

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**To assess the implementation of the Management Performance Assessment  
Tool (MPAT) in a national government department (Statistics South  
Africa)**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). This will determine whether the tool is producing the desired results that it was initially intended to produce. This study provides an insight whether management practices and other aspects of management, such as internal controls and poor administration, have indeed improved due to the implementation of MPAT in the department. These three aspects, amongst others, are some of the reasons that led to the introduction of the tool in 2011 by the Presidency, South Africa, through the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) that was to be implemented by all government departments with immediate effect. The national government realised that there was an urgent need to change the way things were done if there were to be different and improved results. Therefore, MPAT was regarded as a mechanism that would assist in this desired change, with the assumption that it is a tool that can assist public service management to “*measure what they manage*”.

A qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study and semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to gather the data. The non-probability sampling (using a purposive sampling technique) was used and there were 11 respondents identified based on their experience with the MPAT tool. The respondents all form part of the MPAT committee and some are members of the departmental Executive Committee and Internal Audit.

The findings revealed that, even though things such as improved management practices and internal controls have not yet reached the desired levels, the implementation of MPAT has a positive impact on Stats SA and, generally, things are improving. The following themes emerged from the study: The role of MPAT in the public sector and in Stats SA; MPAT’s role in internal controls; MPAT’s role in management practices; MPAT as a tool for sharing of good management practices; senior management perceptions of MPAT; challenges of MPAT; leadership support of MPAT; communication between DPME and departments; and duplication of work by MPAT.

The study concludes with the suggestion that all role players of MPAT should ensure that the tool has the full support that it requires. It is evident from the study that, if MPAT is taken seriously, a more efficient, effective and development-orientated public service can be achieved. It is a tool that has a great potential to change the public service image for the better.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Batho Pele Principles:** “People First” was conceived with the intention of transforming service delivery in the public sector.

**Director-General (DG):** An accounting officer or head of a government department.

**DPME:** A government department responsible for influencing and supporting effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes aimed at improving service delivery, outcomes and the impact on society.

**Government Department:** A government department is responsible for implementing the laws and policies decided on by Parliament or the Cabinet and it is headed by a Director-General.

**Head of Department (HOD):** An accounting officer or head of a government department.

**Implementation:** Defined as a specified set of activities designed to translate theories, plans and policies into practice

**Leadership:** This is defined as the process of encouraging and also influencing other people to execute their activities in a certain way that will ensure achievement of a specific goal.

**Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT):** An assessment tool used to assess management practices in South African government departments.

**Management Practices:** The working methods and innovations that managers use to improve the effectiveness of work systems.

**Manager:** The person who exercises control and manages people to behave in an acceptable manner whilst helping the organisation to achieve their goals.

**Monitoring:** A continuous systematic way of collecting information of specific indicators, programmes or policies to provide managers and stakeholders with progress on an ongoing intervention.

**National Development Plan (NDP):** A detailed blueprint for how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030.

**National Government:** A *National Government* of South Africa is comprised of Parliament, Cabinet and various Departments.

**Outcomes Approach:** It is embedded in and a direct resultant of the electoral mandate. It is designed to ensure that government is focused on achieving the expected real improvements in the life of all South Africans.

**Process:** The way in which things are done or a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

**Spheres of Government:** These are set out by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. They are National, Provincial and Local Government. These spheres are distinctive, inter-related and inter-dependent and they operate according to the Constitution and laws and policies made by national Parliament.

**Stats SA:** A national government department responsible for collecting, producing and disseminating official and other statistics, including conducting census of the population.

**System:** A method used to analyse organised parts that continually affect each other over time, and operate towards a common purpose.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>AGSA</b>	<b>Auditor General South Africa</b>
<b>BSC</b>	<b>Balance Score Card</b>
<b>DDG</b>	<b>Deputy Director General</b>
<b>DG</b>	<b>Director General</b>
<b>DPME</b>	<b>Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<b>DPSA</b>	<b>Department of Public Service and Administration</b>
<b>EFQM</b>	<b>European Foundation for Quality Management</b>
<b>EXCO</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>
<b>FOSAD</b>	<b>Forum of Directors General</b>
<b>HOD</b>	<b>Head of Department</b>
<b>IDSA</b>	<b>Institute of Directors in Southern Africa</b>
<b>KPA</b>	<b>Key Performance Area</b>
<b>MAF</b>	<b>Management Accountability Framework</b>
<b>MPAT</b>	<b>Management Performance Assessment Tool</b>
<b>MPME</b>	<b>Ministry of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<b>MSP</b>	<b>Ministry of State and Planning</b>
<b>MTSF</b>	<b>Medium Term Strategic Framework</b>
<b>NIMES</b>	<b>National Monitoring Evaluation System</b>
<b>NT</b>	<b>National Treasury</b>

<b>OECD</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</b>
<b>PFMA</b>	<b>Public Finance Management Act</b>
<b>PSC</b>	<b>Public Service Commission</b>
<b>SA</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<b>SG</b>	<b>Statistician General</b>
<b>Stats SA</b>	<b>Statistics South Africa</b>
<b>TQM</b>	<b>Total Quality Management</b>

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

When the new South African Government came into power in 1994, it had a very special and crucial mandate which was to provide appropriate services to all the citizens of this country. These were enshrined in the Batho Pele Principles (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA], 2013a) of “consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money” that all government departments are obliged to provide to the public. The principles particularly addressed the legislative framework regarding service delivery to communities. This significant task was and still continues to be a responsibility of government and one that requires total commitment and dedication by leadership and management of government departments, if it is going to be fulfilled (DPSA, 2013a).

According to Muthia and Krishnan (2015), a leader is someone with “a desire to serve and willingness to sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of others”. They further emphasise that a leader’s deep rooted desire is to bring about a positive difference in the lives of those he/she serves (Muthia & Krishnan, 2015). This promise needs public service leaders who are ready and willing to serve to improve the quality of the lives of the citizens of this country.

This promise by the new government is unambiguously spelt out in the South African Constitution of 1996, which clearly stipulates that the public service “must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution”, which affects the following issues (South Africa, 1996, Chapter 10):

- (a) Professional and ethical behaviour;
- (b) Resources must be used efficiently, economically and effectively;
- (c) Public administration must be centred around development;
- (d) The provision of services must be impartial, fair, equitable and unbiased;

- (e) The community should be involved in policy-making so that they can voice their needs;
- (f) Public administration must be accountable.
- (g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.
- (h) Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.
- (i) Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.”

These principles, together with the Batho Pele Principles, are intended to guide the transformation of the public service. This means that the public service will change from being a bureaucracy, concerned only with the administration of rules and regulations, to one that is dynamic and focused on results. In addition, it is envisioned that the public service leaders will be committed to providing appropriate service delivery to all the people of South Africa (South Africa, 1996). Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, in her preface to the Batho Pele Handbook, said:

“The early years of the democratic public service have been characterised by challenges of developing progressive and practical policies and frameworks in order to realise meaningful improvement in the delivery of services to the people of our country – especially previously disadvantaged communities. However, one of the key challenges in this long road to service delivery improvement, has been the ability of the public service to implement policies in the most effective and efficient manner.”

Due to this significant transition South Africa has undergone since 1994, the public sector’s mandate drastically increased and, as such, effective and efficient control mechanisms are

required (Kusek & Rist, 2004) to assist with proper implementation of the mandate.

Although measures, such as the Batho Pele principles (Public Service Commission, 2008) and many others, have been put in place as part of the commitment by government to the public, they were still not reaching the desired service levels (DPME, 2011b). A better life for all was still but just a dream for some of the citizens of South Africa.

The South African cabinet, through a process of introspection, come to a realisation that a mechanism to improve the lives of the citizens was urgently required and that such a mechanism should focus on the root cause, rather than just the effects, of the slow pace of service delivery. Okes (2019) suggests that many organisations tend to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in improving their processes, only to find the same issues or challenges they initially tried to resolve emerging again. The reason for this is that the root cause of the problem was never identified and dealt with. The South African government identified that the root causes of the slow service delivery were the internal controls and management practices within government departments. Hence, a mechanism to address these issues was deemed necessary in order for management “to measure what they manage” (DPME, 2011a).

There was a common understanding that better service delivery begins with improved internal controls and management practices within a department (DPME, 2012b). This is based on evidence from countries, such as Kenya and Canada, amongst others (Presidency, 2010) that had similar measures in place after doing a self-introspection.

Consequently, a Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) that assesses internal controls, management performance and practices was introduced in 2011 in South Africa. This study will assess the implementation of MPAT in a selected national government department called Statistics South Africa, commonly known as Stats SA.

## **1.2 Background**

“If we are to improve our performance, we have to reflect on what we are doing, what

we are achieving against what we set out to achieve, and why unexpected results are occurring. We cannot advance without making mistakes on the way, but we must evaluate and learn from our successes and our mistakes. Without this, we cannot improve” (Radebe, 2017).

According to The Presidency (2010), the South African government is committed to improving public services and to establishing the co-operation and co-ordination necessary to achieve meaningful outcomes for South African citizens. In 2010, cabinet approved 12 government priorities, commonly known as “the government outcomes” (The Presidency, 2010). The main reason for introducing the outcomes was to ensure that there was a bigger strategic end goal for government. Each outcome has a number of measurable outputs and targets and these outcomes were to be the strategic focus of government between 2010 and 2014 (The Presidency, 2010) however, they continue to be priorities to date. At a higher level, the outcomes formed part of the Ministers’ performance agreements with the President and, at a lower level (departmental level), they formed part of the departmental mandate to be implemented through strategic plans and annual performance plans (The Presidency, 2010).

Even though these strategic and annual performance plans are in existence, there was still a need for performance improvement in general, improved management practices and better monitoring mechanisms because there was lack of central coordination when it comes to the overall function of government. A ministry in the Presidency called the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Ministry was formed in May 2010 and a Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) was formed within this ministry (The Presidency, 2010).

Immediately after its formation, in 2011, DPME introduced an assessment tool called Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT). The main intention of this tool was “to promote and institutionalise the monitoring and assessment of the public service towards improved service delivery” which is part of the government outcomes and priorities. The understanding was that improved management practices are the key to an improved public service and contribute to improving service delivery through providing a holistic picture of the quality of management practices within a department against common standards. The information can then be used by management to inform improvements or by transversal

departments to provide support where it is needed (DPME, 2012b).

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to assess the implementation of MPAT in Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) to determine whether the tool is producing the desired results for which it was initially intended. This study will provide an insight as to whether the management practices, internal controls and the administration (based on the four identified KPAs in the study) have indeed improved.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

MPAT was introduced as a tool to assist public service management to “measure what they manage”, amongst other things. This study will assist Stats SA leadership and DPME to know whether this tool is indeed assisting with improved management practices that will eventually lead to improved service delivery and a stronger administration. This will be done by investigating whether those utilising the tool in the department believe that it is achieving the desired results.

### **1.5 The Research Problem**

Confronted with rising citizen discontent and new technological challenges, public service organisations across the globe are seeking means of improving the way they function (Kearney, 1999). Similarly, more than a decade into democracy, the South African government did a critical review on its overall performance since 1994. In 2010, the Outcomes Approach, that contained government priorities, was introduced (The Presidency, 2010). The introduction of these outcomes was based on the fact that the review revealed that change was not happening as effectively and rapidly as required. Despite all the achievements since 1994 in “creating a better life for all”, significant levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality still existed. This has resulted in some communities becoming impatient with the quality, relevance and adequacy of government service delivery (The Presidency, 2010).

There was an urgent need to change the way things were done if there was to be different and improved results. Government had to ask itself the following questions (The Presidency, 2010):

- What have we been doing that has not delivered the desired outcomes?
- What is the reason for our limited success and what will improve the results we achieve? What will we do differently in order to succeed?
- What activities and tools are needed to achieve these results?

To answer these questions, the Outcomes Approach (The Presidency, 2010) was introduced to ensure that government is focused on achieving the expected real improvements in the lives of all South Africans. This led to a realisation that there was a need for a mechanism that will assist in knowing whether the enabling departmental functions, such as Human Resources Management, Strategic Management, Corporate Governance and Financial Management, are being managed correctly (DPME, 2012c). These are the key functions that every government department should have regardless of its mandate and management plays a significant role in the achievement of these key functions.

Service delivery begins with internal controls and improved management practices within government departments (DPME, 2012c) that precede the delivery of the actual services to the citizens. Departments had to understand their own management practices and internal controls clearly. An assessment tool to assist management to be more accountable was necessary, hence MPAT was introduced (DPME, 2011b). However, management tools, on their own, are not adequate. The role of leadership and management in their implementation is crucial (DPME, 2012b) because a lack of direction by leadership is regarded as one of the biggest barriers to change (Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2007). It is for this reason that this study seeks to assess the implementation of MPAT at a national government department, Stats SA.

## **1.6 Research Objectives and Research Questions**

### **1.6.1 Research Objectives**

- (a) To describe the role of MPAT in Stats SA;
- (b) To determine whether MPAT is implemented as intended;
- (c) To identify challenges faced by management using MPAT;
- (d) To provide recommendations to Stats SA leadership and the department of DPME. based on identified gaps or challenges being experienced with the tool.

### **1.6.2 Research Questions**

- (a) What is the role of MPAT in Stats SA? (Has there been improvement in management practices and accountability since the introduction of MPAT in Stats SA?)
- (b) Is the implementation of MPAT bringing the desired results that the tool was initially intended to address in Stats SA?
- (c) What are the challenges faced by management in using the MPAT tool?
- (d) What recommendations or suggestions can be made to Stats SA leadership and DPME with regards to MPAT as a whole?

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

According to Myers (2009), a qualitative research method is appropriate to study a particular subject in depth (e.g. in one or a few organisations). It is used for exploratory research, especially when a topic is new and there has not been much written about it. “It is also ideal for studying the social, cultural and political aspects of people and organisations” (Myers, 2009:9). MPAT is a fairly new concept in the South African public sector environment therefore this qualitative study will determine whether it has a positive impact on government departments and, in particular, Stats SA.

### **1.7.1 Sampling**

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) suggest that a population can be referred to as a group of potential participants who can generalise the results of a study. They further note that the results of research can be generalised from a sample to a population when they have meaning beyond the limited setting in which they are originally obtained (Welman et al., 2005).

In this study, the target group is the senior management utilising MPAT in a national government department, Stats SA. The sampling in this study involved interviews with committee members of MPAT in Stats SA. These committee members form part of senior management in the department and they represent all the four MPAT KPAs, internal auditors as well as the Executive Committee (EXCO). Purposive sampling was used for this study and the sample consisted of eleven participants who were identified based on their experience with the tool. The data gathered from participants was analysed and various themes were identified based on the respondents' views.

### **1.7.2 Data collection**

Data collection methods involve

“visiting a research site and observing the behaviour of participants without predetermined questions or conducting an interview in which the respondent is allowed to talk openly about a topic, with or without the use of specific questions” (Creswell, 2014).

Face-to-face interviews with specific questions were employed for this study and respondents were encouraged to talk openly about each topic.

### **1.7.3 Data Analysis**

For this study, the researcher analysed the qualitative data using thematic analysis. According to Jugder (2016), “thematic analysis is the most commonly used qualitative approach to analysing interviews”, hence the decision to use it for this study as data was collected

through interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) further suggest that thematic analysis is “a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data”.

