

Reaching development outcomes through a dedicated focus on cities, towns and settlements

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By 2011, half of SA Population lived in City regions and Cities

By 2011, 75% of SA population lived in cities and towns

Population in cities and medium-large towns increased at an average of 2.87% whilst the national average growth rate was 1.85% from 1996-2011

Population growth nationally, in urban areas and in towns have generally been

Context and Importance of the problem

The central aim of this policy brief is to raise awareness among key decision makers that the socio-economic development outcomes as set out, including the target of 5 million job opportunities and quality of life for all South African's, will not be possible without a dedicated focus on the central role of cities and towns within the South African development landscape.

It is estimated that almost 78% of South Africa's population of 51.7 million people, reside within cities and towns throughout the so-called urban and rural landscapes. It is calculated that by 2011, 42% of South Africa's population resided within the four City Region areas of Gauteng, Cape Town, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Bay, 7.5% within Cities and about 14% in a number of large Service Towns and the rest in smaller towns. Given that another 12% of South Africans actually reside in high density settlements and that a mere 14% of the country's population reside further than 20km away from a formal town or city¹, it is evident that we can no longer afford to ignore the fact that this country's development challenges will need to be addressed within its network of cities, towns and settlements.

Findings from recently conducted analyses made available on the StepSA platform, also illustrate the crucial role that these spaces, and especially city region areas play as economic engines and job baskets within South Africa, with an estimated 57% of the formal economy being generated in the City Regions alone. If the network of Cities and major towns are included this is more than 80%.

Whilst the average annual growth rate between 1996 and 2011 for the South African population as a whole was a mere 1.85%, the average growth rate² for the combined population in Cities and larger towns (see Table 2) was 2.87%. This means that over the last 15 years these regions were also growing faster than the rest of SA and, as such, the country has become even more urbanised.

¹ For a definition of settlements (City Regions, Cities, Towns, etc.) see Table 3

² Growth rate as referred to in this policy brief is based on linear calculation of average growth for periods 1996-2001/2001-2011/1996-2011



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Almost 12% of South Africa's population reside in high density rural settlements.

90% of SA population reside in cities, towns and high density rural settlements

Regional centres (rural service centres, towns mostly bigger than 40 000 people) provide access to economic opportunity and services to 20% of SAs population

Only 14% of SA population live outside, or further than 20km from a city or town

Whilst growth in general and even urbanisation, took place at quite a slow rate in recent years, the percentage of the population estimated to be living within a 20km distance from city regions, cities and towns continued to increase steadily from 82% in 1996 to 83% in 2001 and to 86% in 2011.

Focus of policy discussion

Given the gross spatial legacies of Apartheid and the dire living conditions in former homeland areas, it is understandable that the policy focus over the last decade had an overwhelming rural focus. This focus have been spearheaded through the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP, 2009) and cemented as one of the 12 national action plans for South Africa (Action plan 6). Scaling up rural development has, and continues to be a key concern for government as a whole, as reflected in numerous Cabinet Lekgotla's, the New Growth Path (NGP, 2010), the Medium term Strategic Framework (2009-2014) and the National Development Plan (2011).

The purpose of this policy brief is not to position the plight of settlements and the so-called 'urban' in opposition to that of the so-called 'rural'. It is much rather to highlight the critical role of the range of towns, cities and settlements within both sparsely and densely settled regions, in highly connected and in remotes areas, across urban and rural regions in South Africa. An issue that needs dedicated focus and that need to inform both urban and rural development policy arenas, the next steps in bringing the NDP (2011) to fruition and within the development of a National Spatial Development Framework (as provided for in the recently promulgated Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 2013)

Evidence and analyses

Evidence of national growth and settlement dynamics, available on the StepSA platform is a result of advanced spatial analyses conducted by the Spatial Planning and Systems unit of the CSIR Built Environment Division. The analyses is based upon the update of the SACN/CSIR settlement typology 2013 (originally developed in 2008 for urban policy analyses commissioned by the Presidency, SACN and the former dplg), the updated Geospatial Analyses Platform (2013), the disaggregation and comparison of StatsSA Census 1996, 2001 and 2011 data at city and town level through the newly developed Temporal Analytical Tool (CSIR, TAT 2013).

