



Municipal Budget Circular for the 2020/21 MTREF

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY AND INFLATION TARGETS.....	2
3. KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR THE 2020/21 BUDGET PROCESS	3
3.1 DIVISION OF REVENUE OUTLOOK	3
3.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONDITIONAL GRANTS AND ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS	3
3.3 CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATIONS.....	4
3.4 ADDRESSING UNFUNDED BUDGETS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT	5
3.5 MUNICIPAL STANDARD CHART OF ACCOUNTS (MSCOA)	5
3.2.1 Release of Version 6.4 of the Chart	5
3.2.2 Budgeting, transacting and reporting in an mSCOA environment.....	5
3.2.3 Changing of the Core Financial System	6
3.2.4 Submission of Borrowing Monitoring and Investment Monitoring Data Strings	7
3.2.5 Cash Flow Reconciliation	7
4. THE REVENUE BUDGET	7
4.1 MAXIMISING THE REVENUE GENERATION OF THE MUNICIPAL REVENUE BASE.....	8
4.2 SETTING COST REFLECTIVE TARIFFS	8
4.3 BULK ELECTRICITY TARIFFS.....	10
4.4 LEVYING OF SURCHARGES	10
5. FUNDING CHOICES AND BUDGETING ISSUES	11
5.1 EMPLOYEE RELATED COSTS	12
5.2 REMUNERATION OF COUNCILORS	12
5.3 BUDGETING FOR WATER UNDER INVENTORY.....	12
5.4 BUDGETING FOR DEBT IMPAIRMENT IN MSCOA	13
6. CONDITIONAL GRANT TRANSFERS TO MUNICIPALITIES.....	13
6.1 NON-COMPLIANCE OF IN YEAR MONITORING	13
6.2 STOPPING AND REALLOCATION IN TERMS OF THE DIVISION OF REVENUE ACT	13
6.3 INVOICE VERIFICATION AGAINST CONDITIONAL GRANT EXPENDITURE/ COST REIMBURSEMENT.....	14
7. PREPARATION OF MUNICIPAL BUDGETS FOR 2020/21 MTREF.....	15
7.1 SCHEDULE A1 VERSION TO BE USED FOR THE 2020/21 MTREF	15
7.2 ASSISTANCE WITH THE COMPILATION OF BUDGETS	16
7.3 VERIFICATION PROCESS AND PERIOD OF 2020/21 MTREF BUDGETS	17
8. BUDGET PROCESS AND SUBMISSIONS FOR THE 2020/21 MTREF	18
8.1 SUBMITTING BUDGET DOCUMENTATION AND SCHEDULES FOR 2020/21 MTREF	18
8.2 EXPECTED SUBMISSIONS FOR 2020/21 MTREF	18
8.3 RETIREMENT OF THE BUDGET REFORM RETURNS (APPENDIX B).....	19
8.4 PUBLICATIONS FROM THE MSCOA CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK.....	19
8.5 PUBLICATION OF BUDGETS ON MUNICIPAL WEBSITES	20
ANNEXURE A – CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION.....	22
Funding segment	22
ANNEXURE B – AMENDMENTS TO THE A1 SCHEDULE TO CATER FOR WATER UNDER INVENTORY IN LINE WITH GRAP 12.....	26
ANNEXURE C – PROCESS MAP FOR INVOICE VERIFICATION/COST REIMBURSEMENT.....	28

1. Introduction

The purpose of the annual budget circular is to guide municipalities with their compilation of the 2020/21 Medium Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework (MTREF). This circular is linked to the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR); and strives to support the budget preparation processes of municipalities so that the minimum requirements of the MBRR promulgated in 2009 are achieved.

In 2010, the National Treasury introduced the local government budget and financial reform agenda. Since then several projects to further this agenda have been introduced. The recent implementation of the municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (*mSCOA*) 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 the annual budget preparation in accordance with the budget and financial reform agenda and the associated “game changers”.

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

2. The South African economy and inflation targets

In the 2019 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) tabled by the Minister of Finance on 30 October 2019, he stated that, he is tabling the 2019 MTBPS in a difficult global and domestic environment. The global growth forecast for 2019 is the lowest since the 2008 financial crisis, weighed down by mounting trade tensions and political uncertainty. Economic activity in two engines of the world economy, namely China and India, is also slowing this year. Policy makers have taken a number of steps to support growth, but there is a risk that these measures will create new vulnerabilities, as interest rates in advanced economies decline. About a quarter of government bonds in these countries have negative yields.

In South Africa, economic growth has continued to stagnate and weaknesses in the world economy are likely to amplify our own challenges. The discussion paper termed the Economic transformation, inclusive growth, and competitiveness released by the National Treasury has proposed a number of economic reforms that might boost GDP growth over the medium and longer term, and support increased investment and job creation. These measures have been broadly agreed on within government. The next step is to implement the reforms urgently. Nevertheless, the economy has continued to weaken with the economic growth projected to grow at 1.2 per cent in the 2020/21 financial year, while long term estimates have fallen prompting government to review its outer year’s estimates.

In addition to low growth, South Africa’s biggest economic risk is Eskom. Ongoing problems with the utility’s operations continue to disrupt the supply of electricity to households and businesses. Government has allocated significant resources to assist Eskom. With the immediate financial restraints lifted, the focus must be on operational problems and restructuring Eskom into three separate entities. Doing so will mark the beginning of a transition to a competitive, transparent and financially viable electricity sector.

South Africa’s public finances deteriorated over the past decade; a trend that accelerated in recent years as low growth led to large revenue shortfalls. For 10 years, the country has run large budget deficits. This has put us deeply in debt, to the point where interest payments have begun crowding out social and economic spending programmes. This cannot be sustained.

Government proposed a range of expenditure reductions to restore the public finances to a sustainable position, some of which are likely to be painful. We owe it to future generations to ensure that we are good stewards of our country's resources and that they do not have to pay for faults in our decision-making.

The following macro-economic forecasts must be considered when preparing the 2020/21 MTREF municipal budgets.

Table 1: Macroeconomic performance and projections, 2018 - 2022

Fiscal year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Actual	Estimate	Forecast		
CPI Inflation	4.7%	4.3%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%

Source: Medium Term Budget Policy Statement 2019.

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.

3. Key focus areas for the 2020/21 budget process

3.1 Division of Revenue outlook

Municipal governments face multiple pressures over the period ahead with local government expected to expand access to free basic service to poor households, while ensuring that those who can afford to pay for services do so.

The 2020 MTEF includes large reductions in planned transfers to municipalities. The implication of these reductions is that municipalities will be required to reprioritise projects. Larger reductions in grants are mainly affecting urban municipalities which have the capacity to offset the effects of these cuts from their own revenue investments.

A notable revision is that of the Public Transport Network Grant (PTNG) which has funded 13 cities over the past decade, yet only six have launched operations. In the 2020 MTEF, the grant will be allocated only to 10 cities and these cities will be required to reduce their costs and to demonstrate their effectiveness to receive PTNG funding.

3.2 Local government conditional grants and additional allocations

The proposed division of revenue is still biased towards prioritising funding services for poor communities. Allocations to local government subsidise the cost of delivering free basic services to the less fortunate and the poorest of the poor households, and the infrastructure needed to deliver those services, as well as the maintenance of the infrastructure to ensure the sustainable delivery of these services.

