AN EXPLORATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRENDS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

An effective records management programme is a major element of the governance of any organisation. However, despite this crucial role played by records management, there is a consensus amongst researchers that many organisations, including government departments, pay little attention to the management of records. In South Africa, government departments are under legislative obligations to adopt a systematic and organised approach to the management of records. For example, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) requires government departments to develop, implement and maintain proper records management systems. The purpose of this study was to explore records management trends in the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) to establish if the Department was managing records according to legislative requirements. Data was collected through online questionnaires, physical observation and interviews with selected DPLG employees and analysed through an open source software. The key findings of the study revealed that an enormous benefit for the implementation of a records management programme is the commitment and support of top management. The study recommended that records management should be included in the performance contracts of all employees in the DPLG. The study concluded that a records management programme will only function effectively if it is developed as part of the strategic objective of the organisation.

Key terms: records, records management, record keeping, records management programme, archives, National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, Department of Provincial and Local Government, access to information, government departments.

DECLARATION

I declare that **AN EXPLORATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRENDS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

...…………………   …….......…………..……

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

(MR MS NGOEPE)

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Tahirah Mampho Adams and my parents Makwena Ngoepe nee Lamola and Mašološolo 'a Bokone Ngoepe for the inspiration they gave me during my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Proverbs 3:5-6
Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight

Asante Sana!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGSA: Auditor-General of South Africa

AIMS: Access Information Management Services

ANC: African National Congress

CA: Chief Archivist

CAR: Cape Archives Repository

CDS: Constitutional Development Services

CODESA: Convention for a Democratic South Africa

CS: Colonial Secretary

DEIC: Dutch East Indian Company

DG: Director-General

DPLG: Department of Provincial and Local Government

DPSA: Department of Public Service Administration

CMTP: Consolidated Municipal Transformation Programme

COMMA: Committee on Machine-Readable Archives

CSVR: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

ECTA: Electronic Communications and Transaction Act

EDRMS: Electronic Document and Records Management System

E-mail: Electronic Mail

E-Records: Electronic Records

ERMS: Electronic Records Management System

ESARBICA: Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of International Council
                on Archives

EU: European Union

FBS: Free Basic Services

HOD: Head of Department

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IDP: Integrated Development Programme

IDRMS: Integrated Document and Records Management System

IGR: Intergovernmental Relations

IM:	Information Management
IMCC:	Information Management Capacity Check
IPSP:	Inter-Provincial Support Programme
IRMT:	International Records Management Trust
ISO:	International Standards Organisation
ISRDP:	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme
IT:	Information Technology
KSP:	Knowledge-Sharing Programme
LAC:	Library and Archives Canada
LED:	Local Economic Development
LIS:	Library and Information Studies
LOGOLA:	Local Government Leadership Academy
MIG:	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MISS:	Minimum Information Security Standard
MSP:	Municipal Service Partnership
NA:	National Archivist
NARS:	National Archives and Records Service
NASA:	National Archives of South Africa
NDMC:	Natural Disaster Management Centre
NIA:	National Intelligence Agency
OAG:	Office of the Auditor-General
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
ODAC:	Open Democracy Advice Centre
OFS:	Orange Free State
PAC:	Pan-African Congress
PAIA:	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PC:	Personal Computer
PRMCBP:	Provincial Records Management Capacity-Building Project
RM:	Records Management
RMC:	Records Management Course
RMCAS:	Records Management Capacity Assessment System

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SA: South Africa

SABS: South African Bureau of Standards

SAHA: South African History Archives

SAHRC: South African Human Rights Council

SANS: South African National Standards

SARMAF: South African Records Management Forum

SAS: State Archives Services

SITA: State Information Technology Agency

TMT: Top Management Team

TSA: Technikon South Africa

UDF: United Democratic Front

UK PRO: United Kingdom Public Records Office

UN: United Nations

UNISA: University of South Africa

URD: Urban and Rural Development

URP: Urban Renewal Programme

USA: United States of America

US DoD: United States Department of Defence

VOC: Verenigde Oost-Indiesche Compagnie

WWII: Second World War

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the study

In their foreword to the publication *Information and Good Governance*,

Fust and Graf (2002:3) argue that the proper management of records is

the foundation any government needs to provide services, to fulfil its

obligation of accountability towards its citizens and to protect their rights.

Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) assert that "proper records management

involves establishing systematic controls at every stage of the record's life

cycle, in accordance with established principles and accepted models of

records management". Practising proper records management leads to

good public management because government activities are based on

access to information contained in records. One can imagine a country

without records of birth and citizenship, property ownership, health, social

grants, etc. Without the records, government will not be able to address

issues such as poverty, crime, social grants, AIDS, land rights and even

the provision of basic services (water and electricity). Therefore a

government department can only act and make decisions if it has

adequate information at its fingertips.

As mentioned above, records also protect citizens' rights, such as their rights to ownership of land, documented through land registration records, or their rights to pensions, documented through employee or personnel records (Chachage, Ngulube & Stilwell 2006; IRMT 1999:8). For example, the Department of Land Affairs in South Africa relies on how well records generated by the Department during land seizures were organised and managed in order to process land claims. Otherwise, land rights could be denied or compromised as a result of incorrect or lack of authentic records or failure to retrieve records. The Presidential Commission established in Botswana in 2004 to investigate the allocation of land in the Segoditshane village is a very good example of the importance of proper records management. According to Sebina (2004:11) commissioners requested official records relating to the allocation of land, but records could not be retrieved by the responsible government department. As a result, commissioners had to rely on the memory of the former Director of Land by giving testimony (Sebina 2004:11). Relying on human memory is dangerous due to its elusiveness, frailty or the nature of human beings for being subjective. This could even lead to service delivery being hampered due to biasness of human beings if a decision taken is based on remembering.

In addition, proper records management results in good archives because the product that is transferred to an archives repository is maintained

according to its 'original order' as in line with the principle of *Respect des Fonds[1]* (IRMT 1999:16). This implies that if records are not managed properly in the office of origin; the product transferred to the archives repository will also be poor and this will compromise the history of the nation as records would not be easily retrievable. In this light, it is essential that government departments should implement and maintain a systematic approach to managing records from their point of creation to their ultimate disposal.

However, despite the crucial role played by records management as indicated above, there is consensus amongst researchers that many organisations, including government departments, pay little attention to the management of records (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005; Mnjama 2004:6; Ngulube 2004:6; Wallace 2004:6). In South Africa, for example, in some cases government departments handle recorded information carelessly without realising that records constitute a major resource compared to finance, people, money and equipment (Makhura 2001:1; Ngulube 2004:7). According to Venter (2004:1), surveys conducted on records

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[1] The principle of *Respect des Fonds* is defined simply as 'respect for the creator of the records.' It consists of two related concepts: *provenance* and *original order. Provenance* refers to the office of origin of records; *original order* refers to the order and organisation in which the records were created or stored by that office of origin. The principle requires that archivists and records managers observe the following guidelines:

- The records of separate organisations must be managed separately even if the organisations in question were involved with similar activities or managed by the same people.
- Records must be maintained according to their 'original order': that is according to the filing, classification and retrieval methods established by the organisation as part of an efficient records management programme.

management by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARS) during the 2003/2004 financial year in government departments of all nine provinces revealed that record keeping has declined to the point where it was seriously hampering the conduct of government business and undermining basic accountability to the public. The surveys revealed that there was no top management support for records management functions in the departments, which resulted in the records managers not having the necessary authority or backing to enforce proper records management practices (NARS 2006a:i). This raises serious concerns as to whether records are managed in government departments as a strategic asset. According to De Wet and Du Toit (2000:74), "it is essential for government departments to integrate records management more effectively with other information management functions so that records management becomes a strategic management function towards reaching a competitive advantage''. In other words, to ensure that records management receives the attention it deserves, it should be a strategic objective in the government department's strategic and business plans (NARS 2004:11).

It is in view of the above that the researcher felt it is relevant to explore the practices and procedures of records management in a particular government department, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG). The study was also prompted by the fact that in

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South Africa, government departments are required by law to adopt a systematic and organised approach to the management of records. For example, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) provides the legislative and legal framework according to which records management practices in governmental bodies are regulated. In accordance with section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, 1996, the National Archivist:

(i) determines classification systems to be applied by governmental bodies;

(ii) examines public records with a view to issuing disposal authorities on all public records to enable governmental bodies to dispose of records no longer required for functional purposes;

(iii) determines the conditions subject to which records can be microfilmed or electronically reproduced to ensure that the requirements for archival preservation are addressed timeously;

(iv) determines the conditions subject to which electronic records systems should be managed to ensure that sound records management practices are applied to electronic records systems from the design phase onwards;

(v) inspects public records to ensure that governmental bodies comply with the requirements of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act;

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(vi)   issues directives and instructions for the management and care of public records in the custody of governmental bodies; and

(vii)   provides training to records managers, senior administrative officials, training officials, work study officials and registry heads with a view to teaching the basics of records management and explaining the National Archives and Records Service's role in promoting efficient records management.

The passage of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000) (PAIA) by the South African government also accentuated the need for proper records management. The Act gives effect to the right provided in the Constitution of access to any information held by the state and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercising or protection of any rights. Because records management is seen as important and there are legislative requirements for the management of records, it is relevant to establish what the situation is in practice in South African government departments. In this study the focus was on one particular department, the Department of Provincial and Local Government.

1.2   Theoretical framework of the study

As indicated above, this study investigated the records management trends in the DPLG covering the processes from the creation to the

disposal of records. According to Ngulube (2003:20) there is a tendency amongst organisations not to base their records management practices on existing theories or principles of records management. According to IRMT (1999:5) the care of records and archives particularly within the context of the public sector is governed by four important principles or theories. "These are (1) that records must be kept together according to the agency responsible for their creation or accumulation, in the original order established at the time of their creation; (2) that records follow a life cycle; (3) that the care of records should follow a continuum; and (4) that records can be organised according to hierarchical levels in order to reflect the nature of their creation" (IRMT 1999:5). These principles and concepts are known as:

(i)   the principle of *respect des fonds* (the reader is reffered to the footnote on page 3 for more information on this principle)

(ii)   the life-cycle concept

(iii)   the continuum concept

(iv)   the principle of levels of arrangement and description.

Chachage and Ngulube (2006) stress that of all the above principles "the records life cycle and records continuum models are the dominant theories in the archival and records management field". These two theories are explained below, as well as the reasons for undertaking this study throughout the entire life cycle of a record at the DPLG. However,

the principle of levels of arrangement and description is not discussed as it applies to records that are already in the custody of an archives repository. Therefore it would be irrelevant as this study was only concerned with records that were still in the custody of the DPLG.

1.2.1   The life cycle vs records continuum theories

Since the late 1930s, the life cycle theory has been the main conceptual framework for managing records, especially in the paper environment. The life cycle concept was invented by Theodore Schellenberg of the National Archives of the USA in 1934 (Shepherd & Yeo 2003:5). It falls into three phases, which may be defined as "(1) records creation or receipt (born or adopted); (2) records use and maintenance (that is, they live actively), and (3) records destruction (they die) or transfer to an archival repository (they are reincarnated)" (Ricks & Gow 1988:4). Table 1 below outlines the life cycle concept of a record.

Table 1: Life cycle of a record (IRMT 1999:19)
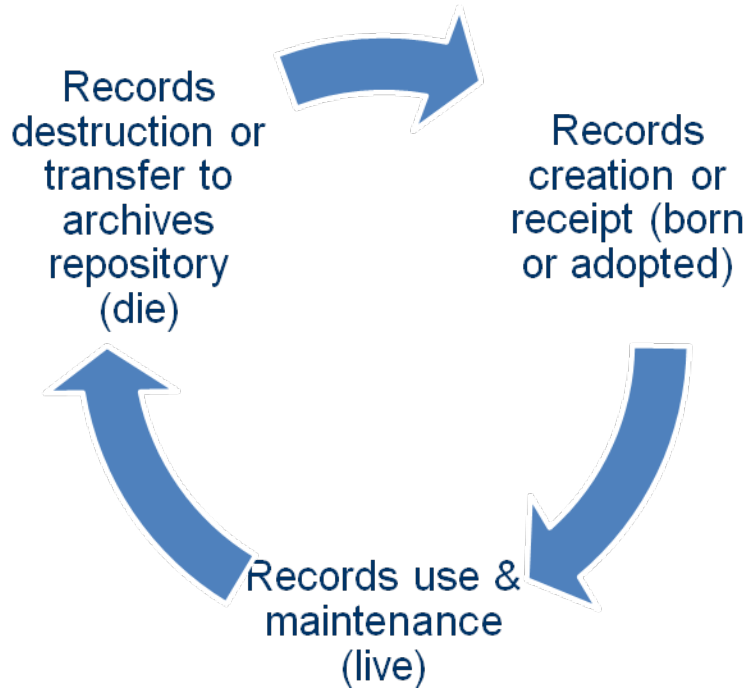
According to Akussah as quoted by Chachage and Ngulube (2006) "it is universally acceptable among archivist and records management professionals that the life cycle concept is the most integrated and comprehensive approach to records management". This, according to Ngulube and Tafor (2006), explains why the life cycle is popularly used as a framework for managing public sector records in Eastern and Southern Africa region.

With the massive shift in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the 1980s and 1990s, there was proliferation in electronic records, leading to new archival and records management practices. This has resulted in debates that have challenged the relevancy of the life cycle

approach in managing records and culminated in the continuum theory. The life cycle theory states that records can only live once at each stage in their life. This clearly defines responsibilities for the management of records at each stage. In contrast, the continuum theory developed in the 1990s by Ian MacLean argues that record keeping is a continuing and rolling process that does not separate the life of records in time and space (Upward 2000:118). When he developed the continuum concept, MacLean was of the view that the work of archivists and records managers are interrelated and that there is continuity between records management and archives (Kemoni, Ngulube & Stillwell 2007). According to Upward (2003:1), "the continuum theory has been defined in ways which show it is a time/space approach instead of a life of the records approach".

In the continuum approach, there are no strict boundaries between archives and records management responsibilities, as current records can also become archives right from creation, instead of waiting for final disposal to determine this. The continuum concept is clearly outlined in table 2 below. Proponents of the continuum paradigm, such as Bearman (1994:32) and Cook (1997:17) have advanced debates in favour of this model as a better approach to modern record keeping. For example, they argue that archivists should not wait until the end of the life cycle, but be actively involved in the management of records from creation.

Table 2: The continuum concept (IRMT 1999:20)

Four actions continue or recur throughout the life of a record

Process	Records management process	Archives management actions
1. Identification and acquisition	Creation or receipt	Selection and acquisition
2. Intellectual control	Classification within a logical system	Arrangement and description
3. Access	Maintenance and use	Reference and use
4. Physical control	Disposal by destruction or transfer as archives	Preservation

1.2.2   Linkage of the theoretical framework to the study

Despite the acknowledged success of the records continuum model in explaining the life of records, it is important to note that fundamental practices in the paper environment as illustrated in the life cycle approach are still relevant. While the need for a new paradigm shift is recognised, the researcher is of the view that the life cycle concept must not be dismissed or rejected. Instead, the continuum model should be looked at as an additional strategy that is useful for managing records in the electronic environment. The literature seems to suggest that advocates for the records continuum fail to take into account the fact that paper records continue to grow, even in the electronic environment. In view of this, and also of the fact that in South Africa manual systems are still prevailing, the

life cycle concept perhaps remains more relevant to this study. As Shepherd and Yeo (2003:10) would attest, the life cycle concept still offers a useful framework, hence its continuing relevance in records management. Therefore this study investigated the management of records in the DPLG through the entire life cycle.

1.3   Statement of the problem

As mentioned in section 1.1, government departments in South Africa are required by law to adopt a systematic and organised approach to the management of records. However, in spite of judicial requirements indicating the importance of proper records management practice, there is a proposition that the situation is not reflected in practice (Chachage & Ngulube 2006; Mnjama 2004:6; Ngulube 2003:18; Venter 2007:24). Therefore it is necessary to establish whether government departments are managing records as required by law. According to Abbot (2007) and Venter (2004:1) it would seem that the problem of lack of proper records management in the South African public sector is aggravated by amongst others the following factors:

- paucity of policies in government departments to enforce records management practices

- lack of top management support on records management practices

- lack of awareness of the importance of records management

- lack of skills and training amongst records management practitioners in government departments

- records managers being employed at a low (e.g. Assistant Director or even Chief Registry Clerk) level

- records management units reporting to senior managers that do not have idea about the function

1.4   Research questions

In order to explore the above problem statement, the following research questions were investigated:

- What is the current state of records management practices in the DPLG?

- Are there records management policies, procedures and filing systems in place in the DPLG?

- In what way does the location (in terms of organisational structure) of a Records Management Unit within the DPLG influence records management provision?

- Has the DPLG records management division established a relationship with other information stakeholders both internally and externally, and how does this relationship or lack of it impact on records management in the department?

- Does records management receive support from top management in government departments?

1.5   Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to explore records management trends in the DPLG to establish if the Department was managing records according to legislative requirements. The specific objectives were to:

- establish the current state of records management practices in the DPLG;
- establish whether records management policies, procedures and filing systems have been implemented in the DPLG;
- evaluate the performance of the records management programme in the DPLG;
- asses the level of top management support on records management practices in the DPLG; and
- investigate the impact of the placement of records management unit in the DPLG.

1.6   The importance of the study

As mentioned in section 1.1 most government departments in South Africa are faced with the challenge of managing records properly due to resource cuts, lack of skills, lack of top management support, etc. Therefore this study is important because it may serve as a worthwhile guide for government departments that are faced with challenges of managing records through their life cycle. Ngulube (2003:21) maintains that "research into records management trends and practices can lead to a better understanding of records management problems and challenges facing government departments, as well as providing solutions to what is to be done, and how resources should be used". It is hoped that the study will serve as a catalyst for modification and formulation of records management strategies and policies in the South African public sector. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will facilitate future investigations in records management in South Africa.

The importance of this study is also underlined by Ngulube (2006:106) when stressing that in the South African society the nature of records management work is little known. Moreover, if the recommendations of the study are implemented, they are likely to lead to the improvement of records management practices in the DPLG, as well as in other government departments that are faced with similar problems.

1.7   Delimitations and scope of the study

The study was confined to the national Department of Provincial and Local Government in Pretoria. The population of the study was limited to the DPLG employees only. People contracted by the DPLG on consultancy basis were not covered in this study. Furthermore, the study was limited to records management trends in the DPLG. The trends were covered according to the following themes:

(i)   records management programme;

(ii)   records management policies and procedures;

(iii)   records management responsibilities;

(iv)   records classification system;

(v)   physical storage of records;

(vi)   records control;

(vii)   usage and access of records;

(viii) electronic records management;

(ix)   records management skills and training; and

(x)   retention and disposal of records.

1.8   Definitions of terms

According to Yusof & Chell (1998:96), defining terminology in research is crucial to dispel confusion and for better understanding, both for those

who are new to the subject and those who are familiar with the subject. The key terms and concepts are explained in this section to provide the context in which they are used.

1.8.1 Record

According to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2004:x), a record can be defined as "recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business and kept as evidence of such activity". In this regard, in archival terms a record occurs in four types of recording media, i.e. paper, electronic, audio-visual or microfilm. While all records convey information, not all sources of information are necessarily records. For example, a published book or externally provided database (on- or offline) will not be regarded as a record in archival science terms although information selected from it and reused in a new context may itself become a record (IRMT 1999:7). However, a published book is regarded as a record in librarianship. Langemo (1995:415) defines a record as a "document produced or received by a person or organisation in the course of business." Based on the above definitions, for the purpose of this study, a record is defined as any form of recorded information created, received, maintained and used by an organisation or an individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in

the transaction of business, of which it forms a part or provides evidence. Records arise from actual happenings; they are a 'snapshot' of an action or event. They offer a picture of something that happened. Records have four important qualities or characteristics, that is, they are static in form; they have authority; they are unique and they are authentic as outlined in table 3 below.

Table 3: Characteristics of a record (IRMT 1999:8)

Characteristics	Explanations
Static	Records provide evidence of a particular action in time. During the process of creating a record, a document will go through a phase of development and change. For example, minutes of a meeting will be produced in draft format and reviewed by the members of the committee before being approved. Once this process of creation, or drafting, is finished and the document is considered complete, it may be regarded as a record. In order to provide evidence the record must now be fixed and must not be susceptible to change. If a record is changed or manipulated in some way, it no longer provides evidence of the transaction it originally documented. If someone alters the minutes of a meeting after they have been approved, the minutes can no longer be considered an accurate record of the meeting.
Authority	Signatures, letterheads, seals and office stamps are obvious indicators of the official nature of records. However, not all records have official stamps or seals. The continuous safe keeping of records is one important way to protect their reliability. If the official version of the minutes is filed by the records manager and thus protected from change, the unauthorised version will not form part of the official record. The authority of the official version will remain intact.
Unique	Records are not isolated bits of information. They have meaning because they were generated during a particular transaction or business process. The records make sense within the context of the overall functions and activities of the individual or organisation that created or used them. Their relationship with other records makes them unique.
Authentic	It must be possible to prove that records are what they say they are. The authenticity of a record is derived from the record-keeping system in which it was created or received, maintained and used. A record is authentic if it can be verified that it is now exactly as it was when first transmitted or set aside for retention. For example, a letter received in an office may be date-stamped, registered and placed on a file. The file containing the letter is tracked throughout its use and stored in a records office when not in use.

1.8.2   Records management

Records management is the process by which an organisation manages all the elements of records, whether externally or internally generated and in any format or media type, from their inception/receipt all the way through to their disposal (Ngulube 2000:164; Wallace 1987:2; Yusof & Chell 1999:10). On the other hand, Place and Hyslop (1982:4) view records management as a "process of controlling organisational information from creation through to its final disposition". The thrust of all the above definitions is that records management manages records from creation to disposal. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, records management is defined as the systematic control of records through the entire life cycle. Table 4 below lists and defines the records management processes.

Table 4: Records management processes (Van Garden 2003)

Process	Description
Records capture	- Identifying business information as records and putting them aside for future use and reference - Registering a record by assigning it a unique identifier - Entering, generating or copying metadata into a record profile
Records classification	- For retrieval – assigning a code, number or index term that can be used to retrieve the record - For disposal – assigning a disposal authority that can be used to determine the record's retention period and its eventual disposal (destruction or preservation) - For security – assigning a security classification code to determine who may access the records and under what conditions
Records storage	- Providing a reliable storage location and ensuring that records are not altered or tampered with to protect their integrity
Records preservation	- Implementing a preservation plan that, in the case of e-records, anticipates technology obsolescence and media degradation to protect the long-term usability of the records
Records access	- Providing records users with search, retrieve and display tools - Enforcing records access and security restrictions
Records tracking	- Tracking the current custody and location of records - Maintaining audit trails on the access and use of the records - Establishing version control and differentiating originals from copies
Records disposal	- Appraising groups of records (disposal classes) and assigning them a common retention period and final disposal (preservation or destruction) - Identifying and monitoring the retention period for records and triggering a disposal event when the retention period expires - Transferring records to semi-current or archival repository for storage - Securely destroying records

1.8.3   Record keeping

Record keeping involves making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information (Yusof & Chell 1999:10). Record keeping systems are not simply software applications designed to manage records, they are organised collections of people, policies, procedures, tools and technology. These combinations enable organisational business to be adequately documented. For the purpose of this study, record keeping is defined as the making and maintaining of complete, accurate, reliable evidence of business transactions.

