THE CIVIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (CSPIP) IN GHANA: LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

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<td>CDT</td>
<td>Capacity Development Team</td>
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<td>Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme</td>
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<td>Civil Service Reform Programme</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department of International Development</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>The International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>MDAs</td>
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<td>NIRP</td>
<td>National Institutional Renewal Programme</td>
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<td>OHCS</td>
<td>Office of the Head of Civil Service</td>
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<td>PAS</td>
<td>Public Administration System</td>
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<td>PIP</td>
<td>Performance Improvement Programme</td>
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<td>PNDC</td>
<td>Provisional National Defence Council</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
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ABSTRACT

Civil Service reform has become a standard feature of the drive to achieve better governance in African countries, looking for better administration systems and implementingconditionalities of international financial institutions. Ghana’s Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) is one such major effort to improve public administration in the country since 1994 with donor support. As part of a national programme to revitalize public sector institutions, CSPIP aims at improved delivery capacity of the Service characterized by better customer/client satisfaction; improved service delivery; a new code of conduct and work ethic; a transparent and accountable Civil Service free of corruption; and a Service with vision, mission and committed leadership.

An internal and official review by the implementers of the programme in January/February 2000, 3½ years into the first 5-year cycle of CSPIP seemed to point to a rosy picture of achievements even including new attitudes of the civil servants. However, that was more of a typical self serving input budgeting type of review which tended to equate results with what had been put into the process.

Conclusion from a survey of both Civil Servants and selected client perceptions is that, while there has been marginal improvements in capacity of the Service, the main coordinates of the reform – attitudinal and cultural change, reduction of corruption, better work ethics and overall customer service remain worsened. There is no clear evidence of better focus which is evidence of weak managerial leadership and to some extent
politicization and donor drivenness of the exercise. CSPIP seems to suffer from the usual implementation problem of public service reforms – lack of effective implementation and leadership. These must be addressed in the next phase of the exercise rather than search for new instruments.
I. INTRODUCTION

Many countries in Africa have over the past two decades engaged in reforming their Public Administration Systems (PAS). As measures for administrative re-engineering, these policies have aimed, at improving the performance of the public sector, especially the civil service, as a means to accelerate overall national development. Efforts have been directed at downsizing, efficient financial management, customer satisfaction and effective governance.

Even before the recent demands on their PAS, triggered off by years of stagnation in the face of globalization, conditionalities demanded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) adjustment programmes, had called for measures aimed at re-inventing the state, in order to address the new imperatives of the paradigm shift, involving state and private sector relationships. In viewing the ‘African Economic Crisis’ not just as an economic issue but one that has several components including the capacity of the central government machinery, the secretariat of which is the Civil Service, good governance and performance-oriented public sector institutions, have all become part of programmes of donors and the International Institutions (IFI) in Africa. (The World Bank 2001).

Ghana has made attempts in the past to reform its public sector (See Section IV) culminating in a more focused attempt to improve the capacity of the core Civil
Service through a Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) since 1994. The purpose of this paper is to:

- Examine the Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme reform intervention in Ghana.
- Analyze the impact of the Reform programme on the operations of the Ghanaian Civil Service.
- Examine the perceptions of both Civil Servants and their clients as a result of the exercise.

The paper is organized in four sections as follows: Section I, the introduction is followed by a general overview of public sector reforms and performance management. (Section II). Section III focuses on Ghana’s public sector reforms in general and links these with CSPIP. Section IV looks at CSPIP in practice in terms of its implementation, achievements and challenges according to the “official view”. This is followed by a survey result of the authors of Civil Servants and their clients view of the CSPIP in Section V. The final section VI draws conclusions and lessons for future reforms.

II. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The need for administrative re-engineering becomes necessary where administrative change is insufficient to keep an administrative system abreast of developments and hence performance gaps appear, that is, when there is a significant discrepancy between what is being done and what ought to be done (Downs 1967, p. 191). According to Cowling (1963 p. 138), “Men, considering
the world, see things that are bad, situations that are wrong, conditions that affront and feel compelled to reflect upon the source of anomalies which distress their natural desire to inhabit a world that yields their own high standards of desirability”. Caiden (1969, p. 165) reinforces the above point when he notes that the need for administrative reform derives from the malfunctioning of the natural processes of administrative change. Reform movements begin with the intention of removing obstacles to change, or of improving on the results of change. He adds that reforms are man-made, deliberate, planned and not natural or accidental. Our own position then is that performance management in the public sector must address the capability of public sector institutions to effectively and efficiently deliver anticipated missions. Hence targets, benchmarks, measurement, accountability and quality assurance are all very important ingredients in the quest to achieve performance management in the public sector.

