Measuring the Goodness of Governance

Macro, intermediate and micro perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Governance comprises a network of interdependent connections between various actors. The performance of governance institutions should be measured, both quantitatively (efficiency, effectiveness and economy dimensions) and qualitatively (outcomes and impact on society). Such measuring endeavours should occur against the background of globally-accepted principles of good and outcomes-based governance. It should further be facilitated by the design and establishment of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems.

The question may be asked as to what extent the South African Government complies with international best practices to measure the goodness of its policy, strategy, programme and project interventions. The focus of this article is thus to critique the system utilised by the South African Government to measure the goodness of government (institutional perspectives) as well as the goodness of governance (network, joined-up, societal perspectives). A macro, intermediate and micro framework is utilised for this purpose.

ORIENTATION

It has become commonplace in the global arena for a network of actors, including government, the private sector, multinational organisations, and NGOs, to join forces to address the vast scope and complexities of societal challenges. The dynamics associated with the interactions in this network of actors, and the way goals are set, decisions are made, and leaders champion initiatives is known as '*governance*'. Network (or *joined-up*) governance thus comprises a set of interdependent connections between various actors.

The success of societal interventions emanating from this network of actors can quantitatively be measured in terms of its efficiency, effectiveness and economy, as well as qualitatively through societal outcomes achieved, and the globally-accepted principles

of *good* and *outcomes-based* governance. With the emergence of the so-called *audit society*, where citizens hold government accountable for its actions and inactions, as well as the global discourse on *outcomes-based governance* and *good governance*, measurement thinking increasingly finds its rightful place in governance strategies, policies and programmes.

With these contexts in mind, the question may be asked as to what extent the South African Government complies with international best practices to measure the *goodness* of its policy, strategy, programme and project interventions. The focus of this article is to critique the system utilised by the South African Government to measure the goodness of *government* (institutional perspectives) as well as the goodness of *governance* (network, *joined-up*, societal perspectives). A macro, intermediate and micro framework is utilised to appraise the philosophy, policy, systems, practices, and methodology utilised by South Africa to measure its "goodness" (that is, effectiveness, efficiency, economy, productivity, quality, value-for-money, performance, and so on).

FRAMING *GOOD GOVERNANCE*

Engel, Westra and Bosselman (2010:2) put it that the issue of *governance* has rapidly moved to the centre of political, economic, and social arenas, mostly because it has become the dominant institution of contemporary societies. It is argued that international law regimes, state governments, the global financial system, the corporate organisation of economic life, educational and cultural institutions of all kinds have lost their capacity to govern the spheres of human activity for which they are deemed responsible in such a way as to maintain the common good. This statement is in line with the seminal work conducted by the Commission on Global Governance's report titled *Our Common Neighbourhood* (1995). In this report, which broadened and popularised the concept of governance, it is stated that the extrapolation of governance to the world political stage occurred in tandem with globalisation, because the problems and new social realities required a new approach to regulate global phenomena and their impact on society.

The etymological roots of governance can be traced back to the Greek verb *kybernân*, which means *to pilot* or *to steer* (Kjaer 2004:3). The term government has been used to impart the notion of steering or piloting of the state and it was only towards the end of the 20th Century that the Anglo-American concept of governance began to feature as an expression of disaggregated political steering. It is thus about decision-making power to steer or direct processes and activities (Kooiman 1993:6; Sorensen 2006:103).

There is significant terminological diversity and a general lack of clarity regarding the concept *governance* – mainly attributed to the wide scope of its potential applications. Hirst (2000:14-19), for example, identifies at least five versions of governance, or five different areas in which it is applied, including:

- governance in economic development and in the context of international development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;
- governance in terms of international relations and international regimes;
- corporate governance or governance in private corporations;
- governance as new public management; and

- negotiated, social governance which is representative of networks, partnerships and various deliberative forms.

It is thus evident that the content ascribed to governance could vary in relation to the details of its application, purpose, context, as well as the instruments utilised to govern.

