

## ■ Government Accountability; Measuring Results

---

David Groisman • Celeste Bustelo • Trevor Udwin

**Index**

**Executive summary** ..... 1

**Acknowledgements** ..... 2

**Introduction** ..... 3

**Charlotte and Coral Springs** ..... 6

**The planning process** ..... 6

    Charlotte: an effective planning process allows for government accountability ..... 6

    Coral Springs: citizens involved in the planning ..... 8

**Institutionalization of Performance** ..... 10

    MIAMI-DADE: from internalization of performance measures to publication of results ..... 11

**The Measures** ..... 14

    Olathe: measuring substance ..... 15

    Austin and Dallas; simplifying the system of measures ..... 18

**Publishing Results** ..... 19

    Miami-Dade: a government is as credible as the information it provides ..... 20

    The City of Buenos Aires: a citizen scorecard ..... 22

**Conclusion** ..... 25

**Appendix 1** ..... 28

**Appendix 2** ..... 29

**Appendix 3** ..... 30

**Bibliography** ..... 31

**About the Authors** ..... 32

**About CIPPEC** ..... 32

**Tables and graphics index**

**Table 1: Coral Springs: Strategic Planning Process** ..... 9

**Table 2: Key indicators to measure performance of the city** ..... 16

## Executive summary

The following document analyzes practices of reference from various Argentine and American governments to gain a better understanding of performance measurement in general, and specifically what affects it has on government accountability. The objective is to identify these practices in order to facilitate a sub-national dialogue and future cooperation between the aforementioned countries.

The intended outcome of this analysis and the project as a whole is to achieve a greater understanding of the experiences of a selection of governments (see appendix 1) and the several facets of the performance management program that they use. It is believed that articulating the experiences of these organizations will provide a reference for others that are interested in transparency and better governance.

This analysis has shown that the performance result publication has two key effects: one external and the other internal. Contrary to what is generally accepted, the cases analyzed in this text have shown that the publication of performance results has a profound internal impact, both administratively and politically. Meanwhile, the public reaction (external) was less pronounced than expected.

Measures as they concern this study are data that are tracked and checked frequently. They are indicators of the strategies implemented by a government. They represent a value; does this data show that the government is advancing towards its goals? When implementing a performance measurement program, governments should begin their efforts by stating their objectives and then using those objectives to define a strategy. Once the overall strategy is in place the individual departments should create their own strategic operating plans that will help them determine which measures will best assist them to manage towards their goals. The network of measures should reflect how close a government is to achieving its predefined strategic goals.

Finally, based on the information gathered in the interviews undertaken during this study, it is essential that internal support for the program remain strong throughout the process and especially when it comes time to publish the results of the government's performance. The individuals in charge of the program must be willing to publish negative results along with positive as well as provide support to the individual departments responsible for any "bad" results. In order for a government to be accountable to its citizens it should work to create an equilibrium between the citizens' demands for transparency, the credibility resulting from performance reporting, and pressures to avoid publishing negative measures that result from internal debates.

## **Acknowledgements**

CIPPEC would like to recognize Ray Scher (Assistant Director, Management Planning and Performance Analysis, Miami-Dade Co.) and Alan Shorthouse (Assistant Director, Strategic Financial Management, Olathe, Ks) for their participation in the workshop and their contributions to this study. CIPPEC also thanks Shannon Szymczak and Ed Vaneenoo, Lisa Schumacher, Bob Goehrig and Chelsea Stahl, Margaret Wright and Carlos Maxwell for their contributions during the telephone interviews and questionnaires that they completed throughout the project. CIPPEC specially thanks the United States Embassy in Argentina and Lynn Fine for their support and assistance that made this project possible. Finally, a special thanks to Fernando Straface, Director of Government Management and Policy at CIPPEC, for his direction and supervision.

## Introduction

Sub-national Governments across the United States and the world are increasingly relying upon performance measurement to improve effectiveness and efficiency in their, cities, states, and national agencies. These governments keep track of their performance by establishing criterion that properly demonstrate their progress towards their stated goals. These indicators, or measures as they are commonly referred to, track efficiency, effectiveness, and outcomes of government services. Measuring government performance improves government service and enables governing bodies to become transparent and accountable to their citizens.

The purpose of this document is to take a closer look at how American and Argentine governments are using performance measurement to improve their operations while becoming more accountable to their citizens. This piece forms part of a greater project taken on by CIPPEC (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth) with the support of the United States Embassy in Argentina, and intends to identify positive practices in order to facilitate a sub-national dialogue and future cooperation between the United States and Argentina. The conclusion of this project was a workshop, hosted by CIPPEC, for officials and academics experienced with performance measurement.

The intended outcome of this analysis and the project as a whole is to achieve a greater understanding of the experiences of these governments and the performance measurement program in general. The analysis will provide a reference for other cities, provinces, and national governments that are interested in transparency and improved results-based governance.

Performance measurement, as defined in this project, is a process that exists internally within a government, which initially produces information for government officials to use in their day-to-day management positions. The information drawn from the measurements can later be presented to the public as a progress report, giving citizens the opportunity to hold their governments accountable. These progress reports include several different types of measures. Some measures are used to track performance and can be linked directly to a specific project, an operational objective, a strategic objective, or a value that marks how resources and products relate to one another (efficiency measures<sup>1</sup> ).

This project intends to highlight the efforts governments are making to be accountable to their citizenry. Therefore, the investigation uses as its point of departure the principle that the publication of performance reports is the last leg of a lengthy process that a government must undergo in order to be accountable for its performance. This piece will analyze each step of the performance measurement process. The process will begin with the planning stage, followed by the institutionalization of the program, then the selection of measures, and finally, ending with the publication of the measures for the public.

The path to good performance measurement begins with the strategic planning process. Given that governments have limited resources, identifying the short and long-term societal goals implies establishing which priorities will receive resources. During the planning process it is important to identify the general strategy and build a consensus within the administration based around that strategy. The most important aspect of the planning process is the setting of priorities so that the administration can progress towards achieving results that are in concordance with the overall city goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Examples of each kind of measure found in the analyzed cases found in chapter 3.

The planning process requires its own methodology. It will not be possible to report on performance if the government plan does not contain a quantified configuration of the strategic objectives and operating plans of the individual departments. Quantifying the objectives of the departments permits the government to evaluate where each agency stands with respect to the general operating plan, and subsequently where the government stands with respect to its strategic plan.

This document will demonstrate that measures are not all alike. Some measures are ineffective or are categorized and grouped incorrectly. The measure's value is directly correlated to its capacity to measure towards a government strategy or objective, enabling that government to use it as evidence for decision-making. Moreover, measures serve to create a platform upon which the government bases its transparent relationship with the citizen, revealing how resources are used and whether the proposed objectives are being met. In other words, the idea is not to measure for its own sake: the measures are only indicators of the strategies implemented by the government<sup>2</sup>. Clearly specifying the government objectives is important because it allows the agencies to select pointed and relevant measures. Simple and direct objectives also enable cross-agency grouping of measures (i.e. public safety includes measures from the police, fire, and health departments).

The term institutionalization refers to the internalization of the program: in effect, the extent to which the organization has accepted the program as a part of its day-to-day operations. As officials become more confident about planning and using measures they become more effective as administrators, and in turn, promote the program across agencies and governments. A high grade of institutionalization is important because it guarantees the sustainability of the program. Moreover, as the process becomes ingrained within the various bodies of the organization, room for personal discretion decreases.

Finally, based on the analysis undertaken during this study it has become evident that the publication of performance reporting has two effects: one internal and one external. Contrary to what is generally accepted, the cases analyzed in this text have shown that the publication of performance results has a profound internal effect, both administratively and politically. Meanwhile, the public reaction (external) was less pronounced than what was initially expected.

Publishing performance results allows for a government to open the door to citizen participation, enabling the public to influence the government's management strategies. This brings up many questions. At what point does a government begin performance reporting? What processes must it pass through to do so? Has performance reporting managed to minimize the information barrier between a government and its citizens? Have the citizens taken advantage of the information provided to them? What inward effects has the publication of this information had on government organizations? What characteristics must a government have in order to sustain the program on a long-term basis?

