“Governance Excellence: Managing Human Potential”

Performance Management in the Tanzania Public Service

Dr. Benson A. Bana
University of Dar es Salaam
Department of Political Science and Public Administration
P.O. Box 35042
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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1.0 Introduction

Performance management is basically concerned with performance improvement in order to achieve the organization’s objectives and strategic goals. The organization must get the right things done successfully. Performance management is a means of getting better results from the organizational teams and individuals by understanding and measuring performance within an agreed framework of goals, standards and competence requirements. Performance management is also concerned with employee development. This is because performance improvement is not achievable unless there are effective programmes to facilitate continuous development. This addresses and enhances the core competencies and the capabilities of individuals and teams. In addition, performance management is concerned with satisfying the needs and expectations of all the organization’s stakeholders and indeed the public in its entirety.

It is also imperative to note that performance management is concerned with communication and involvement, which entails continuous interaction and dialogue between managers and members of their teams in order to define expectations in the light of the organization’s vision, values and objectives. This establishes mutual understanding of what is to be achieved and a framework for managing and developing people.

It is in the light of the preceding context that Tanzania’s experience on performance management in the public service should be understood and appraised. There have been success stories, thought provoking questions and
challenges in the course of instituting and executing performance management systems and processes.

This paper is on performance management experience in the Tanzania public service. First, it highlights the background and context within which the drive for performance management in Tanzania should be traced. Second, an attempt is made to illuminate the approach which Tanzania has adopted/resorted to in order to install and institutionalize a performance management culture in the public service institutions. In doing so, we focus our attention to the strategies as well as the policy and legal frameworks which have been put in place to facilitate effective performance management in the Ministries, independent Departments Agencies (MDAs) and Regional Secretariats. Third, we analyze the processes and mechanisms which have been installed in the public service institutions in order to facilitate effective performance management. These are numerous but for the purpose of this work, we are limiting our focus on four mutually reinforcing performance management tools, namely the Performance Improvement Fund (PIF), Strategic and Operational Planning (SOP), Open Performance and Review System (OPRAS), and the client Service charter (CSC). We delineate the implementation or operational trends as well as transferable lessons of experience and challenges on each of the tools in turn.

The experience of Tanzania regarding performance management generates useful transferable lessons which may be emulated by the public service entities in other countries. It is to these that we now turn.

2.0 Background and Context

Tanzania attained its independence in 1961. The political leadership committed itself to wage and win the war against poverty, disease and ignorance in order to bring about prosperity to all Tanzanians. The public service being the strong arm of government as well as engine for growth and
development was expected to ensure that the war against the three development enemies was executed to a successful end. However, by the late 1990s it was realized that it would take ‘ages’ for the government to combat and eradicate the three development enemies if at all deliberate measures and mechanisms were not put in place to reinvigorate and transform the public service into an institution of excellence capable enough to playing a pivotal role in achieving sustained national economic growth and prosperity, and eradication of poverty in the 21st century³ (World Bank, 2008:3). Consequently, a number of reform initiatives in the public service were initiated for the purpose of accomplishing the government’s goals and objectives.

The Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) was launched in July 1991, it ran up to 1999. The major thrust of CSRP was “cost containment and the restructuring of Government”. This was succeeded by the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) which is implemented in a series of overlapping but mutually supporting phases. The first phase spanning the year 2000 to June 2007 adapted the theme “Instituting Performance Management Systems”. This was specifically aimed at building an integrated system for creating a shared vision, understanding and agreement about the results to be achieved, and the operational framework for continuous performance improvement in standards and quality of public service delivery in Tanzania. The second phase whose implementation commenced in July 2007 is expected to run until June 2012, and it flies under the banner of “Enhanced performance and Accountability”. The third phase is envisioned to operate from July 2012 to June 2017; its thrust set to be “Quality Improvement Cycle”. The implementation process of the PSRP is spearheaded by the President’s Office-Public Service Management (PO-PSM)

3.0 Tanzania’s Approach to Performance Management

Performance management constitutes the kernel of Tanzania’s Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) which is implemented in the Ministries, independent Departments and Agencies (MDA) as well as the public sector in its entirety. The PSRP is implemented by the government of Tanzania in order to improve the MDAs’ service delivery, policy management and regulatory functions through a more vigorous and rigorous Public Service. Performance Management System (PMS) in Tanzania is geared at improving the efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery, consequently ensuring value for money. PMS is one of the reform initiatives that provide a means to improve the effectiveness of the MDAs by linking and aligning individual, team and the public service objectives and results.

