



planning, monitoring
and evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CITIZEN-BASED MONITORING EVALUATION REPORT

(Evaluation questions and Executive Summary)

December 2015



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1. Preface

This report precedes the publication of the full evaluation report for the Implementation Evaluation of the Citizen-Based Monitoring (CBM) Model. It sets out the evaluation questions and reproduces the executive summary of the evaluation report, including findings, conclusions and recommendations. The full report will be made available once it has been submitted to Cabinet, as per the National Evaluation System requirements.

2. Introduction

The Implementation Evaluation of the Citizen-Based Monitoring (CBM) Model was conducted by Palmer Development Group (PDG) as part of the National Evaluation Plan of 2014/2015 of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) between May and September 2015.

3. Background to the Intervention

CBM aims to strengthen the involvement of citizens in monitoring service delivery. It has three focus areas: a pilot process to develop a citizen-based monitoring method for frontline service delivery; policy interventions to support take-up of citizen-based monitoring; and a knowledge sharing focus that aims to provide platforms and opportunities for government and civil society to learn from citizen-based monitoring initiatives.

In the period October 2013 to September 2015 the pilot was implemented in partnership with key government departments – South African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Development (DSD) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). The pilot was implemented in three phases in nine sites across the country, namely: Phuthaditjhaba, Free State and Tugela Ferry, KwaZulu-Natal (Phase 1); Temba, Gauteng, Praktiseer, Limpopo and Jouberton, North West (Phase 2); Mitchells Plain, Western Cape and Batlharos, Northern Cape (Phase 3a); and Kabokweni, Mpumalanga and Katkop, Eastern Cape (Phase 3b). The pilot aimed to evolve and test a method for using citizen feedback to drive service delivery improvements. It is intended to expand to other sites over the course of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTSF) period. Preceding and coinciding with the piloting of the method at sites, policy interventions and knowledge sharing took place.

4. Evaluation Questions

1. What has been achieved through the DPME-led citizen-based monitoring pilot and policy process, to what extent has it achieved its intentions and why?
2. How does the approach that DPME has piloted relate to and benefit from other existing participatory mechanisms and possible approaches?
3. What evidence exists for and against scaling up a citizen-based monitoring programme/system, based on the pilot model?
4. How should citizen-based monitoring be taken to scale in South Africa, and what role should DPME and others play?
5. Based on the evaluation what should the theory of change be for the next five year period?
6. To what extent has the model piloted by DPME allowed for broad participation of diverse citizen interest (gender, class, age, disability etc..)

5. Background to the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation as stated in the Terms of Reference was to “evaluate the implementation of DPME’s citizen-based monitoring pilot and programme to inform development of a five-year strategy for CBM going forward” (DPME, 2015; 4).

The evaluation applied the Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness (CAR) Framework (Holland et al, 2009) and adapted it to address the five overarching evaluation questions (see page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for the list of evaluation questions). The evaluation employed a mixed method approach that included service site specific case studies, semi-structured interviews as well as a sample of surveyors and intervention participants from five Phase 2 and 3a sites.

6. Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation made the following findings and conclusions in relation to the CBM pilot:

Capability of the state to engage citizens

“Capability” is defined for the purposes of this study as the formal and informal institutions that provide the ‘enabling environment’ for effective voice and accountability (Holland et al, 2009: 5) (Refer to page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for more detailed definitions of the framework concepts). In the context of the CBM pilot, this refers to the organisational arrangements, structures and staff responsible for engaging citizens and the mechanisms by which citizens have an opportunity to input into governance and decision-making, beyond just formal elections.

The inception process – identifying, introducing the concept to and consulting with stakeholders within government and the civil domain – has proven critical in terms of capability. This process secured buy-in and participation from national to provincial level down to the service facilities, which helped to ensure follow through on commitments and changes at sites. Observing protocols in terms of working through the Office of the Premier or national department managers, involving the provincial and regional management and allowing partners a say in the identification of sites was an important first step for drawing in the participation and time of individuals from the facilities necessary for the initiative. This process raised awareness and linked the initiative to stakeholders and managers otherwise removed from facilities, laying the groundwork for the escalation of site issues.

In the course of the pilot, the CBM team (inclusive of service providers) have acquired a distinct set of facilitation skills applied in the pilot. However, not all of these skills and experiences will be retained by DPME staff at the close of the pilot due to departure of the external service providers who shared responsibilities for pilot implementation. Considering budget estimates, time allocations and the physical resources identified, the CBM pilot can be described as a resource intensive process that requires considerable financial, human and material input into the process. Meaningful citizen engagement does require significant resources, but ideally the knowledge and skills that are built in the process should be transferred and retained for future engagements. The extent to which the CBM team’s distinct set of facilitation skills were transferred at the sites themselves was unclear. However, the pilot has leveraged existing capacity in the community by involving Community Work Programme (CWP) participants to conduct the citizen survey, and/or recruiting local surveyors as appropriate. These local citizens were trained and gained experience in conducting surveys.

