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PROJECT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

CONSTANCE GLERAH NXUMALO

A RESEARCH REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The aspirations of millions of South Africans for a “better life” will remain a dream if government’s intent, contained in a myriad of policies developed since 1994, is not translated into tangible employment and socio-economic development. For years to come, South Africa will continue to operate on the basis of the principles of a welfarist state as well as those of a market economy. Inevitably, cries will go up that government is not delivering on its promises. It is against this backdrop that the policy formulation process will be reviewed with a view to recommending a project management approach as a means of fast-tracking delivery.

The study is conducted within the context of a transforming South Africa whose fledgling democracy still needs considerable nurturing. Many challenges are faced by government in terms of policy delivery and nation building. The grave shortage of skills in areas such as project management and management generally to some extent offsets the gains made in the democratisation process.

The public service is faced with the challenge of concretising the vision contained in the various policies that seek to ensure “a better life for all”. Since a public organisation’s brief is to add value for the public through strategies and programmes, the various tools and techniques offered by project management will be discussed in a public and development management context. Attention will also be given to the linkages between programme and project management.

This research report comprises a theoretical assessment relating to project management, implementation approaches, and programme and project management. Selected theoretical frameworks will be applied to the case of the Mpumalanga Department of Social Services, Population and Development (DSSPD). Finally, key findings and recommendations will be presented.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. The report has not previously been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.



CONSTANCE GLERAH NXUMALO

08/08/06

DATE

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Chapter 1

Project Management Implementation in the Public Sector: Department of Social Services, Population and Development in Mpumalanga

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this report is to develop approaches that will help with the implementation of project management.

South Africa has experienced dramatic changes, particularly since the implementation of the 1993 Constitution and, subsequently, the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (108 of 1996). Local and provincial authorities have been especially affected, experiencing ongoing change functionally, structurally and legislatively.

Political changes and the consequent constitutional reform have influenced all levels or government and the community as well. Although most of the political changes have now been made, changes to the rigid administrative system within which the apartheid system functioned have not yet been fully implemented, and the previously disadvantaged segment of society has still to be uplifted (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:105).

The reconstruction and development programme (RDP) has been implemented with mixed results. A major problem is that the political and administrative systems are not properly geared for the implementation of such a development strategy. Social upliftment programmes and projects are, however, helping some communities and individuals in South Africa cope with the belt tightening that comes with structural adjustment and strategic change.

Communities in South Africa need to be uplifted social and economically. The upliftment will build capacity in the population, ultimately leading to economic

growth. Poverty is currently hampering development projects in various parts of the country. It is also responsible for the emergence of informal settlements and is determining the general pattern of urban settlement. These informal living conditions are more often than not a result of the imbalance and inequalities in the country and the desperate lack of effective social upliftment programmes (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:106).

The Mpumalanga Social Services Department is faced with the mammoth task of having to deliver quality services in line with its vision but with a limited budgetary allocation. An estimated 93% of the budget is spent on pension grants and personnel with only 7% left for other deliverables. The solution to the problem lies within rather than outside the department.

In this study, a project management approach to public policy implementation will be suggested as an alternative way of fast-tracking delivery while at the same time ensuring minimum resource wastage. This approach seeks to introduce a new perspective on service delivery that places pressure on systems, procedures, attitudes and behaviour within the public service. It involves creating a framework for public service delivery whereby citizens are treated more like customers. This approach will require implementation structures to be more customer oriented.

1.2 Problem statement

The main aim of this study is to assess the status of project management approaches in the Department of Social Services, Population and Development (DSSPD) in Mpumalanga in order to recommend specific options for the institution and implementation of project management in the public sector.

The greatest challenge to every sphere of government in South Africa is reconstruction and development at all levels of South African society aimed at securing a better life for all. This challenge has to be met in an environment constrained by limited financial and human resources. Project management

approaches will therefore have to be considered that will lessen the impact of restricted financial resources and limited human resource capacity.

Various government departments are endeavoring to implement project management that will improve service delivery. The question is whether the concept of project management is properly understood, especially in management terms. The situation in the Mpumalanga DSSPD is that although the executive management would like to implement proper project management, they do not really understand the concept. For example, they have recently appointed a project manager without a budget and without a job description and support.

Project management has to be instituted correctly in order to achieve the desired results. Recently, programme managers were requested to implement operational plans on the basis of a project management approach, but no clear indication was given as to which approach to follow. A project management approach in the department will be far more effective if sound principles are applied in the institution of the concept. The project management process should be driven by the head of department and the executive management to ensure proper implementation.

1.3 Research objectives

Further objectives of the study are to develop options for the improved institution of project management approaches in government and to conduct a case study of the project management approaches in the DSSPD in Mpumalanga.

A theoretical assessment of programme and project management in the public and development management sector and an overview of project management approaches, processes and current knowledge should assist in determining the present circumstances of the DSSPD and in improving its operations in respect of project management. Such an assessment and overview will also assist the department in selecting appropriate approaches, processes and institutional

options to fast-track service delivery. The research objectives of the study can be summarised as follows:

- To undertake a theoretical assessment of programme and project management in the area of public and development management.
- To provide an overview of project management approaches relating to the public sector.
- To conduct and record a case study on the status of project management in the DSSPD in Mpumalanga.
- To apply selected theoretical frameworks to the case study.
- To formulate conclusions and options for the future.

Brown's approach to project management implementation will be used as an analytical framework for the case study and will be discussed in detail in a separate chapter.

1.4 Research question

Can project management assist the public sector in fast-tracking service delivery through the institutionalization and adoption of appropriate approaches?

1.5 Literature review

A fairly extensive literature review was conducted on project management and the different project management approaches. The aim of the literature review was to provide insight into the dominant schools of thought on project management and the different approaches to project management. The literature review also established whether the material available would ensure the viability of the study in terms of academic requirements. Although, the public service is increasingly using project management to improve service delivery, it is not clear whether the concept itself is properly understood and whether the implementation has been correct. The

literature review illuminated the concept itself and the approaches used in project management, including processes and knowledge areas.

1.5 Research methodology

This research report focuses on the public and development management arena and therefore falls within the realm of social and management sciences. The report is based largely on a qualitative research approach. It is termed qualitative because it is "intended more to determine what things 'exist' than to determine how many such things there are" (Walker, 1985:3)

The main research objective is to assess the broad field of project management in the public sector. The research findings will also assist in selecting appropriate project management models. Many theorists in the social sciences advocate the use of multi-methods such as triangulation. Triangulation is the application of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. In this study, the qualitative research approach was used.

A case study methodology was employed that incorporates questionnaires, documents and in-depth interviews. The term case study means that a limited number of units of analysis (often only one), such as an individual, a group or an institution, are studied intensively (Welma & Kruger, 1999:190). Usually, the objective of a case study is to investigate the dynamics of a single-bounded system, typically of a social nature, such as an organisation, a family, a group, a community or an institution.

Various tools can be used for gathering information including experimental surveys, interviews, pilot projects, rapid appraisal surveys and case studies. In this research report, the case study method was employed (see Chapter 3).

With regard to the Mpumalanga Department of Social Services, Population and Development (DSSPD), the case study method was enhanced because “the focus (was) on the contemporary phenomenon within some real life context” (Yin, 1994:1). The case study method, due to its unique characteristic of studying a phenomenon not clearly evident from its context, was appropriate for assessing the social, economic and environmental realities of the DSSPD.

The case study method is not limited to people; it can be extended to phenomena such as policy, organisation and management studies as it was done with DSSPD. Yin (1994) argues that “the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events but only when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated”.

Case study information for DSSPD was also gathered through interviews. All research methods and techniques have their own strengths and weaknesses. Like other methods of social research, the interview method has its biases, inconsistencies and inaccuracies (Bailey, 1994:176). A qualitative research study also tends to be value laden. By being aware of these flaws and biases, the researcher was better equipped to avoid them.

During the fieldwork stage of the study, interviews were confined to people who were directly involved with the implementation of projects. These people included the Director of Planning and Information Management, under whose subdirectorate the Project Management Unit falls, and the programme managers from the Chief Directorate: Welfare Services. Since the primary method of collecting data was through interviews, a representative sample was drawn. Twelve people were selected randomly from different categories: two from the executive management, two directors, and seven managers from programme management and one from project management. (Interview guides showing details are attached.)

The interviews served to highlight the project management implementation challenges facing the DSSPD.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the study field

The study is located in the public and development management field. The report is more of a research report than a full Master's dissertation and focuses on the project management approaches that will help identify potential opportunities and constraints facing the DSSPD.

1.7 Conclusion

The DSSPD needs to gain insight into the various approaches used in project management in order to fast-track service delivery (Batho Pele requirement) and to meet the challenges of development in the province. This research report should help identify different approaches that can be recommended for use in the department.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Assessment of Programme and Project Management in Public and Development Management

2.1 Introduction

The public sector and its various components have undergone dramatic changes in recent times, which have called for wide-ranging organisational and procedural adjustments. Public institutions have to adapt their activities and management processes in order to address modern issues and challenges successfully.

Much emphasis is placed on improving the multi-dimensionality of public management so that the public service can move closer to the management practices of the private sector and thus deliver more efficient and effective services.

Various experts say that public management processes are closely related to the strategic management process. The concept of strategy refers to the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving certain objectives. Public managers are responsible for implementing the public policy of the government of the day and executing the public programmes to achieve departmental objectives.

