



Uniform Financial Ratios and Norms

The purpose of this Circular is to provide a set of uniform key financial ratios and norms suitable and applicable to municipalities and municipal entities. Section 216 (1)(c) of the Constitution and section 2 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) enable National Treasury to introduce uniform treasury norms and standards to ensure sound and sustainable management of fiscal and financial affairs of municipalities and municipal entities.

A number of institutions currently use a variety of financial ratios and norms to assess and compare the financial health and performance of municipalities. Municipalities also use different financial ratios and norms to assess their own performance and set benchmarks for improvement to be measured over time. Results of our research show that there are in excess of two hundred different sets of financial ratios, with different derivatives used to assess municipality's financial status. This results in conflicting interpretation, inconsistent application and misunderstanding of the financial status of a municipality, often with incorrect diagnosis of the challenges and therefore inappropriate responses.

This Circular aims to bring consistency in interpretation and application of certain financial information using standardised financial ratios. It is important that any one of these ratios should not be read in isolation of one another, as this could lead to distortions in interpretation. Ideally, a number of interrelated ratios should be analysed together in order to get a broader picture of a municipality's or municipal entity's financial performance. When used in a combined manner analysis of different ratios will provide policy makers and the public with a very good sense of the financial status of the municipality and its entity. This Circular will also assist in municipalities being able to identify areas of financial management that need constant monitoring and improvement.

The Circular addresses different categories of ratios norms, interpretation and covers various aspects of a municipality's finances, such as financial position, financial performance and budget implementation, so that these can be used as part of in-year and end of year analysis. This will also aid in long-term financial planning and can be used to track progress over a number of years. Each ratio is explained to remove ambiguity and misinterpretation. The source of such information is also explained in the annexures to this Circular. Norms or standards have been assigned to each financial ratio, which are explained later in this Circular.

Categorisation Financial Ratios, Formulas, Norms and Interpretation

Categorisation

In order to perform a holistic financial analysis of a municipality or municipal entity all financial aspects of the institution should be considered. Ratios are divided into various

categories to address the different financial aspects and operations of a municipality or municipal entity.

- 1) **Financial Position**
- 2) **Financial Performance**
- 3) **Budget Implementation**

Financial Ratios, Formulas, Norms and Interpretation

The ratios presented in this Circular are categorised in accordance with the previous section, and are presented in further detail to include the following:

- Purpose/ description of the Financial Ratio;
- Formula to be Used;
- Norms per Ratio; and
- Interpretation of Ratio Analysis Results.

Tables that provide a summary of the financial ratios, formulas, data source and norms are presented in Annexure 1.

1. FINANCIAL POSITION

A. Asset Management

1. Capital Expenditure to Total Expenditure

Purpose/Description of the Ratio

This Ratio is used to assess the level of Capital Expenditure to Total Expenditure, which indicates the prioritisation of expenditure towards current operations *versus* future capacity in terms of Municipal Services.

Formula

Total Capital Expenditure / Total Expenditure (Total Operating Expenditure + Capital Expenditure) × 100

Norm

The norm range between **10% and 20%**

Interpretation of Results

When assessing the level of Investment in Assets, a ratio less than 10% reflects lower spending by the municipality in infrastructure and holds potential risks to service delivery. A ratio of more than 20% reflects higher spending on infrastructure and acceleration in service delivery, but could also hold financial sustainability risks if the infrastructure do not include both economic (revenue generating) and social type infrastructure.

The environment of the municipality should be considered when assessing the level of Investment in Assets. A municipality that has already invested in assets to address service delivery backlogs, would be required to maintain and improve such service levels, and therefore the percentage of spending allocated to new assets may not be significant higher.

On the other hand a municipality where the infrastructure and level of services provided is low and the associated expenditure is also low, the percentage of investment in new assets to total expenditure would be significantly higher.

The results from this ratio should be read together with the results from the analysis of the funding mix for capital expenditure.

It is critical that capital expenditure is largely directed toward service delivery infrastructure and not administrative assets.

2. Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property and Intangible Assets (Carrying Value)

Purpose/ Description of the Ratio

Asset impairment refers to the loss in future economic benefits or service potential of an asset, over and above the systematic recognition of the loss of the asset's future economic benefits or service potential through depreciation.

