

## **Executive summary**

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### **Report on the evaluation of the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy**

Date completed: March 2009

## **1 Key words**

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Batho Pele principles; Public Service; Courtesy; White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery.

## **2 Commissioned and supported by**

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The assessment was internally commissioned by the Public Service Commission (PSC) as part of its Constitutional mandate. As an impartial body created to enhance excellence in governance within the Public Service, an evaluation of this Batho Pele principle was undertaken as part of the PSC's regular efforts to investigate, monitor, evaluate, communicate and report on public administration and the delivery of quality services.

## **3 Conducted by**

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The assessment was conducted by the Public Service Commission.

Contact: Public Service Commission, Private Bag X121, Commission House, Corner Hamilton and Ziervogel Streets, Pretoria, 0083; Tel 012 352 1000; Website: [www.psc.gov.za](http://www.psc.gov.za).

## **4 Background to evaluation**

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Section 196 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), mandates the Public Service Commission (PSC) to, amongst other things, promote the constitutional values and principles of public administration, set out in section 195 and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service. To this end the PSC monitors the level and quality of government services and promotes a culture of access, openness and transparency that in turn should build more confidence and trust between the Public Service and the public it serves. In line with its constitutional duty, the PSC set out to evaluate the performance of departments with regard to the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy.

The extent to which departments meet the requirements for Courtesy was an important indicator of progress in building a citizen-centred Public Service. The PSC therefore undertook a study to evaluate the implementation of Batho Pele principle of Courtesy in order to advise on the progress made and the challenges experienced going forward.

## 5 Overall purpose of the evaluation

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The overarching purpose of the evaluation was to determine the extent to which the departments met the requirements of Courtesy as an indication of progress in building a citizen-centred Public Service.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the degree to which the Public Service complies with the principle of Courtesy as required by the Batho Pele White Paper;
- Determine the methodologies used by departments to promote the principle and the effectiveness of the methods used;
- Determine the challenges and constraints that may be preventing departments from implementing the principle of Courtesy; and
- Formulate specific recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy to enhance public service delivery.

## 6 Scope of the evaluation

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The scope of the study included selected departments at both national and provincial levels. The following national and provincial departments were selected for the study:

*National departments:*

- Department of Land Affairs
- Department of Labour

*Provincial departments (all nine provinces included):*

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Housing
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Safety and Security

One rural and urban service point in each of the above-mentioned departments was included in the study.

## 7 Evaluation questions

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The evaluation was not explicit in setting out questions that it sought to answer. It remained consistent to the evaluation objectives set out in terms of the purpose of the evaluation.

## 8 Evaluation Methodology

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### 8.1 Type of evaluation

The evaluation would best be described as an implementation evaluation since it sought to assess the performance of selected Public Service departments in

implementing the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy and provide recommendations to this end. Although the evaluation contained elements of a compliance assessment, it was clear in its intentions to determine the methods used to promote the principle and their efficacy, while identifying challenges and constraints in this regard. As the evaluation assessed policy implementation that was on-going and sought to provide recommendations to improve performance related to this principle, it was an implementation evaluation.

## 8.2 Methodology

The processes followed in conducting this study included literature review of key documents, the development of semi-structured data collection tools, interviews with key officials in the respective departments who served as key informants, *in loco* inspections of service delivery points, interviews with service users and data analysis.

## 8.3 Data collection

A combination of data collection methods was used for the study. The methods included a review of relevant documentation, such as the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, the Batho Pele White Paper, the Batho Pele Handbook and other documents. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 40 designated officials from the respective departments. Out of a total of 108 planned service user interviews at urban and rural service points, 79 were conducted. *In loco* inspections were also conducted at a number of rural and urban the service delivery points during the service user interviews.

# 9 Findings

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The data collection and analysis yielded the following findings:

*Departments largely used communication and training to implement the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy*

The findings revealed that 45% of the participating departments relied on communication and training to implement the principle of Courtesy. Initiatives included training and induction programmes on the Batho Pele principles, inclusion of the basic requirement of the principle of Courtesy as stipulated in the White Paper in the Departments Service Delivery Improvement Plans and service delivery charters.

*Progress with the development of Courtesy standards was varied*

The development of Courtesy standards as stipulated in the Batho Pele White Paper varied from department to department. On average, 54% of the departments that participated in the study had developed the required courtesy standards. Departments tended to have standards that outlined the generic elements of Courtesy such as how service users should be greeted, how staff should identify themselves and the maximum response time to service users' queries. None of the departments surveyed published their Courtesy standards in the departmental Codes of Conduct as required by the Batho Pele White paper.

