

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE
NORTHERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.



Signature

14 February 2011
Date

INTEGRATIVE SUMMARY

This document consists of three sections, and they are the academic paper (section 1), literature review (section 2) and research methodology (section 3). The academic paper consists of the purpose of the research, the summarised literature review, summarised research methodology and the research findings. The literature review section is a detailed review of literature used in this study. The research methodology section explains the research methodology and design which was employed in this study and it gives more details than the summarised version of the academic paper section. This summary integrated all the elements of section 1, section 2 and section 3. The purpose of this research is to identify the main problems that the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC) could encounter during the implementation and use of a performance management system, based on employee perspectives. The objectives of this research are therefore: to establish how often a particular problem has been encountered during the implementation and use of a performance management system in DENC; to identify the impact of various problems on the implementation of a performance management system, to establish whether these problems can be easily solved or not, and to analyse the problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system, as well as making recommendations for the successful implementation of a performance management system in the future. In this study, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, informed by post-positivism as research orientation. The data collection techniques employed in this research include survey questionnaires and individual interviews. The survey questionnaire was answered by fifty respondents, and interview questions were answered by four respondents. The ethical issues were addressed by writing a letter to the Head of Department and getting authorisation to complete the research and informing respondents of their right to withdraw and to participate voluntarily. The findings indicate that the problems are either sometimes encountered or rarely encountered, and the division is about fifty percent of those sometimes encountered to those rarely encountered. This research indicates that most of the problems have a moderate impact on the use and implementation of a performance management system. The lack of management has a high impact, and a lack of positive attitude to performance management system (PMS) certainly has an impact on the use and implementation of the performance management system. Items such as the problem of information and communication technology (ICT) which does not support PMS adequately, and defining too many key performance indicators (KPI), have a small impact on the use and implementation of the performance management system. There are three problems which are difficult to solve and they are: lack of management commitment, organisational members' lack of positive attitude to the PMS and an insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS. This research indicates that most of the problems associated with PMS are moderately easy to solve. Two other problems that

are easy to solve include the problem where there are too many KPIs defined and the problem where there is no organisational member appointed to take ownership of the PMS. According to this research, the top ten ranking problems have high ranking scores and this indicates that they can create major difficulties for the DENC in implementing the performance management system, and the chance of encountering these problems is high in the DENC in comparison to other problems. Almost all the problems ranked in the top ten seem to score highly in terms of the severity of their impact, and therefore this means that these are the problems which have an impact and, when they are not easily solved, they can become a tenacious issue for the organisation.

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SECTION 1: ACADEMIC PAPER

This research paper identifies the main problems that the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC) could encounter during the implementation and use of a performance management system, based on employee perspectives. The study indicates that about half of the problems are rarely encountered and about half of the problems are sometimes encountered in the DENC. This research indicates that most of the problems associated with PMS have a moderate impact on the use and implementation of performance management system in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, and most of the problems encountered are easy to solve. There are three problems which are difficult to solve and they include lack of management commitment, organisational members' lack of positive attitude to PMS and an insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS, and the above mentioned problems are more likely to be encountered at the DENC.

1.1. Introduction

Criticism of government for being ineffective, inefficient, overly bureaucratic and overburdened by unnecessary rules, pressures on managers to improve performance, and a demand for accountability can be interpreted as a demand for the implementation of performance management systems (PMS) and reporting to effectively attain organisational goals and improve performance (Halachmi, 2005; Holloway *et al.*, 1999). The role of performance management systems is significant because it enables organisations to identify areas of poor performance and introduce remedial measures (Theron, 2000). It ensures that employees know what they are expected to do and managers know whether the employees' performance is delivering the required business or organisational objective (RSA, 1997; Thorpe and Beasley, 2004). Performance management is used to identify poor performance and improve it and to identify good performance and reward such performance. The importance of performance is further confirmed by Graham (2004) when he argues that the development of a performance management system at an employee level supports performance management at an organisational level. This study will provide insights on problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system (PMS) in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC) in the Northern Cape Province. In carrying out the study, it is important to note that public service is a regulated environment, and as a result Public Service Regulations are the primary guide to government departments developing and implementing performance management systems (RSA, 1997). The regulations provide the context within which this study and analysis will be understood. DENC is one of the nine provincial environmental departments and it is located in the Northern Cape Province in South Africa. The DENC is responsible for the implementation of environmental management, tourism and conservation laws in the province. The Northern Cape has a human resource management directorate whose responsibility is to ensure the implementation of a human resource management

strategy. Within the human resource management directorate there is a unit called the Performance Management Development System Unit (PMDS). The PMDS unit is responsible for managing performance management systems. The PMDS unit established the Departmental Moderating Committee. This committee consists of managers from different directorates. The responsibility of this committee is to moderate the performance management review outcomes in the Department by calling upon supervisors to justify their rating and processes of performance evaluation, and to make recommendations to management for decisions regarding acceptance of the outcomes and processes. The regulations indicate that the performance management system had to be in place on 1 April 2001 (RSA, 1997). It must, however, be noted that performance management system implementation was only started in 2006 in the DENC. There has been no previous study to understand problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system in the DENC.

The researcher is a manager and supervisor in the DENC. As a manager in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, the researcher is responsible for management of the Environmental Quality Management programme. Within the aforementioned programme there are four sub-programmes and these include Impact Management, Waste Management, Air Quality Management, and Climate Change Management. In managing this programme, the researcher's role also includes responsibility for the management of human resources attached to it. Part of the researcher's responsibility is to manage performance of all employees in the Environmental Quality Management programme. The researcher is also part of the Departmental Moderating Committee responsible for moderating the performance management review outcomes in the DENC. Based on the above, the researcher will be able to use the recommendations and findings of this research to improve implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. De Waal and Counet (2009) further provide a persuasive argument for the need to constantly carry out research on the implementation of the performance management of any organisation. McNiff *et al.* (1996: 38) advise that "... as a responsible researcher, you need to be reasonably clear why you want to get involved in this issue (research questions)". According to McNiff *et al.* (1996) research is an inquiry conducted for a purpose and the purpose is generally to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Lotz (1996) further notes that "... a research cannot be conceptualised without the focus or research question". In this study, the researcher chose to focus on the problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems in the DENC. The choice of this research was influenced by different contextual and pragmatic factors.

The main goal of this research is to understand and analyse key problems associated with implementing the performance management system in the DENC, to use the insights to understand areas of weakness and strength as well as to identify the areas that need the immediate attention of the DENC and to make recommendations for successful implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. The main purpose of this research is to identify the main problems that the DENC encounters or can encounter during the implementation of a performance management system and the objectives of this research are therefore:

- To establish how often a particular problem has been encountered during the implementation and use of the performance management system in the DENC;
- To identify the impact of various problems on the implementation of a performance management system;
- To establish how easy it is to solve problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system;
- To analyse problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system; and
- To make recommendations for the successful implementation of the performance management system in future.

De Waal and Counet (2009) indicate the need for research on problems associated with the implementation and use of a performance management system. De Waal and Counet (2009: 368) note that if there is no research on performance management in an organisation, the organisation becomes confronted by the same problems over and over again and that results in “inefficiency, long project lead times, as well as cancelled and terminated performance management systems”.

1.2. Performance management

It is noted that in the literature, the terms “performance management” and “performance measurements” are used interchangeably (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004; De Waal, 2004; Halachmi, 2005; Radnor and McGuire, 2004: 246). Radnor and McGuire (2004: 246) however note that “performance measurement is an act of measuring” and “performance management uses the „outcomes“ of measure to manage performance”. The researcher sees both the performance measurements and performance management as part of the performance management system, and thus both aspects will be covered in the proposed study. Performance management is recognised as a key human resources management tool (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004; De Waal, 2003; Schwella *et al.*, 1996). Considering that this research focuses on the problems of implementing a performance

management system, it is important to describe the process that is expected to be followed in implementing a performance management system in the DENC. The document which prescribes the process in the public service is the White Paper on Human Resource Management (RSA, 1997), and it further translated into the DENC policy document.

It is noted that there are four key performance management process activities, and they include performance planning, performance coaching and mentoring, performance measurement and evaluation and performance feedback (Nel *et al.*, 2008). The literature points out thirty-one problems faced by organisations in implementing performance management systems and these include factors such as insufficient capacity, lack of resources, unstable environment, lack of management commitment, attitude of employees, insufficient commitment from middle managers and staff, ICT systems which do not support PMS, poor management styles, and many other associated problems (De Waal and Counet, 2009). De Waal and Counet (2009: 367) indicate that a seventy percent failure rate in implementing performance management systems creates a situation in which it becomes rejected, and this literature further indicates that “without proper research of problems of implementation”, the same problems will face the organisation repeatedly and lead to inefficiencies such as, “cancelled and terminated systems”. Interpretation of the above literature shows that it is important for the DENC to follow up on the implementation of a performance management system to identify areas that need further attention.

1.3. Research design and methodology

The researcher employed both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (individual interviews) research approaches, informed by post-positivism, as the research orientation in this study (Guba and Lincoln, 2004; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Mouton, 2008; Raddoff and Irwin, 2001), and both these approaches “are seen as appropriate” (Krauss, 2005: 762). The survey questionnaire was an adaptation of a questionnaire used by De Waal and Counet (2009). The survey questionnaire consisted of the demographic questions (e.g. work experience, work area, gender, etc) and the second part of the questionnaire consisted of thirty-one of the problems associated with the implementation of PMS (De Waal and Counet, 2009; Radloff and Irwin, 2001) which were used to create closed questions (Mouton, 2008; see Appendix 2). Research participants scored each problem according to its frequency of occurrence, severity of its impact and according to how easy or difficult it would be to solve the problem. Scoring was done on the Likert scale with response options (see Appendix 2). The DENC has about 205 employees (potential respondents). The selection of participants was purposive (Babbie, 2008), and the researcher ensured that all

directorates within the DENC are represented. The research respondents/participants constitute fifty employees from the Deputy Director to lower levels in the DENC who answered the survey questionnaire. In addition to the fifty respondents, an additional four respondents were requested to answer the interview questions. The selected respondents to the interviews were the manager for the Performance Management and Development System Unit in the DENC, two members of the Performance Management Moderating Committee and one middle manager. The respondents were chosen on the basis of their experience and understanding by virtue of their position in the moderating committee, and their encounter with the problems of staff in relation to performance management. Data collected based on the questionnaire is quantitatively analysed using Excel software and monkey survey analysis to determine frequency distribution, to rank the impact of each of the identified problems (see Appendix 1), determine the severity of each impact, and, where relevant, to determine the relationship between variables (Babbie, 2008; De Waal and Counet, 2009). The frequency distribution of the findings relating to encounter, impact and solvability was automatically analysed in the monkey survey website, and was downloaded into Excel. Further analysis of ranking, severity of impact calculations, and graphic representation was done using Excel. The interview questionnaire was transcribed into questions and recorded responses. The data emanating from the interviews were integrated into the discussion sections of the findings. The limitations of this study include lack of generalisation of the findings across the public service or other organisations and limitations in terms of the number of problems rated since there may be more problems associated with the performance management system in the DENC.

1.4. Research findings and discussion

In this section, the researcher presents the findings and discussion of this study in the DENC. In the findings, the researcher presents the demographic profile of the research participants, frequency of encounter, impact and solvability of the problems associated with the implementation of the performance management system in the DENC, and discusses the findings.

