Principles and values of good governance

> *"The most important thing to remember is that you are working for the public. If you consider things from the perspective of the individual citizen, you'll find it easier to know how to proceed and arrive at a good decision, an appropriate next step, or an approach that will engender trust."* Swedish Council for Strategic Human Resources Development, "An Introduction to Shared Values for Civil Servants".

Public administrations exist to serve the public interest. In the words of the Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon, Canada's former Clerk of the Privy Council: *"Public organisations and institutions serve a public purpose. Whatever the political inclination of the governing party, the objectives of public institutions are to build a better future and to improve the welfare of its citizens".*[5] In a functioning democracy, elected representatives are held accountable to the people for the choices they make, and whether they result in better outcomes, such as greater prosperity, security, and quality of life, for the individual, family, community and society. But what about the public servants that advise them and administer their decisions? What governs the practical performance of public duties on a day-to-day basis?

Principles and values are the foundations of good governance, shaping behaviour in public administration. As the Irish Government's Committee for Public Management Research (CMPR) neatly summarised:

> *"Values are essential components of organisational culture and instrumental in determining, guiding and informing behaviour. For bureaucracies, adherence to high-level public service values can generate substantial public trust and confidence. Conversely, weak application of values or promotion of inappropriate values can lead to reductions in these essential elements of democratic governance, as well as to ethical and decision-making dilemmas."**
>
> (*) MacCarthaigh, M., (2008), "Public Service Values", CPMR Discussion Paper 39, Institute of Public Administration, www.ipa.ie

Principles and values provide a clear direction, but only if they are accepted, adopted and applied in practice.

What do we mean by 'principles' and 'values'?

'Principles' and 'values' are often used interchangeably by administrations, but for the purposes of this toolbox, we make the distinction in terms of durability:

- **Principles should be fundamental and enduring**. For example, *honesty* is a value, but also a core principle that should apply to all public officials, irrespective of time or place. In some cases, these principles are adopted in laws or regulations, as rights or obligations on the administration, including in the form of civil service acts, as shown in the comparative analysis of civil service legislation in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The right to good administration, for example, is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

- **Values may also be constant, but equally can emerge and evolve over time as conditions change**. While values might appear to be timeless, new values do arise as a product of circumstance. For example, *transparency* of processes and performance is a value adopted by most administrations relatively recently, in response to both technological possibilities (communication

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technologies, most recently the Internet) and societal demands (social media). *Openness* continues to be regularly re-defined, as citizens and businesses move from passive engagement (receiving public information) to active interaction with administrations (accessing data and, in some cases, developing hybrid public-private services) with the aid of ICT (see theme 4).

In some cases, values become tenets of public administration, usually because they have been accepted at a whole societal level, and can then also be described as fundamental principles. For example, *equal treatment* by administrations of all people, irrespective of gender, age, race or belief, was not a commonly accepted value for most of human history. However, it is now firmly established as a principle in the European Convention on Human Rights.[6] In other words, all principles are also values, but not all values become established as principles.

Moreover, the **emphasis given to specific values can shift over time, as the context changes**. For example, a 2008 study of values in the Irish public administration reported that most civil servants considered *accountability* (to the public) to be the dominant value – it is unlikely that this was the case 50 years previously, when government was less well connected to voters than it is now. Similarly, it found that austerity measures had put a higher premium on *efficiency*.[7]

Values can also be **inter-linked and inter-dependent**. *Accountability*, for example, demands *transparency* and *openness*. Sometimes all three are connected – for example, some administrations have 'open and accountable' as a single value. There can be different permutations and language to convey what is important to them – the jargon is a lot less significant than the underlying concepts they embody. Most important of all is translating them into the real experience of citizens, businesses and other beneficiaries of public policy and services.

In some administrations, these principles and values focus on *integrity*, usually in the form of codes of ethics or codes of conduct (see topic 2.1). But the activities of administrations are **not just about ethical behaviour**, such as 'doing the right thing' or avoiding conflicts of interest, although these are highly important. There are many other aspects of good governance which are equally essential, in the public administration's role as custodians, regulators, employers and facilitators.

