

Embedding **Gender Equality** and **Social Inclusion** in **Urban Development**



Lessons from the Future Cities South Africa Programme

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Acronyms/abbreviations	
CBA:	Cost Benefit Analysis
CCT:	City of Cape Town
CoJ:	City of Johannesburg
CTDE:	Cape Town Data & Economics
EAM:	Electricity Asset Management (use-case)
EMM:	eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality
ETOD:	eThekweni Transit Oriented Development
FCDO:	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FCSA:	Future Cities South Africa
GESI:	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
J4IR:	Johannesburg 4th Industrial Revolution & Mobility
JSAF/SSAF:	Johannesburg/Soweto Strategic Area Framework
ISIMS/EISM:	eThekweni Informal Settlement Information Management System
NMT:	Non-Motorised Transport
MVP:	Minimum Viable Product
POPIA:	Protection of Personal Information Act

1 Executive summary

This Learning Brief distils the lessons surrounding Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) that have emerged from the delivery of Future Cities South Africa (FCSA) programme funded by UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The document builds on the experiences of FCSA in three cities—Johannesburg, eThekweni/Durban, and Cape Town, where the programme was delivered. The document also offers valuable insights on equity and inclusion to other South Africa cities, international development agencies, government and civil society stakeholders, as well as future delivery partners of FCDO programmes.

This document aims to set out the benefits and challenges of mainstreaming GESI into development programmes. In summary, these include:

- The necessity of explicitly building GESI outcomes and corresponding actions into foundational programme and project design;
- Creating a mindset shift around embedding GESI, which cannot be rushed, and comes through iterative engagement and attempts to embed it;
- Translation of GESI principles within each project/programme into concrete actions (which requires consistent support and guidance) with regular review in line with emerging evidence;
- The need for greater alignment and integration between technical and community engagement/development objectives;
- Making GESI ubiquitous in practical and standardised processes and in decision making tools;
- The need for GESI to be established as a shared responsibility for project/programme teams through targeted skills development in addition to dedicated GESI support on each project;
- The need for City departments and project teams to understand the relevance of GESI to their respective functions and mandates: demonstration of the importance of GESI oriented design thinking to improve municipal impact against larger societal outcomes;
- The need for cities to develop frameworks that clarify roles and responsibilities, ownership and accountability for cross-departmental GESI integration and delivery;
- The need to build adaptability within decision tools and systems to allow incremental expansion of GESI ambitions;
- Value of peer-to-peer learning on co-creation between and within cities;
- The need to build on new modes of social facilitation to engage and include communities and marginalised voices to the degree of transformative empowerment.

The authors of this document would like to thank the city officials, FCSA consortium partners and FCDO for their contributions toward shaping our collective understanding of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in development programmes. We trust that as readers you will find this Learning Brief informative, capable of influencing behaviours and increase the GESI impact of your organisations.

While each of the FCSA projects addressed socioeconomic inequality through its particular technical lens—it is important to recognise that the fundamental reason “these projects and the FCSA programme exists” is to help South African cities “deal with a complex spatial transformation challenge that has a history of segregation along racial lines, but also translates into economic divisions,” (explains Shabari Shaily-Gerber, Head of Urban Economic Development, British High Commission South Africa.

2 Introduction

Problem statement

Although GESI features in all of South Africa’s high-level policy and planning documents as both aspiration and requirement, the question of what GESI actually looks like in practice—that is, how to translate those principles into intentional action lines and results—remains largely unanswered at local, national and even global levels. Meanwhile, despite over two decades of investments intended to rectify the spatial inequality that characterises South African cities and transform urban dwellers’ economic opportunities and quality of life, change remains stubbornly elusive.

Part of the reason cities continue to struggle to perform is that inequality is baked into systems, processes and ways of thinking, such that even the most well-considered urban development projects or programmes must function within a broader context mired in vestiges of the more narrow, normative perspectives of the past. With this in mind, it becomes clear why it is so important to intentionally apply a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) lens to all aspects of urban development work. That said, cities—both in South Africa and around the world—are still grappling with what “mainstreaming” GESI actually means from a practical and tangible perspective. In other words, while there is broad agreement that a more intentional approach to inclusion is needed, development practitioners are still untangling what this means in practice.

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Introducing Future Cities South Africa

Future Cities South Africa (FCSA) is the delivery partner for the South African component of the Global Future Cities Programme, funded by the UK Government's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Focused on the South African cities of Johannesburg, eThekweni/Durban, and Cape Town, the FCSA programme's five core projects—Johannesburg Fourth Industrial Transport (J4IR), Johannesburg Soweto Strategic Area Framework (JSAF/SSAF/JCED), eThekwini Transit Oriented Development (ETOD), eThekwini Informal Settlements Information Management System (EISM/ISIM), Cape Town Data and Economics (CTDE)—were designed to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic development and poverty reduction, while mitigating gender, social, and economic inequalities. In the context of rapidly urbanising South Africa, apartheid's spatial legacy persists in the ongoing disparity between where poor people live and where economic opportunities lie. As such, the FCSA's five core, targeted transportation and mobility, urban planning, resilience, and the innovative use of data (see Annexure for more detail on the individual projects).

Steeped in collaboration and partnering, Future Cities South Africa is a unique alliance of organisations and individuals, anchored by PwC (UK & SA) and including Open Cities Lab (OCL), Zutari, Palmer Development Group (PDG), Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU), Isandla Institute and others, together with a range of independent specialists, working in a complementary, agile, and adaptive way that offers our city government partners global expertise, local insight and trusted relationships to ensure enduring impact. Aligned to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030, as well as South Africa's National Development Plan and Integrated Urban Development Framework, FCSA programme learnings are anticipated to inform national practice and policy, and contribute to higher rates of sustainable development and greater investment and trade flows, while also strengthening the relationship between UK and South Africa's cities.

CORE PROJECTS

FUTURE CITIES SOUTH AFRICA (FCSA)		
CITY OF JOHANNESBURG (COJ)	ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY (ETK)	CITY OF CAPE TOWN (CCT)
Soweto Strategic Area Framework (JSAF) Exploring the insufficient development response to previous public investments in the area, the JSAF project and its associated Implementation Tools focused on collaboratively producing a sustainable spatial and economic development vision for the area.	Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) This project aimed to develop a coordination tool to plan, implement, and operationalise Transit Oriented Development (TOD) (i.e., development to maximise residential, business, and leisure space within walking distance of public transport), and to formulate a change management process to foster alignment between public and private sector stakeholder plans.	Data & Economics (CTDE) Providing technical support to the City of Cape Town, the CTDE project aimed to give effect to CCT's Data Strategy through data use and application case studies related to transport, economic analysis, resilience, and human settlements.
4th Industrial Revolution & Mobility (J4IR) Seeking to address some of Johannesburg's transport-related challenges, the J4IR project sought to take advantage of the fact that mobility is one of the sectors most affected by technological advances (sometimes referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution).	Informal Settlement Information Management Systems (EISM/ISIMS) Ultimately aiming to improve the lives of informal settlement dwellers, the Informal Settlement Information Management Solution (EISM/ISIMS) project set out to provide the eThekwini Municipality with a planning tool to make better-informed decisions to address spatial, social, and economic inequalities.	

Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI)

Why GESI?

Cities are expressions of the norms, viewpoints and aspirations of local elites, reflecting powerful, often exclusionary interests, with structural consequences. Until 35 years ago, South Africa's cities and towns were designed to exclude people of colour, unless—and only for as long as—their labour contributed to the urban economy. All aspects of urban governance, including planning and land use management, public and private investment, administrative fairness and political representation, entrenched this duality of superiority/inferiority and inclusion/exclusion. Apartheid's legacy of spatial segregation and exclusion is still evident in South African cities today, notwithstanding public investment in poor neighbourhoods and demographic changes in more affluent neighbourhoods as a result of the upward mobility of a modest proportion of the black population.

Undoing this legacy is complicated, hard work and takes time, and well-intentioned programmes can unwittingly recreate or perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation. In other words, while urban institutions and programmes may no longer be explicitly biased, the 'remaking' of cities often implicitly draws on capacities, systems and traditions that, if not prejudicial, are partial at best. So how do we change this?

Global evidence shows that promoting GESI is not merely 'the right thing to do', but also brings tangible and intangible benefits for individuals, social groups, society and the economy. A critical tool in addressing the entrenched inequality underlying and exacerbating urban development challenges, GESI is central to the programme objectives of the FCSA and its theory of change. It is also a cornerstone of the UK Government's development orientation, stemming from the UK's International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 and Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires that all Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending not only meaningfully considers the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality but also demonstrates that it has done so.

While each of the FCSA projects addressed socioeconomic inequality through its particular technical lens—transport-oriented development, improved data strategies, etc.—it is important to recognise that the fundamental reason "these projects and the FCSA programme exists" is to help South African cities "deal with a complex spatial transformation challenge that has a history of segregation along racial lines, but also translates into economic divisions," as Shabari Shaily-Gerber, Head of Urban Economic Development, British High Commission South Africa, explains. In this context, the programme's focus on GESI was not about compliance alone, but rather provided the foundational architecture upon which the programme built projects aimed at addressing inequality—and its socioeconomic and spatial manifestations—across South African cities.

What is GESI?

GENDER EQUALITY refers to the full and equal exercise of rights by men and women; that is, equal access to socially, economically, and politically valued goods, resources, opportunities, benefits, and services. It is the absence of any discrimination on the basis of gender.

SOCIAL INCLUSION refers to the process of removing institutional barriers, and the improvement of incentives to increase access to development opportunities by individuals and groups that have been marginalised or discriminated against based on social characteristics such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, caste, migrant status, religion, sexual orientation, type of household, level of education and literacy, employment status, or housing status. The results of social inclusion are equal societies in which the needs and rights of all are recognised and met.

These definitions show that GESI is about both material benefits and outcomes, as well as involvement in decision-making processes and the expression of both choice and voice (i.e., the ability of citizens to express preferences and be heard by the state, whether through formal or informal channels).

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About this Learning Brief

Designed with deep intentionality around GESI, the FCSA programme charted new terrain for urban development projects and cities seeking to embed GESI within tools, systems and practices—something for which there is no blueprint or map within existing city programmes.

This Learning Brief offers an opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate the FCSA's novel efforts to mainstream GESI by working with/through professional teams (the FCDO, the FCSA consortium delivery team, and the partner cities) and organisational systems to continually grapple with questions of inclusion/exclusion, visibility/hidden bias and voice/silence, whether it's related to transit-oriented development, data systems, economic project appraisal, or area-based development and governance.

Engaging relevant project teams, city representatives and programme leadership from the five core FCSA projects, this learning brief distils lessons and feedback on how GESI was embedded in FCSA programme delivery, what worked well, where there were challenges, and the likelihood that projects (and the programme overall) will contribute to GESI considerations more prominently guiding urban development post this programme. This learning brief presents the reported importance, possibilities and challenges of addressing (socio-economic, political, technological) exclusion and marginalisation as an integral facet of urban development work, rather than as a specialised, external area of responsibility.