This implies that the utilisation of assets did not deliver the value or service levels envisaged when approval was originally obtained for procuring the assets. When the approval is obtained to invest in Property, Plant and Equipment or Intangible Assets by the Municipality or Municipal Entity, the value should be realised through utilisation and reflected as Depreciation and not through unexpected losses due the Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment or Intangible Assets. Impairment is therefore unexpected and only detected when the assessment for Impairment is performed as per the requirements of the applicable GRAP standards. It is therefore not planned for or expected and will not be budgeted.

Formula

Property, Plant and Equipment + Investment Property + Intangible Assets Impairment/ (Total Property, Plant and Equipment + Investment Property + Intangible Assets) x 100

Norm

The norm is **0%**

Interpretation of Results

The purpose of the Ratio is to indicate the percentage of Impairments compared to the Carrying Value of the Assets; a ratio above 0% reflects a risk in service delivery and therefore corrective measures should be implemented.

3. Repairs and Maintenance as a % of Property, Plants and Equipment and Investment Property (Carrying Value)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio measures the level of repairs and maintenance to ensure adequate maintenance to prevent breakdowns and interruptions to service delivery. Repairs and maintenance of municipal assets is required to ensure the continued provision of services.

Formula

Total Repairs and Maintenance Expenditure / Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property (Carrying Value) x 100

Norm

The norm is **8%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below the norm is a reflection that insufficient monies are being spent on repairs and maintenance to the extent that it could increase impairment of useful assets.

An increasing expenditure trend may be indicative of high asset-usage levels, which can prematurely require advanced levels of Repairs and Maintenance or a need for Asset Renewal / Replacements. Also, should an increasing expenditure trend suddenly drop to lower levels without an increase in the fixed asset value, this may be indicative of challenges in spending patterns. This may also indicate that the Municipality is experiencing cash flow problems and therefore unable to spend at

appropriate levels on its repairs to existing assets or purchase of new assets thus impacting negatively on service delivery.

B. Debtors Management

1. Collection Rate

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio indicates the collection rate; *i.e.* level of payments. It measures increases or decreases in Debtors relative to annual billed revenue. In addition, in order to determine the real collection rate bad debts written-off is taken into consideration.

Formula

Gross Debtors Opening Balance + Billed Revenue – Gross Debtors Closing Balance - Bad Debts Written Off) / Billed Revenue x 100

Norm

The norm is **95%**

Interpretation of Results

Assessing the Collection Ratio will provide an indication of the performance against a number of areas, for example:

- Quality of Credit Control - ensuring that what is billed is collected; and
- Quality of Revenue Management - the ability to set affordable tariffs and bill correctly.

If the ratio is below the norm this is an indication that revenue collection of the municipality requires urgent attention and corrective measures should be implemented. A municipality with outstanding debtors should aim at achieving a collection rate of more than 100%. The results from this ratio should be viewed along with results from the age analysis and net debtor's day's ratio.

2. Bad Debts Written-off as % of the Bad Debt Provision

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio compares the value of Bad Debts Written-off on Consumer Debtors to Bad Debts Provided for Consumer Debtors to ensure that the Provision for Bad Debts is sufficient.

Formula

Bad Debts Written-off (Period under review)/ Provision for Bad Debt (Period under review x 100

Norm

The norm is **100%**

Interpretation of Results

Municipality should only write-off Bad Debts already provided for and, if the results are less than 100%, it should be ideally due to the recoverability of debtors. When 100% is exceeded, it indicates that the Municipality had not previously identified the Debtor/s as having the potential for defaults, which could indicate weakness in calculation of the Provision for Bad Debt, the methodology used and/or poor credit control processes.

3. Net Debtors Days**Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

This ratio reflects the collection period. Net Debtor Days refers to the average number of days required for a Municipality or Municipal Entity to receive payment from its Consumers for bills/invoices issued to them for services.

The Ratio exclude balances for Debtors, which the Municipality or Municipal Entity has assessed as potentially irrecoverable, and is also a good indication of the effectiveness of credit control procedures within the Municipality or Municipal Entity as well as the extent to which the Municipality or Municipal Entity has provided for Doubtful Debts.

