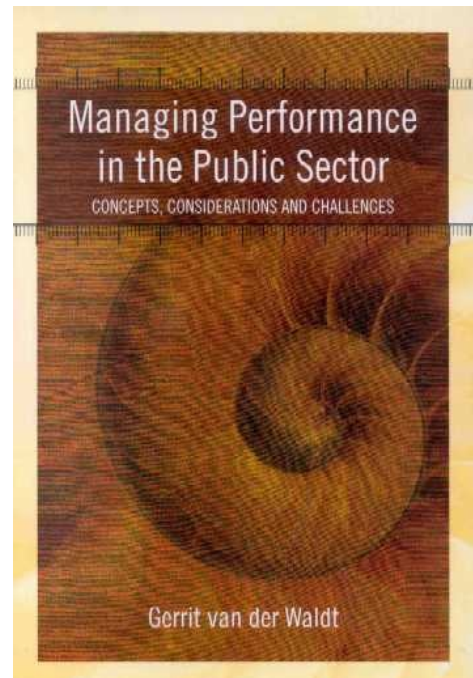


Managing Performance in the Public Sector

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About this Publication:

Efficient, economic and effective use of resources to provide value for money for citizens in service delivery is one of the critical functions of public management. Performance management in the public service is an attempt to balance an institutional centredness with a citizen orientation and it incorporates issues such as productivity (outputs over inputs), quality, accountability and policy outcomes.

Measuring performance in the public sector is not a simple task because various qualitative and, sometimes, unquantifiable variables have to be considered. These qualitative aspects could be rather complex and even intangible – such as the general welfare of a community – and hence, it makes performance improvement and productivity measurement extremely difficult.

The improvement of performance embraces far more than merely calculable or quantitative criteria to determine how many resources have been expended to achieve specified objectives. Performance improvement should become a way of looking at the entire institutional context within which services and/or products are provided. It means looking at types of organisational models, environmental constraints, resource management, working conditions, and numerous other aspects which could have either a positive or a negative impact on institutional performance. Especially since the publication of Osborne & Gaebler's Reinventing Government (1992) did governments realise that performance management and quality should be critical considerations for their administrations.

In South Africa, the Department of Provincial and Local Government issued a guideline document for local authorities, called Performance Management Guide for Municipalities (2001) to assist municipalities to develop a performance management framework. It seems, however, that an overarching performance management framework to manage inputs, outputs and outcomes hampers the broader South African public service. In its State of the Public Service Report (2002) the Public Service Commission recommends that a performance evaluation framework for the

monitoring and evaluation as a standard management practice.

This publication is an attempt to highlight some of the most critical considerations for such a framework.

Contents Include:

Performance management: an orientation • Conceptualising quality and performance management • Performance management and service delivery improvement • Performance improvement strategies, techniques and models • Human resource performance management • Performance assessment and appraisals • Outcomes-based governance: the role of policy analysis, public participation and accountability • Designing a performance management system • Performance auditing and reporting