



# Guide on performance management for social development departments

Public Service Commission

February 2007

## Vision

The Public Service Commission is an independent and impartial body created by the Constitution, 1996, to enhance excellence in governance within the Public Service by promoting a professional and ethical environment and adding value to a public administration that is accountable, equitable, efficient, effective, corruption-free and responsive to the needs of the people of South Africa.

## Mission

The Public Service Commission aims to promote the constitutionally enshrined democratic principles and values of the Public Service by investigating, monitoring, evaluating, communicating and reporting on public administration. Through research processes it will ensure the promotion of excellence in governance and the delivery of affordable and sustainable quality services.

# Public Service Commission

## Guide on performance management for social development departments



Published in the Republic of South Africa by:

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Compiled by: Branch: Monitoring and Evaluation

Distribution by: Directorate: Communication and Information Services

ISBN: 0-621-37005-3  
RP: 10/2007



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## FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON

It gives me great pleasure to present these guidelines on organisational performance management for use by Social Development departments.

The PSC's main function is to evaluate the state of the Public Service against the nine values and principles governing public administration listed in Section 195(1) of the Constitution. These values and principles serve as the cornerstone of good governance in public administration, and provide a benchmark against which to measure progress towards transforming service delivery.



This guide was developed to contribute towards the promotion of good practice in service delivery. Key among the management processes that drive service delivery improvement is organisational performance management, and this is what this guide is about. It is hoped that the guide will help managers in Social Development departments to continually measure their service delivery performance, and creatively make the adjustments necessary to achieve marked improvement in the two critical services covered in this guide, namely, social work services and poverty reduction projects.

It is trusted that you will find this guideline useful, as you play your important role of improving the overall quality of Public Service performance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sangweni'.

Prof Stan Sangweni  
Chairperson: Public Service Commission

The purpose of this guide is to assist social development departments to set service standards and to put systems in place to manage towards meeting those standards.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Performance management terminology is subject to different interpretations and it is sometimes difficult to reach consensus on the meaning of concepts. While some people equate performance measures with indicators, as is the case in this guide, others consider these concepts to be different. Goals, objectives, and sometimes targets are also used interchangeably. It is important therefore to clarify upfront the key concepts that this guide uses.

**Baseline** is the initial data collected to establish a basis for comparison.

**Benchmark** is a standard or point of reference used in measuring and/ or judging quality or value.

**Effectiveness** refers to the extent to which objectives have been achieved. It assesses the relationship of an organisation's output to what it intends to accomplish.

**Efficiency** is a dimension of performance that is based on a direct relationship between input and output. It is measured by the ratio of input to output, sometimes referred to as productivity.

**Indicator** refers to what specifically is to be measured for each aspect of performance. They help managers answer the question: How do you know when success has been achieved?

**Measure**, which is also an indicator, is a scale, yardstick or index along which some dimension of performance can be measured.

**Input** is a resource that an organization uses to produce services. Inputs may include human resources, finances, facilities, materials, and even information.

**Key performance indicator** describes the performance dimension that is considered key or important in measuring performance.

**Milestones** relate to a completed step within a larger or longer-term process.

**Mission** describes an enduring statement of purpose or the organisation's reason for existence. It also describes what the organization does, who it does it for, and how it does it.

**Objective** is a statement summarizing what the organization or component intends to achieve and is a combination of an indicator and a target or standard. The indicator becomes an objective when the desired level of the indicator is stated.



**Output** represents goods and services produced. Outputs are activity oriented, measurable, and usually under managerial control.

**Performance management** is the practice of connecting the long-term strategy of an organization to its day-to-day performance by specifying targets at all levels and monitoring performance against those targets.

**Performance measurement** is ongoing monitoring and reporting of accomplishment, particularly progress towards pre-set objectives.

**Performance target or standard** is a commitment about the quantity, quality and timing of performance results to be achieved. A target identifies the specific planned level of result to be achieved within a specific period.

**Stakeholders** are individuals or organizations that are affected by or interested in a service. In the case of the Public Service they include staff, clients, the public and members of Parliament.

**Vision** refers to an idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state—where or what an organization would like to be in future.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This guide arose out of a need to provide managers with practical advice on how to set performance standards, and how to manage towards meeting those standards once they have been set.

The guide explains the following five step performance management process and the principles underlying it:

- (1) Decide what needs to be done/ achieved. In other words, decide what the key performance areas and objectives are.
- (2) Design measures to assess performance under each key performance area.
- (3) Assign responsibility to a specific person/s for each key performance area. Make sure resources are allocated, and authority delegated, commensurate with the responsibility conferred.
- (4) Measure performance and give feedback.
- (5) Review performance, preferably in a formal setting, and make the necessary adjustments to plans and processes.

The above steps can be summarised as the *Plan-Do-Check-Adjust* management process.

To make sure that the guide is practical, real examples of performance management frameworks for social work services and poverty reduction are given. The frameworks also include relevant performance indicators.

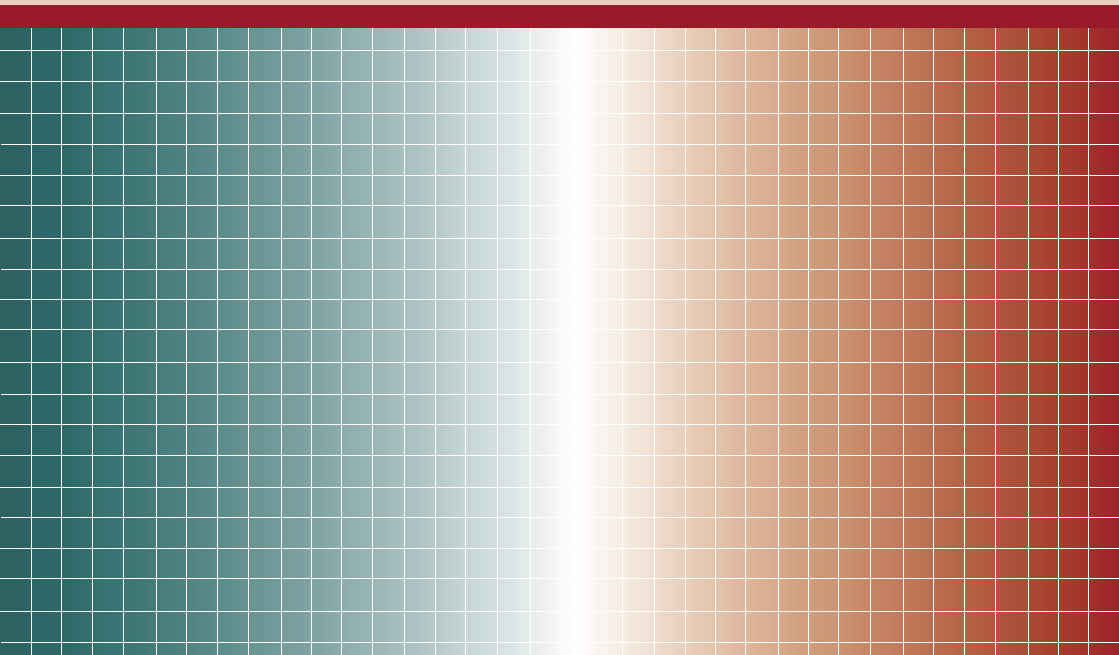
The social work performance indicators were chosen along the dimensions of the quantity and quality of the output (a defined package of social work services delivered to one person, family or community), the developmental outcomes of those services and organisational learning.

The poverty reduction performance indicators were chosen along the dimensions of project management, design of projects, success factors for projects and developmental outcomes of projects.

The guide also contains sections on how to design the information systems that will ensure that information on the performance indicators is collected and presented to stakeholders through reports.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction



# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

A department can improve its performance substantially by putting basic management systems in place and embedding them in the culture of the organisation. One such system is the performance management system. **Performance management is the practice of connecting the long-term strategy of an organisation to its day-to-day performance by specifying measurable objectives at all levels and monitoring performance against those objectives.** Setting service standards as required by the Batho Pele policy implies that a promise is made to achieve a certain level of service, and it is essential that a performance management system is in place to ensure that the promised level is actually achieved.

