

MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. MANY PURPOSES, MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

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Background

This paper provides a reflection on the work and experience of the writer over the past 15 years, in the monitoring and evaluation sector of the South African government. It draws on his experience as manager of the country's first departmental monitoring and evaluation unit¹ at the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), and later, senior manager at the Public Service Commission (PSC) of South Africa. The PSC² is a body mandated to oversee the performance of the country's Public Service, and is constitutionally obliged to "investigate, monitor and evaluate" the Public Service, "without fear, favour or prejudice". It does not do recruitment, as many of its counterpart do, but focuses on monitoring and evaluation. This paper sets out to assess how monitoring and evaluation has evolved in the Public Service, and to highlight the linkages between monitoring and evaluation and democracy. It describes his experience in managing the monitoring and evaluation unit at the DLA, and also considers the growth of monitoring and evaluation at the continental level. In terms of the latter, it focuses on some of the experiences around monitoring and evaluation encountered by the PSC, which is one of the key monitoring and evaluation players in the Public Service.

1 The writer set up the country's first monitoring and evaluation Directorate in 1995, which was expected to support the implementation of an ambitious land reform programme.

2 Republic of South Africa. The Constitution, Chapter 10

Monitoring and evaluation in the era of the post-1994 euphoria

Democracy was achieved in South Africa in 1994, when the country shed apartheid and held its first democratic elections. The apartheid Public Service existed at the behest of the apartheid regime, and implemented policies which were essentially anti-democratic and which entrenched values and practices that created a discriminatory and unaccountable Public Service. Given that the engine of the democratic transformation was the very same Public Service that implemented apartheid policies, it was necessary for this inherited bureaucracy to be reconfigured and revised to operate in a manner that reflected the democratic era.

Since democracy, there has been acceptance of the need for monitoring and evaluation within government, and this has now formed the basis for engagement with international bodies with whom the country needs to work with. The purposes of monitoring and evaluation were several; to support democratic engagement by promoting transparency and accountability, by providing evidence for planning and, in general, supporting the developmental State. The concept of monitoring and evaluation as it is understood now in South Africa is different from how it was used previously, where it was largely to support the Apartheid State.

With democracy, the South African Government aligned itself with international imperatives for good governance, and committed itself to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and to address the issues identified in the *Country Assessment Report* of the African Union Peer Review Mechanism. To this end, the South African Cabinet approved a set of 76 human development indicators and the Presidency has since published, on an annual basis, three editions of *Development Indicators*. The indicators are clustered into ten broad themes, namely: economic growth and transformation; employment; poverty and inequality; household and community assets; health; education; social cohesion: safety and security; international relations, safety and security and good governance. These indicators provide evidence-based pointers on the impact of government programmes on the lives of all South Africans. Based on these indicators, the Presidency also publishes, on a periodical basis, reviews which summarise data on trends, in order to track progress towards the implementation of government programmes. Currently, two such reviews have been published, namely: *Towards a Ten Year Review*, published in

2003 (South Africa) and *Towards a Fifteen Year Review*, published in 2008. It is evident from these reviews, that the country has embraced monitoring and evaluation, and that it views monitoring and evaluation as a critical tool and strategy for improving governance which, in South Africa, is based on the premise of a developmental State that is pro-poor and interventionist.

The process of changing the Public Service was a difficult challenge, and involved a process of rationalising many spatially carved out and racially defined governance structures, which supported the divide and rule ethos of the apartheid government. In the period leading to democracy and shortly thereafter, major policy reforms took place, the result of which are contained in the Constitution of the country, passed in 1996. This set the basis for a constitutional democracy, and paved the way for the reform of the Public Service. Contained within the Constitution are 9 values and principles (CVPS) for public administration. The CVPs have been used by the Public Service Commission (PSC) as a framework for measuring the quality of governance, and is its main framework for conducting its monitoring and evaluation work.

