



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X1000, Pretoria, 0001.

Dr Sean Phillips
Director-General
Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)
PRETORIA
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Dear Director-General

RE: EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT COORDINATION SYSTEMS

Thank you for your letter of 04 July 2014 in respect of the above-mentioned subject.

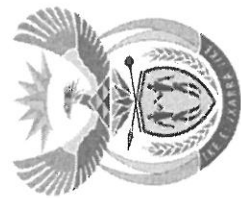
Your response to the general issues raised in relation to the evaluation has been noted. Having perused through the recommendations, we hereby attach a formal Management Response to the recommendations.

I suggest the DPME proceeds with the revision of the Cabinet Memorandum on this subject and work with the FOSAD Clusters on the Improvement Plan.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Cassius Lubisi'.

R. Cassius Lubisi, PhD
Director-General and Chairperson of FOSAD



Impact and Implementation Evaluation of Government Coordination Systems

FOSAD Management Response

RECOMMENDATIONS	RECORD OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT DISCUSSION / COMMENTS
<p>6.1 What is working well</p> <p>Overall there is some evidence that DGs feel the structures are worthwhile, e.g. Table 9 shows that they feel that attending the structures is a worthwhile use of their time. However this is undermined by the actual attendance levels.</p>	<p>Agree with the notion that FOSAD structures are working well. However, this does not apply to all of them. The JCPS and the Economic Cluster have seen great improvement in terms of DG participation. The poor attendance record of DGs in some of the FOSAD Cluster meetings is in direct contradiction of their views that these structures are worthwhile.</p>
<p>6.2 Number of meetings</p> <p>6.2.1 Too many meetings overall (both coordination structure meetings as well as other compulsory meetings for DGs and Ministers) are negatively impacting on the participation in structures by sufficiently senior officials.</p> <p>DGs delegate attendance at structure meetings to lower level officials who often do not have the decision-making powers, and/or required leadership, to make, or contribute towards, meaningful decisions at coordination structure meetings. This results in poor quality decisions and undermines the ability of the coordination structures to effectively fulfil their mandates.</p>	

