MFMA Circular No. 89

Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003

Municipal Budget Circular for the 2018/19 MTREF

CONTENTS

Introduction

The purpose of the annual budget circular is to guide municipalities with their compilation of the 2018/19 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF). This circular is linked to the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR); and strives to support municipalities' budget preparation processes so that the minimum requirements of the MBRR are achieved.

In 2010 National Treasury introduced the local government budget and financial reform agenda and since then several projects to further this agenda have been introduced. The recent implementation of the municipal Standard Chart of Accounts *(m*SCOA*)* and the accompanying "game changers" signals a smarter way forward to strengthening local government finances.

Among the objectives of this budget circular is to demonstrate how municipalities should undertake annual budget preparation in accordance with the budget and financial reform agenda and associated "game changers".

Municipalities are reminded to refer to the annual budget circulars of the previous years for guidance on budget preparation that is not covered in this circular.

1. The South African economy and inflation targets

In the 2017 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement the Minister of Finance stated that, improving the country's economic growth in the period ahead remains the biggest challenge. This undoubtedly echoes the sentiments expressed in the previous year's annual budget circular, that the South African economic outlook is bleak.

The National Treasury's macroeconomic projections show that per capita income will continue to stagnate unless appropriate financial decisions are taken. This implies that a new course of action is required to break the cycle of weak growth, escalating government debt, increasing unemployment and declining investment and business confidence.

It is important to note that the 2017 projected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast of 1.3 per cent in the 2017/18 budget was revised down to 0.7 per cent. The rate of recovery will be slow and at this time, it is anticipated that growth of 1.9 per cent may be reached by 2020.

Notably, the anticipated economic improvements, employment opportunities and business recovery have not materialised hence the economy remains unstable. The impact of the decline in mining growth and the struggle in the agriculture sector because of the persistent drought influence the low economic growth.

The mining outlook remains subdued due to continued domestic policy uncertainty and rising production costs. Fixed-capital stock in manufacturing has declined every year since 2009, indicating a gradual erosion of capacity. Formal non-agricultural employment declined by 0.2 per cent in the first half of 2017 compared to the same period last year. Employment prospects in manufacturing remain constrained. Similarly, employment growth in the trade sector is likely to remain under pressure given low consumer confidence and weak credit growth.

In summary, the country's tax collection targets have not been met and this means that the fiscus has less funds available to allocate across the various spheres of government. Unfortunately, a similar decline cannot be measured in expenditure and this means that deficits are growing.

The following macro-economic forecasts must be considered when preparing the 2018/19 MTREF municipal budgets.

Table 1: Macroeconomic performance and projections, 2016 - 2020

Fiscal year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Actual	Estimate		Forecast	
CPI Inflation	6.3%	5.4%	5.2%	5.5%	5.5%

Source: Medium Term Budget Policy Statement 2017.

Note: the fiscal year referred to is the national fiscal year (April to March) which is more closely aligned to the municipal fiscal year (July to June) than the calendar year inflation.

2. Key focus areas for the 2018/19 budget process

2.1 Local government conditional grants and additional allocations

The proposed division of revenue continues to prioritise funding services for poor communities. Allocations to local government subsidise the delivery of free basic services to low-income households, and the infrastructure needed to deliver those services.

The 2017 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) indicates transfers to local government for the 2018 MTREF are R397 billion, of which 62.2 per cent comprise unconditional allocations while the remainder is conditional grant funding. The allocations for local government over the medium term represent 9.2 per cent of non-interest expenditure and an increase of 8.3 per cent.

The equitable share and the allocation of the general fuel levy to local government constitute unconditional funding. Municipalities are reminded that this funding allocation is formula driven and designed to fund the provision of free basic services to disadvantaged communities. Conditional grant funding must be utilised for the intended purpose within the timeframes, as specified in the annual Division of Revenue Bill. Monies not spent must be returned to the fiscus and requests for roll-overs will only be considered in extenuating circumstances.

The annual Division of Revenue Bill will be published in February 2018 after the Minister of Finance's budget speech. The grant allocations will be specified in this Bill and municipalities must reconcile their budgets to the numbers published herein.

> Municipalities are advised to use the indicative numbers presented in the 2017 Division of Revenue Act to compile their 2018/19 MTREF. In terms of the outer year allocations (2020/21 financial year), it is proposed that municipalities conservatively limit funding allocations to the indicative numbers as proposed in the 2017 Division of Revenue Act for 2018/19. The DoRA is available at
> http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2017/default.aspx

Changes to local government allocations

- The Equitable Share formula takes into account the rising bulk costs of electricity and water, as well as household growth. This is confirmed by the additional R1.5 billion in 2019/20 that was part of the 2017 budget for the *local government equitable share.*

- In line with government's Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), a new approach to funding intermediate cities will be piloted as part of the *municipal infrastructure grant* in 2018/19. It will emphasise a programme of capital investment that combines grant and non-grant funding. This approach may take the form of a separate grant for qualifying cities over the medium term, with strong performance incentives.

