Transforming How Government Employees Will Work

Anti-Corruption Hotline Yielding Results

The Importance Of Knowledge Harvesting In Government

The Government Employees Pension Fund Blueprint Continues To Work
CONSOLIDATING OUR COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE FOR THE FUTURE

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2 From The Editor's Desk
3 Letter from Batho Pele House
4 News In Brief

ETHICS

6 Anti-corruption hotline yielding results
8 Corruption - getting to the belly of the beast

URBANISATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

10 The Promise of the Big City

E-GOVERNMENT

13 Mobilizing e-government to build resilient societies
15 SA prepares for digital revolution
17 Transforming How Government Employees Will Work

ORGANISATIONAL FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS CASE STUDY

19 Case Study: Organisational Functionality Assessment In The Kwazulu-Nataprovincial Department Of Education: Assessment Year – 2013-2014

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY

23 A Gathering of Government Knowledge Workers
25 Case Study: The importance of knowledge harvesting in Government
29 Framework for establishing a formal graduate recruitment scheme

PERSONAL FINANCE

32 The Government Employees Pension Fund blueprint continues to work
Welcome to the electronic version of the Service Delivery Review (e-SDR) magazine. This edition is the second of three editions being piloted during this financial year. Needless to say, the feedback received on the transition from hard copies to digital has been positive and encouraging. The people at the finance department are happy! The savings from foregoing the printing part of producing the SDR magazine are massive. In addition, the headaches that are associated with distributing the publication are all gone!

We know that change is often difficult and uncomfortable. This is because familiarity and sameness are reassuring and comforting. Most of us would rather be left alone as we are, industriously fitting a square peg into a round hole over and over again, never minding the futility of the exercise. The fear of change is a result of the force of habit, but it is also fuelled by a lack of awareness and understanding of what is possible beyond our routines.

In this edition we carry a number of articles that we hope will contribute towards lifting the veil of unawareness in a number of areas. In the article, Promise of the Big City, by Gauteng Premier David Makhura, for example, the inevitable tide of urbanisation is seen not as a threat, but as presenting countless opportunities for big cities and city-regions. Even as they are mostly seen as havens for the marginalised, urban areas bustle with energy and entrepreneurial bounty that just need a bit of a push.

In her regular Letter from Batho Pele House, Minister for Public Service and Administration Ayanda Dlodlo, similarly alludes to the necessity of the kind of changes that the Public Service ought to undergo to be relevant and make a substantive impact. The minister talks of the Public Service Graduate Recruitment Scheme, which not only seeks to make a dent on youth unemployment, but also to infuse energy and fresh ideas into service delivery. Yet another signpost for change is the minister’s Public Service Heckathon initiative, which encourages tech-savvy youngsters to help government find solutions to old service delivery-related difficulties.

This edition contains several other articles with a similar message. However, the case-study on Knowledge Harvesting in Government by Dr Ronel Davel of the South African Revenue Service (Sars), cautions that while change is important and even inevitable, it could result in a loss of expertise, experience and institutional memory that have been built over time. In other words, as desirable and even necessary as change is, it ought to be soberly managed.

Dudley Moloi
Lately, South Africans from all walks of life and across ideological lines are asking deep and hard questions about the Public Service, and justifiably so. They want to know whether South Africa can afford the current public service salary bill, given the unfavourable economic climate. They are asking why the sheer size of the Public Service – numbering nearly 1.5 million people, appears not to have a corresponding impact on the quality of life of many South Africans?

There are as many answers to these many questions as there are millions of people who are concerned about the state of the Public Service. And each of the answers has a ring of truth to it. Yet, is it possible that we are looking at the shortcomings of the public service from the wrong end of the telescope?

There is no doubt that size does indeed matter. The number of public servants that government employs as pitted against service delivery outcomes is a cause for concern. However, any suggestion that the complaints against the Public Service could be eliminated by merely cutting the fat and reducing personnel costs does not begin to get to the root of the problem, which runs deep.

One of the deep-rooted challenges that continues to bedevil the Public Service at all levels is the lack of problem-solving skills, despite the range of legal, policy and regulatory tools that make this possible. The ability to solve problems, legally, is ever more urgent, given the complex and ever-shifting social settings of the Public Service.

Not only does the Public Service contend with chasing fast-moving service delivery targets, it also has to respond to the changed demographic dynamics. For example, the capabilities of service delivery points are increasingly under strain in urban centres, notably around the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg, due to rapid immigration. There are also the pressing current and future needs of a growing youth population who face vulnerabilities from several fronts. How the Public Service serves the youth is as important as what kind of services are relevant to the current and future needs of young people.

Launched in July this year, the Public Service Graduate Recruitment Scheme is one of many ways in which government is responding to the pressing challenge of youth unemployment. The scheme is crucial to the rejuvenation of the Public Service, and not only in age representivity. It is also a way of enthusing the Public Service and introducing new ideas for solving old problems, especially as the world hurtles towards the much vaunted fourth industrial revolution.

The Public Service Hackathon campaign, which was launched in September as part of Public Service Month, is yet another initiative that seeks to place young people at the centre of helping to resolve the many challenges that still confront our nation. Inspired by the desire to ensure that the Public Service ‘moves with the times’, the Hackathon is a problem-solving exercise aimed at finding solutions to service delivery challenges. It will bring young people together in a digital space with the task of identifying gaps and challenges in the government’s service delivery model and proposing innovative solutions that government can deploy to confront these challenges.

Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo, MP
Minister Ayanda Dlodlo 
Hacks Public Service Month

The University of Johannesburg was turned into a festival of ideas when the Minister for the Public Service and Administration Ms Ayanda Dlodlo convened over 400 of the brightest and most innovative minds in South Africa for a three-days National Public Service Hackathon. The event was a business-unusual closing ceremony to mark the end of the annual Public Service Month and it was a hive a productive activity, demonstrating that government was indeed at work.

Minister Dlodlo officially opened the Hackathon by learning how to code the welcoming message using C-Sharp computer programming language and she also joined the Hackers for the pitches that took place at midnight on Saturday. Also present at the Hackathon were Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration Dr Chana Pilane-Majake, Deputy Minister of Communications Ms Pinky Kekana, as well as Gauteng MEC for Education Mr Panyaza Lesufi.

The 400 plus participants hailed from all over the country from different backgrounds. Upon arrival at the Hackathon, they were briefed on the biggest challenges facing service delivery in the country. The Hackers were given 40 hours to develop innovative solutions to challenges in the Education, Health, Environment, and Accountability sectors, amongst others.

The overall winners were Team Guardian who created a solution called Keaphila, a decentralised data storage system based on Blockchain principles, which will enhance the implementation of the NHI Scheme. The solution allows medical professional across the board to access a patient’s file remotely.

The runner-ups were University of Johannesburg’s TechnoLab team who developed BETA which focuses on empowering young people in South Africa to be able to attain extremely critical and useful skills. They created an app that uses artificial intelligence to help learners solve Mathematics problems intuitively and easily.

Data Wizzards completed the top three and they came up with a solution to digitise the public health system in order to leverage big data and deep learning to deliver enhanced services to citizens. All the solutions that were developed over the weekend will be presented to the relevant government departments to encourage them to implement the solutions they deem most viable.

Public Sector innovation is the new frontier in the march to development and the Ministry for the Public Service and Administration is committed to becoming a vehicle for innovation in the Public Service.
Some people turn a blind eye to corruption for fear that reporting it will jeopardise their careers, or even their lives. But there are laws that protect whistle-blowers or people who report corruption in South Africa. The government’s anti-corruption hotline allows people to report corruption anonymously and, in this way, protects their identities.

Launched on 1 September 2004, the aim of the anti-corruption hotline is to create a central database for reporting and monitoring cases of corruption, while eliminating the duplication of investigations and resources.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), as the institution tasked with overseeing the performance of the public service, is the custodian of the hotline. Anyone can report acts of corruption through the hotline by dialling 0800 701 701.

From September 2004 to March 2017, the hotline contributed to identifying 3 655 people who were subsequently found guilty of misconduct. For its role in these successes, the hotline was given a stamp of approval.

“We are making a dent as shown with the numbers: 1 740 officials were dismissed, 450 were fined, 140 were demoted, 927 officials were given final written warnings and 395 were criminally prosecuted,” says Public Service Commissioner Sellinah Nkosi.

At the end of the 2017-18 financial year, through the successful investigation of cases reported through the hotline, R420 million was recovered and returned to the public purse. While ordinary citizens are encouraged to report corruption, public servants are obligated to do so.

“Public servants are obliged to report incidents of corruption because if you are aware of something wrong happening and don’t report it, it could mean you are also party to that,” says Nkosi.

When lodging a complaint or reporting an act of corruption, callers are asked a series of questions pertaining to the act that is being reported. This assists investigators to narrow their search and zone in on their target.

Once reported, cases are forwarded to the relevant departments and public entities for investigation. The departments and public entities are then required to provide feedback to the PSC on the progress made.
This feedback is captured on the hotline’s Case Management System (CMS) to enable complainants or whistle-blowers to track the progress on the cases they reported.

