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Opinions expressed in this journal are not those of government but reflect the views of individual writers
Public Service and the Intelligentsia

It was the philosopher Mahmood Mamdani (quoted in AlterNation, Vol. 6, No. 11999) who described the intelligentsia as a "broad and heterogeneous grouping whose origin lies in the split between manual and mental labour in class divided societies. The work of the intelligentsia combines both conception and organisation of social processes and its explanation".

Debates about the definition of intellectuals, the intelligentsia, and the work, role and relevance of such personages in society tend to slide into the world of the abstract.

In an attempt to avoid sliding into abstractions, therefore, I will quickly and humbly forward a proposition: public service managers should locate themselves within the intelligentsia. For a number of reasons.

Not only is public service management equipped with the skills to identify and respond to the needs of the populace, but the public service management corps has – or is supposed to have – the intellectual capacity to convert Government policy into efficacious strategies, and utilise resources allocated to them effectively.

The ability to understand policy and translate it into a strategy for implementation assumes a certain level of intelligence and competence on the part of an individual located within the public service.

In his essay Learning In Public Management (Page 5) Des Gasper takes this thesis further when he observes: "...for most purposes in senior management we need to make intelligent judgments about cases that consist of a unique new set of circumstances, not completely the same as anything we saw before. We have to think critically to judge how far previous examples or various general management ideas are relevant to the new case".

Ours is a relatively new public service regime, having come into being with the ushering in of a new democracy in 1994. Prior to this, the public service was an appendage to a Government that was not accountable to anyone, except perhaps a small minority; as such, the public service of the time was insulated in a cocoon of intellectual and political arrogance and contentedness.

The challenge, now, is to bring apartheid-created racially and ethnically divided administrations together into single, non-racial administrations. The previous service was characterised by a low skills base, poor quality of service, inefficiencies, lack of commitment and little or no respect for the citizens. As a result, low levels of trust and confidence in public institutions overshadowed the public service environment.

This must be turned around. As our feature introducing the new Senior Management Service (Page 24) explains, there now exists a need to professionalise the senior management echelon through improving recruitment and selection procedures, training, implementing performance assessments, career management and putting in place corresponding remuneration. Capacity building will come in many forms. The Service Delivery Review: A Learning Journal For Managers In The Public Service is part of the process of learning and sharing knowledge in the public service, especially among managers.

The journal aims to be a forum for the exchange of information, the creation of debates, and the simple continuation of the learning process within the public service. In my former incarnation as a newspaper editor one of the refrains that ordinary people confronted me with was: the new government is not delivering.

A closer inspection of this assertion always showed it to be untrue, to say the least. However, the point remains that government has in the main failed to communicate its successes, however small, to the general populace. Also, as writer Marietjie Myburg et al observe in our Amatole Case Study (page 14): “People do not know what they should know about services... until this communication gap has been closed, investment to improve services will probably not improve client satisfaction”.

We cannot hope to communicate with the outside stakeholders if we are not communicating and sharing among ourselves. Instead of reverting to the defensive stance – typical of moribund, unimaginative, conservative, unaccountable public service entities all over the world – the public service here needs to respond intelligently to challenges both internal and external.

One of these, of course, is the matter of restructuring. In line with the ongoing debate about the restructuruing of State assets, our guest columnist Hassen Lorgat, Media Officer of Sadtu, (page 50) encourages us to explore a number of options with regard to the restructuring programme, which has had a direct impact on the labour force in the public sector.

While we look internally at refining and professionalising the public sector, it is equally important that we also heed external voices like Lorgat’s; this is because the public sector does not operate or exist in a vacuum. It is part of a big whole, and as such should be engaging with other stakeholders.

The mandate of the Service Delivery Review is not only to provoke discussion around technical issues as they relate to the public sector’s ability to deliver, but is also to position public sector management within the context of broader societal issues.

We can only learn from continuing, vigorous debate. To paraphrase Edward Said (Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures), “the intellectual” — and remember I have taken the liberty to consider public service managers as such — “is supposed to be heard from, and in practice, ought to be stirring up debate” to deepen democracy through service delivery.

Fred Khumalo
One of the urgent priorities in Government is to improve the services delivered to all South African people. Central to our endeavour to improve service delivery is the need to modernise government and ensure that the structure of the public service is in line with service delivery requirements. In light of the challenges that the Department of Public Service and Administration has identified, various intervention programmes have been implemented. It is our understanding that the objective of reconstructing the public service is based on our commitment to a developmental state underpinned by a need to ensure an effective, efficient and responsive public service.

To become a developmental public service, and to play the pivotal role expected of us in the economic and social development of our country, requires that we approach problems differently. This includes devising creative solutions that take into account best practices and experiences elsewhere, but adapts these to the reality of our country and our public service environment. We should also not fail to learn from our own achievements and mistakes. In a process as complex as reforming the public service, mistakes are inevitable. It is failing to learn and repeating mistakes that is inexcusable.

We must also grapple with the reality that we are reforming the public service and accelerating service delivery in circumstances that are not of our own choosing. We have inherited immense organisational problems, massive social and infrastructural backlogs, limited financial, human and technological resources. We also have to deal with a rapidly evolving global environment where we have to engage and interface with advanced economies, while promoting equity and development for the less advanced economies, principally those in our own continent.

We cannot cope with such challenges unless we build an active culture of learning in our public service. We must avoid the tendency to re-invent the wheel and rather use previous experiences and those of other colleagues as a basis for more rapid progress and higher level achievement. We must act to preserve and utilise the institutional memory of our public service. There is no glory in locking ourselves in our respective silos and “inventing” solutions that others have already perfected elsewhere. To build and preserve our institutional memory we must build robust knowledge management practices across the public service. We live in an age where knowledge is a resource as valuable as financial capital or natural resources. Failing to tap into this resource is tantamount to throwing money down the drain.

To assist the process of learning and managing our knowledge, the Department of Public Service and Administration, in collaboration with other members of the Governance and Administrative Cluster, is promoting a range of initiatives. One of these is the learning journal. We hope, through this journal, to promote the culture of learning and sharing among our public managers. We know that a lot of insights and innovation remain untapped among our public managers, especially those at the coalface of delivery. We call on them to put such insights at the disposal of the public service as a whole. We call on all our public managers to use this journal to learn but also to teach. As the Congress of South African Students’ slogan so aptly puts it, “Each one, teach one”. With your co-operation, this learning journal can become a powerful platform for learning and sharing.

Now the platform exists for managers to engage, learn and debate issues freely. The journal cultivates the spirit of learning from one another. This is a step towards becoming a learning organisation, a necessary condition for becoming a true developmental public service. I therefore challenge public service managers and others who can contribute to service delivery improvement to maximise use of this journal as a platform to share best practices and knowledge and to generate new knowledge.
For senior managers, the difference between learning by rote and learning to think independently is central. In rote learning we learn how to exactly reproduce something, we copy. This is fine for some purposes: we need to know exactly where the keys on the keyboard are, otherwise we produce nonsense or type very slowly; and we must reproduce our signature consistently otherwise our cheques or credit card payments may be rejected.

But for most purposes in senior management we need to make intelligent judgments about cases that consist of a unique new set of circumstances, not completely the same as anything we saw before. We have to think critically, to judge how far previous examples or various general management ideas are relevant to the new case. By ‘critically’ I mean relying on evidence, good logic.

Des Gasper explains how and why some administrative doctrines fail. In this thought-provoking essay, he takes us through the process of learning and thinking creatively, to transcend limitations of the past.
and considered values, not automatic opposition. A good film critic gives both praise and criticism, according to when they seem due. Automatic opposition is uncritical; so is automatically following fashion.

Let’s look at the rise and spread of the doctrines called New Public Management, NPM. These emerged in the 1980s especially in New Zealand, Australia and Britain, and in sister forms in the USA; and spread widely, including in Southern Africa, partly through promotion by international agencies like the Commonwealth Secretariat and major management consultancy groups.

NPM has done a lot to shake up sleepy and self-serving public organisations, often by using ideas from the private sector. It provides many options for trying to achieve cost-effective delivery of public goods, like separate organisations for policy and implementation, performance contracts, internal markets, sub-contracting, and much more. But it has been spread somewhat like a kets, sub-contracting, and much more. Performance contracts, internal markets, sub-contracting, and much more. But it has been spread somewhat like a religion: it is assumed to be modern, relevant and superior, so there is no need felt to prove that it suits the case concerned; to query this is held to show that you are outdated and reactionary.

Christopher Pollitt (of Brunel University, London, and Erasmus University, Rotterdam) records in his study “Justification by Works or by Faith?” that while NPM was being evangelised worldwide, its empirical backing was thin.¹ No thorough pilot studies had been done, let alone ones giving clear lessons and based on consultation also with medium and lower-level staff or customers about their experience in the experiments. Governments pushed ahead with massive changes on the basis of high hopes, misleading comparisons, a few examples, often heard of from abroad, assurances from highly paid consultants, and the views of some top civil servants and politicians far from the delivery line.

By now, as experience mounts, NPM has lost much of its shine. What we see of the public and semi-public utilities such as the railways in Britain — complex new organisational systems, lavish remuneration of managers and investors, and often poor, sometimes disastrous, records of public service — means that copying British-style NPM is no longer on the policy agenda. In New Zealand the costs of an approach that is too narrow, to public management, have been major and there is a considerable backlash.

Learning in public management in the past: nature and limitations

Christopher Hood of the London School of Economics has gone a step further, to ask why and how administrative doctrines often get adopted without a good basis of evidence. I recommend especially his book with Michael Jackson called “Administrative Argument”.² They suggest that politically successful arguments in the past about principles for administration have rarely been based on extensive reliable data or careful logic and comparison with alternatives. More often they have relied on appeals to authority, metaphors, proverbs, and selected supportive examples.

Yet as Herbert Simon pointed out in his famous book “Administrative Behaviour”, for every one of these administration proverbs there is a contradictory one, equally plausible, that is ignored — until the next wave in administrative fashion when those opposite views may become a new orthodoxy. “Administrative Argument” catalogues 99 proverb-like doctrines in administration, about who should do what or how, and discusses influences on which ones get picked out when.

Simon wanted to establish administration on a more scientific basis, by precise large-scale testing of which doctrines work when and where. But the record of that sort of work in academic public administration has been rather indecisive and short of influence, since it rarely gives bold, inspiring, sweeping conclusions — situations and criteria have so many aspects, vary so much and keep on changing.

Far more influential, argue Hood and Jackson, have been approaches which contain attractively packaged sets of administration proverbs and satisfy all or most of the following six requirements:

First, they must pick up a felt mood of the time. NPM matched a desire to “jack up” the public sector and cut costs. In some countries, for example, the swing voter group was now relatively well-off and averse to more taxes.

Second, the approaches use persuasive metaphors and build on appealing and widespread “common-sense” ideas. NPM stressed masterful “management” (the word comes from the training of horses) rather than more modest “administration”, and equated budget-cutting with fitness and losing weight: “mean” came to mean “lean”. It relied on simple pictures provided by economists, that people are restless calculators oriented to financial incentives and predominantly self-interested.

Only vivid simple images will capture the imagination of enough people and be remembered and used. This is how business management “gurus” work. Metaphors also genuinely help people to think and to be more creative.

Third, they should be stated in general terms which allow different groups to interpret the package differently, in line with their concerns. NPM’s “performance” talk could appeal both to cost-cutters, interested in financial performance, and to quality-raisers.

Fourth, the approach promotes the private interests of some influential groups while declaring to serve the public good. NPM schemes, for example, have involved not just well-intentioned copying of a current fashion, but ample rewards for top public officials who gained private sector type remuneration packages and who after leaving the public sector frequently entered interested-party private companies.

Fifth, examples and comparisons are used to give reasoned support, but only selected ones which support the pre-set conclusions. The examples often come as easy-to-remember stories, parables of failure or success, like we see in much management guru literature. NPM presented inspirational stories: of the bad old ways and the shining modern alternative. It ignored cases which didn’t fit.

Sixth, the approach is proposed in a forceful, dramatic way which induces people to accept its story and conclusions even in the absence of solid evidence; for example by insisting that a crisis demands immediate action. At a
These six factors help explain how packages of ideas from business management and economics — NPM drew from both sources — have often become more influential in public management than ideas from the public administration discipline itself, which were too complex, unmarketed and harder to use. Economics-based reasoning has had the added advantage that, given its boldly oversimplified picture of peoples’ motives, it builds impressive-looking mathematical models of behaviour which give definite predictions. This provides a direction and a feeling of decisiveness. And yet the picture is dangerously oversimplified.

So how might we do any better, think independently and yet influence and motivate? One lesson, especially from the study of public administration, is the importance of being empirical, case-specific, and respecting complexity.

Another lesson, especially from economics, is the value of a systematic approach to thinking. And from business management especially we can draw a lesson about the power of metaphors and stories, for seeing new angles, communicating, and persuading.

Here are a few suggestions on how we might combine these three requirements.
A method for thinking critically

Systems of pat answers inhibit us from thinking and learning. We need methods to help us think, including to check assumptions and counter-arguments. I and my students have found the following method very helpful. It helps one to clarify and test positions and think creatively about improving them or finding alternatives. It uses two tables for analysis. The first is for understanding more clearly the components and meanings of what you or someone else says. The second is for then seeing the structure of the argument, how and how well the components fit together. Only if we clarify meanings, as in the first part, are we ready to check logic, in the second part.1

When proofreading our own work we nearly always miss some errors. Similarly, ordinary reading usually misses many significant aspects in a text. So in the first part of the method we look closely, line-by-line and word-by-word, at a selected key passage. We place the text in the first column of a table and divide it into sections, to examine in detail. This helps us to both get close to a position, carefully look at all its perspectives, and keep our distance, think about it in a detached, analytical way.

In the second column one identifies and comments on key words and phrases, including the major images and metaphors. Some people say “New Public Management” was in fact largely old private management, and often different from what successful modern private sector companies try for. Bringing business practices into public administration has been tried since the late 19th century; and many NPM components, like performance-related pay, were widespread even long before then. Sometimes long pedigree is seen as a virtue, but NPM presented itself as “New” to avoid attention to the mixed record of previous attempts on the same lines and to why they had declined.

Another useful guideline is to identify language which hints at praise or criticism and thus gives a pointer towards the conclusions of the piece. Sometimes it is worth having a third column in which one takes the key words and phrases and rewords them more neutrally or with an opposite evaluative load. This helps to clarify the conclusions which the actual choice of words led towards; and to suggest possible counter-arguments, other ways of viewing the same situation, against which the text should be compared when we judge it overall.

In the final column one then identifies the main conclusions and assumptions of the text, both the stated ones and those unstated or hinted at. So overall the first table could look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The text</th>
<th>Comments on meanings</th>
<th>A rewording of key components</th>
<th>Main conclusions and assumptions identified in the text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the method builds on the results from the first.

In a second table we lay out for each important conclusion the basis on which it is proposed: the asserted or assumed data and principles.

The possible counter-arguments (rebuttals) can either be direct doubts about the identified data and principle(s), or other doubts or exceptions concerning the claim.

The overall procedure nearly always provides interesting new insights about what is being said and how, and a helpful basis for evaluating and if necessary changing it.

Learning versus accountability

The “logical framework” (logframe) can be another useful format for thinking. Whether under its own name or at the heart of newer packages like “Results-based Management” and “Project Cycle Management”, it is widely required by funders. But it has often become a cage for control which stops us from learning. Let us see how.

The logframe is another matrix or table. We can describe it in the terms we’ve just used. In the first column is the claim, a programme or project proposal, consisting of a hypothesised chain of means and ends. This relies on, first, the theoretical assumptions behind the means-ends hypothesis, and second a value proposition that the highest end in

| Conclusion 1 | Data 1.1, (1.2, ..) | Principle 1.1, (1.2, ..) | Rebuttal 1.1, (1.2, 1.3, ..) |
| Conclusion 2 | Data 2.1, (2.2, ..) | Principle 2.1, (2.2, ..) | Rebuttal 2.1, (2.2, 2.3, ..) |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

I Claim [this conclusion], given this Data (empirical facts) and this Principle (or principles = theoretical and/or value statements); Unless (except when) one or more of these counter-arguments applies
gives us possible rebuttals. Between the column of objectives and the column of assumptions come a column or columns for measuring performance at each level in the means-ends chain.

The logframe can help us face basic questions about a design: how is the project/programme justified in terms of more fundamental criteria than just its own outputs? How does it contribute to public priorities? How does it relate to factors outside its control but which affect how it would work and contribute? How realistic are its assumptions about them? When used like this, especially to keep our eyes on the valid-
ity of our assumptions about an uncertain future and an imperfectly understood operating environment, the logframe provides an important service. A key element of learning is to learn about our ignorance, identify what we do not know.

Unfortunately most use of the logframe has been preoccupied instead with monitoring the fine detail of achievement of the originally set objectives. We see this in the traditional matrix design: two centrally placed columns about performance indicators dominate, while the assumptions column is relegated to the far right, illogically divorced from the means-ends chain whose links it is supposed to elaborate.

The original design was assumed to be basically adequate and to form a “contract” between implementers and funders, so the priority was to monitor how far it is followed. Logframe-based management has then often ignored changed conditions and outdated assumptions, and been a brake on learning since it was focused on enforcing the original “contract”, not on reviewing and updating it.

In evaluation and monitoring, the choices here are discussed in terms of “learning versus accountability”. But the most basic form of accountability is to show, not that one has stuck by rote to outdated plans, but that one is paying attention to reality and to fundamental public priorities. Some “Results-based Management” goes in this direction, but unfortunately holds on to the unsuitable traditional version of the logframe matrix.

The philosopher George Santayana warned that if we don’t learn from the past then we are doomed to repeat it. Regrettably much management practice has been determined to repeat and reproduce old plans, rather than learning. The plans became ends and not means.

Thinking caringly – learning about values

Learning for the future thus means learning from the past, having an interest in history, precisely in order not to repeat it. A worrying trend reported in South African education is a dramatic decline in the wish to study your admittedly painful but profoundly instructive history.

Studying history can also be a path for learning to care about others. So are mentoring, role models, and stories and examples from everyday practice, not only about “saints”. Caring values are central for public managers and cannot be presumed to automatically grow and be sufficient. In the absence of attention to public values we may become dominated by the values of the market and the search for status through wealth alone.