The approach which is used for performance management in the public service is holistic in structure and scope. This means that it is all-embracing, covering every aspect in the entire public service operations and its various constituents, the MDAs. The approach to performance management takes a comprehensive view of the components or various aspects of performance, focusing on how each of the components contribute to desired performance outcomes at organizational, departmental, team and individual levels.

Performance management also addresses what the employees do (their work), how they do it (their behaviour) and what they achieve (their results). In totality and practice, performance management in the Tanzania embraces all formal and informal measures adopted by the public service entities to increase organizational, team and individual effectiveness. Performance management process is not an isolated function. It is concerned with continuous development of knowledge, skills and competencies of public servants.
3.1 Strategies for Performance Management

Effective performance management requires systems, including clear processes and procedures. Moreover, it presupposes an enabling institutional and legal framework as well as identification of the Key Performance Areas (KPAs). Performance management was the theme of Tanzania’s Public Service Reform Programme phase one which was implemented from the year 2000 to July 2007. The intent of the PSRP 1 was to install Performance Management Systems (PMS) in all MDAs in an effort to reprofessionalize the public service, improve its results orientation and make MDAs more accountable. The current Public Service Reform Programme phase two (2008-2012) is *inter alia*, geared at enhancing further and consolidating the initiatives geared at creating a sustainable performance management culture in the public service institutions.

3.2 Policy and Legal Frameworks

The installation of the performance management system in Tanzania public service institutions was in consonance to the Public Service Management and Employment Policy of 1999 and the Public Service Act, No. 8 of 2002. The two instruments facilitated the institutionalization of performance management system in the public service\(^4\). The policy stipulated clearly the need for a performance and results-oriented management philosophy in the public service. The Act provides an enabling legal framework for managing performance in the public service. These instruments were important in order to give performance management initiative in the public service a legal status. The policy and legislation were important instruments to facilitate a gradual creation of performance-accountability culture in the public service.

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3.3 **Processes and Mechanisms for Performance Management**

Different approaches to performance management exist. In Tanzania a Result Based Management (RBM) was introduced using a home grown rubric referred to as Performance Improvement Model (PIM). This is an integrated approach to performance management with interlinked four stage processes and nine elements. This approach, among other things, requires all public service institutions to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and report on performance, and finally carry out performance reviews. From the year 2000 to 2006 PIM was installed in all Ministries, independent Departments, Executive Agencies and Regional Secretariats.

The public service introduced a number of processes, tools and mechanisms in order to facilitate the institutionalization of a performance management system. The specific tools for performance management include strategic and operational planning, client service charters, service delivery surveys, self assessment programmes, performance budgets, the introduction of Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) and comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.

### 3.3.1 Performance Improvement Fund

The Performance Improvement Fund (PIF) was established and implemented to support changes identified in Strategic Plans. The PIF was an attempt at inducing change and reform in the MDAs that did not prove effective. Its original intent was to combine MDA access to additional funding and technical support from the PO-PSM in order to encourage capacity improvement and performance enhancement. In the course of implementing PIF, numerous setbacks that limited progress emerged. First, the transaction cost involved in the PO-PSM processing of MDA applications turned out to be too arduous and too slow. Second, PO-PSM control of the PIF diminished the sense of MDAs ownership of PIF. Third, some MDAs tried to access the PIF for basic supply
and equipment. It was also observed that PIF was weakly linked to MDAs strategic plans and had none with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)\(^5\).

Strategic Planning and M&E are now integrated into the MTEF. This is a three year rolling plan and it technically the government’s budget\(^6\). Its expenditures are monitored and controlled through the Government’s Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS)\(^7\). The PIF allows government Ministries, Independent Department and Agencies (MDAs) to access additional financial resources in support of strategic initiatives emerging from performance management system. In the following sections we discuss Tanzania’s experience in implementing four components of the comprehensive performance management system.