The purpose of this guide is to assist social development departments to put in place a basic organisational performance management system, consisting of –

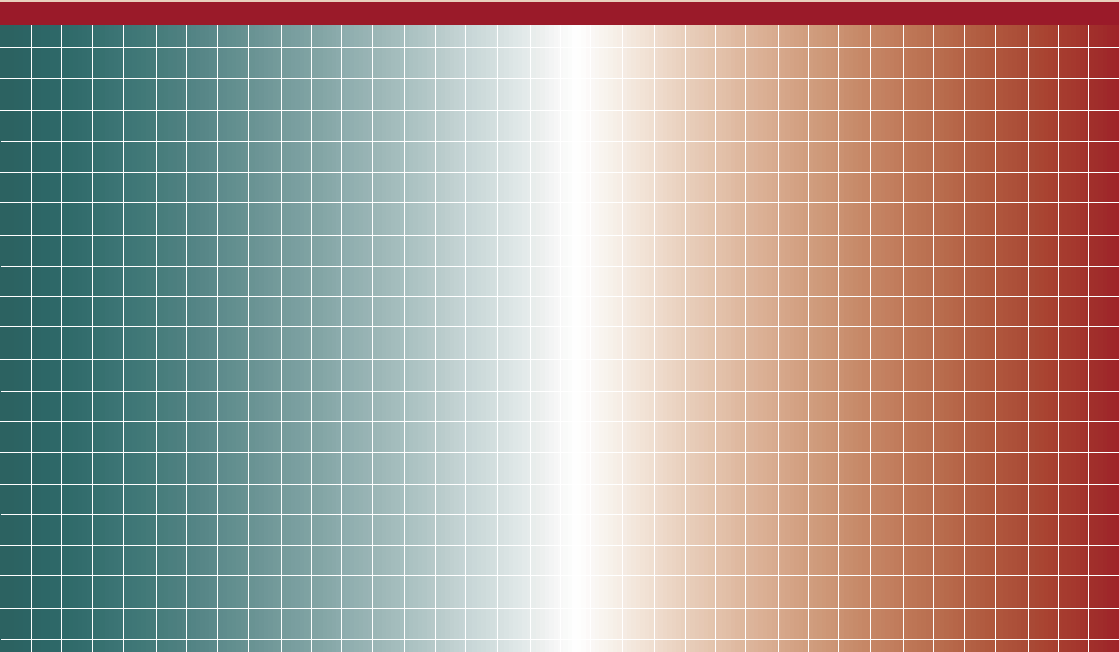
- measurable objectives and performance indicators;
- reporting formats;
- information systems to collect performance information; and
- review processes.

The basic performance management process is explained in Chapter 2 of this guide. In Chapter 3 a performance management framework for social work services is provided as an example, followed by an example for poverty reduction programmes in Chapter 4. The two frameworks are not exhaustive in that they do not cover all key outputs. They nevertheless cover key aspects of the service from the perspective of what could be important to service users. The frameworks are not given as a prescription. It is the task of the department's managers to apply the performance management principles and decide what is important, what needs to be measured and how to arrange reporting and performance review processes. There is however enough confidence in the suggestions in Chapter 3 and 4 that many of these could be adopted. They are in any case based on reports, standards and good practice models developed by the social development community.

It is hoped that this guide will contribute to better performance management in social development departments. Frequent performance review should become part of the routine processes of management, rather than an ad hoc activity conducted only when stakeholders demand accountability.

# Chapter 2

The performance  
management process  
and principles





# CHAPTER 2. THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS AND PRINCIPLES

## 2.1 Introduction

Government has embarked on a transformation path that requires public institutions to function efficiently and effectively. In this context, it is crucial for government departments to be clear about specifying appropriate performance areas that would make the most impact. In addition, departments need to make informed decisions about allocating resources to these performance areas and to carefully monitor progress that is being made during implementation. It is in the nature of democratic dispensations that many stakeholders maintain a constant watch over the performance of the state. Accordingly, it is incumbent on public institutions to optimise the use of the resources at their disposal in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

This chapter sets out a simple five step process for the management of the performance of an organisational unit. Performance management is the day to day management process that ensures that the work of a unit gets done and that work of a high quality is produced. For each of the steps in the process a few good practice principles are suggested to guide the execution of the particular step. The principles can be viewed as a few rules to apply when doing that step.

This chapter concisely sets out the theory of performance management and the guide then turns to practical examples in the following chapters.

## 2.2 A simple five-step process

The performance management process consists of the following five steps:

- (1) Decide what needs to be done/ achieved. In other words, decide what are the key performance areas and objectives.
- (2) Design measures to assess performance under each key performance area.
- (3) Assign responsibility to a specific person/s for each key performance area. Make sure resources are allocated, and authority delegated, commensurate with the responsibility conferred.
- (4) Measure performance and give feedback.
- (5) Review performance, preferably in a formal setting, and make the necessary adjustments to plans and processes.

The above steps can be summarised as the *Plan-Do-Check-Adjust* management process.

Each of the above five steps are discussed in turn below.

## Step 1: Decide what needs to be done/ achieved. In other words, decide what are the key performance areas and objectives.

### Principles guiding the application of Step 1

- (a) The key performance areas are derived from the department's strategic plan, which is based on legislative mandates, the national and provincial Estimates of Expenditure and government priorities as contained in documents such as the *Government Programme of Action* and the *Medium Term Strategic Framework*.<sup>1</sup> They are the key objectives to be achieved and initiatives to be taken in the areas of improving business processes, financial planning, customer service and adjustments to current business design and approach to cater for new policies and priorities. The performance management system is the key tool to implement the department's strategic plan. The performance management framework concretises the implementation of the strategic plan. After reading the performance management framework managers should know exactly what is expected of them.
- (b) Deciding on key performance areas should be a bottom-up process. Delivery of quality services, as seen from the perspective of the department's clients, should be the main key performance areas. (Key performance areas like finalisation of a strategic plan, development of business plans, consultation with stakeholders, development of a fraud prevention plan, formulation of a communication strategy, conducting a skills analysis and development of a capacity building programme abound in work plans and performance agreements, and after reading them one may still be unsure about what service is being offered.)
- (c) Key success factors, meaning those things that should be in place to ensure the success of the programme, should also be assigned as somebody's specific responsibility. For example, to ensure that poverty reduction projects are successful, the following must be someone's responsibility:

**Example:** Putting in place a network of implementing agencies (provincial department and NGOs, CBOs, faith based organisations and the private sector), project managers/ development officers and technical support/ consultants for the implementation of poverty relief projects. The establishment of local institutional structures that can identify, own and manage the ongoing implementation of development initiatives in each community.

- (d) Only a limited number of key performance areas/ objectives should be assigned to each manager—a maximum of five. One person can only achieve so much in a year. The whole object of strategic planning is making choices and setting priorities. This should be done rigorously.
- (e) All the key performance areas together should cover the performance of the organisation

<sup>1</sup> See also the Senior Management Service Handbook, Chapter 4, par 9.1(1) and 10.3 for the determination of Key Result Areas.

from a balanced set of perspectives. The balanced scorecard of Kaplan and Norton<sup>2</sup>, for example, emphasises the perspectives of financial performance, customer service performance, performance of internal business processes and learning and growth. (All these perspectives are covered in the examples in the following two chapters, except financial performance.) The eight Batho Pele principles are also useful perspectives on service delivery performance. In fact, these principles define good performance and are a requirement that all departments must fulfill. The same applies to the values and principles governing public administration listed in Section 195 of the Constitution.

## Step 2: Design measures to assess performance under each key performance area.

Since this step is about performance measurement, it is necessary to first explain how performance indicators are designed, before turning to the principles guiding the application of this step.

### How to design performance measures: Three essential elements of a performance measure explained

A performance measure must contain each of the following three elements:

- (i) The performance dimension: What important aspect of the service should be measured?

