

Deliverology®: Helping public sector leaders deliver results that matter

The challenge: Governments exist to improve their people's lives

Every time governments and other public-sector organizations set a big, ambitious goal, they are making a promise to the people they serve. An effective government makes good use of their resources to deliver on these promises. But this is easier said than done.

When most political leaders arrive in office, they find that **delivering results is the hardest part of the job**. Formally speaking, they have authority to direct what government does. But they sit on top of a large and complicated bureaucracy, and it's not immediately evident how to work through it to get things done. At the same time, political leaders must manage politics – the inevitable day-to-day demands of events that public figures must deal with.

The Deliverology® approach: The science of delivering long-lasting results for the people

Deliverology® was pioneered in the UK at the turn of the century as a way to help governments and public sector leaders deliver on their promises to improve public services. From 2001 to 2005, the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU), led by Sir Michael Barber, developed the Deliverology® approach. They brought global best practices from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to bear on the challenge of improving government performance. In four years, the PMDU helped the government achieve over 80% of its top priorities, including reductions in crime and improvements in public transportation, student outcomes and hospital mortality rates.

Since then, the approach has been successfully adopted by national and sub-national governments and multi-lateral organizations on all continents. It has also been the subject of several books, including *Instruction to Deliver* (2007), *How to Run a Government* (2015), and *Deliverology® in Practice* (2016). At its heart, Deliverology® is fundamentally about building systems that allow public sector leaders to answer five key questions consistently and rigorously:

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|  | WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear priorities• Specific measurable goals |
|  | HOW ARE YOU TRYING TO DO IT? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, practical plans that are regularly updated |
|  | HOW, AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT, WILL YOU KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE ON TRACK? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good, steady, close to real-time data• Monitoring routines (such as stocktake meetings) |
|  | IF YOU ARE NOT ON TRACK, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed actions followed up and refined if necessary• Never neglect a problem once identified |
|  | HOW CAN WE HELP? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant ambition, refusal to give up• Focus on the goals, no distractions• Maintaining routines• Analysis and problem-solving• Bringing to bear lessons from elsewhere |

What sets the Deliverology® approach apart

- **Focus on outcomes:** Begin by defining success clearly, and test every subsequent decision against one fundamental question: will doing this help us to achieve the outcome? Avoid the management of inputs for their own sake. Instead, insist that every input justify itself in terms of its impact on the goal. The result is a tight focus on a limited number of priorities that are meaningful to citizens and residents.
- **Consider the delivery chain:** In both planning and implementation, define the delivery chain: the people and organizations – and the relationships between them – through which results are delivered, starting with authorities at the centre and ending with the citizens and residents who ultimately benefit. By mapping the delivery chain, you will be able to create shared understanding about what should happen during implementation and the role that everyone will need to play. Once you have mapped the delivery chain, use it to engage with, gather evidence from, and build capacity at every level, especially the front line.
- **Take stock:** You can drive implementation by setting up routine stocktakes for principal leaders to review progress with accountable leaders. These evidence-based conversations should focus on three key questions:
 - What do we know about progress so far?
 - How likely is it that we will achieve our goal?
 - What can we do to stay on track (or get back on track!) to achieve the goal?Good stocktakes keep a system's attention on the outcome, provide a series of deadlines for demonstrating progress, and amplify the power of the principal leader to drive progress.
- **Recognize politics:** When managing performance, it will be impossible to ignore politics or pretend it does not exist. In order to drive results in the public sector, you must embrace and account for the reality that politics permeates every aspect of public service delivery. Consider how to thoroughly manage change, influence without authority, and build the culture needed to define and track progress.

The way forward

Implementation in the public sector is hard work. The challenges we face while engaging the public and building state capacity require more and better use of technology in combination with delivery disciplines. It also requires a culture of **ambition** (to stick to the goal); **clarity** (to ensure everyone understands it); **focus** (to not lose sight of it); **urgency** (to keep on top of it); and a commitment to **irreversibility** (so that achieving it is not a one-off). Leaders that master these principles and apply them across all their government or organization create real change for the people they serve – ensuring the improvement that people deserve and demand.