



ANALYSIS OF THE 2015 TO 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN AND 2015/16 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN OF THE MSUNDUZI AND NCOME MUSEUMS, APRIL 2015

1. Background

This report provides a high level analysis of the 2015 to 2020 Strategic Plan and 2015/16 Annual Performance Plan of the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums.

Msunduzi Museum, formerly Voortrekker Museum, has its historical roots to the battle between AmaZulu and the Voortrekkers. On 9 December 1838, as the Voortrekkers were preparing a confrontation with AmaZulu, they made a 'vow to God' that if the Lord could give them victory they would consecrate the day and build a church to honour him. This vow was repeated every evening until 15 December 1838, on the eve of the war. Voortrekkers won the war in what became known as the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838. Soon after 'stability' was maintained they started raising funds to honour the covenant. The Church of the Vow was built in the then newly proclaimed capital, Pietermaritzburg, in 1840. It is this Church of the Vow that became the Voortrekker Museum and officially opened to the public on 16 December 1912. Today the Church of the Vow is part of the Msunduzi Museum complex.

In 1938, to commemorate the centenary of the battle of Blood River, the Bloedrivier Monument was erected on the site where Voortrekkers had built their laager in 1838. The Bloedrivier monument narrates Voortrekker's version of the circumstances that led to the Battle and what transpired on the day of the war. This version is vehemently opposed by that of AmaZulu. Because of the significance of the December 16 and the extent to which it had been manipulated to enforce racial segregation and Afrikaner supremacy, the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) felt it was necessary that the Battle of Ncome should be used as a symbol of reconciliation. It is against this background that the Ncome Museum project was conceptualised to be part of the initial legacy projects that were approved by Cabinet in 1998. However, unlike other legacy projects, it was felt that because the Ncome Museum has modalities of connectedness with the then Voortrekker Museum, it should be administered by Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg. Moreover, it was perceived that this was an economically viable and proactive option since the DACST was, at that time, contemplating the introduction of the flagship concept which was going to result to the amalgamation national museums in KwaZulu-Natal similarly to what later transpired when over 10 national museums in Cape Town merged to form Iziko Museums. The Ncome and Msunduzi Museums were conceived to be separate but linked by moments of history. Nevertheless, the two Museums were going to retain their historical identities.

Today, the Ncome Museum forms part of the Blood River Heritage Site which comprises of the Bloedrivier monument, on the western side of the Ncome River, and Ncome Museum, on the eastern side. These two contrasting, yet monumental, institutions are linked by the Reconciliation Bridge which was officially inaugurated in December 2014 by the President of the Republic of South Africa.



2. Compliance and Audit History

The Msunduzi and Ncome Museums have been regressing on their audit outcomes for the past two years. The following table illustrates the audit history over the past three years:

2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/14
Clean audit	Unqualified audit	Qualified audit

The following summarises the financial management culture within these museums:

- 2.1 The Msunduzi and Ncome Museums have a pattern of incurring irregular expenditure as a result of contravening the Supply Chain Management legislation. In addition, the Auditor General found that these museums did not introduce any steps to prevent irregular expenditure as required by the law;
- 2.2 These museums awarded contracts to person in service of other state institutions;
- 2.3 The fundamental of internal control of financial and specifically the monitoring of compliance with laws and regulations was not effectively carried out by management; and
- 2.4 Financial statements submitted for auditing (2013/14) were not prepared in accordance with the prescribed financial framework.

3. The Strategic Plan

The Strategic plan of the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums raises the following key issues:

3.1 Status of the Document

Entities are required to submit final and approved documents for tabling and consideration by the National Assembly. The Msunduzi and Ncome Museums have submitted a 'second draft' of their 2015 to 2020 strategic plan. This might be a typographic error but it renders the entire document irrelevant to be considered as a legitimate document by Parliament.

3.2 Museums' Research and Access

Research and collections are core functions of the museum. Notwithstanding this it is not clear how the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums' research and collections would address key issues that are facing communities that surround them.

3.3 Understanding of the Collection

Both Museums envisage to promote and increase the understanding and enjoyment of heritage collections through exhibitions. It is not clear how this strategic goal would enhance transformation of both Museums and to what extent would these exhibitions respond to critical issues that are facing South Africa.



3.4 Education and Public Programmes

While both Museums plan to enhance education and public programmes it is unclear how they would work in partnership with the Department of Basic Education and within the framework of the 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework. It is important to note the DBE is not listed as a partner of these Museums.

4. Funding and the Future of these Museums

The funding structure of both Museums raises the following issues:

4.1 Unsustainable Funding Model of the Museums

While both Museums receive a subsidy from the DAC, 83% of it is projected to be spent on personnel costs during the 2015/16 financial year. Although there is an indication that this figure is not going to grow but it is clear that these Museums would be forced to cut on their core functions and service delivery as projected growth for funding for goods and services (education, exhibitions, collection management and research) will be adversely affected by the inflation rate.

4.2 Inability of the Museums' Capacity to Raise Revenue

Msunduzi Museum is located at the centre of town (Pietermaritzburg) and it has a potential to raise substantial revenue. The museum has vast infrastructure it should be using to generate revenue. However, the museum does not take advantage of this potential. Ncome Museum, on the other hand, has the state of the art buildings and facilities that its management should be using to raise additional revenue. However, both Museums do not project to increase their generated revenue.

4.3 Reliance of the investments

Management of these Museums plans to withdraw R3.4 million from its investments during the next five years. These investments would soon be depleted and it is not clear how these Museums would function without them. How much is in these investments and when would they be depleted?

5. Museum and Government Strategic Goals

As entities of the state the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums are expected to ensure that their service delivery environment is shaped by the strategic policy framework of government. However, the following are missing from the strategic plan of the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums:

5.1 National Development Plan, vision 2030

The NDP is transversal policy framework that underlines the delivery of services by all spheres of government in South Africa. Chapter 15 of the NDP has been allocated to the DAC and it is through its entities that this could be successfully implemented. However, despite its direct linkage to the historical event that resulted to the Day of Reconciliation, these Museums' strategic plan omits the NDP and downplay their role in fostering nation building and social cohesion.



5.2 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework

The MTSF is the guiding document of each government administration. Outcome 14 of the 2014-2019 is driven by the DAC. However, the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums still makes a reference to the MTSF of the 4th administration. The current MTSF has been omitted and this strategic plan does not respond to strategic goals of the 5th administration.

5.3 Museum Visitors

It is very unusual that the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums have no performance indicator and a target for museums visitors. This performance indicator should be added as it would ascertain the extent to which these museums are visited.

6. Addition Matters of Concern

- 6.1 The layout of both the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan requires to be reworked. e. g. in both documents the acronym page is towards the end and this makes the document extremely difficult to read.
- 6.2 Most performance indicators are not SMART and this has a potential to hinder oversight by either Parliament, chapter 9 institutions or civil society.
- 6.3 Both Museums do not have an employment equity target.
- 6.4 The closure of the Reconciliation Bridge need to be explored as a similar scenario exist at Freedom Park.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Given that the Msunduzi and Ncome Museums' 2015 to 2020 strategic plan is not in line with the South Africa's overarching policy directives, the Portfolio Committee should reject it and the Museum be ordered to revise and re-table it to the National Assembly by not later 29 May 2015.
- 7.2 The Msunduzi and Ncome Museums' 2015/16 Annual Performance Plan's performance indicators are not SMART and thus Parliament would not be able to conduct oversight over such. The Msunduzi and Ncome Museums to be ordered to revise its 2015/16 targets and table it to the National Assembly by not later than 29 May 2015.