2.2 Definition of programme management and project management

Project management was in existence long before King Cheops planned the construction of his famous pyramid. For thousands of years, when a particular year's crops were not ready for harvest in the "right" month, the Hebrews resynchronised their calendar (based on the phases of the moon) with the annual seasons by adding an extra month, thereby ensuring that everybody started planting the next season's crops at the right time (project start).

Henry L. Gantt (1861-1919) added an important visualisation tool to project management in 1917 with his chart, which dramatically advanced the science of project management. Numerous people devoted their lives to the application and theory of project management. However, the same problems, solutions, and methods continued for another 40 years. The typical problems encountered then are still encountered today such as late completion of projects, over-budgeting, cancelling projects before completion, daily chaos and frustrations, and inadequate measurement of a project's status.

Project management, in its modern guise, was first practised only a few decades ago. In the early 1960s, businesses and other organisations began to see the benefit of organising work around projects and to understand the critical need to integrate work across multiple departments and professions. After World War II, the complexities of projects and a shrinking war-time labour supply demanded new organisational structures. Intricate network diagrams called PERT charts and the critical path method were introduced, giving managers greater control over massively engineered and highly complex projects.

These techniques spread to all types of industries as business leaders sought new management strategies and tools to handle growth in a quickly changing and competitive world. In the following decades, project management in its modern forms began to emerge. While various business models evolved during this period, they all shared a common underlying structure involving a project manager who puts together a team and ensures the integration and communication of the workflow horizontally across different departments.

An overview will be given here of the various definitions of project management for the purpose of the study and also with reference to public sector organisations.

- Project management is a set of principles, methods, tools and techniques for the effective management of objective-oriented work in the context of a specified and unique organisational environment (Knutson & Bitz, 1991:2).

- Project management includes planning, organising, directing and controlling activities in addition to motivating what is usually the most expensive resource in a project, the people (Maylor, 1996:3).
- Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet or exceed stakeholders' needs and expectations (Duncan,1996:6).
- Project management is a set of principles, methods, tools and techniques for the effective management of objective-oriented work in the context of a special and unique organisational environment (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:59).
- "A project is something which has a beginning and an end" (Turner, 1993:4).
- A project is a "temporary endeavour in which human (or machine) material and financial resources are organised to undertake a unique scope of work, of given specification, within constraints of cost and time so as to deliver beneficial change defined by qualitative and quantitative objectives" (Burke, 1992:2; Turner, 1993:8).
- The Project Management Institute says project management is "any undertaking with a defined starting point and defined objectives by which completion is identified".

When one looks at the various definitions of project management, four critical elements constantly emerge: organisation, time, cost and quality (Turner, 1993:14). A balance should be struck between these five elements. If one element is overemphasised at the expense of the other(s), the neglected element(s) is likely to undermine the project. Every project covers a unique scope of work and relies on the institutional arrangements within an organisation. At the same time, it is subject to the constraints of time, cost and quality

Project management can be regarded as a planning and control mechanism for using resources to achieve specific objectives. It has to meet three critical elements: time, cost and quality.

Kerzner states that project management involves project planning and project monitoring and includes the following items.

- Project planning
    - Definition of work requirements
    - Definition of quantity and quality of work
    - Definition of resources needed

- Project monitoring
    - Tracking progress
    - Comparing actual outcome with predicted outcome
    - Analysing impact
    - Making adjustments

In trying to understand programme management, one should first understand what programmes are.

Programmes are long-term, multi-activity endeavours implemented by networks of institutions in locations whose production and/or service delivery objectives and impact goals derive from indigenous policy choices (Brinkerhoff, 1991:484).

Projects, according to Brinkerhoff, can be regarded as the building blocks of programmes. Both programmes and projects usually blend indigenous and exogenous resources to achieve their goals. Projects and programmes share a common set of management functions that have to be fulfilled to achieve successful development results. Programmes are generally linked to strategic tasks while project management is generally linked to operational tasks, both of which are critical for development.

The links between programme and project management tasks can be seen as a continuum with operational tasks associated with projects at the one end and strategic tasks associated with programmes at the other end (Brinkerhoff, 1991: 487).

2.2.1 Operational management and project management

Operational management can be described as a lower level type of management that focuses on carrying out a plan as opposed to developing it, and it deals with practical and concrete problems such as guiding the work in progress, checking performance against set objectives, and drawing up and controlling budgets.

2.2.2 Comparison between projects and operations

PROJECTS	**OPERATIONS**
Are unique	Are repetitive
Exist for a limited period	Create a lasting, stable environment
Bring about revolutionary change by creating a state of disequilibrium	Always evolve in equilibrium
Project managers deliberately set out to disrupt the status quo	Operations managers maintain equilibrium by balancing conflicting requirements
Projects use transient (novel) teams of people	Operations build stable (permanent) teams
The project management environment is flexible	The operations environment is stable

Project teams are goal oriented	People fulfil roles defined by precedent and so can lose sight of their objectives
Projects involve risk management	Operations involve status quo management

Source: Van Baalen (2000:193)

The above comparison between projects and operations indicates that in large organisations, project management and operational management can support each other to ensure successful policy delivery.

2.3 Role of programme and project management in government organisations

In South Africa, an increasing number of public sector managers have been trained in project management. The focus has shifted from adhering to rules and regulations towards improved service delivery. The availability of computer software for project management has given the discipline greater prominence.

Governments throughout the world experienced financial constraints during the 1980s and were forced to adopt alternative approaches in public sector management. The way governments used to operate (hierarchical framework) did not promote economic growth or provide solutions to overspending. The state was pressurised to “live within its means” and “cut its coat according to its cloth”, which eventually led to the development of techniques that could deal with the crises faced by the modern state (Parson, 1995:458).

Changes to the current situation will be effected through public policies. Failure to implement such policies and regulate them will mean they are mere statements of

intent. The reconstruction and development programme (RDP) of the South African Government can serve as a blueprint for societal transformation. The RDP espouses service delivery through projects.

Authors such as Brinkerhoff (1991:486) view projects as the building blocks of programmes. The link between project and programme management tasks can be seen as a continuum, with operational tasks associated with projects and strategic tasks associated with programmes.

According to Bryson (1991), project management is one of the strategic planning approaches learned from the private sector, and it can help government and non-profit organisations, as well as communities and other entities, to deal effectively with their dramatically changing environments. This is because corporate-style strategic planning approaches are equally applicable to the public sector. Project management has proved its worth by virtue of the fact that it is also used by service providers such as universities and technikons.

Project management is said to be the management techniques contained in managerialism. Managerialism is result oriented, with less focus on bureaucracy, procedures and regulations and more focus on decentralisation, delegation of authority to managers and accountability for performance (Public service review report, 1999/2000). Project management cannot be applied in a vacuum; it relies on appropriate institutional arrangements for proper implementation as indicated by Brown in his article on project management.

According to Van der Waldt (2000:16), programme management is an instrument that provides the linkages between strategic planning and project management. He adds that programme management ensures that various interrelated projects converge towards a common goal. In other words, programme management is the sum of the effort contained by the completion of all projects to the ultimate achievement of the operational benefits prescribed by the strategic visions (Van der Waldt, 2001:17)

Programme and project management can be used as a tool for strategic change and development. All development programmes are characterised by the programme phases of policy sanction, development focus, organisational identity and replication (Paul, 90:17). Four distinctive features of development programmes are outlined by Paul (1990:15-17) as follows:

- Policy sanction – refers to the enactment of specific legislation, thus creating the enabling legislative framework before the implementation of the development programme.

- Development focus – involves the expected economic or social benefits consistent with national development goals such as income growth and distribution, and improved quality of life.

- Organisational identity – refers to the institution of development programmes, with each programme having its own organisational structure, budget and personnel.

- Replication – is the ultimate mission of any development programme. Replication refers to the implementation (up-scaling) throughout the country of a development product or service.

Development programmes have life cycles: the pilot phase, the replication phase and the maturity phase.

- The pilot phase is the initial period when a product or service is being designed or adopted. This is done to test the implementation of a programme on a smaller scale before up-scaling.

- The replication or adoption phase begins when the programme is extended from the pilot area to other areas.

- The maturity phase starts at the completion of the replication phase and may continue indefinitely as long as the service is required. It may be terminated if the service is no longer required. The programme may be diversified, adding new tasks but continuing with the original service as part of its breakdown mandate.

The successful implementation of development programmes depends on political commitment and support, resource availability and quality of programme leadership.

Project management is concerned with the achievement of complex goals by integrating multifunctional inputs into a team relationship (Brown, 1993:13). In the public sector, a (special) project approach could be adopted in addition and complementary to normal operational management.

Project management as an implementation strategy involves the management of systems to ensure effective integrated human and material resources, organisational structures, systems and procedures in order to achieve the strategic goals of the organisation.

Projects are a powerful management tool that enhances the manager's ability to plan, direct and execute complementary tasks, using organisational resources to realise the overall objectives of the organisation.

Although projects vary in size, cost and duration, they all involve people and are unique, one-off events aimed at improving the way things are done. Project management approaches are particularly relevant to new initiatives or cases where special management and resource management are needed.

Projects are also seen as instruments for bringing about change, which can be political, economic, social or institutional.

2.4 Major project management approaches

Project management falls within the realm of the “managerialist” paradigm. Public and development management in South Africa represents a paradigm shift away from a formalistic, rule-driven public administration towards a more developmental, outcome and citizen-oriented and participatory practice that focuses on modernising operations of government.