In conclusion, publishing quantitative and qualitative information about performance results is a complicated process. The road to accountability involves several stages requiring the dedication of officials, directors, and government authorities in general. Proponents of the measurement program will have to prevail over those unwilling to publicly show negative results. Through training and experience more administrators will get on board with the program, and the

---

<sup>2</sup> Expressed in this manner by Alan Shorthouse from the City of Olathe, Ks. in a teleconference held on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

administrative culture will begin to shift towards transparent government. Aside from creating outwards government transparency, publishing results also promotes an honest internal dialogue.

Over the 4 month duration of this investigation 21 cases<sup>3</sup> in Argentina and the United States were examined. The analysis was conducted on a sub-national level (including cities, counties, and states). It was designed to explore best practices in both countries. Of the original 21 cases that were selected, 15 governments were sent a questionnaire and 6 were formally interviewed via teleconference. Only the last six governments are cited in this piece, although all of the cases contributed to the study.

The first chapter of this study introduces the *Charlotte and Coral Springs* cases. Both cities have well defined and strong planning processes. The city of Charlotte was one of the first cities in the United States to develop a strategic plan and to link that plan to a system of measures that evaluated the government's performance as a way to improve services and accountability to its citizens. The city of Coral Springs won the Baldrige Award<sup>4</sup> , and is considered a relevant case because of the participatory mechanisms it uses to communicate with its citizenry, primarily during the city's planning process.

The second chapter underlines essential aspects of the internalization process required to develop a performance measurement program. The case highlights how the *Miami-Dade County* government achieved swift and effective internalization of the program. The case demonstrates the strategy and focus of the implementation process of the program.

The third chapter delves into the measures and how they are directly connected to the government plan. The cases developed in this section demonstrate how cities manage to tie their measures into their strategic objectives and operating plans. *Olathe and Dallas* have successfully created measures that inform the budgetary process, streamlining the way their governments spend citizens' tax dollars.

The fourth chapter analyzes the benefits as well as the limitations of publishing the data. A close look will be taken at the practical aspects of publishing (accessibility, format, etc.) as well as the internal and external impact it has on the system. In this section the cases of *Miami-Dade County* and the *Federal District of Buenos Aires* will be considered.

Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

---

<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Anex gives a list of all cities that participated in the first phase of this project.

<sup>4</sup> The **Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award** is awarded annually to organizations in the private sector, health, education, and non-profit, for excellent performance. The award emphasizes management as a central factor for achieving competitive practices. It is the only performance award for organizations awarded by the President of the United States. It is one of only two awards handed out to companies by the President, the other being the Ron Brown Award for corporate leadership. The Award is administered by the Baldrige National Quality Program under the auspices of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of Commerce.

## Charlotte and Coral Springs

### The planning process

The strategic planning process is “the process by which the members of an organization imagine a future and develop the operational procedures necessary to make that vision a reality.”<sup>5</sup>

Strategic planning as it applies to local government allows for an organization to identify its potential as well as prioritize the societal goals that guide its sustainable development. Given that a city’s resources are limited, identifying middle and long-term societal goals establishes priority for the areas that will most benefit from those resources. This reality is what activates the planning process.

It is important that there be consensus over which goals will be considered priority, because once they are considered such they will lead the way for the operating strategy of the city. It is important that the strategic plan transcends short-term performance goals and endures over time. Also, beyond establishing priorities it defines what operative plan of action will be taken to achieve the objectives that are set. The budget should fall in line with the strategic plan.

The planning process also involves a detailed methodology. In this study it was observed that there is a direct linear relation between planning, procedure, quantification of achieved results, and accountability. It is not possible for a government to be accountable without strategic objectives, quantifiable results for each step of the process, and a budget for each department.

Finally, the planning process is not complete without citizen participation. Public definition of goals is a crucial step in the process.

This section brings to light exemplary cases of strategic planning in two American cities. The city of Charlotte developed its first strategic plan over fifteen years ago and was one of the first cities to link its plan to a set of measures used to evaluate its performance as well as provide accountability to its citizenry. The city of Coral Springs uses a model that stresses citizen involvement throughout the entire planning process.

### Charlotte: an effective planning process allows for government accountability

About fifteen years ago the city of Charlotte developed its first strategic plan. Both the mayor and the city council agreed that the city should focus its efforts on the issues that most needed investment. The city had limited resources, as do all cities, and there was a push to direct those resources towards the issues that strategically benefited the city. Therefore, it became necessary that the city reach a consensus about the priorities that it would establish.

The mayor brought various officials together to discuss the government’s priorities. Of the twelve original priorities they agreed on five as the most important. These priorities were: transportation, public safety, economic development, the environment, and home and neighborhood development. There already existed a government body (with some funding from

---

<sup>5</sup> Rodríguez Larreta, H., Ocampo, A., Straface, F., Darmohraj, A., Felici, S., Rabasedas, M., Ruffo, H., y Solda, S., “Hacia un Nuevo Sector Público: Experiencias Exitosas de Gestión en Argentina.”. Grupo Sofía.



the state) that managed Education, for example, and thus, it was not included as one of the five top priorities.

With these priorities established the city of Charlotte began its planning process. It began using a corporate model that considered the city government a sort of business, looking to spend their clients' money in the most efficient and effective manner, all the while outperforming the competition. Along with the corporate strategy the city developed a scorecard that required the individual departments to link their operating plans upwards into the overall strategy.

To understand how the planning process works on a political and administrative level it is important to recognize what type of government exists. Some cities and counties in the United States divide authority between the mayor and the council, while others have a council/manager system. This study will not look into the greater implications of these two governing systems, yet it recognizes that the differences can affect the planning process. In the governments analyzed for this study there is a clear division between the political and administrative realms, as is more often the case in council/manager systems of government. In these governments the political sphere involves the elected members of the council, while the manager heads off the administrative side. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the city and answers to the council performance data. Despite the fact that the council has the ability to remove and appoint the manager, he acts primarily as an a-political figure.

Charlotte has taken other steps to depoliticize the process. The city council members work part-time at the council and have other professions that they maintain along with their public post. It is in the interest of the manager as well as the citizen that the council acts efficiently while continuing to work within the community.

It is the council's duty to determine what priorities the city should have in the short and long term. Elected by their constituents it is their responsibility to prioritize strategic areas for the city. The council, the manager, the manager's staff, and department directors define the strategic goals in council meetings.

Taking into account these priorities the manager along with the other departments is responsible for elaborating the strategic plan and creating a rough draft. The rough draft of the plan is then taken back to the city council. The council reviews and approves the draft for each of the five strategic priorities. Once the strategic plan is agreed upon each department is responsible for creating an operating plan that links to it.

Lisa Schumacher of the Charlotte Budget and Evaluation Office explained that, "they (the council) have an opportunity to tell us through the committee process if they agree with what we have proposed. If not, we go through a revision process."

In Charlotte the Budget and Evaluation Office manages the planning process. This office ensures that the rough draft is managed according to deadlines so that the final product is completed on schedule. The Budget and Evaluation Office directs a group of specialists who are responsible for the organization and elaboration of the document. These specialists are brought in to bolster the creative process of constructing a plan that will guide administrators and interest citizens.

Each strategic goal is carefully considered. Strategies that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government services that pertain to the city priorities are written. For example, when developing the strategy for Public Safety, the Police and Fire departments as well as several

other departments are involved in the process. This way, the priority becomes a multi-faceted exercise.

What is important when it comes time to plan? It is important to identify the general strategy and then build administrative consensus around it. In the words of Lisa Schumacher, “if we only have the resources to focus on three priorities, what would those priorities be?”

Keep in mind that by defining strategic priorities for the city the government is not discarding other important services and programs. For example, the solid waste pick-up service was not defined as a strategic service for the city, yet it is a very important and valuable service. Nevertheless, the government determined that safety was a greater priority at a time when the crime rate was up. In most instances what is determined to be a strategic priority is what is in most need of help, i.e. a service that has not been properly attended to by the city.

In Charlotte, when the process began, it was difficult for the departments to differentiate between strategy and operation. Several departments sensed that they were being ignored because they were not defined as strategic focus areas. It took time for the government to clarify what it meant to be for a service to be a strategic priority.