Keeling (1972 p. 32-31) in his definition of the concept of ‘management’ believes that the use of the word management in the public service should be broadly consistent and if possible, identical with its use in business administration. Keeling defines management as the search for the best use of resources in pursuit of objectives. The key words in the definition are ‘objectives’ and ‘resources’. In both the public and private sectors, this is where management is relevant. Management is about the mobilization and deployment of resources to achieve intended objectives. Performance management then runs through the processes of policy implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback with the ultimate aim
of harmonizing the implementation of such policies with their objectives. What emerges then is the need to establish benchmarks or indicators for the management of public sector institutions.

The foregoing raises several issues with regard to public sector performance measurements. For example, with regards to policies that have been implemented: (a) could there have been new outcomes that may be preferable to the previous ones; (b) would different assumptions might have resulted in alternative strategies and if so, could they still be compared with actual outcomes; (c) can the results of changes in the use of resources be measured; and (d) whether improvement or deterioration can be quantified? In the past, it had sometimes been difficult, or even debatable, to apply measurement standards at least, to some public sector institutions, on the grounds that their outputs were non-quantifiable or non-quantitative.

One, however, agrees with Keeling (1972 p. 188-119 Lawton and Rose 1994) that evaluation can be made of outcome or output, (with the assumption that the input-output relationship is predictable), based on the effectiveness of output, or of efficiency and that will usually fall into one or all three of the following varieties:

- Measurement against absolute standards
- Comparative measurement of achievement, and
- Measurement of direction and achievement over time.
The scale of measurement may range from the whole public service, through the civil service, a government department, semi-autonomous institutions to minor sub-systems or individuals. In all these, it is important to stress that, perhaps, the most meaningful form of performance management would be outcome efficiency, measured against established standards. The issues of the right calibre of personnel, the availability of proper management and monitoring mechanisms and different weights placed on monitoring indicators, are all important in the performance management effort.

III. **OVERVIEW OF GHANA’S PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS**

a) **Content of CSPIP**

Even though public administration systems in different countries have historically been different, it stands to say that public sector institutions are the main media through which governments transact the business of state management. At the heart of public sector institutions is the civil service, which in most countries, is the central administrative machinery of government, charged with the overall responsibility for policy initiation and formulation, project and programme implementation through various departments and agencies, and the coordination of these programmes and projects, including parastatals and semi autonomous institutions.

In Ghana, however, the almost unitary Civil Service inherited at Independence in 1957, has been sub-divided semi-autonomous administrative institutions, with the result that the Civil Service of today refers to the core ministries, departments and
agencies. The 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution lists the Public Services of Ghana to include thirteen such Services in addition to the Civil Service with room for more. (1992 Republic Constitution of Ghana Chapter 14, 190):

- The Civil Service
- The Judicial Service
- The Audit Service
- The Education Service
- The Prisons Service
- The Parliamentary Service
- The Health Service
- The Statistical Service
- The National Fire Service
- The Ghana Customs, Excise and Preventive Service
- The Internal Revenue Service
- The Police Service
- The Immigration and Legal Services
- Public Corporations other than those set up as commercial ventures; and
- Such other public services as Parliament may by law prescribe.

There are parallel reforms in some of the other services as well as public sector wide reform, known as the National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP). CSPIP is a component of the much wider National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) targeted at the Public Service. The NIRP is an umbrella programme and it aims at creating a new vision for the Ghanaian Public Service by crafting a Service which is:

- Proactive, efficient, effective and innovative.
- Citizen and Client-focused, market sensitive and committed to national goals and aspirations.
• Capable of partnering with civil society.
• A rallying point for good governance.
• Capable of creating, empowering, and facilitating an enabling environment for private sector development.

