SMART CARD IN SOWETO

Dr Ntsika Msimang
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Talking technology

Research, technology and what can loosely be described as conversing are the dominant themes in this edition of the journal.

To some of us cellphones are a curse, making us instantly accessible wherever we are. Even when we are trying to relax after work with a quiet drink in the pub. To others, teenagers especially, cellphones are gadgets of endless fascination that must be constantly fiddled with. But to many other South Africans cellphones are a vital form of communication. With the help of those masts disguised as fake trees, cellphones are the one form of modern technology that is accessible to most South Africans. And it is this accessibility and reach which makes cellphones the ideal tool to assist in service delivery – through what is known as mobile government, m-government.

Computers are not as readily accessible as cellphones but they are of course vital in all forms of service delivery. Government services can be accessed online and communication and efficiency are increased, e-government.

The all-important subject of research, as discussed at the Public Service Research Colloquium, is also reliant on communication technology to generate knowledge, encourage innovation and assist development.

The reach and influence of research also formed part of the discussion at the CAPAM Conversation which focused on the interaction between academics and public service practitioners. Conversation flowed as contributors debated this important interaction: its form, its faults, its successes – and how to make it better.

Academics and public servants agreed that more effective cooperation – in essence, talking – would help in putting policy into practice.

In this case technology would help the talking. And as we embrace technology we have to start thinking if this computer technology is “open source” or not, another issue discussed in detail in this edition of the journal.

Amid all this talk of technology and communication it is reassuring to see that something as old-fashioned as a journal printed on paper can make a valuable contribution to the promotion of knowledge and the sharing of experience in the public service and beyond.

We hope that the updating and stylish redesign of the journal will improve this vital form of communication in the face of competition for cellphones and computers. One of the most interesting and appealing ways of sharing knowledge is through the problems faced and lessons learnt by outstanding individuals providing services to the community, whether it be in impoverished rural areas or in the bustling big city. As is the case with Dr Ntsika Msimang of the Meraka Institute in Soweto who is featured on the cover.

Christian Stephen
Government and labour have been involved in protracted negotiations which culminated in a wage agreement for the public sector. It was agreed that there will be a 7.5% general salary increase, the introduction of the Occupation Specific Dispensation for identified categories of employees, increased housing allowance, increased medical assistance, alignment with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and increases in the night shift and standard and special danger allowances.

Government remains steadfast in its belief that this comprehensive offer addresses the interests of all public sector unions and the developmental needs of our nation. With this offer, employees will see real increase (over and above inflation) of 5% over two years (including adjustments on pay progression).

In introducing the Occupation Specific Dispensation, educators, nurses and legally qualified employees will see a substantial additional adjustment during the course of this financial year. In addition, this proposal includes fast-tracking the implementation of the increased housing allowance which rises to R500 per month from 01 July 2007.

Recognising the long service of many of those who are at the lower levels of our public service, we are moving those who have worked at level two for 20 years or more to level three, which will give an effective increase of 16.5% on their basic salary. Employees on level one with five or more years’ service will move to level two, which will give them an effective increase of 17.5%.

As government, we firmly believe that remuneration must include the long-term benefits for a secure and healthy workforce, such as retirement benefits and appropriate medical support. We are also committed to providing remuneration that recognizes good performance, skills, length of service and qualifications. This is in line with our commitment to retain and attract the best into the public service.

Minister for Public Service and Administration
Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

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By Themba Gadebe

Gauteng Health MEC Brian Hlongwa has called on the public health sector to focus on community based health care to help in reducing long queues in health institutions. He said the Community-Based Health Care Services would be the nerve centre of the health care delivery.

"If we cannot improve the health status of our people at this level [community based health care] we will continue dealing with long increase in building ahead of the 2016 FIFA World Cup South Africa was reported in the construction industry.

According to StatsSA the financial intermediation, insurance, real estate and business services industry's employment rose by 17 000 employees (0.9%), due to increased real estate, insurance and pension funding activity. The community, social and personal services industry reported a quarterly increase of 25 000 employees (1.2%), due to increased employment in national departments, provincial administrations, local government and other central government activities and education.

StatsSA data also showed gross earnings paid to employees in the industries of manufacturing, electricity ad gas, construction, wholesale and trade, financial institutions and insurance collectively registered a decrease of R12.249 million. However, gross earnings paid to employees in the mining and quarrying industry experienced an increase of R41 million (0.4 percent) compared to December last year.

The increased growth in employment has been attributed to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA).

AsgiSA aims to achieve a six percent annual economic growth by 2010 and halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. In March 2006 the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition was also launched to identify scarce skills needed to grow the economy in order to meet the objectives of AsgiSA. Governments further efforts to boost job creation include implementing the Expanded Public Works Programme which is a nation-wide programme covering all spheres of government and state-owned enterprises. The programme aims to draw significant numbers of the country's unemployed into productive work accompanied by further skills training. – BuaNews

Community-based health care will reduce queues

By Themba Gadebe

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"If we cannot improve the health status of our people at this level [community based health care] we will continue dealing with long queues at our hospitals and clinics," he said.

The programme is meant to create at least one million jobs over a period of five years. Government has identified certain sectors as vehicles for implementing the EPWP programme and the health sector is one of them. Others include environmental and cultural sectors, the social sector which includes health and social development departments, infrastructure sector and the economic sector.

The programmes in the health sector involve early identification of families in need, orphans and vulnerable children, addressing the needs of child headed households, linking families and caregivers with poverty alleviation programmes and services in the community and patient care and support related to HIV and AIDS and other chronic conditions, among others.

Hlongwa said the EPWP was in line with government’s aim to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014, and bring unemployed people into productive work. “We have identified the need to ensure that while we work tirelessly for economic growth we also narrow the gap between the growing economy and the large numbers of unskilled and unemployed people.

“We acknowledged that as long as economic growth does not translate into visible benefits to those of our people who are unemployed, such growth will not be sustainable," he added.

Hlongwa explained the EPWP was founded to create additional job opportunities and skills development, and training which should ultimately lead to formally recognized qualifications. The EPWP, he said, provided an opportunity to work with volunteers and to contribute in developing the skills base and capacity to deliver quality service in an area of great need. – BuaNews

4 news in brief

Employment in business sector increases

By Michael Appel

Employment in the formal non-agricultural business sector has increased by about 17 000 people, according to the March 2007 Quarterly Employment Statistics (QES) survey done by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA).

The formal non-agricultural business sector includes industries such as mining, manufacturing, electricity and gas, construction, trade, financial institutions, real estate, transport and the communication industry. The formal non-agricultural business sector has recorded an employee growth of 62 000 persons.

The mining and quarrying industry experienced a 1.3 percent growth with an increase of 1 000 employees (1.9%). An increase of 13 000 employees (2.8%) due to the increase in building ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa was reported in the construction industry.

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World Cup 2010 boosts construction industry

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eThekweni’s road project to create jobs

By Thapelo Sakoana

eThekweni’s innovative road maintenance project, which will create sustainable jobs for numerous people, has been hailed as setting the precedent for other municipalities in SA to adopt the same model.

The Zibambele Poverty Alleviation project was originally started in Inanda, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu in 2003 with the aim of maintaining recently constructed roads, while providing sustainable jobs to destitute women-headed households.

The eThekweni Municipality said in a statement that although the programme was similar to another one run by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport, Zibambele had significant differences. According to the municipality, the two initiatives differ in that there was active involvement of local councillors in Zibambele who monitored its implementation.

Contractors reported to local labour supervisors who in turn reported to project co-coordinators, according to the statement.

“The municipality has managed to restore a sense of identity and social re-integration,” the municipality concluded. – BuaNews

ICTs key to service delivery and economic growth

By Michael Appel

Information Communication Technology (ICT) have been identified as key to service delivery and one of the essential factors in promoting economic growth in the South African economy.

The National Government Research Report, identifying various key trends in South Africa’s ICT development, was released. It focused on ICT development, management skills, and convergence in cyberspace, cyber security and e-Government.

The research manager for National Government at ForgeAhead, Nicky Pope said “national government departments are moving to citizen-centered service delivery and not bureaucracy-centered governance. “The departments are gearing towards results and attempting to be more service delivery orientated.”

Ms Pope added that the country’s ICT development was focused on using technology for economic and social development. In line with this, South Africa’s IT Strategy Project (SAITIS) was established jointly by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Communications in order to promote a robust ICT sector, increase population usage of ICTs for economic and social growth, foster a knowledgeable ICT workforce and create a culture of ICT innovation.

The establishment of SAITIS has resulted in increasing internet services to schools, creating an academy for software development, providing community internet access points and installing public information terminals allowing for access to government services.

ForgeAhead research found future investment in technology focused on internet connectivity, adding “there will be heavy investment in information security software especially in anti-virus, firewall and spam protection software,” she said.

A survey was also conducted by ForgeAhead from February to April 2007 in different government clusters namely, the Governance and Administration Cluster, the Social Cluster, the Economic Cluster, the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster and the International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster.

In terms of personal computers (PCs) with access to the internet within the various clusters, research found the Economic Cluster led with 90%, the Governance Cluster had 83%, and the JCPS Cluster registered 75% PC internet usage followed by the Social Cluster with 65%.

The report included factors which inhibited ICT growth and development in government departments and found "skills, staff capacities and budgets allocated for human resources” to be the greatest inhibitors.

President Thabo Mbeki, in his State of the Nation Address earlier this year, also stressed that government is planning to improve competition in the economy, lower the cost of doing business and promote investment, and further develop high-speed national and international broadband capacity.

ForgeAhead announced the current trend is that government will “promote broadband [and ICT usage] not only for economic gains but also to achieve good governance.” – BuaNews
At the launch of the first Research Colloquium in October 2005 I made a number of comments on where we should be heading with research in the Public Service. As background to this paper I therefore want to revisit those points and give possible pointers to the road ahead.

At the time I said that Public Service research should be a systematic search for knowledge, happening in diverse ways, and by using a combination of orthodox and unconventional techniques. However, this search for knowledge is not for its own sake (as in a traditional university) but is purposeful and for the public good.

Unfortunately public service research is, more often than not, theoretically weak, lacks rigour in its choice and use of methods and inconsistent in terms of quality. I suggested that methods could include protocols for testing innovations, making use of peer reviews, using standard proposal and report formats and ensuring sources are acknowledged.

In practice most public service research is a separate activity divorced from programme management and driven by short-term priorities, and conceptualised without theoretical foundation. Of concern is that we outsource most of our research responsibilities to service providers who do not have a proven track record of rigorous research or without building internal capacity to eventually lead, or even participate in, research projects. Most worrying though is that research conducted in this way is often inaccessible to the rest of the public service and thus keeps us “knowledge poor”. And then there are those who are just repackaging and reselling data and findings already in our possession.

We recognised the need for a public service research strategy that facilitates easy entry into this (sometimes mysterious) world of research and builds on cooperative partnerships. Such a strategy shouldn’t involve new structures but rather use existing (research) bodies and creatively employ ICT solutions.

I suggested that public service research should develop an awareness of relevant methodological options and choices. It should also, wherever possible, encourage methodological triangulation, and the streamlining and integration of research. Public service research must also improve methodological practices through recording experiences so that good practices can be identified and promoted.

What has happened since then?

Since the launch of the public service research colloquium, we have investigated “revolving door” partnerships and sabbaticals where academics can spend time in the public service, performing public service duties, and in the process learning how the state works. A policy framework will be finalised in the latter part of the year. Senior public servants, according to this idea, will be able spend time in tertiary institutions teaching or, more importantly, conducting research in relevant disciplines.

There has also been high-level engagement between academics and public service practitioners through the Ministry of Public Service and Administration and the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM). The Cabinet has also since emphasised the need for peer review as an approach to improving public service performance.

Shaping the research agenda: the mid-term review

What should shape the research agenda are high-level objectives such as those based on the Mid-term Review tabled in the January 2007 Lekgola. The review and its objectives are directed by our 2014 vision: "Guided by the Reconstruction and Development Programme, our vision is to build a society that is truly united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic. Central to this is a single and integrated economy that benefits all."

According to the Mid-term Review, the 2014 vision will be attained if poverty is halved and unemployment reduced, if skills required by the economy are harnessed, and if the state can ensure that all South Africans are able to enjoy the dignity of freedom. There must be compassionate government service to the people and a massive reduction of cases of TB, diabetes, malnutrition and maternal deaths. We have to turn the tide against HIV and AIDS, and strive to eliminate malaria. There has to be a reduction of the number of serious and priority crimes and cases awaiting trial. South Africa should be positioned as an effective force in global relations. All of these, according to the review, would reflect changes in the quality of life.

In addition to these requirements for the improvement in the quality of life, the review calls for intensified action that is required in context of AugiSA, Macrosocial Strategy and the Programme of Action. It also recognises the need to speed up policy processes and policy actions for decisive delivery.

A closer look at the Mid-term Review indicators reveals both highlights and lowlights. One of the major highlights in the social sector is the exceptional social grant coverage attained where bene-
ficiary numbers grew from 2.5 million in 1999 to almost 11 million in 2006. Although these developments tempt us towards a debate on a basic income grant (another research agenda point), we sometimes forget to pause, appreciate this achievement and reflect on lessons learned.

Unfortunately there are also the lowlights. Our health indicators are showing a very unhealthy picture, the major cause of the drop in our Human Development Index rating. Life expectancy has dropped by more than 12 years and maternal mortality almost doubled. This obviously reflects the devastating impact of HIV and Aids, especially on the poor. As public administrators these numbers do raise a number of administration-related research questions. For example: Are clinics and rural hospitals appropriately staffed and equipped to provide proper services to pregnant mothers? Do we have the systems and social services in place (at least until we significantly reduce maternal mortality) to deal with the traumatic impact on the surviving babies and families? These are hard questions to ask but they are at the heart of our focus during the remainder of the current term of office.

Let me briefly pause at one of the governance indicators, namely audit compliance. On the positive side we have seen a drive towards increasing public sector auditing standards to beyond what is expected from the private sector. Unfortunately this has also led to more national departments receiving qualified audits. Although still very high at above 50% in 2004/05, local government is steadily improving in its ability to properly manage finances and other resources.

On the continental front South Africa has become a significant actor and troop-contributor in the peace-keeping processes on the continent. We have a strong presence in the DRC with many public servants and members of the armed forces doing exceptional work under extremely difficult circumstances. In April we celebrated our first opportunity to chair the United Nations Security Council. Once again one can start posing research questions: What are the (theoretical) bases of our post reconstruction and development initiatives on the continent? Are these only informed by our (somewhat unique) local experience or do we engage with the continent on its own terms, terms that are thoroughly researched?

In the context of these high-level objectives, we need to ask: What are the research questions? Instead of actually posing the research questions, I want to propose areas of research that I think are significant in the public service. These are:

• Change in class structure and dealing with the “poverty trap”;
• Limited capacity of the economy to create employment;
• Mobilisation of private and other sectors;
• Alignment of Fiscal and monitoring objectives;
• EPWP massification, especially in Social Sector;
• Lowering cost of doing business (e.g. telecoms);
• Comprehensive social security, social cohesion, integrated anti-poverty strategy (as announced in the State of the Nation Address, February 2007), mortality trends;
• Reforming the judiciary;
• Gender, youth and civic activism, and
• International context, especially post-conflict resolution.

Some of the research questions may have political answers, others management answers, but some may beg for more in-depth research to be conducted; the kind of research that will help us find simple and innovative solutions that adhere to the basic constitutional principles of equity, effectiveness and efficiency.

Conclusion

As way of conclusion, I want to briefly look at some research modalities that are significant for public service research. We need to ask ourselves if we need a “custodian” of government research and, if we do, should the custodian be sectoral or not? Provinces and local government need to be part of this process. We need to ensure that there is access to reports and primary data.

Good practices in public service research also need to be disseminated and shared. Perhaps we need a binding ethical code. What is urgently needed is the sharing of good practice in public service research. That will enable us to be proud when we present research papers that are academically sound, rigorous and peer-reviewed. Then we will produce reports that are useful and not left gathering dust on some obscure shelf.

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**Social Grant beneficiaries (Source NT)**

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Sources: MRC, StatsSA
Researching rural communities: the Case of Mpumalanga Province

Xoliswa Skomolo shares experiences of the Research Unit, in the Premier’s Office in Mpumalanga, in working with rural communities of the province and outlines the challenges of making government research more meaningful to the service delivery agenda of government.

Mpumalanga is a province with a population of nearly four million people. About 60% of this population comes from rural areas where 70% of communities live on commercial farms, with 43% living on trust land. In these communities there is a preponderance of illiteracy, poverty, lack of access to resources, and poorly developed infrastructure.

There are also long distances between settlements with poor transport facilities and longer traveling time from one area to another, and poorly researched – scarcity of data in all areas of social research.

When we started our research we assumed that research method approaches are universal and can be applied in all social situations. We also assumed that strangers (consultants) can conduct research studies in rural and/or traditional communities and bring out information that is reliable which can be trusted for decision-making.

We assumed that the concept “rurality” is uniform. Our government often talks of rural development and urban development. We may ask: “Is a community in a village in KwaZulu-Natal or in Transkei rural in the same manner as a community in a commercial farm in Mpumalanga or a community in a trust?”

Lastly, we assumed that research determines the developmental path of service delivery.

Methodological findings

There are two case studies that we base our methodological findings on. The first is the investigation on the causes of crime in the villages surrounding the KaNyamazane area, a study conducted in 2002. The second one is the investigation of the state of service delivery on farms which was conducted in 2004.

Through these case studies, we found that conventional methods alone could not elicit meaningful information. Linked to this, we found out that the unconventional methods we had to resort to required modification in application on farming communities and on trusts.

We also discovered that cultural and language differences between a researcher and the community he/she is researching have an impact on the information that comes out. We are certain now that the longer a researcher interacts with a community, the more refined the information becomes as trust develops between the researcher and the researched community.

When a researcher has more time to interact with the community there is enough time to: organise key informants; identify key informants in the community and conduct in-depth interviews; meet and interact with members of the community, even in unconventional venues like pubs and churches; attend community meetings convened by chiefs/headmen; interviews teachers and senior learners, nurses in a clinic and patients; and mix freely with the members of the community which ensures that he/she is able to source information from all the societal strata in that community.

The community being researched also becomes a resource for the researcher. He/she learns from the community how to solicit more information and gets suggestions as to how certain problems of that community can be solved.

This interaction of the researcher with the community, however, creates a relationship that puts the burden of reliance on the researcher by the community as a person who will come back to them with answers and solutions to their problems. This is where the challenges of a government researcher start.

Our findings become an affirmation of the non-conventional methods we read about, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), and Participatory Action Research (PAR), which advocate that development researchers must “be a catalyst to support service delivery, assisting disadvantaged communities in defining their problems clearly and supporting them as they work towards the solutions of issues that concern them”.

As such, the development researcher becomes a teacher and a learner in the community. He/she becomes a member of the community who does advocacy work for that community. This is in contrast to the expert/academic researcher who is usually a consultant, and whose pre-occupation is research jargon such as objectivity/subjectivity, and has his/her interaction with the researched restricted by conventional research scientific procedures and practices, time-frames and deadlines.

This non-conventional method was found to be very effective in rural communities to supplement whatever questionnaires had been drawn up.

A researcher who adopts this research strategy returns with massive data, a deep knowledge and insight into the problems and the thinking in that community as to how their problems can be solved. The findings of the study become a totality of a broad spectrum of concerns and the recommendations emanate from a wide consultation with the researched community.
Challenges
One of the major challenges facing government researchers is the unavailability of baseline data. There are also contradictory statistics from establishments such as municipalities, Statistics South Africa, Demarcation Board and other sources. Hence most of the data is unreliable.

There is also sometimes a hostile attitude to research. This is coupled with high expectations of the community on the government researcher who is seen as a person who can put pressure on government to solve the problems facing the community.

With regard to the dissemination of feedback research information to rural communities, systems of research and data interpretations are beyond their comprehension. This has a negative impact on campaigns. Perhaps the greatest challenge is government’s reluctance to make decisions that are based on research recommendations.

Conclusion
One tends to buy into Archie Mafeje’s analysis that “neither the social sciences nor their research outputs have an impact on ‘development’. Rather, it is governments, to which social scientists might pander, that have an impact on development or lack of it.”
The NRF and shifting the boundaries of knowledge in Public Administration

Dr Andrew M Kaniki, National Research Foundation, explains how the foundation is facilitating the creation of knowledge, innovation and development

As a way of background, I want to highlight the National Research Foundation’s (NRF) mission statement and briefly highlight its goals and priorities. Through funding, the NRF seeks to develop human resources and provide necessary research facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge, and thereby contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of South Africa.

Its core goals are to substantially increase numbers of high-quality human resources. The foundation seeks to ensure the generation of high-quality knowledge in prioritised areas that addresses national and continental development needs. The utilisation of knowledge, technology transfer and innovation to ensure tangible benefits to society from knowledge created is one of the major core goals.

Lastly, NRF also seeks to provide state-of-the-art research infrastructure that is essential to facilitating the development of high-quality human resources and knowledge.

In addition to the above goals, the NRF has a range of cross-cutting strategic priorities: redressing inequalities in race and gender; adherence to quality; internationalising research; focussing on Africa; positioning the NRF within the NSI; stimulating the interface between science and society; and transforming the NRF organisationally.

In view of the importance of human resources for the country, the NRF has identified what it sees as its key driver – to produce large numbers of high-quality PhDs required to provide the bedrock for an innovative and entrepreneurial knowledge society.

RISA and knowledge fields development
An important aspect in the NRF’s work is knowledge production. In this area, the NRF has initiated Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA). Its purpose and framework is to invest in knowledge, people and infrastructure. It seeks to promote basic and applied research and innovation. It is intended to develop research capacity and advance equity and redress to unlock the full creative potential of the research community; facilitate strategic partnerships and knowledge networks and uphold research excellence.

In terms of the RISA operational approach programmes and functions are largely supported by a parliamentary core grant. They are managed by the NRF as a service provider. Other support comes from the Innovation Fund, Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme(dit); Scars Skills (DoL), and South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP). There are also programmes to facilitate the interface between science and society (SAASTA - South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement).

The KDF, which falls under that the Directorate for Knowledge Field Development, is mandated to promote new knowledge and research capacity by stimulating the entire spectrum of knowledge fields. Researchers (as individuals and their professional and research organisational capacity) are engaged in this process.

In terms of the KDF scope, knowledge field development is achieved by facilitating the advancement of the frontiers of existing knowledge and expertise; developing new fields of knowledge and the necessary, associated research capacity; and investigating and analysing research interests, trends and strengths within and across disciplines and knowledge fields.

Furthermore, knowledge field development is achieved by the promotion of active interaction between researchers within and across disciplines and knowledge fields; strengthening scientific and professional organisations of the South African research community; and strengthening networking within and beyond the South African research community.

All this is done in order to refine or redefine research calls (content, research priorities and funding policies) in light of the above development incentives.

The focus area programme
The NRF has a portfolio of focus areas. Collectively they provide a broad framework for researchers across the spectrum of disciplines (the natural, social and human sciences, engineering and technology) to pursue their research interests taking into account the macro-environment as well as relevant national developments.

The focus areas include the challenge of globalisation: perspectives from the global south; conservation and management of ecosystems and biodiversity; distinct South African research opportunities; economic growth and international competitiveness; education and the challenges of change; indigenous knowledge systems; information and communication technology and the information society in South Africa; sustainable livelihoods and the eradication of poverty; and unlocking the future: advancing and strengthening strategic knowledge.

There are certain conditions and guidelines placed by NRF for focus area funding. Projects that fall under certain focus areas are funded only when they show potential to generate new knowledge or improved understanding. They are also funded if they enable South Africans to become world-class researchers in their disciplines or fields.

They must also provide an opportunity for South African researchers to make cutting-edge contributions to their disciplines and/or areas of enquiry. Research projects should also develop research capacity – especially among young researchers, black researchers and women researchers. They should be designed to impact skills and encourage students to be researchers; contribute to the maintenance and growth of the knowledge base; extend the
research infrastructure base, and strengthen disciplines while at the same time stimulating multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary work.

Projects funded should also enable South Africa to benefit from research conducted throughout the world.

**Focus areas for public administration**

In focusing on public administration, I want to select two areas and their research themes which are sub-focus areas that are useful in the production of knowledge in the public administration discipline. The first focus area is that which looks at research that has distinct South African research opportunities. The sub-focus area here is that of “societies in transition”.

The idea behind this theme is that South African society is exposed to the impact of the legacy of apartheid and the challenges of transition, globalisation and HIV and AIDS. These offer unique possibilities for the study of socio-political transformation. Areas of immediate enquiry are, amongst others, the socio-economic impact of conflict and violence, poverty and inequality as well as diseases, particularly HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria, all of which profoundly influence social transformation, and research into change management approaches in the context of diversity and conflict would benefit development in South Africa and the region.

The second focus area that is significant to public administration is globalisation (depending on how the research question is constructed). Its sub-focus area is “state, society and conflict resolution”. Significant to public administration is that globalisation has recast the nation state as the primary means of political organisation. While its role in managing conflict, both internally and internationally, remains robust, its sway over the economy has been substantially eroded.

Given this, new challenges to social and political organisation have arisen. How these are to be understood and managed in contemporary times offers a rich seam of inquiry. Research might include globalisation, hegemony and discontent; regional and supra-natural organizations: problems and possibilities; city and sub-national responses to globalization; the changing nature of political community, and globalisation and crime war/conflict/terror and peace – its changing bases and faces.

**Shifting boundaries of knowledge project**

The shifting boundaries of the knowledge project seek to identify and make visible research issues and challenges of highest importance in SA. It mobilises the Social Science, Law and Humanities (SSLH) community to engage in scholarly debate on their position and contribute to national challenges. The project provides a focus for future research priorities within and between disciplines, not only within SSLH but also across the whole sciences and knowledge system.

It seeks to open up a healthy dialogue on the place and relevance of knowledge creation and dissemination in society and inform policy and practice. For further insights on this, I recommend a reading of a book titled *Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge: A View on Social Science, Law and Humanities in South Africa* (ed. T. Marcus and A. Holmanner, Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press 2006).

**Some SSLH knowledge considerations**

The first SSLH knowledge consideration involves framing the human and social. Here knowledge production is about the systematic, critical, analytical exploration of multi-dimensional, complex social world and human beings present and past. The second important consideration is inequality and difference which capture a range of concerns that occupy scholarship in SSLH in contemporary world. The third consideration is regulation and governance where interest in ideas about, and practices of, regulation in society is driven by both practical imperatives and intellectual challenges. The last SSLH knowledge consideration is science and society. Here, knowledge produced must be both authentic and authoritative, and therefore of societal value.

**Conclusion**

Perhaps closer to home, I want to conclude by stating that the NRF, in its quest to improve and develop theory advancement and research capacity within the public administration discipline, organised a workshop which engaged on ways of achieving this. The workshop was attended by 20 participants. Participants were invited largely on the basis of the contribution that could be made to the academic development of public administration within the country, rather than on an institutional representative basis. The workshop selected areas for research which included democracy, sustainability, relevance, empowerment, development and governance.
Citizens must be given information and empowered to express their voice through, for example, citizen report cards or community score cards.
Public Expenditure Tracking Studies: Rationale and Results

Public Expenditure Tracking Studies (PETS) is a diagnostic tool that tracks resource flows from central government through line ministries and intermediary administrative levels (provinces, districts) to the service delivery unit (e.g., hospital or clinic). It examines budget allocations, timeliness of funding, local discretion in use of resources, and degree of leakage. It also compares resources at each level (if possible, vis-à-vis performance) and reasons for variances. Lastly, PETS assesses “fiduciary risk,” which is a risk where resources are not accounted for, or are not used for intended purposes.

Rationale for PETS – a health focus

The main reason for the PETS initiative is that some countries are already approaching or have exceeded the CMH’s standard of $33 per capita health spending, yet health indicators are still poor. In Botswana, for example, per capita health spending is $171; Lesotho is at $29; Namibia at $99; South Africa at $206, and Swaziland at $86.

Some countries now exceed the 15% Abuja target of government allocation to health, yet health indicators are still poor. These countries include the Democratic Republic of Congo, 16%; Mozambique, 20%; Namibia, 20%; Tanzania, 15%; Sao Tome and Principe, 15%. Large external infusion of health resources (GEF, GAVI, WB, PEPFAR, etc) are yet to demonstrate equally large improvement in health outcomes.

The rationale for PETS is therefore the need for a new tool to analyse health spending and service delivery. It is a result of a realization that there is limited evidence of the impact of health spending on health coverage and outcomes. The traditional focus of inquiry has been on household data (HHS) and demand-side analysis, and little inquiry on supply side, especially on how financing translates into actual service provision.

PETS is also a result of global and local demand for evidence of efficiency and quality of service delivery. What works? What does not work and why? Lastly, PETS came about because there was a lack of a reliable disaggregated data in countries with poor governance and weak institutions.

PETS and new approaches to development aid

PETS was also impelled by new approaches to development aid. These include a move towards budget support and PRSCs. This means that if donors have to put their assistance into the budget and give up control of management of inputs (as in projects), they need to be confident that the money is being used for their intended purposes, such as minimal fiduciary risk.

Another new approach is output-based aid where the health sector is being asked to account for its performance and outcomes, especially in the Millennium Development Goals. Here, PETS can provide a critical monitoring and evaluation function.

The last new development aid approach that impelled PETS is transparency and accountability. Global agencies and local constituencies are demanding stronger fiduciary and performance systems. PETS in this case becomes a diagnostic tool to identify weak areas and can also lead to practical solutions to address weak areas.

PETS’ approach and design considerations

PETS’ approach and design considerations are highly context-specific. Its management systems reflect the accretion of historical, political, cultural and administrative factors. It also considers the co-existence of formal and informal systems. On the formal systems, the administrative systems of codified laws, orders, procedures, and practices such as budget management, accounting system, drug or equipment supply, personnel system, MIS, private payments (user fees) are considered. The problem is that even in formal systems, procedures may not be followed, or rules may not be clearly specified, leading to “discretionary” behaviour. Informal systems and practices include, for example, payments to expedite receipt of resources or services; power structures between centre and periphery, or between local councils and facilities. PETS also relies on “hard” and “soft” information sources. Hard data includes financial records, drug stock cards, etc, whereas soft information involves interviews of managers, staff, and patients. It emphasizes the importance of perceptions and guarantees confidentiality. Also important, are unannounced visits, especially when the visited facility is in its routine state.

PETS values the need for representative and statistically valid sample. This is mainly because the standard nomenclature for facilities may not reflect actual services they render. It also sees the need to distinguish between corruption versus “wasting” of resources. Corruption is a deliberate leakage of resources with intention to privately capture benefits, whereas “wasting” constitutes inefficiency in resource use, for example, expired drugs, under-qualified or over-qualified staff.

The challenge here is how to account for “honest errors” in reporting or underreporting due to, among others, unqualified staff? This is a question that has not been answered.

Lastly, the PETS approach and design sees the importance of the triangulation of results. It argues that there has to be a multilevel and multi-angular validation of data. Again, there is a problem valuing in-kind resources such as drugs, supplies, TA, training etc.

Key findings of PETS

Through PETS a number of findings were made. One of these is the prevalence of staff absences and ghost workers in health institutions. There is also diversion (leakage) of non-wage expenditures
and “local capture” of resources by councils and other influential community groups or individuals. There is also late or partial receipt of salaries and non-wage funds. Accounting and reporting systems are also universally poor across African countries. More worrying is that there is widespread lack of public information on resource availability, especially at local level. PET5S was initiated in (most) African countries with varying experiences. In Uganda, despite significant increases in budget allocations for primary schools in the 1980s until mid-1990s, enrolment in primary schools remained stagnant. PET5S was initiated to find why this was the case. In its findings, PET5S found out that between 1991-1995 on average only 13% of annual per-student grants reached primary schools and that 37% were misappropriated or “captured” by local officials for purposes other than education. There was also a fairly inequitable allocation of funds. For example, larger schools and those with wealthier pupils benefited disproportionately from annual student grants while less than half of schools received any funds at all. The results of PET5S led to the realisation that conventional mechanisms such as audits and supervision are not enough, especially if institutions are weak. Citizens must be given information and empowered to express their voice through, for example, citizen report cards or community score cards. In Uganda public advertising of transfers from central treasury to local councils are now routine (posting the budget on the school door or wall). Rates of leakage of non-wage funds have also declined dramatically. In Tanzania it was found that direct donor contributions tended to favor better-off districts. It was also found that councils ignore many directives; there were high rates of leakage in non-wage funds, and there was a general underreporting of “other charges”. Off the recorded expenditures, councils spent more than 50% of funds on items not directly benefiting service delivery. There was also weak accounting, internal control, and auditing; and weak monitoring by parent ministries. Moreover, the cash payroll system provides large scope for paying ghost workers. The impact of PET5S in Tanzania was not as positive. This was because the wide scope of surveys, very limited sample sizes and non-uniformity of instruments over time constrained the conclusiveness of the PET5S. Except for the implementation of IFMIS, no major actions were taken to address the shortcomings. A major positive result of the PET5S was that the Tanzanian Treasury decided to advertise in the media all transfers to districts. Another case study is that of Mozambique where government had received a lot of external assistance since the end of the civil war and had initial reservations about PET5S. In this country, PET5S found that there were large variations across districts in non-wage recurrent spending, staffing and drug supply where there was inefficiency, favouritism and corruption. There were also severe problems in budget execution, with late first transfers (four months late) and slow processing of accounts, resulting in low budget predictability. Record keeping at provincial, district and facility levels was weak, often with large discrepancies between levels. There was “free-riding” of influential citizens and large user-fee revenue losses as a result. As a result of PET5S, donors deliberately allocated more equitably across provinces and districts. However, government allocation remains strongly incremental. To reduce fiduciary risk, the Mozambican government increased the level of spending to be approved by central HQ, but this further slowed down budget execution. The user-fee system remained largely “unformed”. In Nigeria, PET5S was motivated by the desire to assess decentralised delivery of health services under a federal system. PET5S found that there was large-scale leakage of public resources in Kogi state, away from original budget allocations. About 42% of health staff had not been paid salaries for more than six months, even though budget allocations were sufficient to cover wage costs. There was corruption in that, to augment salaries, public servants act as private providers, “expropriating” drug supplies and selling them to patients. In Nigeria there was not much documented after the above-stated PET5S experiences, but PET5S suggested that local citizens should be provided with more information about budget resources to hold their local representatives accountable. Conclusion I want to conclude this paper by stating briefly the implications and limitations of PET5S findings. On implications, I want to state that advocating for CMS’ $33 health spending per capita, and the African Union’s Abuja target of 15% health share, are not sufficient conditions to improve health outcomes. We need to look more closely at how existing resources are used. That will mean focusing on actual receipts, speed and equity of central flows to districts and facilities. It will require effective use of received resources, and the institutional and staff incentives to use resources properly. “Top-down” audits and supervision are not highly reliable under weak management systems. “Bottom-up” efforts to empower local communities with budget information and “citizens’ voice” are equally important. PET5S has its own limitations. The main limitation is that PET5S only provides part of the answer. The analyses of inter- and intrasectoral budget allocation, expenditure incidence, and social impact (using household data or through participatory approaches) are equally important. There is also a need to link PET5S with sector outcomes, possibly through Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys. The total amount of resources flowing into the sector, through National Health Accounting is also important to know. PET5S should supplement rather than supplant routine HMIS and FMS. If there is no good financial “paper trail”, PET5S results would be very weak. Another significant limitation is the lack of standardised PET5S indicators to compare countries (unlike DHS). OPM has suggested 22 core indicators encompassing formal and informal systems. A more general research limitation is that surveys provide information but do not necessarily result in change. Lack of information about the nature and scope of problems is not always the primary constraint to improving public expenditure management and service delivery. However, the importance of continuity of tracking and its link with efforts to strengthen institutions and routine systems needs to be emphasised. In closing, PET5S should be linked with efforts to increase “voice” of community and other local stakeholders.
The Conflict and Governance Facility: An evolving model for productive dialogue

Charmaine Estment, Conflict and Governance Facility Programme Co-ordinator South Africa, explains how the organization goes about the difficult task of building peace through knowledge.

As a way of introduction, take for example "bio-fuel technology" as a policy issue as written about in a special edition of Autoinsight titled "Biofuels – has its time come?" (March 2006): "For instance, should a crop such as peanuts be used to make fuel, or would the villagers be better off eating the peanuts? Or selling them? Or should they press them to make oil, for cooking or for selling, and feed the high-protein residue 'cake' to livestock, which in turn they can either eat or sell, while using the livestock wastes (and the crop wastes) to make compost to renew the soil, or to generate biogas for cooking and heating?