The value of stating and sharing values

Distinguishing principles as durable values is less important than ensuring the set of values governing public behaviour is clear and widely shared. Every administration operates with its own set of values – whether these are implicit or explicit – which reveal themselves in the daily delivery of public policies and services:

- In those public administrations that **do not acknowledge their existence**, these values can be said to be the aggregation of every official's personal conduct and performance, which is in turn influenced by character, education, upbringing, culture, tradition, legal constraints, and the interventions of their managers and political leaders. This runs the risk of inconsistency in making decisions: that values will clash, or at least vary widely across institutions, offices and individuals. Without common values that are widely communicated, citizens and business will be uncertain what they can expect from the administration, undermining stability, cohesion and growth.

- In other administrations, a decision has been taken to recognise openly that all day-to-day decisions should be shaped by both principles and values,

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[6]   "Protocol No. 12: 1. The enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. 2. No one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground such as those mentioned in paragraph 1."

[7]   See also topic 1.2.2 on institutional structures and reforms, and the reference to the Europe-wide, EU-funded study 'Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future' (COCOPS)

and to **give them a focus, structure and visibility** by codifying them so that they are common, not personal. Such administrations usually take the next step, and ensure that all public servants are aware of them and follow them (see also topic 3.1). This typically takes the form of high-level statements and codes, sometimes backed up with training workshops or staff discussions, and possibly also supervisory mechanisms to hold officials to these value systems. To ensure their sustainability, these value sets are normally designed around core propositions that are capable of surviving changes of government, so that the faces may change in leadership at the top of the administration, but the values stay the same.

There are many examples of the second approach from within and beyond the EU, such as the Shared Values for Swedish Civil Servants.

Shared values for civil servants (Sweden)

Shared Values for Swedish Civil Servants are based on laws and ordinances. These are presented in the form of six principles, which together, provide guidelines for how government agencies and employees should conduct their work. Although the nature of agency operations and professions may differ, these basic principles remain the same. As a Swedish civil servant, you must therefore know these principles and understand their importance for your work in your agency, and in your encounters with citizens and other parties. You must also be prepared for situations where these principles come into conflict with each other, and you must use good judgement in approaching these situations and taking action. Although these principles offer you guidance, as a civil servant, you are responsible for transmitting their words into actions:

- **Democracy**: All public power in Sweden stems from the people – universal suffrage, representative democracy and parliamentary system.

- **Legality**: Public power shall be exercised under the law.

- **Objectivity, impartiality and equal treatment**: Equality of all persons before the law. Government agencies and courts must treat all persons equally.

- **Free formation of opinions and freedom of expression**: Swedish democracy is founded on the free formation of opinions.

- **Respect**: Public power shall be exercised with respect for the freedom and equality of every person.

- **Efficiency and service**: Public sector activities must be conducted as inexpensively.

You have now read a short description of the six principles that apply to government operations. A more extensive text (*Den gemensamma värdegrunden för de statsanställda*) is available in Swedish.

Source: http://www.krus.nu/Global/Offentligt%20etos/Shared%20Values%20for%20Civil%20Servants.pdf

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In some cases, it is not just the public administration themselves that define the values, but bodies with the **responsibility for holding the administration to account**. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Seven Principles of Public Life (see topic 2.1), are complemented by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Principles of Good Administration.

Principles of Good Administration (UK Ombudsman)

This document gives our views on the Principles of Good Administration. It should be read in conjunction with our Principles of Good Complaint Handling and Principles for Remedy. These principles draw on over 40 years' experience of investigating and reporting on complaints to propose a clear framework within which public bodies should seek to work. At the same time, the Principles of Good Administration helps clarify the expectations against which the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman will judge performance. The Principles set out here are intended to promote a shared understanding of what is meant by good administration and to help public bodies in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction provide a first-class public service to their customers. Good administration by public bodies means:

- **Getting it right:** • Acting in accordance with the law and with regard for the rights of those concerned. • Acting in accordance with the public body's policy and guidance (published or internal). • Taking proper account of established good practice. • Providing effective services, using appropriately trained and competent staff. • Taking reasonable decisions, based on all relevant considerations.