The 2019 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) projects transfers for local government for the 2020 MTREF at 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 8.6 per cent of non-interest expenditure and a slight decrease from the 8.9 per cent realised in the 2018 budget.

The equitable share and the allocation of the general fuel levy to local government constitutes 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 2020 after the budget speech by the Minister of Finance. The grant allocations will be specified in this Bill and municipalities must reconcile their budgets to the numbers published therein.

Municipalities are advised to use the indicative numbers presented in the 2019 Division of Revenue Act to compile their 2020/21 MTREF. In terms of the outer year allocations (2021/22 financial year), it is proposed that municipalities conservatively limit funding allocations to the indicative numbers as proposed in the 2019 Division of Revenue Act for 2021/22. The DoRA is available at <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2019/default.aspx>

3.3 Changes to the structure of local government allocations

The local government equitable share formula has been updated to account for projected household growth, inflation and estimated increases in bulk water and electricity costs over the MTEF period.

Large urban municipalities continue to underinvest in infrastructure, primarily because of poor programme and project preparation practices, leading to long delays, higher costs and breakdowns in service delivery. While public and private capital funding is available, these weaknesses translate into low levels of effective demand from the municipalities.

To address these problems, from 2020/21 government will introduce dedicated grant funding for large urban municipalities. Eligible municipalities will receive co-financing on a declining basis over three years. Financing will be conditional on establishing a municipal project preparation fund and an infrastructure delivery management system, and achieving targets for programmes and projects under preparation. Funding for this new facility will be reprioritised from existing allocations to municipalities.

Government is also working with municipalities to increase their revenue raising potential. The Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Amendment Bill, which will be tabled shortly, will standardise the regulation of development charges. Development charges are the mechanism by which municipalities recover the capital costs of connecting new developments to infrastructure for water, roads, electricity and other services. Currently, these charges are frequently below cost, so municipalities effectively subsidise the provision of infrastructure to businesses and other developments, reducing their ability to subsidise infrastructure directly for lower-income residents.

The change could increase municipal revenues for capital spending by an estimated R20 billion a year. Several efforts are also under way to improve the effectiveness of transfers to rural municipalities. The possibility of using municipal infrastructure grant funds to buy waste management vehicles, which must be purchased through a contract facilitated by the National Treasury to minimise costs, is being investigated to expand services in rural areas. Funds may be reprioritised between water and sanitation grants to accelerate the completion of regional bulk water schemes.

The Department of Energy will complete an electrification master plan to guide the future allocation of funds between the Eskom, municipal, and non-grid components of the Integrated National Electrification Programme. The Department of Transport will establish a national database for all road traffic and condition data to inform the prioritisation and monitoring of road maintenance across all roads.

3.4 Addressing unfunded budgets in local government

A revised strategy to address municipal financial performance failures has been endorsed by the Budget Council and Budget Forum (the respective intergovernmental forums for provincial and local government finances). This strategy is based on an analysis of performance failures in governance, financial management, institutional capabilities and service delivery. As part of this strategy, municipalities must ensure that their budgets are adequately funded.

The number of councils adopting unfunded budgets, where realistically anticipated revenue is insufficient to cover planned spending sustainably, increased from 74 in 2016/17 to 126 in 2019/20. The National Treasury, alongside provincial treasuries, has provided extensive advice and support to ensure that municipalities plan affordable expenditure and collect all the revenue owed to them. All municipalities are able to table a funded budget. This is easier for transfer-dependent municipalities as they have more predictable revenue and can plan their spending accordingly.

The 126 municipalities with unfunded budgets were required to table special adjustments budgets to align their spending plans with projected revenues and ensure they have plans in place to pay their creditors (including Eskom and the water boards). Those municipalities that did not table funded adjustments budgets by 15 November 2019 had their December 2019 tranche of the local government equitable share withheld as the MFMA requires that a municipality must table a funded budget.

Municipalities who are finding it difficult to table funded and sustainable budgets should contact National or their respective provincial treasury for assistance to reprioritise their budgets.

3.5 Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts (*mSCOA*)

3.2.1 Release of Version 6.4 of the Chart

On an annual basis, the *mSCOA* chart is reviewed to address implementation challenges and correct chart related errors. Towards this end, Version 6.4 is released with this circular (see Annexure A). Version 6.4 of the chart will be effective from 2020/21 and must be used to compile the 2020/21 MTREF and is available on the link below:

<http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/MunicipalRegulationsOnAStandardChartOfAccountsFinal/Pages/default.aspx>

3.2.2 Budgeting, transacting and reporting in an *mSCOA* environment

The *mSCOA* Regulations¹ prescribes the uniform recording and classification of municipal budget and financial information at a transaction level. All municipalities and municipal entities had to comply with the Regulations by 01 July 2017.

This standard classification framework enforces the link between planning (IDP) and the budget through the project segment and enables annual reporting and performance management linked to strategic service delivery objectives.

By now, all municipalities should:

- Have acquired, upgraded and maintain the hardware, software and licences required to be and remain *mSCOA* compliant;

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.

- Budget, transact and report on all six (6) legislated *m*SCOA segments and directly on the core financial system and submit the required data strings directly from this system to the Local Government Portal;
- Lock down the budget adopted by Council on the core municipal financial system before submitting the budget (ORGB) data string to the local government portal;
- Closed the core financial system at month-end as required in terms of the MFMA before submitting the monthly data string to the local government portal; and
- Generate regulated Schedules (A, B, C) directly from the core municipal financial systems.

If your municipality has not achieved the above level of implementation as yet, then the implementation of *m*SCOA in your municipality should be accelerated. Towards this end:

- A road map must be provided to the National and respective provincial treasury to indicate how the municipality will become *m*SCOA compliant;
- The municipality's *m*SCOA Project Steering Committee (chaired by the Accounting Officer) must meet at least monthly (if not more often) to track the progress against the road map and take corrective action where required;
- The National Treasury (in the case of non-delegated municipalities) and respective provincial treasury (in the case of delegated municipalities) should be invited to the *m*SCOA Project Steering Committee meeting; and
- Progress against the road map should be presented at the Mid-Year Budget and Performance and Budget Benchmark engagements.

3.2.3 Changing of the Core Financial System

Municipalities are reminded to follow the required due diligence processes in terms of MFMA Circulars No. 80 and 93 and *m*SCOA Circulars No. 5 and 6 when they procure a core financial system.

In addition, if a municipality enters into a contract with a system vendor for the maintenance of the procured system that will impose financial obligations on the municipality beyond the three years covered in the MTREF budget, then the provisions of Section 33 of the MFMA should be adhered to.

Service level agreements (SLA) with system vendors must also be managed properly. Penalties, including the termination of the SLA in cases of persistent non-compliance, should be imposed if the agreed upon milestones are not met by the system vendor. Likewise, if a system vendor has delivered on the services agreed upon in the SLA, then the municipality should pay all money owing to the system vendor within 30 days of receiving the relevant invoice or statement, as per the requirements of Section 65(2)(e) of the MFMA.

The National Treasury will conduct independent audits on all municipal core financial systems in 2020 to determine to what extent these systems comply with the functionality requirements and 15 business processes required in terms of *m*SCOA. These results will also inform the new transversal tender for the procurement of municipal financial and internal control systems in 2021. Until these audits have been concluded and the results have been released, municipalities should exercise caution when changing their financial system to avoid purchasing a system that do not comply with the necessary *m*SCOA functionality requirements.