### **Coral Springs: citizens involved in the planning**

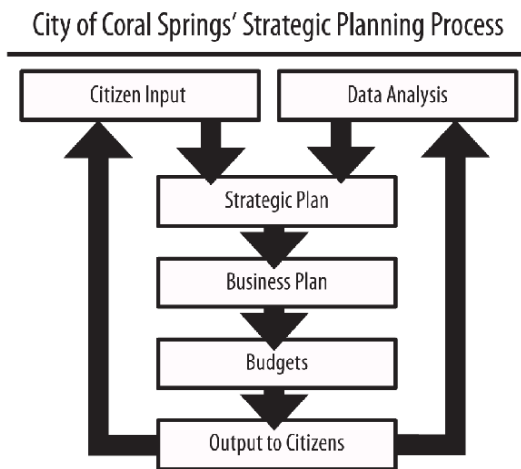
As a result of the hard work Coral Springs puts into its planning process, measure selection process, and publication process, it was given the Baldrige Award. This award is presented annually for excellent performance to organizations in the private, health, education, and non-profit sectors.

In Coral Springs the planning process is considered an essential element in their performance measurement program. City administrators in Coral Springs believe that if the goals are clearly defined, that is to say that there exists consensus around the city priorities, performance measurement will be more useful and the distribution of resources more exact. Thus, emphasis is placed on this first phase of the performance measurement program.

In addition to the previously mentioned interplay between the city council and the departments, lead by the Budget and Planning Office (equivalent to Charlotte’s Budget and Evaluation Office), Coral Springs places a heavy emphasis on citizen participation.

Public participation is vital, not only for the process during which the objectives are defined, but also for when the government selects the measures it will use. By opening the door to citizens the government enables itself to prepare for the challenges that may emerge further on down the road. As the process unfolds, the citizens share their needs and expectations, which allows for the government to prepare a response. This process can be observed in the graph below:

**Table 1: Coral Springs: Strategic Planning Process**



Source: Coral Springs Government

There are various mechanisms that help a government involve its citizens in the planning process. One must not forget that it is the government's responsibility to satisfy the necessities of the citizen, and not vice versa. It is important that the government make sure that there are forums by which the citizen can dialogue with the organization. The availability of communication pipelines and the formalization of a dialoging process is essential for a healthy and productive operation. In other words, for citizen participation to be effective a formalized medium must be developed: citizens must be comfortable with the process in order to completely exercise their voice.

In Coral Springs various efforts are made to generate the spaces necessary for a constructive dialogue, where the citizen can voice expectations and concerns. The city draws from these communications and uses the information as a building block for the strategic plan. Here are some of the approaches the city uses to open a dialogue and receive citizen input:

- Annual Surveys: two annual surveys are conducted. One is for homeowner's satisfaction and the other is business oriented. The sample size for the surveys is 1,000 citizens. A contracted private company evaluates the results.
- The SWOT exercises (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats): a questionnaire completed by people closely involved with the government. The board members, key stakeholders, staff and the city commission complete the survey. These surveys allow for the city to identify critical themes.
- "Slice of the Springs" meetings: six times a year citizens come together with administrators to discuss the issues that are most relevant at the time. The informal environment created in these meetings allows for the free flow of ideas and opinion. Some meetings deal with old issues, while others confront new ones.

The city constantly looks to create and maintain spaces where citizens can be vocal and play a part in the planning process. The performance management program emphasizes the importance of open dialogue between government and citizen. The circle of good governance begins and ends with the citizen: if the city cannot open its doors to new ideas and old critiques than it has little hope of becoming accountable to the public.

## Institutionalization of Performance

Governments become accountable for performance by internalizing measurement criterion and institutionalizing processes of auto-evaluation.

For an organization to institutionalize a measurement program its officials should have a strong understanding of how the measurement criterion apply to the day-to-day operation. Learning the practical uses of the measurements will bring officials together in consensus about the program's functionality as a governing tool. As a rule of thumb, the greater the consensus about the positive affects of performance measurement, the greater the level of institutionalization that exists.

A high grade of institutionalization is necessary primarily because it guarantees the sustainability of the program. Logically, the more deep-rooted the program becomes the more likely it is to survive the changing political tides and become a solidified operation within the administrative structure. As the measurement process<sup>6</sup> becomes ingrained into the governing institutions it is less likely that officials will deviate from the program, and thus, constructive energy is focused on perfecting results and remolding measurements that will better represent the government's efforts.

Consensus, as it is defined within this text, is the near universal agreement of a body of people towards an idea or objective. For the purposes of this study the body in question is the governing organization that supplies services to its residents. This study stands on the foundation that results-based governance is the consequence of a process undertaken by administrators, directors, and government authorities. Because these authorities play a part in the gathering of information it is essential that the institution can rely on them to be honest and truthful when it comes time to share that information. This trust is fundamental for the program to work successfully. Therefore, positive consensus about performance measurement is an implicit agreement between officials that honesty and self-evaluation are supremely important factors in the effort to improve government performance.

All of the interviewed governments pointed to this actuality. Margaret Wright, Assistant Director at the Office of Strategic Customer Services in Dallas explained; "first it is necessary to introduce and contemplate the concepts of performance management. Why? Why have we implemented this program? How will it work? You have to do this before you begin to measure, before you even choose what measures you will use. If you hurry this process, the people will not even understand what the point of the whole thing is. In other words, one has to get over the idea that the program is only about the numbers." Later in the conversation she added, "our goals for the future are to maintain the management concept alive and internalize it throughout the organization and the various departments. This will be harder than selecting the measures, it will even be harder than measuring. For example, it is hard to measure whether the Fire Department understands the concept."

Governments seeking to build consensus about performance measurement face the tall task of changing the bureaucratic culture from years prior. When the performance measurement process is initiated the organization undergoes a cultural shift. For this shift to be complete it must be internalized and long lasting. This change requires strong leadership from top to bottom: administratively the process operates top-down and is fueled from the inside out. For example,

---

<sup>6</sup> Selecting indicators, collecting of information, publishing results.

publishing the results is the conclusion of an arduous effort initiated internally by the organization, and more specifically by the upper-level managers.

This section will show how Miami-Dade County successfully internalized a system of measures, enabling the government to assess how close the departments are to achieving objectives set out in their business plans, and likewise, how close the government is to achieving the goals it set out in the strategic plan. Consensus over the positive affects of the program in the Miami-Dade government has helped internalize the measurement system and has enabled the organization to be accountable to its citizens.

In Miami-Dade County the internalization process was accomplished in a relatively short timeframe. The county administrators and elected officials believed that the performance measurement program was so beneficial to their governing process that they passed legislation that guarantees the sustainability of the program. The legislation also stipulates that performance results must be made public. This section of the document will analyze how the county achieved a high grade of institutionalization.

## **MIAMI-DADE: from internalization of performance measures to publication of results**

### **The responsibilities of the Office of Strategic Business Management**

The OSBM (Office of Strategic Business Management) is responsible for overseeing the performance measurement program in Miami-Dade County. It plays the role of educator within the administration. That is how Carlos Maxwell describes it, “generally the other departments are too busy putting out fires and working in the community. That is why the OSBM works to internalize performance measurement into the administrative organization.”

### **Selecting the measures, revising them, and keeping them up-to-date**

The OSBM manages the county’s selection of outcome (impact) measures and its staff works side-by-side with the various departments during their selection process of output (operational) measures.

The OSBM meets regularly with the departments to review the information gathered from the measures; i.e. the origin and validity of the data provided. Its job is primarily one of support, given that the final objective is that each department takes full responsibility and ownership for its own measures.

In Miami-Dade each measure has an owner. When the measure is uploaded into the system the name of the official responsible is uploaded along with it. The owner of the measure can range from a department director down to a low-level staff member and each measure can have up to two or three owners. The ceiling placed on the amount of owners per measure exists to help simplify the revision process.

Decentralizing management of the measurement process makes each department responsible for its results. The OSBM provides these departments with the guide they need to create measures that will represent their results properly. It is a positive force that emphasizes the importance of good measures to the departments, yet does not act as a regulator for their management policies.