Project management entails a proactive management style that seeks to finish projects on time, within budget and with quality outcomes that satisfy the customer (beneficiary). Project management first came into its own in the private sector and was until recently used predominantly in the engineering and construction industries. It is a technique that adapts to the changing environment and works better in flat structures than hierarchical ones. As public sector management has endeavored to become more “business like”, so have techniques, previously regarded as “private sector” methods, been adopted (Parson, 1995:473).

Through project management, public sector organisations seek to address the problem of delivery as enunciated by Mokgoro (1997:5) who said that “it is no wonder that despite the tremendous, courageous and selfless efforts by politicians and public servants implementing government policies, people continue to complain that government is not really delivering on its promises”.

Projects (big or small) are managed in terms of networks. Five key dimensions of a project need to be taken into account when defining, planning, managing, monitoring and controlling a project. These dimensions are scope, organisation, time, cost and quality. A healthy balance between the five complementary dimensions leads to a successful project.

For the successful implementation of any project, certain key functions and processes have to be carried out. Inevitably, the following tools and techniques are of great importance.

- Managing scope draws parameters regarding what is in and what is outside the project. Tools such as the work breakdown structure (WBS or PBS) are management instruments used to allocate functions, resources and time for the completion of task(s) at hand. The WBS is the backbone of a project's control systems (Cloete & Wissink, 2000:198).

- Managing organisation is directly linked to the design of the organisational structure. Project management is compatible with a projected organisational structure that can respond and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

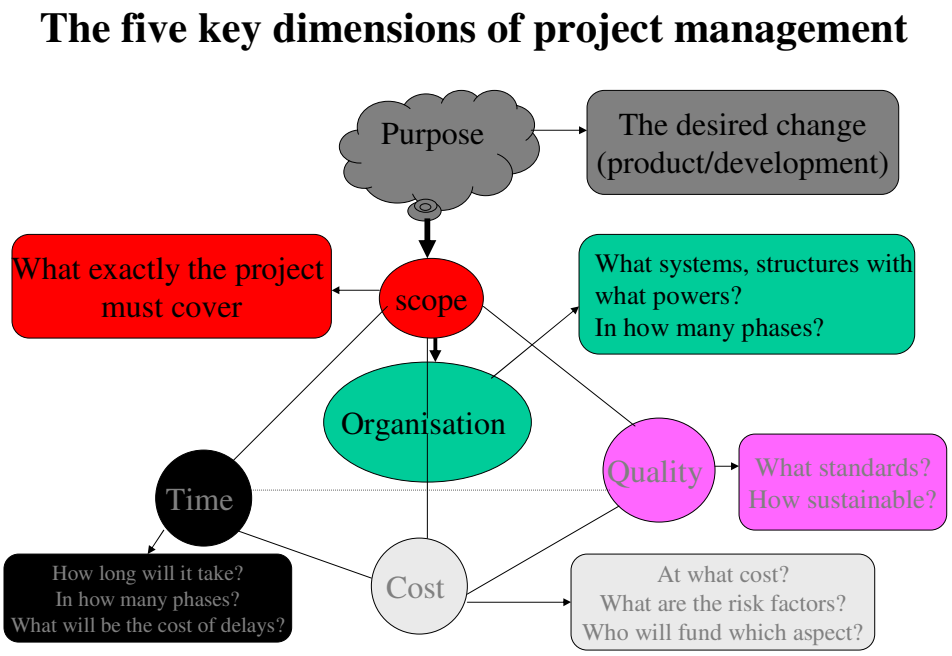
- Managing quality is concerned with the impact a project will have on the project beneficiaries and is to a large extent dependent on the quality of the product or service produced.

- Managing cost is critical for the successful implementation of any project. Tools such as the cost breakdown structure, cost control cube and various forecasting methods are indispensable.

- Managing time techniques includes the critical path method (CPM) and the Gantt chart for scheduling and monitoring tasks.

- The five key dimensions of project management are schematically represented in Figure 2.4 below. As mentioned above, a project has a start and an end point. This will be further demonstrated in the exposition of the life cycle of a project in Section 2.4.1.

Figure 2.4: Key dimensions of project management



Source: Van Baalen

The five key dimensions of project management illustrated in Figure 2.4 are interconnected and interdependent. Projects are purposive acts whereby change is brought to an organisation or area. The product or service delivered through project management implementation should be of good quality and delivered within the constraints of time and cost. The next section outlines the life cycle of a project.

2.4.1 Life cycle of a project

Projects, like all living systems, undergo a process of change from birth to death. This metamorphosis is known as the life cycle of a project. The stages of the project life cycle are summarised below.

- The conception stage is characterised by identifying the need that has to be met through the project. Various stakeholders play a role at this stage. The initiative could also come from government after conducting a needs analysis or

after receiving information about the conditions in the area through political structures. The conceived idea is clearly indicated in the form of a proposal. Areas covered in the proposal may include project definition, scope and business objectives, functional design, feasibility of the project and initial cost estimate. A decision is taken at this stage on whether to proceed with or discard the project.

- Once the decision is taken to proceed, detailed planning including research takes place. An action plan is usually drawn up at this stage. Time and cost estimates are included in the project business plan.
- During the adulthood and implementation stage, all systems and procedures pertaining to the project should be in place. Constant project monitoring and feedback becomes the rule rather than the exception. At the end of this stage, the project should be completed and handed over to its beneficiaries (Baguley, 1995:15)
- Preparing for close-out is a crucial activity in the life of a project. The personnel at this stage are generally very sensitive, and anxiety and conflict are often apparent. Some energy may be diverted to job hunting, foot dragging or even sabotage (Kerzner, 1995:609). Some personnel members may also leave the project prematurely, causing further delays in the completion of the project. Project close-out includes transferring responsibility, documenting results, satisfying contractual requirements, releasing resources, closing out work orders and preparing financial payments.

2.4.2 Processes in project management

Project management incorporates participative processes – all project stakeholders move through a learning process that leads to empowerment. At the stage of project close-out, a feeling of achievement is frequently experienced. Projects almost invariably bring about change in communities. An examination of a project life cycle indicates that development is the primary objective of any project implementation.

In South Africa, the implementation of government development projects to uplift communities in terms of the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) will be effective only if aspects such as costs, time and quality are taken into account.

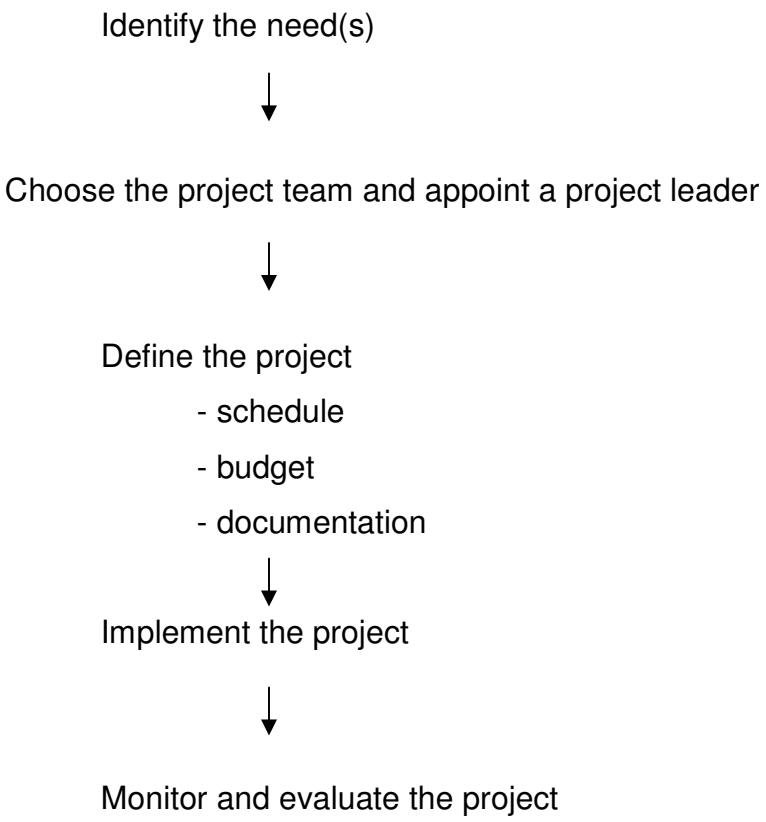
Project management entails planning, organising, co-ordinating, controlling and directing project activities. It is characterised by implementation actions and the adoption of management techniques to exercise more effective control over existing resources. Project management can also be regarded as a planning and control mechanism for using resources to achieve specific objectives (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:58).

Projects move through main phases, namely the preparation phase, the implementation phase and the evaluation phase.

During the preparation phase, the need for a particular project is determined and, if a need is identified, arrangements are made to implement the project.

The implementation phase entails carrying out project activities and evaluating the project (what was achieved), the process (how the product was produced) and the degree of positive change (quality of the project).

In each phase of project management, certain steps or activities have to be carried out.
The steps are indicated below.



All stakeholders and role players should be involved in the project management process to ensure commitment to its objectives.

When identifying the need for a project, formal and informal methods can be used. Formal methods include questionnaires, scientific surveys and opinion polls. Informal methods include debates, discussions and observation (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:68).

When choosing the project, care should be taken to ensure that the right people are selected, not the right number. The members of a project team should be

knowledgeable in certain fields such as finance and personnel matters. The project team should appoint a project leader or manager to serve as the chairperson of the team.

