



# Institute of Social Studies

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN SWAZILAND: THE NEED FOR REFORM, OBSTACLES  
TO IMPLEMENTATION AND THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL  
IMPLEMENTATION. THE CASE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

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LULU THUSEGO MTHETHWA  
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Members of the Examining Committee

**Dr. P. MIHYO**

**PROF. J. BJORKMAN**

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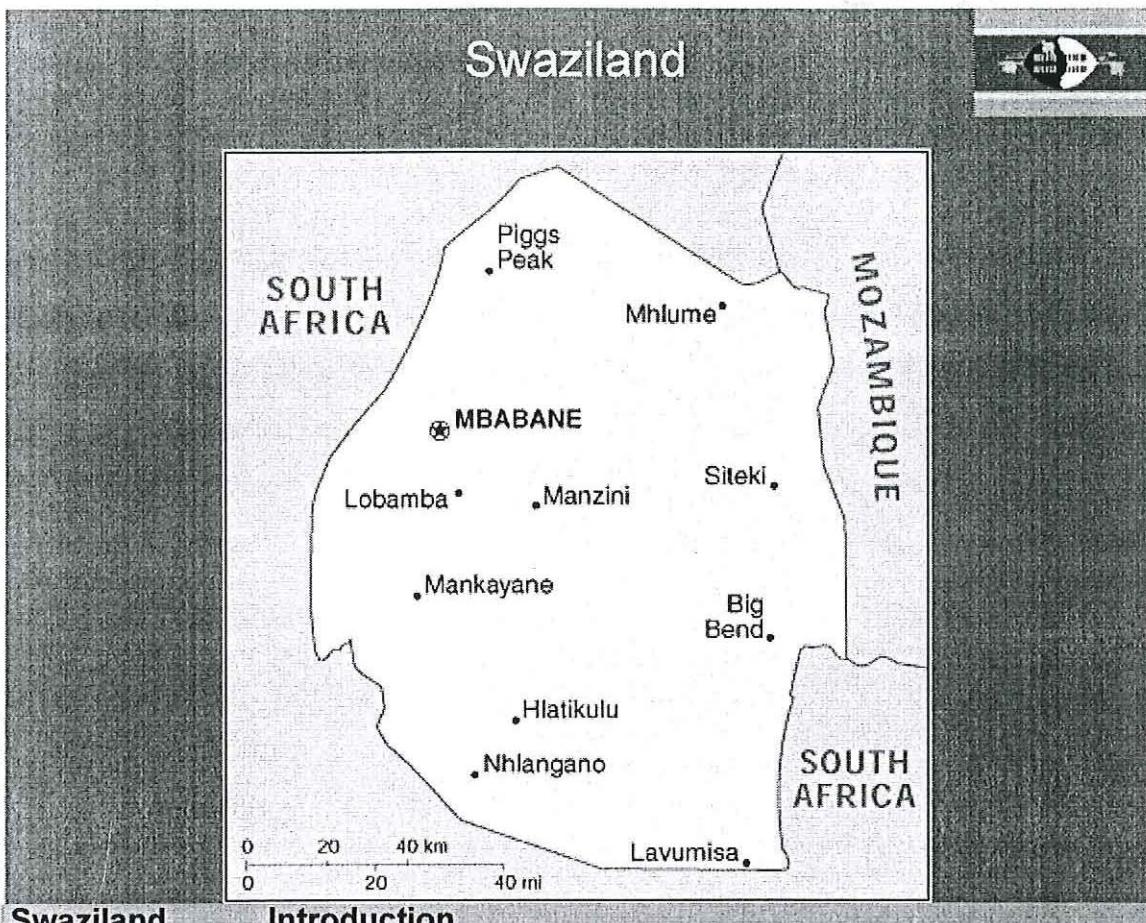
***Postal Address:***

**Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT, The Hague  
The Netherlands**

**Telephone : -31-70-4260460  
Telefax: -31-70-4260799  
e-mail: postmaster@iss.nl**

***Location:***

**Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX, The Hague  
The Netherlands**



## Swaziland

### Introduction

**Background:** Autonomy for the Swazis of southern Africa was guaranteed by the British in the late 19th century; independence was granted 1968. Student and labor unrest during the 1990s have pressured the monarchy (one of the oldest on the continent) to grudgingly allow political reform and greater democracy.

## Swaziland

### Geography

**Location:** Southern Africa, between Mozambique and South Africa

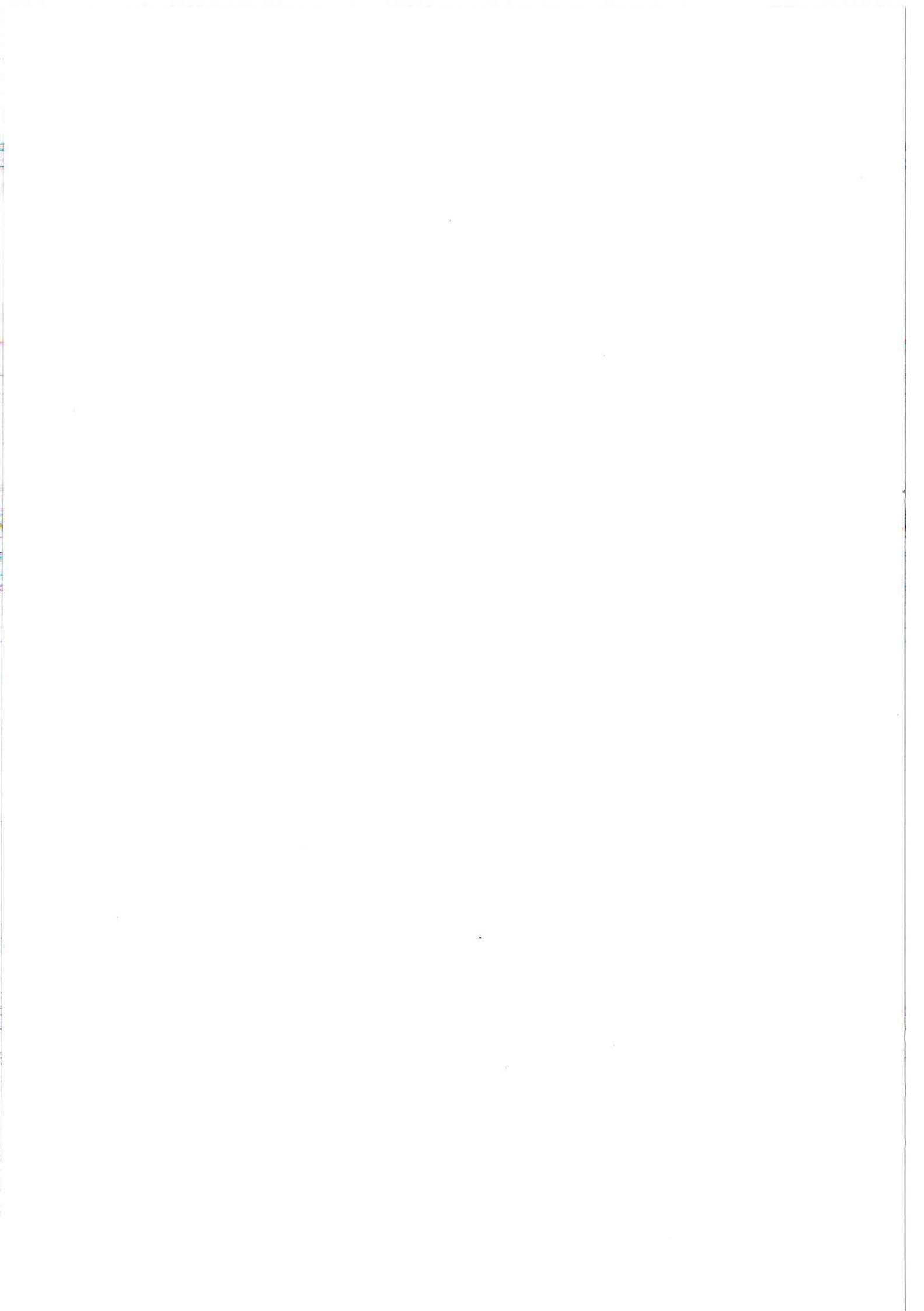
**Geographic coordinates:** 26 30 S, 31 30 E

**Map references:** Africa

**Area:** total: 17,363 sq km

land: 17,203 sq km

water: 160 sq km

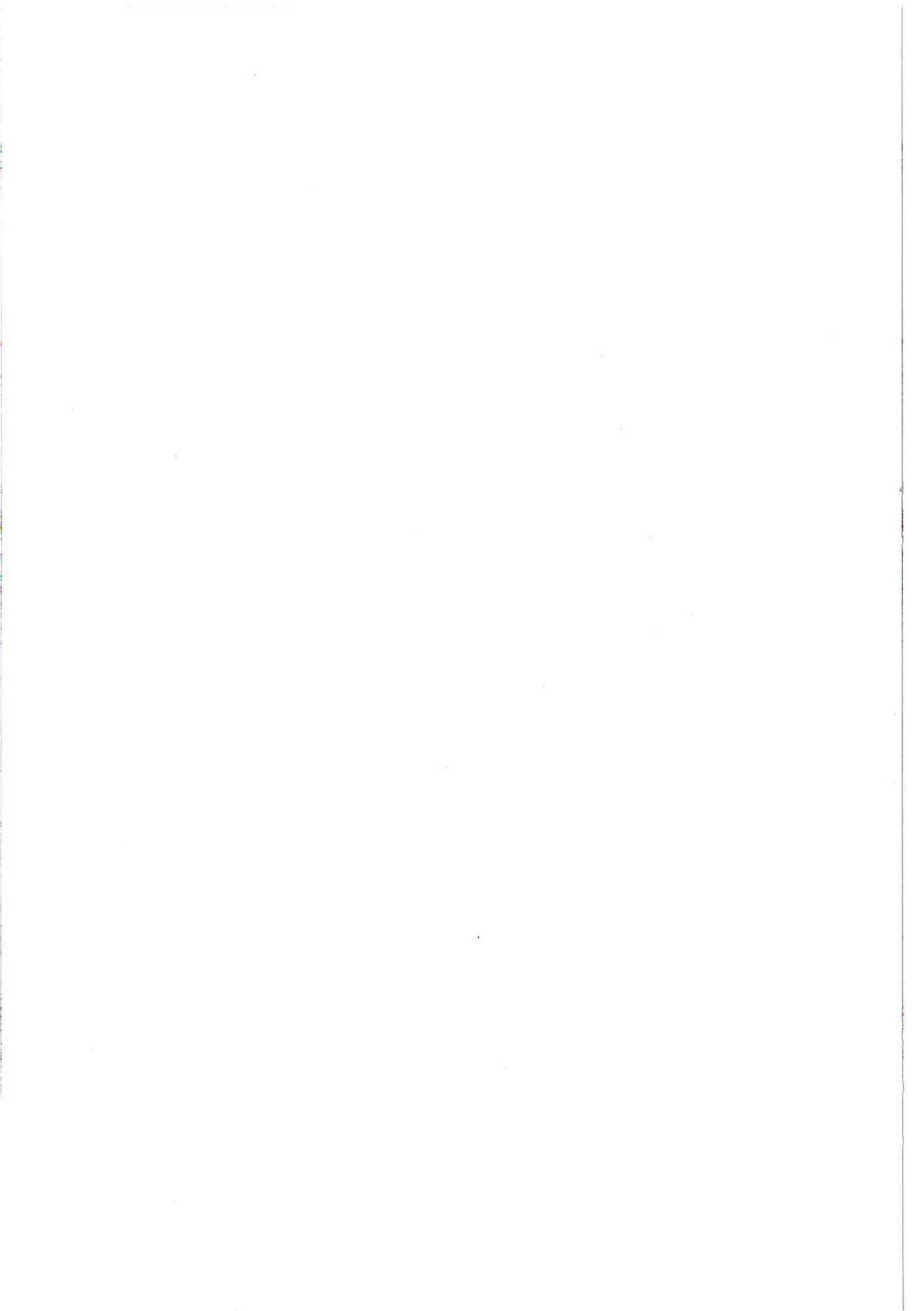


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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

