



The Commonwealth

Performance Matters

Newsletter | October 2024 | Issue 1

From the Desk of the Secretary-General



*The Rt Hon. Baroness Patricia Scotland, KC
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth*

Today the competitive and comparative advantage of nations does not depend on resource endowment. Rather, it depends on the ability of a country's government to effectively and efficiently implement its policies, programmes and projects. All kinds of divides that we observe in the contemporary world – the digital divide, education divide, health divide and security divide – are merely symptoms of the most fundamental divide: the implementation divide.

Finding the causes and cures of this pervasive implementation divide has been a mission for me and a grand challenge for my colleagues in the Commonwealth Secretariat. After some 15 training programmes covering 2,000 senior civil servants across the Commonwealth, we seem to have an agreement. This agreement was endorsed in April 2024 in the third biennial meeting of the Common-

wealth Heads of Public Service. This agreement is now codified as the Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP). This inaugural issue of *Performance Matters* is devoted to various aspects of GAPP.

The purpose of this newsletter is to have a regular dialogue on matters relating to performance management in Government and promote knowledge sharing in this area. We want to do so because government performance really does matter.

I welcome you to this inaugural issue and invite you to contribute to this dialogue.

Sixteen Habits of Highly Effective Governments



Dr Marc Holzer

Founding Dean, School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University

Dr Prajapati Trivedi

Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for SDG Implementation, and Distinguished Professor, Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon

Today, government performance is critical to public service delivery and achievement of national development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As mentioned by the Secretary-General in her foreword, all experts agree that the competitive and comparative advantage of a nation is directly proportional to the effectiveness of its

]government. An effective government is understood as a government that 'delivers' what it 'promises' in foundational documents, legislation, regulations and political forums. Gone are the days when the competitive and comparative advantage of nations was primarily determined by the resource endowments of nation states. Today, resource-scarce nations like Singapore, New Zealand, Ireland and Switzerland, to name a few, are considered prosperous simply because they have effective governments.

Unfortunately, the consensus seems to end here. Alas, three people looking at the performance of the same government organisation can, and often do, come to three different conclusions: good, bad or ugly. That is, the performance of a government organisation seems too often to lie in the eyes of the beholder.

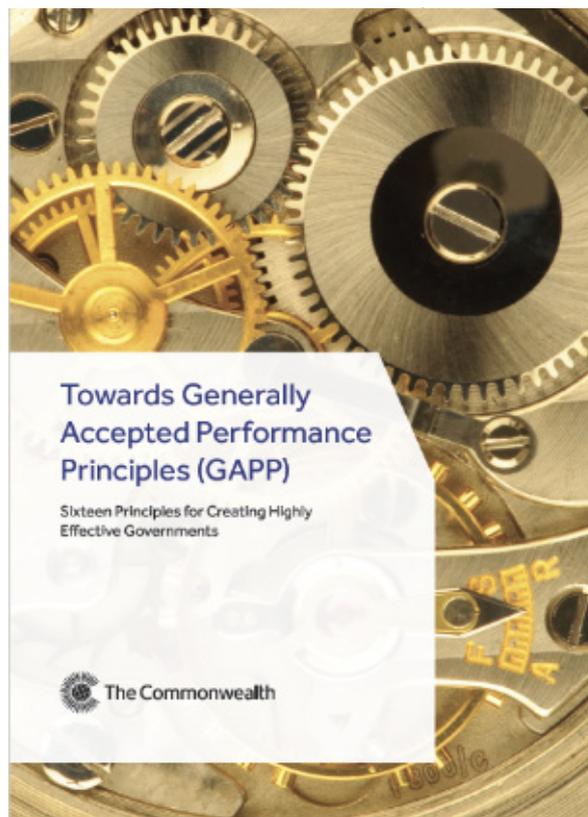
Contrast this with the situation in the private sector. When a private enterprise makes an announcement that it has made a \$300 million profit, everyone takes this announcement at face value. Not because the markets, investors and analysts trust the private sector more – rather because this number is based on accounts that are consistent with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The private entity prepares its accounts using a standard definition of working capital, fixed assets and depreciation. Furthermore, before the financial statements are approved by the board of the company, these accounts are audited by an external auditor, using the GAAP principles.

The Secretary-General posited a grand challenge to the Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Peace Directorate: find the counterpart of GAAP principles for the public sector. After 15 training programmes for some 2,000 senior-most civil servants from across the 56 countries of the Commonwealth, in June 2022 the Heads of Public Service of these countries approved a set of Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP). We call these the 16 Habits of Highly Effective Governments.

The diversity that exists among nations and their governments makes us often overlook a trio of key facts.

1. First, many of the problems involved in managing government are a result of a few underlying causes.

2. Second, the underlying causes of poor government performance are similar in nature across a diverse set of countries.



The 2,000 participants of the Commonwealth's performance training programmes looked for what works and what doesn't work, and distilled the key aspects of the methodology for improving government performance, pulling out the generally applicable (and acceptable) principles. The institutional contexts of each country may differ a little, but participants were struck by the similarities and relevance of their experience.

A broad consensus emerged on the relevance of the following 16 principles for designing government performance management systems in individual member countries. These principles then constitute the GAPP. They also represent a set of 16 habits that are found in governments that seem to work faster and better, and cost less.

