

Conditional Grant

for public libraries

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Overall goal and purpose of the grant

The overall goal of the Conditional Grant is to enable South African society on all levels to gain access to knowledge and information that will improve their socio-economic situation.

Its purpose is to transform the urban and rural community library infrastructure, facilities and services (primarily targeting previously disadvantaged communities) through a recapitalised programme at national, provincial and local government level.

This funding is intended to help resolve the constitutional implications of schedule five of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and to ensure that it is used for the designated purpose of addressing backlogs in the provision of library services that are not distributed across provinces as per the equitable share formula.

The year 2010/2011 marks the fourth year of the Conditional Grant funding for community libraries received by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport from the National Department of Arts and Culture. In implementing the grant the Western Cape Provincial Library Service works in partnership with local municipalities who serve as implementing agents for some of the identified and prioritised projects. Ancillary to this, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport also signs a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with municipalities with regard to projects implemented at municipal level.

In 2007/08 99.5%; in 2008/09 99.7 %; and in 2009/10 100% of the grant was spent.

The budget for 2010/11 was R1 865 000 and is divided as follows:

- an Afrikaans juvenile encyclopedia for Wheelie Wagons (R280 000)
- children's literature (R300 000)
- stock gaps (R400 000)
- magazines and newspapers for Wheelie Wagons (R100 000)
- books for Wheelie Wagons (R785 000).

Conditional Grant projects

Projects within the Conditional Grant are divided into *transfers* (projects carried out at municipal level), and *centrally managed projects* (carried out from the Western Cape Provincial Library Service in Cape Town).

Transfer payment projects 2010/11

Improved staff capacity at public libraries

In order to address staff shortages in public libraries additional staff are employed in public libraries in the Western Cape. The appointment of additional staff has enabled libraries to enhance service delivery to communities and also enabled staff to attend organised staff development programmes. This was previously not possible due to lack of funds from the municipalities to employ more staff in public libraries. In some areas the opening hours at public libraries have been extended.

The extent of the success of the project is attributed to a need that still exists in municipalities to have adequately staffed libraries to be able to provide an uninterrupted service to communities. The challenge of coping with staff shortages due to vacation or sick leave; attendance of conferences, seminars or courses have, to a considerable extent, been reduced. It is acknowledged that most municipalities include relief staff with the additional number of staff employed in their business plan.

Building of new libraries

Funds for this financial year have been transferred to Saldanha Bay Municipality for the building of a new library in Vredenburg.

Maintenance and upgrading

Ten libraries will benefit from this project. The amount allocated for maintenance is included in the transfers to municipalities who listed maintenance and upgrading projects as a priority.

Operational costs for two new libraries

Two libraries, Harare and Kuyasa, were funded.

Improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and systems

Six libraries are benefiting from this project.

Literacy projects

42 literacy projects will be implemented at public libraries.

Office furniture and equipment

43 projects are to be implemented at public libraries.

Centrally managed projects 2010/11

The Wheelie Wagon project

The extended rural library service commonly known as Wheelie Wagons aims at taking library services to remote rural areas who are without easy access to other library facilities. This project is the flagship project of the Library Service and primarily targets the previously disadvantaged. The project was initially implemented in 2004 at the farming community at Nagenoeg near Stellenbosch. Currently 28 Wheelie Wagon sites exist throughout the deeper rural areas of the province.

This proved to be a good choice as it targeted farm areas and areas with small pockets of population who could now receive a library service. The success of the project led to increased requests by the municipalities

for other identified small rural areas. After considering the factors that influence the establishment of these service points, only five sites can be accommodated annually.

What are Wheelie Wagons and how do they work

Books are arranged in a mobile trolley, a steel construction approximately 1340 mm high, 1100-1175 mm long and 600-640 mm wide, with two lockable doors on each side and shelving for books on the inside. The trolley has four wheels, one or two with a brake mechanism.

