6th Public Service Learning Academy

Leadership, Professionalism and Accountability for the Public Service
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An organisation that can turn the paying over of hard-earned cash into a pleasurable experience for the taxpayer must be doing something right. The continued success of the South African Revenue Service in its job of collecting money holds many valuable lessons for other public services tasked with service delivery. And there is no doubt that the quality of leadership has played a big part in the effectiveness of SARS.

In his article titled “Turning around SARS”, Pravin Gordhan writes that one of the major lessons to be learned from the quest for the “continuous improvement of services” at SARS is that “in order to lead such a process you need to take ownership and responsibility. Unnecessary passing of responsibility is discouraged. We need to be accountable for what we deliver. The more we demonstrate this, the more people that report to us will follow the lead.”

Accountability is one of the pillars of the high-performance culture that is the goal of the public service and the many issues surrounding accountability involving public servants, politicians and the people are debated in this issue of the Service Delivery Review.

“One thread running through our understanding of rights-based governance and accountability is the notion that citizens of a democratic and developmental state are not simply passive consumers of public goods and services but also active rights-holders and partners in development,” writes Derick Luyt in his article on building confidence in the public sector. “The implication of this is that both service delivery and accountability are essential to building confidence in the public service.”

Nothing builds confidence like good performance, which of course depends on good leadership. And there is a lot that goes into being a good leader. “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader,” said John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States.

More recently, Microsoft founder Bill Gates commented, “As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.”

In his “A reflection on the State’s developmental targets and citizen participation” Trevor Fowler sums it up in this way: “Managers at all levels must both support and lead the public service responsibly so that public servants feel valued, motivated, informed and challenged to put forth their best efforts on behalf of the people of South Africa, writes Trevor Fowler. Finding, employing and retaining people with the skills to do this is vital for the public service – and the people who so desperately need the services that it provides.”

Christian Stephen

**Follow the leader**

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**Invitation for contributions**

The Service Delivery Review is largely seen within the public service as a tool for sharing experiences and therefore for learning. The journal is a forum for debate and continuous exchange of views. We therefore encourage public servants and beyond, to submit to us responses to articles or any other service delivery issues that they feel trigger debate and require engagement. Responses/letters should not be more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit the long responses/letters. Contributions can be sent to pierres@dpsa.gov.za
June this year saw two events unfolding which, although they may seem unrelated to many, were actually connected in terms of the issue of trust in public service and government. This trust pertains not only to the relationship with government, but also collegial trust within and across the ranks of public servants, as well as trust between public servants and the Executive.

Whereas previously we might have referred to some of these issues almost in a philosophical and abstract manner, these events have very real consequences that can be either positive or negative. As will be shown, they definitely impact on development and what we can do to alleviate the plight of our citizens, particularly those who are most reliant on the state for their well-being. They undeniably impact on the culture and quality of the public service work environment.

Let me turn to these events I am referring to. Over a period of almost a month in June, we experienced a national public service strike. On the one hand this strike was about public service employees exercising their constitutionally protected right to strike, a right that we have always respected and are keen to continue respecting within the framework of our democracy.

On the other hand, it was a strike which had ample examples of how the exercising of rights by some, especially if the boundaries of those rights are pushed and exceeded, impacts negatively on the rights of others. After all, different rights and responsibilities cohabit in the same democratic space and are bound to one another.

Without going into a detailed analysis of the strike, we have to acknowledge the fact that, whilst unfolding, with or without the approval of union leadership, intimidation of fellow workers and the public did happen. In addition, public services, in some instances even essential public services, were denied to members of the public. In other instances, this resulted in the loss of life of critically sick people and in other instances medication impacting on long-term health was not available, which over time might have an effect on preserving health.

Education was withheld from our children. Overall confidence in the stability of our economy and overall system was damaged. But more so, fear was instilled in fellow workers and sometimes the public. Given the size of the public service and the effect the national strike had on the economy, for weeks it filled the public discourse and newspaper pages. It stimulated discussions around the public service, ordinarily not regarded as a hot topic. At the start, there was significant public sympathy with public servants and particularly those in sectors such as health, education and criminal justice.

However, as intimidation and violence mounted and access to public services was denied to the population at large, the sympathy moved away. The public’s negative perceptions of public servants resurfaced and became re-enforced. A look at some of the newspaper headlines during the period tells the story:

On 17 May (at the time unions decided to take strike action) government was criticised for what was described as an “unrealistic”
offer and many newspaper articles clearly favoured a position of significantly higher pay for public servants, linking pay to performance.

On 6 June (early days of strike) a number of headlines pointed to the tensions emerging amongst labour unions: "When a just cause leads to injustice" (Pretoria News Editorial), "Principal backs strike but slams brutal teachers" (The Star), "Violence lashes nobility of strike" (Sowetan Editorial). On 13 June, the Sowetan maintained its sympathetic coverage, stating that "Union strikes are a last resort by desperate workers", and the Pretoria News referred to the court's decision on granting unions the right to embark on sympathy strikes as a "victory for workers".

On 20 June, even a fairly radical media commentator such as Christine Qunta started to pull back from the violent tone of the strike, writing in the Star, "How quickly they turned violent", and in the Pretoria News, "Strike should be disruptive, not deadly". By 21 June, the Sowetan demanded in an editorial, "Teach, don't cheat the future", and by 25 June it punts its service under the headline "We help the victims of Public Sector strike".

By 26 June one headline screamed: "Cosatu plays politics with wage offers", and non-striking HomeAffairs officials' story is carried under the headline "We fear for our lives". By 29 June the strike is over and the question is asked: "Now that it's ended, was it really worth it?", and reference is made to the fact that nobody actually won much. One of the papers chose to carry a story about a professional nurse under the headline "The job Sister M pumi loves has turned into a well of bitterness".

This process of creeping disenchantment of the public with public servants as a general category of workers, and the breach of trust within the ranks of public servants, is in a way the most damaging and will have the longest impact.

The second event related (though not very directly) to the one I just briefly highlighted took place during the last week of June in Vienna, Austria. It was the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government. This year the focus of the discussions was on "Building trust in Government", a theme the organisers considered of critical importance after it became clear that trust in government is generally dwindling across the world, notwithstanding clear evidence that there are close associations between higher levels of trust in the institutions of government and development.

In preparation for the Global Forum, the Africa region met and one of the conclusions of that meeting was that government performance is more than likely the single most important factor that influences trust in governance arrangements in a country. Public servants as a collective are therefore logically at the centre of the future of African countries and their people, and they carry an immense responsibility.

If they perform and deliver public services to the people effectively, trust will grow in government institutions. However, by not performing and not delivering public services, they create a slippery slope through which citizens lose their belief in the institutions of government, paving the way for instability and chaos.

Central to the equation of government performance is obviously competence and professionalism of our public servants. More critically, how does this relate to the discussion on trust and the undermining of trust and the consequences thereof? As the twenty first century begins, there is broad agreement that public sector managers must be specialists by training and application, and professionals by temperament and commitment.

According to the authors Richard Green, Gary Wamsley and Lawrence Keller in their article, "Reconstituting a Profession for American Public Administration", public service professionals will demonstrate "sound moral insight and judgment in their decisions, and exhibit integrity and commitment in institutional missions". Such government officials are involved in a calling to profess and serve public values. The authors argue that university education should focus on development as institutional leaders, while technical competencies in terms of professional management should still be retained.

De Hoog and Whitaker, two American researchers who studied city and county managers in the state of Florida, have identified expertise as the essential characteristic of professionalism in virtually all undertakings, but they also argue that managers must supplement their use of expertise with three specific public service values. These would automatically distinguish public sector managers from their private sector counterparts.

First, they suggest there must be an acceptance of democratic values, and therefore the legitimacy of elected officials, with a corollary decrease in individual autonomy as a value. Secondly, there must be an ethic of responsibility to the public at large. And finally, a respect for the expertise of other professionals is required.

In my view, these are not only requirements for public managers, but for all layers of public servants. With the wisdom of hindsight and the history clearly made in June, we need to reflect critically as to how the image of professionalism for public servants has been undermined given the above requirements.

The two June events referred to above highlight the importance for us of raising the level of discussion around the ethics we as a relatively young democratic public administration want to embrace. In a classical sense, we need to establish a public service ethical community. Such an ethical community is not necessarily one in which we all will agree on issues such as the boundaries of our freedoms, or the extent of our obligation to the common good.

We are obliged to reflect on the effect of recent events in various forums and work out how we are going to restore trust within our own ranks and between us and the public we are intent on serving professionally and competently. How are we going to restore respect between us as professionals when we threatened or were threatened with life or limb during the strike action? How do we restore the image of professionalism and the value base of placing people first in our ranks, where two months ago we stopped as low as kicking over the wheelchairs of the physically disabled and infrim or prevented learners from writing their exams and tests in an atmosphere conducive to academic work?
South African population increases by eight million

By Shaun Benton

South Africa’s population is estimated to have grown by eight million over the past 10 years and progress has been made in improving basic services, according to the 2007 Community Survey.

The survey, conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) countrywide, found that there has been an 8.2% increase in the country’s population, which now stands at 48.5 million. Between 2001 and 2007 the Western Cape showed the highest rate of population growth of 16.1%. Gauteng was close behind, with a 13.9% increase in population between 2001 and 2007.

Statistician-General Pali Lehohla said the survey revealed what South Africans as a whole have to say about service delivery. A total of 246 618 dwellings were covered and 949 105 persons counted, while key socio-economic data was extracted at national to provincial and municipal level.

An assessment of the use of electricity for household lighting showed that electricity usage has increased across all provinces, with 80% of households in South Africa now using electricity to light their homes at night.

Across the provinces, however, the proportion of people in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal using electrical lighting was below the national average. In the Western Cape almost 94% have access to electricity. By the beginning of this year 88.6% of South Africa’s population had access to piped water, with all provinces showing an increase.

However, the percentage of households with access to running water in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal fell below the national average. Gauteng showed the highest level of access with 97.9% of households in the province enjoying water.

Sanitation facilities were also assessed by community survey, which showed that just over 60% of South African households had access to a flush toilet by this year. However, Free State, North West and Western Cape were the only provinces where more than 50% of households had a flush toilet.

Free State had the highest of households still using the bucket sanitation system. More than half of households in Limpopo, 56.3%, used a pit latrine without ventilation, while 25.2% of households in the Eastern Cape had no toilet facilities at all.

The survey also showed that ownership of radios, televisions sets, computers, fridges and cell phones had increased considerably since the 2001 census. There was a dramatic increase in computer ownership. The figure has almost doubled in the six years since the 2001 census, with 15.7% ownership by this year compared with 8.5% ownership in 2001.

By this year, 7.3% of South African households had Internet facilities. More predictably, the demand for landline telephones showed a decrease, owing to the high use of cell phones whose usage had grown from 32.3% in 2001 to 72.9% by this year.

Statistics around education show positive results, with findings revealing that the percentage of the population aged 20 years and older with no formal schooling had dropped from 17.9% in 2001 to 10.3% in 2007. Almost 28% of the population aged 20 years and older has completed at least secondary education.

Officials sent to improve Bara Hospital

The Gauteng Department of Health has sent a team of officials to assist in improving management capacity at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto.

The move follows an assessment of the hospital by a task team after reports of three babies that were placed in a cardboard box instead of cribs. Health Minister Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang described the pictures as disturbing and a direct contradiction of what the department stands for.

The team has put together a work plan to implement recommendations made by a Task Team which was sent to the hospital to investigate the stories in the media. “The team of experts will also support the hospital in implementing measures to reduce long delays in the procurement system, address challenges relating to maintenance as well as ensure compliance with infection control policy requirements.

“As the department, we insist that all our patients should be treated with dignity. The delivery of quality healthcare to women and children in particular is one of our main priorities,” said the Minister.

She said the department was in the process of reviewing the utilisation of the R1.1 billion allocated to the hospital. This is aimed at ensuring the core functions, such as health services delivery, are prioritised in the allocation of budget.

She said the department has been encouraged by the positive response received from the general public, as many people have come forward with donations to try and help the hospital. Among the patriots were corporate and private individuals who approached the department and offered to donate 31 cribs.

The cribs are in addition to 43 cribs that have already been procured by Gauteng Department and delivered to the hospital. “This approach is based on the understanding that government and the people need to work together for the development of our country,” she said.

While welcoming the role played by the media in bringing the hospital’s situation to the department’s attention, the Minister appealed to journalists to take extra care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of patients when reporting on stories of such nature.
Home Affairs bridging SA’s skills gap

By Michael Appel

The Department of Home Affairs is to bridge the country’s skills gap by streamlining the process of applying for scarce skills permits and business permits for foreigners. “Together with business, organised labour and broader civil society, government is working on ways to bridge the skills gap in priority areas to support the country’s rapidly developing economy,” said Home Affairs Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.

The Minister said that as part of the department’s Turn Around Project, they have over 120 full-time staff managing the 14 different Turn Around initiatives. She said one of these initiatives was the application of permits such as business permits and permits for scarce skills. “We should make it less cumbersome for individual skilled foreigners to come into the country and join our economy.”

She said her department had to make sure the same management efficiency applied in helping corporate clients needing large numbers of foreign skills, to import such skills with relative ease. The department has become a significant partner within the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA) programme, particularly as it relates to the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA).

“As far as the department is concerned, we have looked at two important intervening tools that are part of our support to both AsgiSA and JIPSA. These include the drive to mobilise scarce foreign skills through the use of quota work permits, and the pilot [project] to assist large account clients with bigger numbers of foreign skills requirements,” said the Minister.

Unveiled in July this year, the first wave of the pilot project focused on four companies: Anglo American (resources), the Bombela Consortium (Gautrain), Lafarge (cement) and ArcelorMittal (Steel). “I am very pleased that we have been able to assist with more than 3 450 permits required by these companies across a broad range of categories.

“The pilot shows that Home Affairs can indeed provide tailor-made solutions that cut the time and effort required by companies to put skilled people in place and thereby contribute to the growth of our economy,” she said.

Phase two of the project, due to start next month, will make the Large Account Unit services available to a further 20 selected companies. The Minister also announced that the upgrading of the department’s help desk, dedicated to providing information in connection with Scarce and Priority Skills Work Permits was now up and running.

The help desk has been tasked with assisting applicants and prospective employers in understanding and making use of the 35 200 so-called work permits available for professionals ranging from aeronautical engineers to boilermakers and maths teachers.

The Minister said the focus of the department, as stated by the Director-General Mavuso Msimang during his report on his 100 days in office, is to transform the organisation into a modern, efficient, cost-effective institution, responsive to the needs of South Africa’s residents and visitors to the country. - BuaNews

Johannesburg introduces underground bins

Massive new underground bins for the disposal of waste and rubbish were introduced to the Johannesburg inner city. The five cubic metre steel containers are encased within a metal frame and then sunk inside a concrete sleeve in the ground.

Pedestrians, street cleaners and informal traders will be able to deposit their waste into the bins attached to the containers at street level. When the containers are full, specially adapted Pikitup trucks will lift them out of the ground, empty the containers and replace them. The entire cleaning operation takes about ten minutes and will be performed in the evening after peak traffic hours.

Speaking at the launch of the Sisonke Project, Amos Masondo, the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, said this is the first time this modern technology has been utilised in South Africa. “This is part of our comprehensive efforts to clean up the Johannesburg inner city and other CBDs and thus create a better environment for residents, visitors and the business community, ranging from big business to informal traders,” he said.

The Sisonke project is a 5.5 million initiative co-sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology and Pikitup. “Effective waste management strategies contribute to the creation of a cleaner, less wasteful and more sustainable society,” he said.

The 20 underground bins will be installed at strategic locations in the city, 17 in the CBD, Joubert Park, Hillbrow and Yeoville as well as three in Alexandra. The sites have been chosen on the basis of the volume of traffic and population densities.

As the project grows, it will be expanded to other busy parts of the city such as taxi ranks, sports stadiums or shopping malls where many people converge and where there is a pattern of high volumes of waste. The bins provide an alternative to the more traditional wheelie or pole-mounted bins which fill up rapidly resulting in the garbage landing on the ground.

Mayor Masando referred to the fact that Pikitup removes more than 1 800 tons of litter from the streets of Johannesburg every week. More than a third of this waste is generated by businesses with the remainder divided between domestic refuse and street cleaning. He said it is quite clear that residents and visitors cannot continue with established patterns of waste generation and waste disposal.

New technical solutions should be supported by “dramatic changes in the behaviour” of people who are the generators of waste. Landfill space in the city is decreasing and there is a scarcity of available land on which to develop new sites. Masando says the street prefects will become “visible extensions of the broader society where everybody takes equal responsibility for their environment, for their neighbourhoods and eventually for the entire Johannesburg.” - BuaNews
South Africa’s productivity averages 3% annual growth

By Michael Appel

Between 1996 and 2005, South Africa’s real output grew on average by an annual rate of 3.9%, while multifactor productivity grew at an average annual rate of 3% across all sectors of the economy.

The country’s productivity was analysed comprehensively by the National Productivity Institute (NPI) covering the nine-year period after 1996. South Africa has undergone significant macroeconomic reform and trade liberalisation.

Amongst other significant events, in 1994, South Africa became a democratic society with the change to the new government of national unity, and it is events like these that had important implications for the domestic economy’s macroeconomic policy and sectoral reforms, which have an impact on different economic sectors.

“The tertiary sector – which includes transport, storage and communication, finance, insurance, and wholesale and retail trade – were the strongest performing sectors in the economy,” reported Productivity SA.

In his address to media, Chairperson of Productivity SA, Professor Kobus Laubscher, said that as the country edges towards the target of a 6% economic growth rate, the most important target for the organization is to achieve a 7% multifactor productivity growth rate by 2011 across the economy. “We acknowledge that as the only institution dedicated to the concept of productivity in South Africa it is our responsibility to lead the way in this regard,” said Laubscher.

Efficiency Group Senior Economist Dawie Roodt said nothing is more important than economic growth, reiterating that this is not done by creating jobs, but by creating wealth in an economy. “From 1994 onwards the new South Africa has been good for economic growth,” he said, adding however that more needs to be done in terms of education and skills development in the country.

“The amount of matrics who take maths and science on higher grade is about 13%. This means we are going to have massive shortage of engineers [and accountants] in the years to come,” said Roodt. He noted that there seems to be quite a sharp correlation between productivity growth and competition, explaining that Telkom and South African Airways are just some of the companies being protected from the free market, thereby not placing productivity under scrutiny.

“A trend that I have picked up is that mostly we are employing more capital than labour. In other words, the ratio is falling more in favour of capital and away from labour. However he said that the productivity figures for South Africa are a positive picture. “We are not getting beyond the 3% average as we have been on that average for a while. We need to start settings targets such as the 7% productivity growth rate by 2011.”

The tertiary sector - which includes transport, storage and communication, finance, insurance, and wholesale and retail trade - were the strongest performing sectors in the economy.

The services sector is currently the biggest in South Africa, employing some 3.2 million people in 2005. Roodt said the finance, insurance, real estate and business service sectors, which employed about 1.5 million in 2005, are also booming at the moment. However, the recent interest rate hike is likely to have a dampening effect on the sector.

He concluded by saying that the current demand is outstripping supply by R140 billion a year, which means South Africa is importing a lot of capital goods resulting in the current account deficit. - BuaNews

Corporates urged to address scarce skills

The shortage of skills cannot be solved by government alone, said the eThekwini Mayor, Councillor Obed Mlaba. He urged corporate sector players to assist government and come up interventions aimed at bridging the yawning skills gap in the fields of engineering and science. “A problem facing our fledging democracy is scarce skills shortage,” said Mlaba.

He said the unavailability of skilled engineers would hamper government’s goals for developing South Africa. “Leaders in the fields of engineering in the private sector should also play an active role in developing the African child in this regard.” He said these interventions needed to be introduced at earlier grades in order to prepare children for a career in science related fields.

“Children need to start getting exposure to these fields as early as Grade 8 and Grade 9 in order to familiarise themselves with these fields. You can’t wait until a child is in metric before deciding to expose them to opportunities, by then it might be too late,” he said.

According to Mlaba, this can go on to address the problem of unemployed graduates. “Why is it that every weekend there are thousands of advertised jobs yet on the other hand you also have thousands of unemployed graduates?” he asked.

He said learners needed to start looking at careers in the engineering and building sectors as the country needed professionals in these fields. A 2006 report by the South African Institute for Civil Engineering said engineering skills, from professionals through to technicians and artisans, were in short supply in South Africa. - BuaNews
An ideal public service worker: theory, environment, expectations and reality

Richard Baloyi outlines the ideal characteristics and capabilities for a public service worker capable of efficient service delivery

In an exercise to build a professional and competent public service for improved local delivery, there are questions that we have to answer. One of these questions is whether we have the necessary tool to walk the talk of having a professional and competent public service.

As my contribution towards providing an answer to this question, I suggest that we look at an individual public service worker as that tool that we should have in order to achieve a competent public service. We need to discuss whether this tool exists in our situation, the impact of the environment on the effectiveness of this tool and how this tool needs to be sharpened from time to time to sustain its effectiveness in service delivery.

As we do so, reality will dictate that whereas we may have as a point of departure to reflect on the theoretical perspectives of how ideal this tool should be, we will also have to draw a balance between theory and the real-case situations.

As the sub-theme of our focus is on interrogating public service competence, this paper initiates a debate to analyse the effectiveness of this ideal public service worker against public expectations and the ultimate reality in service delivery interventions.

It would be interesting if we were to approach this debate from the point of view that we are not debating these issues out of choice and convenience, we are doing so because we believe that we have a responsibility to contribute to entrenching a public service culture compliant with the expectations of a democratic South Africa.

Characteristics of the South African public service

Our Constitution and subsequent legislative and policy developments direct that the Public Service of South Africa is expected to be the vehicle through which our transformation laws and good policies are implemented. It has to drive the agenda to implement the basic values and principles governing our public administration, as spelled out in the Constitution, including the following:

- Promoting the high standards of professional ethics;
- Promoting efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- Ensuring a development-oriented public administration;
- Providing services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias,
- Being responsive to peoples’ needs;
- Ensuring public administration accountability;
- Fostering transparency;
- Cultivating good human resource management and career development practices; and
- Ensuring that public administration is broadly representative.

As we all know, the Constitution prescribes that these values and principles of public administration are applicable to all the spheres of government, organs of state and public enterprises.

One of the good policies that our government has developed is the Transformation of Public Service Delivery, commonly referred to as “Batho Pele” policy, which provides a framework and practical implementation strategy to put people first as we see the rollout of services provided to the public that we all have to serve.

This policy introduces eight principles:

- Consulting users of services;
- Setting service standards;
- Increasing access;
- Ensuring courtesy;
- Providing more and better information;
- Increasing openness and transparency;
- Remediing mistakes and failures; and
- Getting the best possible value for money.

Together with a number of other policies and the founding principles as enshrined in the Constitution, the Batho Pele policy contributes to giving meaning to what a peoples’ public service should be, and that defines what competency means.

We may say without doubt that our public service’s foundation is cemented on well-researched and well-intended theoretical framework to be able to realise the objective of better life for all.

At the local sphere of government, our municipalities, guided by the stated values and principles of public administration, are required to deal with such activities as the following:

- Provide services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- Promote social and economic development;
- Promote safe and healthy environment;
- Encourage community participation in matters of local government;
- Promote Integrated Development Planning;
- Coordinate issues around housing, and
- Deal with any other issue that is a service delivery priority need of their respective communities.

In order to roll out the implementation of these laws and policies, our government set up structures of service delivery at all three spheres, and, combined with the good policies and laws that we have so far developed, we have a conducive environment for effective service delivery, but, of course, unquestionable only at a theoretical level.

As people argue that policy is good only to the extent to which it is implemented, this debate will provide an opportunity for us to assess our delivery record. The question is whether the good policies that we have can be explained against a record of actual practical implementation and the resultant impact on improving the quality of life for all the people.

At the end of our first decade of freedom, we did an analysis of our performance as a nation. The results, although some may contest them, indicate that we have gone a long way in the area of policy development and that we still have a long way to go with the implementation of these policies.
It will be to the advantage of all of us if we avoided a situation of trying to defend ourselves on these issues and rather concentrate on providing clarity on what has been done and what still remains to be done. We need to find what contributed to the reported situation where there is a perception that, whereas more has been done, more still remains to be done, for it is in doing so that we maximise our opportunities to win the fight to implement our declared national agenda of service delivery.

As we follow the course of seeking solutions with a view to building on them until we achieve a better life for all, we will discover stumbling blocks and clear them out of our way.

As we search deep into the issues that indicate areas where there is room for improvement, we may realise a situation that, with poor policy implementation, those policies themselves either become jokes to the public or rallying points for the people to engage the government in a manner as if those policies have not been developed by the very government. Sometimes people even reach the conclusion that the government has no clue on the implementation of such policies.

It is proper at a gathering of this nature that we put ourselves in the position of the intended receivers of the service that our public service has to deliver, and reflect on those things that we would like to raise as an indication that our service is sometimes below expectations. And, of course, not out of choice but as an act in self-assessment.

Let me begin by raising the issue of water supply in Limpopo and countrywide. When some of us do constituency work, it comes out clearly as we interact with the people that the issue of water supply is a serious concern. So that any positive statement of delivery in this regard that reflects an average good national rating of performance is regarded as a sell-out statement in some provinces.

Of course there are big and good stories told about developments at the level of infrastructure provision, such as the construction of dams, but the reality is that poor people have a tough time getting drinking water, even in areas that have internal network reticulation and have a history of receiving water through those structures.
drinking water, even in areas that have internal network reticulation and have a history of receiving water through those structures.

This state of affairs contributes to a situation where, on average, there are water crisis committees in almost all the regions of the provinces concerned. We may not want to hear anything about crisis committees or those who associate themselves with them, but the reality is that in the majority of cases those committees become public platforms to deal with issues that people identify as a challenge in their locality, and water issues happen to be one of the dominant issues.

We need to rise above what other people call escapism in dealing with issues where people raise genuine concerns. We need to be focused where we are seen as providing responses that only address issues at theoretical level. We should reach a stage where through the taps the people can see actual service delivery of water. Failing to do so, and in compliance with the redress principle of Batho Pele policy, we should give an explanation as to why we may not be able to provide water at the level expected, and commit ourselves to a turnaround time.

It is not enough to respond to issues of service delivery through the language of the budget, by saying that because we have spent all the money allocated for a particular financial year on a particular budget item, everybody should be satisfied that there has been service delivery.

We need to focus on the results and impact of that particular spending, as to whether it translates into addressing the actual service delivery priorities or not.

To be honest, reports on service delivery indicate that water services delivery has become a common challenge in most of our predominantly rural provinces. It therefore sounds relevant that as we interrogate competency of our public service, we should include its ability to deal with issues of water supply.

I think during discussion we will hear more stories from you in reflecting on issues that you believe we have to accelerate our efforts on, of course not as a matter of choice, but because we believe that it is our responsibility to share these issues for us to work as a team in dealing with those matters.

Attributes of an ideal public service worker
But what kind of a public service worker do we need to be able to deal with the agenda of implementing the good policies that we have? What qualities should public service worker have? Is it a matter of academic qualifications that matters? Is it cadreship profile that matters? If it is a merit issue, what constitutes an ideal merit?

These are questions that we have to answer, and I have no claim to knowing these answers, save to make a contribution.

We heard some people argue that this question should not arise because at all the stages, governments come and governments go, but the public service remains. The adherents of this view subscribe to the notion that public service workers are ready-made machines suitable for all governments irrespective of the nature of that government.

They believe that even if you can overthrow a government and substitute it with a new one, you should absorb the public service workers of the old order, for they believe that those workers will adjust, adapt and champion the service delivery agenda of the new political order.

If we were to agree with this school of thought, we would be saying that the prevalence of an ideal public service worker is a given and we should therefore trust that all is well.

Unfortunately, reality dictates otherwise. It says that any political order needs public service workers that are equal to the challenges and priorities of the order of the day.

They should understand the political direction of their political principals and internalise their obligation to service the public in terms of the policies and laws that they understand, cherish and uphold. They must have political understanding and the will to serve.

The extreme adherents to this notion suggest that we should have only liberation struggle time heroes and activists swelling the ranks of our public service for us to begin to see the fruits of a transformed and competent public service.

Unfortunately, too, reality dictates otherwise. It says that in South Africa we have adopted an approach that gives opportunities to all South Africans to contribute in their own unique way to building and servicing the country according to their capabilities and not necessarily limited to the extent as defined by their history.

The proponents of this view suggest that we need a public service worker of a special type, whether historically belonging to the so-called “sunset clause” workers or to the struggle heroes’ category. We need a public service worker who will be equal to the challenges and priorities of the current political dispensation.

In addition to being in a position to implement all the policies and laws, that public service worker should reflect some or all of the following attributes, to mention but a few.

**Breaking new ground:** An official with this attribute is innovative and does not shy away from coming up with new ideas for the public good. The point of departure for this official should be the policies that we have, the legislation that we have developed, the service delivery mechanisms that our government has initiated and the expectations of the public. He or she will then be able to make personal interventions to translate policy into action. We should agree that gone are the days that individual innovative capability will be theoretically located in the history of that person. Yes, history is important, but competency first.

**Inspiring success:** The public service worker that we need is self-motivated and ready to motivate others to service the public. Those who are responsive to this attribute always provide leadership wherever they find themselves.

**Raising the standard:** An official who is responsive to this attribute is capable of giving her/his best regardless of whether she/he is in the front office or at management level.

**Nothing is impossible:** This is the type of a public service worker who comes up with turn-around strategies to salvage a failing situation. This is the type of a public service worker who will not turn on policy and resources constraints as an excuse for not doing work, but will always seek solutions where it appears that solutions are not there in ordinary circumstances.

**Making a difference to people:** An official who upholds this quality understands that the public service has to serve a larger population, and this population has expectations that should always be considered when doing work. This worker will always be committed and work towards the attainment of the people’s expectations. This person will be results-oriented and always measure the impact of his/her actions against those expectations.
Collective responsibility and teamwork: An ideal public service worker must believe in partnership and be practically seen to work with other people. He or she considers the opinion of other colleagues, peers and the public. Even in working under pressure, this official does not work behind people’s backs. This worker is able to network with organs of civil society, community development workers and all other stakeholders.

On board: A public service worker who is on board is the one who owns the processes of service delivery and this person understands that blame for the failure of the system should be laid squarely on his/her shoulders. This person is able to identify early warnings in situations where some challenges may be standing in the way of service delivery, thus being prepared for timeous intervention.

International activism: This is a public service worker who is an active agent in implementing the public service agenda on the continent and in the world.

But how responsive are our individual public service workers to these attributes? Out of 100%, where do we stand? I think we should look for answers in the service delivery record of our public service. The record will no doubt point to instances where we have to improve and those areas where things are going smoothly. We can therefore say that there are those public service workers who are hard at work and give their best in the manner that we see some good progress, the high flyers.

These are those public service workers who are responsive to the attributes of an ideal public service worker of the current political dispensation. I have no doubt that they are there and are in the majority.

But we may also say that there are poor performers and these people are accountable for the failures that are a result of human elements.

The question is, out of our entire public service force, who belongs to which category? Out of all the public service workers who are put forward for awards of excellence in performance, how many of them fall under the category of poor performers? Out of the 600 or more public service workers present here, who belongs to which category? Let us be honest and tell our own stories.

If we all belong to the category of public service workers who subscribe to the attributes referred to in this paper, or if those who belong to this category were in the majority, then someone must answer some pressing questions, including the following:

• Why do we see the country in flames with people becoming impatient with our service delivery record?
• Why do we have so much negative publicity on Home Affairs-related activities?
• Why is lack of capacity considered an issue even at this moment?
• Why do we see people pushing wheelbarrows and walking distances to fetch water, even in areas where the network exists and has been servicing the people for a long time?
• Why do we hear of people losing confidence in our public hospitals?
• Why do we see the mushrooming of private institutions of learning?
• Why do we hear of people having doubts about our security systems?

The list of why this and why not that is long, but we must not point fingers, although we should be able to identify poor performers and respond to their situations on a case-by-case basis. We should not be tempted to join the easy talk of wholesale allocation of blame. It is easy, sometimes even opportunistic; to always put the blame on others without checking the facts. You hear such cheap talk as: “Blame the workers, blame the councillor, blame the minister, blame the president, blame the government”.

Our attention should be on those areas that we have to accelerate service delivery. We should be forward-focused and vow that, through training and motivation, we want to create true public service workers of a competent South Africa and we are all candidates in our respective areas of deployment.

Having argued earlier that there are those situations where the service delivery level is very low, we may want to state that it is time we identified those public service workers who are champions in some of the attributes and deploy them to deal with demanding situations.

But of course we may have ideal public service workers dominating our public service but we do not have the necessary support systems for them to discharge the services to the best of their ability. The results will be the same. There will be no movement.

We may have a combination of good policies, ideal public service workers, but oversight bodies do not pull their weight. The results will be the same. There will be no coordination.

Some missing links giving rise to distortions
Notwithstanding the good policies that we have developed and the laws that we have passed to transform the state and society in South Africa and a proven track record of service delivery, of late we have begun to see tendencies and practices that could only be expected during the apartheid era.
People are taking to the streets in demand of service delivery. Public demonstrations are becoming more common, some characterised by violence and intimidation, all in the name of demand for service delivery.

We have seen protests in Diepsloot, Harrismith, Harry Gwala Informal Settlement, King Williams Town, Lephalale Municipality, Klipfontein, Mamelodi, and many other places. The worst was in Dennesville in the Free State where the local ward cuncillor, Ntai Morris Mokoena, was killed under circumstances masquerading as service delivery-related demonstrations.

We have seen and heard men and women of substance rising to condemn these barbaric acts of thuggery. I think we need to hear and see more and more voices condemning such acts.

But what we need to also do is to carefully conduct a study to try and understand what is actually behind all these developments.

In the book titled State of the Nation, South Africa, 2007, Doreen Atkinson argues that there are three main causes for the mass protests that have become so common in our country:

- Municipal ineffectiveness in service delivery;
- Poor responsiveness of municipalities to citizen grievances; and
- Conspicuous consumption and self-enrichment tendencies.

You may choose to agree with her or not. My view is that if we were to only read this section of her writing, we would say that the arguments in support of this understanding by Atkinson are too simplistic and devoid of analysis of how the situation is at local government level.

But if we were to read further it would become clear that whereas there is that understanding, she stresses that the blame cannot be placed solely at the door of municipalities.

In fact the municipalities are vulnerable. They are located at the level where actual service delivery takes place, hence they are seen as the first respondents when things are not going well, irrespective of whether the performance of such a service is their competency or not. If we know the history of our local government structures, we would agree that they are new, having entered the final phase in 2000.

As a matter of fact it was during their first term as fully-fledged municipalities when some of them were confronted with the challenges of protests.

I think it is too early for anyone to allocate a bigger portion of failure to municipalities.

A further consideration of these tendencies may point to subjective factors being the main issues around which people lead some or all of these demonstrations, and those factors may not necessarily be associated with service delivery issues proper.

It is my view therefore that these demonstrations, violence and related activities will only distort the real characterisation of service delivery-related activities and the stature of our public service.

A consolation picture is that the people are not blind to the real issues around these acts of barbarism, and yet they are not defensive in so far as the demonstrations are providing a caution for us to be vigilant in dealing with issues of service delivery.

In the official online publication of the ANCYL, their President Fikile Mbalula said the following on service delivery and public demonstrations: “As such incidents spread across the country, we are bound to ask if these are driven by genuine concerns regarding the pace of service delivery, or are we dealing with agent provocateurs who are determined to make our public service delivery a failed State.

“We must look long and hard at each of these actions and arrive at logical conclusions based on an honest and serious assessment of their merits or demerits on a case-by-case basis. It is our collective task to put solid foundations in place so that it never becomes necessary for anyone across the length and breadth of our country to take their demands to the streets again.”

It is my view that as loud and clear as we communicate the message to condemn these acts and put mechanisms in place to deny them an opportunity of existence, we need to do so with a clear commitment that we will have to keep the people informed of the true state of affairs so far as service delivery is concerned.

We must also engage the people in dialogue on this aspect and allow them, at the forums created by us, to raise issues of service delivery and we must respond accordingly.

It is therefore clear that whereas we need an ideal public service worker to be able to fast-track policy implementation to strengthen our competent public service, we need a combination with strong oversight bodies to keep the public informed of the situation so that they do not find themselves defenceless when confronted by people who may have personal agendas.

We should strengthen the public participation processes through all spheres of government. Councillors should hold feedback and consultation meetings with communities on a regular basis. Other public representatives like MPs and MPLs should interact with the communities through constituency work, and must be able to raise the issues that the communities feel the government’s attention should be drawn to.

Organs of civil society should also play a leading role to keep the people on board in terms of service delivery issues.

We should strengthen the public participation processes through all spheres of government.

Conclusion
There is a compelling reason why we need to sustain the debate as an ongoing project to keep on reflecting on the effectiveness of our public service workers in building and sustaining a competent public service.

In doing so, we need to keep on examining all those factors that may sometimes militate against public service workers’ ability to make their best contributions, such as negative publicity on public service issues, blanket condemnation of public service workers, party-politicising the criticisms to public service performance and lack of appreciation of the good work that our public service workers are doing.

We need a special campaign organised by people outside the public service, to expose those issues that constitute the highlights of public service delivery. But of course not at the expense of addressing those glaring lowlights.
Knowledge for development and public service

This paper seeks to highlight and reflect on a conference that was organised by the World Bank. The focus of the conference was on knowledge economy in Africa. A lot of the points that emerged from that conference are also relevant for some of the service delivery issues. The findings of this conference will be the central focus of this paper. However, before I do I would like to give a brief background of the World Bank Institute (WBI).

The mission of the WBI is to acquire, share and apply global and local knowledge to meet development challenges. It also seeks to enable countries to develop capacity at the individual, organisational and institutional levels.

Every year we conduct more than 800 learning activities where more than 90,000 clients participate worldwide. We also have 187 formal partner institutions of distance learning around the world which we conduct through our video conference facilities. We have 120 Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) affiliates. We also have scholarship programmes, where 211 scholarships are awarded annually through the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program and the Robert S. McNamara Fellowships Program. Furthermore, the WBI also has field representation in Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France (Marseilles and Paris), Ghana, India, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Turkey, and has a focus on 45 countries. We have thematic programmes which include focus country and regional/global activities. The programmes are as follows:

- Education;
- Environment and Natural Resources Management;
- Financial Sector Capacity Development;
- Health and Aids;
- Knowledge for Development;
- Poverty and Growth;
- Private Sector Development (Business, Competitiveness, and Development; Investment Climate);
- Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure;
- Public Sector Governance;
- Social Protection and Risk Management;
- Trade;
- Urban and Local Government; and
- Water and Rural development.

