

a National Department of Health. National Health Act, 2003 as amended. National Department of Health. Pretoria. 2003.

b National Department of Health. Strategic Plan 2015/16–2019/20. National Department of Health. Pretoria. 2015.

Table 1: Environmental health services components and sub-components

Components	Sub-components
1 Administration	1 Signage 2 Client experience of care 3 Client organisation
2 Human resources	4 Staff allocation and use 5 Professional standard and staff identity 6 Internal communication
3 Infrastructure	7 Disaster management 8 ICT infrastructure
4 District health system support	9 District Health Information Systems 10 District health support 11 Multi-sectoral collaboration
5 Vector control	12 Vector/rodent/pest control
6 Environmental pollution control	13 Environmental pollution control
7 Waste management	14 Waste management
8 Water quality monitoring	15 Water quality monitoring
9 Law enforcement	16 Law enforcement
10 Health surveillance of premises	17 Health surveillance of premises
11 Miscellaneous	18 Complaints handling 19 Community health awareness

Figure 1 shows an example of a component, its sub-components and its associated elements. The compliance of a municipality is determined by assessing the municipality against elements in the audit tool and providing a subsequent score.

Figure 1: Extracted from a section of the municipal audit/assessment tool

COMPONENT	SUB COMPONENT	ELEMENT NO	ELEMENTS	WEIGHT	METHOD OF MEASURE	ACHIEVED	NOT ACHIEVED	ACTION PLAN IN PLACE	TIME FRAME	PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE
Administration	1. Signage: Monitor if there is communication about MHS in the Municipality	1	Display board reflecting facility name, service hours and contact details and that EHS is rendered in the municipality	H						
		2	Sign boards indicating office numbers / service centres / directions	H						
	2. Client Experience of care: Monitor if client experience care survey is conducted and whether clients are provided with an opportunity to complain about or compliment the service received	3	The municipality's Complaint Management Standard Operating procedure is available	H						
		4	Compliments / complaints boxes are visibly placed at the main entrance / exit	H						
		5	A standard poster appears above the compliment / complaint box inviting clients to complain or to compliment the facility about their services	H						
		6	Records of complaints and actions taken are available in line with Complaint Management Standard Operating Procedure	H						
		7	The results obtained from the client compliment / complaint is used to improve the quality of service							

: Visual observations, e.g. telephones, computers, signage, etc.

: Documentation applicable, e.g. implementation plans, inspection reports, databases.

: Tests functionality of equipment, e.g. computers, telephones, PA systems.

Each element's performance is scored as either achieved or not achieved. In the case of achieved elements, a portfolio of evidence is produced by the municipality assessed to verify the achievement in the element.

All elements are allocated a weight depending on the significance of the element and the extent of its need, in rendering EHS. The weight of each element is provided, yellow denotes high priority and blue medium priority. The method of measure is used to verify the portfolio of evidence. The NDoH relaxed the weighting criteria in the first round of assessments.

All 52 municipalities were assessed using the standardised monitoring tool to measure quality of EHS during the period January and September 2016.

Municipalities conducted self-assessments (or baseline assessments) on the various elements. Subsequently, the NDoH conducted verification assessments in all 52 districts.

13.1 Environmental health services compliance rate

Levels of compliance

A municipality must score 51% to obtain compliance. In 2016/17, 24 out of the 52 municipalities achieved an environmental health services compliance rate of 51% or more, and 28 municipalities were non-compliant. The compliance rate varied from 75% (Ugu in KwaZulu-Natal) to 10% (Capricorn in Limpopo) (Figure 2 and Map 1).

