Assessing Public Administration Performance

Making best use of the existing assessment tools

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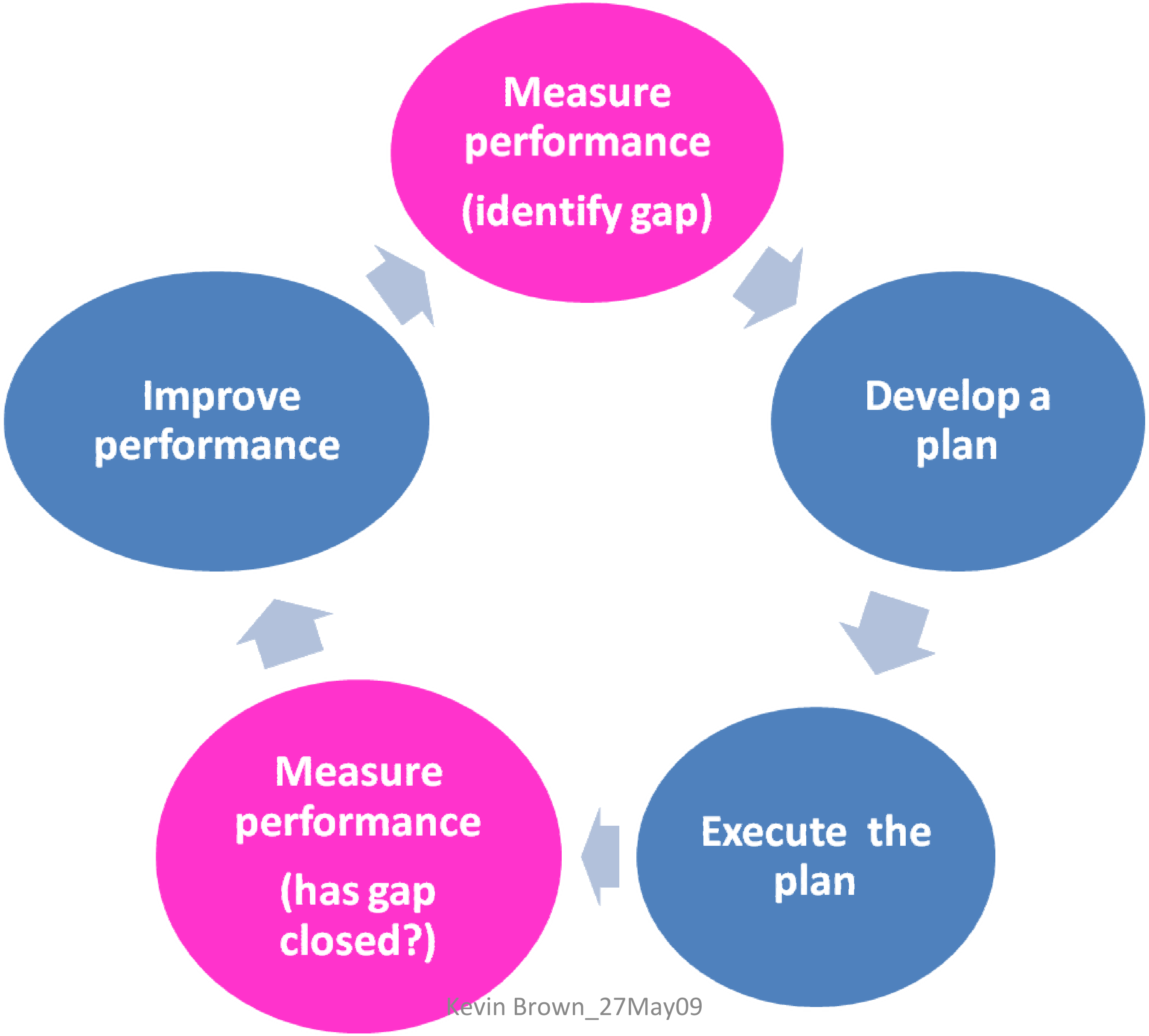
Structure of Session

- Measurement in context
- Existing assessment tools
- Key dimensions of tools
  - objectives
  - indicators
  - methodology
- Ownership
- Case study

You cannot fatten the chicken by weighing him

Measurement is not an end



The Users' Guide
Classification of Assessment Tools

- ❑Public financial management [7]
- ❑Public human resource management [7]
- ❑Government policy making [4]
- ❑Service delivery [4]
- ❑Leadership [2]

What is missing?