The CBM pilot model has not prescribed a role for the formal citizen structures (e.g. Community Police Forums (CPFs) and Clinic / Community Health Committees). Instead their involvement was allowed to vary based on the degree of the structure's functionality and the commitment of its stakeholders to the initiative. In taking this approach there is a risk that these core, enduring structures for public participation may remain dysfunctional or unused. Where this is the case, the opportunity to problematize their role in on-going citizen monitoring is lost, thereby undermining the state's capability for engagement. On the other hand, if the CBM pilot model does assume a role for these structures where they are in fact 'captured' by certain interests, it can reinforce exclusivity, posing a risk to the aims of CBM. There is evidence that the CBM pilot model has not yet resolved how best to leverage these structures. In the absence of a designated structure or champion to monitor commitments, these structures are a place to start if the state is to prove more capable of engaging citizens and escalating issues for resolution.

Enabling citizens to strengthen the accountability of the state

Accountability refers to the extent to which individuals and groups exercise agency and use voice to claim their rights through interaction with the state and its officials (Holland et al, 2009: 5-6). The evaluation analysed the extent to which the CBM pilot facilitated such processes at sites.

The CBM pilot team has succeeded in training and facilitating citizen surveyors and managing surveys that are regarded as highly credible by the overwhelming majority of stakeholders (across a range of measures citizens and staff indicated +80% agreement that the surveys addressed the priority issues). They serve therefore as a useful basis for the identification of priority issues and action plans at service facilities.

Women stand out in terms of their representation as surveyors and as respondents in the surveys themselves. However, this may not reflect a lack of representation amongst men so much as it could be a reflection of women's gendered roles and responsibilities in the contexts in which the CBM pilot has been conducted.

There was a widespread belief that citizens were still meaningfully represented in the process. Participants commonly agreed on this, despite the fact that officials far outnumbered citizens in the key process activities known as the 'Ndiva Ndikuve¹ Week': attendance registers show that the average ratio was 11 officials to 3 citizens at the "root cause analysis" sessions. However, it is concerning that the citizens at these sessions – which are the key CBM engagements at sites – were predominantly members of the formal citizen representative structures, because little data is available on whether these structures are themselves inclusive and functional.

The evidence from the participants of the pilot provides a strong indication that the CBM pilot model has been effective in giving voice to citizen concerns and creating a space for dialogue and engagement in a relatively short space of time. Both citizens and staff reported a broader recognition and awareness of each other's challenges and recognized the issues of greatest concern. The creation of space for citizens to voice concerns that are considered legitimate and acknowledged by public servants provides a strong indication of how this process has facilitated accountability and in some instances the vertical escalation beyond the site level.

¹ IsiXhosa for "Listen to me and I'll listen to you."

Responsiveness of the state to citizen engagement

Responsiveness follows accountability in terms of sequencing and speaks to how role-players take action in response to the issues raised, problems identified and solutions proposed. Responsiveness seeks to reinforce accountability to ensure change (Holland et al, 2009: 7).

The CBM pilot sites have produced improvement plans (or commitments) that officials find actionable, that citizens welcome, and that all stakeholders regard as appropriate for addressing citizens' priorities in most cases. Where there has been stronger involvement of provincial and regional officials, there has been scope for vertical commitments and responses to the challenges at play.

In most provinces and particularly with the SAPS, the CBM pilot has from early on sought to engage with formal citizen representative structures as, if not the most appropriate, a common platform for engagement. Links between public servants and these structures appear to have been strengthened. However, outside of these structures at the various sites, it was unclear how the relationships or good-will generated from this process would be expected to endure, or even just the communication and engagement between actors sustained.

The CBM pilot process has tested different communication approaches for conveying the results of the process, although the extent of that community reach is still unknown. However, how communication should continue after the intervention has left some ambiguity and this is critical to sustaining citizen engagement. In some instances the formal citizen representative structures remain unknown even to surveyors who were closely involved in the process.

Across all sites there was great uncertainty as to the monitoring of commitments – especially who and how citizens would be able to monitor these commitments. The absence of a shared understanding for on-going monitoring and engagement poses a serious risk that citizens will experience CBM as an incomplete intervention that disappoints after high hopes, potentially eroding the relationships and any budding trust that was established. Unless this is addressed, it will result in a failure to reinforce the positive cycle of civic and state action which is posited to improve accountability and responsiveness.

Lastly, measures in relation to making improvements and building trust have also highlighted and reinforced a clear distinction between the surveyor experience and that of root cause participants² with regards to the results of the CBM pilot. By and large, surveyors tend to be more critical of results of the CBM pilot, while root cause participants, who were involved in the improvement planning process, tend to be more positive about its results.

Changes in the capability of the state to engage citizens

The broader intent of the CBM pilot model was that the pilot would not only draw on and test state capability for citizen engagement, but would increase or improve it. It would do so in one or more of the following ways: strengthening organisational arrangements or establishing partnerships that facilitate citizen engagement; building the needed skills for it among officials and citizens; and/or building buy-in to the concept by demonstrating a workable method for it.

