

# **Batho Pele Policy Review**

## **Final Report and Recommendations**

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Prepared by  
**Job Mokgoro Consulting cc**  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

This study investigates the reforms carried out in South Africa. It is verified by the qualitative research conducted and shows that there are a plethora of initiatives underway, which are generally poorly co-ordinated. A strong case can be made that it was necessary to advance on a broad front during the first ten years of democratic government, especially with regard to legislative reform. However, there seems to be a danger that the advances made could be dissipated as new targets are identified and pursued. Furthermore, as the implementation of the Batho Pele policy has not been accompanied by culture change programmes that address deep underlying issues, the progress made tends to be superficial and the true determinants of service improvement have not been addressed, resulting in diminishing returns on future efforts.

It is recommended then that as part of the ten year review, the reform agenda be narrowed down to a few high leverage initiatives which can be implemented with sufficient resources and leadership to bring about the culture change that is necessary in the Public Service

The difficulty with Government is that the "bottom line" is not clearly spelt out and in the absence of clear targets, Governments tend to follow a multiplicity of soft targets, many of which are not measurable or are only important to the service provider rather than to the citizen, and then best services given to those who can mobilize the loudest "voice" to shout for it. This has the worst impact on the poorest of the poor because they are cut off from access to make their needs heard.

To ensure that we have a bottom line to work towards, programmes have to be put into place to identify key deliverables and to measure them regularly and independently. In international practice, the best mechanism seems to be in the form of an annual "citizen survey" or "report card".

In this and other surveys, the main criticism of Bath Pele is that there was insufficient attention paid to its implementation, mainly attributable to lack of resources to monitor and implement. There is often a structural component underlying this in that the human resources necessary are spread thinly and tend to be dealing with a number of conflicting priorities

Nevertheless Batho Pele is central because it is the one policy that most closely addresses the objectives of democratic governance to give prominence to the primacy of its citizens.

A common solution is to have an independent agency to certify departments as Batho Pele compliant. This approach has been used in with success in the UK as the charter mark, and in Australia. Similar approaches have been used successfully in South Africa in quality assurance agencies such as South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) and National Occupation Safety Association (NOSA).

Citizens should be made aware of their rights and how to access them. A vigilant public can only assist government, and in particular the public service in becoming more accountable.

A deliberate policy design and implementation framework should serve as a guideline to government departments in order to enhance successful implementation.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In October 1997 the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (the *Batho Pele* White Paper) was introduced to put into effect the commitment of the Government to extend services to all citizens, not merely a privileged few. This commitment was first expressed in the RDP programmes and is enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

*“All citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“The Public Service is the servant of the people, and must be accessible, transparent, accountable, efficient and free of corruption.”<sup>2</sup>*

The need for a responsive Public Service was expounded in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WPTPS) in chapter 11. Here it states:

“A guiding principle of the public service in South Africa will be that of service to the people; this is essential if the public service is to fulfil its role in the implementation of the RDP.

The RDP White Paper (November 1994) identifies the meeting of the basic needs of all citizens through more effective service delivery as one of the five key programmes of the RDP. The basic needs of people extend from job creation, land and agrarian reform to housing, water and sanitation, energy supplies, transport, nutrition, education, health care, the environment, social welfare and security.

Whilst the need to meet basic needs through improved service delivery can be justified on social and moral grounds alone, especially in the light of the country's past history, there are additional imperatives. These relate in particular to the ways in which service delivery can help to provide the necessary infrastructural support to open up previously suppressed economic and human potential in both urban and rural areas, leading in turn to community empowerment and an increased output in all sectors of the economy.”

And further,

“Given the urgent need to redress past imbalances in service provision and to promote social equity, the GNU feels that it *will be important to base its service delivery priorities on affirmative or corrective action principles in the short to medium term*. Accordingly, service delivery will focus on meeting the basic needs of the 40 per cent or more South African citizens living below the poverty line in urban and rural areas, as well as other groups (including people with disabilities) who have been previously disadvantaged in terms of service delivery” (our italics).

This part of the WPTPS was expanded in the White Paper on Improving Service Delivery – The *Batho Pele* White Paper, the subject of this analysis.

This analysis tests the policy primarily against the intentions outlined above as well as the policy's own stated objectives, namely

- ....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.
- The purpose of this White Paper is to provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. This White Paper is primarily about *how* public services are provided, and specifically about improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which services are delivered.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Section 3 (2) a

<sup>2</sup> RDP White Paper, 1994

<sup>3</sup> *Batho Pele* White Paper paragraph 1.1.1 and 1.1.2

These objectives provide the principle questions which this paper attempts to answer.

The necessity of this policy is not under question, partially because it is a broader question than the brief given, but principally because policies aimed at improving the quality and appropriateness of services provided by governments are an essential part of any modern, truly democratic administration.

This imperative derives both from the international trend in public management towards more client centred approaches and from emerging evidence that the relationships between public spending and various measures of development is tenuous<sup>4</sup>. This would indicate that interventions on the macro level through increasing budgetary allocations to a programme are not guaranteed to achieve the desired development outcomes without supporting strategies at the meso- and micro levels. In other words it is useful to distinguish between the financing and production of services<sup>5</sup>.

## 1.1 A Framework of Analysis

What makes a department effective in delivering services to the public, and in so doing comply with the principles of Batho Pele? A comprehensive and systematic response to this question would be greatly assisted by some framework of analysis.

The framework proposed is an adaptation of a model or set of principles of how client-centred organizations are run and what makes them successful, based on findings of studying service delivery to the public, in Canada<sup>6</sup>:

- Departments that are Batho Pele compliant are infused with reinforcing values, norms and beliefs strongly focused on the public and beneficiaries of their (the departments') services. This culture ensures that the concerns of the public and their needs are at the heart of all key decisions, actions and communications in the departments.
- Top management leadership is critical to building and sustaining a Batho Pele, people-oriented culture.
- A people-oriented public service fosters open and consultative relationship with the public, for example, in the design of new policies or services.
- Departments value their managers and staff and engender attitudes that encourage empowerment, participation, delegation and trust.
- Departments monitor how the public feels about the quality of the services received, with a view to making improvements wherever required.
- Departments place a high premium on effective service management and the public's impressions of the quality of these services.
- Batho Pele compliant departments make effective use of information technology to enhance service delivery.

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship between public spending and growth is ambiguous, it is difficult to find relationships between spending on education and educational outcomes and multivariate estimates of the determinants of life expectancy and child mortality show that the share of public spending on health in GDP is not always significant (Paraphrased from Reinikka, R., Hammer, J. and King, E. 2002 Making Services Work for Poor People - A Research Program on Public Services World Bank Development Research Group)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid pg 2

<sup>6</sup> Public Service 2000, 1990 Service to the Public Task Force Report, October 12, 1990. Ottawa: Federal Government

## 2 THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

### 2.1 Batho Pele Culture and the Role of Top Management

Transforming public service delivery requires an overhaul of the public service and departmental corporate values in order to create a service culture consisting of beliefs, values and norms that give priority to the people to be served. Schein argues that leadership is closely linked to culture formation, evolution, transformation and destruction<sup>7</sup>. He sees the most difficult challenge of leadership as the creation and embedding of culture. The unique and essential function of leadership is the manipulation of culture<sup>8</sup>. Thus, top management's influence on the growth of values and culture in a department is very important. Many managers think that communicating a department's culture through memoranda, circulars and notices is sufficient. However, it is not so much what managers communicate to staff, but what they actually do. If their actions are inconsistent with their pronouncement, they tend to lose credibility.

Large bureaucracies, both public and private<sup>9</sup>, tend to become ends in themselves. They get preoccupied with their own interests and needs, rather than those of the public they are supposed to serve. They become inwardly focused rather than outward looking. Rather than be a sustainer of democracy, the public service tends to promote its own interests, and consequently does not enjoy much trust<sup>10</sup>. A truly people-centred public service and its leadership strive to ensure that values are clearly aligned with the needs of the public. These values are reflected in various departmental corporate practices such as recruitment, training and development, design of new services, resource allocations, priority setting, etc.

