50 Years of the Freedom Charter
How Far We Have Come
Each of us is a knowledge worker and a learning champion in this knowledge economy. We all have a role to play in turning the Public Service into a "Learning Public Service for Quality Service Delivery". Let us pursue this idea by using the Service Delivery Review as a facility for sharing our experiences, successes, mistakes and methodologies and for growing our own intellectual capital.

We belong, we care, we serve.

Opinions expressed in this journal are not those of government but reflect the views of individual writers.

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They came in their thousands, from all corners of the country and converged on a patch of land in Kliptown, Soweto. They were black and white, they were from all sectors of society – the rich and the poor; the uneducated and the highly learned; women and men.

That was fifty years ago, and the occasion was the drafting of the Freedom Charter. The place where this document was drafted has become a historic venue spoken about in reverent tones.

The drafting, adoption and signing of the document was not an end in itself, but an event in the long process towards the emancipation of South Africans from the combined yoke of colonialism and apartheid.

It also marked the laying of the foundation of a democratic society that we are today part of.

It is therefore worrisome that some sectors of this society, using the very freedoms that the liberation movement fought for, are now dismissing the Freedom Charter as a partisan "pamphlet".

Lionel “Rusty” Bernstein, a Congress of Democrats and Communist Party member, who was banned at the time, recalls in his book, Memory Against Forgetting how the Charter was drafted and by whom.

He says “a national ‘call’, explaining the concept of the Congress of People and asking people everywhere to collaborate in setting the terms of the Freedom Charter”, was produced.

The slogan coming out of this call was, “Let us speak of freedom!” That became the keynote of the campaign. From thousands of meetings around the country, suggestions started arriving, often just one liners, says Bernstein.

It was an all-inclusive process that gave birth to the Charter.

Nelson Mandela, who was there in Kliptown during the Charter meeting, has said of this document: “The charter was, in fact, a revolutionary document precisely because the changes it envisioned could not be achieved without radically altering the economic and political structure of South Africa.

“It was not meant to be capitalist or socialist but a melding together of the people’s demands to end the oppression. In South Africa, merely to achieve fairness, one had to destroy apartheid itself, for it was the very embodiment of injustice.”

What the detractors are failing to realise is that the very Constitution of this country, which has been hailed as one of the most liberal and democratic in the world, was informed largely by the tenets of the Freedom Charter. It is hypocritical to make derisive comments about the Charter while you are enjoying the fruits it has borne.

We have an independent judiciary today, thanks to the call for equality before the law as espoused in the Charter.

The National Directorate of Public Prosecutions, and its investigative agency generally known as the Scorpions, has worked hard in uprooting corruption both within and outside government.

There is a palpable sense that this society will not tolerate corruption wherever it comes from, that the law will take its course, regardless of who the suspect could be. Corruption undermines democracy because it creates an environment where favours can be bought, where influence can be purchased. Corruption corrodes the soul of a society, as Hennie van Vuuren suggests in his analysis of this cancer elsewhere in this journal.

Far be it from us to suggest that we have reached nirvana, that the society that we live in is now perfect. Many of the ideals enshrined in the Charter still have to be achieved. We are soldiering on towards achieving these ideals. That is the beauty of the Charter. It is inspirational, as it aims for the highest ideals that any society can aspire to. It informs us that although we have achieved a free, democratic society, the arc goals, dreams, that we should be striving for in our struggle to reach some form of perfection as a society.
This year we celebrate the 50th year of the Freedom Charter. The Charter sets the tone for our democratic transition. The opening statement says it all: “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.” Included in the idea of shared ownership is the idea of equality – no longer the distinction between first- and second-class citizenship. No longer the idea that government distinguishes between race, ethnicity, religious, language or sexual orientation. The Freedom Charter emphatically states that:

- all people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country
- that there shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races
- that all bodies of minority rule shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-governance

Given our history, this meant far-reaching change for the entire South African society. Our changes in terms of public sector institutions had to reach our inner core, touching struc-
tural ideals of the apartheid state to one that advances the principles of a developmental democracy. We have to ensure that as public servants we embody Batho Pele. Experience has shown us that we cannot expect public servants to embrace these principles in their interaction with the public, while inside the public service workplace our behaviour is in contradiction with those principles. This is our brief. The context against which the South African public service operates, broadly speaking, are as follows:

• We are operating in a country marked by huge inequality between our people: We are still faced with strong divides between urban and rural, male and female, rich and poor, white and black, literate and illiterate.

• We are faced with desperate levels of hardship of large sections of our population. One day passing without making progress to provide these citizens with a better life is too long. While speeding up delivery we are expected to radically overhaul the entire machinery of state. Such changes are immensely complex and time-consuming. The size of the public service alone makes change complex. Need I remind the house that the public service is the largest single employer in the country? By December 2004 we employed 1 043 697 people.

• We function in a modern democracy, subscribing to the separation of powers and democratic accountability. We strive to keep our democracy in line with the will of the people, giving direct voice to the people and adjusting our administration in a manner where the relationship between citizen and official is not one of the powerless to the all-powerful, or the ignorant to the know-all expert, but relationships of empowered citizens who are looking towards public officials to truly serve their needs and holding them accountable to exactly that.

• We function in a public sector landscape that has changed significantly from where government departments were the only institutions delivering public services. Now we are dealing with an organisational landscape crowded with arms-length executive agencies, partners from the community and business sector, contractors, regulating bodies, and more – all of them playing a role in public service delivery.

• We function in a global setting, where we have to ensure that Africa takes up its rightful place amongst the regions of the world. Notwithstanding the drawbacks that this continent suffers as a consequence of our colonial histories, and the way in which our economies have been shaped, based on the extractive needs of world powers, and notwithstanding the manner in which our indigenous institutions have been corrupted, we have to overcome this and operate in a manner to release Africa’s full potential.

What the country needs is the careful construction of our road to development - brick by brick, stone by stone. The portfolio that I have temporarily been entrusted with serves as the most important stone in the process and, with all the help and support I get from the entire team, we will chip away at the stones, relentlessly and creatively, so that each fits tightly together, forming the road on which our people can walk to freedom.
Ambassadors For Sustainable Innovation

Four “innovation ambassadors” have been appointed to champion the cause of sustainable innovation across South Africa’s public and private sectors. The Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, recently announced the appointments at the launch of the “call for entries” for the Innovation and Sustainability Awards 2005.

“Government encourages innovation in both the public and private sector,” Minister Fraser-Moleketi said. “As part of this process, we acknowledge four individuals who have made a significant contribution to the cause of sustainable innovation, and who can act as role models and an inspiration to current and future innovators.”

The four innovation ambassadors are:

- Ms Naumi Mashalane, who won the Innovation of the Year Award in 2003 for her pioneering work in developing a new approach to treating asthma patients and now works at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital.
- Professor Emo Alcant, who founded the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC) to help people who are largely ignored due to a lack of speech. The centre won the award in 2004 for excellence in innovation and sustainability in the social category.
- Mr Pierre van der Hoven, founder and CEO of TBM, a digital media company that has developed unique technology that is a world-first in advertising applications. TBM was Grand Prix winner in 2003 for its innovation in the area of satellite-linked IP Multi-Casting.
- Advocate Thoko Majekweni, who heads the Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit of the National Prosecuting Authority. Advocate Majekweni won an award for the Efficient Management of Sexual Offences Project, which has revolutionised the way cases of sexual offences are managed.

“We see the ambassadors acting as role models and living examples of successful innovators — as people who will inspire others not only to innovate but to enter their own innovative ideas into the Innovation and Sustainability Awards for 2005,” Minister Fraser-Moleketi said. “We expect the ambassadors to share their learning, to incentivise others, and to help new innovators to negotiate through the often-complex landscape of innovation.”

The Minister said Government encouraged innovation among its own employees — “especially those innovations that are people-centred and result in improved service delivery, better government, and a better life for all.”

“The same argument applies to private sector innovators. In the spirit of public-private partnerships, we have extended the awards to recognise both public and private sector innovation, and encourage innovators across the country to submit their proposals for assessment.”

There are two elements to the awards:
- A series of private sector awards, sponsored by T-Systems – an information technology solutions company, which covers innovation forms such as process, organisational, management, commercial, marketing and service innovation.
- A series of public sector innovation awards, whose sponsors include Microsoft, TBM and MTN, which recognise successful and effective service delivery improvement projects and initiatives.

The awards are jointly co-ordinated by the government’s Centre for Public Service Innovation, Axius Publishing – publishers of Convergence magazine – and the Da Vinci Institute. For more information visit http://www.innovation-awards.co.za or phone (041) 579-4417.

Vodacom Cares About Rural Healthcare Provision

A mobile healthcare clinic, which will serve the rural villages of Mkhoshe and Mnquma Local Municipalities, has been launched in Nqadu in the Eastern Cape. This development has come as a result of a partnership between His Majesty the King of Amaksi, Xolihlwe Sigcawu, representing the community, the Eastern Cape Department of Health, as well as the Vodacom Foundation.

The vehicle, a Mercedes Benz Sprinter, which has been customised to operate as a fully-equipped clinic, was made possible by an investment of R400 000 from the Vodacom Foundation. As part of this partnership, the Department of Health has taken the responsibility of managing the mobile clinic including the provision of a driver, a nurse and medical supplies.

King Xolihlwe Sigcawu, in expressing his gratitude, said, “The Vodacom Foundation must be congratulated for its magnanimous gesture as many people in our communities, including the aged and disabled, have to travel long distances to reach a clinic.” The mobile clinic will also assist in the local HIV/Aids campaigns that are championed by Contralesa in partnership with the National and Provincial Departments of Health, said Prince Xhani Sigcawu, spokesperson of the Xhosa Royal House and brother to the King.

Mr Mthobi Tyamzashe, Chief Communications Officer of Vodacom, said that health is one of the primary focus areas of the Vodacom Foundation. He added, “By joining hands with the Eastern Cape Department of Health and the Mkhoshe/Mnquma Communities, we are improving the quality of life of people by providing easy access to healthcare.”
Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana has urged under-performing Sectoral Education Training Authorities (Setas) to prove their worth or face the prospect of possible closures or amalgamation. Addressing delegates attending a National Skills Development Conference in Johannesburg, Mr Mdladlana said the time allocated was sufficient for them to amalgamate into strong new Setas.

The exposed Setas are the Diplomacy, Intellligence, Defence and Trade Authority (Diota), Police, Private Security, Legal and Correctional Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Polseta), Primary Agriculture Education and Training Authority (Peta) and Training Authority for Secondary Agriculture (Setasa).

The Minister said that within the next three months his department would provide assistance to them to compile and finalise their new constitutions, constitution and finalise their new integrated scope of coverage, and establish their new boards of directors.

“The only once this process is completed will I be in a position to consider the issuing of a certificate of establishment for new, amalgamated Setas to which the current assets, rights liabilities and obligations will then be transferred,” Mr Mdladlana explained. He added that he had also extended the current certificate for the establishment of the Public Services Education and Training Authority (Pseta). He said he had instructed his department to work closely with the Department of Public Service and Administration and National Treasury to resolve governance matters relating to the authorities’ funding mechanism and constitutions.

“I have also delayed the amalgamation of the Peta with the Local Government Setas until such time that [sic] I am satisfied that their funding framework and other policy matters are resolved ... It was not easy to arrive at this decision,” he remarked.

He explained that the adjusted Seta landscape would take the country to the 2010 Soccer World Cup. “I took into consideration the plight of learners that are already in the system, the grants that employers are expecting, the momentum that is already there and the wonderful work that is going on in coming to this conclusion,” he explained further. The minister also launched the new National Skills Development Strategy, to be implemented in the next five years. He said with the previous strategy Setas did not meet their equity targets of 85 percent black learners, 54 percent women and four percent disabled learners.

“I remain concerned on [sic] the levels of unspent money, even though committed towards projects and employer grants sitting in Seta coffers, provincial labour department offices national skills fund account,” he said.

In the next five years, Setas will receive up to R29.9 billion from the skill development levy.

**Ineffective SETAS urged to prove their worth**

By Zibonele Ntuli, Bua News

The MEC of Health, Dr Monwabisi Goqwana, said that the Provincial Government in the Eastern Cape has in the past few years been faced with a number of challenges amongst which was the unification of three governments the Transkei, Ciskei and Cape Province. With limited resources, the government had to redress the shortage of healthcare facilities across the whole province. “Between 1994 and 2004 we have been able to establish 711 new clinics. In spite of this remarkable progress we still have to contend with the World Health Organisation’s standard of one clinic for every group of 10 000 people. The contribution by Vodacom goes a long way in ensuring that we deliver the much-needed assistance to our communities.”

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**DPSA Learning Session launched**

By Richard Levin, the Public Service Director-General, recently told a gathering of DPSA staff members attending the launch of the first internal Rutanang series of learning sessions on the 21st of April at Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria.

According to Levin, the implementation of the unified public service concept is “revolutionary” as nowhere in the world are there attempts to integrate municipalities into the public service.

He said the “pockets of dissatisfaction”, and in some cases explosions at local government level, were indicative of the service delivery crisis in some of the country’s municipalities.

The views of the two respondents to the DPSA DG’s presentation, the Chairperson of the Municipal Demarcation Board, Dr Vuyo Mlokoti, and Advocate Shami Kholong of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), echoed the DG’s input.

Kholong said that DPLG was developing an employment bill for municipalities that was meant to rationalise and standardise employment practices in the municipal sector. The bill hoped to “create a public service [sic] local government] over the next twelve months”. He was addressing about 50 DPSA staff members attending the launch of the first internal Rutanang series of learning sessions on the 21st of April at Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria.

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The DG said about the drive towards a unified public service, adding that the project was a “pretty hard deliverable [for government] over the next twelve months”. He was addressing about 50 DPSA staff members attending the launch of the first internal Rutanang series of learning sessions on the 21st of April at Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria.

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New Training Model For Public Sector
By Tumelo Modisane, BuaNews

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) will establish a new model for training and development in the public sector. Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi announced this during her department’s Budget Vote in Parliament. The move is in line with President Thabo Mbeki’s emphasis on developing the capacity of the state to deliver services.

“It becomes critical for SAMDI to formulate a response that is commensurate with the enormity of the skills development challenges in the public sector,” said Minister Fraser-Moleketi. SAMDI will also co-ordinate the establishment of a network of accredited trainers, drawn within the ranks of successful public servants with a demonstrable record of successful service delivery in their area of work.

The new approach will be launched with a campaign under the following slogan: “Rutanang ma Afrika”, which means Africans teaching and learning from one another.

Another important area in service delivery was local government, the minister said. Therefore the Department of Provincial and Local Government and SAMDI will formulate a proposed capacity development strategy for local government to form a sub-set of the Public Sector Human Resource Development Strategy. The institute will also focus on training for officials in areas such as management and leadership development, supply chain management and project management.

SAMDI will also work with the local government and provincial department to establish a Local Government Learning Academy (LOGOLA) that will focus on the training of councillors and senior officials. It will also develop individual learning strategies in response to the varying nature of responsibilities at a provincial level. This programme has been launched in the Northern Cape, and the lessons learned from the pilot project will be used to further strengthen and shape the programme for other provinces.

Back to School
KZN Service Delivery Improvement Learning Network
By Desmond Nobin, KZN Provincial Learning Champion

The KwaZulu-Natal Service Delivery Improvement Learning Workshop was hosted from 12 to 13 April 2005 at the Riverside Hotel, Durban. Seventy officials participated in this DPSA initiated activity, which had the full support of the Office of the Premier, KZN. In her opening remarks at the learning session, the former Integrated Provincial Support Programme (IPSP) coordinator for KZN, Cecilia. Khuzwayo, highlighted the need for improved service delivery in the context of the Premier’s policy pronouncements on service delivery, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy and other initiatives taking place, such as the KZN Citizen’s Charter.

Khaya Ngema, of the DPSA, set the scene by outlining the KZN administration review process (undertaken in partnership with the Office of the Premier) and Batho Pele. Delegates were also exposed to a case study on the Eastern Cape’s initiatives in the transformation of social grants. While Professor E. A. Mantzaris shared the nature and scope of the KZN Citizen’s Charter Survey on service delivery. He highlighted the challenges faced by his team during this process and shared the findings of the survey with delegates. The issues raised revealed that there is a great deal of work to be done to meet the expectations of the citizenry. It was however noted that the report on the survey was still pending discussions with MEXCO and the Provincial Executive Council.

The afternoon session of the first day dealt with a further case study on the process and lessons from the Eastern Cape Interim Management Team (IMT) intervention, presented by Bongani Matomela, DPSA, Marcel Wilson, who is also from the DPSA, concluded the day with a presentation on the findings in the KZN Review Report on the state and capacity of several departments to deliver services in the province.

Leaders of Tomorrow Today

The South African Youth Ministers Project began in 2002 as a project aimed at addressing the dearth of youth development projects that focused on governance, democracy, leadership and citizenship development. Since the beginning of 1994, youth participation and interest in South Africa’s democracy and governance has decreased. The experiences of youth who have grown up with democracy are very different from youth who grew up during the apartheid struggle. The South African Youth Ministers Project aims to pro-
mote youth participation in active citizenship for building the New South Africa, strengthening democracy and developing stronger leaders for tomorrow. Currently 225 learners in 15 schools in 8 provinces participate in the project.

Each participating school has 15 Youth Ministers representing their schools and communities. Youth Ministers are voted into office by their peers (aided by the Electoral Institute of South Africa) and are elected to serve in different portfolios, from Arts and Culture to Trade and Industry and Education. Youth Ministers are sworn into office for a period of one year and once in office, Youth Ministers participate in a series of life skill workshops as well as school and community based projects. Youth Ministers are expected to conduct themselves properly and participate in the programmes when called upon as well as to serve their schools, fellow learners, community and country.

On a monthly basis, Youth Ministers compile and submit reports on service delivery challenges in their schools and communities. These reports highlight issues that affect the youth and remind us that the youth, as clients of the public sector should not be overlooked. In their reports, Youth Ministers outline, not only the service delivery challenges they face, but also potential solutions to these challenges. In many cases, together with their fellow Ministers and learners at their schools, they are working to implement these solutions. For example, planting food gardens to help feed needy families, going to speak to local councilors and officials to seek local government assistance and organising community clean-up initiatives. At a time when the public sector is realising the importance of community participation and assistance in service delivery, it is encouraging to see these youngsters take up the challenge. There is now a challenge to the public sector to meet them halfway!

In the future, Youth Ministers will be participating in the Service Delivery Watch initiative being launched by the Department for Public Service and Administration as part of the Batho Pele Revitalisation Strategy. They will act as “mystery shoppers” going into service delivery institutions to evaluate the quality of service delivery against the Batho Pele Belief Set. Their inputs will provide valuable feedback on the youth experience of service delivery.

For more information on the South African Youth Minister’s Programme, please call Alan Williams on 012 667 3385 or allan@aits.co.za.
Most commentators would agree that leadership and leadership capability are central to responsive governance. However, it is within the detail that perspectives often differ and where we find elements of complexity and diversity. When reflecting on public service leadership in Africa we are mindful of the fact that whilst we seek to understand African realities, we need to do this without losing a sense of universal and widely shared knowledge, experiences and history. At the same time we also have to be at work at avoiding a perspective that suggests similarity and unanimity in values and behaviours across the globe, and in particular within a very big continent which experiences many diverse influences and that consequently developed its own systems on different tracts.

A critical assessment of leadership development and changing leadership practices in Africa will reveal the mark left by various colonial processes and reliance, sometimes excessively so, on foreign models. Notwithstanding the importance of public sector leadership in the continent, we are faced with more questions than answers and the empirical base for substantive engagement on the issues is fairly thin. Whilst we work at enhancing the empirical base to further understand the complexity of leadership within the public sector in African countries, we remain mindful that we cannot raise the challenges and questions without venturing in providing some initial thoughts and perspectives on the questions raised.

