



Performance Management Self Evaluation

By Michael J. Mucha

While governments should continually evaluate and look for opportunities to improve their services, the same can be done with their overall performance management approach.

Performance management in the public sector is an ongoing, systematic approach to improving results through evidence-based decision making, continuous organizational learning, and a focus on accountability for performance. Performance management is integrated into all aspects of an organization's management and policy-making processes, transforming an organization's practices so it becomes focused on achieving improved results for the public.

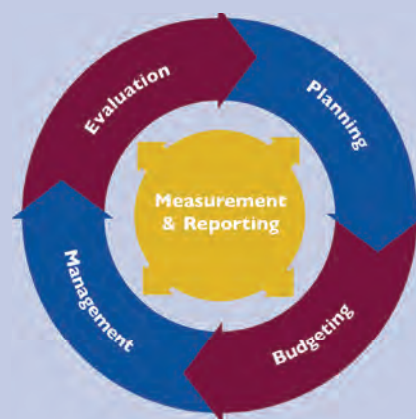
Performance management is all the concerted actions an organization takes to improve results by applying objective information to management and policy making. Performance management uses evidence from measurement to support governmental planning, funding, and operations. Better information enables elected officials

and managers to recognize success, identify problem areas, and respond with appropriate actions — to learn from experience and apply that knowledge to better serve the public.¹

Performance management practices within governments are often shown as a cyclical diagram representing the ongoing iterations of planning, budgeting, management, and evaluation (see Exhibit 1). With each successive cycle, governments engage in overall learning and improvement and apply those lessons going forward.

While governments should continually evaluate and look for opportunities to improve their services, the same can be done with their overall performance management approach. More and more becomes possible as staff, managers, and elected officials

Exhibit I: The Performance Management Cycle



Self-Assessment Tool

This self-assessment tool is intended to help public managers and practitioners apply key performance management elements and identify areas for improvement. The questions are applicable to a single program, a department, or an entire public agency. As performance management efforts evolve, all organizations

will have opportunities for improvement; the intent of this self-assessment is to help prioritize areas that could be improved and build momentum and consensus on the improvement plan. To complete the checklist, select the option that is most appropriate for the statement listed.

Readiness for Implementing Performance Management Systems

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Managers and public officials see the value of a performance management system and endorse implementing one.					
Staff can clearly articulate the value and objectives of a performance management system for the organization.					
Staff can define the elements of the organization's performance management system and how these elements support the organizational and decision-making processes.					
The performance management system supports achieving the organization's defined goals and objectives.					
Staff has expertise on performance management practices and principles.					
Internal and external champions who support the organization's efforts in performance management have been identified.					

Defining the Results to Be Achieved

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
The organization has defined its goals and objectives.					
The organization communicates its goals and objectives well.					
Officials, managers, employees, and other stakeholders understand the goals and objectives.					
The organization's goals and objectives clearly define success.					
The organization's goals and objectives consider citizen expectations and feedback.					

Measurement and Reporting

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
The organization has a defined set of performance measures.					
Performance measures measure actual results and not only levels of production.					
Performance targets have been set for each reported measure.					
The organization has the data collection and processes in place for regularly reporting the performance data against the results to be achieved.					
The data that are reported are available in a reasonable amount of time for making decisions to improve results.					
The data that are reported are credible and useful to the users of the information.					
Performance reports are regularly available and distributed to all to influence decision making.					
Performance results, both positive and negative, are regularly communicated to ensure all involved understand.					

Budgeting

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
The budget acts as an operating plan and clearly communicates how money will be spent to achieve results.					
Budget decisions are made on the basis of which programs and services can most effectively achieve desired results.					
Performance measures in the budget are useful for making or understanding budget decisions.					

Managing for Performance Results

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
The organization has developed decision-making processes that rely on regular review of performance data.					
The organization develops specific plans to improve performance against targets.					
Improvement plans are regularly monitored and reviewed.					
The organization has implemented strategies to link individual job performance to the organization's results.					
The organization's contractors and partners understand the targeted results.					
The organization links its evaluation of partners and contractors to achieving their targeted results.					
The organization has ongoing training and development opportunities to improve the knowledge and awareness of performance management practices.					

Evaluating and Verifying Results

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Programs or services within the organization regularly undergo a performance review.					
The organization has developed mechanisms to support organizational learning on successful strategies.					
Data are periodically audited and verified to support accurate reporting.					
The organization regularly celebrates success and rewards and recognizes achievement of targeted results.					

continue to gain experience using performance data, and their competencies grow. With improvements come greater returns that allow governments to become even more efficient, effective, and responsive to changing external conditions and public expectation ■

Note

1. Taken from A Performance Management Framework for State and Local Government: From Measurement and Reporting to Management and Improving, the final report of the National Performance Management Advisory Commission. The report is available at <http://www.pmcommission.org>.

MICHAEL J. MUCHA is a senior consultant and analyst in the GFOA's Research and Consulting Center in Chicago, Illinois.



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As public-sector organizations face current challenges including dealing with pressure from unprecedented fiscal stress, increased public pressure to do more with less, and the need for transparency and accountability, performance management has become an essential tool to help improve services and ultimately create a more effective, responsive organization. Building off research that includes hundreds of examples of successful performance management systems, *The State and Local Government Performance Management Sourcebook* explains current trends and recent advances in the field of performance management, in addition to focusing on five essential dimensions of performance management:

Citizen Participation ■ Budgeting ■ Operations Management ■ Evaluation ■ Technology

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