Have transformation initiatives in the public service recognized the centrality of culture change? Various prescripts such as the Constitution, the Public Service Act, the RDP White Paper, the White Paper on Public Service Transformation, and several other policy documents make clear the vision and mission for the public service. But, do leaders in the public service live the vision and ensure that their staff does likewise? What role do they play, if at all, in developing a vision and commitment to it by staff? Do they make the effort to ensure that vision is communicated clearly to other parts of the department? Do they diagnose or cause to be diagnosed the present condition of the department and identify gaps? Do they institute and manage processes to close these gaps? Is their leadership style consistent with and focused on achieving the mission? Are they consistent in word and deed? To what extent are they involved in establishing values, acting as a coach and mentor, and communicating change to their departments?

It has been observed that, transformation in the public service has mainly been about changes in systems and structures<sup>11</sup>. Not much has been done to change organizational culture and values such that these are consistent with Batho Pele.

*"Batho Pele principles of responsiveness, access, transparency, accountability, etc, require cultural change that has to happen in order to claim the true transformation of the culture of the public service. These principles apply within the public sector, as well as in its external operations with the people. After five years of implementation, the vagueness with which progress is being reported*

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<sup>7</sup> Schein, E.H. 1985, Organizational Culture and Leadership, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p 317

<sup>9</sup> Much is made of the customer focus of the private sector. However, this is not always the case. American corporations in the early eighties were subjected to numerous hostile takeover bids because the managements had become complacent and the organisations bloated and inefficient. As we argue in the section on measurement below, it is not the form of ownership that is important, but rather the extent to which managers are held accountable to clearly articulated performance measures.

<sup>10</sup> Mokgoro, T.J. 1997, The Public Service as a Promoter and Sustainer of Democracy. SAIPA, Journal of Public Administration, Vol 3, No 4, pg 241-247

<sup>11</sup> ANC, 2002, Transforming the State and Governance

*to the people in terms of this significant policy can be interpreted as failure to successfully implement and include it in the public sector workplace.”<sup>12</sup>*

## **2.2 Consulting the Public**

The White Paper on Batho Pele requires of departments to regularly and systematically inform the public on current and new services provision<sup>13</sup>. Ways to consult users of services include customer surveys, interviews with individual users, consultation groups and meeting with consumer representative bodies, NGOs and CBOs<sup>14</sup>. It is important that consultation be seen as a two-way process, when deliberations take place between government and the public.

The benefits of consultation accrue both to government and the public. For example, consultation influences the course of public policy; improves the quality of public policy; determines policy initiatives; and helps in the redesign or improvement of programmes and improved service delivery<sup>15</sup>. Consultation reduces the possibilities of adversarialism between the public service and service users and stakeholders. Very often many public servants are dismissive of consultation because “it is time consuming, costly and inefficient”. There is no doubt about the costs associated with consultation. For example, consultation within the public sector is necessarily more complex than in the private sector due to the variety and volume of policies; the need to serve the general public interest as well as the needs of the immediate client; differing values and expectations of stakeholders; regulatory requirements; and the political sensitivities that may be associated with some issues<sup>16</sup>. However, the need to strike a balance between efficiency and effectiveness should not be overlooked. In addition, an essential competency that needs to be developed at senior management level is tolerance for complexity and ambiguity. Given the slow pace of transformation in the public service, especially with regard to organizational culture and people-centred values, public policy development and implementation cannot be left to the public service. Besides, consultation and inclusion is simply an imperative of democracy.

Consultations with clients and stakeholders help to transform the public service from a rules-oriented, inwardly-focused, control-dominated organization to a service-driven, quality-maximising organization. Departments need to put in place procedures and train staff to ensure that users of services are given a hearing with regard to concerns and suggestions about service improvement. At strategic level departments are expected to keep in touch with broad service delivery and use trends, and the attitudes of users of services before making any significant decisions.

### **2.2.1 Current Consultation Practices**

Consultation with users of public services takes various forms and approaches. The public service is required to consult internally as well as externally on service delivery matters. The government, in particular politicians, engages the public through constituency work, through Parliamentary Portfolio Committees, through Imbizos, and through the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). These are of course examples of key consultation mechanisms, and the list is endless.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 4

<sup>13</sup> The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery 1997, Government Gazette, Vol 388, No 18340, October 1997

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 16

<sup>15</sup> Public Service 2000, Op cit

<sup>16</sup> Public Service, Op cit, p 37

### **2.2.2 The Public Service and Consultation**

What is the leadership of the public service doing to support and encourage consultation by public servants? What is the experience of members of the public regarding consultation? Is consultation with the public just as bad as consultation inside the public service? Does the public service provide guidance to staff on how they are expected to relate to the public, especially newly-appointed staff? Is consultation enjoyed largely by members of the elite groups in society, such as business and organized labour? Does government training include consultation?

Effective service-oriented departments are those that consult with their clients, maintain open relations with them and monitor client's needs and expectations as well as their levels of satisfaction continually. This orientation to service delivery would be useful and important for an early warning system. Departments can use the consultation process to find out what people need to know, and then explore ways and means of finding the information required, and making this available. An essential aspect of Batho Pele is the imperative to transform the manner in which the civil service communicates with the public. As a result of concerns raised regarding the delays in obtaining information from government departments, as well as delays in inter-departmental communications, the Office of the Public Protector conducted an investigation in order to establish the causes of such delays<sup>17</sup>. The Public Protector's enquiry was directed to Directors General. The following causes were identified:

- i. Systemic problems rather than specific factors.
- ii. The two capital (Pretoria and Cape Town) arrangement.
- iii. Long distances between head office and regional offices, as well as poor infrastructure at regional offices.
- iv. Members of the public and government departments ill informed about the functions and jurisdictions of government departments.
- v. Need for in-depth research on some matters.
- vi. Unavailability of information, unavailability of person dealing with the information, or the confidentiality of the information sought.
- vii. Lack of sense of urgency on the part of public servants.
- viii. Lack of "openness" in the public service.
- ix. Lack of will and commitment on the part of some public servants.
- x. Ignorance of public servants in respect of their Constitutional responsibility regarding the right of access to information by the public.
- xi. Lack of capacity in departments are manifested in poor registries, weak record management and supervision.
- xii. Lack of financial and personnel resources.
- xiii. Lack of knowledge, on the part of the public, of the legislation governing actions of departments.
- xiv. Inadequate and incorrect information provided by members of the public making the enquiries.
- xv. Ministers raise expectations, and thus create voluminous correspondence from the public.
- xvi. Trained and experienced staff resigning from the public service, and being replaced by new employees.
- xvii. Poor complaints handling mechanisms.
- xviii. Employees lack of knowledge of and / or their failure to adhere to prescripts.

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<sup>17</sup> The Public Protector. 2002 Report on an Investigation into the Causes of Delays in Communication in Public Administration

- xix. Lack of diligence and commitment to service delivery on the part of public servants.
- xx. Lack of clear and unambiguous job description.
- xxi. No control over feedback in respect of enquiries.
- xxii. No proper follow-up systems that would help to identify employees responsible for delays.
- xxiii. Ineffective management of paper flow.
- xxiv. Absence of clear, written delegations and assignments of functions and responsibilities.
- xxv. Poor managerial oversight.
- xxvi. Some responses need legal opinion before they are communicated.
- xxvii. Some departments lack qualified personnel in some critical posts, and therefore appoint consultants.
- xxviii. Need to consult others in departments causes delays.
- xxix. Lack of appropriate IT facilities and trained personnel.
- xxx. Unrealistic deadlines by some members of the public.
- xxxi. Poor inter-departmental communication.
- xxxii. Unjustified absenteeism and sick leave.
- xxxiii. Budgetary constraints often impact negatively on quality of services.
- xxxiv. Service standards not established.
- xxxv. Labour relations issues, such as grievances of staff, and conflict between supervisors and subordinates often delays attendance to complaints.
- xxxvi. Proliferation of legislation without accompanying training of staff.
- xxxvii. In-service training consumes production time.
- xxxviii. Requests for information from both the public and other government departments.
- xxxix. Imbalances in allocation of work, with some staff having to carry huge loads.
  - xl. Poor time management.
  - xli. Skills levels of staff who draft responses.

