

## **CHAPTER 4: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES IN STATS SA**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The importance of customers to any institution should not be underestimated. Without customers institutions close down, and even though it can be argued that the South African public service does not run this risk, it can be argued that without customers public servants would not have jobs. The sole reason for the appointment of public servants is to serve the people – the customers of the public service. The argument can be made that the public service has a social duty to spend time and effort on ensuring that it has satisfied customers as they are its security.

In this chapter, the examination of service delivery by the South African public service will be continued by focussing on the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by Stats SA. This chapter will examine the results of the empirical research which addresses 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.

As explained under 1.2. to 1.5. *supra*, 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.

The aim of the questionnaire 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 implementation of the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper* by Stats SA. For the completion of the questionnaire, staff members were selected as participants on the grounds of their being situated in sections 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.

#### **4.2. THE BATHO PELE WHITE PAPER AS SERVICE DELIVERY**

##### **STRATEGY**

The findings of the empirical research will be presented in terms of the *Batho Pele White Paper* as service delivery strategy, addressing the topics and presenting the assessment findings in terms of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles. The principles are: service to the people and the customer concept; consulting users of services; setting service standards; increasing access, ensuring courtesy; providing more and better information; increasing openness and transparency; remedying mistakes and failures; and getting the best possible value for money.

#### **4.2.1. Service to the people and the customer concept**

Consumers of products supplied by public institutions in a democracy are often empowered to act as regulators or to elect or appoint regulators to act for them. As taxpayers and voters, consumers are also suppliers of economic and political resources. For this reason, the preferences and views of citizens as consumers may have important consequences for the functioning of public institutions (Schwella *et al.* 1996: 22).

As a customer can be defined as a person who buys goods or services and a client as the user of a service (The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus 1995: 265, 353), it should be realised that customers of public institutions can be divided into various categories. Public institutions may serve direct or indirect customers, primary or secondary customers or even internal or external customers. The main issue is that not only members of the public are customers of public institutions, but also colleagues, other departments, as well as suppliers (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 31). Institutions that are highly regarded in terms of customer service are those where extraordinary customer relations are practised throughout the institution, regardless of whether the customer is outside the institution or is an internal customer (Hessler 1991: 57).

In the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme, services are specified and customers are identified. This forms part of addressing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles of service to the people and the customer concept, covered by sections 1.1 and 1.3 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*.

Stats SA presently provides the following services (2.4.3. *supra*) (Stats SA 2001c: 7-8):

- a) Economic statistics: This section plans and conducts economic surveys concerning prices, labour and the production and financial performance of economic sectors and making the corresponding statistics available.
- b) National and government accounts: This unit estimates the different components of national accounts, specifically the GDP and collects, processes and makes available statistics on public finance.
- c) Household surveys: This department plans and conducts household surveys such as the labour force survey and makes available corresponding employment and other social statistics.
- d) Vital statistics: This section produces statistics on vital events such as births and deaths and projections of mid-year population figures.
- e) Population census: Stats SA conducts a population census once every five years to measure changes in the demographic structure of the society and progress made in regard to socio-economic development and to lay the basis for development planning and policy formulation.
- f) Provincial offices: There is an office in each of the nine provinces, with duties including providing information services to provincial and local governments and other users.
- g) User enquiries: Stats SA has a user enquiries unit that responds to queries from the public and provides information about publications and data contained therein. The unit refers technical questions on the statistical data to the relevant subject matter component.

With the services and products delivered by Stats SA identified, a valid question would be to whom they provide these products and service. More importantly, however, is to what extent the institution itself has implemented the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of identifying its customers.

In the Stats SA's service delivery improvement programme, the following actual customers are identified (Stats SA 2001c: 7-8):

- a) government (national, provincial and local);
- b) non-government organisations;
- c) international organisations e.g. the IMF, ILO and World Bank;
- d) international statistics offices;
- e) researchers, analysts, economists and market analysts;
- f) the South African Reserve Bank;
- g) commercial banking institutions;
- h) industrial federations;
- i) the HSRC;
- j) tertiary institutions;
- k) financial institutions;
- l) consumer agencies;
- m) policy-makers; and
- n) the media.

The Stats SA service delivery improvement programme states that the current list of customers of the main services provided by Stats SA is fairly comprehensive, but that the use of statistics by small-scale business enterprises and local government authorities needs to be investigated (Stats SA 2001c: 8). Evaluation of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles of service to the people and the customer concept took place through questions 06, 07, and 09 of the questionnaire that was developed for the purpose of this dissertation.

**Table 4/1: Question 06: *I know who the customers of Stats SA are and what services we provide to them.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	<b>2</b>	7.4	<b>7.4</b>
3.00	6	<b>22.2</b>	29.6
4.00	19	<b>70.4</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

70.4% of employees agreed completely with the statement that they know who the customers of Stats SA are and what services the institution provides to them. 22.2% of respondents agreed to some extent, while only 2 respondents (7.4%) indicated that they do not know who the customers of Stats SA are or what the services are that are provided to them. Responses to this question thus indicate that the majority of Stats SA employees have completed one of the first stages in implementing the *Batho Pele* customer concept, as they are knowledgeable of the services the institution provides, as well as who the services are provided to.

**Table 4/2: Question 07: *The customers of Stats SA are important to me.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	0	0	0
3.00	1	<b>3.7</b>	3.7
4.00	26	<b>96.3</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

All employees agreed that the customers of Stats SA are important to them. 96.3% of respondents agreed completely, while 3.7% agreed to some extent. Not only does the majority of Stats SA employees thus grasp the customer concept, as became apparent from the previous table; all employees proved that they support the concept by stating that all Stats SA customers are important to them.

**Table 4/3: Question 09: *I always try to improve relationships with all our customers.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	0	0	0
3.00	2	<b>7.4</b>	7.4
4.00	25	<b>92.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Total	27	100.0	

As could be expected after all employees agreed that the customers of Stats SA are important to them, 100% of employees also agreed that they always try to improve relationships with all customers. 92.6% of respondents agreed with this statement completely, while 7.4% agreed to some extent. The conclusion can thus be drawn that, based on employees' understanding of the *Batho Pele* customer concept, as well as their acceptance and support thereof, the resulting influence in their behaviour is that they constantly aim to improve relationships with all customers.

The majority of respondents indicated that they know who the customers of Stats SA and what services are provided to them; and all employees stated that the customers of Stats SA are important to them and that they consequently always try to improve relationships with all customers. The conclusion could thus be drawn, that based on the perceptions of employees, Stats SA is implementing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of service to the people and the customer concept with success. The next test would be whether Stats SA is consulting the users of its services.

#### **4.2.2. Consulting users of services**

Through communication, government ensures that it is not pursuing its own agenda, but rather the general welfare of the broader population (Guan 1997: 176-199). Through consultation, clarity can also be obtained on what the average citizen considers affordable (Hilliard & Msaseni 2000: 68). Consultation can range from formal written questionnaires to more informal personal interviews, meetings or suggestion boxes. The methods should suit individual circumstances and customer characteristics.



One of the most basic reasons for the public service undertaking consultation is that consensus building should be present in almost all public endeavours (Dodoo 1997: 115). Warner (1997: 417) defines consensus building as a condition in which the majority of participants can live with the end result of what society decides will define sustainability.

Stats SA should consult customers according to a systematic plan and ensure that this plan is included in its service delivery improvement plan. The regularity with which customers will be consulted has to be determined, as well as the range of existing and potential customers which will be consulted. Kaul (1996: 143-144) states that the customers are so important that they have to be consulted continuously and proposes that public service training programmes should include customer care training, including courtesy and complaints handling. Officials responsible for carrying out the consultation have to be identified.

Decisions also have to be taken on the aspects the consultation will cover, in terms of level, quality and choice of services, as well as service standards, access to services and satisfaction with services. Stats SA thus has to understand who its customers are and what services they are provided with. For this reason, methods of consultation must cover the entire range of existing and potential customers in the wider community and must take into account the level of understanding of customers. Another challenge will be to find a balance between what citizens want and what can realistically be afforded (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 32). Managers have to ensure that the results of the consultation are not only fed back to customers and employees, but that these results are also used to improve services. After communication of the results of consultation employees' behaviour has

to be monitored for changes (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 4). Another outcome of participation is that it adds to the legitimacy of policy and prevents resistance to policies (De Vries 1997: 161).

In the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme, a number of consultation arrangements are discussed, forming part of addressing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of consulting the users of services, described by section 4.1 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*. The following is a list of existing user consultation arrangements (Stats SA 2001c: 9-10):

- a) Advisory councils: In an attempt to consult with users, producers and suppliers of data, Stats SA has advisory councils that contribute on issues related to the production of statistical outputs. Advisory councils are currently being used to consult on several issues such as methodology, questionnaire design and quality.
- b) Statistics Council: The Statistics Council advises the Minister (of Finance), the Statistician-General and organs of state on statistical matters. Recently the Council has become more active in performing its watchdog functions as stipulated in the *Statistics Act, 1999*.
- c) User consultation workshops: During the 2000/2001 financial year, Stats SA engaged in a several user consultation initiatives ranging from product-focussed workshops to more generic theme-based discussion fora. User consultation workshops were held regarding national accounts. Through these workshops Stats SA received valuable inputs and positive feedback that will help improve the quality of national accounts. In the past seven years there has been a consolidated effort to engage users in the improvement of the economic statistics service. Following several users' needs assessment workshops, a new Economic Activity Survey was introduced. In addition to this, a debriefing workshop was hosted involving respondents, users and other producers of manufacturing statistics.

