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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 312, *Excellence in service*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

The purpose of public service organizations is to fulfil essential societal needs and provide services that contribute to the well-being, development, and progress of communities, and customers and citizens. These organizations are typically government/public services or semi-government entities established usually by statute to serve the public interest and promote the common good.

Public service organizations are responsible for delivering a wide range of essential services to citizens, such as healthcare, education, transportation, public safety, social welfare and environmental protection. They play a crucial role in a functioning society, ensuring that the needs of citizens are met, resources are efficiently managed and communities progress in a safe and supportive environment.

At the same time citizens and the society at large, expect public service organizations to be committed to the idea of consistently providing high quality services all the time, not only meeting but exceeding these expectations. More importantly citizens expect public services to provide protection as well as improvement of the way of life and at the same time addressing a multitude of challenges such as demographic shifts, shifts of economic power, accelerating urbanization, the climate crisis/resource scarcity and technological breakthroughs but also crisis due to geopolitical changes that have a more immediate impact.

It is no longer enough for public service organizations to deliver the basic services expected by customers/citizens resulting in customer/citizen satisfaction at its most. Public service excellence describes an approach that enables the creation of outstanding customer/citizen experiences by individual and surprising service provision resulting in the creation of trust so that societal challenges are addressed through innovation. Consequently, public service excellence leads to addressing future societal challenges including sustainable development.

This document describes the principles, elements and sub-elements for creating outstanding customer/citizen experiences. The basic foundations of implementing service excellence are the two lower levels of the public service excellence pyramid (see [Figure 1](#)). These are described in standards such as ISO 9001:2015, ISO 10002:2018, ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 and ISO 18091:2019. This document deals with the upper levels which are:

- public service according to citizen/societal needs (Level 3);
- surprising public service provision (Level 4).

Public service according to citizen/societal needs (Level 3) results in service that is perceived by customers/citizens as warm, genuine and value-creating. The customer/citizen experiences an emotional reaction by feeling valued as his/her needs are being addressed.

Surprising public service provision (Level 4) results in service that is tailor-made and leads to emotions of surprise and joy. It is delivered by exceeding customer/citizens expectations. This can be achieved by delivering unexpected outstanding customer/citizen experiences.

The public service excellence pyramid should be used to explain to managers and employees why a public service organization must focus on both: fulfilling the promises (Levels 1 and 2) and exceeding customer/citizen expectations by delivering excellent services (Levels 3 and 4).

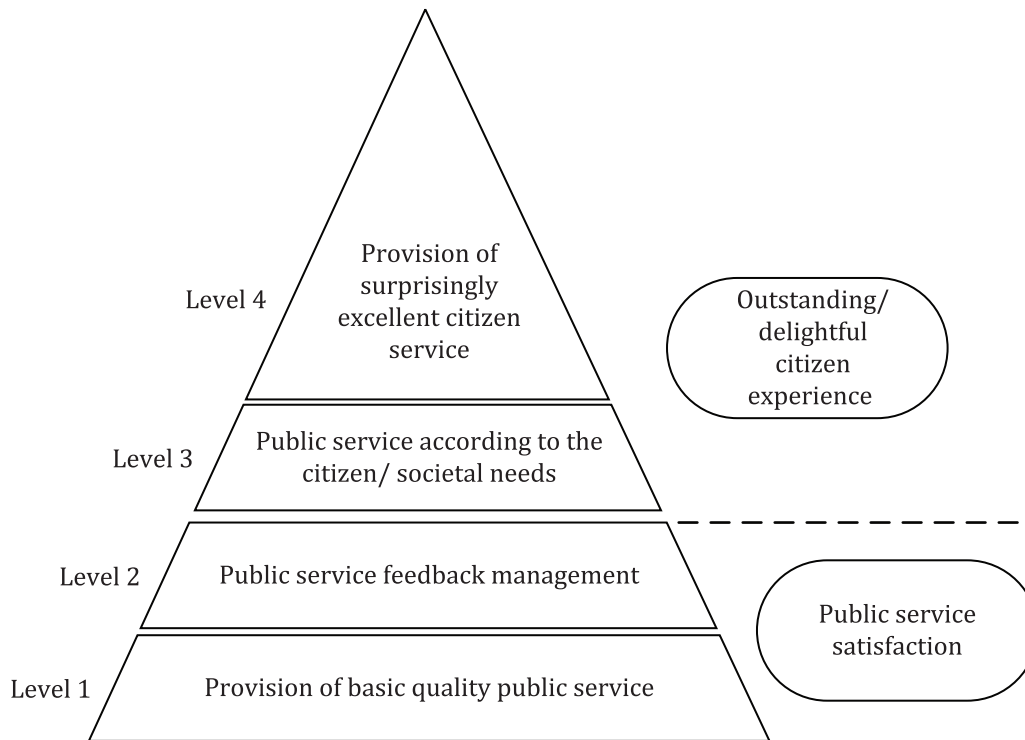


Figure 1 — Public service excellence pyramid

This document defines the essential terms, describes relevant principles and establishes a model on public service excellence. It provides guidance for use by public service organizations wishing to achieve public service excellence.

The recipients of services from a public service organization are typically the members of the public or the community that the organization serves. These individuals or groups benefit from the services provided by the organization, which can cover a wide range of offerings depending on the specific mission and scope of the organization.

This means that in different circumstances the recipients of the public service can be the citizen, a customer or the consumer. For this reason, for the purposes of this document, the term “citizen/customer” refers to the recipient of the public service organization output unless otherwise specified.

The term “public service excellence” in the context of this document can take a number of different attributes such as outstanding public service, exceptional public service or high-quality public service.

Service excellence — Principles and model for public service organizations

1 Scope

This document establishes the principles of public service excellence and gives guidance on a public service excellence model.

This document is applicable to public service organizations that deliver services and aim to provide an outstanding experience to their key stakeholders, such as the society (the citizens) they serve, and other partner organizations for the purpose of delivering excellent service.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

co-creation

active involvement of stakeholders in service design, delivery and innovation

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.3]

3.2

customer/citizen

person or organization that can or does receive a product or a service intended for or required by them

Note 1 to entry: A citizen is a person having a naturally or legally conferred status to belong to a nation with basic or fundamental rights and duties as defined in the national constitution or other decree by law. Citizen rights can include justice, equality, freedom of expression, freedom of association, protection and security, ownership of property and franchise. Citizen duties can include allegiance, and protecting the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

Note 2 to entry: In the context of this document, a citizen is a natural customer of services provided by the state.

Note 3 to entry: “Product or service” relates to the output of the public service processes and can be in many different forms. The types of products and services are outlined in [3.9](#).

Note 4 to entry: In the context of this document, a customer of a *public service* ([3.9](#)) can be a citizen, a non-citizen, such as visitor from another nation, an organization and a society representing a collective of citizens.

Note 5 to entry: The term “customer” can sometimes cause controversy in public administration and even in public international law. However, due to its wide adoption and usefulness in the standardization of service excellence, the use of the term “customer” has been adopted in this document, and is used in combination with “citizen”.

[SOURCE: ISO 18091:2019, 3.2, modified — Notes 1 to 4 to entry replaced Notes 1 to 2 to entry. Note 5 to entry (previously Note 3 to entry) revised in the context of service excellence.]

3.3

customer/citizen experience

perception by a *customer/citizen* (3.2) about their interaction with a *public service organization* (3.14), its products or services

Note 1 to entry: An interaction is related to a *customer/citizen journey* (3.4) or the whole relationship with a public service organization, its products, systems, services or related networks. Interaction can be directly related or indirectly related to the public service organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.6, modified — “customer/citizen” replaced “customer” and “public service organization” replaced “organization”. The last sentence of Note 1 to entry deleted.]

3.4

customer/citizen journey

series or sum of *customer/citizen experiences* (3.3) when engaging with a *public service organization* (3.14), and its products or services

Note 1 to entry: “Series” is based on processes; “sum” is based on results.

3.5

employee engagement

extent to which employees are committed to the *public service organization* (3.14), feel enthusiastic about their job and put discretionary effort into their work

Note 1 to entry: Engaged employees are motivated to go above and beyond what they are expected to do for *customers/citizens* (3.2) and the public service organization.

3.6

outstanding customer/citizen experience

services that are significantly better than the level that creates *public service* (3.9) *satisfaction* (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: As shown in Levels 3 and 4 of the public service excellence pyramid, see [Figure 1](#).

3.7

service provision

delivery and management of a service

[SOURCE: ISO 41011:2024, 3.1.7, modified — “service provision” replaced “internal service provision” and “in-house service provision” as the term. “by staff employed by the demand organization” deleted.]

3.8

satisfaction

perception of the degree to which expectations have been fulfilled

3.9

public service

service provided by an organization, established, appointed or approved by the government, to *customers/citizens* (3.2)

Note 1 to entry: Types of public service include the following:

- a) services provided for the protection of citizens, such as defence, law and order, judicial, and cyber security;
- b) services provided to cater for societal governance through regulatory measures, such as taxation and other revenue collection, central banking, environment protection, labour market regulation, immigration control, food safety, and other licensing and approvals;
- c) services provided for the conservation of culture, arts, heritage, forests, land and water resources, and biodiversity;
- d) services provided for citizens’ welfare, such as infrastructure development, healthcare, basic education, social security and shelters;

- e) services provided on commercial basis, such as airport and postal, and public utilities such as water, electricity and gas.

Note 2 to entry: Services provided by international organizations established under multilateral intergovernmental agreements can also be deemed to be public services.

Note 3 to entry: A public service can be provided for free or on payment of charges.

3.10

public service excellence

capabilities of a *public service organization* (3.14) to consistently deliver *outstanding customer/citizen experiences* (3.6) to achieve customer/citizen delight

Note 1 to entry: Capabilities reflect the four dimensions and twelve elements of the public service excellence model and their interplay (see [Figure 3](#)).

3.11

public service excellence mission

general expression of what a *public service organization* (3.14) is committed to do to achieve the *public service excellence vision* (3.13)

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.13, modified — “public” added to the term and definition. “general expression of what a public service organization is committed to do” replaced “commitment of an organization on how”.]

3.12

public service excellence strategy

translation of the *public service excellence vision* (3.13) and *mission* (3.11) into sound principles, objectives and actions in order to realize the envisaged goals

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.14, modified — “public” added to the term and definition. “envisaged” added to the definition.]

3.13

public service excellence vision

future aspiration of a *public service organization* (3.14) for achieving *public service excellence* (3.10)

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.12, modified — “public” and “public service” added to the term and definition.]

3.14

public service organization

institution, service organization or system, which is under the policy direction of and controlled by a government (national, federal, regional or local)

Note 1 to entry: Public service organizations can include organizations that deal with development of policy and enforcement of law, i.e. matters that could not be regarded strictly as services whose activities influence public interest at large.

[SOURCE: CAF 2020^[8], Glossary, modified — “elected” added in the definition. “whose activities influence public interest at large” added in Note 1 to entry.

3.15

accountability

duty to be answerable for assigned responsibilities, including the responsible use and oversight of allocated resources

Note 1 to entry: Those who assume accountability are tasked with providing explanations and updates regarding the management of resources and operations within their purview to those who require accountability. Therefore, both parties have distinct roles and responsibilities in this process.

[SOURCE: CAF 2020^[8], Glossary, modified — “obligation to answer for responsibilities that have been conferred and accepted, and to report on the utilisation and management of entrusted resources.” replaced by the definition. “Those who assume accountability are tasked with providing explanations and updates regarding the management of resources and operations within their purview to those who require

accountability. Therefore, both parties have distinct roles and responsibilities in this process.” replaced by Note 1 to entry.]

3.16

transparency

visibility of policies, strategies and decisions, and actions of an organization provided to its stakeholders through open access to information, proactive communication and/or responses to queries

Note 1 to entry: In the context of *public services* (3.9), transparency can include providing information regarding the processes deployed to arrive at the policies, strategies and decisions.

Note 2 to entry: *Public service organizations* (3.14) can be protected by law from divulging information that is sensitive, such as matters affecting national security, oath of secrecy and privacy of individuals.

Note 3 to entry: Some of the methods adopted to ensure transparency include voluntary disclosures of accounts, statutory provisions guaranteeing the right to seek information, creating forums for interactions with citizens, audits and reviews.

3.17

governance of organizations

human-based system by which an organization is directed, overseen and held accountable for achieving its defined purpose

Note 1 to entry: Governance is the framework and the top-level processes involved in:

- a) setting the strategic direction of an organization;
- b) the development of vision, mission, values, policies and strategies;
- c) the deployment of strategies through the delegation of authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities;
- d) monitoring and control of processes;
- e) reporting of information and compliances

Note 2 to entry: Attributes of effective governance include establishing mechanisms for reporting achievements against goals and targets, ensuring that stakeholders are informed regarding decision-making processes and management actions, requiring people to be responsive to stakeholders’ needs, and managing resources effectively and efficiently.

[SOURCE: ISO 37000:2021, 3.1.1, modified — Note 1 to entry added.]

3.19

integrity

adherence to a code of values that entails the continuous upholding of the organizational value system and principles, exemplified through the words and deeds of both the leadership and all members of the organization

Note 1 to entry: Particularly in *public services* (3.9), integrity stands as a pivotal element in ensuring *accountability* (3.15) and in preserving the public’s trust and confidence in the organization.

3.20

service standard

definition of requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that services are fit for purpose for the purpose of achieving customer/citizen *satisfaction* (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: ISO/IEC Guide 76:2020 provides guidance on how to meet the needs of consumers in the development of service standards.

3.21

public service excellence purpose

clear direction provided by a *public service organization* (3.14) towards *public service excellence* (3.10)

Note 1 to entry: It provides clear direction for strategic planning and the formulation of a *public service excellence strategy* (3.12).

4 Relevance and benefits of public service excellence

Increasingly public service organizations are facing a number of key challenges. These challenges stem not only from mega trends such as demographic shifts, shifts of economic power, accelerating urbanization, the climate crisis/resource scarcity and technological breakthroughs, but also from crises due to geopolitical changes that have a more immediate impact.

In addition, there is not only regional competition within a country, but also global competition between nations for talents, visitors, investors, companies that create jobs and growth, events and recognition in the global society. Public service organizations must operate within this challenging environment and at the same time deal with the growing demands and expectations of customers/citizens. As customer/citizen needs and expectations expand, public service organizations should concentrate on optimizing the experience, using innovation at all touch-points in customer journeys. Services should be continuously and consistently improved, in co-creation with the customer/citizen and all other interested parties.

Public service excellence describes an approach that enables the creation of outstanding customer/citizen experiences by individual and surprising service provision, resulting in the creation of trust so that societal challenges are addressed through innovation. Consequently, service excellence leads to addressing future societal challenges.

This cause-and-effect chain is shown in [Figure 2](#). This chain can be seen from the perspective of customer/citizens and employees.

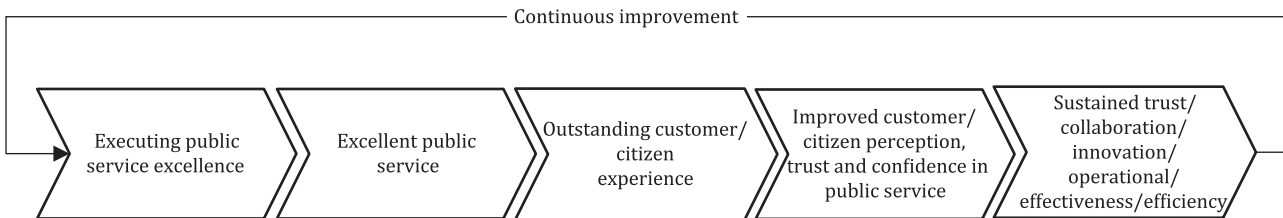


Figure 2 — Public service excellence effect chain

Public service excellence is a continuous process and requires investment in people, infrastructure, systems and research. The organization can benefit from this investment in a number of ways, for example:

- higher reputation as a customer/citizen centric organization;
- establishing and strengthening of long-term customer/citizen relationships (leading to co-creation);
- cost-saving potential in the long term (e.g. lower failure costs, productivity improvement);
- an excellent public service brand (leading to improved recruitment opportunities, higher levels of staff engagement, higher brand awareness);
- improved customer/citizen co-operation and engagement;
- better management of networks with subcontractors;
- enhanced organizational efficiency and performance;
- higher agility to respond to changes;
- potential to develop innovations that would address societal challenges;
- providing convenient access of public services to customers/citizens.

5 Principles of public service excellence

5.1 General principles of service excellence

5.1.1 Managing the organization from outside-in

The organization should design the desired experience from the customer's/citizen's perspective. Once designed, resources and processes should be aligned to sustain customer/citizen centricity on an ongoing basis.

5.1.2 Deepening customer/citizen relationships

The organization should strive for a superior level of individual personalization and be focused on the customer/citizen needs and expectations throughout the relationship. A strong relationship can be fuelled by continuous communication, which should reflect the customer's/citizen's desired level of interaction.

5.1.3 People make the difference

The engagement of everyone in the organization, including partners, in achieving customer delight/citizen delight is of key importance.

5.1.4 Balanced attention to customers/citizens, employees, subcontractors and other stakeholders

Customers/citizens, employees, subcontractors and other stakeholders are important, and the organization should give a balanced focus of attention to them all.

5.1.5 Cross-functional management approach

The organization should work through customer/citizen journeys with an integrated cross-functional approach.

5.1.6 Leveraging of technology

Appropriate technology should be used to create outstanding customer/citizen experiences, for staff, customers and partners.

5.1.7 Create value for stakeholders

Implementing service excellence leads to additional sustainable value for stakeholders. Co-creation with stakeholders should be used to create enhanced value. Value can be monetary as well as non-monetary.

5.2 Specific principles of public service excellence

5.2.1 Public interest

Public services are provided to serve the larger public interest that may include diverse purposes and objectives such as societal, ecological, economic and security. A measure of excellence is the ability to effectively manage conflicts of interest among citizen groups that ensures that precedence is always given to the larger public interest against the interests of individuals or smaller groups.

5.2.2 Equitable approach

The public service should be provided to everybody with the utmost fairness and impartiality to all service recipients, irrespective of their gender, social status, level of literacy, influence and background. Special focus should be given to ensuring that the underprivileged, marginalized segments receive the full benefit of the public service.

5.2.3 Transparency and communication

A public service organization should develop policies and procedures to ensure that the existing and potential customers/citizens or service recipients are aware, fully understand and comprehend the service intent, methods of availing services, its terms of delivery and the possible outcomes. All communications regarding the services should be transparent, clear and timely, and delivered through multiple channels, ensuring the widest possible coverage.

5.2.4 Accessibility

Public services should be available digitally or otherwise to the customers/citizens with simple access procedures at convenient locations, time periods and durations, minimizing incidents of outages, crowding and waiting to acceptable levels. A measure of excellence is the doorstep delivery of the public service for marginalized and disabled consumers.

5.2.5 Efficiency and effectiveness

As public services are provided using government funds or charges borne by the citizens, an important aspect of their excellence is that all resources should be deployed and utilized in a way that maximizes their use and application, and avoids wastage, idling and delays. Resources include finance, people, building and spaces, equipment and materials, knowledge and information. The service processes should be designed, operated, monitored and continuously improved to enhance citizens' experience and reduce service errors and failures.

5.2.6 Accountability

Personnel associated with public services should be made aware that they are accountable to the government, public and society for the proper discharge of their designated function and responsibilities. With a view to protect citizen's rights, a public service organization should set up mechanisms through which accountability can be established, monitored and, when required, invoked (e.g. when lapses occur).

5.2.7 Agility

Agility in public service organization refers to its ability to effectively and quickly respond to changing circumstances, emerging challenges and emerging citizen needs. A public service organization should continuously track these and revise its policies, strategies and processes to sustain an excellent services delivery, without losing focus on its mission, vision and purpose.

6 Public service excellence model

The public service excellence model (see [Figure 3](#)) contains four dimensions with twelve elements, which lead to outstanding customer/citizen experiences.

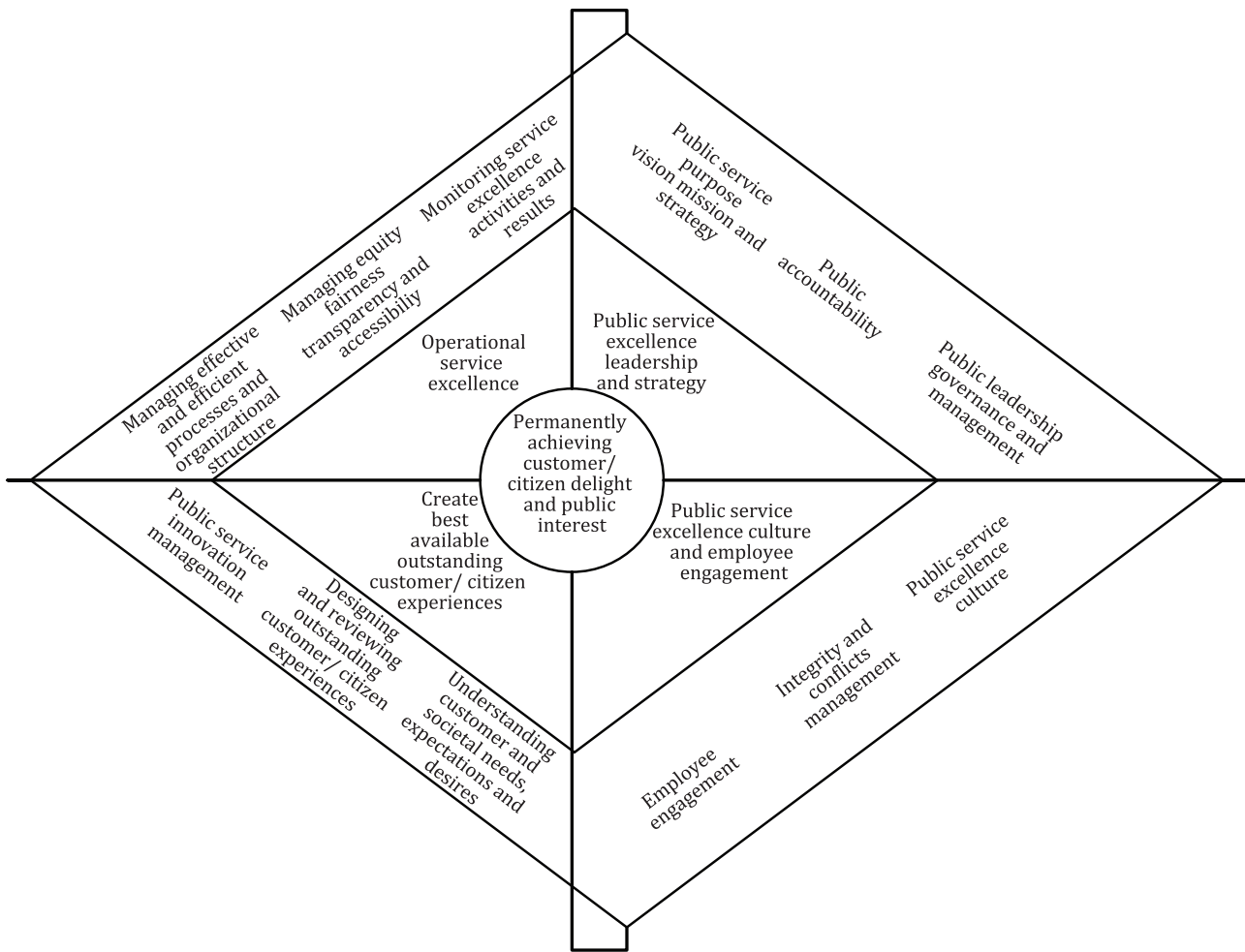


Figure 3 — Public service excellence model

The objective of permanently achieving outstanding customer/citizen experience is at the centre of the model. The four dimensions and twelve elements are equal with no sequence of implementation, although ideally a public service excellence strategy should be in place and should be incorporated in the organization's public service excellence strategy.

7 Elements of the public service excellence model

7.1 Public service excellence leadership and strategy

7.1.1 Public service excellence purpose, vision, mission and strategy

The purpose of the public service is usually documented through the government's orders, notifications or statutes that informs its business scope and the key functions at the time of its establishment, and any changes through revision orders.

The leadership of the public service organization guarantees organizational adherence to a well-defined mission, vision and strategy that align with its intended purpose. This means that they develop the mission, the vision, and the strategy and values required for the organization's long-term success. Each public organization requires values that form the foundation for all its activities. These values should be in line with its mission and vision. The elements of service excellence vision, mission and strategy frame and determine the targeted citizen experience interaction with the public service organization. They translate the principles and the design of outstanding citizen experiences into all other elements of the public service excellence model.

The public service excellence vision, mission and strategy should be aligned with each other and with the public service organization's overall strategy. They should be created and reviewed by involving all stakeholders including management, staff and citizens. The vision, mission and strategy should be communicated to and implemented by all parts of the organization to help create a service excellence culture and to inform everyone about decision-making. This element is divided into the following three sub-elements:

- a) Service excellence vision: The public service organization should have a service excellence vision in the long term which clearly states its aspiration to consistently meet and exceed customers'/citizens' expectations and desires through exceptional public service delivery. The vision should embrace the whole organization and should be based on a deep understanding of the needs and expectations of all relevant stakeholders as well as the external environment.
- b) Service excellence mission: The public service organization should have a mission in the long term which will enable the development of a service excellence strategy that sets the goals and objectives to achieve the service excellence vision. The mission of public service organizations is well stipulated in the legal framework that defines clearly its role and responsibilities towards the society it is called upon to serve.
- c) Service excellence strategy: The public service organization should translate its service excellence vision and mission into a coherent strategy in the form of documented strategic and operational objectives. The service excellence strategy forms an integral part of the overall organizational strategy and describes what the organization will achieve and how it will realize these objectives.

The public service excellence strategy should be based on the defined principles and the other model elements to achieve the results. The strategy should be translated into actionable objectives, goals, programmes and other tools. Responsibilities and how the organization plans to implement these should be defined. The strategy should be deployed to all relevant parts of the organization and reviewed regularly. This review should take into account any changes in the external environment that could potentially affect service excellence.

Appropriate practices for the development and implementation of the service excellence vision, mission and strategy can include:

- Engaging with key stakeholders, including employees, in structured strategy workshops in order to develop a service excellence vision, mission and strategy;
- Developing strategy documentation that is circulated to the main stakeholders as per the stakeholder engagement plan, and subsequently engaging with them to gain acceptance;

NOTE Stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) documents the involvement and influence of project stakeholders. It also outlines how the organization plans to communicate with stakeholders.

- Ensuring organizational agility by regularly reviewing the relevance of the service excellence strategy in the context of internal and external changes.

7.1.2 Public service leadership and management requirements

7.1.2.1 General

The public service organization top management, and relevant managers at all levels have a vital role in determining, implementing and sustaining the service excellence strategy and should be committed to service excellence. They should demonstrate their leadership by developing and deploying the service excellence vision, mission and strategy in line with the overall strategic direction of the organization. They should develop the necessary service excellence values and make sure that the whole organization, including its people, are united towards achieving them. The mindset and commitment of top management to create an environment which allows employees to realize their full-service potential is critical in order to achieve service excellence.

This element is divided into the four sub-elements described in [7.1.2.2](#) to [7.1.2.4](#).

7.1.2.2 Leadership

Relevant managers at all levels should focus on service excellence and create a service excellence culture that captures the whole organization, including its key stakeholders. They should link the performance of the organization directly with the performance on public service excellence.

Managers should:

- develop the public service excellence vision, mission, strategy and purpose, and ensure that it is communicated throughout the organization;
- regularly monitor and review the progress of implementation of the service excellence strategy and objectives by defining and using a set of relevant key performance indicators (KPIs);
- inspire employees on service excellence and create an environment of ownership, engagement and accountability;
- set the direction for service excellence innovation;
- receive regular customer/citizen feedback and use this information as an important input to the performance of service excellence as well as the employee performance;
- ensure achievement of service excellence objectives through supporting and developing employees' knowledge and skills.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Public service organizations in collaboration with associations or local academies of public administration developing and implementing management development programmes specific for public sector managers in the area of service excellence.
- b) Institutionalizing citizen feedback as part of the improvement management or performance management.

NOTE Institutionalize can include giving official status (formalize) to citizen feedback as part of the improvement management or performance management.
- c) Developing the necessary organizational structure with clear responsibilities in relation to service excellence.
- d) Developing a data management system that includes, to the extent possible, capturing data from the work flow, and using the data for effective measurement of performance.
- e) Developing an effective internal communication system so that all aspects relating to service excellence performance are communicated effectively.

7.1.2.3 Shared efforts, defined responsibilities and objectives

Managers, through strong leadership and leading by example, should create an environment in which employees are able to deliver outstanding customer/citizen experiences.

Managers should:

- translate the strategy into actionable operational objectives and programmes for departments, teams and employees so that each one is fully aware of their impact on service excellence;
- establish and communicate motivational and agreed service excellence targets;
- communicate the operational objectives to external stakeholders, including the subcontractors, and ensure that the specifications given to them are properly understood and executed;
- implement the necessary service excellence governance so that:
 - service excellence is promoted;

- service excellence performance is monitored, reported and all necessary improvement actions are initiated.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Local public sector academies implementing personal development programmes for all competencies and behaviours.
- b) Management encouraging everyone to take ownership in shared activities and results.
- c) Translating the service excellence strategy into its organizational objectives with a balanced top-down/bottom-up approach should be part of the organization's regular planning and control cycle. The outcome of such a process is that each department, team and employee is able to link their own objectives and individual actions with the service excellence strategy. Employees should be able to regularly review their objectives and results.
- d) Public sector organization management assigning roles and responsibilities relating to the provision of service excellence.

7.1.2.4 Governance

Governance of organizations in the public sector should be based on the type of public service being delivered. The common elements of governance that will result in public service excellence should include:

- ensuring that all the processes of the organization are aligned in such a way that the purpose of the organization always remains in focus;
- the principles of public interest, equitable approach, transparency, accountability and accessibility are applied to training and development, working procedures, definition of roles and responsibilities, functional and individual KPIs;

NOTE Public interest is the welfare or well-being of the general public.

- the principles of efficiency and effectiveness are factored into organizational review processes and structures that should include resource optimization and utilization, internal audit and control, board level reporting and reviews, and public disclosures;
- the principles of agility and responsiveness are converted into service standards that are made known to customers/citizens, with internal goals and targets specifying the minimum compliance level;
- performance indicators and targets are agreed and decided, and evaluated against the results on an annual and long-term basis;
- improvement actions are taken based on performance reports, citizens' feedback and expectations, government policies, adoption of new technologies as they become available, and benchmarking with service excellence in the private sector.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) The management of public service organizations, particularly those primarily focused on citizen safety, should consistently assess evolving risks to citizen security. They should also aim to enhance their resources, technologies and built capacity (human and digital technology) to minimize these risks.
- b) A crucial aspect of achieving excellence in public service involves cultivating the ability to react swiftly in emergency scenarios. This is accomplished through well-defined disaster or risk mitigation plans that are continuously maintained in a state of preparedness.
- c) The administration of public services, particularly those primarily focused on societal governance, should guarantee that all regulatory measures adhere to established best practices in regulation. They should employ regulatory impact assessment to assess the impact of compliance requirements on all stakeholders, including citizens.

- d) As a benchmark for excellence in public service, it should be ensured that obligations for regulatory compliance are clearly communicated and explained to affected individuals. Compliance should be straightforward and cost-effective, and penalties should be proportionate to the nature and extent of non-compliance.
- e) Services dedicated to conservation and citizen welfare should be managed with the aim of optimizing the use of public funds. They should be guided by performance metrics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the programmes, projects and other initiatives undertaken. These outcomes should be consistently disclosed to the public.
- f) The management of public service organizations, institutions and bodies aimed at citizen welfare should engage in proactive communication to ensure that the target group and citizens are well-informed about their entitlements. Additionally, mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate effective communication between the service providers and the recipients.
- g) In addition to measuring direct benefits such as the number of people covered or funds utilized, governance should cover the evaluation of the long-term social impact of programmes, such as enhancements in literacy, life expectancy and income levels.
- h) Services offered on a commercial basis frequently face competition from analogous private services. These services can function as profit-making entities or operate on a non-profit basis, where any surpluses are redirected to the government.
- i) The governance of commercial public services is bound by the obligation of public accountability. As a result, various procedures such as procurement of goods and services, expenditure, fund management, fees and tariffs, staff recruitment, compensation, advancement, and operating hours can be subject to government policies and regulations.
- j) The leadership of commercial public service organizations delivers excellence by a series of actions, such as:
 - 1) declaring service standards in the public domain;
 - 2) regularly engaging with customers/citizens on the quality of goods/services being delivered and on the evaluation service experience;
 - 3) keeping staff motivated through engagement, encouragement and recognition;
 - 4) constantly upgrading skills and competencies;
 - 5) using technology to improve/upgrade service processes.

Additional appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- Top management of the public service organization should develop the necessary service excellence governance so that:
 - service excellence is promoted and implemented;
 - service excellence performance is monitored and reported, and all necessary improvement actions are initiated.
- Adopting good regulatory practices that are internationally recognized processes, systems, tools and methods for improving the quality of regulations. GRP systematically implements public consultation and stakeholder engagement as well as impact analysis of government proposals, before they are implemented to make sure they are fit for purpose and will deliver what they are set out to achieve.
- Adopting regulatory impact assessment (RIA) which is a systemic approach to critically assessing the positive and negative effects of proposed and existing regulations and non-regulatory alternatives.

7.1.2.5 Employee empowerment and engagement

In a service excellence environment, employees should go above and beyond what they are expected to do for customers/citizens in order to deliver outstanding and personalized experiences. Engaged and empowered employees are more likely to deliver exceptional service and contribute positively to the organization's success.

Managers should:

- provide public sector employees with a clear communication of mission and values;
- create an environment where there is clear and transparent communication;
- where possible, provide autonomy and decision-making authority;
- be ready to recognize and reward excellence;
- use technology and tools to empower employees;
- lead by their own example as to the provision of service excellence;
- engage employees by requesting their input in decisions that affect the customer/citizen;
- provide the necessary support and encouragement to employees for the effective implementation of their duties;
- assess training needs based on individual competencies and provide the necessary training, coaching and support;
- be close to employees and provide quick feedback relating to the delivery of their service excellence responsibilities;
- provide a work environment where employees are motivated to do their best towards achieving outstanding customer/citizen experience.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Management has the potential to foster a culture of continuous learning, encouraging employees to enhance their skills and adapt to evolving requirements.
- b) Empowering and supporting employees by offering timely feedback is crucial for enhancing their performance.
- c) Equipping employees with the tools and technology that facilitate efficient information access, prompt response to inquiries and effective task management is essential.
- d) Fostering a culture of trust between leaders in the public sector and employees involves proactive measures to prevent discrimination, promoting equal opportunities, and addressing the individual needs and circumstances of employees.
- e) Establishing an efficient communication system that involves employees in decision-making processes and provides regular feedback on service excellence performance is vital. Additionally, offering support for personal development is key.
- f) Sharing anecdotes of exceptional employee performance and positive interactions with customers/citizens serves as an inspiration for others.
- g) Leading by example entails personally embodying established objectives and values related to engaging with customers/citizens and upholding service excellence.
- h) Providing consistent constructive feedback and conducting coaching sessions are instrumental in helping employees enhance their performance and advance professionally.

7.1.3 Public accountability

Public servants are accountable to the legislature, the executive (government) and to the civil society/citizens they serve as all the power and authority is given to them through the people's mandate. Accountability is a function of the trust and the confidence the people have in the public service. Public service organizations are also accountable to the public exchequer for diligent utilization and expenditure of public funds made available through government allocation or raised through prescribed fees and charges. Another way to understand accountability is that a public servant is obliged to explain why he or she has not been able to fulfil the responsibilities of his or her role. In several roles, a senior public servant, such as the chief executive, is accountable for the performance of the entire organization and also for lapses, shortfalls in meeting targets, and errors and omissions committed by others in the organization, when these are known to him or her.

NOTE A public servant is a person who is appointed or elected to a public office (e.g. working for a local or state government).

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Ensuring transparency of all processes through which decisions are taken. On demand, the relevant information, such as official notes, should be made available to a citizen.
- b) Ensuring that rules and procedures established by statute or by authority are strictly followed, and any deviations are exceptional and fully justified.
- c) Engaging with citizen groups to inform them about changes, new policies and constraints, as well as to identify expectations, and to seek feedback and suggestions.
- d) Using media/public relations (PR) teams for communications to continuously build trust.
- e) Delegation of authority within the organization in compliance with specified guidelines. The authority should be complementary to the job description/responsibilities of the role.
- f) Setting up systems for internal command and control, so that critical decisions are taken with due consultation or jointly, and deliberate omissions, deviations, transgressions of authority or derelictions in discharging responsibility are identified and corrected.
- g) Ensuring that all information and data that are provided to internal and statutory audits are accurate, complete and updated.
- h) Fixing ownership of non-compliances and nonconformities reported in audits, or found during regular monitoring and reviews. Ensuring corrective actions are taken for the non-compliances and nonconformities.

7.2 Public service excellence culture and employee engagement

7.2.1 Public service excellence culture

7.2.1.1 General

The organization's culture is key to how people think, feel and act in order to attain service excellence and deliver outstanding experiences. As such, the culture is defined by service excellence values, attitudes and behaviours and is an important part of the corporate culture. It includes a commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, responsiveness and excellence in fulfilling the organization's mission and serving the public interest.

This element is divided into the three sub-elements described in [7.2.1.2](#) to [7.2.1.4](#).

7.2.1.2 Defining the service excellence culture

The service excellence culture should reflect the organization's values, attitudes and behaviours. This enables the execution of the service excellence strategy which ultimately leads to outstanding experiences.

NOTE Examples of such culture can include: commitment to excellence, passion, recognition, pro-activeness, empowerment, openness to challenges, agility and going above and beyond.

The organization should:

- analyse, define and establish the service excellence culture by the public service organization's leadership team in close cooperation with employees;
- embed the service excellence culture in the corporate culture;
- ensure that all stakeholders are in line with the service excellence culture;
- celebrate successes, compliments and other positive feedback from customers/citizens to establish a positive culture;
- adapt the service excellence culture to any changes in the external environment.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Conducting customer/citizen research to understand what kind of service culture customers/citizens need most.
- b) Organizing workshops to discuss the service excellence culture.
- c) Co-creating with all employees on the public service excellence culture. Encourage all employees to put forward keywords of service excellence culture, and carry out voting if needed.
- d) Quantifying the service excellence culture into specific KPIs, such as the service timing, feedback rate, etc.
- e) Defining SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) measures to monitor the progress of the implementation process relating to service excellence culture.
- f) Implementing a culture of reflective practice and learning from failures.

NOTE Reflective practice is learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice.

- g) Measurement of efficient public service: reduction of bureaucracy through the use of a one-time application.

7.2.1.3 Communicating the service excellence culture

A continuous internal and external communication is essential to sustain and further develop the service excellence culture.

Managers should:

- continuously share their expectations with employees;
- demonstrate the behaviours that will be expected from employees to deliver service excellence;
- acknowledge employees and teams that consistently put in practice the principles of public service excellence, reinforcing positive behaviours.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) For internal personnel:
 - 1) embedding the service excellence culture into a code of conduct or service specification;

- 2) spreading the service excellence culture through the organization's internal network and work platform;
 - 3) including service excellence culture in the KPIs to promote the spread of service culture;
 - 4) disseminating service excellence culture through internal training and meetings with employees.
- b) For use externally:
- 1) holding a policy conference to let the public know the service excellence culture;
 - 2) holding open or semi-open seminars to spread awareness regarding the organization's service excellence culture;
 - 3) demonstrating the service excellence culture through messages and behaviour at the different touch points on the customer/citizen journey map (such as bus stops), websites, social media, exhibitions, advertisements, etc., so that customer/citizen can understand the service culture;
 - 4) disseminating public service excellence culture through interviews and public speeches by emphasizing the organization's values, corporate responsibility, service standards and practices;
 - 5) facilitating the improvement of public perception of the public service organization through sharing service excellence success stories – bursting the myths.

7.2.1.4 Implementation of the service excellence culture

As described in the other elements of the service excellence model, the culture should be ingrained in all practices of the organization.

The organization should:

- monitor continuously the implementation of the service excellence culture by collecting regular feedback from customers/citizens, employees and other relevant stakeholders;
- benchmark measures against other organizations over time to monitor progress;
- focus on ongoing improvement of processes, services and practices to adapt to changing circumstances, emerging needs and technological advancements.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Documenting the service excellence culture into a public service organization charter, and accept public scrutiny in the form of citizen feedback.
- b) Training employees to make them fully understand the code of conduct or the public service charter.
- c) Promoting intranet or external social networks communication, and crowdsourcing.
- d) Including service culture targets in the individual target agreements or performance evaluation indicator system for managers and employees.
- e) Quantifying the service culture into specific measurable KPIs, such as the service timing, complaint feedback rate, etc. Embedding the indicators into the service information system and deploy it.

7.2.2 Employee engagement

7.2.2.1 General

The public service organization should use human resource processes and tools to stimulate and maintain shared values, beliefs and practices to create outstanding customer/citizen experiences. Management should ensure employees are enthusiastic and motivated to provide outstanding customer/citizen experiences and to delight their customers/citizens.

This element is divided into the six sub-elements described in [7.2.2.2](#) to [7.2.2.7](#).

7.2.2.2 Recruitment and induction of new employees

During the recruitment and onboarding phase, a strong focus should be on the service excellence attitudes and behaviours of new employees in line with the service excellence vision, mission, values and strategy of the public organization. The recruitment and selection of the right candidates for public service positions is critical to building a skilled and motivated personal that can effectively serve the community and uphold the organization's mission.

The organization should:

- define concise job descriptions and requirements including behavioural competencies;
- use a transparent and inclusive recruitment process;
- use various tools for sourcing, testing and selecting new employees with the best service excellence attitudes and cultural fit;
- use a clearly defined and substantial onboarding programme with a focus on the value of customers/citizens, their needs and expectations, and the culture and values of the organization;
- actively involve senior management and relevant stakeholders.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Evaluating the current and projected human resource needs in accordance with the strategic objectives of the organization.
- b) Developing precise job descriptions that delineate roles, responsibilities, necessary qualifications and performance expectations, including defining minimum requirements, skills, education and experience for the role.
- c) Ensuring that the recruitment process is impartial, transparent and devoid of biases, while simultaneously advocating for diversity and inclusion.
- d) Utilizing a variety of recruitment channels such as job boards, social media platforms, career fairs and collaborations with educational institutions to access a diverse pool of candidates.
- e) Confirming that the crucial skills and capabilities required to fulfil the organization's mission, vision and values are in place, with particular emphasis on interpersonal skills and adaptability, as well as proficiency in digital and innovative capabilities.
- f) Involving pertinent stakeholders, such as team members, department heads and community representatives, in the selection process to gather diverse perspectives.

7.2.2.3 Continuous learning and development of employees

The delivery of outstanding customer/citizen experiences is associated with the continuous learning attitude that is expected from all employees, regardless of their level of experience. The success of a public organization relies on the crucial responsibilities of recognizing, fostering and efficiently managing the capabilities of its staff.

The organization should:

- have a continuous learning programme on service excellence for all managers and employees in order to achieve or meet the required competence, skills and performance requirements;
- develop programmes on leadership development that can include tools for public management;
- establish a continuous learning programme for employees with customer/citizen contact focused on the necessary skills for delivering outstanding customer/citizen experiences.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Designing individualized competency development plans that integrate personal skills into employee development discussions. This process provides a platform for reciprocal feedback and ensures alignment of expectations regarding the delivery of exceptional service.
- b) Exploring the adoption of contemporary training methodologies, including a multimedia approach, on-the-job training, e-learning and leveraging social media.
- c) Assessing and cultivating innovative learning modalities to enhance competencies, such as design thinking, collaborative teamwork, experimental laboratories, e-learning and well-structured on-the-job learning.
- d) Employing human resource software proficient in efficiently managing the entire competency development cycle.

7.2.2.4 Feedback of customers/citizens at an employee/team level

Since the experience perceived by customers/citizens can strongly differ from the belief of management in the delivered customer/citizen experience, public service organizations should regularly seek feedback from their customers/citizens.

Collecting feedback on citizen experience is critical for public service organizations seeking service excellence to understand the needs and preferences of the community they serve and to continuously improve their services.

The organization should:

- regularly use customer/citizen experience feedback and listening mechanisms such as implementing internal and external customer/citizen surveys;
- use feedback to either reinforce positive behaviours or redesign negative interactions;
- analyse, share and act upon frequently obtained feedback from customers/citizens to individual employees and/or teams on their service delivery level;
- use the customer/citizen feedback to define and implement corresponding measures and/or action plans and for appraisal and reward purposes;
- encourage employees to ask internal and external customers/citizens for their personal feedback (providing the customer/citizen gives permission), in order to improve the service given on an individual and organizational level.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Offering different ways for citizens to provide feedback, such as online surveys, feedback forms, social media, email, relationship evaluations, complaints, suggestions and compliments.
- b) Developing and implementing mechanisms for citizens to provide feedback in real-time, especially after interacting with a service or visiting a government office.
- c) Developing purposeful surveys that cover various aspects of the citizen experience, including ease of use, clarity of information, responsiveness and overall satisfaction.
- d) Categorizing feedback data by demographics, location or specific services used to gain insights into different citizen groups' experiences.
- e) Using analytical tools to efficiently analyse feedback and identify trends.
- f) Benchmarking the organization's feedback data with similar government agencies to assess performance and identify areas for improvement.

- g) Communicating, by different means, citizen feedback to staff members who interact directly with citizens, enabling them to understand the impact of their work and make the necessary improvements.
- h) Making sure to emphasize positive citizen experiences and success stories resulting from feedback-driven improvements.

7.2.2.5 Evaluation and assessment of employees

The service orientation of employees should be regularly evaluated. Employees should demonstrate that they have consistently helped and served customers/citizens in an outstanding way.

Evaluating and assessing employees in a service excellence environment is a critical process in order to make sure that employees are in line with the public service organization's goals, delivering excellent services and contributing to a culture of excellence.

The implementation of an effective evaluation and assessment process enables public service organizations to motivate employees to continuously improve, deliver exceptional service and contribute to the achievement of the defined service excellence goals.

The organization should:

- define clear performance expectations relating to the provision of service excellence and integrate major targets/objectives on delivering outstanding customer/citizen experiences within the job descriptions of employees;
- conduct regular performance reviews;
- allow self-assessment of an employee's performance and take it into consideration;
- define a system of recognition and rewards (non-financial rewards);
- utilize evaluation and assessment as part of an employee's personal development;
- ensure the transparency and fairness of the assessment process;
- support, recognize and celebrate role models, and take measures to address underperformance in achieving a customer/citizen outstanding experience.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Using evaluation and assessment tools based on excellence-driven KPIs.
- b) Perform periodic performance evaluations to provide employees with feedback on their strengths, areas for improvement and contributions to service excellence.
- c) Collecting feedback from different sources, such as colleagues, supervisors and even external stakeholders, to provide an overall assessment of an employee's performance.
- d) Evaluating employees based on behavioural competencies that are essential for service excellence (communication skills, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, empathy).
- e) Establishing a system whereby employees self-assess their performance against established criteria, providing them with an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and areas of improvement.
- f) Setting performance goals that are aligned with the organization's service excellence objectives and the employee's role, always in a collaborative manner.
- g) Providing constructive feedback that focuses on specific behaviours and outcomes, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement.
- h) Having in place a coaching and mentoring system that enables employees to enhance their performance and develop new skills.

7.2.2.6 Recognition/acknowledgement system

Implementing a solid recognition and acknowledgement system in a public service organization operating within a service excellence environment is essential for motivating employees, reinforcing positive behaviours and promoting a service excellence culture.

The organization should:

- define clear criteria for recognition that are linked to the organizational service excellence culture;
- promote a positive culture of recognition in which service excellence is the main objective;
- establish formal and informal recognition systems focused on stimulating exceptional service behaviours;
- develop recognition systems that are timely, consistent, transparent and inclusive.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Defining specific criteria and behaviours that align with the organization's service excellence values and goals, while at the same time making sure that recognition is tied to the desired outcomes.
- b) Utilizing different forms of recognition such as formal awards, informal praise, certificates, public acknowledgements and small tokens of appreciation.
- c) Providing recognition on a timely basis to ensure that employees feel valued for their efforts and contributions as soon as possible after the event.
- d) Having a recognition system that is consistent and fair, treating all employees equitably and avoiding biases.
- e) Involving managers and supervisors in recognizing outstanding performance, shows it is important and demonstrates leadership's commitment to excellence.
- f) The recognition system's effectiveness should be regularly reviewed, and feedback collected from employees to make necessary adjustments and improvements.
- g) Celebrating successes and wins.

7.2.2.7 Employee feedback mechanism

The collection, review and assessment of employee feedback in a public service organization operating within a service excellence environment is crucial to engagement, identifying areas for improvement and creating an organizational culture that promotes excellence.

The organization should:

- develop and open the necessary communication channels;
- conduct regular employee surveys such as pulse surveys or engagement surveys;

NOTE Pulse surveys are a mechanism for measuring feedback using shorter, more frequent check-ins, that is not bound to measuring specific topics or content. This means that the content being measured can change from organization to organization and even from one survey to the next.

- conduct actionable feedback;
- use feedback as part of the organization's continuous improvement cycle.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Performing regular staff surveys, delivering feedback on the findings, analysing the results and implementing improvement measures based on them.
- b) Developing multiple channels for employees to provide feedback, such as suggestion boxes, surveys, focus groups and regular feedback sessions.

- c) Including a feedback component into performance reviews, enabling employees to share their perspectives on their roles, challenges and goals.
- d) Establishing regular open employee meetings where employees can openly discuss their thoughts and concerns with leadership in a collaborative manner.
- e) Establishing mechanisms to make sure that feedback is acted upon, enabling employees to see that their input leads to positive changes so they are more likely to continue providing feedback.
- f) Encouraging employees to provide feedback on training and development needs, helping tailor programmes to enhance skills and knowledge.
- g) Fostering a culture that values both positive and constructive feedback, promoting open conversations about challenges and opportunities.

7.2.3 Integrity and conflict management

7.2.3.1 Integrity

To ensure that people's trust and confidence is sustained, public service organizations should ensure that their employees are, at all times, maintaining integrity and acting in good faith.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Developing organizational values that guide leadership and employee behaviour. This is typically published as a values statement, often together with the vision and mission statements. The values statement may address integrity aspects such as fairness, impartiality, non-discrimination, honesty, citizen centricity, respect and empathy, valuing lives and dignity, and sustenance of the environment.
- b) Having a documented code of ethics or conduct for employees, which includes guidelines on how to act in specific situations. The code typically describes elements of good conduct and behaviour, and restricts or prohibits undesirable actions. It includes, as a minimum, a clear policy on anti-bribery, compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, compliance with the organization's commitments to citizens, being honest, impartial and non-discriminatory.
- c) Implementing the code through induction trainings, behavioural workshops, repeated messaging, exemplary leadership behaviour, including evaluation of conduct in employees' annual appraisal, and swift and decisive actions on observance of deviance.
- d) Monitoring the implementation of the code through observations, feedback from citizens and service recipients, internal reporting, and setting up whistleblower policy.

7.2.3.2 Conflict management

Public service organizations should remain fair, impartial and non-discriminatory. This can often lead to situations where the interests of different segments of society become conflicted.

Examples of conflict can include the following:

- a) Notifying technical regulations for the quality of products and services is in the consumer's interest, but can lead to a cost burden on suppliers.
- b) Providing welfare subsidies to the underprivileged, marginalized segments can lead to higher taxes for the affluent classes.
- c) Giving priority to senior citizens can lead to higher waiting times for other age group citizens.
- d) Imposing higher tariffs on imports can benefit domestic manufacturers but adversely impact importers.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- When considering conflicting interests, the public service provider evaluates the impact of the decision on each stakeholder group. To the extent possible, the interests should be balanced in the service design and policy-making.

Priority should be accorded to the following considerations:

- Where the public service serves the interests of the larger citizen community rather than smaller groups with vested interests.
- When the well-being of marginalized sectors of society is deemed crucial for their empowerment and advancement.
- Where national interests take precedence over other interests.

The public service organization should ensure that decisions in situations of conflict are taken with due consultation, are transparent and are clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

Other actions that contribute positively to conflict management include the following:

- Setting up mechanisms for grievance and complaints handling (refer ISO 10002).
- Setting up mechanisms for dispute resolution, such as an ombudsman.
- Setting up mechanisms for appeals against decisions.

7.3 Create best available outstanding customer/citizen experiences

7.3.1 Understanding customer/citizen and societal needs, expectations and desires

7.3.1.1 General

The organization should undertake appropriate research and analysis to adequately understand customers'/citizens' societal needs, current and future needs, expectations and desires.

In understanding societal needs for service excellence, public service organizations should recognize the expectations, preferences, and demands of individuals and communities in relation to the services they receive. It is important that they align their offerings with these needs in order to deliver high-quality services that exceed customer/citizen expectations.

This element is divided into the three sub-elements described in [7.3.1.2](#) to [7.3.1.4](#).

7.3.1.2 Scope and depth of listening to customers/societal needs

The organization should have in place a permanent system which listens to and tracks the expectations and desires, and the existing and changing customer/citizen needs, as well as the external environment.

The organization should:

- install a customer/citizen listening system, made up of a series of appropriate methods, that identifies what is valued by customers/citizens, including expressed and unexpressed expectations, external factors, and rational and emotional dimensions of customer/citizen experiences.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Surveys, through the use of structured questionnaires, requesting feedback on key citizen needs and expectations.
- b) The effective use of focus groups which involve small, diverse groups of people discussing specific topics in depth.

- c) The use of open public consultations during which the public is invited to participate in open consultations on policy changes, urban development or other relevant topics. This can be done through online platforms, public meetings and comment periods.

7.3.1.3 Organization of data acquisition and use

The public service organization should consistently research customer/citizen needs, expectations and desires using various methods. Listening to citizen and societal needs should be an ongoing process, and it is important to use a combination of methods to capture a holistic view. The public service organization should ensure that the information gathered is analysed and action plans are created, showing a commitment to meeting the identified needs and concerns.

The organization should:

- have appropriate processes in place to capture customer/citizen feedback (comments, expectations, complaints, suggestions and compliments), whether positive or negative, and quickly pass it on to senior management;
- use multiple data sources to understand cause and effect and to be able to possibly validate data;
- make the data directly available to all employees during their contact with customers/citizens to enable them to deliver an exceptional individual public service;
- integrate data from social media monitoring.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Monitoring social media platforms to understand public sentiment, opinions and concerns. Analyse comments and discussions related to specific issues to gain insights into what people are talking about.
- b) Providing feedback forms on the public service organizations' websites, mobile apps or physical locations, where citizens can provide their thoughts, suggestions and concerns about the services they receive.
- c) Creating online forums where citizens can discuss important topics, share their ideas and engage in meaningful conversations with each other and with representatives from organizations and government agencies.

7.3.1.4 Adapting to customer/citizen needs/societal needs, expectations and desires

It is usual for customers/citizens to expect products and services to remain relevant and updated in response to changes, whatever the origin is (e.g. legal, social, technological, environmental, innovation). Public service organizations should be flexible and open to adjusting their strategies, processes and services in response to new information, emerging trends and changing priorities.

The public service organization should:

- anticipate changes that can occur within society and in customer/citizen demands, and have the ability to be agile and adapt;
- use the results of the customer/citizen listening system (referred to in [7.3.1.3](#)) and translate expressed and unexpressed into service requirements.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Establishing advisory committees composed of representatives from various segments of society. These committees can provide ongoing feedback, insights and recommendations.
- b) Organizing workshops that bring together citizens, experts and stakeholders to brainstorm solutions and co-create strategies.

- c) Analysing media coverage, letters to the editor and other relevant interactions to understand public opinion and identify emerging concerns.
- d) Utilizing data analytics to gather information from various sources, such as number of website hits, social media and customer/citizen service interactions. Analysing patterns and trends can help identify emerging needs.

7.3.2 Designing and renewing outstanding customer/citizen experiences

7.3.2.1 General

To achieve an outstanding customer/citizen experience, a public service organization should design, implement and manage the delivery of excellent public services. Designing and renewing outstanding citizen experiences should involve the creation of effective interactions that should account for the needs and expectations of customers/citizens. Such an approach should ensure that citizens have a positive and seamless interaction with government services, leading to outstanding customer/citizen experiences.

This element is divided into the four sub-elements described in [7.3.2.2](#) to [7.3.2.5](#).

7.3.2.2 Designing and documenting the customer/citizen experience

The targeted experiences should be designed from the customer/citizen perspective, including customer/citizen journeys and the emotional results for both customers/citizens and staff.

The organization should:

- document efficiently and effectively the customer/citizen experiences;
- review the document on a regular basis to ensure changing customer/citizen expectations, competitor activities, innovation trends and significant changes to the external environment are reflected.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Using different methods, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups and data analysis, to gather further information about what citizens expect from public service organizations.
- b) Developing public service user personas that represent different segments of the population. These personas should reflect demographic information, motivations, goals and challenges, helping in designing personalized experiences.
- c) Mapping citizen end-to-end journeys, including pre-service, during-service and post-service phases. This should help the visualization of pain points and areas for improvement.
- d) Defining service attitudes aligned with public service organization values, and translating them into employee behaviour and requirements for customer/citizen journeys.
- e) Involving citizens in the design process through specific discussion techniques, as co-creation sessions, usability testing and feedback loops.

7.3.2.3 Setting organizational public service standards and delivering the service promise

In order to deliver the desired customer/citizen experiences, the organization should set and maintain effective internal standards and regularly exceed its service promise.

Service promise is a set of tangible guidelines that help to define what a customer/citizen can expect from interactions with your business, and how that experience should be delivered by the frontline.

The public service organization should:

- formulate the public service standards from the customer's/citizen's perspective and in the customer's/citizen's language (outside-in);

- engage and encourage management at all levels to be responsible for the implementation of internal service standards;
- ensure that staff fully understand the importance of these standards and are kept informed of performance.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Streamlining complex processes by eliminating non-value-adding steps to make interactions straightforward, minimizing bureaucracy and red tape that can frustrate customers/citizens.
- b) Ensuring consistency and continuity across all service provision channels, allowing citizens to choose their preferred method of interaction.
- c) Using plain language to communicate information and instructions.
- d) Providing clear and concise explanations of processes, requirements and benefits to avoid confusion.

7.3.2.4 Deployment of the customer/citizen experience concept throughout the organization

The customer/citizen experience concept should document requirements for deployment. The public service organization should:

- involve local teams and management in any deployment;
- ensure that in cases of large organizations and organizations with decentralized teams, the concept should be adaptable for local use where teams will jointly construct it with their customers/citizens and relevant subcontractors within the framework of corporate service standards.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Training and empowering frontline staff to provide exceptional public service. They should have the knowledge and tools to assist citizens effectively, whether in-person or through communication channels.
- b) Establishing a culture of continuous improvement by regularly analysing data, monitoring performance metrics, and adapting services based on changing citizen needs and technological advancements.
- c) Collaborating with other public service organizations to create seamless cross-functional public service experiences.

7.3.2.5 Service recovery excellence

Helping customers/citizens with arising or existing problems and complaints in an individual and surprising way is an important prerequisite for creating outstanding experiences.

The organization should:

- establish systems for quick processing of customer/citizen grievances and for their resolution within defined time frames;
- ensure that the resolution/remedy offered is adequate to meet customer/citizen satisfaction;
- have systems to minimize the occurrence of common and similar complaints.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include:

- a) creating channels, forums or web portals to enable citizens/customers voice their grievances easily and openly;
- b) designating persons, teams or committees with authority for handling and resolving citizen grievances;
- c) acting on feedback to demonstrate responsiveness and a commitment to improvement.

7.3.3 Public service innovation management

7.3.3.1 General

Public service innovation management involves the application of innovative practices and strategies within the public service organization to improve the design and delivery of services, enhance effectiveness and address societal challenges. This process focuses on identifying, developing and implementing innovative solutions to improve the level of quality, accessibility and effectiveness of public services.

Organizations aiming at public service excellence should improve and innovate their operations on a continuous basis. This should be achieved by close cooperation with customers/citizens and other relevant stakeholders. Innovation can be gradual, by improving current practices, or breakthrough, by developing and implementing new practices. The purpose of service innovation is to bring excellent value to customers/citizens through, for example, new services and customer/citizen promises and improved process performance that lead to a better service delivery and new business models.

This element is divided into the two sub-elements described in [7.3.3.2](#) to [7.3.3.3](#).

7.3.3.2 Public service innovation culture

A public service innovation culture refers to a set of values, attitudes, practices and behaviours within a government or public sector organization that encourages and supports the development and implementation of innovative solutions to address societal challenges and improve the delivery of public services. The public service organization should encourage an environment where creativity, experimentation, collaboration and continuous improvement are actively encouraged.

The organization should:

- implement a collaborative, agile and open innovation culture;
- continuously explore opportunities and new technologies that facilitate innovation implementation;
- reward employees for innovative ideas and practices;
- allocate time and resources to implement innovations in an effective and speedy manner.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Public service organizations with an innovation culture are open to receiving and considering new ideas, whether they come from within the organization or external sources use of idea generating and capturing methods.
- b) An innovation culture in public service organizations encourages employees to take calculated risks, experiment with new approaches and learn from failures.
- c) Encouraging collaboration between different departments, agencies and even external stakeholders can lead to more holistic and effective solutions.
- d) Public service organization leaders should provide the autonomy necessary for innovation to happen.
- e) Public service organizations with an innovation culture have a long-term vision that includes continuous innovation as a core part of their mission.

7.3.3.3 Structured innovation process

Incorporating a structured innovation process within public service organizations is crucial for fostering creativity, improving services and addressing evolving societal needs.

The organization should:

- ensure management commitment and leadership to ensure support and resources for the innovation process;

- assign a dedicated champion or leader to guide the innovation process;
- organize thorough diagnostic analysis to understand the needs of citizens and users;
- select a set of ideas that have the highest potential for implementation;
- implement pilot tests involving actual users to gather feedback and refine the ideas;
- develop a detailed implementation plan;
- integrate the new services into existing processes and systems;
- encourage continuous feedback implementing change management where necessary.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Defining a clear vision for innovation within the organization and aligning it with the overall mission and goals of the public service organization.
- b) Assembling a diverse team from different departments, skill sets and perspectives to drive innovation.
- c) Identifying the true key challenges, pain points, risks and opportunities faced by the organization and its stakeholders.
- d) Conducting structured brainstorming sessions and workshops to encourage creative thinking.
- e) Idea selection and prioritization, followed by evaluation and ranking of the generated ideas based on feasibility, potential impact, alignment with organizational goals and user needs.
- f) Utilizing user feedback and communication from pilot tests to refine the prototypes.
- g) Allocating necessary resources, including budget, personnel and technology, for full-scale implementation.
- h) Developing KPIs to measure the success and impact of the implemented innovation.
- i) Recognizing and celebrating the efforts of the stakeholders involved in the innovation process.

7.4 Operational service excellence

7.4.1 Managing customer/citizen-experience-related efficient and effective processes and organizational structure

7.4.1.1 General

Public service organizations should possess the necessary operating model, made up of strategies and policies, processes, structure, tools and techniques, to enable them to handle the existing and changing needs and expectations of customers/citizens. Public service organizations should develop, implement and manage customer/citizen journeys that realize their customer/citizen experience concept and lead to outstanding customer/citizen experiences. In this regard, the entire service value chain, including suppliers and other organizations, should reflect the importance of an outstanding customer orientation. In addition, the needs of employees (e.g. employee feedback) should also be included.

This element is divided into the three sub-elements described in [7.4.1.2](#) to [7.4.1.4](#).

7.4.1.2 Managing customer/citizen-experience-related processes

A public service organization should synchronize its internal operations with external stakeholder processes to respond to shifts in customer/citizen needs and expectations. A well-functioning public service organization must define its fundamental processes, as these are what allow the organization to provide its

services (outputs) and achieve its desired outcomes. Throughout, the organization must keep the customers/citizens and other stakeholders' expectations in mind, all in accordance with its mission and strategy.

NOTE Managing the customer/citizen experience processes includes the identification, development, implementation, control, reporting and improvement of all processes related to customer experience to meet customer/citizen needs and expectations.

The organization should:

- develop and implement a process approach through which customer/citizen-experience-related processes deliver targeted customer experiences and offer an individual and surprising service.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- Organizational agility enables any public service organization to design its processes around the customers'/citizen needs, a systematic analysis of customer/citizen needs, and regularly assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes.
- Designing and implementing a system for managing processes, exploiting the opportunities from digitalization and standardization.
- Analysing and evaluating processes, risks and critical success factors regularly, taking into consideration the changing environment relating to societal needs and expectations.
- Conducting a regular evaluation of customer/citizen-experience-related processes (e.g. mystery shopping, service excellence audits, monitoring KPIs of quality and of social media).
- Evaluating process quality from a customer's/citizen's perspective (e.g. by customer/citizen journey monitoring, customer/citizen diaries and regular customer/citizen surveys).
- Regularly improving customer/citizen-experience-related processes (e.g. error/complaint management, quality circle, user groups and customer/citizen communities to exchange on service and process ideas and needs).
- Moving process innovation and optimization forward by paying attention to national and international good practices, involving relevant stakeholders.

7.4.1.3 Deploying customer/citizen-experience-related technologies and techniques

Technologies and methodologies should assist the organization in providing exceptional customer/citizen experiences. They can also aid the organization in overseeing service excellence and providing support to employees in their day-to-day tasks.

The organization should:

- use adequate technologies and techniques to deliver outstanding customer/citizen experiences;
- by embracing these customer/citizen experience technologies and techniques, create a more citizen-centric approach and build trust with their communities they serve;
- examine and enhance the processes to guarantee the safeguarding of personal data.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- Gathering information through surveys, feedback forms and data analysis to understand the needs and preferences of the targeted societal segment.
- Creating customer/citizen journey maps to visualize and analyse the end-to-end experiences of citizens when interacting with the organization for the purpose of identifying pain points and opportunities for improvement.
- Offering a variety of communication channels such as websites, mobile apps, social media, email and telephone.