The resulting insights and lessons are intended to serve both the partner cities as they take FCSA-initiated work forward, adapting and replicating the approach in other

Embracing a GESI mindset

GESI is as much about individuals as it is about institutions, as previous and current biases can surreptitiously creep into city procedures, protocols, and systems—all of which are executed by people. As such, the following principles act as a foundation for individuals wishing to embed a GESI approach:

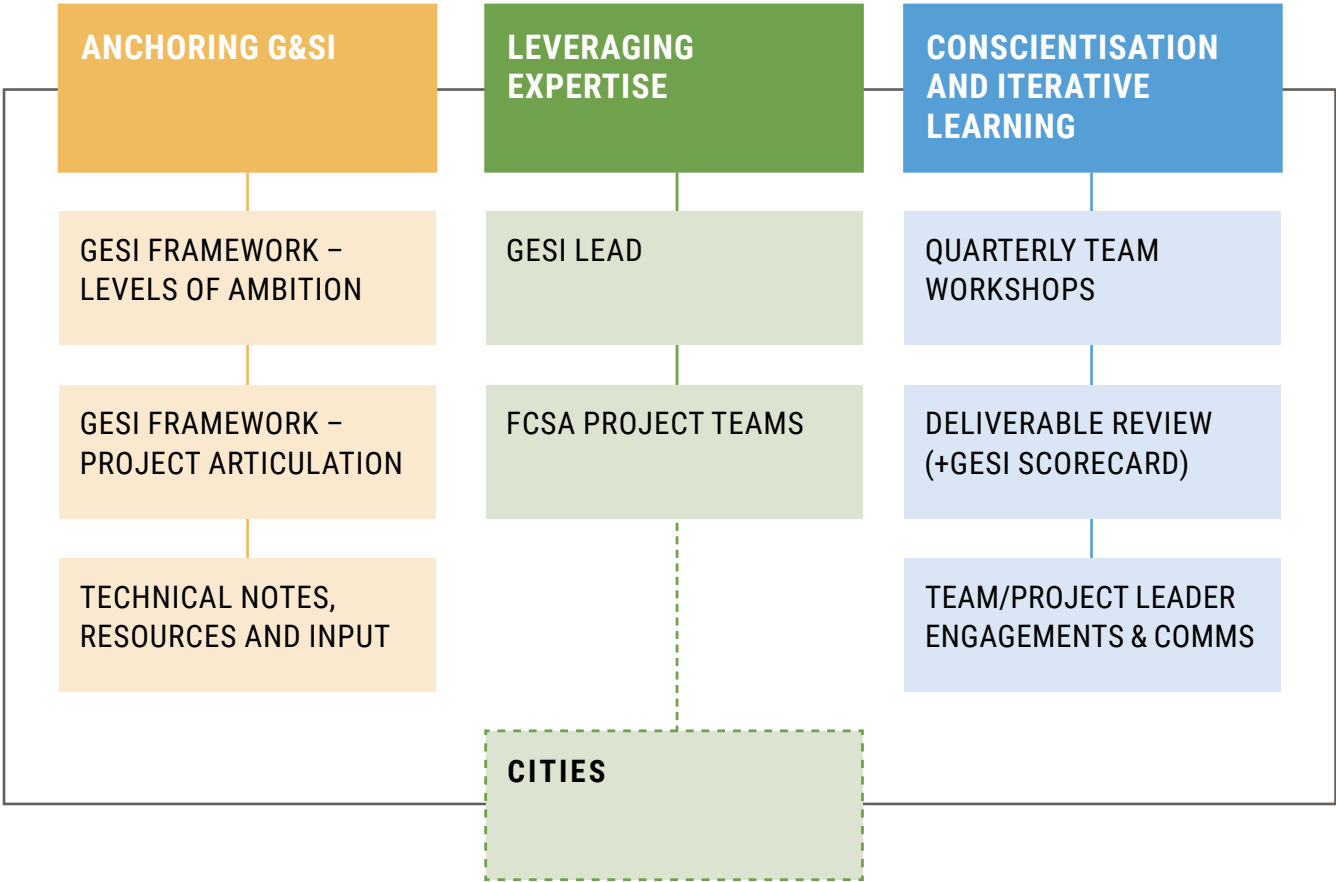
- 1. Adopting a developmental orientation.** This means giving proper consideration to values and principles (such as inclusion, gender equality, social justice, and empowerment) as clearly defined and measurable outcomes. Urban policies and programmes too often articulate these principles, but fail to convert them into actual outcomes.
- 2. Recognising personal situatedness.** Our norms, values, experiences, socio-economic realities, plus the physical environment we move through (and how we move through it) shape who we are, what we consider acceptable (or 'the norm'), and even what we believe is possible. Personal situatedness results in blinkered perspectives, which, while not necessarily invalid, must be understood as not representing everyone's experiences or aspirations. Further, we must acknowledge that cities are ruled by elites, and South Africa—where middle-class professionals and political representatives hold a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, capacity, and power to influence urban development—is no exception.
- 3. Fostering empathy.** Adopting a developmental orientation combined with appreciating one's situatedness creates the potential for empathy, which means stepping outside of one's frame of reference and consciously and humbly attempting to understand what other people see, feel and experience. A risk here is to become patronizing or to impose one's 'ideal city' on others, who may have different aspirations and see other opportunities for change.
- 4. Engaging with social groups who find themselves vulnerable, marginalised, disempowered or excluded.** In instances where interventions seek to improve the lives of a particular social group (e.g., informal settlement dwellers, women traders in the informal sector, unemployed youth, etc.), it is relatively straightforward to identify who to engage with. But in other instances (e.g., at a more abstract and technical level of systems development in cities), the "who" may not be so obvious, not only because discrete "target groups" are not clearly identifiable, but also because institutionalised blind spots and biases may render certain social groups invisible or seemingly less relevant.

workstreams or departments, as well as other urban programmes and actors (including other cities). This sharing is particularly important as one of the FCSA's key take-away points is that for urban development programmes to succeed, institutionalising GESI is critical to overcome the institutional blind spots and biases that obstruct more inclusive and equitable development outcomes. As such, this Learning Brief hopes to contribute to making 'GESI mainstreaming' accessible and practical.

The learnings that follow are grouped by:

- **Anchoring GESI:** the frameworks, systems and tools to help transform GESI principles into tangible and practical actions and workplans (Part 3).
- **Leveraging expertise for embedding GESI:** roles and responsibilities, relational dynamics and questions around creating common ground (Part 4).
- **Institutionalising an iterative methodology:** the overall approach or process by which the various components discussed above speak to one another (Part 5).

Figure 1: GESI delivery and learning structure



3 Anchoring GESI: Towards an applied practice

The FCSA approach to embedding GESI across projects focused on nurturing FCSA project teams’ understanding of GESI in the context of each project; assisting teams to translate GESI principles into appropriate tools, systems and processes that would ensure GESI considerations were embedded within project DNA; and engaging in co-creation processes with partner cities such that GESI outcomes will bear fruit as Cities operationalise systems, tools and methodologies.

While the general importance of GESI principles was largely accepted, turning those principles into tangible actions and guidelines was often where the trouble lay. The following section introduces and reflects on the reference points and resources that assisted FCSA projects in translating ideals into action.

The Framework: Set ambition levels (and keep interpreting)

Adapted from Caroline Moser and Social Development Direct, the FCDO’s GESI framework outlines three different ‘levels of ambition’:

Figure 2: Levels of ambition framework



FCSA adapted this GESI framework to extrapolate as to what each of these levels of ambition entails (see Figure 3). In line with the FCSA’s Theory of Change and programme intent, the GESI level of ambition was set as empowerment.

The Framework provided a critical reference point for projects to rationally assess and concretise what the different levels of GESI ambition meant for them. Teams began by answering the question of what transformation might look like for their project, and then worked backwards, breaking the journey down into digestible stages and deliverables that outlined how to reach that long-term goal from where they were.

By outlining the key results that are associated with each level of ambition, the GESI framework provides critical normative guidance. However, it is in the project-specific interpretation and application of the framework that GESI considerations and intended outcomes become truly meaningful.

Applied to each City project, the Framework provided a critical reference point for projects to rationally assess and concretise what the different levels of GESI ambition meant for them. Teams began by answering the question of what ‘empowerment’ might look like for their project, and then worked backwards, breaking the journey down into digestible

Figure 3: Levels of ambition detailed

MINIMUM STANDARD	EMPOWERMENT	TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE
The action addresses practical needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups	The action builds assets, capabilities, and opportunities for women and marginalised groups	The action addresses unequal power relations and seeks institutional and societal changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We know how the action impacts on social groups & relations (benefits & losses)• We have identified how the action may deepen vulnerability and exclusion and have put safeguards in place ('do no harm')• The action addresses basic practical needs of marginalised groups• We collect and use disaggregated data and indicators (re women, marginalised groups)• We engage with marginalised (interest) groups to hear their views/experiences <p>= Minimal institutional change: GESI measures across programme cycle</p>	<p>Minimum standard plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The action addresses barriers and constraints to economic participation (including household and care responsibilities) & increases productive opportunities for women and marginalised groups• The action increases their access to & control over economic assets• The action increases their agency and decision-making power (with choices, knowledge, info, skills)• The action enables meaningful participation for women and marginalised groups & beneficiary feedback <p>= GESI mainstreaming with some institutional change</p>	<p>Empowerment plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The action tackles strategic needs and systemic barriers (to advance equity)• The action challenges/changes social norms about economic participation & access to resources• The action supports protective public policy (e.g., equal pay)• The action enables representation of marginalised groups in governance structures• The action enables collective voice of marginalised (interest) groups development processes• Social accountability mechanisms are put in place <p>= GESI mainstreaming with relevant organisational systems, skills, capacity</p>

stages and deliverables that outlined how to reach that long-term goal from where they were. Those broad ambitions were then further refined over the programme's multi-year implementation period, with projects developing phased activity TORs, in which each phase (e.g., the conclusion of one phase and the conceptualisation of the next) created an opportunity to reflect on 1) how the project had incorporated GESI considerations; and 2) how it planned to address relevant GESI considerations or actions in the next phase.

While this regular reviewing and resetting was a key part of teams' adaptive learning process (see Part V for more), it can encourage an overly linear interpretation of the process. That is, while the framework's structure lends itself to a linear parsing (and indeed, there are certain things that must happen in a particular order—after all, it's hard to develop targeted economic support programmes if you don't have the data on who needs that support), it is important to reiterate that the three levels of ambition are constantly in a dynamic and multivalent conversation.

An important cautionary point about this framework is that its apparently incremental model of increasing levels of maturity may allow practitioners to set ambitions for inclusion relatively low. That is, seeing the minimum standard as the necessary starting point, without imagining more fundamental opportunities for change; or seeing the minimum standard as 'enough', because it can be transformative in terms of improving people's quality of life (e.g., spending less time walking to collect water, having safer pathways a communal toilet, etc.). While such developments are indeed positive, they are by no means 'transformative', in that they do not alter the power structures in society, who accesses and owns assets, who gets employed for what type of job, etc. Thus, while there are times that a higher level of ambition cannot be achieved if the basics are not in place, the process is not linear, and achieving a minimum level does not mean you are 'done'.

The framework was broadly identified as an extremely helpful model that facilitated teams' ability to translate imposing and seemingly abstract and/or impossible goals (e.g., making the CoJ's transport system accessible and affordable for all; developing a data system for eThekweni's informal settlements that would accommodate the experiences of residents holistically) into manageable, concrete tools, systems, and processes that cities could achieve. Furthermore, the Framework's "Do No Harm" principle served as a critical reminder to consider the potential negative implications of proposed actions or interventions on specific segments of society, and in particular on vulnerable groups.

In addition to the GESI framework, the programme also drew on other resources (e.g., case studies, technical notes, and guidebooks) to give further technical guidance to project teams in their quest to interpret and embed GESI considerations. By bringing global and local practice to bear (on, for example, inclusive Transit Oriented Development (TOD), data bias, social appraisals methodologies), project teams were better equipped to understand the significance of GESI for their work.

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One size does not fit all

The ease and extent to which GESI could be made practical and legible in FCSA projects was heavily influenced by project purpose and scope. For projects whose ultimate beneficiaries could be clearly identified, integrating a GESI perspective was more straightforward than it was for those whose goals were more abstract or technical (e.g., developing a data architecture system).

As the FCSA project teams started applying knowledge in the doing, some key crosscutting needs and actions that underscore why GESI was “easier” for some projects to integrate than it was others, were identified:

- **Appropriate identification of vulnerable groups** (with reference to the project and its desired outcomes and impact). In doing this, it is important for teams to:
 - Rethink how to identify relevant vulnerable groups and effectively communicate and engage with them.
 - Create opportunities for direct engagement and possible capacity building.
- **Draw on or engage in situational analysis to better understand peoples’ realities, barriers, and opportunities:**
 - Take forward stakeholder mapping and power analysis, in part to determine the distribution of power, benefits, losses, and risks of proposed interventions.
- **Collect, use, and analyse suitably disaggregated data to:**
 - Develop inclusive/well-targeted actions and interventions
 - Identify data gaps
 - Rethink how and by whom data is being collected, analysed, and used.

The value of asking these sorts of questions, seeking their answers, and the relationships built through those engagements had very practical implications, as described by the Johannesburg Soweto Strategic Area Framework (JSFA) team:

The team identified elderly female homeowners who had little formal education as being extremely vulnerable to scams—installation of pre-paid meters and solar power, and dispossession of property by banks. This [made] the homeowners very fearful and unwilling to engage with anyone about improvements on their properties. Luckily for us, the Cluster members from the area validated our presence making the homeowners comfortable to open up to us and discuss their challenges. (Monique Cranna, JSFA Project Lead).