## **1.8 Structure of the study**

### **1.8.1 Chapter 1 – Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research problem, the aim of the study, the background of the study, the significance of the study, the research objectives, the research questions and the limitations of the study.

### **1.8.2 Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study while explaining MPAT and how it is being implemented in Stats SA. It also provides a holistic approach of performance assessment tools and discusses the research objectives in literature.

### **1.8.3 Chapter 3 – Research Methodology**

This chapter provides the research methodology that was adopted for this study. It also provides the sampling strategy used, as well as the method used for data collection. Data analysis and ethical considerations are also dealt with in this chapter.

### **1.8.4 Chapter 4 – Research Findings**

The key findings of the study that were obtained through face-to-face interviews with respondents or participants from Stats SA are presented in this chapter. Based on the data analysis, this chapter also deals with answers to the research questions.

### **1.8.5 Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this chapter, the research objectives and the research findings merge and provide closure to the research questions initially introduced in chapter one of the study. This is where the research questions are answered and conclusions and recommendations are made to the

relevant parties, in this case, Stats SA management and the DPME.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

Chapter One describes what the study is about. The introduction, the background, the aim and focus of the study and the research problem are outlined in this chapter. The research objectives, together with the research questions and the significance of the study explain the necessity of the research. Chapter Two presents the literature review of the problem under investigation.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

According to Maphela (2015), a literature review is an assessment of what is publicly available or what is known about a particular topic from various sources. It involves learning from sources previously produced by other researchers and scholars with the main aim being to answer the research questions (Maphela, 2015).

Boote and Beile (2005) highlight that

“conducting a literature review is a means of demonstrating an author’s knowledge about a particular field of study, including vocabulary, theories, key variables and phenomena, and its methods and history.”

According to Creswell (2014), a literature review is a way of searching and finding the related literature on the topic that was chosen by the researcher. Creswell further states that a literature review is intended to share the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken (Creswell, 2014). It relates a study to the larger, ongoing conversation of the subject while trying to close gaps that might exist and expanding on the studies that were done previously (Creswell, 2014).

Creswell further suggests that a literature review

“provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings that might already exist” (Creswell, 2014:28).

Gal, Borg, and Gall (1996 cited by Randolph, 2009), suggest that a literature review plays a role in:

- a) delimiting the research problem;
- b) seeking new lines of enquiry;

- c) avoiding fruitless approaches;
- d) gaining methodological insights;
- e) identifying recommendations for further research; and
- f) seeking support for grounded theory.

### **2.1.1 The evolution of measuring organisational performance**

Measuring organisational performance is high on the agenda of any organisation regardless of the mandate of that organisation. It is for this reason that various approaches to organisational performance measurement have been introduced, undertaken and abandoned by various organisations across the globe. Therefore, with a growing number of improvement models now available, it is important to adopt an improvement model that will be suitable for the organisation's needs and that will also yield the most attractive return on investment (Wongrassamee, Simmons & Gardiner, 2003).

Traditionally, the most common approaches that have been used for measuring organisational performance are financial versus non-financial and qualitative versus quantitative. This is due to the fact that many organisations rely largely on financial measures and process outcomes using self-referenced objective data from internal sources (Chin, Pun & Lau, 2003). However, recent studies have suggested that the traditional approaches or traditional performance measures are no longer fit for today's rapid growing turbulent environment because the traditional performance measures, which are largely financially based, have a number of limitations as listed below:

- a) They are based on a traditional cost management systems;
- b) They use lagging metrics;
- c) They are not incorporated into strategy;
- d) They are difficult to implement in practice and tend to be inflexible and fragmented;
- e) They contradict accepted continuous improvement thinking;

f) They neglect customer requirements (Ghalayini & Noble, 1996).

In order for an organisation to sustain and increase its competitive advantages, non-traditional performance measures have emerged to evaluate, control and improve business processes (Ghalayini & Noble, 1996). Their characteristics are mainly related to the strategy of the organisation, its people and its management (Wongrasamee et al., 2003) and not on financial measures. These non-financial performance measurement systems fall into two categories, those that are self-assessment based (such as the European Foundation for Quality Management Award using the EFQM Excellence model) and those that are designed to help managers measure and improve business processes, such as Norton and Kaplan's Balance Score Card. The Total Quality Management (TQM) approach has also been used by many organisations across the globe to foster continuous performance improvements in organisations (Chin et al., 2003).

The introduction of various international standards and quality/business excellence awards in the 1990s has helped many organisations to measure and assess their performance (Chin et al., 2003). These measurements were achieved through exercises of management practice reviews and internal and external audits, amongst others. These were mainly done through the self-assessment against compliance requirements of standards such as the ISO 9001:1994 and ISO 14001:1996 (Chin et al., 2003).

“The collision between the irresistible force to build long-range competitive capabilities and the immovable object of the historical-cost financial accounting model has created a new synthesis: the Balance Scorecard. The Balance Scorecard retains traditional financial measures. But financial measures tell the story of past events, an adequate story for industrial age companies for which investments in long-term capabilities and customer relationships were not for critical success” (Norton & Kaplan, 1996).

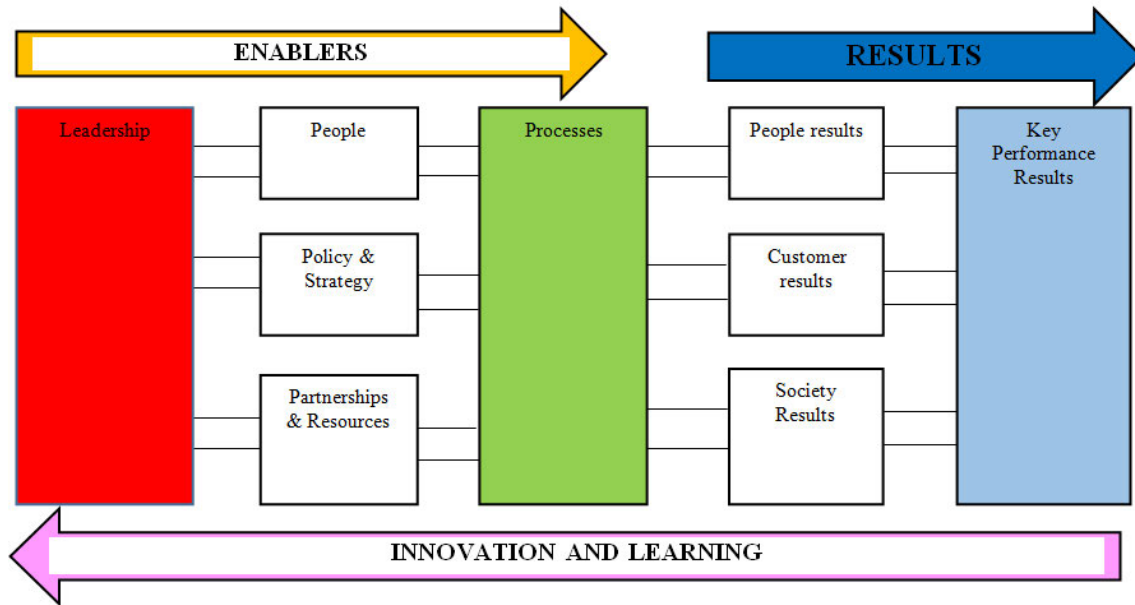
Norton and Kaplan's Balance Score Card (BSC) is one of the most popular tools that came into existence in the 1990s. It is distinctive because it does not just focus on the financial perspective of a business, but it was also considers the customer, internal, innovation and

learning perspectives, which are considered part of the core management system (Norton & Kaplan, 1996). The BSC approach believes that financial measures do not necessarily match with the competencies and skills required by companies that operate in a turbulent environment (Chin et al., 2003). It is aimed at assisting organisations, not just to focus on their profits and losses, but also to know the driving forces that are behind the success or failure measured through its four perspectives (Norton & Kaplan, 1996).

The BSC understands organisational excellence holistically in areas where it matters the most (Chin et al., 2003). This brought about a realisation that financial results on their own do not guarantee the successful future of a business (Chin et al., 2003) as many other aspects of a business play a significant role.

The EFQM Excellence model was a performance measurement tool that was introduced in the late 1980s (Shergold & Reed, 1996) when there was an increasing concern about the lack of quality, productivity and competitiveness in the market world (Wongarassamee et al., 2003). This model places emphasis on organisations doing their own assessment and developing improvement plans. It is a non-prescriptive framework, which is based on nine criteria that reflect endorsed, leading-edge management practices (Wongrassamee et al., 2003). The criteria represent a common language for communicating and sharing best practices within organisations (Wongrassamee et al., 2003). A scoring guideline is provided for this model to prevent bias. Organisations that perform well, according to the set scoring criteria, are rewarded through the European Quality Award (EFQM, 2000). The assessment is carried out on an annual basis, which gives the organisations time to reflect and do a thorough assessment over a period of time.

The diagram below indicates the EFQM Excellence model and its nine criteria:



**Figure 2.1: EFQM Excellence Model**

(Source: EFQM, 2000)

Out of the nine criteria, the first five can be manipulated and are called “Enablers”, while the remaining four are called “Results” and symbolise an organisation’s achievements (Wongrassamdee et al., 2003).

Due to the model’s non-prescriptive approach, the assessment can be carried out in many ways. There are no comprehensive instructions provided to carry out the assessment, but all the nine criteria must be measured during the award assessment process (Wongrassamdee et al., 2003). Even though the EFQM Excellence Model is a reward-based system, many organisations have adopted it not to win the award, but to fully understand their organisational position through the self-assessments and use the results to inform improvements (Wongrassamdee et al., 2003).

## 2.2 Management Performance Assessment Tools in Governments Globally

Even though measuring organisational performance has been largely associated with individual organisations across the world,

“far-reaching changes in the global economy made it imperative for the governments all over the world to improve the quality of their governance structures” (India Government, 2009).

It is for this reason that countries, such as Canada, New Zealand, Kenya and India, have developed performance assessments tools for their government departments due to a realisation that they need to start “measuring what they are managing” in order to achieve improved results.

The government of India

“introduced a system called the New Public Management Concepts in Public Administration with emphasis on results or performance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services” (India Government, 2009).

In 2003, Canada developed the Management Accountability Framework (MAF) for management excellence, through assessing the performance of the departments and management practices across the public sector (Canada Government, 2016). New Zealand developed the Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) to achieve performance improvements in the departments across the entire government system. The framework was also used “to identify the critical gaps and opportunities between the current and desirable future capacity and performance” (New Zealand Government, 2017).

According to the Ministry of State and Planning (MSP) in Kenya, the National Monitoring Evaluation System (NIMES) was developed in 2004 as a result of a weak development plan. Since independence in 1963 (Kenya Government, 2011) there has been no integrated monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the policies and programmes in the public sector. Citizens were, at the time, raising concerns about the lack of implementation of programmes and the non-completion of critical projects that were supposed to benefit them. There were no decision-making and feedback mechanisms, no verifiable evidence of decisions being made and a lack of accountability in the public sector (Management Study Guide, 2010). NIMES helped Kenya to improve in its public sector image and other countries

learned from their experiences and introduced tools of a similar nature.

### **2.3 Challenges of Assessment Tools**

With the growing interest in measuring the organisational as well as management performance in organisations, various assessment tools have been introduced in both the public and private sectors across the globe (Arvidson, Lyon, McKay & Moro, 2010). However, these assessment tools have challenges and limitations such as the following (Arvidson et al., 2010):

- a) They do not always bring the desired results (there is a need to clearly define what the tool aims to achieve);
- b) They do not guarantee return on investment;
- c) Bias from people when such tools are introduced;
- d) Competing objectives between such tools and other forms of systems already in place;
- e) They can create duplication of work for management;
- f) It becomes difficult to know the amount of benefit that can be attributed to the activities being measured (they can provide false results);
- g) They can be time consuming for management because they usually come with their own framework and reporting requirements;
- h) They sometimes assess what is not necessary;
- i) They are imposed on management rather than involving them from the beginning of the process;
- j) They are not always understood by those who implement them;
- k) There is no clear distinction between assessment tools and monitoring and evaluation

systems.

## **2.4 The South African background on monitoring/measuring government performance (post-apartheid)**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, governments in developing countries across the world started to realise the importance of “*measuring what they manage*”. This led to the introduction of performance measurement systems or performance monitoring systems, as some refer to them). The main reason for the introduction of such systems was the need to measure the level of performance of government services and their programs (Mackay, 2011). Mackay (2011:1) explains that

“this particular trend was influenced by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, most of which places a high priority on the following four main uses of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) findings:

- a) Policy development
- b) Evidence-based policy making and budgeting
- c) Management performance
- d) Accountability”.

The importance of measuring and managing government performance in middle and low-income countries is strengthened by ongoing fiscal and macroeconomic pressures, which affect all countries and their governments, as well as the continuous demands and expectations from ordinary citizens (Mackay, 2011).

In early 2009, many South Africans protested against the government’s failure to provide basic services with any degree of reliability and efficiency. The Department of Public Service and Administration’s (DPSA) review revealed that this situation had deteriorated between 2006 and 2008 (towards the end of President Thabo Mbeki’s presidential term) when there was a major drop in the levels of citizen satisfaction regarding service delivery.

During 2008 and the first half of 2009, there were many public demonstrations, some of which were violent. These protests sent a clear message to the new administration, led by Former President Jacob Zuma, who assumed office in April 2009. Amongst the top grievances of the protestors was the issue of poor service delivery. Even though there has been an improvement in other areas where government provides services, the general perception was that the progress was too slow.

This led to the new administration's realisation that there was an urgent need to create performance measurement or monitoring systems to improve service delivery. After the formation of the Ministry of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (MPME) in the office of the Presidency to address some of these challenges, specialists were also appointed who would assist with the development of a system that would monitor and improve government performance (The Presidency, 2009, cited by Mackay, 2011).

According to Mackay (2011), the newly formed ministry in the presidency identified the following weaknesses prevalent across the South African government departments which needed further attention:

- a) A lack of accountability at the ministerial and upper managerial level
- b) Poor planning at some ministries, including a failure to link activities to a departmental plan
- c) Ineffective coordination between ministries in producing and implementing policies.

During the previous administration, government performance monitoring systems were used in the Public Service Commission (PSC), DPSA, National Treasury (NT) and the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA). However, the mandate of these structures was limited and they did not achieve the desired results. This led to the development of the South African Outcomes Approach for government priorities (The Presidency, 2010).

#### **2.4.1 The Public Service Commission (PSC) Mandate**

“The PSC derives its mandate from sections 195 and 196 of the South African

Constitution, 1996. The PSC is tasked and empowered to, amongst others, investigate, monitor, and evaluate the organisation and administration of the Public Service. This mandate also entails the evaluation of achievements, or lack thereof of government programmes. It also has an obligation to promote measures that would ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service and to promote values and principles of public administration as set out in the constitution, throughout the Public Service” (PSC, 2017).

#### **2.4.2 The National Treasury Mandate**

“The National Treasury (NT) is responsible for managing South Africa’s national government finances. Supporting efficient and sustainable public financial management is fundamental to the promotion of economic development, good governance, social progress and a rising standard of living for all South Africans. The Constitution of the Republic (Chapter 13) mandates the National Treasury to ensure transparency, accountability and sound financial controls in the management of public finances” (National Treasury, n.d.).

