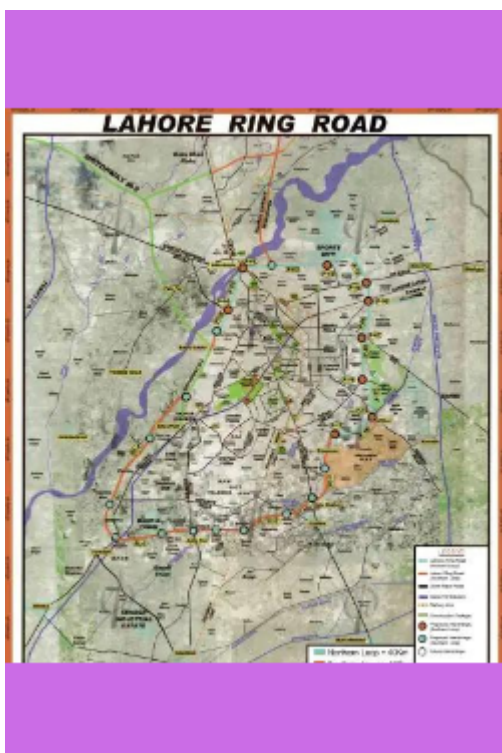


Performance Evaluation Framework for PPP road construction projects in developing countries



The public-private partnership (PPP) mechanism is often proposed as a means of delivering public services, particularly complex construction projects, in developing countries. This [study](#), published in September 2022, developed a performance framework to evaluate the application of PPP projects based on 10 key performance indicators and 41 performance measures. The framework was reviewed by experts for coverage and relevance, then validated through two Pakistani road construction case studies.

Getting the PFM basics right (A study of PEFA scores awarded over the 2016 and 2011 Frameworks)



By David Fellows and John Leonardo

Introduction

The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) programme provides a framework for assessing and reporting the strengths and weaknesses of public financial management (PFM).

The current 2016 Framework refines the previous 2011 Framework and is structured under a hierarchy of 6 Pillars, 31 Indicators (PIs) and 94 Dimensions. The PEFA Field [Guide](#) explains the components of the 2016 Framework and describes how an assessment team should score each dimension on a scale of A to D, a D score representing the lowest level of performance.

An initial assessment of the latest PEFA reports for countries published under the 2016 Framework suggested that many countries were not getting the PFM basics right. This led to a comparison of recent results with those from earlier PEFA reports prepared under the 2011 Framework to examine performance over time and the lessons for PFM improvement that such a comparison may offer (termed the 'dual study'). It was decided to focus on dimension scores since the demands of PFM can change markedly depending on the aspects of the subject matter under consideration and the evident variations of score for the same country at dimension level within a range of PIs.

It was decided to confine this initial study to the analysis of D scores at the dimension level given the frequency of D scores, the very poor performance they represent and the importance of raising performance to a higher level. The Field Guide requires a D score when: 'the feature being measured is present at less than the basic level of performance or is absent altogether, or that there is insufficient information to score the dimension'.

For the purpose of this study, D scores include dimensions marked D*, NR and some NA scores where evidence suggests a breakdown in PFM activity. It seemed evident that these attributions are often applied inconsistently and serve to obscure the extent of the poor performance of some countries

by avoiding the use of justifiable D scores. A summary of all scores for the 2016 Framework and the dual study evaluations, as discussed in this report, can be accessed at [Annex 1](#).

2016 Framework analysis

The 2016 Framework analysis consisted of the latest published evaluations for the 63 countries for which there were published reports at the time of this study. The D scores represent 32% of all dimension scores in this data set, 39% amongst low-income countries.

D scores were widely distributed throughout the framework with 45 of the 94 dimensions having an above average number of D scores.

The study also defined and assessed the key factors (termed descriptors) that contributed to PFM performance. The results, summarised at [Annex 2](#), suggested that most D scores can be explained by the absence of 'Management Effectiveness', 'Integrity' and in one case of 'High Level Technical Knowledge' although poor "System Design" was another potentially important contributing factor.

[Annex 3](#) provides a full list of the 2016 Framework dimensions and D score data together with the descriptors contributing to each dimension.