However, in practice the CSPIP has been instituted and managed separately under the oversight of the Head of the Civil Service.

The Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), of the central government constitute the subject matter of the CSPIP. The main activity of the reform enterprise in this area is the re-engineering of the structures, organizations and mandates of these agencies in line with government policies on decentralization and service delivery, private sector led economic development and public-private partnership.

b) **CSRP Antecedent to CSPIP**

The Ghanaian Civil Service has had a chequered history. From a high pedestal of being described as one of the finest and brightest in the Commonwealth, the Service had, by the early 1980s, degenerated into a reactive, corrupt and visionless one. (OHCS Internal Documents).

A catalogue of reasons explain the above state of affairs. These include: political instability; bad governance; economic decline and the politicization of the Civil Service. To begin with, there has been the scarcity of financial, material and
equipment resources. Human resource capacity was another issue. There are skills shortages in key areas such as policy analysis, financial management and procurement, whereas parts of the Service were over-bloated in terms of disguised unemployment. Low morale and motivation, coupled with a decline in discipline and work ethic resulted in low productivity and low performance. There was also the lack of customer orientation. The cumulative effect of the deficiencies enumerated above was a Civil Service which by the mid 1980s, had a poor corporate image among the Ghanaian population.

In an attempt to reform the Civil Service to make it an efficient and effective instrument in carrying out its expected mandate, a Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP), 1987-93 was launched by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Government. The CSRP was undertaken as a component of a system-wide World Bank – led economic and administrative reforms in Ghana (Structural Adjustment Programme – SAP). The interventions in reforming the Civil Service included the following:

- The introduction of a new performance appraisal system based on objective and target setting.
- A merit rather than a length of service based promotion system.
- The revision of the Scheme of Service as a strategy for the determination of career paths.
- The re-enactment of the Civil Service Law of 1993 after a revision of the old law.
- The establishment of an Incomes Policy and associated financial pay rationalization schemes.
- The retraining of redeployed and retrenched workers.
• The development of training plans.
• The production of personnel procedures.
• The introduction of management concepts for example, performance management.

However, evidence on the ground in terms of the impact of the CSRP indicated that the programme had very serious shortcomings. These stemmed from the following:
• The programme was crafted as a technical instrument by ‘consultants’ and mission experts and imposed top-down with little local participation and ownership.
• The Office of the Head of Civil Service was the main focus of the reform enterprise rather than the Civil Service as a whole.
• The programme lacked an effective machinery to ensure evaluation and follow-up actions.
• Donor deadlines, time-tables and funding arrangements created imbalances.

The Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP), therefore, evolved to plug the loopholes and critical gaps identified in the conceptualization and implementation of the CSRP.
c). **Rationale for CSPIP**

In addition to the problems associated with the CSRP, certain legal and socio-economic developments in the early 1990s set the stage for the introduction of the CSPIP.

To begin with, in 1993 a new Civil Service Law (Civil Service Law 1993), which provided a framework for consolidating the CSRP was promulgated. The Law made provisions for some fundamental reform structures which included:

- The institution of the post of Head of Civil Service with Ministerial rank as distinct from the post of Secretary to the Cabinet. Hitherto the two had been merged.

- The creation and appointment of Chief Directors as public officers to take charge of the Ministries and the Office of the Head of Civil Service.

- The organization of Ministries’ Headquarters into four distinct specialized functional areas namely, Administration and Finance; Human Resources Management; Planning Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation; and Statistics Research Information Management and Public Relations.

- The creation of a Reform Coordinating Unit, a Public Complaints Unit and a Committee on Administrative Reform to support reform activities.

At the same time, the Government came out with its Vision 2020 Document which envisaged that the rate of growth of the Gross Domestic Product had to be raised from 5% to 8-10% if ordinary Ghanaians were to experience sufficient
improvement in their standards of living. This needed an institutional response from the Civil Service which is the main agency within the machinery of government, charged with assistance in policy formulation and policy implementation.

Government’s response to the above situation was the introduction of a National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) as a means of undertaking thorough, deep-seated institutional renewal and capacity building throughout the public sector. CSPIP is a component of the NIRP targeted at the core Civil Service.