The types of products and services that we deliver to client countries include capacity development support services where we provide pedagogical advice, country capacity development strategies, and country programme briefs that lay out the key entry points for capacity development at the country level.

We also offer thematic learning programmes such as courses, seminars, workshops, e-dialogues, technical assistance, awareness raising, and communities of practice using face-to-face, distance learning, digital radio and blended approaches. Our learning products include e-learning programmes, websites, CD-ROM libraries, books and training materials.

Our knowledge services include online dialogues, advisory services, and a Capacity Development Resource Centre. We also have diagnostic tools which include governance diagnostics and indicators, Capacity Development Needs Assessment and Knowledge Economy Assessments. We also offer technical assistance which is tailored to a country's needs. Lastly, we offer evaluation and certification programmes which include evaluation of learning programmes for clients and World Bank staff.

Knowledge for Africa’s Development Conference

The conference was held in May 2006, with a follow-up seminar held in September 2006 on Knowledge for Africa’s Development. The conference was a collaborative effort between the World Bank, the South African Department of Science and Technology and the Finnish government. We had a broad array of participants of over 230 high-level policy makers, private sector, academia and civil society representatives. It was the first conference in Africa to bring together high-level policy makers from all over the continent, including 35 from across Africa.

The conference was based on a theoretical framework that was put together by the WBI around knowledge economy. The WBI analysed the knowledge economy in four specific pillars. The first is the economic and institutional regime which is basically the incentive structure and how various institutions work together. The second pillar is education which focuses on an educated and skilled population that can use knowledge effectively.

The third pillar is information infrastructure which is the means by which knowledge is transferred and disseminated across networks. The last pillar is innovation which consists of organisations that can tap into the stock of global knowledge, assimilate and adapt it and create local knowledge. Each of these spheres is interconnected and interdependent.

There is also a knowledge economy which rates all the countries across the world. Finland has been a strong performer in this index and we see it as a benchmark with South Africa and Botswana following closely behind. The index is mainly based on a number of indicators which fall under the four pillars summarised above.

What emerged from the conference were essentially ten priorities. In reflecting on these I will be raising questions instead of offering answers when looking at the way that these priorities may impact or not impact in improving service delivery at the community level in South Africa.

The first priority that emerged was that knowledge and innovation are the lifeblood of development. The Republic of Korea’s economic growth from the late 1950s is attributed to knowledge. Finland realised the importance of knowledge and innovation and as a result has established an innovation and funding system.
What emerged from the conference was that Finland was able to create an atmosphere that allowed each player in the area of innovation to work together through this innovation system that focused on challenges and solutions from a multi-disciplinary lens.

A few questions emerged around this issue. It was asked to what extent are tertiary institutions contributing to service delivery improvement? How do we build a bridge between research and service delivery innovations? To what extent are departments working together in a system of innovation? How are new ideas being disseminated throughout the system? What are the incentives in place to take risks and try new ideas?

The second main point that emerged from the conference is the need to build integrated policies. It was noted that national policy on innovation helps to support cross-sectoral policy-making.

A need to foster a culture of innovation and risk taking was also identified. Private-public partnerships need to facilitated and issues of global knowledge acquisition, including issues of Foreign Direct Investment and Intellectual Property Rights, need to be addressed. Lastly, it was proposed that the potential of indigenous knowledge and community-based innovation needs to be harnessed.

The third point is the need to mobilise leadership for the knowledge economy. The leadership that is needed is very distinct from what we have experienced in the past. It is a type of leader that can inspire other leaders, create an atmosphere for innovations and a new culture which is not characterised by the top-down, but a networked and empowering kind of leadership.

Here goals and objectives are commonly held and the leader is encouraging everyone to take risks. This will include identification and support of champions at all levels.

The fourth point that came out of the conference is the need for innovation by local communities. Here the focus is on innovation for the community by the community. This is because there has been a tendency in countries across the world where experts impose and think they have solutions for local communities. We need to find the pockets of innovation in communities and capitalize on them.

Relating to this is the fact that innovation builds on existing knowledge. Important here is the indigenous knowledge systems which are to be captured in order to foster innovation. The role of youth was also emphasised and how better to create a culture of innovation amongst this group.

The fifth point is the need for innovation to be aligned with domestic strengths and national needs. Again, to work with universities in order to focus the research and education agenda on African needs. The dialogue between universities and communities needs to be strengthened. It was felt that health education is strongly focused on western standards and that there is over-reliance in the sector on expensive outside skills for projects and so forth.

There is also a need to focus on Africa's comparative strengths in areas such as tourism, mineral resources and fishing. Academic research has to focus on application rather than being too theoretical.

The sixth point is education reform that will respond to the demands of the knowledge economy. This is important because Africa faces enormous challenges in this area. For example, less than 25% complete junior secondary school; less that 15% completes senior secondary school; employers find quality and relevance of graduates at secondary level to be unsatisfactory.

The fact that drivers of change are now globalisation, knowledge and technological change has placed an imperative on a need for life-long learning. This should be coupled with curricular and assessment reform. The skills demand is changing. We now require more analytical capacity, critical reasoning, problem solving, communication and abilities to use new media/technologies.

Active pedagogies, local languages and contextualised learning were seen as important learning areas. The concept of life-long learning should be promoted with incentives for continuous education offered.

The seventh point is ICT which is seen as a fundamental infrastructure and enabler of the knowledge economy. The conference noted that over the past ten to fifteen years progress in this area has been disappointing. The binding constraint that was noted is the critical mass of software engineers. However, the Free Open Source Software (FOSS) is presenting us with opportunities to create these skills amongst our youth.

The question I want to raise is what are the ways to use ICT to foster greater transparency and accountability? How can we use ICT to foster the short route of accountability? The conference resolved that rural access to ICT, including ICT literacy, needs to be addressed. There are also emerging possibilities for cellphones which are largely untapped in the delivery of services.

The eighth point that was raised at the conference was the importance of an open development process. Around the world communities of practice are forming such as open educational resources. Open source software is also another area which points to the need to collaborate as much as possible within networks, countries and regionally. Collaboration and cultural, and awareness were identified as key skills. All this should be solidified through aggregation of talent important to Africa.

The ninth point is building on the know-how of others. This can be achieved through international partnerships for technology transfer and role of FDI. Important here is the adaptation and adoption of technologies to local environment.

Conclusion
The last point that emerged from the conference is the important role that strategic monitoring and evaluation plays in the knowledge economy. With a dynamic knowledge base we constantly need to be informed about the growth of the knowledge economy through key indicators in various sectors. This should be thought of as learning by doing exercise that is linked to continuous M&E framework.

A culture of learning and risk management should be created as opposed to the culture of apportion blame. This is an important cultural shift that needs to happen so that people are not fearful to try new things.

We have also established a Knowledge Economy Index (www.worldbank.org/wbi) for those who want to read more on this.
Realising our dreams for a competent and developmental public service

I would like to start by reflecting on how far we have come because these days we tend to be too critical of the performance of the public sector. We sometimes neglect to reflect on how far the public sector has come and to recognise what the challenges were. Important here were the reconstructions of the state where new provinces, municipalities and departments were established. Fragmented administrative entities were integrated, and these include “homelands”, racially based departments and so forth.

A representative civil service was built with non-racial and poor policies formulated. Furthermore, a new ethos of accountability was developed and training and capacity building prioritised. A lot of the legislative policy that was implemented after 1994 was directed towards addressing these challenges.

There have been notable achievements of the transition. We now have a representative public sector. We also have a legitimate state and are no people who are claiming that the state is illegitimate. In addition, we have an integrated public service without homelands and racially based departments. Generally speaking we have strong policies, fiscal stability and improved service delivery in areas such as water and electricity.

Challenges still facing us

However, there are many challenges that continue to face us. The first one is inter-governmental relations coordination. Unfortunately we have a tension in our Constitution. It speaks of a unitary state, but the way we have configured our provinces and municipalities shows an element of federalism. There are also still shortfalls in service delivery which I will discuss later.

The biggest challenge is that we still have widespread poverty in the country. For a country that has great aspirations, this is a damning judgement of our performance. We also have the frustration and anger of the people who say the progress we have had has been development for some and not for all, and that we are promoting an elite form of development. This is due to our inability to provide services to the majority of the people.

I would like to be a little bit controversial here and reflect back on where some of the things that went wrong. When we started off, we had the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the discourse of people’s development. We then got Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) and the managerialist state. One of the pitfalls of adopting international best practice is that managerialism started creeping into our policies.

Some of our confusion came from that. I think we should not dwell on it but should just state that it was a learning process and we are moving on. That is why the notion of a developmental state, to me, takes us back to where we started. We must really be careful about adopting international best practice.

If you look at the Constitution you notice that all that we need to do for citizens is stipulated. Section 195 of the Constitution states that “people’s needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”. It also states that public administration must be accountable to the citizenry. It further states that transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. The above principles apply to administration in every sphere of government; organs of public enterprises.

Then we moved on to the next document that had confused signals, the Batho Pele White Paper. This was a very good policy, but in the whole Batho Pele idea there were also some confusing messages.

The notion of the citizen as customer is one area. At one level this is an appealing concept because you get good service in the private sector and the customer must be able to get value for money. We were talking in these very managerialist terms, but the public sector is not the private sector.

The relationship between citizen and civil servant can never be the same as that between a customer and an entrepreneur. The citizen has no choice and cannot take his or her custom elsewhere. A citizen’s tax places him/her in an effective employer/employee relationship with officials.

When entrepreneurs consult with consumers their objective is to understand the market better and maximise profits. This is very different from a form of participation with citizens. Companies with poor service become bankrupt and departments that do not perform do not close down, they just perform badly and citizens suffer as a result.

We have all heard about the question of failure to deliver and I want to briefly look at some of the factors around this. One of these is the lack of professionalism. There is a sort of “I don’t care” attitude. Leadership, especially in mid-management, is another important factor. Mid-management has been problematic. They are the ones that have to ensure execution of policies.

Skills shortages and capacity to delivery is another problem area. We do have a lot of capacity, but there are areas where there are not enough skills such as in health and education. We are now trying to recruit outside the country in order to make up for these deficits. However, I think sometimes the skills shortage and the capacity to deliver are sometimes an excuse for something else, such as lack of commitment and focus.

There are also problems of corruption and accountability. How accountable are civil servants? There is really not much to punish underperformance below senior management levels in the public service. This is an issue we need to look at.

Lastly, there is a lack of urgency. Poor people want immediacy in the delivery of services. The sense of urgency is something that has to be infused in the activities of the public service. An area that I
think needs considerable attention is local government.

We talk about the public sector generally being all three spheres of government, but in practice we tend to focus on national and provincial. The primary delivery of services is done by local government and they are in serious difficulty. This is because the co-ordination with national and provincial government is not effective.

There is a serious lack of skills and capacity facing local government. There is also a massive failure of frontline service delivery which to my mind is self-evident. Furthermore, there is poor separation of powers, where you see politicians getting involved in the business of administration and the administrators getting involved in the business of politics. In addition, there is an issue of the political promises and a crisis of expectations. Again political promises are made which are beyond the competence of the local authority to deliver. This leads to severe loss of public trust. The impact of this spreads to other levels of government.

A crisis of expectations and a citizens’ compact

Public expectations of the dividends which democracy would bring were high. These expectations were fuelled by the promises of those running for public office. Members of the community consequently expect the public service to deliver on these promises.

In a democracy, “good governance” implies efficient and effective management of the state, but it also implies a strong partnership between the government and all the citizens of the country. Building and retaining public trust and confidence is every bit as important as managing the financial and physical assets of the state. Without the cooperation and support of the public, no state entity can hope to succeed.

Why do people resort to protest when there is a politically legiti-
Towards the realisation of a dream

The question that comes up is whether the provinces should be realigned. There has been a debate circulated at senior level of government asking whether we should reconfigure the provinces. Do we have too many provinces? It is a question for me because I do not know if this will lead to the results that we are looking for. I am not sure whether the transaction costs of bringing this change will be worth the benefits that will come out of it.

There is also a move towards the Single Public Service. There are some elements of this that appeal to me. One of these is standardising conditions of service. I always find it absurd that a municipal manager can get paid a salary close to that of the President because they have influence over their councils. Accountability should be retained at the local levels.

Improvement in inter-governmental relations is still a key problem for us. This includes the alignment of inter-governmental policies. Some important steps have been taken here, but I think more needs to be done on this.

I seriously think that we need local government reform. We need a serious reconfiguration of local politics. The accountability of local politicians to my mind is very limited. Most local authority politicians report upwards and not downwards. They report to people who put them on party lists. We have to make local politicians accountable to local communities. Local accountability should be increased also at the level of local officials.

When dealing with local authorities, we have to recognise that one size does not fit all. Some local authorities, to my mind, should only be assigned certain responsibilities. We do not have to change the Constitution to bring that about. Interventions such as Project Consolidate are very important. Local authorities cannot be left to get on with it because in the public mind they reflect a failure of government as a whole.

In realising the dream, there has to be a development of a leadership cadre. This is happening, but I think we need to do a lot more in grooming new leaders. Leadership should not just come through vacancies, but should be trained within the public service. When you look at areas that are performing well, it is not because they have resources, but have quality leaders.

There has to be skills training in areas such as auditing and accounting. We need to improve accountability of leadership (especially at middle-management). The ethos of professionalism is something that we need to work on. I think what we need to do is to look at departments that are functioning well and analyse those best practices. We have too often looked at international models of best practices and tried to implement them only to find that they did not fit.

We also need to have accountability for state actions. We can do this by setting realistic delivery targets and ensuring that they are met. When we set targets we must seriously think about impediments. We have to ensure that budgeting is linked to this process and that auditing standards are met. We also need to ensure that civil servants are accountable to political leaders and that political leaders are accountable to their constituencies.

We also need to improve accountability and stamp out corruption by strengthening and implementing legislation. Systems and audit procedures need to be tightened. We need to develop a culture of outrage from within the public service when there is misconduct and underperformance. This should be coupled with positive encouragement to public service integrity where it shows its head. We need to reward a job well done. Whistle blowers need to be protected when they provide alerts to acts of corruption.

On the transparency in policy decisions, we need to know what the government is doing. At a certain level, I think we do this well. Even if this is the case, we still need to provide full and accurate information, even on failures. People can accept unhappy truths but not happy lies. We also have to provide details on the costs of projects and monies spent.

Improving communication is one of the ways of building trust between citizens and government. The public must be informed on all policies which affect them, through appropriate media. Radio is one of the effective media for that. In addition, feedback on action should be provided and false promises should be avoided. Moreover, public officials should be visible in poor communities. They should not feel abandoned.

Civil servants should know that they are not civil masters. They should ensure that the public is treated with respect and courtesy. Staff should be trained on Batho Pele. Their actions should be timeous when delivering services. In addition, administrative systems should be made easy and expected service standards should be known by the public and civil servants. These communities should also ensure that redress measures are in place and that action is seen to be taken.

In terms of administration, we need to go back to basics in administration. There must be an emphasis on effective routines, accountability at every level of service, constant monitoring of standards, and a sense of professionalism at all levels. I want to restate that we should treat international best practice with caution.

Conclusion

Our public service is maturing but this will still take time. Realistic targets should be set. I really do not think this is difficult. Our departments should develop the culture of a learning institution. We should not dwell on mistakes, rather we should come up with new ideas to solve these problems. Most importantly, we should emphasise the positive.
Managing performance in the Botswana public service

In Botswana the performance management system has played a significant part in the reform. In this performance management system, there is a focus on leadership at four levels. The first level is parliament which holds government accountable for results. It also gives feedback to government on performance and provides resources. The second level is the cabinet which provides mandate and direction; approves the reform agenda; monitors results; and gives feedback to parliament and the public.

The third level is the PSP which is secretary to the cabinet, advisor to the president and head of public service. It drives and leads the reform agenda in the public service and is accountable for results. The PSP also holds all permanent secretaries accountable. Lastly, it provides regular updates to the minister, cabinet, vice president and HE.

The last level of leadership is permanent secretaries who head the ministry and advise the minister. They also drive and lead the reform agenda in the ministry. They are accountable for results whether positive or negative. The PSP holds all staff of the ministry accountable and provides regular updates to the minister. All these levels have to make sure that Botswana’s development 2016 vision is realised and the accompanied values. The Botswana 2016 vision is to create a society that is “Safe and secure; compassionate, just and caring; open, democratic and accountable; united and proud; moral and tolerant; productive, prosperous and innovative; educated and informed.” The guiding values for Botswana’s public service are:

• Regard for public interest;
• Neutrality;
• Accountability;
• Transparency;
• Freedom from corruption;
• Continuity;
• Duty to be informed; and
• Due diligence.

The challenge facing leadership is how to translate the vision, values and strategy into employee’s everyday actions, writes Eric Molale, Cabinet Secretary, Botswana.

We seek to translate strategy to operational terms by using the balanced scorecard which links vision and strategy to employees’ everyday actions

Botswana public service

In Botswana we have the Central Government which has around 58,000 employees. We also have the Teaching Service Ministry which has 24,000 employees and the Local Government Services which has about 18,044. Given the small number of the population in Botswana, we believe that we are doing well in terms of balancing our public service employment ratio to the overall population.

During the period between late 1990 to early 2006 Botswana experienced a decline in productivity in the public service. This placed major challenges on government. The political leadership was under pressure to deliver its obligations prompted by the general outcry by the public due to poor service delivery, poor implementation of projects, low productivity levels, poor performance and resource constraints.

There were a number of accusations directed at government. Government was seen as insensitive to public demands and the challenges of the nation. There was lack of performance, accountability and discipline. So transformation was necessary in order to deal with the crisis. We had to start asking critical questions in our attempts to transform. We had to ask, who transforms? What is used for transformation? And what is being transformed? The answer to the last question was the public service.

Before we moved on our transformation strategy, we embarked on a customer satisfaction survey which rated our performance at 25% with the minimum international benchmark for public service performance being 75%. We are now saying that for us to move from 25% to 75% we need to move to not just continuous improvement, but breakthrough improvement. This is why we have placed such an important emphasis on performance management in the public service.

Botswana is a country that is 40 years old. In 1966 we had 6km of our road tarred, now we have 6,367 km of our roads tarred. We also had six secondary schools and now we have 233. Our per capita income was P60 in 1966 which made Botswana one of the 25 poorest countries in the world. We now have a per capita income of P18,340. From 1966 to the present, we have had an average and GDP growth of 4.8%. Credit for this growth must go to the public service.

We therefore have a strategy-focused organisation as a vehicle for reform. In this strategy, we first mobilise change through executive leadership. Secondly, we seek to translate strategy to operational terms. The third aspect of the strategy is to align the organisation to the strategy. The fourth area is to motivate the public service to make strategy everyone’s job.

Lastly, government has to make the strategy a continuous process through resource management, key process management, learning
and control. It is therefore critical to make a clear connection between the bigger picture, in South Africa’s case Batho Pele, and day-to-day operations of public servants.

Challenges and lessons
All this transformation of the public service requires changes in mindsets and attitudes, and yet mindset transformation is not easy in the light of entrenched paradigms. If people still come to the public service for salaries and not to serve the public, then such behaviours and attitudes need to change. Hardened attitude is not suitable for the public service. We also have challenges of scare resources. However, we can still deliver our services to meet vision 2016 if we have changes in mindset and are willing to work with scarce resources. As public servants, we have to have respect for leadership and understand why they are in the positions they hold.

Another challenge is that through all this we are still not clear if the parliament is actually holding the public executive accountable. The system is also exposed to risks of non-delivery as it is difficult to ensure commitment at all levels. The size of the public service also makes it tough to roll-out the strategy to the entire system and the same reason makes measuring quite difficult.

Amongst the lessons learnt, we believe that there must be compelling reasons for change and reform must be relevant and appropriate. Also important is that reforms from the previous period that add value need to be retained and integrated into the new reforms.

Since change brings chaos which affects everybody and creates uncertainty, the chaos has to be managed. To do this one needs to focus on the whole, not parts of the process. The whole here is the ultimate result of reform.

We noticed that there is a need for leadership to be committed to the reform. The values need to be internalised and applied for them to be practiced in the actual delivery of services. There also has to be a holistic approach to the introduction of reforms.

Through this reform process we realised that benchmarking, harmonisation with requisite legislation and continuous monitoring and evaluation are becoming more critical.

Conclusion
Transformation for growth and development is about behaviours and relationships. We need to agree on the values that we believe will take us forward and what the national programmes are that will help us take proper direction. We have to match the behaviours with the programmes. It is at this level where we say we need to change.

What I have done is illustrate what the state of affairs was before the reform where there was no regard for values and where the public service thought more about themselves. For us to reform, we needed to know what we are doing with our values and how these are helping us drive the national agenda, and whether both the values and the national agenda are appreciated by public servants and the public.

Rethinking the public service performance framework

Kuben Naidoo, National Treasury, suggests some improvements to the public service performance framework that would in turn improve service delivery

Our budget reform agenda since 1996 has been shaped by a range of “beliefs”. One of these is that we believe we need to let managers manage, but hold them accountable through reporting. If we force departments to report on outputs and service delivery information, then parliament, the media and public can hold them accountable. We also believe that by aligning the planning, budgeting and policy nexus, we will get better service delivery within budget.

At Treasury we have basic assumptions about public service delivery. We assume that, except for certain narrow areas, public service delivery is either poor in general or, at best, is poor for the bottom half of the income spectrum. It is also our assumption that we score low on the value for money goal and that something is not working right – which essentially means we have a problem. In this light we need to ask, what could be wrong? In addressing this question I explore four hypotheses and solutions to each, a format that will structure this input.

Hypothesis one
This hypothesis states that we have not really let managers manage. This is because financial controls are too tight to allow for flexibility and innovation. Also a hindrance is that personnel controls are rigid and centralised. The procurement framework is not designed for performance, speed or effectiveness. It is rather designed to reduce corruption and advance Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). As a result, managers are asked to deliver, but have little control over financial and human resources and procurement rules are an obstacle. Also worth mentioning here is that the planning regime is a hindrance, not an aid to rational departmental processes.

I want to propose a few solutions to these obstacles. I suggest there is a need to loosen financial controls slightly. We should also lobby hard for looser personnel controls. The procurement framework should be revisited. We should also put in practice the spirit of the PFMA and really let managers manage but hold them account-
We assume that, except for certain narrow areas, public service delivery is either poor in general or, at best, is poor for the bottom half of the income spectrum.

Hypothesis two
The second hypothesis states that sufficient flexibility exists, but there is no real performance information published. The incentive is to avoid this. Also measurable objectives are neither measurable nor objective. I also note that performance information framework, and sound implementation, is key to improving service delivery.

I also want to suggest a few solutions to these. We need to put in place a tighter performance information framework. We also need to work with departments in order to select appropriate output indicators and develop time-series on performance trends. Internal and external think-tank capacity has to be built in order to analyse government’s performance. We also need to work with legislatures to get better use of information.

Hypothesis three
According to this hypothesis, the lack of performance is not the problem. The problem is the accountability cycle. The media and parliament are too unsophisticated to use information properly. Members of Parliament are scared to challenge ministers, possibly due to the proportional representation list system and opportunities for promotion, and also because MPs serve the party, not the electorate. Alternatively, they simply do not have the capacity or support to hold departments and ministers to account.

As a solution to this, we must put less effort into increasing political accountability from legislatures. We must lobby for political accountability at a decentralised level (in schools, policing etc). We can also use market accountability where possible such as in public transport and some areas of education. We have to rethink powers and functions and try to strengthen democracy and institutions at local government level.

Hypothesis four
The fourth hypothesis states that it is the performance information framework that is actually broken. The textbook says we must focus on outputs because that is what departments do, it can be used to hold them accountable, timelines are short enough and so forth.

Textbooks say you cannot use outcomes or impacts since they are too far removed, too long timelines, too many forces contributing and so forth.

But the public does not really care about outputs, so public accountability does not work. There are also too many outputs to focus our minds on. The public cares about outcomes, and there are fewer to focus minds on. Outputs are actually harder to measure objectively whereas outcomes/impacts can be measured a bit more easily through surveys.

So we at National Treasury should change focus completely to look at outcomes/impacts. Treasury and the Presidency should have just about 20 to 30 high-level outcomes that we track ruthlessly. Departments, on the other hand, still need information on outputs to be managed. Parliament can align their focus with what the public cares about. This can be used to hold departments to account. However, all this leaves unanswered questions in the “textbook”. Timelines are still too long with multiple forces playing a role.

A public service reform failure?
We spend 12% of GDP on the public service. The international average ranges from 5% in developing countries to 10% in developed countries. However, it is not a numbers problem, we are also slightly understaffed by international standards. Most civil servants think that they are underpaid, relative to the market. We are also witnessing a huge management failure. This is evidenced by the over-centralisation of personnel management; no real performance management system; it is too difficult to get rid of poor performers; and the public service is driven by rules, not by the “need to deliver”.

Conclusion
I want to conclude by providing a critical framework for thinking about accountability. This framework has three pillars – market accountability, political accountability and bureaucratic accountability. On market accountability, we need to use prices to signal supply and demand. Under this mode of accountability, people vote with their cash and good performers benefit whilst poor performers lose. Furthermore, markets can be simulated in the provision of certain goods where there is market failure.

Political accountability, on the other hand, uses voice and representation to improve performance. Examples here are school governing bodies, community police forums and so forth. Lastly, an important pillar of this framework is bureaucratic accountability. Here, management systems are strengthened; performance incentives improved together with management information. I believe that if we get this framework right, we can improve in our delivery of services to the public.
The need for strategic leadership and setting the state on a competitiveness path

Instead of going into theory, I will touch on a few practical issues that I think may be of interest to the public service. I want to write first of all about a mind-set. A mind-set of what you bring to the table. I will then discuss the public service environment against some of the initiatives in the private sector and parasatalis that I have been involved in, building service delivery and people that will provide such a service.

An aspect that I want to talk about with regard to mind-sets is that we keep accepting status quos as the only norm that is available to us in our environment. We have got to change our mind-set if we want to improve service delivery. We should not get caught up in historical mind-sets that says "this is how it has to be".

What I want to do is run through a few initiatives that I think are important. The first issue relates to the need for a strategic plan. If you do not have a strategic plan that sets everything in motion, you are not going anywhere. There is also a need for a business plan that takes from the strategy and looks at implementation.

**Plans, branding and people**

The biggest failure that we have got in South Africa is that we often have plans but we do not know how to implement them. We have got to get past that. I think the next decade is going to see changes in implementation. We will have to forget about creating fancy plans. We always see a problem which is usually the lack of service delivery and tend to draft new plans. It is time that we took what we have got and implemented it. We also need governance in place, particularly if we are the custodians of the public service arena.

Now that I have painted this picture, I want to deal with a very important aspect which is product branding. The private sector might be taking people out of the public service mainly because they offer things that are not offered in the public service. So the problem of key skills leaving the public service becomes crucial. If you are working in the public service, think of your own area as a company. Are you proud to work there? Do you have a brand that is marketable?

Product branding involves product features, quality and performance, value and price, innovation and design, and image and prestige. These are the things that you look out for in a company or the brand that you are selling to the people we are delivering services to.

So a brand, even in the public service, is important.

The people is the area I would like to focus on here because we forget about that component. This kind of focus is important because it keeps people motivated in their delivery of services. The first important factor here is compensation and benefits. You do not have to be the highest payer, but you have to be able to pay compensation and benefits that are going to be amenable to the job that is being done. If people are unhappy, they are always going to look for greener pastures.

The work environment is also important. Are people or staff happy when going to work? These are basic things and are not difficult at all. They are not difficult theories that you find difficulty in implementing. Also important is work-life balance. Activities outside of the work environment are important for the employer to know because there is a need for a sense of balance. Linked to this is a positive cultural environment in the workplace.

The product strength is an important aspect of this and is closely linked to branding. Are employees proud enough to wear a t-shirt that says, "work for the following department"? Or do they hide it because they are not proud to represent their department.

These are the basic things that make it important in order to have a group of people that are going to deliver a service. Unless you have these components, a lot of things are not going to work for the public service.

**Leadership**

In the area of leadership, at Sanlam we had to look at how we recruit people and where we recruited from. When recruited, we made sure that the first day an employee arrived to assume job responsibilities an orientation session with the Chief Executive Officer of the company was held (in the case of the public service it would be a Minister, Deputy Minister or the Director-General, it should be nothing less). The new employee would have a one- to two-hour session on the first working day of every month.

We also had a retention strategy where we continually held interviews with a number of employees in order to establish important issues in their lives that might impact positively or negatively on their jobs. When doing this, we identified succession planning as an important part of the retention strategy. The succession plan guides you on what will happen when someone in the company leaves. It provides you with answers on what will happen when your leadership moves on. If you do not have succession planning you are going nowhere in your people management.

Also important in developing leadership are training and development plans. The problem is when you go to companies to conduct development audits you find that there are training gaps.
There also has to be a programme for high-flyers. In our company we have 10 000 employees. Out of the 10 000 we identified the top 200 high-flyers from up to junior level - mainly people with potential for the future. We gave them special training programmes. These were the people that we identified as the future leaders of the company. At the end of the day this created an environment where our service levels to our clients went up by 20% to 30% within two years because of the basics that we started doing right.

Creativity

There is a great need for creativity in organisations. Often we are given an excuse that in government there is not scope to move because of the serious rules and regulations. I believe that you can be creative in an environment that has rules and regulations.

For example, at Sanlam we had a manager who had a journalistic background, but her wish was to become a sales manager. So once a month we gave her time off to go and sit in the sales department so that she could learn more about sales. She eventually studied sales and pursued her career in the sales environment. Although this cost a bit of time, it did not cost any money, just creativity in allowing business to improve. These are the kinds of initiatives one has got to look at.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by responding to a question - where to now? I think Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are not used adequately. The public service needs to expose itself to the workings of the private sector and the private sector, in turn, must get more understanding of what the government sector is like.

We at Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) can assist because we have 37 business organisations that are our members operating across all sectors. You must first identify who you do business with in your environment and then come to us so we can assist in improving the relationship which will assist in the improvement of the delivery of services. As private sector and government we can work together in improving service delivery rather than focusing on business deals.

We need to “think out of the box” and I think leadership is a key element of this. If there are not leaders at various levels that are going to take these aspects and run with them, then it will be difficult because teams will not be able to deliver services effectively.

Building financial managerial competence in support of service delivery

Dr Iraj Abedian, Pan African Capital Holdings, believes that financial management is central to good public service delivery.

Financial management and good public service delivery are inseparable. In some departments such links are stronger than in others. The issue here is the sustainability of quality service delivery. After ten years of democracy, I feel we can no longer talk about access, rather the emphasis has to be on quality service delivery. Unless we bring the issue of quality to the forefront we are not serving the cause of development. In fact a major part of the problem in our current public service is that the issue of quality is omitted.

If you want to talk about sustainability, then you will have to talk about quality and appropriate financial modeling coupled with non-financial skills. It is not a question of either-or and one is not more important than the other.

What is important at this stage is that we have a damaged reputation to repair and a branding problem to solve. Public service delivery is not a once-off game, but a repetitive one. When you are in a repetitive game, trust and fulfilling your promises is absolutely critical. In a once-off game you can cheat and get away with it. In a repetitive game if you try to cheat you are fooling yourself and nobody else.

The public service is continually undermining itself by telling the public something that the public knows better. Public sector managers often speak about service delivery as if they are the judge of how good these services are! Commonly they boast about ‘quality service delivery’ whereas the citizens know better, their experience is very different from what has been boasted about. As a result we are on the verge of losing the trust that we have built up with the public.

Importantly, in the public service you do not have a narrow client base, but a multi-layered client base with varied expectations. The public service has to build and sustain trust across these layers. Financial management is critical in this regard. There are some systemic issues that the Department of Finance, Department of Public Service and Administration and National Treasury have just simply ignored. We have got PFMA and the New Public Service Act which require different skills. I think in some departments the skill mix is there, if not we have to put it in place. We have got to get the balance between the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ skills right. Financial management is about the latter. We should not try to bring colonialism, apartheid or anything abstract justification into the debate about hard competencies required to deliver – it is about skills, and nothing else, you either have them or you don’t.

Towards building our supply of hard skills for the new public sector, we have not done enough to get our tertiary institutions to come...
to the party. We need to know how many curriculum changes have been made to meet the needs of the changing public service, particularly in response to PFMA and other systems. My suspicion is that by and large our institutions have not done much in this regard. We have to bring the whole spectrum of service providers for building the skills capacity for populating our public service with financial competencies required for quality service delivery. We have not done this; we have left it to the market. We have introduced SETAs and PSETAs that are an absolute failure, with massive costs to the economy and massive costs to our reputation. Such costs have also entailed a considerable loss of social trust within the society.

PFMA adopted the motto which says, "let the managers manage", championed by the National Treasury. The same National Treasury does not let the managers manage. There is no performance budgeting system in place. We still have unproductive public expenditure which is not compliance with the PFMA. Some of the National Treasury's own practices are out of line with the PFMA. Their implicit condoning of many departmental plans with regard to 'measurable objectives' within the strategic business plans is a case in point.

It is important to appreciate and acknowledge that improvement is not a once-off thing where you go to a training course or an academy- rather it is about long-term planning. That is how a company or a business would seek to improve its capacity. We have not done this for our public sector. We just talk about it but do not do anything to action it.

The system of appointing directors-general is a short-term one as their contracts are limited to five years. If the minister goes, then they go with him or her. If this is the case, who is going to take care of the long-term needs of the department?

Line managers do not see themselves as responsible for financial management. There is always a tension - which I do not intend exploring here - between the line managers and financial managers within departments. This is unhealthy and not conducive to operational efficiency. As a matter of fact, operational efficiency is seldom prioritized. I think every department must have a "chief operations officer", someone with at least 10 years of experience of running organization in a complex environment.

Currently, most structures in government are ill-defined and left ad hoc. Usually when there is a good operation it is because there is a good chief director who does things on an ad hoc basis not on a systemic, organised and integrated basis.

We are always talking about "best practices". Continuously we hear that a DG or a minister going overseas to learn about best practices, but when they come to the office they perform they protect their "old practices"!

**Conclusion**

We need to champion a long-term vision of skills development. We also need to explore the implementation of sound practices not just best practices. Sound financial management is in the final analysis important for quality service delivery. If we can improve this area from inside government (which I doubt we can), then let us invest in it, or we can effectively get change management advisers to assist based on their performance. The latter is the cheapest way of doing it.

We need to treat the comprehensive human resource development seriously, by this I mean from tertiary institutions to in-house training on PFMA etc. We have got to do things the right way.
I want to focus this paper on four important issues: the importance of service delivery to the poor; the evaluation of progress since 1994; factors that affect delivery; and some insights on the way forward. I come from a poor non-governmental organisation which every year seeks to make sense of the reports that are published by the National Treasury and other government departments.

We also conduct research at public institutions. The most extensive has been our research at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, and it is this case study that I want to reflect on from the perspective of the poor.

The supply of public services is important to poor people because markets often fail, especially in societies with high-income inequalities. Secondly, the pricing of goods by markets is based on cost recovery principles which often make goods and services inaccessible to the poor. From this point of view, the provision of public service goods is vital for economic and social development. If we only rely on the market to provide some of these goods the poor will be excluded.

When we are talking about the poor, generally we are talking about the people that tend to be voiceless and disempowered. The public servant on the other hand is an agent of change and has to have empathy for the poor. These are the values that underpin the principles of service delivery captured in the Batho Pele principles.

The poor depend on the state for official documents such as IDs which are crucial for participation in the economy and for accessing public services. They also depend on the state for income, especially grants which provide a buffer against poverty and play a very important development role.

In addition, human capital development (healthcare and education) provided by the state is important in providing healthy and skilled individuals, and productivity to society as a whole.

Infrastructure and basic services are also crucial, particularly to poor women. For example, the provision of piped water is important in releasing time for women to participate in productive work in the economy.

Have we, in 13 years down the line, improved our delivery of services to the poor? Overall we can say that the state has substantially redistributed incomes, assets, capabilities and basic services in the last 13 years. However, it has done so in the context of enormous backlogs and deficits where lots of people still lack basic services such as water, electricity and housing.

We have set up broad policy frameworks such as Batho Pele and zero-based budgeting (which allows for proper planning, prioritisation and execution). However, the question is, how far have these frameworks galvanised the public service onto a new path?

Another achievement that we should not underestimate is the fact that we have overcome apartheid balkanisation by integrating what was a fragmented state. However, I would argue that during the 1990s public service reform focused more on downsizing; minimal transfer of power to managers; and focused more on efficiency and less on equity. I will come back to this point as the paper unfolds.

In some cases the slow pace of delivery can be attributed to blind faith in markets and market solutions. I am not suggesting that we need an inefficient public service, but in trying to make the public service efficient, we have copied models that are suitable for market institutions and organisations such as privatisation, outsourcing and corporatisation.

In some respects we have closed public institutions, such as the public works department in Limpopo and some state institutions in the Eastern Cape, which were important in providing public services. We did this because we believed that when the state retreats, the private sector immediately fills the gap. This belief has not been fulfilled in practice.

Where we have adopted cost effective tariffs in services such as water and electricity, the progress we have made in providing these services has been eroded because of the disconnection as people cannot afford to pay for these services. In some respects I think our policies are really about trying to get the markets to work. The question is, will the market work or will the market continue to fail? This seems to be our policy with regards to housing. In providing housing to the poor, government provides the subsidy and lets the private sector build the actual houses.

Where there is a failure in the market is the missing middle. The government provides subsidies to people earning R3 000 per month and the private sector, in terms of financing, only provides assistance to people earning about R7 000 per month. So the missing middle is made up of people earning between R3 000 and R7 000 per month who have no real chance of getting a house.

I think the austerity measures of the 1990s have also resulted in cuts in budgets and public service personnel. The public service, through various mechanisms like retrenchments or voluntary service packages, lost about 100 000 jobs. We are currently paying for adopting that approach.

Research at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital has shown that poor alignment between provincial and institutional level is hampering service delivery, writes Oupa Bodibe, Naledi.
The points I am making here centre around the question: Do we have development planning in the state or are we trying to feed our planning to a very tight deficit reduction strategy? A strategy which I think has worsened the crisis of apartheid public service in key areas of service delivery. Where we should have followed development indicators such as teacher-learner ratios and the need to reduce infant mortality, our policies were hamstrung by the need to reduce deficit.

Our work at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital has shown that there is poor alignment between provincial and institutional level. The point that we want to raise is that it is a microcosm of failure of management in public institutions. We have not properly realigned the allocation of resources, planning and ensuring that we build capacity at the institutional level. As a result you find that the management is dysfunctional, there is a silo management and doctors, nurses and support staff do not speak to each other. As a result, health outcomes are bad and discipline and performance are not properly managed.

It is ironic for an institution such as ours linked to the labour movement to support the demand for the strengthening of management because if you represent workers you support weak management. From a service delivery point of view, weak management is dysfunctional to the service delivery mandate.

