



the **dpsa**

Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CONSOLIDATED
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
MATURITY ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION
REPORT

MARCH 2022



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CONSOLIDATED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT MATURITY ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Knowledge Management (KM) is a powerful tool to ensure an effective, efficient, professional, highly productive, and capable public service. It affords the opportunities and platforms to deal strategically with the challenges presented by the knowledge economy. Sound decisions and effective action rely on having the right knowledge in the right place at the right time, in the right context.

1.2. KM involves the understanding of the following:

- where and in what forms knowledge exists within the organisation;
- what knowledge the organization needs to achieve its objectives effectively;
- how to promote a culture conducive to learning, sharing, and knowledge creation;
- how to make the right knowledge available to the right people at the right time;
- how to tap into and capture valued knowledge.
- how to best generate or acquire new relevant knowledge, and
- how to manage all these factors to enhance performance considering the organization's strategic goals and short-term opportunities and threats

1.3. Furthermore, the subject of managing knowledge and leveraging it for learning and sharing in government can lead to better planning and decision making thus resulting in improved service delivery. Government institutions are learning organisations, as a result the empowerment of public servants with operational knowledge is key in driving effective and efficient service delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. During the 2018/2019 financial year, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) embarked on a Knowledge Management Maturity Assessment (KMMA) to determine the current state of KM within the various public sector organisations. This assessment was informed by the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework (NKMSF) for the Public Service and was meant to evaluate how advanced the respective public service organisations are in terms of understanding and implementing knowledge management practices.

- 2.2. The assessment approach to determine the state of KM within the various public service organisations measured seven dimensions namely, Leadership & Governance; Business Alignment; People & Culture; Technology; Knowledge Processes; Learning & Innovation; as well as Monitoring & Evaluation.
- 2.3. The Knowledge Management Maturity Assessment was performed through a self-assessment tool designed on an excel spread sheet with programmed calculations.
- 2.4. The levels of KM maturity were determined by a score out of a possible 210 based on 105 statements. The total of the score gave an indication on where the department is in terms of its Knowledge Management maturity. The maturity levels were defined as follows:

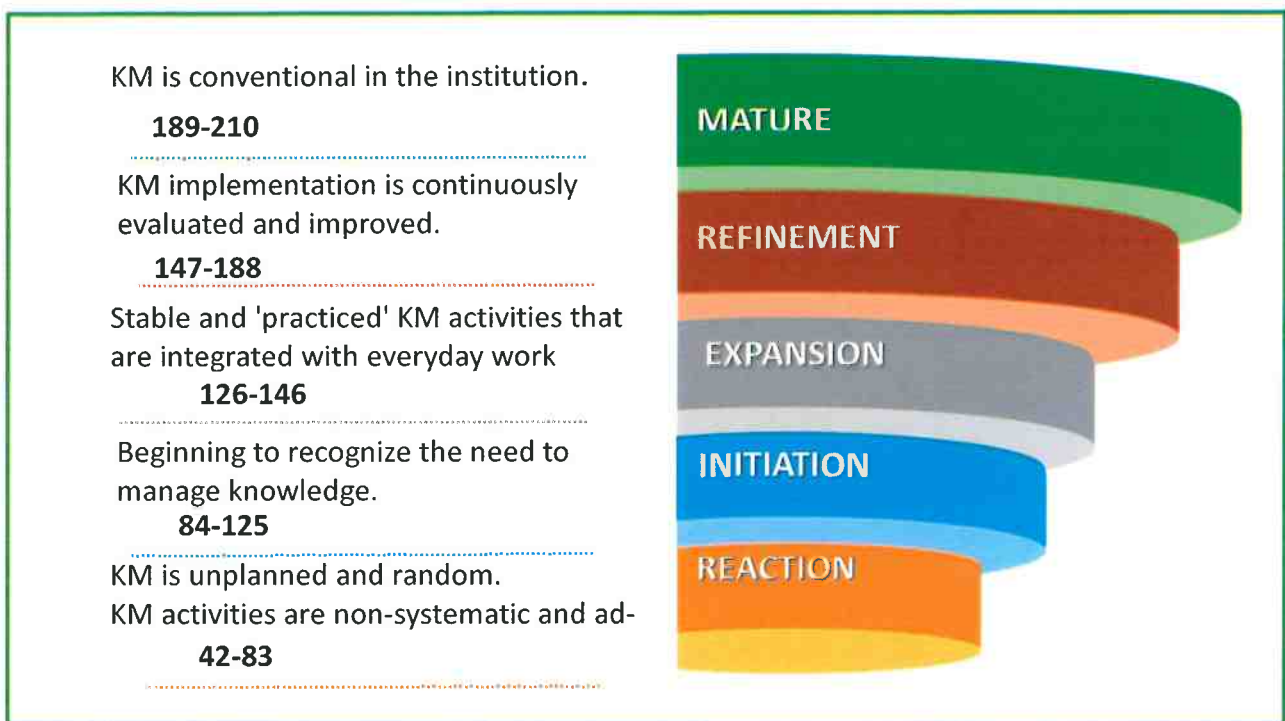


Figure 1: Knowledge Management Maturity Assessment Levels

- 2.5. In November 2021 a KM Maturity status report was circulated to all the National and Provincial Heads of Departments that illustrated the status on the institutionalisation of KM within the public service.
- 2.6. National and Provincial departments that had not participated in the first round of the KMMA were also encouraged to do so at this point.
- 2.7. The KMMA process led to the development of a draft three-year Implementation plan template to assist with the monitoring of KM Implementation in the Public Service. **(Tag C)**

[DRAFT KM IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING TOOL 2022-2025.xlsx](#)

3. THE KM MATURITY ASSESSMENT SUBMISSIONS FROM 2018 -2020

3.1. THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS AS AT 31MARCH 2021

- i. In the year 2018/19, and 2020/21 the DPSA requested the public sector to plot themselves according to a Knowledge Management Maturity Assessment (KMMA), on seven dimensions to determine their level of maturity with regards to KM implementation.

ii. \



Figure 1 KM Maturity Assessment dimensions

Figure 2 below depicts the submission status of the KMMA according to the departments that participated in this self-assessment exercise by 2019

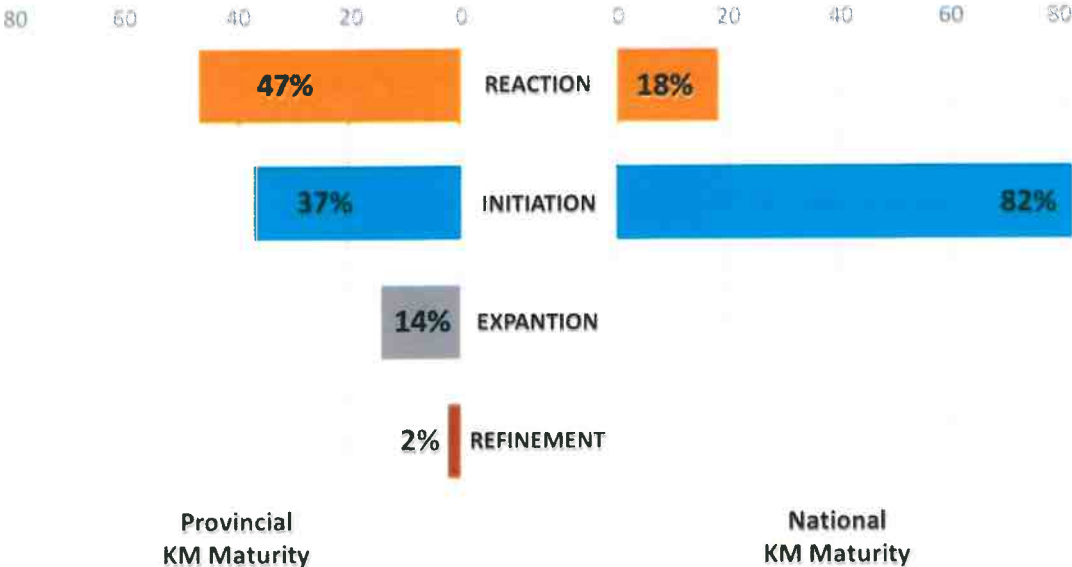


Figure 2: Knowledge Management Maturity Self-Assessment submissions by March 2019

Figure 3 below depicts the status of KM Maturity in the Public Service as per the 2022 KMMA submissions by the departments that participated in this self-assessment exercise.

