

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The majority of exponents of Public Administration are of the opinion that the state originated as a natural institution in response to man's social nature and that it does not exist for its own sake but solely to enable every individual to attain a life of the greatest possible happiness. However, since man can only find the means for living a proper life and developing his mental and moral faculties within society, the ultimate end of the state is not simply the personal goods of individuals, but the welfare of society as a whole. The better the material, moral, and intellectual wellbeing of the whole of society, the better each individual will be able to attain his/her self-perfection as a human being. This, the Graeco-Christian perspective on the role of the state, essentially argues its ultimate purpose as being to promote the common good (Loxton 1993: 30-31).

To comprehend the place of service delivery in the role of the state, the following examination can be highlighted. Service delivery includes protection by an accepted governing body. In exchange for being governed and protected, citizens expect the governing body to maintain an orderly community. This agreement confirms the governing body's responsibility to govern on behalf of the citizens of such communities and to protect their interests (Du Toit & Van der Waldt 1999: 22). This responsibility further implies that the governing body is responsible for service delivery to the community.

The responsibility for service delivery denotes the delivery of some kind of collective or common services. As stated, originally, services delivered were collective and basic, e.g. defending the community and members thereof against aggression and turmoil (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 88). As communities grew and became more sophisticated, so their need for more and better services increased and needs became increasingly difficult to meet. Problems associated with the meeting of needs stemmed from the increased restrictions placed on growing communities with more needs to satisfy, as well as from attempting to maintain an orderly community (Du Toit & Van der Walddt 1999: 24). Governing institutions thus deliver services because citizens are unable to satisfy all their own needs and the activities of public administration are the logical consequences of the practice of service delivery from the earliest times (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 89).

Government and the activities it undertakes to deliver services are the result of political dynamics. Governance is the maintenance of law and order, the defence of society against external enemies and the advancement of what is thought to be the welfare of the group, community, society or state itself (Fox & Meyer 1995: 55). Government is thus responsible for making laws, ensuring that there are institutions to implement its laws, and providing the services and products that these laws prescribe. It is the implementation of laws and the actual provision of services and products that constitutes governance (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 64).

To understand the correlation between governance, encompassing the role of the state, and public administration, the definition of public administration needs to be considered. Public administration can be defined in terms of the (generic) functions of public administration. The six generic functions are policy-making; financing; personnel provision

and use; organising; determining work procedures and methods; and controlling (Cloete 1998: 86). Management is regarded by some exponents as the seventh overarching generic function of public administration, consisting of activities such as planning, leading and co-ordinating (Botes *et al.* 1992: 300 *cf.* Du Toit & Van der Walddt 1999: 16). When the management function and especially the activity of planning is considered separately, the relevance of Statistics South Africa (herein after referred to as Stats SA) as subject of a study in the field of Public Administration becomes apparent. However, the terms planning and policy-making have to be examined first.

Planning is the process of making decisions about what should be done by whom, how, when and where, in order to achieve that which is envisaged by a policy (Du Toit & Van der Walddt 1999: 16). As was mentioned, policy-making is one of the generic functions of public administration starting from the moment a decision is made to do something about a specific problem or need, to the time a service is delivered. Policies in turn state intentions, (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 64) for example, the elected legislative body is responsible for making public policy decisions, that is, deciding what the public policies will be by passing laws. Then it is the responsibility of public institutions to implement these policies consistent with the law, making whatever management decisions are necessary to determine how the policies can be implemented with maximum efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness (Swain 1987: 117). An activity undertaken during both policy-making and planning is decision-making which can be defined as a deliberate choice between alternatives, (Van Niekerk *et al.* 2000: 90) or a rational process by which a specific plan is chosen to solve a particular problem (Crous 1995: 181). Also, the close relationship between decision-making and planning lies in the fact that public administration should

be based on rationality, meaning that public administrators are expected to think before they act, even if reacting to a crisis (Swain 1987: 119).

Before the relevance of Stats SA in the South African public administration can be explained, it is necessary to consider the importance of information to the generic function of policy-making and the management activity of planning, both reliant on decision-making. The terms data and information will be defined under 1.6.5, but at this point it is important to note that information is considered to be processed data and in contemporary societies, information is an important factor in the process of government and administration. For example, it would be unwise to make a decision about a particular situation without having knowledge about what caused the situation to develop. Information is thus extremely important in the process of decision-making. Relevant information at hand empowers governments and administrators to make decisions and to take action. Information provides them with a comprehensive picture of various situations that they have to act on (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 45). The importance of the availability of information lies therein that rational decision-making is often impeded by the cost of information, as it takes time, effort and even money to obtain data and comprehend their meaning (Downs 1967: 3).

Stats SA aims to produce timely, accurate and accessible official statistics to help advance South African economic growth, development and democracy (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/default2.asp>). Statistical data and information can assist in administering all the generic functions of public administration, namely policy-making; financing; personnel provision and use; organising; determining work procedures and methods; and controlling (Cloete 1998: 86 *cf.* Pillay 2000: 35). However, the statistical products of Stats SA are indispensable in especially the policy-making and planning activities of government,

government departments, and other public, as well as private institutions. As it has been established that the statistical data and information produced by Stats SA inform the generic functions of public administration, it can be accepted that the statistical products of Stats SA also have a considerable contribution to make towards improved service delivery in the South African public service. It is after all, bearing in mind the definition that public administration is the type of administration that is involved in the conduct of communal or public affairs by the various government and other public bodies (Gladden 1972: 3), efficiency in policy-making; financing; personnel provision and use; organising; determining work procedures and methods; and controlling that will assist in enhancing public service delivery.

The deduction can be made from the above discussion that the programmes of government should contribute towards an enhanced quality of life for all (Thornhill & Hanekom 1995: 17). This implies that the outcomes of public administration are aimed at service delivery and the improvement of the general welfare of the people (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 6).

Institutions in the public sector are established to achieve specific goals that the legislator has in mind with society. In the public sector institutional goals change because of changing political ideology, changing interpretation of societal values, changing conditions in the international environment, or when a change of government takes place (Thornhill & Hanekom 1995: 167). The transformation of the South African public service has been placed high on the political agenda in the post-1994 dispensation, as the new government would like to consolidate and retain its power, through which it would simultaneously be improving its international and domestic regard (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 66).

The South African government was spurred on to address public sector service delivery, not only because of what is required of it in constitutional terms, but also by the following post-*apartheid* socio-economic statistics. In 1995 it was estimated that close to eight million people (at that stage 30 percent of the South African population) did not have adequate sanitary facilities and that only 57 percent of South Africans had waterborne sewerage (Wall 1997: 113). In 1996 it was estimated that between 15 and 16 million people did not have piped water (Hilliard 1997: 24).

In order to implement South Africa's *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (herein after referred to as *RDP*) and its *Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy* (herein after referred to as *GEAR*), government has released a number of White Papers that have bearing on the transformation of the South African public service, with the aim of making the public service more efficient, effective and economical. One of the most important policy documents is *the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery*, or the *Batho Pele White Paper* of 1997 (Notice No. 1459 of 1997) (herein after referred to as the *Batho Pele White Paper*). 'Batho Pele' is Sesotho for 'People First' and this title was derived from the motto adopted by the post-1994 public service: 'Service to the People' (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 66).

The *Batho Pele White Paper* (Sect. 1.1.1.) states that the South African Public Service will be judged by one criterion: its effectiveness in delivering services that meet the basic needs of all South African citizens. This is emphasised by the following statement: "*Public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society, they are a legitimate expectation. That is why meeting the basic needs of all citizens is one of*

the five key programmes of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)".

The inhabitants of a country require various services from all levels of government and pay for such services either directly or by way of taxes. The community has a right to demand that such services be provided effectively, efficiently and cost effectively. Public institutions must therefore strive to provide such services as required by the community as customer (Riekert 2001: 89).

Service delivery can be regarded as the paramount function of any government. Citizens elect representatives to ensure that the services they need are provided. If a government fails to meet the needs of the community then the elected representatives and councillors must accept responsibility for such failure. Members of the public can and should demand explanations from their elected representatives if the demanded standard of service is not met (Riekert 2001: 89).

The prioritisation of improved service delivery by governments has also been termed 'alternative service delivery', described as involving a re-examination of the core functions of government; those functions that only government can and must perform. Alternative service delivery is said to involve the transformation of government functions with a view to service delivery which is citizen-oriented and citizen-centred (Ford & Zussman 1997: 273-275).

The aim of this dissertation is to evaluate the implementation of the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, as definitive government regulation on service delivery by the South African public service; specifically by Stats SA, as a South African government department, or public institution.

After a general overview has been acquired, the frame of reference of the dissertation should be considered. The frame of reference will explain the type of study undertaken, as well as the institutional context within which research was conducted.

1.2. FRAME OF REFERENCE

This dissertation is an empirical research study on the implementation of the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper* by Stats SA. The empirical research study is supplemented with a normative study of service delivery.

Empirical research will address perceptions displayed by employees at the Head Office of Stats SA on the extent to which the institution is implementing the principles of *Batho Pele*, through their completion of a questionnaire. Stats SA was selected for the empirical study, because of its encompassing role as public institution. Stats SA collects, processes, analyses and publishes economic, social and population statistics. The institution has no direct policy responsibility; however, the data and information it distributes, support policy decisions made by government, the private sector and civil society. Herein then lies the potential of Stats SA to make a major contribution to the improvement of service delivery in South Africa. Past assessments of service delivery by South African public institutions have also tended to focus only on institutions that serve the public as primary customer, often neglecting to address government and other public, as well as private institutions as customers. That government is the primary customer of Stats SA, serves as a reminder that in addressing *the Batho Pele White Paper* principles, public institutions should not be so focussed on the service delivery

needs of external (individual) customers, that they neglect the needs of customers internal to the public service.

When clarity has been established on the frame of reference for the research, it is of paramount importance to maintain a constant awareness of the problem statement of the dissertation. The researcher should of course remain mindful of what it is he/she wishes to prove or assess.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The consolidation and retention of its power, and the simultaneous improvement of its international and domestic regard have been identified as aims by the South African government, leading to the prioritisation of the transformation of the South African public service, with the aim of improving service delivery by making it more efficient, effective and economical. The statement is made in Stats SA's service delivery improvement programme for the 2002/2003 planning period (herein after referred to as the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme), that although there have been service delivery improvement initiatives in Stats SA, there has been no consolidated, systematic, deliberate and conscious effort to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* (Stats SA 2001c: 7).

The aim of this dissertation is neither to prove or disprove the above mentioned thesis, but rather to assess the level of implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by Stats SA, against the background of service delivery in the South African public service. The reason being that the critical challenge associated with the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles is not necessarily to replace or redesign

systems and procedures operating in Stats SA, or to change prevalent attitudes, but rather that these systems, procedures and attitudes are merely re-oriented in favour of service delivery (Stats SA 2001c: 6).

Understanding of and continuously (re)focussing on the problem statement could be seen as the first priority of research. Ensuing, the research methodology utilised has to be justified ensuring that the particular methodology used was best suited to the research undertaken.

1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the normative study or theoretical basis of the dissertation, local and international publications were consulted. Apart from books, these included applicable legislation and government notices of the Republic of South Africa, reports from government departments and other public institutions, as well as articles from subject specific journals.

During the empirical research conducted, the investigating procedures followed were the following:

- a) a questionnaire was developed and completed anonymously by selected employees at the Head Office of Stats SA (Annexure A); and
- b) a frequency analysis was performed by utilising the software package Microsoft Excel '97 for Windows.

The aim of the questionnaire developed for the purposes of the dissertation was to evaluate the perceptions of employees of Stats SA on service delivery related issues. The issues addressed by the questionnaire were selected on the grounds of their direct bearing on the theme of the dissertation, namely the implementation of the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper* by Stats SA, founded in an examination of service

delivery in the South African public service. The arguments in this dissertation are thus supported by both normative and empirical research.