From the above list, it is clear the communication skills, which include consultation and information dissemination, are in seriously short supply. The shortcomings identified reflect structural, systems, cultural and human resource management weaknesses in government departments. This raises questions about the readiness of the public service for Batho Pele, as well as the adequacy of the strategies (if any were adopted) used to implement Batho Pele in various departments. Is this perhaps a way in which administrative and transformation initiatives were and continue to be approached? Does the public service adopt quick fixes approaches when addressing performance-related problems, by simply implementing one transformation initiative (e.g. Batho Pele) after another? Should the approach not be to understand the underlying cause and effect theory before throwing solutions at problems? Would it not be beneficial to target (aggressively) the mindsets and mental models of those in leadership positions, who introduce quick fixes, under the guise of transformation? Perhaps there is need for researching a tool such as systems thinking, which might be helpful in transforming the ways public service leaders handle transformation.

What can be further inferred from reasons given by Directors General is a tendency to externalize the problems and make use of various forms of organizational defences. Are

the Directors General not holding other people or the system responsible for errors in problem solving and decision making, without examining their own responsibility? Argyris describes this defensive reasoning as occurring "...when individuals (1) hold premises the validity of which is questionable yet they think it is not, (2) make inferences that do not necessarily flow from the premises yet they think they do, and (3) reach conclusions that they believe they have tested carefully yet they have not because the way they have been framed makes them untestable.<sup>18</sup>"

This pattern of behaviour is common in those who are overwhelmed by numerous competing goals and who do not have a well structured set of guidelines for assessing one priority against another. This dilemma may be resolved in part as the Performance Management system take hold. However, we believe it is also a symptom of over-ambition in the reform agenda and needs to be addressed through consolidation and focus (see recommendation 1, section 6.1)

### **3 APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM – DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL**

#### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

There have been numerous studies into the effectiveness of Batho Pele implementation. the most important of which is discussed below. Though detailed empirical research was beyond the scope of this paper, a small qualitative survey was conducted to establish whether there had been any major improvements since the PSC survey and to examine the subjective feelings of Public Servants towards the Batho Pele policy and its implementation. This research was conducted by means of interviews in the Departments of Health and Department of Social Development as well as through a questionnaire distributed and discussed with mid level managers during a seminar conducted by one of the authors. The key findings are:

- All respondents knew of the policy but had a reasonable to poor knowledge of its content and purpose, especially for those at a middle manager level. This is despite the fact that very few had been on any sort of an information workshop to brief them
- Where the policy had been communicated, the mediums used were through workshops and pamphlets / posters. Communication seems to have been done as a once-off exercise and was poorest at middle manager level. Managers do not seem to have participated in communicating Batho Pele to external stakeholders
- No respondents had taken part in a culture change project related to Batho Pele or knew of one. This corroborates anecdotal evidence and the findings of the PSC compliance audit
- Little attention is being paid to improving internal customer service or to re-engineering internal services. Despite apparent commitment to the Batho Pele principles at the highest levels, there is little being done to address internal obstacles to improved service. In particular, a number of respondents cited:
  - The prolonged time it takes to fill posts. Delays of six months seem to be commonplace, which puts increased pressure to bear on the remaining incumbents.
  - The financial control system is better suited to control expenditure rather than to "invest" funds to improve delivery systems.
- There are few incentives to improve service delivery. It is expected that the performance management system may remedy this for senior managers, but it is not known when this will filter down to more junior managers

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<sup>18</sup> Argyris, C, 1990 Overcoming Organizational Defences New Jersey: Prentice Hall

- The majority of respondents feel that they are not given recognition or acknowledgement for service delivery improvement efforts. Furthermore, a number feel that they are not a part of planning improvement efforts. These feelings are indicative of a high level of vertical solitude<sup>19</sup> and can be expected to have a negative effect on worker motivation. Surveys on the determinants of employee motivation should be included in future efforts to apply a culture change model to the implementation of the Batho Pele policy
- Supervisors of middle managers encourage their subordinates primarily through the setting of standards
- Generally the factors that prevent middle managers from implementing Batho Pele are lack of resources, lack of communication and heavy workloads

These findings are consistent with those in the PSC and Public Protector surveys and do not indicate any major improvement since the completion of these studies

### 3.2 Survey of Compliance with Batho Pele

During the period October 1999 to February 2000 the Public Service Commission (PSC) conducted a survey with a view to establish the extent to which departments were Batho Pele compliant<sup>20</sup>. The survey included a number of departments. The conclusions of the survey were that:

- The public service was lacking in skills necessary for the application of Batho Pele principles;
- The service delivery transformation programme was seen as separate from the day-to-day business of departments;
- Demands for improved as well as new services were imposed on service delivery units without the consideration of cost implications;
- Batho Pele was a mere listing of principles, without any indication of implementation;
- The Batho Pele policy had not impacted on the daily tasks of front-line personnel;
- "Batho Pele" had not been integrated with performance management and strategic plans.

A similar study was conducted by the PSC on the nature and extent of irregularities and inefficiencies in the management of the Department of Home Affairs and its compliance with the Batho Pele principles<sup>21</sup>. The main findings of the study were that:

- The department was performing below its own published service standards;
- Staff time was inefficiently utilized;
- The department did not consult with the public about services and services standards;

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<sup>19</sup> Organizational performance is thought to be directly linked to employee morale. Morale emerged as a critical factor in Australian and Canadian studies of public employees during the 1980s. Employee morale is raised by job satisfaction and reduced by a disconnect in orientation and attitudes between managers and their staff. See Zussman and Jabes (1989).

<sup>20</sup> PSC 2000 Survey of Compliance with the Batho Pele Policy

<sup>21</sup> PSC, 2000, Report on Home Affairs, Batho Pele and Management Audit Investigations

- No targets for increasing access to the department's services had been set;
- The department did not have a formal mechanism for handling complaints; and
- The department did not have a productivity improvement programme, and was not measuring its productivity.

These two surveys suggest that the fundamentals are not in place for Batho Pele to succeed. These fundamentals include attitudes, beliefs, skills, structure, systems and processes. All these have to be integrated with any major transformation initiative, such as Batho Pele.

In 1996, the North West Provincial Government took the bold step of commissioning a survey in order to assess the perceptions of the residents of the North West Province regarding the quality of service delivery provided by the North West Government<sup>22</sup>.

The following summary captures the perceptions of respondents to the survey:

- The majority of respondents were uninformed on government policies. They were of the view that the NWP Government was not communicating its policies effectively;
- Their perceptions of services and the administration were generally positive. In particular they considered library services, schools, electricity supply and health services as good;
- The majority thought that the NWP had not delivered on its election promises, such as job creation, housing and health facilities;
- The majority felt that the NWP Government had introduced some changes since coming into power;
- The majority were dissatisfied with the rate of implementation of the affirmative action policy.

Although this study was done prior to the introduction of the Batho Pele policy, it provides useful insight. Furthermore, when the next stage of this audit is completed in 2003 it will provide the opportunity for an interesting longitudinal assessment.

### 3.3 Citizen's Charter in the UK

From 1979, the Civil Service in the United Kingdom has been involved in a wide-ranging series of reforms driven by the need for fiscal constraint, the desire to raise the standard of public services, the recognition of the importance of effective leadership, demographic changes and technological advances.<sup>23</sup>

At the core of the reform agenda was the aim, first introduced by the Thatcher government of introducing private sector managerial approaches in to the public domain. Of these initiatives, the one that most closely approximates the *Batho Pele* policy is that of the Citizen's Charter introduced in 1991 and formalised in the Charter Mark. In brief, this is an award made to public institutions that meet a set of criteria for "customer" service. Subsequently a number of other governments have also adopted their own charters, amongst them Australia and India.