But with matters like corruption, fear often stops potential complainants from blowing the whistle.

Some of the challenges we experience are drop calls. People are worried and afraid to report corruption. Even when they report, when you ask probing questions, they drop the calls because they are afraid that you might recognise who they are and because they are afraid of victimisation, especially public service officials.

“They are afraid of victimisation and also occupational detriment that once it is known that they have reported these allegations, they will suffer at work,” says the Commissioner.

To combat the element of fear and ensure the protection of whistle-blowers, the Protected Disclosures Act lists the PSC as one of the institutions protected under the Act.

The Act, dubbed the Whistle-blowers’ Act, makes provision for employees to report unlawful or irregular conduct by employers and employees, while protecting the person who blows the whistle.

“I am happy that in the Protected Disclosures Act, the PSC has been included as one of the bodies that you can report to because in the past, people would be afraid to report because they would think that they are not protected.

Whistle-blowers are protected and can report anonymously,” says Nkosi. In addition to fear, Nkosi says another setback for the hotline was the reduction of the centre’s operating hours, from 24 hours to only eight hours, five days a week.

We used to operate 24 hours, seven days a week and we would notice then that most of the calls would come in after business hours, because people have knocked off and are not at their places of work and can freely engage us. But due to financial constraints, we had to cut down to reduce costs.

“We want to operate up until 7pm or 8pm in the evening, that has financial implications because our staff has to work shifts,” says Nkosi.

The Commission plans to approach ICASA for the possibility of making the hotline a toll-free number because a person may want to report corruption and will be asked a list of questions, all this while using their own airtime.

Although many hurdles exist at the hotline, the PSC remains steadfast that every call that results in successful investigation chips away at the scourge of corruption.

“Corruption is rife, but we will never give up and say we are not winning the battle. If one person is arrested then it is fine. At least something is being done, unlike when nothing is happening to people who are corrupt,” says Nkosi.

Despite the challenges, the hotline continues to grow from strength to strength.

During the 2017-18 financial year, the PSC received 882 cases through the anti-corruption hotline. In this period, complaints about social grants fraud led the pack with 594 cases reported through the hotline.

Cases of unethical behaviour (69), fraud and bribery (34), appointment irregularities (26), procurement irregularities (24), abuse of government resources (18), maladministration (15), criminal conduct other than fraud and bribery (17), abuse of power (14) and identity fraud (13) made up the other top 10 complaints lodged.

With these notable achievements, Nkosi encouraged all citizens to make use of the hotline and play their part in ending corruption.

We want to fight corruption because as we know, our government is not rich. The GDP is not growing and we are no longer collecting tax that will be able to service everything that has to be serviced and so the little resources we have must be taken care of and used efficiently.

“We therefore encourage both public servants and the public at large to report any corrupt act because an allegation remains an allegation until it is investigated,” says Nkosi.
Corruption

Getting to the belly of the beast

The Oxford Dictionary defines corruption as “dishonesty” or an “illegal behaviour”. Full stop. It ends there. The results of Police Minister Bheki Cele’s recent dissection of the word are less flattering. However, it piercingly removes the scabs of the plague’s recuperating laceration, writes Sihle Manda.

“Corruption kills the progress of communities,” an animated Cele told delegates at the recent National Summit on Crime and Violence Prevention in Boksburg, Ekurhuleni. Intensely sobering was that the statement was met with a deafening silence in the second or two while he caught his breath.

Government has prioritised the scourge of corruption, adopting a zero-tolerance approach in both the public and private sector. Corruption is deemed a societal problem to be fought collectively.

The pandemic of fraud and corruption continues to be a source of trepidation to the country’s development prospects but government’s recent interventions have sparked optimism that the tide will gradually turn.

Having taken stock of this harsh reality, government has undertaken a series of interventions in an effort to stop the rot.

The Anti-Corruption Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Anti-Corruption Task Team have developed a broad framework to deal with corruption and are in the process of finalising the development of a holistic Anti-Corruption Strategy.

Government’s arsenal to combat corruption includes the adoption of a code of conduct for the public service.

Additionally, government established specialised anti-corruption units such as the South African Police Service (SAPS) Organised Crime Unit, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks), the National Prosecuting Authority’s Asset Forfeiture Unit and the Financial Intelligence Centre.

These efforts are bolstered by Specialised Commercial Crime courts and the creation of the national and sectoral anti-corruption hotlines.

“We have corruption as a disease,” Cele lamented. “Nobody can now deny that some of us in South Africa are corrupt – very corrupt. It’s not just police as some of us would want us to believe. [This] is one area that the President has made a serious call.”

Corruption Watch’s 2018 Analysis of Corruption Trend (ACT) Report, says it continues to receive thousands of complaints from the public with harrowing experiences. The non-profit organisation, working to fight corruption in South Africa, received 2 500 complaints according the report. The matters ranged from recruitment to procurement in schools, police stations and municipalities.

The picture is not assisted much by international observers. According to Transparency International’s 2018 Corruption Index, South Africa slipped in rank from 64 to 71 of 180 countries.

In an attempt to up the ante on looting, the SAPS will soon announce an anti-corruption body to ensure police net perpetrators more efficiently.

“We’ll soon be announcing that we want eminent people to join the anti-corruption body in the South African Police. It will be people like retired judges, bishops and so forth. This will be to make sure that we have all the integrity of a monitoring structure,” Cele said.

“I can’t be us alone in monitoring ourselves. Cats can’t monitor cats not to eat the cheese; you need some other animals.”

Cele is adamant that the lives of millions of South Africans will continue to linger in oblivion should the epidemic not be halted.

“If we don’t fix this [corruption], we won’t fix the lives of the people. So, don’t look away where you see corrupt practices; especially, don’t be part of it,” he said.

The notion that only government officials were corrupt needed to be stopped as this act required collusion between business and government, Cele said, reiterating his stance during the release of the 2017-18 crime statistics.

“I agree, some government people [are] corrupt. But who corrupts them? Did they wake up corrupt? Or somebody said: ‘If you give this to me, I’ll give you a cut. J ust give me the tender, I’ll take 60[%], you’ll take 40[%]’ - and that’s a R20 million cut,” he said. We are not going to go anywhere if we don’t deal decisively with corruption. Corruption is across the board. People are corrupt out there, especially government people.”

Cele heaped praise on President Cyril Ramaphosa for his unflinching stance on fraud and corruption, citing his recent signing of Special Investigation Unit proclamations into maladministration at various government departments, state-owned entities and municipalities.

One of those was the investigation into the Office of the State Attorney. Allegations include fleecing the state of R80 billion in malpractice, lack of
proficiency and suspicion of abuse of office towards unlawful ends.

"[Have you ever] thought this office would be investigated by the office of the SIU? They are investigated for the abuse and stealing of R80 billion. Eight-zero billion - Office of the Attorney General. I've never heard you shout about them being corrupt," he said.

The reinvigorated elite police unit, the Hawks, Cele said, "must get their wings and fly".

"Strengthening all the police units, all the courts and becoming really brutal and making sure that structures like the IPID are working. But ourselves as police, two Fridays ago we arrested six of our own in the Eastern Cape. Three months ago, we arrested 17 at a go in the Eastern Cape."

Justice and Violence Prevention head at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Gareth Newham, recently wrote on the institution's website that President Ramaphosa has to support much-needed criminal justice system reforms that could hold the corrupt accountable.

"An active civil society, an independent judiciary and a strong media are also fundamental to improving the criminal justice system and strengthening the rule of law," he wrote.

He said some headway has been made with the positive appointments of new head of the Hawks, Godfrey Lebeya, and the police's head of Crime Intelligence Division, Anthony Jacobs.

"[The] new law enforcement agency leaders must urgently replace compromised or unsuitable individuals with capable managers, investigators and prosecutors," he wrote.

With the evident untangling of the complicated web, it is evident that government seems more resolute than ever to get to the belly of the devouring beast.
The PROMISE of the Big City

Metros and cities are a way out of poverty for millions of people worldwide, but can they live up to the promises?

By Gauteng Province Premier, David Makhura
URBANISATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The network of metropolises and large cities from across the world once again graced the shores of South Africa for their annual meeting in August this year. The first such meeting was in 2013, under the leadership of the former mayor of Johannesburg, Parks Tau. This time around the annual Metropolis gathering wrestled with how to build ‘inclusive metropolitan cities and city-regions’.

One of the dominant mega-trends of the 21st century is the relentless tide of rapid urbanisation. More than 50% of the world’s population live in cities. Already, 60% of South Africans live in cities. It is further projected that by 2050, some 90% of the world’s population will be living in cities and urban areas. In reality, the very things that pull people to urban areas are the sources of the challenges that cities face. There are growing concerns over the extent to which cities are inclusive in how they provide basic services and access to economic opportunities, including jobs.

At once heralding hope and prospects, the many pressures that are brought to bear on cities also make them hotbeds of all manner of exclusions and inequalities. While urbanisation offers city residents the opportunity for a better life, many cities and city-regions have become spaces that also feature violent crime; urban poverty and hunger; lack of security of tenure; acute inequality between the rich and poor; economic marginalisation of the majority; spatial exclusion and injustice on the basis of race, gender, age, class, religion and place of origin.