- The allocation mechanism of the *public transport network grant*, which funds the improvement of urban public transport systems, will be amended. The changes will provide more stability in allocations for smaller cities. Performance incentives will be introduced and stricter conditions applied. Where cities fail to demonstrate that they have financially sustainable plans for public transport networks, allocations will be cut. Performance incentives will also be considered for other conditional grants, including for improved spending on infrastructure maintenance.

- The National Treasury and the Department of Human Settlements will review spending on urban informal settlement upgrading, with a view to changing the grant system to enable increased investment in in-situ upgrading. This work will be aligned to the review of the provincial *human settlements development grant*.

The Presidency announced in a press statement on 27 November 2017 that, “President Jacob Zuma has directed the Minister of Finance, Mr Malusi Gigaba, assisted by the Presidential Fiscal Committee, to identify concrete measures to urgently address the challenges identified in the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement.” These measures should focus on four areas, one of which is, “To identify and finalise proposals for cuts in expenditure amounting to about R25 billion. Such proposed cuts should not be in areas that will negatively affect economic growth prospects and job creation.” National Treasury is currently working to implement this directive from the President. If the proposed cuts in expenditure are adopted by Cabinet, they could result in substantial changes to the division of revenue that was tabled in the 2017 MTBPS. Municipalities should be aware in their planning that these changes could include substantial reductions to grants to local government. The details of any cuts to expenditure will be announced when the 2018 Budget is tabled on 21 February 2018.

Reforms to local government fiscal framework

Reforms over the medium term will enhance the ability of municipalities to raise revenue to invest in their own development.

Government will:

- Table amendments to the Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act (2007) to better regulate the levying of municipal development charges; and

- Update the policy framework for municipal borrowing and financial emergencies. The purpose is to establish a system which does not only guarantee stability and certainty in local government finances, but also seeks to implicitly create incentives and attract more players in the municipal debt market space, i.e. insurers, pension funds, fund managers and DFIs.

Municipal revenue-raising capacities vary widely. The National Treasury will consider applications to waive co-funding requirements for infrastructure projects in municipalities with little or no ability to raise finance for such projects. Reprioritisations within the *regional bulk infrastructure grant*, *water services infrastructure grant* and *municipal infrastructure grant* will be made to fund the Bucket Eradication Programme.

2.2 Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (*m*SCOA)[1]

The implementation of *m*SCOA Regulations from 01 July 2017 revealed some of the challenges with version 6.1 of the chart that must be addressed. As a result of this, the chart was updated and version 6.2 is released with this circular (see Annexure A). Version 6.2 of the chart will be effective from 2018/19 and must be used to compile the 2018/19 MTREF. In addition, there were classification differences between the original budgets that were adopted by municipal council and the data strings that were submitted to National Treasury. Furthermore, the budget related policies were not updated to align to *m*SCOA (e.g. Virement policy).

> Version 6.2 of the *m*SCOA chart to be used for the 2018/19 MTREF is available on the link below:
> http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/MunicipalRegulationsOnAStandardChartOfAccountsFinal/Pages/default.aspx

Amendments of mSCOA implementation errors during the adjustments budget

During the budget verification process it was evident that municipalities had challenges aligning the *m*SCOA original budget data string to the original budget adopted by municipal council. The challenges differed per municipality and include differences on classification. Most municipalities were granted permission to correct the alignment during the 2017/18 adjustments budget process. The adjusted budget data strings should align to Schedule B adopted by municipal council. National and Provincial treasuries will undertake the verification process on the adjusted budgets in relation to the data strings. Therefore, municipalities are advised to submit the draft data strings and B-schedules in advance for testing purposes to ensure that aligned documents are adopted by municipal council by 28 February 2018.

The impact of mSCOA on the virement policy

MFMA Circular No. 51 highlighted the principles that must be incorporated into municipal virement policies. It also emphasised that the policy must indicate how the virement process must be managed within the municipality to enable the tracking and reporting of funding shifts.

The principles are still applicable and relevant. The only difference is that a transaction in *m*SCOA relates to six regulated segments, therefore all segments must be considered when making a virement. Municipalities are urged to review the policy and update reference to "Vote" to align to the function segment and indicate the funding applicable to the item being transferred in relation to the funding segment. Therefore, with the implementation of *m*SCOA, virements can only take place within a function or sub-function and the same source of funding. The creation of new projects or savings across functions can only take place through an adjustment budget. The policy must clearly articulate that virements should not be allowed from the repairs and maintenance project in the project segment.

