INNOVATION FRAMEWORK
FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF SOUTH AFRICA

CONFERENCE EDITION

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Innovation Framework for the Public Sector

Foreword by the Head of the Centre for Public Service Innovation

The Public Sector controls 40 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Innovation in the Sector will enhance the developmental state that seeks to bring about a better life for all in our country.

The publication of this important Innovation Framework, by the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI), is one of the milestones in our democracy. South Africa is part of the global village and needs to become more and more competitive.

This Framework shows the way for our developmental state to enhance competitiveness in South Africa’s Public Service so that it can realise the country’s Vision 2014 and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Countries that are competitive, in this ‘flat’ world of globalisation, are using innovative talents from both inside and outside the Public Sector.

Our country cannot afford to lag behind in this fast-moving world.

We all know that developing countries, in one way or another, have to free themselves from the shackles of underdevelopment. Our Public Sector is no exception. It has to be innovative to meet the expectations of the citizens of our country.

In this Framework we reject perceptions that:

1. The Public Sector cannot innovate.
2. Public Sector managers are not good at providing inspirational views of the future.
3. Public Sector managers are not good at delegating effectively.
4. The Public Sector is a wasteful bureaucracy.
5. The Public Sector is a tax burden.
6. The Public Sector is overly concerned with regulations.
7. The Public Sector is corrupt.
8. The Public Sector is too concerned with politics.
9. Government is a distant entity, an “other”, that has little to do with the everyday lives of people.
10. Government and business are in opposition to each other.

The CPSI calls on the Public Sector to discredit these notions. It calls on the men and women in the Public Service to put aside their selfish interests, to embrace the principles of Batho Pele and to serve the nation innovatively.

The critical question always being asked is: “How do I know if I’m an innovative individual or a public servant?”

This Framework addresses that question.

This Framework seeks to:

1. Improve the coordination of activities in the Public Service.
2. Integrate new and simplified technology for service delivery.
3. Foster faster and simpler processes.

The Framework encourages:

1. Using incentives, rather than the dogmatic adherence to legislation and regulation, to improve service delivery.
2. The use of the Private Sector and volunteers in partnerships for delivery.
3. Attitude change in the Public Service.

This Framework is directed at all government services. These include policing, education, social service, transportation, economic development, employment equity, defence, justice and agriculture. This is directed, and must take place at, all spheres of governance in the Public Sector.

We publish this Framework in draft form for now. Our intention is to disseminate it to the Public Sector for discussion ahead of the CPSI’s inaugural Public Sector Innovation Conference in November 2007.

The CPSI encourages debate and discussion everywhere in the Public Service, and in its allied sectors, so that substantive issues can be discussed at the conference. After this conference all the inputs will be considered for
integration in the Framework.

CPSI will use this Framework to measure the level of innovation in the Public Service of the Republic of South Africa during the 2008-09 financial year.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the team at CPSI for all the work that went into producing this draft: Dumisani Mphalala, Fakazile Myeza and Thulani Ngubane.

Well done guys!

We encourage everyone to submit comments on this draft to:

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1. Introduction

In order to enhance its work, the CPSI is producing this Framework for use in the Public Sector to coordinate innovation for better service delivery.

We support the view that business processes, that constantly innovate, have promoted new ideas and that these processes can be replicated practically by any organisation.

There must be innovation in the Public Sector to reduce the frustrations encountered in dealing with government, to reduce government spending, to ensure consistent, fair and equal services, and to manage knowledge.

Innovation occurs efficiently in the context of the creation and the availability of relevant knowledge. This Framework will thus integrate knowledge management in the Public Service as an important element in innovation.

In this Framework the CPSI calls for innovation gusto in the public sector.

For the CPSI, innovation gusto means the refusal by public servants to let fear prevent them from innovating.

Public servants must will themselves to learn new things, must be keen to solve problems and, last but not least, be audacious.

The innovative spirit must engulf the entire Public Sector. Every public servant must have an innovative attitude.

Innovation fervour in the public sector is important for the growth and development of our country.

2. What is the Innovation Framework?

This is a guide to the Public Sector of South Africa. It encourages innovation and aims to:

1. Ensure that Public Service entities and their services are well known to the public.
2. Ensure that the Public Sector is accessible in terms of handling times,
telephone answering delays, confirmation of business needs, and replies to queries and problems.

3. Ensure that the Public Sector treats citizens politely and attends to their needs.

4. Ensure that services are as regular as publicised.

5. Ensure that the Public Sector completes transactions correctly and corrects errors quickly and effectively.

6. Ensure that the Public Sector meets service standards.

7. Ensure that the services provided to citizens do not require unreasonable distances to be travelled.

8. Ensure that all Public Sector offices are able to assist citizens.

9. Improve the quality of service delivery in education, health, water and sanitation, transport, energy, social security, roads, redistribution of land and employment programmes.

