Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Information

PSC
Custodian of Good Governance

Foreword

The democratic government of the Republic of South Africa has since 1994 noted the importance of changing the secrecy culture that characterised the period prior to 1994. The democratic order appreciated the need for openness, transparency and accountability in the Public Service, and as a result, included the right to information in the South African Constitution. The right to information requires that "transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information".

In support of this Constitutional value of openness and transparency, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery that was published in 1997, states that "information is one of the most powerful tools at the customer's disposal in exercising his or her right to good service". In terms of providing more and better information, the White Paper requires that "national and provincial departments provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about the services they provide, and who is entitled to them".

In line with its mandate, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has been monitoring the progress made by departments in implementing the Batho Pele principles since 2005. The principles of Service Standards, Access, Redress, Value for Money, Consultation, and Openness and Transparency have been evaluated since then. The evaluation of the progress departments have made in implementing the Batho Pele principle of Information is the seventh study in this series.

It gives me pleasure to present this report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information. I trust that the findings and recommendations in this report will assist departments in their continued efforts to improve the implementation of the principle of Information.
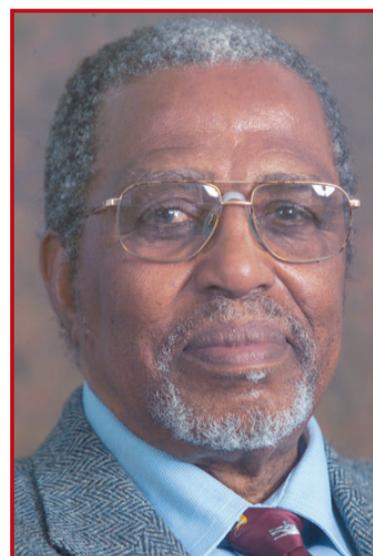
PROF SS SANGWENI
CHAIRPERSON: PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 5:   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS   36

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

List of Acronyms

DDG	Deputy Director-General
DG	Director-General
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EC	Eastern Cape
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FS	Free State
GCIS	Government Communications and Information System
GP	Gauteng Province
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LP	Limpopo Province
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MP	Mpumalanga
NW	North-West
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information
PALAMA	Public Administration and Leadership Academy
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSC	Public Service Commission
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SMMEs	Small, medium and macro enterprises
TWIB	Technology for Women in Business
WC	Western Cape
WPTPSD	White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
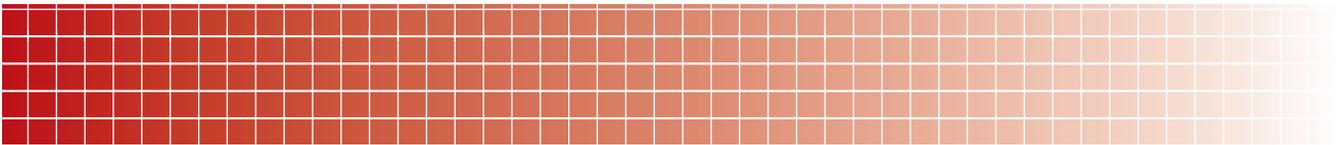
Executive Summary

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The democratic government of South Africa has since its advent in 1994 underscored the importance of the right to information as a building block of a transformed public service. Government appreciated that through allowing citizens access to public documents and information they need to make informed decisions, citizens would be empowered to participate more fully in public life and to exercise their fundamental human and democratic rights. Accessing public information could also assist citizens in holding government accountable and ensure that government delivers services effectively and efficiently. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WPTPSD)[1], introduced by the democratic government in 1997, states that "information is one of the most powerful tools at the customer's disposal in exercising his or her right to good service". Raising citizens' awareness of their right to information through the *Batho Pele,* was just the first step in changing the culture of secrecy to that of openness, transparency and accountability. In terms of providing more and better information the White Paper requires that "national and provincial departments provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about the services they provide, and who is entitled to them".

In terms of Section 196 (4) (a) and (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the PSC has the mandate to, amongst others, promote the values and principles set out in section 195 and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service. The *Batho Pele* White Paper took advantage of the independence of the PSC by requiring the PSC to periodically monitor its implementation and the resultant success or failure (Section 11). It is against this background the PSC decided to evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of the project was to evaluate the performance of selected Public Service departments in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the degree to which the Public Service complies with the principle of Information 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 Information.
- Formulate specific recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information to enhance public service delivery.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

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:

1   The Republic of South Africa. The Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.
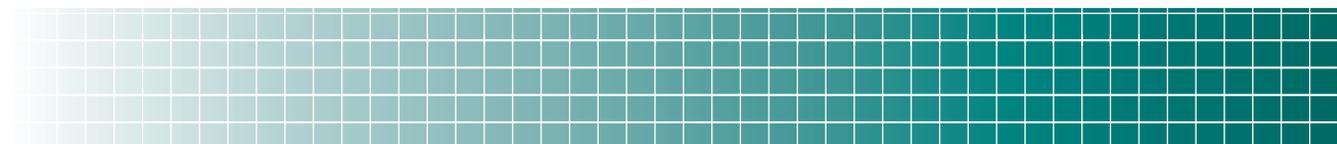
National departments:
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
- Department of Trade and Industry

Provincial departments (all nine provinces included):
- Department of Local Government
- Department of Environmental Affairs
- Department of Roads and Transport
- Department of Economic Affairs
- Office of the Premier

4. METHODOLOGY

The processes followed in conducting this study included a literature review of key documents, development of semi-structured questionnaires, interviews with key officials in the respective departments who served as sources of information, interviews with service users (of the selected departments included in the study), *in loco* inspections of service delivery points and data analysis.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified during the study:

- At certain service delivery points no service users were available at the time of data collection to be interviewed.
- The number of departments included in the study was less than the number of departments that was not included and as such it is difficult to generalise the findings of the study.

6. KEY FINDINGS

The following are the key findings of the study:

Departments have various measures in place to implement the Batho Pele principle of Information

Departments use a plethora of different methodologies and initiatives to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principle of Information is implemented. Most departments (93%) mentioned print and electronic media, broadcast and interactive sessions as the common mode for ensuring that information about services is conveyed to potential service users. The mechanisms correspond with the mechanisms service users prefer departments to use to provide them with necessary information about services available and how to access them.

Departments have developed various policies and guidelines to support the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information

Ninety eight percent (98%) of departments use policies and guidelines to direct the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. These policies and guidelines include communication strategies, information policies and Promotion of Access to Information Act manuals.
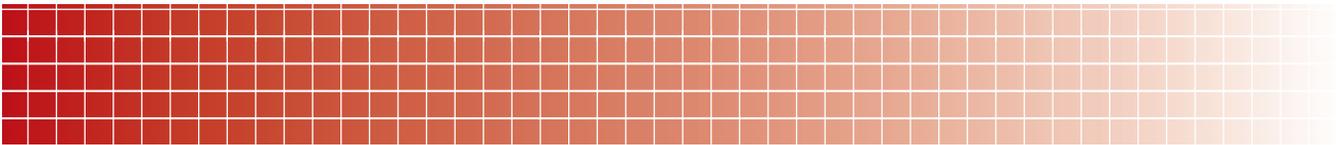
Responsibility to implement the Batho Pele principle of Information is allocated to various units

There is no dedicated unit solely responsible for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information and as such implementation initiative is hampered. The post levels of officials responsible for implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information vary from one department to another. The most senior level is at Chief Director/General Manager and the lowest level at Assistant Director.

Customers are not adequately consulted on their information needs

While 83% of departments indicated that they apply a consultative approach in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information, forty seven percent (47%) of the service users that participated in the study indicated that they had not been consulted on their information needs. There is a contradiction between what the departments have said and what the service users have actually experienced at the service delivery points.

Information is available in local languages to a limited extent

According to the findings of the study, English is still the dominant language used for official purposes by all departments that participated in the study. However, forty two percent (42%) of departments indicated that they also publish official documents in the relevant local languages especially those spoken in their respective Provinces.

Not all departments implement programmes to address the information needs of people with disabilities

Only 43% of the departments that participated in the study have implemented some programmes to address the information needs of people with disabilities such as disability forums, language workshops, translation of policy documents and service brochures in Braille.

Only a few departments implement information programmes aimed at the youth

Only 11% of departments that participated in the study have implemented information programmes aimed at the youth with the hope of ensuring that services rendered are known and accessible to the youth.

A few departments implement information programmes dedicated to people who are illiterate

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments that participated in the study indicated that they have implemented information programmes aimed at people who are illiterate.

A number of departments implement Information programmes for women

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments implement information programmes directed at women such as women empowerment programmes, training programmes and support programmes.

Departments have special arrangements for the provision of Information to remote communities

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments implement special arrangements for the provision of information to communities in the remote areas. A high number of departments (86%) undertake visits to communities in the remote areas to provide citizens with information on the services they render.

The inclusion of graphics in written Information is varied

Fifty percent (50%) of departments include graphic material in their written documents to ensure improved clarity and to make these documents accessible to the illiterate while 38% of departments indicated that they do not include graphic material in their written information as required by the *Batho Pele* White Paper.

There are departments that test readability and comprehensiveness of their written material

Fifty seven percent (57%) of the departments participating in the study test readability of their written material they provide to service users compared to forty three percent (43%) of departments who indicated that they did not test either readability or comprehensiveness. Service users at service points indicated that they were mostly satisfied (53% at rural level and 51% at urban level) with the quality of information material provided by departments. Only seven percent (7%) of service users indicated that they were not able to understand or read the written information provided by departments.

Departments make contact details available to citizens for future reference

The majority of departments (72,5%) provide their contact numbers and physical addresses on published material so that citizens can be able to contact them in future should the need arise.

Training on the Batho Pele principle of Information

All departments that participated in the study provide training on the *Batho Pele* principles in general and information in particular.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information should be strengthened

Eighty nine percent (89%) of departments that were sampled to participate in the study reported to have a monitoring and evaluation system or mechanism in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

7.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment of the Impact of Department's Efforts to Provide Service Users with Comprehensive and Accurate Information

While evidence was provided about the departmental strategies and methodologies to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information, the impact of the different methodologies to increase access to services and to empower service users, have not been assessed. It is important to assess the effectiveness of the different mechanisms not only in terms of reaching more service users but also in providing departments with more feedback to better inform its services and service delivery processes. Departments should therefore develop indicators to ensure that the effectiveness and impact of implementation mechanisms are assessed.

E-Government and M-Government as Mechanisms to Promote Information should be explored

Electronic-government (e-government) and mobile-government (m-government) have the potential to transform public services into open, accessible and citizen-centred public service delivery by extending the benefits of delivery of government services and information to those who are unable to access public services due to their
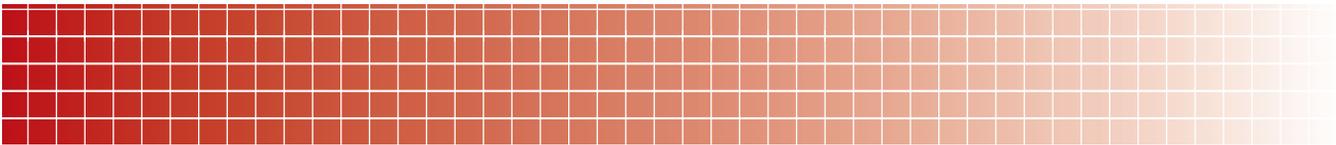
remote geographic location. Departments should explore using these technologies as mechanisms of providing service users with the necessary information about their respective departments and the services they render.

Broadening Consultation

Departments need to intensify initiatives to consult citizens as potential service users. Consultation plays an important role in sharing information with citizens about the availability and accessibility of such services. There are clear mechanisms in place to meaningfully engage citizens such as the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) Framework on Public Participation[2] as well as the Step-by-Step Guide to Implementing Citizens Fora[3] developed by the PSC for national and provincial departments.

Providing Information in the Relevant Local Languages

Departments should ensure that concerted efforts are made towards translating information about their services to local languages spoken in the area instead of only using English as the official language. Information can only be accessible if it is understood by those who need it most.