Ideals of public service and public-spiritedness are critically important for the operation of community and state, and of markets. However, the stories in simple economics models, including some now applied to public affairs in “public choice theory” and so on, often concern actors of great selfishness and much knowledge. They care little and may feel little need to learn from each other — and yet society thrives. These parodies of reality support market-based philosophies of self-interest which in fact rely on inherited ethics of public service, but undermine them. Public spirit, like self-interested attitudes, can increase or decrease according to its environment and whether it is fostered or not.

We need a realistic middle road between ideals of purely self-sacrificing public service and the “public choice” theory models.

People are not only self-interested with a completely fixed idea of what is their self-interest; nor are they purely passive or totally public-spirited. They have valuable knowledge and some willingness to learn from and co-operate with others. Participation increases their co-operation with a policy, and increases its quality. These are the bases for a “social learning” approach.

Learning to think creatively

Lastly, we have to learn how to create, as well as how to criticise and care; and how to unlearn inadequate paradigms and values which we should discard. Many interesting books now discuss creative thinking, including for public management, to identify and transcend the old limitations in our minds.

No doubt this will be a topic in future issues of the Service Delivery Review. I will only say that the methods introduced earlier help considerably. Identifying a metaphor, rewording a proposition, finding an alternative image, locating an assumption, formulating counter-arguments — all foster richer thinking, further options, better communication and improved learning.

Learning in public management is a fascinating and crucial field. I congratulate DPSA for founding this journal, and wish it a great future.

References


5 This section draws on my “Thoughts for the Next Phase in Education and Training for Public and Development Management”, pp 165-188 in The State of Public and Development Management in South Africa, editors: E. Schwella & F. Theron, School of Public Management & Planning, University of Stellenbosch.


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In the last ten years the world has experienced a significant and decisive shift from undemocratic and ineffective governments. This progress has been visible in most parts of the African continent. Together with these political changes we have also witnessed unprecedented commitment by the majority of leaders, particularly in the countries of the south, for economic and social development. The need and the urgency to create democratic governments and responsive public services can no longer be postponed if economic and social development is to be achieved.

The World Bank Report (1997) aptly captures this urgency: “Good government is not a luxury — it is a vital necessity for development. ... People living with ineffective states have long suffered the consequences in terms of postponed growth and social development”.

There seems to be consensus that for governments to meet their objective the nature and the performance of public sector organisations are critical elements in determining developmental success (Turner & Hulme, 1997). In response to this proposition, governments have initiated reform and renewal programmes in order to improve the quality of service to their citizens.

In the first instance, the ideological perspective that defines the role and the nature of the state shapes the approach and the content of the reform programmes. Over decades alternative governance “models” and the role of the public service have evolved. Of these models, the most developed and articulated are the “traditional” and “market” models (Peters, 1995).

The “market” model advocates for the reduction of the role and activities of government. The protagonists of this perspective argue that public services should be delivered through purchases of service agreements with other agencies and NGOs. Within this framework of governance, it would appear that greater power and autonomy is given to civil servants, in reality the redistribution of power is more in their role as managers rather than as policy makers and advisors. Within this ideology, power tends to be centralised in political leadership.

The “traditional” recognises the centrality of the public service and its role in government. The proponents of this ideology support the existence of a permanent and professional, accountable and transparent public service with its core function being policy advice as well as management. This is argued as the most effective way of providing the citizens as well as the political office bearer with the best advice and service.

Secondly, the reform programmes in
Human capital — it’s important for government to invest in people in order to ensure that the public service is able to respond to challenges ahead.
each country are shaped by the specific context in which the services are delivered. In countries that have inherited huge disparities such as South Africa, the need to improve access and quality of service have been on top of the agenda. In those that have almost achieved universal services, the pressure is on continuous improvement of quality.

Before exploring the possible strategies for transformation, a brief exposition of what is the nature and the character of the public service inherited by the democratic government and what are the vestiges of the old that continue to persist in the new is important.

What have we inherited

In last ten years, the world has experienced a disintegration of large systems into smaller administrative systems. South Africa, on the contrary, post apartheid, has been confronted with a different agenda of bringing together racially and ethnically divided administrations into single non-racial administrations.

In education, for example, this process involved the integration of nineteen departments into one single system administered in nine provinces.

This fragmented public service was in the main characterised by a low skills base, poor quality of service, inefficiencies, lack of commitment and little or no respect to the citizens it was supposed to serve.

As a result, low levels of trust and confidence in public institutions overshadowed the public service environment.

The challenge was therefore not limited to bringing people under the same roof, but to create a new organisational ethos, create a shared vision, establish new work ethics and bring the services closer to the people.

The urgent and immediate task was to impress on the new public service that they exist for the sole purpose of delivering quality service to all citizens.

What is the framework for transformation

The transformation of any public service should be guided by the same principles that government wants to promote within society as a whole. In its practice and conduct it must uphold and reflect those principles such as accountability and transparency that forms the cornerstone of the society we are creating. There should never be a contradiction between what government stands for and what the public service does in carrying out its functions. In fact the changes that government wishes to see in society should start within the public service.

In South Africa, where access to quality public services to the majority of citizens is a problem, a transformation programme that focused on limited sectors of the public service would experience numerous problems. First, an incremental approach would suffer similar problems experienced by other reform efforts that have adopted the same strategy, of not being able to “move to scale”.

Second, is that piecemeal interventions and incremental strategies to reform over and above the problem of “moving to scale” also experience a major problem of institutionalisation (Fullan, 2000).

In recognition of these limitations associated with incremental approaches to reform, large-scale reform seems to be the most appropriate approach in order to impact simultaneously on all sectors of the public to ensure that all citizens experience quality services. Large-scale reforms also have their own limitations and problems. Common to all large-scale reforms, is the problem of overload and extreme fragmentation.

Systems in order to deal with these problems have been preoccupied with aligning policies with little success.

Top-down and bottom-up strategies

Change processes have proved that neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies for organisational reform are efficacious. Small and large-scale studies ranging from “voluntary” to “mandatory” top-down strategies have consistently demonstrated that local implementation fails in the vast majority of cases. The major problem associated with top-down strategies is that it is almost impossible to control complex change process from the top. In fact, within such an approach we would be engaging in the “illusion of control” (Senge, 1990).

Controlling strategies do not work because there is too much to control.

Given the difficulties of attempting to control change from afar, it is understandable that local participation and site-based management appears to many to be the solution. However, this alternative is also fraught with fundamental deficiencies. First, there is ample evidence that organisations in general are not likely to initiate change in the absence of external stimuli. Second, it is difficult to maintain quality control. Third, a site (school/hospital/prison) can
become highly innovative, despite the district it is in. However, it is not possible for such a school or hospital to sustain innovation despite the district.

From this analysis, it is important that for any change process to be effective, we require a more sophisticated blend of the two. We need processes where senior managers follow a critical path that obtains the benefits of top-down as well as bottom-up change efforts while minimising their disadvantage. Change flourishes in a “sandwich”, when there is consensus above and pressure below.

Building confidence and pride among public servants

Civil servants in most administrations feel unappreciated and less valued. Feeny (1997), in support of this sentiment has this to say:

“In fact, Public Service bashing has become a regular sport to many Canadians and politicians alike. Evidence of this is reported daily in the media”

There are thousands of civil servants, although not all, who are responsible, talented and dedicated, who must be recognised, affirmed and rewarded. Equally there are departments or sections within departments that are innovative and productive and must also be publicly acknowledged and rewarded. Such a reward system should not necessarily be in monetary terms.

Public service and civil society

The efficiency of the civil service cannot be left to itself. We require a civil society that is constantly demanding faster, more convenient, and more responsive service delivery. A civil society that is assertive, extremely vocal and critical of the government’s ability to meet their evolving needs.

In the process of providing services we must simultaneously empower the local communities to develop their own solutions to their specific local problems. The paradigm shift that must happen within the public service is whether we deliver programmes to clients or we provide services to communities of citizens who have the right to participate in defining the content and quality of such services.

The basic idea behind the community policing forums is to make public safety a community responsibility, rather than simply the responsibility of the professionals — the police. In short, the police can be much more effective if they help the communities to help themselves.

Investing in people

In today’s global environment, it is generally believed that human capital is the factor which will enable organisations to achieve long-term success. This is true of any organisation, be it public or private. It is therefore important for government to invest in its people in order to ensure that the public service is able to respond to the challenges ahead.

We therefore need to revitalise our commitment to human resource management within departments and across government in order to give the human resource function greater prominence in the public service.

Public-private sector interchange

The public and private sectors are increasingly coming closer across the globe. South Africa is also increasingly experiencing levels of co-operation between the two sectors.

Most people have been taught that the public and private sectors occupy distinct worlds, that government should not interfere with business, and that business should have nothing to do with government. Because of budgetary concerns, governments are under intense pressure to solve problems without spending new money.

This has naturally forced civil servants and leaders of industry and commerce to develop a common understanding. There is a need to create opportunities for managers in these sectors to share experiences and information. This could be accomplished through joint training programmes and workplace exchange programmes.

Conclusion

If the maintenance of a public service is complex, its reform is more complex. It is for this reason that all sectors of the economy must work together to support public service renewal, champion the accomplishments of public servants, and reward and recognise high quality and commitment of South Africa’s public service to meet the needs of our county.

References


We require a civil society that is constantly demanding faster, more convenient service delivery

Photograph by Oscar G.
The Eastern Cape government embarked on an integrated provincial support programme (IPSP) to improve service delivery in the province. One aim of the IPSP is to establish a service delivery monitoring system based on service delivery standards as set out in the Batho Pele (People First) campaign.

CIET Africa tendered for and was appointed to demonstrate a social audit in one district of the four departments in the social needs cluster — education, health, welfare and sports, arts and culture.

The objectives of the Amatole district municipality social audit — completed in the first three months of 2001 — were:

- demonstrate social audit of the delivery and performance of public services;
- document the types and effects of community participation in public services, and track evolving participation mechanisms;
- develop communication strategies directed at civil society, service workers and decision makers at district level thus to strengthen informed advocacy of public sector reform; and
- build a supportive environment at district level, identifying examples of best practice in institutions and government, preparing these cases for dissemination through mass media.

**Methods**

To initiate this demonstration cycle in November 2000, CIET conducted a series of interviews with planners and decision makers in each participating sector. These meetings identified the main concerns in each participating sector and the components of their service delivery that they felt would benefit from community-based information.

Based on this input, CIET developed the sample, designed, tested, translated and back translated the instruments. The CIET team selected and trained interviewers, piloted and adjusted the instruments to local conditions, supervised the household surveys and double data-entry, analysed the data and produced the report in the first six months of 2001.

The social audit followed an established research methodology. The data collection methods included a household survey to collect information on individual client experiences, key informant interviews to assess community level factors and to obtain the service workers’ views, and community focus groups to deepen the understanding of results and to explore corrective strategies.

Interviewers conducted 2 297 household interviews which provided information about 11 827 people.
The household questionnaire was piloted using the standard CIET five-step pilot process. Its 66 questions were divided into five main sections:

- General household questions collected information about the household structure including age, sex, education level, occupation and income. It also documented how the people viewed corruption and the relative importance of government departments in their eyes.
- The second, third and fourth sections dealt with the education, health and welfare departments. Based on the Batho Pele principles, these sections produced performance indicators on application of these principles, covering community consultation, access to information, access to services, courtesy, redress and value for money.
- The fifth section covered the department of sports, arts and culture. The head of this department expressed a special interest to learn how people viewed special day events organised by the department: Heritage Day and Freedom Day. Questions in this section documented public awareness of and attendance at these events.

Taking the Gap

There is a communication gap: people do not know what they should know about services. Until this gap has been closed, investment to improve services will probably not improve client satisfaction.

Once the communication issue is solved, it will be appropriate to focus on performance of each department in turn, to obtain more in-depth evidence on what needs to improve.

Amatole is not a typical district municipality and the results cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the province. The social audit should be extended to the rest of the province to get a full picture.

Nevertheless, the key findings for each of the Batho Pele principles were:

Consultation

Although nominal mechanisms were in place for all four sectors, only the education sector was characterised by systematic consultation, through the school governing boards (SGBs).

Some two-thirds of households took part in an SGB in the year prior to the consultation, reported participation in rural areas being if anything greater than that in urban areas.

In one in three households, someone had met with the teacher.

These widely used consultation mechanisms in education could offer an environment conducive to greater client participation in the social cluster as a whole.
Service standards

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public service they will receive, so they are aware of what to expect.

An indication of the extent to which client expectations are met (or frustrated) is the level of satisfaction voiced with public services. One in three respondents said she or he was dissatisfied with these public services. In education, most respondents who saw the need for change wanted better teachers, while in health most asked for more medicine, and in the welfare department they said better service.

Access

All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled

There was good coverage of the basic services reviewed: 89% of youth of school-going age attended school on the day of the survey; 92% of children under the age of five years had been vaccinated against measles and around 92% of senior citizens collected their pensions. There was no detectable difference between urban and rural sites in school attendance or measles immunisation, but a senior citizen in an urban area was more likely to receive his/her pension than one in a rural site. Indicating perceived access — possibly including cultural, language and financial access — the majority of respondents felt that nurses in the clinics and welfare officers were accessible to them. There was very poor attendance of Heritage, Freedom and Women’s Days and few could identify the intended message of the celebrations.

Courtesy

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration

The respect people feel they receive from the public services was estimated from their perception of corruption and
what they saw as corruption. Nearly one half of those respondents who had an opinion on the subject viewed welfare as the most corrupt department. The main reason for this was that many who expected pension cheques did not receive one and were not given reasons for this.

Since 90% of eligible seniors said they did receive their cheques, the perception of corruption appears to be principally one of communication about eligibility. Effective communication in this regard could lead to a quick turnaround improvement.

**Information**

*Citizens should be given full information about the public services*

Many social cluster clients simply do not have the information they need. For example, in the health sector the audit probed the information available by asking respondents if they knew that children under the age of five years should get free immunisation. One in every four — more in the rural sites — did not know this. This is another potentially quick turnaround for improvement. People also wanted to know why medicines they expected were not available. From the education department, people wanted to know more about feeding schemes, free schoolbooks and use of registration fees. In welfare, they wanted information on eligibility for pensions and the role of the social workers.

**Openness and Transparency**

*Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge*

One in five could identify the MEC for education and only one in ten knew who was in charge of health, welfare and sports, arts and culture. The “least open” department was welfare, where only 5% knew the name of the MEC.

**Redress**

*If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic response*

Most people did not know how to complain: 39% in education and 57% and 67% respectively in health and welfare said they did not know how the process of redress worked. Higher levels of complaints and lower proportions who say they do not know how to complain makes education the lead sector in the matter of redress.

**Value for money**

*Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge*

The health and education departments were considered the best run and the most valuable public services, followed by welfare. Expenditure of public resources was not reviewed in this social audit. However, there were also some direct costs to the citizens (official and unofficial user fees) and indirect costs occasioned by not having access to effective services.

For example, the average health visit cost to a government facility, for the one third who had to pay, was R2 and transportation cost for a health visit was in the region of R7 for a round trip.

**Limits of interpretation**

Amatole is not a typical district municipality and the results cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the province. Amatole probably has better than average access to services and, consequently, the problems and solutions may be quite different from other district municipalities. Discussions are currently under way to extend the social audit to the rest of the province.

Because of the requirement that the whole social cluster be covered, it was not possible to include the full depth that might be required in the social audit of any one sector. The Batho Pele principles set the framework for the initial social audit, the idea being to identify first broad strategies that could improve engagement of stakeholders across the whole social cluster and to get more value from existing social sector investment.

At a later stage, individual sectors will require in-depth social audits to identify sectoral bottlenecks, inefficiencies and system leakage.

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In this paper, the planned methodology of outsourcing the road construction unit is described and the necessary preparatory work is outlined. The results of a study which indicated that the construction unit is inefficient relative to the private sector are presented. Weaknesses in the management of internal road maintenance units are identified, and a number of improved management techniques which have been introduced under the SDI programme are described. Preliminary data on output levels and unit costs before and after the programme intervention is presented. The data indicates that the programme has resulted in marked improvements in output levels and reductions in unit costs, without increasing overall expenditure levels and without losing jobs. Additional changes which will be required in order to consolidate and expand the gains are identified.

Financial resources

Personnel expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure reached a high of 67% in the 2000/2001 financial year. General administrative expenditure consumes a further 7% of the budget. The remaining money in the budget must cover both the stores and equipment needed by the in-house teams, and the employment of contractors for outsourced preventative maintenance and major capital works. Even with the improved infrastructure budgets in the medium-term expenditure framework, there are insufficient funds to carry out the preventative maintenance required to prevent the existing infrastructure from deteriorating, let alone address the backlogs of infrastructure in previously disadvantaged areas.

Service delivery standards

In terms of the revised Public Service Regulations, NPDPW has published service delivery standards. For example, it has set itself a standard of repairing a pothole in a road within three days. However, it is not currently meeting many of these standards. The reasons for this will be addressed later in this paper.

Service delivery improvement programme

In the context described in the introduction and background above, the Department embarked on a business process reengineering or SDI programme in 1996, with the aim of improving service delivery. The SDI programme consists of the following elements:

- reengineering of systems within the Department to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- training focused on building the capacity of low level workers and improving skills levels, with a budgetary allocation of approximately 1%
of the personnel budget;
• delegation of authority to regional and cost centre managers;
• performance management to provide staff with incentives and to develop a focus on outputs;
• introduction of project management methods and single-point accountability for projects to improve the management of projects;
• downsizing through attrition and a moratorium on the filling of low level posts to increase the resources available for non-personnel expenditure;
• Disposal of non-core/redundant assets, including the residential property portfolio, to release resources for service delivery; and
• Making internal units more efficient and business-like (commercialisation) and outsourcing of non-core functions.

Although the last of the elements listed above is the focus of this paper, the elements are interdependent and all of them are important.