Assessment Tools
Scope and Issues

- Reasonable range of assessment tools – different sources, many designed by donor agencies
- Many tools which measure PFM and public HRM
- **None measure the breadth of public administration** [Common Assessment Framework?]
- Single theme tools can generate deeper assessments – but at risk of becoming too technocratic
- Because all instruments designed by "outsiders", efforts necessary to achieve host government ownership

A Selection of Useful Tools
Simple, but Robust?

Theme	Tool	Sample "indicator"
PFM	PEFA (Donor Consortium)	Orderliness and participation in the annual budget process [31]
HRM	Common Assessment Framework (EIPA)	Ensuring HR capability is available to achieve tasks and balancing tasks and responsibilities [25+20]
Policy making	Country Governance Assessment (AsDB)	Do inter-ministerial consultations take place on policy proposals? [19]
Service delivery	Customer Service Excellence Standard (UK Cabinet Office)	We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service [57]
Leadership	Capability Reviews (UK Cabinet Office)	How do you manage change effectively, addressing and overcoming resistance when it occurs? [39]

Common Assessment Framework (EIPA)

- Designed to assist public sector organizations in using quality management techniques. Adapted from private sector tool
- Piloted in 2000, revised in 2002 and again in 2006
- Applied in 900+ European public sector organizations – also used outside Europe
- Typically used to improve specific public sector organizations, but can also be used as part of a PAR programme
- Covers all Public administration themes, although significant adaptation required for some
- Assesses "enablers" (e.g. leadership, people, partnerships and resources) and "results" (e.g. competence, motivation, satisfaction and performance of its people)
- Applied by individual self-assessments, followed by group discussion to agree scores and areas for improvement

Customer Service Excellence Tool

- ❑ UK Government's new (2008) tool to help public services drive customer-focused change in their organizations
- ❑ Developed following a detailed review of Charter Mark, the previous standard
- ❑ Can be used as:-

  - a driver of continuous improvement

  - a skills development tool

  - an independent validation of achievement
- ❑ Based on "Customer Service Excellence Standard" that tests areas which research has identified are priorities for customers (delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism, staff attitude)
- ❑ Can be completed as an on-line self-assessment or through formal certification

Key Criteria
Objectives

What are your reasons for carrying out a governance or public administration assessment?

Key Criteria
Objectives of Assessment

- Potential objectives
  - Diagnosis and planning [12]
  - Monitoring and accountability [7]
  - Cross-comparison and benchmarking [1]
  - Dialogue and joint decision-making [3]
  - Resource allocation? [0]
- Most tools claim to serve a range of objectives
- Many users, different objectives – assessments likely to work best where objectives of users coincide
- Objectives, both explicit and perceived, can influence behaviour and quality of data

Group Exercise Part 1
Selecting "indicators"