This is the essence of the Public Service and is consistent with the “Green Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery” of 1996 and which became a White Paper in 1997.

This Innovation Framework seeks to encourage everyone at all levels in the Public Sector to innovate. We call on public servants to be innovative in dealing with problems and crises in the Public Service.

In the same vein we say that public servants must not become complacent where there is proven excellence in service delivery. There must be a spirit of continuous improvement in the Public Sector such as we have seen in the South African Revenue Services, the Pretoria Academic Hospital, the Independent Electoral Commission and others.

3. Background

South Africa has had to innovate to escape past governance practices. These are aptly described by Minister Fraser-Moleketi:

South Africa can be a powerful analogue of the situation that pertains between the developed and the developing world.

Apartheid, often described as colonialism of a special
kind, wreaked exactly the same havoc with the lives and institutions of the majority of the population as colonialism did in the rest of Africa.

It systematically eroded indigenous systems of governance. It artificially replaced true leadership with clientelistic impostors, loyal to the colonial administration, but remote and unaccountable to the population itself.

Apartheid attacked the moral fabric of society, weakening institutions and thus allowing a foothold for unacceptable behaviour.

Apartheid redrew territorial boundaries, artificially determining the settlement patterns of the indigenous people. In order to create a situation in which “divide and rule” was the organising principle, a plethora of little Bantustan administrations was created - each of which was under-resourced and without any economic or other sound rationale for its existence. Relationships of patronage became entrenched as important means to access and distribute resources and power.

It created a situation where the majority of the population was systematically excluded from the economic benefits that society has to offer, and deprived it of the public services that the state, under normal circumstances, makes available to its people.

It denied a proper and appropriate education to children of the Black community - resulting in generations of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Minister Fraser-Moleketi (2002)

On 27 April 1994 South Africans ushered in democracy through the ballot. Three spheres of governance were established, with the sphere of local government only being introduced in 1996.

National government developed national policies and regulations and
set standards. Nine provinces were established to implement social policy. Each had provincial legislative and executive authority. Local governments were responsible for services and infrastructure.

The principles of democratic participation, equity, accountability and shared responsibilities were entrenched in several legislative pieces.

Citizens began to develop high expectations of service delivery. Different “state” administrations were integrated into one administration for the whole of South Africa.

The seed of innovation for administering the new era had to be sown. This was evident in the laws that were passed. The Public Finance Management Act of 1999 is one such law in South Africa.

It is through this Framework that comments, like the one quoted below, will no longer be made.

Writing in the ‘Mail and Guardian’ of 7 September 2007, one of South Africa’s economists said:

> It is ironic that at the very time when government has abundant financial resources and the economy is doing so consistently well, public services are experiencing a notable decline. Of course this not unique to South Africa. During periods of economic buoyancy the relative attraction of higher pay lures many good public service professionals to the private sector...this has resulted in shrinking delivery capacity and declining quality within the public service.

> Moreover, the operational environment of the public sector lacks efficiency, coordination and systemic dynamism. This is true despite the introduction of initiatives such as Batho Pele, the new Public Service Act and Public Finance Management Act.

> Given that nearly 40% of the country’s GDP is managed within such an environment, it is painfully obvious that unless public sector productivity improves dramatically, the
country’s global competitiveness is at risk. So is the prospect of accelerated social delivery.

Iraj Abedian (2007)

In 2001 the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) was established to encourage, promote and reward innovation in the Public Sector. Thus the South African Public sector was to see innovation as part and parcel of an effective, efficient and economical Public Sector. In 2002 the CPSI became operational and 2003 saw the first Public Sector Innovation Awards being made to innovators in the three public-sector spheres.

4. What is innovation?

There are several relevant definitions of innovation. They tend to be specific to contexts.

The Centre for Public Service Innovation defines it as “Applied creativity that is contextually relevant”.

Drucker proposes that innovation is “Change that creates a new dimension of performance”. Drucker (2002:1), in Hesselbein, Goldsmith and Somerville.

Innovation can be driven through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) or through workforce motivation, organisational restructuring and general management behaviours in the Public Sector, amongst others.

In more specific terms, innovation is producing new knowledge, services, products, processes, images and competitive advantage.

Innovation is a management tool and uses technology.

Innovation may be incremental, where it is introduced in parts (or increments), or it may be radical, where the whole is introduced at once. It seems that the Public Sector, being the big process and organisation, cannot easily accommodate radical innovation. However, all forms of innovation are encouraged in the Public Sector.
Innovation is not an idea that ends in that form without resources, implementation or application.

We anticipate that introducing innovation will be disruptive at times. However, if its objectives are to make the sector perform better, this is a welcome end of the innovation endeavour.

Innovation in the Public Sector must be conceptualised to ensure that the citizen’s needs are satisfied. Remember, high expectations were created when democracy was ushered into South Africa. Citizens have rights and obligations. The State, too, has responsibilities and obligations.

