



Custodian of Good Governance

Evaluation of Service Standards in the Public Service

2005



EVALUATION OF SERVICE STANDARDS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

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Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	5
LIST OF TABLES	6
ACRONYMS	7
FOREWORD	8
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	10
1.2 MAIN FINDINGS	10
1.3 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	10
1.4 CRITICAL AREAS OF SERVICE STANDARDS TO ACCELERATE MOMENTUM	13
2. BACKGROUND	14
3. SERVICE STANDARDS – AN OVERVIEW	16
3.1 WHAT ARE SERVICE STANDARDS?	16
3.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDICATORS AND SERVICE STANDARDS	17
3.3 SERVICE STANDARD COMPONENTS	18
3.4 SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SERVICE STANDARDS	20
3.5 THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	21
3.6 THE CONSTITUTION	21
4. METHODOLOGY	23
5. KEY FINDINGS	26
5.1 ASSESSMENT OF SUBMITTED SERVICE STANDARDS	26
5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE STANDARDS	29
5.3 THE ROLE SERVICE STANDARDS PLAY	32
5.4 USING SERVICE STANDARDS AS PART OF THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN DEPARTMENTS	33
5.4.1 Common methods	33
5.4.2 Results of performance assessments	37
5.5 COMMUNICATING SERVICE STANDARDS	39

5.6	RESOURCES EARMARKED FOR SERVICE STANDARDS	41
5.7	ATTITUDES TOWARDS SERVICE STANDARDS	43
5.8	EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE	45
5.9	SUGGESTIONS MADE BY DEPARTMENTS	51
6.	ANALYSIS	55
6.1	COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO THE KEY FINDINGS	55
6.2	STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE STANDARDS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE	58
7.	DISCUSSION ON BEST PRACTICE IN DEVELOPING SERVICE STANDARDS	59
7.1	INTRODUCTION	59
7.2	BATHO PELE HANDBOOK	60
7.3	COMMON PROBLEMS WITH SERVICE STANDARDS	62
7.4	BENCHMARKING	64
7.5	MEASURING PERFORMANCE AGAINST SERVICE STANDARDS	66
7.6	RECOGNITION	68
7.7	COMMUNICATING SERVICE STANDARDS	68
7.8	MONITORING AND REVIEWING SERVICE STANDARDS	70
8.	CONCLUSION	72
	REFERENCES	73
	GLOSSARY OF TERMS	75
	APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS	78
	APPENDIX B: USEFUL WEB SITES	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Responsibility for setting service standards located in different units	29
Figure 2: Level within a department where the person responsible for setting service standards is employed	29
Figure 3: External and internal clients involved in developing service standards	30
Figure 4: The manner in which internal staff were involved in setting service standards	31
Figure 5: Different sources used by departments to gauge client satisfaction when setting service standards	31
Figure 6: Guidelines and other sources used by departments in the development of service standards	32
Figure 7: The role service standards play in a department	33
Figure 8: Methods used to assess performance against service standards	34
Figure 9: How often the assessment takes place	35
Figure 10: Responsibility for assessing the department's performance against service standards	35
Figure 11: Links between a department's performance and individual performance agreements	36
Figure 12: The methods used to receive feedback from clients regarding performance	37
Figure 13: What departments do with the results of their performance assessments	37
Figure 14: Manner in which departments critically reflect on progress being made towards achieving service standards	38
Figure 15: Problems associated with communicating service standards	40
Figure 16: Methods used to communicate service standards to internal clients/staff	41
Figure 17: Number of departments that have earmarked specific resources for establishing service standards	41
Figure 18: Departments that have allocated resources towards training staff in the achievement of service standards	42
Figure 19: Perception that senior managers in the department will continue to allocate resources to the development of service standards	42
Figure 20: Departments that intend to make changes to their existing service standards	44
Figure 21: How often are service standards revisited	44

LIST OF TABLES

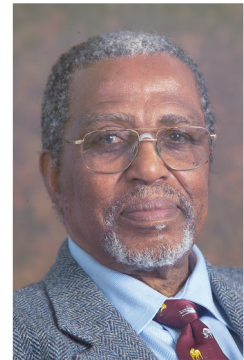
Table 1:	Assessment of the quality of the service standards submitted by national and provincial departments	27
Table 2:	Comments and recommendations made in response to key findings	55
Table 3:	The strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation of service standards in the Public Sector	58
Table 4:	Criteria to consider when developing service standards	63
Table 5:	Examples of routine services and associated benchmarks	65
Table 6:	Example of reporting a department's performance against its service standards	67

ACRONYMS

CD	Chief Director
D	Director
DGs	Directors-General
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EXCO	Executive Committee
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HoD	Head of Department
IC	Interim Constitution
ISO	International Standards Organization
IT	Information Technology
KPAs	Key Performance Areas
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commission
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSCBC	Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council
QQT	Quality, Quantity and Time
SAA	Social Assistance Act
SAMDI	South African Management Development Institution
SAPS	South African Police Service
SDIP	Service Delivery Improvement Plan
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund

FOREWORD: CHAIRPERSON OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

During its first 10 years of democracy, South Africa has developed a number of excellent policies to address the inequalities of the past. It is now time that we move towards vigorously implementing these policies with a view to improving service delivery so as to improve the quality of life of all the citizens of this country. Plans and commitments should now be turned into realities.



Improving service delivery is a continuous process for departments and not a once-off task. It calls for a shift from inward-looking bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes to searching for new ways of working that will give priority to the needs of the client.

The government of South Africa is committed to modernising public service management processes and improving citizen satisfaction with the services it delivers. To this end, the Department of Public Service and Administration developed and published a *Batho Pele White Paper* in September 1997. One of the key features of this initiative is that it requires government departments to establish and implement service standards and then to monitor performance against these standards and use the standards in managing client expectations as a means to improving client satisfaction. The service standards have to be communicated to people so that they are aware of what level of service they can expect from departments.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the PSC has just completed an evaluation of the implementation of the service

standards in the Public Service. The evaluation study included 131 national and provincial departments, of which 122 responded (93% response rate).

The Commission noted from the study that most departments still do not have service standards in place and that in the case of the majority of those that do have such standards they are poorly formulated, mainly because they do not make any mention of costs and redress mechanisms, which means that the service standards are not formulated in a conclusive manner.

The study found that most departments had expressed their willingness to develop and refine their service standards and that there were some isolated examples of best practice to inform the work of other departments. Furthermore, there is an increased awareness of the importance of the implementation of service standards in the Public Service, but the challenge still remains as to how best to develop them. There is also a question as to which organization should take charge of enforcing the implementation of service standards.

In conclusion, I wish to thank our colleagues for their efforts to ensure that this study was carried out successfully. Our special thanks go to GTZ for providing funding for this project and also for the knowledge and skills imparted to the PSC staff during the course of the study. I also want to thank the DPSA for being part of the working team and especially for their assistance in developing the questionnaire used for the study.

PROFESSOR SS SANGWENI

CHAIRPERSON:

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In terms of section 196 of the Constitution, the Public Service Commission has the mandate to promote the constitutional values set out in section 195 and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service. To this end the PSC monitors the level and quality of government services and promotes a culture of access, openness and transparency that in turn should build more confidence and trust between the Public Service and the public it serves. In line with its constitutional duty, the PSC set out to evaluate the performance of departments with regard to implementing service standards in accordance with the Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery published on 18 September 1997. In terms of the second Batho Pele principle listed in the Batho Pele White Paper service standards involve the following:

Service standards: Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

Given the direct applicability of the White Paper, all 131 national and provincial departments, excluding the following departments, were included in the project:

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

In order to conduct a rigorous and valid assessment of the current status of service standards, this study used a standardised questionnaire to gather information, and a standardised score sheet to interpret and analyze the information collected.

1.2 MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of this study were:

1.2.1 Assessment of submitted service standards

- Of the 131 departments that received questionnaires, 122 departments responded (93% response rate).
- Of those departments that responded, 64 (52%) had service standards.
- According to our review of the standards submitted, 44 (69%) of the 64 departments that submitted standards complied with the concept of Quantity, Quality and Time (QQT).

- On the issue of redress mechanisms only 17 departments (27%) had service standards that specifically addressed redress issues or complaints.
- Very few departments (9 departments, 14%) made mention of the cost of their services in their service standards.

1.2.2 Common strengths

- Political will to develop service standards that run all the way to the top of these institutions.
- Senior leadership in the departments have bought into the need for service standards.
- Awareness of the importance of service standards.
- A strong desire to learn from this study in order to develop and refine existing service standards.
- Many departments have identified individuals to drive the process, but these designated “champions of service standards” require assistance in developing their capacity.
- Throughout the country, at both national and provincial level, there are some isolated examples of best practice that can inform the work of other departments.

1.2.3 Common weaknesses

- Departments not having service standards.
- Service standards were poorly defined, thus making them difficult to measure.
- Considerable confusion exists between service standards and service delivery indicators – a number of departments simply sent us long lists of indicators (in one instance more than 600 indicators) and argued that these were their service standards.
- Service standards not readily available to internal or external clients and therefore clients were unaware of the level of service that should be delivered.
- Too much emphasis was placed on the responsibilities of government departments, and very little emphasis was placed on the responsibilities of the clients who access services.
- Service standards were sometimes unachievable, thus leading to clients having exaggerated expectations regarding how soon the service should be rendered.
- Members of staff were often uninformed regarding their department’s service standards and were therefore unaware of whether services were being delivered to the standards set by their department.
- Certain departments had rigid and uniform service standards across the whole department, which took no account of local (urban vs. rural) or service variations.
- Little understanding within some departments that considerable effort is required, beyond simply defining service standards, to implement the concept.
- Not linking the concept of service standards to current initiatives to reform the Public Service in South Africa, e.g. the other seven Batho Pele principles.

The study found that whilst the development and use of service standards as a means to assess service delivery is widespread, several critical challenges remain, two of the biggest challenges being the measurement of performance on a regular basis and using the

information thus gathered. To be able to develop robust service standards, departments and the programmes implemented by them must first have a good strategic plan with clearly defined goals and objectives, including effective and meaningful measures of programme success.

There remains a strong tendency in government to focus on the measurement of activities and outputs¹ as a way of gauging the effectiveness or success of projects. The development of measures or indicators to assess outcomes is often absent, and when present tends to be poorly done.

This is not to say that measuring that outputs is wrong. It is important, for example, to measure the number of beneficiaries receiving social grants or the number of recipients of UIF from the Department of Labour. However, output measures will not tell one about the effectiveness of a programme or inform the citizens of this country about the quality of delivery.

1.3 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations would include:

- Distributing the DPSA's **Batho Pele Handbook** to assist departmental managers and staff in designing, developing, monitoring, reviewing and/or improving on the service standards they are currently using.
- Developing a common approach to service standards, which will enable Portfolio Committees and the respective offices of the nine Provincial Premiers to be consistent in measuring performance over time and will serve to demonstrate the progress government is making in improving service delivery. The common service standards would define minimum levels of delivery that departments are expected to achieve.
- Empowering citizens to enable them to contribute to the development of service standards and to assist in the monitoring of delivery against these standards.
- Standardising the reporting process². A standardised reporting process should be developed across government, which will lead to departments reporting against a set of common standards. The process could include the following steps:
 - ▶ Departments to measure their own performance on a quarterly basis and report results to the appropriate portfolio committees and, where applicable, to the respective provincial legislatures.
 - ▶ Performance to be reported numerically (and, where applicable, a qualitative assessment must be provided).
 - ▶ Ensuring that all departments use the same definitions and measures for collecting data and reporting results.

¹ See glossary for definition of terms.

² Ideas based on Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2002). Literature Review on Service standards. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca>.

- ▶ Maintaining a consistent measurement process in order to assess progress over time.

The results of the evaluation of service standards in the Public Service speak to critical service delivery challenges in both the national and provincial sphere of government in South Africa. With a better understanding of the current gaps in the use of service standards by government departments it is now possible to initiate a focused and concerted campaign to improve service standards across the Public Service and thus assist in the development of service delivery systems that are truly responsive to the needs of the citizens of this country.

1.4 CRITICAL AREAS OF SERVICE STANDARDS TO ACCELERATE MOMENTUM

A focus on seven critical areas of service standards will accelerate the momentum of the process:

- Ensure that senior managers are committed to the process of improving service standards across government by embedding service standards in individual work plans and performance agreements.
- Provide training and tools to increase staff knowledge and competencies and to empower them to develop robust and rigorous service standards.
- Foster a culture within the Public Service of routinely and continuously assessing performance against staff's respective service standards.
- Encourage departmental managers to critically reflect on delivery practices that fail to meet the standards the department has set itself and to act upon this information.
- Ensure accountability by basing standards on the priorities of citizens while keeping citizens fully informed about whether the department is meeting these standards and reporting the results to citizens.
- Identify, share and showcase best practices.
- Put in place a common approach to service standards for all government departments to allow Cabinet, portfolio committees and provincial legislatures to assess overall improvements in service delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

A transformed South African Public Service will be judged above all by one criterion: 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, as the Batho Pele White Paper makes clear: “public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society: they are a legitimate expectation”

South Africans want better quality services from all levels of government. For instance, they want respectful and courteous service, shorter queues and no misplaced documents. However, at the same time South Africans want government “to do more with less” and for government to become more efficient with their taxes. These are not new demands, but the citizens of this country are becoming more vocal in their displeasure with poor service delivery, so much so that President Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address at the opening of our Third Democratic Parliament, May 2004, committed the government to:

Achieve further and visible advances with regard to the improvement of the quality of life of our people, affecting many critical areas of social existence, including health, safety and security, moral regeneration, social cohesion, opening the doors of culture and education to all, and ...ensure that the Public Service discharges its responsibilities to our people as a critical player in the process of growth, reconstruction and development of our country.

The President’s vision for the next five years is based on the foundation of a transformed Public Service delivering “people-centered” services that are “characterised by equity, quality, timeliness and a strong code of ethics” (Mission of the SA Public Service). For the past 10 years the democratic government, led first by President Mandela and now by President Mbeki, has been creating a government-wide focus on results, which has gradually seen a shift away from simply measuring outputs to a new focus on outcomes. A critical component of measuring outcomes is that of service indicators. Indicators show whether the desired goal is being achieved or not. An outcome can have more than one indicator, as indicators should address different stakeholders. Each indicator must have a service standard or a target. In essence, a service standard³ is a criterion adopted by a department, defining how it should behave towards its citizens.

During the past 10 years we have seen government departments do much to address the demands of its citizens, but certain challenges remain. One mechanism to address these challenges is a service delivery improvement strategy that incorporates both the views of our citizens and commitments from Public Service employees to deliver services effectively and efficiently. A central component of any

³ It is important to distinguish between a service standard (i.e. a client focussed standard) and operational performance standards. The latter is an internal management measure that is specific to the quality assurance criterion operating within a sector, e.g. ISO defined standards for bridge and road building or norms and standards used to accredit and quality assure a hospital.

strategy to improve service delivery is a set of rigorous service standards which communicate to citizens the Public Service's commitment to deliver quality services and against which government performance can be measured.

In terms of Section 196 of the Constitution, the Public Service Commission has the mandate to promote the constitutional values set out in section 195 of the Constitution and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service. To this end it monitors the level and quality of government services and promotes a culture of access, openness and transparency that in turn should build more confidence and trust between the Public Service and the public it serves.

The Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery seeks to introduce a citizen-oriented approach that puts the people first. The White Paper requires departments to transform and improve their public service delivery in terms of eight service delivery principles. Specific requirements are laid down for departments to put these principles into practice, the ultimate aim of which is to improve services to citizens. The Public Service Commission is tasked with monitoring departments' progress with implementation.

The aim of this project was to evaluate the performance of departments in the Public Service in implementing service standards as required in terms of the 2nd Batho Pele principle listed in the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, namely:

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

3. SERVICE STANDARDS – AN OVERVIEW⁴

Fostering a citizen-focused Public Service in South Africa is one of the key areas of Public Service reform on which the government is currently concentrating. A reform process that aims at improving the quality of services delivered to all South Africans must also make citizens aware of the wide array of services on offer and their associated costs, as well as encouraging employees in the Public Service to pay due attention to their clients. Thus an integral part of this process will be the development of service standards.

This section of the report provides a brief description of the terminology used in this study. In addition, it summarizes the relevant regulatory framework that is applicable to this study.

3.1 WHAT ARE SERVICE STANDARDS?

The role of service standards – a shortened form of the phrase “standards of service” - is typically to answer questions such as: “How often will the service be provided?” “How long should it take to receive the service?” and “What does one do if one is not satisfied with the service?” Thus service standards inform citizens about what kind of service they can expect from a department, and this is usually done in the form of a statement that describes what level of service will be provided to citizens. In essence, a service standard is a criterion adopted by a department in order to define how it should behave with respect to its client base (the client base may be internal or external).

Service standards are an integral part of a Service Delivery Improvement Plan, as they signify the goals that a particular department is striving for in terms of improving its service delivery. Establishing standards for aspects of delivery such as cost, quality and frequency helps departments improve a broad range of the services they offer.

Everyday examples of service standards include:

Department X: Forensic investigations plans will be produced within five working days of fraud having been detected

Department Z: Each Action Request logged with the IT helpdesk will be followed by an updated call within one day

Department Y: We will answer the phone within five rings

⁴ Information for this section was taken from: a) Batho Pele Handbook: A Service Delivery Improvement Guide. DPSA: Pretoria. 2003. b) Quality and affordable service for Canadians: Establishing Service standards in the Federal Government. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat: Government of Canada. 1 December 1994. c) Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (1995). Quality Services – Guide VII – Service standards. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca>

Departments develop service standards in order to do away with ambiguity and thereby ensure that citizens have realistic expectations about the nature of the services being delivered by a department. Service standards also promote a culture of effectiveness and efficiency, as they are typically used by managers in a department to measure the performance of that department. Importantly within the South African context, service standards promote accountability and transparency, as standards represent a public commitment by a department that they will deliver services that meet the needs of the public.

3.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDICATORS AND SERVICE STANDARDS

A commonly asked question is: "What is the difference between an indicator and a service standard?" The short answer to this is that they are the same thing, the longer answer is that a service standard is a type of indicator. National Treasury (2004) defines an indicator as a measure of "how well an expenditure programme (or main division of a vote) is delivering its output and contributing towards meeting the outcomes that government wants to achieve." In other words, an indicator is a measure or signal or benchmark that indicates the level of achievement or the current state of something. Indicators are what we observe or measure in order to verify whether, or to what extent, progress is being made (United Nations Development Programme, 1999).