An important element of South African democracy was the establishment of institutions of democracy, listed in Chapter 9 and 10 of the Constitution. Whilst each of the institutions may operate in terms of particular legislation and emphasis, they are joined by the common purpose of ensuring that there is no regression to the apartheid era; that the benefits and freedoms of democracy are retained; and, that institutions such as the Public Service operate in an accountable manner. These oversight bodies have helped to establish in South Africa, the elements necessary for monitoring and evaluation, such as providing an enabling environment for scrutiny and accountability of persons and institutions. The re-defined Public Service is expected to be citizen-centric and to support the transformation policies of government.

The multiparty democracy in the country has provided an enabling environment for the institutions of democracy to operate unfettered by political interference. Currently the work of these institutions is regularly reported on in the media. The media contributes in a large part to the performance information produced on government, which supports the discourse on public sector performance, thus promoting good governance.

The interest in issues of public sector performance is driven by a highly politicised citizenry, who view the freedom to express opinions about government performance as part of the democratic package of benefits, hitherto denied. Through an independent and vibrant media, and the accountability framework which is in place, an interest in the performance of government is sustained. The PSC has responded to the high demand on government for performance information that comes from citizens, the media, parliament and from within the government itself. The demand from the citizens relates to their personal circumstances, how they receive services and the quality thereof, thus tools like Hotlines tend to be popular and reflects public sentiment on performance issues. The PSC has scanned the environment and differentiated its products and services, and engages intensely with role-players and stakeholders to remain topical. The PSC demonstrates in many ways how streams of performance information, generated by oversight bodies, can impact on decision-making, galvanise public opinion, and raise levels of transparency in support of accountability. It also demonstrates the link between democracy and monitoring and evaluation, both of which share one commonality in that they promote transparency. Monitoring and evaluation activity can thus be seen as enriching for democracy, as it helps to deepen democracy by bringing higher levels of accountability and transparency into the Public Service. If monitoring and evaluation is located strategically within the decision and opinion-making architecture of the government, it can become more effective.

As an example of how monitoring and evaluation has worked, the experiences of the writer whilst at the PSC helps to illustrate some of the contextual and managerial issues which had to be worked through in setting up a monitoring and evaluation system. Many of these are pertinent in other contexts.

Monitoring and evaluation in the Department of Land Affairs

Importance of the land question for socio-economic transformation

The first monitoring and evaluation unit within a South African government department was started in the National Department of Land Affairs (DLA). This was a department, reformed in 1994, with new policies and which had a critically important political

mandate to reverse the legacy of apartheid that expressed itself in the skewed racial/spatial divide, much of which persists today in terms of land ownership patterns. A plethora of colonial and apartheid legislation largely dispossessed the majority Black population, confined them to disconnected, self-governing states (Bantustans), reduced agricultural potential of Black farmers, and impeded socio-economic progress. The minority White population, on the other hand, benefitted from these policies, gained access to most of the productive and well developed land, and were supported through state intervention to advance economically.

Against this background, the African National Congress (ANC) put in place policies and announced a land reform programme to address these inequalities. The land question was important in the run-up to the first democratic elections, and people saw the return of land rights and land restitution, as indicators of a successful democratic transition. The same department that produced and implemented apartheid land policies, now had to implement land reform programmes, and this was a major challenge from a capacity point of view. The new configured department had to bring in new people with new ideas and creativity, and reverse decades of entrenched land holding patterns and power-relations that existed across the country. The first Minister for Land Affairs in the democratic government, Derek Hanekom, managed to pass policies that would in practice bring about the envisaged changes. Implementation proved to be much more difficult. The monitoring and evaluation unit of the DLA was expected to, amongst others, reflect performance both within and outside the department, and in a context of high expectations, performance results became the source of interest and debate.