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 MFMA Circulars No. 80 and 93, *m*SCOA Circulars No. 5 and 6 and Section 33 of the MFMA when they procure a core financial system and/or enter into an SLA with a

system vendor. The reports on these matters of internal audit must be tabled to the audit committee and at municipal council for consideration.

3.2.4 Submission of Borrowing Monitoring and Investment Monitoring Data Strings

Chapter 3 of the *mSCOA* Regulations provides that the Minister of Finance may determine minimum business processes and system requirements through issuing a gazette. MFMA Circular No. 80 provided guidance on these requirements for all categories of municipality (A, B and C). The Request for Proposal (RFP) issued on 4 March 2016 for the appointment of service providers for an integrated financial management and internal control system for local government (RT25-2016 published in Tender Bulletin No. 2906), provided further guidance on the requirements applicable to a specific category of municipality.

It should be noted that National Treasury will expand the requirements applicable to categories B and C municipalities in 2020 to include business processes and system functionality relating to investment, borrowing or performance management. The expanded requirements will provide the basis for the new transversal contract for the appointment of service providers for an integrated financial management and internal control system for local government that might be issued in 2021, as well as the minimum business and system requirements that will be gazetted at a future date, as envisaged in the Regulation.

In the interim, categories B and C municipalities that have not procured investment, borrowing or performance management modules, will have to prepare and submit their quarterly Investment Monitoring and Borrowing Monitoring data strings to the Local Government Portal manually.

3.2.5 Cash Flow Reconciliation

The cash flow information presented on Table A7 of Budget Schedule A and Table B7 of Adjustments Budget Schedule B did not reconcile to the corresponding data strings for the past two financial years. One of the contributing factors to this was that there were errors in the linkages in the segment item: asset and liabilities on the Local Government Database. National Treasury has now corrected these linkages in the segment item: asset and liabilities.

It was further noticed that a number of municipalities do not use the movement accounts correctly in the *mSCOA* chart which distorts the figures reported in the cash flow tables. Guidance on the use of movement accounts is provided in **Annexure A**.

4. 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 2020/21** 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.

4.1 Maximising the revenue generation of the municipal revenue base

Reference is made to MFMA Circular No. 93, item 3.1. The emphasis is on municipalities to comply with Section 18 of the MFMA and ensure that they fund their 2020/21 MTREF budgets from realistically anticipated revenues to be collected. Municipalities are cautioned against assuming collection rates that are unrealistic and unattainable as this has been identified as a fundamental reason for municipalities not attaining their desired collection rates.

It is therefore essential that municipalities pay attention to reconciling the valuation roll data to that of the billing system to ensure that revenue anticipated from property rates are accurate. Municipalities are encouraged to undertake this exercise as a routine practice. The list of exceptions derived from this reconciliation will provide an indication of where the municipality may be compromising its revenue generation in respect of property rates. A further test would be to reconcile this with the deeds office registry. In accordance with the MFMA Circular No. 93, municipalities are once more requested to submit the required information to the National Treasury by no later than 7 February 2020.

The above information must be submitted on a CD or USB to the National Treasury, for attention:

For couriered documents
Ms Linda Kruger
National Treasury
40 Church Square
Pretoria, 0002

For posted documents
Ms Linda Kruger
National Treasury
Private Bag X115
Pretoria, 0001

4.2 Setting cost reflective tariffs

Cost reflective tariff setting is a requirement of Section 74(2) of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000) which states that tariffs must "*reflect the costs reasonably associated with rendering the service*". This is meant to assist municipalities to generate sufficient revenue to fully recover their costs, deliver services to customers sustainably and invest in infrastructure that promotes local economic development.

The starting point for sound tariff setting is a credible budget. A credible budget is one that ensures the funding of all approved items and is anchored in sound, timely and reliable information on expenditure and service delivery (FFC, 2011). Credible budgets are critical for local government to fulfil its mandate to sustainably provide services. **If the budget is not credible then tariffs will not result in financial sustainability even if they are set using a sound methodology.**

A credible expenditure budget reflects the costs necessary to provide a service efficiently and effectively:

- An *effective* budget is one that is adequate to deliver a service of the necessary quality on a sustainable basis.
- An *efficient* budget is one that delivers services at the lowest possible cost.

In many cases, municipal budgets have costs that are bloated in some areas (high governance and administration costs are one commonly cited example) but inadequate in other areas (inadequate allowance for maintenance is an example). This means that a budget may be both ineffective and inefficient. Before embarking on the tariff setting process, a municipality must assess its budget to determine its efficiency and effectiveness. Ideally, a budget should be zero-based, at least periodically. This would typically require an assessment of what infrastructure is in place and what is needed to operate and maintain this infrastructure.

There are several tools and methodologies to support municipalities in setting tariffs. The common observation is that these tools and methodologies are not aligned. This creates confusion on the approach to be applied. Research has further identified that many municipalities set tariffs through an incremental method and not a scientific method. As a result, many municipalities do not recover the cost of providing that service.

Against this background an exercise was undertaken to bring certainty when setting tariffs. A tool and guide has been developed by National Treasury for this purpose and caters for all categories of municipalities. It also assists those municipalities that lack credible data which is the corner stone for setting a proper tariff. The emphasis is on setting tariffs for the four trading services namely water, sanitation, electricity and solid waste. The methodology follows an approach to tariff setting consistent with existing methodologies developed by SALGA, the NERSA Cost of Supply Framework for electricity, and the DWS Norms and Standards for water services.

The National Treasury Municipal Costing Guide is available on the link below on the National Treasury website.

<http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/Guidelines/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fGuidelines%2fDocuments%2fMunicipal%20Costing%20Guide&FolderCTID=0x0120004720FD2D0551AE409361D6CB3E122A08>

Setting cost reflective tariffs is the start to improved budgeting and financial sustainability.

How will reducing Non-Revenue Water and Non-Revenue Electricity bring down the tariffs required?

Many municipalities have very high levels of Non-Revenue Water (NRW), and some also have high levels of Non-Revenue Electricity (NRE). NRW and NRE can be broken down into 'technical' and 'non-technical' losses*.

Technical losses are related to physical losses out of the system. In the case of water, this is

due to pipe bursts and leakages or due to overflows on storage tanks. In the case of electricity, these are due to resistive losses and other similar effects. The cost of real losses sits in the bulk portion of the bulk purchases cost or if a municipality is performing the bulk water function internally, a portion of the costs associated with bulk water treatment and supply. If a municipality reduces its real losses, it will lose less water and electricity from the system and the cost of purchasing water and electricity or treating bulk water will be reduced.

Non-technical losses refer to losses due to theft or to metering inaccuracies. In these cases, there is no physical loss of water or electricity: someone is using the water or electricity and simply not paying for it. Reducing non-technical losses will have no effect on the cost of supplying a service but it will have an effect on the volumes sold. Since the tariff is calculated as the revenue required divided by the volume sold, increasing the volume sold will reduce the tariff required.

Reducing technical losses will thus reduce the tariffs required because the cost of supplying the service will be reduced. Reducing non-technical losses will reduce the tariffs required because the volumes sold will be increased.

