



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



national treasury

Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

QUANTIFYING THE TITLE DEED BACKLOG AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS

Progress of the OV Titling Project

OPERATION VULINDLELA TITLING PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

- **The project commenced in October 2021.**
- **The OV Steering Committee on Titling includes members from SANT, NDHS, the Office of the Surveyor General, the Registrar of Deeds, and the Department of Justice.**
- **The Titling Project aims to resolve titling issues in South Africa by Addressing the primary transfer backlog (regularisation);**
 - Reintegrating properties that have been transacted off register into the formal system (formalization);
 - Establishing an affordable and accessible system for title preservation (preservation).
- **In 2024, to tackle systemic challenges, the NT DG reached out to Sector DGs, including NDHS, constructive engagement with NDHS is underway**
- **In 2025 the OV support to the project will be provided in relation to the Second Wave of the Operation Vulindlela Framework and coordinated by the CSP and World Bank technical Team.**
- **CSP has advertised a tender through DBSA to appoint company to provide technical support to the OV titling project.**



Problem Statement



- Out of 6.7 million residential properties registered, 2.1 million are state-subsidised houses, with half located in urban areas.
- Owners need an updated title to access their property's value and maintain it over time.
- The current titling system favors wealthier individuals, making it difficult for low-income households. For instance, transferring a property valued at R220,000 can exceed R11,000 in fees.
- Beneficiaries who wish to sell within eight years must request a waiver from provincial government, a process that is both costly and time-consuming, often leading to informal transactions.
- Inadequate titling prevents access to mortgage finance, limiting financial opportunities and impacting municipal governance and income.
- Tribal land market is ineffective, with the government missing out on R56.3 billion from 643,216 traditional land parcels.
- Poor inter-departmental coordination and ineffective regulations contribute to ongoing crisis.
- A functional and accessible titling system requires collaboration across government levels, along with involvement from the private sector and civil society. Operation Vulindlela is best suited to facilitate this coordination.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE METROS

- Title Deeds Backlogs are quantified & categorised & resources / programmes in place.
- Inter-departmental co-operation and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are adopted and routinely reviewed.
- An integrated property value chain – from registration to accounts / billing.
- Processes support asset creation that can support municipal / national fiscus
- Processes are in place to resolve disputes / transfers that have occurred from beneficiaries of primary transfers to third parties
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and credible



Reinforcing "Best Practices"

Following themes are evidently progressive and impactful in shaping some of the Metros approach towards title deed administration.

These are primarily in relation to the township establishment processes associated with housing projects.

(From eThekweni Case Studies reflecting on the RAP for titling 2017 – current)

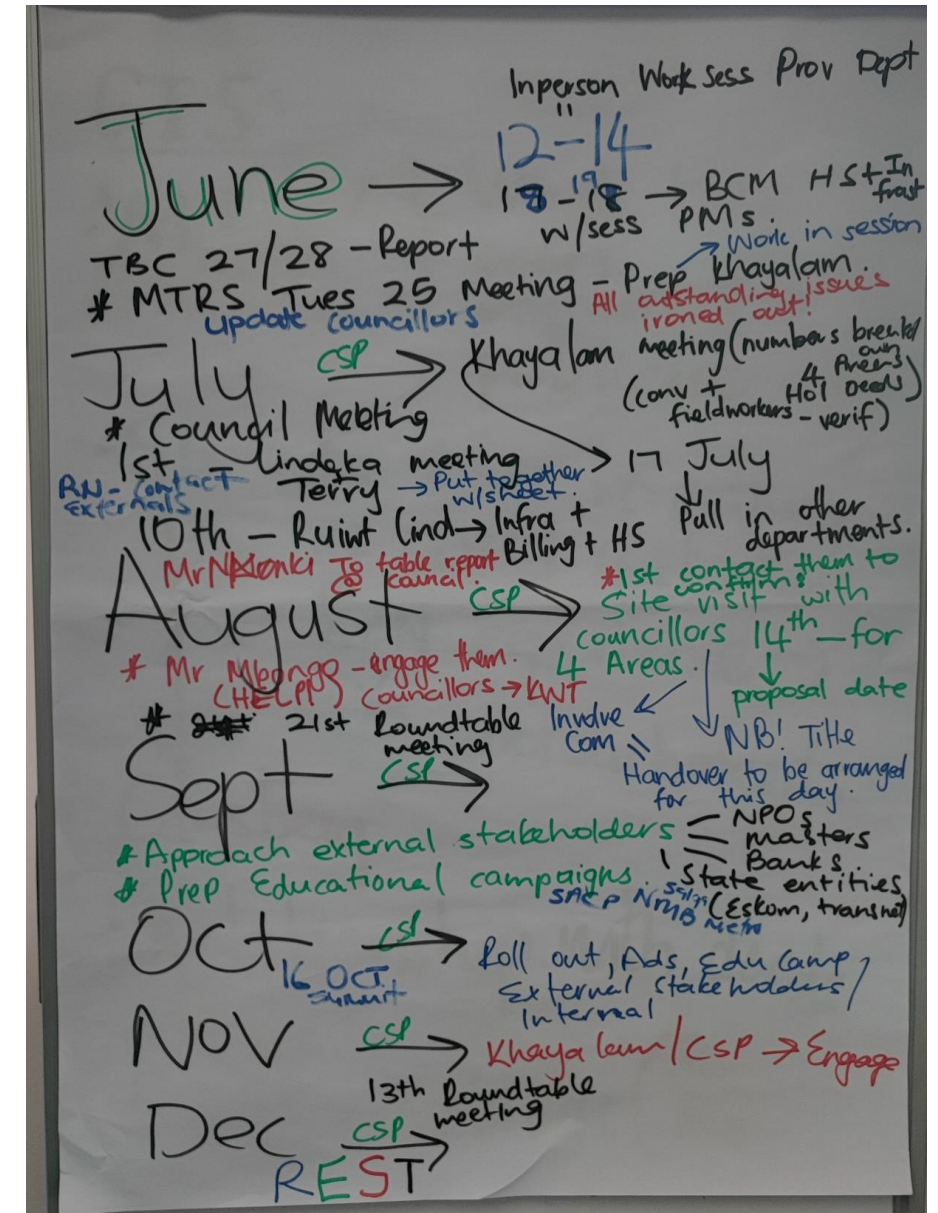
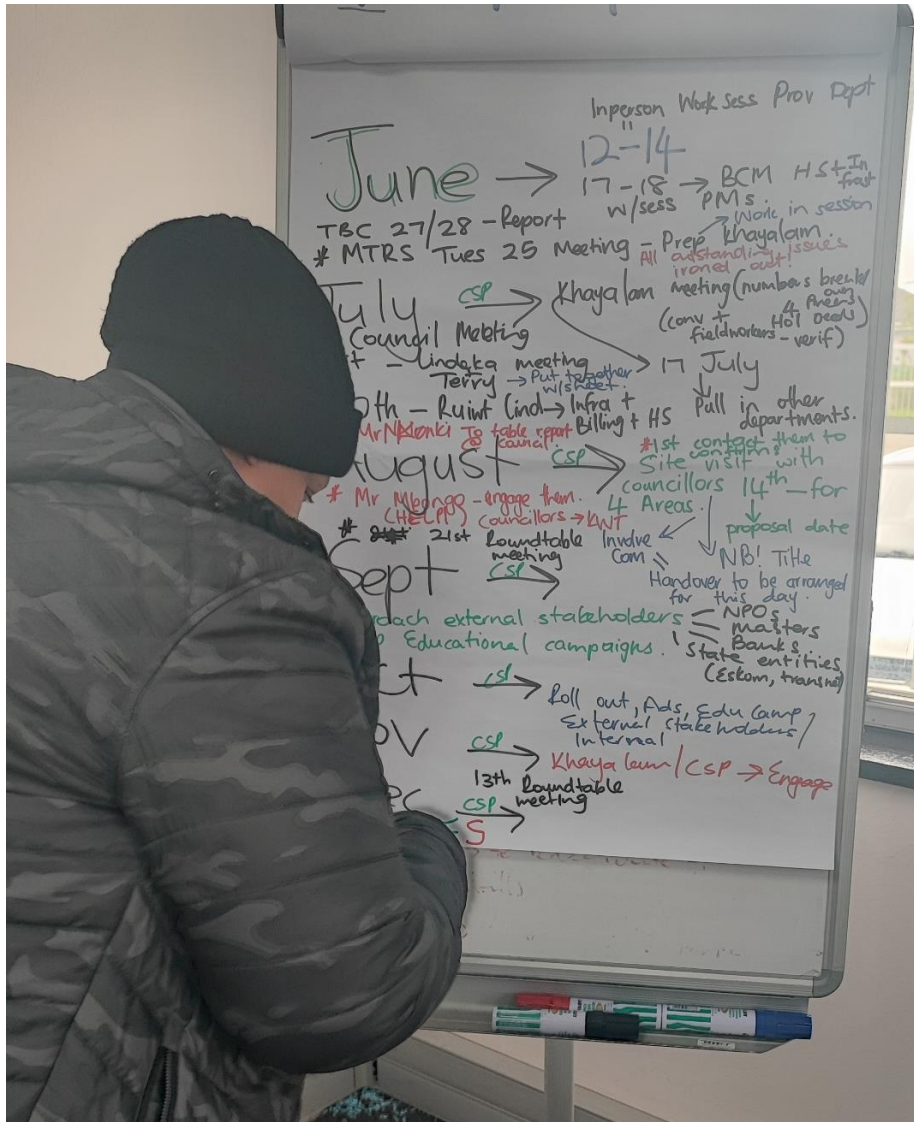




