

Presentation to the International Conference on “National Evaluation Capacities” to be held in Casablanca, Morocco, on 15 to 17 December 2009

Current Evaluation practices of public policies at the national level: governance, independence and credibility.

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1. Overview of the evaluation effort

1.1 Introduction

The primary monitoring and evaluation (M&E) driver in South Africa is the Public Service Commission (PSC). It was established in terms of the Constitution¹ as a Chapter 10 body, set up as an institution of democracy to “investigate, monitor and evaluate” public administration without “fear, favor or prejudice”. An advantage of being independent and falling outside the Executive is that it has the latitude to engage across the socio-economic and political spectrum, which it does with ease, as it is perceived as independent and impartial. Given that independence is critical for M&E, the location issue is important, as is the fact that it reports to and is accountable directly to Parliament. It has been able to produce reports critical of the Public Service, which employs 1,1 million public servants, and to-date has not had its work censored by the Executive. Given its location, it has also managed to forge networks and establish partnerships that have enhanced transparency and accountability of the Public Service in South Africa.

1.2 Historic evolution

The original Public Service Commission, which was established in 1912, was fashioned on the British Civil Service Commission. Its primary function was to prevent favouritism in the appointment of public servants. It burgeoned by the 1980s into a vast and powerful statutory body, which ostensibly was apolitical, but in reality played a role in perpetuating the apartheid regime. With the new

¹ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108, 1996.

Constitution, the PSC was re-established as one of the institutions supporting constitutional democracy. It had multiple mandates, and between 1994 and 1996 changed from an executive policy making and implementing body to focus exclusively on investigating, monitoring and evaluating public administration. With this new mandate, it has become the central M&E player in the country and has also provided support and leadership for the development of M&E at the regional and continental level. Today, it is different from its counterparts in most parts of the world where the focus remains on administrative issues; the PSC of South Africa has embraced and developed its mandate to become a key player in M&E.

1.3 Institutional design and its impact on M&E decision-making process

The PSC (www.psc.gov.za) is structured whereby it has a Board (Commissioners appointed by the President of the country, 9 of whom are based in the 9 provinces, and who may serve a maximum of 2 renewable terms of 5 years each) supported by an Office (public servants appointed in terms of the Public Service Act²). It means that there is adequate capacity within the organisation to engage with the various legislatures, and also the skills to produce the type of networking with stakeholders mentioned. In terms of decision-making, the PSC acts as one, and whilst there is space for provincially specific research, the production of research and decisions are of a unified institution.

The institutional design has not impeded the speed of its work, and by having provincially-based Commissioners, there is the ability to unblock problems at that level. The question of how findings are presented, after they have been engaged with and produced by the PSC, and acted upon is being addressed on an on-going basis by customising approaches that seek to get the most influence in the shortest period of time. (See Appendix D for Organogram)

2. Nature of Evaluation and Scope

The PSC implements different M&E systems, each with a different purpose in mind, and relevant protocol. The systems, either individually or collectively seek to achieve the following:

- Focus on accountability: In this case the bias is towards measuring compliance with government regulation and policies, and where reporting takes the form of identifying deviation from norms, rating departments in terms of bands that are judgementally based (satisfactory, unsatisfactory), and working with other oversight or M&E bodies such as the

² Public Service Act , 1994

Auditor-General (AG). In this focal area work tends to carry a punitive outcome if there is non-compliance.

- Focus on transparency: Given the secretive nature of the apartheid Public Service, the Constitution of the country behoves government to operate in a transparent manner. The work of the PSC has produced an unprecedented level of transparency around the operations of government over the past decade. Whilst transparency on its own does not necessarily translate into higher accountability, it does feed into civil society and provides critical information for it to hold government accountable and to exercise democratic rights. Most of the PSC reports provide very specific performance information on different components of government, making it easy to identify where problems lie.
- Focus on enlightenment: Through the holding of media briefings, seminars, TV and radio shows, roundtables and guest lectures on the work of the PSC, the knowledge base of the public service in South Africa has been improved. Thus far many conferences with specialised sectors have been held, eg organised labour (Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Committee, 2007), the M&E sector (South African M&E Conference 2007 & 2009), to name a few, which have brought together stakeholders to engage on these matters.