Dual framework

Following the results of the 2016 Framework D score study it was decided to undertake a review of 45 countries that have undertaken at least one PEFA evaluation under both the 2011 and 2016 frameworks (the earliest and the latest studies we used for countries with more than two studies). This enabled a country's performance to be compared over a five-year period.

The 2011 and 2016 PEFA frameworks differ in many respects. An equivalence [table](#) published by PEFA suggests that the two frameworks can be aligned to 37 "equivalent" dimensions on the basis that the respective dimensions were either "directly comparable" or "indirectly comparable".

The PEFA equivalence table identifies 28 dimensions (or in some cases subsets) from the 2011 framework as "non-comparable (subject only)" to 2016 counterparts suggesting that the dimension descriptions and scoring routines differ markedly while the general area of relevance to the dimensions are similar. This leaves only 37 pairs of comparable dimensions.

On examination, the study team decided that 26 of the 28 pairs of dimensions judged "non-comparable (subject only)" were in fact very similar to the 2016 counterparts, the main difference being the way in which the later guidance is translated into clear-cut scoring criteria but that a good PEFA evaluator should have made reasonably similar judgements for both frameworks when reviewing all but two of these dimensions.

This exercise, therefore, recognises 63 equivalent dimensions while also providing results for PEFA's 37 equivalent dimensions. It is suggested that the D score characteristics of both data sets are sufficiently similar to provide a reasonable validation for the larger 63 dimension equivalence thereby extending the usefulness of inter-framework comparisons. Details of the PEFA and PFMConnect equivalence tables are set out at [Annex 4](#). The dual study of 2016 and 2011 Framework with D score data at dimension level is set out at [Annex 5](#).

The dual study is highly concerning in terms of the lack of improvement amongst those dimensions receiving D scores. These data are further summarised and commented on below.

Table 1: Dual Framework Study Comparison of Results at Dimension Level for the relevant 45 countries						
Data Set	Average D-score across all dimensions		Dimensions with above Average D scores		Dimensions with fewer D scores in 2016 compared with 2011 No. (vi)	Countries with fewer D scores in 2016 than 2011 No. (vii)
	2016 Framework %	2011 Framework %	2016 %	2011 %		
(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)
PEFA's 37 comparable dimensions	26	23	49	46	13	17
PFMConnect's 63 dimensions	28	23	43	41	16	10

The dual framework study reveals a deteriorating performance with most dimensions exhibiting a greater number of D scores in the later evaluations. Only 13 (35%) of dimensions from the 37 dimensions study and 16 (25%) from the 63 dimensions study experienced reductions in D scores between evaluations.

When the dual evaluations for the same country were compared, see [Annex 6](#), it was noted that most countries recorded a higher proportion of D scores for the same dimension in both evaluations demonstrating a reasonably consistent poor performance. A few countries displayed less consistent results.

Few countries in the 63 dimensions set recorded reductions in the number of D scores in 2016 framework results compared with the 2011 framework results. The top performers where significant PFM reform activities had been undertaken between the dual framework studies included: Philippines, Maldives, Mongolia and Tajikistan.

Table 2: Comparing above average D scores for both frameworks				
Data Set (i)	Dimensions with above average D scores			
	Total for 2016 framework No. (ii)	Total for 2011 framework No. (iii)	Common to both frameworks ¹ No. (%) (iv) (v)	
PEFA's 37 comparable dimensions	18	18	13	(72)
<u>PFMConnect's 63 dimensions</u>	25	25	20	(77)
NB: Column (iv) shows that of PEFA's 37 equivalent dimensions 13 (35%) have above average D scores common to both frameworks or 20 (32%) for <u>PFMConnect's 63 equivalent dimensions</u> .				

The results for the proportion of dimensions with above-average D scores that are common to both framework dimensions sets is concerning. Approximately one third of all dimensions had above-average D scores that were common to both frameworks for the same country for both datasets. In addition, over 70% of the above-average dimensions in both datasets were common to both frameworks showing limited improvement in the worst scoring areas over a five-year period.

Dimensions with regular poor performance are widely distributed (titles in red at Annex 6). This suggests pockets of poor management that remain in place without effective challenge and this is consistent with the descriptor analysis.