CPSI proposes that innovation has to be “contextually relevant”.

Innovation should be seen as an amalgam of various disciplines such as economics, management, organisational psychology, cognitive and systems theory, amongst others.

5. **What is the context of innovation in South Africa’s Public Sector?**

5.1 **Individuals in the public service**

The Public Sector comprises individual employees of the State. These individuals occupy different levels of occupations and have different responsibilities. They form a hierarchy of responsibilities and decision-making powers.

In the end, these individuals make up an organisation. There usually is an organogram that depicts the hierarchy in Public Sector departments and state agencies.

These individuals have to be innovative so as to achieve a domino effect of innovation in the entire Public Sector of South Africa.

5.1.1 **Innovative individuals**

These are problem solvers who act with audacity. They identify the problem
and decode it to find the underlying causes. They generate ideas to solve problems. They have the guts to do “proof of concept”. They do not shy away from problems and crises.

These individuals know that they are not innovative until they implement the innovative ideas to bring about solutions.

These individuals also know that excellence is relative. They are aware that excellence is time- and situation-specific. They know that sea changes take place in their environments. They are forever learning new skills and knowledge. They are bold leaders that act with resoluteness. They are innovators!

However, we know that individuals have their own needs. These needs play a role in the behaviour of people within the Public Sector or any innovators.

The Maslow Hierarchy of needs says it all.

Figure 1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
The five needs are:

1. **Physiological needs** do with the maintenance of the human body. If we are unwell, then little else matters until we recover.
2. **Safety needs** do with putting a roof over our heads and keeping us from harm. If we are rich, strong and powerful, or have good friends, we can make ourselves safe.
3. **Belonging needs** introduce our tribal nature. If we are helpful and kind to others they will want us as friends.
4. **Esteem needs** do with our need for a higher position within a group. If people respect us, we have greater power.
5. **Self-actualization needs** are about becoming what we are capable of becoming, which would be our greatest achievements.

**Source:** http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm

We see no contradiction in calling on Public Sector employees to be innovative even if their own needs are not necessarily the same as those pursued by government. We have a 2014 Vision and the Millennium Development Goals to achieve, among others.

We endorse some of Hamel’s (2000) contribution to building innovation capacity in the state and private sector organisations of this century, we are calling on the public sector employees to endeavour to:

- Know what is changing in the world and what opportunities make these changes possible.
- Build intellectual authority – the depth of analysis, quality of thinking and clarity of reasoning.
- Pay attention to new ideas and share their own with others; tap into cross-departmental initiatives.
- Be more of catalysts and less of a competitors.
- Clear communicators to all. Different Experiences. Different languages. Different values. All this diversity needs people who have
the skills to deal with diversity. The point is, public servants must be understood.

- Win early and often. People can argue with position papers, but they can’t argue with success. All your organising efforts are worth nothing if you can’t demonstrate that your ideas actually work.

- be alert that experiments that stay experiments are failures. The objective is to turn early experiments into radical organisational models or business processes with the power to change the direction of an organisation or department.

The point being made by CPSI here is that:

1. Individuals must be visionaries.
2. They must know the internal environment of the Public Sector and know that the Sector is open to external influence.
3. They must take their Key Performance Indicators and factor innovation into them.
4. They must be capable of influencing people at all levels to achieve innovation.

Further, public servants must understand that ideas alone are not innovation. They need to be implemented and, in order to implement them, some of the strategies described by Hamel (2000) should be followed.

### 5.1.2 Organisations in the Public Sector

In the Public Sector of South Africa you find government departments, parastatals and state agencies. They all perform functions intended to deliver public service to citizens.

These organisations have to be innovative, and innovative organisations, according to the Minister of Public Service and Administration in South Africa, are those that are always learning organisations.
Senge says:

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning.


Senge (1990: 69) further says: “Systems thinking is the cornerstone of how learning organisations think about their world”.

5.1.3 Systems thinking factor in the Public Sector

Systems thinking in the Public Sector will enhance innovation. “Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static ‘snapshots’.” Senge (1990: 68.)

That is what Public Sector organisations should be like.

Some of the structural challenges in the public sector need some turn around.

Research agrees that the likelihood of innovation is enhanced by organisational conditions of slack, loose controls, few constraints and the freedom to safely think and act in non-traditional ways... In fact, both research and experience agree that slack, appropriate (loose) controls and the freedom that comes from a sense of psychological security are important to creativity and innovation.

A competitive Public Sector that productively and innovatively manages its 40% allocation of South Africa’s revenue should be aware of the system’s thinking and practice it.

6. **Drivers for innovation in the Public Sector**

Alberti and Bertucci (2006:15 -17), of the United Nations Division for Public Administration and Development Management, argue that innovation in the Public Sector is enabled by:

1. **Effective leadership.** Strategic leaders encourage responsible risk-taking at mid- and other levels, or front lines, and are open to good ideas whatever their source – whether emanating from citizens, inside the government or from other governments.