- d) Provincial users consultation workshops: Two provincial user consultation workshops were held regarding the Census, 2001. The first workshop focussed on whether Stats SA should conduct a census or a large sample survey. Users advised Stats SA to conduct a Census in 2001 in order to address the concerns that were raised about the Census '96. The second workshop focussed on the Census questionnaire and the stakeholders gave valuable input. These workshops were part of an outreach and marketing programme in which head office and provincial office employees worked together to ensure that key users in each province were afforded an opportunity to comment on census data.
- e) Collaboration and partnership initiatives with stakeholders: Partnerships with other government departments and general collaboration with stakeholders have been intensified recently. In line with government priorities, Stats SA has highlighted the need to produce quality tourism statistics. In this regard, a partnership with the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has been forged through the signing of a delivery contract on migration statistics. The national Department of Agriculture commissioned Stats SA to conduct the National Agriculture Survey. In order to improve the quality of this survey and enhance its capacity, Stats SA worked in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture in the analysis of the survey. Other collaborative initiatives include the construction of a national spatial database with the Department of Land Affairs and the IEC, and conducting a 'Victims of Crime' survey for the Secretariat of Safety and Security. Another cross-cutting initiative has been with SARS on the Business Register, which will facilitate a proper sampling frame for statistical inquiries on economic trends and patterns.
- f) Forum of South African Directors-General: Stats SA participates in the Forum of South African Directors-General (FOSAD). FOSAD

presents Stats SA with an opportunity to consult with other government departments as primary users of statistics for policy-making. As a result, Stats SA is experiencing an increase in demand for services, particularly in providing data and indicators on planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes.

- g) Role of Stats SA's provincial offices: Provincial offices are responsible for communicating with users at provincial level. This entails consulting users and providing them with the information they require. In some provinces, provincial statistics forums have been established to provide a platform for user and stakeholder consultation.

The above mentioned consultation arrangements could be accepted as suffice in terms of consulting users of services, but appraisal of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of consulting the users of services was also undertaken through question 11 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/4: Question 11: Customers are consulted on a regular basis on what their needs are.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	3	11.1	11.1
2.00	2	7.4	<b>18.5</b>
3.00	11	<b>40.7</b>	59.2
4.00	11	<b>40.7</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Despite the large number of user consultation arrangements listed in the Stats SA service delivery improvement plan, there were a number of employees (18.5%) who disagreed with the statement that customers are consulted on a regular basis on what their needs are. The majority of respondents (81.5%) did however agree that the customers of Stats SA are consulted on a regular basis on what their needs are. Consultation is paramount in the development of the policies of the government of the day and through consultation with members of the public as its customers and the provision of information obtained from this consultation to government as customer, Stats SA thus plays an important role in informing governmental policy-making. Where consulting the users of services is a function directed externally, setting service standards is directed at the internal functioning of a public institution.

#### **4.2.3. Setting service standards**

Setting targets is normally part of the corporate planning cycle. The corporate plan and the targets that are set should involve the collective efforts of a wide cross section of Stats SA's employees so as to ensure broad ownership of and commitment to the plan and the targets. The plan should review past performance against agreed upon targets, analyse prospects for the future, review available options and propose a broad strategy for the future (Dodoo 1997: 120).

Measurements can be made in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time. Standards need to be specific and challenging but realistic, so as to keep employees motivated in striving towards their attainment. Standards have to be set for the level and quality of key services as well as for new basic services. Both employees and customers have to be involved in

setting standards. Measures have to be determined for the monitoring of these standards, as well as the frequency with and manner in which the standards will be measured. Standards listed should reflect priorities indicated by customers during the process of consultation (Dodoo 1997: 119).

Stats SA has to be knowledgeable of the national norms and standards it is expected to meet and monitoring instruments should continuously indicate to what extent standards have been met. Measures have to be devised for reviewing and improving standards and the frequency with which this will be undertaken has to be decided. After analysing objectives and requirements for output and performance measures and indicators, targets should be identified that relate to e.g. financial performance, volume of output, quality of service, or efficiency (Dodoo 1997: 119).

Standards have to be publicised ensuring that they are made available to all customers on a regular basis. Monitoring instruments should clearly indicate which standards are not being met and assist in providing reasons for this, so that a department is able to explain poor performance or dips in performance to its customers. Stats SA has to have set procedures in place it can follow on a regular basis to improve poor performance. Standards have to be reviewed and raised regularly (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 5-6). Dodoo (1997: 120) believes that such a framework sets the foundation for a performance management culture.

In the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme, adherence to *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of setting service standards (Section 4.1) is discussed by stating that the setting of service delivery standards is a fairly new process in government in general and in Stats SA in particular.

The process poses challenges and requires that service delivery standards be included in an effective performance management system. The statement is further made that using performance measures set during the planning stage will help to monitor improvement in service delivery (Stats SA 2001c: 14).

The focus of the performance measures used in Stats SA is to determine the extent to which the institution progresses towards achieving set performance targets, by monitoring quality, quantity, access, and timeliness (Stats SA 2001c: 14):

- a) Quantity measures the number of statistical outputs produced.
- b) Timeliness measures whether the outputs are released within the expected timeframe.
- c) Access measures how the statistical outputs are made available and disseminated, and the number of users who receive them. The aim is to increase the number of users who access the outputs thereby ultimately increasing usage of statistics.
- d) The quality of statistical services is measured by conducting user satisfaction surveys that have the potential to show the level of user satisfaction with the services provided. Attempts to use a predetermined set of quality indicators such as adhering to international standards and having the right sample size have not been successful as such indicators have proved to be insufficient and often debatable.

Assessment of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of setting service standards took place by way of questions 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/5: Question 14: *Customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	6	22.2	<b>29.6</b>
3.00	11	<b>40.7</b>	70.3
4.00	8	<b>29.6</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

The majority of respondents (70.3%) agreed with the statement that the customers of Stats SA are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards, with 40.7% agreeing completely and 29.6% agreeing to some extent. 29.6% of employees do not believe that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards. From the answers given, the conclusion could be drawn that Stats SA employees regard customers as knowledgeable of what they can expect in terms of service delivery targets associated with, amongst others, timeliness and quality.



**Table 4/6: Question 16: *I know exactly what is expected of me according to service delivery standards of quality, quantity, time and cost.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	0	0	0
3.00	4	<b>14.8</b>	14.8
4.00	23	<b>85.2</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

All employees confirmed that they know exactly what is expected of them according to service delivery standards of quality, quantity, time and cost. 85.2% of respondents agreed with this statement completely, while 14.8% agreed to some extent. It thus became apparent from answers to the questionnaire that even though some employees (29.6%) do not believe that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards; all employees know what standards they are expected to meet. Internal communication of service delivery standards has thus been more successful than external communication of the standards to customers.

**Table 4/7: Question 17: *I was involved in setting the above mentioned service delivery standards.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	6	22.2	22.2
2.00	5	18.5	<b>40.7</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	77.7
4.00	6	<b>22.2</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

40.7% of employees indicated that they experienced the opposite of what is generally advised in terms of setting standards, i.e. that employees have to be involved in the process – they stated that they were not involved in setting service delivery standards, while 59.2% differed by expressing that they were involved in the process. The importance of involving employees in the setting of standards lies therein that besides the creation of awareness of standards, assurance is obtained of employee agreement with standards, as employees ultimately set the standards themselves. Employee involvement in the setting of standards thus ensures ownership of the standards, responsibility being taken for actions and pride in a process jointly established by employees.

**Table 4/8: Question 18: *I regard the above mentioned standards as challenging but realistic.***

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	3	11.1	11.1
2.00	1	3.7	<b>14.8</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	51.8
4.00	13	<b>48.1</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Even though 40.7% of employees indicated that they were not involved in setting service delivery standards, a much higher percentage of 85.1% regarded service delivery standards as being challenging but realistic. Only 14.8% of employees disagreed. Standards should be based on and adapted to challenges from the changing legislative, economic, socio-cultural and technological environments (3.3. – 3.6. *supra*) internal and external to Stats SA.

**Table 4/9: Question 19: *My performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly.***

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	6	22.2	<b>29.6</b>
3.00	7	<b>25.9</b>	55.5
4.00	12	<b>44.4</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Even though the greater majority of employees (85.1%) regard service delivery standards as being challenging but realistic, a smaller percentage (70.3%) of respondents gave an indication that their performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly. 29.6% of employees made it known that their performance according to service delivery standards is not monitored regularly. The monitoring of standards is essential not only to expose deviations, but to ensure that targets set out in official policy documentation, such as the *Statistics Act, 1999* and the departmental budget, are met.

From the responses to the questionnaire, it can be argued that Stats SA is implementing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of consulting users of services with success. The principle should be kept in mind, however, that evaluation should be placed within the organisational structure at a level constant with its mission, (Weiss 1972: 22) and it should be directed by persons not having a great deal to gain or lose from the outcome (Wholey *et al.* 1973: 21).