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<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>R1 The schedule of structure meeting dates must be developed a year in advance and must coordinate with the Cabinet committee meeting schedule.</p> <p>R2 The Presidency should engage with Parliament to agree on days on which departments and Ministers will not be called to Parliament.</p> <p>R3 POA reporting periods should be reduced from 4 per annum to 3 per annum.</p> <p>Other possible options to consider include:</p> <p>a) <u>Reducing the number of clusters:</u> potential advantages of this option would be that ministers and senior officials would not need to participate in as many clusters (which could improve senior-level attendance) and potentially there would be a focus on a smaller number of critical government priorities. A potential disadvantage is important issues requiring coordinated decision-making may be neglected.</p> <p>b) <u>Reducing the numbers of departments participating in each cluster:</u> potential advantages of this option would be that ministers and senior officials would not need to participate in as many clusters (which could improve senior-level attendance). A potential disadvantage is that the quality of coordination decisions may not be optimal (i.e. important information from a relevant department may not be included in the decision-making process) and coordination decisions may not be (optimally) implemented by all relevant departments.</p> <p>c) <u>Dropping Ministerial Clusters and only having Cabinet Committees:</u> a potential advantage of this option is that it would free up space in minister's schedule for other commitments. A potential disadvantage is that all relevant ministers may not have</p>	<p>R1 - Agreed, as this is the current practice. However, this does not address the identified problem of the delegation of lower level officials to Cluster meetings.</p> <p>R2 – Do not agree, as this might prove to be impractical and interfering with the work of another sphere of government. What can be negotiated with Parliament is on which occasions / meetings should DGs be expected in Parliament, e.g. during the introduction of money bills where DGs have to justify why money should be spent on a Department. Many of the other Parliamentary briefings can be delegated to the COOs / DDGs.</p> <p>R3 - Agreed. It is acknowledged that some extended Cabinet meetings (makgotla) constitute part of the POA reporting periods.</p> <p>(a) - The number of Clusters has already been reduced from 7 to 5 with the collapsing of the two Social clusters into one. The Infrastructure Development Cluster is part of the Economic Cluster.</p> <p>Option (b) is a more feasible option. FOSAD Cluster meetings should focus on the core members of the clusters rather than every department. The JCPS Cluster has been very successful in this.</p> <p>(c) Don't agree. This is the only platform where Ministers and DGs discuss POA reports before submission to Cabinet and other strategic policy issues.</p>
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<p>been adequately consulted/ involved in decision-making processes prior to Cabinet and this could result in Cabinet Committee debates and delays in decision-making.</p>	
<p>6.3 Quality of secretariats</p> <p>6.3.1 Meeting management systems and resources are not optimal and undermine the effective functioning of the structures and their ability to fulfil their mandates:</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>R4 The TORs mentioned earlier should include clear timeframes which Secretariats must <u>strictly enforce</u> for the <u>submission of reports</u> for coordination structure meetings, as well as ensuring that Cabinet committee reports have first been approved for submission to the Cabinet committee via the relevant cluster structure.</p> <p>R5 <u>Secretariats need to play the following roles at a high level:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure that reports are only submitted to the coordination structures after officials have attempted to resolve issues outside of the structures (wherever possible). b) Ensure that reports meet quality requirements before they are tabled (and give feedback on report quality issues which must first be addressed before submission to the coordination structures). c) Follow up with departments to ensure reports are submitted on time. d) Structure meeting agendas to focus on a limited number of strategic issues which are aligned with the core mandates of the structures. e) Take accurate, specific good quality minutes. f) Follow-up to try and resolve issues between structure meetings, as well as follow-up on the status of decisions made in structure meetings. g) Organize DG-Ministerial briefings in advance of meetings. <p>R6 In order to be able to do this the <u>structure secretariat role</u> should not be seen as</p>	<p>R4 – Agreed. The Secretariats will require the support of the Cluster Chairs in enforcing the time-frames for the submission of reports.</p> <p>R5 – Agreed.</p> <p>R6 – Agree with the principle. However, the appointment</p>

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<p>administrative but a high level organizational role requiring at least one dedicated senior official. The Presidency should develop job descriptions for structure secretariats to reflect this role.</p>	<p>of Cluster Secretariats doesn't fall under the purview of the Presidency, thus the latter cannot guarantee that the staff appointed will reflect a high level organizational role.</p>
<p>6.3.2 There is a blurring of roles between clusters, IFs and MinMECs:</p> <p>Key issues include the following:</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>R7 <u>Refined ToRs should be developed by the Presidency for all structures which clarify the difference in roles, core mandates and operating procedures. As part of developing and/or refining ToR for the structures, specific guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of technical task teams need to be developed.</u></p> <p>R8 <u>To strengthen policy harmonization and minimize the need for coordination, the Presidency should develop a set of standardized guidelines regarding policy development processes to ensure meaningful engagement and interaction between departments during the policy development process and to pro-actively address and minimize coordination issues requiring addressing at formal cluster meetings and once policy implementation has started.</u></p>	<p>R7 – Agreed. The DPME needs to re-look the TORs for the Implementation Forums and how these interface with the Clusters. A firm decision needs to be made on whether Clusters should be dropped in favor of IFs. There are also serious challenges with reporting to Ministerial Clusters / Cabinet Committee as most of the time IFs are not at the same level of progress in terms of the POA. Thus, expecting outcomes to be reported to Cabinet simultaneously becomes a serious challenge. This applies particularly to the economic Cluster outcomes.</p> <p>R8 – Agreed.</p>
<p>6.3.3 The Presidency needs to play a stronger role in supporting coordination and the coordination structures in a number of areas, including the following:</p> <p>R9 <u>The Presidency (Cabinet Secretary) need to take final decisions to approve/reject submissions into the Cabinet system if they do not comply with set guidelines.</u></p>	<p>R9 – Agreed. The Cabinet Secretary will need the support of the Chairperson to enforce the guidelines.</p>