Note that the International Water Association (IWA) uses the term 'real losses' and not technical losses, and 'apparent losses' in place of 'non-technical losses'.

4.3 Bulk electricity tariffs

Final electricity bulk price increases for 2020/21 are uncertain at this stage. Although the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) has approved a Multi-Year Price Determination (MYPD) for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022, Eskom has submitted an urgent application to the courts to revise the bulk tariffs allowed under the MYPD. In their most recent MYPD decision, NERSA allowed for tariff increases of 9.41 per cent in 2019/20, 8.1 per cent in 2020/21 and 5.22 per cent in 2021/22 (for national financial years). However, Eskom disagrees with the way NERSA accounted for the R23 billion per year in fiscal support from government in determining Eskom's allowable revenue for this MYPD period. Eskom has requested that the court to allow revised tariff increases of between 16.6 and 16.72 per cent in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The application has been made on an urgent basis, and a decision could be handed down as soon as early in February 2020.

The difference between municipal and national financial years means that in 2020/21, bulk tariff increases for municipalities will be slightly lower than the figures cited above for increases applicable in the national financial year. NERSA has not yet published guidance on the exact tariffs for the 2020/21 municipal financial year. National Treasury's advice to municipalities is to prepare scenarios for electricity bulk price increases in 2020/21 of between about 7 per cent and 15 per cent (to account for the difference in financial years and the potential outcomes of the court case).

Municipalities should also note that if a court decision is made in February 2020 to allow a higher bulk electricity tariff increase, the decision is likely to be too late for National Treasury to make any changes to the equitable share allocations which will be tabled in the Division of Revenue Bill on 19 February 2020.

4.4 Levying of surcharges

Municipal Surcharges are regulated through the Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act (MFPFA) and Local Government Municipal Systems Act (MSA). Section 8 of the MFPFA gives power to the Minister of Finance to prescribe compulsory national norms and standards for imposing "municipal surcharges". Municipal surcharges are defined as: "a charge in excess of the municipal base tariff that a municipality may impose on fees for a municipal service provided by or on behalf of a municipality, in terms of section 229(1)(a) of the Constitution;".

Section 75A of MSA empowers municipalities to “levy and recover fees, charges or tariffs in respect of any function or service of the municipality”. Municipalities must also adopt and implement a tariff policy on the levying of fees for municipal services in terms of section 74 of the Systems Act. The tariff policy should then guide the exercise of power given under section 75A. In section 74(2)(f) the Act provides that the tariff policy must reflect at least the following principles:

“provision may be made in appropriate circumstances for a surcharge on the tariff for a service;”.

Furthermore, Section 9 of the MFPFA requires a municipality to comply with processes in section 75A (2), (3) and (4) of the Systems Act in levying a surcharge.

In terms of the process, the Minister of Finance determines the norms and standards that municipalities must comply with in the exercise of their powers in terms of section 75A of the Systems Act. Approval for surcharges is done by the municipality in terms of section 75A of the Systems Act but subject to the norms and standards prescribed by the Minister of Finance in terms of the MFPFA.

The Minister of Finance has not yet prescribed the norms and standards (the power to prescribe is discretionary). The absence of norms and standards does not prevent municipalities from including surcharges in their tariffs as the power to impose a surcharge is given in the Municipal Systems Act. However, if a municipality decide to levy a surcharge, an approval is done by the municipal council in terms of section 75A of the Municipal Systems Act which gives power to municipalities to levy and recover fees, charges or tariffs in respect of any function or service of the municipality.

A surcharge is normally treated as part of the tariff. When a municipality determines a base tariff, it can include a surcharge (added as a separate variable). The municipal base tariff and a surcharge (if applicable) collectively becomes the tariff for a municipal service (such as electricity). The collective tariff must be approved by the municipal council and published for public comments in terms of section 75A of the Municipal Systems Act (MSA). It must also be subjected to the prescribed budget processes in terms of the MFMA.

In the case of electricity, NERSA only approves the base tariff. However, the final tariff that is published for public comments in terms of MSA and MFMA should include the surcharge if the municipality opted to levy it and is approved by the municipal council.

5. Funding choices and Budgeting 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 2020/21 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 per the Cost Containment Regulations that was issued on 07 June 2019;
- 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 promulgated on 30 May 2014.

5.1 Employee related costs

The *Salary and Wage Collective Agreement* for the period 01 July 2018 to 30 June 2021 is still in operation, therefore municipalities need to budget for their employee related costs in line with the multi-year wage agreement, and also ensure the agreement is correctly implemented and applied as per clauses of the agreement.

5.2 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 councillors 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 councillor(s) concerned.

5.3 Budgeting for water under inventory

GRAP 12, paragraph .07 defines inventory as follows:

“Inventories are assets:

- (a) in the form of materials or supplies to be consumed in the production process,*
- (b) in the form of materials or supplies to be consumed or distributed in the rendering of services,*
- (c) held for sale or distribution in the ordinary course of operations, or*
- (d) in the process of production for sale or distribution.”*

In terms of this definition water should be treated as inventory and should be budgeted and accounted for accordingly. Annexure B to MFMA Circular No. 70 (Municipal Budget Circular for the 2014/15 MTREF) included guidance on the treatment of non-revenue water and electricity. To date the National Treasury has allowed municipalities to either budget for bulk purchasing of water as a direct expense in the Statement of Financial Performance as an interim measure or to account for water under inventory.

Municipalities were cautioned in MFMA Circular No. 93 for the 2019/20 MTREF that the A1 Schedule for the 2020/21 MTREF will be amended in line with the prescripts of GRAP 12. The draft amendments to the A1 Schedule to cater for water under inventory in line with GRAP 12 is attached to the budget circular as **Annexure B**. The amendments are circulated for comments and will be implemented with effect from the 2021/22 MTREF.

In terms of the mSCOA definition **“Inventory consumed water”** water stock should be treated as follows:

Water stock must be accounted for as inventory. This will include water purchased and not yet sold at reporting date insofar as it is stored (controlled) in reservoirs and pipes at year end. Water stock also includes any water purification costs incurred for non-purchased water. Pre-purified, non-purchased water should not be capitalised as part of inventory. The cost of water purchased and not yet sold at reporting comprises the purchase price, import duties, and other taxes (other than those subsequently recoverable by the municipalities from the taxing

authorities, such as VAT) and transport, handling and other costs directly attributable to the acquisition of finished goods, materials and services. Importantly, trade discounts, rebates and other similar items are deducted in determining the costs of purchase.

Substantial changes to the A1 schedule were required to accommodate this approach to account for water under inventory.

5.4 Budgeting for debt impairment in mSCOA

Municipalities are incorrectly using the line item for bad debts written-off under the Item Expenditure segment when budgeting for debt impairment. It should be highlighted that bad debts written-off is not the same as debt impairment. Debt impairment is the provision that the municipality makes for non-payment while bad debt written-off is the irrecoverable debts written off during the financial year as approved by Council per type of service. Therefore, municipalities are advised to use impairment loss under the Item Gains and Losses segment for debt impairment. This provides a breakdown for the different categories that can be impaired, for example, trade and other receivables from exchange transactions: water.

