# A comparison of the utility of urban strategies for small towns: The Cases of Lobatse and Arandis

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Synopsis: This paper compares the urban strategies put forward by two small towns in decline. Each town, although somewhat remote is within 100km of a significantly larger town. The paper assesses the plans' resilience and sustainability response, scores utility and implementatibility and proposing an improvement for future strategy formulation processes.

## 1    Introduction

It seems obvious that that the purpose of planning is to put the plan into action. As the increasingly popular 6 Ps adage goes, Proper prior planning prevents poor performance. Completely unexpectedly, this adage alludes to something that urban planning has long failed at: performance. In a sense, planning too often misses the very reason for its existence. At some point planning must stop and implementation begin.

However, planners have consistently demonstrated a "curious lack of interest in developing methods to evaluate how successfully plans are implemented" and focusing instead on hypothetical assessments of the impacts of alternative proposed plans (Talen, 1996, p. 248). The nett effect is that planning has increasing become a 'tick box' exercise with no real ability to implement. This failure to implement has been a barrier to effective planning so long that it was coined "new plan syndrome" (Calkins, 1979), a term which describes the phenomenon where plans are updated and/or redone with no regard of the extent to which the previous plan (or plans) were executed; it is easier to simply ignore the what come before and to try to conjure a new plan.

But planning "is only defensible as an activity if it [is carried out in the belief] that it will deliver a future that is '*better*'[i] than that which would result without [it]" (Campbell and Marshall, 2008, p. 476 emphasis added). Planning is therefore inherently optimistic and a good plan is necessarily aspirational and transformational without being merely a pipedream: It must be implementable. But how do we know if a plan is even implementable within the specific context? In the small-town context, capacity and governance are the key considerations and as such are the lens through which each of the abovementioned focus areas are viewed.

Implementation evaluation can happen at least two distinct stages: Before implementation (i.e. the planning process) or during/after policy implementation (i.e. the plan implementation) (Talen, 1996). This paper intervenes at the level of the plan itself discussing ways to test a plan's 'implementability' even before the implantation phase—the argument being that only evaluating plan implementation ex post facto is somewhat redundant (although certainly not fruitless). Hence, this attempt to examine 'implementability' rather than the implementation. The premise is that if a plan's implementation is defined and measured in terms of performance (conformance), then the plan itself—specifically its implementability—has an important impact on successful implementation (Tian and Shen, 2011, p. 13).

Thus, the question of plan quality arises: What is a "good" plan? 'Is a plan with high implementation conformance a good one?' (Tian and Shen, 2011, p. 13) or should the

substantive contents be examined. Believing that the substantive contents are critical, this paper attempts to address both content quality—with a focus on sustainability and resilience—and implementability. It considers four integration (cross-cutting) themes that impact a town's 'spatial functioning':

- Economic development
- Quality of urban environment
- Optimisation of land use
- Sustainable urban infrastructure

This paper is then a policy evaluation in that it applies evaluation principles and methods to examine the content of urban policy (plans) in a rudimentary attempt to understand the merit, worth, and utility the plan.

## 2    Approach

The approach is guided by the Centers (sic) for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Framework for Evaluation in Public Health (regular implementation reviews are commonplace in the health sector). The Framework outlines an ongoing process comprising six steps for policy evaluation throughout the policy lifecycle from problem identification to policy implementation (Figure 2).
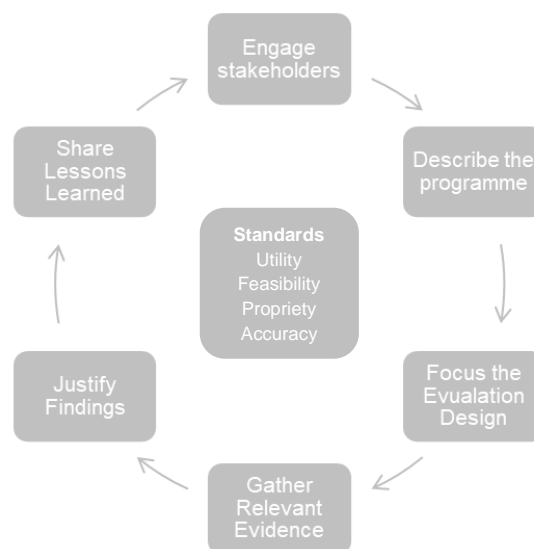


*Figure 1: Six-step Policy Evaluation Process*
(Adapted from: CDC, 2012a)

This paper constitutes an initial analysis and does not exhaustively adopt the Framework. It does however, follow most of the basic steps. Figure 2 shows the policy lifecycle highlighting the sections which is applicable to this paper.