The principle of consulting the users of services, which is directed internally as well as externally, because of customers being located inside and outside the public service. However, the principle of increasing access is a *Batho Pele White Paper* principle that tends to be directed externally.

#### **4.2.4. Increasing access**

Management has to set targets for increasing access to services for existing, new and previously disadvantaged groups. Barriers (physical, distance, or cultural) that could prevent full access to services have to be identified and programmes have to be set for removing these barriers.

Time frames have to be set for the implementation of programmes and the progress thereof monitored. Partners have to be identified who can assist in eliminating barriers and increasing the availability of services. Efforts have to be coordinated with partners and results monitored (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 6-7).

In the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme, a number of forms and channels of service delivery are discussed, forming part of implementing the principle of increasing access as described by section 4.3 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*.

The existing forms and channels of service delivery utilised by Stats SA are (Stats SA 2001c: 12):

- a) Print and electronic media: Stats SA disseminates statistical information in printed and electronic form. The most common is printed publications supplemented with press releases, statistics series and bulletins. Over the past years, Stats SA has developed a distribution list of all the users of the statistical outputs, and this is continuously updated to ensure increase in user access.
- b) Data on diskettes and CD-ROMs have been introduced to expedite data release as well as reduce the costs of dissemination.
- c) The Stats SA website, which provides the following customer services:
  - i. On-line services and products: statistical releases, reports, and time series data are available on-line for all users. Users are encouraged to subscribe to time series data at no charge to ensure that they receive data as it becomes available.
  - ii. An on-line ordering facility: This enables users to order publications directly through the website, which speeds up delivery.
  - iii. A searchable database: An on-line search engine allows users to search for documents containing specific words.

- iv. An on-line archive: This enables users to search for archived historic data.
  - v. Contact details of all the provincial offices and the head office: These are available on the website, listing the telephone and fax numbers as well as the specific operational units responsible for the various outputs. This information is also available on the printed publications.
- d) Library: Modernisation of the library continues, with plans afoot to begin scanning the complete library archives. The archives will be stored on compact disk, and a web interface developed allowing for access via the internet. Library and website employees are collaborating to construct an Internet gateway to an electronic catalogue of current library holdings. When completed, this will enable Stats SA employees to search the catalogue on the intranet, while external users will have access to the same facilities through Stats SA's public internet site.

Forming part of implementing the principle of increasing access as described by section 4.3 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, is a discussion in the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme of a number strategies to remove barriers to access to services and ensure optimal utilisation of statistics services in South Africa. The strategies identified are (Stats SA 2001c: 11):

- a) Statistical literacy training: In future, Stats SA intends to provide statistical training to all users of data and the public in general with the aim of enhancing the usage of statistics. This goal will be realised by training users on how to maximise the usage of a specific product and indirectly through the activities of the NSS. At the beginning of 2001, Stats SA hosted a national workshop on statistical literacy, which was attended by tertiary institutions, other government departments, members of business institutions and various statistics

institutions. In this workshop other government departments, such as the Treasury and the Department of Housing, indicated their statistical needs. This was seen as the beginning of the statistical literacy audit that has to be done under the auspices of the NSS. Stats SA has also started with the training of young people by implementing the 'Census at Schools' project. This concept is aimed at enhancing statistical literacy in primary and secondary schools.

- b) Establishment of an NSS: The establishment of an NSS has the potential to serve as the framework for systematic interaction with government departments. An interdepartmental committee consisting of suppliers, users and producers of official statistics will be formed and tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the NSS.
- c) Increasing and diversifying marketing initiatives: The Publishing, Marketing and User Information Directorate has recently devised various marketing initiatives. A full time dedicated officer has been employed to develop marketing strategies in order to increase awareness of and interest in the statistical service provided by Stats SA.

The above mentioned discussion on strategies for increasing access to the services of Stats SA can be regarded as showing the commitment of the institution to implementing the *Batho Pele* principle of increased access. However, appraisal of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of increasing access (Section 4.3 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*) was further examined through question 24 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/10: Question 24: Stats SA has set targets for increasing access to its services for all customers.**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	1	3.7	3.7
2.00	3	11.1	<b>14.8</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	51.8
4.00	13	<b>48.1</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

A majority of 85.1% of employees indicated that they are aware of targets set by Stats SA for increasing access to its services for all customers. Only 14.8% of respondents believed that this was not true. The answers of the majority of respondents thus indicated that Stats SA employees are aware of the targets set for increasing access, such as statistical literacy training, the establishment of an NSS, and marketing initiatives.

As with increasing access, ensuring courtesy might at first glance seem to be envisaged for the benefit of especially members of the public as customers. However, Stats SA, as all public institutions, should remember that internal customers (and treating them with courtesy) are just as important as external customers.

#### **4.2.5. Ensuring courtesy**

The most important traits of the public employee should be total commitment or loyalty to the public good, strict avoidance of conflict of interests, and self-restraint. The public servant should maintain a balance between commitment to the public good and obedience to



administrative and political superiors, including norms such as to determine when to withdraw from a situation and when to whistle-blow (Dror 1997: 17).

The performance of employees who deal directly with customers has to be monitored continuously and performance that falls below specified standards should not be tolerated. Service delivery and customer care should be included in all training programmes. Managers have to demonstrate that they are personally committed to the ideals of the *Batho Pele White Paper* by encouraging, monitoring and enforcing good customer care (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 35).

Treating customers with courtesy and politeness should be covered in a code of conduct. Stats SA's code of conduct should address standards of courtesy and adherence to the code must be monitored regularly, which includes an accessible complaints handling system being put in place (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 35). The results of this measurement should be used in devising steps to address under-performance. Stats SA should in the final instance ensure that its behavioural norms and values, such as friendliness and helpfulness are in line with all the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper*.

Courtesy is related to ethical behaviour. Public employees' conduct should be above reproach in the exercise of their official duties. They should be free from vested, selfish interests and are therefore expected to display altruistic behaviour. One of the essential qualities a public employee should possess is integrity, ensuring that public interest is placed above own interest (Jean-Pierre 1997: 565-572).

Not only should employees be encouraged to suggest ways of improving customer service, but these suggestions should also be taken to heart.

The manager should ensure that he/she receives feedback, both positive and negative, on the level and quality of services being provided at the frontline. Indicators also have to be devised to measure customers' perceptions of courtesy, as well as steps taken to address the problems identified (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 7-8).

In addressing the principle of ensuring courtesy as described by section 4.4 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, Stats SA's service delivery improvement programme discusses the idea of quality through people. The argument is made that at the forefront of a customer-centred institution are highly trained professional employees that understand the value of treating customers professionally. In terms of capacitating employees for better service delivery, Stats SA's management has committed itself to human resource development and a supportive institutional culture. At the beginning of the 2001/02 financial year, an employee opinion survey was conducted to lay the basis for people development by identifying areas that need immediate intervention. Subsequent to the employee opinion survey a remedial strategy has been developed aimed at addressing problematic areas (Stats SA 2001c: 13). Evaluation of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of ensuring courtesy was done by examining answers to questions 08 and 10 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/11: Question 08: *I treat all customers of Stats SA with respect and courtesy.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	0	0	0
3.00	1	<b>3.7</b>	3.7
4.00	26	<b>96.3</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

All employees confirmed that they treat all customers of Stats SA with respect and courtesy. 96.3% of respondents agreed with this statement completely, while only one respondent (3.7%) agreed to some extent. The deduction which could be made from responses is that all Stats SA employees have begun to grasp the concept that not only customers of businesses are entitled to be treated with respect, but that courtesy is just as important in public service delivery. The majority of Stats SA employees thus understand their role as public servants, that is servants of the public, the citizens, or the voters as source of the mandate of government.

**Table 4/12: Question 10: *My conduct towards customers is monitored regularly.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	5	<b>18.5</b>	18.5
2.00	4	14.8	<b>33.3</b>
3.00	5	<b>18.5</b>	51.8
4.00	13	<b>48.1</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

A majority of 66.6% of employees confirmed that their conduct towards customers is monitored regularly, while 33.3% of respondents indicated that this was not true in their case. Even though all employees indicated that they treat all customers of Stats SA with respect and courtesy, the answers of 18.5% of respondents implied that their conduct towards customers is definitely not monitored regularly. After an understanding has been instilled in employees of the importance of treating customers with courtesy, the usefulness of encounters between employees and customers needs to be established by implementing the principle of providing more and better information.

#### **4.2.6. Providing more and better information**

Kaul (1996: 149) emphasises the necessity for accurate and unbiased reporting, as this strengthens the climate of openness and public accountability. Information should be provided in a manner that is most suited to the needs of the particular users of a service and at intervals most convenient and useful to these users.

Existing and potential customers have to be consulted on what information they require and how this can best be provided. Stats SA should draft, publish and disseminate a service commitment charter covering aspects customers were consulted about. The charter should be readily available to all customers. Checks have to be put in place for ensuring that information is reaching and being properly interpreted by all those who need to see it (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 8-9).

