

Guide on Institutional Support

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Administration



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Government has tasked the Governance and Administration cluster of the Forum of South Africa Directors-General (FOSAD) and Cabinet with the responsibility for driving initiatives that will ensure accelerated and integrated service delivery by public sector institutions.
- 1.2 To this end the cluster considered different means by which acceleration and integration of service delivery could occur. The comprehensive program to improve the performance of the state is underpinned by four strategic focus areas:

Streamlining the systems and processes of the machinery of state to enable better alignment of resources and capability with national priorities.

Integrating service delivery mechanisms and capacity to provide responsive, citizen-centered, service delivery .

Directly combating poor performance, corruption and institutional inefficiency.

Contributing to governance improvements and capacity building beyond South Africa, within the context of NEPAD.

- 1.3 Sound progress has been made with the implementation of the different strategies, although there is recognition by the different task teams to continuously improve and intensify efforts. In terms of providing specific institutional support to assist departments that experience capacity constraints, the following became evident:

Firstly there is a need to clarify the underlying reasons or rationale for such support. There are some stakeholders that believe that there is no need for support teams to assist departments. There is also a view that believes that if delivery fails in, for example, a provincial department of Education, then the national department of Education should take responsibility and ensure that support is provided to address the service delivery constraints.

Secondly, there is a need to have guidelines for support teams to ensure that there is uniformity and guidance. In the absence of which, there is uncertainty regarding the roles of the different national departments. Institutional support could impact on the responsibility and accountability as per the Public Service Act (PSA) and the Public Finance Management (PFMA).

- 1.4 This document aims to clarify the need for support and provide guidelines on the work of support teams.

2. RATIONALE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Government continuously strives to improve service delivery in order to meet its constitutional obligations and electoral mandate. Since the election of the first democratic government in 1994, huge improvements in service delivery are evident as indicated in various reports¹. Government has been successful in broadening access to services and ensuring equity in service delivery (more services available to all citizens).
- 2.2 Service delivery failure is more evident at the primary point of interface between the government administration and its citizens, namely front line service delivery institutions e.g. hospitals, clinics, schools, police stations, vehicle licensing offices, housing departments, home affairs office, etc. It is very evident that there is still a huge need to improve and broaden service delivery at front line service delivery institutions. The ten-year review report of government also highlighted the need to improve the performance of the public service.
- 2.3 The perception of government and its performance by citizens is shaped in fundamental ways by the quality of and access to service delivery at the front line service delivery units. It must be accepted that for some citizens, their experiences at service delivery institutions have left a lot to be desired. Citizens do not necessarily distinguish between spheres of government or between different government role players that have specific roles to fulfill within the service delivery chain.

ROLE PLAYERS

- 2.4 The vision of Government, in terms of the electoral mandate and the strategic objectives for the next five years, should be stated in the Medium Term Strategic Framework of Government and should be aligned to the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. In terms of Section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), there are three spheres of Government that jointly take responsibility and accountability for the rendering of services to the citizens.
- 2.5 Although the spheres are distinct, they have collaborative roles to fulfill which make them interdependent and interrelated to each other. The principles of co-operative governance require that the three spheres must respect the constitutional status, institutions, powers and

¹ For achievement of outcomes, refer for example to the Poverty and Inequality Report, various public opinion polls such as the National Public Opinion of the Human Sciences Research Council, Household Survey reports of Statistics South Africa, the Human Rights Commission's Reports. The Ten Year Review Report.

functions of government in the other spheres and co-operate with each other in mutual trust and good faith by assisting and supporting one another. The Constitution also makes provision for the spheres to use legislation and other measures of support to strengthen the capacity of each other to manage affairs, exercise powers and perform functions.

- 2.6 Policy intentions are legislated in different legislation and resolutions, mainly in terms of two dimensions, namely:

Policy frameworks that guide service delivery. These are more specific to a particular service or sector.

Policy frameworks that guide government operations. These are usually transversal and applicable to the majority of government departments and in some cases also to other public sector institutions such as Public Entities.