- d) Utilizing data analytics to personalize interactions and experiences based on user preferences and past behaviours.
- e) Implementing artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbots and virtual assistants to provide instant support and answers to common queries to citizens.
- f) Developing user-friendly self-service portals where citizens can access information, submit forms and track their requests
- g) Sending notifications and updates in a proactive manner to citizens regarding service changes, events and relevant information.
- h) Maintaining solid data privacy and security protocols to protect citizens' sensitive information.

7.4.1.4 Management of organizational structures and partnerships

An organization should have a defined structure with clear roles and responsibilities relating to the provision of an excellent public service. Such a structure should have the necessary agility so that it is capable to address the changing needs and expectations of customers/citizens relating to service excellence.

The organization should:

- be aligned to inspire the implementation of a customer/citizen centricity approach;
- be structured in line with customer/citizen-experience-related processes so that internal silos can be avoided;
- be agile and adaptive in order to manage ever-changing societal needs and expectations;
- identify their primary partners and establish agreements with them to facilitate the provision of coordinated services when required.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Regularly reviewing the organizational structure based on data-based insights and KPIs on customer/citizen and employee needs and requirements, which can include:
 - 1) benchmarking and best practices;
 - 2) workshops on innovative service ideas;
 - 3) alignment of the organizational structure to follow the process approach.
- b) Defining appropriate management structures, processes, functions, responsibilities and competencies for the purpose of developing an agile public service organization.
- c) Using partnership agreements and/or service level agreements with suppliers, internal customers and other organizations that have influence on outstanding customer/citizen experiences.
- d) Realizing improvement and development activities, such as training provided by the organization within the partners' organizations.
- e) Identifying key partners from the private and public sector as well as society to build sustainable relationships based on trust and transparency.

7.4.2 Managing equity, fairness, transparency and accessibility

7.4.2.1 General

Excellence in public service requires regular demonstration of equity, fairness, transparency and accessibility.

7.4.2.2 Equity and fairness

Consumers of public services can be a nation's own citizens as well as those from other nations in special situations. The consumers come from varied backgrounds, including underprivileged and marginalized sections of society. It is critical that the provider of public services maintains a fair and non-discriminatory policy and approach.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Not providing a more favourable access or benefit to consumers who are influential or have a higher economic status.
- b) Not getting influenced by recommendations or canvassing.
- c) Following a first come, first serve policy, where applicable.
- d) Providing the same degree of attention and diligence to all, especially ensuring that those from underprivileged, marginalized segments are not in any way deprived of their rights due to a handicap in their cognitive abilities and communication.
- e) Treating customers/citizens from other nations the same as domestic citizens.
- f) Persons responsible for service delivery should be sensitized on the importance of being equitable and fair.

7.4.2.3 Transparency

All decisions and actions (excluding those considered sensitive by governments) of public service organizations should be taken in a manner that they are either publicly disclosed or available on request.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Publishing notices, orders and legislative changes on a website in a timely manner. The information to the public should be available in plain and easy-to-understand text. Where required, explanatory notes and guidance should be published for easy comprehension.
- b) Publishing, and widely publicizing on websites and prominent print media, the following types of information:
 - a) invitations for public consultation on proposed policies, schemes, legislations and public orders;
 - b) notices inviting tenders, requests for proposals and expressions of interest for participation in public/government projects;
 - c) notices inviting recruitment and engagement of personnel, agencies, partner organizations and experts;
 - d) annual/periodic reports of activities performed, and achievements against objectives, goals and targets;
 - e) statements of income and expenditure with sufficient details to enable public scrutiny and comments.
- c) Providing on request, and in accordance with the citizen rights, information, records of file-noting and decisions to any citizen.
- d) Setting up a public grievance system that enables easy filing of complaints, and displaying the status of progress and final disposal to the complainant.

7.4.2.4 Accessibility

Public services should be designed in a manner that they can be easily accessed and consumed. The channels of service delivery are varied, such as websites and portals, service counters, helpdesks, service kiosks,

contact centres, home delivery (e.g. postal), on road and during transportation (e.g. mobile citizen service centres).

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) The time and distance required for a consumer to be able to reach the public service outlet is as low as possible, and acceptable to the service recipient.
- b) The coverage of geographic locations where the public service is provided proactively, such as utilities and municipal services, is comprehensive and does not exclude areas merely because they are difficult to reach.
- c) The resources are provided in adequate measures to preclude delays that effectively restrict access.
- d) The availability of support and aids for persons with visual or auditory impairments and persons who are physically challenged to access the public service with equal ease.

7.4.3 Monitoring public service excellence activities and results

7.4.3.1 General

Public service organizations should develop and systematically use a set of internal and external metrics focused on all elements of the public service excellence model.

Top management should use these metrics to monitor, improve and innovate in all parts of the public service organization.

The metrics, and how they are used, should be evaluated regularly and improved where possible. This element is divided into the four sub-elements described in [7.4.3.2](#) to [7.4.3.5](#).

7.4.3.2 Causal relationships

The public service organization should understand the most important determinants/metrics of the elements of the service excellence effect chain (see [Figure 2](#)) and their relationships.

EXAMPLE Employee engagement and outstanding citizen experience (and vice versa).

The organization should:

- define the most important determinants/metrics of the elements of the service excellence effect chain and their relationships.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Using statistical analysis in order to determine the most important factors influencing overall satisfaction and customer/citizen outstanding experience.
- b) Analysing the outputs and outcomes of the public service effect chain and identifying possible metrics for each element.

7.4.3.3 Use of performance KPIs

Performance indicators are critical for measuring and assessing the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of public service organizations in delivering excellence. These indicators should monitor progress, identify areas for improvement and ensure alignment with organizational goals. Based on the causal relationships, the organization should use a set of input, throughput, output and outcome metrics to manage and improve the service excellence concept and develop a set of SMART KPIs.

The organization should:

- define and document all KPIs related to service excellence monitoring and integrate them into a service scorecard;

- ensure that the specific KPIs chosen align with the public service organization's mission and goals, and the nature of its services provided to the customer/citizens.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- Using outcome metrics about customer/citizen experiences, including perceptions of specific transactions and the relationship as a whole.

EXAMPLE Scores and indices related to customer/citizen experience, customer/citizen effort, customer/citizen satisfaction, customer/citizen engagement.
- Using indices such as the net promoter score (NPS) to measure the likelihood of citizens recommending the organization's services to others.
- Using indices relating to accessibility and availability, such as the average response time to citizen inquiries or service requests.
- Using metrics about employee perceptions and behaviours, such as employee involvement, motivation and engagement.
- Using metrics about the operational performance, such as communication channels, customer/citizen journeys and internal (support) processes.
- Using metrics around the learning, improvements and innovation of the organization.
- Use indices relating to stakeholder engagement, such as level of engagement with stakeholders, including citizens, community organizations and other government agencies.

7.4.3.4 Use of measurement tools

The public service organization should use measurement tools on a continuous and objective basis.

The organization should:

- use measurements to benchmark with best-in-class organizations;
- choose tools that align with their goals and resources, and the specific aspects of excellence they aim to measure and improve;
- learn from metrics and negative and positive deviations from service-excellence-related goals.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- Using tools to measure perceptions of stakeholders, such as qualitative and quantitative surveys/interviews.
- Using tools to measure service levels, empathy and process measures, such as mystery shopping.
- Using tools to measure the actual behaviours of customers/citizens, such as database analysis.
- Monitoring social media platforms to track public sentiment and comments related to the organization's services.
- Using balanced scorecards (BSCs) that provide a holistic view of performance across multiple dimensions, such as customer/citizen satisfaction, financial health, internal processes and learning and growth.
- Organizing focus group discussions with citizens, employees and stakeholders to gain qualitative insights into their perceptions, needs and suggestions.
- Using structured mechanisms for citizens to provide direct feedback, complaints or suggestions about their experiences with public services.

7.4.3.5 Use of metrics on operational, tactical and strategic levels

Metrics should be used to support and foster the positive service culture of the public service organization and develop good practices into excellent practices. Also, metrics provide quantifiable data that guide decision-making, track progress and reinforce the public service organization's commitment to continuous improvement.

The organization should:

- have a mechanism for monitoring and reporting results;
- share the results with all relevant stakeholders on a transparent and frequent basis;
- use the metrics in all parts and on all levels of the organization to determine goals, performance and, where possible, improvements;
- ensure the leadership set an example by valuing and utilizing metrics in their decision-making processes;
- capture qualitative data, such as the experiences and stories of customers/citizens and employees, in addition to quantitative data.

Appropriate practices for implementation can include the following:

- a) Defining specific goals related to public service excellence and aligning metrics with these goals, which ensures that they are relevant and directly contribute to the organization's mission.
- b) Transparency fosters accountability and encourages a shared understanding of performance expectations.
- c) Visualizing the results using dashboards, performance walls, barometers and narrowcasting on video screens.
- d) Highlighting achievements and successes based on metric performance and celebrating individuals or teams that contribute positively to service excellence.
- e) Involving employees in the selection of metrics that reflect their role and responsibilities, which creates ownership and engagement in the measurement process.
- f) Using the results for appraisal and incentives for employees, teams and managers.
- g) Using feedback with each group of stakeholders (and identifying clear communication channels to each one).
- h) Leaders are encouraged to base decisions on data insights provided by metrics, and this ensures decisions are well-informed and aligned with the pursuit of excellence.
- i) Reporting service-excellence-related KPIs on the corporate BSC dashboard.

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