2. **Well educated and well trained Public Sector employees.** It is impossible to introduce innovation in the Public Sector without continuously upgrading employees’ knowledge and skills and allowing them access to recent developments in their respective areas of expertise.

3. **Organisational culture.** A mind-set, or organisational culture, which emphasises thinking about possible solutions rather than on the obstacles encountered in tackling specific problems, should be promoted through different mechanisms including recruitment mechanisms, socialisation upon entry to the public service, training, a fair performance-appraisal system, rewards, recognition and freedom to experiment.

4. **Promotion of team work and partnership.** Teams facilitate the breaking down of barriers between genders, age groups, races, ethnic groups, and geographic biases. Building trust, legitimacy and partnerships are critical to the feasibility and sustainability of innovations in government.

5. **Innovation must be oriented to achieving measurable progress.** Without a well-planned and well-managed approach, the routine of day-to-day operations takes over. One response to this may be developing benchmarks against which to judge the success of innovation efforts.

6. It is very important to include innovation in executive programmes, i.e. university curricula should expose and encourage innovation...It is also crucial to improve the body of knowledge about innovation and Public Sector challenges.
Phrases in **bold type** are the author’s own to highlight the themes of the author’s assertions.

Another view by Rannveig Roste (1995) is that Innovation is a process of extended gestation periods where several people are involved and that efforts to initiate innovation are triggered by “shocks” in the market or within the organisation.

CPSI itself has lessons to share with the rest of the Public Sector. The CPSI award-winning innovations, over the past few years, have taught us some lessons. We have learnt that:

1. There is no blueprint for innovation. It arises from chaos in structure, while some innovations spring up because of crises.
2. Innovators think big and act small.
3. Innovators swim upstream.
4. Innovation requires management.
5. Innovators see the doughnut and not the hole.
6. Innovators must understand their environment.
7. Innovation is not a one-man show. A team must be assembled for innovation so that it can be built on a variety of skills and resources.
8. Innovation is about solving real problems.
9. Innovation has a heart. Innovation will only succeed in the Public Sector if someone cares sufficiently about an issue or problem to commit time, energy, a reputation, skills and knowledge to make a lasting difference.

Innovation managers are able to plan, organise, lead and control. These are the principles of management. Some creativity is also needed to be innovative in the Public Sector.

Think out of the box, the “box” is too limiting for innovation.

6.1 **Examples of some innovations that are relevant to the South African Public Sector**

The CPSI intends to encourage the Public Sector to adopt innovative and efficient ways of delivering services to the public.
We present these examples of innovative ways for further development by individuals and organisations in the South African Public Sector. The context will always dictate how you do things.

6.1.1 Governing by network

This is one of the innovative practices relevant to the Public Service. It may not be as well-developed in South Africa but we are getting there. Public servants and their organisations should be aware of it.

Allow us to discuss this concept of Governing by network at length.

It is a movement away from the hierarchical government bureaucracies of the twentieth century. This was a predominant organisational model used to deliver public services and to fulfil public policy goals.

It is the twenty-first century’s solution to the numerous and complex challenges of public service delivery and the fulfilment of public policy goals.

The network creates a marketplace of new ideas inside a bureaucracy and fosters cooperation between colleagues.

This in itself is innovation. Our Public Sector must emulate the better practices of public service delivery. South Africa, being a country open to global influence, has started believing in this way of governance. We are always being encouraged to think out of the box and to remove the bureaucratic practices that stifle efficiency in the Public Service.

Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) argue that government agencies, divisions and offices are becoming less important as direct service providers and more important as generators of public value within the web of multi-organisational, multi-governmental, and multi-sectoral relationships that increasingly characterise modern government.
Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) argue that Governing by network represents the confluence of four influential trends:

1. **Third-party government** This is the use of private firms and non-profit organisations, as opposed to government employees, to deliver services and to fulfil policy goals.

   Examples, amongst others, include:

   i. Schools in the United States, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. These were contracted out to the Private Sector to have them built, modernised and operated on behalf of the school authorities. Delivering education services and managing schools has, as a result, become big business.

   ii. Third-party Prison Administration, which has soared in the United States.

   iii. Private contractors that have become an integral component of warfare. An example is the Gulf War of 1991, where there was one contractor for every fifty to one hundred soldiers. The ratio of contractors to soldiers was down to one in ten by the 2003 Iraq War.

2. **Joined-up government** There is an increasing tendency for multiple government agencies, sometimes even at multiple levels of government, to join in providing integrated services.

   It is similar to our own Thusong Service Centres. In America they call it the “No Wrong Door” approach. It means that citizens seeking state-level services should be able to access help from the first point of government contact - regardless of which agency they contact.