More specifically, the products target different tiers of society and decision-making levels within government.

Scale	Event/Activity	Envisaged outcome
Continental/International	<p>Formation of the association of African Public Service Commissions in Africa (AAPSCOMS)</p> <p>Co-Hosted the 3rd African Evaluation Association (AFREA) Conference in 2004</p>	<p>Increased transparency and accountability around governance in Africa. This will create an enabling environment for M&E, which is also developing on the continent.</p> <p>Helped improve M&E capacity in Africa, drew participants from 61 countries to engage on the relationship between evaluation, development and democracy.</p>

Paper presented: International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity: 13-15 December 2009, Cassablanca, Morocco 3

	Participate in the training programme of the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET).	Share SA experiences with the international community, enhance own practices.
Societal	National Anti-Corruption Hotline, allows citizens to complain about service delivery. Measurement of service delivery.	Helps monitor the connection between government and people, policy and practice. Helps to establish the adherence to the Batho Pele principles.
Departmental	Implementation of the Transversal Public Service M&E System	Management advice on the extent to which the values and principles of public administration (collective definition of good governance) is being met. Through these assessments elements of good governance may be prioritised.
Individual	Management of the evaluations of Heads of Department	By focusing on the highest level of leadership, performance management is driven through the public service.

More details are provided on two of the systems, the Transversal Public Service M&E System and Citizen Satisfaction surveys, as these are systems which engage with management of departments and the citizens they serve.

2.1 *Implementation of the Transversal Public Service M&E System*

The PSC has designed a good governance M&E system, which assesses departmental performance across the 9 Constitutional values ³and principles for public administration. The system,

³ 9 principles for public administration prescribed in Chapter 10, Section 195 (1) of the Constitution of the RSA.

implemented since 2001, has thus far seen over 100 departments assessed. For each of the principles and values, an indicator(s) has/have been chosen and assessment takes place according to verifiable standards. Scores are awarded, recommendations are made and tracked. The process for implementation seeks to ensure buy-in to the process, and takes approximately three months. An important phase is the presenting of the draft report, which is presented to the top management of the department, where management engages with interim findings, and where the department is given 10 days to make written submissions to the PSC, which may be considered in reviewing the draft score. Once the report is finalised, the department is given 6 months to implement recommendations, and the implementation thereof is reported on to relevant political and administrative structures.

The system is now well-known, and has worked by reinforcing other M&E work, as it also draws on existing evaluations, such as that of the Auditor-General. Through a mutually reinforcing process, the question of performance management is entrenched. The PSC has noted that at an aggregated level, the results over time have improved slowly in terms of compliance. However, the pattern has been uneven, and the uptake on the initial set of recommendations has in many cases been poor, resulting in repeated poor assessments for several departments. Given that the system has not changed significantly over time, it is concerning that departments continue to score poorly in some of the areas critical to good governance, such as poor public participation and inadequate decision-making processes, to name but a few. It may also be that the turnover in leadership at the management level contributes to the limited improvements that have been seen.

2.2 Citizen M&E

The PSC has through announced and unannounced inspections tested the extent to which public services are provided according to the Batho Pele (people first) standards. These are 8 standards which stipulate how government departments should operate, and what citizens can expect of them. Several surveys have been conducted, and specific investigations result in reports presented to the political leadership for action. Last year the focus was on police stations, and this year it was on clinics. These reports provide an objective assessment of services provided, and through the tracking of the implementation of the recommendations, one can see whether this form of M&E is delivering the expected results.