Public services are complex and multi-dimensional. Many facets of a service are important. These may be the quantity and quality of outputs, process times, waiting times, outcomes or even inputs. (If one knows how many social workers there are at a district office, it is possible to already anticipate the level of service one can expect there, other things considered equal.) To evaluate the quality of social work multiple criteria will have to be applied to all aspects of the service, from assessment of needs, through prevention and early intervention, up to care and development programmes. Other dimensions may be access to the service, information provided to service users, courtesy, complaints handling, customers' perceptions about the quality of service, development orientation, and many more. A decision needs to be made about which dimension to measure.

- (ii) A measurement scale or yardstick: How can the chosen dimension be measured?

This may be the number of days (to measure time), a rating on a five-point scale on the quality of a service against a number of quality criteria, the number of units produced (to measure quantity), an index (such as the consumer price index), or simply an increase or decrease in quantity (such as the number of cases of domestic violence).

What we mean with measurement scale or yardstick can be illustrated by the example of measuring the quality of a social work intervention:

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan, RS and Norton, DP, 1996. The Balanced Scorecard. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Massachusetts.



**Example:** The quality of a social work intervention can be measured by using checklist containing a detailed list of good practice criteria under headings such as the following:

- Assessing the care, protection and developmental needs of a vulnerable person or family.
- Planning a prevention, intervention, protection or care programme.
- Implementing the programme.
- Keeping case records of the person or family in the programme.
- Assessing the outcomes of the programme.

The quality of the service is then measured by evaluating whether the service has met all the criteria on the checklist. The service can also be scored on a five-point scale (for example) against each of the criteria.

(iii) The standard or target to be achieved: What point on my scale would be considered good performance?

If one measures on a five-point scale, should the target be pitched at 1, 3 or 5 of the scale? In the foregoing example of assessing the quality of a social work service, what score, against all the criteria on the checklist, will be considered an acceptable level of service? Or, if the performance measure is time, does one want to achieve 1 day, 2 days or 30 days? For example, the time within which the Court must be given an assessment and recommendation with regard to a youth in trouble with the law, from the date the Court has requested that. Sometimes the target may be an increase or decrease against a number in a previous period (baseline) or a benchmark like the performance of a similar organisation in a similar process.

The above three elements, namely the performance dimension, the measurement scale or yardstick, and the standard or target, together make up a performance indicator. The performance indicator can be formulated in one sentence, but the sentence must contain all three elements.

## Principles guiding the application of Step 2

(a) The most important dimensions of the service, from the perspective of the customer, should be measured. Managers should, however, ensure that a balanced set of dimensions is measured. The focus should include results and not be limited to activities. This principle can be illustrated by the following example:

**Example:** When evaluating the performance of a social work service, the following are important dimensions:

- The quantity of services delivered. This is measured by the number of cases in the case management system of a social work office.
- The quality of services as measured against checklists for assessing the care and developmental needs of a person or family, planning and implementing the care or developmental programmes and assessing the outcomes of the programmes.
- The developmental outcomes. For example, an increase in the number of youths

placed in diversion programmes relative to secure care or in prison, compared to a previous period; and a decrease in the number of youths repeating anti-social behaviour, compared to a previous period.

- The organisational learning that occurred. This can be measured by the number of good practice case studies that were presented at formal learning fora.

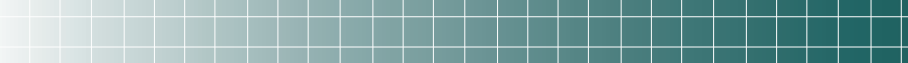
From the perspective of the social work client the important dimensions are the outcomes of the service and ethical considerations such as treating people with respect and dignity and respecting their privacy, despite the fact that they are people with social problems.

- (b) Performance measures should not become absolute ends. Only a few facets of a service can be measured. There are probably many facets that cannot be objectively measured. To avoid one facet becoming an end in itself, an overall objective, stated in general terms, could be set. This overall objective should always be kept in view and improvement along a specific limited dimension should not be pursued at the cost of the overall objective. Success in public administration needs careful judgment and cannot be reduced to a few measurements. Sometimes trade-offs are made whereby certain indicators are deemed more important than others. For example, it may sometimes be necessary to emphasise consultative planning and implementation relative to early completion of delivery. It would be important for evaluative judgements to be sensitive to such trade-offs. Measurements are only indicators of success and help to inform a judgement about success that should be based on many sources of information, not just the (few) indicators on which statistics might be available.

**Step 3: Assign responsibility to a specific person/s for each key performance area. Make sure resources are allocated, and authority delegated, commensurate with the responsibility conferred.**

### Principles guiding the application of Step 3

- (a) The key performance areas derive from the strategic plan and the key performance areas in turn determine the organisational structure. The organisational chart is a visible representation of who is responsible for what. In this manner the organisational structure becomes a tool for the implementation of plans. It must be clear who is responsible for each key performance area in a strategic or business plan.
- (b) Responsibility, authority and accountability should be congruent. The authority to implement projects, or to complete the steps in a process or even to change a process, or to decide matters, and to apply resources necessary to achieve the objectives and associated performance standards under each key performance area, must be delegated to the same



manager on whom the responsibility for that key performance area has been conferred. This is true empowerment. If a manager must achieve an objective but the key actions that he/she needs to take and the key success factors he/she needs to address in order to achieve that objective, are not under his/her control, then it cannot be expected of him/her to achieve that objective. That objective then becomes the key performance area of some other manager. This does not mean that managers should have complete authority but that the authority that is delegated must be enough to enable delivery of the output that is expected from the specific unit manager.

This can be illustrated by the example of the following KPA of a manager responsible for the success of poverty reduction projects:

**Example:** Facilitation of projects and provision of initial set-up capital for businesses/ projects that can deliver benefits to participants, like food produce, social support to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, skills development and job placement, income generation, craft production, child care and social finance, on a sustainable basis.

These projects will be governed by a broad range of criteria that are set out in programme manuals and departmental policies, and which may cover areas such as the following:

- Initiation of projects.
- The developmental objectives of projects.
- The funding of projects.
- Feasibility studies.
- Project management guidelines.
- Beneficiary participation in the design of the project.
- Rules for the financial administration of projects.
- The integration of projects with Integrated Development Planning at local level.
- The management of projects.
- The support services that have to be provided to project members.

The project manager should have the authority to initiate and design the project and complete and submit a business plan. The criteria that a project should meet for it to be approved should be clear so that when the project manager prepares the business plan, these can be met. The authority to approve the project and the amount of money allocated to the project may be at a higher level in the organisation. The approval process must however be clear and a decision must be forthcoming, otherwise the performance of the project manager and expectations that he/she has created for the potential beneficiaries is compromised. Once the project has been approved, the project manager must have the authority to implement the project, even though this authority will be limited by all the requirements that a project must meet as prescribed in relevant departmental policies.

The responsibility structure of the Basic Accounting System (BAS) should be designed in such a manner that a manager knows what resources are at his or her disposal. Appropriate powers should be delegated to the (financial) responsibility manager.

- (c) All managers have unique key performance areas, even if the one reports to the other. The senior manager's key performance areas cannot simply be a repetition of his/ her subordinate managers' key performance areas. Each manager on a higher level in the organisation must add value to the total effort. They cannot just manage according to the papers that flow across their desks. They must ensure that plans, budgets and processes continue to produce the desired outputs and outcomes. They are therefore responsible for the effectiveness of operations. They should assess societal conditions, new needs, or serious failings in the outcomes of programmes or level of service delivery, and take initiatives to address these. The question to be asked of managers at this level during performance review meetings is: "What are you doing about it?" (a problem). Managers on lower levels implement pre-designed processes. Their performance measures are usually efficiency measures, like the time it took to finalise an application for a social grant. The question to be asked of managers on this level during performance review meetings is: "Did you meet the standard?" Managers on this level are required to make incremental adjustments to continuously improve performance as measured against a pre-set standard. A bottom-up key performance area analysis can be done to make sure that each manager in a chain of command has a unique key performance area and contribution to make.