Conclusion
To conclude, I think we are in a new era. More resources are available to accelerate delivery. We now have a belief that the state has to be central in driving transformation and that the capacity of the state to fulfill that mandate has to be built. We are in a period where there is an acknowledgement that the apartheid state may have been big on bureaucracy, but chronically deficient in service delivery. This is an opportunity that we have to use. AsgiSA’s targets of halving poverty and unemployment have serious policy and capacity implications for the state. If we do not change the institutions of the state, their managerial capacity, planning capacity and ability to execute plans, the AsgiSA targets will not be achieved. However, at the same time we need to align AsgiSA targets to the actual allocation of resources. I think there is still a mismatch. On the one hand you have AsgiSA, but the ship is still continuing without critical changes.

Public service transformation has to move now to a service delivery perspective. For the first 10 years we focused on trying to get the institutions of the state right by getting away from the fragmentation of the apartheid state. We did not focus more on how we would align the public service if we were confronted with developmental mandates in a new society. If we were to re-evaluate the public service we would need to think about whether it is capable of fulfilling and developmental mandates as it is currently structured. We also need to review how we have sequenced reforms. Let us take, for example, the White Paper on Health. It is brilliant in terms of trying to move to a primary healthcare system, but at the same time as we are adopting it, there was no resource plan. So if you go to any clinic today there is not adequate staff and medication. The district health system is dysfunctional from the perspective of moving towards an effective primary healthcare system.
A reflection on the State’s developmental targets and citizen participation

In our second decade of democracy, we are faced with consolidating the gains we have made since 1994 and accelerating the pace of economic growth, eradication of poverty, creation of jobs and service delivery in general.

Democracy and development
As we reflect on the state’s progress towards achieving its developmental targets, the context is the assessment of the public service’s role. The public service is the driving force behind the implementation of public policy and we need to continuously interrogate how we fulfil this role, and evaluate our effectiveness. We need to engage in rigorous discussions about how we perform our duties within our policy frameworks.

The developmental targets of the state are based on the government’s electoral mandate it received in 2004. The current approach of government is to develop the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which contains the state’s developmental targets. The MTSF is the tool to bring coherence to the state’s developmental agenda. In brief, this developmental agenda includes the growing of the economy, eradicating poverty, meeting basic needs, nation building, deepening democracy and creating a better world and better Africa.

Development and democracy are intertwined and are central to the Constitution and the conceptual framework within which the state operates. There is consensus that development cannot be left to the vagaries of the market, but must be guaranteed by a strong developmental state acting in concert with society united around a coherent development vision.

Nature of developmental state
The key tasks of the developmental state are to achieve higher rates of growth and development to address the challenges of eradication of poverty, underdevelopment and inequality. It must have the strategic capacity to mobilise society around the developmental agenda; technical and organisational capacity to bring about fundamental change; and the ability to consolidate our gains.

Developmental targets
South Africa is a signatory to the 2000 Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The developmental targets of government are encapsulated in our strategic agenda. In the main, they include programmes to eradicate poverty, underdevelopment, promote equity and ensure rapid inclusive development.

In this sense, the role of government should be to strive towards effective and transparent provision of services forged in a national partnership to build a better life for all. How ought the public service function to achieve this goal? How do we, as citizens, play an evident and substantial role in the support and aspirations of government?

As President Thabo Mbeki said in the 2007 State of the Nation Address, “Working together, we can and shall succeed in meeting the common objective we have set ourselves as a nation.” This includes building a caring society, a growing economy that benefits all, and better services to the public. In specific detail, our development path has in place the following initiatives:

- Accelerated economic growth as a major strategic objective;
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive anti-poverty programme;
- Improving the organisation and capacity of the state at all levels; and

In essence, the fundamental feature of the South African developmental state is that it is people-oriented and endeavours to meet the socio-economic needs of our people as enshrined in our Constitution.

Status of delivery on developmental targets
The South African developmental state is on course to reach not only the UN Development Goals but, as it was stated by Minister Mufamadi at the launch of the Policy Process on the System of Provincial and Local Government on the 31 July 2007: “We are on course to meet our own national targets, which happen to be more ambitious than the global targets (MDGs). We have said that by the end of 2009 there shall be an end to the use of the abominable bucket system as a means of sanitation, that there shall be universal access to clean running water by 2008, decent and safe sanitation by 2010 and electricity for all by 2012.

“Between February 2005 and November 2006, 110 000 sanitation bucket systems had been eradicated. Access to free basic water by poor and indigent households increased from 55% in 2004 to 85% in 2006. The national total number of households with access to water between 2004 and 2005 increased by 540 000 households.”

On economic growth and stability:
- The growth target is 4.5% by 2009 and 6% by 2010-2014, average growth since 2004 has been 4.5%;
- The target for GDP growth of 3% and current GDP growth is 4.5%, exceeding the population growth by 3%;
- The target for growth fixed capital formation (GFCF) has been set at 25% by 2014. The current rate of GFCF is 19.2% and of export as a percentage of GDP has increased to 30.8%;
- Government’s target is to limit debt and retain inflation at a low level of between 3% to 6%. Government debt is now 33.5% of GDP while inflation has remained within the target for nearly
The key tasks of the developmental state are to achieve higher rates of growth and development to address the challenges of eradication of poverty, underdevelopment and inequality.

four years and is now just above 6%; and
• The employment target is approximately 16 million by 2014 or an employment of a maximum 14% by 2014. Employment now stands at above 12.8 million and unemployment is around 25%.

On poverty and inequality, the development target is to halve poverty between 2004 and 2014. The number of people receiving social grants has increased to above 12.8 million and the trend shows a strong income growth for the poorest 10% to 20% of the population but a higher growth in the richest people resulting in an increase in inequality. The number of people in the poorest categories (living standard measure – LSM 1-3) has declined with a marked reduction in LSM 1 while there is an increase in the number of people in LSM 4-10.

These are some of our national headline goals, which reflect our progress and highlight our challenges. Government, and indeed the public sector as a whole, is faced with transformational challenges that pose a threat to sustainable development.

Progress has not reached the expectations we have set for ourselves because of our skills shortage and other variables. For instance, during the assessment of progress on eradicating the bucket sanitation system, a realisation was reached that the number of buckets to be removed included other systems such as unimproved pit latrines. This was an attempt to circumvent the process to achieve a narrow local agenda. As a consequence, there was a lack of coherence between spheres of government, service delivery was delayed, deadlines not met, and in the end the people suffered.

The recent spate of community protests related to service delivery appears to be an indication that people are dissatisfied with the level of service delivery. This is notwithstanding the many successes our government has achieved around improving levels of service delivery.

The question is why are these achievements not appreciated? How much of this dissent has to do with slow delivery? Or is it simply not enough? Or are these protests a reaction to the ineffective systems at local government – such as the ward committee system that is meant to address local issues before they escalate into violent conflicts? According to research by Professor Botes of the Centre for Development Support at the university of the Free State (Business Day, 14 August 2007) these are plausible explanations but, in the main, it is a failure to communicate which results in perceptions of a lack of transparency on the part of the public service.

Our focus has been and continues to be on achieving the developmental targets. However, we need to expand our efforts towards ensuring that once those targets have been achieved we have systems and the capacity to maintain them, to ensure that communities continue to enjoy the tangible benefits in a sustainable way.

In real terms, this means that the work we do needs to be optimised to accelerate service delivery. This can be done by forging and developing relationships with other government departments, business and civil society organisations so that there is greater synergy in our efforts. These reflect key weaknesses in achieving the first attribute in a developmental state, namely strategic coherence around the
developmental agenda. These are reflected both within the public service and within society.

Greater synergy requires detailed planning, the importance of which cannot be stressed enough. In the planning process, tasks are scheduled so that sufficient time is given to establish the prerequisite conditions for achieving the objective. Adequate planning combined with systems for monitoring and evaluating progress are central to holding public service managers accountable. This is invaluable in ensuring that progress is sustained over time.

The challenge to maintain and sustain achievements whilst forging ahead in attaining the outstanding developmental targets remains one of the key issues facing the public service.

**Functions of public servants in a developmental state**

What is our role as public servants in a developmental state? Is our business just about service delivery and providing an excellent service? Is it our duty to ensure that we not only meet our objectives, but that we deliver services to create a better life in communities in the long term.

Central to meeting our developmental targets, and what all South Africans want, is a more accessible and visible public service. A public service should engage the public in the decision-making process and accept new responsibilities. This new public service must seize the opportunity to help make South Africa a leader in participatory government within the confines of a developmental state.

As our public service organisations continue to become more client-centred, more effective in meeting citizens’ needs and expectations, more effective in mobilising people around a common development agenda, there is the necessity for a significant shift in culture and values. This will require a durable commitment by all to achieve these goals.

Key to us achieving these goals is, as stated earlier, coherence in the understanding of policy and the subsequent implementation by the public service.

**A new learning culture**

The evolution of a learning culture in the public service is not a small step. Rather, it is a huge leap in our ways of thinking about work. It calls for new ways of doing work and new roles in relation to conventional training and development. It must also become the basis of new attitudes and values on the part of individual public servants about their work and careers.

In the future, no one should be expected to follow a public service career without continuous learning and/or retraining to keep “ahead of the curve” in contextual knowledge and new skills and work methods. This vision of a continuous learning culture should also characterise the values and plans of departments for evolution into modern organisations.

Departments must begin to see themselves as flexible and responsive organisations which can be improved by the people who work in them. As active learners, public servants should:

- Participate collaboratively with other workers in reflecting on and questioning the nature of the work they do and its role in the larger organisation;
- See themselves as catalysts that can change the organisation;
- Believe that there is always room for self-improvement;
- Continue to see themselves in a relationship of reciprocal exchange and mutual enrichment with the organisation; and
- Feel capable of making a contribution, of offering good ideas and feel worthy of being listened to.

By the same token, organisations that actively learn should:

- See themselves as flexible environments that can respond to employee initiatives;
- See themselves as constantly capable of improving;
- Offer employees clear reference points for learning, by defining the goals and purposes of the work to be accompanied; and
- Offer employees opportunities for reflection, questioning and sharing of new possibilities.

In discharging our roles as public servants, we should avoid coming to work with a mediocre and lackadaisical attitude. It does disservice to what we can fully offer. Quality service to the masses of our people deserves no less. Our democracy calls upon all of us to “achieve high levels of competence in service delivery and entrench accountability to drive sustainable development”. Accelerated service delivery must go hand in hand with civic responsibility and accountability.

**Conclusion**

Our obligation is to serve the South African nation without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or class. This pledge is enshrined in our Constitution. It talks about honouring a contract to serve people in concert with their needs. It talks about partnerships, listening and learning from the electorate. We have to come to work bearing in our minds this consideration: How can I improve my service to the people? It demands that all of us discharge our duties in an efficient and user-friendly fashion.

Managers at all levels must both support and lead the public service responsibly so that public servants feel valued, motivated, informed and challenged to put forth their best efforts on behalf of the people of South Africa.

Actualising these cultural changes and bridging the gap between a commitment to service to the public and actually serving the public in a developmental era means:

- A real understanding, by everyone in the public service, of a service vision and its underlying principles. This implies a corresponding service culture and management style in departments and agencies that support such a vision;
- A commitment to the new culture together with the requisite knowledge and the acquisition of new skills. Of these, the skills requirements are the most difficult to address and the least understood or accepted. It will take significant, sustained effort on the part of everyone involved, particularly senior managers. It also means continuous learning, change and retraining throughout a career; and
- The learning experience must be well designed, well delivered and must meet real training and developmental needs. The work environment must reinforce new skills, provide people with the authority, self-determination and information needed to use the skills and hold people accountable for their use.

In this regard, in its Programme of Action for 2007, government commits to work hard to ensure that the nation’s objectives are met and to meet its commitments to the people by bringing about organisational and individual change in a developmental state. Although the process of change will take time, there is more that can be done in the short-term that will have immediate effect. On this score, we can never compromise.
Building confidence in the public service

Doing the basics correctly will go a long way towards furthering accountability and building confidence in the public service, writes Derick Luyt, Public Service Accountability Monitor.

I must say that I was quite surprised to be invited to address the 6th Annual Service Delivery Academy this year, especially since the topic I was assigned was “Building confidence in the public service”. I am sure that most public servants in the Eastern Cape are convinced that the aim of the Public Service Accountability Monitor, where I work, is to destroy confidence in the provincial public service, not build it. We have a reputation for being highly critical of the provincial government and its public service.

But our critical approach is motivated by a desire to help improve our provincial government, not destroy or discredit it. We are more than happy to acknowledge and commend the positive achievements of the public service in the Eastern Cape, particularly since we are well aware of the difficult and historically created circumstances under which it works. Furthermore, a number of our outputs, such as our “Strategic Plan Evaluations”, have been well received by provincial officials, who recognise their constructive contribution to good governance.

In short, the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) attempts to be constructive in its criticism of the provincial public service. Of course, at times this makes for a rocky relationship, but one which we hope will in the longer term contribute to a genuine and deserved confidence in the province’s public service.

Essentially, the PSAM believes that a public service in which citizens have confidence is one which is demonstrably accountable to them. It is naïve to believe that confidence in the public service can be built solely through service delivery. Improved service delivery is, of course, important: a public service which patently fails to deliver services is hardly likely to engender confidence in itself. But service delivery is not enough. I will suggest that a key to building confidence in the public service is improving accountability.

In this paper I will outline the PSAM’s understanding of accountability and, based on the major lessons we have learned from our monitoring of the Eastern Cape provincial government, discuss some of the ways in which we believe the public service can deepen its accountability and hence strengthen public confidence in it. It should be borne in mind that whatever suggestions I make regarding building confidence in the public service are based largely on the lessons we have drawn from monitoring the Eastern Cape provincial government: clearly, these lessons will not all be applicable to other provinces in South Africa.

The PSAM and accountability

The PSAM is an independent research and monitoring institute based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. It is dedicated to promoting the effective use of public resources and the realisation of socio-economic rights in South Africa, particularly in the Eastern Cape. In order to achieve these goals, we gather and disseminate information on the management of public resources, delivery of public services and handling of cases of public sector misconduct and corruption in the Eastern Cape.

We focus on the four major service delivery departments in the Eastern Cape: Education, Housing, Health and Social Development. Together, these four departments account for more than 80% of the provincial budget. Our basic methodology consists of monitoring and analysing five central processes in the utilisation of public resources within these four departments:

- Planning and resource allocation;
- Expenditure tracking;
- Performance management;
- Integrity management; and
- Oversight.

Corresponding to these five processes we produce a number of outputs annually:

- Budget Analysis Briefs and Strategic Plan Evaluations (based on analyses of annual budgets, Annual Performance Plans and Operational Plans);
- Expenditure Tracking Reports (based on quarterly and annual expenditure reports);
- Performance Monitoring Reports (including Service Delivery reports);
- Integrity System Evaluations (based on departmental disciplinary databases, annual reports and interviews with Human Resource managers); and
- Accountability to Oversight Reports (based on analyses of departmental responses to recommendations from the Auditor-General, standing committees and SCOPA).

In addition, staff at the PSAM produce occasional research reports when possible. This year, PSAM researchers have conducted research into grant payouts by SASSA, housing quality, the School Nutrition Programme and the roll-out of ARVs. Their research reports will be completed soon and submitted, with recommendations, to relevant stakeholders.

The PSAM disseminates its reports and analyses to the media, civil society and provincial government actors.

I will discuss some of the main findings of our work below, when I will also consider some of our recommendations for building confidence in the public service. Before I do this, I will outline how the PSAM defines accountability, since, in our opinion, accountability lies at the heart of any attempt to foster confidence in the public service.

We define accountability as “an obligation by elected political leaders and government officials to answer to citizens for the performance of their duties and responsibilities”. Accountability requires politicians and officials to explain and justify their decisions and actions against set criteria (such as regulatory frameworks, strategic plans and performance targets), to take steps to cor-
The key point is that accountability is, or should be, an obligation on the part of public servants, not a favour to be dispensed when suitable or convenient. Citizens have the right to accountability: where they do not, it is difficult to expect them to have confidence in the public service since they will, with justification, suspect that important information and issues are being hidden from them. The alternatives to accountability – secrecy and disinformation – are not worthy of a democratic and developmental state, and should be actively opposed by all citizens, including public servants.

Furthermore, our notion of accountability is rooted in a rights-based conception of democratic governance which holds that:

- Citizens are not passive consumers of services but active rights-holders;
- Democratic states are constitutionally committed to ensure the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights (such as health care, education, housing);
- They achieve the realisation of socio-economic rights via the delivery of public services within available resources;
- Public institutions are duty-bound to meet public interests and to open themselves to scrutiny; and
- Misuse and abuse of resources are a violation of citizens' rights.

While we believe that citizens have the right to accountability, we are also of the firm opinion that this right must be exercised with due respect for the rule of law. Rights do not come without responsibilities.

Given the centrality of the notion of accountability to our work, we can summarise the objectives of the PSAM in the following five points:

- To improve public service delivery and the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights within available resources;
- To give effect to the right to access information that empowers citizens to participate in governance processes and to hold public officials and outsourced private service providers accountable for their use of public resources;
- To strengthen financial management and reporting systems within government service delivery departments;
- To publicise cases involving the misuse or abuse of public resources and promote the initiation of corrective action; and
- To strengthen citizen and parliamentary oversight of the management of public resources.

One thread running through our understanding of rights-based governance and accountability is the notion that citizens of a democratic and developmental state are not simply passive consumers of
public goods and services but also active rights-holders and partners in development. The implication of this is that both service delivery and accountability are essential to building confidence in the public service. Emphasising one at the expense of the other is a recipe for public service failure.

Overemphasising service delivery at the expense of accountability not only disempowers citizens but places an unsustainable burden on the shoulders of the public service. In part, this is because there is virtually no end to the quantity and quality of public goods and services that citizens can and will demand.

To project the public service simply as providers of goods and services is to create a citizenry whose insatiable demands can never be met within the constraints of available resources: it is to create a state of permanent conflict between citizens and the public service (which may be aggravated by political opportunism). Placing equal emphasis on deepening accountability both empowers citizens and obliges them to accept co-responsibility for the developmental and service delivery choices necessitated by limited available resources.

Lessons learned
The PSAM has conducted detailed monitoring of the performance and realisation of rights by the Eastern Cape Departments of Health, Education, Social Development and Housing between 2000 and 2007. Here I outline our main findings concerning problem areas in the five central processes of resource utilisation in these departments, and suggest that improvements in respect of these areas will simultaneously improve accountability and confidence in the public service.

Planning and resource allocation
One of the main problems that has become clear in our monitoring work is the inadequacy of departmental planning. There is a general need to improve strategic planning by carrying out more detailed needs and situational analyses. In fact, it would probably not be overstating the case to say that lack of adequate planning is a critical obstacle to building confidence in the provincial public service, since deficiencies in this regard have a knock-on effect through the entire spectrum of service delivery and accountability processes. Provincial departments in the Eastern Cape lack the capacity to undertake adequate planning. Two suggestions can be made here.

One, it would be a good idea to commission independent and ongoing research aimed at informing departmental planning. A start was made in this regard with the commissioning of the Rapid Assessment of Service Delivery and Socio-Economic Survey (RAS), completed in June 2006. While this large-scale household survey was intended to inform planning at local and provincial level, there has been little or no indication to date that the findings of the survey have been incorporated into departmental planning, nor that it forms the start of a process incorporating ongoing research to provide updated information for government planners.

It is also unfortunate that the provincial government has only released an abridged version of the RAS, claiming that it will make public the full survey in June 2008. The PSAM is of the view that withholding a public survey intended to inform public planning, conducted by a public institution (the University of Fort Hare) and paid for with public funds, does not meet the requirements of accountability. We are requesting access to the survey through the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

Two, there is a critical need to put in place recruitment and retention strategies in respect of skilled planning, research and evaluation personnel. While the ability of the public service to deliver services is significantly shaped by politically determined policies and resource allocations, these are in turn influenced by sound research, planning and evaluation. I would suggest that public service officials, researchers and planners need to be more proactive in shaping policies and resource allocations through the planning process. If the public service wants to build confidence in itself, it will need to engage more strongly in discussions fueling policies and resource allocations. A good example of this is the School Nutrition Programme in the Eastern Cape. Had officials been more determined in voicing their reservations about the institutional capacity to adequately implement and monitor the community-based model, it is quite likely that its confidence-sapping demise could have been prevented.

Similarly, officials in the provincial department of Health need to be bolder in shaping policies and resource allocations, despite the difficulties involved. Until their knowledge and experience are more fundamentally incorporated into the planning of health services in the province, the department will continue to under-perform.

Such examples indicate that public servants in South Africa do not have the luxury of considering themselves as mere functionaries: they need to insert themselves more vigorously into planning and resource allocation processes in order to build confidence in the public service.

Expenditure tracking
Expenditure tracking and financial management are particularly weak in the Eastern Cape. The department of Education has received eleven audit disclaimers in a row; the department of Health nine audit disclaimers in the past ten years; the department of Housing nine disclaimers and two qualified audits in the past 11 years and the department of Social Development seven disclaimers and one qualified audit in the past ten years. Clearly, it is difficult to build confidence in the public service under such circumstances. Clean financial management is a prerequisite for accountability and public confidence.

In terms of financial management, it is imperative that departments make concerted attempts to implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General. The recently released review of Chapter Nine Institutions noted that “a disregard by government departments and other public institutions of recommendations made by the Auditor-General in audit reports is a cause for concern”, and added that “the office of the Auditor-General has identified the need to inform the public of its work as a priority and has
begun to engage with the media and with civil society in this regard. In the case of civil society, fostering such relationships may become increasingly important, particularly with regard to issues of corruption." A more cogent call for accountability could hardly be advanced.

Departments also need to ensure that they maintain functioning expenditure management, internal audit and risk management systems, since failure to do so results in, inter alia, poor financial control and practices such as fiscal dumping.

As with the area of planning, capacity remains a problem in expenditure tracking. Again, staff recruitment and retention strategies are a priority, and unless such strategies are given serious attention, it will be difficult to deepen confidence in the public service.

**Performance management**
Confidence in the provincial public service would be significantly enhanced if departments ensured that performance agreements are signed and that performance is duly monitored and assessed. In addition, performance agreements of heads of departments and senior programme managers should be published, and the media should be updated on performance compliance, including corrective steps, capacity building and staff development.

**Integrity management**
Ensuring adequate integrity management is another vital aspect of building confidence in the public service. In this regard, Human Resource departments need to be sufficiently staffed so that disciplinary and performance mechanisms function properly. Particularly important is the need to deal speedily with disciplinary matters: too many disciplinary cases in the Eastern Cape have dragged on for too long, often with officials suspended on full pay. The public finds this hard to understand, and inadequate disciplinary processes clearly sap confidence in the public service.

Regular media updates on disciplinary outcomes and accurate feedback on the impact and outcomes of whistleblowing would also significantly enhance confidence in the public service.

**Oversight**
The functioning of oversight committees could be strengthened through access to more detailed and disaggregated information from departments, as well as access to forensic reports. Departments should ensure that officials responsible for implementing their plans and programmes attending committee sittings, and senior management should lead by example in accounting for departmental performance. This will allow oversight committees to fulfill their primary function – to ensure accountability, and hence promote confidence in the public service.

**Public confidence and the media**
Since my role at the PSAM is primarily to deal with media and advocacy issues, I would like to conclude with some suggestions for improving relationships with the media. The media plays a vital role in shaping perceptions of the public service, and there is no doubt that confidence in the public service can be bolstered through judicious relationships with the media. To blame the media for negative perceptions of the public service is simply to accept that there is nothing that the public service can do to enhance confidence in itself through the media. This is not true. Public servants can be proactive in this regard.

First, those who believe that confidence in the public service can best be furthered through refining their techniques of media spin are flat-out wrong. Media professionals are trained to detect and reject spin, and relying on spin simply builds media distrust and compromises confidence in the public service. The more you spin, the more the media will seek out other stories. Don’t blame the media if these turn out to be “bad news” stories.

Spin is fine when you have something to spin, but don’t use it to hide bad news. Spin should involve making the most of good news; not, as it is usually understood, burying bad news. The best way to deal with bad news is to be proactive about it. Inform the media of it and tell them what you are doing about it: make this the story. By doing this you will enhance your credibility and integrity with the media, and so further confidence in the public service.

Second, if the media questions you about an issue to which you have no ready answer, say so – but say you will find out about the issue and honour your commitment to do so. To bluster your way through an uninformed answer is dishonest and will set media alarm bells ringing. Similarly, “no comment” is bad comment.

Third, I so often hear politicians and government officials complain that the media is not interested in “good news”, and prefers to run negative stories about the public service. I do not want to speak on behalf of the media, and in any case not all media are the same. Some, perhaps most, sections of the media are keen to run negative stories on poorly performing or corrupt public servants, and they rightly see it as their duty to expose such bad eggs.

But this does not make them anti the public service. On the contrary, it makes them allies of the vast majority of honest and diligent public servants who are committed to ensuring a public service in which the public can have genuine confidence. Recognising this and acting accordingly will not only enhance your credibility with the media, but make them more likely to run with your good news stories.

**Conclusion**
Most of the suggestions made above are neither new nor innovative. They refer to basic tenets of good governance. The point: doing the basics correctly will go a long way towards furthering accountability and building confidence in the public service. It is admirable to be innovative and inventive, but not if this is a substitute for implementing basic good governance. Do the basics well, be open, transparent and accountable, and citizens will have confidence in their public service.
Accelerating sustainable development through public participation: the case of Likusasalethu Leather Fern Project

Professor Zach Chuenyane, National Development Agency, reports on the success of an agricultural project in Mpumalanga

The National Development Agency (NDA) was established in 2000 by an Act of Parliament. It is a Section 3A statutory organisation that is represented nationally in all nine provinces. To date, the NDA has funded over 5,000 projects. The NDA is expected to "act as a key conduit of funding from the government of the Republic, foreign governments, and other national and international donors for development work to be carried out by civil society organisations". Our vision is to develop a society that is free from poverty, hence our mandate.

The NDA's primary mandate is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations for the purposes of implementing development projects of poor communities; and strengthening the institutional capacity of other civil society organisations that provide services to the poor communities.

Its secondary mandate is to promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of development experience between civil society organisations and relevant organs of state; debate development policy; and to undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy. The current focus areas of the NDA are:

- Food security projects;
- Local economic development/social entrepreneurship;
- NGO consortia and networks for policy and advocacy for the poor; and
- Capacity building for CSOs.

The beneficiaries of the NDA's programmes are poor communities residing in identified poverty nodes. Our other beneficiaries are South African institutions that are responsible for developing anti-poverty strategies and plans.

Likusasalethu Leather Fern Project

The project was started in 1986 by 10 subsistence maize farmers. It was assisted, then, by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and Agri-one (National Department of Agriculture and the former KaNgwane Government). The project is located in Nkomazi Local Municipality at Driekoppies, a rural area in Ehlanzeni District in the Mpumalanga province. The municipality has a population of about 334,415 inhabitants with a 41% unemployment rate. The project has 125 direct beneficiaries where 57 are women, 53 men, and 15 are youths. It also has 1,250 indirect beneficiaries.

The main project activities include growing Leather fern on a 10 hectare land. It also involves grading and packaging of Leather fern; and exporting it to the Netherlands (which is the project's main market). The project also involves supplying multi-flora in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Lastly, the project also involves producing mangoes and sugarcane for the local market.

Currently, 10 hectares of Leather fern have been planted. The bulk of the produce has also been exported to the Netherlands. An additional 10 hectares of land is being prepared and planting began in September. Furthermore, an offer was made by Braaks to sell a 17 hectare farm with two cool rooms, a pack house and three tractors to the project members. Sugarcane has also been sold to TSB with mangoes supplied to local traders and vendors; and the Department of Agriculture has provided extension services.

How has the project improved the quality of life in the area? It has provided an opportunity for income generation and development. The 10 main project members take home no less than R2,500 per month. There are also 54 permanent jobs created through the project with an income of more than R650 per month. In addition to this, the project also employs 35 seasonal workers.

More positives regarding the project are that it has gained recognition which has in turn ensured access to financial resources. It is also a practical display of what can be achieved through a collective pooling of resources for a common goal.

Like any other initiative of this magnitude, Likusasalethu project has its own challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of technical expertise in the management of the project. The ideal is also to produce at competitive levels, something that has not been achieved. Furthermore, the project has not fully accessed and further penetrated local and international markets as Braaks still dominates this sector. There is a need for the project to bring some energy by increasing youth participation in the initiative.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by highlighting lessons that have been learnt through this project. One of the major advantages that the project is having is that there is maximum community participation. Linked to this is that relationships with traditional authorities need to be promoted to further ensure community participation.

The project is also a clear case of partnering for development which is evidenced by stakeholders’ involvement at the project conceptualising phase. There is also a commitment to proper planning which has played an important part in the development of the project.
Integrated performance management system: The Botswana experience

By John Phatshwe and Bernard Pakes of the Botswana National Productivity Centre

This paper is intended to table a conceptual framework for an integrated Performance Management System (PMS). It is an integrated framework that accommodates the PMS-driven performance improvement cycle to enable achievement of performance results.

The paper also places emphasis on key elements of how to use the framework in the real world of performance delivery through deployment of diagnostic instruments to assemble a clear picture of current reality and desired future for any public sector organisation.

John Major, former British Prime Minister, emphasised the importance of quality service by public servants in 1993: “Public services should be a springboard to a better life. They should widen choices, not diminish them, empower people, not leave them feeling frustrated. I refuse to accept the assumption – implicit in so many public services – that because those who use them have no alternative, it is acceptable for them to be shoddy or substandard. I am determined to change all that – and that is the overriding motive behind the Citizen Charter”.

The role of burning platforms

A burning platform at entity level represents an entity strategic imperative that must be resolved – there are consequences for improper resolution. At the individual level, the burning platform represents a strategic individual imperative that must be resolved – there are consequences for improper resolution.

The Performance Prism framework

The five facets of the Performance Prism represent significant strategic parts of any organisation that make it complete. The top and bottom facets are Stakeholder Satisfaction and Stakeholder Contribution respectively. The three side facets are Strategies, Processes and Capabilities.

The PMS conceptual framework

A graphical view of the skeleton conceptual framework is tabled and is followed by narrative outline of the framework, followed in turn by a matrix presentation of the detailed content of the framework.

The performance improvement cycle is labelled with six critical areas associated with successful installation and maintenance of an integrated Performance Management system.

Label 1 points to the specific environment (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal in particular) in which a given public service operates to deliver its mandate via performance results that fully support delivery of the national desired future (in “partnership” with other performance delivery stakeholders). It is about awareness and acknowledgement of the external environment, and acknowledgement of the various enabler development imperatives (enablers in this context include leadership, policy and strategy, people – the public service officers, partnerships and resources, processes) that have to be managed concurrently in the obligation to deliver stakeholder satisfaction. Another aspect here is the need to articulate those assumptions that are critical in relation to performance result delivery – to do a risk analysis prior to strategy adoption, to track (monitor) the critical assumptions and to take action when critical assumptions prove invalid.

Label 2 points to the leadership at all levels in public service – leadership that needs to be competent to lead the renewal installation of PMS so that it results in public service officers who are envisioned (public service officers clearly see the public service destination, accept the reality of current burning platforms, and buy into the steps necessary to make the committed journey to creation of the public service institutional desired future).

They are also energised (provision of the enabling environment so that followers are positioned to choose to make a personal difference in creation of the public service institutional desired future).
They are also enabled (have the right competencies to deliver the right results at the right time in the right place to the right standards).

Label 3 points to the public service officers who, as followers (envisioned by the leaders), are positioned to choose to make significant differences individually and collectively in participating in the public service performance delivery challenges: as competent players, not spectators.

Label 4 points to the holistic, detailed project plan and communication plan that is necessary to underpin the mobilisation of all stakeholders involved in the installation of PMS, the maintenance of a vibrant PMS and the subsequent delivery of the individual, team and institutional performance delivery mandates, including continual performance delivery improvements.

This item has a focus both on the technical aspects of PMS and its installation as well as the change management aspects, since PMS as a reform is a large-scale change intervention in itself. It also accommodates a focus on the structures that are mandated to assume responsibility for defined elements of PMS installation and maintenance.

Label 5 points to the design of the PMS product. The design needs to express the scope of the PMS product (personal PMS with organisational PMS as a basic combination and with possible additional options that can include performance-based reward interventions). The design needs to wrap around the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle so that it has designed elements that accommodate balanced attention to each of the four PDCA segments:

• Plan - performance plan with emphasis on committed performance results, plan with clear targets, plan that accommodates a coherent measurement system, plan that reconciles resource availability (right people with right competencies at the right place at the right time realities, financial resources, support resources including process resources);

• Do - implementation of the plan to specified timelines, resources utilisation and quality, conformance to performance specifications;

• Check - regular reviews at all levels with reviews frequency to enable effective performance management (perhaps monthly for units, sections, departments and quarterly at ministry level). Reviews should acknowledge performance delivery status (usually in terms stated targets for timeliness, resource utilisation and quality). Reviews should enable sharing of information on what’s working, what’s not working. Where performance delivery is off track, performance reviews should expect the action plan to get things back on track. Scope of the reviews design should include provision to review performance outputs and also higher level outcomes.

• Act - makes provision for dealing with situations where key assumptions may have proved to be invalid and perhaps calling for a project to be redesigned or even abandoned, makes provision for institutionalising new processes or other improvements and sharing performance progress with stakeholders – also feeds lessons learnt into the next cycle of PDCA.

Label 6 points to the specific interventions designed and installed to anchor performance improvement gains so as to underpin sustainable performance improvement (e.g. introduction of quality management systems).

Key points associated with the PMS conceptual framework

The PMS conceptual framework is intended to accommodate all key aspects of an integrated PMS in design and operation.

• The PMS conceptual framework is associated with the performance improvement cycle and it is not an end in itself – it is a means to deliver sustainable stakeholder satisfaction.

• Performance improvement requires focus (project plan with timelines and resource commitments plus a quality specification), directed energy and client based feedback on performance delivery.

• PMS is wrapped around the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle coupled with appropriate anchoring mechanisms.

• Processes and process improvements are the gateway to sustainable performance improvement.

• The planning regime for the operating environment often presents a smooth challenge (uphill but smooth). Reality brings the unexpected obstacles hence the need to articulate the key assumptions up front and track their status over time.

• The PMS conceptual framework has a strong connection to the PMS strategic planning model that informs the assembly of the institutional performance agenda. This PMS strategic planning model is the subject of annexure 1.

• Note the clockwise, cyclical buildup of the strategic planning model – seven elements in the cycle;

• Note the relationship of the cyclical model to the PDCA cycle;

• Note resource allocation and reconciliation with approved budgets for the public service institution;

• Note the institutional performance agenda with tight linkage to the personal performance agendas (and team agendas) with integrity in the means-ends ladder via the measurement systems;

• Note the seamless interface between personal PMS and institutional PMS for an integrated PMS approach.

A series of tables are used to amplify the PMS conceptual framework.

Measuring the maturity of PMS installation in a public service enterprise

It is possible to measure the progress of PMS installation within a public service enterprise through the use of a maturity matrix. Such a matrix is the subject of annexure 2 where four important PMS practices are mapped against their relative maturity in supporting sustainable performance improvement.

The maturity matrix may be used to gauge the relative impact progress of institutional PMS installation over time. It may also be used to target levels of maturity achievement to a defined timescale.

BNPC PMS Modules

Situational analysis – uses the following assessment tools: Common Assessment Framework (CAF); Paradigm Instrument Work Culture instrument, Leadership & Management Competencies instrument. This takes 2-4 days, depending on the size of the organisation.

Role clarity – 2 days
Current reality – 2 days
Desired future – 6 days
Measurement – 5 days

These modules are derived from the BNPC Strategic Planning Module.
### Table to amplify the PMS conceptual framework: 1. Operating Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Operating Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Resources availability mapped.</td>
<td>Clear portrayal of national resources availability including public service budget, donor and other funding realities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Critical assumptions mapped.</td>
<td>Clear portrayal of high-level assumptions and monitoring system to track assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Internal situation analysis for all ministries (all public service entities) done. Analysis tools to include excellence model rating, work culture analysis, leadership and management competency analysis, performance paradigms analysis.</td>
<td>Clear current reality portrayal of internal capacity to deliver performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5. External situation analysis for all ministries professionally done. Analysis tools to include PESTEL analysis.</td>
<td>Clear picture of external environment trends and realities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self assessment may be used to establish the state of PMS installation with associated outcomes within a given public enterprise by doing an objective assessment with respect to each of PMS components listed in the above table. The following approach to ratings is recommended, using a minimum rating of 0 and a maximum rating of 10:

- 0 rating where there is no hard evidence or anecdotal evidence;
- 1-2 rating evidence with an emphasis on the "plan" segment of PDCA;
- 3-4 rating where there is evidence with emphasis on the "plan" + successful "do" segments of PDCA;
- 5-6 rating where there is evidence with emphasis on the "plan" + successful "do" + successful "check" segments of PDCA;
- 7-8 rating where there is evidence with emphasis on the "plan" + successful "do" + successful "check" + successful "act" segments of PDCA; and
- 9-10 rating where there is evidence with emphasis on the "plan" + successful "do" + successful "check" + successful "act" segments of PDCA plus record of systematic continuous improvement.