- **Being customer focused** • Ensuring people can access services easily. • Informing customers what they can expect and what the public body expects of them. • Keeping to its commitments, including any published service standards. • Dealing with people helpfully, promptly and sensitively, bearing in mind their individual circumstances. • Responding to customers' needs flexibly, including, where appropriate, co-ordinating a response with other service providers.

- **Being open and accountable** • Being open and clear about policies and procedures and ensuring that information, and any advice provided, is clear, accurate and complete. • Stating its criteria for decision making and giving reasons for decisions. • Handling information properly and appropriately. • Keeping proper and appropriate records. • Taking responsibility for its actions.

- **Acting fairly and proportionately** • Treating people impartially, with respect and courtesy. • Treating people without unlawful discrimination or prejudice, and ensuring no conflict of interests. • Dealing with people and issues objectively and consistently. • Ensuring that decisions and actions are proportionate, appropriate and fair.

- **Putting things right** • Acknowledging mistakes and apologising where appropriate. • Correcting mistakes quickly and effectively. • Providing clear and timely information on how and when to appeal or complain. • Operating an effective complaints procedure, which includes offering a fair and appropriate remedy when a complaint is upheld.

- **Seeking continuous improvement** • Reviewing policies and procedures regularly to ensure they are effective. • Asking for feedback and using it to improve services and performance. • Ensuring that the public body learns lessons from complaints and uses these to improve services and performance.

These principles are not a checklist to be applied mechanically. Public bodies should use their judgment in applying the principles to produce reasonable, fair and proportionate results in the circumstances. The Ombudsman will adopt a similar approach in deciding whether maladministration or service failure has occurred.

Source: http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/improving-public-service/ombudsmansprinciples/principles-of-good-administration

An amalgam of European principles and values

Good governance starts with an agreed set of principles and values widely shared. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' formulation: each administration has its own typology and terminology. As expected, however, there are recurring themes. Drawing on codified statements and common practices across the EU, and an OECD review of its comprehensive Public Governance Reviews[8], a **consensus view** of modern public administration can be summarised in 16 values, some of which can also be described as representing principles (signified by 'P') that should appear in every values statement. In each case, the table describes the underlying concept, and offers some alternative or related terms in ***italics***.

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(8)   OECD (2012), "Strategic lessons from the comprehensive public governance reviews", GOV/PGC(2012)14