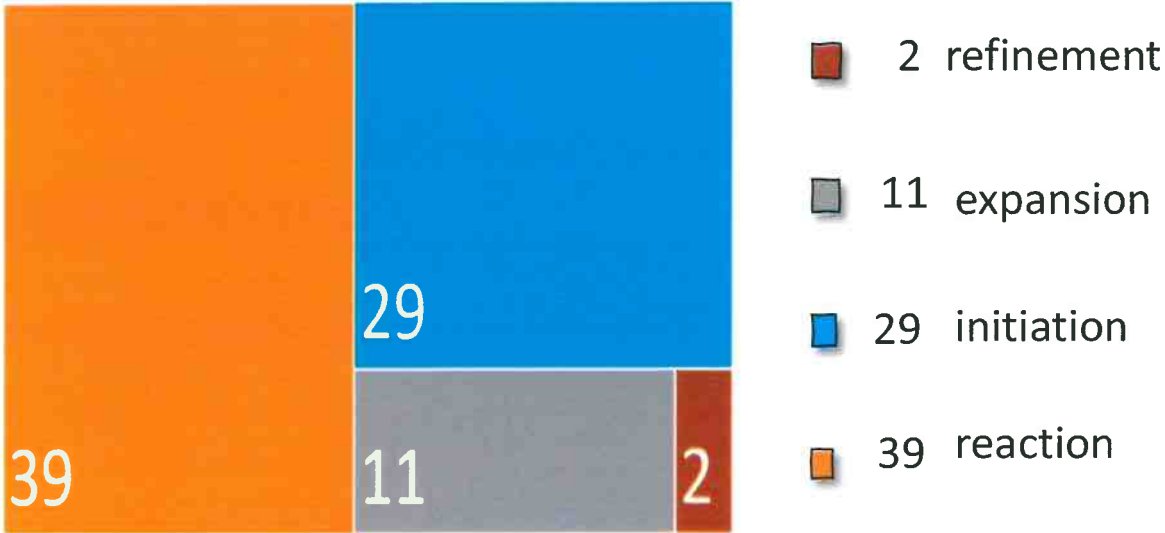


Figure 3: Knowledge Management Maturity Self-Assessment Results by March 2022

3.2. SUBMISSION STATUS BY JANUARY 2022

- i. The Maturity Assessment tool was sent to all National and Provincial Departments to populate and return to the DPSA. The assessment tool was sent to One Hundred and Eleven (111) Provincial and Forty-seven (47) National Departments.
- ii. The overall results on submissions were as follows; National departments: Out of the 47 departments, 19 assessments were submitted (36%); Provincial departments: Out of one hundred and eleven (111) departments, 59 assessments were submitted (46%)
- iii. Only eight departments responded to the call and submitted their assessments. These results were validated except for Eastern Cape, and these were :
 - National Treasury
 - Department of Home affairs
 - Gauteng Education
 - Gauteng Provincial COGTA
 - Western Cape Education
 - Free State Social development
 - Northern Cape Health
 - Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development & Agrarian Reform (were never available for validation)
- iv. **Figure 4** below depicts the status of the Public Service on KM Maturity as per submission between 2018 and 2020.