Typically, indicators are used for specifying outcomes and outputs in measurable numeric or qualitative terms under the following headings:

- Quantity indicators: Magnitude (numbers or dimensions)
- Quality: To which standard?
- Target Group: Who?
- Target Area: Where?
- Time

Outcome indicators specify the achievements of a programme. Output indicators specify what the programme delivers. Usually, in order to assess progress being made towards the achievement of an indicator, a programme will set quarterly milestones. The word "milestone" is taken from the transport sector where milestones are used as indicators of how far you have travelled within a given time period (performance) or how far you are from reaching your target destination (achievement). In terms of programme monitoring, milestones describe the expected progress towards the implementation of activities (events), delivery of outputs (progress) and achievement of outcomes within a specific time period, e.g. a quarter or a year. Milestones are arrived at by breaking down outputs and outcomes into periodical (quarterly) targets. This can be done either by using relative figures (%) or actual figures (numbers).

An example of an indicator when the objective of the programme is to improve health status:

- Define the quality - mortality rates reduced
- Set the target group - infant mortality rates reduced
- Define the target area or place - infant mortality rates reduced in North-West Province
- Set the quantity - infant mortality rates in North-West Province reduced from 3% to 2%
- Set the time period - infant mortality rates in North-West Province reduced from 3% to 2% by 2009

Service standards, as noted earlier in this report, indicate to what standard a particular service will be delivered. Thus service standards are effectively service delivery indicators, which are used to measure or evaluate the performance of departments in terms of service delivery. In order to verify whether delivery has met a standard, service standards need to be measurable. Thus we suggest using the same approach to construct a service standard as we would for constructing an indicator, for example:

- Define the quality - Issue accurate and correct passports
- Set the target group - Issue accurate and correct new passports
- Define the target area or place - Issue accurate and correct new passports at all Home Affairs Offices
- Set the quantity/time period - Issue accurate and correct new passports at all Home Affairs Offices within 6 weeks of receiving an application

3.3 SERVICE STANDARD COMPONENTS

A service standard is more than simply a delivery target such as reducing waiting times or speeding up response times. Typically, a rigorous set or list of service standards developed by a department should incorporate five different aspects. Whilst not every service standard need cover all five aspects, one would expect to find all these different aspects covered by the list of standards a department compiles. These aspects are:

- (a) A description of the service
- (b) A service pledge or commitment
- (c) A delivery target
- (d) The cost of the service

(e) Reference to the relevant complaint and redress mechanisms

Expanding on these aspects, the department's service standards should therefore incorporate the following:

3.3.1 Description

The description provides the details of the service that the department intends to provide and, where applicable, the nature of the benefits citizens can expect to receive. Usually, the service standard includes a short, easy-to-understand statement that describes exactly what services are provided at a particular delivery site.

Description:

- Process an application for a Foster Grant
- Issue a passport

3.3.2 Service Commitment

The service commitment refers to how citizens will be treated and describes the quality of service delivery that the department promises to meet. This commitment would typically emphasise delivery principles such as transparency, accountability, fairness and courtesy.

Service Commitment:

- Our staff will be knowledgeable, responsive, cooperative and available
- We will strive to make information available in all official languages

3.3.3 Delivery Targets

Delivery targets refer to the key aspects of the specific service delivery that is referred to in the service standards. Generally, delivery targets would deal with issues such as access and timeliness. Targets have a two-fold purpose: they help to establish realistic expectations among citizens, based on what the department can actually deliver, and establish the performance expectations for the department.

Delivery Target:

- To respond to all correspondence within 10 days
- To process your application within 30 days

3.3.4 Cost

It is important that citizens should know about the cost of a service,

even when there are no user fees. Knowing the cost of a service, in particular when it is either free or requires only a low fee, encourages citizens to make use of the service, forms realistic expectations about the services being offered, and allows them to participate knowledgeably in debates about the value of government service delivery.

Cost:

- We will proactively provide our clients with accurate, up-to-date and reliable information concerning the cost of the services provided by this department
- No user fee will be charged for this service

3.3.5 Complaint and Redress Mechanisms

It is important that mechanisms should be in place to deal with the concerns of citizens when they feel that a department has not met the service standards it has promised to meet. In addition, such mechanisms provide a means by which a department can assess the quality of its delivery. A public service “that is responsive and citizen-focused must provide an easy, clear and effective way for citizens to complain and seek redress”⁵.

Complaint and Redress Mechanisms:

- We will respond to your complaint within 10 working days of receipt. However, if your complaint requires extensive follow-up, we will contact you within the 10-day period to explain why and when you may expect a full response.
- If you are unhappy with the way you have been dealt with at this police station, you should complain first to the Station Head (Senior Supt.). If you are still not satisfied you can refer the complaint to If you are dissatisfied with their response you can ask

3.4 SOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SERVICE STANDARDS

If service standards have not been developed in a rigorous manner they can cause problems for a department. Some of the common problems associated with ill-defined service standards include:

- Too much focus on what is easy to measure and not dealing with the substantive issues related to service delivery.
- Departments can spend too much time trying to meet unrealistic standards and thus forget about their core business.
- Standards determined at national level, or by outsiders not intimately involved in the delivery of services, seldom take regional variations into consideration.

⁵ Quality and affordable service for Canadians: Establishing Service standards in the Federal Government. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat: Government of Canada. 1 December 1994. p. 3.

3.5 THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Government departments are obliged to develop service standards, as stipulated in both the Public Service Regulations and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). Departments that have no service standards have failed to meet this obligation and have therefore not complied with these prescripts.

Public Service Regulations (C1 & C2, No. 20117, July 1999) specify that an executing authority shall establish and sustain a Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) for her/his department, which should incorporate service standards. Moreover, as noted above, departments are expected to publish their service standards in their annual report as part of their accountability to the citizens of this country. They should also make reference in their annual report to what steps the department is taking to meet these service standards. Thus departments are expected to establish and monitor service standards and to use them as part of their initiative to improve the delivery of services to the citizens of this country.

The PFMA (Act No. 1 of 1999) stipulates that strategic plans cannot be developed in isolation and that they must be integrally linked to a department's SDIP. Moreover, the PFMA emphasizes the importance of regular monitoring and reporting against measurable objectives that are linked to outputs and service delivery indicators (section 27(4) of the PFMA). In accordance with Section 65 of the PFMA, departments should table annual reports that account for the progress a department has made in meeting its service delivery indicators and thereby inform the public as to the performance the department has achieved in meeting the service delivery standards it has set.

In addition, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA, Act No. 3 of 2000) provides a legal framework within which administrators must operate when making decisions (e.g. a decision to grant an old age pension) that affect citizens. The PAJA stipulates that citizens must be informed of the reasons behind the decisions taken by administrators with regard to service delivery. Moreover, the Act stipulates that public servants must respond to a request to divulge the reasons for a decision, in writing, within 90 days. The PAJA also gives citizens the right to challenge the decisions made by administrators in court.

3.6 THE CONSTITUTION

A recent judgment (unanimous decision) in the Constitutional Court has linked the equality clause in the Constitution (section 126[3]) to the need for government departments to have a set of minimum standards. In *Mashavha v President of the Republic of South Africa and others* (CCT67/03), Justice van der Westhuizen found that there was a strong link between the delivery of services, in this case social assistance by way of a disability grant, and human dignity, a value upheld by our Constitution. The judgment

went further and found that social assistance was an example of a service that required minimum service standards across the country:

Social assistance is a matter that cannot be regulated or coordinated by uniform norms and standards that apply generally throughout the Republic for effective performance. Effective regulation and effective performance do not only include procedural and administrative efficiency and accuracy, but also fairness and equality, for example as far as the distribution and application of resources and assistance are concerned. A system that disregards historical injustices and offends the constitutional values of equality and dignity could result in instability, which would be the antithesis of effective regulation and performance." (See par. 57, page 33)

Although the judgment dated 6 September 2004 deals with issues under the Interim Constitution (IC) and the old Social Assistance Act (SAA) it has far-reaching implications for the development of uniform service standards in South Africa.

4. METHODOLOGY

Given the direct applicability of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, all national and provincial departments (currently \pm 130 in total) were included in the project. The following three departments were excluded from the study, as legislation applicable to service standards does not currently apply to them:

- National Intelligence Agency
- South African National Defence Force
- South African Secret Service

The project was divided into the following three phases:

Phase 1. **Data Gathering:** A short literature review (summarised above) was conducted in order to inform the project team's understanding of the concept of service standards, and to explore international best practice with regard to service standards. Drawing on this literature review, a questionnaire was developed in cooperation with stakeholders in provincial and national departments.

For this study, the PSC requested each department, at both the national and provincial levels, to respond to questions relating to key components of their service standards (see Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire):

- The service standards currently being used by the department.
- The role that service standards play in the functioning of the department.
- Identifying who was consulted during the development of the standards.
- Identifying who is responsible for measuring the department's performance against these standards.
- The methods used by the department in assessing service delivery performance against the standards.
- The means used by the department to communicate service standards to both internal and external clients.
- The resources allocated by the department to the development of service standards, the reviewing of service standards and Batho Pele-related initiatives.
- Attitudes to service standards within the department.

Heads of Department or their alternates filled in the questionnaire and also provided documentary evidence for the relevant service standards and their implementation. The PSC head office and regional offices gathered the information.

An unintended consequence of this phase of the project was that, as a result of the questionnaire, a number of departments (both provincial and national) requested assistance from the PSC with the development of service standards. At the time of conducting the study the PSC did not have the resources to conduct workshops across the country to meet all the requests it received. However, as part of Phase 2, extremely well attended information sessions on service standards were held in seven of the nine provinces for provincial departments, and a session was conducted at the PSC's headquarters in Pretoria for national departments.

Phase 2. **Verification:** In order to verify the accuracy of the information gathered, in how far the questionnaires had been completed and whether the supporting documents provided by departments had actually been submitted, a short standardised score sheet was developed. The score sheet was based on the notion that service standards should address the five different dimensions discussed above, namely:

- **Quality:** A brief, specific and easy-to-understand statement, describing to what standard a department promises to serve citizens.
- **Quantity:** Minimum target defined (achievable and realistic).
- **Time:** Typically refers to timeliness and when services can be accessed.
- **Cost:** Informs citizens about the cost of a service, even when there are no user fees.
- **Redress:** Makes mention of mechanisms to deal with the concerns of citizens when they feel that a department has not met the service standards it has promised.

The score sheet used a simple scale of 1 to 4. The scale is described as follows:

- 1 = This is not a standard
- 2 = Standard contains major gaps, i.e. substantial information is missing
- 3 = Standard contains minor gaps, some elements of the standard not specified
- 4 = Standard complies with all criteria

Key principles used in assessing the questionnaire included assessing whether a department:

- Based the development of its service standards on a consultative process that included measuring levels of citizen satisfaction
- Had standards that were attainable yet challenging
- Had standards that could be measured affordably
- Could demonstrate that the standards were owned by managers and staff
- Published its service standards
- Used the standards to measure performance and reported on the performance achieved by the department

- Reviewed and updated its service standards on an annual basis.

Phase 3. **Evaluation and Benchmarking:** In this phase the information submitted by departments was captured and analyzed, and the service standards were scored using the standardised score sheet. A report was then prepared and finalised.

The remainder of this report outlines the findings in detail. In Section 5, the report presents an overview of the key findings with specific reference to the departments that responded to the questionnaire. In Section 6, the report makes recommendations with regard to the findings, with particular emphasis on compliance with the 2nd Batho Pele principle.

5. KEY FINDINGS

“One of the Department's most important tasks is to develop service standards capable of meeting the challenge of improving the delivery of services to all clients. Access to decent public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of all citizens, especially those previously disadvantaged. The Department regards transformation as a dynamic, focused and important process, designed to fundamentally reshape the Department for its appointed role in the new dispensation in South Africa” (Manager, Western Cape).

This section of the report begins with an assessment of the service standards currently being used and then provides an assessment of the six key areas explored in the questionnaire, namely:

- The development of service standards
- The role service standards play
- Using service standards as part of the performance assessment process in departments
- Communicating standards
- Resources earmarked for service standards
- Attitudes towards service standards

This section of the report ends with a list of the suggestions departments made with regard to service standards.

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF SUBMITTED SERVICE STANDARDS

Of the 131 departments that received questionnaires, 122 departments responded (93% response rate). Of the departments that responded, 64 (52%) had service standards. Table 1 depicts the assessment made by the research team, based on the criteria outlined above, of the service standards submitted by the departments. At the provincial level departments had on average 15 service standards each. This represents a significant difference from the national departments, which had an astonishing 111 service standards each.

According to our review of the standards submitted, 44 (69%) of the 64 departments that submitted standards complied with the concept of Quantity, Quality and Time (QQT). On the issue of redress mechanisms only 17 departments (27%) had service standards that specifically addressed redress or complaints. Very few departments (nine departments, 14%) made mention of the cost of their services in their service standards.

National/ Provincial	Number of departments asked to complete the questionnaire	Number of departments that responded	Number of departments that submitted standards	Average number of standards per department	Number of departments whose standards complied with QQT (i.e. scored 3 or more)	Number of departments whose standards men- tioned redress mechanisms (i.e. scored 3 or more)	Number of departments whose standards mentioned Cost (i.e. scored 3 or more)	General Comments
Eastern Cape	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the departments did not have service standards as required in the questionnaire, but by perusing the Strategic Plans and Business Plans one can see that there are promises of an undertaking by these departments to meet certain standards. It appears that lack of direction from a central coordinating centre hampered this process in the province. One of the departments that did not have service standards during the reporting period has subsequently developed service standards. This was not considered for the study but will be included in future.
Free State	11	11	11	20.2	8	4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/11 mentioned QQT, whereas only 4/11 departments mentioned redress and 1/11 mentioned cost. Most statements cover the strategic goals and objectives of the department but not service standards. Some statements are operational arrangements, whilst others are performance measures. Some statements are incomplete and therefore difficult to understand.
Gauteng	11	11	4	14	4	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4/11 departments complied with QQT. Redress was mentioned only by 2/11 departments and cost by 3/4 departments. Many of the departments that did not have standards intended to develop them shortly.
KZN	11	11	2	18	2	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments submitted some documentation containing references to service standards, but only 2 departments submitted actual service standards.
Limpopo	10	9	9	14	8	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/9 of departments had shaped their standards using the concept of quality, quantity and time. 1 department made reference to redress and 2 to cost.
Mpumalanga	11	11	10	11	9	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/10 departments used QQT. No department mentioned either redress mechanisms or cost.

National/ Provincial	Number of departments asked to complete the questionnaire	Number of departments that responded	Number of departments that submitted standards	Average number of standards per department	Number of departments whose standards complied with QQT (i.e. scored 3 or more)	Number of departments whose standards men- tioned redress mechanisms (i.e. scored 3 or more)	Number of departments whose standards mentioned Cost (i.e. scored 3 or more)	General Comments
Northern Cape	11	8	3	16.3	2	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/3 departments used QQT. Cost and redress not mentioned in any of the standards. Most standards submitted did not deal with time or quantity. Many standards were vague and indistinct and lacked commitment to any of the identified criteria.
North West	11	11	6	21.2	4	4	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4/6 departments had standards that complied with QQT and also mentioned redress mechanisms. No department mentioned cost. Some departments simply submitted the Batho Pele Principles as their service standards.
Western Cape	12	11	8	7.5	2	1	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/8 departments used the concept of QQT. 1 department mentioned redress and none referred to cost. Departments typically referred to their Service standards (which are included in their respective Annual Reports) as either outputs or service delivery trends, which are difficult to measure. Whilst departments provided their vision, mission statement, goals and strategic objectives, they did not provide their standards.
National Departments	32	28	10	154.3	5	4	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5/12 departments complied with the concept of QQT. 4/12 departments mentioned redress, but no department made reference to cost.
Total	131	122	64		44	17	7	

Table 1: Assessment of the quality of the service standards submitted by national and provincial departments

The above table suggests that provincial departments are more likely to have service standards than national departments. This finding is not entirely unexpected, as provincial departments are typically involved in service delivery directly to the clients whereas national departments are usually involved in shaping policy and providing strategic direction to provincial departments. Nevertheless, as the regulatory framework discussed earlier indicates, all departments should have service standards, regardless of whether they deal only with internal clients or with both internal and external clients. The table also notes that different departments have opted for a different number of service standards. This is not to suggest that there is such a thing as an optimal number of service standards, but rather to signal that standards should be developed to meet local needs and that consequently there will be a different number of standards per department per province.

The remainder of this section summarizes the responses provided by departments. It should be borne in mind that some departments completed the questionnaire even though they might not have had service standards in place. This suggests that many departments are aware of the value of service standards, and that they understand the theoretical concepts behind service standards even if they have yet to actually develop and implement service standards.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The responsibility for setting the standards was primarily located within a designated unit (31 departments). Typically, the Transformation Unit had been given the overall responsibility for the setting of standards (Figure 1). This suggests that in many departments single units are involved in developing standards rather than the whole department.

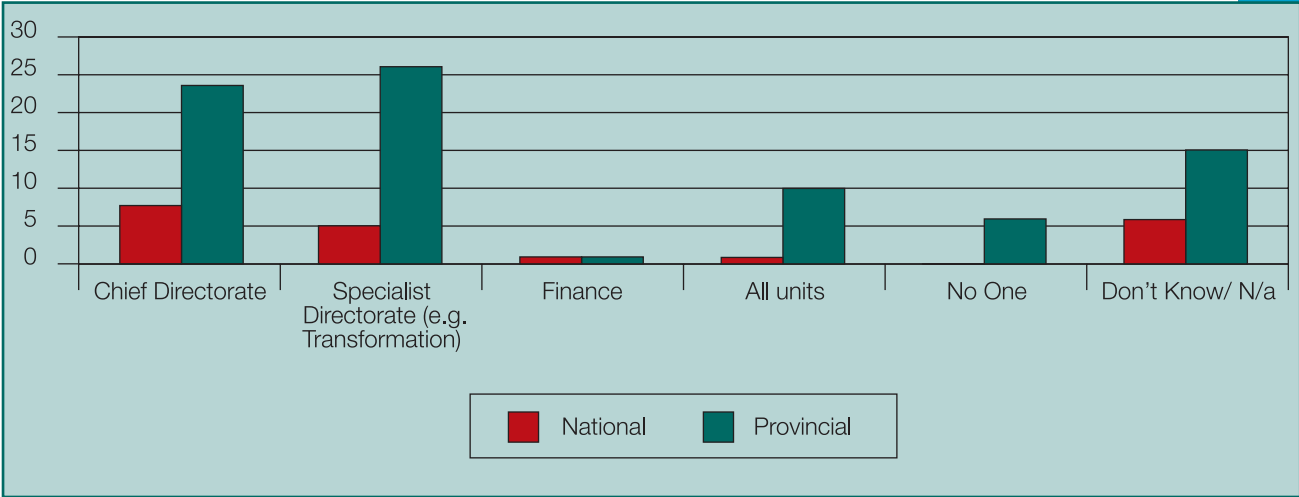


Figure 1: Responsibility for setting service standards allocated to different units

Figure 2 depicts the level within a department where the person responsible for setting service standards resides. Normally the responsibility is located at the Deputy Director level (30 departments), whilst a number mentioned that responsibility was located at the Director level (25 departments), but almost as many mentioned that they were not sure as to who was responsible (23 departments).

