



South Africa  
CPSI Public Sector Innovation Awards



i) Background on the awards programme

The Annual Public Sector Innovation Awards have taken place every year since 2003, ensuring that public sector innovators are identified, recognised and appropriately rewarded. The programme is run by the CPSI, a Government Component reporting to the Minister for Public Service and Administration.

The rationale of the awards programme is multi-fold: to embed a culture of innovation across the public sector; to celebrate the successes of innovators who are already leading the way to more effective, efficient and accountable government; and to encourage sharing of innovative practices to avoid re-inventing of the wheel and to entrench creativity and excellence in the public sector. The programme recognizes projects, models, gadgets, processes and programmes that are directed at improving public service delivery.

ii) Short description of the themes and a list of categories

- Innovative partnerships in service delivery (government with government, private sector with government, CBO/NGO with government)
- Innovative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for effective service delivery
- Innovative service delivery institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, clinics, courts, police stations)
- Innovative enhancements of internal systems of government (back- and front-office)

iii) Summary of participation patterns and number of applications/nominations

Innovative projects are submitted by government departments, parastatals, NGOs, CBOs, and public-private partnerships. Awards are presented to individuals or teams who have impacted positively and in extra-ordinary ways on service delivery.

Since the inception of the Awards the entries have diversified – with 2003 nominations made up of 50% health sector related entries to 2009 being dominated by the education sector-based innovations. The majority of entries throughout the years have come from local based institutions such as schools, hospitals, clinics, correctional services, transport, police, criminal justice and infrastructure, balanced out by provincial and then national departments. A small percentage includes projects from partnerships between the public and private sector, mostly involving the use of ICTs.

Entries for the Awards span an impressive range of innovations, from new business processes, technological products, methodologies and organisational structures to fresh approaches to business and service delivery. Honoured projects are as diverse as organic food gardens and facility facelifts, to creative sleeping bag manufacturing (for the homeless) by prisoners and computerised healthcare services.

The number of entries has grown from around 30 at the inception of the programme to more than 130 in 2009.

iv) Impact of the Awards

- **Replication** – during the adjudication process projects are identified for replication in other provinces and in other sectors (school's permaculture/ greening project has been replicated in health)
- **Lessening of re-inventing of the wheel** and exploitation by consultants (who sell old innovations to other government institutions at double the price) through the resultant sharing of lessons and innovative practices
- **Mainstreaming** and policy informing
- **Sustainability of best practices** – CPSI keeps track of awarded projects to ensure they do not die after receiving awards
- **Strengthening of PPPs** – private sector been directed to projects and areas where they can utilise their corporate social investment; donor organisations view programme as a vehicle for investing their funding (as a proven concept)
- **Unlocking of funding** - Departments are starting to recognise and support their own innovations
- **IT Conferences** focusing on supporting government priorities and private sector involvement in the “Call for Entries”
- **Readiness** for regional and international awards
- **Integration in service delivery** – one sector address other mandates - schools becoming centres for integrated service delivery and socio economic development
- Strategic source of **public sector innovation content** for the repositories in the multi-media Innovation centre launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June