



**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE ROLE OF  
COMMUNICATION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF NAMIBIA WITH SPECIFIC  
REFERENCE TO THE MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD  
WELFARE**

**By**

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**DISSERTATION**

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## **Declaration of Originality and Authenticity**

This dissertation is my original and authentic piece of work. I have duly acknowledged and referenced all material incorporated from secondary sources. It has not, in whole or part, been presented for assessment at this or any other University.

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## **Abstract**

A strategic plan is a management tool that is used to transform organizational objectives into actions. Public Service managers have a responsibility to ensure that strategic plans are developed to stir the organization in the desired direction. However, crafting the best strategy is not the end in itself but the ultimate result will only be realized once the plan is successfully implemented, hence the need for effective communication during strategy formulation and implementation.

The study focused on the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) and covered a cross section of senior managers, middle managers and junior employees. It involved exploring the impact of communication during strategy formulation and implementation, and investigating effective ways of communicating the formulation and implementation of strategic plans in the Public Service of Namibia.

The study was qualitative in nature whereby in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as instruments, with senior, middle and lower level employees of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in Windhoek. The Directorates that participated in the study from the MGECW are: Directorate of Child Welfare Services; Directorate of Gender Equality; Directorate of Integrated Early Childhood and Community Development and the Directorate of Administration and General Services.

The study followed an interpretivism research philosophy as it believes that the world and reality are not objective and exterior to the researcher, but are socially constructed and given meaning to people. All twenty-eight targeted respondents took part in the research study either by means of in-depth interviews or focus group discussions. All the participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique from a pool of 478 full time employees to serve as a representative sample of the Public Sector. The researcher personally conducted the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions while taking down notes.

The study finds that, effective communication is not taking place during strategic planning process, hence majority of the employees who participated in this study felt excluded in the whole process and contribute less toward the implementation of the plan. Moreover, the study reveals that only senior and middle level employees are involved in the strategic planning process while the juniors are left out due to a lack of proper

information dissemination. According to the respondents, employees serving in the AMC and MTI committees do not provide feedback to their fellow employees to enlighten them on the decisions and strategies made. It also became evident that, this exclusion led to juniors to have a negative attitude towards the strategic planning process and have a declining morale.

Hence, the study recommends that effective communication should be emphasized during strategic planning process to ensure stakeholders buy-in through sensitization exercises, e.g. regular feedback, workshops and interactive supervisor-subordinate discussions.

## **Key Words**

Strategy

Strategic Planning

Strategic Management

Communication

Balanced Scorecard

Performance Management System

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction and Background of the Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study focused on the role of communication during the process of strategic planning in the Public Service of Namibia with special reference to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The introductory chapter provides a brief background of the Public Service of Namibia, rationale, purpose and significance of the study as well as the research objectives.

### **1.2 Background Overview of the Strategic Planning Process in the Public Service of Namibia**

Following the attainment of Namibia's independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990, the Government of the Republic of Namibia established a Public Service which includes creating the necessary institutions and reintegrating the Namibian people who were fighting on opposite sides during the war for liberation. The reintegration process involved the employment of previously disadvantaged Namibians in the Public Service using an Act of Parliament passed for that purpose, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 1998, Act 29 of 1998. Affirmative action refers to a set of affirmative action measures designed to ensure that persons in designated groups enjoy equal employment opportunities at all levels of employment and are equally represented in the workforce of a relevant employer (Affirmative Action Act 1998, Act 29 of 1998). This process is being overseen by the Office of the Employment Equity Commissioner.

Since 1990, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which is tasked with the responsibility to oversee the administration of public services, has introduced various reform initiatives aimed at improving performance in the Public Service. The initiatives range from codes of conduct such as the Public Service Charter to Performance Appraisal Systems such as the Wages and Salaries Commission (WASCOM). WASCOM was implemented in 1997 as a tool to motivate employees by means of monetary rewards for improved performance based on the recommendations by respective immediate supervisors during performance assessment and appraisal over a cycle of a period of

twelve calendar months. The appraisal system soon fell victim to abuse as supervisors started recommending notches for undeserving employees based on personal relationships rather than on merit based on performance. Employees started to show discontent when they realized that colleagues they regard as disserving had been rewarded, sometimes even more than those employees that are regarded as high performers. This state of affairs demotivated employees and WASCOM was discontinued two years later after these shortcomings were during its implementation.

In 2004, the Office of the Prime Minister introduced a Performance Management System (PMS) as a management tool to monitor and motivate public service employees for better performance. Poister (2010:251) defines performance management as the process of setting goals for an organization and managing effectively to achieve those goals and eventually bring about the desired outcomes. The PMS Principles and Framework require all Government institutions to develop five-year strategic plans for their respective institutions. Strategic plans provide a critical link between national high-level initiatives and purpose and direction of public sector organizations. Strategic planning forms an important component of the performance management system in the public service of Namibia. In this context, the OPM has introduced the Performance Management System Principles and Framework (PMS P&F) to provide guidelines for the formulation of strategic plans which have become mandatory for all public service institutions. Public sector institutions in Namibia have for the past ten years been engaged in developing strategic plans that would allow them to set objectives geared towards the successful execution of their respective mandates.

As part of the public service of Namibia, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare developed its five-year Strategic Plan (2010-2014) which will serve as a management tool that would enable its functional components to collectively contribute to the attainment of Ministerial objectives in the execution of its constitutional mandate and in pursuit of the goals of Vision 2030. (NPC, 2004:9) defines Vision 2030 as a broad unifying vision that will serve to guide the country's five-year development plans which began with the First National Development Plan (NDP1) covering the period 1995-2000 through to NDP7 (2026-2030). It is further stated that Vision 2030 is a long-term vision for Namibia to become a prosperous and industrialized country, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability by the year 2030. The vision of

the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is to be the leading institution in ensuring sustained quality of life through equal opportunities for all people in Namibia.

Contemporary studies (Henry 2008, Kaplan and Norton 2004, Poister 2010) indicate that the strategic management process include strategy analysis, formulation and implementation. This process and some strategic planning models will be explored further in chapter two of this document.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is currently busy with the implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan in accordance with the Principles and Framework as adopted by the Office of the Prime Minister. Therefore, the researcher concentrated more on the process of developing the plan to explore the impact of communication during the process of strategic planning as well as the best practices in the development and implementation of strategic plans in the public sector.

### **1.3 Benefits of Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning stimulates thinking for organizations to make better use of their resources; assigns responsibility and schedules work; coordinates and unifies efforts; facilitates control and evaluation of organisational activities (accountability). Strategic planning also helps to create awareness of obstacles to overcome; identifies opportunities and threats; avoids the trap of linear thinking and facilitates progressive advancement of the organisational goals (Foundation for Community Association Research, 2001:6).

### **1.4 Statement of the Research Problem**

The 2010-2011 Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare was developed by senior and middle management with the assistance of an external consultant. The consultant provided expertise to the management team during the formulation of the plan. During informal interviews with junior staff members including first line supervisors, it was evident that they do not have adequate understanding of the strategic planning process that took place and how they fit in. It was also established during informal interviews with senior managers that the level of involvement by junior staff members was limited to general briefing meetings by senior management on the status of the draft document. No in-depth information sessions took place at department,

directorate or divisional levels to inform and sensitize staff members on the planning process as the process was going on. A number of staff members that were contacted during the informal interviews indicated that they felt excluded from the process of strategic planning.

According to Henry (2008:10), it is important during strategy formulation and implementation that everyone in the organization understands where it is going and how it will get there. Actual implementation of programs and projects starts at the lowest level in the organization and it is therefore important that staff members at this level understand the direction the organization is going in order to make sense out of their own contribution. This information prompted the researcher to investigate the effectiveness of communication during the implementation of the PMS process in the public service, especially when it comes to strategic plans formulation and implementation in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to ensure that strategic plans are successfully implemented.

### **1.5 Research Aim**

The main aim of this study is to explore the impact of communication on strategic planning in the Public Service of Namibia, identify possible gaps as well as exploring ways to mitigate the effects of the gaps identified to ensure the successful formulation and implementation of organizational strategies.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine the importance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector
- To assess the extent to which the employees in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare are aware of the Strategic Planning Process
- To determine the level of employees involvement in the Strategic Planning process and assess their experience of the process
- To explain the role of effective communication in the Strategic Planning process for the public sector
- To assess the morale and attitude of employees towards the Ministry's Strategic planning process.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The following questions were asked during the in-depth interviews with senior and middle managers as well as focus groups comprising of junior employees:

- What is the importance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector?
- Are employees in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare aware of the Strategic Planning Process?
- What are the level of employees' involvement in the Strategic Planning process and their experience of the process?
- What role does effective communication play in the Strategic Planning process?
- What is the morale and attitude of employees towards the Ministry's Strategic Planning process?

During the interviews with junior staff members in focus groups, the researcher ensured that the respondents were at ease by informing them that they were free to say anything around the topic and assured them that information obtained from the interviews would be treated with confidentiality. The researcher also informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the interviews at any point should they wish to do so. Questions were tailored and clarified to solicit their participation and quality input.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

Strategic planning has become the preferred approach in the public service in terms of steering the institutions towards achieving their goals. It is important that all staff members in the Ministry of Gender equality and Child Welfare understand the process and how their own contribution can help achieve the overall organizational goal. This study will help public service managers to identify the impediments to effective communication with regard to the formulation and implementation of strategic plans in the public sector and to apply remedial actions in the event of diversion from the adopted strategies. The study will also benefit employees by identifying effective strategies of communicating the strategic planning process to employees at the grass root level. It will help to create awareness among the employees on the impact of communication during strategy implementation and assist public service managers to effectively implement

strategies for better service delivery. The study also serves as a basis for future studies and a stepping stone for future researchers in the field of strategic management.

## **1.9 Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into the following Chapters:

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study**

This chapter provides a general introduction to the study. It focuses on the background of the study, significance of the study and statement of the research problem.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This Chapter focuses on the literature review around the topic based on the view points of various authors from different sources.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This Chapter deals with methodology and design, population and sampling procedure, data collection methods, research constraints and ethical considerations.

### **Chapter 4: Research Findings**

Deals with the analysis and interpretation of the research findings derived from data collected during interviews.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This is the concluding Chapter which focuses on the discussion of results, conclusions and recommendations. Provides

## **1.10 Conclusion**

This Chapter provided an overview of the background of the Performance Management System in the public sector with specific focus on communication during the formulation and implementation stages of strategic plans. The chapter also focused on the benefits of strategic planning, introduced the statement research problem and provided the significance of the study.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This Chapter provides definitions of strategy and strategic management. It also gives an overview of the strategic management process and highlights the effective ways of communicating strategy implementation. Causes of resistance to change by public service employees were also presented under this chapter.

#### **2.2 Strategy Defined**

Henry (2008:6) defines strategy as simply an outline of how an organization has planned to achieve its intended objectives. The goals that the organization has set itself are the objectives and the strategy is therefore a well worked out plan on how to reach those objectives.

A strategy is a plan or course of action for the allocation of scarce resources in order to achieve specified goals. It is a plan of action stating how an organization will achieve its long-term objectives. The concept of strategy comes from ancient Greeks. The word strategy comes from the Greek word *stratego*, which means ‘to plan the destruction of one’s enemies through the effective use of resources’ (Burns, 2009:247). Moreover, Mintzberg et al (1998b) as quoted by Burns (2009:254) stated that it is important that everyone in the organization shares a common view of its purpose and direction which informs and guides decision-making and actions.