While the colonial powers undertook significant administrative reforms of both a transformational and ameliorative nature in Africa, independence ushered in a new beginning for the administrative reform efforts in many African countries. Independence called into question the appropriateness of the entire machinery of government, which had been designed by the departing colonialists (Mutuhaba 1989:30). Therefore in the last two or more decades there have been some fundamental changes in the working of governments all over the world and this has given rise to some major management improvements in the organisational structures and systems of governments (ministerial reviews and restructuring) and Swaziland has been no exception.

### **1.1 Introduction to the Kingdom of Swaziland**

To provide an understanding of the analysis of PSMP it is important to provide an orientation to the Kingdom of Swaziland within which the programme is being implemented. The orientation will give the socio-economic, geographical and political environment within which the PSMP is undertaken.

Swaziland is a country of 17364 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of less than a million. The core pillars of its economy are derived from manufacturing, agriculture and government services that account for 39%, 10% and 16% of GDP respectively. The remaining 35% comes from transport and communication, banking and trade.

The country gained independence from the British in 1968. In 1973 the independence constitution was revoked, parliament was dissolved and political parties were banned.

All legislative, executive and judicial powers are vested in the King, thus compromising one of the principles of good governance (i.e. the separation of powers between the three arms of government)

Subsequently the system of governance (which is based on local constituencies largely build around chieftaincy) was designed under which parliament was revived in 1978. The electoral college system was used in electing members of parliament between 1978 and 1993. In 1993 the system changed into direct election. Candidates for the House of Assembly are elected directly from the fifty-five constituencies, with the king appointing an additional ten members. The House of Assembly then elects ten members to the House of Senate whilst the King appoints an additional twenty.

Swaziland has a traditional system of governance, which coexists with the modern system comprising Parliament and the Cabinet. Whilst the modern system is underpinned by a well-documented set of laws, the traditional system is based on an unwritten set of Swazi law and custom. Because of its unwritten status, there are ambiguities and inconsistencies. Currently confusion and overlaps in functions exist, primarily brought about by the poor definition of the respective roles and responsibilities of the system and their respective arms of governance and there is therefore a need for clear and better definitions. Many of the problems experienced relate to the uncoordinated processes and lack of transparency in policy formulation and implementation. This has often led to the poor management of national resources. Within the public sector arena, the confusion and overlap in responsibility has led to a breakdown of staff discipline and morale, and subsequently degeneration in performance.

Despite the problems mentioned above, the country has seen remarkable economic progress and transformation since independence. However, the early 1990s marked a turning point in Swaziland's healthy economic performance. Economic growth declined. The government budget has now gone into deficit and recurrent expenditures are growing at a rate that is not sustainable given the current and projected revenue.

Both external and internal factors impacted on the economy. First, the rapid changes in the political and economic situations in the Southern African region (particularly South Africa, but also Mozambique) caused a decline in the country's direct foreign

investment. Secondly, the high wage bill, total public spending has averaged 34% of GDP over 1991-1996, over that same period recurrent expenditure accounted for 75% of total spending and personnel costs took 54%. Thirdly, changes within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), from which the country derived 48-58% of its revenue, and a high population growth rate, of 3.2% as against a 2.5% economic growth (National Development Strategy 1998:10). These problems have had an adverse impact upon the performance of the economy and introduced uncertainty with respect to future developments. Table 1 indicates the increasing percentage of expenditure taken by salaries and allowances between 1989-1999.

**Table 1: Wage bill as a percentage of recurrent expenditure**

Year	Personnel expend. (E million)	Recurrent expend. (E million)	Personnel expend. as a proportion of recurrent expend. (%)
1989/90	164.8	328	50.2
1990/91	244.6	452	54.1
1991/92	278.4	516	53.9
1992/93	403.9	750	53.8
1993/94	541.3	924	58.5
1994/95	542	1049.6	51.6
1995/96	634.2	1128.9	56.2
1996/97	734.9	1465.3	50.1
1997/98	796.6	1503.8	53.0
1998/99	937.0	1753.8	53.4

Source: Development Plan 1999-2001. Ministry of Economic Planning

## 1.2 Statement of the problem and research questions

The unjustified increase in the number of ministries and the increase in the share of government expenditure on GDP are indications that the size of government is growing. To date the share of government expenditure in GDP is about 34% and

Government's expenditure on goods and services and on wages and salaries is 25% and 52%, of total recurrent expenditure, respectively. Table 2 shows a summary of total government expenditure in Swaziland. Other activities that reflect the size of the government are the number of projects and programs that the government is involved in. For instance the agriculture and transport sectors alone for the period 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 account for 32.2% and 24% total capital expenditure, with approximately 10 policy plans for agriculture alone that correspond to the 8 sub-sectors of the ministry. (National Development Plan 1999/00 – 2001/02:110).

The increase in the number of ministries is accompanied by poor quality services. The civil service has also been characterised by poor working conditions for senior civil servants and a short-term oriented human resource management lacking dynamism. These problems contributed to the national economic decline that resulted in government launching a civil service reform program, the Public Sector Management Program (PSMP) in 1995. Since its inception the program implementation has been subjected to a number of problems which have slowed down the implementation process. This paper analyses the pressures to reform the civil service and the politics that have surrounded and hindered the implementation of the program. It also suggests how the implementation process can be improved as government has a poor record on policy implementation.

While it is true that the performance standards of the civil service in Swaziland are deteriorating, the main questions however are: [1] To what extent does the current PSMP reflect understanding of the civil service problems [2] What are the actual pressures for the need for change in the civil service? [3] How are the objectives of the PSMP addressing these pressures? [4] How have existing structures and capacities in government impacted on the reform programme? [5] What are the prospects for successful policy implementation under the circumstances?

**Table 2: Summary of total Government Expenditure in Swaziland [E000s]**

1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1997/98	1998/99
755,8	794,0	1014,1	1152,8	1822,298	2282,71

Source: Government of Swaziland, Budget Estimates 1990-99

### **1.3 Introduction to the civil service in Swaziland**

#### **Management**

When Swaziland gained independence in 1968 it adopted the British colonial administration with a few changes. The structural set up, which was purposely designed to facilitate and promote its colonial domination and execution of emperil policies, was maintained. As such it was highly centralised, with the centre playing a significant role in policy formulation and execution. The peripheral administration, which was responsible to the centre, remained weak with little powers and meagre facilities.

Organisational and managerial functions in the civil service are shared between the offices of the Head of the civil service (Secretary to Cabinet) and the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service and Information (MOPSI). The duality of major responsibilities falling within the ambit of the former office tends to limit the levels of commitment and effectiveness. Reliance on the latter office is in itself problematic. Responsibilities are restricted to such activities as staff complement control: review and formulation of scheme of service: operational systems, methods and procedure; terms and conditions of service; general orders; salary administration and manpower development.

The important elements of hiring, discipline and dismissal fall outside the responsibility of MOPSI. The Civil Service Board (CSB), Judicial Service Commission (JSC) and Teaching Service Commission (TSC) take such decisions. In general, the CSB and JSC are perceived to be open to outside influences, especially political influences. Of particular concern to the public is the CSB as the larger of the recruiting agencies, which does not report either to the Principal Secretary in MOPSI nor to the Head of the Civil Service but instead reports directly to the Prime Minister and Head of State. (National Development Strategy Report 1997:12) In other countries, the CSB (or commonly known as the Civil Service Commission) is established as a body to monitor the human resource performance and hear appeals. Whilst the CSB was established with this in mind it is in practice taken over the role and function of the Head of the Civil Service as the final authority on human resource matters. CSB members are political appointees and have a five-year renewable contract. The practice, however, has been a lifelong appointment. (Ibid)

### **Structure and Size**

Over the years there has been a steady increase in the number of government ministries and departments, which has necessitated the increase in new posts and hence the size of the civil service. Whilst this is expected in a growing economy, it is not clear how intensive the evaluation to take such decisions were made, especially regarding the utilisation of the Management Services Department. Most decisions on the establishment of new departments and ministries come from the top and the experts at the bottom are not consulted to carry out studies.

The number of ministries and departments has for instance grown from 12 ministries and 12 departments in 1983/84, to 19 ministries and 11 departments in 2001/02. This has necessitated the increase of posts from 12017 to 24594 over the same period, without including teachers, daily paid employees and the armed forces. (Establishment Registers 1993/94, 2001/02).

## **1.4 Working Hypothesis**

Successful implementation of civil service reforms lies in the political and administrative capacities of government and not in bold policy statements.

## **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Since governments in developing countries including Swaziland have weak private and voluntary sectors, it is very important to have a strong and competent civil service especially because the civil service is a means through which government policies can be realised. The civil service in Swaziland is currently faced with problems of inadequate leadership skills and management, problems of staff motivation and productivity, absence of guiding principles for human resource management and the poor financial management resulting in over-expenditure. Over the years there has been an unjustified steady increase in the number of ministries and departments, which has contributed to an increased wage bill that is a problem for the government. The author saw the need to study and analyse, in depth the problems and prospects of the PSMP (ministerial reviews and restructuring), as this is a means towards improving performance of the civil service and hence contribute to the improved national economic performance. The study contributes to the improvement of the implementation of the program and other reform initiatives.

