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Prospectus

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Spatial Data Services Africa NPC

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MAIN POINTS TO TAKE AWAY

In 2015, the United Nations defined an agenda for sustainable development to be implemented by 2030. No other profession has the potential to systematically coordinate multi-sector efforts with underpinning social justice in achieving a sustainable outcome for the citizens of a country than town and regional planning. However, town and regional planning have been criticised for its lack of impact and inability to affect change in recent years. The lack of a positive impact on development and growth is mainly because town and regional planning, specifically spatial planning, has become a normative exercise that lacks the factual basis to deal with the issues on the ground.

A lack of understanding of the development environment and no coherent, factual base to work from has led to inefficient plans and the inability of practitioners to make informed decisions. These issues are perpetuated by a lack of appropriate skills and the industry rapidly moving into the digital age, leaving most spatial planning professionals behind.

Spatial Data Services Africa is a leading planning and spatial analytics non-profit organisation that believes in harnessing the power of data and technology to create knowledge and insight through information to improve decision-making and deal with the significant issues facing our society.

Vision: Advancing a digital future to ensure Spatial Justice, Spatial Sustainability, Efficiency, Spatial Resilience, and Good Administration

Mission: Spatial Data Services Africa is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting government and business in better understanding and utilising data and digital technologies to promote spatial transformation and strengthen development and policy outcomes to benefit the poor and vulnerable.

SDSAfrica's work is organised into four key programme areas, namely;

- *digital readiness,*
- *advisory support,*
- *data and technology access,*
- *training and capacitation, and*
- *applied urban development research.*

Through these programme areas, SDSAfrica's work is geared towards effective and innovative approaches to strengthen the capacity of government and business to improve decision-making and transparency in the planning and service delivery process.

Spatial Data Services Africa operates a non-profit organisation (NPO) registered as a Non-Profit Company (NPC) in terms of the provisions outlined the Schedule 1 of the Companies Act of 2008 (Act 71 of 2008).

SDSA has been approved for purposes of Section 18A(1)(a) of the Tax Act No 58 of 1962, and donations to the organisation will be tax deductible in the hands of the donors in terms of and subject to the limitations prescribed in Section 18A of the Act with effect from 31 March 2023.

Key Information

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Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations defined an agenda for implementing sustainable development by 2030. This *"... provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which ... recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests."*

No other profession has the potential to systematically coordinate multi-sector efforts with underpinning social justice in achieving a sustainable outcome for the citizens of a country than town and regional planning. However, in recent decades, town and regional planning have been criticised for its lack of impact and inability to affect change and improve the situation of poor and marginalised peoples.

This is mainly because town and regional planning, specifically spatial planning, has become a normative exercise that lacks the factual basis to deal with the issues on the ground.

A lack of understanding of the development environment and no coherent, factual base to work from has led to inefficient plans and the inability of practitioners to make informed decisions. These issues are perpetuated by a lack of appropriate skills and the industry's rapid move into the digital age, leaving most professionals behind. Consequently, poor and vulnerable communities are suffering due to an increasing inability of local governments in South Africa to fulfil their Constitutional duties of providing access to essential services and furthering local economic development.

The history behind SDSA

Spatial Data Services Africa (SDSA) is a leading planning and spatial analytics organisation that believes in harnessing the power of data and technology to create knowledge and insight through information to improve decision-making and deal with the significant issues facing our society.

The establishment of SDSA is a result of restructuring MapAble (Pty) Ltd (established 2013) and the need to advance spatial data services beyond the technical confines of MapAble® as a spatial platform. The establishment of SDSA was driven by the following:

- The rapid expansion in available (spatial) data and associated technologies
- The increased inability of built environment policymakers and planners to access, understand and grasp the meaning and implications of data.
- Technological solutions exist in abundance for almost any challenge and also hold for spatial analysis and decision-making. Access to technology is simple, but the productive use and application thereof is complicated and requires specialised skills currently unavailable in the urban planning fraternity.

