



# CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

## Background and Purpose

This guide describes an approach for rapid assessment of a country's capacity for results management.<sup>1</sup> It is constructed on five building blocks that constitute the key factors that influence the demand for results management, namely, improving performance, increasing efficiency, and enhancing the effectiveness of the machinery of government. Each building block addresses important issues or prerequisites for a successful results management system. By posing questions related to these building blocks, the guide provides a broad picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of a country's capacity to manage for results.

### The building blocks are:

1. commitment, norms, and values for results management;
2. clarity of expected results i.e., setting objectives;
3. making results happen by linking objectives and planning;
4. determining contributions to results through monitoring and evaluation;
5. making results matter by providing feedback to decision making.

The first building block refers to the enabling environment for results management. This is related to the broader context of organizational mandates, to patterns of decision making and institutional liaison, and to the prevailing managerial culture and public sector value systems. Results management rests upon demands and commitments as well as reforms in several of the key functional processes in a country's public sector administration.

The four other building blocks refer to the functional elements of results management. From the outset it must be recognized that results management will only succeed when various meaningful reforms coalesce. It follows that a constituency for reform at the senior level of national decision making is needed in order to bring performance and results orientation to public sector management. Among the national institutions that can initiate and sustain results management efforts, the following are usually critical:

- Ministry of Planning (or Planning Commission) for setting national development goals;
- Ministry of Finance for shaping the budget;
- Ministry of Public Service for setting a framework for incentives and rewards;
- national statistical institution for collecting data on development conditions;
- national supreme audit institution for maintaining standards of accountability;

► **Results management rests upon demands and commitments as well as reforms in several of the key functional processes in a country's public sector administration.**

<sup>1</sup>Results management is used here as a common term for approaches usually referred to as "results-based management," "managing for development results," "performance management," or "managing for outcomes."

► **The accuracy, legitimacy, and depth of the assessment will depend on the availability of knowledge and information and the purpose of the actual assessment.**

- legislative oversight committees for maintaining oversight of the executive branch.

In terms of building momentum for reform in the direction of results management, the above government institutions represent a core group of stakeholders and agents for change. In addition, there are invariably civil society organizations that exert an important influence on the management of public affairs.

This guide can be used by staff, consultants, and governments to conduct a rapid assessment of the capacity for results management of the government in a particular developing member country (DMC). It can provide inputs for setting an agenda for country-level analytical work to prepare a results-based country strategy and program (RB-CSP) or for a specific project or technical assistance activity including submissions for the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Managing for Development Results Cooperation Fund.<sup>2</sup>

The accuracy, legitimacy, and depth of the assessment will depend on the availability of knowledge and information and the purpose of the actual assessment. This guide proposes a list of issues and questions that do not all necessarily need to be included in every assessment. However, it is recommended to include at least some aspects of all five building blocks.

The assessment will normally require interviews and consultations<sup>3</sup> with key government officials, with representatives of academic institutions, and with

development partners. Access to local knowledge either through a national officer or a consultant with government background is particularly valuable. Presentation and discussion of the initial assessment in a workshop with the interviewees is also usually quite useful. Depending on the use of the assessment, it can be revised and expanded through consecutive missions. The assessment can be presented as a report identifying strengths, weaknesses, key challenges, and recommendations. See Appendix 1 for examples of reports.

<sup>2</sup> The Managing for Development Fund (MfDR) Cooperation Fund was established in March 2004 to support the introduction of MfDR approaches in ADB's DMCs. The fund, which is a multidonor umbrella facility, currently amounts to \$2.9 million based on contributions from Canada, the Netherlands, and Norway.

<sup>3</sup> The assessment guide has been tested in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji Islands, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Viet Nam, and Uzbekistan by staff from ADB headquarters. The rapid assessment requires 3–5 days of interviews and consultations.