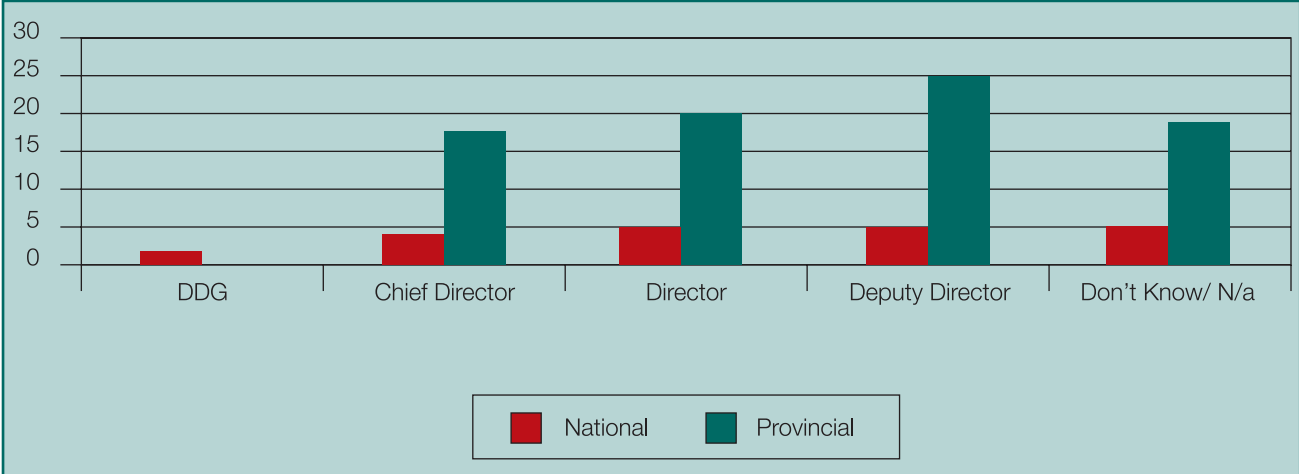


Figure 2: Level within a department where the person responsible for setting service standards resides

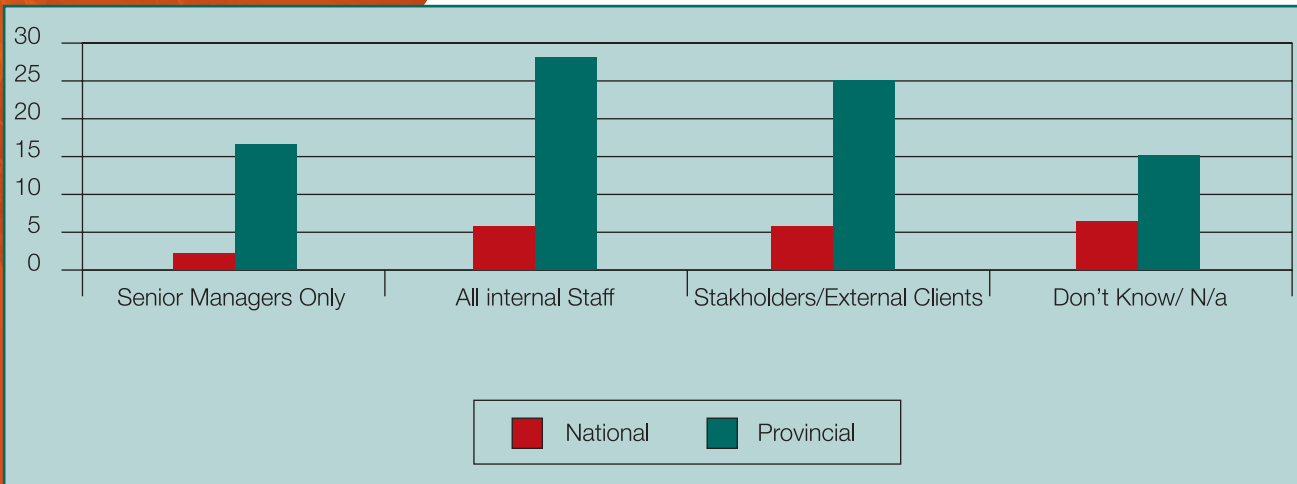


Figure 3: External and internal clients involved in developing service standards

Consultation (Figure 3) was done, involving:

- Senior managers only (18 departments)
- Internal staff only (34 departments)
- Internal and external clients (31 departments)

Typically, this consultation involved “Staff members who deal with citizens when preparing plans to set service standards...and workshop with staff responsible for service delivery.” (Gauteng) Others said that: “Continuous consultation between spheres of government together with service delivery partners was done. Community-based advisory structures were also utilised, such as district transformation committees, of which there are 14.” (Western Cape). One respondent from a national department explained that “It’s a collaborative effort between CD: Policy Management, CD: Corporate Support and D: Monitoring and Evaluation.”

Respondents argued that: “Staff are involved because all the plans start at the branch level before they become departmental plans and standards. With the Quality Assurance Unit and the formation of hospital boards there is going to be even wider participation of the public in the development of service standards especially at local level.” (Eastern Cape)

Typically, internal staff were involved in the setting of service standards by departments in the following manner (figure 4):

- 51 departments consulted staff through meetings and workshops.
- 15 departments had units to set draft service standards and then cascaded these up through the institution.
- 4 departments had frontline staff shape the standards in the first place, based on the needs of clients.

- 4 departments had used an internal questionnaire to obtain feedback on the content of the service standards.

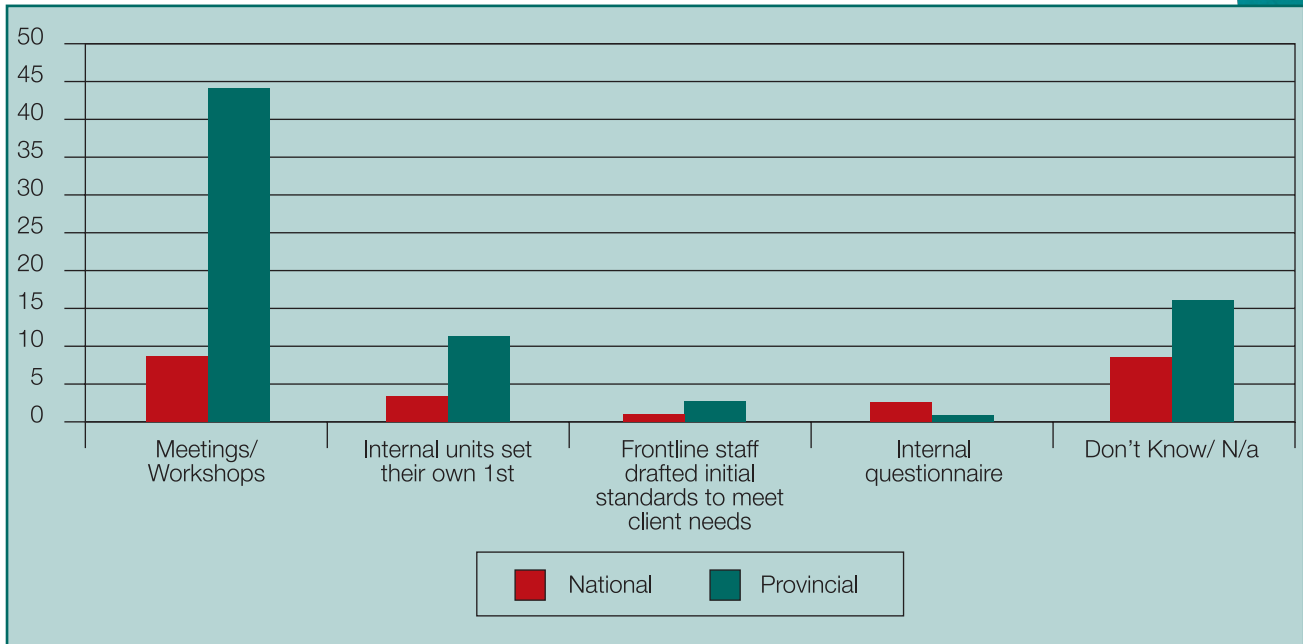


Figure 4: The manner in which internal staff were involved in setting service standards

A number of departments made mention of the fact that they had measured client satisfaction and used it to shape the service standards they developed (Figure 5). The measurement of client satisfaction was typically done in four different ways. Nine departments mentioned using suggestion boxes, 23 departments mentioned using surveys, 24 mentioned using imbizos, and a further 10 assessed the complaints received via their respective complaints mechanisms (typically a toll-free number). 16 departments admitted that they had not used feedback from clients to shape their standards.

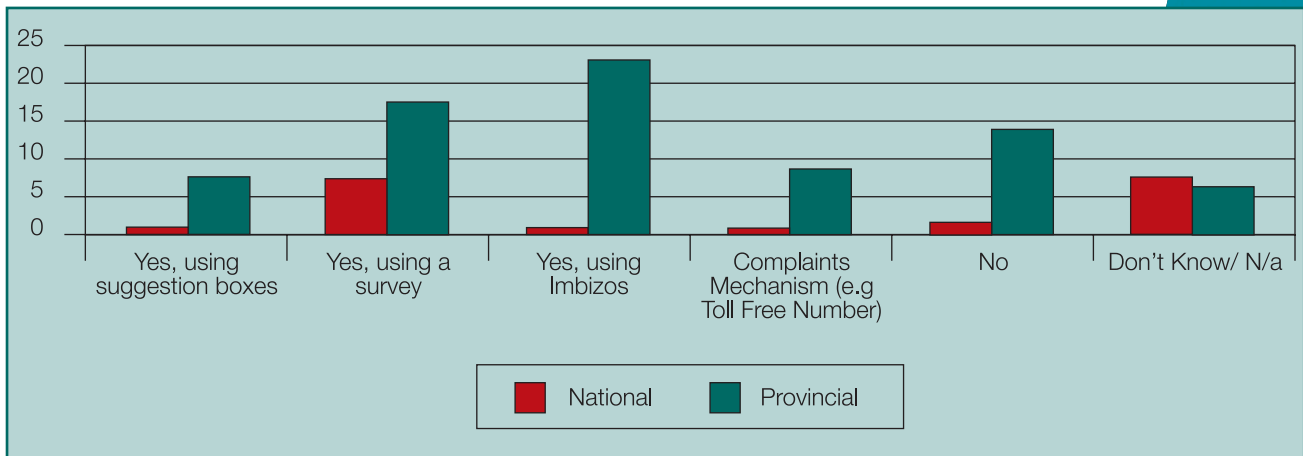


Figure 5: Different sources used by departments to gauge client satisfaction when setting service standards

Departments also relied on a wide range of guidelines to shape the development of their respective service standards. Not surprisingly,

22 provincial departments mentioned national guidelines (Figure 6). Of the others:

- 23 departments mentioned Batho Pele;
- 21 departments mentioned legislation such as the PFMA;
- 9 departments mentioned internal guidelines such as those provided by the International Standards Organization (ISO);
- 5 departments mentioned that they were guided by their strategic objectives; and
- 4 departments mentioned the guidelines contained in the DPSA handbook.

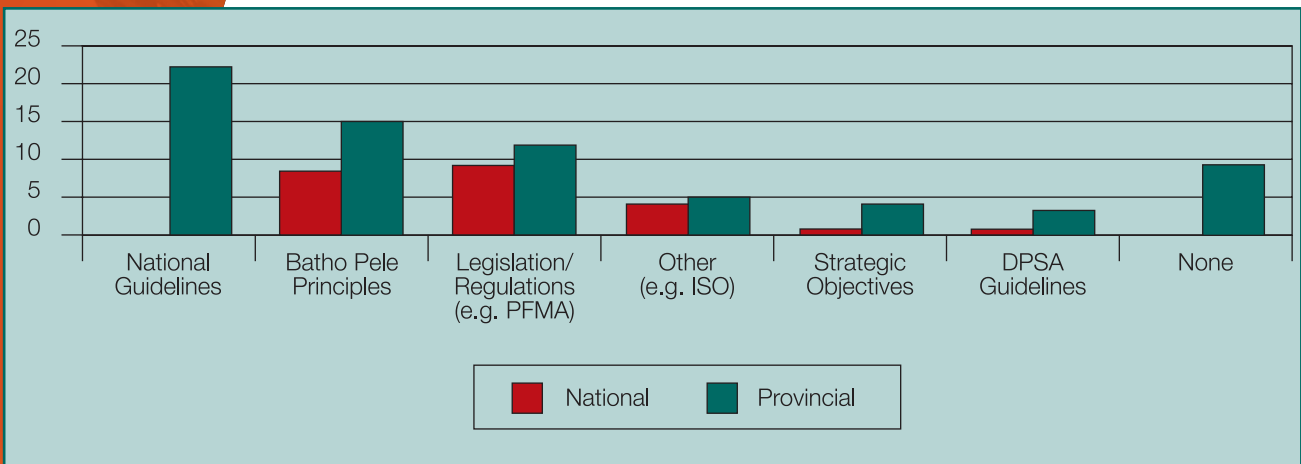


Figure 6: Guidelines and other sources used by departments in the development of service standards

A key factor in developing service standards is the notion that the service standards should be aligned to the Department's strategic objectives. 49 departments recognised this and stated that they had formulated their service standards as indicators and then linked them directly to specific strategic objectives. In addition, 21 of these departments had linked their service standards to specific outcomes in their strategic plans.

5.3 THE ROLE SERVICE STANDARDS PLAY

According to responses from the questionnaires, departments reported that service standards currently in use in their respective departments served the following four main purposes (Figure 7)

- Accountability and transparency (24 departments)
- Ensured quality of delivery in the department (22 departments)
- Measured progress against strategic plans (21 departments)
- To inform clients (8 departments)
- To assure quality (8 departments)
- To comply with regulations (3 departments)

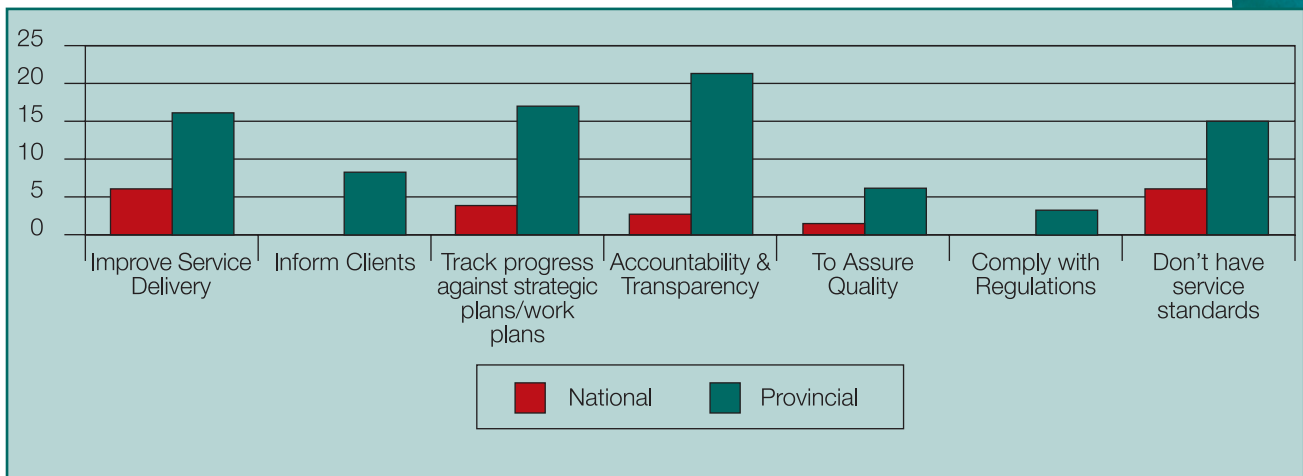


Figure 7: The role service standards play in a department

In their own words, departments made the following comments as to why service standards are important:

- “Monitoring, financial accountability, quality services to customers, individual performance and service delivery.” (Gauteng)
- “Service standards guide the department in monitoring project implementation and assist in measuring departmental targets. They also guide financial accountability and resource allocation.” (Gauteng)
- “To monitor and evaluate the strategic plan of the SAPS and indicate accountability.” (National)
- “To track progress regarding the implementation of the strategic and business plans.” (National)
- “To ensure prudent financial management, a speedy response to clients’ needs, accessibility to the Provincial Treasury and redress of past imbalances as well as professionalism.” (Free State)
- “To increase financial accountability and deepen community participation in decision making processes.” (North West)
- “To measure the overall performance of the department in various functional areas linked to the performance agreement and to measure the performance of Senior Managers in their allocated fields of operation.” (Eastern Cape)

5.4 USING SERVICE STANDARDS AS PART OF THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN DEPARTMENTS

5.4.1 Common methods

The most common method used by departments to assess actual performance against service standards is the performance

management system, usually linked to performance agreements (45 departments) (Figure 8). This suggests that most departments do not rely on the input of citizens to assess their performance in terms of service delivery. Other departments made mention of analyzing annual reports (10 departments) and work plans (six departments). Only five departments made reference to using client surveys as a method of assessing service delivery performance.