"Or should they grow a different crop altogether? Should a grain crop be distilled to make ethanol fuel or should villagers eat the grain? If they use the grain for livestock feed, it can be used for ethanol and still feed the livestock: the distillation process to produce ethanol converts the carbohydrates in the grain while leaving the protein. The protein residue is excellent stock feed, which can be supplemented by forage crops which humans can't eat. This could mean improved utilisation of resources."

This extract captures the nature of the multi-faceted debate around real life and, of course, policy issues. It highlights the trade-off, the concerns and the need for quality information. It shows potential and actual stakeholders and the complexity of the issue. At the heart of the debate, there are decisions to be made.

"How are these decisions to be made and what forums could bring people together to explore questions such as these?

Policy research and dialogues around issues of existence are but some of the mechanisms that could be used to reach such decisions and to guide people including the policy makers towards an optimum choice of action.

Certainly, productive dialogues could go some lengths to producing better informed decisions which will lead to more inclusive, legitimised policies. A plethora of forums exists and work with greater or lesser degrees of success. In mature democracies, these forums often have established track records and work with high levels of confidence in taking such debates forward. In younger democracies, we are still searching, exploring and questioning through forums and organisations that might be said to be on the "cusp".

CAGE is one such "cusp" organisation. It intersects research, theories, practice, policy, communities, government and donors, and absorbs some of the complexities of these many actors at a common point.

Stated differently, it has been said that research wants to explain and understand the world by adding to the body of knowledge while, on the other hand, development practice and policy wants to hurry up and make things happen. A fundamental tension therefore exists between practitioners and theoreticians when "the lofty world" of academia comes into contact with the busy world of service delivery.

Research and practice are different activities, yet a productive dialogue should form a bridge between the two.

The paper will now explore, on a practical level, one of the spaces where such productive dialogue could happen. It sets out an approach that is currently operating in South Africa within an arena linked to policy research. This approach brings government, a donor community, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and communities together over issues of conflict and governance through a project called the Conflict and Governance Facility (CAGE).

Background

In the post-1994 period South Africa had to set itself on a path of (re)construction in almost all aspects of its domestic and foreign policy. It was felt, however, that policy-making and policy implementation on issues that mitigate or cause conflict could be strengthened through the promotion of a wider and deeper debate between government and civil society.

This engagement could be facilitated through a more effective contribution by South African policy research and other institutions, both government and non-governmental, working in the area of conflict and good governance.

In addition, the new imperatives resulting from globalisation and the international pressure on South Africa to take up a continental leadership role require that South Africans have the capacity to...
Given the connotations of the term, the concept was ideally suited to CAGE. The two conceptual entities are linked in the vision to build a unified purpose, including the documenting of and adding to knowledge, creating conditions for safety and greater protection and honouring those who have already fallen to conflict.

With Isivivane and the CAGE Facility, the following rich duality is posited: “We see, for example, that a stick is a tool, and we see the effects of how to use it. The club that kills can drive a stake into the ground to hold a shelter. The spear that takes a life can be used as a lever to ease life’s burdens. The knife that cuts flesh can be used to cut cloth. The hands that build bombs can be used to build schools. The minds that coordinate the activities of violence can coordinate the activities of cooperation.”

Awareness and interest in CAGE, as a model, was demonstrated when unsolicited consultations were held with CAGE for it to share learning from this model with the United Nations “Dialogue with the Global South: Building UN Capacity through University Partnerships” in 2004; a potentially similar project considered for Vietnam in 2005, and in 2006, other similar projects under the EU banner as well as the Southern African Trust, which sets out to widen participation in policies to overcome poverty in Southern Africa.

The isivivane metaphor was given substance through the incremental processes that set up CAGE as a grant maker in the field. This included the creation of sound governance structures which includes a multi-sectoral programme steering committee, extensive terms of reference to guide implementation and the roll-out of calls for proposals for research.

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As CAGE’s research reaches further and wider into the public domain, this independence of view will be reinforced.
Notwithstanding the above, CAGE is also a model that operates in a dynamic and fluctuating environment, i.e. governance on the African continent, peace building, knowledge management and capacity building.

Given that CAGE straddles these “worlds”, how indeed has it performed within an emerging democracy such as South Africa?

From the outset, the facility adopted in its implementation phase a search to fit as opposed to “a search for fit”. It is felt that CAGE was required to do this as it entered as “an actor in a relatively new and complex field” of very different professional cultures. These include the policy field, the research world including emerging research competence and the arena of development. Each of these has a distinct culture, different ways of thinking and methods of working and each tends to be tentative in accepting new players in the sector.

The searching approach is well aligned with South Africa’s own development. As a young democracy, but with “great expectations” of it from the world and the continent to which it belongs, it is itself seeking for credible nationhood and a true niche. As such, its approach is often tentative as it explores organically, experiments and searches for what works, amidst the many challenges that face it as a diverse and complex country with a multiplicity of needs.

In line with its searching approach, CAGE explores multiple identities. These include an administrator and grant maker; an actor in the political field, a developmental actor; and interface or resource stakeholder. We have imbued the organisation with a sense of being a diverse and complex country with a multiplicity of needs.

How has CAGE evolved as a grant maker/administrator? It has been found that CAGE has been very efficient in implementing grant making. This has been achieved through a number of factors. These include creating an identity with a vision, mission and set of values and using that identity to enter the field and to build the emergence of CAGE within the EU. It has had to be mindful of the overarching global frameworks in which it is positioned. The Contonou Agreement is the overarching agreement which frames the partnership between Africa (and Caribbean-Pacific) and the EU. South Africa has a bi-lateral agreement with the EU in terms of the EU-SA Trade, Development and Co-operation agreement which specifies the unique nature of South Africa's engagement with the EU, but also embraces the guiding principles of the Contonou Agreement. These pillars of the agreement are as follows and are the basis, to a greater/lesser extent, for the grant making undertaken by CAGE:

- Political dimensions of relations between ACP countries and the EU;
- Involvement of civil society, the private sector and other non-state players;
- Poverty reduction;
- Innovative economic and trade co-operation framework; and
- Rationalisation of financial instruments and rolling programming.

Development co-operation is to be pursued with local ownership as a defining factor. Co-operation is intended to be an enabling framework of support to the beneficiary country’s “own development strategies” (Contonou 2000:18).

Therefore, while the fiscal disbursement is laid down by the practical rules and guidelines of the EU, the substantive nature of the grant making is shaped by the South African stakeholders. For aid to be effective, developing countries must be “in the driving seat” and “lead a nationally-determined development strategy”.

South Africa accepts full ownership of its ODA flows and drives the flows from a policy position of a strong South African-driven ODA strategy, management and procedures. This ensures that South Africa utilises its limited ODA resources (between 1 and 1.3% of its annual budget and 0.3% of GDP), optimally. However, it is to be acknowledged that despite these high-minded principles of high-level agreements, CAGE is still a grant maker operating within a specific context with South African beneficiaries. As such, “funders and funded alike are engaged in a complex dance in which the agenda of those wishing to make grants be reconciled with the agenda of those applying for them”.

Further there is also the acknowledgment that “power is a hidden force within donor-grantee-beneficiary relationships” which indeed does well affect stakeholders from engaging in meaningful learning. Indeed, there are pressures and expectations on either side of the scale that together shape the funding context.

Findings

- How has CAGE evolved as a grant maker/administrator? It has been found that CAGE has been very efficient in implementing grant making. This has been achieved through a number of factors.
- These include creating an identity with a vision, mission and set of values and using that identity to enter the field and to build the emergence of CAGE within the EU.

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Findings

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a high-level impact in policy circles. Given the context-dependent role of policy, any organisation external to the political process would need to fulfill, amongst others, the following core conditions:

- Reputation and credibility;
- Ease of access into or part of high profile policy networks or “inner circles”;
- Legitimate credentials “links, influence and legitimacy”;
- Ability to prove validity and reliability over a period of time: longitudinal testing;
- Relevance: an established acceptance of research being a fundamental to policy making (a mindset that is open to research and a diversity of opinion);
- Wide reach;
- Funding bringing money into a not for profit, largely donor-dependent sector (caveat: funding needs to be linked to above); and
- Timing and presentation.

Just to achieve some level at “pitching” at the policy space, CAGE has had to work at aligning itself to the leverage points into “the space”.

Van Dyk (1999: 17) highlights the two main groupings who are the “players” in that space namely “policy communities” and “issue networks”.

“Policy communities” – In South Africa, these are generally small, closed circles that are made up of politicians, technocrats, “inner-circles” think tanks with the right political credentials. They have collective interests in a specific set of policy issues and are in agreement about the broad direction that the policy should take.

CAGE built in eligibility criteria for its funding that would draw those “inner circle” think tanks into its grant portfolio. This has had success in that, after 12 short months (“short” in research circles), CAGE-funded research has been cited in the President’s State of the Nation address, influenced the President to call for a regulatory review on start-up for small businesses, and contributed to a government-endorsed set of guidelines for local government practitioners.

Research on “Developmental Peace Keeping” has been heard and read at a number of parliamentary and government briefings, both in South Africa and at the African Union.

It has also contributed to conceptualising the South African White Paper of a similar theme. Further significant funding has been committed to taking this pilot study forward and there exists the possibility of a dedicated post-conflict capacity being created within the South African government structures.

However, CAGE works through an open call for proposals and therefore does not only support the “inner circle”. It is also aligned with the need for more independent forms of policy research, and therefore consulted very widely to set broad enough themes that would attract the community networks.

As such it also funds research that falls within the “issue networks”– these are more open forums which include a broad continuum of people and organisations. The issues are subject to more debate and discussion and less agreement about the preferred policy direction.

As CAGE’s grantees are the intellectual property holders of the research supported by the grant, both those in the policy community and those in the issue networks are free to use the research for their chosen agendas. Hence, CAGE’s support of research around participatory democracy is being used in the issue network.

It is anticipated that more of the research, currently being undertaken, will also be used in this domain. Straddling somewhere between is research done by the South African Human Sciences Research Council on Black Economic Empowerment.

Needless to say, these two dimensions are not mutually exclusive and CAGE has found in dialogue sessions that there may be a healthy crossover between the two. It has been suggested that “policy networks usually share some common values and outlooks and consciously work together to take advantage of policy ‘spaces’ and ‘windows’.

What is important is for any role player who aims to impact on policy to “map out their legitimacy chains through systems of accountability (building structures that are representative of local constituencies where necessary) or relevant experience.”

To this end, CAGE holds numerous rounds of consultations, attends many networking functions and profiles CAGE, has a media strategy and targets key role-players. It has grown a database of close to 1 000 registered stakeholders, from whom it invites feedback and encourages networking.

Thus, as a model, CAGE has aimed for a better understanding of the “landscapes” of policy and sought to work within that continuum. Whilst this might seem to be a middle-of-the-road policy, or a betrayal of either agenda, CAGE has approximated delivery of results against the public sector funds that pinpointed its mandate.

The success of CAGE as political player is also too difficult to judge in the short space of its life time – as a project of 54 months – and given the “slippery” nature of tracking impact on policy research. At best, CAGE can methodically point to citations of its research. It is noted from the review that informed this paper, that “specific lessons about how policy areas are influenced by research are yet to be learned” (Crowe & Young: 2002: no page number) and that this might only be usefully tested if one is able to piece together a historical narrative of policy change which would involve the creation of a timeline of key policy impacts along with important documents and events, and identifying key actors.

CAGE has attempted this in terms of tracking the policy dialogue that is coming out of its supported research. It is obviously limited by a small sample size, the case study approach and transdisciplinarity concerns, and the lack of longitudinal time.

However, the point must be made that such a model, if replicable, must take care to “read the landscape” and try to pinpoint eligibility criteria for the recipient of funds that can optimise its ability to provide policy inputs. CAGE communicates these kinds of eligibility criteria very strongly and up front and its assessment of proposals weighs these criteria as critical for the receipt of funds.

Soundly in the favour of CAGE as an emerging model is that it appears to be delivering on the credibility/reputation factors within
the research world. It is found that it is funding high-quality research across the dimensions of: rigour of working methods, relevance for the political agenda, reputation and credibility of lead researchers, and accessibility of the selected research projects to reach diverse audiences, including policy makers.

At best, the preceding discussion skims the surface of a subject that deserves deepened commentary, but which stretches beyond the scope of this paper.

How has CAGE evolved as a development actor? This is indeed a contested terrain and deserves the most sensitive of treatments, acknowledged, but not explored in this paper. CAGE has been attributed with this label based on the fact that it is a model within the developmental sector, within a South Africa as a developmental state and that part of its mandate is to develop capacity of emerging research competence. Needless to say in this short paragraph there are a host of terms that deserve a far richer interrogation. It is CAGE's mandate to build capacity which this paper will take further in terms of CAGE as a "developmental actor".

Capacity building in itself means different things to different people. Whilst it might well be captured as increasing knowledge and skills so that people are better able to solve problems and make decisions (Senge et al 1999; Mc Allister and Vernooy, 1999; Boal, 1995; Eade, 1997), the situational reality of South Africa has capacity building "equated with providing opportunities for individuals from previously marginalized sectors, especially given the pressures of past inequities".

CAGE expressed this nuance in its log-frame through an activity described as "twinning and collaboration between entrenched and emerging institutions/individuals is encouraged" and "research capacity strengthened" (2002). The terms "entrenched" and "emerging" were not conveniently defined anywhere and CAGE therefore risked an "as-of-now" unchallenged definition of "emerging" as "...defined according the number of years in operation: 0-5 years and verified as such, and 60% of management and staff must be black as per the Employment Equity Act of South Africa of 1998".

What steps did CAGE, itself an emerging model, do to realize this goal? CAGE built in an eligibility criterion that projects should have a capacity building element, through the inclusion of emerging researchers/research organisations as integral to the proposed projects. CAGE reinforced this by publishing a standalone call that ring-fenced funding for emerging institutions, or entrenched organisations twinned with emerging institutions.

An in-depth analysis of capacity building elements in the proposals was undertaken as was an in-depth literature review and concept paper around what constituted capacity building in the CAGE context. CAGE also used the media and requested a call for expression of interest so that organisations which deemed themselves to have emerging research competence registered with CAGE, either
through handwritten notification or web-based registration. These actions have gone some way to providing CAGE with a baseline of what capacity to build and with whom. CAGE followed this up by awarding grants that scored strongly on the capacity building criterion and by implementing, with a small budget, its own project-driven capacity building events as additional to the capacity building mainstreamed in the grant process. Events have taken place include a lecture series on research methodology for 100 previously disadvantaged students and an in-depth workshop for 30 organisations who seek to build research capacity. CAGE has also provided technical assistance to an NGO coalition around surveys as well as done staff exchanges with emerging organisations.

It has also helped, in a decentralised model, a number of NGOs with capacity building activities in their particular research strategies, including workshops on participatory action research and the Freire model. These activities are done in the full knowledge that capacity building should not be done or measured as events, but rather as continuous processes. CAGE has therefore fallen short of meaningful process-based capacity building owing to its own limited-project-specific lifespan.

With regard to the model of twinning organisations around a grant, CAGE has had a very limited uptake. Reasons provided for this include no matching emerging institutions could be found to partner with on the proposed project; research and capacity building are difficult to combine and are two different objectives; and time and budget constraints.

Further, it is essential that certain pre-conditions such as mutual trust and shared understanding have to be built for meaningful collaboration. With the pressures of short-term research projects and the realities of the “harsh competition” between organisations competing for funds, it is suggested that “collaboration is not as productive as it might be”.

Therefore, CAGE has played a limited role in terms of what might be ventured as a “development actor”. Should a model such as this be replicated, the recommendation is that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken to understand the specific objectives and outcomes that are sought from development actors.

Clearly there is much room for enhancing the skills of young organisations around the intricacies of research and policy research, through a variety of approaches such as research methodology, advocacy, lobbying, networking and a host of other competencies inherent in organisational development.

Further, it is often the unique combination of elements, context-specific and generic, that cannot be easily replicated that would deem a “development actor” to be a success. CAGE has laid certain foundations to approximate this combination, but further reflection and investigation are needed.

How has CAGE evolved as an “interface or resource within the sector it services”? This role is perhaps the most exciting because it is the somewhat arms-length position that enables it to cause authoritative and independent research on critical policy issues relating to governance to be done. It is less likely for (SA) government departments to commission open ended research into their own governance – however necessary that might be.

To consolidate this safer place, CAGE has embarked on an inclusive stakeholder engagement process dubbed the “CAGE communities”. This young initiative is to foster CAGE stakeholders, in the main the grantees, to “co-operate and work synergetically within a community”, so that a knowledge-network in the sector is realised. The idea is to develop an “identity” for co-operation which would help to balance the competing and often conflicting interests of the stakeholders.

Further to this, “CAGE’s advantage is its active effort to place independent policy research in the public policy arena and in a form that is useful to those active in implementing it”. This axiomatically stimulates debate.

Certainly for a young democracy such as South Africa, but where the independent “space” is closely watched and guarded, and the civil society movement is organised and strong, CAGE’s relationship with its grantees is watched carefully. The fact that the intellectual property is vested in the beneficiary organisation is valued.

Organisations have felt confident about the dissemination of research within the democratic “space”. This is done in the knowledge that civil society is aware of the need to be an additional “research voice” that is not directly commissioned by government, with government as the client and the option to “shelve” the research. As CAGE’s research reaches further and wider into the public domain, this independence of view will be reinforced.

In the current funding environment in South Africa in terms of investment into research, the grants that CAGE provides to both higher education institutions and NGOs is realistically seen as the single most valuable resource. This is in a field where the funding margins are low and precarious (research being seen as a “luxury” for funding where real social and immediate social needs are very evident).

Clearly the success of a re-granting organisation is to “get the money out” and to do so in a manner that is both cost effective and responsible to both fiscal and research stakeholders. This goal has been achieved through CAGE’s unqualified audit reports and grant making systems.

It is therefore about the balancing of interests and expectations and while Unwin (2004) might well call it a “dance”, for others the metaphor of the “tightrope” must seem more apt. Therefore, in terms of the monitoring relationship that CAGE has in order to account to the delegation of the EU, CAGE has really found that it is about the nuances of the approach.

It is also about the honesty. CAGE gives high levels of detail at
Towards recommendations

It is apparent from this paper that CAGE has a long way to go and is, at best, a pilot of what could be a more deepened and effective model of grant making within its particular mix of characteristics.

However, it does provide some evidence of being an approach that can be used in young democracies that are exploring multiple approaches to make democracy work. This paper has not delved into many contested terrains around ideologies of official development assistance, power relations, political agendas and the like. It has instead aimed to be a pragmatic case study of certain criteria which might make those intending to explore models of deepening democracy through research more insightful.

Further, the challenge always lies with trying to get the "mix of ingredients" right and to combine those elements into a 21st century vision of models for foundations based on their true potential for innovation and creativity. As with all other organisations, at the heart of CAGE lies an intangible web of nuances and competencies that are difficult to articulate and replicate.

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The NDA collaborates with stakeholders in order to formulate strategies for poverty eradication in South Africa.
The National Development Agency (NDA) is a Section 3A statutory organisation, which was established by the National Development Agency Act No 108 of 1998, as amended by the National Development Agency Amendment Act No 6 of 2003 (herein collectively referred to as the "NDA Act").

In terms of the NDA Act, the NDA has the primary mandate to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations. These funds are to be utilised for carrying out projects aimed at meeting the developmental needs of poor communities.

NDA's strategy for development

Funds are also used for strengthening the institutional capacity of organisations which provide services to poor communities. This also involves building the capacity of these organisations to enable them to carry out development work effectively.

The secondary objectives of the NDA are to promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of developmental experiences with civil society and national and local government. It also seeks to promote debate on, develop and influence developmental policies.

The NDA also undertakes research and publication that is aimed at providing a basis for development policy. This includes creating and maintaining a database of civil society organisations.

The vision of the NDA is developing a society that is free from poverty. Its mission is to contribute to poverty eradication and elimination of its causes.

The beneficiaries targeted by the NDA are mainly community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations and co-operatives. The targeted sectors are mainly the economic development sector (especially income-generating projects) and food security.

Engaging development issues and policies

The NDA facilitates research and runs conferences on topical issues on development and poverty eradication. Issues such as the state of giving in South Africa have been researched, debated and shared with interested parties thus helping organisations to broadly understand what South Africans give and why they give.

The NDA seeks to be an institution that provides reliable researched developmental information that will assist government in developing policies that eradicate poverty.

The NDA collaborates with stakeholders in order to formulate strategies for poverty eradication in South Africa. The World Summit on Sustainable Development conference held in South Africa in 2002 was co-sponsored by the NDA. The agency also facilitates various interventions in poverty stricken areas thus enabling other stakeholders to invest in those communities.

Macro-indicators

Macro-indicators speak to the high-level, externally focused objectives that will be achieved through implementation of NDA's strategic goals as defined in the organisation scorecard. The macro-indicators and associated strategic goals include, first, improved coordination of resource allocation for poverty eradication. The associated strategic goals for this indicator include partnering for development and resource mobilisation for poverty eradication.

The second macro-indicator is improved economic opportunities for communities in NDA targeted localities. The strategic goal here is community empowerment for sustainable development.

The third macro-indicator is improved social empowerment in NDA-targeted localities. The strategic goal associated with this indicator is also community empowerment for sustainable development. The last macro-indicator is increased influence in development policy as it relates to poverty eradication, where there is communication of credible and relevant researched development information.

Conclusion

Since its inception, the NDA has disbursed over R500 million in grants made to organisations. These funds have brought about a significant change in the lives of many poor communities. These successes were achieved mainly because of the prioritisation of research by the NDA.

Through this, it enhances knowledge and the policy base for development by getting the knowledge to the right people at the right time.
Evidence-based employment scenarios

Dr Miriam Altman, Human Sciences Research Council, looks at the Employment, Growth and Development Initiative which focuses on employment policy.

I would like to briefly highlight what we are doing at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) particularly through the Employment, Growth and Development Initiative (EGDI) which is an initiative that focuses on employment policy. It basically says that if government is committed to halving unemployment and poverty, let us check the targets seriously and therefore ask, is policy and activity in both public and private sector summing up in order to get us to that target? We know that there are a number of development initiatives happening, we want to know if these come together or to lead us to where we want to go.

We have set up a priority initiative where we are framing what we call evidence-based employment scenarios. In other words, we look at these targets and asking what the society might look like if it reaches them. How much will it cost to get to those targets? We then do a series of practical research projects to make sense of this.

We also have a dialogue where we bring in decision-makers in business, labour and government in a round table process to enable free thinking which might not be possible when discussing within government. This is to enable people to start thinking “out of the box”.

Elements

There are broad areas that we are looking at in EGDI. One area focuses on macro-economic general economic biases. For example, we have a big project on exchange rates and employment. We also do a lot of work on thinking through labour markets. We also do work on job creation, which is one of the bigger areas that we are currently engaged in right now. We focus on job creation through the market, by the state, through government employment programmes and survivalist activities. What I want to focus on is a set of research questions that we are thinking through - questions that are related to job creation for the public service.

Role of the public service in meeting ASGISA targets

When we conceived of the initiative we thought the role of the public service in the employment strategy of the country is, first, in service delivery. Secondly, the state is important as an employer of graduates. The state has been playing an incredible role until recently of being the key employer of black graduates. About 70% of black graduates get their first job in government. The problem is that this is not the case anymore. The state is also the biggest employer of low-skill workers. As we know, the state pays higher wages to low-skilled workers than the private sector.

In terms of the overall employment trends, most employment has been coming from the formal sector which is very important for sustainable job creation trajectory. Since 1996, public sector employment has declined, and so has actually constrained total employment growth. This is starting to change – there is now commitment to expanding the public service.

The public sector is also the primary vehicle for redistribution and attempts at shared economic growth. The delivery of services and the creation of assets are central to the poor being able to withstand shocks, and create assets. The public sector is also amongst the largest employers in the country. Furthermore, attempts to improve productivity and effectiveness could play a significant role across the economy. The state can more easily intervene to address labour market gaps, for example in generating a first employment experience for young people.

In this part of the discussion, I think it is appropriate to ask, how big should the civil service be? The other big question that needs to be asked is, in what areas is the civil service understaffed? How will this be assessed? How do we identify the real personnel gap relative to what is needed to deliver services? In which areas of public service would increases in staff improve productivity and performance? What new areas of government activity will arise that could be labour intensive? Should we identify labour-using approaches to delivering services? What limits exist (fiscal and other) to expanding the public service?

We should also ask if the civil service be explicitly used to have an indirect impact on employment and poverty. This is something that the state in many countries does for as first employer, its ability to address graduate unemployment and in its role as an employer in depressed and poor areas. So the state explicitly states that it employs graduates not because they add value to the work environment, but because it wants to assist families that benefit from their income. In South Africa the question that arises is should we be thinking about the state playing that role? I am not stating an opinion here, these are research questions that we want to put forward.

Conclusion

In closing I want to inform you that we are starting something called Employment Policy Network. We would like participation by different stakeholders. It is a network that has been set-up by the HSRC in partnership with International Labour Organisation and the African Economic Research Consortium. It is a web-based network aimed at drawing together “communities of practice” involved in employment policy. We aim to draw together those interested in thinking about the role of the public service in employment policy. This includes practitioners and researchers.
Monitoring and evaluating policy across the spheres and functions of government

Dr Leanne Scott, University of Cape Town, discusses the results of a monitoring and evaluation project

I want to start with a quick look at some of the terminology. First, monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management/stakeholders with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives. Whereas evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Clearly there are different focus areas for these two functions, although they are linked together as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

At the beginning of the research I was asking myself if this is like motherhood and apple pie. Is there really anything to discuss? Does access to data lead to better information, lead to better decision making, which must lead to better performance? Do we really need to have a 15-month research project to look at how that can happen? One of the points that I pondered about was that we very quickly jump to the indicator part of M&E without thinking through the background and the underlying context of what we are measuring.

Evidence of what?
Monitoring involves selecting an indicator that can provide evidence of progress towards some objective (value judgements). Selection of an indicator is very much a value judgement and the actual framing of the objective itself is very much a value judgment involving policy makers. There are assumptions in selecting a particular indicator. There is an assumption of causality and links between actions and results. Unless one maps out very clearly what the theory is underlying how actions lead to particular outcomes that are being monitored. One could be challenged as to whether actions are leading to results or not.

So in order to provide evidence, one does not just need indicators or measurement processes. One needs to articulate the framework within monitoring is occurring. And also clarify the logic that will apply in making the claim for evidence (of progress). In other words, an indicator could tell many stories rather than just the one that it is claiming. One needs to look at, for example, spurious results, which are results that happen despite uses actions.

M&E of policy in South Africa
Just a bit of background on the research project itself. There were four main strands or purposes. One was to develop a critical appraisal of the current system of monitoring and evaluation established by government around the Programme of Action (PoA). Secondly to propose a set of indicators that can be used to appraise performance. Thirdly to investigate the alignment of M&E processes across national and provincial spheres of government. Finally, to investigate the existence of appropriate data sets that can be used to calibrate indicators.

What I have found upfront was that there was a missing piece of a link prior to the above research questions. That revolves around the lack of clear articulation of outcomes and how interventions are going to lead to those outcomes. This meant that some of those original aims of the project were not attainable or appropriate.

The research started with a literature survey on how M&E has been applied in different contexts and countries. Some broad points that came out of that literature survey were things like the need for a lot of work to build an understanding of why M&E is essential and helpful. There is also a lot of work written about the complex role of incentives. It is quite often practices taken from the private sector and applied in the public sector. There is evidence that the impact of incentives did not work the same way in the public sector like they were in the private sector.

Clearly leadership is important. This is because setting up M&E is a very demanding process which requires incredibly strong leadership. It is also important to start by diagnosing existing flows of information. Typically in the public sector, there is an excess of information. What usually happens is that a group that wishes to develop an M&E initiative pose extra burdens on government departments to produce more data and information without checking whether the existing data has been used for intended purposes. So we only collect what we will be used.

There is also a focus on building credible data or administration systems. The system will only be as good as the data that it is based on. This links with building in structural objectivity which will allow for data integrity – data that will be believed by those that need to use it. Finally, do not over-engineer the system, the trap that all M&E systems fall into – the trap of trying to measure too much. I come from a position that sees M&E as support for strategic decision-making and not an entity on its own. The particular tool that I wish to apply to advance this is called Multi-criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA). Clearly M&E is about multiple criteria and is clearly about making decisions. So it seems like an appropriate field to look into.

Goal setting and prioritisation
The broad areas of MCDA today include problem structuring which...
involves defining the problem arena, including stakeholders. Secondly, to specify the criteria (in M&E these could be referred to as objectives, goals or outcomes). The third broad area of MCDA is the development of alternative courses of action. It seems to me that in M&E one needs to link very clearly with measuring what one is doing. The fourth area is preference modelling, a step that is missing in M&E. Very often it is assumed with indicators that their relationship with impact is linear, which is often not the case.

Finally, also very important and a step that is quite often missed or sidestepped in the public service is assigning weights to the criteria. Very often in annual performance reports departments refer to priorities, but not everything can be a priority, so prioritising things means that one pays more attention to some things and by definition, less attention on others something which is not always popular to spell out.

A strategic framework for M&E
So I try to develop a parallel for M&E to what would be applied in MCDA. Very important here would be the articulating goals, values, high-level objectives - put simply the answer to the question “what is the problem that we need to address?” Secondly, developing a “theory of change” on how interventions will tackle the problems within the problem context. Defining how one sees the problem. You also need to determine what activities will be undertaken to address the problems.

And finally the outcomes where you need to ask, if all interventions are successful where will we be? In other words phrasing it in the medium- to long-term outcome and checking if activities do lead to outcomes, meets objectives or goals.

This research took place in the context of action research. So I work very closely with a particular province in establishing an M&E facility for them. The idea was to see how one could align an M&E facility of the province so that it is coherent with national objectives and made sense in support for local municipalities.

High-level objectives for the province
So I worked on the Western Cape to provincially focus the project. They established what they call an Internal Learning Network which was made up of M&E representatives from all the departments in the province and jointly defined a set of high-level objectives for the province. There were agreements around five high-level objectives: to enhance economic participation, shared growth and development; to enhance spatial integration and provide sustainable service delivery; to ensure the integrity of the physical environment; to develop social and human capital; and to practice holistic governance and administration. The good thing about this is that we did not silo out different sectors.

The next step was to take each of these high-level objectives and translate them into a statement of outcomes which would be medium- to long-term objectives that would be envisaged underneath that broad theme. The further step would be to attach particular measurement tools or indicators to each of these objectives.

In the fifth high-level objective, to practice holistic governance and administration, most of the issues are qualitative and have no
clear indicators, as a result annual qualitative assessments were suggested for measurement purposes.

So one ends up with what is referred to in MCDM as a value tree which captures the broad objectives of government. The nice thing about getting agreements on a structure such as this is that you have got one page with high-level goals which should capture a number of incredibly complex strategic policy documents.

This is not a tool only for M&E, but for communication of government strategy within government. A parallel process to this was to try and develop a national value tree.

**National value tree**

It proved difficult to work with real stakeholders in workshops, which was the strategy we used in the province. So what we did was to work with medium-term strategic framework and try to translate that into a value tree. So what came out was not surprisingly very complex.

There were high-level national objectives. These were to create a single and integrated economy that benefits all; build a healthier nation; promote social cohesion and non-racist, non-sexist, democratic society; improving safety and security; help consolidate peace, security and development in southern Africa, Africa and globally, and position South Africa as an effective global player; and broaden access to services and constitutional rights and provide good governance.

This was a desktop exercise in trying to translate a medium-term strategic document in a set of high-level objectives that could serve as a starting point for discussions with policy makers to make an agreement around this tree.

The advantage of this approach is that one can go down in particular dimensions. For example, the drive to build a healthier nation was captured within the medium-term strategic framework under the activities which include complete tertiary infrastructure improvements; improving services in health facilities; recruiting and retaining health personnel; and reducing preventable causes of death which are broken down into programmes such as TB, diabetes, malnutrition, maternal deaths, HIV and Aids, and malaria.

So one goes from high-level fundamental objectives into more focused objectives, or ultimately programmes. It is at the level of programmes or projects that you should start attaching measurement objectives. This is not to say that there are no high-level objectives, there are, we just need clarity on how these link up across spheres of government and across departments. I think something like a value trees might be a useful tool.

Measurement issues

I want here to highlight some of the themes that came out of that research. One theme was simple versus composite indicators – which asks, for example, whether you simply measure literacy or you look at a human development indicator which looks at literacy, which asks, for example, whether you simply measure literacy or you look at a human development indicator which looks at literacy, longevity and income. The statistical issue with regards to composite indicators is the fact that they have to be weighed in relation to the scales that are used. So there are some statistical issues around composite indicators which need to be unpacked something that can be done in a participatory way.

The second theme involves parsimonious models. In terms of efficiency what one is willing to do is use the list of possible data to get the closest measure of what it is that one is trying to evaluate. What tends to happen with over-engineering of the M&E system is that people measure too much and collect too much information. I think there is fruitful research that can be done on what the smallest set of indicators is which can give us the picture.

There is also the issue of the trade-off between robust or sensitive to change. One can also add the issue of whether we measure from a local point of view or global point of view. Things such as the Millennium Development Goals are fantastic in mobilising resources across countries, but comparing a country on a global scale (especially for a country that is at the lowest in terms of resources available) is likely to result in taking measures which change very little over time. So it is very important to define local indicators and also global indicators.

On the issues of error (for example, in measurements, sampling, statistical bias, interpretations) I have seen very little written about this. Finally, what I mentioned earlier was that there are two steps that are involved in measurement. The first step involves measuring the score and second step involves measuring the impact.

**Some conclusions**

What seems to be the fundamental issue for me is the pervasive lack of clarity on high-level objectives. This is not to say that there are no high-level objectives, there are, we just need clarity on how these link up across spheres of government and across departments. I think something like a value trees might be a useful tool.

I may also add that the word priority is over-used in a sense that does not relate to the allocation of resources, and what is going to be done first. I think very fundamentally is the danger of separating M&E from strategic planning, which could lead to activities that may not be aligned with desired outcomes. I think that becomes evident in the structure of departments where M&E sits far away from the head of department. They are not linked to strategic planning that is happening which makes it harder for them to measure the right things.

I also want to state that there have been tremendous benefits of awareness created by MTEF, as a result departments are thinking in terms of goals and getting funding for particular objectives. The problem with MTEF is that it is a generic framework which must be the same for all departments, but departments are structured very differently and need to translate terms of reference to Treasury in a way that will make them recognise themselves.

There is also a lack of quantitative, problem-solving and modelling skills in government departments. This can be solved by the use of interns from different universities and technikons.

Related to the comment around the MTEF, there is a strong need for a common strategic planning process which is individually tailored by each department or government entity within the context of clear national, provincial, local objectives.

The problem with MTEF is that it is a generic framework which must be the same for all departments, but departments are structured very differently and need to translate terms of reference to Treasury in a way that will make them recognise themselves.
The 4th Annual SA Public Management/CAPAM Conversation

The 4th SA Public Management Conversation was held in Cape Town, South Africa from 16-19 April 2007. It was hosted jointly by the Department of Public Service and Administration and the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM). This was very symbolic as CAPAM played an important part in supporting South Africa’s public service administrative reform during the early 1990s.

The major goal of the conversation was to strengthen the relationship between academics, consultants and senior public service practitioners. The conversation therefore brought together about 142 academics, practitioners and politicians from South Africa and various Commonwealth countries. Together, this group sought to assess the scope of the current relationship. It sought to explore why an optimal interface has not been achieved thus far in areas of research, education/training and consulting. The group also wanted to take forward existing initiatives that seek to advance the interface, identify new initiatives in this regard and lay the foundations for the South African academic-practitioner input into the adjudicated paper stream of the CAPAM Biennial Conference in Barbados in October 2008.
Mapping the Interface

As I write as both Minister for Public Service and Administration and President of CAPAM, I am struck by how many strands of different initiatives, proverbial paths we have walked, sometimes together, sometimes with others and sometimes by ourselves. But somehow many of them actually come together at an event such as this, intersecting with one another.

I am excited at what an opportunity the Conversation offers us to make key connections between activities and initiatives which hitherto might have seemed disparate and uncoordinated.

These are connections and links that we can make across different experiences and different knowledge bases, and I was struck by the wealth of experience and knowledge that we collected at the Conversation under one roof, coming from many parts of the Commonwealth and from a very wide range of institutions and geographical settings here in South Africa.

One very important pathway that has led to this event began in 1998 when Dr Zola Skweyiya, then Minister for Public Administration, was elected as President of CAPAM. Dr Skweyiya is part of a tradition of South African intellectuals working towards rewriting international public agenda. It is thus fitting that in honour of these intelligentsia we engage, from a developmental perspective, with this past "decade and a bit".

Perhaps we should conduct our own Ten Year Review of the status of the discipline/theory and the practice of public administration, in South Africa specifically and Africa somewhat more generally.