## Step 4: Measure performance and give feedback.

### Principles guiding the application of Step 4

- (a) Designing performance measures is an absolutely wasted exercise if information systems are not set up to actually measure the performance. Consider the following indicator as an example:

**Example:** The time within which the Court must be provided with an assessment and a recommendation in the case of the removal of children from the care of their parents.

In this example, the information about how long it takes in practice for the Court to be provided with such an assessment and recommendation must be routinely collected. The information required for performance management must not put an unreasonable burden on service delivery staff. The performance management frameworks in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Guide only require a limited set of information, so as not to be a burden to the department. The information on the performance measures should flow to the manager responsible for the corresponding key performance area and his supervisor.

Sections 3.4 in Chapter 3 and 4.5 in Chapter 4 give a few pointers towards designing simple information systems.

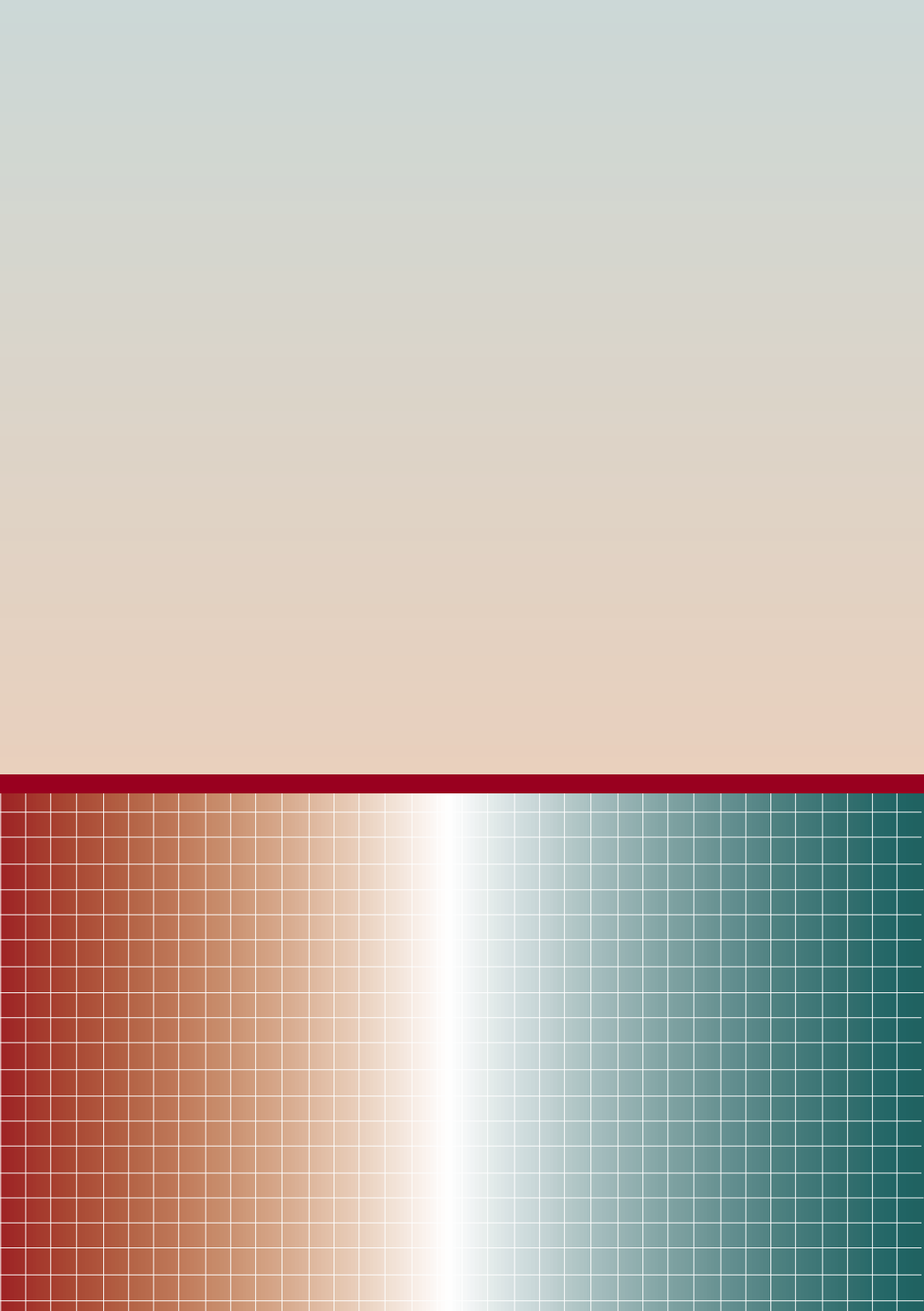
- (b) To facilitate the reporting process standardised reporting formats, based on performance management frameworks such as the examples in the next two chapters (Tables 1 and 2), should be designed. It should be decided what reports, containing what information, should flow to which manager, and how frequently.

- (c) Performance against a performance measure can frequently be plotted on a graph so that everybody can track their performance. This makes the process transparent and will lead to better acceptance of the process.

## Step 5: Review performance, preferably in a formal setting, and make the necessary adjustments to plans and processes.

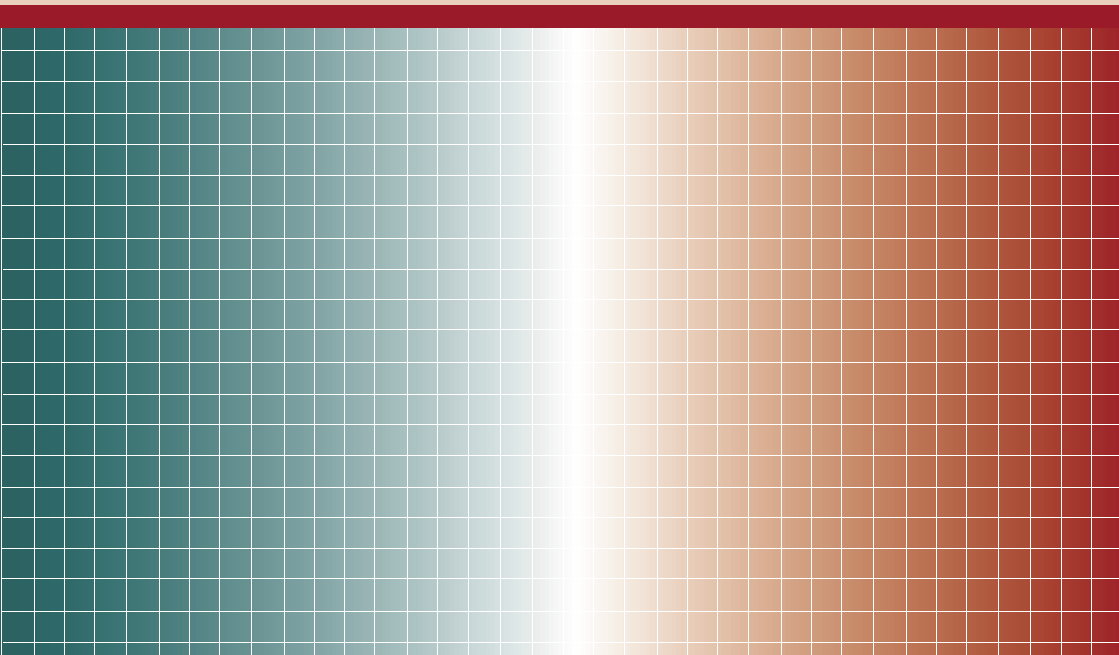
### Principles guiding the application of Step 5

- (a) The purpose of the review is to provide feedback on performance. The review should take the form of a dialogue whereby there is an honest reflection on how well or not one has performed. It could be compared to a sports team assessing a game that has just been played and identifying what was or was not done well. The review is therefore a meaningful exercise of continuously striving for excellence.
- (b) With particular reference to the social work and development arena the review should have an action and learning orientation because in this arena one cannot apply ready-made solutions based only on proven research findings. One has to implement an intervention or a programme based on the best knowledge available at the time, then evaluate success and take decisions to make adjustments to policy and implementation based on the best evidence one was able to collect through routine project management and monitoring and evaluation. This is called evidence-based decision-making.
- (c) The purpose of the review is also to ensure accountability for performance, but it should not be a punitive exercise. Rather, it should be an opportunity for joint problem solving. The whole purpose is not to let problems linger but to do something about them immediately. It can also be a learning experience if managers confronted with the same problems learn from each other.
- (d) The review meeting should not become an opportunity for managers to pass their problems to more senior managers. The responsibility for solving a problem should remain with the manager to whose key performance area the problem relates.