Governance as normative concept

From a normative perspective the effects and quality of governance should be investigated. This perspective usually results in debates about the *goodness* of governance. Also referred to as *metagoverning* (Sorensen 2006:103; Kooiman & Jentoft 2009:822), normative perspectives represent the establishment of ethical principles, or *norms*, that shape and steer the entire governing process. Normative protagonists will usually explore, for example, behaviour of regulatory actors that are involved in governance, their interaction, priority setting, and their functioning towards the common good for society. This perspective usually results in debate about the acceptability of, and support and authority for governance (legitimacy), as well as the way in which governance is conducted (fairness). This perspective also focuses on what governance *should be* and how citizens perceive their abilities to influence socio-political and economic direction (participation).

A normative analysis of governance often has its roots in specific ideologies where, for instance, Western values and ideas such as transparency, participation, and democracy are equated with universal values. The World Bank attempts to concretise *good* governance and developed criteria, guidelines and minimum requirements by means of which it would lend money to countries. The World Bank Institute embarked on an effort to create an internationally comparable measure of governance – the so-called *Worldwide Governance Indicators*. These indicators, already used in 200 countries, use six dimensions of governance, namely:
- voice and accountability;
- political stability and lack of violence;
- government effectiveness;
- regulatory quality;
- rule of law; and
- control of corruption.

These dimensions provide a framework for the development of key performance indicators to measure the extent to which countries adheres to or complies with them.

A PERFORMANCE ORIENTATION IN GOVERNMENT

A performance orientation in government is essential to adhere to the principles attached to *good* governance (Rogers 1994; Fitzgerald & Moon 1996; Otley 1999). In 1994, the World Bank indicated the interface between the goodness of a government and its ability to respond to the needs of society. Bridgeman (2007:21) in this respect also convincingly illustrates the reciprocal relationship between good institutional performance and good

governance. The Economic Commission for Africa (2003:5) points out that the availability of information and transparency in order to enhance policy implementation, promote public debate and reduce the risk of corruption are essential elements of *goodness*. Furthermore, Hyden and Braton (1993:7), Batley and Larbi (2004), and Van der Waldt (2004:10) identified various characteristics of good governance which include elements such as the degree of trust in government, the degree of responsiveness to needs, the degree of transparency and accountability, as well as the nature of authority exercised by government over society.

Performance can be regarded as a multi-dimensional construct referring to the work, as well as being about the results achieved (Fitzgerald & Moon 1996; Otley 1999). Rogers (1994:34) argued that performance should be defined as the outcomes of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of the organisation, customer satisfaction, and economic contributions. A comprehensive view is that performance is achieved in public institutions if it is defined as embracing three interrelated variables: behaviours (people processes), outputs (deliverables), and outcomes (value added or impact) (Kearney & Berman 1999:177). Mwita (2000) regards performance management as "a systems-based model for cultivating the achievement culture in public sector organisations". A well performing public institution may be regarded as one that provides quality services that minimise the performance gap between actual delivery and customer (community) expectations (Fitzgerald & Moon 1996; Ballantine & Modell 1998; Horton & Farnham 1999).

So, why did performance management gain popularity in the public sector? According to Redman and Mathews (1995) the answer to this question is mainly found in the fact that the public sector strives to become more commercially aware in line with the New Public Management paradigm and *managerialism* and that many pressures on the public sector now make performance management appear much more attractive (Dixon 1998:167).

MEASURING THE *GOODNESS* OF GOVERNANCE

Several efforts have been made in the research and international development community to measure the quality or goodness of governance. These efforts revealed that measuring governance is inherently a controversial and political exercise and can broadly be categorised in *organisational* and *human resource* dimensions (Faucett & Kleiner 1994:64; Boland & Fowler 2000:418). Performance measurement, therefore, focuses not only on individual employees, but also on systems, processes, programmes, and the organisation as a whole. Organisational performance measurement takes a wider institutional perspectives as far as the input (resources), processing (systems, procedures, methods, policies, administration, and so on), output (services and products), and outcomes (results of output) of public institutions are concerned (Boyle 1989:17). It thus refers to any integrated, systematic approach to improving organisational performance to achieve strategic aims and promote an organisation's mission and values (Fitzgerald & Moon 1996; Ballantine & Modell 1998).

Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido (1999) and Wilkes (2004:4) state that measuring the goodness of governance should be approached from two vantage points: first, how to measure the "goodness" itself (outward facing, external aspects); and secondly, how to

measure the results (outcomes and impact) in terms of government's performance. Globally, various mechanisms and initiatives are in place to measure the successes and failures of governance from both these vantage points. These include:

World Bank Governance Surveys: Country-level governance assessment tools that use information gathered from a country's own citizens, business and public sector workers to diagnose governance vulnerabilities.

- The World Governance Index (WGI): Use composite indexes such as Peace and Security, Rule of Law, Human Rights and Participation, Sustainable Development, and Human Development.
- Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI): Systematically measure the need for reform and the capacity for reform within (OECD) countries.
- The Mo Ibrahim Foundation's *Ibrahim Index* which scores Africa's 53 nations in 84 categories, that is, economic opportunity, safety, human rights and development (South Africa currently ranks 5th on the African continent)
- The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which is an instrument that member states of the African Union (AU) voluntarily acceded to as a self-monitoring mechanism. Its mandate is to encourage conformity in regard to political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards, among African countries and the objectives in socio-economic development within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

From a brief analysis of these and other mechanisms and initiatives in developed and more developing countries, it is clear that significant inroads were made to establish performance measurement firmly on the agenda of all actors involved in governance.
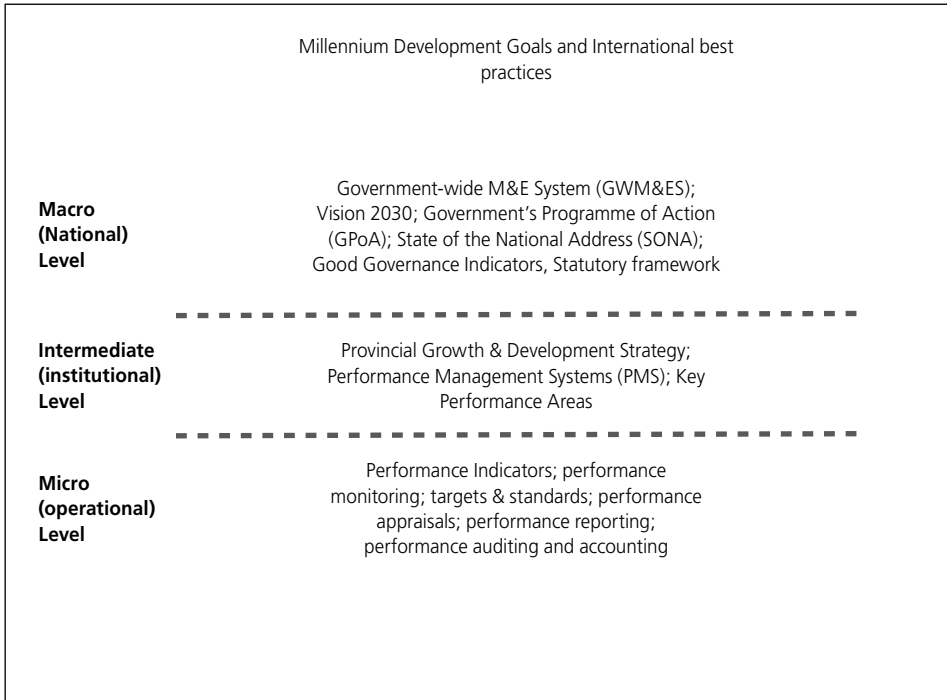
A logical framework to assess the measuring of good governance

As stated, the purpose of this article is to critique the systems, strategies and initiatives utilised by the South African Government to measure its *goodness*. Any critique (evaluation or assessment) of the application of concepts as vague and ambiguous as *good* governance, *measurement*, and *performance* however, is subject to the principles of scientific objectivity and scientific rationality. The researcher should use inductive or deductive logic to outline a problem, interpret observations, and articulate the logical implications of a phenomenon. The quality of criteria or yardsticks that are used to *critique* could also influence the potential outcome thereof. Kealy, Dovidio and Rockel (1988:158) in this regard refer to the *accuracy in valuation as a matter of degree*.