6. Conditional Grant Transfers to Municipalities

6.1 Non-compliance of in year monitoring

In terms of Section 74(1) of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56. of 2003) (MFMA), municipalities must submit to the transferring officers, National and Provincial treasuries documents and monthly grant reports as may be prescribed or required. Furthermore, section 12(2) of the Division of Revenue Act, 2019 (Act No. 16 of 2019) (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. Reporting for conditional grants will also be extended in future to include the information from National Transferring Officers in the mSCOA format.

In terms of performance reporting on conditional grants, municipalities and Transferring Officers are urged to pay particular attention to the contents of money spent against conditional grants. Government is not realizing full value for money against the substantial investments it makes through grants. While financial reporting has become a routine matter on reporting, output/outcome based reporting has become important and it requires attention by all stakeholders. Workshops must be initiated across all government institutions to ensure value for money on conditional grants.

6.2 Stopping and reallocation in terms of the Division of Revenue Act

National Treasury as part of its in-year monitoring on conditional grants has through the Minister of Finance approved requests from the transferring officers to publish a gazette on stopping and reallocations between grants early in the beginning of the year, 2019/20. The gazette addresses shifting of allocations from underperforming local municipalities to their respective district municipalities, correction of errors against allocations made during the main budget and the conversion of allocations between schedules.

Integrated National Electrification Programme

The Department of Energy (DoE) is stopping and re-allocating funds from the Masilonyana Local Municipality (LM) to Lejweleputswa District Municipality (DM) under the Integrated National Electrification Programme (INEP 5B). The Masilonyana LM and the Lejweleputswa DM have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding wherein it was agreed that the district municipality will implement the electrification project on behalf of the local municipality with the assistance of the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) to verify the work done.

Conversion of allocations

According to Section 21(2)(a) of the 2019 DoRA, National Treasury may, after consultation with the relevant transferring officer, receiving officer and provincial treasury, convert any portion of an allocation listed in Part B of Schedule 5 to one listed in Part B of Schedule 6 if it is satisfied that the conversion shall prevent under-expenditure or improve the level of service delivery in respect of the allocation in question or convert any portion of an allocation listed in Part B of Schedule 6 to one listed in Part B of Schedule 5.

Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant

The Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme within the National Treasury is converting funds under the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG) due to anticipated underspending. The 2019/20 NDPG 5B allocations for West Rand DM and Emfuleni LM will be converted from Part B of Schedule 5 to Part B of Schedule 6.

The Municipal Emergency Housing Grant

An amount of R149.1 million is allocated to Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal municipalities after the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) declared a disaster in municipalities in these provinces. The allocation is done through the Municipal Emergency Housing Grant (MEHG) for the emergency relief to fund the temporary shelters following various disaster incidents namely fire and severe rain that caused damages and affected home owners. Funding for the MEHG remains unallocated in the Division of Revenue Act it only gets allocated upon disaster declaration.

Correction of errors in the Division of Revenue Act

According to Section 16(2) of the 2019 DoRA, for purposes of correcting an error or omission in an allocation or framework published, the National Treasury must on its initiative and after consultation with the relevant transferring officer by notice in the Gazette amend the affected allocation or framework.

The Magareng, Emthanjeni and Prince Albert local municipalities in the Northern Cape and Western Cape province respectively had their 2019/20 MIG erroneously allocated in the Section 16 gazette. The MIG allocation for the Prince Albert LM did not take into account the final sport allocation of R3.6 million which was allocated to the Magareng (R2 million) and the Emthanjeni (R1.6 million) local municipalities.

6.3 Invoice Verification against conditional grant expenditure/ Cost reimbursement

National Treasury has over the past two years introduced a system of monitoring all invoices that are paid by municipalities against the transferred conditional grants. The process involves a team of various stakeholders to be periodically placed in municipalities and facilitate verification on all issued invoices to check whether the work done is compliant to the conditional grant framework. This initiative was necessitated by the extent of unauthorized,

irregular and unrecognized expenditure that was being recorded by municipalities through the Auditor General's report. This process will also reduce and ultimately seek to eliminate the extent of misuse of conditional grant allocations.

A selected number of municipalities are earmarked on an annual basis to be supported through this process and transfers are only made to these municipalities once the team is satisfied after verification of the invoices has taken place. These processes assist against the transfer of funds for projects that are not ready for implementation, but at the same time recognizes municipalities that are spending well and incentivizes them for the good work.

Furthermore, in instances where a local municipality is unable to deliver the current year's projects, this process allows for the funds be rechanneled through their district municipalities as part of the District Development Model launched in November 2019. The District Development Model allows for government to allocate funding to the district for implementation on behalf of the local municipality until such time that capacity is built within the local municipality to implement projects on their own.

A process map for invoice verification/or cost reimbursement is attached as **Annexure C**.

7. Preparation of Municipal Budgets for 2020/21 MTREF

7.1 Schedule A1 version to be used for the 2020/21 MTREF

National Treasury has released Version 6.4 of the Schedule A1 (the Excel Formats) which is aligned to Version 6.4 of the *mSCOA* classification framework and must be used when compiling the 2020/21 MTREF budget. Refer to Annexure B for the changes to this version of the Schedule A1.

ALL municipalities **MUST** prepare their 2020/21 MTREF tabled and adopted budgets using the A1 schedule version 6.4.

It is imperative that all municipalities prepare their 2020/21 MTREF budgets **in their financial systems and that the Schedule A1 be produced directly from their financial system**. Vendors have demonstrated their budget modules to the National Treasury and provincial treasuries. All financial systems have this functionality to assist and prepare budgets and to generate the prescribed Schedule A1 directly from the financial system. Therefore, there is no reason why the 2020/21 MTREF budget must be done manually which has been found to create alignment problems.

Municipalities **must** start early enough to capture their tabled budget (and later the adopted budget) in the budget module provided and **must** ensure that they produce their Schedule A1 directly out of the budget module.

Ultimately the aim is to get to a point where all municipalities budget and transact directly in and report from their core financial system. This will result in one version of the '**truth**' where the financial performance reported to Council will not differ from the financial performance information submitted to and published by National and provincial treasuries. This will also reduce the reliance on consultants and system vendors to prepare municipal reports.

The National Treasury has indicated in MFMA Circular No. 93 that in future all A1 Schedules must be submitted in PDF format only. Some vendors have expressed concerns regarding the layout of some of the worksheets and the presentation thereof in PDF. Given the fact that the *mSCOA* classification framework makes it possible to generate the financial data required in the A1 schedule directly from the data strings and to promote the *mSCOA* approach for additional data needed and prescribed in the MBRR from sub-systems, the National Treasury will only accept a prescribed data string containing the supporting data, populated and

uploaded by each municipality (refer to the attachment to this MFMA Budget Circular No 98 on the website for the layout of the data string) from the **2020/21 MTREF**. The publication in the 2020/21 MTREF of non-financial data will be done using the supporting data uploaded from these data strings.

The National Treasury will no longer gather supporting data from the MBRR A1 Schedules, but will expect each municipality to submit the prescribed supporting data strings containing the required data using the LG Upload Portal.

The detail of supporting data strings is available as attachments to this circular.

Version 6.4 of Schedule A1 is available on the following link and is accompanied a comparison between mSCOA vs 6.3 and vs 6.4, highlighting changes made.