1.8.4   Records creation and capturing

Records creation and capturing involves developing consistent rules to ensure integrity and accessibility, deciding on systems to log and track records, and procedures for registering, classifying and indexing (Yusof & Chell 1999:10). When pen is put to paper or data is generated by the computer or information is captured on film/tape, a record is generated. Doing business sometimes results automatically in a record being created. For example, when one transacts business via email or letter, a record that can subsequently serve as evidence of the transaction is created. Other transactions in which records are routinely generated include the

forming of contracts, submitting draft documents for approval and sending invoices. Other business activities do not, by themselves, result in the creation of records. In these cases a record must be made on purpose because the nature of the work does not automatically result in a record. For example, minutes are deliberately produced to document the decisions made at formal meetings. Other examples of activities or transactions that do not necessarily result in records include making oral decisions and commitments, providing advice over the telephone and receiving funds through the mail.

To function as good evidence over time, records should be managed in official records systems. Such systems maintain and demonstrate the connection between a record and the business it documents. Examples of official records systems include paper-based filing systems and electronic records management systems. "Capture" refers to the actions that are taken to secure a record into an effective records management system, where the record can be maintained and made accessible for as long as it is needed (Shepherd & Yeo 2003:4). Record capturing helps to ensure that records are:

(i)   accessible to all who require them, subject to any restrictions that may apply;

(ii)   controlled and managed in accordance with policy and procedures;

(iii)   secured against tampering, unauthorised access or unlawful

          deletion; and

(iv)   disposed of promptly in accordance with legal authority.

1.9   Research methodology

Hermon and Schwartz, as quoted by Ngulube (2003:194), argue that LIS scholars have the tendency to concentrate on the findings of their research without examining the methodology used. "Describing the methods applied in a study is crucial to enable other researchers to use the study as reference, as well as determining the validity of findings" (Ngulube 2003:194). In this study, a basic research approach was adopted, as the study concentrated more on contributing to the expansion of knowledge in the field of records management. The study is explanatory in the sense that the researcher was exploring records management trends in a particular government department, that is, the DPLG.

1.9.1 Research design

Utilising the case study method, the present study used the DPLG employees where the department represented a single case to provide a detailed evaluation of the management of records in a government department. The research questions guided the design of the research in

terms of what data was needed to answer the questions, where such data was and how such data was to be collected and analysed (Babbie, Haley & Zaino 2003:16; Mitchell & Jolley 2004:180; Mouton 2001:48). Both the quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in order to maximise the theoretical implications of research findings. However, the former was used more comprehensively and supplemented with some qualitative data. Although a combination of research approaches may be frowned upon by some because of the vastly different theoretical backgrounds and methods of data collection in each, a combined approach proved valuable in this study. It led to greater understanding and gave a broad view of the existing records management situation in the DPLG. Neuman (2000:122) suggests that, "the best option is for a range of approaches that will allow flexibility in understanding problems, and offering multiple insights into their solutions". Each approach adds something essential to the ultimate findings.

1.9.2 Data collection tools

This study used a combination of data collection tools with the self-administered questionnaire as the principal instrument for data collection. Self-administered questionnaires are easily distributed to a large number of people and they often allow anonymity (Anderson & Poole 2001:17; Mitchell & Jolley 2004:180). However, the method relies on other people

to complete the questionnaire. This made it necessary for the researcher to supplement it with physical observation and interviews. In research, the use of various methods to collect the same data or triangulation is highly commendable (Nachmias & Nachmias 1996:226). Similar studies carried out elsewhere by Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000); Ngulube (2003); Chinyemba (2003); Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005); Makhura (2005) and Ngoepe (2007) also made use of a combination of these research tools in varying ways. For example, Ngulube's study used questionnaire as the key source of data supplemented by interviews and observation.

1.9.3 Population and sampling

Babbie, Haley and Zaino (2003:112) describe a population for a study as that group (usually of people) about whom the researcher wants to draw inferences. However, with limited time and money, researchers are unlikely to study the entire body of relevant facts about the whole group of people under investigation. Therefore the findings and conclusions in survey research are based on information gathered from a limited number of people from whom generalisations can be made about the whole number. This selected group from the population is called a sample (Nachmias & Nachmias 1996:201). When choosing a sample, the researcher often has to prepare a comprehensive list of all units in the target population which is called a sampling frame (Leedy & Ormond

2005:183). The population for this study was all the DPLG employees. The DPLG internal telephone directory that listed 338 employees and their designations according to directorates was used as a sampling frame to select the sample.

This study used a stratified random sampling since the population from which the sample was drawn did not constitute a homogeneous group. The reasons for this were as a result of the following:

- The population was comprised of 80 senior managers, 22 Information Management staff (Records Management, IT and Library staff) and 236 other general staff members. The assumption was that these sub-populations could have different ways of managing their records. There would be more general staff members, which would mean if one did a simple random sample or systematic sample, Information Management staff would not be adequately represented. The result would be skewed, as general staff members would be overrepresented.

- With stratified random sampling, the researcher does not leave the representativeness of the sample entirely to chance. Instead, the researcher makes sure that the sample is similar to the population in certain respects. The attraction of this technique is that it reduces the standard error by controlling a proportion of the variance (Sapsford 1999:70). A stratified sample was obtained by separating

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the population elements into three sub-stratums, viz. Information Management staff, senior managers and other staff members. A simple random sample was then taken from each stratum and the sub-samples were combined to form the total sample of 100. The sample in each stratum was taken in proportion to the size of the stratum. Out of a sample of 100, 6% would be Information Management staff, 24% would be senior managers and 70% would be other general staff members. The first step of arriving at that was to find the total number of the population (338) and calculate the percentage in each group as follows:

- % Information Management staff = (22 / 338) x 100 = 6%

- % senior managers = (80 / 338) x 100 = 24%

- % other staff members = (236 / 338) x 100 = 70%

All these factors indicate that the researcher is more likely to get a valid result if a stratified sample is used. By using stratified sampling, the researcher has all the advantages of random sampling and he does not need to sample nearly as many people.

1.10 Structure of the study

The outline below represents the key issues covered in this study:

Chapter one sets the stage by giving a general background, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, delimitations of the study, research methodology and definitions of key concepts.

Chapter two opens with an overview of the historical trends of records and records management. It also examines the role of records management, particularly within the public sector, and discusses the strategies to manage records as a strategic resource.

Chapter three discusses records management issues in the South Africa public sector. It opens with a historical overview of the development of record keeping in South Africa by the State Archives Service (SAS). It further discusses the current state of record keeping as well as the state of access to records in South Africa. It closes with the discussion of the initiatives in South Africa for the management of records in governmental bodies.

Chapter four gives an overview of the state of records management practices at the DPLG. It also touches on the driving forces for the introduction of records management practice at the DPLG.

Chapter five presents the interpretation of the results, i.e. data gathered from the survey, observation and content analysis are analysed and the results discussed.

Chapter six presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1   Introduction

The face of records management has changed tremendously. Records management has evolved from a paper-based function responsible for the storage of an organisation's miscellaneous documents, to one concerned with the management of specified internal records in a multitude of media (De Wet & Du Toit 2000:74). Despite these changes, the basic underlying principles of record keeping are still of paramount importance. The records should still be created to support and fully chronicle all business, legal, fiscal, social and historical needs. Efficient and effective service provision, accountability, security and integrity, completeness, etc. are still core issues that need to be addressed, whether in hard- or soft-copy environments (Pember 1998:64).

In view of the above, this chapter gives a brief overview of the historical trends of records and records management. It also examines the role of records management, particularly within the public sector, and discusses the strategies to manage records as a resource. It is worth mentioning that in discussing the importance of records and records management, the discussion will overlap in some instances.

2.2 A brief historical overview of records and records management worldwide

To fully understand the enormity and significance of records management, both in its present context and what it purports for the future, the first thing to understand is its historical foundation. The concept of record keeping is not new. The records management profession is as old as the first societal groups, because the need of a memory arises naturally in any organisation. The most ancient forms of memory were oral and the most ancient keepers of records were the remembrances, i.e. individuals entrusted with the task of memorising rules, contracts, sentences and transmitting them by recitation to their juniors (Duranti 1993:30). The frailty of human memory and the growing complexity of administration gave birth to the graphic representations of events in pictorial form (Maedke, Robek & Brown 1974:19).

People have kept records in some form since the earliest development of writing. However, simply recording information or having records is not the same as managing records. There have been major inventions that have had a significant impact on records management, e.g. writing, paper, typewriter, microfilming, computer, etc. The first major invention occurred in ancient times when writing was conceived and detailed records were kept (Krevolin 1986:2; Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:6). Very little, if any,

management of those records was done (or needed) because the volume of information did not require it (Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:59).

Business records originated in ancient Mesopotamia, the land between the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. Priests, who were the administrators in the Mesopotamian economy, kept detailed records of royal activities, crops, stock and commercial transactions (Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:59). "Cuneiform writing, wedge-shaped characters impressed upon soft clay tablets, was used to record the activities of the time" (Krevolin 1986:2). John Geise, as quoted by Krevolin (1986:2) details the management of these ancient records as follows:

> "*After the document has been written on the tablet, it was imprinted with a seal which identified the writer. Then the tablet was baked in order to preserve it. If the tablet were a letter, it would be encased in a light covering of clay on which were written the address and any other desired information; after this it would be baked again. When received, the envelope could easily be broken and the message read. Important documents were frequently treated in this way, with a summary of their contents written on the outside for filing or reference purposes. Of the thousands of such documents that have been recovered, the majority relate to business transactions and royal activities.*"

It is interesting to note that these unwieldy clay tablets were the forerunner of present-day, sophisticated electronic equipment used for managing records. These business records, predating the literature of the ancient world, facilitated business transactions and made the effective administration of this ancient civilisation possible.

Written records were mandated by Babylonian law for all business transactions (Krevolin 1986:2). Written records eventually spread worldwide. The Phoenicians, the great traders of ancient world, kept detailed business records and developed a simple system of double-entry bookkeeping. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans were also commercial traders who kept detailed records of transactions (Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:7). As business flourished in Europe during the Middle Ages, Italian merchants helped to develop accounting techniques that spread internationally (Feather 1990; Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:58).

In the seventeenth century, records were handwritten by clerks. So much time was required to make a record of a business transaction that merchants often kept mental notes. Other records, such as court records were kept well. As the population increased and geographical boundaries expanded, the scope of business activities increased. The population became industrialised and records moved from written to printed form. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg 550 years ago changed society in major way. The need to keep even more records and

to manage them more efficiently became apparent as a result of the invention (Lundgren & Lundgren 1989:7).

As records grew in volume, repositories for their safe keeping were established. Within these repositories records were preserved and arranged in order to facilitate their access and retrieval (Abbot 1999:2). Shortly after the French Revolution, the National Assembly in France established what was to become the first national archives repository in any country (Hare & McLeod 1997:1; Kirkwood 1996:13). This was in recognition that the protection of civil and personal rights is enshrined in public records and that public records define the relationship between the people and government. In 1934, Theodore Schellenberg of the National Archives of the USA invented the life cycle concept (Shepherd & Yeo 2003:5). This concept provided the cornerstone on which modern records management is built. The reader is referred to section 1.2.1 for more comprehensive information on the life cycle concept.

The huge logistical operations of the Second World War (WWII) were responsible for an explosion of paperwork, in both the private and public sectors. This resulted in an increased need for individuals who could establish the requirements and devise the policies, strategies and systems so that information could be recorded and stored and made available when it was needed in an appropriate format.

Widespread use of the computer for record keeping by governments worldwide developed in the 1950s (Kemoni & Wamukoya 2000). The proliferation of electronic records presents national archives around the globe with a unique opportunity for growth and development. For example, computers offer speed, precision, diversity, flexibility and a rich and comprehensive documentation of process, and it is no wonder that they have been so quickly embraced around the world as a critical information management and communication tool. However, ever since the 1950s, archivists, academics and records managers have been concerned about the fragility and impermanence of electronic records. Research and development initiatives during the last two decades (1980s and 1990s) have contributed partial solutions to these challenges but much more remains to be done. By the 1980s most archivists, academics and records managers acknowledged that managing and preserving electronic records were among the most challenging problems facing their profession (Blouin 1996:1). For example, computer systems change rapidly and there is no guarantee that today's software will be readable by tomorrow's hardware (Mullon 2004:7; Ngoaketsi 2003:31). The other problem is that of 'media deterioration' (Cloonan & Sanett 2002:70). These records are by nature fragile and impermanent, for example, they can be written, rewritten, cut and pasted, send to the other end or deleted (Ngoepe 2003:47).

The practice of using computers has grown tremendously with the norm now being for almost every worker to have a PC on his/her desk. Today the computer is performing all the traditional functions of records management and managing records in ways that were not feasible before the computer age. The proliferation of information and communication technology and the perceived shortcomings of the records life cycle motivated scholars to suggest a records continuum model in the field of records management in the 1990s (Upward 2005:84). Many archival and records management theorists such as Cook, Upward, Mckemmish and Reed favoured the records continuum theory because they argued that it combined records management and archival activities in the management of recorded information (Chachage & Ngulube 2006). The reader is referred to section 1.2.1 for more information on the records continuum concept. However, as discussed in section 1.2.2, this study investigated the management of records through out their entire life cycle.

It is clear that from the time records were preserved on the walls of caves and on earthenware jars to today's preservation and control of electronic records, there was an intervening period of tremendous progress. Throughout history, innovations and inventions have affected the way in which records were managed. On the other hand, the need for better records management encouraged innovation and the resulting inventions have altered the ways in which records were created and managed. As a

result, today the vast majority of records are 'born electronic' or converted into electronic formats, for example, through imaging. These records, whether on paper or electronic, need to be managed properly for the value they have in organisations and the public at large.

2.3   The need and value of records

An appropriate place to begin is by exploring the issue of why records are created and why they need to be managed. Records are created by all sorts of people and institutions as a result of an activity being undertaken. In the course of doing business, records are created through a variety of government activities such as vehicle registration, procurement contract transactions, etc. For example, if the Department of Public Works is responsible for buildings maintenance and as part of its responsibilities it might create architectural plans for a new building. It might also take photographs of that building as it is built and it might create minutes of meetings and reports at various stages of construction. Therefore records can either be created internally or be received from an external source (Thomassen 2002:375).

Creating records is a fundamental part of doing business. Business processes that involve the creation and transmission of documents routinely result in the creation of records as evidence of those

processes. Records are also created to document what was decided or done. They are a means of providing evidence of business activity or of remembering events and transactions that have occurred. There are legal and regulatory requirements for creating and keeping records. In this regard, as indicated by Wamukoya (2000:25), the need for records and the role of record keeping operates in three distinct domains, i.e. the business domain, the accountability domain and cultural domain.

(i)   Business domain: government departments need records to conduct their business and to support further service delivery.

(ii)   Accountability domain: records are an indispensable ingredient in organisational accountability, both internal (such as reporting relationships) and external (to regulators, customers, shareholders and the law). Records show whether the organisation or individuals in it have met defined legal, organisational, social or moral obligations in specific cases. In all accountability forums, records are consulted as proof of activity by senior managers, auditors, etc.

(iii)   Cultural domain: demands that records are preserved and made available to society for posterity and for historical research. This provides the basis for writing a country's cultural and national history. This is when records are used for any purpose beyond the support of the business activity which created them or for accountability for that business activity. Records may be regarded as becoming part of the resources available to society to account

for its collective behaviour. Records function as the memory of individuals, organisations and society.

Trustworthy records contain reliable evidence of decisions taken, rights acquired and commitments made. Without records, no assessment can be made of whether individuals and public organisations have actually carried out the actions and transactions that they had to execute, whether they have performed these actions and whether they have done the things which they were not supposed to do (Thomassen 2002:376).

In the above context, a distinction is made between the primary and secondary functions of records. The primary functions of records are the functions that the creator had in mind when creating them and in particular the evidential functions (NARS 2004:34; Thomassen 2002:376). The primary or administrative value is the current value that records have for the office from which they originated. In their primary function records play an active role: they document and regulate social relations. These records are used:

- for administrative and accounting purposes;

- to ensure logical, responsible and consistent actions;

- for the protection of the legal and financial rights and obligations of the office of origin; and

- to ensure proper control of activities.

The secondary function of records is the function which the creator generally does not have in mind and which records only acquire once they have fulfilled their primary functions: the cultural-historical function or the function of source for historical research (NARS 2004:34; Thomassen 2002:376). It is the long-term practical and cultural value that records have for the public and researchers at large. The practical value lies in the use of records in family history studies, proof of property and other rights and evidence in court. From the cultural value, records can be used for research into, amongst others, political, social and economic matters. In other words, records can be used to describe or reconstruct an event or situation of the past.

Cowling (2003:2) further identified two main reasons motivating organisations to manage records, i.e. financial and legal value. An organisation needs long-term documentary evidence of the way in which funds were obtained, allocated, controlled and expended (budget). This includes budget records, which provide evidence of how income and expenditure were planned, and various accounting records documenting financial transactions. Legal records provide evidence of contractual obligations, duties and privileges agreed upon by governments, organisations or individuals. They provide a record of matters such as property titles, charitable status and other legal and civil rights.

Flowing from the above discussion, it may be appropriate to indicate that records exist in order to remind organisations of their previous activities. It can therefore be argued that records have administrative, legal, financial and research value. Hounsome (2001:1) noted that while records management may be regarded as just a mere filing, it plays a tremendous role in the governance of any organisation. According to him records management objectives usually fall into one of three categories:

(i)   Service (effective and efficient);

(ii)   Profit (or cost-avoidance); and

(iii)   Social (moral, ethical and legal) responsibility.

It is clear from the above discussion that the impact that proper records management has on service delivery cannot be over-estimated. Instituting a RM programme results in both immediate and long-term benefits to the organisations as outlined above. A RM programme is not generally an organisation's primary business and even though a RM programme does not usually generate income, the following are the most important reasons to set up a good RM programme in a government department:

2.3.1 Record keeping and information retrieval

Time spent on searching for missing or misfiled records is non-productive. It has been estimated that staff spend as much as 10% of their time at

work searching for information, a figure which could be improved upon through the timely removal of duplicate and unnecessary records, the standardisation of a filing system and the application of meaningful descriptions of information resources often referred to as metadata (Egbuji 1999:93; Gill 1993:2). A good RM programme can help any organisation upgrade its record keeping systems so that information retrieval is enhanced with correspondence improvements in office efficiency and productivity. A well designed and operated filing system with an effective index can facilitate retrieval and deliver information to users as quickly as they need it (NARS 2003b:1).

Where the organisation is small and few records are produced, it goes without saying that it will be easy to trace a particular record. However, the larger the organisation and the more voluminous the records, the more difficult will be the process. It is therefore necessary for the records to be stored according to a specific logical system so that they can be retrieved, not only by the person who filed them, but also by anybody else (NARS 2000:1). In this regard staff members will spent more time working on information rather than looking for it.

2.3.2 The role of record keeping in demonstrating accountability and good governance

"Accountability implies that organisations and individuals should be able to explain their actions to others in a transparent and justifiable manner" (Ngulube 2004:2). To be accountable in the sense expected by modern governance is no easy matter. Accountability requires that the systems of reporting and controls in the organisation are appropriate and transparent. At the base of many of these systems lies the basic system of record keeping (Ngoepe 2004:3). The mechanisms for accountability within the government cannot work properly without proper records management practices. Records are the primary means by which governmental bodies explain their decisions and prove what they have done. A government department's ability to function efficiently and give account of its actions could be negatively affected if proper records management practices are not applied. To this end, it is imperative that a government department should take responsibility for ensuring that its records management practices are aligned with the broader principles of good governance (NARS 2004:13).

Good governance according to Lipchak (2002:13) refers to "how government undertakes functions and activities in an efficient, transparent and responsive manner in which citizens participate and engage with

government in pursuit of their mutual social, political and economic objectives". Good governance therefore refers to the norms and values that a government takes into account as it governs. This suggests that the government governs on behalf of the public that gave it the mandate and should be transparent to enable the public to know how it functions. To enable governmental bodies to function properly, government has a responsibility to ensure that they create and have access to complete and credible records to enable the decision-making process to be in the best interest of the public. The effective management of records ensures that sound decisions can be made based on full, accurate and up-to-date information, and ensures that the rationale for, and the impact of, those decisions can be traced, scrutinised and justified as necessary (Egbuji 1999:93).

2.3.3 The role of records management in exposing corruption and fraud

Poor record keeping affects the entire accounting function, with the result that reporting and auditing may become virtually impossible (IRMT 1999:37). "Without proper records management, fraud cannot be proven, meaningful audits cannot be carried out, and government actions are not open to review." (Health Service Circular 1999:9; Mnjama 2004:4). Virtually all approaches to improving financial management rely on more efficient use of information but these approaches cannot succeed if

financial records are badly managed (Egbuji 1999:99). In this regard the primary value of a records management is to act as a control system that reinforces other control systems such as internal and external audits.

2.3.4 Records management and decision-making

In order to make appropriate decisions, managers must have appropriate information. "In today's business environment, the manager that has the relevant data first often wins, either by making the decision ahead of competition, or in case of a government department, by making a better, more informed decision" (Venter 2004:4). A RM programme can help to ensure that managers and executives have the information they need when they need it. Decisions are only as good as the information on which they are based. "To make professional decisions, managers should have background information (documentation provided by records) to use as a basis for evaluating the alternatives (forecasting past experiences, consequences experienced by other organisation, provided by records) and means for validating the decisions (feedback and control mechanism provided by records)" (IRMT 1999:15).

2.3.5 Record keeping and the preservation of corporate memory

The records constitute what might be termed "corporate memory" of the organisation, for it is impossible for officials to remember everything (Kirkwood 2002:3). Every business day, the records created by the organisation could become background data for future management decisions and planning, and also future scholars may use these records to research the working of the organisation. Each person's memory of an event is different. Therefore an organisation cannot depend on the elusive memory and conflicting recollections. Even if someone was capable of remembering everything, there is still the problem of staff changes and that later arrivals must know what occurred previously in order to carry on sensibly and purposefully, and therefore avoid reinventing the wheel. There has to be evidence of what was done and how it was done. In other words, records help to establish communications between the past and future generations (Griffin 1964; Van Albada 2001:39).

Without a proper RM programme that controls records through the earlier phase of their life cycle, those of archival value cannot readily be identified and safeguarded so that they can take their place in due course as part of the nation's historical and cultural heritage (Ford 1990:22; IRMT 1999:17). According to Pember (1998:22) the most important and the most interesting records should be selected for preservation as part of the

national archives, and the availability and quality of these archives depend on the quality of governmental bodies' record keeping.

2.3.6 The role of records management in minimising litigation risk

Organisations without a RM programme run the risk of destroying records too soon and consequently of not being able to produce them when legally required, or else they adopt the costly practice of keeping everything forever – a practice that can also backfire in legal proceeding. The organisation is then required to produce everything it has relating to the proceedings, not just what it is legally required to have. At the very least, producing all related records is time-consuming and expensive (Diamond 1995:3).