## **The purpose of the program**

Another important element in the performance measurement program is the revision and oversight of the measures. The revision process exists so that the organization can size-up its performance internally before it publishes the results. This process does not function if the exercise solely focuses on low performing services. The intention is to sum-up the performance of the government as a whole and subsequently work to improve the services that are lagging behind. Meetings held with the departments to go over measures are designed to identify the obstacles that are inhibiting the lagging services from improving, and then to create strategies to improve them. These meetings are not punitive exercises intended to punish the officials responsible for poorly performing services. This positive enforcement enables the department officials to feel comfortable with revealing any negative results reflected in the measures and helps them to internalize the process. According to Carlos Maxwell, “now the department directors feel comfortable enough to talk about the measures that are red (lagging), they learned to look at the measures in a different way. The directors are there to help move things forward (...) as time passed they began to accept the project and their fears went away.”

Illustrating this positive approach to reviewing results is an example from Miami-Dade’s Transportation Department: the negative numbers emitted from the measure “on-time bus arrival” set-off an investigation by the OSBM in an effort to get to the bottom of the measure’s lagging performance. The study showed that the origin of the problem was in the information that was being utilized, thus prompting the department to modify the measure so that it would properly represent the performance of the county’s bus arrival times.

Another government that underscored the importance of the non-punitive approach to performance measurement was the city of Charlotte. Lisa Schumacher described this management style in the following manner: “The first time the departments had to select measures they found it very difficult. They were afraid of being punished if the measures were showing poorly. Some people become nervous when they hear the words “strategy” and “performance measurement”. It is very important that the program not be presented as a punitive exercise. If they fear punishment it is likely that they will chose measures without meaning or purpose. In order for them to take on the most difficult tasks they need to have support and feel comfortable. They need to feel that they will not be punished for the results shown by the measures.”

## **A culture shift; the internalization of the program**

In Miami-Dade there is heavy emphasis placed on internal communication within the administration. The administration makes an explicit effort to disseminate a positive message about performance measurement. The OSBM, the manager, and the mayor work throughout the year to deliver specific messages about performance measurement.

1. When the government presents the fiscal year’s new budget it delivers a message about the importance of performance measurement and the key role of the OSBM.
2. In his speeches the manager places emphasis on the importance of performance measurement.
3. When the departments finalize their business plans the importance of constructive measurement is reiterated.
4. In monthly and quarterly meetings, the manager uses the measures as a managing tool.

5. Performance measurement workshops and training sessions are held for mid and upper-level administrators. Famous politicians and officials deliver positive messages about performance measurement.

Throughout the course of the year the manager delivers a positive message about performance measurement to the department directors, highlighting the importance of the program.

The city of Charlotte applied an additional technique designed to increase the institutionalization of the measurement process. They introduced a pilot program before they instated the program, which provided an effective spark plug that ignited the performance measurement process. The pilot program served as a warm-up exercise and helped start to shift the organization's culture.

The pilot program included departments that volunteered to participate. Each department developed a business plan and selected. The Budget and Evaluation Office and specialists provided them with direction and oversight. Once the pilot was concluded the organization boasted of internal leaders that supported the program. These leaders shared their experiences and knowledge with other administrators. In Charlotte they coined these important leaders "Internal Champions".

#### **Legislation that codifies the program**

The Miami-Dade government created legislation that codifies the performance measurement program into the county's law books. In 2005 a law was passed that guarantees; 1) the county must create a strategic plan, 2) each department must link their business plan to the strategic plan, 3) the OSBM must make performance results available to the public.

This legislation was passed in Miami-Dade because the politicians and administrators believed that results-based governing was the most efficient and effective way to provide positive results to their citizens. To date, the authorities have not used the legislation to explicitly defend the program. Nevertheless, it provides a security blanket that ensures the sustainability of the program.

#### **Software can facilitate the institutionalization of the program**

In Miami-Dade, once the strategic plan is written and instated, it is uploaded into a software program. The departments can load their measures into the software, which are then linked to the other measures that apply to the same services. Likewise, the software links the measures and the services to the strategic goals set out in the plan. In this manner, progress made by the county to reach the goals designated by the strategic plan is observable through the software program.

For example: the county's objective to become a safer place to live and work is uploaded as such into the software. There are several departments that play important roles in promoting public safety, therefore, each department uploads its goals for public safety and in turn those goals are linked to the county's strategic public safety objectives. For instance, the Police Department will upload its goal under the title "fighting crime". Below this title one can find the department's measures that relate to fighting crime.

The software helps to visualize the way the strategic plan ties everything together. Departments adopt the general countywide objectives by applying their department objectives to

the strategic plan. This process has been coined the “cascade effect”. The countywide objectives have a cascade affect across the organization, as each goal is broken down into specific operational practicalities for each department.

## The Measures

The media uses measures to report on the government’s performance on a daily basis. For example, it is common to hear a local broadcaster mention that the “infant mortality rate” went up, or the “unemployment rate” went down. Often times the measures that are reported are very simple, such as, “the government repaired x number of streets last month”. Each time these measures are reported on, the public image of the political/administrative apparatus is affected in some way or another. The media will use measures that are produced by the government as well as measures that are drawn from other sources. The measures that interest this study are measures that are produced internally in the government that have the potential to be seen by the public.

Measures that are used to track performance are primarily in place to help the organization optimize efficiency and effectiveness in its short and long-term operations. They are also facilitate government accountability.

“The measure’s utility and function is indisputable when it concerns government accountability. Nevertheless, its incorporation into the public sphere requires a series of challenges that are worth noting. These challenges include the selection process as much as they do the implementation process”<sup>7</sup> .

Bonnefoy and Armijo classify the above mentioned challenges as follows:

1. Confronting the organizational structure present in public administrations, which often resist transition from the traditional bureaucratic models to results-based approaches.
2. Establishing of results-based values as the central theme to government strategy.
3. Confronting Civil services that limit task delegation and responsibility of public efforts.
4. Consolidating bureaucratic models that strain the system.

This paper shows that taking on these challenges with determination and resolve is essential to the program’s success. The measures will be useful when an organizational structure that seeks results exists. The organization must be capable of self-evaluation and taking on new responsibilities, and ready to award those individuals who promote an honest process. As soon as these conditions are met, the measures that are selected will have value and importance.

In any case, not all measures are good measures, and sometimes an entire measuring system can be flawed and off base. The measures are effective when they are linked to the government’s strategy and objectives and help administrators evaluate and make decisions, serving as a platform for government accountability as they reveal how resources are distributed.

---

<sup>7</sup> Trans. Udwin, T. Bonnefoy, J.C., y Armijo, M., “Indicadores de desempeño en el sector público”. Institute for Economic and Social Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean, ILPES. CEPAL, GTZ. November, 2005.



In other words, measuring for the sake of measuring is not helpful. The measures are only useful when they indicate the success of strategies implemented by the government<sup>8</sup>.

Below are three cases of governments that have linked their measures to their strategic objectives and operating plans. They use the measures to provide accountability to their citizens. The first case is Olathe, Kansas. The second and third cases are Dallas, Texas and Austin, Texas.

## **Olathe: measuring substance**

### **The relationship between the measures, strategic plan, and budget**

Business plans, resource allocation, and measuring of results are all connected in the city of Olathe. Each department's business plan is developed with the organization's objectives, the department's objectives, and each individual service's objectives in mind. Measures are used to follow the departments' performance in relation to the strategic plan, compare performance to prior years, and match performance to future targets. Each department receives resources based on the results and successes of previous years, as well as their relation and relevance to the citywide strategic goals.

The connection between the strategic plan and the operation of the individual departments is direct. Resources are allocated to the departments based on previous performance on the one hand, and intended strategic outcome on the other. If a department has not been receiving sufficient funds in past years the measures will call attention to this reality. Officials can investigate what services are lagging and give them special attention, bringing the department back to par. Likewise, if there is a budget crunch and a department that does not have particular pertinence to the citywide strategy is receiving more funds than a department that does, the measures will provide the information necessary to redirect resources according to the strategic goals. In both instances the measures help officials determine where to designate funds. Because of this reality it is very important that the measures properly represent the organization's results.

