



Government Digest

Umsebenzi
Keeping you informed

Metrobuild
Promoting infrastructure and development

August 2013 Volume 33 No 1

EDMS

FMS

Supply Chain

Meter man

IMS

AFS

Payroll

Section 71

PMS

Assets

HR

cloud ware
That just Happened

Your preferred Enterprise Management Solutions provider



Innovating solutions for municipalities, public entities and provincial government

Managing property data makes municipalities more sustainable

By: Janet Channing

It all starts with the property register

The maintenance of an accurate property register is critical to the financial success of any municipality. Without this spatial database, billing and revenue collection from water, electricity, waste and other services is virtually impossible to manage.

The key is to align municipal data sets from various sources – valuations, the financial system and deeds – and analyse them to establish a consolidated aligned result with no mismatches. The register must be maintained and updated with incoming deeds data to reflect the constant changes to property within the municipality: ownership changes, use changes, subdivisions, consolidations, zoning approvals, etc. Property data should be viewed spatially and in real time. And this property register should remain the property of and reside with the municipality, not with an outside service provider.

Accurate valuations are key

Municipalities must prepare and maintain general valuation rolls at least every four years and a supplementary roll at least once a year. Most municipalities outsource this function to external valuation service providers. The municipality should, however, have access to the property data that informed the determination of the property values by the valuer, and it should go without saying that the rolls should be accurate and complete.

Data ownership

Some municipalities have valuation or property management systems to house the property data collected by the valuers. These municipalities are at an advantage in terms of managing their deliverables, reporting on variances and conducting quality control on the draft and final valuation rolls.



Janet Channing

Where a municipality doesn't have an in-house property management system, it can be vulnerable to the manner in which they receive the roll from their service providers. Too often, property attribute data is not handed over to the municipality but rather held by the valuer for the duration of the contract.

Valuation rolls and billing

A general valuation roll will prompt changes to certain data fields including values, categories and extents. If the roll has been prepared outside of the municipal system, there are often challenges with roll uploads to the billing systems. To achieve accurate billing, the valuation roll must balance with the financial system.

Discrepancy reports to identify mismatches between the financial system and valuation roll must be drawn and acted upon. The Auditor-General requires that this task is achieved

monthly in the larger municipal systems, and at least when each new roll is uploaded in the smaller ones. This procedure allows for proper control of all rateable property and measures the implementation of remedial action. Synchronisation between the financial system and the valuation roll protects municipal revenue.

Centralised control of all property data allows for meaningful statistics to facilitate accurate municipal budgeting.

A picture is worth a thousand words

Spatial functionality using sophisticated geospatial information service (GIS) for storing, manipulating, maintaining, analysing and displaying geographic data is essential. This spatially referenced data is ideal for solving operational, management and planning problems.

GIS data becomes a powerful analytical tool comprising information that is related geographically, and can be displayed in a format that allows the user to easily understand inter-relationships.

Spatial reports can show pretty much anything called for in terms of property: arrears on a 30-, 60- or 90-day breakdown per ward, discrepancies between vacant properties and utility consumption, and returned accounts.

Reduce dependencies

Too many municipalities rely on external service providers to provide support. Municipal capacity must be built through structured skills transfer. Bid evaluation and consultancy performance must be measured with this criterion in mind.