For the completion of the questionnaire, staff members were selected as participants on the grounds of their being situated in directorates or subdirectorates of the Head Office of Stats SA regarded as being located closest to the actual point of service delivery, by the time of completion of the questionnaire (April 2002), or on the grounds of their being the employees who are in contact with customers most often. The respondents were employed in the following directorates and subdirectorates:

- a) Statistical Outreach, in the directorate: Analysis and Statistical Consulting and chief directorate: Research and Development. The subdirectorate consists of three staff members; one on senior management level (Director and above), one on middle management level (Deputy or Assistant Director) and one on supervisory level (Senior Administrative Officer or Administrative Officer). All three staff members completed the questionnaire;
- b) Publishing: Web and Publishing: Design, in the directorate: Publishing, Marketing and User Information Services and chief directorate: Research and Development. The subdirectorate consists of five staff members (two in Publishing: Web and three in Publishing: Design); one on middle management level, two on supervisory level, as well as two industrial technicians. All five staff members completed the questionnaire;
- c) User Information Services, in the directorate: Publishing, Marketing and User Information Services and chief directorate: Research and Development. The subdirectorate consists of five staff members of whom three completed the questionnaire. All three respondents occupy positions on supervisory level;

- d) Information Resource Centre, in the directorate: Publishing, Marketing and User Information Services and chief directorate: Research and Development. The centre consists of three staff members of whom two completed the questionnaire; one librarian and one senior library assistant;
- e) Marketing Services, in the directorate: Publishing, Marketing and User Information Services and chief directorate: Research and Development. The subdirectorates consists of nine staff members of whom seven completed the questionnaire; three on supervisory level, one clerk, one dissemination officer and two employees specified as 'professionals'; and
- f) Publications, in the directorate: Finance and Provisioning Administration and chief directorate: Corporate Services. The section consists of 12 staff members of whom seven completed the questionnaire. Four respondents were typists and three were clerks on ranging levels.

A total number of 27 respondents completed the questionnaire. The response rate can be calculated as follows:

- a) the total number of potential participants was 37;
- b) the number of respondents was 27;
- c) which brings the response rate to 72.97%.

A response rate of 72.97% might imply that the answers given by respondents might also be valid for non-respondents within the directorates and subdirectorates targeted. However, it has to be stated in terms of the limitations of this dissertation that only 27 staff members out of 571 employed in the Head Office of Stats SA completed the questionnaire. It can thus not be assumed that the answers given by respondents will be valid for the entire Stats SA. The results of the study

should thus be seen as representing only the opinion of the respondents. It has to be reiterated, however, that the directorates and subdirectorates selected for participation in completing the questionnaire were limited to those regarded as being located closest to the actual point of delivery of services, or being in contact with customers most often.

In order to determine the reliability of the empirical study, the Spearman-Brown formula was used. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Rel} = \frac{Nr}{1 + (N-1) r}$$

Where:

- a) Rel implies the degree of reliability;
- b) N implies the number of units that were measured; and
- c) r is the correlation between one assessment and another.

If it is assumed that the correlation between one assessment and another is one, then the degree of reliability can be calculated as follows (Selltiz *et al.* 1964: 183):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Rel} &= \frac{27(1)}{1 + (27-1) 1} \\ &= 1.0 \end{aligned}$$

The conditions of the formula is that if the number of units measured increases and the correlation between one assessment and another remains the same, it may not change the end result of the formula drastically.

The outcomes of the questionnaire are represented in table format. The following terms were used in the tables: value, frequency, percent, and cumulative percent. Value represents the scale from one to four from which respondents could choose. A value of one represented the lowest value, namely 'I disagree completely', a value of two: 'I disagree to some extent'; a value of three: 'I agree to some extent' and a value of four represented the highest value, namely 'I agree completely'. Frequency depicts the number of times that a specific value occurred and percent the number of times that a specific value appeared in terms of a percentage out of 100. Cumulative percent represents the total percentage after each percent.

This methodology was selected on the grounds of its suitability to the quantification of results, as well as the anonymous participation of respondents. The opportunity for anonymous participation is believed to encourage participants to answer questions more honestly, as they do not have to fear answers perceived as negative being connected to their position or person. When, as in this case, an employee is being questioned on the issue of service delivery in his/her institution, he/she might for example not admit to not always treating customers with courtesy and respect if he/she knows that this could be traced back to him/her, out of fear that this might endanger his/her position in the institution. The scale according to which respondents were expected to answer the questions was also believed to have contributed to accuracy by affording them with the opportunity to express a range of opinions, without the risk of uncertainty of a neutral factor.

After elucidating the research methodology used in a dissertation and also examining the suitability thereof, the structure of the dissertation

needs to be considered. This provides an overall picture of the components of a dissertation.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 embodies an introduction to the dissertation, by providing a general overview, specifying the frame of reference, and discussing the problem statement of the research undertaken. Chapter 1 also explains the research methodology used and provides definitions of terms used in the dissertation. In **Chapter 2**, the development of Stats SA from 1970 to 2002 is examined, which includes discussions on the institution's mission statement, legislative mandate and aims. This examination of the development and structural-functional analysis of Stats SA will serve as an introduction to the study of service delivery within the confines of this particular public institution.

Chapter 3 comprises a conceptualisation of the term service delivery, as well as an examination of the environment for service delivery, examining the legislative, economic, socio-cultural and technological environments. **Chapter 4** is devoted to the outcomes of the empirical research conducted and addresses the implementation of service delivery strategies in Stats SA. The examination of the *Batho Pele White Paper* as service delivery strategy is structured in terms of the principles of the White Paper as they were addressed by the questionnaire. **Chapter 5** contains an evaluation of all preceding chapters, as well as recommendations.

When a summary has been considered of the components of a dissertation, it is necessary to define important terms used in the

dissertation. Providing definitions for the terminology used in the dissertation is aimed at eliminating uncertainty.

1.6. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN DISSERTATION

Definitions are provided for the terms South African public service, service delivery and customer. The relation between the terms effectiveness, efficiency and economy is also examined. It is also necessary to note the difference between (statistical) data and information, as the classification of the products or services of Stats SA.

1.6.1. South African public service

Section 197(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996) (herein after referred to as the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*) states that there is a public service for the Republic which must function and be structured in terms of national legislation and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day. According to section 7(2) of the *Public Service Act* (Proclamation 103 of 1994) (herein after referred to as the *Public Service Act, 1994*) the responsibility for administration will be that of the national and provincial departments and organisational components named in the *Public Service Act, 1994*. While section 8 of the *Public Service Act, 1994* elaborates that the South African public service constitutes all persons holding fixed positions or permanent additional appointments in these bodies. Also included are the Permanent Force of the National Defence Force, the South African Police Service, the Department of Correctional Services, the Department of National Intelligence Services and state educational institutions. The term public

institutions as used in this dissertation thus encompasses all national and provincial departments and organisational components named in the *Public Service Act, 1994*, implicating all persons holding fixed positions or permanent additional appointments in these bodies, ultimately constituting the South African public service. Stats SA thus qualifies as public institution on the grounds of it being classified as organisational component by Schedule 3 of the *Public Service Act, 1994*.

One could elaborate on these definitions of the South African public service by referring to definitions of the term **public institutions**. Fox *et al.* (1991: 231) describe public institutions by stating that these institutions function in an environment where there is a limited degree of market exposure and a great degree of reliance on appropriations from authoritative bodies. The authors continue by stating that the environment of public institutions is legal and formal, and it is influenced by a number of judicial constraints and distinctive political factors. Public institutions are also exposed to close public scrutiny and unique public expectations, such as Stats SA satisfying the need for statistical data and information, not only by the public, but also by other public, as well as private sector organisations providing products or services to the public.

When examining the term 'public service' in a broader/international context, reference can be made of the definition of the Encarta World English On-line Dictionary (<http://dictionary.msn.com/find/entry.asp?search=public+service>) where 'public service' is defined as government employment, especially within the civil service; or as the provision of essential services, i.e. the business or activity of providing the public with essential goods or services. Another definition provided for the term public service is that it is a service benefiting the general public. A public institution could thus be defined as an institution providing a service to

the general public, with the conglomerate of South African public institutions being typified as the South African public service, but within the specifications of the *Public Service Act, 1994*.

1.6.2. Public administration

Administration has to do with getting things done; with the accomplishment of defined objectives. The science of administration is the system of knowledge whereby people may understand relationships, predict results, and influence outcomes in any situation where people are organised at work together for a common purpose. Public administration is that part of the science of administration that has to do with government, and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch, where the work of government is done (Gulick & Urwick 1937: 191). Public administration can also be defined as formulating objectives and goals, working with the legislature, establishing and revising organisation, directing and supervising employees, determining work methods and procedures and exercising controls. Public administration is the administrative or action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realised (Corson & Harris 1963: 12 *cf.* Barber 1974: 1). Public administration is also concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 1997: 13).

1.6.3. Service delivery

Service can be defined as the performance of work or duty by an official or an act of helping others, or power to control or make use of resources,

or an organisation or system providing the public with something useful or necessary (The Universal Dictionary 1961: 1394 – 1395). The act of delivery can be defined as producing or performing, handing over, taking goods to the intended recipient, or producing results as promised or expected (The Universal Dictionary 1961: 413). These definitions are adopted by Riekert (2001: 90), arriving at a combined definition which reads as follows: *‘Service delivery is concerned with the provision of a product or service, by a government or government body to a community that it was promised to, or which is expected by that community’*.

At this point, it might be useful too to consider the correlation between the terms public service and public administration. Reference should again be made to the legislative stipulations mentioned before that there is a public service for the Republic and that the responsibility for administration will be that of the national and provincial departments and other specified organisational components. Even though the terms public service and public administration are often used interchangeably, it can be deducted from the foregoing that public administration is that which the public service has legislatively been assigned with, with the public service constituting the conglomerate of public institutions.

Hanekom *et al.* (1987: 11) are of the opinion that the real core of public administration is the basic services performed for the public, such as policing and the protection of property. Cloete (1978: ii) adds that governmental institutions are continuously called upon to render with even greater intensity, a larger number of public services.

1.6.4. Customer

Riekert (2001: 88) states that all citizens making use of a particular service are in fact customers and that a customer can be defined as a person with whom you must deal, or a person or institution who buys goods and services. A client is described as one to whom services are rendered, or one receiving attention and care. Even though there does not seem to be a considerable difference between the terms customer and client, customer is the term which will be used for the purposes of this dissertation.

The term customer is used interchangeably with the term citizen throughout the *Batho Pele White Paper*. It is however stated that not only the public are customers, national and provincial departments have many internal customers such as components and staff within their own organisations, as well as other departments and institutions to whom they provide a service (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 307).

A customer of Stats SA, for example, can thus be classified as any user/receiver of any product or service provided by Stats SA. This classification would then include individuals or components both internal and external to Stats SA, government or government departments, as well as other public or private institutions.

1.6.5. Effectiveness, efficiency and economy

Efficiency refers to the most effective way of achieving an objective with the most economical use of funds. This implies that effective methods can be extremely uneconomical, or the opposite i.e. that economical methods can be ineffective at achieving the desired results. Efficiency

refers to that which does obtain the objective, i.e. the process of the effective achievement of goals (Botes *et al.* 1992: 290).

It can be argued that in the closed relation between economy and effectiveness, the economy factor would be small if maximum effectiveness is pursued, whereas if greater economy is required, effectiveness would decrease. Efficiency thus refers to maximum effectiveness achieved with maximum economy (Botes *et al.* 1992: 290).

The terms effectiveness, efficiency and economy are continuously being referred to in strategies related to service delivery by Stats SA and the rest of the South African public service. Keeping in mind the above mentioned definitions, effectiveness in service delivery can be seen as involving the satisfaction of goals, e.g. the attainment of service delivery targets. Efficient service delivery would thus imply the satisfaction of service delivery goals with the frugal use of resources.

1.6.6. Statistical data and information

Data is unprocessed facts, figures or predictions from which information is drawn (Van der Waladt & Du Toit 1997: 344). The deduction could thus be made that information is retrieved from data, or that information is processed data. Information can also be defined as the knowledge obtained by processing collected data into something meaningful – something that gives a full picture of a specific event, incident or tendency (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 45).