Olathe uses measures to monitor the successes of each department as the city moves towards its strategic goals. Paradoxically, when Olathe began the measure selection process it had not yet defined a set of well-developed objectives; the measures were selected before the objectives were formed. This resulted in a large quantity of measures that were not necessarily tied into the organization's objectives and did not represent the results properly. In other words, when the city began the measuring process it was measuring for the sake of measuring. To correct this, the city set aside the measures and got busy designing an overarching strategic plan that would combine objectives for all the departments<sup>9</sup>. The measures that were selected were linked directly to the strategic plan and a system was created to assess the progress of the business plans. The measures that are directly linked to the strategic plan are called key measures. These are outcome measure and they give a general perspective on the city's performance.

---

<sup>8</sup> Expressed by Alan Shorthouse in the teleconference interview held on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> In the first chapter of this document the planning process for Charlotte is elaborated on, demonstrating the importance of the Strategic Plan and the individual Operating Plans for the Departments.

**Table 2: Key indicators to measure performance of the city**

Indicator	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2008 Target	Met or exceeded
1. Crime Rate (Part 1 Total)	28.1	26.8	24.58	26	√
2. Overall Satisfaction	117	120	123	≥120	√
3. Overall value received for City taxes/fees	65%	66%	67%	70%	
4. Bond Rating Index	8	8	8.5	9	
5. Percent of Time Water Meets Regulatory Standards	99.9%	100%	100%	100%	√
6. Fire Confined to Room of Origin	48.8%	49.2%	66.0%	53%	√
7. Percentage of Cardiac Arrest Patients Arriving to Hospital with a Pulse	25%	40%	40%	40%	√
8. Parks & Rec. Satisfaction	85%	82%	87%	85%	√
9. Solid Waste Diversion	23.91%	19.92%	26.81%	>25%	√
10. Actual Land Use Mix	NA	NA	NA	NA	Under development
11. Mobility Index	100	106	112	111	√
12. Private Investment in Downtown as a Percent of Total Dollars Invested (Public & Private)	27%	17%	7%	10%	
13. Neighborhood Health Index	NA	NA	NA	NA	Under development
14. Diversity Index	NA	NA	100	>100	2008 Baseline Year

**Measures**

The city of Olathe uses approximately 300 measures. Input, output, efficiency, and outcome measures are found on the city scorecard. Like a big chalkboard in the faculty lounge where teachers write down student grades, the scorecard is a matrix of where all of the city’s measures are organized and tracked.

When department directors report their progress they can use an array of measures to give an overall representation of their results. Generally, input and output measures are used for performance reporting. Here are some examples of efficiency measures: on road clean up/mile, road repair expenditures/mile, and per capita road expenditures/mile. These measures provide information that helps the resource allocation decision-making process. For example, the city measures the expenditure/mile on government vehicles, and uses it to make decisions for when to upgrade the fleets. The objective behind efficiency measurement is to always use the city’s resources in the most efficient way possible.

The city of Olathe began selecting measures as early as the year 2000, yet as with any new program, the city encountered difficulties from the outset. The most pronounced challenge the city faced was its oversized pool of measures. As mentioned before, several measures were not tied to objectives or a strategic plan. Since then the city has worked hard to simplify the measures and reduce their number. The purifying process required officials to take a closer look at which measures informed them of real performance results.

The Office of Strategic Financial Management helped the departments look at their measures and ask questions: What is the measure assessing? Why does it exist? What does it do?

La ciudad de Olathe cuenta con, aproximadamente, 300 indicadores. En su informe “*Balanced Scorecard*”, se publican indicadores de *output*, *efficiency* y *outcome* para las 8 áreas relevantes del gobierno.

### **How to improve the data collection process**

Using various mechanisms the city of Olathe successfully improved the quality of information that resulted from the measures.

A concerted effort to make efficient and useful measures the first step towards achieving improved results was championed by upper-level officials. First and foremost, performance measurement was reintroduced into the administration as a formal activity by standardizing reporting formats and procedures as well as creating templates according to the needs of the individual departments. A timetable was set for turning in information as well as for publishing it.

Training seminars and measure selection workshops are held for department directors and other officials who handle quantitative data on a day-to-day basis. In the workshops the officials learn about measures; why to measure, how to measure, and what to measure. Officials who specialize in performance measurement attend special training seminars that are more specific and directed towards their expertise.

By formalizing the measurement culture it is expected that government administrators will begin to incorporate the measures into their day-to-day strategies. It is essential that they understand that the measures are tools created to help them govern.

### **Revising the measures**

Olathe is currently undergoing a revision process of its measures. The city is working to document what function each measure performs, why the measure was created, how the measure is calculated, and who is its owner. This information will help the Office of Strategic Management to understand what is behind each measure.

The measures that prove to be valuable to the departments’ efforts to monitor results will continue to be used and reviewed by the Budget Office before being published. In the case that a measure shows extraneous or incorrect information it is returned to the departments from which it originated and is reviewed before returning to the Budget Office.

### **Publishing the measures**

The city of Olathe publishes 100% of its measures in an array of documents (*Balanced Scorecard*, *Comparative Cities Report*, *Direction Finder* etc.). These documents include measures from all of the government departments in Olathe. They provide the citizen with an opportunity to look over what results each city service is achieving.

It is worth noting that the annual budget also includes a selection of measures for each department. This document is also available to the public.

## **Austin and Dallas; simplifying the system of measures**

In this study the organizations analyzed have shown a large discrepancy between the number of measures belonging to an administration and the number of citizens that administration represents. Some cities have systems of measures that include up to 3,000 measures while other cities boast one-tenth that amount. The varying number of measures in the organizations analyzed for this study is a result of several factors. Some of these factors include; the population size of the city, the maturity of the performance management program, the types of measures used, and the complexity of the bureaucratic apparatus.

The city of Dallas, for example, uses upwards of 3,000 measures. This large quantity of measures is due to the simple fact that the organization uses a system that includes all types of measures. Dallas has a young program and as analysis shows, most programs start with an inflated amount of measures not all of which are tied into the government's institutional objectives. This phenomenon is also clearly witnessed in the cases of Olathe and Buenos Aires. Generally, programs that start with large numbers of measures follow-up with a purifying process that involves administrators asking why the measures exist and what value they give to the strategic plan. Dallas has passed through the simplification process once and will likely do so again.

The measure selection process is complex. On the one hand, a large quantity of measures allows for a government to watch over the minutia of its various services. Lots of measures can also help to brake down complex services and show the multi-layered results they produce. On the other hand, an excess of measures can blur the picture and lose sight of the objectives/strategy. In addition to purifying the measures several cities have opted to simplify the system of measures that they use.

The City of Austin uses a simple formula to guide its measure management structure. The organization is made-up of 30 departments, each of which is responsible for a multitude of services, activities as they are called in Austin. Each activity is monitored by an average of 3 measures. By keeping the number of measures to activity low the directors of each department have a manageable amount of data that they are responsible for.

Dallas uses a system very similar to Austin's. The city's measurement process begins with its services. In Dallas' case there are eight to ten measures attached to each service that it provides. Like Austin, Dallas provides a description below each measure explaining what it measures, how it is calculated, and what function it provides. For example, the service called "non-hazardous waste removal" has several measures that track its performance. These measures are passed up monthly from the Environmental and Health Services Department to the Office of Strategic Customer Services. These are some of the 3,000 measures that track the city's performance.

It is the responsibility of each department to deliver the data resulting from their measures to the Office of Strategic Customer Services. This department is responsible for overseeing performance measurement in Dallas, and as explained above, it works with the other departments to select their measures and to review the data that results. In the grand scheme of things this department is the organism responsible for filtering the measures into the bigger picture, by double-checking for inconsistencies or trends that do not respond to the strategic objectives.

As opposed to the strategic planning process, the measurement process is bottom-up. As data matriculates from the street on up through the upper echelons of the government it supplies officials with information that will form opinion about the effectiveness of services and departments as a whole. In effect, the results achieved by a service will affect the evaluation of the department or departments responsible for it.

This evaluation process is a formal and transparent procedure. The data is representative of the ebb and flow of the governments services and not only helps officials make important decisions, but also provides material for necessary progress reports to citizens. Dallas publishes 3-4 measures for each service. The publication process will be explained further in the final section of this paper.