In working closely with its sister company, BC Gildenhuys and Associates, in urban spatial development, infrastructure investment planning and municipal economics, SDSA realised that improving service delivery to the poor will remain incumbent on the improvement of the skills and ability of towns and regional planners to focus service delivery, not based on normative goals and objectives, but their ability to intervene and lead the different sectors in the municipal environment towards a better environment for all.

Why converting SDSA to a non-profit company

Spatial Data Services Africa (SDSA) was established in 2013 as a private company to provide a technical platform and database for urban planning professionals in the private and public sectors. The company's mission was to "improve the quality of spatial planning in South Africa by providing access to data, tools, and expertise."

SDSA quickly realised that urban and regional planners' skill levels and abilities in South Africa were substantially below expectations. This was due to several factors, including the lack of training and resources, the high turnover of staff, and the complex nature of spatial planning.

As a result, SDSA found it difficult to generate revenue from commercial ventures such as advisory services and the digitalisation of municipalities. As a result, the company's shareholders eventually decided to convert SDSA to a non-profit company (NPC) for public benefit. As an NPC, SDSA can now focus on its core mission of improving the quality of spatial planning in South Africa. The company has several initiatives underway, including:

- Developing and maintaining a national spatial database to promote an understanding of our development environment.
- Providing training and capacity-building to urban planners to enhance the quality and outcomes of spatial planning
- Promoting the use of spatial planning tools and technologies

SDSA believes these initiatives will help improve the quality of life for all South Africans by ensuring that our cities and towns are planned sustainably and equitably.

In addition to the above, SDSA also conducts applied urban research. This research is necessary since universities and established research institutions do little similar work at scale. Moreover, contract-based research, by its nature, is project-based, and the benefits and results are usually not sustained or maintained beyond the project's scope. A further contributing factor is that, for various reasons, our urban research institutions and especially our universities, are not sufficiently equipped or skilled in technology-based spatial research.

The shareholders of SDSA decided to convert the private company to a non-profit company (NPC) for public benefit. The NPC will strive to improve the spatial planning capacity of municipalities and actively work toward assisting them in achieving their constitutional mandate of providing access to at least basic services and facilitating local economic development within a framework of environmental, administrative, and financial sustainability.

The mission and objectives of SDSA as an NPC

Vision

Advancing a digital future to ensure Spatial Justice, Spatial Sustainability, Efficiency, Spatial Resilience, and Good Administration

Mission

Spatial Data Services Africa is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting the public and private sectors in better understanding and utilising data and digital technologies to promote spatial transformation and strengthen development and policy outcomes to benefit the poor and vulnerable.

Objectives

Our objectives are:

- To capacitate and empower spatial planners in municipalities to play a meaningful leadership role in integrated development planning and service delivery

- To promote an integrated digitally enabled approach to spatial planning by capable and skilled planners through introducing and institutionalising appropriate data and digital systems in spatial planning
- To provide advisory support to municipalities to allow them to deal with confidence with service providers, internal departments and intergovernmental relations
- To compile, package and disseminate spatial data for the benefit of municipal planning
- To render spatial technology and data services on a consulting basis to both the private and public sector

Operational focus areas

In 2015, there were just over 140 000 registered NGOs, which has increased nearly 200% since 2005. However, "... the economic recession, unemployment and *failed service delivery* may impact the sector's growth".¹ Most South African urban development NGOs had their roots in this country's anti-apartheid struggle when urban townships represented the battlefields of the physical resistance against the apartheid regime. In many instances, these struggles were organised around rent boycotts and a refusal to pay for (inadequate) basic services to pressure the apartheid regime to transform its policies. Shortly after democracy, urban development NGOs were extremely active in policy advocacy work, promoting people-centred approaches in housing and local government policy formulation and advocating for changes to the segregated apartheid landscape.²

The work of NGOs in the urban development environment focuses mostly on housing and giving a voice to the destitute. Although some NGOs focus on local government, no NGO currently addresses the issues of capacity building of the planners and institutions of local government.