IV. **CSPIP IN PRACTICE**

a) **The Key Objectives of CSPIP**

The key objectives of CSPIP are as follows:

- Institutional capacity building.
- Enhancement of performance and efficiency.
- Improvements in service delivery to citizens.
- Strengthening of human resource management.
- Instituting good governance.

The main instruments of the reform activities are:

- The institutionalization of Performance Agreements in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).
- The institutionalization of Performance Improvement Programmes (PIP).
- Service delivery activities.
- New Codes of Conduct and Work Ethic were to be signed between Chief Directors and Directors; Regional Coordinating Directors; Heads of Department and District Coordinating Directors.
Performance Improvement Programmes (PIPs) which were supposed to be new management tools for the MDAs and blueprints for institutional capacity building were to be developed under the scheme. They were to emphasize improvements in service delivery, promote accountability and results orientation, facilitate monitoring and evaluation and to develop in-built mechanisms for skills training, target setting, performance measurement and leadership.

The Service Delivery component of the Programme was to focus on quality, the timely delivery of services; cost savings and an application of the concept of value for money in public business transactions.

The Code of Conduct and Work Ethic Component was aimed at building a corps of Civil Servants with a strong work ethic and committed to combating such negative work ethics as habitual lateness, irregular attendance to work, drunkenness, being deliberately and unduly slow in carrying out an activity or assignment, engaging in the unproductive comparison of better conditions of service elsewhere, and using this as an excuse not to work, among several others.

b). **Methodology for Implementing CSPIP**

A three-stage methodology was developed to implement the CSPIP. These were: (i) The capacity diagnostic stage, (ii) The development stage, (iii) The top down analysis and review stage.

i) **The capacity diagnostic stage**,
This is the first level of the capacity building process and it involves the stock-taking of management/organizational review exercises. The key activities at this stage are:

i. The formation of Capacity Development Teams (CDTs).
ii. The completion of self-appraisal instruments.
iii. The conduct of stakeholder/beneficiary/user surveys or assessments.
iv. The conduct of diagnostic workshops.

a) **The Capacity Development Stage.**

This stage covered the development and implementation of strategies to enhance performance and improve service delivery. The key activities in the stage are:

i) The development of performance improvement plans.
ii) The validation of the performance improvement plans.
iii) The implementation of the performance improvement plans.

b) **Top Down Analysis and Review Stage.**

In case any issues or problems having system-wide implications and which, by their nature could not be addressed by any institution on its own came up during the capacity diagnostic stage, the office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS) was to facilitate their resolution in one of two ways:

- By resolving the problems within the purview of the OHCS mandate or
- By involving other organizations such as the National Institutional Renewal Programme, the Ministry of Finance and other Central Agencies in collectively solving those problems outside its jurisdiction and mandate.
c). **CSPIP In practice: Implementation, Achievements and Challenges: An official view**

An official review of CSPIP was undertaken by the Government of Ghana and the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID) the main financiers of the CSPIP in January/February 2000 (Office of Head of Civil Service Documents). The review came to the conclusion that after the first 3½ years of the first 5-year cycle, CSPIP was making the following impact:

- The Reform Performance Programme has halted the decline in the Civil Service.
- CSPIP had improved processes by cutting down unnecessary bureaucracy.
- CSPIP had changed the attitudes and behaviour of Civil Servants and had created learning processes for them through capacity building programmes.
- Through the programme, the Civil Service had acquired a new corporate image, was improving service delivery and promoting public-private partnership.
- Civil Servants were now re-oriented to customers and clients through a new culture of consultation.
- The Civil Service was addressing issues of poverty, health, and the provision of social infrastructure to new communities, women and children.
- The Civil Service was promoting good governance through transparency in service delivery and a new code of conduct.
Like most official project impact assessment documents, the picture carried in the said report could not be the total story. Indeed the report carries an exaggerated picture of the achievements of CSPIP. There was a confusion between activities and impact or achievements, the classical “input accounting” view of many a public sector activity.