1.4.1. Participant profile

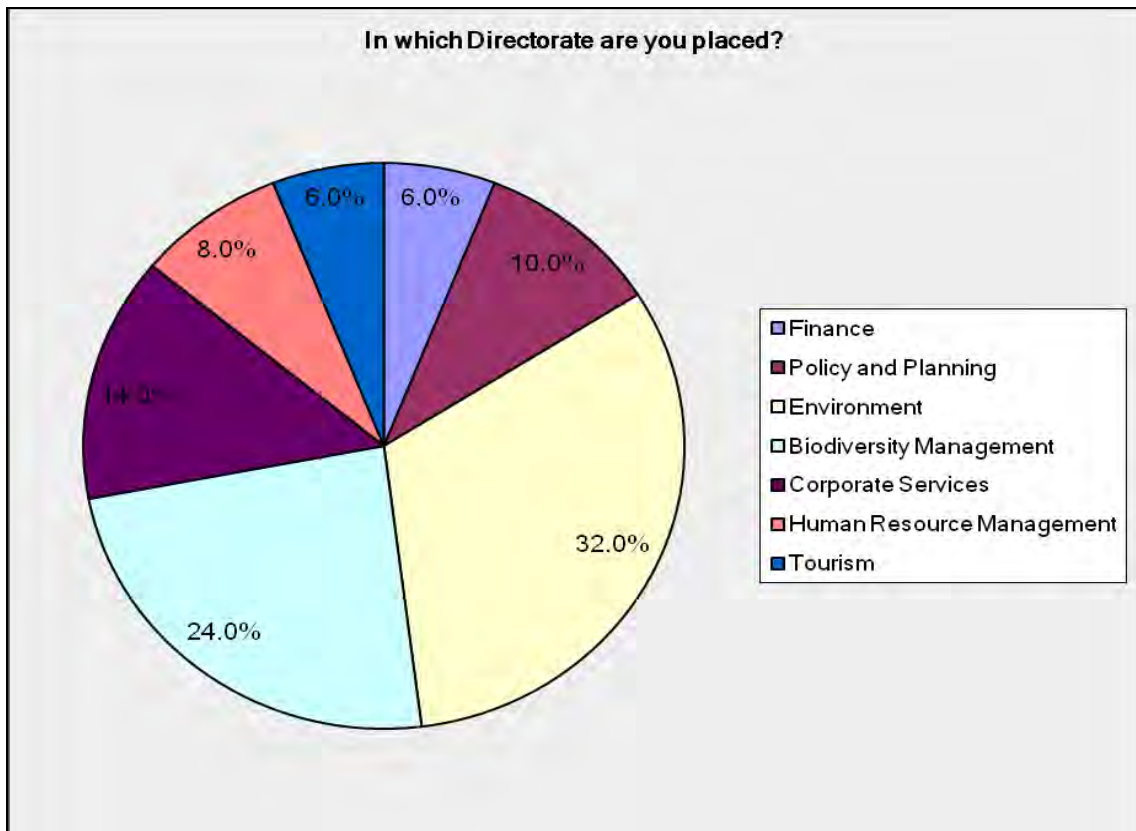


Figure 1: Percentage of respondents per directorate

From Figure 1 it can be seen that thirty-two percent of the respondents are located in the Environment Directorate, twenty-four percent of the respondents are located in the Biodiversity Directorate, fourteen percent of the respondents are located in the Corporate Services Directorate, ten percent of the respondents are located in the Policy and Planning Directorate, eight percent are placed at the Human Resource Management Directorate, six percent are located in the Tourism Directorate, and six percent of the respondents are from the Finance Directorate.

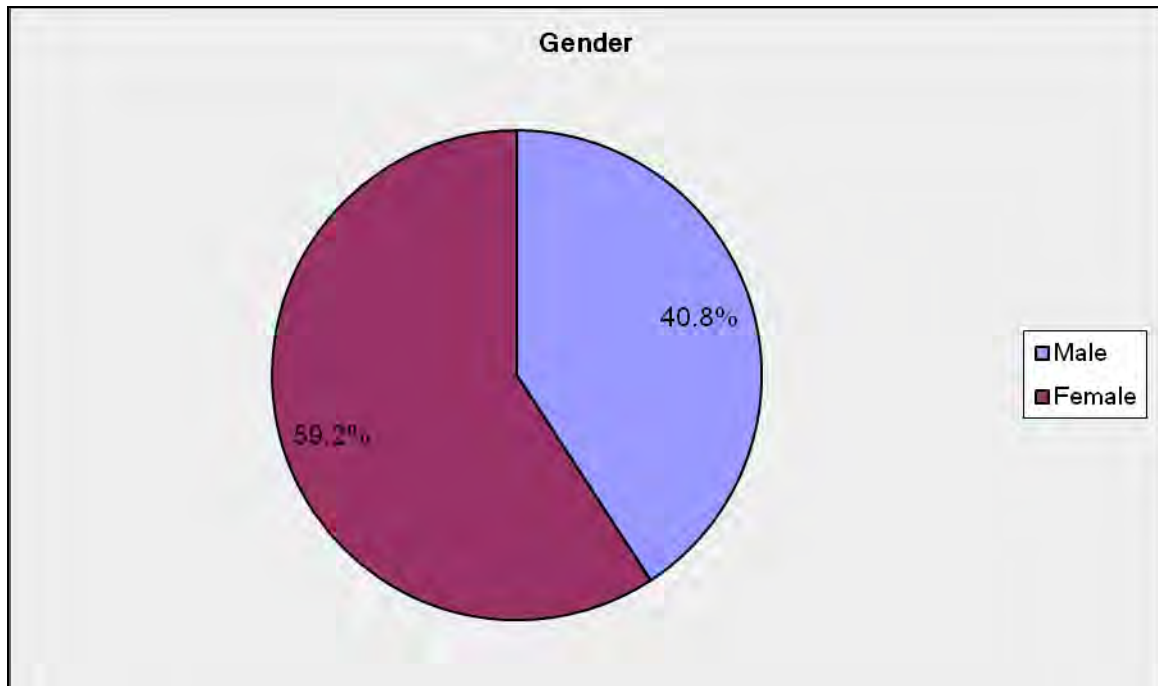


Figure 2: Percentage of respondents according to gender

The majority of respondents are females and they constitute 59.2 percent of the respondents. The male respondents account for 40.8 percent of the total respondents (see Figure 2).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for profile of respondents

<i>Post level</i>		<i>Years of experience in your Department</i>		<i>Years of experience in profession</i>	
Mean	8.673469388	Mean	5.010204	Mean	7.816327
Median	9	Median	4	Median	6
Mode	8	Mode	3	Mode	6
Minimum	4	Minimum	1	Minimum	2
Maximum	13	Maximum	25	Maximum	25
Sum	425	Sum	245.5	Sum	383
Count	49	Count	49	Count	49
Confidence Level (95.0%)	0.656533787	Confidence Level (95.0%)	1.169871	Confidence Level (95.0%)	1.454805

The maximum post level of the respondents is level 13 which is senior management level (see Table 1). The minimum post level of the respondents is level 4 which is either administrative clerk or general worker in the department. The years of work experience of respondents in the department ranges from the minimum of one year to the maximum of twenty-five years and the average amount of work experience amongst respondents in the department is five years. The minimum number of years of work experience in their respective professions is two years and the maximum is twenty-

five, with an average of eight. The average number of years of working experience of the respondents in their respective professions is eight years (see Table 1).

1.4.2. Frequency of encounter, impact and solvability of the problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system

The findings indicate that some of the problems are sometimes encountered in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, and, according to this research, some of the problems are rarely encountered (see Appendix 2). The sometimes encountered problems in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation include management putting low priority on PMS, implementation needing more time and effort than expected, insufficient resources and capacity for implementation, lack of management commitment, an insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS, lack of positive attitude toward PMS amongst organisational members, insufficient commitment from middle management and staff to PMS, organisational members not adopting the right management style, difficulty to define critical success factors, lack of knowledge and skills in PMS, resistance from organisational members to new PMS, insufficient link between PMS and reward system, lack of performance culture, non-use of PMS for daily management and organisational members not seeing the benefit from PMS. The problems that are rarely encountered include PMS without clear goals, ICT which does not support PMS, lack of clear and understandable strategy in the Department, insufficient focus on internal management and control, KPIs which are not linked to the Department, team and individual responsibility, difficulty to define relevant KPIs, too many KPIs defined, measuring of wrong KPS, systems' lack of cause and effect relations, PMS which is not regularly updated and maintained, situations where non-organisational member is appointed to take ownership of PMS, difficulty in getting data to calculate performance indicators and PMS with low priority and use is abandoned after change of management.

This research indicates that most of the problems associated with PMS have a moderate impact on the use and implementation of a performance management system in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation and such problems include:

- management putting low priority on PMS,
- implementation needing more time and effort than expected,
- insufficient resources and capacity for implementation, insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS,

- insufficient commitment from middle management and staff to PMS, not adopting the right management style by organisational members,
- difficulty to define critical success factors,
- lack of knowledge and skills in PMS,
- resistance from organisational members to new PMS,
- insufficient link between PMS and reward system,
- lack of performance culture,
- non-use of PMS for daily management and
- organisational members not seeing the benefit from PMS,
- PMS without clear goals,
- lack of clear and understandable strategy in the Department,
- insufficient focus on internal management and control,
- KPIs which are not linked to the Department, team and individual responsibility,
- difficulty to define relevant KPIs,
- measuring of wrong KPS,
- systems lack of cause and effect relations,
- PMS which is not regularly updated and maintained,
- situation where non organisational member is appointed to take ownership of PMS,
- difficulty in getting data to calculate performance indicators, and
- PMS with low priority and use is abandoned after a change of management.

This research indicates that lack of management has a high impact and that lack of a positive attitude to PMS certainly impacts on the use and implementation of performance management systems. This research also indicates that the problem of ICT which does not support PMS adequately as well as defining too many KPIs has a small impact on the use and implementation of performance management systems.

This research indicates that there are three problems which are difficult to solve and they are lack of management commitment, organisational members' lack of positive attitude to PMS and an insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS. This research indicates that most of the problems associated with PMS are „moderately easy“ to solve, and the two other problems that are „easy to solve“ include a problem where there are too many KPIs defined and where there is no organisational member appointed to take ownership of PMS. This research indicates the top ten problems with the highest severity score from the highest to lowest include lack of management

commitment, organisational members lacking a positive attitude towards a performance management system, management putting low priority on the PMS implementation, an insufficient period of commitment from management to implementation of PMS, insufficient commitment from middle management and staff, resistance from the organisational members toward new PMS, PMS needing more time and effort than expected, lack of performance management culture in the department, non use of performance management systems for daily management of the department and insufficient links between performance management systems and reward systems. Top ten ranking problems indicate problems with a high severity score. The high severity score implies that the problems have a huge impact and such problems cannot easily be solved. It also implies that such problems can become a troublesome issue for the DENC.

1.4.3. Top ten problems associated with the performance management system in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation

It must be noted that this study identified problems associated with the implementation of performance management system which are ranked in the top ten when the ranking was done in this study. These findings are comparable to the findings of De Waal and Counet (1999).

Rank	Top ten problems identified by this research	Top ten problems identified in the literature (De Waal and Counet, 1999)	
	DENC ranking	Practitioner ranking	Academic Ranking
1	Organisational members lack positive attitude towards the PMS	The organisation does not have performance management culture	The current ICT does not support the PMS adequately
2	Lack of management commitment	Lack of management commitment	The organisation is in an unstable phase
3	Management put low priority on the PMS implementation	Management put low priority on the PMS implementation	The PMS has a low priority or its use is abandoned after change of management
4	Period of commitment from management to PMS implementation is not enough	The organisation does not see (enough) benefit of PMS	Lack of management commitment
5	There is resistance from organisational members toward new PMS	The PMS has a low priority or its use is abandoned after change of management	The organisation does not have performance management culture
6	Insufficient commitment from middle management and staff for PMS	Organisational members are not adopting the right management style	The organisation does not have clear and understandable strategy
7	Implementation of the PMS requires more time and effort than expected	There is resistance from organisational members towards new PMS	The PMS is not regularly updated and maintained after implementation
8	The organisation does not have performance management culture	There is too much focus on the results of the PMS implementation, while change process of the organisation is ignored	There is resistance from organisational members towards new PMS
9	There is insufficient link between the PMS system and Reward System	The organisation does not have a clear and understandable strategy	The system lacks cause and effect relations or is over complex due to too many causal relation
10	The PMS is not used for the daily management of the organisation	There are too many KPIs defined	The PMS is not used for the daily management of the organisation

It must be noted that the highest ranked problem associated with the performance management system in this study is that the organisational members lack positive attitude toward the performance management system. This is contrary to the findings of De Waal and Counet (2009). In the findings of De Waal & Counet (2009) human resources practitioners ranked the problems where their organisation does not have a performance management culture as the highest and academics ranked the problem of the current ICT system which does not support the performance management system adequately as the highest. It however appears that even though performance management culture is not ranked number one in this study, it still forms part of the top ten problems associated with a performance management system in the DENC as well, and it appears that according to De Waal and Counet's (2009) study, the academics did not even rank the problem that the organisation does not have performance management culture within the top ten.