Installation of the monitoring and evaluation Directorate in the DLA

The introduction of monitoring and evaluation into the DLA came at a time when the new government was seeking ways to ensure its success, pivotal to which was having high quality performance information at its disposal. Monitoring and evaluation tended to be brought in to support programmes that had a high social and political priority, and where there were high expectations for these to succeed. In light of this, the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate was set up in 1995 in the DLA, and received initial technical support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). This took the form of periodic support of a technical advisor, and

more on-going support from Non-Government Organisations (NGO), namely, the Land and Agrarian Policy Centre (LAPC). The NGO sector for land was very active in the early period of the land reform debates, and brought critical insights into the policy formulation process. This sector supported mainly rural communities, who bore the most severe brunt of apartheid policies. The widespread and brutally implemented apartheid land policies resulted in many of the social and economic problems which persist today. The land reform programme offered much hope, as the return of land was also about a return of dignity. However, in the context of a negotiated political settlement, and a market-led land redistribution programme, actual and potential beneficiaries saw the process as taking too long. The restitution programme, involved thousands of claims against the State, but included millions of beneficiaries, and resolving these claims required intensive research, which was complex and time-consuming. In this context of high expectations from the land reform programme, there was an equally high demand from the monitoring and evaluation unit to produce the information which would ensure its success.

The first 3 years (1995-1998) of the newly established monitoring and evaluation unit was taken up in staffing, building capacity and setting up systems to produce credible information on the land reform programme. Parallel information systems were necessary given that there was no coherent land reform system within the institution at the time. The unit set up needed to establish its own geographic information system so as to indicate on a monthly basis, through its Land Reform Barometer, how many hectares had been transferred and how many beneficiaries had been brought into the programme. This seemingly simple task involved intense monitoring of land transfers and scrutiny of project documents. It benefited the process by producing easily accessible maps which used colours and graphs to show progress, and which in turn made it possible for the political leadership and management to identify performance trends. The Land Reform Barometer soon evolved and became used for accountability purposes, from all quarters, and helped to direct attention to performance. A problem with presenting such stark performance data is that it is a-contextual, and when used for accountability purposes, can cause problems.

The question of information management remains central to monitoring and evaluation, and the setting up of information systems was a priority for the unit which used its own staff to gather information. It should be noted that land reform information was politically

sensitive, so establishing the unit's credibility was important since it formed the basis for the policy, programme and project assessments which were undertaken. The centralisation of the information system within the monitoring and evaluation unit was important in order to ensure adherence to agreed upon definitions and standards, so that the analytical reports would not be challenged on the basis of poor information. It must be remembered that many were questioning the success of the land reform programme. The monitoring and evaluation function can be rendered ineffective, if it does not rely upon a credible data system, and this must be prioritised in the establishment of any monitoring and evaluation function.

Apart from producing the statistical and geographic information, at different scales, the monitoring and evaluation unit, also produced a series of assessments on land reform projects, and which contained critical beneficiary perspectives. For this purpose, expertise was secured to build the capacity of monitoring and evaluation staff around participatory methodologies. Fortunately the unit recruited highly skilled staff and the unit was able to converse in all 11 official languages of the country, which facilitated community engagement. The reports on the pilot projects indicated at that stage that whilst policies were in place, there were serious implementation challenges; a point which was reinforced by a subsequent, externally undertaken assessments. After 5 years of implementation, a key finding was that inter-governmental coordination was weak (meaning that land was delivered without services), and there were many issues about whether the planning processes met the aspirations of communities, especially after land transfer. There were many questions raised about the sustainability of projects, a point documented in several internal and external assessments of the land reform programme.

At an operational level, the monitoring and evaluation unit had to also contend with its relevance being challenged. The key question was who "owned" the monitoring and evaluation function. The policy-makers saw it as necessary to provide information on how policy was proceeding based on implementation evidence. The implementers saw it as a voice for their discontent with policy, and a way to express their frustrations at the coal-face of delivery. Some saw it as just a tool just to produce information, without necessarily recommendations, as this was the prerogative of management who were the ultimate decision-makers. Others viewed monitoring and evaluation as an independent voice, which needed to express opinions about progress or the lack thereof. As can be imagined,

the monitoring and evaluation unit was constantly challenged about who its master was, and what its purpose should be. The staff within the monitoring and evaluation unit, who were still building up their own experience and knowledge, wanted to see quick reactions to their reports, and were frustrated when information went into a decision-making hierarchy where it was difficult to discern the contribution of monitoring and evaluation in decision-making. The problem was compounded by mixed messages sent to the monitoring and evaluation unit about its purpose, which is a common problem faced by monitoring and evaluation units. In the absence of a precedent for monitoring and evaluation in the country, the unit at times had to constantly reappraise itself, and try to meet several, and at time conflicting imperatives. This is often an institutional challenge for monitoring and evaluation units, and requires clear leadership and support.