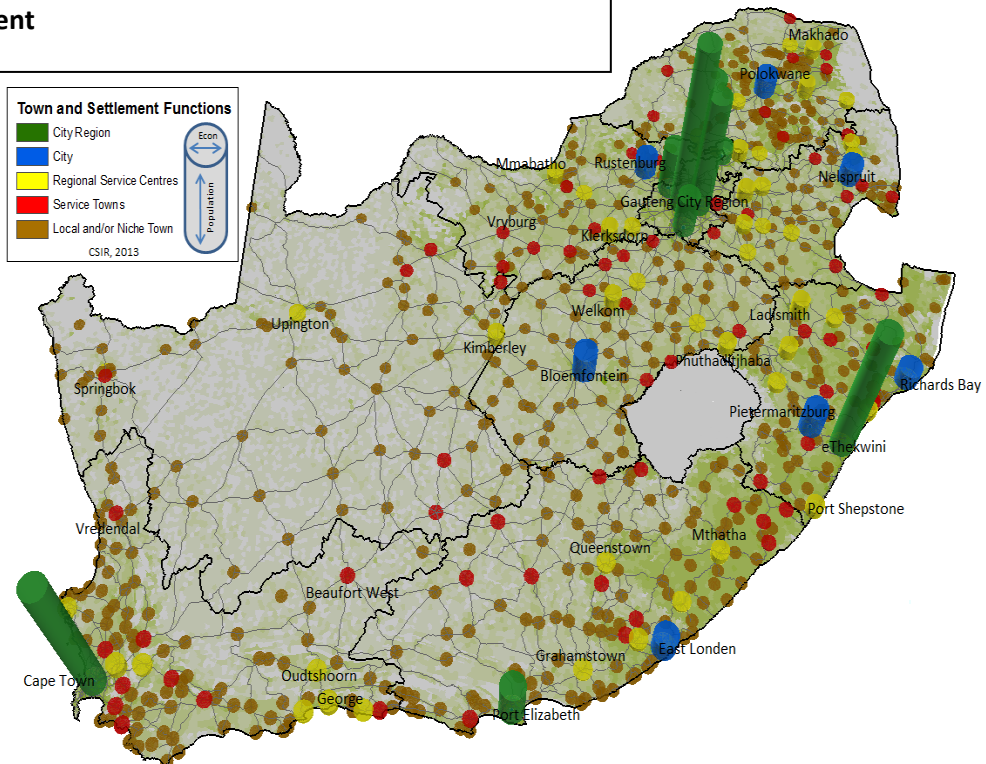


Table 1: Population and economic activity indicated per type of urban area/settlement

Functional Settlement Type (CSIR/SACN 2013v2)	Area_Km	% of National Area	Population 2011	% of National Population	Service Economy (Service Sector GVA (xR1000))	Economic Activity (*Total GVA (xR1000))	Contribution to Formal Nat Econ Activity		
CityRegions	20 575	1.65%	21 856 192	42.22%	758 652	1 185 948	56.77%	2011 Population in cities, towns & Settlements 89.56%	
Cities	8 225	0.66%	3 876 064	7.49%	102 574	178 276	8.53%		
TOTAL CITIES	28 800	2.30%	25 732 256	49.70%	861 226	1 364 224	65.30%		
Regional Centres	18 079	1.45%	7 313 730	14.13%	141 580	229 697	10.99%		
Service Towns	7 232	0.58%	2 720 372	5.25%	47 847	87 232	4.18%		
TOTAL MAJOR TOWNS	25 311	2.02%	10 034 102	19.38%	189 427	316 929	15.17%		2011 Population in cities & towns 77.82%
Local or Niche Towns	29 756	2.38%	4 327 891	8.36%	69 102	121 169	5.80%		
Rural Nodes in High density areas	928	0.07%	191 123	0.37%	2 537	4 850	0.23%		
TOTAL SMALL TOWNS	30 684	2.45%	4 519 014	8.73%	71 639	126 019	6.03%		
High Density Settlements	59 276	4.74%	6 081 912	11.75%	40 074	73 587	3.52%		
Sparse Rural Areas	1 070 931	85.66%	3 036 010	5.86%	51 830	184 994	8.86%		
Dense Rural Areas	35 258	2.82%	2 366 803	4.57%	13 921	23 351	1.12%		
TOTAL REST OF SA	1 165 465	93.22%	11 484 725	22.18%	105 826	281 932	13.50%		
NATIONAL TOTALS	1250260	100.00%	51770097	100%	1228117	2089104	100%		

