Performance Auditing - Basic Education

11 May 2010

Reputation promise/mission

The Auditor-General has a constitutional mandate and, as the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of South Africa, it exists to strengthen our country's democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector through auditing, thereby building public confidence.

Points for discussion

Planned audits on Basic Education
- Background
- Scope
- Researchable questions

Performance audits on infrastructure delivery process
- Background
- Scope
- Researchable questions

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Planned audits on Basic Education

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Background to the Performance Audit (PA)

- The transversal PA at the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHE&T) was approved by the AGSA Performance Audit Advisory Committee.

- PA at the DBE will be conducted at both national and provincial level.

- Reports will be issued in each of the nine provinces as well as a consolidated report to parliament.

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Research and Development of the performance audit

Research phase
- The assistance of international experts was obtained to assist the AGSA with research on the education programmes.

- Team from the European commission delegation to South Africa:
  - A Performance audit expert
  - Education specialists
  - A monitoring and evaluation specialist

Development phase
- Research and development centre in the AGSA performance audit unit

- Responsible for:
  - Development of the performance audit at the Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and training to be conducted at National, Provincial, District and School level.

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Scope

Basic Education:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- No Fee Schools Programme (NFSP)
- National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP)
- KHA RI GUDE (KRG)
- Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (Cross cutting theme)
- Education Management Information System/10th Day Surveys (Cross cutting theme)

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

ECD is defined as the provision of physical, emotional, social, spiritual and moral development for children aged between zero and nine years. The ECD approach is based on the proven fact that young children respond best when caregivers use specific techniques designed to encourage and stimulate progress to the next level of development.

No Fee Schools Programme (NFSP)

No-fee schools were introduced in 2007 and will be expanded over the years that follow to include the poorest 60% of schools. Schools have been ranked into five categories according to the level of poverty in the surrounding area. The schools in the lowest 40% (quintiles 1 and 2) were deemed poor and allow learners from Grade R to Graded 9 to enroll without paying fees. In return, government funds expenses that were previously covered by fees.

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National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

- The overall purpose of the NSNP is to "improve the health and nutritional status of South African primary school children, to improve levels of school attendance and to improve the learning capacity of children", which should in turn level the playing field for the poor in terms of access to education.

- With an estimated national and provincial budget of R3.7 million for 2010/2011 the NSNP aims to foster better quality education by:
  - ➢ Enhancing children's active learning capacity
  - ➢ Alleviating short-term hunger
  - ➢ Providing an incentive for children to attend school
  - ➢ Regularly and punctually; and addressing certain micro-nutrient deficiencies.

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KHA RI GUDE (KRG)

The Kha Ri Gude ("let us learn") mass literacy campaign was officially launched in February 2008. Government will spend R6,1 billion over five years to enable 4,7 million South Africans to achieve literacy by 2010. The campaign is aimed at reducing adult illiteracy by:

•mobilising potential learners, educators and other support personnel to participate in the mass literacy campaign

•developing learner and educator-support material

•setting up relevant systems at national, provincial and district level to facilitate national implementation of the campaign

•establishing and maintaining a database of 4,7 million learners and 40 000 educators over the campaign period.

Scope (continue)…

Each initiative has been analysed over four main performance aspects to facilitate analysis, comparison and possible focus for a performance audit.

On a high level each initiative will be audited taking the following into consideration:
- Implementation of Education Policy and Guidelines
- Adequacy and economy of inputs to services
- Efficiency of processes and systems
- Effectiveness of outputs and outcomes

A number of researchable questions have been included to address some of the aspects directly related to the core functions of the DBE (quality, quantity and availability of teachers, pupils, the curriculum, infrastructure, equipment and training material) and the efficient, effective and economic utilisation of the resources by the DBE to achieve the objectives of the core functions of education.

Researchable Questions - Early Childhood Development (ECD)

- Are there policies and guidelines in place that clearly explain the objectives of ECD, how to achieve the objectives and what the roles and responsibilities are of the various roleplayers?

- Were the policies and guidelines timeously communicated to the roleplayers in a manner that is understandable and will ensure a consistent approach in achievement of the ECD goals?

- Do the policies and guidelines provide for the distribution of funding in line with the objectives of the program and are there sufficient and reliable information available to support this basis?

- Is awareness created in all urban and rural areas of the ECD program and the importance of learners attending Grade R by the roleplayers and do the parents have financial means to enrol and send their children to Grade R classes?