The National Treasury’s legislative mandate is also described in Chapter Two of the Public Finance Management Act. The Act states that the National Treasury is mandated to: endorse government’s economic policy framework; coordinate macroeconomic policy and financial relations within the governmental; control the process of preparing the budget; assist in the Division of Revenue Act that so that nationally raised revenue is distributed equally between national, provincial and local government; and supervise how the provincial budgets are implemented.

The executive and Parliament have therefore authorised the National Treasury to support “the optimal allocation and utilisation of financial resources in all spheres of government to reduce poverty and vulnerability among South Africa’s most marginalised” (National Treasury, n.d.).

#### **2.4.3 The DPSA mandate**

The DPSA is regarded as “the centre of government”. It plays a major role in establishing

“norms and standards for the public service, which ensure that service-delivery mechanisms, integrated systems and access, HR, institutional development and governance initiatives are responsive to the needs of the citizens.”

#### The mandate of the DPSA

“has evolved over the years from transforming and modernising the Public Service through the development and implementation of policies and frameworks, to providing implementation support to ensure compliance, improve service delivery and strengthen monitoring and evaluation” (DPSA, 2014).

#### **2.4.4 The general mandate of the public sector**

According to Linna, Pekkola, Ukko and Melkas (2010:480), the main mandate of the public sector across the globe is “to improve the general welfare of society by delivering public goods and services to individuals, and to the private and other public sector organisations”. Therefore the public sector plays a very crucial role in society. The public sector also has a wide range of stakeholders who have different expectations, therefore it needs to be effective, efficient and accountable in rendering its services (Mimba, Van Helden & Tillema, 2007 cited by Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017).

Lufunyo (2013:27 cited by Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017), suggests that public sector institutions around the world have “undergone various reforms for ages in an attempt to bring about positive change”, but the progress has remained slow. This has also happened in South Africa where the mandates discussed above have been in place as control measures for monitoring various aspects of performance in the public sector. The number of challenges faced by the South African public sector has continued to rise while the progress has not kept pace with the demand. It became evident that issues, such as service delivery protests and other contributing factors, were indicative of a more serious underlying root cause not just in municipalities, but in national government departments as well (Carrim, 2009). Hence, mechanisms have been continually introduced with the hope that, once the root causes are identified and attended to, the service delivery will improve.

## 2.5 The South African government Outcomes Approach

“The defining feature of this administration will be that it knows where people live, understands their concerns and responds faster to their needs” (The Presidency, 2010).

Through the development of the Outcomes Approach, the new administration believed that “an efficient, effective and development-oriented public service can be achieved”. It was designed as a measure to ensure that government highlights the achievement of real improvements in the lives of all its citizens (The Presidency, 2010). Ministers, as well as government departments, had to start planning and working together to build accountability across the board.

The Outcomes Approach follows the following “four step process” (The Presidency, 2010):

**Step 1** involved the adoption of a set of key strategic outcomes with measurable outputs and key activities. The starting point was the ruling party’s election manifesto, which identified five priority areas, namely, decent work and sustainable livelihoods; education; health; rural development, food security and land reform; and the fight against crime and corruption. This was then developed into the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which identified 10 strategic priorities, which were then further developed into 12 key outcomes, together with draft high-level outputs, key activities and metrics.

**Step 2** is performance agreements between the President and Ministers which outline high level outputs, metrics and key activities for each outcome, but in some instances where departments do not contribute directly to the 12 outcomes, include key outputs from the strategic plans of departments.

**Step 3** is converting the high level outputs and metrics into a detailed Delivery Agreement with the key partners that need to work together to achieve the outputs. The negotiated agreement spells out who will do what, by when with what resources.

**Step 4** is the establishment of effective coordination structures that will allow the partners to the Delivery Agreement to work together for the next four years in

coordinating implementation of the outcomes, reviewing progress and deciding on interventions when required. The coordinating structures will also carry out monitoring and evaluation of the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved, which will provide a feedback loop to annual reviews of the Delivery Agreements”.

The Presidency (2010) further provides the following “concepts and principles” of the Outcomes Approach:

- a) It focuses on results
- b) It makes a specific and testable “chain of logic” for planning for the resources needed.
- c) It connects activities to outputs and outcomes
- d) It ensures that expectations are clear and unambiguous
- e) It provides a clear foundation for discussion, debate and negotiation regarding the needs and responses
- f) It enables policy, strategy and plans to be regularly revised and improved through experience
- g) It improves co-ordination and alignment.

## **2.6 The spheres of government in South Africa**

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996), “government has been divided into the following three spheres” (Mthembu, 2012:37):

### **2.6.1 The national sphere of government**

This sphere is responsible for the supreme functions of the country that covers all matters that affect the country as a whole, such as safety, foreign affairs, defence, home affairs and overall public administration. This sphere is also partly responsible for monitoring the other spheres of government performance and taking remedial action, if necessary.

### **2.6.2 The provincial sphere of government**

This sphere is responsible for ensuring that people are taken care of in terms of service delivery such as health care, education, human settlements and social development in their area of jurisdiction.

### **2.6.3 The local sphere of government**

This is considered to be the most important in government service because it is responsible for the delivery of basic services that include water, sanitation and electricity to the South African citizens. Even though these spheres have different responsibilities, they are interdependent and dependent on the national sphere where public administration starts. Therefore, there have to be appropriate national systems and leadership for the provincial and local spheres to execute their mandates successfully. This has led to the development of the MPAT tool.

## **2.7 Management Performance Assessment Tool: The South African context**

Shortly after the formation of the government outcomes, the DPME obtained approval from cabinet to introduce the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in government departments. This was because, even though there were departments at national and provincial levels that have consistently under-performed in delivering services to citizens, not much has been done to improve the situation (DPME, 2011a) and neither the Outcomes Approach nor the other structures with a mandate to monitor government performance were the answer to this persistent challenge. It became obvious that there were serious root causes for the lack of service delivery, not just in municipalities but throughout the country. There was a need to do an introspection because “every challenge has a root cause and if only the symptoms are addressed, the challenges will persist and interventions will be pointless” (Doggett, 2006:34). A diagnosis done by the DPME (2011b) revealed that poor management practices are prevalent in those poorly performing departments even though departments have their own set of indicators and mandates, for example, National Treasury (NT) focuses on Financial Management practices and the Department of Public Services and Administration (DPSA) focuses on human resource management practices as already

mentioned above,

“[n]owhere in the system are these different management practices brought together in a single coherent framework that provides a snapshot of the state of management practices in a department” (DPME, 2011b:9).

Hence, the MPAT tool was formed, not to duplicate existing government frameworks, but to integrate the existing frameworks “into a single framework that provides a holistic snapshot of the state of management practices in a department” (DPME, 2011b).

Even though the Outcomes Approach was a system developed to assess performance and improve accountability, it operates at a higher level and it was not aimed at assessing specific management areas within a government department, which is what the MPAT tool was intended to do, amongst other things.

## **2.8 What is MPAT/MPAT Overview?**

“If we are to improve our performance we have to reflect on what we are doing, what we are achieving against what we set out to achieve, and why unexpected results are occurring. We cannot advance without making mistakes on the way, but we must evaluate and learn from our successes and our mistakes. Without this, we cannot improve” (DPME, 2011).

Improved management practices are therefore key to improving government performance and service delivery. These priority outcomes are underpinned by Outcome 12, which is “an efficient, effective and development orientated public service” (DPME, 2012). Government therefore has committed to improving the public service in order to achieve the priority outcomes it has set for 2009 until 2014.

According to DPME (2014), MPAT consists of:

- a) a tool that collates existing management policy and guidelines into a framework of standards and indicators of good practice to standardise the understanding of good

management practices

- b) ongoing learning about management practices that can allow the public service, over time, to collaboratively refine and develop the framework
- c) a tool for senior managers to measure their own practices and identify how management practices can be improved in providing service delivery
- d) a way to show how management practices in a range of key performance areas in departments and across the public service can identify the need for further support from the relevant transversal departments.

The management performance framework used in MPAT was adopted from a review of similar management performance assessment methodologies used by other international countries, such as India, Canada and New Zealand, among others (DPME, 2012). Lessons drawn from these countries' experiences signified that such methodologies can make a substantial contribution to improving the performance of government,

“particularly if the leadership of departments being assessed take ownership of the assessment process and the findings, if the results are made public thus encouraging competition between departments, if the management of departments implement and monitor improvement plans, and if transversal policy departments implement such programmes” (DPME, 2012c).

Therefore MPAT can be regarded as a tool that

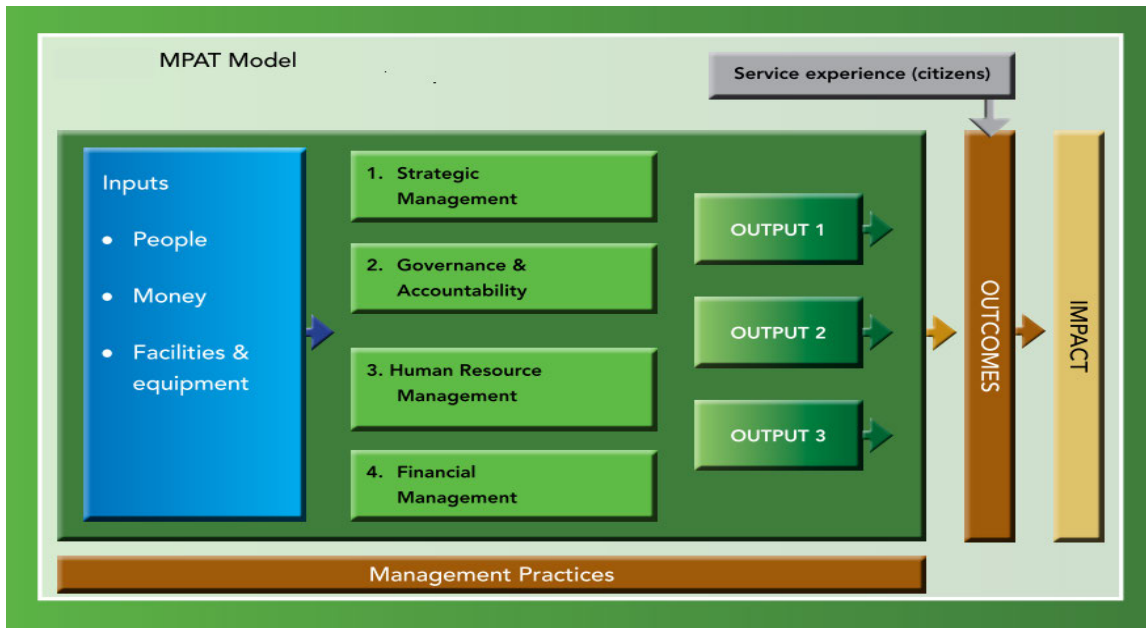
“represents the co-operative spirit necessary to effectively achieve outcomes. It is led by DPME and includes all role players whose efforts are needed for improved management in the South African public service” (DPME, 2011a).

## **2.9 The MPAT process**

MPAT is conducted on an annual basis by all national government departments, including provincial departments and offices of the premiers. It is a tool that assesses management

practices based on existing policies, regulations and frameworks of the public service (DPME, 2012b:9). The MPAT process suggests that effective and efficient management practices at operational and decision-making level leads to improved business performance and service delivery (Maphela, 2015:4).

The diagram below is an overview of the MPAT model:



**Figure 2.2: MPAT Model**

(Source: DPME, 2012b)

According to DPME (2012), MPAT is built around four key management performance areas, commonly known as Key Performance Areas (KPAs):

- a) KPA 1 – Strategic management;
- b) KPA 2 – Governance and Accountability;
- c) KPA 3 – Human Resource Management;
- d) KPA 4 – Financial Management.

These four KPAs are further broken down into 17 management performance areas and performance is then measured against 31 standards across the management performance areas.

The diagram below depicts the four KPAs and 17 management performance areas of MPAT:



**Figure 2.3: MPAT Key Management Performance Areas**

(Source: DPME, 2012b)

### 2.9.1 How the MPAT process works

According to Maphela (2015), “national and provincial government departments as well as the offices of the premiers conduct their own self-assessment on an annual basis”. Each department get access to the DPME MPAT system where they have to score themselves, respond to the assessment questionnaire and provide evidence to support their scorings (Maphela, 2015). The scoring is rated from level one to four (depicted in Figure 2.4 below) with each scoring indicating the level of performance of each standard or activity.

The diagram below depicts the MPAT Levels and their description:

Level	Description
Level 1	Department is non-compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 2	Department is partially compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 3	Department is fully compliant with legal/regulatory requirements
Level 4	Department is fully compliant with legal/regulatory requirements and is doing things smartly

**Figure 2.4: MPAT Levels**

(Source: DPME, 2012a)

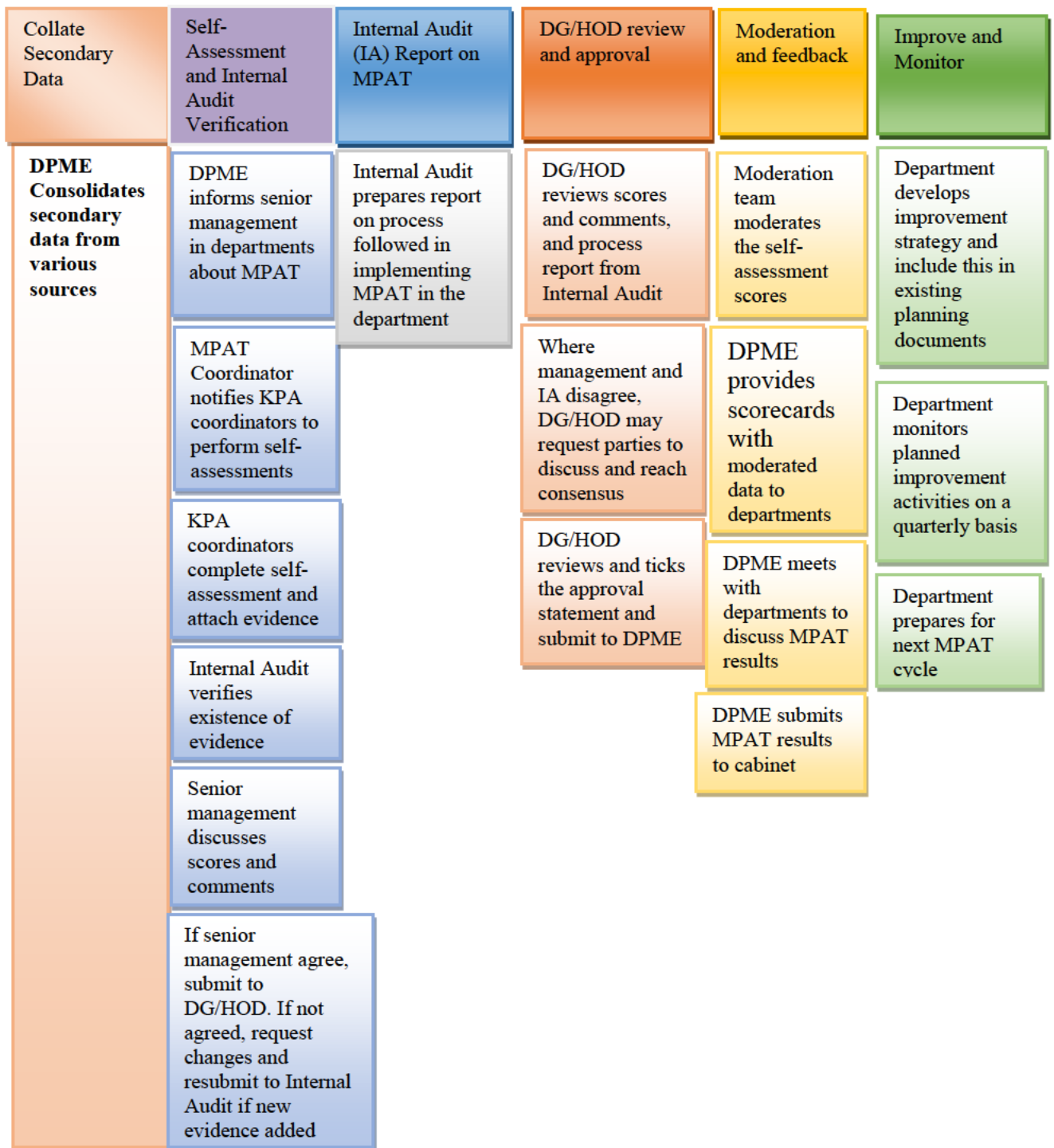
Once the self-assessment process is completed, internal senior management discussions on the self-assessment report take place within departments where ideas are shared and suggestions are made on the different standards and, if necessary, requests for changes are made (DPME, 2012b). The departmental internal auditors have to verify that the whole process is done correctly and also that the evidence is supplied for the various KPAs within a department. Once the entire process is completed and all involved in the process agree, then the Head of the Department or the Director-General must review and sign off the assessment (DPME, 2013d). Thereafter, the departmental assessment is electronically submitted to DPME (via the MPAT system) (DPME, 2012b). DPME conducts its own moderation using independent moderators to verify whether the scoring and evidence provided indeed reflects that the department is at that level of performance (on a particular KPA standard/activity) and, if not, the score is revised by the moderators.

