



Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation

October 2007



Published in the Republic of South Africa by:

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (PSC)
Commission House
Chr. Hamilton & Ziervogel Streets
Arcadia 0083

Private Bag X121
Pretoria 0001

Tel: (012) 352-1000

Fax: (012) 325-8382

Website: www.psc.gov.za

National Anti-Corruption Hotline Number: 0800 701 701 (Toll-Free)

Compiled by: Branch: Monitoring and Evaluation

Distribution by: Directorate: Communication and Information Services

ISBN: 978-0-621-37551-0

RP: 237/2007

Printed by Creda Communications



FOREWORD

Involving citizens in policy development and implementation is one of the fundamental Constitutional requirements that the South African Public Service is expected to observe. For democracy to be deepened, mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that citizens participate in the country's governance processes. Such participation is important in that it allows the public to bring their views to bear on the policies and programmes of government, and also promotes ownership of such policies and programmes.

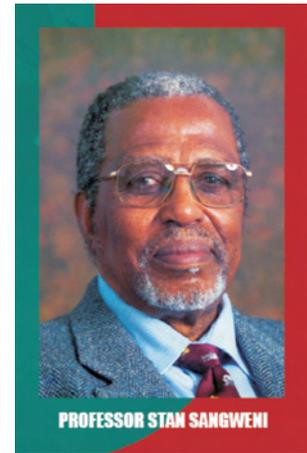
In its previous State of the Public Service reports, the PSC has consistently drawn attention to the need for improved public participation and consultation. In this regard, the PSC has emphasised that public participation requires the implementation of context sensitive processes supported by a particular set of skills from public servants, without which the success of citizen engagement is compromised. In order to further examine the nature and scope of public participation in the Public Service, the PSC has conducted a study on the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation.

The main purpose of the study was to establish the progress departments are making to involve citizens in policymaking and implementation. The study raises important issues concerning how departments understand and practise 'consultation', and some of the critical challenges that impact on participatory governance. It appears that there is a need for dialogue in the public service to deepen the understanding of different mechanism of consultation in order to foster public participation. The execution of consultation in the Public Service requires a particular set of skills from public servants, such as the ability to negotiate, understanding of community dynamics and engaging community members instead of only telling them what departments are doing.

I trust that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will contribute to on-going processes of deepening public participation in the Public Service, and that they will also encourage departments to reflect on their own consultation mechanisms and effect improvements where necessary.



PROF STAN S SANGWENI
CHAIRPERSON: PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Contents

FOREWORD	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Background to the Study	5
1.2 Aim of the Study	5
1.3 Structure of the report	6
CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 The Batho Pele Principles	8
2.3 Batho Pele Principle of Consultation	8
2.4 The goal and mechanisms of consultation	9
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	11
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 The data collection process	12
3.2.1 Literature review	12
3.2.2 Tool development	12
3.2.3 Piloting of the tool	13
3.3 Scope of the study	13
3.4 Data gathering process	13
3.5 Data integrity and validation	13
3.6 Data analysis	13
3.7 Limitations of the study	14
Chapter 4: Key Findings	15
4.1 Introduction	16
4.2 Response rate	16
4.3 Understanding of Consultation	16
4.4 Consultation initiatives	17
4.5 Departmental Systems for Consultation	19
4.5.1 Setting consultation standards and procedures	19

4.6	The Consultation Process	20
4.6.1	Services that departments consult on	20
4.6.2	Frequency of consultation	21
4.6.3	Responsibility for consultation	21
4.6.4	Consultation of special groups	22
4.6.5	Communication and feedback	23
4.6.6	Challenges in Consulting with the Public	24
4.6.7	Budgeting for consultation	26
4.7	Monitoring and Evaluation	26
4.8	Self Assessment	27

CHAPTER 5: A GOOD PRACTICE PROCESS FOR BENCHMARKING 28

5.1	Introduction	29
-----	--------------	----

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 31

6.1	Introduction	32
6.2	Conclusion	32
6.3	Recommendations	32

ANNEXURES 32

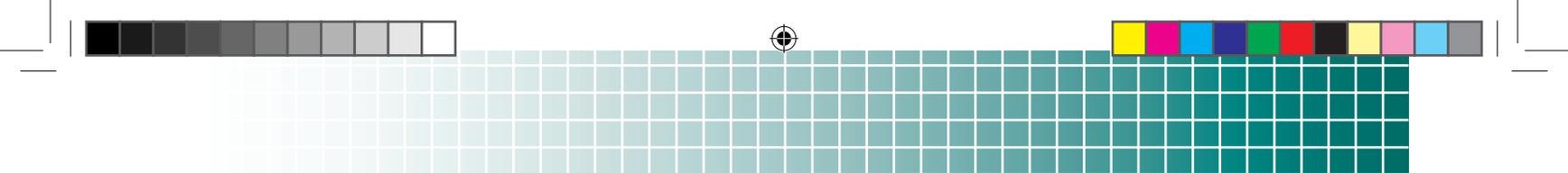
Annexure I:	Sources of information consulted	32
-------------	----------------------------------	----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	The eight Batho Pele principles	9
Figure 2:	Understanding of consultation	17
Figure 3:	Departmental consultation initiatives	18
Figure 4:	Ability to meet departmental consultation standards	19
Figure 5:	Services and service aspects departments consult on	20
Figure 6:	Frequency of consulting with customers	21
Figure 7:	Training initiatives ensuring compliance with consultation standards	22
Figure 8:	Special measures taken to consult rural and urban groups or communities	23
Figure 9:	Channels for communicating how contributions have contributed to decision-making	24
Figure 10:	Challenges in dealing with consultation	25
Figure 11:	Consultation initiatives budgeted for	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Mechanisms proposed by the Batho Pele Handbook	10
Table 2:	Strategies to address challenges facing consultation	25



Executive summary

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Constitution and the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) require the Public Service to consult with the public on the development and implementation of policies. The Public Service Commission (PSC) embarked on a study to assess the progress that departments are making to give effect to this Constitutional and Batho Pele requirement. The Batho Pele principle of consultation requires that:

Citizens be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

This study is the fifth in a series of studies directed at evaluating how each of the eight Batho Pele principles is implemented and complied with in the Public Service.

2. SCOPE

All national and provincial departments were included in the study with the exception of the following departments:

- The National Intelligence Agency,
- The South African Secret Service, and
- The South African National Defence Force.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for data collection was a self-administered questionnaire which was distributed to government departments. A total of 107 out of 138 national and provincial departments responded to the survey. The response rate of the study was 78%.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the survey:

4.1 UNDERSTANDING CONSULTATION

The study found that the definitions of consultation used by most departments reflect a misalignment with what was intended in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) (Batho Pele). Departments' understanding of consultation included information sharing (23%), discussions (23%), conferences (19%) and surveys/ research (19%). Ultimately, the extent to which these mechanisms constitute consultation depends on how they are implemented to ensure that there is meaningful engagement with the public.

4.2 DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEMS FOR CONSULTATION

4.2.1 STANDARDS FOR CONSULTATION

The survey found that more than half of the Public Service departments (55%) have developed standards for consultation. Fifty nine percent of departments that have consultation standards indicated that they are able to meet such standards, while 21% indicated that they partially meet them, and 9% indicated that they



could not meet them. Eleven per cent of departments indicated that they were unsure. The main reasons cited for not meeting consultation standards were staff shortage (43%) and lack of appropriate monitoring (28%). The main reason advanced for not having consultation standards at all was that they have been developed but not approved. Other reasons provided for not having consultation standards were incapacity (15%), confusion over who is responsible for the development of service standards (12%) and budgetary constraints (8%).

4.2.2 BUDGETING FOR CONSULTATION

The majority of respondents (65%) reported that they do not specifically budget for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Batho Pele principle of consultation. In more than half of the departments (52%), budgeting for Batho Pele is integrated into existing operating budgets. The types of consultation events budgeted for include staff training (29%), workshops and meetings (21%), printing and publications (14%), hosting of special events (11%), and marketing and advertising (9%).

4.3 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.3.1 SERVICES THAT DEPARTMENTS CONSULT THE PUBLIC ON

When asked what it is that they consult their stakeholders on, most departments cited consulting on the development of specific programmes (35%) and the quality and mechanisms of delivering services (11%). Only 5% of the departments indicated that they consult on their service standards. Considering that service standards are supposed to inform the public on the kind of service they can expect from a department, it would have been expected that departments would prioritise this area in their consultation process to obviate a potential disjuncture between their standards and what the public expects.

4.3.2 CONSULTATION WITH SPECIAL GROUPS

Departments were asked if they have special initiatives meant to consult with special groups such as people with disabilities, women, youth, the aged and rural communities. A quarter (25%) of the consultation with special groups takes place through stakeholder groups such as organisations for people living with HIV and AIDS, representative structures for emerging farmers, community leaders, and relevant individuals familiar with the needs of rural communities. An additional quarter (24%) of consultation takes place through community outreach programmes.

4.3.3 COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

A key consideration in determining the value of consultation is the visibility of the process, in particular the provision of feedback. This includes providing information on how contributions have influenced decisions of the department. The most commonly cited way of doing this was through reports, especially annual reports (38%). A further 35% of departments indicated that they also provide feedback through meetings and workshops.

4.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Forty four percent of the departments indicated that they monitor consultation and evaluate its effectiveness. The most often used approaches to monitor and evaluate consultation were through the submission of reports, conducting surveys, using call-centres, and creating consultation directorates as a means for ensuring the availability of human resources dedicated to implementing consultation.

4.4.1 BARRIERS TO IMPROVING CONSULTATION

Budgetary constraints ranked high as a barrier to consultation (21%) while language and literacy featured second (15%). Interestingly, poor participation (which departments attributed to public apathy), also came

out as a barrier. This implies that it would not only be necessary to create effective consultation mechanisms, but that departments should also ensure that they win the public's interest and confidence in these mechanisms.

Departments mentioned the following as being among the key steps that should be taken to deal with barriers to effective consultation:

- need to design an effective consultation mechanism (15%)
- improved planning (15%)
- improving translation (12%)
- more funding (11%)
- establishing dedicated units for dealing with consultation (11%)

5. SELF ASSESSMENT

Departments were asked to rate and score themselves on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents very poor, 2 represents poor, 3 represents adequate and 4 represents better than average. One percent of the respondents said they were very poor, 11% scored poor, 42% said their implementation of consultation was adequate while 46% scored themselves as better than average. Although the measure is based on subjective perceptions of respondents, it is important to note that only 12% perceived their departments to be performing poorly with regard to consultation. Other PSC studies have found that public participation in the Public Service is generally inadequate.¹ This suggests that there could be a disjuncture between what departments believe constitutes effective consultation on the one hand, and what was envisaged in the Batho Pele White paper as well as in Chapter 10 of the Constitution.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

Almost all departments that responded to this study indicated that they have been involved in some form of consultation. However, the survey found that there was confusion in differentiating between communication and consultation. Communication mechanisms such as Annual Reports and advertisements are often mentioned as consultation tools. These findings underscore the need for a heightened and shared understanding of what it means to involve the public in policy development and implementation.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

