DPME Guideline No 3.1.2
Practice note on the Operation of DPME Data Forums

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THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Addressed to	All departments involved in outcome implementation forums
Purpose	The purpose of this practice note is to give guidance to the operation of the DPME data forums that are linked to the 12 priority outcomes of government
Reference documents	This practice note draws from the following policy: *Improving Government Performance: Our Approach (2009)*
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1   Background

1.1   Good quality data is critical for decision-making in government. Currently, government is facing numerous challenges with regard to information sharing, data availability and quality.

1.2   Some of the available administrative datasets lack basic quality characteristics such as relevance, reliability, validity and accuracy.

1.3   This state of affairs is exacerbated by inadequate underlying information technology systems and lack of relevant skills.

1.4   Realising this precarious situation, the DPME established data forums to provide a platform for technical discussions on data matters relating to each of the twelve outcomes of government and assist to enhance the quality of progress reports to Cabinet on the implementation of the delivery agreements.

2   Purpose of the Data Forums

2.1   The data forums will support the DPME in facilitating the improvement of the quality and availability of data in government, particularly in relation to performance measurement, analysis, interpretation and reporting on the twelve outcomes of government.
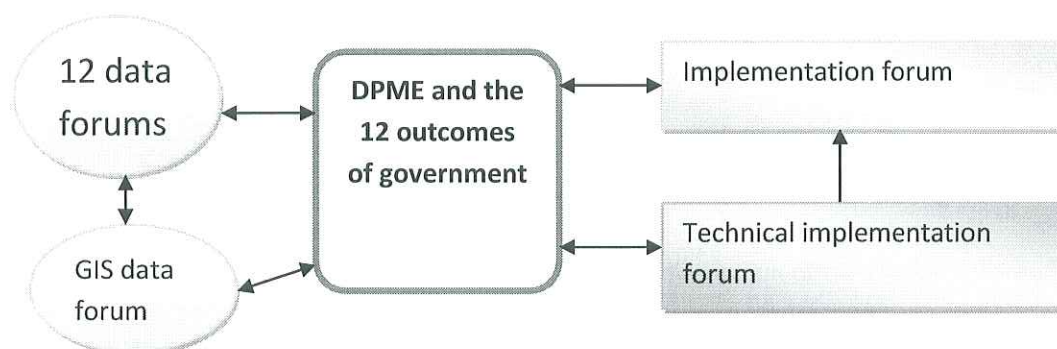
3   Roles of the Data Forums

The data forums will achieve their purpose by providing a platform for technical discussions on data matters in government and by performing the following roles:

3.1   Perform situational analysis to understand data requirements for each of the twelve outcome areas.

3.2   Identify core datasets relevant to the outcome area from the government departments as well as from other institutions outside of government.

3.3   Identify new datasets that will help in meeting reporting requirements and to enable data validation.

3.4   Facilitate the evaluation of the quality of the available datasets and data systems.

3.5   Promote access to and sharing of data.

3.6   Propose data procedures, norms and standards for the relevant sector(s) and make specific recommendations on data related interventions and improvements.

3.7   Provide technical data support and advice on data analysis and interpretation in relation to the POA quarterly reports.

3.8   Constitute and coordinate task teams to carry out special work to ensure the effectiveness of the related data forum.

3.9   Engage with the GIS data forum to enhance the spatial dimension of the data.

4   Relationship with other forums

4.1   Data forums are directly linked to each of the twelve outcomes of government that are coordinated by the DPME.

4.2   They will support the work of the implementation forums that are responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Delivery Agreements.

4.3   DPME will also ensure that data forums are able to make valuable inputs into the POA quarterly reports. There will be a strong linkage with the GIS data forum.

5 Composition of the Data Forums

5.1 The data forums are technical forums composed of individuals working directly with data from government departments and other institutions outside of government.