## **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

An analysis of the performance of the PMSP on the basis of its impact is rather too early at this stage. The objective of my study therefore will be an analysis of the programme on the basis of its content and current outputs. Against the preceding background and problem statement and within the framework of the theoretical concepts to follow in the report, I will attempt an analysis of the driving forces behind the reform, an identification and examination of the problems encountered in implementing the reform program, and recommend ways of improving implementation of the current reform and other similar development initiatives in Swaziland. In my

effort to do this I will analyse the policy cycle especially the decision making process, how policy formulation and implementation are linked.

### **1.7 Research Methodology and data sources**

The research is essentially a policy analysis. Literature on civil service reforms, particularly the implementation and management of such reforms will be used to identify the gap between decision-making and implementation. An analysis will be made on government structures and their capacity to reform.

A qualitative analysis using supportive figures, other data and personal experience as a technical member of the PSMP teams in several ministries undergoing review will be used to identify and examine the problems that have impeded the implementation process.

The paper has also made use of secondary data including written books, journals, newspapers, articles, thesis from the ISS library, Internet and other material on the subject area, official government documents such as reports, memoranda, speeches and gazettes.

A comparative study using documented experiences on civil service reforms in Zambia and Uganda is also used.

### **1.8 Limitations to the study**

Due to lack of adequate feedback from questionnaires that were sent to certain actors in the program, the author was unable to obtain a representative sample to make generalisations. The research therefore relies heavily on the available secondary data.



## **CHAPTER 2: CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

### **2.1 Concepts**

#### **Civil Service Reforms**

In many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the ineffectiveness of the civil service threatens almost all development efforts as well as basic public administration. Civil service reforms are therefore an important component of administrative reforms. The civil service can be defined from three approaches. The first approach defines it as a system of employment, focussing on the size of civil services and the rules of the civil service employment (i.e. recruitment, selection, job evaluation, training and development, etc). Secondly the civil service can be conceived as an instrument of governance, institutions that serve as the bridge between the state and specific administrative organs. Lastly, the civil service is defined in terms of its role in the policy process, as policy authorisers, implementers, fixers, payers, producers, arrangers and clients and customers. (Olowu 1991:3).

In Swaziland's current PSMP, the coverage of this concept does not go beyond the government ministries and departments. One may correctly argue therefore that term Public Sector Management Program (PSMP) is an inappropriate label for the reform under discussion because the reform does not go beyond the civil service. An ideal label would have been Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP). 'Civil service reform' is only a component of 'public sector reforms'. For the purposes of this paper the author shall continue to use the original label to the reform program (i.e. PSMP), but focus on the civil service.

## **Administrative reform**

Administrative reform is the process of making changes in administrative structures or procedures within the public services, because they have come out of line with the expectations or values of the social and political environment. (Chapman and Greenaway: 1980). Administrative reform describes all types of important revisions of administrative practices, organisations, procedures and processes that all government administrative machinery engages in on a regular basis. This definition has no time frames or limitations on scope and direction (Mutuhaba 1989:25). Any reorganisation, behavioral changes or changes in procedures would qualify as administrative reform under this definition. It also entails all the activities in ministerial reviews and restructuring.

## **Ministerial Reviews and Restructuring**

Ministerial reviews and reorganization often form the basis for retrenchment or reorganization of activities in ministries and agencies of government. Organizational and efficiency reviews have been a universal element of CSR in Africa (Olowu 1999: 5). Their objective is to develop new efficient and effective structures and establishments for all ministries and departments. In the case of the PSMP the reviews begin with the composition of a working team (i.e. PSMP team) for individual ministries. These teams are comprised of members of the ministry under review representing all sections and levels of the ministry, technical members from the management services division (experts in the day to day management of organisations) and an independent consultant. Ministries and departments are taken through a management audit and the aim of this exercise is to review mission statements, existing organisational structures, staff numbers including skills profiles, budget levels and expenditure controls, utilisation of assets, operations planning and a stakeholder analysis (feedback mechanisms) (Management Audit Report: 1999). After the management audit the team compiles a report with the recommendations stated in the objectives of the program. During this period there are continuous consultative meetings with the management of the ministry under review, to ensure ownership of the findings and recommendations by the ministry.

The essential feature of administrative reform (including the civil service) is the relationship of administrative changes to characteristics or pressures from the broader social and political environment. Common pressures behind ministerial reforms include among others, the size of the civil service in terms of rising number of ministries and departments (subsequently the rise in staff numbers), debt servicing capacity, growing expenditures and pressure from donors. The PSMP has also been a result of these factors, except for the pressure from donors, as this was a home- grown initiative. The government realized the need for reform before international donors stepped in like with the structural adjustment programs in many developing countries.

The rise of 'new public management' (NPM) over the past 15 years is one of the striking international trends in public administration. NPM supporters hold that it was the only way to correct for the irretrievable failures of the old public management. Some elements of NPM have formed the basis for the main objectives of many public sector /civil service reform initiatives e.g. hands on professional management in the public sector, explicit standards and measures of performance, private sector style of management, etc (Hood: 1991). However, due to the dual system of governance in Swaziland that has promoted patronage, lack of accountability and transparency in government structures, centralisation of functions and rigid budgetary procedures, NPM is unlikely to flourish. These problems are the same problems that have contributed to the poor implementation of the PSMP.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

There are general explanations for the success or failure of reform policies, such as financial and human resources and political factors. These factors, affect different situations in different ways. For example, the recipe used for a successful implementation of a civil service reform in the UK, New Zealand and other parts of the world cannot be repeated with the same success in Swaziland. Even for countries within the same region (i.e. Botswana and South Africa) the experiences will differ.

Nevertheless, different authors of development and reform programmes have suggested common variables that need to be taken on board when planning for the implementation of a reform program. One common argument is that where radical reform to service delivery mechanisms is externally imposed under crisis conditions, they are rarely effectively implemented. The danger is that where reform is announced by national politicians, the reform will be inappropriate and/or have no support. The public, and particularly the poor, have rarely been informed about or participate in the reform process (Batley 1999). The need for local ownership can never be overemphasized, and agenda setting for effective and appropriate reform needs should be based on public information and demands expressed through the local politicians. There is need to determine how reform initiatives get on the agenda for government action and what factors influence decision makers because these impact on the results of implementation.

Grindle and Thomas argue that policy implementation has not been given enough intellectual attention and this has been the main reason why implementing civil service reforms has proven unsuccessful. This is true for Swaziland, hence its bad policy implementation record. The problem originates from the way decisions are made. Decisions on the initiation of PSMP were made at the top level of government (i.e. cabinet level). As a result of the economic situation described earlier, a proposal for reform was put on the agenda for government action and a decision to launch the program was made. The decision was seen as the critical choice and thus became the focus of policy makers. What was ignored was an analysis of the implementation process. Implementation was viewed as an automatic process of carrying out the decisions taken by politicians it was also seen as a responsibility of another group i.e. the managers in the Ministry of Public Service. This is the linear model of implementation, where successful implementation is viewed as a question of whether or not the implementing institution is strong enough for the task. (Grindle and Thomas 1991:122).

The interactive model, on the other hand, provides tools to enable reformers to anticipate reactions from opposition and conflict, to consider the prospects for sustaining reform through the implementation stage and to assess whether the resources to implement it actually exist or need to be augmented (Grindle and Thomas: 1991: 126). The interactive model views policy reform as a process in which interested parties can exert power at any given point of the process. So the reform programme can be altered at any time by opposition. The model therefore emphasizes the participation element of the policy cycle. In the implementation process, political, financial, managerial, and technical resources are needed to sustain the reform. Mobilising these is part of the challenge for decision makers and policy managers. Those opposing the initiative may attempt to block access to the necessary resources. Choices by policy elites and managers at this stage may have an important bearing on the actual outcome of the reform programme.

The central theme of this study is implementation of reforms and how success in implementing such reforms can be realised. But what is successful implementation and how do you know it? Grace Franklin argues that implementation is complex and that any simple, single standard for judging success is highly inappropriate. She indicates that the perspective that links implementation success to program success, that which achieves both short-run performance and impact in accordance with its objectives, is most satisfying. Assessing implementation and reaching judgments about its relative success ideally involves judgment about the program itself and judgment about the facilitative and non-facilitative results of implementation activities in relation to program performance and impact (Franklin 1982:203)

Grindle argues that implementation, even when successful, is more than just a mechanical translation of goals into routine procedures; it involves questions about conflict, decision-making and who gets what in a society (Grindle 1980:3). Studies have attempted to define the parameters of a general implementation process by giving the range of variables that intervene in it and by specifying some of the relationships among these variables. As in many developing countries, Swaziland's policy implementation process is especially central to politics.

The outcome of implementation of a reform program is determined by two broad considerations; the **content** of the reform and the **context** in which the reform is being implemented. This view was also shared in a consultative workshop held in Maastricht (April 1995) on civil service reforms in the context of structural adjustment. It was noted that 'The best analysis for problems encountered in the implementation of such reforms is to consider the context and nature in which the reform is introduced and the institutional provisions for the execution of the programme'. It was further observed that the nature of the reform agenda and its motivation were held to be significant for assessing the kinds of issues to be addressed, the implementation strategies to be adopted, the kinds of problems likely to be encountered and for establishing the criteria by which progress is judged (Corkery and Land 1996:4).

The following listing of factors will be seen to play an important role in the analysis of the PSMP and the impact of each factor to the implementation of the program in the Swazi civil service is described in great detail in chapter 4.

### **2.2.1 The content of the reform policy**

Grindle concurs with Theodore, Corkery and others on the argument that implementation is influenced by a number of factors and based on the content of the programme, she outlines six factors; [1] the interests affected; [2] the type of benefits; [3] the extent of change envisaged; [4] the site of decision making; [5] programme implementers; [6] the resources committed. Therefore the nature of policy being made will have considerable impact on the kind of political activity stimulated by the policy process, encouraging consideration of the implementability of various policy programmes.

#### **2.2.1.1 Interests affected**

Any reform policy that advocates changes in the political or administrative/institutional structures tend to stimulate opposition or resistance from those who benefit from the current system. Reforms like PSMP which oppose for instance nepotism and advocate meritocracy tend to be stifled by corrupt senior officials and even politicians who have

benefited over the years from interfering with recruitment in government. Vested interests are not only at senior levels even at the middle or lower levels. For example the introduction of computers, as a means of improving efficiency, in areas such as procurement destroys the middleman because it removes the kickbacks received from suppliers and it also reduces the handling of imprests and the need to travel to purchase items. Unless strategies are put in place to compensate the losers resistance to change occur.