2.3.7 Records management and compliance with legislation

Most countries have archival and records management laws that establish the need for effective records management and provide the authority to dispose of records, e.g. Canada's Library and Archives Act (Act No. 11 of 2004), South Africa's National Archives and Records Service Act (Act No. 43 of 1996), etc. Other countries have open records, right to know, or freedom of information laws that give the public the explicit right to access government records, e.g. South Africa's Promotion of Access to

Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000); the United States' Freedom of Information Act (Act No. 5 U.S.C 552, as amended), etc. Organisations are legally obliged to create certain records; they are also required to retain certain categories of records for specified periods. Therefore a RM programme is essential to ensure that these legal obligations can be met.

2.3.8 The role of records management in fostering professionalism

A government department with files stashed on top of file cabinets and in boxes everywhere creates a poor working environment (Hare 1998:115). The perceptions of the public, and the 'image' and 'morale' of the staff, though hard to quantify in cost-benefit terms, may be among the best reasons to establish a good RM programme. Nearly all business functions need to be documented to record and regulate the activity of the organisation. The importance of this activity was recognised thousands of years ago when marks were made on clay tablets to record sales and taxes as discussed in section 2.2.

2.4 Risks associated with poor records management

There are many risks associated with poor records management. How well an organisation's records are managed will impact on certain business and legal risks including:

- Loss of revenue, assets, etc. (financial risk)

- Loss of legal rights and failure to comply with legislation (legal risk)

- Exposure to penalties in litigations and investigations

- Violations of the law (compliance risks)

- Staff time is wasted searching for lost or mislaid documents (knowledge management risk)

All of the above risks can negatively affect the reputation of an organisation (Egbuji 1999:100). All of these risks lead to increased cost, delays and anxiety among staff. They may lead to loss of stakeholder goodwill, litigation, loss of information or process quality, etc.

2.5   Managing records as a strategic resource

Although records constitute a vital resource as indicated above, they continue to be neglected in many government departments (Chinyemba & Ngulube 2005; Mnjama 2004:6; Ngulube 2004:6; Wallace 2004:6). Maintaining and controlling records in a government department is itself a costly operation because of the large expenditure on personnel, equipment, etc. (Wallace 1987:54). The greatest need in government departments or any other organisation is to develop strategies for managing records as a strategic resource for competitive advantage. As with any other business activity, it is important to devise a strategy for the

introduction of records management into a government department. It must be seen as a means of furthering the aims and objectives of the department and as making a direct contribution to the critical success of business. "It is important that records management should be seen as a dynamic activity which develops along with the business and changes" (Diamond 1995:3).

According to ISO 15489 (2001), for a RM programme to succeed, it must be closely aligned to the needs of the organisation and in particular to the organisation's strategic and policy objectives. ISO 15489 (2001) provides a practical design and implementation methodology which supports the introduction of a sustainable RM programme to meet organisational requirements. This ISO emphasises that this methodology is valid both for the establishment of a RM programme as a whole and for the development of particular systems within it. The effective RM programme must begin with a records survey, supported by well-defined policies and procedures, a team of well qualified and competent staff and support from top management (Mnjama 2004:9).

It would seem from the discussion above that developing a RM programme to meet business needs is a difficult task, so much so that it is common for records management projects to exceed scheduled completion dates or to not be completed at all. One strategy for improving

or developing a proper RM programme is to divide it into several steps, each with a well-defined goal and set-off tasks to accomplish as shown in table 5 below. People within the organisation can develop RM systems or organisations can opt for outsourcing. Outsourcing allows an organisation to focus on what it does best and delegate other functions to consultants with expertise.

Table 5: An overview of RM system development (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:32)

```
              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
              │    RM SYSTEMS INVESTIGATION           │
              │        Understand problem             │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
              │      RM SYSTEMS ANALYSIS              │
              │        Understand solutions           │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
              │       RM SYSTEMS DESIGN               │
              │     Select and plan best solution     │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
              │    RM SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION           │
              │      Place solution into effect       │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘

              ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
              │  RM SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE AND           │
              │           REVIEW                      │
              │     Evaluate results of solution      │
              └──────────────────────────────────────┘
```
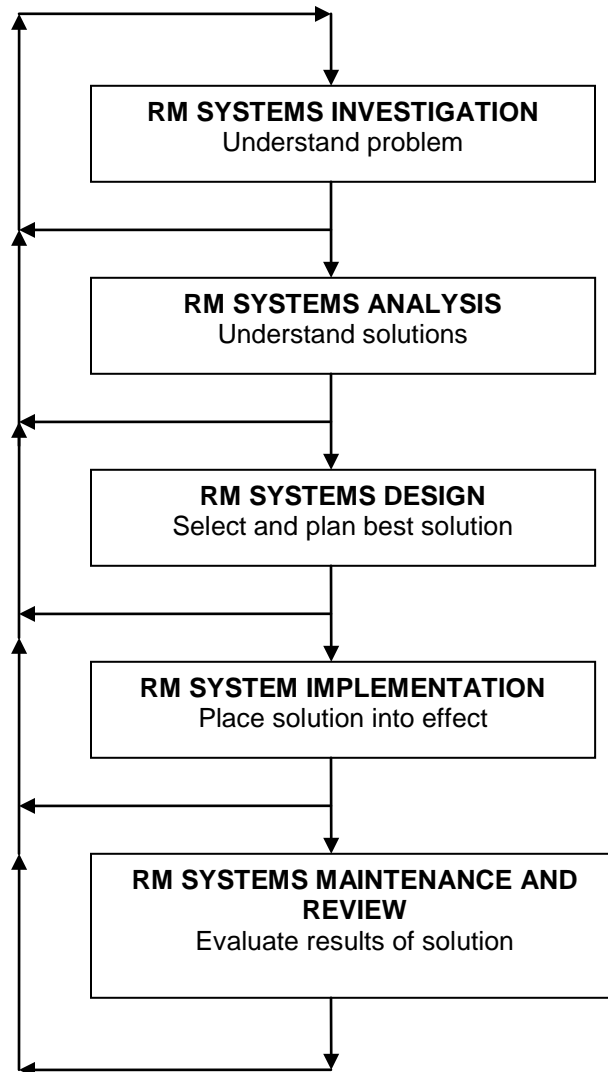
2.5.1 Preliminary investigation and records survey

As noted by Shepherd and Yeo (2003:6) no records management programme can be established, maintained or improved without an understanding of the organisation's existing records management system. Whether a government department is embarking on a RM programme or if it simply intends to improve the existing one, the starting point is to gain an understanding of the department's role, purpose and environment (ISO 15489-1:2001, clause 8.4). This involves examining why the department exists, what products or services it offers, how it operates in the present, how it plans to operate in the future and what changes to its operations and methods have been made in the past. It also involves an investigation of external factors affecting the way in which the department operates, including its economic, political, legal, regulatory and social environment (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:32).

The next step will be to undertake a records survey in order to establish the extent to which records are contributing to an organisation's objectives (Diamond 1995:3; Mnjama 2004:9). Without this information it will be virtually impossible to plan for the RM programme. The information gathered at this stage can be utilised to develop retention schedules, identify vital records, justify the appointment of a records manager, assign responsibilities, design a records management policy, etc.

2.5.2 Identification of strategies for satisfying records requirements

The next step when developing a RM programme is to gain the support of senior managers. It is essential to involve senior managers from the start, so that they support the programme, endorse the policy and provide resources. Senior managers often feel records management programme is not cost-effective (Diamond 1995:4). Without the support of senior management the project is doomed to fail. One of the first steps is to educate them in this area by explaining what records management is and the benefits it provides. While records management is not a profit centre it does save money through greater productivity, time saving, space saving, etc. (Wallace 1987:55)

Responsibilities for RM must also be defined and assigned at this stage. The primary responsibility should be assigned to a records manager who may be supported by other staff. Consideration must be given to the location of the RM service within the organisational structure. It may be an independent unit or a part of a larger department such as information management, legal services or central administration (Kennedy & Schauder 1994:15). Since RM must be adopted across functional and departmental boundaries, and needs formal links with other business functions such as information technology and compliance management, a policy group can be established to contribute to the further development of

the RM policy and act as a forum for communication between records experts and operational managers (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:32; Thomas, Schubert & Lee 1983:60).

2.5.3 Systems investigation and design

The goal of systems investigation is to gain a clear understanding of the problem to be solved or opportunity to be addressed (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:33). The next step is to ascertain whether the problem is worth solving. If the decision is to continue with the solution, the next step, system analysis, defines the problem and opportunities of existing system.

When appropriate strategies have been agreed upon, RM systems can be designed in detail. According to ISO 15489 (2001) designs should be based on the requirements and strategies that have been identified and must take into account the size and resources of the organisation, and the extent to which its operations are concentrated on one site or geographically dispersed. At an operational level, systems must be designed so that they comply with regulatory or best practice requirements for health and safety in the workplace.

A single, organisation-wide RM system may be feasible in a small organisation, but in larger organisations separate systems will probably be

needed in different functional areas (Mnjama 2004:9; Wallace 1987:56). While common models should be used where appropriate, it is also important that each system should be designed to match the needs of the relevant business processes and activities. When technological solutions are to be employed for record-capturing, the relevant functionality should be built into operational systems as far as possible (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:32). If operational staff members are going to be required to follow specific procedures, instructions can be incorporated into guidelines which have a wider scope, for example, RM rules about the capturing of email messages can be included in corporate guidelines on email use, or instructions for managing records of a particular business process can be included in procedural manuals relating to the process concerned (Venter 2004:6).

2.5.4 Planning and managing implementation

When the prerequisites are in place decisions must be taken about priorities for implementation. New systems may have to be introduced in stages, allowing time for piloting and testing each component before full implementation (Wallace 1987:56). Existing systems may have to be partly or wholly restructured, "while it is sometimes possible to implement a new system independently of any need to resolve problems inherited

from past practice, more usually existing arrangements must be integrated into the new design" (Venter 2004:6).

Priorities will vary according to organisational needs, but in general it is unwise to attempt the implementation of new systems for electronic records until paper systems are in good order. Government officials sometimes assume that the introduction of IT is all that is needed to solve problems relating to the managing of paper records, but if the paper records are in disarray, automation may simply transfer the problem to a different medium (Stairs & Reynolds 2006:32).

Although higher management support is essential for implementing the programme, the backing and cooperation from the users are also needed. Records management scholars have observed that the biggest problem for most records management change initiatives is convincing others to implement it (Mbakile 2007:4). Most implementation programmes fail because implementation neglects the most crucial part – the human factor. According to Katuu (2007:28) the human factor could cost up to 80% of the project's costs in training. The introduction of new systems for managing records will have an impact on all members of staff who create or use records. Users can and do sometimes sabotage management-approved programmes when they perceive those programmes as being unworthy of their support (Diamond 1995:5). The most basic cause for any

user resistance to a RM programme is fear – the user's fear of losing control of their records or fear that a critical record will not be found when it is needed. Alleviating this fear is a matter of training and user involvement (NARS 2003a:40). However, the issue extends beyond training into wider areas of change management. Records managers have a delicate task to perform in working with staff members who are often very possessive about 'their' records and may be apprehensive or unsympathetic when RM systems are devised and standards imposed.

2.5.5 Post-implementation review

No project will be complete without a post-implementation review. Experience has shown that frequent minor maintenance of a records management programme, if done properly, can prevent major failures. Some of the reasons for RM programme maintenance according to Stairs and Reynolds (2006:646) include the following:

- Changes in business processes

- New requests from stakeholders, users and managers

- Government regulations

- Additions to, or relinquishing of, functions to other organisations,

After implementation the programme and each of its components must be reviewed and evaluated. The purpose of such reviews is to monitor

progress and measure success so that senior management can be informed of the results and revisions to the programme can be made as necessary. Review and evaluation should also be ongoing processes. Policies and procedures should be examined regularly to ensure that they still meet the organisation's requirements (NARS 2003a:40). Targets may be set and performance measured against them.

Successful implementation of principles and strategies for record keeping will require the informed support of senior management of all organisations. All individuals in organisations should be involved in record keeping in that they are responsible for ensuring that evidence of their business activities is created. From there, the record keeping professionals should be responsible for ensuring that records are successfully managed for as long as they are required (Wamukoya 1999:7).

There are two types of reviews, i.e. event-driven review (review triggered by a problem or opportunity such as a merger between organisations (for example, the merger between UNISA and TSA)). With this approach an organisation makes changes to a system even when small problems or opportunities occur. Although continuous improvement can keep the system current and responsive, doing the repeated design and implementation can be both time-consuming and expensive (Mnjama

2004:9). A time-driven review is performed after a specified amount of time, for example, every six months or once a year. With this approach an existing RM system is monitored on a schedule. If problems or opportunities are uncovered, a new system development cycle may be initiated. The purpose of system review is to check and modify the system so that it continues to meet the changing business needs (Venter 2004:6). Although user satisfaction can be difficult to quantify, feedback is very important.

2.6   Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that there are considerable benefits to introducing a departmental RM programme. These include the enhancement of service delivery, compliance with legislation, a reduction in both the staff time and physical space needed for managing and exploiting records, and the foundation of an information-rich department able to maximise and exploit the knowledge it contains. The list of benefits provided by a comprehensive RM programme is a formidable one. Altogether, these benefits meet the dual goals of increased efficiency and reduced expense; and therefore they justify the cost and effort required to establish a RM programme.

Undoubtedly, the absence of practices to organise and dispose of records can seriously damage the government's ability to be accountable, adopt policies, make decisions and deliver services. Records are therefore both a government's resource and asset. As a resource records provide information and as an asset they provide documentation.

CHAPTER THREE

AN OVERVIEW OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

3.1   Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the role of records management in the public sector in general. This chapter specifically discusses records management practices in South Africa, with a focus on record keeping by the State. It opens with a historical overview of the development of record keeping in South Africa by the State Archives Service (SAS). It further discusses the current state of record keeping as well as the state of access to records in South Africa. It closes with the discussion of existing records management initiatives by the South African Government.

3.2   A brief overview of historical trends of record keeping in South Africa

The historical trends of records management in South Africa can be traced through the history of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. Harris (1997) gives a detailed account of the history of archives and records management in South Africa. He argues that there have been records in South Africa for as long as humans had inhabited the country. Indeed, South Africa can brag about well-preserved records in the form of

rock paintings by the Khoisan and signs patterned in dwellings going back thousands of years. However, as in line with the definition of a record in section 1.8.1, this study was only concerned with recorded information that appears in four media, i.e. paper, electronic, audio-visual and microfilm.

It was during the colonisation of the Cape that traditional paper-based records became prevalent in what is today known as South Africa (Harris 2000:6; Ngulube 2003:152; Ngulube 2006:117). As a result, the Cape Archives Repository (CAR) contains the oldest record of the country generated by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC)/Verenigde Oost-Indiesche Compagnie (VOC) which governed the Cape from 1652 to 1795. The oldest record in the holdings is a resolution created on board Van Riebeeck's ship "the Dromedaries" dated 30 December 1651, therefore written a few months before arrival at the Cape (Van der Merwe 2006; Verster 2007:19). This consisted of the deliberations of Jan van Riebeeck and his advisors (Verster 2007:19). According to J van der Merwe (personal communication, 30 August 2006) the document is housed on the third floor of the eight-storey building of the Cape Archives Repository.

In the days of the DEIC (1652 – 1795) and the three years of the Batavian Republic (1803 – 1806), each of the government offices controlled its own

records (State Archives Service 1987). During the second British rule of the Cape (1806 – 1901), the custody of records was a function of the Colonial Secretary, or the Secretary and Registrar of Records. In 1876 the Cape government appointed an ad hoc commission to investigate how the government records were managed (Technikon South Africa 1990). The most important of the five instructions to the Commission was to "collect, examine, classify, index and make accessible" the records of the Colony (State Archives Service 1987).

Before the establishment of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, each of the four Colonies had made provision in some way or the other for the custody and care of records. The incorporation of the four former colonies (Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal [ZAR]) in the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, amongst other things, also resulted in the establishment of a single archives service under the Department of Interior. This led to the incorporation of the four separate archives services under central control of a Chief Archivist (Harris 2000:6). In 1922 the Public Archives Act (Act No. 9 of 1922) was passed. The Act was brief and relatively simple (See appendix A for the Public Archives Act of 1922). From the outset the SAS custodial mandate embraced the records of all central and provincial government offices (Harris 2000:6).

The period 1953 to 1969 was an era of rapid development and expansion – a distinctive tendency in government administration after the Second World War (WWII). Post-war expansion of government institutions and activities led to the formation of more records and a greater need for the destruction of ephemeral records. The result was that the work could no longer be managed on an ad hoc basis by the Archives Commission. Consequently, after the 1953 Archives Act became operative, staff of the Archives Service commenced to perform an appraisal of government records as it was required by the Act. This appraisal effort assumed a lot of proportions to the extent that on 1 October 1957 a special section known as the Liaison Section with a staff complement of three was created in the office of the Chief Archivist to manage the work (Harris 2002:70; SAS 1987). The State Archives was transferred to the Culture portfolio in the 1960s.

Although initially attention was exclusively directed to appraisal, the officials also had to cope with investigating file plans. Because the maintenance of an effective file plan and the granting of standing disposal authority go hand in hand, the Section was increasingly approached for guidance and support when new file plans were compiled in government offices. The experience acquired by the Section in advising government offices in this regard led to the transfer of this function from the offices of the Public Service Commission to the State Archives Service in 1960. At

the same time the name of the Section was changed to Records Management Section, a name that is retained until today (2009) (NARS 2006:3).

Systematic inspections of archives still in the custody of government offices also commenced in 1966 and towards the end of 1969 considerable progress had been made in the achievement of efficient records management (Abbot 1999:71; Harris 2002:70). The SAS' involvement with records which are still in the custody of government offices (custody and care, file plans, disposal, etc.) gradually gave rise to a need for training of staff who are responsible for the handling of, and control over, records in such offices.

Abbot (2007:7) argues that while the SAS has a long historical role in managing government records, this role has not been without problems. "The work of SAS was adversely affected by the scarcity of funds, staff, and overall vision as well as its relatively low status within the Department of Arts and Culture" (Abbot 2007:7; Callinicos & Odendaal 1996:40). This has particularly been evidenced by the unauthorised destruction of records by, for example, the former South African Police, State Security Secretariat, etc. (Harris 2000:9; Harris 2002:72). This lack of resources and the low status of the SAS have continued with the change of the Service into the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

As a result, public servants view the NARS with little consideration as compared to other institutions which are independent, such as the Auditor-General of South Africa, South African Human Rights Commission, etc.

3.3 The management of electronic records in South Africa

Widespread use of the computer for record keeping by the state developed in the 1970s. In 1974 the SAS issued a circular to government offices (see appendix B for the circular) pointing out the fact that records in electronic format were public records and should be dealt with in terms of the Archives Act (Kirkwood 1994:8). It was only in the early 1990s that the SAS began developing strategies for establishing an electronic archive (Abbot 1999:74; Kirkwood 1991). This was primarily in realisation that many governmental bodies were creating electronic records (Abbott 2001:63). The concern with managing electronic records was further encapsulated in the National Archives and Records Service Act (Act No. 43 of 1996). The Act defines electronic records systems and gives NARS specific authority for their management, for example, in terms of section 13(2)(b)(ii) and (iii) the National Archivist shall determine the conditions under which records may be electronically reproduced and the conditions subject which electronic records systems should be managed.

Given its mandate of managing electronic records, the NARS earlier envisaged that certain types of electronic records systems with archival value would be best preserved permanently in the offices of origin (Abbot 2001:63). However, the NARS realised that the idea of governmental bodies maintaining custody of their own records for preservation, with archival value and records management direction, may not be a beneficial solution to the problem of e-records preservation. The problem with this approach is that records would not really be managed unless additional staff are hired and trained for this purpose of dealing with the new responsibility. The governmental bodies may view the responsibility in a negative way as something that takes away valuable time and funds needed to perform their mission. This non-custodial approach is only a relocation of the problem, instead of a solution.

Prior to 1993, electronic records were not accepted into archival custody in digital form. The relevant records first had to be converted into an acceptable archival medium, which at that stage was paper and microfilm (Abbot 2001:63). However, in 1993 the NARS' policy changed to accepting custody of electronic records in a digital format, provided that adequate guidelines and facilities could be provided for their archival retrieval and preservation (Ngulube 2001/2002:33). Nevertheless, in 2007 the archive of electronic record keeping remained slight. The NARS has a small and rudimentary electronic archive, while none of the provincial

archives services has capacity in this area (Abbot 2007:7). According to Abbot (2007:8) and Ngulube (2006:161) the only electronic records that the NARS had accepted into custody were in the form of snapshots of government's personnel database (PERSAL) and a Department of Foreign Affairs database, as they did not have the resources or infrastructure to preserve and facilitate access to records stored on optical media. The NARS has experienced problems with preserving the physical media on which these records were recorded as well as preserving the means of retrieving them (Ngulube 2006:162). In addition to that, the NARS has little expertise in the area of electronic records management, although electronic records are proliferating throughout government departments (Abbot 2007:8; Ngulube 2006:162).

Ngulube (2001/2002:32) argues that the NARS has taken a number of initiatives regarding the management and preservation of electronic records, for example, in January 1993 the Committee on Machine-Readable Archives (COMMA) was established in order to formulate an electronic policy for the SAS. In 2000 the NARS published guidelines for the management of electronic records. These guidelines were updated in 2003, 2004 and 2006 (Keakopa 2006:14). They explain the mandatory requirements and procedures for managing electronic records. The major shortcoming according to Ngulube (2006:122) is that the guidelines are not simple or modular enough. Therefore they cannot be easily applied as

procedures. Processes in these guidelines are not clearly articulated (Ngulube 2006:122). However, in a comparative study Keakopa (2007:74) observed that South Africa is ahead of Namibia and Botswana as far as the management of electronic records is concerned. She argued that South Africa has established the necessary policies and procedures to guide the management of electronic records in government departments. Policies and procedures are important in guiding the proper management of electronic records. However, designing policy is one thing and implementation is another. It is of no use to have a well-developed policy but fail to implement it. This is the case in South Africa, as there are policies and directives for the management of electronic records from the NARS. Even though there are guidelines on the management of electronic records in the South African public sector, many government departments have not customised those guidelines (Ngulube 2006:123). The NARS itself does not have infrastructure to take electronic records into archival custody. Even though the NARS propagate migration as its strategy for preservation of electronic records, the responsibility for migrating content to new technology remains with the governmental bodies. This is due to lack of infrastructure for ingesting electronic records into the NARS custody. As a result, the responsibility of migrating electronic records is left with the governmental bodies which do not have a mandate to preserve those records (Ngoepe 2008:13).

The current South African Archival Service strategy for the management of electronic records is based on the design and implementation of the ISO 15489 records management standards. According to the NARS' policy, records generated electronically should be managed with electronic records management software applications that are certified against the standards of the United States Department of Defence (US DoD) or the functional requirements for Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) (NARS 2004:16) of the United Kingdom Public Records Office (UK PRO). If not certified, they should at least have proven records management capabilities that are compliant with the standards (NARS 2006a:13; Venter 2007:24).

