



**education**

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# POLICY ON MANAGING PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

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## Acronyms

<b>AO</b>	Accounting Officer
<b>APP</b>	Annual Performance Plan
<b>AR</b>	Annual Report
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>DORA</b>	Division of Revenue Act
<b>GWM&amp;EF</b>	Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
<b>GWM&amp;ES</b>	Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEC</b>	Member of Executive Council
<b>MTSF</b>	Medium Term Strategic Framework
<b>NT</b>	National Treasury
<b>PGDS</b>	Provincial Growth Development Strategy
<b>PFMA</b>	Public Finance Management Act
<b>POA</b>	Programme of Action
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound
<b>TR</b>	Treasury Regulation

## 1. POLICY BACKGROUND

Prior the development of the policy the Department has been using National prescripts/ guidelines to manage performance information.

## 2. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

The definitions in this policy pertain to terms used in the policy and to other terms in order to facilitate the understanding of its requirements:

- **Performance Information:** it denotes quantitative and qualitative information collected systematically and used as evidence for making judgments and achievement in relation to objectives, plans or intentions. It is information about performance that is suitable for use as evidence in decision making.
- **Information Management:** is a discipline that directs and supports effective and efficient management of information in an organization from planning and systems development to disposal and/ or long-term preservation.
- **Management of Information:** is an element of every job function in the department of Department of Education that has to do with treating the information used or produced in the course of performing job duties as a strategic business resource and in line with legal and policy requirements.
- **Performance Audit:** performance audits offer management invaluable insights into their organization's operations by assessing how successfully objectives are being met. These observations in turn enable management to refine systems and further improve performance. A performance audit is an independent evaluation of the measures implemented by management to ensure the efficient, effective and economic use of resources. A performance audit differs from the other audit functions that public sector organizations must already perform each year:
  - The internal audit which is control and risk-focused
  - The external or statutory audit performed in accordance with relevant auditing and accounting standards
  - The audit of performance information which is a statutory obligation of the Auditor-General, looking at performance against predetermined objectives
- **Audit of Performance Information:** Focused on a specific government policy or management process. The criterion for executing this audit is based on the traits, namely: economy, efficiency and effectiveness which is done by subject matter experts.

### 3. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The Department is experiencing challenges in the accuracy, validity and completeness of the reported performance information from one stakeholder to another. This hampers the effectiveness and the professional running of the Department. Performance Information is very critical in assessing the functioning of an organization. Since there are no formal information management processes and practices, a strong need has been expressed by the Department of Education to develop Performance Information Management Policy which will define information security issues that specifically relate to Information Integrity.

Information is an essential component of effective management across departments and in informing all stakeholders. The availability of high quality, authoritative information to decision makers supports the delivery of department's programme and services, thus enabling departments to be more responsive and accountable to stakeholders.

### 4. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Performance information indicates how well an institution is meeting its goals and objectives which policies and process are working. Making the best use of available information and knowledge is crucial for improving the execution of department's mandate. Performance information is key to effective management, including planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reporting. It also facilitates effective accountability, enables provincial legislator, members of the public and other interested parties to track progress, identify the scope for improvement and better understanding the issues involved.

To ensure that the departmental obligation to the citizens is as effective and economical as possible, the department is required to formulate strategic plans, allocate resources to the implementation of those plans, and monitor and report the results. Common repository need to be set up to provide a centralized control of all programme/projects, so that performance information can be accessed by officials for feedback, reuse, facilitate learning and development to build core strategic management and project management competencies.

Performance information also plays a mounting role in budget allocations and will increasingly be used to monitor service delivery, which implies that the information must be accurate, appropriate and timeous. The most valuable reason for measuring department's strategic and performance plans is that what get measured gets done. If the department knows that its performance is being monitored, it is more likely to perform the required tasks and perform them well.