Appraisal of Stats SA's implementation of the principle of providing more and better information, as incorporated under section 4.5 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, was conducted by way of questions 12 and 13 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/13: Question 12: All customers of Stats SA are aware of what services we deliver and how to go about accessing them.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	9	33.3	<b>40.7</b>
3.00	12	<b>44.4</b>	85.1
4.00	4	<b>14.8</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

A majority of 59.2% of respondents were of the opinion that all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them, while 40.7% of employees disagreed. Seeing as that responses to this question almost resulted in a 50/50 split, it is necessary to reconsider answers discussed previously.

In terms of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of providing more and better information, compared to the customer concept, reference can again be made of the results of questions 06 and 14 of the questionnaire. Responses to these questions indicated that the majority of employees know who the customers of Stats SA are and what services are provided to them, as well as that the majority of employees believe that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards. These results should be compared to that of question 12 (discussed above) on whether all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them. This again brings to the fore the issue of internal and external communication, as discussed following table 4/6.

**Table 4/14: Question 13: Customers are kept updated on changes in our institution and services.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	1	3.7	3.7
2.00	7	25.9	<b>29.6</b>
3.00	15	<b>55.6</b>	85.2
4.00	4	<b>14.8</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

A majority of 70.4% of respondents were of the opinion that customers are kept updated on changes in Stats SA and its services, with 55.6% of them just agreeing to some extent. 29.6% of employees seem to believe that customers are not kept updated on changes in the institution and its services. The principle of providing more and better information should also be considered with the principle of increasing access. It

stands to reason that Stats SA could employ similar tools in the implementation of both principles. That is, the strategies of statistical literacy training, the establishment of an NSS and marketing initiatives are just as imperative to the provision of more and better information as they are to increasing access. Closely linked to both the principles of providing more and better information and increasing access, is that of increasing openness and transparency.

#### **4.2.7. Increasing openness and transparency**

Being open and transparent implies that Stats SA is letting customers know how it is achieving the promised standards of service delivery as service provider and how non-delivery is addressed. This would for example entail annual reports to customers, as well as regular progress reports, basically providing customers with any and all information they are entitled to receive. Information to be included in an annual report is the number of employees, what Stats SA performance was against targets for improved service delivery, financial savings, and increased efficiency. Resources consumed, income received, and targets for the following year should also be addressed and the report must be widely published (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 37 *cf.* Hummel 1994: 493).

Ngouo (1997: 490) is of the opinion that developing a culture of transparency in the public service guards against antisocial and avaricious activities, while Guan (1997: 167-170) is convinced that transparency “helps to keep the public service clean, effective, and free from nepotism and corruption”.

Part of the process of openness and transparency is accountability. Kaul (1996: 134) believes that accountability is emphasised to ensure that monitoring systems are strengthened. Mountfield (1997: 74) provides a distinction between accountability and responsibility, where accountability is defined as the obligation on political office-bearers to explain to the legislature “what went wrong”, what action has been taken to correct it, as well as prevent it from happening again. Responsibility is subsequently defined as taking the blame as well as facing the political consequences.

Adherence by Stats SA to the principle of increasing openness and transparency as described in section 4.6 of the *Batho Pele White Paper* was not covered separately by the questionnaire, as the concepts surrounding this principle were believed to be implied by questions 12, 13, 14, and 19 of the questionnaire. These questions were believed to have addressed the above mentioned definitions provided for the concept of increasing openness and transparency.

The secondary idea of strengthening monitoring systems was addressed by question 19 of the questionnaire by asking employees whether their performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly. The concept of letting customers know whether Stats SA is achieving the promised standards, was addressed by question 14 of the questionnaire by asking employees whether customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards.

Exact percentages can not be attached to whether Stats SA has been successful in strengthening monitoring systems and letting customers know whether the institution is achieving the promised standards. However, the majority of respondents to the questionnaire evaluated Stats SA as being successful in this regard by agreeing that their



performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly and that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards.

The concept of providing citizens with any and all information they are entitled to receive was addressed by questions 12 and 13 of the questionnaire. Employees were asked whether all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them, as well as whether customers are kept updated on changes in the institution and its services.

Again an exact percentage cannot be attached to whether Stats SA has been successful in providing citizens with any and all information they are entitled to receive. However, the majority of respondents to the questionnaire evaluated Stats SA as being successful in this regard by agreeing that all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them, as well as that customers are kept updated on changes in the institution and its services.

Increasing openness and transparency and providing more and better information are intended to not only benefit the customer, but also the institution. Increased numbers of access points to services relieve pressure on existing points and measures for service delivery and dealing with informed customers is less time-consuming than attempting to satisfy the needs of uninformed customers. However, implementation of the two principles mentioned does not automatically eliminate mistakes. The *Batho Pele White Paper* principle dealing with the consequences of something going wrong in the implementation of any of the other principles is remedying mistakes and failures.

#### **4.2.8. Remediating mistakes and failures**

Stats SA as service provider should have a clear and easy way in which customers can register complaints as well as a system for solving complaints and informing customers on the steps taken to address their complaints including progress made towards a complete level of satisfaction for the customer. Employees need to be empowered to take action themselves in dealing with complaints, which proposes that they need to receive training in this regard. Mechanisms need to be put in place for communicating feedback on suggestions to prevent mistakes from recurring after complaints have been reviewed. However, merely having a complaints system in place does not suffice, it has to be established whether customers are satisfied with the system. Complaints should be used to actually improve services (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 10-11 *cf.* KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 38).

The principle of remediating mistakes and failures is also known as recovery. Recovery implies acknowledging that the institution made a mistake, apologising, fixing the mistake, and doing more than is required or expected. Customer are more likely to feel that the institution cares about them if the institution endeavours to remedy mistakes as soon as possible after they occurred (Hessler 1991: 55-56). With the above mentioned theoretical background in mind, appraisal of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of remediating mistakes and failures was done by way of questions 20 to 23 of the questionnaire.

**Table 4/15: Question 20: Stats SA is employing a tool which measures customer satisfaction.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	4	14.8	14.8
2.00	10	37.0	<b>51.8</b>
3.00	9	<b>33.3</b>	85.1
4.00	4	<b>14.8</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

For the first time the response of the majority of employees was to disagree with a statement made in the questionnaire. 51.5% of employees disagreed with the statement that Stats SA is employing a tool which measures customer satisfaction. As opposed to this, 48.1% of employees believe that Stats SA is indeed employing a tool that measures customer satisfaction. From the response of the majority of employees, it seems that Stats SA is not yet testing customer satisfaction by way of e.g. surveys, or comment cards. However, the fact that almost half of employees are of the opinion that Stats SA is indeed measuring customer satisfaction, could point to a situation where such a measurement tool may be utilised, but that those employees disagreeing with the statement are not aware of it. If this is the case, then the existence and functioning of the customer satisfaction measurement tool has not been publicised widely enough within the institution.

**Table 4/16: Question 21: Stats SA has a system in place through which customers can register complaints.**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	6	22.2	22.2
2.00	6	22.2	<b>44.4</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	81.4
4.00	5	<b>18.5</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Even though a majority of 51.8% of employees disagreed with the statement that Stats SA is employing a tool which measures customer satisfaction, 55.5% of them believe that the institution has a system in place through which customers can register complaints. 44.4% of respondents disagreed. It stands to reason that if a tool is employed that measures customer satisfaction, possible problems in service delivery could be anticipated, so that it is not necessary for a dissatisfied customer to register a complaint before someone becomes aware of a problem.

**Table 4/17: Question 22: Complaints are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	3	11.1	11.1
2.00	9	33.3	<b>44.4</b>
3.00	7	<b>25.9</b>	70.3
4.00	8	<b>29.6</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

The majority (55.5%) of employees confirmed that Stats SA has a system in place through which customers can register complaints. The effectiveness of this system was verified by the same percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement that complaints are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly. Again the complement of respondents disagreeing with the statement was 44.4%. As mentioned before, if an attempt is made to measure customer satisfaction, the number of complaints regarding service delivery should decrease, as possible problems could be anticipated before they actually arise. However, measuring customer satisfaction will not automatically eliminate all possible problems. The same applies in the implementation of the other *Batho Pele White Paper* principles. The successful implementation of the principles of consulting the users of services, setting service standards, increasing access, ensuring courtesy, providing more and better information, and increasing openness and transparency will not automatically eliminate the need for remedying mistakes and failures. In the delivery of any service customer complaints have to be planned for to ensure that they are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly, as timeliness plays a crucial role in remedying mistakes and failures.

**Table 4/18: Question 23: Complaints about service delivery in Stats SA effect changes which prevent the same mistakes from being made again.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	1	3.7	3.7
2.00	9	33.3	<b>37.0</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	74.0
4.00	7	<b>25.9</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Once more confirming the effectiveness of Stats SA's customer complaints system, an even greater majority of employees (62.9%) agreed that complaints about service delivery in Stats SA effect changes which prevent the same mistakes from being made again. Only 37% of respondents did not agree.

Even though the majority of employees disagreed with the statement that Stats SA is employing a tool which measures customer satisfaction, the majority of employees do believe that the institution has a system in place through which customers can register complaints and that complaints are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly. In addition, the majority of employees indicated that that complaints about service delivery in Stats SA effect changes which prevent the same mistakes from being made again, ultimately confirming that Stats SA is implementing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of remedying mistakes and failures with success.