Figure 4: An intersectional approach to vulnerability



Projects needs to take into account:

- 1) specific (overlapping) identities and vulnerabilities
- 2) factors contributing to their vulnerability and exclusion
- 3) practical and strategic (empowerment) needs and opportunities

The technical challenge

Though sometimes more difficult to articulate, GESI considerations were far from irrelevant to projects whose scope was more abstract, technical, or systems-based. In the case of eThekweni’s TOD project, a key starting point was to develop guiding **principles** and suggest **possible approaches** associated with those principles (see Table 1) and, subsequently, translate them into **technical parameters** to make GESI considerations practical (see Table 2).

In projects concerned with data system development, where the specific aspect or manifestation of vulnerability to be addressed, and/or how to identify and engage with relevant vulnerable groups was generally less obvious, GESI concerns still could be addressed by focusing on **gaps and bias in the data value chain**. More specifically:

- **Institutional bias and how it is replicated in data systems development**
 - Understanding data bias (e.g., absence of particular vulnerable groups and/or specific vulnerabilities/experiences in datasets)
 - How algorithms are written and what datasets they access
 - Addressing issues of (equal) representation in the data system
- **Identifying and avoiding data gaps**
 - Understanding distributional and social impacts
 - Designing forms and surveys appropriately
 - Identifying data needed to improve the City systems and ability to understand all of its citizens
- **Use-case work:**
 - Which use-cases are selected? How do they equip the city to better service vulnerable groups?
 - Inclusion: Who is included as a data point? Who does the work and trainings? Who produces and analyses the data?
 - What data is needed so appraisals include factors beyond the economic?

In year one, we were doing technical desktop work, reports on data standards for governance of metadata, writing best practices, and things like that, so there was this big disjuncture between the GESI framework and what we were producing. But by the end of year one, what had emerged was this concept of guarding against data bias within the data value chain—so understanding where data bias exists within data collection, storage, analysis, and interpretation phases, and that’s really stuck with us and was a clear input and value-add that went into City’s draft inclusion framework that was developed to accompany the City’s Data Strategy (Jodi Allemeier, FCSA City Lead for the City of Cape Town).

Table 1: Key GESI principles for TOD

KEY PRINCIPLES	APPROACHES
Equity of access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mix of basic needs land uses in proximity of homes: schools, clinics, fresh food• Overcome barriers to NMT and develop neighbourhoods that foster walking and biking• Towards a “30-minute” precinct, corridor then city
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety for NMT users (pedestrian paths & crossings, cycle lanes, speed restrictions, etc)• Lighting at stations/stops and adjacent areas• People-centred public spaces around stations• Clean and safe public toilets• Vibrant public spaces where women feel safe• Crime prevention & security
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable transport• Integrated ticketing• Affordable housing/mixed-income development
Accessible infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility interventions, such as lifts, ramps, priority seating for the elderly/women with prams/people with disability• Shelters to protect against elements• Even, smooth, uninterrupted walkways (Universal Access)• Intermodal transport development to enable access to amenities
Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance community activities (parks, markets)• Retain historic/cultural character of the neighbourhood• Urban design interventions
Enhanced mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to reach specialised activities (Jobs, sports, events)• Public design (connecting NMT to public transport)
Economic opportunity and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local hiring (construction, maintenance)• Mixed-use development• Informal trading (zoning, support)• Enhance economic growth & job creation, particularly for vulnerable groups
Prevent displacement of vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid gentrification through regulation and subsidy instruments• Avoid relocation/displacement of informal traders

What ‘technical applications’ of GESI looked like in practice depended on the project. For example, in the Cape Town Economic and Data (CTDE) project’s appraisals of the MyCiti Bus expansion, the team could identify (potential) transit users and how expanded access would enable broader urban opportunities. In the case of appraising a potential water desalination plant, the City needed to cast a wider net of questions; that is, explicitly looking at not only ‘beneficiaries’ (water consumers, but also contractors building the salination plant), but also at the distribution of associated burdens (soil contamination, noise pollution, cost transferred to households via rates and tariffs, traffic flows to/from the plant, etc.). Failing to consider these latter consequences, and who would bear the brunt of them, would be to omit part of the picture, and could result in the project acting against the basic minimum GESI principle of “do no harm”. Either way, by adding GESI considerations into the appraisal matrix, trade-offs beyond the economic are made clear, as is the relevance of GESI within the project.

Make GESI ubiquitous in practical processes and evidence-based mechanisms

Whether expanding thinking about who project outcomes are for, or drilling deeper into the principles and potential bias of systems underlying project approaches, FCSA project teams advised reviewing standardised practical processes (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures, KPIs, etc.) to ensure that GESI considerations that speak to the **what** and the **who** are embedded therein. For example, the eThekweni Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) project embedded GESI into the development application approval process as part of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), thus ensuring that GESI sits alongside the other key deciding factors (e.g., environment, traffic, etc.) that proposed developments must speak to for approval. The ETOD team also applied the GESI lens to project KPIs and other ‘leading and lagging’ indicators (e.g., the number of dropped curbs and the presence of shelters or adequate lighting) to help ensure a way of measuring interventions’ impact against GESI concerns.

Table 2: Example of technical application of selected GESI principles for TOD in eThekweni

KEY PRINCIPLES	PARAMETERS	TARGET VALUE	BASELINE VALUE	INTERVENTIONS	RESPONSIBLE SECTOR(S)	MECHANISM(S)
Equity of access	Leading: Land use mix	% activity mix	20% res: 80% office	Building approval	Strategic Planning; LUMS	Basket of Rights; Incentives Policy
	Km cycle lane / km road (>class 2)	0.6?	0	NMT network plan	Urban design; Transport	Design neighbourhoods primarily for NMT & Transit with Roads as secondary access; Retrofit roads with cycle ways before extra lanes
	Lagging: Accessibility metrics (e.g. Activities/day)	3	1	Proximity, transport	Land Use & Transport	
Affordability	% of household wages (per week / month)	<10%	23%	Fare policy; Cheap modes - cycling	Transport	Appropriate mode, High utilisation of transit by all-day, bi-directional demand
	Trunk + 1st feeder	Per corridor	none yet	Smart tickets, back-office	Transport	Contract trunk and immediate feeder operators
	Proximity to primary activities	15% of GLA; 30% ESS / ESC	collect per priority area	Cross-subsidised housing with saving from travel & socio-econ value-add	Human Settlement; Treasury; Community Dev	Precinct / Corridor level cost model to determine ratios; eligibility; tenure

SMARTER CITIES: data as a critical GESI tool

FCSA projects shed important light on the relationship between GESI and data. While GESI is often presented as a ‘soft’ (vague, woolly, subjective) discipline in contrast to the ‘hard’ (tangible, technical, objective) realm of technology, this distinction is both distracting and inaccurate. In the end, GESI considerations are often only as good the data they are based on.

The challenges faced by the domain experts is not having visibility of the extent of the problem and the impact of their actions, which links back to data and decision-making
(Delyno Du Toit, City of Cape Town)

DATA GAPS

In some cases, projects were unable to conduct the type or level of analysis desired due to a lack of data, issues in accessing data, and/or data processing capabilities. These shortcomings affected projects’ ability to disaggregate data to answer the kinds of questions raised through using the GESI lens, as well as undertaking more sophisticated systems-level analyses. Good design and planning require better data and evidence on gender and inclusion. There is tremendous need for data that can be meaningfully disaggregated. More specifically:

- **Population:** data categories refined beyond gender and disability (which both tend to problematically be treated as homogenous groups), to include distinct information around characteristics such as low-income backgrounds, single parents, severe impairments, migrants, ethnic/religious minorities, sexual and gender minorities, informal economy workers, etc.
- **Place:** Data on informal settlements exists, but not always in conventional data bases, and often in very incomplete forms.

DATA HIERARCHIES

To enable a GESI perspective, data strategies and data systems (including data architecture, governance, and use-cases) need to be mindful of the fact that data is not neutral. Its collection, analysis, and use all can be influenced by bias.

Further, it is important to recognise data hierarchies; that is, how some sources are considered more valid than others. While great care must be taken in terms of ensuring the validity of data sources, collecting and publicising more data from a greater range of sources (e.g., community-collected data) can increase transparency, eventually influencing policy.

There is a superiority given to official stats [e.g., Stats SA data] in reporting, and there's an inferiority given to anything else. Data collected by a local department, or heaven forbid, community-collected data, is considered inferior, and not accurate in reporting, demonstrating delivery, or project spending.
(Abigail Kemper, EISM project team)

The work here is two-fold: on the one hand, building relationships with people who collect data in different ways (community leadership, NGOs, etc.). On the other, using the data stream to build credible information systems. For example, considering how to include or formalise the use of community datasets to validate Stats SA and other ‘official’ data (e.g., existing city data on ablution blocks). With potential insight into how resources are being used and what the problems are, layering such data (e.g., household count data from settlement leadership) onto existing ‘traditional’ datasets could help cities better plan for and influence entire chains of services and support.

For all the good data can do, it can equally be weaponised to control and monitor vulnerable and marginalised communities. The GESI lens helped project teams to spot this issue, catalysing questions around what data city departments wanted, how it would be used, and issues around consent, privacy, and power relations. It was noted that POPIA offers some protection in this regard.

[Thanks to] POPIA, the City introduced a new consent mechanism—so a form that says what a survey is being used for, and [explaining that] you have rights. That has steered [conversations around] the use of data... for benefit of residents.
(Nick Graham, CTDE project team)

SMARTER CITIES: data as a critical GESI tool (continued)

DATA ANALYSIS

One of the most powerful uses of data vis-a-vis GESI is how it can expose and concretise institutional bias and blind spots. For example, the data collected in Cape Town's EAM use-case revealed that substation malfunction was as much to do with excessive load shedding and severe underspending on preventative maintenance as it was the presumed culprit of illegal connections and vandalism. While not downplaying the issue of illegal activities, the data clarified that substation problems came from multiple causes that remained unrecognised due to prejudice and blind spots ('communities vandalise infrastructure').

Further, data collected for the EAM use-case also showed that preventative and corrective maintenance were not happening due to anecdotal perceptions around the danger of their locations in (poorer) areas. By overlaying data, the project could show where that was true or not, and ultimately could lead to evidence on how to intervene with better service delivery.

Anecdotally there is a sense that vandalism is worse in informal settlements. But seeing the data, I can use the technology to spatially and temporally ask: Is vandalism worse [now than] before the informal settlement was established? And if the City provides formal structures, will vandalism come down? We've embedded these questions [into the system we developed], which allows the City to start asking questions. (Winston Anderson, CTDE project team)



DATA LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

► Data gaps:

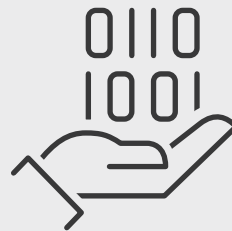
- Lack of disaggregated data
- Limitations of publicly available data (which is not disaggregated)
- Data that captures vulnerable categories beyond gender, age, and disability (i.e., intersectional)
- Data on informal settlements (and new ways of collecting and validating it), including disaggregated data on resident population and data beyond infrastructure services

► Data hierarchies:

- Myopic view of which data is considered "valid"
- Need to explore and support alternative ways of collecting data, especially in informal settlements.
 - Build credible information systems on informal economies
 - Consent around data and protection from abuse (monitoring vulnerable populations)

► Data analysis:

- Lack of skill sets to undertake complicated analysis inhibits level and types of analysis that can be done
- 'Blind spots' and professional/institutional bias
- Share data results/analysis with relevant stakeholders



DATA STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

The CCT suggested the need for an entity to create standards and guidelines around data collection that would also ensure that data is captured to drive GESI outcomes. This includes types of data collected (more diverse attributes and relevant data captured); formats for collection (using specific formats that allow disaggregating); and guidelines around how data is used in decision-making (using data to understand root causes and impact of actions taken). There is also a need for data upskilling in core teams and line departments.

Finally, in the interest of accountability, there is the issue of sharing data. For example, after conducting an informal settlement enumeration, it is good practice to return to the settlement and share the results/analysis with local leadership and the community (also potentially creating the opportunity for community data validation).



A need for disaggregated data

At its core, a GESI lens is a tool to help one see the world differently, to get outside of one's own subjectivity to make connections and question dynamics in new ways. A fundamental learning for which all teams expressed appreciation was the way GESI lens required them to expand the categories informing their notions of who the work they were doing was for, and therefore re-evaluating the data they required to do so. Critically, the explicit articulation of that enhanced understanding also resulted in improved development outcomes.