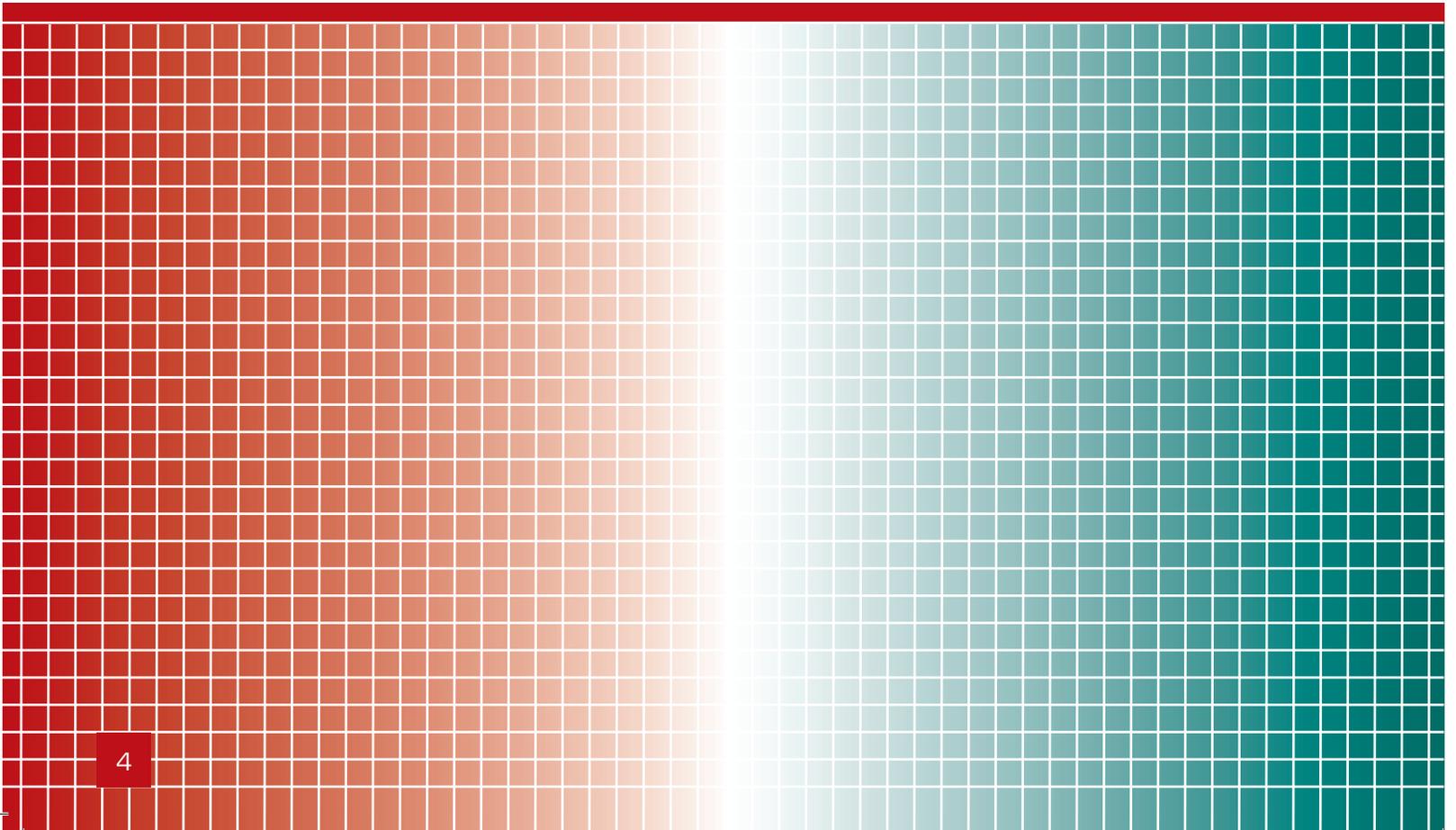
- Guided by the good practice model proposed in Chapter 4, departments should prioritise the concretisation on consultation standards and the purposes that such standards need to fulfil. This would be important so that consultation is not implemented mechanically just for compliance sake.
- Given that there are different stakeholders that departments often need to serve, it would be crucial to assess different consultation mechanisms and then ensure that the most feasible, effective and efficient are implemented. Such mechanisms could include Citizens Satisfaction Surveys, Citizens Forums, *Izimbizo*, and Service Delivery hearings.
- Departments should ensure that they clarify roles and responsibilities for consultation processes, and that those assigned these roles are held accountable. Such clarification should also distinguish between the roles and responsibilities officials have compared to the Executive.
- Departments should improve the manner in which they monitor and evaluate the implementation of their consultation processes so that timely steps can be taken to address areas of ineffectiveness and limited success.

¹ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Third Consolidated Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation Report. March 2007.



Chapter One

INTRODUCTION



1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Constitution² requires the Public Service to involve the public in governance processes. More specifically, the Constitution states that “people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”. Public participation is an important mechanism for entrenching democracy and for promoting broader ownership of the policies and programmes of government. Where public participation is done effectively, it can obviate potential adversarialism between government and citizens, as well as assist in transforming the Public Service into a service-driven, citizen-centred and accountable institution. In order to provide an enabling framework to guide such transformation, government introduced the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (commonly known as the Batho Pele White Paper)³.

One of the key principles contained in the Batho Pele White Paper is the principle of consultation. The principle builds on the Constitutional requirement of public participation and emphasises the need for citizens to be consulted about the services they receive from the Public Service. The Public Service Commission (PSC) has in the past identified public participation as one of the key areas that require further improvement. For example, in its 2005 State of the Public Service (SOPS) Report⁴ the PSC pointed out that although there were some encouraging efforts to ensure genuine public participation, in many instances the processes used were still managed in an *ad hoc* manner. In a subsequent report⁵, the PSC underscored the importance of citizen engagement and observed that the Public Service’s capacity for such engagement was rather sporadic and rudimentary. Building such capacity would not always be easy, but that should further strengthen the resolve of the Public Service to ensure that public servants acquire the skills to negotiate, understand community dynamics and work with communities⁶.

Given the above background, the PSC found it important to conduct a focused assessment of the implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation in the Public Service. This principle is at the heart of participatory governance and its monitoring is therefore a critical part of Public Service performance.

The study of the Batho Pele principle of consultation is part of a series of PSC studies directed at assessing how each of the Batho Pele principles is being implemented and complied with in the Public Service. The other Batho Pele principles that have been considered under this series are the principles of **service standards**⁷, **access**⁸, and **redress**⁹. The approach to focus on each principle individually was adopted after the first Batho Pele study which evaluated the implementation of all eight principles in 2000¹⁰.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

According to the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, the principle of consultation states that ***citizens be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.*** Informed by this broad understanding, the overall aim of the study was to evaluate the nature and extent of compliance with the principle of consultation in the Public Service.

More specifically, the study sought to:

- (a) Assess the degree to which the Public Service complies with the consultation principle as required by the White Paper.
- (b) Determine how, if it is happening, departments consult with citizens, and the effectiveness of the consultation methods utilized.

² Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996

³ Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery 1997.

⁴ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. State of the Public Service Report 2005.

⁵ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. State of the Public Service Report 2006.

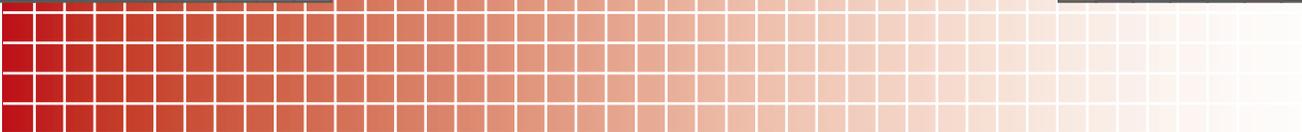
⁶ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. State of the Public Service Report 2007.

⁷ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Evaluation of Service Standards in the Public Service. 2005

⁸ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Access. 2006

⁹ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Redress. 2006

¹⁰ The Public Service Commission (2000) Survey of Compliance with the Batho Pele Policy

- 
- 
- 
- (c) Determine the challenges and barriers that may be preventing government departments from consulting adequately.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

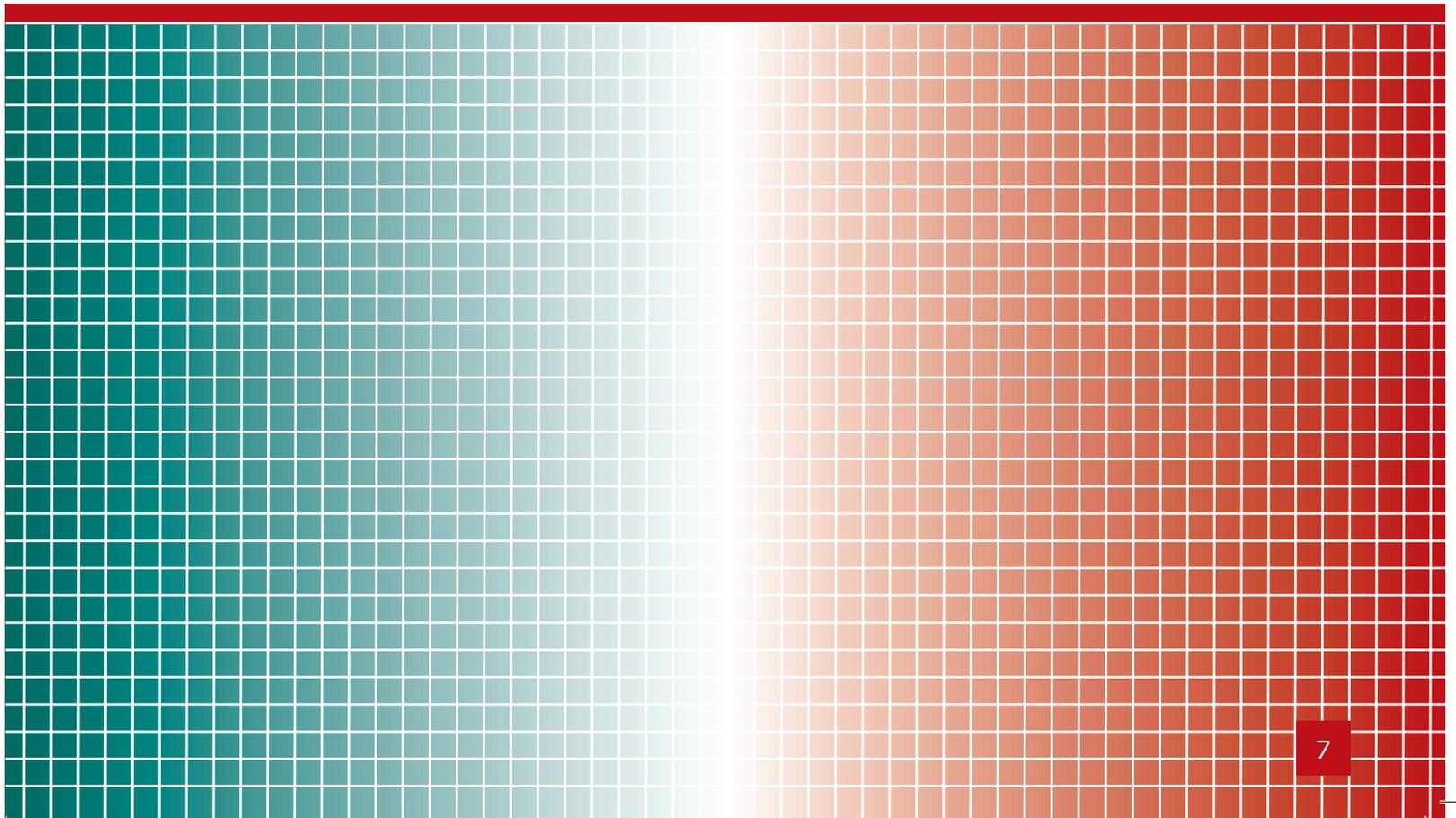
This report is structured in the following manner:

- *Chapter one* introduces and provides background to the study.
- *Chapter two* describes the research methodology followed.
- *Chapter three* presents the findings and analysis.
- *Chapter four* deals with best practice and presents cases of how departments that have successfully implemented this principle have done so and the level of success and failure achieved.
- *Chapter five* draws on conclusions and provides recommendations for improving the implementation of the principle of Consultation.



Chapter Two

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND



2.1 INTRODUCTION

The advent of democratic rule in South Africa brought with it hope for the majority of citizens that there would be a better life for all. Recognising the centrality of the Public Service as a key machinery through which services are delivered, government put in place a number of policy frameworks through which public service delivery can be transformed and reoriented towards the imperative of the new democratic order. One of these frameworks was the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. Comprising eight fundamental service delivery principles, the White Paper provides key directives to guide the Public Service towards being efficient, effective and responsive. The White Paper states, among others, that *“a transformed South African Public Service will be judged by one criterion above all: its effectiveness in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South African citizens. Improving service delivery is therefore the ultimate goal of the Public Service transformation programme”*.

It is therefore important for the Public Service to keep assessing its own service delivery progress against the provisions contained in the White Paper to ensure that appropriate steps are taken where necessary to accelerate implementation and heighten responsiveness. In this way, the Public Service would be better placed to play its role of helping the public to realise the hope for a better life.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Batho Pele Principles, with a specific focus on the Principle of Consultation. The Chapter outlines the goals and objectives of consultation and highlights some of the key considerations to make in order to promote consultation in the Public Service.

2.2 THE BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

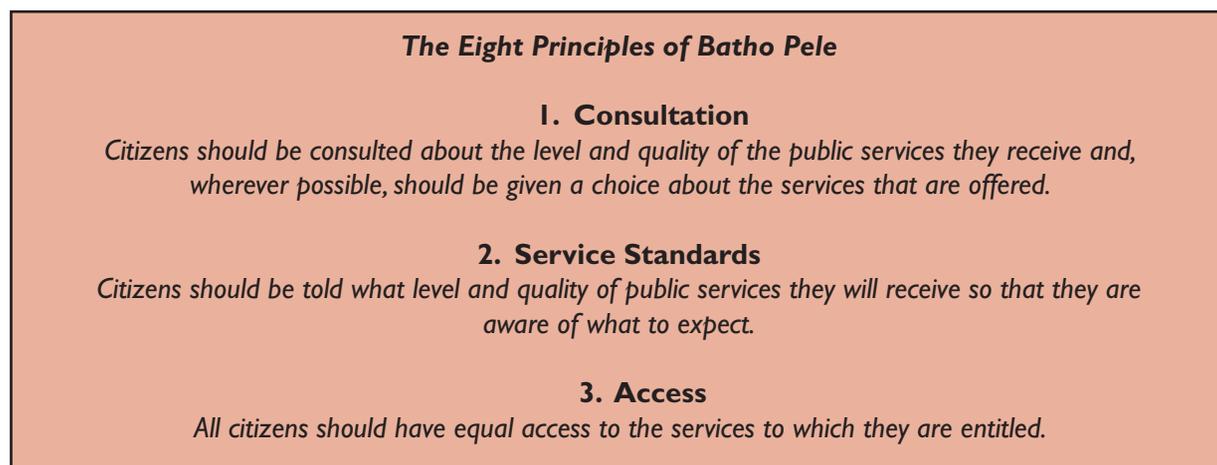
The broad vision and mission of Batho Pele are to:

“continually improve the lives of the people of South Africa by a transformed public service, which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all”...