Value	Description
Legality (P)	Good governance starts with applying the rule of law (see theme 1 on legislative instruments and theme 2 on ethics and anti-corruption). This is a *sine qua non* condition for economic prosperity and societal stability. The civil administration's actions must be in accordance with legislation and judicial decisions, and fully respect human and other fundamental rights. In the context of fiscal governance, legality is also referred to as '**regularity**' (see theme 7 on public financial management). The rule of law can only be enforced if the judiciary is independent, efficient and of high quality (see theme 6).
Integrity (P)	Good governance goes beyond operating within legal constraints. It means doing the right thing - ensuring the executive (government) is **trustworthy** in the eyes of the electorate (citizens). Social cohesion relies on citizens having the confidence in their civil and judicial administrations to act in the interests of the public, rather than narrow political or private agendas. To commit to new business, investment and innovation, entrepreneurs must believe that the government is a **reliable** partner, operating fairly and predictably, as well as upholding the rule of law. Integrity is at the heart of action to tackle anti-corruption, and is about how the system functions as a whole, not just individual **ethics** and **honesty** which are integral elements (see theme 2). In the context of fiscal governance, public funds should be managed with '**propriety**' (see theme 7).
Impartiality (P)	Public administrations should apply **equal treatment** to all citizens and businesses, in their roles as regulators, employers, enablers of economic growth, and enforcers of the rule of law. Impartiality implies showing **respect** to all**, fairness** and **equity**,: not favouring one interest over another (see theme 2), exercising **objectivity** in decision-making, and **avoiding discrimination** or prejudice in staff recruitment (see theme 3 on HR) and service delivery (see theme 4). For enterprises, this value would materialise, for example, in avoiding the breach of State aid rules.
Inclusiveness	This value goes further than impartiality (which suggests a neutral approach), and carries more positive connotations – ensuring that governance is *participatory*. In other words, all members of society should feel that they have access to decision-making, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and more importantly can be party to the policy process (see for example, theme 1 on e-Participation, co-design, co-production and co-evaluation, theme 4 on service delivery, and theme 7 on participatory budgeting). This does not mean that each decision must be taken to satisfy every interest, but participation should be actively encouraged and facilitated, as well as *partnership* with stakeholders (including business and citizen representatives), with the aim that the administration becomes *consensus-oriented*.
Openness	The starting point for openness is **transparency**: enabling the outside world of citizens and businesses a window into the inner workings of government, for example, by publishing information about structures, operations and performance (see theme 3 on professional and well-performing institutions) - who does what, why and how well – which helps to build trust in the administration's integrity (see theme 2), as well as improving communication about its service delivery (see theme 4). Appropriate information should be freely available, but in a format which is understandable and avoids bias in its presentation as far as feasible. However, **open government** goes further than providing a passive insight, by pro-actively putting public information ('open data') into the public domain that citizens and businesses can use productively to create new services and jobs, through ICT-enabled innovation (see theme 1 on co-design and co-production and theme 3 on service delivery). The public should be able to follow and understand decisions, and hence openness is closely related to **inclusivity**, as well as **accountability**.
User-centricity	In providing information and other services (including transactions), public administrations are increasingly looked to be **citizen-oriented** and **business-friendly**, ensuring the priority is to put the users' needs first (including civil society organisation and other public administrations). This affects both policy design and implementation (see theme 1 on co-design and co-delivery, theme 4 on service delivery, and theme 5 on the business environment). User-centricity is also related to inclusiveness, and emphasises values of **professionalism**, **reliability**, **respect** and **courtesy**.

Value	Description
Responsiveness	User-centricity implies that public administrations are responsive, which has several dimensions. First, civil and judicial administrations should ensure that information and other services are provided in a ***timely*** manner (see theme 3 on quality management, theme 4 on service delivery, theme 5 on the business environment, and theme 6 on the efficiency of judicial systems). Second, administrations should be responsive when things are not going well, recognising mistakes and putting them right (see theme 4 in respect of customer satisfaction and especially complaints handling). This value recognises the dilemmas of governance in pursuing inclusiveness (trying to meet the needs of the entire community), which can involve a balancing act of competing interests. Responsiveness also refers to ***agility***, ***resilience*** and ***flexibility***: the ability to respond to global crises, socio-economic developments and other external pressures, and to move or adjust resources (budget and staff) to where they are most needed. It also implies an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders.
Connectivity	From a service user's perspective, Government should be 'indivisible', so that citizens and businesses can approach any part, and receive the same standard of care, and ideally either access all services through one or any portal, or be able to assemble portfolios of services at their convenience (see both theme 4 on service delivery and theme 5 on business environment, regarding one-stop shops and the role of e-government). For efficient management, administrations will always assign roles and responsibilities operate to individual units at national, regional and local locals, in line with the ***subsidiarity*** principle (to the lowest appropriate level of government, closest to the citizen), but need to take a '***whole of government***' approach to organising resources and facing outwards. In practical terms, when different units of the administration have to work together, this requires interoperability (see topic 4.4. In any case, good governance involves ***coordination***, typically involving a strong centre, to ensure ***joined-up government***.
Efficiency	Efficiency is about the relationship between inputs and outputs in policies, programmes, projects, services and organisations. Modern public administrations manage their processes and available resources – people, their knowledge (institutional memory), the processing and networking potential of ICT, other physical and intellectual assets, and administrative structures – to achieve the best results for their communities. This is a matter of *value for money*: the best result with the most productive use of inputs, and a key performance indicator in monitoring and evaluation (see topic 1.3). Efficiency at the organisational level requires innovative human resources management and adherence to the principles of quality management (see theme 3 on professional and well-performing institutions), and is factored into service delivery (see theme 4). Administrations have a duty to deploy scarce resources to the maximum effect, as embodied in *sound financial management* (theme 7, both national and EU funds, including public procurement).
Effectiveness	Effectiveness concerns the extent to which objectives have been or should be achieved due to the policy, programme, project, service or the organisation's activities. Increasingly, administrations are expected to exhibit ***results orientation***, to select and implement the most suitable instruments to achieve high level objectives (see theme 1) and meet societal needs and challenges, especially through service delivery (see theme 4) and the management of ESI Funds (see topic 7.3). Effectiveness is concerned with ensuring that, as far as can reasonably be foreseen, the public sector's high quality outputs achieved the desired outcomes. Effectiveness is closely related to efficiency, as finite resources must be well marshalled to attain these goals, and is another indicator of performance in monitoring and evaluation (see topic 1.3).
Sustainability	This is a good example of a relatively modern value, which has gained prominence in recent decades. Depending on the context, the focus might be the durability of outcomes (financial and/or technical sustainability) beyond the life of the policy intervention, which is again a performance indicator for monitoring and evaluation (see topic 1.3). Alternatively, the focus might be the use of finite resources and the impact on the natural environment and climate change (environmental sustainability). The latter forms part of ***social responsibility*** when also linked to ***inclusiveness*** in considering the impact of policy decisions and the delivery on the community.