16 principles for designing government performance management systems

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Habit #1 | Ensure an appropriate performance measurement system <p>There is no doubt that what gets measured gets done. However, it is just as important to measure the 'right things'. Effective governments agree on the jobs to be done and their targets at the beginning of the year, using instruments like performance agreements, performance contracts and so on. A Government Performance Management System (GPMS) should have the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be based on a preceding agreement on the meaning of performance and the intent of a performance programme to produce tangible, salient efficiency and service improvements.• Employ instruments such as a Performance Agreement (PA), Performance Contract (PC), Commitment for Results (CFR) and Results-Framework Document (RFD).• Cover all aspects of organisational performance: financial, physical, quantitative, qualitative, static and dynamic.• Focus on frontline 'managerial' performance as well as overall 'agency' performance. |
| Habit #2 | Adopt an appropriate Performance Measurement Methodology <p>A GPMS should use a performance measurement methodology that has the following objectives and scientific attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be a connection (line of sight) between vision, mission, objectives, actions and success indicators (that is, key performance indicators, [KPIs]).• Menus of KPIs should be drawn from consultative approaches, web-based resources and best practices, as well as published websites and internal manuals. KPIs should include measures of capacity, services, efficiency, efficacy and outcomes (or impacts).• The objectives, actions and KPIs in the GPMS should be prioritised (that is, weighted).• There should be an explicit, prior agreement as to what constitutes various levels of performance, such as 'excellent', 'good', 'average' and 'poor' levels.• A GPMS should be able to calculate a composite score (a weighted index) for managerial performance. |
| Habit #3 | The GPMS should cover the whole of government <p>Pilot programs may place too much pressure on early innovators, denying them the time they need to demonstrate the worth of their interventions. A performance improvement initiative that focuses on only one adopter misses opportunities for all parts of a government to apply effective habits, learn from the experiences of other units and adapt innovations to their own contexts.</p> |
| Habit #4 | Accountability for results and delivery should trickle down from the top <p>Accountability for results trickles down and does not follow the principle of trickling up. Hence, unless the top person in the department is accountable, others can never be held accountable.</p> |
| Habit #5 | Accountability for results and delivery should be assigned explicitly and unambiguously to specific individuals in the government <p>It is not good enough to say that the 'Malaria Programme' did not work. Effective governments are able to identify, and hold responsible, the officer responsible for the management of the Malaria Programme.</p> |

16 principles for designing government performance management systems

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Habit #6 | <p>A GPMS should have an appropriate incentive system that is related to departmental, team and, ultimately, individual performance</p> <p>No matter how sophisticated the measurement system, if there are no consequences for either good or bad performance then eventually officials will ignore performance considerations.</p> |
| Habit #7 | <p>The GPMS should be effectively integrated with the government's human resource systems</p> <p>In other words, it should not be possible for the officials to get ratings of nine out of ten, whereas the department is rated as three out of ten!</p> |
| Habit #8 | <p>The GPMS Should be Integrated with the Budget System.</p> <p>The departmental budget should correspond with the departmental priorities. Organisational performance can serve as a guide for investing scarce funds in promising and actionable venues.</p> |
| Habit #9 | <p>The GPMS Should be Transparent, Ensuring Access to all Organisational Data.</p> <p>The departmental budget should correspond with departmental priorities. Progress on the departmental commitment for results should be available on the department websites. Similarly, at the end of the fiscal year, reports of performance vs. commitments should be posted on department websites and placed on the floor of the parliament or legislature.</p> |
| Habit #10 | <p>There Should be Appropriate Institutional Arrangements for Managing GPMS.</p> <p>Effectiveness of a government performance management system depends on where it is located in the government. Experience suggests that these systems are most effective when operated from the chief executive's office – whether governor, prime minister or president.</p> |
| Habit #11 | <p>The government should employ an effective, strategic communications strategy in all phases of implementing GPMS</p> <p>Both external and internal communications are key to realising the full potential of an effective government performance management system.</p> |
| Habit #12 | <p>The GPMS should have a strong and unambiguous legal foundation</p> <p>Many governments make the mistake of creating a performance management system based on an executive order. Such systems are short-lived as there is typically resistance to accountability for results; and these systems are often dismantled by a new administration. Creating strong legal foundations is the only sure way to ensure longevity of performance measurement and improvement systems. In the US, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) 1993 is a classic example of this point.</p> |
| Habit #13 | <p>Performance measurement should serve multiple, overlapping purposes; performance measures serve several purposes.</p> <p>While coming to an overall conclusion about the performance of a government organisation is the primary goal, public managers must have certain information in order to successfully operate their organisations. This applies to all management levels and to all organisations. It is critical that performance measurement and resultant performance information be considered a requisite part of the management process.</p> |

16 principles for designing government performance management systems

Habit #14 Performance measurement should be citizen-focused/citizen-centered

A citizen-driven GPMS adds great value and utility. However, for citizen-driven performance measurement to be meaningful rather than a public relations ploy, the guiding value of the endeavour should be reciprocity. Many have argued that designing performance measurement systems with the aid of average citizens adds value to the process; in other words, by involving citizens in the process, public organisations can ensure that they are measuring what is important to the community. This can potentially reduce participatory lethargy, cynicism toward government and the rift between citizens and public decision-makers. Such benefits are in addition to better performance measures.

Habit #15 Knowledge management should be an integral part of GPMS

Public organisations need to learn from their successes and failures – but perhaps more importantly, they need to learn from the successes and failures of other public organisations. Those human and informational resources, knowledge of which is often posted online, can suggest strategies for improving services, achieving cost savings and making quality enhancements.

Habit #16 Momentum, once built, must be maintained

An effective and enduring performance measurement and improvement system is a continuous process. Over the long term, a successful performance program is one that:

- a. keeps an eye not just on measurement, but on improvement of services to citizens;
- b. builds a successful track record of small wins.

About the authors

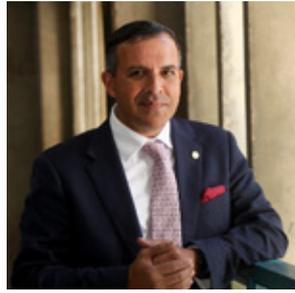
Dr Marc Holzer was designated dean emeritus upon retiring from Rutgers University in November 2017. He is the founding dean of the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University–Newark, where he served as such from 2006 to 2016. He joined the Rutgers University–Newark faculty in 1989 and was appointed Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Administration in 2006. Dr Holzer is past president of the American Society for Public Administration and an elected life member of the National Academy for Public Administration, USA.

Dr Prajapati Trivedi was previously Secretary to the Government of India in the Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office from 2009 to 2014. Prior to that he worked for the World Bank as Senior Economist between 1994 and 2008; as Economic Adviser to Government of India from 1991 to 1994; and STC Chair Professor for Public Sector Management at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. He is an elected life member of the National Academy for Public Administration, USA.

Commonwealth Hub for the Business of Government



Professor Arvind Sahay
Director, Management Development Institute (MDI),
Gurgaon



Professor Luis Franceschi
Assistant Secretary-General,
Commonwealth Secretariat

Background and rationale

There is a widespread consensus that government performance is critical to service delivery and achievement of national development goals, including the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Experts agree that the competitive and comparative advantage of nations depends on the performance and effectiveness of government, implementation of sound policies and optimal utilisation of limited resources.