Each trolley can take approximately 400 books (depending on the size and thickness of the books). Two trolleys are normally placed at a site which means that about 800 books are available for borrowers at any given time. Books for adults and children are normally kept on separate trolleys. The local residents become members of the 'library' and library cards are issued. The mobile library operates pretty much the same as a small public library. Fiction and non-fiction (adults and children) are available as well as reference works. As the communities are predominantly Afrikaans-speaking, mostly Afrikaans books are selected, but books in English are also available. The circulation statistics of all the sites in 2009 showed a total of 102 997. These sites are mainly located in rooms at municipal offices; in classrooms at primary schools, (for example, Ruitersbos) in renovated buildings, (for example, Wittewater) and in sports centres (for example, Kliprand).

Positive feedback has been received from regional librarians, library staff and library managers from Swellendam, Stellenbosch, Breede Valley and Witzenberg regarding user satisfaction. Regional librarians from the Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, Vanrhynsdorp and Swellendam regions also gave valuable input to the needs of users in the rural areas.

Through hard work and dedication of all stakeholders, the Wheelie Wagon project has, without a doubt, added quality to the lives of people in those areas where they are located.

Rural library connectivity project (Information and Communication Technology (ICT))

In an endeavour to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural areas the Library Service in partnership with e-Innovation and with funding from the Conditional Grant, provides infrastructure and free public access to internet connectivity in the rural areas. The Internet costs and services are paid for and maintained by the Conditional Grant funding. The installation of a library and information system and the training of staff take place in those libraries who did not have access to these systems before.

Purchasing of library material

To support the education system, promote multilingualism and indigenous languages and support literacy projects, library material is purchased. An example is the long-awaited **Britannica junior: ensiklopedie vir Suidelike Afrika** of which 381 sets of the 10-volume encyclopaedia were purchased. This was very well received by librarians. A number of provincial and public librarians were involved in the content development of this encyclopaedia.

An increase in the number of books in indigenous languages (isiXhosa and Afrikaans adult and youth) borrowed from community libraries was recorded. The circulation was 9,787,497 by the end of the financial year (2009/10).

The increased use of isiXhosa material can be attributed to an increase in the number of titles purchased as well as a donation of classical literature in indigenous languages received from the National Library.

Management of the grant

Eleven staff members manage and execute projects funded by the Conditional Grant. Monitoring is a key function in terms of managing the grant. Municipalities are monitored to ensure that funding transferred to them is utilised for the purposes it is intended for and agreed upon in the Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) and Business Plans.

The challenge that will be continuously addressed with municipalities is the implementation of projects at municipal level.

Allocation criteria for transfers

The following criteria are used for allocating funds to municipalities:

- % of total population of a municipality in relation to the total population of the province (70% weight)
- % of total circulation of libraries in a municipality in relation to the total circulation in the province (20% weight)
- % of libraries in a municipality in relation to the number of libraries in the province (10% weight).

Conclusion

The extension of library services to remote rural areas is an extremely successful project. During the financial year 2010/11 the service will be extended to five more rural communities. This will provide library services to inhabitants of remote rural areas.



The Rural Library Connectivity Project (ICT) plays a major role in increasing opportunities for rural communities through modern ICT technologies. Rural libraries are being connected to the Internet and this enables library users to connect to the Internet and use computers free of charge.

The important role that the Conditional Grant plays in the Library Service is in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the department of building a socially cohesive, creative and active province and providing library information services which are free, equitable and accessible to all inhabitants of the Western Cape.



▲ The ICT project at **Cloetesville Library** was established in July 2009

► Seen here are members of the public in Stellenbosch making use of the facilities of the ICT project. Both **Cloetesville** and **Stellenbosch** libraries fall under the Stellenbosch Municipality



▲ The official opening of a Wheelie Wagon project in **Vermaaklikheid** in the Mossel Bay Region. (Extended Rural Library Service Project)