Value	Description
Vision	The public interest is not only served by focusing on the 'here and now', but by considering the impact of decisions for years to come, moving from a reactive to a pro-active approach, and anticipating future challenges and changes (demographics, economic trends, climate change, resource limits etc). In the interests of ***sustainability***, administrations need to think about medium-long term optimising (what the country needs in the future), as well as short term satisficing (what citizens and businesses want now), for future generations. This involves forward-thinking: planning for future scenarios, and anticipating the effects of policy beyond electoral cycles (see topic 1.1). This demands ***leadership*** at the political and organisational levels (see theme 3 on professional & well-performing institutions).
Reflection	Excellence is challenging the status quo, searching and striving for improvement, effecting change by continuous learning to create innovation opportunities. Good practice in policy-making and implementation requires an opportunity to review policies, processes and procedures, and to reflect on progress and performance, especially in the context of results-based management. This requires feedback loops to be put in place, to check where things stand, where a new direction may be required, where an injection of new ideas is needed, and where short-term operational goals may need to be adjusted to achieve high-level strategic objectives (see topic 1.3 on monitoring and evaluation, theme 3 on its application to organisation, and theme 7 on its application to public finance management, including ESI Funds). It also means mechanisms to handle problems (including complaints and suggestions), learn lessons and take corrective action to improve services and performance (see theme 4).
Innovation	The pursuit of continuous improvement should translate into openness to transformation, and creating systems which encourage fresh thinking and creative ways to solve new or existing challenges, both from inside and outside the administration. Public sector innovation takes many forms, including policy design and improvement (see theme 1), creative ways to deliver public services (see theme 4 and theme 5), public procurement of R&D and innovation (see topic 7.2) and using ESI Funds to stimulate innovation (see topic 7.3). To turn theory into reality, public sector organisations must be capable of *managing change* (see theme 3).
Accountability	Ultimately, governments and their administrations are accountable to the public, and have an obligation to report and explain, and hence to be answerable for the decisions they take on behalf of whatever communities they represent, whatever the level (supra-national, national, regional or local). This puts a premium on their ***legality***, ***integrity*** and ***openness*** / ***transparency***.

Introducing values into the administrative culture

How do these values – which are inevitably abstract by their nature – become integrated and ingrained in the culture of public administrations? There is very little rigorous research on this process, only examples of administrations that have sought to introduce values, and some surveys of participating public officials, which provide indications of successful elements, approaches and practices. Public administration values are typically developed at two levels:

- **Whole administration:** A decision is taken at the top of the civil service that a value system should be established for the whole of government. This becomes a top-down exercise, setting a common standard for every public body.