To avoid bias, the moderators are generally experts or subject matter specialists in the particular field in which they moderate and they also have a clear understanding of the Public Service environment, the Acts, Frameworks and Regulations that govern these KPAs. These are, inter alia, the National Treasury Planning Framework, the Public Service Act and the

Public Financial Management Act (DPME, 2012b). Mandatory data submitted to the transversal departments and government agencies, such as the National Treasury and the Office of the Auditor-General, is also used as further evidence by the moderators where necessary. The moderators can challenge the self-assessment departmental scores based on their moderation and provide feedback to departments.

The departments are then given a chance to challenge the moderators' initial feedback (commonly known as the "challenge period") after which the results might have improved, remained the same or declined. The final results are released to the departments, published on the DPME website, presented to the Forum of Directors-General (FOSAD) and to cabinet.

Depending on the performance of a department, subsequent recommendations, actions or improvement plans are made, implemented and monitored. These will be assessed during the next cycle of assessment (DPME, 2012b). The following diagram depicts the MPAT implementation process:



**Figure 2.5: MPAT implementation Process**

(Source: DPME, 2012b)

## **2.10 The roles and responsibilities of the MPAT process**

According to DPME (2012b), in order for MPAT to be a success, there are a number of role players who contribute to the success of MPAT implementation in departments (DPME, 2012b):

### **Executive Authorities:**

- a) ensure that their respective departments participate in MPAT;
- b) use the report cards to monitor management performance.

### **Heads of Departments (DGs/HODs):**

- a) ensure that the self-assessment process is completed in accordance with DPME standards;
- b) convene the senior management deliberations on MPAT;
- c) sign off on completed self-assessments;
- d) ensure that the department takes action to improve management practices.

### **Departmental Managers:**

- a) participate in self-assessment processes;
- b) submit evidence for areas of assessment that fall within their responsibility and ensure that evidence is valid and reliable;
- c) develop improvement plans, if required.

### **Departmental MPAT coordinators:**

- a) become the focal point or contact between the department and DPME;
- b) guide the self-assessment process;
- c) liaise with internal auditors on confirmation of evidence.

**Departmental KPA Managers or Key Performance Area (KPA) Coordinators:**

- a) ensure completion of MPAT self-assessment for their designated KPAs;
- b) liaise with internal auditors on queries with regards to the evidence and draft scores.

**Internal Auditors:**

- a) assist with the verification of evidence submitted by departmental KPA coordinators during self-assessment;
- b) provide technical guidance during the self-assessment process, if required;
- c) provide a brief report on process followed during self-assessment.

**2.11 The MPAT objectives**

The following have been identified as the key objectives of MPAT (DPME, 2012):

- a) To establish the baseline performance of departments;
- b) To provide management with useful information to inform improvements;
- c) To catalyse improvements in management practices;
- d) To develop agreed improvement plans and provide targeted support to departments that are poor performers;
- e) To develop a culture of continuous improvement and sharing of good practices.

**2.12 Improved Management Practices**

It is evident that the traditional ways of managing organisations are becoming outdated. Rigid functional approaches to management and bureaucratic leadership styles can no longer cope with the demands of the modern organisation (Steyn, 2012). Steyn (2012:xviii) further suggests that

“managers are entering into a culture of risk due to the fact that business outcomes are only predictable in the short term. Having to lead and manage in this new emergent

culture of risk and uncertainty, organisational structures, leadership and management are compelled to undergo more radical changes than at any time in the past.”

Excellent business performance can only be achieved through improved management practices that are not rigid and bureaucratic but understand that the modern organisation has to adapt to a fast growing and changing environment in all its aspects. Improved management practices means letting go of traditional ways and adapting to the environmental, technological and societal changes that a business environment is faced with on a day-to-day basis.

MPAT was designed to assess compliance and the quality of management practices in the four management areas briefly discussed below. What differentiates MPAT from other monitoring processes is that it provides a consolidated view of a department’s performance across several critical performance areas, which enables an organisation to prioritise areas that need urgent interventions (DPME, 2012a).

### **2.12.1 Strategic Management**

According to Lynch (2012:4), strategic management “makes fundamental decisions about the future direction of an organisation; its purpose, its resources and how it interacts with the world in which it operates.” This is where the strategy of an organisation is developed and every aspect of the organisation plays a role in this development, that is, its people, its finances, its production methods and its environment (including its customers).

When an organisational strategy is developed, the following questions need to be considered (Hough, Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2010):

- a) What is the company’s present situation?
- b) Where does the company need to go from here?
- c) How should it get there?
- d) How should it align its strategies to ensure sustainable competitive advantage?

e) Does the company need to create strategic alliances?

It is the responsibility of management or leadership to make sure that an organisational strategy is developed that is capable of moving the company in its intended direction. Hough et al. (2010:5) explain that crafting a strategy epitomises a managerial obligation to pursue a particular set of actions in “growing the business, attracting and pleasing customers, competing successfully, conducting operations, and improving the company’s financial and market performance.” Therefore, a company’s strategy is all about how management intends to manage and grow the business in all its aspects (Hough et al., 2010), hence it is a critical element of every organisation including government departments.

For the public sector environment,

“[e]ffective public administration in the age of results-oriented management requires public agencies to develop a capacity for strategic management, the central management process that integrates all major activities and functions and directs them toward advancing an organization’s strategic agenda” (Poister & Streib, 1999:1).

Strategic management in the public sector is concerned with strengthening the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of public sector organisations in terms of both essential policy and management capability (Brynston, 1988 cited by Hough et al., 2010). Kaplan and Norton (2001) suggest that the strategic management process incorporates all other management processes to provide a logical, articulate and effective approach to establishing, attaining, monitoring and updating an organisation’s strategic objectives.

In the rapidly changing and turbulent environment in which governments have to operate, public sector organisations need to focus on practical and responsive strategic agenda. This capability provides a sense of direction, both in the short and long term, for a governmental institution in relation to its internal and external environments (Poister & Streib, 1999).

### **2.12.2 Governance and Accountability**

“We are still committed to good corporate governance ... Give us a year in which to demonstrate, clearly what we need is a new vision making sure basic functions work well” (Minister Pravin Gordhan, in Nelson 2016).

Corporate governance affects attitudes to business, obligations, leadership, honesty and integrity (Hough et al., 2010). The main reason for corporate governance in a business is “to match business behaviour and management conduct with corporate intentions, mission and objectives of the business” (Hough et al., 2010:326). Those in executive positions need regulatory standards to minimise risks and abuse of power by those in leadership positions therefore good governance is regarded as the basis of good business (Hough et al., 2010).

“Any organisation, be it private or public, foreign or local, that decides to turn a blind eye to good corporate governance practices will be at the mercy of market forces to their own detriment” (Hough et al., 2010).

Hough et al. (2010) explain that both public entities and non-profit making organisations need to ensure that good governance principles are followed in their organisations. The term “governance” refers to the process of running a government department or an organisation. This management process consists of mechanisms and structures through which governments and all other corporations express their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and resolve their differences (Hough et al., 2010).

Corporate governance can also be defined as

“the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled in corporations. It encompasses the mechanisms by which companies and those in control are held to account” (Australian Securities Exchange, 2007:3).

Therefore, corporate governance can be referred to as a mechanism by which values, principles, management policies and procedures of any organisation are manifested in the

real world (Hough et al., 2010).

The King Report on Corporate Governance became the blue print for improving corporate governance in South Africa (IDSA, 2009). It has the following four cardinal values (IDSA, 2009):

- a) **Fairness** – implies giving due considerations to the interests of all stakeholders of a company;
- b) **Accountability** – refers to the ability to explain and justify one’s actions;
- c) **Responsibility** – is the obligation of the board to take good care of the assets of the company and of the investments and interests of its stakeholders;
- d) **Transparency** – refers to the ease with which outsiders can gain a reliable view of the company’s actions and decisions.

According to Nelson (2016:7),

“the United Nations defined good governance as governance that is seen as good when resources are allocated and managed correctly or, put more simply, when government efficiently provides much-needed services and quality goods to citizens”.

### **2.12.3 Human Resource Management**

Human resource management is basically a function or department in an organisation that is responsible for the management and administration of resources related to employees. This is where employees are recruited and developed. Maphela (2015) describes human resource management as

“the procedure used to manage employees in the organisation in pursuit of enriching and meeting company strategic goals ... [HRM] is concerned with employees’ wellbeing in an organisation and the issues that affect and inform relationship between employee and employer in an institution” (Maphela, 2015:25).

Minbaeva (2005) states that human resource management practices are agreed management

practices that are facilitated and used to improve the competencies of employees that are valuable to that particular organisation's goal in order to bring sustainability and competitive advantage. A critical aspect of Human Resources Management is that the survival of any corporation depends on its employees, hence they need to be well looked after and motivated (Maphela, 2015).

Gamedze (2012:10) suggests that human resource management practice in the private and public sector

“is an important strategic tool used by organizations for creating and retaining competitive advantage. Organizations have started to recognize that a competitive advantage can be gained through human resources. As this realization occurs, research on organizational commitment on good service delivery has gained importance too.”

The notion is that, if employees are happy and well rewarded for what they do, they will also be happy to serve the people or customers that they service, and that this applies to both the public and the private sectors. Therefore, human resource management can be regarded as a pillar of every organisation and no entity can exist and function properly without it.

#### **2.12.4 Financial Management**

Financial management means planning, organising, directing and controlling the financial activities of an organisation. This includes the procurement of goods and the utilisation and management of the funds of an entity or organisation. This is where allocation of funds to various components of a company is done and also the monitoring and control of those funds even though each component is still responsible for the management and control of the finances allocated to them (Management Study Guide, 2010).

In the case of public institutions, the allocation of these funds does not happen by chance, especially because the public sector depends on its taxpayers for income. “Legislative directives have to be followed in the procurement and expenditure of money in the public sector” (Moagi, 2009:2). In South Africa, the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) is

one such a directive that ensures good financial management conduct in the public sector.

According to Moagi (2009:ii),

“the act promotes the objective of good financial management in order to maximise service delivery through the effective and efficient use of limited resources. The key objectives of the Act are to modernise the system of financial management in the public sector; enable public sector managers to manage, but at the same time be held more accountable; ensure the timely provision of quality information; and eliminate the waste and corruption in the use of public assets.”

## **2.13 Performance Management vs Performance Measurement**

### **2.13.1 Performance Management**

“In times of rising expectations and decreasing resources for the public sector, performance management is high on the agenda. Increasingly, the value of the performance management systems themselves is under scrutiny, with more attention being paid to the effectiveness of performance management in practice” (Van Dooren, Bouckaert & Halligan, 2015).

The Government of India (2009:2) defines performance management as

“a broad concept that involves understanding and acting on the performance issues at each level of an organisation, from individuals, teams, and departments to the organisation itself. These issues include leadership, decision making, motivation, encouraging innovation and risk taking amongst others.”

In government departments, performance management is a managerial activity that fosters the well performing policy management and service delivery (Government of India, 2009). Performance management is not just concerned with incentives for individuals and organisations, it also focuses on “the processes of planning, implementing, reviewing, evaluating and reporting” to measure the effect of policies and programmes (Government of India, 2009).

### **2.13.2 Performance Measurement**

The term “performance management” is often confused with “performance measurement”. The two concepts, even though somewhat related, are not the same. Performance measurement

“tracks processes (such as compliance to formal rules), results (such as use of inputs, outputs produced or policy goals achieved) or more complex ratios (such as efficiency, productivity, effectiveness or cost effectiveness)” (India Government, 2009:2).

Performance measurement is a component of the larger performance management system as the performance that cannot be measured cannot be managed and therefore cannot be improved (Government of India, 2009). Over the years, performance measurement systems or tools have been developed to address the issue of measuring organisational performance.

### **2.13.3 Leadership**

“If organisation consisted solely of machines that could implement plans promptly, predictably, and with mechanical precision, only the planning and organising tasks of management would be necessary to achieve the organisation’s goals. But organisations are made up of machines and people. It is people who give life to the organisation. And it is people who, in the age of the knowledge society, constitute the intellectual value of the organisation” (Smit et al., 2007:270).

Leadership is a broad concept. According to Hough et al. (2010:285), “leadership is the behaviour of an individual directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal”. They further state that

“it is the ability of an individual or group of individuals to step outside the existing culture of an organisation to influence, motivate and enable others to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive and that will contribute towards effectiveness and success of the organisation”.

Smit et al. (2007) suggest that leadership can be regarded as

“the activity that infuses energy into the organisation to activate its members and resources to get things moving and keep them in motion.”

According to Hough et al. (2010), leadership is determined from the following four levels:

- **Personal Level:** At a personal level, leadership is determined by an individual's trustworthiness which is dependent on leadership character and leadership competence. The leadership competence portrays what the individual is supposed to do, such as the ability and skills to perform and to motivate people in the organisation to follow his or her directions. The leadership character tells who the leader is as a person, the integrity shown by the individual when living according to his or her value system.
- **Interpersonal Level:** At this level, leadership is determined by an individual's ability to:
  - a) **Build mutual trust and cooperation** – “effective performance of a collective task requires cooperation and mutual trust, which are more likely when people understand each other, appreciate diversity and are able to confront and resolve differences in a constructive way” (Hough et al., 2010).
  - b) **Interpret the meaning of events** – Effective leaders help people to interpret events, understand why they are significant, and identify emerging threats and opportunities (Hough et al., 2010).
  - c) **Obtain the necessary resources and support** – Resources, approvals, assistance and political support may need to be obtained from superiors and people outside the unit or even outside the organisation. Therefore, it is the role of the effective leader to promote and protect the interests of the organisation or unit and obtain these necessary resources and support (Hough et al., 2010).