#### **2.2.1.2 Extent of change envisaged**

Another factor that has an impact on implementation is the extent of behavioral change, especially in the civil service where majority of civil servants have, over the years, enjoyed a layback attitude towards work. This is particularly the case for patrimonial states where political and personal loyalty and obedience are rewarded more than performance and productivity. This is one of the reasons why NPM has not been successfully implemented in the civil service especially in the context of Africa. Changing behavior patterns and culture in the work place is not an easy task, hence civil service reforms tend to be more difficult to implement as a result of this. Introduction of new technology for developing work systems also requires considerable behavioural adaptation and participation on the part of recipients, as compared to a program of providing clean water to a community.

George Balch, in Brigham and Brown (1980:44) presents four strategies that government can use to try to get people to change their behaviour namely; information, regulation, facilitation and incentives.

- Information strategies**

Often people fail or resist using a new product, service, and behaviour because they are unaware of it or are uncertain about its consequences. The same applies to reform programmes. Implementation may be delayed where change in behaviour is concerned because public servants may not have information on what the change means to them.

In cases therefore where information is the main gap between the potential and the new behavior, information is what must be provided.

---

- **Facilitation**

Adopting new behaviours, products or services may take too much thought, expense, skill or time. One might get people to adopt new behaviour by making it easier. Balch argues that the factors that make it seem difficult must be identified and changed. He cites an example where people do not get inoculated against communicable diseases because of time and money costs to go to a private physician, in that case government has an option of providing mobile clinics. This argument is also true for civil service reforms. Old civil servants tend to find attending training programs at training centers inconvenient not only in terms of taking them away from home but also the fear of looking ignorant especially those in senior positions that make them appear knowledgeable. The implementers of reform have to explore options for making change easier like in the case of training there is the option of bringing the trainer/consultant to the work place.

- **Regulation**

Regulation strategies, unlike the facilitation and information strategies coerces people to behave in a certain way. Failure to do so results in punishment. Such a strategy requires legitimacy. For improving the performance of the civil service by for instance reducing the level of corruption government needs to put legislation in place that stipulates a penalty for such behaviour and then enforce it.

- **Incentives**

Incentive strategies merely place a price mechanism on desired behaviour. This is normally the best strategy that a manager can use to improve performance. It is associated with performance management systems. People should be rewarded for desired behaviour. As much as incentives work they do however have some

shortcomings. Incentives if not exclusive do not serve their purpose. Blanket benefits that do not reward according to performance or achievement end up as a part of the salary scheme. For example the provision of cars for managers does not necessarily ensure managerial efficiency.

The Swazi culture, like any other African culture, with its nature of collectivism and sharing undermines the purpose of incentives. In most government departments the cars that are meant to be an exclusive benefit for managers are shared by the ordinary workers, this takes away the motivation for people to work hard in order to get certain rewards because they have access anyway.

#### **2.2.1.3 Type of benefits**

Development programs with long-term benefits tend to be more difficult to implement than those programs whose benefits are realised in the short term. Programs like civil service reforms tend to have a small amount of participation and support from recipients because of the non-visible and long- term benefits unlike in a housing or a water project. Implementation of these will have considerable differences and the main reason is that the latter bare direct effects on its beneficiaries as will be seen within the context of the implementation of PSMP in Swaziland.

#### **2.2.1.4 Site for decision making**

The scope, aim and content of the programme as well as the national governmental structure will influence the choice of location control and the decision-making responsibility. Experience has shown that if a reform program has to be effective across-the-board, like the civil service reform, central responsibility for its direction and coordination has to be with a designated agency. In principle, the lead agency

should be located where it has powerful backing and can have all relevant agencies within its reach. In many African countries the lead agency is within the either the President's office or Cabinet office (Corkery et al 1998:17).

### **2.2.1.5 programme implementers and strategy**

#### **□ Profiles**

Decisions made during policy formulation may indicate who is to be charged with executing the program and such decisions can affect how the policy is implemented. There may be, for instance, differences in capacity of various bureaucratic agencies to manage programs successfully. Experience has shown that in administrative reform programs a specific organisation should have responsibility for the program. In most countries the head of the civil service was either directly responsible or took an active personal interest in the execution of the problem. It is critically important to find the right candidate to head the lead agency. Very special skills and experience are required, as well as superior qualities of character and intellect. The appointment must be considered in the context of the institutional environment and such factors as likely rapport with key actors and stakeholders and the likely perceived legitimacy of the appointee (Corkery 1980:19).

Apart from the head, all other staff of the lead agency need to be credible and acceptable. They need to be resilient, capable of facing up to opposition and of taking initiative. Such staff should be capable of gaining respect and cooperation of others including those of higher status in government. Cockery argues that in principle the agency must be small and cites France and Mali where the agencies had staff of about 30 senior civil servants and in the UK where the agency began with a staff complement of four. The fewer the staff, the easier coordination and consensus can be achieved. Reform promises must also be credible since otherwise losers will not believe that they will be compensated. Reformers must be prepared to withstand opposition by designing plans to compel or compensate those who stand to lose from reform. (Shirley 1999:129)

## □ Goals

Clarification of the overall goals of the administrative reform is a fundamental prerequisite for its success. Whether goals are stated clearly or ambiguously and whether political and administrative officials are in agreement about what the goals are has shown to be decisive for the implementation of reform development programs (Grindle 1980:10). Cockery and others (1980:31) add that it is important from the outset to set clear goals which can be evaluated through credible and acceptable performance indicators and that involves issue diagnosis and analysis and therefore requires diagnostic and analytical skills and capacity.

The use of external inputs has been described in their study to be of value in the diagnostic phase. They argue that outsiders can be more objectively critical and import comparative experience and thus, can more readily challenge built-in assumptions and views of civil servants. From country experiences they draw the conclusion that the use of think tank capacities is profitable.

## □ Time

The Maastricht workshop identified time as another strategy variable in two perspectives: the appropriate time for introduction of the program and the time required to realise the aims of a program of institutional development. Time of the introduction of the program could be critical. In Uganda for example, the civil service reform program was formulated within the framework of the programme of Political and Economic reform initiated by the political leadership and contained in the Economic Recovery Programme of 1987/88. For this reason it has enjoyed political support at the highest level from the beginning (Corkery and Land 1996:7)

Time is also a factor in the sense of the concept of the duration realistically required for a programme. The reform of the civil service can involve a cultural transformation which takes time to be realised. It requires careful groundwork not only with politicians but also with civil servants. Attitudes and values of administrative

behaviour cultivated over a period of three decades will need much more time than three years to change (Corckery, Land *ibid*).

### **2.2.2 Context of policy**

Apart from mapping out the content of a policy to determine its impact on implementation, experience has shown that it is equally important to analyze the context or environment in which the policy is administered. Grindle has identified 3 factors that influence implementation: [1] power, interests and strategies of actors involved; [2] institution and regime characteristics; and [3] compliance and responsiveness (Grindle 1980:11).

#### **2.2.2.1 Power, interests and strategies of actors**

Implementation is an on-going process of decision-making involving a variety of actors. In the administration of a program many actors are called upon to make decisions about specific allocations of public resources at different levels of the implementation process. Actors involved in the implementation include, among others, national level planners, politicians, elite groups, and bureaucrats at middle and lower levels and donors. The influence of these actors depends on the nature of the program. As illustrated by the interactive model of implementation discussed earlier in the chapter, what is implemented may be a result of a power struggle on the allocation of resources. Each actor is bargaining for his personal interest in the program and, because interests may differ a power struggle results. The most powerful tend to control 'who gets what'. In the context of Swaziland, the allocation of resources is in the hands of central ministries i.e. Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Planning (the guidance). The tendency is that spending agencies (the advocates) need to use certain strategies to influence the allocation of scarce resources in their favour. Even at the level of politicians, strategies and power are used to meet personal interests in implementing programmes. In order to access the likelihood of successful implementation, it may be necessary to assess the power capabilities of the actors and their interests as well as strategies they use to achieve their interests.

### **2.2.2.2 Compliance and responsiveness**

Ministerial reviews and restructuring have costs affecting the government budget, which have long term benefits, with high administrative and technical content. Their participation is limited to the ministry in question and is a long-term program. There is need therefore for implementers to develop management strategies to deal with what Grindle and Thomas refer to as the 'response from the bureaucratic arena'. The result of such a program is determined by how the ministries and departments with their administrative routines and public officials respond to the reform. "Reform proponents therefore have to anticipate and overcome opposition, either passively, by having sufficient power to outlast it or actively, by having a specific strategy to counter it". (Grindle and Thomas 1991:134) In Swaziland, civil servants have associated PSMP with the loss of employment and retrenchment and this has caused lack of support. At senior positions some principal secretaries who were not appointed on merit also displayed opposition, which has resulted in delayed implementation. It is important therefore that a strategy be developed to compensate losers in order to get their support. But if overall policy goals are to be realized, the resources traded to acquire compliance must not jeopardize the impact or focus of the programme.

### **2.2.2.3 Institution and regime characteristics**

The structure of political institutions and the type of government which is in power when the programme is pursued tend to influence the pace or processes of implementation. Authoritarian regimes have not always been better at imposing economic austerity than democracies. A distinction between different types of democracies and authoritarian regimes is more useful. Strong democracies, such as Costa Rica, have a tradition of consultation with business and labor, this facilitates acceptance of economic reform. In contrast, where policy-making is conducted by technocrats behind closed doors, reform may succeed in the short term but may be difficult to sustain. On the other hand strong authoritarian governments, characterized by continuity in leadership, insulation from societal pressures, well established and integrated interests groups, and the power to enforce decisions, tend to be relatively successful in imposing the short-term costs of economic reform, for example the

Republic of Korea in the early 1980s. Weak authoritarian governments which maintain political power through personalistic patron-client relations, tend to be bad at economic reform. (Mamadou Dia 1993:17). This argument is true with some exceptions though because there are more factors that influence the implementation of reform than the simple dichotomy of democracy and autocracy. For instance India the largest democracy has a long history of unfinished programmes, while The Netherlands one of the smallest democracies in Europe has a good record of fast efficient policy implementation. Other factors that influence programme implementation include the availability of financial resources, the government's administrative capacity, the political cycles and the influence of interest groups. Corkery et al identify more factors in the institutional environment which have a bearing on the management and implementation of reform programmes;

#### **□ Influence of ideology**

The ideology of 'less state, better state' (often inspired by the need to reduce state expenditure) has influenced many reforms. Many African countries have not been successful in their civil service reforms because they have rushed to cut down on personnel expenditure without really taking into account the human resource needs to manage the reformed administration. Instead the service remained with employees it did not need but lost its professional employees. Some countries like Uganda achieved the goal of reducing the service but it cost the government more in terms of financing the retrenchments. Another problem of this kind of ideology, if not well strategised, is that it results in high social costs for the reformed government especially if the private sector cannot absorb the retrenched public servants.