- **Individual institutions:** The top management of public sector organisations takes an independent decision to develop their own value systems, either as standalone initiative (in the absence of a common standard) or within the specific framework of the whole administration's values (see theme 3).

Within a common standard that focuses on core values, such as the aforementioned Shared Values for Swedish Civil Servants and the United Kingdom's Seven Principles of Public Life, there is a strong case for individual public sector organisations to consider and **customise their own value systems** in line with their specific mandates and missions, as set out by Ireland's CMPR. This seems especially relevant when there has been a change of status (e.g. a reorganisation, relocation or outsourcing) that has produced a 'shock' to established structures and practices. Equally, under-performing organisations may benefit from a review and re-discovery of purpose through a re-statement of its values, to harmonise staff around a common vision.

Customising values to each organisation's circumstances

While a core set of public service values is necessary, it is also true that different values apply to different parts of the public service. For example, a distinction may be made between technical, regulatory and administrative tasks, or between those parts of a bureaucracy in direct contact with the public and those which are not. Given the increasing range of demands on the public service, as well as the frequent ambiguity in terms of goals, relation-ships and responsibilities, value conflicts are not unusual. As values can differ within different parts of the public service, one of the principal tasks of managers and leaders is to co-ordinate, reconcile or cope with differing values between individuals or even between parts of the organisation. Also, there are a number of dynamics chal-lenging traditional values in the public service. These include new modes of governance and the fragmentation of authority, market-based reforms (such as New Public Management), politicisation and political expectations, the growth in the use of agencies, decentralisation or relocation, changes in human resource management and recruitment, and the advent of new technologies and methods of information sharing.

Source: CMPR (2008), op. cit.

Good practice suggests that these values should be developed in each institution as a *participatory* exercise – in accordance with the consensus value set out already. By engaging the institution's staff in producing a long-list of values, and narrowing it down to a shortlist through dialogue and consensus, the process can engender **ownership**.

Value statements are typically limited to a relatively small number (fewer than 10), each with a short description. The key is to keep the set of values **manageable**, so that officials can easily recall them during their daily activities.

Such concise statements can be readily reproduced and **publicised** in information materials aimed at both staff and stakeholders, including citizens and businesses, for example posters in the workplace and covers of government documents (such as annual reports), positioned to maximise visibility and impact. The values should form the basis of organisational strategies (see theme 3), and customer service charters (see theme 4).

But a list of values by itself means nothing. They have to be **acted upon**:

- The values statement can be backed up with **codes and guidelines**, containing more detailed elaboration of the values and how they might be applied in different situations. The format can be an official 'code of conduct', which sets out formal guidelines regarding the standards of behaviour that officials should follow (as happens with ethical standards, see topic 2.1). The alternative is a more informal guidebook, which articulates the values in plain language and can provides examples of real-life circumstances that are relevant to a range of public sector disciplines. These codes and guides are usually made widely available and distributed to all officials.

- Value statements, accompanied by guidance, can be followed up with **awareness-raising and training workshops**, either on a compulsory or voluntary basis, to talk through the values face-to-face with groups of public servants, answer questions, and discuss their application in practice. These exercises are likely to be approached with more enthusiasm if the values emerge from consultation and they have genuine staff ownership. Such workshops already exist for the specific sub-set of ethical values (see topic 2.2 on ethics and dilemma training). Although values might appear straightforward when first sighted, they can raise practical concerns and tensions in their realisation. For example: the pursuit of *efficiency* can discourage *innovation* by incentivising officials to be risk averse; *openness* in government is a value adopted by many administrations relatively recently, but the pursuit of transparency must weigh the right to freedom of information against the right to data privacy, and also the realities of *effective* policy advice in government (see below).