SDSA aims to capacitate planners employed in the national, provincial, and local spheres of government. Our projects will target priority local municipalities where SDSA will build long-term support relationships to improve service delivery in those municipalities. The support will be structured as ring-fenced "projects" with very specific objectives and measurable deliverables. As a matter of principle, support will always try to capitalise on existing initiatives and targeted interventions by custodians and sector departments of local government nationally or at the provincial level.

SDSA's involvement and support will draw on SDSA's operational focus areas, namely:

- Capacity-building support to the municipal sector
 - Advisory support
 - Data and technology access
 - Training and capacitation
 - Internships and Young Professional Development
- Applied urban research
- Commercial services to the development environment

Capacity-building support to the municipal sector

Advisory support

The need for improved decision-making based on an evidence-based approach is undeniable. Our advice is anchored in decades of experience as town and regional planning professionals and experts in using and applying digital technologies in this space. This allows our partners and beneficiaries to engage with us and improve data and technological efficiencies for better planning outcomes for our communities and the poor.

¹ [NGOs today: Competing for resources, power and agency - The Mail & Guardian \(mg.co.za\)](http://mg.co.za)

² [Guide to Urban Development NGOs in South Africa | NGO Pulse](#)

Data and technology access

The pace at which data and technology advances has left most of South Africa's 1 600 professional planners unable to engage with the quantitative characteristics of spatial planning issues effectively. A core component of our approach is ensuring that the correct and most up-to-date data and information is used to add value to the planning process and outcomes. SDSAfrica provides our beneficiaries with the most appropriate technology options and access to the most comprehensive spatial database in South Africa. This data can be augmented with local information to ensure accurate reporting, improved analysis and ultimately better, more informed, and transparent decision-making.

Training and capacitation

Training and capacitation within a framework of continuous professional development are at the heart of what is required to tackle the major issues facing our communities. Unfortunately, a significant gap has emerged and is growing between the formal training that town and regional planners receive and the demands of the new technological age. Our training, skills transfer, and mentorship approach are vital to bridging this divide. Although SDSA's core business is data and data systems, it also realises that it has to capacitate town and regional planning in understanding and mastering municipal finances and infrastructure development and planning. Through SDSA's involvement in developing capital expenditure frameworks as contemplated in SPLUMA and IUFD, it is evident that planners lack an understanding and the ability to lead the planning process because of their inability to engage with municipal CFOs and engineers on a peer-to-peer basis. Capacity building for planners in the municipal environment will address financial and technical concepts, issues and processes

Applied urban research

SDSA has access to the most extensive spatial database in South Africa, which host more than 2 000 national data sets. As part of SDSA's public responsibility and to enhance spatial planning, SDSA do projects to integrate and make data accessible for the general benefit of the broader South African community. These projects are done as internal projects through SDSA's resources. However, if the nature and scope of the project allow it, SDSA will partner with an appropriate value-adding institution. The deliverables of the project must, however, reside in the public domain with no cost to any beneficiaries.

Commercial services to the development environment

SDSA will continue to offer a range of services on a commercial basis.

Data and system access

MapAble® as the technical base of SDSA is also available as a subscription to any interested users. It allows drawing on the data in MapAble, adding user data and exporting the results to a inhouse corporate GIS.

System Generated Reports

The ability to extract information in a user-friendly format from any system is important. SDSA offers a range of standardised reports that bridge the divide between technology and the needs of the person who will use the results.

Municipal service package

Improved service delivery in South Africa is incumbent on better management and decision-making. In light of capacity issues in municipalities and challenges with accessing and managing basic spatial data, we developed a municipal service package designed around three-year access, capacity building, and support contracts. Our aim is to support municipal planning, decision-making, and service delivery. The complete service package focus on:

- Spatial data for the municipality
- An affordable geo-information analysis and data management system that is compatible with mainstream geoinformation systems (GIS)
- Technical support

- Skills transfer
- Data analytical support is delivered as municipal socio-economic profile reports.

Custodianship and management

Spatial Data Services Africa operates as a non-profit organisation (NPO) registered as a Non-Profit Company (NPC)³, in terms of the provisions outlined the Schedule 1 of the Companies Act of 2008 (Act 71 of 2008).