Enhanced delivery of public services and effective implementation of public policies, programmes and projects affects the welfare of all citizens. Our collective concern in the Commonwealth is that the benefits offered by governments should primarily benefit the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. Attention therefore needs to be paid to both equity and efficiency, as both go hand in hand. The guiding principle should be 'to do the right things' and also 'to do things right'. This means operating and delivering in ways that are responsive and accountable, as well as more efficient and effective. Our focus therefore needs to be on ensuring that public systems are streamlined and managed to work better, faster and cheaper in order to deliver what is promised and what is needed.

International experience suggests that 80 per cent of the performance of any organisation is determined by the quality of its systems. Hence, there is growing need in the Commonwealth for practical tools and techniques for improving systems of performance management in government and making them fit for purpose.

There are indeed many fine centres of advanced learning around the world that focus on the art and science of public policy-making. It is not surprising, therefore, that today we are flush with information and knowledge about various aspects of designing sound, evidence-based public policies, including deep knowledge and information about various sectoral public policies covering health, education, agriculture, transportation and industry, to name but a few sectors.

In fact, in this day and age, it has become very easy to get information on what is the 'right thing to do'. It is possible for any government official to discover the best practice in any area of public policy by a few clicks on the computer.

The real challenge facing most governments is 'to do the right thing, and do it right'. On that front, very little guidance is available. This conclusion is based on our conversation with over 2,000 senior-most government officials who attended more than a dozen Commonwealth advanced training programmes on government performance management, covering all regions of the Commonwealth.

In response to this felt need, and the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to good governance, a Commonwealth Hub for the Business of Government has been set up in India with the sole purpose of supporting Commonwealth governments to do their business better, faster and cheaper. The Hub will not focus its resources on sectoral policy issues but will focus on implementation aspects of sectoral policies.

The Hub has been set up in partnership with the Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon, India. A 50-year-old management school in the National Capital Region of India, MDI is ranked among the top B-schools in India by reputed publications and agencies. The proposed Hub is based within the MDI campus. The IBM Center for The Business of Government, based in Washington, DC, is the knowledge partner for the Hub. IBM Center has three decades of experience in identifying issues that matter to government and organising state-of-the-art research and discussion on those issues.

Objectives of the Hub

Research

The Hub will seek to connect research to practice, applying scholarship to real world issues and decisions for government. The Hub will stimulate

research and facilitate discussion of new approaches to improving the effectiveness of government at the local, state, federal and international levels. The Hub will commission reports and studies that will focus on major issues facing Commonwealth governments today. Topics could include acquisition, collaboration, transparency, healthcare, performance, innovation, leadership, risk, security and technology.

Publications

It is proposed that publications from the Hub will focus on major management issues facing governments today, including the use of technology and social media, financial management, human capital, performance and results, risk management, innovation, collaboration and transformation. The intent will be to spark creativity in addressing pressing public sector challenges – crafting new ways of improving government by identifying trends, ideas and best practices in public management that can help government leaders respond more effectively to their mission and management priorities.

It is expected that the Hub will raise resources to award research stipends to public management researchers in the academic and non-profit communities that will produce reports directly relevant to the business of governments in the Commonwealth.

Community of Practice

In addition to publications seeking answers to key challenges facing government managers, the Hub will create and nurture a vibrant community of practice of Commonwealth professionals interested in various aspects of the business of government.

Training

Above all, it is expected that the Hub will be a centre of training on all aspects of the business of government, including government performance management. This training will focus on doing the business of the government with efficiency and effectiveness. The Hub will provide tools and techniques to make this aspect alone the *raison d'être* for its existence.

We welcome suggestions regarding activities from members of the Commonwealth governments. You may send your suggestions to: p.trivedi@commonwealthconnect.org

Activities of the Commonwealth Hub for the Business of Government

Roundtable of the Commonwealth High Commissioners



The International Conference on Innovations in Public Performance Management, organised by the School of Public Policy and Governance, MDI, April 2023]

On 11 April 2023, MDI hosted a Roundtable of the Commonwealth High Commissioners based in Delhi on 'Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP)'. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, addressed this meeting, which Prof. Luis Franceschi, Assistant Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, also attended. The Chairman of the MDI Board of Governors and India-based Commonwealth High Commissioners joined this meeting. The discussion on GAPP was led by Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Distinguished Professor, MDI Gurgaon, and Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for SDG Implementation.

The School of Public Policy and Governance, MDI Gurgaon, organised a two-day international conference on Innovations in Public Performance Management: lessons for policy-makers on 30 June and 1 July 2023. The meeting was organised in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the IBM Center for the Business of Government and the National Center for Public Performance, Suffolk University, USA.

The conference was structured to accommodate 30 expert and academic panels with approximately 150 speakers from India and abroad, including participants from the USA, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nigeria, Kenya, Namibia and India.



In her speech, the Secretary-General suggested that 'India is ideally placed, with its diverse expertise and experimentation in public system innovation, to add value to many countries across the Commonwealth.'

Daniel Chenok, Executive Director of the IBM Center for the Business of Government, sharing the Center's more than three decades of experience working with different governments, explained how they generate ideas and convert them into products for government to use. He referred to how the newly elected members of Congress in the US are expected to read the book *Getting It Done*, produced by IBM. Prof. Prajapati Trivedi elaborated on the need for performance measurement to improve government efficiency. Prof. Trivedi stressed the need for Hub to focus on creating alternative solutions for the government. There are, he said, enough organisations that are in the analysis of problems and policies.



At the same time, Sangeeta Shah Bhardwaj, Acting Director of MDI, suggested the need to learn from existing knowledge by making it contextual to local and regional situations. Prof. Avanish Kumar highlighted the need to produce demand-based knowledge creation that promotes partnership based on the mutual realisation of strain and equitable gain. The

Chairman of the Board of Governors, MDI, Rajnish Kumar, stated that the 'Hub can unleash the capacity to perform in the public system through innovation and transform the lives of millions'.

The Hub is committed to making knowledge and its products accessible to all. Several experts expressed their willingness to collaborate with and contribute to it. An important outcome of the conference was MDI's signing of an MoU with the IBM Center for the Business of Government.

