

Development of Theories of Change for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture



PDG, in partnership with Blue North, was appointed to support facilitation of theories of change for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's five-year strategic plan 2020-2025. After a series of evaluations commissioned over the previous term, the department sought to synthesise the lessons learnt and recommendations from across these evaluations and related evidence to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as part of the departmental strategic planning process.

PDG assisted in the departmental SWOT analysis before using it to identify strategic priority areas around which the department would focus its strategic interventions for the term ahead. As part of the departmental planning session, senior managers were involved in developing problem trees to unpack the root causes of each strategic issue. The department identified seven strategic issues which were then selected for developing theories of change. Five of these proved cross-cutting departmental strategies with systemic implications, whereas two were focused programmatic responses.

Development of cross-cutting/strategic level theories of change are unusual in the South African public sector as application tends to be focused at a programme level. Nevertheless, the strategic nature necessitated broader consultative engagement and workshops were held jointly with departmental and external stakeholders, including representatives of business associations and academia. These workshops were used to articulate the intended outcomes of the department over the medium term in relation to the identified problems and to unpack the causal pathways the department and stakeholders planned to jointly pursue. From these facilitated sessions the Western



Cape Department of Agriculture was able to better articulate a shared understanding of its strategic intentions and engender support and shared purpose with key partners.

PDG produced seven theories of change for each of the strategic issues identified by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, including the identification of key results indicators for the department. This work was integral to the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and has served as the guiding strategic informant to the provincial departments work for this term of government

Project Leader:

Mike Leslie
+27 21 6711402 / mike@pdg.co.za

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