Clarification of core and non-core functions

There are municipalities that experienced challenges with the implementation of the function segment due to the interpretation of what is core and non-core. Core functions provides for the matters in terms of section 156 (1) of the Constitution. These are functions performed by local government and constitutionally assigned to local government in terms of Part B of Schedule 4 and Part B of Schedule 5. Non-core function refers to the functions performed by

[1] The Minister of Finance promulgated the Municipal Regulations on a Standard Chart of Accounts in government gazette Notice No. 37577 on 22 April 2014.

local government that are constitutionally assigned to provincial government in terms of section 156(4) of the Constitution. Local Government are compensated for delivering these functions on behalf of provincial government and typically receive a management fee from the provincial department.

For example, with the water function, if a municipality is an approved Water Service Authority (WSA), the provision of water will be a core function of that municipality. However, where a municipality is providing the service on an agency basis and is not an approved WSA, this will be a non-core function.

2018/19 mSCOA Audit process

When the *m*SCOA Regulation was promulgated in 2014, it provided for a three-year preparation and readiness window. All municipalities had to be compliant with the *m*SCOA classification framework by 1 July 2017. In order to ensure that municipalities meet the compliance deadline, National Treasury provided technical guidance on the processes required through MFMA Circulars No. 57, 80, 85 and *m*SCOA Circulars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Furthermore, a transversal tender (RT25-2016) was issued to reduce the time spent by municipalities on onerous tender processes and price negotiations when changing its current financial system to comply with *m*SCOA. These circulars read together with the *m*SCOA regulations should be the first point of departure when municipalities prepare their *m*SCOA audit files and the following key documents should typically be included in the audit files:

- Governance: Council resolutions pertaining to *m*SCOA implementation, including the resolutions to establishment a *m*SCOA steering committee and project implementation team; all documents of the Project Steering Committee and Project Implementation Committee such as agendas, attendance registers, signed minutes of all meetings, correspondence with National and Provincial Treasuries and the *m*SCOA project plan and reports/evidence of monitoring thereof;
- Change management and training: Records as evidence that change management were implemented and that all officials were trained on *m*SCOA and the use of the *m*SCOA enabling financial system;
- Procurement of Systems: Evidence that the processes set out in Annexure B of *m*SCOA Circular No. 6 was followed, including conducting an ITC due diligence process, obtaining a recommendation from the *m*SCOA project steering committee and the views of the National/Provincial Treasury and correspondence with the Office of the Procurement Officer (OCPO) of National Treasury where the transversal tender RT25-2016 was used; and
- Data migration/conversion: As part of the audit process, the Auditor-General will review the conversion/migration/cleansing processes used by the municipality to assess the completeness, accuracy and validity of data.

Municipalities are advised to use their internal audit function to ensure that the correct process was followed. Internal audit must ensure that the municipality has complied with the requirements of *m*SCOA and the reports of internal audit must be tabled at audit committee and at municipal council for their consideration.

2.3 Reporting indicators

The National Treasury has finalised the process of rationalising the built environment reporting for the eight metropolitan municipalities with an aim to reduce the reporting burden, which included the development of a set of indicators that will enable government to monitor progress on the integrated and functional outcomes.

There has been some confusion as to the level that indicators in the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) occupy, particularly in relation to quarterly projections of service delivery targets and performance indicators for each vote (as per MFMA Circular No. 13).

Municipalities are urged to refer to MFMA Circular No.87 on rationalisation of planning and reporting requirements for the 2018/19 MTREF issued on 30 November 2017. The circular contains municipal performance indicators for metropolitan municipalities. In providing guidance, conceptual clarity and alignment between the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP), SDBIP and the performance part of the Annual Report, the MFMA Circular has conceptual application of benefit to all municipalities.

The performance indicators will be applicable to metropolitan municipalities from the 2018/19 financial year, and incrementally introduced to other categories of municipalities from 2019/20 onwards, although earlier compliance is encouraged.

2.4 Borrowing for capital infrastructure

In terms of Section 46 of the MFMA, a municipality may incur long-term debt only for the purpose of current or future capital expenditure on property, plant or equipment, and in specified circumstances for refinancing existing long-term debt. A municipality cannot borrow to replenish capital, nor can borrowing be attributed to previous years' investment projects.

It has come to National Treasury's attention that some municipalities budget for long-term borrowing in a specific financial year to finance capital projects; however, the expenditure is financed from internally generated funds and not with the planned/ budgeted long-term borrowing as was approved by council. The municipalities will then obtain the long-term debt in future years to refinance the internally generated funds which were used to finance the capital projects in the previous financial years. This practice is not supported as it is not consistent with section 15 of the MFMA that provides that a municipality can only incur expenditure in terms of an approved budget and within the amounts appropriated for the different votes. The incurring of the expenditure against a different source of finance than what was approved will be regarded as unauthorised expenditure.

