

## Summary

### 1.1 Presentation of the evaluation

The Tirelo Bosha Facility established as a mechanism for front line service delivery improvement, emerged in the context of a consolidated programme for a "training facility" identified by BTC and the Government of South Africa in 2010. It was to be financed with the €11 million that was available from the consolidated balances of activities remaining in the Indicative Cooperation Programme . At the same time the National Treasury IDC directorate was looking to orientate donor money towards subsidising investment in public sector capacity and in experimentation for innovation that could not easily be financed from the voted budget. The idea of a grant facility with limited amounts (less than ZAR 2 million) to be allocated to promising ideas for improved frontline service delivery with a potential national impact, fitted very well in this approach. The Facility was conceived as a mechanism for piloting improvement initiatives that would focus on the delivery of front-line public services, including but not limited to methods, models, technologies, systems, processes, strategies and toolkits .

The strategy adopted by the intervention (the Tirelo Bosha Facility), which aimed to contribute to the improvement of front-line service delivery in South Africa, was to stimulate and support improvement initiatives at all levels of government. Improvement projects were envisaged as small-scale initiatives for service delivery improvement (to a value of between €20,000 and 200,000) that would enhance the performance of public service providers through an amelioration of its effective functioning, and especially the delivery of its services to the population, as well as having a clear link with innovation. These initiatives were to include capacity development and training, as well as business processes and systems related to service delivery improvement. The focus of the Facility was to be on support for those initiatives that demonstrated a sound and feasible support mechanism to improve front line service delivery. Capacity development, therefore, was planned in relation to both individual capacity as well as the strengthening of organisations and institutions. The planning of reforms in government is in itself a complex and difficult process, yet it isn't clear from the intervention logic that there is a recognition that public service in a country is never static, it is constantly changing and adapting itself to new demands and emerging demands that arise out of changing circumstances. There was a strong case for the PSC to reflect more regularly on the strategic direction of Tirelo Bosha and its effectiveness in aligning with the stated theory of change.

The **overall objective** of this end term review was to assess the performance of the Tirelo Bosha Facility in promoting enhanced service delivery in South Africa<sup>2</sup>. The **specific objectives** were:

- To formulate evidence-based recommendations to enable scale up of initiatives;
- To assess strengths and weaknesses, with a view to informing future plans; and
- To assess progress made and results achieved against specified programme targets and indicators.

The evaluation adhered to the set of norms and standards for evaluations outlined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which included impartiality and independence, integrity and honesty and taking into account other reviews and evaluations. The review also took into account the MoRe guidelines, which outline the specific focus that the end of term review should take to ensure that useful lessons for other interventions or for new policies, strategies

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2 As per the inception report for the end term review, 11th March 2019.

and programmes, can be drawn. The OECD-DAC criteria for evaluations were used to inform the questions governing the analysis of the review, these being:

- Relevance - the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor;
- Effectiveness - a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives;
- Efficiency - a measure of the outputs in relation to the inputs;
- Impact - the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended; and
- Sustainability - whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn

A mixed methodology was used and included document analysis, participative group discussions, focus-group discussions (FGDs), and face-to-face interviews<sup>3</sup>. Each tool sought to answer a set of key questions relevant to the objectives of this review and the DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance. The tools provided both qualitative and quantitative data, which was synthesised, triangulated and analysed in line with the inquiry. The methodology ensured that the effect of the intervention was analysed at both output and outcome level and allowed for an overall assessment of the extent to which the intervention was able to contribute towards the overall project objective (impact level). It should be noted that the overall programme logframe, as well as the logframes of each of the individual projects are generally output driven and therefore it is not really possible for this evaluation to assess the impact of the intervention on public service delivery improvement.

## 1.2 Results and conclusions

In terms of **relevance** The TB Facility was rated A (Good). It was a strategic, well-placed and highly relevant intervention in relation to the South African government's policies, strategies and priorities, and its efforts to streamline public service delivery and to integrate and harness the potential of technology. Tirelo Boshia aligned well with the NDP vision that the national system of innovation is about networks and partnerships as well as with the DPSA Strategic Plan 2015-2020 of investigating appropriate and alternative public administration delivery models through knowledge management and best practices, as well as leading the Public Service in the e-Enablement of five services for improved service delivery and access by 2020.