One of the examples of trying to respond to a diverse and somewhat powerful grouping came in 1998, when the regional heads of the DLA, demanded their own monitoring and evaluation capacity. The views on this were simmering from 1996, with much discontent expressed by regional heads about what the monitoring and evaluation function was doing, which they saw as being too critical of their implementation efforts. They argued that monitoring and evaluation should be hands-on, and monitoring and evaluation should be a part of the implementation process, rather than writing reports from afar based on periodic visits. The management of the monitoring and evaluation unit decided to secure such capacity, and provided regional monitoring and evaluation officers. However, when this exercise was assessed after 2 years, it had not produced the regional monitoring and evaluation capacity envisaged. The monitoring and evaluation officers were still viewed as undertaking "policing". The intervention was probably not very successful because of the lack of experience in doing monitoring and evaluation, in an institution that was also developing its own managerial capacity. At the national level, the monitoring and evaluation unit, whilst ostensibly independent, fell within a managerial hierarchy, which it had to negotiate. Because of its access and reporting lines to the apex of decision-making in the organisation, the monitoring and evaluation unit was perceived as policing, and therefore seen as another form of scrutiny in a context where managers were doing their best to deliver under trying circumstances, but receiving undue criticism from the monitoring and evaluation unit. This experience points to the importance of addressing the location question,

but recognising that purpose should inform location and strategy. Monitoring and evaluation cannot be all things to all people, and this must be clarified and reinforced, or it can easily become blamed for problems outside its responsibility. The question of where to locate the monitoring and evaluation function, and under whose command, is often an issue in most organisations. There is a need to balance issues of relevance and support, with being sufficiently detached to remain independent and credible.

There are several lessons which can be drawn from the experience of the monitoring and evaluation unit at the DLA which are instructive for those establishing this function. There remains the classic challenge that context, which as the DLA example illustrates, affects strategy and design. If there was credible and useful information, little effort would have to be invested in designing information systems. Another area relates to the relationship between what management sees as their prerogative in directing the monitoring and evaluation unit, and what the management of monitoring and evaluation sees as important to produce. This relates directly to the question of location and authority. There will always be the reality of the hierarchy, and monitoring and evaluation units need to be supported in their work through higher level statements and actions. It is not acceptable for monitoring and evaluation units to have themselves to explain their purpose to strong voices, many of whom have their own agendas, especially when monitoring and evaluation also has an accountability dimension. There would be instances where negative performance comes to the fore and causes embarrassment, which must be anticipated. Monitoring and evaluation practitioners often feel vulnerable and unprotected, which may account for the high turnover of monitoring and evaluation staff in many institutions.

There is a need to determine why and what one can get from different interventions. An example is the initial quality of life system that was designed externally and which the monitoring and evaluation unit was expected to implement. The unit did not see the value in the system. It was viewed as not being relevant, too cumbersome to implement and not owned by the implementers. Following a consultative national workshop, the system was overhauled to make it more relevant and to allow for the production of more useful reports. The experience indicates that context should determine the tools, and when there is any sense that the value of such tools is dubious, they should not be used. It is highly disrespectful to take up people's time by asking them questions when they fail to see

the benefit and receive no return on their investment because it does not solve their problems. The problem with the initial system was that it was predominantly quantitative and it was implemented in a context where these issues were not viewed as priorities.