Addressing the Needs of Previously Disadvantaged Groups

Departments should develop strategies to share and disseminate information with previously disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the youth, the illiterate and women. It will also be useful to consult these groups in this process to ensure that departments develop and implement programmes that would be responsive to their actual needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Departments should develop the necessary monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to enable them to monitor progress with the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The information obtained during such M&E can be critical during the implementation of the systems in order for them to yield the much needed information. Monitoring and evaluation as management tool can generate information which is likely to contribute significantly towards the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

2	*Republic of South Africa. Department of Provincial and Local Government. National Policy Framework for Public Participation, 2005.*
3	*Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Step-by-Step Guide on Holding Citizens Forums, 2005.*

Chapter One

Introduction
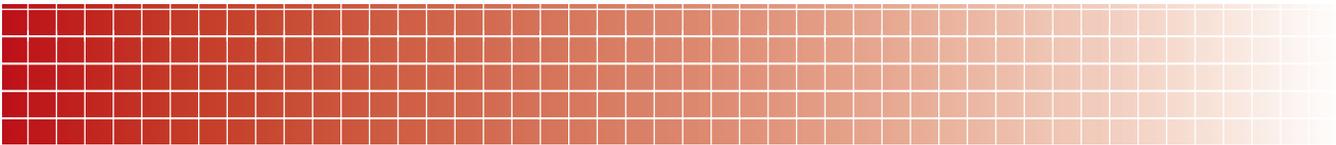
1.1   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The democratic government of South Africa has since its advent in 1994 underscored the importance of the right to information as a building block of a transformed public service. Government realised that through allowing citizens access to public documents and the information they need to make informed decisions, citizens would be empowered to participate more fully in public life and to exercise their fundamental human and democratic rights. Accessing public information could also assist citizens in holding government accountable and ensure that government delivers services effectively and efficiently. In a country like South Africa, where illiteracy is high, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that citizens have access to information that could assist them in making meaningful decisions and life choices. The right to information was considered important enough to be included in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa[4]. Section 195 (1)(g) of the Constitution specifically states that "transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information".

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WPTPSD)[5], introduced by the democratic government in 1997, further states that "information is one of the most powerful tools at the customer's disposal in exercising his or her right to good service. Raising citizens' awareness of their right to information through the *Batho Pele,* was just the first step in changing the culture of secrecy to that of openness, transparency and accountability. The overall aim of the WPTPSD was to transform the South African Public Service into a people-centred institution which would focus on the effectiveness of the public service in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South Africa citizens. Improving service delivery is the ultimate goal of the Public Service transformation programme. The White Paper, therefore, requires national and provincial departments to transform and improve Public Service delivery in terms of the eight *Batho Pele* principles to optimise access to their services by all citizens. According to the White Paper, "public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society: they are legitimate expectations".

In terms of providing more and better information, the White Paper requires that "national and provincial departments provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about the services they provide, and who is entitled to them". The White Paper further calls for a consultation process to "be followed to find out what information is needed and to work out how, where and when the information can best be provided". To ensure the inclusion of the previously disadvantaged, it also requires that information be provided "in a variety of media and languages" which are used in the different geographic locations of the country. At a minimum, information about services should be available at the point of delivery. Special arrangements are required in remote areas where users are far from the point of delivery. "Service providers are also required to make regular visits to those remote communities to disseminate information".

In terms of Section 196 (4) (a) and (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the PSC has the mandate to, amongst others, promote the values and principles set out in section 195 and to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service. The *Batho Pele* White Paper took advantage of the independence of the PSC by requiring the PSC to periodically monitor its implementation and the resultant success or failure (Section 11). The PSC started with the evaluation of departments' implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles in 2005. The principles of Service Standards (2005), Access (2006, Redress (2006), Value for Money (2007), Consultation (2007), and Openness and Transparency (2008) have been evaluated since then. It is against this background the PSC decided to evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

4   The Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.
5   The Republic of South Africa. The Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.
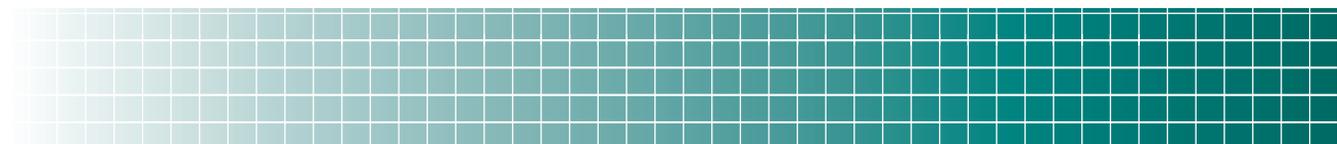
1.2   AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of the project was to evaluate the performance of selected Public Service departments in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the degree to which the Public Service complies with the principle of Information 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 Information.
- Formulate specific recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information to enhance public service delivery.

1.3   STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured in the following manner:

Chapter 2   describes the methodology that was applied in the study.
Chapter 3   provides the contextual background to the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.
Chapter 4   presents the key findings of the study.
Chapter 5   presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

Chapter Two

Methodology
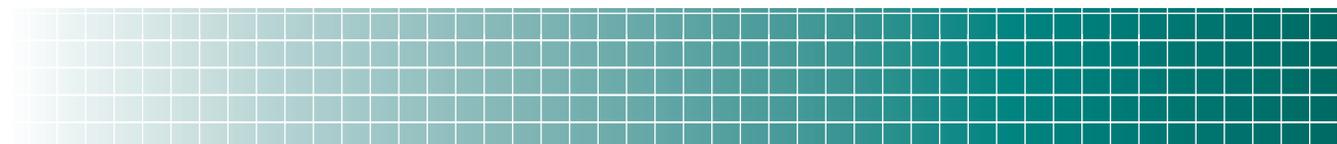
2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the scope of the study and the research methodology followed to collect data on the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The chapter also outlines the limitations experienced during the study.

2.2   SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study covered selected departments at both national and provincial levels. Departments were selected from those departments whose services are of such a nature that they need to provide citizens with information about the services they provide to enable customers to fully make use of these services. The following national and provincial departments were selected for the study:

National departments:
•   Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
•   Department of Trade and Industry

Provincial departments (all nine provinces included):
•   Department of Local Government
•   Department of Environmental Affairs
•   Department of Roads and Transport
•   Department of Economic Affairs
•   Office of the Premier

Note: The names of the provincial departments differ between provincial governments. The names listed above refer to the specific functional area of a provincial department that was included in the study. For instance, in Mpumalanga the department included in the study was the Department of Local Government and Housing although the study just focused on the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information in the Local Government component of the Department.

One rural and one urban service point in each of the above-mentioned departments were also identified and included in the study. The rationale behind the inclusion of these service points was to include the views of customers on the departments' performance in terms of the provision of information on their services and to verify whether the departments' provision of information was aligned with the information needs of their customers. Since the study sought to establish whether departments have put in place efforts to ensure equal access and provision of information to citizens in rural and urban areas, both rural and urban service points were included in the scope.

2.3   METHODOLOGY

2.3.1   Sampling

A purposive sampling procedure was applied to identify departments to be included in the study. Such sampling procedure identifies the elements in the research population that would render the most useful data in terms of the study's objectives.

Urban and rural service points (one each per department included in the study) were selected from lists provided by the selected departments.
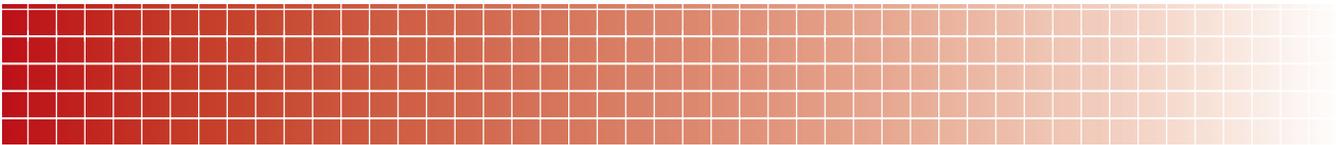
2.3.2 Data Collection Process

A combination of data collection methods was used during the study. These methods included the review of relevant documents, interviews with key informants in departments and interviews with service users (of the selected departments included in the study). *In loco* inspections of service points to verify the data collected during the interviews with departmental officials completed the data collection process.

2.3.2.1 Document Review

A review of documents key to the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information was done. Documents reviewed included the the Constitution[6], the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service[7], the *Batho Pele* White Paper[8], the *Batho Pele* Handbook[9], the State of the Public Service Report, 2008[10]. The literature reviewed was instrumental in contextualising the study and assisted in the development of the research instruments.

2.3.2.2 Interviews with key departmental officials

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with identified contact persons who served as key informants in the departments included in the study.

2.3.2.3 Interviews with service users at service points

Interviews were conducted with randomly identified service users at both urban and rural service points of the departments identified and included in the study. The main aim of the interviews with the customers was to serve as verification of the information provided by the departmental informants about departments' implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information as well as to collect data on the service needs of customers in terms of the different departmental services included in the study.

2.3.2.4 In loco inspections at the selected service points

In loco inspections were carried out at selected service delivery points of selected departments to inspect the current physical facilities, applicability of language(s) used in information material, availability of information about services and information desks and arrangements for special groups of people.

2.3.2.5 Data collection instruments

Two semi-structured questionnaires were developed to serve as data collection tools. One of these tools, the *questionnaire,* was used to collect data from the departmental informants of the various departments included in the study and the other, the *survey,* to collect data during the interviews with the service users or customers of the selected departments.

The questionnaires were informed firstly by the requirements of the *Batho Pele* White Paper and further by the project objectives. The following are the key elements addressed in the questionnaire directed at departmental officials:

- Implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.
- Roles and responsibilities for making information available to citizens.
- Consultation on Information.

6   Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.
7   Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service,1995.
8   Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997.
9   Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The Batho Pele Handbook. 2003.
10   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. State of the Public Service Report, 2007.
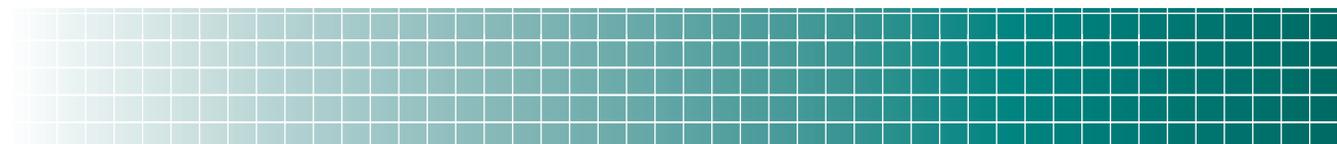
- Compliance with the requirements as stated in the White Paper.
- Training.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Information provision best practice.
- Challenges experienced in providing full and accurate information.

The questionnaire directed at service users of the selected departments focused on whether service users do receive information, where and when they receive information, their views on information they receive and their specific information needs in terms of the respective departments. The officials who conducted the study were also expected to provide their perspective on the state of information and service delivery at the service delivery point including the availability of an information desk and posters, the use of local languages and details of services provided.

Departments that participated in the study were also requested to provide documents such as policies, information and communication strategies, published newspapers and news articles. Such documents were meant to serve as proof of the departments' implementation of the *Batho Pele*. The plethora of information from these diverse sources allowed for the triangulation of data.

2.4   PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. For the purposes of this study, a pilot study took place at the five provincial departments in Mpumalanga included in the study. As a result of the lessons learnt during the pilot study, the data collection instruments were amended and fine-tuned before the actual data collection process started.

2.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Data obtained was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. To achieve this, qualitative analysis of the data was done through themes which were developed in line with the aims and objectives of the study. An Excel data analysis tool was used to complete the quantitative data analysis.

2.6   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified during the study:

- At certain service delivery points no service users were available at the time of data collection to be interviewed.
- The number of departments included in the study was less than the number of departments that was not included and as such it is difficult to generalise the findings of the study.

Chapter Three

Contextual Background

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948[11], proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, grants everyone the right to seek, receive, and impart information through any media and across any border. The International Covenant on Civil Political Rights, 1966[12] repeats Article 19 but admits that exercising the right may be subject to restrictions in terms of the rights and reputations of others, national security, public order or public health or morals. Another major piece of legislation dealing with the right to information, affecting South Africa, is the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights of 1981[13]. Given this fundamental right to information, the democratic South African government, unlike the previous apartheid-led government, accepted the duty and responsibility to provide access to information.