*The responsibility for the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy was allocated to different units and post levels*

Sixty four percent (64%) of departments used various units to ensure that the principle of Courtesy was coordinated and implemented. These units included customer care and information desks. The post levels of the officials responsible for the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy varied from one department to the next with 64% of departments allocating the responsible to Senior and Middle Management levels. The post level of the officials was often indicative of the commitment or intent to implement the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the departments participating in the survey indicated that they consulted with service users on their Courtesy needs and expectations using various methodologies, including *izimbizo*, public meetings, stakeholder engagements, different for a and awareness campaigns.

The study found that only 55% of departments had systems in place to handle complaints, including those related to Courtesy issues, despite a requirement that all departments should have systems and policies developed to deal with service users' needs. Only 45% demonstrated that they have policies in place to ensure that services are available, accessible and affordable to service users.

*Departments had monitoring and evaluation systems on Courtesy in place*

The findings showed that 68% of departments that participated in the study performed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to measure the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy. Activities included monthly and quarterly reports, satisfaction surveys, performance assessments and suggestion boxes. The study found that departments used different performance indicators to assess the compliance of officials with the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy. Only 42% of departments incorporated Batho Pele principles into work plans and performance agreements of officials. The findings further showed that 70% of departments took corrective action where officials did not comply with the standards set for the treatment of service users.

*Departments had limited training interventions on Courtesy*

The study found that 62% of departments that participated in the study provided training to their officials on the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy. On average, only 29% of officials in the respective departments that participated in the study received training in all Courtesy areas as stipulated in the Batho Pele White paper. Furthermore, there were no guidelines or Courtesy manuals available at service delivery points as proof of the formal training initiatives conducted by the respective departments. Adequate training should contribute to awareness and understanding of the importance of implementing Courtesy in the Public Service.

*Few departments rated their performance on Courtesy to be good*

The study found that most departments that participated in the study rated their performance in terms of the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy as above average (50%) while 23% indicated that their performance was average. Only 2% of departments rated themselves as good in implementing the principle and 2% rated their performance as poor. The findings suggested that departments were of the view that they did not perform well with the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy.

## 10 Conclusion and Recommendations

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### 10.1 Conclusion

The findings showed that the majority (54%) of the departments that participated in the study complied with the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy. Forty-six percent (46%) had yet to develop the Courtesy standards as stipulated in the Batho Pele White Paper. Such Courtesy standards are central to the actual implementation of the principle. The recommendations of the evaluation report are provided to improve the nature of service delivery and the manner in which service users are treated in the Public Service.

### 10.2 Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations of the evaluation:

*Courtesy standards should be published in departmental codes of conduct*

Departments need to publish Courtesy standards in the departmental Codes of Conduct to ensure that all officials are aware of the standards, that the standards become part of the culture of the department and that every official takes responsibility for the implementation of such standards.

*Courtesy standards should be included in work plans and Performance Agreements*

Departments should include the responsibility for the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Courtesy in their accountability processes such as work plans and individual performance agreements.

*Monitoring and evaluation of Courtesy should be strengthened*

Departments should develop the necessary process and procedures to monitor and evaluation the implementation of Courtesy standards. The information obtained during such M&E can improve the implementation of Courtesy standards. The information obtained during such M&E can improve the implementation of the principle in the future, which could improve service delivery in the Public Service.

*Training on Courtesy standards should be provided*

There was a need for departments to ensure that all officials at all levels are adequately trained on Courtesy standards. Such training will improve the manner in which officials interact with service users. Courtesy guidelines or manuals which form the basis of training should be developed and made available to all service delivery points to substantiate formal training initiatives.

## 11 Evidence of use

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Public Service Commission reports are generally tabled in National Parliament and Provincial Legislature and support elected representatives in their oversight responsibilities towards the Public Service. In the case of this evaluation, the lack of stakeholder interviews meant that no additional evidence to support claims of instrumental use or value added to specific stakeholders or departments was obtained.

## 12 Note on quality of report

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This evaluation received an overall rating of 3.32 applying the Evaluation Quality Assessment Tool (EQAT), meaning the evaluation can be considered to be of an adequate standard but care should be taken when considering the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the assessment.

The evaluation employed a variety of data collection methods to triangulate the data collection on the principle of Courtesy, including service user perspectives. It fared well in terms of the implementation and reporting phases of the assessment, while general PSC protocols suggested the document was of use, particularly regarding its online accessibility. These ratings should however be taken with caution due to a lack of any informant interviews for this assessment.

Overall, the evaluation can be considered to be slightly above an adequate standard across most of the overarching considerations for evaluations, with the exception of capacity development. All of the other cross-cutting considerations for the evaluation were of an adequate standard or higher.