### Table to amplify the PMS conceptual framework: 2. Leadership Role Delivered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Leadership Role Delivered</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Public service entity performance agendas reviewed, updated to accommodate full vertical alignment to national performance agenda and horizontal alignment to all stakeholders with national performance delivery mandates. Capacity building to support delivery of core business fully articulated in the performance agendas. Future focused SWOT analysis to inform strategy development and articulation of the performance agenda. Consultation with the stakeholder community to position the institution for performance mandate delivery.</td>
<td>Clear institutional performance agenda that informs annual performance commitments at institutional level. Performance agendas that satisfy stakeholder expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Public service officers with full understanding of the institutional destination (vision), the pathway to reach the vision (mission), the behaviours to make the journey (values and guiding principles aligned) and acknowledgement of burning platforms in making the journey.</td>
<td>Envisioned public service followers (performance delivered with passion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Public service officers with right competencies (knowledge and skills) at the right time in the right place.</td>
<td>Processes fully delivered (consistently) to their designed capacity (i.e. matched to standards of performance necessary for customer satisfaction).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table to amplify the PMS conceptual framework: 3. Followership Roles Delivered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 3. Followership Roles Delivered

| 3.1. Public service officers committed to the institutional destination (vision), the pathway to reach the vision (mission), the behaviours to make the journey (values and guiding principles) and acknowledging the burning platforms in making the journey. | Envisioned public service staff (followers) who choose to deliver excellent performance with passion. |
| 3.2. Public service officers with right competencies (knowledge and skills) at the right time in the right place. | Public service staff who ensure that processes are fully delivered (consistently) (i.e. to standards of performance necessary for customer satisfaction). |
| 3.3 Public service officers with the right attitude. Work culture aligned to values, guiding principles – effective enabling environment in place. | Public service officers choose to make a difference in performance delivery and performance improvement. |
| 3.5. Followers that walk the talk. | Followers at all levels consistently engage with values-aligned work place behaviours. |
| 3.6. All PMS components in place to drive systematic performance delivery and performance improvement (deployment of the PMS suite of products and deployment of the change management agenda). | Clear performance agendas with relevant targets at all individual officer levels. Regular, effective reviews at individual officer level. Maintenance of performance measurement systems at individual officer levels to enable data portrayal. PMS installation agents (including change management team members) mobilized, in place and fulfilling their mandates. |

Self assessment may be used to establish the state of PMS installation with associated outcomes within a given public enterprise by doing an objective assessment with respect to each of PMS components listed in the above table and using the ratings approach as detailed under the first table.
### 4. Change Management Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1. PMS installation and maintenance plan fully documented.</strong></td>
<td>Clarity on all aspects of PMS processes and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2. Comprehensive plan to address the 8 change management steps.</strong></td>
<td>Change management successfully achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3. Comprehensive PMS cascading plan in place (using media and language that can be assimilated by the target audiences).</strong></td>
<td>Communication plan that enables each public officer to see his/her unique opportunity to connect to the strategic performance agenda of the public service employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.4. Plans to take institutions through from entry level to high performing institutions.</strong></td>
<td>Successful implementation of planned interventions to lead public service entities through organizational development phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.5. Change management structures designed to support PMS introduction and maintenance. Includes provision for Performance Improvement Coordinators.</strong></td>
<td>Change management teams that fully deliver to team charters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self assessment may be used to establish the state of PMS installation with associated outcomes within a given public enterprise by doing an objective assessment with respect to each of PMS components listed in the above table and using the ratings approach as detailed under the first table.

Reference is made to Kotter’s eight change management steps to underpin successful change management as follows:

- The establishment of a sense of urgency connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The creation of a guiding coalition connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The development of a vision and a strategy connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The communicating of the change vision connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The empowering of broad-based action connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The generating of short-term wins connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The consolidation of gains and producing more change connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution;
- The anchoring of new approaches in the culture connected to the PMS intervention needs to be at the upper end of effective engagement within the public service institution.

### 5. PMS Product Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1. PMS product portfolio fully documented (organisational PMS, personal PMS and any add on options such as Performance-Related Pay).</strong></td>
<td>User friendly documentation that is readily accessible for use at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.2. Clear, user-friendly processes, procedures and documented work instructions in place for organisational level performance delivery (including guidelines for preparation of annual plans, guidelines for target setting, guidelines for performance implementation, guidelines for performance review, guidelines for performance measurement).</strong></td>
<td>Annual performance plans with clear targets in place and fully aligned to primary stakeholder performance agendas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the above with balanced attention to the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3. Clear, user-friendly processes, procedures and documented work instructions in place for individual level performance delivery. Fully aligned to the institutional performance agenda. (Including guidelines for preparation of annual plans, guidelines for target setting, guidelines for performance implementation, guidelines for performance review, guidelines for performance measurement). All the above with balanced attention to the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle.

Annual performance plans with clear targets in place and fully aligned to primary stakeholder performance agendas.

5.4. Clear, user-friendly processes, procedures and documented work instructions in place for a possible performance based reward system.

Timing for this option has a connection to the timing when a stable, effective institutional/personal PMS is up and running.

Self assessment may be used to establish the state of PMS installation with associated outcomes within a given public enterprise by doing an objective assessment with respect to each of PMS components listed in the above table and using the ratings approach as detailed under the first table.

Table to amplify the PMS conceptual framework: 1. Intervention Anchors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS components – applicable to all institutions within public service. All components expressed as required end state performance results.</th>
<th>Outcomes from full installation of the PMS components in the PMS conceptual framework.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Intervention Anchors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2. PMS system review processes installed.</td>
<td>PMS system improvement proactively managed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self assessment may be used to establish the state of PMS installation with associated outcomes within a given public enterprise by doing an objective assessment with respect to each of PMS components listed in the above table and using the ratings approach as detailed under the first table.

The BNPC Strategic Planning Model

The BNPC has developed the below seven-stage model to assist organisations to develop strategic plans.
PMS and alignment issues
It is important to ensure that there is alignment throughout the entire process as indicated below.
• Vision 2016
• NDP 9 (DDPs)
• Public Service Vision
• Ministry Vision
• LA Institution Vision
• Key Result Areas (KRAs)
• Strategic Goals
• Strategic Objectives
• Annual Objectives
• Critical Activities (link to PBRS)

The relationship between the individual, teams and the tasks and how this leads to results.
The model emphasises that as individuals, we all have a role to play and we are accountable for our individual roles. But, more will be achieved when working in teams.

Team development
The model shows the four stages of the team develop process that each team goes through before it can perform well. A lot of teams fail to reach the performing stage because they disintegrate at the initial stages due to team dynamics.

Example of what happens when there is no team
This picture has been used to show what is normally described as a win-lose situation as opposed to a win-win. In other words one does not see that to remove trees also belongs to him or her as a team member. This is quite a normal situation in many organisations. Where there is a coherent team, the one who draws lines would have easily removed the tree in stead of having to call someone else to come and do it. This obviously has cost implications.

The Intention Model
This model is used to show that where people have a 100% intention to perform a duty, they will achieve 100% results. But when the intention is less than 100% then the same level of achievement will be attained. For example, 75% intention will get 75% results. People then have a lot of convincing excuses to explain the non performance (the 25% gap). Supervisors should not be trapped in this type of situation where they end up being sympathisers when downstream the customer wants 100% results.

The intention mechanism

Some of the challenges
• Mindset problem amongst staff;
• Leadership & Management competencies;
• Clients/customers that are not used to complaining;
• Transfer of staff; and
• Staff turnover

Conclusion
The concluding diagram is intended to visually emphasise the connection between individual performance delivery, team performance delivery and institutional performance delivery. This with full horizontal and vertical integrity combined with balanced attention to the four segments of the PDCA cycle at all levels.

The issue of consequences for performance delivery – good or poor performance is also emphasised.
It is important to conclude this paper with an observation made by John Tschohl, in his book, The Customer is Boss:
"Don't ever feel guilty about complaining. You deserve good service. You pay for good service. Every time you let bad service go by without objecting, you're encouraging it. You are rewarding people for being lazy. You're making it acceptable for them to not be interested in doing a good job."
2010 as a springboard for intergovernmental coordination in speeding up delivery

Lessons learnt in finding ways to meet strict deadlines for the 2010 World Cup can be applied to service delivery in general, writes Malcolm Simpson, National Treasury.

My paper deals with the 2010 soccer World Cup which will be held in South Africa. I want to give an indication of the organisational structure for the event and intergovernmental coordination that has to take place in the project. To do this we need an implementation model – as a result there are some principles we need to consider in designing the delivery model. I will also look at the management tool, funding contribution tool and lessons learnt. I am interested to see if the lessons learnt from this project can be cascaded to improving service delivery challenges.

I would like to state that because of this World Cup, South Africa is at a stage where the event is going to take place. Because of other initiatives, we believe that not only SA, but the African continent is going to be the theatre. The continent must be able to see and experience the event.

We are driven by the need to deliver a world-class event. Its execution must reflect excellence through our sport; arts, culture and tourism; by showcasing our unique history; and showcasing our heritage. It is important to note that we do not want to necessarily show the entire romantic heritage that we have in this country of lions, elephants and rhinos; rather we have to show the world our work heritage because we will have a number of high-paying visitors. We want to leave an impression with them, that this is a country to invest in. Obviously when one invests, one looks at the work heritage of the country.

Organisational structure

The project is located in nine host cities: Cape Town, Rustenburg, Polokwane, Pretoria/Tshwane, Mbombela, Johannesburg, Mangaung, eThekwini and Nelson Mandela Bay. The cities have signed agreements with FIFA and the Local Organising Council (LOC) to deliver certain specifications for the event. To ensure that the event is a success in the host city, we have an organisational structure. Before I highlight it, it is important to note that in South Africa, government is the significant funder of the event whereas in Germany government was a very small player. This is because their football federation was wealthy enough to deliver the event without relying on government funding. In South Africa government is also participating in the area of technical expertise and leadership.

In terms of the organisational structure we have the Local Organising Committee, which is really the agent of FIFA chaired by Dr Irvin Khoza, and they have a number of work streams where they deliver certain projects. On the board of this LOC are a number of government ministers who in turn are part of the Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Deputy President. Under this, we have a Technical Coordinating Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Finance. Under this, there is a Director-General who is responsible for a 2010 World Cup Unit in the Department of Sport and Recreation and line departments that have to deliver on certain guarantees.

The responsibilities of the unit in the Department of Sport and Recreation are to work with the Organising Committee; commit the line departments to detailed projects and deadlines; harmonise projects; facilitate communication; report on progress and decisions made to the higher authorities.

We can then eliminate organisational clutter and disburse funds directly to the point of delivery, and hold the individuals responsible for them accountable

Inter-governmental coordination

The responsibility of the 2010 Organising Committee is to deliver the FIFA World Cup competition in South Africa in 2010 according to FIFA specifications and requirements. Many people feel that it is South Africa’s World Cup, it is actually not - it is a FIFA event and product. The other responsibility is to work with national government departments and host cities to implement projects ensuring that specifications and requirements are met. The key is to interpret these specifications into projects and execute them to ensure compliance. Some of the implementation takes place through provincial departments and they did not sign guarantees. So we have to coordinate with provincial departments on key areas - transport, health, tourism, sport and recreation - because this is their core competency. Line departments therefore have to integrate work plans with those of the host cities.

The host city has the main responsibility. The accounting officer of the city is responsible for the delivery and financial management of the event. So the Municipal Finance Management Act applies. We have not changed any of these prescripts to accommodate this event. Host cities signed an agreement with FIFA/LOC which outlines the responsibilities of the host city. These include:

- Provision of LOC/FIFA project offices;
- Stadium and training grounds;
- Reporting and taxes, customs and entry requirements;
- Safety and security;
- Transportation and airports;
- Environmental protection;
- Commercial display and exclusion zones;
- Environmental protection;
- Commercial display and exclusion zones;
We are driven by the need to deliver a world-class event.
A project-based model has been adopted. As a project, it has a single focus on the delivery of government services. This reduces political "gymnastics" that occur through the three spheres of government. As a result, the delivery model must be designed to ensure that funding reaches the point of service delivery, structure to eliminate organisational clutter, and that deadlines are met.

Let me reiterate that the event takes place in host cities and not in smaller cities. This has placed significant pressure on smaller cities.

Principles for delivery model

Let me reiterate that the event takes place in host cities and not in national or provincial spheres of government. A deadline has been set and does not move. So we cannot have roll-overs. (Perhaps we should have more deadlines set to ensure that services are delivered to the public.) Since the deadline cannot be changed, we have to consider streamlined communication, reporting, decision-making, and cash-flow and therefore you can continuously monitor it.

The project must be designed to reduce political "gymnastics" which occur through the three spheres of government.

So what model have we come up with? To deliver the 2010 World Cup a project-based model has been adopted. As a project, it has a start date and an end date. It will end in July 2010 when the last whistle is blown. Underneath this mega-project there are a myriad of small projects that have been defined, procured, deadlines determined, and are currently being implemented. To do this not only do we need a project management tool, we also need a management tool.

Management "tool"

This is critical where some of our managers in line departments, provinces and municipalities do not talk to their management tool everyday. So when someone comes to see you, you just look at the management tool, if the visit does not fit in the management tool you send them away. In implementing the management tool, we have a project classification framework; all critical paths are developed and deadlines for each project are determined. The benefit of this approach is that we harmonise implementation schedules and information sharing across all institutions. It also allows information which can be used for tracking implementation, presentation to political leaders, decision-makers and to citizens who are ultimately funding the project.

The table on the left is an overview management tool that we have developed.

The financing of the project does not only happen in the National Treasury, provinces are also contributing. The rationale for this model is to ensure tight cost control. For example, if a municipality has spent a certain amount of money on the stadium, it should be able to account to rate payers.

The funding "tool" that we have is essentially a conditional grant mechanism, certainly for the stadiums through the Department of Sport and Recreation. The money goes straight to the host city (the point of delivery) into a secondary bank account for the stadium project. This has eliminated organisational clutter. It makes it easy to monitor expenditure against agreed project plans. Through this mechanism you are able to keep track of the construction programme and cash-flow and therefore you can continuously monitor it.

Lessons learnt so far

Can we implement "management by deadline" in our delivery of services to the public? Can we set deadlines for completion of work (for example, a certain number of houses to be built on a specific piece of land by a certain date)? If we can do this, then we can use project management tools such as Gantt charts, cash flow, resource allocation and so forth, to ensure deadlines are achieved. We can then determine the risks and mitigation measures.

We can then eliminate organisational clutter and disburse funds directly to the point of delivery, and hold the individuals responsible for delivery accountable. We can also implement performance management for all parties based on achievement of deadlines. The monitoring is uncomplicated because you have a programme that you have set-up and you are monitoring projects against the actual programme. The project has really focused the minds of all and there is a deadline to be met. The deadline is fixed and there are no rollovers allowed. We can implement the management by deadline approach and our meetings are uncomplicated. Four questions are asked at meetings: Are we on programme? Is the "cash burn rate" in line with the programme? What are the risks and mitigation measures going forward? Will we complete the work before the deadline?

I want to conclude by asking if the lessons learnt from this project can be used for service delivery improvement.
I want to highlight the construction of the Nkodibe Interchange in Hluhluwe as a case study on inter-sphere coordination from the initiation to implementation stages. As a provincial government, I will highlight how we have worked with other spheres of government in order to realise the construction of the interchange.

The project is located in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, about 50km from Richards Bay. It is the interchange on the N2 that feeds to Mozambique, to Swaziland and is also a passage to Mpumalanga. So it is quite a critical route in the area.

Project background
We had numerous requests from communities to upgrade the interchange because of the increased rate of accidents in the area and reports of fatalities. The interchange was also declared as a hot spot by the Community Road Safety Council (CRSC) falling under the KZN Department of Transport looking after the safety issues on roads.

As a result of these requests, a traffic engineering study was carried out in 2002. The study revealed that the interchange is required in 2016 as traffic will grow at the rate of 4% and in 2031 at 25%.

This resulted in a consultation process which was driven by South African National Roads Agency Limited and the KZN Department of Transport. There was also engagement between the three spheres of government – the national through the roads agency, provincial through the transport department, and local through the Hlabisa and Mtubatuba municipalities. However, local conditions, traffic mix and accident statistics necessitated that human judgment overruled pure theoretical requirements. So we felt that we needed to act fast rather than respond as prescribed by the study. We also felt that we had to act fast because of several other factors:
• Tourist attraction (Hluhluwe, St Lucia Wetland Park, Sodwana Bay, Kosi Bay);
• Population growth;
• Closure of rail line;
• P235 Upgrade, ARRUP Project (KZN DoT);
• Richards Bay Harbour; and
• 2010 Soccer World Cup.

After consideration of these factors, the project was brought forward by 10 years. The conception of this project was therefore driven by road safety. After several engagements between all stakeholders, decisions were taken around the intersection needs that need to be upgraded; the funding model; public participation process (PLC formation); implementation strategy; project design undertaken; project details agreed upon; and exit strategy devised.

Project details, funding model and implementation
The contract period for the project was 13 months. So the project was started in February 2006 and finished in August 2007. The contract value was R43.5 million.

On the funding model, the SA National Roads Agency identified savings from other projects and reprioritised future projects in order to get enough resources for the interchange. The KZN transport department funded the business plan review and made requests for additional funding from the provincial treasury. Local municipalities provided assistance through MIG funding. The roads agency contributed 52% of the financial resources, with the transport department contributing 24%, Hlabisa 10.5%, and Mtubatuba 13.5%.

The implementation strategy began with the sourcing of unskilled and skilled local labour because we believed that local
people should benefit from the initiative. We also resolved to use local emerging contractors - again, to contribute to the economic development of the area. Even the sourcing of building materials was conducted locally. Joint venture contracts were encouraged and spin-off projects were identified for the benefit of the local community.

To achieve all this, public participation was seen as an important vehicle and as a result the Project Liaison Committee was formed and represented by the following stakeholders:

- South African National Roads Agency;
- KZN Department of Transport;
- Local municipalities - Hlabisa and Mtubatuba;
- Department of Labour;
- Department of Education;
- Road Traffic Inspectorate;
- Vukuzakhe Emerging Contractor Association;
- Mtubatuba Taxi Council;
- Informal Traders Association;
- Traditional Authorities;
- Rural Road Transport Forum; and
- Safety and Security.

Challenges and lessons
The biggest challenge is that in a project such as this lack of political buy-in can be a big obstacle. In this case we are referring to traditional authorities. They should be properly informed and brought on board for the project to succeed. There are also challenges relating to labour issues, alignment of policies, lack of commitment and procurement procedures especially since the project involved three spheres of government. The other challenge is making sure that all three spheres of government work in an integrated way, rather than in separate silos.

Through the interchange project we learnt that inter-sphere coordinated projects promote public trust. Also important is that stumbling blocks must be detected and avoided where possible in advance when work is not done in silos. This kind of coordination also fosters a sense of ownership, as the community and other stakeholders are all on board through the project liaison committee.

The funding model was an opportunity to see partnership taking place between the three spheres of government. In such a project, business plans have to be flexible and not rigid. The project proved to be a people-centered development where the Batho Pele principles were paramount and the community itself is the ultimate beneficiary.
The main aim of the Bethelsdorp Women Arise Cooperative (BWAC) is to empower women and youth in the community by means of training and skills development in various trades and thus giving them economic independence.

The Eastern Cape's Department of Social Development was asked to assist the initiative through finance and consultation. The women that started the project were determined to make the project successful as all of them were community workers who have a passion for community development and poverty alleviation.

A workshop was arranged to activate the project where we learnt a number of important points regarding the management of a cooperative. During the workshop, individual members listed their expectations which included efficient communication, mutual respect, commitment, unity and trust, accountability and responsibility, just and fair management, and the importance of skills development and empowerment.

Then we had the members' expectations of the group which included teamwork, orderly finances, group unity, transparency, transformation, positive attitudes, shared visions and ideas, and strategic marketing and planning.

We also had a discussion on the beneficiaries of the project. We resolved that we as directors of the cooperative must ensure that the disadvantaged people who benefit are from Schauderville and Bethelsdorp, which means that the employees and trainees must come directly from these communities.

**Objectives**

The project intends to serve as a vehicle to bring women together to address various challenges that they face in the community and alleviate these using available resources. Through the project, we seek to lobby national and provincial government, public and private institutions, either directly or indirectly, to assist in the trade and commercial activities of the cooperative.

The project also seeks to align BWAC with other organisations with similar interests at national level and to leverage the relationships arising from these alignments to the benefit of both parties. Furthermore, it seeks to facilitate access to business resources, information and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in a manner that would promote their effective participation in global economy.

Lastly, the objective of BWAC is to network, organise and support women entrepreneurs to ensure success and growth.

**Conclusion**

There are a range of projects that we are currently undertaking. We are involved in events management, catering, candle making, draping, sewing, candle stand making, floral arrangements, and hiring crockery, linen, and candle stands. Currently, five of the members have enrolled in a welding course in order to capacitate themselves for the welding project, which will commence in two months.

We also have a partnership with ABET for numeracy and literacy classes. All these projects are up and running.
Service delivery performance auditing

Tini Laubscher, from the Auditor-General, explains the importance of good governance and the role that performance auditing can play in achieving this.

The Auditor-General (AG) has developed a reputation promise to our stakeholders and clients. The reputation promise states that the AG has a constitutional mandate and, as the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of South Africa, it exists to strengthen our country’s democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector, thereby building public confidence. This is what the AG sees as its primary objective.

When one talks about accountability, one also needs to understand what the concept of good governance entails. It is therefore a good idea to start by unpacking the issue of the impact of good governance.

Good governance

Decision-making is an important aspect of good governance. It speaks to the day-to-day planning, organising, control and monitoring that are required in every department and public entity. Decision-making speaks to enhanced service delivery, accurate information and financial gains.

If managers in their decision-making process take the enhancement of service delivery into consideration, making sure that the decision-making process is based on accurate information with financial gains, then economic gains can be achieved. Citizens will also enjoy their rights; poverty can be reduced and quality of life can improve.

If one talks about decision-making one should not stop there, but take it further to implementation, because that is what is required to ensure proper service delivery to citizens. There are good policies but public servants need to turn them into day-to-day activities ensuring service delivery. A strategic plan should not be an end in itself; it should be realistic and practical, and be implemented.

Decision-making that is coupled with implementation leads to important results. One of these is accountability. This is because strategic plans with well-considered targets, based on proper information, lead to accountability and transparency. In the implementation process, managers must comply with laws, rules and regulations which constitute an important part of the jobs of public servants.

During the decision-making process, managers need to ask themselves whether resources, for example the staff, are obtained and used in an economical, efficient and effective manner.

Managers need to ask themselves whether resources are obtained and used in an economical, efficient and effective manner.

Interdependency, which links back to the AG’s reputation promise, is another important tool to ensure accountability. As external auditor, the AG needs managers to provide relevant information to facilitate the audit process.

Getting closer to home, does the mandate of the AG speak to the challenges of accountability and service delivery? The Auditor-General is established and mandated by the Constitution. The Public Audit Act, 2004 (Act No. 25 of 2004) (PAA) further gives effect to the provisions of the Constitution by providing for the auditing of institutions in the public sector and providing for accountability arrangements of the AG.

In terms of section 20 of the PAA, the AG must prepare an audit report and that report must reflect such opinions and statements as may be required by any legislation applicable to the auditee which is the subject of the audit, but must reflect at least an opinion or conclusion on -

• whether the annual financial statements of the auditee fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position at the specific date and results of its operations and cash flow for the period which ended on that date in accordance with the applicable financial framework and legislation;
• the auditee’s compliance with any applicable legislation relating to financial matters, financial management and other related matters; and
• the reported information relating to the performance of the auditee against predetermined objectives.

In addition, the AG may report on whether the auditee’s resources were procured economically and utilised efficiently and effectively. In performance audit reports auditors will not express an opinion, simply because of the scope of performance audits. During performance audits the auditor evaluates the existence of management measures and the extent to which these measures promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The performance audit process is based on audit criteria relevant to a specific focus area that should be mutually agreed between the auditor and auditee.

Audit model for good governance

The AG also had a look at what other auditing institutions are doing internationally and found a model that is used by the Algemene Rekenkamer in the Netherlands. This model includes transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, and responsiveness as essentials of good governance.

In this model transparency implies that relevant information is accessible to parties with an interest in it. This means that financial
and performance information, as well as evidence of compliance with rules and regulations, must be accessible to anyone who needs to use it, including taxpayers. It also requires of budgets and annual reports to meet proper standards.

During the two years that the statement of performance against predetermined objectives was audited, auditees often had questions as to why they need to adhere to certain standards which the National Treasury has set. If auditees do not adhere to these standards, chances are that the performance information will not be transparent and will not be available to the intended users.

In terms of accountability to the public, the model states that the public sector and affiliated bodies must render account to the public of the regularity of the collection and spending of public revenue; the effectiveness and efficiency of policy and discharge of public duties; the integrity of the organisation and its staff; the capacity to learn; and the effectiveness of internal control.

The third aspect relates to the effective and efficient implementation of policy.

Another aspect of the Netherlands audit model for governance is responsiveness. In order to achieve this, policy should be based on societal demand and connect with perceived needs and problems.

Furthermore, public bodies should display the capacity to learn.

**AG strategy for the auditing of performance information**

With the implementation of the PAA in 2004 the AG commissioned research to establish a strategy for the auditing of performance information. During this research project, extensive consultation with the National Treasury and other parties involved assisted the AG to believe that expressing an audit opinion on performance information during the first few years of implementation would mean that all the performance information reports would either be qualified or even disclaimed. After consultation, the AG adopted a phasing-in approach, while the National Treasury started with the compilation of a framework for performance information.

The first audit reviews of published performance information took place during the 2005-06 financial year. During 2006-07 the auditors focused on understanding internal controls regarding performance information and documented system descriptions. For the period 2007-09 auditors will increasingly focus on the policies and procedures in place for managing programme performance information, as well as on the systems generating the performance information. It is foreseen at this stage that the 2009-10 financial year will be the first year where audit opinions will be issued on performance information.

Non-financial information is becoming more important. The importance has also been demonstrated with the 2007 National Budget. In this regard please refer to the National Treasury’s Budget Review of 2007, which states that:

“improving the quality of public service delivery has been a consistent theme of government’s policy framework and in the transformation of public service institutions since 1994. Government is working to enhance performance management at all levels. As an integral part of this initiative, the National Treasury and the Auditor-General have developed a programme performance information framework for strengthening performance management and budgeting across national, provincial and local government.”

**Conclusion**

The AG also has the mandate to conduct performance audits. There are three categories of performance audits. The first category comprises the auditing of economy and efficiency at a basic level as part of the financial audits. In the second category, economy, efficiency and effectiveness is audited, with a specific focus on an area/programme or project at an auditee. The third category, often referred to as transversal performance audits, evaluates economy, efficiency and effectiveness for a transversal focus area, relevant to the main objectives of government and linked to service delivery at different auditees, at different spheres of government.

Focus areas for performance audits are selected after considering quantitative and qualitative criteria. An example of current transversal performance audits is the performance audits focusing on infrastructure development in South Africa. This transversal performance audit’s focus area will extend over a period of five years. Aspects to be audited here include planning, design and tender processes as well as project implementation and commissioning of infrastructure projects, and utilisation and maintenance of existing and newly built infrastructure. This audit will be conducted at all spheres of government with specific emphasis on provincial and local government levels.
Expenditure tracking

Rogier van den Brink, World Bank, looks at the relationships of accountability between clients, policy makers/politicians and service providers

South Africa is a well-functioning democracy, and has an excellent constitution with rights to basic services included. There is also reasonable economic growth and the fiscal space which has allowed large increases in pro-poor spending on social grants, health, education, housing and so forth. In addition to this, there is a sound decentralized framework with an advanced inter-governmental fiscal framework, which allocates funds both on the basis of population and poverty; plus conditional grants; and there is the option of sub-national borrowing. Despite all these achievements, the pace and quality of service delivery to poor people continues to be a major challenge.

What could be the problem? The consensus in the country is that there exists a “lack of capacity”. We would go further and ask instead if the problem is not more of a fundamental institutional issue. The “institution” in this case is defined as “the rules of the service delivery game” which involves relationships of accountability between three sets of actors, namely, clients, policy makers/politicians and service providers. There is consensus among researchers that all these three relationships need to work well if pro-poor service delivery is to be achieved. In these relationships, all actors need to be accountable to each other.

I want to propose a few research questions dealing with these relationships of accountability. The key questions include: where are information dissemination and transparency about service delivery and finance used? Where are poor people heard and have influence on policy makers? Where do policy makers care about the poor and insist on good delivery? In exploring these questions, I make several suggestions for policy analysis and research.

Elections and “voice” - the “short” route of accountability

South Africa is a parliamentary democracy with a free press. The press has an important role to play in informing the voters on the affairs of the state and its delivery of services. The press also plays the role of making policy makers accountable to the public through its various media. And elections give citizens a very direct “voice” over service delivery as they can reward those who delivered and punish those who didn’t. Nevertheless, politicians might not feel very strongly accountable to the voters on a day-by-day basis with respect to service delivery, mainly because elections are periodic events and relatively rare. Hence additional “voice” mechanisms are needed.

With this in mind, the Public Service Commission noted that “...citizen engagement can sometimes be a challenge in new democracies, where the process of democratic decision-making (decision-making by elected representatives) may be incorrectly regarded as a substitute for citizen participation. The latter remains crucial even if there are legitimate and democratically elected representatives in place”.

We can only improve citizen’s voice by looking beyond elections. Other mechanisms for citizens to hold policy makers accountable include mechanisms such as public disclosure, citizens-based budget analysis, service benchmarking, program impact assessments and strengthening the media. The working hypothesis to be tested in the South African context is that intended beneficiaries of key public service programs often have imperfect information about them which restricts their ability to access them, and produces an inefficient policy feedback loop.

Compact and contracts: long route of accountability

The key question to ask is “does a service provider have the incentives to provide the service”? For instance, is his pay affected by whether or not services are provided? Internationally, high absenteeism rates of teachers in schools and nurses in clinics are obvious examples of a lack of such incentives. Absenteeism of teachers and nurses is also found to be a problem in South Africa (from focus group studies).

Contracting is one mechanism to strengthen the incentives for service delivery. Through a contract, a service provider’s pay will depend very directly on the extent to which the service is actually delivered. However, contracts need to be very specific to clearly define what constitutes good and bad delivery, and this often reduces their flexibility. Also, you will need to be able to clearly observe delivery, putting a premium on good and unambiguous information. For these reasons, contracting works best for services which are easy to monitor and non-discretionary, meaning that they do not require additional, context-dependent decision-making by the service provider. Contracts do not work very well if these conditions are not met. South Africa has extensive experience with contracting for public service delivery, ranging from toll-roads and garbage collection, to the provision of free low-income housing. There is a need to review this experience.

Think of “compacts” as “contracts” between the politicians, say the Minister, and the department. Compacts are well developed in South Africa. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1997) advanced a vision of an accountable public service. The Public Financial Management Act of 1999 obliges public service providers to account for public expenditures based on the outcomes of the services provided. Independent international comparisons such as the Open Budget Initiative conducted by the International Budget Project which rated South Africa’s national budget transparency among the best in the world. South Africa’s Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is considered international best practice. Inputs and outputs are measured as part of elaborate strategic frameworks with performance indicators. In addition, all senior managers in line departments are required by law to enter into performance agreements with their principals. For
example, in City of Tshwane there was a promise that we will "... install 8,200 meters of bulk water pipelines and 14,168 meters of internal sewer networks as well as 5,000 new meters to non-metered households in the City." Furthermore, "the Roads and Stormwater Department will appoint 57 emerging contractors as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme which will create approximately 788 jobs."

What are the drawbacks to these compacts, if any?

First, if outcomes are difficult to observe and measure, they risk being substituted with outputs. For example, in the Department of Land Affairs, senior officials have difficulties convincing some of their staff that "just delivering land" is not enough and that other services need to be put in place at the same time. The response is often - "that's another department's problem, not ours". So some officials feel that the outcome, which is a successful land reform project, is not their concern. Their concern is to deliver land only. But if they are only judged on how many hectares have been delivered and how much budget has been spent, this is quite rational behaviour. Second, compacts focus primarily on the accountability between policy makers and service providers, rather than on the relationship between service providers and clients. Some service delivery crucially depends on the interaction between the service provider and the client to ensure that the right service is being provided. Think of the difference between giving a child a flu-shot (no discretion involved), and teaching him how to learn how to read and write (lots of discretion involved).

The drawbacks of compacts, then, is that they can lead to too much focus on inputs and outputs at the expense of outcomes. This affects in particular services that are not easy to monitor by the policy maker and/or require discretionary decisions to be made in consultation with the clients.

Choice, participation, monitoring and disciplining: short route of accountability

In market transactions, relationships of accountability are clear because they delegate from client to service provider and finance, perform, inform and enforce. The client can simply choose not to buy the item and go somewhere else. But for non-market transactions there is a need to somehow increase the client's power over the provider. How? For instance, by introducing user fees to create an incentive to monitor; by giving clients choice; or by empowering the client to participate, monitor and discipline.

When politicians/policy-makers/senior managers lack good information with which to establish whether or not the services are being provided, the clients might be in a better position to provide the information. This "short" route works also very well for service provision when clients are very heterogeneous. Strengthening the short route typically involves increasing client participation in service delivery planning and implementation, and, if possible, providing clients a choice of service providers.

Mechanisms

There are various mechanisms for ensuring accountability. These include citizen report cards, empowering communities to exercise decision-making in service delivery planning and implementation, introducing payment or co-payment for service, vouchers, information and transparency, constitutional guarantees and recourse to law.

On citizen report cards, the Public Service Commission has been conducting citizen satisfaction surveys since 2002. This culminated in three surveys of more than 15,000 citizens on 34 services. The survey showed that there was low level of consultation with clients. Increasing such consultation was the main policy recommendation by the PSC.
Another initiative was the Citizens’ Score Card pilot by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) and the World Bank in Tshwane. It showed that Tshwane citizens were in fact quite satisfied with many services, but it also showed that only 17 percent of all residents in the selected townships had even heard of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which is supposed to be a participatory exercise.

Do instruments like Citizen Report Cards work, in the sense that they cause better service delivery? In a 2007 Bjorkman and Svensson conducted a study of the impact evaluation of citizen report cards project in the primary health sector in rural areas of Uganda. They used a randomized field experiment approach, the strongest of all impact evaluation methodologies. Citizen report cards improved access to information, local organizational capacity to effectively use the information, and unambiguously improved the quality and quantity of health service provision. The study discovered that one year into the citizen report card programme, there was a 16 percent increase in health services; significant weight-for-age z-scores gains for infants; and markedly lower deaths among children under the age of five.

On the idea of empowering communities, the most radical method is known as Community-Driven Development (CDD), which involves placing resources directly under the control of communities to execute their own projects. CDD has become a widely-used method to implement and maintain small development projects in many countries in the world, in particular in Brazil, China, India and Indonesia. Not so in South Africa, though. A review study conducted by David Everatt and Lulu Gwagwa found a remarkable dearth of CDD in South Africa, noting that it used be much more widespread before 1994. A focus group study by Khanya-acdd (Participatory Service Delivery Assessment) stated that all stakeholders (communities, service providers, and politicians) were unanimous in saying that there should be a better and more accountable relationship between clients and providers. The hypothesis, then, is that the absence of such client participation and monitoring results in poor service delivery in several key areas.

Would the short route to accountability work in South Africa? Judging by the anecdotal popularity of successful “hotlines” such as the National Anti-Corruption Hotline; the South African Revenue Service hotline; the Department of Social Development’s hotline for reporting social grant fraud, and the Department of Home Affairs’ sms-based facility, this might be an idea whose time has come. Why not extend these to many other services? What we still need to try out, though, is Community-Driven Development.

**Strengthening long and short routes of accountability: Decentralisation**

In South Africa strong legal frameworks for decentralization exist. These include the Public Finance Management Act, the Municipal Systems Act, the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, and the Municipal Finance Management Act. However, most observers agree that the interpretation of these laws is often overly rigid, because of a lack of more practical guidelines.

At the same time, these new laws and policies were often superimposed on an intricate system of apartheid laws, rules and regulations. In many areas, this has resulted in a combination of legal and administrative provisions that is very complex, and very difficult to interpret and operationalise, especially for the front-line service providers. This complexity often undermines capacity and initiative that exists at the local level, preventing further decentralisation of public services. The “Ethembalethu” case study we recently did about a group of farmworkers trying to buy land and establish a village in Muldersdrift makes this abundantly clear.

Successful decentralisation also requires very clearly defining roles and responsibilities in between the spheres of government. Decentralization to provinces has occurred in a number of areas, either mandated by the Constitution or as part of a Ministerial delegation. However, limited decentralization to districts and municipalities has happened, even though the Constitution explicitly enshrines the principle of subsidiary to guide decentralization. The hypothesis would be that local government service delivery assignments are underdeveloped. A number of critical services could probably be directly executed at the local government level, e.g. the housing program.

**Sector studies - research outline**

We need more studies that do an in-depth analysis of the institutional framework of accountability. These studies should focus on the “black box” linking public spending to outcomes. For instance, we need to know how much sector spending is budgeted to go to the poor and the non-poor. We need to do public expenditure tracking that measure how much of the sector spending actually reaches frontline service providers and the poor. Where are the leakages along the way? We need sector studies that place performance assessment against international benchmarks. Whether frontline service providers are actually present on the job? And when they are, whether they do a good job? We need to look at accountability at the level of actual delivery of the service. We also need to seriously study decentralization and community empowerment. We also need to push much more for serious impact evaluation, because many major public service delivery programs lack basic impact data.

These studies need to focus on empirical outcomes, and not only on inputs and outputs. These studies could use the framework of accountability among clients, politicians/state, and service providers. The policy reform agenda which these studies should address should answer the following basic question: what institutional conditions would support the emergence of capable, motivated frontline providers with clear objectives and adequate resources?

**Conclusion**

The international evidence is clear: service delivery can improve dramatically if we empower poor people to monitor and discipline service providers, if we raise the voice of poor people in policy making, and strengthen incentives for service providers to serve them.

**References:**

Participation and accountability for sustainable development

Russell Wildeman, Idasa, outlines the challenges of participation and accountability

This paper will focus on the work that Idasa has been involved in, largely in the area of participation and accountability. I will however start by locating Idasa in it, through a brief vignette on the re-orientation of Idasa and the relevance of this to our current approach. I will then look at participation challenges in South Africa and Africa. This will be followed by a discussion on ways of unlocking participation challenges. I will provide three case studies from African countries to demonstrate this.

Re-orientation of Idasa: implications for our approach
Idasa has been re-defined as an African/continental NGO. South Africa is now only one of the African countries we work in, but South African experiences are vital for the rest of the continent. This re-orientation has had implications for existing programmes and how we continue to organise ourselves within the organisation.

The Budget Information Service (BIS) programme deals with issues such as sectoral budget analysis and special interest groups such as women and children. It also deals with budget process and institutional reform research, which includes the role of Parliament and civil society in participating in the national and provincial budget process. Lastly, it deals with applied budget analysis training for NGOs in SA and the rest of the continent.

Another programme, The Right to Know (RTK), interrogates issues about access to information and administrative justice, party political funding and so forth.

These two programmes, namely BIS and RTK, have been consolidated into one programme called the Economic Governance Programme (EGP). Our explicit aim with this programme is to put the politics back into economic governance and accountability issues so as to enhance the voice of critical actors in the democratic project on the continent. Our presentation today thus draws from research, advocacy campaigns and the vast experiences amassed in these two Idasa programmes.

Participation challenges in South Africa: Parliament
I want to note a lack of conferred powers to amend the budget is key, but realisation that Parliament needs to re-invent and re-organise itself in anticipation of amendment powers. Without such efforts, the granting of amendment powers will make little difference to the present status quo.

Despite massive strides in the budget reform process, the present legislative budget process does not allow sufficient time for budget scrutiny. For example, the budget committee has seven days to hold hearings and present a report to the House. Parliamentary committees are under-resourced and struggle to access high-quality independent analyses on the executive's budget.

Too much of the so-called budget debate happens on the floor of the House instead of in committees, thus limiting public participation. Scope for participation is further dented by the tabling of the Division of Revenue Bill with the national budget.