In an ANC Today in July last year President Thabo Mbeki reminded us of the centrality of public administration in our developmental setting. He specifically reminded us of the importance of the leadership development of the managers, or as he referred to them, the "Mandarins". Allow me to quote what he wrote:

"Our Public Administration consists of more than one-and-a-quarter million people. In terms of responsibility and skill, its members range from our Directors-General, corporate Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and professionals, to 'span' managers and unskilled workers. The state entity described as our Public Administration is the biggest and most complex multi-task organisation in our country.

"In terms of our Constitution, this Public Administration has the responsibility, among other things, to help heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

"Obviously, an organisation as big, varied and differentiated as our Public Administration, and charged with the task to contribute to the fulfillment of these fundamentally important tasks, requires a skilled, educated and dedicated leadership cadre."

We need to acknowledge that it is those of us who sit in this room, and the organisations and constituencies we represent, who are solely responsible for creating and maintaining this public administration that is outlined by President Mbeki. We need to reflect on how we are collectively doing in this task, and what we can do better, collectively.

When undertaking such a review, we should remember that collectively as a nation we tend to be highly self-critical. In the process we often forget our strong points. We forget about our achievements both domestically and internationally.

Let me quote from ANC Today, August 2006: "Perhaps the time has come that, as Chris Thomson said, we, as Africans, take responsibility for how our continent is portrayed. We should therefore respond to Chido Nwangwu’s cry from the heart that, for far too long, a majority of Africans have been indifferent to misrepresentations about who they are. They have remained 'objects' of the ill-informed caricatures of a once glorious heritage disfigured by colonial and post-colonial predators."

As South Africans we have much to offer. We are often regarded as punching above our weight, given the positions of responsibility we tend to assume on the global stage. We are acknowledged for the particular angles we cover in debates and the difficult questions we tend to raise, and raising those in a particular way based on our experience of representing so many of the big and tricky global debates, all within the boundaries of a single nation state and within a relatively short history.

We have developed particular sensitivities in certain matters, taking certain positions that can be deemed to be thoroughly counter-cultural, against the stream of conventional wisdoms at particular times. But this has not prevented us from taking up important roles in the international community.

It is not difficult to single out other examples of where we created forks in the road and ventured onto the newly created roads. Let me highlight just two areas where I think we contributed to reshaping the international agenda in the area of public administration.

We were amongst the early contingent that critiqued New Public Management, cautioning about the potential negative implications of taking an approach of a minimalist state in a developing country setting and also tendencies within the New Public Management tradition that ignored the necessary nuance that contextual understanding brings to any discussion regarding good and transferable practice.

We pointed all along to the pitfalls of the uncritical transfer of so-called "international best practice" and instead sought to encourage the development of a particular "African" understanding. We also walked a pioneering road in terms of redefining and reinventing the theory and practice of post-conflict reconstruction, especially on the African continent, building on the foundation of our very own experience in rebuilding a new non-racial, non-sexist society.

But the questions linger. Have we gone far enough and deep enough in our impact and influence to move beyond the high conceptual levels of engagement; to show the actual effects on the ground; to make the poor of our county and continent experience the benefits of what we are engag-
Political Judgment: the Context of Public Administration in South Africa

Dr Zola Skweyiya, Minister for Social Development, looks at the roles of academics and practitioners in the public administration.

The fact that it is common cause among students and practitioners of public administration in our country that the interaction between academics and practitioners has not yet sufficiently taken root 13 years into our new democracy makes imperative a reflexive meditation on the deployment of expertise and political judgment in the domain of public administration.

I take it as a given that both academics who study public administration and practitioners who make and implement public policy, are all involved in the deployment of expertise and political judgment.

It is possible that the conclusion “that the interaction between academics and practitioners has not sufficiently taken root” is partly based upon the fact of a relatively slow pace of social transformation, because a strong case can be made that far-reaching public service transformation has occurred over the past 15 years.

Alternatively, it is possible that this conclusion is being reached because of the counterproductive logic that the disjuncture between research, policy and practice make possible.

Whatever the assumptions or assertions, they have to be tested against the backdrop of the lived experience of all the pertinent public policy actors in South Africa and against the backdrop of the programmatic interventions generated by CAPAM’s trajectory more generally.

The Rapporteur’s summary report on the 2006 Biennial CAPAM conference mentions seven fields in which these issues of expertise and political judgment manifest and play themselves out:

- the primacy given to particular values and the associated regime of fundamental rights;
- the question of whether marginal or fundamental structural reforms are being undertaken;
- the caliber of leadership over time;
- the extent of the service delivery deficits and requisite capabilities;
- the existence of an enabling platform of partnerships and cross-government collaborations;
- the efficiency of indigenous solutions; and
- the distribution of benefits in the interim and final outcomes.

The common features and peculiarities of public administration in the South African context have to be specified at least in terms of these seven fields. In each of these fields different kinds of expertise are brought to bear and different kinds of political judgments are being made on a continuous basis.

Most of us have actively participated and got our hands dirty. We have variously adopted open or closed systems approaches depending upon our tolerance for ambiguity and dissonance. We have speculated about the dynamics of particular situations with varying degrees of insight; we have or have not had the luxury of being able to assess available information with due diligence and we have variously chosen optimal or sub-optimal paths.

The question is thus not whether academics are foxes and practitioners hedgehogs. The question is who, when required, has had the ability to change back and forth between these two frames of mind?

I recommend the insightful and thought-provoking text Export Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know? written by Philip Tetlock for anyone interested in further exploring the ramifications of the different frames of minds of foxes and hedgehogs. The book has, for instance, interesting chapters on radical skepticism, on
whether “foxes are more willing than hedgehogs to entertain self-subversive scenarios”, and on the limits of objectivity and accountability.

Given South Africa’s history and the complexity and magnitude of the process of public service transformation that we have initiated, it is highly probable that we have made some mistakes and missed some opportunities. We have to be able to openly assess and make judgment calls about these matters if we want to improve the interface between academics and practitioners.

Our discussion of the interface between academics and practitioners must bear in mind that the transformation of the public service was informed by a clear and decisive political mandate and implemented in a transparent manner. Despite this mandate, the transformation of our public service was also a product of a political transition.

It was informed by the imperative to be inclusive and harness all available resources. This year’s 8 January Statement of the African National Congress reaffirms this imperative and calls for forging a strong, coherent and united front across all strata and classes within society to defeat racism, sexism, poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In this regard, the pertinent watch-words in the 8 January 2007 statement are “not to be timid about acknowledging and celebrating the important strides we have made, nor shy away from critically examining our record”.

The first big question that we therefore have to deal with is how, with which tools and on the basis of which criteria should we calibrate the expert performance and political judgment of academics and practitioners as they interact in the domain of public administration in the South African context.

This leads to a second fundamental question: How relevant are the competencies of the various professionals in academia and the public service, and what needs to be done to substantially enhance these competencies? The answer to part of this question was provided by my colleague, the Minister of Public Service and Administration, in her briefing to the media in February 2007 on behalf of the Governance and Administration Cluster.

She highlighted the fact that the Cabinet had recently approved the reconstruction of the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDIH) as a Public Service Academy with a brief to revamp the content of the training provided to public servants. Government’s Programme of Action for 2007 underlines the fact that the organisation and capacity of the state is going to be a priority concern in the years leading up to 2009.

The Public Service Academy is one side of the coin and has to be seen in the context of the gradual re-alignment of the university sector towards the social and economic needs of the country. It is common because education and skills are a binding constraint to accelerating and share economic growth and the state of affairs in key professions in the country is a matter of serious concern.

The 2006 Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa Annual report notes, for instance, that the town and regional planning profession is in a state of disarray.

The Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition is accordingly attending to the issue of the role and status of town and regional planners, the competencies required in this profession; the registration of these professionals; and the role and functioning of institutions like the Planning Council. With respect to architects, engineers and artisans, the issue is not so much one of professional organisation as it is insufficient local supply to meet local demand.

With respect to the human and social science disciplines and the public management professions in our country, there are a number of common concerns:

• Are these disciplines and professions being funded adequately given the magnitude of the task of social transformation confronting our country?
• Are we making sufficient investment in creating and retaining the next generation of African researchers?
• Is the research that is being conducted relevant and applicable? In other words, does this research inform policy making and does this research get translated into improvements in service delivery practices of the public service.

I know that formulating the latter question in this manner suggests an instrumental relationship between the use of policy research findings and decision-making processes. Beyond these instrumental relationships, often times it is the conceptual relationships between research, policy and practice that are more important.

It is easy to underestimate the extent to which social science research influences the knowledge, understandings and attitudes of policy makers and practitioners. In addition, the commissioning and conducting of research is sometimes done solely for tactical purposes to defer the taking of action or as a way of ensuring the involvement of stakeholders.

Examining the relationship between academics and practitioners only in terms of knowledge generation and information sharing is only a small part of the story: the relationships also have to be examined in terms of the values, identities, ideologies and institutions that frame and channel the actions of the various actors.

In the South African context, this perspective was used in preparing the publication “A Nation in the Making: A Discussion Document on Macro-Social Trends in South Africa”. The discussion document covers a wide range of topics all of which are underpinned by a concern about engendering social integration and cohesion.

Interestingly, the discussion document notes with concern “the tendency to devalue, both in terms of social status and social rewards, some of the professions that deal with the moulding of social values, particularly pedagogy and the teaching profession from primary to tertiary level; writing; research in the social sciences and other such pursuits”.

This section of the discussion document concludes by noting: “Much work still needs to be done for the nation to use its won prison to define itself.”

The Macro-Social Report also examines the issue of the extent and vibrancy of the social networks in our country: The report notes that “participating in civil society activities is relatively high and in broad terms, South African society manifests a high level of socio-political consciousness”.

The social value of these levels of active participation in civil society activities and the associated levels of socio-political consciousness is diminished if they are confined to our geographic borders. In this context it is heartening to see that the elections that will breathe life into Article 22 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union will commence in June this year. Article 22 establishes the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union as an advisory organ composed of different social and pro-
Building the Academic-Practitioner Interface in Africa

I must begin by commending the South African Ministry of Public Service and Administration for daring to embark on and initiate the process of building what can eventually emerge as a culture of holistic interface between the public service and academia so that they work in tandem in their service of the public.

But it is a tall order. Indeed, many people might say that it is mission impossible.

The experience of South Africa between 1990 and 2000 is not dissimilar from the collective experience of the then newly independent African countries of Africa – North and South of the Sahara.

But post-apartheid South Africa of the 1990s started at a much higher playing field than the rest of Africa did in the 1960s. Unlike South Africa in the 1990s, universities were extremely few in number in Sub-Saharan Africa of the 1960s; they were Ibadan, Legon, Makerere Haile Selassie and Fourah Bay in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone respectively.

Although their number has been multiplied several times during the past four to five decades, they and the pre-independence universities have remained the exact replica of European universities, particularly those of the United Kingdom which under the promoting of the British colonial office gave them their apprenticeship.

Not only was the culture of interface foreign to them, their heredity was such that public administration as a scientific and academic discipline was regarded as American and not British.

Since the main concern of the newly independent African countries was the production of cadres with sufficient education and training in public administration to bring about the fulfilment of the Africanisation of their public services, the universities were bypassed. The establishment of Public Administration and Ecole National D’Administration (in French-speaking Africa) were usual-ly under the control and oversight of the government.

Indeed, except in Nigeria where two such institutes were part of the universities (Ahmadu Bello University at undergraduate level and Obafemi Awolowo University at graduate and postgraduate lev-els), they were all part of the ministry of establishment and training (as the public service and administration ministries were then called).

IPAs/ENAs were ubiquitous throughout Africa. As I once said at an all-African seminar in the 1960s, like the national anthem and the national flag every country has its IPA/ENA! These three constituted the symbol of sovereignty.

IPAs/ENAs are directly accountable to their supervising ministries and through these to the government. Oversight activities are inevitably regulatory even if they take the newer forms of “smart regulation” with its built-in incentives to motivate desirable individual and organisational conduct.

But promoting interface was not their task. It is the university-based IPAs that have some scope for interface with government departments as this can impact positively on their research while at the same time giving their students, particularly through the case studies approach, a deep insight into the policy-making processes and the general operations of government.

However, it must be admitted that independent staff colleges and strategic studies institutions, even if they are government spon-
During the colonial period when government was generally limited in size and functions, public administration in most of Africa was based on Max Weber’s definition of rational bureaucracy, i.e. the application of the norms of professionalism, universalism, detachment and strict objectivity in analysis and decision-making, with a hierarchical pattern of supervision and an information system which ensures continuity and certainty.

Unfortunately, public administration could not survive the decay and decadence that was the plight of Sub-Saharan Africa throughout the eighties, which, several years ago, I christened Africa’s lost decade.

The Weberian norms and definitions were severely perverted, the politicisation of the public service became pervasive and the economy of affection based on networks of support, communication and interactions among structurally defined groups who are connected by blood, kinship, religion or politics was enshrined.

The economy of affection breeds double standards morally, socially and politically. It not only threatens solidarity of the state, but it also weakens the viability of the national economy.

It is no doubt the escalation of the impact of these negative forces and their hindrance to the development and growth of the academico-practitioner interface that has promoted the emergence of multi-national and international public administration organisations. Such initiatives were intended also to widen the scope of interfaces and thus give them a multidimensional approach.

**CAFRAD, AAPAM and CAPAM**

The Tangier-based CAFRAD was established in Morocco in 1961/62 on the basis of a decision taken at one of the very early pan-African conferences on public administration. Its uniqueness lies in its membership. Both Francophone and Anglophone African countries took the initiative in its establishment, although the government of Morocco was primarily responsible for its funding.

It attracted UNDP funding and UNESCO was the executing agency, thanks to the support of Moktar Mbow, then UNESCO Director-General. When in 1967 the project was due for review and assessment, I was asked by Morocco and UNESCO to lead the review team. On the basis of this review CAFRAD’s doors were thrown wide open to all independent African countries and member nations were required to make financial contributions for the running of the institution and consequently, assume joint ownership of it as a regional project.

Meanwhile, at the initiative of some higher civil servants in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and Nigeria, an Inter-African Public Administration Conference was established with a more or less equal participation of the practitioners at the top echelon of civil service and the academicians in the field. David Anderson, Ford Foundation Resident Representative in Kenya and Chief Jerome Udoji, one of the colonial and post-colonial top-level civil servants in Nigeria, led this initiative.

For the first time government and gown of English speaking Africa’s public administration were seriously engaged in interfacing. Indeed, this Inter-Africa Public Administration Conference became a venue where interactions occurred between the academe and the practitioner, between theory and practice; and between the past and the present.

As Gavin Stevens stated in William Faulkner’s *Requiem for a Nun*, “the past is never dead; it is not even past”.

So successful were these annual encounters between university dons and the higher civil service that it was decided to establish a permanent institution which would play a substantial proactive role in nourishing the culture of interface between academic and theoretical public (development) administration, and policy-making and governance. AAPAM was accordingly founded in 1971.

Indeed, I had the singular honour of serving as its president for 13 years (1972-85). Early in the 1990s, the Commonwealth joined the bandwagon in setting up CAPAM. I was also present on that historic occasion in Canada.

While all these supranational institutions have continued to make their contribution to building a network of interfaces between the practitioners and the academe, there is as yet no breakthrough. The scope remains extremely limited due to lack of enabling environment in the universities for fostering the culture of interface. Nor, for that matter, has there manifested a consistent and sustainable effort on the part of the public service generally in Africa to bring about this.

Yet it takes two to tango. And as the late Alfred Marshall, one of the founders of economics would have put it, the two sides – government and university – must behave like two blades of a pair of scissors by moving in harmony and unison in addressing the challenge.

But will this even happen? Will our institutions of higher learning ever accept the gauntlet?

**The African university and the social contract**

During the eighties when Africa was going through its worst in development and economic domain, most people were very disappointed by the silence and non-involvement of Africa’s academia in the search for solutions and for alternative strategies.

Consequently universities generally lost public confidence and their self-esteem. The public increasingly saw them as being part of the problem rather than instruments for bringing about the solution.

In order to address this problem, I convened in 1983, as ECA’s Chief Executive and United Nations Under-Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU), a conference of vice chancellors, presidents and rectors of all African universities and other institutions of higher learning. Three of such conferences were convened during the decade. The distinguished and renowned academicians and university chief executives admitted that:

- Most African governments see universities as institutions they must control openly or fortuitously and accordingly interfere in all aspects of the life of their institutions — academic programmes, curriculum development, staff appointment and promotion and student activities and discipline.
• Universities are starved of funds and the conditions of service of the staff are allowed to lag behind those of other sectors.
• It is no longer the council and senate of a university that determine what appropriate discipline to subject misbehaved students to but state authorities.
• Because of inadequate remuneration, many academic staff have, as a matter of course, to supplement their incomes from non-academic activities and given the pervasiveness of the public sector in African countries, this inevitably leads to academics being compromised; sycophantic and subservient behaviours are generally well rewarded while independent and critical scholarship loses.

In the light of all this, genuine interface between gown and government becomes nigh impossible. I have always likened a university to a mental home, the fundamental difference being that unlike the inmates of a mental hospital, those of the university are allowed to administer themselves. The breach of this has damaged both the self and public esteem of these institutions and has put in doubt the credibility of any interface that may be initiated or even worked out.

However, the public generally feels that these institutions have themselves to blame because their members see themselves as constituting a Platonic elite of whom it is unbecoming to descend to the level of the common man or woman. Secondly, that there is too much mimicry of things foreign and their obsession with the pursuit of “international” recognition to the detriment of “internal” recognition.

There is also the generally held view that not only are research activities grossly under funded, a substantial proportion of the funds available is from foreign donors and that in the circumstances most research work is motivated more by pure academic urge to publish and/or satisfy donors that by the need to make contributions to search for solutions to Africa’s development problems.

Conclusion
It is therefore imperative that all efforts must be made to re-orientate and refocus the universities to accept the challenge of playing an increasing role as agents of change by their direct involvement in community activity; by having a deep and extensive comprehension of the nature and scope of those things they set out to change; by conducting and applying the findings of their research to the solution of problems confronting their countries and peoples; and by establishing a culture of interface between them and the government, between them and the private sector, and between them and the communities.

To succeed in this endeavour the university must enter into a symbiotic relationship with all the stakeholders, influencing its growth and being in turn influenced by that growth. Thus, in its outreach programmes, if the university is to be effective as a consultancy agency for government policy formulation or for the setting of planning priorities, it must interact with policy and decision-makers in an atmosphere of critical discourse, to help achieve clarity in the articulation of needs, the setting of priorities and the formulation of strategy.

By the same token, the university must open its gates to allow input linkages to be established with the world outside. The teaching of management would be greatly enriched if practising managers in the public and private sectors were brought in to provide that vital tinge of practical experience to the theoretical side of classroom learning.
Efforts at Collaboration Between Public Administration Academics and Practitioners

One of the primary questions that engage the minds of most South Africans and others with an interest in the country is, why do we find it so difficult to practice good governance (whether real or perceived) when we are the envy of the world in terms of our transformation from apartheid to our current state? Perhaps more pragmatically for purposes of public officials and public administration academics, the question could be posed thus: How is it possible that we can actually achieve some of the policy, service delivery and cooperation goals that we set out to achieve while others continue to elude us? This is akin to “the moon and the ghetto” problem that Richard Nelson (cited in Caruso, 2007: 2) stated as: “If you can land a man on the moon, why can’t you solve the social problems of the ghetto?” The service delivery undertones are clear and so too is the indictment this question poses for academic-practitioner collaboration.

In ongoing research, Sarewitz and Nelson (cited in Caruso, 2007:2) are exploring what they dub “human know-how” in an effort to respond to the “moon and the ghetto” challenge. They describe “know-how” as being more than knowledge, it is the ability to put knowledge to work in the real world. “It is how scientific discoveries become routine medical treatments, and how inventions ... become the products and services that change how we work and play”.

The level of robustness of know-how allows it to attain a quality that Sarewitz and Nelson call “the go”, which constitutes a “core of reliable action”. They explain that: “The ‘go’ can provide a vital convergence point for stakeholders with very diverse agendas. Once they find common cause in a reliable technological solution, they have something to rally around so that all their interests can be advanced.”

This essay aspires towards reporting on some of the important attempts of academics and public service officials in South Africa in pursuit of the “go” that Sarewitz and Nelson articulate so well. It will briefly reflect on the period represented by the late 1990s to the present. Some important collaborative efforts will of necessity not be mentioned due to a lack of information about them. This ignorance does not imply a lack of importance of the attempts.

Collaborative efforts

The late 1990s served as an important time for public service transformation in South Africa, since, as Minister Zola Skweyiya (1994), indicated, the degree of successful transformation of the public service will serve as an indicator of the degree of successful transformation of the South African society at large. This period was characterised by many efforts at finding new space in a new government epoch. Efforts at collaboration took various forms, including workshopping, attempts at becoming acquainted, identifying prospective important role players, political posturing, academic posturing, and efforts at creating and cornering niche areas.

The major attempts, however, were efforts to write new policy for a new epoch, and to operationalise such policy. The latter, in its turn, required high levels of learning and unlearning; veritable transformation of logics of action and of interpretive schemes. This required training and education in what the public service of the new South Africa profiled in its ideal state.

It included co-optation from academia into the public service, and to a lesser extent also evinced a movement from public service to academia. Much of this “exchange” was determined along colour lines in response to new policies given the history of the country and the pursued goals of the new government.

Collaborative effort I: Training for the new public service as an opportunity for Academic-practitioner collaboration (Case study workshops)

One of the important attempts during the early 1990s was the collaborative effort between academics from the Kennedy School of Government, South African public administration academics, and some public officials to establish novel training modalities for a new public service. The KSG group facilitated seminars on the development and application of public service related case studies, simulations, and other active teaching methods (Zimmerman in Brynard & Erasmus 1995: introduction), while the academics and practitioners learned and sought to emulate, contextualise, and apply.

The case study workshops (which became known as the South African Public Management Workshops) were sponsored by OTIS and became an annual platform for interaction between academics and practitioners in the period 1992 to 2000. It saw the development of hundreds of case studies and the publication of at least two case study compilations. These were, for a while, extensively used in public administration and management programmes throughout the country. While the case study workshops exposed public officials and academics to each other, these groups primarily remained uninfiltrated and un-inspired by each other. The workshops were abandoned after the January 2000 workshops revealed deep-seated tensions, differing expectations and credibility challenges between the parties involved.

It was clear that the definition of how to collaborate and what to collaborate on was at the centre of the tension. Although the case study method continued to be used in classrooms and workshops, albeit superficially, it served to be almost the undoing of academic practitioner collaboration. Some intimate that an alternative reason for abandoning the case study workshops was that the time for the case study method had run out with the funding for the workshops.

The unfortunate aspect of this era was that important relational
ground was lost due to an inability to define and redefine collaboration between academia and practitioners.

Collaborative effort II: The influence of the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI)
In the same period, the influence of the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI) (Breytenbach & Erasmus 1995: Foreword) maintained that the case-study workshops were presented "in partnership with the New Public Administration Initiative". This actually points to an important fact: that some strong, politically connected, credible, and entrepreneurial academics were able to corner an important collaboration niche to the exclusion of their "weaker", less connected, less "credible" and less entrepreneurial counterparts. These Public Administration and Management academics, in ostensible emulation of the Minnowbrook I & Minnowbrook II conferences (1968 and 1988 respectively), i.e., who sought to transform the public administration theory and praxis in the United States, challenged the so-called JJN Cloete generic administrative processes paradigm that prevailed in public administration teaching and praxis and introduced public management constructs. Like the Minnowbrook I protagonists tried to do for their own country; the NPAI leaders in the South African context sought to provide solutions to public management challenges in a new South Africa (cf. Bailey 1989: 224). It is currently significant that the most high-profile protagonists of NPAI are now admitting to having been right in what they confirmed but often wrong in what they had denied.

Collaborative effort III: Joint Universities of Public Management Education Trust
Whatever else can be stated of the drivers of the NPAI, it is certainly true that they were able to persuade the political, public administration and funding powers of the day that they had the credibility and wherewithal to drive training of a new public administration cadre in South Africa. The primary vehicle used was the Joint Universities of Public Management Education Trust (JUPMET) consortium, established in 1996. This consortium of public management academics consisted, to the chagrin of most of the other schools and departments of public administration and/or management, exclusively of Stellenbosch University, Western Cape University, Fort Hare University, Witwatersrand University, Pretoria University, and Durban Westville University public administration academicians (JUPMET: Online).

The JUPMET consortium was established ostensibly to "improve the quality of education and training in the field of public management and development (JUPMET: Online) and to provide professional training and consulting services for the public sector (Cloete Networks & Links: Online). JUPMET was very active during the late 1990s. Its dominance in the market of academic consulting to the public service resulted in them managing to monopolize consulta-
tion and training on behalf of SAMDI and for other state depart-
ments but began to wane, at least in its activities, during the early part of the new millennium. While JUPMET had been fairly influential and active in the training of public officials, the consortium experienced a diminishing credibility among other public administration academics. This could possibly be ascribed to the fact that the consortium was seen to be rather exclusive and parochial, contrary to some of the inclusiveness and developmental objectives they subscribed to. The consortium was also torn by some internal dissension (Interview).

What this meant for academic and practitioner collaboration, was that practitioners were, for the most part, on the receiving side of training that they did not necessarily participate in developing, and that they could not always import academic constructs into the operational field.

Collaborative effort IV: Public Administration and Management Standard Generating Body as platform for collaboration
The Public Administration and Management Standard Generating Body was registered as a collaborative vehicle in 2000 with the primary aim to "research and identify the South African requirements regarding public administration and management standards and qualifications", and to generate new standards for the various qualifications in public administration and management in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework of the South African Qualifications Authority.

The Public Administration and Management SGB served as an important platform for collaboration between academics, SAIPA officials and the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA). This opportunity was, however, largely lost due to the inability of members of the PSETA to participate in the deliberations other than serving as hosts of the proceedings.

Collaborative effort V: Academic initiatives as platforms for collaborative efforts
Various initiatives on the part of public management academia towards collaboration with the public service were launched during the 1990s and into the new millennium. These were primarily done against the background of the understanding that the silo mentality can only serve to the detriment of the discipline and the practice.

There was also a prevailing understanding that in both the public service and academia there were untapped sources of expertise that could be harnessed to the benefit of academia, the public service and ultimately the South African society. Some of these initiatives were the establishment of the South African Association of Public Administration and Management in 1999, the Association of Southern African Departments of Public Administration and Management on 13 September 2001 and the Public Policy Association of Southern Africa in 2000. As will be seen, these associations are not new since, for the most part, they were established upon the foundations laid by preceding associations.

South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM)

SAAPAM rose from the erstwhile South African Institute of Public Administration (SAIPA). It seems that, while SAIPA was a very active association, providing a discussion forum for both academics and practitioners, it was too closely related to the apartheid context, and that it naturally fizzled out due to a lack of credibility in the new government and public service era.

SAAPAM was established on the same basis of SAIPA, but with a new home and a very new younger, and more representative, membership.

It was established in order to encourage and promote good governance and effective service delivery through the advancement of
professionals, scholarship and practice in public administration and management.

The SAAPAM mission statement subsumed academics and practitioners on the same footing. Hence SAAPAM has held successful collaborative seminars and conferences over the last ten or so years. It is evident, though, that there exists a predominance in favour of academics.

SAAPAM also manages a successful accredited journal (Journal of Public Administration) which affords academics and officials the opportunity to publish findings of their research.

The Association of Southern African Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM)

The rationale for the establishment of ASSADPAM was somewhat different from that of SAAPAM, at least in terms of its mission statement. Like its predecessor, the Lecturer’s Association, ASSADPAM was primarily earmarked to create and facilitate a forum for continuous academic discourse and dialogue and to seek to develop the discipline. ASSADPAM acknowledges that public officials also have a stake in, and that many public officials are sensitive to the need for, the development of the discipline. ASSADPAM therefore does not exclude practitioners partipation, but endeavours to manage higher level academic and practitioner discourse.

The association, like SAAPAM, has until recently focused on hosting conferences and managing a credible journal. During 2005, however, it made a more active move towards understanding the discipline in context of the praxis. On the basis that theory is in praxis revealed and praxis is in theory concealed, ASSADPAM set up the U’kubambisana I workshop in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service and Administration in order to establish mutual respect among academics and practitioners and to define a collaborative future that would be of mutual and societal benefit.

The participants in the workshop were representative of academic and practice, and of junior and senior levels from both sectors. It also included participation of other stakeholders such as the National Research Foundation, the Human Sciences Research Council, and NGOs.

An important result of the workshop was the identification of seven initial streams for collaboration. These are: institutionalisation of the revolving door mechanism; operationalisation of experiential learning; focus on community work; new and continued curriculum development; increased efforts towards professionalisation of the public service; collaborative research; and identifying and harnessing financial resources to enable the other identified streams.

The success of the implementation of the agreed upon streams has, however, been very minimal since 2005. Some of the reasons for the lack of success are identified below.

Joint conferencing

An important attempt towards collaboration was the joint SAAPAM/ASSADPAM conference held in 2006 (September), which fostered associational collaboration, and included academics, practitioners, public service commissioners and parliamentarians.

It is important to note that most of the above-mentioned efforts at collaboration focused primarily on the discourse and teaching level, and only evinced marginal success at the level of collaborative research and improved service delivery. The “go factor”, the “rallying around solution” continued to evade academics and practitioners.

Academics mostly see research as a medium- to long-term process and exercise, while public officials often seek short-term or immediate solutions and results from researchers.

Accredited publication

Public Administration academics and public service practitioners have access to a number of important journals in which to publish their individual and collaborative research efforts. SAAPAM manages a regular journal (Journal of Public Administration), while ASSADPAM hosts Administrivia Publica. Another important South African journal that the public administration fraternity have access to is Politeia.

The unfortunate aspect is that these journals seldom feature collaborative research efforts, which serves as an indication that such might not exist.

Recently Wessels (20) published important research that indicated a lack of quality on the South African public administration front on the levels of research methodology, choice of topic, research rigour, among other matters. This speaks to the credibility of existing research and researchers.

Collaborative research based on mutual knowledge sharing, collaborative need identification, and sharing of resources could to a large degree address this credibility matter.

South African Public Management Conversation

In December 2002 the Minister of Public Service and Administration hosted the First Annual South African Public Management Conversation (SAPMC) at which she launched the series. The SAPMC is a successor to the South African Public Management Workshops which – as mentioned earlier – focused on the sharing of case studies.

The SAPMC, however, combined the sharing of case studies with an Appreciative Enquiry approach in order to draw participants towards finding solutions to the issues presented.

The purpose of the SAPMC is to facilitate and stimulate dialogue between academics, public servants, civil society, private sector and internationals on repositioning the public service in line with the new generational thinking and operations in the public service. One of the benefits accrued from this partnership is the enrichment of realistic challenges in the content of public management programmes for relevance.

Every year the conversation focuses on particular themes. For example, in 2003 two key areas were investigated: policy coordination, integrated planning, an integrated public service; service delivery innovation, including e-government and information management; and anti-corruption and ethics.

The December 2004 conversation presented three challenges to participants: building a unified system of public administration; achieving the goals of a developmental state through strategic partnerships, and making integrated programmes work. The 2005 conversation focused on the African Peer Review Mechanism.
This year the conversation is a joint initiative with CAPAM, in support of the Minister for Public Service and Administration to fulfil her role as President of CAPAM.

In 2005 the DPSA launched a second annual initiative, the Public Service Research Colloquium, providing another platform for practitioners, research institutions and academics to engage, specifically around research initiatives, methodology and the sharing of research findings. The research colloquium thus serves as another platform addressing the public administration research concerns raised by Wessels.

One of the key success factors of the conversation (vis-à-vis the SAPMW) is that the funding is provided by the DPSA and that it is hosted by the minister, thus providing both the enabling environment and a level of importance that attracts both eminent academics and senior practitioners.

These conversations provide the minister, as well as senior managers in the public service, with the opportunity to enter into a policy dialogue with scholars and leading thinkers in an a-political and non-partisan environment thus helping to ensure that innovative and critical thinking inform policy development.

The conversation and learning material originating from the conversation (including multi-media CDs and articles in the Service Delivery Review) have proven to be valuable teaching tools for academics, also complementing the case studies generated through the SAPMW.

Conclusion

Equipped with information about the above collaborative efforts, it is evident that more empirical research is needed on the reasons behind the lack of success-through-collaboration in order to get closer to the “go”, the core of reliable action that Sarewitz and Nelson propagate.

Through collaboration management, academics and practitioners should seriously address the matters that could impede or enhance a functional academic-practitioner interface. Engaging with some differences that might stand in the way of implementing and operationalising policy, the discussion should focus on the implications of how these differences can be managed in order to achieve the successful engagement of practitioners and academics.

Those conversations and engagements thus enhance the capacity of both parties to collaborate, by addressing the barriers that might stand in the way of the successful implementation of a policy or project. This might result in a more effective and efficient collaboration that is consistent with the principles of good governance.

The extensive reliance on consultants: Often academics regard public service capacity constraints as opportunities for consulting and for supplementing poor academic salaries. Although this, as a driver for motivation, might be frowned upon, the spin-off is that academics get exposure to the reality of the public sector context, have the opportunity to knock their theoretical knowledge up against the world of practice, and in turn can bring this exposure back into their academic work.

Holistat attempts at promoting efficiency, effectiveness, and good governance: Perhaps most importantly, formal and informal discourse among academics and practitioners evince sincere hopes for improving governance, with a clear understanding that the primary solution towards achieving this lies in cooperation and collaboration between the two groups of functionaries while including also other role players such as NGOs and trade unions as the situation, project or need may demand.

Existing expertise and comprehension of context

Often academics know what to do (read “research”) but not always how to do it, while practitioners might know how to do, but do not always have the contextual or priority knowledge of what needs to be done (cf. Schon). Such a scenario creates a perfect platform for well-managed collaboration.

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The Academic/Practitioner Interface in Public Administration: The Early Years – 1990 to 2000

A positive engagement between practitioners and academics is vital to maintaining and developing a vibrant theory and practice of public administration in South Africa. A robust dialogue between these two spheres provides a space in which to explore the limitations of practice and develop new approaches and theories to the challenges of public provisioning.

It also ensures that the stories, problems, disasters, achievements and innovations of public provisioning are documented and examined for history and, more importantly, for further learning and knowledge production.

However, the interface between practitioners and academics is complex and complicated by a blurring of lines and roles in areas such as research, consulting and education and training. This has to do with the nature of public administration as an academic discipline and a professional practice.

The traditional domain of academics is the generation of knowledge, yet it is often practitioners who know more about the challenges of public provisioning and the means to deal with these. This is a tension between the academic requirement for a strong scientific foundation for the discipline and the professional necessity of relevance to practice.

Osypina and Dodge suggest that this tension resides at the heart of the academic/practitioner interface: "Which of the two realms represents the legitimate source of knowledge production: the discipline of public administration or the activities of public administration? Who produces this knowledge, only academics, only practitioners, or both? For what reason do we produce knowledge: to build theory, to inform practice, or both?" 4

This engagement is further complicated, in the South African context, by the fact that the survival of academic schools of public administration is dependent, to some extent, on creating and sustaining a market for education, training and research. This has to do with the nature of public administration as an academic discipline and a professional practice.

The purpose of the paper is to document the history of the academic/practitioner interface in public administration with a view to exploring the knowledge dynamic in relation to research, public service and engagement, consulting, education and training. The argument is that the context, and the nature of the transition to democracy, defines this interface.

As the context changed from negotiations to transition to democratic government and then delivery, so the interface between academics and practitioners was redefined and rearticulated.

A close interface between Afrikaans institutions and government during apartheid was challenged by academics in the early nineties as South Africa negotiated a new democratic beginning. This led to a collaborative partnership in the late nineties between new government officials and academics that dissipated in the new millennium. Current initiatives seem to be driven by practitioners seeking opportunities to look beyond their practice. It is unclear whether academics and universities are meeting this need through a rigorous process of engaging, documenting and theorising.

Changing the paradigm

The early nineties shift away from apartheid was marked by the 2 February 1990 speech made by the then President PW de Klerk unbanning liberation movements and starting the negotiations that would lead to a democratic settlement.

This led to a shift in the established dynamic between public administration and universities in South Africa creating a bridge between the separate worlds of progressive academics and activists (within the African National Congress and other opposition movements) as a means to challenge the dominant model of knowledge in the field – the generic process approach.

This approach facilitated the administration of apartheid policy by disguising the inherent bias of separate development by separating politics (and apartheid values) from administrative science and process. This approach was evident in the writings of JHN Cloete who developed the generic process model which dominated South African public administration practice.
Public administration was defined as a process involving policy making, financial administration, organisation, work methods and procedure, control and personnel provision and utilisation. Effective administrators did not challenge the political purpose of policy but focused instead on the administrative systems which ensured delivery. This approach tended to ignore the context of shifting social processes and was limited by a lack of political awareness which would ensure that the complexities of administration arising from the system of apartheid were overlooked. As a consequence, it was seen as a means of justifying apartheid practices through its apparent neutrality and exclusive focus on implementation only.