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<p>R10</p>	<p><u>The Presidency should play a role in strengthening structure secretariats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishing guidelines for strengthening the resourcing and functioning of structure Secretariats (which include guidelines and procedures to address issues raised above and including: managing agendas; the report submission process; meeting schedules; ensuring appropriate representation for agenda items; minute taking; monitoring decisions-taken) for each of the coordination structures as part of developing refined ToRs for the coordination structures. These ToRs should include clear time-frames which Secretariats must strictly enforce regarding time-frames for the submission of reports. b) Working with coordinating department's Secretariats to refine the strategic & unblocking focus of agendas. c) Ensuring that departments allocate sufficient resources for coordination (e.g. structure Secretariats). d) Training and monitoring and supporting the secretariats. e) Refining ToRs to guide the effective functioning of the coordination structures. <p>R11 In order to do the above the Presidency should have a senior official allocated to each cluster who works with the cluster to ensure the agendas and reports are appropriate and well prepared.</p> <p>R12 The Presidency needs to identify the required resources (new and/or existing), develop an implementation plan, and allocate responsibilities for playing a stronger coordination support role in the above areas, including a dedicated senior official working with each cluster.</p> <p>R13 Ministers need to hold DGs accountable when departments do not report on progress to the IFs or Cabinet (as part of the performance management process).</p>	<p>R10 – Agreed. However, there should be an understanding that this is a shared responsibility between the FOSAD Cluster Chairs and the Presidency.</p> <p>R11 – Agreed.</p> <p>R12 – Agreed. However, there should be an understanding that this is a shared responsibility between the FOSAD Cluster Chairs and the Presidency.</p> <p>R13 – Agreed.</p>
<p>6.4</p>	<p>Leadership, problem-solving, accountability and weak coordination culture</p>	

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6.4.1 Leadership

R14 For coordination to be effective ministers have to take a lead, as shown in the LTSM case study.

6.4.2 Inadequate chairing

The chairing of coordination structure meetings needs to be improved, which is closely linked to meeting management discussed below. It would also assist if chairpersonship reflected the actual co-ordination role of the Ministry/Department in that area (e.g. Rural Development should not coordinate the Economic Cluster but rather one of the lead departments, dti, EDD or National Treasury). Sub-section 6.5.2 contains recommendations to improve meeting chairing.

6.4.3 **There is an inadequate culture of coordination, especially in structures where service delivery processes between departments or spheres are not closely linked into an overall system**

Recommendation:

R15 The refined ToRs for the coordination structures, as well as the process to develop these refined ToRs and other complementary support measures and systems, should include or address the following (drawing from Manetje and Martins. 2009):

- a) Minimize the number and complexity of rules, procedures and approval processes.
- b) Involve structure members in designing the rules, methods, and procedures.
- c) Create information systems that allow organizational members to track their own results in "real time", including around coordination.
- d) Ensure that information and influence can flow laterally and diagnostically, rather than only vertically, so favoring informal coordination at all levels.
- e) Involve employees at different levels in improving coordination structure systems and procedures, including making suggestions of how coordination can be improved at operational and decision-making levels.

R14 – Agreed;

However, the choice of Ministerial Cluster Chairs is a political decision which is beyond the scope of management.

R15 – Agreed.

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f) Periodically review the performance of coordination structures and be prepared to change the rule book and start over.

f) Periodically review the performance of coordination structures and be prepared to change the rule book and start over.

6.4.4 There is a need for ongoing skills development of Ministers, DGs and senior officials to enhance skills to support effective coordination, including: strategic thinking, problem-solving, negotiation skills, and meeting chairing skills:

Recommendations:

R16 The Presidency should engage the SA School of Government (as well as possible partnerships with the Higher Education Institutions) to include in the curriculum and related awards system the following:

- a) Coordination, M&E and problem-solving skills.
- b) Specialized courses on negotiation skills and meeting chairing skills. This should include a high level course and training program on chairing skills for DGs and Ministers.
- c) A dedicated training programme for coordination structure secretariats.
- d) The Public Sector Excellence Awards (or an equivalent award initiative) needs to include an award for the best example of (or initiative illustrating) government coordination (possibly to be sponsored by the Presidency).