BCM – Community engagement Sisulu @ Potsdam



**BCM – Site Visit to Unit 2 Mdantsane –
occupied houses, no services, no title deeds**



BCM - Action Plan June - December 2024

BCMM MTRS PRESENTED TO TOP MANAGEMENT

By Cwenga Liwani

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Metro Title Reform Support Programme (MTRS) supported by National Treasury and the Cities Support Programme Committee had an in-person meeting with BCMM Top Management on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 at Trust Centre Building, East London.

The purpose of the engagement was to extend the practical dimension of the MTRS in the City in resolving bottle necks that are causing slow delivery of the title deeds and transfers.

The critical issues discussed are related to subdivision of land, approval of township establishment, state land, land surveying, illegal occupation of Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) houses.

The committee showcased the work done in tackling title deed backlog within Buffalo City for pre and post 1994 human settlements projects.

The BCMM executive has committed to review work done and challenges while enhancing and supporting its approaches relating to title deed administration.

The Metro established the MTRS Working Committee, working together with the relevant departments that include Property Management, Human Settlements Task Team, City Planning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Revenue and Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO).



A City Hard At Work

METRO TITLING REFORM WORKSHOP

By Oyama Tsabo

Metro Titling Reform Workshop culminates today, 19 February 2025 at East London ICC. The workshop which started on Monday 17 February is part of the Metro Title Reform Support Sub-Program (MTRS) under the Vulindlela Project with the Presidency.

The session targeting various line departments is aimed at coming up with effective strategies to assist the Metro in resolving backlogs in issuing of Title Deeds.



According to BCMM's Transfers and Registrations Lindeka Nkuntayi, "Making deliberate efforts in the registration of Title Deeds to individual beneficiaries gives back dignity and ensures that people become rightful owners to their homes."

"Home-owners can leverage their immovable property as an asset. This, in turn, will contribute significantly to the collection of revenue at Buffalo City. Possible annual revenue to be generated from the backlog on Pre and Post 1994 projects is estimated at R89 million," said Nkuntayi.

The Buffalo City Metro's Geographic Information System (GIS) team started with the capturing of all projects in various wards in trying to quantify the numbers to identify which areas they need to focus on. This is done in an effort to eradicate backlogs, more specifically for Pre 1994 projects.

In closing, Nkuntayi said, "We have categorised the challenges that have caused delays in issuing of Title Deed and have made great progress in eradicating the backlog."

The Metro has successfully transferred 21 780 Title Deeds thus far and has plans to do Deed transfers simultaneously with housing handovers.

The workshop was coordinated by representatives from the World Bank.



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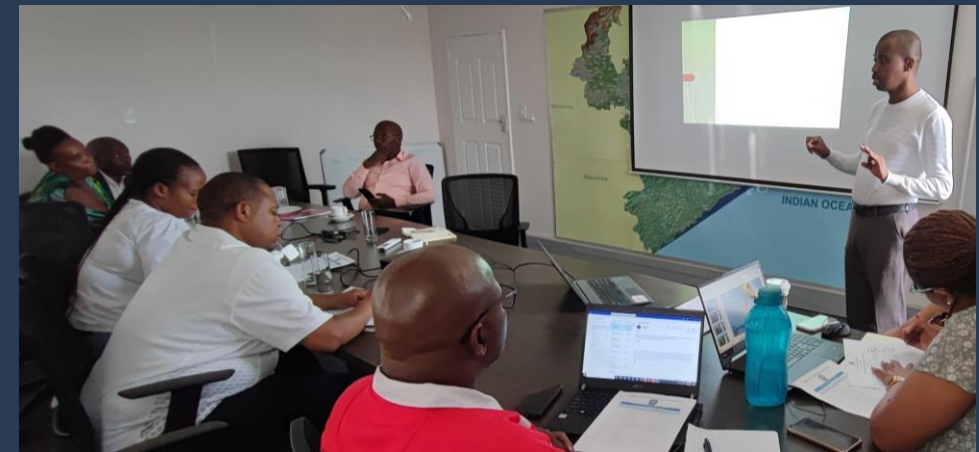
Engagements with Buffalo City April / September '23 & Feb June '24 and Feb '25