This early period of engagement was characterised by a proactive push from academia fired with the challenges of transformation to change the theory and practice of public administration in the country. There were a number of early initiatives to begin a debate on the nature of the post-apartheid state both from the academic community and the ANC.

In the late eighties, Erwin Schwebel and Donovan Marais, among others, were writing about the need for a new approach to public administration in the country. Schwebel argued that the generic approach was inappropriate to the context and work of practitioners, while Marais suggested that it was not a theory at all. The ANC established a group to explore post-apartheid public administration in South Africa (referred to as PAPASA) and its implications. The view of the ANC was that public administration practice should be redirected towards a more appropriate model relevant to the South African context.

Overall, there was a recognition that the paradigm of public administration would need to change. In August 1992, the ANC established a pilot team to work on public administration education and training priorities headed by Zola Skosnya, who would later become the Minister of Public Service and Administration. The apartheid public administration in residence at the time represented by the Commission for Administration (CFA) met this challenge with some resistance. The CFA had effective control over training, appointment and promotion in the central administration.

There had been a mutually symbiotic relationship between a number of Afrikaans academics and the apartheid government prior to this period. There was continuous engagement between the CFA and academics through various fora such as the South African Institute for Public Administration (SAIPA) and through the SAIPA Journal of Public Administration. The University of Pretoria, in particular, was responsible for training senior managers in the service.

Schwebel suggests that the generic administrative process approach provided a safe house for the discipline during the end of apartheid. He argues that many of its key protagonists were close to government decision-makers and stood to lose a favoured position if criticism was too sharp. He suggests these vested interests were compounded by recognition that the discipline was weak in terms of providing any relevant guidance on complex public management challenges.

FitzGerald, in a speech to the Public Servants Association on 23 May 1992, notes: "The present public service establishment seems to retreat further into its old caste and ethnic loyalties, refuses to discuss openly and hide behind patently absurd and non-credible protestations of 'political neutrality'. It is time to decisively leave forever the absolute heart of darkness which so much of our workings of government have become. It is time to allow in the light of professional concern, social accountability and to seize the day of future development, good governance and a truly new public service ethos."

Aspects of the new public management discourse, specifically those which focused on outcomes and delivery, were incorporated into the thinking of academics who were beginning to challenge the dominance of the generic process approach in South African delivery systems and public administration academia. Many of these academics and activists (recently returned from exile) stressed that a new approach to public administration practice should be development oriented, responsive, efficient, economically innovative and proactive. The New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI), formed in 1991, strongly reflected these sentiments.

The NPAI was comprised of a loose network of universities, technikons, NGOs, practitioners and individuals government employees in the field of public and development management. Academics and activists predominated. The main objective of the NPAI was the discussion of an overall strategy for the professional development of public and development management practices in line with the tasks and challenges of a transformed South Africa.

The NPAI led the paradigm shift in the approach to the public administration in South Africa by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to forge forward to the rapid professional development of public administration practice and training in South Africa.

In furthering its aims, the NPAI has held two national consultations to discuss issues critical the development of public administration theory and practice. The Mount Grace Consultation held at a hotel of the same name in the Magaliesberg resulted in a resolution which called for a paradigm shift in public administration. They explicitly rejected the generic process model and attempted to move towards a more appropriate model relevant to the South African context.

Key elements of the resolution noted that the theory and practice of public administration was too descriptive and reductionist and lacked analytical technique. In addition to recommending a more developmental and responsive approach, the resolution called for "more rigorous scientific analysis, explanation and predications of governmental and administrative phenomena supplementing their mere description."
Schools argued that the traditional approach entailed a dogmatic adherence to the administrative process model, which reduced complex societal phenomena to generic processes and six administrative functions. This is inappropriate to a society in turmoil as it effectively ignores complex socio-economic problems. Moreover, this model had been reified to the status of reality through politically powerful institutions. He therefore suggested that management theory should provide an environmental context for public administration. The debate at Mount Grace noted the challenge of inserting values and principles into the structures, institutions and processes which comprise the domain of public administration. It was concluded that only a normative approach could counteract the bogus neutrality of the old model.

The views of the NPAI were not well received by many within the public administration establishment. Many were concerned about the effects of the transition of their salaries and pensions and jobs.

There was also some contestation amongst the public administration academic community. Some felt that the NPAI was not as inclusive of different views as it could be. In addition, there was some debate over the broad approach adopted. This led to a debate amongst academics about different theoretical approaches to public administration and their location in the practice of public administration.

These approaches varied from the open systems approach advocated by and Erasmus, to a focus on development administration. Some were concerned about the impact of the NPAI on capacity building in public administration. The more significant impact of the NPAI was probably felt through the cohorts of newly trained officials that went into public service from 1999 onwards. Over time, there is a shift from the more normative change orientation initially advocated to a more technical skills-based approach focused on building the capacity of the state to deliver.

Some universities and academics were more adept than others in meeting new demands. Debate in the discipline was no longer about the science of public administration, but the practice.

Changing the teaching

Donor agencies and foundations supported many of these early initiatives to explore a new paradigm and practice in public administration. Mount Grace I was supported by the Hans Seidel Foundation and Mount Grace II by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Anglo American Chairman’s Fund Educational Trust.

Liberty Life supported a number of early consultations about public administration training and education. The Canadian International Development Agency provided funding for research and education in the field of public administration and state transformation, as did Kagiso Trust, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society and the European Union.

The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University supported by funding from Otu Elevator and The Ford Foundation ran a series of workshops through the NPAI on the case method of teaching. However, as Picard notes, much of the aid provided during the transitional period was poorly co-ordinated and did not have a substantial impact on capacity building in public administration.

Access to funding seems to significantly define the academic/practitioner interface in public administration training and education. The more significant impact of the NPAI was probably in putting the training and development of public officials on the national agenda. The process of developing new curricula and approaches was supported by the various donors and foundations backing the NPAI.

However, towards the end of 1993, the NPAI began to fade away as more pressing national issues such as the formation of the Transitional Executive Council and its many working groups and the national elections took priority. At the same time, significant donors began to shift their funding focus from institutions to government following the democratic elections.

Schools of government were forced to operate in a state of “co-option” in order to access significant funds for capacity building for the new democratic public administration, while at the same time competing for the students, research and consulting that would ensure their survival.

Over time, government through the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI), a reconstituted Public Service Training Institute (PSTI), controlled the engagement between academics and practitioners in the area of capacity development by virtue of its access to funding. Academics and academic institutions were forced to operate as if they were part of the training and development systems sector in South Africa.

It is certainly the case that an entirely new way of thinking about public administration as a discipline was introduced over this period, with some impact of the practice and practitioners. The largest impact was probably felt through the cohorts of newly trained officials that went into public service from 1999 onwards. Over time, there is a shift from the more normative change orientation initially advocated to a more technical skills-based approach focused on building the capacity of the state to deliver.

Some universities and academics were more adept than others in meeting new demands. Debate in the discipline was no longer about the science of public administration, but the practice.
Western Cape, Durban-Westville and Witwatersrand) formed, with the approval of the government, the Joint Universities Public Management Education Trust (JUPMET). The purpose of JUPMET was to build the institutional capacity of the participating providers to meet national management development needs.

This loose NPAI network was to some extent replaced by a more formal mechanism aimed at enhancing the capacity of Schools of Government to support management development for the public service. This process led to a significant shift in the academic/practitioner interface from the early proactive and creative engagement about training and education possibilities led by the NPAI to a more constrained customer/client relationship driven by the need to survive in an increasingly competitive arena.

Liberty Life funded the first “Co-ordinating and Consulting Working Conference on the Teaching of Public Administration in South Africa” in February 1990. Its purpose was to facilitate discussion on new forms of public administration teaching. The scale of need for training and development at all levels highlighted the importance of a new mode of training and education and the need for increased capacity to meet these varying demands. This led to the formation of the NPAI as a mechanism to build regional and national co-operation to ensure an efficient utilisation of resources, through a pooling of strengths or a focus on specific areas.

The NPAI was therefore viewed as a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to forge forward to the rapid professional development of public administration practice and training in South Africa. Areas of interest included course content, pedagogy, context, curriculum development and ethos.

At the time, the prevailing management development paradigm was based on the conceptualisation of scientific administration which had dominated the field for so long. A review of past practices revealed that in-service training at the central and regional level was directly linked to promotion and career advancement.

There was an emphasis on technical and functional training as officials were taught precisely what was necessary to get the job done. Officials tended to gain experience on the job without developing a broad base of knowledge or frame of reference. The PSTI took the lead in providing such training and SAMDI has struggled to rise above this legacy.

Lower level training was also technical and directly related to specific job functions. The classification of personnel into different classes meant that instead of being developed as managers, civil servants were straitjacketed by their job descriptions and training. This shifted with the development of new administrations at the provincial level and the development of new approaches to capacity building.

Senior managers did receive intensive general management training which focused on the tasks of a “public administrator” rather than the necessary analytic and conceptual tools which would enable them to be more effective in most situations. The generic approach was prevalent. The most effective management development mechanism was (and still is) the induction of new personnel into the “culture” of the civil service, in terms of establishing set procedures and approaches to issues. In general, the lack of a government training policy led to a fragmented training system in all levels of government.

Training was conducted on an ad hoc basis without sufficient attention being paid to career advancement and performance evaluation. This absence of a structure and policy led to a management development context which failed to provide a framework in which programmes, resources and performance could be evaluated.

Many universities and technikons also utilised the generic approach. Courses tended to be descriptive and historical in nature, focusing on existing state structures, rather than on context, comparative structures and processes of change and transition. No relation between theory and practice was established, as students (with the exception of technikon students) were not required to have any practical experience.

Degrees were not professionally oriented and provided the students with an academic background of technical procedures and ideal ethics. Post-graduate courses were slightly different as students were usually experienced. However, this experience was not always utilised to encourage discussion and debate and their course material was subject to the same inadequacies discussed above.

In response to the changing political and social context in South Africa, several institutions, such as Wits, Stellenbosch, Western-Cape, Durban-Westville and others, took up the challenge of change by designing new curricula. These initiatives recognised the need for a strategic shift in the approach to capacity development.

There was an attempt to move beyond the generic “value-free” approach to one that is value-oriented, normative and based on community needs and expectations. Thus, both course orientation and content were under direct scrutiny. This involved a complex curriculum development process based on extensive consultation in order to ensure that training was oriented towards needs and driven by real and projected market demands. There was significant dialogue between newly appointed officials and academics in this regard.

The shift was from the more inward looking approach of scientific management which focused on inward accountability and formal organisational procedures to more client focused activity. Management development approaches in South Africa in this area manifested themselves in different ways, but must notably in a shift in conceptualisation and wording from public administration to public management.

Universities also attempted to establish links between the development and public administration fields. Many of business sector management development strategies and methodologies in areas such as human resources development, productivity or performance management entered the arena under the guise of new public management.
At the same time as curricula were being revised, the Kennedy School of Government, supported by Otis and the Ford Foundation, came to South Africa to explore whether the teaching methods used at the Kennedy School might be useful in the new South Africa. South African methods had tended to be confined to lecturing. This was considered inappropriate in the professional development of practitioners.

In January 1992, 40 academics spent one week writing and teaching at the University of the Western Cape with eight Harvard facilitators. This workshop, using a combination of case studies, reflection and managed discussion, exposed South African academics to an entirely new way of teaching and working.

It introduced a professionalism into the teaching of public administration in South Africa that was reinforced through annual workshops. It also led to the development of South African cases for teaching public administration using the experiences of practitioners written up by academics.

In addition to discussion about the curricula and teaching approaches that would support training and education for a new public administration practice, academics and practitioners engaged in a series of discussions about fast tracking, bridging and executive development. A wide range of short courses were implemented by a number of institutions in the lead up to the democratic elections.

Groups of ANC officials were sent all over the world to examine different administrative practices. The British Civil Service College trained an initial cohort of ANC officials and continued to provide support to SAMDI over a number of years. The practitioner discussion on these issues seemed to go in-house in order to focus on government priorities set out in the 1995 White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service which envisaged a public service that was “appropriately skilled and accountable and equipped with the appropriate technology”.

SAMDI’s role in the capacity building of the public servants was contested from within government as well as by academics. Critiques ranged from the quality of the training provided, to inadequate skills, to poorly conceptualised development programmes. Yet SAMDI continued to control training and education through its access to funding and met many of its objectives through a process of contracting services to individuals, IUPMET institutions and other public and private providers.

Increasingly, dialogue between the schools of public administration and the government seemed to narrow so that by the second Mount Grace consultation in 1998, very few practitioners participated. Academic institutions discussed the state of public and development processes, health and other areas also included academics to an entirely new way of teaching and working.

In fact, Mount Grace II seems to represent a hiatus in the academic/practitioner interface. While many academics as individuals continued to provide support and advice to government as consultants, the circle of engagement was limited to a small pool of academics and academic institutions. The vested interests of institutions with more access than others once again came into play.

The much wider and more robust engagement of the earlier years had waned. This was probably due to a reduction in the resources available to support such dialogues as larger donors such as the European Union reduced their focus and support in this area.

In addition, the 1999 elections heralded a new focus for public administration practice with a strong emphasis on the delivery of public services and a focus on efficiency and effectiveness. Academic institutions, like government, were required to adapt to a changing higher education funding and regulatory system focused on rationalisation and efficiency, democratic governance and the relevance of education to economic growth.

In practical terms, this meant that public administration departments were increasingly compelled to generate income to supplement declining government subsidies.

Schools of public administration shifted focus from policy development in the 1994 to 1999 period to an emphasis on the tools and challenges of implementation in a resource constrained economy. Many courses were re-engineered for changing market needs. For example, competency-based courses to support the development of the Senior Management Service as a mobile group of expert managers (Director level and above) were developed.

Public administration academia tended to respond to the demands of government, rather than participate in public debate and research. Tendering became the name of the game. Engagement happened within the confines of contractual agreements and not more generally. Neither the discipline nor the practice of public administration was enriched.

**Changing the practice**

There was considerable dialogue and exchange about the nature of post-apartheid public administration and public sector reform in the 1990 to 1993 period. Many academics and activists were involved in these debates as part of Transitional Executive Council work or ANC processes of preparing for government.

There was considerable interaction between academics and activists leading to joint research work and the joint development of policy. For example, the 1992 Policy Research and Action Training (PRACT) project comprised a series of papers focused on the transformation of public and development management in post-apartheid South Africa.

Research processes led by the ANC in education, reconstruction and development processes, health and other areas also included academics and paid attention of public sector transformation. At this stage, debates on public sector reform were relatively new.

The NPAI put forward a number of goals with respect to transformation, including issues such as restructuring the CFA, giving priority to education and training, ensuring cultural diversity and...
identifying change agents. Academic activists developed and implemented a particular approach to change as local government level premised on the need for a strong centre to plan strategically and perform functions such as redistribution and auditing.

Techniques included the shifting of power to elected officials, loosening bureaucratic rigidities through establishing task teams for projects consisting of management, unions, end-users and community representatives, participative planning and increasing the capacity of civil society to participate in decision making.

In the public service itself, the CFA and departments tended to take control of the technical aspects of the transition process by virtue of their being in situ. Many of the changes were driven by the state, on the authority of existing legislation and in terms of the Interim Constitution. There were also state-driven sectoral initiatives where, for example, the Department of Education Co-ordination Services was required to integrate all education departments on a regional basis by 1 April 1994. Finally, there was a range of regional or geographically specific forum activity.

Regionally specific "Civil Service Forums" played a role in restructuring to the extent that they coalesced the interests of an important group of stakeholders in the change process, notably the bureaucrats. Many of these processes were supported by regional academics or institutions.

The most notable tension in initiatives directed towards management restructuring was the lack of clarity over the roles of different levels of government and the likely decentralisation of functions. However, until the 1994 elections, much of the debate remained at the level of principles and wish lists, with little serious work being conducted on the nuts and bolts of change.

Few academics had the experience to consider the institutional implications of constitutional change and most relied on international trends in public sector reform which focused on change management techniques and organisational development to change the apparatus, mechanisms and "engineers" of the governance process. Many of these approaches were put into action after the elections as a large number of progressive academics went into government as heads of department, senior managers, public service commissioners and political leaders. These academics who had been leading the push to change the practice redefined the terrain of public administration.

This was followed by a period of alignment between schools of public administration and government which resulted in research, the development and implementation of a range of training and educational programmes and individual and institutional consulting work. Donor funding, particularly from the European Union, facilitated this growth and development.

The academic/practitioner interface shifted significantly as these newly appointed officials called on their academic networks as change management consultants, participants in review committees and members of commissions. Some universities, such as Stellenbosch, established consulting companies to feed this new market.

Reflective practitioners and engaged academics trawled the corridors of government. Strategic Management Teams, for example, introduced as a temporary measure to plan for a restructured administration, created a space for the introduction of those formerly excluded from the governance to participate in the crucial phase of transition as advisors to the national and provincial ministers.

They also provided a buffer between new political heads and established administrative and management networks which wielded considerable power in terms of their access to information and existing management practices. However, very little of this work, some of which resulted in the building of new institutions and administrative processes, has been documented or analysed.

Within government, scientific management (the process approach) continued to appeal because it enabled departments to maintain control of implementation through regulation and line accountability. The new public management emphasis on professionalism and performance was useful in terms of reorienting the public service to new objectives.

The democratic participation ethos responded to demands for a more responsive and development-friendly public service.

Over the first five years of democratic government, there was a shift from a more open and engaged practice of public administration to a more regulated and bureaucratic style as the realities of implementation and fiscal constraints became evident. This was evident in a growing emphasis on the decentralisation of responsibility, performance contracts and professionalism.

The approach adopted was underpinned by an assumption that professional behaviour combined with rational management techniques would improve service delivery.

A shift in the focus of donor funding, a change in government public administration strategy and a sense of complicity within universities shifted the terms of engagement in the late 1990s. Universities and academics were less proactive and perhaps more focused on the game of survival in a restructured higher education terrain.

Former academics leaving government tended to go into consulting or business rather back into academia. This meant that the reciprocal dynamic that characterises the academic/practitioner interface in places such as the United States was absent in South Africa. Government was increasingly concerned with the challenges and technicalities of service delivery and, finding fewer answers in academia, set up processes to seek them elsewhere. While individual academics continued to provide support and advice in their specialist policy areas, it was left to government to facilitate an engagement through processes such as the Public Management Conversations.

Thinking into the future

What lessons are there from the early years that might enable us to move forwards to a more productive academic/practitioner interface in the future? The first is to acknowledge the tension that is likely to exist in terms of knowledge production. The very nature of public administration, as both a practice and a discipline, implies that both academics and practitioners have valid claims in the production, generation and dissemination of public administration knowledge.

However, seeking opportunities to combine the wisdom and experiences of practitioners understanding with rigorous theorisation about the implications of such experiences will considerably enrich the field. Such engagements are only possible if both practitioners and academics see the purpose and relevance of dialogue, and clearly recognise their roles.

This opens possibilities for exchanges, fellowships and other programmes that enable practitioners to reflect on their practice in an
academic environment and academics to explore practice in a gov-
ernment context.
As is evident from the experience of the NPPI and other initia-
tives, joint projects, teaching and research are only possible if ade-
quately resourced and supported. Universities often cannot afford to undertake large-scale research projects to support government change initiatives without funding and access.
Government departments may also lack the time and capacity to manage such projects. In the absence of such support, many aca-
demic institutions will be obliged to run after the money and play the game of tenders and contracting. Government departments will simply get on with the business of delivering services.
There would be a need to change the terms of engagement from government as contractor and academic institutions as providers. This locks the academic/practitioner interface into a particular mode of interaction that does not lead to the pushing of boundaries or innovation.
Finally, a productive academic/practitioner interface requires the building of trust and an openness of engagement. Vested interests in future projects or training courses need to be set aside to ensure a critical consideration of the state of public administration practice. Practitioners would need to try not to be defensive and shut down dialogue.
Similarly, academics would need to rise to the occasion by pro-
ducing rigorous and thought-provoking research and theory about the state of public administration now and in the future. This would lead to the identification of trends relevant to the practice of public administration and the building of a strong social science founda-
tion for the theory. It would lead to the production of knowledge that could regenerate the theory and practice of public administra-
tion in South Africa. This would seem to be the most appropriate mode of interaction that does not lead to the pushing of boundaries or innovation.

Endnotes and references
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3. Personal communication with Patrick FitzGerald.
6. Schueller, ibid.
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23. Mount Grace Papers, ibid, p.25.
24. Mount Grace Papers, ibid, p.25 onwards.
26. Marais, ed.
32. Mount Grace II memorandum, ibid, p. 252.
33. Picard, 2005, ibid, pp. 222-232
34. A term used by Patrick FitzGerald in the time to define the relationship between higher education institutions providing public administration education as both cooperative and competitive.
37. Mc Lennan, ibid.
40. See Picard, 2005, pp. 208 to 211, for a more detailed discussion.
42. See list of participants in the Mount Grace II process, Therien and Schwella, 2000.
Dialogue for a developmental state

Professor Ben Turok, Member of Parliament, outlines three points of principle regarding the interface between academics and practitioners and reflects on the interface in the context of the developmental state.

The first point of principle that I like very much is the shifting paradigm. There has been a shift in paradigm from the apartheid to the post-apartheid period. But even within the post-apartheid period there is a shifting paradigm.

We must try and understand what that is. It means a commitment by all of us to the public good and not to our silos and our own individual institutions. I think this is high priority for any meeting which discusses interface and dialogue.

The second point of principle I want to talk about is political judgment. Many public servants do not like the word political judgment because it challenges their neutrality and objectivity, yet I would argue that because we are a developing country in a particular phase, political judgment is required all the time. We make judgments on the basis of what the outcome will be.

The third point I would like to make is about the complexity of decision-making in South Africa. Many people think that there is somebody up there who pushes a button, and decisions are taken. Some of us who studied political science know that within a modern system there is a high degree of complexity in decision-making. Of course there are people who push buttons, but that does not necessarily turn the system. They push the button as a pressure node, but there is a degree of relative autonomy in many institutions. Universities have a degree of relative autonomy which is part of the problem that we are discussing.

The public service also has a degree of relative autonomy as they report in the way they want to report and do not always report in the way that parliamentarians want them to report because they are exercising the relative autonomy of their institutions.

We are living in a country where there is no single person pushing a button. There is a system of institutions which are highly complex. Decision-making is complex. The President cannot do what he wants all the time because there is a complexity of decision-making and decision-taking which goes way beyond the Cabinet.

So these are the three points of principle – what does this do to the question of interface? We clearly need a great deal of dialogue and interaction between practitioners, academics and the public. We must insist that public participation is part of the dialogue.

The raising of the question of a developmental state which is beginning to appear in various documents of the African National Congress and government – the question being posed is how South Africa moves towards the creation of a developmental state.

Clearly, public servants have a view on these matters because they are the people who generate and promote development. I want to argue that there is no doubt that a concept such as a developmental state requires much more than the input of a practitioner. It requires the theorisation and understanding of the African experience. We cannot start thinking about the concept of the developmental state without consulting specialists who are housed in universities.

This is an example where policy formation requires the input of intellectuals, parliamentarians and public servants in a joint enterprise to define and characterise what is a developmental state.

As several documents are emerging at the moment on the question of the developmental state, they come through the political process. But clearly public servants have a major input to make there and we cannot possibly think that South Africa will move towards a developmental state without the input of all these people including the people at the grassroots who experience what development means in practice.

This is an example of how cooperation across the board between different sector, is vital. I really do not believe that the public service can do it on its own.

Use the public service of the future

Jacqui Wilson, Director of Governance and Institutional Development Division in the Commonwealth Secretariat, believes the student body can play a much bigger role in relationship between academics and practitioners.

The interface must be widened to include the student body. In my view they are the most important nexus between academics and practitioners. They are the public service of the future. In addition to this, the interface must be widened to include civil society.

The influence of academics in the survival of society should be strengthened. In that way, the governance arrangement will come into play so that we widen the definition of the interface beyond transparency to the active participation of all people in the affairs of the country.

If we take this as my general thesis, then how can we work to improve this? How can we build a more robust relationship?

Anne McLennan laid the foundation to this when she talked about what I call theory-laden, practice-driven and the key to public policy from both practitioners and academics, and how can both groups work together in an environment of mutual understanding and respect to ensure that the theory contributes to the practice and
feeds back into new theory and flexible arrangements.

I want to suggest that we need to go back to the principle of communication, non-judgmental behaviour which includes politically aspiring academics who condemn politicians and public service officials in newspapers – that it will not work for them if they do that. Very often this is where all the theorising takes place about the quality of public service.

I want to suggest that a major part of effective public service is in the leadership and there are so many opportunities for joint leadership development. There are so many opportunities for the creation of academic programming designed around the work of the public service that will give legitimacy to the work of the public service and allow you to become centres of influence in how the public service evolves within a framework of good theory and evaluation.

In Trinidad and Tobago academics got involved in a national strategy setting and as a result the agenda was created by everyone. The shaping of the agenda will then be monitored because everybody owns it.

In addition to this, a huge gap is in the development of case studies. You have an amazing student body. Why can’t they be used to develop case studies through assignments supervised by both academics and practitioners so that there is an emergence of high-quality case studies and knowledge creation during the evolution of the work? These can also be used for customer feedback systems.
Social capital is crucial in a developing society

You will not get cooperation in the developmental state if it is not based on the culture of trust and confidence. Confidence in the state is an absolute pre-condition for a successful developmental state. This has to be created because you do not get it packaged. You cannot have development in the absence of a culture of confidence and trust. There is a linkage between values and development.

One of the ingredients for a successful strategy is that you need a shared developmental vision. There are studies that make a distinction between high-trust, medium-trust and low-trust organisations/societies. When we talk about the context of the interface, we need to understand if context is low-trust, medium-trust or high-trust.

Based on research conducted at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa is a medium-trust society. What is interesting is that the main reason for the perceptions of particularly the elite within a state or society is the capacity of the state to deliver public goods. So the state must be democratic and effective if it is to be a successful developmental state.

I want to make a couple of suggestions. First of all, on the continuum of interaction we need both the formal and informal dimension to cooperation. The informal dimension will give you the indication of who the connectors are and it is where social capital is created. If there is an antagonistic relationship between the connectors there will be trouble on how to effect the interface.

The second recommendation is that we must try to develop the ability to translate research. In a developmental state, if you do not have workable and visible partnering meaning mutually beneficial relationships there will not be any success.

A better understanding of reality

The few thoughts that I would like to share here are based on some idea of having a re-look at the way we formulate policy. I hope to suggest some way of cascading policy upwards.

Teaching is about dissemination, sharing and researching knowledge. This body of knowledge tells us how reality is organised. I think the critical question we have to ask ourselves, especially in the academia, is whether that reality is really mirrored in our teaching programmes. Perhaps to some extent it is mirrored in our teaching. However, it would appear that there is often a serious misfit between what we teach and what reality is.

There are a number of examples that one can cite to support the observation. The lack of readiness of our graduates to deal with the reality of the work environment is one of these examples.

We also see from our delivery challenges that this is in fact the case. In 2002 the Public Service Commission conducted a study on the verification of qualifications. What is interesting about the outcome of that study is that, on average, those in the senior management levels had two-and-a-half degrees, but that same report lamented the lack of managerial skills.

So it looks like we develop people not for this world but for somewhere else.

I would like to argue that one of the things that we need to do in order to enhance the implementation of our policies is to begin to say let us have a better understanding of reality.

In our cascading up process we can begin to inform more the process of policy making so that we maximise the implementability of these policies.
An important question I want to pose now is, if things work in theory, do they work in practice? Ronald Reagan said something very interesting about this. He said, "If it works in practice, does it work in theory?" I thought that was a very interesting and fundamental question because it talks to the iteration that has to underpin the interface that we are talking about.

Recently I was facilitating a UNDP workshop where the participants were permanent secretaries, senior managers within SADEC as well as senior manager in management development institutes. I then gave senior managers from management development institutes an assignment which asked them to share their short-term critical priorities in terms of their mandate. The outcome of the assignment was that their priorities had nothing to do with their clients.

In Mpumalanga my company is involved in a project where out of the 21 poverty nodes declared by the President, we started a total development effort around these, sponsored by Business Trust and the Department of Local Government. We are focusing on agribusiness development as well as tourism development. We are facilitating business linkages and joint ventures between operators in the first and second economy. When we started there were enormous problems around land reform issues where communities were given land as part of the land reform process, but they said “we don’t want land, we want jobs”. We have, however, advanced quite significantly in integrating that land as part of the total development effort. The experiences are mind-boggling.

My thesis is let us start developing policy at micro-levels and this time around we can come up with informed policy and evidence-based policy. So that if we look at SMMEs in Mpumalanga, for example, our micro-level will be what we do at the enterprise level. Based on those experiences, we could ask a higher level question where we say, within a sector of SMMEs, what are we learning? What are the risks and what implications do they pose for policy making and its implementation?

Having benefited from those learnings at macro-level, informed by a political framework, then develop policy. This is opposed to what is happening now where there are clear political imperatives; we have policies that are based on these political imperatives and less so on experiences that inform us at the coal-face level. As a result we end up with a policy that is created somewhat in a vacuum.

This cascading up, which should be based on rigorous experiences and research, can better inform and enhance successful policy implementation.

Knowledge is the best policy

Professor Jerry Kuye, Director of the School of Public Management and Administration at the University of Pretoria, examines targeting strategic policy for national and continental development.

I have listened to the debate surrounding public administration and the synergy behind the formulation of strategic policies. My argument is that there are various levels in which we inculcate knowledge. It could be at the secondary level, undergraduate level and it could also be at the post-graduate level.

Whatever levels we try to initiate ideas at, we must accept that institutions of higher learning are supposed to cultivate and generate new thinking and new knowledge. The application of these ideas (that we have inculcated in universities) must not only be left in the repositories of universities, but must be best-practiced outside universities.

When we talk of policy, we can be spread into different dimensions. Here I want to concentrate on public policy because if we accept the notion that policy in the public domain is what governments choose to do or not to do, then we have to accept that within the concept of a developmental state government will choose what it wants to do for the benefit of the state.

Therefore, the linkage between public policy, public administration and the way we govern ourselves in the management of these policies become very important and paramount.

From the inception of public administration, we are still debating crucial issues on how policy and administration travels. To some, public administration in the past evoked dull images of complex structures which are convoluted in procedures, not easily understood and, in some cases, ineffective actions and bad protocol of engagement.

However, to understand modern public administration one must think within the concept of interdisciplinary dialogue. As we diversify our strategies we must move away from the mechanistic paradigm in public policy making, public administration and move into those of elaboration and collaboration within the broader discipline.

However, I would like to take another look at institutions of higher learning. Too frequently we compete in domains where we do not have expertise. When we should be collaborating, some of us are competing. This creates a disjoint in the way we deliver our programmes. I have always argued that public administration is both an academic and professional practice. It has always integrated theory and practice in the quest for new discovery and in the acquisition of new knowledge. Public administration and policy management as a dis-
discipline has moved in the direction of collaboration – into collaborative ventures and transdisciplinary approaches. Now the question is, what is the relationship between what we do in institutions of higher learning and how we share this information with functionaries and structures of government? It is not good that dissertations just sit in university libraries. They must be translated into meaningful entities and structures.

Research in the field of public administration and public policy must adapt to the current events of society. It should also be prepared to futures research that will shape the discipline and instill new dimensions to the debate of leadership and governance. Research in these disciplines can play a strategic role in the reform of public organisations and agencies, including programmatic policy centres and centres that provide futures research advice. However, the issues of boundaries and territoriality continue to plague the synergy between the discipline and the professional sectors, between basic forms of research and applied research. This takes me to my next phase – is there a distinction between basic and applied research?

Basic research, as we tend to cultivate it in universities, involves a conceptual construction of a research problem through the use of theoretical models. Institutions of higher learning must learn about basic research used in structures of government.

The application of the results of research findings is what forms basic research and is what can be labeled as applied research put into practice. I have always argued that neither applied nor basic research should be assigned any higher status. They should be complementary.

Academic specialists in public administration and public policy institutions should be as attentive as possible to the needs of practitioners. Academics constantly complain that the practitioner community ignores their best scholarly efforts. The best scholarly effort without application, is a failure.

How can good and effective consultancies support, sustain, maintain and preserve the domain of public administration and policy? A consultancy that cannot be sustained is irrelevant. Consultancies that can replicate and sustain themselves over a period of time are what we need in terms of this collaboration between the practitioner and the academic.

The debate has been going on for a very long time. The institutions of government use research done in institutions of higher learning. Rather, I would like to ask, are institutions of higher learning sensitive enough to make sure that what we are researching applies to the basic needs of the state?

Public administration is a term often used to mean the study of selective practices, of the task associated with behaviour, conduct and protocol of the affairs of the administrative state. Is it not right, therefore, to contend that the area of policy domain, policy management, public administration should be the coordination of group strategies to carry out the affairs of government through the application of organizational decision making to the restructuring of the way we conduct research?

I also would like to state that the issue that we face in the modern-day governance imperative is how we want to define territories. I often hear people say, “It doesn’t really matter whether you are in political science, economics, sociology.” It does not really matter. Each of these disciplines assists in the construction of reality.
Identity, values and the agenda

Anver Saloojee, advisor to the Minister in the Presidency, gives his thoughts on what is involved in the academic-practitioner relationship.

The navigation of the continuum has to involve a number of things. The first point I want to talk about is the issue of identity and compromised identities – that is the identity of an academic as an academic and the practitioner.

Are academics compromised when they do consultancy work for government? This is an interesting issue in terms of knowledge production, dissemination and the autonomy of the academic. Is the autonomy compromised by the terms of reference that they agree to with government?

Also important is the issue of the compromised identity of the practitioner. The issue of the neutrality of the practitioner in the context of the developmental state – the question here is, to what extent are administrators truly neutral? Should they be neutral?

Knowledge creation, dissemination through tendering for government business as distinct from knowledge creation and dissemination through peer-reviewed articles, raises the issue of accountability of the academic.

The second point is the issue of values, competing values and ethics. What are the ethics that guide this interface? Is there a common set of values? I would suggest there is a common set of values. The notion of the communities of engagement to promote democratic administration, national development goals including improved service delivery, the transformation agenda of the state and increased representation between the academic world and in government is critical.

The third point which needs to be emphasised repeatedly is that the interface between academics and practitioners has to begin with the centrality of politics. We cannot have an interface without an absolute understanding of the politics and administration dichotomy, which is a false dichotomy.

My next point is about the role of academic consultants and practitioners in the realisation of the national development objectives of the state. Also important here is the difference between academic curriculum and curriculum for training, and academics that do not respond to immediate developmental needs of the state. Knowledge creation through consultancy, research and actual practice – and navigating the continuum means bringing these dimensions together.

There has to be a recognition of potential conflict of interests, for the academic, the practitioner or the consultant. The question is, are academics willing to fully understand the implications of autonomy when they do consultancy work for government? Are consultants willing to do themselves out of the job? Are they willing, when they do their consultancy, to transfer skills on the job so that they do not get called back for a similar job? Practitioners need to ask, why is it that government has such a high reliance on consultants?

Certainly in the process of transformation there is a need for reliance as we are developing skills through the educational process, etc.

Last, but not least, the issue of the agenda is very important. It is in fact interesting because the agenda must come through the democratic process. The agenda of the state is derived from the legitimacy it gets through the electoral process.

As practitioners and academics, the real question is how do you enforce and give life to the agenda of the state that is has legitimately derived from the will of the people? In the case of South Africa it is the notion of the people’s contract which binds the state to its citizens and public servants to service delivery. So what is the role of the people’s contract in the realisation of the agenda of government that is duly elected? It gets its legitimacy through that.

Outcomes-based public policy is important and the role of academics in the assessment and impact of public policy is interesting. Much of the research is telling us that the full impact of significant public policy does not happen until 20 years after the policy has been implemented. So what is it that we are paying consultants to monitor and evaluate? What is the difference between short-term impact and long-term impact when you know the effect of, for example, the broadening of the social safety net and its impact on poverty is being felt immediately, but the real impact in terms of poverty eradication will not be felt for another 10 or 15 years?

Higher education and development challenges

Naledi Pandor, Minister for Education, believes that higher education institutions should make a greater contribution to finding solutions to the social development challenges in South Africa.

I want to talk about higher education and the possibilities it has for meeting the expectations of society. I would like to begin by saying that I find South Africa very fascinating. If you look at South Africa, one of the interesting features of its institutional make-up is that it has one of the best frameworks of public accountability. Its constitutions, the statutory instruments that guide the state and a range of non-statutory vision instruments that guide non-public institutions, but which incorporate the very same ideals.