Central to any perspective on leadership development and the changing role of officials must be the question: What are the unique challenges that are facing senior public sector officials in Africa? Hence, to understand the changing expectations we have of our senior public servants, it is important to under-
stand the challenges that face the political leadership and the manner in which they have responded. Drawing from a number of sources, the challenges confronted may be summarised as follows:

- **Responding to Poverty:** The consequences of uneven development are particularly evident within Africa and the leadership has been faced with the challenge of responding in a context of diminishing public sector resources and within a world that continues to be dominated by neo-liberal perspectives on the role of the state.

- **Responding to Globalisation:** As globalisation has both positive possibilities and very evident negative consequences for African countries, the leadership challenge in our context is how to harness the positive and limit the negative.

- **Resolving and Preventing Conflict:** Whilst conflict is specific to particular countries, the overall consequence to all is recognised, and it continues to be a central responsive challenge for the political leadership.

- **Reestablishing the Legitimacy of State Institutions:** In many instances political leaders are faced with the challenge of reestablishing the legitimacy of state institutions in contexts where there is very limited trust and reciprocity between the state and the broader society.

- **Operating within a Framework of Interdependence:** Rapid globalisation has established for the leadership an imperative to cooperate and build partnerships across sectors and national boundaries to address the interlinked social and economic challenges of the 21st century.

- **Driving Transformation:** The reality of constant change, and the emergence and reemergence of contradictions, has established for the leadership an imperative to constantly drive change and respond to ambiguity.

The package of challenges identified served not only to establish the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) but also to the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). In practice, NEPAD is the programmatic expression of the African leadership’s response to the challenges confronted. Seen from this perspective, the central challenge for senior African public servants at present resides in understanding and responding to the vision and commitment that have been established by the political leadership in the continent through the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

Whilst being mindful of our history of colonialism and the challenges that emanate from an uneven global economic system, the leadership in the continent has expressed and demonstrated that we have to take responsibility for our future and work at defining our own development agenda and path. Seen against this backdrop and the complex public sector realities we face, the challenge is how do we ensure that the vision and commitment permeates our institutions and the practice of public service?

Although many of us have initiated programmes that seek to enhance the willingness of public servants to take responsibility and embody the vision and commitment of the political leadership, we continue to confront many instances where the commitment and the provision of resources does not translate into adequate action on the part of the public service. In building responsive governance, the challenge has shifted from responsive governance towards ensuring that we have a responsive senior leadership cadre in the public service.

A component of the challenge of ensuring a responsive senior public sector leadership resides in attracting and retaining the right people. That is, people who have the required skills and who are committed to service in a complex and changing environment. If we are to bridge the gap between vision and delivery, the people we attract and retain must be able to live the articulated vision and translate this vision into actual practice. We cannot sustain a public service cadre that is only able to restate the vision, but does not have the skills and leadership capabilities to translate this vision into active institutional practice and service delivery. In the spectrum of leadership development, our emphasis has to be on establishing the capacity amongst senior civil servants to translate...
the vision into active demonstrable practice.

In reflecting on the disconnect between a committed and visionary political leadership and a ‘slow to respond’ administrative leadership, we cannot but conclude that some challenges lodged in the political-administrative interface in Africa may be unique to our history. Whilst we remain aware of the many perspectives that seek to establish a divide between the political and administrative realms, our histories and development trajectories suggest the need for a more symbiotic relationship.

In building capable states, experience suggests that it is essential that we build an ethos within the political-administrative interface that is rooted in recognising that the challenges we confront require a willingness by all to demonstrate responsible and responsive public service leadership. Such a symbiotic relationship does not preclude recognising the realm of political control and the expertise that are rooted in administrative leadership. However, within the framework of symbiotic relationships, the central challenge for senior public servants is recognising that administrative action is inherently political, and that constant political guidance and mutual adjustment are key to the building of effective developmental states and responsive governance practices.

A further and more substantive question that confronts many of us is: Is there a uniquely African leadership style and can such a style be amenable to the context of the modern state? Whilst many would argue that traditional African practices and ancient African philosophies would be inadequate for modern governance, there are undeniable influences in the African value system that distinguishes it from that of a more western approach to public sector leadership. In research conducted in 1995, it was concluded that the Afrocentric organisation is based on the philosophico-orientational harmony, spirituality and humanistic/people-oriented principles with basic administrative elements that include support of all members, communal management styles and the prioritisation of people over profit.

Having focused attention to the dominance of inappropriate leadership models within many of our institutions, I would like to focus some attention on the leadership development challenge and on the unfolding African strategy to respond to the leadership development challenge. Central to the change challenge is our ability to influence and change the curricula and approaches established by our ‘leadership development’ institutes. With our academic and capacity-building community, we need to work at ensuring that we restore African influences in public administration and governance thinking.

In reestablishing the value of local knowledge and practices, it does not mean that we should loose sight of public sector leadership models that have emerged in other contexts. All that is required is a greater balance so that the opportunity to establish alternative approaches and practices are there. In the current conjuncture, much of what permeates leadership development initiatives is based on research and knowledge generated in vastly different contexts.

It must be appreciated that the political leadership in Africa, in expressing its commitment to NEPAD objectives, has established a base upon which leadership development on the continent can be constructed. In responding to the commitment of the political leadership, and in our efforts to change the historic tide of public sector leadership practice, we have within the African region been working for the past few months on establishing a programme for ‘Public Sector Leadership Development for Good Governance’. A central objective of this programme is to exchange knowledge and experiences on public sector leadership and its development within the region. This is done with a view that exchange would serve as an essential vehicle for the examination of appropriate methodologies, curriculum content and strategies for public service leadership development in African countries.

Without venturing further into the details of the programme, it is important to mention that the leadership programme we are envisaging is rooted in regional supportive interventions that would help us establish innovative leadership development practices across all countries. Central to our strategy is the establishment of a ‘Network of Public Service Management Development Institutions in Africa’.

Having moved from the conceptual to the practical, I would like to conclude by raising a fundamental challenge when reflecting on the ‘changing role of senior public servants’. At the political level, accountability, responsiveness and the willingness to change is driven by the reality of poverty, community need and societal activism. My colleagues will testify that this reality keeps us up at night and instils a sense of urgency and energy in our activism. The fundamental challenge for many of us is how we ensure that this sense of urgency and energy translates into visible action on the part of those senior public servants who enjoy the comforts of permanence and who often find comfort within the boundaries of bureaucratic practice.

Having responded, in brief, to most of the public service leadership problems and challenges I have posed, I know you will forgive me for leaving you with this one challenge. A challenge for which, I know, there are no easy answers.

1 NEPAD at work: Summary of the NEPAD Action Plan of July 2002

Towards Participatory and Transparent Governance

There is growing recognition that governance systems can shape socio-economic growth and development trajectories. This goes to the heart of the reinventing government project, which reaffirms the centrality of the state in the resolution of social and economic problems. The path of post-liberation development in South Africa reflects a desire to both stabilise the macro-economic situation as well as address the needs of the poor by reinventing government through the establishment of a developmental state.

Prior to 1994, South Africa had a history of oppression, characterised by an authoritarian system of governance that ignored the rights and aspirations of the majority of its people. Under apartheid, the government denied the majority of citizens’ democratic rights and implemented a tyrannical system of rule in a secretive, top-down manner.

Although a number of good policies have been formulated since the inception of the democratic government, the implementation of policy and service delivery continues to challenge government at national, provincial and local level. All three spheres of government play a role in service delivery at the local level.

Greater attention is being devoted in the second decade of democracy to the development of tools and methods that promote the involvement of citizens in service delivery. The Mbeki government is now placing substantial emphasis on programme implementation and service delivery improvement to tackle the problems of poverty. There is also growing recognition of the value and importance of consultation, and formal mechanisms have been developed to facilitate this.

The Developmental State and the Challenge of People-centred, Integrated Governance

The strategic objective of the second decade of freedom is to build and consolidate a developmental state in South Africa. A developmental state excels in the basics of governance and intervenes strategically in the economy to promote social development.

South African economy and society comprise a developed economy with sound macro economic management,
surrounded by a second underdeveloped economy characterised by poverty and unemployment. The challenge for the developmental state is to integrate the two economies while meeting both their needs.

In order to achieve integration, the developmental state needs to be people-oriented and capable of addressing the socio-economic needs of its entire population, especially the poor, marginalised and historically oppressed. As noted, the South African state comprises three spheres of government. The quality of interaction between the three spheres determines the impact of the state’s development efforts and is related to the Constitutional principle of co-operative governance.

The key objective of integration is to improve service delivery. Integrated service delivery is a challenge for public services globally. The quest for integration takes place at a number of levels. It involves improving intergovernmental relations horizontally as well as vertically. It also requires the integration of citizens into governance systems and processes in order to ensure that implementation of policy meets the needs of citizens. This is achieved through participatory governance.

**Participatory Governance**

Participatory governance experiences are found all over the world. These experiences show efforts to consistently involve people in governance issues, the importance of communication and a vision of social transformation and development. Central to the success of participatory governance is strong leadership and a political will and commitment to bring about changes suggested through the participatory governance experience.

Osmani has shown how decentralisation and participation have been widely used and somewhat abused as terms because politicians all over the world have sought, in many instances sincerely, to increase the impact of programmes and projects on the lives of the poor. Decentralisation should not, however be seen as a necessary condition for participatory governance. A strong centre of government can promote and be enhanced by the participation of citizens in policy formulation and implementation as well as the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation. We need to acknowledge that participatory governance should be treated as a flexible and elastic concept that is historically contingent. It refers to contexts and situations in which governments strive to be more relevant to the lives of people by increasing their role in service delivery in order to improve the quality of government services.

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Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright have come up with useful pointers to the reinvention of government through popular participation by way of what they call “Empowered Deliberative Democracy”. They define this as efforts to deepen the way in which ordinary people can effectively participate in and influence policies that directly affect their lives. Fung and Olin Wright provide five case studies (some of which are also used by others in this field). Two of the cases aim to remedy failures by state agencies through the use of participation and deliberation to enhance effectiveness (community policing in Chicago and a collective training strategy in Milwaukee) while in another two, left wing political parties have captured political power and seek to advance a social justice agenda (urban budgeting in Brazil and participatory village governance in India). The fifth case involves stakeholders making reforms to legislation governing protected species.

They identify three principles of Empowered Deliberative Democracy:

- A practical orientation (in that participation is geared to very concrete concerns);
- Bottom up participation; and
- Deliberative solution generation (i.e. iterative dialogue based decision making).

They go on to identify three design principles that need to be considered when engaging with Empowered Deliberative Democratic style reforms. These design principles require:

- Devolution (because Empowered Deliberative Democracy requires a fundamental reorganisation of the state apparatus);
- Centralised supervision and co-ordination (because accountability requires local bodies to be connected to superordinate structures); and
- Interventions should be state centred and not voluntaristic (because they seek to transform the mechanisms and institutions of state power).

Another important feature of participatory governance is the important role it plays in poverty reduction. It helps to ensure that policies are based on better information while building policy makers’ commitment to agreements and making the implementation of policy more effective and efficient. Some see participatory governance as the missing link in poverty reduction, usually ignored and under-utilised.

The importance of participatory governance for poverty reduction is important in the South African context where poverty remains one of the major challenges for the developmental state.

**Participatory Governance, poverty reduction and improved service delivery in South Africa**

South Africa is in its second decade of democracy. A stable macro economic framework has been created and delivered reasonable growth based on solid fundamentals, while a progressive social outlook has created a harmonious, creative and optimistic society. Poverty and unemployment remain major challenges because economic growth has also been relatively jobless, based on modern technology and improvements in productivity and performance. HIV and AIDS are also major challenges, with South Africa having a very high prevalence rate.

The ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) enjoys very high levels of popular support, and gained a 70 per cent majority in the 2004 elections. Key to its popularity is the fact that its policies and principles continue to be drawn from a political manifesto designed fifty years ago known as the Freedom Charter. The Charter is a popular, community-based declaration developed through participatory mechanisms describing a society in which “the people shall govern”. A progressive and socially aware party, the ANC has always been deeply concerned with the plight of people and groups who have been disadvantaged and historically oppressed.

Harnessing the potential of empowered participation through deepening democracy is pivotal in the search for improved public service performance, poverty reduction and service delivery excellence. South Africa’s rich tradition of popular participation has been translated into a number of laws, structures, mechanisms and practices beginning with the Constitution itself. Section 195 outlines principles governing the public service and states that “people’s needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making.” The chapter dealing with local government states that one of the objectives of local government must be to “encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government” (Section 152).

The National Assembly and provincial legislatures have public participation offices that have a sound record of consulting extensively with affected parties before legislation is passed. The Imbizo is an adaptation of traditional forums at which political leaders meet with and consult communities on pressing matters and are increasingly important consultative events in the political calendar. They involve leadership of all spheres of government, and President Mbeki has placed great emphasis on the importance of the Imbizo as a consultative methodology to strengthen implementation capacity, and he himself has an extensive Imbizo program.

This institution of popular participation plays a critical role in providing a platform for the voice of the people to be heard. It also promotes accountability by ensuring broader involvement of elected representatives. The Imbizo deepens democracy by ensuring that community meetings and report back sessions inform the Imbizo process and broader policy formulation. Communities are also positive about the Imbizo, but post-Imbizo research shows that communities need immediate feedback on the issues they have raised.

The following table shows the major issues that are raised during the Presidential Imbizo sessions:

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**Issues**

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or residents associations, these are effectively emerging out of the civic associations and structures of people’s power established during the struggle against apartheid, and in the early years of liberation. They are therefore a new form of participatory structure constructed on the foundations of alternative sites of people’s power.

Other structures that local authorities can use to promote participation include Advisory Committees, Focus Groups and public hearings and meetings, all of which are provided for by national legislation governing municipalities.

During 2002, South Africa’s Public Service Commission, responsible for oversight and monitoring the public service, implemented a pilot study jointly with the National parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration to test a participatory governance methodology known as Citizens’ Forums.

These Forums are a unique and distinctly South African method of consulting citizens on their views with regard to service delivery and focus on a specific service in a specific place. Their strength lies in their drawing on the South African tradition of community-based decision-making through dialogue and discussion.

Community Forums function as empowering, education interventions that build on a partnership based approach. The format followed to undertake the Forums varied from site to site but usually involved a public hearing at which views and opinions could be aired as well as a problem-solving workshop component at which suggestions for improvement could be made.

An important element of the process was reaching agreement on issues and items to be implemented by the relevant government authority based on preceding discussions on what would be done to address particular concerns raised in the public hearings.

There are of course a number of valid concerns, including issues such as representation within the forums, the ability of attendees to report back to others who could not attend Forum sessions, but none of these undo the valuable contributions that simple but useful interventions such as these can make.

In terms of the criteria provided by Fung and Olin Wright, Imbizos, Ward Committees and Citizens’ Forums largely fall within the Empowered Deliberative Democracy framework: they have a practical orientation in that they are concerned with particular services and governance practices in a particular place, they have bottom-up participation in that they are open and unrestricted, and they entail deliberative solution generation. They also raise the profile of local decision-making and input in the context of centralized supervision and coordination. Finally, they are state-centered, not voluntaristic, and in terms of the intergovernmental framework in South Africa provide the platform for decentralized decision-making.

**Conclusion: Looking Forward**

This paper has argued that South Africa has decisively created the space for participatory governance. Clear legal, structural and institutional frameworks are in place, although more work is required to consolidate, deepen and coordinate these emergent practices of participatory governance.

In building a developmental state, this is an area in which requires greater focus on in future and one through which all kinds of government pro-

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### Table 1: Top ten issues raised at Presidential Imbizos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic opportunity</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting Crime &amp; Corruption</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads, transport, buses</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional &amp; local authorities</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social grants</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land restitution</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 2: Imbizo Focus Weeks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Nov 01</th>
<th>Dec 01</th>
<th>Jan 02</th>
<th>Feb 02</th>
<th>Mar 02</th>
<th>Apr 02</th>
<th>May 02</th>
<th>Jun 02</th>
<th>Jul 02</th>
<th>Aug 02</th>
<th>Sep 02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>427</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dep. Ministers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Premiers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
grammes are ensured to achieve greater impact in the longer term. This would in particular include programmes designed to tackle the issues of poverty and unemployment in the second economy to facilitate and promote sustained growth and development.

Currently, the single biggest tool to provide a minimum threshold of support is the social security system that provides mothers of young children and the elderly, as well as special groups such as war veterans and disabled people, with a small monthly grant to cover their basic needs. This is a very successful important intervention but it is currently characterized by relatively minimal participation. This would be a key area for consideration in broadening a participatory approach to governance, to ensure that beneficiaries are drawn in to maximize effectiveness of the program.

In South Africa there is a need to continue to find more and better ways to build a public service that is finely attuned to the needs of its citizens and flexible enough to provide what they require.

This must be done by creating innovative and appropriate public participation mechanisms and systems that provide for authentic consultation to take place on an ongoing basis. It is critical that consultative mechanisms not only operate effectively, but also provide clearer links to government’s strategic and operational planning procedures and to its programme structures and budgeting systems.

Government, through the Department of Provincial and Local Government, is currently preparing policy and guidelines on public participation in policy making and programme implementation at the local level. This should indicate precisely what levels of participation are required in which phases and will make suggestions on practical and realistic strategies and tools that can be applied in diverse settings.

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1. Director General: Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa; Visiting Professor of Public Management and Development, University of the Witwatersrand
5. Ibid., 21-24
Globalisation pressures, including economic integration, fiscal discipline and democratic governance, have forced governance institutions to redefine their role of universal provider as one that encompasses the roles of catalyst, enabler, gate-keeper, consensus-builder, mediator and negotiator. UN, 2000, ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.6, quoted in UNDP, 2001

The impact of globalisation has irreversibly changed the manner in which the state is viewed and the roles that it is expected to play. We need to reinvent the way in which we viewed the reinvention of government and state. The state should champion the rights of the poor and marginalised, while simultaneously ensuring that growth and prosperity attract capital, which can be fickle in its choice of allegiances. The state has to meet the needs of a diverse and multi-cultural citizenry, and in so doing ensure redress for past imbalances. Finally, the state cannot remain focused on its own domestic agenda at the expense of regional and global processes and accountability. This complexity requires a flexible, strategic state that is unapologetically developmental, regionally sensitive, and increasingly sophisticated.

Are the traditional structures and processes of governance and public management equipped to produce this desired state? Practitioners and theoreticians alike have witnessed a period of intense evolution and revolution in understanding what behaviour makes the state and its practice of governance relevant and necessary in the early 21st century. There appears to be broad consensus that what is required is not less, but more, governance, provided it is driven by principles of equity, fairness and accountability, locally and internationally.

We have witnessed conflict in parts of Eastern and Central Europe, the Great Lakes region of Africa over the past decade or more, the Middle East, the ongoing war in Iraq – its causes and effects – and, ultimately, the unexpected horror of the natural disaster of the tsunami in Asia and East Africa, witnessed earlier this year, and the ongoing human tragedy related to poverty, HIV and AIDS and other preventable diseases (like malaria and so on). Underlying all...
of these human tragedies is the reality that the trajectory of increased poverty and inequality between developed and developing nations is not sustainable, and will undoubtedly impact on the lives of all, directly or indirectly.

The pressure on our states is therefore to find more creative ways to address some of the seemingly intractable challenges of governance, and to function in ways that may have seemed unlikely in the past, but which the immediate challenges of our troubled present enforce on us. Emerging practices from across the globe provide hope in this regard, and reflect that as politicians, public servants, community leaders, captains of industry, we are capable of providing the new models that are required to ensure a prosperous future. Hence the appropriate and well-chosen emphasis of this Sixth Global Forum on ‘Innovation in Government and Governance’. Being prepared to open our minds to the possibility of doing things differently is most certainly the first step.

James Rosenau (1997: 145) defines governance to refer to “spheres of authority at all levels of human activity that amount to systems of rule in which goals are pursued through the exercise of control”. This definition makes provision for the reality that governance also manifests itself (and can go wrong) within the private domain, as well as the global, regional, national, local, public or private - a social construct. In order to analyse or comment on it is therefore necessary to critically assess the power structures, the underlying interests of the dominant actors, and the beneficiaries of various governance mechanisms.