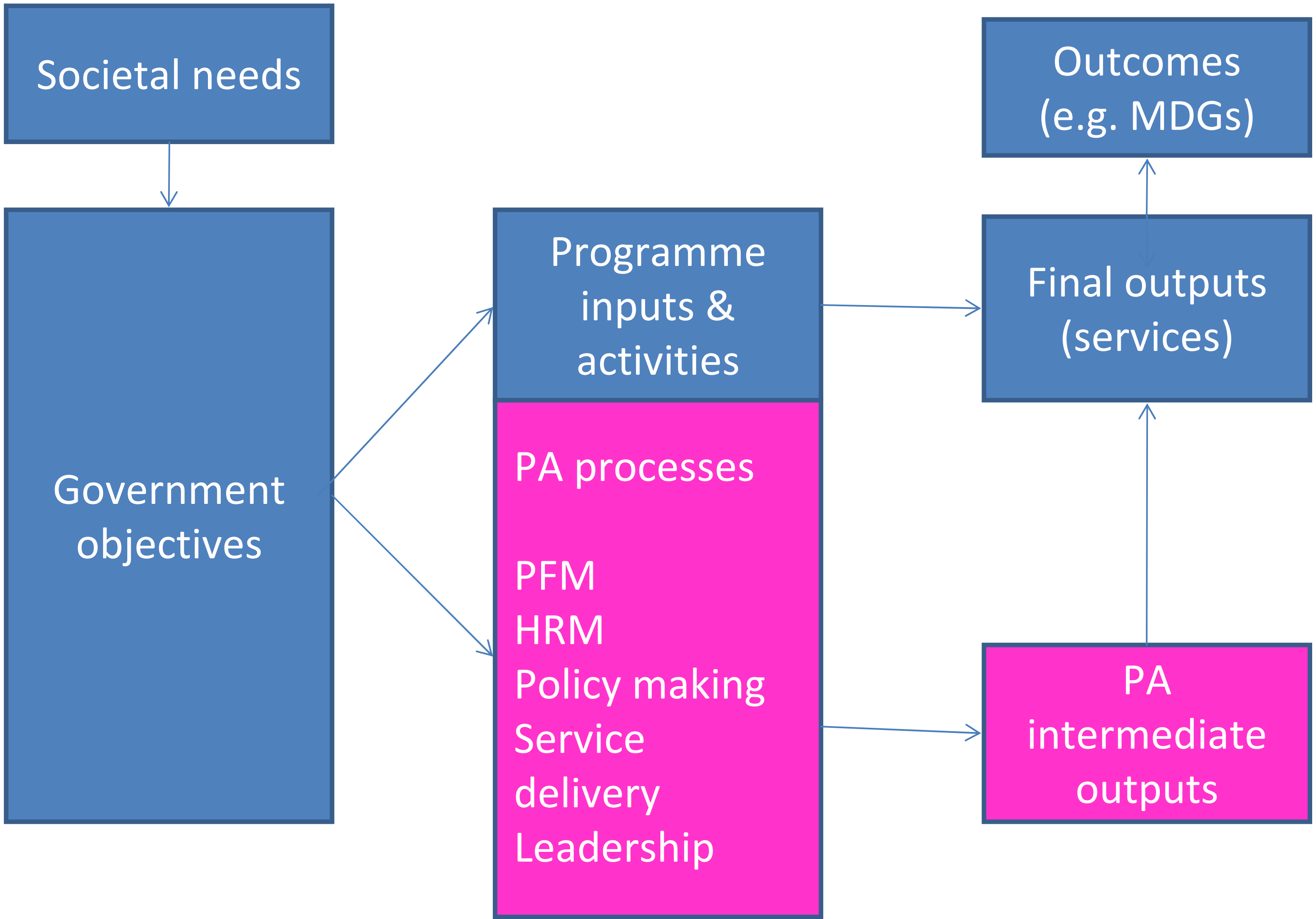
Although Egypt is on track to achieve MDGs for child mortality and maternal health, significant geographical differences remain a cause for concern. What are the public administration barriers in terms of human resource management (CAF tool) and service delivery processes (Customer Service Excellence Standard)?

- Which "indicators" in these tools are most relevant to achieving these MDGs?
- Are there any "indicators" which should be added?
- What criteria did you use to select these indicators?

Key Criteria
Indicators - Findings

- Tools tend to measure *practices* (in use, not in law) rather than *principles* – neutral with respect to policy objectives sought
- Governance principles embedded in only a few tools
- PFM & policy making tools are similar
- HRM and service delivery tools are different
- No available HRM tool which can claim to embody a universal set of indicators
- **Dearth of intermediate output indicators in existing tools**

What should we measure in public administration?



Intermediate outputs
Examples of universal primary education

Policy process

- ❑ Education policies are approved which address the causes of low enrolment ratios

HRM

- ❑ Teachers are recruited or deployed to overcrowded schools
- ❑ Low teacher absenteeism

PFM

- ❑ Increased government recurrent budget allocated to primary education
- ❑ Low staff costs per pupil

Emerging Tools
HRM Actionable Indicators (World Bank)

- A more robust (& longer!) version of EU accession matrix
- Fills a gap in contemporary assessment tools
- Users will include governments as well as donors, but no input of former in design
- Primarily viewed as a diagnostic tool, but may be used for monitoring
- Intended focus on “actionable” indicators – tool measures inputs, processes & intermediate outputs
- Data generated mainly by questionnaire completed by Bank staff & government officials

Linking Assessments to Policy Objectives
Participation of Women in the Civil Service

PAR objective

- To ensure the representation of women in senior management broadly reflects their composition in society