The *measurement* of the *measurement* of the goodness of governance can typically be described as a *wicked problem* – a complex problem that is difficult to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognise (Camillus 2008:99). The author will utilise deductive logic to arrive at specific conclusions based on generalisations (statements about the measurement of goodness of governance in South Africa).

To facilitate such a critique through deductive reasoning, an explanatory framework is necessary. Such a framework should make provision for the potential complex (*wicked*) vantage points from which measurement systems, strategies and initiatives could be explored.

Figure 1 Macro, intermediate and micro framework
for performance measurement

	Millennium Development Goals and International best practices
Macro (National) Level	Government-wide M&E System (GWM&ES); Vision 2030; Government's Programme of Action (GPoA); State of the National Address (SONA); Good Governance Indicators, Statutory framework
Intermediate (institutional) Level	Provincial Growth & Development Strategy; Performance Management Systems (PMS); Key Performance Areas
Micro (operational) Level	Performance Indicators; performance monitoring; targets & standards; performance appraisals; performance reporting; performance auditing and accounting

A macro, intermediate and micro framework is utilised to assess or appraise the philosophy, policy, systems, practices, and methodology utilised by South Africa to measure its *goodness* (that is, effectiveness, efficiency, economy, productivity, quality, value-for-money, performance, and the like). Figure 1, highlights these levels or perspectives from which South Africa's efforts could be analysed.

The macro level refers to initiatives taken by government in party-political and national spheres to establish a comprehensive philosophical (ideological intent), statutory and strategic framework for performance measurement. This includes, for example, the establishment of a Government-wide Monitoring & Evaluation System (GWM&ES) as well as legislation to direct the measurement of the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of government strategies and programmes.

The intermediate realm refers to initiatives taken on institutional level to operationalise macro sphere initiatives. This includes the establishment of performance management systems to measure organisational and human resource dimensions of performance. It also contains the establishment of Key Performance Areas (KPAs), which are used to measure the performance of the respective functional areas in public institutions.

The micro domain refers to initiatives taken on operational level to give effect to institutional (intermediate) mechanisms and includes the use of performance targets, indicators and standards to measure performance. This also incorporates managerial interventions such as performance monitoring, performance appraisals, performance auditing and accounting, and performance reporting.

EXPLORING THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

In the section that follows, each level or perspective is examined. Based on the reflections of the initiatives on these three vantage points (macro, intermediate, and micro), an assessment (critique) is made.

Macro framework

The Millennium Development Goals provided the required impetus for the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, to propose in 2004 that a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system be developed. His request was that such a system should facilitate reporting on the progress made on the operationalisation of the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations, donor agencies, as well as feedback to society on government's delivery through the Government's Programme of Action (GPoA) as well as the State of the Nation Address (SONA). In November 2007 the Government-wide Monitoring and

Table 1 Statutory and regulatory framework for performance management

Statutory framework	Regulatory framework
• Public Service Act Proclamation 103 of 1994 (Section 7(3)(b)) • The Constitution of the South African Republic, 1996 (Section 195) • Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Schedule 8) • Skills Development Act of 1998 • The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 (Section 10) • Public Finance Management Act, 1 of 1999 (Section 27(4) & 36(5)) • The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 (Chapter 6) • The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003 (Sections 53 & 72) • Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005 (Section 4)	• White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 (Section 5.10.2) • White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995 (Part 3.1.1 & 12.3) • White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele), 1997 • White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997 (Section 5.9.1) • The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, 1998 (Section 7.2) • The Baseline Implementation Guide for Performance Management, 1999 (Part IV) • Public Service Regulations of 1999 & 2001 (Section 3(b)) (Sections B & D, Regulation VIII) • Treasury Regulations, 2000 (Section 5.3) • Resolutions of the Public Service Coordinated Collective Bargaining Council (Res. 13 of 1998); Res. 10 of 1999; Res. 1 of 2003, etc.) • Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations of 2001 and the Performance Management Guide for Municipalities, 2001 • Local Government: Municipal Performance Regulations for Section 57 Employees, 2006 • National Capacity-building Framework for Local Government, 2006 • Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS)(April 2007) • Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM&ES) (2007) and The Role of Premiers' Offices in Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation: A Good Practice Guide (2008) • National Treasury's Framework for Managing Programme Performance Management Information (2007) • Local Government: Turnaround Strategy 2009