Lecture Series at the Hub



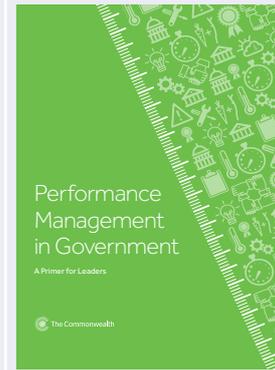
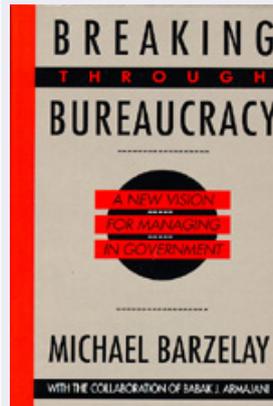
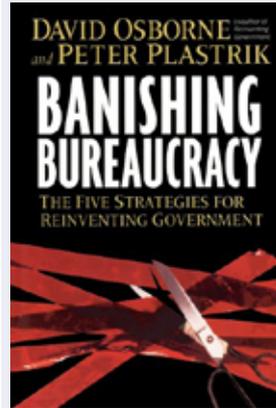
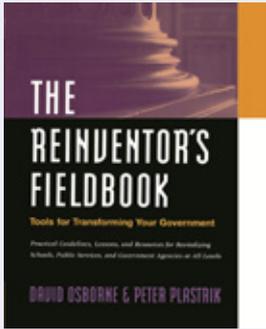
The Commonwealth Hub for the Business of Government organised a Commonwealth-wide lecture with the School of Public Policy and Governance, MDI and the IBM Center for the Business of Government.

The speakers were Dr Kevin C. Desouza of the Queensland University of Technology; Dr Gregory S. Dawson of Arizona State University; the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; Prof. Luis Franceschi, Assistant Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat; Mr Daniel Chenok, Executive Director, IBM Center for the Business of Government; Prof. Avanish Kumar, Dean, School of Public Policy and Governance, MDI; and Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Distinguished Professor, MDI and Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for SDG Implementation.

The discussion was based on their recently published research monograph for the IBM Center for the Business of Government, Washington, entitled *Pathways to Trusted Progress with Artificial Intelligence* – a topic of utmost relevance and importance in our rapidly evolving world.

For queries and further details email ComHub@mdi.ac.in

Our recommended reading for this issue



Two books by David Osborne & Peter Plastrik

The Reinventor's Fieldbook Tools Government: Tools for Transforming Your Government
John Wiley & Sons, 2000

An 'encyclopedia of practical tools for public leaders, managers, and employees', drawing dozens of lessons on public management and governance from five countries.

Banishing Bureaucracy: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government
2nd ed., Blitzprint Inc, 2005

A 'manual for transforming unresponsive government bureaucracies—local, state or national—into entrepreneurial systems open to innovation and change' focussing on five core strategies and a vision of community empowerment.

Breaking Through Bureaucracy: A New Vision for Managing in Government

Michael Barzelay, with Babak J. Armajani,
University of California Press, 1992

Tracing the progress of successful state government reform in Minnesota, this book both provides practical advice and formulates a 'new paradigm' that aims to 'reframe the perennial debate on public management'.

Performance Management in Government: A Primer for Leaders

Prajapati Trivedi,
Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018

A collection of articles that explore the central insight that problems in managing government result from only a few underlying causes – and can be successfully dealt with through solutions – that are remarkably similar across a diverse set of countries.

Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Commonwealth Secretariat partner for Training in Government Performance Management

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) recently hosted the globally recognised Commonwealth Advanced Training in Government Performance Management System (GPMS) 'T&T Edition' from 26 August–6 September 2024, at the Trinidad Hyatt and Trinidad Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre. Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sustainable Development Goal Implementation, facilitated the sessions.



Left to right: Claudelle McKellar, Permanent Secretary (MPA), Senator the Hon. Allyson West, Minister of Public Administration, Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Ms Collene Gallazzi, Executive Director (MPA)

The acclaimed programme is among the strategic initiatives being implemented by the MPA through its Modernisation and Service Improvement Division. The training programme provided participants with practical tools and techniques for improving systems of performance management in government.

The GPMS training has helped government entities across the region and the globe to be more effective, accountable and transparent in measuring and managing performance. The main instrument of the GPMS is the Commitment for Results (CFR), also known as Performance Agreements. CFR is a document that clearly outlines the objectives of the government entity, proposed actions to achieve these objectives and success indicators for measuring the achievements of the targets. The design and implementation of CFRs is supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Management and Accountability for Results Toolkit (SMART) software platform. SMART is a proprietary software of the Commonwealth Secretariat and is available, at no-subscription cost for the first year, for whole-of-government application to all countries that adopt the GPMS. Subsequently, there is a modest charge for out-of-pocket expenses. It is currently in use by various countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

In addition, the GPMS training by Professor Trivedi across the Commonwealth has covered over 2,000 senior public officers. In the Caribbean, Barbados recently trained over 500 senior public officers and employees of state-owned enterprises. All trainees are members of a vibrant community of practice, sharing their knowledge and experience in the design and implementation of performance management systems across the Commonwealth.

In Trinidad and Tobago, approximately 150 permanent secretaries, deputy permanent secretaries, heads of departments, directors, monitoring and evaluation practitioners, research officers and service owners took part in this strategic training initiative that is a key component of the Public Sector Performance Management System (PSPMS). PSPMS is the gateway to a systematic approach to the collection, measurement and benchmarking of organisational data across the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. During the training programme, each ministry, department and agency was trained in developing and tracking annual CFRs/Performance Agreements.

At the opening ceremony on Monday 26 August at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad, Senator the Honourable Allyson West spoke on the benefits of the programme.



The fabulous MPA team: L to R: Ana, Mitzi, Coreen, Prajapati, Colleen, Aja, Ayinde

'Results-based, performance management – that is our true North. That is how we will navigate towards National Development. And these sessions will help us get there. We are looking to partner with Ministries, Departments and Agencies, aligned with the National Development Strategy, to develop an agile, client-focused, results based and performance-driven public service.'

'The programme has been as good as it gets', stated Professor Trivedi, who is also a Senior Fellow (Governance) at the IBM Center for The Business of Government and teaches Economics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.



'The seriousness with which the participants have taken this initiative, frankly, is the best practice. People have shown up, every single day and diligently worked with their groups, they've followed instructions and done their homework. So for a teacher, that's like being in heaven. I am very hopeful that this kind of commitment, enthusiasm and the clarity of thought in Trinidad and Tobago will ensure excellent Commitment for Results (CFR)...which simply means closing the performance gap between what you say and what you actually do.'