Formula

$((\text{Gross Debtors} - \text{Bad Debt Provision}) / \text{Billed Revenue}) \times 365$

Norm

The norm is **30 Days**

Interpretation of Results

This Ratio adjusts for Municipality's who have had significant write-offs of Irrecoverable Debtor balances in the Gross Debtors Days analysis as it only assesses the performance of collectable Debtors. In addition, it provides an indication of the quality of credit control policy, effectiveness of the implementation thereof and quality of revenue management. If the ratio is above the norm, this indicates that the Municipality is exposed to significant Cash Flow risk. This is also an indication that the municipality is experiencing challenges in the collection of outstanding amounts due to it. In addition,

this indicates that a significant amount of potential cash is tied up in consumer debtors and the municipality must improve its revenue and cash flow management.

C. Liquidity Management

1. Cash/ Cost Coverage Ratio (Excluding Unspent Conditional Grants)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio indicates the Municipality's or Municipal Entity's ability to meet at least its monthly fixed operating commitments from cash and short-term investment without collecting any additional revenue, during that month.

The Ratio is adjusted for Unspent Conditional Grants as the cash is not available for normal Municipal day-to-day operational expenditure but rather reserved for Grant related expenditure.

Formula

((Cash and Cash Equivalents - Unspent Conditional Grants - Overdraft) + Short Term Investment) / Monthly Fixed Operational Expenditure excluding (Depreciation, Amortisation, and Provision for Bad Debts, Impairment and Loss on Disposal of Assets)).

Norm

The norm range between **1 month to 3 months**.

Interpretation of Results

If a municipality has a ratio below the norm it would be vulnerable and at a higher risk in the event of financial "shocks/set-backs" and its ability to meet its obligations to provide basic services or its financial commitment is compromised. The results from this ratio should be viewed along with results from analysis on Debtor Management to fully assess Cash Flow Risk. The more cash reserves a municipality or municipal entity has available the lower the risk of it being unable to fund monthly fixed operational expenditure and to continue rendering services.

2. Current Ratio

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio is used to assess the Municipality's or Municipal Entity's ability to pay back its Short-term Liabilities (Debt and Payables) with its Short-term Assets (Cash, Inventory, Receivables).

Formula

Current Assets / Current Liabilities

Norm

The norm range between **1.5 to 2 :1**

Interpretation of Results

The higher the current Ratio, the more capable the Municipality or Municipal Entity will be to pay its current or short-term obligations and provide for a risk cover to enable it to continue operations at desired levels. A financial ratio under 1 suggests that the Municipality or Municipal Entity would be unable to pay all its current or short-term obligations if they fall due at any specific point.

If current liabilities exceed current assets, it highlights serious financial challenges and likely liquidity problems *i.e.* insufficient cash to meet short-term financial obligations. Current assets must therefore be increased to appropriately cover current liabilities otherwise there is a risk that non-current assets will need to be liquidated to settle current liabilities.

D. Liability Management**1. Capital Cost (Interest Paid and Redemption) as a % of Total Operating Expenditure****Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

The Ratio indicates the cost required to service the borrowing. It assesses the Borrowing or Payment obligation expressed as a percentage of Total Operating Expenditure.

Formula

Capital Cost (Interest Paid and Redemption) / Total Operating Expenditure x 100

Norm

The norm is between **6% to 8%**

Interpretation of Results

Operating below the Norm could indicate that the Municipality has the capacity to take on additional financing from borrowing to invest in infrastructure projects or it could relate to cash flow problems where it is unable to access borrowed funds or the funding decisions of the municipality impacts of these levels. On the other hand, exceeding the Norm could pose a risk to the Municipality should changes or fluctuations in financing costs arise.

When assessing this ratio, the cash flow requirements of the Municipality or Municipal Entity should also be considered.

2. Debt (Total Borrowings)/ Total Operating Revenue

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio indicates the extent of Total Borrowings in relation to Total Operating Revenue. It indicates short and long term debt financing relative to operating revenue of the municipality.

The purpose of the Ratio is to provide assurance that sufficient Revenue will be generated to repay Liabilities. Alternatively stated, the Ratio indicates the affordability of the Total Borrowings.