The term statistics is defined as the science of collecting and analysing numerical data, especially in large quantities and inferring proportions in a whole from proportions in a representative sample, as well as the

systematic presentation of such facts (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 1521). Statistical information would thus refer to information obtained from large quantities of processed numerical data.

1.7. CONCLUSION

The general overview provided in this dissertation ensures that the reader is supplied with the necessary background to this study of service delivery in the South African public service with its assessment of the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by Stats SA. The discussion of the frame of reference is a vital prelude to the dissection of the problem statement of this dissertation.

In this chapter the structure of the dissertation was set out and an explanation was provided of the methodology utilised during the research. Definitions were also provided for the terms South African public service, public administration, service delivery and customer, effectiveness, efficiency and economy, as well as statistical data and information.

In chapter 2, the development of Stats SA from 1970 to 2002 will be examined, which will include discussions on the institution's mission statement, legislative mandate and aims. The examination of the development and the structural-functional analysis of Stats SA will serve as an introduction to the study of service delivery within the confines of this particular public institution.

CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1970 TO 2002

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Before the implementation of service delivery strategies in Stats SA can be examined to assess the level of implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by the institution, it is necessary to understand its functioning as a public institution. This can be achieved by, amongst others, considering the development of Stats SA from 1970 to 2002. The examination of the development of Stats SA provided in this chapter will include consideration of the institution's mission statement, legislative mandate and aims.

2.2. STATS SA AS PUBLIC INSTITUTION

When two or more people are striving for the realisation of any purposeful and institutionalised goals, administration takes place (Botes *et al.* 1992: 1). Although there are proponents who suggest that the ultimate aim of the state is to maintain peace and order, and to enhance the common good of the people, all these actions are simply a means to an end and not an end in itself. Reference can be made to the ancient statement of Aristotle, who wrote that: '*the state exists, not merely to make life possible, but to make life good*'. All actions of the executive authority of a state should thus be directed at ensuring the continued existence of the state. But the state should also realise that people do not only want to exist, they want to be prosperous, healthy, educated and protected and they want to exist in an orderly environment and state (Botes *et al.* 1992: 3). It is, however, impossible for political office bearers

to manage all the activities related to these objectives (Roux *et al.* 1997: 37); therefore executive institutions or institutional infrastructures should be created to provide essential services and to maintain the required infrastructure (Botes *et al.* 1992: 3). It does not matter which political system is followed to achieve this, there will always be some kind of public administration who will serve as the executive arm of government to act as the actual deliverer of services.

Public administration has been defined (1.1 *supra*) as that part of the science of administration which has to do with government, and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch, where the work of government is done (Gulick & Urwick 1937: 191). However, public administration was also defined in terms of the (generic) functions of public administration. The six generic functions are policy-making; financing; personnel provision and utilisation; organising; determining work procedures and methods; and controlling (Cloete 1998: 86). The relevance of Stats SA as subject of a study in the field of Public Administration became apparent when the terms planning and policy-making were defined and examined (1.1 *supra*).

The deduction was made (1.1 *supra*) that statistical data and information can assist in administering all the generic functions of public administration, but that the statistical products of Stats SA are indispensable in especially the policy-making and planning activities of government, government departments, and other public, as well as private institutions. As it was established that the statistical data and information produced by Stats SA inform the generic functions of public administration, it was accepted that the statistical products of Stats SA also have a considerable contribution to make towards improved service delivery in the South African public service. It is, after all, efficiency in policy-making; financing; personnel provision and use; organising;

determining work procedures and methods; and controlling that will assist in enhancing public service delivery.

Stats SA was not just decided upon as subject of this study in Public Administration, because of its status as public institution on the grounds of its classification as organisational component in terms of Schedule 3 of the *Public Service Act, 1994*. The discussion above has established the indispensability of national statistics in the public administration and thus in informing attempts to enhance public service delivery. Now that a comprehension has been formed of Stats SA as public institution, the development of the institution may be considered.

2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF STATS SA SINCE 1970

Between 1970 and 1994 the South African statistics system was fragmented, since it was dominated by six distinct but overlapping forces. Each of these had its sphere of geographic and/or thematic influence (Stats SA 2001b: 11):

- a) The then Central Statistical Service (CSS) predominately focussed on Whites as a population group and the economy of the geographic component referred to as the erstwhile White South Africa. Ultimately, the CSS focused on a population minority of less than five million which left the economy of the Black population relatively unknown.
- b) The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) as a source of official statistical information, focussed on the Black population, especially in the former homelands, but its studies largely had demographic themes.
- c) The third force was the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) who looked at the financing of Black development. The DBSA predominantly collected information in the homelands, but there was

some professional conflict between the CSS and the DBSA, hampering co-operation for useful information sharing.

- d) The fourth area was dominated by the academia, who were largely active in demographics and population projections.
- e) The fifth group consisted of market researchers, with the Bureau of Market Research being the predominant force specialising in income and expenditure surveys.
- f) The sixth group constituted the statistics offices of the homelands. These offices functioned with varying levels of effectiveness, focussing on informing the Customs Revenue Pool and the conduct of censuses.

A brief summary has been provided of the development of Stats SA between 1970 and 1994. The history of Stats SA as public service provider in post-apartheid South Africa can now be reflected on.

2.3.1. Official statistics in post-apartheid South Africa

The transformation of the CSS's products, structures, systems and staffing between 1994 and 1997 was shaped by three key national policies, namely the *RDP White Paper*, *GEAR* and the goals of public service transformation set by the Department of Public Service and Administration. In 1994, a task team was set up to review the *Statistics Act, 1976* (Act 66 of 1976). The project was taken over by the Interim Statistics Council. With expert international assistance, a policy paper was produced and widely discussed during 1997 (Stats SA 1999: 8, 12).

In 1995, the CSS commenced a vigorous programme of rationalisation. Provision was made for restructuring in alignment with national development priorities; a performance-oriented review of employees to determine who was to be absorbed into the new structure; integration of

components previously fragmented under apartheid; and recruitment towards specified representativity targets. Following the comprehensive rationalisation, some 270 new appointments were made in the total complement of approximately 750 positions. These included appointments in the management echelon and the nine new provincial offices (Stats SA 1999: 10, 45).

The CSS's Chief Directorate of Demography was created to give due significance to South Africa's first post-apartheid national population census. Census planning and demarcation took place in 1995 and 1996 and the massive enumeration exercise by 100 000 fieldworkers in October 1996.

The need for service delivery over a vast geographical area contributes largely to the division of countries in regions with legislative and executive authorities (Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 11). Demographic needs also led the establishment of nine provincial offices in 1997. These provide statistical information for planning and decision-making at provincial and local level and also manage fieldwork for the CSS's household survey programme. In co-operation with the Department of Land Affairs and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Chief Directorate of Demography also undertook the development of a national computerised geographical information system (GIS). The GIS has given the IEC digitised, small-area planning information for general and provincial elections and has also provided a spatial basis for all census reporting (Stats SA 1999: 8).

The Chief Directorate of Research and Development was formed in 1996 to provide methodological services and accessible statistical outputs. Its role during the censuses is to finalise questionnaires and to implement and compute the special surveys required for the early phases of

undercount adjustments. The Directorate provides the analytical and publishing infrastructure to generate the first sets of final census results (Stats SA 1999: 9).

An internet website was started in 1996, but even though the dissemination of outputs became increasingly electronic, print products remained an important part of dissemination strategies. Through study tours and consultants' visits, the CSS benefited from extensive technical assistance and international good practice in all its operations, primarily from Sweden, but also from Australia, Switzerland, Norway, the United Nations Population Fund and Canada (Stats SA 1999: 3, 11).

In 1997, the CSS introduced a new performance-oriented employee appraisal system, after consultation with the relevant trade unions. The appraisal system links the performance management of each employee with capacity building for improved service delivery in line with institutional goals. Every employee would now be assessed annually. Assessment criteria include initiative and commitment as well as skills and experience (Stats SA 1999: 10).

The most important institutional developments in the post-apartheid Stats SA have been highlighted and advancement is being made towards the completion of an examination of the development of the institution. The developments of 1998 might have been the most consequential throughout the development of Stats SA.

2.3.2. From the Central Statistical Service to Statistics South Africa

With the renaming of the Central Statistical Service (CSS) to Stats SA and the adoption of a new logo in 1998, the commitment to

professionalism and service delivery of the restructured institution was reflected. In 1998 Stats SA's institutional structure was constituted by the Chief Directorates of Economic Statistics and Surveys, Demography, Research and Development, and Strategy and Planning and Corporate Services. Vigorous institutional development brought about that Stats SA moved from 15% black employees out of 582 in mid-1995 to 61% of its 695 employees in 1998, as well as from an all-white, all-male senior management team to one that was 40% black and 27% female. People with disabilities formed nearly two percent of employees. A performance-oriented employee appraisal system and modular training courses in statistics and administration were introduced. A multi-faceted capacity-building programme was put into action, covering statistics, computer applications, and managerial and administrative skills development, for both new and existing employees (Stats SA 1999: 1, 3, 10, 11).

A challenge identified in 1997 was to render transformation sustainable by consolidating infrastructure and systems. The challenge was however heightened in 1998 by fiscal constraints, as the Stats SA core budget for the 1998/99 financial year of R 95 318 000 kept up with inflation, but the census budget was halved in real terms. These circumstances were responded to with innovative methodologies, closer collaboration with other departments, increased earning through extended user-pay arrangements and donor support, and bold management. Seen against the mentioned circumstances a Statistics Bill was drafted in 1998, canvassed with the Minister, and approved by Cabinet for submission to Parliament in early 1999 (Stats SA 1999: 3, 12).

Well before the end-1998 deadline, South Africa was the first developing nation to achieve compliance with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Special Data Dissemination Standards (SDDS) in respect of the specified suite of key indicators. This involved halving previous

turnaround times regarding responding to enquiries and requests for statistical information, while extending coverage of South Africa and its people (Stats SA 1999: 2). This achievement is of particular importance as one of the ways in which services delivered, or performance, can be measured is by standards of quality set by an organisation of professional persons concerned with the particular service (Sharkansky 1975: 334).

The inception of an intranet came in 1998 together with the expansion of Stats SA's internet publishing programme. The website recorded an average of 3 000 'hits' (number of individual accesses by users) per month throughout the year, and 6 000 in the three weeks following the release of the results of Census '96. Over 4 000 requests were processed per month by the user enquiry section, plus an additional 3 000 requests in the three weeks following the release of the results of Census '96. During 1998, the Stats SA help desk handled about 600 calls per month (Stats SA 1999: 11, 43, 56). The number of requests and calls received are mentioned throughout this discussion of the development of Stats SA, based on the theory that services delivered, or performance, can be measured in several ways; one of them being the popularity of a service among customers (Sharkansky 1975: 334).

The monumental developments of 1998 lead up to great anticipation of what Stats SA could accomplish in the new millenium. Stats SA's most significant institutional developments during 1999 will now be discussed.

2.3.3. National statistics in the new millenium

One of the challenges Stats SA, as all public institutions, were faced with in 1999 was to accomplish more for less which was directed at delivering

improved and more comprehensive outputs from available resources, through better management, capacity building, and imaginative implementation of new financial and employee regulations. In Stats SA this involved extending the outcomes of rapid transformation by seeking efficiency through integration (Stats SA 2000: 1).

As was the case with many public institutions around this time, transformation and restructuring initiatives aimed at improved service delivery, brought about that Stats SA's employee racial distribution changed to 61% black out of 654 employees, whilst the female component of employees constituted 53% in 1999 (Stats SA 2000: 5). There were no major changes to Stats SA's institutional structure in 1999 and, as in 1998, the institution managed its programmes through the Chief Directorates of Economic Statistics and Surveys and National Accounts, Demography, Research and Development, Strategy and Planning, and Corporate Services and the institution was awarded a budget of R 141 423 000 for the 1999/2000 financial year (Stats SA 2000: 64).