Conclusions

This study offers a range of findings that pose questions about the approach, effectiveness and sustainability of PFM reforms instituted by national and subnational governments often in collaboration with development agencies. The concerns about management effectiveness and integrity highlighted in this study must be seen to question the most basic aspects of any organisation.

The study focusses on D score analysis, but it could be useful to extend the analysis to C-level scores where the performance of countries still remains below good international standards. This could reveal new characteristics of national PFM performance and extend the range of analytical techniques applied to performance data.

The data analysis evidences the credibility of PFMConnect's extended 63 dimension equivalence model that offers significant potential for more detailed studies of specific countries or regions.

Further work on descriptors to reveal contributory factors to variations in performance seems worthy of further development.

The failure of some governments to publish PEFA studies in full reinforces concerns about the need for greater attention to integrity. Another improvement that could be readily and widely implemented is legislative scrutiny of audit reports (PI 31).

Recommendations

We recommend that country-specific studies should be undertaken based on PEFA assessment reports (both 2016 Framework studies for the full 94 dimensions and dual studies where the data are available) examining D scores at dimension level to establish potential causes of poor performance and identify ways in which performance may be improved. Issues to consider with respect to areas of poor performance, include:

- The commitment to personnel development and support, including: in-service training, management development, oversight, feedback on performance, and system design.
- The adequacy of transparency and accountability and evidence of corrupt activity.
- The quality of relevant communication and support levels among different departments and units of the finance ministry.
- The reasons for persistently poor or erratic performance and the fit with other findings.
- The observations of managers and staff on reasons for poor performance and barriers to improvement.

We recommend that country studies should be designed as the initial phase of PFM development programmes. In this context, a [report](#) by the Swedish International Development Cooperation

Agency (SIDA) offers some observations about the conditions for effective PFM reform. These include the importance of change agendas being aligned with Government priorities and the need to treat PFM reform as a learning process with strong emphasis on coordination and systematic evaluation of the activities performed by teams responsible for delivery.

Groups of countries or subnational bodies may wish to collaborate in reform programmes enabling challenges and learning to be shared and systems of mutual support developed. We have previously advocated the use of digital communication as a cost-effective and time-saving way of sharing knowledge and ideas between nations (incl. expert advisors).

Any country, region or development institution wishing to participate in further work in this field is invited to discuss their interest with the authors.

An article based on this study has been published by the [IMF's PFM Blog](#).

PFMConnect is a public financial management consultancy with a particular interest in the use of digital communication to support learning and sharing expertise amongst the international development community.

David Fellows began his career in UK local government where he became President of the Society of Municipal Treasurers and a pioneer of digital government. He has held appointments in the UK Cabinet Office and the National Treasury of South Africa (david.fellows@pfmconnect.com).

John Leonardo is a PFM expert with extensive worldwide experience. He has undertaken PFM assignments in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific where he undertook PEFA assessments. Both authors are directors of PFMConnect, a public financial management consultancy (john.leonardo@pfmconnect.com).

Coherent Policy, Planning, and Performance for Delivering the SDGs



Posted by David Fellows [\[1\]](#)

This is an extraordinarily important time for coherent policy, planning, and performance – the “3 Ps” – for delivering the

SDGs and other core public policy objectives.

The SDGs present an extensive range of essential service improvements that are applicable across the world. The threat posed by climate change has become a major international issue with immensely ambitious remedial targets and huge spending requirements. Governments are also under pressure to introduce gender responsive budgeting and digitalize their public finances, reforms that offer huge benefits but also challenges and costs in the short to medium-term. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic has devastated many economies and produced huge fiscal burdens, increasing the challenge of delivering the SDGs and better environmental outcomes.

A coherent delivery framework

It is important that governments take decisions within a strategic framework that represents an appropriate timeframe and deals clearly with policy goals, service responses, resources deployed, and outcomes achieved. The various elements of this framework include:

1. A vision having a 10-year perspective expressed in terms of outcomes.
2. Objectives set with a 3-5 year delivery time frame, consistent with achieving the vision.
3. Delivery targets for each of the next 3-5 years in terms of service outputs relevant to the performance outcomes.
4. 3-5 year budgets for agencies or programs that reflect the delivery outcomes and performance targets that each budget represents.
5. Annual accounts that set out executive responsibilities,

annual performance outcome and delivery targets and the actual performance achieved.