# Chapter 3

## Social work services





## CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter a step-by-step process for designing a performance management framework for social work services is described and an example of a framework and the associated performance indicators is given. A few pointers are also given on how to design a simple information system that will ensure that the information implied by the chosen performance indicators is indeed collected.

### 3.2 Step-by-step process for designing a performance management framework for social work services

#### Step 1: Define each package of service that is offered.

This is the same as defining the output. See the example in Box 1. If this is not done it would not be possible to count the quantity of services or outputs delivered, nor the quality of these outputs or services. The outputs cannot simply be counted by stating that service was delivered to so many families (because the output of the department is not families but some service to a family). The service offering to a family (or individual, or community) needs to be standardised – otherwise it cannot be counted. If, for example, services to one family amount to giving them a food parcel, and to the next family they amount to a comprehensive range of developmental services, one cannot simply throw these diverse services into the same basket and count them as if they are the same.



## Box 1

### Defining the output (What are we offering?) Example: Children, Youth and Family services

- Assessing the strengths and care, protection and developmental needs of children, youth and families in crisis, (eg, after arrest, after abuse/violation, after a young person has run away) during all the stages of prevention, early intervention, statutory process and continuing care.
- Planning and implementation of prevention programmes.
- Planning for and facilitating access to Early Intervention Programmes.
- Planning and implementing programmes for diversion of a child/ youth from the justice system or statutory process with the aim to preserve families.
- Drawing up care and safety plans and Individual Development Plans for children and youths and implementing such plans.
- Facilitating access to/ offering appropriate programmes such as –

- |                                |                                                  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| • youth leadership development | • job skills                                     |
| • wilderness therapy           | • dealing with substance abuse                   |
| • adolescent development       | • sexual offender                                |
| • anger management             | • intensive family support and capacity building |
| • community service            | • dealing with abuse and violence                |
| • social and life skills       | • sport/recreation                               |
| • counseling                   | • parenting skills                               |

- Making recommendations for the transitional care of children/ youths (in foster care, families, extended families, shelters, child and youth care, secure care) while they are waiting for a court decision.
- Making recommendations for the placement /sentence of children/ youths considering options from the least restrictive most empowering to the most restrictive.
- Regularly evaluating and reviewing care plans and Individual Development Plans with a view to achieve reunification of the family and/ or reintegration into the community as soon as possible.



The “package” of outputs, or mix of services, could be changed depending on the budget available to the department and the department’s priorities.

The package could also be broken up into smaller packages. For example, drawing up an Individual Development Plan could be one package. However, counting the quantity of services delivered, and contracting for services from private welfare organisations on an outputs basis, would be easier if a few standardised packages are offered instead of hundreds of discrete small packages.

In the example depicted in Box 1 one unit of service is the delivery of this package to one youth/one family.

## Step 2: Cost each package of service.

Costing each package of service will enable the department to move towards outputs-based budgeting. Outputs-based budgets are budgets based on a standard (pre-calculated) cost for a defined package of service. It is a normative budget in the sense that it tells the department what a package of service should cost if staff work at a pre-determined level of efficiency. An input budget is a budget based on inputs such as staff numbers and goods and services without linking the inputs directly to outputs. When the department funds non-governmental welfare organisations it can also buy packages of welfare services (or outputs) from them at a comparable cost, rather than subsidising their input budget.

## Step 3: Track (count, keep record of) the quantity of services actually delivered.

The department should have a system in place where each package of services delivered to a person, family or community is tracked. In other words, the case loads of each social worker should be tracked through a case management system.

## Step 4: Measure the quality of the services delivered.

In the social work environment the assessment (or measurement) of the quality of the service can be done by means of a tool such as the Developmental Quality Assurance Assessment Framework. Application of the Framework is dependent on the development of minimum standards, which have been facilitated by the national department for a few welfare services.

Developmental Quality Assurance is the assessment of the quality of social work services against policy principles, principles derived from international instruments South Africa is party to<sup>3</sup>, and minimum standards derived from good social work practice. The assessment of a service delivery unit (like a district office) is done by an assessment team and an organisational development plan is then drawn up for the unit. There are comprehensive principles and minimum standards<sup>4</sup> on all aspects of social work. The department should consider whether its staff has the capacity to implement them.

<sup>3</sup> For Example: United Nations. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>4</sup> For example: Department of Social Development: Minimum Standards. South African Child and Youth Care System. May 1998.

As an alternative a simple checklist of criteria/ standards/ requirements that social work must comply with, could be developed. Each standard in the checklist will be in the form of a “should” or normative statement. For example: “Before a social work intervention is made an assessment of the care, protection and developmental needs of the person or family should be made. Such an assessment should meet the following standards...” The checklist will contain quite a number of standards and substandards under headings like the following:

- Assessing the care, protection and developmental needs of a person or family in crisis.
- Planning and implementing prevention programmes.
- Planning and implementing early intervention programmes.
- Planning and implementing statutory processes.
- Planning and implementing programmes for diversion from the statutory process.
- Planning and implementing continuing care, safety and development programmes.
- Keeping case records.

The checklist can then be used as a score sheet to evaluate and award a score for the quality of the services.

## Step 5: Track the outcomes of the social work interventions.

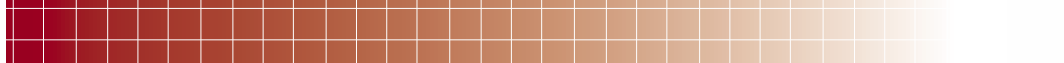
The whole effort is a waste of time if the developmental objectives of social work are not achieved. As a minimum, the outcomes for the participants in the department's programmes must be tracked (as opposed to developmental outcomes for the population of a district, region or the province as a whole).

## Step 6: Collect and describe case studies of what works best to achieve intended outcomes.

Social work is a complex and difficult undertaking and it is essential that the department learns from its own experience. This learning should not be restricted to pilot projects or flagship programmes. Learning will be promoted if it is managed through a formalised process, such as writing best practice case studies and discussing them at regular learning fora.

### **3.3 Example of a performance management framework and the associated performance indicators**

Completing the above six-step process for designing a performance management framework for social work services will result in a performance management framework for a district manager such as the framework depicted by Table 1. The framework uses the well-known performance dimensions of Quantity of Outputs, Quality of Outputs, Outcome and Organisational Learning.



The performance management examples in Table I focus on service delivery to outside service users. District offices should deliver most of these services. A performance management framework should obviously also be developed for the many unique outputs of regional offices and head office, such as –

- formulate and review policy and guidelines for service delivery
- capacity building
- maintain appropriate central registers
- maintain data bases
- manage the budget
- plan for equitable distribution of services
- network and participate in fora

Many welfare services are not delivered by the department but by non-governmental welfare organisations funded by the department. To get a full picture of service delivery in the province, the department should also track the quantity, quality and outcomes of these services.