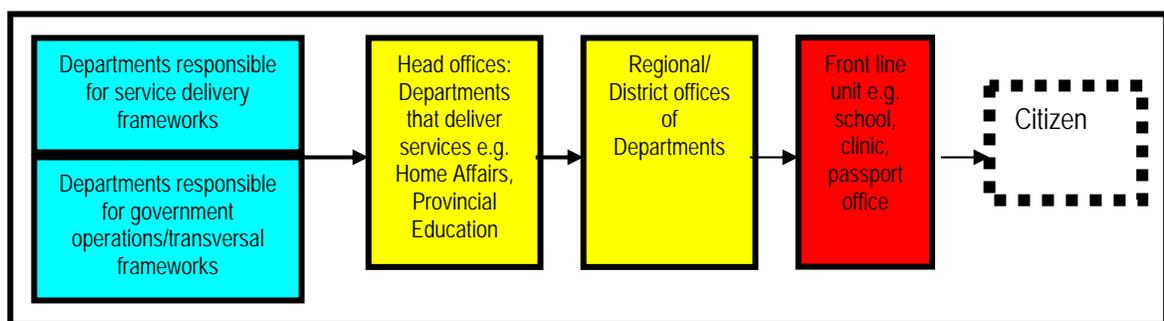
- 2.7 For example in terms of the health service delivery framework, there is a national white paper for the provision of health services, national legislation and regulations. Each province has provincial health legislation and regulations in line with the national white paper and each local government will have its own policies on how to implement the service delivery framework mainly legislated through the municipal codes (by-laws).
- 2.8 In essence, there are not major differences between the service delivery policy frameworks of the different provinces and local governments, although there is still a need to improve the integrated planning processes. Provincial priorities are supposed to be stated in terms of the provincial growth and development strategy and plan; and local government priorities are supposed to be stated in terms of integrated development plans (these should link to the provincial growth and development strategy and plan). National line departments provide overall strategic direction, but powers and authority for implementation are vested with service delivery departments. If line departments are weak, it impacts directly on provincial line departments and local governments.
- 2.9 The transversal frameworks that guide government operations are determined mainly by national departments such as National Treasury, DPLG and DPSA. Although there are differences between the frameworks of National-, Provincial Departments and Local Governments, the essence of the frameworks is the same, namely to promote sound, effective, efficient, and transparent financial, procurement; human resources; information resources, and public sector management.

- 2.10 In provinces the Office of the Premiers, Provincial Treasuries and Provincial Local Government departments provide overall strategic direction², but powers and authority to implement is vested with service delivery departments.
- 2.11 The latter three provincial departments play a very key role in a province. In provinces where they fail to fulfill their roles or where they are weak, it impacts directly on the ability of the different head offices of the line departments in the province and/or local governments to fulfill their role. These offices should provide strategic guidance, facilitate delivery, set adequate provincial frameworks and ensure rigorous monitoring.
- 2.12 There should also be regular and close interaction between the national policy departments and their provincial counterparts. National Treasury has formalised their relationship with the Provincial Treasuries and through close interaction, major investments in capacity building, analyses and rigorous monitoring, successes are evident.

SERVICE DELIVERY CHAIN

- 2.13 The majority of service delivery chains go beyond departmental boundaries, across spheres of government, and even to non-government actors. There are the front line service delivery units, where services are delivered and the support offices (referred to as the back offices) that ensure that all planning and support functions are performed effectively. In order for the front line service delivery units to be effective and efficient, there is need for sound transversal and service delivery frameworks, as well as sufficient back office support e.g. a budget, sufficiently trained staff, infrastructure, adequate supplies, etc. Figure 1 below provides a diagrammatic illustration of the service delivery chain.

Figure 1: Service Delivery chain



² In terms of Section 7 of the PSA, the Office of the Premier is responsible for strategic guidance to all provincial departments in terms of public service transformation and reform, human resources management, labour relations, functions and structures, information management and –technology. This role has also been expanded to include support and guidance to local government. The Office of the Premier is the centre of Government in a Province.

WHY DOES SERVICE DELIVERY FAIL?