Stats SA's strategic imperatives for 1999 focussed on the following (Stats SA 2000: 49):

- a) stakeholder relations: making partners of users;
- b) products: developing flexible electronic products in addition to standard print products;
- c) institutional development: implementing an institutional development strategy to reduce crisis management;
- d) restructuring: regrouping organically-related functions to achieve integrated service delivery;
- e) technology: developing new information management systems for subject-matter and institutional areas; and

- f) resources: optimising use and allocation according to overall institutional priorities.

As part of the prioritisation of improved service delivery in the South African public service, Stats SA conceptualised the outline of a “strategic management cycle” in 1998. This cycle begins with management strategic thinking and moves through budgeting and individual performance management towards final monitoring and review. Early in 1999, this cycle was set in motion. The cycle laid the basis for one-year and three-year planning at operational unit level and feeds the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) budgeting process (Stats SA 2000: 46).

The Statistics Bill was passed as the *Statistics Act, 1999* (Act 6 of 1999) (herein after referred to as the *Statistics Act, 1999*). The *Statistics Act, 1999*, contains important new dimensions. The conception of official statistical production is no longer confined to Stats SA, its Minister and the Statistics Council, but envisages a system of official statistics, covering government statistics wherever they are produced, as well as producers, users, respondents, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

During 1999 Stats SA’s head office resolved over 50 000 enquiries of a contemporary statistical nature from a wide range of users and Stats SA’s library processed over 1 500 specialised enquiries from both internal and external users requiring detailed historical research, on-line data and information searches. The helpdesk was upgraded and handled approximately 500 calls per month (Stats SA 2000: 43).

Notable achievements by Stats SA's distribution component in 1999 included (Stats SA 2000: 44):

- a) the development of a dissemination database incorporating 210 different categories of users of statistics;
- b) the dispatch of over 500 000 questionnaires to respondents; and
- c) the distribution of over 300 000 statistical releases to external users.

With the above mentioned, highlighted as significant institutional developments and achievements in 1999, the most recent developments and achievements of Stats SA as public institution can be considered. The timeframe 2000/2001 brought with it the following developments.

2.3.4. The latest developments in Stats SA

One of the challenges identified as facing public institutions in 1999 also affected the institutional development of Stats SA. This challenge to public institutions was to work collaboratively, as they were expected to tackle the nation's key strategic goals such as consolidating democracy, eliminating poverty, enabling job creation through economic growth and investment, and tackling HIV/AIDS. The programmes prioritised to address these goals – including rural development, urban renewal and regional development – spanned departments and other organs of state, as well as the different spheres of government. These developments emphasised the need for official statistics that were not only relevant, reliable and accessible, but also linked and comparable across institutions, to inform the formulation of joint policies and monitor their implementation. Stats SA has moved in this direction with several ambitious interdepartmental ventures, on which it hopes to gradually build a national statistical system (Stats SA 2000: 1).

One of the structural developments influencing service delivery in Stats SA was that in November 2000, South Africa's first Statistician-General was appointed. Other structural characteristics of Stats SA for the timeframe 2000/2001 included the following: Stats SA's employee racial distribution stood on 69% black out of 868 employees. This total included the census contract posts. The female component of employees constituted 51%. Even before the restructuring envisaged for 2002, the institutional structure of Stats SA was altered somewhat between 1999 and 2000/2001, so that during 2000/2001 the institution managed its programmes through the Chief Directorates of Economic Statistics and Surveys; Demography; Research and Development; and Corporate Services. Stats SA was allocated with a budget of R 281 395 000 for the 2000/2001 financial year and during this time employees received an average of 4,9 days training per employee. An average amount of R 1 050 was spent on each employee for training. Much of this training was aimed at improving service delivery by supplying employees of Stats SA not only with the necessary skills to meet the basis requirements of their jobs, but also with skills to perform their functions more efficiently (Stats SA 2001a: 1, 14, 15, 19).

Following concerns from employees about the slow pace of institutional transformation in Stats SA, a cross-functional team including trade union representatives was established to drive the process of institutional development. This team, known as ODeTT (Organisational Development Task Team) participated with management to develop an agenda for change in Stats SA. ODeTT was tasked with fleshing out the agenda for change, while management's responsibility is to ensure that this agenda is implemented (Stats SA 2001a: 4).

One of ODeTT's core responsibilities was to devise a new institutional structure for Stats SA. (Implementation of the institutional restructuring

of Stats SA was envisaged for the end of April 2002. Restructuring was thus not completed by the time the empirical study on Stats SA was conducted.) The structure was to facilitate the implementation and achievement of Stats SA's key strategic priorities. These priorities facilitated the development of a national statistics system (NSS), which would promote evidence-based policy making, and enhancing the quality of official statistics through the empowerment of people (Stats SA 2001a: 4).

The conception of the NSS is an organised response to the growing need for integrated information for planning programmes, monitoring progress and evaluating performance of mainly government initiatives. The function of the NSS will be to co-ordinate statistical information from all implementing agencies, including government departments, parastatal institutions, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, businesses and members of the public. The purpose of the NSS is to enhance the capacity of the state to formulate and evaluate policy decisions by providing appropriate data. This will be achieved through the creation of an integrated network of public institutions to focus on improving the quality of statistics, enhancing the comparability of statistics and minimising unnecessary overlaps or duplication in the collection or publication of statistic among organs of state. Because of the reasons mentioned before, the NSS is probably one of the most important innovations the public service can adopt for improved service delivery (Stats SA 2001a: 5 *cf.* Stats SA 2002: 8).

The completion of the business register integration project was foreseen for the end of 2001. The business registers of the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Labour and Stats SA were being integrated, thus creating a new sampling frame for collecting economic statistics. This integrated register

would ensure that samples used in business surveys are up to date and that they produce more accurate statistics (Stats SA 2001a: 2).

South Africa's second population census after the general elections of 1994, was conducted in October 2001, when approximately 100 000 fieldworkers visited households and institutions to collect information about the living conditions of persons. Major developments took place to better manage South Africa's Census 2001. Firstly, the enumeration area database, which in 1996 covered only settled areas, was extended to cover the entire country. And secondly, a more technological methodology was developed using remote sensing and satellite imagery, global positioning systems technology and videographic techniques. Scanning technology is used in the capturing and processing phases still running and this investment will be made available for use by other government departments, in particular the SARS and Department of Home Affairs as customers of Stats SA (Stats SA 2001a: 42, 44).

In order to ensure that Stats SA is able to maintain and develop its high levels of statistical quality and timeliness, information systems are continuously upgraded. The year 2000 saw major upgrades to Stats SA data processing, transmission and storage capacity and capabilities. This was done through the installation of new servers, and enhanced bandwidth on the local-area network (LAN) and wide-area network (WAN). In addition, 164 personal computers were installed as part of the institution's commitment to ensure that every employee has the equipment necessary to effectively do their job. The helpdesk was upgraded and more employees were appointed and trained to receive and channel calls. More than 6 300 calls were attended to. The before mentioned upgrades gain importance when considered against the theory of Sharkansky (1975: 335) that the crucial dimensions of equipment that may affect service outputs include compatibility with contemporary

methods of providing services and flexibility with respect to the multiple needs and changing demands of customers. Sharkansky (1975: 335) states that the nature of surroundings and the availability of modern equipment should contribute to the capacity of employees to perform in a superior fashion. In addition, as part of Stats SA's commitment to keep its employees technically skilled, a number of courses on the use of software were presented to approximately 400 employees (Stats SA 2001a: 24).

The above examination of the development of Stats SA from 1970 to 2002 showed that enormous advancement has been made from the fragmented, unrepresentative South African statistics system of the 1970 to 1994 period to the public institution which is Stats SA today. Now that the role of Stats SA as public institution has been established, the institution may be considered as deliverer of public services.

2.4. STATS SA AS DELIVERER OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Regularly published and reliable official statistics enable government to identify and address policy and delivery challenges. Stats SA collects, processes, analyses and publishes economic, social and population statistics. The institution has no direct policy responsibility; however, the data and information it distributes via electronic and print products support policy decisions made by government, the private sector and civil society. The impact of government policies is also evaluated using statistical information (Stats SA 2001a: 21).

An analysis of the functioning of Stats SA as public institution and deliverer of services will not be complete without considering its mission

statement and legislative mandate. The aims of Stats SA will also be featured.

2.4.1. Mission statement

The central idea of public administration is rational action, defined as action correctly calculated to realise given desired goals. Public administration is intended to maximise the realisation of goals (Waldo 1955: 11).

To understand the term mission, it is necessary to firstly examine the term vision, because of the close correlation between the two concepts. Having a vision means setting a goal which may be hard to achieve and which may even unreachable. A vision is thus something, often vague and immeasurable, to strive for (Collins English Dictionary 1982: 1621 *cf.* Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 72).

In the effort to realise a vision, specific and measurable tasks (or missions) have to be executed (Collins English Dictionary 1982: 943 *cf.* Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 73). The term mission can thus also be accepted as referring to a particular task or goal assigned to a person or group (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 975).

An institution usually has an overarching goal, or mission that is to be pursued by the institution as a collectivity. Therefore, it could be argued that the goals of an institution represent a particular future state of affairs that the institution as a unified whole is supposed to bring about (Etzioni 1964: 6). An imperative activity of public administration is to evaluate results in order to determine the degree to which the originally designated goal and objectives were achieved (Swain 1987: 129).

The mission of Stats SA is to inform socio-economic development. The institution aims to accomplish this by providing accessible quality information through better statistics, better access to information and better management (Stats SA 2001 (i): 9). To understand the above mentioned as the mission statement of Stats SA, it is necessary to reflect on the institution's legislative mandate.

2.4.2. Legislative mandate

The term legislative mandate can be defined by examining the definitions of its constituent parts. The term mandate is defined as an official command or instruction by an authority; support for a policy or course of action, regarded as derived from the wishes of the people in an election; a commission to act for another; or a legal commission by which a party is entrusted to perform a service (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 927). For the sake of specification, the term legislative can be defined as empowered to make legislation (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 872).

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, (section 239(b)(ii)) states that the term organ of state includes any institution exercising a public power of performing a public function in terms of any legislation. The classification of Stats SA as organisational component in terms of Schedule 3 of the *Public Service Act, 1994* thus effects the constitutional entrenchment of Stats SA's status as organ of state, while its legislative mandate was awarded constitutional entrenchment by the adoption of the *Statistics Act, 1999*.

In the *Statistics Act, 1999* the role of Stats SA is defined as providing statistical information to organs of state, businesses, other institutions and the general public for planning, decision making, monitoring and assessment of policies. Further functions of Stats SA are to:

- a) promote co-ordination among statistical producers in South Africa in order to advance the quality, consistency, comparability and optimum use of official statistics and to avoid unnecessary duplication;
- b) provide statistical advice to government departments; and
- c) liaise with the statistical agencies of other countries.

The legislative mandate of Stats SA has been established. The aims of Stats SA can now be considered against the background of the *Statistics Act, 1999*.

2.4.3. Aims

An aim can be defined as a target, purpose, design or goal; or an aspiration, objective or end (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 33). An objective is the aim or object towards which an endeavour is directed. When objectives are achieved, the mission identified by an institution will have been accomplished (Collins English Dictionary 1982: 623 *cf.* Du Toit *et al.* 2002: 73).

Stats SA aims to produce timely, accurate and accessible official statistics to help advance economic growth, development and democracy in the new South Africa. The institution is committed to being (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/default2.asp>):

- a) relevant: providing the data, information and analysis required for implementing and monitoring the country's growth and development strategy;

- b) reliable: producing authoritative statistical results on the basis of appropriate procedures that are sensitive to the diversity among citizens;
- c) representative: becoming an institution that increasingly matches the population with regard to population group, gender and physical disability; and
- d) responsive: meeting the statistical needs of stakeholders in national, provincial and local government, labour and management, parastatals and research institutions, civil society and special interest groups.

Stats SA's work includes (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/default2.asp>):

- a) undertaking official demographic, economic and social censuses and surveys;
- b) collecting and processing administrative statistics;
- c) publishing and disseminating statistical reports and releases;
- d) compiling national and government accounts;
- e) providing statistical advice to government and other institutions; and
- f) analysing statistical surveys and samples to ensure accuracy and consistency.

