

MPAT 2012 to 2015 Consolidated Case studies and Lessons



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Introduction

The National Development Plan (NDP) states that between now and 2030, South Africa need to have established a state that is more capable, more professional and more responsive to the needs of its citizens. It further urges that progress in this regard needs to be pursued most rapidly, especially in those areas where state capacity is currently at the weakest.

The NDP states that a capable state is the enabler for government to realise its long term development goals.

Within this context government has to prioritise key programmes to reform the public sector to a capable state. In this regard, DPME has been implementing the tool called Management Assessment Tool (MPAT) to facilitate and support public sector reforms in the areas of management practices. The MPAT tool was approved by Cabinet in 2010.

This report provides consolidated learnings of the MPAT assessments and case studies analysis from 2011 until 2015. In this report the centrality of managerial leadership in building a responsive work culture, leading with commitment, strategizing for delivery of outcomes, responding promptly to challenges, integrating plans and allocating resources appropriately.



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ATTENTION ALL MANAGERS

SIX STEPS TO IMPROVED SERVICE



1. **Lead** with commitment and consideration



2. **Build** an accountable and responsive service and work culture



3. **Strategise** and operationalise transformation in delivery outcomes



4. **Allocate** and **utilise** human, financial and physical resources



5. **Integrate** plans, resources, budgets and performance review systems up, down and across



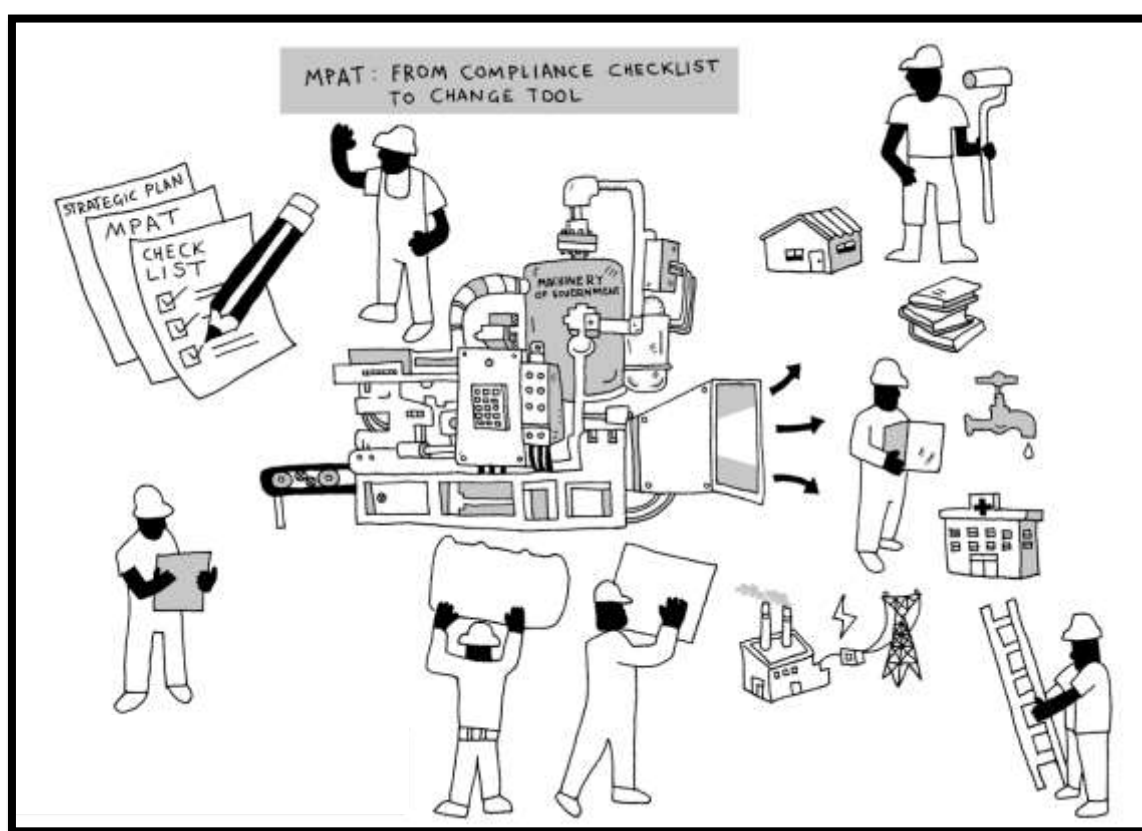
6. **Review** performance, **report** progress and respond to challenges



SIX STEPS TO IMPROVED SERVICE

The Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT), run for the first time in 2012 by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), is one of several strategies to improve the management practices of provincial and national departments in South Africa. MPAT is a structured standards-based approach to assessing management practice in departments based on an understanding that regulatory compliance will improve management practice and contribute to service delivery outcomes. This document integrates the learning from 34 cases of effective practice, with three-year trends from MPAT results and several learning workshops between 2012 and 2015.

The learning has been condensed into six steps - lead, build, strategise, utilise, integrate and review. Consistent political and administrative leadership builds a committed compliance and performance culture. Set strategic targets and aligned implementation plans mobilise resources to where they are most needed. Recognise and reward good people and good work. A professional culture, supported by cooperative engagements with stakeholders, enables effective management backed by monitoring, feedback and consequences¹.