Formula

Debt (Short Term Borrowing + Bank Overdraft + Short Term Lease + Long Term Borrowing + Long Term Lease) / Total Operating Revenue - Operating Conditional Grant

Norm

The norm is **45%**

Interpretation of Results

If the result of the Ratio analysis indicates less than 45% then the Municipality still has capacity to take increase funding from borrowings, however, this should be considered within the cash flow requirements of the Municipality or Municipal Entity.

E. Sustainability

1. Level of Cash Backed Reserves (Net Assets - Accumulated Surplus)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio measures the extent to which the Other Reserves, which are required to be cash backed are actually backed by Cash Reserves.

Formula

(Cash and Cash Equivalents - Bank Overdraft + Short Term Investment + Long Term Investment - Unspent Conditional Grants) / (Net Assets - Accumulated Surplus – Non Controlling Interest – Share Premium – Share Capital – Fair Value Adjustment – Revaluation Reserve)

Norm

The norm is **100%**

Interpretation of Results

If a Municipality or Municipal Entity has less than 100% Cash Reserves it could negatively impact the Municipality's or Municipal Entity ability to comply with the conditions for creating the Reserves and on its ability to fund current and future operations.

2. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**A. Efficiency****1. Net Operating Surplus Margin****Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

The Ratio assesses the extent to which the Municipality generates Operating Surpluses.

Formula

$(\text{Total Operating Revenue} - \text{Total Operating Expenditure}) / \text{Total Operating Revenue} \times 100\%$

Norm

The norm is equal to or greater than **0%**

Interpretation of Results

Municipalities should at least recover operational costs for the services being delivered. In addition, a ratio which is greater than 0% will enable the municipality to generate a surplus which will assist to contribute towards its capital funding requirements. If the result is less than 0% it implies that the municipality is operating at a deficit and measures must be implemented to address this situation to ensure sustainable service delivery. In a case of an operating deficit it is critical to ascertain the extent to which the accounting policy, i.e. revaluation method has impacted on the calculations to avoid any distortions in interpretation of the outcome. Refer to Circular 58 section 4.3 regarding revaluation in terms of GRAP 17 and treatment of depreciation and GRAP 24.

2. Net Surplus /Deficit Electricity**Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

This ratio measures the extent to which the municipality generates surplus or deficit in rendering electricity service. The purpose of the Ratio is to determine the contribution

made by the provision of Electricity Services, being one of the major functions of a municipality.

Formula

Total Electricity Revenue less Total Electricity Expenditure / Total Electricity Revenue x 100%

Norm

The Norm range between **0% and 15%**

It should be noted that this norm will be superseded by sector determinations from time to time, as other regulatory bodies address the appropriate level of tariffs and surpluses.

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 0% depicts that electricity service is rendered at a deficit/loss and will be unsustainable if other revenue is not allocated to fund such services. The results must be between the range to ensure services are sustainable and that all costs associated with the delivery of Electricity Services are at least recovered with a margin for future growth and/ or capital funding for electricity assets.

3. Net Surplus / Deficit Water

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent to which the municipality generates surplus or deficit in rendering water service. The purpose of the Ratio is to determine the contribution made by the provision of water service being one of the major functions of a municipality.

Formula

Total Water Revenue less Total Water Expenditure / Total Water Revenue x 100%

Norm

The norm is equal to or greater than **0%** and will be superseded by the sector determination from time to time, as other regulatory bodies address the appropriate level of tariffs, surpluses and subsidisation.

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 0% depicts that water service is rendered at a loss and unsustainable. The results must not be below the norm so as to ensure that the Services are sustainable and that all costs associated with the delivery of Water Services are at least recovered with a margin for future growth and/ or capital funding for water assets.

4. Net Surplus /Deficit Refuse

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent to which the municipality generates surplus or deficit in rendering refuse service. The purpose of the Ratio is to determine the contribution made by the provision of refuse service being one of the major functions of a municipality.

Formula

Total Refuse Revenue less Total Refuse Expenditure /Total Refuse Revenue x 100%

Norm

The Norm is equal to or greater than **0%** and will be superseded by the Sector determination from time to time, as other regulatory bodies address the appropriate level of tariffs, surpluses and subsidisation.