In the preceding section, Stats SA was examined as deliverer of public services, by focussing on the institution's aims in relation to its overall mission of informing socio-economic development. Stats SA's legislative mandate was also established by highlighting the constitutional entrenchment of its status as public institution. An examination of Stats SA's work, or the services it delivers would however not be complete without considering how the institution is organised.

2.5. A STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF STATS SA

Due to the magnitude and complexity of government activities, individuals have to work together to undertake all of these activities. As soon as more than one individual is involved in the endeavour to realise the same goal, system and order should be obtained in their activities. The grouping of people into orderly patterns is necessary. Individuals are placed according to specific relationships to one another as heads and subordinates. This type of grouping may lead to the combining of the members of an institution into a team, as well as the possibility of executing the totality of activities and of all the members striving together for the same goal. The process of organising with a view to establishing a framework according to which the work in the institution will be done in order to accomplish objectives, is an indispensable activity in administration (Cronje *et al.* 1990: 95 *cf.* Claver *et al.* 1999: 455).

In the process of bringing together different parts, a structure of relationships is created and the whole expanse of work to be done is divided. The result is that an organisational (or institutional) structure is established (Bhambri 1975: 40). An organisational (or institutional) structure is the network of formally, deliberately planned and implemented relationships existing among the positions in an institution. Organisational structure is commonly manifested as a hierarchy consisting vertically of different levels of authority, and horizontally of different units such as branches, divisions or sections (Ullrich & Wieland 1980: 39).

Six steps can be identified in designing an organisational structure (Obel 1981: 247 *cf.* Huse *et al.* 1975: 61-63):

- a) stating organisational goals, i.e. political, technological, environmental and structural prescriptions;
- b) specifying the forms of organisational structure to be considered;
- c) grouping activities into units;
- d) designing the management hierarchy;
- e) structuring individual units to facilitate the operating of the structure; and
- f) comparing various organisational structure designs with a view to determine which is the most suitable.

Stats SA aims to meet its identified objectives through the activities of four Chief Directorates, established in the design of an organisational structure, responsible for four programmes (Stats SA 2001a: 21):

- a) administration: provides financial management, information technology and support services for statistical production, as well as strategic capacity for top management;
- b) statistical services: produces official economic, social and population statistics and provides statistical support and advisory services;
- c) population census: involves planning and conducting the census, as well as processing and publishing results; and
- d) auxiliary services: comprises the Statistics Council, which advises the responsible Minister (Stats SA currently falls under the authority of the Minister of Finance) and the Statistician-General on matters of official statistics, and the trading account for the marketing and sale of value-added data products.

The question can now be asked where the above mentioned Chief Directorates and their subordinate Directorates would fit into an organisational structure as per the above mentioned definitions. For this

reason a graphical representation of the organisational structure of Stats SA needs to be considered (Figure 2/1: The Organisational Structure of Stats SA).

The basic, generalised structural form of most governmental (as well as private) institutions is a pyramid shaped hierarchy. The major characteristics of an idealised hierarchy are the following (Swain 1987: 17-18):

- a) Tasks are divided so that specific duties are clearly assigned among work positions. This is also called the division of labour or specialisation.
- b) Positions are ranked into a pyramid, creating chains of command based on level of responsibility and functional differentiation.
 - i. Level of responsibility is determined by the complexity of a position's duties and the breadth of supervision required.
 - ii. Functional differentiation means that all employees performing similar functions are grouped together in the hierarchy, while differing functions are separated.
- c) Routines are established through written rules and standard operating procedures; these, along with position titles and written position descriptions, define the role of each employee in terms of impersonal duties and procedures.
- d) The source of direct supervision and leadership for each position is clearly defined in a single position ranked immediately above the subordinate position's level of responsibility which implies unity of command. The number of positions a supervisor directly supervises is called the supervisor's span of control.

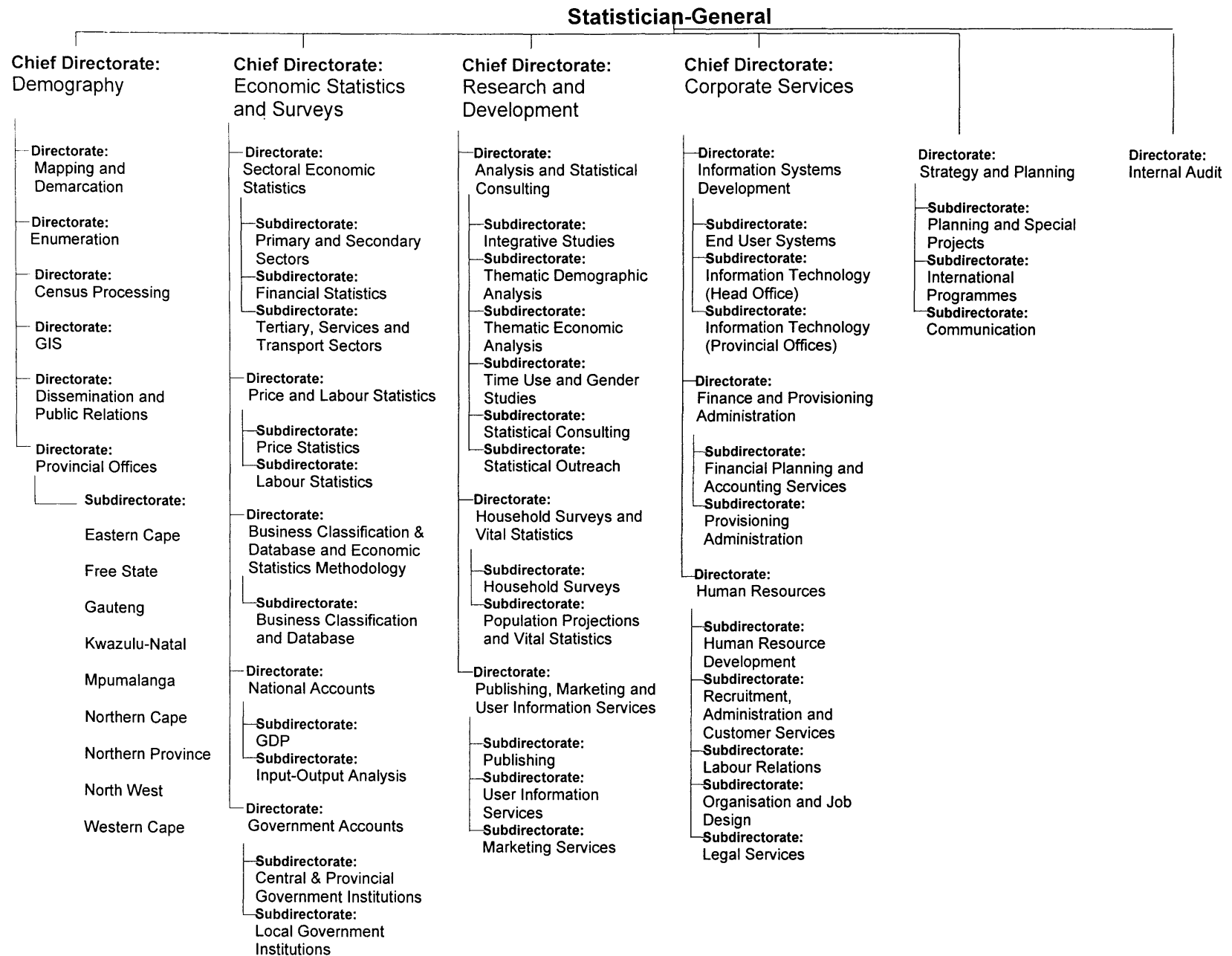


Figure 2/1: The Organisational Structure of Stats SA (Stats SA. 2001a: 12-13)

- e) The chain of command, rules, and standard operating procedures establish formal, communication channels.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned characteristics of an idealised hierarchy, Stats SA employees have to keep a number of organisational issues in mind in functioning in their organisational structure; those include planning, delegation and communication. Planning has much to offer public administration. Planning permits the (public) institution not only to anticipate and prepare for change but to some way select and shape such change. Planning offers a way of institutionalising vision and stabilising innovation (Berkley 1981: 340).

Delegation is in practice one of the most difficult and complex functions of any form of administration. It is of particular importance in public administration, not merely because of the size and complexity of public organisations, but because of the problem of public responsibility and accountability of Ministers and other public authorities (Baker 1972: 130). Authority should be delegated to the extent and in the way necessary for the accomplishment of the results expected (Barber 1974: 26).

A common purpose must be commonly known, and to be known must in some way be communicated (Barnard 1968: 89). Simon (1957: 154) states that 'without communication, there can be no organisation, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behaviour of the individual'. Communication will in large part determine the way in which decision-making functions are distributed through the institution (Simon 1957: 154).

People interacting with other people to accomplish tasks is thus what administration is essentially about. Administration is a process involving

human beings jointly engaged in working towards common goals. Joint activity within the framework of some kind of organisational structure is thus an essential part of all administration (Berkley 1981: 2,3).

2.6. CONCLUSION

The statement has been made that staff size and the distribution of employees among the principal and auxiliary tasks to be performed have a definite effect on an institution's service outputs (Sharkansky 1975: 335). International observers note that Stats SA remains small, even in the developing world, relative to the size and complexity of the South African population and economy. The institution however endeavours to minimise the impact of fiscal constraints by a concerted strategy of managed change, enhancing the capacity of employees to take the initiative in continuously improving their work processes and systems, and responding to users' evolving needs. By these means Stats SA hopes to maximise its provision of the relevant, prompt and reliable statistical information needed by its customers to plan for and monitor the economic and social development of South Africa.

In this chapter on the development of Stats SA from 1970 to 2002, Stats SA was examined as public institution and deliverer of public services, providing regularly published and reliable official statistics enabling government to identify and address policy and delivery challenges. Stats SA's aims were examined in relation to the institutions overall mission of informing socio-economic development. More importantly though, Stats SA's legislative mandate was established by highlighting the constitutional entrenchment of its status as public institution. A graphical representation was also provided of the organisational

structure of Stats SA to better understand how the institution is organised with a view to achieving its identified objectives.

From considering the institutional environment of Stats SA, advancement can now be made to examining the environment for service delivery of the South African public service and of Stats SA as public institution in particular. After a conceptualisation of the term, service delivery will be investigated in terms of the legislative, economic, socio-cultural and technological environments.

CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENT FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The environment of public administration can be described as the world in which government and its institutions function to deliver services. In this examination of the environment of service delivery, the assumption was made that the environmental influences regarded as valid for the South African public service, could also be regarded as influences in the environment in which Stats SA delivers its services. This assumption was based on the (proven) legal status of Stats SA as South African public institution. The influences on service delivery by the South African public service will be examined in terms of the legislative, economic, socio-cultural and technological environments. However, a conceptualisation of service delivery is necessary before the environment in which it takes place can be examined.

3.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE TERM “SERVICE DELIVERY”

A conceptualisation of the term service delivery has to begin with consideration of the role of government and government functions. What is meant by public services also needs to be established.

3.2.1. The role of government

Thinking about the why's and wherefore's of service delivery usually leads one to the concept of the general welfare, which most exponents interpret as the greatest measure of spiritual and material wellbeing of

people, or on a basic level, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The same line of thinking about the duty of the state has led Barker (1964: 226-228) to believe that the state renders services to its citizens because it owes them services. He believes that services are due to the citizens by virtue of the rights they hold, as the functions of the state and the rights of its citizens can not be separated. He elaborates that service delivery by the state is not only necessary for the enjoyment of rights, but also secures those rights. His conclusion is thus that service delivery is not only a consequence of the rights of persons, it is simultaneously integral to the rights of persons.