Apart from information being a right, it also empowers citizens to participate in priority setting and decision-making, to hold government accountable and to ensure equal treatment and justice. From government's side, access to accurate and comprehensive information can be used to fight corruption, address civil unrest, to make the governance process more transparent and to establish trust between itself and its citizens. Access to information implies that government should establish record keeping and archiving systems which serve to make it more efficient, reduce discretionality and allow for better decisions based on factual evidence.

This chapter provides an overview of the contextual frameworks which ensure that citizens are informed and receive quality information. The chapter also outlines the Batho Pele[14] principle of Information and the legislative context in which the study was conducted. Previous PSC studies related to the principle of Information, are also discussed.

3.2   THE TRANSFORMATION FRAMEWORK

The democratic and developmental path that the new South African government had decided to follow with its advent in 1994, focused strongly on the inclusion of the citizens as recipients of services, active participants in policy-making and the implementation of these services. To accomplish this inclusion, the public needed to have access to information about the services they receive. The Report on the Task Group on Government Communications (COMTASK) noted the fact that "large parts of our society are information deprived. The worst scenario can be seen in our remote rural areas where 30% of South Africans – the majority of them women – live poor, isolated and out of touch with the rest of the country, and hence, with democracy itself"[15]. The Report further notes that "no task is greater or more pressing than finding ways to alleviate the isolation of those who, through apartheid, poverty and present circumstances are deprived of the information with which to take control of their lives and enter into dialogue with government".

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery[16], states that the Public Service should, amongst others, be open to public participation, transparency, honesty and accountability and expressed the need to develop a more effective customer orientation and stronger service ethos. The *Batho Pele* White Paper, therefore, sets out eight service delivery specific transformation principles. These eight *Batho Pele* principles were developed to serve as acceptable policy framework regarding service delivery in the Public Service. The eight principles of *Batho Pele* articulated in the White Paper are:

*   **Consultation**: Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they received and, whenever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.
*   **Service Standards**: Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that

11   The United Nations. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948.
12   United Nations. International Covenant on Civil Political Rights. 1966.
13   Organisation of African Unity. African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights of 1981.
14   The Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.
15   www.parliament.gov.za/live/content.php?_ID=303. Report on the Task Group on Government Communications (COMTASK). 1996.
16   Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.
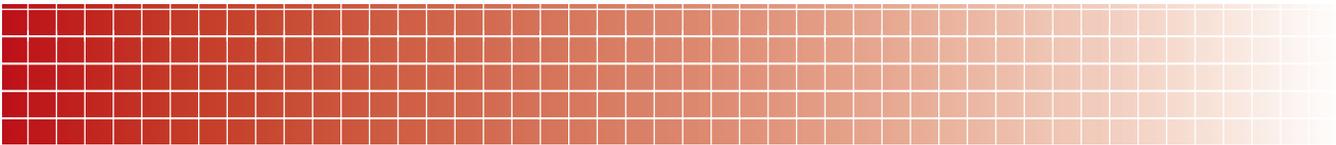
they are aware of what to expect.

- **Access:** All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
- **Courtesy:** All citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
- **Information:** Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
- **Openness and Transparency:** Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge.
- **Redress / Dealing with complaints**: If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
- **Value for money:** Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

These *Batho Pele* principles are also aligned to the Constitutional ideals of:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of professional ethics.
- Providing services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- Utilising resources efficiently and effectively.
- Responding to people's needs; where citizens are encouraged to participate in policy-making.
- Rendering an accountable, transparent, and development-oriented public administration.

3.3   THE BATHO PELE PRINCIPLE OF INFORMATION

According to the *Batho Pele* White Paper[17] and the *Batho Pele* Handbook[18], citizens should, *inter alia*, "be given full and accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive". This undertaking is in line with the commitment made by the democratic government to its citizens in Section 195 (1)(g) of the Constitution[19] discussed in *par* 1.1 above. It is therefore the responsibility of Public Service officials to ensure that information that facilitates citizens' access to the services "is communicated accurately and comprehensively to them". Furthermore, according to the *Batho Pele White* Paper, the provision of information "should be done actively, in order to ensure that information is received by those who need it, especially those who have previously been excluded from the provision of public services". The provision of information should, furthermore, be based on a thorough consultation process that will reveal what customers' information needs are and inform the measures used to provide the necessary information.

The *Batho Pele* White Paper requires that "information must be provided in a variety of media and languages to meet the differing needs of different customers", that "contact details be provided should customers need further information or advice", that all written information be "tested on the target audience for readability and comprehensiveness" and that the provision of information is supported with the option of receiving information orally to ensure that customers' questions are answered. Information should at least be available at all service points, but for service users who are far from service points, "other arrangements will be needed". In such instances, the *Batho Pele* White Paper, requires that "service providers make regular visits to remote communities to disseminate information". It is important to note that the *Batho Pele* principle of information is not only about providing the public with information, but also about empowering them through access to information, to play an active role in the policy-making processes and in assessing the services provided.

---

17   *Republic of South Africa. Department of public Service and Administration. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.*
18   *Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. Batho Pele Handbook, 2003.*
19   *Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*

3.4   LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Since 1994, various pieces of legislation have been drafted to formalise the sharing, accessing, requesting and receiving of information. These pieces of legislation provide the necessary procedural framework on sharing information. The following is an overview of these relevant pieces of legislation which formed part of the parameters of the evaluation of the implementation of the principle of Information.

3.4.1   The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa[20] focuses on the provision of timely, accessible and accurate information to foster transparency. The Constitution further spells out clearly in Chapter 2 on the Bill of Rights, the different rights related to the provision and access to information and which are also referred to as fundamental human rights:

Section 16:   ***Freedom of Expression***
                (1)(b)   Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;
Section 32:   ***Access to information***
                (1)   Everyone has the right of access to –
                Any information held by the state; and
                Any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights.
                (2)   National legislation must be enacted to give effect to this right, and may provide for reasonable measures to alleviate the administrative burden on the state".

3.4.2   The Promotion of Access to Information Act

To give effect to section 32 (2) of the Constitution, mentioned above, at public, private and civil society sector level, the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA)[21] was adopted. The Act provides the necessary framework and guiding rules allowing citizens access to public records as well as the records that private companies, organisations or individuals hold which are needed by citizens to exercise or protect any right. It also sets out how government, private institutions or individuals should deal with requests for access to such records.

3.4.3   The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA)[22] is also underpinning access to information and the principle of Openness and Transparency, although its main focus is on ensuring procedurally fair administrative actions and providing citizens with the right to request reasons for administrative actions and decisions and to have these actions reviewed in court. By providing citizens with this information about decisions affecting them, access to information, openness and transparency are promoted.

3.4.4   The Protection of Personal Information Bill

The Protection of Personal Information Bill[23] provides for the comprehensive regulation of all aspects of personal information from the collection, use, disclosure, storage and access to this information. The implications of the Act will be widespread and will definitely impact on the handling of personal information especially during the recruitment, selection and employment of people. It will, however also affect the personal information that departments keep on service beneficiaries and accessing this information by individual members of the public.

---

20   *Republic of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*
21   *Republic of South Africa. Promotion of Access to Information Act. Act 2 of 2000.*
22   *Republic of South Africa. Promotion of Administrative justice Act. Act 3 of 2000.*
23   *The Protection of Personal Information Bill has not yet been adopted by Parliament.*

3.5 PREVIOUS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION STUDIES RELATED TO THE BATHO PELE PRINCIPLE OF INFORMATION

The PSC has since 2000 conducted several studies aimed at evaluating the implementation and compliance of government departments with the *Batho Pele* principles. An assessment of the implementation of the following principles has already been completed by the PSC:

- Service Standards[24];
- Access[25];
- Redress[26];
- Consultation[27];
- Value for Money[28] and
- Openness and Transparency[29]

The PSC reports on the implementation of the principles of Service Standards; Openness and Transparency, Access, Consultation highlighted the following key issues relating to the *Batho Pele* principle of Information:

- Given that there are different stakeholders that departments often need to service, it would be crucial to assess the different consultation mechanism such as Citizens Satisfaction Surveys, Citizens Forums, *Izimbizo* and Service Delivery hearings[30].
- *Izimbizo* have been used to strengthen relations with communities. However, the lack of a feedback loop in the form of appropriate action on issues raised by communities is a concern[31].
- In addition to annual reports, each department should commit to the production of the Annual Report to Citizens[32]. Annual Reports to Citizens tend to summarise critical information in a user friendly manner making them useful communication mechanisms from departments as compared to ordinary Annual Reports and brochures[33].
- For the public to improve access to services and products of the various departments, the departments must develop measures to increase access to people who are disadvantaged by language, for example through the use of, among others, help desks, use of indigenous languages, call centres/toll free lines and flexible hours of work[34].

The PSC report on the implementation of PAIA[35] advised departments to utilise other mechanisms rather than rely on written information to ensure that the poor and illiterate groups are able to access information.

24   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission: Evaluation of Service Standards in the Public Service, 2005.
25   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission: Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Access, 2006.
26   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission: Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Redress, 2006.
27   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation, 2007.
28   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation, 2007.
29   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Openness and Transparency, 2008.
30   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation, 2007
31   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Round table discussion on the State of the Public Service Report, 2007.
32   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Round table discussion on the State of the Public Service Report, 2008.
33   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Openness and Transparency in the Public Service. February 2008.
34   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of the Performance and Compliance with the Batho Pele Principle of Access. October 2006.
35   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Implementation of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). 2007.

Chapter Four

Findings of the Study
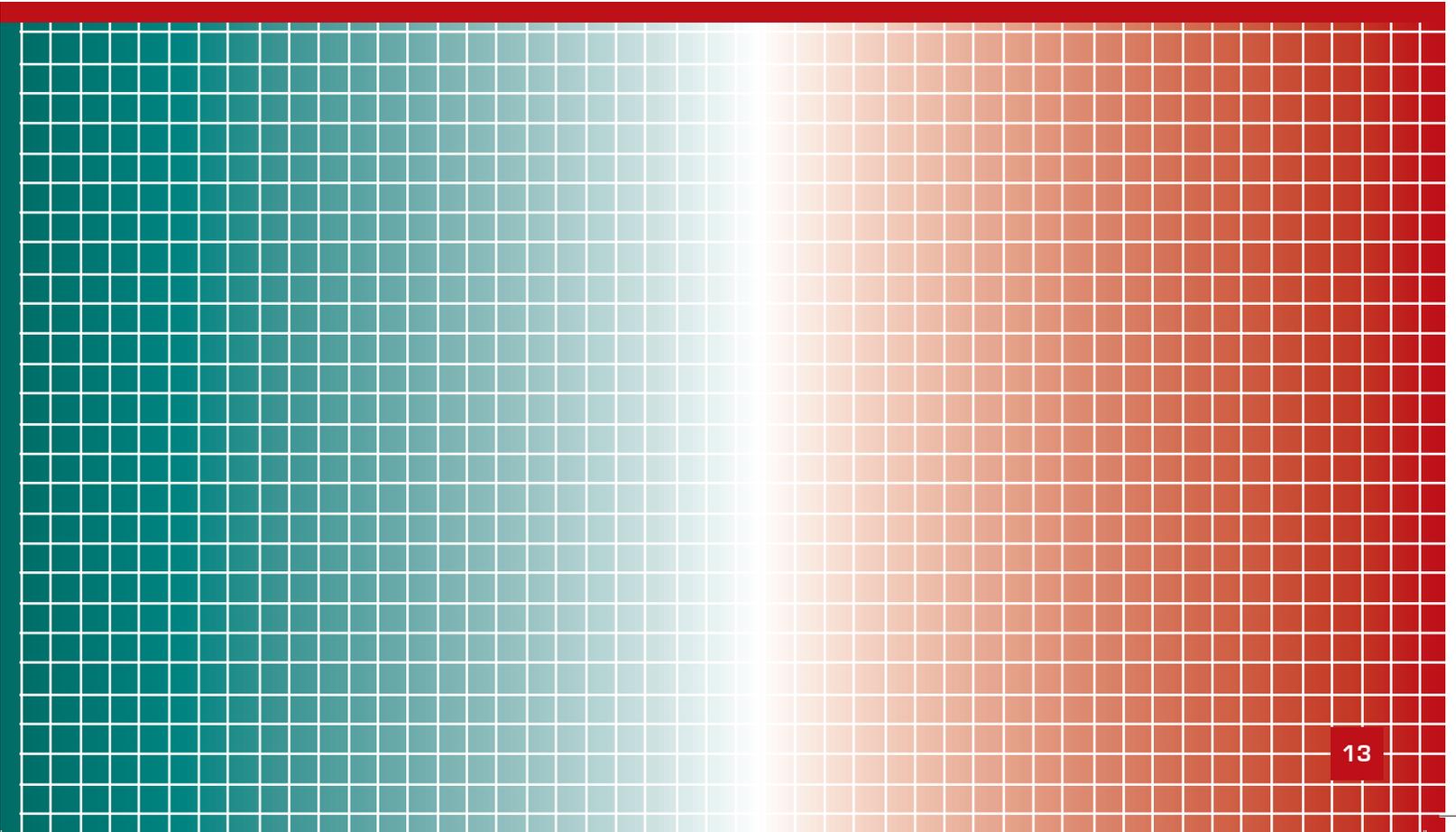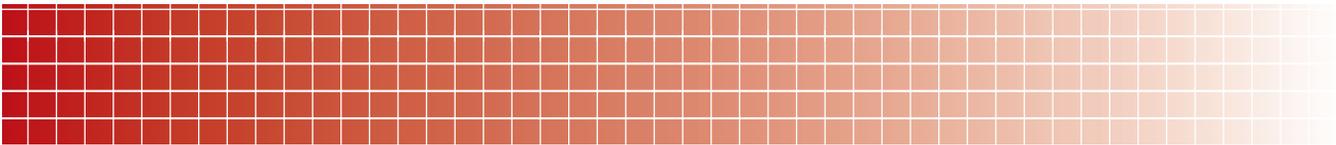
4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information in the Public Service. The findings are discussed according to the following key themes derived from the questionnaires that were used during data collection:

- Implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information by departments.
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities for making information available to customers.
- Consultation on information.
- Compliance with the requirements of the *Batho Pele* White Paper on the implementation of the principle of Information.
- Training on the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.
- Challenges departments face in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information and measures departments are implementing to overcome these challenges.

4.2 KEY FINDINGS

4.2.1 Overall Response Rate

A total of 40 (87%) face to face interviews were conducted with designated officials from the respective departments. Out of a total of 106 planned service user interviews at urban and rural service points, 75 (71%) were conducted.

4.2.2 Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Information

4.2.2.1 Departments use various measures to implement the Batho Pele principle of Information

The study sought to establish the measures departments apply to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. It was important to establish the mechanisms applied by departments as they would demonstrate the departments' tendency towards compliance with the *Batho Pele* White Paper. The findings show that departments use a plethora of different methodologies and initiatives to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principle of Information is implemented. Most departments (93%) mentioned print and electronic media, broadcast and interactive sessions as the common mode for ensuring that information about services they render is conveyed to potential service users. Among specific mechanisms mentioned by departments are newspapers, posters, flyers, *izimbizo,* road shows, pamphlets, radio, newsletters and programme publications. Posters are commonly used to inform members of the public about up-coming events and meetings such as *izimbizo* and road shows and encourage them to attend and raise their concerns.

The findings of the study further suggest that the measures used by departments to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information are in line with those used by the respective departments to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Openness and Transparency[36]. The PSC study on the Implementation of the *Batho Pele* Principle of Openness and Transparency revealed that 88% of departments use *izimbizo*, information brochures, public participation mechanisms, Citizen Charters, newsletters, outreach programmes, roadshows, electronic media as well as television or combinations of these methods, to ensure that information is provided and that openness and transparency are ensured. The similarities in the findings of the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles of Information and Openness and Transparency is an indication of the nature of integration and interrelatedness of the *Batho Pele* principles. The implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information leads to openness and transparency about the department concerned. Citizens as service users are likely to play a meaningful role in

36   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Openness and Transparency in the Public Service. 2008.
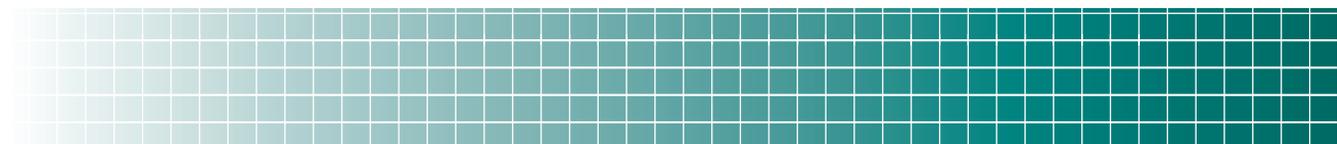
departments' activities such as policy making if they have comprehensive information.

The study further sought to establish the views of service users with regard to the methods they prefer to receive information from departments. The findings show that at all service delivery points of the respective departments in all provinces, both rural (53%) and urban (42%), service users rank *izimbizo* first. In the PSC *Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service*[37] the purpose of *izimbizo* was reflected as creating "a platform where face-to-face interaction between government leaders and communities takes place". During the *izimbizo*, government provides citizens with information about service delivery and policy issues. These meetings are interactive in nature, allowing inputs from members of the public on public service delivery as well as policy issues. *Izimbizo* have become an important vehicle for government to consult and communicate with citizens. The reason for rural communities to choose *izimbizo* as preferred method of receiving information may be as a result of a lack of access to written information material in these areas and the high levels of illiteracy that prevails in such rural communities. Government departments, both at national and provincial level, have in most cases institutionalised *Izimbizo* and similar interactive consultation fora such as Exco-meets-the-people as part of their planning processes and have established public participation units in departments[38] to drive these initiatives. The above-mentioned PSC study revealed that at least two national *izimbizo* focus weeks are held every year, during the months of April and October. The overall purpose of these *izimbizo* focus weeks is to assist departments with the implementation of the *izimbizo* initiative and to focus on the importance of these initiatives in obtaining information on citizens' issues and needs which should inform government planning and budget processes. Sharing information about government initiatives with citizens as service users consolidates evidence-based planning and evidence-based policy making processes.

Radio was found to be the second most important mechanism through which communities would prefer to receive information. Twenty one percent (21%) urban and nineteen percent (19%) rural service users indicated that they prefer the radio as method of receiving information from departments. Although radio does not promote interaction between service users and government, it has a wide reach which includes the most remote areas of the country. Through the use of the radio, departments can reach citizens previously deprived of all government information in the remote areas. Radio stations make use of local languages and all 11 official languages are used by the various radio stations. There are also community radio stations which have broadened the outreach initiatives to the communities across the country.

The study found that pamphlets were the third most important mechanism (rated 21% by urban service users and 13% by rural service users) through which communities prefer to receive information. Newspapers were regarded by both the urban citizens (9%) and rural citizens (9%) as equally important. This is surprising taking into consideration that up to 40% of citizens in the rural areas are still illiterate[39]. It is possible that the literate people who read newspapers share the information with the broader community. **Figure 1** below shows service users preferred modes of receiving Information from government departments.

37   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service. 2008.
38   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Assessment of Public Participation Practices in the Public Service, 2008.
39   www.southafrica.info/about/education/education.html.
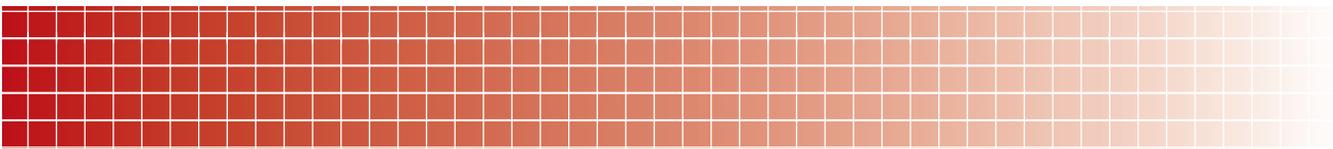
**Figure 1: Service users' preferred modes of receiving information**
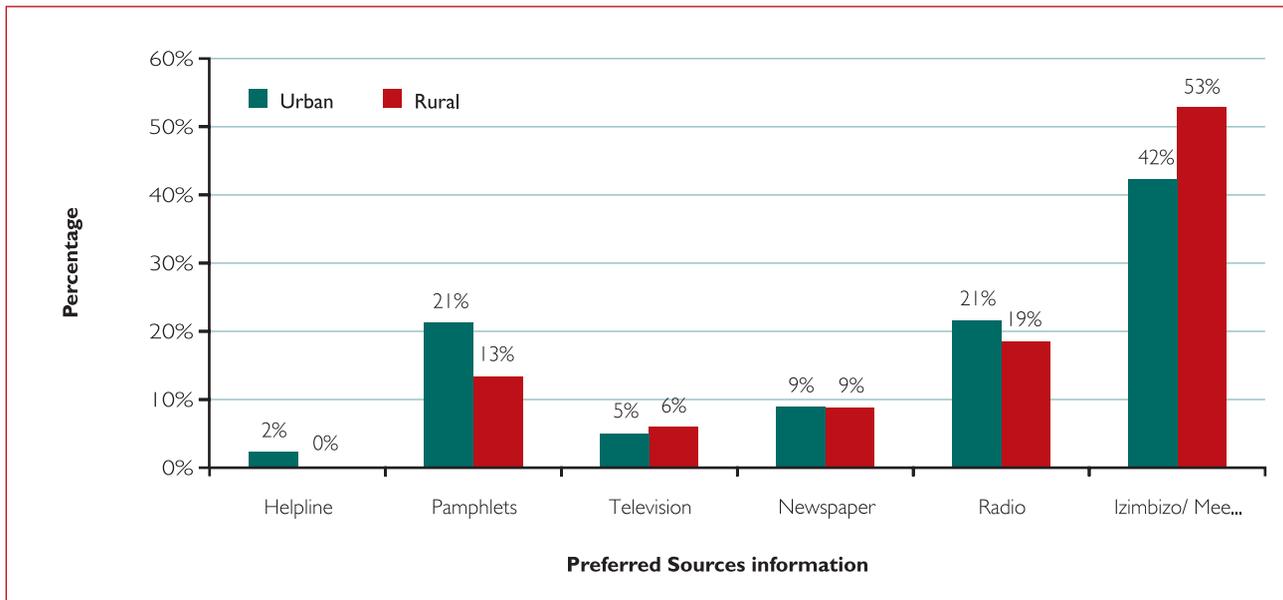
Figure 1 above shows that *izimbizo* is the most preferred method to communicate information to service users, both in the urban and rural areas.

The findings also show that the Western Cape and Gauteng Provincial Administrations have started to make optimal use of e-government in their efforts to disseminate information widely. The Western Cape has established e-Community Fora whose primary role is to disseminate information about community projects at the local level. At the time of the study, nine such fora had already been established in the Province. A bulk SMS service is also used by the Western Cape Provincial Government to disseminate information to service users and stakeholders who have access to cellphones. Furthermore, the Western Cape has a toll-free helpline where citizens can call in and request information about services. The Cape Gateway, a web-based portal serving as a gateway to all services offered in the Western Cape, has a walk-in centre in the city where provincial departments are located and citizens can access the portal. Electronic documents are also available in printed form at the centre. Furthermore, assistance in accessing electronic documents is provided, should citizens need any.

Contrary to what was indicated by the departmental officials in all the provinces on the methods they mainly use for sharing information about departmental services with citizens or service users, forty eight percent (48%) of service users indicated that they are provided with information mainly at the information desks (35%) and service counters (13%) at service delivery points. **Figure 2** below further shows that 25% of service users surveyed said they had not been provided with the required information at the service delivery point. Twenty seven percent (27%) of customers indicated that they receive information through other means such as word of mouth through other service users who have had contact with the respective departments, human rights offices in the area, police stations, municipal offices, councillors and community meetings.