- 2.15 Problems with the rendering of services are not restricted or limited to only one specific sphere of government, for example provincial governments or one sector, for example Education. There are national departments, provincial departments and local governments that find it difficult to perform their mandate. There are however provinces where more provincial departments and/or local governments tend to experience capacity constraints to deliver services compared to others. Often the reasons why a front line service delivery office e.g. a clinic is failing to render services are beyond the powers and authority of clinic supervisors or sub district managers to address. The underlying causes may be in the district head office of the department, or even in the national line department.
- 2.16 Whilst recognising that the reasons why service delivery fails should not be generalised as there is great heterogeneity within service delivery institutions, sectors, departments and across geographical areas, the main reasons why service delivery fails are summarised in TABLE 1 below³ :

TABLE 1: MAIN REASONS FOR FAILURE TO DELIVER SERVICES

<p><i>Inadequate Management & leadership capacity (this includes political and administrative leadership).</i></p> <p><i>Weak Human resources planning, management and development</i></p> <p><i>Inadequate financial and supply chain management (procurement)</i></p> <p><i>Absence of basic and sound administration</i></p> <p><i>Lack of ability to plan pro-actively and execute service delivery in line with national policy framework by all key role-players across departments, sectors and spheres and limited scope for influencing policy changes</i></p>

³ This is evident from the Presidential Review Report, the Public Service Review Report, the Audit Report, and the Interim Management Team Reports.

Inadequate understanding of how implementation happens and insufficient time/effort to develop capacity⁴ e.g., some policy decisions are un-funded mandates and/or policy makers did not consider the full practical impact of decisions taken

Monitoring and reporting at the lower levels of service delivery (mainly front line service delivery units) is not completed and scrutinised rigorously

Key role players do not fulfill their role and mandate

2.17 The above reasons seem to be impacting on service delivery in two different ways:

Firstly, there is non-compliance to service delivery and government operations frameworks. This widens the gap between policies and implementation. Failure to comply also impacts on the ability of an institution to at a later stage comply with further or new policies. For example, departments that did not develop human resource plans (requirement as per Public Service Regulations, 2001) struggled to implement the agreement on the restructuring of the public service (Resolution 7).

Secondly, the pace of broadening access to and quality of services is negatively affected.

2.18 In order to address the above, it is critical that support is implemented to close the gap between the expected or required scenario versus current service delivery. Depending on the type of constraints being experienced by departments a decision can be taken on whether multi disciplinary teams or only SMS managers/staff from one particular department should be deployed to support in service delivery. However, it is often not possible for only one department to address the issues on their own and multi sectoral teams are required to view the different service blockages across sectors and across spheres. Many, if not all of the problems being experienced cannot be addressed in isolation or without the full participation and support of all key role-players.

2.19 Taking into consideration the capacity constraints, it is clear that the constraints or problems may not be resolved easily only by managers within the different service delivery units or managers operating in one sphere of government. There is often a need to have internal consulting capacity that is constituted of all the different/relevant spheres of

⁴ It is evident that since the implementation the PFMA, financial management and reporting has improved substantially. There are also, through the appointment of Chief Financial Officers and accountants, huge improvements, in capacity to manage finances. This capacity building commenced in 1999, but is still ongoing in terms of training, regular Chief Financial Officer Meetings, etc. The lesson learnt from this is not new, namely to develop sustainable capacity takes time and dedicated effort driven by a multiplicity of stakeholders.

government and sectors in order to address capacity constraints or problems to adhere to policy and service delivery frameworks.

- 2.20 Such a team will also have more influence in terms of changing policies or influencing key role-players to work together and will also strengthen weak or inadequate management. Furthermore, it will provide more opportunities for feedback to policy makers in cases where compliance is impossible or unrealistic. However, the composition of teams must depend on the outcome of the problem analysis (refer to phased approach - figure 2). This will determine the areas in which support is required, the numbers and roles of such managers. If the composition of outside teams is decided after the problem analysis has been conducted, departmental managers will feel less apprehensive for assistance and more comfortable in the work arrangements.

3. PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Institutional support teams should be appointed for Departments which are identified as high risk ones following early warning reports or a directive/request by the Executive. Some Departments might only require limited short term support, whilst others might require longer term major support. The DPSA should report on these departments on a regular basis using information from the Public Management Watch.
- 3.2 Before a support strategy is implemented, it must be approved by the relevant authority that directed/requested the support e.g. a Provincial Executive Committee or National Cabinet, etc. The learning generated and products delivered are shared with all departments.
- 3.3 Support will have increased the success ratio if the following departure points are followed :
- It is viewed holistically from the point of policy decision to the point where citizens receive a service.
 - There is a proper multi-sectoral problem analysis of which areas in the service delivery chain are the reasons why service delivery failed.
 - Teams must be selected based on the outcome of the problem analysis in terms of the kind of skills being required, which projects they should be assigned to and the roles that they should fulfill.
 - Service delivery at the front line offices and the back offices are not separated. In fact, the two dimensions are interrelated and interdependent and gaps in any one of the dimensions reflect directly on the ability of the other to function effectively and efficiently.