- **Managerial Level:** At this level, the leader should be able to:
  - a) **Develop and empower people** – Effective leaders help people develop essential skills and also empower people to become change agents and leaders themselves. One of the critical roles for leaders is to prepare the people they lead to become future leaders.
  - b) **Build task commitment and optimism** – The performance of a difficult and stressful task requires commitment and persistence in the face of obstacles and setbacks. Effective leaders increase enthusiasm for the work, commitment to task objectives, and confidence that the effort will be successful.
  - c) **Organise and coordinate activities** – Successful performance of a complex task requires the capacity to coordinate many different but interrelated activities, while efficiently utilising people and resources. Effective leaders help people become organised to perform collective activities efficiently and to coordinate these activities as they occur.
  
- **Organisational Level:** The leader must portray the ability to:
  - a) **Create alignment of objectives and strategies** – Effective performance of a collective task requires agreement about what to do and how to do it. It is the role of an effective leader to ensure that there is agreement about objectives, priorities, strategies and other activities in the organisation.
  - b) **Strengthen collective identity** – An organisation requires at least a moderate degree of collective identification because, in this era of flexible teams, virtual organisations and joint ventures, boundaries are often unclear and loyalties may be divided. Effective leaders are able to create a unique identity for a group or organisation, and they resolve issues of membership in a way that is consistent with this identity.
  - c) **Encourage and facilitate collective learning** – In a highly competitive and

turbulent environment, continuous learning and innovation are essential for the survival and prosperity of an organisation. Therefore, it is the role of a capable leader to ensure that there is collective learning and innovation.

- d) Promote social justice and morality – Employee satisfaction and commitment exist in a climate of fairness, compassion and social responsibility. This is achieved by active efforts to protect individual rights, encourage social responsibility and oppose unethical behaviour and practices. Effective leaders set an example of moral behaviour and take necessary actions to promote social justice (Hough et al., 2010).

Even though the role of leadership is generally the same in both private and public institutions and should be accompanied by the abilities mentioned above, in addition the public service leadership plays a critical role in ensuring that the programmes and promises that the government has made to the citizens are fulfilled across all spheres of government (Mndze, 2014). This means that the leaders in the different spheres of government must know the needs of the people and respond accordingly in their different roles (Mndze, 2014). Today's government institutions need decisive leaders who are able to make decisions and solve problems, and such leaders should ensure that the elements within the four levels of leadership mentioned above are fully exercised within their organisations in order to achieve excellence

## **2.14 Conclusion**

Chapter Two provided the literature review of this study. An overview on the evolution of organisational performance measurement was outlined. The performance assessment tools that are used by different governments were also explored to support the study being undertaken in the South African context. The need for MPAT was provided and also the MPAT implementation process in a government department was outlined in order to support the study being undertaken within Statistics South Africa. Other theoretical frameworks that support the study were also discussed. Chapter Three will focus on the research methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

According to Kothari (1990), research is defined as a scientific and systematic search for relevant information on a specific subject. He further states that research can be considered to be a journey of discovery because human beings are naturally curious beings, especially when the unknown confronts them. This desire for knowledge can be regarded as the mother of all knowledge and the method, which human beings use to obtain this knowledge of the unknown, is called “research” (Kothari, 1990). This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to assess the implementation of MPAT in Stats SA. The chosen approach for this study was selected after consideration of the research methods debated by various scholars.

Myers (2009) defines a research method as “a strategy of enquiry, which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection”. Kothari (1990) explains research methods as all the methods or techniques that researchers use to perform research operations or to conduct research.

Since the main purpose of conducting research is to find a solution for a given problem,

“the unknown aspects of the problem and the available data have to be related to each other to make a solution possible” (Kothari, 1990:8).

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm can also be referred to as a “worldview” that, according to Creswell (2014:6), is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action ... a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study”. Worldviews arise as a result of a number of factors such as:

- a) Discipline orientations

- b) Students' advisors/mentors inclinations
- c) Past research experiences (Creswell, 2014).

The following are the most common worldviews (Creswell, 2014):

### **3.2.1 The post-positivist worldview**

Post-positivist assumptions have represented the traditional form of research, in particular, quantitative research rather than qualitative research. This worldview is referred to as the scientific method, positivist/post-positivist research, empirical science and post-positivism. Post-positivism “represents the thinking after positivism, challenging the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge” (Phillips & Burbles, 2000).

According to Sekeran and Bougie (2016 cited by Zibani, 2018),

“positivism is a deductive approach that mainly focus on factual knowledge that has been derived through experimental design that allows for the testing of the cause and effect of the relationship in the study”.

### **3.2.2 The constructivist worldview**

This approach is seen as the most ideal for qualitative research as people are allowed to have “different worldviews” (Creswell, 2016). In this approach, individuals seek a better understanding of the world in which they live. They develop particular meanings of their own experiences which may differ from person to person. The main goal of the research conducted under the constructivist worldview is that it allows the researcher to rely on the participants' views of the situation under investigation rather than the researcher's. The questions used for this approach are generally broad and allow the participants to be as articulate as possible (Creswell, 2016).

The following assumptions of constructivism were identified by Crotty (1998, cited by Creswell, 2016):

- a) “Human beings construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants can share their views.
- b) Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives – we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally.
- c) The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive; the inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field”.

### **3.2.3 The transformative worldview**

This worldview emerged during the 1980s and 1990s “from individuals who felt that post-positivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that did not fit marginalised individuals in our society or issues of power and social justice, discrimination, and oppression that needed to be addressed” (Creswell, 2013). This worldview includes groups that represent inequality, oppression, discrimination and alienation, among others. The transformative worldview believes that research inquiry should be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at any level (Mertens, 2010 cited by Creswell, 2014:9). Transformative research is regarded as a voice of reason for the participants, “raising their consciousness or advancing an agenda for change to improve their lives” (Creswell, 2014).

Mertens (2010) regards the following to be the “key features of transformative worldview:

- a) It places central importance on the study of lives and experiences of diverse groups that have traditionally been marginalised. Of special interest for these diverse groups is how their lives have been constrained by oppressors and the strategies that they use to resist, challenge, and subvert these constraints.

- b) In studying these diverse groups, the research focuses on inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic class that result in asymmetric power relationships.
- c) The research in the transformative worldview links political and social action to these inequities.
- d) Transformative research uses a program theory of beliefs about how a program works and why the problems of oppression, domination, and power relationships exist.”

### **3.2.4 The pragmatic worldview**

The pragmatic worldview “arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism)” (Creswell, 2013). In this approach, researchers emphasise the research problem and use tactics at their disposal to understand the problem rather than just focusing on the methods (Rosman & Wilson, 1985 cited by Creswell, 2014). This worldview is more suitable for mixed method research. The following are some of the key features of pragmatic worldview (Cherryholmes, 1992 cited by Creswell, 2014; Morgan, 2007 cited by Creswell, 2014):

- a) Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that researchers use both quantitative and qualitative assumptions to engage in research.
- b) Individual researchers have the freedom of choice of the methods, techniques and process of research that meet their requirements.
- c) Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity therefore mixed methods researchers may use different approaches for collecting and analysing data (e.g. quantitative or qualitative).
- d) Pragmatists believe that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts. Therefore, mixed methods studies may include a postmodern view which is a theoretical lens that reflects social justice and political aims.

- e) Pragmatism is open to multiple methods, worldviews, assumptions and different forms of data collection and analysis.

### **3.3 Research Design**

When a research is conducted “to investigate a research hypothesis or research question, data is collected from the objects of our enquiry in order to solve the problem concerned” (Welman et al., 2005:52). The results should therefore shed a light on the tenability of the hypothesis and “it should give an indication whether to accept or reject the hypothesis” (Welman et al., 2005). A research design can be defined as a plan through

“which the research participants (subjects) are obtained and then data or information is collected from them. The research design provides a clear description of what needs to be done with the participants, with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem” (Welman et al., 2005).

According to Welman et al. (2005), a research design needs to be specified according to:

- a) The number of groups that should be used to decide which statistical technique to use;
- b) Whether these groups are to be drawn randomly from the population involved and whether they should be assigned randomly to groups;
- c) What exactly should be done with them in the case of experimental research.

### **3.4 Research Methods**

A research method is an approach in which

“a researcher chooses to undertake for his or her own study when it comes to collection, analysis and interpretation of data. This will also vary based on the researcher’s predetermined nature, the use of close-ended versus open-ended questioning and also the researcher’s focus on numeric versus non-numeric data analysis, amongst other things” (Creswell, 2014).

Researchers can collect data on an instrument or test, or gather information on a behavioural checklist. Data collection methods might also involve

“visiting a research site and observing the behaviour of participants without predetermined questions or conducting an interview in which the respondent is allowed to talk openly about a topic, largely without the use of specific questions” (Creswell, 2014).

The choice of methods depends on whether “the intent is to specify the type of information to be collected in advance of the study or to allow it to emerge from participants in a project” (Creswell, 2014:16). The most commonly used research methods are classified into qualitative and quantitative. The main difference between the two methods is how data is collected and analysed. The worldview and the purpose of the researcher also play a distinctive role between the two methods. The other method that is commonly used is the mixed method, which basically means both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in one study (Myers, 2009).

### **3.4.1 Quantitative Research Method**

Quantitative research methods originated from the natural sciences. This method makes use of questionnaires, surveys and experiments to collect data that is revised and tabulated in numbers and then analysed statistically (Hittleman & Simon, 1997). In this type of research,

“numbers come to represent values and levels of theoretical constructs and concepts. The interpretation of numbers in a quantitative research is viewed as strong scientific evidence on how a phenomenon works” (Myers, 2009:8).

To a large extent, the focus of a quantitative researcher is on the testing of a theory. Quantitative research is also considered to be deductive and a hypothesis is needed in order for the research to begin (Stake, 1995). Creswell (2014:19) describes a quantitative research method as one in which “a researcher tests a theory by stipulating narrow hypotheses and the collection of data to support or refute the hypotheses”.

Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013 cited by Maphela, 2015) define quantitative research as the application of numbers in such a way that the final results will be given in tables or graphs.

Bryman (2012 cited by Maphela, 2015) explains the four main issues in quantitative research:

- a) Measurement that addresses the issues of reliability and validity to ensure quality
- b) Casualty which examines the causes of phenomena
- c) Generalisation which means that the results can be applied to individuals who did not participate in the survey or respond to the questionnaire but are part of the population identified
- d) Replication means that the research results are objective and can be repeated.

### **3.4.2 Qualitative Research Method**

According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is considered to be naturalistic because it studies the everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural settings. It is designed to help researchers to understand what people say and do. It also helps researchers to understand the social and cultural contexts within which people live.

Furthermore, a qualitative research method allows the researcher to gain an insight of how decisions are made and actions are taken (Myers, 2009). One of the advantages of this type of method is that, unlike quantitative research, it depends on human beings talking rather than the natural world, as Myers (2009:6) explains:

“It is only by talking to people or reading what they have written that we can find out what they are thinking because understanding their thoughts goes a long way towards explaining their actions.”

The most commonly used data collection techniques for qualitative analysis are:

“interviews, fieldwork (participant observation), and using documents. All these three techniques can be used singly or in combination in any qualitative research project. The choice of technique largely depend on the researcher’s topic, the method and the availability of data” (Myers, 2009:25).

### **3.4.3 Mixed Methods Research**

In this type of research method, both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are used which basically “results in integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014:4).

The main assumption of this form of investigation is that the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data methodologies provides a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014). While qualitative data tends to be

“more open-ended without predetermined responses, quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as those found in questionnaires or psychological instruments” (Creswell, 2014:14).

According to Creswell (2014), the mixed methods research approach is relatively new and comes from the mid to late 1980s. However, its origins go beyond the 1980s to as far back as 1959 when Campbell and Fisk used multiple methods to study psychological traits (Creswell, 2014). Even though, at that time, only quantitative methods were used, this led to the collection of other forms of data, such as observations and interviews, with traditional surveys (Sieber, 1973 cited by Creswell, 2014).

The value of multiple methods, called mixed methods, resided in the idea that

“all methods had bias and weaknesses, and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralised the weaknesses of each form of data. Based on this analogy, triangulating data sources (which is a means of seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods) was born” (Jick, 1979 cited by Creswell, 2014).

By the early 1990s, mixed methods had turned into the systematic convergence of quantitative and qualitative databases, and this was the beginning of integrating the different types of research designs.

### **3.5 Research Method for this study**

According to Myers (2009), a qualitative research method is used to study a particular subject in depth (e.g. in one or few organisations). It is used for exploratory research especially when a topic is new and there has not been much written about it. “It is also ideal for studying the social, cultural and political aspects of people and organisations” (Myers, 2009:9).

MPAT is a fairly new concept in the South African public sector environment and it still needs to be determined whether it has a positive impact on government departments or not. Therefore, the qualitative research method will be most suitable for this study.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted for this study. According to Myers (2009:121), interviews are one of the most important data gathering techniques for qualitative researchers (positivist, interpretive, or critical), and “are the technique of choice in most qualitative research methods”. Interviews allow researchers to gather rich data from people in various roles and situations.

“It has been said that qualitative interviews are like night goggles, permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but seldom seen” (Myers, 2009:120).

Myers further states that a good interview focuses on the world of the subject that is being researched. The researcher can use the language of the participants rather than imposing his or her own as “[t]he role of the researcher is to listen, prompt, encourage, and direct” and the more comfortable the interview respondents are in a setting, the more the researcher is likely to get concrete and useful information (Myers, 2009).

Only primary data sources were utilised for this study. According to Myers (2009), a primary data source refers to the data that is unpublished, which the researcher has gathered directly from participants, such as interviews. The interviews, the primary source of data collection, were done through direct interaction (face-to-face interviews) with respondents, that is, Stats SA senior management who utilise the MPAT tool. One of the advantages of face-to-face interviews is that they allow the researcher to probe for accurate and unambiguous information (Myers, 2009). Myers (2009:122) further suggests that primary data adds “richness and credibility to qualitative manuscripts” because the data that is gathered for a study is unique to that particular research project.

### **3.6 Population and Sample**

The population “consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed” (Welman et al., 2005:52). In this case, the term “population” may not necessarily be people but refers to cases that contain the information required for the study. A research problem therefore relates to a specific population that contains the information that the researcher needs to make specific conclusions (Welman et al., 2005). Therefore, a population can be referred to as the full set of cases from which a sample is drawn (Welman et al., 2005).

The selection of the sample is a very important stage of the research. Welman et al. (2005) suggest that a population can be referred to as a group of potential participants to whom the researcher can generalise the results of a study. They further note that generalisability occurs only when the results can be generalised from a sample to a population beyond the limited setting in which they are originally obtained (Welman et al., 2005). The sample needs to be “representative” in order for the results to be generalisable. This means that it must have the exact properties in the exact same proportions as the population from which it was drawn, but in smaller numbers (Welman et al., 2005).

Sampling can be distinguished between Probability and Non-Probability Sampling as indicated below:

### **3.6.1 Probability Sampling**

In probability sampling, one can determine the probability that any element or member of the population will be included in the sample. The advantage of this kind of sampling is that it enables the researcher to indicate the probability with which sample results deviate in differing degrees from the corresponding population values. Unlike non-probability sampling, probability sampling allows for the estimation of sampling errors, which is a statistical term that means that it allows for the unrepresentativeness of a sample. Probability samples, according to Welman et al. (2005), are:

- a) Simple random samples;
- b) Stratified random samples;
- c) Systematic samples
- d) Cluster samples.