There is no doubt that specific activities have been undertaken under CSPIP. These include:

- The acquisition of vehicles and computers
- The formation of Capacity Development Teams
- The carrying out of Beneficiary Surveys.
- The carrying out of Diagnostic Workshops.
- The development of Performance Improvement Plans.
- The launching of Codes of Conduct and Work Ethic Brochures for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and District Assemblies and Regional Coordinating Councils.
- The signing of Performance Agreements or Contracts between Chief Directors and other senior Civil Servants with the Government. These Agreements are intended to be new management tools and they include deliverables covering institutional, sectoral targets, cabinet decisions and others, and thereby provide means of ensuring accountability to politicians, stakeholders and a source of performance evaluation.

As at 1999, over 200 Performance Agreements had been signed with Chief Directors, Regional Coordinating Directors, Heads of Department and District Coordinating Directors.
d) **CSPIP: The problems remain the nagging questions**  
**The reality**

In spite of the enormous claims made for the success of CSPIP, the reality on the ground seemed a far cry from the “myth”. One had to compare any achievements with the practical problems that CSPIP was supposed to address, namely:

- Customer/client satisfaction through the Improvement of Service Delivery.
- A New Code of Conduct and Work Ethic.
- A Transparent and Accountable Civil Service free of corruption as part of the National Platform for Good Governance.
- A Civil Service with a Vision, Mission and Committed Leadership.
- Institutional Strengthening/Sustainable Capacity Building.

In other words, the CSPIP like any administrative reform enterprise, was conceived to tackle perceived administrative gaps in the Ghanaian Civil Service. It was to bridge the gap between the actual and estimated or expected performance of the Service. The bottom line of the measurement of the success or otherwise of CSPIP must therefore be predicated upon how far the above variance has been narrowed or eliminated.

V. **SURVEY OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND CLIENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF CSPIP**

a) **Survey of Perceptions**

For the execution of this study, a perception survey was undertaken by the authors to solicit the views of both Civil Servants and clients of the Civil Service on their views about the Civil Service since the implementation of CSPIP.
The Civil Servants were from the Central Ministries in Accra, while the clients came from the general public and quasi-governmental institutions. One hundred and eighty-four completed questionnaires out of a total of two hundred and forty questionnaires for the Civil Servants were returned. This gave a response rate of 76.7%. For the clients/customers, one hundred and seventy-five out of two hundred questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 87.5%.

The questions asked and results are presented in Tables 1-4 are limitations to the exercise to be noted. In the first place the survey was limited to Civil Servants and clients in Accra, the capital city and not the whole country. While the number of Civil Servants were quite representative of all the echelons of the staff, those of clients were too few. However, the authors are comfortable at the results given the close similarities between the two sets of surveys.

b) **Civil Servants’ Perceptions about CSPIP**

For more than five years of the implementation of the programme, 6.5% of Civil Servants at the seat of Government had not heard about it. The majority of Civil Servants (56.0%) only think their clients are moderately satisfied with them while 30.4% felt that clients are less satisfied with their services today compared with 5 years ago. Only 11.4% perceived improved client satisfaction. Most revealing was the fact that 69.8% of Civil Servants believe that they are corrupt or more corrupt today five years after the CSPIP was introduced! This is corroborated by
the fact that despite CSPIP, 73.5% of them think there has either been no significant change with regard to vision or focus of the service or that, that the situation has worsened. Again, in answer to the issue of capacity of the Civil Service, 6.5% observed significant improvement, 35.3% some slight improvement, 35.9% did not see any change and 21.8% think the capacity of the Civil Service has weakened despite CSPIP. It was therefore no surprise when 80.4% felt that CSPIP had not achieved its objective and one could imagine that the 14.1% who answered that CSPIP has led to positive change could be among the few who benefited from the “goodies” that CSPIP brought in terms of computers, cars, and training which is often judged in terms of per diem allowances rather than capacity building.

c) **Clients’ Perceptions about CSPIP**

With one exception, there were unanticipated parallels between the results of the survey of Civil Servants and their clients. That exception had to do with whether the respondent knew about CSPIP’s existence. Naturally while 93.5% of Civil Servants knew about it 72.6% of their clients surveyed had not heard about it or probably heard but not taken notice. This is quite significant because it means demand for performance improvement would be weak.
Table 1