In terms of **efficiency** the TB Facility was rated A (Good). The TB Facility demonstrated that it was an efficient mechanism for facilitating the development, testing and implementation innovative projects to improve front line service delivery that could be used more widely and scaled up where necessary. Some improvements could be made in relation to finding ways to circumvent bureaucratic processes and in equipping the PMU with sufficient staff and an effective data / project management system. Bureaucratic delays might have been mitigated with more innovative "future" planning at the outset

In terms of **effectiveness** the TB Facility was rated B (good). With regard to providing the space to test and innovate service delivery improvement projects, the Facility was highly effective. Successes demonstrated how innovation could be used to streamline a system and to use evidence for effective planning. Some improvements could be made in relation to knowledge sharing and information dissemination. The Theory of Change (ToC) was found to be somewhat limited and could have been developed in a way that foregrounded the service delivery changes that were desired to ensure that the intended service delivery improvements were achieved.

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3 Refer to annex 1 for tools

In terms of **impact** the TB Facility was rated B (Good). Where projects were successful, positive and sustained impact can be illustrated – particularly, where the project was able to impact at a systems level. Valuable lessons have been learned and there are several examples of good practice that can be replicated. Several successful projects should be scaled up to broaden the impact.

Although the impact is rated good there is at present insufficient evidence to be able to analyse and appreciate any degree of impact. While individual projects have brought about important institutional, operational and implementation changes the actual effects on users (beneficiaries) have not been fully tested. In retrospect the limitations identified in the Theory of Change for the Facility meant that measurement beyond the outcome level of results would not be possible.

In terms of **sustainability** the TB Facility was rated C (problems). Where projects have intervened at a *systems* level, they will be sustained. Projects with a champion or driver within government will find traction. Projects lacking an interested and committed partner appear to struggle to remain functional (aquaponics, hospital energy consumption). Clear agreements need to be made with private sector partners at the outset to ensure continued use of developed products, applications and assets. Without government commitment and a focused approach to promoting innovation using the Tirelo Bosha model, the Facility has little chance of being sustained and this needs to be addressed. Elections will take place on the 08<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and it is likely that an incoming government will be restructured to meet contemporary governance needs. The current president is committed to the concept of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and this may offer possibilities of a Tirelo Bosha-type facility under the next MTSF for 2019-2024.

It was clear that the Tirelo Bosha model in itself was innovative and provided an opportunity for products, technologies, services, or applications that could prove to be breakthrough solutions to critical front-line service delivery challenges, to be tested and show-cased. Potential exists within these alignments for the project to be sustained should the necessary requirements of government support and buy-in be in place. All grantees interviewed expressed great appreciation for the support offered to them by Tirelo Bosha, without which, they would not have been able to test their ideas. Even in the instances where the project failed the replication assessment, it was still understood that they had a project worth pursuing and that once the outcome could be feasibly measured, they would be in a position to secure alternative support.

Over the life span of the Tirelo Bosha intervention there was a shift funding projects that were going to use a range of information technologies as drivers of their proposed innovations. This was clearly articulated in the second Call for Proposals. There is a clear case for the use of ICT innovations within the public service, especially when it improves efficiencies, cuts waiting times, keeps citizens more informed, is responsive to citizen's needs and operates within the capacities of citizens to actually utilise the technologies. At the same time there needs to be a pragmatic approach to the use and adaptation of technologies to environments and contexts where service delivery practitioners work in contexts where there is limited access to internet, concerns around the security of equipment, high levels of corruption, and access to maintenance services. The introduction of information technologies may therefore require more robust feasibility studies, environment scans, and stakeholder mapping to assess the relevance, viability and sustainability of a particular innovation.

From the projects visited, it was clear that some projects had wide reach and could produce clear evidence that front-line service delivery was improved. Other projects showed a limited reach and could not demonstrate either outcome or impact level changes. Such projects may have benefitted from a different approach to increase reach and target the primary beneficiary.

An observation from the field visits was that where projects had successfully intervened at a systems level, the project would be sustained and provided good examples of best practice.

Where projects could be integrated with a national system (for example health systems), the scale-up opportunities are vast.

While some projects clearly improve services for a sector of the population, it was not always clear how marginal groups would benefit (non-rate payers for example). While this observation does not change the impact on the targeted sector, it does suggest that innovative improvements could be explored to increase the reach.

