

BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

1. PRINCIPLES

Eight Batho Pele principles were developed to serve as acceptable policy and legislative framework **regarding** service delivery in the public service. These principles are aligned with the Constitutional ideals of:

- a. Promoting and maintaining high standards of professional ethics.
- b. Providing service impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- c. Utilising resources efficiently and effectively.
- d. Responding to people's needs, the citizens are encouraged to participate in policy making, and;
- e. Rendering an accountable, transparent, and development-oriented public administration.

2. THE BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES ARE AS FOLLOWS

The Batho Pele Principles are as follows:

Consultation

There are many ways to consult users of services including conducting customer surveys, interviews with individual users, consultation with groups, and holding meetings with consumer representative bodies, NGOs and CBOs. Often, more than one method of consultation will be necessary to ensure comprehensiveness and representativeness. Consultation is a powerful tool that enriches and shapes government policies such as the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and its implementation in Local Government sphere.

Setting service standards

This principle reinforces the need for benchmarks to constantly measure the extent to which citizens are satisfied with the service or products they receive from departments. It also plays a critical role in the development of service delivery improvement plans to ensure a better life for all South Africans. Citizens should be involved in the development of service standards.

Required are standards that are precise and measurable so that users can judge for themselves whether or not they are receiving what was promised. Some standards will cover processes, such as the length of time taken to authorise a housing claim, to issue a passport or identity document, or even to respond to letters.

To achieve the goal of making South Africa globally competitive, standards should be benchmarked (where applicable) against those used internationally, taking into account South Africa's current level of development.

Increasing access

One of the prime aims of Batho Pele is to provide a framework for making decisions about delivering public services to the many South Africans who do not have access to them. Batho Pele also aims to rectify the inequalities in the distribution of existing services. Examples of initiatives by government to improve access to services include such platforms as the Gateway, Multi-Purpose Community Centres and Call Centres.

Access to information and services empowers citizens and creates value for money, quality services. It reduces unnecessary expenditure for the citizens.

Ensuring courtesy

This goes beyond a polite smile, 'please' and 'thank you'. It requires service providers to empathize with the citizens and treat them with as much consideration and respect, as they would like for themselves.

The public service is committed to continuous, honest and transparent communication with the citizens. This involves communication of services, products, information and problems, which may hamper or delay the efficient delivery of services to promised standards. If applied properly, the principle will help demystify the negative perceptions that the citizens in general have about the attitude of the public servants.

Providing information

As a requirement, available information about services should be at the point of delivery, but for users who are far from the point of delivery, other arrangements will be needed. In line with the definition of customer in this document, managers and employees should regularly seek to make information about the organisation, and all other service delivery related matters available to fellow staff members.

Openness and transparency

A key aspect of openness and transparency is that the public should know more about the way national, provincial and local government institutions operate, how well they utilise the resources they consume, and who is in charge. It is anticipated that the public will take advantage of this principle and make suggestions for improvement of service delivery mechanisms, and to even make government employees accountable and responsible by raising queries with them.

Redress

This principle emphasises a need to identify quickly and accurately when services are falling below the promised standard and to have procedures in place to remedy the situation. This should be done at the individual transactional level with the public, as well as at the organisational level, in relation to the entire service delivery programme.

Public servants are encouraged to welcome complaints as an opportunity to improve service, and to deal with complaints so that weaknesses can be remedied quickly for the good of the citizen.

Value for money

Many improvements that the public would like to see often require no additional resources and can sometimes even reduce costs. Failure to give a member of the public a simple, satisfactory explanation to an enquiry may for example, result in an incorrectly completed application form, which will cost time to rectify.