* GVA Total excludes Construction sector
 SOURCE: CSIR GAP 2013 based on StatsSA Census 1996,2001,2011; SACN/CSIR Settlement Typology 2013v2, CSIR TAT (Temporal Analyses Tool) 2013

Map 1: Population and economic activity indicated per type of urban area/settlement





The Gauteng City Region continued to grow at a 2.37% average annual growth rate over the last 15 years.

National average growth for cities and towns from 1996-2011 is estimated at 2.87%, 1.81% for small towns, 1.85% for the country as a whole, and only 0.58% for areas outside towns.

Population and economic activity concentration in urban South Africa

Given the South African spatial economy and apartheid legacy the range of towns and cities in the country do not relate to a simple population and/or economic hierarchy. A detailed analyses of population, land area, economic activity, urban and rural regions and specifically the role of towns as service centres in their respective hinterlands have highlighted the crucial role played by a network of urban areas across the South African landscape.

The most significant contribution is made by the conurbation of metropolitan municipalities in City Region areas of Gauteng, Cape Town, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Bay (See Table 1). It is interesting to note that Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekweni have shown quite a slow growth of population, whilst Cape Town and Gauteng city regions have continued to show significant growth (See Table 2). The role and importance of Cities have been highlighted over the last couple of years and it is evident not only in their population and economic contribution, but also as provincial capitals.

In addition to the Cities, it is evident that a number of strategically located regional (rural) service centres and towns (See Table 1 and Map 1) provide a crucial urban service function (both for government and economic services) to the resident population (almost 20% of the national population), as well as to the population in surrounding rural areas. It is these large service towns that have shown significant growth over the 1996-2011 period (See Table 2).