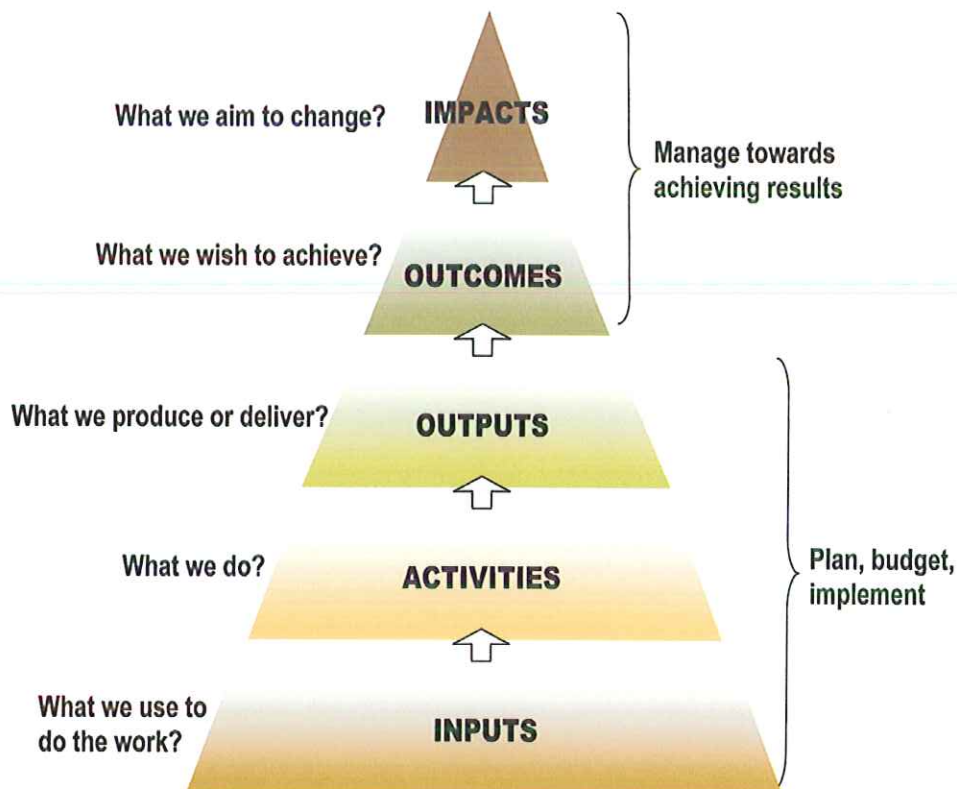
### 5. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To plan, coordinate, monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of all Departmental programmes and projects.
- To clarify standards for performance information in support of regular audits of such information where appropriate;
- To improve integrated structures, systems and processes required to manage performance information;

- To facilitate communication for improved common processes, methodologies, systems and best practices consistently to the needs of the department in supporting the Provincial Government on its obligatory mandates to the citizens;
- To match organizational goals with all relevant mandates, policies, strategies and plans;
- To facilitate evidence based decision making and promote accountability and transparency by providing Parliament, Provincial Legislature and citizens with timely, accessible and accurate performance information;
- To act as an early warning indicator to the MEC, AO and Senior Management by diagnosing challenges, instigate necessary intervention strategies in a timely manner, bench marking, and reduce operational risks.

## 6. M & E PRINCIPLES

Performance information needs to be structured to demonstrate clearly how the Department uses its resources to deliver on its mandate. When monitoring and assessing outcomes and impacts, it needs to be kept in mind that department interventions can also have unintended consequences. These need to be identified and monitored so that risks can be managed and corrective action can be taken. In managing results, budgets are developed in relation to inputs, activities and outputs, while the aim is to manage towards achieving the outcomes and impacts. The figure below illustrates the relationship between the core performance information concepts of the M&E principles:



### **Government outcome approach**

- Past experience shows we improved access to services and expenditure (inputs) but have not being converted into positive outcomes.
- Still experiencing challenges of skills (human capital), poverty, spatial segregation, inequality of income & wealth and service delivery backlogs.

Government approach on M&E

**Step 1:** Outcomes Government wants to achieve from MTSF, Manifesto, MDG, PDGS, Departmental plans, etc.

**Step 2:** What priority outputs must we measure against the set outcome

**Step 3:** Where should we focus on in order to achieve outputs

**Step 4:** How much to invest to achieve the best mix of desired outcomes

### **The power of measuring results:**

- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

## **7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

Reporting requirements is done from a legal and accounting point of view to promote general accountability. The Department of Education is regulated by a variety of South African statutory and regulatory legislation. The most vital of these are the following:

- The Constitution of the Republic of SA
- Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1 of 1999 as amended
- Division of Revenue Act (DoRA)
- Treasury Regulations (TR)
- Public Service Act
- Policy Framework for Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM&ES)
- The Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (GWM&EF)
- Public Service Regulations 2001
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000) (PAIA)
- Relevant Department of Education policies and legislation
- Protection of Personal Information
- Public Audit Act (25 of 2004)

## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Role of Accounting Officer**

Performance reporting can be viewed as an enabling mechanism that allows the Accounting Officer (HOD) to track progress against what has been planned and what is actually achieved in the form of service delivery outputs. The AO is required to submit monthly/ quarterly departmental performance reports to the MEC and also to provide necessary interventions for the identified barriers that may comprise achievements of set objectives

### **Role of Senior Managers**

The offices of the Senior Managers will be responsible for coordinating performance reports from the responsibility managers within their Programmes. These offices will serve as a point of entry for Strategic Planning, Research and Project Coordination Directorate during the gathering of performance information. In essence, the management of performance information for individual Programmes will be done at these offices.

It is the responsibility of these offices to ensure that their sub-programmes adhere to the submission deadlines. The Senior Managers will also be responsible for information validation by ensuring that the information submitted reflects the true events that happened during the reported period. All submitted reports by Programmes will be expected to be signed-off by the relevant Programme Managers.

### **Role of Line Managers (Responsibility Managers)**

An important issue for line managers is that of reporting performance against predetermined objectives. Each line manager is responsible for compiling a report regarding the outputs generated within that sub-programme. This means that the exercise of compiling monthly/quarterly reports cannot be delegated to junior staff and such reports are also expected to be signed-off by the relevant managers.

### **Role of Strategic Planning, Research and Project Coordination**

The Unit will be responsible for the overall monitoring of the strategic outputs as well as monitoring progress towards departmental service delivery outcomes. The coordinating office will also provide formats of monitoring & evaluation that will be used by the department within the provincial /departmental framework and guidelines.

### **Role of Provincial Treasury**

Provincial Treasuries need to fulfil a monitoring role from an accountability perspective within the performance reporting paradigm. The implementation of strategic plans/objectives needs to be tracked. Officers in Provincial Treasury tasked with this responsibility need the following documents to execute the task at hand: Five Year Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Quarterly Performance Reports and the ultimate non-financial reporting document, the Annual Report.

### **Role of National Treasury**

Once National Treasury receives inputs from Provincial Treasury, an evaluation of the inputs is conducted to determine the quality of the inputs. If it adheres to reasonable standards it will be forwarded to Department of Basic Education otherwise it will be sent back to Provincial Treasury to take up the highlighted issues with the Department of Basic Education to note or verify the information for correctness where applicable.

National Treasury will use the information to draft the following reports: a sectoral quarterly performance report, a government wide quarterly performance report, a press release and a report to MinMec once final written signed off letters and final datasets are received from Department Basic Education stating that they have noted or verified the correctness of the information.



### **Role of DBE**

Department of Basic Education will receive the quarterly information via information files from the respective departments. DBE must interrogate the information (against targets in the Annual Performance Plan) and if discrepancies are found these needs to be communicated directly with the provincial counterparts. Provincial Department will effect the necessary changes and the final information will be submitted to Provincial Treasury as well as the National Department.

It is important to note that the status of the datasets received by DBE is "signed off by provincial HOD". If any changes are made to the information based on interaction from DBE it needs to be signed-off again by provincial HOD. Once the Provincial Department has agreed to the proposed changes, the updated final information sets and the sign-off letter need to be re-submitted to DBE who need to submit the final narrative reports, information sets and signoff letters to National Treasury who will then draft the final report.

## **9. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING**

The Department is expected to meet its service delivery commitments, targets, objectives and outputs, which are aligned to National and Provincial Government priorities.

At the end of each quarter, each Senior Manager is required to:

- Compile a report according to and as described in an Annual Performance/ Implementation Plan of the Programme on an approved format
- Complete a self-assessment report on the performance and submit the consolidated programme report to the Directorate: Strategic Planning, Research and Project Coordination for consolidating Departmental report and performance analysis
- Ensure that the sub-programme managers assess their performance objectively on the 4 point scale and to promote transparency and accountability in the reporting processes
- Ensure that documentary proof/ portfolio of evidence is kept and provided to Branch Managers and Directorate in order to support their performance information
- The Directorate will conduct verification to ensure accuracy and technically adequate information about programme features and defensible results
- Provide documentary proof/portfolio of evidence to auditors, both internal and external, to comply with performance audit legislative framework
- The Directorate after completing the programme performance analysis will convene a review session and provide Senior Managers with comments, observations and recommendations for improvements to be effected on the report where necessary and in future quarterly reports
- The Directorate will thereafter compile Departmental quarterly reports to the Executive Authority/ MEC, Provincial Treasury and DBE through the AO, on the performance of the Department
- The Directorate will act as the overall advocate and custodian for performance information within the Department.