### 3.3.2 Strategic and Operational Planning

Tanzania has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at improving performance in terms of planning, monitoring and reporting processes. The major objective is to get MDAs to focus on their outputs (i.e. what they produce) or their outcomes (what they achieve) rather than their inputs (the money they spend). Strategic Plans usually cover 3 to 5 years while operational plans generally cover a period of one year. Tanzania’s planning system is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

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\(^7\) Although the MTEF is three years, the IFMS works on a one year cycle.
The PMS endeavours on the one hand to fill gaps in strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation; and on the other hand to link institutional plans to individual responsibilities. In the course of instituting the strategic and operational planning tool or mechanism was revealed that:

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Tanzania’s planning process was characterized by overlapping jurisdictions especially at the institutional level. Whereas MTEF which overtime evolved into use as the Government’s main plan was championed by the Ministry of Finance, the Performance Management Systems (PMS) which is a broader planning and monitoring system was championed by the PO-PSM. The key players were acting unilaterally to address individual deficiencies.

There was duplication and unresolved links between planning levels (like the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), popularly referred to as MKUKUTA\(^9\) and institutional plans), processes and systems.

The tools to help government plan were insufficient and the competency (knowledge and creativity) required to create high quality plans was somewhat inadequate. Large sector and programme plans relied heavily on external systems and consultants.

Most MDAs had multiple but inconsistent plans which culminated into mixed messages both at the strategic and operational level. In many instances MDAS reported different things to different people, resulting in a duplication of effort and mixed messages.

Most of the MDAs plans were not very forward looking and did not chart very well the strategic direction. Plans describe what institutions want to do, and what they wish to achieve. MTEF objectives were predominantly statements of process and could not be described as strategic. Because of this monitoring was reduced to discussions of activity completion rather than performance assessment in terms of outputs, outcomes or impact.

The MTEF, Tanzania’s main planning document, mostly had no indicators to facilitate performance monitoring, and where indicators did

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\(^9\) MKUKUTA is a Kiswahili acronym which in English language denotes the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP).
exist they largely failed the standard test of indicator quality in terms of SMARTNESS\(^\text{10}\).

- Almost all managers claimed to work from the MTEF not their sector plans or the PMS plans. Despite this claim most managers in the MDAs did not keep copies of their MTEF plans at hand.
- Plans were not updated to reflect changing circumstances. Despite the level of detail contained in the MTEF and its use as a tool for tracking expenditure, the MTEF was not used as a tool to guide weekly operations at departmental level, and it was not adjusted to reflect the apparently lower-than-budgeted quarterly disbursement from the Ministry of Finance.
- There was a high degree of deviations from the plans both in terms of scheduling content. There were a lot of implemented activities which were not found in the plans, reflecting a weak planning capacity where planners did not accurately foresee future activities as well as frequent changing operational environment. Consequently plans tended to be intentionally vague and non-committal.
- A lot of monitoring was taking place in Government. However, most of the monitoring was informal and often non-systematic. It was not directly connected to the planning process. Very little formal performance monitoring was exhibited in the MDAs.
- The supply-driven PMS initiative did not sit down well with MDAs expectations.

### 3.3.2.1 Lessons of Experience and Challenges

Tanzania designed and implemented a number of remedial measures to address shortcomings outlined in the preceding section. The pitfalls regarding strategic and operational planning as distinctive components in performance management are not unique to Tanzania. Most of these shortcomings and

\(^{10}\) Real or proxy indicators must satisfy the requirement of being Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Aligned, Realistic and Time bound (SMART).
challenges in strategic and operational planning were taken care of immediately, and as soon as they emerged as stumbling blocks to the implementation of the strategic plans. However, the implementation of strategic and operational planning as distinctive tools for performance management generated some lessons of experience which are worth noting and sharing. They include:

First, eradication of duplication and overlapping and unilateralism in strategic and operational planning require well thought and strenuous measures as well as joint effort. Tanzania Government formed a “Task Force” consisting of senior officials from PO-PSM, VPO and PMO-RALG\(^\text{11}\) in order to rationalize planning, monitoring and reporting process in the public service institutions.