- Are sufficient numbers of ECD educators appointed at the schools to be able to monitor the learners and provide individual attention and are they properly qualified as required in terms of the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?

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Researchable Questions – Early Childhood Development (ECD) continue…..

- Are the ECD educators trained in standardised teaching specific techniques and the prescribed curriculum framework, retained to justify the investment in training and are they duly remunerated for their work?

- Are there adequate prescribed learner material, necessary nutrition and other facilities (stationary and books, playing material, computers etc.) available at the beginning of the school year, which provide a conducive environment for young learners in Grade R?

- Do the budgets support the strategic objectives of the ECD program with regard to the quality of practitioners, access to basic human needs and ECD infrastructure?

- Do the school personnel, principal and the educators have access to the information systems and are they trained on how to gather and import educator, learner and school performance information into the systems?

- Is the progress of Grade R learners, the involvement of the community, the family subsidy information, the implementation of the policy and guidelines, and the implementation of ECD in schools monitored through the information systems and evaluated continuously to identify absenteeism, non performance and areas of concern and are corrective actions implemented to address identified problem areas?

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Researchable Questions - No Fee Schools Programme (NFSP)

- Are there comprehensive and approved policies and guidelines in place that clearly explain the objectives of NFSP, how to achieve the objectives, what the roles and responsibilities are of the various role-players and how to measure the performance and impact of NFSP effectively?

- Were the policies and guidelines timeously communicated to the roleplayers in a manner that is understandable and will ensure a consistent approach in achievement of the NFSP?

- Do the policies and guidelines provide for the consistent distribution of funding in line with the objectives of the NFSP and are there sufficient and reliable information available to support this basis?

- Did the department plan and budget adequately and timeously to ensure that the no fee schools receive and spend their allocated budget before the end of the year?

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Researchable Questions – No Fee Schools Programme (NFSP) continue…..

- Are there provincial and district systems in place for administering, accounting and monitoring for NFSP efficiently to ensure that areas of concern are identified and corrective actions are implemented timeously?

- Is the progress of learners and the educators monitored through the information systems and evaluated continuously to identify absenteeism, non performance and areas of concern and are corrective actions implemented to address identified problem areas?

- Are there adequate and reliable performance indicators and other data in place to measure the outcomes and impact of no fee schools with the use of the information systems in place and to implement corrective actions where problems are identified

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Researchable Questions - National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

- Are there comprehensive and approved policies and guidelines in place that clearly explain the objectives of NSNP, how to achieve the objectives, how to implement NSNP and what the roles and responsibilities are of the various role-players?

- Were the policies and guidelines timeously communicated to the role-players in a manner that is understandable and will ensure a consistent approach in achievement of the NSNP goals?

- Do the NSNP policies and guidelines provide for the distribution of funding in line with the objectives of the program and are there sufficient and reliable information available to support this basis?

- Do the budgets support the strategic objectives with regard to the economical provision of staff, feeding facilities, and food inputs for NSNP, including the new provision in secondary schools?

Researchable Questions – National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP) continue.....

- Are there proper food preparation areas, food preparers and cooking facilities at all the NSNP schools with sufficient number of serving points and timely delivery of food supplies to schools?

- Are there processes and systems in place to monitor the suppliers, the quality of the food and the timing of feeding and to ensure that corrective actions are taken were the NSNP schools do not comply to the prescribed norms and standards?

- Does the information system have adequate baseline data on student performance to measure the NSNP program and reliable performance indicators and other data in place to ensure that the objectives of NSNP are being achieved?

Researchable Questions – KHA RI GUDE (KRG)

- Are there comprehensive and approved policies and guidelines clearly explain the objectives, outputs, activities and verifiable indicators of KRG in place and what the roles and responsibilities are of the various role-players to ensure that the most disadvantaged areas and groups are reached?

- Were the policies and guidelines timeously communicated to the role-players in a manner that is understandable and will ensure a consistent approach in achievement of the KRG goals?

- Do the policies and guidelines provide for the distribution of funding in line with the KRG objectives of the program and are there sufficient and reliable information available to support this basis?

- Is the initiative sustainable and have links/ interface with ABET been clarified to ensure that initial learning will not be lost?

- Are there adequate quality control and monitoring procedures in place to ensure quality teaching and service delivery?