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 0% depicts that refuse service is rendered at a loss and unsustainable. The results must not be below the norm so as to ensure that the Services are sustainable and that all costs associated with the delivery of Refuse Services are at least recovered with a margin for future growth and/ or capital funding for Refuse assets.

5. Net Surplus / Deficit Sanitation and Waste Water

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent to which the municipality generates surplus or deficit in rendering sanitation and waste water service. The purpose of the Ratio is to determine the contribution made by the provision of sanitation and waste water services being one of the major functions of a municipality.

Formula

Total Sanitation and Waste Water Revenue less Total Sanitation and Waste Water Expenditure / Total Sanitation and Waste Water Revenue x 100%

Norm

The norm is equal to or greater than **0%** and will be superseded by the sector determination from time to time, as other regulatory bodies address the appropriate level of tariffs, surpluses and subsidisation.

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 0% depicts that sanitation and waste water is rendered at a loss and unsustainable. The results must not be below the norm so as to ensure that the Services are sustainable and that all costs associated with the delivery of sanitation and waste water are at least recovered with a margin for future growth and / or capital funding for assets.

B. Distribution Losses

1. Electricity Distribution Losses (Percentage)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The purpose is to measure the percentage loss of potential revenue from Electricity Services through electricity units purchased and generated but not sold as a result of losses incurred through theft (illegal connections), non or inaccurate metering or wastage. It is expected that implementation of the free basic service policy is included in the calculation for sale of electricity.

Formula

(Number of Electricity Units Purchased and / or Generated - Number of Electricity Units Sold) / Number of Electricity Units Purchased and / or Generated) x 100

Norm

The Norm is between **7% and 10%** and will be superseded by the sector determination.

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below the norm depicts that electricity losses are well managed. If the Ratio exceeds the norm it could indicate various challenges, for example, deteriorating electricity infrastructure or poor management of the networks, affecting the Municipality or Municipal Entity, which would require further analysis to determine the reasons for such losses. In addition, the root causes should be addressed.

2. Water Distribution Losses (Percentage)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The purpose of this ratio is to determine the percentage loss of potential revenue from water service through kilolitres of water purchased but not sold as a result of losses incurred through theft (illegal connections), non- or incorrect metering or wastage as a result of deteriorating water infrastructure. It is expected that implementation of the free basic service policy is included in the calculation for sale of water.

Formula

(Number of Kiloliters Water Purchased or Purified - Number of Kilolitres Water Sold) /
Number of Kiloliters Water Purchased or Purified × 100

Norm

The Norm is between **15% and 30%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio within the norm depicts that water losses and water infrastructure are well managed. If the Ratio exceeds the norm it could indicate various challenges, for example, ageing water infrastructure or poor management, affecting the Municipality or Municipal Entity, which would require further analysis and explanation to determine the reasons for such losses. In addition, the root causes should be addressed.

C. Revenue Management**1. Growth in Number of Active Consumer Accounts****Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

The ratio measures the actual growth in the Revenue base of the Municipality brought about by an increase in the Consumer base rather than tariff increases.

Formula

(Period under Review's Number of Active Debtor Accounts - Previous Period's Number of Active Debtor Accounts) / Previous Period Number of Active Debtor Accounts × 100

Norm

No Norm is currently being proposed for this Ratio but will be monitored and a determined in the future. Municipalities are requested to report on this aspect to its Council.

Interpretation of Results

The results from this analysis will have to be taken into consideration when assessing the Growth in Revenue to determine the Real Growth in the Customer base vs growth due to tariff and inflationary adjustments. Growth in number of active consumers indicates an increase in revenue base.

Further, the impact of growth on the Indigent Base vs Growth in Paying Consumers should be assessed regularly as this must be used to inform Councils policy.

2. Revenue Growth (%)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This Ratio measures the overall revenue growth. In addition, this ratio will assist in determining if the increase in Expenditure will be funded by an increase in Revenue base or by some other means.

Formula

$$\frac{(\text{Period Under Review's Total Revenue} - \text{Previous Period's Total Revenue})}{\text{Previous Period's Total Revenue}} \times 100$$

Norm

The norm is at the rate of **CPI**

Interpretation of Results

The Revenue Growth has to be assessed in conjunction with the growth in the Revenue base and number of consumer accounts to determine the real Growth in Revenue.