In 1995 when Swaziland launched its civil service reform program, the opening statement for the speech from the then minister of Public Service, Senator Mdluli was, "With governments the world over redefining their roles, in order to focus more closely on the needs of their citizens, the PSMP in Swaziland is an opportunity for us to do the same, but in a manner which recognises our own circumstances" (PSMP Paper 1999:1). This is a clear example of the influence of

ideology and global trends. The latter part of his statement, qualifies that the manner in which the reform will be carried out in is recognition of the countries own circumstances. My view is that these are the same circumstances that have made the process slow. There is no need however to reinvent the wheel, Africa should take off from where the UK and other good examples left off.

In the United Kingdom reforms of the Public Sector had a history, they were debated and formed a basis of political mobilization. Hence they were homegrown and based on party beliefs and ideologies whilst in the case of Africa, they were either imposed through SAPs or adopted to respond to external stimuli or to attract development cooperation. They were denied ideological base and were not based on mass consultation or politicking.

#### **□ The societal environment**

The role of the civil society as a stakeholder in reform programs can also influence the implementation process. It is important to assess the perceptions of the society on government and its administrative shortcomings. Although Corkery argues that the support of the civil society is difficult to secure, I have a differing opinion from experience. Whilst it may be easily assumed that the civil society generally has little interest in the government's administration, with civil service reform programs, the society is usually the first to complain about its inefficiencies because government will be failing to deliver services to them. Normally civil society supports attempts to improve government performance. Public outcry on government's poor service delivery is one trigger for reform.

- **Previous experience with reform.**

A governments previous reform experiences tend to influence attitudes towards any new initiative. The fact that previous reforms may have been imposed on people, for example, may undermine credibility for a reform initiative. Also a program's success may easily be affected by the outcome of other programs. Similarly there are leaders who are generally associated with reform failures or their success. Serial reform failure managers tend to make reform programs unpopular whilst successful reformers can easily inspire the population and mobilize support. As discussed earlier in the chapter credibility is an important for the success of reforms aspect and reputation is one measure.

## CHAPTER 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE PSMP

### 3.1 Aims and Objectives of PSMP

As a response to the threat of externally imposed structural adjustments, the government of Swaziland initiated a National Development Strategy (NDS), which sets out the vision for the development of the Swazi society over a twenty-five year period and is based on the aspirations of all stakeholders and major players in the economy. NDS' key macro strategic areas are; sound economic management; economic empowerment; human resource development; agricultural development; industrialisation; research for development and environmental management.

The NDS recognises that in a modern economy government's major functions are; the creation of an enabling environment for economic, social and human development; the exercise of sound macro-economic management and the provision of basic socio-economic services where private sector involvement is found to be inappropriate or unsatisfactory. (PSMP Report 1999:3). It was the NDS study that found that both the relative size of the public sector and its associated wage bill were either above that for countries at a comparable stage of development, or above international norms. An Internal Structural Adjustment Programme (ISAP) was also launched to focus on revenue diversification, expenditure control and public sector management. These initiatives were to run concurrently and were aimed at balancing the budget, the macro-economic framework, improved revenue collection, and the commercialisation of parastatals. To enhance these initiatives, the PSMP was launched in 1995 to address these challenges in the short and medium term. PSMP is a locally designed civil service reform program. A series of workshops were held to launch the program, where employees from different ministries and departments raised a number of concerns on the performance of the civil service. Some of the issues included; the lack of adequate leadership skills and management capabilities; the absence of guiding principles for HRM activities and the adhoc portfolio allocations.

The PSMP has the following core projects;

1. Ministerial Reviews and Restructuring
2. Approach to the Policy Framework of restructured ministries
3. Development of a performance management system for the Swaziland civil service.

There are also the following support projects;

1. Redundancy management
2. Capacity building through training
3. Inculcation of customer service attitudes

The broad objectives as outlined in the project document are as follows;

- To develop clear and appropriate ministerial missions, objectives, strategies, structures, and staffing levels
- To identify areas where government involvement needs to be reduced in the provision of services
- To revise operating, technical and management systems
- To build capacity of staff at all levels through training
- To create and increase public awareness of the need of public sector reform.

The author's study focuses on the first project (ministerial reviews and restructuring). This project addresses issues of the size, cost and effectiveness of the government against the background of stagnant economic growth, budget deficit, the skewed allocations of staff remunerations and the resource constraints facing the realisation of the government's poverty alleviation attempts. The project assesses the need for government's continued role in the provision of certain services or whether this role would be better placed in private hands, leaving government with only a regulatory role.

The project also seeks to establish the number and grades of posts needed to make the new structures work efficiently, effectively and responsively by ascertaining the number and grades of jobs to be located within the streamlined structures. Each ministerial review and restructuring is treated as a separate project and the whole exercise is in three phases; [I] management audit studies; [11] Strategic and action planning and [111] actual restructuring.

### **3.2 Institutional and Financial arrangements for the program**

Over the years there has been a common trend in most countries for civil service reforms to be spearheaded and managed by the ministry of Public Service and variations only occur in the placement of this ministry in the civil service. The principal reason for this is that such programs are concerned with the areas that fall directly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) i.e. human resource management. Although each ministerial review was treated as a separate project as stated earlier, Swaziland like Zambia adopted a common approach in all ministries and the need for lead agency was generally accepted. The role and function of the lead agency is an important feature in the implementation strategy of the program and hence should be considered as part of that strategy. (Corkery et al 2000: 17) The functions/activities that the lead agency for PSMP, MOPSI performed are;

- To define clearly the role of ministries in the context of the reform program
- Agree targets and associated time scales within the program with ministries

- Hold ministries accountable for attaining agreed performances
- Provide facilitation, advice and support to ministries
- Organise meetings of individual facilitators from ministries and together review progress and problems
- Manage the consultative process.

Within MOPSI an office was established to manage the PSMP, [i.e. PSMP office] directed by a National Director. The National Director reports directly to the Principal Secretary MOPSI or to the secretary to cabinet on all activities of the program. The PSMP office receives local technical expertise from the Management Services Division (MSD) of MOPSI and external expertise from an independent consultant plus a Common Wealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) adviser, who are both placed within the PSMP office.

Two committees were established to assist the ND to oversee the implementation of the consultancy study. The first team is for first line technical advice and constitutes the Under Secretaries in MOPSI, Ministry of Education (MED), Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Principal Parliamentary Draftsman; Secretary CSB; Secretary TSC and Director MSD. The second is a sub-committee of Principal Secretaries (PSs)

which gives policy direction to the study team. This team consists of The Secretary to Cabinet PSs from MOPSI, MOJ, MED, the Attorney General and The ND.

The magnitude of the reform program meant that MOPSI had to secure the necessary support from other important figures and agencies especially the ministries responsible for finance and planning. Existing bodies are utilised for coordination among the different agencies. For any staffing requirements, financial resources or capital projects concerning the PSMP the ND through the principal secretary MOPSI submits a proposal to the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) which evaluates the request

and further submits it to the Public Service Reconstruction Committee (PSRC), which approves any changes within the public service and is headed by the secretary to cabinet.

### **Financial Arrangements**

As stated in chapter one PSMP is a locally initiated and designed program, initial financing therefore came from government coffers. Donor assistance was secured from CTFC through the provision of technical assistance, which however expired in 2000. The European Union provided regional and overseas training for MOPSI staff. The Swazi government continues to utilise her limited financial resources on salaries and other activities of the programme.

### **3.3 Implementation Plan**

As indicated earlier the implementation of the review and restructuring is divided into three phases, i.e. management audit studies, which were set to be complete by May 2000: strategic and action planning stage, planned for completion by June 2000 and the actual restructuring phase.

#### **Phase 1: Management Audit Studies**

The concept of work groups was adopted in Swaziland's reform programme like in many other countries. These, as earlier discussed, are referred to as PSMP teams. Members within line ministries were selected, as much as possible to represent every unit within the ministry. Consultants guided these groups from MSD. In Zambia these were referred to as implementing committees. Like in the case of PSMP they worked closely with a similar department, which reported to the Cabinet office. The purpose of the teams is to sustain the momentum of the programme, to encourage and assist line ministry personnel and to reduce the risk, during a necessarily long reform process, of

fatigue setting in. These groups have also helped promote and animate the reform and its implementation and to facilitate continuous and effective communication between the lead agency and line ministries.

The main objectives and tasks of the management audits are;

### **Objectives**

- Undertake a critical review of the objectives, tasks and functions of a given ministry/ department with a view of establishing the relevance and effectiveness of it in government.
- Examine the operating, technical and management systems, to establish efficiency and effectiveness and propose any necessary innovations
- Suggest options in the discharge of the various tasks and functions (retention in government or privatisation)
- Solicit the views of ministries and departments, including the views of contending ministries for certain portfolio responsibilities
- Solicit the views of ministries' and departments' stakeholders on the ministries impact and effectiveness.

### **Phase 2: Strategic and Action Planning**

### **Objectives**

- On the basis of the analysis of the ministry/department's Strengths and Weaknesses and the survey of external Opportunities and Threats, draw up a new strategic plan delineating new roles and the ministerial structure within which these roles should be performed.

## **Phase 3: Restructuring**

### **Objectives**

- Elaborate the ministerial structure by ascertaining the job contents of the new posts prior to recommending the number and grades of the posts needed for the new structure, and bearing in mind the principle of equal-pay-for-equal -work
- Prepare detailed job descriptions for each post, paying particular attention to the duties and responsibilities, the skills needed for the successful discharge of the post's functions, and the need to instil customer-service attitudes in public servants;
- Provide an inventory of equipment (including computer hard- and soft-ware) that will be required to effectively perform the functions; and
- Carry out any other tasks and apply methodologies in furtherance of the aforesaid objectives.

### **Expected Output(s)**

- New ministerial structure (complete with strategic plan, mission statement, and allocation of responsibilities to the Ministry's component units, departments, and autonomous Agencies having relations with the Ministry)
- Lists of functions/agencies to be studied farther for possibility of (a) commercialising or (b) privatizing, or (c) contracting out as and when necessary, or (d) transferring to NGOs or the voluntary sector, or (e) "producing" with private or voluntary sector;
- List of identified areas in which new or revised operating, technical and management systems need to be installed and other institutional capacity

building issues that need to be addressed to sustain the momentum of public service reform and eliminate obstacles to efficiency and productivity;

- Budgetary implications of restructuring proposal;
- Ministerial review and restructuring report incorporating findings, recommendations, and implementation modalities (including identification of agencies to include at pilot phase of implementation);
- Cabinet consideration and approval or rejection of proposals.