## 10. THE QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Information must be accurate, valid, relevant, reliable and complete. Systems for collecting and validating performance information are likely to be more robust when the Department:

- **Define the quality of the information in advance:** Performance information can be costly to produce. The Department must therefore consider how information will be used and the cost of collection, and to strike an appropriate balance between cost and the comprehensiveness and reliability of information.
- **Establish clear performance measure definitions:** Documentation of definitions, the source of the information and the arrangements for their collections and analysis have been shown to facilitate a common understanding between those designing information systems and reporting performance and those collecting the information.
- **Designate who is accountable for performance information:** Experience shows that information is more likely to be reliable when managers are assigned responsibility for information collection and reporting.
- **Managers are active in obtaining good quality performance information:** Managers need to ensure that appropriate resources are devoted to information collection and validation. Where managers actively monitor performance information, they are able to identify variations in performance which call for examination. Managers must conduct reviews to assure themselves that the department's performance information systems are a reliable basis for capturing and reporting performance information.
- **Develop and implement effective controls over the collection of information:** Performance information may be collected from the department's information systems, surveys and external sources. It is important to establish controls which will ensure the reliability of information; the controls will vary depending on the source of the information. Predetermined checks need to be undertaken with regard to the collection, review and verification of performance information.
- **Establish and implement clear guidelines for the validation of performance information:** The guidelines for performance information management should be made available to all responsibility managers at the beginning of each financial year.

## 11. SUBSTANCE OF REPORTS

Senior Managers will ensure that the content of the Performance Report satisfies the following:

- The First Quarter Report is a review of progress made in the first three (3) months of a given financial year.
- The Second Quarter Report is a review of progress made in the six (6) months [midterm] of a given financial year.
- The Third Quarter Report is a review of progress made in the nine (9) months of a given financial year.
- The Fourth Quarter [12 months] Report and final report is a review of progress made in that financial year.

- The Departmental Plans e.g. Strategic Performance Plan (5 year plan), Annual Performance Plan (3 year plan), Implementation Plan (1 year plan), Cluster POA, MEC Delivery Agreement, Score Card, etc will be used as a tool for collating, monitoring and evaluating performance information.

## 12. PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

- Programme Managers to keep records and furnish documentary proof/ portfolio of evidence to Branch Managers and Directorate Strategic Planning, Research and Project Coordination in order to support the reported performance information (Evidence Based Reporting).

## 13. TIME FRAMES FOR SUBMITTING REPORTS

- Senior Managers are required to submit quarterly reports to the Directorate within five (5) working days for non financial performance information following the end of a quarter.
- Submission by the AO to Provincial Treasury and Premier's Office is by the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> respectively at the end of the quarter

## 14. ANNUAL REPORTING

- The requirements for monitoring and evaluating programme performance in a given year are completed with the publication of an Annual Report. The quarterly reports that have been prepared in a particular financial year will form the basis for compilation of the Annual Report. The same procedures described for quarterly reporting will be followed in compiling the Annual Report.

## 15. GENERAL

- Quarterly performance reports assist the Executive Authority/ MEC and AO to review and facilitate effective performance monitoring, evaluation and corrective action
- Performance review enables the Programme Managers to monitor, evaluate and take corrective action and to ensure that service delivery stays on track
- Dissemination of performance information to stakeholders should be centralized to the Directorate to ensure accuracy and consistency of the reported performance information.

## 16. POLICY REVIEW

This policy takes effect from the day of approval. This policy will be subjected to review annually from the date of its approval through consultation with all stakeholders and amendment will be done when needs arises

## 17. POLICY APPROVAL

Signed at Nelspruit on this 06 day of October 2010

  
**MOC MHLABANE (MRS)**  
**ACCOUNTING OFFICER**