3. The revenue budget

Similar to the rest of government, municipalities face a difficult fiscal environment. Even as demand for services rises, weak economic growth has put stress on consumers' ability to pay for services, while transfers from national government are growing more slowly than in the past. Some municipalities have managed these challenges well, but others have fallen into financial distress and face liquidity problems. These include municipalities that are unable to meet their payment obligations to Eskom, water boards and other creditors. There is a need for municipalities to focus on collecting revenues owed to them, and eliminate wasteful and non-core spending. Municipal budgets will be scrutinised to ensure that municipalities adequately provide to service their debt obligations. Municipalities must ensure that expenditure is limited to the maximum revenue collected and not spend on money that they do not have.

Municipalities are reminded that, the local government equitable share allocation is mainly to fund the costs of free basic services and to subsidise the administrative costs of the smaller and more rural municipalities. The increasing unemployment and growth in the number of persons per household means that the revenue foregone in respect of free basic services will likely increase and it will become even more difficult to collect revenue. The household budget will be under pressure and trade-offs will be applied as it may be unaffordable to pay all household expenses with regularity.

National Treasury encourages municipalities to maintain tariff increases at levels that reflect an appropriate balance between the affordability to poorer households and other customers while ensuring the financial sustainability of the municipality. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is forecasted to be within the upper limit of the 3 to 6 per cent target band; therefore municipalities are required to ***justify all increases in excess of the*** **projected inflation target for 2018/19** in their budget narratives, and pay careful attention to the differential incidence of tariff increases across all consumer groups. In addition municipalities should include a detail of their revenue growth assumptions for the different service charges in the budget narrative.

3.1 Maximising the revenue generation of the municipal revenue base

The implementation of *m*SCOA requires systems integration of several sub-systems such as that which contains the municipal valuation roll. Among the internal controls, the system must have the capability to compare the valuation roll data to that of the billing system; the list of exceptions derived from this reconciliation provides an indication of where the municipality may be compromising its revenue generation in respect of property rates. Municipalities must reconcile valuation roll data, billing system and the deeds office. This may become a formal disclosure item in the near future.

Municipal own revenue sources are shrinking due to widespread drought and households opting for alternative sources of energy. This means that more effort is required to maximise revenue derived from property rates.

3.2 Eskom bulk tariff increases

2017/18 was the last year of the third Multi-Year Price Determination (MYPD) for Eskom's tariffs approved by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA). Eskom has applied for a one year average tariff increase of 19.9 per cent for 2018/19. For municipalities, the different timing of the municipal financial year means that the increase Eskom has applied for would mean a 27.29 per cent average tariff increase in the 2018/19 municipal financial year. The National Energy Regulator of South Africa recently concluded a process of public hearings on this application, but has yet to publish a decision on the application. Municipalities can monitor www.nersa.org.za for news on the outcome of this process.

Municipalities should note that the average electricity tariff increase for municipalities in the 2017/18 municipal financial year was only 0.31 per cent. MFMA Circular No. 86 noted that by the time that tariff announcement was made, the local government equitable share allocations for 2017/18 had already been calculated with a higher electricity tariff increase. That circular said that "municipalities will have to budget to retain any surplus funds from the higher free basic services subsidy paid [through the local government equitable share] in 2017/18 in order to offset the cost of providing free basic electricity in 2018/19."

Municipalities are also urged to examine the cost structure of providing electricity services and to apply to NERSA for electricity tariff increases that reflect the total cost of providing the service so that they work towards achieving fully cost-reflective tariffs that will help them achieve financial sustainability. Municipalities in arrears with Eskom should ensure that their payment arrangements are effected in their 2018/19 MTREF budget.

3.3 Water tariff increases

The prevailing drought makes it difficult for some municipalities to improve revenue generation from this service. It is now more important to improve demand management, infrastructure maintenance, loss management, meter reading and tariff setting in respect of water services.

Municipalities must ensure that the tariffs charged are able to cover for the cost of bulk purchases, ongoing operations as well as provision for future infrastructure. There are municipalities that are struggling to pay water boards due to a number of issues, one of which is poor financial sustainability and cost recovery. All municipalities in arrears with bulk suppliers must ensure that their payment arrangements are effected in their 2018/19 MTREF budget.

Accounting officers should take note that failure to undertake proper due diligence in terms of the affordability of payment arrangements and making the necessary provision in the municipality's budget will be considered as an act of financial misconduct and the necessary action in terms of chapter 15 of the MFMA read with the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings will have to be taken.

Municipalities that may have benefited from having introduced penalty tariffs for non-compliant consumers will have to adjust their budgets accordingly.

3.4 Water Conservation and Water Demand Management (WCWDM)

Water Conservation and Water Demand Management has been identified as a key intervention to balance available municipal supply against projected future needs. In this regard municipalities must actively implement WCWDM. Ongoing accurate monitoring and reporting of municipal Non-Revenue Water (NRW) and water loss performance against set targets and baselines is critical. The reporting must take place via the International Water Association (IWA) water balance methodology. No new funding towards future water infrastructure projects will be considered unless municipalities can provide actual consumption figures and prove that their water losses are under control. Municipalities should increase their efforts to reduce NRW and the negative impact it has on their ability to generate their own income and run a viable water business.