This advanced training initiative is just one of the many strategic initiatives being led by the MPA, which will impact performance management, service delivery and ultimately result in benefits for citizens across Trinidad and Tobago



Kenya's Performance Management Journey



Dr Amina Mohamed

A Path to Public Sector Excellence

Kenya's approach to public sector performance management stands as a leading example of how a nation can foster transparency, accountability and service delivery through a well-structured framework. Over the past two decades, Kenya has built a Government Performance Management System (GPMS) that has revolutionised the way in which public service operates, ensuring that every public office is held accountable for delivering tangible results. This journey, marked by decisive leadership, strategic planning and continuous improvement, offers key insights for other nations seeking to reform their public sectors.

The foundation of reform

In the early 2000s, Kenya faced significant economic and governance challenges. Recognising that these could not be addressed without reforming public sector management, the government introduced a robust performance management system rooted in clear goals, measurable outcomes and accountability. A blueprint, known as the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (2003–2008), laid the groundwork for Kenya's performance contracting framework. This strategy marked the beginning of a transformation aimed at improving government efficiency, service delivery and resource utilisation.

At the core of the system is the principle of results-based management, which demands that all public offices operate under performance contracts. This approach signalled a shift from a retrospective and often subjective appraisal system to one driven by clearly defined, objectively measured targets. The framework ensured that public sector performance could no longer be left to interpretation – it was now governed by a commitment to deliver on specific, pre-agreed goals.

Cascading accountability across government

The performance contracting system in Kenya is structured in a way that ensures accountability at all levels of government. At the top, the President signs performance contracts with Cabinet Secretaries, setting the tone for the entire public service. These contracts cascade down through various levels, with Principal Secretaries, department heads and other public officials all holding their own contracts that align with the broader institutional goals.

This cascade of accountability ensures that performance is tracked and measured consistently, from the highest offices to individual employees. The system has been implemented across ministries, state corporations and even tertiary institutions, creating a unified approach to government performance. Notably, Kenya's judiciary also adopted performance contracts, reinforcing a culture of accountability across both executive and judicial arms of government.

The performance contracting cycle in Kenya follows a meticulous process, beginning with the review of annual guidelines and the development of performance targets. These targets are then negotiated to ensure buy-in from all parties, after which institutions are responsible for implementing and tracking their progress throughout the year. Performance is monitored continuously, with quarterly reports submitted to a central office for review. At the end of the financial year, a formal evaluation takes place, involving both self-assessments and external moderation. This process culminates in the public release of performance rankings, fostering transparency and accountability.

Key pillars of the performance management framework

Several key pillars have underpinned the success of Kenya's performance management system, ensur-



ing that it not only delivers on its goals but also adapts to the evolving needs of the public sector.

- 1. Performance Contracts:** The cornerstone of the system, performance contracts outline the specific targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) that public institutions are expected to meet. These contracts are meticulously crafted to ensure they align with the institution's strategic plan, the government's budget and Kenya's long-term development vision – known as Vision 2030. The contracts are reviewed and updated annually to reflect emerging priorities and best practices.
- 2. A Structured Performance Evaluation Process:** The GPMS includes both quarterly monitoring and annual performance evaluations. This regular review process ensures that institutions remain on track to meet their targets and provides an opportunity to address any challenges that may arise throughout the year. The final evaluation, moderated by external teams, serves as the basis for the performance rankings released at the national level. This public release underscores the system's commitment to transparency and sends a clear message that performance is being closely monitored.
- 3. Linkage to National Priorities:** Kenya's performance contracts are closely linked to its national development agenda. Every public institution's performance targets are drawn from its strategic plan, which is itself aligned with Kenya Vision 2030, the country's long-term development blueprint. This ensures that public sector efforts are consistently directed toward achieving the country's key socio-economic objectives.
- 4. Integration with Planning and Budgeting:** The system ensures that performance targets are not only aligned with strategic plans but also integrated with the government's budgeting

process. Each institution's budget is tied to its performance goals, ensuring that public resources are used efficiently and directed toward achieving the highest priority outcomes.

- 5. Non-Monetary Incentives and Sanctions:** While Kenya's GPMS allows for monetary incentives, such as bonuses for state corporations that perform exceptionally well, the focus is on non-monetary incentives. These include certificates of excellence and presidential trophies for top-performing institutions, which provide recognition and motivate continuous improvement. The emphasis on non-monetary rewards helps maintain the system's sustainability, avoiding the potential pitfalls of over-reliance on financial incentives.
- 6. Adaptability and Continuous Improvement:** One of the reasons Kenya's performance contracting system has endured and evolved over 20 years is its flexibility. Every year, the system is reviewed and updated to incorporate lessons learned and emerging best practices. This adaptability has allowed Kenya to remain at the forefront of public sector performance management innovation.

Overcoming challenges and earning international recognition

Kenya's implementation of performance contracts faced several challenges, particularly scepticism from both domestic and international observers. At the time of its introduction, the concept of performance contracts in the public sector was relatively new, and many doubted whether it could be successfully implemented in a complex, resource-constrained environment like Kenya's.

However, Kenya's early success silenced these doubts. Within a few years, the country earned international recognition, receiving a United Nations Public Service Award in 2007 for its efforts in improving transparency, accountability and respon-

siveness in the public sector. This accolade marked a turning point, validating Kenya's approach and inspiring other countries to benchmark their own systems against Kenya's model. Countries such as Namibia, Malawi, Nigeria and others in Africa have since adopted similar performance management frameworks, often customising Kenya's model to suit their own unique contexts.

The impact on service delivery and public confidence

The introduction of Kenya's GPMS has had a profound impact on service delivery across the public sector. By holding public officers accountable for results, the system has significantly improved the efficiency and responsiveness of government institutions. Citizens now experience better services, and public institutions are more focused on achieving national goals, from health-care improvements to infrastructure development.

The focus on performance contracts has also fostered a culture of accountability. Every public official, from senior government leaders to entry-level staff, understands that their performance will be evaluated based on clear, measurable targets. This has led to a shift in mindset, where public service is seen as a results-driven endeavour, not just a routine administrative function.