**Performance Indicators:**

- Each ministry/department has a structure that clearly delineates its proper functions - a structure that leaves to Government what it is properly fitted to do
- Position papers are produced outlining the roles to be transferred to, and/or "co-produced" with, (a) commercial arms of government (b) local authorities, (c) the private sector and (d) NGOs and voluntary development organizations
- Cost savings resulting from restructuring (mergers, abolition, hiving-off, etc.);

## **CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF PSMP**

**4.0** As stated and agreed in the second chapter of the paper, successful implementation of reform programs is influenced by variety of interrelated variables. This chapter sets out to critically analyse the implementation of the civil service reform in Swaziland. This appraisal will be done against the variables discussed earlier together with the citation other countries' experiences. The main objective is to identify factors which have delayed the implementation process of the programme and identify lessons that can be learnt.

### **4.1 The Context of PSMP**

#### **4.1.1 Triggers for the reform programme**

One of the most important factors for improving implementation is the ability to clearly identify, review and understand the real problems of the system to be reformed, by those who initiate the reform exercise. It is true that the main problem that Swaziland faced was a dwindling economy which resulted in a national deficit in the early 1990s. The civil service is growing in terms of numbers and expenditure and there is an imbalance. This imbalance is evident in the figures of the latest establishment register where the proportion of professional and executive posts vis-à-vis the clerical/non-professional can be drawn. Of the 24593 established posts appearing in the register, 1% is ungraded, only 22% are professional and 76% are non-professional positions (estimate figures). With the additional daily paid staff the figure for clerical staff is much higher, as some clerical and even professional positions are employed as temporary staff and are paid on a daily basis, due to lack of funds to establish new posts. The irony of the situation is that, despite the growing number of civil servants and the growing wage bill, currently approximated at 54% of recurrent spending (Development Plan 1999/2001), the performance of the civil service is deteriorating.

It cannot be denied that this poor performance and the overstaffed civil service has in a way contributed to national economic decline, but did the analysts of the situation do a critical assessment of the sources of the problems of the civil service, and who were involved in the identification of the problem? Because the nature of the trigger/source can have a significant influence on the goal and strategy of the program, as indicated in Chapter 2, it is imperative that the diagnosis is done critically. It is more effective to treat the source of the problem than to treat its symptoms. Clearly the over-bulging of the civil service and the poor performance are only symptoms of the real problem which needs to be identified for a lasting. An important question that follows therefore is, to what extend does the present PSMP reflect the understanding of the real problem that is crippling the performance of the civil service in Swaziland?

It is a fact that the problems of the overstaffed civil servants can be attributed to, amongst other factors, patronage. The civil service in Swaziland has served as a ground for patron client relationships. Over the years there has been a lot of political interference in the human resource management practice, especially the recruitment process. Like in many developing countries the private sector in Swaziland is not strong enough to sustain the rising unemployment and the government is therefore the largest single employer. With the high degree of corruption in the service (nepotism, bribery, favouritism) people have found it much easier to obtain jobs in the civil service than in the private sector.

Since Swaziland gained independence in 1968, the civil service has been an arena where people are rewarded unprocedurally with recruitment into the civil service for a variety of reasons. Belonging to the royal family guaranteed, and still does, employment by the civil service. Before the banning of political parties in 1973, those who supported the ruling party were guaranteed jobs in the civil service. Even being active in national/cultural events including national sports, people are rewarded jobs in the civil service especially at lower level positions. As promotions are based on seniority, especially in the administrative and clerical cadres people who entered the system in this way have found themselves in positions as high as Under Secretary.

Performance has been compromised a great deal because such appointments and promotions are regardless of competence and in some cases even regardless of vacant positions. Political interference is a major source of the current state of the civil service.

Swaziland with its small population, which is strongly bound by culture and tradition, suffers from the problems of extended family ties. The tendency is that almost everybody is a relative of the other in one way or the other. The civil service has been turned into a family business and this takes away objectivity when it comes to HRM practices. Apart from the ordinary Swazi citizens, there is the royal clan. These are the 'untouchables' of the nation, a majority of their appointments are influenced by their status and hence unquestioned. The majority of times these come as a directive from the so-called 'labadzala' meaning the elders. There are however those who do qualify and are loyal to the service. Disciplining the privileged has proven to be difficult because those responsible may suffer the unknown consequences that may arise from such action.

In previous reforms, the Government of Swaziland has privatised some of her responsibilities in order to reduce expenditure, but parastatal organisations have remained a burden on public funds either through direct subventions to cover annual deficits in operations or through the provision of guarantees for loans. The NDS reports, "in some cases government takes onto herself burdensome regulatory tasks which are interventionist rather than creating an enabling environment. Examples cited are the Swaziland Dairy Board and the National Maize Corporation where prices are regulated. (NDS Report 1996:10). In other cases, government continues running organisations that are a drain on public resources, yet they could be profitably run in the private sector, for example the central Transport Administration and Royal Swazi National Airways.

Political interference is not only the cause of the problems in the civil service, there are other reasons, which include, the under-utilization of staff due to poor leadership. Civil servants have lost motivation because of the lack of transparency and accountability in the management of the civil service. Corruption is not only at the political level but has

also spread to civil servants themselves. With the rising population and lack of employment in Swaziland people have resorted to bribery to secure jobs in the civil service. Poor salaries have also played a great role in de-motivating public servants. With these and other factors, the civil servants themselves have resorted to corruption to satisfy their economic needs. Corruption amongst senior civil servants has led government to lose large sums of money in paying ghost workers. Senior civil servants in the Ministry of Agriculture and that of Health and Social Welfare have been culprits in the hiring of ghost workers in the early 90s.

Still on the issue of pressures for reform, Swaziland's civil service reform program differs from most such reforms in developing countries especially in Africa because of the fact that it was a homegrown reform. Most reforms like in Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia were ideas which came from the IMF and World Bank. There are concerns from these countries that these reforms did not work because they were imposed. Have their experiences differed in any way from those of Swaziland so far? No! If anything my experience with the reform process is that it is not possible to have objectivity in planning for a reform that will interfere with the reformers' interests. External pressure sometimes works to bring in objectivity and comparative experience. However external influence may also come from locals outside the civil service. The difference between the World Bank and local external influence is that one comes with funds the other does not. My argument is that influence from the IMF or the World Bank if coupled with good local leadership and capacity things would be different.

For the PSMP to succeed in Swaziland there is need to address the issues of political interference in the management of the civil service and the problem of patronage. As it is right now the PSMP tends to focus too much on ministerial capacities as the main cause of the problems of the civil service. It identifies the symptoms of the problem e.g. increasing number of civil servants and poor performance, but it does not categorically state the source of the problem and how to address it. Attitudes of local politicians towards the civil service have to change, for the successful implementation of civil service reform, and this should be from the highest level of political leadership.

#### **4.1.2 PSMP and the Political and Institutional Environment**

Swaziland has been ruled by a royal decree since 1973 when the former King repealed the constitution inherited from Britain at independence in 1968. The current monarch, King Mswati III, now reigns over the only absolute monarchy still surviving in a Southern Africa region that has embraced democratic forms of government. The absence of a democratic culture in Swaziland for more than three decades insulated its people from ethos of critical appraisal of the government. The dual system of governance, with the King having supreme powers over the legislative, judicial and executive arms of government, has been a major stumbling block for development initiatives. While on one hand the PSMP is trying to introduce sound management practice in the human resource management of the civil service the King still retains the right to appointments in the civil service at his own discretion. The King chooses the Prime Minister and, in consultation with the Prime Minister, the Cabinet as well as many senior civil servants and heads of government offices. The basis of such appointments remains unclear.

There are however underground movements that have built pressure to modernize the political system. The Peoples United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) 1988 criticised the King and the government and called for democratic reform. The King's response was the initiation of the Constitution Review Commission (CRC). The review has been criticized for being too slow and lacking credibility because the majority of the 33 members of the CRC are members of the royal family and the country's powerful network of traditional chiefs. Political, labour or other organized groups have also criticized it for only considering submissions from individuals rather than organised groups. However efforts to implement the PSMP have not in anyway been disturbed by political instability and unrest like in Lesotho where civil service reforms were initiated in 1993 during a period of political unrest which resulted in five governments within a period of five years, but the dissatisfaction of the system and its effects has continued to de-motivate employees and has made them not realize the importance of the programme.

The decision-making process within this dual system of governance makes the implementation of many programs almost impossible. The major problem with the decision-making in the policy process is its lack of accountability and transparency. Whilst decisions are taken at parliamentary and cabinet level, the passage of legislation by parliament requires the King's assent to become law, which he is not obliged to give. When parliament is not in session, the King may legislate by decree under his residual emergency powers. The King receives advice from a council of traditional conservative elderly people, most of whom are from the royal family, who support the current system and do not see why it should change especially because they benefit from it and it gives them access to the King.

What has also delayed the implementation of PSMP and other programs are the unpredictable reshuffles which are done by the King in consultation with the Prime Minister. These involve the replacement of ministers, principal secretaries and under secretaries. For instance since the inception of the PSMP in 1995, MOPSI has changed ministers and principal secretaries four times. This has caused a lot of interruptions and delays because every new leader has to familiarize himself/herself with the new business and more so they bring with them personal assistants, ideas and interests who or which may not necessarily be in agreement with those of their predecessors.

#### **4.1.3 The administrative environment**

The idea of establishing committees constituting very senior civil servants as described in chapter three made it possible for the Ministry of Public Service to interact easily with those units that play a part in the implementation of the programme, especially those involved in the allocation of resources (Finance and Planning) and at Cabinet level which is the highest level of decision making concerning any restructuring in the civil service.

However what has negatively affected the implementation process is the placement of the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency is at the same level with other ministries which does not give it much power and authority over them especially in securing compliance. In countries like Botswana and Zambia where the Lead Agency is

attached to either the President's office or the Cabinet office, its ability for it to implement decisions is considerable.

**Fragmentation in policy initiatives** - Under the umbrella of the NDS initiative there are a number of reform programs including PSMP, the Economic and Social Review Agenda (ESRA), and the Public Enterprise Reform (PER). All these reforms seek to address the declining performance of the economy but they are poorly related and co-ordinated. The coordinating ministries work in isolation. Taking into account the limited capacity of the programme in terms of available financial resources, co-ordination would cut on costs. Instead the lack of such co-ordination results in duplication and a potential conflict in government's efforts. The potential for donor support in such a situation is destroyed.