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<sup>22</sup> North West Provincial Government, 1997, *Report on the Findings and Recommendations of the North West Province Community Survey*

<sup>23</sup> *Overview of Recent Public Service Reforms in Canada, Britain, Australia, New-Zealand and the United-States* (Prepared by the Research Directorate, Public Service Commission of Canada) 2000

The original ten criteria were very close to the eight *Batho Pele* principles. A comparison between these criteria and the principles is given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1- Comparison between *Batho Pele* Principles and the UK Charter Mark Criteria**

<b><i>Batho Pele</i> Principles</b>	<b>2002 Charter Mark Criteria</b>
<b>BP1: Consultation</b> Citizens should 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.	<b>C3 Consult and involve</b> Consult and involve present and potential users of public services as well as those who work in them; and use their views to improve the services provided.
<b>BP2: Service Standards</b> Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.	<b>C1 Set Standards</b> Set clear standards of service that users can expect, and monitor and review performance and publish results, following independent validation, wherever possible.
<b>BP3: Access</b> All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.	<b>C4 Encourage access and the promotion of choice</b> Make services easily available to everyone who needs them including using technology to the full, offering choice wherever possible.
<b>BP4: Courtesy</b> Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.	<b>C5 Treat all fairly</b> Treat all fairly, respect their privacy and dignity, be helpful and courteous, and pay particular attention to those with special needs.
<b>BP5: Information</b> Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.	<b>C2 Be open and provide full information</b> Be open, and communicate clearly and effectively in plain language to help people using public services; and provide full information about services, their cost and how well they perform.
<b>BP6: Openness and transparency</b> Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.	<b>C2 Be open and provide full information</b>
<b>BP7: Redress</b> 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.	<b>C6 Put things right when they go wrong</b> Put things right quickly and effectively; learn from complaints; and have a clear, well publicised and easy-to-use complaints procedure, with independent review wherever possible.
<b>BP8: Value for money</b> Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.	<b>C7 Use resources effectively</b> Use resources effectively to provide best value for taxpayers and users.
	<b>C8 Innovate and improve</b> Always look for ways to improve the services and facilities offered, particularly the use of technology.
	<b>C9 Work with other providers</b> Work with other providers to ensure that services are simple to use, effective and co-ordinated, and deliver a better service to the user.
	<b>C10 Provide user satisfaction</b> Show that your users are satisfied with the quality of service they are receiving.

While this comparison of the main elements of the policy shows some similarities, there are some significant differences between the two policies. Namely:

- The charter mark criteria go to considerable length to address the issue of implementation. In the introduction to the 2002 criteria it states “The Charter Mark scheme is both a standard of customer service *and a quality improvement tool* to assist organisations in service delivery to users.” (our italics) This stated intention is backed up by a wide range of support materials, guides and training materials as well as a well staffed support unit located in the Cabinet Office.
- Organisations which successfully apply the criteria are awarded the “Charter Mark” which carries considerable prestige, both within and outside of the public service. This incentive approach has positive impact on the morale and motivation of staff in the organisations. While the Premier’s Service Excellence Awards also share this positive motivational aspect there are qualitative differences<sup>24</sup> between these and the Charter Mark awards.

In addition to the above, the UK Civil Service is markedly different from that which was inherited in the unnatural birth of our state in 1994. In particular many of the fundamental prerequisites for service delivery were in place, namely:

- It was well resourced, with a highly skilled workforce in all branches of the service.
- Notwithstanding the factors which necessitated the reform, there were adequate to good service levels covering the great majority of the population.
- There was a reasonably well established tradition of public *service*, whereas the SA Public Service was seen by many as an instrument of domination and control.
- The charters were supplemented by structural reforms such as the creation of agencies to provide specialised services and the contracting out of certain non-core services.

Furthermore, the UK White Paper on Efficiency and Effectiveness (which is analogous to our WPTPS) was published in 1982 and the Citizen’s Charter was released in 1991. This is not to advocate a wait-and-see complacency, but to illustrate that fundamental cultural change takes time.

### 3.4 Service First in Canada

The profile of the Canadian Civil Service is similar to that of the UK outlined above and there has also been a reform process underway in the last decade. However, in the Canadian case the main driver of the civil service reform initiative was cost reduction and improved efficiency. In a 1997 report “Getting Government Right”, the Treasury Board identified four focuses of change, namely:

- the success in controlling government expenditures is due to the dedication and contributions of Public Service employees;
- recruiting and retaining high-quality people at all levels; ongoing investment in training and development, and encouraging employees to develop the leadership and management skills required by a modern society;
- building a positive labour relations environment to enable employees to become more involved;
- simplifying and modernizing its management and administrative systems to make them more efficient and cost-effective.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Premier Service Awards are in the nature of prizes given to the institutions which are the best in the implementation of the principles while the Charter Mark is awarded to all who meet the set criteria. There is a case to be made that the latter approach is more effective in promoting **widespread** adoption of service delivery improvement principles.

<sup>25</sup> *Overview of Recent Public Service Reforms in Canada, Britain, Australia, New-Zealand and the United-States* (Prepared by the Research Directorate, Public Service Commission of Canada) 2000

Given this focus it is understandable that there was no specific programme targeting service to “customers” and any improvements made were in the context of efficiency and other programmes. To this end the Public Service 2000 legislation was passed in 1989 to address matters of staffing, staff relations, classification, compensation and benefits, remuneration and staff training in the public service. The focus of their change efforts was to develop better delivery methods to get services to Canadians at a lower cost.

While the national reforms were pursued in much the same way as those in the UK at the provincial level there were some interesting initiatives, particularly in Manitoba. One element of note in the implementation of the reforms in this province was the implementation approach used. Rather than utilize a “top down” approach they identified early adopters<sup>26</sup> and prepared them thoroughly to create a successful small scale success. These success stories then received considerable publicity both through specialized publicity programmes as well as natural publicity through other channels such as word of mouth and existing communication channels. This publicity then created a strong demand from other elements in the Civil Service to apply the model.

This approach has the following advantages:

- It is a demand led model of change, reducing resistance through the positive use of incentives and demonstrated successes.
- By working with small scale implementation projects they were able to develop effective and tested working models that were available when the demand for the programme expanded.
- Expectations are managed in that the publicity comes with successful implementation, albeit on a small scale, rather than as a declaration of intent which is then subject to public scrutiny and comment before the programme has had time to produce results.

### 3.5 Australia

The Australian Public Service (APS) reform was similarly guided by concerns over fiscal constraint and a desire to improve services. However, the APS, and its New Zealand counterpart, were aggressive in pursuing a programme of privatisation and devolution of services, supported by legislative reform. Some characteristics of these reforms are:

- The introduction of an explicit merit regime with the introduction of the Merit Protection Act in 1984. This law was passed early in the reform process and established a culture of performance management and accountability early in the reform process. This has been followed up with a system of fixed-term employment agreements and performance based pay. The Public Service Act (1999) strengthens the accountability of Secretaries and Agency Heads.
- A movement away from regulations as a means of control to one based on principles through the adoption of a Statement of Values in 1998. The Agency Heads are responsible for promoting the values within their organisations and must put in place systems to ensure that the staff apply the values in day-to-day situations<sup>27</sup>.
- There were widespread structural reforms, principally through the creation of agencies to deliver government services, the largest of these being Centrelink, a one-stop service for welfare, employment and some passport services.

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<sup>26</sup> In any change process there are those who are relatively quick to embrace the new approaches. These *early adopters* are a powerful force for change because their enthusiasm is high and resistance is negligible. Unfortunately, they are often neglected while leadership energy is expended on those who resist the change.

<sup>27</sup> *Overview of Recent Public Service Reforms in Canada, Britain, Australia, New-Zealand and the United-States*

Following the UK lead the APS also introduced charters of service to clients which are subject to evaluation by the client. It is mandatory that agencies and government departments report annually on performance against standards and client complaints and feedback<sup>28</sup>. They are required to maintain information systems, perform customer surveys and research on to include the findings in their annual reports. The information systems, findings and the methodology used to perform the research are subject to audit and scrutiny. The effect of these requirements is that the Australian PS Managers are held directly accountable to their clients.