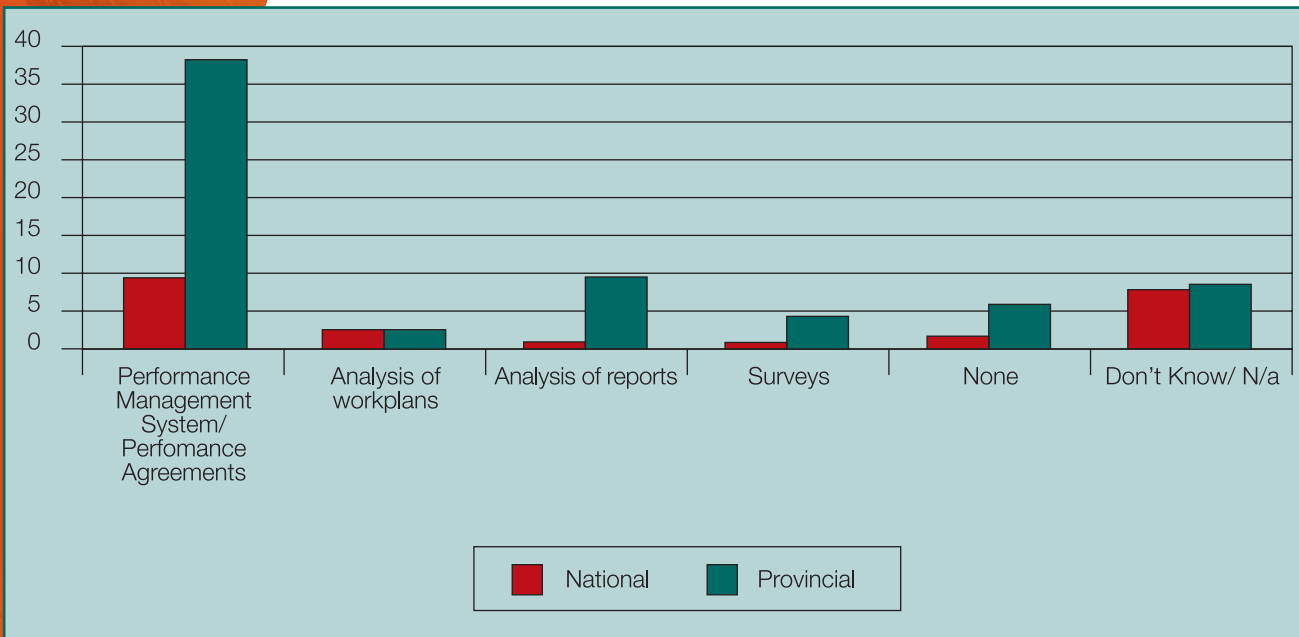


Figure 8: Methods used to assess performance against service standards

The assessment of performance typically happens at the following intervals (Figure 9):

- Monthly or
- Quarterly (58 departments)
- Every six months (5 departments)
- Annually (13 departments)

A further five departments admitted that no such assessment took place, whilst 13 departments were not aware of an assessment having taken place in their department.



Figure 9: How often assessments take place

The assessment (Figure 10) is usually conducted by either the line managers (26 departments) or by senior managers in the department (41 departments). Mention was also made of DGs (3 departments) and the fact that either no one was responsible (10 departments) or the respondent was unsure whether anyone was responsible (11 departments).

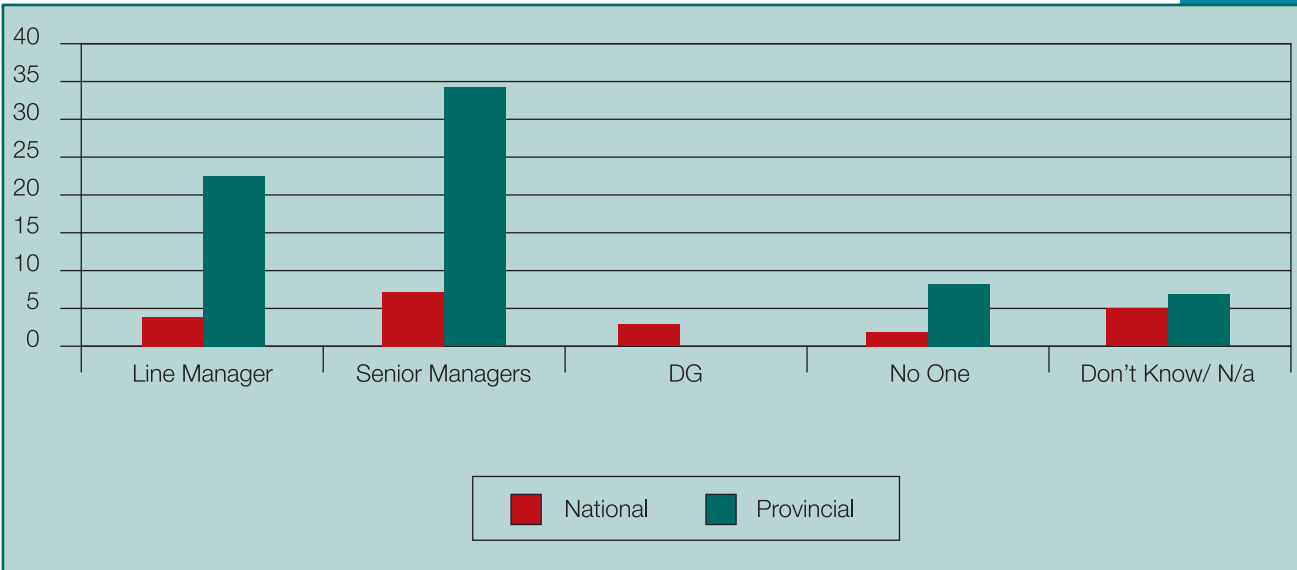


Figure 10: Responsibility for assessing the department's performance against service standards

34 departments (Figure 11) had aligned the performance of the

department to the performance agreement of senior managers (in line with a recent Cabinet memorandum – August 2004). The following are examples showing performance alignment:

- “Each performance agreement has KPAs linked to performance.” (National).
- “Service standards are elucidated in the strategic plan, translated into the Operational and Business Plan of each Directorate and linked to that Director's Performance Agreement.” (National)
- “Information derived from review processes of senior managers is cascaded to all other staff members. Individual staff members' quarterly assessments are also used to inform and guide their daily activities.” (Eastern Cape)
- “Yes, individual performance agreements are reviewed on a quarterly basis, with the final assessment in early April.” (Free State)
- “Yes, informal quarterly reviews take place as well as six-monthly formal reviews between supervisor and subordinate.” (Free State)

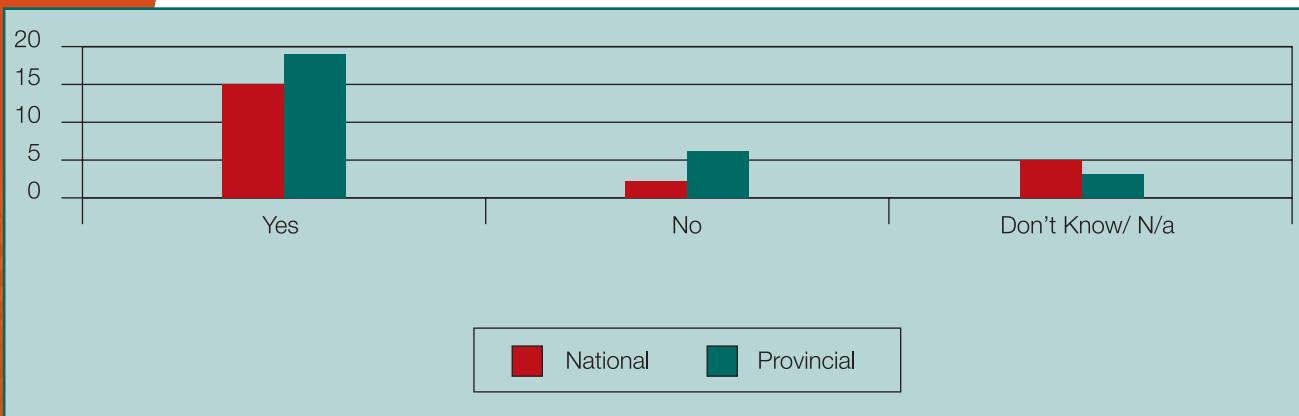


Figure 11: Links between department's performance and individual performance agreements

Most departments (48 departments) admitted that external stakeholders/citizens were not asked to play a role in the assessment of performance or that they were unaware of these external groups being involved (Figure 12). Among those departments that did use external assessments, the feedback was gathered in the following ways:

- Meetings/imbizos with stakeholders (24 departments)
- Suggestion boxes (9 departments)
- Stakeholder evaluation forms (7 departments)

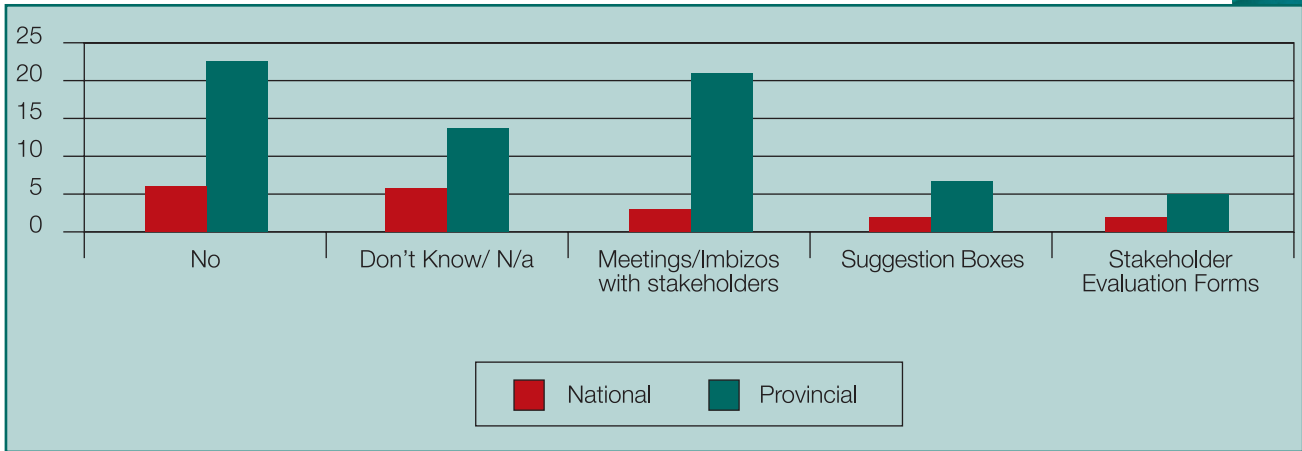


Figure 12: The methods used to obtain feedback from clients regarding performance

5.4.2 Results of performance assessments

Departments used the results of their performance assessments in two very different ways (Figure 13). 40 departments used the assessment simply as a manner in which to gauge whether staff should receive a reward (e.g. a merit bonus), whilst 31 departments used the assessment to strengthen their service delivery. Five departments did not use the assessment in any meaningful manner and a further 19 respondents were unsure of what their departments did with the assessment.

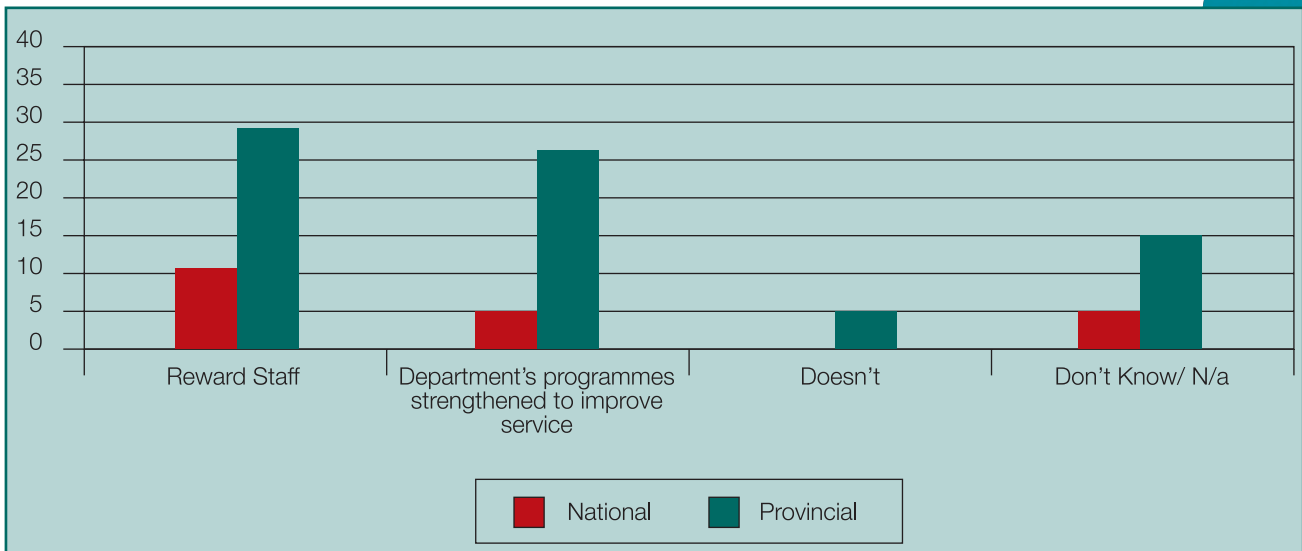


Figure 13: What departments do with the results of their performance assessments

Internally, whilst 17 departments had no system whereby they could reflect on progress being made against service standards, many other departments did actively engage with performance assessments (Figure 14):

- 36 departments mentioned that the assessment was discussed at EXCO or other senior management meetings;
- 18 departments identified regular staff meetings for these assessments; and
- a further 3 departments had set up specific Batho Pele forums in which they discussed service delivery performance.

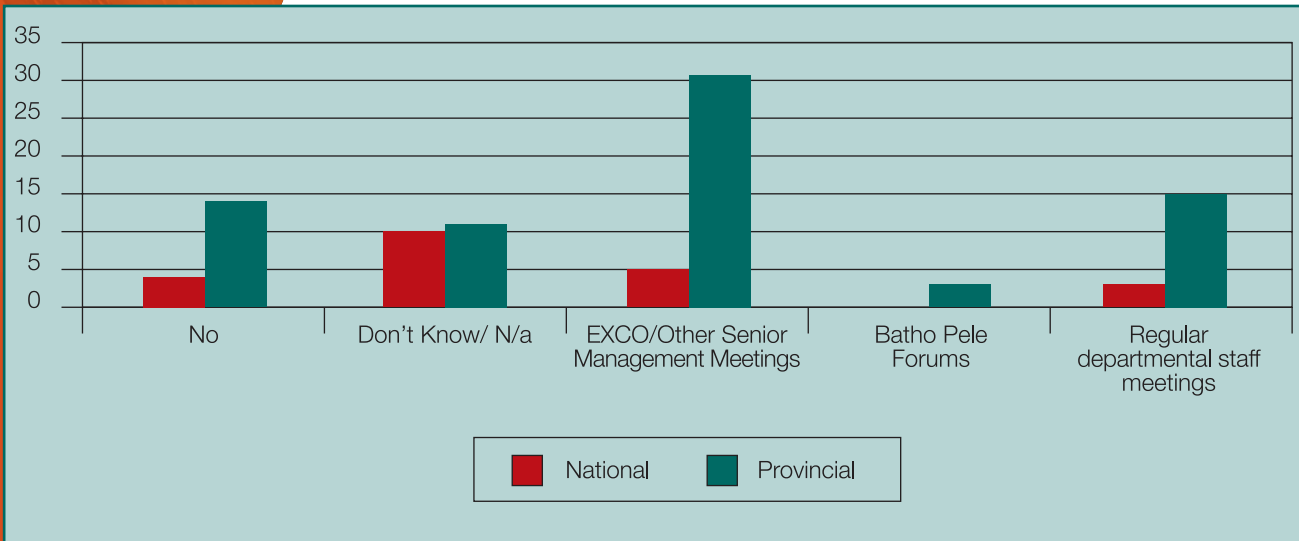


Figure 14: Manner in which departments critically reflect on progress being made towards achieving service standards

In most instances these meetings happened on a monthly basis (21 departments), others met quarterly (11 departments) or annually (6 departments). A further three met on a weekly basis. Eight departments did not meet to discuss service delivery performance and another 29 departments were unsure as to whether their department engaged in any meaningful manner with assessments of their service delivery.

Departments that did engage with the results of their performance assessment described how using the information gained from the assessment had contributed directly to improved service delivery. In all the examples below departments have noted how input from citizens had led to direct improvements. Examples include the following:

- “Yes, in the case where we did a Client Satisfaction Survey service delivery has improved significantly.” (National)
- “Yes, it put more focus on departmental service delivery and facilitated better financial planning.” (N West)
- “Yes, based on the previous year’s performance, the actual performance in most cases exceeded set standards. The functional approach that was adopted when the department was restructured in terms of Resolution 7 of the PSCBC has enhanced service delivery.” (Mpumalanga)
- “Yes, in cases of reports of under-performance or irregular conduct corrective actions were taken to improve the situation, for example, we have improved on payments to creditors.” (Free State)

- “Yes, the standards have ensured awareness of expectations of client relations and service delivery and awareness of shortcomings.” (Western Cape)
- “Yes, the interface with communities in particular has resulted in them taking ownership of departmental projects. This has resulted in a higher and more focused quality of service being rendered.”(Western Cape).