Figure 2: Providing information at service delivery points

Figure 2: Providing information at service delivery points
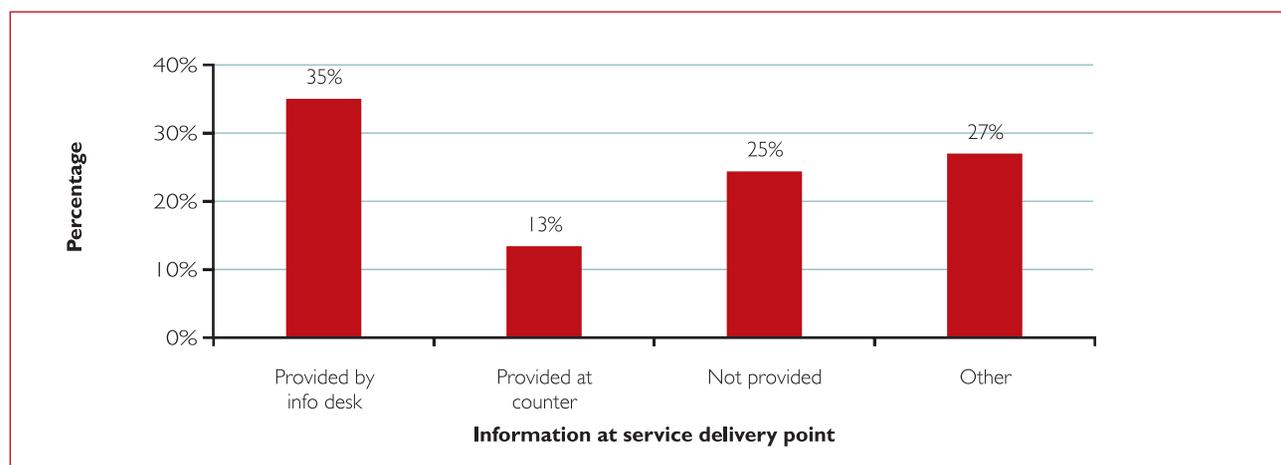
Figure 2 above shows the methods through which information is provided to service users at the different service delivery points. According to the findings, 35% of the service users indicated that they receive information at information desks and 13% receive information at service counters.

4.2.2.2 Departments have developed policies and strategies to support the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information

The study sought to establish whether departments have developed strategies, policies and programmes to support the implementation of the Information principle. The availability of policies and strategies is likely to confirm departments' commitment to comply with the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The study found that departments have developed various policies and strategies to support the implementation of the principle of Information. **Figure 3** below shows that thirty five percent (35%) of the departments had a communication strategy or policy in place. Twenty four percent (24%) of departments indicated that they had developed Promotion of Access to Information Act[40] (PAIA) manuals and that the manuals are used to support the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. Twenty percent (20%) of departments make use of an information strategy to guide their efforts in implementing the principle of Information.

Figure 3: Strategies to support the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information

Figure 3: Strategies to support the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information
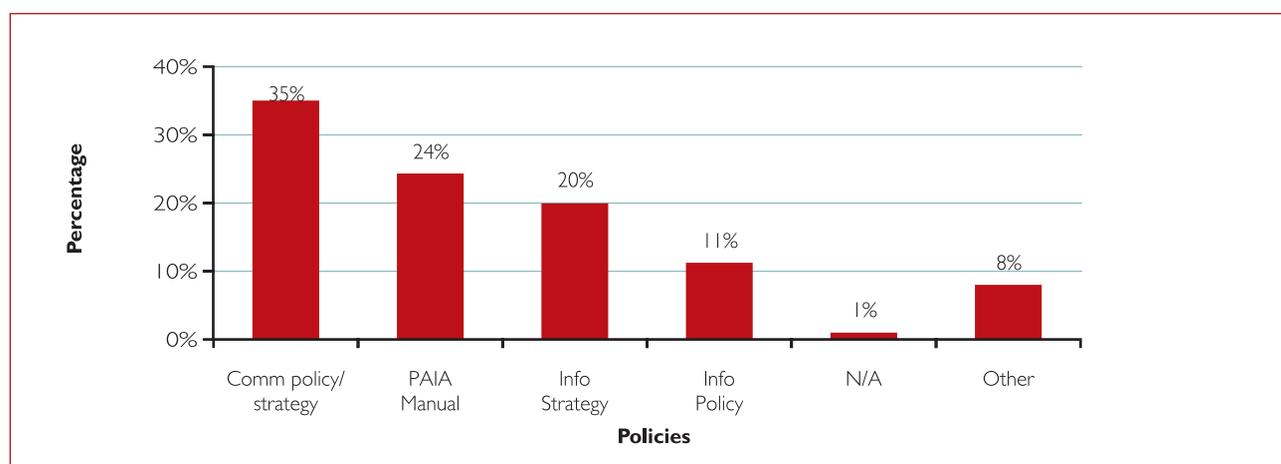
Figure 3 above presents different strategies used by departments to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The findings show that at most of the departments included in the study (35%) make use of a communication strategy to implement the principle of Information.

40   *Republic of South Africa. Promotion of Access to Information Act. Act No 2 of 2001.*
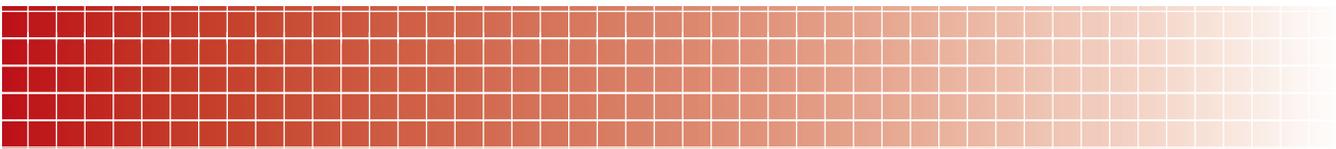
The study also sought to establish the capacity departments have to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information and how communication takes place between departments and service users. According to the findings of the study departments seem to have the capacity to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information and to communicate with service users. The findings show that departments have the ability to develop policies and communication strategies internally without external assistance such as consultants. This finding suggests that departments have officials with skills to meet the needs and demands of the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

Figure 4: Communication and information strategies are mostly developed internally
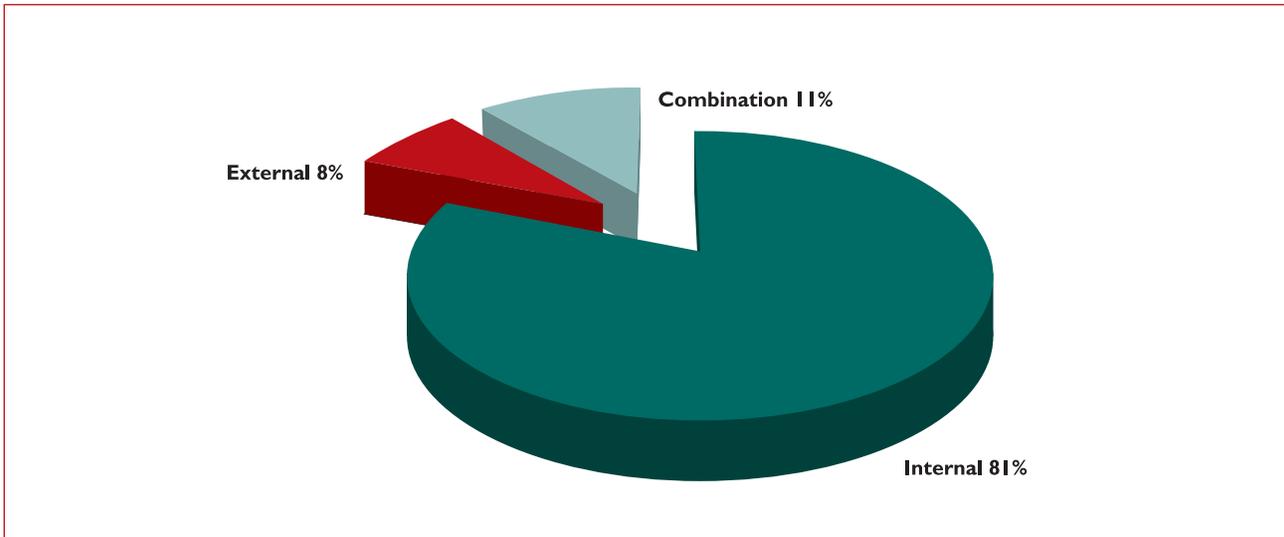

Figure 4 above shows that in 81% of the departments that participated in the study, communication and information strategies were developed by internal staff.

4.2.3 The Roles and Responsibilities for the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Information

4.2.3.1 Levels of officials responsible for implementation are varied

The study sought to establish the post levels of the officials responsible for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information in the respective departments. The post level of officials would be an indication of the commitment of departments to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information or a lack thereof. The existence of a well-established unit with individuals dedicated to the implementation of the principle of Information would also be indicative of the commitment of departments to effectively and efficiently implement the principle. **Figure 5** below shows that the majority of officials (32%) responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle, including Information are at Chief Director/General Manager level. The findings also show that in 27% of departments, the post levels of officials responsible for co-ordination and implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles, including Information range from Deputy Director, Manager to Assistant Director level.

Figure 5:   Post levels of officials responsible for the Batho Pele principle of Information
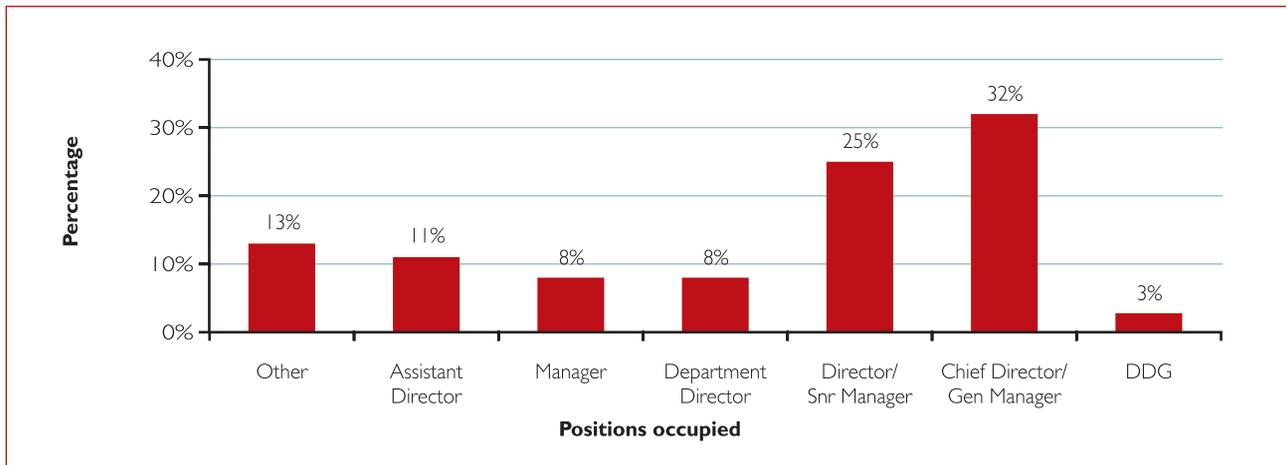

Figure 5 above shows the post levels of officials responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles, including Information, in the departments that participated in the study. In 32% of departments officials are at Chief Director/or General Manager levels.

According to the findings of the study, 39% of departments' officials responsible for the *Batho Pele* principles, including Information, report directly to the Director-General or Head of Department and not to the person at the next higher level. In three of the departments included in the study, officials responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles including Information, report directly to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC).

4.2.3.2 Various units are responsible for the implementation of Information

The study sought to establish if departments have established units responsible for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The findings of the study show that departments use various units or components to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principles, including Information, are co-ordinated and implemented such as the *Batho Pele or* Transformation units, Communications or Marketing Components, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, stakeholder Management and Client Services units. Although departments use a variety of units or components to implement the principle of Information, it is important to note that the responsibility for implementing the principle of Information is clearly allocated to a specific manager in the department. The allocation of the responsibility of a particular official is indicative that departments are committed to implement the principle of Information as part of their service delivery transformation drives.