The management of the Department struggled to make progress with the implementation of the programme on their own, due to capacity constraints. However, progress improved from 1999 after donor-funded outside assistance was obtained through the Integrated Provincial Support Programme (IPSP) of the national Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

### Outsourcing of a road construction unit

The Department’s SDI programme is not based on an ideological view that the private sector is necessarily more efficient at providing public services than the public service. The Department reviewed its activities with the aim of identifying the most appropriate means of improving service delivery in each functional area. The function of construction of roads had been largely outsourced since pre-1994, and the Department was left with a single small road construction unit (consisting of approximately 170 people). The road construction industry is a highly capital-intensive and competitive industry. The Department’s construction unit had developed a reputation in the province for being slow and inefficient in comparison with private contractors. The Department was struggling to run the unit efficiently and effectively with the human and financial resource constraints described above, and with the inefficiencies caused by the regulatory framework in key areas such as procurement.

Furthermore, given the existence of a well-developed road construction industry in the province, the Department did not view the construction of roads using an internal construction unit as one of its core functions.

In the light of the above, the Department undertook a study to examine the case for outsourcing the road construction unit. As expected, the study found a lack of management skills in the unit. The number of staff members in the unit was found to be 2,2 times the number which would be employed by an equivalent unit in the private sector. It was also found that the amount of machinery in the unit was 1,6 times the amount of machinery required by a unit of that size. This latter finding was unexpected given that lack of machinery is often given by managers in the Department as a reason for service delivery problems.

Finally, the study found that, for the last project completed by the unit, the cost of the work to the Department was R38 million and the project took 18 months to complete. Based on average tendered rates in the industry, it was calculated that the cost to the Department would have been R15 million had a private contractor been used for the same project, and the project would have been completed within six months.

A strategy was developed to outsource the construction unit by transferring the whole unit (including all its equipment) to a private sector construction company as a going concern, under Section 197 of the Labour Relations Act (Republic of South Africa, 1995).

The process of transfer would be linked to a road construction project, to provide an incentive for the new employer to take over the unit, and to ensure that the new employer has enough work to maintain the employment of the transferred staff for at least a minimum period. The new employer would also be contractually obliged to maintain at least the former conditions of employment of the staff for the minimum period. Consideration was also given to granting a tender preference to the new employer for a further period after the initial period has elapsed, on condition that the staff remain employed by the new employer.

A two-stage implementation process was entered into. Firstly, the Department invited expressions of interest from private sector companies. The purpose of this phase was to obtain inputs from the private sector and to shortlist companies on the basis of a number of criteria, including their capacity to take over the unit, their proposals for training and empowerment of the staff of the unit, and black economic empowerment.

Submissions closed in November 2000, and a shortlist of five contractors was decided on after the 10 submissions received had been adjudicated. In the second phase which has not yet been implemented, the short listed companies would be invited to tender on a particular road construction project, with the contract documents adjusted to include the transfer of the road construction unit.

In order to prepare for the outsourcing of the unit, a skills audit of the staff in the unit was conducted and staff records were updated. Issues relating to the transfer of staff benefits were resolved. With regard to pension fund benefits, permission has been obtained for staff to remain members of the government pension fund until a suitable pension transfer mechanism has been developed. An inventory of equipment and plant was prepared, and Treasury approval was obtained for the transfer of the unit’s equipment to the new Employer. A suitable road construction project was identified and designs were prepared.

The Department initiated a process of consultation with the relevant trade unions regarding the outsourcing of the unit, but this process was overtaken by negotiations at national level regarding the development of a framework for the restructuring of the public service. Further consultations will take place in the context of a national framework agreement.
Service delivery improvement in other functions

In the functional areas of security, cleaning, gardening, routine road and building maintenance and minor roads and building capital works, it was decided that the most appropriate way of improving service delivery would be to try to make the internal units more business-like.

These are the functional areas of the Department in which most of the staff are located, including the staff employed as additional to the establishment. Outsourcing is not a solution to problems of overstaffing. Overstaffing has to be dealt with either by reducing staff numbers or by finding more productive work for staff to do. It was envisaged that the adoption of a private sector approach of focusing on optimising output per unit expenditure would encourage managers to find innovative ways of identifying more productive work for existing staff to do.

In addition, these functions are largely labour-intensive and do not require large inputs of capital, and are therefore suitable functions to be carried out by small and emerging businesses. Thus, if these functions were to be outsourced at some time in the future, they could be outsourced as employee-owned small enterprises.

However, the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal units would need to be greatly increased before they could be outsourced, if they are to have a reasonable chance of being successful in the private sector. If no decision is taken to outsource the functions in future, then the Department can remain with more efficient and effective internal units.

The need for change

The Department’s work activities were previously carried out in an ad-hoc rather than planned manner. Work plans, in which the required work is identified and programmes of work are set, were almost entirely absent in the Department. The lack of focus on optimising outputs also resulted in an ad-hoc rather than planned allocation of human, financial, and material resources to work activities. Work planning methods need to be introduced into the Department.

This involves setting service delivery standards and calculating the outputs required to meet the service delivery standards. Target output levels that should be achieved with a given amount of resources need to be set. Human resources need to be reorganised into rational business units and the other resources required to achieve the target output levels need to be calculated and allocated to the business units. Each business unit should produce detailed work plans aimed at meeting the target output levels.

The culture of the organisation needs to be changed in order to implement the measures described above. Incentives for achieving and exceeding target output levels, and for optimising output per unit cost, need to be introduced. Job descriptions need to be realigned, and training in output measurement, calculation of costs, record keeping, work organisation and project management is required.

Implementation

Due to financial constraints to the amount of outside assistance which could be made available, the Department decided to initially focus on its routine road maintenance units, which are made up of approximately 4 000 staff.

However, due to innovation by some managers, some progress has also been made in other sections of the Department. For example, the facilities management section of the Department took the initiative to reduce the number of private security services contracts, and to redeploy existing staff who were additional to the establishment in their place.

The mechanical section of the Department established a trading account and is implementing a system of charging hourly rates to other parts of the Department for the use of its machines. The aim is to encourage more efficient use of the machines and enable the use of the machines to be costing more accurately.

In addition, in the previous financial year the finance section of the Department attempted to capture the budget and expenditure according to basic activities as well as programme and standard items. The recorded expenditure figures per activity have not yet been analysed.

The programme began with the road maintenance section of the Department in one region, and is currently being expanded to road maintenance in other regions.

The first step was to create an understanding of the proposed process amongst management and other staff. Orientation sessions were followed by training courses. Trainees consisted of district managers, roads foremen and machine operators. The approach to training was very practical, with a focus on basic issues such as work planning, work organisation, resource allocation, work plans, measurement, and costing.

The next phase consisted of the preparation of business plans for maintenance. The work load was determined in terms of the size of the road network and the number of bridge structures to be maintained. The maintenance activities being performed were reformulated and grouped together where practical. Maintenance methodologies were agreed upon and service standards were set.

Maintenance teams (business units) were then formed, which included the necessary plant, tools and vehicles allocated to each team. Target production standards were discussed and agreed upon by the maintenance staff. For some activities, the target production rates were determined through on-site tests to determine what is realistically and reasonably achievable. Cost estimates of the work to be executed were prepared by maintenance staff and compared to the available budget. Adjustments were made until the estimated cost of the planned maintenance work matched the available funds.

Progress to date

The regional manager for road maintenance in the Waterberg District (then Western region) where the programme was initiated had kept records of production levels prior to the introduction of the SDI programme. On the basis of these records, it was possible to compare production levels and costs per unit out-
put before and after the SDI programme intervention.

To date, output data has been collected and analysed for the following maintenance activities: light bushclearing, blading, grass cutting, crack sealing, and pothole repair.

**Discussion of results**

The results need to be qualified in several respects. Firstly, there are deficiencies with regard to the setting of quality standards for maintenance work in the Department, and the monitoring of compliance to these standards. There is limited value in monitoring the efficiency of production if the required quality of output is not specified and strictly monitored. If this is not done, reported improvements in output may be misleading.

For example, if the quality of grading work is not specified and monitored, the grader operator may increase output by working more quickly and sacrificing the quality of the work. Secondly, there may be problems with the accuracy of the measurement and recording of output data. Thirdly, the “previous” output figures should be treated with caution, as they are anecdotal.

The improved outputs and unit costs have not yet been benchmarked against outputs and unit costs for similar work activities carried out by the private sector. Although the improvement in the output and unit costs figures appears to be dramatic in comparison to the “previous” figures, there may be a need for further improvement to match private sector output levels.

**Conclusions**

In response to a pressing need to increase service delivery in a context of declining budgets and increasing personnel expenditure, the Northern Province Department of Public Works formulated a multi-faceted service delivery improvement (SDI) programme.

This paper has focused on the experience of implementing two elements of the programme, namely improving the efficiency of internal units and making them more businesslike, and the outsourcing of a road construction unit.

The paper describes the results of a feasibility study, which indicated that the road construction unit has been inefficient relative to private road construction companies. A methodology of outsourcing was described and planning and preparatory work for the outsourcing of the unit was presented.

The results of the study on the construction unit and the results of the work with the road maintenance units indicate that there are currently substantial inefficiencies in the public service and that significant improvements in service delivery can be achieved without increasing overall expenditure levels.

The Department has markedly increased outputs in certain maintenance activities by making its internal work units operate in a more business-like manner. This involves introducing management practices such as setting work plans, setting output targets, organising work teams into rational units, and measuring and recording costs and outputs per activity. These management practices were previously largely absent in the Department.

The Department has made limited progress to date with the implementation of some of the important but more complex aspects of the SDI programme, including implementing a performance management system which provides the right incentives for increasing output, and introducing a comprehensive activity-based budgeting and costing system. A high level of external assistance has been required to implement the programme, and it remains to be seen whether the improvements in efficiency which have been achieved will be sustained once the external assistance is removed.

To date, the programme has focused on the roads maintenance functions of the Department, and much work still needs to be done to extend the gains within this function. In the future, the programme will also be extended to improving output in other regions and in the security services, building maintenance, cleaning and gardening functions. The same programme can be used in other provinces without re-inventing the wheel if need be. This is also a good case study for SDI learning network.

The ongoing transformation of the regulatory framework of the public service, including the planned decentralisation of the procurement function, will result in the removal of some of the obstacles to further improving efficiency.

The National Treasury and the Department of Public Service and Administration will also be assisting with providing the required activity-based budgeting and performance management systems.

Once the NP DPW is able to produce reliable data on its outputs and unit costs for its work activities, it will start benchmarking these figures against outputs and units costs for similar work activities carried out by the private sector. This benchmarking will provide information to support objective debates about the efficiency of the public service relative to the private sector, and will also assist with the identification of further changes required to improve service delivery.

This case study has highlighted some of the challenges and complexities of implementing new policies. The Department embarked on its SDI programme in 1996, and has taken five years to reach the stage of implementation described in this paper.

Implementation was particularly slow when there was no external assistance. However, external assistance should not be seen as a substitute for managerial commitment and involvement, which is essential for success.

The revised Public Service Regulations specify that departments must formulate and publish service delivery standards. This case study provides an indication of the extent to which established management practices in the public service need to change in order to enable these service delivery standards to be met.

The results of the case study also indicate that it is possible to successfully implement such changes. The case study also proves a point that we can improve service delivery in the Public Service through business principles like commercialisation without necessarily outsourcing or losing jobs.

- Dr. Sean Phillips is the head of Department of Public Works in the Northern Province.
The Government’s National Communication and Information System, co-ordinated at the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), was tasked by Cabinet with providing development communication and information to the public through the establishment of Multi Purpose Community Centres (MPCC). This process, which was initiated in July 1999, is co-ordinated by the GCIS through the National Intersectoral Steering Committee (NISSC).

Prior to the launch of the Tombo MPCC, it became necessary that the concept be introduced to various stakeholders in the Kei region. Briefings and consultative meetings were conducted with provincial and regional and local structures.

At provincial level introductory meetings were held with the Provincial Director-General, the Speaker for the Provincial Legislature and Provincial Heads of Departments. The purpose of these briefings at provincial level was to solicit support from the decision-makers, because this process also requires that services be rendered at the centre, and that has implications for personnel. GCIS, both national and provincial, and the Office of the Premier, championed the process.

At the regional level, meetings with the Regional Directors’ Forum, the Kei District Council and the Kei Reference Forum were held.

The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the concept and obtain an appropriate building and personnel that would service the centre.

At local level, liaison was done with various community structures, youth and women formation groups, including service providers that are operational at that level.

The purpose was to get the kind of service that the communities around Port St Johns would like to receive and also begin to plan for the launch of the centre.

The whole consultative process was successful because by the time the centre was launched every stakeholder was committed to either service delivery or participation during the launch and post-launch phase.

Tombo MPCC was launched in December 1999. The purpose of this centre is to bring integrated government service and information closer to the communities. This is possible because within one centre/complex or within a couple of metres radius communities will be able to access a variety of services which are beneficial to them.

Service providers at Tombo are those identified by the communities as essential services. The government depart-
ments and NGOs currently at the centre are listed in the graphic.

There are scheduled monthly meetings for all service providers, whereby each department reports about its progress and problems. It is during such meetings that departments are able to lobby for support from each other.

For example, the Department of Home Affairs could not collect funds from applicants as they did not have a safe place to keep money overnight and this impacted badly on effective and efficient service delivery.

GCIS had a safe that was underutilised so it was recommended that it be handed over to Home Affairs. The health clinic has also assisted Welfare counselling services by providing a consultation room.

The community of Port St Johns benefits from this centre, especially the elderly during the re-registration of social grants and correction of their details as reflected in the identity documents.

Home Affairs officers are also able to register marriages conducted at the centre.

In a nutshell Port St Johns and adjacent communities find the services to be of value to them, as they do not have to travel long distances. Many schoolchildren did not have birth certificates, but due to the fact that Home Affairs is within reach, they were able to apply for the certificates.

Members of the community are also able to receive information and training on how to start their own businesses.

While there are many successful elements to centre, there are also practical limitations with regard to service delivery.

As has been mentioned before, there are personnel implications that go with the launch of each centre.

This means there need to be people able to render the services and they also need to be provided with the necessary tools to do the job effectively.

There major hinderance to service delivery at Tombo is the lack of vehicles. The staff is unable to reach communities and the clinic does not have an ambulance or any vehicle capable of transporting critically ill patients to the nearest hospital.

Home Affairs also needs to appoint a person to receive money as stipulated in the treasury instructions.

With the telecentres there are still problems concerning the computers that were purchased from a certain company, as it was not indicated in the documents that were signed that they would be expected to do after-sales service as well.

The telecentre is not running as efficiently as it should.

- Ms Busha Bomela is a Senior Communication Officer for GCIS, Eastern Cape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>NO. OF DAYS</th>
<th>OFFICER</th>
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<td>Development communication and Information</td>
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<td>Mondays and Fridays</td>
<td>Mr Mgqibane</td>
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<td>Welfare</td>
<td>Counselling Social Security</td>
<td>Tuesdays and Thursdays Same as above</td>
<td>Ms Ndzumo Ms Jubase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Affairs</td>
<td>Registration of births and deaths ID application, marriages, etc.</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Mr Mgwatyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecetre and Postal Agency</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Five days per week</td>
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<td>Seven days per week</td>
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<td>Five days per week</td>
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The year 1994 marked a watershed in the history of South Africa. It ushered in a new democratic order and paved the way for dramatic change in the political and public service environment. The ensuing years, since 1994, saw rapid changes taking place in the country. Nowhere was this more evident than in the public service. During this process it has become increasingly evident that effective leadership, both at the political and administrative level, is vital in order to accelerate the transformation of the State and improve the quality of service delivery.

Senior Managers and high-level professionals must concretise government’s vision of a better life for all through effective implementation strategies and the efficient utilisation of resources. Needless to say, a people-centred and strategically focussed leadership in the public service faces a momentous task in ensuring that the public service is aligned with the priorities of Government.

Linked to the above there has been a growing concern about the ability of government departments to convert policy into practice and to utilise resources allocated to them effectively. Several reports, including the Presidential Review Commission, have pointed out the lack of management capacity in most departments. In this regard the need to attract, develop and retain capable managers was subsequently identified as one of the key challenges facing the public service.

With the above in mind, a study was conducted into the senior management and professional echelons of the public service which confirmed that the effectiveness of this group impacts on the overall ability of the public service to deliver on its mandate.

Issues placed under the spotlight in the study were the recruitment and selection of senior managers and professionals, their retention, terms and conditions of service, competency requirements, training needs as well as performance assessments and career management. The report confirmed the following persistent problems:

- High turnover rates in scarce occupations and problems in recruiting and retaining skilled senior personnel.
- Poor levels of performance and skills among some senior staff, resulting in inadequate service delivery.
- Under-developed performance assessment systems, notwithstanding positive developments in introducing performance agreements.
- Insufficient attention to training and development, and nurturing of a sustainable senior executive corps.
- Minimal horizontal mobility due to
the rigid structure in the employment framework and underdevelopment of core leadership/managerial competencies.

- Uneven distribution of managers between national departments and the provinces.
- Inflexibility of the remuneration framework to attract and retain scarce skills.

In order to address these issues and to professionalise this critical echelon of the public service, Cabinet approved the establishment of a distinct SMS during the second half of 2000.

**What is the SMS?**

The SMS is a programme introduced by Government to professionalise its senior management echelon. It was introduced on 1 January 2001 by means of an amendment to the Public Service Regulations. The SMS consists of all managers and non-managers to whom the Public Service Act, 1994, and the Public Service Regulations apply and who were remunerated on salary levels higher than 12 (that is Director and higher) prior to 1 January 2001. All persons appointed as from 1 January 2001 either permanently or on contract on these levels will also be included in the SMS.

Given the pivotal role of senior managers and high-level professionals in the delivery of public services, the SMS programme strives to:

- Improve the recruitment, selection
Key pillars of the SMS

Introduction of a flexible remuneration package

One of the pillars of the SMS has been the introduction of a new salary structure for senior managers with effect from 1 January 2001, based on the principle of flexible remuneration. As from the mentioned date the old system of remuneration, whereby benefits were added to the basic salary, have been switched to an inclusive total cost to employer structure. All existing benefits with direct financial implications have subsequently been included in a new flexible remuneration package.