Element total scores and environmental health services compliance rates of all 52 municipalities are also shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Element total score and environmental health services compliance rate by district, 2016/17

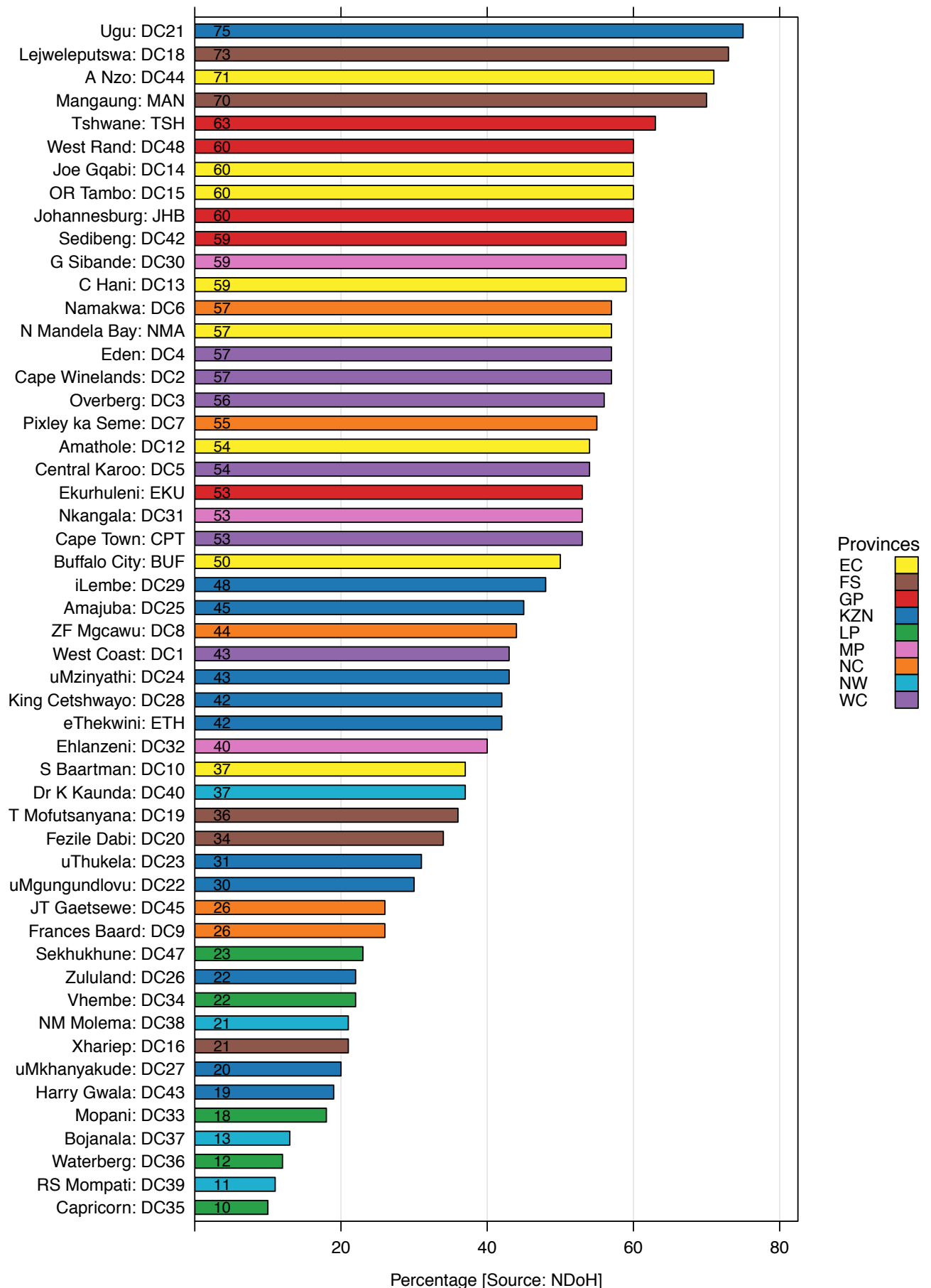
No.	Province	Municipality	Elements total Score	Percentage %
1	Eastern Cape	Alfred Nzo	171	71%
2		Amathole	131	54%
3		Buffalo City	122	50%
4		Chris Hani	144	59%
5		Joe Gqabi	145	60%
6		Nelson Mandela Bay	139	57%
7		OR Tambo	147	60%
8		Sarah Baartman	90	37%
9	Free State	Fezile Dabi	83	34%
10		Lejweleputswa	178	73%
11		Mangaung	171	70%
12		Thabo Mofutsanyane	88	36%
13		Xhariep	52	21%
14	KwaZulu-Natal	Amajuba	110	45%
15		eThekweni	103	42%
16		Harry Gwala	45	19%
17		iLembe	118	48%
18		King Cetshwayo	103	42%
19		Ugu	183	75%
20		uMgungundlovu	73	30%
21		uMkhanyakude	50	20%
22		uMzinyathi	106	43%
23		uThukela	75	31%
24		Zululand	54	22%
25	Limpopo	Capricorn	24	10%
26		Mopani	44	18%
27		Sekhukhune	55	23%
28		Vhembe	54	22%
29		Waterberg	30	12%
30	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	98	40%
31		Gert Sibande	144	59%
32		Nkangala	130	53%