Although departments have allocated responsibility for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information to one of the aforementioned components at Head Office level, the findings of the study show that most departments (66%) have not created a structure at service delivery level for this purpose. Departments make use of the line function counter officials at the service delivery points to also ensure that service users are provided with the necessary information.

4.2.4   Departments Consult Service Users on Information

The study sought to determine if departments consult citizens on their information needs and solicit their inputs on how to improve information sharing strategies. The study found that departments implement different mechanisms to ensure that customer consultation takes place in terms of the requirements of the *Batho Pele* White Paper principle of Information. Such mechanisms include, amongst others, customer surveys, *izimbizo,* road shows and public meetings which are used by most departments (83%). This corroborates with the findings of

the PSC *Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation[41]* which indicated that most departments (68%) use workshops, seminars or summits, *izimbizo,* engagement of critical stakeholders and printed media, radio and television as iniatiatives to promote consultation (p 18).

While departments report to have gone to great lengths to consult service users about their information needs, their efforts were not reflected in the customer data. The study found that (47%) of service users at all service delivery points of the respective departments in all provinces indicated that they had not been consulted on their information needs.

Consultation with citizens on their information needs is not an end it itself. The success of such consultation should be evidenced through the extent to which feedback from service users is used to improve policy making and service delivery. Departments reported that minutes and notes emanating from various consultation fora are forwarded to senior officials in the relevant departments to ensure that necessary action plans are developed and implemented. **Figure 6** below shows the benefits departments reported to have had as a result of implementing inputs received from citizens during consultation sessions.

Figure 6:   Benefits of integrating citizens' inputs into departmental policy-making and planning systems and departmental programmes
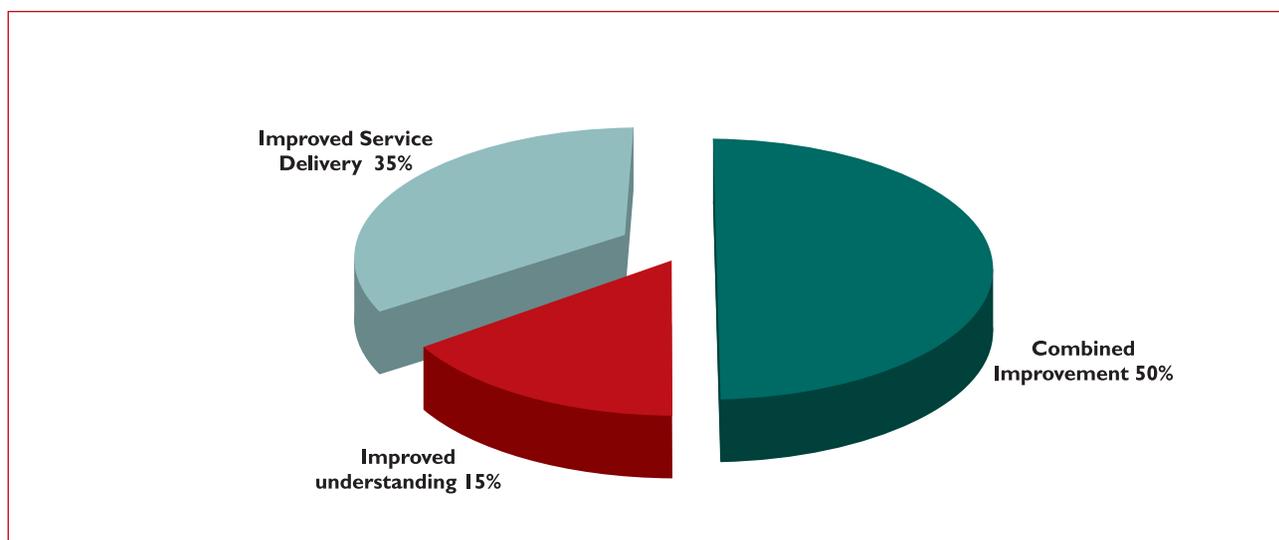

Figure 6 above shows that 50% of departments achieved an improvement in citizens understanding of the departments' services as well as in improved service delivery, while 35% reported an improvement in general service delivery as a result of consulting with members of the public as service users or potential service users thereof.

4.2.5   Compliance with the Requirements of the Batho Pele White Paper

The study sought to establish departments' compliance with the requirements of the *Batho Pele* White Paper in implementing the principle of Information. These requirements include:

- The provision of information in a variety of languages to meet the needs of different customers.
- The inclusion of the previously disadvantaged groups (physically disabled, the illiterate, the youth and women) in information programmes.
- The inclusion of graphics in written information to ensure clarity.
- The testing of the readability and comprehensiveness of written information on target audiences.
- The implementation of special arrangements for the provision of information to remote communities.

41   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Consultation. 2007.

- The availability of contact details to allow for obtaining further information and advice.

Departments' compliance with each of the above requirements is discussed below.

4.2.5.1   Departments use local languages to ensure the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information

The findings of the study show that departments use local languages to ensure effective implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The languages departments used to convey information correlated with the main languages spoken in a particular Province. All departments that participated in the study indicated that they predominantly use English in their written materials and local languages in verbal communication with service users. Forty two percent (42%) of departments indicated that they also publish documents such as budget speeches, *izimbizo,* pamphlets and brochures in languages used in the Province other than English.

Table 1: Languages used to disseminate Information

LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF DEPART- MENTS USING LANGUAGE	DEPARTMENT USING THE LANGUAGE
English	16	Limpopo Local Govt and Housing, Limpopo Premier's Office, FS Public Wks and Transport, GP Local Govt, NW agriculture, WC Local Govt/ and Housing, Limpopo Econ Dev, NC Roads/Works, EC Roads/ Transport, NW Econ Dev/Tourism, NC Premier's Office, FS Local Govt/Housing, MP Local Govt, EC Econ Dev, KZN Local Govt/Traditional Affairs
English, Sotho, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Zulu,	1	DTI
English and Zulu	3	GP Transport, KZN Transport, KZN Econ Dev
English, Zulu and Xhosa	1	KZN Premier's Office
English and Xhosa	2	EC Local Govt, EC Premier's Office
English, Afrikaans, Sotho or Tswana	4	FS and NW Premiers' Office, NW Agric, NW Transport
English, Afrikaans, Xhosa	4	WC Econ. Dev and Tourism, WC Public Works and Transport, WC Premier's Office, WC Environment
English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Sotho	1	Gauteng Department of Economic Development
All 11 languages	1	National Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

Table 1 above shows the languages used by different departments that participated in the study to communicate and share information with their service users. Despite an assurance by departments that information is provided in the relevant languages spoken in the different provinces, the findings show that most departments (53%) cited English as the only language in which written material is available. Service users in all provinces also raised the availability of written material mainly in English as a point of dissatisfaction. During the in loco inspections at service delivery points, it was found that that forty five percent (45%) of departments provide information in the local languages. It is possible that translation costs deter departments to have documents in languages other than English.
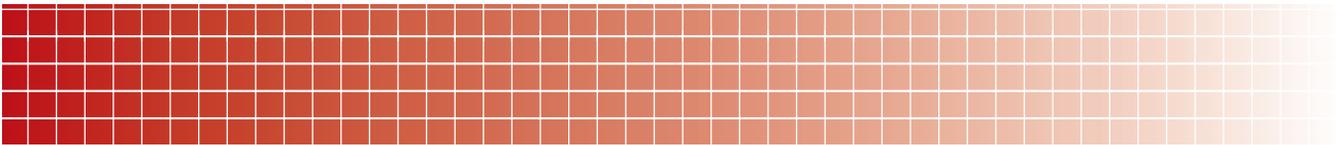
4.2.5.2 Departments' efforts to include previously disadvantaged groups in information programmes varies

The study sought to establish if departments include previously disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, the youth, the illiterate and women in their information programmes. The views of the previously disadvantaged groups are important in developing responsive service delivery strategies.

The findings show that forty three percent (43%) of the departments that participated in the study have implemented programmes to address the information needs of people with disabilities such as disability forums, language workshops, translation of policy documents and service brochures to Braille. While departments indicated that they provide for people with disabilities, it was found during *in loco* inspections that many buildings were not accessible by people with disabilities. However, the study showed that there were departments that had appointed sign language interpreters.

The study found that 11% of departments that participated in the study have implemented information programmes aimed at the youth. For instance, the Free State Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport runs a national youth service programme which implements a road safety campaign aiming at learner drivers and training young people to drive. The awareness programme focused, amongst others on presentations about tourism business opportunities, information on start up capital and assistance with business planning, to increase youth participation in the mainstream economy.

The findings of the study indicate that 52% of departments that participated in the study have implemented information programmes aimed at the illiterate. These programmes include making visual materials available (e.g. DVDs and photographs), the *Jamboree Programme* of the Western Cape, radio talk shows and interactive outreach programmes including *izimbizo* and road shows are used to ensure increased access to services by all people. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) publishes a booklet on starting businesses in comic format, making it easy to understand by those who cannot read.

The findings of the study show that fifty two percent (52%) of departments implement information programmes directed at women such as women empowerment programmes, conferences, training programmes and support programmes (e.g. starting a business). The Western Cape Provincial Administration runs an annual conference during Women's Month (August) where information about opportunities for women in the Province is provided. The DTI caters for the needs of women through its Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) programme, a national initiative aimed at enhancing the accessibility of science and technology to women in business and in particular small, medium and macro enterprises (SMMEs).

4.2.5.3 Departments have Special Arrangements for the Provision of Information to Remote Communities

The study wanted to establish the type of arrangements departments have in place to provide information to remote communities. The findings of the study indicate that 52% of departments implement special arrangements to ensure the provision of information to remote communities. A high number of departments (86%) conduct regular visits to remote communities to provide them with information on their respective departments and the services rendered by such departments. A few departments (13%) undertake annual interventions to ensure the provision of information to remote communities. The overall purpose of such visits is to share information with members of the public on the availability of services and how to access them.

4.2.6 The Inclusion of Graphics in Written Information is Varied

The study wanted to determine if departments include graphic material in the provision of information to service

users to ensure clarity of written information. According to the *Batho Pele* White Paper[42], departments are required to provide graphic material in written information to ensure clarity. The findings of the study show that fifty percent (50%) of departments include graphic material in their written documents to ensure improved clarity and to make such documents accessible to the illiterate. Thirty eight percent (38%) of departments indicated that they do not include graphic material in their written information as required by the *Batho Pele* White Paper. Departments indicated that they rely on direct verbal communication with service users at service points to accommodate the illiterate's information needs. Fourteen percent (14%) of service users indicated that they would prefer departments to include pictures in the written information they receive from departments to improve clarity.

4.2.7 There are Departments that Test Readability and Comprehensiveness of their Written Material

The study sought to establish whether departments test the readability and comprehensiveness of written information on their intended audiences. The study found that fifty seven percent (57%) of the departments that participated in the study test readability of their written material compared to forty three percent (43%) of departments who indicated that they did not test either readability or comprehensiveness. Eight departments (20%) used external editors as well as departmental staff to proof read and edit documents. Although the use of external editors is helpful in ensuring the quality of documents, it does not guarantee that departments would comply with the *Batho Pele* which pertinently requires that "readability and comprehensiveness should be tested on the target audiences"[43]. The study further found that only seven percent (7%) of service users that participated in the study indicated that they were not able to understand or read the written information provided by departments and this should be attributed to the high illiteracy in the country, especially in the rural areas.

In support of the data obtained from departmental officials, service users at service delivery points indicated, as reflected in **Figure 7** below, that they were mostly satisfied with the quality of information material provided by departments (53% at rural level and 51% at urban level).