Intermediate output

- % of vacant management positions filled by women

Process indicators

- New selection criteria which recognise women's contribution
- Flexible employment policies which allow women more freedom to choose their hours of work
- Equal training opportunities which permit women with child-rearing responsibilities to attend training close to home
- External competition for jobs to widen the pool of potential female applicants

Practical Guidance
Indicators

- ❑ Focus on measuring processes and their intermediate outputs, avoiding indicators too far down the service delivery chain
- ❑ For processes, identify the key criteria. Don't attempt to measure everything
- ❑ Measure only what you can change when you are conducting a diagnostic, so identify actionable indicators
- ❑ Qualitative data tends to be more useful and accessible than quantitative data. Use quantitative data when available to support qualitative data, but don't be fooled by misleading metrics
- ❑ Make sure that your indicator set is expressed in a language that you and your respondents can understand.   Don't blindly copy the terminology used by the tool's authors

Group Exercise Part 2
Determining the methodology

In Part 1 you selected relevant “indicators” for customer service and human resource management which will contribute to narrowing of geographical differences in child mortality and maternal health.

- ❑ How will you collect the data? (Consider surveys, questionnaires, desk research, interviews, discussion, other?)
- ❑ Who will collect the data? (Consider consultants, experts, officials, clients)
- ❑ What are your views on the strengths and weaknesses of these two tools?

Key Criteria
Methodology: the "How"

Findings

- Many assessment tools use a combination of methods – surveys, questionnaires, interviews, desk research, discussion
- Information sources tend to rely on desk research, or a combination of surveys & desk research
- Scoring often used to compare performance across dimensions , but combined with narrative assessment (e.g. PEFA, UK Capability Reviews)

Key issues

- Multiple methods can generate more information, permit validation & triangulation of data, BUT complex and costly to administer
- Questionnaires do not always generate honest answers
- Selection biases in sampling for surveys and questionnaires
- Negotiating ratings may divert energies away from action to

Key Criteria
Methodology: the "Who"