Finally, leading monitoring and evaluation requires negotiation skills. Monitoring and evaluation cannot be all things to all people, and must differentiate itself by stating what its products and services are upfront, and prioritise. If this does not happen there is the tendency to expect too much from monitoring and evaluation, and expect monitoring and evaluation to be a panacea, or it may result in monitoring and evaluation being blamed for not dealing decisively with poor performance. Monitoring and evaluation is not a stand alone. It is part of the management architecture, and when it interfaces with decision-makers it needs to be sensitive to the obvious vested interests. A key skill is the ability to communicate, which is often forgotten. It is important to realise that monitoring and evaluation is a human endeavour, which affects the moods and aspirations of people. Thus it is important to tread carefully.

The discussion now moves on, below, to describe some of the evolutionary threads for monitoring and evaluation at the continental and country level.

Precedents for monitoring and evaluation in South Africa and the continent

Monitoring and evaluation in South Africa became more pronounced from around 2000, although there had been monitoring and evaluation activity since 1995, but this was not co-ordinated. This was understandable in that the post-1994 period was one of policy formulation, reconfiguration and setting up of departments, and getting the engine of government moving. Apart from the DLA monitoring and evaluation function, monitoring and evaluation was largely absent in government in a formal sense during the early years. The exposure to monitoring and evaluation was largely confined to the few people who attended conferences outside the country, as an monitoring and evaluation association did not exist, although an evaluation network (EVALNET) organised monitoring and evaluation events. On the African continent, however, there were certain important initiatives led by international bodies that sowed the seeds for monitoring and evaluation, and which helped to introduce the monitoring and evaluation practice. Some of these galvanising moments are referred to below.

In November 1998, a conference was held in Abidjan, which brought together teams from 12 African countries and 21 international development agencies. It presented an opportunity for fostering networking amongst practitioners on the continent. This was followed by the inaugural conference of the African Evaluation Association (AFrEA), in Nairobi in 1999. Attended by over 300 evaluators from 35 countries. This conference helped to embed the monitoring and evaluation discourse more firmly on the continent.

Within South Africa, the first regional event was hosted in Johannesburg in 2000. This was organised by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, around the theme of *Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Development in Africa*. The event was attended by experts and resource persons with delegates from 8 African countries. It sought, amongst other things, to address the linkages between monitoring and evaluation and the development challenges in Africa; provided country perspectives on how demand and monitoring and evaluation infrastructure was built; addressed evaluation capacity development through new methodologies; and, provided African sector experiences on monitoring and evaluation. It also addressed the issue of developing national evaluation associations and opportunities for international cooperation (AfDB, Summary Report on Seminar Proceedings, November 2000).

A further watershed event was held in 2004, when the PSC co-hosted the 3rd AFrEA Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, under the theme; *Evaluation Matters, Africa Matters, joining forces for development*. This event drew 450 participants from 61 countries, and was characterised by the large representation from high-level members of African governments. As with other events of this nature, it offered over 20 pre-conference training sessions, as part of the capacity building initiative. The PSC in 2005 supported a development evaluation seminar in Tunisia, which was attended by representatives from 21 African countries. The 3rd AFrEA Conference was followed by two other events, in Niamey in 2006 (AFrEA IV) and Cairo in 2009 (AFrEA V). The AFrEA V event was significant, in that the African Evaluation Association (AFREA) became formally constituted, with potential to translate into a more vibrant continental association operating beyond just the biennial events where it was most visible.

In 2004, the idea of a *South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association* (SAMEA) was presented, and whilst a community of practice had been operating until then, the need for formalising this gained support and SAMEA was launched in 2006. In 2007, the first SAMEA Conference was co-hosted by the PSC under the theme *Evaluation in Action*, focusing on utility, and in 2009 the 2nd Biennial Conference, also co-hosted by the PSC was held under the theme: *eVALUation*, focusing on the values of evaluation. Both these events were attended by over 400 people, including government officials and monitoring and evaluation people, NGOs, academics, consultants, practitioners, and politicians, all of whom engaged over the 4 day event in training, networking and discussing the approximately 50 papers presented on the conference themes. A richer understanding of what monitoring and evaluation can and cannot achieve was gained from these events. For the first time, abstracts and papers were produced which spoke to the practice and indicated that there was now a stronger engagement with the discipline. As part of its policy for engaging productively with stakeholders, the PSC has entered into a memorandum of understanding with SAMEA, to take forward its commitment to public participation.