Looking ahead: The future of Kenya's performance management

Kenya's performance management journey is far from over. The country continues to refine and enhance its GPMS to ensure it remains relevant in an ever-changing world. One of the most significant recent developments has been the digitisation of the performance contracting process. The introduction of the Government Performance Contracting Information System will streamline the entire process, allowing institutions to manage their contracts and reports online, reducing the need for physical interventions and freeing up valuable management time.

Additionally, Kenya is in the process of developing an Integrated Performance Management Policy, which will standardise performance management across national and county governments. This policy, once enacted, will further entrench accountability and transparency in public service. The government is also exploring the possibility of a Performance Management Act, which would give the system a stronger legal foundation and ensure its longevity.

About the author

Dr Amina Mohamed is the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sport, Enterprise and Development, and a former Cabinet Minister in the Government of Kenya responsible for several portfolios including Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport, Enterprise and Development.

Unlocking Government Performance

How Commonwealth Secretariat Supports Member Countries through SMART Software



Rajiv Nair
Governance Adviser, Public Sector Governance Unit (PSGU) Commonwealth Secretariat, London

Governments around the world are grappling with the complexities of delivering efficient, transparent and results-driven public services. In response to this need, the Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a strategic approach to help member countries implement Commitment for Results (CFR) using its unique, innovative, proprietary and user-friendly software known simply as SMART (Strategic Management and Accountability for Results Toolkit). It is the only known software of its kind that is fully compliant with the widely endorsed Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP). SMART is now regarded by knowledgeable policy-makers as an essential tool for governments looking to bridge the gap between policy formulation and successful implementation.

It is so regarded because SMART:

- has been designed by practitioners
- has evolved overtime to respond to user requirements
- has been used extensively by large and small governments

- is supported by a large knowledge base and experience base
- reduces the implementation lag between policy formulation and policy implementation

The Commonwealth Secretariat offers a comprehensive technical assistance program that supports countries in their efforts to enhance government performance. This step-by-step guide outlines how member countries can leverage the Secretariat's expertise and the SMART software to implement CFRs and improve their public sector management systems.

Step 1: Requesting technical assistance

The first step for any member country interested in implementing an effective, state-of-the-art government performance management system is to formally request technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat. This request can be made at any time by the government, often initiated through the Cabinet Secretary or Head of Public Service. The Secretariat's Public Sector Governance Unit (PSGU) will then be authorised to collaborate with the requesting country, starting the process of technical support for CFR implementation.

Step 2: Organising a five-day workshop on government performance management

Once the request is approved, the Secretariat arranges a five-day workshop to introduce the CFR framework and its associated methodologies to senior officials of the member country. This workshop is crucial, as it familiarises key public sector leaders – such as Principal Secretaries, Heads of Departments and other senior management personnel – with the CFR concept and how to implement it effectively.

Participants will also receive detailed guidance and hands-on experience in using the SMART software, which is specifically designed to support the drafting and management of Commitment for Results (CFR), the cornerstone of an effective government performance management system. This web-based tool enables governments to set clear performance targets, track progress and ensure accountability across all departments.

Step 3: Deciding on CFR guidelines

Following the workshop, the next step is to decide on the customised CFR guidelines suited specifically for the member country. These guidelines are crucial, as they outline the expectations, measur-

able targets and success indicators that will be used to evaluate each department's performance. The Secretariat works closely with the government to tailor these guidelines to the local context, ensuring they align with national development goals and priorities.

Typically, this process is completed within five days of the workshop. Once finalised, these guidelines will serve as the foundation for all subsequent performance contracts issued by the government.

Step 4: Preparation of departmental draft CFRs

Once the guidelines have been established, they are officially issued to all government departments. At this stage, departments are required to submit their initial draft CFRs using the SMART software. SMART facilitates the entire process, enabling departments to input their performance objectives, define success indicators and create a transparent record of expected outcomes.

The software also helps departments ensure their objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). This clarity ensures that government officials at all levels understand what is expected of them and how their performance will be evaluated.

Step 5: Reviewing draft CFRs

After departments submit their draft CFRs, the Commonwealth Secretariat can be requested to organise a first-round review of the draft CFRs by an independent body consisting of experts from various fields, including former government officials, academics and private sector executives. This body of independent, non-government experts may be referred to as the Advisory Task Force (ATF). The ATF reviews each CFR to provide constructive feedback and ensure the documents are aligned with best practices and the agreed-upon national guidelines.

Departments are then given the opportunity to revise their CFRs based on the ATF's recommendations. This process ensures that each performance contract is both comprehensive and feasible, driving real improvements in service delivery and government accountability.

Step 6: Finalising local task force members

To make the process sustainable in the long term, the Secretariat also works with the member country to finalise a team of local ATF members. These individuals will be trained to review and critique CFRs in the future, reducing the need for

ongoing external assistance. This capacity-building initiative is a vital part of the Secretariat's commitment to helping countries achieve long-term self-sufficiency in performance management.

Step 7: High-power Committee approval

Once the revised CFRs are submitted, a High-power Committee (HPC), typically composed of Permanent Secretaries of nodal ministries such as finance, planning and PMO convenes to approve the finalised CFRs. This committee plays a critical role in ensuring that the CFRs are fully aligned with the country's broader strategic objectives and that they are feasible within the current resource and policy framework.

The HPC's approval marks the formal adoption of the CFRs, signalling the start of the performance monitoring phase.

Step 8: Uploading CFRs and public transparency

A key feature of the Commonwealth Secretariat's approach is transparency. Once the CFRs are approved, they must be uploaded to the relevant government departments' websites, making them accessible to the public. This step fosters accountability and allows citizens to track the government's performance against the objectives laid out in the CFRs.

The SMART software also plays a role here, ensuring that performance data is readily available and can be monitored in real time. This transparency is a core element of the GAPP, reinforcing the public's trust in government by providing clear, measurable indicators of success.

Step 9: Monitoring and continuous support

The Commonwealth Secretariat doesn't stop at the implementation stage: it continues to provide monitoring support and technical assistance to member countries. The SMART software is continuously updated to reflect evolving best practices, and the Secretariat offers ongoing training to ensure that countries can maximise the potential of their performance management systems.

Additionally, member countries can request further assistance as needed, whether that involves revising their CFRs, adjusting their performance targets or troubleshooting issues with the SMART software. This ongoing partnership ensures that governments are not only implementing CFRs but also refining their systems to meet changing national priorities.