Role of the state in innovation

Government innovation in the context of governance deals fundamentally with the definition of the role of the state. It is therefore largely an ideological discussion of whether there should be more or less state, more or less government, more or less regulation and intervention in terms of the market specifically, and society more generally speaking, in order to ensure economic growth of a certain kind that also take on board other considerations and values.

The governance debate for African countries, however, should be on whether this is the approach that is normatively desirable at the point of post-conflict reconstruction. Is it not time to admit that more government, rather than less government, is required to set the ongoing conflicts that mark African societies? Is it not time to admit that more regulation of the use of public resources and assets – for example, forests, minerals, water, and labour – could be more in the interest of the public good, rather than highly elitist, small groups that benefit from global free market operations? Is it not time to admit that the private sector, left to its own devices, has no inclination to act in the interest of the public good, and that the fundamental nature of organised civil society is focused on particular interests, rather than the public good. Following this logic, it could be argued that it is only the state that can in the final instance legitimately act in the interest of the public as a whole, for current and future generations.

So, the role of innovation is to provide new and alternative ways of addressing common and recurrent challenges. In addition to the very challenging and provocative point that I raised earlier, there is a need to further state that within the governance paradigm, which is itself multi-faceted, innovative systems and solutions do not appear in predictable forms. Currently, innovation is more commonly associated with research and development institutions, and business development units in the private sector, than it is with the public sector. Its role in driving competitive- ness and hence economic growth has received significant attention over the past years, with industrialising countries investing a proportion of GDP in R&D programmes (Bartzakos & Teubal, 2003).

The achievement of lasting peace and security in many nations across the world has been the result of long years of hardship and struggle, coupled with a strong capability to adapt and innovate in the presence of opposing and seemingly irreconcilable difference. William Zartman makes two fundamental observations on the nexus between Africa and governance. He asserts: “Africa is known as a continent of conflict” and then he proceeds to define governance as conflict management. “Governing a state is not only the prevention of violent conflict from destroying the country, it is the continual effort to handle the ordinary conflicts among groups and their demands which arise as society plays its role in the conduct of normal politics.” As organised interests or groups bring their demands to government, they necessarily conflict with others: either the demands themselves meet opposition from competing groups and demands, or, if they do not, the measures required to satisfy the demands conflict with competing resource allocations or programme orientations. Managing these conflicts is government’s job.”1

This view of governance coincides

National reconciliation and peace building

The pressure on our states is therefore to find more creative ways to address some of the seemingly intractable challenges of governance.
with the way the UN perceived the changing role of governance institutions to encompass the roles of ‘consensus-builder, mediator and negotiator’ (UN, 2000, ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.6, quoted in UNDR, 2001). It is particularly in respect of conflict management, national reconciliation and peace-building that Africa has been, in recent years, extremely active. South Africa’s remark- able case in the early 1990s of finding a negotiated settlement after protracted political struggle and conflict, and deep societal divisions, is an example that is respected internationally. Many coun- tries in Africa are currently attempting their own reconciliation processes, drawing on, amongst others, the experience of SA in this regard.

Policy innovation

Now requirements for stakeholder engagement and conciliation, improved accountability, and attention to natural resource depletion have resulted in innovative policy development across the world. The process through which policy itself is developed has evolved from a bureaucratic, academic driven process, to one which is centred around citizen and stakeholder consultation, negotiation and compromise. Generally, policies adopted by states today should be more successful in implementation, because of the work undertaken to develop them.

Clear cases of innovation exist: Western academics regard themselves to be on the cutting edge when they gener- ate thinking and agendas for ‘discurs- ive’ democratic practice. For example, policy-making and the whole issue of ‘community engagement’, which Africa has over centuries been practicing, has been referred to as so-called “palaver democracy”, in which talking and the exchange of thought is at the heart of democracy in Africa. In fact, Africa is reviving these traditional practices and adjusting such processes for modern democratic practice. These are seen as instrumental in advancing inclusive decision-making, strengthening the interface between government and the people, and providing opportunity for the demands of competing groups to be communicated to the “rulers” or govern- ment. An example of this in the SA context is the Izimbizo.

Service delivery systems innovation

In attempting to enable policy to be implemented in a more effective man- ner, the machinery of government has become increasingly creative in the manner in which it employs innovation in service delivery systems to ensure that services reach all citizens. This problem is most acute in large and populous developing countries, but equally we have seen our developed world counter- parts greatly improve service delivery through the use of creative systems. Single-window and one-stop service delivery facilities are good examples of the innovative overhaul of traditional systems in favour of citizen-focused streamlined systems. Last year, during an official visit by a South African dele- gation to our IBSA counterparts in the Indian provinces of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, we were greatly impressed by the work undertaken in improving citizen access to services, particularly for poor people.

Resourcing and partnership innovation

Inherent in the notion of innovation are the principles of partnership and shared risk. If government is to no longer do business as it has in the past, then this implies that its commercial and social partners should behave differently too. Innovative partnerships, both in the form of large-scale multi-million dollar public private partnerships which are used to finance infrastructure develop- ment, and local level community partners- ships, reflect the state engaging in the process of governance and service deliv- ery through a different set of arrange- ments. Substantial resources can be released, not only those related to finance, but also the use of physical resources and intellectual capital, through allowing innovative partners- ships to play a central role in governance processes.

Capacity development

One of the pervasive and ongoing chal- lenges faced by developing countries is that of human capacity development. At the Fifth Global Forum in Mexico, I spoke of the importance of human capi- tal to our social and economic growth and development (Fraser-Moleketi, 2003). As the UNDP reminds us, “Fundamental to enlarging human choices is building human capabilities.” (UNDP, 2002: 13)

Human capital is ‘the notion that knowledge and skills, derived from educa- tion, training and experience, repre- sent some of our most valuable resources’ (OECD, 2002). The applica- tion of the term ‘capital’ is indicative of a desire to better understand and quantify the real, economic contribution that individuals make to growth and devel- opment, through the productive applica- tion of their knowledge, skills and val- ues. Talent and competence, resolve and commitment become commodities that can be developed and traded in the interest of improved performance, greater productivity and what the OECD cites as the ‘well-being of nations’ (ibid). Innovation in the develop- ment of human capital has increas- ingly been used by countries around the world to develop amongst their citizens:

• An understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens
• An ability to produce value, either in fixed or self-employment
• A realisation of the growing competi- tiveness of the global economy and the need for individuals to improve their skills and hence marketability

Countries have creatively employed technology, mixed modes of delivery of learning materials, and alternative approaches to adult learning in an endeavour to build the intellectual capa- bility required for nations to compete.
Many of these innovative practices have evolved through experimentation and some by chance, rather than by direct design and investment. Unlike our contributions as states to innovation in the formal economy, we do not make comparable direct investment in building the capacity of our public sectors to actively innovate. If we value the contribution made by more creative and problem-solving behaviour, then the challenge remains to us as the leadership of a global public sector community to find ways of nurturing and developing such practices.

In conclusion, we need to consider that a number of contextual factors are likely to bring about the worst of the different governance arrangements in terms of the effect of creating a just and democratic society. Government innovation should be aimed at neutralising the negative and developing the positive, creating balance in the process. Amongst these factors are:

- Excessive informality as well as lack of transparency opens up decisions and the implementation thereof to be captured by self-interested (often corrupt) elites
- Excessive formality results in the stifling of innovation and the over-bureaucratization of processes that can be relatively simple
- Unmediated demand formulation, where processes are too open and unstructured with competing interests at play, results in conflict and invariably the outcomes favour the powerful and wealthy (minority) at the expense of the interests of the poor and disempowered, and the public good in general
- The poorly institutionalised capability to regulate the market and monitor economic transactions allows a veneer of state/government involvement to be presented as state endorsement and participation; in fact it might be well-placed individuals in the political and administrative realm that strike deals to benefit them either directly or indirectly

A general recognition is emerging that we have under-estimated the government capacity required in regulation, oversight and performance management and contract management in terms of the innovations introduced under the label of service delivery improvement or alternative service delivery (outsourcing, agentisation, extensive use of 3rd sector and the market – either as partners or formal contractual relations).

One of the most important areas for innovation in government (in Africa and elsewhere) that can impact on governance is the creation of a shared value and normative basis. In African countries where this did not take place, it was a matter of time before conflict erupted again. Any processes of value setting or norm-creation, including the setting of standards (good governance indicators), is a political process, although it is often presented as, or misunderstood as, purely technical. In terms of the governance discussion on the African continent this demands much more debate and consideration.
Convenient and appealing, the term ‘governance’ has become international, even though it eludes precise definition, and connotes various meanings in various governmental scenarios. In Japan, this catchword has received considerable public attention. A Tokyo publisher has brought out a very successful quarterly journal titled *Gabanansu* (governance), which carries articles relative to local government. Part of its popularity seems to lie in its eye-catching title: had the magazine been called *Local Government Management*, it probably would not have generated as many subscribers.

As this example shows, people find the term ‘governance’ beguiling, possibly because it carries a sense of going beyond seemingly worn-out systems of government. They utilise it perhaps without clearly understanding it. In this respect, governance is akin to the term democracy. Both appear to have a common global understanding, although neither offers a universal definition that transcends cultural and historical boundaries. Similarly, both words are normative and value-laden, carrying emotional appeal: in fact, calls for democracy have touched off revolutions and wars in the past. Similarly, governance has recently become a buzzword that represents one of the most important social prerequisites for improvement in many developing countries. At least, this view is held by such international funding organisations as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Unlike democracy, the definition of governance has not yet been tested through strenuous intellectual and empirical discourse. The word itself is
and residents alike would not care less government are limited, taxpayers, voters and minimal incentives. government because of the low wages personnel. Many would decide to leave find it difficult to retain experienced economies would likewise increasingly recruit gifted persons, developing Bank. In addition to being unable to the United Nations and the World tor or such international organisations as would look for work in the private sec- to work for government; instead, they Particularly in developing environ- the state of human resources. Even among industrialised countries, the same phenomenon is applicable to the state of human resources. Particularly in developing environ- ments, talented people would not choose to work for government; instead, they would look for work in the private sec- tor or such international organisations as the United Nations and the World Bank. In addition to being unable to recruit gifted persons, developing economies would likewise increasingly find it difficult to retain experienced personnel. Many would decide to leave government because of the low wages and minimal incentives. Although different resources in gov- ernment are limited, taxpayers, voters and residents alike would not care less about the issues. Regardless of the lack of government resources, the public would continue making diverse requests on government. The public’s demands of government would probably see no limit. Some people ask for a better wel- fare programme, while others request an improvement plan for the aged. Still others would like government to extend the public transportation system. All and all, many governments would be flooded with public demands for differ- ent services.

In this respect, Japan may be a case in point. In the coming decades, Japan expects to undergo a fundamental alter- ation in the structure of the population. The birth rate has declined continuous- ly over the last several decades. In 2003, mainly due to the social advancement of women, the average number of children born to a woman was 1.4, far below the 2.1 rate necessary to maintain the cur- rent population size by the year 2100. While the birth rate has been drop- ping, the rate of the aging population has been rising. Owing to the improve- ment and sophistication of medical technology, the average life expectancy in Japan has reached 76.6 years for males and 83 years for females. Consequently, by the year 2010, the aged population (those over 65 years) is expected to com- prise 25.8% of the total population, sur- passing many other industrialised nations.

From the perspective of public man- agement, the growth of the aging popu- lation has generated several important policy issues. Both central and local gov- ernments have found it difficult to keep pace with the greying population. Nursing homes and day care centres for the aged are in such high demand that governments are failing to cope.

The Japanese example makes clear that the gap between the availability of government resources and the growth of public demands would progressively expand. This discrepancy will most probably become universal. The chal- lenge, therefore, is that in these states, the governments must come up with new modes of social management to narrow the gap; otherwise social schism and unrest would certainly ensue. One of the ways to alleviate the esca- lating problem is to change the basic for- mat of government. In essence, decen- tralisation would perhaps develop to be an effective means to resolve the discrep- ancy. In many countries, centralisa- tion has been the hallmark of social management. Under this arrangement, the central government controls legal and financial resources, while it also commands local governments to carry out various national mandates. However, the problems these govern- ments face appear too enormous to maintain through the traditional pattern of central-local configuration.

In the case of Japan, the national legis- lature enacted a law promoting decen- tralisation which would begin in April 2000. The new modes of decentralisation: vertical and horizontal, both of which will eventual- ly contribute to the development of functional integration and policy coordi- nation among different levels of govern- ment in Japan. Decentralisation has become the hallmark of the country’s intergovernmental relationships. Under the new circumstances, reconfiguring Japanese government power suggests the eventual growth of two different modes of decentralisation: vertical and horizontal, both of which will eventual- ly contribute to the development of functional integration and policy coordi- nation among different levels of govern-
ing together toward common objectives. This consolidation is, in fact, the only way to mobilise meagre financial resources to alleviate the social issues many countries face in the coming decades.

Decentralisation has another dimension: a horizontal collaboration among local governments. Devolution of power will enable local government to work together and to coordinate policy among themselves in different areas, and thus provide freedom and independence for local units of government. They will make their own policy choices irrespective of the national government. This freedom of policy decision naturally carries with it increased accountability and fiscal obligation. For some localities, these liabilities will prove too immense to carry out alone; they will increasingly find that policy coordination among neighbouring local governments is necessary, and in fact imperative, for them to remain vital instruments in the public sector management of different countries.

These cases indicate that public management has reached an important crossroad in various nations. In many of these scenarios central government, while maintaining immense power, has tended to remain insensitive to the changing social environment. Consequently, government programmes are often too slow in responding to changing social needs and dynamics. The future of public management in various countries calls for the decentralisation of central power. With a decentralised form of government, public management will be able to meet the rising challenges of new issues and problems. Decentralisation will permit both central and local units of government to share functions and coordinate policies and programmes. A decentralised form of government, then, is the only solution for both the effective and efficient management of the public sector in the coming years.
Hands-on Local Government

Last year the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) undertook a comprehensive study on the capacity of local government to deliver services, which was followed by the development of a rescue plan called Project Consolidate (PC) for beleaguered municipalities. Dudley Moloi spoke to PC project manager Elroy Africa in the context of the recent explosions of unrest around local government service delivery challenges.

Dudley Moloi: What are the underlying causes to the recent spate of unrest in urban areas?

Elroy Africa: We were not surprised [by the unrest] because as government we undertook our own assessment and analysis of service delivery challenges and backlogs in the country. The exercise was a national profiling of all 284 municipalities that led us to the identification of 136 municipalities that needed specific focus by government. All these 136 have various challenges that are primarily related to service delivery and governance. We undertook a quick analysis of the 12 municipalities where the protests have been most visible and found that they all fall within the 136 municipalities identified through Project Consolidate. This reinforces our own assessment of municipalities with serious service delivery challenges that government is trying to respond to through Project Consolidate.

DM: Are there similarities between these protests and those of the 1980s?

EA: What is different is that the protests prior to 1994 were by and large legitimate protests. Those protests were aimed at an illegitimate government that was not responsive and not addressing the needs of our people. That fundamentally characterises the protests prior to 1994. On the other hand the post-1994 protests that you’re referring to are clearly [taking place in the context of the] legitimate government in place. What that means is that we have a government that by its very nature is responsive and trying to address the problems that people are facing on the
ground. What is also different is that this government has put in place mechanisms for people to participate in matters of government. [It is for this reason] that we find it very difficult to understand why people need to take to the streets because we have put in place formal structures for people to channel their grievances, their concerns and to work with government in tackling service delivery, corruption and governance challenges.

DM: The demographics of the protests as reflected in media reports indicate an active participation of young people. Is this telling us something about the needs of the country’s youth?

EA: I think the one point that needs to be made is that we do have unacceptable levels of unemployment within the youth category in the country. Many analysts and social commentators have tried to make comparisons with the young people prior to 1994 and the generation post 1994. I am not an expert on these matters, but clearly the generation prior to 1994 was a generation of young people who were experiencing the brunt of various exclusions during the apartheid regime daily. They were, for example, systematically denied access to jobs and educational institutions. Clearly, the youth were organised in different formations, which meant that their energy and anger was expressed and mobilised in a very organised manner.

Post 1994 one does seem to get the impression that there are sections of our young people who are still very socially conscious and concerned with social development issues. There are very good examples of these young people being organised in different kinds of formations, whether through political parties, community-based organisations, NGOs or Umsobomvu Trust projects. But at the same time one must also make a point that there are also other instances where there are examples of some youth not appreciating where we come from as a country. What this means is that they take many of the opportunities that come with the new dispensation for granted. They have a responsibility to defend, entrench [and] broaden these opportunities.

DM: A much-publicised response to the spate of unrest had been to send intelligence officers to investigate the possible...
existence of agitators. Do you think there was a basis for this kind of response?

EA: I am not the authority to respond on this but let me restate one or two things. One, there are different arms of government with different responsibilities for defending our democratic state and clearly the South African Police Services and security forces have their own responsibilities. I don’t think there can be any excuse - post 1994 - for people to burn down buildings and destroy infrastructure[s] and engage in acts of lawlessness.

DM: Is there an early warning system for such incidents?

EA: We have tried to assemble very important key baseline indicators that would indicate the health of the local government system. What we are trying to do as the national department, together with provinces, is that we are trying on a regular basis to get reports from municipalities and provinces that would indicate progress against those indicators. Whether that constitutes an early warning system is something that we can discuss. But we think that we are reaching a situation in which we are able to anticipate where there would be a serious challenge with regard to service delivery or governance. Also, the fact that we have identified 136 municipalities is itself a big early warning signal which says “Let us very carefully look at these 136 municipalities because if we don’t then we will begin to see the kinds of problems that we are seeing”.

DM: How different is PC from the urban renewal programme?

EA: The Urban Renewal Programme [URP] and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme [ISRDp] were initiated by government in 2000 and 2002. Eight urban renewal nodes and 13 rural development nodes were identified as part of the programme. What is common in all those developmental nodes is that they are characterised by extreme levels of poverty and underdevelopment. So the primary purpose of these two programmes was to channel government resources to begin to turn around and tackle those problems. On the other hand, when we announced Project Consolidate in October 2004, we said we are going to be focusing on these 136 municipalities across the country, which constitute just under 50% of the country’s municipalities. What is unique about Project Consolidate is that it cuts across urban and rural South Africa. But the most important defining feature about Project Consolidate, which makes it slightly different from those other two programmes, is that Project Consolidate tries to tackle the most pressing service delivery challenges by building the capacity and the capabilities of our officials and politicians at local government level in order for them to discharge their developmental obligations. Project Consolidate is an extraordinary initiative of government [for re-enforcing the] partnership between national, provincial and local government. It also provides an opportunity for government to work together in addressing the challenges faced by local government. At the end of the day Project Consolidate is a partnership across government [that aims] to tackle and resolve [the problems we have discussed] at local government level.

DM: What are the time frames and what you hope to see at the end of the project?

EA: We have put ourselves under pressure with Project Consolidate for very good reasons. Project Consolidate is a two-year support project. We hope these next two years we hope to see a visible and tangible change in the quality of life in these 136 municipalities. Project Consolidate tries to tackle the most pressing service delivery challenges by building the capacity and the capabilities of our officials and politicians at local government level in order for them to discharge their developmental obligations. Project Consolidate is an extraordinary initiative of government [for re-enforcing the] partnership between national, provincial and local government. It also provides an opportunity for government to work and reconnect with ordinary people. It is an important opportunity for people to participate in matters of local government.

DM: Is PC indicative of the diminishing role of local government?

