

Blueprint Services

Blueprint provides a unique range of services within the following fields.

1. Economic Development Policies and Strategies

Blueprint assists governments and their development partners to design, implement and monitor policies and strategies that promote economic growth. These interventions can occur at national or sub-national levels and include private sector development, trade and investment promotion and pro-poor growth. The services we provide within this field include:

- Research and assessment of economic development dynamics and growth opportunities
- Design of economic development strategies, programmes and services
- Evaluation of economic development programmes
- Industrial, spatial and cluster development strategies and programmes
- Sector based policy and strategy development and organisation
- Employment and skills assessments and development strategies that improve the number, quality and variety of employment and training opportunities for women and men, and increase local incomes and livelihood opportunities

2. Better Investment Climates and Business Environments

One of the greatest challenges to African countries is the creation of an enabling business environment and investment climate for private sector development. Blueprint works with governments, private sector representatives and civil society structures to identify priorities for reform of the business environment and design practical reform strategies. Services within this field include:

- Assessment of African business environments and investment climates and the identification of reform priorities, including an assessment of the political economy and identification of the drivers of change in the business environment
- Design of reform strategies and programmes, including the development of a multi-stakeholder reform agenda and the design of management structures and procedures
- Management of business environment reform and engagement programmes
- Evaluation of business environment reform interventions and the measurement of programme impacts

There is a wide range of information, experiences, toolkits and resources Blueprint draws upon in its work to help our clients improve the business environment for private sector development. Special attention is placed on those business environment bottlenecks that are most relevant for the countries of Africa. These include:

- Product market factors such as business registration and licensing, foreign and domestic investment policies and regulations, price regulations, and innovation policies
- Public and private governance, including strategies to improve accountability and transparency, reduce corruption and rent-seeking, and enhance a stronger client-focus among public and private service providers
- Trade facilitation including issues such as the regulatory regime for trade, as well as trade policies and promotion; this also includes issues that stem from the demand for WTO compliance, including product standards, conformity and certification issues
- Competition policies, programmes and regulations

- Sector development: business environment assessments and reforms used to promote enterprise development within specific sectors such as the envisaged formalisation of markets for gemstone trade in Zambia
- Sub-national business environment reforms
- Reforms that address the problems of the informal economy

3. Developing Better Trade and Investment Opportunities

Blueprint works with regional and national clients (i.e., public, private and development actors) to enhance trade facilitation and promotion strategies that increase the levels of African trade and investment. The focus is on assisting African economies to increase import and export opportunities and become better integrated into and more competitive in world markets. The services provided by Blueprint in this field of work include:

- Trade and investment project development, management and evaluation
- Development and operation of trade and investment business linkage programmes
- Evaluation of bilateral and multilateral trade and investment agreements
- Development and operation of trade capacity building initiatives
- Private sector participation in trade policy dialogue
- Evaluation and improvements of the regulatory regime for trade through technical assistance to help countries remove legal and regulatory barriers to trade and investment, improve the policy framework and incentives for trade and investment, and formulate a strategic approach to promoting new trade and investment opportunities
- Trade information: BDC is engaged in a constant process of review and data collection, which can provide clients with practical and incisive information and analysis
- Assessment, research and review of trade and investment opportunities, combined with practical recommendations on the ways to realise these opportunities
- Development of communications and engagement strategies for business development and engagement in the SADC

4. Private Sector and Entrepreneurship Development

Blueprint assists public, private and community actors in the design and implementation of strategies that promote private sector development and the creation of an entrepreneurial culture. This is a major priority for all countries in Africa and an important prerequisite for poverty reduction, economic growth and employment creation. Key services provide include:

- Policy and legal frameworks for private sector development, including the promotion of small enterprises, women-owned enterprises, youth enterprises and rural enterprises - included in this field of work is policy and programme development that addresses the problems of the informal economy
- Business and financial services that improve the competitiveness and profitability of indigenous private enterprises
- Design of programmes and services that improve the representation of indigenous enterprises, including small and informal enterprises, when working with governments or with international business and investment representatives
- Improvement of education and training services to incorporate practical and more effective approaches toward the promotion of entrepreneurship and the encouragement of personal, group, economic and community initiatives

- Improvement of national and local business environments so they become more conducive to indigenous private sector development and more competitive within African and international markets
- Design and management of local business expansion and retention strategies to strengthen the business community and improve the responsiveness of local government and development agencies

5. Local Economic Development

Blueprint provides a wide range of services to address the specific concerns and opportunities associated with local economic development (LED). LED is a participatory development process that encourages partnerships between the main private and public actors of a defined territory, enabling the collaborative design and implementation of a common development strategy by making use of their local resources and competitive advantages in a global context with the final objective of generating economic development and pro-poor growth. Among the range of services provided by Blueprint in the support of LED are the following:

- Design, management and monitoring of national LED policy frameworks and support programmes
- Support to local actors (e.g., local government authorities, business membership organizations and other civil society actors) in the design and implementation of local participatory planning and development processes
- Training and support in the formulation of capacity and capability building programmes to strengthen the role of key actors in LED processes

Blueprint works with local municipalities, provincial or regional government authorities, community organizations and business associations to stimulate local employment and sustainable economic opportunities. Our LED support services can be applied within urban, peri-urban and rural settings, as well as within small towns and informal settlements.