Dilemmas in applying values: hypothetical example

How should officials behave under a newly-introduced right of the public to freedom of information (transparency as an enforceable principle), when ministers ask them for full appraisals (in writing) of the pros and cons of politically contentious policy options? Does the official set out all the possible scenarios even if this *implies* that some more controversial ones were being considered seriously, in the event of their advice being published, irrespective of the minister's final decision (which might be fully in line with mainstream public opinion)? Alternatively, does the official hold back from setting out all the scenarios, to avoid potential embarrassment to the minister later, even if this means providing an incomplete picture of the options?

- In some cases, public administrations can also introduce **monitoring and enforcement mechanisms**, in order to 'give teeth' to values, with both recognition when applied but also the threat of sanctions if they are not followed. This is inevitable if the values are principles that have been formulated as rights or obligations in law. In other cases, where the stated value is more abstract (as they typically are), public administrations may have to rely on other means to encourage and enable compliance, including peer pressure, the oversight of line managers, performance appraisals, etc.

Above all, embedding values demands **leadership**. Senior managers can set the example and send out the right signals, through their own behaviour and actions, that the values are relevant to the organisation. Some public sector organisations have ethics or values committees which can oversee the implementation and monitoring of the values system, and even update it over time in consultation with staff.

The example of the State of South Australia (population around 1.7 million) is illustrative of all these points, as the State Government has adopted a public sector value system for all institutions (service, professionalism, trust, respect, collaboration & engagement, honesty & integrity, courage & tenacity, and sustainability) after widespread consultation, and offers assistance on how each public sector organisation can apply them and still create or maintain their own value system if so desired.

Values in action (South Australia)

"A strong set of values can transform the way we work. Values help to clarify who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. They define who we are as public servants.

Whether collaborating across agencies, with partners in other sectors or with members of the community, when our actions align to our values we create productive working relationships founded on mutual trust and respect. The public sector values are, in part, based on the great tradition of public service and include service, professionalism, respect, trust, honesty and integrity. They also reflect the ongoing evolution of the public sector and the world in which we work and include collaboration and engagement, courage and tenacity, and sustainability. They reflect that as a public sector we are focussed on the ever changing needs of South Australians and the place of Government in helping to grow the State's prosperity and wellbeing. I am often asked how the public sector values relate to values already established by individual public sector organisations. The public sector values, which are provided in detail at the end of this guide, were developed by more than 600 public sector employees of varying professions working together with the South Australian Government, Senior Management Council and organisational development specialists. They are a guide to behaviours and practices that apply to all employees, regardless of position, technical expertise, or location. The most important thing about the public sector values is they will make it easier for us to work together by forming a culture and a vision that we will all share.

Collectively our most senior leaders have agreed the public sector values will provide a foundation for progress and change. We should now use these values to guide decision making, direct strategies, manage performance and development and plan our future and the future of South Australia. There are a number of ways you can bring values to life in your workplace. A good starting point is to use this document to guide informal discussions at team meetings. At the right time you should also work through a more formal approach to embedding values across your organisation. The Office for Public Sector Renewal can help you bring the values to life in your workplace by providing advice and direction, and facilitating discussions and workshops at a team, business unit, divisional or organisational level."

Erma Ranieri Chief Executive, Office for Public Sector Renewal Chair, Change@SouthAustralia Taskforce.

When to begin the values journey

Introducing values into an organisation can begin at any time. However, there are times when a formal approach to values is essential and this is invariably associated with a period of change. This can include:

- A change to machinery of government;

- A change of leadership;

- A change of strategic direction;

- The establishment of a new programme or project team;

- A time of structural or cultural change within an organisation.

The values journey, particularly in any of these situations, must start with a discussion about values.

Having a discussion about values

Discussions about values have to be founded on openness and recognising and embracing a diverse set of opinions. Each value you discuss can be interpreted in many different ways, and everyone's perspective needs to be considered if it's to be a robust discussion. The result of these discussions should be an agreement on:

- What the values mean to your team or organisation and what behaviours embody those values;

- The team or organisational practices and cultures required to underpin and sustain those behaviours;

- The behaviours that contravene those values and will not be accepted.