The link between the necessity for remedying mistakes and failures and the other *Batho Pele White Paper* principles becomes apparent again

when the last principle is considered. The statement could be made that if employees are dedicated to providing customers with the best possible value for money, mistakes and failures, and thus the need for addressing them, would decrease. However, the fact has to be reiterated that even though the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles are inseparable, the successful implementation of one of the principles, does not necessarily guarantee the successful implementation of the next.

#### **4.2.9. Getting the best possible value for money**

Concentrating on improving effectiveness and efficiency where no additional resources are required could be useful, but it would be more useful to aim at achieving the same or improved quality with fewer resources. Savings should also be ploughed back into improving services (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000a: 43). Addressing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of best value immediately brings about budgeting issues, such as matching the budget with programmes for improved service delivery and keeping within this budget. Stats SA needs to re-evaluate the unit costs of their services and aim to lower prices to a level most acceptable to the customer.

Employees have to be informed about the need for efficiency and best value as well as be empowered to perform their duties in such a way that they contribute towards the realisation of this principle. This links to the eradication and prevention of fraud and corruption. Assessments also need to be undertaken to determine the training and development needs of employees to enable them to provide an excellent service. Stats SA should thus strive to make improvements to their services with little or no additional cost and they have to decide on where and how to utilise efficiency savings. To improve services Stats SA's service also has to be

co-ordinated with other components or departments serving the same customer group (Pricewaterhouse Coopers 200/2001: 11-13).

One of the most important aspects to consider when trying to ensure value for money is putting in place an effective financial management system. Rowat (1996: 402) recommends an Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) which is intended to provide policy makers with accurate and timely financial information that:

- a) eliminates overlapping, duplication and confusion;
- b) increases transparency and accountability;
- c) facilitates effective budgeting for scarce resources;
- d) minimises loss through leakage; and
- e) increases confidence in government.

Because the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of getting the best possible value for money involves not only financial or economic considerations, but (increased) efficiency and effectiveness on all levels, the questions in the questionnaire measuring compliance by Stats SA are questions 15, 25, 26 and 29.

**Table 4/19: Question 15: *I always aim to improve service delivery in my workplace.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	0	0	0
2.00	2	7.4	<b>7.4</b>
3.00	2	<b>7.4</b>	14.8
4.00	23	<b>85.2</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	



Commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness for improved service delivery in Stats SA was displayed by an overwhelming 92.6% of employees stating that they always aim to improve service delivery in their workplace, by e.g. undergoing service delivery related training. Only two respondents (7.4%) admitted to the opposite. At this point, the statement should be made that all training could in fact be considered as service delivery related, as any training that would enable an employee to function more effectively and efficiently, would in effect contribute towards better service delivery by such an employee.

Public institutions should constantly strive towards improving their service delivery. There is no such thing as 'arriving' when it comes to service delivery (Mitchell 1991: 72).

Besides being related to the attitude of employees and being a combination of other *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, the principle of value for money should be considered against the background of the following statement. In the public sector the endeavour should always be for action which will lead to the improvement of the quality of service rendered by public institutions. The endeavour should be for efficient administration in the form of goal realisation, the thrifty utilisation of resources and the equitable division of resources among groups and programmes (Thornhill & Hanekom 1995: 195).

**Table 4/20: Question 25: *I was consulted on how to improve customer service.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	6	22.2	22.2
2.00	11	40.7	<b>62.9</b>
3.00	3	<b>11.1</b>	74.0
4.00	7	<b>25.9</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

It became evident that employees' commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness has not yet been utilised to the full, as 62.9% of respondents indicated that they were not consulted on how to improve customer service. 37.0% of employees differed by stating that they were in fact consulted on how to improve customer service.

The question needs to be asked constantly how service delivery can be improved. It is especially important that those who are closest to the point of service delivery be asked how to improve performance, (Mitchell 1991: 72) whilst offering visible support and encouragement (Fourie 1998: 231).

**Table 4/21: Question 26: *I have, or am scheduled to, receive service delivery related training.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	9	33.3	33.3
2.00	6	22.2	<b>55.5</b>
3.00	4	<b>14.8</b>	70.3
4.00	8	<b>29.6</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Again, seen against the clear commitment of the majority (92.6%) of employees to improved service delivery, more employees should have been exposed to capacity building and development for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Just more than half (55.5%) of respondents indicated that they have or are scheduled to receive service delivery related training, but this was not the case for the complement of 44.4% of employees. The most common barriers to training are budget constraints and the limited time of employees, i.e. their workload prevents them from being released for training.

**Table 4/22: Question 29: The organisational transformation and restructuring envisaged for Stats SA will improve service delivery.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	3	11.1	11.1
2.00	5	18.5	<b>29.6</b>
3.00	12	<b>44.4</b>	74.0
4.00	7	<b>25.9</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

The commitment of the majority of employees to increased efficiency and effectiveness was also emphasised by the positive acceptance of institutional changes. The majority (70.3%) of employees indicated that they believe that the organisational transformation and restructuring envisaged for Stats SA will improve service delivery. 29.6% of respondents disagreed. As the majority of employees have indicated their commitment to improved service delivery, the percentage of respondents stating that the organisational transformation and restructuring envisaged for Stats SA will not improve service delivery, could be attributed to factors such as a resistance to change and fear of the unknown.

Questions 04, 05, 27, 28 and 30 of the questionnaire were not designed with specific *Batho Pele White Paper* principles in mind, but rather to investigate Stats SA employees' attitude towards service delivery in general. These will now be discussed to complete this representation of the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles by Stats SA.

**Table 4/23: Question 04: *I understand the principles of Batho Pele.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	1	3.7	3.7
2.00	4	14.8	<b>18.5</b>
3.00	6	<b>22.2</b>	40.7
4.00	16	<b>59.3</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Based on answers to previous questions, the deduction could already have been made, but when employees were specifically asked to indicate whether they understand and support the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, the majority (81.5%) of employees confirmed their understanding and support. A complement of 18.5% of respondents indicated the opposite. If service delivery is thus assessed purely in terms of employee's subscription to the principles of *the Batho Pele White Paper*, it would seem that Stats SA can safely assume that employees support the transformation of public service delivery.

**Table 4/24: Question 05: *I am aware of the provisions of Stats SA's Service Delivery Plan.***

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	6	22.2	<b>29.6</b>
3.00	11	<b>40.7</b>	70.3
4.00	8	<b>29.6</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

With 81.5% of employees confirming their understanding and support of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, it would also be comforting for Stats SA, as for any public institution to note that the majority of its employees are conversant with its service delivery improvement plan. This seems to be the case for Stats SA, as 70.3% of employees indicated that they are aware of the provisions of the institution's service delivery plan. 29.6% of respondents gave an indication of the opposite. The aim of departmental service delivery improvement programmes is to conceptualise what is envisaged by section 7.2.8 of the *Batho Pele White Paper*. If the majority of employees thus indicate that they are aware of the provisions of the service delivery plan, they imply that they are not only knowledgeable of the end of improved public service delivery, but also the means by which this end is to be achieved. This awareness would have been created by, amongst others, internal (and external) publication and/or training.

**Table 4/25: Question 27: *I try to persuade my colleagues to implement the Batho Pele principles.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	7	25.9	25.9
2.00	5	18.5	<b>44.4</b>
3.00	10	<b>37.0</b>	81.4
4.00	5	<b>18.5</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Elaborating on the investigation of Stats SA employees' attitude towards service delivery in general, employees were asked whether they try to persuade their colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles. A majority of 55.5% of employees answered affirmatively, while 44.4% of respondents denoted that they do not try to persuade their colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles.

Persuading colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, is closely related to working as a team. It is essential that every employee is committed to working as part of a team. Employees need to understand that when a team member performs well all the members of the team benefit. All employees should aim for common goals; it is thus essential that each team member knows what the goals are (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000b: 10).

**Table 4/26: Question 28: The importance of effective service delivery is reflected by the actions of all Stats SA staff members.**

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	5	18.5	<b>25.9</b>
3.00	6	<b>22.2</b>	48.1
4.00	14	<b>51.9</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Closely linking to employees' persuasion of their colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, they were confronted with the statement that the importance of effective service delivery is reflected by the actions of all Stats SA employees. A majority of 74.1% of employees agreed with the statement, 51.9% completely and 22.2% to a certain extent, while 25.9% of respondents disagreed with the statement. As with the previous question, the importance of teamwork is stressed once more in this case. Every employee should be clear about his/her position on and importance to the team. Employees who understand the goals of their institutions and know where they fit in are more likely to be willing and able to make a greater contribution (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration 2000b: 10).



**Table 4/27: Question 30: *It is my opinion that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of Batho Pele and that we are achieving excellence in service delivery.***

<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
1.00	2	7.4	7.4
2.00	7	25.9	<b>33.3</b>
3.00	13	<b>48.1</b>	81.4
4.00	5	<b>18.5</b>	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Finally, as culmination of previous questions investigating Stats SA employees' attitude towards service delivery in general, the statement was made in the questionnaire that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper* and that the institution is achieving excellence in service delivery. The majority of employees agreed with the statement. 66.6% of employees agreed that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper* and that the institution is achieving excellence in service delivery, displaying Stats SA's commitment to the targets for improved service delivery by the South African public service. 33.3% of respondents disagreed with the statement.