“create a people-centred and a people-driven public service that is characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and a strong code of ethics¹¹.”

Batho Pele is therefore a call to action from the Public Service to the members of the public and customers to assist in improving service delivery. The need to improve services means that Batho Pele should not be seen as a hollow slogan. Batho Pele Principles require a shift in ways of working in the Public Service. Public servants should demonstrate that they care about citizens who are primary consumers of public service and are willing and prepared to serve them. The following are the eight Batho Pele principles:

Figure 1: The eight Batho Pele principles



¹¹ Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. Batho Pele Handbook: a Service Delivery Improvement Guide. 2003.



4. Courtesy
Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

5. Information
Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

6. Openness and Transparency
Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge.

7. Redress
If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

8. Value for money
Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

2.3 BATHO PELE PRINCIPLE OF CONSULTATION

The Batho Pele principle of consultation should not be seen in isolation to the other Batho Pele principles. All eight principles are interlinked. For example, the promotion of the principle of access requires that consultation takes place with citizens to better understand their needs and to ensure services can indeed be accessible to them. Without such consultation, the risk exists that what government regards as accessible service delivery may be different from what citizens have in mind. This is the case with all Batho Pele principles. Consultation is critical in the deepening of good governance and democracy because it invites active participation of the public not as service recipients but also as players in decision-making on service delivery. The implementation of consultative mechanisms should, therefore, transcend mere technical compliance and become an integral part of service delivery in the Public Service.

2.4 THE GOAL AND MECHANISMS OF CONSULTATION

The goal of consultation is to put the citizen at the centre of Public Service delivery through ensuring citizens' active involvement in service delivery. The Batho Pele Handbook¹² stipulates that consultation will be considered effective if the following objectives are achieved:

- There will be a balance or compromise between what citizens want and what national and provincial departments can realistically afford and have the capacity to deliver;
- Customers are happy or at least satisfied with the quality and quantity of service delivery;
- Service delivery is improved and improving; and
- There is mutual respect between service providers (government departments) and customers (citizens).

The Batho Pele Handbook further outlines the following specific mechanisms for promoting consultation:

¹² Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. Batho Pele Handbook: A Service Delivery Improvement Guide. 2003



Table 1: Mechanisms proposed by the Batho Pele Handbook

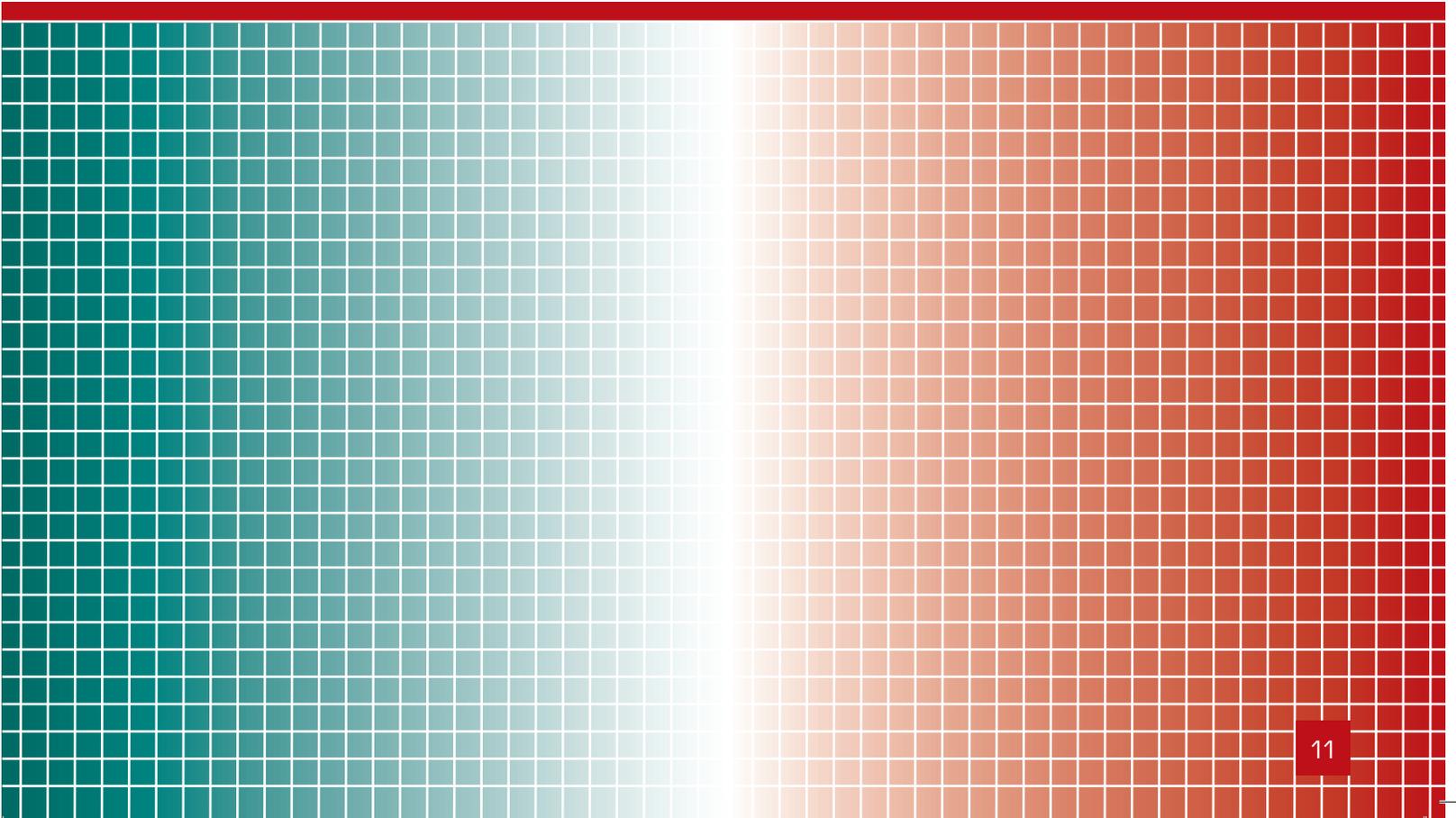
Step	Activity
1. Set clear objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Decide what you want to achieve b. Decide what you want to know c. Determine what questions to ask
2. Identify all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify all stakeholders that need to be consulted b. Identify 'stakeholders' into relevant sub-groups, such as programme team/management structure; citizens/customers/beneficiaries; other departments/pressure groups/funders/interest groups/NGO's/etc; peer group/reference group/advisors/sounding boards)
3. Choose the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use a combination of methodologies (re-write as (a) determine suitable design and (b) develop relevant methodologies, (c) outline whether there is a theory based approach to this or not) b. Knowing your customers helps you choose the best methodologies (also the importance of the type of service, the delivery mechanisms, goals and objective of the department, capacity to deliver the service, etc should be considered – these are goal based (i.e. utility designed) evaluations based on Consultation.
4. Allocate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify what resources are needed for the consultation b. Identify what resources can be supplied internal from the department c. determine what resources need to be contracted from outside the department (also link to BPO best approach, ethics, efficiency/ effectiveness, develop a realistic budget or this and assess the costs and benefits of the consultation design – change the design if necessary)
5. Prioritise	<p>Determine what must be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in the short term b. in the medium term c. in the long term <p>(these periods should be defined, the programme/consultation plan should be outlined on a timeline and key milestones identified. This should be closely managed and reorganised and reported on as appropriate)</p>
6. Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communicate your objectives to your customers b. Be flexible c. Be consistent d. Be patient e. Be courteous (b to e are characteristics of a good leader/moderator/facilitator in the consultation process)
7. Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate whether the process was successful b. Establish whether the stakeholders are happy c. Establish what needs to be changed
8. Feedback and report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tell whom b. Tell them what c. Tell them how

This study has considered the above-mentioned mechanisms during the process of the development of the assessment instrument that was applied to collect data. For example, the data collection tool included questions on, among others, how departments allocate resources to conduct monitoring of their consultation processes.



Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY



3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology that was applied during the execution of this study. A study of this nature, which has both quantitative and qualitative elements, required a combination of methodologies. The processes followed in the study included literature review of key documents, development of the data collection tool and the piloting thereof, identification of relevant persons from each department to serve as focal points of the study between the PSC and the respective departments, and verification of the integrity of the data gathered.

3.2 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The stages that were followed during the data collection process are outlined below.

3.2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study of this nature, there was a need for a literature review. Documents such as the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery¹³, the Constitution¹⁴, the Batho Pele Handbook¹⁵, the Charter Mark¹⁶, and the State of the Public Service Report¹⁷ were perused. The purpose of the literature review was, among others, to identify key issues regarding consultation in Public Service delivery, and to use such information in the subsequent development of the data collection instrument.

It emerged from the literature that there is a need to entrench the culture of consultation among government departments. The literature also raised key issues for consideration in ensuring that such a culture is effectively entrenched. According to the Charter Mark, these issues include the following:

- Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff
- Use your resources effectively
- Set standards
- Continuously develop and improve consultation processes
- Contribute to improving the opportunities and quality of life in the communities

Similarly, the Batho Pele White Paper states that there are many ways to consult users of Public Services. These ways include customer surveys, interviews with individual users, consultation groups, and meetings with consumer representative bodies. The Public Service needs to actively involve citizens in its work, especially previously disadvantaged or those who, due to geography, language barriers, fear of authority or any other reasons, have previously found it hard to make their voices heard.

3.2.2 TOOL DEVELOPMENT

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and administered as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into the following themes:

- (a) Background information,
- (b) Understanding of the Batho Pele principles,
- (c) Mechanisms for consulting citizens,
- (d) Setting consultation standards,
- (e) Communication and feedback,
- (f) Conditions required for consultation to take place,
- (g) The budget,
- (h) Convenience of the consultation process,

¹³ Republic of South Africa. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997)

¹⁴ Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

¹⁵ Republic of South Africa. DPSA (2003) The Batho Pele Handbook

¹⁶ The Charter Mark is the United Kingdom Government's National Standard for Excellence in Customer Service. For more information see <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/chartermark/>

¹⁷ Republic of South Africa. The State of Public Service Report: Public Service Commission, (2007).

- (i) Barriers to improving consultation, and
- (k) Monitoring and evaluation of consultation.

3.2.3 PILOTING OF THE TOOL

The data collection tool was piloted prior to the actual data collection. Comments received during pilot process were used to refine the tool.

3.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study covered both national and provincial government departments. Therefore, all 138 departments were included in this study. The following departments were not included in the study:

- The South Africa Secret Service,
- The South African National Defence Force, and
- National Intelligence Agency.

3.4 DATA GATHERING PROCESS

Questionnaires were distributed with an introductory letter to all Directors-General and Heads of Department requesting them to nominate contact persons that the PSC would interact with during the project. The contact persons were also requested to render assistance during follow-ups to questionnaires where necessary. To familiarise the contact persons with the dynamics of the study, they were invited to workshops undertaken in all the provinces. A separate workshop was also conducted for national departments. The overall purpose of the workshops was to provide clarity on the questionnaire, explain the rationale for specific questions, and ensure a common understanding of what is required in the study. In these workshops, the process of data collection and what is required in terms of documentation was also clarified.

3.5 DATA INTEGRITY AND VALIDATION

Telephonic follow-ups with departmental contact persons were conducted where insufficient information had been received. There were instances where follow-up interviews had to be conducted to assist departments that were struggling with completing the questionnaire on their own. These follow-ups proved to be helpful in strengthening the integrity and quality of information gathered.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis started off with data coding. This was to prepare data to allow a degree of comparability. A rigorous process of coding data has allowed for more accurate analysis at an appropriate level.

The coding of the data conformed to the following protocol:

- All verbatim data was captured in MS Word documents, in a format that allowed each item in the instrument (question in each questionnaire) to be adjacent to each other for comparison;
- All the responses were read and an appropriate code list for each item devised;
- All responses to each item were coded to allow for the maximum range of responses;
- Once the code list was applied, consonance (that is similarity in meaning and/or application) of the constructs was assessed and the code list was simplified;
- All data was then captured into a specially designed data base and validated for consistency;
- A frequency distribution was done on each item using the Statistics Package or the Social Sciences (SPSS);
- The frequency of each item was tabulated and transferred into MS Excel.