As regards the rights of persons, distinction can be made between natural socio-economic, and third generation rights. Examples of natural rights are those to life, liberty, property and fair trial, as well as freedom of movement, association and speech. Socio-economic rights are extensions of natural rights and examples are the right to employment, education, medical care, and an adequate living standard. The rights to peace, development, and a clean environment are examples of third-generation rights. Rights are vested in individuals, but can extend to groups as far as locus is concerned. As to the origin of these rights, they derive from the theory of innateness; rights are inherent in humans being human. Freysen (1999: 60) then speculates that this innateness could thus be the basis of a citizen's ownership of services.

Social contract theory is based on the notion of inalienable human rights and hence on consent. An answer to the question of the basis for government owing its authority to the citizens is found in the concept of popular sovereignty, a corollary to the social contract. Freysen (1999: 60) concludes that the purpose of the state is to promote self-development of the individual and hence the community.

To conceptualise the term service delivery, it is thus necessary to recap the goals and objectives of government. The original goals of government may be summarised as the maintenance of law and order and the protection of the life and property of the individual. The social welfare goal of government is the creation of social security through the provision of social welfare services by government, while government's economic welfare goal entails creating the circumstances in which individuals may be able to care for their own social well-being.

The role of government could thus be defined in terms of its goals. Based on the above discussion, the goals of the modern state would be based on a democratic political system, where the Rule of Law applies, where rational human rights are protected by the constitution, and where government interference in the social and economic life of the individual is limited to the utmost minimum; in other words the creation of a good quality of life for all citizens. With the role of government established, it is now necessary to determine which functions government needs to perform in order to fulfil the role citizens expect.

3.2.2. Government functions

Government functions that support the above mentioned goals can be divided into line functions and staff functions. Line functions are those government activities which substantially and directly contribute to the attainment of the objectives in the process of realising the goal of securing a high quality of life for the citizens of the country. Line functions are therefore concerned with delivering services directly to the public, while staff functions enable or compliment line functions. Governmental line functions consist of order and protection functions, social welfare functions, and economic welfare functions. Order and

protection functions include the military defence, police, management of justice, imprisonment, civil defence, and traffic police functions. Social welfare functions consist of the health, social security, education and training, housing, sports and recreation, cultural, and human science research functions. Economic welfare functions include regulating the economy; stimulating economic development; maintaining economic order; providing and maintaining an economic infrastructure; establishing and operating public industrial corporations; and undertaking research. Governmental staff functions include the financing; personnel; office and secretarial; legal advisory; organisation and work study; resource supply; and accounting and auditing functions (Gildenhuys 1997: 8-12). Dawson (1929: 220) states that administrative departments ultimately exist primarily to render a service to the community.

To execute their functions in order to realise their goals and objectives, governments are bound to supply and deliver public goods and services to their communities. Du Toit *et al.* (2002: 24) are of the opinion that services refer to the results emanating from the execution of a variety of functions or processes, while public services are considered to be some of the most tangible outputs of administrative agencies (Sharkansky 1975: 334). Service delivery is defined in the Public Administration Dictionary as the provision of public activities, benefits or satisfactions (Fox & Meyer 1995: 118). In the context of governance, consumers (or customers) are those who use the services and products delivered and provided by government institutions (Fox *et al.* 1991: 22).

According to the above definitions, services relate both to the provision of tangible public goods and to intangible services themselves. The question may now be asked what services, and public services in particular, are.

3.2.3. Public services

Services would be classified as public services if they (Gildenhuys 1997: 13):

- a) could not be delivered by the private sector because of their collective nature;
- b) are necessary for the realisation and attainment of a government's goals and objectives and the private sector, for some reason, fails to deliver them; or
- c) can be delivered more cheaply and advantageously by collective effort than by individual effort.

Services are classified as being either public or private sector services, on the grounds of their being either collective or particular in nature. Collective services will, under normal circumstances, be classified as public services; and particular services as belonging to the private sector. A third classification of public services is quasi-collective services. These services have characteristics of both collective and particular services. Quasi-collective services are also referred to as subsidised particular services, because the customers are subsidised in whole or in part through tax income. Quasi-collective services have either positive externalities generated to the advantage of the whole community, or negative externalities generated to the detriment of the whole community and should therefore be regulated or delivered by government (Gildenhuys 1993: 33-34).

The nature of collective services can be explained in terms of the following characteristics (Gildenhuys 1997: 14):

- a) Collective services are non-apportionable. They cannot be divided into consumption units and can therefore not be supplied per unit

according to a market demand and sold at a price per unit determined by the free interaction of supply and demand in the market-place.

- b) Collective services are non-exclusive. Members of the public cannot, under normal circumstances, be excluded from utilising such services, irrespective of whether they are paying for them or not.
- c) Collective services are inexhaustible. These services cannot become depleted in the process of utilisation. As long as they are properly maintained, they remain available to the public.
- d) Collective services can only be financed by taxation, because a price per unit cannot be charged. Taxpayers receive no direct *quid pro quo* for their tax payments and therefore do not receive value commensurate with the amount of tax they pay.
- e) Collective services are monopolistic in nature. Governments usually hold monopolies on such services, which means that they have no competition in delivering these services.

When the above mentioned characteristics of collective services are considered critically, it becomes evident that the services rendered by Stats SA cannot be classified as collective, simply because Stats SA is a public institution (classified as organisational component by Schedule 3 of the *Public Service Act, 1994*) and the services delivered by public institutions are usually classified as collective. Some services of Stats SA may indeed be regarded as non-apportionable, e.g. telephonic enquiries or requests for statistical data or information replied to free of charge, or the results of censuses, or household and labour force surveys available from the Stats SA website at no cost. However, specialised research requested by private institutions for example, are in fact paid for and are thus sold at a price per unit. Some services of Stats SA may also be classified as collective on the grounds of their non-exclusiveness. The statistical data and information obtained from the surveys mentioned above are available to any institution or person requesting it, at no cost.

However, some Stats SA services can be classified as particular in terms of exclusiveness, e.g. non-payers are excluded from the opportunity to commission research. In terms of inexhaustibility as characteristic of collective services, it can be stated that most services of Stats SA can be classified as collective services, as they do not become depleted in the process of utilisation. This is mostly due to the inexhaustible nature of statistical data and information as the main products of Stats SA. Some services of Stats SA may be classified as particular based on the characteristic of collective services being monopolistic in nature, as any other (public or private) institution is free to e.g. conduct the kinds of surveys Stats SA conducts. However, the costs associated with e.g. national censuses, as well as the necessity of the service for the realisation of government's goals and objectives, bring about that these services are bound to be delivered by government itself. In terms of financing, Stats SA as public institution is mainly financed by taxation, which makes this true for most of its services as well. However, all Stats SA services cannot be classified as collective on the grounds of financing by taxation, as not all services are financed by taxation alone; a price per unit is in fact charged for some Stats SA products. The statement is however true that taxpayers receive no direct *quid pro quo* for their tax payments in terms of Stats SA services, with the simplified example of some citizens in higher income groups contributing relatively large sums of money in the form of taxes to the financial resources of Stats SA without ever directly consuming Stats SA products or services. However, as with all collective services, all citizens are benefited (albeit indirectly) by the services of Stats SA, as the institution provides accessible quality information through statistics, informing public and private sector decision-making in policy-making and planning for socio-economic development.

The discussion above has thus shown that it is possible to classify individual services of Stats SA as either collective or particular. However, when an attempt is made to classify the entire collection of Stats SA services, it becomes evident that these services possess characteristics of both collective and particular services and may be referred to as subsidised particular services, because customers are subsidised in whole or in part through tax income. The collection of Stats SA services have either positive externalities generated to the advantage of the whole community, or negative externalities generated to the detriment of the whole community and should therefore be regulated or delivered by government as quasi-collective services. Now that the term service delivery has been conceptualised and the services of Stats SA have been classified, the environment for service delivery can be examined.

3.3. LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Public administration is characterised by a great reliance on, and vulnerability to, the law. Legalism in general and laws in particular tend to circumscribe and influence the operation of a public institution much more than they do that of a private institution (Pfiffner & Presthus 1967: 427).

The legislative environment for service delivery by Stats SA is influenced by fundamental legislation, as well as by legislation and other official policy documents regarding: the broader public service, reconstruction and development, the transformation of the public service, and macroeconomic strategies. Official policies regarding: public finances, national statistics, service delivery in the public service, and the transformation of public service delivery also need to be considered.

3.3.1. Fundamental legislation

Constitutionalism requires that all actions by public employees should be in accordance with their country's constitution. In a democratic society the constitution attempts to protect human rights, entrench democratic governance and ensure proper practice in public institutions (Schwella *et al.* 1996: 15).

Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, makes provision for the establishment of a public administration governed by democratic values and principles, including:

- a) a high standard of professional ethics;
- b) efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- c) development-orientated services to be provided in an impartial, fair, equitable and unbiased manner;
- d) responding to peoples' needs entailing the participation by the public in policy-making;
- e) accountable public administration;
- f) transparency;
- g) good human resources management and career-development practices; and
- h) broad representativity of the South African people.

The principles applicable to public administration encompass administration in every sphere of government, all organs of state and public enterprises. Section 197 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* makes provision for the establishment of a public service responsible for lawfully executing the policies of the government of the day. Now that the fundamental legislation governing the country and the public service has been discussed, legislation pertaining specifically to the public service can be considered.

3.3.2. The broader public service

The *Public Service Act, 1994*, states that for the purpose of the administration of the public service, national and provincial administrations, as well as other organisational components will be created. As mentioned before, section 8 of the *Public Service Act, 1994*, states that the South African public service constitutes all persons holding fixed positions or permanent additional appointments in these bodies. Also included are the Permanent Force of the National Defence Force, the South African Police Service, the Department of Correctional Services, the Department of National Intelligence Services and state educational institutions. An evaluation of the legislation regulating the South African public service would not be complete without considering official policy documents on reconstruction and development as priorities of the South African public service.

3.3.3. Reconstruction and development

The *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994* (Notice No. 1954 of 1994) (herein after referred to as the *RDP White Paper*) identifies meeting the basic needs of all citizens through more effective service delivery as one of its five key programmes. The basic needs of people comprise nutrition, security, education, health care, job creation, land and agrarian reform, housing, water and sanitation, energy supplies, transport, a healthy environment and social welfare. Reconstruction and development as priorities of the South African government can not fully be comprehended without the background of policies on the transformation of the public service.

3.3.4. The transformation of the public service

A guiding principle of the South African public service is that of service to the people, regarded essential if the public service is to fulfil its role in the implementation of the *RDP White Paper*. Section 11.1. of the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995* states that meeting basic needs through improved service delivery can help to provide the necessary infrastructural support to open up previously suppressed economic and human potential in both urban and rural areas, leading in turn to community empowerment and increased outputs in all sectors of the economy.

To redress past imbalances in service provision and to promote social equity, service delivery will focus on meeting the basic needs of the estimated 40 percent of South African citizens living below the poverty line, as well as on other groups, such as the disabled, who have previously been disadvantaged in terms of service delivery. Central to the improvement of service delivery is the improvement of productivity within the public service. To promote continuous improvement in the quantity, quality and equity of service provision, departmental service delivery strategies should thus identify (*White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995: Section 11.6*):

- a) a mission statement for service delivery, together with service guarantees;
- b) the services to be provided, to which groups and at which service charges in line with RDP priorities, the principle of affordability and the principle of redirecting resources to areas and groups previously under-resourced;
- c) service standards, defined outputs and targets and performance indicators benchmarked against comparable international standards;

- d) monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and structures, designed to measure progress and introduce corrective action where appropriate;
- e) plans for staffing, human resource development and organisational capacity building, tailored to service delivery needs;
- f) the redirection of human and other resources from administrative tasks to service provision, particularly for previously disadvantaged groups and areas;
- g) financial plans that link budgets directly to service needs and personnel plans;
- h) potential partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental and community organisations to provide more effective forms of service delivery;
- i) the development, particularly through training, of a culture of customer care and of approaches to service delivery that are sensitive to issues of race, gender and disability; and
- j) plans for the introduction of continuous quality improvement techniques. The transformation of the public service, as most public endeavours, are influenced by macroeconomic strategies.

