



planning, monitoring and evaluation

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Presidential Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring – case study

Case Study Title: Improvement monitoring process and mainstreaming of FSDM activities into SASSA business processes in the North West province as part of sustaining and managing frontline service delivery improvements.

Purpose: The purpose of this practice note is to demonstrate how SASSA NW Regional Office provides guidance to officials on Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring management, through the streamlining of SASSA core business with the eight FSDM assessment indicators as an integral part of service improvements to both customers and staff. It further aims to have and promote uniform systems at local offices, share good practices by maintaining quality service standards in the delivery of services and to mitigate against those areas where there are short comings/challenges. It also covers the intended, and unintended, consequences of this approach as it impacts on the overall SASSA business process.

Target Audience: Office of the Premier, National Sector Departments, Provincial Sector Departments, SASSA and DPME

Glossary:

FSDM	Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
NW	North West
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
MPAT	Management Performance Assessment Tool
OBP	Outcomes-based Priorities
OTP	Office of the Premier
NDP	National Development Plan
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SDIP	Service Delivery Improvement Plans
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
KPA	Key Performance Areas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FSDM programme, through its Key Performance Indicators, represents critical aspects of frontline services that impact on the experience of users of public facilities and makes an important contribution to a more responsive government by sustaining the focus on quality and service delivery. Better frontline service delivery has both economic and social benefits. Quicker turnaround times for the delivery of frontline services lessens the economic cost of accessing public services; these costs vary but potentially include the loss of earnings by citizens, time spent away from work and transport costs. Improvements to frontline service delivery also builds trust and confidence in government's ability to deliver these important public services.

SASSA is one of the sectors that started with the FSDM programme in 2011 and has been very responsive to service delivery improvements in line with their mission "*To administer quality customer-centric social security services to eligible and potential beneficiaries*". SASSAs work is integral to the NDPs aims of advancing social protection and this is attested by their MTSF emphasis on the importance of improving the efficiency in the delivery of services; identifying and reaching all those entitled to social protection; and reducing administrative bottle-necks that prevent people from accessing benefits.

Over the past four years of FSDM implementation, evolution of the programme has been observed in different provinces and sectors through different initiatives employed in a quest to turnaround the face of frontline services and SASSA has been an excellent role player in this regard. Regional executive managers taking responsibility of managing their own provinces and the culture of self-management instilled to district and local managers (leading by example) has been displayed by the number of SASSA facilities that have implemented their frontline service delivery improvement plan led by the local office managers. Culture of customer care and Batho Pele instilled and practiced by all staff members.

The NW SASSA Regional Office has adopted and introduced a uniform approach to drive improvements across the province through the mainstreaming of FSDM indicators into SASSA business processes. This approach enables and fosters cooperation and ownership between the regional, district and local offices by collectively identifying common strategic management and systemic challenges and thereby influences improvements in service delivery.

2. MAINSTREAMING FSDM ACTIVITIES INTO SASSA (NW) BUSINESS PROCESSES- SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR IMPROVEMENT MONITORING

<p>1. Background and Context</p>	<p>The FSDM programme focus is on bringing about improvements by assessing the extent to which actual frontline services differ from government wide standards. Where gaps exist, the programme facilitates the development of improvement plans that identify what must be done by the facility to meet the standard. Fundamentally, the purpose and objectives of these monitoring assessments is to encourage continuous and sustained improvements in frontline service delivery. One of the overarching lessons learnt during the past four years of implementing the FSDM programme is that, solving problems at the frontline produces strategies for tackling systemic and management challenges. This frontline monitoring by officials as well as the citizen is showing the value of detailed engagement with the specific challenges faced by individual frontline facilities as a way to develop knowledge, strategies and capacity for solving systemic challenges. This is a major point of emphasis in the NDP. Yet another lesson we have learnt is that, in spite of sometimes negative reports of poor performance, there are many hard working dedicated civil servants in these facilities and they need to be supported and enabled – one of the defining characteristics of these role models at facility level is that <i>they have a passion to serve and they are problem solvers. They find creative ways to make the best with what is available, often building partnerships with communities and the private sector to bring extra resources into the facility. They are civil servants who are passionate about serving in spite of less than perfect work conditions.</i> We also learnt that too often we respond to challenges in facilities in a panicked, quick-fix approach. Whilst this approach is encouraged, it is important that officials be empowered to identify the root causes of both challenges and successes and together work to achieve lasting service delivery improvements.</p>
<p>2. Problem statement</p>	<p>The objective of FSDM in improvements monitoring is to facilitate and drive the implementation of improvement plans for improved quality of service delivery and experiences of citizens. The focus is on facilitating a culture of change in government towards increasing use of evidence in policy making, planning and monitoring to inform improvements to plans and policies. DPME has always been encouraging sectors to put more effort on managing and sustaining improvements in facilities.</p>