During the period from 2002 to present, there have been Presidential statements about the importance of monitoring and evaluation, the most significant being an appointment of a Minister responsible for this function, based in the Presidency. The African National Congress (ANC) 2004 Election Manifesto also committed to fostering monitoring and evaluation. Currently systems are being developed which will allow for performance to be reported on a set of key performance indicators. Once these performance outcomes are reported on, the status of monitoring and evaluation could be enhanced further in the country. In a relatively short period there was increased exposure to monitoring and evaluation through the hosting of various events, which have been largely PSC driven. The participant profile at these events reflects a high diversity of people, organisations and institutions, which augurs well for the growth of the discipline.

The next section looks at how the PSC's monitoring and evaluation systems have evolved, and what their outputs and possible outcomes have been.

The Public Service Commission as a central driver for monitoring and evaluation in the country

Setting up a new identity

The PSC entered the monitoring and evaluation arena from 1997, when a new Public Service Commission Act was passed, built on the Constitution, which gave the revised PSC new powers and functions. It broke from its original 1912 remit, set up and modelled on the old British Civil Service Commission Act, to oversee appointments and prevent favouritism in public servant appointments. Although ostensibly independent, the institution under colonialism and apartheid grew into one that supported the executive, and hence its legitimacy would have been under question in the democratic era. By focusing on investigating, monitoring and evaluating, the PSC helped to galvanise support for monitoring and evaluation in the country, which as illustrated makes it a nodal point for monitoring and evaluation.

In operationalising this new identity, the PSC had to respond to the imperatives of the developmental State, which sees the South African State and government needing to intervene in all aspects of South African society, to redress the legacy of apartheid and bring about transformation and development. Since 2000, the PSC has taken the lead in developing a monitoring and evaluation discourse in the country, which it did by partnering with associations such as AFREA and SAMEA. More importantly, it designed and implemented several monitoring and evaluation systems to give effect to its constitutional mandate around monitoring and evaluation, and these have introduced a very high level of transparency around government performance, which has come about due to its many assessments, and the strategies it has used that cut across the media and civil society where it places its results and work in the public domain for engagement.

Using the constitutional basis expeditiously

The PSC has been set up to be the custodian of “good governance”. It uses as its monitoring and evaluation framework the 9 constitutional values and principles (CVP) for public administration. The CVP can be viewed as a comprehensive definition of good governance in South Africa. Contained within the CVP are universally accepted

normative concepts for good governance, such as transparency and accountability. Also included are topical issues such as the fight against corruption (CVP 1: ethics) and human resources and transformation issues as contained in CVP 8 and CVP 9 respectively. Central to the CVP is the question of the judicious management of financial resources, which is contained in CVP2: the efficient, effective and economical use of resources. The benchmarks for performance are explicit, and the PSC has unpacked each CVP into specific monitoring and evaluation systems/programmes/interventions, resulting in a range of monitoring and evaluation products and services targeted at different sectors of society, and which seek to drive the good governance ethos in the country.

The table below sets out the CVP components and illustrates some of the work done in these areas by the PSC.

Table 1: Constitutional value and principles, engagement in area and products (selected examples)

<i>Constitutional value and principle (CVP)</i>	<i>Engagement in area</i>	<i>Products</i>
1. Professional ethics	<p>Helped form the National Anti-Corruption Forum (NACF) in South Africa (civil society, business and government), currently serve as Secretariat</p> <p>Communication across society of the expectations of public servants, so as to raise awareness and prompt reporting of corruption.</p> <p>Through monitoring and evaluation systems, report on the management of disciplinary processes within departments</p> <p>Management of the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH), allowing public access to a toll-free, multilingual, anonymous facility to report corruption</p> <p>Prevention and detection of conflicts of interest of public servants</p> <p>Investigating complaints received</p> <p>Production of policy on issues of ethics</p>	<p>Secretariat of the NACH, Resolutions and reporting thereof</p> <p>Code of Conduct produced for public servants</p> <p>Recovery of ZAR100 million, and dismissal of 50 officials. Received over 100 000 calls, and referred over 6000 for investigation</p> <p>Management of financial disclosures of civil servants, and scrutiny thereof</p> <p>Investigative reports resulting in action taken on errant public servants</p>