3. **The digital revolution.** This refers to technological advances that enable organisations to collaborate, in real time, with external partners in ways previously not possible.

   Goldsmith and Eggers discuss how this deals a heavy blow to the traditional costs of partnering such as travel, meetings, document exchange, and so on. We are familiar with the digital revolution in the Public Service.
CPSI endorses using digital technologies. As a government agency we even endorse the use of Open Source Software in the Public Service.

**4. Consumer demand.** Citizens’ demand for more control over their own lives and for more choices and variety in government services has increased.

The authors argue that people who need social services want to be able to decide how, and when, they get help.

The Department of Public Service and Administration has an access strategy which the CPSI endorses. We endorse it because it puts the citizen at the centre of Public Service delivery and because it supports Batho Pele principles. We advocate it for adoption in the Public Sector which adheres to those principles.

Governing by network will require State organisations to develop skills to manage the network. This is a change from the “business-as-usual” approach. State organisations will need to do some work themselves to:

1. Assess organisational readiness.
2. Develop internal processes.
3. Design partnerships that fit both organisations.
4. Manage partnerships on an ongoing basis.
(Adapted from Bidault F, Despres C, and Butler C, 1998).

Adopting the Governing by network approach should consider the phases suggested by Bidault, et al (1998):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department strategy</th>
<th>Government values</th>
<th>Organisational development</th>
<th>Relationship design</th>
<th>Partnership management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on core competencies, e.g. development of government macro-policies and implementation thereof.</td>
<td>Create employment. Alleviate poverty. Grow the economy of South Africa. Full citizen participation. Deliver public service to all. Developmental state – build capacity in Government.</td>
<td>Find the right partner that shares government values. Partner must have technical expertise. Partner must meet time schedules and delivery dates. Partnership functions within the budget frame. Supplier maintains confidentiality. Partner’s top management is committed to the partnership with government.</td>
<td>Define relationship through TOR/ MOA. Contractual obligations must be in place including prices/ fees. Intellectual property issues must be observed. Integration must be assured (cognitive and emotional commitment to the project at hand).</td>
<td>Teamwork. Bold but open leadership to restate priorities consistently. Team process established. Communication between government and partners. Old habits change. Joint project team.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phases of preparing ‘Governing by network’ (adapted from Bidault, et al (1998)).

Table 1: Governing by network
6.2 Other contexts

South Africa is a beacon of hope for Africa: hope for economic development, conflict resolution, peace and driving the continent to be at the centre of the global development agenda. However, our Public Sector needs to position itself and deliver to its own people first: charity begins at home.

6.2.1 The ‘information society’

South Africa’s public is ‘blogging’.

The Public Sector needs to pause and think about the increasing number of Internet users, especially of the informal knowledge management tool, the so-called blog. Media reports indicate that blogs are increasing in popularity, particularly with the young to middle-aged citizens.

An article in the Mail and Guardian Online of 6 September 2007 is evidence of a ‘blogosphere craze’ that is beginning to envelop the country.

More than 600 000 internet users visited blogs in just one month (August 2007).

Goldstuck says he believes that, by August next year, “blogs will not only be a mainstream component of most online media in South Africa, but they will also be a dominant component.

“In terms of social media and networking spaces, the shift in numbers has increased greatly. Facebook, which has had a three-fold increase in the past three months, is the symptom of the tipping point.”

Goldstuck’s statistics show there were 25 037 blogs in South Africa at the end of August, though only 11% were active. According to Vincent Maher, the M&G Online’s strategist, the number of blog visitors during August, 621 204, would place blogs among South Africa’s five most popular websites.

This number, said Maher, lends credibility to the way the Internet and its use is moving forward: it promotes collaboration between, and sharing among, users.

“By the end of the year we should see the number of [South African] Internet
users increase to 3.85 million, and broadband subscriptions will increase by 828,000. This will bring greater media attention until such time blogging will find its natural niche,” he (Goldstuck) said.


While this is the informal media, it does have the potential to be one of the most effective communication tools for Citizen to Citizen (C2C) communication. It may also become recognised for Citizen to Government (C2G) communication in the future.

Knowledge management is one of the pillars of innovation and these blogs cannot be ignored by the Public Sector. If knowledge is not managed, individuals and organisations run the risk of becoming irrelevant in what they do.

South Africa is using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for eGovernment. This is web-based - and so are the blogs. Blogs are just as effective as online conferences. They can be used as intraweblogs (used by employees in one organisation or department) or as interweblogs between different departments. That is on its own is innovation.

The CPSI believes that these practices will assist the Public Sector to become innovative.