EA: Absolutely not. Project Consolidate is not a pronouncement on the importance of one sphere of government in relation to another sphere of government. Project Consolidate is about the ability of the whole government – national and provincial – to tackle problems at local government level. It is fundamentally premised on the ability of national and provincial government to work together in addressing the challenges faced by local government. It is about building the functions of local government. At the end of the day Project Consolidate is a partnership across government [that aims] to tackle and resolve [the problems we have discussed] at local government level.
To some people here the confession I am about to make – that prior to accepting my current position as CEO at the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) I knew absolutely nothing about ICT – will be something of a dampener. As a matter of fact, when I went over to SA National Parks in July 1997, my knowledge of conservation was perhaps only marginally better than George W Bush’s knowledge of world affairs. I was unflatteringly referred to as an ‘alien species’ – had they been kinder they might have at least said ‘exotic species’. The kind IT people, for their part, affectionately referred to me as an outsider. This non-ICT background can be both a boon and a curse. A curse because, as one quickly finds out, people in this sector speak a peculiar language that sounds like English, to be sure, but one you must learn fast if you want to be part of the action. On the other hand, it can be good in that it affords one the detached appreciation of the quintessential value of ICT in modern life: in education, health, management, governance, the economy – you name it – it is so strategic that its understanding has necessarily to be transferred to ownership by every human who walks the streets of our urban areas and indeed the footpaths of the countryside.

Upon joining SITA I recall how some journalists came to ask me about my plans for the transformation of the organisation. They quickly turned to questions they considered fundamental to the lifeblood of the industry: What was my position on Open Source versus Proprietary Software; my view on mainframe versus distributed systems; my attitude towards Voice over IP, and so forth – things that I could not make sense of. In turn, I posed to the team questions that I considered important regarding the industry at large and how these would affect my anticipated role at the agency:

• Had government organisations attained the Return on Investment (ROI) that the ICT service providers and gurus had promised?
• Could they demonstrate that Information and Communication Technology was really core to radical improvement of government service delivery?
Is “e-government” fundamentally different and better than government as we know it?

• Can we definitively demonstrate to government decision-makers that investment in ICT radically improves organisational efficiency and effectiveness?
• Can we demonstrate to these decision-makers that investment in ICT does indeed improve citizen participation and engagement?
• Can we demonstrate that there exists a positive correlation between the country’s investment in ICT and the improvement in the standard of living of its citizens?

I have no doubt that most of you have grappled with these questions. But are the answers that crystal clear?

Failure of e-government projects

The very aggressive industry operatives I met upon my initiation told me about super-duper applications that could overnight revolutionise government service delivery. I was told, among many other things, that the cure to the ills of government service delivery was “e-government”. Whilst the experts informed me that e-government was the solution every department had to implement because it was changing governments world-wide, I read with a degree of apprehension a United Nations report titled: “E-government Readiness Assessment Survey 2003”. It stated that “while the benefits of e-government are in theory numerous, global experience indicated that they remain elusive in reality. Indeed, the failure rate of e-government projects has been estimated at somewhere between 60%-80%”. Another report published in the same year by iGovernment said, “Behind the hi-tech glamour of these [e-government] projects, though, lies a hard reality – the majority of projects are failures”. It goes further to say that in developing countries:
• 85% of the projects were total failures – the initiatives were never implemented or were implemented but immediately abandoned.
• 50% were partial failures – major goals for the initiatives were not attained and/or there were significant undesirable outcomes.

15% were successes – most stakeholder groups attained their major goals and did not experience significant undesirable outcomes.

The picture out there was after all not quite as rosy as I was being made to believe. What concerned me most was not the failure of e-government initiatives per se, but the fact that while solution providers were convinced that they had the solution for government, the results on the ground indicated quite the opposite! You must be wondering – is the CEO of an agency that is responsible for facilitating ICT in the South African government saying investments in IT are ill-informed and of questionable value? Well, not at all. I derived some comfort from another UN document: World Public Sector Report 200 titled: “E-government at the Cross Roads”. It concludes, after analysing e-government failures, that “with all the problems identified, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that if a public administration crosses the digital divide, it opens endless opportunities that are practically inaccessible by any other means. This is true for all public administrations in the world, regardless of the level of economic development, the level of human development and the social and cultural context that prevails in the country or community concerned.”

Why are most e-government initiatives failing? Why is it that so few succeed? From my observation, the success or failure of e-government projects relate to the following:
• Wasteful: it engages resources but does not result in optimising government operations.
•Pointless: even if it optimises government operations, it does not have (or has minimal) effect on the development objectives preferred by society.
• Meaningful: it optimises government operations AND ALSO supports human development; it equips people for genuine participation in the inclusive political process and supports values considered as essential for human development in the 21st century.
To be successful in government, the ICT solution must not only address hard measures like financial returns and efficiencies, it must equally address soft measures like political value, public value and social inclusion. A key problem with ICT solution providers is that they sometimes give the impression that implementing their proposed application will solve the government’s problems – be it poor service delivery or rooting out corruption. In most cases, implementing the solution is but a small part of solving the problem. The success of the project is highly dependent on business processes, organisational culture, competencies and the robustness of the ICT infrastructure.

Given the above, what is the justification for the existence of the State Information Technology Agency? Let us go briefly into history.

A brief history of SITA

In the mid-1990s, a Presidential Review Commission (PRC) was established and one of its briefs was to undertake a critical review of ICT and its application in government. This was a necessary step by the newly elected democratic government in setting its agenda for an efficient and relevant public service. The government accepted quite early in its tenure that service delivery can be best enhanced through the efficient use of ICT. The challenges identified by the commission and the government’s drive for citizen access under the Batho Pele initiative, and many others, in essence gave rise to the formation of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA). We must remind ourselves that the objectives of the State Information and Technology Agency are, amongst others, to integrate government’s ICT resources to improve service delivery, to remove or reduce duplication and to recruit and retain skilled professionals in ICT.

The guiding principles for the SITA mandate are encapsulated in what has come to be known as the IT House of Values. The three tenets that form the roof of the ‘house’ are: lowering of costs; increasing productivity; and enhancing citizen access. The five pillars of the ‘house’ are: leveraging economies of scale; enhancing interoperability; ensuring systems security; elimination of duplication; and black economic empowerment. The foundation of the ‘house’ is a robust Government IT Architecture (GITA).

The discussion of this critically important strategic question is often clouded by history, which is mostly poorly analysed, if at all, by the critics. Poor performance, high senior staff turnovers, acrimony over mandates, and so forth, tend to dominate the discourse. It would serve no useful purpose to reiterate those problems here. Suffice it to say that the reasons have been many and complex: some are inherent in the very constitution of the organisation, others emanate from fanciful management concepts and practices; and yet others are external. Many people may not be aware of the fact that:

• SITA hosts HR systems for most government employees and pays their salaries every month without fail.
• SITA hosts and runs some the most sophisticated logistics systems in the world, without fail.
• SITA hosts examination systems for matriculation examinations and ensures that the results are released on time every year without fail.
• In the past year SITA (together with National Treasury) reduced the cost of hosting the BAS government financial application by over R80m.

In the past year, together with the Department of Home Affairs, we connected most of the maternity hospitals to the DHA system to enable them to print birth certificates immediately after a child is born.

• In the past year we reduced the cost of Internet and WAN costs to government by over R15m.

I would like to do a brief review of some of the technology that currently enables public sector service delivery. Historically, transversal applications were hosted on a mainframe environment. Recognising the number of mainframes across government and the benefits of economies of scale that could be gained from consolidating these, a mainframe consolidation project was undertaken. This resulted in SITA hosting the largest IBM mainframe environment in the country. Presently, server consolidation exercises are being carried out in the provinces to establish server farms that will host all applications running on a distributed client-server architecture. Again, the economies of scale that will be achieved through this exercise are enormous.

Prior to 1995 a proliferation of wide area networks (WANs) existed in government – approximately 15 in 1998. This complicated the free and unrestricted flow of information between departments. The provision of security as required across these disparate networks was also a nightmare. Various unsuccessful attempts were made to resolve this dilemma. During 2000 SITA started a project known as the SITA Network Architecture Project. This project was aimed at designing a government network that would provide seamless access, support multimedia traffic and unified network man-
agement. This project was successfully concluded and the government common core network (GCCN) architecture finalised.

SITA then embarked upon the rollout of the connectivity infrastructure, the GCCN, with a target date of mid-2002 for the first phase. This multi-media, Virtual Private Network (VPN)-enabled network was to add a new dimension to government networking with the creation of new services for all government departments. The project was successfully completed in December 2002. The next phase was to migrate all departments to the GCCN and to start the process of creating virtual private networks (VPNs) for each department. The prerequisite for deploying VPNs was, therefore, a clear definition of the department's requirements in terms of the said security, management and throughput policies. This was to ensure a customised solution for each department and to minimise disruption of services during migration. It would appear that due to the scale and complexity of the GCCN, the process of defining and rolling out VPNs for departments has been hamstrung by a number of problems. Acceptance and general understanding of the technology has been slow, even though the technology itself is STB a world-class. A solution has to be found for this.

Electronic Government (e-government)

The e-government concept has a special meaning within the South African context. The SA government mandate, based on the People's Contract, espouses certain dictates that have in turn led to the Batho Pele Programme and various others. The e-government concept is thus the cornerstone of these programmes within the South African context. The tenets of the Batho Pele philosophy are:

- Citizen access to government from anywhere, anytime
- Enhancing productivity and efficiency in service delivery

- Reduction of costs of service delivery to ensure equal and equitable distribution of services and resources
- These principles would all be in vain without a sound e-government platform. We also need clarity of purpose, for example, on how ICT will assist the implementation of the Government's Integrated Development Programme for Local Government. Are we aware of the fact that, by and large, citizen access to government services will be at the Local Government Level? The disparity between municipalities in terms of ICT enablement is cause for concern within SITA. A strategy to develop a transversal application for municipalities must be placed firmly on the government ICT agenda.

SITA's Strategic Direction

Strategy means focus, and focus means getting good at a few things! This is the underlying principle of SITA's long-term strategy. After six years of operation we have no option but to endeavour to build a world-class operation. The driver of this strategy will be the IT House of Values. Underpinning this strategy will be a strong partnership model in which SITA has to get good at working with industry partners. This starts with the recognition and acceptance that SITA cannot and should not try to do it all. A few strategic partnerships are in place already, chosen on the basis of key competencies of the partners. The SITA/Telkom partnership is a case in point.

Telkom is the premier provider of telecommunications infrastructure services in the country. In this regard Telkom has built a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field of telecommunications. The SITA/Telkom relationship was thus a logical consequence of SITA's quest to provide government with the best telecommunications solutions at the best possible price. But more than that, the relationship allows SITA to call on Telkom to assist in providing connectivity solutions to departments where SITA is constrained to do so, and

where Telkom has the capacity. An example is the recent agreement between the Department of Justice (DoJ), Telkom and SITA, whereby Telkom is providing a VPN to DoJ. This was occasioned by DoJ's unique needs that could not be met by SITA in the immediate term.

As the SITA Convergence Strategy starts to take shape, a unified partnership model will be presented to all stakeholders including industry to ensure that government gets state-of-the-art technology solutions cost-effectively.

The few examples outlined in this article show how ICT can actually be used to benefit not just government but also the ordinary citizen. Key questions would be: were these achievements realised cost-effectively, and what were the benchmarks? Were they achieved efficiently and in a timely fashion? If they were not, why was this? If they were, what accounted for the successes? The truth is that no informed debate has taken place as it must, given ICT sector dynamics.

A key paradigm shift worthy of consideration for successful e-government may be to move away from centralised control to centralised co-ordination. It would be futile for SITA to endeavour to develop and retain skills that span the length, breadth and depth of the ICT industry. The focus must therefore be on selected key competencies relevant to public sector ICT needs. SITA should help stimulate growth of the ICT industry in South Africa and possibly play a facilitation role vis-à-vis the provision of ICT services to government.

The question of financing its operations arises and must be adequately addressed. Government ICT Agencies in the world fall evenly on a continuum that ranges from a pure agency role to that of Service Provider. SITA present-

ly leans more towards a service provider role in this continuum. While I do not believe that we should be exclusively agency-oriented in our operations, the position we currently occupy in this continuum deserves critical re-examination.
A swarm of people is buzzing about, waiting to have a minute or two of Vusumuzi Magagula’s tight schedule. Magagula’s Personal Assistant (PA) apologises profusely for the fact that a large chunk of my appointment time with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) had been gobbled. People invariably go beyond their allocated quota of Magagula’s time, explains the PA, which messes up the whole schedule. Taking the PA’s hint, it meant that I had about thirty minutes, which I considered to be better than nothing. A week before this particular interview (which was set up for me in absentia) I’d been forced to reschedule an appointment with the CIO.

The truth is I wasn’t prepared. I was arriving from elsewhere the night before our scheduled appointment at the almost hermitic SITA location in Erasmuskloof (know where that is?) – on the far eastern fringes of Pretoria. And naturally, there’s nothing as annoying to busy people like Magagula as to be held captive by a waffling ignoramus at the crack of an 8:30am winter dawn.

Motivated by the fear of being drowned in techno-speak, or worse, wasting the CIO’s time and mine, I burrowed into the labyrinth of the digital age. It’s a fascinating world of MOOs, MUDS, PALs, widespread poverty, digital inequalities and e-service delivery. Having emerged from the world hidden in the guts of the CDU – that’s a computer screen for you – was I now ready for an intelligent chat with SITA’s award-winning CIO?

Separated by over four hundred kilometres from his native Hammersdale Township, in the KwaZulu-Natal province, Magagula, in his office, immediately strikes one as smart, ambitious and a business-all-the-way kind of per-
son. It’s probably the combined effect of the luxurious office milieu and Hugo Boss persona - young, well-heeled and professional. Almost like a dot.com tycoon.

From the preliminary, biographical or the getting-to-know-the-person kinds of questions, the story of Magagula’s rise to his current stature in the ICT industry has a familiar ring. It’s about deferred dreams, accidental career choices and making the best of available opportunities.

The SITA CIO’s round about road to the world of ICT began at Tsand Technical High School, KZN, where he studied electronics and electrical engineering among other matriculation subjects. The tight money situation resulted in the readjustment of career goals from electrical engineering to a three-year diploma in computer sciences. Since then, says Magagula opaquely, “one thing led to another”. But behind the CIO’s regular use of “one thing led to another” phrase are details of his dogged zigzagging to the point of being recognised as Public Sector CIO of the Year last year.

The journey ranges from stints in menial private sector jobs, computer school lectureships and various public service institutions over the past eight years. At this instant in the interview – when we get to talk about the meaty stuff, that is, the MOOs, the MUDS, the PALs and being digital – it’s Magagula the teacher who emerges. And it turns out that all my cramming of computer lingo went a bit over the top – hahaha! – as most of the stuff I quickly learnt in preparation for the interview was not immediately helpful.

Far from my fantastic constructs of a CIO as a kind of person who wears thick prescription glasses, torn jeans and has a reclusive personality that prefers communion with the virtual than the corporeal, a real CIO – Magagula for instance – works in the all-too-real world while having to find solutions to the all-too-real challenges of public service delivery.

The basic tenets of the job, he says, are the ability to provide a strategic vision, being business and customer-minded, and possessing adequate technical background to be able to pinpoint technical solutions to service delivery challenges. “The job is far from just being about computers, it is about managing information and the people who generate or interface with it,” he explains.

In fact the world behind the CDUs or inside the guts of the network is probably much easier to deal with. It doesn’t answer back and doesn’t fear change or the unknown. In contrast the day-to-day work of the Chief Information Officer (in the context of SITA as the custodian of government ICT infrastructure) is largely about dealing with behavioural issues.

SITA employs 2 500 people, who in one way or another directly impact on the work or the interests of over a million public servants, across 39 departments, excluding dozens of public entities, who in turn have the Welfare of the country’s 4.5 million citizens to consider. Then there’s the regulatory environment, which sometimes strangles the capacity to deliver services or dampen the spirit of innovation due to unnecessary red tape.

CIOs walk a tightrope, says Magagula, who describes government processes as being “notorious” for their rigidity. He also defends the necessity for controls and insists that the Public Sector CIO of the Year Award is about recognising innovations not the wanton breaking of rules. “Let’s say public works has two trucks,” the SITA CIO tells an illustrative anecdote, “and one of the trucks completely breaks down save for the gearbox, while the second truck breaks down only because of a gearbox problems. Policy says assets are not transferable. In other words you can’t take the gearbox from the first truck so that the department can continue with its work. This sort of policy doesn’t make sense, which is why a way around it has to be found but without sliding into abuse.”

The anecdote captures the complexities of the SITA mandate and the work of its CIO and the quest towards achieving a public service wide ICT architecture that would allow government entities to “talk to each other”.

“A single public service network is like our roads system,” explains Magagula the teacher. Like our physical roads, the electronic road network of the information superhighway carries many benefits that often coexist with potential hazards that have to be continually managed, concludes the SITA CIO. •
We all often have the challenge of persuading our colleagues and superiors that our proposals are good ones. In other words, we need to put forward convincing business cases. In the course of its work the Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) Work Group of the Government IT Officers Council developed a framework for the KIM business case. If you leave out the specific detail, it becomes generic and can be used for business cases in other disciplines too, thus the idea to share the framework with Service Delivery Review readers.

Since its first draft the framework has evolved markedly, but can probably be improved even further. What would be useful now would be for readers to come up with suggestions for further enhancements. Please feel free to submit such inputs to the author or the Editor.

The framework suggests that the main issues to be addressed in stating a business case are:

- What value will the proposed venture yield?
- What action is required for development and implementation?
- What capacity is needed to carry out the actions?
- Does the necessary support exist or can it be generated?
- What obstacles have to be removed to ensure success of the venture?

Value

Types of value

Decision-makers will usually expect a new venture to make economic sense, but in the public service addressing certain other needs can be equally if not more important. Value could flow from gains in the economic, social, political or environmental spheres. A useful checklist of the types of value that could flow from a venture is the list of ten Es.

- Escalation: The venture will enable increased output in terms of quality and/or quantity.
Measuring value

One’s case is stronger if one can indicate up front how performance will be measured. Aspects that should be considered include measurement of:

- inputs, processes and outputs
- performance against targets, own past performance or performance of others
- satisfaction of clients, principals, owners and participants in the processes

Action

Decision-makers need to be quite clear on what everybody will be expected to do. There needs to be a set of action steps laid out that answers the traditional “w” questions of what needs to be done, who will be doing it, when must it be done. If this description is not explicit enough, add detail on why and how. Also make clear how and by whom it will be decided that each action step has been successfully completed.

Capacity

People often overlook some of the many facets of capacity. Capacity that must exist — or that it will be possible to create — should include the necessary funding stream(s), able and willing human resources, equipment, raw materials and other physical facilities, knowledge and information, organisation structures, regulatory frameworks, fully functioning processes. The last item is often a factor that is sometimes neglected. Although capacity may exist on paper, one may find that, when actually trying to utilise it, unforeseen problems crop up that prevent the process from actually being carried out in practice. Capacity cannot be said to exist before it has actually been shown to function in practice.

Support

Clients

One needs support from several quarters to ensure success. Most important may be the clients. They often have freedom of choice and may choose not to support the new venture. Sometimes they may not have a choice, will be forced to “support the venture” but will do so with little enthusiasm, blowing up out of proportion anything that may go wrong. Some indication of support must be obtained before the venture starts.

Management

No venture can thrive without management support. A quality business case can secure the support of those managers who study it in depth and are involved in approving the venture. The support of other key managers must also be ensured, for example managers of support functions (like say supply chain management) who can play a role in making or breaking the venture.

Staff allocated to the venture

Prerequisites for the desired staff performance include:

- buy-in into a shared vision
- appropriate skills
- positive attitude
- personal aspirations
- incentives/ disincentives. The importance of a change management strate-
gy for ensuring that these prerequisites are met cannot be overemphasised.

Change management
Change management may be required to ensure that changes resulting from the new venture are accepted and dealt with competently. Neglecting this can put a new venture at risk. Two models are useful to heed.

Drivers of behaviour. Ultimately each individual’s behaviour is the result of his or her perception of reality. Each one of us only observes part of reality. Based on this partial observation we form certain perceptions of reality, which lead to our beliefs. From that we deduce a value system which in turn influences our attitudes towards various things in life. The first driver of our behaviour is therefore the structure of beliefs, values and attitudes that we have built up.