More than anyone, leaders of sub-national governments at city and regional level are faced with the stark choice of building cities and city-regions that are characterised by the evils of fear, hatred, exclusion and inequality, or finding ways of building cities and city-regions that embrace inclusivity, equity and diversity. The latter choice comes with the responsibility of turning cities and city-regions into hubs of inclusive growth, sustainable development and service delivery to all citizens.

The above-average rate of urbanisation on the African continent makes the task ahead even more daunting. Africa’s population is expected to reach 2 billion people by 2050; 70% will be below the age of 30 and an overwhelming majority will be living in cities. In sub-Saharan Africa, the urban population grew by more than 200 million, bringing the total

Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni are the spine of the Gauteng city-region, which represents the best promise and the worst problems of urbanisation in Africa. The province is home to 24% of South Africa’s population and contributes more than one-third to South Africa’s GDP. Its three metros are major drivers of growth and employment in our national economy. For instance, the City of Joburg contributes 15% to national GDP, Tshwane 9% and Ekurhuleni 7%. The city-region boasts world-class infrastructure, rich cultural diversity, a young population and vibrant informal trade.

However, the Gauteng city-region has its own great exclusions that are difficult to overcome. The legacy of apartheid spatial planning, the economic marginalisation of black people and the social exclusion of women and youth are some of the realities that face city and regional governors daily as we strive to construct a new post-apartheid society.

The collapse of apartheid has tripled the rate of urban migration. Gauteng has to contend with the reality that more than 200 000 people move into the province every year. This places enormous pressure on municipalities and provincial government departments in terms of service delivery and infrastructure development, with particular reference to education, healthcare and housing.

Although a lot of resources continue to be invested in this areas and general infrastructure, the backlog remains huge due to rapid urbanisation. For instance, despite the fact that we have built more than 1,2 million houses (30% of the national housing stock) since 1994, the province still has a backlog of 1 million houses.

As the most industrialised city-region in sub-Saharan Africa, Gauteng has all the hallmarks of urban ecosystems in the developing world. This requires significant investment in the maintenance of infrastructure and the initiation and development of new mega infrastructure projects in housing, public transport, water, energy, sanitation, broadband, industrial parks, schools and health facilities.
to some 430 million people, or 38% of the sub-Saharan population, living in cities today.

Urbanisation on the African continent can be a window of opportunity in several ways. More than before, the clustering of people around cities and urban areas makes it possible to potentially expunge the urban bias, or the stubborn patterns in which urban areas enjoy better service levels than their rural counterparts.

Cities and urban centres are known to attract the robust and energetic. They mainly attract those that are better educated, creative, innovative, entrepreneurial, ambitious, impatient and youthful. The net effect of this mix of demographics and personalities makes for dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial urban centres.

It being labelled as ‘underdeveloped’ is not a badge of shame. It only means that Africa’s economic graph can only point upwards. Her cities and mega cities are driving the new industrial revolution in clean, green and ecologically sustainable living. They are leading the charge towards the kind of Africa we want; an Africa rising together with her people.

What has been painted thus far is a picture of what the African continent could become, driven by its cities and urban centres. It is, however, a picture that could only become a reality through visionary leadership, effective planning and provision of adequate infrastructure. Doing otherwise would only turn the urban promised land into a nightmare of urban squalor, poverty, inequality and crime, which are the common features of many urban centres in the developing world. If it is true that the 21st century is the African century, as argued by former President Thabo Mbeki, then this African century will be made possible through a distinct contribution of a critical mass of African cities that are becoming growth points and economic development nodes of the different regions of the continent.

This new picture of Africa is dependent on the cities and regional governments fighting for their space in the African body politic. It means being well organised and well governed by leaders with a strong sense of ethics and respect for the rule of law.

Most important is that the renewal of the continent being driven by cities cannot take off without the concomitant financial commitments from the centre of government. The many challenges that cities and urban areas are charged with cannot be overcome through mere words. The provision of adequate infrastructure and building capabilities for sustainable urban planning and financially viable cities costs money.

African cities are currently playing a national role in managing the challenges of urbanisation, but are not adequately funded in line with their contribution to the GDP of their countries. In particular, African capital cities and city-regions need to be at the centre of shaping a uniquely African new urban agenda. They have to localise and give practical and contextual meaning to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

For African cities to offer opportunities to citizens, they have to be well funded and well governed so that they don’t turn into slums and hubs of crime, unemployment, inequality, informality, environmental degradation and urban poverty.

African cities are also trying to assert their role in shaping the destiny of our continent. From Cape to Cairo; Accra to Addis Ababa; Lagos to Luanda; Abidjan to eThekwini; Libreville to Dar es Salaam; Nairobi to Maputo; Kigali to Windhoek; Johannesburg to Juba; Tunis to Tshwane; Gaborone to Rabat; Kinshasa to Conakry; Khartoum to Kampala; Brazzaville to Bamako; the streets of our cities are buzzing with hope, innovation, ambition, diversity and entrepreneurship.

However, it is from the toils of African leaders at all levels and sectors that the day-to-day dreams of the inhabitants of African cities could be realised. After all, it was Nelson Mandela who said the following in his 1998 farewell speech to the United Nations General Assembly: “I will continue to hope that Africa’s Renaissance will strike deep roots and blossom forever, without regard to the changing seasons. Were all these hopes to translate into a realisable dream and not a nightmare to torment the soul of the aged, then will I, indeed, have peace and tranquillity. Then would history and billions throughout the world proclaim that it was right that we dreamt and that we toiled to give life to a workable dream.”
Mobilising e-government to build resilient societies

The 2018 UN E-Government Survey, with the overall theme “gearing e-government to support transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”, is published as the implementation of the 2030 agenda advances to its third year and the 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) focuses on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

Global and regional trends in e-government

E-government has been growing rapidly over the past 17 years since the 1st attempt by the United Nations to benchmark the state of e-government in 2001. The 2018 survey highlights a persistent positive global trend towards higher levels of e-government development. In this edition, 40 countries scored ‘very-high’ on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), with values in the range of 0.75 to 1.00, compared to only 10 countries in 2003 and 29 countries in 2016. Since 2014, all 193 member states have delivered some form of online presence.

The average world EGDI has increased from 0.47 in 2014 to 0.55 in 2018 due to the continuous improvement of its subcomponents’ indices. This suggests that globally, there has been steady progress in improving e-government and providing public services online. But despite some development gains and major investments in several countries, the e-government and digital divides persist. Fourteen countries in the low-EGDI group are African and belong to the least developed countries.

Denmark, followed by Australia and the Republic of Korea, lead the world in providing government services and information through the Internet according to the 2018 EGDI. The remaining countries in the top 10 are the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Singapore, New Zealand, France and Japan.

E-government development increased overall across regions, driven largely by improvements in the online service index. The European countries lead e-government development, while the Americas and Asia share almost equal standing in the high- and middle-level EGDI. The number of African countries in the high-level EGDI group remains relatively modest at six, with only one country, Ghana, joining the group since 2016.

Many people in these countries are unable to benefit from ICT because of poor connectivity, the high cost of access and a lack of necessary skills. These disadvantages are likely to affect the further development of e-government in Africa as the pace of technological innovation intensifies. Finally, in order to build a well-functioning e-government, countries need to strengthen investments in developing human capital and telecommunication infrastructure.

According to the 2018 survey, the complexity of e-government in promoting accountable, effective, inclusive, transparent and trustworthy public services that deliver people-centric outcomes is growing. Currently, there are trends of deploying e-services, especially in health, education, the environment and decent employment, while the reach to the most vulnerable is expanding. The major drivers of the EGDI, as well as trends in open government data, public participation and engagement for delivering innovative public services are scrutinised in detail.

According to the survey, the three most commonly used online services in 2018 are utilities payment, submission of income taxes and registration of new businesses. Service availability through emails, feed updates, mobile apps and SMS (short message service, or texts) has doubled globally, especially in the health and education sectors. For instance, 176 countries provide online services in education via email alerts to citizens compared to 88 countries in 2016, and 152 countries provided such services in the health sector this year compared to 75 in 2016. A growing number of countries are also providing targeted online services to vulnerable groups: 86% in the Americas, 79% in Asia, 57% in Africa and 15% in Oceania. One hundred and forty member states provide at least one transactional service online. Improvement in such services is strong and consistent in all assessed categories: paying for utilities; submitting income tax; registering new businesses; paying fees; applying for birth and marriage certificates; registering motor vehicles; and applying for driver's licenses and personal identity cards.

Transforming cities to increase resilience and sustainability

The survey provides an overview of assessment models and presents the findings of a pilot study carried out in 40 municipalities around the world. The challenges and opportunities of applying e-governance to local government units are presented through specific cases. E-government improves public services, citizen engagement, and the transparency and accountability of authorities at the local level. E-government also strengthens resilience and sustainability and better aligns local government operations with national digital strategies.