*Figure 2: Policy Development Phases and Types of Evaluation*
(Adapted from: CDC, 2012a)

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: The third section discusses theoretical perspective on the terminology, specifically sustainability, resilience and small towns. Section four determines the evaluation framework. The case study analyses are presented in section five, comprising an assessment of the representations of economic development, quality of urban environment, optimisation of land use, urban infrastructure from a sustainability and resilience perspective. The last part sums up the discussion and proposes next steps which would give the research more relevance.

## 3    Context and Terminology

The theme of rapid urbanisation is ever present in planning literature and popular culture today. (United Nations figures support this showing that much of about 2/3 of the world's population will be urban in 2050 (UNDESA, 2014). However, much of the discourse focuses on so-called megacities and too often forgotten in the narrative of urbanisation are the myriad of small towns despite the fact that more than 50% of the urban population live in urban areas with under 500,000 inhabitants (UNDESA, 2012). Indeed, even in a completely urbanised world is that there will be many small towns, fewer larger cities and only a few megacities (Batty, 2015 citing Cristelli *et al.*, 2012). So, cities will continue to be the dominant human settlement "regardless of whether the fact is considered positive or negative" (Vaništa Lazarević *et al.*, 2018, p. 1130).

In particular, Sub-Saharan Africa's urbanity is dominated by towns of fewer than 500,000 residents with 26% of such settlements inhabited by fewer than 50,000 people (Tacoli and Agergaard, 2017). Arandis and Lobatse are towns in this latter category with respective populations of about 8,500 and 27,000, respectively. Each is also located in a relatively arid climate zones and need to consider sustainable and resilient development.

The concepts of sustainability and resilience feature prominently in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly through SDG11*: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. Both Namibia (Arandis) and Botswana (Lobatse) have committed to the integration and implementation of the SDGs.

Each town is located about 80 km from larger, more significant town, Gaborone and Swakopmund, respectively. This location, while somewhat remote is also sufficiently proximate for the pull factors of the larger cities to cause significant decline. Particularly in the developing world, the flow of people to large(r) urban centres has a double negative nett effect—it decreases the quality of service delivery in the receiving centres and decreases the viability of the sending settlement. In the case of these two towns, only Lobatse has suffered depopulation decreasing from about 29,000 in 2011 (LTC, 2018). Meanwhile, Arandis has struggled to attract investment despite a population growth rate of about 10% (RUL, 2018).

Thus, in the "no [place] is left behind" spirit of the SDGs', this paper investigates the regeneration efforts of these two small towns.

### 3.1   Small town

While 'small town' has no specific definition per se, the most fundamental definitions are based on population size with the United Nations smallest population category being urban agglomerations with "less than 50,000" (UNDESA, 2012). However, population alone is problematic since urban hierarchies vary across the world (Bell and Jayne, 2009). A town's "'cityness', [physical] smallness, 'third-tierness', 'localness'" would be a more justifiable basis for its 'small town' status (Fahmi *et al.*, 2014, p. 2). Thus, the relative importance of a city within its own (country's or region's) urban hierarchy should be of greater relevance rather than its absolute population.

Segueing from this is the economic importance of a settlement. Small towns (however defined) tend to have small, unvaried economies. Economic diversification and development strategies typically fail from an absence of economies of scale. Still, these towns often play an important role serving as service centres which both stimulate and support rural and hinterland economies. In particular cases, small towns are sometimes thought to blur the undefined line between urban and rural since they often include significant agricultural activities (Fahmi *et al.*, 2014).