<http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/RegulationsandGazettes/MunicipalRegulationsOnAStandardChartOfAccountsFinal/Pages/default.aspx>

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>

7.2 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	Matjati Mashoeshoe	012-315 5553	Matjati.Mashoeshoe@treasury.gov.za
Buffalo City	Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5807	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Free State	Cethekile Moshane	012-315 5079	Cethekile.moshane@treasury.gov.za
Gauteng	Kgomotso Baloyi	012-315 5866	Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za
Johannesburg & Tshwane	Kevin Bell	012-315 5725	Kevin.Bell@treasury.gov.za
	Willem Voigt	012-315 5830	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za
KwaZulu-Natal	Kgomotso Baloyi	012-315 5866	Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za
eThekweni	Johan Botha	012-315 5171	Johan.Botha@treasury.gov.za
	Una Rautenbach	012-315 5700	Una.Rautenbach@treasury.gov.za
	Abigail Maila		Abigail.Maila@treasury.gov.za
Limpopo	Willem Voigt	012-315 5830	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za
	Sifiso Mabaso	012-315 5952	Sifiso.Mabaso@treasury.gov.za
Mpumalanga	Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5807	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
	Musa Mnguni	012 315 5072	Musa.Mnguni@treasury.gov.za
Northern Cape	Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5807	Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
	Phumelele Gulukunqu	012 315 5539	Phumelele.Gulukunqu@treasury.gov.za
North West	Willem Voigt	012-315 5830	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za
	Makgabo Mabotja	012-315 5156	Makgabo.Mabotja@treasury.gov.za
Cape Town	Kgomotso Baloyi	012-315 5866	Kgomotso.Baloyi@treasury.gov.za
George	Willem Voigt & Mandla Gilimani	012-315 5830 012-315 5807	WillemCordes.Voigt@treasury.gov.za Mandla.Gilimani@treasury.gov.za
Technical issues with Excel formats	Elsabe Rossouw	012-315 5534	lgdataqueries@treasury.gov.za

National and provincial treasuries, will undertake a completeness check on the data string submissions and will analyse the supporting data strings. Where municipalities have not provided complete supporting information, the municipality will be informed and will be required to make the necessary corrections and resubmit the data strings.

7.3 Verification process and period of 2020/21 MTREF budgets

As the mSCOA reporting requirements state that a budget must be locked into the financial system by latest 30 June before the start of the new municipal financial year, in the previous timeframes provided, there was no opportunity to evaluate the adopted budget to be funded and complete BEFORE the start of the municipal financial year. The traditional verification period from July to September can no longer be applied as the municipalities are already transacting against the adopted and locked budget. Amending an unfunded and incomplete budget in an adjusted budget is also not the solution as the National Treasury only considers an adjusted budget in the third and fourth quarter of the financial year for analysis and publication purposes.

The verification period of all municipal budget will therefore be brought forward to the period 31 May to 30 June. In this one-month period, the National and provincial treasuries will be required to evaluate all municipal budgets for completeness and for being fully funded. Any adjustment that need to be made must be done before the start of the municipal financial year on 1 July.

Municipal managers are reminded that the annual budget must be accompanied by a quality certificate and council resolution, as well as a budget locking certificate (in the case of adopted budgets) in accordance with the format specified in Regulation 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 requirements of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations and the Municipal Standard Chart of Accounts Regulations. In addition, where municipalities have adopted an unfunded budget, they will be required to correct the budget to ensure they adopt and implement a funded budget.***

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 budget and data strings that the municipality submits to National Treasury must be a consolidated budget for the municipality (including entities). The budget of each entity must be submitted on the D schedule.

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.

8. Budget process and submissions for the 2020/21 MTREF

8.1 Submitting budget documentation and schedules for 2020/21 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 electronic formats. If the annual budget is tabled to council on **31 March 2020**, the final date of submission of the electronic budget documents and corresponding mSCOA data strings is **Wednesday, 01 April 2020**.

Section 24(3) of the MFMA, read together with regulation 20(1) of the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, 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. E.g. if the council approves the annual budget on **29 May 2020**, given the new timeframe for the evaluation of the municipal budgets, the adopted budget data strings and documentation must be submitted by the latest **Monday, 1 June 2020**.

Municipalities are no longer expected to submit hard copies of budget related documents to National Treasury from the 2020/21 MTREF.

8.2 Expected submissions for 2020/21 MTREF

- The budget documentation as set out in the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations (MBRR). The budget document must include the main Tables (A1 - A10) and the supporting tables in the A1 schedule must be submitted in the prescribed mSCOA data string in the format indicated in an attachment as part of this circular.
- the draft and final service delivery and budget implementation plan in electronic PDF format;
- the draft and final integrated development plan;
- the council resolution for the tabled and adopted budgets;
- signed Quality Certificate as prescribed in the Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations for the tabled and adopted budgets;
- schedules D specific for the entities; and
- A budget locking certificate immediately at the start of the new municipal financial year on 1 July.

Budget related documents and schedules must be uploaded by approved registered users using the LG Upload Portal at: <https://lguploadportal.treasury.gov.za/>.

Please note that the LG Upload Portal does not have the same size restrictions previously encountered but requires all documents to:

- be in PDF format only; and
- each PDF file must NOT contain multiple document e.g. council resolution and quality certificate within the budget document. Each document type must be identified and uploaded separately.

Any problems experienced in this regard can be addressed with Elsabe Rossouw at Elsabe.Rossouw@treasury.gov.za.

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 2020 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. (Yasmin to confirm if she still needs hard copies.)

8.3 Retirement of the Budget reform returns (Appendix B)

Municipalities must conclude all reporting for 2018/19 up to restated audit outcomes on the Appendix B (old electronic returns) to lgdatabase@treasury.gov.za before we can retire the returns.

Ensure that each municipality also submit the pre-audit and audited data strings in the *mSCOA* classification framework as data strings and that the figures are aligned to the Appendix B returns. Pre-audit and audited outcomes will only be submitted in the *mSCOA* data strings prescribed from 2019/20 onwards.

8.4 Publications from the *mSCOA* classification framework

The 2019 MTREF and the preliminary Quarter 1 Section 71 results for the 2019/20 financial year that has recently been published, have exposed that the credibility of the *mSCOA* data strings is a concern. At the core of the problem is:

- The incorrect use of the *mSCOA* and municipal accounting practices by municipalities;
- A large number of municipalities are not budgeting, transacting and reporting directly in/from their core financial systems. Instead they prepare their budgets and reports on excel spreadsheet and then import the excel spreadsheets into the system. Often this manipulation of data leads to unauthorised, irregular, fruitful and wasteful (UIFW) expenditure and fraud and corruption as the controls that are built into the core financial systems are not triggered and transactions are processed that should not be processed; and
- Municipalities are not locking their adopted budgets and their financial systems at month-end to ensure prudent financial management. To enforce municipalities to lock their budgets and close their financial system at month-end in 2020/21, the Local Government Database and Reporting System will lock all submission periods within the reporting period at the end of each quarter. The published period will NOT be opened again to ensure consistency between publications. System vendors were also requested to build this functionality into their municipal financial systems.

To improve the credibility of these data string, National and provincial treasuries are analysing the accuracy of the data strings and the use of the six regulated segments. The National Treasury has developed tools to analyse the segment/chart use and trained budget analysts from both National and provincial treasuries on the use thereof.

