

**Second Biennial Pan-Commonwealth Meeting of  
Heads of Public Service / Cabinet Secretaries  
on  
Frontiers of Government Performance Management:  
Towards Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP)  
6-8 June 2022**

**Outcome Statement**

The Second Biennial Pan-Commonwealth Heads of Public Service / Cabinet Secretaries Meeting took place virtually from 6 to 8 June 2022 with the theme: 'Frontiers of Government Performance Management: Towards Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP)'

The forum brought together the Commonwealth Heads of Public Service, Cabinet Secretaries and Senior Public Officials from across the Commonwealth with the following principal objectives:

1. To review and discuss the international experience in general and Commonwealth experience in particular with regard to the design and implementation of effective government performance management systems, with a view to share best practices, lessons learned, and identify challenges.
2. To take stock of emerging global consensus on the Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP) for the design and implementation of government performance management systems, which contribute to more effective government.
3. To enhance participants' knowledge in (a) performance improvement and management techniques, based on theory and international experience, and (b) cutting-edge tools and techniques.
4. To strengthen the Commonwealth Community of Practice (CoP) in Government Performance Management to ensure that we sustain and institutionalise cross-learning, exchange of ideas and experiences in performance management.

The meeting was addressed by Hon Mia Mottley QC, MP, Prime Minister of Barbados and The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General.

During the three-day meeting, experience of following countries in designing and implementing a government performance management system (GPMS) was discussed in some detail: Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria and Rwanda. Many other participants shared their country experience to highlight various points.

From the various country cases and experiences from across the Commonwealth discussed during the meeting, participants sought to distil the underlying principles that seem to be common among countries that have been successful in creating government departments that work faster, cheaper, better and deliver what they promise. These underlying principles were discussed and summarised as Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP).

Participants agreed on the following broad points:

1. Government performance is critical to public service delivery and achievement of national development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. The competitive and comparative advantage of nations depends on the performance and effectiveness of government, implementation of sound policies, and optimal utilisation of limited resources. An ‘effective’ performance management system is therefore a critical requirement for the public service.
3. The diversity that exists among nations and their governments makes us often overlook following three key facts:
  - a. First, many of the problems involved in managing government are a result of a few underlying causes.
  - b. Second, the underlying causes of poor government performance are similar in nature across a diverse set of countries.
  - c. Third, countries have successfully dealt with these (few) underlying causes using remarkably similar approaches.
4. Participants looked for what works and what doesn’t work and distilled the key aspects of the methodology for improving government performance and culled out the generally applicable (and acceptable) principles. The institutional context of each country may differ a little, but participants were struck by the similarities and relevance of their experience for each other.
5. A broad consensus emerged on the relevance of the following principles for designing government performance management systems in individual member countries. These principles then constitute the Generally Accepted Performance Principles (GAPP):

Principle	Brief Description
Principle 1	<p>The Government Performance Management System (GPMS) should have the following attributes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be based on a preceding agreement on the meaning of performance and the intent of a performance programme to produce tangible, salient efficiency and service improvements.</li> <li>Employ instruments such as a Performance Agreement (PA), Performance Contract (PC), Commitment for Results (CFR), and Results-Framework Document, (RFD), etc.</li> <li>Cover all aspects of organizational performance - Financial, physical, quantitative, qualitative, static and dynamic.</li> <li>Focus on 'managerial' performance as well as 'agency' performance.</li> </ol>
Principle 2	<p>A GPMS should use a performance measurement methodology that has the following objective and scientific attributes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There should be a connection (line of sight) between vision, mission, objectives, actions and success indicators (Key Performance Indicators-KPIs)</li> <li>Menus of KPIs should be drawn from, consultative approaches, web-based resources and other publications. KPIs should include measures of capacity, efficiency, efficacy, and outcomes or impacts.</li> <li>The objectives, actions and KPIs in the GPMS should be prioritised (i.e. weighted).</li> <li>There should be an explicit, prior agreement on what constitutes various levels of performance - such as excellent, good, average and poor levels of performance.</li> <li>A GPMS should be able to calculate a composite score (a weighted index) for managerial performance.</li> </ol>
Principle 3	The GPMS Should Cover the Whole of Government.
Principle 4	Accountability for Results and Delivery Should Trickle Down from the Top.
Principle 5	Accountability for Results and Delivery Should be Assigned Explicitly and Unambiguously to Specific Individuals in the Government.
Principle 6	A GPMS Should Have an Appropriate Incentive System that is Related to Departmental, Team and, Ultimately, Individual Performance.
Principle 7	The GPMS Should be Effectively Integrated with the Human Resource (HR) Systems in the Government.
Principle 8	The GPMS Should be Integrated with the Budget System.
Principle 9	The GPMS Should be Transparent, Ensuring Access to all Organisational Data

Principle	Brief Description
Principle 10	There Should be Appropriate Institutional Arrangements for Managing GPMS.
Principle 11	The Government Should Employ an Effective, Strategic Communications Strategy in All Phases of Implementing GPMS
Principle 12	The GPMS Should Have a Strong and Unambiguous Legal Foundation
Principle 13	Performance Measurement Should Serve Multiple, Overlapping Purposes
Principle 14	Performance Measurement Should be Citizen Focused / Citizen Centred.
Principle 15	Knowledge Management Should be an Integral Part of GPMS
Principle 16	Momentum, Once Built, Must be Maintained.

6. There is a general agreement among observers of public administration that today the performance of a government organization lies in the eyes of the beholder. There is therefore a need to generate consensus on the use of these GAPP principles for designing effective government performance management systems and to enhance trust on the performance rating of government organisations.
7. To facilitate better understanding of these GAPP principles, the participants agreed to create a community of practice and requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to suggest modalities for designing and operationalising it based on international experience.
8. Participants acknowledged the Platinum Jubilee celebrations marking the Queen's 70 years on the throne with joy, respect and affection.
9. Participants expressed their gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, for her invaluable leadership of the meeting and thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat staff for organising a fruitful and successful meeting.
10. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all the participants for taking time out from their busy schedules and for their important contributions to the meeting's discussions and outcomes.