

SASSA uses accessibility studies to optimize provision of social grant pay points

Information Brief 10

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Accessibility studies done to improve effectiveness

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is one of the most advanced departments in the implementation of accessibility studies. They have undertaken three accessibility studies on their social grant pay points. The purpose of doing these studies is to optimize the location of their facilities to benefit beneficiaries. To improve their cost effectiveness, SASSA also uses other service providers such as the Post Office and banks to pay beneficiaries.

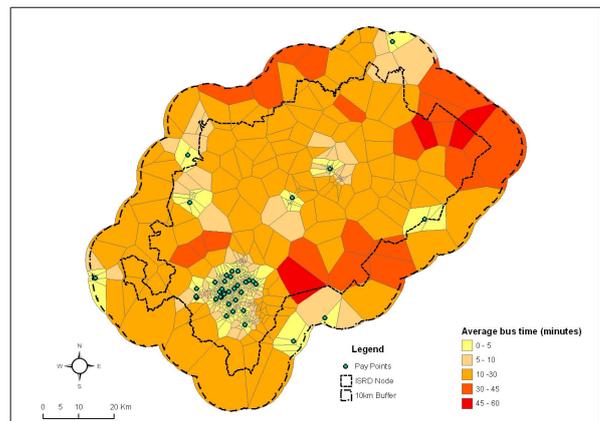
Two types of facilities exist, namely; fixed and mobile social grant pay points. Only the access norms for fixed social grant pay points were used in this accessibility study. The access norms and standards that they use are presented in the table below.

Type of Pay Point	
Fixed	
Target population	Total population
Capacity	1 250
Mode of transport	Bus
Travel time/distance	60 min/5 km

It is important to emphasize that SASSA has just completed their most recent accessibility study at the beginning of 2009 and these results will provide a perspective on where social grant pay points should be optimally located. The reason for doing further accessibility studies of the social grant pay points was to provide an alternative perspective using different approaches and more current data to that used by SASSA.

Beneficiaries travel on average 7 minutes by bus to access pay points

The average demand that social grant pay points have to deal with in terms of the total population in the 15 ISRD nodes is just over 2 000 people. This is quite a lot higher than the norm provided by SASSA of 1 250 people per payment session. Although, it is assumed that the 1 250 people refer more specifically to the beneficiaries (i.e. elderly, child support grantees, etc) that access the social grant pay points. Consequently, this number would be a smaller proportion than the total population.



Maluti-a Phofung stands out because its average demand of over 8 300 people per social grant pay point is so much higher than the average for the 15 ISRD nodes. The average time it takes to travel by bus from communities within the ISRD nodes to the closest social grant pay point is just over 7 minutes. This is a lot less than the access norm of 60 minutes (or 5km) stipulated by SASSA as being the travel time to get access to social grant pay points. This points to the need to either change the norms and standards or to look at the rationalization of social grant pay points.

The three worst off ISRD nodes in terms of the average travel time to get to pay points are Umkhanyakude (12 min) and Zululand (10 min) in KwaZulu-Natal province and Central Karoo (9 min) in the Western Cape. The node which has the worst case bus travel time is Umkhanyakude where people from isolated areas have to travel up to 1 hr 35 min to access social grant pay points. If one uses a 30 min bus trip as a benchmark in providing access to social grant pay points then on average just over 98% of the population occur within this travel time. Thus, only about two per cent of the population still has to be catered for in providing them with access to social grant pay points.

Accessibility study indicates a need to rationalize social grant pay points

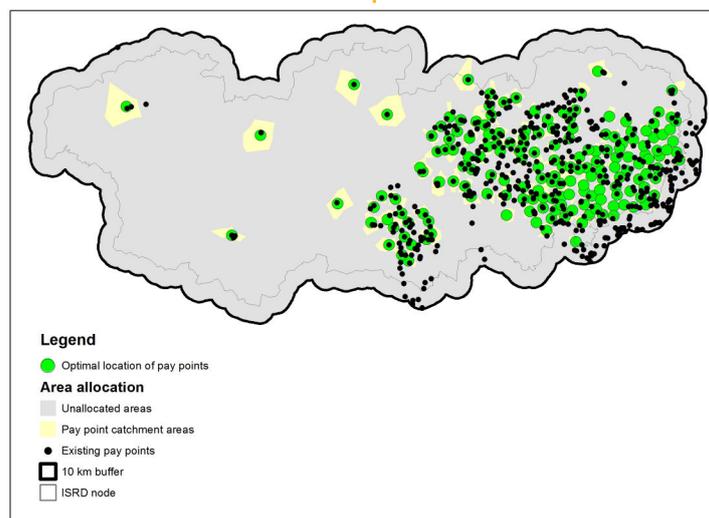
SASSA undertook accessibility studies in 2004, 2006 and in 2008. One of the reasons for undertaking so many studies was partly because they did not have a complete and accurate spatial dataset of all social grant pay points across the country. In these accessibility studies there was also the need to consult with provincial SASSA members to get their input on the recommendations made in the accessibility studies and who are responsible for implementing these services. This exercise took some time to complete.

What this accessibility study shows is that using the norms and standards provided by SASSA there can be quite a significant optimization and reduction in the number of social grant pay points in each ISRD node. In fact across the 15 ISRD nodes a 49% reduction of social grant pay points could be facilitated if the norms and standards of managing 1 250

people per payment session that come from a distance of approximately 5 km are maintained. However, there are a number of factors that would have to be taken into consideration. This includes ensuring that the maximum coverage of social grant pay point beneficiaries is ensured and that effective consultations are held with all relevant stakeholders before any decision is taken on the future of a pay point.

What can be concluded from the accessibility study is that a more optimal distribution of social grant pay points can be achieved that may have far reaching effects on the costs of government providing social grants to beneficiaries throughout South Africa. What the map shows is the optimal location of social grant pay points in Chris Hani.

The map also shows the area around each pay point that falls within its catchment and consequently, the demand that it serves. The existing social grant pay points are also overlaid on the map to reflect which existing social grant pay points are optimally located and which are not. It also enables areas to be identified that previously did not have access to social grant pay points and where new optimally located social grant pay points should be located.



Conclusion

SASSA has undertaken several accessibility studies using different approaches and data. This accessibility study confirms the finding of their studies, which is that there can be a significant reduction in social grant pay points if SASSA's norms and standards are applied. The accessibility study has identified where social grant pay points should be optimally located, where existing social grant pay points can be 'reallocated' for use at optimal sites and where there are potential gaps in the provision of social grant pay points.

For further information please refer to the final report. Contact Trevor Holdsworth at the Dept of Public Service and Administration (dpsa) on (012) 336 1040 or trevorh@dpsa.gov.za