Project definition is crucial because “if you don’t know where you are going, you will probably and up somewhere else” (Peter in Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:71). All the members of a team should know exactly what they are letting themselves in for, and all uncertainties about the project should be clarified.

Project planning is also crucial according to Crawford Green (Van der Waldt & Knipe, 1998:72): “Every moment spent planning saves three or four in execution.” No project is too large if it has been properly planned. A schedule of activities should be drafted and a work breakdown structure put in place.

Implementation is the process by which all planned actions are executed. Plans are put into operation, the responsible people carry out tasks and give feedback to the project team, resources are allocated and control is exercised.

Evaluation of the project becomes crucial. The results of the project must be quantifiable (measurable). Invisible results such as the degree of change in attitudes and perceptions need to be assessed. The cost-effectiveness, organisational capacity and operational systems of the project must also be assessed. A technique known as the programme evaluation and review technique (PERT) is often used to evaluate projects.

2.4.3 Institutional arrangements for project management

Institutional arrangements for project management relate to the management and organisational capacity needed to implement project management.

The project management approach represents a different organisational structure and culture from the functional bureaucratic approach. The traditional functional

structure remains the basis of the organisation on which the project management structure is superimposed to deal with organisational, co-ordination and integration complexities (Ford in Brown, 1999:35). A network of relationships links the various components of the organisation under the guidance of the project manager for the purposes and duration of the project. Some team members find themselves in the difficult position of having to “divide” their loyalties by reporting horizontally to their project manager and vertically to their functional areas (Brown, 1999:35).

Public sector organisations are obliged by transformation and other changes to manage themselves like business units. Projects, in turn, have become a common way of planning, managing and implementing change in an organisation. Such changes have naturally to be effected through the optimal use of existing resources.

A healthy relationship should exist between the vertical and horizontal structures (intergovernmental relations). Government departments in South Africa are hierarchical, and there is a clear distinction between line manager and staff powers. The project management approach is, however, more horizontal and flexible. In project management, the team is more important than the sum of the individual members. Team building and conflict resolution have consequently become indispensable tools in project management.

No single best way exists of organising resources for the successful implementation of the project management approach. The nature of the organisation will determine the type of structure to be adopted.

The project management approach is moving away from traditional structures, which are bureaucratic and cannot respond rapidly to a changing environment. Such structures need to be replaced by project management or other temporary management structures that are highly organic and can respond quickly as situations develop inside and outside organisations (Kerzner, 1995).

The project management approach relies strongly on the willingness of the project manager to operate within the guidelines, policies, procedures, rules and directives of the parent organisation. A healthy relationship between project managers and line managers is essential since project managers can manage only those resources made available to them by line managers (Kerzner, 1995:10-11).

In a bureaucratic setup, the project manager bears a heavy responsibility but has little authority. As a result, the project manager is forced to resort to “interface management”, which is described by Wilmon and Cicero (Kerzner, 1995:11) as follows:

- Managing human interrelationships in the project organisation.
- Maintaining the balance between technical and managerial project functions.
- Coping with the risks associated with project management.
- Overcoming organisational restraints.

Kerzner (1995:17) compares success in project management to a three-legged stool. The first leg is the project manager, the second leg is the line manager and the third leg is senior management. If any of the legs fail, even delicate balancing will not prevent the stool from toppling over. The critical mode in project management is therefore the project manager/line manager interface. The two should view each other as equals and be willing to share authority, responsibility and accountability**.**

2.4.4 Knowledge areas for project management

Project management is an instrument derived from the private sector. It involves a number of processes aimed at realising the strategic objectives of an organisation.

The project management body of knowledge (PMBOK) describes project management under nine knowledge areas (Bunce, 199:6-7). Kerzner and Van Baalen concur that these knowledge areas form the heart of project management.

- Project integrated management, which entails a process to ensure that co-ordination and integration occur between the various elements of the project.

- Project scope management, which sets parameters as to what is in and what is outside the project. It covers the title and aim of the project as well as the problem statement. The project scope includes the processes and work required to complete the project successfully.

- Project time management, which ensures timely completion of the project. It consists of activity definition, activity sequencing, duration estimation, calendar establishment, schedule development and time control.

- Project quality management, which ensures that the project satisfies the needs for which it is undertaken. It includes determining the quality condition, quality planning, quality assurance and quality control of the project.

- Project human resource management, which ensures that optimal use is made of the people involved in the project. It covers organisation planning, staff acquisition and team development.

- Project communications management, which ensures proper collection and dissemination of project information. It covers communication, planning, information distribution, project meetings, progress reporting and administrative closure.

- Project risk management, which is the process that identifies, analyses and responds to project risk. It includes risk identification, risk quantification, response development and risk control.

- Project procurement management, which covers the acquisition of goods and services from outside the project team. It involves procurement planning, resource selection, contract administration and contract close-out.

2.4.5 Brown's approach to project management implementation

Any organisation that wishes to transform from a functionally structured organisation to a project management type of organisation cannot succeed without the strategic intervention of top management. Such transformation may be faced with challenges such as resistance to change generally and apprehension about undergoing a paradigm shift to a project-driven type of culture (Brown, 199:33-34).

Brown's model is based on the acceptance of the formal hierarchical structure as a basis for a project management approach on which is superimposed a "network" linking various inputs from different functions (Brown, 1999:34). This model has been summarised by Brown in a seven-step implementation plan:

1. Plan the implementation process carefully.

2. Top management demonstrates its unequivocal support for a transition to the project way of goal achievement.

3. Establish a multifunctional project management steering committee.

4. Determine the work breakdown structure (WBS) of the project.

5. Establish time scales so as to give the process a goal and meaning.

6. Determine and manage the cost of the implementation process.

7. Continuous evaluation by the steering committee is crucial.

During project implementation, issues regarding power relations in the organisation may arise. These issues may impact negatively on the organisation if not handled carefully. The following points should be borne in mind.

- For the purpose and duration of the project, the functional structure is of little consequence.
- The functionaries (team members) are faced with the dual responsibilities of having to report vertically (intra-functional) to the functional head and horizontally (trans-functional) to the project manager**.**
- The specific skill input of a functionary is subordinate to the overall objective of the project goal.

Brown has identified factors that inhibit project management application and they are as follows:

- Resistance to change, because the project structures, leadership styles, and information, planning and control system are departures from traditional management
- Due to the diversity of project scope ,acceptance of a singular (i.e. universal) project management methodology, will invariably lead to frustration and resistance from the project managers on smaller projects, who see it as too much extra work, not “justified” for a smaller project
- Top management resists because additional management overhead is created as well as additional staff mainly administrative, required.The tendency of top management is therefore to keep people in their present posts and to just load the managing of projects onto their “normal” functional workload.

- People being driven by loyalty to their primary function, i.e. t first and foremost promote their professional, functional skills in a parochial sense. This leads typically to a “prima donna” propensity that could mean untouchable, inflexible and not inclined to share with others
- Absence of a “team culture”, i.e. failure to work together with and or take orders from people outside one’s own functional division.
- Low cost (money) and time sensitivity. Project management is by definition concerned with performance, time and cost efficiency and consequently orientation to it is a success factor of critical importance(Kerzner,1992)
- The organisation structure. Most functional organizations do not provide for, or even facilitate non-functional management,i.e the management of activities outside the jurisdiction of a function’s hierarchy.
- Several factors pertaining to financial management were found by Brown to impede on effective project management implementation and functioning. Firstly alack of or insufficient incentives to perform on any or all of the project management success factors. Secondly, zero based annual budgeting instead of continuous project budgeting and thirdly a financial management system which does not include an autonomous activity and output-oriented cost management system.
- Occasionally, statutory constraints may be inhibiting to project management, for example specific auditory requirements, the appointment of personnel and the actions of unions

The implications of Brown’s approach are that successful application of project management in large organisations, and therefore also the public sector, depends on the ability of the organisation to institute such an approach. Factors such as managerial commitment, resource availability and reporting lines are crucial as discussed above. This is even more relevant to project management approaches in the public sector and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Brown’s approach will also be used to assess project management approaches in the Department of Social Services, Population and Development (DSSPD) in Mpumalanga.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter defined project management and made comparisons between operations and projects so that the two can be distinguished easily in the DSSPD. The chapter also considered the major project management approaches, some of which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter and compared with the approaches used in the DSSP

Chapter 3

Interviews and Case Study: Case Study of the Department of Social Services, Population and Development in Mpumalanga (DSSPD)

3.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters focused on the literature study of project management and its approaches. This chapter documents a case study where programme and project managers in the DSSPD were interviewed on the approaches they followed in implementing project management. An analysis of every approach could not be done separately due to time constraints and because this document is more of a report than a dissertation.

The Chief Directorate: Social Welfare Programmes was considered a suitable source of information on the approaches used and was selected because the senior managers, programme managers and front line workers were available and willing to give details on how they implemented projects. They also suggested the topic for this research.

A detailed discussion of the project management approaches in the case study will be followed by a consideration of the Project Management Section of the DSSPD, which provides guidelines to programme managers on project implementation. Detailed project management approaches for the department as provided by the Project Management Section will be dealt with separately from the general interviews conducted with programme managers.

The results of the interviews with 16 respondents will be discussed to give a general idea of the project management approaches in the department. The overall approaches of the Chief Directorate: Social Welfare Programmes and the Project Management Section in the department were analyzed to derive an overview of the project management process.