<i>Constitutional value and principle (CVP)</i>	<i>Engagement in area</i>	<i>Products</i>
2. Efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the public service	Track and report on the quality of financial management in departments, and aggregated results into oversight reports Reporting on financial misconduct	Reports on the management of financial misconduct
3. A development orientated public service	Assess the extent to which departments engage in public participation processes, to ensure a citizen centric public service is in place	Reports on the extent to which departments engage in public participation practices
4. provision of services which are impartial, fair, equitable and without bias	Assess service delivery from citizen perspectives, by conducting Batho Pele (people first) surveys, as well as announced and unannounced inspections	Reports on adherence to the 8 Batho Pele principles
5. People's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making	Assessment of departmental-public interface processes, to assess the extent to which policies are relevant	Assessment through Public service monitoring and evaluation System Analysis of complaints received
6. Accountable public administration	Processes which call leadership to account monitored, e.g. Management of the evaluation of Heads of Department, as well as implementation of all other monitoring and evaluation processes Reporting on results of departments to political oversight committees	Overarching reports such as the State of the Public Service reports indicates the effectiveness of the accountability framework Implementation of compliance systems
7. Transparency to be fostered through the provision of timely, accurate and accessible information	Through media briefings, roundtables, hearings, reports, the PSC puts into the public domain performance assessments of departments	
8. Good human resource management and career development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated	Assessment of HR practices in order to see whether it has the desired effect Policy advice Adjudicate grievances referred to it after internal departmental processes have been exhausted	Adjudication of grievances
9. A representative public service	Assessment of progress against targets	Reports on state of representivity in the Public Service

From the above, it can be noted that the PSC has translated and concretised the CVP into interventions and products, which have been aimed at different client bases. These include:

- Parliament, the legislature and its committees.
- Political and administrative heads of government departments.
- 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 monitoring and evaluation 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.

Critical areas of work

It is easy for any oversight body to become unfocused. The PSC has now reached a point where it has regular products, which are followed by engagement strategies to take findings forward. The following are examples of the regular, routine products of the PSC and these serve as a basis for producing performance trends.

- The annual *State of the Public Service* (SOPS) reports. Thus far 9 editions have been produced, with the last 5 being thematically written. These use the CVP as chapters, and within each produce an interpretation of the CVP as it relates to a theme; reflects on performance trends over previous periods; and, captures recent research and findings, from all related work on the subject. These provide policy directives going forward. Each of the chapters/ CVP helps to emphasise why the area of performance is critical for the Developmental State and for reinforcing good governance. The report may be considered a meta-evaluation, and is the most widely cited and debated assessment of the State in the country. See www.psc.gov.za
- Individual departments are using the *Transversal Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation System* (TPSMES), which was designed using the CVP as a framework. It produces both quantitative and qualitative assessments of departmental performance, based on the application of a set of standards and indicators; interviews; document analysis; and, responses to interim reports. The assessment draws on other assessments, such as that of the Auditor-General, and in this way reinforces the work of the institutions of democracy, especially those dealing with the Public Service. The implementation process seeks to engage management at the inception and reporting stage. The reports end in performance scores given for each CVP and for the department as a whole. A set of recommendations is also provided, the implementation of which is tracked and publically reported on. The system uses performance bands (a five point scale from weak to excellent), and the performance of departments for each cycle is made public. Thus far 131 departments have been assessed using this system, and 6 consolidated reports produced.
- A set of reports are also produced on the management of financial misconduct, which is used to indicate the extent of financial corruption on how this has been attended to. Similarly, trends reports are produced on the management of grievances, the submission of financial disclosures etc.
- Fact sheets on compliance have proved to be a quick way to indicate poor performance, and this has worked in highlighting non-compliance in the areas of the filing of performance agreements and the conducting of the evaluations of heads of department. If performance management is not done properly at this level, it has implications for the rest of the Public Service.