A key characteristic of the new remuneration strategy is that a senior manager is able to decide on the component mix of the flexible portion of his/her package, thereby giving him/her the necessary flexibility. In theory this means that the flexible portion of the remuneration package can be:
- an all-cash flexible portion; or
- an all-benefit flexible portion; or
- a combination of the above.

The only component that remains compulsory and fixed is the basic salary and the employer pension contribution. The flexible remuneration strategy, in essence, gives individuals the discretion to manage their own cash flow and tax obligations, whilst allowing departments greater flexibility in remunerating individual managers according to their market scarcity and individual worth. This will in turn assist departments to attract and retain individuals with scarce skills.

Improved recruitment, selection and retention of high quality managers, specialists and professionals

Clear recruitment and selection procedures (including the verification of qualifications and track records) have been and will be introduced for persons to be appointed to the SMS. In order to ensure the appointment of the right people to the SMS, a generic competency profile has been developed and will be submitted to Cabinet for approval shortly. This will be backed up by a battery of competency tests, both to be administered by trained individuals as well as self-testing. This, in combination with stricter checking of qualifications and backgrounds, as undertaken by the OPSC, should result in a substantial improvement on who is to enter the SMS henceforth.

To ensure that momentum is maintained in establishing a representative management service, national employment equity targets will also be set.

Greater flexibility in re-deploying members of the SMS

The SMS is seen as a corporate resource of scarce skills to be utilised in the best interests of the public service. Hence members of the SMS will be more actively managed across the public service. Should a situation arise where the public interest requires that an individual be transferred from one department to another, or from one position to another, this will be done in full consultation with all the parties involved, including the relevant person.

Improved training and development opportunities

Plans to improve human resource development include the following:
- DPSCA and SAMDI will provide guidelines and support to departments on techniques such as mentoring, coaching, accelerated development and succession planning;
- A National Qualifications certified MBA course (public service orientated) will be developed in conjunction with suitable institutions.

Initiatives to improve professionalism and ethics in the SMS

The unions in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council will be consulted on the establishment of a professional association to represent the interests of the SMS. A set of protocols will furthermore be developed governing issues such as political activities, disclosure/use of official information after leaving the public service etc. The recent extension of the financial disclosure framework to all members of SMS is a further initiative to improve ethics in the SMS.

Developing and implementing of a performance management system

All members of the SMS are compelled to enter into performance agreements. The SMS seeks to provide a sound and solid basis to evaluate management performance and provides departments with greater flexibility to determine the relevant levels for rewarding that performance. Of the utmost importance is, however, the current initiative to develop and implement a performance management system customised specifically for the SMS. A uniform performance evaluation system for HoDs has also already been implemented during the second half of 2000.

Conclusion

Given the fact that the SMS was only introduced in January 2000 it is too early to comment on its success. Indicators centre on retention, increased levels of experience and qualifications will have to be closely monitored. Over the long term, however, the proof of the success of this initiative will have to come through the monitoring and evaluation of programmes to achieve our overall societal goals.

- Chris van der Vyver is the State Administration Officer at the Department of Public and Service Administration.
The Integrated Provincial Support Programme (IPSP)

The Nature and Scope of IPSP
- The IPSP is a multi-year strategic programme of the South African Government to support targeted provincial governments to achieve and sustain poverty alleviation, the effective rendering of basic services and good governance through the implementation of their respective Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDS).
- It was conceived in 1999 as a partnership initially between the DPSA and the Provincial Governments of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province.
- The Free State and Mpumalanga joined the IPSP during the latter part of 2000.

Products of the IPSP
The IPSP support broadly entails
- Projects designed to turn around provincial service delivery
- Focus on strengthening the centre of government in participating provinces
- Generating and sharing of lessons on service delivery transformation

The IPSP is increasingly being recognised as a capacity building programme based on an approach on inter- and intra-governmental as well as international (donor support) partnerships. The Programme has over the past two years established a track record for being one of the successful government and donor supported initiatives. Consequently, the provincial governments of the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape have requested to be included into the programme. The annual review conducted in May 2001 also established that it had achieved some significant impact in especially the Northern Province and that it should continue.

Benefits of the IPSP
- An established and well-functioning programme management system which ensures effective allocation and utilisation of resources.
- It has been institutionalised into the government system which implies, among other, that activities are included in the departmental business plans as being integral to their service delivery responsibilities. The performance management system is again based on the business plans, while management teams in the departments monitor IPSP indicators.
- It provides a facility to share experiences and learning on an inter- and intra-governmental basis.
- With strong political support and a well-developed and positioned management system the IPSP has an excellent capacity to identify emerging risks and to mitigate these in an effective manner.
- It serves as a mechanism to access conditional grants and release additional funds for development.
- It provides a vehicle for support to key programmes that cut across sectors (for instance poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS).

Conclusion
During the President’s State of the Nation Address delivered at the opening of Parliament on 9 February 2001 effective and integrated government at work was identified as a key theme for the Government. The Minister for Public Service and Administration, in her budget vote speech of 17 May 2001, committed the GoSA to the continuation of IPSP II and referred to IPSP I as a “phenomenal success”. The IPSP is therefore not only aligned to the GoSA's key priorities but also enjoys political commitment and support at the highest level. In the relevant provincial governments it similarly enjoys support and commitment from Premiers, Executive Committees (Cabinets), Heads of Departments and Project Leaders.
With a life story that takes him back to Merebank, Durban, where he was born, Oswald Reddy says he realised that he wanted to be a policeman as soon as he finished his matric in 1981.

“Before the (first, non-racial, democratic) elections (of 1994) police had a bad name, but I still believed that I could work within the system to make a change, play a role in society,” he says.

Immediately after joining the force in 1982 he started working at the Wentworth police station in Durban where he stayed for about two years.

“When I joined the police force it was then that I realised the impact of apartheid and the magnitude of the problems. I have vivid memories of this one law that stated that a non-white person could not arrest a white person.”

In defiance of this law Commissioner Reddy arrested two white men and his supervisor was afraid this would create problems.

“I couldn’t accept this law. When I brought these guys in to be charged the group on duty wanted to release the other guys who had been arrested and I refused. They did not want to put them in the back of the van to take them to the police station to charge them. So I

Mention the name Hillbrow to anyone who knows the area and they’ll tell you it’s the last place you want to visit. Sam Monareng asks Commissioner Oswald D Reddy why he decided to be head of Hillbrow Police Station, smack in the middle of ‘Armageddon’
got into the car, went to the police station with them and charged them. The offense was not so serious, they were buying liquor from a shebeen.”

He was threatened and told he would lose his job. He was immediately transferred to Cape Town where he worked for seven years — still challenging the unjust laws and practices.

While in Cape Town, he completed his Diploma in Police Administration in 1990. His supervisor who was the commander there was due for a promotion and recommended to the seniors that Reddy be put in charge of the police station since he had the competencies and showed potential. This was refused.

He was then transferred to Soweto as further punishment because Soweto was regarded in police circles as a “straf kamp”.

Initially stationed at Lenasia Police Station, Commissioner Reddy started working with the community and won an award from Rotary International in 1992.

He was then moved to Eldorado Park and soon thereafter to Diepkloof Police Station during very difficult times of political and taxi violence.

While in Diepkloof during December 1993 he recalls there were 21 attacks on either the police station or a police vehicle in one day.

In January 1994 he was moved to the Protea Police Station and assigned to implement the concept of Community Police Forums (CPFs) for the whole of Soweto. He worked with community leaders such as Western Shabangu, Jabu Dube, Isaac Mogase and Isaac Pabe. He was tasked with building relations between these two groups, which viewed one another with distrust and suspicion. Countless efforts to bring the two to a meeting proved fruitless.

“Finally I decided to follow a different strategy. I engaged IDASA, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the Welgespruit Fellowship Centre and Peace Action to facilitate the meeting between the police and the community. The first of these meetings took place on the 14-16 May 1994. They were very emotionally charged but definitely successful in the end. The foundation had been laid.”

He was then transferred to Dobsonville Police Station in June 1995 where he served as Station Commissioner until April 1999.

During this period Commissioner Reddy completed a Law Degree with Unisa and a Diploma in Business Management. His recent achievement is a Masters’ Degree in Public Administration which he obtained from Harvard University in the United States where he spent a year. The focus was on Management and Leadership.

A typical day in the life of Commissioner Reddy starts as early as 5:30am when he leaves home to start work no later than 6am.

“The first thing I do is go to the computer to get a sense of what has been reported in the past 24 hours in terms of crime. Then I visit the cells downstairs to check the prisoners. At 8am I have a daily information session with the core management comprising senior officers in charge of different components making up the station.

“First we deal with the crime. The detective head gives me a rundown on the past 24 hours, all cases that have been reported. The crime intelligence head gives a report regarding where the crimes occurred, the type of modus operandi, tendencies if there are any. The crime prevention commander reports on the successes for the previous 24 hours in terms of crime prevention, how many arrests have been made, guns seized and so on. Then we do a deployment regarding visible policing on all the flash points using mobile units. We then go to Community Service Centres and Support Services where duty officers also give me updates. After this I have a sense of what is happening in the entire Hillbrow area.”

Hillbrow is the leading crime spot in the country and is also a crime generator. The Police Precinct has been divided into five sectors covering Braamfontein, Joubert Park, Berea, Hillbrow and Parktown, Killarney and Upper Houghton.

Together with his team the Station Commissioner will be embarking on “Operation Clean Up”. The main aim of this operation is to mobilise all key roleplayers within the precinct to clean up literally everything — from cleaning up rubbish in the streets, scrap and broken vehicles and shelters, cutting bushes, shrubs and lawns to repairing broken stormwater drains, fixing all broken lights, right up to cleaning graffiti on an ongoing basis. The intention is to instil in the residents of these areas, commuters travelling through and the larger community a sense of pride and dignity about the area.

While in New York, Commissioner Reddy studied the crime prevention methods used by the New York Police Department. “The elements are basically the same, save to say that they have more sophisticated resources and technology. They use, for example, the 'Zero Tolerance' approach and the 'Broken Window Syndrome' (if one window is broken, fix it or they will all soon be broken).”

Commissioner Reddy believes that there are powers greater and beyond human understanding. In addition to intensified police action being carried out currently, he believes in “Operation Divine Intervention” as a unified plan of action that can be taken by all recognised religious organisations within the precinct to pray for the reduction of crime in the area.

With “Operation Community Mobilisation” the Commissioner and his team aim to get a million signatures from members of the community to sign up and make a pledge committing themselves to contribute and participate actively in the fight against crime and to make Hillbrow more safe and secure.
Debates on public service reform have over the years been informed by a host of competing paradigms and theoretical orientations. However, stripped of technical discourse and intricacies, the key purpose of public service reform in South Africa is simple: to enhance the public service so that it plays its role in ensuring that quality services are delivered to citizens in an effective and efficient manner. Most citizens look to government for the fulfilment of their hopes for a better life.

To put the matter within its proper context, the public service in South Africa is engaged in restructuring efforts while at the same time facing immense pressures of providing quality services. Some of these pressures are attributable to the huge backlogs that exist in certain communities and which are essentially socio-economic vestiges of the apartheid legacy. Others are simply a reflection of the increasing demand for better and accessible public services.

In addition, it is expected that restructuring efforts should not only lead to better public services but also echo and reflect the democratic values enshrined in our Constitution. These values include sound management practices, impartiality, equity, a developmental-orientation and ethical conduct.

Given all these considerations, it becomes clear that with our restructuring efforts, many issues are at stake, including effectiveness, efficiency, equity, political responsiveness, accountability, representivity, transparency and customer orientation. Citizens expect these things to be achieved all the time, and at the same time; societal and developmental problems are pressing, and addressing them should not be delayed.

The advent of globalisation is presenting added challenges to this and other countries which are grappling with their own domestic or internal developmental dynamics. Globalisation has imposed upon the world new dynamics of information and communication technologies which the global community cannot avoid.

Trade, labour and financial mobility have profound implications for the way local institutions operate, if these are to interact effectively with the international community. These circumstances are real as they shape the environment in which public service transformation has to take place. We can choose to despise or celebrate them, but we cannot wish them away. Nor can we pretend they do not exist.

Given these pressures, how is the transformation process likely to realise its objective of improving the quality of services provided to the public?
When government adopted the policy of *Batho Pele* (People First), it was in recognition of the fact that it cannot just be business as usual with regard to the way public services are delivered. However, this policy framework also recognised that for our service delivery transformation efforts to have impact and be sustainable there are a number of elements that also need to be transformed and improved on. These are:

a) appropriate human resource development and training;

b) sound employment conditions and labour relations;

c) promotion of a professional service ethos;

d) rationalisation and restructuring;

e) institution building and management;

f) representivity and affirmative action; and

g) democratising the state.

Successful service delivery, for example, cannot be sustained in an environment riddled with corruption and disrespect for human rights. Sustainability in this regard also depends on strong institutions, skilled personnel and enabling systems. It is against this background that one argues for a holistic and incremental approach which recognises that we cannot do everything at the same time.

The list of potentially good interventions that can be undertaken may be endless, but given limited resources and capacity it is necessary to establish the relative leverage of one intervention over the next.

Having a targeted leveraging approach ensures that government avoids the trap that Peter Drucker so sarcastically alluded to when he said, “It is in the nature of government activities that they come to be seen as symbols and sacred rather than as utilities and means to an end. And the absence of results does not raise the question: shouldn’t we rather do something different? Instead, it leads to a doubling of efforts.” (“The New Realities”)

Whilst these assertions are obviously debatable, they nonetheless provide some food for thought, underscoring the need to have a targeting approach that is not driven by sentimental preferences.

How should government be using such targeting in relation to its machinery of service delivery?

**Focus on Service Delivery Institutions**

The current machinery of public service delivery comprises:

- National Departments which set broad frameworks for government operations (e.g. the Presidency, National Treasury, DPLG and DPSA). These frameworks are not sectoral but apply to the public service as a whole.

- National Departments which set frameworks for service delivery at a sectoral level (e.g. Departments of Health, Education, Welfare, etc)

- Provincial Departments which plan and oversee service delivery at provincial level; and

- Service Delivery Institutions that interface directly with the public (e.g. hospitals, prisons, police stations, schools, front-line offices of home affairs, etc.)

A lot of support has been provided to the first three levels of the delivery machinery described above. This was a necessary step to enhance their ability to create operational environments conducive to service delivery. More work still needs to be done to optimise their functionality.

However, our strategy of restructuring for better service delivery also calls for more support to be directed at the fourth level of the service delivery machinery, namely institutions such as schools, prisons, frontline home affairs offices, etc.

This scenario is illustrated above.

This approach gives effect to the *Batho Pele* policy pronouncements — putting people first in the provision of services.

Service delivery institutions as shown above serve as the actual interface between government and the public. For most citizens, these are institutions through which they experience government, and indeed to them this is what government is.

If there are no changes at these levels, for them government has not changed. This means that although there may be
notable changes in the way, for example, departments such as DPSA work, unless these are translated into improvements in the way service delivery institutions operate, they may not mean much to the public.

Therefore as efforts are being made to address issues of sound labour relations, professional ethos, human resource development, institution building and the other dimensions as shown earlier in Box 1, the issue should become: How do these take effect at the level of service delivery institutions to enhance their capacity? Even as we explore opportunities of using information and communication technologies, the critical issue should become how we can deploy these in a manner that assists us to deliver a level of services that exceeds the current institutional capacity of public service organisations, as well as enhance quality and convenience to citizens.

Clearly, this does not imply that other levels of the service delivery machinery such as national departments have become superfluous. On the contrary, they remain more critical to the value chain, and should thus not be written off from the transformation process. Indeed, the issue of mapping and understanding service delivery and value chains is increasingly becoming critical to the transformation process. By this we refer to what happens from the time policy pronouncements are made to the time citizens receive services, and what value is added in between. Mapping and analysing these chains is important to have a grounded understanding of the enablers and inhibitors of service delivery.

We need to identify opportunities to use technology as an enabling mechanism to offer a one-stop service package to citizens, categorised according to their needs rather than how government is structured. Through these value chain analyses, it would become clear how frameworks set by national departments impact on service delivery institutions and their ability to provide improved services to the public.

It would also become clear even at the level of a service delivery institution as to which activities, processes, systems and players add value to the service delivery mandate of the institution. Efforts to transform service delivery would be significantly enhanced by such information.

Conclusion

The business of reconstruction and development is hard and the answers are never so obvious nor do they follow a straight line. As we review the proportion of our transformation efforts to target levers such as Human Resource Development and professional ethos, and as we seek to increase our focus on service delivery institutions, it would be important to create and utilise appropriate platforms for sharing lessons and experiences.

A recent study on the use of consultants in the public service has shown us how different government departments often appoint consultants to deliver similar products. The study further reported coming across instances where the same consulting company is appointed by different departments to develop virtually the same product. This is clearly not an effective and efficient utilisation of our capacity.

It is therefore necessary to recognise that others may have walked or are still walking the same road as ourselves, and that we can avoid re-inventing the wheel by utilising appropriate platforms to exchange information.

It is also important to ensure that we all have the wisdom and humility to learn from our own mistakes, from those of our peers, as well as from other developing and developed countries which have traversed this path before.

We should expect that along this road there will be moments of frustration and moments of excitement.

However, all these should serve as a challenge and an inspiration for public service managers to stay focussed on their resolve to improve service delivery and to be even more PROUD TO SERVE the public.

• Khaya Ngema is Executive Manager, Service Delivery Improvement; Mashwahle Diphofa is Senior Manager, Service Delivery Improvement.
Background
South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) became a fully-fledged department in October 1999 with its own Director-General accountable to the Minister of Public Service and Administration. SAMDI is the most important statutory body in the provision of Public Service training and education.

Vision
The creation of a self-sustaining Organisation Transformation Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Service Delivery.

Mission
We will provide customer-driven training and organisation development interventions that lead to improved public sector performance and service delivery.