	<p>SASSA NW has been responsive to this call and developed guidelines and procedures for managing frontline service improvements. The idea behind the documenting of the whole process is to share information with other sectors as one of the good practice that can be adopted for managing and sustaining improvements.</p>
<p>3. Approach to the Case Study</p>	<p>This document has been compiled using the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and sourcing of inputs from SASSA head office, NW Regional Office, interviews with some District and Local Office Managers and Office of the Premier officials. • Observations during the improvements monitoring process (meetings and rescoring). • Semi structured interviews with service users/ beneficiaries during the improvement monitoring process.
<p>4. Envisaged results and benefits of this approach</p>	<p>This initiative is meant to improve management and operations systems to address the frontline challenges, clarifying responsibilities, introducing efficient and effective work processes, delegating greater authority to resolve day-to-day problems and introducing effective queue management systems. The initiative is further intended to improve staff morale, quality of service delivery and make it easier for staff to resolve any problems or complaints arising from service users at the coal face, thus creating a virtuous cycle.</p> <p>Due to the importance and value of receiving the FSDM findings as part of self-reflection for the department with specific reference to views coming from the citizens, as part of managing and sustaining improvements, SASSA provincial managers have taken an initiative to uniformly implement the FSDM standards across all their local offices even in those that have not been identified for monitoring.</p> <p>The North West, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Provincial Managers are leading in the process of replicating this approach.</p>
<p>5. Demonstration of good governance and leadership</p>	<p>The NW Regional Office has issued standard operating procedures (SOP), which are aligned and directly respond to the FSDM performance indicators in support of the SASSA business process for improved quality of service. These SOP are to be managed by local offices with the support of the District offices throughout so that they demonstrate continuous improvement where gaps/ weaknesses have been identified.</p>
<p>6. Leveraging on existing</p>	<p>The SOPs apply to all SASSA officials within the NW province and</p>

<p>mechanisms and coordinated approaches to ensure accountability</p>	<p>failure to comply with this practice note/ operational guide is considered misconduct by the District and Regional office. Each Local office manager is expected to submit a dashboard monthly “Service Delivery Assessment Report” highlighting progress. The work of strengthening routine accountability is again identified as a priority in the NDP, and we as DPME we remain committed to working with departments to improve service delivery through understanding and responding to the realities on the ground. This is best achieved by leveraging on the existing mechanisms such as Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIP) and interventions within departments as one of the 2015/16 annual workshop recommendations.</p>
<p>7. Strategic use of FSDM performance indicators to drive improvements</p>	<p>The FSDM approach and methodology has established a process that allows for rapid diagnostics of problems and the subsequent rapid development and implementation of corrective actions. The overarching purpose of this process is to provide an objective intervention that speaks to SASSA’s own assessment of service delivery improvements based on the FSDM findings. All local offices are to manage and minimize enquiries/ complaints and queries by ensuring that systems are in place to address challenges that affect effective rendering of frontline services with the following pointers.</p>
<p>8. Improvement innovation process</p>	<p>5.1 Location and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each local office needs a schedule for outreach programs. The schedule needs to be monitored weekly for implementation by the level 8 or 9 official. b) All SASSA leased/owned buildings must have direction boards at strategic points. The local manage needs on a periodical basis conduct inspections to see that boards are still in place. c) If the boards are not in place or damaged or defaced a submission needs to be written to the district office to install or replace such directional boards, with the support of Marketing and Communication Unit. d) Any new acquisitions of offices should be done by doing a feasibility study of the area namely population distance from the nearest SASSA office, distance form public transport and other essential government departments such as SAPS; Home affairs and Social Development. e) Each office should have an appointed OHS representative who

shall conduct daily inspections to see that the OHS Act is been adhered to. He/she shall give a brief to the local office manager or head of the office on his/her findings. Any matters needing their attention must be recorded and addressed with the relevant unit at regional office.

5.2 Visibility and Signage

- a) The Local office needs to be branded both internally and externally. SASSA branding must be according to the SASSA standards. The local office manager shall conduct regular inspections to ensure that the office is adequately branded. Any missing or damaged signage needs to be removed and a submission be sent to replace such.
- b) All officials reporting for duty should be neatly dress in line with SASSA's dress code policy and be representable by wearing their name tags at all times during official working hours.
- c) Officials that have lost or damaged their name tags shall through the Local Office Manager shall make a submission to replace such.
- d) The Local Office Management Team photos and contact details shall be displayed in the waiting areas, for easy access to customers and stakeholders.