Revising a complex measurement structure presents a tall task for any government. In Dallas the City Manager does not have time to review each and every one of the city's 3,000 measures. Acknowledging this logistical barrier, the city has incorporated a tagging technique, which flags measures that perform poorly. Like a stoplight, the city categorizes all of the measures into three colors; measures that performed positively are given the color green, measures that did not register a change the color yellow, and measures that performed poorly the color red. By categorizing the measures this way the manager can focus on the services that perform negatively.

Another way to simplify the revision process is to have fewer measures altogether. With fewer measures, the administration can take more care and time to review the information that is emitted and the directors can evaluate their services more carefully.

## **Publishing Results<sup>10</sup>**

The stated objective of this investigation is to present cases of reference about governments that promote transparent performance management by being accountable to their citizens.

Up until this section the analysis has presented the conditions necessary for a government to become accountable for its performance. These conditions are developed as organizations follow the steps of institutionalization until they reach the stage when productive performance measurement is possible. These steps include strategic planning, creation of a culture that promotes good measurement (creates conditions so that government can measure honestly and with purpose), and the design and selection of measures.

The last step in the process is the publication of the results. This is considered the final step a government must take to become responsible for the results its administration has achieved.

For the purposes of this paper, accountable government is understood to be the publication of an array of measures representative of the government's performance. As previously stated, the measures monitor a government's progress as it works to achieve goals that take into account the organization's resource availability. Consequently the measures mark the progress of performance as it relates directly to the city objectives. Ultimately all of the measures should be linked to the strategic goals of the city, yet on an operational level they can be specific to a single project, a service objective, or a departmental objective. The measures can also indicate the relationship between resources and products (efficiency measure<sup>11</sup>).

Publishing quantitative and qualitative information implies exposing the bureaucratic apparatus of government to outside forces. The implication of publishing performance results simultaneously reverberates through the political and bureaucratic paradigms. Performance measurement is like a tower of Jenga, a metaphorical structure in which the blocks are measures

---

<sup>10</sup> Anex 2 has the links to the performance publications for the six governments analyzed in this study.

<sup>11</sup> Chapter 3 gives examples of all types of measure analyzed in the cases for this study

that are connected through careful planning and design. The stability of the tower is completely dependent upon the manipulations it receives. It is composed of measures that indicate good results (green), unchanged results (yellow), and bad results (red). This set-up will be the same in all governments. Therefore, it is understood that any manipulations or attempts to hide the “red” blocks will debilitate the integrity of the structure and the final product.

Upon further research it is observed that publishing performance results has two impacts: one outward moving and the other inward. In the paragraphs below, this study will show how the publication of results plays a significant role in the internal workings of the organization, both administratively and politically. Observations will also be made about public reactions to the publication of data, which in the cases analyzed has been less pronounced than expected.

Finally, the legibility and practicality of the publications will be analyzed. In order that the data can be useful to the public it should be presented in a format that is not misleading or confusing. Citizens who look for information are concerned with the issues and problems that they confront on a daily basis. Accessible and legible information is valuable to the public, whereas inaccessible or poorly explained data has no constructive value. The value an organization places on providing progress reports to its citizens is reflected in its efforts to make the data accessible and concise.

The cases analyzed in this section give good examples of organizations that have made a concerted effort to publish information in a manner so that it is valuable to the citizen. The utilization of graphs, colors, descriptions, and links that connect the interested party to other sources of information all create an atmosphere that is welcoming, and that has the potential to interest a person beyond the information they were searching for. In these cases governments have made sure to design websites that invite the citizen to become informed about their performance results.

When analyzing the publishing policies of the following cases for this study, the analysis was initiated by going to each government’s official website. First and foremost it was important to determine what kind of information is available and what steps must be taken to access it. After this first step was completed a more in-depth look at the history of each government’s effort was taken. What steps were taken and how transparent was the process? As a final point, mention will be given to the cultural shift that occurs after a government begins to publish performance results, both internally and externally.

### **Miami-Dade: a government is as credible as the information it provides**

The OSBM is responsible for publishing data indicating performance results for Miami-Dade County. This office works year around to ensure that the performance results information accurately represents the government’s performance.

On the OSBM website, (<http://www.miamidade.gov/osbm/>), one can find a variety of information and reports, such as the strategic plan and the business plans for the departments.

The website directs most of its attention towards the scorecards, which are progress reports that provide the results achieved for the individual departments since the year 2003 until present. These reports present the measures in a less reader-friendly format and can be complex and confusing to someone who is unfamiliar with the process.

The other key report found on the web page is called the Progress Report (<http://www.miamidade.gov/stratplan/progress-report.asp>), which presents information organized by strategic themes. Instead of detailing the information in its administrative format, the Progress Report groups the measures by their connection to the strategic plan. For example, under the heading, Public Safety, one can find measures that provide data from the Police Department, the Fire Department, Juvenile Services, etc. This report is designed for readers who are less familiar with the performance management program.

Both documents disclose the measures that are used by the county to measure its performance. By analyzing this information the citizen can compare what the county has proposed in its strategic plan to what it has achieved throughout the year.

By publishing these documents the county holds itself accountable to its citizens and opens the door to public participation. It is now appropriate to ask whether the citizens take advantage of this possibility, if the barrier between citizen and government has been reduced, and if a new line of dialogue has been created.

In Miami-Dade the first notable reaction to the publication of the data came from the media. Articles about results-based publications and the results were published in the largest newspaper in the area. Yet despite the media attention, the organization witnessed less public reaction than was originally expected. The website has a space for feedback yet the county has received little commentary through this medium. Nevertheless, as explained by Ray Scher, although the public reaction has been minor, publishing the information is an act of transparency that contributes to the credibility of the government and enriches its relationship with the public.

While public reaction was tame, the publication of performance results has had a profound inward effect on the organization. This inward impact has prevailed as a recurring theme throughout all of the cases analyzed for this study. From the moment any government decides to make its results public there are political implications involved. Yet, the measurement program is designed to be an a-political tool to assist officials to manage their government's services. Maintaining an a-political environment is difficult when the public eye is watching, and so governments have to balance internal and external pressures that seek to sugarcoat negative results.

The date that is set for when the county will publish performance results represents a crucial moment for Miami-Dade. Before publication the emphasis of the program is placed on improving performance results by helping officials to recognize their objectives and measure their progress towards them. However, when this data becomes public the officials become concerned about how the public may perceive their efforts, which is complicated when improvement does not always show itself in positive numbers (there can be times when some services will show diminished results because more emphasis was placed on other services). Will the public recognize this?

When a service has not met an operational objective it is flagged with the color red, therefore departments may become cautious about setting difficult objectives so as not to look as though they are performing poorly. For example, the Police Department was initially reserved about publishing its measures because most of the goals it had set were very high and consequently several services showed red. The Department feared that once made public, people would assume that it was not functioning and providing safety for the residents of the county.

Fear that departments have about publishing red results can affect the measure selection process. Publishing the results inclines departments to select goals that they can reach. Logically, the communication department has been especially reticent to publish results that showed poorly

for the county. Disagreements between departments can materialize as officials become concerned about the reaction that their results may provoke. When disagreements about publishing the measures do arise, the leadership at Miami-Dade has proven that it is determined to be transparent. On multiple occasions the upper-level county management has decided to publish results despite any negative appearances. As commented by Ray Scher, this level of transparency ultimately positively influences the county's credibility.

In conclusion, publishing performance results is the fulcrum that balances the political/administrative entity on the one side, and the citizen's demand for transparency on the other. In all of the analyzed cases this equilibrium modifies the organization's internal dialogue and imbues within it a new approach to citizen communication. In other words, publication is the central piece in the internal cultural shift, which permits the organization to interact directly with the citizen.

### **The City of Buenos Aires: a citizen scorecard**

In 2007 the government of the City of Buenos Aires<sup>12</sup> proposed an initiative to develop a system that would monitor the performance of the projects initiated by the previous government as well as projects initiated from its point of inception. In this manner the government would enable a forum in which officials could communicate to citizens about their performance. As a result, the government created a scorecard that tracked its performance and facilitated results-based decision-making.