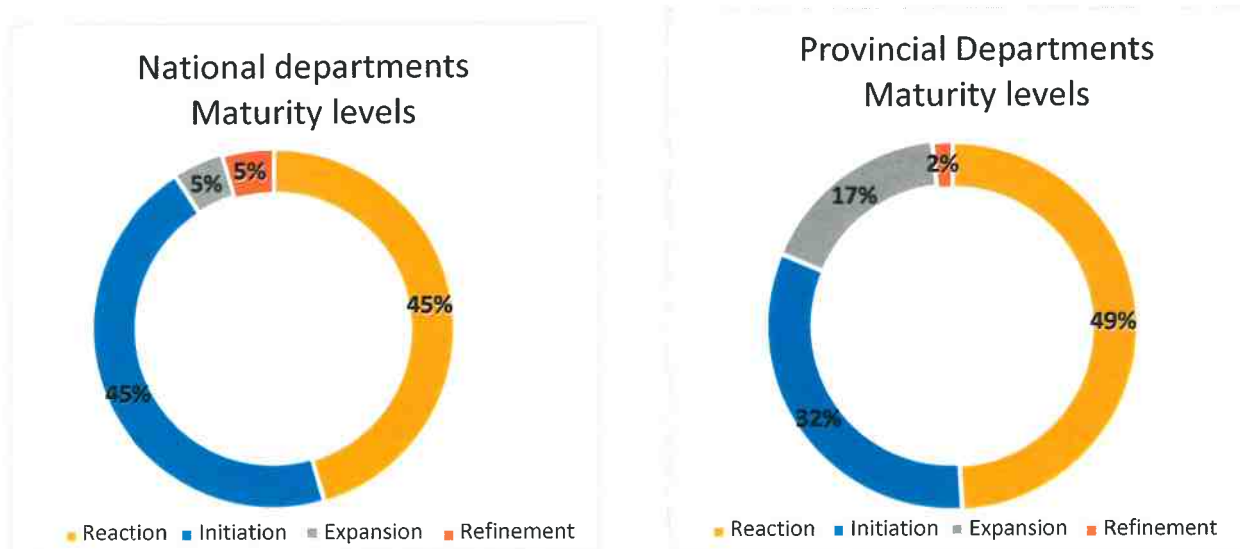


Figure 4 Knowledge Management Maturity Self-Assessment Results by March 2022

4. CONSTRAINTS OF THE METHODOLOGY ADOPTED AND CORRECTIVE MEASURE

The following were constraints on the assessment methodology adopted

- Lack of understanding in terms of the person who is supposed to be responsible for KM in the departments. This meant that in departments without a formal KM unit, the assessment was given to officials in records management or in human resources to complete, who did not have the necessary background to properly assess their departments KM maturity
- Lack of response from national and provincial departments in general and especially from some departments that have been practicing KM for some time. This impacts on the true and full picture of the status of KM in the public service especially in national departments.
- Many respondents did not understand how to complete the assessment despite the instruction and guidance given. This resulted in scoring that is not truly representative of the departmental KM Maturity levels

In an attempt to overcome the constraints on the methodology adopted, the DPSA KM unit with the technical team then implemented a workshop approach to address some of the constraints alluded to above. The workshops were also utilised as a validation method especially in the provinces due to lack of human resource capacity. This ensured that all departmental assessments submitted were also validated during these workshops.

5. VALIDATION OF THE MATURITY ASSESSMENTS

Initially the validations undertaken were face to face with individual departments or through group workshops. However, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021/22 online validation sessions were held. An initial report was sent to the Head of departments in 2021, resulted in eight more departments participating in the process. Although fewer departments participated during the respective workshops especially the national departments, the validation confirmed most of the findings on each dimension of the assessment based on the analysis undertaken with minor adjustments. A special online workshop was again held in September 2021 and was open to all KM practitioner's who had an interest to ensure that all government departments were capacitated on the KMMA tool.

The validation process also served as a benchmarking exercise in terms of the maturity level of KM in government; and provided an opportunity to identify KM best practices within the participating provinces and departments. These best practices were shared through the Public Service KM Forum as well as the Community of Practice held in November 2021.