R16 – Agreed; however, Ministers could have an appropriate induction programme instead of being subjected to a skills development programme.

6.4.5 There is insufficient resolution of coordination issues outside of the coordination structures and this over-burdens the structures and undermines their strategic focus and overall coordination effectiveness:

Recommendations:

R17 DGs need to delegate officials to address coordination issues outside of the coordination structures, wherever possible.

R18 The Presidency needs to take responsibility for forming and supporting ad-hoc dedicated coordination task teams to deal with difficult cross-cutting policy or strategy issues where deep differences exist between departments, and/or in the broader public, and/or strict time limits for resolving these exist. To enhance the effectiveness

R17 – Agreed; the proposed Task Teams will go a long way in addressing coordination issues.

R18 – The Task Teams should be formed by the relevant Clusters and Implementation Forums and supported by the Presidency. Task Teams should report to the Cluster Chairs and not the Presidency or any other Political

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<p>of these task teams, they should report directly to either the President (or deputy President), and/or a senior minister, and/or a Cabinet Committee.</p> <p>R19 Revised TOR for the coordination structures must require that coordination structure decisions are clear and specific about the group of departments (and officials) responsible for specific joint/related projects.</p>	<p>Principal.</p> <p>R19 – Agreed.</p>
<p>6.4.6 Linkages between coordination structures are not always clear and need to be strengthened:</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>R20 Revised TORs for the structures should formalize and clarify how feedback of structure decisions should take place between structures as well as how structures should refer matters/ reports to other structures (including how relevant Cabinet decisions should be communicated back to relevant structures. There should be a standing item for all IF/Cluster meeting agenda on “matters/feedback from Cabinet” pertaining to IF/Cluster work.</p>	<p>R20 – Agreed. Reestablishment of PCAS will address this.</p>
<p>6.4.7 Low levels of accountability for implementing decisions made by the structures (incl. a lack of consequences for not implementing decisions) have been widely reported and seriously undermine the effectiveness of the structures in fulfilling their mandates:</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>R21 It would assist if chairpersonship reflected the actual co-ordination role of the Ministry/Department in that area (e.g. Rural Development should not coordinate the Economic Cluster but rather one of the lead departments, dti, EDD or National Treasury).</p> <p>R21 There is a need for all departments to ensure that performance agreements cascading down from Ministerial, DG, to at least Chief Director levels, include stronger performance indicators and targets for coordinated outputs (and possibly outcomes), and problem-solving. The Department of Public Service and Administration should assist by developing guidelines, and/or specific examples of refined KPIs, which promote coordination and the effective functioning of the coordination structures.</p>	<p>R21 – Agreed; however, the choice of Ministerial Cluster Chairs is a political decision which is beyond the scope of management.</p> <p>R21 – Agreed; the current Delivery Agreements were meant to achieve exactly that. However, the PFMA holds DGs accountable for managing their Departments and not for the integrated governance system.</p>

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<p>6.4.8 The coordination structures need to monitor and assess their performance regularly, including through an annual assessment:</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>R22 <u>An annual assessment of the coordination structures</u> needs to designed and coordinated by the Presidency starting end 2014, and building on the revisions set in place following this evaluation. This could include a survey of the structure participants which tracks annual trends in key structure performance areas (some of which are included in the 2013 DGs survey carried out for this evaluation). In addition, trends in attendance should be monitored.</p>	<p>R22 – Agreed.</p>
<p>6.5 Specific recommendations for clusters not covered in the general recommendations for all structures</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>R23 Coordinating departments need to ensure that report quality is good, deadlines for submissions, so reports can be taken as read, so less time is spent on reporting and more time is available for unblocking and decision-making.</p>	<p>R23 – Agreed.</p>
<p>6.6.1 MinMECs are limited in their ability to deal with the horizontal aspects of concurrent powers.</p> <p>For example, both human settlements and EA regulations require active roles to be played by a range of national and provincial departments and it is not clear if MinMECs are able to effectively broaden participation beyond the core national coordinating department, and Provincial delivery department to ensure that processes are coordinated to address both vertical inter-governmental, as well as horizontal, issues. Alternatively, there may be a need for MinMECs and clusters to feed into each other on certain issues where both horizontal and vertical coordination issues require action.</p>	<p>During the establishment of the Implementation Forums (IFs), MinMECs were meant to also double up as IFs. This is where they had the scope to effectively broaden participation beyond the core national coordinating department and Provincial delivery department to ensure that processes are coordinated to address both vertical inter-governmental, as well as horizontal, issues.</p>
<p>6.6.2 There are relatively low levels of agreement amongst participating DGs on the following three MinMEC roles:</p>	<p>The subject of concurrent functions between provincial and national government departments has been a perennial challenge since the inception of the democratic</p>