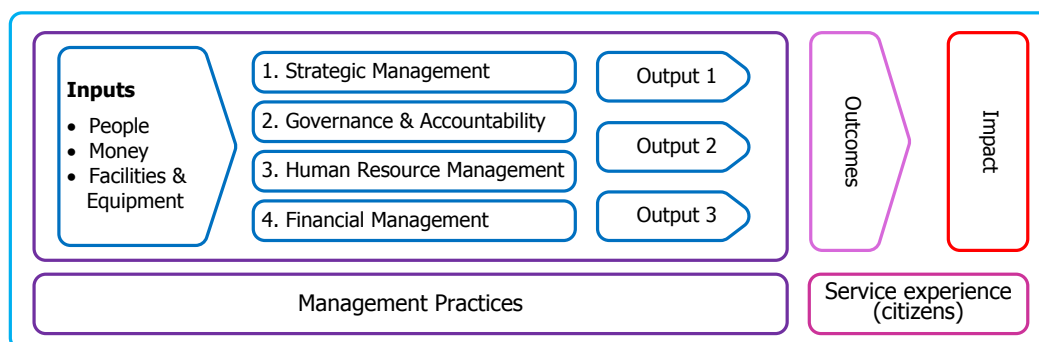
¹This overview for the DPME MPAT learning process is by Professor Anne Mc Lennan from the Wits School of Governance, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Introduction

We have a calendar which deals with all the compliance matters. It is also part of the reporting and checking to see if those deliverables have been met. MPAT helps with that. We realise that ‘that damn department did work!’ We always tend to have a negative view [of departments]. It did enable us to identify gaps, for example, the fraud policy and highlight areas that need improving.

MPAT assesses how departments manage implementation in accordance with regulatory requirements. Departments assess themselves against standards in 4 key performance areas (KPA): Strategic Management; Governance and Accountability; Human Resource Management and Financial Management. The standards link inputs and activities to outputs to outcomes and ultimately to impact (see Figure 1). The MPAT data and cases confirm that effective leadership and management practice contributes to improved departmental performance.

Figure 1: MPAT process



MPAT has four progressive levels of management performance and each management practice is assessed against these (see Table 1). A department that scores at level 1 or 2 is non-compliant to the legislative requirements captured in the standards. A level 3 score indicates compliance, while level 4 means the department is operating smartly. Smart management practices are recorded as case studies and shared in learning networks.

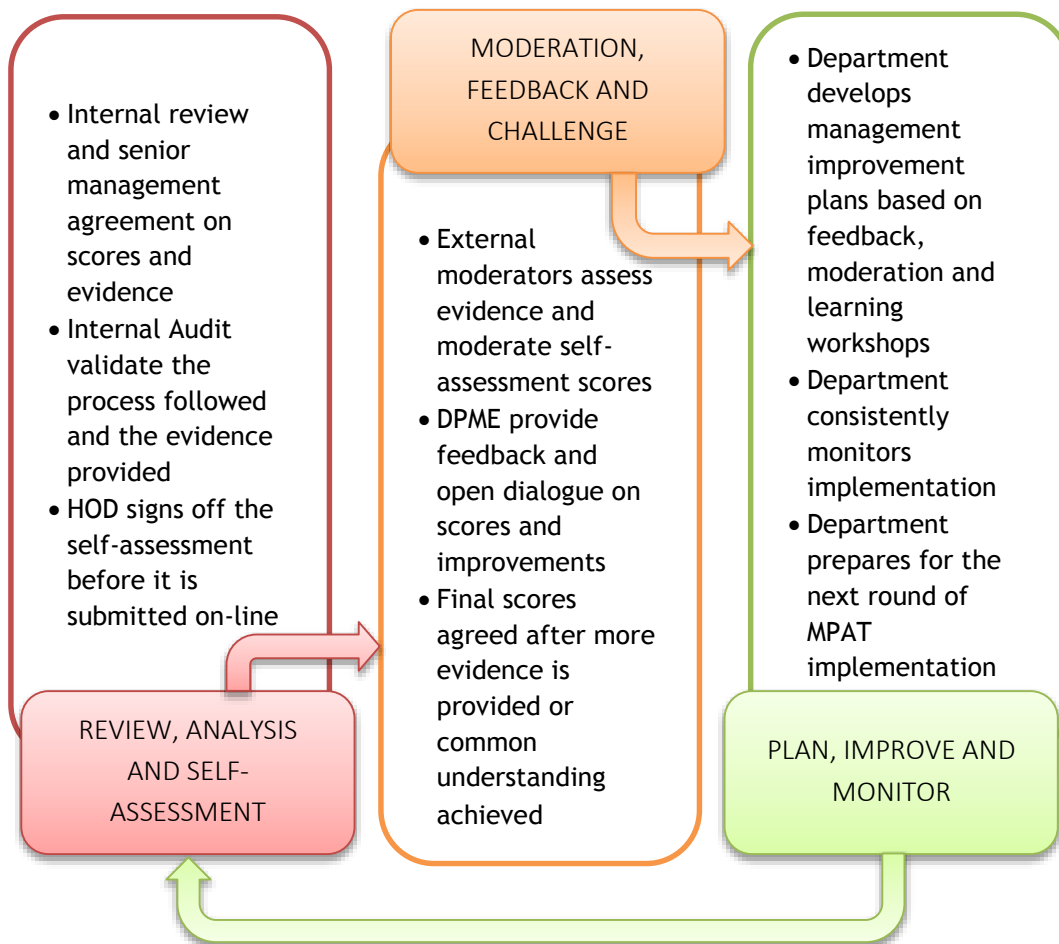
Table 1: Performance level descriptions

Level 1	Department is non-compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 2	Department is partially compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 3	Department is fully compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 4	Department is fully compliant with legal/regulatory requirements and is doing things smartly

The MPAT process involves a number of steps mapped in Figure 2. Provincial and national departments conduct self-assessments and upload corresponding evidence using a web-enabled system by October of each year. The DPME and the Offices of the Premier (OtP) provide support and assist departments to work through the

internal review process. External moderation takes place in November by moderators are drawn from national and provincial departments that have expertise in the management practices assessed by MPAT.