The finding of lack of management commitment ranked number 2 by the employees in the DENC and this is consistent with other findings which indicate that the same problem is similarly ranked by HR practitioners and ranked number 4 by academics in De Waal and Counet's (2009) study and it is part of the top ten problems associated with performance management. There seems to be general consensus of the finding that lack of management commitment has serious implications for the implementation and use of a performance management system.

1.4.4. Management and performance management system

The findings of this research indicate that management-related problems that are associated with the implementation of the performance management system are ranked highly. This implies that management needs special attention in the DENC if the implementation of a performance management system is to succeed. The top ten highly-ranked, management-related problems associated with the PMS include lack of management commitment, management putting low priority on the PMS implementation, insufficient period of commitment from management to the implementation of PMS, insufficient commitment from middle management and staff to PMS. It appears that most of the PMS problems which are management related appear on the top ten ranking of all problems associated with the performance management system and it is only the problem of organisational members not adopting the right management style which does not appear on the top ten ranking problems. This problem is still ranked fourteenth which indicates that it is still a problem in the DENC.

The study indicates that one of the management-related problems associated with the performance management system implementation is lack of management commitment. According to De Waal and Counet (2009), lack of management commitment creates a situation where less or no priority is put on the implementation of a performance management system. This seems to indicate the link between the problem of management putting low priority on the PMS implementation, and the problem of lack of management commitment. It must be noted that these problems are the top ten problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system.

This study indicates that one of the top ten ranked problems associated with PMS implementation is the insufficient commitment from middle management and staff to PMS implementation. This finding is consistent with the finding by Radnor and McGuire (2004) which also indicates that there was limited buy-in from middle management of the system. It must be noted that any system that is implemented by the institution must be supported by the members of that institution to succeed. It therefore becomes worrying to note that this is one of the top ten ranked problems in the Department. The literature indicates that middle management and staff buy-in is important for the success of the implementation of the performance management system (De Waal and Counet, 2009), and this should also include top management. This study further indicates that one of the factors that could lead to employees' lack of commitment is that they do not see what they stand to gain from the performance management system. This question also links back to the problem of management commitment indicated by this research.

One of the top ten ranked problems is that management does not have sufficient time period to commit to the PMS implementation, and it also indicates the problem that PMS needs more time and effort than expected is one of the top ten ranked problems. The literature however acknowledges that PMS takes more time to implement (De Waal and Counet, 2009; Rademan and Vos, 2001). The literature further indicates that for the above reasons there is a strong requirement for management commitment and support, and that without such support and commitment, the performance management will not become institutionalised and as such it impacts negatively on the implementation of the performance management system (De Waal and Counet, 2009). While the relationship between the problem that management does not have sufficient time period to commit to the PMS and the problem that performance management systems need more time and effort than expected are not statistically confirmed in this research, the literature seems to indirectly link the two problems.

The interview results also indicate that one of the problems associated with the performance management system is the role of the moderating committee. Some managers feel that the moderating committee undermines the role of managers and supervisors. This appears clearly from the following statement of one of the respondents: “I feel that they are questioning the integrity of managers or supervisors. When it comes to practical aspects, how can a person who is not engaged with the employee tell the line manager what is going on? And if they submit motivation and evidence why must the committee question it?” This statement expresses the level of frustration managers have with regard to the implementation of PMS in the DENC. This finding is consistent with Rademan and Vos (2001) finding that performance appraisal are finalised by persons who do not know the employees or their capability, and this make it insufficiently representative and unfair. This is a major problem in implementing the performance management system in the DENC. One of the key respondents indicates that some staff members complain that the moderating committee reduces rating scores unnecessarily even though their supervisors recommended them for bonuses. This might also explain the reason for lack of management and staff commitment (if their hard work is not being rewarded) to the performance management system in the DENC, and organisational members’ attitude toward the PMS. This also might be influenced by one percent allocation for bonuses and the committee might be trying to ensure that bonus allocation does not exceed the allocated budget. However, if that is the case, it will defeat the objectives of the performance management system and further alienate managers as results like this will hinder successful implementation of the performance management system.

The results of the interviews also indicate that there is a problem of subjectivity in rating scores during the performance management system implementation. Some respondents indicate that this is influenced by the fact that employees see PMS as motivation to get bonuses, and another respondent indicates that some managers are not giving honest feedback about the performance of their subordinates because they want to keep a good working relationship with them or sometimes because of bias against or towards certain employees. The respondents indicate that the rating scores are manipulated by managers. Rademan and Vos (2001) observed that PMS is regarded as too subjective in terms of appraisals by supervisors. The literature provides that there might be other reasons for this, including ownership, bad news effect, and personal reflection (Furnham, 2004). In terms of ownership, Furnham (2004) indicates this is likely to happen if the managers or subordinates have no sense of ownership. Furnham (2004) indicates that the reasons managers and subordinates may not have a sense of ownership is that they are not involved in the system design, and they have little input in the system. They also indicate that sometimes managers are not honest because they do not want to deliver bad news to people they still have to work with, and they are

aware that subordinates do not like to receive negative news (Furnham, 2004). This is because negative news generates defensive reactions and promotes hostility rather than serving as useful performance feedback. In terms of personal reflection, it is indicated that managers take bad performance as a reflection on their ability to select and develop subordinates (Furnham, 2004). Furnham (2004) however points out that it is possible to provide negative feedback without the hostility and defensiveness coming in, and that includes feedback that is based on reliable evidence, and letting the person know what to do to avoid that in the future. “The managers themselves need to be coached in how to convey assessment messages in such a way that they are not taken negatively” (Whittington-Jones, 2011). This should be done by managers in the DENC, and it should be done by the moderating committee where their actions have implications for the change of the rating score.

This study also indicates that geographical distances in the Northern Cape Province are one of the problems associated with performance management since the distances make it difficult for managers to verify evidence of their subordinates’ performance, so they work on trust. This also compromises the accuracy of the rating scores.

1.4.5. Performance management system and rewards system

The findings of this study indicate that the problem of insufficient links between the performance management system and the reward system ranked ninth and it is one of the top ten ranked problems associated with the performance management system in the DENC. This implies that the system may be failing to reward employees in terms their performance. The interview results seem to provide perspective on that by indicating that there is only a one percent allocation of the budget for performance management system rewards. As a result, the DENC has to ensure that the number of employees that get performance bonuses is congruent with the available money for financial compensation, and this should be complemented by other forms of reward like providing training opportunities, creating career development opportunities, and such other initiatives. Furnham (2004) notes that organisations are rarely able to reward employees with double their salaries even if their output or the outcome of their evaluation is indicated as twice as high, and this often leads to de-motivation rather than the intended motivation of staff. The implication, however, is that even the well-performing employees are not rewarded in accordance with their performance. According to Helm *et al.* (2007), a performance management system which links performance and pay can have the desired effect on the outcome of PMS and in improving the perception of employees and this argument is supported by Ohemeng (2009). This argument is also further expanded by De Waal

and Counet (2009), who conclude that in such a situation people regard performance management as highly irrelevant and therefore ignore it and focus on other things in the organisation. It therefore becomes very important for the DENC not to overlook the importance of ensuring the appropriate link between the performance management system and reward system and to put the appropriate measures to ensure the balance (Furnham, 2004). The reward system should go beyond the monetary reward to include training, career development, and other such rewards. However, what is important is to be able to establish that the form of reward can be valued and accepted by employees because other forms of reward may not be that attractive to DENC employees.

1.4.6. Employee attitude and behaviour toward performance management

The highest ranked problem associated with the performance management system is the organisational members' lack of positive attitude towards the system in the DENC. The implication is that if people are not positive towards the performance management system, they may act in a way that hinders the successful implementation of a performance management system. De Waal and Counet (2009) indicate that this is usually caused by people's lack of understanding and acceptance of the need for a performance management system. This implies that the DENC should engage the employees to educate them about the performance management system. It is crucial that employees understand and buy into the system. This study further indicates that organisational members' resistance toward the performance management system is ranked fifth, and it is one of the top ten ranked problems in this study. De Waal and Counet (2009) indicate that this should be expected because everybody in the organisation may feel threatened by the new system if it is not transparent. In the literature, twenty behavioural factors which have a positive influence on performance-driven behaviour were identified, and these behaviours are grouped into five categories which are referred to as areas of attention (De Waal, 2003). The areas of attention include organisational members' understanding, organisational members' attitudes, performance management alignment, organisational culture and performance management focus (see section 2.10).

1.4.7. Use of performance in the daily management of the organisation

This study indicates that one of the top ten ranked problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems is that it is not used for daily management of the DENC. The use of PMS could mean reviewing, analysing and discussing the results and use the outcomes of the

results to improve the performance of the individual employee and the department. The literature indicates that this leads to reduction of the successful implementation of a performance management system, and failure to use the PMS outcomes also renders the system futile (De Waal and Counet, 2009; Ohemeng, 2009). It therefore becomes important to improve the daily use of the performance management system in the DENC. It must also be noted that the use might be influenced by the attitude of employees.

1.4.8. Performance management culture, management style and PMS implementation

Ranked eight in this research, performance management culture is one of the top ranked problems associated with the performance management system. This problem is sometimes encountered and has moderate impact on the use and implementation of a performance management system, ranging from difficult-to-solve to moderately-easy-to-solve. This finding is also consistent with the literature findings which conclude that culture is one of the key fundamental problems that hinders and continues to hinder the successful implementation of performance management systems (Bititci *et al.*, 2006; Ohemeng, 2009; Waal and Counet, 2009). This implies that it is one of the problems employees are more likely to encounter in the DENC and which is not easy to solve. Ohemeng (2009: 121) points out that culture is "... an important element that must be carefully considered" in the implementation of a performance management system. According to De Waal and Counet (2009: 371), if the Department "...does not have a performance management culture which focuses on achieving results at all times and continuous improvement", DENC will not be able to use a performance management culture to achieve better performance. By implication, this could hinder the successful implementation of a performance management system in the DENC. This further implies that the DENC will need to look for ways to encourage a performance management culture in the Department. The major question is therefore how to improve the performance management culture in the DENC. According to Graham (2004), there are specific characteristics of a performance management culture one needs to understand to be able to promote high performance culture. Firstly, Graham indicates that organisations with performance management based culture acknowledge that their success is contingent upon the successful performance of their employees; the premium is placed on excellence in performance obtaining desired behaviours and results. It is also important to inculcate the culture of trying hard even if the expected results are not achieved. The DENC needs to recognise that the "...ability of the organisation to carry out its mission and achieve results depend on the competence, innovation, and productivity of its work force" (Graham, 2004: 5).