#### **4.3. CONCLUSION**

Responses to the questionnaire showed that the majority of Stats SA employees have completed one of the first stages in implementing the *Batho Pele* customer concept, as they are knowledgeable of the services the institution provides, as well as who the services are provided to. In

addition, all employees proved that they support the customer concept by stating that all Stats SA customers are important to them, reaffirmed by the sentiment constantly aiming to improve relationships with all customers.

The majority of respondents agreed that the customers of Stats SA are consulted on a regular basis on what their needs are. It became apparent from answers to the questionnaire that even though some employees do not believe that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards associated with e.g. timeliness and quality; all employees know what standards of quality, quantity, time and cost they are expected to meet. Internal communication of service delivery standards was thus proved to have been more successful than external communication of the standards to customers.

Even though 40.7% of employees indicated that they were not involved in setting service delivery standards, a much higher percentage of 85.1% regarded service delivery standards as being challenging but realistic; however, a smaller percentage (70.3%) of respondents gave an indication that their performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly. The majority of employees indicated that they are aware of targets set by Stats SA for increasing access to its services for all customers.

The deduction was made from responses that all Stats SA employees have begun to grasp the concept that not only customers of businesses are entitled to be treated with respect, but that courtesy is just as important in public service delivery. The conclusion was drawn that the majority of Stats SA employees thus understand their role as public servants, that is servants of the public, the citizens, or the voters as source of the mandate of government. To elaborate, the majority of

employees confirmed that their conduct towards customers is monitored regularly.

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them, as well as that customers are kept updated on changes in Stats SA and its services. The principle of providing more and better information was considered with the principle of increasing access and the statement was made that Stats SA could employ similar tools in the implementation of both principles.

The deduction was made from the response of the majority of employees that Stats SA has been successful in strengthening monitoring systems and letting customers know whether the institution is achieving promised standards, as well as in providing citizens with any and all information they are entitled to receive.

Commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness for improved service delivery in Stats SA was displayed by an overwhelming majority of employees stating that they always aim to improve service delivery in their workplace. However, it became evident that employees' commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness has not yet been utilised to the full, as the majority of respondents indicated that they were not consulted on how to improve customer service. The majority of respondents indicated that they have or are scheduled to receive service delivery related training. The commitment of employees to increased efficiency and effectiveness was also emphasised by the positive acceptance of institutional changes, with the majority indicating that they believe that the organisational transformation and restructuring envisaged for Stats SA will improve service delivery.

Based on answers to previous questions, the deduction could already have been made, but when employees were specifically asked to indicate whether they understand and support the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, the majority of employees confirmed their understanding and support. When service delivery was thus assessed purely in terms of employee's subscription to the principles of *the Batho Pele White Paper*, it seemed that Stats SA could safely assume that employees support the transformation of public service delivery. The majority of employees also indicated that they are conversant with Stats SA's service delivery improvement plan.

The majority of employees indicated that they try to persuade their colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles and that the importance of effective service delivery is reflected by the actions of all Stats SA employees. Finally, as culmination of previous questions investigating Stats SA employees' attitude towards service delivery in general, the majority of respondents agreed that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper* and that the institution is achieving excellence in service delivery, displaying Stats SA's commitment to the targets for improved service delivery by the South African public service.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The state originated as a natural institution to enable every individual to attain a life of the greatest possible happiness. It is the governing body of the state's responsibility to govern on behalf of citizens and to protect their interests by way of service delivery to the community. Public administration as an academic discipline can then be defined 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. Public administration can also be described in terms of the generic functions of public administration, namely policy-making; financing; personnel provision and use; organising; determining work procedures and methods; and controlling. When management is considered as the seventh overarching generic function, consisting of activities such as planning, leading and co-ordinating, the relevance of Stats SA as subject of a study in the field of Public Administration becomes apparent. The conclusion can be drawn that the statistical data and information produced by Stats SA assist in administering all the generic functions of public administration, but that these products are indispensable in especially the policy-making and planning activities of government, government departments, and other public, as well as private institutions. As 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 efficiency in the performance of the generic functions that will assist in enhancing public service delivery.

A number of White Papers have bearing on the transformation of the South African public service, with the aim of making the public service

more efficient, effective and economical, but the most important policy document is certainly the *Batho Pele White Paper*. The aim of this dissertation was an evaluation of 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.

An investigation into the development of Stats SA illustrates the transformation from a fragmented statistics system between 1970 and 1994, to the CSS's products, structures, systems and staffing between 1994 and 1997, shaped by the key national policies of the *RDP White Paper*, *GEAR* and the goals of public service transformation set by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Further developments include Stats SA's vigorous programme of rationalisation to support South Africa's first post-apartheid national population census in 1996, as well as the renaming of the CSS to Stats SA in 1998, with a new commitment to professionalism and service delivery.

Stats SA's aims of relevance, reliability, representativity and responsiveness, should be examined in relation to the institution's overall mission of informing socio-economic development by providing accessible quality information through better statistics, better access to information and better management. Stats SA's legislative mandate has been established by highlighting the constitutional entrenchment of its status as public institution. After conducting a structural functional analysis of Stats SA to better understand how the institution is organised with a view to achieving its identified objectives, the conclusion of international observers can be highlighted that Stats SA remains small, even in the developing world, relative to the size and complexity of the South African population and economy. After undertaking the structural-functional analysis of Stats SA, the recommendation can be made that

administrative efficiency is will be increased by: specialisation of the task among the group; arranging the members of the group in a determinate hierarchy of authority; limiting the span of control at any point in the hierarchy to a smaller number; and grouping workers for the purposes of control according to purpose, process, clientele, or place, as it is commonly excepted that a formalistic, static and bureaucratic culture makes it impossible to offer citizens an adequate service.

The statement can be made 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. Therefore, 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. Public service delivery can be summarised as the provision of public benefits or satisfactions. The services delivered by Stats SA have been classified as collective, particular, or quasi-collective, measured against characteristics of non-apportionability, non-exclusiveness, inexhaustibility, financing by taxation, and monopoly. The conclusion has been drawn that it is possible to classify individual services of Stats SA as either collective or particular. The discussion continued that 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 either has 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.

Even when some of the environmental influences discussed in this dissertation 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. The legislative environment for service delivery needed to be examined, because of public administration's great reliance on the law. The greatest influence from the legislative environment for public service delivery has been concluded to be the *Batho Pele White Paper*, providing guidelines on 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 outcomes of the *Batho Pele White Paper* were concluded as being: improving service delivery on all levels; identifying the needs for improving service delivery; applying the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles in practice; rectifying and improving on existing mistakes and failures regarding service delivery; and providing a proper service to all communities.

Conclusions on the economic environment for public service delivery in South Africa see South Africa typified 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. An attempt has been made to prove the link between the economical and efficient use of resources and improved service delivery. The economic environment for service delivery was proved to be influenced mainly by the need for a new approach 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 greatest



communal influences on service delivery from the socio-cultural environment proved to be poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, geographic location and HIV/AIDS. 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 most important consideration for service delivery emanating from the technological environment was shown to be the question of improved access for, versus increased marginalisation of customers because of technological advances.

A number of recommendations can be made to Stats SA based on findings related to the technological environment for public service delivery in South Africa. Stats SA should employ information technology solutions that are relevant and practical to the context of South Africa as an under-developed country, especially conditions faced by people living in rural areas. Stats SA should realise that information technology solutions can significantly improve the manner in which services are provided, but only when a strong partnership with the private sector is cultivated and innovate pilot projects are launched. Stats SA can however be commended on integrating information technology solutions systematically along network lines, e.g. still delivering some paper based products while electronifying most services. Stats SA can also be commended on raising the general level of awareness of information technology and should continue to learn from experiences elsewhere in the world.

The statement is made in Stats SA's 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*.

The aim of this dissertation has neither been to prove nor to 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.

In terms of service to the people and the customer concept, Stats SA has shown that has undertaken an investigation into the services it is actually providing. The services were identified as economic statistics; national and government accounts; household surveys; vital statistics; population census and user enquiries. Stats SA's service delivery improvement programme also contains an extensive list of actual customers, and states that attempts are being made to identify potential customers.

Empirical research drew on the responses of employees to the questionnaire. During the assessment of Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of service to the people and the customer concept, the deduction was made that the majority of Stats SA employees have completed one of the first stages in implementing the concept, as they are knowledgeable of the services the institution provides, as well as who the services are provided to. Further conclusions were that most Stats SA employees not only grasp the customer concept, but support the concept too by stating that all Stats SA customers are important to them, with the resulting influence in their behaviour being that they constantly aim to improve relationships with all customers. The deduction can be made that customer identification should be undertaken as a continuous process, closely linking it to the political and socio-economic realities of a country.