The standards discussed in the above paragraph contain the functional requirements against which records management applications can be tested to ensure that they meet records management requirements. Current developments are that the NARS, in conjunction with the South African Bureau of Standards, has adopted the ISO 15489 Records Management Standard as a South African standard. The ISO 15489 standard is a practical design and implementation methodology that has been adopted across the globe as formalised information, documentation and records management standards (Mullon 2004:8). It provides the guidelines to a sustainable records management implementation that comprises the following eight components:

(i)   Preliminary investigation;

(ii)   Analysis of business activity;

(iii)   Identification of requirements for records;

(iv)   Assessment of existing systems;

(v)   Identification of strategies for satisfying records requirements;

(vi)   Design of a records system;

(vii)   Implementation; and

(viii) Post-implementation review.

The reader is referred to section 2.5 for comprehensive information on the above eight components of ISO 15489.

The NARS endorses the national standards listed in table 6 below with a view to guiding governmental bodies in creating authoritative and reliable records.

Table 6: List of records management standards endorsed by the NARS (2006a:13)

SANS 15801	Electronic imaging – information stored electronically – recommendations for trustworthiness and reliability
SANS 23081	Information and documentation – records management processes – metadata for records – part 1: principles
SANS 17799	Information technology – security – code of practice for information security management
NIA's standard	Minimum Information Security Standard
DPSA's policies	Draft Information Security Policies

The NARS' electronic records management programme is aligned with regulatory requirements of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and the Government Information Technology Officers' Council (GITOC) (Venter 2007:23). It is built on a four-pronged strategy which includes the following:

(i)   Archival involvement in the design and maintenance of electronic records management systems.

(ii)   The earliest possible transfer of electronic records with enduring value into archival custody. However, this is not practised as the NARS does not have the necessary infrastructure to take electronic records into archival custody.

(iii)   The identification of archival electronic records which should remain in the custody of the creating body.

(iv)   The identification of non-archival electronic records that can be disposed of as part of an office's normal administrative practice.

As in many countries, South Africa has had little success in ensuring the longer term preservation and accessibility of electronic records. As a result, the loss of electronic records is enormous. Whereas ICT professionals are able to secure status and leverage within government structures relatively quickly; archivists and records managers in South Africa remained marginalised in government administration. One of the

consequences is that record keeping cultures within the electronic environment developed slowly. In the National Archives and Records Service Act, provincial archival legislation, the Promotion of Access to Information Act, the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act and other legislation, archivists and records managers have powerful legislative instruments for addressing the challenges. However, the NARS fails due to the fact that it is a subordinate functionary within the Department of Arts and Culture, rather than an independent body like Chapter Nine Institutions[2].

3.4   Records management training and education in South Africa

It is generally accepted that education plays an important role in updating knowledge and skills. It applies to both those who are already working and to prospective workers. Yusof and Chell (1998:26) point out that the most obvious way for records managers to enhance their resourcefulness is through education. The training and upgrading of skills can be achieved through workshops, vendor-sponsored programmes, professional seminars and college or university-level courses.

There are a great many records management practitioners in South Africa but few records management qualifications. According to Metrofile

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[2] Institutions established in terms of chapter nine of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to strengthen democracy and accountability, for example, the Auditor-General of South Africa, South African Human Rights Commission, Independent Electoral Commission, etc.

(2007:6) there is no formal academic training programme specifically designed for records management in South Africa. As a result, records management modules at the South African universities are encapsulated as an insignificant part of degrees and diplomas in Information Science/Studies. Most RM practitioners in South Africa have not received any formal training in records management (Metrofile 2007:7). Record keeping in South Africa has traditionally been viewed as a low-level routine work, such that investment in training and development of record keepers was deemed not cost-effective.

The point of lack of professional training in South Africa is also stressed by Keakopa (2006:186). Her studies found that there was a shortage of fully trained staff in South Africa. At the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, for example, only one person was self-trained in electronic records management. The NARS has more than 4 000 client offices across the country. One person would not be able to cope with the continuous research that is necessary to keep up to date with electronic records management developments.

The historical trends show that when the idea of offering formal archival training was put forward in 1946 by the government, South African universities did not show any interest in taking up the challenge (Harris 1997:42). As a result, the SAS took up the challenge and designed a

curriculum for the National Diploma in Archival Science, which was approved by the Department of Education and Culture in 1950 (Vos 1992:5). In the 1980s this Diploma was moved to Technikon Southern Africa (TSA), which began developing it into a distance-learning qualification better suited to a wide range of students (Ngulube 2003:168). However, it must be noted that the NARS did not totally withdraw from the training arena, as the National Archives and Records Service Act of 1996 obliges it to provide training to records managers employed by governmental bodies. Therefore the NARS still offers training in the form of a week-long course in records management (NARS 2006b:87).

According to Abbot (2001:65; 2007:3) the provision of education for records managers in South Africa is very poor; however, the need to offer archival studies and/or records management was recognised by a number of tertiary institutions since the 1990s. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has expanded its information studies courses at honours, masters and doctorate levels to accommodate archival science and records management (Ngulube 2003:153). In 1999 the University of the Witwatersrand launched an archives course within its heritage studies programme at postgraduate diploma and masters level (Harris 2000:100). In 2000 the University of South Africa introduced archives modules into its information science courses. In January 2004 the former Unisa merged with Technikon Southern Africa and incorporated the distance education

component of Vista University (VUDEC) to form the new Unisa. The merger brought together vast resources and infrastructure, while consolidating the knowledge bases built up over the years by the three former institutions. With the merger, Unisa continued to offer records management and archival courses through the Departments of Information Science. The University of Johannesburg offers an overview of records management as part of their information management diploma.

An analysis of the records management curriculum in tertiary institutions by Katuu (2007:11) reveals the heavily leaning on the archival rather than records management perspective. Table 7 below shows a number of records management courses offered at universities in South Africa.

Table 7: Analysis of archival and records management curriculum in tertiary institutions in South Africa (Katuu 2007:11)

University of Johannesburg (Department of Information Studies	Only 1 out of 17 subjects covering records management
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Department of Information Science)	Only 5 out of 12 subjects covering records management
Unisa (Applied Communication)	Only 3 out of 4 subjects covering records management
Unisa (Department of Information Science)	Only 1 out of 15 subjects covering records management
University of Witwatersrand	No indication that records management is covered

As a result of the few records management courses offered at the universities, events management companies have come in to fill the gap by hosting records management events. "A multitude of conference and

training companies have sprung up all vying for their slice of the lucrative records management training market, conservatively estimated at least R10 million a year in turn over" (Abbot 2007:7). Anecdotal evidence reveals an average of more than three events per month for the last four years (2004 – 2007). Table 8 below outlines an average of records management events organised by events management companies from 2004 – 2007.

Table 8: Statistics of records management seminars / workshops / conferences hosted by events management companies from 2004 – 2007 in South Africa (Katuu 2007:12)

Year	No. of events	Events average/month
2004	29	3.22
2005	42	3.5
2006	32	2.66
2007	44	3.66

According to Abbot (2007:65), in terms of electronic records management courses, the situation is even more unfavourable than in other media such as paper and microfilm. Since 2001, there have been a number of conferences and seminars that have included presentations or papers on electronic records management. These seminars according to Abbot (2007:65) have been very theoretical in nature as a result of a lack of practical experience in South Africa.

3.5 Records management skills in South Africa

The NARS Act requires the head of a governmental body to designate an official of the body to be its records manager. The records manager is responsible for ensuring that the governmental body complies with the requirements of the Act. According to Kirkwood (2000:5) it has generally been a shortcoming in governmental bodies in the past that no one at an appropriately senior level has been assigned to the overall responsibility to manage records. Often records management is seen as a low-level function and, despite the commitment of registry and records clerks, they simply do not have the authority to formulate and implement overall records policies that are enforceable for staff at all levels. The regulations in terms of the NARS Act therefore stipulate that the official designated as the records manager shall (a) be in possession of an appropriate university or technikon qualification, and/or have appropriate professional experience; (b) have successfully completed the NARS' Records Management Course; (c) possess a thorough knowledge of the body's organisational structure, functions and records system; and (d) be responsible for promoting the effective, efficient and accountable management of the body's records and ensuring, by inspections and other means, the body's compliance with the Act and all other relevant legislations.

However, despite the above provisions, records managers in governmental bodies are appointed at a relatively low level (Abbot 2001:66). Normally, records management is just one of their responsibilities and often not a high priority. Furthermore, governmental bodies generally ignore the qualification criteria contained in the Archives Regulations when appointing records managers (Abbot 2001:66). This low level of the records managers and the fact that they are unable to focus on records management issues because of other responsibilities impact negatively on their ability to manage the records of their offices effectively, let alone trying to tackle the issues presented by electronic records.

3.6 The current state of records management practices in governmental bodies in South Africa

As discussed in section 3.2, historically South Africa had a unified system of public records administration since its creation in terms of legislation in 1922, within which physical decentralisation at provincial level was accommodated. The basis for establishing a new archives and records management system for South Africa was provided by the 1996 Constitution, which provided in Schedule 5 that archives other than national archives are a functional area of exclusive provincial competence. By virtue of this provision each province should promulgate its own Act on archives and records service and should establish and maintain its own

archival infrastructure (Kirkwood 2002:3; Venter 2007:24). However, provinces are not autonomous to work independently from the NARS. To ensure a coherent and compatible records management system the National Archives and Records Service Act contains specific provisions that impact on the archival and records management services delivered by provincial archival services. Section 3(g) provides for the National Archives and Records Service to assist, support, set standards for and provide professional guidelines to provincial archives services. Flowing from this, the NARS determines the broad records management policy framework within which the provincial archives services operates.

In South Africa, the current trend is that most provincial and national government departments operate with central registry systems, and registry work is done by registry clerks. While it is known and accepted that every government department creates, uses and relies on records, it has taken a long time in South Africa to make provision for the proper management of records with specifically designated records managers (Ngulube 2003:157; Pickover & Harris 2001). Severe under-sourcing of the National Archives, together with the slow development of provincial services, means that the management of records is reaching only the tip of the record keeping iceberg in public bodies across the country (Abbot 2007:7; Ngulube 2006:118). "Traditional paper-based systems tend to be poorly resourced, managed by junior officials with little status and subject

to high turnover rates, and imperfectly connected – if at all – to parallel or related electronic systems" (Pickover & Harris 2001).

In many provincial government offices and local authorities, record keeping is out of control (NARS 2004:iv). For example, the regularity audits conducted by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) in all municipalities in South Africa indicated lack of supporting documentation resulted in most municipalities receiving qualified reports and disclaimers (AGSA 2008). Poor record keeping in national and provincial administrations in most cases results in the loss of public revenue. Some government departments, such as the Department of Home Affairs received qualified reports for the past seven years (2001 – 2008) not because the officials misappropriated the funds, but because officials were unable to retrieve records of their expenditure (AGSA 2008). As a result, these departments are unable to account to Parliament and the public because they have no records on how they spent public funds (AGSA 2007).

The other challenge in the management of records in South Africa is the routine destruction of records no longer needed for operational purposes. In the public sector, the national and provincial archives services are mandated to identify records which should be preserved through an appraisal process. Appraisal is the process whereby archivists identify

records of enduring value and select them for transfer into archival custody. In 2001 the records management component of the NARS investigated four cases involving allegations of the loss or unauthorised destruction of public records (NARS 2000/2001:18). Concerns here relate to holding these governmental bodies publicly accountable for their decision-making and ensuring that they have adequate resources for preserving the records they identify as having enduring value. A number of pieces of legislation address public records retention, for example, section 31 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act No. 75 of 1997)[3] regarding the retention of personnel records.

The other challenge is with regard to the records audits/inspections undertaken by the National Archives in governmental bodies. In terms of section 13(2)(c) of the NARS Act, the National Archivist shall inspect public records in so far as such inspection may be necessary for the performance of his/her functions. However, this core function has become virtually impossible to execute due to a grave lack of human, financial and

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[3] Section 31(1) of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act states that every employer must keep a record containing at least the following information:
- The employee's name and occupation
- The time worked by each employee
- The remuneration paid to each employee
- The date of birth of any employee under 18 years of age
- Any other prescribed information

Section 31(2) states that a record in terms of subsection (1) must be kept by the employer for a period of three years from the date of the last entry in the record.
Section 31(3) states that no person may make a false entry in a record maintained in terms of subsection (1)
Section 31(4) states that an employer who keeps a record in terms of this section is not required to keep any other record of time worked and remuneration paid by any other employment law.

other resources (NARS 2000/2001:17). Nevertheless, the records management section of the NARS often undertakes routine and comprehensive inspection visits to the governmental bodies in order to audit records management functions of the bodies and to offer advice regarding compliance with the Act.

Through contact with governmental bodies it has been apparent to the NARS that the move from the old dispensation to the new one has resulted in a new workforce which is unaware of proper records management practices (NARS 2000/2001:21). The most crucial records management problem encountered by the NARS when auditing governmental bodies is that there is no culture of record keeping in the public service and there is no top management support for records management in most governmental bodies (NARS 2000/2001:17; Venter 2004:1). Some of the findings of the survey to augment the ones highlighted in section 1.1 include that:

- the records managers do not have the necessary authority or backing to enforce proper records management practices throughout the department.

- the offices do not have approved records management policies that compel officials to apply proper records management.

- officials are not using the registries but are keeping records in their own offices. This situation results in information not being readily

available at a central point, preventing sound management decisions to be made based on authentic, reliable and relevant information.

- due to the lack of central control over the records and records management awareness among staff, there is a definite possibility that records are destroyed without a disposal authority being issued for them.

- the governmental bodies are not properly equipped to manage records that are generated and stored electronically. Users are creating and deleting records, especially e-mails, at their own discretion without giving thought to creating and keeping records of official transactions conducted in this manner.

Venter (2004:1) argues that, of all the departments that were surveyed by the NARS in 2003/2004, only one office was following proper records management. The office had strong top management buy-in in the importance of records management and a very capable records manager with a very well documented records management policy (Venter 2004:1). The records manager was running regular interventions to ensure that the staff members were knowledgeable about their records management obligations. In other government departments, especially in provinces which did not inherit archival and records management infrastructure from the previous dispensation, the lack of provisions for records management

is attributed to a progressive deterioration in the culture of record keeping over several decades (see table 9 below for the list of provinces which did not inherit archival and records management infrastructure).

Table 9: List of provinces which inherited archival and records management infrastructure

Provinces with infrastructure	Provinces without infrastructure	Provinces with archival legislation
Western Cape	Mpumalanga	Mpumalanga Archives Act (Act No 14 of 1998)
Free State	North West	Free State Provincial Archives Act (Act No 4 of 199)
KwaZulu-Natal	Northern Cape	KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Archives Act (Act No 5 of 2000)
	Limpopo (busy erecting archival building)	Northern Province Archives Act (Act No 5 of 2001)
	Eastern Cape	Eastern Cape Provincial Archives and Records Service Act (Act No 7 of 2003)
	Gauteng	

In a study on the state of records management in government departments and statutory bodies in South Africa by Hlungwani (2007), it was found that record keeping across government is largely without active management and personnel are untrained and unmotivated. Hlungwani (2007) argues that records managers are appointed at a low level. In the cases where records managers are appointed at senior management level, they have additional responsibilities other than records management. Therefore records management receives little attention.

Table 10 below indicates the selected departments and level of the records managers.

Table 10: Level of records managers in selected government departments in South Africa (Hlungwani 2007)

Department	Level of records manager	Electronic system used
Department of Public Service and Administration	Assistant Director	N/A
Department of Trade and Industry	Director	Documentum
Department of Science and Technology	Deputy Director	Hummingbird
Department of Agriculture	Senior Admin Officer	N/A
Department of Arts and Culture	Chief Registry Clerk	Hummingbird
Department of Provincial and Local Government	Deputy Director	Piloting Hummingbird
Presidency	Deputy Director	Hummingbird
Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism	Assistant Director	Livelink
Department of Public Enterprise	Deputy Director	Hummingbird
National Treasury	Deputy Director	N/A
Department of Transport	No records Manager	N/A
Department of Home Affairs	Assistant Director	N/A
Department of Labour	Deputy Director	N/A

3.7   The state of access to public records in South Africa

Mazikana (1999:74) argues that public access to information is the lifeblood of any meaningful democratic participation. Without the right of access to information, the affirmation and, more concretely, the realisation of all other rights is fundamentally compromised. Right of access to information in South Africa is regulated by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) which is in charge of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000). The Promotion of Access to

Information Act (PAIA) was approved by Parliament in February 2000 and came into effect in March 2001.

In terms of this Act any person can demand records from public bodies without showing a reason. Public bodies currently have 30 days to respond (reduced from 60 days before March 2003 and 90 days before March 2002). The PAIA therefore exists to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private bodies by giving effect to the right of access to information (Makhura & Ngoepe 2006:98). In essence, the PAIA shares a common vision with the NARS Act, which is safety and access to primary sources of information. In both Acts a record is approached as the primary sources of information. It can therefore be argued that without proper care and management of records, sustainability of first-hand information will be greatly jeopardised.

The Act also has a unique provision (as required in the Constitution) that allows individuals and government bodies to access records held by private bodies when the record is 'necessary for the exercise or protection' of people's rights. However, the Act does not apply to records of the Cabinet and its committees, judicial functions of courts and tribunals, and individual members of Parliament and provincial legislatures. To facilitate the identification of records, all public bodies subject to the PAIA are required to publish a manual that should act both as an index of records held by public bodies and as a guide for requesters. In addition, every

public body must appoint an information officer (usually the head of the institution) to render the public body as accessible as reasonably possible for requesters of its records.

There were problems in the implementation of the Act and its use was limited. A survey conducted by the Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC) in 2002 found that the PAIA has not been properly or consistently implemented because of low levels of awareness and information of the requirements set out in the Act (McKinley 2003:18). Where implementation has taken place it has been partial and inconsistent. Almost half of the public employees interviewed by ODAC in 2002 had not heard of the Act (McKinley 2003:17).

In 2005, ODAC published results of a monitoring survey carried out over a period of six months in 2004 during which 140 requests were submitted to 18 public institutions by seven requestors from different spheres of civil society. The 2004 Monitoring Survey followed a similar 2003 Monitoring Survey, undertaken as part of a pilot monitoring study. The 2004 survey found that only 13% of the submitted requests for information resulted in the information being provided within the 30-day time limit in the Act, while 63% of the requests were ignored. Interestingly, a comparison of the two surveys shows that compliance has actually dropped; in 2003, 52% of the

requests received no response and only 23% of requests received a positive response (ODAC 2005).

The South African History Archives (2005) also commissioned a study in 2004 on how prepared government departments were to manage requests for digital electronic records made under the Act. The report indicated that few departments keep official records in electronic format and that there was no formal policy and procedure on how and when electronic records should be stored. In September 2005 ODAC, through partnership with the South African Human Rights Commission, announced the launch of South Africa's first openness and responsiveness awards known as the Golden Key Awards. Through this award ODAC and the SAHRC recognise government departments, deputy information officers, private institutions, journalists and members of the public that have done exemplary work in promoting openness, transparency and accountability in the public and private sectors through usage of, and compliance with, the PAIA. Table 11 below outlines results of the 2006 Golden Key Awards for government departments. As indicated in the table below, the departments were judged in terms of how they manage their records, how they make the records available, whether there were policies and staff members knew about those policies and whether resources were allocated to the PAIA within a government department. Each item and each department was allocated a score and all the scores were calculated to determine the

winner. As shown in the table, the DPLG scored 68% in 2006 and was ranked number 3 sharing the spot with the Department of Trade and Industry. See Appendix C for the criteria used to judge government departments for the awards.

Table 11: Results of 2006 Golden Key Awards for government departments (SAHRC & ODAC 2006:5)

Department	Road Map	Records Mgmt	Internal Mech	Resources	Total	Percent	Rank
1. Defence	6	5	19	11	41	82	1
2. Land Affairs	6	6	22	6	40	80	2
3. Trade and Industry	6	6	18	4	34	68	3
4. Provincial and Local Government	6	5	17	6	34	68	3
5. SA Police Services	6	3	19	4	32	64	5
6. Justice and Constitutional Dev	6	5	16	4	31	62	6
7. NIA	6	3	16	6	31	62	6
8. Agriculture	6	5	15	4	30	60	8
9. Public Service and Administration	4	3	18	4	29	58	9
10. Water Affairs and Forestry	6	3	9	4	22	44	10
11. Public Enterprises	4	5	8	4	21	42	11
12. Correctional Services	6	3	11	0	20	40	12
13. Public Works	2	6	8	3	19	38	13
14. Housing	6	3	6	0	15	30	14
15. Foreign Affairs	6	3	6	0	15	30	14
16. Science and Technology	4	4	6	0	14	28	16
17. Presidency	6	3	3	0	12	24	17
18. National Treasury	2	3	6	0	11	22	18
19. Minerals and Energy	4	1	6	0	11	22	18
20. Transport	2	1	6	1	10	20	20
21. Education	4	3	3	0	10	20	20
22. Social Development	4	3	3	0	10	20	22
23. Arts and Culture	2	1	3	0	6	12	23
24. Communications	2	1	3	0	6	12	23
25. Environmental Affairs and	2	1	3	0	6	12	23

Tourism							
26. Health	2	1	3	0	6	12	23
27. Home Affairs	2	1	3	0	6	12	23
28. Labour	2	1	3	0	6	12	23
29. Sport and Recreation	2	1	3	0	6	12	23

Like South Africa's Constitution, the PAIA has been widely lauded both at home and abroad. It is, by international legislative standards, a fairly radical law, or as one archivist called it, 'the golden standard' (Harris 2003). Despite its progressive and expansive content, however, there are several aspects of the PAIA that present serious barriers to the full realisation of the right of access to information (Mikensy 2003:3). The PAIA provides a limited right of access to information since it reduces access to records only, leaving out all other types of information that are not contained in a record. This is in direct contradiction to Section 32 of the right of access as contained in the Constitution, which states that 'everyone has the right of access to any information' (held by either public or private bodies). Moreover, the PAIA and the NARS Act differ in terms of the period when access to records can be obtained. Whereas in terms of the PAIA records can be accessed immediately after creation, the NARS Act states that a public record shall be available for public access if a period of 20 years has elapsed.

In spite of legislation governing access to records, it is clear from the research by the SAHA, the SAHRC, ODAC and other institutions that most public organisations in South Africa are not geared towards providing

public access to records. To do so effectively they will need adequate and appropriately trained human resources dedicated to the task. Government departments have the greatest responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the PAIA. Without knowledgeable and well-trained personnel throughout government departments, who understand both the content and processes of the PAIA, the 'promise' of realising the right of access to information for ordinary South Africans will be stillborn. At this stage, public bodies seem to assume that they can rely on existing staff members who are already heavily overburdened by other responsibilities.

3. 8   Existing records management initiatives in South Africa

A number of initiatives are underway which should be used as building blocks for further work in developing records management in South Africa.

3.8.1   The records management improvement strategy

The NARS is promoting a strategy that would provide good practice procedures for the implementation of a records management programme. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure compliance with the National Archives and Records Service Act by governmental bodies. The strategy is based on the design and implementation methodology promoted by SANS (ISO) 15489 Records Management Standard, and incorporates

aspects of a methodology promoted by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT), SITA-C and the IQ Business Group (Venter 2004:4). Table 12 below gives the graphical view of the records management improvement strategy.