Section A: Environmental health

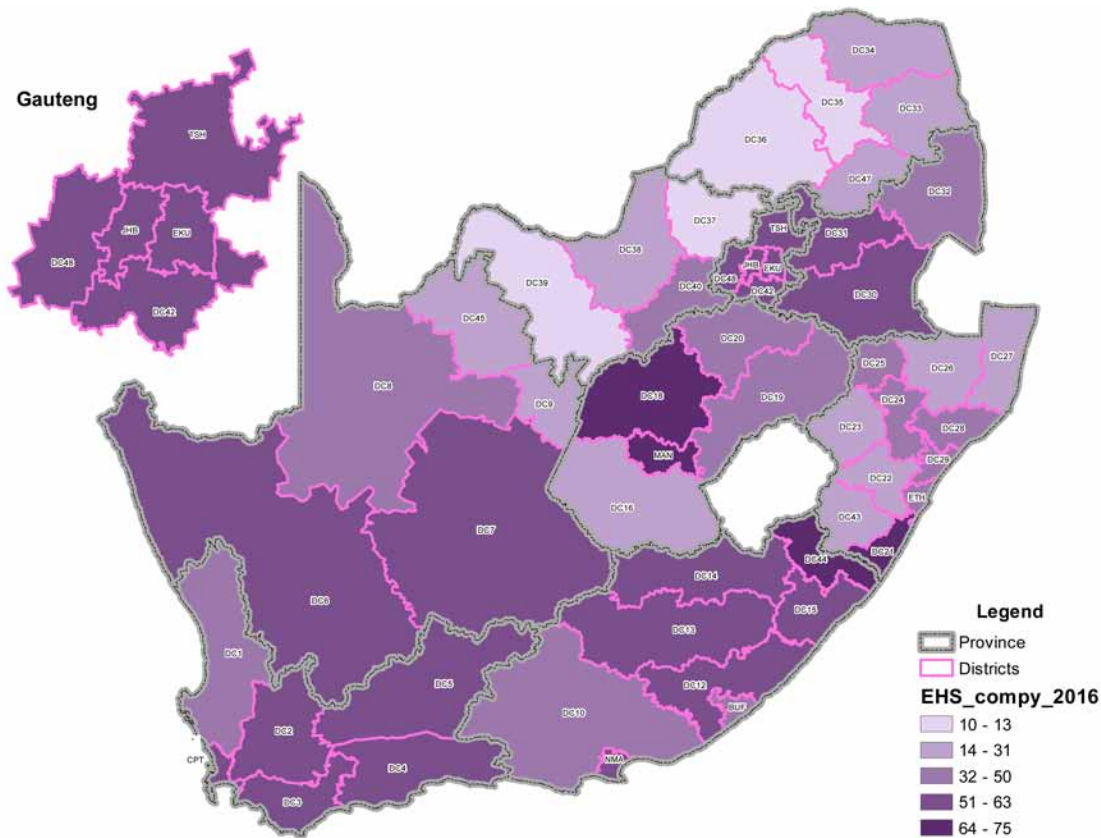
No.	Province	Municipality	Elements total Score	Percentage %
33	North West	Bojanala	31	13%
34		Dr K Kaunda	90	37%
35		RS Mompoti	27	11%
36		NM Molema	51	21%
37	Gauteng	Ekurhuleni	130	53%
38		Johannesburg	147	60%
39		Tshwane	154	63%
40		Sedibeng	144	59%
41		West Rand	146	60%
42	Northern Cape	Francis Baard	45	26%
43		JT Gaetsewe	63	26%
44		Namakwa	140	57%
45		Pixley Ka Seme	133	55%
46		ZF Mgcawu	107	44%
47	Western Cape	Cape Winelands	138	57%
48		Central Karoo	132	54%
49		Cape Town	130	53%
50		Eden	139	57%
51		Overberg	136	56%
52		West Coast	104	43%

Baseline Findings. Green bar indicates municipalities that met minimum standards for compliance with the norms and standards.