Among the top 10 of the 40 pilot cities, Moscow ranks the highest, followed by Cape Town and Tallinn (second, tie) and by London and Paris (forth, tie). According to the Local Online Services Index (LOSI), used in determining this ranking, the remaining cities in the top 10 are Sydney, Amsterdam and
Seoul (seventh, tie), and Rome and Warsaw (ninth, tie). The LOSI covers the technical and content aspects of the city/municipality websites, as well as electronic services provision and e-participation initiatives available through the portals.

Politicians, policy-makers and public officials are creating new policies to promote resilience and sustainability, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, equal opportunity for all, support for vulnerable groups, land development and planning, economic development, smart growth, pollution prevention, energy, resources and water conservation, inner-city public transit, eco-projects and alternative energy. Public administration processes are being reengineered to integrate these policies into local planning and development efforts, even as these administrations are striving to keep pace with the speed of technological innovation.

Improving local e-government is inseparable from the pursuit of sustainable development goals (SDGs). The 2030 agenda recognises the importance of technological innovation in implementing the SDGs and contains specific references to the need for high quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data including earth observation and geospatial information.

Many of the specific targets of the 2030 agenda are directly or indirectly related to local e-government assessment indicators. Local governments are indeed the policy-makers and catalysts of change. They are also the level of government best placed to bind the SDGs to local communities. The development of electronic services and the increasing number of citizens participating in decision-making will motivate efforts to achieve the SDGs and assist in making cities sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient.

**Fast-evolving technologies affecting e-government and possible applications for the SDGs**

Today, fast-evolving technologies have a potential to transform the traditional way of doing things across all functions and domains of government as well as the ways in which ICT offers governments an unprecedented opportunity to achieve sustainable development and improve the well-being of their citizens. The challenge lies in the speed with which technology is evolving, which surpasses the speed at which governments can respond to and use ICT to their advantage.

The survey discusses some of these transformative technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence including cognitive analytics, robotics, bots, and high-performance and quantum computing. It explains how forces driving such technologies are the result of long-term and painstaking research and development, their use by businesses and citizens, as well as the increased processing power of hardware, increasing data availability and society's driving needs and expectations. Oftentimes, it is not the technologies that are new but the convergence of developments in hardware, software and data availability.

Data is currently being referred to as the new oil, the new raw material driving innovation and growth in both the private and public sectors. Indeed, data use will grow exponentially in the next decade and will offer the ability to systematically analyse and act in real time to solve more complex business problems, create more competitive advantage and make better-informed decisions in a tightly connected world.

Yet, integrated approaches to achieving synergies and minimising trade-offs may remain relatively untapped in many countries.

Artificial Intelligence is beneficial, particularly with its potential applications, touching on neural networks, natural language processing, machine learning, and robotic process automation. The recognised benefits of AI are error reduction, robust functioning, delegation of repetitive jobs, improved security, improved business operations as well as improved customer experience. However, the rise in use of AI also carries uncertainty in terms of employment. It is feared that AI, particularly robotic automation, will leave low-skilled workers without jobs.

The fourth industrial revolution and convergence of innovative technologies such as big data, internet of things, cloud computing, geo-spatial data, broadband, AI and machine learning is promoting a dramatic shift towards more data and machine-driven societies.

Digital transformation does not depend on technologies alone, but also requires a comprehensive approach that offers accessible, fast, reliable and personalised services. The public sector in many countries is ill-prepared for this transformation. Governments can respond by developing the necessary policies, services and regulations, but many of these instruments are slow to be ‘brought to the market’. Principles such as effectiveness, inclusiveness, accountability, trustworthiness and openness should direct the technologies and not the other way around.

The survey concludes that while e-government began with bringing services online, the future will be about the power of digital government to leverage societal innovation and resilience and to transform governance to better achieve the SDGs. ■

Source: excerpts from UN E-Government 2018 report
SA prepares for digital revolution

“Government leaders, information and communication technology (ICT) doyens, academics, researchers, exhibitors and industry geeks with an interest in all things technological, recently converged in the sunny seaside city of Durban. Their mission? To ponder the way the Fourth Industrial Revolution will reshape the way governments all over the world work,” writes Nosihle Shelembe.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecom World Conference 2018, held for the first time on African soil, gave governments and industry leaders an opportunity to explore challenges, partnerships, solutions, investment opportunities and best practices for socio-economic development through ICT. The conference was hosted on the continent to increase the participation of other African countries, which would also increase the possibilities of investment in ICT on the continent.

South Africa, as the host, had the added advantage of positioning the country as a leader in Africa in the ICT development space. The conference supported the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, which calls for support of the continent’s accelerated growth and technological transformation, and for the attainment of a well-developed ICT and digital economy. This goal is aligned to South Africa’s own National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 vision of transforming the country into an inclusive and innovative digital and knowledge society. This will be achieved by promoting leadership and partnerships to tackle the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

South Africa used the opportunity to promote its business, scientific and academic research projects and showcased its innovation. The conference attracted more than 3 100 participants from 94 countries. Among these were over 200 ICT leaders from 74 countries, including 33 ministers, and 125 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from emerging and developed markets alike.

One of the strategic values of hosting the conference was that government, together with its sponsors, provided support to over 50 small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) to exhibit at the conference. The entrepreneurs were mentored on how to pitch their ideas to investors.

“The SMMEs we supported as government and our partners, to showcase their work, will not only be known at this conference … global businesses are looking at those technologies. This is a huge marketing opportunity for them,” said the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services Siyabonga Cwele.

More money from honey

One of those businesses that exhibited its technology at the conference was Beedale, a family business that developed an application that informs the bee farmer when the honey in the hive is ready. This application is linked to a bee box. Member of the family business, Nicky Worthmann, says beekeepers generally get one reaping of honey from one box per season.

“With this technology they can get up to three just by knowing when the honey is ready. The application also has a temperature probe, demonstrating how technology can be used to improved agricultural production, because if the temperature drops, the bees can get sick or they can fly out of the hive, leaving the box empty. Beedale also wants to put a QR code at the back of the honey bottle to inform consumers about the farmer that produced the honey and the types of
flowers that were in season when the honey was produced. Worthmann says being at the conference has been a wonderful opportunity as potential investors from Malawi and Zimbabwe have expressed interest in the application.

Incubation programmes to assist SMMEs

Noting the talent of SMMEs who exhibited their products at the conference, Minister Cwele says the technologies that emerged at the conference will make it easier for South Africa to be at the forefront of the digital economy and digital revolution. In an effort to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs to thrive, the department and its partners intend to set-up Tech SMME Incubation centres at the Dube Trade Port in KwaZulu-Natal and at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria.

The incubation centres will assist SMMEs to develop their business ideas from the infancy stage. The businesses will be offered support and guidance as they produce new technologies. Incubation programmes are aimed at improving the early-stage survival and long-term growth prospects of SMMEs, to ensure that they remain sustainable.

“These centres will be hosted in an environment that will enable the building of solutions, and the ability to transform innovative ideas of SMMEs into real projects. The facility will grow into a space that allows sponsored SMMEs to build and stage their ideas,” says the minister. SMMEs using the facilities will be contracted on an agreed timeline to get their ideas to prototype level.

“Through various partnerships, the department and Cisco hopes to develop current and cultivate new SMMEs in the ICT space and help them enter, grow and compete in the market,” the minister says.

Forum to bring it all together

In preparation for the digital revolution, South Africa has committed to train women, children, people with disabilities and SMMEs. These programmes include digital literacy training for 100 women per province. In October, the department will launch a multi-stakeholder consultative forum to devise a strategy towards collaborating for the programme. The objective of the multi-stakeholder forum is to determine how to ensure that opportunities and facilities are widely commuted and accessible to SMMEs, women and youth-owned organisations. It’s also aimed at addressing gaps identified by government to bridge the digital divide, transform the industry and close the growing unemployment gap. As of 2019, government will train one million young people to be data scientists until 2030.

Bridging the digital divide

The South Africa Government has emphasised that the digital revolution must respond to the needs of the developing world by assisting it to overcome unemployment, as well as bridging the digital divide. According to the minister, government is making progress in the rollout of broadband through the SA Connect programme.

“Broadband Infraco continues to bring fibre closer to small villages, which makes the 3G and 4G network work much faster. The fibre also makes the Wi-Fi networks work faster,” he says.

The department, together with the National Treasury and the Development Bank of Southern Africa, are looking at affordable and sustainable public private partnership models in an effort to get funding to roll out the programme throughout the country.

“We are not going to have the R88 billion we need to roll out this project throughout the country so we are going to have to do it in partnership with the private sector,” the minister confirmed.

Great strides have also been taken in implementing the e-government services, which will see shorter waiting periods in queues for citizens. The service intends to simplify government procedures, improve access to information for citizens, improve service delivery, and strengthen accountability and transparency. In addition, government has finalised consultations with the telecommunications industry and other stakeholders to ensure that the allocation of spectrum reduces barriers to entry, promotes competition and reduces costs to consumers.