Accordingly, this paper considers a small town as a tertiary city (in its own countries context) with less than 50,000 inhabitants with a relatively one-dimensional economy. Small towns can be grouped in two categories: those within (relative proximity to) a larger (mega) urban region and those within rural regions (Prabatmodjo, 1993). This this paper deals the former.

### 3.2   Sustainability

The term "sustainability" implies indefinite continuance and as such is a logical goal of human settlements. *Our Common Future* (also known as the Brundtland report) defines sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). Some criticise this 'classic' definition for "[resting] heavily on the dubious assumptions of limits to growth" (Bruegmann, 2008, p. 148) since it supposes that the resources used in the future will be those used today. However, it may well be this very prudence that makes the definition so apt. At the same time, this simplistic eschatological conception of sustainability belies the scientific reality[ii] that "'sustainable' cannot mean 'forever'". Moreover, it is immeasurable and reliant on an impossible capacity to bequeath utility on future generations (Daly, 2002, p. 40).

The utility-based[iii] *Our Common Future* definition must therefore be augmented by a more immediate impetus. But, utility as a basis encourages frugal consumption—use less—while throughput is the impetus for efficiency—use wisely. "'Frugality first'…, induces efficiency as a secondary consequence [while] 'efficiency first' does not induce frugality—it makes frugality less necessary" (Daly, 2006, p. 11). Both frugality and efficiency are valid, necessary and inextricable. Thus, this paper looks at sustainability through both the frugality and efficiency lenses and expects strategies to demonstrate an appreciation for cyclical resource flows.

However, sustainable urban development entails more than just environmental concerns and must also focus on economic viability, physical liveability and social equity. The fifth dimension is political sustainability—which will be called governance here (Pieterse, 2011). It holds the sustainability puzzle together and without a focus on governance sustainability, realising urban sustainability becomes that much harder.

*3.3    Resilience*
Resilience is a related but distinct concept which, has gained traction in urban discourse since the 2008 (economic) crisis, is sometimes used (wrongly) in place of sustainability (Vaništa Lazarević *et al.*, 2018). As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of natural disaster, resilience becomes a more important goal for cities. Resilience asks how well a place can "absorb the presence of an organism or activity" using the health concepts of "immunity and recovery" (Neuman, 2005, p. 18). It has both preventative and reparative dimensions.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. The Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities movement defines urban resilience as "the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience" (Rockefeller Foundation-RF, no date). Most definitions capture this sense of an urban areas ability to withstand both immediate and forecast multi-hazard threats. They tend—more so than the definitions of sustainability—to highlight the individual citizen's role in constructing and maintaining urban resilience. Resilience, in contradistinction to sustainability, seem to have a more obvious focus on both short- and long-term futures of urban systems (Vaništa Lazarević *et al.*, 2018).

## 4    Evaluation Framework
Before articulating the evaluation framework, it is important to reiterate the purpose of the evaluation (CDC, 2012a). The aim of this evaluation is two-fold: To establish whether the plan aligns with the targets of SDG 11 and determine the extent to which each town's strategy embodies sustainability and resilience principles. Effectively, it seeks to see whether the plan is implementation-worthy. Secondly, it seeks to determine whether the policy is implementable—that is whether there is enough guidance so those responsible for it will be able to put it into action.

To this end, specific evaluation questions were identified. Ideally this is done in the policy drafting phase to ensure quality outcome (CDC, 2012b). The following are some policy content evaluation questions used in this evaluation framework (CDC, 2012c):

- Does the policy clearly state the goals or objectives?
- Are the components of the policy consistent with those of model policies?
- Which major stakeholders played a role in the policy's development?

The evaluation has two stages. The Utility Assessment tests the plans inclusion of principles of sustainability and levels. It further assesses the expected outworking of these by comparing the number of projects planned in each SDG category. The Feasibility Assessment considers the implementability of the plan asking questions about implementation guidance.

*4.1    Utility Assessment: Resilience and Sustainability*
SDG Goal 11 is developed into ten targets. For this paper's analysis, these are customised to a small-town level and their assigned to one (or more) of the four focuses of this paper— viz. economic development, quality of urban environment, optimisation of land use and sustainable infrastructure Table 1.