5.2 *The following representatives will be permanent members of the forums:*

- Representatives from the DPME.
- Representatives from all the departments identified in the delivery agreement for that particular outcome area, including agencies.
- Representatives from Statistics South Africa, National Treasury and Government Communication and Information System.

5.3 *The following would be invited as need arises:*

- Representatives from other spheres of government.
- Experts from the science councils, public entities, universities, business sector, civil society and international organisations.

6 Modus operandi

6.1 Data forums will be chaired by the M&E Systems Coordination and Support branch of the DPME

6.2 Data forums will meet once per quarter, or more regularly if required.

6.3 The secretariat will be provided by the DPME.

7 Basic documentation

7.1 Meeting agenda;

7.2 Minutes of the previous meetings, including action list showing previous decisions on what was supposed to be done, by whom and by when;

7.3 The delivery agreement;

7.4 Latest versions of Annexure A and B of the delivery agreement;

7.5 And any other documentation relevant to the work of the data forum

8   Standard agenda

ITEM	ISSUE	RESPONSIBLE	TIME
1	**Introduction**		
1.1	Opening and welcoming	Chair	
1.2	Changes to the agenda and adoption	All	
1.3	Correction and adoption of the previous minutes	All	
1.4	Matters arising from the previous minutes	Chair	
2	**POA Quarterly report**		
2.1	Discussion of inputs to the POA quarterly reports	All	
3	**Key issues for discussion**		
3.1	Issue 1		
3.2	Issue 2		
	Etc		
4	**Confirmation of decisions**		
4.1	Follow-up actions by Data Forum	Chair	
4.2	Date of next meeting	All	
4.3	Closure	Chair	

9   Meeting organisation

9.1   The draft agenda and a list of expected attendees of the data forum meeting should be developed.

9.2   The basic documentation for the meeting should be compiled and ready for circulation.

9.3   The venue of the meeting should be booked and an alternative venue noted in case of unexpected change.

9.4   The data forum meeting should be called via an email specifying the date, time, venue, RSVP date, and agenda of the meeting. Some of the basic documents could be circulated via email together with the meeting invitation.

9.5   On the RSVP date, an email reminder could be sent to ensure that there is enough response to the meeting invitation. Follow-ups via telephone calls could be made especially to individuals that are expected to provide specific reports to the planned meeting.

9.6   The venue, catering and printed copies of the meeting documents should be confirmed at least 48 hours before the meeting.
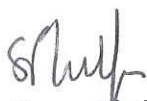
10 Meeting proceedings

10.1   The chairperson should formally constitute the meeting and present the agenda for changes and adoption.

10.2   The chairperson should play a facilitating role which ensures maximum participation of all concerned and consensus in decision-making.

10.3   Ground rules could be agreed upon by members present (e.g. cell-phones switched-off or put on silent mode, no informal conversations when the meeting proceedings are still on, issues related to the meeting that need to be discussed off-line should be confirmed with the chairperson, professionalism, etc)

10.4   Decisions taken should be summarised and noted in the minutes.

10.5   Specific action items should be indicated and included in a separate action list.

10.6   Diversion from the adopted agenda should be by consensus and formally accepted by the meeting.

10.7   An effort should be made to resolve all conflicts amicably, whether inside the meeting or taken off-line.

11 Data Forum task teams

11.1   Task teams should be constituted on the basis of the expertise of the members to carry-out a given task. People who are not members of the data forum can be invited to participate in the task teams.

11.2   The task team should have a convenor that will be responsible for convening the meetings of the task team and reporting on the progress made in executing the task.

11.3   The chairperson of the data forum should send a letter confirming the appointment of the task team members, clearly indicating the terms of reference and expected completion date of the task.

11.4   The task team could elaborate more on their stated terms of reference and present to the chairperson of the data forum for acceptance.

11.5   Tasks that require procurement of services should be anchored within specific departments using relevant departmental supply chain management policies.

Signed

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Date: 23 / 03 / 12