Table 1: Performance Management Framework for a District Manager

Respon- sibility	Objective	Key performance area (Output)	Performance dimension	Performance measure	Standard/ Target	Frequency of monitoring
District manager	To provide quality, comprehensive, developmental social work services in order to maximise the inherent potential of every individual, family or community	Children, Youth and Family services – see Box 1 on page 16 for the definition of this package of services or service offering.	Quantity	Number of units delivered  A unit is the defined package of service delivered to one person/ one family.	Eg. 100 units for a year.  This will depend on the budget available.	Weekly or monthly.
			Quality	Developmental Quality Assurance Framework and the Organisational Development Plan drawn up after an assessment.	At least one such an assessment per year.	Annually
			Outcome	The outcome indicators are listed at the bottom of the table (next page).	Increase/decrease compared to previous period	Annually
			Organisational learning	Number of good practice case studies described.	One per district per year.	Annually

Respon- sibility	Objective	Key performance area (Output)	Performance dimension	Performance measure	Standard/ Target	Frequency of monitoring
Outcomes						

### 3.4 Step-by-step process to design simple information systems that can support the chosen performance indicators

It is no use setting performance indicators if the information to report on these indicators is not available or reliable. Such information can be collected on an ad hoc basis, for example, when a district office is subjected to a Developmental Quality Assurance Assessment, but should also be extracted by social workers from the detailed case files that are routinely maintained on each person or family to whom the department is rendering services. It has to be pointed out that the most reliable administrative data are those the agency collects for its own operational purposes. When staff collects data solely for measurement purposes, there are no incentives to keep the data accurate. The chances are high that the department will get the data that senior managers or other stakeholders are happy to see. If the data are collected for other purposes (budgeting, resource allocation, general statistics etc.) the chances that the data better reflect reality are higher. The availability of information from administrative records relies on comprehensive case files and a case management system being in place. Such a system would contain, among others, detailed records on each person, family or community to whom a package of welfare services is provided. Each piece of information required by each performance indicator in the performance management framework must be provided for in the case files and case management system – or an alternative source for that information should be identified.

Below follows a step-by-step process to design the performance information system. The process will be illustrated by using the following two outcome indicators taken from Table 1:

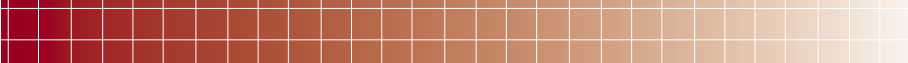
**Examples:** Increase in the number of young people at risk not needing special protection measures or placement away from home or community context, as a percentage of the total at risk, compared to the previous period.

Decrease in the average number of days spent away from home before youths are re-integrated into the family or community, compared to the previous period.

#### Step1: Analyse the indicator and decide what information is needed.

The indicators in the example imply the following information:

- (a) The number of youth at risk on the department's case files.
- (b) The number placed away from home.
- (c) The number of days away from home.
- (d) The same statistics for a previous period.



**Step 2: The social worker extracts this information from the case files and enters it on a pre-designed form, data table or data base.**

The detailed records in the case files on each individual, family or community receiving services from the department should be prescribed and the prescribed records should preferably be captured onto standardised forms. From these detailed records supervisors and managers on different levels only need certain key information. If this information is not extracted and summarised on a periodic basis, the information will be buried in the case files and could not be put to use for evidence-based management decision-making.

**Step 3: The forms flow to the statistics clerk who enters the information into a summary table or a computer database designed for this purpose.**

The information extracted from the case files need to flow to a central point where all the information for a district or for the whole province can be summarised. If the information is at the same time captured into a well-designed computer data base, it becomes very easy to analyse the data and prepare reports that meet the needs of various users.

**Step 4: The statistics clerk or the computer calculates the indicator.**

Depending on the formula for the specific performance indicator, the statistics clerk, or if this has been pre-programmed into the data base software, the computer, can then aggregate the data for all the cases on the department's system, calculate percentages, compare the values with previous periods, or do other analyses of the data for the indicator.

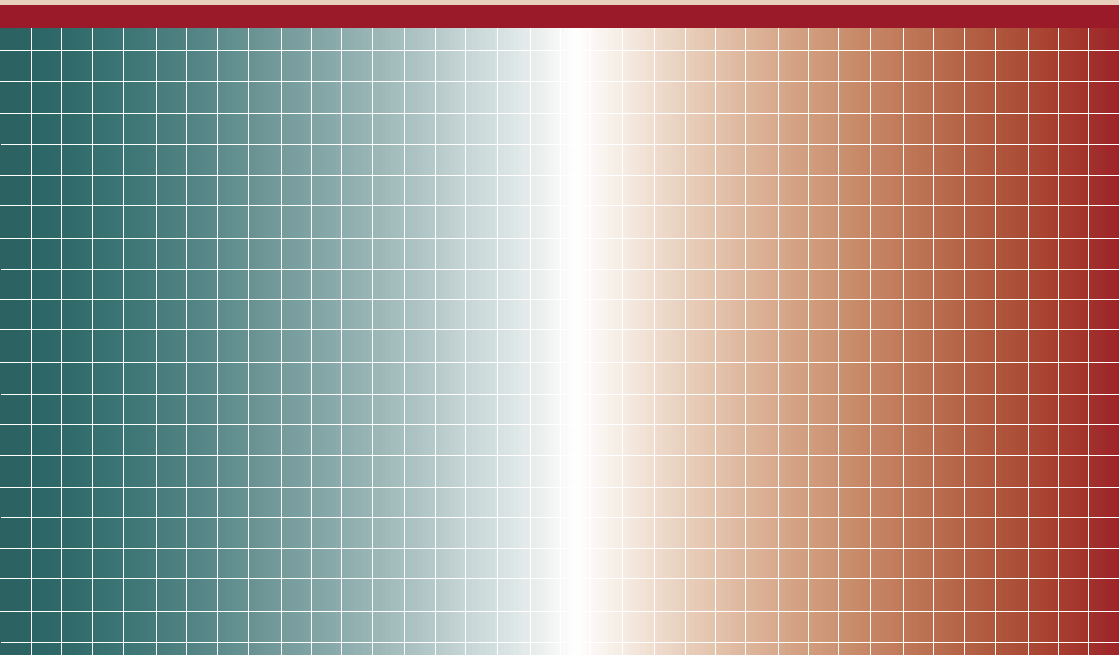
**Step 5: The statistics clerk then prepares a report for the relevant manager.**

The information on the indicator is lastly reflected in a standardised report for the manager interested in that indicator. The person designing the system will have to establish which manager is interested in which indicator because different indicators are monitored by managers on different levels, and the frequency of reporting.



# Chapter 4

Performance  
management for poverty  
reduction programmes





## CHAPTER 4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter an example of a performance management framework for poverty reduction programmes (developmental services) is given and important aspects thereof explained. A few pointers are also given on how to design a simple information system that will ensure that the information implied by the chosen performance indicators is indeed collected.

The PSC annually evaluates the performance of the Public Service against the nine values and principles governing public administration listed in Section 195 (1) of the Constitution. The PSC found the following with regard to the principle "Public administration must be development-oriented" as applied to poverty reduction programmes<sup>5</sup>:

- (1) Basic project management principles are frequently not applied.
- (2) Complete and accurate records of projects are not always kept.
- (3) Projects are frequently abandoned. In other words, after the capital payments (usually in more than one installment) have been made, the project is left to the beneficiaries' own devices with not much support is given by the department.
- (4) Projects are not properly monitored.
- (5) Outcomes of projects are not evaluated.

It is trusted that the notes and examples below will help to address some of the above problems.

### 4.2 An example of a performance management framework and the associated performance indicators

In Table 2 an example of a performance management framework for poverty reduction projects and the associated performance indicators is given.

<sup>5</sup> Public Service Commission. State of the Public Service Report, 2005 and Second Consolidated Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 2002 – 2005.