**Table 1: Customisation of the SDGs Targets to Small Town Setting with the associated Focuses indicated**

| No. | 10 Targets to Achieve resilient and sustainable cities | Principles within a small-town setting | Applicable focuses |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums | **Housing**: Density that allows increased usage of infrastructure, makes public spaces viable and limits new infrastructure requirements | Economic Development<br><br>Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Optimisation of Land Use |
| 2. | By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons | **Transport**: Support for non-motorised transport (NMT). Linked to land use with a focus on vulnerable people groups | Economic Development<br><br>Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Sustainable Urban Infrastructure |
| 3. | By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries | **Participatory Planning**: Adoption of structures that promote citizen inclusion in urban planning and management | Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Governance |
| 4. | Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage | **Heritage**: Promotion and protection of cultural and natural heritage in town's spaces | Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Governance |
| 5. | By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations | **Disaster Mitigation**: Development disaster management protocols and mitigate risks through nature-based design and preparedness | Economic Development<br><br>Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Optimisation of Land Use<br><br>Governance |
| 6. | By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management | **Quality Environment**: Focus on cyclic economy and incorporate environmentally regenerative design | Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Sustainable Urban Infrastructure |
| 7. | By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities | **Public Open Space**: Design varied open spaces *networks* that are safe for and accessible to vulnerable people groups | Quality of Urban Environments<br><br>Optimisation of Land Use<br><br>Sustainable Urban Infrastructure |
| 8. | Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and | **Rural-Urban Rapport**: Support rural activity with associated urban functions | Economic Development |

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| | regional development planning | | |
| 9. | By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels | **Urban Governance**: Openness to greater citizen participation by embracing digital platforms, flexible, transparent and consultative decision making | Optimisation of Land Use<br><br>Sustainable Urban Infrastructure<br><br>Governance |
| 10. | Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials | **Genius Locii**: Booting local economy by using local / traditional designs, techniques and materials | Economic Development<br><br>Sustainable Urban Infrastructure<br><br>Governance |

### *4.2    Feasibility Assessment: Implementability*

The feasibility assessment is a series of questions focused on the process, content and guidance offered by each strategy. Since this paper advocates reflection, this assessment includes questions about the previous plan(s). It also attempts to assess the plans flexibility since strict adherence to (the specifics of) the plan is not always useful in a dynamic environment (Tian and Shen, 2011). Adherence to the spirit of the plan (if not the letter of it) is important. It questions the extent to which planners can adjust the plan. This assessment of the implementer's agency further demonstrates the need to assess implementability in the first place.

## 5    Analysis

The case study compares two towns: Arandis is a small mining town in the Erongo Region of western Namibia and Lobatse, a small—although significantly larger than Arandis—town in the South-East District of southern Botswana.

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*Figure 3: Location of Arandis and Lobatse*

The principal reason for the choice of these two towns is the author's familiarity with them. However, the comparison may still be warranted as each is a small town in decline which has put forward strategies to stimulate regeneration. Both are somewhat remote being within 80km of significantly larger urban agglomerations so are susceptible to urban degeneration. Both towns have arid climates and are vulnerable to climate change hence the paper's focus on resilience and sustainability. Additionally, as small towns in proximity to larger urban centres, each town reports capacity constraints particularly with respect to urban management and planning and often seek consultant's assistance with strategy development. Hence this paper also seeks to assess whether the inputs of said consultants are conveyed in an implementable manner. The towns have similarities and some noteworthy differences (although these have not been calibrated for) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Key similarities and differences between Arandis and Lobatse**

| | | Arandis | Lobatse |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Similarities** | Proximity to larger settlement | 60km from the Walvis Bay-Swakopmund urban agglomeration. These touristic and logistics towns are the country's second and third largest respectively. | 75km from Gaborone, the country's largest city and economic and political capital. |
| | Climate | Hot and arid | Hot and arid |
| | Political / Administrative Classification | Phase 2 municipality (receives direct financial support from national government) | Receives funding from national government |
| | Regional impact | Mining activity impacts the town which is very susceptible to resource price fluctuations | Border proximity along SA-Namibia corridor. Some cattle rearing and other agriculture in the area around the town. |
| **Diff** | Population | 8,500 | 27,000 |
| | History and | A young town proclaimed in 1994 after | The area of Lobatse has been settled |