Figure 2: MPAT implementation process



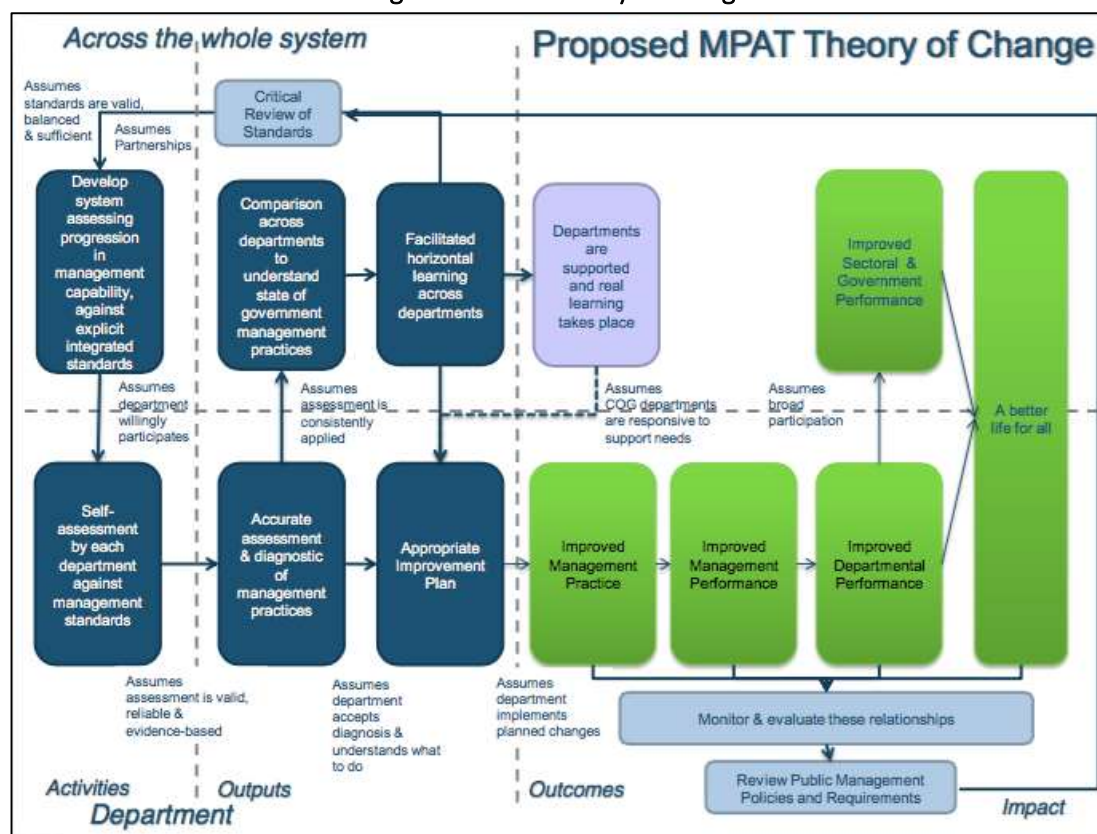
The departments receive feedback on their moderated scores in February and have the opportunity to engage with DPME on their moderated scores and provide additional evidence if necessary. This period of engagement and challenge is an important part of the MPAT process as it enables departments to better understand management processes and implementation requirements. The dialogue leads to the development of improvement strategies in challenging areas.

There is organisational learning and improvement initiated by the MPAT process. The process of tracking compliance raises awareness about what should be done and what is not being done. This enables proactive departments to make relevant adjustments to their management process. While the system is directed at enhancing internal reflection on management practice, it can be used as an improvement or performance tool. It is therefore a useful tool to improve the management performance of provincial and national departments.

MPAT theory of change

Any type of performance framework is about achievement. In the case of the MPAT, the primary focus is on meeting defined standards in each of the KPAs. The four KPA areas comprise the primary aspects of management embedded in public service delivery and the standards specify levels of performance. The implementation evaluation results confirm that MPAT does impact on performance if departments use the diagnosis to develop and implement an improvement plan. This is further elaborated in the MPAT theory of change in Figure 3².

Figure 3: MPAT theory of change



The theory of change assumes that evidence from the MPAT self-assessment and moderation will enable managers and whole departments to take appropriate action to improve their management performance and eventually service delivery. The primary purpose is to improve management practice by building learning and accountability into the process of reporting. MPAT discourages malicious compliance or gaming by requiring managers to use the results for improvement. This enables a conversation on management process and outcomes to take place.

² Report on the Implementation Evaluation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) by PDG, 24 March 2015.

The learning process linked to the MPAT assessment enables the identification of critical management practices and strategies that improve performance. The 2012/2013 MPAT assessments identified critical factors as:

- constantly (and intelligently) tracking and monitoring processes, compliance and progress;
- achieving commitments through determined leadership and management support and an accountable service ethic; and
- understanding (and learning from) the consequences (positive and negative results) of practice in order to implement appropriate actions.

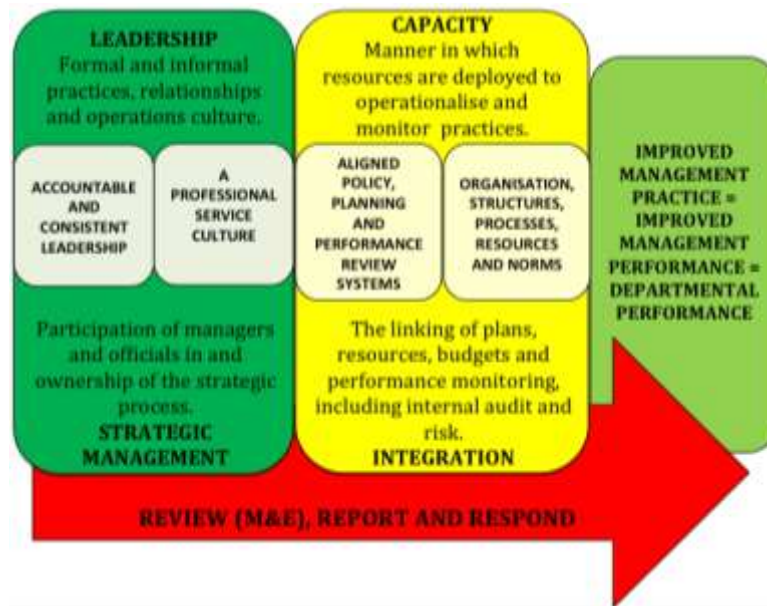
The 2013/14 enablers and conditions for performance were:

- consistent political and administrative leadership builds a committed compliance and performance culture;
- plans that are set, followed, adapted to departmental conditions and aligned to operational processes, human resources and finance, are implemented;
- organisational design, governance, workflow and human resource systems should be aligned; and
- a professional culture, supported by cooperative engagements with stakeholders, backed by monitoring, feedback and consequences enables performance.