A pathway to excellence

By following this structured, step-by-step approach member countries can quickly and effectively build a robust Government Performance Management System (GPMS) that adheres to international best practices and is aligned with Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP), accepted and approved by all 56 countries of the Commonwealth.

For any clarifications and additional information, please contact:

Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for SDG Implementation, p.trivedi@commonwealthconnect.org

Rajiv Nair, Governance Adviser, Public Sector Governance Unit (PSGU), Commonwealth Secretariat, r.nair@commonwealth.int

Reflections from the Commonwealth Heads of Public Service Meeting in London



Daniel Chenok, Executive Director, IBM Center for The Business of Government Washington, DC

I had the honour of joining the biennial meeting of the Commonwealth Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of Civil Service from 22 to 24 April 2024, organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, UK. Since its founding in 1949, the modern Commonwealth has grown in both scale and influence, with 56 member countries spanning five continents and representing a third of the world's population. Leaders from many of the Commonwealth's 56 member states attended the meeting (see below picture), and over three days discussed a robust agenda and set of actions which will lead to improved government performance across the Commonwealth and provide insights for the United States and other global partners.

The Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, provided leadership for the session and inspired many discussions



Daniel Chenok with Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC

on the importance of global partnership in addressing emerging challenges like artificial intelligence and the need for agile government. IBM Center Visiting Fellow Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Special

Envoy for implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, led several sessions, including panels on implementation of the Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP), and on the Commonwealth Hub for The Business of Government, which I joined with the leader of the Hub, Professor Avnish Kumar of the Management Development Institute in New Delhi.

In the panel, I highlighted the Centre’s Future Shocks initiative, which focuses on helping governments develop greater capacity to prepare for and respond to risks and threats across the cybersecurity, supply chain, climate, workforce and similar domains. I also invited Commonwealth officials to submit case studies of governments that have achieved positive outcomes in addressing such future shocks, around which our Center is hosting a challenge grant initiative in collaboration with the National Academy of Public Administration and the IBM Institute for Business Value.

The summary document and outcomes statement capture the key results from the meeting, with the Hub highlighted in the outcomes statement. In addition to opening remarks and the continued engagement of Secretary-General Scotland, other highlights from the session included the following.

- A keynote speech from the Prime Minister of Bhutan, which has driven many reforms around the GAPP framework.
- Many interesting presentations from leaders in attendance, including on e-government advances in Rwanda and Kenya that demonstrate a model for modernisation and especially for the global south.
- An overview of India’s CPGRAMS program, which enables many millions of citizens to contact government about questions and concerns through a one-stop portal that uses AI to improve service and speed response time.
- Discussions about the Commonwealth’s work to support governments through a number of

artificial intelligence initiatives, including an AI consortium for member states and partners. Our Center has shared a great deal of research on AI and government with the Commonwealth, to help expand their knowledge base.

The IBM Center for The Business of Government looks forward to collaborating with the Commonwealth Hub and the Commonwealth Secretariat on helping governments to share information and work together to improve performance over time.

Building Future Ready Government

By Cristina Caballe Fuguet, Kee Won Song and David Zaharchuk

The IBM Institute for Business Value, in co-operation with Oxford Economics, surveyed 635 government leaders in 44 countries who were in positions of organisational authority during the pandemic to understand how specific behaviours and attitudes adopted during the pandemic influenced levels of preparedness for shock-level events in the future.

Through the innovation and investment spurred on by the pandemic, governments entered an era of growth in functional capabilities and organisational transformation. In retrospect, the accomplishments made by governments during the crisis were recognised and appreciated by many citizens. In fact, a 2023 survey of 19 countries reported that a median of 68 per cent of citizens thought that their country did a good job in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak.

In the US alone, COVID-19 relief laws enacted in 2020 and 2021 provided around \$4.6 trillion of funding for pandemic response and recovery – a historic governmental commitment to manage and mitigate a shock event without precedent.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, many governments recognise that, despite progress made, they are not as prepared for the next round of future shocks as they should be. To find out what these leaders are doing to improve resilience and readiness, the IBM Institute for Business Value conducted a survey of global government leaders. Survey insights focus on the actions and investments made to improve resilience, as well as mindsets and attitudes toward organisational transformation.

The survey captured candid responses to questions about the functional capabilities of governments in



the context of a global shock event, as well as organisational culture, strategy, behaviors, attitudes on trust and technology strategy.

A variety of analytical techniques supported our hypothesis that maturity in a set of core functional capabilities led to better performance during the pandemic and greater preparedness for future shocks. When we isolated different groups of governmental organisations based on performance, the comparison revealed startling differences as well as valuable insights for government leaders as they develop their capacities to respond to a range of potential shock events.

Other useful knowledge resources:

- aspacap.com
- performance.gov/about/what-is-performance

Barbados: Policies and Steps towards Structured Game-Changing Government Performance Management



Senator Dr The Honourable Shantal Munro-Knight
Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Barbados

The Government of Barbados is very pleased to contribute to this inaugural issue of *Performance Matters*, and we thank the Secretary-General for inviting us to do so.

We applaud this new step to mobilise the sharing of ideas and strategies for the improvement of government performance and the promotion of the Generally Approved Performance Principles which, with the Commonwealth's leadership, have a defined space in the evolution of performance management.

Government, private sector and civil society have indispensable, fundamental roles in the proper organisation of any modern society. However, it is the effectiveness of Government that is the real game-changer in the functioning and performance of a country. With roles as regulator, guarantor of enabling environments and administrator of equitable growth, it is government implementation that makes the difference. We know this well in Barbados where public service delivery represents the keystone in the foundation of our socio-economic development. Without consistent delivery on the policy for human development, manifested in our prioritisation of education and health services, many achievements in our national development would not have been possible.

Therefore, our government embraced the opportunities made available by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2019 and 2021 to be trained in the application of the Commitment for Results (CFR). This programme for organisational performance management offers a structure with features

that fill various gaps in the current management arrangements in our Public Service.