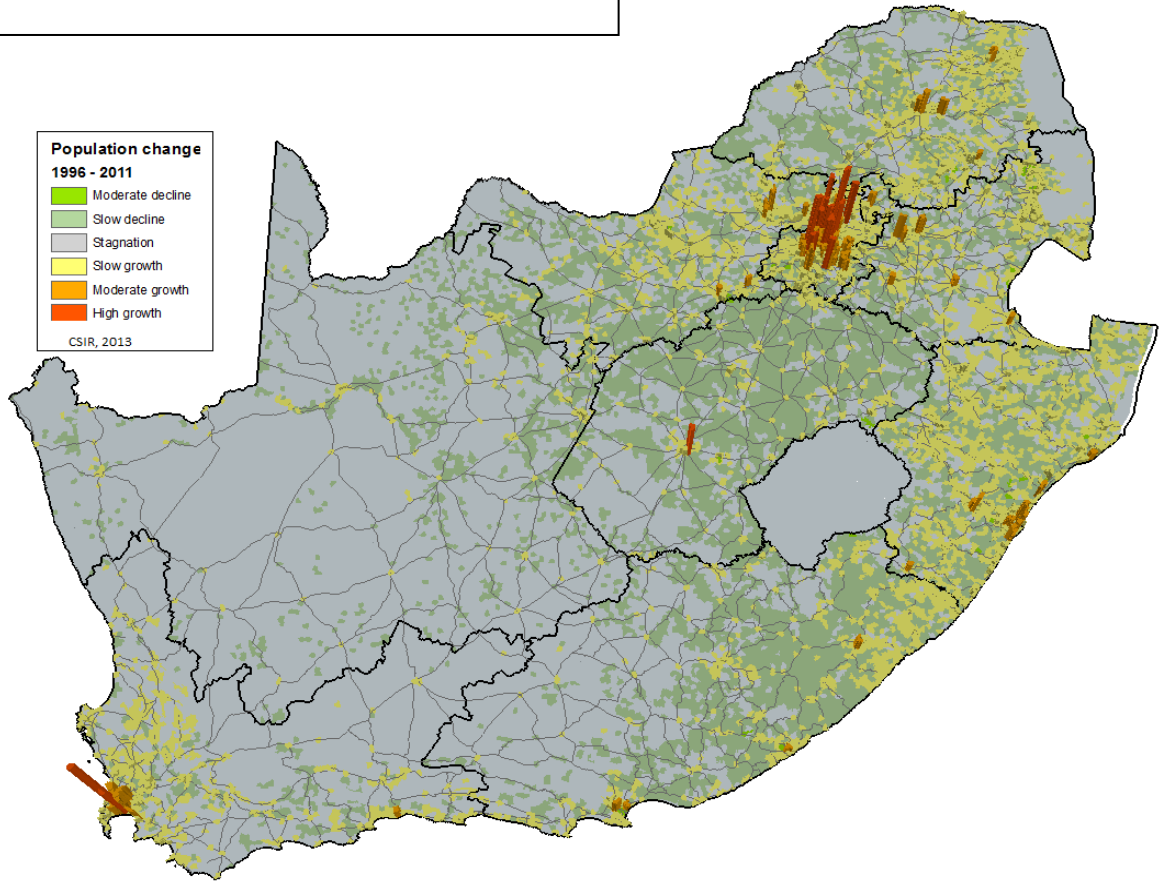
Urban growth trends

The average annual population growth rate in South Africa over the period 1996-2011 can be calculated at approximately 1.85%. This growth includes both natural population growth as well as in-migration. Given existing population numbers, cities and towns have continued to be the places of highest population growth (see Map 2 for an indication of absolute population growth for the 1996-2011 period). Even though South African cities and towns have on average (as indicated earlier) been sustaining higher growth rates than the rest of the country (See Table 2 and Map 3), there is vast differentiation between places.

The City Region areas of Gauteng and Cape Town showed the largest growth over this period. Average population growth in the Gauteng City Region area is calculated at 3.9% p.a. for 1996-2001 and at 3% p.a. for the 2001-2011 period, with an average annual growth rate of 3.68% over the last 15 years. Cape Town City Region area registered annual growth rates of 2.6%p.a. for 1996-2001, 2.9% for 2001-2011 and 3.10% for the 1996-2011 period. It is the only city region with an increase in growth rate over the last 15 years.



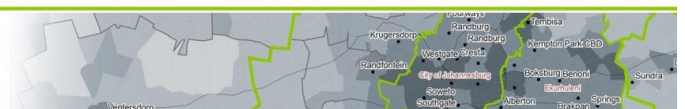
Map 2: Area specific absolute population growth 1996-2011



POPULATION GROWTH 1996-2011

National average cities & towns with >20 000 people	2.87%	% of National Population in/within in 20km from city or town	1996	82%
National average local/small towns	1.81%		2001	83%
National average rest of SA	0.58%		2011	86%
National average SA	1.85%			

SOURCE: CSIR GAP 2013 based on StatsSA Census 1996,2001,2011; SACN/CSIR Settlement Typology 2013v6, CSIR TAT (Temporal Analyses Tool) 2013