A strategy enables an organization to balance its resources and capabilities to the needs of the external environment in order to achieve competitive advantage. There are three types of strategies namely corporate strategy, business strategy and functional strategy. Corporate strategy deals with the broader issues of what industries the organization wants to compete in, and the allocation of resources between its strategic business units. It is usually dealt with at senior management level. Business strategy deals with how an organization is going to compete within a particular industry or market. It is more about how an organization is going to achieve competitive advantage over its rivals. Functional strategy is basically responsible for the provision of support to business strategy and is the

responsibility of managers in the different functional units to ensure that their activities are geared to assist and complement the efforts towards achieving the business strategy (Henry, 2008:8).

Strategy can therefore be defined as those planned activities employed to achieve the objectives of the organization. It is a means to an objective, a vehicle that guides and takes the organization from its present position to a desired position.

### **2.3 Strategic Management Defined**

Coulter (2005:12) defines strategic management as “those organizational decisions and actions, in which organizational members analyze the current situation, decide on strategies, put those strategies into action, and evaluate, modify or change strategies”. Strategy implementation means putting the organization’s various strategies into action. It is about putting theory into practice. Strategy evaluation is the process of examining how the strategy has been implemented as well as the outcomes of the strategy. It is about taking stock of the actual implementation of the strategy and its effectiveness. Employees should monitor both the actual implementation of the strategy and the performance outcomes of strategies that have been implemented. If these don’t measure up to the expectations or strategic goals, then the strategy itself or the implementation process may have to be modified or totally changed. The discrepancies identified will inform the organization what action to take next if need be. All organization’s employees play an important role in strategic management. Although an organization’s top managers have several important strategic leadership responsibilities in the strategic management process, managers and employees at other levels throughout the organization also are important to the process (Coulter, 2005:12-14).

FCAR (2001:6) identified three main components of Strategic Planning namely plan development, plan execution and plan evaluation. Many of the functional areas within these components are similar in that all three require a team concept that is based on ensuring that members’ roles are defined, team members are educated about the process and that quality communication is used when interacting.

According to Poister (2010:249), Strategic management involves shaping, implementing, and managing an agency's strategic agenda on an ongoing rather than episodic basis, employing a purposeful incremental approach to strategy formulation. Henry (2008:8) states that strategic management involves strategy analysis, strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Henry (2008:21) identifies two broad perspectives of strategic management namely, the Design School and the Learning School. According to the Design School of thought, an organization needs to match its strengths and weaknesses with the needs of the competitive environment. The analysis of the external environment is used to identify opportunities and threats facing the organization, while the internal analysis of the organization identifies its strengths and weaknesses. Results of the analysis of the external and internal environments lead to the development of a number of different strategies from which the best strategy can be chosen and implemented. However, the Learning School argues that a rational approach to strategy fails to take account how strategy making occurs in reality. Henry (2008:22) states that Mintzberg and Waters (1985) suggest three approaches to strategy making namely intended, realized and emergent strategies.

Intended strategy is that strategy that an organization has deliberately chosen to pursue and is usually worked out in detail. It is a strategy that an organization has crafted after thorough analysis of its internal and external environments in order to address its weaknesses, build on its strengths, ready itself for the threats posed by the external environment and position itself to gain competitive advantage through the opportunity offered by the external environment. It should be noted that not all plans are implemented as intended. Changes in the environment may render certain strategies redundant, resulting in only a certain number of intended strategies implemented. The implemented strategies are known as realized strategies and those not implemented are called unrealized strategies. The Learning Schools argues that needs arise along the way prompting organizations to develop strategies responsive to and relevant to the needs of the time. These are called emergent strategies. According to Mintzberg and others, as quoted by Dransfield (2001:69), strategy emerges, adapting to human needs and continuing to develop over time.

The emergent school of thought considers strategy to develop incrementally, step-by-step, as organizations learn, sometimes through simple actions of trial and error. This school of

thought believes strategies are developed to meet the needs of the external environment and that strategy formulation is more likely a result of emergent strategies rather than based on detailed intentions (Fill 2009:289).

Organisations put strategies in place aimed at addressing issues identified during the initial stage of strategy formulation where the organization makes an objective analysis of its external environment. However, change in the external environment such as disasters influence the organization to reprioritize or abandon some of its objectives thereby making the development of new strategies necessary.

## **2.4 Strategic Planning Defined**

Strategic Planning is concerned with formulating strategy. Strategic planning takes a “big picture” approach that blends futuristic thinking, objective analysis, and subjective evaluation of values, goals, and priorities to chart a future direction and courses of action to ensure an organization’s vitality, effectiveness, and ability to add public value (Poister, 2010:246).

As indicated by FCAR (2001:4), strategic planning is not only about ensuring that an organization remains financially sound and be able to maintain its reserves, but it also projects where the organization expects to be in five, ten or fifteen years and how it will get there. It is a systematic planning process involving a number of steps that identify the current status of the organization, including its mission, vision for the future, operating values, needs (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), goals, prioritized actions and strategies, action plans, and monitoring plans. Strategic planning can be referred to as a process to establish priorities on what will be accomplished in the future and allows all components of the organization to pull together around a single plan for execution for the attainment of a common objective.

## **2.5 Strategic Management Process**

Strategic management is about analyzing the situation facing the organization, and on the basis of that analysis formulating a strategy and finally implementing that strategy. The three elements of strategy analysis, formulation and implementation are co-dependent and due consideration should be given to the implications each phase could have on the successful implementation of the strategy (Henry, 2008:8).

### **2.5.1 Strategy Analysis**

This refers to the analysis of the organisation's general and competitive environment and the evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses to ensure that it is strategically positioned to exploit the opportunities presented by the environment. This includes the consideration of other factors such as the possibility of political conflicts, natural disasters, economic changes and legal restrictions (Henry, 2008:9).

### **2.5.2 Strategy Formulation**

Dransfield (2001:7) states that "strategies enable an organization to build on its past, plan for the future and monitor ongoing progress". The following steps have been suggested:

- Identifying past organizational achievements;
  - Identifying the nature of the environment in which the organization operates and changes that are taking place in that environment;
  - Outlining the organization's current strengths, and weaknesses. Identify opportunities and threats;
  - Identify a chosen direction;
  - Choose a strategic plan to take the organization into the future;
- Monitor the progress of that strategy and make adjustments as and when necessary.

Plan Formulation is the first component of strategic planning and includes the following steps (FCAR, 2001:8):

- **Assessment of the organization's history and significant accomplishments.** This refers to the development of a history of the organization and the listing of important milestones that brought the organization to where it is today.
- **Assess the organisation's current status.** Determine the organisation's current status by looking at such things as the state of the facilities, infrastructure of the operations, the financial statements, the demographics of the population, and so forth.
- **Evaluate the organisation's current governance structure.** The operations of the Organisation should be reviewed to determine how responsibilities are assigned. Communication channels and hierarchy of authority also need to be identified.
- **Develop mission and vision statements.** The vision statement is the image or state to which the organisation aspires. It emphasizes the dream of where the organisation will be at a specific time. The mission statement is the organization's purpose stated in a memorable phrase.
- **Determine operating values.** These are the guiding principles that state the organisation's intentions and expectations. They are used to judge the organisation's policies and actions, as well as individual conduct. They include among others, values such as the importance of customers and customer service, commitment to quality and innovation, importance of honesty, integrity and ethical behavior, corporate citizenship, respect for the employee and duty the organization has to its employees of safety and protecting the environment.
- **Perform a needs assessment.** Determine the needs of the organization by analyzing the present state of the community, addressing any critical issues, and identifying the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This includes the determination of key result areas and customer expectations.
- **Determine critical issues.** List the critical issues faced by the organization that must be addressed for the organization to achieve its mission and vision, based on customer expectations. This includes listing the organizational attributes that promote the organization's ability to meet its mission and vision (strengths) and those organizational attributes that hamper the organization's ability to meet its mission and vision (weaknesses). It also includes listing those factors, internal and

external, that would enable the organization to meet its mission and vision (opportunities) as well as those that would hamper the organization from meeting its mission and vision (threats).

- **Define the roles of key players.** Define who will be the key people responsible for each aspect of the strategic plan.
- **Educate and communicate the plan.** Without education and communication, team members can neither perform their roles nor effectively interact with each other. Make sure that every player has the necessary documents and basic knowledge to perform effectively. Further ensure that each of the players communicate with each other. Provide updates as necessary and always ask for others' input. This would ensure that a potential problem is detected earlier than later. If a Strategic Plan calls for specific management participation, make sure it is spelled out in the management contract.
- **Listen and take notes.** During the strategic planning, it is important for all parties to actively listen and take notes in order to execute a quality strategic plan.
- **Develop and prioritize long-range goals.** Develop long-range goals to address the critical issues identified through the needs assessment, and then prioritize those goals.
- **Develop short-term goals and action plans.** Establish short-term goals and specific action plans along with scheduled completion dates.
- **Monitor the progress.** Establish a monitoring process to assess the progress made on both short-term and long-term goals.

The strategy formulation phase is important because it is at this stage that an organization crafts strategies that are responsive to the needs identified during the strategy analysis phase. It is important to note that communication plays a vital role in ensuring success of the plan and managers should therefore make sure that the plan is communicated properly.

Two broad perspectives on how a strategy is formulated were identified. The first perspective is that strategies can be planned by matching the organizational strengths and weaknesses with the needs of its external environment. This is known as the Design School. In contrast to the Design School of thought is the Learning School which regards strategies as emergent. Emergent strategies are defined as those strategies developed by

managers using their experience and learning to develop strategies that meet the needs of the external environment. Strategies can be emergent based on the change in the environment (Henry, 2008:21).

The strategic planning models shown above all follow a similar pattern of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. These strategic planning models can be used as guideline in the strategic planning process in public as well as private sector institutions.

### 2.5.2.1 Characteristics of a Useful Strategic Plan

According to FCAE (2001:11): “a useful strategic plan should be:

- **A set of priorities.** Setting priorities allows for the plan to be adjusted according to changing needs or resources.
- **Achievable, measurable, and time sensitive.** The plan should contain goals that are measurable and have deadlines.
- **Flexible and responsive to changing conditions.** The plan is a road map that may contain unforeseen detours such as unexpected crises, new opportunities, or change in resources.
- **Short and simple.** Keep it focused on the more important things to accomplish.
- **A unit, not a menu.** Everything in the plan needs to be accomplished.
- **The means to an end, not an end in itself.** The plan is a process by which it reaches its destination. It is not the destination.
- **Based on a three- to five-year period.** The strategic plan should be a living document that has a *one-year drop off and a new year added* so that it always covers the same time period”.

According to the Performance Management System’s Principles and Framework (PMS P&F), a strategic plan for the public service should include the following elements:

- **Situation analysis of the organization.** This helps the organization to identify and match its internal strengths and weaknesses with the threats and opportunities presented by the external environment.



- **Development of organizational mandate, vision, mission and value statements.** The organization needs to establish a clear mandate that illustrate its reason for existence. Through the situation analysis and a clearly stated mandate, the organization will be in a position to craft a vision which gives a picture of where it wants to be in a given time frame, i.e. five years.
- **Development of objectives based on strategic issues.** The strategic issues identified during the situation analysis phase helps the organization to develop strategies that would address the issues identified and steer the operations of the organization towards the realization of its vision.
- **Development of performance indicators and targets.** The strategic plan should also contain clear performance indicators as well as measurable and achievable targets.
- **Determination of financial and other resource requirements.** In order for the plan to be realistic, the financial, human and other resources that would be required and secured for the implementation of the plan should be highlighted.