This study also indicates that the problem of organisational members not adopting the right management style ranks thirteenth in this research, which is still high. This research indicates that this problem is either rarely encountered or sometimes encountered and is moderately easy to solve. It has a moderate impact on the use and implementation of a performance management system in the DENC. This finding is also consistent with the literature findings by De Waal and Counet (2009). De Waal and Counet (2009) indicate that this usually manifests itself through management using the PMS for settling scores and punishing people instead of using the system for coaching and continuous improvement. As result of that, it appears that employees tend to dislike performance management systems and this significantly contributes to hindering the successful implementation of performance management systems. This leaves the question of what is the most appropriate management style that can be adopted to improve the implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. Bititci *et al.* (2006) suggest that the authoritative management style can be successful in the adoption stage of performance management systems and a participative and consultative management style is important is to sustain the continuing use of a performance management system after the results are achieved. Bititci *et al.* (2006) further link management style, organisational culture and implementation by indicating that there is interplay between these variables. This implies that "... performance management system can shape organisational culture and management style; organisational culture and leadership style can affect the success of a PMS initiative" (Bititci *et al.*, 2006: 1327). The interplay suggests that for the DENC to successfully implement a performance management system, it needs to review and adapt the management culture, management style and format of the PMS to be in line with the goals and needs of the Department (Bititci *et al.*, 2006).

1.4.9. The goals, strategy, internal management and control and PMS implementation

This research indicates that lack of clear goals for the PMS is one of the problems associated with the performance management system which is rarely encountered, and other problems which are rarely encountered include the problem that the organisation does not have clear and understandable strategy and that it is difficult to define goals for lower levels of the organisation. One is not likely to expect these problems at the DENC, and even if they are encountered they are easy to solve. Because of this, the above-mentioned problems do not pose significant constraints to successful implementation of the performance management system. It is however important that the DENC should not take them for granted and it should still monitor them to ensure that they do not impact on the implementation of performance management systems in the DENC.

This study further indicates that the problem of lack of skills and knowledge with regard to the PMS is sometimes encountered in the DENC, and these both, in terms of ranking and impact, do not seem to be a problem since it appears that they can be easily solved. It is interesting to note that the interview results seem to indicate that there is the usual need for training intervention but no training budget even if a skills gap is identified during performance assessment, which happens on a quarterly basis. This statement implies that skills and knowledge may be serious problems in the DENC.

This study also shows that the problems of lack of enough focus on the internal management and control, lack of regular update and maintenance after implementation of PMS, and difficulty in defining critical success factors in the DENC are rarely encountered, and this suggests that these problems do not pose significant barriers to successful implementation of a performance management system in the DENC. This even suggests that the DENC may be managing these problems successfully.

1.4.10. Lowest ten ranking problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system

This research indicates that the lowest ranking problem is where there is no organisational member who is appointed to take ownership of the implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. This finding in the literature is contrary to the findings of this study in that it indicates that one of the top ten ranked problems is lack of ownership and accountability associated with a performance management system (Radnor and McGuire, 2004; De Waal and Counet, 2009). Radnor and McGuire (2004) further indicate that this may be hindered by the structural nature of the organisation. This research further indicates that this problem is never or rarely encountered in the DENC. It therefore does not present any significant constraints in the successful implementation of a performance management system in the DENC. The other problems which are ranked in the lowest ten problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system in the DENC include too many key performance indicators defined, ICT which does not support the performance management system adequately, difficulty in defining relevant key performance indicators, the Department being in an unstable phase, measuring of the wrong KPIs, link of KPI to department or team, the system's lack of cause-and-effect relations, putting low priority on PMS and abandoning it, and difficulty in getting data to calculate performance indicators. Most of these problems are rarely encountered in the DENC. This suggests that in terms of the key performance indicators, these were properly aligned to the DENC's strategy, and the DENC understands clearly

the link between individual employee work and the Department's objective or strategy. This finding seems to be consistent with the findings which emerged from the interviews that the system, format, and documentation which aligned is properly done and it is therefore not a problem in the DENC.

1.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research indicates that about half of the problems are rarely encountered and about half of the problems are sometimes encountered in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC). This research indicates that most of the problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system (PMS) have a moderate impact on the use and implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. This research, however, indicates that the problem of lack of management has a high impact and the problem of lack of positive attitude to PMS certainly has an impact on the use and implementation of the PMS. This research also indicates that the problem of ICT which does not support PMS adequately and defining too many KPIs has a small impact on the use and implementation of a PMS. There are three problems which are difficult to solve and they include lack of management commitment, organisational members' lack of positive attitude to PMS and an insufficient period of commitment from management to PMS. Most of the problems associated with PMS are moderately easy to solve. The two other problems are easy to solve, and they include a problem where there are too many KPIs defined and where there is no organisational member appointed to take ownership of PMS. The top ten ranking problems are mostly the same problems with a high severity score, and therefore this means that these are the problems which have a huge impact; when they are not easily solved they can become a troublesome issue for the organisation. This research also indicates that most of the top ten ranked problems associated with the PMS are management related. The findings emerging from the interviews include subjectivity in rating of employees' performance, the role of the moderating committee versus the role of the manager or supervisor, the need for training intervention and no budget for it, one percent allocation for performance reward and distance which makes it difficult to visit the site and verify evidence. These are some of the problems associated with the use and implementation of a PMS.

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SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this Section, literature is reviewed to contextualise this study within the broader context of the field of performance management systems and their implementation. This is consistent with the post-positivism research paradigm which acknowledges that a research problem cannot be understood without fully understanding the context in which it is taking place (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). In so doing, a number of issues or dimensions are provided to guide the review of relevant literature, and they include:

- understanding of performance management,
- the significance of implementing a performance management system,
- the emergence of performance management systems,
- the historical development of performance management systems and a regulatory framework in the South African public service,
- the performance management process,
- linkages between performance management systems and strategic planning,
- organisational culture and performance management systems,
- performance management as a human resource management strategy,
- management style, performance driven behaviour and performance management, and
- other research findings: problems associated with the implementation of performance management.

It must be noted that these contextual factors, to a large extent, influenced the research design, the choice of research question, and the research process and the interpretation of the research findings. These dimensions will help to provide significant insights on issues related to the implementation of performance management, and inform better understanding of the process.

2.2. Understanding performance management

It must also be noted that there are a number of definitions of performance management. In this section, different definitions found in literature are presented. According to Nel *et al.* (2008: 492) “performance management can be defined as a holistic approach and process towards the effective management of individuals and groups to ensure their shared goals, as well as that organisational strategic objective are achieved”. Pickett (2000: 228) defines performance management as the

“managerial process that links strategic planning, performance standards, individual objectives, and performance evaluation, training and individual development”. Performance management is also regarded as an integrated process in which employees and managers work together to set the expectations, measure and review the results, and reward performance with the intention to improve the performance of employees with the ultimate goal being to ensure organisational success (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004; Thorpe and Beasley, 2004). Swanepoel (cited in Amos, 2008: 3) sees performance management as “an approach to managing people that entails planning employee performance, facilitating achievement of work-related goals, and reviewing performance, as a way of motivating employees to achieve their full potential in line with an organisation’s objectives”. Theron (2000: 32) points out that performance management has key elements which include “shared vision of organisational objectives communicated to all employees, individual performance management targets related to both operating units and wider organisational objectives, regular formal reviews and evaluation of effectiveness.”

It is noted that most literature uses performance management and performance measurements interchangeably (Radnor and McGuire, 2004; Halachmi, 2005). Radnor and McGuire (2004: 246) however note that “performance measurement is an act of measuring” and “performance management uses the „outcomes“ of measurement to manage performance.” The researcher sees both performance measurements and performance management as part of the performance management system, and thus both aspects will be covered in the proposed study. It is clearly stated that performance measurements include “measures based on key success factors, measures for detection of deviations, measures to track past achievements, measures of output and input and measures to describe status”. It is also stated that performance management involves “training, team work, dialogue, management style, attitudes, shared vision, employee involvement, multi-competence and incentives and rewards” (Radnor and McGuire, 2004: 246).

There are different models of performance management, including “performance management as a system for managing organisational performance, performance management as a system for managing employee performance, and performance management as a system for integrating the management of organisational and employee performance” (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004: 557; Fletcher, 2001: 473). The focus of this research is on problems associated with performance management as a system for managing employee performance with the intention of improving organisational performance or realise organisational goals (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004; Fletcher, 2001).

2.3. The significance of implementing performance management systems

Having discussed the definition of performance management in section 2.2, in this section the focus is on the significance of performance management and its implementation. This section aims to clarify the justification for the importance of implementing performance management systems in the public service, and thus the reasons for studying problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system in the Department Environment and Nature Conservation (DENC).

The significance of developing and implementing performance management systems is triggered by the fact that there is wide criticism of government performance across the world, and government departments are seen to be “ineffective, inefficient, overly bureaucratic and overburdened by unnecessary rules” (Jones and Kettle *cited* in Halachmi, 2005: 507). This is further echoed by Holloway *et al.* (1999: 351) when they note that “managers, whether in the public sector or private sector, are under pressure to improve performance of their organisations”, and, in order to achieve that, managers also have to improve the performance of employees. This indicates a greater demand for public accountability, and the South African government is not immune to these criticisms. It is noted that these criticisms are interpreted as demand for performance measurements and reporting in order to effectively attain organisational goals (Halachmi, 2005; Holloway *et al.*, 1999). In line with these reasons the responsible public service has to respond through the implementation of performance management systems and other measures to improve service delivery as a public service strategic objective. Thus recognition is needed of the importance of performance management systems and understanding problems associated with it. This is consistent with Greiling’s (2005) observation that the state, as a public service provider, needs to allow for a strong role for performance management, and this will help to identify areas of poor performance and the introduction of remedial measures.

The significance of performance management systems applies to any organisation that wants to improve its services, including the corporate sector. It is indicated that in the corporate sector, as global and national competitiveness puts strong pressure on performance excellence and cost-effectiveness at all organisational levels, integrated human resource systems, including performance management, have become an indispensable tool. According to Theron (2000: 32), performance management plays a significant role to “improve organisational processes as well as team and individual performance”, and it is therefore emphasised that the improvement of employee performance is a goal of performance management in order to realise the goals of the organisation.

This is further supported by De Waal and Counet's (2009: 367) observation that the implementation of performance management systems "improves the performance and overall quality of the organisation". Cameron's observation (2009) notes that, in South African public service, performance management was initially meant to measure performance of managers, and to determine whether they are performing their function effectively in the South African public service. This further provides a compelling argument for the support of the implementation of a performance management in the DENC. Brumback (2003: 167) advises that performance of employees and teams need to be managed very well "if tall performance is to be achieved and sustained". Brumback (2003: 167) used the term tall performance to mean "consistent competent, ethical, motivated behaviour that produces the best results for an organisation". De Waal and Counet (2009) further provide a persuasive argument for the need to constantly carry out research on the implementation of performance management of any organisation, and the need for research on problems associated with the implementation and use of performance management systems. De Waal and Counet (2009: 368) note that if there is no research on performance management in an organisation, the organisation becomes confronted by the same problems over and over again and that results in "inefficiency, long project lead times, as well as cancelled and terminated performance management systems". These writers emphasise that more research is required to increase the chance of successful implementation of a performance management system, and this is therefore justification for this research.

Graham (2004) indicates that performance management is significant because it provides a fair way to guide employees' performance and it enables employees to know what they are expected to do, to know what is working well and to know areas that need improvement. Graham (2004) further argues the importance of performance management is that it enables employees to know how they are contributing to the organisation and they are rewarded appropriately.

In the next section, the literature on the emergence of performance management systems is reviewed.

2.4. The emergence of performance management systems

Having discussed the significance of performance management systems in the above section, in this section the focus is on the emergence of performance management systems. This section provides the historical development of performance management systems, and it helps to provide the

historical context of performance management systems in general and performance management in the South African public service.

According to Radnor and McGuire (2004: 246), there has been a “revolution in performance management and measurements over the past twenty years”. It is also noted that according to Pratt (1991), performance management systems are not new, and researchers have found reference to performance management during the third century A.D. in China, which has been confirmed by Furnham (2004). Furnham (2004) further indicates that in both America and Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was already evidence of early forms of performance management, whilst most Western armies did performance management in the last century. In the United States, performance management started with the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century. In the United States, the use of performance appraisal started after World War I, and the system was not extensively used until about 1955. Literature further indicates that performance management during the industrial revolution was simple and crude. According to Furnham (2004: 84) two thirds of big companies had performance appraisal systems during the 1950s in America and the same happened in the 1960s in Europe. Companies were compelled to adopt some sort of system through legislation in Britain (1980s/1990s) and in America (1970s). Furnham (2004) notes that performance management systems were used to try to bring about change in the public service culture and ethos in the 1980s and 1990s.