- When service delivery is failing and rapid support is required, a team that consists of expertise of central and line government departments, as well as experts from other provinces is required. In practice, a lot of collaboration already exists between the respective departments and specific projects.
- A phased approach with an adequate problem analysis will identify the constraints up front. This analysis must be under the leadership of the support team, but managers of the recipient department must participate and provide information.
- In order to support implementation and improve monitoring, adequate project management office support should be established in the recipient institution.
- Implementation and sustainability need time and dedicated effort driven by officials from the recipient institutions and the members of the support team.
- Each support project must, where possible, include quick wins to ensure that sufficient momentum is sustained.
- A senior manager of the recipient institution (preferably the Accounting Officer or HOD) must drive the support. However, if it is evident from the problem analysis phase that the existing leadership cannot drive change or is resisting the changes, the responsibility must be allocated to a different leader/manager. The latter could be selected as part of the support team responsible for Phase 2, or there can be steps taken to ensure a systematic renewal of leadership and management in the recipient institution.
- The political sponsor for support plans should ideally be the relevant authority that is politically accountable and responsible for the recipient institution. There must be regular interaction between the support team and the political sponsor to ensure that adequate and regular progress is reported and that problems being experienced are addressed in a pro-active manner.
- Depending on the nature of assistance required, teams should be based for a long term period at the recipient department.
- Teams should function within the spirit of co-operative governance – supporting each other and working together to achieve success. Accountability and responsibilities should continue to be vested in the recipient institution. Only in cases where co-operation cannot be obtained or serious failure in service delivery is evident, consideration should be given to legalise support.
- The design of support plans must take into consideration:
 - the political context,
 - legal status,

- budgetary requirements, and
 - levels of national participation and skills requirements.
- The development of support plans must form an integral part of the strategic plans of the department and therefore be included in the budget of the department.
 - The entry and exist strategy of teams must be formalised in writing and approved by the recipient department, before any deployment of SMS members/other staff is approved by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration.

APPROACH

- 3.4 Too often government attempts to develop and support service delivery institutions without a clear understanding of the problems causing the breakdown in service delivery or not having multi-sectoral teams that could concentrate on their areas of expertise. Another major failure of teams is to take a short-term view. Institutional support can only be successful if implementation and sustainability take place within a two to three year cycle, although quick wins and short term evidence of improvements are critical.
- 3.5 It is recognised from previous projects that support requires two to three years to see the achievement of the desired outcomes. The challenge of support is not only to design and implement changes, but to sustain the implementation successes and extend the stability and integrity achieved to all levels of service delivery institutions in a department.
- 3.6 A phased approach with clear time frames is recommended for institutional support :

Phase I should entail an analysis of the underlying reasons for service delivery failure and how these could be addressed⁵. Phase I should be implemented within 8 weeks (two months) from the date on which the team was deployed to the department.

Phase II should entail the development of a business case or support plan. This plan must include outputs, outcomes, resources and responsibilities. The business case or support plan must form an integral part of the strategic plan and operational plans of the Department. Phase II must be completed within 4 weeks (one month) from the date on which the team was deployed to the department.

Phase III should entail implementation and development of sustainable capacity. This should be over a two to three year period depending on the nature of the business case or support plan. Continuous and rigorous monitoring must form part of Phase III to track performance and to review learning.

⁵ If institutions have already completed such a scoping, it is not necessary to undertake further analysis, provided all issues that should be addressed have been identified.

3.7 The above phases are not necessarily required for all support being provided. For example where a problem diagnosis has already been completed and a support strategy has been developed, it does not mean that this phase must be repeated. The detailed actions in terms of each phase are diagrammatically illustrated in FIGURE 2 below.