#### **2.5.2.2 Balanced Scorecard**

Incorporated in the plan, is a Balanced Scorecard through which the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is evaluated from different perspectives namely the Financial Perspective, Learning and Growth Perspective, Internal Processes Perspective and Customers Perspective. A Balanced Scorecard provides a framework to illustrate how strategy links intangible assets to value-creating processes (Kaplan and Norton, 2004:30). It is through the balanced Scorecard that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is evaluated from different perspectives with the ultimate purpose of ensuring that strategies are effectively implemented and customer value is achieved. As opposed to the private sector where the ultimate goal is profit maximization, strategic planning in the public sector starts with the efficient deployment of resources towards strengthening human capacity in order to be able to manage internal processes and thereby ensuring customer satisfaction.

### **2.5.3 Strategy Implementation**

It was also stated in Henry (2008:303) that unless key individuals and groups, within and outside the organization, accept the rationale for strategic change, any proposed implementation will be suboptimal at best. Dransfield (2001:69) states that effective communication systems are needed in implementing strategy to make sure that everyone within the organization shares the vision, mission, objectives and values and has a good grasp of the strategy and how it relates to their own efforts. Multi-channel flows (in which information and ideas flow in all directions) of communication are helpful in creating a shared sense of ownership of corporate strategy.

Plan execution is the second phase of strategic planning; an organization puts its plan into action through the allocation of resources. This step has three components namely programs, procedures and budgets. Programs serve as blueprints for converting objectives into realities whereas procedures are the specific sequence of tasks required to complete the programs (FCAR, 2001:11). Once the strategy is developed, organizations should prepare budgets to fund programs. An organisation should be strategy-driven and not budget-driven.

If the plan development phase was put together well, then the plan execution phase is much easier. Teamwork, roles, communication, and education are important and apply to the plan execution phase. Periodic meetings should also be held to review progress on short-term goals and plans. Adaptability is crucial to the plan execution phase since all plans will have flaws. If the team members are not adaptable, there may be simple issues that will not be resolved in a reasonable manner and the community will suffer.

It is therefore important for management to ensure that there is constant education and communication on the plan so that all those involved are up to date with the direction the organization going and how their own contribution can help achieve organizational goals.

Plan review is required constantly to improve the plan and ensure its execution. Strategy or plan review is a very important element in strategic management because it provides managers and employees responsible for the implementation of strategy with an opportunity to determine whether the plan is working or some adjustments need to be

made. Plan review is a continuous process that takes place mostly during the implementation phase and helps managers to take informed decisions and adjust their strategies accordingly.

## **2.6 Role of a Consultant During Strategic Planning**

An external consultant or professional facilitator brings impartiality; provide answers to questions as an expert and the facilitation skills needed to balance differences of opinion. Organisations should be aware that consultants will take different approaches to strategic planning as no one right way exists. While hiring a consultant can be expensive, he or she will greatly accelerate the organisation learning curve and help to ensure that the strategic planning process will complete a full cycle.

The recruitment of a consultant pays off because managers and employees get time to pay more attention to their own areas of expertise and become meaningfully involved in the process when there is a neutral person facilitating the process.

## **2.7 Overview of Strategy Implementation in the Public Service of Namibia**

According to Dransfield (2001:61), strategy implementation involves the development of the strategies, policies and operational planning procedures to translate strategy into action steps and then carrying out the required actions. Strategies then need to be monitored and evaluated to ensure ongoing improvement. Effective leadership is important for implementing strategy in terms of the creation of strategies. Stakeholders of organizations seek some sort of directive leadership from senior managers. The responsibility of the senior management team within an organization is to create strategy (after a wide process of consultation) and then to set out the structures for implementing the strategy. Research indicated that the happiest, most productive employees are those who feel empowered at work. Good leaders need to coach and motivate and then leave people to get on with it in terms of the grass roots implementation of strategies.

In the public service of Namibia, Committees have been set up to deal with the implementation of strategies in the different institutions. These Committees are called Performance Management System Ministerial Implementation Teams and are responsible

for among others, the coordination of the formulation and implementation of strategic plans in the respective institutions.

## **2.8 Role of Communication in Strategic Planning**

Communication is a process of sending and receiving symbols with meaning attached to them. It is the meaningful of signs to establish social relationships. People see and hear from others meaningful information that helps form or change attitude and opinion. Communication is essential to the formation and re-formation of opinions with which people are concerned (van Niekerk, van der Waldt and Jonker, 2001:162). Communication can be defined as information transit which occurs because people in organizations need to receive and transmit information to coordinate their activities and execute their tasks. Communication seeks to change or confirm the receiver's knowledge, attitude or overt behavior in some predetermined manner.

Organisations, especially in the public sector, involve organizational hierarchies and the division of labour. Some people are superiors and some are subordinates. These roles strongly affect communication behavior. Supervisors are usually the information managers because they have decision-making and control functions allowing them to control information flows. They transmit messages to subordinates who must receive and obey the contents.

Organisations need sets of interconnected communication channels for receiving, processing and sending internal and external messages. They also need to receive information from their environment. Information can be managed, decisions made, feedback obtained and further corrections made through these information channels. Communication is also important in creating and maintaining an appropriate organizational climate and culture. Adequate information flow in an organization is a crucial factor when members assess their working climate. Employees must feel themselves to be in tune with the organisation. Believing that they are well informed and can communicate adequately with superiors and co-workers is important for employees Scwella, Burger, Fox and Müller (1996:228).

Strategic planning inevitably comes with change. The introduction of new strategies may affect the usual way of doing things in the organization. It interferes with individual and organizational cultures. In order to effectively manage the change and the cultures, Scwella et al (1996:229) states that there should be a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that includes cultural analysis and communicating new rule. The communication must have the following basic elements:

- The state of the organization and its task environment, and any other information of value to members
- A vision of what the organization is to become and how it will achieve this
- The progress of the organization in the areas identified as keys to realize the vision

Managers must create new stories, symbols and rituals to replace the old negative ones. This must be done quickly because delays will close the windows of opportunity for change. Public organizations and their managers also need the ability and skills to communicate appropriately with stakeholders in their specific environments.

## **2.9 Effective Ways of Communicating Strategy Implementation**

According to Marr (2006:185), implementing organization-wide Strategic Performance Management initiatives requires IT support to integrate data from disparate sources, enable organizations to analyze the data across all strategic elements, and most importantly allow collaboration and communication of the strategic logic and key objectives organization-wide.

It is important for public service managers to ensure that all staff members are continuously informed about the strategy to be adopted and how they fit in. It is important that management promote an organizational culture of shared values by ensuring that employees understand the vision and mission statements of the organization.

## **2.10 Impact of Effective Communication during Strategy Implementation**

Armstrong (1995:616) states that effective communication is required to achieve results in an organization. An organization functions by means of the collective action of people. Strategic planning is a process that requires constant flow of information, especially from the most senior ranks in the organization to the lowest level in the organization to ensure that there is awareness at all levels.

Henry (2008:10) stated that even the best formulated strategy in the world can fail if it is poorly implemented, hence the need for strategies to be effectively communicated and properly resourced. The need for change needs to be understood and properly coordinated with stakeholders inside and outside the organization. Although the leader of an organization will ultimately be responsible for a strategy's success or failure, their role should be to encourage and create an organizational culture that empowers managers to respond to opportunities. This will provide employees with confidence to try out new ideas and innovations without fear of reprisals. The successful implementation of a strategy in public institutions depends on how effectively the strategy was communicated to all the employees that would be involved in the implementation of such strategy.

Communication enables dialogue, and dialogue enables learning. It is important that employees understand the strategic direction and how they are able to contribute to the strategic mission of the organization Marr (2006:186). Moreover, Fills (2009:914) states that employees form part of a major stakeholder group in any given organization. The employees make a major contribution to the success of the organization through their individual contributions. They are responsible for the performance of the organization and their role has become increasingly recognized. Management should therefore take cognizance of the existence of this group of stakeholders and keep it informed on issues related to strategy implementation.

## **2.11 Causes of resistance to change**

Strategies are developed to bring about change in the operations of an organization. However, change is not usually something that is easily accepted by those affected. According to Dransfield (2001:83), resistance to change is an attitude or behavior that

reflects an unwillingness to make or support a proposed change. The introduction of a new strategy means change, and with every change come resistance. There are a number of possible barriers to change. Some of the barriers are organizational while some others stem from resistance among individuals.

### **2.11.1 Main Types of Organizational Barriers**

The following are some of the organizational barriers that a researcher can come across:

**Structural Inertia:** Over time organizational structure has developed set patterns and procedures. These have become the norm and are embedded in the culture of the organization. For example, in a hierarchical organization, people will have become used to top-down decision making and communication patterns. It will not be easy to shift these structural patterns. People naturally feel comfortable sticking to old familiar structures than taking risks with new structures. When a new strategy is introduced in an organization, the organizational structure is in most cases adapted to accommodate the new strategy. A change in the organizational structure can lead to redundancy of positions and rearrangement of functions.

**Existing Power Structure:** Power within an organization will be embedded in an established way of doing things. To change an organization and its existing strategies will inevitably involve a clash with the existing power structure. For example, in seeking to create a more democratic way of doing things in an organization, there will inevitably be clashes with those who resist losing autocratic powers. It is not uncommon that people in positions of power within the structures of the organization refuse to embrace new strategies with the fear that it will take away their powers.

**Resistance from Work Groups:** Over time, work groups develop cultures and patterns of doing things. These work groups will be hostile to new patterns which threaten existing relationships and work practices.

**The Failure of Previous Change Initiatives:** Within organizations there will be a collective memory of previous initiatives that failed and which led to bitterness, demotivation and waste of time. For example, the WASCOM was implemented in the

public service of Namibia but was abolished after shortcomings were detected during its implementation. This memory of previous failures may lead groups within an organization to develop a cynicism about the value of change.

### **2.11.2 Main Types of Individual Barriers**

The following are some of the individual barriers that the researcher came across:

**Fears about the Impact of the Change on Individuals and Families:** Change strategies may lead to downsizing and redundancies as well as to the change in working patterns which may well impinge on the job security and social relationships for individuals and families. For example, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has, as a means to take Government services closer to the people, embarked upon a process to decentralize public services in order to ensure that people have easy access these services. However, no matter how beneficial this strategy is believed to be, some individuals felt it could interfere with their lives and those of their families because once functions have been decentralized, some positions at the Central government might become redundant requiring individuals to move to other locations and thus disturbing their family life.

**Fears about having to Increase Commitment to the Organization:** New work practices and processes may require higher levels of commitment from individuals. The strategic planning approach that has been adopted by the public service of Namibia requires good planning of activities, financing such activities for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the plans are carried out effectively. Some individuals fear that it gives additional responsibilities and that their performance will be closely monitored.

**Fear of the Unknown:** Most people feel insecure when asked to face new situations which they are not familiar with. When people are not clear on what how the new strategy is going to work and how it is going to affect their positions or the way they do things, they are inclined to resist change. Strategic planning in the public service of Namibia is a component of the performance management system introduced to serve as a management tool for better performance. People who have not been properly orientated about the system and who are not so confident about their own performance will be more concerned



about their own future rather than seeing the potential the performance management system presents for the improvement of organizational performance.

**Tradition and Set Ways:** Where people's jobs have changed little over time, they may develop a conservative approach to work. They may see change as threatening their comfort zone and would therefore be hesitant to commit to the new strategy.

**Loyalty to Existing Relationships:** People often develop a fondness for existing management structures and patterns of doing things. They may resent being asked to change what they do or who they work with. It may be required that with the new strategy, some structural rearrangement should take place that will undoubtedly impact on existing relationships.

**Failure to Accept or Recognize the Need for Change:** When people feel that what they are already doing is successful, they will be reluctant to work in a new way, if they see that 'there is no need for it'. People tend to support the change and make meaningful contribution to the implementation of the new strategy when they are well informed of the necessity for change and the role they are expected to play in order to make collective contribution towards the successful implementation of the new strategy and the achievement of organizational goals.