The second driver is the skills acquired, which enables you to do some things and prevents from doing others. For example, you may have a positive attitude towards physical exercise, believing that it is good for your health, but you never learned to swim. So you don’t swim.

The third driver is the information available, which helps one to decide on appropriate behaviour. For example, you have a positive attitude towards physical exercise, you have learnt to swim, but you have information that there are crocodiles in the river. So you don’t swim in the river.

A change management strategy should ensure that those affected have suitable perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, skills and information to play their part during and after the change.

ii) Phases of change.
Change managers must be able to take stakeholders through a series of phases, starting from total ignorance of what is to come, through understanding, acceptance and co-operation to total internalisation of the changed circumstances and behaviour. Starting from a condition of ignorance, the first phase is to seek contact with the stakeholders.

Then follows the creation of awareness, understanding, converted to positive attitude. Then comes the building of commitment by testing the new dispensation and then accepting it. A phase of adjustment and customisation that leads to full implementation may follow. The last phase sees the change being institutionalised and internalised, ending in a situation where it becomes part of subconscious behaviour.

Obstacles
No new venture will be without them. Before starting out with the venture, try to identify them and decide how to deal with them. Split them into categories: Those that have to be removed before the venture can start, those that can be removed during the development stages of the venture, and those that cannot be removed. If an obstacle cannot be removed one can either circumvent it by changing the modus operandi, or one may simply accept that it may delay the success of the venture. In the last instance the venture could still go ahead if one can show that there will still be sufficient positive results despite the negative impact of the obstacles. For example, some food cannot be eaten raw, but has to be cooked. You know that some of the vitamins will be destroyed by cooking it, yet you go ahead anyway, knowing that some nutrients will survive, making the process worthwhile.

Having read this, you may want to try two things. Use this framework to develop your strategy for a new venture that you may be involved in. Otherwise think back on past ventures. See if the framework helps you to understand why they were not totally successful because some elements in the framework were not addressed. In the case of successful ventures, you may be able to understand a little better why they did in fact succeed.
The Minister of Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, has the mandate for the governance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in government as outlined in the Public Service Act and subsequent regulations. During the Minister’s tenure important milestones in the evolution of ICT in the Public Sector have been achieved. The State IT Agency (SITA) was established in 1999 with the Minister as sole shareholder and the Government Information Technology Officers Council (GITOC), consisting of departmental and provincial CIOs, has been active since 2001.

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) was also set up within DPSA to provide e-government leadership and coordination and to assist the Minister in fulfilling her mandate to ensure that government technology systems are effective, efficient, inter-operable and secure and that the Public Service Act and Public Service Regulations are adhered to.

Overlapping Mandates of Government Departments

Government departments have overlapping mandates with regard to ICT, electronic government (e-government) and information management within the respective legislative frameworks governing each department.

The Minister of Public Service and Administration’s specific mandate is ICT within the civil service, which also encompasses e-government as the further automation of manual processes and the improvement of service delivery through the vertical and horizontal integration of electronic systems. E-government provides a single view of government to the citizen and it enables public servants to effectively adapt to the use of ICT as part of their daily work.

To this end, DPSA has introduced a phased implementation approach to e-government, which is taking place in five phases in line with international best practice. The implementation of these phases will take into consideration
all existing and ongoing initiatives within government.

**E-Government Defined**

There are many definitions for e-government, but for the purposes of our mandate at DPSA, we will describe e-government as “a programme of controlled adaptation to the advanced use of technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness of government’s internal processes in order to render services to citizens in the best possible manner”. This is done in alignment with the government’s developmental agenda.

**E-Government Phases briefly outlined**

The first phase includes the “Batho Pele” Gateway Portal that was launched in August 2004. This informational phase involves the clustering of services provided by government into life events from cradle to grave and is accessible on the Gateway portal (www.gov.za). This information includes: where one can obtain a service such as a birth certificate; what documents are required when applying for a particular service; the procedure when applying for a service; the nearest office to the citizen; the cost of the service, etc. This portal will also carry the necessary forms that citizens are required to fill in before visiting a particular government office. Hopefully this will assist in reducing queues in government offices, as citizens will carry the right information and documents before going to a government office for service. The Batho Pele Gateway has a call centre linked to it as well, available via the toll free number 1020.

All e-government initiatives developed in the South African context should be underpinned by the principles of ensuring that citizens have access at their convenience. This includes accessing information in a language that will be understood by all, including those who cannot read. This will ensure that citizens can easily communicate with government, thus improving government’s service delivery offerings. To this end, all information on the Gateway Portal will be available at the click of a button in all 11 official languages. Preliminary tests have shown that people can save as much as 50% of their time when accessing service information via the portal compared to conventional means.

The second phase, currently undergoing planning, will extend Phase 1 and offer current and new services electronically to citizens and businesses similar to the offerings of SARS – such as e-filing and mytax.com. Citizens will be properly identified and authenticated and thus will be able to transact online in a secure manner.

This phase will have many parallel projects, including those concerned with service offerings as well as those projects concerned with ensuring that the “behind the scene” business processes of government are being transformed or reengineered to ensure the seamless “look and feel” interactions expected by citizens.

Phase three will probably involve the clustering of related services irrespective of which government department is offering that particular service. By this stage, clear data and information requirements of departments would have been mapped out as a result of
activities undergone in the preceding phase. This includes the management of the collection of citizen data.

**Phase four** will increasingly enable e-government to build relationships directly with citizens through a proactive and informative relationship by reminding them of important deadlines or other information – for example, when a citizen has reached the age at which they can vote and have to register. In this way, the citizen will be serviced by a proactive and supportive government.

**Phase five** is envisaged as the maintenance phase of e-government. This phase will involve a continuous organisational transformation as the needs of government and citizens dictate. These will also be controlled by the latest technological innovations.

The above-mentioned phases will not necessarily be happening in a serial or linear manner but will in many cases overlap or run concurrently over a period of time.

**The Consultative Process**

The OGCIO has begun an extensive government-wide consultative process, beginning with an internal workshop with DPSA in May 2005. It will be fanning out, with the next consultation being with government departments that are developing considerable e-government transversal projects as well as those with specific mandates for service delivery. The National Treasury, Department of Provincial and Local Government, Home Affairs, Social Development, Communications, Health and GCIS, amongst others, will partner with DPSA, through the OGCIO, to ensure the success of e-government.

This consultative process will bring together all stakeholders within government to establish the way forward. This will ensure institutional support for the achievement of government’s policies for electronic government.

The process will be ongoing but will require consensus on issues at various points. To this end, all stakeholders will have to work together on an ICT governance model that will guide e-government.

**Conclusion**

There is a tendency to proselytise e-government as the solution to all business process ills of government. E-government supports the work of government in tandem with all other government initiatives that will improve the quality of life of all citizens and ensure the accountability of civil servants - such as those of Batho Pele and the Service Delivery Improvement interventions by DPSA, which are in not dependent on technology.

E-government is simply helping to prepare government for the 21st century. It will help government to deliver more efficient and effective services to its citizens through technology-based solutions and improved business processes.
In post-war and conflict societies, there is always a precedence of the state assuming a central role in bringing about development. It usually derives its mandate through a democratic process, thus making it credible and legitimate. It would then use the massive resources and machinery to change the social and economic landscape of society. However, there exists no model of development where the state alone, using its machinery of government, has dealt with all problems of society. Democratic governments must work with a range of organisations and institutions in society to effect societal change.

The case for a developmental-oriented state

In essence, the goal was to bridge the social and economic divide using the resources, influence and apparatus of the state. But the RDP itself identified not only government, but a whole range of other actors that would need to be mobilised to participate in the development process.

Throughout the world, the role of the state in development has been widely acknowledged. For the state to successfully implement its development programmes, it needs another ingredient - a corporatist state model. This model is premised on the consensual approach to issues of public policy. The corporatist state model is based on strong interventionist state, but of critical importance is that it is a state that is characterised by a reciprocal relationship between government, business, and organised interest groups in society. The model is also based on the economic imperative of guaranteed high levels of employment, investment, accumulation and citizen consumption. This is the kind of
The notion of a South African developmental state, at least practically, is not new. It has its origins far back. The challenges

The huge inherited development backlogs are well known. In essence, it is an economically and opportunity-skewed society, and even today that legacy is still manifest. The one visible aspect of this is the social development one, where income opportunities are scarce, resulting in social pressures, both to the state and society at large, and leading to social ills, breakdown of social structures, and crime, etc.

The second one is the labour market phenomenon where the majority of people are under-skilled and cannot easily be absorbed by the labour market. This can be attributed to an inadequate further education system, and lack of investment in science and technology, amongst many other things.

The third legacy is that of huge under-investment in small enterprise development – we have a thin slice of organic entrepreneurs, and over the last ten years a plethora of institutions that have been created have failed emerging small business people. Slightly related to this is the fourth legacy – that of state institutions that do not have the requisite capabilities - skills, modern infrastructure, and appropriate systems to respond to the diverse and increasingly sophisticated needs of the public.

How do we create a public service corps with organic skills and exposure in hard-core development facilitation and linking communities with a range of development opportunities and possibilities that exist in government and other organisations? How do we create a public service that is made of what Michael Lipsky, in his study of economic development efforts in Oakland in the US, calls the 'street-level' bureaucrats? Can and should public servants be involved in small business development support when they have had no exposure to business development and economic development issues themselves? What kind of advice and brokerage can they provide?

If a developmental approach can attend to these challenges, then that will be effective. They are key to development. But experience at home and internationally tell us that the state alone cannot address these challenges. It needs to forge partnerships to leverage skills, resources, energy and other related capacities. We have to move away from the proposition that the state alone can centrally plan and then implement strategies that will bring development. Development should be a partnership between the state, the market and civil society. Such partnerships must harness the energies and creative abilities of individuals, communities, businesses and state organisations in a common cause.

Towards a partnership approach: types and kinds

Business-government partnerships

These are very fundamental to a country that is a developing economy like South Africa (save for the middle-ranking accorded by the IMF and World Bank). South Africa is a developing country where there are still major gaps in technical skills, labour market penetration and absorption, where the social pressures require some decisive business and enterprise development interventions, and where there is a huge backlog in physical and logistical infrastructure that should get the economy moving and build beneficial inter-linkages between social and economic development.

Fortunately these partnerships are happening, and in some cases the state has taken the lead, with the private sector giving backing. One of the challenges facing the state will be how to build incentives for business to do more, especially where the private sector supports a high-impact outcome. However, this should not be at the expense of the social responsibilities of the state and also the economic imperatives of the existence of business. It is indeed a difficult balance to strike, and even developed countries are struggling to fine-tune.

Major partnerships such the Business Trust, Business Against Crime, National Business Initiative, the R42 billion partnerships between department of housing and banks, and partnerships in research and development, to name just a few, are very encouraging and have yielded huge results and outcomes. However, stronger regionally-based partnerships rooted in the social and economic realities of specific communities are very important, and this remains
and trustful ways of organising these initiatives are taking place in society. Some of these initiatives – giving and opening space for people themselves to express their voices and make choices – giving and opening space for people themselves to express their voices and make choices. Some of these initiatives are taking place in society. However, there is a dearth of structured and trustful ways of organising these partnerships – resulting in some of the potentially strong partnerships collapsing. Again, the role of the state, as a legitimate and credible force, is critical, as an integrator, facilitator and broker between the resources of government and the energy and capacity of civil society, and their ability to reach out.

Critical reflection: going ahead

Governments, development-oriented as they may be, or strive to be, do not have the capacity and resources to address all development challenges, hence the need to leverage other resources and forces in society. There are obviously challenges in this regard – sometimes the state would normally not want to let go because of its resistance and unwillingness to share power and responsibilities with other partners, and at times compounded by lack of generic and technical capacity required in a particular partnership project. Similarly, local organisations and groups and private sector organisations tend to be very inward-looking to the point of finding it hard to resist becoming cooperative, because they have all along tended to confine themselves to local and sectional interests.

Good partnerships are based on a strong, genuine commitment to let go, integrate, cooperate and work together. Fundamental to the success of any partnership project is a shared development goal. They need to be managed well and based on commonality of purpose and goal. More often than not, this is the case, and the challenge is the extent to which each partner is willing to go beyond the narrow sectional confines and interests and take a holistic view. As Putnam puts it: ‘where people know one another, interact with one another each week, ... and trust one another to behave honourably, they have a moral foundation upon to base further cooperative enterprises.’ There should not be any ‘trust deficit.’

Often partnerships fail because there is lack of clarity in the mandate, scope and coverage. Linked to this is the need to have clearly designed and detailed implementation processes, steps and parameters. Partnerships are desired to achieve a developmental goal, and therefore good partnerships should identify areas of leverage for each partner – knowledge, resources, capital, skills, experimentation and innovative capabilities.

Full and meaningful participation of all partners at all the stages of the development process is profoundly critical as well.

Good governance is about society achieving a common end. It is also about sharing the risks – government taking the political and social risk, the private sector the financial risk, and civil society sharing the risk to experiment and test. Both in the pre-1994 era and post-apartheid period there have been lots of partnerships, and the trajectory now is even more rigorous and purposeful and structured relations between government and private sector and civil society, with the former taking an even more prominent role as the state grapples with issues of job creation, skills development and investment in infrastructure.

Conclusion

Partnerships are not the only panacea. Development players will continue to act according to their own terms. Therefore, they have to have clearly designed and detailed implementation processes, steps and parameters. Partnerships are desired to achieve a developmental goal, and therefore good partnerships should identify areas of leverage for each partner – knowledge, resources, capital, skills, experimentation and innovative capabilities. Partnerships are not the only panacea. Development players will continue to act according to their own terms. Therefore, they have to have clearly designed and detailed implementation processes, steps and parameters. Partnerships are desired to achieve a developmental goal, and therefore good partnerships should identify areas of leverage for each partner – knowledge, resources, capital, skills, experimentation and innovative capabilities. Partnerships are not the only panacea. Development players will continue to act according to their own terms. Therefore, they have to have clearly designed and detailed implementation processes, steps and parameters. Partnerships are desired to achieve a developmental goal, and therefore good partnerships should identify areas of leverage for each partner – knowledge, resources, capital, skills, experimentation and innovative capabilities.
Over the past seven years, the idea of public-private partnerships (PPPs) has become accepted by the South African government as an important way of improving the delivery of public services. Already, seven large partnership agreements have been concluded (from May 2000 to June 2003) between national and provincial governments on the one hand and private sector companies or consortia1 on the other. Another 41 agreements, including agreements to build schools through PPPs, were in the process of negotiation as at June 2003. The National Treasury has established a special Unit to promote PPPs and assist other structures of government to implement them (DOF, 2000a:12-13). The PPP Unit, according to an article in the Financial Mail (9 May 2003, p 34) is staffed by treasury officials and World Bank advisers and uses mainly large consulting companies.

Concluded agreements are in the area of fleet management, toll roads, information systems and hospitals3. Those PPP projects still being negotiated include new head offices for several national government departments in Pretoria; fleet management and airports in the Eastern Cape; schools and hospitals in the Free State; the Gautrain Rapid Rail project in Gauteng; the Dube Trade Port in KwaZulu-Natal; schools in Mpumalanga; the Mafikeng Airport in the North West and hospital projects in the Western Cape4. In addition to these, municipal PPPs have also been concluded and the Treasury continues to encourage them.

Apart from some opposition to specific projects by the labour movement – particularly concerning water supply and other municipally-based projects – the whole issue of PPPs has been rather uncontroversial in South Africa. Indeed it has hardly been the subject of public debate at all. This is in stark contrast to the situation in some other countries. In the UK, for example, a union-sponsored motion calling on the government to review the Private Finance Initiative (PFI, the term used for PPPs to develop...
public infrastructure) was passed at last year’s Labour Party conference over the opposition of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer after extensive debate in the mass media5.

**PPPs for schools infrastructure**

Although the South African government has adopted a favourable attitude towards PPPs, it is only recently that there has been an attempt to apply PPPs to overcome the huge backlogs in schooling infrastructure. Over the past year, however, two provinces, the Free State and Mpumalanga, have decided to look at this possibility6. While there may be benefits to going the PPP route in order to tackle our dire shortage of infrastructure, there are also some possible pitfalls that need to be taken into account. This article argues that, while PPPs may prove to be a useful weapon in the armoury of provincial education departments tackling the enormous shortage of quality school buildings, they will not be unproblematic and certain aspects need to examined very carefully before embarking on a PPP.

How would a PPP to develop schools infrastructure work? If, as is likely, a schools PPP were to follow a model similar to the British one, the relevant education authority (in the SA case, a provincial education department) would call for tenders from private businesses to construct (or substantially refurbish) a number of schools. Private companies which want to bid would form consortia, each typically consisting of a bank, a construction company, a facilities management company, and possibly an information technology company if the contract required IT capacity to be installed in the school. The contractor (i.e. the private ‘partner’) would normally be required to build a number of schools or substantially refurbish existing schools, to provide the schools with all the necessary furniture and equipment (e.g. computers, laboratory equipment, etc.), to manage and maintain all the property and possibly provide additional services for a period of 25 or 30 years. The exact terms of an agreement could vary from project to project. The contractor would receive no money upfront and would be paid in instalments over the life of the project, starting when the school is ready for use7.

**Some Benefits**

There are a number of benefits that government could derive from PPPs. Because the private contractors are responsible for maintenance, they are more likely to be careful in the design and building process than a traditional contractor who would hand over a building to the public sector and have no further responsibility for the quality of its work. This is more likely to result in better quality buildings. If a government department is not confident of its capacity to build or refurbish the schools rapidly through normal, bureaucratic procurement procedures, the PPP could conceivably be a way of getting the job done faster. An additional advantage to an education department is that no money would be paid over to the contractor until the school is functioning. The latter would provide the funding which may not be available in the education budget at a particular time. This however does not mean that government miraculously gets resources free of charge. It must still pay for the capital costs in much the same way that it would repay a loan and also pay for the ongoing maintenance costs for a period of up to three decades – or possibly longer. Indeed one of the main differences between PPP finance and loan finance is that the former would have a built-in outsourcing of maintenance for the period of the agreement, the latter, however, would only involve the repayment of the loan while maintenance would be done by the department – or outsourced in a separate deal if the department so wished.

If the British experience is anything to
go by, another feature of PPPs that national and provincial finance officials may find attractive is that, unlike loans, they do not appear in the government accounts as liabilities. This may make them more likely to encourage education departments to use this type of financing. This has prompted the Economist in the UK to suggest that ‘the principal virtue (of the Private Finance Initiative) to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, as to their Conservative predecessors, is that it hides the true cost of public-sector spending programmes.’

Risk transfer

The South African Treasury insists that in all PPPs there should be significant risk transferred to the private sector. Although it depends on details of a particular contract, in a schools PPP there would probably be some risk transferred such as the possibility of building-design flaws or poor quality IT equipment requiring high maintenance costs. Late handover of schools due to, say, bad weather or other building delays, could be also transferred to the contractor who would need to pay penalties for late delivery. Once a school is built the risk of vandalism, a big problem for many South African schools, could also be passed on to the contractor.

But these cannot really be regarded as considerable in the case of building and maintaining schools. Noel Thompson, a former senior official in the Department of Education and Employment, writes that, ‘Whilst it is easy to see a significant risk being transferred to the public for the private sector in PFI schemes involving large, complex and innovative projects of civil engineering, there is precious little risk transfer in projects designed to inject capital for routine building and improvement projects for schools’ (Thompson, 2000:54). In addition, the normal commercial risks of the purchaser not being able to pay for the services rendered by the contractor are minimal with a government contract.

One of the most significant risks facing education departments that build new schools in South Africa is the possibility that demographic shifts will lead to schools not having enough learners to make them viable. Since the departments and not the private contractors are the ones that are likely to decide on the location of schools, it seems unlikely that this risk would be taken on by the contractors. So if a school is forced to close down as a result of a shortage of learners, the government will most likely end up paying for an asset it is no longer using, including the cost of unneeded maintenance, unless the contract makes specific provision for the termination of the agreement in such circumstances.