6. Public-Private Dialogue

Blueprint recognises the value in effective public-private dialogue at all levels of development: local, national and regional as well as within specific industry sectors. By enhancing representation and improving the quality of this dialogue, new economic opportunities can be identified and pursued, bottlenecks in industry development can be removed, and changes in the skills profiles of key industry sectors can be identified and addressed. Blueprint works with key public, private and community actors to improve public-private dialogue in the following ways:

- Assessments of the quality, functions and effectiveness of current public-private dialogue processes and mechanisms
- Training and support of all relevant actors to improve dialogue (e.g. public, private, trade unions, employers, small enterprises, informal enterprises, rural-based enterprises, and women's enterprises)
- Design and management of interventions to improve the quality, effectiveness and functions of public-private dialogue
- Monitoring public-private dialogue processes and mechanisms
- Assisting in the development of membership organizations, including the design of membership and development services
- Advice on the development of an advocacy agenda that can be pursued and monitored through public-private dialogue processes and mechanisms

7. Spatial Economic Development

Blueprint offers the ability to integrated socio economic development planning with spatial planning considerations for optimum project development prior to engineering feasibility and has extensive experience in this field.

Blueprint specialises in strategic spatial development and allied strategy and policy formulation. The spatial development field is very broad which means that the services offered cover a wide range. These include spatial plans at various scales from regional, rural, metropolitan to local areas as well as sector plans such as industrial and tourism plans sector plans such as industrial and tourism plans.

A unique skill includes knowledge and experience of economic and financial development. This has been put into practice in the creation of the City of Johannesburg's Capital Investment Plan and the development of economic sectors such as ICT, sport and freight and logistics for metropolitan areas. Research has varied from feasibility studies for particular industries to work on Democracy and Governance in South Africa for the World Bank. A background in statutory town planning ensures that strategic plans and policies are grounded in reality and can be applied and implemented.

Over 25 years experience have been gained in the public sector (national, provincial and local government spheres), in NGOs and the private sector. Clients include a range of private and public sector clients. Involvement with the professional institute (SA Planning Institute) and academia (various courses have been presented at 2 universities and external examiners for under- and post-graduate students) ensures being up-to-date with national and international development practices. Blueprint has established relationships with a variety of specialists so that the services of a multi-disciplinary team are available. Services offered include:

- Research and analysis
- Strategy and policy development
- Integration of inputs from multi-disciplinary teams
- Spatial systems such as (but not limited to)
 - Development corridors
 - Nodes
 - Transportation
 - Land use
- Urban and rural strategic spatial planning e.g.
 - Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs)
 - Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)
 - Precinct or local area plans
- Spatial planning training

8. Environmental, Biodiversity and Conservation

In the environmental bio diversity and conservation arena, Blueprint offers the following services:

Environmental

- Environmental auditing and environmental risk analysis.
- Wildlife and industry interactions, such as conflicts between electricity suppliers and wildlife, wildlife management at airports to reduce bird strike risks, and others.
- Powerline and utilities routing to reduce environmental impacts on habitats and species.
- Rehabilitation of disturbed areas to indigenous or required land-use capacity.
- Renewable and alternative energy options for developers.
- Energy efficient and low pollution stoves for low income communities.
- Training of managers in renewable and alternative energy technologies.
- Assessment and management of insect-borne diseases (like malaria).
- Writing and presentation of educational and training materials and manuals for environmental management.

Biodiversity

- Taxonomy and Red Data status of vertebrates and invertebrates for EIA reports.
- Management of habitats for biodiversity or specialised species (like Brenton Blue Butterfly).
- Inventories of fauna in specific localities to assess risk to biodiversity.
- Captive breeding and reintroduction programmes.
- Assessment of biodiversity risks from developmental activities or chemicals.
- Alien plant identification and management programmes.
- Managing communal areas for biodiversity and natural resource management benefits.
- Protected area management plans for biodiversity.
- Writing and presentation of educational and training materials and manuals for biodiversity management.
- CBRM and land degradation, research related to listing of species and ecosystems, research related to listing of cultural heritage sites, institutional expertise in biodiversity and heritage.
- Environmental reporting, research compilation, Integrated environmental management and planning, GIS, production of guidelines and public information.
- Geotechnical investigation, land survey, floodline investigation

Conservation

- Urban conservation through correct management of municipal open space.
- Wildlife management, stocking rates and species mix for protected areas.
- Census and inventories of fauna in protected areas.
- Siting and design of facilities in protected areas, with emphasis on energy efficiency.
- Training protected area managers in various disciplines.
- Visitor information and educational materials for protected areas.
- Identification and management of adverse effects of roads, drainage and other impacts in protected areas.
- Guidance to corporate clients about identifying worthy conservation causes from the confusing number of non-government conservation organisations operating in South Africa.

- Writing and presentation of educational and training materials and manuals for conservation agencies and individuals.

9. Improving Development Policies, Programmes and Practices

Blueprint also works with national, African and international development agencies to improve the effectiveness of their efforts in Africa. While Africa's need for increased development assistance has been highlighted in recent years, Blueprint believes current and future development policies, programmes and practices can be improved to achieve greater impact in Africa. The answer is not simply more development aid, but how to improve the delivery of this aid: how to design better programmes and harmonize these with other agencies, improve coordination, work with local public, private and community partners, build capacity, and ensure long-term and sustainable impacts are achieved.

Blueprint works with a wide range of development and donor agencies to deal with common challenges in this field, such as how to achieve the key elements of the OECD Paris Declaration and how to improve accountability and responsibility for programme outcomes among partner organizations. We are particularly skilled in helping development agencies improve the ways they support developing country governments, private sector organizations and other social partners in their efforts to reform the business environment. Specifically, Blueprint provides the following services to national, African and international development agencies:

- Project design and management - including consultations with local actors and project partners, preparation of project documents and proposals, budgets and financial management systems, and the design of a practical monitoring and evaluation framework
- Design of programme facilities and strategic management frameworks
- Research and consultations
- Programme monitoring and evaluations
- Impact assessments
- Programme sustainability assessments and strategies
- Preparation of resource materials, such as best practice guides, programme management handbooks, evaluation and client tracking manuals, and project reporting frameworks