4. Funding choices and management issues

The Circular clearly outlines that, as a result of the economic landscape and weak tariff setting, municipalities are under pressure to generate revenue. The ability of customers to pay for services is declining and this means that less revenue will be collected. Therefore, municipalities must consider the following when compiling their 2018/19 MTREF budgets:

- improving the effectiveness of revenue management processes and procedures;
- paying special attention to cost containment measures by, amongst other things, controlling unnecessary spending on nice-to-have items and non-essential activities as was highlighted in MFMA Circular No. 82;
- ensuring value for money through the procurement process;
- the affordability of providing free basic services to all households; and
- curbing consumption of water and electricity by the indigents to ensure that they do not exceed their allocation.

Accounting officers are reminded of their responsibility in terms of section 62(1)(a) of the MFMA to use the resources of the municipality effectively, efficiently and economically. Failure to do this will result in the accounting officer committing an act of financial misconduct which will trigger the application of chapter 15 of the MFMA read with the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings.

4.1 Employee related costs

The *Salary and Wage Collective Agreement* for the period 01 July 2015 to 31 June 2018 has come to an end. The process is under consultation; therefore, in the absence of other information from the South African Local Government Bargaining Council communication will be provided at a later stage.

4.2 Remuneration of councilors

Municipalities are advised to budget for the actual costs approved in accordance with the Government Gazette on the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act: Determination of Upper Limits of Salaries, Allowances and Benefits of different members of municipal councils published annually between December and January by the Department of Cooperative Governance. Any overpayment to councilors contrary to the upper limits as published by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs will be irregular expenditure in terms of section 167 of the MFMA and must be recovered from the councilor(s) concerned.

5. Conditional Grant Transfers to Municipalities

5.1 Non-compliance of in year monitoring

In terms of Section 74(1) of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No 56. of 2003) (MFMA), municipalities must submit to the National and Provincial treasuries documents and monthly grant return forms as may be prescribed or required. Furthermore, section 12(2) of the Division of Revenue Act (Act No. 3 of 2017) (DoRA) states that the municipality, as part of the report required in terms of section 71 of the MFMA, report on the matters referred to in subsection (4) and submit a copy of that report to the relevant provincial treasury, the National Treasury and the relevant Transferring Officer.

There are municipalities that have not been complying with the reporting requirements as stipulated above. Municipalities are reminded that non-submission of monthly reports translates to non-compliance with the MFMA and DoRA. The National Treasury and Transferring Officer will be implementing stringent measures to municipalities that do not comply with the prescripts. This includes, but is, not limited to the stopping and reallocation of conditional grants funding away from municipalities that are non-compliant. Municipalities are encouraged to comply with the reporting requirements in order to avoid withholding or stopping of an allocation.

6. The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations

6.1 Tabling of funded budgets

The importance of tabling funded budgets is highlighted in MFMA Circular No. 74. This is one of the game changers in local government to ensure financial sustainability. As an initiative to support municipalities in this regard, the National and Provincial treasuries are assessing tabled budgets and assisting municipalities in effecting the required changes to ensure that they adopt funded budgets. However, some municipalities have challenges in correcting the budgets to ensure that they are funded in one financial year due to financial challenges. As a result, such municipalities must, together with their 2018/19 MTREF budget, table a plan in a municipal council on how and by when the budget will improve from an unfunded to a funded position. The National and Provincial treasuries will assess the budget together with the plans and support the municipality accordingly.

6.2 Budgeting for collections from arrear debtors

Most municipalities do not split collections between current and arrear debtors when reporting on table A7, this results in the collection rate being overstated. Municipalities are required to only disclose receipts from current accounts under cash flow from operating activities and the receipts from arrear accounts should be disclosed under cash flow from investing activities (Decrease in non-current debtors).

6.3 VAT implications (Budgeting on capital (A5) vs reporting)

MFMA Circular No. 58 indicated that municipalities must disclose total capital conditional grant allocations reflected in the DoRA under 'transfers and grants – capital' on Tables A2, A3, A4 and A5. However, there are municipalities that are experiencing challenges when reporting capital expenditure performance against the budget. The expenditure at year end appears to be understated when compared to the budget.

In terms of paragraph 4.5 of the VAT 419 Value-Added Tax – Guide for Municipalities, section 8(5A) was introduced to create a deemed supply where a person receives a grant from a public authority, constitutional institution or municipality. In light of the above it is clear that transfers to municipalities are deemed to be a zero-rated supply which includes VAT at 0 per cent. Grants are therefore VAT inclusive as per MFMA Circular No. 58 but at 0 per cent. ***Therefore, municipalities must budget for VAT at 0 per cent and not 14 per cent on tables A4 and A5.*** The approach also applies to the adjustments budget process (tables B4 and B5).