## **2.12 Ways to Increase Employee Motivation to take Ownership of the Strategic Planning Process**

As stated in Smit and Morgan (2003:296), changes occurring in the rapidly changing environments in which the organization operates have a real effect on all aspects of the organization such as its management, the people involved, its culture, structures, processes, and so on. Change usually originates in the external environment, which then makes change within the organization necessary. This type of change makes enormous demands on management. Through the strategic management process, management could formulate strategies to ensure the survival and success of the organization within the environment in which it operates. When implementing strategies giving rise to change, management can adopt one of two methods. The first involves management deciding that change is necessary and explain to employees how the change will be implemented. The

second option is to involve employees themselves in implementing the change. The formulation and implementation of strategies result in change, and management must then manage that change. Public service institutions are therefore required to apply strategic management techniques especially during the implementation phase of the strategy.

Similarly, Dransfield (2001:85) indicated that there are a number of approaches that can be applied to deal with resistance to change. Such approaches include encouraging people to participate and to be involved so that they feel ownership for the change. Resistance to change can also be overcome through education and communication which involves getting the message across through discussions, meetings, presentations, workshops, newsletters, etc. people are most likely to give their support for the new strategy when they understand the need for change and what it involves. The approaches also include counseling and support which involves listening to people's views about the change, and the difficulties that it will present to them. Support involves finding ways to address the real needs of the individuals who feel threatened or unhappy about the change. In order to overcome resistance to change, the system should enable negotiation to take place where agreed incentives can be provided to encourage people to accept the change, e.g. pay bonuses for improved performance. Management can also use manipulation to influence people by persuading influential employees to convince others of the value of the change. Some individual employees or groups still remain reluctant even after all the approaches mentioned above have been exhausted. In such cases, coercion can be used to force the change on reluctant individual employees and groups in some cases by making them redundant or by threatening them with sanctions should they fail to comply.

### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter dealt with the definition of strategy and strategic management. It further gave an overview of the strategic implementation process in the public sector and also highlighted the effective ways of communicating strategy implementation. An overview of the impact of communication during strategy implementation was also highlighted as well as the causes of employees' lack of interest in strategic planning and ways to increase employee motivation.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the research methodology and procedures applied during the study. It presents the research design adopted by the researcher, the methodology used to collect data and description of the research population as well as the considerations that were taken in establishing the sample. The chapter also elaborates on the ethical considerations of the research and data analysis techniques applied.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997:29), qualitative research methodology refers to research which produces descriptive data. Leedy and Omrod (2001:148-149) states that qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purposes:

- **Description.** They can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people.
- **Interpretation.** They enable a researcher to gain insights about the nature of a particular phenomenon, and/or discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon.
- **Verification.** They allow a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalizations within real world contexts.
- **Evaluation.** They provide a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practice, or innovation.

The researcher used a qualitative approach based on an inductive process to collect data to assess processes, relationships, systems and people in relation to communication on strategy formulation and implementation in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. According to Saunders *et al* (2007:145), quantitative is predominantly used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as questionnaire) or data analysis procedure (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or uses numerical data. In contrast,

qualitative is predominantly used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as interview) or data analysis procedure (such as categorizing data) that generates or uses non-numerical data.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The research is based on the Interpretivism research philosophy. According to Wheeler and Carter (undated), the Interpretivist view believes that the world and reality are not objective and exterior to the researcher, but are socially constructed and given meaning by people. The researcher explored the feelings of respondents on the issue of communication in terms of strategic planning in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, hence the choice of the Interpretivism philosophy with Action Research strategy. Action research is an approach that assumes that the social world is constantly changing, and the researcher and the research itself are part of this change. Action research is a type of applied research designed to find an effective way of bringing about conscious change in a partly controlled environment (Wheeler and Carter, undated). The researcher applied the following data collection techniques:

- Review of the relevant literature
- In-depth Interviews
- Focus Groups

In addition to literature review of relevant material, data collection took the form of in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions. The semi-structured questions allowed the researcher to probe for detailed information where needed. The researcher designed questions aimed at finding out how employees felt about the change that was taking place in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare through the implementation of the five-year strategic plan, how much they knew about the strategic planning process and how they felt about the way change was communicated, amongst others.

### **3.4 Population and Sampling Procedure**

#### **3.4.1 Population**

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003:150) define population as “the full set of cases from which a sample is taken”. The research population for this study was the 478 employees of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The study was carried out at the Head Office of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Trust Centre, Windhoek.

#### **3.4.2 Sampling Procedure**

Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the amount of data needed by considering only data from a subgroup rather than all possible cases or elements. The researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select participants for the research. Saunders et al (2007:215) states that “simple random sampling involves the selection of a sample at random from the sampling frame using either random number tables or a computer”. The simple random sampling technique gives every member of the population an equal opportunity to be selected for participation in the research.

**Senior Managers:** The sample that the researcher selected consisted of ten Senior Managers at the level of Director and Deputy Director. The population for this group category was small and as a result, all Senior Managers were selected to take part in the study.

**Middle Management:** The sample selected was ten Middle Managers at the level of Chief Control Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Control Social Worker, Chief Development Planner, Chief Training Officer, Chief Community Liaison Officer, Chief Policy Analyst, Chief Accountant, Internal Auditor and Control Officer. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants.

**Junior Staff Members:** The sample also included two Focus Groups of not less than 4 participants per group of lower level employees drawn from different levels of the four directorates namely: Directorate of Child Welfare Services, Directorate of Community

and Integrated Early Childhood Development, Directorate of Gender Equality and the Directorate of Administration and General Services. Participants in the first Focus Group are on levels ranging from Social Worker, Community Liaison Officer, Gender Liaison Officer and Human Resources Officer. The second Focus Group consisted of participants at the level of Clerk, Assistant Accountant, Assistant Human Resources Officer and Driver. A simple random sampling technique was also used to select participants.

This diverse group was picked to provide input from all levels of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The reason for choosing these two categories as research samples in this case is for the researcher to collect data from participants from diverse work units and on the different post levels as well as to involve the hierarchy of the Ministry for their input during the interviews. The researcher targeted about twenty eight respondents.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Data was obtained through in-depth interviews recorded by note-taking and tape-recording. Data was also collected through focus group interviews using the same method.

In-depth interviews refer to unstructured interviews but more often refers to both semi-structured and unstructured interviewing. Semi-structured interview refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. With the unstructured interview, the interviewer typically only has an interview guide, which is basically a list of topics or issues to be covered and the style of questioning is usually informal (Bryman and Bell, 2007:213).

The focus group method is a form of group interview in which, in addition to the facilitator, there are several participants and the emphasis in the questioning is on a particular fairly tightly defined topic. Interviewees are selected because they are known to have been involved in a particular situation and are asked about that involvement. This particular method can be administered to individuals or groups (Bryman and Bell, 2007:511).

In-depth interviews or unstructured interviews are informal and the researcher chose this technique because it gives the researcher scope to explore in depth a general area of interest. There is no predetermined list of questions to work through when in-depth interviews are used, although the interviewer needs to have a clear idea about the aspect or aspects to be explored. The interviewee is given the opportunity to talk freely about events, behavior and beliefs in relation to the topic area (Saunders et al, 2007:312). In-depth interviews were conducted with 9 senior managers and 10 middle managers. The questions to this group of respondents were focused on examining the strategy used by the respondents to communicate strategy formulation and implementation, determining the perception of the respondents on the strategic planning process and to determine their assessment of impact of communication on the overall strategic planning process.

The researcher also conducted two Focus Group interviews with junior staff members within the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to determine their general feelings towards the strategic planning process, to determine their level of willingness to take ownership of the strategic planning process and to probe for possible ways to increase staff motivation to take ownership of the process.

According to Carson et al (2001) as quoted by Saunders et al (2007:339), a focus group interview is a group interview that focuses clearly upon a particular issue, product, service or topic and encompasses the need for interactive discussion among participants. Furthermore, Saunders et al (2007:339) cited Kruger and Casey (2000) stating that in comparison with other forms of group interview, individual group members' interactions and responses are both encouraged and more closely controlled to maintain the focus. Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic being discussed and they are encouraged to discuss and share their points of view without any pressure to reach a consensus.

Therefore, the researcher chose to select senior and middle management managers because their experience by virtue of their diverse positions of authority and by being members of the Administrative Management Committee meeting where most administrative decisions are taken. The participants in the focus groups were selected based on the representativeness of different non-managerial levels in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

### **3.6 Research Constraints**

The study follows a qualitative research approach, which mostly consists of semi-structured interviews with a target sample of about twenty eight employees. The researcher identified time as a constraint from the day the research proposal was approved. The researcher experienced time pressure caused by the need to conduct literature review, conduct interviews, write the report and submits it on or before 31 March 2011. Although cognizant of this constraint, the research is determined to aim for the March 2011 deadline.

The other constraint experienced by the researcher lack of urgency from the side of participants in granting appointments for interviews. However, the researcher had to good to the participants and kept reminding them until he interviewed most of them except 2 Deputy Directors and 1 Chief Development Planner with whom the researcher could not secure interviews due to their work commitments.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

In the context of research, ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in relation to the rights of those who become subjects of the study or are affected by it. The researcher needs to consider ethical issues throughout the period of the research and to remain sensitive to the impact of his work on those whom he approaches to help, those who provide access and cooperation, and those affected by the study (Saunders et al, 2003:129).

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare was approached prior to conducting research by way of a letter to the Permanent Secretary seeking permission to conduct research in the Ministry. The purpose of the study was explained in the letter to the Permanent Secretary and a written acceptance of the request was received from the Permanent Secretary. This research deals with direct questioning of respondents, a process during which some confidential information might be revealed. The researcher undertook to assure the respondents that the information provided during the study will be kept confidential. This was done through letters to respondents (Appendix B) and through ethics forms (Appendix D) signed by the respondents giving consent to be interviewed.



### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter dealt with the aims and objectives of the research as well as the methodology and design that guided the research. The study used a qualitative method and data was collected by means of in-depth and focus group interviews. Semi-structured questions were designed for both in-depth and focus group interviews. The target sample was twenty eight and twenty eight respondents took part in the study. However, only nine out of the targeted sample of ten Senior Managers took part in the study. Furthermore, the targeted sample of the two focus groups of four participants per group was exceeded by one respondent. The targeted sample of ten respondents from middle management was achieved. The researcher took cognizance of the ethical issues and permission was sought from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender Equality and child Welfare. The next chapter deals with the findings of the study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and interpretations of data collected through in-depth and focus group interviews. The data is presented in a descriptive form. The results are presented under thematic headings that guided the interviews and are in line with the research objectives. The interpreted data formed the basis of discussions upon which recommendations and conclusions were drawn and presented in Chapter 5. The results are further discussed in the context of the literature reviewed as well as the conceptual framework guiding this research to compare to what extent the findings align with the theories presented in the literature. The objectives of the research were:

- To examine the importance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector
- To assess the extent to which the employees in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare are aware of the Strategic Planning Process
- To determine the level of employees involvement in the Strategic Planning process and assess their experience of the process
- To explain the role of effective communication in the Strategic Planning process for the public sector
- To assess the morale and attitude of employees towards the Ministry's Strategic planning process.