In using this embracing approach, it has managed to tap into the potential of stakeholders and role-players in the country, who possess insights and expertise that can be harnessed to help government improve. Importantly, such an approach has also given the institution more credibility and respect, elements which are important when it comes to producing and presenting evaluation findings.

3. Primary Purpose

The main purpose of the M&E of the PSC has been to improve transparency and accountability, and instil a performance ethos. M&E makes an important contribution to the reform and modernisation process of government in South Africa. Apart from its very important contribution to democracy, whereby it provides previously unknown government performance information to citizens, and helps in increasing the levels of transparency and accountability of the Democratic State. It has also:

- Improved the receptiveness of government to being measured, which means that it has to review how it works and as such, has instilled a performance ethos within departments. The guidelines by the National Treasury (NT), the Auditor-General (AG) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), in particular with regards to planning and reporting, has for the first time quantified what needs to be done, with what resources.
- There is a greater results-based orientation now than was the case previously. Reports such as the Annual Reports of departments in the past were largely related to activities. The current format of the Annual Report assists with the M&E of the department, as it is designed to be indicator-based.

4. The Use of Information produced by

The PSC has translated and concretised the Constitutional Values and Principles into interventions and products, which have been directed to different client bases. These include:

- Parliament, the legislature and its committees – carry out political oversight based on the evidence gathered from our reports which also influences legislation.
- Political and administrative heads of government departments – utilize our reports as they are empowered to address areas of concern identified through monitoring and evaluation and therefore improve governance.

Paper presented: International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity: 13-15 December 2009, Cassablanca, Morocco 6

The PSC's management of the HoD evaluation framework, its advice on performance agreements and its evaluation of leadership practices through the key performance area Leadership and Performance Improvement contributes to the achievement of a high standard of public leadership. The outcomes achieved are-

- Effective linkage of strategic objectives with agreed individual performance outcomes;
 - Improved integrity amongst the Public Service leadership;
 - Rewards for good performance and corrective actions for poor performance amongst HoDs; and
 - Improved levels of individual and institutional performance.
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- Civil society, through its engagement via conferences, seminars etc.
 - The academic sector, by presenting papers, soliciting for critical comment on reports (e.g. the State of the Public Service roundtables)
 - Organised labour, by co-hosting the Public Sector Co-ordinating Bargaining Chamber (PSCBC) conference.
 - The M&E community, by co-hosting the AFrEA 2004 event, subsequent support to AFrEA, and the co-hosting of the SAMEA 2007 & 2009 biennial conferences.
 - Continental associations set up to promote good governance. It helped form the Association of African Public Service Commissions (AAPSCOMS), a body meant to support good governance in Africa.
 - The media, through regular press briefing on its reports and findings.

This indicates an appreciation of the importance of building strategic alliances, and engaging with a cross-section of society. It has been used as a means to establish its own identity and credibility, and by being respected across all sectors of a diverse society, it is able to capitalise on the unique perspectives each sector/body brings, and thus provide more incisive assessments and advice. The PSC sees engagement, not detachment, as being a way to influence decision-making and public policy, and has built a track record to attest to the value of such a decision.

5. Technical Expertise and know-how

The PSC is now moving into a phase where it will more directly support the M&E capacity-building initiatives in the country. This will take the form of producing and presenting its M&E guides, and in general providing a much needed support for emerging M&E practitioners who have been appointed in many departments. It seeks to do this in a collaborative programme with the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA).

It also believes that holding more sector or province specific events on M&E will be a way to build M&E capacity in the provinces. M&E is currently concentrated at the national level, which is an anomaly given that most of the departments and population are not. Through the more effective synergy between SAMEA and the PSC offices, whereby communities of practice flourish at the provincial and district level, this necessary change can occur.