Figure 4 combines the underlying MPAT theory of change with the lessons from 2012 to 2014 for frame the case analysis in 2015 which focused on departments (rather than KPAs) that has performed consistently or improved on MPAT over 3 years.

- Leadership builds a performance culture and links culture, management performance and delivery.
- Strategy and strategic management enables the process of setting, adapting and operationalizing plans to ensure delivery.
- Integration, the alignment of policy, resources planning and performance review systems, contributes to improved delivery.
- Capacity is enhanced when departmental structures, systems, human and financial are utilised and deployed to ensure delivery.

Figure 4: Enabling management performance



What the data tells³

The data shows slow and incremental improvements in the latest MPAT scores suggesting that system is embedded into departmental practice. The improvements from 2013 to 2014 were steeper (see Figure 5). 24% of national and provincial departments' scores per standard are compliant (at least level 3), of which 26% (50% overall) are at level 4. As for previous years, KPA 1 (Strategic Management) and KPA 4 (Financial Management) have higher compliance levels (69% and 64% respectively) than KPA 3 (Human Resources Management at 33%) and KPA 2 (Governance and Accountability at 50%).

Although the highest performing KPA, Strategic Management has not improved over the years like the other KPAs. This suggests that most departments are adhering to the basic legislative requirements for planning (level 3), but struggle to innovate and work smartly. Average performance in the Governance and Accountability KPA remains at 3 (fully compliant), the same as 2013 and a small improvement on 2012. Financial Management performance is largely stagnant, averaging at 2.8 (so almost fully compliant) showing a marginal improvement in certain areas.

The slight decline in the total average in 2014 is concerning as Human Resources Management consistently falls below the required 'fully competent' score at 2.3. Small improvements in human resource planning, diversity, employee wellness, SMS performance management development system (PMDS) and disciplinary cases are encouraging as they suggest that a concentrated focus on challenges lead to improvement. The cases suggest the human resources are a significant factor affecting management performance.

Figure 5: Overall KPA score for each province 2012-2014



The data trends seem to confirm the MPAT change model, that compliance with policies and practices, not only assure sound management, but positively influences the quality of departmental performance. In other words, committed and effective

³ This section uses data from the DPME MPAT analyses as well as the additional statistical analyses undertaken by Dr. Mark Orkin and Dr. Mike Muller.

management is seen to contribute to improved delivery. Figure 5 shows a pattern of continuous improvement on MPAT for provinces and national departments over the three-year period (with some very slight exceptions).

For example, the Free State’s overall KPA score has consistently improved from 2012 to 2014. The overall KPA score averaged across all national departments (ND), shown the grey bar, improved to 3.0 in 2013, and remained static in 2014. Although the general trend is to improvement, ND and the Eastern Cape show a slight decline in 2014 due to sharp falls in governance compliance. A closer look at performance in each of the KPAs over three years suggests that Governance presents the greatest challenge. In addition, the extent of the improvements is less for Strategy and Human Resources in the first period, than for the other two KPAs.

There are clusters of performance within and across KPAs and departments that may provide additional insight into what may work or what does not. For example, Table 2 should that the WC has a large number of departments across all KPAs whose scores “remained high”. FS, in contrast, can be found in clusters 2, 3 and 4 for different KPAs, but is nonetheless consistently improving. Eastern Cape may be in crisis as it has “dropped to low” in all areas.

Table 1: Provinces with higher number of departments per cluster

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
	Remain high	Rise to high	Remain med.	Rise to med.	Drop to low
KPA 1: Strategy	WC	EC	LP	NW	EC GP
KPA 2: Governance	WC LP	NC	FS MP	KZ	EC MP
KPA 3: HR	WC	LP	LP	FS GP	EC NW
KPA 4: Finance	WC ND	FS GP	ND	NW	EC

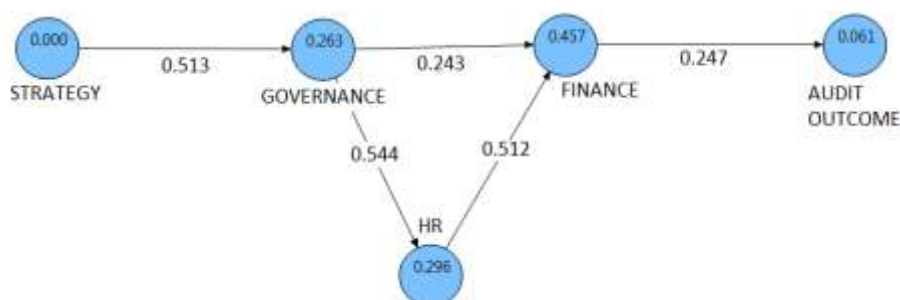
Correlations between KPAs and external criteria confirm that the relationship between good performance across the KPAs on the one hand, and both audit compliance and performance-on-objectives on the other hand, is well-sustained. A noteworthy correlation is that between high scores HRM and a high proportion of staff additional to establishment. Perhaps well-run HR components keep a lean core payroll, supplemented by flexible staffing for particular purposes.

There are moderate correlations that suggest that top executives need longer than three years in post for departmental MPAT scores to benefit. In addition, departments with executive stability (incumbent DGs and DDGs in place for longer than one year or five years) do better on Strategic Management, HR and Finance. However, this criterion is evidently more a predictor than an outcome of MPAT compliance. This is confirmed by the case analysis.