6. SUMMARY ON OBSERVATIONS FROM THE MATURITY ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION CONDUCTED

6.1. The observations in line with the seven dimensions assessed and validated were as follows

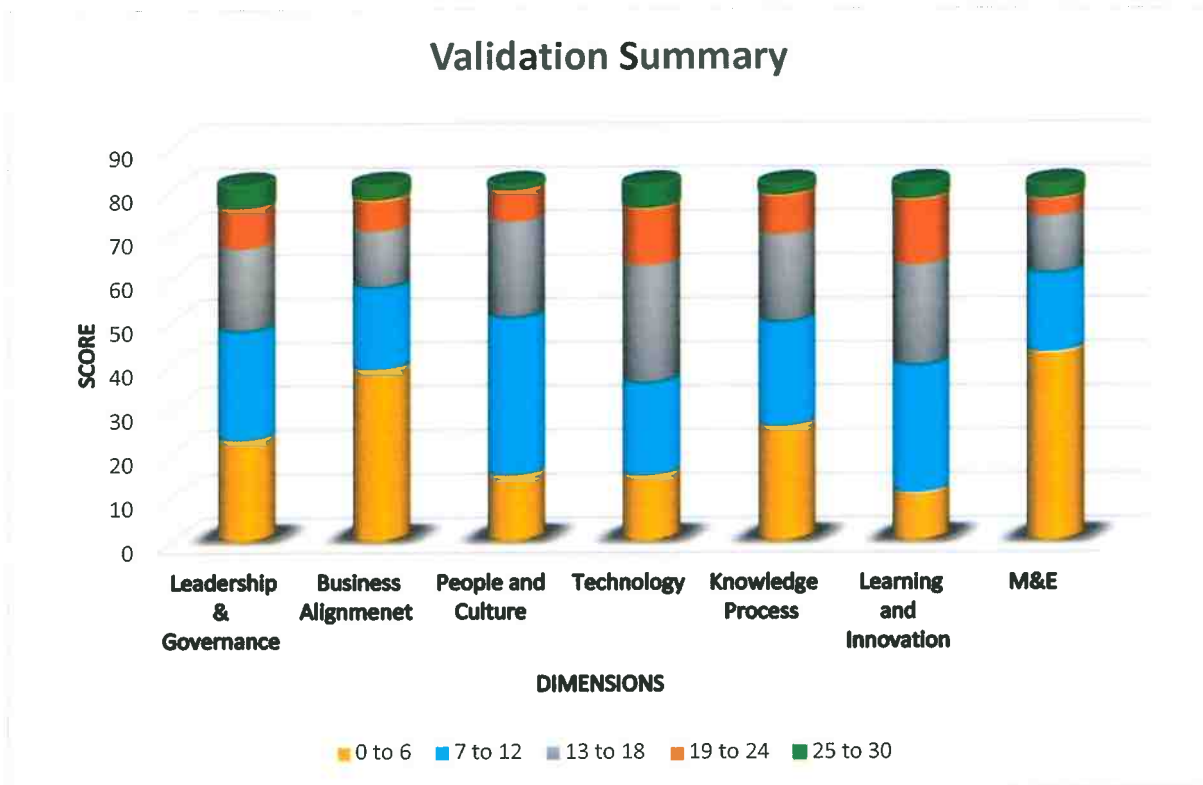


Figure 5 Summary of KM maturity dimensions assessed and validated

- a) Most departments are still in the **reaction phase** in terms of
 - Business Alignment
 - Knowledge Processes
 - Monitoring & Evaluation
- b) Most departments have reached the **initiation phase** in terms of:
 - Leadership & Governance
 - People & Culture
 - Learning & Innovation
- c) Most departments have only reached the **expansion phase**, in terms of:
 - Technology

7. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION FROM THE MATURITY ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION CONDUCTED

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maturity assessment revealed that leadership support of the effective implementation of KM is still lacking. Both in terms of senior management championing of the KM function and in terms of provision of resources for KM programmes. Where management support was weak or uninformed, the institutionalisation of KM became a challenge and the function existed only for compliance purposes thereby not delivering expected value. In addition, the function is often allocated to officials at a junior level, often with limited training or experience of the function. This reduces the strategic value of KM to the departmental decision makers. KM is not seen as a strategic support function in most departments. A lack of clear definition of KM within the context of the organisations has resulted in the function not having effective governance guidelines. The practices of KM manifest in organisational structures such as risk management, Human Resource Development and business continuity committees but is not practiced in a structured way, so as to deliver high-level insights and an integrated way of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership has a critical role in determining policies, strategies and structures that support organisational goals and objectives. It is therefore essential that KM must be led by senior managers who are able to utilise knowledge harvested in decision-making. Knowledge Management should be defined in line with the knowledge needs of the organisation to support its strategic goals. For this to deliver value, senior management needs to appreciate the value of organisational knowledge and the ability to share that knowledge with the whole organisation. As with every organizational function KM must be governed through formal policies and approved processes to guide the daily implementation thereof.