### **3.6.2 Non-Probability Sampling**

In non-probability sampling, it is not possible to pre-determine or specify the probability of a specific element or member of the population that will be included in the sample. Elements that have a chance of being included

“have a probability that exceeds zero. In some examples of non-probability samples, some elements have no chance (hence a probability of zero) of being included at all. Also, non-probability sampling does not enable us to estimate sampling error”  
(Welman et al., 2005).

Non-probability sampling is most commonly and frequently used for reasons of convenience and economy (Welman et al., 2005). According to Sekeram and Bougie (2011), non-probability sampling is the ideal method for qualitative research because it is based on a target group and there are no figures or statistics utilised (Zibani, 2017). It is for this particular reason that non-probability sampling was employed for this study.

Examples of non-probability samples/techniques, according to Welman et al. (2005), are:

- a) Accidental or incidental samples;
- b) Quota samples;
- c) Purposive samples;
- d) Snowball samples;
- e) Self-selection samples;
- f) Convenience samples.

The non-probability sampling technique that was adopted for this study is purposive sampling. The main reason for adopting this technique was that it is

“a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. This technique allows the researcher to decide what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience” (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2015:2).

In this study, the sampling targeted 11 MPAT committee members of Stats SA. The researcher targeted this particular group because of their representability of the committee in the organisation. The MPAT committee does not just involve senior management of the department but also MPAT KPA coordinators and their teams, internal auditors and some EXCO members all of whom have a role to play in the implementation of the tool.

Permission to do the research and conduct interviews was requested from the Director-General (Statistician-General) of Stats SA. Nothing confidential will be made public and the interviews with respondents will remain strictly confidential.

### **3.7 Population for this study**

A research population group can be defined as the entire population of whatever it is that the researcher would like to conduct the research on, such as a group of people, events or objects

that have similar characteristics (Zibani, 2018). For this study, the targeted population was senior managers who work directly within any of the four MPAT KPAs, internal auditors and other members of the departmental MPAT committee.

Even though MPAT affects all senior management in the department, the researcher’s focus was on those who have direct exposure to the MPAT tool and who form part of the MPAT committee within Stats SA. The selected population is also mandated by the department’s leadership to provide monthly progress reports on their standards per KPA to the committee.

Table 3.1 indicates the population sample:

**Table 3.1: Population sample**

<b>Respondent Code</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of years using MPAT</b>	<b>Member of MPAT Committee</b>
A1	Chief Director	Male	5 Years	Yes
A2	Chief Director	Male	4 Years	Yes
A3	Chief Director	Male	4 Years	Yes
A4	Chief Director	Female	5 Years	Yes
A5	Chief Director	Female	5 Years	Yes
A6	Director	Female	4 Years	Yes
A7	Director	Female	4 Years	Yes
A8	Director	Male	4 Years	Yes
A9	Director	Male	5 Years	Yes
A10	Director	Male	5 Years	Yes
A11	Director	Male	4 Years	Yes

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Although a clear distinction between data gathering and data analysis is commonly made in

quantitative research, such a distinction is problematic for many qualitative researchers. There is an assumption that

“the presuppositions of the researcher will affect the gathering of data. The question posed to informants will largely determine the answers that you get. The analysis will affect the data and the data will affect the analysis in significant ways. Therefore, it is of vital importance to think of the data analysis phase as distinctively separate from the data gathering phase” (Myers, 2009:165).

One of the reasons for focusing on the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is that a qualitative researcher normally has a huge amount of data. The advantage of a qualitative data approach is that it allows the researcher to focus only on the most important aspects of his/her data (Myers, 2009). For this study, the researcher analysed the qualitative data using thematic analysis as Braun and Clarke (2006:79) suggest that thematic analysis is “a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data.” According to Jugder (2016), thematic analysis is the most commonly used qualitative approach to analysing interviews, hence the decision to use it for this study because data was collected through interviews.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

It is important to make sure that validation of findings occurs throughout the research process but validity in quantitative and qualitative research does not carry the same meaning (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative validity, which was employed in this study, means that

“the researcher checks for the accuracy of findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers” (Creswell, 2014).

According to Creswell (2014), validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. There is a selection of terms that address

validity, such as trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

For this study, validity was maintained through the interview process. The researcher took notes, probed where necessary and also recorded all the interviews. This assisted the researcher to ensure that the themes that emerged from the interviews were factually correct according to the views of the respondents.

Qualitative reliability suggests that the researcher should be consistent throughout his or her approach in order for the findings to be reliable. For this study, the researcher crafted a series of questions that were asked during the interviews in a similar manner for each participant.

The respondents also provided in depth responses based on their experiences, which was also consistent because they all responded to similar questions and therefore this confirms that the collected data is both valid and reliable and can assist in determining the findings of the study being undertaken.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to the assessment of the implementation of MPAT in one government department only and therefore the outcomes of this study may not be generalised as a view of all government departments. The researcher focused on the experiences of senior management in Stats SA on the implementation of MPAT tool. The assessment does not include whether the outcomes of MPAT are being met, but focus on whether management practices and internal controls have improved since the tool was introduced.

The study also does not measure the MPAT results per KPA nor the individual standards thereof. The main purpose for conducting this study was to check the impact the tool has made in a department where it is being implemented based on the views of those utilising the tool.

It should also be noted that even though there has been a lot written on performance measurement or assessment tools by different scholars across the globe, not a lot of work has

been done on MPAT and very little publications have been written about the tool. Therefore, this led to the depending on similar sources in certain areas.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical behaviour is important in research to produce reliable results. Researchers must be honest and have respect for the participants involved in their studies. According to Creswell (2014), researchers must make sure of the following during research:

- a) Participants' rights are protected;
- b) There is trust between researchers and participants;
- c) To promote the integrity of research (by being accountable and being truthful); and
- d) To guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on the organisations the researchers represent.

For this study, the researcher adhered to the abovementioned code of conduct. Because the targeted group was strictly senior management personnel from Stats SA, the researcher made sure that the data collection process did not interfere with their work schedules and interviews were scheduled at the times and places convenient to them. All participants were given the ethical clearance that the researcher received from the University of KwaZulu-Natal as evidence that the study is authentic.

The letter from the head of Stats SA (the Statistician-General) was also produced to inform participants that the researcher has permission to do the study within the department. Furthermore, participants were given the consent letters to sign before beginning the interviews. The respondents were informed that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish as participation was voluntary. Participants were assured of confidentiality in order for them to give honest inputs or opinions.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter was on the research methodology for this study. Various research

and sampling methods were explained to give a background on each of them. The qualitative method was adopted for this study. This chapter also provided the population sample for the study and the data analysis was also explored. Chapter Three also provided an insight on the limitations of the study as well as the ethical considerations of the study. Chapter Four will present the research findings and analysis of the results.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter was about the qualitative research method chosen for this study. The data collection instrument for this method was face-to-face interviews with respondents. The interview questions were guided by the research objectives, and the main aim was that the respondents would respond in line with each research objective. Furthermore, the research findings were aligned with the literature review for the study presented in Chapter Two.

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

- a) To describe the role of MPAT in Stats SA;
- b) To determine whether MPAT is implemented as intended;
- c) To identify the challenges faced by management using MPAT;
- d) To provide recommendations to Stats SA leadership and the DPME based on identified gaps or challenges being experienced with the tool.

### **4.2 Sample Population/Demographic Information/Sample**

The sample population consisted of 11 senior management personnel who have full access to the MPAT system and work directly with the tool. These personnel also form part of the MPAT committee for Stats SA, which is responsible for the continuous monitoring of MPAT implementation within the department.

These committee members also report/present the departmental MPAT progress to the Stats SA Executive Committee (EXCO) on a regular basis. Therefore, the selected population was suitable and relevant to provide insight on the implementation of the MPAT tool within Stats SA.

### **4.3 Identified Themes and Objectives**

Based on the research methodology used for this study (see Chapter Three), a number of themes were identified during the data collection process. The themes that emerged from this study were

“inductive in nature because findings emerged from frequent, dominating/significant themes that were inherent in raw data without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (Judger, 2016:3).

The identification of these themes from the collected data is referred to as the inductive approach (Bernard, 2000) as themes are not predetermined but are generated from the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Bazeley (2009), themes only achieve full meaning when they are linked to “form a coordinated picture on an explanatory model: ‘Describe, compare, relate’ is a simple three step formula when reporting the results” (Bazeley, 2009:6). Also, repetition (Bernard, 2000) was used to identify themes and for this study.

#### **4.3.1 The main themes that emerged from the data**

The following were the main themes that emerged from the data collected that have a direct link to the objectives of the study:

- a) The role/effectiveness of MPAT in the public sector;
- b) Effectiveness of MPAT in Stats SA;
- c) MPAT’s role on management practices in a department;
- d) MPAT as a tool for sharing of good management practices in government departments;
- e) General senior management perception/understanding of MPAT tool;
- f) Leadership buy-in or support of MPAT;
- g) Advantages of MPAT;

- h) MPAT disadvantages/challenges;
- i) MPAT's role on internal controls in a government department;
- j) Poor communication between DPME and departments on MPAT;
- k) MPAT duplicating the work of other government departments or structures.

#### 4.3.2 Linking of emergent themes, objectives and research questions

Chapter One highlighted four objectives and four research questions for this study. The direct links between the research objectives 1, 2 and 3 and research questions 1, 2 and 3 are indicated in Table 4.1 below. However, the fourth objective and the fourth research question are not linked with the themes because they form part of the recommendations of the study and are discussed in Chapter Five.

The table below indicates the linkages between themes, objectives and research questions:

**Table 4.1: Objectives and Themes**

Research Objective	Research Question (RQ) Number	Themes
Objective 1		
To review the effectiveness of MPAT in Stats SA	RQ 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of MPAT in the public sector.</li> <li>• MPAT's role in internal controls.</li> </ul>
Objective 2		
To determine if MPAT is the relevant tool to enhance sharing of good management practices in government departments (based on Stats SA management experiences)	RQ 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPAT's role on management practices.</li> <li>• MPAT as a tool for sharing of good management practices.</li> <li>• Senior management perception of MPAT tool.</li> </ul>
Objective 3		

To identify the challenges faced by management using MPAT	RQ 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges of MPAT.</li> <li>• Leadership support of MPAT.</li> <li>• Poor communication between DPME and departments.</li> <li>• MPAT duplicating work of other government departments.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.4 Findings of the study

The main aim of the study was to assess the implementation of MPAT in Stats SA. Hence, the study was conducted with senior management personnel of the department to determine their views about the tool. Interviews were conducted with participants who were part of the sample based on their utilisation of MPAT. The findings presented below are in line with the research objectives.

The researcher developed a series of guiding questions so that the participants had a common understanding of what the study intended to achieve or address. This assisted in pointing out emergent themes during analysis of the results.

The findings per objective are explained below:

##### 4.4.1 Objective 1: To review the effectiveness of MPAT in Stats SA

The main aim of this objective was to determine the effectiveness of the MPAT tool for government departments with special reference to Stats SA. Based on the fact that MPAT is a tool that is being used by all government departments for the first time, participants were encouraged to share their general perspectives of the tool before engaging specifically with its use in their department.

The researcher wanted to establish whether the participants fully understood the role of MPAT in a government department, whether the respondents believe this tool is necessary or

not and the reason for their answer.

The following themes emerged from this question:

### **Theme 1: The role of MPAT in the public sector**

According to DPME (2011), MPAT was introduced because there was a lack of central coordination when it comes to the overall functioning of government and a monitoring mechanism was required within departments.

The majority of respondents explained that MPAT's role is to assist government departments in monitoring the core areas of a department. Some participants feel it also assists in monitoring management practices and internal controls within a government department and, as such, they believe it is a necessary tool. Some respondents further suggested that MPAT has been effective in making sure that departmental performance and accountability improve.

Some of the participants said:

*Personally, I was very negative when this tool was introduced. I felt like it's one of those unnecessary tools that will be a waste of our time and also a waste of government's time and money. Having been a public servant for quite some time, I know many things that were introduced and some never succeeded, hence my perception initially. However, MPAT proved me wrong, a tool of this nature should have existed a long time ago. Many mistakes could have been avoided. What a better way to make management and leadership more responsible and accountable. Yes, the tool does have some challenges, which can be improved, but it is a good start and we have begun to see some positive results.*

*This tool allows us, as management, to do an assessment on our own management practices and the reality is that you cannot separate management practices from the way an organisation performs. Actually, the best way to measure organisational performance is by measuring the management practices of an organisation. You cannot separate the two. This is a completely new thing in government and we are learning*

*but, more importantly, we are improving gradually because, due to this tool, now we can do a self-introspection and really work towards improving ourselves as departments.*

A very small number of respondents said they do not see the necessity of MPAT because, according to them, “*it is just another compliance tool by government*”.

The findings above suggest that most participants in this study find MPAT a necessary and effective tool for government departments and for Stats SA, in particular. According to the views of the majority of the respondents, management has now become more aware of its environment and, as such, has become accountable and responsible. Most participants also said the tool is assisting management in monitoring and managing its work.

## **Theme 2: MPAT’s role in strengthening internal controls**

According to Aramide and Bashir (2015), internal controls are processes by which an organisation governs its activities for effective and efficient operation, reliability of financial accountability and compliance with applicable law and regulation.

The majority of the respondents said they believe MPAT will improve internal controls within a government department. They made reference to their own departmental experiences. According to most respondents, because MPAT monitors issues of governance within a government department, things that never really mattered in the past are now taken seriously, as one of the participants said:

*Even though there are acts and regulations in place to guide us in enhancing internal controls as a government department, MPAT has enforced them better. Committees that were not in place as part of internal management controls are now in place. Since I started working here, I don’t remember us having certain committees in place, but now with MPAT, we are forced to have them. Management and leadership cannot hide anymore; proper internal controls have to be in place whether they like it or not.*

There were a few respondents who indicated that they could not confirm whether internal

controls have been improving due to MPAT as there were other systems and processes in place in the department. However, the majority of the respondents believe that MPAT is indeed the source of improvement in internal controls as it advocates that improved service delivery begins with improved internal controls within departments (The Presidency, 2010).

#### **4.4.2 Objective 2: To determine if MPAT is the relevant tool to enhance sharing of good management practices**

The aim of this objective was to get an understanding of whether MPAT is contributing to improved management practices within a department and also if it is assisting government departments in sharing these relevant management practices.

There were two themes that emerged from this objective:

##### **Theme 1: MPAT's role in improved management practices within Stats SA**

The majority of respondents suggested that management practices in the department have improved due to MPAT. They found that management and leadership are becoming more accountable, responsible and aware of their internal environment and the whole public service environment. The following were some of the comments from the respondents regarding improved management practices:

*MPAT is a vehicle that assists management in monitoring the critical areas of their work and therefore it is assisting them in improving their practices as well.*

*In the beginning, it was difficult to realise whether this tool will assist with management practices, but now that it has been in place over a long period, one can see that management practices are improving. Management now can measure what they are managing.*

*MPAT is an evidence based monitoring tool and therefore management cannot hide or lie anymore. If things are in place, they are in place, and if they are not in place, it is as simple as that, they are not and management must account. The days of cheating*

*government are over and management must lead by example and account.*

Four respondents did not believe that MPAT is producing improved management practices. They felt that management does not take MPAT seriously and that MPAT is “just another compliance tool”. However, the general feeling of the majority is that management practices within Stats SA are improving and MPAT is contributing to this. They also acknowledge that there are other mechanisms in place that are contributing to management practice improvement, but that MPAT plays a crucial role in this regard.