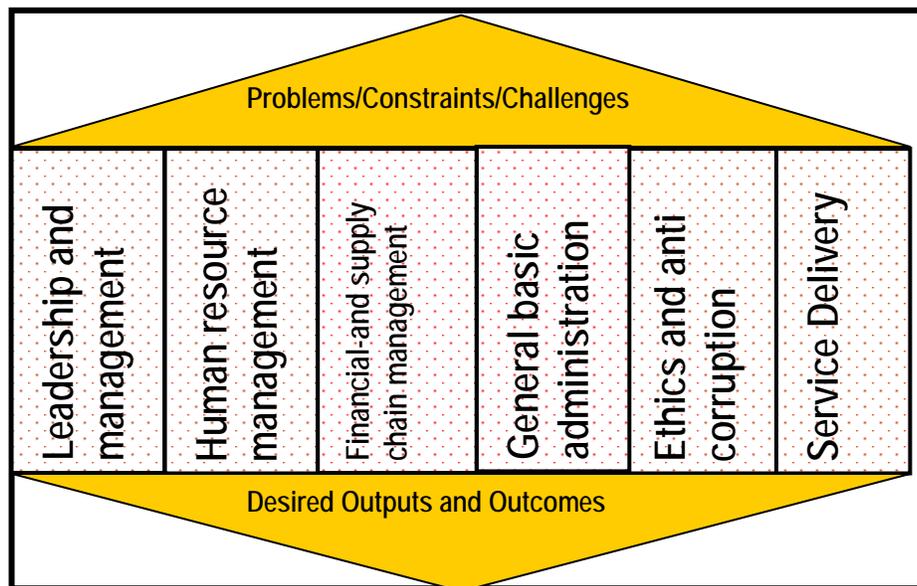
FIGURE 2: PHASED APPROACH FOR SUPPORT

<u>Phase 1: Problem analysis</u>	<u>Phase 2: Business case</u>	<u>Phase 3: Implementation</u>
<p>Appoint problem analysis team</p> <p>Undertake problem analysis and determine support strategy. Determine the kind of skills required to implement the support strategy</p> <p>Competency assessments of all senior managers with recommendations</p> <p>Submit report to relevant political authority with recommendations on support required (support strategy)</p> <p>Political authority takes decision on type of support to be implemented following provisions in the Constitution</p>	<p>Appoint, design an implementation team based on requirements in the support strategy.</p> <p>Conduct detailed business case – must include resources, outputs, outcomes, responsibilities, capacity building strategy.</p> <p>Submit to relevant political authority for approval</p> <p>Incorporate business case with strategic and operational plans and budget</p> <p>Formalise implementation team with relevant political authority</p>	<p>Implement over two-year period – can include actions being implemented across spheres and/or departmental boundaries</p> <p>Submit quarterly progress reports to relevant political authority</p> <p>Develop sustained capacity over two – three-year period</p> <p>Ensuring ongoing monitoring and track performance</p>

3.8 Given the reasons listed in Table 1 (point 2.17), it is recommended that six areas be assessed in terms of the problem analysis, as indicated below. However, the selection of the areas to be included in the problem analysis should be based on the main reasons why service delivery failed, thus it is not required to assess all six areas. Service delivery must inter alia include issues around infrastructure requirements, information technology and business process flows.

3.9 FIGURE 3 below indicates the six key areas.

Figure 3: SIX focus areas of institutional support teams



4. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MODEL

4.1 Based on the problem analysis and business case, a recommendation must be made to the relevant political authority regarding the type of support model that should be considered. The relevant political authority must approve the type of support being offered before implementation commences. This will include approval on the entry and exit strategy of the support team, the duration for redeployment/secondment and performance management issues.

4.2 It is essential that sound inter and intra governmental relations be promoted. Thus, the need to apply Section 100 or 139 of the Constitution should only be considered in very serious cases.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that most support will be implemented in terms of the spirit of co-operative governance. In cases where support is implemented in provinces and local government, it is critical that key departments such as Provincial Treasuries, Provincial Local Government departments and Offices of the Premier are an integral part of the support. If required, the support plan should include the strengthening of these departments if they are not fulfilling their roles and mandate.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.4 The management arrangements would depend to a large degree on the type of support model being followed. However, the following basic guidelines will apply:
- Accounting officers should remain responsible and accountable in terms of the different legislation (i.e. Public Service Act, Public Finance Management Act, Local Government Municipal Systems Act and Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act.). Only in cases where the problem analysis indicated possible involvement in fraud, corruption or irregular practices, or serious incapacity, consideration should be given to move these managers from their posts before the support commences.
 - The Political Authority and managers of the recipient institution must be fully supportive and co-operate to such an extent that the proposals and recommendations of the support strategy supported by outside managers is fully implemented.
 - Accounting officers and other senior managers must undertake to work with the 'outside' team and ensure that they form part of management meetings including the decision making process.
 - Consensus about resource requirements especially the budget and its source should be agreed upon up-front to avoid delays in the implementation of turnaround plans. Such prior consideration will give the team a sense of direction e.g. will the receiving departments/province be able to fund the support, if not, National Treasury should be approached or other funding mechanisms like conditional grants, re-engineering fund, etc. be considered.