Programme managers in the DSSPD were interviewed in order to ascertain how project managers in the department implement projects in their various sections. The sample included almost everyone in the Chief Directorate: Social Welfare Programmes. Managers interviewed were from Community Development, Planning and Information, Not-for-Profit Organisations, Disability and Older Persons, Child and Family Care, and the Chief Director: Social Welfare, Poverty Alleviation and Capacity Building Programme.

The managers interviewed ranged from middle level to senior level. Before the interview results are presented, some background information will be given and the details of each approach/step discussed.

3.2 Background to the case study: Mpumalanga Department of Social Services, Population and Development

The Department of Social Services, Population and Development (DSSPD) was established after the 1999 general elections. Previously, the DSSPD was regarded as a branch of the Department of Health and Welfare Following the 1999 elections, these services were elevated to the level of a department with its own political head.

The areas of responsibility of the DSSPD are described in the Constitution of RSA (1996), Chapter 2, Clauses 24 and 28. In essence, the DSSPD aims at protecting the rights of children and vulnerable people and providing integrated social development services for all citizens in the province.

The DSSPD is also guided by the White Paper on Social Welfare, which was drafted in 1996 by the National Department of Social Development. The White Paper gives broad guidelines on how services should be rendered. The different provinces have to ensure that they implement the proposed strategies using appropriate implementation mechanisms at their disposal.

The DSSPD was faced with human resource problems when it was established in 1999 as all support personnel remained with the Department of Health. Once the new structure had been designed and approved by the provincial legislature, the DSSPD began to fill vacant posts. One of the strategic positions created was that of Deputy Director: Project Management with the mission of fast-tracking projects and advising management on project management implementation within the department.

When the post of Deputy Director: Project Management was created, it was not clear as to what was expected of the incumbent. No other staff members had been appointed in that unit, and the only budget allocated was for the maintenance of all buildings by the department.

The DSSPD is guided by the vision (2003:5). “A dynamic department promoting integrated social development for all.”

The department’s mission (2003:5) is to “promote integrated social development for all through the provision of social welfare, social security and development in Mpumalanga”.

The DSSPD has committed itself to the following values.

- Honesty and integrity
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Collective accountability
- Consistency

Based on its core functions and constitutional mandate, the DSSPD identified the following priorities.

- Strengthening of child protection services.
- Expansion of poverty alleviation initiatives.
- Accelerating of access to social grants to all eligible beneficiaries.
- Consolidating partnerships with local government to enhance integrated planning and social development.
- Building integrated service delivery teams at local levels.
- Improving service delivery infrastructure and human resource capacity.

3.3 Analysis of the project management approaches followed by the DSSPD

As indicated in Chapter 1, the structured interviews yielded personal views and qualified answers through probing and prompting. A tape recorder was used (with the permission of the respondents) during the interviews, which assisted in accurately recording the responses after the interviews. Brown's approach to project management implementation was modified by the researcher and used in the interviews.

3.3.1 Planning of implementation process

The respondent indicated that the Project Management Sub directorate was always involved in the crisis management of "so-called projects". If any work had to be done and management was not sure who was best suited to do it, it was referred to this sub directorate.

The project manager would collaborate with the relevant section to manage the crisis without a proper or formalised plan. He/She would also consult with top management on a regular basis to make sure that the project was being

implemented with their approval. The project manager depended a lot on project managers in other departments who had experienced similar situations.

3.3.2 Top management support for the process

The respondent indicated that most of the projects were allocated to him in terms of top management directives. He thought that top management did not fully understand how project management should be instituted in the department. By appointing a project manager, they imagined that he/she could do anything in the name of project without strategic and structural support.

The respondent said that top management should come up with a strategy on how the unit should function and provide guidance to the other sections in implementing project management.

3.3.3 Establishing a multifunctional project management steering committee

According to the respondent, when he has to undertake a project as designated by top management, he works with different sections. It is always a problem, according to him, to work with people without knowledge of and interest in project management.

3.3.4 Determining the work breakdown structure

The respondent stated that, when he implements projects, he relies on other managers and other project managers regarding what steps should be taken. The opportunity of sitting down with the team involved and devising an approach is not available. He further indicated that, in most cases, they do achieve project objectives but under difficult conditions. At present, projects are implemented in a haphazard way.

3.3.5 Establishing a project time scale

According to the respondent, top management generally determines the time frames of projects. He as a project manager rarely plans the time frame of a project because the project is usually too late already.

3.3.6 Determining and managing the cost of implementation progress

The respondent stated that in most cases the line managers or programme managers involved in a particular project use their own budget to support the activities of the project. It is not certain that the project will have its own budget. For example, the political head (MEC) will indicate to management that a particular project has to be undertaken. It becomes the responsibility of that particular line manager or programme manager to ensure that the project is initiated and completed within the time frame proposed by the MEC. Sometimes managers involve him (the respondent) as a project manager and sometimes not. These are some of the problems the department has to contend with.

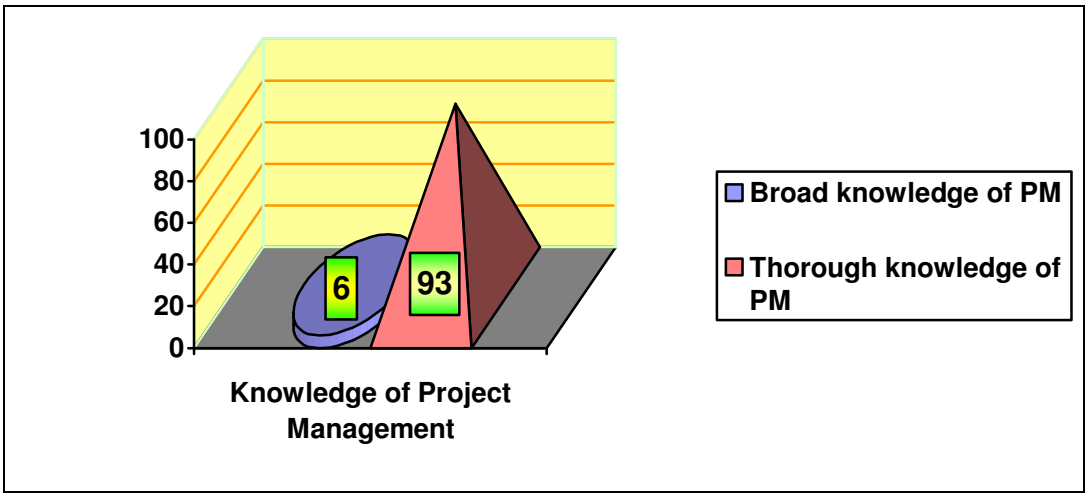
3.3.7 Evaluating the project management implementation process

The respondent indicated that the projects implemented by the department are usually of a crisis nature. Evaluation can generally not be done during implementation. Evaluation normally takes place at the end of the project on an ad hoc basis because no specific format or approach is followed in implementing projects.

3.4 Interview analysis of project management approaches in the department

Sixteen programme managers were interviewed. The interview questions were analysed one by one, which will assist in giving details of all responses.

3.4.1 What is your understanding of project management, and do you think project management is implemented in the DSSPD?



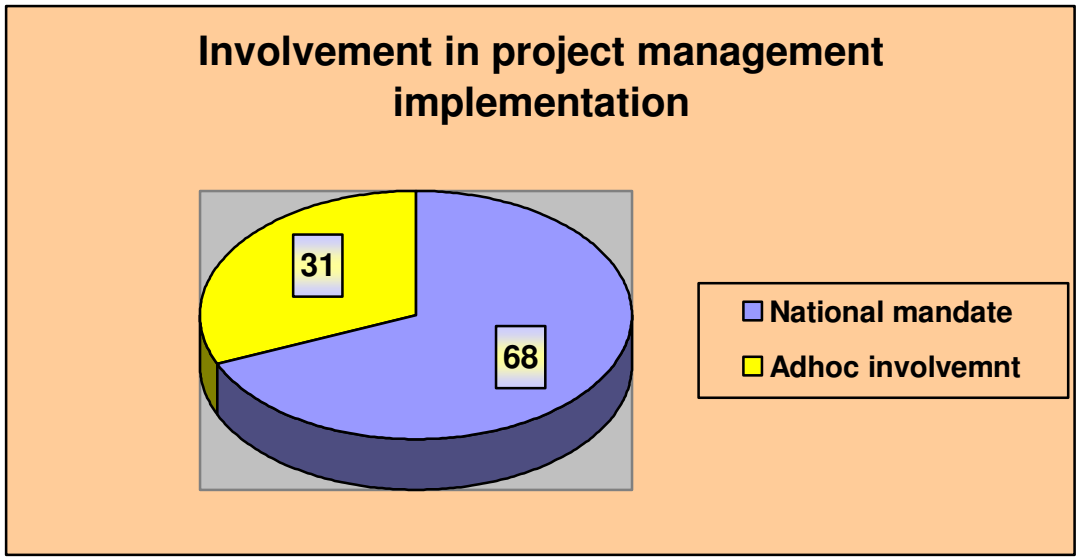
Six (25%) of the respondents had broad knowledge of project management and also thought that project management is implemented in the department; 93 (75%) had a thorough knowledge and indicated that project management is not properly implemented in the department.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that some of the projects are directives from the national department in the form of conditional grants. The national government provides assistance in interpreting data and monitoring projects; feedback is sometimes used to deal with blockages in the project implementation process.

Some of the projects are used to fast-track service delivery in a specific field or to ensure that provinces implement national priorities. Twenty-five percent of the respondents confirmed that national projects allow them to fast-track delivery and also give them the opportunity to plan and sustain projects as a province when the conditional grant is exhausted. They further stated that this sometimes also has a

negative effect on service delivery because some projects need resources, which are provided for in the conditional grant.

