PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE BOTSWANA PUBLIC SERVICE

ABSTRACT

Performance management is a reform initiative introduced by the Public Service to facilitate delivery of the national vision goals. It is driven by a Performance Management System strategy whose objectives are to provide a planning and change management framework that is linked to the national development plan and budgetary process; enhance the capacity of the government to achieve the desired level of socio-economic governance; improve the performance capacity of public officers; and focus the efforts of the Public Service towards the achievement of the national vision goals.

Management structures have been put in place in the Public Service to facilitate effective management of the reform initiatives and provide fora for consultation. These include the Ministerial Performance Improvement Committees, the Committee of Permanent Secretaries (PIC FORCE) and the Economic Committee of Cabinet.

To ensure that ministerial functions and structures support the delivery of the vision goals, each ministry has to define its vision, as a subset of the national vision, and mission, which links the purpose for its existence to the vision. Each ministry then develops a strategic plan based on the policy priorities, which are derived from the national vision, and articulated in the National Development Plan.

The performance of ministries is reviewed quarterly by respective Permanent Secretaries and their Ministers at the ministry level and at half yearly by the President at the Economic Committee of Cabinet level. The Permanent Secretary to the President also reviews the performance of each ministry with the relevant Permanent Secretaries twice a year.

1.0 THE NEED FOR CHANGE

1.1 General

National socio-economic and political development agenda are normally designed to respond to the changing demands, expectations and aspirations of a nation. They are also designed to respond effectively to the pressure of the changing global environment and for a nation to meet its obligations effectively, both internally and internationally, it must have an efficient Public Service. The Public Service is the principal actor in macro socio-economic policy making infrastructure and an architect of an enabling environment for national development. Hence, it is imperative that the structures, policies and operations of the Public Service effectively facilitate the realization of national socio-economic needs as articulated in either the national vision statement or the national development plans.
1.2 The Burning Platform

The government of Botswana has, since independence, been concerned about the quality of its service delivery to the public and its ability to compete effectively in the global market. Some of the key issues that created the need or the burning platform for change included:

- lack of proper planning and management of projects resulting in non completion of some projects and cost overruns for others;

- inefficiency in the management of resources resulting in serious resource wastage;

- insensitivity of the Public Service to the needs of the public;

- absence of strategic plans at ministry level to facilitate effective implementation and review of the policy goals contained in the national development plans; and

- the need to be competitive in the world market
2.0 THE NATIONAL VISION

2.1 Vision Development Process

In response to the national burning platform, the government set up a Presidential Task Group in January 1997 to formulate a national vision that would guide national development planning take stock of the achievements made on the national aspirations set at the time of Independence in 1996 and to formulate another set of aspirations to be achieved by the year 2016 when the country is fifty years and to provide the basis for future Public Service reforms.

The Task Group, through an elaborate consultative process with the public, eventually produced a national vision which is “VISION 2016 – A LONG TERM VISION FOR BOTSWANA: TOWARDS PROSPERITY FOR ALL.” The vision defines the following seven achievement areas to be realized by the nation, i.e. come the year 2016 Botswana shall be:

- An educated and informed nation
- A prosperous, productive and innovative nation
- A compassionate, just and caring nation
- A safe and secure nation
- An open, democratic and accountable nation
- A moral and tolerant nation
- A united nation
2.2 The National Vision and the National Development Plans

The national vision has set out a long-term national development agenda from which national development plans define those aspects of the vision that should be achieved within a medium term, which is six years in the case of Botswana. Ministries are, therefore, expected to develop their strategic and operational plans based on the sectoral policy priority areas defined in the national development plans.

2.3 PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS

Government efforts to improve on its service delivery to the public did not make the desired impact. Hence, public outcry about poor service delivery by the Public Service grew even stronger. Consequently, the government conducted a study, between 1994 and 1997, to determine what could be done to address the problem. The study recommended the review of the earlier reform initiatives and introduction of a Performance Management strategy with the following components of Decentralization, Computerization of Personnel Management System, and Performance Management System as new reform initiatives. These initiatives have since been implemented from 1999.

The decentralization of personnel functions was meant to empower ministries to manage their Human Resources. Before the decentralization of personnel functions all personnel matters were centrally handled by the Directorate of Public Service Management on behalf of ministries, which created a lot of delays in personnel decisions at the ministry level.
The introduction of computerization of personnel management system was intended to provide ministries with up to date personnel information to facilitate quick and effective decisions on human resource management issues, while the introduction of performance management system was meant to provide an integrated and holistic approach to Public Service reforms; and an effective infrastructure for the delivery of the ministerial mandate, and the national development plan policy goals and ultimately the national vision.

Work improvement teams strategy was introduced to facilitate identification and solution of operational bottlenecks that affected efficiency levels of ministries and their ability to deliver quality service. This has made considerable impact on those ministries that have used it effectively.

3.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)

The Performance Management System is the most important reform initiative that is geared at transforming the Public Service, its objectives are:

- To provide a planning and change management framework that is linked to the national development planning and budgeting process to ensure that the people of Botswana get maximum benefit out of the national resource use.

- To enhance the capacity of the Public Service to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively, pitch itself at the desired level of socio-economic governance and be able to compete at the global level.

- To improve the capacity of the public servants to be more productive.
• To focus the efforts of the Public Service on the facilitation of the achievement of the Vision 2016.