As a town planner, we do a lot of spatial policy plans, but never really take into account who it affects. So, for me, using the GESI lens, we start to really unpack who we want to deliver what we are proposing to, and how it will affect them... becoming more deliberate in our interventions and proposals. Using the GESI approach disaggregated further what we were doing. We were able to become more intentional in the way we do things. You can't do a tick box exercise when applying GSI lens. (Thuli Ndlovu, JSAF team member)

For projects with clear beneficiaries, the 'who' is a foundational launching point to dig deeper into ever-more nuanced indicators that go beyond questions of whose voice should be heard, and into issues of how interventions will affect different vulnerable and marginalised groups in a multiplicity of ways, from access and affordability, to safety and avoiding displacement. Answering these types of questions, however, requires access to disaggregated data—or data that has been collected with subcategories embedded. For example, instead of just asking how many people use a train service with the standard gender and age disaggregation, including questions around disability, purpose for travel, livelihood questions, ethnicity, level of education, etc., will provide a far more nuanced picture of the needs and realities of metro-riders, and therefore allows the City to service those needs. Here it becomes clear why 'moving on' with technical solutions and then asking these questions defeats the purpose of the latter, as they must be embedded into survey design from the start.

That view about providing quality basic services in a way that is as inclusive as possible, and that data enables us to do that, has pushed us to make better decisions around service delivery, particularly in crisis, but also in long-term planning. (Hugh Cole, City of Cape Town)

LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS: Anchoring GESI

- ▶ **Urban programmes should aim to embed GESI concerns into the tools, systems, and processes they develop** such that cities can take inclusion forward.
- ▶ **The GESI Framework was seen as a helpful tool in articulating GESI principles and outcomes and clarifying different levels of ambition for inclusion. However, its real value comes from project-specific interpretation as a critical step towards applied practice.**
 - Guard against the levels of ambition being used to validate underachieving (i.e., cruising in the minimum standard lane)
 - While the framework presents an iterative model, it is not linear: the levels speak to one another in dynamic and ongoing ways.
 - The 'do no harm' principle provides a critical 'check & balance' to ensure well-intended actions do not inadvertently contribute to, or deepen, exclusion and vulnerability.
- ▶ **One size does not fit all: Project scope and purpose affected how easily GESI was made legible**
 - Projects with clear beneficiaries will have an easier time of identifying and integrating GESI considerations
 - More abstract and technical projects may struggle to articulate GESI initially, but can find meaningful entry points through:
 - Examining data value chain gaps, institutional bias, and expanding appraisals to encompass considerations beyond the economic
 - Need for bespoke technical input and orientation that speaks to each project's specific concerns and questions
 - All projects can make GESI ubiquitous in practical processes (SOPs, KPIs, evidence-based mechanisms)
- ▶ **Disaggregated data is key to asking more nuanced questions and executing complex GESI analyses**
 - Exposes the problem with "moving on" with technical solutions (and formulating more nuanced questions later)

4 Leveraging expertise for embedding GESI: The human factor

Having discussed the practical, technical aspects of embedding GESI (i.e., the levels of ambition framework; project-specific technical input; the need to embed GESI in practical processes; and issues around data), we now turn to the human factor. That is, how to leverage expertise in the interest of achieving GESI intentions, based on a shared understanding of GESI at project, programme, and institutional levels.

Globally, concerns with how to institutionalise or mainstream GESI in programmes, systems, and initiatives have led to different responses, one of which (and commonly pursued in South African municipalities) is to set up a dedicated structure/position, such as a gender desk or a youth development officer. In many instances, the establishment of these specialist structures (often under-resourced) has paradoxically contributed to the marginalisation of the issues they were meant to elevate.

The FCSA was very intentional in making GESI everyone's responsibility and supporting technical teams in applying and re-evaluating their technical expertise in the interest of GESI. The programme found that to consciously, consistently, and effectively embed GESI, a number of **prerequisites need to be in place**, all of which are predicated on a shared concept of GESI:

- A shared appreciation (between cities and project teams) that GESI is relevant to the work;
- A commitment (from partner Cities and project teams) to explicitly explore what the relevant GESI considerations are, and how the project can best incorporate those issues;
- The technical skill and know-how to embed GESI considerations in the work.

Influencing the human factor—laying the foundations for receptivity to, and active pursuit of, GESI—is not a paint by numbers kind of exercise. That said, the FCSA experience, involving multiple projects focused on different themes across three cities, offers some foundational guidelines for effectively engaging people and supporting their GESI journeys.

Creating common ground: Scoping & inception issues

Creating common ground around GESI throughout programme implementation will be additionally challenging if broader misunderstandings and/or misalignments of expectations (unrelated to GESI) exist. From the initial strategic development phases of a programme (i.e., when proposals are being prepared), through to its scoping and inception phases, clarity around a programme's ultimate objectives, goals, and theory of change should be crystal clear. In other words, from the beginning of involvement, all partners and stakeholders should understand and agree on who the programme is for, and what its long-term vision is. It is against these larger goalposts that individual project choices are then measured and made, with workstreams integrated and aligned accordingly.

While the need for consensus may seem obvious in principle, the reality is that developing and implementing largescale, multi-stakeholder programmes like the FCSA takes time and involves a large and often shifting cast of characters. Those involved in original programme inception may not be involved at implementation; similarly, within a project's timeline, teams can change and grow. Such sub-optimal predictabilities need to be scaffolded through a well-established theory of change that all involved express commitment to from the start, and that is continually reaffirmed through a clear mechanism for transferring responsibility and understanding to new arrivals to the programme.

Speaking more specifically to GESI within the FCSA programme experience, although it was positioned as a key element within the original programme terms of reference from the FCDO, feedback demonstrates that issues with initial scoping of GESI within programme development, followed by changes in who executed the GESI Lead role in inception versus implementation, impacted on how GESI was understood and pursued. These two early factors led to project teams and cities not being fully alive to the implications and possibilities of GESI, contributed to the view of GESI as an 'added burden', and created internal confusion about how best to integrate community-based and more technical workstreams. In sum, the programme would have been enriched if the GESI elements and requirements had been set out further in the scoping phase.

Given the very technical orientations of many of the projects, making GESI a meaningful reference was perhaps always going to be challenging. However, for future programmes, the lesson from FCSA is that there is a fundamental need for an aligned and integrated strategy with agreed scope and scale designed-in from the beginning to ensure cohesion around expectations around GESI in general, and the community/stakeholder participation within projects in particular. Future projects should spell out how the connections should work (e.g., between stakeholder engagement/community participation/and building in other GESI elements) into the outputs.

Roles & responsibilities

‘Mainstreaming’ GESI means making it a normative, ubiquitous, and shared responsibility. Acknowledging that most teams setting out to embed GESI into their work will not be operating in a context in which GESI is already mainstreamed (and most likely will also have differing levels of receptivity within the teams themselves), we look at key roles and responsibilities and how to support the interplay between stakeholders for uptake of GESI.

Project teams

The premise of FCSA was that to effectively embed GESI in its various projects, responsibility for doing so had to be decentralised; in other words, executed by project teams themselves, rather than by an external ‘GESI specialist’, who in all likelihood would not be a subject specialist. Project teams assumed responsibility in different ways: in some cases assigning a dedicated ‘GESI champion’, in other instances having the Project Lead fill the role. This champion wasn’t responsible for the technical interpretation or application of GESI concerns in all project processes and deliverables (although s/he might do so for some aspects of the project), but rather was expected to ensure that GESI remained high on the project team’s agenda, and to draw in the Programme’s GESI Lead as and when needed.

Dedicated GESI support

This brings us to the critical role of GESI support. FCSA project teams were provided with dedicated GESI support, in the form of the GESI Programme Lead. Introducing project teams to the GESI Framework (levels of ambition), the Lead’s first job was to ensure that teams had a consistent and thorough understanding of GESI concepts and principles. Going on to iteratively review all project workplans, activities, and deliverables, the Lead worked with projects until GESI considerations were adequately and appropriately reflected in all deliverables, providing additional guidance if and when teams struggled to surface GESI in practical and tangible forms.

As with the framework, GESI Lead support was cited as vital to the project teams’ ability to understand and translate GESI principles practically. Despite an initial expectation (from project teams) that the GESI Lead might straddle strategic (programme level) and operational (contributing to project documents) support, it quickly became clear that

this was not feasible, nor desirable. Redefined as a **purely strategic, ‘quality control’ role**, the Lead—critically—was not involved in day-to-day operations. A choice that explicitly decentralised responsibility for GESI, it pushed project teams to take ownership for the nitty gritty of making GESI visible and coherent within their respective workstreams, with the GESI Lead playing a supportive and, where necessary, corrective rather than operational role.

A final point to be considered here is the question of **whether the GESI Lead role requires technical expertise at the project level**. All GESI facilitators come with their own expertise and focus, and it is important that the GESI Lead can translate and apply their conceptual models to relevant programmatic subject matter—in this case, urban development, governance, management, and systems-level support. While translation does not require expertise in each subject, it does necessitate familiarity with the relevant GESI issues within a given workstream. For example, for the FCSA programme’s more abstract data systems work, the GESI Lead found she needed to research the current, relevant contextual issues and debates in order to provide the prompts that helped project teams advance their GESI agenda.

I saw my role as asking the questions and putting the issues on table so the team could grapple with it. So it wasn’t necessarily for me to come up with the technical solution, but to say, if institutional bias is an issue around data systems, how does that apply to your work? What does it mean in terms of data custodians and users in the city? And what does that mean for representation, institutional bias, and blind spots? (Mirjam van Donk, FCSA GESI Lead)

The GESI journey

When introducing the GESI approach to any group of people, it is critical to acknowledge that everyone will arrive at their own starting point, and that no matter where one begins, adopting the change mindset that underlies the GESI approach is a journey. And while it is normal for any innovation to meet with some degree of resistance, GESI brings the added dimension of subjectivity—both in terms of people’s own views about its importance or relevance, as well as judgments and misunderstandings about the discipline being “soft”.

Misunderstanding & resistance

On that note, it’s useful to distinguish between misunderstanding (‘not quite getting it’) and resistance. Many FCSA team members had not previously been exposed to such a level of effort to embed GESI and didn’t quite know what it meant for their work or project. As has been mentioned, the real learning curve with GESI only happens in ‘the doing’; that is, until one grapples with translating GESI principles into actual workstreams and outputs, it can remain difficult to grasp. The FCSA programme was no different to start, but saw remarkable growth across three years, with teams not only becoming more aware as time went on and the relevance of the concepts became clearer, but also expressing genuine commitment and even passionate conviction in terms of how the GESI lens deepened and improved their work.

Resistance, by contrast, comes from many places (including misunderstanding). Within the context of urban development work, where relatively heavy administrative and bureaucratic requirements can already feel unwieldy, GESI can strike many people as an “add-on” or something that will demand “additional” resources, and resistance to that is to be expected. Then there are ideological hurdles: “people have different beliefs about how change happens and what change is necessary,” notes GESI Lead, van Donk, explaining that in the context of urban development work, an economist may be less likely to engage with a project’s social implications, both because of lack of exposure to such ideas, but also due to differing foundational notions about how development works. In other words, people come to GESI with varying beliefs about how ‘valid’ it is and what inclusion means.

How deeply they are willing to engage—whether debating ideas or investing time in trying to surface GESI in their work—is thus likely to be in direct proportion to beliefs about its legitimacy. Such an orientation can also manifest in a tendency to prioritise technical components first, and ask distributional outcome questions (Who benefits? Who bears the brunt of the costs?) later. While not outright resistance, this habit of **deferring GESI** speaks to a general reflexive perception that sees GESI as detracting from other (primary) purposes, rather than appreciating it as an essential part of urban development that in fact enhances and improves all other outcomes.

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Meet people where they are: Establish a baseline understanding

Although the FCSA Programme clearly focused on broadly encompassing, transformative goals, FCSA project team members all approached GESI from different starting points, each bringing their own orientation and varying levels of appreciation for the importance of GESI. Comprised of numerous roles and backgrounds (from engineers and data scientists to social facilitators, economists, and spatial planners), teams exhibited divergences of opinion about GESI—how relevant it was, how to surface its considerations within the work, how far to go with it, etc.

For teams engaging directly with external stakeholders and community groups (including GESI groups), the relevance of making GESI issues visible and tangible was clear and relatively straightforward. Here, the challenge became one of where to draw the line: if we understand that vulnerability is intersectional and that the broad categories of women, youth, and people with disability are often not adequate to fully appreciate vulnerability and exclusion, how far should one go in one's identification of 'vulnerable groups'? Also, challenges around 'contested knowledge' did arise: that is, the more sources of knowledge were considered (including from community groups), the more the primacy of any one perspective (including from 'technical experts') was challenged.