### 7. The Business Case for innovation

All innovators have to understand the context of innovation in South Africa’s Public Sector. Senge (1990) expressed its significance as:

> There is something in all of us that loves to put together a puzzle, that loves to see the image of the whole emerge. The beauty of a person, or a flower, or a poem lies in seeing all of it. (Senge, 1990: 68).
The case for innovation in the Public Sector, therefore, should consider at least:

1. Political will.
2. Impact.
3. Efficiency.
5. Government priorities.

7.1 South Africa’s political will for innovation

The Preamble to our Constitution (1996: 1) states that it is the supreme law of the Republic so as to:

1. Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
2. Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
3. Improve the quality of the life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
4. Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

In his letter to the senior managers of the Public Service and their political principals, President Mbeki, the President of the Republic of South Africa, urged the Public Sector to become innovative:

All of us, including the DGs, should turn our backs on routine. It means that we must repudiate the comfort zones that have encouraged us, literally, to rest on our laurels, arising from the fact that we have seen and can quantify the positive results of our work during the short years of our liberation.... this means ... that we must, once again, repose ourselves as innovators who dare to challenge the proven truths that our successful practice, to date, has established proven truths.

To achieve this outcome, we must everyday remind ourselves that we serve in government because we are revolutionaries.
As revolutionaries, and therefore agents of revolutionary change, we have no choice but to cultivate a frame of mind that celebrates and does not fear change – a frame of mind that repudiates timidity, that constantly criticises many of the routines that we have established, that questions the established order that is our much admired offspring, that has the daring and courage fully to open itself to the exciting ability to embark on the new and original – that has the courage to reconstruct itself according to the insurrectionary principle and practice of audacity, and audacity, and once more, audacity!!

President Mbeki (Letter to Ministers, Premiers and Deputy Ministers, 8 March 2007).

7.2 Impact

Innovation impacts positively on service delivery. Whether it is in accessibility or cost effectiveness, the bottom line is that citizens will realise change in their lives after interacting with an effective Public Service.

7.3 Efficiency

An innovative Public Service is best positioned to ensure that service is satisfactorily delivered to citizens.

7.4 Cost-cutting in service delivery

Resources are not unlimited. Innovative ways will ensure that public servants make most of what they have to deliver service to the public.
7.5 Government priorities

The South African Government has to meet its Millennium Development Goals. The eight goals are:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty.
2. To achieve universal primary education.
3. To promote gender equality and empower women.
4. To reduce child mortality.
5. To improve maternal health.
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. To ensure environmental sustainability.
8. To develop a global partnership for development.
It is not the Public Sector of South Africa alone, however, that must contribute to the achievement of these targets as it manages only around 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.

It also has a role to play in the development of South Africa and in achieving South Africa’s own developmental goals, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) and the 2014 Vision.

There are programmes and interventions directed by the principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Major Public Sector investments are directed at the consolidation of democracy, at human development and at economic growth.

Vision 2014 promotes a better life for all through its targets and objectives, which seek to ensure that:

1. **Poverty is halved by 2014**, through (amongst others) economic development, comprehensive social security, land reform and improved household and community assets.

2. **Unemployment is halved by 2014**, through employment creation, skills development, assistance to small businesses, opportunities for self-employment and sustainable community livelihoods.

3. **Skills required by the economy are provided**, by building capacity and providing resources across society to encourage self-employment with an education system that is geared towards productive work, good citizenship and a caring society.

4. **Society is integrated** by ensuring that all South Africans, including especially the poor and those at risk - children, youth, women, the aged, and people with disabilities - are fully able to exercise their constitutional rights and enjoy the full dignity of freedom.

5. **Government is compassionate** by ensuring that services and Public Service representatives are accessible whilst citizens are awarded avenues to know their rights and should be enabled to insist on fair treatment and efficient services.

6. **Tuberculosis, diabetes, malnutrition and maternal death cases are greatly reduced and the tide is turned against HIV and AIDS**, as well as, working with the rest of Southern Africa, to strive to eliminate malaria and improve services to achieve a better national health profile and reduce preventable causes of death, including violent crime and road accidents.

7. **Serious and priority crimes are significantly reduced in number**, as well as cases awaiting trial, with a society that actively challenges crime and corruption, and with programmes that also address the social roots of criminality.

8. **South Africa is strategically positioned as an effective force in global relations**, with vibrant and balanced trade and other relations with countries of the South and the North, and in an Africa that is growing, prospering and benefiting all Africans, especially the poor.
Some of the targets that the Public Sector needs to contribute towards achieving can be presented graphically:

Source: http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletter/previous_newsletters/322354.htm
Source: [http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletter/previous_newsletters/322354.htm](http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletter/previous_newsletters/322354.htm)
8. **Assessing innovative leanings in your department**