5.3 Queue Management and Waiting times

- a) Every office shall have a Queue Management System (QMS) in place. Level 8/9 officials in the office will conduct regular visits to the front office to assess that queues are managed and if need be call for additional assistance should the need arise.
- b) Norms and standards with regards to the 4 step application process must be adhered to.
- c) The Express Queue must be in place and managed. This should be done by educating customers on the use of it, so that no confusion exists as to how it managed.
- d) The Local Office Manager should conduct front line visits to ensure that the norms and standards are been implemented. The LOM must sample customers to determine the purpose of their

visit and also question them on their arrival times to determine whether the office is achieving on its turn-around time norms.

- e) Each local office should have a front office visitor's book for the LOM to endorse their findings soon after he/she conducted such front office visits. These findings should be analysed and any shortcomings should be addressed.
- f) Leave must be managed so that there is sufficient staff to implement the 4 step application process at all times.
- g) The LOM to hold monthly meetings with staff and inform officials of good practices or shortcomings at the front office.
- h) Any ICT down time to be reported to the service provider immediately and such to be recorded in the systems down time register.

5.4 Opening and Closing times

- a) Every office should have a Notice Board which is visible from outside of the office indicating the open and closing times.
- b) The Local office Manager shall during the stakeholder engagements inform all stakeholders of SASSA's open and closing times.
- c) Flexi-working hours should be implemented so that staff is available early mornings to attend to customers arriving before the official opening times.
- d) Attendance registers need to be in place and these need to be inspected at least on a weekly basis by the most senior official of the office.
- e) Any training or disruptions should be conveyed to the community in advance by placing a notice that is visible to all.

5.5 Complaint Management

- a) Every office shall be equipped with a suggestion box. The Suggestion box is placed at a point that is easily accessible and has a pen and additional paper. The Suggestion and Complaints register needs to be placed at the box visible for all to see.
- b) The suggestion box shall be opened daily by the delegated official and complaints are then entered in the prescribed complaints

register. These complaints are then addressed telephonically or in writing to the complainant within 7 days.

- c) All enquiries and complaints must be analysed and common problems needs to be addressed as soon as they arise through an early warning system.

5.6 Dignified treatment

- a) The Engagement Officials needs to “Meet and Greet” every customer coming to the local office.
- b) Each office shall have an engagement official to do the “Meet and Greet” on an ongoing basis throughout the day that customers and stakeholders are served.
- c) The Queue Management Official shall prioritise older persons as well as people with disabilities and or special needs to be assisted first.
- d) Clean drinking water shall be available at all times with clean drinking cups.
- e) Sufficient ventilation shall be ensured in the waiting area.
- f) A First-Aid Box will be mounted in the waiting area, and shall be monitored to ensure that expired items are removed and out of stock items replenished beforehand.
- g) Female rest rooms should have nappy changers for use.
- h) Sufficient seating for all customers shall be in place.
- i) A wheel chair shall be available in the waiting area at all times.
- j) The LOM shall during the front office visits monitor the above and ensure that all official complied with these provisions.

5.7 Cleanliness and Comfort

- a) Office space to be cleaned before the customers arrives. During the day cleaners need to be visible in the waiting area to pick up on dirt or any spillage. The daily cleaning register to be signed by a senior official.
- b) All rest rooms to be cleaned 3 times a day. During busy periods cleaners need to make periodic visits to the rest room and clean.
- c) Toilet paper to be managed at all times.
- d) The outside premises also need to be swept daily and papers to

	<p>be picked up.</p> <p>e) Local office manager or delegated official to conduct periodic visits to see that the rest rooms, offices and outside yard is clean tidy.</p> <p>f) The waiting room as well as office has sufficient ventilation or air conditioners. The OHS, representative to ensure that air conditioners are in working order at all times.</p> <p>5.8 Safety</p> <p>a) Security personnel shall be on duty at the office every day.</p> <p>b) Local office or delegated official to ensure that security is equipped with the necessary equipment to safe guard the office.</p> <p>c) Local office manager or delegated official to meet with the supervisor of security at least once a month to discuss security matters.</p> <p>d) OHS representative to conduct daily inspection at all offices.</p> <p>e) Any defects that may endanger customers or officials should be reported for repairs to Facilities and Auxiliary Services immediately.</p>
<p>9. Benefits of the process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standardisation of the grant application process into 4 steps, namely screening, attesting, quality control and verification, has improved the quality of applications being processed while at the same time reducing the turnaround time for applications. Previously an application could take anything up to 21 days to complete, while currently the majority of the applicants leave the office with the outcome letter on the same day the application was lodged. This process has been assisted by the designation of SASSA officials from level 7 (senior grants administrators) as Commissioners of Oaths. This means the certifying of all supporting documents is done on site, and the affirmation or oath is also done on site, preventing the constant referrals of applicants to other Commissioners of Oaths. “The current standard 4 step administrative process is under review, to identify areas where greater efficiency can still be achieved”, said a SASSA official. • Establishment of additional service points where a need was identified through the FSDM programme, and adequate provision

for disability access in the majority of their service points.