The link takes place more by agreement and convention, than on a more formal basis. In terms of the work undertaken, the PSC augments its research with that of the NT and AG. Thus, the State of the Public Service (SOPS) reports are heavily referenced with work from these institutions. It also draws on research undertaken on aspects by research units in the country and abroad, and attempts to avoid duplication of effort. It participates in initiatives led by the Presidency from the Ministry for M&E, and works with all those involved in M&E in the country. Through its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SAMEA, and as a follow-up to the SAMEA 2009 conference, it will engage more directly with the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and research sector, perhaps coming up with an evaluation programme that sees the harmonising of M&E and maximising of evaluation capacity that exists. This remains work in progress. There is no overt competition to the work of the PSC from the M&E sectors in the country, and this may be due to the history of co-operation that has been established. As we not only do M&E, but also support the community of practitioners, in doing so we are able to generate contextually specific methodologies.

****Paper prepared by Ms CB Julie with the support of the Public Service Commission M&E Unit.***

*Paper presented: International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity: 13-15 December 2009,
Cassablanca, Morocco 8*

**APPENDIX A: PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSVERSAL M&E SYSTEM:
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND APPLICABLE POLICIES / REGULATIONS**

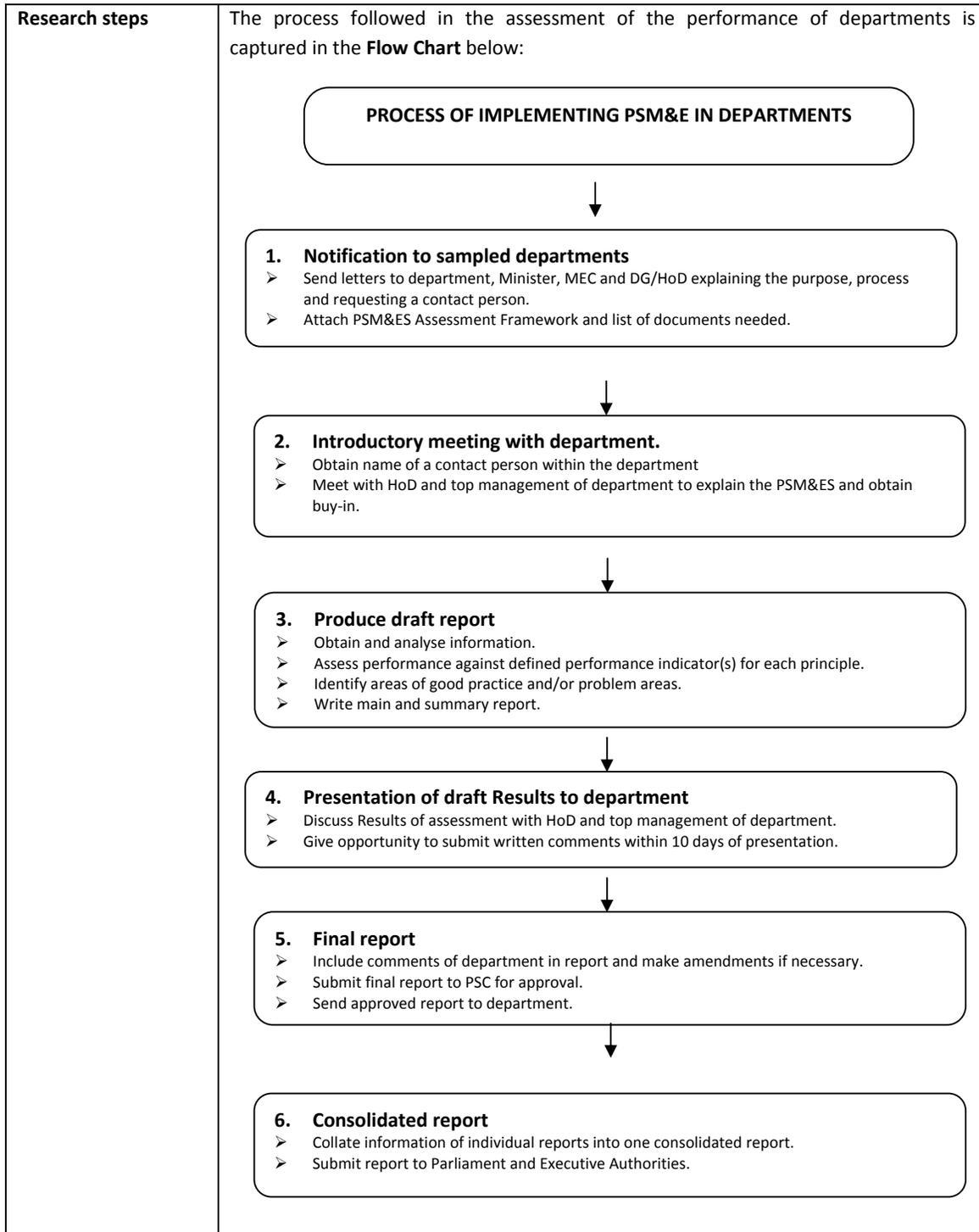
Constitutional Principle	Performance Indicator	Applicable Legislation and Regulations
1. Professional ethics. A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.	Cases of misconduct where a disciplinary hearing has been conducted, comply with the provisions of the Disciplinary Code and Procedures for the Public Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disciplinary Codes and Procedures for the Public Service. ➤ Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 2 of 1999 as amended by Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council Resolution 1 of 2003. ➤ Code of Conduct for the Public Service.
2. Efficiency economy and effectiveness. Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expenditure is according to budget. ➤ Programme outputs are clearly defined and there is credible evidence that they have been achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999, Sections 38 to 40. ➤ Treasury Regulations. Part 3: Planning and Budgeting. ➤ Public Service Regulations. Part III/B. Strategic Planning. ➤ Treasury Guidelines on preparing budget submissions for the year under review. ➤ Treasury Guide for the Preparation of Annual reports of departments for the financial year ended 31 March. ➤ National Planning Framework.
3. Public Administration must be Development-oriented.	The department is effectively involved in programmes/projects that aim to promote development and reduce poverty.	Section 195 (c) of the Constitution.