Complete the questionnaire by circling your answer (i.e. 1, 2 or 3) to each statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1. NEVER</th>
<th>2. SOMETIMES</th>
<th>3. ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Our department is seen by citizens as being responsive to their needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Our department allows the ‘freedom to fail’ and gives careful consideration to new ideas, no matter what their origin.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Innovative people in our department are held up as examples and are clearly recognized by senior management for their contributions.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My department tends to hire people for their talent, welcoming diversity, and doesn’t attempt to hire people all cut from the same mould.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) We look at seemingly unrelated events in the environment to determine how they might benefit us and our service to our customers.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) We are methodological about innovation, particularly in utilizing processes to assess the relative value of new ideas that come before us.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Our departmental culture tends to look at change as presenting opportunity, not threat.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Our department, both line and staff, tends to get excited about new developments, new ideas, and new service delivery approaches.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) My immediate colleagues present a good sounding board for new ideas and are not hesitant about generating new approaches and new ways of doing things.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Rules and standard operating procedures are sometimes broken when there seems to be the opportunity to achieve a breakthrough or a new level of performance.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) In their oral and written messages to me and my colleagues, our superiors cite the need to be innovative, entrepreneurial, and creative.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Articles, war stories, and examples of innovation in other departments and other environments are the topic of conversation in our department, both formally and informally.</td>
<td>1. NEVER</td>
<td>2. SOMETIMES</td>
<td>3. ALWAYS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Add up your scores, and rate your department as follows:

1. 1-9: Your organisation is decidedly not innovative, and is probably geared toward frustrating innovation.
2. 10-18: Your organisation tends to be slothful about innovation and is able to achieve it only through the efforts of forceful personalities.
3. 19-27: Your department is situationally innovative. This means there are repositories of innovative thinking and action throughout the organisation. It’s more a matter of luck, however, than design.
4. 28-36: Your department is a highly innovative organisation. Procedures and techniques are in place to foster, stimulate, and reward creativity. Although the personality of top officials may be largely responsible, the probability is that such an innovative culture is institutionalised and perpetuated by the organisation itself.


9. **Implementing pillars of innovation**

9.1 **Individual employees**

1. Focus on improvement, not just on fixes.
2. Remove the phrase: “Yes, but…”
3. Use the impact scale and risk/reward analysis from the developmental step to calculate prudent risk.
4. Before moving ahead with implementing an opportunity, ascertain the critical factors that will determine success or failure.
5. Never assume that an opportunity is going to implement itself.

9.2 **Organisation or department**

1. Departments must know the service needs of the citizens.
2. Departments must be citizen-value-add driven.
3. Departments must give public servants, at all levels, some measure of autonomy.
4. Departments must inculcate creativity amongst their employees.
5. Departments must promote excellence throughout and not simply in ‘major areas’.
6. Consistent and incremental improvement must be recognised as
the most effective kind of innovation.

7. Departments must have a ‘cause’ like ‘we belong, we serve, we care’.

Hamel (2000) adds more aspects to the pillars of implementation. These are skills, metrics, information technology and management processes. All are adopted in this Framework.

However, our discussion differs slightly from Hamel (2000) as his focus is on the Private Sector. Our proposition for the pillars of implementation here is specific to the Public Sector. Hamel’s (2000) further aspects of implementation pillars are:

9.3 **Skills**

Every mind in the department must be inclined towards innovation. Everyone must understand the vision of a ‘better life for all’. They must feel personally responsible for innovation.

9.4 **Metrics**

Measures for cost, efficiency, speed and citizen satisfaction must be in place. These measures must relate to innovation. In the Private Sector measures like Return on Investment (ROI) are often used to measure performance and these encourage higher productivity levels. The Public Sector can use them to encourage innovation just as we embrace the principles of Batho Pele.

9.5 **Information Technology**

Intranets, email and instant messaging are some of the useful technologies of innovation that the Public Sector must continue to use for service delivery.

9.6 **Management processes**

There must be democratic and open management systems. Bold leadership goes hand in hand with interpersonal skills. There must be agility in management processes without compromising the legislation for Public Service delivery.
10. Monitoring and evaluation

Systems must be in place to monitor and evaluate innovation practices in, and impacts on, the Public Sector. The CPSI is making awards for innovation in the Public Sector annually. These provide indicators of innovation in the Sector. However, entries are voluntary.

Public institutions must be prepared to measure and evaluate innovation. Individuals in the Public Sector must also monitor and evaluate themselves on their innovation practices.

A typical monitoring and evaluation technique is to ask your department, agency or unit a series of questions. This becomes your barometer of innovation for your department.

We have adapted the so-called Question Banks (Q-Banks) technique proposed by Van Gundy (2007). This technique is useful when an organisation:

1. Is trying to find its direction.
2. Wants to affirm all, or parts of, its current strategic plan.
3. Lacks consensus about strategy among key stakeholders.
4. Wants to chart a new strategic course.


In the Public Sector we all experience these situations at some point or another. This validates the application of the Q-banks technique. Here are examples of questions that could monitor innovation in your organisation:
Question bank

Typical questions in a Q-Bank

A. Our department

What are our core competencies?
What is our primary vision?
What is our primary mission?
What are our core values?
Who are our partners? Why?