A striking example of lack of coordination was experienced by the Ministry of Tourism's PSMP team which during its management audit study in 1999 discovered that at that very same time there was another restructuring exercise of the ministry and this was carried out by a team of external consultants. This brought about a feeling of de-motivation on the government team. Government was in essence financing two exercises which had exactly the same objectives and activities. The need therefore for co-ordination at national and ministerial level cannot be overemphasized for improved implementation of the programme.

**Use of consultants** - PSMP has engaged consultancy services almost on a permanent basis since the beginning of the program. The general feeling from the staff working with the consultant is that the consultant used was less competent, whereas in terms of fees and benefits he received almost ten times more than the MSD staff. Consultancy would have been enough at the initial stage only to impart skills on knowledge to staff. This large difference in remuneration has created a lot of dissatisfaction and de-motivation on the part of staff because the amount of work done by the consultant is the same as that done by the staff. At times staff has deliberately frustrated any cooperation with the consultant due to these inequities and this has caused some delays.

**Management problems** - The idea of establishing a separate PSMP office and separating it from MSD has in the past caused problems that have caused delays in the implementation process. Whilst the offices are separate the PSMP office uses MSD staff to implement the program, whilst at the same time engaging in their day-to-day management services work. The main problem that came out of this situation was that there were now two reporting channels. On the one hand they reported to the ND on PSMP matters on the other to the Director MSD. This situation brought about a lot of confusion because the functions and duties of MSD cannot be separated from those of the PSMP especially realising that both share the same mission (i.e. managing the size and performance of the civil service)

**Selection of jobs and teams** - The strategy that the programme used in the selection of ministries to be reviewed caused some delays in its implementation. In Uganda one of the factors that positively contributed to the implementation of the civil service reform program, especially in the case of acceptance by line ministries the idea of the lead agency (Ministry of Public Service) taking a leading role also in terms of being the first to be reviewed and the first retrenchments were from the lead ministry. (Status Report No.9 1996) Line ministries need to see how committed implementers are, by experimenting with the highly positioned ministries and departments. Instead, in Swaziland MOPSI came after five ministries were reviewed and the kind of questions that the PSMP teams faced from line ministries were for example, why not set an example or why not experiment with you first? (referring especially to MSD). This is infact a realistic concern. Civil servants had the fear that MOPSI had set out to retrench them and therefore developed resistance.

A second problem in the strategy was that ministries were selected at random. An ideal situation would for example be to review the ministry of Natural Resources at the same time with the ministry of Environment or the ministry of Agriculture and the ministry of Housing and Development because they deal with related issues of land, this means therefore that recommendations and issues of concern are likely to be similar. The random selection has caused delays in implementation because ministries that had undergone their reviews and had recommendations that affected other ministries within the same sector had to wait for them.

#### **4.1.4 The societal environment**

Swaziland has a weak civil society because the government restricts freedom of association and assembly. Several traditional forums exist for the expression of opinion, including community meetings, national councils and dialogue with village chiefs. These however depend on the sufferance of leaders and are not effective channels for expressing political dissent.

Labour law restricts the ability of trade unions to participate in the social and political affairs of the nation. Within government there are worker associations which represent civil servants, however these are not allowed to assembly without the permission from government. It was evident during the management audit studies that the Swazi people are interested in seeing the programme succeed. Perceptions from the society (governments clients) reflected great dissatisfaction in the way government was running her business. So there was great support from this end and that was a very positive factor in speeding up the implementation of the management audits. The society was more readily available for example to be interviewed than the civil servants and politicians. Their support was demonstrated in a variety of ways. For example government with her limited resources at times had no vehicles to carry the implementing teams to carry-out studies in various areas, but the people (the private sector, NGOs, Local Authorities, etc) freely volunteered transport and some even offered to come to the ministry to be interviewed. Some organisations even offered refreshments and meals to government officials, which is not the kind of incentive they received from government on field assignments. Civil servants as union however do not entirely support the program merely because they were not consulted and informed about it and because of their dissatisfaction with the government system they do not perceive the program as their own.

#### **4.1.5 Influence of ideology**

For Swaziland the international trend for reforming civil services contributed positively to the initiation of the program. Despite the desperate need to rescue the dying economy, from the minister's speech quoted in chapter two (i.e. 'every country

is reforming their civil services its an opportunity for us to do the same'), it is evident that the influence of ideology also played a part. This is one reason why there was no adequate planning done at the initiation of the programme, in terms of assessing the capacities, both financial and administrative to implement the reform. What seemed to be of paramount importance was the decision to initiate the programme and join the rest of the world.

## **4.2 The Content of the PSMP**

The management function to deliver civil service reforms differs from day – to –day management within the public service and the capacity needed is affected by the nature of the reform.

### **4.2.1 Strategy variables**

#### **▪ Goals and Objectives**

The PSMP document states clearly the overall goal of the program is to improve the performance of the civil service (its sustainability, effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency). The objectives as described in chapter 3 are clear and consistent with each other. Each stage also has clearly defined tasks and expected outputs. During the management audit it was evident that some civil servants were not aware of the purpose of the PSMP. But the problem was not because they did not understand it but rather they did not have the information. After the team outlined the objectives to them their perceptions changed and support was forthcoming.

The goals of the restructuring are concerned with issues of the size of the civil service, its efficiency, responsiveness and effectiveness. It is true that the size of the civil service is growing but what is not stated in the PSMP objectives is a

measurable and desired size of the civil service. Indicating the ‘ideal size’ will help in evaluating whether the program is achieving its objective.

Some of the objectives of the program are not realistic. For instance it recommends processes that are not in agreement with the current structures. The development of appropriate management strategies, structures and staffing levels may be easy task but with the current centralised government structures implementation may not be possible e.g. in areas of budgeting, training and recruitment. Within its objectives there is no mention of decentralisation and delegation of authority to facilitate change. The program puts too much emphasis on the capacities of ministries as entities and makes no mention of the relationship between these entities and the overall system, i.e. the relationship between ministries and politicians and the political institutions, who in-fact are important actors in the administration of the civil service as policy formulators and as discussed earlier are the root cause of the current civil service problems.

The objective of the PSMP is to restructure the civil service by overhauling the ministries and departments. This it does by carrying out standardized management audits throughout the different ministries and departments. This approach is not ideal because what the program managers should understand is that ministries as entities have their own dynamics which affect change. Firstly competencies are different, this was evident in the management audit studies, team members from professional departments had a better understanding and grasp of the reform process, their capacities in conducting interviews, evaluating and recommending new systems and also capabilities in producing reports meant that a lot of change was initiated by them as opposed to the lead agent. Such capacities are an indication that change for these ministries is more likely. Their management culture, which is characterised by accountability and transparency, is also more adaptive to the objectives of the program. Whilst on the other hand those with the opposite culture are less likely to adapt to change. Secondly, the linkages between these entities may also influence innovation. For example the connection between ministry of Economic Planning and Finance are more likely to adapt to the changes recommended by the ministry of Public Service due to their linkages as central

agencies. Thirdly, relations and conflicts within and among ministries and departments, means that those ministries and departments whose interests conflict with those of the central agencies are less likely to support the change recommended to them. An example of conflict between line and central agencies is with the allocation of resources, line ministries are always unsatisfied with the allocation of resources. Finally and the most important factor that influences change in ministries and departments is the access to power especially access to the King. Without mentioning names, departments that have better access to the power tend to favour changes that are in line with the ideology of those in power and the reason is the benefits derived.

- **The implementers**

It was decided that the MOPSI takes the lead role in the implementation of the program and this decision was the most appropriate because activities of the PSMP are in fact the day- to –day operations of this ministry and this has been to some degree a factor that has contributed to the achievements that the programs has experienced this far. MSD's mission in government is actually to ensure that the civil service is the right size, efficient and productive. It implements this by offering management advice to ministries and departments on a daily basis.

However the competence of this ministry has been under severe criticism by client ministries over the years. This is indeed true because the department over the years has not been offering critical management advise to ministries in terms of regular work inspections, regular work measurements, regular revision of job descriptions, organizational structures, etc. instead the department operated on a rather reactive manner. The department has highly qualified staff which are under-utilized. Apart from the under-utilization of the staff, the staff is grossly under-paid (lack of incentives). Delays in implementation of PSMP have also been caused by this lack of incentive on the part of staff. A positive aspect to note though is that despite the criticisms that the department has received, MSD staff still manages to command respect and cooperation from ministries at all levels and this has been a positive contribution to the implementation process.

It is important that the leader of the program has to have special skills and experience. The current National Director is a leader with superior qualities and intellect. With her vast experience as the Director for MSD and on several occasions acting as the principal secretary in MPOSI, has made her coordination and consultation with other units an easy task.

- **Timing**

The introduction of PSMP was within the framework of an Economic Review Commission (ERC) which was commissioned by the King. The ERC report published in 1995 solicited a national consensus and came up with recommendations which called for the formulation of strategies for satisfying the aspirations of the nation. As such awareness at the political level was secured at the beginning and this is one of the reasons that opposition was not a key factor for delays at the formulation stage.

On the other hand however because civil service reforms require changes in cultural behaviour there was a lot of groundwork that needed to be done before the programme could take off. At a certain period in 1995 the programme came to a standstill for 18 months because government could not appoint a leader and during this period a lot of civil servants, the public and even politicians lost confidence in the programme and this really delayed the implementation process because now there was need to re-secure the support of actors involved in the programme's implementation.

In 1999 the King invited the nation for a re-launch of the NDS which embraces among other programmes the PSMP. This was an opportunity for the PSMP office to regain its support from its major stakeholders and this improved the implementation process because from that period a lot of activities have been implemented. By December 2000 five ministries had produced comprehensive management audit reports with critical recommendations ranging from staffing

issues to portfolio reallocations, possibilities of privatisation, the need to review HRM practices in the entire civil service etc. Mission statements and job descriptions were revised for all departments and new ones were drafted where they did not exist. It was surprising to notice that the ministry of Tourism has operated since 1974 (and this is just one example) without a mission statement and being one of the sectors, which brings in substantive revenue to the country. Redeployments were recommended and where such redeployments were within the same ministry they were immediately effected especially in the non-technical fields like administration. Where funds were readily available training and purchase of new equipment was implemented.