So this notion of ideals specified and ideals shared infuses social
Some of the honours programmes in political science and that the relationship serves the ends that we want to achieve. So you do not always find programmes had to be de-accredited from offering these pro-
vide service in the way that we want them to. A few years down the line we have not seen the improvement in quality of our teachers and they are unable to pro-

While we might have achieved access to higher education, we may ask if it is access that advances the imperatives of the state.

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opmental ethos that is put into reformulating and rethinking of our curriculum.

We could also collaborate on strategic research projects in partnership with public service departments throughout the country. I also think that we could look at infusing a problem-solving approach into some of the training that is done for the public service. Many of our public servants believe everything is right, but they do not have a problem-solving approach, and do not really engage critically with problems facing their sectors.

I think more training and problem-solving and critical assessment of our public service could be done. That is something that universities are traditionally good at and could assist us with.

I think the time has come for us to have a national discussion about the role and place of higher education within a society that is in a process of change. We also need to consider how we can allow universities to carry out their particular role whilst also supporting the state to achieve the objectives which are agreed amongst all of us.

Of course for such a partnership to occur, we must ensure that government has clear and coherent priorities, because we as government sometimes have a mixed set of priorities which make it difficult for our higher education institutions to interface with us. We need to communicate our priorities and objectives far more clearly.

We must also ensure that while we seek a partnership, it cannot be so intrusive, that on higher education’s important autonomy and academic freedom. These must be aspects and principles of higher education that we recognise and support so that the partnership is a shared one, rather than an imposition of our programmes and expectations.

Universities need to become far more alert to national imperatives, rather than to economic potential or pure scientific inquiry. The state should ensure that if it expects universities to play a role, it should fund them appropriately and develop a clear understanding of the autonomous role that higher education must have if it is to thrive as a higher education sector. I also think that you need to specify areas of support that you ask universities to assist in because universities do not have a staff complement that can address fully the objectives that we would want to achieve.

We as the state have to ensure that we have our own institutions that can deliver the kind of training and development that we want. If we wish to have a developmental relationship with higher education, let us make sure we clearly understand and articulate what we want to achieve and that the relationship is well specified and well articulated.
It’s still ‘us’ and ‘them’

Avril Gollop, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service in Barbados, emphasises the need for trust and real talking.

Let me start with the question of consultants. Why don’t we have internal consultants? Why don’t public servants consult? There is absolutely no reason why we don’t consult, except that we do not see ourselves as consultants. In truth and fact, we are actually consultants.

The biggest issue that I want to raise besides the issues of consultants is the issue of trust. You cannot run any organisation without trust. You don’t just need trust between public servants and academics, you also need trust within the public service itself. This is where we are losing out because we don’t have trust. I think we have look at this direction before we think about trust with people outside the public service.

I am also fascinated by some strange conceptions of policy formulation. Public servants are people that by and large drive the policy formulation. The final act of policy making is done by the highest body, but public servants with academics are usually the people that come out with ideas and thoughts.

Furthermore, the word that has been used today to refer to working together has been “interface”. I am going to use a different word and suggest the word “talk”. We are interfacing but do not talk.

This is the fourth public management conversation and we are still talking about “us” and “them”. This tells me that the conversations are not getting across. As an outsider I think you need to ask yourselves if you are really making good progress. I am also wondering if academics understand really what a public servant does.

I am also curious if a public servant understands what another public servant does. I just do not think they do.

The last thing I want to talk about is that we talked a lot about academia meaning university training. There is a component of training that is not university training and has to be done in the public service, and the senior public servant as part of his or her role has to be a trainer.

You have to do your own in-service training and have to learn how to deal with the green graduates that come out of universities needing guidance from senior public servants. I think mentorship programmes within the public service work wonders.
Botswana has been a planning economy since 1966. We are currently at National Development Plan No 9. Therefore our public service for years has been a public service which was focused on providing services related to infrastructure provision. As we progressed, the infrastructure that we had provided needed people to now provide the service. That is where we noticed gaps.

In 1986 we asked what kind of Botswana we want to see when we are at 50 years of independence in 2016. What came was a programme called Vision 2016 whose theme is “Prosperity for all”. It came up with seven major pillars which were:

• Prosperous and innovative nation;
• Educated and informed nation;
• Safe and secure nation;
• Just, compassionate and caring nation;
• Moral and tolerant nation;
• United and proud nation; and
• Open, democratic and accountable nation.

We are left with nine years to 2016 and we are only now beginning to see a scramble. What is coming out clearly is that the way the vision is structured has had an effect on the whole public administration in Botswana.

We are now beginning to refocus and restructure ministries. As a result, in January 2007 we had to bring in three additional ministries because we were not well structured to meet the demands of 2016. One wonders whether in the remaining nine years we will be able to meet the demands of the vision.

As we restructure there are more glaring gaps appearing, particularly with regard to skills. It is exacerbated by the fact that the few skills that we have are taken by South Africa because of the 2010 project. One believes that when graduates return to Botswana they would be prepared for the work environment.

I want to conclude by stating that the interface is necessary and should be nurtured as it gives us a sense of purpose and improvement on the quality of outcomes between practitioners and academics. The principles that should reinforce this interface should embrace time management, resource allocation and the need to trust each other. We should have integrity so that the common purpose of what we want to achieve should be the primary drive for the interface.

Interfacing in an abnormal society

On the question of the connection between academics and the public service practitioners I would like to say that I believe that being an academic at a public institution makes a particular sub-type of the public service. I think we need to move away from the idea that says academics are completely outside of the public service.

We are all engaged in public service in different ways. So we ought to be working in a way that is coordinated and coherent towards similar goals. I do not believe that the academic is out there somewhere in another sphere and the public service practitioner elsewhere.

The relationship

The academic needs to be engaged, not because government wants it to be engaged in the interface, but because by engaging that is a site of knowledge and you need to know how government and the state works. And in order to know that you need to engage and examine how it carries out its mandate as a state, and pull out knowledge out of that - knowledge which will help us understand whether we have a viable government and state administration of society.

So engaging for me is a site of learning and developing new knowledge around the nature of the state, not how the state thinks it is. The academic becomes an enquirer who looks at things objectively through evidence and presents it in a way that throws light on the reality so that the state and society see themselves as they are, not as they think they are. That is really the contribution that an academic ought to make.

Our programmes need to be structured in a way so that they have an element of reality in them. We can achieve this by allowing public service practitioners who are intellectually capable to come to university classrooms and share with students the kind of work that they are doing. This is so that they can be interrogated by students and students can have an idea of what is going on outside the classroom in real life.

This does not mean that you bring them through the so-called “revolving door”. They can still remain in their positions in government. They can just come and visit at the university and make an input to the teaching programmes there.

The liberation of knowledge

The state and the university must be part of the transformation of knowledge production and its application. The apartheid system excluded the majority, particularly women and black people, from being producers of knowledge in universities. Even when some of them were in universities, they were located there as teachers not as researchers who are producers of knowledge.

Has that changed? Maybe 3% to 6% of the previously excluded groups are now involved in the production of knowledge. We are not talking about a real shift here. This is worrying because it informs the type of knowledge that is produced and its cultural basis and relevance to society. To me that is critical because it says something about whether we are a developmental state or not. We are developing with what type of knowledge? What is its relevance to society?

White males still dominate knowledge production in the country.
Black and women scholars need to claim this space and become knowledge producers.

In my view, we should also take a trans-disciplinary route. This is because I do not believe you can develop society when we continue to produce tunnel-minded, silo-minded, and narrow graduates. So we need research that focuses on trans-disciplinarity – led by people with open minds and think laterally. We need people who know the limits of their knowledge area. This is not to say we should not specialise.

An interaction of an academic with a public servant is to provoke them to think critically and be innovative, not simply to help them.

**Idea of a developmental state**

I hold the view that society develops itself and that the state does not develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society.

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The state is not a delivery motor car. This is very important because sometimes we disempower people and as a result they engage in life-changing activities and how does the academic help?

**The other area is action research.**

We have been involved in action research where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research. For example, the grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research. For example, the grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research. For example, the grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research.

**The responsiveness and that academic freedom does not imply academic freedom.**

I think this is our bridge and our campus to navigating the continent that in terms of the developmental state there is a certain responsiveness and that academic freedom does not imply academic freedom.

**The South African state is a problematic state with a fragile society.**

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**We are all public servants.**

We are all public servants. We are all public servants.

**The grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research.**

For example, in the past year I have been engaged in research for the Department of Education in to areas of basic literacy – looking at global models and plan for implementation in South Africa. In that way it is direct research which would impact directly on policy. One must also acknowledge that there are indirect impacts to policy through researches from higher education. For example, the recent legislation on passive smoking which is a result of a direct study from a university, we know from medical research that harmful smoking is harmful which is an implicit impact on policy.

There are also grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research. For example, the grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research. For example, the grey studies where a lot of grey research exists that is not part of the formal research.

**The responsive state.**

I hold the view that society develops itself and that the state does not develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society.

The state is not a delivery motor car. This is very important because sometimes we disempower people and as a result they engage in life-changing activities and how does the academic help?

**The idea of a developmental state.**

I hold the view that society develops itself and that the state does not develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society. It is therefore important to ask to what extent is the state an enabler of people to be able to realise their potential to develop society.

The state is not a delivery motor car. This is very important because sometimes we disempower people and as a result they engage in life-changing activities and how does the academic help?
The South African situation, with its peculiarity, is not unique to what is happening in most parts of the world. The reality today is that curriculum development and teaching techniques will increasingly reflect the needs of society today and the future. Globalisation is also a reality that is impacting on all states. Also very scarce resources are likely to be increasingly channeled towards programmes that support and address immediate issues.

We need to move away from this idea of two worlds – the academic and practitioner. The challenges ahead are real and we can only deal with them successfully through collaboration. The important question we need to consider is what is the role of academia in meeting development challenges?

Clearly higher education can play a critical role in development. Is there a need for an intermediate institution to try and broker the differences between traditional universities and practitioners? Or can we broker these with existing structures? I have no answer to these questions.

On the issue of curriculum development, we need to ask what the needs of the public service are. These include preparing people who know how to think critically and provide solutions to situations. The curriculum should reflect and be responsive to the needs of the nation.

So we need leaders who can assess situations and use appropriate tools in addressing problems. It should be programmes that really reflect the needs of the public service.

Let me ask a further question: Are our students equipped to meet the challenges of the work environment? If not, what can we do more to assist? How do we improve our programmes so they equip learners to be leaders in the developmental state?

Curriculum development must also reflect the theoretical rigour. It is also critical to integrate innovation in programme design. We also need to reflect on the experiences of other countries and try to find workable solutions in different contexts.

Briefly, I want to ask what the role of the interface is. Is there a value in it? The answer is yes, but the question that continues to permeate is that we all see the need to engage, but where will that lead us?

Perhaps we need to now cross the bridge, not the bridge between two silos, but cross that bridge that leads to some concrete action. I am just wondering to what extent we can move forward on that agenda.

I also question whether we are investing enough in this relationship. Are public sector needs to provide clear and concrete feedback on, for example, types of skills necessary in the public service and then allow the institutes to design programmes that reflect these needs on the basis of robust academic principles? So both can co-exist.

Finally, so far we have heard inputs revolving around ideas of the nation and the institutions, but there are also micro-levels where there is a reality in provincial and local levels, that our public sector practitioners and academic institutions need to engage and learn from each other because the reality and needs at the national level might be different from the local level.

Cross the bridge that leads to concrete action

Paul Zahra, Permanent Secretary (Policy) in the Prime Minister’s Office in Malta, says the curriculum should be responsive to the needs of the nation.

Regular talking and shared planning

I think we are talking about the conditions to ensure that collaboration works. Shared planning in terms of getting academics and public servants together and creating a relationship is one of the key conditions to making sure that public servants and academics can do their jobs.

One thing that has not been mentioned is the fact that public servants and academics work quite differently. Often public servants are given short spaces of time to give advice and recommendations to ministers. I would suggest that if academics were asked to do thoughtful research in a week, they would find that distasteful and not a credit to their institution.

Unless we have a relationship where the intuition of a public servant that a particular programme is not working and unless that public servant (on an informal basis) say “this is not working” – the academic can start to frame the problem and get the research in place so that by the time the evidence is there that it is not working, academics will have the reason why.

If public servants are not, at least once a month, talking to their favourite academic to find out what is going on and if academics do not have a talking relationship with public servants – that bridge will never be built.

This is a challenge that we do not need anybody to help us with. It is a personal commitment.
A Passion for Skills Development

Dr Ntsika Msimang was born and raised in Rockville, Soweto, and after a lengthy detour to the United States, he has returned to Soweto – as the manager of an information security lab developing smart card technology at the Meraka Institute.

Speaking on the first anniversary of the Lab, Ntsika said that in order to produce local innovators, he recruits mainly highly skilled but underutilised and displaced talent and channels them produce "world class" solutions.

Ntsika has recruited five graduates (three with Masters degrees in Computer Science, and one two with Honors degrees), all living in and around Soweto. They are developing a biometric-based smart card technology solution. "These are seasoned researchers who were working in areas that underutilised their talent such as software testing and web development. No one with post-graduate qualifications should be doing software testing," Ntsika asserts.

The research focuses on creating an Open Source operating system for smart cards, Biometrics and Open Source software for smart cards including an Open Source Java Virtual Machine.

As to why they chose smart cards as a project, Ntsika says that identity authentication has national security implications. "When you enter a bank, patrons need to be rest assured that the person they are serving is indeed who they claim to be. Otherwise our financial systems will crumble. Western countries do not outsource such national security safeguards and neither should we."

In addition, he says smart cards are a relatively new technology, and it is every researcher's dream to be right on the cutting edge of things. Unlike many research projects that culminate in technology demonstrators and stop there, Ntsika says they are looking to commercialise the final application in South Africa and abroad.

"There is a lot of interest in what we are doing from many countries in Africa and overseas. Bear in mind that in a digital world, all six billion-plus people are expected to carry digital forms of identity authentication tokens (IDs, passports, drivers license, birth certificates, bank cards)."

The cutting edge of technology is a long way from Ntsika's early years when he served as an altar boy at Regina Mundi Catholic Church. The church being the hotbed of anti-apartheid activity, Ntsika could not resist joining the voices of descent against racial injustice. He participated in organisations such as the Soweto Students Congress (SOSCO) and Soweto Youth Congress (SOYCO) and later joined the "underground movement" eventually receiving military training in 1989 in Tanzania.

At the dawn of post-apartheid South Africa, left the country for what he thought would be a brief stint at school but instead wound up being a 13-year stay in the United States. He attended his final year of high school at Nottingham High School in New York where he matriculated in 1991. His performance earned him a scholarship to Le Moyne College, also in New York, where he majored in Physics.

After graduating in 1996, he started graduate school in Binghamton University located in Binghamton, New York where he studied Industrial Engineering from Masters to PhD. He only came back to South Africa in late 2004, something he laments as he missed out on the first hard years of the country's transition to democracy.

In January 2005, despite having a number of more lucrative private sector opportunities, he joined the CSIR. He shares his frustration in the failure of South Africa to use the skills of university graduates like him properly "The only jobs I seemed to get offered were BEE fronting jobs." He adds that while they offered better remuneration, they had very little to do with what he went to school for and were humiliating and belittling.

"I just couldn't see myself, having worked so hard, only to come back and be used as camouflage for companies refusing to transform." This seems to be a frustration shared by many black graduates, particularly in the science and engineering fields, he adds. He laments the fact that South Africa, and the rest of the continent, is failing to leverage on the local skills because they have not aggressively pursued an innovation agenda like the Asian countries have done.

The mandate of any university is to produce critical thinkers and innovators (upstream skills). "Unfortunately, the students coming out of South African universities go on to local industries that do nothing but peddle and adapt overseas-made technologies. This has resulted in a skills mismatch where universities are producing students with upstream skills (trained to innovate or 'make' things) and an industry looking for downstream skills (trained to 'peddle' and 'support' their products).

"This mismatch of skills is often misconstrued to represent the lack of skills when in reality the highly skilled and talented graduates the
country produces wind up underutilised (work as salespeople, project managers and troubleshooters) and displaced (working in sectors they were not trained for because they offer better remuneration).”

Ntsika points out that the entire continent – with over 50 000 PhDs who hold African citizenship – hardly produces a cellphone or a TV. He stresses that the skills shortage debate is a facade largely perpetuated by influential entities to promote self-interest.

“Consultants will always make you believe they are the only game in town so as to justify fleecing the taxpayers. Companies refusing to transform use the skills shortage as a crutch to justify their ‘lily white’ workforce. Overseas companies preach that gospel as well when positioning their products as superior to local brands.”

He argues that sooner or later South Africa will wake up to two realities. First, that the thirst for skills is unquenchable. “There will never be a point where South Africa will say there are enough skills. The skills shortage is a global problem, and like other countries, we just have to play the hand we were dealt and stop cashing our chips and wallowing in self pity.”

The second reality is that “our biggest problem is not skill shortage but our failure to rally the local scientific and engineering corps to innovate. Companies win billions of rands worth of government tenders and immediately fly out with shopping baskets to shop for solutions overseas. We are shipping tens and thousands of jobs, if not millions, this way every day and that needs to be put to an end.”

And the solutions being found in Soweto would certainly help: “If our solution can serve only 1% of the world population, that would translate to billions in revenue for the country and perhaps even thousands of jobs.”

They are aiming to have a fully-fledged prototype system by the beginning of 2008 and start testing it. At the time of this interview, the fingerprint module was close to the testing phase. All the algorithms they are coding will be released on an Open Source license.
Lessons from the South African Commons project

On February 22, 2007, Cabinet announced it's adoption of the updated South African policy position (Government Communications, 2007). Entitled “Free and Open Source Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan”, this document represents the culmination of a multi-year consultative process on the phenomenon of free and open source software (FOSS). This article outlines some of the key learning aspects of South Africa’s FOSS process which involved demonstrator projects, research, skills development, consultation and debates. An analysis to this effect is done through the “lens” of the digital commons and some of those who graze lamadlelo (Nguni for the commons).

Context: the digital commons

In his essay on the commons-based peer production, Benkler (2002) provides some explanation of some of the factors that motivate people. He asserts that the reward system (R) can be made up of monetary (M), hedonic (H) and psycho-social (PS) benefits. This is expressed through the formula $R = M + H + PSp_jalt$, where $s$ (satiation) signifies the rate at which the marginal utility of money (M) decreases, $p$ represents the correlation between M and PS. $j$ and alt represent the extent to which the psycho-social reward is affected by the elements of altruism (alt) and jealousy (j).

In support of this theory he gives examples in the areas of food, legal practice and sex. Some people cook as part of the restaurant business (monetary rewards). Others do it as a hobby (hedonic rewards). Then there are those who have earned word-wide respect for their recipes (psycho-social rewards). Examples of the latter group range from Sandile “Sanalicious” Tilhabalala-Fakudze to Jamie “Naked Chef” Oliver. There are legal practitioners who will take a case simply on the basis of the fee it attracts. In certain cases, the fee will be important but what will get them going is the excitement of a good legal argument.

Psycho-social factors may help explain what sustained Priscilla Jana's legal representation of high school students at the height of apartheid repression. Other examples of this reward system can be found in the arts, science, etc.

The ‘business case’ for South Africa’s FOSS strategy

The 2003 FOSS strategy document is based on the Value/Capacity/Support Model (GITOC, 2003). The argument is made that for the strategy to be taken forward, the FOSS phenomenon should have value, there should be a level of capacity to support it and/or plans to increase this capacity, and there should be support for the initiative. This is the framework used to discuss different aspects and people involved in the FOSS process.

Value

The value proposition for FOSS can be approached from various points of view. There have been selected: digital freedom, financial considerations and technical merit.

On digital freedom, during conversations around the importance of FOSS and costs, Sibisi (2003) cautioned against a simplistic usage of the financial argument to decide on the potential impact of FOSS. He compared such an exercise to arguing for freedom and democracy in South Africa on the basis of cost. It is widely accepted that people’s freedom is a birthright and should therefore not come at a cost.

However, there are cases where freedom and democracy have come at great human cost. Jolliffe (2007) has drawn comparisons between South Africa’s freedom charter and FOSS to emphasise the importance of the freedom rationale behind free software. The Free Software Foundation (2007) uses ethical arguments as the basis for assessing the value offered by free software. The foundation defines free software as “a matter of the users’ freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software”. More precisely, it refers to four kinds of freedom for the users of the software:

- The freedom to run the programme, for any purpose.
- The freedom to study how the programme works, and adapt it to your needs. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.
- The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbour.
- The freedom to improve the programme and release your improvements to the public so that the whole community benefits. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

With regard to financial considerations, financial costs still inhibit many people from accessing ICT. During the research on the FLOSS project (Ghosh, 2004), it was found that it would take an average South African family about 2.6 months to afford a legal copy of the proprietary MS Windows XP with MS Office, and a Mozambican family would need 33.7 months compared to 0.2 months in the United States.

David Wheeler’s site provides a number of statistics that make a similar case. Of interest is the fact that an estimated 95% of software is not developed for sale (Wheeler, 2007). This somewhat finds some explanation in Benkler’s formula above as well as in the FLOSS Project’s (2002) findings on skills acquisition as being at of the list of motivators for FOSS developers. The same report found that monetary factors were also present, but at the bottom of the same list.

On technical merit, the Debian project’s Bruce Perens provides the “many eyes” argument that if a sufficiently large number of programmers can access the code, then it is easier to identify and fix bugs and the speed with which this can be done is exponentially higher. Approaching the same point from a different angle, Linux International’s John “Maddog” Hall (2005) points out the difficulty of supporting applications when they have been developed in secret,
and the number of users goes to the millions.

Security technologist Bruce Schneier’s arguments for FOSS include the security benefits where the user organisation can strip down any of the systems and exercise better control on it and better managing the challenges of spyware and backdoors (2005).

Capacity

During an industry briefing session on the Integrated Finance Management System project, officials from National Treasury pointed out that “skills should be seen as a deliverable and not an obstacle” (IFMS, 2007). The challenge of developing skills has previously been used as an excuse for not getting things done the right way. Indeed, as explained by Himanen (2001), many people learn by addressing the complex problems, hence the quote above.

In the case of FOSS, there are millions of developers around the world who work in various funded and unfunded projects. The Gnu/Linux project alone is supported by over 1 800 000 developers around the world. This seems to strengthen the employment equity commission’s assertion that there are still a number of underutilised skills.

There is also a lot of latent talent. For instance, not many people know that the multi award-winning singing sensation Simphiwe Dana has been part of a team that developed Compiere, a FOSS enterprise resource planning tool. Few know that Charles Majola taught himself to write computer programmes by downloading things from the Internet and studying their source code. At the age of 13 he became part of a team that developed what is arguably the world’s first commercial FOSS accounting package. He later went on to be part of the Ubuntu Linux and Impi Linux teams.

Other examples include the likes of Adi Attar, Solly Masinga, Dr Veli Msimang, Dr Kgomo Kganyago. Coltrane Nyathi, Thapedi Matsabu are both successful entrepreneurs specialising in ICT security. It could be argued that beyond capacity, organisational environmental factors need to be considered. In his description of alienating environments, Magasela (2000) seems to have a point in this regard.

Support

The FOSS policy framework process has involved a multi-stakeholder consultative process over a number of years. This policy has also been endorsed by the Cabinet. More importantly, as indicated above, it aligns well with a number of the country’s key development objectives.

Milestones

Some of the early milestones include the fact that the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) developed a cost benefit analysis tool to help with decision-making processes. The Centre for Public Service Innovation also hosted an innovation zone workshop in order to get local FOSS developers to meet various government departments and discuss their challenges. This led to the development of a number of solutions, some of which have borne fruit through the SITA’s track and trace project as well as the Dokuza project. I might also add that a number of local providers were also given an opportunity to accomplish proof of concept FOSS migration installations.

Subsequently more and more projects came to the fore. The migration process has gone beyond small pilots to major enterprise
migrations. SITA and SARS (South African Revenue Services) issued tender requests for desktop and back-office migration solutions respectively. The benefits to SARS of their move of an proprietary enterprise resource planning tool from a server running proprietary software to a FOSS server is now being analysed as a case study.

The response from companies further demonstrated the availability of technical support for FOSS solutions. More importantly, it has also encouraged companies that were not geared to provide this support to re-orient themselves to this new environment. Of significance is the fact the move by one of the major banks towards FOSS was assisted by information developed by SITA and SARS for their tender processes.

It should also be noted that in addition to the early milestones, there was a lot of FOSS usage in some of the key areas in South Africa. The South African government’s network, for instance, has been using FOSS security applications for about 10 years.

Challenges and opportunities

Vuk’ uzenzele: The FOSS move has surfaced a number of opportunities as well as challenges. Go Open Source, a major awareness campaign was undertaken through a partnership between Canonical, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Hewlett Packard and the Shuttleworth Foundation. One of the campaign’s projects was the creation of the Geek Freedom League (http://www.freedomleague.org.za/).

This resulted in the creation of a growing network with over 5 000 volunteers who readily help install FOSS for others. It presents an opportunity to synergise between its work and that of Community Development Workers initiative being championed by the DPA.

The example above shows how synergies can be created between FOSS and current government-wide initiatives. FOSS and, generally, appropriate ICT can be used as critical success factors for various initiatives. Relevant ICT/FOSS questions can be included as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism. The existing network of African developers and experts through organisations like Afrinic and the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa can play a major role in this regard.

In addition to finding existing synergies, there is also the opportunity of addressing new challenges. The Financial Intelligence Centre is being set up. It would be a good example of another government initiative using FOSS. This is especially important given the need to ensure that this centre’s systems are highly secure and do not run applications that cannot be audited for back doors and spyware.

A number of local government entities have migrated their systems to FOSS. The ability of their systems to scale can help make it easy to achieve a single public service. It would be interesting to know how different things would have been had the eNatis project been run on FOSS just as the eNatis website is.

The other challenge is that of the lack of information and, in some cases, misinformation. There are billions of rand’s (SITA estimate R48 billion) that leave the country annually in software licenses. A change in the status quo towards FOSS thus poses a threat to existing business models that exploit this poor balance of payments situation. This has led to a lot of anti-FOSS (FUD) fear, uncertainty and doubt campaigns driven by self-interest and supported through dodgy statistics.

A major opportunity lies in extending the thinking on the digital commons as demonstrated in the FOSS phenomenon to other areas of ICT infrastructure. It is this type of thinking that might just find SA optimising its resources around existing networks for the Independent Electoral Institute; the lottery as well as the 2010 World Cup among others. The ministries of Communications and Arts and Culture have been vocal on the role of FOSS in promoting local content.

Conclusion

I want to conclude with a quotation by Easlea where he asks, “Why is it that of all people, scientists, those people supposedly committed to rational thought and action, who pride themselves on being members of an international community of scholars, either stand by powerless or even participate in actions that are – to say the least, the very least – in no way conducive to the building of a world in which people can cooperate together to ensure that each individual is able to live a full and creative human life?” (Easlea, 1973).

Addressing such questions may help society move towards using science, engineering and technology appropriately to get the country (and the continent) back on track in terms of meeting some of the developmental targets of halving unemployment poverty and unemployment as articulated in frameworks like the National Information Society and Development plan as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

FOSS is but one key intervention towards this end alongside developing critical skills and broadening high speed connectivity.

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A results-based monitoring and evaluation system to support good public management

Chris Morris, Meraka Institute (CSIR), outlines the need for performance indicators in the implementation of e-government.

Many countries around the world are implementing e-government in an attempt to improve service delivery, general back office efficiencies, and effectiveness through citizen-centred strategies. But the question needs to be asked, “How will government measure and communicate progress. How will they know if they are failing?”

Addressing the development challenges in South Africa requires government to constantly seek better and improved development solutions. Government is committed to using information communication technology (ICT) to take the country into a higher growth and development trajectory. One of the key pillars of this strategy is e-government.

Unfortunately, the role and contribution of ICT in development is often not clearly defined, documented or captured in monitoring and evaluation systems. Assessing the performance of these initiatives and learning from them requires more deliberate actions with regard to measuring the increasing reach of the information society in South Africa.

Potential benefits of ICT applications may be lost or unfold unnoticed unless their impacts are measured. Furthermore, decision-makers and policy developers globally require information and intelligence about the performance and results of ICT interventions for evidence-based policy making.

The assessment of the contribution of ICT to the development of the information society requires detailed analysis based on statistical and qualitative data about purpose, intensity and value of ICT use and application. Official statistics relating to the connectivity of SMMEs, health institutions, public-funded institutions are not widely available and thus need to be developed and collection strengthened.

South Africa lacks a comprehensive and easily accessible evidence base to support strategic policy decision making and programme design to leverage ICT for South Africa’s information society development. This affects timely detection of service delivery challenges for the purpose of effecting corrective actions, thereby impinging on the ability of the state to deliver effectively and efficiently in terms of the ICT for development agenda.

It further hampers international development reporting obligations on ICT such as reporting requirements on the Millennium Development Goals and progress made towards the implementation of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action.

The Plan of Action calls on all countries and regions to develop and set up coherent and internationally comparable indicator systems and tools to provide statistical information on the information society, with basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions. The design, development and implementation of a nation-wide indicator and measurement system will require agreement on a core set of indicators and measures needed to generate the necessary data, among all stakeholders. Stakeholders have divergent views on what constitutes the information society and have different indicators and measures to represent their methodological approaches.

Extensive consultation is required to develop a common indicators system for the country.

Results-based monitoring and evaluation

Because e-government usually involves significant money, human resources, information and political commitment, accountability is critical. In developing and industrialised countries alike, whether democratic or not, the policymakers and agencies responsible for e-government are answerable for money spent, policies set and public services delivered, once the rollout of e-government begins.

Performance is the key. The test of an e-government project’s success is how well the project meets its goals, for example, how well it delivers services, makes information accessible, or increases access to government. Judging both progress and performance means establishing metrics. Accountability requires measurable performance standards.

A results-based monitoring and evaluation system is a valuable tool to support good public management. If results are not measured success cannot be distinguished from failure and success will not be rewarded. Conversely, failure is likely to be rewarded and if success is not visible there are no lessons learned.

Equally, if failure is not recognized it cannot be corrected. If results can be demonstrated then public support can be achieved.

There are a number of reasons for implementing results-based monitoring and evaluation. It provides crucial information about public sector performance, a view over time on the status of a programme, promotes credibility and public confidence, helps formulate and justify budgets and identifies promising practices.

It focuses attention on achieving outcomes, establishing goals and objectives, permits managers to identify and take action to correct weaknesses and supports development agenda that is shifting towards greater accountability for aid lending.

Implementing results-based monitoring requires a combination of institutional capacity and political will. Traditional monitoring focuses on implementation monitoring that tracks inputs, activities and outputs (the products or services produced) often done to assess compliance with workplans and budgets.

There is now a new emphasis on both implementation and results-based monitoring. Results-based monitoring demonstrates how effectively government is performing and whether a policy/programme is achieving its stated goals.

Results-based evaluation is an assessment of a planned, ongoing or completed intervention to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The intent is to incorporate
lessons learned into the decision-making process.

In designing an evaluation getting the questions right and answering the questions is critical in order to support public sector decision-making with credible and useful information. The World Bank has developed a methodology for designing, building and sustaining a results-based monitoring and evaluation system:

- Conducting a readiness assessment;
- Agreeing on outcomes to monitor and evaluate;
- Selecting key indicators to monitor outcomes;
- Baseline data on indicators;
- The role of evaluations;
- Monitoring for results;
- Planning for improvement – selecting results targets;
- Baseline indicator level plus the desired level improvement equals the target performance. Only one target is desirable for each indicator. Targets challenge low expectations and give the public a clear benchmark against which they can measure progress.

The readiness assessment is an analytical framework to assess a country’s ability to monitor and evaluate its development goals. It requires an understanding of the incentives (or lack thereof) to effectively monitor and evaluate development goals. A champion needs to be identified, capacity to monitor and evaluate defined, and clear roles and responsibilities need to be clarified. Trustworthy and credible information systems need to be established.

Outcomes make explicit the intended objectives of government action, they are what produce benefits and tell you when you have been successful or not. It is advisable to develop a participative approach from a wide range of stakeholders when choosing outcomes. Outcomes must be translated to a clear set of key indicators. Outcome indicators are not the same as outcomes. Outcome indicators identify a specific numerical measurement that tracks progress (or not) toward achieving an outcome. Each outcome needs to be translated into one or more indicators.

It is necessary to establish baseline data on indicators. A performance baseline is information that provides data at the beginning of the monitoring period. The baseline is used to learn about recent levels and patterns of performance on the indicator and to gauge subsequent policy performance. Sources of data need to be identified for the indicators.

When planning for improvement it is necessary to select results targets. Targets are the quantifiable levels of the indicators that a country wants to achieve at a given point in time.

Baseline indicator level plus the desired level improvement equals the target performance. Only one target is desirable for each indicator. Targets challenge low expectations and give the public a clear benchmark against which they can measure progress.

A results-based monitoring system tracks both implementation (inputs, activities, outputs) and results (outcomes and goals). Implementation monitoring is supported through the use of management tools such as budgets, staffing plans and activity planning. An evaluation is an assessment of a planned, ongoing or completed intervention to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The intent is to capture lessons learned into the decision-making process.

Evaluation means information on whether we are doing the right things (strategy), whether we are doing things right (operation), whether there are better ways of doing thing (learning). Credible information strengthens public accountability.

There are six critical components of sustaining monitoring and evaluation systems within the organisation. There needs to be demand for it from government and civil society who want evidence of performance, and greater government accountability. Roles and responsibilities need to be clear and reporting lines established.

Information needs to be trustworthy, credible and available for

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<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<th>Targets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the number of government services online</td>
<td>1. number and/or percentage of public services provided electronically; 2. volume of transactions handled electronically</td>
<td>1. current number of services; 2. Score 3.6 (World Bank); 3. current volume of transactions</td>
<td>1. X % government services online by dd/mm/yyyy 2. Score X by 2007 3. X number by dd/mm/yyyy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve delivery of government services to citizens living in rural areas</td>
<td>1. number and/or percentage of rural customers accessing information or services electronically 2. % increase in MPCCs</td>
<td>1. X % accessing services; 2. current number of MPCCs</td>
<td>1. X % accessing government services online by dd/mm/yyyy 2. Number to be delivered by dd/mm/yyyy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizens experience improved customer service</td>
<td>1. response time to inquiries; 2. length of trouble-free operation of an e-government service starting from its launch 3. increased convenience or efficiency in delivering information or services (e.g., reduction in number of days to deliver services) resulting from 24/7 availability; 4. length of time for procuring goods, service, info (from the government, business or citizen perspective);</td>
<td>1. current response times; 2. current trouble free time; 3. average number of days; 4. current number of days</td>
<td>1. improve response time by X% by dd/mm/yyyy 2. X % hours trouble free time by dd/mm/yyyy 3. target number of trouble free days by dd/mm/yyyy 4. target number of days by dd/mm/yyyy</td>
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independent verification. The data collection and analysis procedures should be subject to review by the national audit office and Parliament.

Civil society and the media play a key role in highlighting accountability by encouraging transparency. Capacity is crucial and sound technical and managerial skills are required for data collection and analysis as well as institutional experience. Finally, incentives need to be introduced to encourage use of performance information.

Performance monitoring should be complemented with evaluations to ensure a better understanding of public sector results. Developing a performance matrix involves the following:

- A results-based monitoring and evaluation system is recognised as a valuable tool to support good public management. Outcomes make explicit the intended objectives of government action, they are what produce benefits and tell you when you have been successful or not. Outcomes must be translated to a clear set of key indicators.
- From government’s e-government strategy documents the following outcomes may be appropriate:
  - increase the number of government services online;
  - improve delivery of government services to citizens living in rural areas; and
  - citizens experience improved customer service.
- Each outcome needs to be translated into one or more indicators. An outcome indicator identifies a specific numerical measurement that tracks progress toward achieving an outcome.

Developing a Performance Matrix

Other quantifiable indicators may be developed. For example, an e-procurement project might be assessed based on the volume of transactions processed, reduction in the time for the procurement process or reduction in the government’s administrative costs of procurement.

Lessons learned from developing countries

Developing countries around the world are moving towards a results-driven approach that promotes government accountability and improved government effectiveness and efficiency.

- Moving towards a results-based approach creates a demand for trustworthy and credible data and information systems. Results need to be distributed both vertically and horizontally within government, parliament, civil society and the public.
- Implementing a results-based monitoring and evaluation system in order to support continued assessment of whether or not goals are being achieved is a daunting task. It is recommended that first a "readiness assessment" is conducted to assist countries gain an understanding of the requirements for implementing a system. In some cases the readiness assessment concluded that the conditions were not right for implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system at that time.
- According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "The budget is the single most important policy document of governments, where policy objectives are recon-

ciled and implemented in concrete terms. Budget transparency is defined as the full disclosure of all relevant fiscal information in a timely and systematic manner."