² Refers to participants of a specific 'root cause analysis' session during the Ndivo Ndikuve week.

National engagements and platforms for CBM have been a key channel through which both state departments across spheres and civil society have had the opportunity to come together and build capability around this process. Highlights in this regard include the establishment of Steering Committees (although inconsistent) and the formalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Black Sash, amidst other engagements.

Communication and information sharing within the network of CBM stakeholders has generally been good as documents have been published online transparently and regularly, with accessible fact sheets and flyers for distribution.

The addressing of systemic issues (issues which hamper government service delivery across multiple sites) proved a challenge given current institutional arrangements and capability. Expanding the role of the Office of the Premier in each province proved part of the evolved pilot process, but it was less clear how systemic issues could be raised, or periodically consolidated and addressed, within the service departments themselves, particularly in the absence of a defined role for established structures.

The CBM process has been rather intensive during short stints of activity and reliant on considerable external capacity. Although the end of the pilot will see the contractual end of outsourced service providers, DPME has to some extent served as a repository for the skills, methods, tools and lessons from this process.

7. Recommendations

The original evaluation Terms of Reference contained two evaluation questions that focused explicitly on recommendations with regard to the strategy for CBM going forward. The first of these was: "How should citizen-based monitoring be taken to scale in South Africa, what role should DPME and others play?" There are three recommendations in this regard:

1. This implementation evaluation does not recommend a wholesale 'scale-up' of the intervention in pilot form, but rather a considered and targeted roll-out of the model's successful process elements customized to selected service departments. The first service departments for roll-out should be those that have shown interest and willingness to participate throughout the process and where there is a demand, such as the South African Police Service (SAPS).
2. For the next five years DPME's role should shift from implementer of the CBM pilot model to that of policy leader, custodian of the methodology, knowledge partner and institutional repository for CBM good practices, approaches and methods, as well as a skills developer and facilitator within the state. A strategy that emphasizes refining the most effective methods and building institutional capability to implement CBM within departments under the guidance of DPME is proposed.
3. As a matter of priority, and in order to secure the gains of the pilot processes tested to date, it is recommended that DPME follow-up and conclude the pilot at the nine participating sites. In doing so DPME should pay special attention to clarifying, formalising and communicating arrangements for the on-going monitoring of the commitments that have been made at these sites.

The second evaluation question asking for a recommendation was: "Based on the evaluation, what should the Theory of Change be for the next five year period?". A revised Theory of Change is recommended as an annexure to the summary report and is included to

inform a more systematic approach by DPME to the CBM programme over the next five years.

The evaluation also makes a series of recommendations related to the design and implementation of the most current CBM model. In the work with the current pilot facilities and any future sites, the following design and process recommendations should be addressed to strengthen the model:

Design recommendations

4. DPME should, in conjunction with partner departments, clarify and provide guidance on the selection criteria for future CBM sites and consider existing departmental planning cycles and citizen engagement initiatives.
5. DPME should clarify, define and communicate the intended role of existing citizen engagement structures and other representatives in the current model.
6. DPME should, in conjunction with partner departments, clarify, define and communicate the intended role of district, regional and provincial management in the current model.

Process recommendations

7. CBM implementers should, in consultation with service site management and local citizen representative groups, identify and diagnose the state of citizen engagement structures (formal structures like CPFs, as well as other relevant groupings) as part of the inception week.
8. CBM implementers should identify the most appropriate citizen stakeholder, group or network that should champion on-going monitoring and dialogue at the site as early in the site engagement as possible.
9. DPME should standardize surveyor selection criteria, make them transparent and ensure fairness in selection of surveyors at service sites, whether CWP or an open call to citizens.
10. CBM implementers should ensure the survey results and commitments are shared with all surveyors.

Timing and location

11. CBM implementers should develop action plans with dates and timeframes for all aspects of the intervention from the start of the process to the close of it and abide by them.
12. CBM implementers should organise some engagements outside of normal working hours and at centrally accessible places to allow for broader citizen participation.

Communication and Commitments

13. CBM implementers should develop a communication plan for each site to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of progress during and after the intervention.
14. CBM implementers, service site management and citizen representatives should formalize the commitments by having the facility representative and the citizen champion sign a Memorandum of Agreement to implement and monitor commitments.
15. Service site management and citizen representatives should jointly announce a schedule, the responsible parties and means of on-going monitoring and reporting of the commitments on site.

Institutional improvements

16. DPME and partner departments should ensure regular, timeous and well-attended steering committee meetings to provide updates and feedback on progress.
17. DPME should undertake periodic reviews of implementation to identify systemic issues for escalation and resolution at regional, provincial and/or national level.
18. DPME should periodically capture lessons and results from across sites and retain a public repository and inform the development of future policy on citizen engagement.