### **Theme 2: MPAT as a tool for sharing of good management practices**

The majority of respondents feel that MPAT is not assisting in sharing of good management practices amongst government departments yet and such a platform still has to be created.

There was an overwhelming concurrence that, even though MPAT was supposed to be a vehicle to share good management practices across government departments, this is not happening because the annual MPAT launches, where results would be presented and all departments could air their views, have been discontinued without prior notice to departments. The majority of respondents made it clear that such a forum must be created by DPME if departments are expected to learn from each other. This is supported by Paliszkievicz, Svanadze and Jikia (2017) who say that environments that encourage knowledge sharing enable people to learn from each other resulting in improved results. Departments must share best management practices because some departments are doing better than others are when it comes to MPAT and such a platform will assist poorly performing departments to benchmark their performance with others. Some participants suggested that non-confidential evidence from those departments that are performing well should be made available to those that are struggling, as this will assist them.

#### **4.4.3 Objective 3: To identify the challenges faced by senior management using MPAT**

Due to the fact that MPAT is a fairly new tool in government departments, the researcher saw the need to explore its challenges and/or disadvantages through engaging those who directly interact with the tool. Although this objective focused on the challenges and disadvantages, most participants felt they should also acknowledge the MPAT advantages. Therefore, an additional theme of MPAT advantages was added to this objective.

The following themes emerged from this objective:

- Theme 1: Challenges of MPAT.
- Theme 2: Advantages of MPAT.
- Theme 3: Leadership support on MPAT.
- Theme 4: Poor communication (on MPAT) between DPME and Departments.
- Theme 5: Duplication of work by MPAT and other government departments or structures.

These are discussed below:

##### **Theme 1: Challenges and disadvantages of MPAT**

While the majority of the participants agreed that MPAT is a tool with the potential to improve the department, all the participants of this study agreed that there are challenges and disadvantages that need to be addressed and resolved, as they explained:

*The MPAT system does not recognise well performing departments. They use a 'one size fits all approach' and this is discouraging because you find that some of us are doing better on certain standards, yet we are still measured as department 'X' which does not even have proper processes in place. If we are doing well on certain standards or if our processes are in place, why should we still get measured on them? There is no need to assess departments with mature processes in place, focus on those that are struggling.*

*The actual system needs improvement, it gets to be too slow at times and there is too much saving required.*

*Assessment period is too short; more time is needed.*

*There is too much evidence required on MPAT. Is it worth the effort?*

*They must re-look at the evidence they need and really see if it is necessary. This takes too much time on management who are already swamped with other activities.*

*The tool should start assessing departments as per their mandate because not all government departments function the same way.*

*There is a lot of duplication on MPAT. We are submitting the same things to various departments.*

*Moderators are not accessible to departments and sometimes they don't seem to understand how departments function and they just end up giving low scores to departments, yet they are supposed to be subject matter specialists.*

*Moderators are narrow focused on their assessment approach.*

*Departments are not sharing good management practices. The forum/platform is not there.*

Even with the challenges and disadvantages mentioned above, the majority of the participants had positive views about MPAT and they believe that, just like anything new in any working environment, most of these disadvantages are teething problems. They felt that if DPME works together with departments, these challenges will be addressed.

## **Theme 2: Advantages of MPAT**

This theme emerged when participants shared the disadvantages of MPAT. The majority of participants agreed that MPAT has advantages that they felt they should share with the

researcher.

The following were the advantages that emerged from the majority of participants:

*Management and leadership have become more accountable, responsible and proactive due to MPAT.*

*MPAT helps management and leadership to identify areas of weaknesses in a department and take some action to improve.*

*Management cannot hide or make excuses anymore because MPAT will expose them.*

*MPAT assists management in measuring what they are managing, because 'if you can't measure it, you cannot manage it'.*

*MPAT gives leadership a good snapshot of continuous organisational performance of the critical areas of an organisation without having to go through stacks and details of the annual reports and audit reports.*

*MPAT is one of the tools that will assist in changing the overall image of the public service for the better because there has been a negative perception of the public sector and its administration*

One of the participants explained the benefits of MPAT:

*Leadership is now able to understand and monitor the functioning of the critical areas of a department, such as HR, Finance, Strategy and Governance, and these are basically the nerve centre of any organisation. This will also assist with the overall functioning of a department because these areas affect all management in an organisation. If you are managing, you have to deal with these four key areas in your day-to-day work. You have to know the strategy of the organisation in order to plan your work, you have to manage people, you have to manage finances and you have to deal with issues of governance and legislation. What more could have been better than a tool that measures all these aspects at one go? I think MPAT is the answer to most of*

*our problems as public servants' management. We are no longer just working for compliance; we are making an impact and competing amongst ourselves as government departments to do better. I have been a public servant for a very long time, and this kind of performance monitoring, which specifically focuses on management practices amongst other things, it's a first of its kind. And with all of our support, it will surely be a success and we will reap the benefits.*

The majority of respondents suggested that MPAT is a suitable vehicle for monitoring management performance or practices and improving internal controls and organisational performance within the department. They also emphasised that it is a tool that allows management to take a “snapshot” of the overall organisational performance without having to get into the details of organisational performance reports. Therefore, most participants find MPAT to have many advantages for management in government departments and for Stats SA management, in particular.

### **Theme 3: Poor communication (on MPAT) between DPME and departments**

The majority of participants share the same views on this theme. They all raised the issue of poor communication between DPME and government departments. One of the participants said the following:

*Better communication is required between DPME and all of us (other government departments). We know this is lacking for all departments because, even though there is no formal platform to share our experiences, somehow we do talk to each other as departments because, after all, we are all measuring the same standards. So the communication part on the DPME side is very poor; it can improve really. A simple example will be that standards are just dropped or introduced without prior engagements with departments. It seems as if DPME dictates to departments and we must just follow them and, trust me, that approach is not working and it is not sustainable in the long run. I am sure they can do better than that, after all they (DPME) are also a government department just like us, they really have to work on their communication side of things.*

The other common issue that was raised on this theme was that timeous communication of annual standards and MPAT season is required. The participants raised a concern that the standards booklets are not the same each year as they change per MPAT season or cycle and therefore the department cannot use the previous year's MPAT guide/standards booklet in the following year.

This raised a concern with participants saying that, if there was better communication or engagement between DPME and departments, they would know how and by when to release these standards. There should be an agreement in place by now because, according to the participants, these standards are sent out about a month or a few weeks before the assessment period and it does not give the departments a chance to provide feedback to DPME or ask questions if they are not clear about certain things.

Smit et al. (2007:362) suggest that there has to be communication in all management functions as “communication has become more complex, strategic and vital to the health of any organisations than it was in the past”. Therefore, communication must be seen as the most important priority of the DPME leadership as, according to most participants, it is lacking between DPME and the government departments.

#### **Theme 4: Duplication of work by MPAT and other government departments or structures**

According to the DPME (2012b), MPAT is a tool that benchmarks management practices and does not duplicate existing monitoring tools/vehicles that are already in existence in other departments and oversight bodies, such as the National Treasury, DPSA, Public Service Commission (PSC) and AGSA, among others. The DPME (2012b) further explains that “MPAT draws on secondary data of these departments and oversight bodies to moderate the self-assessments of departments”. However, the majority of participants seem to agree that, even though the custodians of MPAT have tried to clarify the roles between MPAT and those existing mechanisms or vehicles that are already in place in other departments and oversight bodies, MPAT is a duplication of work already done by those departments.

They also agree that the kind of evidence that is required by MPAT is also required by these other structures and participants feel this is also a duplication of efforts. The participants who agree that MPAT is a necessity in government departments feel however that its approach should be completely different, as one of the respondents explained:

*It has to be either MPAT or MPAT should be integrated into these other tools that are already in existence because this is becoming a waste of management time and efforts. Having to report on similar things to so many structures is tedious and this ends up confusing us as stakeholders who have to report to these different structures. For example, AGSA will give you a clean audit and tell you that you are doing well generally on certain things, but when MPAT moderators assess you, on the other hand, they rate you on a level 1 scoring on the same thing that AGSA suggested that you are doing well on, which actually suggests that you are not complying with legal/regulatory requirements or basically performing poorly according to MPAT and this creates confusion. There has to be consistency and these structures must talk to each other or integrate somehow.*

According to the DPME, MPAT is a monitoring process that provides a consolidated view of a department's performance across several critical performance areas, making it easier to prioritise areas that are in need of significant improvement. DPME further suggest that MPAT does not duplicate existing monitoring and auditing processes that are already done by National Treasury, DPSA, PSC or AGSA but it assists these departments in identifying gaps and areas of improvements in the government departments being monitored (DPME, 2012a:7). However, most participants feel MPAT is indeed duplicating work already in place.

### **Theme 5: Leadership support or buy-in on MPAT**

The National Development Plan (NDP) states that, between now and 2030, "South Africa needs to have established a more capable and professional state that will be responsive to the needs of its citizens" while the DPME (2015) states that leadership plays a significant role in ensuring that management practices improve in government departments. Furthermore,

leadership builds a performance culture in organisations and the culture links to management performance and service delivery (DPME, 2015). It is for this reason that MPAT was designed to measure management practices and leadership principles in government departments (DPME, 2015).

The aim of this theme was to establish whether the participants feel they have leadership support when it comes to MPAT implementation in their department. Seven of the 11 respondents said that they are happy with the support they are getting from leadership when it comes to MPAT implementation in their department as the following quotes attest:

*Stats SA leadership takes MPAT seriously. There is even an MPAT committee that was established by the leadership of the organisation and its role is strictly to monitor MPAT implementation in the department.*

*The MPAT committee meets regularly to monitor progress on MPAT activities in the organisation and KPA coordinators have to report monthly on progress of their respective KPAs.*

*Executive Committee (EXCO) have discussions on MPAT at times, but the majority of participants felt this can be improved and more robust discussions should take place, including following up on things that have not been improving for a long time.*

*Leadership have now pushed for certain committees to be in place as per MPAT directive/requirements.*

The majority of the respondents who concur that leadership takes MPAT seriously also raised a concern that MPAT is not widely known by all management personnel in the department. They further indicated that this becomes a challenge because it is a management tool, which should be known by all senior management in a government department. A suggestion made was that EXCO, together with Chief Directors' Forum (CDF) (both representing leadership and management in the organisation) should promote MPAT and make sure that senior management members in the organisation are fully aware of it.

Some respondents felt leadership is not doing enough on MPAT and things are taking too long to improve because there is no guidance and motivation from leadership. According to Smit et al. (2007), leadership can be defined as a management function that activates people to do things willingly. Therefore, leaders must motivate and guide their followers in order for them to produce excellent results in whatever they do for their organisations.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of the study in line with the research objectives and research questions. The thematic analysis of the findings was done manually and all the themes were aligned to the research questions and objectives. The findings were also aligned with the objectives and the literature of the study.

The following nine themes emerged from this chapter:

- a) The role of MPAT in the public sector
- b) MPAT's role on internal controls
- c) MPAT's role on management practices
- d) MPAT as a tool to share good management practices
- e) Senior management perceptions of MPAT
- f) Challenges of MPAT
- g) Leadership support of MPAT
- h) Poor communication between DPME and departments
- i) MPAT duplicating work of other government departments.

The following chapter will present the recommendations of the study and the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter presented the findings of the study based on the views of the participants. This chapter focuses on the recommendations of the study by both the respondents and the researcher.

The South African government realised that better service delivery begins with improved internal controls and management practices within a department. This was based on evidence from countries such as Kenya and Canada (The Presidency, 2010) that had put similar measures in place after doing a self-introspection. Consequently, a Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) that assesses internal controls, management performance and practices, was introduced in 2011.

This study was conducted to assess the implementation of MPAT in Stats SA (which is a national government department). The participants provided their views on the tool and also provided recommendations for improvement of the process.

The following were the main objectives of the study:

- a) To review the effectiveness of MPAT in Stats SA.
- b) To determine if MPAT is the relevant tool to enhance the sharing of good management practices in government departments (based on Stats SA experiences across the four KPAs).
- c) To identify and measure the challenges faced by management using MPAT.
- d) To provide recommendations to Stats SA leadership and the department of DPME based on identified gaps or challenges being experienced with the tool.

## **5.2 The findings and recommendations of the study per objective**

### **Objective 1: To review the effectiveness of MPAT in Stats SA**

The main purpose of this objective was to determine how effective the MPAT tool is in Stats SA. The researcher wanted to establish whether the participants fully understand what the role of MPAT is and also whether they believe it is a necessary tool based on the implementation of the tool in their department thus far.

According to DPME (2012b), improved management practices contribute to improved service delivery. The cabinet of the South African government had approved 12 priority outcomes in 2009, which were to be implemented by various government departments and entities between 2009 and 2014. These twelve outcomes were underpinned by Outcome 12, which is “an efficient, effective and development oriented public service”. MPAT was introduced in support of achieving this outcome.

The main reason behind the formation of MPAT was for management to be able to assess itself when it comes to its management practices (with the key focus being on Strategic Management, Governance, Human Resources and Financial Management, commonly known as KPAs). The tool was meant to assist management in getting a consolidated view of a department’s performance across the four KPAs, making it easier to prioritise areas that need urgent attention or intervention (DPME, 2012b).

The majority of participants in this study were aware that MPAT’s role is to assist government departments in monitoring the core areas of a department, which are the KPAs, in this instance. They also concurred with the fact that MPAT also assists in monitoring management practices and internal controls within a government department. There was also a general feeling that MPAT has assisted in making departmental performance and accountability improve since its implementation.

The findings suggest that MPAT is playing a crucial role in government departments and

therefore it is indeed a necessary tool to have. The participants also seem to understand the role of MPAT in government departments and in their department, in particular but a minority do not understand the role of MPAT and feel that it is just another tedious compliance tool.

**Objective 2: To determine if MPAT is the relevant tool to enhance the sharing of good management practices in government departments (based on Stats SA experiences across the four KPAs)**

The aim of this objective was to get an understanding of whether MPAT is contributing to improved management practices within a department and also if it is assisting in sharing good management practices within departments.

According to DPME (2012c), the quality of management practices, that is, how we plan, how we manage staff, finances and infrastructure, how we govern ourselves and how we account for our performance, has a significant influence on the quality of outputs our department produces, the outcomes achieved, and ultimately, the impact our services have on society. Therefore, to improve the performance of a department, it is essential that management practices of a department are assessed and strengthened. Good management practice is a precondition for effective, sustainable service delivery.

The majority of respondents share the same view as DPME (stated above). They also suggest that, within Stats SA, the management practices have been improving and they believe MPAT is playing a significant role in these improvements. However, when it comes to the sharing of good management practices amongst government departments, the majority of the respondents believe that it has not been happening. They feel that a platform for this should be provided by DPME, as the custodian of the tool, because it is one of aims of MPAT. There was an indication that, because departments are not all performing equally when it comes to MPAT, a sharing platform is necessary. According to Tryon (2012), knowledge sharing adds value to those sharing it. It is through sharing of knowledge that people can learn from each other while sharing ideas (Tryon, 2012) and, in this instance, a platform

where departments can easily share ideas on how to do things better is necessary.