3.3.5. Macroeconomic strategies

One of the aims of the South African government's *GEAR* is administrative restructuring with a view to a more cost-effective service, by considering right-sizing, affordability and the maintenance of public services (*GEAR*: Section 3.3). *GEAR* envisages a national social agreement creating an environment for rapid growth, investment and the accelerated delivery of public services that are based on equity and universal access. The agreement is envisaged to be underpinned by rapid growth, job creation and development. Through the strategy, the South African government further commits itself to an accelerated increase in

its contribution to social and community living standards, to ensure (GEAR: Section 9):

- a) the delivery of housing and related services;
- b) steady improvement in the quality of education;
- c) universal access to primary health care;
- d) access to land and agricultural support for emergent farmers;
- e) electrification of all urban areas and an increasing number of rural communities;
- f) reliable water supplies and appropriate sanitation infrastructure;
- g) improved postal and telecommunications services; and
- h) a broad social security net, comprising social grants and targeted welfare services. South African macroeconomic strategies can not be evaluated as part of the environment of service delivery, without considering legislation governing public finances.

3.3.6. Public finances

Public finances are mainly regulated by the *Public Finance Management Act, 1999* (Act No. 1 of 1999) (herein after referred to as the *PFMA, 1999*). The *PFMA, 1999* gives effect to sections 213 and 216 to 219 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* for the national and provincial spheres of government, concerning:

- a) the introduction of generally recognised accounting practices;
- b) the introduction of uniform treasury norms and standards;
- c) the prescription of measures for ensuring transparency and expenditure control in all spheres of government; and
- d) the setting of operational procedures for borrowing, guarantees, procurement and oversight over the various national and provincial revenue funds.

The *PFMA, 1999* adopts an approach to financial management that focuses on outputs and responsibilities, rather than the rule-driven approach followed in the past. The Act is part of a broader strategy on improving financial management in the public sector, assuming a phased approach. The first phase focuses on the basics of financial management, like the introduction of proper financial management systems, appropriation control and the accountability arrangements for the management of budgets. Ensuing phases focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes (*PFMA, 1999: i*). As opposed to legislation on public finances governing the general environment of service delivery, the following discussion deals with legislation specifically governing the environment of statistical service delivery.

3.3.7. Legislation governing national statistics

Stats SA's professional independence is stressed in the *Statistics Act, 1999*. Although the responsible Minister determines the overall work programme of Stats SA and is accountable to parliament for its financial and administrative affairs, he or she has no jurisdiction over the professional manner in which a survey is undertaken, and when or how the results are released. The *Statistics Act, 1999* also determines that the Head of Stats SA is known as the Statistician-General, appointed by the President. The incumbent is responsible for advising the Minister on statistics, promoting co-ordination in the envisaged national statistical system, certifying other departments statistics as official if they meet specified standards, and representing Stats SA in the world arena. The Minister is responsible, on recommendation of the Statistician-General, for granting or withdrawing approval for the production of statistics by other organs of state. The Minister also makes recommendations to Cabinet on membership of the Statistics Council.

The *Statistics Act, 1999* stipulates that the Statistics Council consists of between 15 and 25 members appointed by cabinet and includes one member from each province. The Council must be representative of national and provincial organs, organised business and labour, as well as statistics and information technology. The Council advises the Minister, the Statistician-General and other organs of state on any statistical matters and promotes, co-ordinates and safeguards statistics.

According to the *Statistics Act, 1999*, no information collected by Stats SA that relates to an individual person, organ of state, business or other institution may be disclosed to any outside person or institution. All persons employed by Stats SA are required to take an oath of confidentiality. Now that legislation governing the delivery of statistical services has been examined, policies dealing with service delivery in the public service in general can be considered.

3.3.8. Service delivery in the public service

Section C.1 of the *Public Service Regulations, 2001*, (Notice No. 21951 of 2001) state that a service delivery improvement programme should:

- a) specify the main services to be provided to the different types of actual and potential customers, as identified by a department;
- b) contain consultation arrangements with a department's actual and potential customers;
- c) with due regard to customers' means of access to services and barriers to increased access thereto, specify the mechanisms or strategies to be utilised progressively to remove the barriers so that access to services is increased;
- d) indicate standards for the main services to be provided;

- e) contain arrangements as to how information about a department's services are to be provided; and
- f) stipulate a system of mechanisms for complaints.

In terms of section C.2 of the *Public Service Regulations, 2001*, (Notice No. 21951 of 2001) an annual statement of public service commitment should be published. The statement should set out the service standards a department such as Stats SA's customers can expect and should serve to explain how the department will meet each of the standards. It is not suffice only to consider official policy documents on service delivery in the public service; those policies dealing with the transformation of public service delivery are even regarded as more important by for the purposes of this discussion.

3.3.9. Transforming public service delivery

The *Batho Pele White Paper* requires that all users of public services be consulted about their needs, priorities and standard of services required (Riekert 2001: 84). Public officials will have to adjust to accommodate the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, that members of the public should be accepted as customers and that a position in the public service implies that the occupant is a public servant, rather than a public official.

Riekert (2001: 85) paraphrases the planned outcomes of the *Batho Pele White Paper* as:

- a) improving service delivery on all levels;
- a) identifying the needs for improving service delivery;
- b) applying the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles in practice;

- c) rectifying and improving, where necessary, on existing mistakes and failures regarding service delivery; and
- d) providing a proper service to all communities.

In striving towards meeting the needs of all South Africans, the South African public service is required to implement the eight *Batho Pele White Paper* principles of service delivery: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and best value. However, underpinning the eight *Batho Pele White Paper* principles are two fundamentals, namely service to the people and the customer concept.

3.3.9.1. Service to the people

The *Batho Pele White Paper* (Section 5.1) states that the South African public service must ensure that a conducive environment for the delivery of services is created to enhance employees' capacity to deliver services efficiently and effectively. The said document furthermore states that it is essential that the commitment, energy and skills of public servants be harnessed to tackle inefficient, outdated and bureaucratic practices, to simplify procedures and to identify new and more efficient and effective ways of delivering services.

In providing an efficient and effective service to the community, a service delivery programme should include the following (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 7.1):

- a) the existing levels of service delivery and the proposed service standards to be adopted in the short, medium and long term;
- b) how service standards will be monitored and reported on and the management information systems which will support this;

- c) the organisational and systems arrangements which will ensure that standards are met;
- d) human resource training, supervision and appraisal arrangements;
- e) how communications systems will be improved upon to provide information about the type and frequency of services that customers require;
- f) how the complaints system will be developed to identify and rectify failure to deliver the promised standard to individual customers; and
- g) the financial systems which will collect data on the unit costs of key services in order to provide information for standard and priority setting in subsequent years. The fundamental principle of service to the people is closely related to the principle of treating those people as customers.

3.3.9.2. The customer concept

The *Batho Pele White Paper* (Section 1.3.3) states that to treat citizens as customers implies:

- a) listening to their views and taking account of them in making decisions about what services should be provided;
- b) treating them with consideration and respect;
- c) making sure that service is always of the highest quality; and
- d) responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised level. The treatment of citizens, as the users of public services, as customers will not be enforced successfully if customers are not consulted on an ongoing basis. At this point, the definition of the term customer provided in 1.6.4 *supra* should be reconsidered; i.e. that a customer is a person or institution who buys goods or services.

3.3.9.3. Consulting users of services

The principle of consultation (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.1) requires that citizens be consulted about the level and quality of the service they receive and should, where possible, be given a choice about the services that are offered. Citizens should thus simply be asked what they need (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 68). This principle also calls for the consultation of the public on how products and services can be improved. Improvement of products and services can only take place if service standards are set to measure performance against.

3.3.9.4. Setting service standards

The principle of service standards (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.2) calls for citizens to be told what level and quality of services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. Standards relate to the degree of service excellence provided to customers at any given point in time. The setting of service standards is an overarching principle that might e.g. deal with measuring the extent to which access to services is, or needs to be increased.

3.3.9.5. Increasing access

The principle of increased access (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.3) calls for the public service to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. Access can range from physical access, such as ramps for wheelchairs, to understanding of customers' language and the positive attitude or approachability of employees. Increased access to services will imply that institutions have to deal with

larger numbers of customers, heightening the importance of ensuring courtesy.

3.3.9.6. Ensuring courtesy

The principle of courtesy (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.4) calls for the public service to treat citizens with courtesy and consideration. Courtesy implies customer care ranging from addressing customers politely to helping them with filling in forms. As with the other principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, specific standards have to set for the way in which customers should be treated (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 35). Apart from ensuring courtesy, another principle especially important in direct dealings with customers is information.

3.3.9.7. Information

The principle of more efficient and effective information (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.5) calls for public institutions to inform their users in a clear and forthright way of the services they provide and how to reap the most benefits from those services. Not only should customers be provided with information on how to qualify for certain services, as well as on changes and new services, they should also be consulted on what they need to know (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 40).

Nigro & Nigro (1980: 237) make the statement about public information that government information programmes should be limited to disseminating factual information, but that advising the public is often not suffice, i.e. that public information must also induce the citizen to

take action. The principle of efficiency in providing information is directly related to the principle of increasing openness and transparency.

3.3.9.8. Increasing openness and transparency

The principle of increased openness and transparency (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.6) calls for the public service to be open about how its organisations are managed and what their financial situation is. Openness and transparency are features of a democratic system of government and are as fundamental to the improvement of service delivery as they are to change and transformation (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 73).

According to section 4.5. of the *Batho Pele White Paper* customers should be invited to discuss service delivery issues, service standards, as well as problems with service delivery. The principle of openness and transparency implies that when public institutions identify areas where they have not met their promised standards they, not only correct it, but explain this under-performance to customers, as well as provide them with details on how they plan to correct it (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 2000/2001: 9). Apart from increasing openness and transparency, the principle of remedying mistakes and failures is receiving renewed attention in attempts to transform public service delivery.

3.3.9.9. Remedying mistakes and failures

The principle of remedying mistakes and failures is also known as redress (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.7). Remedying mistakes and failures calls for public service institutions to enable people to indicate

when they are not entirely satisfied with a product or service and for the public institution to apologise, provide a full explanation and act swiftly to rectify mistakes. Redress further implies that citizens should, apart from a remedy, receive a sympathetic, positive response.

Governments are bound to make mistakes. Corrective action hence needs to be taken when mistakes do occur. However, the importance lies in learning from past mistakes, so that they are not repeated (Edwards 1997: 238). The *Batho Pele White Paper* (Section 4.7) specifies that in remedying mistakes and failures a complaints system should be reviewed and improved regularly according to the following requirements:

- a) accessibility: the complaints system should be well publicised;
- b) problems should be resolved speedily;
- c) complaints should be dealt with fairly and impartially;
- d) the complainant's identity should be kept confidential;
- e) the public institution should be responsive to the real needs and justified expectations of the citizens;
- f) mechanisms should be put in place for review and feedback; and
- g) training should be given to employees so that they are knowledgeable on handling a complaint when it is received. The need for remedying mistakes and failures would decrease if public employees constantly aim to provide customers with the best possible value for their money.

3.3.9.10. Value for money

The presupposition exists that any customer (the taxpayer in the case of the public service) expects quality services from his/her service provider, based on the principle of value for money or cost-effectiveness. Frugality is therefor expected from Stats SA as from all public institutions.

Recipients of services are expected to pay for services rendered to put into effect cost-consciousness (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 73).

The principle of value for money (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.8) would require that Stats SA provide its services economically and efficiently by making efficient use of its resources in order to give citizens the best possible value for money. This is founded in the post-1994 necessity for not only improving service delivery and expanding access to public services to all citizens; but also the simultaneous reduction of public expenditure and the creation of a more cost-effective public service.

The principle of best value does not necessarily imply financial considerations, it also includes resources such as employees and material. The principle of best value may even require institutions to restructure or implement alternate means of service delivery to increase productivity and efficiency and improve effectiveness to meet customer needs. Waste and inefficiency should be eliminated and government should identify areas where savings can be effected (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.8).