The mayor of Buenos Aires created a new government position called Secretary of Management so that his administration could monitor government progress from a purely administrative perspective. This allowed the mayor to leave the day-to-day management of the city to the Secretary of Management while he focused more on legislation and politics.

In the beginning, the new government intended to institutionalize a system to monitor the projects of the various ministries (departments). This was accomplished by creating a general directive for the Scorecard, designed to track the progress of the ministries' projects. Simultaneously, as the monitoring process was being internalized, the creation of a strategic plan began development.

Distinguishing the Buenos Aires case from the other analyzed for this study, the government created two parallel processes, one designed to create a strategic plan and the other to design and maintain a monitoring system for the city's projects (some newly created and some inherited). The performance measures were also selected in the first year the government took office.

In conclusion, the Buenos Aires process was not linear. Instead, parallel processes marked the creation of a strategic plan, the institutionalization of a performance-monitoring system, and the selection of measures designed to provide accountability to the citizens.

It is important to note that although the city did not follow the traditional path for performance management, it did manage to create a more accountable government. Presently it appears that these efforts will continue to help the government to be transparent in the short term. However, precedence shows that overburdening the measurement system with an excess of measures that do not necessarily link directly to the strategic plan can be counterproductive. The

---

<sup>12</sup> Buenos Aires (Federal District) changed governments on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007.



efficiency and effectiveness of government projects will not necessarily improve simply because it is transparent.

When the performance measurement process is linear the program becomes more sustainable. Because the measurement process is designed to help officials manage their services more efficiently-towards the department and government wide objectives- it is important that they be given time to become familiar with the process. Training and familiarization, as discussed earlier, are necessary steps that should be taken so that the government culture shifts towards using measures to manage results.

### **Aligning the incentives**

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the publication of the measures has a very notable and important impact on the organization, both administratively and politically. Buenos Aires is not an exception to this rule. The Argentine capital has experienced difficulties resulting from the expedited nature of their program and the push to achieve the final product- the publication of the results<sup>13</sup>. First and foremost, when the organization first published the results it had just begun to undergo the cultural shift that in other cases would have already been further advanced by that point. The administrators had just started to internalize the process and take on the responsibilities associated with measuring the government's results.

After the date was set to publish the results for the first time, pressures of the sort mentioned above began to influence the process. In response to these pressures the administration began efforts to review the measures and to assure that none were being ignored. Upper-level administrators also initiated a purifying exercise, during which they determined which measures would be shown to the public, and which ones best represented departmental performance.

Like the other cases in this study, the organization concentrated its efforts on deciding which results should be published. The fears that were voiced about publishing red results opened a new internal dialogue about the concept of transparency. A search for equilibrium between internal political pressures and the citizen's demand for transparency came into play.

### **Publishing results with the citizens watching**

The city of Buenos Aires publishes its results on a webpage titled The Observatory of Government Results. This webpage is a product of the 2009 Strategic Plan<sup>14</sup> and includes basic information about performance results as well as extra information provided to help inform the citizen. Essentially, it is a site designed to demonstrate what the government is doing to address citizens' issues.

The website is broken down by the following categories: 1) "What is the Observatory of Government Results?" This section describes the mission of the Observatory, the type of information it provides, who coordinates it, what the specific objectives are, and a presentation letter and video, 2) "Performance Strategies" serves as the common denominator for the rest of the components because it presents all of the information that is to be found in the rest of the Observatory, 3) "Priority projects" gives the results of all of the strategic projects managed by the government, 4) "Citizen perceptions" references opinions of the public about specific issues concerning the major problems of the city, and on the same page includes the actions the

---

<sup>13</sup> These processes are: planning, internalization of the program, and selection of measures.

<sup>14</sup> Directorate for Strategic Planning, Secretary for Strategic Planning, Manager's Office (2008).

government has taken to respond to those problems, 5) “The Evolution of City Measures” allows for the citizen to look up pools of measures that respond to specific services provided by the government, 6) “Comparison with other Cities” allows for the citizen to compare some of Buenos Aires’ measures to other cities of the world.

Besides the above-mentioned components, the website also has a module that is dedicated to the budget and the expenditures to date. This module also follows the city’s construction and infrastructure projects.

Finally, the site has a citizen comment section where the citizen can post questions and comments about the information on the site.

What is most relevant about this case is how the Observatory for Government Results is orientated towards the citizen. As mentioned above, the information in the Observatory is organized around the city’s strategic objectives, as they are laid out in the 2009 Strategic Plan. Each strategic objective involves several ministries. Consequently, the information is presented to the citizen grouped by government services and programs. It is not presented in a confusing administrative format. The priorities as defined are; Health, Culture and Education, Social Development, Labor and Economic Development, Public Safety, Environment and Public Space, Transit and Transportation, and Buenos Aires Easy. Also, the names of the projects are non-technical and citizen friendly. Each section of the website is designed and written for the citizen.

The Observatory for Government Results reflects the culmination of a process designed to report performance results, completed by the publication of the results. In this case, the desired outcome will be a citizenry in control of the quality of services rendered by its government. The Observatory is intended to provide the information necessary for the citizen to make determinations as to whether the government follows through with its promises to fix city infrastructure, for example, and to do so efficiently. The official can use this tool as a guide as well as a reminder that the citizen is up-to-date and involved.

## Conclusion

The last section presents a list of ten bullet points of advice handed down in the interviews by the officials who are responsible for overseeing performance measurement programs. Advice from officials often coincided despite the fact that they represent governments from across the United States and Argentina. This is good advice for governments that seek to create results-based programs.

1. **“Support for the program should begin from the top”**. The leadership should be the program’s biggest supporter. Leaders bring value and honesty to the measures. The manager is responsible for shifting the norms of the administrative system towards a performance measurement system. He must promote the program from within the organization using clear and consistent messages.
2. **“Publish results that are representative of performance”**. Support for the program should be at its strongest when it comes time to publish. Leaders must be resolute about publishing both positive and negative results, and should support those departments that publish some “bad” measures on their scorecard. Throughout the entire performance measurement process the upper level administrators should work to find equilibrium between the demands for transparency from the citizens, the credibility manufactured by the publication of honest results, and the fears and pressures within the organization to avoid publishing negative results. To allay these fears it is essential to have descriptions below the measures and services to explain why the results came back the way they did.
3. **This is not a punitive exercise**. This program is designed to help officials administer and improve the government’s performance. In meetings with department directors it is essential that positive and negative data be used constructively, with a focus on what the directors can do to improve in the areas that show poorly. These meetings provide an opportunity to return to the drawing table and re-strategize in the areas that are struggling. This approach allows for the directors to feel more comfortable with presenting and talking about their lagging services, giving them room to internalize the process and the value of the measurement system. If the system is punitive the directors will be less likely to establish far reaching goals. If they fear punishment they will be pressured to create measures that have no value. In order for the officials and especially the department heads to feel confident they must have the support of their leaders.

“Lets clarify the difference between positive management as opposed to punitive management (...) Now the directors are willing to come to meetings and talk about ‘reds’. With time the directors began to understand the program, they began to accept it and their fears disappeared.” Carlos Maxwell, Miami-Dade County.

4. **Training gives life to the program**. It is important that all members of the organization who will play a role in performance management have technical and analytical training to prepare them to measure the services and read the data properly. Learning to read and analyze data is crucial to the measuring process and requires professional training. Training is also important because it helps orient the administration towards a measurement culture, as we have discussed above. The training promotes a measurement culture because it stimulates interest and helps conceptualize the process. Understanding the logic of the process helps shape and stabilize each rung in the performance measurement ladder.