The fact that grants are a zero-rated supply enables municipalities to claim the input VAT on expenditure incurred. In line with MFMA Circular No. 58 a municipality must report the VAT inclusive expenditure against all conditional grants for purposes of DoRA, failing which the reclaimed input VAT will reflect as 'unspent' and revert to the National Revenue Fund (NRF). In practice the amount of expenditure (VAT exclusive) in the grant register will be expensed/ capitalised and the VAT portion reflected in the grant register may be utilised by the municipality as own revenue in terms of MFMA Circular No. 58. This also removes any doubt about the misalignment of Tables SA18, SA19, SA20, A4 and A5 due to VAT.

6.4 Budgeting for projections on tables SA25 to SA30

Over the years municipalities in general have not adequately completed the supporting tables SA25 to SA30, where projections were equally divided over twelve months. In addition, the quarterly projections reported on the C schedules differ with the projections that were set in the adopted budgets. This has defeated the purpose of monthly projections which seeks to improve cash flow and performance management. The implementation of *m*SCOA requires municipalities to undertake monthly projections, which must align to the supporting tables of the A schedule. Municipalities must reflect realistic projections when they adopt the budget and not to change the projections during in-year reporting.

6.5 Service level standards

A broad guideline was provided on the minimum service standards to be incorporated in the budget documentation. In addition, MFMA Circular No.74 included a framework that was developed as an outline to assist municipalities in finalising their service level standards.

Municipalities are advised to update the service level standards to align to the new IDPs that were compiled after the 2016 Local Government Elections. As indicated in MFMA Circular No.74 it is not possible to have the same service level standards across all municipalities. Therefore, the outline must be used as a guideline and be amended accordingly to align to the municipality's specific circumstances.

6.6 Schedule A - version to be used for the 2018/19 MTREF

National Treasury has released Version 6.2 of Schedule A1 (the Excel Formats) which is aligned to version 6.2 of the *m*SCOA classification framework which must be used when compiling the 2018/19 MTREF budget. **ALL** municipalities **MUST** use this version for the preparation of their 2018/19 MTREF budget.

It is imperative that all municipalities prepare their 2018/19 MTREF budgets in their financial systems and that the A1 schedule be produced directly from their financial system. All financial systems must have this functionality to assist and prepare budgets.

Special attention must be given to the supporting schedules in the prescribed A1 schedule. Where detailed data is lying in a sub-system e.g. human resource data for SA22 to SA24, this data must be pulled from the sub-system into the applicable supporting sheet.

Download Version 6.2 of Schedule A1 by clicking HERE

The Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, formats and associated guides are available on National Treasury's website at:
http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/Pages/default.aspx

6.7 Assistance with the compilation of budgets

If municipalities require advice with the compilation of their respective budgets, specifically the budget documents or Schedule A1, they should direct their enquiries to their respective provincial treasuries or to the following National Treasury officials:

Province	Responsible NT officials	Tel. No.	Email
Eastern Cape	Bernard Mokgabodi Matjatji Mashoeshoe	012-315 5936 012-315 5553	Bernard.Mokgabodi@treasury.gov.za Matjatji.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za
Free State	Jordan Maja Cethekile Moshane	012-315 5663 012-315 5079	Jordan.Maja@treasury.gov.za Cethekile.moshane@treasury.gov.za
Gauteng	Kgomotso Baloyi Nomxolisi Mawulana	012-315 5866 012-315 5460	Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za Nomxolisi.Mawulana@treasury.gov.za
KwaZulu-Natal	Bernard Mokgabodi Johan Botha	012-315 5936 012-315 5171	Bernard.Mokgabodi@treasury.gov.za Johan.Botha@treasury.gov.za
Limpopo	Una Rautenbach Sifiso Mabaso	012-315 5700 012-315 5952	Una.Rautenbach@treasury.gov.za Sifiso.Mabaso@treasury.gov.za
Mpumalanga	Willem Voigt Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5830 012-315 5807	Willem.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Northern Cape	Jordan Maja Anthony Moseki	012-315 5663 012-315 5174	Jordan.Maja@treasury.gov.za Anthony.Moseki@treasury.gov.za
North West	Sadesh Ramjathan Makgabo Mabotja	012-315 5101 012-315 5156	Sadesh.Ramjathan@treasury.gov.za Makgabo.Mabotja@treasury.gov.za
Western Cape	Vuyo Mbunge Kevin Bell Sibusiso Mahlangu	012-315 5661 012-315 5725 012-395 6737	Vuyo.Mbunge@treasury.gov.za Kevin.Bell@treasury.gov.za Sibusiso.Mahlangu@treasury.gov.za
Technical issues with Excel formats	Elsabe Rossouw	012-315 5534	lgdataqueries@treasury.gov.za

National Treasury, together with the provincial treasuries, will undertake a compliance check and, where municipalities have not provided complete budget information, the municipal budgets will be returned to the mayors and municipal managers of the affected municipalities for the necessary corrections. Municipal managers are reminded that the annual budget must be accompanied by a quality certificate and council resolution in accordance with the format specified in item 31 of Schedule A of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations.