Some governments are moving towards a results-based focus and are implementing a strategy that aims to tie the annual budgets to the outcomes of M&E systems.

According to the OECD, performance management is a key aspect of public sector reforms in many OECD member countries. In developing countries, performance management is also a key aspect of poverty reduction strategies and social reforms.

Other lessons learned include creating an environment that expects and values high performance, designing and executing a well-defined system for M&E, and aligning budgets with programs and goals.

Different countries have adopted differing ways of implementing performance management in government. Strategies include "whole-of-government" approaches, sector specific or customer focused.

The "whole of government" approach introduced government-wide strategic plans, performance indicators and annual performance plans and integrated them into annual budget documents. Sector-specific approaches, for example, would be piloting performance M&E as part of a rural development sector performance information and management system.

Customer-focused approaches include targeting users or beneficiaries such as women or children. Such strategies develop key performance indicators that cut across lines of ministries with a specific focus on improving programmes targeting those beneficiaries.

Some countries have adopted whole of government approaches to introducing performance management others began with pilot initiatives. This strategy can help move forward a national agenda in a program area without waiting for the entire government to embrace performance management.

Challenges and next steps

In terms of developing a results-based monitoring and evaluation system for South Africa, it is recommended that a readiness assessment be conducted first. This will help understand the demand, clarify roles and responsibilities, identify ways to generate trustworthy and credible information, assign accountability, audit technical and managerial capacity and create incentives for the use of the information.

It is recommended that results-based monitoring and evaluation implementation begins with an enclave strategy (e.g. an island of innovation) as opposed to a whole-government approach. It is advisable to begin with a pilot in order to learn the lessons for building and sustaining monitoring and evaluation within the organisation.

Conclusion

The South African government has expressed the need to establish performance indicators but indicators are only one key component of a performance management system. Results-based monitoring
and evaluation for e-government provides crucial information about public sector performance and details a methodology for capturing best practices and lessons learned for evidence based decision-making.

Results-based monitoring and evaluation focuses attention on achieving outcomes, establishing goals and objectives, and supports development agenda that is shifting towards greater accountability and transparency of government.

Government performance is the key. The test of an e-government project’s success is how well the project meets its goals. Judging both progress and performance means establishing metrics. Accountability requires measurable performance standards.

An example of a performance matrix was proposed using outcomes derived from e-government policy. This matrix demonstrates the linkages between outcomes and indicators. Outcome indicators identify a specific numerical measurement that tracks progress toward achieving an outcome. Defining outcomes should be a participatory process.

International lessons learned indicate that there is no best way to implement performance management strategies whether they be whole-of-government approaches, sector-specific or customer-focused.

Other lessons learned include the need to create an environment that expects and values high performance, designing and executing a well-defined system for M&E, and aligning budgets with programs and goals.

By implementing results-based monitoring and evaluation, South Africa can develop a comprehensive and easily accessible evidence base to support strategic policy decision-making and programme design in order to leverage e-government for enhanced public sector performance.

It is recommended, however, that a readiness assessment is conducted as a first step in order to assess the current capacity of government to design, build and maintain a results-based M&E system.
Using E-government to curb corruption in the Public Service

Vanessa Lerato Phala, Department of Public Service and Administration, outlines how technology can help fight corruption

In 1998, then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki cautioned against the perils of moral degeneration in South African society. The moral degeneration is reflected in high levels of crime, disrespect for authority, disregard for the rule of law and the erosion of key institutions such as the family.

For some time now, corruption has been a feature of the South African public service. Some of the challenges facing the country’s fragile democracy are the practice of good governance and fighting corruption. Government now prioritises the fight against corruption. Numerous anti-corruption programmes and projects are now in place that include watchdog agencies to identify corrupt practices and bring them to the public attention.

Background

Global concerns around corruption have intensified in recent years. Although corruption is a universal problem, it is more harmful in emerging democracies. It endangers the stability and security of societies and threatens social, economic and political development. It also drains the government of resources and destroys opportunities for international investments.

Since corruption has economic, political, social, legal, administrative and cultural dimensions, combating it requires a multi-disciplinary approach. It needs to be tackled at the national, regional and international levels. This has resulted in South Africa forging partnerships with regional and international bodies in the fight against corruption.

In October 1999 the South African government co-hosted the 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Durban in collaboration with Transparency International. This was the first IACC convened in Africa and was the largest thus far with some 600 delegates from over 135 countries drawn from government, business, civil society and international organisations. African concerns and perspective on corruption have been injected much more intensively into the global discussions on how best to tackle the problem.

Regionally, South Africa has ratified the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Protocol against Corruption (2003); continentally it has ratified the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2005). Furthermore, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has requested the South African government to assist with establishing a comprehensive anti-corruption framework in the DRC. Globally South Africa has ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2004).

During the 4th Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers which South Africa was chairing in 2003, the Capacity Development Programme was adopted, which includes a project on ethics in Africa. At the 5th Pan African meeting in December 2005, South Africa hosted a workshop dedicated to fighting corruption in the region, which culminated in the ministers taking very specific decisions on implementing regional initiatives. South Africa will continue to chair this important forum until 2007.


Defining e-government and corruption

E-government refers to government’s use of information communication technology to promote more efficient and effective government, allow greater public access to information, make government accountable to citizens and deliver better services to the public. E-government is essentially more about reforming government and delivering services to the public than about the application of specific technology.

It involves delivering services via the Internet, telephone, kiosk, wireless devices or other communications systems. The opportunity is to transform service delivery rather than replicate current practices on-line.

Meanwhile, organisational and individual capacities need to be built with adequate telecommunications infrastructure, hardware and software to support e-government initiatives. Commitment and resources are required to train stakeholders from senior officials to clerical staff, as well as citizens, on specific applications, and increase computer literacy in general.

According to the World Bank, e-government refers to the use of information technology by government agencies that has the ability to transform relations with citizens, business and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends, better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management.

The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions. A well-planned e-government strategy can make leaps into building a more efficient, accountable and transparent government. If planned with representation from key stakeholders, e-government applications can rebuild citizen trust in government and promote economic growth by improving interface with business.

Furthermore, it can also empower citizens to participate in advancing good governance. While e-government is not a panacea for the complex and deep-rooted problems of corruption, it should be acknowledged that ICT possesses the ability to contribute effectively towards any anti-corruption efforts.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines corruption as the misuse of public power, office or authority for pri-
When e-government applications are used to fight corruption, it is critical that four key anti-corruption strategies – prevention; enforcement; access to information and empowerment; and capacity building – are integrated in the design and implementation process. Efforts to prevent corruption can be complemented with e-government strategies that review and clarify procedures and practices, and design systems that simplify, standardise and de-personalise the delivery of services.

Of course this needs to be complemented with civil service reform as well as societal education efforts in reducing tolerance to corruption and reinforcing fundamental values such as honesty. E-government can also help monitor corruption and hence better enforce laws and policies that ensure accountability and transparency by standardising data collection methods, tracking actions and decisions, and develop a feedback/compliance mechanism. This has to be complemented with the development of institutions, laws and practices that protect whistleblowers, impose powerful disincentives for corruption and punish those involved in corruption. e-government must meet these objectives in order to reduce corruption, increased access to information, transparency and accountability. All these objectives can curb corruption. Media, as an alert watchdog, plays a significant role in providing information and generating widespread debate around significant issues of public concern.

However, governments should bear in mind that e-government does not guarantee the end of corruption. Officials who master technology-empowered processes can find new opportunities for rent seeking. Under such circumstances, e-government may simply cause an inter-generational shift in corruption toward younger, more tech-literate officials.

Objectives

The objectives of e-government are primarily to assist government achieve the ICT House of Values, i.e. interoperability, security, elimination of duplications and economies of scale. This is inclusive to all sectors, G2G, G2C and G2B.

The South African Constitution calls for cooperative governance among all spheres of government to ensure a seamless delivery of services. It specifies that values and principles, accountability, professionalism, administrative justice and development orientation, should govern the public service.

Corruption, maladministration and poor governance do more than just undermine economic stability. They undermine government in the eyes of the people and can make some of these e-government objectives unrealisable. The objectives of e-government are to provide one-stop on-line access to information and services to individuals. Citizens should be able to find what they need quickly and easily, and access information in minutes or seconds, instead of days or hours.

E-government also intends to enable all levels of government to more easily work together to better serve the needs of citizens and businesses. It seeks to change the culture of the civil service from reactive to proactive.

It will also ensure transparent and accountable government, cost-effective procurement, and greater participation by citizens in government. E-government will also create a fit between technology and human capital within government to allow effective service delivery.

Using e-government to curb corruption

When e-government applications are used to fight corruption, it is critical that four key anti-corruption strategies - prevention; enforcement; access to information and empowerment; and capacity building - are integrated in the design and implementation process. Efforts to prevent corruption can be complemented with e-government strategies that review and clarify procedures and practices, and design systems that simplify, standardise and de-personalise the delivery of services.

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Methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies was employed to collect the primary sources of data. For qualitative data collection methods unstructured face-to-face interviews and/or telephonic interviews were used. This approach is quite informal and suits the nature of the research. Data collection using face-to-face interviews often results in serendipities that increase the value of the data.

This research also employed quantitative techniques to collect primary sources of data mainly from the Department of Social Development web site, the Special Investigative web site, the National Anti-Corruption web site, and the World Bank web site. Secondary data collection methods through desktop research techniques supplemented the research study.

Technology description

The SOCPEN system is a result of the amalgamation in 1998 of about 14 different systems which were previously used in silos by different government institutions. It is the biggest payment system in South Africa as compared to other systems such as the Government Employee Pension Fund. The system runs on Open Technologies.
Net network, its mainframe is located at the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and currently has about 3,000 users, and is deployed at all government institutions.

The implementation of the SORPEN system, like any other IT systems, had some challenges. This was as a result of the amalgamation process which resulted in the duplication of data, such as ID numbers. The SORPEN system required both information of parents and children while the previously used systems only required information regarding parents. Then there was the human element, where people were skeptical and reluctant to use the system, and is not a user-friendly system. It is important to note that connectivity was a huge challenge especially in municipalities in previously disadvantaged rural communities.

Currently, the Department of Social Development and the Social Security Agency of South Africa are embarking on modernising the system, to make it a web-based application in order to enhance its usability. In terms of future plans, there are a number of anti-corruption initiatives which are in the pipeline to further curb corruption in the public service. However, these cannot be disclosed as they are confidential and not yet public information.

**Developments**

In the past few years, the government has taken several significant steps in cleaning the public administration system of corruption and responding to local and international pressure to ensure good governance, greater openness, transparency and accountability.

One of the first steps involved a Public Sector Anti-corruption Conference in November 1998. Its resolutions addressed such issues as defining corruption, restoring a public service ethos, the role of civil society, the responsibilities of public sector managers, financial management and controls, and co-ordination of anti-corruption structures.

A National Anti-corruption Summit was convened in April 1999, involving government leaders, organised business, organised religious bodies, the NGO sector, donor countries, the media, organised labour unions, academic and professional bodies and the public sector. The National Anti-corruption Summit created a powerful platform for the National Campaign against Corruption in that it recognised the societal nature of corruption, and that the fight against corruption requires involvement of all stakeholders, a national consensus and co-ordination of activities.

The summit adopted a range of resolutions for implementation in the public, business and civil society sectors in South Africa. These resolutions relate to combating and preventing corruption, building integrity and raising awareness.

Progress with implementation of the resolutions has been very good. The government has honoured the commitments made at this summit. Following the summit, the Cabinet formally endorsed the resolutions and nominated the Public Service Commission to lead the national anti-corruption effort. The commission has since convened a cross-sectoral task team to manage the national programme.

As a result of continuous consultation between the sectors in the period after the National Anti-corruption Summit, the National Anti-corruption Forum was created in June 2001 as the formal mechanism to bring the public, business and civil society sectors together to fight corruption in all aspects of our society.

Government has consistently participated in this forum and attempted to strengthen its work. A report monitoring progress of the forum was discussed in depth at the first Africa anti-corruption meeting held in February 2007.

In order to fast-track South Africa’s anti-corruption initiatives, an Anti-Corruption Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2002, and implementation commenced in February of that year. This strategy contains nine considerations that are inter-related and mutually supportive:

- Review and consolidation of the legislative framework;
- Increased institutional capacity to prevent and combat corruption;
- Improved access to report wrongdoing and protection of whistle-blowers and witnesses;
- Prohibition of corrupt individuals and businesses (blacklisting);
- Improved management policies and practices;
- Managing professional ethics;
- Partnerships with stakeholders;
- Social analysis, research and policy advocacy; and
- Awareness, training and education.

In order to fulfill some of these considerations the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) was established in 1996 to investigate corruption and maladministration, and to take civil legal action to correct any wrongdoing in the public sector.

Since August 2001 the SIU has rapidly expanded its capacity to fight corruption. Much of this expansion has been by forming partnerships with departments who funded the SIU to create a dedicated anti-corruption capacity to work with them, including the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Department of Social Development, Eastern Cape Department of Housing, Local Government and Traditional Affairs, and the Department of Transport.

**Results**

In 2004 the Special Investigating Unit was tasked by the Minister of Social Development, Mr Zola Skweyiya, to investigate and redress any impropriety, including fraud, corruption and maladministration, in relation to the administration of the social grant system.

Over the past few years, there has been an enormous increase in the number of beneficiaries as government introduced a child support grant and disability grants. To date, the total number of beneficiaries is 11 million. With these grants becoming widely accessible, losses due to fraud and corruption have conservatively been estimated at approximately R1.5 billion per annum.

The SIU worked closely with Department of Social Development, South African Police Services (SAPS) and National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in the investigations. A national steering committee has been established which ensures coordination of the investigation and activities of the role-players.

Proclamation R18 of 2005, published on 6 April 2005, mandated the SIU to investigate the payment and/or receipt of social grants or benefits by unqualified beneficiaries and the irregular or unlawful conduct of government officials and/or agents responsible for the administration and/or payment of social grants or benefits.

The process of identifying who was receiving grants was done by comparing the ID numbers on the Social Pensions Database.
(SOCPEN) to ID numbers on the Government Personnel Salary system (PERSAL). This comparison resulted in approximately 44 000 officials being identified as being on both databases. Then using a means test (as prescribed by the Department of Social Development) the data was analysed and graded.

The grading process was as follows:
- Person was entitled to their grant;
- Person is not entitled but due to an official’s error they are receiving a grant;
- Person was not working when they got their grant but subsequently their financial situation changed and they are no longer entitled to the grant. (they did or have only received this grant for a period not exceeding 12 months);
- As per two above but have been receiving the grant illegally for more than 12 months; and
- Person was employed and earnings in excess of the means test when application were made.

Investigations have established that amongst the 41 000 officials registered on the system, some government officials have defrauded the social grant system by misrepresenting their financial status, which allowed them to qualify for a social grant. In other instances, government employees who initially qualified for a social grant due to their financial status and who had improved their status, failed to notify the department of this change in status. Grants that are most affected are the disability grant, care dependency grants, old age grants and child support grant.

Certain cases revealed that doctors declared individuals as disabled or dependent, which allowed them to qualify for these grants. Investigations concluded that assessments by these doctors were falsified or were not a dependent. False affidavits were submitted by attorneys or community leaders thus supporting unlawful application by individuals for child support or old age grants. In some cases offenders also procure false identity documents to defraud the social grant system.

Business benefits

The 12 387 officials found guilty of defrauding the state will face prosecution and disciplinary action. In addition, 15, 5% interest a year will be added to the outstanding debts they are paying. By October 2006, 1 475 public servants had pleaded guilty to social grant fraud and were convicted and sentenced for fraudulently obtaining social grants. So far only the Western Cape had finalised its 208 disciplinary matters, in which four people were dismissed, 174 received final written warnings and six had died.

By October 13, 3 901 public servants had signed formal acknowledgement of debts, which were enforceable in court if they defaulted on the promised payments. Of this 1 123 were signed by public servants in Gauteng, 1 041 in KwaZulu-Natal and 463 in Mpumalanga.

The Minister of Social Development argued that should a case arise where a public servant refuses to pay an indebted amount, most of them junior officials, the matter will be referred to the state attorney for legal action against such a debtor. About 400 000 members of the public were suspected of illegally pocketing social grants and are under investigation, also parents who registered their own children as foster children to access grants are also under scrutiny.

The Department of Social Development has saved the government more than R600-million over the past year as a result of its anti-fraud campaign. Savings of more than R400-million had laid a solid foundation for the new Social Security Agency. R47-million had been allocated in this year’s budget (2006/2007) to accelerate “Your ground-breaking collaboration” with the Special Investigation Unit.

Lessons learnt from the collaboration with the SIU had resulted in improved review processes of the recipients of disability grants. An additional 150 000 recipients of temporary disability grants had been reviewed with “very little disruption of disbursement processes”. As a result, a total saving of more than R200-million had been achieved.

These savings have resulted in the increase of social grants as stipulated by the Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel, in his February 2007 Budget Speech.

In order to consolidate the integrity of the social security system and related processes, the Department of Social Development has increased the national budget allocation for system integrity from R24-million in the current financial year to R68-million in the next financial year (2007/2008).

Some of these funds will be devoted to strengthening the department’s management information systems. The department is committed to drastically reducing the turnaround times for grant applications, to improving the effectiveness of the risk management processes, and to standardising reporting procedures across provinces.

Conclusion

Although South Africa has laid the foundations, it is still an anti-corruption construction site with more still to be done. Government is proud of its contribution to creating a sound and efficient anti-corruption framework. Through partnership, nationally in the forum, regionally and internally with other partners such as international public organisations, the current framework can be improved and the fight against corruption intensified.

As already stated above, efforts to prevent corruption should be complemented with e-government strategies that review and clarify procedures and practices, and design systems that simplify, standardise and de-personalize the delivery of services.

This paper recommends that when e-government applications are used in fight corruption, it is critical that four anti-corruption strategies prevent, enforcement, access to information and empowerment, and capacity building are integrated in the design and implementation process.

2. www.weforum.org
5. www.siu.org.za
6. Public Service told graft does not pay, Dec 13, 2006 Edition 1
8. The Herald Anti-fraud campaign saved state more than R600 million a year, 29 March 2006
Outside the legal paradigm discussions and debates surrounding the negative impact of software patents on local innovation have concurrently gained momentum.
Pria Chetty, of the Meraka Institute Open Source Centre, takes a hard look at software patents in South Africa

In South Africa, software, or rather a computer programme, is granted intellectual property protection as a literary work under the Copyright Act 98 of 1978 (as amended). Under the Copyright Act, an author’s rights in a computer programme are infringed if a person in South Africa acquires an unauthorised copy of such computer programme.

An example of an unauthorised copy is a pirated copy in which the author's right to commercially exploit the software has been infringed.

The appropriateness and sufficiency of copyright protection for software is currently being debated globally with specific countries (jurisdictions) exploring whether or not software is in fact patentable subject matter. The European Commission's inquiry, as a case in point, resulted in a proposed directive on the patentability of computer-related inventions.

A public furore, particularly from the Free, Libre and Open Source (FLOSS) community, in consideration of the implications of software patents on the open source community (explored later) contributed to the rejection of the directive and a continuing status quo of illegality of software patents in the European Union.

South Africa, albeit informally, has raised similar questions on the patentability of computer programmes. Currently, the South African Patents Act 57 of 1978 (as amended) excludes computer programmes from qualification for a patent as an invention. The South African Patent Office, however, is a non-examining patent office. Patent applications lodged at our patent office are therefore not subject to examination on the patentability of the relevant invention but merely on the formalities.

This has resulted in the Registrar of Patents granting patents on computer programmes. This grant is however subject to being challenged in court by third parties who contest the validity of such patent. This loophole, alternatively inefficiency, in the patent administration system has resulted in public calls for rectification of the patent office procedures facilitated by decisive action from within-government.

Until the realisation of such rectification, however, civil society forces such Freedom to Innovate South Africa have been driving a litigation strategy to contest illegitimate patent(s).

Outside the legal paradigm discussions and debates surrounding the negative impact of software patents on local innovation have concurrently gained momentum. Primary arguments against software patents in this regard relate to the fact that a patent is granted to the first person to apply for it as opposed to the first person to "invent" the software, negating the potential of software patents as an incentive for innovation.

They also relate to whether the protection offered by a patent is suitable to software considering that software is compiled from various modular components and the impossibility of developing software without infringing a patent on any one of the components. One can also consider the impossibility due to financial constraints and excessive time required to first verify whether or not a specific software developed by an "inventor" in fact violates any one of the multitude of software patents on sizeable patent databases suggested as prudent software innovation; and the knowledge that in developing countries specifically, the number of foreign patent holders far exceed the number of local patent holders.

Conclusion

In May this year, perhaps reflective of the future of software patent legal wars to come in South Africa, Microsoft claimed that open source programmes infringe in the region of 235 Microsoft patents. This is especially alarming in light of the Policy of FLOSS announced by Cabinet on 22 February this year which generally favoured the use and development of open source software in government henceforth.

In light of Microsoft's claims and any intended doubt regarding the innovative capability of open source software that such claims are likely to rouse, will the Policy receive the critical support required at all levels of government for its successful implementation? Will the Policy be rebelled against for fear that it places government's open source software developers at risk of patent infringement suits?

Will the South Africans iron out uncertainty regarding software patents and reform patent administrative practices in time to secure the success of the FLOSS Policy, a flagship measure to address local innovation and dent the digital divide? Crunch time.
The Status of E-government in South Africa

María Farelo (DPSA) and Chris Morris (Meraka Institute, CSIR) measure the progress made in e-government initiatives

In the developing world the use of ICTs has been identified as an important tool for reform and transformation, and for leveraging second world economies up to first world economies. Government plays a critical role in supporting and enabling this process and in the creation of a socially inclusive information society.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) plan of action foresees the formation of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can access, utilise and share information and knowledge. South Africa has made great strides towards meeting the commitments of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action to which the country is a signatory.

This paper describes the status of e-government in South Africa and takes a look at the progress of e-government initiatives by asking the 10 questions posed by the “Roadmap for E-government” developed by the Pacific Council on International Policy. The purpose of this exercise is to build on lessons learned in the implementation of e-government in the developing world and to highlight issues and challenges that government should address.

What is e-government?

Defined broadly, e-government is the use of ICT to promote more efficient and effective government, facilitate more accessible government services, allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens. E-government has emerged beyond electronic service delivery and is part of the ongoing reform and transformation of government, enabling participatory governance and partnerships to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

E-government is about transforming government to be more citizen-centred. Technology is a tool in this effort. E-government successes require changing how government works, how it deals with information, how officials view their jobs and interact with the public.

E-government is also, within the South African context, split up into different sectoral areas such as e-health, e-education, SMME (small and medium enterprises) and local content.

Achieving e-government success also requires active partnerships between government, citizens and the private sector. The e-government process needs continuous input and feedback from the “customers” – the public, businesses and officials who use e-government services. Their voices and ideas are essential to making e-government work. When implemented well, it is a participatory process.

Roadmap for e-government

The Roadmap for E-government in the Developing World, developed by the Pacific Council on International Policy [1], seeks to leverage e-government lessons already learned in the developing world to maximise the chances of success for future projects. The roadmap highlights issues and problems common to e-government efforts.

It presents ten questions that e-government practitioners from around the world (including South Africa) believe are crucial to successfully conceiving, planning, managing and measuring e-government. The Roadmap Working Group suggests that e-government officials ask themselves these questions before they embark on the e-government path.

- Why are we pursuing e-government?
- Do we have a clear vision and priorities for e-government?
- What kind of e-government are we ready for?
- Is there enough political will to lead the e-government effort?
- Are we selecting e-government projects in the best way?
- How should we plan and manage e-government projects?
- How will we overcome resistance from within the government?
- How will we measure and communicate progress? How will we know if we are failing?
- What should our relationship be with the private sector?
- How can e-government improve citizen participation in public affairs?

How does e-government in South Africa measure-up?

Why are we pursuing e-government?

The South African government understands the need to develop an Information Society and harness the power of ICT for economic and social development for the benefit of the country and its citizens. Government understands the need for reform and the transformation of its core activities to make processes more effective and efficient and more citizen oriented.

Leaders should think about how to harness technology to achieve objectives for reform. ICT is an instrument to enable and empower government reform.
Do we have a clear vision and priorities for e-government?

In South Africa, the Vision 2014 describes an inclusive Information Society, one in which the use of ICT will be harnessed to ensure that everyone has fast, reliable and affordable access to information and knowledge that will enable them to participate meaningfully in the community and economy [2].

The vision further aspires to move the country from being a consumer of ICT products and services to being a major player in the production and innovation of these products and services. The cornerstones of this Inclusive Information Society are a vibrant and thriving ICT sector, an enabling policy and regulatory environment, accessible ICT infrastructure and broadband connectivity, and an appropriately skilled and knowledgeable citizenry.

The vision for e-government expressed in the approved e-government discussion document, "Electronic Government, The Digital Future: A Public Service IT Policy Framework", published in 2001 by the Department of Public Service and Administration, recommended that an e-government initiative should address three main domains:

• E-government: the application of IT intra-governmental operations (government to government or G2G);
• E-service: the application of IT to transform the delivery of public services (government to citizens or G2C); and
• E-business: the application of IT to operations performed by government in the manner of G2B transactions (e.g. procurement).

The vision for achieving e-government in South Africa is to render services around life episodes of the citizens that follow a series of events, from cradle to grave. Such services must be accessible to all citizens anytime, anywhere and through different access devices and media.

All stakeholders – government and non-government – were invited to participate in defining the vision. Continuous buy-in and participation from critical role-players is recognised as a key priority. This is achieved through a series of intergovernmental consultative workshops and working together with the Government Chief Information Officer Council.

The Department of Home Affairs promotes the vision on redefining the relationship between government and citizens. A smartcard-ID is under development that focuses on the automation of fingerprints and the development of an electronic Population Registry.

Through its Home Affairs National Information System (HANIS) project citizens can access birth and death registration forms online. To the extent that increased transparency, accountability and predictability (of rules and procedures) are made priorities, e-government may offer a weapon against corruption.

The vision of e-government is the optimisation of services so that government can achieve its goals. One especially sensitive issue, which may prevent or delay service delivery, is the issue of fraud. Within the e-government policy and strategic framework, there is...
no particular focus on how government will address the issue of non-delivery of services or inefficient service delivery to citizens. Although there is no explicit reference to corruption in the South African e-government vision, a number of important strategies are in place. To address the specific problems of corruption, government launched South Africa’s National Anti-Corruption Programme followed by Public Service and National Anti-Corruption Summits. Later in 1999, government also co-hosted the 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference. At the beginning of 2002, the Public Service Anti-Corruption Strategy was adopted.

The e-government vision is informed by the growth and development priorities expressed in Vision 2014 as well as the Millennium Development Goals whereby ICTs are regarded as an enabler for the achievement of these goals within a broad and integrated developmental approach, rather than just as an infrastructure.

E-government is firmly seen as an integral pillar for developing a Partnership across government. The success of government, including: Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS); Handbook on Minimum Interoperability Standards (MIOS); Electronic Communications Transaction Act of 2002; and the Law Commission Issue Paper on Privacy Public Service Act. The Convergence Bill, which is now called the Electronic Communications Bill, is the proposed new legislation that will transform South Africa’s telecommunications industry, and should be signed into law before the end of April 2006.

The Public Service Regulations of 2001 has also enabled e-government implementation. There is a Draft Protection of Information Bill which is presently undergoing consultation. An Open Source Software Strategy and Policy has been in place since 2003 and an implementation strategy and plan is going to be presented to Cabinet in the near future.

The ICT responsibility for national and provincial government resides with the Minister of Public Service and Administration, and the necessary legal framework and functional bodies were created, including: the State IT Agency (SITA), formed as a central, shared service provider to government departments and provinces, and the Government IT Officers’ Council (GITOC), formed to encourage and facilitate a forum for consultation and deliberation of ICT-related issues by the then newly appointed Government IT Officers.

The GITOC is an advisory body to the Minister of Public Service and Administration of ICT-related matters. The Office of the Government CIO was created within the DPSA to act as a policy-making, regulating and strategy formulating body with the specific purpose of coordinating e-government activities across government.

The DPSA was also tasked with ensuring proper measurement of ICT effectiveness in government working together with National Treasury.

Achieving e-government success also requires active partnerships between government, citizens and the private sector

Infrastructure

Although the telecommunications landscape is dominated by the Telkom monopoly, government, through a process of managed liberalisation, is now introducing competition through the Second Network Operator and a third cellular operator was licensed in 2002. Despite this, broadband access is limited and according to the ITU 2003 comparative study, South Africa performs poorly in this vital indicator of preparedness for e-commerce.

Mobile penetration has risen to over 50% of the population increasing opportunities for multi-access to information. South Africa leveraged the tools of multi-access government to promote “free and fair” national elections in 2004. The IEC developed partnerships with cellphone service providers, which enabled voters to SMS their identity number and in return receive a message back indicating their eligibility to vote and voting station details.

Custom-designed handheld scanners captured information from bar-coded ID books and greatly streamlined the process of voter registration.

A further strategy employed to increase affordable universal access is that of granting underserviced area licenses. The licenses
are small-medium enterprises that provide telecommunication services in areas designated as under-serviced.

**Human capital**

South Africa faces significant human capital development challenges in building the Inclusive Information Society. One of the key challenges is the shortage of skilled ICT people in the country exacerbated by the “brain drain” of skilled ICT personnel and other professionals to developed countries, and from public to private sector.

Currently the education and training system is unable to produce the essential and technical management skills that most employers seek. The School Register of Needs survey of 2000 reveals that schools that used computers for teaching and learning in 2000 was 12.3% and those that had access to email and internet was 6.9%. This has a direct link to the quality of ICT-related qualifications produced by universities and technikons.

According to the HRD review of 2003, trends over the past ten years indicate that very few graduates (12 % in 1999) obtain post-graduate qualifications and that has serious implications for the supply of high-level ICT workers.

**Is there enough political will to lead the e-government effort?**

The President has committed South Africa not only to participate but to compete internationally in the Information Society. The Presidential National Commission on Information Society and Development (PNCISAD) was established in 2001 to advise and to broadly coordinate ICT initiatives.

It gave effect to the President’s commitment to promoting the use of ICT to increase the pace of service delivery, economic growth and development in the country. To this end, the commission works closely with the Minister of Communications on ICT strategies for the Information Society as a whole.

The Minister of Public Service and Administration was tasked to participate in designing and implementing an e-government strategy. The e-government strategy is to ask the public for feedback, and ask regularly. Such interactive dialogues create greater accountability.

A study on Inventory of Government-wide Information Systems in 2001 giving recommendations for implementation has been completed. Recommendations included monitoring of expenditure, achieving economies of scale, minimum interoperability standards, security, architecture, management of projects and marketing of the e-government vision.

An Electronic Inventory of Government Information System has been developed. It requires all Chief Information Officers to fill in information on departments, IT systems, applications and projects which will assist in terms of reporting requirements and the necessary compliance with the Public Service Regulations.

The horizontal integration of e-government services (across agencies and departments within the same level of government) has long been a goal of many countries, even while many have struggled with the challenges of connecting across various department and agency systems.

Government has implemented a number of transversal projects such as the financial, personnel management systems and supply chain management systems (Pensal, Bas and Logis). The transversal systems are in the process of being improved through the Integrated Financial Management Systems Project (IFMS).

The case management systems used by the police, the motor vehicle registration systems used by transport, the pensions and unemployment insurance systems used by welfare and labour, and the subsidy management systems used by housing are all examples of transversal initiatives within government.

The Batho Pele Gateway Portal was launched in 2004 and is in its first phase as an information portal providing information on government services and other information such as legislation, policies and all other information of government. At present it is undergoing enhancement by translating information on the portal into all 11 languages.

The South African Post Office’s Paymaster to the Nation project promises to make life considerably easier for recipients of pensions, particularly those who live in remote rural areas. Under the scheme, welfare grants and pensions are paid into a Postbank account that is linked to a smart card containing a magnetic strip and a chip, which contains the beneficiary’s fingerprints and photo to eliminate fraud.

In the government to business domain the South African Revenue Service (SARS) e-filing already provides a means to conduct transactions related to tax returns on the internet.

**How should we plan and manage e-government projects?**

The approach outlined by the e-government framework proposed by the DPSA includes the management of all e-government projects by a systems development life cycle which requires that all application implementation go through a process from conception, through design and development phases and final implementation.

A monitoring and evaluation capability will be implemented to ensure that best practices and lessons learnt are shared.

An e-government governance framework has been proposed by the DPSA and has recently undergone extensive government-wide...
consultations to achieve approval and buy-in from senior officials. The ICT governance structure consists of the DPSA, the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), the National Treasury and the Government Information Technology Officers Council. These three interrelated entities are in the main responsible for government's ICT responsibility and service improvement using ICT.

The governance model also recognises an inter-departmental forum consisting of relevant government stakeholders, specifically those who are at present managing transversal e-government projects that will impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of government as well as have the necessary effect of improving service delivery to citizens. These projects include the Home Affairs National Identification System, (HANDS), Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), South African Social Security Agency, and the Integrated Justice System (IJS).

The governance framework outlines the responsibilities of specific committees responsible for e-government data-related projects, specifically citizen-data, application-related, access channel projects such as service centres, etc., infrastructure-related matters. It is envisaged that a programme office, namely that of the Office of the Government CIO, based at DPSA will play a coordinating role to ensure that large e-government projects are well planned.

Criteria for identifying ICT projects include increased productivity in terms of quantity and quality of ICT implementation, better cost effectiveness in terms of duration, complexity and possible reduction or duplication of tasks, and improved service delivery.

All these are measured by interoperability standards, security of documents and systems, economies of scale in supporting the accelerated growth strategy with the development of a vibrant ICT sector and Open Source Software usage, and development, elimination of duplication of ICT functions, projects and resources, thus ensuring that access to ICT infrastructure is paramount.

E-government management is more than implementing projects; it means planning for capacity-building. The e-government strategy has raised a number of relevant issues to capacity building. These include the necessity for skills transfer from ICT vendors during system implementation; that ICT re-training and re-orientation should be a continuous part of the development plan for public servants; and that ICT literacy has to be part of the general education curriculum.

Digital inclusivity must permeate solutions formulated as part of the e-government programme. An example would be that citizens will get general ICT training at general service centres, such as a multi-purpose community centres.

How will we overcome resistance from within the government? The government has been following a consultative process in terms of achieving ‘buy-in’ from all government stakeholders. E-government has generally been accepted as the term governing general aspects of modernising government’s business processes. It has been mandated by the Governance and Administration Cluster of Cabinet to the Department of Public Service and Administration to forge a common approach to the understanding and implementation of e-government.

There is general acceptance and buy-in at Cabinet level but resistance, if any, will be at inter-departmental or possibly at senior management level as it may be perceived that turf is being trampled upon. Resistance to an e-government governance model and plan will only come about if relationship building is not cultivated.

How will we measure and communicate progress? The assessment of the contribution of ICT to the development of the Information Society requires detailed analysis which is based on statistical and qualitative data about purpose, intensity and value of ICT use and application. Official statistics relating to the connectivity of SMMEs, health institutions and public funded institutions are not widely available and thus need to be developed and collection strengthened.

South Africa lacks a comprehensive and easily accessible evidence base to support strategic policy decision making and programme design to leverage ICT for South Africa’s Information Society development. This negatively affects timely detection of service delivery challenges for the purpose of effecting corrective action, thereby impinging on the ability of the state to deliver effectively and efficiently in terms of the ICT for development agenda.

It further hampers international development reporting obligations on ICT such as reporting requirements on the Millennium Development Goals and progress made towards the implementation of the World Summit on Information Society Plan of Action.

The plan calls on all countries and regions to develop and set up coherent and internationally comparable indicator systems and tools to provide statistical information on the Information Society, with basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions.

What should our relationship with the private sector be? In South Africa there are a number of examples of Public Private Partnerships in ICT for development. The corporate sector plays an important role in providing support to community programmes. However, the relationship with vendors remains problematic and government must remain vigilant in not getting “locked in” to proprietary solutions from a single vendor. For example, government is promoting the use of non-proprietary solutions such as open source software.

How can e-government improve citizen participation in public affairs? E-government is evaluated through public participation. Access to public services is a necessary part of e-government, but not sufficient. Facilitating, broadening and deepening openness and citizen involvement is fundamental to e-government.

Evaluate the effectiveness or success of e-government through participatory dialogue and interaction. Such participation can either be discreet, one-time participation or ongoing participation.
by individuals or community groups (e.g., some kind of “citizen steering committees” for e-government projects).

The important thing is to ask the public for feedback, and ask regularly. Such interactive dialogues create greater accountability.

The government has established a process through which the public can comment on draft legislation. Green papers, draft laws and regulations are posted on government web sites. Citizens can review policy proposals and documents online and submit comments, even before a policy issue reaches the Green Paper stage. This kind of participation allows citizens to contribute directly to public policymaking.