SAMDI’s core business
• Provision of Training
• Organisation of Development Interventions
• Consultation, Policy Formulation, Interpretation and Co-ordination for Development of people and departments
• Research, Diagnostics and Reporting in terms of training and Organisational Development needs
• Service Provider Brokering

Why SAMDI?
Our Interventions are:
• Public Service Unique (portability of skills)
• Taking into account, international best practice
• Direct support of Government objectives and priorities
• In compliance with relevant legislation: Registered with Education Training and Development Practices (ETDP) and Sector Education Training Authority (SETA)
• Centrally positioned with a mandate to provide training and development in the Public Service

SAMDI’s Achievements
• Developed, and is continuously developing, relationships with managers in government departments as well as international partners and stakeholders.
• Finalised its internal transformation and appointed staff on the approved structure.
• Effectively launched and implemented the Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme.

SAMDI provides training in the following areas:
• Training of Trainers
• Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme
• Human Resource Management and Development Training
• Change Management and Leadership Development
• Provisioning Management and Administration Training
• Project Tiro
• Economic Literacy
• Provincial Capacity Building
• Provincial Cabinet Training
• Ministerial Support
• Senior Management Services Training
• Information and Communication Technology
• Assessor Training and
• Other training as per the request of clients

Customer services
Address: Private Bag X759
PRETORIA 0001
or
Batho Pele House
Cnr Vermeulen and van der Walt Streets
PRETORIA

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(012) 314-7505/321-1810
E-mail: itumelmo@samdi.gov.za
Never before has there been a time when an epidemic has caused so much death that fears of human extinction have hovered on the horizon. While HIV/AIDS is perceived as the scourge of the century, it has nevertheless brought to the fore an important element in the workplace: the integration of health issues into the mainframe of business goals and objectives.

The creation of the Management of Ill-health Centre is the in-thing in the corporate world, and sourcing of Employee Assistance Programme services now forms the core support system to address the challenges of this epidemic. HIV/AIDS in the workplace challenges us to focus on retaining and sustaining quality human resource.

Understandably, the public service as the largest employer is concerned about HIV/AIDS and has established a solid mechanism to deal with it from an employer perspective.

In October 1998 AIDS Partnership was launched by the then-Deputy-President, Thabo Mbeki, and this body was a forerunner for the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), which has representation from all sectors of civil society, business and government.

In early 2000, the Minister for Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Molcketi, launched a project called the Impact and Action Project (I&A) on HIV/AIDS in the public service with a specific focus on the employer. DPSA has taken the lead in this project to ensure the formulation of clear guidelines for collective action to deal with the HIV/AIDS challenge.

The project is funded by USAID, CIDA and DPSA jointly, with the hope of securing more partners to strengthen our course of action.

The vision of the project is “A well-informed, supportive public service where HIV/AIDS is effectively managed and quality service is sustained”. This can only be achieved through concerted efforts by all partners, government department clusters and our social partners from organised labour to render unwavering support and co-operation through workplace initiatives.

The goal of the project is “To ensure that the public service is able to sustain quality service in spite of the progression of HIV/AIDS in South Africa”.

In this regard, the project is divided into three phases. Phase I, focussing on the Impact Study, has already been completed, basically premised on the extrapolated predictions for the coming ten years.

We are currently in Phase II, the Response Phase. Phase III entails Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Evaluation, which will somehow be
applied concurrently with the Response Phase.

The following areas — which are key to delivering the work within the response phase — are currently being given attention by several task teams of the Impact and Action Project:

• legislation, regulations and policy review from the public service to ensure inclusion of HIV/AIDS matters;
• development on Guideline for Policy Framework;
• conditions of service; and
• capacity development, training and support.

These task teams include experts in these fields, members from other government departments and local staff members according to area of specialisation.

There have been several consultative workshops held by the I&A to develop the current Programme of Action for 2001/2000.

Some stakeholders have done groundwork for the Response Phase which has proved successful. Experts in the field, both local and international, were roped in to assist in this process of verification.

You will undoubtedly realise that our workplace will be affected at two crucial levels: service delivery and human resources. With approximately one million-plus public servants in our system, the challenge to ensure sustainable mitigation from HIV/AIDS is a daunting task.

The responsibility therefore lies with every individual public servant to ensure Prevention and Education/Awareness are translated into action that will lead to change in sexual behaviour, coupled with caution in handling human blood in emergency situations or accidents.

Managers, supervisors and shop stewards will have to work together to ensure the HIV/AIDS infected and affected staff members are given adequate support through existing programmes. Policy on non-discrimination, disclosure, voluntary testing, creation of peer support groups, and access counselling services etc. become part of the process of liberating the workplace from the fears that people have on HIV/AIDS.

Discrimination and stigmatisation of those infected and affected is a central challenge to our workplace, and that has to be addressed for us to create a conducive environment for all people with life-threatening illnesses to live and be productive whilst they still can.

It is noted as well that most public servants are breadwinners in their homes. One of the key challenges of our project is to start planning for the orphans of these public servants when they do ultimately pass away.

The planning process can be facilitated by us working in consultation with our sister department, Social Development.

Also important will be the impact of HIV/AIDS in the GEPF, medical aid systems and housing just to mention a few. We need to encourage our public servants to be on medical aid schemes so that they can receive necessary medical care when they need it.

These, coupled with proper life assurance plans, will alleviate the burden imposed upon many families in the event of their loved ones passing away as a result of AIDS-related illnesses.

Given the wide scope of our work, SAMDI/PSC, the Department of Education, Department of Health, SAPS, SANDF, Social Development, National Treasury and Statistics SA, have been some of our closest partners who responded to the workshops we arranged earlier this year.

However, the project is not in any way limited to these departments; it is for the whole public service. Consultative workshops will be arranged to take the processes further, and everyone will be notified accordingly.
You run the world's biggest hospital; almost every day you hear of an AIDS-related death inside your hospital; your wife is undergoing chemotherapy; your youngest daughter is about to leave you — getting married; you therefore can be forgiven for succumbing to the ravages of stress which renders you aloof, uncommunicative, absent-minded and possibly short-tempered.

But not Dr Reg Broekman, the amiable Chief Executive Officer of Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, which is the biggest in the world, boasting 2 930 beds and a staff complement of 5 000. When you ask him about how he copes, he gives you a shrug that says c'est lavie.

We meet at a practical restaurant at the Southgate Mall, a stone's throw from the hospital he calls "home". At his suggestion, we order prawns which sadly do not turn out to be as succulent and enjoyable as he had hoped.

Anyway, we decide to concentrate on the job at hand, primarily trying to explore the "human" side of Dr Broekman — the fact that in addition to the stressful job of running Bara, he remains a committed family man, is passionate about the church, enjoys music, and has some strong opinions about the cloning of human beings.

But trying to separate the many Dr Broekmans from each other is a challenge because these personas are interlinked, not unlike ripples you see after tossing a pebble into a pond.

So we start with Dr Broekman the husband. At 52, he is a happily married father of two. He met his wife, Peggy, when they were both medical students at Wits University in the 1970s. His wife, also a doctor, works at Alexandra Clinic but was at the time of the interview on leave as she was due to undergo chemotherapy.

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Though it saddens him, the religious Dr Broekman who teaches Sunday school at the Methodist church, believes that what has befallen his wife is God’s will. “I can’t contradict what God has decided,” he says.

He also cannot change the fact that his youngest daughter, Lisa, is to get married in January. He says he is going to miss her, and jokingly points out that as soon as his daughters were old enough to “start seeing boys”, he promised them that he was not going to like their husbands.

While Lisa is a social worker, her elder sister, Jennie, is a child care worker in Pietermaritzburg. Clearly, the Broekmans are a public spirited family, individually working for the common good of fellow humans.

“I think my venture into medicine was informed by my love for humanity.
I like to help. I can’t tolerate suffering,” says Dr Broekman.

While he waxes lyrical about new technology and how it is helping to enhance human life, he is sceptical about the cloning of human beings — at least for now. This philosophical scepticism is informed by his religious convictions.

“I am not vehemently opposed to human cloning as a concept. But I think it would be irresponsible to embark on the programme right away. The technology is still new, and needs further research and refinement.”

In search of a balance between technology and ethics in the medical world, Dr Broekman decided to study for a Masters degree in Philosophy (specialising in Biomedical Ethics) because he believes that you cannot practice responsible medicine without an ethical foundation.

In addition to his Masters in Philosophy, and of course his medical degree from the class of 1973 at Wits, he recently finished an MBA through the same institution because he believes he needed managerial and business skills in order to run his hospital properly and efficiently.

Dr Broekman does not want to dwell much on his past achievements both as a doctor and as a hospital administrator who has been at the helm of such hospitals as Coronation and Johannesburg.

He’d rather focus on current challenges: “Right now the major challenge is AIDS. We record AIDS-related deaths almost every day. Up to 30 per cent of our patients are not going to get better. You can imagine what that is doing to staff morale.”

Staff members — doctors and nurses — have also been infected in the line of duty. That has heightened the levels of paranoia to such an extent that a number of interns have resigned, fearing needle pricks.

But another challenge facing Dr Broekman is to modernise Bara, notorious for squalor and over-crowding, resulting in unnecessary fatalities. Dr Broekman assures me that squalor and overcrowding are now things of the past. He is looking ahead at putting the hospital on a par with the best-run hospitals in the world.

“One of the first ways to implement the modernisation programme will be to break the hospital into three hospitals on the same campus,” says Dr Broekman.

According to this new ambitious plan aimed at streamlining administrative procedures, there will now be a maternity hospital twinned with a children’s hospital; the second wing will be a new casualty outpatients hospital, and the third will house a slew of theatres. Each hospital will be run by its management team, and each of these will ultimately report to the Chief Executive Officer.

While the emphasis will be on the restructuring of management, the hospital will be given a physical facelift, albeit minimal. Instead of spending money on replacing walls and windows, Dr Broekman wants every rand to work for him, rather channelling the money towards equipment, medicines and upgrade services.

To say running the hospital is expensive would be an understatement. With an annual budget of R760 million, the hospital spends R2 million a day. Three years ago, the hospital overspent by 10%, but Dr Broekman has over that period managed to slash over-expenditure to just R300 000 last year.

He takes pride in the fact that he has succeeded in democratising the management of the hospital by encouraging senior managers to participate in decision making. To facilitate this, he laid the foundations for the establishment of a management committee which is in charge of the hospital at an operational level.

The hospital is run along sound business and moral principles, and is funded 100% by the government.

Users must be made to appreciate that every time they visit the hospital, they pay only 2% towards service charges; the rest is covered by government.

The repositioning process will be phased in over a period of three years, and each wing will be run as a business unit, with each of these units answerable to the management committee and the chief executive officer.

The new culture of management stems partly from the relationship which Dr Broekman has engendered between Bara and Kings College Hospital, in the United Kingdom, through a new concept called “twinning”.

The concept of “twinning” helps hospitals in different parts of the world to share not only cultural experiences, but also exchange ideas and the latest technology and management expertise.

Dr Broekman believes that by the time his contract is up for renewal the ambitious twinning plan will have taken the hospital to new heights in terms of human resource management, technological innovation and research.

“When my contract expires it will be time for me to review my ambitions, have another look at my career direction. I think I’ve laid the foundations for Bara to be an exemplary hospital. There are other visionary young doctors out there who can take over from me,” he says, hinting that he would now like to take things “a bit easy”.

Because of their busy schedules, the Broekman couple do not have much time to themselves at their home in Kew, north of Johannesburg. But whenever they are not busy, they visit the Kruger National Park as they are keen nature lovers.

“When I am not reading at home, I fool around with the piano. I used to play the harmonica but my family complained and said it was too noisy. I play mostly hymns, a lot of Handel and so forth. But I also listen to other types of music, ragtime, you know, Scott Joplin and the like.”

In a few years time, when Bara is mentioned in the same breath as some of the world’s most successful hospitals, that will be music to Dr Reg Broekman’s ears.
For our purpose we have adopted the definition of e-Government as the “the continuous optimisation of government service delivery, constituency participation, and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet and new media”.

This implies the transformation of how citizens, be they legal or natural persons, perceive and experience government. It is the investigation and formulation of new methods to enable the public to access Government services.

This is summed up in the Minister’s words in an article published in the ICT in Government Handbook for 2001:

“Government is facing a number of challenges. On the one hand, Government is experiencing pressures of catching up to the latest technology trends, so as to narrow the ‘digital divide’ between developed nations and us, and the haves and the have-nots amongst ourselves. On the other hand, citizens’ needs are changing. Citizens are demanding access to government services anytime, anywhere and anyhow.

“The challenges and demands of catching up to the latest technology trends and delivering a seamless government service need to be balanced with the increasing need to reduce costs to the taxpayer”.

Government has no option in this case but to respond in innovative ways to the needs of citizens. If Government needs to continue trading with developed nations, there is a need to embrace new ways of doing business and interacting with other players, eliminating the relevance of time, space and distance, whilst increasing convenience, reducing costs for service delivery and increasing productivity. Security and inter-operability of Government information systems, the proper coordination of Government resources are at the top of the agenda in enabling e-Government.
Motivation for e-Government

There are a number of factors that force Government to look into new mechanisms of delivering services to the public. We have chosen to evaluate each e-Government business case in terms of how it will increase productivity, offer citizen convenience and reduce costs of service delivery.

The following are some of the factors that force governments to continuously look for new ways of delivering services to citizens:

- the continued level of sophistication of business and how business renders services;
- the increasing level of sophistication among citizens and their expectations of government services;
- the volatility of ICT gadget prices;
- the pace of technological change and access to technology;
- the possibility to utilise ICT to enable the performance of previously impossible tasks; and
- the need for governments to deliver services that can be accessed through a variety of gadgets anywhere, anytime.

It is important to note that there are both challenges and opportunities in the e-Government equation that should be utilised for e-Government to succeed. One such opportunity is the pace of cellular technology diffusion in the country that has surpassed expectations. This is an opportunity we should take advantage of to enable citizen access to government services. Cellular handsets and services are becoming affordable and accessible to the majority.

The technical infrastructure is being extended to previously marginalised areas. This will create access channels via the Public Information Terminals (PiTs) and Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCC) for government services to be accessed by all via intermediaries and third parties. Such partnerships are crucial in that they alleviate the Government’s burden of investing in volatile ICT infrastructure.

Major challenges include the re-engineering of our business processes, the reskilling of our work force, the integration of systems and applications, as well as the development of a culture of information security awareness.

e-Government Over a Ten Year Horizon

Six phases of e-Government have emerged from both success and failures of countries that have or are undertaking e-Government initiatives.

Therefore, the South African public service intends to phase e-Government according to tested worldwide trends, and through the six phases as contained in the table above.

The ten-year horizon takes into consideration various factors, such as the policy consultation and formulation process, which is ongoing, and the business strategy planning process, which will resume later when the e-Government Policy is adopted.

The horizon also takes into consideration the fact that technology changes occur every two years, implying frequent e-Government policy review. Factors that require policy consideration in this domain have been isolated as best as possible.

South Africa finds itself faced with typical ICT challenges of the developing world, but unlike others, has additional challenges of extending and improving services to previously neglected communities.

Consequently initiatives over a horizon of ten years will have to contend with the ensuing factors:

- ICT infrastructure is weak in geographical areas in which the majority of citizens live because of the apartheid separate development legacy;
- ICT related goods and services are made available on suppliers’ terms, most of which are foreign companies, and the low per capita purchasing power does not allow markets to mature;
- The general education level is lower and ICT degrees are difficult to obtain, hence there is over-dependence on imported ICT goods and services.
services, rather than the development of local solutions.
• organisations have less and shorter experience in using ICT, consequently it takes some time to offer a comprehensive range of services leveraging ICT capabilities;
• information sharing is not common among organisations, and sometimes within an organisation itself, given the old silo/command structures, hence, the provision of seamless services is usually hampered by fragmented information systems, and fragmented systems will take a while to inter-operate;
• e-Government readiness varies significantly between government departments, provinces and local authorities;
• management structures and styles are hierarchical and result in red-tape, inflexibility, and poor turn-around times and desired efficiencies;
• there are other pressing demands in the public service which make ICT development a lower priority in budget terms. The gap between the ideal ICT development scenario and the reality is big, and needs financial priority;
• governments the world over find it difficult to recruit and retain competent ICT professionals. e-Government endeavours require some in-house champions to undertake planning and oversee developments.

Given the situation as stated above the picture below briefly suggests an outline of some of the milestones along the legends of Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B) and Government to Citizens (G2C).

### Priority Initiatives or Flagship Projects

Listed below are some of the priority initiatives that need to happen in order to totally unlock the potential of e-Government. These initiatives are not listed in any particular order or preference. Suffice to say at this stage that some of the initiatives are dependent of others.

Some of the initiatives are at various stages of development, while others are still to be initiated.

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### Smart Card (G2G/C/B)

Smartcards are a stepping-stone towards providing some form of online identification. Through Home Affairs National Identification System (HANIS), every citizen can be afforded an opportunity to have a virtual presence in the online environment.

With the aid of unique electronic identification and authentication, every citizen can be allocated an e-mail. This will enable not only the provision of online information and services, it will further enable real-time online transactions.

The envisaged smart ID card, as part of the Home Affairs National Identification System, could prove to be highly effective in terms of electronic identification.

This will in turn precipitate the development of national “e-smart citizens” within the context of the global digital economy.

These multi-application cards can be configured to carry electronic value or cash; they can be remotely debited and credited in a reasonably secure and authentic manner.

The smartcard ID is one of the critical projects that will contribute to the breakthrough of e-Government in South Africa.

### Population Register (G2C)

The population register needs to be kept up-to-date so as to ensure that all citizens are recognised by the Government which represents them. This register needs to be made accessible to the majority of Government departments dealing with a people-orientated service of some sort e.g. Home Affairs, Health, Social Welfare, Justice etc.

This will also be facilitated by the information flow project and/or public service information resource management process.

### Call Centre (G2G/C/B)

Call centres play a number of roles in the whole e-Government equation. Amongst others, their role is:
• to deliver improved public information and services through increased citizen’s access and more rapid completion of enquiries and transaction leading ultimately to greater citizen’s convenience, goodwill and increased
efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery;
• to facilitate rationalisation of operations by removing significant volumes of enquiries. The concentration of inquiries in a single or small call centre enables economies of scale in staffing and related costs to be achieved;
• to save citizens travelling time and related costs in the endeavour to access public service centres or offices; and
• to provide more timely and focused service based on information being available to the operator and the citizen, anytime and anywhere.
Whereas some National and Provincial Government Departments are rolling out some form of call centres respectively, moves are on the way to implement an integrated call centre for the whole of Government.