3.4.2 Are you involved in project management implementation? (please indicate in what way and clearly indicate your role in project management implementation)



Sixty-eight (75%) of the respondents indicated that the national government or top management mandated them to implement certain projects. They played an active role as project leaders by working together with other managers. Thirty-one (25%) indicated that they were involved in project management on an ad hoc basis and were instructed by their supervisors. They indicated that they were drawn into projects without clear roles and guidelines.

3.4.3 How has project management been instituted in the DSSPD in terms of capacity building, budgeting, human resources, and so on?

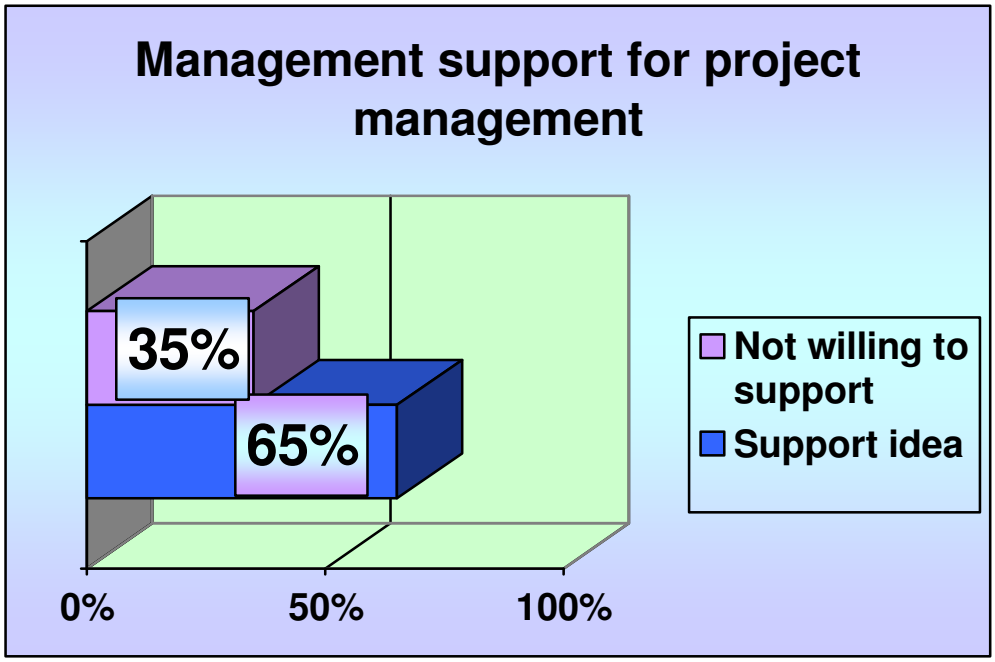
Surprisingly, 75% of the respondents did not make any institutional arrangements in implementing projects. They also did not conduct proper research; they believed that project management strategies can be applied in any situation without a formal institution process.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents did consider institutional arrangements when they were implementing projects. They indicated that they did check the structure of the department as they thought this could help them achieve their project goals. They also considered the resources needed for use in the project implementation process.

3.4.4 How is the support of top management with regard to the above?

Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated that top management wanted to institute project management in the department but did not know how to go about it. Their giving managers resources to implement projects and the appointment of a project manager is proof of their willingness to institute the process.

Thirty-five percent of the respondents indicated that top management did not support the implementation of project management, did not allocate resources to projects and did not support project activities taking place within the department.



3.4.5 Which of these approaches/steps do you follow when implementing project management in the DSSPD?

The respondents were asked to give a brief explanation of how each step was followed. The steps are planning of the process itself, top management support, establishing a multifunctional project management steering committee, determining the work breakdown structure, establishing the project time scale, determining and managing the costs of the implementation process and evaluating the project management implementation process.

All the respondents did not rigidly follow the steps indicated in the literature, some of the steps were not followed at all and other steps were followed at the same time.

The following steps were followed by some of the respondents; others followed only a few of the steps.

Planning the process itself

As many as 47,5% of the respondents had been asked by the national department and/or top management to embark on a specific project with instructions (conditions) on how the project should be implemented.

Although they endeavored to interpret the conditions and tailor them to their own environment, the core function of the projects remained as required nationally. In the case of all the respondents, the process of project management implementation started only after those in power (senior managers) mandated the process.

Top management support

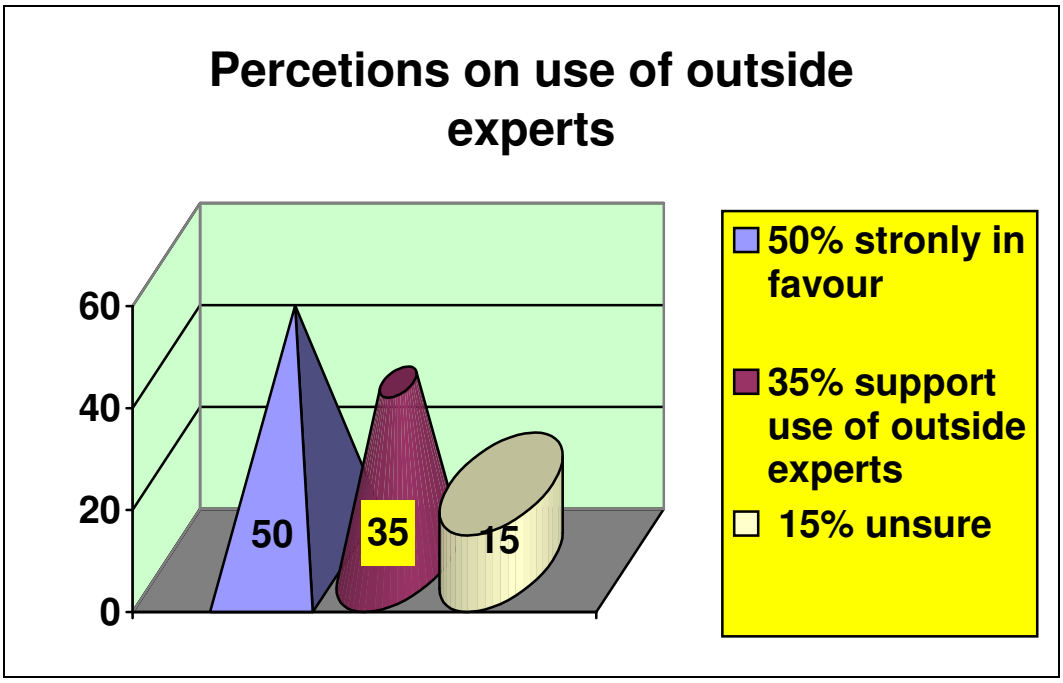
All the respondents said that senior management's support was indicated by the fact that they mandated all projects, but when the projects were actually implemented, minimal or no support was shown in terms of the provision of resources.

Establishing project time scale

All the respondents indicated that in respect of all national projects, time frames were attached to the conditions; this also applied to all senior management projects.

Determining and managing the costs of the implementation process

Twelve (5%) of the respondents did not manage the costs or implementation of the projects assigned to them.
Forty-three (75%) used outside experts to mange the process and the costs.
Forty-three (75%) managed their own project costs and the implementation process. They also relied on their own knowledge and experience.
Fifty percent of the respondents thought that using outside expertise speeded up the process and ensured that projects were completed on time and within the budget; 25% said that their projects did not need any outside expertise and were completed on time. Thirty-five percent maintained that that not using outside expertise slowed down the implementation process and affected the quality of the project results negatively; 15% were are unsure whether using outside expertise had any effect or not.



Evaluation of the project management implementation process

All the respondents said that evaluation was not done on a regular basis – only closing reports were written and submitted to either the national department or top management. They further mentioned that where outside expertise was used, minimal evaluation was done.

3.4.6 Are approaches or steps followed in the DSSPD, other than the above? (Please explain)

All the respondents followed most of the steps discussed above, although sometimes not in great detail.

3.4.7 What are the major obstacles to effective project management implementation in the DSSPD? (please list them)

- Lack of guidance and capacity on how project management should be implemented.
- Lack of co-operation from other line managers during the implementation process.
- Confusing role of the project manager in the department.
- Shortage of resources (human and financial) to implement projects.
- Lack of top management support for and interest in project management activities.
- Lack of teamwork.
- Interface with key stakeholders

3.5. Conclusion

Planning of the project management process is one of the steps that the majority of the respondents took very lightly – they tended to implement projects without proper planning. Most of the respondents did not use consultants properly, and there was no indication of any process for transferring skills from the consultants.

Projects were generally implemented in a rushed manner to meet deadlines, and little monitoring of the process took place. The findings from this chapter will be compared with what the literature have identified as good practice in project management. The comparison will assist the research team in devising generic approaches for implementing project management in the department.

Chapter 4

Comparison of the Theoretical Perspective with the Practice in the DSSPD in Implementing Project Management

4.1 Application of Brown's strategy for project management implementation

The implementation of project management in organisations is a complex process that requires careful planning. It is complex because it calls for adaptations in many functional areas. Brown's strategy for the implementation of project management will provide an overview of how to transform an organisation from a functionally oriented undertaking into a project driven organisation. Areas covered in this exercise will include: mind shift to project management, organisation's undertakings, and the relative importance of projects as well as financial management systems. Brown's strategy enables us to purposefully focus on administrative and operational feasibility as well as considerations regarding the institutionalisation of a project management approach.