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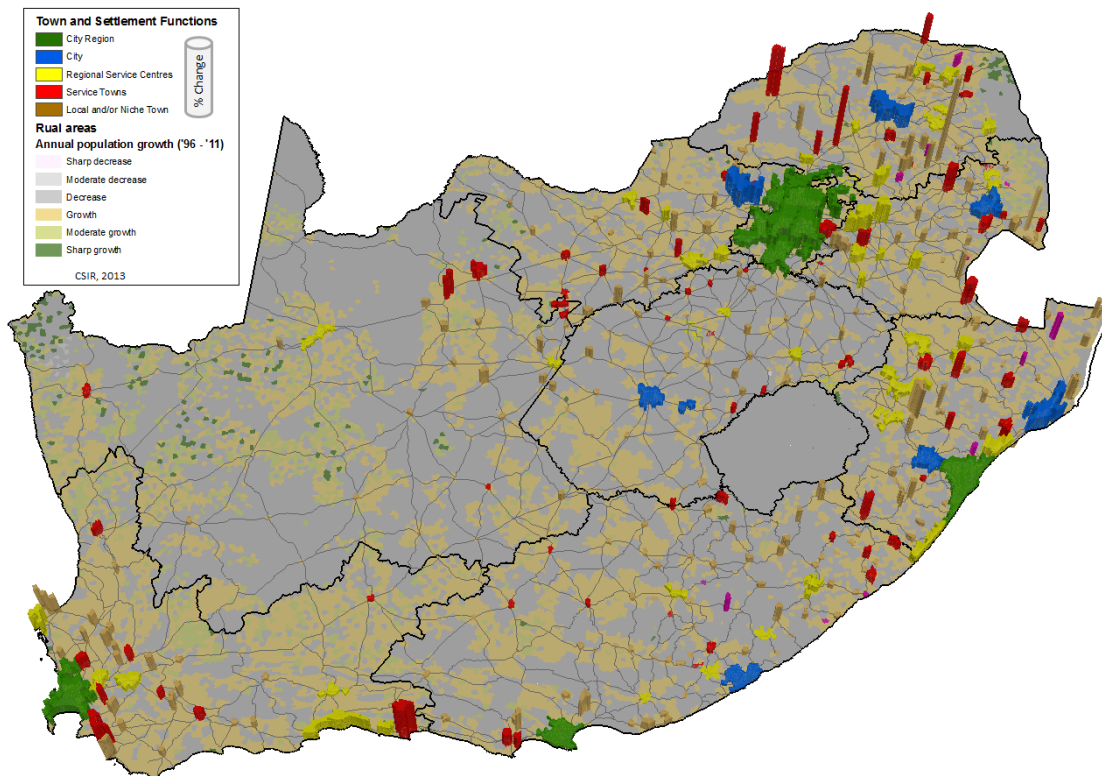
Realities of Increased Concentration

Table 2: Population indicated per type of urban area/settlement with % growth (1996-2011)

Functional Settlement Type (CSIR/SACN 2013v2)	Economic Activity (*Total GVA (xR1000))	Population 1996	Population 2001	Population 2011	% Change Per Annum (1996-2001)	% Change Per Annum (2001-2011)	% Change Per Annum (1996-2011)
City Regions	1 185 948	15 005 442	17 411 707	21 856 192	3.21%	2.55%	3.04%
Cities	178 276	2 782 186	3 209 787	3 876 064	3.07%	2.08%	2.62%
Regional Service Centres	88770	2093504	2333315	2686146	2.29%	1.51%	1.89%
Service Towns	27 278	664 479	826 337	970 366	4.87%	1.74%	3.07%
TOTAL CITIES & LARGER TOWNS	1 480 272	20 545 611	23 781 147	29 388 768	3.15%	2.36%	2.87%
Local and niche towns	123168	3418703	3937326	4345993	3.03%	1.04%	1.81%
Rural Nodes in high density settlements	4 850	148 384	160 935	191 123	1.69%	1.88%	1.92%
TOTAL SMALL TOWNS	128 018	3 567 087	4 098 261	4 537 116	2.98%	1.07%	1.81%
REST OF SA (High density rural areas, densely populated areas and sparsely populated areas)		16 408 074	16 925 740	17 844 213	0.63%	0.54%	0.58%
TOTAL SA		40520772	44805148.2	51 770 097	2.11%	1.55%	1.85%

SOURCE: CSIR GAP 2013 based on StatsSA Census 1996,2001,2011; SACN/CSIR Settlement Typology 2013v6, CSIR TAT (Temporal Analyses Tool) 2013

Map 3: Settlement specific average population growth rates 1996-2011 (for settlements with population bigger than 5000)





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Realities of Increased Concentration

The Cities with the highest average annual growth rates during the 1996-2011 period are that of Rustenburg (5.87%), Richards Bay (4.82%) and Polokwane (4.17%). Amongst the range of Cities and Towns, growth rates differ widely. Significant growth trends (See Map 3 and Table 4) are evident in resource investment towns and regions (eg. Lepalale, Kathu, Middelburg and Rustenburg, Richards Bay), towns in border areas (eg. Musina, Mookgophong, Thabazimbi) and specifically along the Swaziland and Mozambique border areas. Southern Cape coastal towns such as Plettenberg Bay, Hermanus, Jeffreys Bay and George, as well as a number of the service centres and towns in the Western Cape, have also experienced relatively more growth (See Map 3). Trends seem to correspond with reported economic investment over the last decade, as well as much speculated migration patterns.