Data was then subjected to a final coding procedure. Each item was checked and the consonant responses were reassessed to develop presentable categories of responses. Many original responses contained too many options for meaningful analysis.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

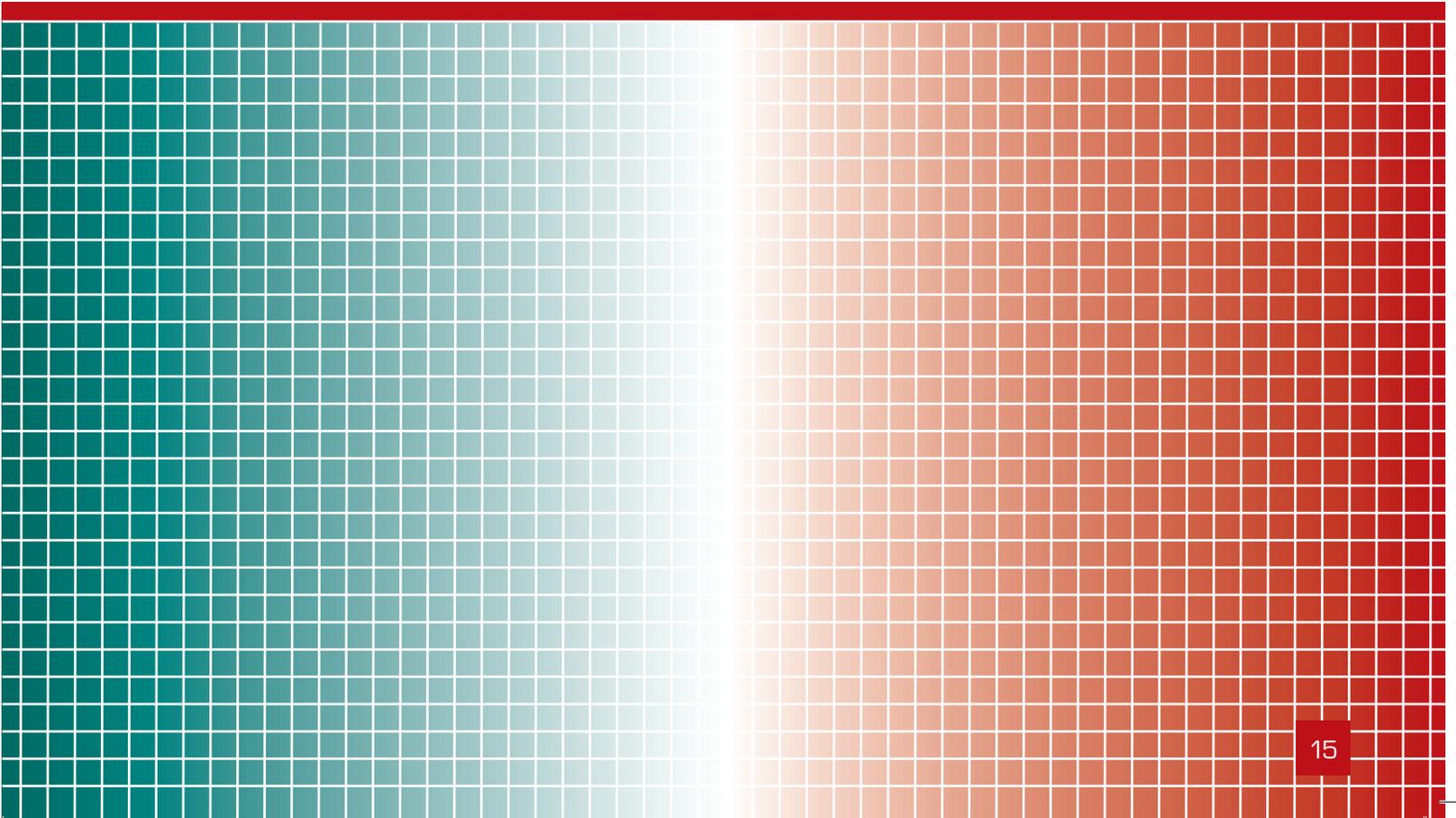
The study was mainly based on responses received from officials in departments. The methodology used, therefore, did not make provision for data validation through, for example, onsite observations and interviews with service users. However, it is believed that other PSC oversight activities generate such validation information. These activities include Citizens Satisfaction Surveys¹⁸ and Inspections of Service Delivery sites.

¹⁸ See, for example, Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Citizen Satisfaction Survey: Economic and Infrastructure Services Sector: 2006



Chapter Four

KEY FINDINGS



4.1 INTRODUCTION

Consultation can be a very complex process, depending on how it is understood and the purpose it is meant to serve. This chapter presents the findings of the study on the implementation of and compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation. The chapter firstly analyses how departments understand consultation, and whether such understanding is comprehensive enough. The chapter further analyses consultation initiatives and processes applied by respective departments. This is followed by findings on strategies employed by departments to conduct consultation. Finally, the chapter presents an analysis of the monitoring and evaluation systems used by the departments to track consultation processes.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

The study yielded a positive response rate. A total of 107 out of 138 departments responded to the survey, resulting in a 78% response rate. A further disaggregation of the response rate shows that only 48% of the National departments included in the sample returned their completed questionnaires. This is very low compared to the 87% response rate of provincial departments. A possible reason for the low response rate from national departments could be that many regard themselves as being at arm's length from citizens, at least in comparison to provincial departments. Indeed, there are other studies in which some national departments have indicated to the PSC that they regarded certain Batho Pele principles as being less applicable to their service delivery context¹⁹. The PSC believes that such a view reflects a narrow understanding of what Batho Pele is about.

4.3 UNDERSTANDING OF CONSULTATION

Departments were asked to indicate what they understand consultation to mean in the context of public service delivery. The purpose of the question was to establish if there is any common understanding of what consultation entails. The findings show that departments attached various meanings to the Batho Pele principle of consultation. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, 90% of respondents indicated that consultation was about soliciting the views from stakeholders. Based on the 90% of respondents having an agreement on what consultation entails it can be concluded that there is common understanding of the principle amongst the departments. But the common understanding of consultation shared amongst the departments does not seem to directly talk to the definition of Consultation provided by Batho Pele Handbook. Other meanings attached to consultation include when departments inform customers about government services and when departments interact with customers and stakeholders. The principle of Consultation states that people should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they receive and, wherever possible, people should be given a choice about services that are offered.

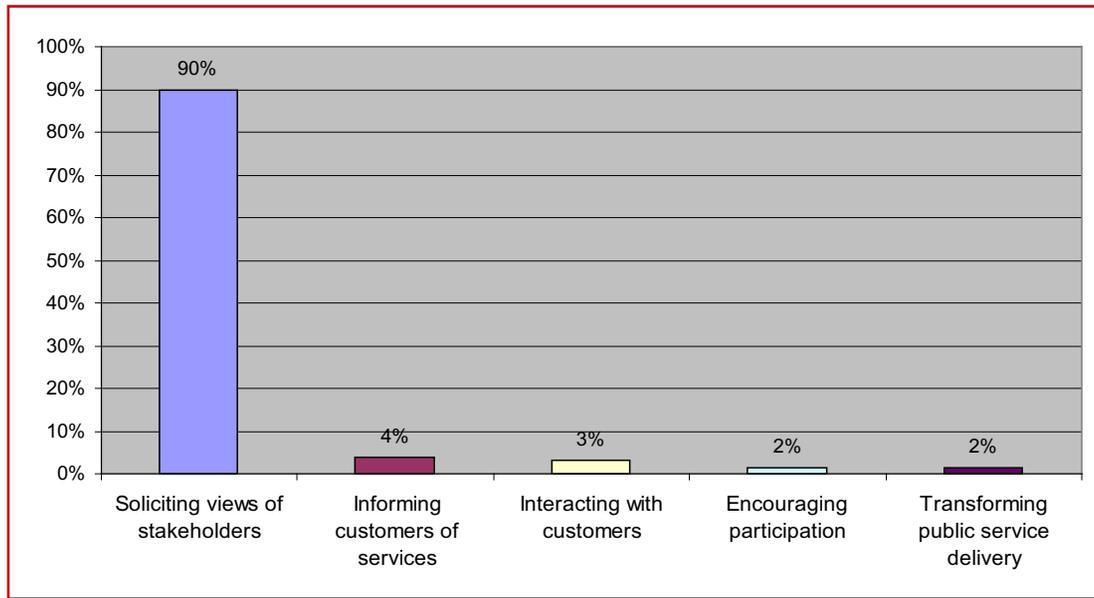
The different meanings of consultation provided by departments do not adequately talk about the gist of the principle of consultation. They only talk about instances where departments only inform their customers and stakeholders. Informing customers of service rendered by government departments does not necessarily constitute consultation. Consultation should involve active engagement with members of the public through a platform where they can express their views on the level and quality of services they receive.

The fact that departments seem to have such a narrow understanding of consultation could explain why, as the PSC found in one of its earlier studies, citizens are generally not satisfied with the complaints and consultation mechanisms of several departments. The study found that in terms of the departments included in the sample, only 27 % of the service users indicated that they had been part of consultation processes²⁰.

¹⁹ See for example, Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Access. October 2006

²⁰ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Citizens Satisfaction Survey: Overview Report of the Criminal Justice Sector. October 2005.

Figure 2: Understanding of consultation



The following definition provided by the department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environmental Affairs (Gauteng) is worth quoting due to its comprehensive nature:

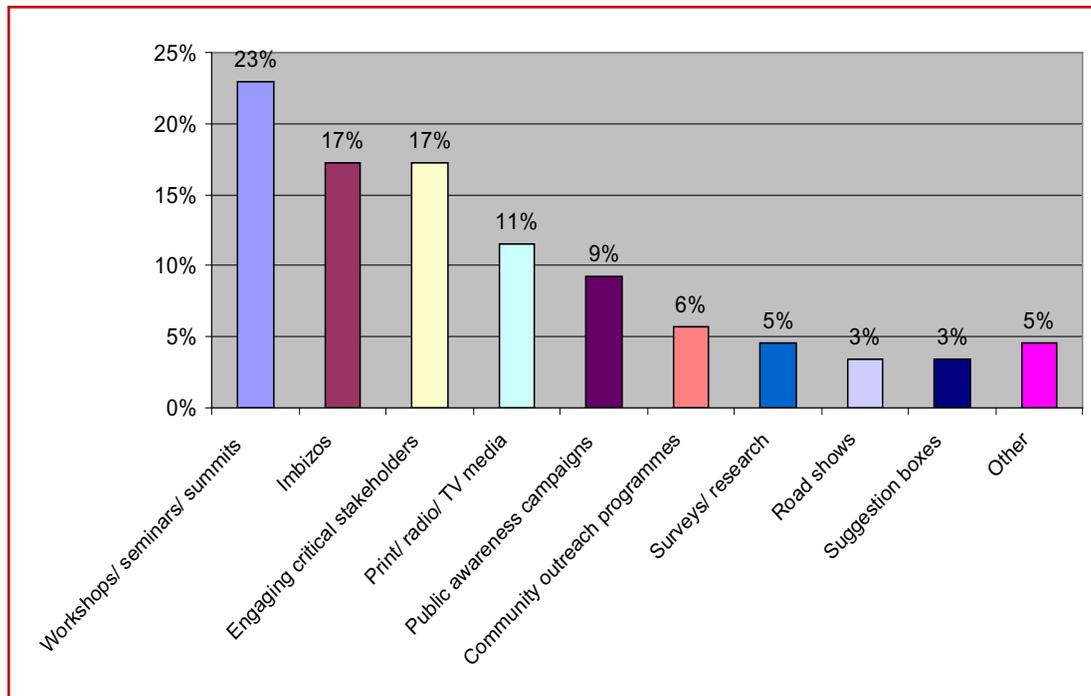
“Consultation is a means of communicating with various customers/stakeholders in a manner which is conducive to a particular target audience. We as government officials should consult with customers/ stakeholders and the general public with regards to services we provide them. All stakeholders should participate and identify their specific needs, be given an opportunity to obtain/provide feedback or communicate on initiatives/ projects so as to make input into the policies and kinds of services rendered to them on a regular basis. The customers/ stakeholders should preferably have a choice with regards to the services they are offered.”

The above definition reflects an understanding of consultation which involves an interactive process between the Public Service and the public. This is an important aspect that the current study has carried into the other stages of analysis to establish if the actual practice in departments provides for such an interactive process as opposed to a simple one way communication of messages from departments to the public. This definition also has features similar to the one contained in the Batho Pele White Paper and Batho Pele Handbook where the emphasis is on soliciting views of members of the public on the level and quality of existing public services. Citizens are able to make right choices on the services offered if they are well-informed about their existence and advantages and disadvantages thereof.