Meanwhile, project teams often worked both simultaneously and consecutively on different aspects or workstreams within a bigger offering, sometimes bringing on specialists (who had not participated in the more foundational GESI dialogues) for a particular component of the work. This sometimes raised further tensions around prioritisation of workstreams, how far to go with community/stakeholder consultations, and a drive to 'move on' with technical solutions such that 'the GESI part'—or laying the groundwork for understanding distributional and social questions that may ultimately influence efficacy of technical solutions—was deferred. (See 'Creating Common Ground' on page 17).

An iterative pedagogy

Probably the biggest take-away from the FCSA programme in terms of cementing the concepts of GESI among a diverse audience is that it is an **iterative pedagogical process**, requiring constant engagement to translate principles into technical parameters and specifications—both through real-time conversations and through collaborative work on documents—and only becomes clear as people grapple with how to embed it within their workstreams. Requiring input, guidance, review and, more often than not, course-correction, the earlier such checks are done, the better (see Methodology, Section 5, for more).

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LEARNINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS: Leveraging expertise

- ▶ **Institutionalising, or embedding, GESI means marrying dedicated strategic GESI support with assigned project-level responsibility**
 - Dedicated, strategic GESI support is required over the long term
 - Support on GESI should come in the scoping phase of each deliverable and process, and be iteratively repeated as required.
 - Project teams should see GESI as ‘everyone’s’ responsibility, while also assigning a champion or custodian to ensure it remains on the agenda.
 - Demonstrate to teams how they are already ‘doing’ GESI
 - How a GESI lens provides language to discuss issues that are already being considered or work that is already being done within an urban context
- ▶ **It’s a journey:**
 - Addressing misunderstanding & breaking down resistance:
 - Many people will initially view GESI as “additional”, “soft”, and/or detracting from the “main” (technical) work
 - Beneficial to understand that GESI should not increase workload and the need for resources in a considerable way if integrated into the project design from the beginning
 - Anticipate tensions between a drive to “move on” with technical solutions, and the need to lay the groundwork for understanding distributional and social questions that may ultimately influence efficacy of those solutions
 - Meet people where they are:
 - A diverse team will not have an initial shared understanding of GESI
 - Debates around ‘contested knowledge’ and ‘how far to go’ are part of the process
 - You cannot wait for people to be “receptive”, but rather need to move forward and “bake in” as much possibility for change as is possible within the product commissioned
- ▶ **Understanding cannot be rushed or forced, and comes through iterative engagement (the “doing”), trial and error**



5 The methodology: An iterative process

Connecting the technical tools and frameworks, and the roles and responsibilities, was an iterative methodology or process. Based on consistent communication and regularly scheduled engagements, the FCSA process also utilised phased reviews of deliverables, and a scorecard to highlight project progress towards planned GESI actions.

Regular engagements, iterative processes, and formal reviews

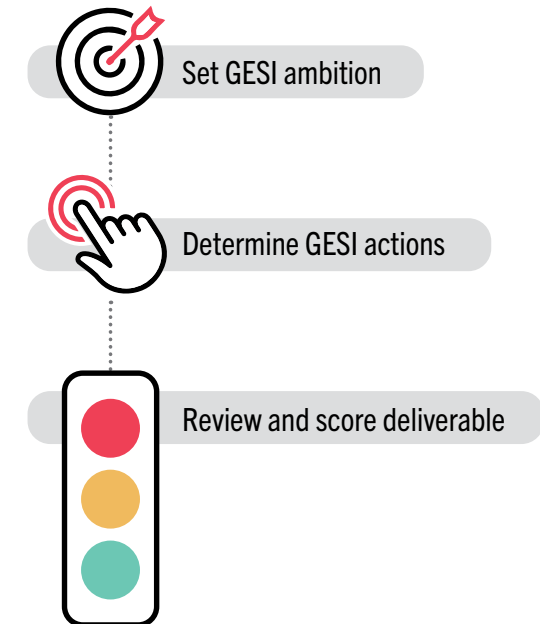
From a process perspective, the GESI Lead began by meeting with each project team to establish a **baseline understanding** about what GESI is, and to **flag resistance**. Moving forward, the Lead ascertained project members' understanding and willingness to engage with GESI, ultimately providing reference points for teams to work out what GESI would mean in the context of each project. The development of project-specific interpretations of the GESI Framework was a central part of this initial process.

From there, monthly meetings with Project Leads and constant iterative reviews of project activity plans, TORs, and deliverables allowed the GESI Lead to keep tabs on project progress towards GESI goals, and ensure that GESI considerations were robust and spoke to sometimes quite abstract project objectives (e.g., those focused on more technical and/or systems-level interventions). One of the early lessons in the programme was that the GESI Lead should not only come in to review 'work in progress' (e.g., draft deliverables), but rather be brought into the scoping of work and deliverables, as this is the opportune moment to identify and frame relevant GESI considerations.

The FCSA programme also developed an **internal scorecard** against which to measure GESI deliverables, helping to concretise and clearly measure project progress (especially for intangible elements). While many team members noted the scorecard's utility in tracking progress, others found its direct link to individual deliverables confining. Clearly, some deliverables did not lend themselves to the scorecard's assessment (e.g., a PPT or minutes from a meeting), and in other cases, GESI 'success' was more about the cumulative impact of project deliverables, rather than an individual deliverable. Notwithstanding such limitations, the scorecard proved valuable as a tool intended to hold up a mirror to project teams at a moment when revision of a deliverable was still possible.

Critically, the FCSA programme convened quarterly **learning events/workshops**, which brought together programme leadership and project teams. Every learning event included a session on GESI. Not only did this signal the importance given to GESI in the programme, it also created a valued opportunity for reflection and peer learning on efforts to embed GESI across highly diverse projects.

Critically, the FCSA programme convened quarterly **learning events/workshops**, which brought together programme leadership and project teams. Every learning event included a session on GESI.



Communication is vital

While certain engagements for contact between the GESI Lead and teams were set—quarterly workshops with teams, monthly meetings with Project Leads—not all team members attended all sessions, making exposure to GESI accordingly variable. The expectation that those who attended regular engagements would share back with the larger team also varied:

This decentralised model for GESI assumes the team lead would make sure the rest of the team knew, and would ask for help if needed, and that didn't always happen as it could have. So there were gaps in that sense of bringing people on board and ownership, and being clear that even if you engage with people once, they may not fully participate, or get it for this deliverable or process, and next time they still haven't quite figured out what [GESI] means or have forgotten.
(Mirjam van Donk, FCSA GESI Lead)

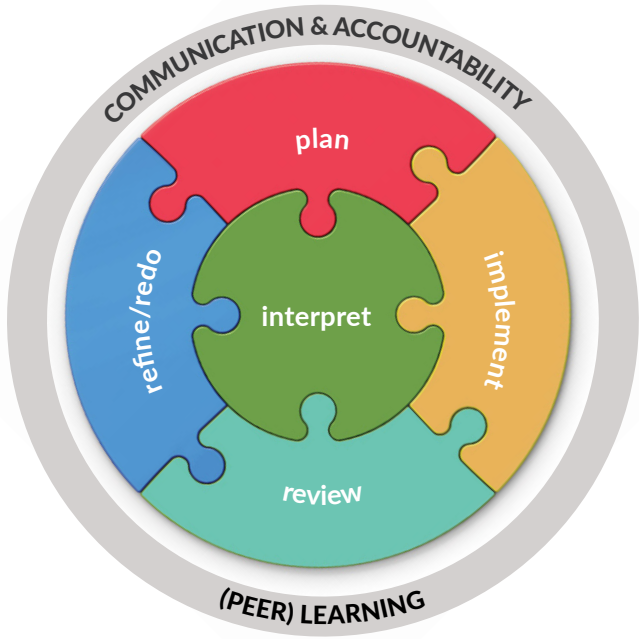
Additionally, teams weren't static—some people moved on over the 2-3 years of the project; or as work changed, different resources were brought in. For all of these reasons, having **a clear mechanism to share learnings and/or to induct new team members** would be helpful.

Regular in-person contact (via workshops and meetings) between project teams and the GESI Lead were cited as vital to meaningful uptake of GESI within projects. Physical distancing required by Covid negatively impacted the ability to communicate at the deeper and more nuanced level engendered by face-to-face communications, but with that said, online meetings allowed teams to maintain regular contact, with the added bonus of reducing costs and building in more flexibility. Post-pandemic, teams continued to make use of online and hybrid options for meetings if/when in-person meetings were impossible. In addition to meetings (in-person or online), regular communication and engagement via the GESI Lead's review of action TORs, deliverables, reports, etc. also proved incredibly helpful to deepening and cementing understanding of GESI among team members. Many FCSA partners spoke of GESI as something one learns by doing—that is, through engagement, mistakes, honest feedback, and iteration.

Physical distancing required by Covid negatively impacted the ability to communicate at the deeper and more nuanced level engendered by face-to-face communications, but with that said, online meetings allowed teams to maintain regular contact, with the added bonus of reducing costs and building in more flexibility.

LEARNINGS: The methodology

- ▶ Consistent communication is vital
- ▶ Review of work and deliverables is key at scoping phases, and should continue throughout the project
- ▶ A clear mechanism to share learnings and/or to induct new team members would be helpful



6 The Cities

Before discussing what the FCSA programme accomplished vis-à-vis embedding GESI, it is worth revisiting the programme's scope and remit. That is, to support cities' pursuit of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and reduced gender and social inequality. As such, FCSA primarily concerned itself with developing the tools, systems, capabilities, and mindsets to allow the cities—ultimately the programme's primary actors—to bring about intended GESI outcomes.

Additionally, from the outset, the FCSA programme was envisioned as one in which cities (the partner/client) and FCSA programme teams (consultants/technical experts) would co-create solutions—be it tools, models, documents, or processes—that the cities would then take forward and operationalise post-the programme. In other words, FCSA wasn't intending to develop and implement interventions aimed at economic empowerment of women or informal economic actors, for example; rather, it built that ambition into its models and vision (e.g., ETOD scenarios, the Soweto Area Framework project list) for respective Cities to implement.

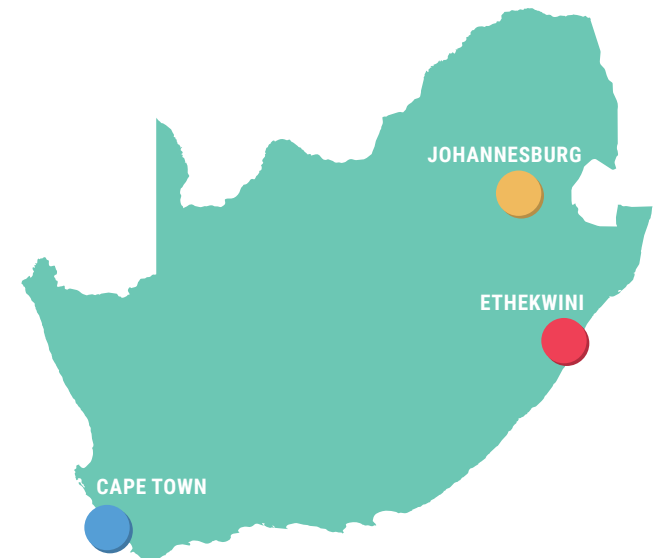
Sharing GESI lessons with cities

While the Cities generally welcomed the FCSA's co-creation approach, engagement remained largely confined to the development of commissioned technical products, and a sense of co-creation around GESI specifically did not come through as well as hoped. However, interviews for this Learning Brief suggested that City counterparts were in fact extremely open to more learning around GESI, and that the sharing mechanisms between project teams and Cities were partly to blame for Cities being 'left behind' on the GESI journey.

For example, while FCSA teams kept track of their own GESI progress through mechanisms like the regularly updated project activity TORs, reviews of deliverables, and quarterly workshops, resulting documents and insights—though significant and impactful for project teams learning how to 'do' GESI—were not consistently shared with the Cities. In other words, while project teams were expected to make GESI an explicit reference point in their engagements with City counterparts, more often than not, this sharing was not experienced as such by the Cities. That said, while there was a general recognition that more sharing would have been ideal, it was also noted that such an exercise would only have made sense had the Cities been more involved in giving guidance on GESI ambitions/outcomes from the beginning.