Having discussed the emergence of performance management systems, in the next section the focus is on the historical development of performance management systems and a regulatory framework in the South African public service.

2.5. The historical development of the performance management system and a regulatory framework in the South African public service.

Having discussed the emergence of performance management systems in the broader context, the focus will be on the historical context to inform the implementation of performance management system in the South African public service. South Africa emerged from the legacy of an apartheid era in which different government administrations catered for different racial and ethnic groupings, and six self-governing territories existed within the republic prior to the 1994 democratic transition (Cameron, 2009). Since the beginning of the new democratic dispensation in 1994, there was amalgamation of government administrations and rationalisation of government processes created along the model of three spheres of governance, namely national government, provincial

government and local government. During that period there were many performance management systems and procedures which detailed the rules and regulations for appraisal of different categories of staff and for different purposes. From 1 July 1999, a new public service management framework was introduced to streamline and standardise performance management systems in the public service department and improve public service performance. All departments' activities are informed by this legislation, which includes the Public Service Act (1994), the Public Service Regulations (2001), and a White Paper on Human Resource Management amongst others. The other legislation also includes the Labour Relations Act, Basic Condition of Employment Act, Employment Equity Act, Skills Development Act and Skills Levies Act in the public service. It must be noted that the Public Law Amendment Act of 1997 introduced performance management systems in the South African public service; the Public Service Regulations provide more details and primary guidance in developing and implementing performance management systems in the South African public service (RSA, 1997). When it was introduced in the public service it was intended for Directors and above, and it has now devolved to Deputy Directors and below.

In terms of the Public Service Regulations, there are a number of principles that should guide the development and implementation of a performance management system in the public service (RSA, 1997). The DENC is one of the public service departments that is guided by these principles in the Northern Cape. The first principle is that each public service department "shall manage performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner in order to enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness, accountability for the use of resources and the achievement of results" (RSA, 2001: 33; RSA, 1997). The second principle is that the performance management process must link to broad and consistent plans for staff development and align with the department's strategic goals. The third principle is that primary orientation of performance management must be developmental, but it must allow for effective response to consistently inadequate performance and for recognising outstanding performance. The fourth principle is that performance management procedures should "minimise the administrative burden of supervisors while maintaining transparency and administrative justice" (RSA, 2001: 33). In doing research on problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems in the Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, these are the principles one should take into consideration because they create the fundamental context in this study.

Performance management systems in the South African Public Service should have the following characteristics: standardised rating criteria, personal development plans, and clear guidelines for linkages to pay progression and reward, standardised management assessment criteria, and

standardised generic assessment criteria for junior officials (RSA, 2001). The system remains results based and tries to balance standardisation and flexibility to adapt (RSA, 2001).

According to RSA (2001), the Labour Relations Act gives effect to and regulates the fundamental rights of employees, promotes collective bargaining, promotes worker participation and promotes dispute resolution in the public service including the DENC. The Basic Condition of Employment Act prescribes minimum standard legislations on working time of employees, leave, employment and remuneration particulars, termination of employment, and prohibition of employment of children. The Employment Equity Act provides for elimination of unfair discrimination in the workplace and implementation of affirmative action. The Skills Levies Act addresses the low level of investment in education and training in the workplace. The implications is that for one to successfully implement a performance management system, these regulations should be seriously considered and they have a potential to affect the success or failure in implementing performance management systems in the public service, especially the DENC.

2.6. Performance management process

Having discussed the historical development of performance management systems, in this section the focus is on describing the performance management process expected to be implemented by the DENC. Considering that this research focuses on problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system, it is important to describe the process that is expected to be followed in implementing a performance management system in the DENC. The document which prescribes the process in the public service is the White Paper on Human Resource Management, and it further translates into the DENC policy document (RSA, 1997). It is noted that there are four key performance management process activities, and they include performance planning, performance coaching and mentoring, performance measurement and evaluation and performance feedback (RSA, 1997; Nel *et al.*, 2008).

2.6.1. Performance planning

The implementation of a performance management system must be planned as part of the process. In planning the implementation of a performance management system, it must be “aligned with the strategic plan and objectives of an organisation” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 494). It is stated that performance management systems must be informed by “vision and purpose of the organisation, key

performance indicators and annual objectives of the organisation” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 494 and Section 2.7). It is further stated that for the performance management system to be effective, the supervisor and the employee (whose performance is managed) must “constantly meet to discuss the strategic goals of the organisation and they constantly discuss ways to achieve the strategic goals” and during their meetings they must “share information regarding available support and guidance to enable the employee to fulfil his or her responsibilities to realise the goals of an organisation” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 494).

Nel *et al.* (2008: 295) states that the “performance evaluator and evaluation methods must be determined in advance” during performance planning. It also indicated that the “criteria for assessment and evidence that will be used to gauge performance” should be discussed and agreed upon between the employee and the supervisor or manager in advance (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 495). This provides significant insights for this study to focus on the performance evaluator, evaluation methods and evidence that they are determined during performance planning.

It is also stated that during performance planning, the manager and employee should agree on the timeframes for checking progress, and they should agree on the type of value that will be added if the goals are achieved (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 495). A draft document must be compiled to document all key points of discussion and agreements.

2.6.2. Performance coaching and mentoring

As indicated earlier, part of the performance management processes includes performance coaching and training of employees. Coaching and mentoring are the ways in which people who are “more experienced in the workplace help those who have less experience” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 464). Coaching is a method of training, directing or instructing a person to do a specific task, to achieve a goal or to develop certain skills (Nel *et al.*, 2008). Nel *et al.* (2008: 464) further indicates that “the coach sets an example of what is to be done, answers questions, and generally offers counsel to the trainee.” Mentoring is the relationship built on trust and its goal is to make inexperienced people more confident in their abilities and talents and it is a long-term ongoing process. According to the literature, the manager must carry out interim checks on the progress of employees and identify the reasons for poor performance and provide the necessary coaching and mentoring of employees (RSA, 2001, and Nel *et al.*, 2008). Graham (2004: 8) emphasises that “management must provide ongoing coaching”.

During the process of conducting interim checks on progress of the employee, it is emphasised that the “manager must engage the employee informally and provide feedback” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 495). Consistent with the above assertions, the DENC performance management system is expected to emphasise that the manager or supervisor must constantly check the progress of his/her employees.

It appears that through interim checks and other formal checking systems, “areas of poor performance by the employee will be identified” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 495). It is therefore suggested that once areas of poor performance are noted, the manager must explore the causes of poor performance. It is stated that poor performance is usually noted when performance matches requirements in the employees’ work plan (RSA, 1997). Once the causes of poor performance are identified, the manager must use mentoring and coaching skills to “help the employee improve performance towards realising the goals of the organisation” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 495). It is indicated that some of the interventions to improve poor performance include career counselling, teaching, mentoring, retraining, developmental opportunities and re-deployment (RSA, 1997). The DENC performance management system also emphasises that performance reviews of an employee must be discussed with the employee, and mentoring and coaching strategies should be implemented (RSA, 1997). Significant to note is that in terms of regulations, if the desired improvement could not be effected, dismissal of an employee on grounds of incapacity can be considered (RSA, 1997).

It is important to acknowledge and reward exceptional performance by employees. This should be done to encourage employees to maintain high standards achieved and to encourage others to strive for improved performance (RSA, 1997). The DENC is expected to acknowledge and reward exceptional performance through systematic pay progression and or performance bonus which is extrinsic motivation.

2.6.3. Performance measurement and evaluation

Another activity of the performance management system is performance measurements and evaluation. The performance of the employee can be judged in two ways “relative and substantive evaluation” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 496). In the relative performance judgement, supervisors compare an “employee’s performance to that of others doing the same job” (Nel *et al.*, 2008: 496). In terms of absolute judgements, supervisors assess their subordinates based on performance standards (Nel *et al.*, 2008). It appears that the DENC is expected to use absolute evaluation to judge the performance

of employees. This is based on the fact that the White Paper on Human Resource Management prescribes that the public service employee's performance "should be assessed on the basis of a work plan covering a specified period, setting clear responsibilities and objectives to be achieved" (RSA, 1997: 42). On the work plan, specific standards are set which are used as the basis for performance assessment.

The supervisor is expected to set the performance standards in consultation with the employee beforehand, and use performance standards to evaluate the performance of the employee. It must also be noted that the performance evaluator can either be a supervisor, peer or subordinate. Self appraisal or customer appraisal or a combination of all the above (360⁰ feedbacks or multi-rater system) is also possible (Nel *et al.*, 2008).

2.6.4. Performance feedback and documentation

One of the activities for implementing performance management is performance feedback and documentation (Graham, 2004; Nel *et al.*, 2008).

According to the performance management framework, there must be "frequent communication between the rater (supervisor or manager) and employee before the appraisal interviews" (Abernathy, 2008: 125; Nel *et al.*, 2008: 496; Graham, 2004: 8). This provides significant insights on PMS, and it is useful to understand the problems associated with a performance management system in the DENC.

Nel *et al.* (2008) emphasise that the rater (supervisor) must be trained in performance appraisal interviewing before engaging in appraisal interviews. This is further echoed by the literature as Graham (2004: 8) explains that the organisation must "plan and provide for individual training and development to support the achievement of performance expectations and organisational goals". De Waal and Counet (2009) note that lack of knowledge and skills in performance management are some of the constraints on successful implementation of performance management. This usually results in a performance management system not being properly implemented or just not being implemented at all.

It is also stated that the rater (manager or supervisor) must plan to use a problem solving approach rather than a „tell and sell“ approach before interviewing employees (Nel *et al.*, 2008).

The rater must frequently communicate with those who are being rated, periodically assess their progress toward goals and make organisational goals central to performance management goals (Graham, 2004 and Nel *et al.*, 2008). It is argued that this allows for periodic assessment of employees' performance to achieve the goals of the organisation, and this can be done quarterly. It is further noted that performance management instruments should be clearly linked to organisational goals. De Waal and Counet (2009: 371) note that in the case where "the performance management system is not used for daily management of the organisation", this also serves as a constraint on the implementation of a performance management system. This reflects a situation whereby results of performance measurements are not discussed, the case where there are no corrective measures and because of that the organisation fails to meet its target. Graham (2004: 8) emphasises that "management must provide ongoing feedback".

It is also indicated that there must be a system to record performance results properly and such result must be communicated properly to stakeholders" e.g. Human resource department (Nel *et al.*, 2008).

2.7. Linkages between performance management systems and strategic planning

Having discussed the performance management process, this section will focus on identifying and discussing the linkages between a performance management system and strategic planning. Such discussion is important to contextualise problems associated with the performance management system within strategic planning. When implementing a performance management system in an organisation and similarly in a public service department, performance management systems "integrate with an organisation's strategic planning process to create organisational success through successful performance of employees" (Hopen, 2004: 16). It is noted that the connection between strategic planning and performance management exists regardless of the planning methodology used by the organisation, and such connection is presented by Hopen (2004) as per figure 1 below.