| national relevance | formation as a mining settlement in 1978 for Rössing Uranium Limited employees. It ranks about 25th in Namibia in terms of population. | since the 18th century. Considered around independence as a candidate to be the nation's new capital, Lobatse is seat of the judicial system ranks about 13th in population size in Botswana. |
|---|---|---|
| Economy | Single industry: Mining | - Main industry: Beef.<br>- Country's largest concentration of agro-based industries<br>- Limited manufacturing |
| Climate | Desert with mean annual rainfall of about 45mm and mean annual temperature of 19°C. | Semi-arid with about 550mm mean annual rainfall and mean annual temperature of 20°C. |

### 5.1 Utility Assessment

The following analysis tests if and how the principles of sustainability and resilience are embedded into urban strategies. It seeks occurrences of the terms focusing on parts of the plan where the objectives, vision, aims and conceptual approaches are expounded among others. Terms related to sustainability included *green*, *renewable*, *recycle*, *cyclic*, *reduce*, *efficiency* and variations thereof. Terms related to resilience included *resilient*, *prepared*, *adaptive*, *flexible*. It is followed by an assessment the extent to which the projects in the strategies reflect the SDGs.

**Table 3: Instances of Terms Related to Sustainability in the Arandis and Lobatse Urban Strategies**

| | | Sustainable | Green | Renewable | Recycle | Reduce | Efficiency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LOBATSE** | | Principles; projects; development; regeneration | — | — | — | — | — |
| | **Governance** | — | Building guidelines | — | — | — | Facilities management; implementing institutions |
| | **Economic Development** | Economic growth; employment | Community garden | — | — | Development costs | — |
| | **Quality Urban Environments** | Nature's cyclic systems; river abstraction; Societies; living environments (access to opportunities); neighbourhoods | Historic character Landscaping Open/public space Streets | Urban renewal | Nature's cyclic systems | — | — |
| | **Land Use** | Expansion (physical extension); infill & densification | — | — | — | Fragmentation (increase urban integration); expansion (favour infill) | Mixed land use Land development; layout structures |
| | **Infrastructure** | Infrastructure (bulk, natural, dwelling unit density); Transport; NMT permeability Technology | Natural infrastructure | Energy | Collection Points | Travel demand & infrastructure | Transport Movement Permeability (NMT access) Infrastructure use |
| **ARANDIS** | | Development | — | — | — | — | — |
| | **Governance** | Self-sustaining Partnerships Local authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| | **Economic Development** | Returns on investment Growth (economic) Job opportunities Employment Financial | — | — | Tourism Mines Material (Glass, fabric) Production from wastes | Extreme poverty Malnutrition | — |
| | **Quality Urban Environments** | Livelihoods model | — | — | — | Social ills | — |
| | **Land Use** | Buildings | — | — | — | Maintenance backlogs | — |
| | **Infrastructure** | | — | — | Building roads | — | — |