Graeme Ball Graeme Ball	Peter Khaled Ahmad	Ruweida Naina Ruweida Naina	30039323 30039323	Nzondelelo Mbongo Nzondelelo Mbongo
Amina El Zayat, Inter... Amina El Zayat, International Fin...	Lindeka Lindeka	MWNgemaS MWNgemaS	Illana	Karen Harrison Karen Harrison
Kenny Kenny	Stefan Grobler Stefan Grobler	meganbryer meganbryer	Seth Maqetuka Seth Maqetuka	COJ Marcelle Hattingh COJ Marcelle Hattingh
Coenraad Calitz CO... Coenraad Calitz COCT	Vuyokazi Ndzimand... Vuyokazi Ndzimande-eThekwin...	Stanley Mutisi Stanley Mutisi	Amelia Buchner Amelia Buchner	Bertus van Zyl Bertus van Zyl
Fadeya Fadeya	Nonhlanhla Qhobos... Nonhlanhla Qhobosheane	Anelisa Anelisa	Nuthan Maharaj	Bernadette Leon NT Bernadette Leon NT

**x9 Peer-to-Peer Engagements:
A platform to showcase, challenge
and inspire – “What can you share?”**

- Engagements involved various key players, including Urban Planners, the Land Survey Unit, the Geographical Information Systems Team, the Finance Team (Valuation Roll), and Property Management.
- Via ECDHS, the Project Management Team and Chief Directorate contributed primarily through PRM submissions, business plans, and virtual sessions.
- Ongoing focused virtual meetings with ECDHS and BCMM officials have allowed for continuous updates to the SIMP.



SIMP “101”: an Excel Spreadsheet reflecting “cradle to grave” of project

A1	SMART INTEGRATED MASTER PLAN (SIMP) FOR TITLE DEEDS - EASTERN CAPE METROPOLITAN AREAS										
1	MASTER PLAN (SIMP) FOR TITLE DEEDS - EASTERN CAPE METROPOLITAN AREAS										
2	PROJECT BASIC INFORMATION							PROJECT			
3	Local Municipality	Regional Area	Project Name	HSS Project No.	Property Description of Parent Property	Subsidy Instrument (To be Obtained From HSS)	Project Type	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Total Project Value Approved	Total Accumulated Expenditure Date
6	Buffalo City Metro	Inland	KWT - Breidbach 531 subs (Phase)	C17090001/1			Progress Payment Housing Project	30/05/2018	30/06/2024	R 73 513 431,22	R 10 801 7
9	Buffalo City Metro	Midlands	East London - St Lukes 203 subs (- Utshani 143 subs)	C13110002/1	Erf 4651 Newlands registered under BCM		Peoples Housing Process (IRDP)	18/10/2019	08/12/2022	R 23 083 141,60	R 20 052 9
10	Buffalo City Metro	Coastal	East London - Scenery Park Ph 1 - 1160 subs (Phase 1)	C95010001/1			Progress Payment Housing Project	31/03/2014	30/09/2022	R 132 366 123,90	R 113 708
13	Buffalo City Metro	Coastal	East London - Airport Phase 2a - 614 subs (Phase 1)	C03030002/1			Peoples Housing Process (IRDP)	21/05/2003	30/06/2023	R 38 832 754,63	R 32 877 5
19	Buffalo City Metro	Coastal	East London - Duncan Village - 352 subs (Phase 1)	C00110001/1			Peoples Housing Process (IRDP)	15/01/1998	13/03/2023	R 6 035 170,12	R 5 724 4
31	Buffalo City Metro	Inland	East London - Berlin - 411 subs (Phase 1)	C01050004/1			Progress Payment Housing Project	22/05/2001	30/06/2022	R 7 655 580,00	R 7 655 2
39	Buffalo City Metro	Midlands	East London - Chris Hani - 304 subs (Phase 1)	C01080001/1			Peoples Housing Process (IRDP)	08/11/2001	30/06/2022	R 8 725 596,01	R 8 725 5
40	Buffalo City Metro	Midlands	East London - Mdantsane Zone CC - 427 sites (Phase 1)	C97120014/1	Erf 2106 Mdantsane CC		Peoples Housing Process (IRDP)	01/09/1997	22/02/2023	R 10 672 115,31	R 10 512 1
	Buffalo City Metro	Inland	KWT - Dimbaza 27 subs (Phase 1)	C13020022/1			Progress Payment Housing Project	17/08/2015	28/02/2023	R 5 421 859,20	R 4 080 8

< >

Post 94 BCMM | Sheet3 | Sheet2 | Pre 94 BCMM | Sheet1 | Nelson Mandela Metro | +



Anticipated Benefit of SIMP

- Updated project records and categorisation of project completion
- Alignment with HSS and MTSF categories to include Pre 94; Post 94; Post 2014 & New will be attained, thereby improving monitoring and evaluation processes
- Enhanced reporting to City Executive and Political Leadership
- Potential for an increased number of closed out projects – reducing unnecessary pressure on HSS and ongoing audit queries.
- BCMM & Province will utilise a single template instead of various fragmented reports that are being used (NMB process initiated)
- Standard and integrated approach on titling will be attained and thereby avoiding unnecessary projects duplications.

OBSERVATIONS FROM METRO ENGAGEMENTS

- Each Metro is **addressing titling backlog** in some manner – clear that some are well advanced and making progress – others embracing the collegiate nature of the Metro Titling Restoration Support (MTRS)
- Indications are that the historic backlog remains priority for most
- Does not imply that “new” developments are being addressed differently or that new systems approaches have been introduced – **this remains a major concern**
- Some have put an inter-dept. forum in place to address the issues
- Others have put a document recording system (SharePoint) in place
- **No clear protocols and systems of how to strengthen coordination between metros and provinces – GP has appointed PRTs to support municipalities**
- **No evidence of coherent, single “menu” or SOP that supports Metro to support projects from “inception” to possible “revenue”**
- Not clear how much of a priority (or not) this is for Provinces or resources are being utilised (or if everyone is reading from the



**THE
OBJECTIVE
OF THE
PROJECT IS
TO
STRENGTHEN
TITLE**

DEVELOP A DATA-DRIVEN, REALISTIC PLAN TO REDUCE THE TITLE DEED BACKLOG

- Develop a framework to segment the title deed backlog
- Obtain required data to quantify and characterise the title deed backlog

DEVELOP SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

- Create a data management system so that municipalities can monitor the backlog over time
- Develop data collection protocols and systems

PILOT INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO DEAL WITH KNOWN TITLING PROBLEMS

- Encroachments
- Digital ownership certificate pilot
- The lessons from pilots must to inform policy and programme changes



Inception (of Project) to Integration (into PVC)

1) Township Establishment



Township establishment = municipal function.