The Centrelink charter is included as an example in appendix 1. This document is notable in three respects:

- It is extremely user friendly.
- There are brief details for on the brochure in 13 languages, with contact information to get the full document. The charter is available in 31 languages and their services and key publications are offered in 56 different languages with some documents also available in other formats such as Braille.
- There is a separate charter specifically addressing the needs of Indigenous Australians.

### **3.6 India**

The concept of citizens' charters was started in India in 1997, closely modelled on the British example. While there has been relatively wide adoption of Charters, it is still felt to be in its early stages of implementation. The following extract from the introduction to the Indian Panel on Service Quality: Indian Experiment with Citizen's Charter, gives a good overview of the current state of affairs:

"Introduction of a new concept is always difficult in any organisation. Introduction and implementation of the concept of Citizen's Charter in the Government of India was much more difficult due to the old bureaucratic set up/procedures and the rigid attitudes of the work force. The major obstacles encountered in this initiative were :-

- The general perception of organisations which formulated Citizen's Charters was that the exercise was to be carried out because there was a direction from the top. The consultation process was minimal or largely absent. It thus became one of the routine activities of the organisation and had no focus.
- For any Charter to succeed the employees responsible for its implementation should have proper training and orientation, as commitments of the Charter cannot be expected to be delivered by a workforce that is unaware of the spirit and content of the Charter. However, in many cases, the concerned staff were not adequately trained and sensitised.
- Sometimes, transfers of key personnel at the crucial stages of formulation/implementation of a Citizen's Charter in an organisation severely undermined the strategic processes which were put in place and hampered the progress of the initiative.
- Awareness campaigns to educate clients about the Charter were not conducted systematically.
- In some cases, the standards/time norms of services mentioned in Citizen's Charter were either too lax or too tight and were, therefore, unrealistic and created an unfavourable impression on the clients of the Charter.
- The concept behind the Citizen's Charter was not properly understood. Information brochures, publicity materials, pamphlets issued earlier by the organizations were renamed as Citizen's Charters.

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<sup>28</sup> Australian Department of finance and Administration, 2000. Client Service Charter Principles, pg 18 - 19

Following lessons have been learnt from our experience so far:

- As with any new effort, the Citizen's Charter initiative is bound to be looked at initially with scepticism by bureaucrats as well as citizens. An effective awareness campaign amongst all the stakeholders at the initial stage is essential to overcome this scepticism. These awareness campaigns should be designed and delivered innovatively and effectively.
- The issuance of Citizen's Charter will not overnight change the mindset of the staff and the clients, developed over a period of time. Therefore, regular, untiring and persistent efforts are required to bring about the attitudinal changes.
- A new initiative always encounters barriers and misgivings from the staff. There is a natural resistance to change, particularly among the cutting-edge staff. Involving and consulting them at all the levels of formulation and implementation of Citizen's Charter will go a long way in overcoming this resistance and will make them an equal partner in this exercise.
- Instead of trying to reform all the processes at once and encounter massive resistance, it is advisable to break it into small components and tackle them one at a time.
- The charter initiative should have a built-in mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the working of the Charters, preferably through an outside agency.
- The Charter initiative should form part of a larger quality initiative of the Organisation.”<sup>29</sup>

### 3.7 Report Card on Government Services

The report card<sup>30</sup> approach is an exercise first initiated in Bangalore in 1993 where a local CBO, the Public Affairs Centre (the Centre), raised donations to conduct research into the service levels in the city. In the first iteration of the reports the results were publicised in the press, but the second time briefings were held with the main service delivery agencies before the results were made public. The success of this programme led to the Centre being asked to conduct a similar service for Karnataka State in 2000.

This approach is used in various forms in many cities and states. A recent World Bank paper<sup>31</sup> identifies four variants of this approach, namely:

- Public Affairs Centre (the Centre) in Bangalore, Karnataka State, India. In this model, the research is carried out by an independent body with funding from donors and the state. Its strength lies in the independence of the institute. However, this independence may also result in the results being treated with suspicion by the government agencies and for the model to work it requires an institute with a high level of credibility with the delivery agencies. In addition, the institute will have to be able to access the resources needed to carry out the research.
- Social Research Branch of the Department of Social Security, UK. This model uses a government agency to initiate the report card. The agency can carry out the research itself or commission an outside agency to conduct it. In this model, the results have high credibility and ownership within the public service. This can

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<sup>29</sup>Conference Brochure for the International Institute of Administrative Sciences Second Specialised International Conference, New Delhi (India), 5 - 9 November 2002. Internet publication

<sup>30</sup> This should not be confused with the practice of local newspapers who publish annual “report cards” on local politicians which seem to be based solely on the assessment of a few political commentators. All the examples discussed here are based on research into the public’s first hand experiences of service levels.

<sup>31</sup> *Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services*. World Bank Action Learning Programme on Participatory Resources for PRSP, Internet Publication

however lead to low credibility amongst the public. An additional problem is that the public contribution to the framing of research questions may be neglected. This may lead to essential perspectives of the public assessment of services not being captured and a divergence developing between public and service provider perceptions of the service levels.

- General Services Administration, USA. The GSA reports differ from the above in that the government agency makes use of a consortium of prominent outside companies and education institutions to complete the survey on their behalf. The results are then fed back to the agencies being assessed as well as into the budgetary allocation process of Congress.
- Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services. This is a recent initiative, using lessons gained from the models referred to above to provide an external assessment of a selected range of government services. The focus on pro-poor services is intended to give a voice to those who have little access to influence or redress.

These models add a critical element to initiatives to improve service to “customers”, namely a reliable external measure of service from the perspective of the recipient of the service.

The critical importance of measurement in any performance management system is well established, though it is important that the measures be carefully chosen. In private sector organisations the “bottom line” fulfils this measure. While the bottom line is far from the magic bullet that it is sometimes considered to be, it does provide a relatively simple and accurate mechanism for assessing the overall performance of the organisation. In public organizations, it can be argued that their “bottom line” is the satisfaction of their clients with the services they offer as this is the source of the democratic mandate that provides the legitimacy for the services.

In the attempt to provide pro-poor services, these measures are even more important. In an administration’s attempts to meet its objectives, there is a multiplicity of pressures placed on it by the various institutions of civil society. The poorest sections of our society are inadequately represented in these institutions and their needs tend to slide off the agenda while the administration battles to deal with the multiplicity of pressures that are brought to bear by the multiplicity of role-players and lobbyists seeking to improve their access to public goods.

### **3.8 Making services work for poor people – World Bank research programme.**

In 2002 the World Bank launched a research programme within their Development Research Group to investigate the determinants of service delivery and effectiveness of public spending, especially with relation to services to poor people and with a focus on developing countries. In the description of the research programme they discuss a number of issues that are relevant for this discussion.

In considering what motivates workers to deliver services to a specific group of individuals one has to consider the incentives that the individuals have to perform a certain set of tasks rather than another set, or to perform the same set of tasks to the same standard. A narrow interpretation of motivation tends to focus on the financial rewards and to link them to specific measurable objectives. However there is evidence to suggest that workers in the public sector (and probably workers in other sectors) are motivated by other factors. Bennett, Gzirishvili, and Kanfer<sup>32</sup> found that, while the respondents in the survey cited better financial remuneration as a means to improve motivation, “the most critical group of factors in stimulating motivation were those related to the social environment, particularly good relationships with supervisors and co-workers. Job content issues were the second most important group of issues.”

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<sup>32</sup> Bennet, S, Gzirishvili, D and Kanfer, R. 2000. An In-depth Analysis of the Determinants and Consequences of Worker Motivation in Two Hospitals in Tbilisi, Georgia. Major Applier Research 5, Working Paper 9. Partnerships for Health Reform.

Further research by Fehr, Fischbacher, and Gächter indicates that rather than behaving in a purely self interested manner, people have a tendency to co-operate when treated fairly<sup>33</sup>

While these elements will be explored in the empirical research section of this project definitive answers on this topic are far beyond the scope of this paper and should be the topic of further research, particularly when incentive programmes are being devised.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that many workers in the Public Sector have multiple principles. Health workers, for instance, can be seen to be balancing responsibilities to their managers, their patients, the communities in which they work, their colleagues (including any union interests they may subscribe to) and to their own self-interest. Any attempt to influence their behaviour in a specific direction needs to be aware of the constraints under which they operate.