Evaluation System was published. The System aims to instil the systematic and coordinated monitoring and evaluation of policy and programmes to improve the management of the public sector. It monitors developmental impact, for example, through the Provincial Growth and Development Plans and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of municipalities. It also enhances the quality of performance information to monitor outcomes and impact. Performance Management Systems (PMS) must assist departments and municipalities with their own performance, whilst the GWM&ES takes an outcome and sectoral perspective. For this purpose two new ministries were created in the Office of the Presidency: the Ministry of the National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation. Furthermore, the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) were created to align strategic priorities and budgets of departments with the vision of Government.

Vision 2030 (see National Planning Commission, 2011), with its twelve outcomes, and the GPoA provide the macro framework for the implementation of programmes and projects in the various clusters in Government. Each of the twelve outcomes has a delivery agreement, signed by the respective ministers. These agreements reflect government's delivery and implementation plans for its so-called *apex* priorities.

Another macro dimension is the establishment of a comprehensive statutory and regulatory framework to mainstream performance management in government operations. Table 1, below, provides a brief list of some of the most significant statutory and regulatory documents governing the application of performance management in the South African public sector, inclusive of municipalities.

Although the content of this table is not complete, it reflects that significant progress has been made to establish a comprehensive framework for performance measurement in the South African public sector. This framework makes provision for the complexities associated with the monitoring and oversight functions of government.

Intermediate framework

The meso or intermediate level of the assessment framework (Fig. 1) focuses on initiatives and mechanisms in the institutional domain. This includes, *inter alia*, the design and implementation of comprehensive Performance Management Systems (PMS) in government institutions in national, provincial and local spheres. All government institutions, including municipalities, are required to develop strategic plans, to allocate resources to successfully implement these plans through programmes and projects, and then to monitor and report the outcomes thereof (Van Baalen & De Coning 2011:178). Public institutions are expected to report annually on policy implementation and service delivery initiatives based on their PMS. The PMS can be regarded as the building-blocks of the GWM&ES.

In the case of national and provincial departments, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in 2002 published *The Guide on Performance Management and Development* to assist departments to develop policy on performance management and development that links individual performance to the strategic objectives of the department, and to design, implement and utilise a performance management system (Van der Waldt 2004:290). In the local government sphere the former Department of Provincial and Local Government (now Department of Cooperative Governance) published the *Performance*

Management Guide for Municipalities in 2001. This guide was aimed at addressing the significant performance challenges that municipalities face through the design, implementation and use of a comprehensive performance management system. The PMS is intended as a strategic tool to monitor performance of projects aligned to the IDP. The PMS thus assists project teams to measure the efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and quality of project deliverables. The system is designed to continuously monitor the adherence to its developmental and constitutional mandate. The PMS use performance indicators, municipal scorecards, service targets, and service standards to enhance the quantification of service delivery outputs, outcomes and impacts. In this respect National Treasury designed a *Framework for Managing Programme Performance* (2007) to facilitate the utilisation of performance management in all activities of government and in the measuring of outcomes of projects.

Central to the system is the development of key performance indicators to translate development challenges into quantifiable and measurable constructs. The PMS also set targets, assist with the design of roles and responsibilities of people to adhere to those targets, and to establish a process of regular performance reporting to facilitate accountability. A comprehensive Performance Review typically takes place during the mid-year Budget and Performance Assessment in January when the annual performance report is prepared. This review is intended to analyse municipal performance and to draw conclusion from statistics and trends in performance over the financial year and in all political and administrative structures of the municipality.