The National Treasury would like to emphasise that where municipalities have not adhered to the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, ***they will be required to go back to the municipal council and table a complete budget document aligned to the requirement of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations. In addition, where municipalities have adopted an unfunded budget, they will be required to correct the budget to ensure it adopt and implement a funded budget. However, where there are challenges the process indicated in paragraph 6.1 above will be applied.***

Municipalities with municipal entities are once again reminded to prepare consolidated budgets and in-year monitoring reports for both the parent municipality and its entity or entities. The following must be compiled:

- An annual budget, adjustments budget and monthly financial reports for the parent municipality in the relevant formats;
- An annual budget, adjustments budget and monthly financial reports for the entity in the relevant formats; and
- A consolidated annual budget, adjustments budget and monthly financial reports for the parent municipality and all its municipal entities in the relevant formats.

> The A Schedule that the municipality submits to National Treasury must be a consolidated budget for the municipality (plus entities) and the budget of the parent municipality. D schedules must be submitted for each entity.

7. Budget process and submissions for the 2018/19 MTREF

7.1 Submitting budget documentation and schedules for 2018/19 MTREF

To facilitate oversight of compliance with the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, accounting officers are reminded that:

- Section 22(b)(i) of the MFMA requires that, ***immediately*** after an annual budget is tabled in a municipal council, it must be submitted to the National Treasury and the relevant provincial treasury in both printed and electronic formats. If the annual budget is tabled to council on 29 March 2018, the final date of submission of the electronic budget documents and corresponding electronic returns is **Tuesday, 03 April 2018**. The deadline for submission of hard copies including council resolution is **Friday, 06 April 2018**.
- Section 24(3) of the MFMA, read together with regulation 20(1), requires that the approved annual budget must be submitted to both National Treasury and the relevant provincial treasury ***within ten working days*** after the council has approved the annual budget. If the council only approves the annual budget on 30 June 2018, the final date for such a submission is **Friday, 13 July 2018**, otherwise an earlier date applies.

The municipal manager must submit:

- the budget documentation as set out in Schedule A (version 6.2) of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, including the main Tables (A1 - A10) and ALL the supporting tables (SA1 – SA38) in both printed and electronic formats;
- the draft service delivery and budget implementation plan in both printed and electronic format;
- the draft integrated development plan;
- the council resolution;
- signed Quality Certificate as prescribed in the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations; and

- schedules D specific for the entities.

Municipalities are required to send electronic versions of documents and the A1 schedule to lgdocuments@treasury.gov.za. Any problems experienced in this regard can be addressed with Elsabe Rossouw at Elsabe.Rossouw@treasury.gov.za. Budget related documents and schedules may also be uploaded using the LG Upload Portal at

https://portals.treasury.gov.za/sites/LGUploadPortal/SitePages/Home.aspx

Municipalities are required to send printed submissions of their budget documents and council resolution to:

For couriered documents	***For posted documents***
Ms Linda Kruger	Ms Linda Kruger
National Treasury	National Treasury
40 Church Square	Private Bag X115
Pretoria, 0002	Pretoria, 0001

In addition to the above-mentioned budget documentation, metropolitan municipalities must submit the draft Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP) tabled in council by 31 March 2018 to Yasmin.coovadia@treasury.gov.za. If the BEPP documents are too large to be sent via email (exceeds 4MB) please submit to yasmin.coovadia@gmail.com or send to Yasmin Coovadia via Dropbox; any problems experienced in this regard can be addressed with Yasmin.Coovadia@treasury.gov.za. Hard copies of the BEPP may be sent to Yasmin Coovadia, National Treasury, 3rd floor 40 Church Square, Pretoria, 0002 or Private Bag X115, Pretoria, 0001.

7.2 Budget reform returns to the Local Government Database for publication

Municipalities are required to continue to use the Budget Reform Returns to upload budget and monthly expenditure to the National Treasury Local Government Database for publication purposes. All returns are to be sent to lgdatabase@treasury.gov.za. Municipalities must submit returns for both the draft budget and the final adopted budget as this will assist the National and provincial treasuries with the annual benchmark process. The current electronic returns may be downloaded from National Treasury's website at the following link: http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/Return_Forms/Pages/default.aspx.

The tabled and adopted budget data strings submitted to the Local Government Database and Reporting system should also be consolidated figures.