Government has decided to accelerate licensing the radio frequency spectrum in the 2.6Ghz, 700Mhz and 800Mhz bands to hasten the growth of mobile communications. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) is now preparing to licence available high-demand spectrum. Furthermore, South Africa has begun work in preparation for 5G spectrum licensing as part of its efforts to build a smarter digital economy. The various initiatives by government demonstrate a commitment to meeting the demands of the digital revolution and building an inclusive economy.
"As part of its IT modernization strategy, the American administration is making the use of commercial cloud services a top priority," reports Steven Boberski.

The Report to the President on Federal IT Modernization, issued by the American Technology Council, calls for agencies to move to commercial cloud services wherever possible - part of a 'cut and invest' strategy that reallocates funding associated with maintaining legacy systems to more modern technologies, cloud solutions and shared services. To meet these requirements, agencies need to identify the upgrades that will enable them to modernise their networks quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively. Freeing up funds that are currently consumed by legacy systems can have a major impact. Today, it is estimated that 80% of government IT budgets go towards maintaining legacy systems, many of which are ‘decades old’.

Low-hanging fruit

How can agencies address this inefficiency quickly? Migrating their email systems to the cloud is one popular approach, serving as ‘low-hanging fruit’ for government IT managers looking to pursue a path toward cloud-based services. Being a logical candidate to move into the cloud, many government agencies have already performed email migrations and are using cloud-based systems. In addition to email, collaboration systems meet the criteria for migrations - low-cost, quick and efficient - making it another ideal candidate for governments to upgrade, particularly those agencies that have already migrated their email systems. After email, collaboration is the second most common cloud workload.

Without completely disrupting their operations and uprooting their entire annual budget, a government agency can work toward IT modernisation objectives with a simple upgrade to their collaboration systems. While the investment is minimal, the result of such an upgrade can have a major impact for a government agency, providing a number of benefits including:

• Efficiency and cost savings

Upgrading collaboration systems does not require a major overhaul of equipment; in fact, agencies can repurpose their existing hardware. Additionally, the cloud model offers the financial advantage of a fixed monthly rate based on user count. Agencies can virtually eliminate unnecessary spend while enabling a scalable model that allows them to increase or decrease users as needed.

• Modern technology

With a cloud-based system, the latest collaboration technology is always at the users’ fingertips. Upgrades and maintenance are included, so the burden doesn’t
lie with internal technology staff. These can instead focus on other strategic, or mission-critical, initiatives. Even better, every communication tool that users require is integrated in one cohesive solution. IM, presence, voice, audio/video conferencing and many other applications are included, working together on a single platform that offers a unified experience. This represents a quick and easy method to start transitioning away from burdensome legacy infrastructure.

**Workforce transformation**

IT modernisation efforts are aimed at more than just agency operations. There are also efforts to improve how agencies work. With a cloud-based collaboration system, agencies can enable workforce transformation initiatives including bring your own device, mobility and remote work. If partnered with a secure cloud provider, agencies will do so with the peace of mind that they have deployed a secure infrastructure, no matter when or where their employees connect.

Additionally, adoption of cloud-based collaboration can help address another challenge facing agencies today - the aging workforce. With more than a quarter of federal workers falling in the 55-plus age range, many government agencies strive to implement workforce transformation practices that may help recruit the next-generation of federal workers. This will also help to address the knowledge management issue that will soon plague agencies as this workforce retires. These individuals have the background required to operate and maintain current legacy systems so, as they leave, that knowledge is walking out the door, adding risk to the agency’s environment. By eliminating on-premises legacy applications and systems, agencies can significantly reduce that risk.

**Shared services**

A cloud collaboration model for agency communications can serve as the spearhead to meet two main areas included in the modernisation plan:

1. **Modernisation and consolidation of networks, and**
2. **the use of shared services to enable future network architectures.** C

Cloud collaboration capabilities enable agencies to take advantage of more modern technologies as it does not require the upfront costs associated with procuring the actual infrastructure. Taking that a step further, it allows agencies to retire its current legacy communications infrastructure to help meet consolidation and cost saving requirements.

This type of model can also help transition agencies to a shared services approach, a major priority for the administration. By pursuing this as a service model, the government can consolidate network acquisitions and management – another key component in the plan – to take full advantage of the benefits afforded by shared services.

**Next steps**

While the mandates outlined by the Modernizing Government Technology Act and the American Technology Council may seem time-intensive, agencies can make major headway with a few simple cloud migrations. As stated earlier, agencies are looking to modernise their networks quickly with fast, efficient and cost-effective upgrades. One such approach is migrating collaboration workloads to the cloud with a Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) platform. While this workload doesn’t carry with it the pain points associated with other cloud migration projects, such as cost, time and the need to overhaul existing equipment, the gains are significant and immediate. With many agencies already using cloud-based email, it’s likely that many will follow suit with plans to migrate their communication and collaboration systems to the cloud. This should be the next wave of modernisation efforts across government.

Source: [www.nextgov.com](http://www.nextgov.com)
Organisational functionality assessment in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Education: Assessment year 2013-14

Organisational functional analysis (OFA) in brief

Most department assessments focus on organisational performance against inputs and outputs. Yet there is strong evidence of a direct relationship between organisational functionality and performance outcomes, but with little focus on the organisational functionality that underpins performance. While performance is the desired outcome, the organisational functionality analysis (OFA) toolkit focuses on the enablers that allow departments to deliver services, and not on performance per se. In other words, the optimisation of functionality should lead to an improved ability to perform, but deficient performance may also be an indicator of dysfunctionality. Worth noting is that the OFA tool is intended to be an interpretation of already available data and accessible information, and in line with SMART criteria:

- **Specific**: Indicators must be precise and unambiguous
- **Measurable**: Indicators must be measurable year on year to ensure proper comparison
- **Achievable**: The measuring of the indicators must be cost effective and must be able to be measured
- **Relevant**: The identified indicators must be relevant or add value to the analysis or assessment being done
- **Time bound**: The data provided by the indicators must reflect a specific period under review to ensure comparative analysis

Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans; National Treasury, 2010

Introduction

The member of executive council (MEC) for the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education (KZN DoE) requested the Department of Public Service and Administration’s (DPSA) assistance to conduct an organisational diagnosis to identify challenges hindering the appropriate functioning of the department’s Human Resource Management and Development unit. The DPSA was invited to make a presentation on the organisational functionality assessment (OFA) toolset in order to take the department through the OFA processes and to elucidate the relevance of the tool to the MEC’s request. The presentation highlighted the value of the OFA toolset as a means to conduct an organisational diagnosis focused on human resource management at the department. The head of department decided that the application of the OFA should be extended to all functional areas of the department and not be limited to human resource management unit.

EDUCATION: THE CORNERSTONE OF A THRIVING SOCIETY

Education is the foundation of a prosperous and enlightened society, enriching and supporting teaching and learning serves as a basis for academic success and achievement. It is also considered one of the most important aspects of national regeneration and progress in any given country in the world.

Overview of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Education

KZN EDUCATION’S MANDATE

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education (KZN DoE) is mandated with the responsibility to provide equitable access to quality education. This responsibility is at the centre of government’s plans and efforts to improve the lives of citizens. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, states that education in the country must be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism.

The department subscribes to legislative mandates that govern both the national departments of Basic Education and of Higher Education and Training. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) has the second-largest population in South Africa, with a population of approximately 10 267 million people. Much of the province is rural with limited infrastructure, a lack of basic services and communication, and inadequate health and provisions. The province has one of the highest illiteracy levels in the country and the difficult responsibility to reverse this situation lies with the KZN DoE (South Africa 2012: 3).

The distinguishing characteristic of the KZN DoE, when compared with other provinces, is its sheer magnitude. In South Africa, approximately 23% of teachers and 23% of...
learner cohorts are from KZN. There are 2 868 436 learners (from pre-Grade R to Grade 12 including learners with special educational needs) and 98 436 educators (permanent, part-time and substitute educators) in both ordinary public and independent schools (South Africa 2013: 7).

The department’s operations are coordinated through a provincial head office, 12 district offices, 40 circuit offices and 202 wards. At the time of the assessment, the department had 89 000 approved educator posts and 16 400 public service posts on its post establishment.

The figure below depicts the KZN educational districts. The province has 6 241 schools dispersed through 12 education districts that coincide with the municipal district boundaries, except for the eThekwini Municipal area that is divided into two education districts: Pinetown and Umlazi districts.

Education receives the largest allocation in the national budget. This is also true of the KZN budget. However, a point of concern has been that the quality of the output does not match the extent of the investment. From a budgetary perspective, in assessment year 2013-14 the KZN DoE budget stood at approximately R37,6 billion (of which 79% was devoted to CoE).

The department could not quantify the number of funded and unfunded posts and the majority of employees were functionally located at the district and school level. This was problematic as proper planning was not possible without this basic information. Of the employees, 85% were engaged in core functions while 15% provided support services. Of the 15% support services staff, 83% functioned at schools, which meant that only 17% were attached to various offices in support of the core functions.

What is an organisational functionality assessment?