3. Revenue Growth (%) - Excluding Capital Grants

Purpose/Use of the Ratio

This Ratio measures the overall Revenue Growth adjusted for Capital Grants. In addition, this ratio will assist in determining if the increase in Expenditure will be funded by the increased Revenue Base or by some other means.

Formula

$$\frac{((\text{Period Under Review's Total Revenue Excluding Capital Grants} - \text{Previous Period's Total Revenue Excluding Capital Grants}))}{\text{Previous Period's Total Revenue Excluding Capital Grants}} \times 100$$

Norm

The norm is at the rate of **CPI**

Interpretation of Results

The Revenue Growth has to be assessed in conjunction with the growth in the Revenue base, number of consumer accounts to determine the real Growth.

D. Expenditure Management

1. Creditors Payment Period (Trade Creditors)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio indicates the average number of days taken for Trade Creditors to be paid.

Formula

Trade Creditors Outstanding / Credit Purchases (Operating and Capital) × 365

Norm

The norm is **30 days**

Interpretation of Results

A period of longer than 30 days to settle creditors is normally an indication that the Municipality may be experiencing cash flow problems, however in certain instances this may be as a result of disputes, processing of payments, etc. In addition, a ratio that exceeds the norm indicates that the Municipality may not be adequately managing its Working Capital or that effective controls are not in place to ensure prompt payments. The municipality will be required to provide further explanations in this regard.

2. Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful and Unauthorised Expenditure/ Total Operating Expenditure

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The ratio measures the extent to which the Municipality has incurred Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful and Unauthorised Expenditure.

Formula

(Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful and Unauthorised Expenditure) / Total Operating Expenditure × 100

The net amount after condonement should be used in this calculation.

Norm

The norm is **0%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio that exceeds 0% must be investigated and acted upon.

3. Remuneration (Employee Related Costs and Councillors Remuneration) as % of Total Operating Expenditure)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The ratio measures the extent of Remuneration to Total Operating Expenditure.

Formula

Remuneration (Employee Related Costs and Councillors' Remuneration) / Total Operating Expenditure x 100

Norm

The norm range between **25% and 40%**

Interpretation of Results

If the ratio exceed the norm it could indicate inefficiencies, overstaffing or even the incorrect focus due to misdirected expenditure to non-essentials or non-service delivery related expenditure. Various factors need to be considered when commenting on this ratio, such as the powers and functions performed by the municipality or entity, as this can create distortions in the outcomes, if the analysis ignores such factors.

4. Contracted Services % of Total Operating Expenditure

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent to which the municipalities resources are committed towards contracted services to perform Municipal related functions.

Formula

Contracted Services / Total Operating Expenditure x 100

Norm

The norm range between **2% and 5%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio in excess of the Norm could indicate that many functions are being outsourced to Consultants, or that Contracted Services are not effectively utilised. This also depends on the model of service delivery selected by the municipality. In addition, outsourcing decisions will have to be weighed against the ability to attract skills; however, increases in this ratio can further expose the municipality to other risks, such as its inability to build capacity and ongoing reliance on Contractors.

E. Grant Dependency

1. Own Funded Capital Expenditure (Internally Generated Funds + Borrowings) to Total Capital Expenditure

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio measures the extent to which the municipality's Total Capital Expenditure is funded through Internally Generated Funds and Borrowings.

Formula

Own Funded Capital Expenditure (Internally Generated Funds + Borrowings) / Total Capital Expenditure x 100

Norm

No norm is proposed at this time. It is critical that the funding mix of capital expenditure is undertaken in such a manner that affordable borrowing is directed towards addressing service delivery needs and that there is also opportunity for increased capacity on internally generated funding to attain an improved balance of the funding sources.

2. Own Funded Capital Expenditure (Internally Generated Funds) to Total Capital Expenditure

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio measures the extent to which Total Capital Expenditure of the Municipality is funded through Internally Generated Funds.

Formula

Own funded Capital Expenditure (Internally Generated Funds) / Total Capital Expenditure x 100

Norm

No norm is proposed at this time. The funding mix for capital expenditure is dependent on the municipal policy and ability to raise revenue from different sources. Increased capacity for internally generated funding is required in some circumstances, which could also improve the balance in funding sources.