4.2 Mind shift to project management

Any organisation that seeks to transform itself from a functionally structured organisation (hierarchical) to a project-driven arrangement cannot succeed without the strategic intervention of top management. In short this means there should be senior management buy-in since this transformation is likely to result in some form of resistance to change or to transform to the unknown, untested waters. This change will also demand a paradigm shift to a project driven type of culture (Brown, 1999: 33-34). The DSSPD is not a project driven organisation, and apparently there's a move in that direction in the short to medium term. Though some officials have been capacitated in project management and a sub directorate set, the inclination is more towards status quo management rather than project management. This arrangement rubs off on the planning unit of which project

management is part, as indicated by the minimal support it enjoys from top management.

The DSSPD is to a large extent a functionally driven organisation with clear-cut power relations in terms of its structure. Therefore, even though Brown recommends that a project manager should enjoy special status in the organisation, this is likely to be shot down in the DSSPD as this arrangement encroaches into other people's positions by suggesting that for the purpose and duration of the project, the functional structure is of little consequence (Brown, 1999). It could also create some problems by requiring functionaries (project team members) to report both vertically (intra-functionally) to the functional head and also horizontally (trans-functionally) towards the project manager. The DSSPD is currently way off the mark in terms of transforming towards a projectorised arrangement. This results in projects being implemented by the line function officials with no distinct beginning and end point. Projects are only projects in so far as their limited lifespan is concerned. The potential therefore exists to institutionalise a project management approach in the Department on the basis of the specific factors identified by Brown. In particular, ownership, funding, organisational location and clarity on roles and responsibilities are of great importance.

On the question of special financial arrangements, the DSSPD is a beneficiary of a number of donors (foreign and locally based), which include the business sector as well as NGOs. The DSSPD serves as coordinator, and foreign donors prefer to send their own project managers or sometimes engage consultants. Most donors have their own bank account and are fully responsible for the management of their funds.

4.3 The organisation's undertakings

The DSSPD mandate is to deliver quality social services in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. This ideal is captured succinctly in the DSSPD's mission statement. However, this is a very big challenge which can be addressed through both operational management and project management.

The DSSPD is one of the key departments in the Mpumalanga Province. Its undertakings comprises of a variety of activities divided into sections which cover a broad spectrum ranging from social security, poverty alleviation, child protection, older persons, poverty alleviation, HIV and Aids, Social Crime Prevention, Substance Abuse ,financial management, human resource management, logistics as well as special projects. Most of the activities performed in the fall within the realm of operational management. However, there are also certain undertakings that can be broken down into smaller deterministic work packages. These fall within the domain of project management. For example, the project management section.

Since project management is concerned with performance, time, as well as cost efficiency, the DSSPD may have to provide for non-functional management outside the hierarchical structure. In the transformation of the DSSPD, projects are central to the department's attempt to make a complete break with the past. The implementation of developmental approach in the department straddles the line between operations management and project management. The reason for this is that the DSSPD is more of a functionally driven organisation.

4.4 Financial management system

The DSSPD will have to implement operational restructuring in order to provide for activity-based costing and control (Brown, 1999:36). This financial management system will have to include an autonomous activity-and-output-orientated cost management system. The DSSPD's move away from the zero-based annual budgeting system to an incremental budgeting system is a welcome innovation.

Inhibiting factors in the DSSPD may include the newly introduced Basic Accounting System (BAS) as well as actions of unions. But if top management commit themselves to the complex transformation process, the rest may be solved through capacity building of the workforce. The post-level system of remunerating public servants will have to be reformed to allow for project manager posts and levels (Brown, 1999:36).

The project manager will have to enjoy a special status in the DSSPD. This means a salary which is commensurate with the work and responsibility carried. The DSSPD also needs to establish a structured career path for project managers, without which there is very little motivation to venture into that area.

It is, however, acknowledged that most projects currently implemented by the DSSPD result from donor funds channeled into South Africa through a number of agencies and also per national department's directives. The DSSPD's autonomy in the use of the funds is very limited. Most donor countries prescribe as to how the money is to be expended including the national department of Social development.

The DSSPD can use the project management sub directorate unit to actively take charge of projects. This will be possible if top management is willing to give this unit the freedom to establish data bases pertaining to project planning and information systems.

4.5 Institutional arrangements

The successful implementation of project management requires that the functionally driven structure be adapted to suit a project management approach. Consequently, this calls for the creation and filling of extra functional management positions, which will have to be in a particular relationship with line function managers, as well as project customers (Brown, 1999:36)

Project management approaches are in line with what Government wants to do. Government encourages team work in the sectors of the public service. The network structure propagated in project management is conducive to the new personnel performance management system. The DSSPD can use this performance management system to integrate the implementation of its human resources policies to be more client oriented in line with the BATHO PELE principles.

Project management is a participative management technique which seeks to commit individuals to contribute effectively to the success of the project. The team should have the right mixture of skills, abilities and experience (Baguley, 1995:104). In the DSSPD, the culture of team work and team spirit is at its lowest ebb. People are more concerned about positions in the hierarchy, which leads to competition and conflict at all fronts.

4.4 Application of programme and project management approaches

As already alluded to in Chapter 3, project management can be defined as “a set of principles, methods, tools, and techniques for the effective management of objective-oriented work in the context of a specific and unique organisational environment”.

When looking at the definition of project management, it is apparent that this is a management technique which can be used to exercise effective control over resources. Project management is characterised by five critical elements, namely, scope, organisation, time, cost and quality. On the other hand operations management is viewed as status quo management. This is preferred by functionally driven organisations like the DSSPD, with project management becoming a side issue.

With Government's move away from input-driven operations to an output and goal-orientated way of doing things, project management approaches have grown in popularity. The DSSPD's modus operandi requires that both project management and operations management be accommodated. The normal functions that are guided by the core business of the DSSPD, which take place in the three regions within the Mpumalanga Province, can be attained through operations management. There are, however, certain supporting or once-off undertakings that create the enabling environment for the implementation of the core business plan. These include poverty related projects, the capacity building of social workers and other office-based staff, the distribution of food parcels and many more. Such activities are ideally suited to a project management approach.

4.7 Project management processes and life cycles

Project management processes refer to a series of tasks or activities aimed at realising the objectives of a project. These tasks are organised into five groups, namely: initiation, planning, execution, controlling as well as closing. These process groups are iterated, with one completed process becoming an input to a subsequent group. In the DSSPD, the initiation process can be done by means of feasibility studies which can be conducted internally or outsourced. Projects in DSSPD can be approved as a result of one of the following:

- A change in service delivery approach (Developmental approach).

- Allocated conditional grant by national department with specific conditions.

- A stakeholders' request, for example one of the newly established welfare organisation may request DSSPD to capacitate them in order to be able to perform.

- A technological advance, for example information technology (IT) has revolutionalised the functioning of Government.

Depending on a person or group's perception of the above stimuli, these can sometimes be called problems, opportunities or even threats. But whatever project is embarked upon, it should eventually be supportive of the DSSPD's strategic goals.

Planning processes depend largely on the nature of the project in terms of its size and scope. Project management planning processes may be divided into two groups, namely core processes and facilitating processes.

When planning for projects the DSSPD can ensure that the amount of planning done is commensurate with the scope of the project. Project plans should however not be cast in stone. Flexibility is necessary if there is a need to go back to the drawing board and thus avoid wastage of resources. Core processes form the backbone of any project and may be performed in the same way in different projects. On the other hand facilitating processes are dependent on the nature of a project.

Executing processes involve carrying out the plan and include both core processes and facilitating processes. The DSSPD can move towards team development during this process. The focus is on carrying out the plan as designed. During project execution, quality assurance should be conducted regularly to ensure that the product or service would live up to the set standards. In the case of the DSSPD, quality assurance can be done by establishing and staffing a unit that will

specialise in this field. Presently, quality assurance is left in the hands of line function officials who may not have the capacity to do it. During project execution information becomes the life-blood of the project. All projects' stakeholders should have access to information.

Controlling processes are also performed during project implementation. These processes are vital to ensure that deviations from the plan are nipped in the bud. The separation of roles and functions between line function officials and project team members can enable the DSSPD to do justice to these controlling processes. These controlling processes contain both core processes and facilitating processes (PMBOK).

Lastly, closing processes involve all administrative activities that characterise a project that has reached a stage of completion. In the case of the DSSPD, project close-out means the expiry of the duration of the project. This normally involves the withdrawal of the funder. The impression created in this phase is that the project will be sustained, whereas practically this is not the case.

4.8 Knowledge areas of project management

In order to achieve the overall objectives of the project, both core planning processes and supporting processes should be considered. According to Burke (in Van Baalen, 2000:196) Project Management Body of Knowledge areas of scope, time, cost and quality are the four core elements which ensure that a project is delivered as per objectives. The other knowledge areas are supporting processes. These include integration, human resources, communication, risk, procurement and contract. The usefulness of these knowledge areas in the DSSPD will be discussed briefly below:

- Through project integration the DSSPD can integrate the three main project management processes of planning, execution and control by combining inputs from all the other knowledge areas (Van Baalen, 2000:196).

- Project scope management determines what is in, and what is outside the project. This exercise is undertaken to meet the sponsors and stakeholders goals and objectives. Before any project is implemented in the DSSPD, a consultation process can ensure that relevant stakeholders' participate instead of bringing projects in a top-down fashion.