MTRS/ OV has had a series of meetings and workshops with metros to support titling. Overall, engagement is low, and capacity is weak.

2) Beneficiary Administration



Beneficiary administration processes lies with Human Settlements, either at a provincial or municipal level.

NO standardised systems or processes, and current policy is **NOT** supportive of regularisation

Toolkits developed but low uptake

FRAMEWORK DRIVEN

Data should align with the key stages of township establishment and beneficiary administration:



Key data sources:

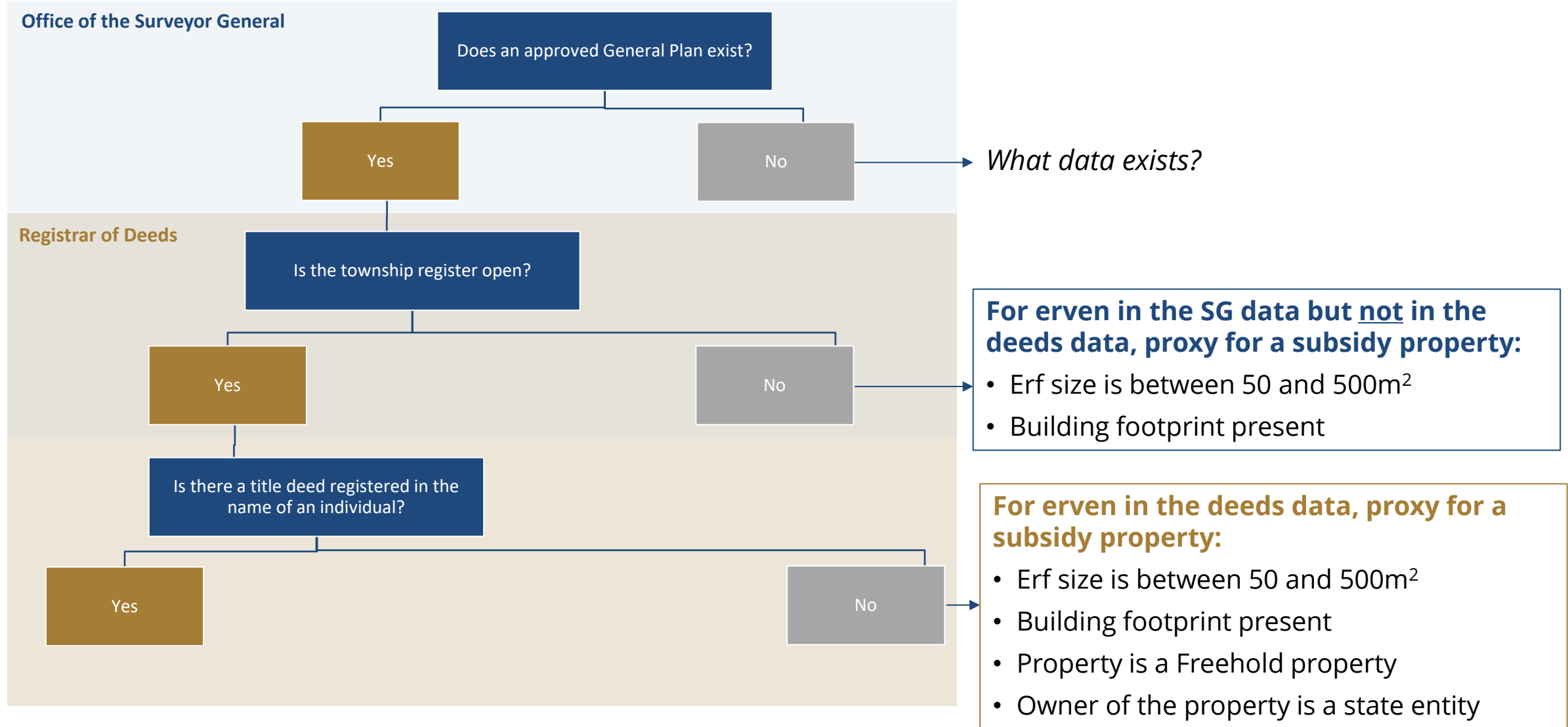
- **The Office of the Surveyor General (SG)**
 - ✓ Maintains data on all approved GP including diagrams
 - ✓ Maintains hard copy documents for each approved GP as it proceeds through the various stages of township establishment (including conditions of establishment)
- **The Registrar of Deeds (RoD)**
 - ✓ Maintains data on ownership of properties in proclaimed townships (spatial links when joined to SG data)
 - ✓ Maintains hard copy documents for each proclaimed township (TBD)
- **Google footprints data**
 - ✓ Identify erven where there is a structure – exclude vacant stands from the determination of the backlog