The PMS furthermore enables provincial supervision, monitoring and support of local government projects. Provincial authorities may intervene in a municipality (Section 139 of the Constitution) if its actions (that is, projects) should involve misappropriation of funds, corruption, maladministration as well as the breach of Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution which outline service delivery obligations of municipalities.

From the above it could be deduced that adequate mechanisms exist to facilitate the measurement of governance initiatives on institutional level.

Micro level perspective

The third vantage point from which the measurement of *good* governance could be explored lies at a micro or operational level where mechanisms are designed to monitoring and evaluate service delivery initiatives. This includes, for example, the use of Performance Indicators (PIs), targets and standards to measure the success (quality, efficiency, effectiveness and economy) of each initiative.

The micro level perspective also includes focus on the human dimension of performance and includes performance agreements and appraisals of staff. Performance monitoring and evaluation typically revolve around issues such as resource results (typically budget), efficiency results (deliverables on target, in scope, and according to quality specifications), and people results (productivity, performance appraisals, performance contracts, reporting, control measures, and so on).

The Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (2007:7), issued by the National Treasury, explains that suitable performance indicators need to be specified to measure performance in relation to inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. It also

shows that determining a set of appropriate performance indicators depends on the nature of the institution's mandate (Prinsloo 2011:59).

This concludes a brief outline of endeavours of the South African Government to measure the *goodness* of its programmes and service delivery initiatives. The next section will critically reflect on these initiatives.

CRITIQUING THE MEASUREMENT OF *GOOD* GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is evident that the South Africa Government has developed, and is still in the process of refining, a comprehensive framework for the measurement of its initiatives. Based on the performance philosophy, political will, and policy intent, as expressed by the preambles of various pieces of legislation, it seems that there is significant alignment with international performance frameworks and best practices. There is also a realisation that a need exists for regular national government report-backs to the International UN Millennium Goals Initiative on progress made with the operationalisation of these goals in the country. There is an understanding that government requires a national M&E system to assess sustainable development (as required by the Rio Convention of 1992) and the undertaking by the Presidency to regularly inform citizens about progress made with the Government's Programme of Action. In line with international good governance practices, significant progress has thus been made to institutionalise performance monitoring and evaluation in South Africa in all spheres of government.

As confirmed by Dassah and Uken (2006:705), initiatives taken by the South African government to measure its performance after 1994, did much to adhere to the democratic principles of openness, access, transparency and accountability. According to Ijeoma (2010:352) South Africa's framework provides a useful guide to the role of performance information in government planning, budgeting and reporting. In this regard National Treasury (2007:2) propagates the use of systems to generate performance information in support of regular audits. It further proposes the development of improved integrated structures, systems and processes required to manage performance information, the clarification of roles and responsibilities for managing performance information, as well as the promotion of accountability and transparency by providing parliament, provincial legislature, municipal councils and the public with timely, accessible and accurate performance information.

Although significant progress has been made, the process is not without certain challenges. It should be noted that good governance and performance measurement is a *journey* and not a *destination*. The Presidency (2008:15), in this regard, states that the GWM&ES is still *a developing system* and that it has not really taken root. Cloete (2009:299) concurs that it seems as if the GWM&E system has more of an *emerging* nature. Cloete (2009:299) elaborates that there is an emerging regulatory framework that forms the backbone of the system. As an emerging field, Ijeoma (2010:351) indicates that the GWM&E system does not currently have prescriptive and clear policy procedures as to how and when the programme should be implemented across government. No implementation time frames were developed and Ijeoma (2010:351) points to the fact that even though the system was launched in 2007, currently there are still national and provincial departments, as well as

municipalities, that are operating without a comprehensive performance management system. This makes performance measurement extremely difficult. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of clear lines of authority and operational guidelines.