Following from the above, the role of the NCOP in the legislative budget process is still under-utilised, especially since the Division of Revenue Bills is not a money bill. There is a definite need to give the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) greater legal clarity to allow it to operate on the same level as the budget bill and Division of Revenue Bill. The present MTBF is not yet fully explored as a viable point of entry for the legislatures and the public.

Participation challenges in South Africa: Civil society
The budget reform process has arguably delivered some of the best budget and supporting documentation in the world. This quality competes with and exceeds almost all of the major first world countries. Despite this glut of information (and thus participation) opportunities, civil society has not fully utilised these new resources consistently enough.

There is also a tendency for civil society to focus too much on the big picture and not more fully engage the finer details of the budget. Opportunities, civil society has not fully utilised these new resources consistently enough.

There is also a tendency for civil society to focus too much on the big picture and not more fully engage the finer details of the budget. Opportunities, civil society has not fully utilised these new resources consistently enough.

Participation challenges in the rest of Africa
In most African countries, there is a lack of parliamentary involvement in setting strategic priorities. It usually has the rubber-stamp approval capacity and with existing political constraints. Budgets usually are meaningless and actual spending differs from approved budgets. There is ineffective audit and accountability, quality of audits and legislative capacity. In addition, there is lack of transparency which hinders oversight through the budget process. Political expediency is widely visible. This is evidenced in countries’ willingness to supply donors with relevant service delivery information, but refusal to do so for ordinary public on supposed grounds of “capacity”.

Unlocking participation challenges
In South Africa, Parliament and the Executive must do a deal on amendment powers. Parliament’s capacity issues must not be used as an excuse for the deferral of this important legislation. Legislation needs to spell out the amendment powers of Parliament (unrestricted, restricted, balance budget). Legislation also needs to be clear on the fiscal management style/role of Parliament (USA, UK, Swedish model).

Legislation also needs to be clear on how the benefits of an empowered Parliament serve important democratic objectives.
should also be clear about how risks to government's fiscal position ought to be managed, thus preventing the two arms of government from developing in completely opposite directions.

Parliament needs to re-organise itself so that it has a committee structure that facilitates the co-ordination of amendment proposals. It should also re-organise so that it interacts more dynamically with departments, especially senior bureaucrats, to obtain the best possible service delivery and implementation information.

The Parliament should adopt a far more medium-term focus in its engagement with budgets. Given the failure of corporatist institutions in the post-1994 period to develop consensus on key social and economic issues, Parliament needs to re-invent itself as the assembly where national issues such as HIV and AIDS, poverty reduction and socio-economic rights are debated.

Civil society should more fully utilise parliamentary processes to get their advocacy messages across - this implies civil society's support for amendment powers legislation. It should also use existing legal provisions more aggressively vis-à-vis the right of access to information. It should begin to view engagement with the budget as part of its core responsibilities and not just engage in “policy talks”.

Civil society should also use existing socio-economic rights provisions in the Constitution and test these rights in South African courts. This is a direct form of participation in the budget process, although this modality of participation eschews the parliamentary route. However, Parliament is still required to deal with the consequences and fallouts of such legal challenges, thus reinforcing its role as the premier assembly of the South African people.

The key lesson from South Africa is that transparency is a prerequisite for participation, but not enough in itself to assure participation. It's vital therefore that key institutional, legislative and capacity deficits be removed to solidify the link between transparency and participation.

**Case study 1: Oil revenues in Chad**

By 2001, Chadian civil society groupings started mobilising around the issues whether government has the political will to use oil revenues for poverty and community development. GRAMPTC started work on oil revenue transparency and monitoring. It initiated the Oil Revenues Management Watch (OGRP) to cultivate citizens’ interests in the use of national resources. GRAMPTC collects, analyses and disseminates information on public expenditure in general and oil revenues in particular.

This key partner monitors information such as the crude oil quantity produced and sold; transfers made to the Chadian City Bank’s account; and the allocation of funds to the priority sectors and their uses.

This key partner also contributes to the setting-up of oil-related PRSP through which oil revenues and other resources are managed. It also contributes to the monitoring of socio-economic, legal and environmental aspects of oil projects. It also monitors information to international partners/organisations about the overall state of transparency in oil revenue management in Chad.

The Idasa brief was to train coalition members in budget analysis, budget monitoring and budget advocacy. This was to be done.
using the Chad national budget, the IMF documents/writings on Chad and the Chadian PRSP.

After the first round of training, we agreed that further work was required and organised an exchange programme in 2005 where one-on-one mentoring was done. Although one should never claim a one-on-one correspondence between our involvement and subsequent outcomes, we can report that oil revenues have been integrated into the national budget. We can also report that there appears to be far more equitable transfer of oil revenues across the regions.

In terms of the overall poverty reduction strategy paper process, our observation with our Chadian partners is that there is a fair allocation of national resources to priority sectors. The net result of these actions is that economic governance is receiving increasing priority and citizen participation not only helped move the country forward, but became more focused.

In these complex environments, it is critical to trust your country partners and rid yourself of South African “we know how to do it best” attitudes.

**Case study II: Advancing child’s rights through the budget in South Africa**

The Children’s Budget Unit (CBU) of Idasa was established in 1995 with the objective of conducting research and building capacity, and disseminating information on the government’s budgeting for children and how it advances their constitutional rights. A strong focus of the CBU research was the accessibility and effectiveness of the child support programme.

Through research done in 2001, the CBU was able to establish that there was a lack of administrative capacity in provincial governments, which hindered access to the programme. It also established that funds allocated to the programme did not grow in real terms, which generally implied under-prioritisation of this programme.

One of the strong recommendations concerned raising the age-limit for qualification for the support grant from six to 14. Other recommendations included that government improved data on the grant, maintain real value in the budget, and allocate resources to improving the distribution of the grant in rural areas.

The study was widely discussed at provincial workshops with civil society groups and provincial legislatures. It led to the building of alliances with organisations such as:

- People Participating in Poverty Reduction Project and the National Committee for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect;
- The Child Justice, the Community Law Center and the Alliance for Children’s Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS); ACESS mobilised around this issue and delivered a petition to the Minister for Social Development requesting for the extension of the grant to the age of 18 years.

While one remains cautious about a simple (policy) cause and effect situation, the government increased real resources to the child support grant in 2003/04 and also raised the age-limit to 14. One key participation lessons here is that successful participation involves access to relevant research as well as critical mass of people promoting a specific expenditure agenda.

Successful participation also benefited from a fecund policy and political environment (Taylor Commission and agitation for the Basic Income Grant). Finally, alliances are painstakingly built and sometimes involves compromise and trade-offs internally before a joint public position is tabled.

**Case study III: The right to basic education (Malawi)**

The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSQBE) was founded in 2000 with the objective of achieving measurable change in the quality of basic education by 2005. Key to the activities of this role player was the promotion of free universal basic education and reduction in adult illiteracy.

Primary survey research was the main methodology and the results from this were to be used to advocate and lobby politicians in government and Parliament. Although the first survey was carried out and results disseminated, government was scathing about the sampling frame and dismissed the results out of hand. The survey covered basic public expenditure tracking issues (leakage and timelines of payments/transfers) as well as a comprehensive inventory of learner support materials.

In this situation, we have not enabled their vast participation successes but our approach is to ensure that gains are sustainable so that their research becomes more sophisticated and yet remains accessible. With regard to the latter, we sent one of our media specialists to help them to develop a coherent advocacy and dissemination brand. They can use the results of the survey analysis to question the assumptions of the existing budget allocations for basic quality education.

One of the real problems still is to simplify their budgets because they still follow a line item approach, thus making it hard to pull together the heart of assumptions that drive education spending. For us, the key participation lesson seems to be that nothing can replace inter-personal relationships and attention to institutional branding in the media.

This after all landed them an audience with finance and education ministers.

**Concluding remarks**

Supporting participation in the government’s budget process is an important organisation principle, but what do you do in conflict situations in which you increasingly work (blood on the floor issues)? Also, how do you ensure that your work/interventions are not manipulated to serve partisan political interests?

In many African countries, donor aid and cash budgets render the notion of public participation problematic and accountability becomes doubly complicated. An abiding challenge remains to move from “participation” to “meaningful participation” and to reliably and validly measure the latter. This lands us in the terrain of policy outcomes and the notion of sustainability - we have come full circle.
Transformational and appreciative leadership

South Africa has taught me that this land belongs to all who live in it and that this democracy we have today is a heritage of countless treasures. We have made so many strides since 1994, so much that we are often inclined to behave as if what we have is going to be here irrespective of whether we work hard to protect and strengthen it or not.

As the fruits of liberation, democracy, human rights and non-racialism become common in our lives and no longer subjects of distant yearning and dreams as was the case in our dark recent past, sometimes we do not sit back and take full cognisance of the meaning of it all.

I believe that increasingly progressive societies have to realise that women have a pivotal role to play in fostering transformational and appreciative leadership in all spheres of life. The recognition of women-centred leadership in our society is undoubtedly one of the opportunities through which a society can begin to give birth to a truly transformational and appreciative leadership.

Speaking for women on the margins

Whilst I am humbled by your gesture for inviting me, I however remain aware that there are many in our society, scores of nameless women, whose voices are either not being heard or are deliberately being marginalised by dominant and powerful classes. I will therefore endeavour to also speak for these women even though I too have limitations since materially our lives are now markedly different.

My effort this morning in this regard would basically be to remind all of us that these women who live on the margins, face incalculable abuse, wrenching poverty and the cruelty of countless diseases are human too and cannot be wished away. These women's plight should continue to prick our consciences and inform the decisions we are able to take or influence wherever we are.

In 2004 the South African scholar Niven Postma revealed that a study of all the companies listed on the JSE Securities Exchange and 17 of the largest state-owned enterprises, showed some interesting statistics. While women made up 52% of the adult population in South Africa, they made up only 41% of the working population, 14.7% of executive management and only 7.1% of them were women. Furthermore of 3 125 directorship positions held, only 221 were held by women and only 11 of them chaired boards out of a total of 364.

Well, it's three years since the study showed these figures and one might say that perhaps the situation has changed somewhat in 2007. I, however, doubt that much has changed and this intransigence is reflective of a dominant leadership ethos that does not fully appreciate the role of women in our society and is not conducive to transformation.

Government cannot do it alone

I am therefore suggesting quite strongly that the transformation imperatives of this nation, particularly as it comes to women and black emancipation, must not be left to government alone. Wherever we are today in positions of influence, deep down we know the socio-economic barriers that afflict our society and must genuinely interrogate our very own actions, inactions and prejudices. We must beat our inner selves and ask: Are we doing enough? Am I doing enough?

When April 27 happened in 1994 South Africa became a beacon of hope that the world had never imagined. I actually doubt that we too as South Africans had ever imagined a world without apartheid, a world without the Group Areas Act, the Immorality Act, Separate Development Act and so on. Yet we emerged from the nightmare and the madness to embrace the peaceful dream and live the normal lives of decent citizens in most parts of the modern world.

But as we all have come to appreciate, April 27 was just the beginning of our collective journey. In 2007 this journey continues, and a gathering such as yours in a sense is part of that journey and must therefore attempt to be sincere in its review of our times and its litany of bliss and woes.

The organisation I work for, the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, is in the process of doing this reflection I am talking about. This is even more urgent for us as we celebrate our 10th anniversary this year. As many of you will know, the IEC was formally established in terms of Chapter 9 of the country's Constitution and the Electoral Commission Act of 1996. We are undoubtedly one of the most critical pillars of South Africa's democracy and believe that you, the general public, must continue to expect the highest service delivery standards from us and where we falter, we must be prepared to accept our shortcomings and learn from them.

The IEC - a glorious history

Right at its inception the IEC philosophical ethos and mandate were intrinsically transformational as, for instance, we came into being on 1 July 1997 when South Africa had no national common voters' roll. Therefore, under pretty challenging conditions, we started the process and by the end of 1999 had successfully compiled the first national common voters' roll that contained more than 18 million names. This was definitely a remarkable achievement for South Africa.

It's ten years now since the IEC was born and today South Africa has more than 20 million people on the national voters' roll. How many people realise today that in 1997 we had no voting districts in this country? Yet, between June and November 1998, the IEC created 14 650 voting districts for the first registration weekend and today there are 18 873 voting districts.

Dr Brigalia Bam, Independent Electoral Commission, takes time out for reflection as the IEC celebrates its tenth anniversary.
Of course South Africa has also successfully declared “free and fair” election results following four general elections; has held generally peaceful electoral contests; and brought in a wide range of ordinary citizens to partake in our democratic processes through the ballot box and other constitutional vehicles.

Today South Africa is a new world. My reference to the glorious ten years of the IEC is made for two main reasons. I am trying to show that the axiom which says that “charity begins at home” is a valid one and must continue to be one of the hallmarks of great leaders. Secondly; as the IEC celebrates, it is appropriate that this milestone is understood as a collective national accomplishment.

Clearly, as an organisation our success would have amounted to naught had we not been able to rally the support of the majority of our citizens in whose democratic interest we exist in the first place. Through various channels and forums, South Africans and various government and non-governmental agencies in this country and abroad, the IEC has been strengthened and encouraged to fulfill its mandate to its best ability.

We are not about to take this support, trust, confidence and goodwill for granted. We hope that indeed in years and decades to come we will continue to fiercely guard our independence and enhance its dedicated service offering so that our democracy thrives into the future.

In a nutshell, robust independence is integral to the attainment of transformational and appreciative leadership since without solid core principles, an organisation may be so rudderless as to be swayed without end whenever the currents swerve.

**Discipline and reflection**

Transformational and appreciative leadership is also about the discipline of reflection, particularly when the storms are calm. It is about tuning one’s ear to the resonant note in-between the music. It is about the delicate art of symphonic harmony when the music is elegantly charming and is, at face value, with no gaps that need to be filled. The desire for this kind of far-sighted leadership must be a subject of greater poignancy when one is riding the crest of a wave.

How often do we sit back and reflect when all is going well in our organisations? How often do we ponder as individuals about the past, the present and the future when all seems to be going pretty fine? The mindset that is captured in the cliché that says “don’t fix it if ain’t broken”, is in my view a lame excuse for self-righteousness and shows laziness to constantly re-invent one’s organisation or oneself.

The lesson here is that transformational and appreciative leadership is about keeping the constant desire for innovation and self-improvement alive. This desire must forever be burning in us like Durban’s hot curry. If we keep this desire vibrant in all of us, then we will amazingly enhance the relevance of our organisations to their customers, shareholders and varied stakeholders. Undoubtedly once our organisations lose their zing for desire and innovation, they in essence begin slow and certain natural deaths.

**Long term planning**

Not so long ago I read with a great deal of humour and intrigue in the Financial Mail when someone observed tongue-in-cheek that prior to the arrival of foreign competition, legend was that South African companies used to define long-term planning in terms of what one wanted to do after lunch. Surely if this kind of thinking was or is still pervasive in certain organisations and professionals, it is the kind of stuff that thwarts progress and makes organisations wasteful and inefficient?

The lesson here then is that without the benefit of long-term strategic envisioning, we cannot at all genuinely regard ourselves as transformational and appreciative leaders. Planning allows us thoroughgoing deliberations and the sharpening of our thoughts. It makes us more able to appreciate our environment and therefore respond to its demands as creatively as we should.

Transformational and appreciative leaders are therefore those who place a major premium on forecasting and incisive reading of the holistic climate under which they do business. Such leaders take time and see the value of sharing quality time pondering the next step.

When I learnt communication many years ago in America, one of the lessons I learnt was that a journalist is as good as her last story. In this sense whilst you can be admired for having spent a number of years as a journalist, it is your most recent output that matters the
most and shows whether you still have what it takes to be a force in the trade. That’s not an easy code to live by and I’m sure our ladies and gentlemen from the media in our midst would attest to this.

**Success must be sustainable**

Going back to the example of the IEC, my point is simply that we too face the enormous challenge of ensuring that the success we have today remains with us into the future. Now that we have shown our qualities as an organisation, ours now is the onerous duty of resisting complacency and stopping at nothing to make our success sustainable. This is another hallmark of solid transformational and appreciative leadership – nothing is taken for granted and critical resources are brought to bear to guarantee continuity in performance excellence. The long haul is a categorical imperative.

Incidentally the current edition of the Harvard Business Review deliberates on the very issue of enduring success pretty cogently. The prestigious journal provides the results of an illuminating study carried out by Christian Stadler, Hans Hinterhuber and Franz Mathis. The trio, assisted by eight researchers, conducted groundbreaking research on Europe’s oldest and best companies to determine what was at the heart of their enduring success.

Again, here one derives invaluable lessons towards the attainment of transformational and appreciative leadership. According to Stadler, “Our goal was to understand why some companies have managed to perform at a very high level over very long periods of time. What can we learn from their experience? What did they do that set them apart from other old, large corporations that, while successful, were not so extraordinary?”

**The four principles of enduring success**

This painstaking research resulted in four main findings, which Stadler’s team calls “the four principles of enduring success”. These principles are:

1) **Exploit before you explore**: Throughout their history, the great companies in the sample always emphasised exploiting existing assets and capabilities over exploring for new ones. How often do good organisations with good profit margins and a good customer base suddenly think because someone else has done it, they too must go out and expand their business externally?

   How often do we take the diligent and high-calibre staff we employ for granted and behave as if we can at the wink of an eye get rid of them and replace them with even better and more diligent staff? I hear young people today telling me that their romantic relationships, or even marriage for that matter, fell apart because they just got bored and had to move on! Clearly such behaviour demonstrates a serious failure to be firmly rooted first before exploring the broad canvass that the world has to offer.

   After all as priests often counsel when a couple ties the knot, there will never be a stage in life when third parties will look more beautiful and charming than your current spouse. The bottom line is that we should all be rooted in principles that we will abide by no matter the challenges of the hour.

2) **Diversify your business portfolio**: Good companies tend to stick to their knitting but great companies know when to diversify. In his seminal book, The Art of Innovation, strategist Tom Kelley says that “no one gets ahead by copying the status quo”. Here the principles of prudently managing risk by diversifying and removing the fear of change are paramount.

A great leader therefore is one who is not afraid of enhancing progress by bringing on board other minds to enrich the pot and ensure that there is food for all today and tomorrow. If one is too wedded to the status quo, nothing fresh and innovative occurs and we are instead stuck with mediocrity and almost debilitating complacency.

3) **Remember your mistakes**: Great companies tell and retell stories of past mistakes and so work harder at avoiding their repetition. I believe this should be true of great nations as well and for that reason I do not subscribe to the notion that we should forget the past and move on. The past is a university we should never abandon provided we get rid of hatred and prejudice. In a transformational society such as ours, an evocation of the past is part of standing up to its ugliness and committing to its undoing.

4) **Be conservative about change**: Negative as this may sound to some, it is basically about the lesson of making change after a careful analysis of the situation so that the change that is introduced lasts a long time. In other words, change must be carefully studied, be well reasoned and not be emotional.

   At times the pace of change in South Africa can be frustrating depending on where one stands on the expectation ladder. My view is that whilst so much still needs to be transformed, overall South African leaders across the spectrum have shown a propensity for effecting change that is manageable and does not lead to chaos and uncertainty. Learn to manage or lead for the long-term.

**Contemporary South African politics**

Before I conclude, let me now turn my attention to the realm of contemporary South African politics and address a few issues broadly. The last few months and weeks have been pretty disturbing and at times hurtful for those of us who believe that our democracy is just too precious to be muddied by narrow political ends. This development has of course created a frenzy in certain quarters as pundits of varied persuasions look at this young nation and wonder if we too could be going down the ferocious road that have seen, until recently, many African countries face uncertainty, political strife and the sheer waste of human talent and human resources.

   The political spitefulness that is now often played out in the media suggests quite strongly that we perhaps need to remind one another that yes, indeed, robust debate is central to democracy yet it too requires responsibility and a certain degree of decorum towards one another. No matter our political differences we must never forget to treat one another with the human decency that underlines the national bond of our collective South Africanness.

**Conclusion**

South Africa is another country today. Nothing is perfect and never will be. Side by side let us nevertheless take it as our collective responsibility to safeguard this country’s constitutional gains. Let us do whatever is possible in our organisations and as individual leaders in various walks of this beautiful land to make sure that the goal of a better society for all remains more valid than ever before.

   Wherever we are as South Africans let us all recognize that in each part of the country the freedom and democracy we have fought so hard for becomes a reality then no one, no matter how cynical, dare doubt and dismiss. This tenet will make transformational and appreciative leadership even more relevant and immediate to a South Africa that is in transition and adorning colourful wings.
The threat of mediocrity in state institutions: challenges for public sector leaders

I would like to start by saying that I care a lot about people and as a result I like to observe how they behave. I have developed a number of programmes on change management behaviour, leadership, team building and so forth. Here I am not going to make a call as to whether the public service is mediocre. Rather, I seek to pose a number of questions in order to address this issue.

There are two questions that I would like answered by the reader at the end of reading this paper. The first one is: Is the public service is mediocre? The second question is, can leaders do something differently?

Mediocre or effective
Are departments, units, branches yielding the results that we would like them to yield? Are processes efficient? I have been in the public service and one process that I have always wanted to challenge is the process of human resource recruitment. I do not think an effective recruitment process can take up to six months just to replace a person that has resigned. This happens quite frequently in the public service.

The existing supply chain management system is not a system that can lead to the cheapest quotation and not necessarily the most qualitative of quotations. So there are a number of processes that we need to revisit and explore their efficiency.

Are decisions that we are tasked to make prompt and proper? How much time does it take to make and effect a decision in the public service? How much time does it take for a decision to be made and effect in the private sector? In the public service, you find a submission that has up to four individuals who must look at it before a decision can be made. Is this the most effective way of taking decisions, or does it delay the progress that we want to make a public sector?

Are institutions coordinated? How does it happen that a public clinic does not have water supply when water supply is the function of a public service institution? Was there no proper coordination between these two state entities to make sure that when public service initiative is delivered to communities, it is coordinated through all the role players? Are we a public service organisation or a set of uncoordinated organisations?

Are systems that we use really state-of-the-art systems? I am a finance person by training and have noticed the finance systems used in the public service and think they need a lot of improvement. How can we improve performance management systems for better results in the public service?

Role of leadership
I do not intend getting into an academic exercise on what a leader should or should not do. I think there is a big gap in leadership in the public service. As long as we do not have the right calibre of leaders in the public service, we will not be able to improve the lives of our people.

To what extent are our leaders defining and refining goals of government? How much time do our public service leaders spend with their staff, and if they do spend time, what do they spend that time doing? Do they know where the organisation is going and what is required of them to fit into the organisational goals?

Are our public service leaders motivating people sufficiently and making them want to belong to the public service? To what extent are people still motivated? Are people carrying public service duties because they are motivated or because it is just a job?

Do we believe that we are purposeful in how we drive programmes and processes forward? Or do we believe we have lost the drive ourselves as leaders? As a leader, are you still teaching people something?

Are people that work in the public service adequately skilled for the functions that they perform? Do we employ her because she is my girlfriend or because she has adequate skills to perform the required task? Do we employ him because he was an MK veteran or do we employ him because he can discharge the duties? We need to look closely at how we recruit in the public service.

A fundamental question, are we ourselves using the services of the state? Are our children studying in public education schools? When our mothers get sick, do we send them to public hospitals or private hospitals? Do we go to public institutions when we get sick? Do we use the services that we deliver to the people of this country? If we do not, why don’t we? Is it a subconscious acceptance that services are not as proper as we would like them to be?

I will be happy if we all send our children in our public schools when it is where the best education is and we have put adequate systems in our government. Until this happens, I think there is a subconscious acceptance that maybe the services we provide are not as efficient as we would like to make use of them.

The questions lingers, are services that we are tasked as government efficient or mediocre? Do public servants feel proud to produce their business cards and say he/she is working for government? Or do they feel small just because they work in the public service?
As long as we do not have the right calibre of leaders in the public service, we will not be able to improve the lives of our people.

Leadership challenges

The main challenge facing leadership is how to translate intention (strategy) into action. There are a number of broad national strategies in South Africa; how are leaders translating these into action? Most of the strategies are not hitting the ground because of lack of leadership ability to translate strategies into action.

How do we optimise and sustain performance? How do we implement technology and systems in the shortest space of time with maximum impact? I always say that an implementation of a system that takes a year is not good enough because a system is not a service delivery issue, but a mechanism to deliver a service. The leadership must also have strategies to retain committed and competent people.

Conclusion

Great leaders in my view primarily achieve results. They know what they want and how to get it. They get involved and do not remove themselves from the organisations that they lead. They know more about the organisation than the sum-total of the people in the organisation. They are firm, but very fair. They are extremely humble. They put themselves and their interests last. They are felt by the organisation even in their absence. They steer extremely dynamic organisations.
Leadership and management development for operational excellence

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) is a provincial establishment that is involved in dialogue in leadership development, but also at a regional and international level. Looking at the educational environment, there are three categories of leaders in this sector. At the bottom is the aspirant leader, in the middle are practicing leaders (which will be the focus of this presentation), and experienced or seasoned leaders.

The point of departure therefore is that we need to acknowledge that we have leaders who are at different levels with different needs. They cannot be treated as if they all need the same kind of leadership development.

In this paper I want to talk about the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) which is a Level 6 Qualification. I will focus on our practical experience in delivering a leadership development programme aimed at improving practice. I intend to explore four areas. Firstly, I am keen on exploring what is the problem that we are currently experiencing in education? Secondly, what is the response? Thirdly, what is the experience to date? I will conclude by asking where to from here?

The mischief
The problem that we are sitting with in education is that there are principals that are not prepared for their role. In other instances you find that good teachers are promoted to the principal positions, when they do not even want to be promoted in the first place. But if that is the only way that they can advance themselves in terms of earnings, most of them accept these promotions even if they do not have the disposition or skill of being principals. Given our history, you find that most problematic teachers get removed from children into offices where they work as principals. So we need to look at recruitment strategies for principals.

There is also a minority of principals who are at war with their staff and community, lack any idea of policy, use corporal punishment and have no idea what goes on in classrooms. In addition, many principals who lack confidence, accept absenteeism, follow policy in talk not action, and have poor administration abilities. The challenge is how do we transform schools with these principals in charge?

I also have to restate the problem of good teachers getting promoted to principal positions without prior knowledge and skills for this leadership position. Evidence shows that good schools are only those that have good leadership in their principals. So it is an important variable in addressing issues of delivery in the education sector.

The response
The route that South Africa has taken was to introduce an ACE qualification which is targeting serving principals, new principals as well as aspirant principals. Just to reflect on content issues, literature on leadership and management there is consistency of ideas, which leaves very little space for innovative content.

I want to just mention one thing that I think is innovative in such literature and this is the notion of the practice-based qualification. Practice-based qualification means that the assessment and confirmation of competence is demonstrated on site and not in a lecture theatre. The qualification has to match the competence on the ground. This has been the fundamental shift which has been adopted by the Department of Education (DoE) in the roll-out of its qualifications.

Deciding on the structured intervention for school leaders has been a long journey. We looked at a number of models worldwide. What we found very useful was the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) which we then contextualised to our reality. The key in this qualification is that the original design of the SQH programme was based on the notion that professionals develop their practice most effectively by maximising their experiential learning through engaging in reflective processes.

The SQH emphasises the link between theory and practice. The pedagogical approach of the SQH programme was developed with great attention to these beliefs. Central to the approach was the inclusion of school-based projects where candidates had to carry out a programme of change in their own school.

As a result our qualification seeks to assist the participants to apply theory to practice in the context of their own situations. It focuses on the need for participants to take action in the workplace to apply and test their learning. Lastly, the ACE seeks to increase the confidence of participants in a supportive, but realistic manner.

The programme also seeks to achieve three competencies which are laid out in the Educator Norms and Standards. The first competency is the practical competence which is the demonstration of ability in real or authentic context. There is also the foundational competence which is a demonstration of an understanding of the knowledge or thinking that underpins an action. The last one is...
reflective competence which is the demonstration of the ability to integrate or connect performance, decision-making with understanding, and ability to adapt to change.

There are some principles that need to be considered in this leadership development. When implementing the programme, we need to make sure that the target group are practicing professionals with experience and varying levels of expertise. The unique characteristics of schools in South African terrain need to be considered. The programme also needs to embody values and principles, and take into account the social dynamics involved in changing practice.

Training must be about developing professional practice and accessible. It must fit into the wider strategy of school improvement and service delivery. Training must also be supported within the system, inside the school and the wider system of education.

The experience

In terms of the ACE delivery thus far, we have cohort networks where we bring in practitioners on an ongoing basis in a structured environment to reflect on issues that are important in the delivery of their work. The first cohort that we had starting in 2004 graduated in early 2006 and recorded a 95% throughput rate. The second cohort, which is the class of 2007, scored 82% in its throughput rate. We have also gone beyond the first two cohorts, as the DoE is looking at national rollout of the ACE.

We are also looking at something called the Gender ACE because we have a limited view of what we should do to empower women in a structural way in the education sector. When we did a survey, we found that in primary schools in Gauteng there is a 50/50 ratio in terms of males and females. But when you go to secondary schools you find that 66% of principals are male and 34% female. This is not going to correct itself without a decisive strategy.

The environment that has to receive women that are going through these empowerment programmes needs to be sensitised. This is because parents and school governing bodies still want a male principal to lead their schools because females are still not viewed as having the kind of authority and competence that males have.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to ask where to from the ACE? How do we decide on who takes part in these programmes? Unfortunately the decision lies with the bureaucratic structures. There is also a problem of principals resisting to go to the programme because they think attending implies they are problem principals. We need to tighten up on contractual obligations for principals who do not show up having enrolled and those that do not fulfill the requirements of the programme.

Also what we are beginning to look at is a two-year qualification course. The other challenge is ensuring continuous professional development through non-formal and informal programmes. You cannot look at improving operational delivery through school leaders if capacity building is seen only as an event that happens at a particular time. As a result we can never reach a stage of complacency or educational utopia. There is a constant need for continuous collaboration, improvement and networking.
The function of the South African Receiver of Revenue Service (SARS) is to collect money. We also spend a little bit of money in the process of collecting money. However, a lot of our work has been to encourage the tax-paying culture and compliance. We educate people about their responsibilities in order to promote a better climate of compliance.

Continuous improvement in service has also been the focus of our organisation. This is critical because it is through our service that the citizens judge us. They judge us by what we deliver, and not what we say. So education and service are two critical pillars in what we call the compliance model. We also take enforcement seriously mainly because a little stick does ensure compliance in the area of our work. This should be done in a fair and in an impartial way. Our goal is to make our institution a success story in order to make South Africa a better democracy.

If you look at our core business in revenue collection in 1998/1999 we collected R184 billion in taxes for government. In 2007 our target is R556 billion. This gives some idea of the growth that has taken place in our economy and the efficiency of loyal taxwomen and taxman. In the last ten years the Minister of Finance has probably given about R90 billion in tax cuts largely to individuals. So tax rates are coming down, but the revenue still increases. This is quite an achievement.

While all this happening, government has been able to extend its expenditure on social security in the form of grants. It has also contributed to improving our own administrative capacity. About ten years ago individuals in South Africa used to contribute about 46% of the revenue collected. Today, as a result of the tax cuts and the change in the pattern of compliance, individuals only contribute just over 30% of revenue collected. So in the past revenue dependence was on individuals. Today companies which were paying about 10% ten years ago are now paying about 22% of the overall tax. This gives some idea of the changes that have taken place.

In addition to collecting money, we have to enforce on one hand and service and educate on the other. In South Africa we are not only changing the culture of individuals, but are beginning to change the culture of corporate South Africa to comply with their tax responsibilities. It is the culture that we have in society that will determine whether we are on the right path or not. If that culture is undermined then we will not be able to reach our destination.

For years we did not have what we now call the tax filing season. Most South Africans did not meet the deadline for their tax returns and everybody got an extension. Today about 60% of South Africans are filing on time, but if you go to the US or Australia, 91% of people are filing on time. So we have still got quite a gap to cover.

This is an important gap because it tells us about the attitude of the public. It also tells us whether we as a public administration are reaching out to this public in the right kind of way or not; whether we are doing enough to earn their respect; and whether we are doing enough to make it easy for them to comply with the requirements.

There is huge internal mobilisation within SARS which is coupled by the external mobilisation outlined above. During filing season we make sure that we occupy critical public space such as malls where the public can see us and get assistance with their tax returns from our employees. We are also working with employers where we requested them to allow us to set up tables in their premises to allow their staff to be assisted with tax returns.

This demonstrates that we are not just sitting in our offices as bureaucrats waiting for people to come to us. It says we are willing to go out and meet South Africans. I believe all of us in different government departments are capable of doing that. After the 25 April to the end of July 2007 on a weekly basis we had about 3 000 to 5 000 people on the streets of South Africa assisting with tax returns.

We have also had fantastic outreach in smaller town where we do not have offices. Through this process we have learned much about what South Africans want in terms of service.

Simplified processes

We have simplified the tax return forms and processes. I think there is a lot that we can still do, this is just the beginning of the process. Before, we needed supporting documents to accompany the tax return forms. Now we say that we trust the citizens write in the tax return form, but we can only trust what you write only if we have a risk management system. As a result we have built a risk management sys-
So as the forms are being processed, automatically the system will be processing the individual's profile and if there is something pointing to a risk indicator, the form will be kicked out and a SARS agent will then contact that particular individual to sort out the problem where the supporting documentation will have to be presented.

Both the filing season and the small business amnesty cases are good examples of how you mobilise staff, giving them a target to reach and allowing for innovation at local offices. In local offices people find their own ways of protecting themselves, travelling and working extra hours with some getting frustrated in the process. There is, however, tremendous amount of energy and passion and innovation in the course of doing this.

So our vision at SARS is to continue to work in a smarter and more efficient way and to introduce electronic processes without creating job losses. Secondly, our aim is to be more visible and in contact with the public. We also want to be more responsive. In order for us to be responsive, we need to have our ears and our eyes open. We do not have to always focus on what we think about something, but have to listen to what people say about the work that we do.

We need to be open to the public's feedback and take that feedback seriously so that as we develop our systems and programmes people can say "we made that suggestion and it has been taken into account".

Leadership lessons from SARS

What does leadership mean in the kind of context that we find ourselves? I want to give a quick response to this question. The first one is that we are aware of the fact that we have a higher purpose in South Africa which is very powerful. We are not public servants for our own sake, but we are here to serve South Africa. The state has to lead development and the state is nothing abstract, but us public servants. We can all talk about the developmental state and if all our energies are developmental, then it will become a developmental state.

Secondly, each entity that we operate within must have a clear vision of where it wants to go. This should go beyond the idealist views that are often placed on office notice boards, but it should be brought to the level of daily operation of the organisation. It should include how one wants to interface with the public. The vision must be of efficiency, cleanliness, effectiveness, politeness and treating people with dignity.

Thirdly, we have a philosophy that we have learned elsewhere, that education, service and enforcement will give us a better compliance kind of South Africa, but we have to do a lot of work to embed it in the minds of our people.

Fourthly, in order to lead such a process you need to take ownership and responsibility. Unnecessary passing of responsibility is discouraged. We need to be accountable for what we deliver. The more we demonstrate this, the more people that report to us will follow the lead.

The fifth point is that clear public service values such as Batho Pele need to be adhered to. At SARS we told our staff that they will not accept any gifts from the public because that contaminates our integrity. Managers must emphasise the importance of personal and organisational integrity.

The sixth point is understanding the business of the organisation and our individual roles in it. At this stage of development we need managers to understand our business and how it works or why it does not work. We can then dirty our hands if something is not working and we know what is not working because we understand the business.

The seventh point is that there has to be a delivery focus. We should not get too bogged down in whether policy is right or wrong, the priority should be delivery. It is where our reputation grows. Reputation does not get enhanced by correct policy manuals.

The eighth point is that we should help each other in building our capabilities. There is no doubt that all of us in our organisations meet capability challenges. There is potential in our environments. The challenge for managers is how do we exploit, grow and nurture that potential.

The ninth point is how do we mobilise and make our people enthusiastic? Making employees enthusiastic is the role of the leader. Unless the leader is passionate about delivery, nobody else is going to take anything seriously.

SARS regards itself as the centre of excellence, but we are by no means perfect. There are many challenges that we face. As we do better, the public expects more, so part of our challenge is that we cannot sleep. Part of our challenge is how we meet the growing expectations of the public.

Another challenge is that we do not work in South Africa isolated from our neighbours. Our neighbouring countries request assistance from SARS, and we are offering assistance in the region despite our limited capacity. We also have huge capability gaps that we need to cover.

Conclusion

In conclusion, clearly one of the things that we need to be aware of is that values and behaviour in the institution are two different things, and there is usually a gap between them. The challenge is how you close that gap.

Also, because we have so much to do in South Africa, we want to meet our bigger ambitions, but are inhibited by lack of capabilities. What should we do then to meet these ambitions? At SARS we have very good policies and ideas, but have an execution challenge. We need to strategise on how we finish what we started and deliver it in a way that we intend to.

Lastly, people judge us by the direct experience they have with us. One of the easiest things to do is change the experience where we interface with the public. A little bit of care and politeness when responding to the public's needs will improve their perception of government's delivery of services.
State of the Public Service

In this interview transcript Dudley Moloi pulls out issues from a conversation with Richard Baloyi who is a member of the parliamentary portfolio committee on public service and administration.

Assessment of the public service
There are successes and challenges with regard to the transformation and performance of the country’s public service which can give us an indication of future priorities and areas of focus. Overall, we have moved some positive steps and continue to be on course. The three tiers of government are now talking to each other in a clearly defined fashion and are arranged in such a manner that they are able to coordinate their activities.

We have also gone far in transforming the public service from a policy point of view. We are now in a position where we can confidently say that if all public servants could internalise their obligations to work towards the full implementation of Batho Pele, we stand a better chance of moving towards a public service that is accountable, responsive to the needs of the people and listens to the people.

Policy is only good to the extent that it is implemented, as an unimplemented policy is worthless. It is the responsibility of the portfolio committee to ensure that policies and legislation are implemented and cases of under-performance are dealt with through, for example, organising hearings of government departments or institutions on public service related issues.

An example of institutions which regularly provide input to the committee include] the Public Service Commission (PSC) which is an independent body specifically established to deal with issues related to public service monitoring and evaluation. While the PSC reports to parliament broadly, it more directly reports to the committee, which also plays a key role in the appointment of its commissioners.

The DPSA as a lead department in terms of public service policies also appears before the committee, while line departments may also be requested to appear in front of the committee should that be necessary.

South Africa is not an island. It is part of the continent and the world. That is why the portfolio committee will keep on benchmarking with the international best practices. We may undertake a study tour to a particular area to observe how the systems work, how we relate to them and what improvements we can make as far as our systems are concerned.