Challenges and next steps

The 10 questions posed by the “Roadmap for E-government” have highlighted the positive progress South Africa has made in e-government but also raised some interesting issues.

Although the e-government vision is articulated in various policy documents there is no common theme or consensus. Reference to corruption in the vision is notably absent. The general principles of Batho Pele are evident in government’s strategies which is important in creating a citizen centred service.

Government has noted the absence of G2E (government to employees) in its strategies and is addressing this issue realising the crucial role employees play in the process. On the technical front there are many challenges particularly with legacy systems and the need to implement transversal systems in order to achieve horizontal integration required for cross-departmental integration. Technological solutions can easily be found but government needs to manage carefully its role with the private sector in forming public-private partnerships.

However, it is the human resource development issue within government that needs prioritisation. The education system needs to be aligned with the ICT demands of the country and scarce ICT skills need to be attracted and retained, particularly within government.

How will government know if it fails or succeeds without an integrated monitoring and evaluation system? Government has demonstrated its understanding between outcomes and cost-benefit but formal monitoring and evaluation procedures need to be put in place. Emphasis should be placed here on the impact on service delivery and the customer.

There are issues regarding implementation of the public service regulation in terms of ICT which are being addressed with further amendments to the Act requiring reporting mechanism to be put in place to report back on ICT spending and project implementation to the Public Service Parliamentary Committee.

Change always brings with it the possibility of unexpected outcomes and difficulties. Some which have been experienced in the e-government arena include high turnover of staff, inadequate resourcing, underachievement of project work, lack of leadership in terms of financial planning, lack of ICT expertise, a “relatively” weak ICT industry, poor recognition of the emerging Information Society and a weak educational system.

E-government in South Africa needs to develop service and customer maturity. Service maturity measures the level to which a government has developed an online presence - the most critical service delivery channel in terms of driving down delivery costs. Service maturity takes into account the number of services for which national governments are responsible that are available online (service maturity breadth), and the level of completeness with which each service is offered (service maturity depth). Service maturity overall is the product of service maturity breadth and service maturity depth [6].

Customer service maturity measures the extent to which government agencies manage interactions with their customers (citizens and businesses) and deliver service in an integrated way. Important measures of customer service include customer relationship management, citizen-centered strategies, multi-access for services, cross-government service delivery and creating awareness and educating customers [6].

Conclusions

E-government in South Africa is in the formative stage of development. Key challenges facing government include creating access, internal efficiency and human resource development. With advances in technology improved access needs to be created for citizens, particularly in rural areas and a supportive telecommunication policy needs to be in place.

Internal efficiencies need improvement not only from a technological point of view but also from a people perspective. Training and creating a common purpose are key issues.

Key policies and governance frameworks have recently been developed and the role of leadership, amongst its many agencies, has been defined. South Africa has taken the first tentative steps in creating online access but its breadth and depth of services requires significant development. This needs to be seen in the context of relatively low tele-densities, especially in rural areas, and high telecommunication costs.

Government’s current plans include resumming the e-government portal to improve access to government services, through public information terminals in post offices and multi-purpose community centers, and to provide streamlined government services online to present government as a single entity to consumers of its services. These plans point to a positive movement in customer service for the country.

A consultative process has been followed in developing e-government in South Africa but achieving buy-in, particularly within the ranks of government departments, remains a challenge. The next phase of e-government should focus on implementation guided by the citizen-focused Batho Pele principles in terms of online service delivery and customer service.

References


According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), in 2004 alone, the African continent added almost 15 million new mobile cellular subscribers to its subscriber base. Over the last decade, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have been growing at great speed, always exceeding global economic growth and changing the way people work, entertain, shop, communicate and organise their lives.

This growth has been driven by both demand-side factors, such as the increasing popularity of mobile phones and the Internet, and by supply-side factors such as regulatory reforms, falling costs, and technological innovation (Vanessa Gray, "The un-wired continent: Africa’s mobile success story").

In South Africa specifically, this growth is driven by increasing competition among mobile service providers.

Contextualising m-government

In a continent as geographically massive and culturally diverse as Africa, the mobile phone is a tool of great social worth. In South Africa where there are vast economic and social inequalities, mobile technologies can assist in bridging the technological gap between the first and the second economy.

According to the study "Towards an e-Index for South Africa: Measuring household and individual access and usage of ICT" [by Alison Gillwald et al], South Africa’s mobile growth with a total number of subscribers in 2004 was estimated to be over 19 million. This means that almost half the population has access to mobile phones, with this high penetration rate service delivery using SMS technology becomes critical.

Government is facing an inevitable e-direction, using mobile technologies, applications and services in enhancing e-government efforts. Out of these efforts mobile government emerges and constitutes the next generation of e-government evolution. Mobile government, or m-government as it is commonly referred to, refers to the use of mobile technologies and applications to provide and receive services, while e-government refers to the broader use of information communication technologies which enables government to work more effectively, share information and deliver better services to the public.

In a nutshell, m-government is not a replacement for e-government, rather it complements it.

Providing information to the public is not a trivial activity. It is the foundation of citizen empowerment. Without relevant information citizens are unable to form intelligent opinions and, thereby, are unable to meaningfully act on the issues before them. Information is also needed not only to promote transparency but also accountability.

Accelerating Service Delivery through the use of Mobile Technology: M-government

Mobile government can be applied to four main purposes in the public sector (see the full report by Emmanuel Lallana, “M-government, applications in government, e-government for development):

M-communication: Improving communication between government and citizens

Mobile devices provide an important access channel for governments to reach citizens (G2C). For example, Johannesburg residents through the City of Johannesburg Municipality can choose to receive an SMS (short messaging systems) alert for traffic fines which outlines the status of the fine, the date the offence was committed and the amount.

According to the municipality there are an estimated of 18 000 hits per month on this specific service. Clearly, this demonstrates the excitement and willingness by citizens to use mobile technologies as a platform to engage with government.

The track and trace initiative by the Department of Home of Affairs is another example, where citizens can send and receive an SMS on the status of their application (i.e. ID and passport).

SMS is also a channel for citizens to communicate with government (C2G). The DPSA and the State Information and Technology Agency (SITA) are developing a Citizen Relations Portal to give citizens an opportunity to interact with government using SMSs.

M-services: M-transaction and m-payment

SMS and other mobile devices not only provide a channel of communication between citizens and government, they also enable government-to-citizen transactions.

While the use of m-payment is prevalent in the banking sector in South Africa, its use within e-government projects is still limited. This is the same for developing countries, it is expected that as mobile payments systems evolve from simple payments for digital content and services to complex integrated handsets, its use for transacting business with government will grow.

M-democracy

M-voting and the use of SMS and mobile devices for citizen input to political decision-making is an m-government application with tremendous potential to enhance democratic participation. At present, there are no significant experiments with m-democracy in African countries, so evidence here is taken from experiences in the UK.

Most of the UK experiments with electronic voting, including voting via mobile phones, are meant to discover more convenient ways to involve citizens in political decision-making. However, several concerns would have to be attended to before voting over mobile phones gains widespread acceptance.

Questions of security and privacy are top of the list. With the traditional voting method it is sufficient to present oneself at the voting station. An m-voting system has to ensure that the message sender is a registered voter, and that no-one abuses the system to vote more than once or vote in place of another person. Voters in
Liverpool and Sheffield in the May 2002 local elections were given PIN numbers to use if they wanted to vote by text message.

Another issue is to make the system as user-friendly as possible. If PINs are used, chances are many would forget their PINs if they are too long. Finally, the voting procedure itself must allow voters at any stage to repeat the instructions and choices. In addition, the capacity of the system would need to be sufficient to deal with peak periods because congested telephone lines are as frustrating as long lines in the voting stations.

**M-administration: Improving internal Public Sector Operations**

M-government also provides opportunities to improve the internal operation of the public sector. Again, there are few instances of such applications yet in African countries.

Another potential for wireless technology is that it can provide a seamless environment for government employees to stay connected from any device.

Up-to-date government-to-employee (G2E) information (i.e. number of leave days taken and remaining) and services can be provided at any time using mobile phones.

**Benefits**

The main benefit that m-government brings is its boundary-breaking potential, truly allowing working on an anywhere, anytime basis and helping to create a truly integrated digital nervous system for government. Because of its immediacy and convenience, it also reduces the barriers to public service operations, encouraging citizens or service providers to make use of the technology where previously barriers were discouragingly high.

For South Africa specifically, the benefits of m-government are huge and realisable given the mobile penetration rate where more than 19 million citizens have access to cellphones while the majority of people do not have access to computers to participate in e-government.

The exorbitant cost of Internet connection has also contributed to the usage of SMS as an affordable communication tool.

**Challenges**

When implementing m-government and all related e-government initiatives it is critical to take note of the inequalities that exist between and within different provinces and communities. It is noted above that South Africa is an unequal society with a dual economy. It is therefore going to take real visionaries to overcome these challenges and to realise that technology is the answer to some of the deeper problems such as building virtual societies, connecting government to the people and educating citizens.

These visionaries in their various guises can change the face of South Africa and its relationship with the region, the continent and the rest of the world.

Some of the challenges include e-readiness of departments, human e-readiness (willingness by public servants to embrace and use these new technologies) and leadership.

**Conclusion**

South Africa has successfully implemented the first generation e-government by making government information available to citizens through various access channels such as the Batho Pele Gateway Portal and Thusong Community Centres. The challenge is to revamp these access channels to support on-line transactions, on-line integration and the transformation of business processes.

With the introduction of m-government, South Africa is swiftly moving towards the next generation e-government which allows the public to interact with government at their convenience. This presents a profound shift in how government structures its services. Citizens can now engage with government in the manner of their choosing.

In moving forward, South Africa should continue embracing new innovative technologies which complement e-government to accelerate service delivery anytime, anywhere.
South Africa’s Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is an independent body responsible for the registration of the nation’s estimated 23 million eligible voters in the national common Voters’ Roll. Its task is the impartial management of free and fair elections at national, provincial and municipal levels. Although publicly funded and accountable to Parliament, the IEC is independent of government.

A software selection phase of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) for the commission was started in September 1998 and involved the analysis and functional specification for the new ERP as well as the evaluation of supplier responses to request for tender. The new ERP was adopted and since 2001 the commission implemented a number of additional components to increase the overall efficiency and control of the systems such as project management, workflow management, electronic fund transfer, financial management reporting, a custom extension to the ERP for municipal offices, contract management, data warehousing and a custom developed Votaquotes (e-procurement) system.

The custom e-procurement (Votaquotes http://votaquotes.elections.org.za) system was launched on 8 July 2002 and has received very positive response from the business community, with over 1 000 suppliers registering in the first 15 days.

Objectives
The Votaquotes solution was implemented to allow the IEC to electronically gather quotations/tenders from suppliers through a reverse auctioning process. The solution allowed the IEC to achieve a number of procurement imperatives including making the process fair and transparent, creating the broadest possible competition, improving supplier quality control, standardising procurement procedures and policies and reducing costs in line with government regulations.

Companies with historically disadvantaged owners (i.e. black, female and/or disabled) are given preferential treatment through a fully automated and transparent points system in line with government’s preferential procurement policy framework objectives and goals.

Methodology
The IEC’s Procurement and Asset Management Department, along with its IT partner Accenture, developed and successfully implemented the internet-based custom-developed e-procurement solution. A phased approach was adopted for the implementation. Phase one involved a detailed operational requirements analysis as well as the evaluation of various off-the-shelf products and the option of custom developing the solution to best suit the IEC’s requirements. This took two months to complete and the best option was to custom develop the solution.

Phase two involved the detailed conceptualisation, design, development, testing and rollout of the custom built e-procurement system based on the functional requirements defined in the first phase. Phase two was completed in less than six months.

System and process description
The solution can in essence be seen as a quote-gathering tool to obtain the lowest quotes quickly, efficiently and cheaply from registered suppliers. It automatically ranks all the bids (taking the issue of substantial subcontracting as well as preferential points for HDIs into consideration) and allows all bidders to see the competing quotes.

Since the bidders can view competing bids they can actively participate in a competitive and transparent tendering environment and offer as best possible prices. Companies owned by black individuals, women and/or disabled persons are given preferential treatment through a points system that automatically takes their status into consideration when ranking bids. A higher price could therefore still rank as the top bid if submitted by a HDI supplier.

The system has been developed to such an extent as to take into consideration the provisions of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA – 2000) and do automated calculations in respect of both the 90/10 or 80/20 scoring principles.
This architecture also ensures that the system is secure from internet attacks.

The system was developed using a three-tier net-centric architecture on a Windows 2000 platform with Visual Interdev and SQL 2000 as development tools.

The intranet web site functionality gives the IEC servs functionality to view, search and approve suppliers, maintain purchase catalogues, create and manage supplier surveys, approve and run auctions/tenders and also provides various statistical and analytical reports. The front page of the Votaquotes System displays a dynamic work list which shows the logged in user and the tasks that he/she has permission to perform on the system. This allows the procurement users to see at a glance which tasks (and quantity of tasks) require their attention at any time. The work list is hyper-linked and clicking on the task will take the user to the specific task or list of tasks.

The internet web site provides suppliers the functionality to register on the system, maintain their details, place bids, view current auctions/tenders, view a user guide, see latest media releases and view awarded auctions.

The Supplier Home Page is unique to each supplier and allows the supplier to view their registration status, outstanding registration issues and complete surveys. The suppliers can also update and print registration details, print request forms for tax clearance certificates and de-register themselves.

The system has been seamlessly integrated with the IEC’s existing Enterprise Resource Planning and Workflow Management systems. When a requisition is raised on the ERP for the procurement of goods or services, the system automatically checks if the requisition is found to be corresponding to/adhering to auction requirements and is then automatically created in Votaquotes. The relevant users are notified via e-mail to complete auction specific detail and information on the Votaquotes intranet site by entering auction specific data and optionally uploading specification documents (pictures and/or text options are available).

Once the detail has been completed, the Procurement and Asset Management Department checks and verifies the auction specifications/conditions and uploaded documents/images, sets bidding parameters, completes auction start and end dates and runs the auction. The system automatically starts running approved auctions and also notifies the relevant registered suppliers via e-mail, fax and/or cellular phone (sms) about the auction.

This functionality dramatically reduces the workload of the Procurement and Asset Management Department, as the notification of suppliers is fully automated. Costs associated with advertising or sourcing quotations from suppliers are also drastically curtailed and effectively reduced whilst actually increasing the normal number of suppliers targeted rather substantially.

This assists and ensures that the IEC can target a supplier base far exceeding the norm in respect of complying with the minimum requirements set by National Treasury through it’s supply chain management framework.

All approved suppliers can see and place bids on any running auctions. Such bids are automatically scored and ranked in real time without any action required from the Procurement and Asset Management Department. Suppliers’ bids are ranked according to bid points and not by price alone. Bid points are calculated using the
Factors illustrated (based on Government’s preferential procurement policy objectives and goals):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Factor weighting (example only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of company owned by previously disadvantaged individuals (POD)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of company owned by women (W)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of company owned by disabled persons (DP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office location</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points are awarded based on the 80/20 principle, where 80 points are given to the cheapest bidder whilst 20 points are distributed differently between the factors above for each auction. The factor weighting determines the maximum number of points that can be scored for each of the factors and are calculated in the following way:

- Price points = 80 x [1 - ((your bid - lowest bid)/lowest bid)];
- The points for the POD, W and DP factors are calculated in the following way:
  - POD points = 15 x (POD% owned / 100) W points = 4 x (W% owned / 100) and DP points = 1 x (DP% owned / 100).

The 20-point factor is, however, not awarded when one or more of the following apply:
- The bidding supplier indicated that sub-contractors would do more than 25% of the work;
- The owners of the company are not involved in the day-to-day running of the business; and
- The business is a public company, Section 21 company, parastatal, government department or non-government organisation.

Suppliers can see each other’s bids and their bid’s ranking whilst bidding. When the auction close time is reached, the system automatically closes the auction and presents the Procurement and Asset Management Department with a ranked list of all bids submitted. The department then submits the top five bids back into ERP system for further processing and approval.

The entire auction process described above can easily be accomplished by one person from the department as the process is fully automated and truly transparent to all parties concerned.

Non-delivery and non-compliance with specifications and general risks posed by service providers to the IEC are minimised through effective auction evaluation processes (i.e. measuring supplier performance against auction specifications and conditions) and due diligence audits. Once the final approval is done and a purchase order is awarded, the auction status in the Votaquotes system is automatically changed to “awarded” and is updated with the official contract documents and can virtually download them from any active internet site, with special reference to access at remote rural sites.

As the Votaquotes system is a financial system with sometimes substantial higher than what is reflected in these figures. Total expenditure estimates for the 394 auctions run on Votaquotes during the year was set at R65 million. The total expenditure of R62.14 million represents a potential cost saving of 4.62% (estimated figures).

Latest requirements from National Treasury require the IEC to report on black and white woman ownership and participation in the contracts awarded. The Votaquotes system was enhanced to enable suppliers to capture this information when completing or updating their details and this information is available to the Procurement and Asset Management Department via various reports.

Business benefits

During the 2004/2005 financial year a total of 3,778 bids were placed by suppliers on the 394 auctions that were awarded in the period. This reflects an average of 9.2 bids per auction which is significantly higher than the required minimum number of bids that must normally be obtained before awarding a contract (refer Government’s Supply Chain Management provisions as issued by National Treasury).

Actual expenditure in respect of these contracts was approximately R62.14 million which was awarded through the Votaquotes system. In respect of auctions awarded through Votaquotes, approximately 90.29% of contracts awarded through the Votaquotes system were awarded to SMME companies. In respect of auctions awarded through Votaquotes, approximately 90.29% of the awarded contract went to BEE companies.

Latest developments

The system was recently upgraded with new bidding functionality. One of the enhancements was to enable the Procurement and Asset Management Department to advertise and run part of the standard tender process on the Votaquotes system.

These electronically advertised and run tenders, measured against the “manual” tender processes, greatly enhance supplier targeting and responses and has substantial cost savings as a result of not having to pay additional advertising costs through normal media and savings by using dramatically less paper.

Suppliers also do not have to travel long distances to obtain tender documents and can virtually download them from any active internet site, with special reference to access at remote rural sites. This has already provided significant benefits of greater tender participation and fewer tender disqualifications as suppliers comply more easily with primary tender requirements.

New restricted auction functionality was introduced which allows the Procurement and Asset Management Department to run “closed” auctions for suppliers who, for example, form part of a closed panel or pool of service providers that may have been appointed for specific term contract requirements.

Such auctions are only visible to the suppliers that have won a prior tender to participate in such auctions. An example of such a panel is the commission’s printing panel that provides general printing services.

Actual expenditure in respect of these contracts was approximately R62.14 million which was awarded through the Votaquotes system. In respect of auctions awarded through Votaquotes, approximately 90.29% of the awarded contract went to BEE companies.

The IEC awarded 441 large contracts during its 2005/2006 financial year of which 339 went to BEE companies (approximately R60 million). More than 92% of the bids awarded through auctions that were run on Votaquotes went to BEE companies. E-procurement
Auctions during this financial year accounted for more than R45 million of total expenditure on the mentioned contracts. This does not include BEE companies that have public or trust shareholding that have been awarded contracts in the 2004/2005 financial year. It also does not include NGOs that were contracted, nor does it account for BEE companies that form part of consortiums where claims in respect of the provisions of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000, have been nullified.

Key figures in respect of the total IEC impact on SMME enterprises and BEE companies are:

2004/2005 financial year
- 37 contracts awarded to micro companies (8.41%);
- 115 contracts awarded to very small companies (26.14%);
- 235 contracts awarded to small companies (53.41%);
- 39 contracts awarded to medium companies (8.86%); and
- 14 contracts awarded to non-SMME companies (3.18%).

2005/2006 financial year
- 127 contracts awarded to micro companies (28.80%);
- 26 contracts awarded to very small companies (5.90%);
- 168 contracts awarded to small companies (38.10%);
- 81 contracts awarded to medium companies (18.37%); and
- 39 contracts awarded to non-SMME companies (8.84%).

All the ERP systems and components are tightly integrated, ensuring seamless processes and data integrity. The IEC now benefits from the increased control and more uniform and efficient administrative processes enforced by the systems.

The ability of the commission to quickly change the system to adhere to the latest laws and regulations (i.e. prescribed provisions in respect of BEE, for example) has proven to be a deciding factor in the success of the system and its underlying processes.

Way forward and conclusions

Efforts are continuing to identify the necessary action required to align the remaining IEC financial/procurement systems, processes and procedures with emerging regulatory and statutory requirements, and to create an enabling environment to deal especially with reporting requirements.

The Votaquotes system has enabled the IEC to successfully run its 2004 national and provincial and 2006 local government elections, and also to contribute to promoting small business development and black economic empowerment in South Africa.

It also serves as a key procurement tool used on a daily basis for the procurement of goods and services as part of the normal business requirements of the IEC and in the run-up to the forthcoming elections.

The system currently has over 5 600 registered suppliers and over 700 auctions have been successfully run since its inception. The system will continue to expand with the IEC’s needs in the future.

Further advancements like the ability to place bids entirely via cellular phones (sms) and WAP are now on the cards in order to enable rural businessmen and women to place bids via their cell phones, without necessarily having access to the internet on a continuous basis.

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2. Online Votaquotes user reference guide.
The Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Network

Sihle Mthiyane, National Treasury, reflects on recent discussions to resume M&E Knowledge Sharing in government

The idea of a learning network was born in 2004 through the knowledge management initiatives hosted by the Department of Public Service and Administration. The purpose was to provide a national knowledge sharing platform for the monitoring and evaluation processes and systems within the public sector. Two network sessions were hosted in 2004 and 2005 by the DPSA (for more information log on: www.dpsa.gov.za). However, at that point the DPSA was driving the process alone. It soon became clear that other stakeholders who had the competency in the monitoring and evaluation area had to come on board in order for the network to be sustainable. Unfortunately, the processes of bringing other stakeholders on board took longer than expected.

A meeting was subsequently organised by the DPSA in January 2007 whereby key stakeholders deliberated on how to re-launch the network and broaden its impact. The following stakeholders contributed in the reshaping of the network’s focus:

• The Presidency;
• The Office of the Public Service Commission;
• Department of Public Service and Administration;
• South African Management Development Institute;
• National Treasury;
• Department of Provincial and Local Government;
• Stats SA; and
• Eastern Cape Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism.

Deliberations amongst these stakeholders culminated in the re-launch of the Public Service M&E Learning Network. The above stakeholders collaborated in hosting the network on 14-15 May 2007. It was held at the National Treasury and drew more than 100 M&E practitioners and professionals from the three spheres of government, donor agencies as well as civil society organisations such as academic institutions and SAMEA.

With regards to the relaunch programme, the first day session was chaired by Ms Mahbuhla of DPLG. She welcomed participants and invited both Andrew Donaldson, National Treasury DDG responsible for Public Finance, and Ketumetse (Tumi) Sibeteri, DPLG DDG responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, to formally open the session. They both shared their excitement about the M&E learning network concept.

As they set the scene, both DDGs welcomed the re-launching of the network as an important initiative and stressed that the network will increase awareness on monitoring, reporting and evaluation. The network will assist with the standardisation of different M&E approaches and terminology and will also enhance the capacity of all the M&E practitioners and professionals, especially in government.

The programme was designed to achieve four objectives. The first objective was to establish clarity and common understanding on different levels and responsibilities of M&E in government. This was a panel presentation which allowed presenters to make their contributions at once before allowing any discussions. This was seen as a useful approach since it presented a unified perspective on what the centre of government is doing on M&E.

The second objective was to share and exchange M&E good practices and contribute to the development of a more appropriate M&E framework in the public service. In trying to address this objective case studies, best practices and experiences on the monitoring, reporting and evaluation implementation were presented by various stakeholders.

The third objective was to expose the participants to the monitoring and evaluation capacity-building initiatives. With the advent of the GWM&E, some particular skills that are critical to the success of conducting successful M&E missions within the public sector.

The last objective involved discussing and agreeing on the purpose, mandate and role of the Learning Network. This was the essence of the network since the participants had to spell out the future of the network. Three commissions were set up to discuss issues pertaining to the sustainability of the network.

On the second day the focus was more on capacity building initiatives and on the consolidation of the presentations from various commissions. The concept paper was initially put together by Ms Lesile Bosch, from South African Social Security Agency, and refined by Mr Herbert Batidzira, from the Eastern Cape DEAEHT, during the plenary discussion.

Key decisions

It was decided that the Governance and Administration Cluster Departments will continue to provide leadership on the Learning Network. The Department of Local Government will take over the coordination and secretariat functions from the National Treasury. Furthermore, National Treasury’s TAU will continue to provide support to the DPLG with respect to the above functions. The Presidency will identify a suitable department that can host the network’s webpage.

It was agreed that the network activities will be outlined in the concept paper that will be circulated to the members once refined by the intermin steering committee. There will also be two learning network workshops a year. All presentations will be posted on the National Treasury’s Technical Assistance Unit website www.tau.treasury.gov.za.
An allegorical construction of the topic of this article may naturally arouse curiosity, coupled with a sense of obfuscation about what I intend to discuss. It is perhaps therefore imperative that the topic is, at the outset, unpacked. In the context of this article pedigree nexus means ancestral line; whereas a tie refers to a connection or a link. Put in simple terms, the topic is about the ancestry of Batho Pele principles in terms of their theoretical and philosophical antecedents.

In much of scholarly and policy discourse in the field of public administration that ensued following the introduction of Batho Pele principles in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery in 1997 as the strategic policy intervention to transform service delivery in South Africa, there is little attempt to vigorously engage their theoretical and philosophical foundations. Instead, uncritical acceptance that the pedigree nexus of Batho Pele principles is tied to the theory and philosophy of the New Public Management preponderates in the existing body of knowledge. This is ostensibly as a result of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery’s emphasis on a customer-focused approach to service delivery, a notion that countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand pursue as one of the fundamental imperatives of the New Public Management approach to governance.

But, is it really true that the Batho Pele principles are embedded in the theory and philosophy of the New Public Management? This question may, on the basis of the dominant intellectual propositions in the mainstream public administration discourse, sound simple to answer; yet it is not as easy as is often trivialised to be.

The intricacy of the question is convoluted by the fact that there is an emerging body of knowledge outside the mainstream public administration discourse, mainly on African studies, which tends to jettison the thesis that the pedigree nexus of Batho Pele principles is ingrained in the philosophy and theory of the New Public Management. Its proposition is that Batho Pele principles are ingrained in the African philosophy of humanness, which is ubuntu.

Much is written about Batho Pele principles as policy framework for improving service delivery in the field of public administration and therefore cannot be repeated here. What is, however, of particular interest to me is the philosophy of ubuntu coupled with the proposition of African scholars that Batho Pele principles are embedded in this African philosophy of humanness. But, what exactly does the philosophy of ubuntu entail?

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a universal African philosophy, which is increasingly being recognised as part of the epistemology or system of knowledge in the social sciences. Much of public intellectual outputs of President Thabo Mbeki also make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the philosophy of ubuntu. In his address at the Heritage Day Celebrations in 2003, Mbeki said: “Today, government as well as civil society uses elements of this value-system of ubuntu in their approaches to the day-to-day challenges. Some of these examples are the government’s Batho Pele campaign that seeks to place the interest of the public at the centre of government work and delivery of services”.

Johann Broodryk’s book, Ubuntu Life-Coping Skills from Africa, makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge as it developed theoretical and philosophical frameworks that can be used to teach the philosophy. This challenges arguments that are often advanced against much of the writings on ubuntu that they are mainly short of research profundity (see Jackson, 2004).

Scholarship engagements to unpack the concept of ubuntu converge at one point that it is a philosophical thought system, which embodies values and beliefs that underpin the foundation of sound human relations and co-existence of all African societies. Such thought system is ingrained in an African axiom that “I am, because we are”. It is a “social ethic, a unifying vision” (Teffo, 1999), and a thread that holds the continent together.

Ubuntu is about the righteousness of being human; it is a belief in the centrality, sanctity and foremost priority of human beings in all kinds of interactions (Bengu 1996). It is a “collective interdependence and solidarity of communities of affection”, which emphasises the value of social relations (Mbigi 2005).

The importance of the philosophy of ubuntu is clearly captured by Wiredu (1980): “It would profit us little to gain all the technology in the world and lose the essence of humanism”. These words are similar to those of Biko (1978): “The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.”

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This is supported in Bengu’s recent book Ubuntu: The Global Philosophy for Humankind. This brings into the discourse the question about where is the tie of the theoretical and philosophical pedestal nexus of Batho Pele principles is. Is it ingrained in the neo-liberal philosophy and theory of the New Public Management, as the literature in the mainstream public administration discourse seems to suggest, or in the African philosophy of ubuntu as scholarship on African studies clearly contends?

This question, using Hospers words, “leads into very intricate pathways of argument, with many traps for the unwary.” It needs intellectual reflection. A pedigree nexus of Batho Pele principles - where is the tie?

Reflective analysis

In engaging the question about the pedigree nexus of Batho Pele principles in the context of the two schools of thought that, as indicated above, contrast each other, I enter the debate from a premise that Batho Pele – an African adage meaning people first – perfectly beats the imperatives of ubuntu, which, as explained above, is the African philosophy of humanness. This adage embodies all the values of ubuntu as illustrated in the table. In the African context, adages are not fashionable nifty philosophies that are only important to enhance the richness of language used in conversations. They represent a particular philosophical orientation in terms of how things ought to be in a social world.

The adage Batho Pele, therefore, expresses a particular philosophy that ought to underpin the behaviour and action of the South African public service, which is ubuntu.

Usage of the adage in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery is so appropriate in that it represents a particular philosophical direction that the public service ought to take in an attempt to re-invent itself into an effective machinery of government. What is, however, somewhat inappropriate in the White Paper is the use of a concept which, in terms of its theoretical and philosophical context, is to articulate the philosophy of ubuntu, which the adage Batho Pele represents. As Pauw (1999) ingeniously puts it, “concepts are tools of thinking” and therefore, to improve our thinking and debates, on issues of policy development, their appropriate use is fundamentally important.

If we use concepts incorrectly, our thinking, particularly in developing policies, would be inept in dealing with issues of public administration.

Throughout the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, a key concept used to explain the imperatives that undergird Batho Pele as a policy framework for improving service delivery is that of a customer. This is a neo-liberal construct embedded in the administrative reforms theory and philosophy of the New Public Management that undergirds changes that shook the entire Anglo-American world of public administration; where, in dealing with issues of public goods, economic thinking rather than thinking about the public interest dominated the realm of public policy.

The ultimate objective of this administrative reform paradigm is to achieve fiscal stability. This neo-liberal conception of administrative reform is ingrained in an “economic mythical” invocation that “if the economics are right, everything would fall into place” (Cernea 1994).

The customer-focused approach to service delivery, which, as argued above, is a neo-liberal concept, is used in the White Paper to explain the concept of Batho Pele, which is embedded in the African philosophy of humanness. But, is this not a theoretical or philosophical paradox? Can neo-liberal theories be used to explain African philosophies?

In the mainstream literature in the field of public administration, the customer-focused approach to service delivery as encapsulated in the White Paper is rationalised on the basis that the private sector organisations are managed better than the public sector and therefore importations of business practices in managing public services is appropriate, particularly the one propounding that the citizens must be treated as customers. This often disregards the significance of the distinction between the private and public sectors.

Concepts commonly used in private sector businesses are increasingly permeating the science and practice of governance to the extent of obfuscating the distinctiveness of public administration. The fundamental objective of the public sector, as compared to the profit-making foundational value of the private sector, is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens. Discourses and debates on service delivery should take into consideration the context of the public sector; particularly in as far as its foundational value is concerned.

Throughout the White Paper the concept of a customer is used as being synonymous with that of a citizen. Although attempts are made to qualify such indistinctiveness, their interchangeable use in the White Paper creates the problem of conceptual inconsistency. ‘Treating a citizen as a customer goes against the philosophical grain of the essence of the very concept of Batho Pele, which, as explained above, means people first, without any qualification in terms of their characteristics in the social world.

The concept of a customer, with its theoretical antecedents embedded in the private sector business administrative systems and philosophies, is a characterisation of people in society. People become customers when they enter into transactional relationships of mutual benefits, which are mainly profit-driven.

These types of relationship are characterised by abundance of choices in case either of the party reneges or is not satisfied with the services they get from each other. This means that a customer has the power of choice. The same, however, contrary to the theoretical and philosophical propositions of the New Public Management, cannot be said about the relationship between government and people. The concept of a customer is not part of the parable of the philosophy of ubuntu, which the Batho Pele principles represent.

Modern governments are put in power by people following democratic processes. These types of governments therefore become the
governments of the people. When in power democratic governments do not conduct their business of governance like an enterprise with a client or customer base. Instead, their preoccupation is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens by delivering public services.

People depend on the public services for their well-being and do not have the choice of getting them elsewhere as they are largely the domain of government. This is because of the fact that citizens, in the context of the foundational value of public administration, are not customers or clients, but just people who, with the power of the vote, assign government the mandate to serve them.

To subject them to the vagaries of the market for the service that they want in the name of promoting competition in the delivery of services is to go against the philosophical foundation of Batho Pele. Service to the people, contrary to transactional relationships of a customer and a service provider, is not profit-driven; it is about prioritising public interests and acting accordingly to meet the needs of the people. In the context of neo-liberalism, service delivery improvement is defined in terms of fiscal discipline, reduction of public expenditure and the quantity of outputs.

The main concern is with money rather than people; whereas in the context of the philosophy of ubuntu, service delivery is about enhancing the quality of life of the citizens, not only on the basis of the number of services delivered, but also in terms of how those services change the life people for better. This means that service delivery is not only about the outputs, it is also about the outcome.

The fundamental objective in this regard is to serve the people and often go the extra mile in our attempts to satisfy their needs and expectations. Citizens are not customers of government and therefore the approach of government in serving them cannot be that of a customer.

Our actions as the public service ought to be dictated by the essence of who we are as Africans. We are the embodiment of ubuntu, a caring and a compassionate society imbued with a sense of sharing because we believe in the sanctity of humanness.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Is it perhaps not time that the customer-focused approach to service delivery as encapsulated in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery should be reconsidered to truly reflect the essence of the philosophical foundation of the adage Batho Pele, which, as argued above, is ubuntu.

In response to President Mbeki’s observation that not enough has been done “to ensure that ubuntu becomes synonymous with being South African,” we ought to review our re-orientation training programmes, which are largely based on the Batho Pele principles.

Our pedagogic approaches to the subject of Batho Pele are so much inclined to the concept of a customer as an epistemological framework to engage in a discourse about improving service delivery. There is little intellectual reflection on the philosophical context and antecedent of the adage Batho Pele - people first which, as argued above, is ubuntu.

Our training programmes to re-orientate the public service should be re-designed and presented in a manner that orientates the psyche of the public service to the sanctity of humanness, particularly in its interaction with the citizenry, not the imperatives that underpin the concept of a customer.

As public servants we need to understand that “we are because of the millions of South Africans who depend on us for public services”, not as customers, but simply as people or citizens whose relationship with government is anchored in a social contract with a prescription a better life for all. To realise this contractual obligation, we ought to give the public service a more human face that always exudes a sense of humanness, sharing, respect, caring and compassion.

In the institutions of higher learning, even in our public service training sessions, when we engage with the science and art of governance as specifically pertains to service delivery, we need to provide an appropriate philosophical context, which is ubuntu. For, this African philosophy of humanness is a tie that ties the pedigree nexus of Batho Pele principles.
Improving Service Delivery through the use of Mobile Technology and Online services

Lufuno Raliphada, Department of Public Service and Administration, reports on the E-government Learning Network

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer hosted the E-government Learning Network in conjunction with the Research, Learning and Knowledge Management Branch at the CSIR Convention Centre on 21 May 2007. The objective this event, sponsored by Bytes Specialised Solutions, a Division of Bytes Technology Group South Africa, was to consolidate progress made in the use of SMS technology and e-services.

These projects and initiatives would be used as best practices to accelerate e-government as a key enabler of service delivery improvement and ensuring better life for all.

The theme related to the use of mobile technology and online services. South Africa has high mobile technology penetration and this is a strength that should be used to accelerate the use of mobile technologies to improve service delivery which has become known as mobile government or m-government. Mobile government is complementary to e-government and its use should be promoted and accelerated.

Mr Treven Rabindhnath from the Institute of Satellite and Software Applications (ISSA) outlined the mobile applications that can be used to improve service delivery. During the workshop, challenges facing the mobile applications were outlined, including: ill-defined user requirements, multimedia vs bandwidth, lack of standardisation and sharing of information, and hosting of applications. However, the benefits outweigh the challenges and emphasis was placed on piloting the application before deployment (incubate and accelerated implementation).