In terms of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of consulting the users of services, empirical research showed the majority of respondents

agreeing with the statement that the customers of Stats SA are consulted on a regular basis on what their needs are. However, the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme identifies a major gap in current customer consultation arrangements as the absence of an institutional framework for customer and stakeholder networking. The current institutional framework for producing statistics is fragmented, with several producers working independently and in competition with each other for the production of statistics. As a result, producers often disseminate conflicting reports because they use various data systems, methodology, standards and classifications. Improvements on consultation arrangements envisaged by the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme include a national statistics system (NSS). In addition to ongoing user consultation processes, Statistics SA will facilitate and co-ordinate the process of establishing an NSS. The NSS will form the basis for more interactive and systematic co-operation among customers, producers and suppliers of data. Stats SA will provide statistical leadership within the system and establish a network of customers, producers, and suppliers of data.

The recommendation can be made that customer consultation should be aimed at informing the satisfaction of the real needs and justified expectations of the citizens. It is also critical for Stats SA to establish what the needs of the previously disadvantaged groups are so that these needs can be met as a matter of priority. However, the needs of citizens will always be unlimited, while government resources are limited. No institution will thus be able to satisfy all wants of all citizens.

The focus of the performance measures used in Stats SA is to determine the extent to which the institution progresses towards achieving set performance targets, by monitoring quality, quantity, access, and timeliness. From responses to the questionnaire, the conclusion could be

drawn that Stats SA employees regard customers as knowledgeable of what they can expect in terms of service delivery targets associated with, amongst others, timeliness and quality. Even though some employees do not believe that customers are aware of what they can expect in terms of service delivery standards; all employees know what standards they are expected to meet. The deduction was thus made that the internal communication of service delivery standards had been more successful than external communication of the standards to customers. Even though 40.7% of employees indicated that they experienced the opposite of what is generally advised in terms of setting standards, i.e. that employees have to be involved in the process, (they stated that they were not involved in setting service delivery standards) a much higher percentage of 85.1% regarded service delivery standards as being challenging but realistic. However, a smaller percentage (70.3%) of respondents gave an indication that their performance according to service delivery standards is monitored regularly.

Assessment of the implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of increasing access, revealed the existing forms and channels of service delivery utilised by Stats SA as print and electronic media; data on diskettes and CD-ROMs; the Stats SA website; and library. Strategies envisaged by Stats SA for removing barriers to access to services, are statistical literacy training; the establishment of the NSS; and marketing initiatives. The majority of responses to the questionnaire indicated that Stats SA employees are aware of the targets set for increasing access.

Stats SA's implementation of the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of ensuring courtesy was also assessed by way of employees' responses to the questionnaire. All employees confirmed that they treat all customers of Stats SA with respect and courtesy and the majority of employees

confirmed that their conduct towards customers is monitored regularly. The deduction was made that all Stats SA employees have begun to grasp the concept that not only customers of businesses are entitled to be treated with respect, but that courtesy is just as important in public service delivery.

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that all customers of Stats SA are aware of what services the institution delivers and how to go about accessing them, as well as that customers are kept updated on changes in Stats SA and its services. The principle of providing more and better information was considered with the principle of increasing access and the statement was made that Stats SA could employ similar tools in the implementation of both principles. The deduction was made from the response of the majority of employees that Stats SA has been successful in strengthening monitoring systems and letting customers know whether the institution is achieving promised standards, as well as in providing citizens with any and all information they are entitled to receive.

The first time the response of the majority of employees was to disagree with a statement made in the questionnaire, was when the statement was made that Stats SA is employing a tool which measures customer satisfaction. From the response of the majority of employees, the conclusion is that Stats SA is not yet testing customer satisfaction by way of e.g. surveys, or comment cards.

The Stats SA service delivery improvement programme also addresses the absence of a comprehensive mechanism for measuring customer satisfaction with the services provided. Planned consultation arrangements identified in the service delivery improvement programme are a customer consultation workshop and a customer satisfaction

survey. Stats SA intends to conduct a comprehensive customer consultation workshop that will focus primarily on measuring customer satisfaction with all statistical outputs, identifying new customers and potential demands based on a broad theme-based discussion. Linked to this is the notion of conducting a customer satisfaction survey, in order to determine the overall customer satisfaction level across all the statistical outputs produced by Stats SA. Both the customer consultation workshop and the customer satisfaction survey will be envisaged to be conducted before the end of the planning period 2002/03.

The majority of employees indicated that Stats SA has a system in place through which customers can register complaints. The deduction was then made that if a tool is employed that measures customer satisfaction, possible problems in service delivery could be anticipated, so that it is not necessary for a dissatisfied customer to register a complaint before someone becomes aware of a problem. The effectiveness of the system for the registration of complaints was verified by the majority of respondents agreeing with the statement that complaints are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly. The recommendation can be made that merely measuring customer satisfaction will not automatically eliminate all possible problems, i.e. measuring customer satisfaction should inform improvements in the service delivery process. In the delivery of any service customer complaints have to be planned for to ensure that they are referred to the relevant official and handled swiftly, as timeliness plays a crucial role in remedying mistakes and failures. Once more confirming the effectiveness of Stats SA's customer complaints system, an even greater majority of employees agreed that complaints about service delivery in Stats SA effect changes which prevent the same mistakes from being made again, ultimately confirming

that Stats SA is implementing the *Batho Pele White Paper* principle of remedying mistakes and failures with success.

Commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness for improved service delivery in Stats SA was displayed by an overwhelming majority of employees stating that they always aim to improve service delivery in their workplace. However, it became evident that employees' commitment to increased efficiency and effectiveness has not yet been utilised to the full, as the majority of respondents indicated that they were not consulted on how to improve customer service. The majority of respondents indicated that they have or are scheduled to receive service delivery related training.

Stats SA's service delivery improvement programme indicates that the institution is currently engaged in an organisational development and transformation process that is aimed at improving its capacity to achieve its vision. The organisation is being restructured to facilitate effective management and enhance internal communication. The focus of the organisational redesign is to build a professional structure with the ability to meet users' needs and expectations. The commitment of employees to increased efficiency and effectiveness was also emphasised by the positive acceptance of institutional changes, with the majority indicating that they believe that the organisational transformation and restructuring envisaged for Stats SA will improve service delivery.

Based on answers to previous questions, the deduction could already have been made, but when employees were specifically asked to indicate whether they understand and support the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles, the majority of employees confirmed their understanding and support. When service delivery was thus assessed purely in terms of employee's subscription to the principles of *the Batho Pele White Paper*, it

seemed that Stats SA could safely assume that employees support the transformation of public service delivery. The majority of employees also indicated that they are conversant with Stats SA's service delivery improvement plan.

The majority of employees indicated that they try to persuade their colleagues to implement the *Batho Pele White Paper* principles and that the importance of effective service delivery is reflected by the actions of all Stats SA employees. Finally, as culmination of previous questions investigating Stats SA employees' attitude towards service delivery in general, the majority of respondents agreed that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper* and that the institution is achieving excellence in service delivery, displaying Stats SA's commitment to the targets for improved service delivery by the South African public service.

Stats SA can be commended on the following activities aimed at improving the quality of services, planned for in the Stats SA service delivery improvement programme. Activities aimed at the enhancement of quality and methodology include a quality and methodology unit, because of the need to continuously improve the quality of the statistical outputs produced by Stats SA in order to ensure their usefulness and public credibility. In line with this, an internal quality and methodology forum has been introduced with the mandate to be a watchdog for the quality of statistical products. This responsibility entails hosting discussions on methodology and questionnaire design. In future this function will be performed by a full time formal unit. Another initiative aimed at the enhancement of quality and methodology is based on the principle of quality through people. At the forefront of a customer-centred institution is highly trained professional employees that understand the value of professionalism in their dealings with



customers. Stats SA's management has committed itself to human resource development and a supportive organizational culture. At the beginning of the 2001/02 financial year, a staff opinion survey was conducted to lay the basis for people development by identifying areas that need immediate intervention. Subsequent to the staff opinion survey a remedial strategy has been developed aimed at addressing problematic areas. Several training needs have been identified, with the primary training programme aimed at providing statistical literacy for interested staff members. The intention is to increase their professional depth, for their own development and to enhance their contribution to the institution. The mentioned intentions and planned activities are endorsed, as several aspects related to institutions' employees may have bearing on the quality or quantity of service outputs. Employees' training, their sensitivity to customers' needs and their motivation for professional advancement may each affect an institution's ability to make the greatest use of its funds, to deliver the best possible service. However, Stats SA should also keep in mind that aspects related to equipment also affect service outputs. The mentioned aspects include compatibility with contemporary methods of providing services and flexibility with respect to the multiple needs and changing demands of customers. The nature of surroundings and the availability of modern equipment should contribute to the capacity of employees to perform in a superior fashion.

In terms of attempts to improve service delivery, Stats SA can be commended on participating in activities of the Southern African Development Community with regard to the development of regional capacity to produce high quality statistics. The mentioned participation covers critical areas such as harmonisation of the statistics produced in the region, implementation of censuses and demographic surveys, harmonisation of economic statistics and identifying further statistical

needs for regional socio-economic development. Stats SA has also visited several other African countries, namely Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania, with the purpose of learning and sharing experiences. The lessons learnt feature strongly in the institution's restructuring processes and a study partnership has been initiated with tertiary institutions in Uganda and Tanzania through which Stats SA staff members will be trained in official statistics.