Table 2: Performance Management Framework for Poverty Reduction Projects						
Responsibility	Objective	Key performance area (Output)	Performance dimension	Performance measure	Standard/Target	Frequency of monitoring
Regional manager	To render developmental services to a targeted group of beneficiaries with the aim to assist them to exit welfare services and progress to self-sufficiency and independence and improved social cohesion.	Putting in place a network of implementing agencies (provincial department and NGOs, CBOs, faith based organisations and private sector), project managers/ development officers and technical support staff/ consultants. The establishment of local institutional structures that can identify, own and manage the ongoing implementation of development initiatives in each community.	Output/deadline	Meeting deadlines	End of 2002	Quarterly
			Quality of output	Comparing output with specification of output.	Specification of what resources/ capacities should be available and could be drawn upon from the network	Quarterly

**Table 2: Performance Management Framework for Poverty Reduction Projects**

Responsibility	Objective	Key performance area (Output)	Performance dimension	Performance measure	Standard/Target	Frequency of monitoring
District manager.  See notes 1 to 3 in the box at bottom of table.		Facilitation of projects and provision of initial set-up capital for businesses/ projects that can deliver benefits to participants, like food produce, social support to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, skills development and job placement, income generation, craft production, child care and social finance, on a sustainable basis.	Project Implementation/ Progress with project from initiation up to close-out of project or hand-over to members to manage the project without further involvement of the department	1. Completion of project against milestones – see note 4 in the box at bottom of table. 2. Project expenditure against budget.	80% of projects are on schedule.	Monthly
			Implementing the project as designed	Doing an audit of the project and checking whether all elements have been implemented or adhered to, as prescribed in the project manual—see note 6 at bottom of table.	No over or under expenditure. All expenses are accounted for. (No discrepancies)	Monthly
			Success factors of projects/ organizational learning – see note 5 at bottom of table.	Number of good practice case studies described.	The project manual.  One per district per year.	Annually

Table 2: Performance Management Framework for Poverty Reduction Projects						
Responsibility	Objective	Key performance area (Output)	Performance dimension	Performance measure	Standard/Target	Frequency of monitoring
			Developmental objectives/ Outcomes:			
			1. Household food security	Number of individuals benefiting from food production	1 000	Annually
			2. Provision and maintenance of social support structures in communities where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high	Number of initiatives to provide social support to people affected by HIV/AIDS	100	
				Number of active care givers	1 000	
			3. Broadening of skills and employment opportunities	Number of youths participating in skills development and employment opportunities created by projects	1 000	
			4. Income generation	Amount of net income of project per member per year	R3 000	
			5. Establishment of community-based child care	Number of aged people involved in community-based childcare	1 000	
			6. Participation of disabled people in projects	Number of disabled people who are members of projects	500	

## Notes to Table 2

1. In many instances the implementing agencies of the projects are NGOs, CBOs and faith-based organisations. The responsibility for managing the projects is then theirs. However, it is the ultimate responsibility of a Department of Social Development to ensure that the outcome objectives of the programme are achieved. So, someone in the department should make sure that progress and performance reports are received from partners and that underperformance is followed up on. This could be the responsibility of regional or district managers.
2. A project manager (the department may call him/ her a development officer) who is a member of staff of the department or the implementing agency must be appointed for each project. This project manager must have entrepreneurial, business and accounting skills to be able to support projects. The level of such skills in communities is generally too low for the department to abandon projects to the business entities/ community groups who own the projects.
3. Projects need to be supported intensively. The department needs to decide how many projects a project manager can handle. A span of control of 10 projects per development officer will mean that the development officer can spend 2 days per month on any one project.
4. A standardised project cycle will facilitate reporting against milestones: Eg, target dates should be set for the following milestones and actual progress against these target dates reported on:
  - Submission of business plan
  - Approval of business plan
  - Disbursement of first tranche
  - Submission of evaluation report
  - Disbursement of second tranche
  - Submission of evaluation report
  - Disbursement of third tranche
  - Submission of evaluation report
5. It is essential that the department learn from successful projects. The successes and the reasons for success should be described and the learning disseminated to all development personnel and partners. This should be a formalised knowledge management process.
6. The manual will describe in detail how projects must be put together and what requirements must be met by beneficiaries, members of the project and the development officer appointed by the department. Each project will be designed by the development officer. The manual lays down the design parameters. The following aspects, amongst others, may be covered by the manual:
  - Who the targeted beneficiaries are.
  - Initiation of projects.
  - Types of activities that can be undertaken, eg, food production, social support to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, skills development and job placement, income generation, craft production, child care and social finance.
  - Minimum requirements for each type of activity.
  - What the department is prepared to fund.

- Undertaking feasibility studies.
- Form of business entity (eg, KwaZulu-Natal is promoting cooperatives).
- Minimum business requirements with regard to, eg, marketing, bookkeeping, management and staffing, governance,
- Project records.
- Technical support that the department will provide to projects.

### 4.3 Different types of indicators

Table 2 illustrates the following different types of indicators:

#### (1) Project management indicators

The two basic performance indicators for a project is whether the project activities are completed on time (against the schedule or the milestones), and whether project expenditure is according to budget.

#### (2) Checklists/ manuals/ specifications/ lists of criteria or descriptive standards

Public services, such as poverty reduction projects, are complex and there are many criteria that they must meet to be considered effective or a quality service. All the requirements that a project or a service must meet can be listed on a checklist, or described in a manual, or a detailed specification of a poverty relief project can be prepared. These manuals, checklists, specifications or descriptive standards (describing the features the project must have or the criteria it must meet) then become the quality standard. Each standard on the checklist will be in the form of a "should" or normative statement, eg, "Beneficiaries should be consulted on the design of a poverty reduction project." Performance against such a standard, or lists of standards, can also be expressed as a number, eg, if there are 10 criteria on the checklist, the output or service can be scored out of ten.

#### (3) Beneficiary Statistics

The outcome indicators in Table 2 are examples of statistics where the number of beneficiaries is counted.

### 4.4 Different key performance areas and indicators on different organisational and management levels

The performance management examples in Table 2 focus on service delivery to outside service users. District offices should deliver most of these services. A performance management framework should obviously also be developed for the many unique outputs of a head office, such as –

- programme budgeting
- marketing support to projects
- undertaking research to determine developmental trends, patterns and impact
- establishing systems for profiling beneficiaries

- developing a data base of beneficiaries
- developing staff capacity
- developing systems for referring people to relevant programmes
- developing a monitoring, reporting and evaluation tool

One critical output of head offices that is highlighted in the framework in Table 2, as an example, is to set up a network of implementing agencies, project managers/ development officers and technical support staff/ consultants to implement the programme.

#### 4.5 Step-by-step process to design simple information systems that can support the chosen performance indicators

It is essential that the information implied by the chosen performance indicators is collected, otherwise the whole effort to prepare the performance management framework, with its key performance areas and indicators, would have been fruitless.

The following step by step process can be used to design the performance management information system. Such an information system can only be designed after the performance management framework has been developed because the framework shows which performance areas and which indicators are important to which manager, so that information relevant to his key performance areas and those of his subordinates can be collected and presented to him in a report.

The process will be illustrated by means of the following outcome indicator taken from Table 2:

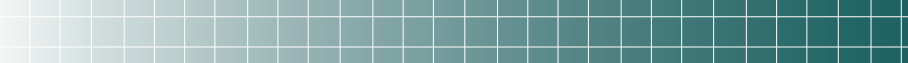
**Example:** Amount of net income per project per member per year (to measure the household income generation of projects).

#### Step 1: Analyse the indicator and decide what types of information are needed.

The indicator in the example implies the following types of information:

- Net income of the project. This implies that basic financial records of income and expenses must be kept and that a simple income statement must be prepared at the end of a year, showing all the expenses and the income received, with the net income at the bottom. This will be facilitated if these records are kept in standard formats.
- The financial year to which the income statement applies.
- A unique name or number for the project so that the project can be correctly identified.
- A list of all the members of the project. This will require that "member" is defined.





## Step 2: Collect the source documents containing information from each project.

The basic source (preferably standardised) document for this indicator is a simplified income statement, with the correct name of the project on top of the statement and the form listing all the members of the project.

It should be the responsibility of the project manager/ development officer to keep standardised records for the project and prepare standardised reports—not the members of the project. Monitoring of projects should be based in the first place on thorough administrative record keeping. Monitoring can't be undertaken as a project (meaning that a team, armed with forms to complete, is sent to projects once a year). Complete data will never be obtained in this manner.

## Step 3: The forms flow to the statistics clerk who enters the information into a summary table or a computer database designed for this purpose.