6. Training and recruitment plans that enable public agencies to operate the systems and deliver the services that have been approved.

Delivering change

Successful reform is an elusive concept. Any initiative worth doing must have a benefits realisation plan specifying the steps necessary to ensure that progress is being made and that the end results are achieved.

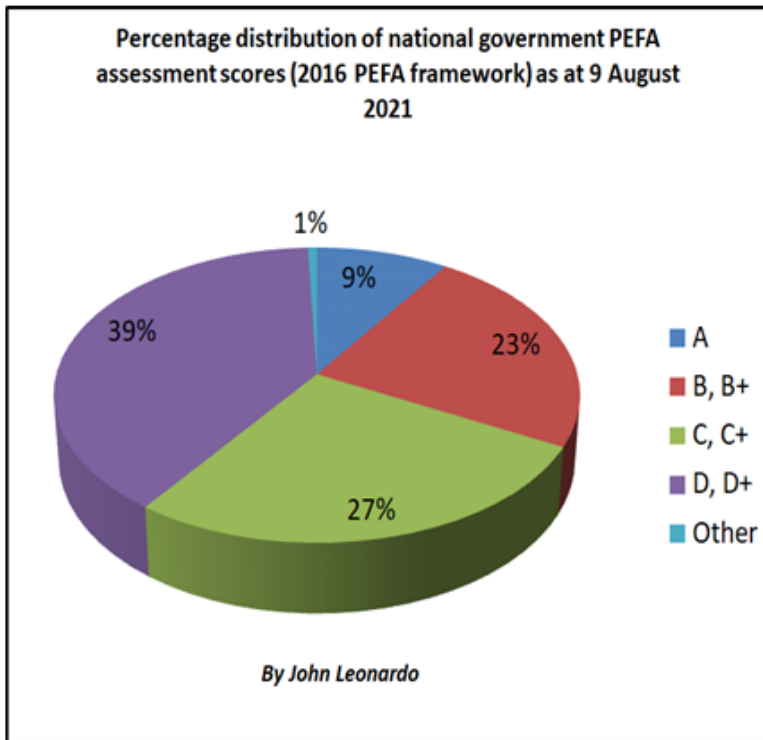
Services and changes to service provision should be protected by risk management strategies that seek to mitigate internal or external events and shocks that may otherwise hamper delivery or destroy valuable assets.

Review and accountability

The various elements of the framework must be consistent with each other. When major new commitments are proposed, or it becomes obvious that major targets are no longer achievable then a review of the framework should be undertaken. In addition, there should be an annual review of the framework as part of the annual budget preparation process, perhaps as part of a wider spending review. Policies, plans, performance, and the results of review processes should be made public. There is no aspect of the planning and delivery process that cannot benefit from public scrutiny and comment. It is the responsibility of all public institutions in a democratic country to make themselves open and responsive to such a

dialogue.

The PFM challenge for developing countries



A = High level of performance that meets international practice

B = Sound performance in line with many elements of good international practice

C = Basic level of performance

D = Less than basic level of performance or insufficient information to score

The chart relates to 58 countries: 52 developing countries and 6 countries in transition

The relatively poor condition of PFM in developing countries shown in the chart suggests the difficulties that developing countries face in planning, managing, and maintaining their existing budget systems. The SDGs and other global pressures to increase spending represent additional challenges for PFM systems to face. Multilateral decisions on the SDGs and climate change must therefore take account of the consequences for developing nations given the likely dependence of successful outcomes on their cooperation.

Conclusion

The immense pressures on governments worldwide to fulfil the

global obligations and pressures described above often require concerted action. If governments are to succeed without making over-extended commitments, wasting time and money on impractical solutions, they must make decisions within the rigours of a fully operational policy, planning, and performance framework. Multilateral agreements, economic, social and technological considerations will all feed into framework construction but the integrity of the framework is key.

Framework development will inevitably present hard choices but that is a strength of the process. It should also provide a coherent basis for democratic accountability if, as a result, drastic life changes are required, freedoms are curtailed, and personal costs are increased.