An OFA is a process used to assess and diagnose, based on evidence, whether all the necessary service delivery enablers are in place to support delivery processes in an optimum and accountable manner. The development of the OFA tool resulted from a need to look deeper into departments’ total service delivery system to diagnose organisational functionality challenges and good practices to enhance their service delivery readiness. This is achieved by assessing government institutions’ organisational functionality to deliver on their mandates and identifying the systemic good practices and the challenges hampering effective delivery; and implementing corrective measures to resolve such challenges.

OFA DEFINED

OFA focuses on the systemic analysis of organizational functionality measured against:
• Capacity to deliver
• Resource use and deployment
• Institutionalised systems, policies and processes

OFA project governance

As part of the institutionalisation of OFA, the KZN DoE nominated employees representing all functional areas at head office and district offices to form part of a multi-disciplinary team. The team gathered functionality and capacity information in and across all spheres of the department under the leadership and guidance of the departmental OFA coordinator.

PROJECT WORK STREAMS

• Leadership and Governance
• Human Resource Management
• Financial Management
• Information Communication
• Technology and Knowledge Management

Terms of reference (ToF) to institutionalise OFA, including the project plan with timelines, were developed, discussed and agreed. The applicability of OFA to the department followed a structured methodology in which the work streams/teams gathered functionality information from content owners, analysed the information, assured the quality, validated the information and reported to the executive management of the department on the findings and recommendations.

As part of its technical assistance to the department, the DPSA provided the OFA toolset, assisted with capacity building and interviews to enable the department to conduct the OFA, and provided quality assurance on the OFA report. However, the OFA was a self-assessment exercise and the purpose of this approach was to ensure that internal resources...
could be leveraged and to transfer skills. The KZN DoE took responsibility for establishing a project governance structure, conducting the OFA and drafting a report with findings and recommendations. After quality assurance processes, the department presented the final OFA report to the executive management of the department, which accepted the bulk of the findings and recommendations.

Findings and recommendations

The OFA provided evidence for key functionality and capacity issues. The highlights of issues identified and addressed, are:

Poor alignment of organogram to the strategy and service delivery model

Poor alignment between the approved organisational structure and the departmental strategy had a negative impact on organisational performance. The alignment of the structure to the approved service delivery model as well as the DPSA corporate management generic structure and the educator sector ensured that departmental capacity was appropriately directed to address service delivery challenges.

KZN DOE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Alignment of organisational structure to strategy
- Development of formal terms of reference for all governance structures.
- Review and alignment of HR and SCM delegations to SDM and organisational structure.
- Devolution of delegations to district offices and circuit offices to speed up financial, SCM and HR processes, and to support accountability.
- Alignment of SMS performance agreement to the annual performance and the operational plan of the department

Lack of terms of reference for governance structures

Departmental governance structures were characterised by a lack of formal terms of reference. This lack quite often resulted in governance structures addressing similar issues, resulting in time wastage. This challenge was resolved by developing terms of reference for each governance structure, specifying their mandates to ensure that they do not consider overlapping issues.

Poor alignment of delegations

The department’s financial, SCM and HR delegations were not aligned to the organisational structure and service delivery model, resulting in service delivery delays. The alignment of delegations to the organisational structure and service delivery model, and assigning appropriate financial and SCM as well as HR delegations to district offices and circuit offices resulted in an improvement in financial, SCM and HR processes, and to support accountability,
Alignment of SMS performance agreements to APP

The department was characterised by poor alignment between SMS performance agreements and the APP. Ensuring that SMS performance agreements were aligned to the APP and the departmental strategic plan contributed to improving organisational performance.

Connectivity challenges

As a predominantly rural province, formal connectivity through the departmental network was identified as a mayor challenge to communicating with some schools based in deep rural areas. These schools were often detrimentally affected by regular power interruptions and poor power supply. The connectivity challenge was mitigated by providing principals at such schools with cell phones that were linked to private e-mail accounts, which ensured that schools received important departmental communication on time.

Implementation of the OSD for educators

The implementation of the OSD for educators was not fully funded by the Treasury. The department therefore had to finance a substantial portion through internal savings but ultimately this resulted in the department overstretching its CoE budget. A consequence was that the department could not pay any performance bonuses while other departments did. This affected staff morale negatively, but also had the effect that the department could not effectively recruit staff when posts became vacant. It also compromised departmental financial management because funding for the CoE had to be augmented with funding originally budgeted for other purposes such as training. This challenge was resolved by establishing a joint task team between the department and the Treasury to investigate the perennial underfunding of the department and to find a more permanent solution.

Lessons learnt

OFA is a diagnostic exercise that focuses on service delivery enablers of departments and not necessarily on organisational performance. However, although organisational performance was not the primary focus of the assessment, it was found that it cannot be ignored, both because the optimisation of functionality led to the improved ability to perform and because deficient performance may be an indicator of dysfunctionality. In the final analysis, improved organisational functionality appears to be the pathway to performance excellence. OFA allowed the KZN DoE to conduct a thorough introspection of its operations to identify inhibitors to the smooth running of its service delivery machinery and to set the wheels in motion for improvements.

One of the major lessons learned was how administrative/management decisions can sometimes have unintended consequences. Although the intention of the withdrawal of certain financial, SCM and HR delegations was to improve financial discipline, it had a disruptive impact on service delivery at district level.

When an organisational structure is changed, it has an impact on a number of areas, such as the re-alignment of delegations, the placement/re-assignment of staff to manage new programmes or managing existing service points, which has a further impact on a department’s ability to deliver services in an efficient and accountable manner.

With regard to the connectivity challenge, the department’s experience is that solutions often require out of the box thinking. Solutions to service delivery challenges may sometimes require exploring solutions beyond the tried and tested.

OFA has afforded the department the opportunity to self-correct in a structured manner by identifying and addressing functionality and capacity challenges. OFA has also demonstrated the potential to bring about functionality and capacity improvements in the public service followed by successful implementation in the Health, Education, Social Development and Public Works sectors.

Sources of reference


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A gathering of government knowledge workers

Over 60 knowledge management specialists from across the three spheres of government, the public and the private sectors gathered for the Public Sector Knowledge Management Forum held on 16 August 2018. An overarching theme of the forum was the troubling consequences of the potential loss of organisational memory and skills when public servants either leave or retire from service. Several discussions were therefore held on the concept of knowledge harvesting, which is one way of stemming the loss of organisational knowledge and expertise.

In his opening address, the DPSA’s Dr Patrick Sokhela emphasised the strategic placement of knowledge management practitioners to anticipate solutions to the challenges that confront the public service. Among the critical questions that Dr Sokhela posed for consideration by delegates was: how do knowledge managers ensure that the knowledge acquired and gathered is used and processed to benefit the citizens of this country. He reiterated the need to ensure that the knowledge created and accumulated facilitates innovation and productivity that will enhance service delivery.

Absa group’s knowledge harvesting and retention strategy

Seipati Mrwebi is a knowledge strategist at Absa bank, where she demonstrated the value of knowledge management in her unit. Her presentation demonstrated how knowledge harvesting was used during the separation of the South African-based ABSA banking operations from the UK-based Barclays operations. Through this exercise ABSA ensured that the knowledge base, lessons learnt and insights gained in the course of the partnership with Barclays was not lost to the South African entity.

Knowledge harvesting at Sars

Dr Ronel Davel, a knowledge specialist at Sars, reflected on the academic views of knowledge harvesting. Dr Davel defined knowledge harvesting as a process applied to convert the know-how in an expert’s head into information assets that can be used to dramatically improve corporate performance, competitiveness and valuation. She emphasised the phrase “used to dramatically improve” as there is often a lot knowledge to capture which is important, but the most essential knowledge is that which can be used to make a significant and measurable change in the organisation. For Sars the harvesting processes are ultimately aimed at supporting the individuals performing the key tasks of the organisation. In defining knowledge harvesting Dr Davel further stated that it is a process designed to get at not only what the expert knows about a particular domain, task, or aspect of work, but also specific how-to and conditional knowledge (when, why, whether, etc.) that is employed while performing the task to ensure the best results (see Sars case study).

DRDLR experience with knowledge harvesting

Knowledge practitioner at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in Limpopo, Constance Kekana, explained how they are resolving knowledge retention-related challenges with reference to knowledge harvesting activities. These range from exit interviews with those colleagues who are approaching retirement to retain institutional memory by exploring ways in which the expertise and project-specific lessons learnt from the use of external service providers could be harvested for the future benefit of the department.

Use of audio-visual technology in knowledge harvesting

A practical example of knowledge harvesting was presented by the Limpopo Provincial Treasury and Limpopo Department of Transport. A presentation was given on the meaning of knowledge retention and harvesting; its importance and tools used to facilitate these. The presenter alluded to the fact the province has an approved knowledge retention strategy. Also from the Limpopo was a thought-provoking presentation on the use of video recordings as knowledge harvesting tools, which generated fierce debate on the possible ethical and legal implications in some instances.