5.5 COMMUNICATING SERVICE STANDARDS

The communication of the actual service standards to citizens is done through either quarterly or annual reports (60 departments). Very few departments use any other means:

- 12 departments used a variety of media (television, radio, newspapers, posters, flyers, web sites)
- 11 departments used Imbizos to share their service standards
- 2 mentioned specific Batho Pele Day activities related to service standards

Overall responsibility for the communication of service standards, as may be expected, rests with the Directorate of Communication. It is this directorate that is usually responsible for ensuring that service standards are displayed in public places. The following examples illustrate how departments have begun to display service standards:

- “The Patients’ Rights Charter is displayed in all facilities. Each facility displays a list of services offered.” (National)
- “They are displayed in places where they are visible throughout the department.” (Mpumalanga)
- “Our standards are displayed at our service delivery points. This is coordinated through our circuit or regional offices. Each circuit office controls a specific number of schools and the circuit office then sends information to them.” (North West)

When departments came to reporting progress against these standards to external clients, not surprisingly, they relied on the same reporting formats:

- 60 departments mentioned annual reports
- 11 spoke of the media, imbizos, public hearings and other types of meetings with stakeholders
- 5 mentioned specific performance management reports
- 5 mentioned diagnostic evaluation reports

Whilst departments appear to be aware of the fact that when they communicate performance against service standards a user-friendly language is important, many departments were still primarily using English as the language of communication. As Figure 15 illustrates,

the vast majority of departments (66 departments) mentioned that they foresaw no problem in publishing service standards. However, 15 departments did feel that there were problems associated with the publishing of service standards. Reasons provided by respondents included:

- “Yes, the problem is that most of our standards are internally focused and the mechanism of communicating them has been ineffective.” (North West)
- “Communication barriers may hinder the effectiveness of publishing service standards, but our local offices are working closely with local communities in interpreting them. Accessibility in terms of the language used may pose a challenge as standards have not been translated into all the spoken languages of the Province.” (Eastern Cape)
- “If we publish service standards that are unrealistic we will create expectations we cannot meet.” (National)

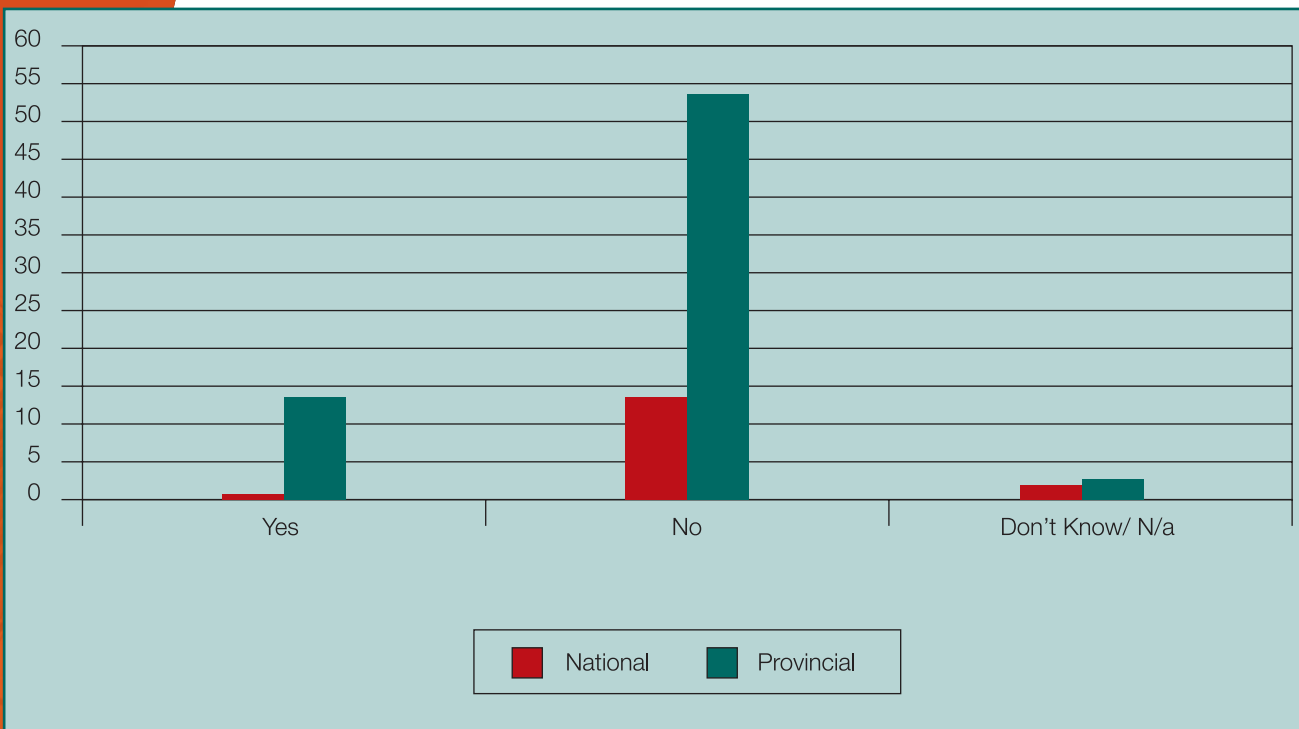


Figure 15: Problems associated with communicating service standards

When it came to communicating service standards to internal clients, departments appeared to have been more proactive, as Figure 16 illustrates:

- 44 departments mentioned that they had publicised service standards either during meetings or at workshops convened specifically to discuss service standards;
- 37 departments had promoted service standards through the use of circulars, flyers and email; and
- 15 departments were unsure of whether any method was being used to communicate service standards to internal clients.

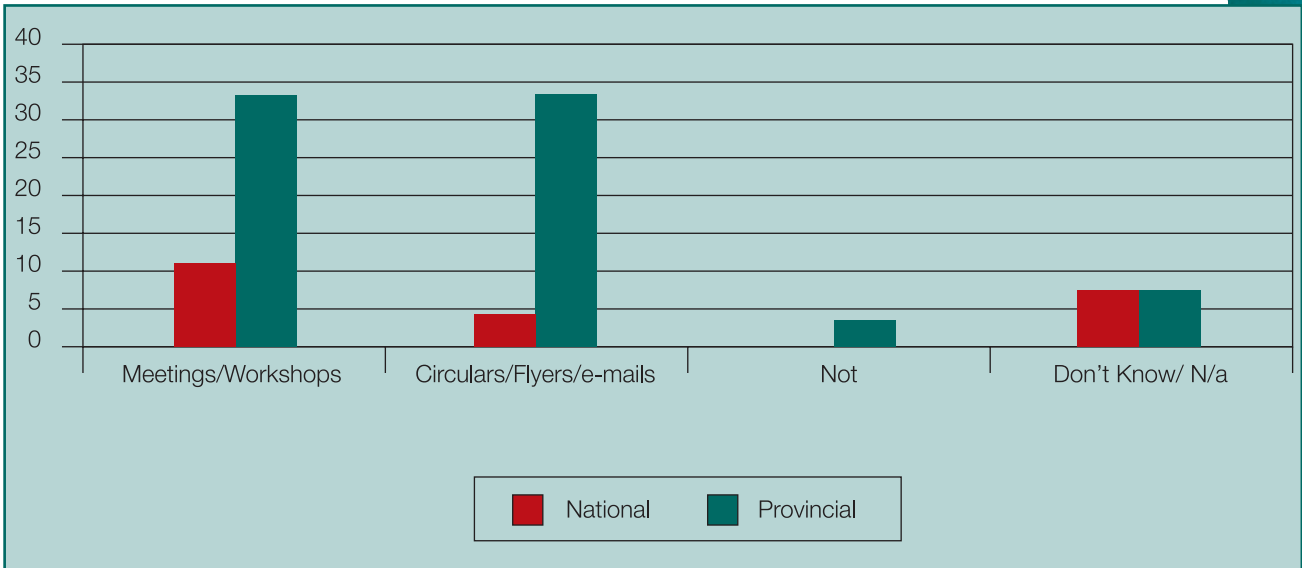


Figure 16: Methods used to communicate service standards to internal clients/staff

5.6 RESOURCES EARMARKED FOR SERVICE STANDARDS

As can be seen in Figure 17, 48 departments have no specific budget allocated to establishing service standards and assessing everyday performance, whilst 33 departments have allocated resources for this purpose.

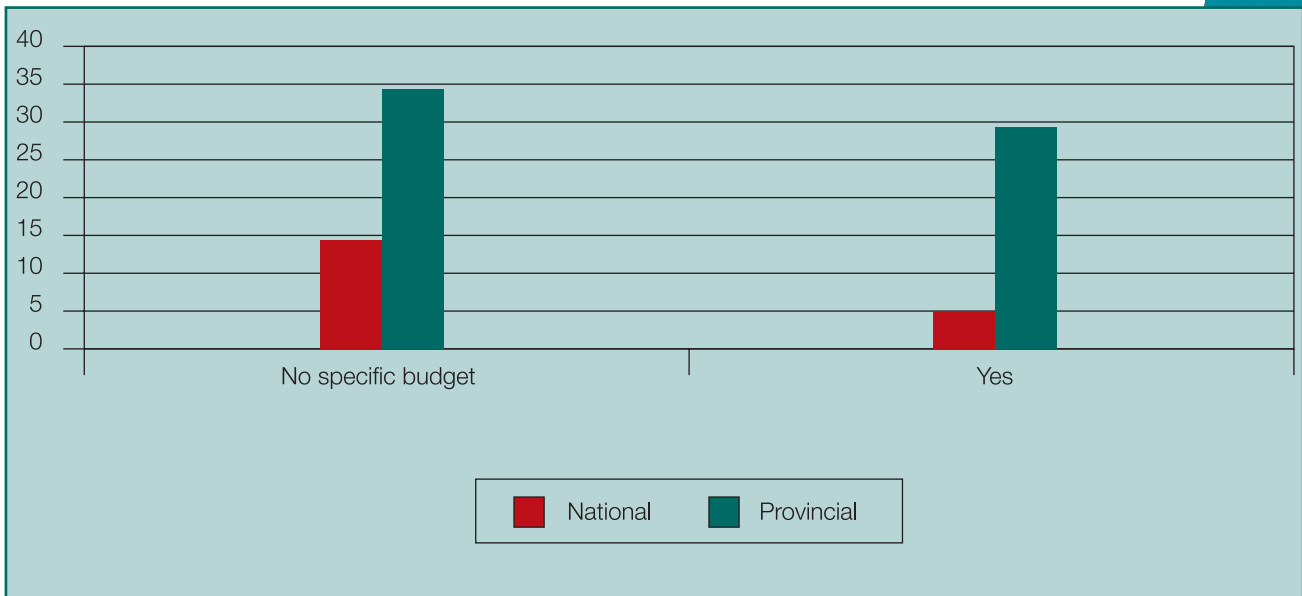


Figure 17: Number of departments that have earmarked specific resources to establish service standards

However, the majority of the departments (75 departments) have sufficient resources in their training budgets to familiarise staff with and/or train staff in the use of service standards.

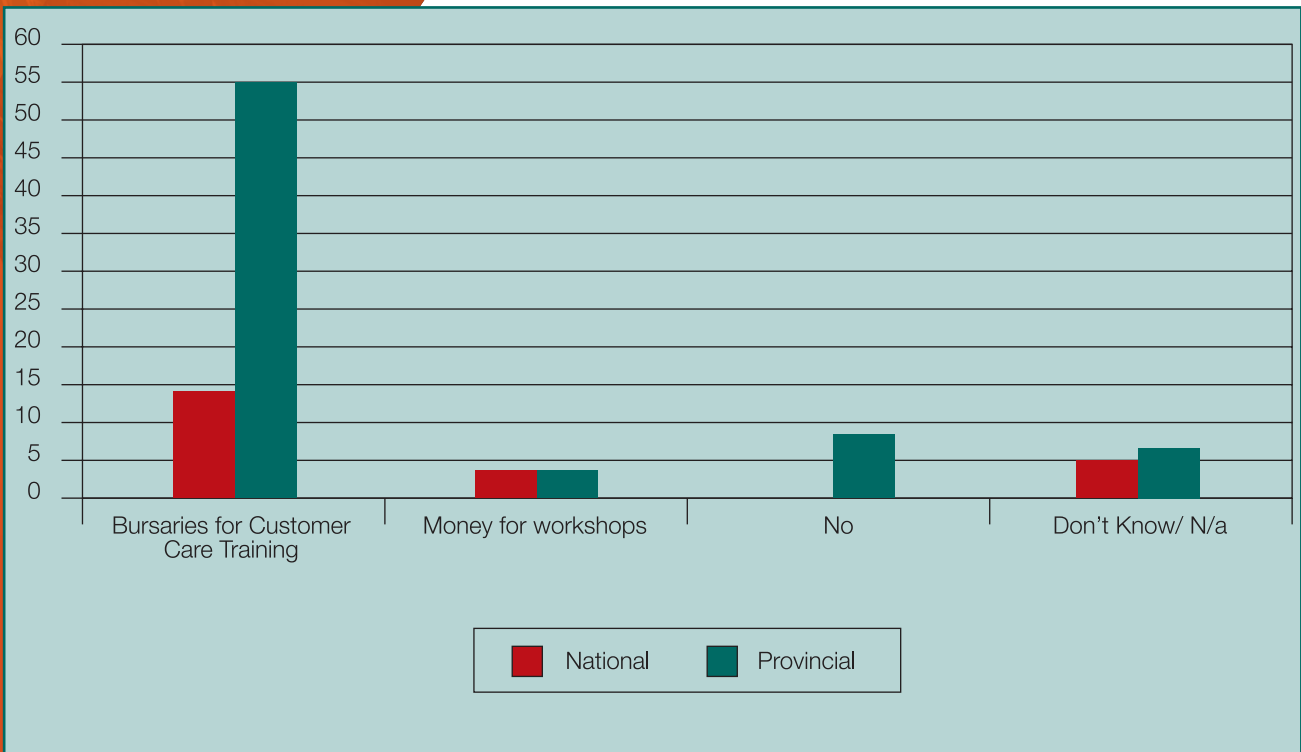


Figure 18: Departments that have allocated resources towards training staff in the use of service standards

Moreover, the majority of respondents (72 departments) felt that their departments would continue to allocate resources to the development of and assessment of progress against service standards (Figure 19).

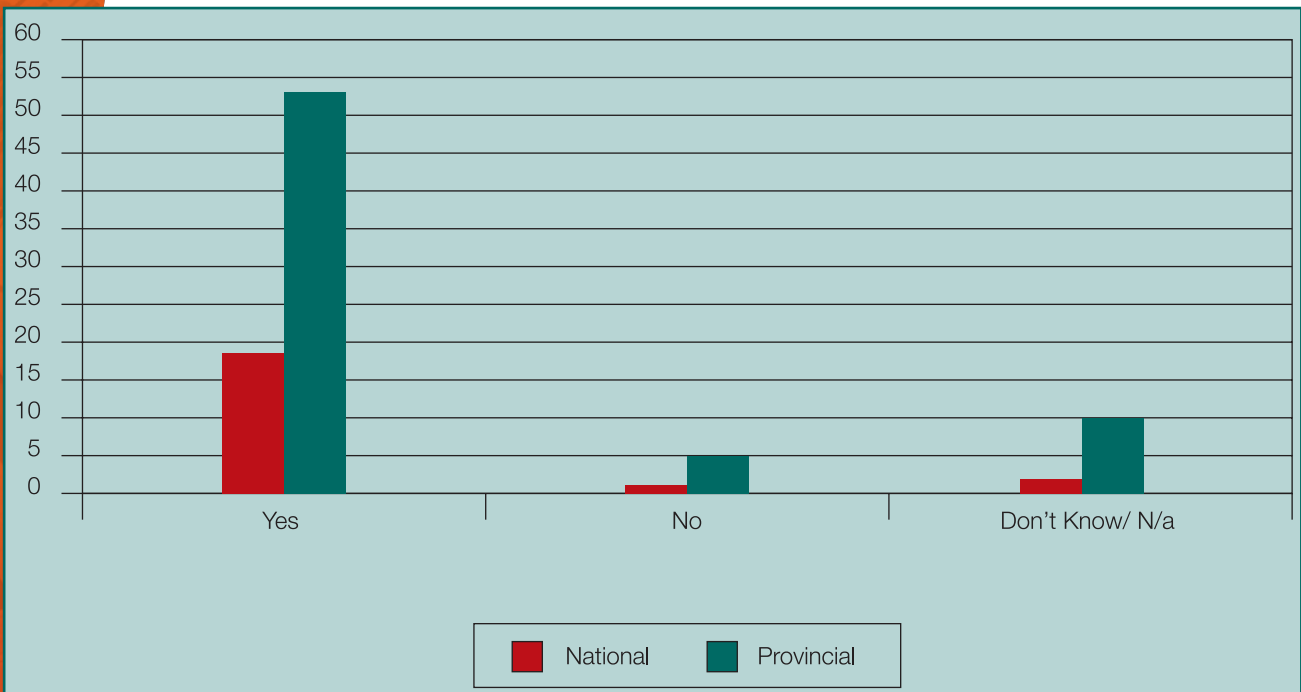


Figure 19: Perception that senior managers in the department would continue to allocate resources to the development of service standards

5.7 ATTITUDES TOWARDS SERVICE STANDARDS

Overall, there appears to be a strong political will to promote service standards within departments, as the following quotes from a selection of departments suggest:

- “Yes, the drive to develop service standards is coming from the top, from the Statistician-General. Managers are aware that at present there is a lack of readily available information, which makes the actual process of reporting difficult, and which in turn places a burden on managers.” (National)
- “Yes, the Minister intends to be closely involved in management and operations in the Department.” (National)
- “The MEC is involved and attends Executive Management and EDMC meetings.” (North West)
- “Yes. This can be seen in the Turn Around Strategy implemented in the department.” (North West)
- “Yes, there is political will, as most of these consultative forums were established as a result of initiatives from the Office of the MEC.” (Eastern Cape)
- “Yes, one of the Department's most important tasks is to develop service standards capable of meeting the challenge of improving the delivery of services to all clients. Access to decent public services is no longer a privilege to be enjoyed by a few; it is now the rightful expectation of all citizens, especially those previously disadvantaged. The Department regards transformation as a dynamic, focused and important process, designed to fundamentally reshape the Department for its appointed role in the new dispensation in South Africa” (Western Cape)
- “The Minister of Health has clearly demonstrated her ownership of Healthcare 2010 and related strategic plans.” (National)

However, the real test is whether departments are actively engaging with service standards on a regular basis (Figure 20):

- 41 Departments reported that they did revisit their standards and that they were proposing to make changes to their existing standards.
- 40 departments reported they had no wish to adjust their current standards.
- 19 were not sure if they would.