The publication of standards and performance, inspection and systems of complaints and redress are intended to make public services more accountable to customers; and performance management is designed to improve responsiveness and efficiency (Sanderson 1996: 92). The statements have been made that public administration is characterised by a great reliance on the law and that laws tend to influence the operation of a public institution much more than they do that of a private institution. The opposite might be stated in terms of the economic environment of public service delivery, but that does not mean that influences from the economic environment do not have a definite effect on public service delivery.

3.4. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

South Africa is a middle-income, developing country with an abundant supply of resources and well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy and transport sectors, but growth has been hampered by unemployment, lack of economic empowerment, crime, corruption and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (herein after referred to as HIV/AIDS). Statistics for 2001 showed that South Africa displayed a gross domestic product (GDP) real growth rate of 0.6%, an inflation rate of 5.5% and an unemployment rate of 30% (CIA World Fact Book 2001). South Africa is also typified as an emerging economy characterised by a unique history of statutory inequalities; in fact, it has the third most unequal distribution of incomes in the world (Department of Trade and Industry 2001: 9).

South Africa's productivity is amongst the lowest in the world. South Africa is ranked 36th out of 41 countries in terms of its productivity in manufacturing and 18th out of 32 countries in terms of its productivity in industry. Regarding the overall productivity and GDP per person South Africa ranks 29th out of 47 countries. One of the reasons for the low productivity especially in the South African public service could be that new recruits are ill equipped to handle the challenges of public service delivery. Uncertainty and tension are high among the new employees and productivity suffers because of a lack of understanding and training (Hilliard & Wissink 1999: 293).

Smith (1996: 165) asserts that economic development is a prerequisite for sustainable democracy and that affluence reduces discontent and political disorder. It is hence necessary for South Africa to collect as much of the revenue due to it as possible, to stimulate economic growth, to reduce unemployment and to increase payment for services rendered.

Any public service should ensure that financial management systems are modern and that funds and record keeping are handled professionally. That effective credit control procedures should be put in place is particularly relevant in the South African local government sphere where debts due to non-payment are mounting.

As mentioned, the *RDP White Paper* and *GEAR* are particularly important regulatory instruments in the economic environment of service delivery. The *RDP White Paper* and *GEAR* contain policies aimed at satisfying the objectives of building the economy, as well as administrative restructuring with a view to a more cost-effective South African public service.

With the adoption of the *Batho Pele White Paper* in 1997 came the recognition of the link between the economical and efficient use of resources and improved service delivery. The financial management and budgeting systems of the time were ill-designed to meet the needs of a customer-oriented public service. Expenditure control was focused almost entirely on inputs and took little account of value for money. Processes were excessively lengthy and bureaucratic. A new approach was thus needed in which budgets would be constructed on the basis of outcomes for which financial authority and accountability would be delegated to those responsible for the delivery of services, so that individual managers could be held responsible for results. The time had thus come for the passing of the *PFMA, 1999* which adopted an approach to financial management that focused on outputs and responsibilities, rather than the rule-driven approach followed in the past (University of Fort Hare 1997: 12).

From the above description, it becomes apparent that the characteristics of the economic environment need to be taken into account by Stats SA,

as the particular economic needs of developing nations pose unique demands to their public institutions, especially in terms of service delivery. However, economic influences on the environment of public service delivery cannot be considered on their own. Attention has to be afforded too to the socio-cultural environment of public service delivery.

3.5. SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The greatest communal influences on service delivery from the socio-cultural environment seem to be poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and geographic location. Where customer illiteracy impedes the satisfaction of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles of consultation, information and transparency, it can be expected that poverty and unemployment would fundamentally influence customers' ability to pay for services. When public institutions like Stats SA are considering how customers' ability to pay for services would influence the actual delivery of services as well as customers' access to services, they should remember the responsibility of the public service to redress the needs of those previously disadvantaged through service delivery (*Batho Pele White Paper*: Section 4.3).

Satisfaction of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of access is also influenced by the rural location of vast numbers of customers. The rural service delivery environment is characterised by the following (University of Fort Hare 1997: 8):

- a) lack of capacity in government and communities;
- b) lack of resources especially human and financial;
- c) public service instability;
- d) insufficient access to funds for the development of infrastructure;
- e) inadequate access to credit; and
- f) inadequate links between service delivery and economic development.

Based on the above mentioned, suggested priorities for improving service delivery in rural areas include (University of Fort Hare 1997: 8):

- a) capacity building and the maximisation of local potential;
- b) the improved management of resources;
- c) a return to the RDP principles;
- d) the establishment of one-stop services; and
- e) improved consultation.

Where the above mentioned influences on the socio-cultural environment for service delivery are characteristic to the external environment of Stats SA, the following influence is typical to both the external, as well as internal environment of the institution. In South Africa the official HIV prevalence rate has risen to its highest level ever, being 24,5%, bringing to 4,7-million the total number of South Africans living with the virus. In 15 countries studied by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), it was found that there would be 24 million fewer people in the workforce by 2020 as a result of HIV/AIDS (<http://www.health-e.org.za> 2001).

HIV/AIDS is a particular threat to the South African community and the public service as South Africa's age structure shows that 32.46% of the population is 0-14 years of age, while 62.76% is aged between 15 and 65, and only 4.78% of the population is 65 years and over. In comparing this to the age structure of the public service, it became known that about 70.7% of all public servants are 30 to 49 years old, which places them in the age group most affected by HIV/AIDS (CIA Factbook 2001 cf. Department of Public Service and Administration 2000b).

Statistics highlight that South Africa's epidemic is among the worst in the world. Projections indicate that about six million people will be infected by year 2005. As mentioned this will result in the death of people who form the core of the workforce. While it has not been possible

to collect statistics on the specific impact of HIV/AIDS on the South African public service, it is clear that the impact on Stats SA and the rest of the public service is likely to be similar to the rest of society in that it will result in (Department of Public Service and Administration 2000b):

- a) an increase in absenteeism due to illness;
- b) a loss of skilled people, which can disrupt service delivery, result in lower performance and potentially increase wages for people with scarce skills;
- c) a reduction in job performance due to illness, stress and low morale amongst employees;
- d) a potential labour breakdown and increased litigation costs if the government fails to manage HIV/AIDS related issues;
- e) increased expenditure and monetary implications for government spending on HIV/AIDS related issues;
- f) social and political instability and an increase in poverty and inequality; and
- g) a decrease in skilled workers and lack of continuity.

The fact has to be stressed however that government is the primary customer or user of Stats SA and the aim of the institution is thus above all to produce statistics that enable government to monitor the impact of programmes and identify delivery challenges (Stats SA 2001c: 3).

Even though they contain influences that are of extreme importance; an examination of the environment of public service delivery would not be complete if only the legislative, economic and socio-cultural environments were considered. The technological environment poses its own, constantly changing challenges to service delivery by Stats SA and the rest of the public service.

3.6. TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The impact of information technology on the South African public service increases daily, because of increasing demands on government to meet the needs of a changing society. Electronic government demands a paradigm shift that would see government extending information technology to assist in the provision of all public services.

According to the *Green Paper on e-Commerce, 2000* electronic government can be defined as government use of information communication technologies to offer citizens and businesses the opportunity to interact and conduct business with government by using different electronic media such as telephone touch pad, fax, smart cards, self service kiosks, e-mail and internet. E-government thus includes electronic service delivery with a view to improve public service delivery.

All public institutions are expected to align with the following (*Green Paper on e-Commerce, 2000*):

- a) the provision of a secure information technology environment;
- b) the establishment and maintenance of inter-operability; and
- c) the elimination of unnecessary duplication.

The South African public service has committed itself to the promotion of information technology skills, as electronic government is ultimately an effort to extend services to more citizens (Department of Public Service and Administration 2000 (i)). With the adoption of the *Batho Pele White Paper, 1997*, note was taken of the challenge to harness information technology solutions to facilitate the more effective and efficient use of public resources in the delivery of services. The need was realised for (University of Fort Hare 1997: 12):

- a) a systematic policy framework in which the aims, value and content of information technology solutions, including priorities, should be outlined clearly;
- b) information technology solutions which are relevant and practical to the context of South Africa as an under-developed country, especially conditions faced by people living in rural areas;
- c) a distinction between two types of information technology applications *viz.* strategic (policy) decisions and routine (operational) services; each of which requires a distinctive set of strategies;
- d) an evolutionary approach to information technology development which takes a long-term and multi-sectoral perspective as its starting point, and which acknowledges the differing needs of society; and
- e) an information technology developmental strategy to be effective, there is a need for strong political leadership, preferably by national government.

When aiming to utilise information technology with a view to improving service delivery, it can be accepted that (University of Fort Hare 1997: 12):

- a) information technology solutions, if correctly applied, can significantly improve the manner in which administrative decisions are made and services are provided in public institutions;
- b) to be effective, information technology solutions have to be integrated systematically along network lines in order to ensure common access to their benefits, not only to public servants but also to the public; and
- c) for an information technology strategy to work, it is essential to cultivate, from the onset, a strong partnership with the private sector in systems and software development.

The following are suggestions for making better use of information technology to improve service delivery (University of Fort Hare 1997: 13):

- a) innovative pilot projects with the objective of bringing several disciplines together;
- b) raising the general awareness of the value and role of information technology in a modernising and developing society, particularly insofar as the vision of the political leaders are concerned;
- c) raising the general level of awareness of administrators, especially non-information technology personnel, by means of information technology awareness programmes;
- d) using information technology to establish “one-stop-shops” by means of the “single window kiosk” where a single public servant can supply a customer with various services or products; and
- e) learning from experiences elsewhere in the world, especially in other developing countries, but adapting these solutions to particular South African circumstances.

Technological influences on the service delivery environment are of particular importance to Stats SA, as most of the institution’s products are taking on an electronic format, implying that the internet will soon be their main mode of service delivery. The “electronification” of the products of Stats SA, such as the results of the household and labour force surveys, is aimed at increasing access by customers by e.g. shortening the response time on requests for statistical information, or even reducing the number of telephonic or written enquiries because of information being readily available and accessible by the public. However, in November 2000, only 3,75% of the South African population had access to the internet (NUA 2000). Ironical thus that the process of “electronification” might alienate previously disadvantaged customers even further, as they are the ones with already questionable access to the

products and services of Stats SA, because of e.g. illiteracy or rural location.

3.7. CONCLUSION

In the examination of the role of government and the duty of the state, the conclusion was drawn that services are due to citizens by virtue of the rights they hold, as government is tasked with the creation of a good quality of life for all citizens. After a discussion of government functions, public service delivery was summarised as the provision of public benefits or satisfactions. As part of an analysis of public services, the services delivered by Stats SA were discussed in terms of collectiveness, particularity and quasi-collectiveness.

The environment has been described as the world in which government and its institutions function to deliver services. Even when some of the environmental influences discussed in this chapter were not distinctly specified to be relevant to Stats SA, they are seen as valid for the institution because of its status as South African public institution, with the environmental influences discussed being those regarded as relevant to the South African public service.

In this chapter the legislative environment for service delivery was examined, because of public administration's great reliance on, and vulnerability to the law. The greatest influence from the legislative environment for public service delivery is the *Batho Pele White Paper*, discussed in this chapter in terms of the principles of service to the people; the customer concept; consulting users of services; setting service standards; increasing access; ensuring courtesy; more efficient

and effective information; increasing openness and transparency; remedying mistakes and failures; and value for money.

The economic environment for public service delivery in South Africa was characterised by typifying South Africa as a middle-income, developing country with an abundant supply of resources and well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy and transport sectors, but with growth having been hampered by unemployment, lack of economic empowerment, crime, corruption and the HIV/AIDS. This characterisation was undertaken whilst attempting to prove the link between the economical and efficient use of resources and improved service delivery. The greatest communal influences on service delivery from the socio-cultural environment proved to be poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, geographic location and HIV/AIDS. The most important consideration from the technological environment proved to be the question of improved access for, versus increased marginalisation of customers because of technological advances.

The aims of this chapter were thus to conceptualise the term service delivery and provide a basis for examining service delivery in the South African public sector by highlighting environmental influences. This study of service delivery in the South African public service will now be continued by focussing the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by Stats SA.