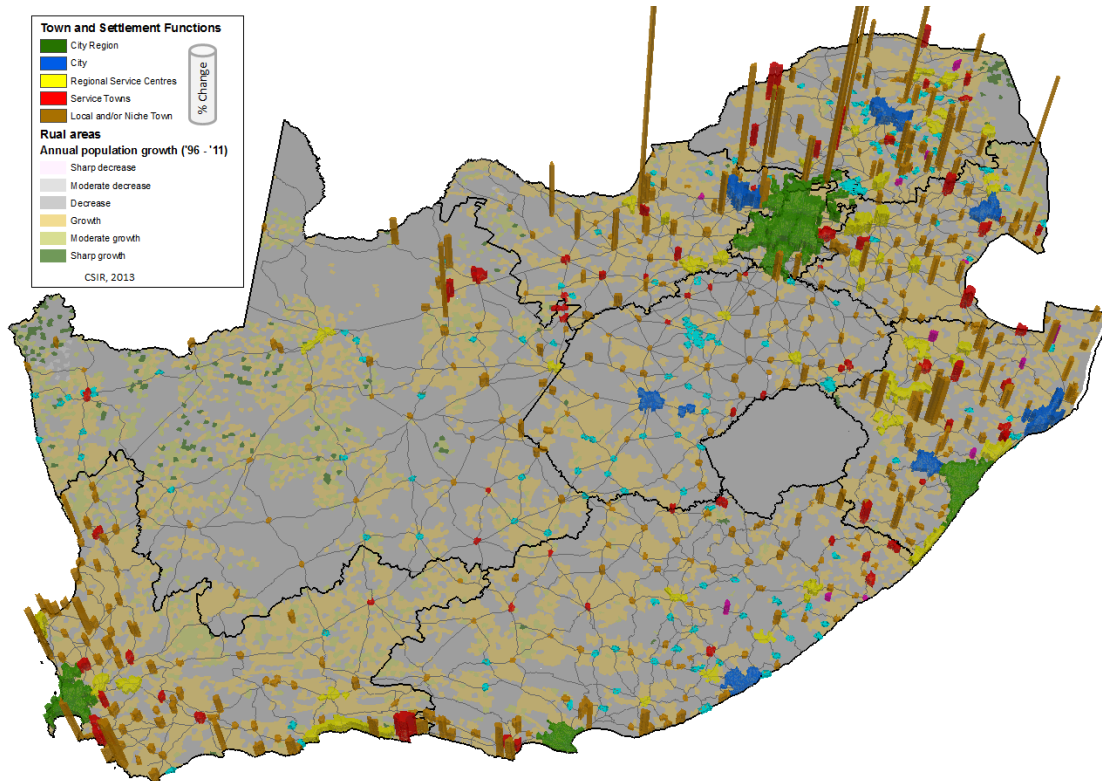
It is evident that there is population decline (in absolute numbers) in many parts of Eastern Cape districts such as Chris Hani and OR Tambo. In line with this trend significantly lower than average annual growth rates between 1996-2011 have been recorded in the Nelson Mandela Bay City Region (1.24%) and Buffalo City (0.95%).

Another key trend is the slow growth in major regional service towns within densely populated rural areas such as Bushbuckridge, Dennilton/Siyabuswa, Butterworth and King Williams Town, as well as in declining mining centres such as Kroonstad, Welkom Kimberley and Klerksdorp/Stilfontein.

With regards to Local and Niche (small) Towns, population growth rates differ widely across regions, and it should be noted, that it this is often from a low base. However, significant growth rates are evident in some small towns north of Gauteng City Regions, eastern Limpopo, in many Western Cape towns and all across the Swaziland/South Africa and Zimbabwe/South Africa border areas (See Map 4). Numerous small towns in Mpumalanga and some parts of Limpopo, North West and Kwa-Zulu Natal on some major routes, illustrate high growth rates (even though from a very low base – less than 5000 people), whilst many other small towns are in complete decline (see light blue on map).



Map 4: Settlement specific average population growth rates 1996-2011
(for all settlements – including settlements with relatively small population numbers (<5000))



Policy recommendations

The purpose of this policy brief is not to merely make the case for a stronger urban agenda. It is aimed at highlighting the importance of policy debates and development interventions to take cognisance of the critical importance of spatial realities and the crucial role of cities, towns and settlements throughout the urban rural continuum.