**Table 4: Instances of Terms Related to Resilience in the Arandis and Lobatse Urban Strategies**

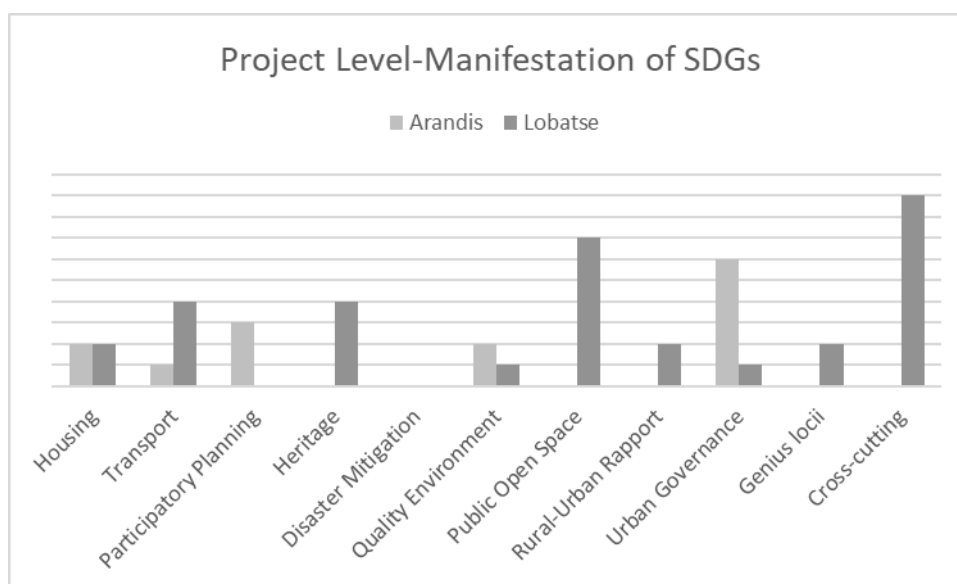| | | Resilient | Prepared | Adaptive | Flexible |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LOBATSE** | | Principles; projects; development; regeneration | — | — | — |
| | **Governance** | — | Governance | Plans<br>- Diverse stakeholder contributions | Land administration<br>- Land subdivision<br>- Site layout<br>- Plot configuration |
| | **Economic Development** | Thinking<br>- City development<br>- Economic strategy | Tourism | — | — |
| | **Quality Urban Environments** | Landscaping<br>- Automation of watering<br>- Drought tolerant | — | — | Public/Open spaces |
| | **Land Use** | Land use | — | Land uses | Layout; land use / function; permeability |
| | **Infrastructure** | Building design | — | — | Grid; building design |
| **ARANDIS** | | — | — | — | — |
| | **Governance** | — | — | Planning | Institutions |
| | **Economic Development** | — | — | — | — |
| | **Quality Urban Environments** | — | — | — | — |
| | **Land Use** | — | — | — | — |
| | **Infrastructure** | Infrastructure management | | — | — |

*Figure 4: The extent of alignment of each strategy's projects with the SDGs*

*5.2    Feasibility Assessment*

**Table 5: Feasibility Assessment**

| | | Arandis | | Lobatse | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Comment | Score | Comment | Score |
| **Contents** | **Does the policy clearly state the goals or objectives?** | **Yes**. One of the main objectives of the council is to gain economic independence from the mining activities—i.e. economic resilience. The strategy then outlines thirteen strategic objectives defined within four Strategic Themes, namely cultural capital, community service excellence, stakeholder relations and financial sustainability. | 1.0 | **Yes**. It seeks to provide the implementers and investors with a quality plan for participatory regeneration of the town focusing on specific precincts. It further provides an implementation framework for Lobatse regeneration efforts. | 1.0 |
| | **Does the plan highlight its alignment to higher policies?** | **Yes**. The strategy reports alignment to Namibia's Vision 2030 and National Development Plan (NDP) 4 (since superseded by NDP5). It further aims to develop a marketing and tourism strategy aligned to the Erongo Regional Tourism Plan.<br><br>It fails to indicate alignment to the Erongo Region's Strategic Plan and its principal themes of socio-economic development, operational efficiency, good governance despite alignment thereto. | 0.75 | **Yes**. The plan forms part of the overarching Lobatse Development Plan (2000 - 2024).<br><br>While any other alignment can be inferred (through its association with the Lobatse Development Plan (2000 - 2024), it fails to specifically indicate alignment such plans. | 0.75 |