3. Own Source Revenue to Total Operating Revenue (Including Agency Revenue)

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

The Ratio assesses the extent of Own Source Revenue to Total Operating Revenue, including Agency Revenue hence self-sufficiency.

Formula

Own Source Revenue (Total Revenue - Government Grants and Subsidies – Public Contribution and Donations)/ Total Operating Revenue (Including Agency Services) x 100

Norm

No norm is proposed at this time. The municipal specific circumstances, including the powers and functions assigned to it, must be considered when assessing the level of own source revenue or its self-sufficiency. An analysis of the trends and levels of own source of revenue will also inform the municipality and users of measures taken to optimise own revenues. The ratio measuring own source revenue should be increasing over time as it reflects municipal efforts towards self-sufficiency.

3. BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION**1. Capital Expenditure Budget Implementation Indicator****Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

This ratio measures the extent to which Budgeted Capital Expenditure has been spent during the financial year, under review. Further, this ratio measures the municipality's ability to implement capital projects and monitor the risks associated with non-implementation. The ratio also assess whether the municipality has effective controls in place to ensure that expenditure is incurred in accordance with an approved budget.

Formula

Actual Capital Expenditure / Budget Capital Expenditure x 100

Norm

The norm range between **95% and 100%**

Interpretation of Results

This can be used in-year to monitor progress. Any variance below 95% indicates discrepancies in planning and budgeting, capacity challenges to implement projects and/or Supply Chain Management process failures, which should be investigated and corrective measures implemented.

Under-spending is also an indicator that the Municipality might be experiencing possible cash flow difficulties to implement projects. Ideally, under-spending should be the result of improved efficiencies and not as a result of non-implementation of programmes and/or projects.

Overspending may also indicate inaccurate budgeting or poor financial management control.

2. Operating Expenditure Budget Implementation Indicator

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent to which Budgeted Operating Expenditure has been spent during the financial year, under review. The ratio also assess whether the municipality has effective controls in place to ensure that expenditure is incurred in accordance with an approved budget.

Formula

Actual Operating Expenditure / Budgeted Operating Expenditure x 100

Norm

The norm range between **95% and 100%**

Interpretation of Results

Any variance from 100% indicates either challenge in capacity to implement, issues of financial controls and management and/or poor budgeting.

Under-spending normally is an indicator that the Municipality experiences possible Cash Flow difficulties or capacity challenges to undertake Budgeted/ planned service delivery, and/ or does not prepare accurate and credible Budgets. Ideally, under-spending should be the result of improved efficiencies and not as a result of non-implementation of programmes and/or projects.

Overspending may also indicate inaccurate budgeting or poor financial management control in respect of budget control.

3. Operating Revenue Budget Implementation Indicator

Purpose/ Use of the Ratio

This ratio measures the extent of Actual Operating Revenue (Excl. Capital Grant Revenue) received in relation to Budgeted Operating Revenue during the financial year, under review.

Formula

Actual Operating Revenue / Budgeted Operating Revenue x 100

Norm

The norm range between **95% and 100%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 95% indicates either a challenge in capacity to implement, ineffective billing and credit control, weakness in compilation of budgets or issues of financial controls and management of the Municipality.

4. Service Charges and Property Rates Revenue Budget Implementation Indicator**Purpose/ Use of the Ratio**

The ratio measures the extent of Actual Service Charges and Property Rates Revenue received in relation to Budgeted Service Charges and Property Rates Revenue during the financial year, under review.

Formula

Actual Service Charges and Property Rates Revenue / Budgeted Service Charges and Property Rates Revenue x 100

Norm

The norm range between **95% and 100%**

Interpretation of Results

A ratio below 95% indicates either a challenge in capacity to implement, ineffective billing and credit control, weakness in compilation of budgets or issues of financial controls and management of the Municipality.