Second, whenever new systems are introduced in organizations such as the public service, sufficient time is required before they are internalized, fully understood, accepted, used and used with sufficient quality. As such, institutionalization of new systems in organizations requires constant efforts geared at continuous training, learning and follow up.

Third, successful implementation of strategic and operation plans require a full fledged Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. Useful information pertaining to the implementation of the plans must be collected from different data sources, including surveys; routine component level monitoring reports; and routine activity-level monitoring reports. Key information products must be produced including a semi-annual progress reports; annual progress reports; mid-term evaluation reports; phase completion reports; and impact evaluation reports. The information generated must enable different stakeholders to determine whether the strategic and operational plans are achieving the intended strategic goals and objectives or not. These are in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact of the plans. The public service in

\(^{11}\) The acronyms VPO and PO-RALG stand respectively for Vice President’s Office and President’s Office-Regional Administration and Local Government.
Tanzania using different data sources and data gathering instruments has developed a culture of producing progress reports on the implementation of strategic and operational plans every quarter, six months and year’s end reports to the stakeholders. The comprehensive seminal report was on the “State of the Public Service 2004” which was published and distributed to the stakeholders in 2005.

Fourth, planning, monitoring and reporting processes may be complicated by lack of computerized tools to implementers. Moreover, performance reporting should be firmly established. The public service institutions should be required to produce regular reports and subjected to parliamentary and, indeed, public scrutiny.

Fifth, demand-driven PMS initiative which takes into account the specific demands and operational contexts of MDAs is more likely to achieve the intended objectives than supply-driven PMS.

### 3.3.3 Open Performance Appraisal and Review System (OPRAS)

A new innovation for managing individual performance in the public service institutions was the introduction of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in 2004. This is a distinctive tool in the history of HRM in the Tanzanian public service. The OPRAS is one of the major tools that are critical to the adoption and nurturing of the performance management culture in the public Service. The tool which aligns the objectives of the individual officer with that of the department/division/unit/section to the objectives of the organization is used in all public service institutions. The open Performance and Review appraisal system replaced the ‘Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS) which was used before in order to assess the performance of employees in the public service institutions. The CACRS was limited and largely generated one-sided information on the performance of employees in the public service.
The OPRAS requires all public servants and their managers to develop their personal objectives based on strategic planning process and the organizations’ respective service delivery targets. To develop the individual performance plan both the supervisor and subordinate have to agree on performance objectives, performance targets, performance criteria and required resources in order to achieve the set targets and objectives. Moreover, there must be Mid-Year Review (MYR), which is important in order to keep track of the employee-cum appraisee’s progress in terms of meeting the annual personal objectives and to identify the resources needs that will be required to carry out the remaining six-month plan.

The installation of OPRAS by all MDAs has been made mandatory and the requirement is embodied in the Public Service Legislation. About 2,500 public servants were trained on the use of OPRAS from the year 2004 to 2008. However anecdotal evidence reveals that:

- The adoption and institutionalization of OPRAS in the MDAs has been patchy. The compliance rate is estimated to be about 51 percent for, arguably, a variety of reasons.
- There are claims that the initial OPRA forms were overly complicated to complete and they were not context-sensitive to different professional cadres in the public service.
- Some public servants remained skeptical of their intended use especially for promotion purposes.
- Little dissemination took place at the middle and lower levels of the MDAs or in field offices. The prognosis however is for their increasing use as staff become more familiar with the technique.

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12 By organization we refer to the following: i.e. sector, department, division, unit or section.
15 Ibid. p. 13
3.3.3.1 Lessons of Experience and Challenges

Effective employee performance appraisal is a useful tool for monitoring individual performance. Moreover, the appraisal system which provides the opportunity for dialogue between the appraisal and the appraised is more likely to improve performance than a system of staff appraisal which is closed and unilateral. A new change innovation in an organization, if not thought of well is more likely to generate supporters and believers than skeptics and doubting “Thomases” than supporters and believers. There may be leaders and staff who may not support new innovations. Continuous effort is required to bring the skeptics and “doubting Thomases” on board.