Potentially that was a gap, something that could have been stronger in terms of making sure the Cities constantly saw how G&SI was connecting with the programme. They were alive and alert to the constant expectation that we strengthen G&SI in our projects, but often didn't understand the work that was happening behind the scenes. So, our City and Project Leads were well placed to make sure the cities fully understood our programme, not just the deliverables and products we were creating for them, but what our change agenda was for each of these projects (Nishendra Moodley, FCSA Team Leader)

While the Cities generally welcomed the FCSA's co-creation approach, engagement remained largely confined to the development of commissioned technical products, and a sense of co-creation around GESI specifically did not come through as well as hoped.



Although the programme originally envisaged more explicit City engagements on GESI in its final year as projects geared towards institutionalisation and handover, funding constraints unfortunately curtailed that close-out process, also affecting planned GESI City engagements. Nonetheless, given the overall success of the GESI process within FCSA project teams, a recommendation for future programmes is that a similar process (of intentionally pursuing embedding GESI actions and outcomes) is undertaken with partner cities.

City variability

Finally, it is important to note that each partner City's capacity, interests, local context, and relationships with the programme's target populations, affected how GESI was taken onboard. Equally important were the interests and orientations of individuals within City departments and units. In the end, how much emphasis City counterparts provided on GESI was influenced largely by how they understood the ultimate purpose of their FCSA projects, and the role of GESI in that purpose. In other words, the degree to which Cities engaged in GESI issues was found to be proportionate to how valid or important City counterparts viewed GESI more broadly (returning to the question of 'resistance' and 'misunderstanding'). The fact that these individuals did not have the benefit of joining the 'GESI learning journey' that the project teams undertook meant that it was hard(er) for them to change their perspective. This observation underscores the overall value of the FCSA approach and methodology to embed GESI (given the impactful nature experienced by project teams), but also why aligned expectations from inception are so important to successful uptake of GESI, and equally why a system-wide policy or city framework around GESI is critical.

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LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS: Co-Creating GESI

- ▶ Cities need to be custodians of GESI ambitions and as such the relevance of GESI to a particular project or initiative needs to be made evident to address misunderstanding and/or resistance (e.g., using the GESI Framework to interpret what the different levels of ambitions mean with reference to a specific project)
- ▶ The transfer of GESI skills/knowledge from the FCSA project teams to City counterparts wasn't as strong as hoped
 - Cities and project teams should co-create GESI ambitions and concretise those ambitions in terms of specific GESI actions from project inception
 - GESI should be an explicit agenda item for project meetings with City counterparts, to ensure visibility of GESI ambitions and that issues of interpretation/application can be jointly explored

7 Institutionalisation: Legacies, mainstreaming & room to grow

As FCSA concludes, the question now is what GESI legacy the programme—whose broad ambition was to use urban development to support inclusive economic development in South Africa—will leave for Cities to take forward, and how well equipped are the Cities to continue advancing GESI ambitions, post the programme?

The GESI legacy: Maintaining momentum

Cities may have initially seen the FCSA projects as delivery vehicles for specific, pragmatic tools and systems, whether concerned with area-based economic development, transit-oriented development, or data systems. However, the FCDO and FCSA project teams always intended for the programme to leave Cities with the modalities of working that will continue to advance inclusion. That is, with systems, tools, and mindsets that, taken together, may ultimately overcome spatial and socio-economic exclusion by strengthening assets, capabilities, and opportunities for women and marginalised groups (i.e., the GESI level of ambition of empowerment).

In addition to the project tools and systems in which GESI considerations were embedded (See GESI Legacy, page 28), the programme tried to ensure that aspects of GESI that for whatever reason could not be realised within the programme's three years, would still have room to flourish. This was done in two ways: 1) through conscious design of systems with built-in scope for GESI considerations to expand as projects evolve; and 2) through embedding GESI within decision-making tools, such that it is core to appraisal processes, with related trade-offs made explicit.

Built-in scope for incremental GESI expansion

Several FCSA projects initially tied GESI aspirations to the use of 'external' data sources, including community-collected and -validated data. When those data sources could not be accommodated within the programme period, project teams responded strategically, designing modular data systems that could encompass a broader array of (third-party) data sources in the future, and baking in processes to encourage cities to continue augmenting and expanding GESI ambitions.

As ISIMs develops further, then we can really start to consider datasets that speak to GESI. Once we have an MVP up and running, we can move to an enhanced solution, automate certain datasets and processes, and start to look at inclusion of other datasets that speak to access to economic opportunities, community services, etc. We accounted for that in our design of ISIMs and tech specifications: being modular and allowing for new datasets to be fed in in the future. That allows us to over time to increase our GESI level of ambition as we progress. We haven't forgotten about it, we put it in.
(Paul Jones, EISM project team)

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Tools for decision-making and understanding trade-offs

In addition to designing in scope for expansion of GESI ambition, FCSA teams attempted to make GESI a key consideration for future City decision-making, whether around prioritising projects or use-cases for operationalisation, or adding GESI considerations in as part of standard operating procedures related to approvals processes. In other words, attempting to ensure that GESI becomes a fundamental part of internal checks and balances.

For ETOD I think there is a solid basis to work from. For EISMs, although the project itself did not get to all the necessary detail, there is a lot of existing work that lays a good foundation. (Jo Douwes, eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality)

We delivered a mechanism of how to choose use-cases, and GESI is in that. When there is all this need—all these line departments and different functions in the city requesting data strategy interventions—which ones do you choose? The framework hopefully will prioritise the ones that are more GESI relevant. (Richard Gevers, Project Lead CTDE)

A critical part of decision-making is having the tools to assess the trade-offs involved in any given decision. One of the key values of having GESI embedded in project

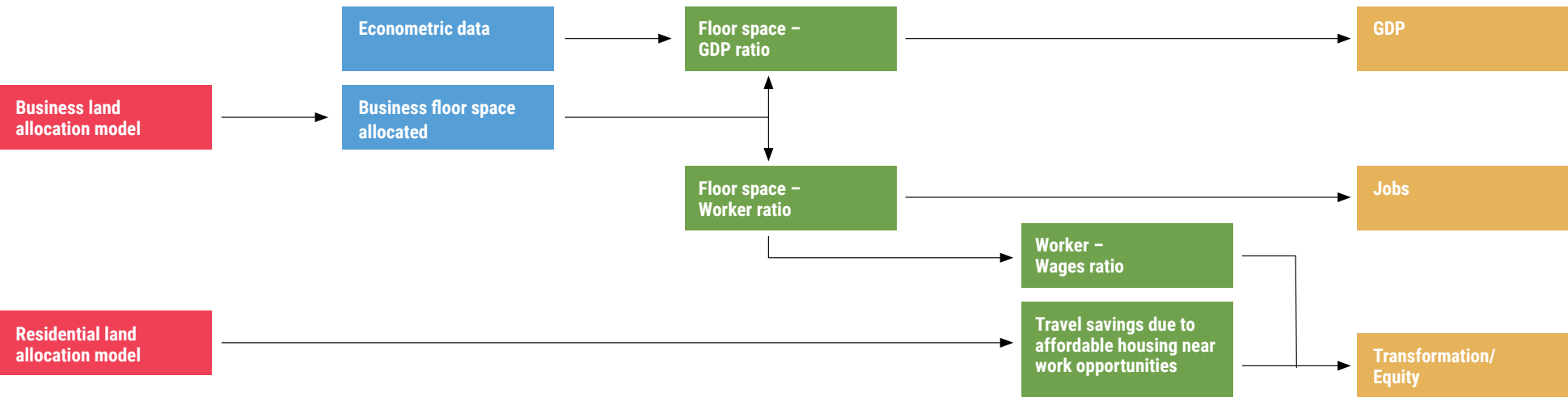
tools is that it starts to make some of the trade-offs, both in decision-making and technically, more visible.

The intention of the economic component of the FCSA deliverables was to enhance City decision making and make it more effective and inclusive for the citizens of Cape Town. The appraisal framework helps us to think a lot more about benefits in general and where we place weight on things. The use of multicriteria analysis definitely provides avenues to score and weight issues around inclusivity and targets on transformation. But embedding it as standard metrics is still a bridge that's a bit far at this stage. We're still introducing this methodology... it's a process. (Paul Court, City of Cape Town)

Understanding the trade-offs of inclusivity is key to moving beyond business as usual, but having the tools to make appraisals is just the first step. As numerous FCSA team members pointed out, budget constraints are the enemy of the kinds of deep engagements that underlie a GESI approach, and so while the tools to make the trade-offs visible are there, the question is, will they be used to support GESI?

The tools we have developed will inform the City of the cost and benefit implications of doing the right thing. It is therefore the City management's decision how much they could afford to advance G&SI. (Francois Botes, ETOD Project Lead)

Figure 5: Socio-economic Value Model



The GESI legacy: FCSA core projects tools and processes

CTDE

- ▶ The team provided inputs into the CCT Draft Inclusion Framework, which the City developed to accompany its Data Strategy.
- ▶ A project on the ability to pay for municipal services focused on low-income and poor households and provided key insights race and gender.
- ▶ The Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) project (to guide city decision making on large infrastructure projects) identified cost/benefit categories per case and explicitly focused on distributional impacts. It produced a good practice document outlining social and environmental tools to complement CBA analysis as well as a document on shadow pricing.
- ▶ Spatial economics: consideration of data gaps, deliberation processes, value of spatial economics in spatial transformation
- ▶ To support the implementation of the City's Data Strategy, use-cases were selected. The selection of (future) use-cases is guided by an impact frame, which is informed by GESI considerations. The three use-cases (on informal settlements remuneration, electricity asset management and project appraisal) were framed and interpreted through a GESI lens.
- ▶ In the data capabilities training events for city officials, explicit attention was paid to GESI in both the content (engaging with relevant considerations related to inclusion) and in reach (ensuring fair representation in the room).
- ▶ In the development of data forms, consideration was given to data gaps and data equity (especially in the informal settlements use-case)
- ▶ The 'do no harm' principle was supported by the application of the Protection of Personal Information Act to protect personal information gathered during enumeration activities.

JSAF/SSAF/JCED

- ▶ SSAF informed by disaggregated data that helped to shape proposed interventions
- ▶ SSAF informed by direct engagements with community groups, including GESI groups
- ▶ SSAF report includes a section upfront that spells out the importance of GESI, its relevance to the project (or Soweto) and the lessons learnt through the process
- ▶ GESI was included as an agenda item, and issues were discussed in Cluster meetings
- ▶ After each Cluster meeting, the attendance was reflected on and the team asked the question "who was no in the room".
- ▶ The toolbox does not only focus on Capital Projects but also community-level projects that target GSI
- ▶ Small-scale rental:
 - The small-scale rental workstream was informed by the SSAF finding that landowners in the study area are disproportionately female, unemployed, functionally illiterate and elderly. Many rely on their backyard units as their only form of income. Thus, the need to support them to understand the value of their land as an asset.
 - The 'do no harm' principle informed the design of the small-scale rental pilot. In particular the team was mindful that intervention in a highly congested and oversubscribed rental market may inadvertently result in greater displacement, particularly poorer households living in backyard shacks. Therefore, the selected precinct had a lower backyarding intensity.
 - Survey was designed with GESI in mind. Questions regarding possible displacement were included and tenant/landlord vulnerabilities were recorded.
- ▶ ABCD:
 - The criteria for the 28 champions were tailored to target marginalised groups that were identified during the SSAF (unemployed youths)
 - Interventions/projects that are considered 'low-hanging fruit' (a SSAF identified project that matches the assets available in the community) that have GESI impact were highlighted.
 - Areas for improved social accountability were identified.

The GESI legacy: FCSA core projects tools and processes

J4IR

- ▶ Context report on urban mobility in Johannesburg identified issues such as accessibility, affordability, safety, and passenger journeys as key GESI considerations
- ▶ International and local trends reports identified how traditionally excluded groups can be better incorporated into the urban mobility system and how 4IR can worsen socio-economic fault lines
- ▶ Scenario development to identify drivers and opportunities for change (in terms of using 4IR for urban mobility) was framed around GESI considerations
- ▶ 4IR Disrupters Engagement Day focused on identifying solutions for different social groups and the distributional impacts of 4IR
- ▶ A multicriteria assessment framework was developed to assess interventions; equity (safety, gender, and social inclusion) was one of these criteria.
- ▶ Three of the five high impact areas identified were: the passenger journey, data-driven mobility, and safety and inclusion; GESI was critical to the framing of these impact areas
- ▶ Roadmap on 4IR and mobility in Johannesburg identified mobility interventions focused on GESI opportunities, e.g.
 - Data-driven transport planning, with data collection specifically focused on different transport-related needs and use by different social groups (including access, accessibility, affordability, safety)
 - Include GESI datasets in the CoJ's revised Travel Demand Management Strategy
 - A citizen-based fault reporting tool to identify transport operational efficiencies and safety concerns in/around stations, transit areas, and bus stops

EISM/ISIMS

- ▶ Workshops were undertaken with representatives from informal settlements as inputs into development of user profiles for EISM/ISIMS.
- ▶ Data that is important in ensuring better GESI in informal settlement planning was identified and captured in the Technical Specifications, and will be included in future phases of EISM/ISIMS (datasets relating to incremental services have been prioritised).