DATA MATCHING PROCESS



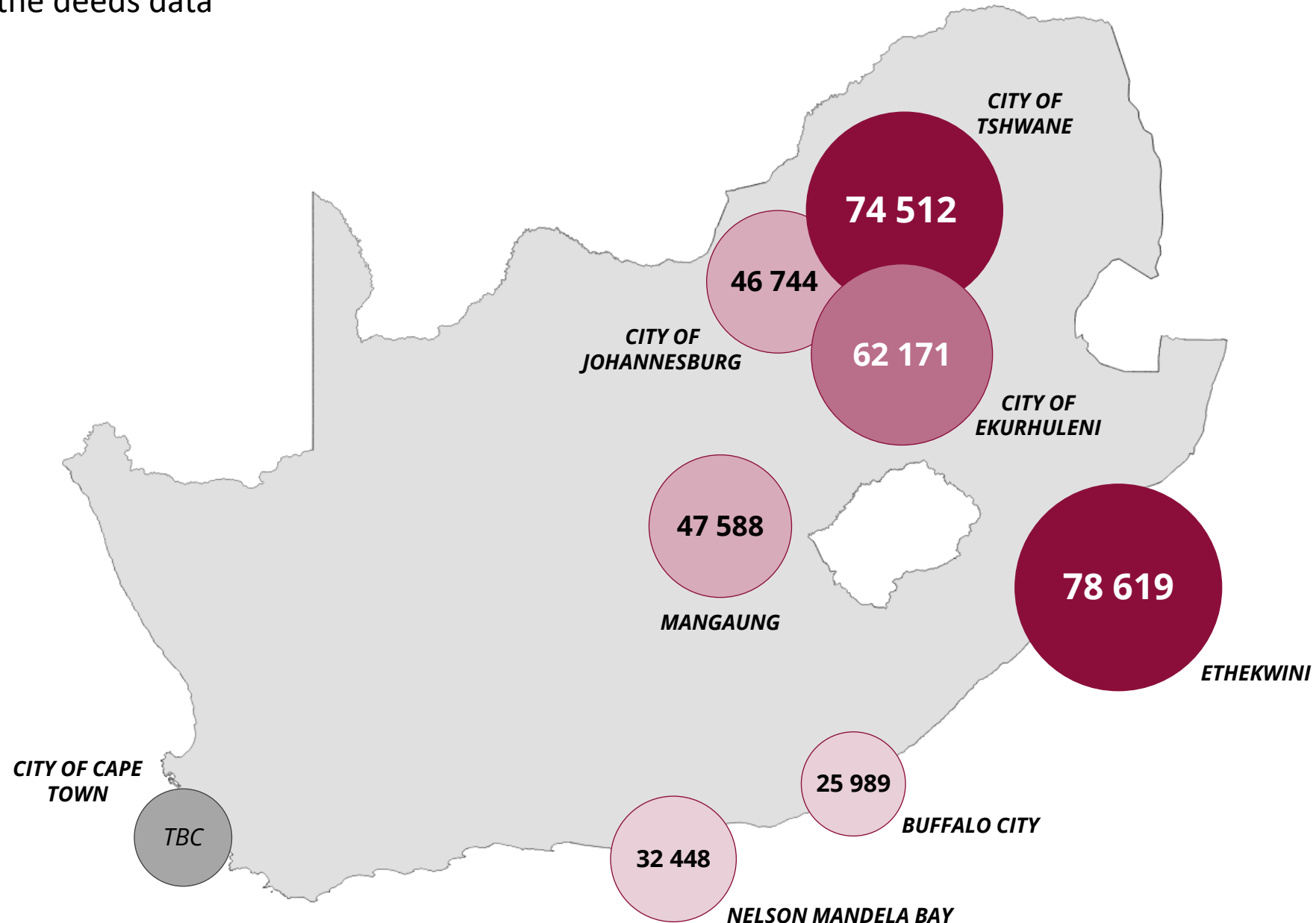
We then use various proxies to identify erven as backlog subsidy properties



BACKLOG ESTIMATES: METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES

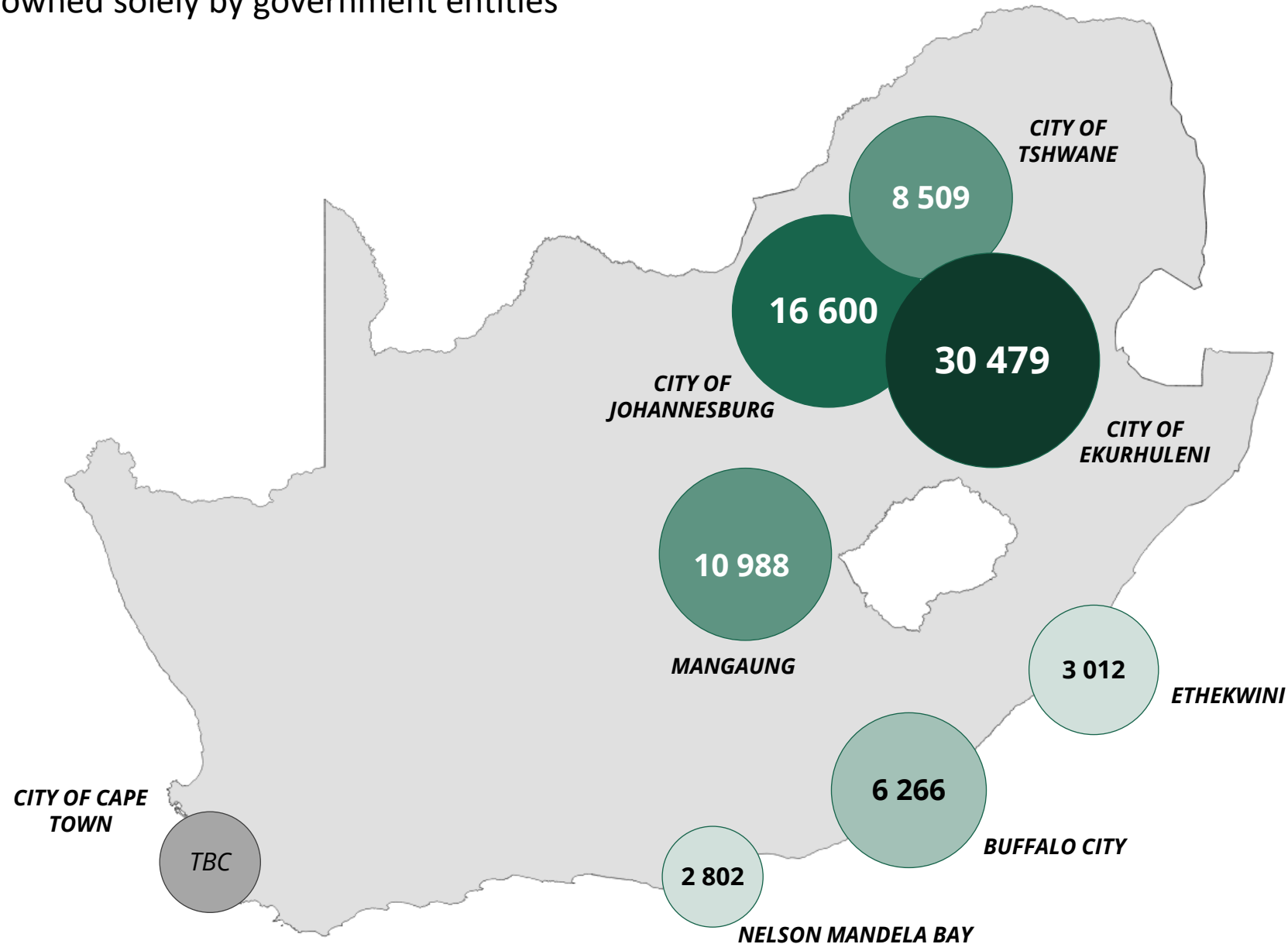


Based on our analysis we estimate the backlog in the **metropolitan municipalities overall** to be **368 071 subsidy properties** in SG data but not in deeds data. eThekweni metro has the highest number of subsidy properties in the SG data but not in the deeds data