7.3 In-year reporting

The impact of mSCOA on in-year reporting

Municipalities must submit the *m*SCOA compliant data strings to the LG Upload Portal. National Treasury will continue with parallel reporting using the old format (return forms) and the *m*SCOA data strings until it is satisfied that all municipalities are *m*SCOA compliant and reporting adequately to support all publications. Therefore, the data submitted using both reporting methods must reconcile. National and Provincial treasuries together with the municipalities will conduct monthly verification of the data strings, Schedules C and the return forms to ensure that corrections are effected. All corrections must be done by **28 February 2018** in line with the amendments to the adjustments.

Supporting documents to be submitted with Section 71 monthly reports

Municipalities were advised in MFMA Circular No. 67 that they must provide the following additional information and supporting documentation to the National Treasury as part of the submission of the Section 71 input forms:

- An extract of the trial balances from the general ledger;
- Copies of the actual monthly bank statements (reflecting the opening and closing bank balances) for the primary bank account;
- Bank reconciliation for the reporting period in the primary bank account; and
- Copies of the quarterly tabled section 71 documents in the prescribed Schedule C format including the applicable council resolution.

Most municipalities have not followed the guideline; therefore, municipalities are reminded that this request is still applicable and that the information must be submitted with the monthly Section 71 reports. The information is meant to assist in improving the quality of the quarterly published local government performance information.

Monthly reporting of debtors and creditors

National Treasury has observed through in-year monitoring that most municipalities are overstating debtors as they report on gross debtors instead of net. The format of the monthly debtors return form (Age Analysis of Debtors) provides for a column to disclose provision for impairment as per council policy. Therefore municipalities are urged to always reflect the provision for impairment in the column as indicated above for National Treasury to be able to reconcile the net debtors.

It was also observed that most municipalities are understating outstanding creditors. There is a major difference in the amounts reported through in-year reporting and those disclosed in the annual financial statements. It is assumed that amounts are not disclosed for all sundry payments and contractual commitments. Municipalities are urged to reconcile creditors on a monthly basis to increase the quality of reporting and for effective cash flow management.

7.4 Budget verification process

Annually during the budget verification process it is noted that municipalities have challenges to align the audited years, which results in amendments to the Schedule A. Municipalities must ensure that the audited figures and adjusted budget figures captured on the Schedule A aligns to the annual financial statements and Schedule B respectively.

7.5 Publication of budgets on municipal websites

In terms of section 75 of the MFMA, all municipalities are required to publish their tabled budgets, adopted budgets, annual reports (containing audited annual financial statements) and other relevant information on the municipality's website. This will aid in promoting public accountability and good governance.

All relevant documents mentioned in this circular are available on the National Treasury website, http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/Pages/Default.aspx. Municipalities are encouraged to visit it regularly as documents are regularly added / updated on the website.

Contact

national treasury
Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Post	Private Bag X115, Pretoria 0001
Phone	012 315 5009
Fax	012 395 6553
Website	http://www.treasury.gov.za/default.aspx

JH Hattingh
Chief Director: Local Government Budget Analysis
08 December 2017

Annexure A – Changes to *m*SCOA version 6.2

No.	Segment	Amendment
1	Region	Include ward / township breakdown as requested by municipalities
2	Region	Retired decommissioned municipalities due to demarcation
3	Region	Updated name changes due to demarcation and gazette notifications received
4	Item Revenue: Licences or permits	Added item for revenue from Atmospheric Emission Licence Fees
5	Item Expenditure: Depreciation	Added breakdown of asset classification to align to the CIDMS classification and SA34d
6	Item Expenditure: Remuneration of councillors	Added remuneration of Section 79 chairperson as this needs to be reported separately
7	Item Expenditure: Contracted services	Added line item for outsourced printing services
8	Item Expenditure: Operational cost: Licences	Added line item for liquor licence (entities)
9	Item Expenditure	Added “Transfer to Accumulated Surplus” account
10	Item Expenditure	Added “Capitalisation” accounts to capitalise materials, plant and vehicle costs
11	Item Assets: Investments	Report at institution level and breakdown detail for own purposes.
12	Item Assets: Current Accounts: Control, Clearing and Interface Accounts	Added line item for mistakes made by bank (over/ under banking, unidentified deductions from bank account)
13	Item: Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets	Removed all “Closing Balance” accounts
14	Item Assets and Liabilities	Added “Opening Balance” accounts, detail to be carried in the sub-system
15	Function	Expanded definition descriptions to guide municipalities on the difference between core and non-core functions
16	Fund	Added breakdown of grants, transfers and subsidies as requested by municipalities
17	Fund	Aligned Fund, Item Liabilities, Item Expenditure and Item Revenue segments
18	Project	Changed breakdown allowed to “Yes” for 8 items that indicated “breakdown required but principle N/A”.