ETOD

- ▶ Drawing on the GESI Framework for ETOD, specific GESI principles for TOD with associated approaches and outcomes were developed; these principles and outcomes (e.g. affordability, safety, prevention of displacement) were translated into technical parameters, specifications (target values) and key interventions.
- ▶ GESI considerations have been embedded in the technical underpinnings to inform precinct selection for TOD:
 - The Land Housing Transport model makes socio-economic trade-offs visible, which allows the City to make informed choices (in terms of scenario selection). More specifically, the model includes:
 - The role of lower income housing within the precinct
 - Considerations to minimise travel to land uses that house lower income jobs
 - Land use & building plan applications includes a component on equity & growth scores and on soft infrastructure (which enables a focus on human scale)
 - An Inclusive Development Workstream (under the TOD Transversal Working Group) is established by the City.

Institutionalisation: Room to grow

The work that carries on from the FCSA programme sits with the Cities, and how well GESI is applied to that work will rely on a few key things. First, how well municipalities mainstream GESI. Second, Cities being willing and able to find and use new platforms for social facilitation that genuinely bring communities into development work across phases in meaningful ways.

Mainstreaming GESI means it is everyone's responsibility

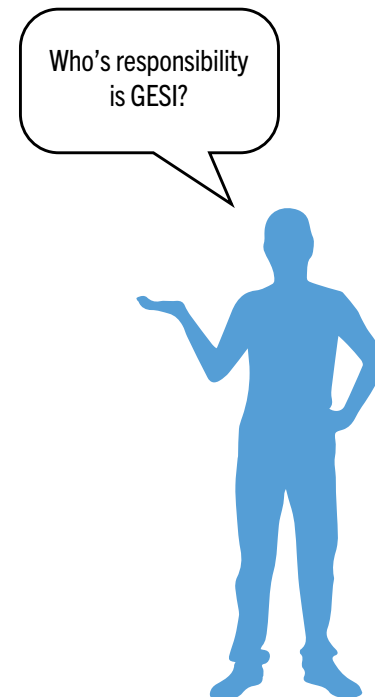
Having acknowledged the above, the question remains: where in the Cities does responsibility for GESI sit? While there is a satisfying tidiness to the notion of a unit or a desk (an idea mentioned by numerous FCSA team members and City partners alike), GESI is too vast and too important a function to effectively exist in compartmentalized space. Because a desk or unit can never encompass all that would be required for GESI to be meaningfully institutionalised, the role inevitably erodes from that of an expert called in to integrate a broader understanding of social change and transformation in everything the City does, to something more like a public relations or political function (e.g., hosting women's day events or youth month activities, etc.). Additionally, from a practical perspective, placing responsibility for something as broad (and conceptually kaleidoscopic) as GESI at a single individual's feet makes the function vulnerable to human churn on one hand, and on the other, runs into the problem of specialist knowledge (or lack thereof):

As directorates, we are very cognisant of the importance of GESI. However... the risk is that the next person that hasn't been privy to this process of FCSA would not consider or know the importance of this work. So as a City we need to elevate this work into a more institutionalised and city-based approach.
(Mbalenhle Chemane, City of Johannesburg)

While it is simple enough to say that GESI is "everyone's responsibility", the work of institutionalisation involves clarifying across City departments and units what GESI means, and how the institution views it with regards to roles and responsibilities, and expectations around ownership and accountability. In an ideal world, this would happen in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, involving the entire institution from leadership through to junior team members. The reality will be messier and more piecemeal. That said, the FCSA projects' practical application of and engagement with GESI considerations offer a rich entry point to intentionally kickstart that mainstreaming process.

Defining roles and standards

While mutual ownership means GESI does not sit outside of a given project or unit, from a practical perspective, it is advisable that projects choose an individual 'custodian' (e.g., from the business unit leading the work, the project lead, or a team member with the interest or relevant expertise) who will ensure that GESI considerations remain visible and on the team's agenda (for example, including GESI in every project's TORs).



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While such project custodians are there to keep everyone mindful, the GESI consideration ultimately still needs to be understood by the whole project team, meaning everyone is tasked with asking who benefits, how they benefit, and who gets left out or disproportionately affected by whatever the project seeks to do. It also means each technical team member needs to be clear about how they could/should embed GESI into their technical components, and if they are unsure, they need to reach out to request additional support, which is where institutional capacity comes in.

At the **institutional level**, future programmes and deliverables would benefit from greater visibility and coherence around GESI in the form of **dedicated strategic capacity** to support teams as they conceptualise, embed, and implement GESI deliverables. Here, the FCSA's decentralised approach offers a sound model. That is, each project was responsible for implementing GESI (with some projects opting to assign a GESI custodian), but the GESI Lead was always on hand to support and guide the team as needed.

What dedicated capacity looks like will vary according to each City's (or institution, organisation, urban programme) context and internal capacity, but whatever shape it takes, it would be an **internally based** function that **ensures consistency and maintenance of GESI knowledge and practice** across the institution, unpacking how to **coordinate between various units** to aid cross-cutting flow. It would require **dedicated GESI expertise** (in the form of a person or persons), but, as with the FCSA Programme, the role would be **strategic** (versus operational), **cross-cutting**, and ideally would sit at a **leadership level** (e.g., the City manager's office, IDP office, etc). If a City lacks the necessary expertise internally, the other option would be to build this incrementally, for example by creating a resource panel across the City, using people from different departments with relevant expertise, or outsourcing a consultant on a short- to medium-term basis. Ultimately, and critically, the function needs to be executed internally, as inclusion and gender equity are core to a City's mandate and responsibility.

It is having assigned strategic responsibility that is looking at outcomes and applications, and supporting teams and units to do that. But at the same time being clear that this is ultimately about societal transformation, and this type of development is everyone's responsibility: as an institution, as a city, it is all of our responsibility to ensure inclusive development.

(Mirjam van Donk, FCSA GESI Lead)

As with the embedding of GESI within FCSA projects, the institutionalising of GESI in Cities will happen through consistent engagement with the questions, through the defining of roles, and through the hard, sometimes messy, and always iterative work of trial and error.

When we started with [GESI]... there was a lot of discussion, no one could put a finger on it. But as the program progressed, we had updates on standards, roles, and the projects getting better alignment around GESI, and the City departments were more aware. So getting those standards and roles defined in the city will allow for better outcomes. Really it's a function of maturity. I think as time moves on, as roles get defined better, as we have better standards around data, better oversight and an entity from a data perspective, you'll have better outcomes in terms of GESI.

(Moeneeb Abass, City of Cape Town)

As with any change management, GESI requirements will be “relatively meaningless if not something that those in leadership positions are constantly thinking about and called to question”, as Nishendra Moodley points out. In other words, someone in leadership needs to champion GESI within the City's broader agenda.



Another key point concerning dedicated capacity is that it needs **high-level support**. As with any change management, GESI requirements will be “relatively meaningless if not something that those in leadership positions are constantly thinking about and called to question”, as Nishendra Moodley points out. In other words, someone in leadership needs to champion GESI within the City’s broader agenda. In the same way that some municipalities have high-level, cross-cutting leadership champions for other vital competencies (e.g., chief data officer, chief resilience officer), a similar leadership position for GESI, either from someone already on a relevant project team, or from the broader leadership, is advised.

That said, such leaders critically must build beneath them, so that should they move on, they don’t leave a leadership vacuum. This then speaks to the need for a **systemic framework to support and nurture GESI** across the City, to reduce vulnerability to individuals.

It’s true when everyone’s responsible, no one is responsible, except when you put performance management systems in place. You’ve got to bring it back to intentional and deliberate actions: make it part of KPIs and KPAs, so every department and manager will be assessed accordingly, and it will cascade down to teams and team members. And then it must be given fair weight, so it’s not incidental, but matters to the assessment. (Mirjam van Donk, FCSA GESI Lead)

Guidelines

Responding to the uncertainties around how to maintain the GESI momentum created in the FCSA projects, several City partners requested written guidelines to assist ongoing efforts to incorporate GESI beyond the tick box minimum level; pointers that will keep nudging projects in the right direction so that the intentionality built around GESI can sustain itself after the FCSA has departed. Specifically, the CCT, which developed its own Inclusion Framework to accompany its Data Strategy over the course of the CTDE project, requested “recommendations from the [FCSA] team on ways we could enhance that inclusion and ethics perspective within the city, on data particularly”; while the CoJ asked for “some guidelines into how GESI processes were done, how to improve, and especially what we [in the City] missed”.

This need is particularly acute given how clearly ongoing support and engagement—whether the ability to pick up the phone or send an email to the GESI Lead to express doubt, worry, or confusion—has come through as vital to the FCSA programme’s ability to embed GESI.

Critically, City officials noted that the ‘ask’ for support and guidance wasn’t only directed at the FCSA; they pointed to an institutional vacuum around GESI, where City documents as well as sectoral programmes and policies (e.g., transport) offer little guidance to officials in how to move from principles and aspirations, such as inclusion, to practices that lead to measurable results.

In the broader institutional environment, as a City, we don’t have in a written format, guidance, or policy on how we incorporate GESI. The broader institutional environment solely exists within SPLUMA: public participation says this is who must be in the room, but it doesn’t go into how you do that. (Mbalenhle Chemane, City of Johannesburg)

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New models for social facilitation

With diverse deliverables including a Strategic Area Framework for Soweto, a Transit Oriented Development plan for eThekweni, project appraisal tools for large infrastructure projects and tools, and methodologies to support the implementation of Cape Town's data strategy, the FCSA programme leaves Cities with numerous avenues to explore—so how should Cities prioritise project initiatives, and to what extent can GESI be part of that prioritisation? While FCSA technical teams have determined sequencing for implementation, and Cities will have their own internal criteria, project teams expressed the hope that the voices of the vulnerable do not get lost as processes roll out. More specifically, communities need to be meaningfully involved in selecting projects for prioritisation, as well as participating in identifying local interventions. That said, one of the learnings to emerge from the programme was “the need to locate different models of social facilitation that invite true community engagement,” as Nhlanhla Mncwango, eThekweni City Lead, points out.

If GESI is to be a cornerstone of urban development, Cities need new models for social facilitation that are truly inclusive and sustainable. This is as much about changing the tenor of the relationship between “the City” and “the community” from one that is regulatory to one that is empowering, as it is about helping communities understand that a dialogue is just that: a way to incorporate local knowledge and needs into broader considerations, and not a budgetary promise.

Our space is urban planning, we are not GESI specialists. So we do the component of the work through public participation, but we are not specialists in the field, and there are gaps that we need to be capacitated on, and that's something we need to raise as the City, as part of the workstream or training that we need from the City's perspective. (Mbalenhle Chemane, City of Johannesburg)

We can't incorporate communities earlier in the planning process, we can't understand their needs, if we are afraid to go out and engage without an envelope of money that's already approved for the upgrading projects. So that's a big limitation for how we incorporate communities into our planning and delivery of our projects. (Sarah Watson, eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality)

Communities need to be meaningfully involved in selecting projects for prioritisation, as well as participating in identifying local interventions.



8 Conclusion

The ultimate hope for the FCSA Programme is that Cities will take the developed tools, systems, and processes, and use them not just for their immediate technical value, but also continue consciously applying and expanding on GESI components to move the dial on inclusive economic growth and development in South African cities. As discussed, the projects have left a wealth of resources for Cities to operationalise and iteratively expand and improve upon. That said, how GESI will be taken onboard—who assumes responsibility to ensure that its prerogatives are fulfilled? Where does it ultimately ‘sit’?—and concerns that GESI advances made so far could ‘slip away’, remain all too pertinent.