Figure 2: Compliance rate for environmental health services by district, 2016/17



Map 1: Compliance rate for environmental health services by district, 2016/17



The 28 municipalities found to be non-compliant were subjected to a follow-up audit. Eight of the 28 districts remained non-compliant in the follow-up audits. These municipalities are highlighted in red in Table 3.

Table 3: Compliance adherence rates for follow-up audits by district and metropolitan municipalities that scored below 51% in baseline audit, 2016/17

No.	Province	Municipality	Baseline total %	Follow-up 2016/17 Total score	Percentage %
1	Eastern Cape	Sarah Baartman	37%	151	70%
2		Buffalo City	50%	150	66%
3	Free State	Fezile Dabi	34%	166	68%
4		Thabo Mofutsanyane	36%	203	86%
5		Xhariep	21%	198	84%
6	KwaZulu-Natal	Amajuba	45%	91	37%
7		eThekwini	42%	183	78%
8		Harry Gwala	19%	223	91%
9		iLembe	48%	146	60%
10		King Cetshwayo	42%	111	52%
11		uMgungundlovu	30%	152	67%
12		uMkhanyakude	20%	54	22%
13		uMzinyathi	43%	112	51%
14		uThukela	31%	139	62%
15		Zululand	22%	126	52%
16	Limpopo	Capricorn	10%	51	21%
17		Mopani	18%	111	45%
18		Sekhukhune	23%	109	45%
19		Vhembe	22%	128	53%
20	Mpumalanga	Waterberg	12%	81	33%
21		Ehlanzeni	40%	145	60%

No.	Province	Municipality	Baseline total %	Follow-up 2016/17 Total score	Percentage %
22	North West	Bojanala	13%	147	60%
23		Dr K Kaunda	37%	207	85%
24		RS Mompoti	11%	105	43%
25		NM Molema	21%	101	42%
26	Northern Cape	Francis Baard	26%	59	29%
27		JT Gaetsewe	26%	149	61%
28		West Coast	43%	166	76%

Key findings

- ◆ In terms of the published national EHNS in rendering environmental health services, over 80% of municipalities in the country meet the minimum standards set at 51%. However, further efforts are required to improve the quality of EHS and to fully meet the set standards.
- ◆ A major constraint is the inadequacy of human resources for environmental health.

Recommendations

- ◆ Municipalities must:
 - develop action plans to address the shortcomings identified through the assessments;
 - put measures in place to ensure that environmental health (EH) staff are identifiable by name in communities (name tags to be provided and always worn);
 - put measures in place to ensure monthly performance review meetings are held with operational staff to review progress towards set operational targets;
 - put systems in place to ensure health certification of all premises as prescribed by the norms and standards;
 - ensure that all Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) are appointed as Health Officers in terms of Section 80 of the National Health Act, 2003;
 - ensure that all EHPs are trained and appointed as Peace Officers in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act 1977, (Act 51 of 1977), as amended;
 - ensure that a law enforcement system is in place through municipal courts to support EHPs to deal with issues of non-compliance where necessary and that documentation (e.g. fine books) is made available to EHPs at all times for EH law enforcement;
 - develop and implement EH assessment support documentation (e.g. inspection checklists, report formats) to ensure systematic and structured EH inspections;
 - develop costed monitoring plans and allocate budget for water quality monitoring;
 - develop costed plans and allocate budget for vector control and management;
 - develop costed plans and allocate budget for environmental pollution control;
 - develop plans for waste management and monitoring;
 - allocate budget for EH staff training and capacity building to ensure continued development;
 - develop costed Human Resources (HR) plans with annual targets to address the vast HR shortages found in almost all of the 52 municipalities;
- ◆ Prioritise appointment of additional staff to ensure they can keep up with recommended frequencies of inspections as per the monitoring standards.