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| **Process / Ownership** | **Which major stakeholders played a role in the policy's development?** | The strategy was prepared by Council with the support of consultants. However, inputs from other stakeholders were limited. | 0.75 | The plan was developed by private consultants with regular inputs from Lobatse Town Council and the Department of Town & Country Planning within the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services. | 0.5 |
| | **Is there any analysis of the previous plans and/or the implementation of such plans?** | **No**. The strategy only mentions other sector strategies e.g. LED Strategy (2009) which were current at the time of drafting and which should also be consulted when reading the strategy. Curiously it barely references most these again. Neither does it indicate that it is the first such document. | 0.25 | **No**. It mentions an older development plan, Lobatse Urban Development Plan (2003 - 2009), but makes no attempt to assess the implementation of this nor any other plan. | 0 |
| | **Are the implications of such plans (and the assessment of their implementation) for the current plan indicated?** | **N/A** (The above was not done well.) | 0 | **N/A** (The above was not done well.) | 0 |
| **Implementation guidance** | **How flexible is the plan?** | The strategy is flexible in as much as it does not have budget for all its projects. However, it fails to indicate alternative scenarios to help implementers rationalise. | 0.5 | At times, the plan presents some alternative scenarios and their implications which give implementers good information should they chose / need to deviate. | 0.75 |
| | **Are the requirements (pre-requisites) for implementation clearly stated in the policy?** | Not always. At the project level, the strategy indicates some requirements as "Assumptions and risks". Throughout, it mentions some requirements currently lacking but stops short of clearly identifying general implementation pre-requisites. | 0.5 | Prerequisites are not specifically presented but the plan indicates that infrastructure upgrades will be required (to stimulate private development) and suggests that special funding be put in place to that end. | 0.25 |
| | **Are the requirements feasible given available resources? If not, does the policy present a rectification / amelioration action?** | The requirements listed are often "availability of funds" and hence it's is difficult to definitively indicate feasibility. As a Phase II town, the Council is dependent on national government. | 0.5 | The requirements although not specifically listed will likely include funding. Having received budget cuts in recent years from national government, difficult to definitively indicate feasibility. However, the plan calls for some specialist design and capacity may not exist locally. | 0.5 |
| | **Does the Strategy culminate in projects – that is specific** | The strategy presents forty-three strategic initiatives/projects for implementation of over its five-year period. The projects are time-bound with high-level financial requirements indicated | 0.75 | The presents several projects for each precinct. The projects are not time-bound nor is any attempt to give high-level indicative costs made. Although | 0.5 |

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| **interventions which are**<br><br>**a. Time bound**<br><br>**b. Budgeted**<br><br>**c. Prioritised**<br><br>**d. Geolocated (as required)?** | and where relevant, located. There are not prioritised. | | not all prioritised, the plan does give some strategic interventions which should be prioritised for regeneration. | |
| **Does the policy assign responsibility to appropriate implementing and/or monitoring actors?** | **Yes**. Each of the strategic initiatives/projects has an associated responsible entity. However, it is explicitly clear who is responsible for **monitoring** implementation progress. | 0.75 | **Yes**. Each of the strategic precinct has specific intervention high-level actions for the realisation of its projects. Each action has an associated responsible entity.<br><br>However, the plan only gives a generic overview of monitoring and evaluation indicating that independent evaluators should assess three key evaluation processes (i) at the beginning of the project to establish existing situation; (ii) during implementation and (iii) at the end of the project by external. | 0.5 |
| **Does the policy articulate the mechanism for monitoring implementation?** | The ATC Strategic Scorecard reflects that the organisation needs to implement, manage and report quarterly on twenty-six (26) Performance Indicators / Measure within the thirteen strategic objectives. It further gives the reporting baseline so that those monitoring have a sense can get a trend immediately. | 0.75 | **No**. | 0 |
| **Does the policy identify indicators for assessing program success?** | Yes. At the project level, the strategy's scorecard has targets and completion dates for projects. | 1.0 | **No**. | 0 |
| **Is there any mention of costing? Where the funds will come from? How to seek funding? And what are the financial operational and maintenance implications?** | Yes. Reflected in the ATC Scorecard, is a resource requirement estimate per strategic initiative/project budget across the strategy's horizon. It doesn't propose funding sources or financing mechanisms. | 0.5 | The plan makes no attempt to cost interventions. It does however highlight the need for a budgeting process to mobilise funding from both private sector and government finances to implement the regeneration plan. Further, it proposes a special fund for all infrastructure and catalytic projects as well as the annual budgets that deal with operational issues. It suggests that a "certain amount be allocated annually (development | 0.5 |