Overall, the Tirelo Bosha Facility allowed innovative grantees to implement products, systems or applications ultimately aimed at improving front line service delivery and that the best practices and good examples can be used as a blue print for further development and implementation (scale up).

In the case of the Tirelo Bosha logical framework, the actions planned to achieve Result 3 (strengthen and sustain successful practices) were not sufficient to ensure that this result could be achieved. Additional actions needed to be planned in (for example, defining a champion, establishing partnerships for replication and scale-up, planning for support and funds, etc).

In order for success to be measured, there needs to be some baseline or criteria for measurement. The Tirelo Bosha logframe does not indicate baseline or measuring criteria, making it difficult to quantify the measure of success. The figure below (figure 4) illustrates the logical flow, with the dotted line suggesting a break in the flow.

Planning in relation to innovation in particular requires a dynamic approach. The life cycle of the pilots was short (18 months), and by necessity, would require quick turnaround times in terms of project feedback. Projects should generally be seen as systems and as cyclical as opposed to linear. The iterative feedback loop (as illustrated in figure 5) allows for project flexibility within a results-based approach. However, slow processes at PMU level and at grantee level did not enable the necessary dynamism, causing some level of frustration and possibly hindering progress.

Planning at the outset, needs to consider all of the risks and assumptions associated with the project and must mitigate for these. For dynamic planning processes, with short project cycle time frames, it would benefit the projects to ensure that future scenarios (future planning) is included. This in particular is relevant to the sustainability of the project. Who exactly is going to own it, how will it continue once the donor has withdrawn? The planning phase should include a good representation of all role players and stakeholders and multi-disciplinary teams to bring alternative and diverse perspectives.

There appeared to be relative clarity in relation to the roles of the different actors. According to the procedural manual, the **Programme Steering Committee (PSC)** was tasked with “guiding the implementation of the Facility and providing strategic oversight of the facility”. **The Project Management Unit** were responsible for “implementing service contracts, launching the project, implementing and managing grant allocation processes, managing the operational and financial procedures of the Facility and preparing appropriate reports to DPSA and the PSC on all aspects of implementation within agreed upon report cycles”. The Project Steering Committee, comprised of individuals at high management levels, were often stretched to perform the oversight function effectively. The minutes of the PSC meeting, did however, show a quorum and often full representation was maintained at all PSCs meetings. Adequate strategic guidance was made by these representatives and decision were seldom deferred unless needing legal opinion or extended mandates. The PMU on the other hand were under resourced and were not able to provide the project planning support and technical guidance needed by the implementing partners. In addition, the data management system was never implemented for the PMU and monitoring of projects and project data took on a manual. This clearly slowed down the turnaround times and undermined the dynamic project planning processes required.

In interviews with the DPSA and with the CPSI there appeared to be a lack of alignment in terms of a strategic vision for service delivery innovation. The CPSI is a component in the portfolio of the Minister for Public Service and Administration, established to identify, support and nurture innovation in the public service with a view to improve service delivery<sup>4</sup>.

The CPSI has a cross sector reach and is meant to be a resource for the whole of government. In particular, it does not directly deliver services but facilitates partnerships and “advocates for and drives the adaption, replication and mainstreaming of innovative solutions”<sup>5</sup>. Using the lessons learned from Tirelo Bosha implementation it will be important for the DPSA and the CPSI to reach a consensus on which agency is best placed to drive a project funding innovation to improve service delivery.

Transversal issues, including governance, gender and the environment were assessed during the evaluation. In terms of governance the establishment and management of the government structure for Tirelo Bosha has been a significant achievement of the intervention. In terms of gender the absence of any clear focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment has undoubtedly been a gap in the overall programme. It would have been helpful if the initial programme formulation and foundational documents (the TFF and the Procedural Manual) had required the Facility to insist that applicants, at the very least, included a short gender analysis of the potential gendered impact of their intervention. In terms of environmental issues neither the calls for proposals nor the project concept notes addressed in any focused way the complex issues of environmental sustainability as an outcome of project interventions.