<p>working. In National departments and provinces where KM is aligned to strategic planning and M&E units, KM serves to inform organisational strategy and improve business effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government departments are failing to acknowledge the risk of loss of critical knowledge for informed decision-making. As a result, they find themselves re-inventing the wheel in some projects. This has resulted in continuously relying on external consultants to provide necessary data and information, while the knowledge needed for execution and innovation already exists within the organisation. 	
BUSINESS ALIGNMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all national and provincial departments, there is a revival of interest in the implementation of KM programmes. Unfortunately, departments have failed to create an environment where information flows freely resulting in units within departments working in silos. As a result, the collaboration efforts are still largely ad hoc, hampered by stubborn silo-type way of working which inhibits knowledge exchange amongst employees and information sharing across business units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Management should allow departments to identify lessons learned or best practices, to harvest organizational knowledge assets, as well as to promote knowledge exchange. • However, KM processes (creation, storing, classification, structuring and sharing of knowledge) must support business objectives and be embedded in business processes to ensure that knowledge sharing is not seen as a stand-alone function or administrative burden. • Business process analysis and Standard Operating procedures should identify and include points / nodes where knowledge must be harvested, shared or utilised as an output of the function.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings also indicate that the culture of knowledge sharing is also inhibited by lack of support and participation by senior managers of informal knowledge sharing platforms where they exist. As a result, knowledge sharing forums are poorly attended and are not regarded as a critical activity for officials to participate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge identified within the organization must be monitored and analysed and ultimately utilised to improve the efficiency of existing business processes. This practice will also lead to highlighting innovation opportunities..
PEOPLE AND CULTURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all national and provincial departments, there is a revival of interest in the implementation of KM programmes. Unfortunately, departments have failed to create an environment where information flows freely resulting in units within departments working in silos. As a result, the collaboration efforts are still largely ad hoc, hampered by stubborn silo-type way of working which inhibits knowledge exchange amongst employees and information sharing across business units. • The findings also indicate that the culture of knowledge sharing is also inhibited by lack of support and participation by senior managers of informal knowledge sharing platforms where they exist. As a result, knowledge sharing forums are poorly attended and are not regarded as a critical activity for officials to participate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge management is people centred. The organisational culture is key in driving the adoption of new initiatives that will assist the organisations to become more productive. The goal of KM is to enable organizational learning through knowledge sharing in supporting culture. An organizational culture that promotes the regular and secure exchange of knowledge and information encourages employees to engage in peer-to-peer learning for mutual benefit. • Incentivize knowledge sharing. The incentives offered should fit with the organisational culture e.g. Recognition shoutouts, Performance reviews and Professional development. • Allocate time and resources for informal learning to facilitate collaborative learning that will result in innovation • Knowledge champions should be authorised and empowered to support business units to implement knowledge management and to promote an integrated way of working

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of organizational knowledge should be built into employee performance agreements to enforce and reward active participation in KM. • The conducive knowledge sharing culture in all departments will promote collaborations and assist with eliminating silos.
TECHNOLOGY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings confirmed the need for government's technology to support knowledge transfer, collaboration and learning over and above the communications function. It was also evident that not all national and provincial departments were equally advanced when it came to the use of technology for KM systems. • Where dedicated KM technology and systems are not available, the available technology is not utilised effectively for knowledge storing or sharing. This is aggravated by the lack of the necessary training and financial resource. • A lack of understanding and alignment between the IT department and KM unit result in business needs for KM not being translated into innovative technology to support KM. • There are provinces like Gauteng where the use and adoption of Microsoft chatrooms as collaboration tools has advanced knowledge exchange. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology is a key pillar of Knowledge Management enablement; however, it is but one aspect of the whole knowledge system. It is necessary to balance between a focus on technology as enabler and a focus on people who are the generators and users of knowledge. • The public service needs to invest in the development of transversal ICT platforms that allow interoperability with departmental reporting systems and document sharing. • Departments should capitalise on the existing ICT platforms to support information flow and knowledge sharing. • Officials must be assisted to develop confidence in the use of ICT platforms while practicing information security protocols. •