The invaluable role of the network of cities and range of towns within highly urbanised, sparsely populated as well as densely settled regions to address basic needs, render high quality services and support the job creation initiatives of the National Growth Path is critical. However, it does not merely require a focus on spatial objectives, or a spatial planning agenda as reflected in the new Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act. Rather, especially within a low economic growth period, it requires government as a whole to understand and realise how its actions and investment can actually be targeted to significantly contribute to better quality living environments, what the importance of settlement management is and to recognise the value created by movement through and synergies between places – a reality well recognised by a highly flexible and moving population.

The current Urban Framework initiative by the Department of Cooperative Governance, provides the ideal opportunity to highlight the plight of cities and towns. However, much more than that, it provides an opportunity to galvanise recognition for the importance of living and working spaces of almost 80% of South Africa's population.

Instead of being regarded as merely an 'urban agenda' the policy can make a substantial contribution to ensure that government investment and service delivery across urban and rural South Africa, consider the critical role that



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settlements, towns and cities are playing, and will continue to play, in the day to day living conditions and future of the South African population.

Some of the key aspects to consider are that:

- Financial viability of municipalities are often impeded by housing and service demand which far outweigh economic activity and service delivery capacity in small towns.
- Poverty in South Africa is largely urban. Not only as increasingly found within city regions and major regional towns, but also within dense settlements and small towns.
- Government interventions can no longer afford to be merely blanket targets aimed at municipal level, as settlements and living spaces do not correlate with administrative boundaries. Technology, as is evident in this policy brief allow for finer grain analyses as well as monitoring and evaluation, and thus also more targeted interventions.
- Effective governance of cities and towns is critical to ensure utilising efficiency gains and economic and job creation agglomeration advantages.
- The positive correlation between urbanisation, GDP per capita increases and job opportunities found in many cities and urban contexts across the world is not yet realised in the South African context.
- Government interventions and subsidy schemes aimed at improving access to housing and high quality services need to take cognisance of multi-nodal household formation, mobility of the South African population and the need for flexibility to make use of opportunities through networks across a range of settlements and between urban and rural South Africa.
- Spatial perspectives and industrialisation support policies that recognise the importance of current economic assets and job baskets in the country are critical. While more than 56% of South Africa's economic activity and employment, as well as most significant job growth in South Africa is generated in the city regions areas, neither the New Growth Path nor IPAP 2012/2013-2014/2015 mention the role of critical growth centres, cities and towns as hubs of regional and rural production areas and markets.
- Whilst there is still some capacity in metropolitan areas to address provision of basic services in spite of increases in population, the capacity of other municipalities to deal with increased service delivery demands and settlement densification (especially in rural South Africa) is a major concern. The impact of rapid urbanisation due to roll out of large scale infrastructure projects and high growth (even from small base) on capacity of local administrations and financial viability need to be taken into account in the roll out of the SIPS and infrastructure programmes.
- Key questions about the urbanisation of poverty, the role of grants and service delivery expectations in creating viable settlements have to be asked. The possibilities created by concentrations of service delivery demands for industrialisation and job creation related to a basic service delivery value chain has to be considered – within urban and rural contexts.
- Questions also need to be asked about how movement patterns of people and goods, and relationships between settlements and between urban and rural contexts actually create safety nets and networks of mutual support that should rather be recognised and valued instead of “reversed” as the case is in many local IDPs.

Given the huge costs of infrastructure upgrading and maintenance in urban areas, the rise of poverty in these areas, as well as the severe potential ecological impacts, the critical importance of government investment for provision and maintenance of bulk services, road, rail and air infrastructure, the mass construction of affordable housing, the provision of basic services, targeted grants and support schemes, and public transport subsidies are evident. However, more than just spaces of ‘need’, evidence also suggest the significance of South Africa's urban areas and settlements as remaining the engines of growth and job creation within their respective regions and for the nation as a whole and that these areas are key to the achievement of Government's national development objectives.



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Data Sources: Revised
CSIR/SACN Settlement
Typology (2013v.2), based
on CSIR GAP (2013) and
CSIR Temporal Analyses
Tool (2013).
<http://www.stepSA.org>
and/or
<http://www.gap.csir.co.za>

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