Risk transfer from the public to the private sectors in the case of a schools PPP may thus not be particularly great. There is one way in which risk to government is actually increased by PPPs. Once the contract is in place and the contracting consortium has built the facilities and is managing them, it is very difficult to get a separate contractor to do the additional work required. The need for two competing contractors to share information (e.g. about electricity and plumbing installations), the inconvenience of having two facilities managers in a single school and the possibility of conflicts between them is likely to make departments and schools very reluctant to get a new contractor after a PPP project has begun, even if the prices quoted by the initial contractor for additional work are considered excessively high. The private contractor would thus become virtually a monopoly supplier for a period of 25-30 years – with consequent cost implications for government.

PPPs and the work of the school

An argument in favour of PPPs which is often made in the UK (and likely to be made here) is that they allow professional – i.e. school principals, teachers and department heads to focus their energies on their core tasks – i.e. overseeing the education process in their schools – rather than being concerned with issues of maintenance, keeping the hardware and software up to date, replacing broken laboratory equipment, catering and so on. Whether this is in fact the case is questionable. A head teacher that I interviewed in England, when asked if indeed she had been released by the Private Finance Initiative from many routine administrative tasks, replied that the main difference since the PFI is that she had changed from one set of tasks to another. She now spent large amounts of time in meetings with the Local Education Authority and the contractor, many of them trying to sort out disputes between the school and the contractor because the contract did not cover all contingencies. She did concede, though, that since the PFI at her school had only been in place for two years, such tasks may decrease as time went on and some initial problems had been sorted out.

PPPs and other stakeholders

Another potential problem is that private sector maintenance of schools could result in job losses or deteriorating wages and working conditions for maintenance staff, and thus lead to conflict with the unions. If this is not handled sensitively by government in developing and negotiating PPPs, it could become disruptive, especially if teacher unions decide to support other workers facing job losses. The practice (which currently appears to be being followed in the Free State), of appointing private sector advisors to do a feasibility study without involving the unions could turn out to be a pathway to strife.

The role and rights of school governing bodies also needs to be considered. The South African Schools Act gives governing bodies the duty to ‘administer and control the school’s property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels’ (Sect 20 (1) (g)) and the right to rent out the school’s facilities with the income accruing to the school (Sect 20 (2)). So-called Section 21 schools (i.e. schools which have been granted additional powers

Case study
under Section 21 of the Act) may have the right to ‘maintain and improve the school’s property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels’ (Section 21 (1)(a)). Any contract drawn up between a provincial department of education and a private ‘partner’ would thus have to be careful not to violate the rights of governing bodies. It is also unclear to what extent such a contract could bind the governing body of a school built via a PPP.

The issue of capacity

It may be tempting for a department of education which is suffering from serious management weaknesses to look to the promise of external ‘partners’ to enhance its capacity. Departments, however, need to be aware that in order for the PPPs to be successful from the point of view of safeguarding public interests, they need to be prepared to develop their capacity specifically to deal with PPPs. Far from allowing departments to wash their hands of many problems associated with construction and maintenance, in reality a PPP is only likely to change the nature of their responsibilities, not eliminate them. Departments will need to develop their capacity in various ways: to negotiate complex contracts in such a way that the interests of schools are safeguarded and advanced; to monitor the contractors so as to ensure that they fulfil their obligations; to deal with disputes arising from differences in contract interpretation between themselves and the contractors; and to deal with disputes between schools and contractors.

Conclusion

Although the concept of public-private partnerships is still new in South Africa, it appears to have been accepted by the government as a legitimate and even desirable way of developing public infrastructure. While they may well be useful in this regard, PPPs are not without their problems, as has been demonstrated above.

An important weakness of the policy development process around infrastructure PPPs in education is the almost complete absence of public debate and scrutiny by stakeholders. This is in stark contrast to the practice with regard to most key education policies (e.g. on school governance, curriculum, values, the role of religion, and so on) that have been the subject of widespread debate. There has also been very little examination of the experiences of other countries which have used this form of financing for school building purposes. The absence of debate could lead to important stakeholder perspectives being ignored and the lack of comparative studies of PPPs could lead to valuable lessons being neglected, both with costly consequences.

Policy around infrastructure PPPs appears to have been driven by the National Treasury with apparently little attention from officials or stakeholders in education – and possibly in other sectors as well. It would be useful for the Ministries of Education and Finance to jointly develop policies for public discussion before finalising any PPP arrangements.

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12 Interview with Fiona Wright, Head Teacher, Peacehaven Community School, 8 November 2002.
13 The advisers working with the provincial and national Departments of Education and the Treasury on the Free State schools PPP are: management consultants, KPMG; a construction and engineering consultancy, Africon; HLM, Architects; and legal consultants, Ashera Consulting. Reference: we print out at home: (http://www.treasury.gov.za/organisation/ppp/projectprog/may03.pdf (downloaded, 12 June 2003); DOE, 2002:62)
In the wake of the 2004 general elections, there has been a change in the way and manner in which personnel in the public service have been doing and thinking about things. The emphasis now is on the speedy delivery of services.

With the advent of change that the Premier announced in the first State and Second State of the Province Addresses, the Department of Economic Development and Planning was compelled to reposition itself in order to be able to carry out the new mandate.

The restructuring of the Department meant that there needed to be an alignment of purpose and intent, and also a unity of vision with its sub-structures, including parastatals. The Department is engaged in an involved process of merging compatible parastatals. The Department of Economic Development and Planning is small in comparison to sister departments that have regional offices such as Education, Health and Public Works. This fact makes it untenable for such a small Department to steer, co-ordinate and monitor the plethora of institutions under its wing.

The shortage of human resources makes it difficult for a Department like ours to carry out its oversight function, especially when there are too many parastatals. It is for this reason that the Department is involved in a repositioning and prioritisation of its sub-structures to be in line with the new mandate as espoused by the Premier.

It is envisaged that after completion of the process of mergers service delivery will be improved dramatically. My department cannot afford to be a bystander when it comes to the main functions of the parastatals.

One of the ways of improving the capacity and capability of the Department to properly manage parastatals is by way of reducing the numbers, without losing essential functions that must be carried out.

The Premier has announced that there must be a merger between...
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Mphumalanga Tourism Authority and the Mphumalanga Parks Board on the one hand and between Mphumalanga Economic Empowerment Corporation and Mphumalanga Investment Initiative (MII) on the other.

This is the rationale behind the pairing of these institutions.

- The MTA-MPB merger makes sense in that it will promote and bring to fruition the concept of sustainable development. The Department is charged with the responsibility of developing tourism products which are marketed by MTA. On the other hand, the Parks Board is there to safeguard and protect the environment for future generations. Bringing together the seemingly contrasting functions under one roof improves the checks and balances. It also eliminates situations where one parastatal might pursue projects and policies that are harmful to another’s plans.

In addition, the Parks Board, has in its possession a number of State-owned facilities which could be turned into products that could be allocated to Black entrepreneurs in order to level the ground and improve the equity levels.

- The MEEC-MII merger is also influenced by a simple rationale based on economies of scale. The MII’s core function is to attract investment into Mpumalanga by facilitating a business-friendly environment, while MEEC’s function is to generate Small and Medium businesses and develop local entrepreneurs.

However, in a sense, MEEC also plays a role in bringing investment to the Province through the Industrial Parks that they manage.

The MII and MEEC will focus on economic development whilst MTA and MPB will play a role in unlocking the eco-tourism and ensure the development of responsive tourism.

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You will notice that by merging the two you will be eliminating two mutual-exclusivity of Board of Trustees, you will be eliminating two CEOs, you will be eliminating two CFOs and you will be eliminating two COOs. In a long and short way the merger will eliminate a lot of duplication and wastage of resources that we can ill-afford.

The MEEC alone, for example, has staff in excess of 100. It is almost equal to the number of staff in the core-Department. The corporation has offices in many parts of the Province, which means more office space, more telephone lines, more computers! The list is endless.

As separate entities, these Parastatals are costing the public more than the public gets on their investment. Therefore, logically we are engaged on this merger to save the public a lot of money that would then be rechanneled and utilised to attract more investment and create more businesses.

If we succeed—and I know we will—in attracting more investment and creating more enterprises in the province, we will directly reduce the rate of poverty and increase the creation of jobs, which is why we exist as a department.

Parastatals are significant strategic public assets that must be included as an integral component of our approach to service delivery—Batho Pele. The MMEC alone, for example, has staff in excess of 100. It is almost equal to the number of staff in the core-Department. The corporation has offices in many parts of the Province, which means more office space, more telephone lines, more computers! The list is endless.

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(MTA)
• Mpumalanga Parks Board (MPB)
• Mpumalanga Gaming Board (MGB)
• Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust (MRTT)
• Mpumalanga Housing Finance Corporation (MHFC)
• Mpumalanga Manufacturing Centre (Mpumac)
• Mpumalanga Agricultural Development Corporation (MADC)

Therefore, as illustrated above, the merger of some of these parastatals will eliminate duplication of services and unlock resources to be deployed in needy areas. With regards to the MHEEC and MTA-MPB, the government intends to enact legislation to ensure that the newly-formed agency complies will bring about effective and efficient good governance within the scope of the law as exemplified by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Public Service Management Framework (PSMF), Intergovernmental Relations Bill (IGRB). Likewise, the above will ensure, inter alia;
• Transparency
• Accountability
• Improved service standards
• Integration
• Coordination

This review/ reform/ re-organisation will ensure that MADC remains razor-sharp to implement the emerging farmer support programmes whilst MRTT will continue focusing on skills development with emphasis on relevant skills for growing our economy. Our exemplary gambling management will be enhanced by alignment with the National Gaming Act. MPUMAC will find a new home in the new Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) structures aimed at beefing up business support programmes.

Our challenge will be drawing in, at Board and Management levels, competent individuals to drive our parastatals. We will pull out all stops to maximise the capacity of these institutions to deliver to our communities and ensure maximum adherence.
I must acknowledge that the learning network of this nature in the Province builds on the wonderful work that is championed nationally by the Learning and Knowledge Management Component at the Department of Public Service and Administration. Most of you will remember that the first Batho Pele Learning Academy was launched in Mpumalanga in 2002. This has since become an annual national event that offers a national platform for sharing best practice innovations and experiences in governance and the delivery of government programmes.

At a provincial level, we have decided to hold a similar annual service delivery conference to ensure sustainability and broad-based participation in learning networks and knowledge management initiatives. To enhance service delivery in the Province, this conference will assist us with sharing programme and project implementation lessons and best practice innovations with colleagues from national departments and our sister provinces. It will also provide an opportunity for Mpumalanga provincial departments to share lessons and experience amongst themselves, thereby enhancing levels of integration, cooperative governance and integrated service delivery. In this regard, it is appropriate to thank all the speakers that are going to present at this conference. Thank you for taking time out of your busy and tight schedules to be with us to share your expertise, experience and lessons learned from your implementation environment.

During the first decade of democracy, the government invested a lot of money in various ways to build a body of institutional knowledge capital that is intended to support the growth and capabilities of a Developmental State, so that the State is in a position to deliver on economic growth, job creation and accelerated service delivery. One of the glaring weaknesses in the whole machinery of government is the poor management of knowledge in the government machinery as a major problem.
management of knowledge that government itself generates through huge investments over a period of time. Service delivery innovations and successes are not exploited fully for the benefit of government as a whole. There is still the challenge of building a strong knowledge management system and culture that allows for a systematic identification of successful service delivery models and ensures that these are widely implemented in government as a whole.

One of the advantages for this would be the ability to achieve short project cycles as there will be a broad knowledge base to support decision-making during project implementation, and documented lessons to support implementers not to repeat the same mistakes that were committed elsewhere in government. Perhaps the service delivery conference should start by asking simple, hypothetical, but sometimes practical, questions:

• Why would you have one province spend R60 million on an Asset Management System that is successfully rolled out, and another province going through the same process and spending R65 million two years later. No lessons and experience shared, the same consultants provide the same service to government twice. This may sound hypothetical. But this does happen in government across a range of service delivery disciplines. This happens as a result of a poor culture of knowledge-sharing and transferability of government knowledge capital to be deployed for wider application in other environments.

• Why would you have the best governed and best performing municipality and the worst governed and worst performing municipality in the same province? What is required here is not to pass value judgments against anyone, but to ask a fundamental question about how best knowledge practices, experience and lessons can be shared across municipal boundaries to enhance good governance and delivery capacity.

These basic questions underline a need for a concerted effort by government across all service delivery disciplines to strengthen communities of practice or learning networks to support government-wide knowledge dissemination and sharing to improve service delivery and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The translation of a Developmental State vision into practical programmes that will impact positively on the lives of our people requires an efficient and effective machinery of government that is transparent, accountable and people-centred. One hopes that the conference will deliberate on the practical ways of moving from strategy and process analysis to effective programme implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation. We hope that lessons learned here will be useful in pursuing the Mpumalanga’s delivery agenda. Currently we are working on the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation system that
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will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of government programmes in the Province. We hope that lessons and experience that will be shared by our colleagues from the national departments and sister provinces will be brought to bear in our own change management processes during our implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system.

From policy development and back-office support to coalface service delivery points, it is important that there is no unnecessary red tape that impact negatively on service delivery. We were fortunate that the KHAEDU project that is championed by DPSA was piloted in Mpumalanga. In this programme, senior managers are deployed in service delivery institutions to expose them to practical challenges at service delivery points. This will help sharpen senior management’s understanding of the interplay between policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Province is poised to move to the next stage of implementing the recommendations emanating from the innovative senior management deployment programme. We hope that lessons from the implementation of similar interventions in other provinces will be shared in this conference. Perhaps the conference will also be able to touch on some of the logistical challenges that will go with the full-scale implementation.

One believes that this learning conference will provide a platform that promotes innovation in the way government does business. Government has to review some of its processes which create unnecessary red tape. There is a need to effect improvements in:

• Programme delivery through improved project management capacities within government (e.g. accelerated implementation of the Expanded Public Works Programme and Project Consolidate)
• Supply chain management processes
• Payment of grants to beneficiaries
• Services delivery at hospitals, police stations and clinics.

Another challenge that the provincial government has to focus on is ensuring appropriate investments in the Information Technology and Communication infrastructure to create an environment for increased accessibility of government services. Information technology will enable e-government initiatives and facilitate online transactions for some of the government services. In a knowledge-based economy that must play a meaningful role in the competitive global environment, the South African public service needs to embrace new technology developments in order to position its institutions to adapt to emerging pressures of a Developmental State. We must create learning organisations that have the capacity to deal with community demands for improved government service. The emerging consciousness in poor communities to take to the streets due to poor service delivery is sending a signal to all of us in the public service that we need to learn quickly and find innovative ways to deal with emerging pressures. This learning network will hopefully tease out some of the issues more critically and suggest possible interventions.

There is an opportunity to deploy information and communication technologies in improving organisational internal controls to fight fraud and corruption. There are initiatives underway in the Province to fight all forms of fraud and corruption. The Province is committed to ensuring that resources meant for service delivery improvement are not misdirected through fraud and corruption. You would agree with me that this is a major national challenge that may bring the government to its knees. One hopes that deliberations in this conference will share lessons that will stop the tide for this destructive phenomenon at all levels of government. There is going to be a close critical engagement on some of the resolutions emerging from the recent national Anti-Corruption Summit that took place a week ago.
Case Study

Project Khaedu in KwaZulu Natal

Senior Management Service Delivery Challenge

Reshma Badal, Reggie Cele, Khosi Gxagxisa, Palesa Majazi, Themba Masondo and Nomsa Nkosi collaborated on this the first in a series of articles on Project Khaedu, which was piloted at Grey’s Hospital, KwaZulu Natal.

Background

To reinforce the principles of Batho Pele, cabinet made a decision in August of 2004 which requires all SMS (Senior Management Service) members, in each performance cycle, to undertake a period of deployment to the service delivery ‘Coal Face’.

In response to this challenge the DPSA have developed a programme called Project Khaedu (Venda for “challenge”) to assist all SMS members in meeting the cabinet objective. Project Khaedu is a unique and innovative combination of an active skills development process using public sector case studies and practical exercises, followed by a ‘deployment’ to a service delivery point. It is a team-based approach to developing practical problem solving skills in a real live environment, often referred to as ‘Action Learning’.

The programme is divided into two main elements:

1. A 5-day intensive problem-solving and communication skills course in which managers learn to analyse service delivery problems in terms of:
   - Process design weaknesses
   - Organisation barriers, particularly lack of multi-skilling and teaming
   - People management and working with organised labour
   - Budget and control problems

2. Using the skills acquired during the core course, participants are deployed in syndicates to selected service delivery points to analyse any problems and develop recommendations.

Khaedu has been very successfully piloted with 67 national and provincial man-
agers having taken part. Over the next six months, it is the DPSA’s objective to scale-up Khaedu, working closely with selected provinces and national departments. One of the first provinces to take part in this roll-out is KZN.

Project Khaedu in KZN

Twenty-three SMS managers participated in Project Khaedu in KwaZulu-Natal between March and May 2005. This first Project Khaedu intervention in the province has been viewed as very successful with participants rating the programme very highly (average feedback score of 4.6 out of 5). They praised its practical emphasis and relevance to the public sector. Managers were exposed to real life service delivery problems at the coal face, and used their newly acquired skills to attempt solving some of these.

Host sites found the deployment reports relevant and useful.

On the final night of the skills development week, each group is expected to work on, and solve, the final ‘integrated case-study’. Most participants only finished working on this case-study after midnight! The following day’s presentations on the case study were of a very high quality, with an exceptional report back from the two winning teams (who shared the Best Report prize).

Service delivery to our citizenry – the problem of queues...

The 2nd phase of the programme – the deployment to the ‘coal face’ – was scheduled for May. This supervised Action Learning deployment ensures that managers practise their problem solving skills, and the solution building process is reinforced. Participants were split into four groups, each group being sent to a separate service delivery site:

1. Greys Hospital
2. Addington Hospital
3. Home Affairs eThekwini
4. Home Affairs Scottburgh

The reports that were produced by the teams were of a consistently high quality. All teams presented their findings to the senior management team of the relevant site (hospital or home affairs office), before finalising their reports. In addition, the Home Affairs team also presented to the Provincial Home Affairs Director the following week.

The hospital groups identified a number of “best practices” at their sites, discovering that both Greys and Addington hospitals are very well run institutions. However, they also faced some challenges. For example, Addington is struggling to overcome the problem of long queues at the back end of their outpatients process. Patients wait a long time in the pharmacy queue to collect their medication.

The team, in the short time that they had available, analysed the pharmacy process and came up with some practical ideas to improve it, including revamping the physical layout of the process, elimination of ‘batching’, synchronisation of opening times and automatic printing of medicine labels using the existing MediTech system.
The Greys Hospital team identified some challenges with respect to integration between Head Office and the hospital, in terms of planning, funding and decision making, as well as communication between Management and labour. They developed ideas and initiatives to tackle both problems.

The Home Affairs teams discovered that core existing operations are not stable, evidenced by long queues, poor process flows and high error and return rates. There are long and unpredictable times to receive critical documents, and staffing is not matched to the highly variable demand pattern. Consequently, staff at critical times of the year and month are overstretched, service levels fall and both staff and customers are unhappy.

In addition, some basic project management skills appear to be lacking as, nearly 10 months after opening the new office in Scottburgh, there is still no proper signage, secure cashiers area and key IT systems such as BAS have only just been connected.

However, the team identified that, with a limited investment in temporary staffing capacity to cover peak demand months (January, February and April), some basic process redesign and organisation alignment (particularly introducing multi-skilling and a team based structure), this situation can be significantly improved and the Turnaround Strategy reinvigorated. The provincial management all supported these findings and encouraged the teams to present them to Home Affairs head office in Pretoria.

Summary

Helping public service managers become more effective problem solvers is a critical step in ensuring that government overcomes the service delivery challenges that we face. Project Khaedu is an important element in the government’s overall skills development and Batho Pele revitalisation strategies. This also goes some ways in enhancing the capacity of our SMS members to lead by example in showing that in the Public Service WE CARE, WE SERVE and WE BELONG.