Perceptions of Client Satisfaction

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Clients</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately satisfied</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less satisfied</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very less satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Highly dissatisfied)</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified/no response</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100.00% 100.00%

The clients’ satisfaction mirrors those of the Civil Servant that provided the service. Among the clients 57.1% were moderately satisfied (56% for Civil Servants); 29.7% were either less or very unsatisfied (30.4% for Civil Servants). While 7.72% of their clients felt the Civil Servants were as corrupt as before or more corrupt. On the whole the clients were more generous in their perception of increase in corruption with 52.6% being of the view that the corruption level has been the same. The breakdown of their response compared with the civil servants were as follows:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Clients</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much more corrupt</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little more corrupt</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As corrupt as before</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The perception of clients with regard to the clarity of vision and focus of the Civil Service is almost the same as that of the Civil Servants themselves, with both of them not seeing much significant change for the better and even about 13% indicating perceived worsening with regard to sense of direction (See Table 3).

**Table 3**

**Vision of Civil Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Clients</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much more focused</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No significant change in the situation</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less focused with regard to vision</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Finally, the bottom line of the CSPIP was to enhance the capacity of the Service. The majority of the clients following the pattern indicated by the service providers themselves think the Ghana Civil Service today has not gained in capacity or lost some capacity. In either case, only a third recorded moderate improvement while a much smaller number saw (2.3% in the case of clients) significant improvement.

**Table 4**

**Civil Service Capacity Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Clients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Servants</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Much weaker       9.8%   6.3%
Weaker           12.0%   8.0%
The same         35.9%   45.7%
Improved slightly 35.3%   33.1%
Improved significantly 6.5%   4.6%

100.00%  100.00%

d) **A Tale of Two Evaluations**

Our findings stand in sharp contrast with the evaluation which was done almost two years ago by the implementers of CSPIP. Based on activities that study painted a rosy picture of success. But five years after the introduction of CSPIP both civil servants and selected clients are of the view that there has been little improvement in client satisfaction, with more less satisfied today than those who say they have seen some improvement in the service to clients. The perception is that the Civil Service is more corrupt today than before CSPIP. However, there seems to have been some perceived improvement in Civil Service capacity by as much as a third of those Civil Servants and their clients surveyed in the case of clients still almost an equal number (31.8%) felt the capacity is either weaker or much weaker. The majority of either respondents do not see a Civil Service which has a clearer vision.

It must be noted that these responses were from the Civil Servants in the Central Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Accra, who are supposed to be conversant with the policy elements and impact of CSPIP.
In almost all the questions fielded, their responses gave a negative assessment of CSPIP. To them, the Programme has not changed anything positively in the Ghanaian Civil Service.

It is our considered opinion then that CSPIP has failed to achieve its intended mandate. To begin with, the Ghanaian Civil Service is still saddled with bureaucratic inertia and has no serious initiative. Indeed, it looks as if the paradigm shift in the country’s development strategy – i.e. from a command economy to a private sector led economy – has not dawned on the Service in order for it to make the necessary adjustments to provide the institutional support needed. It is still a slow, paper pushing Service.

The necessary transformational leadership required for any meaningful quantum change is absent. Even though Performance Contracts have been signed the quality of leadership in the Service is still poor and the contracts are not followed up, analyzed so that the results can be used to improve the system. It looks as if bound by its own past, the leadership of the Service has failed to exploit the full potential of the reform objectives.

What about the Reform objective of a New Code of Conduct and Work Ethic for Civil Servants? Where are the underpinnings of the Reform initiatives and good governance indicators which emphasize: Integrity; Customer Sensitivity; Courteous Behaviour; the Cost-Effective use of National Assets and Resources
and the Rejection of Corruption? Corruption in the Service is both systemic and endemic. CSPIP was launched way before the incumbent President, J.A. Kufuor assumed office in January 2001. The President is championing “zero tolerance of corruption” in life. There seems to be inadequate response from the Civil Service. A recent survey by the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD – Ghana, 2000) on Governance and Corruption in Ghana significantly rated Government Ministries as the third “least honest” among public institutions in Ghana. And, these were the organizations which were the core beneficiaries of CSPIP. The other two institutions which were more corrupt than the Civil Service were the Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU) of the Police Service and the Regular Police itself.