## **4 PROPOSED APPROACH TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM**

### **4.1 Towards a Policy Design and Implementation Framework – Learning from the Canadian Service Gap Model**

The Canadian Service Gap model is a conceptual framework which concerns the gap between the service that citizens and clients expect, and the service they actually receive<sup>34</sup>  
The model comprises four components:

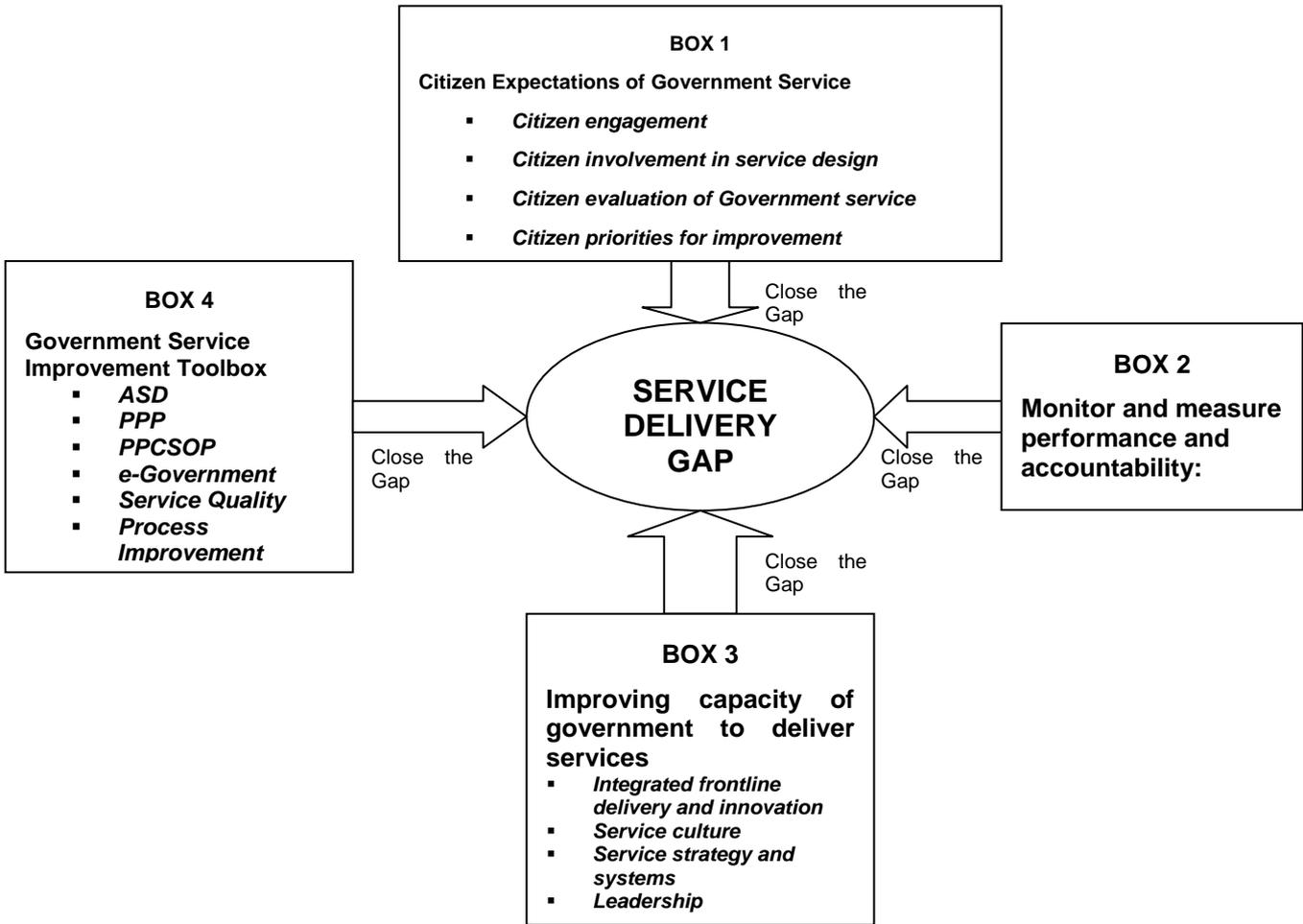
- Knowing what citizens and clients expect in terms of public sector service, including how they want to be engaged and what their priorities are for service improvements (box 1);
- Measuring progress in closing the service gap using a variety of tools, and ensuring accountability for results (box 2);
- Improving the capacity of public organisations to provide the service that citizens expect (box 3);
- And using the appropriate mix of tools to help close the service gap (box 4)

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<sup>33</sup> Fehr, E, Fischbacher, U and Gächter, S Strong Reciprocity, Human Cooperation and the Enforcement of Social Norms Human Nature 13(2002): 1-25.

<sup>34</sup> Blythe, DM and Marson D. B. 1999 Good Practices in Citizen Centred Service, Ottawa, Canadian Centre for Management Development

Figure 1 - The Service Gap Model according to the CCMD, 1999



#### **4.1.1 Learning about Citizens' and Clients' expectations of government**

An important element in a citizen-centred service delivery is to engage citizens on their views and expectations of service. Information provided shows that citizens assist departments in:

- Responding to emerging citizen demands;
- Providing feedback to frontline staff, managers and political leaders about service performance;
- Allowing resources to meet service priorities;
- Evaluating how well departments are meeting their mandates; and
- Strengthening strategic and business planning processes.

Through this information, departments will be able to select appropriate service improvement tools, such as alternative service delivery, re-engineering, service standards etc, in order to close the gap.

#### **4.1.2 Measuring Service performance and ensuring accountability for results**

A citizen-centred service culture requires that progress towards meeting service performance goals be measured from time to time. Departments committed to service delivery use performance measurement to assess how well they are doing in decreasing or eliminating the gap between citizen expectations and the service provided. As a result of measurement, departments are able to develop and implement improvement plans, thus translating strategy into action<sup>35</sup>.

Accountability is a central tenet of performance measurement. It is essential that managers and employees buy into the performance process, and actually take appropriate responsibility. There needs to be integration between service performance plans, the strategic planning process and the annual business planning cycle.<sup>36</sup>

#### **4.1.3 Tools for Closing the Gap**

Tools for closing the service gap include alternative service delivery options, public/private partnerships and public/private/civil society partnerships. Other tools used by government departments to improve service delivery include e-government, service quality, process improvement, benchmarking and innovation.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.1.4 Improving the capacity of government to deliver services**

Approaches to improve the capacity of government departments in order to close the service gap include quality management, high performance models, and changes in governance framework.<sup>38</sup>

Critical elements in capacity improvement are integrated frontline delivery and innovation, service culture, service strategy and systems, leadership and self-diagnosis.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

## 5 THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROPOSED APPROACH

### 5.1 Applicability of service gap model to South Africa

Batho Pele tends to be oversimplified and is understood in a narrow service delivery perspective. Rather, it should be seen within the broader conceptual framework which could actually, more appropriately guide a number of specific actions<sup>39</sup>. Included in such a framework are:

- Values or the ideology of the State;
- Governance;
- Performance Management and accountability;
- Organisational design of government; and
- The design of public goods and services.

#### 5.1.1 Values or the ideology of the State

The Constitution of South Africa and various public policies of government are underpinned by people-centred values and principles. It is no coincidence that the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery is called Batho Pele<sup>40</sup>. People-centredness can therefore be seen as representing the core values or ideology of the democratic state. Thus, Batho Pele should first and foremost be understood in this context. The Canadian model based on a concept of citizen-centredness is, needless to say, very similar to Batho Pele.