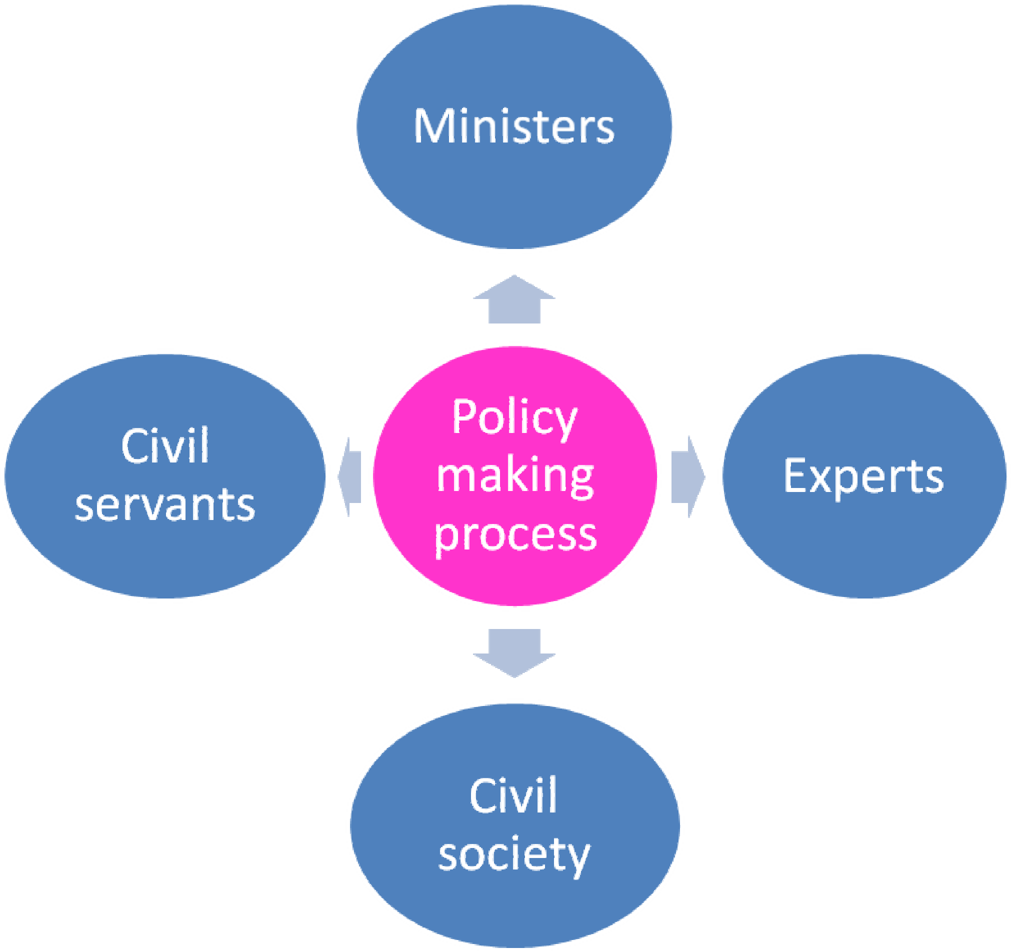
Findings

- Most assessment tools rely heavily on judgements of consultants, experts, & agency staff
- Views of government officials are often sought, but government rarely shares responsibility for the assessment report
- Self-assessments used, but usually combined with other data sources

Key issues

- Views of rank and file civil servants or civil society rarely solicited in tools developed by aid agencies
- Independent experts may be objective, but often highly critical
- Local consultants may not wish to be critical of their government
- Self-assessments can be inflated, especially if used for monitoring purposes

360 degree feedback
Potentially useful, but cultural limitations



Practical Guidance
Methodology – How

- ❑ Start with the data you have, not the data you would like to have in an ideal world
- ❑ Use surveys and questionnaires to obtain views from many stakeholders in a relatively short period of time. But recognise that surveys of citizens or civil servants may not generate accurate or valid data…..why?
- ❑ Follow up surveys with focus groups to interpret findings and search for solutions
- ❑ Use self-assessments as an input to discussion, not as a final verdict
- ❑ Avoid placing too much emphasis on scoring and ratings, as may distract attention from what you need to do to improve

Practical Guidance – Who

- Involve civil servants in assessing their own systems – ideally junior or mid-career, not too senior, without a vested interest in the status quo
- Embrace joint assessments carried out by government officials and consultants (or development agency staff)
- Don’t ask civil servants or citizens for their opinions if you do not intend to give them feedback on what they said
- Consider 360 degree feedback to provide a balanced picture from a range of perspectives. But don’t impose it where respondents have no knowledge or legitimate interest in the theme to be assessed

Ownership
Do we really know how to achieve it?

“They [donor project] do their own thing over there. Then they come and ask us for an input. It is like an ambush.”

Senior government official, December 2008

Achieving Ownership

- People commit to what they help to create – flexibility in indicators and methods is important
- People rarely argue with their own data – where possible users should contribute to the actual assessment
- Graduate towards improving information systems and capacity – use external assessors to help build capacity

Case Study
Capability Reviews

- Introduced for all central government departments by Cabinet Secretary in 2005, rolled out in 3 phases
- 2 objectives:-

  - assess how well equipped departments are to meet delivery challenges

  - provide targeted support to make improvements required
- Assesses capabilities of top management team in terms of leadership, strategy & delivery
- Run by Capability Reviews Team in Cabinet Office
- Each review conducted by 5-person review team – 3 external and 2 from other departments
- Department develops action plan to address areas for action and close capability gaps
- Cabinet Secretary monitors progress and holds Permanent Secretary to account for implementation

Capability Review Process & Timeline

Stages	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5
1-Orient	Conduct orientation with Dept.				
2-Focus		Identify focus Discuss with top team	Sign off with Permanent Secretary		
3-Review				Conduct review Discuss findings with Permanent Secretary	
4-Action				Dept. prepares action plan	Agree final report Publish it

UK Department for International Development Capability Reviews

	March 2007	March 2009
Leadership		
L1 Set direction	Strong	Strong
L2 Ignite passion, pace & drive	Strong	Strong
L3 Take responsibility for leading delivery/change	Well placed	Well placed
L4 Build capability	Dev area	Dev area
Strategy		
S1 Focus on outcomes	Well placed	Well placed
S2 Base choices on evidence	Well placed	Well placed
S3 Build common purpose	Urgent dev area	Dev area
Delivery		
D1 Plan, resource & prioritise	Urgent dev	Dev area
D2 Develop clear roles & delivery models	Well placed	Well placed
D3 Manage performance	Well placed	Strong

UK Capability Reviews

Could this assessment tool work in your countries?

How would it need to be adapted to reflect your traditions of public administration?

Thank you for listening!

Questions?