Monitoring

It is important that these indicators are not seen or used in isolation of one another but used in a combined manner so as to provide a holistic picture of the financial status of the municipality or municipal entity. Poor outcomes with relation to these indicators can also point to weaknesses in Institutional and Governance aspects in a municipality that need attention. Therefore, Councillors, Municipal Managers, Chief Financial Officers, Accounting Offices of Municipal Entities, and all financial officials should derive benefits from a deeper understanding of these Ratios and Norms and their implications. The primary responsibility to avoid, identify and resolve financial problems in a municipality rests with the municipality and proper monitoring and use of these indicators, will support decision-makers overcome such challenges.

The use of these Ratios and Norms should assist Municipalities and Municipal Entities to predict, identify, prevent, avoid, and resolve financial problems/crisis timeously and serve as an early warning mechanism. Moreover, this will ensure that Municipalities and Municipal Entities make strategic decisions based on empirical and factual information and analysis for a sustainable outcome. Monitoring and trend analysis of these ratios is critical to ensure that measures are introduced to address areas needing attention and that there is progressive improvements of municipalities own position against the norms. These indicators and their norms, when viewed holistically, provide an overview of the financial position and performance of the Municipalities and Municipal Entities, while recognising institutional differences. Sound and effective financial management practices form the basis for an effective long term sustainable municipality.

The oversight role played by the Municipal Executive, Audit Committee, and Municipal Public Account Committee will also be enhanced with the use of these financial Ratios and Norms through implementation and reporting of financial information. The financial ratios and norms will strengthen financial management and accountability and be used throughout the cycle - integrated development plans (including long term financial plan), budgets, in-year reports for example section 52, 71 and 72 reports, annual financial statements, annual report and oversight reports. Comparison with other municipalities is now possible.

An Excel template has been developed (Annexure 2 of this Circular) to assist municipalities and Municipal Entities to populate relevant financial information, automate calculations, and assist in interpretation thereof.

These Ratios and Norms will be used to assess financial position and performance, quality of budgeting, management, and other characteristics of Municipalities and Municipal Entities, and should holistically provide an overview of the financial health of the Municipality or Municipal Entity, taking the respective and unique circumstances into account. Benchmarking and comparisons between Municipalities and Municipal Entities can also be undertaken, made simpler in future, and will further assist in targeting assistance and support, where needed.

Different institutions including, financial institutions, research organisations, rating agencies, national and provincial government, legislatures, amongst others, can use these uniform set of financial indicators, ratios and norms to monitor the financial position and performance of municipalities.

Implementation

The ratios and norms provided in this Circular and elaborated in the annexures are to be understood in an aspirational context and utilised as soon as possible to enable municipal councils to commence with the process of introducing measures to address areas needing attention. Municipalities and Municipal Entities should take advantage of the transition period, covering the medium term, to allow for progressive improvements of their own status against the ratios and norms.

Conclusion

The variety of financial ratios and norms, over 200, used by various institutions to assess and compare the financial health and performance of Municipalities and Municipal Entities has resulted in confusion across the sector, as users formulate assumptions based on different interpretation of the same financial information.

The Circular creates a uniform categorisation of ratios, standardising formulas and inputs, providing guidance on norms and interpretation of the financial ratio analysis, as applicable to Municipalities and Municipal Entities. There may be other ratios and norms used by analysts that are more appropriate to the financial status of private sector institutions, therefore, the use, differentiation and range described in this Circular should be understood within the context of a public sector institution.

This Circular therefore attempts to address the above challenges and also provide a more structured approach for holistic analysis, taking into cognisance the different type of Municipalities and Municipal Entities. The consistent use of these ratios and norms will assist in reporting accurately the status of municipal finances.

Institutions performing financial ratio analysis for Municipalities and Municipal Entities should therefore refer to this Circular and interpretation therein to ensure uniformity and consistency of application.

It is important that the Municipal Manager ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of the Municipal Council, Board of Directors of Municipal Entities, relevant oversight structures (Municipal Executive, Audit Committee, and Municipal Public Account) and all other relevant stakeholders. Training providers are also requested to bring this Circular to the attention of trainees.

The introduction and application of these uniform norms, coupled with other financial reforms, will allow for comparisons with different type of municipalities and municipal entities and it is expected that they will replace earlier regulations issued that cover financial ratios and norms as these are based on the latest reforms in financial management.



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Annexure 1: Summary of the financial ratios, norms, formulae and data sources

Annexure 2: Excel template for calculation of the ratios and interpretation of results