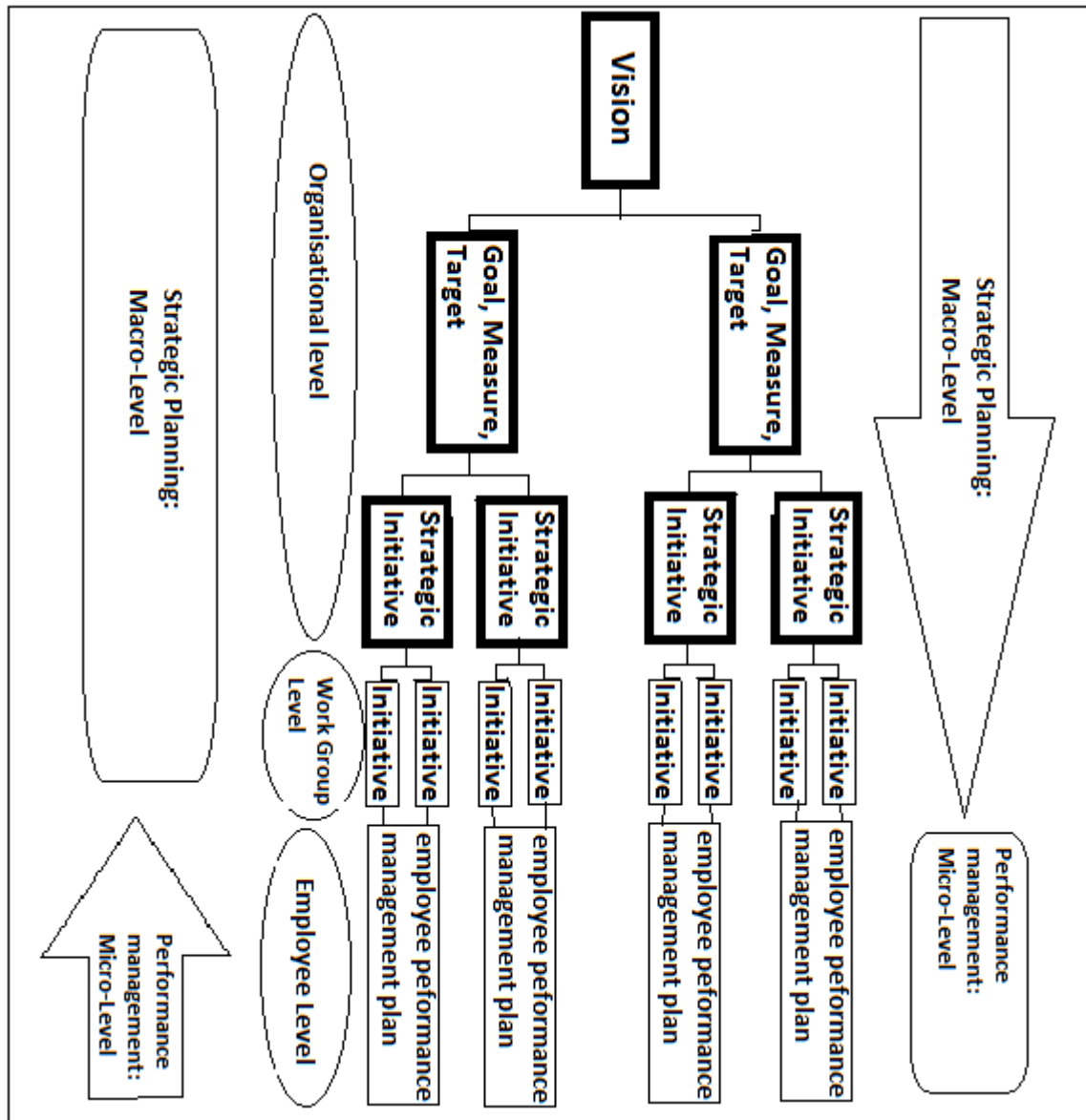


Figure 3: Linkages between strategic planning and performance management and alignment (adapted from Hopen, 2004)

Pickett (2000: 225) points out that integration of strategic planning and performance management “can help minimise misdirected and inappropriate effort as a result of the ineffective use of employee skills and experience”, and thus provide practical means of increasing contribution of employees to the realisation of the goals of the organisation. It must also be noted that organisations should have a clear vision, that is, they know what they are trying to achieve (Pickett, 2000). Figure 3 shows that the organisational level plan at the strategic level presents the vision in terms of strategic goals, measures, targets and strategies for directing the approaches to realise the goals. Those goals become the goals of the work teams (referred to as work groups). The goals of the teams become translated into the goals of an individual employee in the form of an individual performance management plan that helps to realise the goals of the team, and finally the goals of the organisation at a strategic level. Graham (2004: 7) states that clear performance expectations for

“each employee are linked directly to the desired outcomes set forth in the organisation’s strategic plan”. Amos (2008) also confirms that performance management is critical to achieving the strategic objectives of any business.

It is explained that the combination of “systems for strategic planning and performance management creates checks and balances for the organisation” (Hopen, 2004: 17). Hopen (2004) acknowledges performance management systems as a micro-level management tool which is important to ensure the realisation of the strategic planning objectives. This happens by taking the issues that are identified during the performance management process, and using them to make an input for strategic planning, including setting organisational priorities and determining the required resources.

This is also argued by Theron (2000: 32) when he confirms that “once implemented, performance management plays a significant role in implementing organisational strategy”. Hopen (2004: 16) notes that “strategic planning deployment represents the macro level of communicating and implementing organisational strategic direction, and performance management represents the micro level of deployment”.

2.8. Organisational culture and performance management systems

In trying to understand problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems, it is important to understand that it happens within the context of organisation culture. Organisational culture is seen as a system of shared values, beliefs, understandings and norms shared by employees that create behavioural norms, organisational structures and control systems in an organisation (Eker and Eker, 2009). Research on organisational culture recognises that culture guides and shapes the behaviour and attitude of all employees (Bititci *et al.*, 2006). This implies that organisational culture may play a significant role in problems associated with the implementation and use of performance management systems. Bititci *et al.* (2006) confirm that organisational culture affects the success and failure of the implementation of performance management systems. It is noted that a “paternalistic culture can lead to the successful implementation of a performance management system” (Bititci *et al.*, 2006: 1331); however this does not suggest that this is the only culture which may lead to the successful implementation of a performance management system. This implies that if one implements a performance management system, one needs to seriously take into consideration the organisational culture. It is, however, noted that whilst organisational culture affects performance management, “it is also affected by performance management” (Bititci *et al.*,

2006: 1326). This is further confirmed by Theron (2000: 32) when he states that performance management “helps to design the desired organisational culture, and it is a driving force for a participative culture”.

De Waal and Counet (2009: 371) note that one of the reasons for failure in implementing a performance management system is that “some organisations lack a performance management culture”. It is indicated that this happens when there is no culture focused on achieving results and continuous improvement, and in such a context performance management is not used to achieve better performance (De Waal and Counet, 2009).

Bititci *et al.* (2006) identified a number of organisational cultures which influence the implementation of a performance management system, and those include role culture, power culture, achievement culture and support culture.

Franco and Bourne (cited in Bititci *et al.*, 2006: 1331) indicate that the institution must adopt an organisational culture which “does not punish people’s error and that encourages discussion and analysis around performance measures”. This implies that when public service departments do not punish error and they encourage discussions around performance measures; the context for an organisational culture that facilitates effective implementation of a performance management system is created, and there may be positive contribution to successful implementation of a performance management system in the DENC.

It is indicated that in a role culture, people perform their work out of respect to their contractual obligations which is backed by sanctions and personal loyalty to the organisation. In this case, the employees accord the status to their leader out of respect for the office he/she occupies. Leaders in this context do what they are authorised to do, and leaders are usually experts in their field. In this cultural context, “leadership is invisible, impersonal and evasive” (Bititci *et al.*, 2006: 1335).

The power culture is associated with an authoritative management style. It is indicated that in organisations where this culture prevails, “employees perform their work because of hope for reward, fear for punishment or loyalty to powerful individuals or leaders” (Bititci *et al.*, 2006: 1335). It is stated that employees are motivated through the „carrot and the stick“.

Having briefly looked at the power culture, the achievement culture provides an environment where employees perform their work because they are satisfied in the excellence of their work and their

personal commitment to the task or goal (Bititci *et al.*, 2006). The power base of a leader in this culture is the expertise of the leader and followers accord the status out of recognition of the contribution of the leader (Bititci *et al.*, 2006). The appropriate management style within the achievement culture is consultative and rational achiever. In this culture there is an assumption that employees are motivated and need encouragement to continuously achieve high performance (Bititci *et al.*, 2006).

2.9. Performance management as a human resource management strategy

Having discussed organisation culture and performance management, in this section the focus is on performance management and human resource management strategy (RSA, 2001; Schwella *et al.*, 1996; De Waal, 2003). It is recognised that performance management must be seen from the broader perspective of human resources management, and therefore the overall human resource management strategy provides the broader context for the implementation of a performance management system.

It is noted that the level at which managers operate influences the human resource management function which includes performance management (Schwella *et al.*, 1996; Holloway, 2009). The Public Service Regulations prescribe the processes and format to be followed for strategic human resource planning (RSA, 2001). These processes enable the identification of core competencies and the subsequent identification of human resource development needs of any public service department including the DENC in South Africa. In that process, jobs are designed, analysed and evaluated in terms of the human resource strategic plan and job profiles are developed for each job of the employee in the public service department. It is noted that such job profiles guide the recruitment and selection of employees and it thus creates the basis on which the performance management system is developed and implemented (RSA, 2001). The White Paper on Human Resource Management for Public Service recognises performance management as a “key human resource management tool” (RSA, 1997: 42). It can therefore be argued that “performance management is an integral part of an effective human resource management and development strategy” (RSA, 1997: 42). Den Hartog *et al.* (2004) indicate that there is a clear link between performance management and human resource management, and they comment that taking a performance management approach is important and it involves aligning human resource management practices in such a way that it maximises employee performance and ensures that development of employees is enhanced which in turn will have a positive impact on the organisational performance.

2.10. Management style, performance driven behaviour and performance management

Having discussed performance management as a human resource strategy, in this section the focus is on management style, performance-driven behaviour and their implications for the implementation of a performance management system. It is noted that management style has a great influence in helping the employee deliver the desired results, and thus has serious implications for the effective implementation of a performance management system (De Waal, 2004). According to Nel *et al.* (2008), management style is a way in which management is practiced in the organisation. De Waal (2004) notes that if management style is restricted to steering only, the result will be a directive style without much regard for the importance of individual responsibility. This raises questions on how managers are contributing to the poor performance of their employees. It is further noted that a “combination of result-oriented steering and coaching by management equals the style of result oriented” (Bititci *et al.*, 2004: 29). For an organisation to successfully implement a performance management system and improve performance management, the manager’s management style must address three components, and they consist of visible commitment, clear steering and provision of support. The relationship between performance management and management is further confirmed by Bititci *et al.* (2004: 29), who argue that “there are two drivers to the successful implementation of a performance management system”, one of which is top management commitment. It seems astonishing to note that Bititci’s research indicates that all successfully implemented performance management systems in their case studies were achieved through the “adoption of an authoritative management style” (Bititci *et al.*, 2004: 39). In this study it is further indicated that among all the cases that were studied, all the companies that were not employing an “authoritative management style failed to successfully implement performance management systems” (Bititci *et al.*, 2004: 39). They however note that the authoritative management style is “not essential to sustain the continuing use of a performance management system” (Bititci *et al.*, 2004: 39).

It is further noted that there is a mutual relationship between a management system and the successful implementation of a performance management system, and Bititci *et al.* (2004: 39) further notes that a performance management system “supported by a participative management style at all levels leads to greater buy-in of all levels of the organisation”, and this implies that such management style could lead to a buy-in from everyone in an organisation, in terms of implementing performance management. This seems to suggest that one needs an autocratic management approach to get the PMS started and a more participative management approach to “sustain the continuing use and implementation of the PMS” (Bititci *et al.*, 2004: 39).

De Waal and Counet (2009: 369) further demonstrate the relationship between management style and performance management when they argue that one of the constraints to the successful implementation of a performance management system is that “management does not adopt the right management style.” In pursuing this argument, it is indicated that sometimes management uses performance management to “settle scores and punish people instead of using the system for coaching and continuous improvement” (De Waal and Counet, 2009: 371). As a result of such management styles, employees do not like the performance management system which is used to punish them. It is noted that this can result in manipulation of the data in the implementation of a performance management system and sometimes sabotages the implementation of a performance management system (De Waal and Counet, 2009).