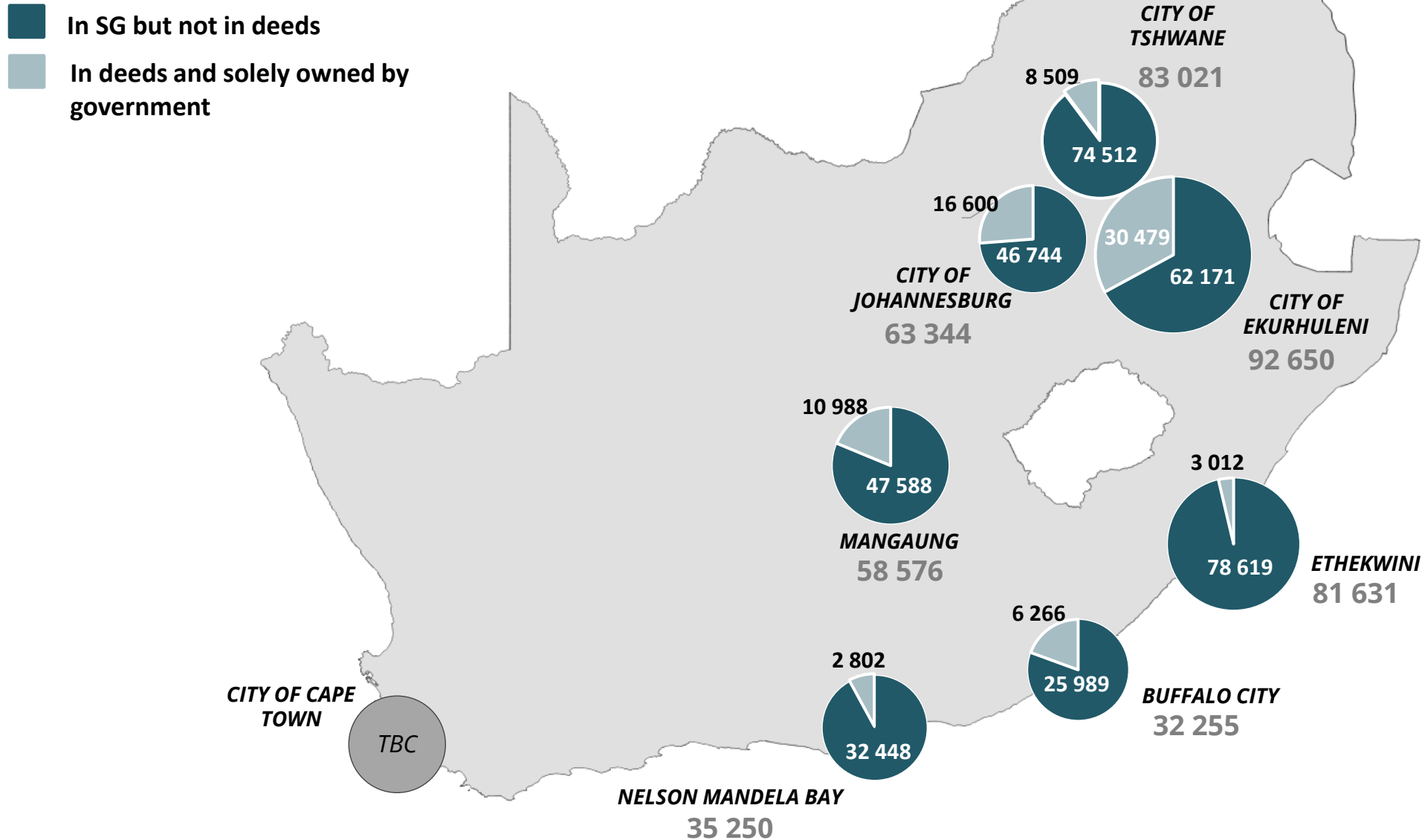
Notes: Analysis excludes City of Cape Town estimates while deeds information is being confirmed

Based on our analysis we estimate the backlog in the **metropolitan municipalities overall** to be **78 656 subsidy properties** in deeds and owned solely by government entities. The City of Ekurhuleni has the highest number of subsidy properties owned solely by government entities



Notes: Analysis excludes City of Cape Town estimates while deeds information is being confirmed

Based on our analysis we estimate there to be **446 727 backlog subsidy properties** in metropolitan municipalities excluding Cape Town. **368 071 (82%) subsidy properties** can be found in townships with an approved general plan (in SG data) but with no records in the deeds data, while **78 656 (18%) subsidy properties** can be found in deeds data and owned solely by government. These properties could be transferred immediately



KEY PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING A DATA ASSET

To effectively manage and reduce the title deed backlog, robust systems are necessary for gathering, storing, updating and analyzing relevant data. Key principles of effective data management include:

- **Defined:** all fields are clearly defined and clearly documented in a consolidated *data dictionary*
- **Auditable:** the source of all data is clearly specified and can be validated by third parties
- **Single Source of Truth:** one unified and authoritative data source to ensure consistency and accuracy
- **Accessible:** data is available for use in a central repository by authorised users as needed
- **Permissioned:** data can only be added to and updated by specific users, and these actions are logged for reproducibility and auditability
- **Integrated:** data from various sources can be combined using concrete linking fields to create a unified view
- **Reusable:** available for future analysis and application on an ongoing basis



DEVELOPING A DATA ASSET

Ideally, this data should be maintained in a structured GIS database



Database

- Structured collection of data that is **stored electronically** and managed by a Database Management System (DBMS).
- Used to store, process and manage **large volumes of data**
- **Controlled access permissions** reduce the risk of accidental alterations, increasing data quality
- Built to create a clearly auditable **single source of truth**

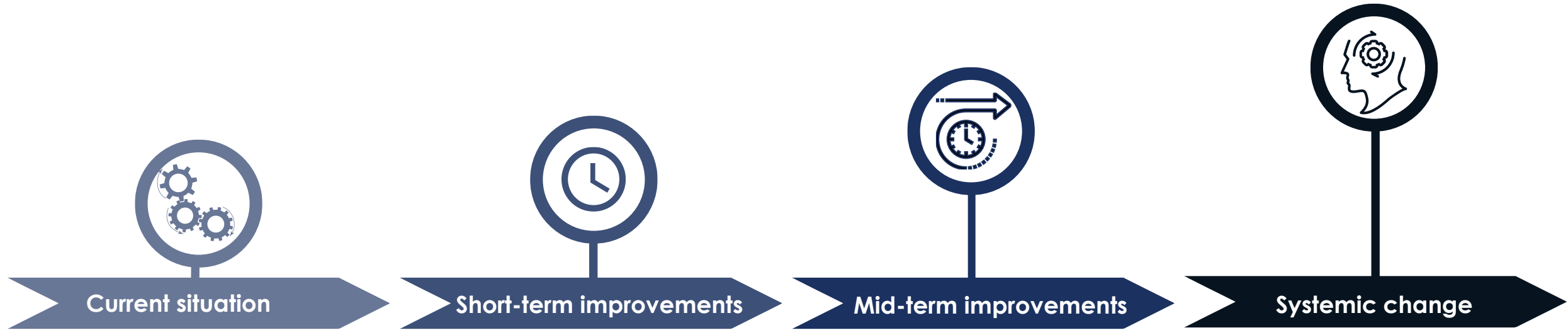


Spreadsheet

- Document that organizes data in rows and columns. Used for data analysis, calculations and **simple data management**
- While spreadsheets are easy to use, **reproducibility is highly limited** making data more prone to errors and inconsistencies as changes are difficult to track, especially in collaborative environments
- Lack of structured permissions leads to many **possible versions of the data that are difficult to audit for accuracy**