Figure 20: Departments intending to make changes to their existing service standards

Departments reported that the primary reason for changing standards was that their mandates had changed and that they had adjusted their standards accordingly. Those departments that did adjust their service standards typically revisited their service standards annually. (Figure 21)

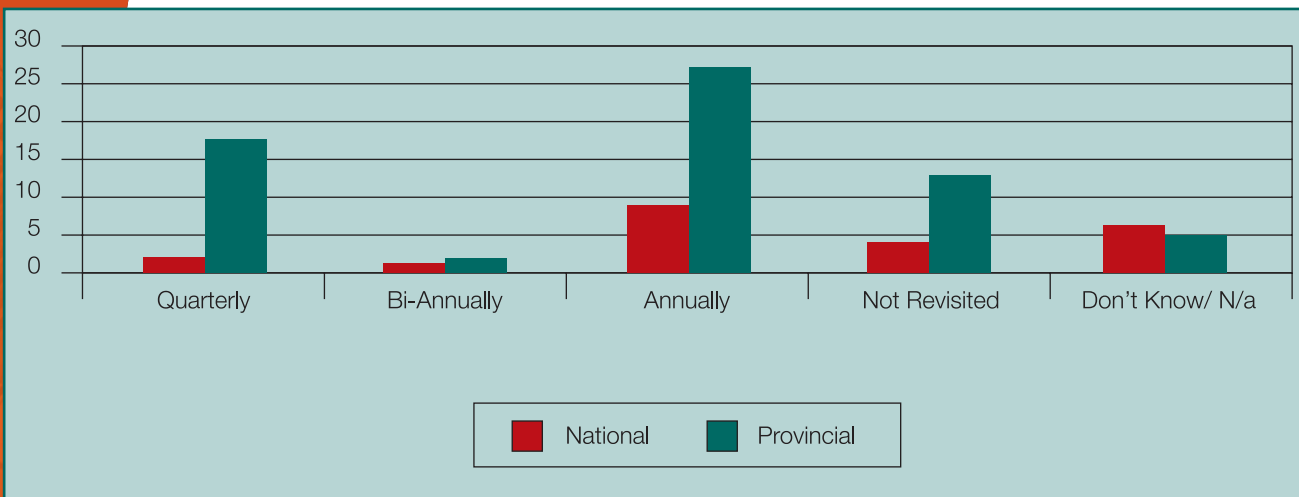


Figure 21: How often are service standards revisited

Examples of how standards have been revised include:

- “Minor changes may be effected, indicating a slight shift in focus within Departmental priorities. Thus the service standards proposed have to then be aligned to Departmental projects. The revised standards are proposed by the extended management team, including the HoD and the MEC.” (Gauteng)
- “No, except for improvements in turnaround times, i.e. reducing processing and delivery time frames of stated objectives. Proposals come from unit managers and changes to budgets are subject to approval during budget adjustment.” (Gauteng)

- “Yes, reduced turnaround times for processing licensing and consumer complaints. Revised policies and intervention strategies for empowering small business. Revised strategies, media for outreach programmes and campaigns.” (Gauteng)
- “Initially there was no Customer Support Centre, so a Call Centre was established which so far has addressed more than 300 000 queries.” (Gauteng)

5.8 EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Two aspects of best practice with regard to service standards can be identified amongst the departments that participated in this study. The first is to be found at the organizational level, the second at the level of the actual service standards themselves.

Exemplary effective organizational arrangements with regard to service standards can be found in the Office of the Premier, Limpopo. This Office has put into place the following means to ensure that service standards play a meaningful role in shaping service delivery in the province:

- Appointed a coordinator in the Office of the Premier who manages the development and subsequent implementation of service standards by all provincial departments in the province.
- The coordinator receives regular reports from departments. Departments are expected to report against their service standards.
- The coordinator hosts a regular forum where departments discuss issues, problems and challenges with regard to service standards.
- The coordinator ensures that all provincial departments in Limpopo publish their service standards on an annual basis. A standardised format is used for this publication, which allows the Office of the Premier to assist with the marketing and publicising of these standards to all citizens.
- The coordinator regularly reports to the Premier and the EXCO to ensure that senior managers are kept informed of the standard to which departments in the province are delivering their respective services.

Another example of effective organizational coordination with regard to service standards can be found in the Western Cape, where every provincial department’s annual report records not only their service standards and service delivery indicators but it also reports on actual performance over the year against these standards.

At the national level, examples of effective organizational arrangements with regard to service standards can be found in the following departments:

- The Department of Agriculture has initiated training with regard to customer services throughout the Department. The Department has linked this initiative to the development of service delivery plans

and the signing of service delivery level and performance agreements.

- The Department of Correctional Services has linked the development of service standards to a number of initiatives to ensure the rights of prisoners. They have also initiated a Client Service Assessment Tool in order to solicit the perceptions of citizens with regard to the level of service clients experienced.
- The Department of Health has developed a monitoring tool for assessing hospitality and cleaning standards in their health centres. The aim of the tool is to ensure that services provided at their health centres (including hospitals and clinics) contribute to the well-being and safety of both staff and health care users.
- The Department of Labour has linked service standards to its service charter, which is publicly displayed in all Labour Centres. In addition they have specifically trained frontline staff in service standards, provided staff with a service standards manual and linked managers' performance agreements to service delivery standards.
- The Department of Social Development has put in place a range of initiatives and resources to ensure that the Department actually meets the standards it has set itself. These initiatives include upgrading the National Call Centre, improving registration procedures, upgrading helplines, publicising services such as Victims Empowerment Programmes, and distributing procedural manuals to citizens.

Examples of departments that have established effective service standards include the following (Please note that this list is not exhaustive but rather provides examples from across the different sectors):

- At the national level:
 - ▶ **Department of Correctional Services**, including:
 - Religious services are available to all prisoners at least once a week.
 - Social work services are available to all prisoners and parolees who need them.
 - All prisoners have access to adequate comprehensive health care services within the limitations of the available resources.
 - Offenders are given the opportunity to lodge complaints of unfair and unjust treatment with an independent body.
 - Media enquiries about incidents at prisons will be answered within three hours.
 - ▶ **Department of Labour**, including:
 - Corporate Image Standards, such as:

- All service points will be kept clean at all times.
- All office equipment will be kept in proper working order at all times.
- All service points will have sufficient stationery and all the necessary items for serving clients.
- We will ensure that all officials wear identification tags, as outlined in the client orientation strategy.
- Client Care Standards, such as:
 - Telephones will be answered by staff members within the specified and agreed number of rings.
 - Phone calls will be diverted to another official who is in the office when an official leaves the office.
 - One official per section will be identified who has an all-round knowledge regarding the Department, and calls that cannot be answered by staff will be diverted to this person.
 - No official will be allowed to eat or drink while talking on the telephone.
 - Personal telephone calls will be terminated when a client needs assistance.
- Integrated Registration Services, such as:
 - We will ensure that our help desk offers fast and friendly service and that our clients do not wait more than five minutes without being attended to.
 - We will ensure that no client spends more than 20 minutes at our Client Services Section without being attended to by our staff.
- Inspection and Enforcement Services, such as:
 - We will ensure that all complaints are investigated within 10 working days and that all complainants are informed of the outcome of the investigation within a week.
 - We will ensure that all stakeholders are accurately informed about all labour laws within three months of their publication and that information is always available to our clients on request.
 - Ministerial and DG enquiries will be finalised within 21 working days.
- Management Support Services, such as:
 - All our creditors will be paid within 30 days from the date of receipt of the official invoice.
 - All UI claims will be finalised within two weeks.
 - We will ensure that each client or member of the public is served within 10 minutes at Security Reception in a friendly manner.
 - We will ensure that no criminal elements are allowed into government buildings 24 hours a day and that no dangerous weapons are allowed into government buildings 24 hours a day.
- At the Provincial level:
 - ▶ **Department of Agriculture, Mpumalanga, including:**
 - Staff members will at all times honour commitments and be

punctual for appointments made with clients.

- If circumstances dictate otherwise, the client will be given a full explanation within a minimum of three days before an appointment or commitment is due as to why it cannot be fulfilled.
 - Staff members will attend to the problems and concerns of clients without delay and will immediately process transactions brought to their attention.
 - When you visit us, you will be welcomed by a receptionist or a security guard, who will immediately greet you and then ask how he or she can help you. If the person you wish to see is not immediately available, you will be told how long you will have to wait before you can see the person so that you can exercise the option of waiting or coming back later.
 - The official time for accessing our offices is from 7h45 to 16h15 every working day.
 - The receptionist will answer the telephone after three rings and will inform the caller as to the availability of the relevant person.
 - Meetings with clients will be conducted in a language understood by the audience. Whenever necessary, interpreting services will be provided at meetings where a diversity of language prevails.
- ▶ **Department of Education, Free State, including:**
- The person who is making enquiries should receive a letter of acknowledgement within seven days whilst the matter is receiving attention.
 - Service providers should be paid within 30 days after the service has been provided.
 - A newsletter informing the public about the achievements and challenges of the Department should be published monthly.
- ▶ **Department of Finance, North West Province, including:**
- All creditors will be paid within 30 days after receipt of invoice.
 - We will answer the telephone within five rings.
 - All correspondence will be acknowledged within three working days, with a specific statement that the matter is receiving attention and that a reply can be expected within 14 days.
 - Departmental submissions will be provided to the tender board as per specified format three days before the meeting.
- ▶ **Department of Housing, Western Cape, including:**
- Subsidies will be processed within 28 days.
 - Progress payments will be processed within 30 days of receipt of invoice.
 - Complaints to the Rental Housing Tribunal will be settled within 90 days.

- Project considerations will take place within 90 days.
- Complaints filed by debtors will be dealt with within 30 days.

- ▶ **Department of Local Government and Housing, Limpopo, including:**
 - Information Management Services:
 - Internet services are provided to recommended officers within a day.
 - All hardware and software problems are recorded on job cards and responded to within a day.
 - Registry Services:
 - Postal articles are collected from the Post Office daily and opened within a day.
 - Faxes are delivered within thirty minutes of receipt.
 - Files and correspondence are collected and delivered twice daily.
 - Government circulars are dispatched to officials and one copy is sent to the Head of Department within the same day.
 - Transport Services:
 - Resolutions taken by the Departmental Transport Committee are communicated to the Head of Department within seven days of meetings.
 - Government vehicles are cleaned on a daily basis.
 - Government vehicles are submitted to the Government Garage for service within a day on request.
 - Misuse of government vehicles is attended to within a day upon report or allegation.
 - Personnel Management:
 - Applications for medical aid are processed within a day of receipt.
 - Guarantees for Housing Loans are processed within a day of receipt.
 - Leave applications are processed within a week of receipt.
 - Service termination is processed within three months of receiving an application.
 - Recruitment Services and Performance Management
 - Advertisements of posts are finalised within two weeks of request to advertise.
 - Appointments are finalised three weeks after the interviews have taken place.
 - Claims for resettlement allowances for qualifying personnel are finalised within three weeks of receipt.
 - Transfers are effected within two months of an application for transfer.

- ▶ **Department of Provincial Administration, Western Cape, including:**
 - Ensure that programme managers have at least 15 working days to submit first inputs on budget.
 - Process all internal payments within 72 hours.
 - Pay all departmental claims within seven days.
 - Convene at least 20 Bid Committee meetings per annum to evaluate bids – once every two weeks.
 - Provide order numbers within two days of receiving a requisition.

- ▶ **Department of Social Services**, Population and Development, Mpumalanga, including:
 - Adherence to of official working hours from 07:45 to 16:15.
 - Telephones will ring not more than three times and messages left will be answered within three working days.
 - Commitment to provide and pay social grants within 35 days.
 - Complaints will be dealt with promptly in a speedy, fair and responsible way.

- ▶ **Department of Public Works**, Limpopo, including:
 - Road Management:
 - Inspections are done once a week. When it is not raining, repairs are done within four days after being reported. During the rainy season repairs are done within seven days after being reported.
 - Grass cutting at junctions, T-junctions and around road-signs is done once a year, two metres from the road shoulder, and then when required.
 - Inspection of road signs is done once a week. Repairs and replacements are done within four days after being reported.
 - Buildings Maintenance:
 - The Department maintains all government building structures, equipment and installations in a good and safe working condition according to the specifications at all times.
 - Construction of government buildings is in line with applicable Building and Engineering Standards in the country.
 - Property and Facilities Management:
 - Equipped and trained personnel guard all government property 24 hours a day in the case of premises where departments share facilities.
 - Lights and appliances are switched on only during the utilization period. All taps are closed when not in use and leaks and faulty equipment are reported as soon as possible and repaired within 24 hours.

Linked to service standards is the issue of a service charter. One example of an excellent service charter is the Charter belonging to the **Department of Home Affairs**. Their Service Charter contains the following:

- Minister's statement outlining the Department's commitment to building a culture of service excellence
- Summary of key services
- Standards for processing applications and dealing with enquiries
- Complaints and redress mechanisms
- Contact details

Another fine example of a service charter is that of the National Prosecuting Authority, whose Service Charter contains the following:

- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement
- Values Statement
- Short description of the organization
- Service standards
- Complaints and redress mechanisms
- Citizens' roles and responsibilities
- Contact details of both national and regional offices

For other excellent examples of service charters, see the charters of the Department of Health, the Department of Housing and the South African Police Service.

Finally, an example of an innovative approach to operationalising improvements in service delivery in relation to service standards can be found in the Free State. Provincial departments have been encouraged to develop "Customer Care Operational Plans". These plans "provide a practical guide on how to deal with complaints and compliments from our customers". The operational plans typically cover the following issues in relation to service delivery:

- Objectives of the operational plan
- Roles and Responsibilities (including the role of the MEC, HoD, senior managers, supervisors, frontline staff and individual employees)
- Implementation of the Customer Care Plan (including the handling of complaints and the different complaints procedures)
- Training and development requirements
- Monitoring customer care
- Timetable for implementation

5.9 SUGGESTIONS MADE BY DEPARTMENTS

In providing responses to the questionnaire, departments made a number of suggestions regarding service standards. These suggestions have been grouped into six broad areas. These areas again signal that departments are seeking assistance with the development of service standards and also with using service standards to assess service delivery.

In terms of developing service standards, departments signalled that they saw the issue of political "buy-in" as a critical first step. In order to ensure this, respondents suggested that departments could ensure the necessary support by:

- ▶ “Recognising performance throughout the year and also by introducing non-cash rewards”;
- ▶ “improving the recognition system”; and
- ▶ “including it as a standing agenda item in all meetings.”

Respondents felt that there were a number of improvements that could be made in the development of service standards. These included:

- ▶ “Service standards follow budget allocation at present. This should be the other way round. Budget should be allocated to those areas where services will be improved... of course in a realistic and transparent way.”
- ▶ “Consultation should be central to the setting of standards, particularly with all stakeholders and affected communities.”
- ▶ “A team of officials should be nominated by all departments to facilitate, coordinate and synergise the development, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of service standards.”
- ▶ “There should be seminars or workshops lasting at least half a day for people who are responsible for setting standards for the purpose of having a common approach to service standards.”
- ▶ “It is important that citizens are engaged when setting service standards. Middle Managers provide a link or interface between staff at the operational and senior management levels. They have experience and are exposed to conditions at an operational level and to a certain extent understand the strategy to the Department. Sometimes their wealth of experience is not considered when conceiving policies.”
- ▶ “Start developing service standards for components or units within departments. There's a need for developing the DPSA's generic service standards for core functions.”
- ▶ “Set achievable and measurable standards”/“Reasonable, attainable and practical standards must be set in consultation with stakeholders for/within the department.”

There was also a sense amongst departments that it is important to improve internal training and communication with regard to service standards. Suggestions made included:

- ▶ “Making all departmental employees aware of the advantages and benefits associated with the use of service standards to assess performance in the department and continuously informing external clients of the core business, our mandates, strategic goals, objectives, performance targets, achievements, outcomes, and challenges.”
- ▶ “Intensifying discussions of standards in the operational work plans to create more awareness of the need to adhere to the programmes we have prioritised.”

- ▶ “The importance of setting service standards for relevant activities should be brought home to managers/staff in government by way of a Communication Campaign by DPSA.”
- ▶ “Our evaluation of service standards for all provincial departments demonstrated that directorates within the departments are still battling to know what exactly constitutes a standard and how to monitor performance against it.”

In terms of requesting assistance, departments signalled that there should be a centralised unit within the public sector that can assist departments in developing and improving existing standards. Suggestions made by departments in this regard included:

- ▶ “It would be greatly appreciated if there were regular workshops with all government departments to ensure that there is compliance.”
- ▶ “It would be advantageous if these workshops could provide information on best practice with regard to service standards.”
- ▶ “It would be useful if a standard instrument or mechanism to assess service delivery could be developed for all departments.”
- ▶ “[They] should provide departments with Guidelines and Resource Materials and provide feedback on surveys ... and give suggestions for improvement.”
- ▶ “There should be guidelines on assessing the impact of service standards across the whole Public Service.”

Linked to the above point were suggestions regarding the need to improve coordination concerning service standards. At provincial level there was a sense that the respective Offices of the Premier could play this role and that at the national level a unit within the Department of Public Service and Administration could provide overall coordination. Other suggestions with regard to coordination included:

- ▶ “Include the item “Service Delivery Standards” as a standing agenda item in all meetings held by employees at all levels so that it is not overlooked or forgotten.”
- ▶ “Regular surveillance by oversight structures.”
- ▶ “Encourage the setting up of Service Standards Units and the training of managers in service standards and related matters.”
- ▶ “Provincial departments should be guided in the setting up of service standards ... to ensure an integrated common approach and understanding when delivering services to our internal and external clients.”

Once service standards have been developed, departments made a number of suggestions with regard to using service standards to improve performance. These included:

- ▶ “To link service standards with the Performance Management System of the department and move from individual performance assessment to component assessment and to organizational performance”/“making it part and parcel of the Individual Performance Plans”/“To make it part of the performance contract of each senior manager so that it can get the attention it deserves.”
- ▶ “Inculcate a culture of performance management in the Department.”
- ▶ “There must be closer alignment of the Department’s Strategic Plan to Service Delivery Outputs. These must have measurable indicators and they must be benchmarked and monitored closely.”
- ▶ “Through a balanced scorecard that links standards to the strategy of the organization and through the MIS to improve reporting on the achievement of standards.”
- ▶ “Ensure compliance with performance management guidelines. Monitor performance through regular feedback. Recruiting staff with relevant competencies and skills. Developing relevant competencies through training.”
- ▶ “Performance against service standards must be reviewed annually and as service standards are met, so they should be progressively raised, year on year. If a standard is not met, the reason must be explained publicly by the Department and a new target date set for when it will be achieved.”
- ▶ “Improving service delivery is a continuous progressive process for the Department and not a once-off task. It calls for a shift away from inward-looking, bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes and a search for new ways of working which put the needs of the Department’s clients first. The need for a SDIP includes welfare, equity and efficiency.”
- ▶ “Continuous benchmarking with international standards.”