Further challenges include continuing questions about the existence of corruption, poor service delivery, and maladministration that are still prevalent in the South African Government. Some of the issues that should be addressed with a measuring instrument, such as the M&E system, include the absence of qualitative assessments of public sector performance to ensure that policies, programmes and projects have the desired impact; the decentralisation and *balkanisation* (fragmentation) of public institutions in contrast to the need for strong centralised planning to facilitate a developmental state; and the prevalence of corruption, nepotism and *tenderpreneurs* in spite of various codes of discipline, performance auditing, and accountability mechanisms.

Probably the biggest concern regarding the measurement of *good* governance in South Africa, as echoed by Hauge (2001:7), is that South Africa's system focuses too much on compliance with government requirements and regulations rather than its outcomes (results). Osborne and Gaebler (1992:14) caution in this regard that in attempting to control virtually everything, governments have become so obsessed with dictating *how* things should be done – regulating the process, controlling the inputs (resources) – that they ignore the *outcomes* (results). This could result in civil servants being rewarded for compliance with bureaucratic practices, rather than for making a difference in people's lives. The M&E system should therefore extend beyond tracking levels of expenditure, bureaucratic activities and adherence to administrative requirements and procedures, but also measure actual results on the ground. The M&E system should guide managers towards achieving institutional goals, and as such, provide adequate guidelines as to measure the successes and failures of programmes and projects. This perspective is confirmed by Hauge (2001:7) who indicates that the real product of the M&E system is not necessarily only the reports or facts, but a higher quality of decision-making.

These perspectives highlight the need to cascade the M&E system to lower levels of operation within public institutions. The system should thus make provision for top-down measurement (that is, achievements in the operationalisation of the Government's Programme of Action), but also for bottoms-up measurement (that is, the measurement of the success of programmes and projects that are the building blocks of the GPoA).

Lange and Luescher (2003:82) propose that the M&E systems should operate beyond mere accountability and resource allocation. The authors propose that the system should transcend the mere generation of baseline data and venture into the more complicated and contested terrain of explanation. For this to happen, the M&E system needs to be deeply embedded in the socio-political dynamics of society – both at conceptual and design levels. Lange and Luescher (2003:83) caution that the M&E system, regardless how sophisticated, without a transformative capacity, would be an empty exercise. Thus the argument is that the value of such a system resides in its capacity to produce knowledge on which to base change and improvement. The M&E has, indeed, two intensions: promoting accountability and facilitating learning. Such learning (institutional *memory*) should foster institutional capacity, and improve performance and service delivery. Current practices, however, reveal that the focus rather falls on the former, monitoring (compliance) and not on learning. It seems that significant emphasis is placed on performance reporting, but that the *evidence*

emanating from these reports is barely used for learning (change, transformation, and such like), but rather for financial accountability purposes only.

To measure the *goodness* of governance in South Africa, it seems, requires two main vantage points. The first vantage point is to enable the collection of data across government to measure as to whether, how, to what extent, and with what consequences government's vision (see Vision 2030), policy goals and objectives are being realised at a systematic and at an institutional level. In this respect the M&E system should be utilised to support core government functions, and should not just be about the performance of programmes against pre-set objectives. It should also be an approach to value responses to pressing issues in South Africa.

The second vantage point focuses on operational (*bottoms-up*) issues and provides a continuous flow of actionable management information about the interrelationship between operational activities, those within government, and social realities on the ground. The system should provide a means for managers to know which programmes and projects have any discernable impact upon societal challenges (that is, service delivery issues). The M&E systems should show, not only that government is functioning at acceptable costs, but also that it is running policy programmes and projects worth paying for.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to critique the approach, systems and mechanisms employed by the South African Government to measure the *goodness* of governance. A macro-, intermediate- and micro-level model was developed to appraise the respective initiatives taken by the South African Government. It was established that South Africa designed a comprehensive system (GWM&ES) to measure performance, but that certain challenges still remain. Owing to its emerging nature, the system could be regarded as *work in progress* and certain challenges still remain to cascade the system down to operational levels in public institutions.

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