Examples of organisational practices, successful personal behaviours and taboos are provided at the back of this document (see 'sustainability' below). These examples provide a good starting point for thinking about what values look like in your team or organisation.

Sustainability		
We work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians		
Organisational practices	**Successful personal behaviours**	**Taboos**
Designing structures, systems and services to consume resources more efficiently over time	Considering the long-term outcomes of the decisions you make today	Designing short-term solutions to long-term problems
Taking collective action to improve productivity and maximise the impact on limited resources	Collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders to design and deliver the best possible services with the resources that are available and considering the future availability of resources	Implementing unconsidered solutions in order to achieve quick wins
Taking a sector-wide, holistic approach to strategic planning	Prudent management of resources, including people, money and physical assets	Not balancing the predicted benefits against the amount of time and resources necessary to achieve success
Working together to leave a lasting legacy for future generations	Focusing on solutions which continue to produce outcomes over the long term	Doing what is easiest or cheapest rather than looking for the best solution

Comparing organisational and public sector values

Where organisations or teams have existing values it is important that employees are engaged in a discussion on how they relate to the public sector values. This process should be overseen by the organisation's most senior executives. Questions to consider include:

- What organisation values represent or are most closely aligned to the Public Sector Values?

- If our organisation has placed more emphasis on one of the Public Sector Values than another, what strategies will we put in place to ensure employees uphold all of the Public Sector Values?

- How will our organisation ensure that our values do not override the Public Sector Values?

Embedding the values

Successful integration of the values into your team or organisation needs to be based on action – how you 'live the values' through your work. This is what we mean by embedding the values. There are three key elements to ensuring that values are properly embedded in any organisation:

Commitment from leaders	**Values-based management**	**Assurance mechanisms**
Leaders champion the values by modelling the highest standards of behaviour. They:	Managers work within cultures and systems that reflect the values. They	Leaders and managers oversee mechanisms to properly implement the values. They:
➢ Lead culture change, mentor others on how to behave according to values and reinforce the importance of values to employees ➢ Ensure that strategic decisions at all levels are aligned to the values ➢ Embed values in accountability frameworks ➢ Ensure that service design aligns to values	➢ Provide informal & formal feedback and performance management integrated with reward and recognition programmes ➢ Ensure recruitment, induction, development, management and transition processes are informed by values-based behavioural competencies ➢ Promptly and effectively manage behaviour inconsistent with values	➢ Communicate & make accessible employee grievance, review and whistleblowing avenues ➢ Apply the High Performance Framework to assess organisational performance in embedding values ➢ Seek feedback from citizens and employees to gauge the effectiveness of values-based service delivery and organisational culture.

More formal approaches to evaluating values in your organisation

It is important to periodically assess and adapt your activities to ensure they are as effective as they can be. Evaluation can help you identify areas for improvement and ultimately help you embed the values more effectively. The High Performance Framework is the South Australian public sector's performance evaluation tool for organisations. It recognises that having a strong set of values, and behaving and making decisions using those values, is a key element of any high-performing organisation. When evaluating your team or organisation, the

High Performance Framework:

- Provides the impetus and tools for self-evaluation;

- Provides advice on what it looks like when values have been successfully embedded;

- Helps you identify areas for improvement;

- Provides recommendations for continued success.

You can access the High Performance Framework at www.hpf.sa.gov.au.

Source: Extracted from "Values in action: A guide to the South Australian public sector values", Government of South Australia, Office for Public Sector Renewal

http://change.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Values_in_action.pdf

SIGMA – Principles of Public Administration – a holistic approach in the context of EU enlargement

The joint EU – OECD initiative SIGMA (principally financed by the EU) has outlined a series of **Principles of Public Administration**[9] specifically relevant for EU candidate countries. These Principles define what good governance entails in practice and outline the main requirements to be followed by countries during the EU integration process. The Principles also feature a monitoring framework enabling regular analysis of the progress made in applying the Principles and setting country benchmarks. Despite the specific enlargement context, many of the principles apply and could provide useful guidance to any European administration.

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[9]   November 2014