Mobilising public participation
The reasons behind some of the recent protests are many and varied. There is no one answer fitting all explanations from protest A to Z. Some of the protests may even be influenced by ignorance even amongst the protestors themselves. I raise that issue of ignorance in the context of people not being empowered enough in terms of understanding government plans, there is likelihood that they will join in protest actions and sometimes even demand things that are already articulated in the IDP.

This apathy and lack of readiness to participate in IDP processes is something that needs to be worked on. Of course there are areas where there are just negative influences, with people who use the simple language of service delivery for political motives.

In order to address this challenge we need to at all times consider the fact that participation is mobilised through agents who are able to arouse the community’s sense of and feeling of participation. Agents such as members of parliament or traditional leaders need to draw the consciousness of people around participation.

More importantly, participation should be encouraged by the conduct of public servants themselves because that is where people see the practical implementation of government service delivery goals.

Seamless service delivery
The debate on the SPS is still ongoing. Its shape will be a product of the engagement that is taking place before the bill is introduced to parliament. My own contribution is that a single public service is...
necessary and would ensure perfect coordination of needs identification and the deployment of resources across the three spheres of government. We should increasingly be able to have a situation whereby these spheres talk to each other.

Although Chapter Three of the Constitution says they have to be complementary, we need something more which would enable a free flow of resources. In fact we have one government in the country and local government, for example, should not be looked at as a different world and not part of South Africa.

We are not a federal state but more of a unitary state which requires a free flow of policies and services. Some people refer to a "one-stop-service without referral", in other words, there must not be an impenetrable wall between the spheres in terms of the flow of services. To me, let the detail come when the bill is finally introduced to parliament and let South Africans debate and share views. But as far as I am concerned the thinking is perfect as it is not about dividing this country or balkanisation. It is about creating a sense of oneness.

Decreasing provinces

The issue about the possibility of decreasing the number of provinces should be underpinned by the fact that there is one South Africa and that the service delivery policies that are decided upon are informed by factors that hold nationally. As such, there should be no such thing as being better served in one province as opposed to another. The policies are the same and cut across, even at local level.

In the same vain - does it matter whether we have nine or less provinces? The issue is that people would argue because they are used to having nine provinces or a particular kind of organisation. People hold strong views on either the pros or cons of reducing provinces. But if we understand that there is no independent identity of the provinces, either position would not make any difference. The number of provinces should not be an issue.

Rebuilding trust after the strike

If we talk of rebuilding, we assume that trust has collapsed. It means trust collapsed during the strike, which is true. We have been calling each other names - to some extent this was expected but it was at an exaggerated level. Unfortunately, we are parties in the act of governance as government and workers. So the call for rebuilding trust should be located in this understanding of a partnership in the act of service delivery.

In order to rebuild trust, we need to look back and ask whether there are policies, acts or collective bargaining agreements which suggest how we should relate to one another. Most of these building materials for trust are of course all there.

We need to make a careful selection of the building materials so that trust does not collapse at the slightest provocation. This means we must start with internalising our obligations to work according to the agreed upon policies and the laws of the land.

This call to rebuild the trust must be preceded by commitment of all parties to the cause of the public service, which would require debate. We need to look back and ascertain how trust collapsed and how we missed each other in the process, and explore ways in which we can relocate each other, because trust is earned, it is not given. Each party would have to earn the trust of the other party.
The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act: practice and implementation

Dr Lothar Jahn, GTZ Project Manager, discusses the implications of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act and how it can be used to implement the Batho Pele principles.

**How to practice the PAJA**

**What is the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3, 2000 (the PAJA)?**

The South African Bill of Rights guarantees the right to "just administrative action" to all in South Africa. This right (in Section 33 of the Constitution) says everyone in South Africa has the right to fair and reasonable administrative action that is allowed by the law; and to be given reasons for administrative action that affects them in a negative way.

This Section also required government to pass a law setting out the detail of this right. This is the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3, 2000. Hence, the PAJA says administrators must:

- Follow fair procedures when making decisions;
- Allow people to make representations before taking any decision that might adversely affect their rights;
- Clearly explain the decisions they take;
- Inform people of any internal appeals within their department. If there is no internal appeal, they must tell people they can take the decision on review by a court; and
- Tell people they have the right to ask for written reasons for the decision.

**Why do we need the PAJA?**

The government is running major programmes to meet the fundamental needs of the majority of the population. Most prominent are housing projects and allocation of social grants for children, poor and the old-AGED, and other grants or subsidies.

Although the resources are huge, they are also limited. This must be administered by the public service. For those individuals to whom resources cannot be delivered, it is important that government sets out in detail the processes required for the making and explanation of such administrative decisions. In other words, if no service can be delivered “just administration” must be the surrogate.

The surrogate must be consistent with the rule of law and democracy. These criteria are accountability, transparency, openness, fairness, impartiality, rationality and participation. The application of these criteria must facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration as well.

The PAJA is the tool to introduce those criteria specifically into the allocation processes. If the citizen, by being provided with reasons that justify the decision, knows and understands why a certain decision with adverse effects was taken, he or she may accept it that it was not based on arbitrary considerations. This does not necessarily require that he or she agrees with the decision. The mere fact that a decision is motivated with appearance of being correct will increase confidence in public administration.

**What are the PAJA standards of fair administrative procedures?**

The PAJA sets out procedures that administrators must follow before taking a decision and afterwards. Before taking a decision, administrators must give people whose rights may be affected:

- Proper notice of what they plan to do; and
- Enough time for people to make representations.

Administrators must consider these representations before they decide. They must also consider assisting people whose rights will be affected, allowing them to be represented by a lawyer, and allowing them to challenge any arguments or evidence that goes against them (either in writing or in person).

After taking a decision, administrators must give anyone whose rights have been affected:

- A clear statement of what they decided;
- Notice of any right to review or internal appeal; and
- Notice that they can request reasons for the decision.

Whenever the administration takes a decision that affects people’s rights, they are performing an administrative action and the decision-making process must comply with the PAJA requirements of fair administrative procedures.

The failure to take a decision can also amount to administrative action. For example, if someone applied for a pension but the application was never processed. The table provides some examples of administrative decisions which must comply with the PAJA standards.

**Is the PAJA also targeting administrative decisions where the general public is involved?**

There are two main types of procedures stipulated in the PAJA which deal with administrative decisions adversely affecting the general public. In the notice and comment procedure, the administrator must publish a notice saying what they are planning to do and asking people to comment. The administrator must then consider these comments before deciding what to do.

The other type of procedure suggested by the PAJA is the public inquiry. In this procedure, a person or panel is appointed to hear arguments from people at a public hearing. These arguments must also be considered before a decision is taken. In some cases, administrators may choose to use both notice and comment and public inquiry procedures.

If other laws have implemented different procedures regarding decisions affecting the general public the administration can depart from the requirements of the PAJA as long as the alternative procedure can be regarded as procedurally fair.

**To what extent is the PAJA a tool to implement the Batho Pele principles?**

Translating the general principles of Batho Pele into specific measures for public administrations is challenging. The PAJA breaks...
This illustrates that by implementing the PAJA, the Batho Pele principles are facilitated;

- By giving a person reasons for a decision, the Batho Pele principles relating to “accountability”, “transparency” and “redress” are promoted; and
- By furnishing notices explaining the rights to written reasons and of internal appeals (or judicial review) the empowerment of the affected person is facilitated and the “information” principle of Batho Pele is met.

This illustrates that by implementing the PAJA, the Batho Pele principles are also implemented. In this regard the PAJA may serve as a tool to implement the Batho Pele principles into the core businesses of the public service.

For example, if someone applies for a disability grant, they can expect to be told, before the final decision is made, whether or not this will be granted to them. If not, they can make representations (such as pointing out any relevant information that has not been taken into account). If the decision still goes against them, they can ask for written reasons explaining why this happened. If they still believe the decision is wrong, they can appeal to any appeal board within the provincial department. If they are still not successful, they can ask a court to review the matter.

**When must reasons be provided and how?**

Anyone can request reasons for decisions that adversely (or negatively) affect their rights. However, it is recommended to give these reasons immediately with the clear statement of the decision. The 90-day time period regarding requesting and providing reasons, which may in some cases amount to 180 days, is not really efficient and effective. Files must be found, reasons memorised and the decision-making process is made transparent to the relevant individual - as suggested by Batho Pele;

- By informing people about the intended decision and the reasons immediately with the clear statement of the decision.

**Table: EXAMPLES OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS (not comprehensive)**

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<tr>
<td>Refusal of tenders</td>
<td>Refusal of applications or withdrawal of local indigents from registration</td>
<td>Decisions related to refusal or withdrawal of approvals provided with conditions regarding to:</td>
<td>Decisions related to refusal or withdrawal of approvals provided with conditions in regard to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refusal of job applications</td>
<td>Refusal or withdrawal of different kinds of housing subsidies or referring</td>
<td>• Housing subsidies</td>
<td>• Social grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refusal or withdrawal of internal and external bursaries or approval</td>
<td>applicants to a waiting list Refusal or withdrawal of a building plan or</td>
<td>• Withdrawal from housing registration</td>
<td>• CASP related support to farmers</td>
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<td>provided with conditions</td>
<td>approval provided with conditions</td>
<td>• Adding application to a waiting list for housing subsidies</td>
<td>• Support to farmers in connection to land care programmes</td>
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<td>Refusal or withdrawal of subsidies or approval provided with</td>
<td>Refusal or withdrawal of land use or approval furnished with conditions</td>
<td>• Liquor licensing</td>
<td>• Import/export of animals and animal products, plants and seed</td>
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<tr>
<td>conditions</td>
<td>Refusal of objections related to building plans or land use applications</td>
<td>• Drivers licensing</td>
<td>• Import/export and use of GMOs</td>
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<td>Refusal or withdrawal of licences or approval provided with conditions</td>
<td>Decisions based on findings of building inspections</td>
<td>• Taxi licensing</td>
<td>• Decisions based on inspections related to trade control</td>
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<td>Refusal or withdrawal of certificates or approval provided with</td>
<td>Refusal of gatherings and demonstrations or approval provided with conditions</td>
<td>• Subsidies for taxes</td>
<td>• Decisions based on findings related to breach of environmental legislation</td>
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<td>conditions</td>
<td>Refusal of selling of stands or approval provided with conditions</td>
<td>• Decisions based on findings related to animal products</td>
<td>• Water licence</td>
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<td>Refusal or withdrawal of a liquor licence or approval provided with</td>
<td>Decisions based on findings of health inspections</td>
<td>• Hunting licensing</td>
<td>• Access permits to state forests</td>
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<td>conditions</td>
<td>Refusal or withdrawal of a liquor licence or approval provided with conditions</td>
<td>• Foot and mouth disease control</td>
<td>• Support grants for poor farmers</td>
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<td>Refusal or withdrawal of permissions for street hawkers</td>
<td>Refusal or withdrawal of permissions for street hawkers</td>
<td>• Import/ export or use of GMOs</td>
<td>• Firearm licensing and related decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>And other decisions</td>
<td>And other decisions</td>
<td>• Land lease, loans and grants for farmers</td>
<td>• Learner- and internships</td>
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<td>Failure to take a decision</td>
<td>And other decisions</td>
<td>• Registration of independent or home schools</td>
<td>• Petroleum products licensing</td>
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<td>• Subsidies to child care homes</td>
<td>• Funds for renewable energy</td>
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<td>• Subsidies to homes for aged</td>
<td>• Disaster disbursement of disaster relief</td>
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<td>• Registration of child care homes, homes for aged and treatment centres</td>
<td>• Decisions based on inspections related to breach of labour law</td>
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If this is not practised, written reasons must be given upon request. If people cannot write, the regulations also say that administrators must provide assistance to people who cannot write. So, a person could go to the office that made the decision and ask for assistance in writing down their request for written reasons.

The PAJA says administrators must give “adequate” reasons. Administrators cannot just say that they thought about the matter and reached their decision. They must say how they reached it. If the person requesting reasons has raised questions, these should all be answered even if they are not relevant. In short, administrators must provide a satisfactory explanation for their action. Of course, this does not mean that they have to convince the person that their decision was correct.

How to implement the PAJA

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and GTZ (the German Agency for Technical Cooperation) are conducting a project which aims at strengthening just administration. In the first project phase (1998-2001) the PAJA was drafted. This cooperation on drafting administrative law came to a successful end in 2000 when the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) was passed by Parliament and became law. Since 2000 the project focuses its efforts mainly on the implementation of the PAJA. Requests for the support to PAJA implementation can be e-mailed to ShMisser@justice.gov.za or ljahn@justice.gov.za

Progress in implementing the PAJA in the public service is still insufficient

A rapid assessment of the PAJA implementation was conducted in 2004. The report of the findings was submitted to the South African Cabinet in 2005 and published in the PSC’s annual “State of the Public Service Report” 2006. The report reads in a concluding passage as follows: “Implementation of the PAJA is not being prioritized or adequately addressed by government departments. Administrative actions are not being undertaken as prescribed by the PAJA.” These findings are still applicable to the present situation which means implementation progress remains a challenge.

Training is the wrong route to PAJA implementation

In discussions with members of the public service “training” is frequently used as a synonym for “PAJA implementation”. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The project’s task is improving PAJA compliance of the business processes and, if the need arises, subsequently provide training.

In the previous implementation phase a large number of public servants were trained in the PAJA. This training was concentrated on public servants within one province. Surprisingly, the subsequent evaluation clearly pointed out that the impact of the training was not as expected. The evaluations even disproved the assumption that training on PAJA would lead to PAJA implementation.

As a consequence, the implementation platform had to be shifted from skills development to the public service business processes. The project has departed from the idea that training is the key to PAJA implementation. This new route is hard to maintain because this goes against the well-founded general perception within the public service that training must always be conducted to improve service delivery.

The main factor: the PAJA is homeless

One explanation for the insufficient implementation progress is the poor response from the public service to implementing the PAJA since it is not sector-related. The Act cannot be attached to a certain sector because it is a cross-cutting legislation. In this context the PAJA is homeless.

This becomes obvious if the legislative procedure of the PAJA is looked into. The DoJ&CD focuses overwhelmingly on the judicial branch of the state rather than the executive branch of the state. But the DoJ&CD was the department responsible for drafting the Act. The usual institutionalised interdependence between “forming” (legislator and institutions) and “performing” (organizations) levels is almost absent. This may explain why a strong institutional mechanism to support the implementation is not really functioning.

This is also indicated by the fact, that none of the national line departments were ever asked about the state of PAJA implementation before “their” parliamentary portfolio committees. Hence, PAJA implementation is a more general issue and is discussed in general. From a line department’s point of view, this makes the discussion about the PAJA unspecific, diffuse and as a result not really relevant.

The legal advisors are those who will ring the bells to improve the department’s responsiveness to implementing the PAJA

As evaluations have shown the cross-cutting character of the PAJA dampens the commitment of the departmental senior management to implement the PAJA into the business processes. It appears that the main implementation task at the institutional level is to connect the PAJA legislation with the institutions and their organisations as it can be normally observed with sector-related legislation.

The PAJA must find many homes. The project has identified the legal advisors within the public service as those who have the potential to motivate the senior management to open the public service for PAJA implementation. They have the influence and the function to alert the senior management within the public service in case of non-compliance.

In other words, the legal advisors within the public administrations are the ideal change agents. Although they are not decision-makers, they are the actual owners of the public service business processes. That means their role is to:

- Assist in court matters;
- Ensure implementation of court decisions;
- Adjust business processes requested by court rulings;
- Monitor the department’s training needs; and
- Alert the senior managers if and what decisions are required to keep the department on track in terms of the actual legislation, policies and court decisions.

Their alarm system is directly connected to the court system. Actually, every decision coming from the court and addressing matters of the legal advisor’s unit is put at first priority. At present, legal advisors in the administrations are not productive in their role of implementing the PAJA because the Act is not as burning an issue as other topics.

Predominantly, legal advisors within the public service have to address on an ad hoc basis urgent matters coming from the senior management or the court system. In this context, the legal advisors
must prioritise their actions according to the damage which is at risk. They do not have the resources to work systematically in workshops or on projects even if that would lead to better performance.

The project speculates that an increase of unfavourable court decisions would make PAJA implementation a burning issue from the legal advisor's perspective. That may happen once the Magistrate Courts have jurisdiction on PAJA related matters. Then the legal advisors would ring the bells to alert the senior management and the PAJA implementation would gain momentum.

Conclusion

Improvements to PAJA compliance can only be made by working on the business processes which are composed of or shaped by the department's policy papers, IT-supported processes, file management, guidelines, manuals or forms in use. Training can just contribute to this setting after having implemented the PAJA requirements into the business processes. Once administrative justice has set anchor in business processes the knowledge is embedded into the organisation and institution.

The organisation's business processes seem to be the right place for sustainable results because they represent knowledge, experiences and procedures, which can exist independently from individuals and may influence individual and collective behavior within the organisation.

The project has identified one mechanism which would work ideally to improve the institutional ownership to implement the PAJA. The PAJA stipulates in Section 7(3) that the Rules Board "must (...) make rules of procedure for judicial review". The project did support the drafting of the court rules in the previous and the current project phases.

Once the Court Rules are enacted, this would shift the current jurisdiction of PAJA related disputes from the High Courts to the Magistrates' Courts. The effect would boost PAJA implementation since, almost suddenly, the number of PAJA-related court decisions would increase dramatically.
Women of Bethelsdorp arising and doing it for themselves – and for the good of the community

Bongani Matomela recounts a fascinating and enriching day he spent with the Bethelsdorp Womens Arise Co-operative

The Bethelsdorp Womens Arise Cooperative (BWAC) in Port Elizabeth is involved in events management, catering, candle making, draping, sewing, candlestand making, floral arrangements, and hiring crockery, linen and candle stands. The main aim of the BWAC is to empower women and youth in the community by means of training and skills development in various trades thus giving them economic independence.

Bethelsdorp, a vast “coloured” area in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, has predominantly women-headed households. Its farthest point on the eastern side lies at the banks of the Swartkops River in the city. It was a station, an old colonial outpost. Like most black areas, it has its share of challenges – poor infrastructure, drug and alcohol abuse, diseases, crime, unemployment, etc.

In order to address some of these challenges BWAC was formed in 2006 by a group of housewives in the area and on a warm but windy spring day I pull in to a garage at the entrance to Bethelsdorp to meet Christine Fortuin, the hospitality coordinator of the cooperative. I had first met her earlier in the year at a function hosted by the provincial Department of Social Development in Port Elizabeth. She arrives in small pick-up van bearing the project name and a list of the various services and activities.

Christine says that she and her colleague have been up since early in the morning providing a hospitality service at a function. Immediately we hit the road to go to the cooperative’s site – a big yard which houses a huge building. The building is the former Port Elizabeth College building, and this is where BWAC operates from.

We move into the building and Christine takes me to the rooms where they keep their project materials, and I take a short tour of the sewing and the hospitality areas where they keep the material for events and catering services. From there we go to the main office – indeed a very tiny office given the magnitude of work that is being done there, but comfortable and welcoming environment. Christine immediately set a sense of warmth as I step in and greet everybody gathered. There are 13 members of the cooperative (none of which has a matric qualification), 11 are women and two are men – one man is disabled. Seven members form the management committee of the cooperative.

The chairperson of the cooperative is Mrs Priscilla Leandars (popularly known as Moira), who has a long history of involvement in community projects.

Their objective, she says, is “to reach out to people so that everybody can experience what we experience ... If you look back 20 years ago we were slaves, and even today we still are. We want to change that. People are not empowered, the poor are getting poorer.” The cooperative is more interested in humanity than in politics.

All of this is demonstrated by the coop’s involvement in many activities and initiatives – cultural and arts, politics, social and community, business, etc.

It was not easy or smooth sailing when the co-op started, some left – they didn’t have patience because they were using their own resources to do everything.

A workshop was arranged to activate the project where they learnt a number of important points regarding the management of a cooperative. During the workshop, individual members listed their expectations which included efficient communication, mutual respect, commitment, unity and trust, accountability and responsibility, just and fair management, and the importance of skills development and empowerment.

Then there was the members’ expectations of the group which included teamwork, orderly finances, group unity, transparency, transformation, positive attitudes, shared visions and ideas, and strategic marketing and planning.

The beneficiaries of the project are the disadvantaged people of Schauderville and Bethelsdorp, and lately KwaNoxolo township, and the employees and trainees must come directly from these communities.

The project intends to serve as a vehicle to bring women together to address various challenges that they face in the community and alleviate these using available resources.

The project also seeks to align BWAC with other organisations with similar interests at national level and to leverage the relationships arising from these alignments to the benefit of both parties. Furthermore, it seeks to facilitate access to business resources, information and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in a manner that would promote their effective participation in global economy.

BWAC networks, organises and supports women entrepreneurs to ensure success and growth.

The cooperative is also involved in developing a database of people over 35 years of age with no work, and also matriculants. The women say their main objective is to empower youth and women. Their response to marginalisation is to start with something.

Because of the experience, BWAC now also motivates other people and women on how to do it, and is involved in doing this for other women in the townships in the city. Their future plan is to have between eight to ten employees. They are working with the Bethelsdorp Development Trust, they work with schools and churches, and have been featured in the Bona magazine as well.

Asked if the cooperative participates in some other local business activities with other associations, the response is affirmative. BWAC is a member of NAFCOC, and the local PE Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PERCI). They are also service suppliers to various organisations.

By the same token, the ladies are realistic about what they can do, “because we are new, we are going to move from one step to the other”.

The local business service centre, the Community Self-Employment Centre, also holds workshops where BWAC is situat-
ed. They are also in discussions with the Department of Labour and have invited them to come and see how many people are looking for skills acquisition and employment. They indicated that they also have a good working relationship with the MEC for Public Works, Mr Christian Martin, who comes from the area.

Besides the main activities of the cooperative, the project is involved in rebuilding the morality in the community, dealing with rape cases, drug abuse, and alcoholism, etc.

The women make the point that the "main objective is to unite". They participate in moral regeneration activities, have had discussions with the MEC for Sports, Arts, and Culture, etc. In sum, as they put it, "this is what government meant when it said people must govern."

When I ask how they are working with the CDWs, they respond to the affirmative and mention an upcoming October workshop on the CDW programme.

Moira says, "We want to be greater and be judged as good by those in higher levels, and we want to take people to higher levels."

Given all the hard effort they are putting in as members, I ask them how they are building and improving their own capacity to do more and better. The intention is to train some members in computer literacy and the management team will get management training as well to improve their management skills. There are some discussions going on with the University of South Africa over their support in this regard.

Another reason for setting up the co-op was to revive the culture and traditions of the people of the area, who are predominantly San. Moira is herself a Khoi queen, and they even participated in the recently held heritage northern arts festival as part of celebrating and reviving the San culture.

Although based in Bethelsdorp, one of the members of the cooperative, Mama Paullina, lives in the adjacent new "African" township of kwaNoxolo. This demonstrates how the work of BWAC has transcended all barriers and.

Mama Paulina had gone through trials and tribulations: living in a shack, losing her daughter and having to take care of her grandchildren. But ultimately she is now satisfied with a new house that was built for her by Habitat with the support of the city council. Life was not easy for her in the last three years as she was selling cardboard boxes to get food for her children and grandchildren, but now she says she is learning a lot.

Due to the success of the BWAC, payment of R5 000 was recently made to all members to share the fruits of their labour, and she has used that money for household needs. However, I quickly get told by her and the other women that the members are paying back the money in installments, putting it back into the project.

I go down to kwaNoxolo with Moira and Mama Pauline and as we drive they point to various sites and projects where they work and narrate stories of a gangster who turned into a business person running a taxi business and a fruit stall. They show me Mama Paulina’s new house, and behind it the old shack she used to stay in is still there, they say they decided to keep it as a symbolic mark.

Despite all the successes, the women are aware of their shortcomings. As they put it, "we are not immune to trials and tribulations, people aren’t perfect." Indeed, there have been ups and downs in the process, but they say they don’t have problems - they have great challenges. The ultimate goal is to break the culture of dependence.

"BWAC has exceeded all our expectations," remarks Moira. Clearly, the fact that now even profit sharing is possible is an affirmation of that.
In July 2007 Minister Fraser-Moleketi, in her capacity as Chairperson of the 5th Pan-African Ministers’ Conference, sponsored a SADC Experts’ Seminar on the review, update and domestication of the African Public Service Charter. The African Public Service Charter was formally adopted at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service (5-6 February 2001, Windhoek, Namibia)1. The objective of introducing the African Charter as a normative framework was to provide countries with the means to establish new approaches and adapt to the changes taking place at a phenomenal speed on the continent1. In other words the Ministerial perspective was that the African Charter would act as an “agent of change” to provide African countries with a soft landing in the public service transformative process that is sweeping across the continent.

This contribution reflects on the outcomes of the SADC Experts’ Seminar as well as making a case for African countries to recognise and embrace the African Charter as an important catalyst to the public service reform agenda on the continent.

This contribution traces the origins of the African Charter and its gradual evolvement into a thematic area within the overall framework of the Ministerial programmatic agenda. At the substantive level the contribution argues that the case for the adoption of the African Charter is in recognition of the need for principles and codes to establish normative prescripts for the practices that shape a public administration system.

One of the key observations at the SADC Experts’ Seminar was the acknowledgement that the professionalisation of the public service is a prerequisite for the improvement of the State, which, in turn, is necessary for the development of countries.

This work amplifies this theme and notes that public service employees must possess a series of attributes such as merit, ability, vocation for service, efficiency in the performance of their duties, responsibility, honesty and adherence to the principles and values of democracy. The contribution argues further that achieving a professional and effective public service is for any democratic society, an ongoing objective and a means of improving many aspects of existing institutional arrangements. The contribution cautions that the content, scope and intensity of the reforms necessary in each case will differ according to the various starting points. Key elements of the African Charter are identified and explained. The African Charter is in the mould of a legal framework. However a case is made for a set of principles as opposed to a rigid legal regime. A set of principles, it is argued, would provide countries with the necessary flexibility to tailor their reform agenda to the ethos of the African Charter without having to go through the rigmarole of Parliamentary ratification.

The contribution explains why the African Charter is central to efforts to build integrity systems within the public service. As the culture of enhancing integrity systems takes root on the continent it is critical to examine how the African Charter sits in the scheme of these efforts. A few challenges are examined and the conclusion is irresistible that the African Charter is a welcome innovative continental framework that will unleash its catalytic effect to the transformative processes taking place across the continent.

**Background**

Over the past few years, the momentum to sustain collective efforts and support national public administration reform efforts culminated in the establishment of the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service2. Since its inception, the Ministerial Conference demonstrated a commitment to move beyond the passive exchange of information towards establishing practices, codes and standards for public administration in Africa.

Ministers at the preceding Pan-African conferences were driven by a recognition that the establishment of basic frameworks for public administration would be central to enhance the overall effectiveness of the state in sustainable development.

The commitment to work as a collective to enhance governance and public administration effectiveness across Africa is reflected in the numerous historical exchange initiatives across the continent3. The second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, organised with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations and held in Rabat (Morocco) from the 13-15 December 1998, was a landmark event for African public administration as it set the foundation for establishing a Charter for the Public Service in Africa4.

The African Public Service Charter was formally adopted at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service (5-6 February 2001, Windhoek, Namibia)5. In keeping with the recommendations of the conference, a Ministerial working group, supported by a secretariat, was established to draft a charter for the Public Service.

The integration of the efforts of the Ministers of Public Service into the AU received substantive additional momentum at the 4th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service (4-7 May 2003, Stellenbosch, South Africa). In addition to serving as a platform for a brief evaluation on the implementation of the Charter, the 4th Conference served to ensure that the initiatives of the Ministers would be integrated into the AU. The Stellenbosch Declaration provided that the programme and Conference of Ministers of Public Service be under the auspices of the AUC6.

As part of Namibia’s overall leadership, a further forum meeting on the implementation of the Charter was arranged in Namibia in September 2005. In addition to reviewing developments within the terrain of Ethics and Codes across selected countries, the Namibian
meeting served to further reinforce the need to take forward the commitments and momentum established with the adoption of the African Public Service Charter.

In addition to providing a broad review of the status of the Charter, the meeting noted that the value of the Charter for enhancing public administration effectiveness needs to be reflected in the dialogue at the 5th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service to be held under the auspices of the AUC.

The overall consequence of the transition and the adoption of the Charter outside of the continental political structure has been a lack of coordination with other initiatives within the AUC and the absence of a direct linkage with the political structure of the AU. Whilst the Charter has been adopted by Ministers and is recognised by many countries, details of its usefulness and effectiveness as an instrument for building public administration capacity effectiveness remain sketchy.

Contextual framework

One of the most critical difficulties emerging from the establishment of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) has been the reassertion of the central role of governance systems and institutions in promoting sustainable development. This translates into an enhanced focus on establishing supportive continental and regional strategies and frameworks for building the capacity and effectiveness of governance and public administration across the continent.

Global changes and internal transformation in many countries have radically transformed the principles and foundations of public administration practice. Global changes have exerted pressures on the public sector to increase skills and capacities to deal with challenges of globalization and the opportunities that emanate from the use of new information and communication technologies. Internal transformation has also established the momentum for democratic governance as a means to achieve participatory and sustainable development. In combination, global changes and internal transformation have produced a need to re-evaluate the standards and codes for public administration effectiveness. In particular, greater emphasis has been placed on the principles of transparency and accountability, participation and responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and equity and access to services.

The challenges of the globalisation of standards and principles include the development of universal or regional codes of practice for evaluative purposes and the encouragement of countries to change and conform to global or regional standards. Within this framework, a further espoused value in establishing and enforcing common principles and codes is that they may be effective in establishing common practices across a public administration system and often assist in establishing mobility within the system and level of predictability in the practices within a particular system.

At the continental level, this may, by implication, result in commonness in approach and practice across varied systems of public administration. Such a development is likely to have a positive impact on establishing closer coordination.

Elements of the African Public Service Charter

The general provisions of the Charter adopted at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service are divided into four parts: the first defines the purpose and scope of application of the text; the second recalls the “fundamental and universal principles” of the public service, namely the principles of legality, neutrality, equality and continuity; the third part sets forth the rules governing relationships between the public service and users, which are based on the criteria of the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the public service; and the fourth part, which deals with relations between the public service and public service employees, stresses the obligations of the administration vis-à-vis public service employees with respect to the different stages of their careers, their remuneration and their working conditions.

The code of conduct within the Charter is divided into two parts titled “Fundamental values of public service employees” and “Rules of conduct of public service employees”. The last section deals with the modalities of implementation. The code defines the fundamental values of professionalism, integrity and respect that should guide public service employees, establishes the rules affirming the primacy of general interest over private interest and recommends that countries should undertake sensitisation and training programmes in these areas and establish follow-up and monitoring bodies.

The Charter, whose dispositions were adopted by consensus, includes the fundamental principles of the public service which African administration should observe in its relations with both its users and employees. It also includes the code of rules and conduct the public employee should respect. The African Charter is intended to be a useful instrument for modernisation and professionalisation of the systems of public management and individual public service employees in the countries of Africa. It is not a set of standards, but a reference intended to contribute to a common language related to the public service in Africa that fully takes into account the characteristics, cultures, history and traditions of each country.

A professional public service is part of the institutional system that enables the progress and welfare of the society. The design of public service systems will have an impact not only on the efficient functioning of governments, but also on the elements that affect the quality of democracy in the African region.

The issue of mutual rights and obligations of government and public officials also received the attention of the African Charter. The APSC provision is grounded on the basis that relations among the public service and its employees are hinged on professional merit and respect for human rights. For that reason, the last part of Chapter I highlights the merit and equal opportunity considerations in matters pertaining to staff recruitment and promotion, mobility and deployment, training and development, motivation, remuneration, physical safety, working conditions, and security of tenure.

More specifically, the Charter has 29 Articles addressing particular areas for evaluation and reform. Part II of Title I concerns the fundamental principles of the public service equality of treatment, neutrality, legality and continuity. These principles are necessary for an environment conducive to ensuring an effective public service.

Part III deals with the rules “governing relations between the public service and the users”. The rules include: proximity and accessibility of services; participation, consultation and mediation; quality, effectiveness and efficiency; evaluation of services; transparency and information; speed and responsiveness; and reliability and confidentiality of information concerning citizens.

In addition, Article 9 of the APSC, which deals with consultation and mediation, states that it shall be the responsibility of the admin-
istration to ensure that the mechanisms of participation and consultation involving civil society and other stakeholders are effectively put in place through consultative forums or advisory bodies. The importance of such consultative forums or advisory bodies cannot be underestimated. These institutions can go a long way in stemming adversarial relationships which usually exist between civil society and the public service, whether in regard to, for example, inefficient policing or lack of service delivery.\textsuperscript{16}

Part IV deals with the "relations between the public service and the public service employees" and relates to: recruitment and promotion; mobility and redeployment; staff training and development; motivation; remuneration; and physical safety, working conditions and security of tenure. This aspect is a crucial element of the mosaic that makes up the APSC.\textsuperscript{17}

Importantly, the APSC's greatest asset is that it moves beyond the narrow corruption confines and seeks to empower public officials. Through emphasising the importance of creating an atmosphere conducive to hard work, the APSC has already created a shift. Ensuring that proper recruitment systems are in place, evaluation systems for assessing promotion exist; and generally ensuring that hard work pays off, will create motivated public officials.

Botswana has a Performance Management System which, among others, requires government officials to develop and implement strategic plans, and to employ measurement systems to track their progress and outcomes.\textsuperscript{18} Performance reviews which track actual performance against achievement with respect to performance plans are also built into the performance management system.\textsuperscript{19}

Constant assessment tied into promotion can help build motivation and hopefully work against apathy. However, evaluation and promotion are empty goals without the requisite training and development. In Mozambique it has been noted that "the vast bulk of Mozambican public servants are not educated beyond secondary level - and 60 per cent are not properly qualified for the jobs they are doing". The Higher Institute for Public Administration has been established to train new public servants and existing ones since the correlation between training and proper rendering of services is acknowledged.\textsuperscript{20}

A recurrent concern in most readings on public officials in Africa is the poor remuneration public officials receive.\textsuperscript{21} In some cases they are not even provided with a living wage. Poor wages in no way condones corruption, but "dignity" must mean a living wage.

Title II, Part I deals with the "fundamental values of the public service employee" which are limited to two, professionalism and ethics. Part II deals with the "rules of conduct for public service employees" and these are: integrity and moral rectitude; conflict of interest; declaration of assets or illicit enrichment; and political neutrality and duty of confidentiality. These initiatives are usually captured in codes of conduct and anti-corruption legislation.

A report compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Public Economics and Public Administration entitled "Public Service Ethics in Africa" has examined the problems of public services in certain African countries. Significantly, the review included a focus on South Africa, Namibia and Madagascar. Although now dated, the review clearly illustrates that historical, socio-economic and political developments have informed public service trajectories.\textsuperscript{22}

From the report it is evident that although substantial legislation may exist to curb abuse by public officials, abuse still continues unabated. Madagascar, at the time the report was compiled, had not developed a comprehensive legal framework, whereas South Africa had, but was still facing significant corruption problems.\textsuperscript{23}

In South Africa, Chapter 10 of the Constitution\textsuperscript{24} deals specifically with the Public Administration. In Angola, Article 142 of the Constitution sets out the objectives of the Judicial Proctorate which is to "defend the rights, freedoms and guarantees of citizens ensuring by informal means the justice and legality of the public administration".\textsuperscript{25}

While it has been noted that a "... legal and constitutional framework provides the backbone for a corruption-free, ethical system of governance;"\textsuperscript{26} for a thriving public service, such legislation needs to be supplemented by training, awareness and support structures. Nonetheless, the provision of a legal framework is the first step to domesticking the APSC, once the requisite signing and ratification has occurred.

Part III deals with "implementation modalities" concerned with sensitisation and training programmes and the establishment of national monitoring bodies. Training of public servants is essential, not only for career development, but to instill a code of ethics and to create awareness of the repercussions of not abiding by the code of ethics. This once again reinforces the importance of creating a society which does not condone corruption. Initiation classes should happen monthly and it should be compulsory for new recruits to be inducted.

Further, the principles under Part 11, of the general provision which deals with the principle of equality of treatment, neutrality, legality and continuity are already enshrined in the public service laws of most African countries. This provides that "public service shall be provided on an ongoing basis and in all its component parts, in accordance with the rules governing its operation".

The Charter warns that "failure to comply with the principle of continuity may incur the liability of the administration in respect of any person who might have suffered harm on account of such failure."\textsuperscript{27}

The Charter under Part III focuses on "Rules Governing Relations between the Public Service and the Users". That provision dealt with issues under this heading: Proximity and access to service; Civil society participation, consultation, and mediation; Quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of service; evaluation; Transparency and information. Khan laments that the issue of Professionalism seems not to be adequately covered by the APSC. Yet professionalism is the obvious inspiration behind the clauses inserted in constitutions, the public service and various anti-corruption laws enacted in many SADC countries.\textsuperscript{28}

At the end of the day it is well to note Jide Balogun's assertion that the APSC should be viewed at "holistically" serving the interests of "civil society, the customer, the government, and the officials."\textsuperscript{29} This is important, since it informs the implementation and enforcement process. Civil society is a key element since it is often civil society that exerts pressure on governments to ensure effective service delivery. The "customer" or citizen,\textsuperscript{30} using Balogun's terms, has direct interface with the public official and as a result is directly dependent on the service provided by the public official.

The government is dependent on the public service to provide quality service, while public officials in turn depend on government to ensure that they are treated equitably, with respect and provided with, inter alia, proper working conditions and remuneration.
Consequently, interdependent relations are established and for the system to succeed, everyone has to do their part.

The first commission on institutions of governance looked at the current realities faced by Africa in the historical context of the coming into being of African nation states. Although there is a plethora of institutions in existence within countries, they don't always function efficiently. Leadership commitment is crucial. In the discussion it was argued that globalisation has weakened the power of governments, and that AU capacity on governance needed to be enhanced. It was asserted that traditional African values are the basis of good governance.

The need for integrity systems
Sustainable integrity was said to consist of three things: access to credible information, functioning institutions and engaged citizenry. The observation made was that Africa's strengths are its leaders, the utilisation of peer review, the regulatory framework, institutions and vocal citizens. Weaknesses include poor implementation, limited resources, lack of skills or capacity and weak management, among others. Three commissions focused on National Integrity Systems.

Throughout the entire continent, with varying degrees of success, there have been serious efforts by government, the private sector and civil society to combat corruption. The question remains, given such efforts, why corruption remains such an intractable challenge. Part of the reason is that the systems in place are not functioning effectively, owing to inadequate institutional capacity. Capacity-building efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) aim to build the capacities of these institutions in the public sector, private sector and civil society realms.

The Charter, as adopted at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service, places as a central thrust the need to adapt the different public services in Africa to the changes that African countries are experiencing. The changes are outlined as changes in communication and information technology, changing global trading patterns and the realities of poverty and income disparity.