Further analysis can indicate KPAs relate *to each other* and the relative role of the various MPAT standards in this relationship. Figure 6, for example, suggests that an integrated model of departmental development is perhaps: leadership strategic vision must translate into effective policies and organisational culture; and this, via

sound financial practices, and buttressed by sound HR practices, translates into improved AG outcomes.

Figure 6: Relations among KPAs in improving AG findings, 2014



The relationships confirm, on the basis of the data, the enduring insight that in a well-functioning department, strategy, the province of top-leadership, is expressed through sound policies of corporate governance. And these policies achieve their effectivity in the deployment of resources, towards the compliance and delivery outcomes measured by the AG's outcomes.



What the cases tell

The National Development Plan (NDP) focus on building a capable state includes re-defining the political-administrative interface, improving intergovernmental relationships and professionalisation of the public service. Improving executive managerial authority in relation to human resources and finances is critical to ensuring that the public service is able to deliver regardless of political transition and policy change. Similarly, the emphasis on decentralisation and delegation to manage challenges in intergovernmental relations is constructive.

Improving the performance of government services requires political and administrative leadership to build an accountable performance culture. This means doing the right thing and doing things right. The right thing is defined by government strategy and outcomes. Doing things right, as is doing things better, is defined and measured by MPAT. Doing things right requires leadership commitment to build a performance culture. Good management practice is premised on an understanding of the consequences of individual actions for organisational performance and follows a commitment to improve service.

The case research supports the findings from the data analysis by confirming that the quality of compliance works as a catalyst to improve management performance. Compliance is a necessary first step towards public service change, but commitment to meet standards through monitoring is essential. In other words, robust regulatory compliance is an important change tool in the hands of leaders and managers and departments that focus on getting the core work done. Hence the identification of steps to improve management practice and contribute to building a capable and development delivery system.



When you are employed in the department, you are here to perform, whether there is a bonus or not. People go out of their way to impress and maintain the standards. If you hear someone justifying a bonus by saying 'I've performed well', the response will be 'did we employ you to not perform well?' Bonuses are for over and above high performance, if there is money available.

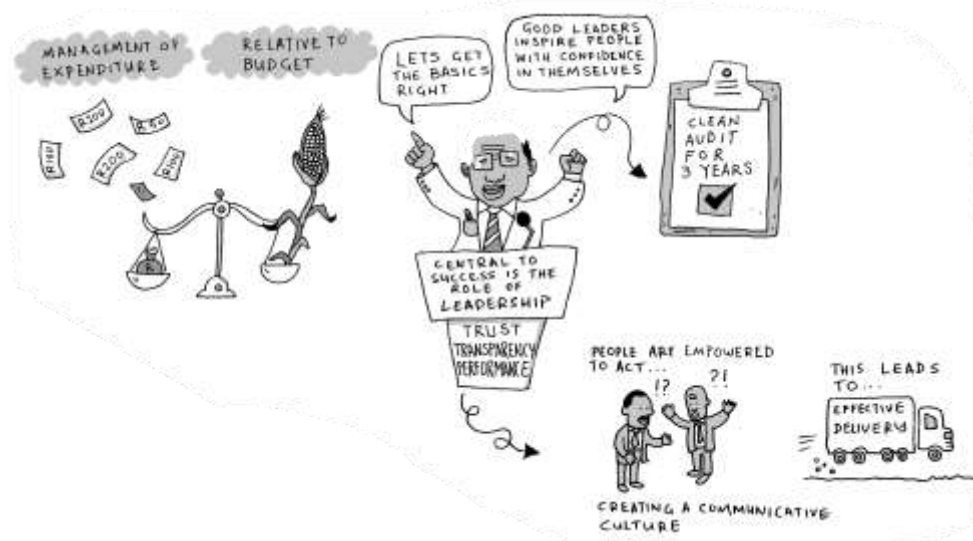
He (the Minister) had a passion for what he was doing. You could feel the vibe when he was talking at strategic planning sessions. He had a clear perspective on what needs to be done to ensure success. He understood the issues and his input was good. He also gave people a sense of belonging. He would visit buildings, go to roadblocks. He would engage with the public at all opportunities that he got.

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1. **Lead with commitment and consideration**

The cases show that smart practices are sustained when political and administrative leadership (and peers) apply pressure by holding people responsible and requiring them to account. This requires consistent oversight, attention to detail and leading by example. A passionate champion gets the ball rolling by noticing a gap and introducing an innovation. In almost all the cases, a strong manager, champion or team drives, leads and monitors improvements. Attention to detail is a critical part of this process.



In most of the cases political principals and managers that ‘lead by example’ are seen as a critical lever for departmental performance. The impetus to change is usually driven by leaders committed to solving problems and making a difference. Leaders who respect and listen to staff and stakeholders hold the key to improved delivery. Approachable, engaged leadership at all levels of the organisation inspire people to do their best.

A passionate, can-do attitude encourages all employees to voice their ideas and concerns regardless of rank. Staff are inspired to emulate their leaders. Good leaders are dynamic, expecting of themselves what they expect of others by engaging with the issues and stakeholders at the coalface. They listen to different views but use boldness and authority to clearly define the way forward. They will deal with poor performance and reward innovation and excellence.

You can perfect things but you first have to try. My learning in leadership is that I continue to learn.

Stability within senior leadership, where managers know and understand the department and work well together, ensures continuity of vision and the opportunity to follow through with the small changes of continuous improvement. This enables the organisation to work towards a common vision and to perform and flourish as a whole. In particular, stable and consistent leadership set targets and expectations and stick to them.

As a politician, I focus on the outcomes. I know that the officials have a responsibility in terms of the law and that they do lots of work to make sure that things happen ... they make the outcomes we want possible.

Effective leaders are flexible and able to adapt to keep on task. These leaders respect the different roles people play in the organisation and delegate accordingly. This is an important component of a productive political administrative relationship. Clarity on the accountabilities and interests of politicians builds a strong foundation. Optimal political-administrative interaction requires mutual respect and role

appreciation. Administrators need to respect political mandates and politicians the professionalism of officials. Constant interaction, communication and the building of trust facilitate good working relationships.

The full support of the leadership and senior management is important. One of the common factors that cause an organisational improvement process to fail is the reluctance of management to deal professionally with non-conformers or poor performers. The research shows that smart leaders communicate expectations and manage consequences. Once the leadership as well as the senior management are committed and dedicated, organisational improvements are possible. Substantive knowledge is important, but commitment, wisdom and grit in the face of resistance is essential. Passion and humility see these tasks through.

I (a DG) am not an aggressive person. That softness has taught me to be able to talk to everybody in the organisation and that everybody plays a meaningful role ... I don't focus on what you can't do - I want to know what you can do differently. Here everybody is a leader - we exercise that leadership in our different roles.

We have a Principal who leads by example and this sets the tone: he is there early, he is committed, he's in the trenches with you. So it's pretty hard to rock up late when he is there. He doesn't say anything if you are late, you would just die of embarrassment.



- Be passionate and humble
- Set targets and standards and stick to them
- Respect the different roles that make delivery possible
- Know your stuff, engage and be decisive
- Be accountable - walk the talk of continuous improvement
- Be open - listen, trust and delegate
- Deal with poor performance and corruption
- Recognise commitment and innovation
- Keep your ears to the ground and your eyes on the goals



2. Build an accountable and responsive service and work culture

The NDP highlights the importance of a professional and accountable service culture and the cases show that smart departments hold people to account and ensure that employees understand the personal and organisational consequences of not doing what is required. In most cases, the incentive to improve comes from peers, citizens, managers or political leaders with high expectations who ask the asking tough questions. These leaders actively recognise good performance and innovation.



A culture of accountability and taking responsibility can be achieved through the establishment of stable systems that support performance. Predictable systems and procedural clarity build confidence and work culture of departments. People are able to give their best in an environment where they know what they are required to do and how it relates to the department’s work. Good support systems enable the organisation to balance a focus on outcomes, as experienced by those who use services, with compliance to national and provincial norms and standards.

Building an accountable and responsive work place takes time and commitment. Expectations with regard to work relationships and outputs need to be clear, support processes need to be established and consistent pressure applied. It is not possible to build a learning or performance culture without dedicated follow through. The cases suggest that an accountable culture develops when the organisational hierarchy is used to for compliance and support rather than ‘bossing’.

You can’t create a culture like this overnight. It stems from the will of steady senior management chipping at it, and living that leadership style, walking the talk. Others see it and emulate.

Peer or team pressure is a more effective motivator than the hierarchy. In terms, or work units, where everyone is contributing, falling behind, or non-performance is seen as ‘embarrassing’. People do not want to be seen to be letting the team down. This creates a ‘culture of commitment, passion, and wanting to work’. It is, however, a culture that needs to be evident from political principal to senior management to frontline officials. The research shows that in these departments employees know what roles they play and are proud of their contribution.

It doesn’t matter who you are, you have to deliver and we are here to help each other.

Cultural (r)evolution taps into peoples’ sense of purpose. A conscious decision to create a responsive service culture needs to combine technical process management with mobilisation. Departments with learning and performance cultures have clear steps for implementing changes but tap into, and draw on a bigger sense of purpose. This creates ownership and a commitment to achieving organisational objectives.

I feel like I belong here ... I can still give more because I am given the opportunity to give more ... the moment you have people's buy-in they become owners. That's our culture: you feel proud of where you are and what you do.

In a system where people are mobilised by a common purpose and care for recipients of services, innovation becomes routine practice. When empowered to make decisions, people can and do introduce innovative solutions to challenges. This is only possible if there is some space for innovation and the associated risk of failure. Many of the departments in the cases describe their organisation as 'open' and 'learning-oriented', a situation that ensures that everyone takes responsibility for making things happen. This requires embedded relationships of trust and respect.

Success in the establishment of specific governance and accountability related practices requires officials to understand the relevance of their work and how it contributes to departmental reputation and achievements. Many departments achieve this through processes of review and communication. Communication connects teams and colleagues within departments, but also connects departments to stakeholders. Many departments are establishing alternative strategies to account through cooperative engagements between different units.

We have culture of communication and take this very seriously ... we have linkages with the lower levels and there is rapid contact when a crisis emerges ... we solve challenges in a few hours because people know what is happening on the ground, and are in touch with these realities.



- Cultural (r)evolution builds purpose
- Build a professional and accountable culture based on trust and respect
- Use peer pressure to push performance
- Motivate, commit, follow through
- Expect and recognise great performance
- Allow space for innovation and mistakes
- Connect teams and colleagues
- Use the hierarchy for compliance not bossing
- Keep doors and ears open



3. Strategise and operationalise transformation in delivery outcomes

Strategy translates vision into action, but that action is strongly informed by departmental culture and context. Strategic planning is the foundation on which other management tasks are built and the launching pad for implementation. Policy implementation and transformation goals are more likely to be met if backed by a strong strategy and practical working systems. However, strategy drives improved practice only if adapted to the department’s operating context. The case research shows that plans based on evidence and an honest review of challenges and objectives are more implementable.



A key finding across the cases is that strategy is more likely to be operationalised if there are clear, challenging but doable goals. Strategic goals should be formed in dialogue with Ministers taking into consideration their political commitments and accountabilities. Strategy can be an area of contention, but if politicians and senior managers work together as an executive, the whole department is mobilised to achieve goals. This is an important space in which to listen and respect different ideas and boundaries.

The Minister attended the session and only really spoke formally for about ten minutes. I was really surprised as he spent lots of time in open discussion and listening to people. This served to establish relationships of trust and helped to ensure that there is awareness of the mandate imperatives, at the same time as there was consideration of the administrative issues that confronted the Department.

Departments that achieve targets consistently have an inclusive strategic and operational planning process. All staff are actively engaged at different levels in the organisation and therefore understand their role and contribution to the larger goal. Of note is that staff feel able to speak out and also to offer ideas. A closed defensive working culture does not facilitate effective planning or target setting.

Target setting is an important part of aligning strategic and operational processes without conflating them. This enables a focus on intended outcomes based on due assessment of available resources. Management experience, when coupled with the specialist capacity of other officials, pushes the department to higher levels of strategic and operational performance.

Target-setting is done by operations because they understand the context. Where targets are done at a higher level, there is pre-planning with operations and it's discussed in terms of what makes sense.

Target-setting, as well as monitoring implementation, is best done in small work teams which set priorities, check progress and find solutions to immediate challenges. This allows for flexibility and the chance to adapt to changing contexts or economic circumstances. Operational planning requires a clear, well-communicated objectives and tasks. The plan must be able to mobilise staff and stakeholders around common purpose.

Departments that link strategic goals to departmental and individual performance plans are more likely to identify challenges early and adjust regularly. Many departments put systems and controls in place to ensure that people perform and comply with the plans. Management provides the tools and support units. These operate as early warning systems but also build evidence-based decision-making, promoting innovation and adaptability, and an analytical approach.

Leadership must first define the overall vision that drives the organisation. Out of that you can integrate the different divisions ... [so] they are all united around this key task. Our job is not inside; our job is to work collaboratively with the private sector to drive this economy. Once everyone is focused on that vision, you can coalesce their activities. Less bureaucracy and more allowing people to do their job.

Even as I trust them, I know they can be conservative as they are scared of contradicting the PFMA. So I do engage with others in the society ... I call on others for advice and I do call on the National Minister directly and others



- Strategy translates vision into action
- Set clear, challenging but doable goals with your Minister and colleagues
- Engage all staff, in different ways, at different levels, so that they know and understand their role and contribution
- Work as a team to set priorities, check progress and find solutions
- Link individual performance goals to unit and departmental targets
- Keep your feet on the ground and put your head together with your team



4. Allocate and utilise human, financial and physical resources

Human resource capacity, as in people with the skills, will and space to perform, is a primary focus of the NDP. The cases confirm that people are the most valuable and versatile resource if recognised, supported and mobilised, yet this is the KPA in which most departments struggle to work smart. The right people, with the right skills, using the right tools and systems are fundamental to service delivery. Performance management, backed by support systems and development opportunities, is an important tool to drive improved practice.



Staff are competent from the lower level up - from the drivers to senior management.

Recognition of what individuals and teams are capable of and what they achieve nurtures a workforce which feels 'like I belong'. This creates a reputation that attracts talent, nurturing an environment where people want to stay, enabling continuity and performance. Being a preferred place of employment enables departments to attract good people and recruit from a wide pool of candidates.

I have been here for 25 years - you become loyal towards the department ... I feel like I belong here ... I can still give more because I am given the opportunity to give more ... the moment you have people's buy-in they become owners. That's our culture: you feel proud of where you are and what you do.

Smart departments build ownership of the contextual realities and the challenge of working with fewer resources. Individuals are motivated by improving their control over the content of work and establishing the linkages with vision and mission. Performance is promoted not through monetary incentives, but through recognition, opportunities, mutual respect, and a personal wish to maintain excellence: a culture where nobody wants to be the 'weakest link'.

We work on the budgets in a manner that ensures that we bring value for money.

Teamwork creates efficiencies and places people at the centre of change. The case research demonstrates that utilising organisational resources optimally is more important than limited budgets or skills shortages. Motivated people can do more with less. When departments take responsibility for a set of activities without the allocated resources, they learn to innovate, use resources creatively and develop tools that cross traditional silos.

The cuts in budgets have been a constant in the department ... as resources declined, compliance requirements increased. The only way we could overcome this is through careful anticipatory planning and working with all levels as a team.

Departments need to ensure that compliance requirements do not distract from outcomes, or become the core focus of daily work. Smart departments have developed systems to support the work process which range from meetings to computerised tracking of progress. The systems are only effective if they are easy to use and short cut routine compliance requirements. Otherwise they detract from the real work.

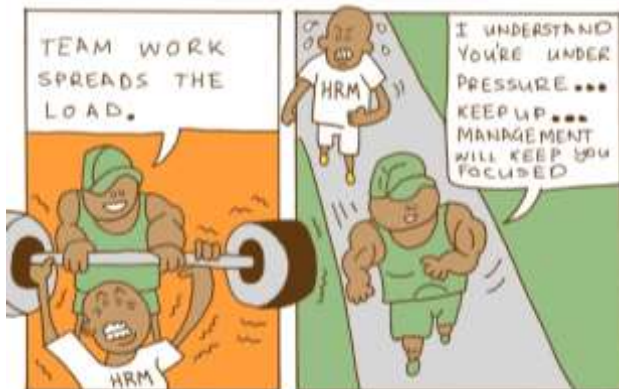
You can have good governance, but you also need a good team.

Use budgets strategically and meet all compliance requirements. Recognise and work with internal audit, risk management, Treasury and the Auditor-General. The research shows that departments that pay attention to the detail, comply with all the financial requirements and work with compliance units do perform. These units help departments to work effectively and to identify and deal with problems early.

We do not rely on the legislative mandate to comply - we meet it because staff know what they are doing.



I was born a public servant. It's my passion and calling. This is what I am. I live my passion and get the opportunity to live my dreams. I have always been a public servant and really enjoy what I do. We are game changers for the province and we are taking up the challenge.



- Do more with less - mobilise and use all your resources
- Align plans to departmental capacities and systems
- Get the right people with the right skills and keep them
- Recognise and respect people to cultivate high performance
- Comply with regulatory requirements
- Respect internal audit and Treasury - you will learn and they will help
- Invest in systems that free up time for doing the real work



5. Integrate plans, resources, budgets and performance review systems up, down and across

The NDP notes the challenges related to intergovernmental relationships and community engagement. Aligning strategy and implementation with provincial and national goals, as well as community needs is always a challenge, especially when resources are limited and delivery diverse. The cases show that departments develop a range of strategies to manage integration within departments, across levels of government and outwards to citizens.