This question of institutionalisation surfaces a deeper issue: how can development work effect the large-scale social and cultural transformation towards inclusivity and equity that is alluded to in high-minded policy and strategic planning documents, but remains elusive when city officials in line departments have to sit down and grapple with what that means on a day-to-day basis?

A key learning from the FCSA experience is that **there is an order to things, and the work of GESI is cumulative**. That is, you cannot install large-scale societal change without consistently employing—and iteratively improving on—the smaller innovations (tools, systems, processes, relationship management) in which GESI considerations have been embedded.

Our tools and systems are quite significantly changing [City’s] ability to deliver services, but we are not in the position to change the ideology or agenda of the City. For example, it’s massive to change the way [the City] allocates resources to servicing in each district. [Changing] this concept that an informal settlement resident doesn’t have a data point in the city, but a formally housed person does, is huge. But that next level of [ideological] change only comes down the line, as the team internalises the learnings that this dashboarding is giving them.
(Jodi Allemeier, City Lead)

Thus, while having the data and systems that can answer more questions differently is a prerequisite to realising GESI ambitions, the ideological change within municipality and civic culture that needs to occur so that the most is made of those GESI tools is something that must be consciously driven, first by individuals, but ultimately through the whole of the institution.

The prompt is for [GESI] to go beyond ‘consideration’. Within institutions this necessitates paradigm shifts—the conversations that need to be had need to be different in order to embed it so it reaches into the institution, into the mainstream of components, as well as into the technical implementation, so that technical delivery is designed to be inclusive of GESI parameters. (Nazreen Kola, ETOD project team)

Urgency and a sense of scarcity plague development work, with the pressure to establish and hit deliverables and targets with as little time and money as possible being a constant theme. Part of the power—and difficulty—of truly

Part of the power—and difficulty—of truly employing a GESI lens is that it is a long-term endeavour that requires projects to slow down and consider variables beyond the generic or normative, and it is in those processes that the seeds of change can take root.

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The FCSA programme approach to inclusivity and equity can be summarised as ‘whole of society’. At their core, all the projects were concerned with addressing the spatial segregation and socio-economic inequality still pervasive in South Africa’s three largest cities. The primary mechanism for promoting *equity of outcomes* from FCSA’s work was devoted GESI leadership, resources, and focus. Now on the cusp of handing project operationalisation over to partner Cities, it is useful to reflect on the insights and lessons that have emerged from this process, specifically as they may serve other urban programmes and actors (e.g., FCSA partner and other cities), but also in service of deepening global efforts to better understand and identify practical success factors behind mainstreaming GESI within governance, across institutions, and for individuals.



9 The lessons summarised

Anchoring GESI

- **FCSA GESI Framework’s “levels of ambition” was extremely helpful in breaking down GESI into tangible workstreams**—especially when it was interpreted within the purpose and context of each project
 - The ‘do no harm’ principle provides a critical ‘check & balance’ to ensure well-intended actions do not inadvertently contribute to, or deepen, exclusion and vulnerability.
- **Make GESI ubiquitous in practical and standardized processes, decision-making tools**
 - Even if present context does not appear receptive to implementing GESI concerns, build-in scope for expansion of “GESI” concerns (third-party, community-collected, and externally sourced data)
 - “Bake in” community validation of data
 - Embed GESI checks and balances in decision-making tools
 - Develop and use tools that make trade-offs visible
- **Project scope and purpose affected how easily GESI was made legible**
 - Projects with clear beneficiaries will likely have an easier time of it
 - More abstract and technical projects struggled to articulate GESI initially, but found meaningful entry points through aligning key GESI principles with approaches and intended outcomes, examining data value chain gaps, institutional bias, and expanding appraisals to encompass considerations beyond the economic
 - If GESI is properly embedded, it cannot be “cut”

Data lessons

- **Data gaps: disaggregated data is key to asking more nuanced questions and executing complex analyses, but is lacking at the national level**
 - Data collection should be designed to capture vulnerable categories beyond gender, age, and disability
 - Skill sets to undertake complicated (and intersectional) analysis need to be developed

- **Data hierarchies:**
 - Need to explore, support, and validate alternative ways of collecting and using data, especially in informal settlements
 - Build credible information systems on informal economies
 - Remain mindful of consent around data use and privacy rights
- **One of the biggest measures of whether GESI is taken seriously will be how data gets used**—to make the vulnerable visible to city so that it can provide better services? Or to control and monitor?—and what protections are put in place around its use.
 - Track how data is used in the day-to-day: who has access and what are they use data for (e.g., including informal settlement residents into formal servicing systems)?
 - Set up data structure to these things can be recorded, and then follow up and use that capability to report on such questions.

Leveraging expertise

Early stages: Programme design & scoping

GESI needs to be explicitly built into foundational project design, carried through from proposal development into scoping and inception, with commitments to address inequality and exclusion clearly articulated to all stakeholders, especially city partners, from the beginning. For any future urban programme designed similarly to the FCSA (as a partnership between cities, delivery partners, and national/bilateral funder), the following insights are offered:

- **Strategic Development Phase:** GESI commitments should be made absolutely clear to all parties.
- **Scoping/Project Design:** Develop a clear Theory of Change that embeds GESI as a deeply conceived cornerstone of project design, and then develop project-specific TOCs that also specify what GESI means for each project.
 - If needed, realignment of TORs with City counterparts (who will remain involved in the projects) and delivery partners should happen at scoping phase (not inception), such that GESI work components are integrated/aligned within projects, and seen as integral to outcomes
 - In particular, projects integrating community participation and technical processes should be designed with the interface between those elements explicit, especially with regards to how GESI concerns will bridge them
- **Inception phase:** Roles and responsibilities should be made clear right from the start.
 - City departments' and units' roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and aligned, both with one another and with project teams, and GESI ambitions should be made explicit within these roles from the beginning.
 - Clear accountability from day one, for City partners, as well as delivery partners, vis-à-vis GESI ambitions

Building the prerequisites: Lessons for the journey

- **Meet people where they are:**
 - A diverse team will not have an initial shared understanding of GESI: this must be forged
 - You cannot wait for people to be “receptive” to GESI, but rather need to move forward and “bake in” as much possibility for change as is possible within the product commissioned

- **Breaking down misunderstanding and resistance:**

- Many people will initially view GESI as “additional”, “soft”, and/or detracting from the “main” (technical) work
- Understand how perceptions that GESI will take from limited resources (“turf wars”) plays into resistance, and speak to that
- Anticipate tensions between a drive to “move on” with technical solutions, and the need to lay the groundwork for understanding distributional and social questions that may ultimately influence efficacy of those solutions
- Show people how they are already ‘doing’ GESI
 - How a GESI lens gives language to discuss issues that are already being considered or work already being done within Cities

- **Translation of the principles to concrete actions requires iterative, consistent, and long-term support & open flows of communication**

- Support on GESI should come in the scoping phase of each deliverable and process, not at the end when teams are ready to submit work for City review
- Mechanism to induct new team members would be helpful
- Virtual meetings have enabled opportunities for more regular, even impromptu engagements, but nothing beats in-person engagements

Dedicated GESI support

- **GESI Lead role was critical to FCSA projects’ ability to embed GESI**

- Role is strategic, not operational
- Lead needs to be able to swim in the waters of the projects, but does not need to be a technical expert

Co-creation GESI lessons

- The GESI journey should be shared with city counterparts to encourage the transfer of GESI skills from FCSA project teams to City counterparts
 - Project Leads should make GESI ambitions visible and explicit to Cities
- GESI Lead should participate regularly in City meetings
- Regular and frequent (preferably in-person) meetings where teams and City counterparts can “hash things out” should be built in (with GESI always on the agenda)

Institutionalisation

First and foremost, GESI must be viewed as everyone's responsibility: this ethos needs active support from city leadership, and an institutional framework for GESI that provides guidance, defines standards, and clarifies roles and responsibilities around ownership and accountability. From a practical level, this means:

Mainstreaming

- Institutionalising, or embedding, GESI means marrying dedicated strategic GESI support with assigned project-level responsibility
- Dedicated institutional capacity: internally based function that ensures consistency and maintenance of GESI knowledge and practice across the institution, and can advise and support departments/projects (growing departments to develop internal, consistent capacity and to see GESI relevance to their work).
 - Strategic (vs. operational)
 - Cross-cutting / coordinates between different units
 - Available “on tap” to support and advise project teams
 - Leadership level position / requires high-level support
 - Could be a person (“Chief GESI Officer”), a resource panel, or outsourced consultant (if lacking internal expertise).
- Each project should also assign a champion or custodian to ensure GESI concerns remain visible
 - Real implications of GESI must be felt in performance management systems (KPIs, KPAs)

Social facilitation

New modes of social facilitation are needed to better engage and include communities and marginalised voices going forward:

- Public participation and genuine co-design should facilitate meaningful engagement between the three primary parties of the community (those with lived experience of the place/issues), the City (with its governance and institutional knowledge about budgets, law, etc.), and technical team(s) (with their relevant expertise).
 - Listening and sharing between those three parties—what each sees and experiences as challenges and opportunity—is key to establishing a common and shared understanding of the context in which appropriate solutions can be developed.
- Incorporate communities earlier in development/ planning processes
- City representatives need to be able to speak openly with communities about development needs and get community input without this act being understood as a (budgetary) promise.
- Create meaningful opportunities for community involvement in project delivery

Public participation and genuine co-design should facilitate meaningful engagement between the three primary parties of the community (those with lived experience of the place/issues), the City (with its governance and institutional knowledge about budgets, law, etc.), and technical team(s) (with their relevant expertise).

Annexure

Soweto Strategic Area Framework (JSAF/SSAF) Johannesburg – January 2020 to September 2022

“Strategic Area Framework and Associated Implementation Tools for Soweto Triangle, Johannesburg” focuses on a specific part of Soweto (a key intervention area defined in Johannesburg’s 2016 Spatial Development Framework) which has benefitted from substantial public investments over the last quarter-century. Starting with a comprehensive ‘Status Quo’ analysis, the intention was to collaboratively produce a sustainable spatial and economic development vision and trajectory for the area by exploring the reasons for the apparently insufficient development response to previous public investment. The project had a strong focus on township economic development.

Cape Town Data & Economics (CTDE) – January 2020 to September 2022

The aim of the CTDE project is to provide technical support to the City of Cape Town and give effect to CCT’s Data Strategy through data use and application case studies related to transport, economic analysis, resilience, and human settlements. The project was divided into 4 workstream that focused on:

- Project Preparation & Appraisal (PPA): the FCSA team have developed a set of tools, training materials and events, and good practice guidelines as well as applied CBAs to develop the City’s infrastructure spend prioritisation methodologies.
- Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network (CKAN): CKAN is an open-source secure data sharing platform that the FCSA team set up and maintained for data sharing needs during the Covid response work.
- Electricity and Asset Management (EAM): the EAM use-case focused on improved data quality (primarily through capabilities interventions) and tooling (data science and business intelligence applications) for mini-substation maintenance, repair and replacement planning.
- Informal Settlements (IS): the informal settlements use-case focuses on data collection in informal settlements. The use-case focused on capabilities, tooling and data security and privacy for household level surveying in informal settlements.

4th Industrial Revolution & Mobility (J4IR) – January 2020 to September 2021

“Review of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) trends and effects on urban mobility in Johannesburg” sought to take advantage of the fact that mobility is one of the sectors most affected by technological advances (sometimes referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution), to address some of Johannesburg’s transport-related challenges. Thorough reviews of the international and local 4IR trends in mobility set the scene for an exploration of ways in which these trends could be harnessed to address some of the issues affecting mobility and transport in the city.

eThekwini EISM/ISIMS – January 2020 to September 2022

The eThekwini Municipality faces the challenge of managing and providing services to a growing number of informal settlements. It is estimated that there are over 580 informal settlements comprising 287,000 households and accounting for approximately one quarter of the population in the eThekwini Municipal Area (EMA). The goal of the Informal Settlement Information Management Solution (EISM/ISIMS) project is to provide the eThekwini Municipality with a planning tool to make better informed decisions to address spatial, social and economic inequalities and ultimately improve the lives of those living in informal settlements within the EMA.

Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) – January 2020 to September 2022

The overall objective of the proposed intervention was to develop a multi-sectoral institutional model that acts as a coordination tool to plan, implement and operationalise Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and to formulate a change management process to foster alignment of stakeholder plans, both public and private sector. Technical support was required to develop an organisational structure by identifying sector roles and responsibilities in planning, implementing and managing TOD within the municipality and the lead and coordinating function for aligned intergovernmental and private sector initiatives.

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