In so doing, the Charter emphasises that in responding to the challenges, public services must respond in a sustainable, quality-conscious and efficient manner to the needs of users, whilst ensuring transparency and the respect for human rights.

Whilst recognising the need for flexibility in application and contextualisation, the Charter's underlying message is that there is a direct correlation between the application of the codes and principles it embodies, and the effectiveness of the country's public administration. At the 2nd Pan-African, there was general acceptance that in rehabilitating the role of the state, particular attention needed to be focused on the revival of professional values and the establishment of particular standards for public service. In establishing the process of drafting the charter, it was further noted that the process demonstrated a real desire on the part of African states to find additional means of coping with development problems by inculcating in the public service the behaviours required for dealing with current economic, social and technological challenges.

The efficacy and relevance of the charter as a change agent
It is important to bear in mind that the legal and policy implications of implementing the APSC will depend on the historical and socio-political context of each country. In many cases legislation, codes, training institutions already exist and therefore the APSC will only be necessarily to fill in the gaps and strengthen current initiatives.

It is significant to note, however, that in other cases no such legislation, codes or training exist, and therefore the APSC provides a benchmark for these cases. As a result, what must be remembered is that the APSC works with existing national initiatives and consequently the legal and political implications of implementation are dependent on national developments in the field of public service reform.

The general implications on human capacity development of implementing the APSC are best encapsulated by Balogun when he writes that: "The implementation of the Charter (read "African Charter") has wide-ranging human capacity-building implications. Acquainting all stakeholders with their responsibilities under the Charter entails exposing them to new ideas and best practices — in governance, customer service orientation and total quality management, interpretation and application of legal texts, and revitalization and professional ethos and practices."

"For the human capacity-building programmes to have the intended impact, the training institutions (which are currently in a sorry state) need to be revitalised. Specifically, they need massive infusion of financial and material resources. Above all, the instructors at these institutions need to be highly motivated, and exposed to new training techniques."

The training imperative can be a time consuming and, as noted, an expensive procedure, but the benefits will inevitably outweigh the negatives. Once again it is important to emphasise that human capacity initiatives may already exist in certain countries and that the APSC provides a guideline for countries to gauge their progress. Often effect cannot be given to the core principles of charters, treaties, conventions etc. because the necessary support structures are not in place or the programme lacks resources or the political environment does not foster democracy and the rule of law.

Detailed progressive anti-corruption legislation exists, with all the protection and safeguards for whistle-blowers, but the judiciary is not independent or inadequate resources exist for proper investigations to secure successful convictions of guilty officials. Similarly, if there is no media freedom, unethical practices may not be exposed.

The point is that a public service may have a customer pledge, a code of conduct, the necessary training and legislation, but may still not be fulfilling its duty. Reform of the public service cannot take place in isolation. There must be a commitment to develop a society imbued with ethics, morality, democratic values and legality for the public service to fulfil its duties. Only when morality, ethics and obedience to the rule of law are epitomised in our leaders and business people, will we be moving in the right direction.

A subject that needs to be considered under the heading of employer-employee relations is that of immunity. This relates to the issue of whistle-blowers. The need to protect the action of employees who in their wisdom and out of moral fortitude decide to alert a higher authority to the unethical behavior of his/her employer must be addressed. Cases abound where these officials are not only ostracised by the employer but also end up losing their jobs without consequent remedial action against the loss and the irrational act of the employer.

One fundamental issue the Africa Charter needs to revisit is situations where a civil servant decides to take, or carry out, discre-
tionary decisions. There is a need for a legal framework that empowers third parties (courts of law, tribunals or public defenders’ offices) to pronounce on the validity of the decisions, as well as the motive behind the action taken. The rationale should be to identify the category of decisions officials could take without any form of liability for the consequences of decisions that fall within the domain of “public interest”.

There is a need for guidelines on how to resolve such professional versus moral problems. There is therefore a need for an approach that marries both the public service reform thrusts with other elements in management to achieve the desired result of domestication of the APSC in SADC countries.

There is no doubt as to the scope and comprehensiveness of the African Charter. It has dealt with issues of concern to the four principal stakeholders. None the less, there is need for subsequent review of its ability to align its key provisions with the efforts that have been, and are being, made at the national level to achieve more or less similar objectives. It is also the responsibility of the courts of law, the news media and other constitutional structures established by the authorities to promote democracy.

Selected case studies

It is important to point out that most of what is outlined in the African Charter is common practice for most African Union member states. Various countries have developed service delivery charters to govern the interface between public servants and the citizenry. Some countries have even traveled the extra mile to require of every ministry or department that they develop service charters as a ry. Some countries have even traveled the extra mile to require of their respective spheres of competence to act any without fear of retribution. Some AU member states are currently making conscious effort to reorganise their public service into what is termed “customer-friendly”, or “Batho Pede”.

In the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pede) Government Gazette 18340, 1 October 1997) the South African government committed itself to honoring eight principles in service delivery similar to those outlined in the APSC provisions including the following:

• service standards: citizens are to be informed of the level and quality of public services they will receive to promote awareness.
• information: making information available to citizens, including full information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
• openness and transparency: citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run.
• consultation: citizens should be consulted on the level and quality of services they receive service delivery agents.

These reform efforts complement the objectives of the APSC and should be considered when incorporating the provisions of the APSC into local laws.

The Namibia Public Service Bill contemplates high levels of integrity, professionalism and efficiency. Besides outlawing divided loyalty and conflict of interest, it spells out grounds for bringing cases of misconduct against a public servant. It considers the performance of acts prejudicial to discipline and good administration, disobedience of lawful instructions, engagement in private business affairs without due authorization, public criticism of government or any of its agencies, use of official position to further personal interest or to advance the cause of a political party, misuse of public property, divulgence of official secrets for personal gain, consumption of alcoholic beverages while on duty, acceptance of bribes and gratification, commitment of a criminal offence, absence from duty without leave and without a valid reason, and false declarations as misconduct provided. The inclusion of the personal life of the employees into ethics is rather curious.

Part II of the Namibian Act may carry equal application to some African member states. Under that provision, misconduct has occurred where a member of staff “conducts himself or herself in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner causing embarrassment to the Government or to the Public Service or, while on duty, and is grossly discourteous to any person”. It is possible to view the Namibian Act as a little bit extreme for incorporating personal misconducts as against those done while on duty.

The South African Public Service Commission, in its State of the Public Service Report (2005: 23) states as a principle for effective service delivery that services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. It is therefore imperative to indirectly incorporate the basic principle of just actions which should be open to public scrutiny.

This aspect of public service delivery can only be sustained if society has access to information relating to the quality and quantity of the services provided. However, all these public service reform initiatives must be considered in the formulation of the final draft of the APSC for domesticating among African member states to avoid duplication of laws dealing on the same agenda.

The implications of the principles concerning public administration in South Africa are obvious. It implies that administrative actions have to comply with the Constitution, 1996, which is, as determined in Section 2 of the Act, “the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled”. It could therefore be argued that government is obligated in terms of the Constitution to determine and acknowledge the needs of society and ensure that those needs are satisfied.

Similarly, in Namibia, Part I, Section 2 of the Public Service Bill tabled before the National Assembly between 25 and 26 October 1994, stipulates: “There shall be a Public Service for the Republic of Namibia which shall be impartial and professional in its effective and efficient service to the Government … and in the prompt execution of Government policy and directives so as to serve the people of the Republic of Namibia and promote their welfare and lawful interests.”

It would seem as if the APSC has adequately addressed issues bordering on customer relations in its normative provisions. The APSC appears to be ambiguous in establishing links between this issue and the other aspects of the code - such as the establishment of ethics and integrity infrastructure.

A noticeable absence of any measure for enhancing professional ethical standards was identified in spite of the emphasis on “customer satisfaction”.

Fortunately, African member states such as Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Kenya and Uganda have identified
improved customer service orientation as a nucleus of their civil service reform programmes.

A localised approach to domestication

National circumstances often set constraints and determine the principles and foundations applicable to a particular national setting. Any intervention strategy must, as a consequence, address the varying conditions in countries throughout the continent. Establishing supportive interventions, within a context of governance and public administration diversity, requires recognition that frameworks must be driven from the country level and include the perspectives of different stakeholders. The process for establishing intervention strategies and the methodologies to be utilised is as crucial as the content of any proposed intervention.

In order to be effective, management principles, procedures, policies and practices that form the basis of a public service structure must all be placed in an appropriate context within the institutional framework in which they must function. Requirements deriving from history, traditions, socio-economic and political context of each country are determining factors as regards the specific components of any generic model. Moreover, the quality of the different national public or civil service systems within Africa varies considerably.

As a consequence of diversity of experience and contexts, there is much to suggest that the principles and foundations of good public administration must be derived from the cumulative experiences and insights of public administration in different countries at various stages of development. By implication, evaluative research on the effectiveness of public administration must be focused at the national level, before the resulting data and information can be collated at the continental level.

A country-level (bottom-up) approach to establishing the foundations and standards for public sector effectiveness does not negate a continental commitment to some core principles, as reflected in the adoption of the African Public Service Charter. The Charter and the codes it embodies provide a basis for evaluative national studies and a framework within which data may be collated.

The need to establish the foundational principles and codes relevant to a particular country, however suggests that a more focused country-level approach and methodology for implementation could serve to highlight national opinions and expectations on public administration.

The practices and approach embodied in the African Peer-Review Mechanism (APRM) embody both the application of standardised codes and a bottom-up country approach that emphasises localised processes for defining the standards or criteria that could be used to judge a country's performance. Rather than placing emphasis on imposing certain standards, the APRM emphasises participation in evaluating a country's governance performance. Learning from and complementing the APRM process suggests a shift away from the pure application of codes and a charter to varied country circumstances. However, as with the APRM, such an approach would still seek to be informed by global and continental commitments to particular standards, as in the African Charter.

Changing global and national conditions makes it difficult to define the generic principles or codes for public administration across different contexts. Public administration may not be universal in its effectiveness, responsiveness, quality or behaviour.

At a continental and regional level, the drafting and adoption of a public service code or charter is often perceived to be an essential instrument in ensuring that countries would initiate public administration change processes that would allow them to achieve higher standards of public administration practice. In so doing, a code or charter seeks to construct a direct relationship between the application of particular values and standards, and the ability of the country's public administration system to respond to the socio-economic conditions and challenges confronted.

Whilst at the national level such prescripts may be embodied in binding legislation and regulations, the matter becomes more complex when established as a framework at the continental level. Amongst the matters to be considered at the continental level is the relationship between the established codes (or charters) and country-specific experiences, the framework for implementing the standards and codes and the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.

In recognising that the application of global principles and codes to varied national contexts has limitations, it would be necessary to introduce an approach which builds on local experiences as a basis for constructing further continental supportive interventions. To establish a bottom-up country approach to the implementation of the charter, countries would be encouraged to conduct self-assessments on the "application of principles and codes to enhance public sector capacity effectiveness".

A set of principles as opposed to a rigid legal framework

The APSC is not a binding document. It was adopted by African ministers of public/civil service but the document has not been lodged for formal African Union ratification processes. In international legal parlance, a treaty, charter or convention is a binding agreement between states who are party to the agreement. The treaty, charter or convention, becomes binding once it has been signed and ratified.

The two laws are seen as separate and international law will never apply domestically unless the law has been adopted. This is merely the starting point, since most writers feel that ratification is merely the beginning. Ratification is simply an agreement by states of a certain core set of principles and values. The next important step is to determine how the laws will be applied and this requires a certain degree of incorporation.

Hopkins therefore maintains that there are two incorporation issues. The first deals with the state's obligation to the rest of community, in this case African community, while the second deals with the state's obligation to its citizens and the extent to which the international law is incorporated into municipal law and applied by the judges.

Christof Heyns and Frans Viljoen have noted, in the context of human rights treaties that two aspects degrading the influence of the treaty system are particularly striking. The first is the fact that the international system has had its greatest impact where treaty norms have been made part of domestic law more or less spontaneously (for example as part of constitutional and legislative reform), and not as a result of norm enforcement (through reporting, individual complaints or confidential enquiry procedures). Although in the context of human rights, their comment is still relevant.

Domestication of the APSC "as part of constitutional and legislative reform" is more likely to give concrete effect to the substance of the APSC.
Many charters adopted across the continent often fail to move to a stage of full acceptance as an effective instrument of the AU. The reasons for this are complex and varied, but do point to the need to focus substantial attention on the utility of a charter or a similar framework as an instrument to support public administration effectiveness across African countries. Moving a collectively established charter away from being an instrument of gentle persuasion to an instrument to enforce certain principles and codes is fraught with risks.

Not only will this require enhanced capacity for monitoring deviations from the code, but it would require that the enforcing institution be able to institute relevant disciplinary measures.

Therefore, even though the APSC has neither been signed nor ratified, other avenues exist at a continental level to enforce certain of the ideals, objectives and principles encapsulated in the APSC while simultaneously complementing and supporting it. The APSC provides a framework for an efficient, ethical public service and endeavors to protect all stakeholders.

Many African countries have sought to deal with some or all of the issues dealt with in the APSC. Individual assessments of SADC countries will need to be done to determine the extent to which they comply with the APSC. In certain cases it may be discovered that all the relevant requirements have been met, but unethical practices still occur.

Benefits of the charter
The main purpose of the Charter is to define the principles and general rules governing African public services. It also serves as a policy framework for the public service administrations of all African countries and a source of inspiration for the development, strengthening or updating of national codes of conduct with respect to transparency, professionalism, and ethical standards. Although the main provisions of the Charter apply specifically to the public service and their employees, four parties were actually affected: the citizen, the customer, the government and the employees.

Under the general provision, the APSC seems to focus on the activities of professional public service, to the exclusion of others. In reality, the public service is influenced by other external factors such as the political elites and the politician’s view of how the public service should function. The overall benefit to participating countries would be the peer support they would receive from other countries within the AU and the general benefits that can be derived from a transparent process of further establishing strategies for improving its public administration capacity.

In understanding the benefits and limitation of charters, it is also crucial to understand the value and limits of standardised principles and codes approaches to establishing public administration effectiveness. A standardised principles approach is to adopt a common set of codes believed to be fundamental to the development of effective public administration across national governments and national contexts.

One of the most straightforward reflections of this approach is the long-held tradition that good public administration is built on practices that ensure efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness. Whilst all the principles appear relevant, they often negate the fact that, in practice, there are trade-offs which render objective assessment of the application of the principles impossible.

Key challenges
The most important challenge resides in the manner in which the African Charter was adopted. Whilst it has been adopted by ministers and is acknowledged by many countries, it has failed to garner the grassroots support required to deliver the mandate of building effective and efficient public administration capacity in Africa. More fundamental is the status of the African Charter among participating countries. It has no binding force on its members, but rather is persuasive in nature, thereby implying that members are not obliged to domesticate and implement the charter.

The Charter has been hailed as being the most comprehensive Charter of Public Service that has emerged at a multilateral level. Its specific value is deemed to be the fact that it establishes obligations for all parties involved in establishing public administration effectiveness. Whilst comprehensive, the key acknowledged weakness was that, although it recognises the need for a mechanism to monitor and support implementation, it relies on the goodwill of countries for detailed implementation. The resultant reality is that very few countries have actually embodied, in a very direct manner, the codes into their public administration system.

Whilst asserting flexibility within the detail, universalisation or regionalisation of standards and practices has the tendency of not acknowledging that the nature, behaviour and effectiveness of public administration are highly dependent on the circumstances in which it operates. Cultural differences and different stages of development act to shape the orientation and performance of public administration systems.

Cross-national comparisons suggest that governments are at different points in embracing or moving away from standardised public administration models. Some have retained a centralised structure, whereas others have chosen decentralised models, allowing each ministry to tailor its systems. Such a state of affairs, where governments have made different choices and taken different paths, also poses an application problem for principle and codes rigidly standardised across nations.

Whilst many of the original signatory countries make reference to the Charter and there is supportive voice of ownership over the Charter, many countries continue to grapple with the contradictions inherent in the application of standard codes and principles across complex contexts.

This difficulty was reflected in ongoing dialogues on the application of the Charter in Namibia on the implementation of the Charter. Whilst the Charter embodied the limitations associated with the application of standardised codes and principles across varying contexts and countries at different stages of development, its central strength resides in the commitment that served to establish it as a collective project and the continuing commitment of Ministers of Public Service to an evaluative continental framework. As such, the Charter must serve as the central foundation for further supportive interventions by the AU and regional organisations.

As a result of the history of its evolution, the Charter was adopted by member states outside of the structures of the AU. Its existence outside of the AU system created a disjuncture between the AU’s commitment to supportive strategies for public administration and the continuing commitment of countries to the Charter. To close this gap, it is necessary that the existence of the Charter be recognised within the AUC and that it serves as the foundation for further supportive measures to improve public administration effec-
importance of customer service in public service reform. 51

when interacting with public servants. 51

rant who suffer most as a result of lack of knowledge of their rights

Pledge and ensure its dissemination. It is often the poor and igno-

mery action if a public servant deliberately impedes rendering of a

Forms of Media. The Pledge must make allowances for discipli-

The domestication and implementation of the APSC among

African member states will go a long way in reducing some of the

continent’s developmental problems. Highlighting professionalism

and ethics in the conduct of public affairs will no doubt improve

productivity, resulting in the elimination of the developmental

backlog under which some African member states have existed for

several decades. 50

Giving effect to the rules could be achieved through “Customer

Service Pledges” devised by the public service. Customer Service

Pledges will need to be disseminated and the public informed using

all forms of media. The Pledge must make allowances for discipli-

nary action if a public servant deliberately impedes rendering of a

service and behaves in an unprofessional manner. In this regard

non-governmental organisations must also be informed of the

Pledge and ensure its dissemination. It is often the poor and igno-

rant who suffer most as a result of lack of knowledge of their rights

when interacting with public servants.

Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland have noted the

importance of customer service in public service reform. 51

Furthermore, and this is closely related to training, public officials

must understand that they have entered the public service in order

to serve the public and not for personal gain. The sense of honour,

commitment and determination to make a difference must be

recaptured as reasons for joining the public service.

References

1. See the Windhoek Declaration, adopted at the 3rd Pan-African

Conference of Ministers of Public Service, held in Windhoek, Namibia, on

the 5-6 February 2001. In addition to the formal adoption, the Windhoek

Declaration requested that the Chairperson of the Conference submit the

text of the Charter to the 56th session of the United Nations General

Assembly. The Windhoek Declaration further emphasised the role of

CAFRAD and UNDESA in the implementation of the Charter.

2. See also the Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service adopted by

the 5th Ibero-American Conference of Ministers for Public Administration

and State Reform on the 26th – 27th June 2003, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra,

Bolivia.

3. The first Pan-African Conference of Ministers was hosted by Morocco in

1994 and was supported by the United Nations Department for Economic

and Social Affairs. CAFRAD served as the Secretariat for the first three

Ministers Conferences.

4. The established initiatives were supported by organizations such as the

African Training and Research Centre in Administration and

Development (CAFRAD), the Development Policy Management Forum

(DPMF) and the African Association for Public Administration and

Management (AAPAM). Many of the commitments translated into the

establishment of learning exchange opportunities (conferences, semi-

nars), training initiatives and the development of research projects and

publications.

5. See report of the Secretariat, Background and synopsis of the draft Charter

for the Public Service in Africa, presented to the Group of Experts on the

United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance,

Fifteenth session, 8-12 May 2000.

6. See the Windhoek Declaration, adopted at the 3rd Pan-African

Conference of Ministers of Public Service, held in Windhoek, Namibia, on

the 5-6 February 2001. In addition to the formal adoption, the Windhoek

Declaration requested that the Chairperson of the Conference submit the

text of the Charter to the 56th session of the United Nations General

Assembly. The Windhoek Declaration further emphasised the role of

CAFRAD and UNDESA in the implementation of the Charter.

7. See the Stellenbosch Declaration and the report of the 4th Pan-African

Conference of Ministers of Public Service, held in South Africa, 4-7th May

2003.

8. Whilst recognising the need for cooperation with regional and sub-

regional institutions and groupings, the Windhoek Declaration did not

provide for the submission of the Charter, for formal adoption, to the

Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Whilst the linkage with the conti-

nental structure was recognised by Ministers present, any movement

towards the OAU (and AU) would have impacted negatively on the rela-

tionships with Morocco. In its capacity as the host country of CAFRAD

and Chairperson of its board, Morocco was central in initiating the Pan-

African Conference of Ministers of Public Service.

9. See the founding document of the New Partnership for Africa’s

Development and the report of the 4th Pan-African Conference of

Ministers of Public Service.

10. See Report of the UNDESA Secretariat on ‘Bottom-up approaches and

methodologies to develop foundations and principles of public adminis-

tration: the example of criteria-based organisational assessment’.

Presented at the Fourth Session of the Committee of Experts on Public

Administration ( New York, 4-8 April 2005)

11. See Mills Alexander, Ethics Goes Global: The OECD Council

Recommendation on Improving the Ethical Conduct in the Public Sector,


13. The principles lie into the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and

Governance (ACDEG) since these principles will essentially have to be

imbued in society as a whole to ensure effective buy-in from the public

service.

14. A, Ditlhake. Legislative and Operating Framework for Civil Society-

Regional Overview. Gaborone, 14-16 August 2005.

15. Balogun in this regard speaks of the policeman who is ordered to open

fire on peaceful demonstrators. He maintains that “(a) public service

16. The signing of performance agreements by permanent secretaries, their

deputies, and heads of departments has been extended to local govern-

ment level, in Botswana.

17. Prof. S J H Hendricks, Acting Director-General, South African

Management Development Institute (SAMDI), South Africa. Visionary

Leadership for a High Performance Workforce. Public Service

Convention, Gaborone Botswana. 14-15 August 2006. [Online]. Available at:
20. Ibid

36. In South Africa, the Public Protector (ombudsman); the Human Rights
35. Kenya is one such good an example of a country with service charters for
34. Salim Latib cites as an example the issue of Accountability, which should
32. Naefa Khan notes for example that anti-corruption legislation may be in
31. Balogun. op. cit. pgs 16 and 17.
30. Ibid pg 11

30. Ibid pg 11
31. Balogun, op. cit. pgs 16 and 17.
32. Naefa Khan notes for example that anti-corruption legislation may be in place, but no legislation exists for the protection of whistle-blowers ibid.
33. In this instance Khan suggests - rather drastically that when a public service department contracts with a private company to provide meals to primary school children, and the company does not fulfill its duties under the contract, the company, as well as suffering legal action, must also be blacklisted.
34. Salim Latib cites as an example the issue of Accountability, which should not be seen as the duty of only the public managers and enforced by them as well ibid
35. Kenya is one such good an example of a country with service charters for every ministry
36. In South Africa, the Public Protector (ombudsman); the Human Rights
Commission; the Commission for the Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities; the Commission for Gender Equality; and the Auditor-General.
37. Batho Pele refers to people first and is a South African innovative slogan that sets out normative values to guide public servants to deliver efficient and effective services to the populations.
38. See Report of the UNDESA Secretariat on ‘Bottom-up approaches and methodologies to develop foundations and principles of public administration: the example of criteria-based organisational assessment’. Presented at the Fourth Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (New York, 4-8 April 2005)
39. Salim Latib: In ‘Towards a Framework for Public Service and Administration Capacity’ supra
40. See details of this argument in the Report of the UNDESA Secretariat on ‘Bottom-up approaches and methodologies to develop foundations and principles of public administration: the example of criteria-based organisational assessment’; Presented at the Fourth Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (New York, 4-8 April 2005)
41. See the APRM Secretariats Guidelines for countries to prepare for and to participate in the African Peer-Review Mechanism, 2003.
42. David Shimam A Human Rights Perspective [Online], Available at: http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumatch/hedseries/tb12/Section3/hr glossary.html
43. Indigenous Peoples, the UN and Human Rights, [Online], Available at: http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/publications/docs/indleafflet2.doc
44. Whether a national court takes cognizance of the document, which is then legally binding, depends on whether the state adopts a monist or dualist approach to international law. Monists believe that international law forms part of municipal law without the need for adoption, whereas dualists believe that international law applies in the international arena and municipal law applies domestically.
49. It is suggested that the peer review mechanisms as envisioned under the NEPAD should be used to guide or to offer resources and experience to individual country initiatives. The role of the NEPAD Secretariat in this should be clarified. The Questionnaire on Implementation of the Charter exercise is a necessary first step to self-review and to peer-learning sharing of information. Informing people about the Charter and making its rules accessible to agents in the public services of member states, is an important activity but regrettably, this information-sharing task could not be followed up either by CAFRAD or by the public services who had been notified of the document for a number of reasons.
50. To ensure the actualization of this objective it being suggested that NGO’s are brought on board in the implementation and monitoring of the APSC, particularly in the battle against corruption and transparency in public affairs. Creation of a Regional implementation, monitoring and enforcement Secretariat is an idea that should be discussed and debated. CAFRAD would appear best suited to carry out this undertaking of duties connected with this mammoth responsibility. UNDESA and the ECA can help with providing resources and collaborate with CAFRAD and UNDESA on the design and implementation of capacity-building and other efforts. UNDESA, particularly, can assist CAFRAD with needed information technology guidance for enforcement - a relatively new area. Through the UNPAN, CAFRAD can further link the African region to the global public administration network.
51. Ibid pgs 9-11
Review of state capacity for organisational structuring

Daniel Pienaar outlines the results of a survey on state capacity conducted for selected departments

Two studies were commissioned by government during the past four years to investigate the ability of the public service to deliver on its mandate, namely the Ten Year Review Series of papers (2003) and a report by the Forum of South African Directors-General (2005). Both suggested that government departments were faced with capacity limitations in relation to organisational structuring. Some of the findings indicated that:

- Organisation structure development focuses on the creation of posts with little attention paid to the purpose and functions of the department;
- There is insufficient consideration of the workload and interrelatedness of work in designing structures;
- The span of control deviates substantially between departments with 1:27 in some instances and 1:1 in others;
- There is a tendency to have senior posts at headquarters with few senior posts at the coalface of service delivery;
- Organisation structures are in many instances designed to cater for individuals rather than the interests of service delivery.

In response, the Cabinet Lekgotla of January 2006 directed that the Public Service Regulations be amended to state that Executing Authorities should consult with the Minister for Public Service and Administration (MPSA) prior to approving their Departments’ organisational structures. This was embodied in a Directive issued by the MPSA in July 2006. Moreover, Cabinet also mandated the DPSA to develop a “Guide on how to Design, Implement and Maintain Organisational Structures in the Public Sector”. As part of this process, the DPSA undertook a high-level assessment of the current capacity of the public service to conduct or support large-scale structuring.

Approach

The study was undertaken between October and December of 2006. Information was collected by way of interviews with selected officials in the national and provincial departments sampled. Categories of officials interviewed included Organisational Design (OD) Specialists, Human Resource Specialists and Senior Managers (from Director level upwards). Participating national departments included Education, Health, Housing, Labour and Social Development. Provinces consulted included the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, North West and the Western Cape. Interviews were designed to collect information in the following categories:

- The level of knowledge and skills on basic organisational structuring matters;
- Expertise and sufficient staffing to support and carry out major restructuring and
- Understanding of the regulatory framework of organisational structuring.

Interviewees were requested to rate their departments on a scale of good, medium and poor (and to explain their rating). In addition, data was obtained from the Vulindlela information system of the National Treasury, and existing legislation and guidelines were also examined.

Understanding of the regulatory framework

The existing regulatory framework governing organisation structuring in the public service includes the Constitution of 1996, the Public Service Act of 1994, the Public Service Regulations of 2001, the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and the Public Finance Management Act of 1999. In addition, the DPSA has developed a number of guidelines on organisation structures, including Guidelines of Integrated Human Resource Planning in the Public Service; a Guide on Job Descriptions; and a Guide on Job Evaluations.

The July 2006 Directive does not prescribe what internal processes should be followed in provinces prior to submitting their organisation structures to the DPSA. As a consequence the methods used vary from province to province.

Some operate on a decentralised OD model and submit their structures directly to the DPSA. However these provinces run the risk of not having the most recent information on departmental structures at hand in a central and easily accessible location. In others, like the Western Cape, a decision in the provincial cabinet provides direction on the subject of proposed restructuring whereby departments route their submissions through their respective Offices of the Premier.

Departments were generally confident in their knowledge of the legislation and regulations relevant to restructuring. However, interviews with officials suggested that while OD practitioners were very familiar with the regulatory framework, line managers were not as well informed. Also, knowledge of the Public Finance Management Act was found not to be as comprehensive as it should be.

Knowledge of organisational structuring

While departments displayed a high level of general awareness of the different types of organisational structures, many officials were not entirely confident on how these should be used. Some interviewees indicated that the public service environment did not lend itself to experimenting with different types of structures, as well as that line managers lack understanding of the various types of structures and how these could be applied in different circumstances. Some departments resorted to structuring themselves according to the budget programme structures designed by the National Treasury.
Level of organisational design skills
Most departments rated themselves highly in skills for job descriptions and costing of posts or roles. They also claimed medium to good skills in job and work design. Skills in process analysis were also given a medium rating and it was suggested that this was an area that required improvement.

Departments were generally not skilled in dealing with the behavioural aspects of organisational structuring. The majority rated themselves as medium to poor in change management skills. A medium to poor rating was also given for planning for physical infrastructure (for example, ensuring that sufficient office space, furniture, telephones, computers and other office necessities were available to enable employees to perform effectively).

OD practitioners suggested that there is a need for more sophisticated skills in the areas of business process reengineering, quality management, practical aspects of organisational change and national and provincial strategic priorities in relation to organisation structuring.

Capacity for large-scale structuring
Most departments suggested that they lacked sufficient staff numbers to support or conduct large-scale restructuring. The only exceptions in this regard were the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces. Both provinces centralised their OD capacity (in contrast to this, KwaZulu-Natal and North West both operated on a decentralised model).

Expertise in the analysis and design phases of organisation structuring were rated as good to medium. By contrast, departments gave a medium to poor rating for their skills in planning, implementation and rolling out of new structures, as well as for their capacity to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.

The majority of OD managers and practitioners were only used to minor structuring tasks. These were limited in scope and typically dealt with the writing of job descriptions, costing of posts and formally creating positions in the structure. They were rarely involved in the initial phases of major restructuring initiatives and often only requested to create structures that had already been planned and designed by senior managers.

A number of explanations were offered for the non-involvement of OD practitioners in the strategic component of restructuring, some of which are:
- Line managers did not always have confidence in internal OD capacity and either preferred to use consultants or undertook restructuring themselves;
- Line managers did not display appreciation of the time needed to engage with restructuring issues;
- In most departments, organisation design is carried out by human resource practitioners who are not necessarily equipped with the required skills; and
- There was little understanding of the proper role of OD and what value the function could add to a department.

Of the participating departments, the Western Cape Office of the Premier was the best equipped to act as a partner to line departments. It contains a Chief Directorate for Organisation and Institutional Development that has the ability to undertake diagnostic work, design and evaluate the implementation of structures.

The OD function was not positioned and equipped to play a strategic role in most of the departments surveyed and practitioners have limited influence on the views of management on issues related to organisation structures. In the experience of OD practitioners, senior managers and executive authorities were not receptive to the advice offered by their units. It also appears that OD officials are not senior enough to influence decisions on structuring.

Graph 2 shows the number of posts in provincial departments that were involved in OD (the information was obtained in October 2006). The post levels which most OD practitioners occupy are shown in Graph 1 and the majority of OD-related posts are on the levels of assistant director to junior management categories. Noticeably, very few posts are on the deputy director to director level. Only in a small number of departments was the OD function headed by a senior manager.

OD practitioners also indicated that they have very limited access to senior management. The communication culture of the participating departments did not fall within the scope of the study, but in view of the relatively low level of posts occupied by practitioners, the possibility exists that they do not possess the skills required to advise senior management on strategic issues and are hence not approached for input.

There was very little incentive for departments to invest in developing organisation design expertise, as there had been until very recently no demand to this effect from senior management. Some departments, like the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport, relied on external consultants when planning and implementing major restructuring. Furthermore, organisational design is sometimes viewed as a sub-component of the human resources function and training in specifically OD-related techniques and latest practices had been neglected.

However, the July 2006 Directive had refocused managerial attention on OD and had led to a leap in the demand for skills and expertise in that area. Departments reported that OD practitioners were now subject to “poaching” by others. As a consequence, some interviewees indicated that practitioners were being appointed and promoted without possessing the required experience. With the demand for experienced practitioners suddenly outstripping supply, a real possibility exists that OD function will, in some departments, not be carried out as effectively as circumstances require.

Staffing levels
Graph 2 shows the number of posts in provincial departments that were involved in OD.
framework appropriate for their revised structure.

Recommendations

The departments consulted provided a wide background on what sort of activities the OD function is expected to undertake and where limitations were currently located. Three interrelated recommendations, all relevant to the OD function in general and the DPSA in particular, emerged from the study:

1. **Strengthening existing capacity**
   - Existing OD capacity, though limited, should be optimised. Remedial measures could include the creation of an OD network of practitioners across the public service. It could also include that the capacity of departments to engage with consultants that specialise in restructuring should be enhanced. Improving skills in drafting terms of reference and project management will have a positive impact on the quality of work delivered. Remedial measures also include provinces that manage their OD function on a decentralised basis should investigate consolidating existing capacity in a central location such as the Office of the Premier, where line departments can expect advisory and support services when needed. Such provinces should also clarify the role of the Office of the Premier in the organisational design process.

2. **Skills development**
   - The current level of skill among OD practitioners needs to be expanded. Specifically, an introductory training module should be developed to focus on OD in the public sector. The South African Management Development Institute is well placed to undertake this, and such a module can be developed at the request of the DPSA. This training should be aimed at ensuring a common OD competency framework for the public sector. It can also serve as a refresher course for more experienced practitioners. The DPSA could leverage its existing learning networks and establish a national learning network for OD and encourage provinces to do the same.

3. **Monitoring and evaluation**
   - The DPSA and the Offices of Provincial Premiers should monitor OD trends across the public service and within provinces. These trends include OD capacity in national and provincial departments; frequency of restructuring in departments; extent of restructuring; and impact of restructuring. Departments should also be encouraged to adopt a monitoring and evaluation framework as part of their restructuring efforts to track progress in implementation and to assess its outcomes.

Conclusion

The "Guide on How to Design, Implement and Maintain Organisational Structures in the Public Sector" has been designed by the DPSA with a view to enhancing the capacity of public sector organisations to engage in organisational restructuring and to address the issues uncovered by the study. Rollout of the guide is expected in the first part of 2008. It aims to provide decision makers (executing authorities and accounting officers) with information on organisational restructuring that can assist them when making decisions about their department’s structures.

It also seeks to explain the importance of effective organisational structures and provide a common framework for organisational design in the public sector. The guide also aims to provide a step-by-step description of each phase of the organisational structuring process. The guide describes each phase in detail and these are accompanied by guidance and tools that can be used to execute the work. They are presented according to the particular phase of the structuring process. The range of tools is comprehensive and includes over 80 tools and templates which allow practitioners to choose the tools that best suit their circumstances.

It will also explain the regulatory framework, provide the underlying philosophy and principles of organisation design, and describe a generic process of organisational design.

Lastly, the guide aims to provide the necessary information and tools for practitioners to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework appropriate for their revised structure.

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Community, crime and the commander

It is an unusually chilly and wet day in Bloemfontein as we arrive at Batho Police Station, a few kilometers outside the city centre. We have come to meet Agnes Nxamagele who, in a move that was part of the police restructuring exercise, started as station commissioner of Batho Police Station in January this year.

She says that she has enjoyed the move and work ever since and has no regrets. Commenting on the restructuring exercise itself, she asserts that it was a good thing to do because “it brings the police closer to the community”.

Batho Police Station is situated in Batho township, and is part of a six-station cluster. The police station that Agnes Nxamagele heads is made up of 88 officers, who she says are quite supportive. They work according to sectors of which there are two, each serving four 12-hour shifts.

Agnes tells us that when she started at the police station it was not performing well, however she believes it has since turned the corner, and it now performs at top 10 level. She says that as a leader she motivates her members, and regularly joins them in their policing activities in the community.

She is happy with the efforts they make despite some challenges. Fresh in her mind, for instance, is a recent problem of a high incidence of smash and grab cases in a neighbourhood subway during the peak hours. Police were deployed to the area resulting in a marked decrease in criminal activity.

When asked if there are any efforts to encourage and motivate the officers, she says that due to the shortage of funds they normally seek sponsorship to reward good performers, and engage in team building activities as well. There are monthly awards for the detective staff, and quarterly awards for relief staff. She emphasises the point that monthly awards were introduced especially for the detectives as the section was performing badly previously. This, she reiterates, has had a positive impact.

Clearly, through all these efforts, there is no doubt that Agnes has provided the kind of leadership and guidance to take the police station forward. Yet in her humble nature, she continues to pay tribute to the work that the 30 police reservists are doing in fighting crime. In some instances without remuneration.

Sometimes the staff puts on exhibitions in the communities, showcasing the work of the police. They also participate in the “take a girl child to work” initiative. Despite the dedication and commitment shown, Agnes still thinks that perhaps the incentive schemes must be looked at and improved. She believes station commissioners must be given the latitude to determine and decide the incentive schemes and awards.

She alludes to the challenge of illiteracy amongst the officers which has serious implications for their work, like in the writing of statements, etc. They are trying to address the challenge through in-service training and ABET classes.

Challenges

Agnes is not shy to point to the challenges the police face in the area. It has a high unemployment rate, there are many informal settlements, there is poor infrastructure and not enough lighting, the houses are old and some without numbers. All of this makes the work of the police very difficult.

She pays tribute to the work of the local community police forum which is involved in activities such as crime awareness campaigns. They even take part in community patrols. She can bear testimony to that, having ridden in the police van with some of them on patrol. The community police forum takes part in planning of police activities that involve communities. Agnes says there is 70% community involvement in matters of policing in the area, a remarkable achievement indeed. “The councillors,” she adds, “also attend CPF meetings, and they invite us to their community meeting.”

Challenges that still need to be addressed in the community include crime, especially committed by the youth, liquor abuse where taverns close late with women getting raped at night. In an attempt to deal with some of these problems, Agnes and her colleagues participate in several community initiatives. She tells us that in their police station they have adopted a young girl in a school who comes from a poor background, and they have also been involved in organising food parcel activities. There is also an exciting initiative where they organise a youth camp to do motivational talks and impart life skills to the young people of the community.

When asked how much of her time she devotes to her work in a
day, Agnes – a married mother of three – says, "I am here to protect and serve the community. I work until very late. Although I am supposed to be here from 7.30am to 4pm, I leave the office at about 7pm." For most of the day she says she is so busy that she only attends to administration work very late in the day. The community, she mentions, "don’t make appointments – they just come in and request to see her."

Agnes normally visits the women church gatherings (umanyanos) on Thursday afternoons, and she gets invited to community societies and clubs on Sundays.