Reflecting on the Focus and Resources Working in the Tilting Space



OV workstreams – IGR focus across the National Departments , TSC pilots and Data analysis *

MTRS works streams – Metro Govt. focus with targeted and broad partnerships

NGO Partnerships – with multiple partners across the country e.g. TSC / Khaya Lam

* The “last” of the OV focus areas and arguably most peripheral to OV efforts

OV Focus

Increase the small estates threshold to R385,000 to ease property transfers - **DoJ**

Reduce/scrap transfer fees for low-value properties (<R330k) - **Deeds Office**

Digital Deeds database within Deeds integrated with other departments e.g. – **Deeds Office / Human Settlements**

Simplify documentation requirements for lower-income households to formalise property ownership - **Masters Office**

Build a centralised database to monitor and prevent future backlog growth while enabling market activities – **all spheres**

Seek support from the new administration to implement these recommendations as part of OV reforms.

Metro focus

eThekweni Case Studies publication and launch

Completion of SIMP and expansion from **BCMM to NMBM**

Ekurhuleni database

Peer-to-Peer Roundtable platform to share info / approach – **all metros and practitioners**

Workshopping of toolkits – **BCMM** deep-dive towards institutionalisation

Business case for a Special Task Team **eThekweni**

Opportunities

Linking of partners e.g. Khaya Lam / ESRI with Metro partners

X 4 Pilots in BCMM to rectify Parent Title and convey title to occupants

ID of pilots in eThekweni to give effect to 2022 resolution re: encroachments / partial transfers

HSTSP 3 focus areas
(Inner City / Informal Settlements and Small-Scale Affordable Rental) – next slide

100 Day intervention plan

Key and Immediate Actions



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of priority structural reforms

Facilitate formalisation

- i. Increase Small Estates Threshold to R385 000
- ii. Reduce (or scrap) Deeds Office transfer fees on low value transfers (<R400 000)
- iii. Expedite digitisation at the Deeds Office, starting with secure request and transfer of digital certificates / documents issued by the Department of Home Affairs and Masters Office

Facilitate regularisation (title deed backlog)

- i. Clarify regularisation policy to enable transfer to rightful owners who are non-qualifiers
- ii. Pilot e-Title project in partnership with SANT and selected metros
- iii. Build a robust case management platform to enable efficient primary transfer (from state to beneficiary / owner)

Data

- i. Amend the Deeds Registries Act to enable government access to deeds data at no charge
- ii. Develop specific for master data management system to hold/maintain housing subsidy, project, SG / deeds data
- iii. Updating of the HSS and linking it to the GIS system.

Capacity

- i. Strengthen operational capacity at provincial and municipal level regarding beneficiary administration and general admin support . The NDHS to re-establish provincial/ municipal support teams.



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Recommendations by Department



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Suggested Intervention



- Increase the small estates threshold to R385 000 (aligned with the real value of the threshold when it was last gazetted in November 2014)
- Review the impact of online estates reporting portal with respect to turn around times, and explore opportunities to integrate with beneficiary administration processes (where beneficiary is deceased), integrate with deeds office (digital “Next of Kin” certificates)



- Develop systems and processes to scale beneficiary administration capacity significantly
- Clarify regularisation policy
 - ✓ Informal purchase where there is evidence of a purchase / no dispute (no evictions, no penalties – just transfer)
 - ✓ Other non-qualifiers (address concerns about AG)
- Develop expedited process for subsidy applications, substitutions on HSS, updates to HSS
- Review and redevelop the HSS to enable integration with SG and deeds data



- Amend the Deeds Registries Act to enable access to deeds data for government at no cost
- Reduce deeds office transfer fees for low value transfers
- Expedite digitisation to enable efficiencies (DHA and DoJ)



Recommendations by Department – DALRD



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Immediate priority	Medium term
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Amend schedule of fees to reduce burden on low-cost transfers2. Standardise requirements re: certificates and documents to accompany transfer3. Establish specific work streams to process increased volumes of primary transfers to resolve the title deed backlog4. Pilot e-Title project in partnership with SANT and selected metros	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Amend the Deeds Registries Act to enable access to deeds data for government at no cost6. Reduce deeds office transfer fees for low value transfers7. Expedite digitisation to enable efficiencies (DHA and DoJ)

Recommendations by Department – Dept. of Justice



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Immediate priority	Medium term
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the small estates threshold and ensure it is aligned with inflation on an annual basis 2. Align thresholds used by the Masters Office in the estate reporting process to new small estates threshold 3. Establish specific processes and channels to onboard and resolve estates of deceased beneficiaries in title deed backlog projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Review processes within the Master's Office to streamline issuing of Letters of Authority 5. Review effectiveness of online estates reporting portal and refine where required

First Contact		Follow up		Outcomes
Date		Date		
Who		Who		



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Recommendations by Department – Ntl. Dept. of Human Settlements



**OPERATION
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Supporting the implementation
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Immediate priority		Medium term	
1. Issue policy statement re: regularisation re: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where there is evidence of a purchase / no dispute (no evictions, no penalties – just transfer) Other non-qualifiers (address concerns about AG) 		3. Revise the Housing Act to remove Section 10 which prohibits sale of subsidy properties within the first eight years	
2. Grant accreditation to all metros to allow transfer of townships to the metros to complete		4. Revise the Housing Subsidy System protocols to accurately records cadastral and beneficiary data, and seamlessly integrate with other data sources including Home Affairs, SASSA data (for beneficiaries) and Deeds and SG data for properties	

First Contact		Follow up		Outcomes
Date		Date		
Who		Who		



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Recommendations by Department – Prov. Dept. of Human Settlements



