Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Human Resources Capacity Benchmarking

A Preliminary Toolkit for Planning and Management

What is the Human Resources Capacity Benchmarking Toolkit?

This Human Resources Capacity Benchmarking Toolkit helps empower local governments to understand their staffing gaps and address them accordingly. It takes staffing as a key driver and an entry point to achieving desired service-level standards and benchmarks.

The toolkit is based on Cities Alliance analysis of existing staff capacity in critical frontline services and key support functions in 16 reference cities in four African countries.

Why is the toolkit needed?

A city's workforce is one of the most critical determinants of inclusive urban development. Cities and towns around the world are experiencing a crisis in capacity that is insufficiently recognised and poorly understood. Increasing levels of urbanisation, growing informalisation, and deteriorating services have prevented cities from transforming into engines of inclusive growth.

While municipalities are responsible for addressing these challenges, they are often the weakest link in government.

Understaffed by under-qualified, poorly paid and under-motivated employees, it is no surprise that cities struggle to assume the multiple and increasingly complex roles expected of them. This toolkit aims to help resource-constrained local governments understand how well they are staffed, where the gaps are, and what trade-offs to make to achieve optimal service delivery.

Who is the toolkit for?

The primary audience is local governments who are interested in understanding staffing efficiency. While the current model has been designed for African cities, it is adaptable to other continents and expandable to other sectors of government – making it a useful tool for decision makers.

What information can the toolkit provide?

The toolkit can be used to know about:

- Variations in urban local government features (population, area, finance, and service levels) for different categories of a town.
- Variations in municipal staffing numbers and patterns across categories of towns.
- Staffing averages for each category.
- Adjusted averages based on (population, area, finance, and service levels as relevant).
- Variations as compared to the Model Benchmarks.
- Variations in pay scales across public and private sectors.
- Variations in staff qualifications.

How does the toolkit work?

The toolkit requires the city to fill out two template questionnaires that collate basic aggregated information on the city. This includes population, geographic area, length of motorable roads and service networks, total number and status of employees, total revenue and expenditure, as well as details on the solid waste service and water supply.

The toolkit analyses staffing data for all managerial and technical grades across functions: Municipal Finance and Accounts; Revenue; Planning; Engineering, Public Works and Street Lighting; and Environmental Health and Solid Waste Management.

It captures the number of staff required as well as the corresponding qualifications and skills deemed optimal for different categories to provide services to adequate standards.

For each sector, and each position under the sector, the model derives a benchmark based on basic essential criteria, allowing the user to identify deficits and/or surplus across function, qualification and sector. The tool will automatically adjust the benchmarks in relation to city population, geographic area and service network characteristics based on the data entered into the template.

How to use the toolkit

Step 1: Refer to the model framework

A model staffing framework has been developed and detailed in the toolkit. It provides an optimal number of staff and posts required for an efficient service delivery in select urban services, including:

- Environmental health and solid waste management
- Public works, roads and street lighting
- Administrative services including planning, finance and revenue.

These estimates are then adjusted according to key urban service variables such as geographic area, population, density, number of properties, and total revenue (including transfer).

The model has been designed so that any end user may easily input the requisite date for a specific town to generate a staffing gap analysis.

Step 2: Understand the gaps for your town/city

Mapping actual staffing data against the Model Framework will help identify the status of a city in terms of staffing number, posts and capacity in relation to service standards in comparison with the Model Framework, after adjusting for local variations.

This analysis may be used to assess the degree of staffing undersupply or oversupply, and the extent of correlation between staffing and current service levels (coverage and/ or quality).

Step 3: Strategies for filling gaps

After completing steps 1, and 2, the user will have an approximate status of staffing levels and gaps for key municipal service delivery functions. Equipped with this information, the user may then identify areas for more detailed analysis and explore various strategies/ models for address staffing gaps which may include: staff recruitment, training, deployment of new operating systems, work processes, technology, and equipment.

How workforce can be optimised through the model framework

Gap analysis model	Result analysis	Alternative models for service delivery
Mapping target city on model	Identifying gaps	Prioritising gaps & cost-benefit analys for bridging them

Partnerships for Development

Human Resources Capacity Benchmarking Toolkit is one of many results from the Future Cities Africa initiative undertaken by Cities Alliance and the UK Department of International Development (DFID). The initiative was designed to help support African cities as they transform themselves into resilient, inclusive centres of economic growth and job creation.

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