The integrated call centre is reliant on a seamless back-office information sharing system.

Public Service Information Resource Management (G2G/C/B)
The need to co-ordinate information flows within government, in order to improve service delivery to citizens, has been identified as a key challenge for the public service.

The importance of this is reflected in the attention placed on integration and streamlining of information in various inter-governmental forums. Of particular reference is the Governance and Administration Cluster in which strengthening of the core of the public service, through information integration and management, has received significant attention.

In line with its constitutional mandate, and in collaboration with the G&A cluster, the DPSA is developing an e-Government strategy as part of its overall service delivery improvement programme.

In preparation for a more convenient, efficient, effective and integrated Government service delivery system, the DPSA has commissioned a scoping study.

The objective of the scoping study is “to describe the optimal process by which government can deliver services to citizens, according to critical life cycle events, rather than defined by government structures and systems”.

It has to be determined as to:
• Which government departments are better positioned to collect what type of information?
• Who is better positioned to process, i.e. update, delete, re-configure or transport information resources in Government?
• Who is dependent on what information in the supply chain of government services.

The study will therefore capture the entire interface that takes place in the Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Business (G2B) relationship, from the point of view of providing a single gateway through which citizens can interact with government.”

The study will focus on mapping both technology enabled information flows, as well as the institutional mechanisms through which they are delivered.

The desired outcome of the study is to develop a vision of optimal service delivery, reflecting which Government departments are better positioned to collect, process, store and disseminate various types of information, as well as suggesting the most appropriate mechanisms through which services should be made available to the public.

Core to the study will be the development of a back office information sharing and dissemination methodology that will translate into an integrated approach in service delivery, free of unnecessary duplication and inefficient procedures.

Certification Authority (G2G/C/B)
Confidentiality, integrity, authenticity and non-repudiation are identified to be the four critical success factors that will determine the level or extent to which the online environment takes up.

Online identification and authentication are very important for e-Government.

It has to be established beyond any reasonable doubt whatsoever that the person with whom you are communicating with is indeed the person they claim to be.

It has to be established beyond reasonable doubt that there is integrity, confidentiality, and non-repudiation of online transactions.

A certification authority is a third trusted body that will ensure that all the requirements outlined in the above paragraph are complied with.

The Government intending establishing a Root Certification Authority to authenticate and keep a directory list of all certification service providers.

This authority will go a long way in creating a secure infrastructure for public service information and transactions.

Asset Management (G2G)
A repository of all Government information resources and equipment needs to be kept and updated at all times. This will provide a detailed comparative analysis of the nature of work that lies ahead versus the tools that are available to confront the challenges.

It will also provide a detailed trail record of the nature and pattern of procurement and expenditure.

Public Information Terminals (G2C)
This terminal is intended to provide the citizen with an access point to public information and services. Adjacent to the Multipurpose Community Centres, the PiT is a complementary initiative to provide convenient access to the average citizen.

As part of the info.com 2005 initiative (see annexure A), once fully rolled out, these machines will be deployed at strategic and common places within reasonable walking distance.

The objective of the Public Information Terminal is to basically bridge the digital divide, by providing a terminal that will bring public information, services and transactions, closer to the people.

The PiT infrastructure will be e-business enhanced and will provide an alternative window to access the web. It will be menu driven, allow the user to send and retrieve electronic messages to relatives, friends and businesses, and print out these messages.

Depending on the HANIS and populations registry project, all citizens of South Africa can be allocated an online identity and an e-mail address.

• Jack Shilubane is Manager: Policy, Strategy & Regulation in the Office of Government Chief Information Officer.
The Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) is an initiative of the Minister for Public Service and Administration. Established as a Section 21 company, CPSI aims to work with public and private sector partners to identify, nurture and support innovation within the public service.

The role of CPSI is primarily to function as an enabler, facilitator and champion of innovative ideas. This involves:
- creating an enabling environment for the generation and rewarding of new ideas;
- facilitating engagement between public, private and non-governmental partners;
- championing the value of and need for innovation within the public service.

The vision of the Centre is “To enable the SA public service to be able to effectively implement innovative ideas in its quest for improved service delivery.”

Within a two year period CPSI aims to be established as a financially self-sufficient broker of innovative solutions.

The impact of CPSI activities will be seen in improved service delivery being demonstrated through a range of lead projects. Our projects will achieve:
- Greater access to services
- Improved quality of services
- Reduction of poverty and improvement in quality of life
- Cost-savings through improved government efficiency
- Shortened delivery times

The CPSI opened its doors on 1 September 2001, at the offices of the State Information Technology Agency in Centurion.

Contact Glenda White at the CPSI on:

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The Innovative State
The Role of Government in Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development

Governing in a changing world

The world of the 21st century is one of opportunity and contradiction. The challenges facing both the developed and the developing world are considerable. Homeless people hawk basic wares outside Internet cafés. Satellites link us to real-time events, bringing the world into our homes, while many have no access to basic telephony. Cars become smarter, able to navigate for their drivers, provide access to e-mail and diagnose their own automotive ills, while adults remain illiterate and children leave school too soon to provide income for their families.

Governments across the world face the challenge of addressing service delivery needs within the context of globalisation, changing citizen demands and the increasing importance of information and communication technologies as time-saving and efficiency improving devices.

Internationally, there is pressure on governments to find new ways of harnessing intellectual capital and physical resources in the pursuit of economic growth and sustained, or improved, standards of living. This is equally the reality for all nations, regardless of where they fall on the development spectrum.

However, the countries of the South and parts of Eastern Europe and Asia face additional challenges. Growing poverty and increasing marginalisation exacerbate the difficulties experienced by millions of people attempting to live and trade in this faster, smarter, technology enabled world. Demands for more responsive government are not focused on greening cities and protecting the arts, important as these issues may be, but on addressing basic needs for fresh water and sanitation, housing and employment.

South Africa reflects a country attempting to deal with the reality of growth and development. Growth in the South African economy has shown a downward trend over the past 25 years. This is accompanied with declining levels of employment, including in recent years, despite the targets set in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). Quality of life indicators reflect improvements made with regards to access to health, education and recreational facilities, but also reveal that the improvements made with regards to these services have not kept pace with improvements made in other developing countries (Fedderke, 2000).

In relation to technology, the digital divide is tangible and requires addressing. Regardless of the extent to which segments of society are able to develop in line with the most sophisticated technological advances elsewhere, while sig-
nificant numbers of South Africans live in poverty, and unemployment hovers between 40 and 50%, sustainable growth will remain a well intentioned policy objective.

**Innovating for growth and development**

It is within this context that innovation finds inspiration. Innovation involves the application of new ideas, which result in benefits through cost-savings, efficiency improvements and new products or services. Innovation therefore should not be equated to creativity, but rather be seen as the means by which the outputs of the creative process are put into practice. It requires support and an enabling environment, and does not arise by itself out of stifling conditions.

Regardless of the context and state of development, the intelligent governments are those that assess their current reality, identify their competitive advantage and put in place the mechanisms to incentivise the behaviour that will drive and enable change. The Boston Consulting Group (2000: 5) notes, “The world is quickly separating into two kinds of countries: those that offer conditions in which innovation flourishes, attract FDI, trade and prosper, and those that do none of these things, so stagnate.” Similarly, the Auditor-General of Canada notes, “Innovation has become a crucial survival issue. A society that pursues well-being and prosperity for its members can no longer treat it as an option.”

Within the context of developing countries, poor infrastructure, low and, in some cases, negative economic growth and skills shortages have resulted in the failure to creatively pursue innovations in the use of technology, to effect changes that will result in cost efficiencies, redistribution and capital growth.

In addition, developing countries often fail to put in place the incentives required to ensure that both industry and individuals are encouraged to take their creative ideas one step further from concept into prototype.

The innovative state is therefore one which both creates the enabling environment within which the implementation of creative ideas can be supported and encouraged, and transforms its own mode of operation to ensure that it is better able to fulfil its mandate with regards to the provision of services. In most cases this requires an entirely new orientation.

Internationally, public services are characterised as being rule-bound, inflexible, monolithic. Engaging in innovation requires creativity, risk-taking and a willingness to experiment. Countries in which innovation will flourish are likely to be those led by governments that understand the contextual, regulatory and institutional requirements for experimentation and change.
Building a culture of innovation in South Africa

The context for supporting innovation within South Africa is enabled by the White Paper on Science and Technology. This creates the framework for a National System of Innovation (NSI), aimed at maintaining cutting-edge global competitiveness while simultaneously meeting the urgent developmental needs of the majority of South Africans.

The core themes of the policy are aimed at addressing growth and redistribution through promoting competitiveness and employment creation and enhancing quality of life, as well as some of the fundamental requirements for enabling innovation, such as developing human resources.

Innovation encompasses both the invention of new products and services, as well as the application of existing technologies and tools in different ways. The Department of Trade and Industry’s new Industrial Strategy recognises that South Africa is unlikely to become a major producer of proprietary goods within the manufacturing sector in the near future, but should certainly expend energy and time in considering how to apply imported technologies more innovatively (DTI, 2001).

Significant programmes are already in place in this regard, from the introduction of technology and design into the curricula of primary and secondary schooling, to the development of the National Skills Strategy and the Integrated Human Resource Development Strategy by the Departments of Education and Labour.

However, South Africa remains with a severe shortage of technically skilled people capable of participating in R&D and activities likely to result in innovation.1

More attention needs to be given to developing the skills relevant to working and succeeding in the knowledge economy, particularly with regards to technological innovation. Research shows that “South Africa needs to provide more students with mathematics and science qualifications, as well as to build up a solid skills base on which to grow its R&D capabilities” (Fedderke, 2001)

Support R&D programmes that are future-oriented

In an environment requiring immediate solutions to pressing problems, R&D expenditure is often the first to be reduced. However, increasingly governments need to be more future-oriented, working on answers to the questions that will be asked in five years time. Increasingly the state may also be required to make hard choices about which sectors should receive substantial state support, because of the resultant externalities. Reducing the emphasis placed on foresight will result in significant lost opportunities and the reduction in any competitive advantage that the country may have.

Encourage networking and clustering to foster information exchange and learning

The most powerful learning environments are those that arise out of the drawing together of like-minded legislators, managers and experimenters. Networking is an invaluable tool for developing a culture of innovation and fostering the value of sharing knowledge.

“Networking between individuals builds the trust and spirit for collaboration, the vital social capital that

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1 More attention needs to be given to developing the skills relevant to working and succeeding in the knowledge economy, particularly with regards to technological innovation.
enhances productivity and innovation (SIAC, 2001: 20)."

Clustering of similar activities, or business ventures, provides an environment conducive to learning and business development. Incubators work on this principle. The Innovation Hub, a core element of Blue IQ, the Gauteng Provincial Government’s economic development programme, is developing a techno-park, in the hope of developing a South African base for cutting edge technological development through nurturing small, innovative companies.

**Incentivise the innovators**

Rewarding good ideas is a cornerstone of any successful innovation policy. Policy considerations for the rewarding of business include research grants, development finance primarily for enterprise development and tax incentives for R&D (Mani, 2001). Industrially successful East Asian nations such as Korea and Singapore have implemented a variety of tax incentives to encourage private sector enterprises to devote more resources to industrial R&D (ibid). While South Africa currently has at least ten financial incentives in place, they are insufficient to cover all aspects of the innovation cycle (ibid).

Individual and community innovators are acknowledged through research and study grants, and public awards.

Taking all of these elements into account requires important policy changes and government departments and institutions working together in the interests of developing and nurturing innovation within the broader society.

**Developing an innovative public service**

The development of the public service into not only an enabler of innovation but an innovator itself presents a different challenge. Employing in excess of a million people, the public service is one of the largest procurers of goods and services. It therefore has the financial muscle and the sheer weight of numbers to significantly change the manner in which government goes about its business.

However, becoming an innovator requires the public service to change the basic culture that informs approaches to providing services to citizens. The dominant culture within the South African public service is one born out of the isolationist, divide and rule policies of the past. The state’s primary function was one of enforcement, compliance and protection, rather than that of agent of development and facilitator of growth, as it is seen now. The rule-bound culture bred in the past is being challenged through changes to the regulatory environment, but this remains a slow, incremental process that must be supported through large programmes of change management, skills development and reorientation.

A comprehensive strategy moving from a culture of compliance to a culture of innovation is required. This would include, at the very least:

- A comprehensive policy statement on what the vision for an innovative public service should be, in the context of the challenges presented by globalisation and local poverty, in order to identify the programmes that are required, and the behaviours that should be rewarded. This largely to be found in the Science and Technology White Paper;
- An implementation strategy cutting across departments and agencies of the state, which reflects where joined-up government is required to work beyond the existing artificial institutional divides;
- A skills development plan which describes the core competencies required, in particular by public service managers, to identify, facilitate and manage the introduction of innovation into government activities;
- An incentives and rewards programme which provides sufficient motivation to individuals to actively explore creative options which may be alternatives to current practice within the public service;
- A monitoring and evaluation framework which provides a set of indicators for measuring the impact of innovative practices, both directly within the public service, and beyond this the society more broadly.

However, this process of change is slow. Innovation within the context of government makes progress largely through incremental gains, rather than radical changes and this requires patience.

**Conclusion**

The state plays an important role in setting the tone and creating the conditions conducive to innovation, both with regards to the broader economy, and directly within the public service. Potential innovators should be supported and successful innovators rewarded in order to reflect the value that is placed on identifying new solutions to address the challenges of growth and development.

South Africa, due to its unique conditions of abject poverty and technological sophistication existing side by side, is well positioned to develop a culture of innovation, and use it to actively address the developmental challenges facing the country.

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Glenda White is Executive Director: Programmes at the Centre for Public Service Innovation.
Access to public services is a right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 21 (2), which states: “Everyone has the right to equal access to public service”. Whenever they are effected, cuts to public expenditure — encompassing basic services such as water, electricity, health and education — impact directly on human beings.

Even big businesses elsewhere are at last realising that downsizing will not result in making the public service more effective provider of services to the poor. The public service has shed over 150 000 jobs since 1994, or about 10% of all jobs lost. Not all jobs were subject to brutal cuts. Others were due to benign-sounding but no less pernicious “natural attrition”.

What is needed to meet the challenge posed by the reconstruction programme is investment in people and infrastructure, a closing of the apartheid wage gap, and the acceptance of unions as partners towards genuine reconstruction and development.

In a recent article in the Financial Times (July 2001), “The downside of downsizing”, the director of Bain and Company, Darrel Rigby, explains that in their study of 288 Fortune 500 companies that “weathered the last recession” by dismissing more than 3% of their employees, “performed no better than those companies that made smaller cuts or none at all”.

Companies such as Pan Am which cut more than 15% of their workforce performed significantly below average. Why is this so? The author argues that some of the reasons are obvious: large redundancies are often symptomatic of flawed strategies that inevitably produce below par results.

Taking the public sector as a whole, outsourcing has been immense. Paying severance costs, “outplacement costs, loss of knowledge from skilled workers and damaged trust and credibility has been equally costly”.

The solution, according to Rigby, is to learn from those smarter than you before workers are “jettisoned”. Ask yourself: Are employees more valuable than a corporate jet, art collections or first class travel?

The ostentatious display of wealth by many is despicable when living in a land of such grave disparities between those in jobs and the jobless. The gap between top earners and those below needs to be addressed urgently.

COSATU’s submission in their 1997 presidential public service review presented a detailed vision of what they regard as wrong with the public service. (still on the website www.cosatu.org.za for your perusal). These wide principles
supported a human resource development strategy that will achieve employment equity as well as skills development for “all public servants”.

Many of the principles have stood the test of time and are worth remembering.

**Developmental state**

COSATU has always believed that the public service should be transformed in such a way as to enable the State to play a developmental role in redressing past imbalances and in the general reconstruction of our society.

**Rationalisation and restructuring the public service**

The current strategy to restructure the public service is based on mechanical and blunt instruments such as voluntary severance packages and natural attrition. In the absence of a comprehensive needs assessment to evaluate optimal staffing arrangements in the public service, “rationalisation and restructuring” will amount to little more than a programme for staff reduction.

**Public Service Delivery**

Service delivery is currently hamstrung by the structural inefficiencies inherited from apartheid. There is a need to fast-track service delivery to extend services to previously marginalised groups, to foster the principle of universal access to services, and to encourage public participation.

The DPSA 1999 Personnel Expenditure Review found that the public sector is not bloated — yet management continued to cut into the lean meat, affecting much-needed services.

If you really need to cut something, begin with cutting out the ideological commitment to a small and minimalist state. If you do this you will have to forego privatisation of essential services such as electricity, water, education, health, etc.

The State needs to be a role model because as the single biggest employer in the country its good practices will easily be followed. But you will have to start by negotiating in good faith. Stick to agreements and overcome what unions perceive as a culture of reneging on agreements and unilateralism.

Bad faith negotiations undermine industrial relations and trust.

It is also time to avoid the latest fad of using consultants. The need for consultants must be agreed upon with unions, and their track record must be looked at thoroughly. In addition, they must not only serve to achieve “management’s objectives” but be available to labour and civil society as well.

Alternatively, funds must be provided to build the capacity for these institutions to make informed choices.

For real restructuring to work it must serve multiple constituencies and accountable to them as well. It must meet the needs of the users of public services (also workers and their families), the providers of the services (management and labour) and those who pay for the services (tax payers and that brings in government).

The frontline workers in the hospitals, community centres, schools etc are the ones whose ideas must be the core of any restructuring efforts. Meaningful engagement with their unions is a prerequisite for success.

A simple starting point would be to invest in training and education. Robert Reich said in “The Wealth of Nations” (1991) that “education and training are the only real source of competitive advantage, because labour is the least mobile of all the factors of production”.

This is infinitely better than contributing to the “jobloss bloodbath” which easily spirals into poverty, crime and exclusion of millions of our people. This makes the struggle for social justice an urgent priority of our nation.

- Hassen Lorgat is Media Officer for the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (Sadtu). He is writing in his personal capacity.
My daughter says she wants to write a letter to the Premier and the President and ask them why they are giving me so much work.” That’s how the Director-General of the Northern Province, Ms Benedicta Manching Monama, breaks the ice, trying to illustrate how hard she is working in trying to turn around her province.