Table 12: The NARS' records management improvement strategy (NARS 2006)
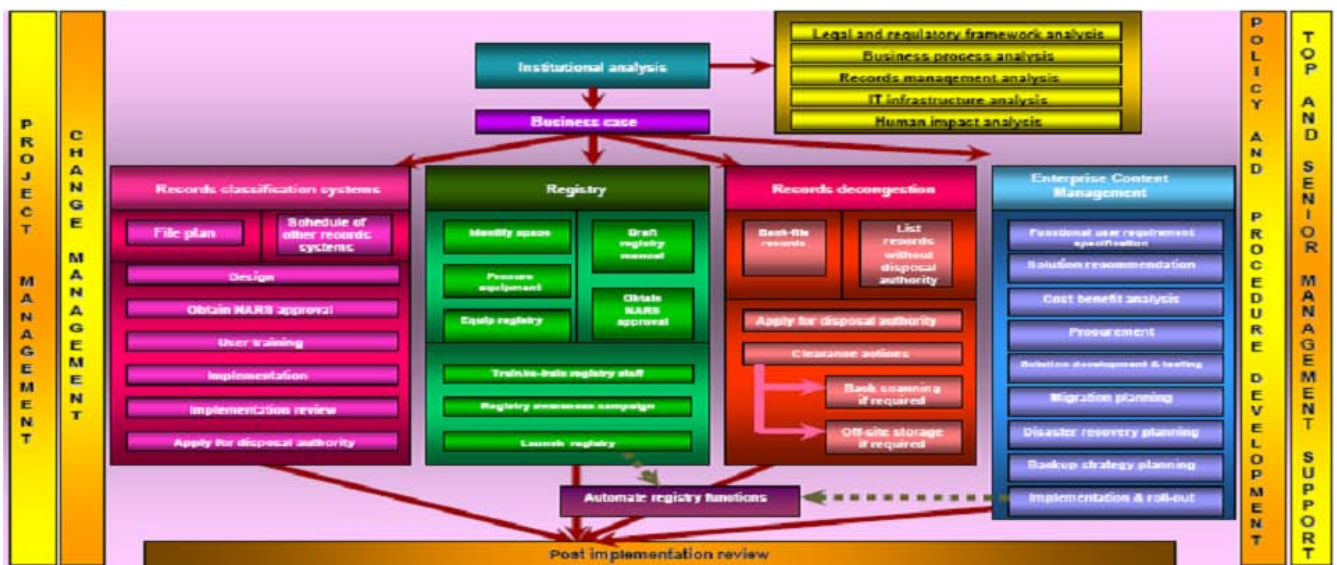
As indicated in the above table, a point of departure according to the strategy is that a full and proper analysis of an organisation's business requirements should be done before embarking on the development of a records management programme. The strategy promotes a strong project management approach with consistent change management, a dedicated top and senior management approach and continuous formulation of policies (Venter 2004:4). The strategy is four pronged in nature, meaning it

consists of four individual but interrelated branches. Any of the top four branches of the strategy above could be implemented as a single project depending on the nature of a specific problem in the offices. For example, if an office has an approved file plan and a systematic disposal authority in place, it now only requires the roll-out of an Integrated Document and Records Management System (IDRMS). Only that leg of the strategy could be implemented. Likewise, if an office has an approved file plan and an IDRMS in place and now wishes to embark on a backlog clearing or decongestion exercise, only that branch of the strategy would be implemented.

3.8.2 National Archives' partnership with the Auditor-General

A joint venture between the NARS and the Auditor-General was approved in 2004. The agreement was that while the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) audits governmental bodies, at the same time certain aspects of records management can be checked and brought to the attention of the National Archivist (Kirkwood 2007; NARS 2006b:12). This is due to the fact that the AGSA has ready access to information on the financial transactions entered into by governmental bodies to enable it to report to the public on the spending of their tax monies. For example, if it takes time for the auditors to obtain requested records (or not obtain them at all) from the auditee, that should be reported to the National Archivist

who would devise means of ensuring that those records are easily accessible, either through hands-on involvement or by advising the auditee on how to manage records properly.

3.8.3 Provincial Records Management Capacity-Building Project

The primary aim of the project is to develop the capacity to manage records within the provinces. The project aims to develop in provinces a cadre of records management professionals with the capacity to leverage records management functions for their respective provinces. Through various training initiatives and skills programmes, the NARS aimed to train appropriate people to manage provincial records. Effective records management units will therefore be established in each provincial department. In addition to the human resource capacity, the project will also help in terms of identifying infrastructural developments to be undertaken (NARS 2006b). After the project was rolled out to all Limpopo provincial departments in 2004 it made a major impact in that province. As a result, records managers in all Limpopo provincial departments were appointed at senior manager level (Makhuvele 2007). Almost all Limpopo provincial departments have records management policies and procedures as well as an approved file plan (Makhuvele 2007). The same cannot be said about other provinces in South Africa, as they are still struggling with the implementation of records management projects.

3.8.4 National Archives' partnership with the State Information Technology Agency

The NARS also endeavoured to forge links with government offices that have overarching authority in the field of IT such as State Information Technology Agency (SITA), to ensure that archival requirements are built into government-wide policies (Ngulube 2006:195). In terms of the State Information Technology Agency Act (Act No. 88 of 1998), SITA is charged with providing information technology and information systems services for governmental bodies in South Africa. In the long run the partnership between the two state agencies could prove beneficial to the management of electronic records in South Africa. SITA can provide the technical knowledge and skills for the management of electronic records while NARS can provide the records management expertise.

3.8.5 South African Records Management Forum

The South African Records Management Forum (SARMF) was established and launched at the SABC offices in Auckland Park on 22 September 2005 (Makhura & Ngoepe 2007:10). The Forum consists of records management practitioners employed by governmental bodies falling under the stipulation of the National Archives and Records Service

of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996). The vision and mission of the Forum are to create knowledge- and information-sharing platforms for all records management practitioners irrespective of colour, race and gender. Since its establishment, the Forum hosted several workshops and seminars in Gauteng whereby prominent speakers made presentations on topics of the month such as change management, file plan, knowledge management, StanSA TC 46, Tender 398, etc. (Makhura & Ngoepe 2007:11).

3.8.6 Deputy Information Officers' Forum

As discussed in section 3.7 above, one of the critical challenges of the implementation of the PAIA has been the non-compliance of public bodies with the requirements of this Act. According to the SAHRC (2007) the reasons for the failure to comply with the requirements of the Act vary and include the following:

- Lack of awareness by public bodies about their duties in terms of the Act.

- Public bodies not taking their obligations in terms of the PAIA seriously.

- Poor information management systems (no records management policies and file plans) in public bodies.

- Failure to delegate information officers' powers within the public bodies.

- Inability to identify the Unit or Division to be responsible for administering the PAIA.

Thus, in view of these challenges, which are major factors hampering proper implementation of a successful access to information regime in South Africa, a cross-sectoral information officers forum was established on 20 September 2006.

The objectives of the Forum are, amongst others, to:

- share information on the implementation issues and difficulties regarding the PAIA;

- raise awareness of the Act in the public bodies; ·

- advice the SAHRC on areas that require its "intervention"; and

- advise information officers and other sectors on the latest developments with the PAIA.

3.9   Conclusion

Undoubtedly, it is clear from the discussion that the great majority of public records remain outside the control of the NARS. This is demonstrated most powerfully by the fact that the NARS is able to conduct relatively few routine inspections to audit compliance with the provision of the NARS

Act. Ideally, each of the over 4 000 client offices of NARS should be inspected at least once annually. Slow progress with the development of archival infrastructure in provincial governments has not helped the situation.

South Africa has a long road to travel as far as record keeping is concerned. The state has been provided with legislative tools that are amongst the most powerful available worldwide to enable and audit government record keeping. Together the Constitution, PAIA and the NARS Act provide an excellent map and rules of the road. Therefore it is important that government departments should commit themselves to the effective implementation and maintenance of records management systems. Otherwise, records management function will continue to be marginalised in government administration forever.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

4.1   Introduction

Chapter three discussed records management practices and legal requirements for record keeping in the public sector in South Africa. The Department of Provincial and Local Government is also affected by the legal requirements discussed in chapter three as it falls under the stipulations of the NARS Act. Like other government departments, the DPLG is required to account to Parliament, the public and donors for its actions. To be accountable, the DPLG should submit amongst others, the following documents to Parliament and make them available to the public if required: annual report, strategic plan, audited financial statements, Promotion of Access to Information Act Manual, etc.

For all the above to be possible, the DPLG needs to manage its records properly. Flowing from that, the DPLG has taken the responsibility to ensure that its records management practice is aligned with the broader principles of good governance and Batho Pele. Therefore this chapter discusses the following in relation to the DPLG:

- Brief historical overview of the DPLG and the nature of its business and functions;

- Historical trends of records management practice at the DPLG; and

- The position of records management unit within the DPLG.

4.2   An overview of the DPLG

4. 2.1 A brief history of the DPLG

The DPLG has its origin as a small unit established in the Office of the Presidency in the early 1980s. During the early 1980s there was political unrest in South Africa and it became apparent that the country was heading towards a crisis of unmanageable proportions. The international communities, boycotts, as well as movements such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) were putting political pressure to the then government. In response to the pressure the government formed a unit referred to as a 'think tank' in the Office of the Presidency to negotiate with the liberation movements (South African yearbook 1985:166). As a result, the first exploratory discussions began between the liberation movements and the unit in the Office of Presidency.

In 1984, the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (Act No. 110 of 1983) was implemented. When tasked to implement the 1983

Constitution, the think tank amalgamated with a number of chief directorates from various state departments to become the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (South African yearbook 1985:166). The responsibilities of this Department centred on constitutional advice to the then government to transform South Africa to a multi-party democratic state (DPLG 2004:15).

In 1991, the Department was officially renamed the Constitutional Development Services (CDS) (South African yearbook 1991:40). The purpose of the Service was to render an administrative, planning and advisory support service to the negotiation process in South Africa. Staff members of the service were required to provide secretarial, logistical and administrative services to the activities of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and its various working groups as well as to a variety of bilateral discussions between the government and various political parties (South African yearbook 1994:118). CODESA was a forum for the negotiations for the end of the apartheid system in South Africa. CODESA took place against a backdrop of political violence in the country, including allegations of a state-sponsored third force destabilising the country (Mandela 1994:108). It comprised 18 delegations covering the gamut of South African politics, as well as observers from United Nations, the Commonwealth, European Union and Organisation of African Unity (Mandela 1994:108). In 1993, the negotiation process culminated in a

historical session of Parliament, at which the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 200 of 1993) was tabled on 17 December 1993 (DPLG 2004:15).

The year 1994 introduced a name change to the Service and it became known as the Department of Constitutional Development. Its focus was redefined to include the management of the implementation of a democratic constitutional dispensation for all spheres of government in South Africa (DPLG 2004:16). It thus assumed overall responsibility for the implementation of the (interim) constitution of 1993, which came into operation on 27 April 1994. With effect from 1 July 1994, the Department of Constitutional Affairs' functions were extended to include intergovernmental relations, provincial government, local government and traditional authorities. In 1996, the key focus was on supporting the development, finalisation and promotion of the new Constitutional of Republic of SA (Act 108 of 1996) (DPLG 2004:16). In 1997, it continued its responsibility for implementing and promoting the principles and provisions of the Constitution (DPLG 2004:15).

During the second term of democratic government in 1999 the Department changed its name and this also led to new functions. The constitutional development function was transferred to the Department of Justice and the Department was renamed the Department of Provincial and Local

Government, a name that has been retained until 2009 (DPLG 2004:19). Consequently, the Department's role shifted from that of custodian of the Constitution to the establishment of the new system of provincial and local government. It is clear that under various names, the DPLG has played a leading role in the establishment of a new constitutional order.

4.2.2 Functions of the DPLG

The mission of the DPLG is to provide professional and technical support to the government by:

(i)   developing appropriate policies and legislation to promote integration in the government's development programmes and service delivery;

(ii)   providing strategic interventions, support and partnerships to facilitate policy implementation in the provinces and local government; and

(iii)   creating enabling mechanisms for communities to participate in governance (DPLG 2005a).

The DPLG mandate is derived from chapters 3 and 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). As a national department, its function is to develop national policies and legislation with regard to provinces and local government, and to monitor the implementation of the following legislation:

- White Paper on Local Government (1998)

- Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act (Act No. 27 of 1998)

- Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Act No. 117 of 1998)

- Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000)

- Disaster Management Act (Act No. 57 of 2002)

- Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (Act No. 41 of 2003)

- Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No. 56 of 2003)

- Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act (Act No. 6 of 2004)

- The other function of the DPLG is to support provinces and local government in fulfilling their constitutional and legal obligations (DPLG 2005a).

4.2.3   Organisational Structure of the DPLG

The Department of Provincial and Local Government is currently (2009) headed by the Minister for Provincial and Local Government, Mr S Shiceka; who is supported by the Deputy Minister, Ms NE Hangana, and the Director-General, Ms L Msengana-Ndlela. The DPLG is further divided into six branches, namely:

(i)   Governance, Policy and Research

(ii)   Urban and Rural Development

(iii)   Systems and Capacity Building

(iv)   Free Basic Services and Infrastructure

(v)   Monitoring and Evaluation

(vi)   Corporate Services

The main structure of each of the branch is outlined in table 13 below.

Table 13: Organogram of the DPLG (DPLG 2005a)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Branch                │
│   Governance, Policy and Research    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Chief Directorate Inter-governmental Relations	Chief Directorate Provincial Co-ordination and Support	Chief Directorate Development Planning	Chief Directorate Local Economic Development	Chief Directorate Internal & Donor Relations	Chief Directorate Traditional Leadership and Institutions

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Branch                │
│      Urban and Rural Development      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Chief Directorate Urban Renewal Programme (URP)	Chief Directorate Integrated, Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP)	Chief Directorate URP Monitoring and Evaluation	Chief Directorate ISRDP Monitoring and Evaluation

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Branch                │
│     Systems and Capacity Building    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Chief Directorate Inter-governmental Governance, Policy and Research	Chief Directorate Local Government Administrative Systems	Chief Directorate Capacity Building Systems	Chief Directorate Disaster Management	Chief Directorate Performance Management and Monitoring Systems	Chief Directorate Local Government Leadership Academy

Branch
Monitoring and Evaluation

Chief Directorate Corporate Planning and Project Management	Chief Directorate Local Government Transformation	Chief Directorate Anti-corruption	Chief Directorate Corporate Secretariat	Chief Directorate Internal Audit and Risk Management	Chief Directorate Compliance and Legal Services

Branch
Corporate Services

Chief Directorate HRM	Chief Directorate ICT	Chief Directorate Admin	Chief Director Communication	Chief Director External Communication	Chief Financial Officer

Branch
Free Basic Services

Chief Directorate MIG	Chief Directorate FBS	Chief Directorate PPP	Chief Directorate MSP

4.3   Historical trends of records management practices in the DPLG

In many government departments in South Africa, including the DPLG, structured records management systems were common before 1994, operating as part centralised registry, often with a well-trained and experienced registry staff component. Senior public servants had an understanding of the importance of records management because the majority of them started their careers in the registry (NARS 2000/2001). In this environment, records were well kept because records management requirements were known and observed. Furthermore, the quality of registry staff was relatively high (NARS 2000/2001). This was the norm across government departments in South Africa.

Like in other government departments, at the DPLG in the years following democracy this situation deteriorated progressively. Informal practices supplanted formal rules; and registries were no longer taken seriously. While the public service expanded steadily, bringing with it a corresponding increase in the flow of paper, the more formal ways of working gradually collapsed; informal and often ad hoc work methods prevailed. Typically a departmental culture developed that made little use of records of the previous apartheid government for reference purposes. As a result, little resources were allocated for records storage and staff (Vosloo personal communication, 16 November 2006).

Eventually, the registry stopped acting as a point of entry for new recruits. Instead, people who were ineffective or disruptive were relegated to the registry. For example, according to the previous records manager, in 2003 when the restructuring started in the DPLG, one security officer and two cleaners who could not be placed anywhere were dumped in the registry (Vosloo personal communication, 16 November 2006). This was due to the fact that records management was considered one of the lowliest of administrative functions. Its ranks were decimated, even as new and complex electronic information systems were overwhelming the Department.

As a result, records management systems collapsed because registry clerks did not have the authority to formulate and implement overall records policies that are enforceable on staff at all levels. People working in the DPLG registry had limited training or experience with record keeping work. This led to a decline in attention to the structure and management of current records and respect for record keeping in general. Records classification designed to meet the record keeping requirements of the apartheid government became unwieldy and ultimately unmanageable. However, despite the low usage of records, there was an extreme reluctance to destroy records, even after they ceased to have any value to the Department (Vosloo personal communication 16 November 2006). This is evident by the mass of records that the DPLG inherited from the

previous dispensation. According to A Vosloo (personal communication, 16 November 2006), from 1994 the DPLG's registry existed only to provide messenger, courier and postal services. It became apparent that the move from the old dispensation to the new has resulted in a new workforce which was unaware of proper records management practices.

During the 2003/2004 financial year the DPLG conducted business process mapping in order to align the organisational structure to the strategic plan of the Department. This process resulted in restructuring which increased the number of personnel in the DPLG and the creation of new branches such as the Urban Renewal Programme (URB), Free Basic Services (FBS), Local Economic Development (LED), Disaster Management, etc. This major restructuring process had an impact on the information needs of the DPLG. The following symptoms of a failure to manage records as explained by IRMT (1999:40-45) were realised during restructuring at the DPLG:

- The loss of control over the creation and use of records.

- The loss over access.

- Fragmentation of official records.

- Existence of different versions of the same information and the absence of authentic records.

- The loss of contextual information, such as the originator and the date of creation.

As a result of the restructuring, there was a necessity for the newly restructured DPLG to accommodate the needs of all its functions in the record keeping system as well as to revive the deteriorating system. The DPLG then realised and recognised the value of records management in its normal operations. More efforts regarding records management were taken in 2004 after the process of restructuring was completed. For the first time, qualified records management professionals were appointed with the mission of establishing a fully-fledged registry that provides an efficient records management service to the whole Department.

On 2 April 2004, the DPLG decided to appoint a service provider to develop a records management system for the newly structured Department (DPLG 2005b). A formal quotation was developed in consultation with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. The specification of the formal quotation covered the following:

- Studying (understanding) the structure and functions of the DPLG.

- Studying (understanding) the business processes of the DPLG.

- Consultation with Branch Heads, Chief Directors, Directors and staff involved in generating and receiving of records.

- Consultation with NARS.

- Development of classification systems, i.e. file plan and records control schedule.

- Obtaining disposal authority regarding all the records of the DPLG to enable the DPLG to allocate proper retention periods to all its records to enable it to comply with the requirements of accountability and transparency.

- Develop a records management policy and procedure manual.

- Develop an implementation plan and provide an after-service support during the implementation process.

After a thorough evaluation and several consultations with all stakeholders, AIMS was appointed to develop the records management system for the DPLG. On 1 December 2004, AIMS embarked on a project to develop a records management system with several information audits being done. The project was structured in five major phases as shown in table 14 below. As indicated in table 14, the first phase of the records management project in the DPLG involved discussions and meetings between the service provider and the representatives from the DPLG. Phase 2 entailed gathering the required information on the DPLG's functions. In this regard, information audits were undertaken. Information obtained from phase 2 was used to develop key records management documents, i.e. file plan, policy, procedures, etc. AIMS' contract ended on 31 May 2005, with the implementation starting on 1 June 2005.

**Table 14: Stages of the development of records management system for the DPLG**

Stage	Description	Dates
Stage 1: Set-up	Discussion with the DPLG regarding the scope of project, dates, work plan, etc.	(10 working days)
Stage 2: Assessment	Records audit Evaluation of system in use Functional analysis Workshop	(24 working days)
Stage 3: Development	File plan drafted Records management policy drafted Records control schedule drafted Procedure manual drafted	(39 working days)
Stage 4: Clean-up	Overseeing the collection of records from various directorates to the central registry	Simultaneous with the above
Stage 5: Implementation	Training and roll-out Assistance with the opening of new files	(28 working days)

In the beginning of 2005, the DPLG appointed a records manager to implement the records management system started by AIMS. The greatest challenge was to create a central registry system for the whole department that would cater for all records. The restructuring of the DPLG necessitated that the system should embrace the old and prepare for the newly restructured DPLG. Additionally, this entire process was influenced by the National Archives and Records Service Act, as well as the Promotion of Access to Information Act as the DPLG falls under the stipulation of both Acts.

4.4 **The structure and position of the records management division in the DPLG**

The records management division within the DPLG is a sub-directorate of the Administration Support Service Directorate as shown in table 15 below.

Table 15: Structure of records management sub-directorate in the DPLG
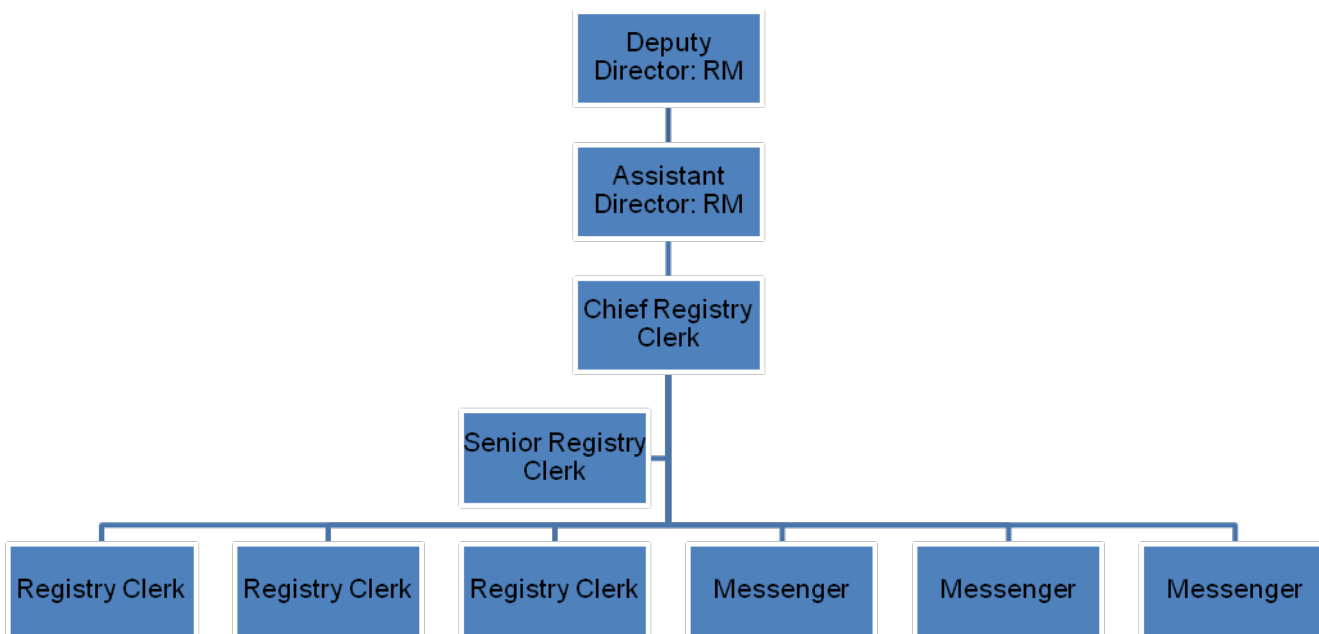
The Administrative Support Service falls under the branch Corporate Services which is depicted in table 13 (organogram of the DPLG). The records management division has a staff complement of five registry

clerks, three messengers, one Assistant Director and one Deputy Director.
The official who is heading records management unit is on the level of
Deputy Director and reports to the Director: Administrative Services.
Although the Director of Administrative Support Services has been
designated by the Director-General as the records manager of the DPLG,
he/she has responsibilities other than records management such as
facilities management, security services and building and maintenance.
The assumption is that one of his/her functions is likely to suffer or receive
little attention due to more responsibilities assigned to him/her.