**Sector policing**

Asked about the most difficult decision that she has had to take in her present position, she mentions the decision to implement sector policing on a 24-hour basis. She says that when she came there was no sector policing. They had to divide the police into groups, and make members work in shifts. This she says was very difficult to do but it had to be done. She is happy though because since then the reaction time to community requests for policing has improved, and they have received compliments. Since police vehicles are available in each sector, things have improved.

Agnes is one of three women commanders in the designated police stations cluster.

When asked if there is any support she gets as a woman, Agnes tells us that she is part of the SAPS Women’s Network. In addition, the station commissioner in the nearby Kagisanong Police Station is also a woman, so she has a companion.

As we round off the conversation, I ask her where she sees herself in five years’ time, and she confidently says she wants to see herself as a director in the police service.

If she reaches this goal it would be another achievement in a long police career. Agnes, who comes from Klerksdorp in the North West Province, joined the police service in 1986. She started as a constable in Klerksdorp, then moved to the West Rand in Gauteng where she worked in areas such as Krugersdorp, Florida and Roodepoort. This was followed by a stint at Parkroad (popularly known as Parkweg) Police Station also in Bloemfontein.

Explaining her choice of career, she tells us of a lady that she admired in her police uniform, that her love for the profession made her decide to join. She adds that she joined the service because “I wanted to help the community with crime and other problems.” That is exactly what she is doing at Batho Police Station.
I am told that the University of Cape Town can trace its roots to the South African College founded some time in the 1820s. If so, this city has some claim to be Africa’s oldest “modern university” city – putting aside places of learning like Alexandria that have arguably hosted higher learning for around two thousand years.

So, it is a pleasure to be in this lovely, and historic university city.

I should make it clear that the comments I offer on this subject are not of course official comments in my capacity as Privacy Commissioner, nor in any way reflective of the New Zealand government. They are personal views.

It will not surprise you that in a nice example of cooperation between government and university, I have drawn extensively on comments from Dr Andrew Ladley, Director of the Institute of Public Policy in the School of Government at Victoria University of Wellington. Andrew tells me that apart from anything else, he graduated in the 1970s from the University of Cape Town.

For the sake of brevity, I have framed my brief remarks around three propositions that might have some general relevance to most Commonwealth members, but which are particularly shaped around New Zealand experience.

First, it is important to remember that the modern university, however “independent in its teaching and thinking”, has always in some measure been responsive to government policy, especially relating to higher education. This does not mean that governments should directly tell universities what to research and teach in a political sense – but it does mean that we need to understand the relationship between government and university within the broad framework of policy.

Secondly, relationships between government and universities need to be seen in the context of what can be quite dramatic policy changes affecting higher learning and state-funded research.

Thirdly, a very interesting and interactive relationship has developed between universities and government in New Zealand, particularly in the capital city, Wellington.

Proposition 1: Modern universities are creatures of statute and of public policy
We might almost regard a general definition of “modern universities” as those founded by statute, mostly in the 20th century, to advance higher learning and knowledge.

As creations of parliaments, modern universities are thus inevitably in some measure instruments of public policy – in this case, the policy of providing higher education and training for intellectual leadership in all aspects of the society, and the related goal of “growing knowledge and understanding of the meaning of things” – which we call collectively: “research”.

All universities probably share the maxim rerum cognoscere causas (to know the causes of things) which is, incidentally, the maxim of the London School of Economics, founded initially by charitable donations and then absorbed into the University of London.

The current statute for Victoria University of Wellington in my home town in New Zealand, phrases its purposes simply: “For the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination and maintenance of higher learning and teaching research there shall be ... a University to be called the Victoria University of Wellington.”

In general, the establishment of modern universities should be seen as directly accompanying the rise of representative legislatures. As the franchise expanded across the 20th century, so each state increasingly took on responsibility for mass education from childhood onwards. Universities were founded to advance the peak of higher knowledge for the economy and as part of what the 20th century will surely record as the steady expansion of democratic values.

The democratic basis is seen simply in the imperative that there be public educational opportunities at all levels, to which all citizens might have access, albeit that there would be a requirement of academic merit.

In the absence of substantial charitable funding in most countries, only governments could provide the capital backing to start universities. This was certainly the case in New Zealand. This means that apart from student fees (which are quite new in New Zealand, having been introduced only in the early 1990s), and some outside funding from donors or industry, most modern universities are highly dependent on government funding, and see themselves as “public institutions” serving the people, the democracy and the economy in a particular way.

Universities are not, of course, government departments subject to ministerial or political direction in their basic activities. But they are accountable in some way to the people and taxpayers as well as to their students, staff and wider community. In general, university governance is through councils made up of elected members of the university, by a president – with a government appointees, or other constituent representatives, to ensure public perspectives are brought to bear on governance.

The extent of public funding has encouraged some governments to try to control universities, without accepting their autonomy in relation to knowledge and freedom of expression. We all know of societies where these clashes have been dramatic and certainly in New Zealand students and staff have a long and proud history of being in the vanguard of changes to values and arguments.

Actually, the most resistance in the universities at the moment in New Zealand relates not to some wider values, but to the funding structure which has seen a generation of students start their work-
ing lives with more debt than at any other time in the country’s history.

As a general statement, whilst we must accept the public nature of universities, their relationship with government is always also going to reflect the values that the government is putting into law across the board, as well as the specifics of education policy.

And the more repressive a government, the more one might expect voices of disagreement to be found in places of higher learning - and the more one might expect governments to try to further repress such voices. I suspect that all Commonwealth countries will have examples that illustrate this. Some are very current.

Proposition 2: Relationships between government and universities need to be seen in the context of what can be quite dramatic policy changes affecting higher learning and state-funded research

Putting aside wider political or world issues (such as the Vietnam War or the Springbok tour), we need to concentrate on changes to state policies for higher learning and research.

In New Zealand, these policies have taken a variety of courses since the various university colleges were founded about the turn of the 20th century in different cities. Across the course of the century, we have seen the original “federal university” broken into separate universities in cities. As might be expected, the state has legislated to form other institutes of learning to fill skill or training gaps, especially in skills and trades (eg polytechnics, teachers colleges, nursing colleges).

As regards high-level research, the government formed the Department of Science and Industrial Research (DSIR) early on, to accumulate practical and high-level applied research that would be of benefit to the core needs of the New Zealand economy, especially in primary industries.

As might be expected in a small country with limited resources, government policy and the legislation initially ensured there was some specialisation in the universities. For example, of the eight modern universities, only two (Massey and Lincoln) focused on agriculture and forestry, two on engineering (Auckland University and Canterbury University in Christchurch) and two on medicine (Otago in Dunedin and Auckland University).

Most universities had general students doing “catch-all” degrees, such as the standard BA and BSc. But otherwise government funding and the orientation of the universities was directed towards reasonable specialisation.

In the 1980s and 1990s government policy changed course dramatically. The DSIR was broken into “Crown Research Institutes” expected to produce market-relevant and funded research and a dividend to the government. Funding for universities was altered to ensure a proportional government subsidy for every student, no matter what course was being taken. Universities could charge fees on top of the government subsidy. Student loans were offered to encourage students to undertake higher education.

We need to understand relationships between government and universities within the context of what can be dramatic general shifts of education policy and funding.

The result was a massive increase in enrolments, with New Zealand jumping from a very low proportion of only the brightest school leavers going to university (about 1/3) to about 2/3 post-school engagement in higher education. But (and in retrospect predictably), universities also shifted their strategies to attract students, especially into low-cost/high-return courses, like the BA and Commerce.

Teaching, rather than research, was very highly rewarded by the subsidy scheme. Some universities set up new satellite campuses in other population centres, rather than relying on their basic locations, so that they could attract students. Competition was assumed to be driving educational strategy, not core policy aimed at maximising value for each education dollar spent in universities.

Over the last few years in New Zealand this core policy has begun a slow road towards 180-degree reversal, basically towards trying to ensure more specialisation, the allocation of funding towards preferred courses needed in the economy, an entirely new funder (the Tertiary Education Commission) whose job it is to channel funding on a more strategic basis than just enrolments, and an entirely new funding scheme (the Performance-Based Research Fund) aimed at encouraging research.

At the same time, the Crown Research Institutes are being weaned off the “market-driven” model, and being given longer-term stable funding to enable them to keep highly skilled people who have increasingly left New Zealand rather than live with the instability of losing their job at the end of each research contract.

In short, the “market model” is regarded by the current government as not having worked for the best interests of New Zealand, and it is being re-shaped so that the “visible hand” of government directs resources in a more coherent way.

It is too early to assess this policy reversal. No doubt, each Commonwealth jurisdiction will have its own variation of this theme about government policy. In South Africa, a major theme will of course have been government policy as regards race and university education. But whatever the variation, the point is that we need to understand relationships between government and universities within the context of what can be dramatic general shifts of education policy and funding.

Proposition 3: A very interesting and interactive relationship has developed between universities and government in New Zealand, particularly in the capital city, Wellington.

In a small jurisdiction like New Zealand, it is inevitable that many people in government, both at the political level and in the bureaucracy, will know staff and students in universities. That is especially so in a small capital city like Wellington. The result of that “smallness” is that university expertise tends to get called on in all sorts of ways by government, from policy advice to expert comment, to secondments for particular functions.

But, at least in New Zealand, those interactions always need to
recognise the distinctive roles of government and the academy. For the universities, the result of all the changes to government funding has focused the universities on core business. They seek to interact with government to “advance knowledge” by teaching and research – and in particular to ensure that their interaction is funded.

In other words, whilst the network of working relationships is very strong, there is no longer any free lunch for government at New Zealand universities if something other than “the advancement of knowledge by teaching and research” is on the table.

I gather that universities tend to look very closely at requests from government to assist in some way. The question is: does this relate to a funded teaching course? (If so, come and take the course, and pay.) Or, how might this advance research? (And if it does, how can we agree payment for that, rather than just doing it for the hope of an academic publication?)

Here, I only have time to elaborate on two examples that might be of interest to this meeting to illustrate effective collaboration between universities and government.

The first relates to the School of Government at Victoria University, formed in 2002 to teach and research public policy, public management and strategic studies. One of the components of that school is the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). This was actually formed in the university well before the school, back in 1983, to be a forum for the neutral discussion and analysis of important questions of public policy, and as such to be a trusted bridge between the university and government. Over the intervening 24 years, a great many difficult and sensitive policy issues have been researched, discussed and disseminated by the institute.

One example is the transition from first-past-the-post voting to proportional representation, which was a very major constitutional change in New Zealand. In my capacity as then Cabinet Secretary, I was very pleased to see the IPS playing a key role in bringing together opposing political parties, and indeed officials, into a trusted university environment. This allowed the issues to be worked through sensibly so that there were no surprises and a major change took place smoothly. At the same time, a number of academics undertook a substantial research project to monitor and assess the changes, resulting in several books and many learning articles.

A more recent example of how the institute works is the “emerging issues project”. In 2004, chief executives of government departments in New Zealand agreed to “pool” a component of their research funding to fund research and discussion of “cross-cutting emerging issues”. That pooled fund was then allocated to the Institute of Policy Studies in the School of Government, to undertake research and discussion of new issues that are likely to affect all of government.

On that basis, the IPS has led academic and public discussion over the last few years about aspects of climate change. Behind this academic discourse, core government policy will inevitably be formed, and the university will no doubt comment on that as it sees fit. But in raising hard issues, and in particular in bringing together a very wide range of informed opinion into the university, the IPS has played a critical role. This is then reflected in several publications, and of course in the teaching that results to students of public policy.

The second example, also from Victoria University of Wellington, but reaching widely across Australia too, is the Australian and New Zealand School of Government, otherwise affectionately known as ANZSOG.

ANZSOG is a very dramatic development reflecting a close relationship between governments and universities in Australia and New Zealand. It was formed in 2004 as a company – its shareholders are 10 universities in Australia and NZ, the governments of Australia and New Zealand, and the governments of the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory. (It is expected that South Australia and the Northern Territory will one day join.)

This joint venture aims at pooling resources so that world-class higher education can be given to public servants, on a scale that single institutions simply could not provide on their own. Through the respective universities, ANZSOG offers a Masters Degree (Executive Masters in Public Administration), and a Senior Fellows Programme involving chief executives who meet for advanced discussion.

Thus far some 400 senior public servants have taken the courses, or are in the progress of doing so. The School of Government at Victoria University is the principal New Zealand partner in ANZSOG (apart from the NZ government as shareholder). I suspect you will hear more about ANZSOG in the years to come. In the meantime, type ANZSOG into Google, and you will find details.

Conclusion
My starting point is that universities are public institutions in New Zealand and as such are shaped by public policy. That policy has changed dramatically over the last few years. The current emphasis is on getting better value by strategic spending, not just funding student enrolments for whatever courses they choose.

The current emphasis is on getting better value by strategic spending, not just funding student enrolments for whatever courses they choose. These policies affect the relationships between universities and government. Prime current examples of how those relationships are playing out, are the School of Government, the Institute of Policy Studies, and the related Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG).

The key to these relationships is that whilst a trusted and collegial network exists, both government and the university recognise that their relationship is based on respect for separate roles - and on appropriate funding. The collaboration appears to be very successful, but as Mao Tse Tung is reported to have said when asked whether he thought the French Revolution was successful, perhaps it is too early to be sure.
Professional and quality delivery culture

Only through being decisive and intense in our quest for efficiency and effectiveness can we demystify the commonly held view that the public service is inherently inefficient, writes Bongani Matomela.

The public service has, quite remarkably and in an unprecedented way, transformed not only in terms of its demographic make-up and restructuring, but also its policy orientation, structures and configuration, culture and ethos. Its culture is citizen-centric and development-oriented, it is accountable, and has built-in modern systems and processes, to name but a few.

The public service of today is not like the one of yesterday, and the one of yesterday is not the same as the one of yesteryear. It is staffed by officials of high calibre and dedication who have a clear sense of government’s vision for a better life for all.

However, despite all the progress, many challenges continue to haunt the public service. We hear of the lack of coherence and synergies between policies of national and provincial government on the one hand, and local level implementation capacity and skills shortages on the other hand. This has led to crippled delivery, lack of progress in critical areas such as land reform and redistribution, which are fraught with challenges, the public health system collapsing in parts of some provinces, and backlogs in processing public needs and entitlements. And all this despite the billions of rands government has allocated, through various highly niched and focused programmes, to attend to these matters.

So then what is the problem? The issues alluded to above are in my view just symptoms of a bigger set of challenges.

Understanding the public service machinery of today

Perhaps we make the mistake of thinking these symptoms are the root causes and then we deal with them as such, whilst in fact they are symptoms and nothing else. Some of the fundamental issues that require closer inspection in making the public service an effective engine for development and delivery, given the experience with transformation thus far, are:

- Obsession with policy and structural undertones and textbook approaches to implementation of what are generally good policy intentions;
- Inappropriate leadership and management in public service institutions;
- Lack of credible systems and measures to instill a culture of performance and quality;
- Complete absence and at worst stifling of innovation and creativity;
- Bad recruitment and retention of the best the labour market can offer;
- Rewarding and recognising good management solutions and not good professional and technical solutions; and
- The need for strong and more robust oversight and constitutional safeguards institutions, relative to how they have performed thus far.

The first five years were the policy development phase, the ensuing five years was the implementation phase, and the present five years had to be characterised by intense implementation and consolidation. This, the present period, and over the last decade, has also been characterised by the massive resources and investment the state has put into social and economic infrastructure programmes.

So to realise the state’s goals, you need an agile and flexible public service machinery. We talk of a developmental state precisely to acknowledge the need to use the state machinery to do these things and intervene decisively. But unfortunately few public servants, even at management and leadership senior levels, realise what triggered the notion of developmental state in postwar Japan and subsequently in the decolonising Africa of the 1960s, and newly industrialised Asian Tigers. And what, most importantly, it means in terms of the public service as machinery to realise those development ideals.

Sadly, and as one prominent ruling party member of Parliament recently wrote in a newspaper article, the public service is not equipped for the developmental role, and for it to achieve this, there has to be some fundamental change in the way the state conducts its business.

Appropriate leadership and management in public service institutions

The question of leadership is the most often talked about in public service and the public sphere in general, but less is devoted to honestly define the kind of leadership traits that are required and must be practiced by people occupying key strategic executive positions in government.

In some very crucial portfolios and areas, the process by which people are put in these critical portfolios remains disingenuous at times. Strong technical and administrative skills complemented by political understanding of the context, ability to lead and marshal people towards a common goal, honesty and inspiring officials and technocrats indiscriminately towards an organisational cause, and adequately resourcing key delivery areas in every government department, are things required of public service managers and leaders. Sadly, in critical departments, this is lacking.

The over-emphasis on training and development of managers and leaders, and the sometimes textbook approaches to leadership and management, are no panacea and will not take the public service to greater heights. Ironically, public service institutions - be they national, provincial or municipalities - operate to serve a very sophisticated and dynamic citizenry who are aware of their rights and obligations. Hence leadership is about knowing and being connected, and using the administrative machinery to respond to those expectations, but it
is also about the ability to explain to the citizens what is feasible and what is not. Equally, all public institutions in the contemporary era operate within a very dynamic external climate, hence managers must understand the strategic realities and the implications these external variables have on the institutions they lead.

How many public service managers and leaders in key strategic positions know the implications of the current gloomy global economic outlook, the threat of increasing pollution and climate change, the rise and emergence of giants like China, India and Singapore, and what it means for SA as an emerging economy, the recent World Economic Forum report on world competitiveness and what it says specifically about the efficiency of state institutions in South Africa, to name but a few?

In seeking to recruit and deploy the best in public service institutions, and in order to arrest the culture of mediocrity, are we looking at emerging leadership that would propel the state institutions to face the enormity of these tasks? Or is the true case that it is because, as one prominent businessman cum heavyweight politician recently remarked, “We may need to focus a lot on emergent leadership for the next generation of public service leadership, as the new challenges of administrative efficiency, resilience, competence as opposed to just political acumen, emerge.”

The legion of damned must be unleashed to take the public service to the next level. There is need for new leadership with new and fresh ideas, with a mixture of experiences, skills drawn elsewhere. Innovation will not happen because it is the right thing to do or is the fad of the contemporary period, the state must draw and unleash the kind of leadership (at all levels of the public service and society) to pursue those innovative approaches to development.

At times, one gets an unease sense that in some public institutions, as the great Irish poet said, “The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

Lack of credible systems and measures to instill a culture of performance and quality

In line with the new public management doctrine, in the late 1990s we vigorously followed the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, adopting customer care, performance management, outsourcing, public-private partnerships, and a managerial approach to running public service institutions.

Despite the logical case to adopt some of the NPM approaches, we have not followed them to the letter in real terms and not rigorously enough, however inappropriate some of the elements may have been. Through the Batho Pede (putting the public first) initiative we have embodied the notion of caring for the citizens and placing them at the centre of what we do as public servants. Many government functions have been outsourced, with varied results. Partnerships with the private sector are prominent and have made a huge impact in some social and physical development services. We have a managerial approach to managing and implementation with throngs of managers (as opposed to specialists) appointed as heads of public institutions such as hospitals.

Despite problems in some areas such as outsourcing (more the process issues rather than the intent), and over-managing in some cases, there has been remarkable progress in instilling a sense of citizen orientation and accountability in public service delivery, and recognition of the pivotal role of the private sector in developmental services.

Ironically, we have one of the most well-crafted performance management and development systems, but it has been, to say the least, a failed experiment. It has not created the high performance culture we hoped it would. It is highly subjective, unpredictable, bureaucratic, and most sadly, has been compounded by lack of experienced human resources personnel to administer and manage the tool.

Recent cases of departments issuing performance bonuses in a blanket way, or some dithering or applying the system in an uneven manner, all point to the problems with both the system and its application. A performance management system must either be preceded by building a culture of delivery and performance, or/and must be seen to be nurturing that as such.

One of the frequent questions most operational public servants ask, and which is still a puzzle to many and perhaps the public in general, is why heads of department whose departments receive
qualified audit reports go on and receive performance bonuses. Perhaps this is where the role of independent constitutionally established bodies like the Public Service Commission need to be visible and robust in dealing with these matters.

The recent Global Competitiveness Yearbook has identified, amongst a few problematic areas and challenges we face as a country, the inefficiency of state institutions. As Leslie Maasdorp put it in a recent Business Times article, "We cannot be a winning nation without taking urgent, bold and decisive action to address the combined challenges of the skills shortage ... and enhancing the efficiency of our institutions, including the government."

**Bad recruitment and retention: getting the worst the labour market can offer?**

We must populate public service institutions not just with good policy, management or bureaucratic experts but also with technocrats who have the know-how. It is about recruiting the right people with the right skills for the right tasks. These are people who will innovate, network and enter into partnerships with like-minded organisations, understand the intricacies of sector-specific programmes, and the implementation possibilities and constraints, and are essentially concerned about outputs and outcomes, and not inputs and processes.

Let me isolate just two sectors to illustrate the point: trade, industry and economic development; and housing. Departments of trade and industry and economic affairs must be manned by trade experts, and economic development, consumer affairs and regulatory experts and activists. Municipalities' local economic development initiatives must be driven by people with expertise and a track record in community and economic development, people coordinating and implementing sector-specific strategic economic sectors should be drawn from both the trade union.factory floor, academic, and management backgrounds.

To address the two million housing units backlog for example, there is a need for housing departments to be staffed by experts in various specialist technical areas of urban planning, architecture, engineering, etc. But equally, housing is a social phenomenon, and as a result you need people with strong social and community development skills.

In the aftermath of the 1994 elections we did this combination very well, but somehow we seem to have gone back to relying on technical experts and managers, and isolated developmental activists and practitioners. It is indeed through this reciprocity that the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy will become a reality.

In most instances the public service is not the first choice for the energetic and passionate. At the most it is second best. Or it is for those who harbour personal ambitions and desires to have influence, or who have no alternative but to work for the public service; those who seek influence and are happy to just be part of the public service process.

As one prominent businessman and political heavyweight recently mentioned, "Not enough has been done to invest in people successfully and the state has just been unable to recruit the best and brightest." He went on to say that the ruling party has to convince young people that it is okay and attractive to work for the state.

In essence, what is required is a mix of people with in-depth understanding of the policy intentions, programmes and sectors, and must be drawn from different working and orientation backgrounds. This will help close the gap between the policy intentions and actual implementation.

Failure to strive for a mixture sometimes has unintended consequences, and this applies not only to the public service. For example, it is often said that one of the possible features of South African companies' lack of competitiveness compared to their global counterparts is shocking statistic that most CEOs are finance professionals (mostly accountants) rather than experts in the specific industries or companies that they lead. Consequently, none of them know the intricacies of the sectors, let alone have the ability to provide the strategic leadership required of them. The same, it can be argued, holds true for the public service leadership.

The other very useful option that has been tried and tested in countries such as the US and UK is the revolving door between government officials and graduate schools and think tanks. The Harvard Kennedy School of Government is staffed with ex-state department officials who bring a wealth of practical experience to the teaching of future public servants.

And the opposite is also true. In the UK, M Ps and senior government officers are erstwhile lecturers, journalists and public policy experts and analysts in such think tanks as the Institute for Public Policy and Research and Institute for Fiscal Studies are ex-Whitishall officials. This allows cross-fertilisation of ideas and the best possible approach to public policy-making and implementation.

**Concluding thoughts**

In his address to the sixth annual public service delivery academy on the issue of appropriate leadership for continuous improvement in the public service, Professor Vincent Maphai best sums it up by highlighting the following as benchmarks of comparative country insights of successful civil services:

- Close working relationship between political leaders and bureaucracy;
- At the same time, high degree of professional autonomy and political independence/insulation;
- Competent, efficient and skilled public sector apparatus;
- Recruitment and allocation on merit, experience and training;
- Performance culture, including rewarding excellence with promotions and higher salaries;
- Opportunity competitive with private sector; and
- Elimination of corruption through accountability mechanisms, including ombudsperson, special courts, and public access to documents.

Indeed, the gauntlet has been thrown down, and in response to increasing public demands for better and quality services, shrinking available resources, and the global competitiveness demands, the public service has no choice but to be bold and push the boundaries.

As Professor Maphai remarked, "problems in public service mirror problems and challenges in society", and we need to be aware of the ramifications of that. Only through being decisive and intense in our quest for efficiency and effectiveness can we demystify the commonly held view that the public service is inherently inefficient.

How ironic indeed that, as I remarked seven years ago, "The public service needs a major shake-up"; and as the media headline encapsulated the recent deliberations of a seminar on development, "the public service not equipped for developmental role". We need to push the boundaries and boldly and decisively weed out all the constraints.
Vocation and occupational education and training

In May this year I attended the All Africa IVETA conference which took place in Mauritius. It was an international conference focusing on vocational education and training, and was attended by representatives of many countries of the world. During the very first session of the conference a question was asked by one of the delegates about the differences between vocational and occupational education and training. The answer was not satisfactory and delegates were advised to focus less on conceptual and theoretical definitions and more on the intended outcome of each training intervention which must be employability.

It was this question and the manner in which it was addressed that actually prompted me to write this short article. I have thought hard and deeply about the question since returning from the conference. I have had to deal with a number of issues related to the Mauritius question, and some of my questions still remain unanswered to this day. I want to ask the same questions in this article as well as attempt to provide some answers to them.

Are our efforts to transform the education and training system in the country into one of high quality which is responsive to the skills needs of the economy, not misplaced and mis-directed? Are we not being bogged down by an apparent obsession with precise definitions of the type of vehicle or learning mode that we use to acquire a qualification? Is the pre-occupation with the type of vehicle used to achieve a qualification, making us lose sight of and overlook the intended objective of qualifications? asks Dr Sazi Kunene, Research Manager, Services SETA

The collapse of national economic autonomy with the emergence of globalisation has made human resource development the top priority of governments worldwide. The new information age economy requires a different kind of more flexibly skilled worker who can contribute to greater profitability and productivity. So, the search for the best possible system of education and training that will address the current and future socio-economic challenges of the countries of the world is still on-going and gaining increased momentum daily.

The new education and training system must be designed to put a stop to the “paper qualification syndrome” which has contributed to the high number of unemployed graduates who hold qualifications that are not relevant to the needs of the labour market and hence render them unemployable. This is an international challenge with which governments around the world are intensely engaged.

One aspect of educational reform is aimed at refocusing attention on vocational education and training. There is a concerted effort by governments worldwide to bring education and training closer to the world of work. Education and training must be geared towards addressing the needs of employers appropriately. The dominant trend in this education and training challenge is the re-emergence of “hand learning” which has been embraced by governments worldwide as the panacea that will provide for the current and future socio-economic demands on education and training.

Notwithstanding these determined efforts and noble intentions of governments, a number of unanswered questions which are mainly centred on the conceptual definition and description of the different types of vehicles or learning modes used to achieve such qualifications still exist. This has resulted in conceptual confusion as a result of the apparent obsession with conceptually and academically correct definitions and terminology. The collateral of this obsession with academic and philosophical correctness has had serious implications when it comes to the practical implementation of education and training reforms and, more importantly, the anticipated outcomes of our investments in education and training.

The dominant and common trend in these education and training reforms across the globe has been the refocus on “hand learning” or workplace-based learning as opposed to institution-based learning or “head learning”. Hand learning is now being given the upper hand and most education and training reforms are taking this direction across the globe. “Hand learning” also gives power to employers or the corporate sector in terms of deciding what appropriate qualifications and training mechanisms to develop and implement in order to address their skills requirements. They also need to play a more active role in the development and implementation of these qualifications and training mechanisms.

More importantly, they should have a final say in terms of whether a learner qualifies or not in terms of occupational competency or professional certification. The focus here is on ensuring relevance and articulation with industry requirements. The focus is thus more on the capacity for action rather than the capacity for theoretical understanding. The relevance of education and training to the needs of employers is of the utmost importance for the country’s economic competitiveness in this new information age.

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The voice of the employer becomes even more important when dealing decisively with the mismatch and disequilibrium between the kind of product produced by our institutions of learning and the kind of product needed by the economy. This represents the triumph of a corporate model of education and training and of human capital development theory.

This brings us back to the question posed at the beginning of this article as to what constitutes the difference between VET and occupationally directed education and training and occupational or academic qualifications. Does the difference lie in the manner in which these qualifications get constructed? Does it lie in the manner in which these are developed, implemented and certificated or does it lie in terms of the aims of the different qualifications?

I believe that all qualifications must have the capacity to satisfy both social efficacy and economic efficacy requirements. Yes, the focus of universities should be on producing critical thinkers but, at the same time, the ultimate objective of the critical thinkers must be to be employed in one form or another so that they can practise their critical thinking skills. It does not make sense for a learner to do a BA degree for social efficacy or social status per se. His/her BA degree must be linked to a particular occupation.

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) National Standards Body (NSB) regulations, a qualification is described as "representing a planned combination of learning outcomes with a defined purpose or purposes, including applied competence and a basis for further learning". It should also have the capacity to "enrich the qualifying learner by providing status, recognition, credentials and licensing. It must improve marketability and employability and open up routes to additional education and training."

The above SAQA definition of a qualification covers both components of social efficacy in terms of status and recognition as well as economic efficacy in terms of employability.

My colleague at SAQA, Dr James Keevy (Deputy Director for Research), has provided me with the following descriptions of the different types of vehicles used to get to qualifications:

• Professional qualification: service to people or organisations; competencies have academic knowledge base; afforded autonomy by virtue of ethical behaviour; regulated by a profession;
• Occupational: a qualification that is needed for, or facilitates the practice of a profession; carrying on a trade or business; or engaging in any other occupation or form of employment; and
• Vocational: performing some function such as making, repairing, servicing, etc. competencies have a predominantly practical knowledge base; work in a "managed" environment; regulated by employment environment/conditions.

I believe that the current obsession with theoretical debates about the different types of vehicles used to achieve qualifications as well as definitional precision will not help us win the battle against skills shortages in the country. What we should be emphasising is actually the intended ultimate outcome of all qualifications which is gainful employment, i.e. formal or self-employment. The emphasis should be on the extent of the value they can add to the economy. The dominant consideration should be the economic value of the qualification, which far outweighs its social value, especially during this era of globalisation.

It is the economic efficacy rather than the social efficacy of the qualification that should be given the upper hand in terms of the extent of the value added to the economy. Where the intrinsic value of the qualification has diminished because of new demands on education and training imposed by the ever-changing market place, efforts must be made to up-skill, re-skill and upgrade the qualification in order to maintain its intrinsic value.

It is the need to develop and offer qualifications which have a high intrinsic value which should be uppermost in our considerations. It is the intrinsic value of their qualifications as they progress through the rapid changes that characterise the market place of today.

It is the intrinsic value of the qualification which should be the primary focus of our education and training reforms, regardless of whether the qualification is defined as academic, professional, occupational, vocational etc. Where a qualification has lost its economic value and has reached what we call educational lock-step, efforts must be made to re-package a new qualification that will take into account the actual skills needs of the economy.

At the same time, an aggressive programme of re-training, CPD etc. must be undertaken for qualified workers already in employment.
The book starts off by saying that "the greatest challenge of innovation is not a lack of ideas but, rather, successfully managing innovation so that it delivers the required return on the company's investment of money, time and people". Here, some of the points they are making regarding innovation are appropriate for the public sector of South Africa as well as regarding innovation management.

Leadership for innovation
The authors say leadership must not allow actions and decisions to be taken by default. Leaders must convince an organisation that innovation matters to the company and to the leader himself. They must allocate resources – when many projects innovative or otherwise are vying for scarce resources of time, money and talent the leaders must decide how these resources should be distributed.

Leaders should also reshape dynasties – products or services become dynasties if they have been extremely successful and tend to continue to get high allocations of resources. To reduce the negative effect of dynasty leaders must take purposeful action, often with regard to how resources are allocated to the dynasty or to other business units that might affect the dynasty.

They must also focus on the right things – focus the organisation on the ideas and activities that will contribute to a return on innovation investment. Choose ideas to commercialise, ponder on how to configure the portfolio, decide when to kill an idea or cannibalise an existing product or service.

Leaders should assign the right people to the right role; take responsibility for hiring and assigning the people who can most help the innovation process, and also remove or realign those people who cannot help or are getting in the way; and deal with risk. Sparks must fly and risks must be taken. Rather than just support or pay lip service to the innovation effort, leaders must truly lead.

Organisational alignment for innovation
This answers the question, "How can my company become more innovative?" and "How can I increase the return on my innovation spending?" Any organisational structure can enable the organisation to be innovative and can fail to be innovative with any structure as well. What matters is alignment. Various units, disciplines, activities, structures and processes must be aligned around innovation.

Lack of alignment is as a result of:
- Innovation strategy being at odds with business strategy;
- Innovation is all talk and no support. The leader says that he wants innovation but invests very little on innovation capability and capacity;
- Innovation is an island where a small group is formed to generate new ideas and propose new products or services. It becomes worse when the leader heading the group does not have enough authority or respect from operating groups or whose efforts are stymied by metrics that are inappropriate for the effort or cannot be achieved;
- The process that is fragmented where the leader does not spend time on innovation;
- Dynasties monopolizing innovation resources; and
- Metrics that confound the goals of innovation – the leader supports innovation. Innovation capability is available. But key metrics get in the way.

How do organisations align?
The most important elements that innovative organisations pay attention to include individual responsibility, unit responsibility, companywide responsibility, conducive conditions, openness, and measurement.

Individual responsibility: Innovation has to be someone's main operational responsibility, a person who wakes up each morning worrying about how to execute a required set of innovation-related tasks that day and how to get the people in the organisation to accomplish them. In most organisations there is no such position.

Whatever the title there are two main ways to define the position with responsibility for innovation: the innovation facilitator or the chief innovator. They operate in different ways and serve different functions.

Innovation facilitator is essentially an educator, advocate and adviser who usually has a team with responsibilities to make the organisation aware of the importance of innovation, standardise and communicate a vocabulary of innovation, provide a set of tools, develop training activities, and determine which metrics will be used. Usually business units determine whether and how to best use what the innovation facilitator has developed, often in consultation with, and with support from, the leader.

Innovation facilitator is an especially important role for organisations that are making fundamental change from some other strategic alignment, because people in the organisation will have to change attitudes and learn new skills and behaviours. Education, execution, measurement and communication tools and approaches will have to be created from scratch, and the innovation facilitators may have to be involved for the many years such a change process can take.

Chief innovator is responsible for managing the entire innovation process holistically and makes decisions about the trade-offs involved. They don't do everything themselves, but neither do they allow organisations to not perform. They clear bottlenecks when it becomes necessary to do so, get involved in both the strategic and the tactical, and have either the authority or the personal influence to make things happen.

CEOs or chairmen often play this role, especially when an organisation must make a change from another business strategy such as cost cutting and merger or geographic expansion. Organisations that don't have a chief innovator, or whose chief innovator does not have visibility into the entire process and the ability to manage it, can get in trouble.

Unit responsibility: Innovative organisations often establish small
groups or discrete units that encourage or support innovation in specific ways. Some are innovation incubators, designed to encourage, seek out, evaluate and promote a wide variety of ideas and inventions. Some focus on the creation of a single new product or service, and often operate outside the normal operations of the company to do so, like a skunk voice. Others function like sponsors, selecting and funding ideas and pushing them through to commercialisation.

Companywide responsibility: While innovation must be someone’s operational responsibility, supported appropriately, it must also be everyone’s job. Ideas, of any size or application, can in fact come from everywhere.

Conducive conditions: Six conditions that can help people to be more effective in the innovation process, particularly the idea generation phase, no matter what the formal structure of the organisation may be:

• Time to think – you can’t think about something new when you have to spend all your time taking care of the million things you have on your plate right now.

• Space to explore – people need both psychic and physical space – the freedom to think and dream as well as some walking-around space in which those activities are expected and even protected. When people are part of an environment where thinking is encouraged and where “crazy” ideas are tolerated, they feel they are being given permission to think about new, even risky, ideas and approaches.

• Deep domain knowledge – another requirement for innovation is to possess or obtain a great deal of knowledge about an issue, problem or inquiry. It’s virtually impossible to generate innovative ideas about something you know little about.

• Stimulation – even with time and space to think, and plenty of domain knowledge, people come up with more and better ideas when they receive some stimulation in their thinking from the influence of other people and from exposure to ideas that are not their own;

• A challenging environment – ideas get generated, tested, refined and improved in environments where ideas are valued and constantly focused on, as opposed to environments where new ideas don’t get aggressively challenged and refined.

• Motivation – people must be motivated to come up with ideas. Many people are self-motivated to do so; they have natural desire to do something that hasn’t been done before or to answer a question that intrigues them. But may people need a nudge. Motivation is particularly important because new ideas generally imply that the organisation will be asked to do something it has never done before. This will mean that there will always be hurdles to leap and barriers to be removed. Only a sufficiently motivated person will have the energy and commitment to press forward in the face of adversity. The creation of something new also may require working long and extra hours, coming up with endless iterations of a single idea and persevering through failures and unexpected difficulties. Even when the motivation to generate and pursue new ideas is intrinsic, extrinsic rewards – including financial compensation, recognition and access to new opportunities – can help.

• Measurement – there are four aspects that need to be measured. The first aspect is the input to the process – resources such as money and people. The number of full-time staff for selected functions involved in the process and what their key people are working on. The operating expense. The second aspect is about the performance of the process – the inputs are acted on by certain people and processes, which can be tracked and measured, including cycle time through entire innovation process; cycle time through specific parts of the process; deviation around average cycle time – high end to low end of the range; number of ideas that are moving from one stage of the process to the next; resources expended, both per specific idea and on average; performance by the organisation with regard to the specification of the process, such as attendance at key meetings, percentage of documentation submitted on deadlines, and percentage of projects passed on to the next stage in the process without having met all of the specified requirements. The third area involves the cash payback (return on innovation investment). Effective measures need to be both clear and ones that management is willing to hold people accountable for. The last aspect to be considered is indirect benefits – for knowledge organisations can keep track of the number of books and papers published by their people, the number and type of conferences they have sponsored and attended and the number of citations that appear in other works.

Conclusion

This book can easily be an input on how South Africa manages innovation in the public sector.
I was barely sitting down when I heard a voice from the other stall saying: “Hi, how are you?”

I’m not the type to start a conversation in the men’s restroom but I don’t know what got into me, so I answered, somewhat embarrassed, “Doin’ just fine!”

And the other guy says: “So what are you up to?”

What kind of question is that? At that point, I’m thinking this is too bizarre so I say: “Uh, I’m like you, just traveling!”

At this point I am just trying to get out as fast as I can when I hear another question. “Can I come over?”

Ok, this question is just too weird for me but I figured I could just be polite and end the conversation. I tell him, “No......I’m a little busy right now!!!”

Then I hear the guy say nervously...

“Listen, I’ll have to call you back. There’s an idiot in the other stall who keeps answering all my questions!!!”
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.