#### **4.2 Research Data and Analysis**

As indicated in the previous Chapter, the targeted sample was a total of twenty eight participants comprising ten senior managers, ten middle managers and two Focus Groups of four participants per group. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the researcher, only nine out of the targeted ten senior managers could be interviewed. However, the total number of targeted sample did not change because one of the focus groups had one person more than it was initially planned. The analysis of the responses to the interviews is presented in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **4.3 Summary of Participants Interviewed**

The participants were drawn from the four directorates of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. These are: The Directorate of Child Welfare Services; Directorate of Integrated Early Childhood and Community Development; Directorate of Gender Equality and the Directorate of Administration and General Services. The participants were in four categories namely: Senior Managers, Middle Managers and two focus groups of which the first group consisted of first level supervisors and the second group consisted of lower level staff members. The Senior Managers category consisted of Directors and Deputy Directors. The Middle Management category consisted of a Control Social Worker, Chief Control Officer, Chief Development Planner, Chief Community Liaison Officer, Chief Policy Analyst, Chief Accountant, Chief Training Officer and Chief Human Resources Practitioner. The first Focus Group consisted of a Social Worker, Community Liaison Officer, Control Officer, Gender Liaison Officer, Senior Human Resources Practitioner and Internal Auditor while the second Focus Group consisted of a Clerk, Assistant Accountant, Assistant Human Resources Practitioner and a Driver.

Semi-structured questions were asked during in-depth and focus group interviews. It should be noted that although the same questions were applied to both individual and Focus Groups, the researcher took caution to ensure that respondents, especially in Focus Group 2 which had participants from the lowest levels in the Ministry, understood the questions asked. The researcher made efforts to clarify the questions until he was satisfied that the respondents have understood a particular question asked before taking notes as the group deliberated on the question and provided feedback. Data collected has been clustered under specific themes as shown in table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.1 Themes and Associated Questions**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Question (s)</b>
<b>Understanding of the strategic planning process</b>	Why is it important for Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies to have strategic plans in plans?
<b>Awareness of the strategic planning process</b>	How would you explain the level of awareness regarding strategic planning in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare?
<b>Experience and involvement in the strategic planning process</b>	Are you or were you at any point involved in strategic planning? If yes, state year and how you were involved. If not, why do you think you were not involved?
	Do you think it is important for staff members to be involved in the strategic planning process and why?
	What do you think should be done to ensure that staff members are motivated to take ownership of the strategic planning process?
<b>Role of communication in strategic planning</b>	How was the strategic planning process communicated to you?
	Are you aware of the existence of the communication channels to communicate the strategic planning process to staff members?
	Would you say that these channels are effective? In other words, do they achieve the desired results?
	In your view, what would be the most effective ways to communicate strategy formulation and implementation in the public sector?
	What impact do you think does communication have on strategy formulation and implementation?
<b>Morale and attitude towards the strategic planning process</b>	What is your opinion on the general feelings of employees towards the strategic planning process? Why do you think it is like that?

The responses by participants were clustered in the following five themes:

- Understanding of the strategic planning process
- Awareness of the strategic planning process
- Experience and involvement of employees in the strategic planning process
- The role of communication in strategic planning process
- The morale and attitude of employees towards the strategic planning process

#### **4.4 Rationale and Importance of Strategic Planning**

The purpose of this assessment was to determine the extent to which senior managers, middle managers and low level employees in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare understand the rationale behind strategic planning. The interviews commenced with the researcher assessing respondent's knowledge of the strategic planning process by asking why they thought it was important for Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies to have strategic plans in place.

##### **4.4.1 Definition of a Strategic Plan**

Respondents gave different definitions of strategic planning. The definitions are presented according to their levels of management in the Ministry as follows:

##### **Senior Managers**

A respondent defined the strategic plan as a tool that guides the Ministry in the direction it wants to go. Another respondent stated that the strategic plan is a document that informs the Ministry where it is and where it wants to go. The same respondent added that the strategic plan helps management to take informed decisions and avoid duplications. Another respondent stated that a strategic plan is a tool that guides a person in the direction that he wants to go. She said it guides people through the execution of programmes and activities. Another senior Manager mentioned that a strategic plan is important because it serves as a roadmap and provides leadership to achieve goals and mission. She further said that strategic plans are a means of communicating and interacting with the public.

## **Middle Managers**

A respondent mentioned that the strategic plan keeps people focused and helps them to set objectives. Most Middle Managers stated that strategic plans help organizations to reach their targets and achieve their objectives, adding that it is a roadmap for the Ministry to achieve its objectives. They mentioned that the strategic plan helps the Ministry to think about its role and to strategize on how to fulfill its mandate. They also stated that a strategic plan is a guideline on the way forward.

Some respondents commented that strategic plans help the Ministry to set goals and objectives that will contribute to the realization of its mission and vision. They said it helps the Ministry to do an organizational situation analysis and serves as a monitoring tool for the Ministry during the implementation of its programmes.

Most Middle Managers mentioned that a strategic plan is a guiding tool that directs the Ministry on where to go and how to get there. They stated that the strategic plan is a guide on how the Ministry can efficiently and effectively employ government resources in order to achieve its strategic objectives and ultimately achieve and realize its mission and vision.

## **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Group 1 fall directly below the middle managers. A respondent in this group mentioned that strategic plans guide Ministries to achieve their goals and objectives. They added that through strategic planning, broad objectives are narrowed down to specific objectives with time frames attached. The respondents in this focus group also added that a strategic plan helps the Ministry during the review process to track progress in programme implementation.

Respondents in focus group 2 are employees in entry level positions drawn from different directorates in the Ministry. Most respondents in this group stated that a strategic plan makes work easier because it gives direction for what should be done and what should not be done. Another respondent added that without a strategic plan, the Ministry will not have a vision and that the strategic plan also shows the way where the Ministry is going.

Judging from the responses of the three categories of respondents, they all know the rationale behind strategic planning. All three categories of respondents indicated that a strategic plan is a guiding tool and roadmap for the Ministry towards the achievement of its objectives.

#### **4.5 Awareness of the Strategic Planning Process**

The purpose was for the researcher to determine the level of awareness on strategic planning among employees of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The participants were asked to explain how they perceived the level of strategic planning awareness in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The responses to the question are presented in three different categories, namely: Senior Managers, Middle Managers and Focus Groups.

##### **Senior Managers**

A respondent mentioned that awareness regarding strategic planning is high in his Directorate, attributing it to his own educational background. He pointed out that people in other Directorates have different understanding of strategic planning because there were no workshops held through which all employees could be taken through so that they could know what strategic planning is all about. Another respondent stated that awareness in the Ministry differed from person to person because not everyone in the Ministry is involved in the strategic planning process. The respondent further said it also depends on the level of the position a person occupies in the Ministry because selection of members to serve on committees that deal with strategic planning was also determined by the positions occupied by individuals. The same respondent added that some people in the Ministry may not be able to say what a strategic plan is. Another respondent mentioned that awareness is high at Senior and Middle Management level but low at lower levels in the Ministry. She said as far as employees in the regions are concerned, only Middle Management level employees are involved in strategic planning.

Some respondents pointed out that the process was not introduced gradually so that everyone could understand. They stated that members of the Administrative Management Committee meeting started to understand as time went by, but junior staff members,

especially those in the regions do not have an in-depth understanding of the strategic planning process. They commented that information needs to be passed to regional officers so that they could also transmit the information further down to their subordinates.

### **Middle Managers**

Most respondents felt the Ministry has made positive strides in terms of awareness regarding the strategic planning process. They said the Ministry has planning review meetings where information on strategic planning is shared. They added that employees were gradually becoming acquainted with the strategic plan document. However, the respondents pointed out that a lot still needs to be done to get information to the people in the Ministry, especially those sitting at the lower end of the hierarchy.

Most respondents also stated that there was awareness at Management level but most people at the lower levels were not aware of the strategic planning process. The respondents felt there was a need to do more to sensitise people on the strategic planning process through workshops. Some of the respondents mentioned that from Middle Management downwards, awareness was low. They added that some people were not even aware of the mission and vision statements of the Ministry. Another respondent stated that awareness is low because some managers do not see the importance of strategic planning. However, another respondent felt most people were aware and that they understood the strategic planning process.

### **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Group 1 stated that strategic planning is only known by a certain group of people that deal with the strategic planning. They mentioned that those people dealing with the strategic plan do not brief their colleagues or subordinates on developments regarding strategic planning. The respondents remarked that they saw the strategic plan document but needed someone to explain it to them and therefore proposed that Directorates should hold meetings for the purpose of sharing information.



Respondents in Focus Group 2 stated that people in junior positions were neither involved nor informed and their level of awareness was therefore very low. They mentioned that only managers had good knowledge of the strategic planning process.

In summary, most Senior Managers in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare stated that awareness of the strategic planning process in the Ministry was low especially at junior levels. The Middle Managers felt that although the Ministry has made some strides in terms of awareness through platforms such as review meetings, a lot still needs to be done to ensure that information flows to all the people in the Ministry. The Focus Groups mentioned that awareness in the lower ranks was very low, attributing it to lack of information. They felt that people in the lower positions were not involved and were also not provided with information that could help them understand the process.

#### **4.6 Experience and Involvement of Employees in the Strategic Planning Process**

In order to determine participants' level of experience in strategic planning, the researcher asked the participants whether they were at any point involved in strategic planning, what their thoughts were on the involvement of staff members in strategic planning and what they thought ought to be done to ensure that staff members are motivated to take ownership of the strategic planning process.

##### **4.6.1 Respondents' Experience in Strategic Planning**

The respondents' answers on the question of experience in strategic planning have been recorded and are presented below according to the four different categories of respondents:

##### **Senior Managers**

Most respondents indicated that they have been involved in strategic planning since 2004 when they were part of the management team that formulated the first strategic plan of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Another respondent stated that she had been involved in strategic planning since 2008 when she joined the Ministry at the time when the Ministry was reviewing its strategic plan.

All respondents confirmed that they have been involved in the strategic planning process either by serving as members of the Performance Management System's Ministerial Implementation Team (PMS MIT) or through the fact that they were obliged as managers to plan for their respective divisions.

### **Middle Managers**

All respondents indicated that they have been involved in strategic planning. Most of them have been involved since 2004 and a few have been involved since 2008 through their participation as members of the Administrative Management Committee meeting. Another respondent mentioned that he was involved in the strategic planning process at an advanced level when he was seconded to the National Planning Commission to work on the Millennium Challenge Account, a United States of America development programme to developing countries. Another respondent stated that he was involved in strategic planning and was tasked with making sure that the strategic plan of the Ministry was harmonized with the balanced scorecard.

### **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Group 1 mentioned that they were only involved at the brainstorming stage of the strategic planning process. In Focus Group 2, all respondents indicated that they were never involved. They added that it was why things are always difficult for them because they were never involved.

In summary, all Senior Managers and Middle Managers indicated that they have been involved in strategic planning as members of the Administrative Management Committee and for some of them, as members of the MIT. Respondents from Focus Group 1 indicated that they were involved at the brainstorming stage while Focus Group 2 said they were never involved.

#### **4.6.2 Staff members' Involvement in Strategic Planning**

The researcher wanted to find out from respondents whether strategic planning should be limited to certain structures after which the rest of the employees would then just be asked to implement or whether the process should involve everybody in the Ministry, and to what extent.

##### **Senior Managers**

All respondents indicated that there was a need to involve all staff members in the strategic planning process. A respondent stated that in his Directorate, all staff members have been involved through regular staff meetings at Directorate level to update them on the strategic planning process. Another responded pointed out that people at the lower end needed to be sensitized through feedback meetings by those who attend meetings and training related to the strategic planning process. They felt it would foster ownership of the process by staff members. Most respondents stated that staff members need to be involved because they are the people that implement programmes. However, another respondent mentioned that she had been involved in strategic planning for seven years and that she felt it could have been better if the strategic planning process been introduced gradually by having briefing meetings at Directorate level instead of one big meeting. She said it could help people to understand the plan better. Another responded added that staff members would only be able to implement programmes effectively if they understand the objectives set out in the plan.