Another recommendation on the implementation of the principles of the *Batho Pele White Paper* by Stats SA, concerns the attitude of Stats SA employees as public servants, or more specifically, the normative guidelines of public administration. In the practice of service delivery, Stats SA employees occupy the position between the institution, or service provider on the one hand and the customer expecting to receive quality services on the other. When customers are dissatisfied with services, they will confront employees and expect of them to remedy the situation. Therefore, if employees comply with the normative guidelines of public administration in doing their work, the number of dissatisfied customers should be limited to a minimum. Guidelines for the behaviour of public employees, emanating from community values include fairness and reasonableness, thoroughness, and justice. A public service orientation is thus recommended to Stats SA employees. The mentioned orientation implies that tasks and activities are solely aimed at usefully serving the citizen or customer; that Stats SA is judged according to the quality of service given with the resources available; that the way customers are treated is usually governed by rules; and that prompt, quality service is sought by all employees.

Regarding the attitude of Stats SA employees towards (improving) service delivery, the following recommendations are also made. Employees should believe that change is possible and that even one person can

make a difference. Stats SA should work as a team with every employee committed to working as part of a team. Employees should understand that when a team member performs well all the members of the team benefit. All employees should aim for a common goal. It is thus essential that each team member know what the goals are. Goals should not be thrust upon employees; instead team members should determine them together. Employees who understand the goals and know the rules of their institution, as well as where they fit in, are more likely to be willing and able to make a greater contribution. Stats SA employees should be encouraged to be innovative, i.e. they should always be looking for better ways to do their work. Employees should be aware that every activity has an end result and that customers judge the performance of the institution according to this end result. It is thus important to ask whether the end result was achieved; whether it was achieved within the expected time span, and in what manner it was achieved. The recommendation is also made that Stats SA employees be encouraged to be entrepreneurial, i.e. they should work as efficiently and innovatively as they would if they were running their own business. This implies employees taking ownership of their duties as they would if poor performance would mean financial loss to them personally. In the process of transforming public institutions with a view to improve service delivery, one of the biggest challenges public managers will face is people's inherent resistance to change. It is therefore incumbent upon public managers to convince their subordinates that the envisaged changes will bring with them more opportunities than threats.

Implementation of the above mentioned recommendations with a view of reaching service excellence and becoming an efficient, caring institution all employees can be proud of, requires the commitment of all team members individually and in their combined capacity as a team. Achieving the vision of *people first* means working in a positive

environment as part of a committed team, being involved in decision making, feeling proud to be associated with an efficient public service, knowing time at work is well spent and being appreciated for one's efforts. Thus not only do the customers benefit, but Stats SA and its employees as well. As employees become empowered, their skills develop and they grow as individuals.

With the above mentioned recommendations relating more to the behaviour of subordinates, the following recommendations relate to the behaviour of leaders. Effective leadership and communication is vital in ensuring progress towards and the attainment of any vision. With regard to improved service delivery, it is thus the responsibility of leaders, which include managers and supervisors, in Stats SA as a public institution to ensure that they develop a culture which focuses on service delivery as a priority. This can only be achieved through leaders being prepared to demonstrate their commitment to change on a continuous basis. Leaders should provide an enabling and supportive environment for their staff to be able to focus on improving service delivery. Such an environment can only be created through effective communication where a positive attitude towards improving service delivery can be inspired through the realisation of the significance, as well as the benefits thereof. It is important to test the level of understanding of the transformation process throughout the organisation in order to ensure that all employees know exactly what to expect and are clear on how the vision of service excellence is going to be attained. Subordinates will only be as enthusiastic and committed as their leaders allow them to be. Lack of physical support and encouragement is the surest way to doom a transformation programme to failure.

Invariably the demand for resources towards the activities that need to be performed to achieve the desired outcomes, will exceed the availability

of such resources, i.e. funds, people and equipment. The recommendation is thus that Stats SA undertakes a prioritisation exercise to ensure that those activities that contribute most to achieving outcomes are identified. By prioritising inputs, Stats SA will be in a position to concentrate and spend its budget on the most critical activities that add the most value. This will also better management to expand or limit activities as resources increase or decrease. Prioritising inputs will probably lead to activities being managed on a project basis, with target dates and planned action steps being associated with activities, so that the entire team knows exactly who is responsible for what, what resources are at their disposal and what results they are expected to achieve in the time available. To enable managers to determine what needs to be done, by whom, when and what resources are required, a questionnaire is suggested which will enable the manager to do a baseline survey of the current level of service delivery as measured against the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper*. This will then reveal the gap between current and desired levels of service. Such a survey can also be used to measure progress in closing this gap.

In the process of actually gearing up for improved service delivery, more recommendations can be made to Stats SA. The suggestion can be made that outputs must be measured in terms of inputs to ensure that objectives are attained and that plans must stipulate clear short-, medium- and long-term targets to accomplish the predetermined goals. Contingency plans must be put in place to deal with unforeseen circumstances and to address potential barriers to the successful implementation of plans, and to ensure acceptability, general consensus needs to be obtained from all stakeholders involved.

Stats SA does have a service delivery improvement programme in place, but it is recommended that the service improvement programme be

monitored to ensure that any deviations are noted and rectified immediately. This phase involves control by managers, as well as accountability for their institutional actions or inactions. Stats SA's service delivery programme is certainly doomed to failure if control mechanisms are not put in place and if those responsible for failures are not held accountable.

Services delivered, or performance, can be measured in several ways: by the products received by the customers; by the improvement in the customers' conditions that results from the service; by the popularity of the a service among clients; or by some standards of quality set by an organisation of professional persons concerned with the particular service. If Stats SA e.g. decides to measure its progress towards achieving these standards, performance indicators need to be determined by asking what aspect of performance will be important for the project to succeed, as well as by setting targets by asking how much (quantity), how well (quality), by when (time) and/or at what costs the team will have to deliver services. By comparing actual performance against a team's targets, it will be possible to establish how the team is progressing and they will be able to take timeous corrective action when necessary. It should be borne in mind that when performance is measured, performance is improved, but when performance is measured and reported back, the rate of improvement accelerates. It is therefor not only important to measure a team's performance, but it is equally important to give the team feedback on its performance. For feedback to be effective, it must thus be given frequently, be relevant and easily understood, and enable comparison, e.g. present to past performance, or against national or international standards.

The recommendation can be made that progress with planned milestones and targets should be monitored on a monthly basis in order for the

institution to establish progress towards the achievement of standards as described in the form outputs and outcomes. If, during reporting, milestones achieved are mentioned, the possibility is created to assess progress towards realising objectives. Regular monitoring also allows for controlling that the team is focussed on the right issues at all times. In the same way, referring to planned milestones gives a complete picture of what has to be done in order to achieve the objectives of projects. By comparing milestones achieved with planned milestones, one can thus establish exactly how far the project has progressed.

One of the most important recommendations of this dissertation relates to encouraging innovation and recognising and rewarding service excellence. Stats SA should recognise and reward performance in improving service delivery. It is recommended that management develop a system for measuring staff performance and providing recognition for commendable efforts and achievements. Stats SA must ensure that an environment is created which is conducive to the delivery of services to enhance employees' capacity to deliver services of the highest quality possible. Stats SA needs to ensure that staff commitment, energy and skills are being employed to tackle inefficient, outdated and bureaucratic practices, to simplify procedures and to identify new and better ways of delivering services. It is therefore especially important that both the individual and group efforts of employees who perform well in providing customer service be recognised and awarded appropriately. Equally, on the issue of maintaining superior performance, the recommendation is made that ongoing positive reinforcement needs to be consistent to assist in maintaining performance once it has reached the desired level. Stats SA should afford well-performing employees praise and recognition, which simply implies acknowledgement of a task well done.

Thus, to ensure that the momentum of transformation is sustained, recognition must be given for improved service delivery. Reasons for the principle of recognising and rewarding excellence can also be found in two fundamental truths about people in institutions. One being that people are the main asset in an institution, as they are responsible for performing the functions of the institution and the second truth being that motivated and informed employees contribute more effectively to institutional goals than those who are demotivated or frustrated. Continuous recognition and reward of effort is therefore regarded as critical to Stats SA's successful implementation and sustainability of their service delivery improvement programme. Guidelines to recognising and rewarding team achievement include letting employees know how well they are doing. Employees need to be told what is expected of them, what the standards and targets are and be provided with continuous feedback on how well they are doing in meeting those targets and standards. In addition, healthy competition between teams is a great motivator which unleashes the potential of employees and encourages them to be innovative and to take pride in their achievements. Of course, performance must be measured and feedback provided as fairly and transparently as possible to avoid allegations of favouritism and performance which is below standard or below expectations should not be condoned, as this makes recognition and reward meaningless. It is vital to be honest in appraisal and feedback.

If the above mentioned conclusions are considered and the recommendations implemented, further advancement can be made towards supporting the majority of Stats SA employees who are of the opinion that Stats SA is meeting the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper* and that the institution is achieving excellence in service delivery, displaying Stats SA's commitment to the targets for improved service delivery by the South African public service. The possibility would



then exist to advance to the realisation of the vision and mission of Stats SA: improved service delivery aimed at promoting evidence-based policy-making, and the enhancement of official statistics through the empowerment of people.

The principle should be borne in mind 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. Reference can thus again be made to the statement in Stats SA's 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*. The problem statement of this dissertation is then regarded as solved, as it was 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.