Flagged recommendations

A full report of the Public Sector Knowledge Management Forum is available from the DPSA. However, below are some of the high-level recommendations by delegates in the context of knowledge retention in the public service:
The following are recommendations emanating from the forum discussions for the DPSA’s attention:

i. The DPSA should finalise the KM framework, which will provide a public sector-wide mandate for KM in the public service.

ii. The DPSA should embark on conducting KM maturity assessments across government to have an understanding of the status of KM in various departments and to inform the forum agenda.

iii. There is a need implement a transversal KM project across government to promote the institutionalisation of KM practices in the public service, led and facilitated by the DPSA.

iv. With regard to the announcement on the downsizing public service and the role of KM practitioners, the participants posed the following questions and also made recommendations for the DPSA’s consideration:

- Have government departments identified and located expert departments from whom critical knowledge can be harvested?
- How can KM units assist to collaborate with relevant units within their organisations to identify the experts that are about to leave?
- Has government harvested adequate knowledge to assist in achieving the goal of Vision 2030 as alluded to in the NDP?
- Have quick wins that can be explored with regards to knowledge retention been identified?
- There is a need for a government-wide knowledge retention strategy.
- There is a need for an obligatory public sector-wide project that will focus on the retention of critical knowledge in government.

v. The structure of KM units needs to be reviewed to include a function that relates to facilitating or coordinating knowledge retention.

vi. The forum expressed a need to establish a central point that will be facilitated by the DPSA, which will serve as a platform of engagement for all departments. This is where projects and best practices can be shared.
Knowledge is increasingly recognised as an imperative, strategic resource by all types of organisations and institutions, both private and public. Regrettably, for many years public sector organisations across the globe had often been less inclined than the private sector to embrace knowledge management (KM) to its full potential (Arora, 2011).

Of late, the public sector has come to realise the importance of KM. This realisation can be attributed to the kind of difficulties that have an impact on the efficiencies and effectiveness of their services such as potential knowledge loss as a result of older employees retiring; problems with retaining knowledgeable personnel (Jaine, 2009) and millennial job churn. As a consequence, it has become imperative for the public sector to focus on methodologies that will protect it against a potential knowledge drain. One such approach is termed knowledge harvesting.

Defining knowledge harvesting

According to IGI Global (2018), knowledge harvesting can be defined as an “... integrated set of processes that allow the often hidden insight of human expertise to be captured. Then it is converted into a specific actionable know-how that can be transferred to others.”

Knowledge Harvesting Inc. (2018) refers to knowledge harvesting as something that “is used to convert the know-how in an expert’s head into information assets that can be used to dramatically improve corporate performance, competitiveness and valuation.”

In essence, knowledge harvesting can thus be described as the process that is applied to convert the tacit know-how of identified experts into explicit information assets to protect organisations against the loss and unavailability of expertise if, and when, it is needed.

Value of knowledge harvesting

According to Snowden (2010), “we always know more than we can say, and we will always say more than we can write down.” Much of the knowledge that is most critical to an organisation thus resides in the heads of employees. When critical employees leave the organisation, so does that knowledge. Organisations are thus at risk of losing critical knowledge as key employees retire or move to new jobs; and the only way in which they can protect themselves from the unavailability of this expertise when and where it is needed, is if they can identify, capture and transfer vital technical, and business knowledge in time.

Knowledge harvesting processes

If most of our knowledge is unwritten and essentially unsaid, one first needs to elicit this knowledge before it can be articulated, shared and employed in a wider sense. Knowledge harvesting is one way to extract and package tacit knowledge so that others can adapt, personalise and apply it to build organisational capacity, and preserve institutional memory (Serrat, 2010).

Knowledge harvesting processes are ultimately aimed at the individuals performing the key tasks within an organisation. These processes are designed to not only establish what an expert knows with reference to a particular domain or aspect of work, but also the specific how-to and qualified knowledge (when, why, whether, etc.). A typical knowledge harvesting project is thus focused on a particular expert or experts.
Serrat (2010) maintains that approaches to knowledge harvesting generally entail seven steps, as is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

In brief, the knowledge harvesting process kicks off by identifying vital organisational know-how. This process is closely aligned to the second sub-process during which individuals performing key tasks within an organisation are identified, as well as their specific know-how. The third sub-process aims to elicit and capture the identified expertise of these key individuals. Subsequently, this captured expertise needs to be organised in such a way that allows other individuals to apply the expertise to the same underlying processes across the organisation. Next, the best means of packaging the specific knowledge is pinpointed and applied. Finally, it is essential to include a process during which the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of this harvested knowledge is evaluated, after which instruments can be developed to ensure that the needs of targeted apprentices are met.

Knowledge harvesting in the South African public sector

The South African public sector appears to be on diverse levels of maturity when it comes to knowledge harvesting. This article aims to draw attention to three knowledge-harvesting techniques that have been implemented successfully within some South African public sector entities: expertise locators, social network analysis (SNA) and 3E interviews.

Expertise locators and SNA can be applied to address the first two knowledge harvesting sub-processes identified by Serrat (2010), which are focus and find, while 3E interviews focus more on the third sub-process of extracting the correct knowledge of identified experts.

Expertise locators

Certain South African public sectors have implemented expertise locators with much success. Information in this tool can be either captured manually or drawn directly from Enterprise Resource Planning systems e.g. an SAP system, which makes it fairly easy to maintain.
Although a knowledge network has the same composition as a social network, knowledge networks are as a rule more complex and dynamic in that they aim to facilitate the flow and sharing of knowledge as well as to create new knowledge and to ensure its application (Denner 2012:14-15). By conducting an SNA on knowledge networks, the public sector organisation was able to reveal what facilitates or hampers knowledge flows, who knows whom and who shares what information and knowledge with whom (Figure 5).

SNA also assisted the organisation to detect different types of knowledge networks based on the type of knowledge exchange, i.e. obtaining advice vs. learning as. Moreover by comparing the same knowledge networks in terms of SNA at different interludes, the organisation was able to measure the effectiveness of specific KM interventions (Figure 6).
3E Interviews

3E interviews refer to three kinds of interviews aimed at harvesting important knowledge from employees. When a key employee joins the organisation, an entrance interview is conducted. This type of interview constitutes more of a coaching session than mere induction. When employees join an organisation, they have certain expectations of what their job will entail and how they will achieve their deliverables. It usually takes some time before a new employee really becomes productive. Entrance interviews assist in keeping them on track so that they understand exactly what is expected from them as well as what the time lines are i.e. what must they accomplish within the next six months.

Expert interviews are conducted with people who are considered experts in their line of work. During these interviews, deep smarts (key insights, historic information as well as context) need to be extracted as comprehensively as possible. Depending on the situation, expert interviews are conducted either one-on-one, or in a group. What matters, however, is that an initial interview is conducted and the knowledge elicited is presented to a set of potential users. Any disparities or ambiguities can then be addressed in a second round of expert interviews. This process of navigating between users and experts ensures that there is a fit between what knowledge is needed and what knowledge is eventually captured.

Finally exit interviews are conducted with key individuals who are either retiring or leaving the organisation. Knowledge harvesting exit interviews differ from generic human resource exit interviews in that it is not so much concerned with why the person is leaving the organisation but would rather focus on the know-how the person obtained during his/her work at the organisation and what knowledge can be passed on to ensure that those who will need to fill their shoes are able to do so.

Overall, the South African public sector is still in the first stages of cultivating knowledge harvesting, despite the dire need for it. A government-driven KM mandate will assist to address this very dangerous gap. In the meantime it is important for the public sector as a whole to work together and to learn from one another. This can be done using benchmarking exercises and identifying best practices that can be replicated in different areas as and where they are needed.

Bibliography

Framework for establishing a formal graduate recruitment scheme

Background

The National Development Plan (NDP) observed that graduates and youth with potential, struggle to identify and embark on a career in the public service while, on the other hand, the public service struggles to fill junior positions in scarce occupations and critical areas of service delivery.

In order to achieve a high-quality public service, improved and adequately maintained infrastructure and improved conditions for economic development, the country will require a professional public service and a capable state.1

The NDP further observed that there are a number of department-based graduate recruitment and development schemes. However, these are not widely known by the public and, therefore, the public cannot make a connection or link these to the public service.

A Report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001)2 revealed some factors or reasons that the public service is unable to attract and retain suitably-qualified graduates and youth with potential in its employment. These include:

- **Lower levels of wages** compared to the private sector. When competing for new staff, especially young graduates, salaries are important. This problem mostly concerns specialised staff (e.g. professionally qualified personnel). Wages proved to be a crucial factor in the retention of staff, especially after two to four years of service. The salary level is not the only critical issue. There is also the possibility of influencing one's own salary by performance. The report showed that performance-based salary systems are attractive to young people.

- **The image of the public sector** is not very positive, clear or stimulating. Although there are exceptions among departments, young people do not rate public employment very highly. The public service is deemed dull, bureaucratic and old-fashioned, and the prestige of public service is low. In addition, citizens’ trust in government has decreased, negatively influencing the image of government.