4.6   Conclusion

The functions of the DPLG are not only highly diverse; they are also
extremely technical, for example, the function of disaster management for
which the DPLG is responsible, requires technical knowledge to deal with
disasters such as floods and wildfires. Decision-making in the DPLG is
therefore informed by sound management information. With its focus on
daily municipality and provincial problems, proper records management is
of the utmost important for the survival of the DPLG. The local government
in South Africa is by the time of finalising this thesis (2007/2008) going
through a major crisis with people protesting against the provision of basic
services by municipalities. The role that records management can play in
enhancing the provision of these services is vital to the DPLG, for

example, records of funds granted to municipalities for infrastructure as well as statistical records for households with free basic services need to be properly managed. Failure to retrieve these records can lead to poor service delivery and unaccountability as the DPLG will not know how many households require free basic services or how municipalities spent the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RESULTS

5.1   Introduction

In section 1.7 the choice of research methodology and data collection tools adopted in this study were discussed and justified. The previous chapter (four) discussed records management practices in the DPLG. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to present an analysis of data collected through questionnaires (see appendix D for a copy of the questionnaire), interviews and observations, and to discuss the findings of the study.

5.2   Response rate and participants' profile

In section 1.9.2 it was indicated that this study used questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection supplemented with interviews and site visits. The questionnaire was tested with 10 DPLG staff members to minimise measurement errors. Some questions in the questionnaire were changed after a pre-test as a result of the feedback from the pilot group. It is worth mentioning that the results from the pre-test were not combined with the results of the post-test.

Before the questionnaire was sent to the respondents, approval was obtained from the DPLG's Director-General (see appendices E and F for

the letter of request and approval). As discussed in section 1.7.3 in chapter one, 100 questionnaires were distributed electronically to the selected sample. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, only 52 were returned, representing a 52% return rate. Of those returned questionnaires, 51.9% (27) of the respondents were male while 48 % (25) were female as indicated in figure 1 below. The response rate was considered to be adequate in accordance with the statement of Babbie and Mouton (1998:261) that "the consensus in survey research is that a response rate of 50% is considered adequate for analysis, while 60% is good and 70% is considered very good". Returned questionnaires were automatically analysed using an online open source survey tool. Interviews were conducted with the records manager, one registry clerk, three officials who were part of the pilot group for the electronic records management system and eight administrative assistants. This provided the opportunity to triangulate the data in order to strengthen the research findings and conclusion.

Figure 1: Gender of the respondents
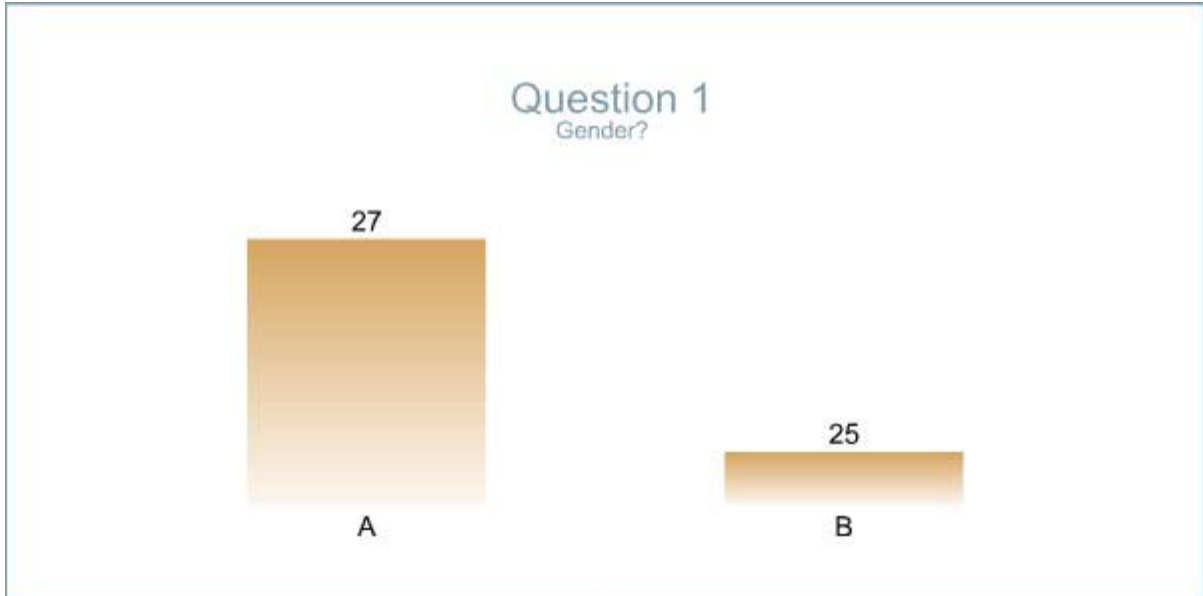
A = Males   B = Females

The average in terms of the respondents' qualifications was a degree and diploma as shown in figure 2 below. Qualifications for respondents range from matric certificates to postgraduate degrees. Only 3.8% (2) of the respondents out of 52 indicated that they were currently studying towards a qualification in archival science and records management. A further 1.9% (1) of the respondents did not have a matric certificate.

Figure 2: Qualifications of the respondents

Question 2
Your highest qualifications?
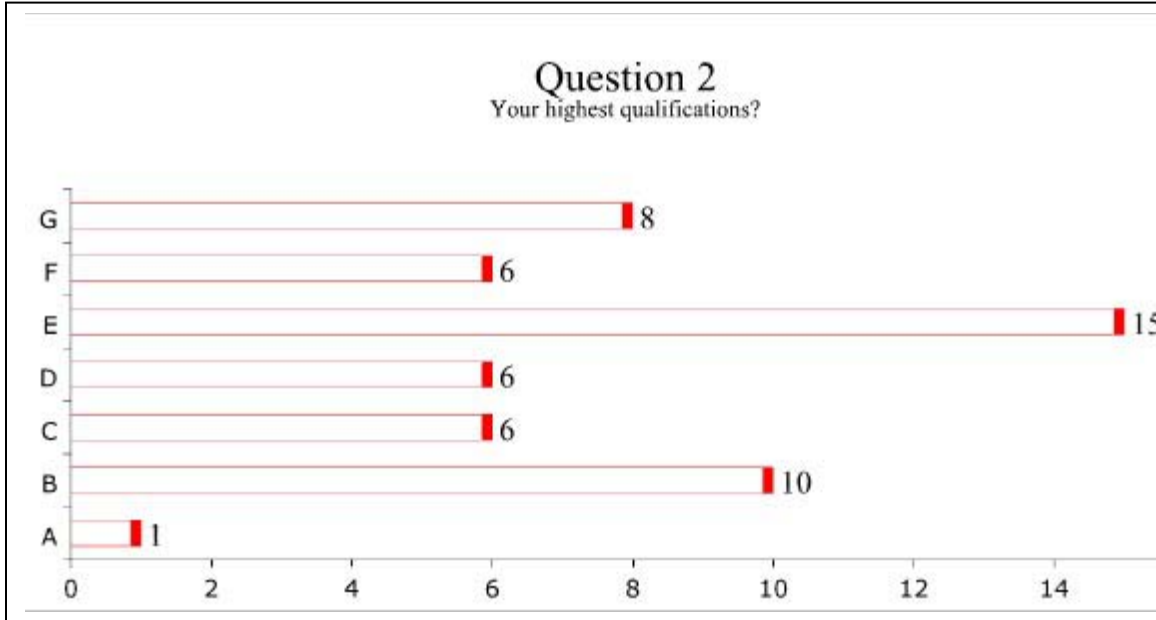
A = Below matric   B = Matric certificate   C = Post-matric certificate   D = Diploma
E = Degree   F = Postgraduate degree   G = Other

As shown in figure 3 below, of the 52 respondents, 19.2% (10) were senior managers and higher, whereas 5.7% (3) were from the Information Management Unit. The other 50% (26) were general staff members (Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, administrators, researchers, etc.) and 25% (13) were administrative assistants (secretaries to senior managers and above).

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Figure 3: Positions of the respondents
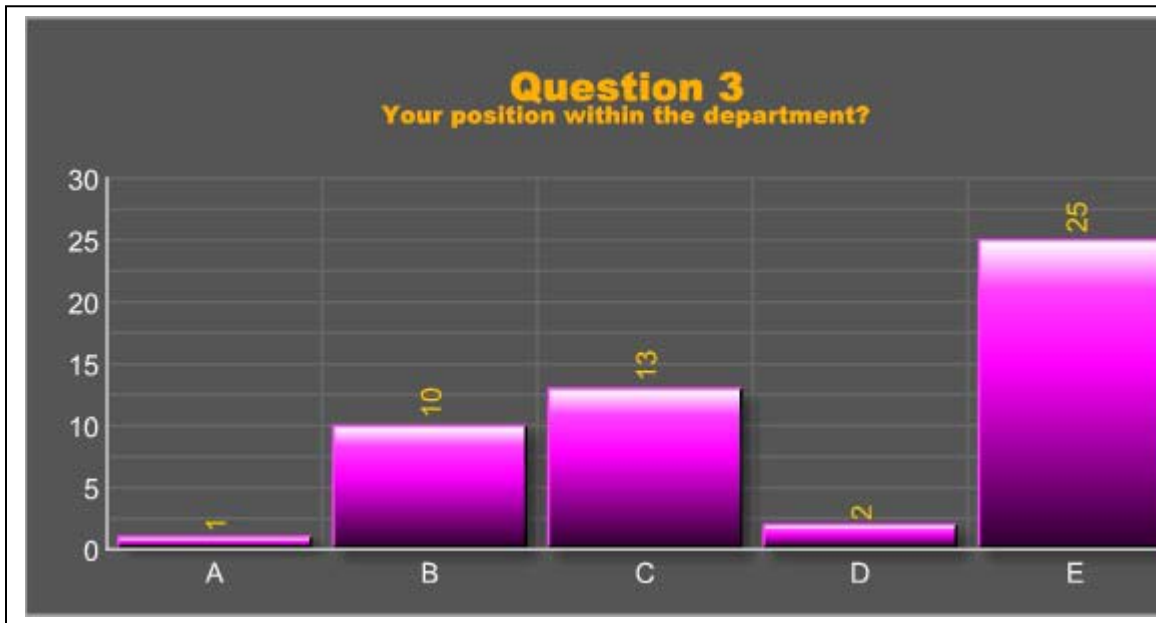
A & D = Information management (IT & RM)   B = Senior managers   C = Admin assistants
E = Other staff members

5.3   Data analysis

The findings are presented according to the records management themes mentioned in section 1.7 as well as the objectives of the study and research questions. The broad objective of the study was to explore records management trends in the DPLG to establish if the Department was managing records according to legislative requirements. It is worth mentioning that the objectives of the study and research questions are covered in some of the records management themes mentioned below. As mentioned in section 1.7 the study was limited to the DPLG covering the following records management themes:

(xi)   records management programme;

(xii)   records management policies and procedures;

(xiii)   records management responsibilities;

(xiv)   records classification system;

(xv)   physical storage of records;

(xvi)   records control;

(xvii)   usage and access of records;

(xviii) electronic records management;

(xix)   records management skills and training; and

(xx)   retention and disposal of records.

5.3.1 Records management programme

All governmental bodies that fall under the stipulation of the National Archives and Records Service Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) are required to establish a records management programme in conformity with standards and codes of best practice in records management approved by the National Archivist. The purpose of the question in this section was to establish whether the DPLG has developed such a records management programme and whether the respondents were aware of it.

As shown in figure 4 below, 98% (51) of the respondents were aware of the fact that the DPLG had a formal records management programme and

that it was placed within the Administration Support Services as compared to 1.9% (1) who were not aware. Forty-four per cent (23) of the respondents believed that the location of the RM unit within the Administrative Support Services Directorate had a positive impact on records management provision in the Department. However, the other 55.7% (29) argued that the physical location of the registry and the placing of RM unit on the departmental structure under Administrative Support Services directorate had a negative impact on records management provision in the Department. Some of the reasons cited include that, by reporting to Administrative Support Services, records management receives little attention, unlike if it was placed under the ICT directorate which already has leverage support from senior managers. Some respondents argued that the centralisation of registry made it difficult to staff members in other building to access it.

Figure 4: Records management programme

A = Yes   B = No

Only 34.6% (18) respondents indicated that they did send records to the registry for filing purposes. One (1.9%) respondent indicated that arrangements had been made with the registry to open files for his/her directorate and keep them on permanent loan. Other respondents (63.5%) indicated that they did not send records to the registry for filing due to the fact that registry was in another building and the distance did not facilitate quick access as they had to rely on messengers to deliver the records. According to the respondents, most of the time the messengers took time to deliver the requested records. As a result of this reason, some officials in other buildings did not send records to registry for filing. Other respondents argued that the reason they did not send records to registry for filing was due to the fact that their records were confidential and

therefore were kept within the directorate. They indicated that they had made arrangements with the Records Management Unit in this regard and the DPLG records management policy made provision for that.

Figure 5 below reflects that 36.5% (19) of the respondents rated the DPLG records management programme as just meeting compliance with archival legislation. Only 9.6% (5) rated it as being poor citing the fact that files often got lost in the registry. Others indicated that they sometimes waited too long to get the files from registry because of the distance. The other 9.6% (5) indicated that they did not use the registry and therefore could not rate the service. Only 1.9% (1) rated the system as being very poor compared to 30.7% (16) who rated it as being good.

Figure 5: Rating of the records management programme

Question 8

How would you rate the effectiveness of the dplg records management programme, e.g. in terms of file retrieval, accessibility etc?

F 9.62%
A 9.62% B 1.92%
E 11.54%
C 36.54%
D 30.77%

A   B   C   D   E   F
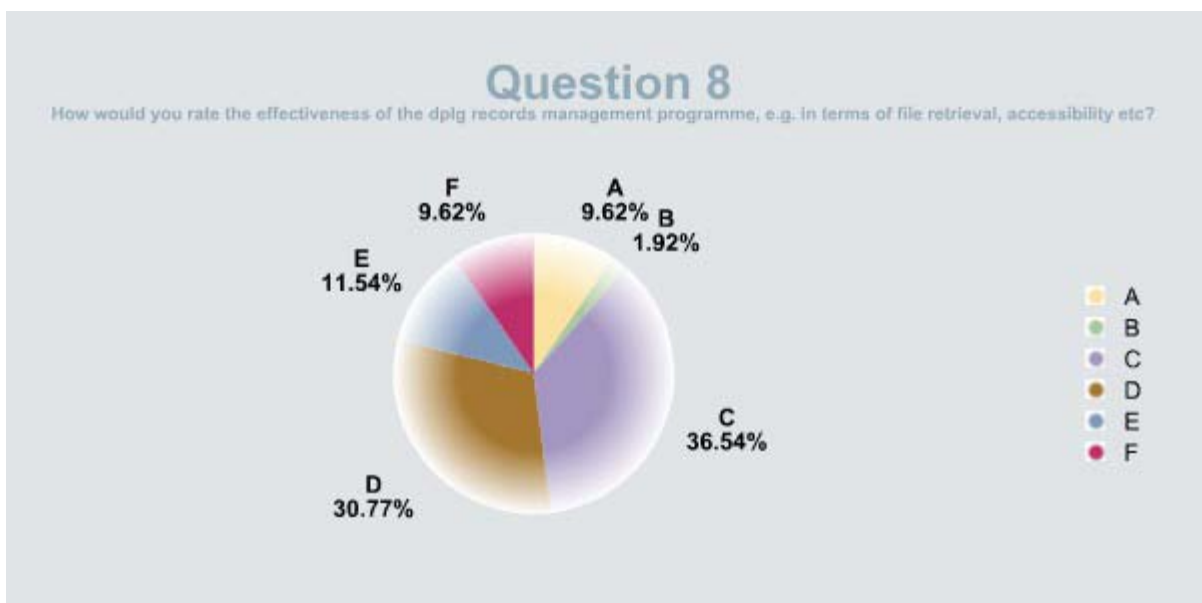
A = Poor   B = Very poor   C = Just   D = Good   E = Very good   F = Other

According to the responses, the DPLG registry was perceived as being helpful. Most of the respondents indicated that it was particularly helpful through its messenger service for distributing information through circulars. However, there were those who viewed it as a dumping ground when they no longer required their records.

The respondents indicated that records management was not an objective in the DPLG's strategic plan. Indeed, information obtained from the DPLG's strategic plan (2005-2010) only featured in one sentence on electronic records management under ICT unit. The management of paper-based records did not feature in the strategic plan. The plan indicated that the DPLG was intending to implement an electronic records management system in order to manage electronic records. From the plan it seemed that the implementation of electronic records management system was the responsibility of ICT unit.

5.3.2 Records management policy and procedures

Government departments are required to develop a records management policy that regulates records management activities. The policy has to compel officials to practise proper records management. For the policy to be effective, it has to be endorsed by the head of the government department as well as the top management team. It should also be

communicated and implemented throughout the organisation. The purpose of the questions in this section was to establish whether the DPLG had a records management policy and procedures and whether officials were managing records according to those policy and procedures.

Figure 6 below indicates that only 7.6% (4) of the respondents were unaware of the fact that the DPLG had a records management policy. They indicated that they were neither invited to comment on the policy nor made aware of the existence of such a policy. Twenty-seven respondents (51.9%) indicated that they were not sure whether the policy had been endorsed by top management. As a result, some were not managing records according to the policy. Others argued that the consultants who were outsourced to develop the system did not understand the nature of the DPLG's business. Therefore the system did not make provision for their needs.

Figure 6: Records management policy
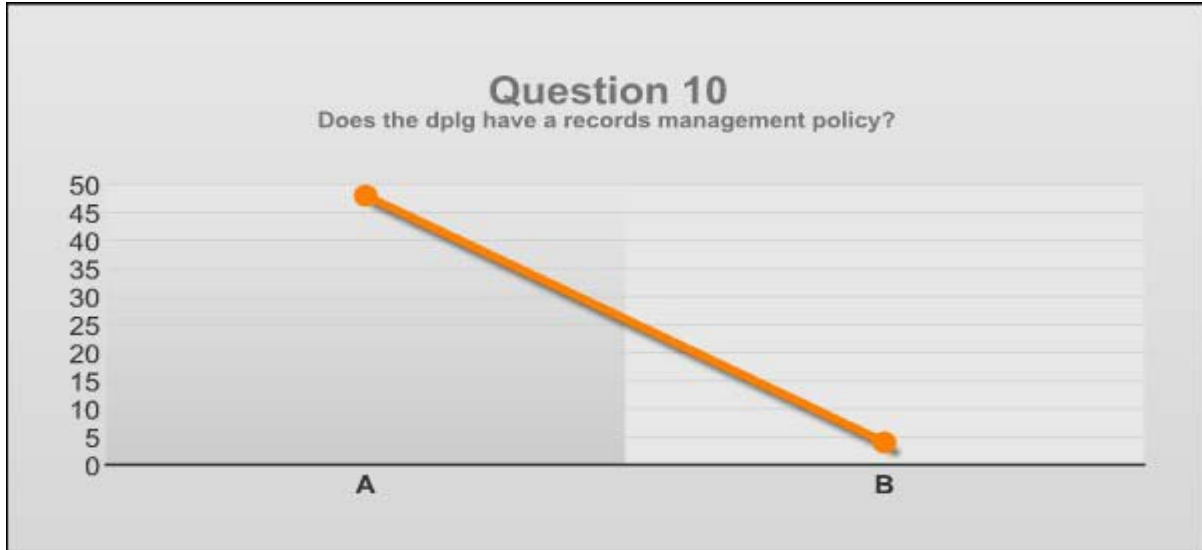
A = Yes   B = No

5.3.3 Records management responsibilities

Records management is a shared responsibility between users, senior managers and records management staff. The purpose of this section was to establish if records management responsibilities had been communicated to all staff members in the DPLG.

Sixteen respondents (30.7%) indicated that records management or what they call 'filing' was the responsibility of administrative assistants (secretaries) within their directorates, while 50% (26) indicated that it was the responsibility of the registry clerk. Only 9.6% (5) indicated that records management responsibilities within the DPLG had been communicated, but not clearly. According to the responses, the communication had been

done through an electronic memo (see appendix G for the memo) issued by the head of the department committing herself to establishing and maintaining proper records management. Responses from senior managers indicated that their secretaries were responsible for records management.

5.3.4 Records classification system

In terms of section 13(2)(b)(i) of the NARS Act, the National Archivist shall determine the records classification systems to be applied by governmental bodies. A records classification system provides a means of knowing what records exist and where they are kept in an organisation. It also facilitates easy access to records. The purpose of this section was to establish if the DPLG had an approved records classification system and whether officials were managing records according to it.

The DPLG had a records classification system that was approved in April 2005 by the NARS. Only 63.4% (33) indicated that they had received training on the DPLG's approved records classification system. However, they indicated that the training was not sufficient because it was done only once for one to four hours. Sixty-five per cent (34) indicated that they file according to the approved records classification system. These included

respondents from the office of the Minister. The other 34.6% (18) indicated that they either file according to dates, directorates or subject.

5.3.5 Physical records storage

In South Africa, government departments are required by law to keep their records in a spacious office area centrally located and known as a registry. The office space allocated to a registry must be able to accommodate the growth in documentation.

The DPLG registry was visited on two occasions (5 December 2007 and 14 January 2008) by the researcher during the study period. A visit to the DPLG registry by the researcher revealed that a spacious office area has been allocated to records management to accommodate growth in documentation. Therefore the DPLG registry will not be cramped with records in future as it currently occupies a large area. The space was enough to accommodate growth in files in future.

The researcher also had an opportunity to visit the DPLG's archives storage. The DPLG has inherited large volumes of records from the previous dispensation which were not properly arranged and described. As a result, these records could not be easily retrieved. Many of these records need to remain accessible over time and those with archival value

must be transferred to the national archives repository for permanent preservation. According to the DPLG's records manager, a large percentage of these records, however, had no enduring business or historical value and needed to be destroyed. Some of these records had exceeded their useful business life and the DPLG was still keeping them. Some still had business value, but the DPLG was unable to access them. This, in turn, would lead to the DPLG having difficulty meeting the requirements of Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000). These records needed to be properly identified and managed to enable compliance with archival legislation as well as easy retrieval of information. The results of the interviews indicated that vast stores of unclassified records in the DPLG had built up over years as a result of, amongst others, the following:

- Lack of resources in the DPLG to manage records

- Absence or poor implementation of records management policy and procedures

- Inability to distinguish historical records from those with temporary value, as a result, everything was kept

- Low awareness of the importance of proper records management practices

- An overwhelming volume of older stored records

- Staff changes that leave the context of many records unknown

- Absence of a disposal authority from the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa that allows for destruction of records.