This article was first published by the International Monetary Fund's Public Financial Management Blog on 20 September 2021.

[\[1\]](#) David Fellows began his career in UK local government where he became President of the Society of Municipal Treasurers and a pioneer of digital government. He followed this with appointments in the UK Cabinet Office and the National Treasury of South Africa. He is a Director of PFMConnect.

Policy Frameworks and Municipal Effectiveness

By David Fellows [\[1\]](#)



Introduction

Local governments, referred to here as 'municipalities', tend to be smaller scale, face less complex challenges, and have less diversity amongst stakeholders when compared to national governments. This relative simplicity should be regarded as their defining strength. It eases the path to identifying their core mission and prioritising service developments within resource constraints and national mandates.

A common problem with capitalising on this strength is that municipal strategic policy agendas are often asserted without sufficient regard to their consistent articulation, internal coherence or supporting administrative sub-structure. It is the author's contention that without these attributes municipal leadership will always lack clarity of direction; delivery competence; and full hearted community support. In addition, the media will have grounds for scepticism and its criticisms will probably intensify over time.

This piece outlines the elements of an effective municipal policy framework and the need for its periodic review and realignment.

The Policy Framework

The fundamental elements and principles of the policy framework are outlined below:

1. Policy objectives should be set at a long-term level with more detailed expression at shorter timescales. This policy cascade must be consistent. The policy cascade must be achievable in a practical sense and there must be sound and clearly expressed reasons to expect the necessary resources (finance, skills and materials) to be available in the timescale envisaged by the policy objective.
2. Operational changes must be supported by realistic development plans and external expert support should be sought to help develop internal capacity where necessary.
3. There should be a medium term budget reflecting the

stated policy system over a minimum 3 year policy timescale. All budgets should contain both revenue and capital provision that should be consistent between the two, realistically achievable. Where policies are changed the budget must change accordingly.

4. No spending commitment must be made until budget provision has been allocated as a priority above all competing demands that would otherwise make funding untenable.
5. Service delivery arrangements and underpinning administrative processes must be set out clearly and there must be adequate training plans to achieve the intended outcomes.
6. The budgetary control must be exercised to ensure that expenditure and revenues are consistent with the budget and where this is not achievable then modifications to policy, practice and budget must be made appropriately. The overall responsibility for containing spending within budget must be imposed on departmental heads without the option of delegation to a lower level.
7. Benefits realisation strategies for new developments must be used to guide successful outcomes and risk management strategies used to anticipate and mitigate possible challenges.
8. Civil servants must have performance contracts for achieving service outputs and outcomes within budget.
9. There must be public engagement in the development process and transparency about its outcomes.
10. The logical chain of policy, delivery practice, supporting administrative processes, development plans and budgetary provision must be understood by politicians and administrators at all levels.

This type of policy framework could be said to be applicable to anywhere within to anywhere within the public service but in municipalities it is more tangible in terms of proximity

between the administration and the community as a whole, more easily comprehended as a working system that encompasses the entire municipality and more capable of being used by the political leadership as an envisioning and executive tool. This sentiment was echoed by Mr Armand Beouinde, Mayor of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso at the [UN-Habitat Conference in Marrakesh](#) last November.

Review

Periodic reviews of the policy framework offer an opportunity to improve coherence and effectiveness. They can also lead to a better understanding of municipal capacity and critical areas of weakness that must be addressed if ambitions are to be fully realised. It may be useful for such reviews to be undertaken independently and shared with the community for comment prior to finalisation.

Conclusion

Municipalities are well placed to make crucial contributions to community well-being and development. Better governance based on coherent policy frameworks and sound development plans can help them deliver on their potential. In the author's view development partners can be too keen to rush developing countries into adopting practices that are unsustainable before the necessary organisational capacity has been achieved.

End note

We should be pleased to discuss the ideas in this piece with those who believe that they may have relevance to their situation.

[\[1\]](#) *David Fellows began his career in UK local government where he became President of the Society of Municipal Treasurers and a pioneer of digital government, he followed this with stints in the UK Cabinet Office and the National Treasury of South Africa. He is a director of PFMConnect.*