#### 5.1.2 Governance

South Africa subscribes to the notion of democratic governance rather than “good” governance. Democratic governance means governments doing things in ways that make people believe they have a stake in government and governance<sup>41</sup>. It is about inclusivity, about even-handedness, especially in divided societies. Democratic governance emphasizes public participation in decision-making. “Good governance” is associated with the post-cold war World Bank’s and IMF’s policies of conditionalities. It is underpinned by market driven solutions to development and is technocratic in its orientation. “Good governance” has featured prominently in the IMF-driven Structural Adjustment policies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The democratic governance calls for a form of governance which is appropriate and sensitive to issue of poverty and social needs.<sup>42</sup>

The Batho Pele is an expression of how the State wants to relate to its citizens, and this is consistent with democratic governance. In this regard, the primacy of the citizen is given prominence. Similarly, the “citizen expectations of government service” component of the Canadian model highlights the importance attached to the role of citizens in service delivery.

#### 5.1.3 Performance Management and Accountability

Batho Pele prescribes how actors in the policy environment should relate to one another and the public. In this can also be read performance management and accountability. This

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Professor Sipho Shabalala, Policy analyst, KZN Government

<sup>40</sup> Literally translated this means “People First”

<sup>41</sup> Landsberg, C. 2002 Democratic Governance Pivotal for Africa’s Future. Global Dialogue Vol 7.3

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

is consistent with the “Monitor and Measure Performance and Accountability” in the Canadian model.

#### **5.1.4 Organisational Design of Government**

The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery refers to partnerships with business and industry, with NGOs, CBOs, academic institutions and other community bodies. It refers to relationships within government departments and externally. These internal and external partnerships require appropriate departmental designs.

The emphasis on the citizen would suggest greater focus on a citizen perspective design, rather than a service or product or core-business-oriented design. In the Canadian model, the “government service improvement toolbox” seems to be the appropriate parallel.

#### **5.1.5 The Design of Public Goods and Services**

Again, the question of partnerships and people-centredness calls for specific approaches to the design of goods and services. Once more, this is similar to the “toolbox” in the Canadian model.

In view of the above discussion, it appears that there would be merit in **adapting** the Canadian Service Gap Model to the South African environment. The advantages of doing so are:

- The Batho Pele policy would be understood in a much broader strategic and governance perspective;
- The management of service delivery would be greatly enhanced;
- The model provides a structure that would enhance policy and programme implementation;
- The model, underpinned by values of the State, democratic governance, performance management and accountability, organizational design and design of service provides essential elements for successful policy implementation; and
- The Canadian model evolved through comprehensive empirical research. Although the research was conducted in an environment different to South Africa, a case could be made for similarities and therefore relevance. Whatever policy design and implementation framework is developed, it should be fully informed by South African circumstances.

Various reports have highlighted the poor state of Batho Pele compliance by a number of government departments. In all of this, the victim is the citizen. Thus, to be emphasized in this policy design and implementation framework are matters relating to citizen expectations of government services, and these include citizen engagement, citizen involvement in service design, citizen evaluation of government service and citizen priorities for improvement. Effort must be invested in developing public servants to perform, especially as “...multi-skilled community development workers who will maintain direct contact with the people” .In addition, there is a need for a comprehensive culture change, training and development programme which would focus on giving effect to Batho Pele. But, there is also need for an aggressive campaign to sensitise citizens about their rights, and empower them so that they are able to claim their rights especially in areas where services are provided by government departments.

Attention could also be given to Chapter 9 institutions, particularly the Public Protector. The latter has been doing useful work in investigating complaints relating to Batho Pele non-compliance, and giving feedback to government through Parliament. Support to NGOs and CBOs that usually work in partnership with the Public Protector to propagate the citizen rights’ message could also be helpful.

## 6 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Recommendation 1 – Narrowing the Focus

This is a dilemma well described by Polidano<sup>43</sup>: does one attempt a comprehensive change and risk over-elaboration, over commitment of resources and consequent under delivery? Or does one adopt a more incremental approach on a narrower front and risk losing relevance? Polidano argues convincingly that few governments have the resources or political capital to sustain more than a limited range of initiatives and that furthermore most of the successful transformation initiatives were in fact more incremental than they appear to be from hindsight. The Canadian model we refer to in section 3.4 above has explicitly used an incremental model to great effect.

The study of investigations into the reforms carried out in South Africa, verified by the qualitative research conducted with this project shows that there are a plethora of initiatives underway, which are generally poorly co-ordinated. A strong case can be made that it was necessary to advance on a broad front during the first ten years of democratic government, especially with regard to legislative reform. However, there seems to be a danger that the advances made could be dissipated as new targets are identified and pursued. Furthermore, as the implementation of the Batho Pele policy has not been accompanied by culture change programmes that address deep underlying issues, the progress made tends to be superficial and the true determinants of service improvement have not been addressed, resulting in diminishing returns on future efforts.

It is recommended then that as part of the ten year review, the reform agenda be narrowed down to a few high leverage initiatives which can be implemented with sufficient resources and leadership to bring about the culture change that is necessary in the Public Service

Not only the public service should be expected to embark on action programmes to improve Batho Pele compliance, but all institutions of State, e.g. Parliament, have important roles to play. Communication to public servants, serving and new recruits, should go beyond mere pamphleteering and superficial workshops. Batho Pele should be conveyed in a manner that projects it as part of government's broader vision.

### 6.2 Recommendation 2 – Measuring Outputs

Organisations are only successful if they are held accountable for objectively measured results. In private sector organisations this is the bottom line, though even in private organisations the bottom line only works if managers are held accountable to it<sup>44</sup>. For democratic governments, particularly as we outlined in section 5.1.2 this bottom line is the citizens' expectations of government service and their assessment of how well the government has met these expectations.

The difficulty with Government is that this "bottom line" is not clearly spelt out and in the absence of clear targets, Governments tend to follow a multiplicity of soft targets, many of which are not measurable or are only important to the service provider rather than to the citizen and then best services are given to those who can mobilize the loudest "voice" to shout for it. This has the worst impact on the poorest of the poor because they are cut off from access to make their needs heard.

To ensure that we have a bottom line to react to, programmes have to be put into place to identify key deliverables and to measure them regularly and independently. In international practice, the best mechanism seems to be in the form of an annual "citizen survey" or "report card". Best practice indicates that this report card would:

- Be conducted by a consortium comprising of:

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Polidano, *Why Civil Service Reforms Fail* 2001

<sup>44</sup> for an interesting discussion of this see Henry Mintzberg's article on Managing Government, *Governing Management* in Harvard Business Review

- A government agency. This makes access to data easy, but also ensures that the state retains psychological “ownership” of the process and will buy into the results
  - A tertiary institution. This increases the credibility of the process to civil society and NGOs, as well as adding intellectual rigor to the process
  - A firm of consultants. These would improve credibility with civil society institutions, especially in the business sector as well as providing project management skills.
- Comprise of a few key indicators to focus the attention of the public service providers and key policy makers. There is often a tendency to over-elaborate the quantity and complexity of the measures, and this results in indices that are difficult to measure and even more difficult to understand and use. It is more effective to use a few indices that are easily understood and that can lead to concrete actions and follow-up
  - Some subjective measurements of satisfaction. This is to avoid the problem of over-reliance on hard quantifiable measures which tend to squeeze out softer but nevertheless important indicators. A key example would be courtesy, which includes some important qualitative components together with the harder ones like waiting time. The inclusion of softer variables also acknowledges the fact that citizens base their assessment on soft issues as well as harder ones
  - The results will be fed back to departments and to Parliament as well so that it can influence the expenditure allocation process
  - This should be the pre-eminent determinant of Senior Management performance and should be linked to rewards and sanctions. This will give it teeth and avoid the public service from getting to absorbed in its own agenda

The provision and regular measurement of such a set of indicators will be a high leverage intervention to maintain focus and to assess the effectiveness of strategies in achieving their stated objectives

### **6.3 Recommendation 3 – Institutionalising Batho Pele**

In this and other surveys, the main criticism of Batho Pele is that there was insufficient attention paid to its implementation, mainly attributable to lack of resources to monitor and implement. There is often a structural component underlying this in that the human resources necessary are spread thinly and tend to be dealing with a number of conflicting priorities

Nevertheless Batho Pele is central because it is the one policy that most closely addresses the objectives of democratic governance to give prominence to the primacy of its citizens.