The company will be structured and operated as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) within the framework as set out in Section on The mission and objectives of SDSA as an NPC. The choice of operating as an NGO is based on the fact that:

- SDSA will work independently from the government to promote change and improved efficiencies in local government spatial planning and service delivery,
- SDSA will take on large projects and operate nationally or internationally if required and the opportunity presents itself.
- SDSA will work actively with the government to build spatial planning capacity and improve municipal service delivery as outlined in our mission and objectives above.

Founding directors

The three founding members were appointed for NPC in terms of Section 5 of Schedule 1 of the Companies Act of 2008 (Act 71 of 2008). SDSA currently has three directors: Burgert Gildenhuis, who is responsible for all operations and financial management, and Johan du Toit, who is responsible for software development and maintenance. Johan currently resides in North Carolina, USA. Burgert and Johan were the founding directors of SDSA (Pty) Ltd. In addition, a third director, Roelf Kotze, with long-standing experience and expertise in municipal government, was added to the team.

Burgert Gildenhuis

Burgert is a founding director of Spatial Data Services Africa NPC. He is also the founder of BC Gildenhuis and Associates (Pty) Ltd in 1997 and MapAble (Pty) Ltd in 2013. Burgert is an internationally recognised expert in municipal planning, spatial, economic development, and local government finances. Burgert is responsible for the overall management and business development of SDSA

Johan du Toit

Johan is a founding director of Spatial Data Services Africa NPC and co-founder of MapAble (Pty) Ltd. He is a leading expert in spatial software development, database development and web-based mapping. Johan operates from the USA.

Roelf Kotze

Roelf has more than 20 years of senior executive management experience in local government and is an expert in development strategy and PPPs in the municipal environment. He was responsible for managing Mbombela's involvement in the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup and has been involved in many strategic projects to further local economic development.

SDSA will continue to expand its directorship to meet the challenges and to add the required expertise to the team. Given the profile of the current three directors, the immediate focus will be on a director experienced in South African governance and transformation and a director with an academic and research background related to the objectives of the SDSA NPC.

³ A Non-profit company is colloquially referred to as a "Section 21 company". Section 21 of the Companies Act does not exist in terms of the Current Companies Act of 2008 (Act 71 of 2008) as amended by Act 3 of 2011. The legal requirements for non-profit companies (NPCs) are now governed by Schedule 1 of the the Companies Act of 2008 (Act 71 of 2008)

Staff requirements

SDSA has a small core staff responsible for geoinformation-related matters. All other activities and operations are covered by voluntary work done by BC Gildenhuys and Associates staff. Networking and partnerships will drive future internal staff requirements.

Tax status

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) confirmed SDSA's exemption from income tax as approved as it meets the requirements of a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) set out in section 30(3) of the Income Tax Act No 58 of 1962 (the Act). Accordingly, SDSA's Tax Exemption has been granted in terms of section 10(1)(cN) of the Act, effective 01 March 2022. Annual receipts and accruals will therefore be subject to the provisions of section 10(1)(cN) of the Act and accruals and receipts from trading or business activities which fall outside the parameters of section 10(1)(cN) will be subject to tax.

The following exemptions also apply and are limited to:

- The public benefit organisation has been approved for purposes of section 18A(1)(a) of the Act and donations to the organisation will be tax deductible in the hands of the donors in terms of and subject to the limitations prescribed in Section 18A of the Act with effect from 31 March 2023.
- Donations made to or by the PBO are exempt from Donations Tax in terms of section 56(1)(h) of the Income Tax Act.
- Exemption from the payment of Estate Duty in terms of section 4(h) of the Estate Duty Act No.45 of 1955.

Technology base

MapAble® is the technology base of Spatial Data Services Africa (Pty) Ltd to which SDSA has exclusive use rights through a back-to-back agreement between SDSA and MapAble (Pty) Ltd. This agreement will be renegotiated to allow MapAble® to provide full information technology services to SDSA NPC. The services will include developing and maintaining MapAble® and its functionality, server housing, and general IT support.