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Smart Pens in both the Limpopo Agriculture and Rural development as well as Western Cape department of Agriculture has also been as critical technical support for information storage. 	
KNOWLEDGE PROCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge management processes allow departments to ensure that critical knowledge needed to achieve organisational goals and objectives is identified documented and easily accessible. • The findings highlighted the need for DPSA to develop a guide that will assist the practitioners in assessing the readiness of their organisations for the implementation of KM. This guide will provide a standard way of examining the respective organisations. • There is a concern raised across the departments both national and provincial in relation to the fact that knowledge management processes are not embedded in business processes, thus inhibiting the organisations from harvesting current key information and knowledge for the departmental advancement. • One of the challenges in certain departments is the assignment of the KM function to officials with who have no training or experience in implementing knowledge management. These officials are not proficient in the variety of commonly used KM processes and tools. As a result, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPSA to finalise the Strategy Assessment Guide and engage on an awareness campaign to induct KM practitioners on how to use the guide. • The departments to develop KM strategies in line with the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework. • Departments should develop documented KM processes which can be shared with the DPSA and other departments through Communities of Practice to build a strong, standardised KM practice within the Public Service.

<p>there is a need for ongoing training and development to enable them to become more accomplished in knowledge management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The validation processes highlighted that the use of evidence mapping as a tool to gather and organise information that will inform decision making has proved to be an effective way of managing critical knowledge and this has been apparent in National Treasury (NT), DPME as well in the National Department of Water and Sanitation and has delivered value to these organisations. 	
LEARNING AND INNOVATION	
<p>Learning and sharing platforms are key for capitalising on knowledge harvested. Many times, the critical organisational intellectual capital resides as tacit knowledge (insight and experience) within the experts in the department. Senior managers participation enhances the quality of knowledge shared while also setting an example to employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings showed that the participation by senior manager in knowledge sharing platforms was minimal. This is due to the lack of motivation for departmental experts or senior managers to engage fully in knowledge sharing sessions. • Therefore, informal learning is not recognised as key to professional development. As result, time and resources are not allocated to these learning activities and furthermore participation is not given recognition to the same degree as formal training which is tracked through and monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government departments to encourage participation in informal learning opportunities and create a culture of collaborative working that seek to strengthen innovative thinking. • Institutional recognition and reward must be incorporated within government departments to encourage knowledge exchange that will enhance innovative thinking and professional development of public servants. • Allocate time for informal learning in organisations that will facilitate and promote knowledge sharing as well as peer to peer learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p style="text-align: center;">MONITORING AND EVALUATION</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to develop and strengthen KM M&E at all levels under the guidance of the DPME. • While the KMMA provides a good starting point, indicators and measurements for the true impact of KM on departmental performance require much more investigation and standardisation • KM Practitioners who had M&E measurements raised the challenge that the value of knowledge management is very difficult to monitor as it is a long term process and is dependent on the active participations of individuals in the programmes in place. 	<p>The impact of KM on departmental and individual performance should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that value for the organisation is derived from the programmes in place. Departments to develop KM implementation plans indicators as well to monitor accomplishment.</p>

8. CONCLUSION

The implementation and institutionalisation of KM in the public service is a key factor in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by government. In addition, knowledge sharing and informal learning are critical drivers of the professionalisation of public servants and the creation of an ethical business environment driven by the transparency and openness that is inherent in the information and knowledge sharing processes. However, it is not sufficient to simply put policies in place and hope that people will comply. Senior leadership must not only support the function through resources but support it through active participation in the KM programs and through utilisation of the KM outputs to improve the way their departments plan and work.



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DATE: 29/4/2022