This has been one of the best courses overall and highly relevant to one’s work relationship from start to finish. A good investment

This programme has already given us a management tool that can easily and readily be utilised with positive results.
Dr Mark Patrick, currently based in Greys Hospital’s pediatric unit in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, has been associated with the public health system for nearly 20 years. He began practicing as a medical doctor at Edendale Hospital, in the same province, and later worked at Frontier Hospital in the Eastern Cape. In the past, the two hospitals, because of apartheid social engineering and the attendant legislation, catered for the health needs of black people. By contrast, Greys Hospital served white areas. With socio-political transformation that has happened in the country, Greys now caters for a much wider area as a tertiary health institution, including historically disadvantaged communities. The challenges faced by the public health system in largely rural provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal are well documented. They include the relationship between poverty and wellness, high population densities that are largely concentrated in the hinterland, and the fact that the burden of disease is heaviest among women and children. But what bothers Dr Patrick as much as the poor health of people is the often chaotic state of patient record keeping in many public hospitals, particularly those located in previously disadvantaged areas. Dr Patrick says poor record keeping and the quality of the physical copies are some of the most obvious (yet often unattended to) obstacles to quality hospital health care provision. The various forms (about seven basic clinical record forms and a couple of observation forms) patients, nurses and doctors routinely fill out in hospitals often disappear due to mismanagement, or are rendered useless as third-hand copies are...
While many comparable institutions in the private sector may have long moved into the electronic or paperless patient management realm, many hospitals Dr Patrick and his colleagues work within are barely managing their paperwork, which “leads to problems with the quality of care and patient relationships”, says Dr Patrick.

“The [patient record management] challenges are widespread, and even hospitals such as Greys face similar problems, although the situation is not that bad,” explains the doctor.

Despite the move away from paper-based administrations at highly sophisticated public hospital such as the Chief Luthuli Hospital in KZN, paper-intensive hospitals are likely to be a major feature of the public health system for years to come. In any case, argues Dr Patrick, “you can’t go electronic if the basic stuff is not sorted out.”

It was out of the resolve to tackle the realities of being “stuck with paper” that Dr Patrick and some of his colleagues embarked on what they “see as a Batho Pele effort”, which is updating, and in some cases, redesigning a whole new set of hospital forms. After years of painstaking development (work done during spare time) the various forms have now been burned into CD-Rom copies that are easily available to hospital staff.

In addition to the obvious benefit of improved management in individual hospitals, specific or clinical forms will improve the quality of baseline data on disease profiles in the areas or geographic regions in which the institutions within which the hospitals are located, and ultimately the province and the country.

Although not yet entirely adopted by the provincial health department, the not so new paper regime has the backing of the relevant authorities.

“Everywhere that I work, report-keeping is based on old habits and not thought through along the lines of the new health system,” Dr Patrick observes.

The rollout of the new forms will be “piloted in small chunks”, beginning at the twenty-two hospitals that are part of the outreach programme Dr Patrick heads from Greys Hospital.

Dr Patrick was invited as an observer at inaugural Red Tape Awards in 2004. His initiative is testimony to the fact that innovation and initiative in the public service need not necessarily involve spending millions on expensive consultants or exclusive bokkebraads. It is about relentless initiatives by people at the coalface of service delivery.”
The 2005 State of the Public Service Report was released in February by the Public Service Commission (PSC) under the theme Bracing the Public Service for Sustained, Effective Service Delivery Based on Batho Pele. The report is informed by various activities that the PSC undertakes in the course of fulfilling its oversight mandate. These include monitoring and evaluation, assessment of the performance of Heads of Department, compliance audits, investigations into public administration practices, the promotion of professional ethics, and the handling of labour relations grievances. In addition, the report also draws from appropriate research findings of other government and non-government institutions.

Organised according to the nine constitutional values and principles of public administration, the report acknowledges the commendable achievements of the Public Service since the advent of democratic rule in South Africa. These include the good institutional base that has been created, the progressive policy framework that has been developed, measures to promote anti-corruption and improve service delivery, and the role that is increasingly being played in world affairs.

However, the report also notes challenges that the Public Service still has to grapple with. These include the need to complete, consolidate and monitor compliance with public management frameworks, and the need to address negative workplace cultures and the environments that reinforce them. In terms of the specific Constitutional values and principles of public administration, key points made by the report include the following:

**Principle 1: A High Standard of Professional Ethics Must be Promoted and Maintained**

Findings show that the Public Service sometimes still takes too long to address cases of professional misconduct, and
this may be seen by some as a lack of action. A strong link needs to be created between the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and departmental strategies, accompanied by the creation of minimum anticorruption capacity at departmental level. There also needs to be a clear and coordinated roll-out of the Code of Conduct for Public Servants to improve its implementation and enhance compliance.

The report argues that a public service that supports a strong developmental state requires a sophisticated ethics infrastructure. There are no short cuts to achieving this goal. Instead, this can only be achieved through consistent and sustained work which puts all the basic building blocks in place.

Principle 2: Efficient, Economic and Effective Use of Resources must be Promoted.

The report acknowledges that the public service is starting to overcome difficulties in spending its funds. However, other departments still appear to have a problem achieving some of their strategic objectives. In this regard, annual reports are not related to budgets and reporting on the achievement of objectives is less than satisfactory.

The public service should have useful, practical and accessible guidelines which show an alignment between government priorities, departmental strategic objectives, programme plans and individual job descriptions. These, together with other processes such as performance management, should seek to support officials to ensure that they achieve efficiency, economy and effectiveness in their work.

Principle 3: Public Administration must be Development Oriented.

In giving effect to this principle in the second decade of democracy, the PSC’s report identifies sustained poverty eradication as a critical issue for the public service. This, the report argues, would require the public service to ensure a balance between complex and often competing priorities in order to narrow income disparities in all its activities, ranging from strategic planning, budgeting and implementation.

The PSC observes that there are positive developments in this direction, including the advent of the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP), which provides guidelines that should inform development in the country. Other commendable efforts include the employment of Community Development Workers (CDWs) to bridge the gap between government service provision and communities that use the services, and the launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to promote investment in infrastructure development whilst ensuring targeted empowerment and job creation. These however, require complex and often time consuming processes in order to achieve the intended results.
The report notes that some of the development projects implemented by departments seem to employ the wrong strategies as well as involve the wrong service providers as partners. It is important that over time, poverty eradication projects should evolve into sustainable initiatives that are not completely reliant on government support. At the heart of this would be the notion of empowering service users guided by a clear national development strategy.

**Principle 4: Services Must be Provided Impartially, Fairly, Equitably, and Without Bias.**

The PSC’s examination of the state of the public service with regard to this principle is guided by the need to realise just service delivery balanced with considerations of redressing the legacy of past inequities. In this regard, embedding the ethos of Batho Pele (People First) irrespective of such factors as family connections would be key.

Developments such as the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) of 2000 are positive in that they put on the agenda of public service delivery the very important notions of fairness, impartiality and equity in public service delivery, the PSC does make very important observations regarding the implementation of the Act. Most departments surveyed by the Commission show a limited understanding of how to work with Act, and few have advised the public on their rights in this regard. What’s more, staff in civil society organisations also appear to have limited awareness of the Act and its provisions.

The PSC notes that in the second decade of democracy, public service delivery would need to advance impartiality, fairness and equity by embracing notions of transparency and accountability as espoused by legislative frameworks such as the PAJA and the Promotion of Information Act of 2002.

**Principle 5: People’s Needs must be Responded to and the Public must be Encouraged to Participate in Policy Making**

Key to fulfilling this constitutional value and principle is the internalisation and embedding of a consultative and participatory culture to ensure a close alignment between service delivery and the needs of the people. The PSC report notes that although there are such approaches as Citizens’ Forums, it is important that over time, poverty eradication projects should evolve into sustainable initiatives that are not completely reliant on government support. At the heart of this would be the notion of empowering service users guided by a clear national development strategy.

**Principle 6: Public Administration must be Accountable**

The report emphasises the importance of clarifying responsibilities across the value-chain at any stage of policy formulation, implementation and execution. This would, among other things, contribute towards the accountable use of scarce resources. In this regard, and drawing from a report by the Auditors General, the PSC observes that there has been an increase in the number of matters being emphasised, from less that 150 matters in 2001/2 to more than 250 in 2003/4. These commonly include income statements, asset management and the functioning of audit committees. (Emphasis of matter as an audit opinion seeks to bring certain matters to the attention of users, but is considered less severe compared to a qualified opinion, adverse opinion, and disclaimer of opinion. The matters raised are nonetheless still important and deserve serious attention.)

There has also been a decrease in the number of unqualified audits, for example from 51% to 37% at provincial level in the health, education and social development sectors.

The report further notes that for the 2003/4 financial year the performance of 17 national and 19 provincial Heads of Department (HoDs) was formally evaluated. A cause for concern here is that although other HoDs could not be formally evaluated due to genuine reasons (for example, they had not been in the post for a full financial year), in fact 26 more should have been evaluated but these did not comply with their requirements for a proper formal evaluation. In terms of the PSC guidelines for the evaluation of the performance of HoDs, the following information is required:

- A duly signed performance agreement for the relevant financial year
- The department’s strategic plan covering the relevant year
- The budget and expenditure report for the relevant financial year
• The department’s annual report for the relevant financial year; and
• A verification statement completed by the Executing Authority and the HoDo detailing the achievement of key result areas and core management criteria provided for in the performance agreement.

If the above information is not made available, a proper formal evaluation cannot be conducted.

Overall, approximately of the 14% of the HoDoS evaluated received an ‘outstanding performance’ rating, 55% received a ‘significantly above expectations’ rating, and 11% received a ‘fully effective’ rating.

The PSC has identified the need to supplement the HoDo evaluation system with a framework that evaluates institutional performance. In this way, there can be an alignment between the performance of the HoDo and that of the Department they are responsible for.

Principle 7: Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.

The sharing of credible information with the public is important in making the workings of government visible and understandable. If properly done, this also fosters a sense of ownership of government programmes and processes by communities.

The PSC report acknowledges that, overall, the quality of departmental Annual Reports has improved in recent years. The reports have also become more reader-friendly and accessible. However, areas of weakness still exist. A number of departments do not systematically report on the achievement of their strategic objectives. Neither do they link performance information to departmental plans and budgets. The PSC points out that unless Annual Reports are beefed up to provide adequate detail on the results achieved by departments, they become public relations documents rather than useful sources of information. Proper monitoring and evaluation is key if departments are to generate credible information to be reported to the public.

The report further points out that other ways of reporting to the public, such as izimbizo, should be widely practiced in order to contribute to a flourishing culture of transparency.


Given that the public service is the single largest employer in the country, it is important that it also becomes the epitome of sound human resource management practices. The public service is still faced with the challenge of hierarchical and silo practices and needs to embrace more team-based work methods for producing better results. The transformation of the human resource management regime has provided for increased decentralisation and delegation of authority. However, there is a sense that in some instances consideration should be given to holding back on these delegations until appropriate capacity to use them effectively has been developed. This could be in the form of an accreditation system in which certain powers are delegated only once the institution has reached a certain capacity threshold to use them effectively.

The report further notes that there are still challenges relating to high vacancy rates, inadequate recruitment and selection processes, and the alignment of training and development with the broader HR management function.

The public service requires sound human resource planning capacity that could, among others, focus on realistic and rigorous analysis of current skills and future needs, and link these to the strategic plans of departments.

Principle 9: Public Administration must be broadly representative of SA people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

The public service has become more representative in terms of race, but representation for women at the level of management and generally for people with disabilities still require attention. The setting of numeric targets alone is not enough. Indeed, the report quotes research that found that some departments had good Affirmative Action planning systems but implemented them poorly, thus failing to realise the objectives as envisaged in the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service.

The report argues that there needs to be a clear link between affirmative action and human resource planning. This would ensure that the country has a public service that is not only properly equipped to deliver, but one that is also fully representative of the rich diversity of the people it serves. The monitoring and evaluation of progress would be key in sending a strong signal of what is considered important. In this regard, Parliament and other oversight bodies would need to continue engaging with this issue so that its importance is constantly reiterated.

Conclusion

The 2005 State of the Public Service Report raises a number of key issues that need consideration in order to brace the public service for sustained, effective service delivery based on Batho Pele. In doing this, the report does not suggest that the public service is in a crisis and requires a major rescue mission. Instead, it acknowledges that the public service is now on a sound institutional footing, and has achieved much to be proud of. What it needs is further strengthening to ensure sustained effective service delivery in the spirit of putting people first.
Corruption in the private and public sector undermines service delivery, increases inequality and drowns out the voice of the country’s majority in policy and decision-making and places a drag on economic growth and job creation. Although not the biggest single issue facing South Africa – corruption is by far one of the most important ‘cross-cutting issue’. This is backed up by one of the most comprehensive civil society assessments of corruption – and the effectiveness to combat it to date. The extensive study, which complements the 2002 SA Government / United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime ‘Country Corruption Assessment’ Report by providing a critical non-state perspective on our National Integrity System, was completed over a period of 18 months.

Transparency International (TI) and Transparency South Africa commissioned the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) to author the National Integrity Systems (NIS) Country Study Report – South Africa 2005. Similar studies have been published in almost 60 countries and the studies value lies in the fact that it goes beyond measuring ‘perceptions’ of corruption, which President Mbeki railed against when opening the 2nd National Anti-Corruption summit in Thswane on 22 March this year. Instead the report, released on Human Rights Day, provides an in-depth assessment of the strength and weakness of the various ‘pillars’ of the South African NIS – and how these relate. To fight corruption a country requires the requisite laws, institutions and political will. SA has done remarkably well on all three fronts in ten short years since the end of corrupt apartheid era rule. However, the trick is now in closing legislative gaps and increasing the capacity of institutions – in line with their constitutional obligations - in order to ensure that corrupt individuals no longer cream off billions of rands in both the public and private sector annually. Consider some of the following:

- At a national level, almost R2 billion was lost in 2003 to corruption in Social Welfare. Sustained corruption and fraud over the past decade resulted in the much heralded efforts by the Minister Zola Skweyiya’s Department and Special Investigations Unit to now consider prosecuting the almost 40,000 public servants who were almost literally stealing from the
mouths of children to subsidise their lifestyles.

- The Labour Ministry may have lost as much as R1 billion of the money allocated to skills development
- The Road Accident Fund, which has long been susceptible to fraud and corruption, may have lost R1 billion in the past year as well.
- The private sector, a major source of corruption, may be losing as much as R50 billion a year to fraud and corruption.

These figures, although largely indicative, provide an understanding of the rash of corruption in only a few sectors. The knock-on effect of such activity is manifold including the potential alienation of the electorate who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected or who either become politically disaffected.

The latter form of protest that has swept the country over the past year has underscored the need for effective strategies to deal with the corrupt at all levels of the public and private sector. This begs the question:

**How is our nation fairing in the fight against corruption?**

A summary of key findings and recommendations from the National Integrity Study casts some light on this vexing issue:

**Executive:** A fish rots from its head. The old saying goes – therefore we are fortunate that the National Executive has remained relatively scandal free. Where serious allegations have surfaced, as is the case with former Deputy President Zuma, they are now being tested in court. Of concern however is the revolving door between government and business, which needs to be addressed with adequate post-employment restriction that serves to protect the integrity of the public service while protecting the interests of those who are required to take a mandatory “cooling-off” period. Equally the Executive Members Ethics Act, which requires disclosure of assets and interests, may need to be revisited as it has no sanctions mechanisms nor does it allow for sufficient public oversight. Another area of concern is the awarding of government contracts to partners and relatives of members of the Executive at a provincial level.

**Legislature:** The countries supreme oversight body has taken a bruising in the wake of the arms deal and travel scam. Although it has played a key role in designing laws to fight graft and improve transparency – it must also hold government departments to account and measure their effectiveness in regulating the private sector. Increased research capacity for committees may help ensure that some MPs sound less like imbongis – a concern raised by Deputy Speaker Gwen Mahlangu. The lack of direct accountability between the people and elected representatives is a cause for concern – and this may be solved by cabinet and parliament grappling with proposals for an electoral system that allows for a mix of direct and proportional representation, thereby giving more direct power to the people and less to the leadership of parties. Rules governing disclosure provisions also need stiffer sanctions than the mild punishment meted out to date.

**Political Parties:** Full transparency concerning the sources of private funding of political parties remains one of the key areas that need to be addressed by effective legislation and enforcement thereof. At all levels of governance this legal gap can be abused to benefit the interest of organised criminals or certain private sector groups to the disadvan-

tage of the poor majority.

**IEC:** If Pantsi Tlakula’s and Brigalia Bam’s team were corrupt our elections would no longer be fair or free. The IEC has done an excellent job to date and its integrity is central to sustaining electoral democracy.

**Auditor-General:** The criticism that the office of the Auditor-General has received in the wake of the arms deal may be a measure of the value we place in the constitution, which ensures the independence of Shaukit Fakies office. The AG undertakes excellent work in reporting on how public monies are spent however, politically charged investigations such as the arms deal remain the ultimate test of this constitutional independence. The AG’s continued effectiveness will in no small measure depend on the ability of parliament and SCOFA to probe reports from his office.

**Judiciary:** An independent judiciary that is able to ensure access to justice is a key to combating corruption. Corruption within magistrate’s courts may be as problem as are the security of the countries judges and magistrates. Equally the issue of race and racism in the judiciary should be dealt with to ensure that the judiciary is both independent and representative.

**Public Sector:** The Public Service Commission has an oversight role over the countries largest single employer the Department of Public Service and Administration. However public officials are still not submitting their financial disclosure forms on time (more than 50% in 2002/03) and the PSC has no effective sanction mechanism to deal with this. Equally calls by COSATU and others to regulate post-public sector employment must be heeded in order to place a stopper in this gilded door. Cabinet agreed to a Public Service National Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2002 and although it has been carried out in part, under the able auspices of the DPSA Anti-Corruption Unit, a new timetable for implementation is required to allow for monitoring thereof. Requirements for minimum anti-corruption capacity within all departments have also not been fulfilled and will need further attention. The PSC national anti-corruption hotline (0800 701 701) should also be rolled out as the single national anti-corruption hotline as part of a strategy to creating an enabling environment for whistleblowers.

**Police & Prosecutors:** Both the SAPS and NPA are key role-players in combating corruption. However of growing
concern in the public mind is corruption within the ranks of the Police. It may be time to invest sufficient resources and capacity in the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) to ensure that an independent body monitors corruptions amongst the countries guardians.

Public Procurement: National Treasury has put a Supply Chain Management Framework in place to reform the old State Tender Board System. Given the c. R180 billion spent on procurement its success is imperative as is the Register of Tender Defaulters (Corruption List) that Treasury has created in terms of the new Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act. Errant companies need to be named, shamed and excluded from government business, without fear or favour. The penalties that Treasury have prescribed are harsh – twenty-year exclusion from public contracts – and if vigorously enforced this could become a powerful preventative tool to trip up the two parties who are locked in the infamous ‘tender tango’.

Public Protector: Laurence Mushwana’s independence is guaranteed by the Constitution and plays a key role in investigating graft. However the PPs case backlog and investigation of high-profile cases has not been without its detractors. Increased capacity may assist in beefing up the role of the Public Protector.

Investigative Agencies: Next to the SAPS, the country can be proud of its investigative agencies including the Scorpions, Special Investigations Unit (SIU), and Asset Forfeiture Unit. Collectively, though not always successful, they have managed to recoup millions of rands and investigate and prosecute high-profile individuals in both the public and private sector. However there is a need for improved co-ordination amongst state anti-corruption agencies. In the medium term this should not be at the cost of closing down agencies such as the Scorpions – and the deliberations by the Khampepe Commission need to be closely followed by all those interested in tackling graft. However, in the long term we may need to reopen the debate around a single national anti-corruption agency.

Media: There is a need for more investment in investigative journalism by the countries media owners. The Public Broadcaster, home to the country’s largest news team is historically also prone towards political influence and it needs to be kept free of sectional interests. The media, much maligned by some, also needs to keep its own house in order of which events around the arms deal are testament.