B. Our customers

What value does our service provide our customers?

C. Our brand

What is our brand?
What values are associated with our brand?

D. Our goals

Where do we want to be in one, three or five years?
What do we want to do in the future that we aren’t doing now?
How do we know when we achieve our goals?

E. Our Innovation

How do we define innovation?
How do we measure it?
Do we have a strategic innovation process?
What is our innovation process?
How effective is it?
How do we know it is effective?
What are our top three barriers to innovation?
How might we overcome these barriers?
How do we motivate innovation?
How do we increase the motivation to innovate?
What sources do we use for new ideas? Internal only?
How well do we manage the ideas we generate? Why?
How might we manage them better?
At any one time, how many ideas do we have in our innovation pipeline?
Do we re-evaluate promising ideas we once left on the shelf?
When do we innovate best? Why?
How do we reward innovation?
How might we become more innovative?
What new services should we explore?
10.1 **Steps for administering a Q-bank**

1. Send these questions to your stakeholders and employees at all levels.
2. Analyse and summarise the results.
3. Send the results to the employees (unless organisational politics, time, money or other considerations dictate otherwise).
4. Send the final results to the Head of the Department.

11. **Enablers and inhibitors of innovation in the Public Sector**

In the end CPSI accepts that there are enablers and inhibitors of innovation. The discussion in this Framework is biased largely towards the enablers of innovation.

In this section we explore briefly the barriers to innovation and learn from Patel Imraan (2006), a former CPSI employee. Patel (2006) cites the following as barriers to innovation:

1. Lack of access to resources for development and testing.
2. Lack of understanding about how to initiate innovation or what to do with new ideas or project possibilities that present themselves.
3. Inability to attract funding for long-term implementation.
4. Difficulties in finalising arrangements for public-private partnerships.
5. Inability to replicate and to mainstream innovations.
7. Poor skills in active risk or change management and a culture of risk-aversion.
8. Few rewards or incentives to innovate or adopt innovations.
9. Cultural or organisational constraints in using available technology.
10. Over-reliance on a small pool of high performers within the organisation as sources of innovation.
11. Reluctance to close down programmes that fail to innovate.
12. Delivery pressures and administrative burdens.
13. Slow decision-making processes.
14. Fear of the unknown.
15. The myth that innovation is expensive.

These barriers are presented in point form only.
12. The innovation manifesto

At the end of it all, the CPSI proposes that every department or agency in the Public Sector should have an innovation manifesto. Turn to the next page for an example.
INNOVATION MANIFESTO FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In view of the fast changes in the Public Sector environment, the continuous introduction of new technologies and changes in citizens’ expectations, our department declares that innovation shall rule our service delivery and actions.

Henceforth:

1. All public servants shall embrace, encourage and nurture innovation at all times. Every decision they make will take into consideration how that decision will affect the innovativeness of the Department.

2. Public servants shall adopt more creative behaviour—through training if need be—and demonstrate their creativity to other public servants and to the general public.

3. Public Sector institutions shall communicate in every possible way the importance of innovation and innovation goals. Such communication shall be both internal and external and target employees and the general public.

4. Public Sector institutions shall establish a reasonable budget for implementing radical innovative ideas. The return on the investment of implementing those ideas shall take into consideration learning value and adherence to the principles of Batho Pele.

5. Managers shall ensure that team members have time to be creative and understand that being creative, which leads to innovation, is a critical component of their job responsibilities.

6. Realising that innovation is the future, public servants shall all learn to greet new ideas with open arms and consider the innovative potential of those ideas. Rather than criticise new ideas, as public servants have done in the past, public servants shall challenge those who propose new ideas to improve them and to make them more innovative.

7. No employee shall ever be reprimanded for sharing an idea to others in the Department, even if the idea seems preposterous. There must be an understanding that one employee being scolded for sharing a silly idea can do irreparable damage to the public institution’s innovativeness. Employees shall be rewarded for their innovative ideas.

8. All public servants shall adopt an idea-management process and system in order to encourage, capture and evaluate innovative ideas from colleagues.

9. Project teams shall be filled with a variety of people from various divisions in order to ensure breadth of creative thought and innovative solutions in all projects.

10. All public servants shall take great pride in their innovativeness and strive to improve it daily.
13. Conclusion

We have provided this Framework for innovation in the Public Sector but we do not advocate a dogmatic approach. This has been pointed out clearly in this Framework.

In conclusion, the CPSI pursues:

1. A rebranded Public Sector.
2. Motivated public servants.
3. Faster turn-around times for public service delivery.
4. A reduction in red tape.
5. Encouraged innovation to ensure that citizens are satisfied with the services rendered by the Public Sector of South Africa.
References

15. Mc Leñnan, Anne. (Date unknown). The state of governance innovation in South Africa 1.