A common solution is to have an independent agency to certify departments as Batho Pele compliant. This approach has been used in with success in the UK as the charter mark, and in Australia. Similar approaches have been used successfully in South Africa in quality assurance agencies such as South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) and NOSA.

Such an agency would have a dual function.

- Firstly to accredit organisations (departments, provinces and other organs of the state) as being Batho Pele compliant. The certification can be done a various levels so as to allow organisations at all levels of development access while differentially rewarding the more advanced organisations
- Secondly, to assist organisations improve their internal processes and practices so as to achieve the desired standard. This consulting role would give a wide range of organisations access to high level skills in a cost and resource effective manner

In addition to ensuring compliance, the awarding of accreditation would have positive motivational aspects in that it gives visible and public recognition to all departments who make an effort to improve

The existence of such an agency would also solve a dilemma of political leadership, namely how to require compliance without incurring the heavy demands that direct oversight makes on their time and political capital. As the technical aspects of ensuring compliance are dealt with by the agency, the political leadership is freed from this burden and can support the move towards compliance with the tools at their disposal.

With regard to all three recommendations above, any interventions and strategies to improve public service compliance with Batho Pele should assume a systemic approach. Both the internal and external environments of government should constitute the focus of any programme of action. In respect of the external environment, it is essential that through partnerships with Chapter 9 institutions and civil society organisations, citizens **SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS** and how to access them. A vigilant public can only assist government and particularly the public service in becoming more accountable.

A deliberate policy design and implementation framework should serve as a guideline to government departments in order to enhance successful implementation.

Managers should at all times be aware that not only are citizen-centred values important for service delivery beneficiaries, but that appropriate internal people management practices are critical if the policy is to succeed.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

Change in the South African Public Service has gone through a number of phases since the advent of democracy in 1994. Changes have included, among others, the amalgamation and integration of various disparate geo-political entities from apartheid into a unified government and public service. Further changes have been about the very essence, image and face of the public service. There has been a major drive in respect of service delivery, a strong element of this being extending services to all communities especially the poor. Indeed, these changes demonstrate some metamorphosis that the machinery of government has gone through. A critical aspect of this ongoing change process refers to the manner in which the State engages with society, especially in keeping with its overall goal of bringing about “a better life for all”.

A significant development in 1997 was the introduction of a framework for transforming public service delivery known as Batho Pele. Like many other policies of government, Batho Pele has been and continues to be a laudable intervention by the democratic State. However, the laudable elements of the policy tend to be diluted by implementation shortcomings and these include;

- Lack of policy design and implementation framework;
- Absence of people-centred culture in the Public Service;
- Just as is the case with strategic visions and missions whose importance tends to be limited to impressive frames hanging on the walls of reception areas of departments, Batho Pele has not been ingrained in the daily activities of public servants at work;
- Training and development programmes are not underpinned by “People First” values;
- Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms both internally and externally;
- Virtual absence of induction for new employees, consequently many know little about the policy imperatives of Batho Pele and other policies;
- Efforts to improve Batho Pele compliance focus almost exclusively on the Public Service and little attention is paid to citizens and the role they play in making the policy work;

- Batho Pele has tended to be seen as a narrow mechanism to enhance service delivery instead of being understood within a broader strategic and governance framework;
- Senior managers make little effort to motivate staff as part of internal people management;
- Strategic planning activities including service delivery issues are generally limited to senior management. Only in rare instances are frontline employees - the people who are critical in reflecting Batho Pele ethos in departments - included in service delivery capacity development programmes, e.g. workshops,

Considering the apparent failures above, it is easy to be overcritical of the Batho Pele initiative and to propose extensive and widespread actions to rectify the matter. This we believe would not be productive as the so-called failures are a function of the existing state of development of the South African government, rather than evidence of a lack of will. In fact, the extremely wide range of reform initiatives that have been attempted and the numerous successes that have been achieved need to be acknowledged. The nature of the problem, is one of over- rather than under- commitment. In short, the transformation agenda is a momentous one and we are still at an early stage of development.

## **8 LIST OF ACCRONYMS**

ASD- Alternative Service Delivery  
APS – Australian Public Service  
CBO – Community Based Organisation  
CCMD – Canadian Centre for Management Development  
GNU – Government of National Unity  
GSA – General Services Administration  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
KZN – Kwa Zulu Natal  
NEDLAC – National Economic Development and Labour Council  
NGO – Non Governmental Organisation  
NOSA – National Occupation Safety Association  
NWP – North West Province  
PPCSOP – Public Private Civil Society Partnerships  
PPP – Public Private Partnerships  
PSC – Public Service Commission  
RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme  
SA – South Africa  
SABS – South Africa Bureau of Standards  
UK – United Kingdom  
WPTPS – White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service

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## APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### BATHO PELE IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

Thank you very much for agreeing to give us input in this important research effort

All responses to these questions will be treated in the strictest confidence

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What department are you in?	
What is your job title	
Please give us a brief description of your responsibilities	
How many people report directly to you?	
How many people are 'under' you in total?	

#### GENERAL INFORMATION ON BATHO PELE

What has been your experience with Batho Pele?	:
Have you been directly involved in any change effort? If so please give us some details	
What was your involvement? For example, did you initiate a service improvement project? Were you part of a project team working to improve service standards? Were you involved in a service improvement project (but not part of the development team)	
Were you part of a team developing an implementation strategy?	
What was the scope of the effort?  ✕ How many people were involved?  ✕ What was the approximate budget?	
What are the main strategic priorities of your department? Please give us the top five in order of priority.	1 2 3 4 5

How important do you think Batho Pele is related to your departments other priorities?	
Which of the eight Batho Pele principles listed below has your department implemented well? 1: Consulting Citizens about Services 2: Setting Service Standards 3: Equal Access to Services 4: Treating Citizens with Courtesy 5: Give Citizens full and Accurate Information 6: Openness and transparency 7: Redress – dealing with Poor Service and Complaints 8: Value for money – Efficient and Effective Services	
Which of the Eight Batho Pele principles has your department implemented poorly?	
What could be done to improve this effort?	

## COMMUNICATION

How was the Batho Pele information communicated to you?	
How was it communicated to other members of your department?	
How was it communicated to external stakeholders?	
Rate these communications with different stakeholders using a five point scale (5 high) and give us the reasons for your ratings	<p>To you (Please Circle the appropriate number)</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>To other members of your department?</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>

	<p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>To external Stakeholders?</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>Please comment:</p>
What was done <b>well</b> in the communications effort in your department?	
What was done <b>poorly</b> in the communications effort in your department?	
What is the single most important thing that can be done to improve communication of the Batho Pele policy in your department?	

## MOTIVATION

What incentives, positive or negative are there to improve service?	
What is the one thing that would motivate workers to improve services?	

## OBSTACLES

What prevents typical managers in your department from performing better in implementation of the BP policy?	
What systems or procedures get in the way of your performance?	
What could be done to remove these obstacles?	
Do you have adequate resources? Are these resources consistently available?	
Do you have enough time to implement Batho Pele? Where could time be saved to have more time to spend on BP?	

## MANAGERS ROLE

<p>How does your direct superior encourage you to improve services? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coaching</li> <li>➤ Setting standards</li> <li>➤ Problem solving</li> <li>➤ Driving / pushing</li> <li>➤ Rewarding positive efforts</li> </ul>	
How do more senior managers encourage you?	
Are senior managers sympathetic / understanding towards your problems in improving service? Towards other managers?	
What is the one thing senior managers could do better in encouraging you to improve services?	

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### MEASUREMENT

Are important outputs being measured? Could you give some examples?	
Are some important outputs not measured? Could you give some examples?	

### POLICY CONSISTENCY

Which other policies support the Batho Pele policy?	
Which policies hinder the application of Batho Pele? How?	
Are there any aspects of the policy 'missing'? If so what?	
Are there any aspects of the BP policy that are unnecessary?	

**Thank you for your time and input!**