

Aim of Portfolio Committees' Oversight

- Clear understanding of purpose of oversight helps to achieve objectives
- Fulfil constitutional obligation to hold executive accountable
- Ensure departments and public entities are:
 - producing high quality services, economically, efficiently and effectively
 - complying with constitutional and/or legislative mandates, strategic plans and budgets
 - contributing to the realisation of government's objectives
- Gather information on the *views of customers and clients*
- Make recommendations on improving the quality and responsiveness of services

Preparing to exercise oversight

Oversight Preparation Checklist	
Be ready	- think about the issues and information needs well in advance of the start of the oversight process.
Be disciplined	- set clear start, interim milestones and completion targets.
Be aware	- know about other oversight processes that may be relevant, e.g. of other departments of entities, or of provincial departments.
Be focused	- tailor the oversight process to where it can have the most impact, i.e. set clear priorities.
Be intelligent	- be flexible enough to take on board new issues and options should they arise in the course of the oversight process.
Be open	- consult with outside experts, organisations and clients throughout.
Be forward looking	- <i>remember that the purpose of oversight is to improve service delivery in future.</i>


The committee needs to work as a team in exercising oversight

The oversight process is about the *legislature exercising oversight of the executive in accordance with the Constitution*

It is NOT about opposition parties exercising oversight of government

Oversight of technical quality of Annual Reports

technical quality
aim of overseeing



Aim of overseeing technical quality

- To ensure that entities' annual reports comply with the legal and policy frameworks for:
 - the structuring of the annual reports
 - the compilation of information
 - tabling of annual reports

of Annual Reports
oversight of technical quality



Necessary background information

- Guide for the Preparation of Annual Reports* issued by National Treasury
- Familiarity with the technical terms and methods used to
 - describe service delivery performance
 - esp. economy, efficiency and effectiveness
 - describe human resource issues
- Strategic plans and budgets for the entity


Typical technical focus questions

- Was the report delivered on time?
- Is the report in line with the prescribed formats?
- Does the layout of the report facilitate understanding?
- Is the information communicated simply and clearly?
- Is the report original, or are key portions copied from previous reports?
- Does the report deal faithfully with each aspect of the strategic plan?
- Is each measurable objective specified in the strategic plan reported on in the report?
- Is the service delivery information presented in the report reliable?
 - Are the performance measures robust?
 - Can the performance information be verified?
 - Can the human resource information be verified?
- Was an excessive amount spent on the production of the annual report?

Oversight of entities' performance

- Information
- Information
- The entity's strategic plan and progress
- The management's actions, methods, objectives and measures
- Information on the entity

Information
Necessary background



Necessary background information

- Information on the entity
 - its mandate, structure, way of operating, strengths and weaknesses
- The entity's strategic plan and budget
- Information on external and internal challenges faced by the entity
- Information from clients

Organisational concerns and options

- How effectively does the entity contribute to the delivery of government objectives, as reflected in its mandate?
- Should the mandate be changed to better reflect the priorities of government, and the needs of clients?
- Is there a continuing need for the functions being delivered by the entity as a whole, and by each of its programmes?
 - If not, can the entity be closed down, or certain of its programmes be terminated?
- Is there a need for new programmes?

Evaluating Past Performance

- Is the annual report transparent about the entity's performance?
 - Or is it simply a public relations document?
- Has the entity met its aims, objectives and performance targets and quality standards?
 - What were the reasons for any failures?
- Have the entities performance targets changed over time?
 - Are targets increasing with increases in funding?
- Are there examples of good practice in how the entity has delivered its services?
- What changes have been made in the services provided to clients?
 - How can greater client choice be provided in future?
- What are clients' views on the nature and quality of services?
 - Have these views altered over time?

Evaluating Future Performance

- Are the entity's objectives and performance targets linked to government's overall aims?
- Are the objectives and targets sufficiently comprehensive?
- Do the performance targets drive continuous improvement?
- Is there continuity in the performance targets between years?
- Does the entity have too many performance targets?
- Are any additional/alternative performance measures and targets needed?
- How well do the performance targets measure the delivery of outputs and the achievement of outcomes?
- Does the entity have the right balance between output and outcome performance targets?
- Are effective information systems in place to measure performance?
 - How could these be improved?

Evaluating Efficiency of Performance

- Are there systems to identify clients' needs and monitor the extent to which they are met?
- Has the entity delivered value for money?
 - Over time, is it delivering its outputs at reduced cost?
- Has the entity been innovative in managing costs and improving performance?
 - What steps has it taken in this regard?
 - Is there any scope for increased efficiency savings?
- Are staff hampered by internal bureaucracy?
 - What has been done to encourage greater flexibility and creativity in delivering services? What can still be done?
- How effective have the relationships with other entities operating in the same or related areas been?
- Have service delivery risks been managed adequately?
- Does the entity comply with the Access to Information Act?

Human resource development

- Has progress been made with the implementation of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan?
 - Is there evidence that services are improving as a result?
- What has been done to fill key vacancies?
 - What more can be done?
- What progress has been made with employment equity?
 - What strategies have been adopted to promote greater equity?
- What is the status of the skills development programme?
 - Is the programme making a difference to staff's ability to deliver services?
- How much was paid out in performance bonuses?
 - How much did the accounting officer and other senior managers receive as performance bonuses?
 - Are these rewards in line with the entity's delivery performance?
- How many disciplinary matters are outstanding?
 - What is the age profile of these complaints?
 - What is the entity doing to ensure the speedy conclusion of matters?
- How many senior management posts do consultants fill?
 - How will the entity reduce its reliance on consultants for routine functions?

- How will the entity reduce its reliance on consultants for routine functions?
- How many senior management posts do consultants fill?
- What is the entity doing to ensure the speedy completion of matters?
- What is the age profile of these consultants?
- How many disciplinary matters are outstanding?
- Are there reasons in line with the entity's general performance?
- How many did the performance review?
- How many are being on the performance review?

Conclusion

- What is the status of the skills development programme?
- What strategies have been adopted to promote greater staff progress?
- What progress has been made with employment equity?
- What more can be done?
- What has been done to fill key vacancies?
- Is there evidence that services are improving as a result of improvement plans?
- Has progress been made with the implementation of the Service Delivery

Human Resource Development

Aim of overseeing Annual Reports

- To test whether the annual report is an accurate record of the entity's performance
- To evaluate whether the reported performance is in line with the entity's strategic plans and budgets
- To evaluate whether performance is acceptable given the operating environment
- To assess how the entity might improve on its performance in future

Focus is on:

How can the entity deliver services better in future?



How can the entire service better in terms?

Focus is on:

QUESTIONS?

- To test whether the service is in line with the entire strategic
- To test whether the service is an accurate record of the entire performance

Annual Reports
and Overview