De Waal (2004: 301) has identified twenty behavioural factors which have a positive influence on performance driven behaviour and these behaviours are grouped into five categories which are “referred to as areas of attention”. The areas of attention include organisational members’ understanding, organisational members’ attitudes, performance management alignment, organisational culture and performance management focus. De Waal and Counet (2009: 371) note that sometimes there is “resistance from employees to the new performance management system because they feel threatened about its transparent process and the unknown effect”. According to Theron (2000: 36), “management of human resources is complicated by intricate and to some extent enigmatic nature of people as employees”. Theron (2000: 36) further argues that complication of managing human resources as a result of the abovementioned reasons leads to the “premise that a valid theoretical understanding of the different facets of employee work behaviour constitute the a fundamental prerequisite for efficient and equitable management of performance”. It must be noted that employee work behaviour is the behaviour of employees in the work place. In the next section, the researcher will look at other research findings on the problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system.

2.11. Other research findings: problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system

In reviewing other studies, it is indicated that there are a number of possible problems that affect the successful implementation of a performance management system (Rademan and Vos, 2001). De Waal and Counet (2009) identified thirty-one problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems. It is indicated that one of the problems which affects the implementation of a performance management system is that “management put a low priority on the implementation” because of work pressures and time constraints (De Waal and Counet, 2009: 368).

It is further noted that this slows down the pace of implementation. It is indicated that where there is change of management especially where old management is replaced by new management who do not support the system, “the implementation of a performance management system gets low priority and at times it is abandoned” (De Waal and Counet, 2009: 372).

One of the problems experienced in implementing the performance management system is that it might require more time and effort than the organisation planned or expected. According to De Waal and Counet (2009), this makes the organisation members discouraged by a lack of short-term results. They then spend less time and energy in implementing the performance management system, which contributes to the slow implementation of the performance management system.

De Waal and Counet (2009: 368) note that “there can be insufficient resources and capacity for the implementation of a performance management system”. This happens often because organisations cannot free enough resources and capacity to implement the system. This implies that for organisations to succeed in implementing the performance management system, they need to provide sufficient resources and capacity for implementing the performance management system. This has implications for this study as it takes into account other factors, like resources, which impact on the implementation of the performance management system.

Another problem is that failure to implement the performance management system is caused by the fact that an „organisation is in an unstable phase” either because it is busy with major projects or because it has financial problems.

De Waal and Counet (2009) note that one of the reasons for failure to implement the performance management system is the lack of clear goals for the implementing the performance management system and this is further complicated by the lack of a clear and understandable strategy, mission and objectives for the organisation. This finally leads to the development of key performance indicators which are not relevant, and thus it is found that some organisations measure the wrong performance indicators.

One finding is that lack of management commitment (including middle management commitment) and insufficient use of the system is a serious problem and presents a constraint for the successful implementation of a performance management system. Lack of management commitment creates a “situation where less or no priority is put on the implementation of a performance management system” (De Waal, 2009: 369).

The lack of properly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) is also a constraint. It is noted that organisations have difficulty in defining key performance areas, and as a result they lack trust and lose faith in the system. Sometimes “there are too many key performance areas, and there is difficulty in working on each indicator” (De Waal, 2009: 371).

Another problem in implementing a performance management system happens when the organisation does not see the benefit of the system. If employees and managers cannot see positive results in their organisation which they can trace back to the performance management system they give up on the system. This contributes to the “failure of an organisation to implement the performance management system” (De Waal and Counet, 2009: 372). These problems form the foundation for the development of research questions for this research and understanding of problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems. Ohemeng (2009) also indicates that other problems associated with the implementation of performance management systems include institutional fragmentation whereby decision making is fragmented among different departments instead of one, and this create a problem of accountability and responsibility, lack of seriousness on the part of political authority in the context of a government department, individual and organisational culture, public ignorance about and indifference to the role of government departments.

2.12. Conclusion

In conclusion, performance management is a holistic approach and process that is used to ensure effective management of individual employees and groups to realise the achievement of organisational objectives. A performance management system does this by linking strategic planning, performance standards, individual objectives and training. The implementation of a performance management system provides a space for intervention on poor performance and for rewarding good performance. Performance management is an important process to improve the performance of individuals in any organisation including the public service, and to ultimately improve performance in an organisation and realise organisational goals. The performance management process includes performance planning, performance coaching and monitoring, performance measurement and evaluation, and performance feedback and outcomes, and it uses the outcome of the performance management system to intervene on poor performance and to reward good performance. The implementation of the DENC’s performance management system is regulated by the Public Service Act, Public Service Regulations, Labour Relations Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Skills Development Act and other regulations. It is also influenced

by the organisational culture, management style, behaviour of employees, and other variables. There are also factors that serve as constraints to the successful implementation of a performance management system, and they include some of the following: the need for more time than allocated by organisations, insufficient resources and capacity, unstable phase in an organisation and lack of clear goals.

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SECTION 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In answering the research questions, the researcher applied a research methodology that enabled him to gain insights into the research questions. Maxwell (1999) provides an interactive model for a research design. This model has five components which include the purpose of the research (See section 1), conceptual context (See section 2), research questions, methods, and validity of the research. In designing this research, the researcher took the above components into consideration as a guide, and included the findings as another component.

3.2. Overview of post-positivism as the research paradigm for this study

Based on the literature review, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches informed by post-positivism as the research orientation in the study (Guba and Lincoln, 2004; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Mouton, 2008). Cohen *et al.* (2000) indicate that ontological and epistemological assumptions that researchers hold have direct implications for the methodological concerns of researchers. Ontologically, post-positivism is based on the concept of critical realism philosophy (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Critical realism philosophy derives from the work of Roy Bhaskar, and it has an established following and that led to the formation of the International Association for Critical Realism in 1997 (Hodgson, 2004). Critical realism believes that there is reality, independent of our thinking about what science can study (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). This is contrary to the belief in the concept of subjectivity in understanding reality. Post-positivism is also different to positivism as a research paradigm in the sense that while positivism believes in the existence of an absolute truth out there, post-positivism believes that even though reality is out there, independent of our thinking it is fallible and has error and is revisable. This is based on the belief that researchers as human beings have questionable ability to know reality with certainty. Post-positivism does not see reality as a rigid thing. This is consistent with the researcher's view that even though a researcher can do an extensive and thorough study, it is possible that we may not understand fully what we need to understand. It is also important to note that post-positivism rejects the idea that researchers can see perfectly as it really is, and it recognises that we are all biased and therefore emphasises that the best efforts to try and achieve objectivity is through multiple fallible perspectives. It is seen as a creation of those individuals involved in the research, and recognises that reality is influenced by context, and that there are multiple realities. This is consistent with the researcher's view that context plays a significant role in fully understanding the phenomena being

studied, and in the context of this research problems associated with the implementation of performance management system in the DENC.

Epistemologically, post-positivists believe that human knowledge is not based on unchallengeable, rock solid foundations, but rather upon human conjectures (Phillips and Burbules, 2000). According to Phillips and Burbules (2000: 29) these conjectures are “supported by the strongest (if possibly imperfect) warrants we can muster at the time and are always subject to reconsiderations.” It is further indicated that these conjectures can be warranted or justified by sets of warrants which can be withdrawn or modified in the light of new evidence during the research process. This implies that accepting the pursuit of knowledge does not necessitate a commitment to a claim of absolute truth or its attainability in understanding problems associated with the implementation of a performance management system. This further implies that knowledge on the problems associated with implementation of a performance management system will change as new evidence emerges as part of the research process. Researchers engaging within this paradigm accept fallibility as an unavoidable fact of life. It is therefore acceptable that post-positivists argue that knowledge can be built up when there are no authoritative sources and further indicates that every source is welcome but it is not taken as authoritative.

3.3. Research approach: qualitative and quantitative complementary

Guba and Lincoln (2004: 198) observe that both qualitative and quantitative research approaches “may be appropriately used within any research paradigm” including post-positivism, and consistent with that, it is considered an appropriate methodology for this research. In section 3.2., it is noted that post-positivism is based on the critical realism philosophy and, according to Krauss (2005: 762), specifically indicates that “both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are seen as appropriate” and they emphasise that this should be influenced by the topic of interest and level of existing knowledge associated with the research focus. It is in that context that the researcher used both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (individual interviews) methodologies in this research. The primary aim of quantitative research is to establish characteristics or relationships between variables to a parent population or a large group of research subjects (Radloff and Irwin, 2001).

3.4. Data Collection techniques

The researcher used a questionnaire as the main data collection technique supported by individual interviews in this study.

3.4.1. Survey questionnaire

3.4.1.1. Design of the survey questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data and each questionnaire consisted of 31 closed questions (Mouton, 2008). The use of a survey questionnaire is consistent with post-positivism as the research paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). The survey questionnaire was an adaptation of a questionnaire used by De Waal and Counet (2009). The researcher used the 31 problems associated with a performance management system which are identified in the literature review to adapt a survey questionnaire (De Waal and Counet, 2009; Radloff and Irwin, 2001). The first part of the questionnaire consists of demographic questions (e.g. work experience, work area, gender, etc.) which helps to establish the contextual profile of the participants or respondents, and the second part of the survey questionnaire consisted of thirty-one problems associated with the implementation of performance management referred to above. Research participants were expected to rate how often each of these problems occurs in the DENC. They were also expected to rate the severity of the impact of each problem on the implementation of the performance management system. The impact reflects the extent to which the problem inhibits successful implementation of the performance management system in the DENC. Research participants were also expected to rate how easy it is to solve the problems. Research participants scored each problem according its frequency of occurrence, severity of its impact and according to how easy or difficult it would be to the problem. Scoring was done on the Likert scale with response options (see Appendix 2). The survey questionnaire was completed by the sample of fifty employees – from the Deputy Director to all lower levels in the DENC.

3.4.1.2. Administration of the survey questionnaire

Before the researcher could distribute the survey questionnaire, it was important to get permission from the Head of Department and respective managers where applicable. A letter was sent to the Head of Department to request permission to administer the questionnaire and conduct the research in the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation (Babbie, 2008). In terms of the

administration of the survey questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed through the departmental e-mail system, and response boxes were going to be put in the entrance of each regional office of the DENC for the employees to return the completed questionnaire. It however appeared that with the potential for strikes in the public service, the boxes with completed application forms would have been completely destroyed. As a result, the researcher had to apply an alternative way of administering the questionnaire.

While in the process of considering how to administer a questionnaire, the researcher received the questionnaire that had to be completed online as an online survey. The researcher did research on this online survey and managed to access the website called “Monkey Survey”. This website provided a platform for one to develop a questionnaire and to use it as a platform to collect data. The researcher opened an account on the monkey survey website, and reconfigured his questionnaire for the web-based data collection with all the variables in the paper survey questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The researcher set up the questionnaire to be emailed as a link to the respondents. This feature also allowed the researcher to be able to track the responses to each specific respondent who was asked to complete the survey questionnaire. It however appears that some of the respondents wanted complete anonymity because they feared that because they were not comfortable with the researcher being a manager in the DENC. They feared he might share it with their supervisors. In response to that, the researcher created a web-based survey, and within this context, the respondents had to open the website at any computer and answer the questionnaire, but the survey administrator could not identify the specific respondents. This helped to ensure the complete confidentiality of the respondents.

3.4.2. Focus Group Interviews and Individual interviews

The researcher had indicated his intention to use focus group interviews with about ten managers to validate and triangulate information from the survey questionnaire, and gain more in-depth information about the impact of each problem associated with implementation of the performance management system. It must however be noted that during the time of data collection, there was a public service strike which affected the whole process of data collection, and many officials were not allowed to hold meetings for fear of being attacked by the striking workers. As result of the strike, when the DENC resumed its normal functioning, there was no time to arrange the focus group meetings because of different commitments from individual managers who had to make up for the time lost during the public service strike. Bearing these issues in mind, the researcher decided to use individual interviews instead of focus group interviews. The researcher limited the

interviews to four respondents to make it manageable. The researcher used five open ended questions (see Appendix 3). The intention was to record the interviews using both a voice recorder and a video camera. Two of the respondents willingly allowed the researcher to use both the video camera and voice recorder to record the interviews. The other two respondents were not comfortable to respond on camera, they however agree to respond and be recorded on the voice recorder. The interviews were transcribed for interpretation.