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Immediate priority

Medium term

1. Devolve authority for signing sale agreements with rightful owners of subsidy properties to municipalities that have proven capacity (systems and people) and accreditation to undertake this task
2. Hand over files/responsibility of pre SPLUMA townships to municipalities so that pre-SPLUMA townships can be proclaimed, in line with the 'municipal planning' function in the Constitution (Schedule 4 Part B)
3. Devolve authority for resolving disputes between claimants to municipalities where appropriate Establish a dedicated team of administrators to receive and process municipal applications for housing subsidy applications and amendments
4. What about the waivers to deal with COE

First Contact		Follow up		Outcomes
Date		Date		
Who		Who		



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Recommendations by Department – Ntl. Dept. Department of Home Affairs



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Immediate priority	Medium term
1. Provide access to population register data to enable identification and validation of status of property owners	2. Enable access to digitised certificates to enable Deeds and Masters office processes

First Contact		Follow up		Outcomes
Date		Date		
Who		Who		

Recommendations by Department – Auditor General



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Immediate priority	Medium term
1. Issue a clarifying statement about the transfer of subsidy properties to rightful owners, even if they are not qualifying beneficiaries (statement to require a coherent policy and systems to ensure that policies are adhered to)	

First Contact		Follow up		Outcomes
Date		Date		
Who		Who		



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Recommendations by Department – Municipalities / SALGA



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Immediate priority

1. Establish cross-cutting teams comprising planning, human settlements, engineering, legal and finance to progress townships that have land/legal or township establishment issues.
2. Create clear guidelines for transfer to non-qualifiers, heirs of beneficiaries etc
3. Identify specific individual / team mandated to review and sign sale agreements
4. Establish fast track process to process bulk rates clearance certificates for backlog projects
5. Develop clear policy with respect to write offs and payment plans to support regularisation

Medium term

6. Review by-laws and amend to enable township proclamation for backlog projects(**waivers ?**)
7. Develop systems and data management processes to ensure that all documentation relating to township establishment is digitised and securely stored, and that it is accessible

START:
Launch online –
A manifesto for title
reform

A SALGA /
Provincial
Perspective

Khaya Lam short
stories video
compilation

TSC short stories
video compilation

Review OV Steer
Com

SIMP demo of
BCMM to NDHS /
OV / DPME

Toolkit showcase
and panel
discussion

Ekurhuleni Data
Case Study and
panel

Review MTRS
Roundtable –
August 21sts

Policy Showcase
- Regularisation
- Encroachments
- Lapsing
approvals

eThekwini Case
Studies Launch and
panel

iLembe Case Study
showcase and
panel discussion

Problem Statement
/ SIMP demo to HS
Portfolio
committee
Parliament

16th October
Eastern Cape
Summit

Conveyancers
Engagement?

CONCLUDE:
Summary of
outcomes in-
Person plenary
session



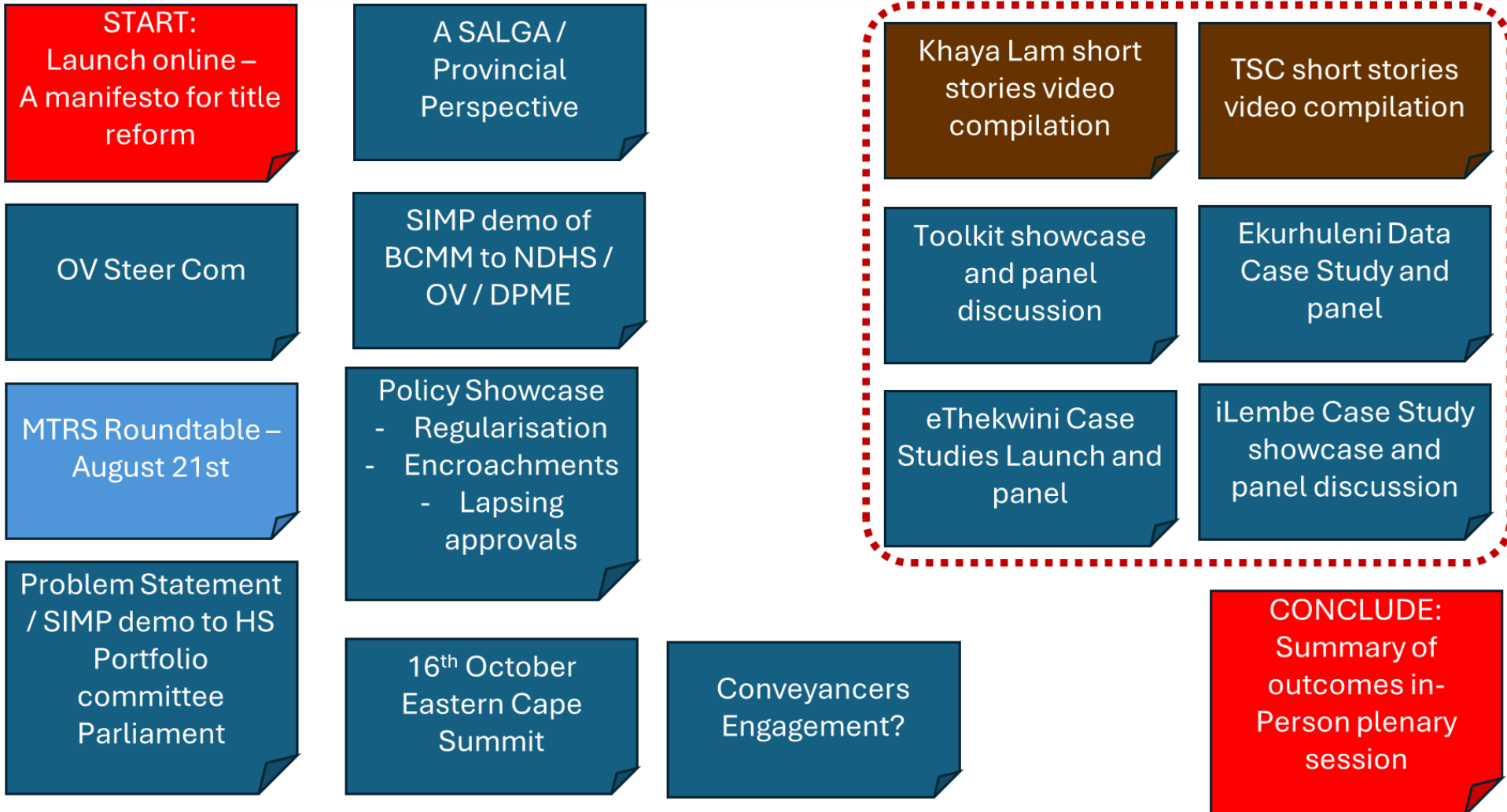
April 1st 2025 – Thursday 10th July 2025 100 days

14 weeks Title Deed Battle Plan and Operationalisation



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