5. **The measures are indicators of the strategies implemented by the government.** There is a direct relation between the value of the measure and its capacity to quantify a service's progress towards its goal, defined in the strategic plan. Because this is the case, it is recommended that the organization begin with the strategic plan, then move to the individual departments and their business plans. Once the strategic plan and the business plans are in place the organization can begin designing and selecting the measures that it will use. The measures should demonstrate how the services perform in relation to the goals defined in the strategic plan. Measuring for its own sake is not ultimately constructive. Measuring towards the strategic plan will deliver results.
6. **Start measuring small.** Based on the data gathered in this study it will save the organization lots of trouble and time if it begins measuring with a small number of measures. By starting large, a government will experience difficulties differentiating between the measures that are valuable and the measures that serve no purpose or have no link to the strategic plan. Also, the government that begins with a small number of measures will simplify the internalization process of the measurement system. If the program is simple and user friendly it will be more likely to be adopted by the administrators. As the program ages and grows the pool of measures may grow and become more complex.
7. **Start measuring and respect deadlines.** More often than not governments just beginning the program consider that their measures are inadequate and therefore not worth using. The departments will ask for extensions to the deadlines and insist that they be given time to improve the measures. It is important to understand that when an organization begins to measure performance the measures will not be perfect. Nevertheless, they should begin to measure. They should respect the deadlines despite lagging measures and results. Only after the organization begins to measure will it be able to improve the measures and the process as a whole.
8. **Create a pilot program.** The city of Charlotte began their program with a simple and effective pilot program, which began the institutionalization process and prepared the organization for strategic planning. The pilot program was created for volunteer departments and developed confidence by measuring towards strategic goals on a smaller scale. Once the pilot was completed, the city boasted internal "champions" which promoted and supported the program from within the organization. The departments that participated shared their experience and training with the rest of the government when it came time to implement the program across the organization. The pilot program helped prepare the organization for the challenges of a performance management program, all the while creating internal leaders with experience and wherewithal.
9. **The software is only a reflection of the strategic plan and the system that evaluates it.** A good software system can help officials organize and visualize the link between the measures, the government's strategic plan, and the operational objectives of the departments. Using the software, the administrator can monitor the measures and see how they connect to the government's strategies. It is a tool that helps officials visualize how measures relate to one another. It should be simple and user friendly. It is important to keep in mind that the program is not the software. The program is structured around and functions because of the administrators, directors, and government officials.

**10. Patience.** The program requires time and dedication. The implementation of a measurement program can take between 3 and 4 years. A program that helps an organization define its objectives and measure its progress takes time. Moreover, once the program is internalized it must be sustainable. To create a lasting and sustainable program it is necessary to remain open to new ideas and to have patience and conviction.

## Appendix 1

Organizations that participated in this study:

- Miami-Dade, FL.
- Charlotte, NC.
- Coral Springs, FL.
- Rockwall, TX.
- NYC, NY.
- Pennsylvania.
- Hillsborough, NC.
- Olathe, KS.
- Austin, TX.
- Bellevue, WA.
- Dallas, TX.
- Henderson, NV.
- Long Beach, CA.
- Phoenix, AZ.
- San Jose, CA.
- Vancouver, WA.
- Westminster, CO.
- Fairfax County, VA.
- Philadelphia, PA.
- Washington, DC.
- Oregon.

## Appendix 2

Austin: [www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/default.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/default.htm) .

Charlotte: <http://www.charmeck.org/living/home.htm> .

Coral Springs: <http://www.coralsprings.org/CityManager/index.cfm> .

Dallas: <http://www.dallascityhall.com> .

Miami-Dade: <http://miamidade.gov/wps/portal> .

Olathe: <http://www.olatheks.org/CityManager/J.MichaelWilkes> .

## Appendix 3

### Interviews completed

- Shannon Szymczak, Corporate Budget Manager, Budget Office; Ed Van Eenoo, City Budget Officer, Budget Office and Justin Goldbabai, Senior Budget Analyst, Budget Office. Austin, Texas, U.S.A. Interviewed by Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 14, 2009.
- Lisa Schumacher, Charlotte Budget and Evaluation Office. Charlotte, North Carolina, U.S.A. Interviewed by David Groisman, Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 9th, 2009.
- Bob Goehrig and Chelsea Stahl, Management and Budget Office. Coral Springs, Florida, U.S.A. Interviewed by Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 16, 2009.
- Margaret Wright, Assistant Director of the Office de Strategic Customer Services, Dallas, Texas, U.S.A. Interviewed by David Groisman, Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 7, 2009.
- Ray Scher, Assistant Director, Management Planning and Performance Analysis, Office of Strategic Business Management; Carlos Maxwell, Business Analyst Manager, Office of Strategic Business Management, Miami-Dade, Florida, U.S.A. Interviewed by Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 14, 2009.
- Alan Shorthouse of the Office of Strategic Financial Management, Olathe, Kansas, U.S.A. Interviewed by Celeste Bustelo and Trevor Udwin. Teleconference, October 14, 2009.



## Bibliography

Inter-American Development Bank, IADB and Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo, CLAD: *“Modelo Abierto de Gestión para Resultados en el Sector Público”*, julio de 2007.

Bonnefoy, J.C., and Armijo, M.: *“Indicadores de desempeño en el sector público”*. Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social, ILPES. CEPAL, GTZ, noviembre de 2005.

Consejo Científico del Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo (CLAD): *“La Responsabilización (“accountability”) en la Nueva Gestión Pública Latinoamericana”*.

Cunill, Nuria y Ospina, Sonia (Eds.): *“Evaluación de resultados para una gestión pública moderna y democrática: experiencias latinoamericanas”*, VIII Congreso Internacional del CLAD sobre la Reforma del Estado y de la Administración Pública, Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo, Panamá, October 28th to 33rd, 2003.

Darrell, B.: *“Does a balanced scorecard dilute a local government’s focus on results?”*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, marzo de 2009.

Estis, A., y Hyatt, G.: *“The Balanced Scorecard – Applying a Private Sector Technique to the Public Sector”*. Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Octubre de 1998.

International City/County Management Association, ICMA: *“Local governments recognized for performance management successes”*, july, 2009.

Josep Maria Guinart i Solà: *“Indicadores de gestión para las entidades públicas”*, Escola d’Administració Pública de Catalunya, VIII Congreso Internacional del CLAD sobre la Reforma del Estado y de la Adiministración Pública, Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo, Panamá, 28 al 31 de octubre de 2003.

Levin, N.: *“Herramientas de monitoreo de la gestión de gobierno: un análisis comparativo”*, CIPPEC, Buenos Aires, may, 2009.

Rodríguez Larreta, H., Ocampo, A., Straface, F., Darmohraj, A., Felici, S., Rabasedas, M., Ruffo, H., y Solda, S.: *“Hacia un Nuevo Sector Público: Experiencias Exitosas de Gestión en Argentina.”*, Grupo Sophia.

## About the Authors

**David Groisman:** Politics and Public Management Program Coordinator, CIPPEC. Received his B.A. in Economics at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Received a Masters degree in International Economics at the University of Buenos Aires. He worked seven years in the Executive Branch of the National Government as coordinator of the National Tributary and Social Identification System (SYNTyS).

**Celeste Bustelo:** Politics and Public Management Program Analyst, CIPPEC. Received her B.A. in Economics at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Will graduate with a Masters Degree in Urban Economics, 2010 from Torcuato Di Tella University (UTDT), Buenos Aires. Worked with City Council on fiscal budget for the City of Buenos Aires and as a consultant for social development in Costa Rica.

**Trevor Udwin:** Politics and Public Management Program collaborator, CIPPEC. B.A. in International Relations, with specialization in Latin America (American University, Washington, DC). Interned at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, DC and worked in the private sector in Puerto Rico.

**To cite this document:** Groisman, David; Bustelo, Trevor Udwin: "Government Accountability; measuring results", *Working Document N°35*, CIPPEC, Buenos Aires, December, 2009.

**CIPPEC publications** are distributed without cost and can be found on the website: [www.cippec.org](http://www.cippec.org) . Not meant for commercial sale.

*The author's opinión is not necessarily a reflection of CIPPEC's opinión on the matter at hand.*

## About CIPPEC

CIPPEC (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies promoting Equity and Growth), is an independent, non partisan and non profit organization that strives to create a more fair, democratic and efficient State to improve people's lives. To do so, it analyzes and promotes public policies that foster equity and growth in Argentina. Its main challenge is turning into concrete actions the best ideas that emerge in the Social Development, Economic Development, Strengthening of the Institutions, and Public Management areas, through the Education, Health, Social Protection, Fiscal Policy, International Economics, Justice and Transparency, Local Development, and Politics and Public Management Programs.

*This publication was written thanks to the support of the Embassy of the United States in Buenos Aires.*