- Project time management can be used by the DSSPD to ensure that projects are completed on time.

- Project cost management can greatly assist in saving the limited resources at the DSSPD's disposal. This will ensure that projects are completed within approved budget (Van Baalen, 2000:197).

- Project quality management can ensure that the DSSPD delivers services that will satisfy the needs of project beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

- Project human resource management can enable the DSSPD to get the most out of its human resources.

- Project communications management is the lifeblood of any project. This ensures that information flows within the project stakeholders. During project planning and implementation, the DSSPD can have a mechanism that will ensure that communication planning, information distribution, project meetings, progress reporting and administrative closure are tasks that are not left at the hands of line function staff who may not have direct interest in the project.

- Project risk management is a proactive management process that can be used by the DSSPD to minimise that element of risk in its undertakings. It includes having built-in contingency plans during project planning.

- Lastly, project procurement management ensures that goods and services are made available to the project team from outside sources.

According to Turner in Van Baalen (2000:197), the two knowledge areas of scope and organisation are mandatory to any project. Without scope there is no project and without organisation there is no implementation. These two are hard constraints, which the DSSPD should treat as priority issues

4.9 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to illustrate the application of theoretical frameworks developed in this study, which include policy process and management, policy implementation approaches as well as project management within the realm of development planning. This chapter attempts to use the information discussed in Chapter 3 (case study) to apply the theoretical frameworks.

From the discussion of the case study, it is clear that the officials at the strategic apex of the DSSPD are still faced with an enormous challenge of having to transform the organisation and still deliver a quality product within the limited resources at their disposal. Lessons of experience have been drawn from the discussion of the various theories in the text and their application in this chapter. Key findings as well as recommendations and conclusions of the study as a whole will be spelt out in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters compared project management approaches as outlined in the literature with the DSSPD's culture of project management implementation.

5.2 Conclusions on the implementation of project management

The reasons for the selection of project management approaches to policy implementation challenges and improving service delivery are discussed in Chapter 4, and are in response to objective 3 in section 1.4. Conceptual frameworks and definitions are drawn from a variety of sources and are carefully used in order to reach out to a number of policy practitioners who may not be academics. It is in this chapter where the relevance of project management approaches is suggested as a strategic tool for strategic change and development in the public sector. A detailed discussion on the application of project management, with regard to its process and life cycles, knowledge areas as well as institutional arrangements has been done in the previous chapters (Chapters 3 and 4). Some of the key findings discussed in Chapter 5 include the following:

- The value of project management in the public sector has grown in stature over the past seven years. It is however, acknowledged that project management gained its prominence in the construction and engineering sector. Ultimately, its value as a profit driven approach has also been systematically translated to the public sector, and has proved its usefulness in government, NGOs as well as CBOs.

- Project management approaches should be in line with the management system and management style in government, since its application in the public sector is different from the private sector.

- Institutional arrangements for the implementation of project management approaches call for a fundamental shift in organisational culture.

- All statutory frameworks guiding project management implementation are different from those in the public sector.

- Contracting and tendering procedures in the public sector are different from those applied in the private sector.

- Project management approaches have become popular in the public sector regarding policy management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, as well as strategic and business planning.

In conclusion, the above discussion (which is comprehensively covered in Chapter 4) confirms the fundamental shift of focus in government from an input driven to a more output driven organisation which seeks to respond to the challenges posed by globalisation.

5.3 Conclusions: The case study

The case study of the Mpumalanga Department of Social Service Population and Development (DSSPD) is presented to illustrate the usefulness of particular selected theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3 and in addition the usefulness of Brown's theoretical framework as outlined in the same chapter. Some specific findings relating to the case study include:

- Brown's strategy for the implementation of project management identified the need for strategic intervention by top management as a precondition in transforming formerly functionally driven organisations into projectorised undertakings. Issues like ownership of the process, strategic appointments (labour force), relative importance of projects to the organisation as well as financial considerations (separate budget) have been identified as critical for project management implementation.

- Project management approaches, including operations management have a role to play in the management of the DSSPD. The participative nature of the process as well as team building is in line with what Government wants to do.

    - According to Bryson (1991), project management is one of the strategic planning approaches learned from the private sector that can help government and non-profit organisations, as well as communities and other entities, deal effectively with their dramatically changing environments. The findings indicated clearly that the majority of project and programme managers in the department are not trained in project management and that no clear guidelines or support is provided for project management implementers.
    - The use of outside consultants is recommended, but planning should be done in such a way that skills transfer takes place during the process. This implies that consultants should work hand in hand with project managers and programme managers. The views of project and programme managers help ensure that the project covers all aspects of the problem and is focused on the goals of the institution. The involvement of project management specialists could assist the DSSPD in dealing with project management issues.
    - The DSSPD should train more people in project management so that they can implement successful projects and promote organisational efficiency.

- Project management approaches, including operations management, have a role to play in the management of the DSSPD. The participative nature of the process as well as team building is in line with government objectives.

The application of specific theoretical frameworks to the case of the DSSPD shows that these frameworks can be used by Government in solidifying public /private partnerships.

Chapter 2 covered the application of project management in respect of its processes and life cycles, knowledge areas, Brown's approach and institutional arrangements.

5.4 Observations and recommendations

- The value of project management in the public sector has increased over the past seven years although project management first gained prominence in the construction and engineering sector. As a profit-driven approach, it has proved its usefulness in government, NGOs and CBOs.

- Project management approaches should be in line with the management style in government, which is different from the style in the private sector.

- Institutional arrangements for the implementation of project management approaches call for a fundamental shift in the organisational culture in the DSSPD.

- Statutory frameworks guiding project management implementation in the private sector are different from those in the public sector.

- Contracting and tendering procedures in the public sector are different from those applied in the private sector, and they can influence the failure or success of the project management implementation.

- Projects should be clearly explained to those who will be affected by the projects to ensure better understanding and acceptance. The DSSPD is apparently ignoring this important requirement; the department seems to focus on managers and ignore the majority of people who will be affected by the project itself. Project plans and proposals should therefore be work-shopped with everyone who will be affected by the project.

- Project management approaches have become popular in the public sector in respect of policy management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, as well as strategic and business planning.

- Government should conduct a thorough study of project management in order to devise the best project management approach. Without such knowledge, projects could end up being understood only by the project designers and may not be implementable.

- Use of tools such as the ghantt charts and work breakdown structure to monitor project management implementation processes can be used within DSSPD

The above discussion (which is comprehensively covered in Chapters 2) confirms the fundamental shift of focus in government from an input driven to a more output driven approach that seeks to respond to the challenges posed by globalisation.

The key findings and conclusions of this study indicate that the objectives set out in Section 1.4 of Chapter 1 have been met. The following concluding statements can therefore be made.

This study recommends that project management should take its rightful place in the South African public sector. Project management should be implemented in respect of policy formulation, development planning, monitoring and evaluation as well as strategic and business planning.

5.4 Conclusion

This research report has attempted to respond to the many questions pertaining to project management implementation. Chapter 2 explains how project management can be employed as a partial solution to service delivery challenges. The emphasis is on how programmes and projects can be used to give effect to public policies. Monitoring and evaluation are also shown to be indispensable instruments in ensuring that the strategic objectives of an organisation are realised.

The rationale for project management as a partial solution to implementation challenges is confirmed by an analysis of the five key dimensions of project management as well as of the life cycle of a project.

Chapter 3 documents the DSSPD case study in regard to the department's composition and the management of its policies for reconstruction and development. The case study outlines the current situation in the DSSPD with regard to institutional arrangements, management approaches, policy frameworks as well as programme and project management.

Chapter 4 discusses the application of selected theoretical frameworks to the DSSPD with the emphasis on Brown's approach to the implementation of project management.

Chapter 5 briefly discusses the key findings reached and the recommendations made on the basis of information gathered in the previous chapter.

This study has shown that project management in the public sector can make a significant contribution to economic development in South Africa. Project management can fast-track delivery not only in South Africa but on the continent as a whole. A project management approach can help realise President Thabo Mbeki dream of an African Renaissance.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INTERVIEWS

1. What is your understanding of project management, and do you think project management is implemented at DSSPD?
2. Are you involved in project management implementation (please indicate in what way, and clearly indicate your role in project management implementation)
3. How is project management instituted in the DSSPD in terms of capacity building, budgeting, human resources, research, etc?
4. How is the support of top management with regard to the above?
5. Which of these approaches/steps do you follow when implementing project management in the DSSPD? Provide a brief explanation or necessary details of how each step was used.

5.1 Planning of the process itself
5.2 Top management support
5.3 Establishing multifunctional project management steering committee
5.4 Determining the work breakdown structure
5.5 Establishing project time scale
5.6 Determining and managing the costs of the implementation process
5.7 Evaluating the project management implementation process

6. Are there approaches or steps followed in the DSSPD other than the above? (Please explain.)
7. Which factors do you consider as major obstacles to effective project management implementation in the DSSPD? (Please mention them.)

APPENDIX B

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

TITLE	**PROGRAMME**
1. Chief Director	Social welfare programmes
2. Director	Planning and information
3. Director	Community development
4. Director	Welfare services
5. Programme Manager	Capacity building
6. Programme Manager	Not-for-profit organisations
7. Programme Manager	Poverty alleviation
8. Programme Manager	HIV and AIDS
9. Deputy Director	Project management
10. Programme manager	Women issues
11. Programme Manager	Substance abuse
12. Programme Manager	Disability and older persons