6. ANALYSIS

6.1 COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO THE KEY FINDINGS

This section of the report comments on the key findings from the previous section and then makes recommendations, where applicable. The analysis has been tabulated as follows:

Key Finding	Comment	Recommendation
Most departments have not provided us with their service standards; others indicated that work done on the setting of standards has yet to be completed.	It has been observed in the annual reports/strategic plans and SDIPs of departments that departments were assessing service delivery but not through service standards that met our criteria. In most cases the setting of service standards relies on the discretion of the lower-level employees rather than on that of the HoDs and their management team. The setting of standards should be a consultative process.	Departments should therefore ensure that goals and objectives with regard to improving service delivery are directly linked to the department's service standards.
Confusion over whether service standards are indicators.	The development of a good service standard is based on the same principles as are used for constructing an indicator, i.e. that they must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. However, service standards must deal specifically with measuring the quality of the service being delivered.	The DPSA should develop a short guideline on how to select and develop rigorous service standards. This guideline could contain a set of common service standards ⁶ that will enable the Public Service to be consistent in measuring performance over time and demonstrate the progress government is making in improving service delivery. The common service standards would define minimum levels of delivery that departments are expected to achieve. The DPSA should establish a forum in order to facilitate ongoing sharing of best practice between departments with regard to service standards.
Whilst many departments are still in the process of developing service standards, there was a surprisingly high awareness of the value of service standards.	Responses to the questionnaire demonstrated that many institutions had identified who was responsible for service standards and which unit should "champion" service standards.	Once service standards are linked to the performance agreements of senior managers within departments it should be easier to manage the role service standards can play in shaping service delivery.
Many departments have yet to allocate specific resources to the development of service standards, yet many reported that they had resources within their training budgets to familiarise staff and/or to train staff in the use of service standards.	Implementing service standards is likely to require resources and it is unrealistic to expect departments to develop and then communicate service standards without an adequate budget.	The development of service standards should be included within departmental work plans so that activities relating to service standards can be appropriately budgeted for.

⁶ The British Government has established six service standards for central government: 1) Answer letters quickly and clearly (letters answered in 15 days); 2) See a citizen within 10 minutes of any appointment made; 3) Answer telephone calls within 15 seconds; 4) Provide clear and straightforward information about services, including contact details of delivery sites; 5) Provide details of complaints procedure; 6) Take all reasonable steps to make services accessible to everyone, including those with special needs.

Key Finding	Comment	Recommendation
Whilst many departments have consulted their internal clients when constructing service standards, few departments have consulted external clients.	A key consideration in the development of service standards is that they must be constructed in relation to the needs of the clients being served.	Departments should establish a standardised process for engaging external clients in the development of service standards.
Linked to the previous point is the finding that consultation with clients regarding the development of service standards is largely done ad hoc and not in any systematic manner.	Whilst receiving feedback or comments on service standards is important, if this is not done in a reliable and valid manner it is difficult for the department to assess whether the feedback is representative of all clients.	Linked to the previous recommendation, departments need to put in place a system whereby they can obtain feedback on their service standards in a rigorous manner in order to establish whether the comments they are receiving are representative of all their clients (both internal and external).
Departments are currently using a wide variety of guidelines to shape their service standards.	Departments obviously have to develop service standards within a particular legislative framework, but one would have expected more departments to link service standards to their specific strategic objectives, especially objectives regarding service delivery.	The DPSA should actively promote the Batho Pele Handbook as it demonstrates the important link between service standards and strategic objectives. In addition, this will ensure that all departments use the same definitions and measures for collecting data and reporting results, which will allow sector-wide benchmarking across departments.
Many departments do not use service standards as part of the performance assessment process.	Service standards must not only signal to clients what to expect but they must also be used as a means to assess whether or not the service delivered met the standard that was set.	Departments need to measure progress being made towards achieving the standards they have set for delivery.
The majority of departments use performance assessments to reward staff. Fewer departments use the results of assessing performance against service standards to improve service delivery.	Information on a department's success or failure in achieving the standards it has set should be used by management to critically reflect on the service delivery process and then make appropriate adjustments to realise the targets that have been set.	Departments should be encouraged to use performance assessments not only as a mechanism to reward staff but also as a means to strengthen and improve service delivery.
Some departments are meeting regularly to discuss service delivery whilst many appear not to be.	Service standards will only be of value if departments regularly assess the progress being made towards achieving these standards. Moreover, departments should meet at least once a quarter to reflect on their progress.	Departments should establish a systematic reporting process that includes the development of a standardised reporting format. This report recommends that a standardised reporting process should be developed across government departments that will lead to departments reporting against a set of common standards (see previous recommendation). The process could include the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments measure their own performance on a regular basis and report results to a central unit within the DPSA. • The DPSA would then present an overview report to Parliament and Cabinet on a regular basis. • This process should be improved upon as reporting requirements for departments become aligned and rationalised.

Key Finding	Comment	Recommendation
Many departments claimed that they reported against service standards using their annual reports. However, an examination of all the annual reports submitted by departments revealed that in most instances annual reports made little mention of service standards.	Whether or not annual reports discuss service standards in relation to the delivery of services by the departments, the question has to be asked as to whether annual reports are the most effective means of communicating service standards to clients. The literature suggests that this is in fact not the case.	Communication Units within departments should be encouraged to think of more innovative and creative ways of informing clients about service standards. Moreover, the annual reports produced by departments should have a section on service standards and departments should report on how they have fared in meeting these standards. The recommended format to be used can be found on pg. 3 (Table 6: Example of reporting on a department's performance against its service standards).
Approximately half the departments said that they were considering adjusting their service standards or had adjusted them within the last four years.	Service standards need to be revisited on a regular basis in order to assess whether they still relate to the priorities of the department. Service standards should also be revisited to ensure that the target is still appropriate.	If a standardised reporting process is instituted then it should also identify when service standards should be revisited and, if necessary, adjusted.
Many departments are seeking guidance on how best to develop service standards	An unintended consequence of this study has been that it has spurred on a number of departments to take action with regard to developing service standards. During the research many departments contacted the PSC asking for assistance towards the development of service standards. It appears that currently there is a need for training in developing service standards in the Public Service.	SAMDI and DPSC need to define more clearly what role they can play in assisting departments to develop service standards. Moreover, the PSC will need to come up with a procedure for conducting periodic follow-up evaluations to assess efforts to implement service standards across the Public Service.

Table 2: Comments and recommendations made in response to the key findings

6.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE STANDARDS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The above analysis indicates that within both the design phase and the implementation phase there are some common problems regarding the manner in which departments approach service standards. These are summarised in the table below:


		Implementation	
		Weak	Strong
Design	Strong 	NB: Attributes that need attention – areas where priorities should be focussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with citizens and stakeholders (other than annual reports) • Developing quantifiable service standards • Setting a core set of standards that every department must meet • Providing training for staff in order that they may develop and implement service standards 	NB: Current strengths of the Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will to develop Service standards • Resources available for training staff
	Weak	NB: Low priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in developing service standards • Departments making resources available to develop service standards 	NB: Unnecessary strengths – possible overkill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of annual reports to communicate with stakeholders • Regulatory framework governing service standards

Table 3: The Strengths and weaknesses in the design and implementation of service standards in the Public Sector

7. DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICE IN DEVELOPING SERVICE STANDARDS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

A recent study by the DPSA⁷ found that “there are no uniform and minimum national norms and standards for service delivery across government. Where such standards have been developed performance against the standards is not monitored and reported to Cabinet and Parliament in a coherent manner”. The report went on to list various other problems related to service delivery that are intertwined with service standards, including the following:

- Monitoring of service delivery rarely takes place.
- Baseline service delivery information is largely absent.
- Few departments have delegated the monitoring of service delivery to appropriate managers.

In the previous section of this study it was noted that whilst the development and use of service standards as a means to assess service delivery is widespread, several critical challenges remain – measuring performance on a regular basis against these standards and the use of the information gathered by management are two of the biggest challenges. A further significant challenge is that there seems to be a number of very different understandings as to what is meant by the term service standard. There remains a strong tendency in government to focus on the measurement of activities or outputs as a way of gauging the effectiveness or success of projects. Measures or indicators to assess outcome are often lacking or, when present, are poorly developed. This is not to say that measuring outputs is inherently wrong. It is important, for example, to measure the number of beneficiaries receiving social grants or the number of recipients of UIF from the Department of Labour. However, output measures will not inform one about the effectiveness of a programme or inform the citizens of this country about the quality of service delivery.

In order to begin to address these issues it is important that departments methodically capture and analyze the results of their successful initiatives and that they systematically disseminate and share examples of best practice throughout their department and within the Public Service. In the following section we will discuss:

- Pertinent sections of the DPSA's Batho Pele Handbook
- Common mistakes made with regard to developing service standards
- Benchmarking of service standards
- Measuring performance against service standards
- Recognition for staff who meet service standards

⁷ DPSA (2003). Government Strategy to ensure Institutional Performance for Service Delivery.

- Communicating service standards
- Monitoring and reviewing service standards

7.2 BATHO PELE HANDBOOK

We would encourage readers to explore the DPSA's Batho Pele Handbook (2003), particularly as it provides a useful framework for departments in setting standards. For instance, the Handbook notes that there are five key pre-requisites that managers within a department must ensure are in place in order to set standards, namely:

- Managers must believe that service standards will play a useful role in improving service delivery.
- Departments must have the capacity to develop robust standards.
- Departments must have the resources to develop and implement service standards, and be able to measure progress against the standards.
- Departments must be able to promote their service standards and thereby educate citizens and other potential users on their rights with regard to service delivery.
- Departments must realise that service standards have to be developed that are specific to the needs of a particular customer.

In addition, the Handbook notes that “it is better to focus on a few, hard-edged” standards that deal with key deliverables by a department than “a large number covering trivial matters” (p. 103, 2003). The Handbook provides departments with a useful checklist, which should be consulted when a department is developing service standards. Included in the checklist are the following:

- Standards should comply with national and provincial norms, and provincial standards should be in line with national standards.
- Citizens should be consulted when standards are developed.
- Standards should be realistically set so that they can be achieved with the available resources.
- Standards must be “owned” by the department and should guide performance management in the department.
- Departments should publicly report on performance against their service standards.
- Standards should be reviewed on a regular basis with the aim of continually raising them and thereby striving for continuous improvement in the delivery of services by the department.

Consulting clients, both internal and external, is of vital importance when establishing service standards. Consultation can be done formally through citizen satisfaction surveys or more informally through imbizos. An important reason for consulting citizens can be seen in the following examples:

- Telephones: Whilst most South Africans probably feel that a thirty-second wait on the telephone is acceptable, many feel that a wait of one minute or more for a departmental representative is unacceptable.

- Referrals: Similarly, whilst most South Africans find it acceptable to deal with two people before obtaining a service, many will probably find it unacceptable to deal with more than three people.
- Waiting in line: Similarly, whilst South Africans believe that waiting in line for about two to 10 minutes is acceptable, most will probably find it unacceptable to wait 10 minutes or more to be attended to by a departmental official.

It is also important for a department to be clear about whom it should be consulting in the development of its standards. One of the major traps that departments can fall into when doing this work is to assume that -

“communities or beneficiary groups are homogeneous entities. What is required if participation is to be more effective in the future is a departure from an ideal conception of ‘community’ in favour of a more realistic sense of localities where there is likely to be division across ethnic, cultural, class and gender divides.” (Vaughan, 2004)

Moreover, there is a need to understand a community’s context, and the structures and institutions operating within that community, to ensure effective participation. In order to avoid mistakes in this regard departments must not make assumptions regarding the nature of the relevant community or beneficiaries, rather they must first do appropriate research on the matter, culminating in a valid definition of the recipients of their services.

The Handbook also provides a very helpful guide to departments on the approach that they should adopt in developing service standards. It is not the purpose of this report to repeat these procedures other than to recommend that managers follow the six steps outlined below. In brief, the six steps suggested by the DPSA are:

- Know your business – i.e. identify users and stakeholders, and be clear about the vision and mission of the department and what services you can afford to offer.
- Consult – talk to citizens to see what is working and what is not working and thus needs to be improved.
- Set standards – ensure that you are sensitive to the needs of your users and address issues such as time, quality, quantity and cost.
- Empower staff – ensure that employees have the capacity to deliver services to the standards that have been set.
- Communicate – citizens must be made aware of the standards that the department has committed itself to.
- Manage standards – the standards developed must be used to assess the performance of the department.

In addition, departments should be well aware that developing and implementing standards could lead to a “cultural” change in the

department. Senior managers must be prepared to direct and support their employees through this change. The implementation of service standards may or may not involve a committee or a specific unit within a department, but someone has to become the “Service Standards Champion”. This person or group will help “steer” the department through considerations such as:

- How to proceed
- Scope of the initiative
- Time frames
- Methods of implementation
- Communications
- Roles and responsibilities

While managers are expected to take the lead in making the necessary changes, all parts of the department should be involved in developing service standards and in finding solutions to problems discovered as a result of applying the standards. Frontline staff and internal service providers must be involved in the process to ensure “buy-in”.

7.3 COMMON PROBLEMS WITH SERVICE STANDARDS

The essential challenge for departments is to select service standards that meaningfully measure the key aspects of the services being delivered by that department. The following table may be useful when selecting service standards. The criteria specified in the table are based on the following questions:

- Specific – Does the service standard specifically mention what is being measured?
- Measurable – Is the service standard measurable, and can it be done at a reasonable cost and with reasonable effort?
- Achievable – Is the standard achievable with the current resources that staff within the department have access to?
- Realistic – Is the standard realistic in terms of current or past performance?
- Time-bound – Does the standard specify by when the service will be delivered?

Service standards selection criteria	Current Service Standard	Why standard is inadequate	Proposed Revised Standard
Specific	All customers will be treated with respect and dignity and will be greeted in a polite manner.	Difficult to measure respect/dignity and politeness. Better to identify the nature of the service being delivered (e.g. answering the telephone) and then to specify to what standard it will be delivered.	When you leave a telephone message we will return the call within an hour. OR Citizen queries about our services via email will be answered within 24 hours or, if more time is needed for a fuller reply, within five working days.
Measurable	List of services provided should be displayed on notice boards.	Neither the list of services nor the number of notice boards is currently provided, so it will be difficult to measure whether this standard is achieved.	Within 24 hours of receiving updated service information the notice will be dated and placed on a notice board within the delivery site. OR At all 150 labour centres a poster will be displayed that lists the 10 services offered by the Department of Labour.
Achievable	Clients visiting this clinic will be seen within 10 minutes.	This standard is only achievable if the delivery site knows from past experience that clients will be seen within 10 minutes. If this is not the case, then the target might never be met.	At this clinic we will endeavor to see new patients within 30 minutes and follow-up patients within 20 minutes. OR We are striving to reduce waiting times from two hours to one hour.
Realistic	Consultation with stakeholders on service delivery will be done.	No minimum target defined. A minimum target needs to be set to ensure that the standard can be realistically met.	Biannual consultations will be done with stakeholders to assess perceptions of service delivery.
Time bound	We will respond to all requests in writing.	The standard is not linked to time.	We will respond with a letter of acknowledgement within seven working days upon receipt of your correspondence. OR Each action request logged with the IT helpdesk will be followed by an updated call within one day.

Table 4: Criteria to consider when developing service standards

7.4 BENCHMARKING

Once the service standards have been developed by a department they are in a position to benchmark their performance against other departments and also to share best practices as a way of learning from the experience of others, adapting the knowledge gained and thus significantly improving the operational performance of their department. The processes of benchmarking and best practice are defined as follows:

Benchmarking⁸: The continuous, systematic process of measuring and assessing products, services, and practices of recognised leaders in the field to determine the extent to which they might be adapted to achieve superior performance.

Best Practice Sharing: The capture, dissemination and sharing of a work method, process or initiative to improve organizational effectiveness, service delivery, and employee satisfaction.

In addition, benchmarking fulfils a variety of purposes for a department, and these would include⁹:

- Providing an objective assessment of the use of resources across the department.
- Helping management measure progress from one year to the next.
- Providing supporting evidence for external quality assurance audits.
- Providing objective measures against which transformation and other change processes can be assessed.
- Promoting accountability through peer reviews.

Moreover, benchmarking is an integral part of performance management. The process of making relevant comparisons leads to benchmarks against which a department can measure future performance and thus achieve self-improvement/transformation. Typically, a department will make one of four types of comparisons when establishing its benchmarks. It might make an internal comparison within the Public Service, a comparison with a competitor (e.g. Telkom vs. Vodacom or MNet), a functional comparison (e.g. between departments offering similar functions), or a generic benchmark (a comparison against a company known for innovation but unrelated to the services delivered by the Public Service, e.g. BMW or Woolworths).

It is also important to be clear about which, if not all, the service delivery components the benchmarking process will focus upon. Benchmarking, can, for example, be done at the input phase and/or the implementation phase and/or the output phase. Benchmarking the input and

⁸ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (1995). Quality Services – Guide VIII – Benchmarking and Best Practices. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca> .

⁹ Appendix A: An Approach to Quantitative Benchmarking, pp 226 – 231, in Jackson N, & Lund H (Eds.). (2001). Benchmarking for Higher Education. London: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press

implementation phase might be more process-focused, and therefore a department might want to consider benchmarks from similar organizations, whereas output benchmarks could be influenced by a wider range of organizations, not necessarily operating in the same sector.

The first step is to gather accurate and relevant data that allows managers to set a benchmark against which future performance can be measured in quantifiable form. The value of this benchmark data is that it allows managers to build this information into their performance management systems. It also allows managers to assess where their strengths and weaknesses lie in terms of service delivery. By receiving a report card on their service delivery, managers will be able to prioritise their work and target areas of performance that are unsatisfactory, determining the importance and quality of the service as perceived by citizens.

Some useful ideas for initiating benchmarking in a department include:

- Making sure that staff understand how the benchmarks fit into existing performance measurement initiatives.
- Ensuring that within the department there is sufficient incentive to regularly make comparisons against the benchmarks.
- Making sure management has sufficient skills to work with benchmarks.

Routine Service	Benchmarks
Number of options given to a caller on an automated telephone system	Three options
How long is it acceptable to wait for the phone to be answered	Approximately 30 seconds
The number of different people a citizen should have to deal with when making a routine telephone request of a department	Two to three people is acceptable
The time taken to respond to a voice-mail message left at a government office	Within four hours is acceptable
Walk-in services: Amount of time citizens are prepared to wait in a queue to be served	A wait of more than 30 minutes is unacceptable
Number of officials at an office that citizens feel they should have to deal with when making a routine request	Two to three officials is acceptable
Amount of travel time to a delivery site which citizens find acceptable	30 minutes
Correspondence: Amount of time citizens find acceptable in waiting for a written response to a request they have made	Up to two weeks is acceptable
Email: Amount of time taken to respond to a routine email request made by a citizen before 10:00 am	A reply within 24 hours is acceptable
Web sites:	Web sites should not be down for more than a day
Complaints/Redress: Amount of time taken to acknowledge a routine complaint	Addressing the complaint after 3 weeks is unacceptable

Table 5: Examples of routine services and associated benchmarks

These in turn could be turned into a set of common service standards across government, which would define the minimum levels that departments are expected to achieve.