##### **Middle Managers**

Some respondents felt that staff members need to be involved because they are the ones that will be expected to implement the plan. They stated that it would be beneficial if staff members could be involved from the beginning in order to understand the plan and for them to know what is expected from them. Another respondent added that staff members will take ownership if they are involved.

## **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Group 1 mentioned that it was important to involve staff members because they are the implementers of the programmes. Similarly, respondents in Focus Group 2 stated that staff members need to be involved because they are the ones who on the ground and know what the problems are. They added that staff members are the ones that face the challenges and that sometimes managers do not know what it takes to get the job done.

Some Senior Managers felt staff members were well informed and involved. However, some respondents stated that there is a need to sensitize people, especially those in the lower ranks. Regular briefing meetings have been proposed. Middle Managers also felt that in order for staff members to take ownership of the process, they need to be involved. The Focus Groups also indicated that it was important for staff members to be involved.

### **4.7 Ways to Motivate Staff Members**

The researcher wanted to know if the respondents could think possible ways that can be used to motivate staff members to take ownership of the strategic planning process.

#### **Senior Managers**

A respondent stated that there was a need to talk to staff members who are not yet positive about the plan and explain to them the set objectives and intentions of the plan. Another respondent mentioned that people need to be involved from the beginning. She added that achievements should be celebrated and the language used in the strategic plan and the process should be simplified. Another respondent remarked that there should be clear vision, mission and goals for the Ministry, and individual roles must be clarified. Another respondent felt staff members would be better motivated if the strategic planning process was introduced in smaller groups so that each staff member could understand the process. Most respondents stated that people need to understand what strategic planning is all about and what it aims to achieve. They mentioned that it was important for people at all levels to receive training as a form of awareness raising in order to eliminate the negative perceptions and attitudes that people have about the strategic planning process.

Another respondent stated that the Public Service Commission needs to look at things such as promotions even if it means changing the law. Most of the respondents stressed the importance of involvement and participation of all staff members. Another respondent mentioned that the language used in the strategic plan is complicated and at a high level and should therefore be simplified. The respondents stated that the draft strategic plan document should be made available to staff members so that they can understand it and thereby fostering ownership.

### **Middle Managers**

A respondent stated that information about the strategic planning process can be disseminated to staff members through the development of information education communication material. She said there should be regular supervisor-subordinate consultations and recognition for exceptional performance. She also mentioned the need for leaders to lead by example and portray a positive approach towards the strategic planning process. Another respondent stated that the way to go was to invest in training for staff members to know what a strategic plan is and how they fit in. Respondents mentioned that people would be motivated if they were involved from the beginning. Another respondent stated that there is a need for increased awareness because if people do not understand the strategic planning process, they will not have interest. She added that managers need to explain the plan in a simplified language so that people can understand. The same respondent proposed that workshops be organized specifically for awareness raising and detailed explanation of the plan. The respondents mentioned that involvement of staff members from the start can create a sense of ownership to the staff members and is therefore important.

### **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Group 1 stated that managers should encourage their staff members to get involved. In focus group 2, respondents also expressed the need for staff members' involvement in the strategic planning process. They mentioned that when people are not involved, they do not feel part of the process. They felt managers need to change their style and realize that everybody in the Ministry is important and can give input regardless

of their position. They added that involvement will also contribute to learning and personal development of staff members.

To summarize, Senior managers Middle Managers and respondents from the Focus Groups felt that the best way is to get people involved. However, a respondent from Senior Management stated that the goals, mission and vision statements of the Ministry should be clarified to staff members. A respondent from Middle Management stated that it was important for the Ministry to develop information education communication material in order to facilitate faster and effective information dissemination.

#### **4.8 Role of Communication in Strategic Planning**

The researcher asked the respondents some questions aimed at finding out what role communication plays in the strategic planning process. The responses provided by the respondents are presented under this theme.

##### **4.8.1 Form of Communication**

The researcher wanted to know which forms of communication methods were used in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to communicate strategy especially during strategy formulation and implementation. In order to answer that question, the researcher asked the respondents to explain how the strategic planning process in the Ministry was communicated to them. Their responses are presented hereunder.

##### **Senior Managers**

Respondents indicated that communication related to strategic planning was mostly done through the PMS MIT and the Administrative Management Committee (AMC) meeting. They added that internal memoranda, emails and letters were also used to disseminate information on the strategic planning process.

## **Middle Managers**

Most respondents mentioned that the strategic planning process is usually communicated through the AMC meeting. Few respondents stated that they have attended workshops on strategic planning. Some respondents mentioned that they had face to face briefing sessions with their supervisors.

## **Focus Groups**

Respondents in focus group 1 mentioned that they did not know about the document until they saw it on people's desks. Respondents in focus group 2 also indicated that they only came to know about the planning process when managers were out of the office and they were told that they had gone to attend strategic planning meetings.

At Senior and Middle Management level, strategic planning information is shared at the AMC meeting. It is also shared through emails, letters and memoranda. Respondents in the Focus Group felt excluded from the process.

### **4.8.2 Communication Channels**

The purpose of this section was to establish which communication channels were in place through which strategic planning is communicated in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

## **Senior Managers**

Most respondents indicated that information on strategic planning is usually shared at the AMC meeting. Another respondent stated that in addition to the AMC, there are other platforms such as the Decentralisation Committee and the MIT.

## **Middle Managers**

Respondents mentioned that strategy is communicated through the top-down structures of the Ministry such as the AMC meetings, Directorate Management meetings and Divisional Meetings. The respondents added that there are other platforms such as Annual

Work Plan review meetings as well as Decentralization Committee meetings where matters related to strategic planning are discussed.

### **Focus Groups**

In Focus Group 1, respondents stated that strategy is communicated through the top-down structures of the Ministry. Most of the respondents indicated that they do not know about the MIT. Respondents in Focus Group 2 mentioned that they do not know anything about the structures that exist and have never heard of the MIT.

It emerged from the responses that most communication on strategic planning takes place at AMC and MIT meetings.

#### **4.8.3 Effectiveness of Existing Channels of Communication**

In trying to determine the effectiveness of the channels of communication in place, the researcher asked the respondents whether they thought the channels were effective.

### **Senior Managers**

A respondent mentioned that the existing channels of communication were effective to a certain degree but added that there were gaps because it left out junior staff members who are always excluded when it comes to information dissemination. Another respondent felt the channels were effective while another respondent stated that she was not sure how staff members at the lower end in the Ministry get the information about the plan. She added that the MIT was still relevant in coordinating information related to strategic planning. Most respondents mentioned that the channels were relatively effective because the Ministry managed to finalise its strategic plan. The respondents pointed out that a lot still needs to be done in terms of improving communication to lower levels in the Ministry. They also mentioned that there is a gap between management and those in the lower levels and that they would want to see people at regional and constituency levels involved.



## **Middle Managers**

Some respondents stated that the existing communication channels were somehow effective. However, they pointed out that they still had a problem communicating downwards. Most respondents mentioned that the communication channels were not so effective because people are different and it depends on how supervisors communicate with subordinates. They also pointed out that in the case where email was used to communicate the strategy, not everybody in the Ministry has access to email and as a result, the information does not reach all intended recipients. Another respondent stated that the strategic planning process was introduced at a fast pace and that there is a need for more information dissemination. She further stated that as head of a sub-division, she has never discussed strategy with her subordinates and she felt it is a situation that needs to be addressed. Respondents in this group felt that the communication channels were not effective because people at the lower levels, including clerks and chief clerks do still not understand the strategic planning process. Another respondent stated that there is a need to strengthen the MIT because the members on that committee have other responsibilities that affect their performance as members to the MIT.

## **Focus Groups**

Respondents in Focus Groups stated that the communication channels were not effective in communicating strategic planning. They pointed out that managers do not brief their staff members on the progress and new developments regarding strategic planning.

To summarize, most Senior and Middle Managers stated that the existing communication channels were somehow effective. Respondents from the Focus Groups felt the communication channels that are in place were not effective because information does not reach everybody in the Ministry.

#### **4.8.4 Effective Ways to Communicate Strategy Formulation and Implementation**

In order to find solutions to possible gaps identified during the assessment of the existing channels of communication in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, the researcher probed the respondents on what the possible effective ways could be to communicate strategy formulation and implementation.

##### **Senior Managers**

Respondents stated that one of the most effective ways to communicate strategy would be to make sure that everybody is involved from the beginning. They also pointed out that for the sake of raising awareness, workshops, meetings, brochures, supervisory visits, and media can be used as effective tools to communicate strategy.

##### **Middle Managers**

Respondents mentioned that the strategy will be well communicated if the MIT could coordinate the flow of information between the different levels in the Ministry. They believe that the MIT can do better by engaging people in their respective Directorates and in conjunction with the Ministerial Training Committee to facilitate training that would make staff members understand what the strategic plan is all about. The respondents also pointed out that supervisors need to play their role in ensuring that their subordinates are involved. They also mentioned that in order to effectively communicate strategy, the use of emails and internal memoranda should be encouraged to update staff members on the progress and new developments concerning strategic planning in the Ministry. The respondents also suggested that monthly staff meetings can be effective platforms to disseminate strategic planning information.

##### **Focus Groups**

Respondents expressed the importance of communication. They stated that if the strategy is not communicated properly, the implementation might fail but if it is well

communicated and everybody understands the plan, people will be motivated to work towards the common goal and thereby ensure the success of the plan.

In summary, senior Managers felt it is important to involve everybody in the strategic planning process. Middle Managers stated that the MIT and the Ministerial Training Committee should play their role in coordinating strategic planning matters and to facilitate relevant training respectively.

#### **4.8.5 Impact of Communication on Strategy Formulation and Implementation**

In response to the question by the researcher on what impact communication has on strategy formulation and implementation, the participants responded as indicated below:

##### **Senior Managers**

A respondent stated that communication raises awareness and that the lesser information is communicated to the people, the more alienated they become. He also stated that people become more comfortable, productive and take ownership when they are involved in the strategic planning process. Another respondent pointed out that if effective communication does not take place to ensure involvement of the people and their understanding of the strategic planning process, those expected to implement programmes will not know the need for their implementation. Another respondent mentioned that if the strategy is not properly communicated, people will not know what is expected from them and this may lead to failure in the implementation of the relevant programmes.

##### **Middle Managers**

Most respondents stated that effective communication has a positive impact on strategic planning because people are kept informed and know what is expected from them.

## **Focus Groups**

Respondents mentioned that communication has an impact on strategic planning because if people are not informed about the changes taking place, they will not know what to do and programmes will therefore not be implemented as would be expected.

The common answer that came from all three categories of respondents is that the successful implementation of programmes depends to a large degree on the manner in which the strategy was communicated within the Ministry.

### **4.9 Morale and Attitude of Employees Towards the Strategic Planning process**

Respondents that participated in the study gave the following views regarding the morale and attitudes of employees towards the Strategic Planning process in the Ministry:

#### **Senior Managers**

A respondent stated that all staff members understand the strategic planning process. He said the problem lies with the implementation. Other respondents felt the majority of the employees are positive about the strategic planning process. Some respondents stated that staff members have different feelings towards the strategic planning process because of the lack of understanding to some staff members. As such, some staff members are embracing the process while some are saying it is an unnecessary process. The respondents added that those that are negative are those that want to keep the status quo simply because they do not understand the process and therefore do not understand why there is a need for change.

#### **Middle Managers**

Some respondents believe people have different feelings about the process because they do not know what will come out of the planning process. They are afraid of the unknown. They stated that people also have different levels of understanding depending on the level of involvement in the process. They pointed out that managers understand the process and

therefore see it as a positive initiative while staff members who do not understand the process see it as another project waiting to fail.