3.5. Research Respondents or participants

The DENC has about 205 employees (potential respondents). The research respondents/participants were fifty employees from the Deputy Director to lower levels in the DENC who answered the survey questionnaire (purposive sampling). In addition to the fifty respondents, four selected respondents were requested to answer the interview questions. The respondents to the interviews were the manager for the Performance Management and Development System Unit in the DENC, two members of the Performance Management Moderating Committee and one middle manager. The respondents were chosen on the basis of their experience and understanding by virtue of their position in the moderating committee and their encounter with the problems of staff in relation to performance management. The middle manager was chosen because he experienced more issues from complaints of the staff and difficulty of dealing with the moderating committee. The researcher assumed that middle managers are better exposed to issues faced by the employees reporting to them and issues which are raised by the moderating committee. The selection of participants was purposive (Babbie, 2008), and the researcher ensured that all directorates within the DENC are represented. The research sites are all Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation offices based in Kimberley, Kuruman, Upington and Springbok (see Figure 1).

3.6. Data organisation and analysis

Data, which were collected in this research, were categorized in data files. Coding of data files was done for easy reference. Data were sorted according to different stages of research and type of data. They were kept in files which will serve as a case record. McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (1996:80) note that managing records is “part of the requirements to be systematic in research”. Stenhouse (1978:36 cited in McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996: 81) indicates that sorting data should “provide an archive of case records that can be used as a primary source of data”. Stenhouse (1978:25 cited in Lotz, 1996:103) referred “to levels of data organization”, and describes the case

data as all the materials assembled by the fieldworkers during the study. In this context, the researcher used an electronic record-keeping system and kept a physical filing system as back-up. The data from survey questionnaires were downloaded electronically and a folder for research data was created in the computer in which data files from the questionnaire were saved. The interview recording was also downloaded from the voice recorder to the computer and it was saved on the created folder. In addition to the computer saved files, a back-up was created using the external hard drive of the computer.

Data collected, based on the questionnaire, were quantitatively analysed using Excel and Monkey Analysis software to determine frequency distribution, rank the impact, and determine the severity of each impact and, where relevant, to determine relationships between variables (Babbie, 2008; De Waal and Counet, 2009). The frequency distribution of the findings relating to encounter, impact and solvability is automatically analysed on the Monkey Survey website, and was downloaded into Excel. Further analysis of ranking, severity of impact calculations and graphical representation were done using Excel. The interview questionnaire was transcribed into question and response records. The data emanating from the interviews are integrated into the discussion sections of the findings.

3.7. Ethical issues in the research

To address ethical issues in the study, a letter was sent to the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation Head of Department, requesting permission to conduct this study and outlining the purpose of the study and through the office of the Head of Department a request for cooperation was sent to employees in the DENC. After the permission was obtained to collect data from the Department, letters were sent to all potential respondents requesting them to answer the survey questionnaire. It also informed the respondents of their right to withdraw their permission at any stage if they felt it necessary, and gave the research participants a guarantee to keep their responses anonymous (Babbie, 2008).

3.8. Validity and rigour in the research

The researcher realises that different researchers point out that to ensure validity or trustworthiness in the research process, one needs to take triangulation into consideration, respondent validation, and clear exposition of methods of data collection and analysis, attention to negative cases, member checks and relevance (Babbie, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 2004; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Mouton, 2008). Drawing from the above literature and ensuring validity in this study, the

researcher had to take into consideration the triangulation by using different sources (questionnaire and interviews), ensuring member checks by encouraging the research participants who were respondents to re-check the questionnaires and summative tables of the research data. Having discussed the research the validity and rigour issues in this research and in the next section the researcher will describe the limitations of this research.

3.9. Limitations of this research

It must be noted that there are a number of potential limitations of this study. Firstly, while the findings can be generalised in the DENC, it cannot be generalised across the public service or other organisations. There were also limitations in terms of the problems associated with performance management system because the focus was on the predetermined problems, and there is a possibility that more than the thirty-one problems identified in the literature would have emerged if it was an open-ended questionnaire for the rest of the respondents. The overutilization of De Waal and Counet (2009) is also a limitation, and it is justified on the basis that in search of the relevant literature it is the only study found which addressed the same issues in details as this study.

3.10. Conclusion

The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches informed by post-positivism as the research orientation in the study. The data collection techniques employed in this research include the survey questionnaire and individual interviews. The survey questionnaire was answered by fifty respondents, and interview questions were answered by the four respondents. The ethical issues were addressing by writing a letter to the Head of Department and getting an authorisation, ensuring confidential of information given by the respondents and ensuring voluntary participation. The request was also sent to the respondents, seeking their permission and advising them of their right to voluntarily participate and to withdraw if they feel uncomfortable.

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APPENDIX 1: DATA ANALYSIS

Problem	Employee frequency	Impact	Solvability	Severity (Impact/solvability)	Ranking (Severity x Employee Frequency)
Lack of management commitment	3.16	3.71	2.35	1.58	4.99
Organisational members lack a positive attitude towards the PMS	3.40	3.63	2.37	1.53	5.21
Management put low priority on the PMS implementation	3.02	3.77	2.49	1.51	4.57
Period of commitment from management to the PMS implementation is not enough	3.06	3.39	2.35	1.44	4.41
Insufficient commitment from middle management and staff for PMS implementation	2.98	3.39	2.65	1.28	3.81
There is resistance from organisational members toward the new PMS	3.10	3.19	2.55	1.25	3.88
Implementation of the PMS requires more time and effort than expected	3.14	3.39	2.80	1.21	3.80
The organisation does not have a performance management culture	3.13	3.33	2.76	1.21	3.78
The PMS is not used for the daily management of the organisation	3.02	3.06	2.90	1.06	3.19
There is an insufficient link between the PMS and the reward system	3.04	3.17	3.02	1.05	3.19
There are insufficient resources and capacity for implementation	2.67	3.06	3.04	1.01	2.69
Organisational members are not adopting the right management style	2.59	2.86	2.86	1.00	2.59
There is lack of knowledge and skills in regard to the PMS	2.67	3.04	3.17	0.96	2.56
The organisation does not see (enough) benefit from the PMS	2.53	2.94	3.14	0.94	2.37
There is too much focus on the result of the PMS implementation, while the change process of the organisation is ignored	2.59	2.85	3.12	0.91	2.37
The organisation does not have a clear and understandable strategy	2.26	2.81	3.10	0.91	2.05
The PMS is not regularly updated and maintained after implementation	2.27	2.92	3.29	0.89	2.01
The PMS has a low priority or its use is abandoned after change of management	2.02	2.75	3.12	0.88	1.78
There are difficulties in getting the data to calculate performance indicators	2.06	2.78	3.16	0.88	1.81
The organisation is in an unstable phase	1.89	2.65	3.06	0.87	1.64
There is not enough focus on internal management and control	2.41	2.73	3.16	0.86	2.08
The organisation measures the wrong KPIs	2.04	2.82	3.29	0.86	1.75
The key performance indicators (KPIs) are not linked to department-, team- and individual responsibilities	2.10	2.86	3.38	0.85	1.78
The system lacks the cause and effect relations or is overly complex due to too many causal relations	2.13	2.47	2.96	0.83	1.78
The PMS implementation does not have a clear goal	2.33	2.55	3.08	0.83	1.93
It is difficult to define relevant critical success factors (CSFs)	2.54	2.56	3.10	0.83	2.10
It is difficult to define goals for lower levels in the organisation	2.35	2.67	3.33	0.80	1.88
It is difficult to define relevant KPIs	2.02	2.69	3.39	0.79	1.60
There is no organisational member who is appointed to take ownership of the PMS	1.69	2.65	3.45	0.77	1.30
The are too many KPIs defined	1.94	2.47	3.49	0.71	1.37
The current ICT system does not support the PMS adequately	2.00	2.37	3.35	0.71	1.41

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (Optional): _____ Post Level: _____ Directorate: _____ Office location: _____

Years of experience in the NCDENC: _____ Years of experience in your profession: _____ Gender: _____

Problems associated with implementation performance management systems (PMS)	Please answer all three major questions by ticking the relevant box for all listed problems.														
	How often did you encounter each of the following problems during PMS implementation and use? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.					What is the impact of each of these problems on the implementation and use of PMS? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.					How easily can each of these problems be solved? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.				
	1. Never encountered	2. Rarely encountered	3. Sometimes encountered	4. Often encountered	5. Always encountered	1. No impact	2. Has small impact	3. Has a moderate impact	4. Certainly has an impact	5. Has a high impact	1. Very difficult to solve	2. Difficult to solve	3. Moderately easy to solve	4. Easy to solve	5. Very easy to solve
1. Management put low priority on the PMS implementation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Implementation of the PMS requires more time and effort than expected	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. There are insufficient resources and capacity for implementation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. The organisation is in an unstable phase	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The PMS implementation does not have a clear goal	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lack of management commitment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Period of commitment from management to the PMS implementation is not enough	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Organisational members lack a positive attitude towards the PMS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. Insufficient commitment from middle management and staff for PMS implementation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. The current ICT system does not support the PMS adequately	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. Organisational members are not adopting the right management style	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. The organisation does not have a clear and understandable strategy	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is difficult to define relevant CSFs (critical success factors)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. There is not enough focus on internal management and control	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15. It is difficult to define goals for lower levels in the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. There is a lack of knowledge and skills in regard to the PMS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Problems associated with implementation performance management systems (PMS)	Please answer all three major questions by ticking the relevant box for all listed problems.														
	How often did you encounter each of the following problems during PMS implementation and use? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.					What is the impact of each of these problems on the implementation and use of PMS? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.					How easily can each of these problems be solved? Rate by ticking the relevant box for all problems below.				
	1. Never encountered	2. Rarely encountered	3. Sometimes encountered	4. Often encountered	5. Always encountered	1. No impact	2. Has small impact	3. Has a moderate impact	4. Certainly has an impact	5. Has a high impact	1. Very difficult to solve	2. Difficult to solve	3. Moderately easy to solve	4. Easy to solve	5. Very easy to solve
17. It is difficult to define relevant key performance indicators (KPIs)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. The KPIs are not linked to department-, team- and individual responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. There are too many KPIs defined	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. The organisation measures the wrong KPIs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. There is too much focus on the result of the PMS implementation, while the change process of the organisation is ignored	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. There is resistance from organisational members toward the new PMS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. There is an insufficient link between the PMS and the reward system	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. The system's cause and effect relations are overly complex due to too many causal relations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. The organisation does not have performance management culture	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. The PMS is not used for the daily management of the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. The PMS is not regularly updated and maintained after implementation	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. There is no organisational member who is appointed to take ownership of the PMS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. There are difficulties in getting the data to calculate performance indicators	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. The PMS has a low priority or its use is abandoned after change of management	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. The organisation does not see (enough) benefit from the PMS	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

(This questionnaire is an adaptation from research problems related to implementation of PMS identified by De Waal & Counet, 2009)

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. Do you think we are successful or not successful in implementing a performance management system in the Department?
2. What do you think the Department is doing better to successfully implement a performance management system in the Department? Be specific.
3. What do you think the Department (managers, officials, and other staff members) is not doing right? As a result, do they become or can they become constraints in successfully implementing a performance management system in the Department in some areas?
4. In areas where you may foresee challenges or constraints, what do you recommend the Department (managers, staff or employees) should do to improve the implementation of performance management system in the Department?
5. What complaints have you received from employees or other managers regarding the implementation of performance management systems in the Department?