Performance audits on infrastructure delivery process

Background

- The AGSA conducted performance audits of the infrastructure delivery process for education as part of a transversal performance audit on infrastructure delivery at most of the provinces.

- The execution phase of all the audits have been completed.

- Six of the eight management reports have been issued to the accounting officers and they are in the process of commenting on these reports.

Background – Implementing agents

- Although the respective provincial departments of Education identified the need for schools and compile the budgets, they did not have officials with the technical skills to supervise the construction of schools.

- In most of the provinces the department of Public Works was appointed as implementing agents but in other instances where the department of Public Works was not used, institutions such as Itala and IDT was appointed to serve as implementing agents.
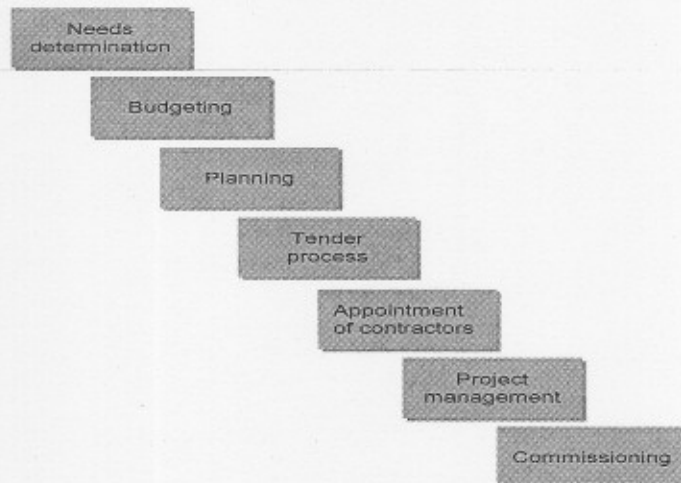
Scope

Performance audits of the infrastructure delivery process focused on the following key elements:

• Demand management;
•Acquisition management;
•Project management and information; and
•Commissioning and utilisation

Scope – High level process overview

Scope – Demand management

- Demand management is the first phase of SCM.
- The objective is to ensure that the resources required to fulfill the needs identified in the strategic plan of the institution are delivered at the correct time, price and place and that the quantity and quality will satisfy those needs.
- As part of this element of SCM, a total needs assessment should be undertaken. This analysis should be included as part of the strategic planning process of the institution and hence will incorporate the future needs.

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Scope – Acquisition management

Legislation requires from accounting officers to ensure that the department has and maintain an appropriate procurement and provisioning system which is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective.

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Scope – Project management and information

Project management for infrastructure projects focuses mainly on the strategic and technical monitoring and evaluation of contracts. Cognisance needs to be taken of the following during project management to monitor, evaluate, report on and implement corrective actions if necessary:

- The initial need against the current progress;
- Critical target or delivery dates;
- Budget and current expenditure against progress;
- Specifications against quality; and
- All possible risks and interventions.

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Scope – Commissioning and utilisation

Commissioning is the last step in completing the contract. The contractor commissions the completed building to the client department for occupation and utilisation as envisaged during need determination and to enable the client department to timely render the intended service. Important issues to consider include the following:

- Outstanding work to be completed as identified during first handover;
- Impact of late commissioning; and
- Penalties for late commissioning.

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Researchable questions - Demand management

- Does the needs determination and planning for infrastructure projects start timely and, if not, what are the reasons, extent and the effects thereof?

- Is the design for infrastructure projects done timely and cost-effectively and does it address the needs of the client department?

- Are the communication and coordination between the different role players in the infrastructure delivery process effective to ensure comprehensive infrastructure delivery?

Researchable question – Acquisition management

- Does the infrastructure project tender process ensure timely, cost-effective and quality appointment of contractors?

Researchable questions – Project management and information

- Is project implementation effective to ensure timely, cost-effective and quality delivery of infrastructure projects?

- Are effective measures implemented to ensure that quality projects were completed timely and within budget?

- Does the client department and implementing agent effectively monitor and evaluate the progress to ensure timely, cost-effective and quality infrastructure projects?

- Are the communication and coordination between the different role players in the infrastructure delivery process effective to ensure comprehensive infrastructure delivery?

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Researchable questions – Commissioning and utilisation

- Are completed projects commissioned timely and do the projects address the need of the client department?

- Is infrastructure optimally utilised to ensure effective and efficient service delivery?

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