4. Impartiality and fairness. Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.	There is evidence that the Department follows the prescribed procedures of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) when making administrative decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act No 3 of 2000. ➤ Regulations on Fair Administrative Procedures, 2002. ➤ Departmental delegations of authority.
5. Public participation in policy-making. People's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.	The department facilitates public participation in policy-making.	White Paper for Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele).
6. Accountability. Public Government must be accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequate internal financial control and performance management is exerted over all departmental programmes. ➤ Fraud prevention plans, based on thorough risk assessments, are in place and are implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999. ➤ Treasury Regulations. Part 3: Planning and Budgeting. ➤ White Paper for Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele). ➤ Public Service Regulations. Part III/B. Strategic Planning. ➤ Treasury Guidelines on preparing budget submissions, 2002. ➤ Treasury Guide for the Preparation of Annual Reports of departments for the financial year ended 31 March. ➤ National Planning Framework.
7. Transparency. Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.	<p>A. Departmental Annual Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The departmental annual report complies with National Treasury's guideline on annual reporting. <p>B. Access to Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department complies with the provisions of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Finance Management Act 1999, Act 1 of 1999. ➤ National Treasury's guideline for the Preparation of Annual Reports. ➤ The Department of Public Government's guide for an Oversight Report on Human Resources. ➤ Public Service Commission. Evaluation of

*Paper presented: International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity: 13-15 December 2009,
Cassablanca, Morocco 9*

Constitutional Principle	Performance Indicator	Applicable Legislation and Regulations
		Departments' Annual Reports as an Accountability Mechanism. October 1999. ➤ White Paper for Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele). ➤ Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000, Act 2 of 2000. ➤ Departmental delegations of authority.
8. Good human resource management and career development practices. Good human resource management and career development practices, to maximize human potential, must be cultivated.	A. Recruitment ➤ Vacant posts are filled in a timely and effective manner. B. Skills Development ➤ The department complies with the provisions of the Skills Development Act.	➤ Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended. ➤ Public Service Act.
9. Representivity. Public Administration must be broadly representative of SA people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability objectivity fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.	The Department is representative of the South African people and is implementing diversity management measures	➤ Part VI Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended. ➤ Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998. ➤ White Paper on the Transformation on Public Service – 15/11/1995. ➤ White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 2001. ➤ White paper on Disability.