Civil Society: Civil society plays a key role in monitoring corruption and awareness raising. However sectors of civil society remain underfunded. Corruption within the sector also needs greater attention.

Provincial and Local Government: The ‘site of service delivery’ (or a large part thereof) needs a key focal area for efforts to monitor corruption. The lack of sustained national media attention means that these are often vulnerable to endemic corruption which then requires national intervention (as in the Eastern Cape) or results in direct action by communities (as in the Free State, Gauteng, Eastern and western Cape).

The law: The country has a strong law: The country has a strong piece of legislation in the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act however it remains largely untested – the key measure of its value. The National Anti-Corruption Forum has prioritised the need to raise awareness around the effective implementation of anti-corruption legislation in 2005/06. Such joint government/business/civil society projects could have a major impact on making the laws work as intended by our elected representatives when they passed the law in Parliament. The Protected Disclosures Act must also be beefed up to better protect whistleblowers and the Promotion of Access to Information Act (another ‘model’ law) remains an empty promise as long as the media and civil society have to use the threat of legal action to access information that should be in the public domain.

The private sector: Were it not for an unhealthy doses of crony capitalism under apartheid few of the countries mega-rich would enjoy the position they occupy today. The private sector as a source of corruption has long been neglected and the business community must do more introspection to combat graft. This is also true of some empowerment deals that may be abused for the enrichment of individuals with access to power – or white businesspeople that abuse preferential procurement by committing fraud such as ‘fronting’.

The National Integrity Study also identified the following areas for action amongst its over twenty priorities and recommendations for action that cut across institutions:

Islands of integrity – 2010, jobs and anti-retroviral (ARV) rollout: It is always useful to create initiatives that exemplify how things should be done as opposed how they should not be done. It may therefore be worthwhile for the public sector to choose a few high-profile initiatives and announce that they will become Presidential lead projects with the specific aim of keeping them free of corruption. These should be projects from which the people benefit directly (not necessarily arms, for example). They could include the massive infrastructure investment in building soccer stadiums in the run-up to the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa or the R15-20 billion which the President announced in February 2004 would be spent by the state on a public works campaign to create employment over the next 10 years. Similarly, the roll-out of anti-retroviral medication to citizens with HIV/AIDS could also be targeted: a scarce commodity is an easy target for corrupt practice and in this instance, if the right people do not get the medication it may mean the difference between life and death. Such Presidential lead projects could not only save the fiscus money but also become examples of good practice.

The wealth gap and greed: Inequality remains the hallmark of South Africa. The size of the divide means that two...
distinct groups are created, the majority who aspire to live a better life and those in the top tier who aspire to climb even higher as they fear the thought of living like the majority. This sort of instinct leads to a form of short-termism that encourages corruption and greed, particularly among the elite. Much is spoken of moral regeneration, and elected leaders should be exemplary in this regard and scornful of those who aspire to fabulous wealth. This may be the largest structural problem that must be tackled. It is, however, necessary to break the cycle of greed and corruption which, though not uniquely South African, is particularly pronounced in this society.

Looking back while looking forward: After a decade of democracy the political situation may have settled sufficiently to now revisit grand corruption involving both the state and the private sector during apartheid. An initial step may be for a specialised agency such as the NPA or SIU to undertake an initial scoping exercise of what crimes could potentially be prosecuted. Such a report would both spell out the linear nature of corruption in SA – and dispel the myth that it is only a problem of the post-apartheid era – and grand corruption for it to consider at its October meeting.

In summarising these many and varied recommendations three factors need to receive particular attention by anti-corruption practitioners in the public sector, business and civil society. These are:

Legislative reform and implementation
Where we have a good solution, energy must be invested in implementation. This is the collective responsibility of every individual. Where the law is imperfect efforts must be made to continuously adapt and reform it. This will always remain necessary given the fact that many measures have not been tested in the same contexts elsewhere and given the changing nature of corruption in South Africa in the future.

Organisational restructuring
No bureaucracy holds all the answers to combating corruption. This study has shown that the current model of co-ordination is possibly only successful because a number of competent state agencies exist to combat corruption. It is not clear how co-ordination has strengthened the capacity and effectiveness of these agencies, if at all. The debate around the single anti-corruption agency model needs to be revisited. If the single agency model is not appropriate, then good reasons for this need to be provided and co-ordination amongst agencies needs to be strengthened. The capacity of key oversight institutions also require continuous attention to ensure that they continue to fulfil their constitutional mandate.

Personal integrity
‘Greed is good’ must not be allowed to become the motto of a highly divided society. This threatens any notion of long-term stability and social cohesion. Matched with this is the requirement for ethical practice by individuals in business, government and civil society. Assets need to be disclosed and sweeteners rejected where these may result in a conflict of interest. Leaders in all sectors of society need to recognise that where they fail in this regard, or do not support whistleblowers, or do not speak out against corruption, they are failing the post-apartheid democratic order. Public education and awareness raising must be prioritised to promote the participation of all South Africans in combating corruption.

Corruption is not the national priority. However, it remains one of the issues that can effectively undermine efforts to deal with all other national priorities. If not kept in check it will stunt economic growth, hamper service delivery to the poor and undermine efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS and poverty. It remains a collective concern and one of the largest challenges facing the country more than a decade after the dawn of democracy. •
The department of Social Development, Eastern Cape, explains what the CMC is, and how it facilitates payments to pension beneficiaries.

CMC, which shall be used throughout this Blueprint, is an acronym for the Contract Management Centre. The dictionary definition of a Blueprint (figurative) is the “Detailed plan of work to be done.”

The Province of the Eastern Cape has more than 1 000 000 beneficiaries who are paid at over 2 700 pay points. In 2000, the Province, in common with all other provinces in South Africa, took a decision to outsource the payment of social grants. Accordingly, a full tender process was embarked upon.

Through the joint efforts of the department, an evaluation committee and the State Tender Board, a split award was made to Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) and Allpay. The service providers were tasked with rendering services in the former Transkei and the remainder of the province respectively.

Both service providers are bound by service level agreements (SLAs) which envisage a monitoring process being undertaken by the department. To this end, the department established the CMC. The idea of the CMC was also fortified by the Interim Management Team (IMT), set up by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

The IMT identified a need for a Unit which would be dedicated to the management of third party service providers of the department beyond the grants paying companies. The establishment of the CMC is a loud and visible acknowledgement by the department of the fact that the ultimate constitutional responsibility for service delivery resides with the government.

This is in keeping with the national strategic goal of ensuring that implementation of laws and policies benefits the poor and previously marginalised people. In order to ensure that service delivery is a reality, a concentrated effort was called for to determine and maintain consistent levels of service.
Vision

- It is envisioned that the payment of grants will occur in a manner which accords with the constitutional promise of preserving the dignity of those who are vulnerable in our midst.
- It is hoped that the combined skills-base borne out of the public-private partnerships will give impetus to the developmental goals of the department and the country.

Mission

- The CMC will ensure that the service providers deliver on their contractual undertakings.
- Similarly, the CMC will provide the necessary guidance to ensure that the departmental obligations in terms of the service level agreements are discharged, and
- The CMC will build excellence in its practice and deepen the human rights ethos of the poor and vulnerable (beneficiaries).

Core Objectives

- Monitoring compliance by third party service providers to service level agreements,
- Ensuring that the service level agreements facilitate service delivery,
- Provision of information to beneficiaries and social security stakeholders, and
- Ensuring efficient and honest administration of social security funds.

Legislative Framework

The CMC’s activities and focus will be guided by a plethora of prescripts which, principally, include but are not limited to the following:
- Constitution Act 108 of 1996,
- Service Level Agreements signed by the department and third party service providers,
- Public Service Act of 1994,
- Public Service Regulations of 2001,
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act of 2000,
• Social Assistance Act 2004,
• South African Social Agency Act 2004,
• Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000,
• Public Finance Management Act
• Treasury Regulations

Scope of the CMC Mandate

The CMC Office
The offices are situated at (address), telephone number and fax. Its entire staff except the Director is located at these offices. The CMC has an annual budget of R16 million and an approved business plan and organogram. Hereinunder are the CMC’s work-streams and their primary tasks.

Legal Unit—Audit, Review and Standardization of Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
It has been established that the main SLAs, CPS’s and Allpays’, contain clauses which are simply cumbersome. Accordingly, the CMC, with the assistance of legal unit, should lead a renegotiation of the SLAs. Given the advent of the South African Social Security Agency, the CMC will rely on the guidance of the national department.

The CMC is tasked with auditing other service level agreements in the department and standardizing them as part of its contract administration. To this end, the CMC will work with the department’s program managers for access to the various SLAs.

Community Liaison — Provision of communication platform between the department, service providers and Stakeholders
Proper communication with beneficiaries and about problems concerning them is an essential component for an efficient grant payment system. Area forum meetings, which take place on a monthly basis, are used as a platform by the department to communicate decisions that affect payment of grants and problems incidental thereto.

Welfare forums are committees responsible for ensuring stability and orderly payment process at all cash pay-points. Since these committees are non-statutory, a process of restructuring and legitimizing them is underway. To this regard a draft document has been submitted to the legal division for scrutiny before it is submitted to the Eastern Legislature for adoption.

Another communication touchstone is the concept of Help Desks officers. Help Desks officers follow designated pay teams to every pay-point and ensure presence at pay-points during the entire payment period. These officers use the BENEN system (beneficiary enquiry system), which contains SOCPEN information in an easily accessible format.

The primary function is to take queries from beneficiaries and either resolve immediately or take the full details of the query for clearance at a later date. The additional tasks include:
- commenting on the appropriateness of the payment itinerary, with a view to contributing towards payment rationalization process;
- commenting upon the status of bedridden beneficiaries and 9999 beneficiaries;
- providing feedback for submission to Area Forum meetings regarding infrastructure upgrade needs at pay-points;
- completing checklists for paypoint visits, and
- submitting fortnightly reports on prescribed format to the CMC Project Manager.

Pay-Point Support — Operationalisation of monitoring systems
Monitors are deployed on a sample basis to various paypoints. The CMC has contracted 12 monitors who will report to it but communicate and consult district co-ordinators with regard to their activities in a particular region. Their main role is to monitor and report on the adherence to the SLA’s by both the service providers and the department.

Reporting is controlled by the use of standard forms which help to provide a level of professionalism and consistency in reporting. These standard forms include a paypoint checklist, an infrastructure database and a daily report sheet. They are responsible for response, where possible, to crisis situations and will document special reports on various incidents such as robberies, deaths at paypoints and special investigations.

Monitors have a planned itinerary for the month that will be a combination of experience and statistical analysis. However, departures from the itinerary are foreseeable given the need for special reports at appropriate periods. They themselves are monitored by the CMC administrative staff, which audits the submitted control sheets (logbook and timesheet) and refueling logs. These are matched by third party information where available.

Data Analysis — Management of data through a dedicated system and monitoring of payment of Service providers.
An offline windows-based system has been developed for information management. All the information received from monitors and Helpdesks is centrally captured and analyzed from this system. The management information obtained is utilized for improved planning, budgeting and effective co-ordination of paypoint monitoring activities.

Alternative payment methods
Grants payments are currently not limited to pay-point cash payments. Indeed, beneficiaries are paid through Standard Card and Merchant Acquiry payments from Allpay and CPS respectively. The CMC is duty-bound to manage the implementation of these payment systems.

Finance and Asset Management — Monitoring and verification of payment of grants
This function has been performed by Nkonki and Nkonki and managed by the department’s finance section. As the
function is reliant on information from SOCPEN, which has security obligations and which is under the authority of CMC Director, it is for all intents and purposes a CMC management function. This work-stream is also responsible to maintain and manage the CMC’s Stores.

**Payment itineraries, preparation of guidelines and stabilizing the payment function**

The following criteria are applied when discussing and agreeing the setting of payment itineraries with the service provider:

- Rural pay-points should be paid earlier in the pay-cycle and urban pay-points later in the pay-cycle. This will reduce migration and will enable beneficiaries who have missed their rural pay-day to have the proverbial second bite at the cherry. Fixed pay-points should be set up for urban pay-points.
- Pay-points should be geographically clustered in order to make the process of traveling to pay-points as practical as possible. It may however be necessary for the service provider to change the order of the day for security reasons.
- Where pay-points are too large to be paid on one payment day, they should be spread over two or more days. The normal order of the type of grants should be used to distribute beneficiaries over more than one day, i.e., disability, old age, war veterans and then the rest.
- There should be, as close as possible, an equal number of beneficiaries spread over each day of the payment cycle. In this regard, SOCPEN will be updated to reflect the number of beneficiaries actually paid at the pay-point.
- Pay-points are not moved to later in the pay-cycle by more than 5 payment days in any one month. Where the ultimate itinerary requires a pay-point to be shifted out by more than 5 days, this should be done over two months or more if appropriate.
- Itinerary must be re-assessed for any day where the pay-points for that day are completed three months in a row after 4.30 p.m.
- Beneficiaries requesting transfers between pay-points must be able to satisfy the department that they are resident in the area of the paypoint. Ideally, transfer requests should be made at the paypoint concerned at the helpdesk provided by the department. Alternatively, it should be made at the service or district offices.

In itineraries will be reviewed by the CMC and in instances of non-compliance will be attended to and corrective action taken.

**Inherent Risks/Challenges**

The CMC will maintain continuous vigilance against the obvious logistical risks such as:

- Exposure of Help Desk officers to danger in case of robberies,
- Misuse of equipment such as laptops, digital cameras,
- Abuse of enabling tools such as vehicles and airtime,
- Viability and security of the capturing system,
- System maintenance support,
- Unverified capturing which may lead to incorrect analysis,
- Adaptation of operations with Agency’s needs, and
- Certifying of incorrect payments to service providers.

**Conclusion**

The Centre is being piloted in order to create a permanent structure which will perform contract management, which is about ensuring that the agreed quality standards are delivered. Given the public finance management regime, it is crucially important to ensure that there is value for public funds.

The Centre other equally important task is not only to manage the legal obligations, but also to sustain and manage the underlying relationship. This mutual trust will facilitate a longer term investment which will make for the easy transfer of skills.
The book provides a practical guide to the design and implementation of a successful Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. The authors propose ten steps towards the design and implementation of a successful M&E system by providing a detailed description of steps and tasks required to complete each step. If followed, this model will help to answer the ‘so what’ question. Indeed, throughout the book the authors emphasise a results-based approach to monitoring and evaluation. The aim is to move away from the traditional focus on implementation to outcome and impact assessment.

The proposed model can be seen as a feedback system, which helps to build the knowledge base. It helps to provide information on the nature of projects, critical success factors or failures, and the reasons for the outcomes of every project, programme or policy intervention. In this way, it promotes learning and information sharing.

Furthermore, the proposed M&E system can be successfully applied to a myriad of situations or milieu. Thus, for developing countries, like South Africa, the model is particularly useful for measuring the impact of services delivered by governments on their communities. Similarly, in countries where governments are not directly involved in the provision of services, the model is still useful for evaluating the impact of policies on advancing growth and development.

The authors argue that the proposed system can be seen as a tool for public management. Thus, it helps to promote accountability and transparency within government or organisations. Stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to monitor and evaluate government’s performance against set targets. Therefore, where targets have not been met governments can be called to account. On the other hand, if the results are positive, the system will help to garner more support from various stakeholders, including donors.

The book is a must read for development practitioners, academics and researchers alike. It is also useful for government officials who wish to measure the impact of developmental programmes on communities.

**Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System**

Reviewed by Glenda Moss, Specialist Researcher, Learning and Knowledge Management, DPSA.

**Book Details**
Authors: Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist
Publication Year: 2004
Publisher: World Bank
Inquiries: www.worldbank.org
Operator: “Thank you for calling Pizza Hut. May I have your...”
Customer: “Halloo, can I order?”
Operator: “Can I have your multi purpose card number first, Sir?”
Customer: “It’s eh ..., hold on ... 698-45-54610 ...”
Operator: “OK... you’re ... Mr Sfiso Majola and you’re calling from 17 Retief Str. Your home number is 4094 2366, your office 7645 2302 and your mobile is 082 266 2566. Which number are you calling from now Sir?”
Customer: “Home! How did you get all my phone numbers?”
Operator: “We are connected to the system Sir.”
Customer: “Home! How did you get all my phone numbers?”
Operator: “We are connected to the system Sir.”
Customer: “May I order your Seafood Pizza...”
Operator: “That’s not a good idea Sir.”
Customer: “How come?”
Operator: “According to your medical records, you have high blood pressure and even higher cholesterol level Sir.”
Customer: “What?... What do you recommend then?”
Operator: “Try our Low Fat Hokkien Mee Pizza, You’ll like it”
Customer: “How do you know for sure?”
Operator: “You borrowed a book entitled ’Popular Hokkien Dishes’ from the National Library last week Sir.”
Customer: “OK I give up ... Give me three family sized ones then, how much will that cost?”
Operator: “That should be enough for your family of 10, Sir. The total is R149.99”
Customer: “Can I pay by credit card?”
Operator: “I’m afraid you have to pay us cash, Sir. Your credit card is over the limit and you’re owing your bank R3720.55 since October last year. That’s not including the late payment charges on your housing loan, Sir.”
Customer: “I guess I have to run to the neighbourhood ATM and withdraw some cash before your guy arrives.”
Operator: “You can’t Sir. Based on the records, you’ve reached your daily limit on machine withdrawal today.”
Customer: “Never mind just send the pizzas, I’ll have the cash ready. How long is it gonna take anyway?”
Operator: “About 45 minutes Sir, but if you can’t wait you can always come and collect it on your Green Double Cab...”
Customer: “What!”
Operator: “According to the details in system, you own a Nissan Double Cab, registration number NRB 1123...”
Customer: “*’!^ *%^*%^I7*”
Operator: “Better watch your language Sir. Remember on 15th July 1987 you were convicted of using abusive language on a policeman...”
Customer: [Speechless]
Operator: “Is there anything else Sir?”
Customer: “Nothing ... by the way ... aren’t you giving me that 3 free bottles of cola as advertised?”
Operator: “We normally would Sir, but based on your records you’re also diabetic...”
Customer: “Please cancel the order, my wife will have to cook...”

Beggars can be choosers...
A man walks past a beggar every day and gives him R10 and that continues for a year. Then suddenly the daily donation changes to R7.50. “Well,” the beggar thinks, “it’s still better than nothing.” A year passes in this way until the man’s daily donation suddenly becomes R5. “What’s going on now?” the beggar asks his donor. “First you give me R10 every day, then R7.50 and now only R5. What’s the problem?” “Well,” the man says, “last year my eldest son went to university. It’s very expensive, so I had to cut costs. This year my eldest daughter also went to university, so I had to cut my expenses even further.” “And how many children do you have?” the beggar asks. “Four,” the man replies. “Well,” says the beggar, “I hope you don’t plan to educate them all at my expense.”

Management training
A Senior Manager walks into a cafe with a shotgun in one hand and a bucket of manure in the other. He walks up to the counter and says to the waiter, “I want coffee.” The waiter says, “Whoa, sir! We’re still cleaning up your mess from yesterday. What the heck was that all about, anyway?” The manager smiles and proudly says, “My training for senior management dictates: come in, drink coffee, shoot some crap, leave a mess for others to clean up, disappear for the rest of the day.”

The Future of Customer Service
A man walks past a beggar every day and gives him R10 and that continues for a year. Then suddenly the daily donation changes to R7.50. “Well,” the beggar thinks, “it’s still better than nothing.” A year passes in this way until the man’s daily donation suddenly becomes R5. “What’s going on now?” the beggar asks his donor. “First you give me R10 every day, then R7.50 and now only R5. What’s the problem?” “Well,” the man says, “last year my eldest son went to university. It’s very expensive, so I had to cut costs. This year my eldest daughter also went to university, so I had to cut my expenses even further.” “And how many children do you have?” the beggar asks. “Four,” the man replies. “Well,” says the beggar, “I hope you don’t plan to educate them all at my expense.”

Odds & Ends
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"I trust that in reviewing my pocket money increase you will take into account the fact that I now have a BEE partner"