COMPOSITION OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS

- 4.5 Depending on the outcome of the design phase, members will be appointed in terms of the required areas that need attention. DPSA will facilitate the appointment of teams through different vehicles, e.g. internal consultants, managers from SMS database, etc. Over time, it is envisaged that the DPSA will establish a central pool of experienced managers for this purpose.

- 4.6 It will be advisable for the initial design team to include representatives from all key departments that could support the recipient department. It must be recognised that managers from national departments do not necessarily understand the service delivery environment within which provincial or regional offices of national departments must deliver. Thus teams must also include managers from other provincial departments and/or municipalities.
- 4.7 The team composition to assist departments with implementation of the support strategies can only be selected and finalised once the business plans have been finalised. Thus, there could be two different teams, one that undertakes the analysis and another that implements the support strategy. In some cases larger teams might be required whilst in other cases only one or two SMS members might be sufficient to provide assistance.
- 4.8 The duration of deployment or secondment will depend on the type of support that will be implemented. However, in cases where major support is required, members must be re-deployed for a long term period. In terms of SMS staff, re-deployment will be in terms of Chapter 4 of the Public Service Regulations whereby SMS members are managed as a public service wide pool of scarce resources to be utilised in the best interests of the public service. In terms of non-SMS staff, redeployment will be done in terms of the Public Service Act.
- 4.9 Team members will not be required to relocate unless they indicate such preference. In the selection of team members, consideration must be given to the personal circumstances of team members. It will be unwise to re-deploy a public servant if the particular individual is not interested in such deployment or experiences personal difficulties.
- 4.10 The Minister for the Public Service and Administration will approve secondments or deployments of public servants (SMS and others). The DPSA will make available a policy framework on how the performance of deployed or seconded public servants will be managed.
- 4.11 Team members should be compensated for normal subsistence and travel expenses e.g. parking of car at airport, laundry, and meals.
- 4.12 The criteria for selecting teams should not be based on representing a line or a central department. It should be based on the kind of knowledge, skills and competencies that are required from support challenges.
- 4.13 The selection of teams must be based on the outcome of the problem analysis, for example if there are more weaknesses in terms of financial resource management, there should be more managers from National Treasury and/or Provincial Treasuries.
- 4.14 Private sector consultants cannot be members on support teams except if they are appointed on a contract fixed (1 - 5 year contracts) in line with the Public Service Regulations. Consultants can however be appointed to focus on specific deliverables

required in the support plan or strategy, if adequate capacity does not exist in the Department.

- 4.15 A dedicated project/programme management capacity must be established in the recipient Department to ensure sufficient management of and support for the implementation of the support strategy. For this purpose private sector consultants on short-term contracts could be considered. The latter could also be appointed to fulfill the role of project management and monitoring.
- 4.16 There must only be one political champion and a administrative one driving the achievement of the support in order to promote sound reporting lines and to fast track decision making.

REPORTING

- 4.17 Reports on progress must be submitted to the relevant political authority. Each support plan must include a protocol to clarify reporting arrangements.
- 4.18 The political sponsor must report progress to the relevant higher political authority e.g. a National Minister or a Premier.

RESOURCING

- 4.19 Resourcing is critical. It is desirable that the support plan forms an integral part of the strategic plan of the recipient institution. This will imply that the funding is included in the budget of the recipient institution.
- 4.20 However, in cases where projects cannot be funded within the budget of the recipient institution or there is a need to immediately implement projects that cannot be funded through re-prioritization of the existing budget, a written submission must be made to the Minister for Finance.
- 4.21 Where possible the team members must be assigned offices and equipment in the office building of the recipient department.