- Provision of external and internal signage to all local, district and provincial offices and nametags to all staff members. The well-developed signage system clearly identify government service facilities (buildings); create a welcoming environment to enrich the experience of users; promote the identity and corporate image of SASSA including their front-line offices; simplify customer traffic patterns by guiding clients along specific routes, better organise and present information about services, activities and their location
- The introduction of the help desk and improved waiting areas with adequate seating, which contributed to a clear process flow of the grant administration process and improved management of queues. With office space being the ongoing challenge faced by SASSA, the systematic arrangement and layout of their service points, waiting areas and consulting stations make best possible utilisation of available floor space. This is good office lay-out as it ensures efficient performance of office work by securing effective utilisation of space and equipment whilst promoting confidentiality of the consultation process.
- Display of operational hours and continuity in service delivery throughout the day with the introduction of staff rotation during tea and lunch breaks.
- The introduction of disability assessments on site at many of the SASSA offices. This has been done in an effort to reduce the number of referrals and the delays in processing applications for disability grants.
- SASSA has a formal complaints and compliments system in all its offices standardised. Each office has at its entrance a suggestion box and complaint register book with necessary stationery where clients can either complain or make complements. In accordance with Batho Pele principles, the system is accessible, well-publicised and easy to use, user-friendly and convenient to the customer, free of excessive formality. The system reinforces the customer's right to complain, transparency and openness which in turn promotes the quality of frontline service delivery. In terms of fairness, all complaints are fully and impartially investigated. To ensure that customers are aware of the system and how to use it,

	<p>a recent innovation is the public opening of the complaints and complements boxes, where all inputs are publically recorded and measures to correct or redress are also publically announced and recorded.</p>
<p>10. Lessons learnt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although we often talk about innovation and change as something that is most important for organisations, and for those working within them, the skills necessary for working innovatively are crucial and this has been displayed by the Regional Director in the management of the whole province by encouraging the participation of the district and local managers to bring the desired change. It has been proven that people and change management led to a more confident and relaxed approach to this process of improvements monitoring. This is what made local office managers to cope more easily with proposed changes for service delivery improvement. • SASSA has used complaints and complements handling as a learning opportunity, allowing SASSA to hear from citizens and use this as an opportunity to improve service. In the Batho Pele context this has meant getting SASSA officials to be service orientated, striving for excellence in service delivery and committing to continuous service delivery improvement. Practically this has entailed listening to customers, learning from their mistakes and striving to improve and achieve service excellence. This focus has helped embed within the institution an ethos of customer care and satisfaction. • The integrative approach used towards the innovation of improving frontline service delivery comprehensively, of being flexible and adaptable and treating change as an opportunity has been a useful and motivating to staff members in the local offices. • One major lesson learned is that once the staff members gets an understanding and the importance of upholding frontline service standards like the proper management of queues, improved waiting times and even if there are delays in the system or network, citizens are more likely to understand and endure in the process. • Facility managers have become empowered and emboldened to oversee the implementation of their respective improvement plans

	and apply operations management methodologies. “With a positive attitude, problems can become opportunities and learning experiences, and as a local office manager, I gained much information from service delivery problems addressed.”
Conclusion	Wheels of change are slow, but surely they do turn. Putting pressure in the system is vital by doing regular monitoring. Constant engagement and communication with the stakeholders is critical.
Recommendations	<p>The quality of public services can deliver two important benefits: Firstly, they oblige government departments to set quality standards. These signal the minimum level of service expected from service areas to service users. Once entrenched, they also serve as the basis for recourse by service users if these standards are not met.</p> <p>Secondly, quality standards also serve to direct efforts and resources towards achieving minimum service standards. These are designed to drive measurable improvements in key service delivery processes. Over time, monitoring the frontline service delivery standards can help to raise the quality of public services.</p>

3. References

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Further Reading:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DPME Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring Guideline 4.2.8: Guidelines for selecting, collecting data and drafting case studies www.dpme.gov.za 2. FSDM Programme Framework Plan 2015 www.dpme.gov.za

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. FSDM 2014/15 Annual Report www.dpme.gov.za4. FSDM 2015/16 annual workshop report www.dpme.gov.za |
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