4.4 CONSULTATION INITIATIVES

Departments were asked to indicate the mechanisms they use to promote consultation. **Figure 3** below shows that a wide range of initiatives are considered to be mechanisms for consultation. Meetings such as workshops, seminars, and summits account for almost a quarter (23%) of the consultation initiatives. *Izimbizo* account for 17% of the initiatives. The category of ‘other’ accounts for 5% and it includes mechanisms such as exhibitions and commemoration of national and international ‘special days’.

Figure 3: Departmental consultation initiatives



A key observation emanating from the above findings is that departments seem to regard information dissemination as a form of consultation. Using media briefings, print media and departmental websites to share information could indeed serve as useful communication purposes. However, because such processes for information dissemination do not always contain a feedback loop to allow interaction with the public, the extent to which they can serve consultative purposes becomes limited. None of the departments mentioned the PSC-developed Citizens Forums²¹, which represent one of the programme-focused mechanisms to consult with members of the public.

CITIZENS FORUMS

Citizens' Forums create a platform whereby citizens are invited to participate in assessing particular programmes and to suggest practical improvements. Participants are directed away from just being critical to also making practical recommendations for dealing with identified challenges. It is also important to note that Citizens' Forum are educational and empowering. They address the challenge of cultural diversity, socio economic, inequalities, and meaningful public participation. People from diverse background are able to contribute to effective policy implementation and improved service delivery.

Citizens' Forums aim to achieve the following:

- *Improved citizen participation in the processes of service delivery, decision-making and policy formulation.*
- *Effective and efficient use of public resources and improved service delivery.*
- *Better understanding of the community social and economic needs.*
- *Sustainable economic and social transformation.*
- *An empowered, informed and educated citizenry.*
- *Partnerships between different spheres of government and citizens.*
- *Improved governance and greater accountability.*

The overall purpose of conducting Citizens' Forums is to evaluate the delivery of particular services throughout the country, and to enable the active involvement of people affected by government programmes in service delivery improvement processes.

²¹ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission: Citizens' Forum Toolkit.

Again, no department mentioned the draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation developed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG)²². Although the DPLG framework focuses more on Ward Committees, it can provide the much-needed broader guidance on types, principles and the practice of citizen engagement. It is either departments are not aware of these potentially exciting initiatives meant to foster consultation with members of public or departments do not have capacity to apply them. There is a need to raise awareness about the existence of these participatory models among government departments.

But information dissemination can be regarded as a one way process. It is only the departments that are informing citizens about the public services available. The way in which departments interact with citizens does not allow for a two way process where citizens also share their views on how they perceive services rendered to them. This means that there is no dialogue between departments and the citizens who are the consumers of the services. It is therefore difficult to refer to this process of information dissemination as consultation. It does not involve the basic elements of consultation as stipulated in the government official documents such as the Batho Pele Handbook and the White Paper on Batho Pele.

4.5 DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEMS FOR CONSULTATION

4.5.1 SETTING CONSULTATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Departments were asked if they have any consultation standards set as a means to mainstream the implementation of the consultation principle. Fifty one percent (51%) of departments indicated that they have developed standards for consultation. Where departments have developed such standards, respondents were asked to comment on whether their departments were able to meet their consultation standards, and the results are reflected in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Ability to meet departmental consultation standards

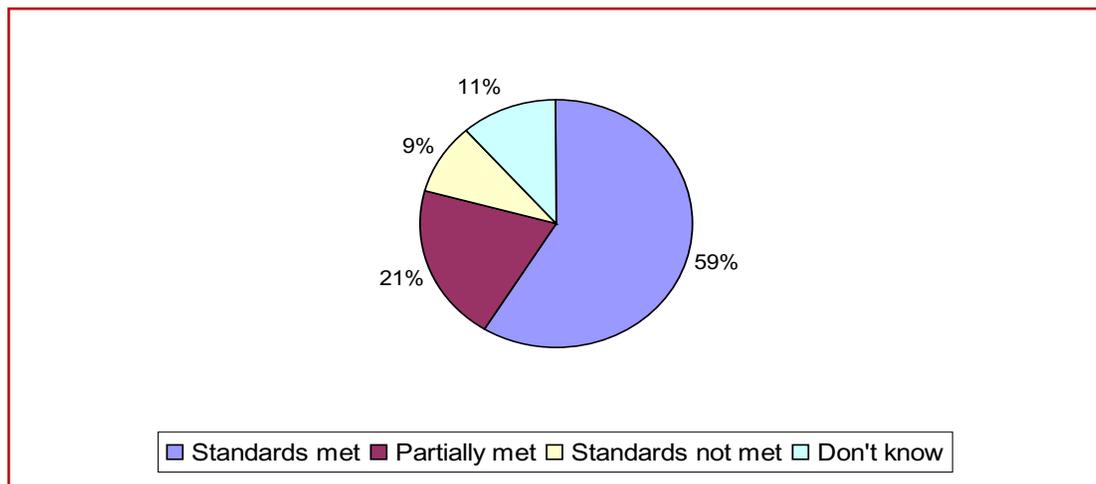


Figure 4 shows that 59% of departments were able to meet their consultation standards. These findings warrant a closer examination. Taking a few steps back, it was indicated earlier that only 108 departments participated in this study. Of these, only 51% (that is, 55 departments) said that they have service standards for consultation. Of these 55, only 59% (or 32 departments) indicated that they were able to meet their consultation standards. In other words, it is only a small fraction of departments who believe that they are succeeding in consulting the public. This suggests that the effectiveness of consultation mechanisms in the Public Service requires serious attention. These findings seem to be in line with the ones contained in the 2007 State of the Public Service Report by the PSC where it emerged that the Public Service needs to do more to improve the scope and quality of participation by citizens in its work. It emerged in this report that there is a need for more dialogue in the Public Service to deepen the understanding of different mechanisms

²² Republic of South Africa. Department of Provincial and Local Government: Draft National Framework for Public Participation, 2005.

of public participation and the objectives that they serve²³. Consultation standards can only be successfully met if there is solid understanding of consultation by the officials of respective departments. However, departments stated that the key reasons for not meeting departmental consultation standards were a shortage of staff (43%), and a lack of appropriate monitoring (28%).

Other reasons are limited internal commitment (13%), inadequate training (8%), and inadequate feedback (5) and budget constraints (5%). The fact that 21% indicated that they could only meet their standards partially suggests that with more effort, the number of departments meeting their standards could increase. It would, however, be necessary for departments to carefully examine their own specific contexts to ensure that they can perform much better than these findings suggest.

Respondents who indicated that their departments had not developed departmental consultation standards, were asked to elaborate why this was the case. The most common response, shared by more than two-thirds (65%) of these respondents, was that the consultation standards developed by departments had not yet been approved. Other reasons for not developing standards include inadequate capacity (15%), confusion as to whose role and responsibility the development of consultation standards is (12%) and budget constraints (8%).

4.6 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.6.1 SERVICES THAT DEPARTMENTS CONSULT ON

Departments were requested to identify areas on which they consult their stakeholders. Figure 5 below shows that various services were identified as key areas on which departments consult.

Figure 5: Services and service aspects that departments consult on

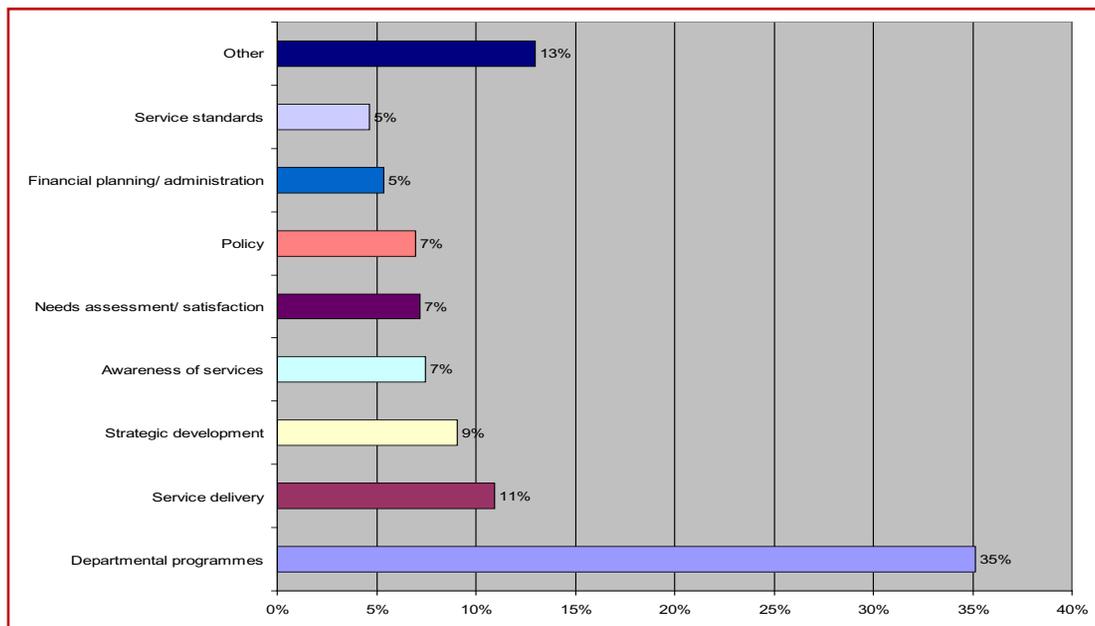


Figure 5 above, shows that the majority of consultation among departments by far occurs in relation to the development of specific departmental programmes (35%), for an example, the Expanded Public Works Programme in the Department of Public Works. Of particular concern are the very low levels (5%) of consultation on service standards. Considering that service standards are supposed to inform the public on the kind of service they can expect from a department, it would have been expected that departments would prioritise this area in their consultation process to obviate a potential disjuncture between their standards and the expectations of members of the public. It may well be that as the PSC has found in

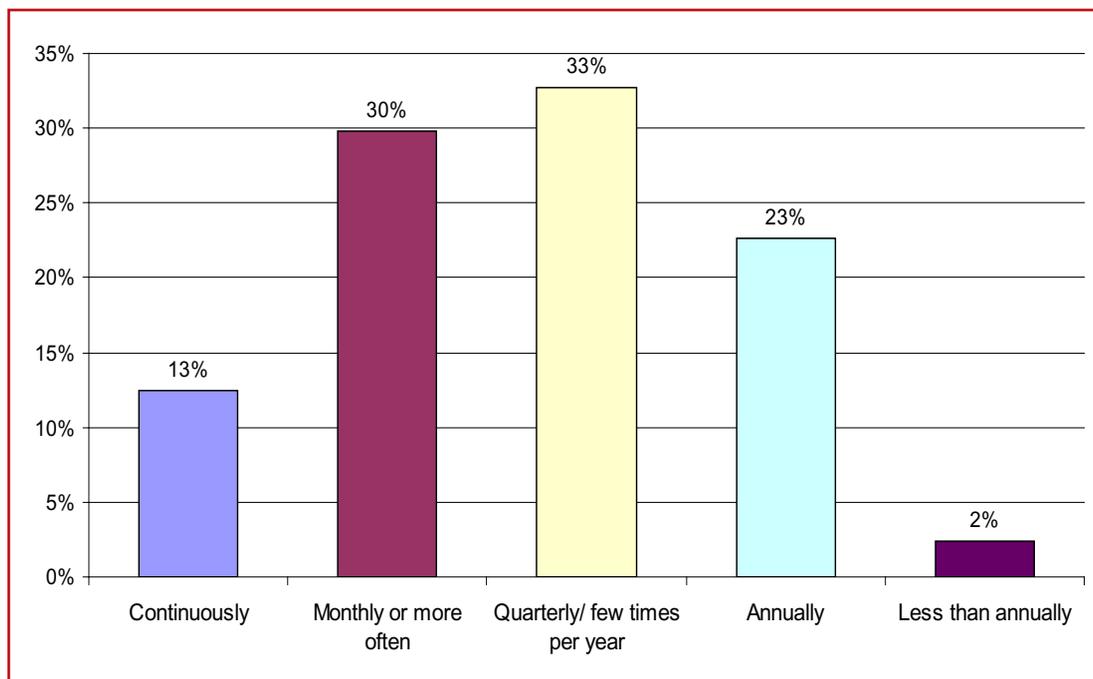
²³ State of Public service Report: Public Service Commission, 2007.

previous studies²⁴, not all departments develop service standards, thus explaining why only a few would consult citizens on such standards because they have not even developed them in the first place.

4.6.2 FREQUENCY OF CONSULTATION

When asked about the frequency of their consultation, departments indicated different levels of frequency. **Figure 6** below illustrates the regularity of consultation between departments and their customers. Sixty three per cent (63%) of departments indicated that they consult monthly or quarterly while 13% indicated that they consult continuously. Although these figures are encouraging, it should be noted that unless the quality of such consultation is assessed, it may not be possible to comment on its effectiveness. Considering that some departments have included media releases and the updating of their websites as forms of consultation, it may well be that some of these figures also include such one-way information dissemination activities as part of what departments regard as regular consultation processes. If that is the case, 63% of departments that have indicated that they have regular consultation with the customers might be referring to what departments themselves regard as consultation. This is not what is prescribed as consultation in official documents such as the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery²⁵. Therefore, this figure might not be reliable and acceptable as the true reflection of the state of consultation in public service.