- The feedback rate to the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) is a good indicator of the capacity of departments to investigate cases referred to it. In this regard the 2009 *State of the Public Service* report notes a decline in feedback, which is a concern in that follow-through on reported cases is critical for demonstrating the resolve to address corruption.

Supporting transparency and accountability

Whilst issues of transparency and accountability may be taken for granted in mature democracies, these remain pertinent issues in South Africa, where there was much distrust about the intention of the State. Now the Public Service needs to be citizen-centred and to subject itself to public scrutiny. In such a context, the implementation of monitoring and evaluation remains a challenge, for reasons similar to the ones mentioned in the DLA example described earlier in this paper. There is often agreement at the intent level about the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and a commitment to cooperate, but when the monitoring and evaluation process begins one can expect a level of resistance. Fortunately, the legal authority of the PSC has reduced some of this, as it has the power to summons, which it has used to ensure compliance. However, implementing monitoring and evaluation will always be a challenge as placing performance results in the public domain, which the PSC does, would obviously bring tensions to the fore.

The PSC has recognised that monitoring and evaluation has a strong accountability thrust, which the developmental State needs in order to instil new values, both in terms of how its institutions operate, and how its public servants behave, termed *Batho Pele* (people first). In light of this the accountability thrust has been expressed in large part through implementing systems which are compliance biased, using the assumption that the policies in place are inherently good and valuable for the transformation and development of the citizens of the country. Until compliance improves the accountability thrust of monitoring and evaluation must remain. The PSC's *State of the Public Service* reports indicate clearly that compliance remains a problem, which implies that monitoring and evaluation for accountability needs to remain.

This paper has spoken about administrative accountability, tested using the TPS monitoring and evaluations. In terms of the avowed intention of being a citizen-centric public service, the PSC has put much effort into developing monitoring and evaluation system to

assess how services are received. In the final analysis, the true test of whether the 15 years of transformation has impacted at the citizen level will be whether there has been improved service delivery. Various assessments indicate that services have improved, but the pattern is uneven across the country and varies, depending on which services one is considering. Through the development of citizen forum toolkits (which establish what the drivers of citizen satisfaction are); conducting assessments; conducting Batho Pele surveys (to see if all that has been promised is delivered); conducting announced and unannounced inspections; and, engaging with the NGO sector and other stakeholders, the PSC has produced reports which indicate what the quality of services are in the Public Service. Evidence from PSC assessments indicates that departments perform poorly when it comes to interfacing with citizens, and whilst during the post-1994 period citizens were at the centre of policy formulation, this has not been sustained. Service delivery protests, whilst not a perfect indicator of the quality of services received (given that many of these have been orchestrated), in some instances indicate that citizens are not happy with the services which they receive, and resort to such means to make their discontent known.

Conclusion

This paper has painted a picture of what monitoring and evaluation means for the Public Service, and has shown links to democracy, transparency and accountability. It has reflected on the importance of galvanising moments, namely conferences on the subject of monitoring and evaluation held under pertinent themes, and it has attempted to provide a candid view of the challenges in actual implementation of monitoring and evaluation. It has shown that monitoring and evaluation has advanced in the country, at least at the level of managers in the Public Service, by leading the practice through its practical work, and thus supporting a discourse on the subject of good governance. The journey is far from over, it has only just begun. What remains evident is that monitoring and evaluation, whether led from oversight institutions with authority, or from individual units, cannot afford to become complacent. monitoring and evaluation needs to constantly scan, engage, refine, communicate, debate; all in order to remain relevant in a world where there is much competition in the provision of opinions and evaluations. Finally, monitoring and evaluation is not a panacea, it is but a stream of information driven by a sound intent and supported by a credible

methodology. Whether it gets considered, depends on how well the potential recipients are prepared for results, and whether it can be communicated and taken through to make a difference, or, in other words, to demonstrate utility.

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