Admittedly a bit shy generally, when it comes to issues of transformation and service delivery she is uncharacteristically outspoken, emphatic and tackles matters head on, with very little reserve.

Variously known as Benny, Mantshing, Pebetsi or Lindi to different people she has met at different stages of her life, the Director-General was born in Alexandra township. Her family later moved to Meadowlands in Soweto during those difficult times of forced removals.

I asked her what inspired her to join the public service. “Like many young people I wanted to become a doctor when I grew up, but by some quirk of fate, I ended up studying law. A very close cousin of mine was a major influence. I looked up to her; she was a role model for me, well mannered and inspiring. But then, you know, things didn’t quite go well for her. She went to the University of Natal and did not do very well. This gave me a fright that I would also not make it.”

Her memories of herself as a young girl are linked more to Alexandra than Meadowlands. “Alex used to be a beautiful township in those days, and maybe because most of the time I was at the boarding school I possibly had a romantic notion of the township which I saw on rare occasions, during school holidays.”

Ms Monama had a Catholic upbringing and started her primary education in Alexandra and continued in Soweto. For her high school, she went to Stotolwane in Pietersburg. “This was a good school where you gained admission through excellence. I think I was a brilliant young girl,” she says.

Some of the people she went to school with — Joe Phaahla, Hendrik...
Motsoaledi, and Professor Nkopodi-Nkopodi — now occupy responsible offices.

Ms Monama studied for her Law Degree at the University of the North. She also had a turbulent but rewarding political life at university where she took part in the founding structures of the then Azanian Student Organisation (Azaso) and South African Student Organisation (Saso), which were aligned to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). She also had her share of the consequences of Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, as her name started featuring prominently on the list of those wanted by the security officials in the old order. She managed to elude the security officials for quite some time but they caught up with her when they raided her lecture room and she was arrested and detained.

Studying for a law degree came in handy because she was able to pick up a technicality and latch on to it to win her case.

She served her articles with Phosa, Mojapelo and Partners, a firm run by the former premier of Mpumalanga, Matthew Phosa.

She did her LLB at Wits and gained experience with NGOs when she worked at the Legal Aid Resource Centre to try and alleviate the inequalities in society. She still has fresh memories of the Bantu Authorities Act, the Public Violence Act and similar apartheid legislation.

“It is a daunting task to be Director-General,” she says. “My husband is in Atteridgeville and is a dentist by profession.”

So is Atteridgeville where home is? Do you go home then?

“Well I do go home though I do not manage to spend as much time with the kids as I would like because of work. It’s not easy to strike a balance. My daughter says she wants to write a letter to the Premier and the President and ask them why they are giving me so much work.”

What projects is the province involved in and what challenges have been encountered and successes achieved?

“The Northern Province inherited four former homelands and has a population of about 4.9 million. Unifying these homelands was not an easy task. Now there are only six regions and the focus is on addressing tribal problems created by the old system. The Director-General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) was instrumental in helping us strike a deal with the DFID. This has enabled us to capacitate senior officials in the Office of the Premier to lead transformation in the province. There is also a programme of bringing together departments in the province, for example the three offices comprising the Office of the Premier, Public Works and Economic Affairs.”

“There is a daunting task to be Director-General,” she says. “My husband is in Atteridgeville and is a dentist by profession.”

The Department of Local Government in the Province is busy with a strategic management plan to deal with overlaps in the regions and we are looking at merging it with the Department of Housing.”

Ms Monama feels strongly that the people of the province and the Executive Council will guide the strategic vision of the province. The key issue that needs to be addressed, she feels, is job creation.

“The situation is such that a population that is 98% African, 48% is unemployed. That is a huge section of the province. We are talking about two million people being unemployed in this province alone.”

“We need to open up opportunities,” she says. “The Northern Province produces the most platinum in the country, so platinum mining is an avenue. Diamonds and other minerals are found here in the province. We can then tap into the private sector to assist. Agriculture can create even more jobs. Citrus fruit, vegetables, maize and even cotton are produced here. We need to convert this to benefit the province. Instead of sending products to manufacturers in, say Gauteng, we need to develop that industry right here.”

“We have a beautiful province; some of the evergreen wetlands are found here. Tourism needs to be enhanced even more. Tourist sites such as Magoebaskloof, Maphungubye and Makapansgat are in this province and need to be marketed.”

In answer to my enquiry of how she spends her leisure time, Ms Monama says, “My husband and I like travelling. It doesn’t happen as often now and we like taking the children out, to see new things.”

“My mother was a strict person. If school came out at 14h00 you had to be home by 14h10. So I had little time for hobbies. I tried a little of chess and tennis though not to any serious extent. I was more into cultural activities like drama. I did some acting and I sang but now I do not speak for longer than 15 minutes and my voice does not complain.”

“I like Latin American music and my collection is predominantly African. I had an uncle who appreciated jazz and I developed a liking for it. I also like classical music. I love cooking and my husband enjoys eating what I prepare.”

“The last time I read any love story was during those Danielle Steel days as a teenager. I am trying to catch up on some biographical works by African leaders, books by Govan Mbeki, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jeremy Cronin. I have just finished reading a book on Mao Tse Tung.”

“My idea of a holiday is exactly that. Away from everything and anything that is an interference with peace and quite, with beautiful music and plenty of good meat.”

“I enjoy my work and I believe I am a good public servant.”
The 2001 round of salary negotiations have concluded with the signing of an historic three-year agreement. The agreement is historic for three reasons. Firstly, this is the first multi-year salary agreement since the 1996 broad-banding agreement. Secondly, salary increases for future years are benchmarked to a standard, uniform, acceptable measure of inflation; and thirdly, the agreement paves the way for a framework agreement on restructuring of the public service to be negotiated.

With the 2001 round of salary negotiations out of the way and an agreement that will, for once, allow budgets to take account of negotiated salary agreements, personnel policy can focus on more longer-term, developmental issues. This article highlights some of the key personnel policy challenges that face the public sector over the next three years. In broad terms, this challenge can be summarised as follows: how do we use the additional budgetary space that fiscal policy provides to improve the quality of service delivery in the public sector?

Following the 1996 salary agreement, personnel policy focused on curbing costs in order to improve the balance between personnel and non-personnel expenditure. The reason for this narrow focus was the high cost of the 1996 salary agreement, the cost of rank and leg promotions and the fact that due to fiscal tightening, budgets were not growing rapidly in real terms. In most, not all, instances, the objective of reducing personnel expenditure to more acceptable levels has been met. The way in which personnel costs were reduced was mainly through a reduction in personnel numbers, with the public service losing almost 10% of its staff compliment.

General salary increases were in line with inflation, but due to rank and leg promotions and an increase in the number of managerial posts, the average cost per employee still went up in real terms. In aggregate, personnel costs declined by about 1% a year in real terms between 1997 and 2000.

Going forward, the budget framework allows for real increases in budgets of between 3 and 4% a year. Government has prioritised capital spending and social security grants in the 2001 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement. Personnel costs in total should increase by about 2% a year in real terms. This rate of increase is faster than over the past four years, and should allow some policy space to achieve Government’s objectives of improving service delivery.

The 2001 salary agreement provided average salary increases of 6,58% for 2001, with the 2002 and 2003 salary increases coming in at inflation plus 0,5% and inflation plus 1% respectively. The salary agreement also committed government to spend 1% of salary costs (defined as basic salary, pension contributions and 13th cheques) on a pay progression system to reward performance.

Government must improve the remuneration and working conditions in order to attract and retain good quality staff, writes Kuben Naidoo.

Personnel Policy in the Public Sector
and seniority. The net effect of the salary agreement is that wage costs will rise by at least 1.5% above inflation in the 2002/03 financial year and by 2% above inflation in 2003/04. To keep growth in the total wage bill below 2 percentage points above inflation will not be an easy task.

On the question of numbers of civil servants, there are certain critical areas in the public service, where there is a large shortage of personnel. In aggregate, the number of employees in the criminal justice and health sectors should rise over the next three years. Staff shortages in these two sectors are impacting on the ability of Government to reduce crime and to respond effectively to the impact of HIV/AIDS in the public health system. The types of people required in the health sector are doctors, specialists and nurses.

There are also a number of departments, especially in poorer provinces, where there are large staff surpluses. Many provincial public works departments, agriculture departments and transport departments have many more staff than they require in terms of the functions they perform or the budget of the province.

Outside of the three social service functions, the Northern Province has five staff members per 1 000 of the population at a cost of 25% of their total personnel budget. Gauteng has just 0.8 staff per 1 000 of the population and spends just 6% of their total personnel budget on personnel in these functions. The effect of this pattern is that in 2000/01, Gauteng spent R1.8 billion on capital spending while the Northern Province spent just R719 million. In addition, Gauteng could afford more teachers and health workers per 1 000 of the population than the Northern Province.

There is a desperate need for a retrenchment tool to rectify these imbalances. In some instances, redeployment and retraining may mitigate against actual retrenchment. However, in many instances, more health professionals and additional younger police officers are needed, while the skills and age structure of surplus staff are inappropriate for the jobs required. Government must be prepared to offer training and small business opportunities, pay a decent retrenchment package and provide financial and social counseling to retrenched staff. In the end, higher capital and social service spending will improve service delivery and place poorer provinces on a higher growth path.

Medical aid costs in South Africa have accelerated massively since the early 1990s. The public sector has not been immune to these increases, with medical aid costs rising almost 10 percentage points above inflation each year. Generous post-retirement medical aid provision, especially for police, correctional services and defence, also adds to Government’s wage costs. Government is faced with the challenge of trying to expand the provision of medical aid across the public service beyond the present 60% (including protection services) of civil servants.

To provide universal coverage to medical aid, Government would need to spend an additional R3 to R4 billion of 4% of the wage bill a year. The public service has to be able to reduce the costs of medical aid in order to be able to increase the number of people who have medical aid.

The scrapping of rank and leg promotions was welcomed as this system of automatic promotions increased costs, was out of kilter with organisation’s staffing plans and was biased against teachers and professional staff. Departments are now required to develop an alternative pay progression system that costs about 1% of salary costs. This will not be an easy task. We need a pay system that recognises that employees with three years experience are, in general, more productive than new employees due to their experience and on-the-job training. The pay system needs to reward people more appropriately for such experience.

In the private sector, the starting salaries of engineers, computer science graduates and many other professionals are lower that the starting salaries of similar professionals in the public sector. The pay progression system being developed must attempt to meet the requirements of rewarding seniority and good performance, but must also fit within the expenditure envelopes that departments can afford. This will not be an easy challenge.

Linked to pay progression, there are a range of scarce skills in the public service, mainly related to general management, information technology, financial management, certain health specialists and engineering skills that is in short supply in the public sector. Government must improve both the remuneration and working conditions for these professionals in order to attract and retain good quality staff.

A similar approach can be developed for skills such as mathematics and science teachers in rural areas, or doctors in rural areas. A framework to reward very specific skilled people to work in poorer provinces or poor areas must be found.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the public service is likely to be severe. Professions such as teachers, health workers, soldiers and police are likely to be hardest hit. At present, we do not have effective education and counseling programmes in place to stem the rise of infections of this disease. Secondly, we are not training as many people as we should in order to replace civil servants who are likely to die due to this disease in the next decade.

Expanding the provision of medical aid in the public service should be part of the process of providing civil servants with access to care that could prolong their productive lives and lessen the impact of the disease on service delivery and more importantly, on their families and dependants.

The certainty of a three-year salary agreement and the 2002 Budget provides policy makers with a stable environment within which to tackle the key personnel policy challenges over the next three years.

The fiscal room to solve these problems is not large. Perhaps, the 2001 salary agreement is too generous in its general salary increases in the outer years and does not provide enough room to tackle the other developmental challenges facing the public service. Nevertheless, the field is set to reform the way in which the public service works to make a meaningful difference to service delivery in South Africa.

• Kuben Naidoo is Director Personnel Policy
Issues

Service Provision in Rural Areas: Challenges and Problems

The well regarded and often quoted adage of development that “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach him how to fish you provide him with the means to support himself forever”, has just become out-moded through the rapidity of change in the modern world. Today, you need to teach her how to learn how to fish because by tomorrow there may not be any fish or someone may have built a dam at the headwaters of her river, and she may not have any water left to fish in.

The latest buzzwords in Development are empowerment and sustainability. This reflects a search for a more long lasting and human dimension to the issue or rather, process of development.

A recent search of the literature on development, despite the plethora of references, left the author no wiser on how these were to be accomplished or exactly what they meant. However, the results from some recent research may provide some insight into some of the issues to be considered.

The author undertook a survey of 28 rural service providers (including government, parastatals, NGOs and the private sector) and 25 Eastern Cape rural villages to find out what the problems and issues were in rural service provision in the Eastern Cape.

One of the first responses in terms of Obstacles to Rural Service Delivery was lack of infrastructure and resources. None of the service providers explicitly recognised the need for knowledge and information management in their service delivery except for occasional reference to communication problems. It was only as the author was analysing the results of the surveys that the preponderance of knowledge and information problems in their management of rural service delivery, became clear. A further apparent bias of rural service providers was in seeing information as an object (letter, document, plan, report or map).

The responses from the 28 rural service providers to the question: “What are the greatest obstacles to rural service delivery?” was numerous and were broadly categorised under the following themes:

1. Information (41%)
2. Knowledge (66%)
3. Physical Resources (42%)

(See Fig. 1)

It became clear that knowledge management, followed by the need for physical resources and information management were the crucial issues needing attention. “What service delivery initiatives are occurring?” 68% of the responses identified physical resources and knowledge actions as part of their initiatives.

In reply to the question, “What serv-
ices do you need to deliver to rural communities?” 72% identified services including both a knowledge and information dimension and 61% identified physical resources in their responses.

From the responses, it became clear that knowledge and information were the most important of the services to be provided.

However, when asked about the difficulties of collecting and disseminating information to rural communities, 76% identified the lack of physical resources and infrastructure as being the problem.

In respect of the following question: “What knowledge and information do you need to distribute to rural areas?” 70% of the responses considered information to be a priority and 54.5% acknowledged the importance of knowledge and advice.

In summary therefore, there are five main obstacles to meaningful rural service delivery:
1. Lack of physical resources and infrastructure.
2. Limited knowledge base of both providers and rural communities.
3. Inability of rural service providers and communities to exchange information and knowledge.
4. A lack of communication and information sharing between service providers themselves and between service providers and their communities.
5. There are major shortcomings in the management of information, knowledge and resources in an integrated way.

The results of interviews within rural communities identified the fact that there is a lack of congruence between what communities need and what rural...
service providers are delivering. Above is a table of some of the mismatches between these two groups.

**Definition**

Information can be represented as a resource or object, or as meaning, which resides in people’s minds.

In the study, all information referred to as meaning will be referred to as knowledge. Knowledge is integrally tied up with language and activity, its attenuation being accomplished in relationship:

“Knowledge is meaning made by the mind.” (Marakas, 1999)

It is only through meaning, that information finds life and becomes knowledge.

It is therefore suggested that the management of knowledge is the key to successful rural service provision, if we have as our goal, empowerment and sustainability. Such knowledge management is dependent on joint action/activity by both service providers and communities to allow for the formation of meaning. Knowledge then occurs through action/interaction and can be characterised as the exchange of meaning.

**The New Paradigm**

If one were to view a rural service provider organisation as an information and knowledge optimising entity (Alchian & Demsetz 1992) one would look pre-eminently at the needs, means and flow mechanisms of information and knowledge, and the mechanism to manage these. This requires a new way of thinking. One must move from the conventional view of the firm and the economy to a new viewpoint, which takes as a starting point the view that the world economy is at the point of a sharp discontinuity. A new economy (Drucker 2000), the knowledge and network economy, is in the process of being born. In this new economy the rules are different, information and knowledge have become the main productive forces as opposed to the conventional economy in which land, labour and capital were the elements of production. You may well ask what this has to do with rural service delivery in areas in which information and communication technology is almost non-existent. A great deal!

The main concept involved in the “new economy” is that knowledge and information is not consumed but replicated and multiplied by each transfer of meaning. A further principle is that of networks. As more people join a network the value of that network increases exponentially.

The nub of the question is still: “What has this got to do with rural service delivery?” If knowledge is exchange of meaning then we get back to basics. Any rural service delivery initiative needs to find out what people need and provide it to them or with their co-operation and active support (ie. the continuous customer connection) (Venkatraman & Henderson, 2000). Most of the development work done so far has been on supplying goods, infrastructure and money, but often in ways that take out much, if not all, initiative from the local people. Rural poor people don’t always know what they need most as they have often different value systems and world views that shape their picture of reality. We need to provide them with the means to learn about the often alien views, technologies, rules and worlds of meaning that impact into their lives.

The world has become a smaller place and change is happening at a faster pace on a continuous basis. Rural poor people need to be able to mediate and make meaning of this changing environment and to be able to combine their own local knowledge and that of outsiders to create new meaning and to engage in new actions to better their circumstances. That organisation which is able to engage effectively in this challenge will be a success and achieve major competitive advantage in terms of develop-
The tools of marketing, such as market research and selling goods and services are available and have been perfected over many years. However such tools often do not make an impact and mean different things to different customers. The problems are exacerbated in rural areas where people are often illiterate and have a completely different context in which they live.

How can we reach these people with the goods and services they need and require, and how can we engage with them in a joint process, which will lead to their needs being met and us developing satisfied and loyal customers? (Customer orientated marketing/relationship marketing)

How can we get meaningful information about our customer’s needs, ensure that they get what they need (in terms of economic demand) and that they are in a position to use these goods and services effectively and provide us with ongoing feedback?

The answer is to build a system that looks at finding out their needs on an ongoing basis, works with them to meet these needs, builds their ability to identify more and new needs on an ongoing basis, and to actively engage with the service providers in a relationship that creates meaning (or shares knowledge) on an ongoing basis.

This emphasises the creation of a network, a development network, composed of rural service providers on the one hand and the rural poor on the other, engaged in exchanging information and knowledge rather than just goods, infrastructure and money. If we are able to exchange meaning through joint activity or action then our resources will be used so much more effectively.