As reflected in figure 7 below, only 42.3% (22) of respondents stored their records in the registry as compared to 36.5% (19) who kept records either in their offices or within their directorates. Only 11.5% (6) stored records in shared drive and the other 11.5% (6) stored records on an electronic records and document management system. All the respondents felt that the records storage areas were secured. However, those who stored records in their offices or within their directorates indicated that those records could only be accessed by them. They also indicated that they did not have sufficient space to store their records. This can be attributed to the fact that they were not using the registry for storage purpose; otherwise, they would not experience the problem of insufficient records storage.

Figure 7: Records storage area

A = registry   B = my office   C = shared drive   D = within the directorate   E =
other

The majority of respondents (71.2%) indicated that they always filed records from external correspondence as compared to 3.8% (2) who never filed correspondence coming from outside the DPLG. Only 3.8% (2) indicated that they did not receive correspondence from outside the Department as they dealt only with internal clients.

5.3.6 Records control

The purpose of tracking records is to document the movements of records so that the organisation knows where its records are at any time. Tracking may also be used to monitor the use of records and to maintain an auditable trail of record keeping processes, such as access to records by

users. In addition, tracking may be used to ensure that, for example, a particular record is dealt with by the person to whom it has been assigned and that action is taken by a predetermined date. Based on the results of the questionnaires, it appears that only control cards and registers were used as a control mechanism to monitor the movement of paper-based files within the DPLG.

Only 40% (21) of the respondents indicated that files did get lost in the Department due to lack of tracking mechanism; negligence of the registry clerks; staff members borrowing files and keeping them too long in their offices; transfer of records from one office to another without informing the registry; the registry not registering files borrowed or difficult staff members who do not want to sign for borrowed files. The other respondents (60%) indicated that they had never experienced losses of files in the registry or in the Department.

5.3.7 Access and usage of records

In section 3.7, it was mentioned that the purpose of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, is to promote public participation in decision making. In this regard, members of the public should have access to information held by state without providing the reason. The purpose of the

question in this section was to establish how the DPLG implemented the Act.

Forty-two (80.7%) respondents indicated that the DPLG was able to deal with PAIA requests successfully. However, they were not sure who was responsible for PAIA implementation in the DPLG between the RM unit and the Legal Services Directorate. Their feeling was that the RM unit should implement the PAIA while Legal Services should monitor the implementation. Others also called for the two units to work together as the responsibility was not clearly communicated.

As far as internal usage and access to records is concerned, 40% (21) were worried about the long time it took them to get records from the registry. This was due to the fact that their offices were located in other buildings that were either two or three blocks from the registry.

5.3.8 Electronic records management

In South Africa, electronic records are also subject to the same requirements provided in the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act that applies to the management of other records. The purpose of this section was to establish how the DPLG managed records that were created or received electronically, e.g. e-mails, sms, etc.

As shown in figure 8 below, only 23% (12) of the respondents mentioned that they filed electronic records on an Electronic Document and Records Management System called Hummingbird. In 2004 the DPLG piloted Hummingbird and procured only 33 licences. A further 50% (26) made print-outs and filed the hard copy. Only 17.3% (9) indicated that they deleted records at their own discretion as compared to 3.8% (2) who filed records on shared drives or e-mails on GroupWise.

Figure 8: Electronic records management
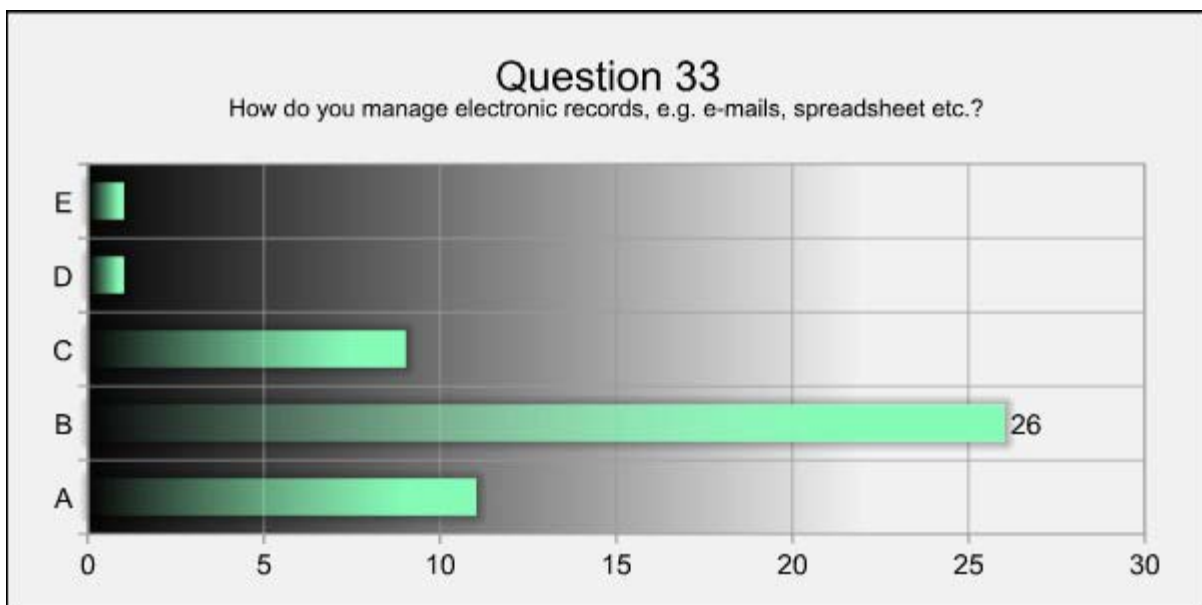
A = EDRMS   B = Print-out   C = User Discretion   D = Shared Drive   E = Other

It seemed that the respondents were not sure about the role played by the RM unit and ICT directorate with regard to the management of electronic records. However, most respondents (70%) felt that electronic records management should not be the responsibility of the ICT directorate. They

argued that the ICT directorate should just provide the architecture based on the specifications provided by the users and the RM unit.

Three staff members who formed part of the pilot group were visited to see how they work with the system. Of those three staff members, only one from the ICT directorate was using all the functionalities of the system. He filed records on the system. The other two did not even have a single record filed on the system. The two users indicated that the piloted system did not meet their needs because it does not have the necessary records management functionalities. The interview with the records manager revealed that not even a single member of the RM unit was part of the pilot group for the EDRMS in the Department. This project was likely to fail because the decision to pilot the EDRMS was not founded in a sound analysis of the business requirements of the office. The users and RM staff were of the opinion that the roll-out of an EDRMS is essentially a records management issue and not an ICT issue. The ICT unit failed to indicate to the researcher the criteria used to select the pilot group for the system. The interview with the records manager revealed that the RM staff lacks technical expertise in electronic records management, hence the ICT unit is training the lead in EDRMS project.

5.3.9 Records management training

As discussed in paragraph 5.3.3 above, records management is a shared responsibility. Therefore creators of records should be equipped with the necessary skills to capture and manage records. The purpose of this section was to establish whether the DPLG conducted regular records management training and who offered the training.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they have attended the internal records management training. Forty-eight per cent (25) of the respondents indicated that they attended the training on file plan usage only once during the implementation in 2005. A further 15.3% (8) attended the training during induction. Only 36.5%% (19) mentioned that they never attended the training. As reflected in figure 9 below, the training was offered by both the records manager and consultants. The respondents felt that the department spent lots of money on the consultants and there was no skills transfer.

Interviews with the records manager revealed that during the implementation of the records management system several training sessions were organised for the users. The biggest challenge for training was attendance. Despite reminders that were sent out daily, the

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attendance of training was poor. After the system was implemented the users started requesting registry for more training.

Figure 9: Records management training
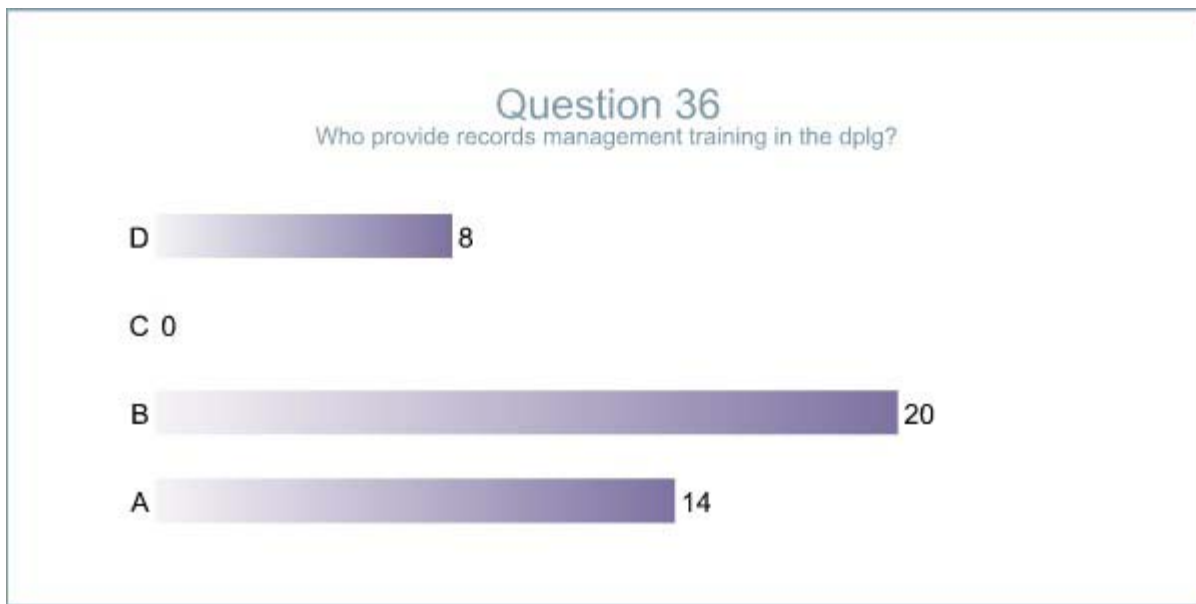
A = Consultants   B = Records Manager   C = National Archives   D = Other

5.3.10 Retention and disposal of records

In accordance with section 13(2)(a) of the NARS Act, no public records under the control of any governmental body may be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without a written disposal authority issued by the National Archivist. The implementation of a disposal authority enables a government department

to dispose of its records regularly. According to the respondents, only the Ministry had a disposal authority for the records.

As reflected in figure 10 below, 3.8% (2) of the respondents destroyed records regularly while 17.3% (9) did that randomly. A total of 59.6% (31) indicated that they did not destroy records at all. The other 17.3% (9) indicated that it was the responsibility of the registry to destroy records. Those who destroyed records indicated that records were destroyed when the owners or creators resigned or when they wanted to decongest their storage area. It appears from the responses that the DPLG did not have a retention schedule for its records.

Figure 10: Disposal of records
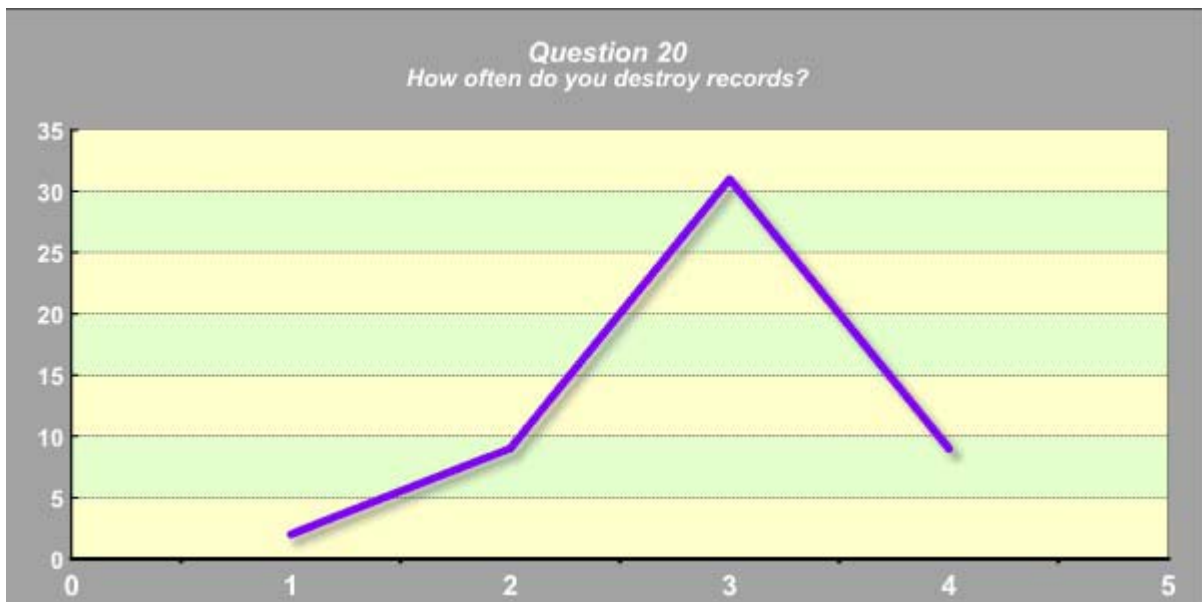
1 = Regularly   2 = Seldom   3 = Never   4 = Other

The interview with the records manager revealed that the DPLG requested a disposal authority from the NARS in 2005. However, the disposal authority was never issued to the Department. The letter for acknowledgement from the National Archives for request of disposal authority by the DPLG dated 31 May 2005 was shown to the researcher. The records manager indicated that numerous attempts were made to contact the NARS to expedite the issuing of a disposal authority but without success. The NARS cited shortage of staff as the delay in issuing a disposal authority.

5.3.11 Strength and weaknesses of the records management function in the DPLG

When asked about the strength of the DPLG's records management function, 86.5% (45) indicated compliance with legislation as one of the strengths. For example, they indicated that there was an approved records classification system as well as records management policy and procedures. Some indicated the support from the Director-General as a strength, but lack of understanding of records management by senior managers as a weakness. Some of the challenges mentioned by respondents included: users wanted to file in their own way; duplication of records in different locations and thus utilising a lot of space; unqualified records management staff; registry operated without a records manager

for a long time (approximately nine months); high turnover of records management staff (for example, the registry lost ten staff members from director to registry clerk level in less than two years). Those staff members constituted 99% of the team which implemented the DPLG records management programme in 2005. The other concern by respondents was that the NARS was not helping as it had not done the audits or inspection at the DPLG for a long time. Lack of records disaster recovery plan was mentioned as a risk.

5.4   Summary of research findings

In view of the above survey, interview and observation results, as well as the content analysis in chapter four, it is clear that the DPLG has taken a number of initiatives to follow proper records management practices. For example, the DPLG has engaged consultants to develop a records management system which resulted in an approved records classification system, records management policy and procedures, as well as the implementation thereof. In outsourcing the development and implementation of the records management system, the DPLG benefited from the expertise of the service provider because at the end the Department was able to comply with the basic requirements of archival legislation. The DPLG was even ranked number three by Open Democracy Advice Centre and South African Human Rights Commission

for Golden Key Awards of 2006 in recognition of a government department that best implemented the PAIA (the reader is referred to section 3.7 for more information on Golden Key Awards and the PAIA).

However, a few respondents indicated that outsourcing the development of the DPLG records management system did not benefit the Department. One of the reasons given is that consultants came, develop the system and left. According to the respondents there was no proper skills transfer because the consultants were in hurry to finish the job so that they can go on to the next job. This, according to the respondents will result in a vicious circle because the same consultants will come in future to rectify some of their mistakes and they would be paid for it. Either way, the use of consultants or in-house staff has pros and cons as outlined in table 16 below.

Table 16: Using consultants vs in-house staff

Consultants	In-house staff
Pros	**Cons**
Have experience	May not have experience
Have all their time allocated to the project	May not have all their time allocated to the project
Can be held totally accountable	Difficult to hold totally accountable
Cons	**Pros**
May not initially understand the organisational culture and vision/mission	Immediately understand the organisational culture, vision and goals
May be very expensive	Very cost-effective
May not engage in knowledge and skill transfer	Development of organisational knowledge and skills

There is an indication that the DPLG's records management function does receive support from the Director-General. This is due to the fact that some respondents indicated that the Director-General does not approve submissions or memos without an approved classification system reference number. This is done to enforce the usage of the classification system. The hiring of consultants by the Department to develop a records management system also shows commitment from the top management. As discussed in section 4.3 the idea of outsourcing the consultants for the development of the records management system was initiated and sponsored by the Director-General. This can partly be attributed to a willingness to comply with archival legislation or an attempt to facilitate easy retrieval of information in the Department that will help in decision-making. The DPLG has also appointed a records manager on deputy director level in terms of section 13(5)(a) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) to maintain the records management programme.

While the DPLG has a well-established tradition of hard-copy records management-based programme, the same cannot be said of electronic records management. It is clear from the responses that the relationship between the ICT directorate and the RM unit has not been identified. As a result, information stakeholders operate in silos and do not communicate effectively with each other. For example, the ICT directorate still defines

and drives EDRMS solutions with minimal involvement of records management staff.

In view of the above discussion, the results of the study can be summarised as follows:

- Records management function is not an objective on the strategic plan of the Department.

- There is no overall departmental performance management framework related to records management. In other words, DPLG employees are not measured on records management during performance appraisal as it does not form part of their performance contracts.

- There is evidence that the Top Management Team is supporting records management activities but lacks understanding.

- There is a lack of appropriate RM experts and specialists in the Department.

- Turnover in the RM Unit in the DPLG is high, e.g. the DPLG has lost almost everybody who started with the records management project in 2005. As a result, there is no succession planning on records management.

- The DPLG operated without a records manager for a long time (nine months).

- The records manager has been appointed at deputy director level. In consideration of government hierarchy and bureaucracy in South Africa, the level is low as the official at that level does not have the platform to interact with top management. Therefore an assumption is that the records management function will not be represented when key decisions are made in strategic meetings of the Department.

- Roles and responsibilities of RM are not clearly defined or communicated to staff members, for example, it is not clear who is responsible for the PAIA between the RM division and the Legal Services division within the DPLG. It is also not clear who is responsible for the management of electronic records between the information technology division and the RM division.

- Compliance with legislation is inconsistent, for example, there is no control over the disposal of records as some respondents indicated that they destroy electronic records such as e-mails at their own discretion.

- There is no integrated records management risk mitigating framework in the DPLG. As a result, the Department is vulnerable to information loss should a disaster strike.

- The existing records management staff within the DPLG is not well positioned to function in an electronic work environment which requires record specialists to:

- become involved at the front end of the records creation process (the planning stage);

- set standards for record keeping that are relevant to the business and accountability requirements of the department;

- work with technical specialists in incorporating these requirements into the design of systems (including office support systems), and

- serve as a coach and advisor on record keeping matters to officials at all levels in the department.

- A tendency exists amongst staff in the Department to take personal ownership of records and to keep them out of the central storage area.

- There is fragmentation of official records in the DPLG as some directorates do not want to send their records to registry for filing.

- Failure of the NARS to exercise authority over the control of records in governmental bodies is evident. For example, the respondents have indicated that the NARS has not done inspection in the DPLG since 2005.

- There is overt lack of proper training and skills in records management amongst records management practitioners in the Department. As discussed in section 5.2 above, only two

respondents have indicated that they were studying towards qualifications in records management.

- Based on information obtained from the previous records manager, there was a tendency to dump members who are unproductive, idle, disruptive or redundant in RM units within the DPLG.

Based on the above results, a records management capability model (see

table 17 below) was developed as a possible guideline to help government

institutions to measure themselves against prescribed levels. The model is

adapted from the IRMT's Records Management Capacity Assessment

System (RMCAS)[4] and the Library and Archives Canada's Information

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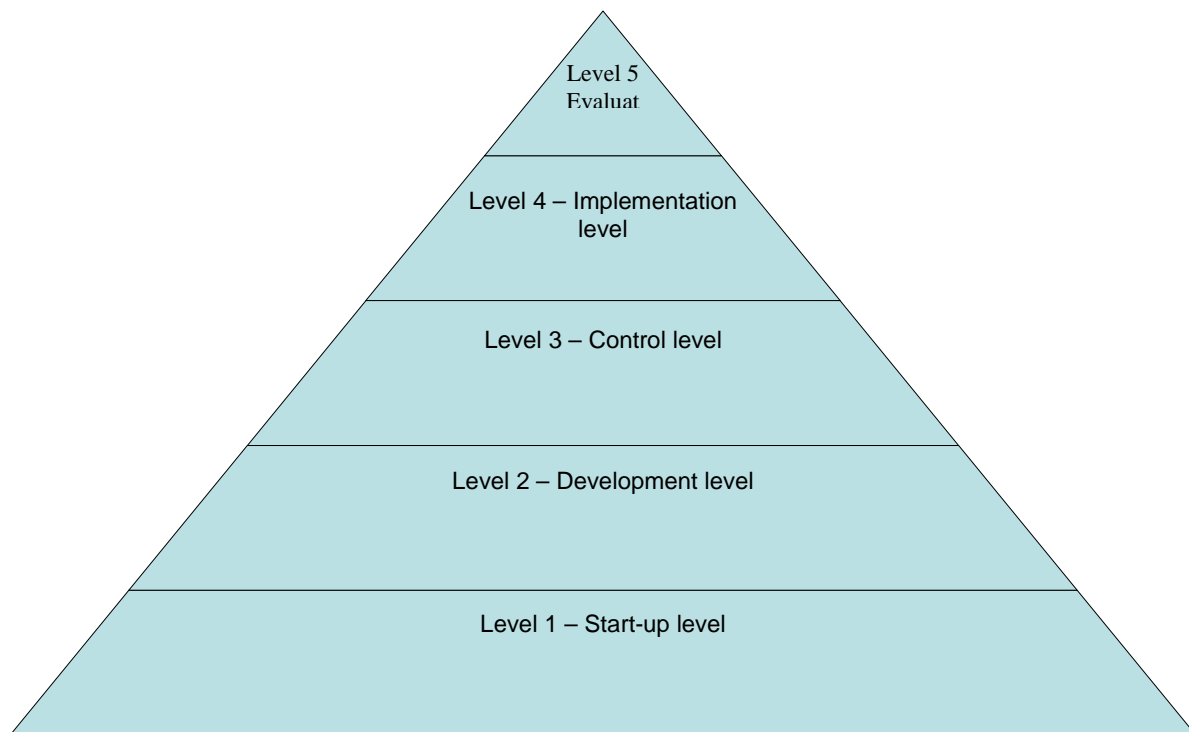[4] According to Demb (2004:12) the RMCAS comprises three components:
 - A data gathering element consisting of assessment questions in structured sequences
 - A diagnostic model which maps the data gathered against statements of good practice and
   capacity levels
 - A database of training and capacity-building resource for records and information management

Management Capacity Check (IMCC).[5] The aim of the model is to assist

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[5] Library and Archives Canada has developed the IM Capacity Check tool to define a set of best practices against which government departments can benchmark their current IM capacities and improve them over time. The IM Capacity Check is a flexible self-assessment tool intended as a diagnostic for senior management (not an audit or central agency reporting mechanism). Key characteristics of the tool are: senior management participates in the process, the process creates open dialogue between all areas in an organisation and it allows an organisation to determine its current capacities (as is) and develop a strategic plan to improve its capabilities (to be). The tool is available on the website http://www.collectionscanada.ca/information-management/002/007002-2003-e.html and can be adapted by any organisation; however, BearingPoint must be acknowledged and identified as the owner of this product. The key elements of IM Capacity Check are:
- Organisational context
- Organisational capabilities
- Management of information
- Compliance and quality
- Records and information life cycle
- User perspectives

Table 17: Records Management Capability Model

Level 5
Evaluat

Level 4 – Implementation
level

Level 3 – Control level

Level 2 – Development level

Level 1 – Start-up level

government departments in measuring and identifying records management issues at prescribed levels. Measuring itself against this model, a government department will be in a position to determine where it is in terms of records management and how to improve to the next level. The levels of the above model are summarised in table 18 below.