Figure 7: Service user satisfaction with quality of information material
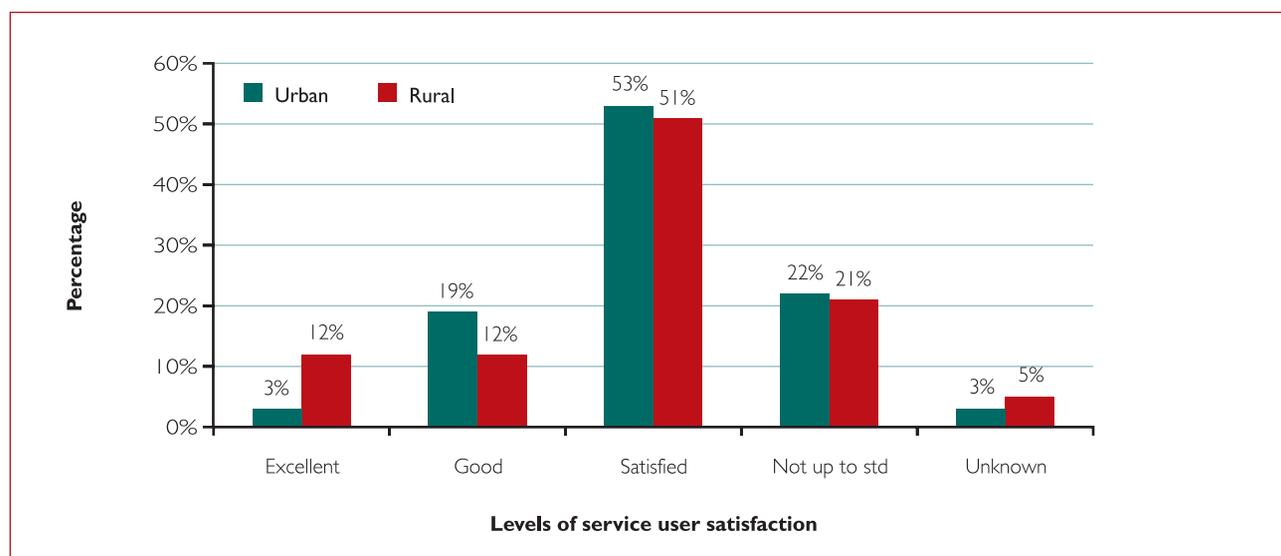

Figure 7 above shows that a high proportion of service users (52% on average) at rural and urban service points rated written materials provided to them by the relevant departments as satisfactory. Such level of satisfaction suggests departments' ability to provide service users with the information they need. All service users in all provinces indicated that the respective departments could improve their information sharing initiatives by ensuring that the language used in written materials is simple and easy to read or explain.

42   Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.
43   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.

4.2.8   Departments make Contact Details Available to Citizens for Future Reference

The study sought to establish if departments make their own contact details available to citizens for further reference, should they in future need further information or advice. The findings show that the majority of departments (72,5%) provide their contact numbers and physical addresses on published material such as service delivery or citizens charters and brochures. Compared to the findings of a previous PSC study on the Implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Openness and Transparency[44], the findings show an increase of 26,9% in departments providing such contact information.

Assessing departments' overall compliance with the above *Batho Pele* White Paper requirements for the implementation of the principle of Information and comparing the compliance figures at a national-provincial level, the study found that all Provincial Administrations and the national departments complied to a lesser or greater extent with the requirements at an average of 65%. The figure is indicative of departments' concerted efforts to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principle of Information is implemented according to the requirements spelt out in the *Batho Pele* White Paper. **Figure 8** below shows that the Eastern and Western Cape Provincial Administrations leads with 77% and 76% compliance with the requirements of the *Batho Pele.* The figure further shows that the Provincial Administration of the Northern Cape complied the least (52%) with the requirements. The 96% compliance of national departments might be skew taking into account that only two national departments participated in the study.

Figure 8:   Overall compliance with the *Batho Pele* requirements for the implementation of the principle of Information
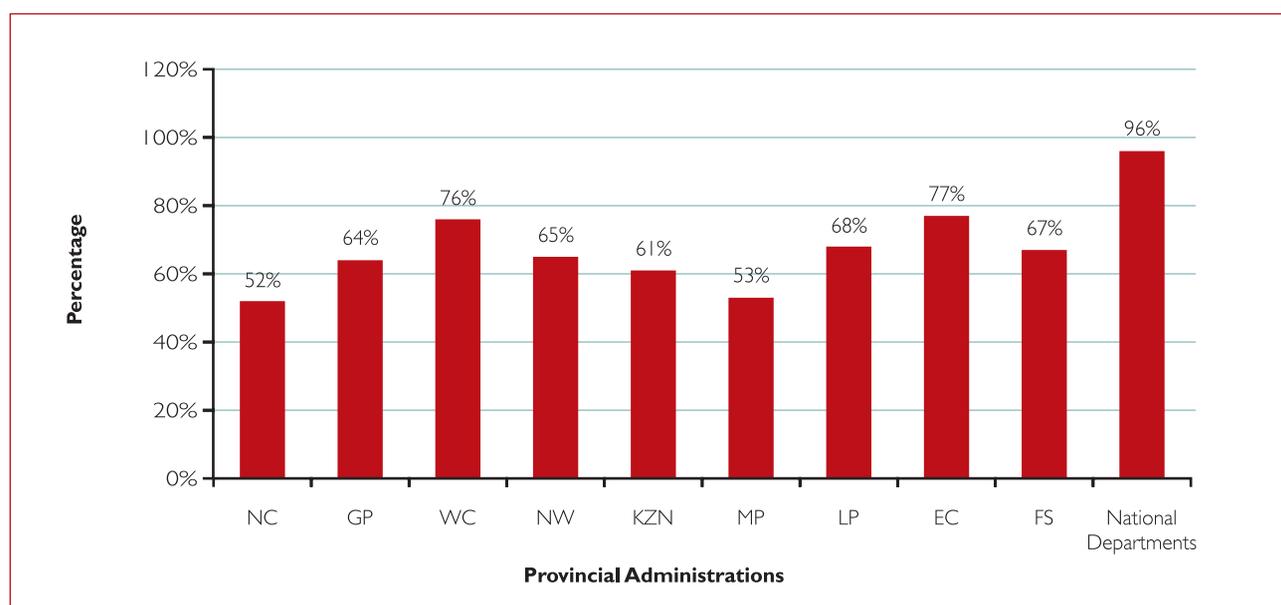

Figure 8 above shows how Provincial Administrations and national departments collectively compare in terms of compliance with the *Batho Pele* requirements for the implementation of the principle of Information.

4.2.9   Departments Provide Training on the Batho Pele Principle of Information

The study wanted to establish whether departments provide training to their officials on the principle of Information and its requirements. It is presumed that training on the principle will ensure that the principle of Information and the responsibility to implement the principle, are understood. Training on information strategies and communication skills would capacitate staff to ensure that service users receive the necessary information. The study found that all departments that participated in the study provide training on the *Batho Pele* principles

44   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Openness and Transparency in the Public Service. 2008.
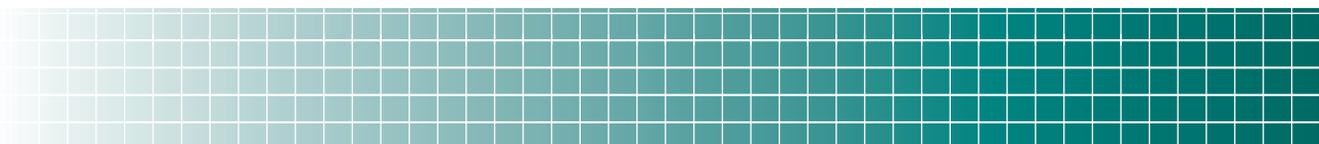
in general and information in particular. The findings further show that training is mostly provided (25%) under the stewardship and co-ordination of the Offices of the Premiers. The findings also show that 21% of training is provided by the provincially based higher learning institutions who are contracted by the respective departments, and in 19% of the departments, such training is provided by the supervisors concerned. The evaluation of training courses is mostly conducted at the end of the training courses and through observations once the employees are back at work after attending the relevant training. A previous PSC study, *Report on the Implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Openness and Transparency in the Public Service*[45] indicated that seventy seven percent (77%) of departments included in that study conducted training on the *Batho Pele* principles (including all eight principles). The findings of the study, therefore, show an increase of 23% in departments providing officials with training on the *Batho Pele* principles.

Where necessary external service providers are engaged to address staff development needs. The Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) plays an important role in providing external training and development of staff with regard to the *Batho Pele* principles. Training on the *Batho Pele* White Paper provided by PALAMA include courses on service delivery improvement, customer care, the *Batho Pele* principles, belief set and internalising the principles and belief set.

4.2.10   Monitoring and Evaluation of Information

4.2.10.1 The Monitoring and Evaluation systems departments use to measure progress with the implementation of the principle of Information are varied

The study sought to establish monitoring and evaluation systems departments have in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The implementation of the principle requires a rigorous system of assessing progress towards the achievement of objectives, identifying challenges hampering the implementation and action plans to address these challenges. The findings of the study show that departments use different mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the provision, reach and utilisation of information shared with citizens. Eighty nine percent (89%) of departments that were sampled to participate in the study reported to have a monitoring and evaluation system or mechanism in place in this regard. Only eleven percent (11%) reported that they did not have a M&E system in place to assess progress with the implementation of the principle. Thirty eight percent (38%) of departments indicated that they use a combination of measures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. Further analysis indicated that the most common form of M&E systems applied by the respective departments are management reports with sixty four percent (64%) of departments participating in the study using these reports. Customer satisfaction surveys are used by fifty four percent (54%) of departments as a M&E mechanism towards the implementation of the principle of Information, while 335 of departments indicated that they have a M&E system in place and 11% are using research processes. Site visits and suggestion boxes are used by other departments to supplement their M&E efforts. The Western Cape Premier's Office reported that there are efforts to monitor radio and television coverage during the April Imbizo Focus Week as a measure towards the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. Findings and observations made through such monitoring are used to improve the Premier's efforts to implement the *Batho Pele* principles, including Information.

4.2.10.2   Monitoring and evaluation timeframes are varied

The findings of the study show that departments monitor the provision of information to service users at various intervals, ranging from quarterly to annual assessment of inter alia the flow and quality of information. The preferred interval for M&E is quarterly, with 36% of the departments that participated in the study falling into this category. The findings show that nearly a quarter (24%) of departments neither monitor nor evaluate their efforts to make information available, although eighty nine percent (89%) of departments included in the study indicated that they have M&E systems in place to track progress in the implementation of the principle as shown

45   Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Report on the Implementation of the Batho Pele Principle of Openness and Transparency in the Public Service. 2008.

in **Figure 9** below.

Figure 9: Monitoring and evaluation intervals
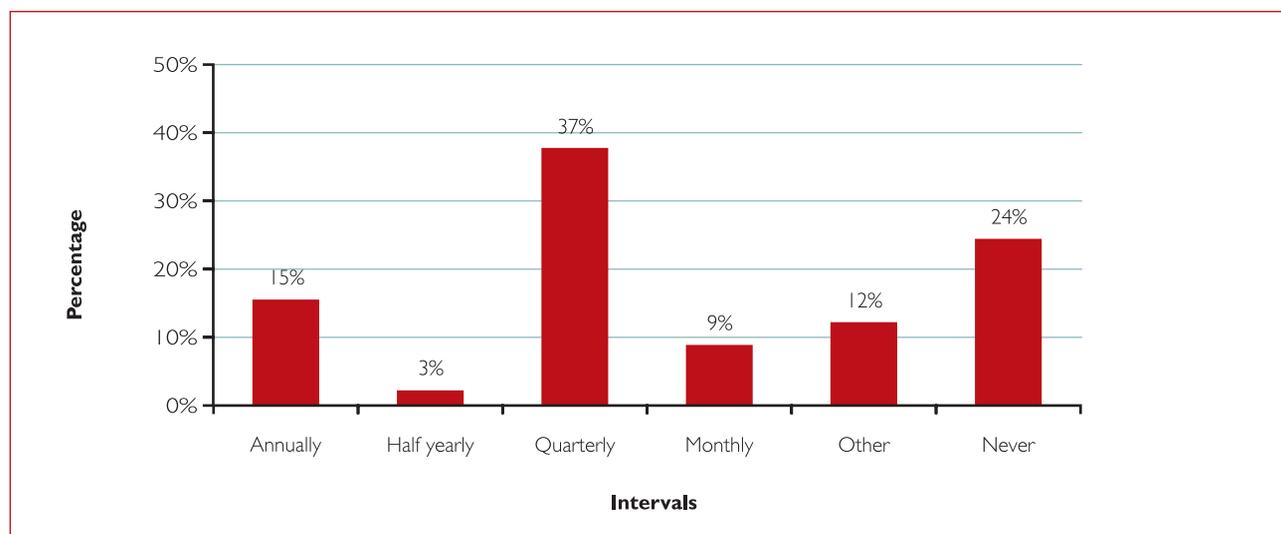
Figure 9 above shows the intervals at which departments monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principles including Information. The findings of the study indicated that most departments (37%) undertake monitoring and evaluation on a quarterly basis which is aligned with the reporting requirements of the Public Finance Management Act[46] (PFMA).