### 1.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Planning for success and sustainability:** An outcomes-based approach should be undertaken at the outset to ensure that the intended results chain is achievable and sustainable. The Theory of Change developed for Tirelo Bosha was, in retrospect, too simple and linear, and lacked the core elements of a Theory of Change. A robust Theory of Change should explain the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative, i.e., its shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes. Planning for the Facility, as for planning for the individual projects should adopt a dynamic planning approach, where constant monitoring, iteration, and correction serves to keep a project on track to achieve its objectives. As a grant-making agency the Facility has the mandate to lead by example in ensuring that intervention planning, including the development of an outcomes-oriented Theory of Change and M&E Framework, provides a robust foundation from the outset.

**Recommendation 2: Managing for success:** Clear planning should lead to clear resource management, including human resources. If the project is planning to undertake certain activities to achieve success, then these activities have to be resourced. Roles need to be clear and there must be sufficient people in place to do what the project planned to do. Providing technical support and developmental input will ensure that resources are used optimally, and the risk is reduced.

The success of the project, specifically within the short, allocated time frame, is dependent on fast turnaround times. Decisions at PMU level cannot be made in sufficiently fast times, if the processes are manual and onerous. Considering that the project is promoting innovation and technological solutions, it seems counter-productive to have a manually-based system at the project management level. It would be an innovation in itself for a future PMU to take the lead (potentially utilising some programme funds) to design and establish a cloud-based system to manage project indicators, targets and payments. Projects should be able to input directly to the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cpsi.co.za/about-us/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



cloud in line with the monitoring requirements. This would clearly fast-track important decisions that need to be made and keep the project systems dynamic.

**Recommendation 3: Understanding Impact:** Both the Theory of Change and the M&E Framework for the Tirelo Bosha Facility were very focused at the process and output level, and the indicators were all quantitative. This has made it difficult to identify whether the Facility as a service delivery improvement mechanism has had a measurable impact.

Future interventions of a similar kind need to have a “mixed method” approach to measurement, using both quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as ensuring that outcome level results have indicators that can signal whether interventions are bringing about changes in service delivery practice and performance that have a measurable effect on service delivery beneficiaries. It would be beneficial for DPSA to propose an impact evaluation of the Tirelo Bosha programme, ensuring that it registers on the DPME’s next National Evaluation Plan (potentially for 2020). A key lesson learned from the Tirelo Bosha experience is the need to have a dedicated M&E Specialist on board from the outset to ensure that measurement frameworks are adequate for the intended purposes of the intervention.

**Recommendation 4: Governance and oversight considerations:** The evaluators found that the Tirelo Bosha programme had put in place strong governance and oversight mechanisms<sup>6</sup>. The two-tier system for the evaluation for proposals worked well in most instances. The first tier comprised separate Technical Committees to assess the technical strength of proposals and included experts in relevant themes such as ICT and Back to Basics. The second tier comprised the overall evaluation of the proposal by a multi-disciplinary evaluation team. Despite these noted strengths, the evaluators found that a number of the grants approved were for projects that appeared to have limited scope for improving service delivery in a replicable, sustainable and gender responsive manner.

In future the Programme Steering Committee, should, if possible, comprise both high level management as well as technical people (preferably multi-disciplinary) and innovation experts. Technical specialists, including specialists in gender, environmental sustainability and human rights, can be brought together in the dedicated PSC sub-committees which advise the PSC. Decisions on replication or on the awarding of grants need to be made in an evidence-based manner. An innovation that appears new and creative to a layperson may well be an old, tested and failed idea. Innovation experts will bring valuable knowledge and expertise to the steering committee, while high level managers need to bring collaboration and coordination between the actors. It is also possible that within a motivated and experienced PSC, ways could be found to streamline the onerous bureaucratic process experienced by implementing partners and grantees, without compromising standard operating procedures and accountability.

**Recommendation 5: Knowledge management and sharing of lessons learnt:** Sharing experiences and lessons was regarded as valuable and implementing partners valued the platform provided by the PMU. This is a mechanism by which partnerships can be established and strengthened, ideas for replication and scale up can be explored and actors can find common ground. Integrated systems and processes become a possibility within such a framework. These platforms must include the partner institutions and especially the champions and drivers and could be achieved through the establishment of effective communications modalities.

**Recommendation 6: Promoting collaboration and coordination:** Upscaling and replication must, by their very nature, include high levels of collaboration and coordination to avoid duplication and parallel processes. In line with its mandate, it would seem that the CPSI is best

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6 These governance and oversight mechanisms were clearly outlined in the Procedural Manual.

placed to act as the coordinating body. This discussion needs to happen at the outset of the project implementation phase.