### **Objective 3: To identify and measure the challenges faced by management using MPAT**

The researcher wanted to determine whether the participants might have experienced any challenges while implementing MPAT as it was a newly introduced tool. The respondents indicate both the challenges and advantages of the tool while responding to this objective.

While the majority of the participants agree that MPAT is a good tool for their department and also for other government departments, all the participants also indicated that it does have some challenges and disadvantages. Furthermore, participants highlighted that they believe through improved communication between DPME and departments, most of these challenges and disadvantages can be addressed.

The majority of the respondents also acknowledged the advantages that the tool has which is making an impact on their work and the department.

### **Objective 4: To provide recommendations to Stats SA leadership and the department of DPME based on identified gaps or challenges being experienced with the tool**

This objective provides the recommendations of the study based on all the three objectives. Although the recommendations are provided in no particular order however, those pertaining to Stats SA leadership and to DPME are separated for clarity.

## **5.3 Recommendations from participants to Stats SA leadership**

### **5.3.1 Leadership needs to promote MPAT and make sure that senior management in the department is aware of it**

There were suggestions made on the role that departmental leadership should play. Some respondents felt that MPAT is a burden rather than an organisational priority for those who gather the information or those with direct roles in it. This was based on the fact that they find that most senior managers may not be fully aware of what MPAT is and that only

leadership in the department can assist when it comes to MPAT awareness.

### **5.3.2 EXCO and CDF need to play an oversight role in MPAT**

Similar to the point already made above, EXCO and CDF represent organisational leadership and they need to play an oversight role when it comes to MPAT.

### **5.3.3 Leadership and management need to take MPAT seriously**

Leadership and management within the different KPAs need to demonstrate that they are taking MPAT seriously by making sure that the different standards within their KPAs are improving and not just complying. A recommendation was made that those managing the respective KPAs should ensure that there is continuous improvement in their KPAs so that they are not just submitting evidence for compliance but they are actually improving their areas of responsibility or their standards.

### **5.3.4 Deputy-Directors General (DDGs) branches must have sub-MPAT committees**

Deputy-Directors General (DDGs) branches must have sub-MPAT committees that monitor MPAT and should report quarterly to the departmental MPAT committee. It was suggested that the MPAT committee should not be the only forum where MPAT is discussed. Different DDG branches need to have sub-committees where MPAT becomes part of the agenda item, that the KPAs affecting that particular branch must be discussed and issues concerning those KPAs must be addressed continuously.

### **5.3.5 Leadership to cultivate a culture of continuous learning and improvement when it comes to MPAT**

According to DMPE (2012a:10), MPAT places emphasis on the

“progressive improvement made by a department against its initial baseline performance and therefore departments are supposed to improve their level of performance each year.”

Leadership must make sure that there is a culture of continuous learning and improvement when it comes to MPAT. This can be achieved through internal forums. Also, that leadership follows up on those KPA standards that do not show improvement and make sure that corrective action is taken and improvement plans are in place.

### **5.3.6 Leadership to make management more accountable and responsible when things do not improve on MPAT**

Hough et al. (2010) state that leadership is not necessarily something that people inherit, but rather is a set of behaviours that are associated with responsibility and influence. Hough et al. (2010) further note that leadership involves an individual or individuals enabling or motivating others to achieve goals and also making them accountable when necessary. It is the view of most respondents that leadership should put measures in place, especially where there is lack of improvement on MPAT activities or standards, as this will create the expected improvement that MPAT seeks to achieve.

## **5.4 Recommendations from participants to DPME**

### **5.4.1 Re-look into the standards being assessed and see if they are all still relevant**

Most participants felt that there was a need for DPME to re-look into the MPAT standards because, since it was introduced, there have been very few, if any, changes to the standards. This means that, even though some standards are no longer relevant to the department, they are still being assessed because they were part of the tool when it was introduced, and not because they are making any impact.

### **5.4.2 There is no need to assess departments with matured processes in place**

Similar to the recommendation made above regarding the standards, most participants felt that some of their KPAs have been doing well in certain areas and their processes have matured such that they do not need them to be assessed by MPAT. However, due to the fact that MPAT is using a blanket approach for all departments, this is ignored by DPME and all departments are expected to assess using MPAT. These departments are therefore doing this

for compliance only.

### **5.4.3 The actual MPAT system needs to be improved**

The actual MPAT electronic system needs to be improved as it requires continuous saving and, at times, it gets too slow. There was a strong recommendation from all participants that the technical part of the system needs to be improved. Even though there have been some improvements over the years, it still remains a challenge during the self-assessment period. Also, the system needs to keep up-to-date with technology and have basic functions, like an auto save, to avoid the manual saving that is currently required by the system.

### **5.4.4 Some moderators seem to have limited knowledge of the departments and how they operate**

According to DPME (2012a), the self-assessment process is moderated by an external panel of moderators who have experience in the public service and are also subject matter specialists. However, the respondents feel that the moderators seem to have limited knowledge of the departments that they are moderating. This discourages those working to gather and provide the required evidence. The moderators believe that assessments that are not standardised are therefore incorrect even though they address the same issue. DPME therefore needs to examine their moderators' skills and appoint moderators who will add value to the process.

### **5.4.5 Make moderators more accessible specifically for questions and feedback**

Even though DPME provides information about the criteria they use when they appoint moderators, departments do not know who these moderators are because their identity is not provided to the departments. Neither do departments have direct access to them. In order to interact with them, the department must write comments to them on the system during the MPAT challenge period and wait for their feedback.

Participants felt it would be easier if they could have a platform where they can engage directly with the moderators because sometimes their ratings are not factually correct and

they are only available during the challenge period via the system. Therefore, DPME should make their moderators more accessible and allow departments to engage directly with them and not through a system.

#### **5.4.6 Create a platform for sharing of good management practices across government departments**

DPME (2012a) suggests that the main purposes of MPAT are to improve learning, improve government departments and also to improve accountability. According to the respondents, a platform for sharing these good management practices or to learn and improve has not yet been formally created. Therefore, it is recommended that DPME creates such a platform that will assist departments in benchmarking their practices with each other and will also become a platform for learning and improvement.

#### **5.4.7 DPME needs to be more flexible in cases where facts are correct even though they may be presented differently**

The respondents feel that DPME should consider that departments may operate differently, but can achieve the same results. This means that the DPME and its moderators should also take into account audit reports, clean audits and other documents provided by the departments. The DPME needs to assess departments with unqualified audits differently from those with qualified audits because, if the auditors' assessments give positive feedback, MPAT should respect that.

#### **5.4.8 DPME to improve communication with departments and allow them to give opinions and input**

According to Smit et al. (2007), communication can be described as a process of transmitting information and meaning. This process is used when there is something a sender wants the receiver to know, understand or act upon. Respondents suggested that DPME must create a feedback mechanism between itself and the departments, as there is a lack of communication regarding decisions that are taken which affect the departments. For example, when it comes to introducing or dropping standards or new information is introduced, there is no

consultation with departments that are expected to implement the decisions or changes that are taken on their behalf. Therefore, DPME needs to improve on its communication with departments.

#### **5.4.9 A review of the tool should be done by DPME**

The tool has been around for more than five years therefore a review of the tool should be done by DPME that should include the views of those utilising it. Respondents felt it is appropriate that a survey be conducted with those utilising the tool to gather their views and their experiences with it.

Respondents felt that MPAT requires considerable unnecessary evidence because some of the processes are self-evident. Respondents also noted that there is a lot of duplication of processes between MPAT and other structures already in place and therefore there is a need to consider integrating these structures or tools so that management does not have to repeat activities or processes. There was also a suggestion that the assessment period is too short at four to six weeks and this puts pressure on those who are required to work on the system who also have other work responsibilities.

### **5.5 Overall recommendations for the study**

Even though there were a few participants who were not clear about the role of MPAT in government departments, the majority of participants understand what the role of MPAT is and they also agree with the fact that it is a necessary tool for government departments. However, there was a general feeling that the tool needs to be reviewed especially when it comes to what it assesses.

The researcher also gathered that there is confusion between what MPAT requires and what other departments or oversight bodies, such as National Treasury, DPSA, AGSA and Public Service Commission, require from departments. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that MPAT is duplicating work already in place by other departments/oversight bodies even though, when MPAT was introduced, it was stated that it does not duplicate existing

monitoring processes that are already done by National Treasury, DPSA, PSC and AGSA (DPME, 2012b). Instead, it was supposed to draw on secondary data of these departments and oversight bodies to moderate the self-assessments of departments (DPME, 2012b).

Therefore, it is recommended that both DPME and these other structures, in consultation with the government departments that are being assessed, examine and agree on who should monitor the different processes. This will lessen the confusion about MPAT duplicating other processes.

The participants were also concerned about communications between DPME and departments. The general feeling was that the departments are not consulted when certain things are done, such as introducing or dropping standards, making changes to the system and during assessments. This was also linked to a concern raised about the moderators. The participants felt that, even though sometimes the evidence provided is correct, moderators may decide otherwise and there is no platform where they can explain to the moderators why they have provided such evidence.

The participants felt that this approach disregards their submissions even though they might be factual. It is recommended that DPME, together with departments, create a forum where they can engage so that departments are part of the whole process to improve performance and communication.

The majority of participants also feel that, due to MPAT, management practices and internal controls within Stats SA have been improving even though they have not fully reached the desired levels but a minority disagrees with this opinion. They also feel that leadership should play a bigger role in driving and promoting MPAT as this will eventually lead to overall improved organisational attitude and performance.

## **5.6 Recommendations for future studies**

During the research process, the majority of respondents highlighted that MPAT was implemented to focus on management practices within a government department. The initial

assumption was that improved management practices will lead to improved service delivery. Therefore, the respondents felt strongly that this study was necessary because they have not had an opportunity to air their views about the tool. They proposed that future studies should focus on the citizens who depend on these services from government. Such a survey should focus on the service delivery improvement aspect since MPAT was introduced to give a holistic view of both parties and not just that of departments.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

MPAT has been implemented in Stats SA and in other government departments for a while now. The study highlighted that, even though it has not completely reached its desired levels in Stats SA, the tool has had a positive impact and, if taken seriously, an efficient, effective and development-orientated public service can be achieved. The general feeling is that management practices are indeed improving, but there is a lot that leadership still need to do to create a “management by MPAT” culture in the organisation. The findings of the study suggest that the initiative is valuable but that all responsible should play their role and that improvements be made in order to better “measure what they manage”.

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## Annexure A: Request for participation

### UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

**MCLS Research Project**  
**Researcher: Khuliso Petunia Tharage (082 888 2436)**  
**Supervisor: Dr Bibi Zaheenah Chummun (031 260 8943)**  
**Research Office: Ms N. Mthethwa (031 260 1383)**

Dear Respondent,

I am, Khuliso Petunia Tharage, a Masters student in Leadership Studies, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: **To assess the implementation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in a national government department (Statistics South Africa)**

The aim of this study is to assess the implementation of MPAT in Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in order to determine whether the tool is producing the desired results it was initially intended to produce in government departments.

Through your participation, I hope to understand how the implementation of MPAT has contributed in improving management practices and accountability in your organisation. The results of the interviews are intended to contribute to the public sector leadership (especially Stats SA and DPME leadership and management) in knowing whether some of the tools (such as MPAT) that get to be introduced are indeed making an impact or not in those areas which the tool is supposed to assist in.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. All the information provided by you will remain confidential and your names will never be revealed. The final report will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the interview or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The interview should take about 45 minutes to a maximum of an hour. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and I really hope you will take the time to participate in the interview.

Yours Sincerely,

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Annexure B: Informed consent letter**

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

**MCLS Research Project**  
**Researcher: Khuliso Petunia Tharage (082 888 2436)**  
**Supervisor: Dr Bibi Zaheenah Chummun (031 260 8943)**  
**Research Office: Ms N. Mthethwa (031 260 1383)**

CONSENT

I.....(full names of participant)  
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the  
research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## **Annexure C: Interview guide**

**TOPIC: To assess the implementation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in a national government department (Statistics South Africa)**

### **Interview Guide Questions**

1. Do you consider MPAT to be a necessary tool for government departments and in particular for your department and if so why? (please elaborate your answer)
2. One of the main objectives of MPAT, which is also the main focus of this study, is to improve management practices in government departments. Do you believe the management practices have indeed improved since 2011 in your department? If yes, what role do you think MPAT has played to assist in these improvements (you can just provide examples)? And if no, please elaborate your views.
3. Has management and leadership in your department become more accountable since the introduction of MPAT in 2011? (please elaborate your answer)
4. Is the introduction of MPAT assisting government departments in sharing of good management practices (based on your departmental experience) and if so what are some of the most common ones that have been shared and how?
5. Are there any challenges that you have experienced since you have started using MPAT (throughout the years) and if so, can you please identify some of them and explain.
6. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of MPAT that you have faced to date (you can answer this question in general or in your particular KPA)?
7. Based on your experience with MPAT thus far, do you think there is a role that leadership in your organisation needs to play in order to ensure effectiveness of the tool and if so, what role do you think they should play?

8. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) with regards to their tool (MPAT), based on your experiences so far?
9. Do you think MPAT is indeed the answer to making internal controls within government departments better with the aim to eventually improve delivery of services to the South African citizens? Please elaborate
10. Do you think the MPAT process is repeating some of the processes that have already been put in place by other governments or transversal departments? Please elaborate
11. What has been your overall experience with MPAT been? Is there any other thing that you would like to say about the tool (suggest, propose or just acknowledge)?

**Annexure D: Editor's letter**

*Barbara Shaw*

*Editing/proofreading services*

*18 Balvicar Road, Blairgowrie, 2194*

*Tel: 011 888 4788 Cell: 072 1233 881*

*Email: [bmshaw@telkomsa.net](mailto:bmshaw@telkomsa.net)*

*Full member of The Professional Editors' Guild*

**To whom it may concern**

This letter serves to inform you that I have done language editing, reference checking and formatting on the thesis:

**To assess the implementation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in a national government department (Statistics South Africa)**

by Khuliso Petunia Tharage



Barbara Shaw

18<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

## Annexure E: Ethical clearance certificate



19 September 2018

Mrs Khuliso Petunia Tharage (215080966)  
Graduate School of Business & Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear M's Tharage,

Protocol reference number: **HSS/1234/018M**

Project title: To assess the implementation of the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) in a national government department (Statistics South Africa)

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 15 August 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

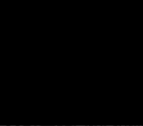
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr B'bi Zaheenah Chumnum  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Muhammad Hoque  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

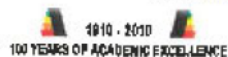
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X2400, Durban 4000

Telephone: 127 00 31 260 8587/8580/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: [shenuka@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:shenuka@ukzn.ac.za) / [shumanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:shumanm@ukzn.ac.za) / [hr.enq@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hr.enq@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**Annexure F: Turnitin report**

**KP\_Tharage\_Dissertation\_9July2  
019**

*by* Khuliso Tharage

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**Submission date:** 09-Jul-2019 10:20PM (UTC+0200)

**Submission ID:** 1150542706

**File name:** KP\_Tharage\_Dissertation\_9July2019.docx (356.67K)

**Word count:** 24 103

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