Generally, our other organisational performance management processes involve monitoring and review that are focused on determining the case for allocation of funds and whether the funds are being appropriately and efficiently spent. However, it is the degree of structure in the CFR planning framework; the structure in the approach to measuring and evaluating performance results, including deviations from targets; and the whole-of-Government reach are attributes in the CFR that stand out for us. In addition, a year-end performance score which forms part of the CFR programme is not a feature of any of our processes at the institutional level. The three main tools of the CFR – the Results Framework, the Service Charter and the Grievance Redress Mechanism – enable a foundational network to promote citizen-centric accountability and, inter alia, provide for us a basis for a more diverse but interconnected organisational management system.

We are so seized by the strategic importance of implementation that we included our performance management and CFR policies in our last manifesto, published in January 2022. These policies are based on a commitment to make government deliver for citizens and to improve transparency and accountability to citizens; they form part of a wider project to transform governance in Barbados. As stated in the President's Address on the occasion of the opening of Parliament on 4 February 2022, Government intends 'to reorient the focus of its operations to be more citizen-centric in order to make people's lives better; make processes easier and more efficient and to make policy impactful and valuable for all Barbadians'.

The principles and aims of Government's CFR programme are as follows:

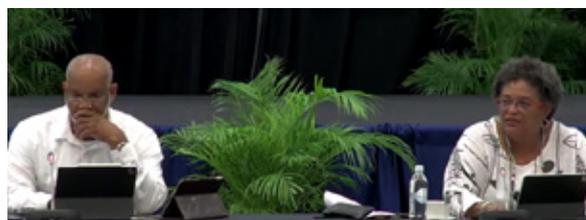
- Clarity of Goals and Objectives
- Transparency of Government Operations
- Measurement and Evaluation of Organisational Performance
- Accountability for Delivery of Results
- Co-ordination among Government Entities
- Incentivising to Deliver Results
- Economy in Government Operations
- Service-orientation.

In 2022, the Government of Barbados established a dedicated CFR Department in the Prime Minister's Office to administer the implementation of the CFR programme. Having determined that more time should be devoted to familiarisation with the programme, we undertook practical in-house training sessions at intervals throughout the calendar year 2022, then moved to initial implementation, including the creation of our own CFR portal, in the financial year 2023/24. We are now in full implementation of the programme, with effect from the beginning of our financial year in April 2024. We thank Professor Prajapati Trivedi for his invaluable and ready guidance that allowed us to reach this point.

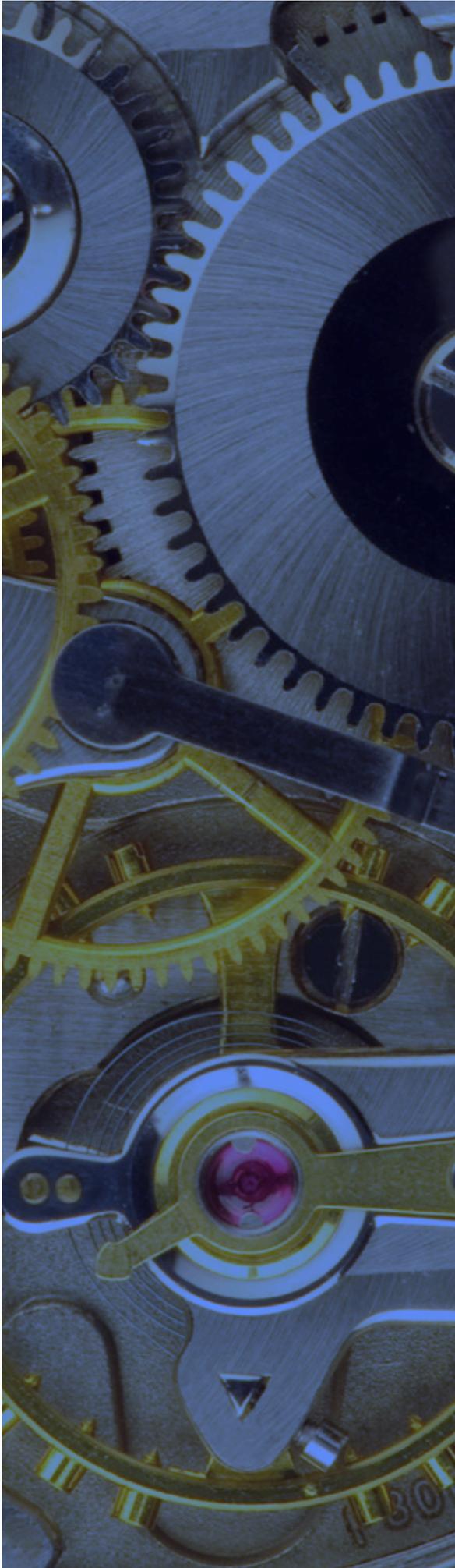
The shift from programme budgeting and process-orientation to results-driven management, the focus required to identify priority objectives in a crowded public agenda, and the effort to identify meaningful success indicators and measurements are all changes in the planning and operational cultures that should not be underestimated, and which require more time than may be at first anticipated. This has been our experience.

The Government of Barbados treats this CFR undertaking very seriously. Our in-house practical CFR sessions in 2022 were convened and chaired by the Prime Minister herself and attended by the Cabinet, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees, Permanent Secretaries and officers of related grade. This approach sent the due message to all stakeholders as to the significance of this project and responded to the principle that accountability trickles down.

When Prime Minister Mottley chaired a training session on 3 June 2022, she stated to ministries and departments present that the CFR would change the culture and output of the Public Service, and reminded us that no one ministry could function on its own. As the Prime Minister also advised us, and I now say to our Commonwealth family, let us 'hold each other's hands and turn the corner'.



The Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, S.C., M.P., chairing an in-house CFR session on 3 July 2022, with the Attorney-General and Minister for Legal Affairs, the Honourable Dale D. Marshall, S.C., M.P.



The Power of Performance Measurement

What gets measured gets done

If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure

If you can't see success, you can't reward it

If you can't reward success, you are probably rewarding failure

If you can't see success, you can't learn from it

If you can't recognise failure, you can't correct it

If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support



Performance Matters

Please send your suggestions and contributions to:

Editor: Prof. Prajapati Trivedi

Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy for SDG Implementation

P.Trivedi@commonwealthconnect.org

Deputy Editor: Rajiv Nair

Governance Adviser, Public Sector Governance Unit (PSGU), Commonwealth Secretariat

R.Nair@commonwealth.org

Produced by Governance, Peace, and Democracy Directorate of the Commonwealth Secretariat