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<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>R24 MinMEC structures must confirm whether the scope of consultation in the context of the IGRA precludes or allows MinMECs to make decisions pertaining to national policy/ legislation. A specific issue was raised by the Health Minister that the Health MinMEC is enshrined in legislation, unlike some other structures and so has the power to take decisions.</p> <p>R25 Coordination structure ToRs should clarify when issues need to be referred between MinMECs and clusters. This should also look at how to address the three above-mentioned roles (see previous point 2).</p> <p>R26 In addition, MinMECs' TORs need to clarify their role in the coordination and alignment of strategic performance plans; priorities, objectives and strategies across national, provincial and local governments.</p> <p>R27 It may be appropriate to establish an economic development MinMEC.</p> <p>R28 The Presidency should undertake a feasibility study into the use of video conferencing (as happens for clusters between Cape Town and Pretoria) to reduce the direct and indirect costs of such meetings, e.g. using Tele-presencing technology (including a brief review of the experience with this in Australia by the COAG structures).</p>	<p>dispensation.</p> <p>R24 – what pertains to the Health MinMECs may not necessarily apply to other MinMECs, as the Health MinMECs might have put the requisite legislation to deal with their concurrent challenges.</p> <p>R25 – the challenge is that once the Ministers and MECs have agreed on a policy or implementation issue, that issue cannot be further subjected to a Cluster of officials for discussion or endorsement.</p> <p>R26 – Agreed.</p> <p>R27 – There has to be a convincing rationale for this recommendation, since economic development is a national prerogative and there is already an existing national Cluster for economic development and employment.</p> <p>R28 – Agreed; this has already been done. However, there are challenges with the security of the video-conferencing system. It is hoped that the proposed implementation of the pre-cabinet phase of the e-Cabinet system will help deal with the security challenges.</p>
<p>6.7 Specific recommendations for IFs not covered in the general recommendations for all structures</p> <p>6.7.1 There is a need to further clarify selected IF roles through the provision of</p>	

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detailed guidelines for fulfilling selected roles:

Recommendation:

R29 The Presidency needs to ensure that IF's understand the role in their TORs of unblocking bottlenecks, including guidance for the formation and functioning of special working groups to address specific bottlenecks, as well as for the referral of certain matters to working groups/ task team as well as to clusters. The establishment of stronger secretariats mentioned previously will assist greatly.

6.7.2 IFs need to follow up on the focusing of indicators, and quality of reports:

Recommendations:

R30 IFs need to explicitly address the following issues by taking specific decisions: :

- a) The relationship between the PICC's Management Committee and the Outcome 6 Technical and Ministerial IFs (for example, should the Outcome 6 Technical IF support the PICC Management Committee, is the Outcome 6 Ministerial Forum needed in addition to the PICC Management Committee?).
- b) Lack of clarity in some cases as to what departments should fall under what outcome, with a specific examples relating to Outcomes 4 and 5 and 6.
- c) The roles and responsibilities of provincial governments with respect to DAs and the achievement of targets need to be clarified and confirmed.

R29 – Agreed.

R30 – Agreed. The Infrastructure Development Cluster might have to be collapsed into the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (PICC). However, this is a political decision which is beyond the scope of management.

Departments know under which outcomes they fall.

The respective Implementation Forums / MinMECs should clarify the roles and responsibilities of provincial governments with respect to the Delivery Agreements (DAs) and the achievement of targets need to be clarified and confirmed.