Figure 6: Frequency of consulting with customers



4.6.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSULTATION

Respondents were asked whose responsibility it was to ensure that there was active consultation in their respective departments. More than three-quarters (77%) indicated that the responsibility to ensure active participation is designated to a specific unit or individual in the departments. In other words, departments have units or individuals that are specifically responsible for consultation. This may be a favourable finding in that it could be an indication that specific individuals have been assigned the important responsibility of ensuring that consultation takes place. Such individuals should then be held answerable if poor levels of consultation are realised and their progress could be assessed through normal departmental performance management and reporting systems. However, this finding does also suggest that there may be a need in some of these departments to distinguish between units that may be responsible for facilitating and supporting the creation and implementation of consultation mechanisms on the one hand, and the broader

²⁴ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Evaluation of Service Standards in the Public Service. November 2005

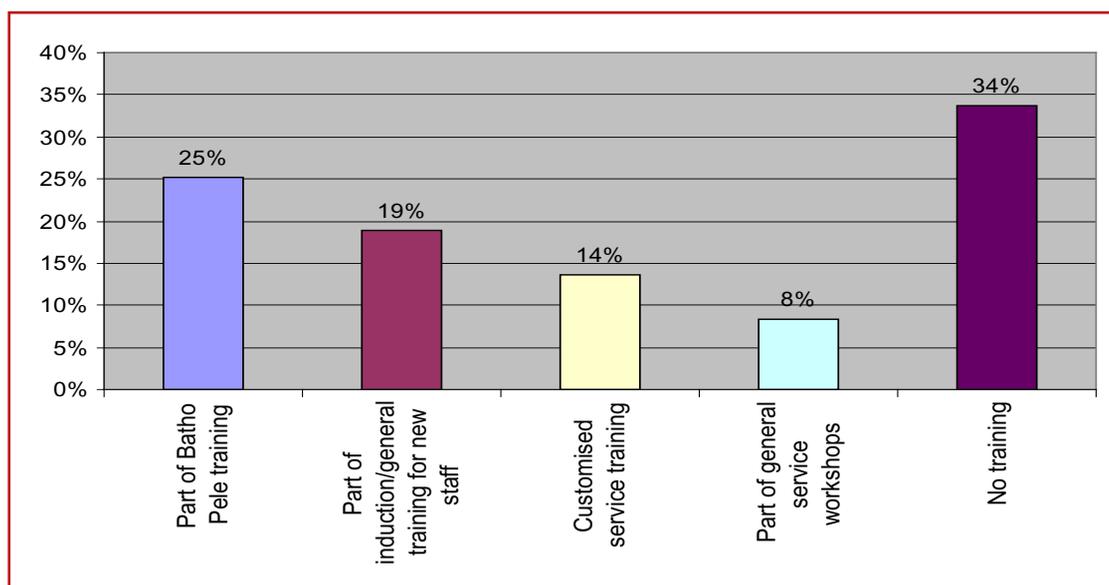
²⁵ Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997.

responsibility of consulting with the public, on the other hand. The importance of such a distinction lies in the fact that consultation is unlikely to be effective when it is centralised within the job description of a single individual. Considering the need to consult frequently and on a range of issues such as policy, service standards, programmes and projects, it is worrying that some departments would believe that consultation could be the preserve of a single individual.

Departments were further asked if their staff members were trained or equipped to consult with their stakeholders, and only 52% indicated that such training was offered. However, this training does not seem to be designed to account for the unique conditions of each department, nor for the unique requirements of the customers they serve. There seems to be generic training across the board. One quarter (25%) of departments indicated that training on consultation was a component of general Batho Pele training. A further one-fifth (19%) indicated that consultation was covered in the Batho Pele training that was offered as part of a general induction training to new staff. A few departments, did however, indicate that in their departments, only management received training on consultation or Batho Pele in general. The latter requires some urgent rethink of what Batho Pele is about and who is responsible for implementing it. All Public Servants need to practise Batho Pele, and training should therefore not be limited to management or new staff.

The execution of participatory models that would fast-track the implementation of consultation requires a particular set of skills from public servants, such as the ability to negotiate; ability to understand community dynamics and work with, rather than work for communities²⁶. Surely, with the type of public servants South Africa has who are not at the same level of understanding the value of consultation, this would require their orientation and re-skilling to address the challenges posed by working in such a context.

Figure 7: Training initiatives ensuring compliance with consultation standards

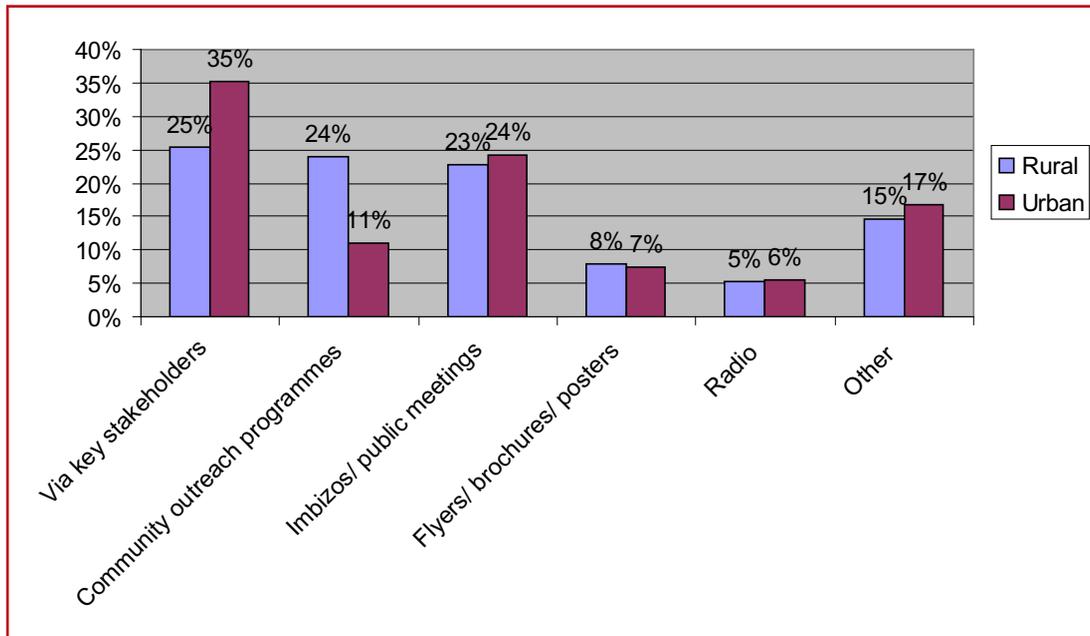


4.6.4 CONSULTATION OF SPECIAL GROUPS

Departments were asked if they have special initiatives for consulting with special groups such as people with disabilities, women, youth, the aged and rural communities. These special groups might need particular attention to reach and ensure that their needs are brought to bear on the policies and programmes of departments. Departments indicated that there are a number of initiatives that are used to consult special groups. As indicated in **Figure 8** below, a quarter of consultation (25%) takes place through stakeholder groups such as organisations for people living with HIV and AIDS, representative structures for emerging farmers, community leaders, and relevant individuals familiar with the needs of rural communities. An additional quarter (24%) of consultation takes place through community outreach programmes.

²⁶ State of Public service Report: Public Service Commission, 2007.

Figure 8: Special measures taken to consult rural and urban groups or communities



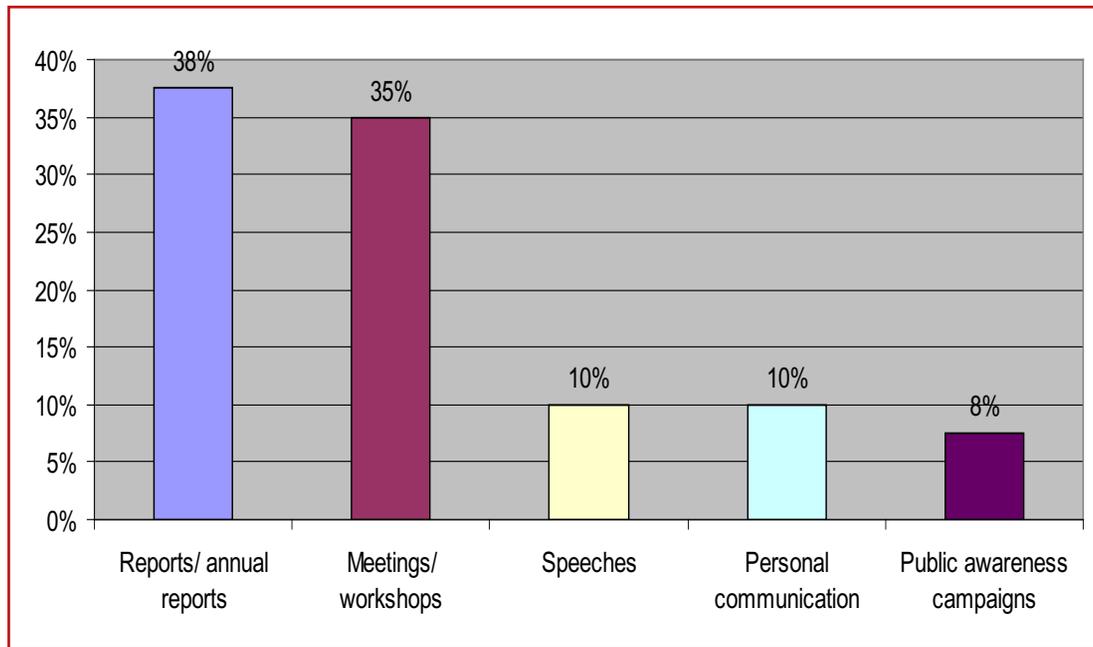
4.6.5 COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Departments were asked if they have a system in place through which they inform members of the public how their inputs have been incorporated in efforts to improve service delivery. As reflected in **Figure 9** below, the most common means of communicating feedback to external stakeholders are reports, especially annual departmental reports (38%). A further 35% of feedback is provided through meetings and workshops. However, in one of the PSC studies on the Criminal and Justice Sector, it was found that “in almost half of the cases where services users lodged complaints, they indicated that nothing had happened after they lodged their complaints, while almost a third stated that they were still awaiting an answer²⁷.”

Although the issue on lodging complaints might seem unrelated to consultation, it is tempting to think that if departments have no means of informing citizens on the lodged complaints, they are likely not to have communication strategies to give feedback on consultation related inputs. It is likely to be during these meetings and workshops where there is a one way process of information dissemination. It is only the departments that talk to the citizens, without space for active engagement and exchange of views between the departments and citizens. This approach can be referred to as top down and it does not encourage citizens to have a sense of ownership when it comes to programmes driven by government departments.

²⁷ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Citizen Satisfaction Survey: Overview Report of the Criminal Justice sector; 2005.

Figure 9: Channels for communicating how contributions have contributed to decision-making



This finding confirms the earlier observations made in this report that one-way communication channels are generally the common means of 'consultation'. Clearly, such mechanisms are important for communication, but they have limitations if they are used for consultation. Apart from not facilitating an exchange of views, some of them also reach certain audiences only. For example, annual reports largely reach the literate and numerate, both in terms of the ability to read and count and the ability to understand English (Annual Reports are mostly published in English).

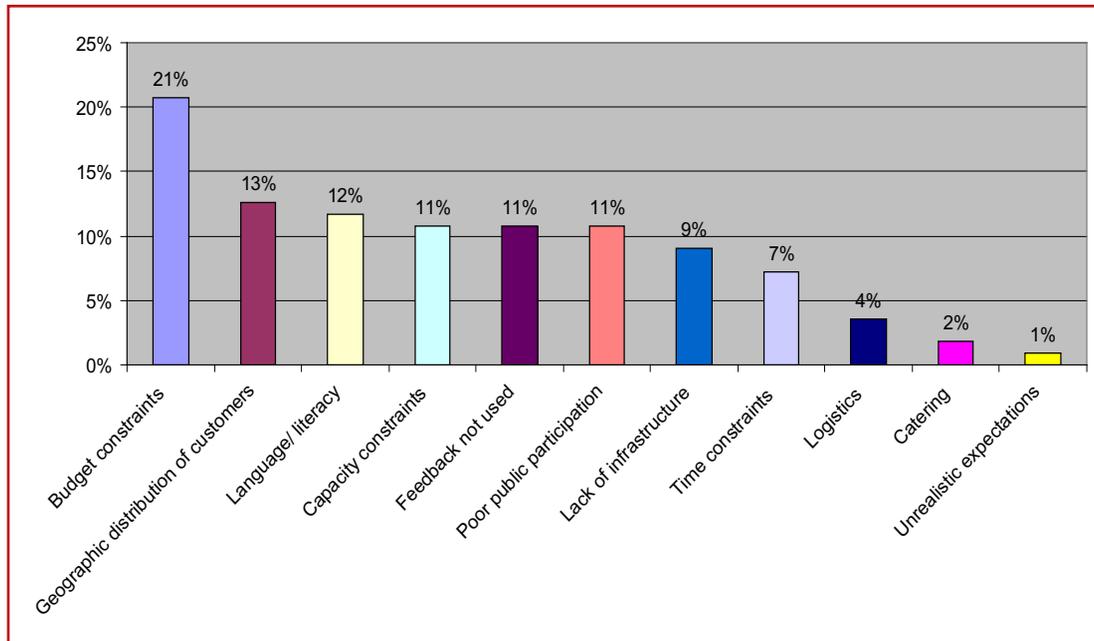
4.6.6 CHALLENGES IN CONSULTING WITH THE PUBLIC

Departments were asked to indicate the kinds of challenges they face in their efforts to promote consultation with the Public. As **Figure 10** below shows the most severe constraint, cited by more than one-fifth of respondents (21%), is insufficient budget available for consultation. Of similar severity are the geographic distribution of customers (13%), language and literacy issues (12%), departmental capacity constraints (11%), that feedback is not being used (11%), poor public participation (11%) and lack of infrastructure for managing consultation (9%). There was no department that mentioned lack of awareness of existing public participatory mechanisms to engage public such as Citizen Forums²⁸ and a draft National Framework for Public Participation²⁹. Perhaps departments do not regard such lack of awareness as a challenge.

²⁸ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission: Citizen Forum Toolkit

²⁹ Republic of South Africa. Department of Provincial and Local Government: Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation, 2006.

Figure 10: Challenges in dealing with consultation



Departments were then asked to indicate what strategies they have in place to address the consultation challenges they face. Table 2 below contains the strategies mentioned by the respondents.

Table 2: Strategies to address challenges facing consultation

Communication strategies	17%
Systems and designs for more effective consultation	15%
Planning within departments	15%
Translation	12%
More funding	11%
Dedicated units for managing consultation	11%
Increase public participation	4%
Logistics	4%
Partnering with the private sector	4%
Increased monitoring of consultation	2%

Interestingly, the strategies mentioned do not adequately take account of some of the reasons that the departments mentioned earlier in the study as hindering consultation. For example, a number of departments had mentioned that they had service standards for consultation but that these standards had not been approved. Clearly, what is needed in such a case is not more funding or new partnerships with the private sector. Rather, departments need to put more effort in identifying the reasons why the standards are not approved, and making sure that they address such reasons.

4.6.7 BUDGETING FOR CONSULTATION

The majority of respondents to this survey (65%) reported that their departments do not specifically budget for Batho Pele. Only one third (34%) of departments specifically budget for implementing, monitoring and evaluating Batho Pele reforms. However, more than half (52%) of departments indicated that Batho Pele is integrated with operational budgets. Integrating Batho Pele in the operational budgets of departments could be a more sustainable approach to mainstreaming service delivery transformation. However, such an approach requires careful monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the implementation of the Batho Pele principles do not get de-prioritised as departments focus on what they perceive to be more pressing core functions.

Figure 11: Consultation initiatives budgeted for

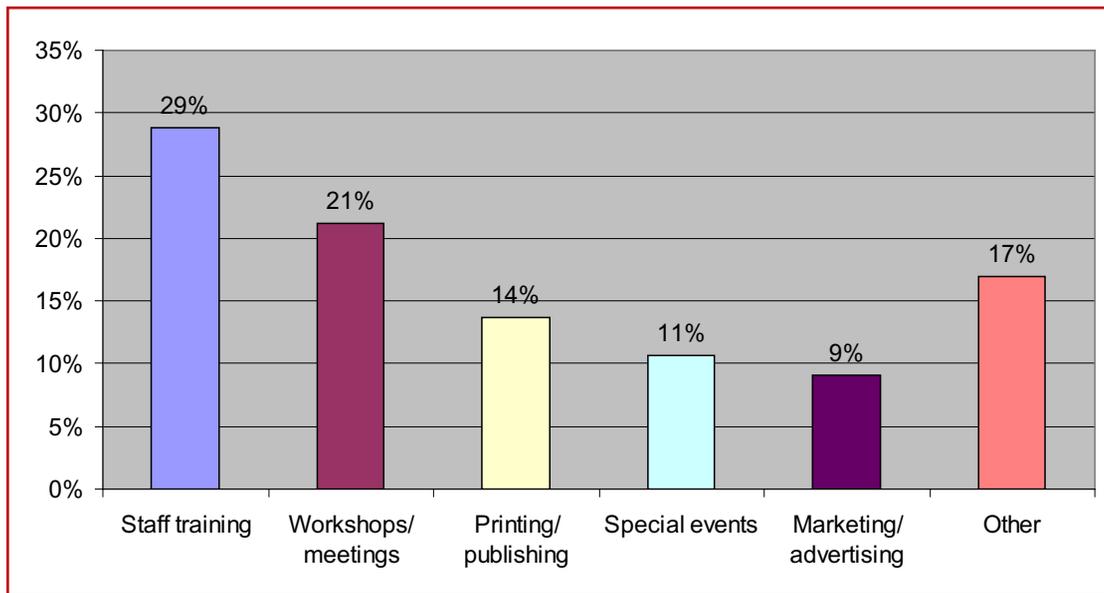


Figure 11 above outlines the types of consultation-related initiatives that departments budget for. However, during the analysis of the data it became clear that most departments do not distinguish between budgets for consultation and general budgeting for service delivery improvement. Implementation of Batho Pele, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery, general staff training, and meetings and discussion that may have only made passing reference to service delivery, service standards, service offerings or some form of communication to, or with, customers are also elements that are budgeted for. The most common initiatives that are budgeted for include, staff training (29%), workshops and meetings (21%), printing and publication including annual reports (14%), the hosting of special events (11%) and marketing and advertising as part of departmental public relations activities (9%).

4.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.7.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION

Departments were asked if they have any monitoring and evaluation systems in place to track progress made in as far as consultation was concerned. The findings show that 44% of departments have some systems in place. Most departments indicated having the following mechanisms in place to monitor the practice of consultation:

- Reports (7)
- Surveys (7)
- Meetings (3)

- Call-Centres (2)
- Directorate created (2)
- Assessments (1)
- Registering responses (1)
- Registers are kept (1)
- Interaction with customers (1)
- Joint task teams (1)

Those respondents who indicated that their departments do not have consultation monitoring systems in place were asked to provide details on how they measured the effectiveness of consultation. The findings show that although there may not be a formal monitoring system in place, departments use other mechanisms for this purpose. These include simple tools such as suggestion boxes.

Respondents were asked to comment on whether their departments incorporated consultation activities into both individual performance level agreements and/or service level agreements. The majority of respondents (67%) indicated that consultation standards are incorporated into these agreements. If indeed such mainstreaming of consultation standards is achieved, it should then be possible to have more effective implementation taking place. Given that the earlier sections of this chapter have shown that the nature and degree of consultation remains inadequate, it is possible that even where consultation is made part of performance agreements, there is no effective follow up.

In addition, the survey identified that there are four main contributions from senior management to departmental consultation initiatives. The main contribution is funding and budget allocations (40%), followed by annual planning activities (25%). Together these two activities account for almost two-thirds (65%) of all contributions made by senior management to consultation. The other two main contributions are management and administrative support (16%), including the redistribution of staff. This finding shows that senior management is not necessarily using its most effective levers to generate and sustain a momentum for consultation. Management should ensure that they provide strategic leadership to the consultation agenda of their departments, in the process leading by example to demonstrate to the rest of the staff how important such consultation is. Budget allocations and annual planning activities will not achieve much in the absence of such strategic leadership.

4.8 SELF ASSESSMENT

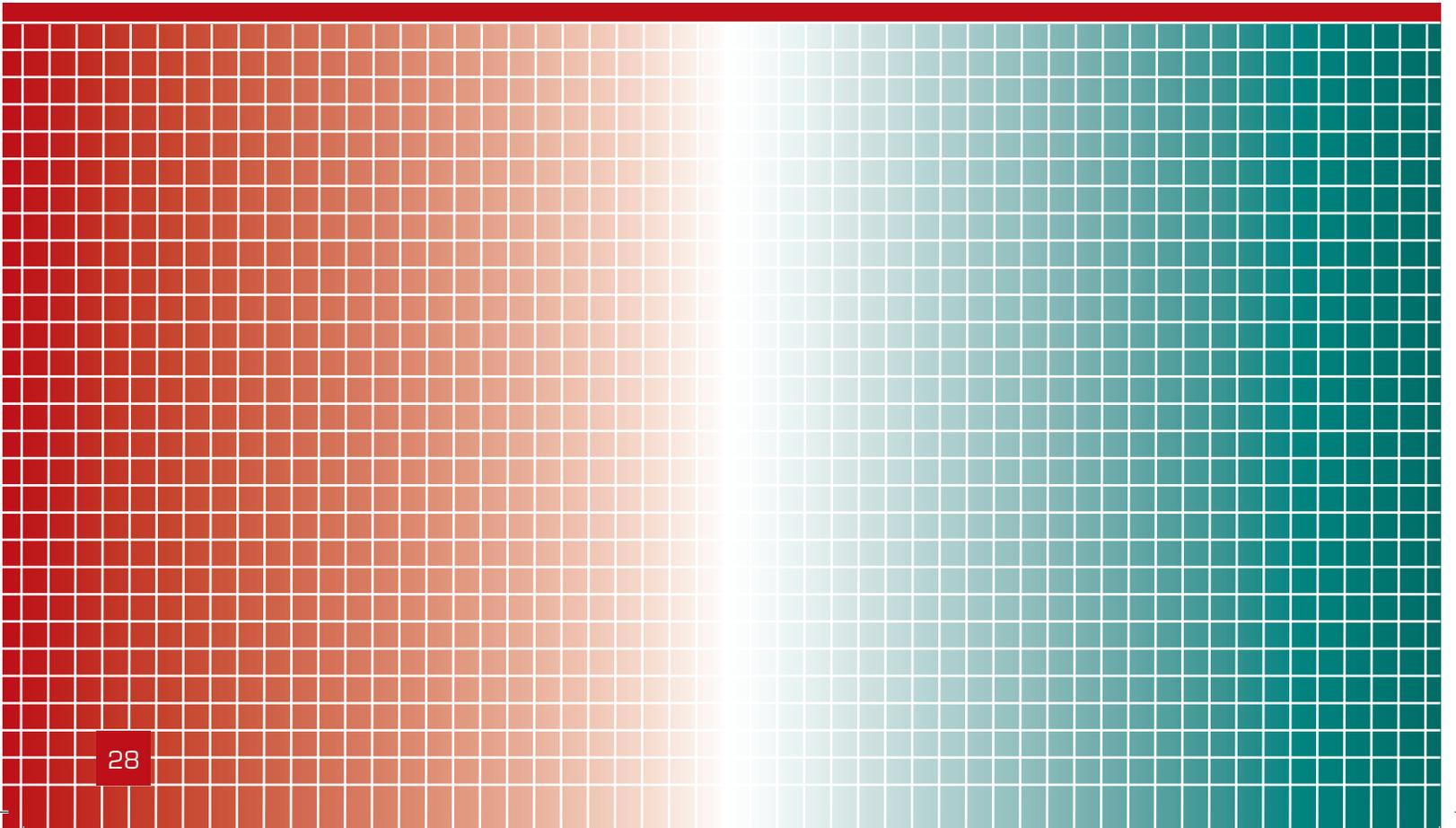
Departments were asked to rate and score themselves from very poor to better than average in terms of consultation. A scale was used where one represents very poor and four represents better than average. One percent of the respondents said they were very poor in terms of consultation, 11% scored poor, 42% said their implementation of consultation was adequate while 46% scored themselves as better than adequate. Although the measure is based on subjective perceptions of respondents, it is important to note that only 12% perceived their departments to be underperforming with regard to consultation. This should, however, be looked at against the findings of other PSC studies which showed that in those departments that were sampled, citizens were not satisfied with the quality of consultation³⁰. This suggests that there could be a disjuncture between what departments believe constitutes effective consultation on the one hand, and what was envisaged in the Batho Pele White paper as well as in Chapter 10 of the Constitution.

³⁰ Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Citizen Satisfaction Survey: Overview of the Criminal Justice Sector, 2005.



Chapter Five

A GOOD PRACTICE PROCESS FOR CONSULTATION



5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the good practice process for implementing the Batho Pele principle of consultation. A critical component of the study was to collect secondary data from the departments who participated and it is this data that is used to benchmark and compare departments.

The good practice process contained in this chapter outlines how customer consultation can be integrated into the management systems of an organisation such as a department. In addition, this process illustrates the benefits of customer consultation and has illustrated the stages at which consultation should occur.

The process illustrates that consultation occurs within current service delivery processes. Service delivery does not stop in order for consultation to take place. Moreover, consultation does not only occur at the end of a particular programme in relation to calendar events – instead consultation is related to specific phases of service delivery. Consultation should not be seen as separate from departmental operations. The function of a department is to provide services. Therefore, consultation which will result in improved service delivery is necessary.

PROCESS 1: COMMUNICATION ON CONSULTATION

The **first phase** of consultation requires active engagement and consultation with external stakeholders. The purpose of this first phase is for departments to assess the current state of service delivery. This process recommends that departments review their mandates and objectives. Departments should assess the degree to which available capacity is aligned with delivering current services. Departments should also assess the available service delivery mechanisms, and how well they are functioning. In addition, departmental managers need to gather all the 'intelligence' on their customers including their profile, how customers engage their services, and the current service use. The Public Service also needs to identify gaps in their knowledge of their customers and their ability to deliver current services. All available information on the degree to which service delivery meets the needs of the customers are to be considered.

From the information collected, customers can then be profiled and departments can also assess if there are particular sub-groups (urban/ rural and women) of customers that have specific needs.

The **second phase** of consultation occurs once departments have developed guidelines for new services or for re-engineered services. Customers should then be consulted on the degree to which these new services or re-engineered services will meet their needs. This process may require department managers to 'return to the drawing board' a number of times to align their operations and services with the needs of the citizens. In addition, interaction with customers will flag problems with service delivery before they occur. If the department is aligned to continuous improvement, the management team will be able to respond to this timeously.

Until this point, service delivery has continued parallel to consultation and consultation outcomes now effect changes to the service delivery process. These interventions imply change. These service delivery interventions are indicated as intervention B on the process.

The **third phase** to consultation will seek to **evaluate the implementation** of service delivery of new or re-engineered services. The key questions are 'do these new services or re-engineered services really meet the needs of customers?' and 'do these new services function appropriately?'

Thereafter, during the third phase, departments need to **monitor the effectiveness** of the service offered. Departments need to ensure that services delivered remain consistent; that services are provided at the stated quality and quantity within the specified time frames and to the departments' mandate. These evaluations also entail the measurement of satisfaction with services, and assessing the appropriateness of the service standards.



Various components within a department will be operating at various levels in the consultation cycle simultaneously. Some services may continue, whilst others require more frequent evaluation and change.

PROCESS 2: COMMUNICATION ON CONSULTATION

This second process should be seen as an activity within the phases outlined in process 1. This process may be used to evaluate a single event such as a once off departmental project or commemorative event. Its strength lies in its alignment with departmental functions and the ability to direct consultation initiatives to benefit departments, their managers and to provide feedback to customers and other stakeholders. The process also seeks to show the interrelationship between consultation and communication.

Departments need to clearly identify the objectives of the consultation initiative. The objectives should be realistic and achievable, measurable and align to both the phase during which consultation occurs and to the service being evaluated. The objectives will inform the design of the consultation initiative. *An example of good practice was found in the Gauteng Department of Economic Development where there is an emphasis on developing relationships and creating policy through community participation.*

The design should take into account the type of information required, as well as the level of analysis. Departments must establish what quantitative and qualitative data is needed, and to what extent they want to compare and analyse findings and feedback. Consultation is in many ways aligned to evaluation thus departments have a wide range of options. *The Independent Complaint Directorate conducted a customer survey to elicit the required information about their customers. This is an example of a practical mechanism of consulting with service users.*

The department should then consult customers or appoint suitable experts to undertake the consultation. Consultation should be closely monitored to ensure that it is conducted according to the approved design. The feedback and findings need to be well documented and captured in a format suitable for appropriate analysis. Analysis should make use of appropriate tools and techniques and be used to develop practical, action-orientated and user friendly reports.

The department should also be responsible for interpreting and internalising the findings presented in the evaluation or consultation report. The findings may be presented in a report format based on the analysis of the data but they still need to be internalised – assessed against the departments' priorities. The department needs to decide how to use the findings and develop a plan of action. This plan of action is the outcome of the consultation process and is reflected in the process as the re-engineering of service delivery. Re-engineering, improving and better aligning service delivery with the needs of customers is the purpose of consultation however this is not an end in itself.

It is critical to provide post-consultation feedback to those stakeholders that participated in the consultation process but also to the rest of the departments' customers. This feedback should detail the nature of the consultation process, provide findings and clearly illustrate the outcome of the process. Any service delivery improvements should be highlighted and customers should be informed as to the timeline for implementing improvements, how they will know that improvements have taken place and how these improvements may impact on them. This feedback is important as a sign of respect to those who participated in the process, and also provides customers with the assurance that the department is working to improve services for them.

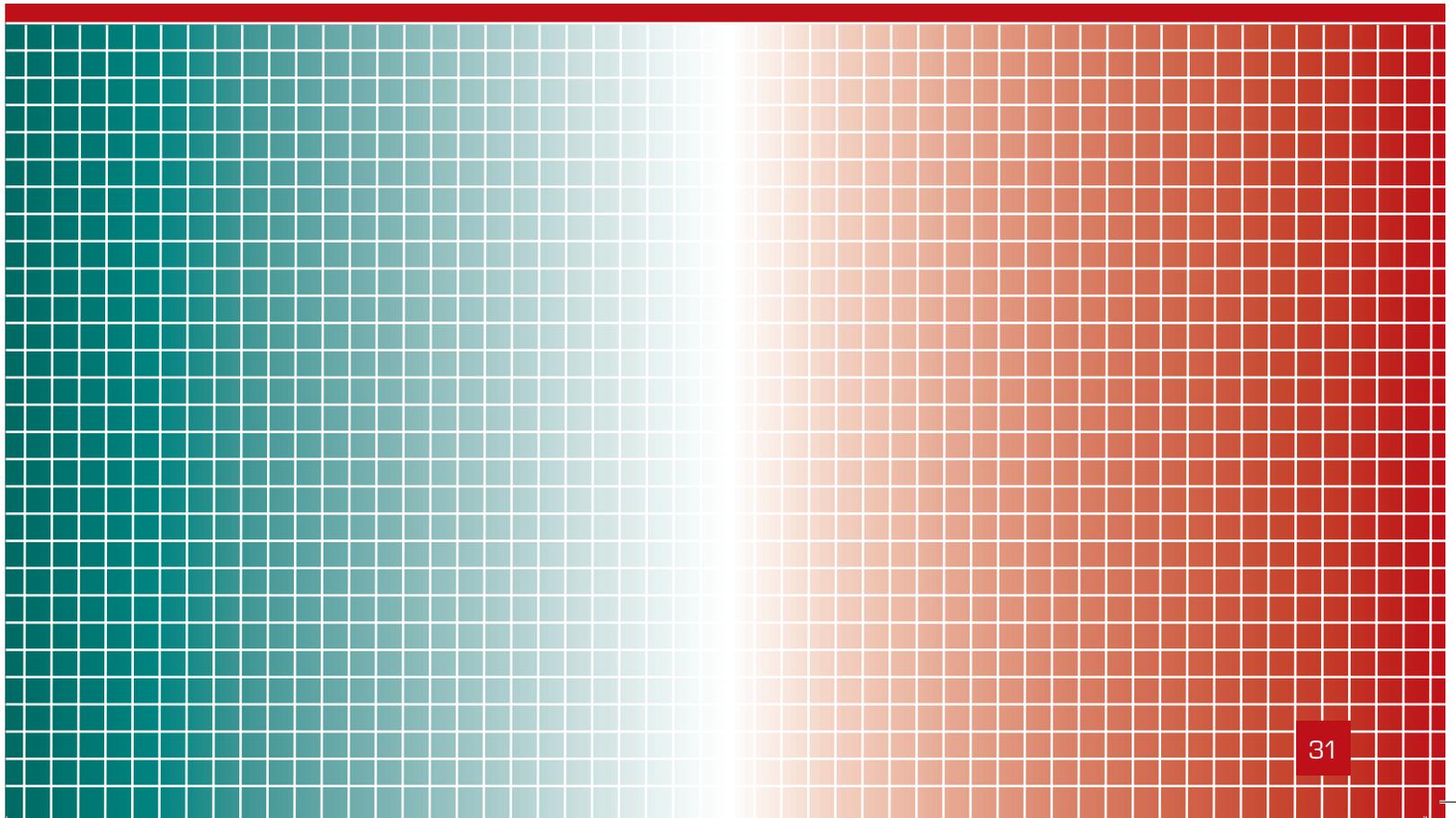
Continuous monitoring of service delivery should also occur. The improvements to service should be accompanied by new performance indicators and the level of service must be monitored and measured against these. The process is never complete – departments need to continually seek to improve services. Some consultation interventions may be relatively simple and less time consuming to implement others may take an extended amount of energy and time. Departments need to assess the costs and the benefits of approaches and prioritise which consultation initiatives are most important.

The processes together combine facets of the consultation process provided in the Batho Pele Handbook, and improve on the design as outlined.



Chapter Six

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



6.1 INTRODUCTION

Like all other Batho Pele principles, consultation is a key driver of government service delivery. Government departments must find creative ways to ensure that this principle is mainstreamed in their day to day activities. The successful practice of the principle of consultation will deepen democracy and participatory governance in South Africa.

6.2 CONCLUSION

This study has shown that departments tend to embark on a variety of activities to communicate with the public. However, not all of these activities fulfil a consultative function. For example, a number of departments share information with the public through reports, advertisements and their websites. Notwithstanding their usefulness as communication instruments, these measures do not normally provide the public with the opportunity to raise concerns and to make recommendations. The PSC believes that the main challenge is to appreciate the purpose of consultation and to monitor the effectiveness of existing mechanisms in achieving this purpose. Such clarity of purpose should help many departments to critically reflect on their current practice and to accordingly strengthen the measures that they have in place.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 CONSULTATION STANDARD

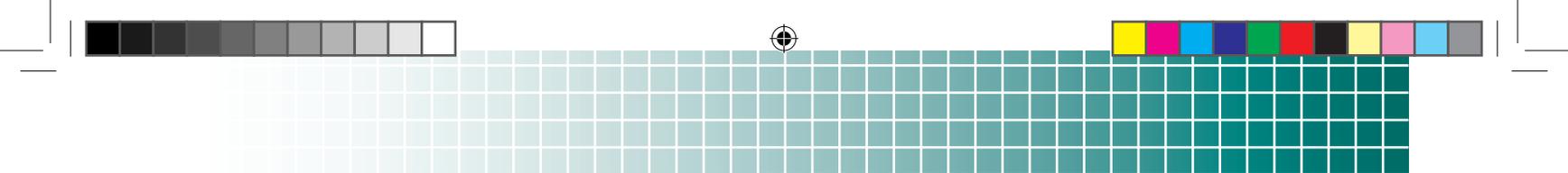
- Guided by the good practice process proposed in Chapter 5, departments should prioritise the concretisation of consultation standards and the purpose that such standards need to fulfil. This will be important to ensure that consultation is not implemented for just compliance sake.

6.3.2 CONSULTATION MECHANISMS

- Given that there are different stakeholders that departments often need to serve, it would be crucial to assess different consultation mechanisms and then ensure that the most feasible, effective and efficient the ones are implemented. Such mechanisms could include Citizens Satisfaction Surveys, Citizens Forums, Izimbizo, and Service Delivery hearings.

6.3.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION

- Departments should improve the manner in which they monitor and evaluate the implementation of their consultation respondentses so that timely steps can be taken to address areas of ineffectiveness and limited success.



ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION CONSULTED

In addition to previous PSC survey reports, the survey data and secondary data that was supplied by departments, the following sources of information were consulted in the development of this report.

BOOKS AND REPORTS:

- Babbie, E and Moutonn, J. 1998. *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford (UK)
- Barberis, P (ed). 1997. *The Civil Service in an Era of Change*. Dartmouth: Aldershot (UK)
- Creighton, JL. 2005. *The Public Participation Handbook*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco (USA)
- Department of Public Service and Administration. 2003. *Batho Pele Handbook, A Service Delivery Improvement Guide*. Government Internal Consulting Services: Pretoria (SA)
- Miller, K. 1998. *Public Sector Reform, Governance in South Africa*. Ashgate: Aldershot (UK)
- Pollitt, C et al. 1999. *Performance or Compliance? Performance Audit and Public Management in Five Countries*. Oxford: Oxford (UK)
- Rensburg, RS. 1996. *Introduction to Communication, Communication Planning and Management*. UNISA: Pretoria (SA)
- Steinberg, S. 1997. *Introduction to Communication, The Basics*. UNISA: Pretoria (SA)
- Wollmann, H. 2003. *Evaluation in Public-Sector Reform, Concepts and Practice in International Perspective*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham (UK)

In addition to these documents the following websites were consulted in the development of this report.

WEBSITES:

- <http://www.bpir.com> (The Business Performance Improvement Resource)
- <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk> (The UK Charter Mark).