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| | | | and re-current) over the next 10 years for the implementation of the Lobatse Regeneration Plan. This budget should include funds for sectoral strategies and detailed design that is essential spur implementation." | |
| **SCORE (x/11)** | **ARANDIS TOTAL** | **8.0** **(62%)** | **LOBATSE TOTAL** | **5.25** **(40%)** |

## 6   Discussion

This two-step utility analysis of the development urban strategies of Arandis and Lobatse indicate that sustainability is a well-understood concept which features prominently even in small town plans. Resilience, on the other hand is a relatively new concept and is still being adopted into the lexicon and is yet to be embedded broadly into the strategies.

The analysis showed that the most frequently used terms are the sustainability and resilience (and variations) which appear in both strategies. Sustainability features across each of the four integration areas (economic development, quality of urban environments, land use and urban infrastructure) and governance. Associated terms appear less frequently. The Arandis strategy scores poorly with less than 50% the frequency of instances of sustainability (as associated terms) as in the Lobatse strategy.

Resilience and its associated terms, are mentioned significantly fewer times in both strategies. In the Arandis strategy, there were only three instances—across governance and urban infrastructure—while the Lobatse strategy associated resilience with all five integration areas.

The second step in the analysis assessed the conversion of the concepts as expressed in the SDGs into concrete projects. Here exposed the gap between the concepts and their application. In the case of Arandis fewer than 50% of projects clearly express the principles. It must be noted, however that the strategy has several governance-focused projects which align with the sustainability and resilience principles of the SDGs. Lobatse's strategy fairs significantly better with in the 72% of projects clearly expressing the principles. However, the plan has only one governance-focused project. It is noted with concern that neither town's strategy makes any mention whatsoever of disaster mitigation and preparedness.

The feasibility analysis indicates that both strategies are well constructed indicating their purpose clearly and aligning themselves to plans on higher levels. However, their scores are mediocre with regards process/ownership. Moreover, each plan perpetuates "new plan syndrome" with no evidence of having consulted, much less assessed the implementation of previous plans.

Overall, the Arandis plan emerges as the more implementable plan. It contains in part all the elements that offer guidance to implementers including an indication of financial requirements, timeframes, pre-requisites and project-specific monitoring and evaluation.

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## 7    Concluding and further remarks

This paper has shown that in the case of small towns, sustainability and resilience are concepts that are not fully embedded in urban strategy. Resilience in particular, has yet to gain traction. It further showed that there is at times a disconnect between the discourse in the strategy and how it manifests as projects. This is especially true for supranational goals and targets which find little expression in the town's projects.

Still, Lobatse's plan emerges as superior with regards to its embedding sustainability and resilience, particularly sustainability. However, from an implementation perspective, Arandis' strategy seems more likely to be implementable. It quantifies time and money and offers measures to monitor progress.

It becomes difficult then to determine which is a good plan—the one that reads well or the one that can be implemented well? In the context of under capacitated municipal officials, it is interesting to note that Arandis' strategy was developed in closer association with the Council which may be a lesson to improve future plan's implementability. The more aspirational/transformational plan was developed by consultants with limited Council involvement. Perhaps a closer association is required to bring aspiration and implementable to a convergence.

This paper was primarily a desktop exercise with minimal engagement with either town's official. The next step is to test the assessment with the implementers (i.e. council officials) to determine whether they feel it is useful as a sort of rubric to assess the work of future consultants (or indeed their own). A following step will be to review in the medium- to long-term whether the implementability index line up with implementation in reality?

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[i] But, for whom must the future be better? That there are scales of better. But in all cases, "better" should represent good value and benefit particularly for the poor. In other words, better refers to a Just City.

[ii] According to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the entropy of the universe tends to a maximum. In other words, the universe must end and thus nothing can be sustained indefinitely.

[iii] Utility reminds us that societal actions – regardless of intention – can reverberate through time. We are experiencing this today with global warming.

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