The data strings are also verified against the Council adopted budget (A1 Schedule), adjustments budget (B Schedule) and monthly performance against the budget (C Schedule) to ensure that these figures reconcile.

Quality improving focus areas for the 2020/21 MTREF:

- Pay specific attention to the funding of the capital budget and expenditure. The total capital expenditure must balance with the total funding used. Currently the expenditure is much higher than the funding reported.
- Opening balances, especially for capital projects, will always be DEFAULT projects as it will remain a system activity governed by council decision. In the current publications, capital expenditure is highly overstated due to incorrect use of opening balances for capital projects and presents a very inflated view of the actual capital expenditure.
- The cash flow data supplied by municipalities is not credible. This is partly due to the different ways in which the vendors treat actual cash collected but also is a result of the National Treasury not giving clear guidance on the procedures and processes to follow to get credible cash flow figures. In this budget circular signals have been given as to the treatments the National Treasury wants all municipalities to follow to get credible figures from the *mSCOA* data strings. The National Treasury will implement these guidelines in March 2020 in time for the receipt of the 2020/21 MTREF budget data strings. It will affect the third and fourth quarter Section 71 publications of 2019/20 as well.
- It is imperative that vendors assist municipalities to populate SA30 / SC30 when submitting cash flow figures. The detail that is required to ring fence functions and to determine actual cash collections are in the mentioned MBRR supporting worksheets and not in A7 / C7 which is a summarised version. When transferring payments made from sub-system to the general ledger, please ensure that these transfers are done using the prescribed 6 segments at the detailed level prescribed in SA30 / SC30.
- Municipalities are not using the FUND, REGION and COSTING segment correctly. In many instances these segments are simply defaulted and hence the true power of the *mSCOA* classification framework cannot be demonstrated.
- The National Treasury is currently developing Municipal Money Phase II. The first step is to interactively show all capital projects municipalities have budgeted for and are reporting on monthly to all citizens. It has become apparent that many municipalities are not using the correct GPS coordinates when reporting on the capital projects. Many are simply using the GPS coordinates of the municipal building or using 0 coordinates. Special attention must be given to the correct location and the proper description of projects as citizens will now be able to drill down and follow what is happening in their own wards.

8.5 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.

Link to all previous circulars

[K:\CD - LGBA\Municipalities\20. Budget Regulations\04. Budget Circulars\2020 MTREF](#)

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
06 December 2019

Annexure A – Cash Flow Reconciliation

The following movement accounts should only be used for cash inflow and outflow transactions:

Item Assets:

- *Collections*: Collections received pertaining to a respective account (example is collection on receivables from non-exchange (property rates) and non-exchange (service charges electricity) transactions).
- *Acquisitions*: Purchases of assets and other expenditure.
- *Disposal*: Sale of non-current assets (example land).
- *Earned*: Interest earned on a bank account.

Item Liabilities:

- *Receipts*: Current year receipts on transfer and subsidies.
- *Advances*: Advances taken for the year, example for borrowing.
- *Repayments*: Repayments for the year, example for borrowing.
- *Payments*: Payments made; example defined benefits.
- *Withdrawals*: Payments made, examples are for bulk purchases for electricity and bulk purchases water.

Funding segment

Most municipalities are transacting incorrectly on the funding segment and accordingly overstate the cash balances available per function (example energy sources (electricity), water management (water treatment) etc. for the payment of services.

The “Funding” segment in the financial system identifies the various sources of funding available to municipalities for financing expenditure relating to the operation of the municipality for both capital and operational expenditure.

The intent with the Funding segment is to assist municipalities in the management of available funds to use in running the municipality (working capital), capital expanding, maintenance programmes and operational projects intended for the benefit of the community. **The underlying principle in recording of transactions in this segment is therefore cash based or funds available to utilise.**

The key question in finding the appropriate classification code for this segment is: “against which source of funding is the payment allocated and against which source is revenue received?”

The primary sources of funding for a municipality are property rates, service charges, equitable share and own revenue. Further to these sources of revenue a municipality also spend funds transferred from other sectors within government, namely transfers and subsidies such as appropriated by national and provincial government in terms of the Division of Revenue Act (DORA). A further source of funds available for utilisation is “cash backed reserves” as directed by the municipality’s financial policy on the utilisation of the reserves.

The projects as defined within the Project segment together with the “funding” and “Item” segments provide information on how funds have been spent and on what. The Funding segment’s structure distinguishes between “Operational, Capital and Non-Funding Transactions”.

Operational: Operational revenue provides for funds from all other sources of income such as taxes, service charges, commercial services, transfer and subsidies, etc.

Capital: Funds to finance capital projects.

Non-funding Transactions: This is items that does not relate to a cash transaction.

Examples of non-funding transactions are:

- Billing for services on consumer accounts issued;
- Recording of invoices;
- Depreciation; and
- Debt provision.

Example 1: A municipality has issued a consumer account (billing) to a client for electricity consumption amounting to R100 in Ward X.

The transaction will be recorded as follows:

Segment	Dt	Cr
Project	Default	Default
Function	Function: Energy Sources: Non-core Function: Electricity	Function: Energy Sources: Non-core Function: Electricity
Item	Assets: Current Assets: Trade and other Receivables from Exchange Transactions: Trading Service and Customer Service Debtors: Electricity: Monthly Billing	Revenue: Exchange Revenue: Service Charges: Electricity: Electricity Sales :Domestic Low: Conventional
Funding	Non funding transaction	Non funding transaction
Region	Ward X	Ward X
Costing	Default	Default
Amount	100	100

The monthly billing of a consumer does not relate to any cash inflow, the funding segment therefore a non-funding transaction.

Example 2: The client pays the municipality R100 on the consumer account received.

The transaction will be recorded as follows:

Segment	Dt	Cr
Project	Default	Default
Function	Function: Energy Sources: Non-core Function: Electricity	Function: Energy Sources: Non-core Function: Electricity
Item	Assets: Current Assets: Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash at Bank: Bank Account: Specify (replace with account description): Deposits	Assets: Current Assets: Trade and other Receivables from Exchange Transactions: Trading Service and Customer Service Debtors: Electricity: Collections
Funding	Fund: Operational: Revenue: General Revenue: Service Charges: Electricity	Fund: Operational: Revenue: General Revenue: Service Charges: Electricity
Region	Ward X	Ward X
Costing	Default	Default
Amount	100	100

The payment received will be recorded as a cash inflow against revenue service charges electricity for the function electricity. The electricity function will now have R100 funding (cash inflow) available for the payment of expenditure.

Example 3: The municipality receives an invoice from Eskom for the usage of electricity amounting to R50.

The transaction will be recorded as follows:

Segment	Dt	Cr
Project	Municipal Running Cost	Municipal Running Cost
Function	Electricity	Electricity
Item	Expenditure: Bulk Purchases: Electricity: ESKOM	Liabilities: Current Liabilities: Trade and Other Payable Exchange Transactions: Electricity Bulk Purchase: Deposits
Funding	Non funding transaction	Non funding transaction
Region	Mun	Mun
Costing	Default	Default
Amount	R50	R50

The recording of an invoice in the financial system does not relate to any cash outflow, no payment has been made, the funding segment therefore is a non-funding transaction.

Example 4: The municipality pay Eskom R50 on the invoice received.

The transaction will be recorded as follows:

Segment	Dt	Cr
Project	Default	Default
Function	Electricity	Electricity
Item	Liabilities: Current Liabilities: Trade and Other Payable Exchange Transactions: Electricity Bulk Purchase: Withdrawals	Assets: Current Assets: Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash at Bank: Bank Account: Specify (replace with account description):Withdrawals
Funding	Fund: Operational: Revenue: General Revenue: Service Charges: Electricity	Fund: Operational: Revenue: General Revenue: Service Charges: Electricity
Region	Mun	Mun
Costing	Default	Default
Amount	R50	R50

The payment made will be recorded as a cash outflow against revenue service charges electricity for the function electricity. The electricity function will now have a balance of R50 cash available (funding) which is the difference between the cash received of R100 from a consumer on electricity consumption (example 2) and the payment of R50 to Eskom for the usage of electricity (example 4).

The electricity function will have a net balance of R50 positive cash (funding) which reconcile to the net cash in the bank account of R50.

Annexure B – Amendments to the A1 Schedule to cater for water under inventory in line with GRAP 12

Substantial changes to the A1 schedule were required to accommodate the approach to account for water under inventory. The draft adjustment to the A1 Schedule (Excel version) is attached to this published circular with amendments highlighted in light orange. The Excel document has been populated for one financial year to demonstrate the accounting treatment of the proposed changes. These changes are not for implementation during the 2020/21 MTREF but are included in the circular for comments prior to final implementation during the 2021/22 MTREF. The main changes were to Table SA3 that required further changes to some other worksheets as indicated below.

Table SA3

Changes to this table included the addition of water and other inventory items to enable municipalities to fully budget for the acquisition, issuing, adjustment, write-off, transfer and sale of all inventories. This will provide a detail reconciliation for the disclosure of inventory on the Statement of Financial Position (Table A6). This section has been aligned to the mSCOA chart - Item Assets – Inventory and, as it relates to water inventory, also to the IWA Modified Water Balance utilised by the DWS. The layout of the section includes the following inventory items:

- Water (separate item)
- Agricultural, Consumables, Finished Goods, Materials and Supplies (consolidated into one item)
- Work-in-progress (separate item)
- Housing Stock (separate item)
- Land (separate item)

It is important to note that, as a result of these changes, bulk purchasing of water will be processed as a cash transaction in the Statement of Financial Position – Acquisition of Inventory (Table A6). Acquisitions of water stock should include the following:

- Bulk purchases - Supply from bulk or other water service providers recognised by the amount paid.
- Water purified - Potable supply from Water Treatment Works. Value is to be determined by calculating primary and secondary cost components.
- Natural sources - Supply from boreholes, springs, fountain if not supplied through the water treatment plant. Value is to be determined by calculating primary and secondary cost components.

Currently the Statement of Financial Performance (Table A4) reflected the bulk purchasing of water as a cash expense. In terms of the change to treating water as inventory the cost of sales (water inventory consumed) is disclosed as a separate non-cash expense included under “Other materials & inventory consumed” on Table A4.

The cost of water losses and any write-down of inventory are expensed as a non-cash entry under “Expenditure by type Losses” on Table A4. When there is clear evidence of an increase in net realisable value of inventory adjustments are accounted for as a non-cash entry under “Revenue by source Gains” on Table A4.

Water Inventory consumed (cost of sales) included under “Other materials & Inventory Consumed” on Table A4 should include the following:

Billed Authorised Consumption

Billed Metered Consumption

- Free Basic Water
- Subsidised Water
- Revenue Water

Billed Unmetered Consumption

- Free Basic Water
- Subsidised Water
- Revenue Water

Un-Billed Authorised Consumption

- Unbilled Metered Consumption
- Unbilled Unmetered Consumption

The above-mentioned amendments to Table SA3 also necessitated adjustments to the following other tables as indicated below:

Table SA1

In order to adequately account for inventory, including water inventory, the following detail calculations were added on Table SA1:

Addition of Other materials & Inventory Consumed

- Inventory Consumed - Water
- Inventory Consumed - Other material
- Other materials

Total Other Material & Inventory Consumed

Bulk purchases: Electricity & Waste Water (previously Electricity & Water - now water changed to "Waste Water")

The change of terminology

- Electricity Bulk Purchases (no change)
- Waste Water Bulk Purchases (previously Water Bulk Purchases now water changed to "Waste Water")

Table A4

The change of terminology:

- Bulk purchases now **"Bulk purchases: Electricity & Waste Water"**
- Gains on disposal of PPE now **"Gains"**
- Loss on disposal of PPE now **"Losses"**
- Other Material changed to **"Other materials & inventory consumed"**

Table SA 30

The changes of terminology to cash payments by type:

- Bulk purchases - Electricity now changed to **"Bulk purchases - Electricity & Waste Water"**
- Bulk purchases - Water & Sewer" now changes to **"Acquisition Inventory - Water & other inventory"**

Annexure C – Process map for invoice verification/cost reimbursement

ACTIVITY	INSTITUTION	INDIVIDUAL
Step 1: Municipality receives invoices from the contractors and consultants	Municipality	Technical Director and PMU Manager
Step 2: Check completeness and all documents included and update the verification list/implementation plan	Municipality	PMU Manager
Step 3: Invoices and verification list submitted to Province (PT, Transport, CoGTA province, DWS, Energy, human settlement and MISA)	Municipality	Technical Director
Step 4: Province coordinates the site verification meeting/s with all stakeholders (Prov CoGTA and Treasury, MISA and municipality)	Province	Provincial selected lead official
Step 5: Municipality arranges with consultants and contractors to be on site and prepares the necessary progress report	Municipality	Technical Director and PMU
Steps 6: Site meeting/s held	(Prov CoGTA/Treasury, MISA and municipality)	Verification Team
Step 7: Transferring National Officer/MISA prepares the verification report and shares with all the verification team members. It recommends the amount to be released to municipality or recommends a refer back	Transferring National Officer/MISA	Transferring National Officer/MISA
Step 8: Verification team (coordinated by Province) to consider the recommendations by Transferring National Officer/MISA and submit recommendations to NT/Sector department	Province	Transferring National Officer/MISA with Provincial Treasury

ACTIVITY	INSTITUTION	INDIVIDUAL
Step 9: Transferring National Office reviews all documentation submitted and: (i) either refer back to Province for corrections; or (ii) submits report to NT	Transferring National Officer	Director: Grant Administration in national department
Step 10: NT evaluates and provides go ahead to Transferring National Officer and confirms amount for the transfer	National Treasury	Municipal Grant Monitoring and Analysis (MGMA) Unit within NT
Step 11: Transferring National Officer prepares sundry payment advise for Finance and confirm the date with NT	Transferring National Officer	Transferring National Officer
Step 12: Finance confirms transfer details with National Treasury (date amount) and loads transfer NT loads transfers on Safety Web	Finance	Finance Grant Administration Unit with NT
Step 13: Transferring National Officer confirms transfer with receiving officer	Finance	FINANCE
Step 14: Municipality effects the payments to contractors and submit Proof of Payment (POP)'s Transferring National Officer	Municipality	Technical Director / CFO
Step 15: Next transfer of funds may be effected once the previous POP has been verified	National Treasury and Transferring National Officer	National Treasury and Transferring National Officer