3.1 Performance Management System Development Process

The installation of PMS into the Public Service was anchored on the national vision and from that point of reference appropriate strategies were designed to facilitate realignment and refocusing of Public Service plans and operations towards the achievement of the Vision 2016 goals. These strategies included creating an infrastructure for the management of reforms; training public servants on change management; development and implementation of strategic plans by ministries; carrying out measurement and review of planned activities by ministries; and putting in place appropriate human resource management systems.

3.2 Infrastructure for the Management of Reforms

A number of structures were created, at different levels in the hierarchy of the Public Service, to facilitate effective management of reforms and coordination of the implementation of the Vision 2016. These included Ministerial Performance Improvement Committee (MPIC) at the ministry level; Performance Improvement Committee (PIC-Force), as a committee of all Permanent Secretaries; Economic Committee of Cabinet (ECC), the Vision Council, Directorate of Public Service Management, Botswana National Productivity Center.

a) Ministerial Performance Improvement Committee (MPIC)
The Ministerial Performance Improvement Committee is a committee of heads of department within a ministry and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary. Its role is to manage all the reform activities within a ministry. The Permanent Secretary is answerable to the head of the Public Service Permanent Secretary to the President on reform issues in the ministry and also reports to the PIC-Force on progress the ministry makes on reforms.

b) Performance Improvement Committee (PIC-Force)

This is a committee of all Permanent Secretaries and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary to the President. At the PIC-Force meetings, Permanent Secretaries share their experiences, learn from each other, and suggest solutions to the common problems they face during the implementation of PMS. It is also a feedback forum for the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the President.

c) Economic Committee of Cabinet (ECC)

This is a committee of Cabinet and is chaired by the President. All Permanent Secretaries also attend it. It is a briefing forum where ministers inform the President and their colleagues on the progress their ministries make on reform.

The committee also provides an opportunity for the ministers to share their
experiences, learn from each other, and suggest solutions to the common problems their ministries face during the implementation of PMS. It is also a feedback forum for the President.

d) Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM)

The Directorate is responsible for the formulation and ensuring effective implementation of human resource management policies in the Public Service. It is also responsible for the promotion of productivity initiatives in the Public Service. It has, by virtue of its role, been appointed to be the overall manager of reforms for the Public Service.

e) Botswana National Productivity Center

Botswana National Productivity Center is the leading consultant for the Public Service in the Performance Management System project. It provides the entire consultancy needs of ministries under the overall coordination of the Directorate of Public Service Management.

f) The Vision Council

This was set up to manage the implementation of the Vision by the Public Service, the private sector and the other members of the civil society. The Council is made up of members from all the sectors of the economy who periodically report on the status of sectoral performance in the implementation of the achievement areas for the Vision. The Council has developed a monitoring
and evaluation system to facilitate effective monitoring of sectoral performance.

3.3 Training

There were two sets of training. Training on mindset development and change management; and training on strategic plans development skills. Transformation requires a certain mindset, hence it is imperative that people who are to be involved in transformation initiatives must be tuned to think and see the change process positively and be able to manage it effectively as the first step. This training was given to Permanent Secretaries, middle level managers, supervisory and operative staff in ministries.

Training on strategic plans development and change management skills were given to Performance Improvement Coordinators who were specially appointed to help Permanent Secretaries in the management of PMS in ministries.

3.4 Development and Implementation of Strategic Plans.

Ministries developed their strategic plans, based on the policy priorities outlined in the National Development Plan. In the strategic plans they articulated what they would deliver to the public during the six years planning period. They also prepared annual performance plans from the strategic plans to define what they plan to achieve during a particular year.
3.5 Measurement and Review of Planned Activities

Performance measurement and reviews have been introduced to ensure that planned activities are delivered at the scheduled time. Ministries are to measure the progress they make on the planned activities, which are reviewed quarterly at the ministry and PIC-Force levels and half yearly at the Economic Committee of Cabinet level. However, heads of department hold monthly reviews within their departments.

At the ministry level, a minister reviews the progress of the ministry with the Permanent Secretary, while the Permanent Secretary reviews with the heads of department. On the other hand, at the PIC-Force level, the Permanent Secretary to the President reviews the progress with all the Permanent Secretaries. At the Economic Committee of Cabinet level, the President reviews the progress with all the ministers.


A motivated human resource is essential to a transformation process. It is, therefore, necessary that appropriate human resource management systems are developed to facilitate this. In this regard, the following instruments are being developed:

a) A performance appraisal instrument that would facilitate effective management of the performance of individual officers;
b) A performance based reward system to provide an equitable system for rewarding good performers.

c) A performance contract for executive leadership to ensure that only those who deliver are retained in the service;

4.0 Lessons Learnt

The key lessons learnt during the 3 year period we have been implementing the reforms are:

- Meaningful Public Service reforms must be driven by clearly defined national vision.

- For a Public Service to succeed it must have the support of both political and administrative leadership at all levels i.e. reform is leadership driven.

- Change agents driving the transformation process must be skilled, creative, resilient and have the fortitude to withstand the pressure of their responsibilities.

- Because of the size of the Public Service and the number of interest groups involved, its transformation process is a slow one.

- Public Service reform is an expensive venture.
• Reforms require strong partnership between the Public Service, labour organizations, the private sector and the NGOs because reform decisions affect all players in the economy.

• Reforms also require strong partnership among the reforming entities for purposes of developing and sharing new ideas.

• To maintain the motivation to support reform over the long period, there must be quick hit results to demonstrate the benefit of reforms.

• Reforms thrives best under democratic government system
REFERENCES