It is important that departments methodically capture and analyze the results of their successful initiatives and that they systematically disseminate and share examples of best practice throughout their department and within the Public Service. There are many different ways of sharing best practice, ranging from face-to-face methods (e.g. training, workshops) to paper (e.g. reports) to electronic means (e.g. web sites). What is essential is that departments have a clear plan as to:

- How they are going to disseminate the information (i.e. what is the most effective way to share information in the department).
- What means will be used by the department to encourage learning from examples of best practice.
- Implementing best practice.

Moreover, departments must also consider how they will sustain and support best practices once they have been implemented within the department.

7.5 MEASURING PERFORMANCE AGAINST SERVICE STANDARDS

Service standards provide a practical way to manage performance in an era of fiscal restraint and help shape the expectations citizens have of government services. Literature on service standards suggests that services can be improved and delivered at a reduced cost by:

- Refocusing services on citizens
- Finding out what citizens consider to be critical aspects of government services and service delivery
- Giving managers flexibility in responding to client needs
- Developing proper incentives to promote innovation
- Monitoring and analyzing performance against realistic goals and standards

As an integral part of good management, service standards provide the means to measure service performance, as well as providing meaningful information on the content, value and methods being used to deliver services. In addition, service standards can be used in the interpretation of citizen satisfaction information and thereby guide operational decisions to improve both the service standards and the actual performance of the department.

Although improvement of citizen satisfaction is the key measure of service improvement and service quality, service standards can also play an important role in the overall service improvement strategy of a department. For each service standard developed on the basis of a knowledge of client expectations, departments should measure actual performance against the standard. An example of how departments could report on this performance could be tabulated as follows:

Areas	Service standards	Expected Performance	Results
Access	We will provide citizens with eight hours of service each business day and we will post our hours in each office/delivery site.	XX%	XX%
Time	When you leave a telephone message we will return your call within two hours	XX%	XX%
Information	If you send us a request about an application, we will respond to it within five business days of receiving your request.	XX%	XX%
Language	You will receive assistance from this department in the language of your choice.	XX%	XX%

Table 6: Example of reporting on a department's performance against its service standards

In order to systematically measure actual performance on a regular basis it is recommended that departments put in place a performance reporting strategy that:

- Defines the performance measures that specifically relate to the department's service standards.
- Outlines the performance reporting structure, including how the performance measurement information will be gathered.
- Identifies roles and responsibilities.
- Provides a time frame for the different activities incorporated into the strategy.

Linked to performance measurement is the important concept of monitoring. Monitoring is the process of keeping track of citizen expectations and operational factors and adjusting service delivery as appropriate. Knowing what citizens are thinking and how they feel about services should be a key priority. This allows a department to modify policies and programmes to improve service quality. Monitoring signals to citizens and employees that the department is serious about its performance. Data on aspects of service delivery such as numbers of citizens accessing delivery sites and levels of satisfaction shows employees the results of their efforts and helps them focus on the essential purpose of the department.

It is recommended that departments review their current internal and external monitoring procedures to determine which techniques will best capture information about citizen satisfaction and suggestions to improve service delivery. The best monitoring system is one that parallels organizational structures and does not overburden senior management in the department with unnecessary details, yet provides information for evaluation purposes that the public, government ministers and senior management can understand.

In addition to monitoring service standards and service delivery, it is essential to assess services on a larger scale. Taking a broader view will ensure that service standards reflect the changing environment and will allow departments to make concerted improvements to the programme as a whole. It will also lessen the likelihood of changes or improvements being made on a section-by-section basis, which may actually be counterproductive.

Continuous improvement requires ongoing assessment of both the results of performance monitoring, such as citizen satisfaction, and the manner in which performance is monitored. This assessment must be done from the perspective of the sector directing the service and must show how service standards and delivery reflect the mandate and mission of the sector and the department. These assessments must be attached to a mechanism for implementing the solutions or changes identified.

7.6 RECOGNITION¹⁰

Units or individuals within a department who perform better than the standards laid down by a department should be given appropriate recognition. Recognition typically involves three aspects:

- Openly giving praise
- Granting monetary or non-monetary awards
- Celebrating and communicating successes

Recognition includes a wide range of activities, from informal low-cost activities to formal programmes and ceremonies. Appropriate gestures of recognition encourage role models and champions, encourage the sharing of best practice and help create a sense of being a valued member of a successful department.

Although examining rewards options for Public Service employees is beyond the scope of this report, departments should consider basing an internal recognition programme on the following principles:

- Recognition is most effective when it is given soon after a noteworthy accomplishment.
- Recognition should not be reserved solely for exceptional achievements
- All employees should be eligible for recognition
- Recognition should be granted to individuals as well as teams/business units for accomplishments on and off the job
- Recognition should be meaningful and sincere
- Recognition should be granted publicly

7.7 COMMUNICATING THE SERVICE STANDARDS

A crucial component of creating an environment within which quality service delivery will flourish is to inform those who benefit from the delivery of services by these departments by means of service

¹⁰ Ideas for this section are taken from Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (1995). Quality Services – Guide V – Recognition. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca>

standards. However, to communicate the standards, both internally and externally, requires a robust communication strategy. It is crucial that the communication strategy should provide an appropriate feedback loop that will ensure that information is fed both upwards within a department to allow managers to make informed decisions, and downwards to keep citizens informed about the initiatives each department is embarking upon as part of its SDIP. Components of a communication strategy would include:

- Ensuring that all internal employees are aware of the service standards.
- Citizen education – i.e. ensuring that staff educate citizens about what services each department offers, thus ensuring that citizens use the services in a manner that each department has deemed appropriate.
- Providing citizens with reliable and up-to-date information on quality that meets their needs.
- Providing citizens with information pertaining to the services each department has targeted for improvement.
- Creating effective information dissemination mechanisms to ensure that citizens receive important information about each department (see below).
- Providing assistance to those citizens who require help in making informed decisions about the type of service they would like to access.
- Identifying opportunities for citizens to be involved in the governance and oversight of the services delivered by each department.
- Informing citizens as to whether the service charter of each department will be updated on the basis of the results of the survey.
- Commissioning research on promoting effective use of information by citizens.

A communication strategy to enable each department to disseminate appropriate information that citizens will understand and that is relevant to satisfaction with service delivery could incorporate the following components:

Information Dissemination

- Translate the information into local languages
- Distribute the information using multiple media sources (both mainstream and below-the-line)
- Ensure that the information is easily understood and in a readable format
- Disseminate information that empowers citizens to make the most appropriate choice with regard to the service they would like to access
- Provide up-to-date, accurate information on the services offered by departments in a timely manner

All government departments have web sites, some providing far more information than others. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to

review the role web sites play in communicating information between departments and citizens, it is worth noting that there are four crucial communication criteria that departments should strive to meet if they are going to use their respective web sites to inform citizens about service standards, namely:

- Navigation – is it easy for citizens to find their way around the web site?
- Outcome – Will citizens find the information they are looking for?
- Visual appeal/design – is the web site pleasing to look at?
- Fast – do the pages download quickly?

7.8 MONITOR AND REVIEW SERVICE STANDARDS

When service standards have been established, verification mechanisms need to be identified for each service standard. This will enable a department to monitor the progress it is making towards achieving its standards on a regular basis. At the outset the department should outline how it will monitor and report on progress being made against the service standards. Moreover, the department should indicate what will be monitored, what methods it will use in the gathering of data, the frequency with which the results will be reported and to whom they will be reported.

The most reliable indicator of improvement in service quality and service performance is an improvement in client satisfaction. Information on client satisfaction can be gathered using a wide variety of methods. The most appropriate method to be used by a department will be influenced by two important questions: (a) what is the central question the data gathered will help to answer and (b) what resources does the department have available to answer this question? Whilst properly designed surveys are often the most popular method of gathering data (for reasons of validity, representivity and confidentiality of participants), they are often extremely expensive and time-consuming. Most departments are unlikely to have sufficient resources to continuously survey clients in order to assess the progress being made.

There are a number of cheaper methods that departments could consider, other than surveys, some of which are listed below:

- **Suggestion boxes** – Reviewing the submissions made on a monthly basis will give a department a good idea as to the common issues clients are concerned about.
- **Help desks/Help Lines** – Similar to suggestion boxes, a monthly review of the issues raised by clients will provide departments with a good idea as to what the common themes are with regard to service delivery.

- **Telephone review** – If, for example, a department has set a service standard that deals with how quickly the telephone will be answered, then this can also be measured internally. A member of the department's service standards task team/monitoring team could be given the job of regularly (e.g. once a week or once a month) phoning a random number of internal numbers to check how quickly the telephone gets answered. This information could be recorded and then tracked over time to see what the average time is for a telephone to be answered in the department. This same review could also be used to test how long it takes for an official to respond to a voice-mail message or a message left on an answering machine.
- **Correspondence review** – Similar to the telephone review, if a department, for example, has committed itself to answering all written correspondence within seven days, this can also be measured internally. A member of the monitoring team could regularly (e.g. every two weeks or once a month) check a random number of letters received by the department (this information could be taken from the register that most departments keep with regard to written correspondence) and compare it with the register that records when the letter was answered. Again, the information can be recorded and tracked over time to establish the average time taken by the department to respond to written correspondence. This same review could be used to measure how long it takes officials to respond to an email request.
- **Imbizos** – This is a useful mechanism by which departments can meet face-to-face with the community in order to hear which aspects of service delivery clients would like to see addressed. These gatherings can also be used by the department to explain what services a department can or cannot deliver, and thereby help the department to manage the unrealistic expectations that clients sometimes have with regard to service delivery.
- **Citizens' Forums** – This is an effective and unique development, whereby institutions, independent of the executive, participate jointly with citizens in proposing practical measures to improve service delivery and it contributes towards the consolidation of the government's people-centered development programme. It aims to demonstrate the responsiveness of government to the needs of citizens and the role that oversight bodies can play in this respect.

Whatever methods a department uses to gather data, it should make sure that over time it uses the same methods in order to allow it to make valid comparisons. The data gathered should be analyzed by managers in order to assess service delivery performance and, where applicable, service standards should be adjusted as departments improve on their delivery in terms of standards.

The approach should be programme-specific; it should not look at a department in its entirety. It should not be just a problem identification exercise but a solution-seeking consultation as well.

8. CONCLUSION

The results of the Evaluation of Service Standards in the Public Service speak to critical service delivery challenges at both the national and the provincial levels of government in South Africa. With a better understanding of the current gaps in the use of service standards by government departments it is now possible to initiate a focused and concerted campaign to improve service standards across the Public Service and thus assist in the development of service delivery systems that are truly responsive to the needs of the citizens of this country.

A focus on seven critical areas of service standards will accelerate the momentum of the process:

- **One** - Ensure that senior managers are committed to the process of the development, setting and improvement of service standards across government.
- **Two** - Provide training and tools to increase staff knowledge and competencies and to empower them to develop robust and rigorous service standards.
- **Three** - Foster a culture within the Public Service to routinely and continuously assess performance against departments' respective service standards.
- **Four** - Encourage departmental managers to critically reflect on service delivery practices that fail to meet the standards the department has set itself and to act upon this information.
- **Five** - Ensure accountability by setting standards based on the priorities of citizens and keeping citizens fully informed as to whether the department is meeting these standards.
- **Six** - Identify, share and showcase best practices.
- **Seven** - Put in place a common approach to service standards for all government departments in order to allow Cabinet, portfolio committees and provincial legislatures to assess overall improvements in service delivery.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Baseline study: “An analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.” (Kusek & Rist, 2004)

Batho Pele: The Batho Pele White Paper (No. 1459 of 1997) listed eight principles with which departments are expected to comply. The links between setting service standards and Batho Pele are self-evident. The second principle deals with service standards and states that citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. This comes straight after the principle that urges us to consult with customers on their needs and expectations, so that there can be no doubt that, within the spirit of Batho Pele, setting and communicating service standards is critically important. (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003)

Batho Pele Principles Number 2:

- Service standards: Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

In addition, it is worth reiterating that the White Paper outlines a clearly defined implementation strategy for transforming public service delivery. It maps out the process that should be undertaken to improve service delivery with the emphasis placed on consulting citizens. Central to this strategy is the Service Delivery Improvement Plan. (SDIP)¹¹

Benchmarking: A benchmark is “a reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be assessed.”(Kusek & Rist, 2004) Benchmarking is the continuous, systematic process of measuring and assessing products, services and practices of recognised leaders in the field to determine the extent to which they might be adapted to achieve superior performance.

Best practice sharing: The capture, dissemination and sharing of a work method, process or initiative to improve organizational effectiveness, service delivery and employee satisfaction.

Complaints mechanism: A process whereby a client (external or internal) can make a complaint regarding the level of service provided. It is important that departments use a complaints mechanism to assess service standards and to ensure that they are in compliance with the Administrative Justice Act (No. 3 of 2000). One useful example from the private sector is the LEARN approach¹² –

¹¹ For more information on the SDIP see the Government Gazette of 5 January 2001, No. 21951

¹² “A complaint is a gift”. The Economist, April 24, 2004, p. 67.

- Listen to the citizen who is making the complaint.
- Empathise with the citizen and be courteous in the manner in which one records the complaint.
- Apologise to the citizen on behalf of the department.
- React to the complaint in a professional manner.
- Notify the appropriate unit within the Performance Management System of the nature of the complaint.

Measurable objectives: "... are clear statements of the specific outcomes or results that can be achieved over the medium term period in a given programme. They should provide a clear link between the programme's output/s and the department's goals, and define the actual impact on the public rather than focusing on the level of effort that is expended. Measurable objectives are tools to assess the effectiveness of an agency's performance and the public benefit that is derived." (National Treasury, 2004)

Indicator: See Performance measures and service delivery indicators below.

Inputs: The financial, human and material resources used by a department or programme to deliver services.

Outcomes: "Outcomes are the end social and economic result of public policies or programmes. Outcomes mainly refer to changes in the general state of well being in the community. Examples include a safe and secure environment, healthy citizens, reduction in repeat offenders, reduced poverty levels and stable and self-sufficient families." (National Treasury, 2004) Outcomes are often referred to as the accomplishments of a programme or the impact achieved by a programme.

Outputs: "Outputs are the final goods and services produced or delivered by departments to customers or clients that are external to the department. Outputs may be defined as the 'what' that departments deliver or provide, contributing towards meeting the outcomes that government wants to achieve. Outputs must be measurable. Outputs are delivered to an external party and comprise the majority of day-to-day interactions between citizens and the government. Outputs include services such as issuing passports, providing policy advice, assessing applications for benefits and policing the streets." (National Treasury, 2004)

Performance measures and service delivery indicators: "... measure how well an expenditure programme (or main division of a vote) is delivering its output and contributing towards meeting the outcomes that government wants to achieve. They play a key role in planning and budgeting as they are used to measure and assess how effectively resources are used to achieve departmental strategic priorities and service delivery targets... Examples include the number of grants provided, the number of cheques processed, the number of operations performed, the number of graduates

enrolled each year.... (They) encompass one or more of the following characteristics of performance:

- The *quantity*, volume, or level of outputs or services to be delivered
- The *quality* at which the outputs are to be delivered
- The *timeliness* or timing required for delivery of the outputs” (National Treasury, 2004)

Service charter: A service charter is a brief publication that describes the service experience a citizen can expect from a department. Typically, the document not only includes service standards but also other important information relating to the services delivered by a department. One would expect to find the following information in a service charter:

- What the department does
- How to contact and communicate with the department
- Service delivery standards
- A commitment to deliver services in accordance with the Batho Pele principles
- The citizen’s basic rights and responsibilities
- How to provide feedback or make a complaint

Service standards: A shortened form of the phrase “standards of service”, service standards typically answer questions such as: how often will the service be provided; how long should it take to receive the service; and what does one do if one is not satisfied with the service? Service standards inform citizens about what kind of service they can expect from a department, and this is usually done in the form of a statement that describes what level of service will be provided to citizens. In essence, a service standard is a criterion adopted by a department in order to define how it should behave with respect to its client base (the client base may be internal or external).

APPENDIX A: Participating Departments

Sector	Department
Economic Services and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Communications • Environmental Affairs and Tourism • Labour • Land Affairs • Minerals and Energy • Public Works • Trade and Industry • Transport • Water Affairs and Forestry
Justice and Protection Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional Services • Independent Complaints Directorate • Justice and Constitutional Development • Safety and Security
Financial and Administration Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Communication and Information Systems • National Treasury • Public Enterprises • Public Service and Administration • South African Management Development Institute • Statistics South Africa
Central Government Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidency • Parliament • Foreign Affairs • Home Affairs • Provincial and Local Government
Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts, Culture, Science and Technology • Education • Health • Housing • Social Development • Sport and Recreation

APPENDIX B: USEFUL WEB SITES

SERVICE STANDARDS

South African Bureau of Standards - www.sabs.co.za
<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca>
www.standards.com.au
www.health.gov.au
www.psrni.gov.uk
www.servicefirst.gov.uk

BENCHMARKING

www.brain.org.za
www.iso.ch/iso/en

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION REGIONAL OFFICES

Eastern Cape

91 Alexandra Road
PO Box 2167
King William's Town 5601
Tel: (043) 643-4704
Fax: (043) 642-1371

Northern Cape

55 Carrington Road
Monument Heights
Kimberley 8300
Tel (053) 832-6222
Fax (053) 832-6225

Free State

62 Fedsure Building
3rd Floor, St Andrews Street
Bloemfontein, 9301
Tel: (051) 448-8696
Fax: (051) 448-4135

Limpopo

Kleingeld Trust Building
81 Biccard Street
Polokwane 699
Tel (015) 297-6284
Fax (015) 297-6276

Gauteng

Ten Sixty-Six Building
16th Floor, 35 Pritchard Street
Johannesburg 2001
Tel: (011) 833-5721/2/3/4/5/6
Fax: (011) 834-1200

North-West

Mmabatho Post Office Building
Ground Floor
University Drive
Mmabatho 2735
Tel: (018) 384-1000
Fax: (018) 384-1012

KwaZulu-Natal

262 Brasford House
cnr Commercial &
Longmarket Street
Private Bag X9130
Pietermaritzburg 3200
Tel: (033) 345-9998
Fax (033) 345-8505

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