What about training which must be and was part of the change process? Has training in the Service become institutionalized as a result of CSPIP? What about the sustainability of training programmes? The authors found that training in the Service is still ad-hoc, uncoordinated and not strategic in intent. Even for the District Assemblies where most junior and lowly – skilled personnel are to be found and for whom specific financial provisions have been made as part of a national District Assemblies Common Fund, training is haphazard. The Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA’s) Outreach Training Programme for staff of the District Assemblies in 2001-2002 reveal that several of the staff have not even sighted the CSPIP document before, let alone claim ownership of it.
One is tempted to conclude that CSPIP has fallen into the trap of several reform initiatives in Ghana which have been full of concepts, workshops and seminars without any serious impact on the ground. This has been the tragedy of what we choose to call the ‘Talk No Action States’ (TNAS) of many a developing country.

VI. CONCLUSION AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

What are some of the practical lessons that can be learnt from CSPIP in Ghana?

To start with, even though some Ghanaian officials associated with the Reform initiative are at pains to point out that CSPIP is a home-brewed and home-grown initiative, deep down, it is clear that CSPIP is a donor-driven project whose mainstreaming has become difficult. After the workshops, seminars, provision of vehicles and other hardware as well as reports, what is most needed, which is the inculcation of reform ownership and reform sustainability have been lacking. It is important therefore to mainstream CSPIP and make it a corporate property of the Ghanaian Civil Service. The only segment of the Civil Service who championed the programme was the Head of the Civil Service and few officials who were directly responsible for the execution of the programme.

Following from the above is the issue of attitudinal change in CSPIP. CSPIP assumed that the instruments of Performance Contracts, Brochures on Work Ethic etc. would in themselves result in better performance. Unfortunately, they did
not. This must not surprise anyone versed in change management. Perhaps the most difficult part of any change process is attitudinal change. This needs a lot of careful management. Here, the change agent becomes almost a psychologist, going into the fundamental questions dealing with why people behave the way they do. This was not seriously addressed. The contracts were signed but the managers remained typically Ghanaian.

Furthermore, in a country like Ghana where consumer associations are not developed and where illiteracy is high, it will be naïve to assume that the population at large will, as a matter of right and principle, insist on customer care and customer satisfaction from Civil Servants. A whooping 72.6% of clients did not even know about the programme. Unlike some other institutions in the Public Service, the Civil Service operates almost in a monopolistic position and its services and products are only offered by the Service. CSPIP should have undertaken a major citizens’ sensitization programme on their rights and expectations from the Civil Service as a result of the perceived changes.

We have already alluded to the problems that have been created by the non-institutionalization of training in CSPIP. Training energizes people and puts them on the path of innovation and mental liberation. The trained worker is not only empowered with skills but is also an agent for change. The lack of institutionalization and integration of sustainable training in CSPIP was one of its major weakness. To-date, the de jure Civil Service College of Ghana does not play any role in CSPIP.
CSPIP needs a strong, motivated and strategic leadership, which is transformational. Such a leadership must not consider its mandate as part of a political handshake from a political gravy train. Whilst it is true that CSPIP is a public policy measure, its managers must not behave as if everything they do depend unduly upon pleasing the politicians. At the end of the day, the survival of CSPIP might not depend upon the political correctness of its managers but their ability to provide the type of managerial leadership which inspires action and change. As at now, that type of leadership has not been evident. Indeed, CSPIP is being implemented at a time when most managerial leadership positions (Chief Directors) in the Civil Service have not being filled substantively.

We have presented information on the genesis of CSPIP, its management and implementation, and what has been done. We have also done an analysis of some of the constraints militating against the achievement of objectives by CSPIP reform and what has to be done for the future.

As a reform programme, CSPIP has run for close to a decade with the last five years being the active implementation phase. CSPIP must show practical results in the area of its core mandate, which is, transforming the Ghanaian Civil Service from an under achiever to a high flyer. This objective has not so far materialized. It is our considered opinion that creative and business – like leadership is needed
for this to happen. The tendency to create new instruments should be avoided instead of making CSPIP work.
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