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSVERSAL M&E SYSTEM

RESEARCH STEPS



**APPENDIX C: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PSC'S TRANSVERSAL PUBLIC SERVICE
MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOL**

Reporting period	<p>This re-assessment of the department was conducted during the PSC's 2009/10 evaluation cycle and covers the following periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principles 2, 6, and 7: Information obtained from the department's annual report for the 2007/08 financial year. ➤ Principles 1, 3 to 5 and 8 to 9: The most recent information up to 18 May 2009 (date of the final draft report).
Introduction and background	<p>The Public Service Commission (PSC) has designed, piloted and implemented a Transversal M&E System (System) that it uses to evaluate the performance of Public Service departments against the nine constitutional values and principles governing public administration.</p> <p>Since the introduction of the System the PSC has already evaluated 101 departments. The sample of departments for the 2009/2010 research cycle comprised 2 national and 28 provincial departments.</p> <p>The Results of this Report were presented to the Department with a request to comments on the Results. Comments were submitted and these comments were incorporated into the Executive Summary.</p>
Methodology	<p>The methodology involves comparing the actual state of practice in the department against at least five standards per principle. Evidence about the actual state of practice is obtained by collecting documents, conducting interviews and collecting records on small samples of specific cases. At the end of the evaluation a draft report is written and the department is awarded a score.</p> <p>Since the same indicators are used year after year, the performance of a sample of departments in a specific year can be compared with the samples of previous years, departments can be compared with each other, and a department's performance can be compared with its own performance in a previous year when that department comes up for re-assessment.</p> <p><i>(The detailed assessment framework is available on the PSC's web page: www.psc.gov.za).</i></p>
Final result of evaluation	<p>Comparative performance results between the first assessment (2004/05) and the re-assessment (2009/10)</p> <p>The Department's performance and compliance with the nine Constitutional values and principles have improved from an average score of 36% for 2004/05 to 55% for 2009/10, which is indicative of adequate performance against several of the standards.</p>

	<p>Strengths</p> <p>The Department's performance against only four out of the nine principles was above the average performance of 55% for the 2009/10 evaluation cycle. These four principles are 3 (90%), 4 (100%), 6 (90%) and 7 (80%). Compared to the 2004/05 evaluation, improvement in performance occurred in 2009/10 against principles 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7, with the score varying between 30% and 80%.</p> <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>A cause of concern though is the decline in performance during the 2009/10 evaluation cycle against the 2004/05 evaluation in principles 5 (public participation in policy-making), 8 (human resource management) and 9 (representivity). The decline of performance against these four principles is indicative of poor project and human resource management that need attention.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Status of implementation of recommendations of first assessment</p> <p>When the Department was assessed for the first time in the 2004/05 evaluation cycle 36 recommendations were made of which 18 (or 50%) were implemented when the Department was re-assessed in the 2009/10 evaluation cycle. Of concern is that the majority of the recommendations that were not implemented falls within Principle 8 (good human resource management and career development practices) and Principle 9 (diversity management). Consequently the PSC is now making even more recommendations with regard to these principles. In light of the dire need for departments to deliver services, poor human resource management in the Department needs urgent attention.</p> <p>New Recommendations</p> <p>The PSC made 59 recommendations in this report that need to be implemented within specific time frames. Within six months of receipt of this report the PSC will do a follow-up on the progress made with the implementation of these recommendations using the <u>list of recommendations at Appendix A</u> as template for the feedback Report.</p>

APPENDIX D: ORGANOGRAM OF THE PSC