### **Focus Groups**

Respondents in focus groups said staff members could not take ownership of the process because they were not involved. Respondents also mentioned that people were frustrated because they did not really know what was going on.

### **4.10 Conclusion**

Although the majority of staff members are said to be positive about the strategic planning process, the non-involvement of staff members at all levels and the resulting lack of understanding of the strategic planning process has led to frustration and lack of interest to take ownership of the process.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter provides interpretation of the findings presented in Chapter 4 with the aim to respond to the central questions raised in Chapter 1. The focus is on the views of the respondents interviewed for this research project. These views are presented in three broad categories of: discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

#### **5.2 Discussion of the Results**

The findings of the research are discussed and built around the following themes generated from the research questions.

##### **5.2.1 Importance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector**

The majority of the respondents stated that a strategic plan is important because it serves as a guiding tool and a roadmap for the Ministry to achieve its objectives, mission, and vision. Apart from being an effective tool for the allocation of government resources, it also serves as an important tool for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of programmes. Another important aspect mentioned by the respondents is that the strategic plan is a means of communicating and interacting with the public. These statements by the respondents are in concurrence with the statement by Poister (2010:246) that strategic planning is about futuristic thinking, objective analysis, and subjective evaluation of values, goals and priorities to determine the future direction of an organization.

This ability by all four categories of respondents to provide a clear definition and importance of strategic planning serves as evidence that most staff members in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare have an understanding of strategic planning and its importance to the Ministry.

### **5.2.2 Awareness of the Strategic Planning Process**

Education and communication is an essential ingredient for success during the formulation of the plan. Without education and communication, staff members cannot perform their duties or interact effectively with each other. It is important that every staff member has the necessary documents and basic knowledge to do their work effectively. It is also important for managers to ensure that staff members interact with each other. In order to ensure that potential problems are detected earlier than later, updates should be provided as necessary and input should be solicited (FCAR, 2001:8).

The Ministry of Gender Equality has made some progress in terms of raising awareness for the strategic planning process, especially at Senior and Middle Management levels. However, awareness in the lower ranks is very low and it is attributed to the fact that the process was not introduced gradually in order for the people to understand it. The absence of tailor-made workshops and Directorate staff meetings to sensitize employees as well as the non-involvement of junior employees in the strategic planning process has also contributed to their ignorance. The results of the interviews indicate that junior employees felt excluded from the strategic planning process.

According to the respondents, much still need to be done to sensitize employees at low levels of management on the importance, application and implementation of strategic plans for corporate organisation. They suggested that regular workshops, short courses and seminars, one-on one discussions with Directorate's heads with employees, and MIT committee should visit individuals Directorates at least once a month to sensitize employees on the need to acquaint themselves with the plan.

### **5.2.3 Experience and Involvement of Employees in the Strategic Planning Process**

On the question of whether staff members had experience in strategic planning, the evidence provided by the results of the interviews is that majority of the staff members were involved at different levels. Senior and Middle managers were fully involved not only because they have to plan for their respective Directorates and Divisions respectively, but also because they were members of the Administrative Management

Committee. Lower level employees' participation was limited to brainstorming sessions or never at all.

Staff members in lower positions in the Ministry are not involved in the planning activities but would need to be updated as the implementers of programmes emanating from such planning. It is important that effective communication systems are put in place during implementation of strategy in order to make sure that everyone within the organization shares the vision, mission, objectives and values, and has an understanding of the strategy and how they relate to it, (Dransfield, 2001).

In terms of motivation, there is a need for managers to talk to and seek buy-in from staff members who are not yet positive about the strategic planning process. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure, after deciding on a strategy, that the objectives and the intentions of the plan are explained to staff members in a language they understand and that they are involved in implementing such change. The implementation of the strategy should be a gradual process and relevant training should be provided to staff members at all levels to ensure understanding of the plan among staff members. Things such as promotions need to be considered in an effort to motivate staff members. The development of information education material will help to disseminate strategic Planning related information to the employees.

#### **5.2.4 Role of Communication in Strategic Planning**

The purpose of this section was for the researcher to determine how strategy is communicated in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. It became evident from the results of the study that strategy related information is mostly communicated through the Administrative Management Committee and the Performance Management System Ministerial Implementation Team. Emails, memoranda and letters are basically used to invite the relevant members of the different committees to meetings. Therefore, staff members who are neither member of the AMC nor of the MIT are usually left out. Those who attend the meetings do also not come back to brief them. This situation is contrary to Scwella et al (1996:228) who stated that it is important to the employees when they believe that they are well informed and can communicate adequately with superiors and co-workers.



### **5.2.5 The Morale and Attitude of Employees Towards the Ministry's Strategic Planning Process**

Regarding the question of staff morale and attitude towards the strategic planning process in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, the results of the study indicated that staff members have different reactions to the strategic planning process. The study reveals that, staff members that are at management level and have been exposed to the strategic planning process understand it and are positive about the process. However, the study also indicates that those who do not understand the process are more inclined to maintain the status quo. As stated under 2.11.2 in Chapter 2, there are individual barriers that contribute to the resistance to change such as tradition and set ways of doing things, loyalty to existing relationships and the fear of the unknown. The latter is the most common and is mostly contributed to situations where the group or individual lacks adequate information on the proposed change.

## **5.3 Conclusions of the Research Study**

The first conclusion from the side of the researcher is that strategic plans are crucial documents for any organisation both in the private and public sector. It serves as a guide and roadmap for an institution in pursuit of its stated objectives. However, for those responsible for the implementation of the programmes emanating from the planning process, it is one thing knowing what a strategic plan is and it another thing knowing the content of strategic plan. People should be able to understand the strategic plan and relate to it in terms of their own activities.

It is further concluded that, less efforts is made by the Ministry to sensitize junior staff members on the process of formulation and implementation of the strategic plan, especially employees at lower levels.

On the involvement and experience of staff members on the strategic planning process, it is concluded that senior and middle level managers are fully involved in the process and contributed toward the formulation of the plan. However, it became evident that staff members at low ranking positions have less exposure to the process, hence could not provide more information about the process. This, according to the respondents, will

discourage them from making positive contribution towards the attainment of the Ministry's goals.

It is also concluded that staff members who are not part of the AMC or MIT committees are in most cases not adequately involved and informed about the process. It is further evident that only those who are part of the said committees are knowledgeable about the process. This situation will not help the Ministry to achieve its set goals as some of the staff members will not deliver their service in conformity with the stated goals or tasks in the plan. In addition, staff members involved in the two committees do not brief others on the decisions made regarding the strategic plan.

Moreover, when it comes to the morale and attitudes of employees towards the strategic planning process, the non-involvement of staff members, especially junior staff members has led to some staff members not taking ownership of the strategic planning process.

From this study, a conclusion is reached that, for any organisation to succeed in the execution of its mandate, it needs to have a strategy that serves as a roadmap toward the realization of its objectives. This strategy must be effectively communicated and explained to all staff members in the organisation.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- All government institutions are expected to have strategic plans in place as guiding tools for their operations and ensure that such plans are implemented successfully to achieve their objectives.
- The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should create awareness among its staff members, especially at lower levels through regular workshops, short courses and seminars, one-on-one supervisor-subordinate discussions. As part of its coordination function, the MIT committee should have regular contact with Directorates with the purpose of facilitating the dissemination of information related to strategic planning.

- Senior and middle level managers should ensure that junior staff members are involved or adequately informed in the strategic planning process to be able to contribute effectively to the process.
- The Ministry should motivate staff members to align their performance to the planned goals in the strategic plan 2010-2014. This can be done by sending junior staff members to attend workshops, seminars or conference that will enhance their understanding.
- Effective communication should be maintained at all levels when communicating strategy.
- Communication tools at the disposal of the Ministry should be put to their optimum use to ensure that strategies are properly communicated.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The current study reveals that strategy communication channels need to be re-emphasized in all government offices for the benefit of the society. With that, the researcher is of the opinion that strategic planning process must be effectively communicated to all employees at all levels regardless of their position in the Ministry and strongly recommends the sensitization exercise for strategic planning process to be carried out to enable government achieve its planned goals. The researcher challenges that more researches still need to be carried out in the area of strategic planning in the public sector to solicit more data that the current study could not review and analyse.

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## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A: Authorization Letter to the Permanent Secretary

P.O.BOX 25334  
Windhoek  
Cell 0811273257  
Email: jwandjiva@gmail.com  
07 March 2011

Ms Sirkka Ausiku  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare  
Private Bag 13359  
Windhoek

Dear Ms Ausiku,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN THE  
MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE (10<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March  
2011).**

I am a final year MSc LCM (*Master of Science degree in Leadership and Change Management*) student at Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom, through the Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business of the Polytechnic of Namibia. As a requirement for the completion of my degree, I am currently conducting a research study on the topic: *An Exploratory Study on the Implementation of Strategic Plans in the Public Sector in Namibia with Specific Reference to the Ministry of gender Equality and Child Welfare.*

I therefore need your permission to:

- (i) interview at least **10 Senior Management Cadres** from the level of Under Secretary to the level of Deputy Director;
- (ii) interview at least **10 employees at Middle Management** level from the level of Chief Control Officer to the level of Control Officer and,
- (iii) Conduct Group Interviews to **two groups of approximately four people per group of lower level employees** from the level of Chief Clerk to the level of Clerical assistant selected randomly from all directorates and divisions in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

I therefore request your permission to conduct interviews in your Ministry and to allow me access to all relevant documents related to the Strategic Planning process in the Public Service of Namibia in general and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in particular. Should permission be granted, I will appreciate if Management and all other employees are informed accordingly.

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**Jackson T. Wandjiva (Mr.)**  
**MSc LCM Final Year Student**  
**Leeds Metropolitan University in collaboration with the Polytechnic of Namibia**

## **APPENDIX B: Covering Letter to Respondents**

P.O Box 25334  
Windhoek  
Cell: 0811273257  
E-Mail: [jwandjiva@gmail.com](mailto:jwandjiva@gmail.com)  
09<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Ms H. Andjamba**  
**Director: Child Welfare Services**  
**Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**  
**Private Bag 13359**  
**Windhoek**

**Dear Ms Andjamba,**

### **Request to participate in the research study.**

I am a final year **MSc LCM (*Master of Science degree in Leadership and Change Management*)** student at Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom through the Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business of the Polytechnic of Namibia. As a requirement for the completion of my studies, I am currently conducting a research study on the topic: ***An Exploratory Study on the Implementation of Strategic Plans in the Public Service of Namibia with Specific Reference to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.***

I have selected you to participate in my study, as you may have different perceptions, experience and ideas regarding the impact of effective communication in the formulation and implementation of Strategic Plans in the Public service of Namibia. Therefore, it will be appreciated if you can avail yourself for an interview of about 15 minutes during the period **10 -17 March 2011**. The researcher will make use of a tape recorder and take narrated notes during the interview session. Please indicate the time most convenient to you at [jwandjiva@gmail.com](mailto:jwandjiva@gmail.com) or [jwandjiva@op.gov.na](mailto:jwandjiva@op.gov.na) .

Please also note that the information obtained during the interview will be used for academic research purpose only and will be treated confidential.

Thanking you in advance,

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**J.T. Wandjiva (Mr.)**  
***MSc LCM Final Year Student***  
***Leeds Metropolitan University in collaboration with the Polytechnic of Namibia***



## APPENDIX C: Interview Schedule

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SENIOR MANAGERS, MIDDLE MANAGERS AND JUNIOR STAFF MEMBERS

#### *An Exploratory Study on the Implementation of Strategic Plans in the Public Service in Namibia with Specific Reference to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare*

The researcher will ask the respondents the questions in this guideline, but can be diverged. During the interview session the researcher will fill in the required information in this guideline while also using a tape recorder.