The pressure for integration varies according to the location and work of departments. Departments that deliver social services (education, health, social development or housing) are compelled to integrate national and provincial policy and strategy into annual work plans. Sometimes there is a tension between local contexts and needs and provincial or national requirements for delivery. Many departments have explicit strategies for managing inter-governmental relations which involve active attendance at meetings and strict compliance to all prescripts.

There is very strong governance and compliance. We have focused significantly on governance nationally and provincially. We ensure we comply with the prescripts in management or operations. It's a way to show that things are happening, and happening in the right way.

Integration internally and externally is achieved through engagement on issues and strategies. This means keeping communication channels open, attending relevant meetings and engaging with stakeholders. Many of the departments chunk the work up, so that certain parts focus on policy integration, and others on operations. Sometimes work is split between the political office (to deal with stakeholders) and the administration (to improve efficiency). However, this work needs to be coordinated and linked to a common set of goals. This is often achieved through meeting reports, electronic systems, discussions and monitoring.

We function like the tentacles of an octopus: the tentacles perform on their own, but all together, they are working to the same goal.

A strategy adopted by many departments is to comply first, even if it does not make sense, so that they are doing what is required. Some will then engage further by demonstrating why a particular requirement does not work in a particular context. In order to do this, departments need to be informed of all development and to engage consistently with colleagues in the system and with citizens who receive services. This process builds networks and eases the burden of compliance.

The Minister said that we needed to change an indicator that doesn't make any sense. We responded by preparing for a coordination meeting with national. We engage with other provinces also and presented our case with good evidence and arguments. The Minister also played a role by engaging with his colleagues from other Provinces and we were able to make changes.

Departments with integrated processes show how individual and organisational performance link to delivery. In these cases, strategic planning is framed by national policy (the NDP) and based on a review of delivery trends, taking current and future finance, human and other resources into consideration. These departments have long terms plans (10 to 15 years) that feed into annual human resources and infrastructure plans. Short term alignment in annual performance plans are linked to a longer-term perspective on service delivery improvement.

Compliance leads to improvement when people see its benefits. For example, many departments that link individual performance commitments to unit and departmental commitments note improved motivation and a better understanding about the goals of the departments. Officials understand where they fit in and how their work contributes. This enables them to work more effectively, but most importantly, independently. Peer pressure and reporting on commitments drive operations and delivery processes. The same principle applies to organisational compliance.

We are finding that often it's compliance requirements and the manner in which programmes are defined that create silos. We try our best to overcome this by focusing on services and what people require ... geographically and transversally we are integrating ... people hold us accountable for services, not for sections that we have. There is a constant process of managing the tension. People expect integrated services and this is our focus.

- Implement simple, reliable and predictable systems that link human resource, finance, planning and assessment
- Keep informed and connected upwards, downwards and outwards
- Engage with colleagues in the system and with the people who receive services
- Create awareness about how performance links to delivery
- Compliance yields results when the people see its benefits



6. Review performance, report progress and respond to challenges

A key learning across the cases is embedded is the power of reviewing performance, reporting on progress and making decisions based on evidence. Access to performance data is only useful if it is used to assess progress and inform improvement and strategic plans. Otherwise it works as compliance for compliance sake. The value of MPAT is not that it measures management practice, but that it

requires departments to think through what the assessments mean and use this learning to inform improvement strategies. This learning approach, also based on sharing useful practice, is the foundation of effective monitoring and evaluation.

There is no magic wand - executive and accounting authorities take seriously the least sexy things of the department's reporting ... we want to see all those indicators improving continually.



Departments focused on improvement review implementation progress at all executive, management and staff meetings. It is a standing agenda item and there are opportunities to discuss challenges and work through problems. These departments are responsive because regular updates enable staff to deal with and resolve issues.

Our success is in being agile and responding to changes.

Smart departments make monitoring and evaluation (M&E) every manager's responsibility in the same way that adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) is a requirement. M&E cannot operate as the system that feeds evidence based decision-making if it remains the preserve of a few technical experts. When organisations institutionalise evaluative thinking the value of the hard, detailed work regarding quality of information is evident. This learning culture is evident in the ways in which departments engage with and report to stakeholders and citizens. Providing consistent and reliable information on progress and challenges builds trust and eases the delivery process.

We are building a culture of focusing on outcomes and measuring these.

M&E is first and foremost about people. Although methodological considerations and electronic systems tend to dominate in conversations of the M&E experts, the cases show that employees at levels in department maintain and validate the system through regular use. Leadership, management and staff need must be convinced of the utility of the system. Otherwise it is seen as an additional administrative burden that adds little or no value to the execution of key responsibilities.

A learning culture is conducive to continuous improvement, as well as problem solving and innovation. The cases suggest that continuous improvement requires making persistent, small changes, open communications and exchange, as well as a trusting relationship between professionals. People have to acknowledge shortcomings in order to do things better. Effective and consistent monitoring for learning and action based on evidence is critical to sustaining improvement. This requires a predictable learning and review process, which forms part of daily management practice. MPAT is identified as being a system that pulls systems together.



The motivation isn't in the finances; it's a whole culture of performance. When you have a whole organisation where most people want to perform, that's where performance can be sustained. If you take over an organisation with clean audits, you don't want the first bad audit to start under your watch. Once you have set the standards, you want to keep it that way.

- Base planning on evidence and an honest review of challenges and objectives
- Review progress regularly at executive, management and staff meetings
- Report often to stakeholders and staff to discuss anomalies and challenges
- Deal with problems and respond to claims
- Continuous improvement requires consistent, small changes and hard work

Key findings

Two key issues coming out of the performance assessments and case studies are as follows (1) there are pockets of excellence with regards to management practises throughout government. (2) Secondly weak managerial leadership practises remain a major challenge and contribute to administrative failures in government. Good management practices are crucial and at the centre as enablers for service delivery and have to be established throughout government institutions. Management practices combined with good leadership are key to success of any organisation.



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