- **Slow advancement** including the fact that seniority is more important than merit. A common belief is that it is impossible to advance by promotion and that there is a fixed order, independent of performance. There is a weak tradition of recognising the individual merits of employees.

- **Public service does not reach students and graduates** in the way that most commercial companies do. This applies to marketing vacancies, use of electronic recruitment as well as, for example, increasing knowledge about public organisations. The methods used to attract students are often more passive than active.

- **Changes in employee attitudes and values toward work.** Individual employees demand, to a much greater extent than before, conditions tailored for the individual. This applies to job content, opportunities for development, career opportunities, work scheduling and salaries. A challenge for government organisations is to create workplaces that meet the preferences of both the organisation and the employees.

- **Career paths are unclear and career planning is insufficient.** To make career path opportunities clearer, strategic actions are needed at several stages. Recruitment situations give employers the opportunity to explain career prospects. Questions include how to incorporate career planning in regular performance and career discussions and how to create pay and other human resource management systems that promote both kinds of careers: one leading to leadership positions and one leading to expert positions. Increasing mobility is closely related to this issue.

- **Staff development** will be an increasingly important competitive factor. The public sector is challenged with using knowledge management to ensure that everyday development is kept at a competitive level and that public organisations are at the forefront of knowledge enterprises.

In line with the recommendations of the NDP, in 2015 the DPSA commissioned a study to investigate the feasibility of implementing a centralised formal graduate recruitment scheme embedded within the broader Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework.

The DPSA feasibility study report arrived at three possible models that would help public service departments to pursue a graduate recruitment scheme.3

The following options were identified:

- **Option one:** Coordination of departmental scheme - develop a graduate recruitment policy framework and establish a mechanism for cooperation through a collaboration forum between the various participating departments.

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3 Department of Public Service and Administration (2015) - Feasibility Study and Development of a Formal Graduate Recruitment Scheme for the Public Service - Comprehensive Report - Final - 30 June 2015
Knowledge Management Case Study

- **Option one**: Centralised recruitment, decentralised selection - establish a centralised graduate recruitment platform, similar to that identified in a number of best practice countries covered by international research. The platform would be a central application mechanism for all graduate recruitment into the public service and would be used by the various participating departments. The platform would have the benefit of creating visibility and improving the efficiency of the application process for the applicants as well as the selection process for multiple departments.

- **Option two**: Central graduate recruitment scheme - expand on option two and build on the central graduate recruitment application platform to create a central graduate recruitment scheme that would operate alongside existing departmental schemes. At no stage is the central graduate recruitment scheme intended to replace or even compromise the existing graduate schemes but should work in collaboration with these schemes. The clear advantage of this option is that it creates a mechanism for departments that may not have established schemes to access graduate recruits, but also creates the mechanism for the enrolment of a regular annual cohort of graduates. These graduates are then exposed across multiple departments in the public service and are able to be deployed efficiently into various departments based on needs and requirements.

The final analysis of these delivery mechanisms revealed that all of them would depend on the creation of a central executing agency. However, this would be costly and not feasible considering the decentralised approach to human resource management and limited resources. Therefore, we adopted an approach using a common framework that provides for the development and implementation of schemes for graduate recruitment in departments.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this framework is to:

- introduce a programme intended to recruit and train graduates for specific roles, assigning them to these specific roles on completion to respond to the demand for scarce skills in technical and specialist professionals in the public service
- set out a broad framework for public service departments to develop and implement graduate recruitment schemes
- enhance planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on implementation by departments while maintaining the autonomy of their schemes.

**Scope**

The framework is applicable to all national and provincial departments as contemplated in Schedule 2 of the Public Service Act No. 104 of 1994 as amended.

Graduate recruitment must be focused on addressing the capacity gaps in technical occupations and specialist professions identified through the human resource planning processes of the public service.

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4 OECD: Kirsi Äijälä, 2001 public sector report

**Objectives**

- To give effect to the recommendations of the National Development Plan for building a capable state by introducing a formal graduate recruitment scheme for the public service and promoting the public service as a career of choice.
- To establish a well-defined, transparent and shared approach to recruiting dedicated young people that develops their skills, accompanied by career progression to ensure that they are retained in the public service and, importantly, in the specialised areas they are primarily qualified in.
- To enhance the competitiveness of public employment in the labour market and to improve professionalism in the public service.
- To enhance and manage the central coordination of, and reporting on, the implementation of various graduate recruitment schemes in the public service.
- To foster collaboration and sharing of best practices among departments already implementing graduate recruitment schemes rather than to replace or compromise such schemes.
- To foster effective and strategic cooperation with universities to predict and plan future trends in the public service. This will enable and strengthen the skills supply to produce graduates with the competencies that are in demand.

**The approach**

The feasibility study found that to optimally deliver any of the three identified options would require a central executing agency. However, the development of a centrally operated graduate recruitment scheme would run counter to the principle of the decentralised human resource management approach in the public service.

Instead an approach that enhances coordination and reporting while maintaining the autonomy of departments in pursuing their own schemes would be the most feasible.

The graduate recruitment scheme envisaged in this framework is ideally one that is an integral part of the department's recruitment strategy. It must provide access to a diverse pool of high-quality candidates with a wide range of transferable skills, including technical and up-to-date specialist knowledge gained from their studies. A graduate recruitment scheme has the potential to help meet future public service staffing needs.
Ideally a graduate recruitment scheme should form part of an integrated talent development management programme directly linked to the overall organisational human resource management and development strategy and plan.

The organisation’s top management plays a critical role in the career progression and talent management plan as well as recruitment strategy options that would facilitate recruiting graduates into the organisation. The graph in figure 1 above depicts a possible career progression, talent development and recruitment strategy options for consideration by departments.

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**Figure 1: Career planning, talent development and recruitment strategy options model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Quota allocation based on the vacancy rate of the relevant occupations (Demand directed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td>Decision on the Career Planning, Talent Development &amp; Recruitment strategy options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM (Recruitments)</td>
<td>Open recruitment</td>
<td>e.g. 80% of the department’s vacancy rate in the relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM (Planning &amp; Recruitment) &amp; HRD</td>
<td>Career progression &amp; talent management plan: maintaining constancy in the supply of skills by grooming and promoting talent internally</td>
<td>e.g. not exceeding 10% of the relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development &amp; HRM (Planning Recruitments)</td>
<td>Promoting developmental programmes including learnerships, internships, traineeships &amp; graduate recruitments programmes</td>
<td>e.g. not exceeding 10% of the department’s vacancy rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Government Employees Pension Fund blueprint continues to work

Since its establishment in 1996, the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) has grown its worth from R127 billion to more than R1,8 trillion, becoming Africa's largest pension fund as well as being among the top 10 pension funds in the world. It is also the largest single investor on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), playing a critical role in South Africa's development.

The single most important characteristic for anyone wanting to understand the GEPF, is that it is a defined benefit fund, meaning that the GEPF promises benefits in terms of the rules set out in the Government Employees Pension Law and these benefits are not calculated on the basis of how the fund is invested.

The pensions and the benefits due to members and pensioners are guaranteed in terms of the law. The only issues that matter in how members are paid, is the years of service that the members have in the GEPF and their final salary at the time they exit the fund, as these determine the amount of the pensions or pay-outs if one resigns.

As indicated, investments actually do not affect the benefits because benefits are determined by the rules and they will always be paid. This is guaranteed by government as the employer. Incidentally, the fund is currently 115% funded, meaning the GEPF is able to meet all its liabilities.

The assumption that the GEPF is easily influenced on how funds are invested is the furthest from the truth. The board and management of the GEPF take their fiduciary responsibilities seriously and act in the best interests of its members, pensioners and beneficiaries at all times. This can be illustrated by the fund’s growth, which is nearing R2 trillion.

The GEPF board and management have employed a number of mechanisms to ensure that its asset managers, such as the PIC, act within the mandates provided. How the GEPF invests its funds is a carefully thought-out strategy aimed at achieving long-term growth for the fund.

The strategy focuses on ensuring that we allocate and manage the fund's assets so that it meets or outperforms the fund's current and future liabilities, which has been done very successfully in its 22 years of existence. The GEPF has also adopted a responsible investment policy, which integrates environmental, social and governance issues in its investment decisions.

The GEPF also has a developmental investment policy focusing on targeted investments that contribute to positive economic, social and environmental outcomes for South Africa, while earning good returns for members and pensioners.

It is important to emphasise that the board and management of the GEPF take their fiduciary responsibilities seriously and act in the best interests of its members, pensioners and beneficiaries at all times. The GEPF is guided and operates within the Government Employee Pension Law and rules, which define precisely how the fund should be governed and how it should administer pensions and other related benefits to members, pensioners and beneficiaries.

For more information contact:
GEPF at enquiries@gepf.co.za or visit our website at www.gepf.co.za or on twitter at @GEPF_SA
Each one of us is a knowledge worker and a learning champion in this knowledge economy. We all have a role to play in turning the Public Service into a learning public service for quality service delivery. Let us pursue this idea by using the Service Delivery Review as a platform for sharing our experiences, successes, mistakes and methodologies and for growing our own intellectual capital.