The researcher contends that we now have the means of managing meaning through joint activity and are for the first time able to say with reasonable certainty that if we engage in joint meaning involving activity, we can create new knowledge on a conscious and ongoing basis.

The researcher believes that a new paradigm, which focuses on information and knowledge management, is required to achieve meaningful service delivery to rural communities in the Eastern Cape.

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Planning is Key to

Today people are required to take more responsibility for their personal financial affairs than ever before. However, to many, personal financial planning is a daunting task.

Faced with a dizzying array of financial products and masses of information, most people need professional help to make critical investment decisions.

“Personal financial planning will help you achieve your goals, such as buying that dream home, ensuring sufficient capital to pay for a sound education for your children, or to retire with enough money to enjoy your golden years,” says Lizwe Nkala, marketing manager of Old Mutual Personal Financial Advice.

“However,” Lizwe adds, “you need to take into consideration that the balance between investment, life and disability cover, health cover and retirement planning will change at different stages of your life.”

People have different wants and needs, and as their lives develop, these wants and needs change. Because people have different requirements, they also need a personal financial plan suited to their own circumstances. Personal financial planning is not a case of one plan fits all. Trained financial advisers are well qualified to help individuals assess their personal needs and to draw up a tailor-made plan best suited to their particular needs.

It is important to remember that your personal financial plan is not cast in stone, and you will need to reassess and update it continually as you go through the stages of life.

While it is true that individuals require their own specific personal financial plan suited to their own circumstances. Personal financial planning is not a case of one plan fits all. Trained financial advisers are well qualified to help individuals assess their personal needs and to draw up a tailor-made plan best suited to their particular needs.

Your personal financial plan has to protect you against the risks people often overlook — with disastrous consequences, either for themselves or for their direct family or loved ones, or both. It has to protect you financially against dying prematurely, becoming very ill or disabled, and also against dying too late.

“Think about it. We all hope to live until a ripe old age, but life is unpredictable and anyone of us could die tomorrow, or even worse, today. Will we leave behind sufficient capital to take care of our loved ones?” Lizwe asks. “Will they be able to continue the standard of living they’ve become accustomed to?”

“Accidents or severe illness could leave us permanently disabled and unable to earn an income. Will you have money to pay for specialised nursing care or medical treatment, or continue to provide sufficient cash for everyday living expenses?”

In most instances, if not all, the benefits any employee — including Public Sector employees — can expect from his or her employer are not sufficient to ensure peace of mind, particularly if such benefits are needed prematurely.

In the case of a government employee who has less than ten years’ service, the Government Employee Pension Fund (GEPF), for example, provides only for a lump sum payout. This implies that in the event of the death of the breadwinner, the remaining spouse and family are left without the monthly income of the breadwinner.

Nevertheless, the family will need resources to carry on living. They may not only require money to meet hire-purchase installments, or doctor’s bills, but they will also need to pay for everyday expenses, such as food, petrol and clothing.

If there is a liquidity shortfall in the estate and the heirs don’t have the money to pay any debt or taxes, assets may have to be sold under adverse conditions, or mortgages may have to be renegotiated by heirs, potentially under less favourable circumstances.

Immediate liquidity in your estate is the best way to provide for your family. “A whole life policy is the most efficient way to provide the necessary liquidity,” Lizwe says. But it is essential to nominate a beneficiary (usually the wife or husband). In this case the cash can be paid out within days “if all the paperwork is in order and the requirements for a claim can be met”.

Fact: Life is unpredictable.

Fact: We cannot prevent pain or loss.

Fact: We can soften the blow to our dependants.

Fact: Life assurance is one of the most affordable methods to do so.

Everyone needs life assurance, regardless of how rich or poor, young or old they are. Our lifestyle is determined by our ability to earn an income. If our earning power ceases another source of income must be available. Life assurance can be that source.

Life and disability cover is a critical pillar of any financial portfolio, another being an emergency fund to cover unforeseen expenses such as the stove or geyser breaking down.

“And what happens if you die too late? Yes, often people outlive their retirement capital and long before they die they have to look to others for a means of survival. The pension they had worked for during their entire working life simply is not enough. It is never too early to start saving to protect yourself and your family against this risk,” cautions Lizwe.

While to some the prospect of retirement may seem far off, it is important that you save for this last stage of life during your working years.

A Public Sector employee’s pension is calculated according to a fixed formula and what he or she has to live off monthly is linked to their years of service. This implies that those who joined the Public Service, and therefore the GEPF, late in their lives, will have a shorter working period than someone who joined at the age of 20.

Generally, the 2% rule applies to all people invested in a
Financial Well-being

defined benefit pension fund, such as the GEPF. This merely means that a retired Public Sector employee’s pension would be more or less 2% of his or her final salary multiplied by number of years’ service. Therefore, a member with 20 years’ service will enter the golden years with 40% of his or her final annual pensionable salary.

Should the retiree die after five years into retirement, the remaining spouse will be entitled to only 50% of the monthly pension.

It is clear that, like for everyone else in our country, Government employees have to address certain personal financial issues to ensure a carefree retirement.

Investors should carefully consider their personal objectives and reasons for making an investment. To achieve wealth creation, one has to identify and confirm short, medium and long-term goals. This helps to select the investment vehicle that will ensure the attainment of each goal.

Here are 11 factors to consider when choosing an investment:

- **Tax.** Which investment offers the most tax breaks? Are your payments tax deductible up to certain limits? Will the proceeds of the investment be taxed? If so, at what rate?
- **Liquidity.** How quickly and easily can you convert the investment into cash? Are you likely to need cash within the first 5 years? Can you borrow against the investment or use it as security to raise a loan?
- **Guarantees.** Is there a guaranteed rate of growth on your investment, or does its return depend entirely on the performance of the stock market?
- **Term.** Does the investment have a minimum term?
- **Risk.** What is your risk profile? Are you looking for a high-growth equity investment? If so, can you afford short-term setbacks in the market, or are you looking for a lower risk investment with a higher exposure to bonds and cash?
- **Return.** If you cannot obtain a real return after tax and inflation, then the purchasing power of your savings will reduce year by year.
- **Performance.** How has the fund performed in the past? How easy is it to track the performance of the fund?
- **Flexibility.** Do you have the freedom to switch to other funds if you should wish? How many choices do you have? What are the switching fees?
- **Investment risk.** Investment risk is a combination of market risk (the risk of fluctuations in the market as a whole) and company risk (the risk associated with a certain industry or the company itself). Do you feel comfortable with the investment risk?
- **Balance.** Do you have all your eggs in one basket, or are you invested in a variety of product types, using different currencies, geographical domains, and investment portfolios? Do these investments match your needs in terms of the timing of your payouts?
- **Sound advice.** Reputable advice from people who have been in the business for a long time really helps.

“Your financial plan must start off with what you already have. Look at the employee benefits you have, identify your shortfalls and only then, with the help of a financial adviser, have a thorough analysis done which will form the basis of your personal financial plan,” advises Lizwe.

“Remember, you can’t blindly rush into a financial analysis. And remember, too, that someone else’s financial plan will in all probability not be suited to your needs.”

Financial advisers or brokers are able to give advice on how protection and investments work together in a balanced portfolio that will meet those needs at different times in your life.

Choosing a good adviser is one of the most important investment decisions you can make.

Ask the adviser for credentials. Find out if the adviser is tied to a major financial organisation. This should mean he or she is properly trained and attends regular refresher courses to keep up to date with the latest developments. Lizwe says: “More importantly, it means that you have recourse to the company if you are not satisfied with the adviser’s service.”

Ask for a list of references or some indication of past performance. A large, loyal, local customer base usually points to someone who knows what he or she is doing. It also indicates that the adviser is established in your area, providing reliable ongoing service, rather than just selling policies and then moving on.

Old Mutual uses a program called Pathfinder to do needs analyses. It covers every aspect of your financial wellbeing, from tax planning to estate and retirement planning. The adviser is able to interpret the results and tailor a financial plan best suited to your needs, age, aspirations and lifestyle.

If you are serious about the wellbeing of your family and want to go through life with the peace of mind that you have done the best you can to minimise the risks associated with unforeseen financial troubles you may encounter, feel free to contact your Old Mutual personal financial adviser, a broker or your nearest Old Mutual branch for more information.

In addition, Old Mutual has developed a presentation to explain the rules of the GEPF to public sector employees. The presentation also focuses on the changes of the rules and how they affect members of the fund. Presentations can be arranged by calling Lizwe Nkala at (021) 504 4339.

Old Mutual can help you make the most of your life, every step of the way.
The Wayward Search for an AIDS Vaccine

By: John Cohen
Reviewed by: Ruth Hoskings

AIDS is considered the most serious plague to afflict humankind since the Black Death in 1348, and the most enormous medical problem in human history. This book reveals in a clear and powerful way the intellectual challenges AIDS vaccines pose for the scientific community, and the human struggles of some of the greatest scientists of our time to address them.

As HIV continues its death march around the globe, now infecting 40 million people, an AIDS vaccine remains an elusive goal. When scientists first proved in 1984 that HIV causes AIDS, a vaccine race quickly spun into action with high hopes that the world would soon have a means to stop this modern plague. But today the search to develop an AIDS vaccine has slowed considerably, despite the great advances that have been made in biotechnology. Ten years ago, Jon Cohen, a leading AIDS reporter, began this book intending to document the story of the discovery of an AIDS cure. Today, his story is instead a chronicle of the failure to do so, owing to a combination of bad scientific research, haphazard leadership, and obstructive political and economic agendas.

Cohen tells how the forces inside and outside the world of science have hindered the AIDS vaccine search. He reveals the complicated obstacles that confront researchers, the uncertain marketplace that confronts pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, the haphazard political response, and the ethical dilemmas that face everyone involved. Cohen goes behind the scenes at academic labs, companies, government agencies, scientific meetings and investment houses to document how promising leads go nowhere as scientists jump from one fashionable idea to the next. Besides critiquing the current methods and strategies, this book also offers specific recommendations for accelerating AIDS vaccine research.

Cohen believes that a major obstacle to the successful development of a vaccine has been the domination of the field by “reductionists” (mostly virologists) who are interested primarily in understanding the pathogenesis of HIV infection and the interaction of the virus with the immune system. The argument that more needed to be known about HIV and the immune response to it before a targeted program could be designed has always prevailed. Cohen cites other obstacles and these include a lack on the part of major pharmaceutical companies in developing an AIDS vaccine because of the concern about liability and profit; disagreement about the relevance and importance of the animal models; differing views regarding what a vaccine could achieve; ethical problems related to the design of placebo-controlled trials and the treatment of the vaccinated persons who became infected during trials; and the limited interest among industrialised counties in supporting vaccine research.

According to Cohen, this wayward search for an AIDS vaccine could have been avoided through the centralisation of leadership and the unification of direction from the outset, along the lines of the March of Dimes model that was so successful in the development of a poliovirus vaccine. Such leadership would have designed a master strategy to deal with the obstacles to vaccine development, rigorously compare vaccine strategies, and follow up promising leads.

Cohen’s research is exhaustive and he provides the reader with a well-documented history of the search for an AIDS vaccine. His book poses all the right questions as he explores the political and scientific issues that have affected this long journey to a vaccine. The book is a wake-up call to all (especially here in Africa) because the popular fear and urgency of the early years of the AIDS pandemic has declined, and the success of the various treatments in improving the quality and duration of the lives of AIDS patients has only lulled the public into a false sense of security. Cohen argues that already there is evidence that the virus has developed resistance to certain drugs.

The book is international in scope and Cohen calls for a focused, directed, and well-funded AIDS vaccine development effort outside of government. The book is highly readable and is a must-read for policy makers, scientists, leaders, and everyone who is working to stop AIDS.

Who moved my cheese?

By: Dr Spencer Johnson
Reviewed by: Solly Mogaladi

“Who moved my cheese?” is a captivating piece of writing. The story is written in a simple style, which enhances easy and quick reading. It is this simplicity blended creatively with humour, which defies the richness of the theme of “change” in one’s life, as depicted in the metaphor of “cheese”. This cheese connotes various realities such as an aspired job, family life, affluence etc.

The setting in this parable is a maze, which epitomises the life environment of the four characters in the story. In real life the maze could represent the workplace, home etc. characterised by a myriad of paths.

Sniff and Scurry are mice who just want to have the cheese from where they always get it. When the cheese is moved, they lament over this but continue to entertain hopes of getting it back nevertheless.

The fruitless attempts at getting “their” cheese are suggestive of the frustrations in life when the security factors we have learned to depend on suddenly disappear, leaving us miserable and despondent.

The other characters, Ham and Hew, are little people who have a different disposition towards the cheese. They nevertheless go through some frustrations and fears that go along with the sudden sense of loss. Finally one of them succeeds in dealing with this change (a moved cheese).

The central theme of the story is that change is a reality and that failure to accept and overcome it will invariably lead to misery.

This book is recommended for anyone with interest in change management.
The Personality Compass: A New Way to Understand People

By Diane Turner & Thelma Greco
Reviewed by: Thuli Radebe

Although the book was first published in 1998, it covers a subject that poses a great challenge to most managers, that is, trying to understand the people they manage and work with, and attempting to understand themselves.

As points of reference, the authors refer to universal analogies which are based on various theories. They move from the premise that there are four fundamental types of people in relation to their natures. They draw a parallel between the cultural characteristics of each of the four regions, i.e. the North, East, South and West directions on a compass and the four fundamental natures of man. Thus there is talk of people of Northern cultures having Northern nature (for instance determined Vikings and their powerful conquests); peoples of the Eastern cultures with an East nature (for instance the polite Japanese and their respect for etiquette).

Chapter One provides historic precedence and recent scientific evidence to support the four major groupings of traits. In Chapter One the authors borrow from classic theories starting from Hippocrates’s four Humours (choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine) and Aristotle’s forces of Nature (fire, earth, water and air) through to Pavlov. They combine Jung’s four basic functions and four basic attitudes of psychological man, DNA Types, Myers/Briggs four personality types, the four blood types, the left brain/right brain discoveries, body and facial types, handwriting and canine types.

Chapter Two covers the cultural analogy in greater detail and presents diagrams of the Personality Compass.

Chapters Three to Six explore in detail the natures of all four regions (North, East, West, South) in terms of their uniqueness, their strengths and danger zones. They continue to explore the behaviours, the children and the dynamics in recognising traits in a variety of roles (as students, parents, athletes, leaders and spouses), in different situations — at home, in interviews, on the job. They give comments which serve as tips on how to recognise typical regional traits, how to motivate them, how to please them, how to reward them, etc. Of interest are Do’s and Don’ts of working with the different groups.

Of interest is the fact that everyone will have some characteristics from all four types (regardless of where you are located) although one type will capture the personality’s essence more accurately than the others (which makes us all a combination of types). The book provides exercises to identify types, including diagnosing yourself.

Chapter Seven allays human fears by indicating that people aren’t difficult but different and “differences can be valuable” and different people can work well together. The authors themselves illustrate the point brilliantly (being different — North-East and South-West — they worked together to produce this book).

The book is easily written, presented in a humourous style and is acclaimed for its accuracy in identifying personality types. It is a fascinating, practical, graphic reference tool to help individuals understand themselves and the people around them, a virtue that is essential in managing and working with people.
Some time ago divorcing one’s spouse was a process that required a lot of soul-searching. These days, however, people divorce each other for the weirdest reasons, as this reader discovered while perusing the US press:

A man in Connecticut filed for divorce because his wife had left him a note on the fridge that read: “I have gone to the bridge club. There will be a recipe for your dinner at 7pm on Channel 2.”

A woman in Georgia divorced her husband on the grounds that he “stayed home too much and was much too affectionate”.

A man in Kentucky divorced his wife because she “beat him whenever he removed onions from his hamburger without asking for permission”.

The attack on the World Trade Center, New York, and the subsequent anthrax attacks have spawned a number of stories showing that the world is now in the grip of paranoia. US comedian Billy Crystal, when he appeared on stage during a benefit concert for rescue workers who were involved in the rescue mission after the attack, is said to have made this observation: “I’ve been backstage at a lot of rock concerts and this is the first time I’ve seen rock stars running away from white powder.”

The arse-side of freedom does not exactly smell of roses.’ — writer Breyten Breytenbach as quoted in the Dictionary of South African Quotations

Question: Why don’t skeletons make music in church?
Answer: Because they have no organs.

Question: How did the Yeoman of the Guard at the Tower of London get the name “Beefeaters”?
A: “Beefeater” was a term used in the 17th century for a well-fed servant of the Royal household. It was often used in a derogatory sense. – International Express

Mary: I suspect that my ex used to visit prostitutes before we met.

Jill: What makes you think so?
Mary: Well, one night we were just playing around, and he picked me up and headed for the bedroom.
Jill: So?
Mary: So I giggled and asked, “Should I struggle?” And he asked, “I don’t know. Does that cost extra?”

A young husband comes home one night, and his wife throws her arms around his neck:

“Darling, I have great news: I’m a month overdue. I think we’re going to have a baby! The doctor gave me a test today, but wait until we find out for sure, we can’t tell anybody.”

The next day, a guy from the electric company rings the doorbell, because the young couple haven’t paid their last bill:

“Are you Mrs Smith? You’re a month overdue, you know!”

“How do YOU know?” stammers the young woman.

“Well, ma’am, it’s in our files!” says the man from the electric company.

“What are you saying? It’s in your files?” “Absolutely.”

“Well, let me talk to my husband about this tonight.”

That night, she tells her husband about the visit, and he, mad as a bull, rushes to the electric company offices the first thing the next morning.

“What’s going on here? You have it on file that my wife is a month overdue? What business is that of yours?” the husband shouts.

“Just calm down,” says the clerk, “it’s nothing serious. All you have to do is pay us.” “PAY you? and if I refuse?”

“Well, in that case, sir, we’d have no option but to cut you off.” “And what would my wife do then?” the husband asks.

“I don’t know. I guess she’d have to use a candle.”

When I was a kid I used to pray every night for a new bicycle. Then I realised that the Lord doesn’t work that way so I stole one and asked Him to forgive me.

• We are inviting readers to send us jokes, anecdotes and puzzles for publication in the next issue of the Service Delivery Review. Forward your contributions to: fredk1@freemail.absa.co.za.