#### **Part: A. General Information**

Would you please provide me with the following information?

- (a) Department: \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Division: \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Rank/Post Title: \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Management cadre/ non-management cadre: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **PART B**

1. In your opinion, why do you think Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies such as the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare need to have strategic Plans?

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2. Do you think the majority if not all of the employees in this Office /Directorate/Division is aware of the importance of a strategic plan?

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3. Are you or were you involved in the formulation of the strategic plan/s previously? State the year. If not, why you were not involved

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3.1. How was this process communicated to you and how do you find the type of communication channel used?

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3.2. Who were in the majority in this process, in terms of gender?

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4. What communication strategies were used to create awareness?

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5. Do you think that all the employees are directly or indirectly involved in the formulation and implementation of this plan?

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6. What monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that employees perform according to their Performance Agreements?

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7. What impact does you does communication has on strategy formulation and implementation?

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8. In your opinion, what do you think should the public service do to motivate employees to take ownership of the strategic planning process?

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9. In your own view, what would be the most effective ways to communicate strategy formulation and implementation in the public sector?
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- 

*Thanks very much!!!!*  
*End of the interview!!!!*

## Appendix D: Authorization Letter from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE

Tel: + 264 61 283 3111  
Fax: + 264 61 238 941/240 898  
E-mail: [genderequality@mgecw.gov.na](mailto:genderequality@mgecw.gov.na)

Private Bag 13359  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Our Ref.: .....  
Your Ref.: .....  
Inquiries: .....Mr. K. Kapenda.....

08 March 2011

Mr. Jackson T. Wandjiva  
P.O. Box 25334  
Windhoek

Dear Mr. Wandjiva

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS AT THE MINISTRY OF  
GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE:**


The subject matter refers.

This letter serves to inform you that permission has been granted for you to conduct research interviews for your Master programme in Leadership and Change Management at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare *on Exploratory study on the strategic planning process in the public sector of Namibia with specific reference to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.*

Thank you for taking your previous ministry as a point of reference.

I wish you success in your studies.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Kornelius K. Kapenda  
Deputy Director: Administration

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary.

## APPENDIX E: Local Level Approval Form

### LOCAL LEVEL APPROVAL: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

#### Low risk project involving human participants

Name

Programme (identify taught postgraduate programme, or target research award eg PhD)

Project Title

#### Human Participants Involved

These should be specified in full on an attached sheet including numbers and description e.g. 20 members of University staff; 30 residents on a named estate; and how it is proposed to select these.

#### Relations with Human Participants

Details of the proposed inter-action should be given on an attached sheet. A draft information and consent form which should detail the right of the participant to withdraw from the project MUST be included.

#### Student Undertaking

I confirm that I am proposing to undertake this research project in the manner described. I understand that I am required to abide by the terms of this approval throughout the life of the project. I also understand that I may not make any substantial amendments to this project without consent; and that if I wish to make significant amendments to the project I will seek approval for this immediately, and will not undertake such research unless and until approval is granted. I understand that if I infringe the terms of this approval my work may not be marked.

Signed

Date



30/03/2011

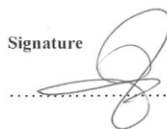
#### Supervisor's agreement

Name

Signature

Date

JL Muadino hunka



30/03/2011

#### Approval- Research Ethics Co-ordinator

Name

Signature

Date

.....

.....

.....

This form will be retained for the purposes of assurance of compliance and audit for the duration of the research project and for five calendar years thereafter.

## **Appendix F: Ethics Form for the Respondents**

### **Ethics Form**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research: *An Exploratory Study on the Strategic planning process in the Public Sector of the Republic of Namibia with specific reference to the Ministry of gender Equality and Child Welfare.*

Your participation will remain confidential and all data will be anonymous to ensure your identity and that of any colleague or company that you may mention is not revealed. You are also able to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Please sign below to indicate your consent to participate in the research.

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **Appendix G: Dissertation Research Proposal**

**Jackson Tuhafeni Wandjiva**

**Student Number: 9750851**

**Research Proposal in preparation of a research project with the following title:  
“Communicating Strategy Implementation in the Public Service with specific  
reference to the Office of the President”.**

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5. Constraints
6. Ethical Consideration
7. Reflection
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Appendices: Appendix A – Gantt Chart



## **1. Background**

In recent year, public sector institutions in Namibia have been engaged with developing strategic plans that would allow them to set objectives which would enable them to successfully carry out their respective mandates. Strategy is, simply an outline of how a business intends to achieve its goals. The goals are the objectives and the strategy sets out the route to that objective (Henry, 2008:6).

Namibia gained independence from colonial South Africa in 1990. Following the attainment of independence, the Government of the Republic of Namibia created a Public Service which includes putting up the necessary institutions and integrating the Namibian people who were fighting on opposite sides. The integration process included the employment of previously disadvantaged Namibians in the Public Service using an Act of Parliament passed for that purpose, the Affirmative Action Act.

Over the past 20 years, the Office of the Prime Minister which is tasked with the responsibility to oversee the administration of public services, has introduced various reform initiatives aimed at improving performance in the Public Service. These initiatives range from codes of conduct such as the Public Service Charter to monetary incentive initiatives such as the Wages and Salaries Commission (WASCOM). The WASCOM was implemented in 1997 and was discontinued two years shortly after its implementation due to shortcomings identified with its implementation. The Office of the Prime Minister then introduced a Performance Management System (PMS) as a management tool to monitor and motivate public service employees for better performance. The Principles and Framework of the PMS compels all Government institutions to develop five-year strategic plans.

According to Henry (2008), a strategy allows an organization to match its resources and capabilities to the needs of the external environment in order to achieve competitive advantage. Public service institutions are therefore required to apply strategic management which includes analysis of the situation facing the particular institution, formulating a strategy based on the analysis and finally implementing that strategy.

The Office of the President has also developed its five-year Strategic Plan (2010-2015) as a management tool to enable the functional components in the Office of the President to

render effective support services to the Head of State and Cabinet in the execution of their constitutional mandate. It aims to transform the Office of the President into an institution of excellence in public service delivery. Incorporated into the plan, is a Balanced Scorecard taking into consideration the Financial, Learning and Growth, Internal Processes and the Customers perspectives of the Office of the President.

## **2. Statement of the research problem**

The development of the Strategic Plan of the Office of the President was done by Senior and Middle Management with the assistance of an external consultant. The level of involvement by junior staff members was limited to general briefing meetings by senior management on the status of the draft document. No in-depth information sessions took place at department, directorate or divisional levels to inform and sensitise staff members on the planning process as the process was going on. According to Henry (2008), strategies are often not committed to paper, but it is enough that everyone in the organization understands where it is going and how it will get there. During informal interviews with junior staff members including first line supervisors, it became evident that they do not have adequate understanding of the strategic planning process that took place and how they fit in. Actual implementation of programs and projects start at the lowest level and it is important that staff members at this level understand the direction the organization is going in order to make sense out of their own contribution. This revelation and observation prompted the researcher to investigate the effectiveness of communication during the implementation of the PMS process, especially when it comes to strategy formulation and implementation.

## **3. Aims and objectives of the research**

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine the importance of Strategic Planning in the Public Sector
- To assess the extent to which the employees in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare are aware of the Strategic Planning Process
- To determine the level of employees involvement in the Strategic Planning process and assess their experience of the process

- To explain the role of effective communication in the Strategic Planning process for the public sector
- To assess the morale and attitude of employees towards the Ministry's Strategic planning process.

#### **4. Methodology**

According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997), qualitative research methodology refers to research which produces descriptive data. Leedy and Omrod (2001:148-149) states that Qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purposes:

- *Description.* They can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people.
- *Interpretation.* They enable a researcher to gain insights about the nature of a particular phenomenon, and/or discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon.
- *Verification.* They allow a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalizations within real world contexts.
- *Evaluation.* They provide a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practice, or innovation.

This researcher is going to use a qualitative approach based on an inductive process to collect data to assess processes, relationships, systems and people regarding in relation to communication on strategy formulation and implementation in the Office of the President.

##### **4.1 Research Design**

The research is going to take an Interpretivism research philosophy. According to Wheeler and Carter (undated), the Interpretivist view believes that the world and reality are not objective and exterior to the researcher, but are socially constructed and given meaning by people. The researcher is going to examine the feelings of respondents on the issue of communication in terms of strategic planning in the Office of the President, hence the choice of the Interpretivism philosophy with Action Research strategy. Action research is an approach that assumes that the social world is constantly changing, and the

researcher and the research itself are part of this change. Action research is a type of applied research designed to find an effective way of bringing about conscious change in a partly controlled environment Wheeler and Carter (undated).

The researcher will apply the following data collecting techniques:

- Review of the relevant literature (communication for effective change management)
- Interviews
- Observation

In addition to literature review of relevant material, data collection will take the form of in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions. The semi-structured questions will allow the researcher to probe for detailed information where needed. The researcher will design questions aimed at finding out how junior staff members feel about the change taking place in the Office of the President through the implementation of the five-year strategic plan, how much they know about the process and how they feel about the way change is communicated amongst others.

## **4.2 Sampling**

The researcher will explore the problem of communication with regard to strategy formulation and implementation in the Office of the President and will draw participants from middle managers and lower level employees within the institution. The reason to take these two categories as research samples in this case is for the researcher to find out how middle managers communicates information to subordinates. The researcher is targeting about 30 respondents.

## **4.3 Data Analysis**

Data will be obtained from in-depth interviews by recording notes or with a battery operated tape recorder. The data collected will be grouped into themes and the researcher will interpret the data accordingly. In order to ensure reliability and validity of the data collecting tools, the researcher will conduct a pre-test of the data collecting tools, in this case testing questions prepared for the in-depth interviews on selected individuals to see if they would produce the desired results. According to Wheeler and Carter (undated),

reliability refers to the precision of a measurement and the extent to which a test or procedure is capable of producing similar results under constant conditions on all occasions.

## **5 Constraints**

The proposed study follows a qualitative research approach, which will mostly consist of semi-structured interviews with a target sample of 30 employees. The researcher foresees time to be a constraint given the amount of time that would be required to undertake interviews and have the report ready by December 2010. Although cognizant of this constraint, the research is determined to aim for the December 2010 deadline. A Gantt chart (see annex A) has been developed to guide the researcher through the project.

## **6 Ethical Consideration**

The research in this proposal will deal with direct questioning of respondents, a process during which some confidential information might be revealed. The researcher undertakes to assure the respondents that the information provided during the study will be kept confidential.

## **7 Reflection**

Strategic planning has become the preferred approach in the public service in terms of steering the institutions towards achieving their goals. It is important that all staff members in the Office of the President understand the process and how their own contribution can help achieve the overall organizational goal. It is therefore expected that this study will help to identify the impediments to effective communication related to strategy formulation and implementation.

## **8 Literature Review**

The researcher will consult materials on leadership and management as well as literature on communication and performance management in order to make an objective conclusion on the results of the data that will be collected during the study.

## Referencing

Brynard, P.A. and Hanekom, S. X. (1997). **Introduction to Research in Public Administration and Related Academic Disciplines**. Pretoria. J.L. van Schaik.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). **Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design**. London. Sage.

Henry, A. (2008). **Understanding Strategic Management**. New York. Oxford.

Leedy, P. D. and Omrod, J. E. (2001). **Practical Research: Planning and Design**. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Prentice Hall.

Wheeler, G. and Carter, S. (undated). **Research Methods: *Supplementary Module Resource***. Derbyshire Business School and Leeds University