4.2.11 Departments Still Face Challenges in Implementing the Principle of Information

The study wanted to determine challenges departments still face in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. Sixty nine percent (69%) of the departments reported challenges such as budgetary constraints and a lack of capacity among staff as challenges in implementing the principle.

Challenges mostly cited by the departments that participated in the study include the following:

i) Financial constraints which negatively affect the extent to which materials can be made available to more citizens and translated into other relevant official languages.
ii) Lack of communication infrastructure, in particular information technology at service points to facilitate information sharing, hampers departments' efforts to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.
iii) Ineffective client support units where service users are not provided with the information they needed.
iv) Lack of integration and coordination between departments. For an example, Thusong centres were established with the purpose of integrating and coordinating departments service delivery processes, but these centres are apparently not effectively used by departments in delivering services to service users.
v) The low level of computer literacy and illiteracy in general of service users limits departments' use of computer technology in disseminating information to the public.

The findings of the study show that although departments have been faced with challenges in implementing the *Batho Pele* principles, and Information in particular, they have developed strategies to address such challenges. Developed strategies include searching for sponsorships to solicit the necessary funding for implementing Information programmes. These programmes will include the translation and printing of documents in more languages.

In addressing the language diversity of targeted audiences, departments have resorted to the use of professional
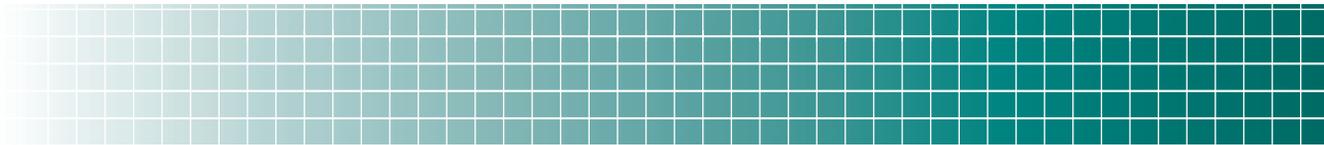
translation services to develop relevant materials. Capacitation of *Batho Pele* coordinators is the key strategy employed to ensure that *Batho Pele* principles become integrated in the value systems of departments (for example, training conducted by the Office of the Premier in the Free State). Customer care programmes and the implementation of service delivery plans were also introduced by some departments as a way of dealing with problems and challenges experienced.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations
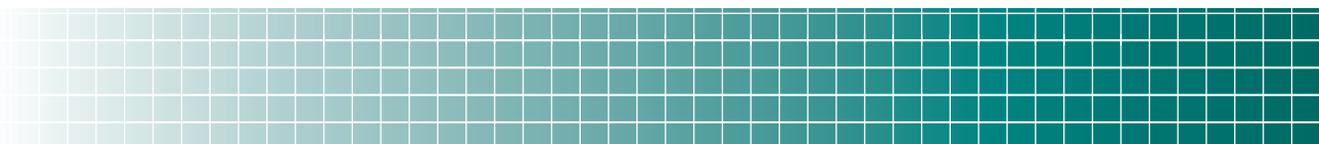
5.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Batho Pele* White Paper[47] provides guidance to the Public Service on the provision of full, accurate and timely information to citizens to empower them to become part of the design and quality of public service delivery. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study have shown that the implementation of the *Bath Pele* principle of Information in the Public Service is varied. There are departments that have effective systems to implement the principle whereas there are also departments that seem to have challenges in this regard. Service users at different service delivery points of the respective departments have varied experiences with regard to the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. There are service users that are satisfied with the information they receive and the manner in which they receive such information. There are also service users that were not satisfied with the process of the provision of information.

Departments have various measures in place to implement the Batho Pele principle of Information

The findings show that departments use a plethora of different methodologies and initiatives to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principle of Information is implemented. Most departments (93%) mentioned print and electronic media, broadcast and interactive sessions as the common mode for ensuring that information about services is conveyed to potential service users. The mechanisms correspond with the mechanisms service users prefer departments to use to provide them with necessary information about services available and how to access them.

Departments have developed various policies and guidelines to support the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information

The study found that 98% of departments use policies and guidelines to direct the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. These policies and guidelines include communication strategies, information policies and Promotion of Access to Information Act manuals.

Responsibility to implement the Batho Pele principle of Information is allocated to various units

The findings show that there is no dedicated unit solely responsible for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information and as such the implementation initiative is hampered. The post levels of the officials responsible for the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information vary from one department to another. The most senior level is at Chief Director/General Manager and the lowest level at Assistant Director.

Customers are not adequately consulted on their information needs

While 83% of departments indicated that they apply a consultative approach in implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of Information, forty seven percent (47%) of the service users that participated in the study indicated that they had not been consulted on their information needs. There is contradiction between what the departments have said and what the service users have actually experienced at the service delivery points.

Information is available in local languages to a limited extent

According to the findings of the study, English is still a dominant language used for official purposes by all the departments that participated in the study. However, forty two percent (42%) of departments indicated that

47   *Republic of South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. 1997.*

they also publish official documents in the relevant local languages especially those spoken in their respective Provinces.

Not all departments implement programmes to address the information needs of people with disabilities

Only 43% of the departments that participated in the study have implemented some programmes to address the information needs of people with disabilities such as disability forums, language workshops, translation of policy documents and service brochures in Braille.

Only a few departments implement information programmes aimed at the youth

Only 11% of departments that participated in the study have implemented information programmes aimed at the youth with the hope of ensuring that services rendered are known and accessible to the youth.

A few departments implement information programmes dedicated to people who are illiterate

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments that participated in the study indicated that they have implemented information programmes aimed at people who are illiterate. These programmes include making visual materials available, personally assisting the illiterate people at the service points with the necessary information, availing officials for radio talk shows and interactive outreach programmes such as *izimbizo* and road shows.

A number of departments implement Information programmes for women

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments implement information programmes directed at women such as women empowerment programmes, training programmes and support programmes (e.g. starting a business).

Departments have special arrangements for the provision of Information to remote communities

Fifty two percent (52%) of departments implement special arrangements for the provision of information to communities in the remote areas. A high number of departments (86%) undertake visits to communities in the remote areas to provide citizens with information on the services they render.

The inclusion of graphics in written Information is varied

Fifty percent (50%) of departments include graphic material in their written documents to ensure improved clarity and to make these documents accessible to people who are illiterate while 38% of departments indicated that they do not include graphic material in their written information as required by the *Batho Pele* White Paper.

There are departments that test readability and comprehensiveness of their written material

Fifty seven percent (57%) of the departments that participated in the study test readability of their written material they provide to service users compared to forty three percent (43%) of departments who indicated that they did not test either readability or comprehensiveness. Supporting the data collected from departmental officials, customers at service points indicated that they were mostly satisfied (53% at rural level and 51% at urban level) with the quality of information material provided by departments. Only seven percent (7%) of service users indicated that they were not able to understand the written information provided by departments.
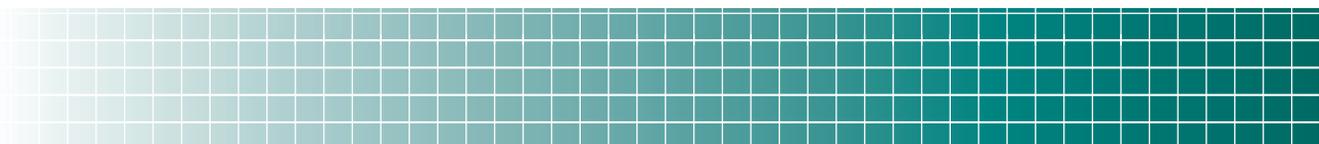
Departments make contact details available to citizens for future reference

The majority of departments (72,5%) provide their contact numbers and physical addresses on published material so that citizens can be able to contact them in future should the need arise.

Training on the Batho Pele principle of Information

All departments that participated in the study provide training on the *Batho Pele* principles in general and the *Batho Pele* principle of Information in particular.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Information should be strengthened

Eighty nine percent (89%) of departments that participated in the study reported to have a monitoring and evaluation system or mechanism in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. Thirty eight percent (38%) of departments indicated that they use a combination of measures to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. These measures include management reports, customer satisfaction surveys, having a M&E system in place and using research processes.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the key recommendations of the study.

5.3.1 Assessment of the Impact of Department's Efforts to Provide Service Users with Comprehensive and Accurate Information

While evidence was provided about the departmental strategies and methodologies to implement the *Batho Pele* principle of Information, the impact of the different mechanisms to increase access to services and empowering service users, have not been assessed. It is important to assess the effectiveness of the different mechanisms not only in terms of reaching more service users but also in providing departments with more feedback to better inform its services and service delivery processes. Departments should therefore develop indicators to ensure that the effectiveness and impact of implementation mechanisms are adequately assessed.

### 5.3.2 E-Government and M-Government as Mechanisms to Promote Information

Electronic-government (e-government) and mobile-government (m-government) have the potential to transform public services into open, accessible and citizen-centred public service delivery by extending the benefits of delivery of government services and information to those who are unable to access public services due to their remote geographic location. Departments should explore using these technologies as mechanisms of providing service users with the necessary information about the respective departments and the services they render.

5.3.3 Broadening Consultation

Departments need to intensify initiatives to consult citizens as potential service users. Consultation plays an important role in sharing information with citizens about the availability and accessibility of such services. There are clear mechanisms in place to meaningfully engage citizens such as the DPLG Framework on Public Participation[48] as well as the Step-by-Step Guide to Implementing Citizens Fora[49] developed by the PSC for national and provincial departments.

---

48   *Republic of South Africa. Department of Provincial and Local Government. National Policy Framework for Public Participation. 2005.*
49   *Republic of South Africa. Public Service Commission. Step-by-Step Guide on Holding Citizens Forums. 2005.*
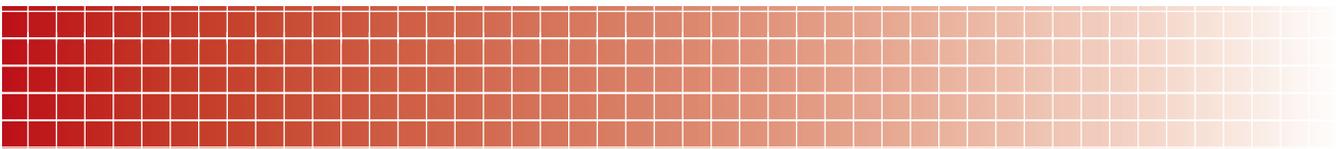
5.3.4   Providing Information in the Relevant Local Languages

Departments should ensure that concerted efforts are made towards translating information about their services to local languages spoken in the area instead of only using English as the official language. Information can only be accessible if it is understood by those who need it most.

5.3.5   Addressing the Needs of the Previously Disadvantaged Groups

Departments should develop strategies to share and disseminate information with previously disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the youth, the illiterate and women. It will also be useful to consult these groups in this process to ensure to ensure that departments develop and implement programmes that will be responsive to their actual needs.

5.3.6   Monitoring and Evaluation

Departments should develop the necessary monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to enable them to monitor progress with the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information. The information obtained during such M&E can be critical during the implementation of the systems in order for them to yield much-needed information.   M&E as a management tool can generate information which is likely to contribute significantly towards the implementation of the *Batho Pele* principle of Information.

Notes:

Notes: