



CHAPTER 3

COMMITMENTS, NORMS, AND VALUES FOR RESULTS MANAGEMENT (BUILDING BLOCK 1)

Commitments, Norms, and Values for Results Management (Building Block 1)

A. Policy Leadership

As is the case for any reform efforts, results management is fundamentally preconditioned by the degree of demand and ownership, particularly the commitment and leadership of a country's policy-level decision makers. Nothing that is imposed upon an unwilling constituency will work no matter how much advocacy and promotion support the technical merit of the initiative.

Likewise, results management will not take root if government leaders don't particularly care about the results their government produces, that is, if they don't want to know what produces results and what doesn't. This cuts across any specific technical or functional entry points for results-based management. In order for a culture of continuous of performance improvement, of excellence, and of client service to take root within a civil service system, there must be a clear sense of expectations about results. Improving performance is not easily done. Political leaders, public managers, civil servants, and the organizations they work for must care about results and actively search out means to better achieve them. Caring about results must ripple through the ranks, defining what the government does and the ways in which it operates.

Questions to Pose

- Are organizational mandates and individual responsibilities clear and understood, or are there significant overlaps that curtail effective decision making?

- Are the responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judicial arms of the government clearly delineated?
- Is coordination for implementing government policies facilitated by, for example, a cabinet office or chief minister's department?

B. Accountability

Accountability is imperative to make public officials answerable for government behavior and to make them responsive to the needs of the citizens they serve and from whom they ultimately derive their authority. This may be achieved differently in different countries or political structures depending on the history, cultural milieu, and value systems involved. The mechanisms needed vary from accounting procedures to audit institutions and practices to oversight provided by legislatures to more narrowly focused consultative committees. Accountability also relates to the rule of law encompassing well-defined rights and duties as well as mechanisms for enforcing them and for settling disputes in an impartial manner.

Accountability thus has different dimensions. Legal accountability ensures that the actions of public sector entities are in accordance with legislative

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requirements. Financial accountability is directed at efficiency and effectiveness. The goal of public management accountability has, over the last two decades, gradually been shifting from concern primarily for doing things the right way to also ascertaining that the right things get done. The common denominator of many recent public management innovations and reforms is an emphasis on downstream results rather than on the internal mechanics of bureaucracy. Accountability arrangements are, therefore, not only meant to help stop managers from doing the wrong things, they should also help guide and motivate them to do the right things.

Questions to Pose

- Is there an independent ombudsman with powers to adjudicate disputes?
- Is the legislative branch able to effectively monitor the executive branch of government?
- Is the judiciary independent and free from the influence of politicians and powerful business interests?
- Are media independent and able to investigate and provide critical judgment that can help deter illegal and unethical behavior?
- Does the government have an anti-corruption agency backed by appropriate legislation, financial resources, and technical skills?

C. Openness and Participation

The common development experience is that the benefits of inclusiveness,⁹ participation, and openness are considerable. Transparency and access to information are of great importance if forces outside the public sector are to play their full roles not just in articulating their needs and priorities but also in inducing public officials to behave honestly, effectively, efficiently, and in their interests. Soliciting direct inputs from end-users of public services is a dynamic process.¹⁰ Similarly, public service managers who depend upon client feedback and approval to obtain their share of public resources for performance appraisal and remuneration don't deliver poor quality services. The more the intended beneficiaries of government programs believe that their opinions count and that they can materially influence activities, the greater the chance that outputs will be of a satisfactory quality and will ultimately attain the outcomes desired.

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⁹ See "Law and Institutional Reform: Catalysts for Inclusive Development in the Asia and Pacific Region", ADB Theme Paper No. 13, 2004.

¹⁰ Refer to Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen's observation that no large famine has ever occurred in a society characterized by democracy and freedom of expression. Sen, A. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. The observations about famine are placed in a wider context of development, freedom, and democracy.

Questions to Pose

- Has civil society been able to provide meaningful inputs to formulating national development plans?
- Has the private sector been able to provide meaningful inputs to formulating national development plans?
- Are decisions generally made in an open and transparent manner, or is secrecy a prevailing attitude to public information and decision making?
- Do permanent structures exist for community involvement in decision making about local affairs?
- Do civil society and the public at large have access to public decision-making meetings?
- Does legal framework allow for establishing and operating nongovernment organizations (NGOs)?

- Are there any domestic institutions that provide training in results-based management (e.g., logframe planning, integrated program management, monitoring and evaluation)?
- Does the government have a comprehensive civil service reform or performance improvement program?

D. Receptivity to Reform

A performing state is one that continually assesses its condition and adjusts how and what it does in response to new information. A performing state is not satisfied with the results it gets just by sticking to business as usual but actively seeks improvement by canvassing the world around it and changing both its objectives and programs as required. It seeks lessons of experience in order to build knowledge on what works and what does not.

Questions to Pose

- Do major public institutions undergo continuous change management as, for example, manifested by concrete and actual organizational reforms?
- Are piloting, experimentation, and identification of good practices encouraged and promoted?
- Do mechanisms exist for the continuous development of staff competencies and capabilities?

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