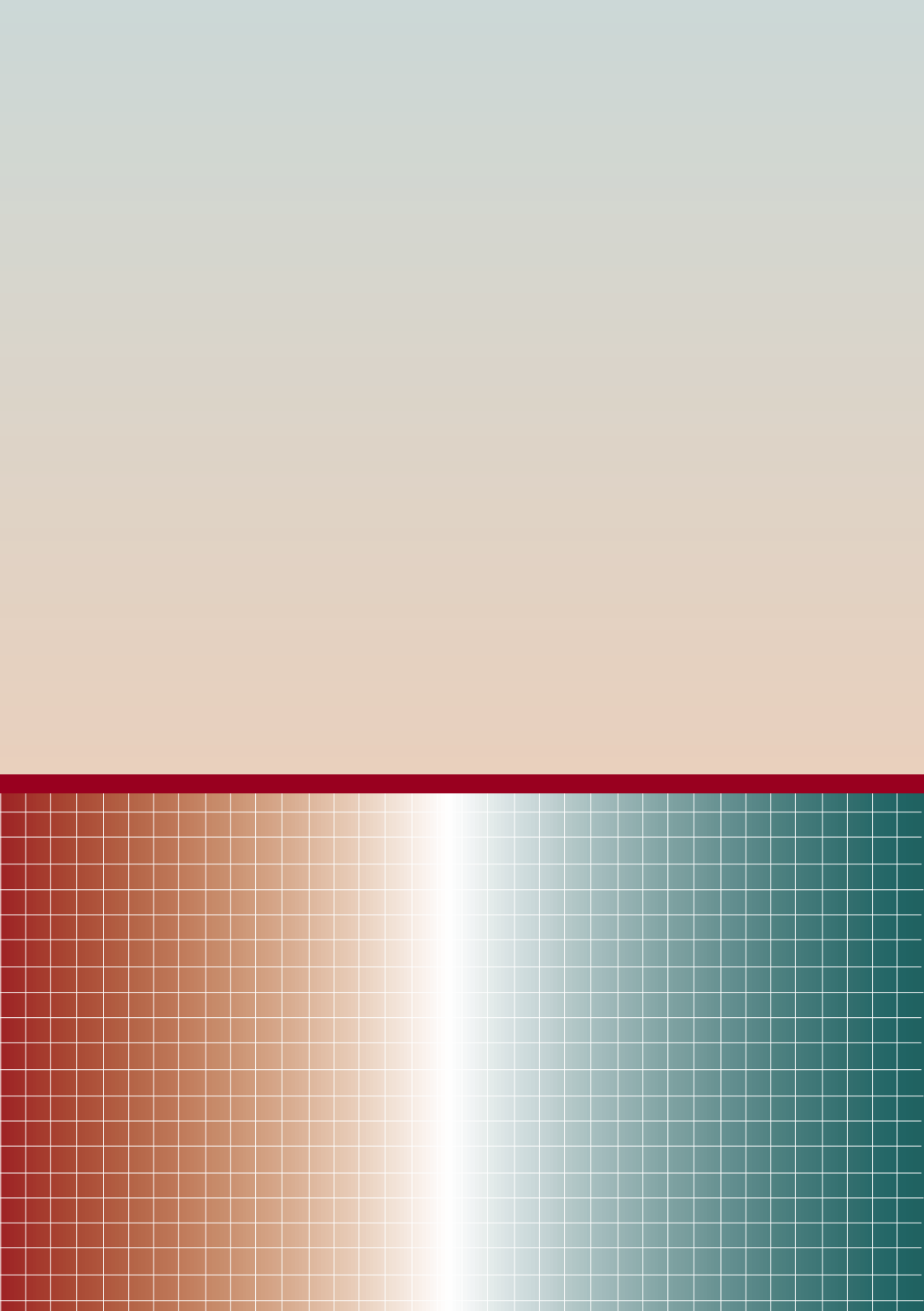
The source documents from each project need to flow to a central point where all the information for a district or for the whole province can be summarised. If the information is at the same time captured into a well-designed computer data base, it becomes very easy to analyse the data and prepare reports that meet the needs of various users.

## Step 4: The statistics clerk or the computer calculates the indicator.

Net income per project per member is calculated by dividing net income for the project with the number of members.

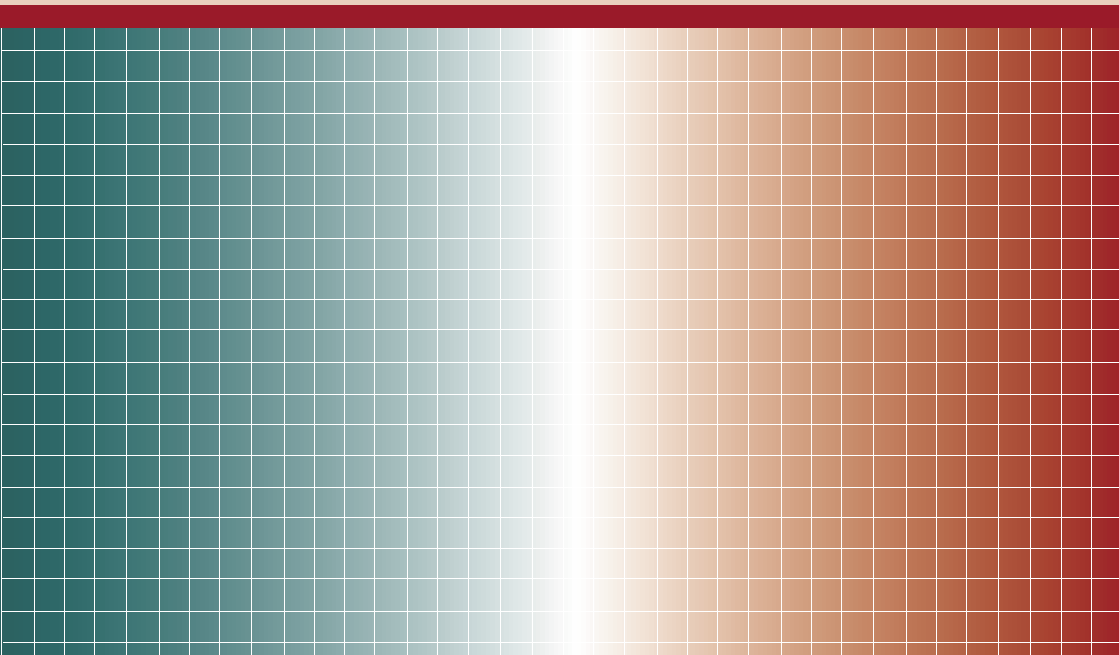
## Step 5: Prepare a report for the relevant manager.

The net income per member is averaged for all the projects in the programme and this number is included in a standardised report for the relevant manager. The report on this indicator is included in a summary report of all the other indicators monitored by that manager. The person designing the system will have to establish which manager is interested in which indicator; because different indicators are monitored by managers on different levels, and the frequency of reporting.



# Chapter 5

## Conclusion





## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 of this guide briefly outlined the theory of performance management. It set out a simple five-step process for the management of the performance of an organisational unit. For each of the steps in the process a few good practice principles were suggested to guide the execution of the particular step.

But to keep this guide as practical as possible, Chapters 3 and 4 described step-by-step processes for designing performance management frameworks for social work services and poverty reduction projects and examples of such frameworks and the associated performance indicators were given. A few pointers were also given on how to design simple information systems that would ensure that the information required by the chosen performance indicators is indeed collected.

To supply managers on all levels with relevant performance information requires that the system of performance indicators and the information systems that support those indicators are designed with some care, by asking the logical questions that people practically ask, namely: What are the important aspects of my work and when will I know that it is a good piece of work? Is it possible to give a few statistics that will demonstrate the outcomes achieved, or is the quality of my work judged by my peers and other stakeholders?

Performance reporting however also requires diligent, routinized record keeping and the maintenance of systems that can supply performance information in a format useful to users on different organisational levels.

It is hoped that this guide will be of help in the daily practical management process of ensuring that the work of social development units gets done.

## NOTES

[illegible]



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