Furthermore, new innovations in organizations tend to create anxiety and the desire to see immediate results and changes as soon as possible. The best way of introducing new innovations in organizations such as the public service is by evolution rather than revolution. The process of installing new performance appraisal system should be supported by deliberate strategies for institutionalization of the system, including training and positive reinforcements.

Employee performance appraisal should, among other things serve as a tool for identification of the employees’ training needs. Performance appraisal should serve as a means to an end, hence should not become an end in itself. Training and development plans for employees should be developed and implemented in order to enhance their capacity. This would enable employees to perceive appraisal as a useful tool in their career and a source of healthy ‘psychological contract. They should know what is in the OPRAS for them.

Lastly, meaningful performance appraisal should also provide a means to recognize and reward good performance as well as to manage under-performance. Recognition or reward for performance, including Performance
Related Pay (PRP), salary progression guided by performance or non-pay reward system should be used as positive reinforcements in order to enable employee buy into the imperatives of OPRAS.

### 3.3.4 Client Service Charters

The installation of client service charters were designed for all MDAs and Regional Secretariats. The charters were intended to support the peoples’ demand for accountability at institutional level. The implementation of the client service charters have been, by and large, characterized by sad stories. Anecdotal evidence point to what may be refereed to as a somewhat sad story. A recent report by the World Bank\(^\text{16}\) points to the following weaknesses:

- Most of the client service charters are not operational in the MDAs;
- Citizens are not using them for demanding services;
- Public campaigns to publicizing them were inadequate and limited; and
- MDAs have not monitored the impacts of the charters and have not reviewed or amended them to generate greater legitimacy.

The foregoing observation conveys one critical message that introducing innovation in the public service institutions is not an easy task and “things may fall apart”. Introducing new tools and systems for performance management is one thing but implementing them effectively and efficiently is a different thing.

### 3.3.4.1 Lessons of Experience and Challenges

The implementation trend of the client service charters, as a performance management tool in the public institutions in Tanzania generates more heat

\(^{16}\) World Bank, op.cit. p. 13.
than light. However, there are lessons of experience as well as challenges which we must point out.

The charters are likely to serve a useful purpose in an environment in which the literacy rate is very high and the reading culture is well entrenched in society. This permits people to read and derive a correct meaning from various government documents, and consequently they are likely to use the acquired knowledge to demand accountability consonant with the prescriptions of the charters. Moreover, a conscious citizenry is more likely to hold public officials accountable if they provide lip service.

Awareness creation is also very important in “conscientizing” the people to demand services and accountability. This could be achieved if the government and other non-state actors, including the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other interest groups mount deliberate campaigns to educate the people on their right to access public services in specified time frame as well as their entitlement to a quality and timeliness service.

4.0 Concluding Remarks: Tying it all Together

Effective performance management in the public service requires specific tools and deliberate measures. Tanzania has made significant achievement in recognizing the need to ensure that performance in the public service institutions is monitored and evaluated by using a number of management tools and installing them in all MDAs. Much as installation of the performance management tools is important, it is also imperative to ensure that the performance management systems is continuously institutionalized in the public service in order to pave they way for creating and attaining a performance culture in the entire public service.

A performance management culture cannot be created by chance or by revolutionary means. This culture must be created evolutionary by putting
into place a supportive incentive regime, including strategies to counsel and develop the poor-performers as well as rewarding tangibly and non-tangibly the good performers in the public service. The performance management tools should serve as means to good performance; hence they should not become ends in themselves.

Effective performance management requires the institutional and legal frameworks. However, the legislation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for institutionalizing the tools for managing performance. Both the hard (laws) and soft measures, including counseling and training are required to enforce compliance with performance management requirements.

There is a growing critique of Performance Management Systems. Firstly, they are seen as adding more pressure to a short-term view among MDAs managers which may well hamper performance in the public service over a long term. Secondly, they are often proffered in a very prescriptive fashion, with many writers advocating a single best way for performance management, to the neglect of important variables such as degree of centralization, unionization, etc. The real danger is that performance management, including the employee performance appraisal system cannot be simply borrowed from one organization and applied in another as many advocates appear to suggest. If PMS has to work the first important step is to change the focus from appraisal to performance planning, review and development.
REFERENCES