The different tasks to be undertaken by the program are given time frames for instance, management audits are to complete within a period of six months and action planning and implementation approximately another six months. These time frames are unrealistic given the fact that such a reform is more successful in a more incremental than transformational approach. It is not easy to transform a civil service especially with centralised functions.

When planning and implementing an incremental reform like the PSMP it is essential to make assumptions about the future. Factors that the PSMP did not consider about the future include finance availability, human resource availability and retention. Implementation was delayed in some cases because of the unavailability of funds. Ministries were expected to finance PSMP activities that were not in their annual budgets. Programme managers did not forecast the staff turnover which is a major problem that government faces mainly due to low salaries for its employees.

#### **4.2.2 Conflict of Interests**

Experience has proven that for every system that governs there will be group of people who support it, those who do not support it and sometimes those who are neutral. Those in support are the ones who are less likely to support a program that will be a threat to their interests.

As described earlier within the administrative system of the government of Swaziland there is a lot external influence and a certain clique has enjoyed benefits over a long period of time. The implementation process of the PSMP has in several cases been delayed because of a conflict of interests with people who saw the programme as a threat to their interests. There were people for instance who openly stated that the positions they held were life positions that they had been appointed by the King and as such nobody can question what they do but the King.

There are also some areas where one cannot really tell whether it is an issue of lack of political commitment/support or merely an issue of conflicting interests. During the management audit phase for instance the PSMP team on certain occasions failed to get permission from the relevant authorities to conduct management audits in certain departments. This included departments, that according to me should be role models for other ministries such as the Cabinet Office and Prime Ministers office. The team also failed to get approval from the Prime minister to conduct audits in Swaziland's foreign missions.

#### **4.2.3 Change envisaged**

The public has come to associate PSMP with retrenchment. This problem as indicated earlier is associated with the lack of information and communication. The implementation process has been slowed partly because of this problem. Civil servants and other stakeholders were not supporting and cooperating because they did not like what they envisaged as the outcome of the programme. What exacerbated the problem was that staff associations were not involved in the formulation stage of the program.

#### **Box 1. Lessons From Zambia and Uganda Civil Service Reforms**

##### **Zambia's Restructuring process (1996)**

1. The problem of dealing with ministerial restructuring in isolation with other political or decision making structures meant that while the government had accomplished the restructuring of the public service, it was unable to pay retrenchment benefits because the cost of paying retrenches under the Pensions Act of the Laws of Zambia is too expensive, and not cost-effective because it would take 15 years on average to recoup the cost. This proves also that not enough research was done before the exercise began.
2. Zambia was mindful of the social, economic and political impact of immediate and large cuts in public sector staffing and as such has adhered to a systematic and phased approach.
3. Placement of Lead Agency - the program was co-ordinated by the Office of the President. This gives the program the authority it deserves and shows a sign of political commitment at the highest level of government. This however does have its shortcomings e.g. political interference.
4. Soliciting public support – the President officially launched the program in full attendance of various stakeholders, including the donor community, trade unions, NGOs and other interested parties, where the program was subjected refinement.

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##### **Uganda's Retrenchment Exercise**

1. Political commitment- The Ugandan government took a political decision to reduce the number of ministries from 35 to 21 in 1992. Reducing the number of civil servants from 320 000 to 268 000. This target was set and met. (This is also setting clear and measurable objectives and is essential for evaluating program success).
2. Coordination- Lack of coordination among existing programs resulted in conflicting goals for government. Whilst the retrenchment team in the Ministry of Public Service was working towards job reductions, their colleagues were carrying out a rolling programme of restructuring reviews in the ministries which resulted in recommending a staff increase.
3. Retrenchment costs- Performance in financial compensation was relatively good because although the early retrenchedes went without pension, the Ugandan government was able to pay later retrenchedes a standard amount of US\$ 1000 plus three months' salary for each year of service up to 20years. Although the financial compensation was fulfilled the social and psychological cost was ignored.

Ministry of Public service. (1996) Uganda Civil Service Reform Programme. Status Report 9. Minogue, M., C. Polidano and D. Hulme (1998) Beyond The New Public Management.

## **5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 CONCLUSION**

It is evident that the civil service of Swaziland is characterised by an irrational increase in number of employees, ministries and departments and poor human resource practice which has led to its poor performance. These problems have contributed significantly to the deteriorating state of the economy because public expenditure has grown beyond the means of government. These problems as discussed earlier in the report have called for launching of the PSMP. What has been pointed out by the study however is that the emphasis of the reform program puts too much emphasis on dealing with capacities of ministries and departments as entities and ignores the interrelationship of these and other structure of government i.e. political institutions which are in fact the root cause of the problems of the civil service, especially the decision-making process. The PSMP is therefore only identifies and attacks the symptoms of the real problems facing the civil service and this is the major factor that has inhibited a speedy and successful implementation.

Other implementation problems that the program encountered are strategic management issues. The program managers failed to make future assumptions in areas of availability of both human and financial resources. It is evident that the government is struggling to meet the requirements of the program with its limited budget and yet there are no plans put in place to mobilise external assistance. There are also no plans put in place for retaining competent human resources. Sufficient support from stakeholders including staff associations, and political support is another area that is lacking.

However since successful implementation is determined by a variety of factors, the program has made success in some areas especially at the ministerial level. The programme managers have been able to secure administrative support and collaboration from ministries and departments for the successful implementation of

some of its objectives. Some ministries and departments have developed up-to-date mission statements and identified desired staffing levels, identified the need for portfolio reallocations and training needs. The programme has also been successful in some areas to increase the awareness of the need for reform.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Although standards of successful or effective implementation are not rigid and sometimes not clear, on the background of the problems identified in the implementation of the PSMP, the following proposals for improving program implementation are recommended.

**1. Capacity building.** Although it is evident that the problems encountered in the implementation of the program are more politically oriented than administrative, the administrative machinery also needs improvements. Implementing agencies especially the Lead Agency has to enhance its capacity for policy formulation and implementation. Civil service reform is not a ones off program, it is a continuous exercise which even after completion there is the need for continuity in order to maintain the reformed administration. So capacity should not only be directed to the immediate or current program but must have along term forecast. It is therefore important for the ‘success’ of the program that capacity should be enhanced in the following areas.

### **a) Leadership and motivation**

For improved implementation of the PSMP and other development programs there is need for leadership of the highest calibre. Leadership should not be seen only as the class of people at the top positions of the hierarchy. The staff of the Leading Agency should have leadership and motivational skills at all levels of the administrative hierarchy. These skills will enable them to communicate ideas and instructions effectively to line ministries, they will help them to organise and mobilise civil servants to take rational decisions. They should not appear in line ministries as people who are not sure of what they are doing, people who need to

consult before taking decisions. The best way to win the compliance and positive response from people is to be a ‘leading’ example; people need to be convinced that they are being led in the right direction.

**b) Planning and Forecasting**

Policy makers and their advisors must develop a strategic orientation. Strategic thinking should become an integral part of the process of program initiation and implementation at both national and ministerial level (especially to the Lead agency- MOPSI). To enhance these skills it is important for MOPSI to work in close collaboration with the Public Policy Coordinating Unit of government. Unless such a skill is obtained the possibility of implementing the program with limited delays is impossible, because planning and forecasting essentially help the implementers to see problems before hand and equip themselves with the appropriate reaction if such problems do occur.

**c) Resource Mobilization**

In view of the resource constraints on the government of Swaziland, it is vital that MOSI constantly applies resource mobilization skills. The ministry should have smart strategies that will convince the controllers of the government purse that the PSMP is worth the money sought.

The implementation of a civil service reform programme is a costly exercise that cannot be met solely by locally generated resources so mobilization of resources should not only be restricted to government but even to the private sector and the international community. Caution must be taken though by program managers in appraising the cost and benefits of the different types of aid.

#### **d) Human Resource Management**

The need for HRM skills can never be overemphasized, particularly on the part of the MSD staff. This is a critical skill because civil service reforms are concerned with changing civil servant's work cultures which have proven to have deteriorated their performance over the years.

The current situation with the separation of the PSMP office from the Management Services Division may need to be reviewed. What the ministry needs to do is improve the capacity of the staff and put in place incentive mechanisms to motivate the staff. Also on capacity development the one-week training offered to PSMP team members at ministerial level is not adequate for such a demanding program. So the program management should collaborate with the Swaziland Institute of Public Administration (a government training institute) to improve the training.

**2. Communication** and consultation is another important element that builds consistency in favour of a reform program. There is need for program managers to improve their communication and consultation with major stakeholders in the program. Effective communication begins at the introduction stage of the program, to sell ideas to the affected groups, it also continues at implementation to clear any misunderstandings about change. An important stakeholder that the PSMP managers neglected is the association for civil servants. Communication with this body is very crucial for successful implementation of the program hence it needs to be improved.

**3. Selection of ministries.** To speed up the implementation process the selection of ministries should be done on a sectoral basis i.e. ministries in the same sector should be reviewed at the same time to avoid delays in the implementation of recommendations, where one ministry cannot implement recommendations because they affect another ministry that is scheduled to be reviewed at a later stage. For example recommendations from the ministries of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy, Tourism and Environment and the ministry of Housing and

Urban development affect each other in one way or another since they are all dealing with land issues.

Still on the issue of selecting ministries for restructuring, it is important that the central ministries take a leading role in the implementation process. This does not only show commitment and encouragement to line ministries but also serves as a good foundation. As stated earlier in the report problems of the civil service are in part due to the centralised structure of decision making in the civil service. If recommendations like the decentralisation of certain functions like training, discipline and performance incentives were made at the central level then implementing reform at line ministries would be easier.

**4. Placement of Lead Agency**, the Management Services Division should be placed as a unit within the Cabinet Office. Experience in many African countries has shown that attaching this office to the Presidency or Cabinet office emphasises the importance and influence of its head both at a political and personal level and also the authority of its staff.

**5. Political Support.** From the analysis of the implementation process PSMP there is evidence that civil service reforms cannot be implemented exclusive of the political process especially the decision making process. It is evident that current dual system of governance in Swaziland has created problems that have affected the performance of the civil service. There is need therefore for the clear separation and description of roles in the management of the civil service. There is an urgent need for changes in the power structures. The political influence in the administration of the civil service needs to be minimised. If the two systems of governance are to run concurrently in the administration of the civil service there should be clear regulations that will govern all civil servants. There should be clear-cut responsibilities and close collaboration between the two systems.

Political reform is not easy to deal with but as stated earlier for any reform to succeed there is need for political support. Political commitment at the highest level should be displayed and sustained over a long period of time. Even though

there are no democratic elections and parties at the current moment, politicians should be appointed on a term basis to avoid the interruptions that result from unexpected cabinet reshuffles.

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