Ms Komma from STIA R&D presented the findings of the Dokoza pilot project on the use of mobile technologies in the Department of Health. This was a joint project between STIA, CPSI and CSIR Meraka Institute. The areas covered by the project piloted included these functionalities: register a patient; enable health workers to check prescriptions; obtain blood test results from NHLS; obtain patient history and remind patient about treatment take-up and next appointment.

The Dokoza system was nominated by the DPSA to enter the United Nations Public Services Award in the category “Improving the Delivery of Services”. The Pilot concluded that mobile technology has great potential to assist government in improving services and increasing citizen confidence.

E-government is a key enabler for a Public Administration which advocates for a paradigm shift from inward looking (internal efficiency and effectiveness) to an outward looking citizen-centric approach. The e-services, often referred to as online services, encompass Government to Citizen (G2C) applications.

Mr Norris and Ms Pretorius presented the City of Johannesburg e-services offerings: online JMPD (traffic fines), accounts (e-mail and view online), meter readings, billing address update, log and query a city problem online, GIS – online maps, valuation of property; building plan application tracker, and RSC levies.

The challenges experienced were customer data problems, technical issues such as web site, and new platform development and training of customer service staff. The future plan is to transact online and develop the SMS channel to accelerate this.

Mr Earl Jaftha presented on South African Post Office’s e-services and the manner in which it enhances access to e-services. The Post Office has extensive coverage of outlets and Public Information Terminals which are crucial for enhancement of access to services.

The workshop was also informed that citizens can access all government websites free from the terminals at post offices and service points are being transformed to have internet business centres at the convenience of citizens.

Mr Regardt van de Vyver of Neology presented a case study on Tshwane from proof of concept to covering open access methodologies. The technologies included are WFi, WiMax, Fiber and FSO. The two phases of the project were core solution architecture and multiple service provider deployment. The focus was on municipal ICT infrastructure and access which are critical for e-government implementation. The practical changes for Tshwane citizens are lowering point of entry for citizens, it removes digital delivery concerns, the focus is on access, content and education, low-cost telephony access, low cost of data access, free access to banking and Tshwane content sites.

When we accelerate e-government, implementation opportunities presented by mobile technologies are huge and need to be exploited.

When we accelerate e-government, implementation opportunities presented by mobile technologies are huge and need to be exploited. South Africa’s mobile penetration is a springboard to accelerate and give impetus to e-government implementation. Mobile technologies are critical to improve service delivery and e-services should be promoted and supported in order to ensure that citizens are serviced faster, better and at their convenience.

The Citizen Relationship System will utilise mobile technologies for citizens to interact with government. E-government enables the swift paradigm shift to citizen-centric service through the e-services modeled according to citizens needs.

In conclusion, the e-service and use of SMS technologies give e-government energy to accelerate service delivery. As a way forward we can engage with the City of Johannesburg and the Post Office to explore ways in which their enriching experience can be shared with other institutions contemplating similar initiatives.
Implementing “modern” internships for unemployed graduates

Dr Sazi Kunene, of the Services SETA, outlines the problem of unemployed graduates and the need for transformed internships

This article seeks to initiate and stimulate debate and engagement among policy makers in order to begin a process of policy conceptualisation and formulation for the transformation of internships so that these can fall into line with National Qualification Framework requirements.

We have yet to find out how widespread the problem around the implementation of internships, as expressed by an anonymous intern, actually is. It also remains to be known whether this particular anonymous intern is one of the 5 596 graduates who have “been placed with South African companies for training and job experience through Umsobomvu Youth Fund and the Independent Development Trust” (Republic of South Africa: 2007. Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa, Annual Report: 2006-2007).

I sincerely hope that a more in-depth and intensive study of the internship system will be conducted in order to revamp and transform it. It is envisaged that, with a clear policy framework developed in the context of the current education and training legislative and regulatory requirements to guide and inform the implementation of internships, a greater and decisive impact will be made on alleviating the problem of unemployed graduates.

Contextualisation

Youth unemployment is one of the most serious challenges facing the government in South Africa. Although this is a universal challenge, which also affects developed nations with successful economies, its consequences differ from country to country. They are much worse in developing countries like ours.

In Britain, for example, they speak of the “forgotten half” when referring to learners who have completed an equivalent of the SA matriculation qualification. It is only about 50% of these matriculants who are unable to take advantage of any opportunities in terms of the three dimensions of gainful employment. This simply means that, they cannot set up their own businesses, in line with self-employment opportunities, cannot further their studies at tertiary institutions, and cannot access formal employment. Consequently, they will find themselves at the periphery of mainstream economic activity.

In South Africa, we can’t speak of the “forgotten half” but could probably speak of the forgotten 80% of our matriculants who fail in all three dimensions of the principle of gainful employment. Credible research points to our faulty education and training system as the main cause of youth unemployment. What compounds this challenge is the added problem of unemployed graduates whose numbers increase at an alarming rate year after year. Some of these are under-employed and work as administrative clerks or in occupations that are not relevant to the particular type of qualification they hold.

In responding to the challenge of rising levels of youth unemployment, the government has come up with various job creation interventions such as the Extended Public Works Programme, the National Youth Service and learnerships, which were partly designed to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. (Sunday Times, 22 April 2007; RSA: 2007. State of the Nation Address by President Thabo Mbeki, 9 February 2007, pp. 8-11).

The government has also decided to focus more on the internship system as an employment creation mechanism for unemployed graduates. Whereas, in the past, internships were offered to graduates in the law, accounting, medicine and engineering professions, the objective now for immediate, medium and long-term skills requirements is to implement it across all types of professions and occupations.

In the state of the nation address for 2007-2008, the President highlighted the need for us to come up with more aggressive strategies to help unemployed graduates access the mainstream economy. The National Skills Development Strategy 2 (2005-2010), which governs and directs the activities of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), requires them to implement internships in order to deal with the problem of unemployed graduates. The Department of Labour has also decided to broaden the learning delivery landscape for skills development to include internships as one of seven training interventions that may be facilitated and coordinated by SETAs. This is clear from its Learning Type Matrix document of 2006. (DoL: 2006. Learning Type Matrix.) My SETA has created a list of unemployed graduates as part of our specific internship programme intervention. (Services Sector Education and Training Authority: 2006. List of graduate internship candidates.) I have seen on this list engineering graduates, among others, and have asked myself why there is such an outcry about the shortage of qualified engineers? Is it only about the “mismatch” between the qualifications that unemployed graduates hold and the actual needs of employers?

As Bernstein and Johnston argue, “This fact – that you might have a paper qualification but it is not worth very much – is beginning to edge into the skills debate, up to now usually via the euphemism “mismatch”, but recently with increasing boldness”.

Another question would be whether there is something else missing. But evidence points to the contrary as job opportunities are actually available but cannot be filled because of the shortage of skills in certain areas.

Another dimension to this debate is the suggestion that our economy has not kept pace with the number of graduates produced by the tertiary sector. In other words, is the economy falling to “generate sufficient job opportunities for those individuals?” (Business Day, 5 March 2007).

This becomes a “chicken and egg” scenario but, in reality, it is the supply-side that should endeavour to appropriately meet the
demand for skills and keep within the limits of the demand-side. This will need a long-term solution. As Bernstein and Johnston state: “In order to confront the full reality of our skills crisis, we have to face up to the fact that South African education and training is in deep trouble.” (Business Day, 1 March 2007).

Let me now turn to what we need to do in order to transform the current internship system into a “modern” and NQF-aligned internship system and thereby improve its impact and effectiveness in dealing with the problem of unemployed graduates.

Policy and regulatory framework

The internship programmes, if properly implemented, can contribute towards addressing the problem of unemployed graduates. This may not be the only panacea, nor is it a one-size-fits-all solution. The starting point is the conceptualisation and development of a clear and appropriate policy framework that will inform the implementation of internship programmes.

The envisaged policy framework will need to take into account a number of factors that impact on our education and training system. First and foremost, the NQF and the broad philosophical premise upon which it was founded will need to be examined. Although the implementation of internship programmes has been included as one of the success indicators for the NSDS 2 (2005-2010), there has been no policy directive issued by the Department of Labour to guide the implementation process (DoL: 2004. National Skills Development Strategy, 2005 – 2010). Because of the department’s multi-level approach to policy formulation, SETAs have the flexibility to develop new policies where none have emanated from the department. Some of the SETAs have taken the initiative in developing their own internship policies to guide and inform their implementation processes. But such policies still need to be improved so as to achieve the required alignment with the NQF among other things.

So, we need a broad policy and regulatory framework for internships, informed by NQF principles, that SETAs can customise to their specific needs in line with sectoral dynamics.

Qualifications: linking theory to the capability of action

The aim of an internship programme is to equip the learner with hands-on and employment-related practical skills, which will result in a learner acquiring marketable and productive skills. This is about exposing the learner to the real world of work.

It is my firm belief that the internship programme should be a structured training intervention offered through a structured learning programme. To illustrate my point, the structured internship programme must be designed so as to link the theory that the learner will have acquired through institution-based learning and assessment with workplace-based learning and assessment.

As with the theoretical component, the internship workplace-based component must be structured and formalised. As with institution-based learning and assessment, there will be a need for the development of internship implementation tools to facilitate workplace-based learning and assessment.

In order to develop the required internship implementation tools, it will first need to be ascertained whether there is a clear correspondence between the theoretical package of the qualification and the kind of application required by the workplace in terms of the hands-on and employment-related dimension of the outcome.

There will also be a need for clear criteria to define those qualifications that may be too old or whose “economic value” has fallen away. The envisaged policy framework must also address the question of how an internship programme can accommodate old or outdated qualifications that have reached “educational lock-step” and may be inappropriate to the current skills demands of the industry.

Answers to these and other questions will help determine how an internship programme may be structured for a particular occupation. So it is the currency of the qualification that will determine which unemployed graduates to prioritise for the internship programmes, as well as how to structure and package the workplace-based learning and assessment instruments for the internship programme.

In the long-term, tertiary institutions will need to forge strategic co-operative partnerships with business in order to develop and
offer qualifications which have a clear market destination. Professor Duma Mulaza states: “Our interest is in the capacity of higher education to prepare students to participate in a changing world of work.” (Mail and Guardian, 26 Feb 2007).

All types of qualifications must include an internship programme component which will help address the missing link between theory and the capability of action, as well as the “mismatch” with the real skills needs of the industry. This was appropriately captured by the theme of the academic symposium held at the University of South Africa in October 2005: “From ivory tower to market place: What future for the university in SA?” Wemberg and Kitner state that “higher education must align with the demands of the market” (Mail and Guardian, 26 January - 1 February 2007).

**Formal recognition of internship programmes: re-certification**

A structured internship programme that is NQF-aligned will need to be formally assessed as a credentialled or credit bearing training intervention. This will entail developing an appropriate assessment tool for this purpose and also deciding on who should take responsibility for the final summative assessment and how it should be done, whether for professional certification or simply re-certification purposes.

A set of guidelines to inform this entire process of re-credentialism will need to be included as one of the components of the internship policy framework. This will ensure that a learner who has acquired the necessary marketable and productive skills undergoes formal re-certification so as to be declared occupationally competent. Needless to say, if the structured internship programme is to be formally assessed, it will need to first have been accredited by a relevant Education and Training Quality Assurance. The workplace provider itself as a site of learning and assessment will also first have to have been accredited.

**Employer promotional incentives**

As one of the components of the internship policy framework, we will need to package and put into place employer promotional incentives designed to encourage employers to take in graduate interns and, eventually, offer them permanent employment. These could be in the form of SETA-initiated employer incentives. They could be in the form of monetary assistance or in the form of SETA-initiated employer incentives. These incentives could also come from the government along the same lines as learnership tax breaks for employers. Employers who understand the need to achieve the “equilibrium condition” will not need much convincing to take up this challenge.

**Foreign skills and mentorship**

In April this year, the Minister of Home Affairs, Ms Nosiviwe Mapula-Nokula, issued a new list of about 35,000 quota work permits for the importation of scarce skills from foreign countries (Business Day, 26 April 2007; City Press, 29 April 2007; Mail&Guardian, 5-10 May 2007). The pros and cons of importing foreign skills are currently being extensively reported in the print media (Business Day, 26-30 April 2007; City Press, 29 April 2007).

The policy on the importation of foreign skills should incorporate a strong mentorship component which would allow foreign nationals to mentor and build local talent. Such a policy should be designed to ensure skills transfer from foreign skilled nationals to local graduate interns (Patel, R: National Skills Authority (NSA) Skills Colloquium, 4 May 2007). Interns could be employed to understudy these foreign nationals. As the anonymous intern passionately pleads: “We are not here to take people’s jobs, but to acquire necessary skills in order for us to be employed elsewhere.” (Daily Sun, 4 May 2007).

**Work readiness programme**

The structured internship programme should include a component of work readiness training for the interns. This will constitute a non-credentialled element of the structured internship programme and will focus, among other things, on communication skills, computer skills, understanding workplace culture, attitudes towards other workers, diligence, professionalism, productivity, memoranda and report writing, and should include elements of both appropriate top-up and generic critical skills.

An effort should be made to integrate elements of the work readiness programme into the core elements of the internship programme rather than offering them as a stand-alone and separate components. This will serve to address the critical skills that a graduate may require to support occupational competency.

There is also another view that, in certain occupations, there is no shortage of scarce skills as reported in the print media or as might be generally perceived, but that the shortage is in the area of critical skills (Elliot, G: Presentation to the NSA Skills Colloquium, 3 May 2007). This shortage of critical skills could be addressed by a similar work readiness programme. But this still does not deny the argument that all qualifications should include an element of structured workplace learning through exposure to the real world of work.

**Conclusion**

The “modern” internship programme is designed to be an aggressive and critical intervention directed at alleviating the problem of unemployed graduates. The time for traditional internships, such as those associated with the law and accounting professions, is past. We need new “modern” and transformed internships that will take into account new legislative and regulatory requirements within the education and training system. They must also take into account new demands on education and training as imposed by the new information age. Furthermore, they must take into account the new socio-economic needs of the transformative and developmental state. Hence there is a need for a clear and effective policy framework that will guide and inform the transformation of the internship system.

“Modern” internships will need to be implemented within the context of workplace-based learning and assessment and should include proper re-certification procedures and formal recognition of occupational competency.

The biggest challenge here is about being able to “link theory to the capability of action.” Stated another way, the biggest challenge is about being able to “link hand learning to head learning”, which is probably the “missing link” without which graduates get relegated to a situation of voluntary or involuntary unemployment.

“Hand learning and the capacity for action” will certainly add “intrinsic value” to the qualification which will give unemployed graduates practical workplace experience as required by employers.

* (This article has been written in Professor Kunene’s personal capacity)
Smallholder farmers could not afford the commercial hybrid varieties consequently they were recycling “local varieties” of seeds.
Limpompo farmers’ strategy to resist drought

Community-based seed production: Limpompo farmers’ strategy to resist drought

Food production is one of the priorities of South Africa’s government. Erratic rainfall and drought are recurring problems in southern Africa. This is why the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Rockefeller Foundation funded the Southern African Drought and Low Soil Fertility Project which was initiated in 1996. This project involved CIMMYT and agricultural research programmes of the Southern Africa Development Community region.

Community-based Seed Production Project

The Northern Province Department of Agriculture and Environment, in terms of the new South African agricultural policy framework, decided to extend services to smallholders. In 1998 it launched the Broadening Agricultural Services and Extension Delivery Programme (BASED). Researchers, together with farmers, developed sustainable mixed farming systems to improve economic returns while sustaining food production. Farmers on smallholdings demanded seeds for improved open-pollinated maize varieties.

These improved varieties would cope better with drought and low soil fertility when compared to traditional (“local”) varieties. They would store as well, would mature faster, and would meet market requirements for pure white grains. The maize would also taste as good.

Smallholder farmers argue that recycling OPV seed carries no yield penalty. The economic returns of improved open-pollinated varieties over seasons, particularly when they are grown in harsh environments, may therefore match those of more expensive hybrid seeds.

The problem

Addressing a NSIMA annual collaborators’ meeting in August 2006, Mr Jeff Mkhari stated that in the past in South Africa the formal seed systems did not meet the needs of smallholder farmers, while research for the selection of crop varieties mainly focused on the needs of commercial farmers. Furthermore, the past seed system activities did not allow smallholder farmers to produce seeds.

According to MR Mkhari, prior to the introduction of the innovative ways of producing seeds, “the officials were not meeting with farmers to identify their needs. Farmers were forced to plant only maize crop and not to intercrop with other legumes like cowpeas. Officers were serving farmers identified by them and not serving those who are ploughing in open fields. There was no event where open-field farmers could meet and share problems. Yield was declining.”

In a nutshell, Mkhari pointed out that the problems that were faced by Limpopo farmers were that the smallholder farmers could not afford the commercial hybrid varieties. Consequently, farmers were recycling “local varieties” of seeds, which had become increasingly non-adaptive to environmental and socio-economic changes. Farmers needed varieties of maize that were resistant to disease and could be stored. They needed grains that matured early, that are uniformly white in colour, had cobs that cover the tip and tasted similar to local varieties.

This shows that there is considerable scope for success in improving agriculture and rural livelihoods for the poorest farmers in South Africa

Methods, interventions and solutions

CIMMYT, ARC-GCI, SANSOR, NDA-Genetic resources, LDA colleges, Progressing Milling and private seed companies, under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture, met to address the smallholder farmers’ challenges in seed production and to formulate a strategy. Its objectives, according to Mkhari, were:

• To expose farmers to different seed varieties;
• To enable them to identify preferred varieties according to their own criteria and by using MBTs and VENOs trials; and
• To enable farmers to multiply preferred varieties of seeds so as to guarantee local seed security and to make seed production profitable.

The Agricultural Research Council Grain Crops Institute (ARC-GCI) has been testing and registering CIMMYT maize varieties and promoting their use among farmers through community-based seed production schemes and small private seed companies.

Word about ZM521 and Grace (another new variety) seeds got around quickly and farmers wanted to know how to multiply and maintain these seeds. Under programmes supported by the German Technical Co-operation and the British High Commission, the NFIAE and EcoLink have started to train farmers in seed production.

Communities are building up seed stocks.

Recently, 600 packets of farmer-produced Grace seed were supplied to farmers in Mpumalanga and Limpopo in one season. Despite adverse weather 12 farmers produced ZM521 seed on areas of 0.25 hectares or more.

To make this popular seed more widely available in South Africa it was decided that the ARC-GCI would register the varieties so that they could be released officially in South Africa, multiplied on a larger scale, and then made available to seed companies, non-governmental organisations and others. The farmers that were trained...
in seed production are partners in EcoLink Seeds and this new company produced ZM521 and Grace seed in 2001. The seed processing is done at Mazivhangala Agricultural College at Vhembe as it is the only processing unit registered.

**Results**

As a result of the initiative, Crown Seeds produced 300 tons of certified ZM521 seed during the 2005/06 season. Crown Seeds also planted about 100 hectares of each of ZM521, ZM423, ZM523 and ZM623 for certified seed production in the 2006/07 season. Crown Seeds also supplied certified ZM521 seed to smallholder farmers through community-based stockists, who also act as crop advisors. Certification is administered by SANSOR, the national seed-certifying agency.

One of the pioneers of this seed production innovation, the CIMMYT, foresees considerable success for the innovation. This shows that there is considerable scope for success in improving agriculture and rural livelihoods for the poorest farmers in South Africa. Progress can become extremely rapid when partners with many different areas of expertise are highly engaged in making a difference. Through the partnership described here, many farmers have obtained greater control over their circumstances. They can participate more widely in the selection of the maize varieties they want to grow and have the opportunity of developing an economically viable and sustainable seed production system.

**New varieties**

According to CIMMYT, the new varieties have several advantages. ZM521 yields between 30% and 50% more than traditional varieties during conditions of drought and low soil fertility. Farmers also value Grace seed, the other new variety, because it matures early, is resistant to maize streak virus, is suitable for green maize production and has a very flinty grain type. Their seed will be cheaper than hybrid seed because they are open-pollinated varieties.

With regards to the new maize varieties, ZM521 has a number of advantages. It has intermediate maturity of between 60 and 65 days to flowering and between 120 and 130 days to maturity. It is a white semi-flint grain with modest frequency of semi-dent kernels. ZM521 also has high yield even during conditions of drought and low soil fertility. It has moderate levels of resistance to maize streak virus, grey leaf spot, common rust and northern leaf blight. Lastly, it is tall, with good lodging resistance and good cob tip cover.

**Project sustainability**

This type of seed production is not time-sensitive, but can be affect-
ed by climatic changes which are not yet known. These seed varieties are, however, drought- and disease-resistant. Mkhari advised that, for sustainable community-based seed production, it is necessary to have:

- The involvement of different partners throughout;
- Commodity association;
- Provision of basic seed;
- A seed certification authority;
- Value-adding and market linkages; and
- Continuous seed development and evolution.

The skills, which include training on the breeding of basic seeds for farmers, are also critical for sustainability. Sustainability will be further enhanced if farmers are trained by the SADC, are able to share processing with others; are able to hold fairs; are well organised; earning money after selling seeds; and have received grants from the Department of Agriculture to build processing structures in their villages.

**Lessons learned**

There are six main lessons learned from the project. The first one involves difficulties associated with introducing something new. Secondly, we have learned that it is possible for people to learn new skills. Thirdly, it is important to use familiar language—the local language. The fourth lesson is that people’s lives can be improved through innovative projects. The fifth lesson reinforces the fact that teamwork produces the best results. Lastly, resources must be shared.

I must emphasise that introducing something new was a huge challenge. It was the first experience in the Department of Agriculture. It was new to officials, new to the farmers, new to Moshate (a chief in a traditional community) and new to headmen.

There was fear of a failure for public officials. Project leaders got training from external consultants and always used the English language for a long period. This made things difficult. To mobilise farmers and create awareness of the project innovation was not simple.

The process has to start at the chief where he/she can be convinced of the merits of the project and thereafter take it to the community. Then people need to be consulted through meetings.

The project taught people new skills for arid land. These included methods of planting, using ripper planters to avoid soil erosion, and using Vertivar and Napier grasses to prevent soil erosion and to control cutworms.

**Conclusion**

The Limpompo Community-based Seed Project is a success story. It was made possible by a partnership between many organisations which include government, communities, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and donors.

South Africa needs to be innovative in food production, especially with the inflation in food prices being experienced. That is why this project is so important.
Improving performance reporting:
An intervention in Ekurhuleni

Karuna Mohan, General Manager – Organisational Performance, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, argues that the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan is a starting point for the social contract to create work and end poverty to be realised.

Some of the key roles and responsibilities of officials, particularly with respect to accountability and transformation at the vertical and horizontal levels, are still blurred and unclear. In this respect, there is a perception that there is reticence on delivery. The manifestation is slow and deliberate delivery processes. The sense of urgency felt within the political sphere does not seem to find itself in the full spectrum of the administrative rings.

This implies that the technical and political realm of governance is yet to be unpacked. This creates a greater imperative for debate and discourse to unfold. It is only through discussion that an intervention that shapes the strategic path to ensure effective governance will emerge.

Local government produces an Integrated Development Plan which provides a local perspective of the national picture. In addition to a formal overview, accessible outcomes for inputs and for people to understand their role in the contract to create work and end poverty are required. It is only with clarity regarding the capabilities of local people, local structures and institutions, and local government capacity that policies and strategies can be realised. This could also assist in bringing national programmes and local needs into a tighter loop.

The gap between rich and poor and the presence of development and underdevelopment side by side, as well as the differences in the participation of men and women in the economy, are among the challenges we face. There are many reasons for this and to close this gap it is necessary to consult with citizens. Indeed, government needs to ensure that all members of the public are fully consulted. In this respect, public inputs to the integrated development plan and policy processes are a legislative imperative. It is also the key performance area linked to democracy and governance for local government.

This paper is premised on the view that the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan as required of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 is a starting point for the social contract to create work and end poverty to be realised. Councillors can make realistic promises to communities through an understanding of the deliverables and timeframes in the plan. Moreover, for the purposes of accountability of management the plan can be an effective management and implementation tool between councillors and administrators to agree on deliverables and measure the outcomes.

For this to be achieved though, the politicians and officials, the employers and employees in municipalities, need to pledge to do everything in their power to complete the process of the transformation of local authorities to become effective organs of the developmental state. In terms of the Constitution local government is a sphere of government in its own right and is no longer a function of national or provincial government. Local government has been given a distinctive status and role in building democracy and promoting social and economic development.

To achieve this vision national government published a White Paper on Local Government that spelled out the framework and programme in terms of which the previous system of local government had to be radically transformed. The White Paper established the basis for a system of local government which is centrally concerned with working with local citizens and communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives.

To give practical effect to this vision the national government passed a battery of laws which govern the role, structure and system of local government. The Municipal Structures Act deals with the political structures and the administrative organisation. It also deals with the participation of the community in the running of their affairs.

The Municipal Systems Act deals with how municipalities must organise themselves and how to deliver services to the community. The Municipal Finance Management Act stipulates the changes that municipalities must undertake in the way they manage and account for the use of their financial resources more particularly, unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure would not be allowed. The Municipal Rates Act deals with the framework for municipalities to exercise their power to impose rates within a statutory framework that not only enhances certainty, uniformity and simplicity across the nation, but also takes into account historical imbalances and the rates burden on the poor.

Apartheid contaminated the natural development of society and the economy, and this is most visible at the local level where social, economic and cultural relations and resource allocations still artificially segregate communities. To reverse this requires focused governance and a willingness to work towards a common goal, both at the political and administrative levels.

It could be argued that the Integrated Development Planning Process has the goal to achieve this, however inclusion of all viewpoints across communities is still to be forged and consensus is yet to become a preferred process. A measure that is meaningful and linked to public participation, as well as citizens’ satisfaction, would help to build consensus on priorities as well as provide for an acceptable rating on delivery. The budget implementation plan must of necessity cover the details of meeting the key performance areas of municipalities: democracy and governance, financial sustainability, infrastructure and service delivery, social and economic development and institutional transformation.

A challenge at local level is about the lack of alignment between local micro plans and needs, the provincial meso plans and priorities and the macro national programmes and strategies. Alignment, in spite of the integrated development plans, does not get realised,
at the horizontal and vertical level. The budgets of municipalities are number crunches but must be underpinned by an economic and social analysis of the local area. This will bring about informed prioritisation, a direct linkage to investments as well as a clear indication on whether the budget spend of municipalities is improving the quality of life.

It is only with clear and precise indicators that the process of realising broad-based empowerment and a standard of service delivery will be realised and measured. At a vertical level, the lack of provincial horizontal integration among the departments reveals a dislocation between the integrated development plans and the provincial departmental plans. The service delivery budget implementation plan offers a solution albeit based on the inputs and targets for a year, to commence on closing this gap.

The integrated development plan has become a guide to what is to be done in a municipality. There is growing realisation that a greater effort of integration would bring in better results. It is through increased cooperation that the strategies linked to integrated service delivery will be realised. To achieve this fully, local government needs to be viewed as an equal player in the national government programmes.

Currently integrated development plans have sectoral plans and strategies that do not talk to each other. Housing is provided but the impact on the economy is never realised through an increase in the local tax base and land ownership. Roads and bridges are planned and constructed, but is there an adequate transportation network that allows for easy and affordable access and mobility? Water pipes and electricity grids and networks are provided and maintained, but the various sectors of the economy do not get stimulated nor does the quality of life improve.

All departments of the municipality are required to implement interventions in the economy and society. In particular, the land use management, spatial planning and environment management programmes need to aggregate towards a holistic strategic view of the medium term economic growth, the building of social cohesion and sustainable development. In addition, the capability of industry to supply at a reasonable price cement, bricks, steel, pumps and valves needed for construction work needs to be seriously considered for financial viability and sustainability of municipalities.

A long-term view of the project management and specialised skills needed to execute infrastructure projects is vital for planning, budgeting and execution of delivery. The budget implementation...
plan offers a means to collate the overall inputs and factors that affect the performance of the municipality.

The main focal point with respect to oversight on the integrated delivery plan should be performance reporting or monitoring and evaluation. Overall measures of how well municipalities are doing, which are sometimes used as a rationale for the salaries being paid out to the management of municipalities, have been collated under the performance management system from both national and provincial government. Social indicators such as the gap between the lowest and highest salary and parity are not measured, which would be more appropriate for a developmental state.

The closing of the gap on skills to integrate services and move away from the silo approach is not measured, which will help with the necessary municipal transformation that is needed to deliver services and develop quality jobs. What is measured is whether there is a plan and budget, whether that leads to an improvement in the quality of life of citizens, whether it is turning current skills and capacities around into areas of excellence, whether the plan and budget harnesses resources and builds participatory democracy is not considered.

Currently measures of performance are about numbers. The number of jobs created, the number of houses built, the number of BEE companies awarded contracts, number of staff. Whether these deliverables are sustainable, whether these have an impact on the economy and assist to transform the industrial military complex into a peoples’ development complex is not considered. Whether there is a qualitative input into changing the poverty index, the HDI, the Gender Empowerment Index, whether reskilling is being achieved to consider new work, new approaches is irrelevant. Bonuses do not get paid on this!

When local government is seen to be doing well, it is about spend- ing. And this is linked to procurement, more often than not, the idea is to create a local elite who benefit from the government’s pro- gramme. Real redistribution, collective wealth creation, is not con- sidered. There is only a market-led approach to buying and this points to a local state, albeit a developmental one, that is shaping the future towards individual accumulation and self-interest.

In theory, the service delivery budget implementation plan should assist to build a developmental state to bring about the deliver- ery. In reality, the plan in Ekurhuleni was viewed until very recently as a bureaucratic process carried out to fulfil the requirements of the law. In February 2007 an intervention with respect to municipal transformation was embarked on and the plan was leveraged as a key assessment tool to assist in highlighting delivery as well as reviewing performance of departments. This is important for eco- nomic development, decentralisation and delivery of integrated services, which should be the cornerstone of the implementation of the integrated development plan and budget allocations. A quarter- ly report on the budget implementation plan and the more impor- tant issue of the budget spend is monitored by the municipal man- agement and council.

In taking all of this into account, an interdepartmental core team that works together, speaks with one voice, and that plans and exe- cutes the delivery programme, was set up. Cycles and activities linked to a programme of plans for the year were put together. A team that talked to the integrated development plan, the budget and the controls worked together with functional areas to improve the measurable deliverables, and began a process of shifting depart-
Pooling knowledge resources for local government

The South African government has for a while considered ICT as playing a pertinent role as leverage to deliver public services. How ICT could be used to advance service delivery at local government, the sphere of governance with the most operational challenges, has been seriously contemplated.

It is an issue which the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), as a major funder of municipalities, was keen to respond to. After the DBSA’s interactions with local government stakeholders, there was a sense that numerous capacity interventions were being piloted in eight municipalities. It is being populated with local and national data, which includes satellite images, aerial photographs and topographic scanned images. It has a wealth of information that has been welcomed by users.

Another pertinent resource is the Geographic Information System which is being piloted in eight municipalities. It is being used by the DBSA, in conjunction with its partners, to roll out the second phase of the programme.

For its part in ensuring success of the second phase of the initiative, the LGSETA is injecting R5 million for the training of municipal officials. About 1 500 municipal employees in the nine provinces have been earmarked for the second rollout of the programme.

Based on the overwhelming positive results of the training during Phase 1 of the project and the enthusiasm from municipalities to participate in the training, it is clear that it is critically important to continue with Phase 2, says Finger.

For its part in ensuring success of the second phase of the initiative, the LGSETA is injecting R5 million for the training of municipal officials. About 1 500 municipal employees in the nine provinces have been earmarked for the second rollout of the programme.

Upon completion of their technical training, municipalities will be able to more effectively harness the benefits the LGRC and LGNet to help them function better in meeting the challenges they face in fulfilling their developmental responsibilities.

The rollout of the LGRC and the LGNet undertaken by DBSA and its partners is a direct response to national government’s vision of ICT empowerment for local government which enhances information flow between local government communities. The outcome of the training project will be improved capacity at local government level in this critical area of its operations,” says Finger.

Through new legislation and policy frameworks, South Africa has the opportunity to transform its municipal environment. However, what is required now is political leadership and commitment from those involved in local government to make municipalities successful development agents, with the capacity to improve the lives of the people they serve.”

Together with the DPLG and CSIR, the DBSA is considering a business case for an IDP Nerve Centre to be accommodated on the LGNet. This is part of a number of ongoing attempts to expand the benefits of the online information reservoir. The LGRC looks set to becoming a key ICT knowledge intervention resource in capacity building initiatives targeted to local government.

Lucky Madikiza, Development Bank of Southern Africa, explains how the internet-based Local Government Resource Centre is transforming municipalities.
The Battle for the Mind
By Noel Jones
Publisher: Destiny Image
ISBN: 0768423740
Reviewed by Molemane Chris Kanyane

"I can sit here, a lump of nothing thinking nothing about nothing and achieving nothing and becoming nothing because of my thoughts" – Noel Jones.

The eminent Noel Jones, who attracts over 20 000 people across the United States every weekend to his public speaking, has written a book in which he shows how the thoughts you think ultimately become you.

Let us listen to Jones as he fantastically explains this: "It is unrealistic to think I can think and not be part of the process of my thinking. My thoughts are not detached from me. I cannot think independently of something that does not affect me. Ultimately whatever I think about comes back to me because it is me thinking it. I certainly cannot think about people I don't know. I can only think about people I know.

"Nobody think thoughts that are independent of themselves. There is no thinking or thought of yourself or from yourself that does not include yourself. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. How can I be separate from what I think? And how can I think separate from myself.

Somewhere I have to figure into the equation of my thinking. I have to be there somewhere. The thing that affects me most is the thing I think about most. The thing that affects me the least is the thing I think about the least. Whatever I think as something that makes me uncomfortable it becomes something I think about and it overwhelms my thoughts. It possesses me. And I react, respond and operate within the feeling of my thoughts."

"It is evident therefore that it is unrealistic to think that you can think thoughts and not become part of those thoughts. Whether good or bad. So, then, if I am in relationship with my thoughts, and the thoughts I think ultimately become me, then we can conclude that good thoughts will ultimately make you good. And on the other hand bad thoughts will ultimately lead to bad things about me."

Flowing from this, Jones then advises: "Never lose the power to think about things which bring peace, joy and consolation. The power to think about things which bring peace, joy and consolation becomes the antidote to bad things that happen in your life. As long as you don't mess with my thinking you cannot control me. I can face anything if I can think about good things instead of bad things."

So the dissertation of Noel Jones is as follows: If you think about bad things then that bad thinking is going to become you because as long as you think bad things your mind begins to reason that things are not going to change.

"And because your mind thinks that things are not going to change then you help them not to change. Worry petrifies and puts you in a mode of non-action. Worry is the product of you presently thinking bad and forecasting bad in your future. You think bad things inwardly because of the bad circumstances that are outward. So right away the outward moves into the inward and nullifies – cancels any positive action from you.

"But if you start thinking about good things your thinking pattern now says that the things that are positive will continue."

Jones notes that even though the mind is above circumstances but it is connected to the body and the body is connected to circumstances, the mind through its connection with the body receives stimuli of circumstances the body is in contact with. And then the mind is left with impressions from the body that even when the body has moved to better circumstances the mind is still holding on to previous impressions.

"You got to connect your mind to the creative power of God and become more spiritual rather than focusing on external circumstances around you. When I say be connected to God I don't say become a religious fanatic in your thinking. I say become spiritual in your thinking."
Teach, Maria, go to the map and find North America. William: Here it is! Teach, Correct Now class, who discovered America? Class: Maria! Teach, Why are you late, Frank? Frank, Because of the sign. Teach, What sign? Frank, The one that says, "School Ahead, Go Slow." Teach, John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor? John, You told me to do it without using tables! Teach, Glenn, how do you spell "crocodile"? Glenn, "K-R-O-C-O-D-I-L". Teach: No, that's wrong. Glenn, Maybe it's wrong, but you asked me how I spell it! Teach, Donald, what is the chemical formula for water? Donald, H I J K L M N O!! Teach, What are you talking about? Donald, Yesterday you said it's H to O! Teach, Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago. Winnie, Me! Teach, Goss, why do you always get so dirty? Goss, Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are. Teach, Millie, give me a sentence starting with "I." Millie, I am. Teach, Millie, Always say, "I am." Millie, All right... "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet." Teach, Can anybody give an example of COINCIDENCE? Tino, Sir, my Mother and Father got married on the same day, same time. Teach, George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted doing it. Now, Louise, do you know why his father didn't punish him? Louis, Because George still had the ax in his hand. Teach, Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating? Simon, No sir, I don't have to, my Mom is a good cook. Teach, Clyde, your composition on "My Dog" is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his? Clyde, No, teacher, it's the same dog! Teach, Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested? Harold, A teacher.
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 ideal by using the Service Delivery Review as a facility for sharing our experiences, successes, mistakes and methodologies and for growing our own intellectual capital.