**Recommendation 7: Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights into Public Service Improvement Interventions:** Innovations and new approaches to the ways in which government and its partners deliver public services must respond to the inequalities that characterise South African society. It should be a requirement of similar future interventions that public service improvement is implemented with a very strong focus on how inequalities can be reduced / eliminated through innovative delivery platforms.

**Recommendation 8: Replication in Other Belgian-Supported Countries:** The Tirelo Bosha programme has constituted a major investment by the Belgian government. During the evaluation process the evaluators reflected on the potential for a Facility along the lines of Tirelo Bosha to be replicated in other countries that are supported through Belgian development aid. The overall assessment of this evaluation has been that the Government of South Africa has been relatively successful in setting up and managing a grant facility for public service improvement and that the majority of the projects funded through the Facility have been managed in an accountable and efficient manner. While the service delivery terrain in South Africa is beset by numerous problems, the legislative architecture, oversight, governance and financial systems that guide public service delivery are robust. South Africa has also, over the years, established a well-structured and fertile environment for innovation across the public sector. Replication in other countries supported by Belgium would need to be dependent on some of the following factors:

- An assessment of the legislative framework governing the public service;
- An assessment of the oversight, governance and financial management systems that regulate public service delivery;
- An assessment of the innovation environment within the country, and its readiness for the kind of initiatives that have been promoted under Tirelo Bosha;
- An assessment of possible alternative delivery mechanisms where government is not ready for such an intervention – for example through a civil society or private sector mechanism.

## 1.4 Lessons learned

**Planning is key:** Considered planning will mitigate for risks and challenges and ensure that the objectives of the project are met. Planning in relation to innovation specifically, needs to be dynamic and responsive and should include future planning and innovation experts. Sound planning will also ensure that adequate resources are in place to drive the project and achieve its aims.

**Management must be highly responsive.** The project management unit must be adequately equipped to carry out its mandate effectively. An integrated information system, that can be accessed by all projects to upload their data, should be employed. A cloud-based system would facilitate faster decision-making turnaround times and enable the project management unit to monitor the projects and provide support in real time.

**A developmental approach can optimise resources.** Piloting innovative projects is clearly a catalyst for growth in innovation. With focused support, promising projects can grow and show the potential for replication or scale up. Projects that show potential but do not meet the criteria for scale up within the bounds of the project, can be supported to meet the criteria and / or to secure support elsewhere. Networking and collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences similarly supports implementing partners to progress and expand.

**Collaboration and cooperation facilitate scale up.** Similar projects can learn from each other, but high-level cooperation can facilitate successful innovations to be integrated into a provincial or national system, thereby optimising the resources that have been spent on testing ideas and streamlining scale-up and alignment with national policies and plans. While the Facility supported networking platforms, which were very successful, government partners need to take this up and support a regular innovation networking platform. In South Africa, the CPSI has this mandate and cooperation with this entity is essential.

**Projects showing a potential for lasting impact should be prioritised.** The imbalance of inputs and outputs is a generally understood principle (20% inputs generate 80% outputs). While innovation pilots, by definition, are untested, a simple application of the 80/20 principle can assist in the selection process.

A project that is likely to impact on a large number of beneficiaries with less resources could be selected over projects with a limited reach and perhaps greater expenditure. Similarly, if a project is likely to be sustained for longer with limited additional support, that too could be a criterion for selection.

**Projects that impact at a systems level are likely to be sustained.** Where a project has improved or changed a system (either locally or at a provincial or national level) it is unlikely that things will be allowed to go backwards.

**Innovation needs a driver or champion.** Team work and cooperation within projects themselves have the potential to succeed, specifically if the team is led by a passionate driver or champion. Where projects, processes or systems have a driver or passionate change agent, the project is most likely to succeed. In combination with knowledge sharing and high-level collaboration, these projects are easily replicable and can be scaled up.

**Knowledge Management.** The projects funded under the Tirelo Bosha programme have generated a wealth of implementation experience, good practices and innovations. The projects have also demonstrated concepts and processes that have worked well, and those that have not worked as well. A Knowledge Management staffing structure and process should be put in place from the outset so that documentation, learnings and dissemination kick in as soon as projects start implementing.