

MILEstones

4 March 2022

Financial viability of municipalities amidst COVID-19



MILE Programme Manager, Buyisiwe Ngubane facilitated the master class at Durban ICC.

Financial viability is a fundamental aspect and requirement for local government. Municipalities aim to support and anchor strategic key priorities required to actively provide for service delivery. It is within this context, MILE in collaboration with KZN COGTA and KZN SALGA hosted a Master Class on Financial viability of Municipalities amidst COVID-19, from 3-4 March at the Durban ICC.

The purpose of the master class was to discuss the state of municipalities in this uncharted territory of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Master Class aimed at providing a platform on building municipal financial resilience and fostering knowledge sharing, whilst municipalities face challenges emanating from COVID-19.

Prof Mpilo Ngubane, EThekweni Municipal Academy, Chief Learning Officer set the scene for the master class.

Presenting virtually, Prof Ngubane mentioned the disruptions that were caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. "Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 impacted to a certain extent negatively on service delivery, revenue collection, how we do work, in certain instances disruptions within our working environments and certain work procedures which have contributed to the audit findings that some municipalities may have received," said Prof Ngubane.

Mr Bhekithemba Cele, KZN COGTA said COVID-19 caused several challenges. "The pandemic has changed life as we know it. We are here today to share knowledge to ensure efficient municipal finance. Let's gather together for more viable municipal finance."

Sabelo Gwala, SALGA provided a message of support reiterating the importance of municipal finance and service delivery. "Let us do some concrete work together at this Master Class," said Gwala.

During the Master Class delegates were given an opportunity to provide meaningful contributions to enhance the capacity of local government finance practitioners in municipal property rates compliance, rates tariff review, improving audit outcomes, revenue enhancement and debt collection strategies amongst other pertinent matters.

The master class provided officials with a practical approach in addressing municipal finance. It is envisioned that the outcome of this master class will contribute immensely to advancing financial viability within the various participating municipalities.