Table 18: Summary of the levels of RM capability model

Level	Outline	Detailed characteristics
Level 1 – Start-up level	No RM policy, procedures and file plan	Policy and file plan have not been developed. Functional analysis of the department is not documented
Level 2 – Development level	There is basic RM policy and procedures and an approved file plan	Policy and file plan have been developed and documented but not implemented
Level 3 – Control level	Impact analysis and preparation	Policy and file plan are working across the organisation. IT is used for records management but not effectively
Level 4 – Implementation	Training of users and roll out of file plan and policy. A mixture of IT and paper system	Policy and file plan reviewed to monitor progress. Furthermore, they are updated regularly
Level 5 – Evaluation	Knowledge management environment is in place	RM is used effectively to support all business functions and governance objectives. A learning culture exists and there is compliance with legislation

In terms of the above model, it can be argued that the DPLG is on level 2 – development level. To improve to the next level, the DPLG will have to force compliance across the Department and roll-out the EDRMS to the rest of the staff.

5.5 Conclusion

The findings in this study clearly illustrate the value of establishing key policies, activities and control framework necessary for proper records management. Setting up correct policies, procedures and practices is important for building a culture of proper records management in the organisation. Top and senior management support has equally proved to be an essential element for a successful records management

programme. It can therefore be argued that the establishment of an effective record keeping infrastructure is based on:

- public servants at all levels who understand the importance of records and recognise the need for a record keeping infrastructure (policies, systems and standards for capturing and maintaining records); and
- records specialists who know how to build and maintain the record keeping infrastructure.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter (five), data collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation was analysed. The findings of the study were also discussed and summarised. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Conclusions were drawn based on the content analysis, research questions and objectives of the study, as well as the findings of the study thereof. Recommendations were made based on content analysis and the findings of the study discussed in chapter five.

6.2   Conclusions

This study was undertaken to investigate the state of records management practices in the South African public sector with specific reference to the Department of Provincial and Local Government. Even though the study has found that the DPLG has developed and implemented policies for records management, it is clear from the above discussions, content analysis and findings that the Department has a long way to travel as far as record keeping is concerned. The challenges experienced of implementing a records management system in a

government department are not unique to the DPLG. Records management infrastructures are in danger of collapse (through resource reductions, retirements, etc.) in various government departments and there are few people equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to develop and rebuild infrastructures that are relevant to the business and accountability needs. This study has revealed that an enormous benefit for the implementation of a records management system is the commitment of top management. Indeed, without the support of top management, the attempts to implement a records management system are doomed to failure.

The study has also established that even though the management echelon in the DPLG has shown commitment and leadership to records management activities, its support is characterised by lack of understanding of records management function. Despite the support of the TMT, records management does not form part of the strategic objectives of the DPLG. There is chronic lack of concrete evidence demonstrating that the entire leadership of the DPLG, from the Director-General to senior managers, shares a common vision on records management. Furthermore, insufficient resources are allocated to records management. The study also revealed that there is overt lack of requisite skills amongst records management professionals on policy formulation, analysis and advocacy. The placement of the records management unit within

Administrative Support Services is also a concern to the researcher as the function does not have anything in common with facilities management, building and maintenance which are housed within Administrative Support Services. Undoubtedly, it is also clear that information management stakeholders within the DPLG operate in silos resulting in duplication of services. In view of the above discussion, it can be argued that this study was able to answer the research questions as well as meet the objectives raised in chapter one.

Despite the challenges cited above, a few lessons could be learnt from the study and are as follows:

- It is clear from the findings that collaboration between key business areas (ICT unit, RM unit, internal audit unit, legal service unit, etc.) can underpin an organisation's success on records management. Therefore it is important for the records management division to establish a good rapport with other information stakeholders.

- Undoubtedly, it was shown in the findings that the roll-out of EDRMS is not about information technology. It is also about people and processes. Any approach to the roll-out of EDRMS needs to consider information, records, people, processes and systems together as they rely heavily on each other. The EDRMS product suite is a tool and not the solution to solve the records management

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problems in government departments to enable them to deliver quality services.

6.3   Recommendations

In order for records management to receive the attention it deserves in the DPLG, this study proposes that it should be a strategic objective in the Departments' strategic plan. Records management practitioners in the DPLG have a delicate task to perform in working with officials who are often very possessive about their records. They cannot rely only on legislation, policies or their functional authority to ensure departmental-wide compliance with the records management system. It is essential to sensitise staff members and top management about the benefits and risks of records management. The starting point is usually promoting an awareness of records as a corporate resource and an understanding that, whether on paper or in electronic form, records are not merely for personal use. Culture change often includes motivating staff to recognise the importance of good records management, as well as building confidence in the new system. A records management programme should be notified to all staff, together with a directive for its implementation. By itself, however, this will not suffice. Records management practitioners have to develop a corporate culture in which employees take the documentation of their activities seriously. Staff must feel ownership of the records

management programme and it is essential that they participate as fully as possible in the change process. Therefore, a communications strategy should be adopted, with workshops, demonstrations, meetings and interviews held as necessary.

The records management policy should compel officials to practise proper records management, e.g. the policy can state that all line managers should only approve documents with file plan reference numbers. There is also a need for effective advocacy programme by records management practitioners of the DPLG to be able to sensitise senior managers about records management. This can be done through internal road shows on records management or by introducing a records management awareness week that coincides with the archives week coordinated by the National Archives. The senior manager responsible for records management must also exercise his/her legitimate authority and introduce a robust plan of action (PoA) which targets policy development, implementation and maintenance with specific time lines in order to comply with all statutes having a bearing on records management.

Proper records management can also be enforced by mainstreaming it in the balance scorecards of all employees in the DPLG. Management needs to ensure that the RM vision is shared, understood and embraced by all staff. The point that records management cannot be implemented solely

by records managers in the Department cannot be overemphasised. This calls for a joint and collective responsibility for records management from grass root to top management level. Senior managers in the Department, given their strategic position, are expected to vertically and horizontally synchronise records management strategies and policies.

One other way of leveraging records management can be through auditing compliance within the Department. Upon completion of the audits, non-compliance directorates can be named and shamed within the DPLG. Those which are complying can be given incentives or points towards their performance assessments.

To improve records management provision, the RM unit should form an internal forum in which each and every directorate within the DPLG is represented by the coordinator. These coordinators can be used as a direct link between the records management unit and their respective directorates. The ideal role of the coordinators is to ensure that the needs of their directorates are accommodated by the records management function. They can also identify gaps and loopholes regarding records management in their directorates and report to the records manager.

Registries are usually established on a central basis as is the case with the DPLG. However, sometimes it is necessary to establish decentralised

registries. Decentralised registries are usually established if it would cause unnecessary delays to accessing files if they are not kept near individuals working with them. This is the case with the DPLG since it is located in four buildings. However, decentralised registries can cause the development of dissimilar systems and records management practices, as well as duplication of files. It also requires the use of more office space and shelving and it prevents the accurate estimation of personnel recruiting and training needs. Should the DPLG consider having registries in other buildings, the following should be taken into account:

(i)   The classification system and records management policy should remain uniform;

(ii)   The receipt and opening and dispatch of mail should remain the function of the main registry, which will ensure that the correct file reference numbers are allocated to all mail; and

(iii)   Staff members should be trained in the main registry to enable them to gain the necessary skills to manage records properly and to facilitate the interchange of staff when necessary.

This study proposes that the DPLG should consider grouping the RM unit with other units that are concerned with information management such as the ICT unit, Knowledge Management Unit, etc. The DPLG records management programme should be evaluated through either of the

following methods: post-implementation workshop, internal audit of records management activities or survey.

As a way forward, the DPLG should consider rolling out the EDRMS to the entire Department. With an electronic records and document management system, which links to a workflow system, not only are all documents stored electronically, but these can also be automatically extracted or routed to the recipient and escalations can be attached to these documents ensuring that they receive the attention that they require within the requisite time frames. Working from this premise, it can be seen that a records and document management system will not only be part of records management, but will also contribute to stakeholder relationship management and to good corporate governance.

Finally, there is also a need for government through the NARS to partner with universities to develop training modules for records management and also to commission studies on different aspects of records management. Based on the above findings, a study should be conducted with the following objectives:

(i)   To identify and define the key functions and activities (job models) associated with the design, implementation and maintenance of records management infrastructures for government departments;

(ii)   To identify the education, training and recruitment strategies that should be employed to close the gap between what exists now and what is required to ensure that government departments are supported by relevant and effective record keeping infrastructures;

(iii)   To investigate the relationship between NARS and government departments regarding records management; and

(iv)   To assess the level of compliance with the National Archives and Records Service of SA Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) by government departments.

6.4   Summary

This study was organised into six chapters. Chapter one set the scene by giving an introduction to the study. Chapter two discussed the objectives and importance of records management practices, as well as the records management strategies in the public sector. Chapter three focused on the state of records management trends in South Africa, while chapter four discussed records management practices in the Department of Provincial and Local Government. Chapter five presented an analysis of data, as well as the findings of the study. This chapter (six) presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

It is clear from the study that the implications of a continued state of ad hoc implementation and formal compliance have dire consequences for records management. Realistic solutions to accelerated implementation as discussed above are vital. Improvement in the management of records is a long-term and wide-reaching prospect for a government department and is often (and properly) integrated into wider information and knowledge management agendas. To achieve improvements in records management, the DPLG will require strong leadership and an improvement agenda that is endorsed at a high level and supported throughout the Department. A records management system will only function effectively if it is developed as part of the larger managerial environment, so that procedures reflect overall management objectives. Furthermore, the establishment of an effective records management infrastructure is based on public servants at all levels who understand the importance of records and the need of records management infrastructures, i.e. policies, procedures, file plans, etc. Unless the records management initiatives have the support of those who hold power in the DPLG, all the initiatives that the Department have undertaken are doomed to failure.

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APPENDIX A: Public Archives Act, (Act No. 9 of 1922)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES ACT, No. 9 of 1922.

Act to make provision for the custody and control of the public archives of the Union.

(Signed by the Governor-General in Dutch.)

(Assented to 22nd May, 1922.)

[Date of commencement—1st July, 1922.]

1. Chief Archivist.—The chief archivist, under the direction of the Minister, shall have the care, custody and control of the public archives in every archives depôt, and shall advise any Government department with reference to care, custody and control of the public archives remaining in the custody of such department.

2. Chief Archivist May Acquire Documents, Etc.—The chief archivist, with the approval of the Minister, may acquire all such original records, documents and other things as he may deem necessary or desirable to secure for the public archives, or he may acquire copies or replicas thereof, and he may pay for the same, or for the transcribing, binding and repairing thereof, out of such moneys as are voted by Parliament for the purposes of the public archives.

3. Creation of Archives Depôts.—The public archives which are no longer required by the various Government departments for administrative purposes shall be transferred periodically to archive depôts. For the Union public archives the depôt shall be at the seat of Government of the Union, and for the provincial public archives of any province the depôt shall be at the seat of the provincial administration.

4. Public Archives Available for Public Use.—Public archives shall, subject to regulations, be made accessible to the public: Provided that the chief archivist may, in his discretion, withhold access to any particular document or a document relating to any particular event, subject always to the right of the person desiring access to such document to appeal to the Minister, whose decision shall be final.

5. Archives Commission.—An archives commission may be appointed by the Minister, the functions of which shall be—

(a) to recommend to the Minister the steps necessary for the custody and improvement of the collection of public archives in the Union;

(b) to recommend to the Minister from time to time what steps are considered desirable in connection with the collection, preservation and distribution of all written matter, public or private, bearing on the history and records of South Africa;

(c) to recommend to the Minister what steps are considered desirable for the encouragement of historic record;

(d) to supervise the publication of any portion of the public archives, authorized by the Minister to be published; and

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aa. 1–5

PUBLIEKE ARCHIEVEN WET, No. 9 van 1922.

Wet tot regeling van de bewaring van en het toezicht over de publieke archieven van de Unie.

(Deur die Goeverneur-generaal in Hollands geteken.)

(Goedgekeur op 22 Mei 1922.)

[Datum van invoering—1 Julie 1922.]

1. Hoofdarchivaris.—De hoofdarchivaris is onder oppertoezicht van de Minister belast met de bewaring van, en het beheer en toezicht over de publieke archieven in elke archief/bewaarplaats, en dient een Goevernements-departement van advies betreffende de bewaring van, en het beheer en toezicht over de publieke archieven welke in de bewaring van zulk departement blijven.

2. Hoofdarchivaris kan Dokumenten, enz., Verkrijgen.—De hoofdarchivaris kan met goedkeuring van de Minister, al zulke oorspronkelike gedenkschriften, dokumenten en andere voorwerpen verkrijgen als hij nodig of wenselik acht om voor de publieke archieven te verkrijgen, of hij kan kopieën of duplikaten ervan verkrijgen en hij kan voor dezulke of voor het overschrijven, inbinden en herstellen daarvan uit de gelden, die door het Parlement voor het doel van publieke archieven toegestaan zijn, betalen.

3. Oprichting van Archiefbewaarplaatsen.—De publieke archieven welke niet meer door de verschillende Goevernementsdepartementen benodigd zijn voor lopende dienst worden op geregelde tijden overgebracht naar archiefbewaarplaatsen. Voor de publieke archieven van de Unie is de bewaarplaats in de zetel van het Goevernement van de Unie en voor de provinciale publieke archieven van elke provincie is de bewaarplaats in de zetel van de provinciale administratie.

4. Publieke Archieven Toegankelik voor Publiek Gebruik.—Publieke archieven zijn, met inachtneming van de regulaties, toegankelik voor het publiek: Met dien verstande dat de hoofdarchivaris in zijn diskretie deinzage van een biezonder dokument of een dokument betreffende een biezondere gebeurtenis kan weigeren, onderhevig echter aan het recht van de persoon die inzage wenst te hebben van zulk dokument, om zich op de Minister te beroepen, wiens beslissing finaal is.

5. Archieven Kommissie.—De Minister kan een archieven kommissie benoemen wiens funktiën zijn—

(a) de Minister de nodige stappen aan te bevelen voor de bewaring en verbetering van de verzameling van publieke archieven in de Unie;

(b) de Minister van tijd tot tijd aan te bevelen welke stappen wenselik geacht worden in verband met de verzameling, het behoud en de verspreiding van alle publieke of private geschreven stukken, betrekking hebbende op de geschiedenis en gedenkschriften van Zuid-Afrika;

(c) de Minister aan te bevelen welke stappen wenselik geacht worden ter aanmoediging van historiese ingeschriftstelling;

(d) het toezicht houden over de publikatie van een stuk uit de archieven waarvan de publikatie door de Minister gemachtigd is; en

185

(c) to report from time to time, but at least once a year, the proceedings of the commission.

6. **Regulations.**—The Governor-General may make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, prescribing—

(a) the admission of the public to archives depôts and the inspection by the public of the public archives;

(b) the steps to be taken for the examination and disposal of valueless records;

(c) the transfer of any public archives from the custody of any Government department having control thereof to an archive depôt;

(d) the procedure to be followed at or in connection with the meetings of the archives commission,

and generally for the better carrying out of the objects and purposes of this Act.

7. **Interpretation of Terms.**—In this Act, unless inconsistent with the context—

"archives depôt" means any place in which at the commencement of this Act any public archives are kept, or any place to which any public archives may thereafter, with the approval of the Minister, be transferred;

"Minister" means the Minister of the Interior or any other Minister to whom the Governor-General may assign the administration of this Act;

"the public archives" means all such public records, documents and other historical material of every kind, nature and description as are in the custody of any of the public departments, whether of the Union Government or of any provincial administration, or as have already been transferred to an archive depôt; but the expression "the public archives" does not include any document which, under the provisions of any other law, is to be kept in the custody of any particular officer;

"the Union public archives" means public archives formed by the various departments of the Union Government since the date of the establishment of Union;

"the provincial public archives" means public archives formed by any provincial administration since the date of the establishment of Union, and includes the public archives prior to such establishment, of the Governments of the colonies which now constitute the provinces of the Union.

8. **Short Title.**—This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Public Archives Act, 1922, and shall commence and come into operation on the first day of July, 1922.

(e) van tijd tot tijd maar ten minste eenmaal per jaar verslag uit te brengen van de handelingen van de kommissie.

6. **Regulaties.**—De Goeverneur-generaal kan regulaties niet in strijd met deze Wet uitvaardigen betreffende—

(a) de toegang van het publiek in de archiefbewaarplaatsen en de inzage door het publiek van de publieke archieven;

(b) de stappen te worden genomen betreffende het onderzoek naar en de beschikking over waardeloze dokumenten;

(c) de overbrenging van publieke archieven van de bewaring van een Goevernementsdepartement dat daarover het beheer heeft, naar een archiefbewaarplaats;

(d) de regels te worden gevolg bij gelegenheid van of in verband met de vergaderingen van de archieven kommissie,

en in het algemeen voor de betere verwezenlijking van de doeleinden en oogmerken van deze Wet.

7. **Woordbepaling.**—Voor de toepassing van deze Wet tenzij de samenhang een andere zin aanwijst wordt verstaan onder—

"archiefbewaarplaats" de plaatsen waar bij het inwerking treden van deze Wet publieke archieven berusten, of de plaats waarnaartoe publieke archieven daarna met de goedkeuring van de Minister overgebracht worden;

"Minister" de Minister van Binnenlandse zaken of een andere Minister die door de Goeverneur-generaal met de uitvoering van deze Wet belast wordt;

"de publieke archieven" alle zulke publieke gedenkschriften, dokumenten en ander historiese materiaal van enige soort, aard en beschrijving, als berusten bij een publiek departement hetzij van het Unie Goevernement, of van een provinciale administratie of als reeds naar een archiefbewaarplaats zijn overgebracht; maar de uitdrukking "de publieke archieven" sluit niet in een dokument dat krachtens de bepalingen van een andere wet in de bewaring van een biezondere ambtenaar berust;

"de publieke archieven van de Unie" de publieke archieven ingesteld door de verschillende departementen van het Unie Goevernement sedert de datum van de totstandkoming van de Unie;

"de provinciale publieke archieven" de publieke archieven ingesteld door een provinciale administratie sedert de datum van de totstandkoming van de Unie en tevens de publieke archieven van de Goevernementen van de kolonies vóór de totstandkoming van de Unie die nu de provincies van de Unie uitmaken.

8. **Korte Titel.**—Deze Wet kan voor alle doeleinden aangehaald worden als de Publieke Archieven Wet, 1922 en treedt in werking op de eerste dag van Julie 1922.

APPENDIX B: CIRCULAR NO. 1 OF 1974

TO HEADS OF ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, S.A. TRANSPORT SERVICES, POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS, DEVELOPMENT BOARDS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, COMMUNITY BOARDS AND DECLARED INSTITUTIONS

WORD PROCESSOR: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE [1]

1974-10-01

1. For archival purposes two basic applications of the Word Processor have been identified, viz.

    (i) Primary Application: Customary editing of type written text.

                  : Storage of standard letters/forms for periodical use.

    (ii) Secondary Application: Storage of correspondence (other than standard letters), reports etc. when copies are not placed on correspondence files

                  : Transmission of information directly between inter town/city linked word processors.

                  : Linked to mainframe computer of the office.

2. All controlling offices where a word processor is in use are required to institute the following steps immediately to ensure that a complete record of all transactions is available on correspondence files:

    (i) An office instruction directed to all offices/ departments/sections that when the word processor is used a copy of each finalised item or revised finalised item be placed on correspondence files of the office. This instruction does not apply to amended drafts but to final copies only.

    (ii) Offices employing the word processor for secondary application, as set out above, must report such usage to this office supplying full details as regards each application.

    The National Archives and Records Service's publication Management of electronic records in governmental bodies: Policy guidelines, 2003 contains the latest guidelines regarding the management of electronic records.

APPENDIX C: Criteria used to measure government departments for Golden Key Awards

Category 1 : The Openness Award

The winner of this award will be determined by consideration of the following criteria:

	Guiding question
Roadmap	1. Is there a list of all documents which can be disclosed and those which cannot? 2. Is the process for submitting requests readily available to requestors? 3. Are contact details regarding the office which handles requests provided? Are there provisions for receiving requests using different methods?
Records management	4. How are records organised and stored? 5. What are the rules governing the generation of information? 6. Is there a practice of automatic disclosure where records are disclosed as soon as they are generated?
Reporting	7. Is there a system for recording and reporting on the number of requests received? 8. Does the report reflect open practice?
Internal Mechanisms	9. Are requests recorded accurately? 10. What internal guidelines exist for frontline officials on how to handle requests? 11. What internal procedures exist for processing requests and communicating with requestors? 12. What is the procedure for assisting disadvantaged requestors? 13. Is there an implementation plan which operationalises the Act?
Resources	14. What financial resources are allocated to implementing the Act? 15. What human capacity has been appointed/trained to facilitate access to information? 16. Is there a unit established to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the Act? 17. What incentives are in place to ensure that staff comply with the Act? 18. What sanctions are in place to ensure that staff comply with the Act?

APPENDIX D: OUESTIONNAIRE

Survey instrument for collecting information on the management of records in the dplg

Mark (X) the option relevant to you

Use the space provided to write your answers to the questions

1.   Gender?

Male	
Female	

2.   Your highest qualifications?

Below Matric	
Matric certificate	
Post-Matric certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
Other: Specify	

3.   Your position within the **dplg?**

Records management	
Senior Manager and above	
Admin Assistant	
IT	
Other: Specify	

4.   Does the **dplg** have a records management programme?

Yes	
No	

If yes, continue below.

Is the RM programme meeting your needs?

Yes	
No	

If no, why? ……………………………………………………………………

Where is the records management programme located within the **dplg**?

Knowledge & Information Management	
Admin Support Services	
Information Technology	
Communication	
Other: Specify	

Does the location of records management programme have impact on the provision of information?

Yes	
No	

If yes, how? ………………………………………………………………………….

Has the records management programme been allocated the appropriate resources (finance/equipment) to enable it to be maintained?

Yes	
No	

Is the RM programme fully staffed?

Yes	
No	

If not, how long have posts been vacant?

6 months	
1 year	
2 years	
Other, Specify	

What is the average turnover of records management staff per annum?

0	
1 - 5 employees	
5 – 10 employees	
Other, specify	

Is the RM programme regularly reviewed to ensure its continued effectiveness?

Yes	
No	

If yes, how frequently

Monthly	
Quarterly	
Annually	
Other, specify	

How is the review done?

Survey	
Information Audits	
Statistical Analysis	
Other, specify	

What is the reputation of the RM programme? Indicate with a yes or no.

Is it perceived as helpful?	
Are its views given credence?	
Are its recommendations implemented?	
Other, Specify	

5. Does the **dplg** have a records management policy in place?

Yes	
No	

If yes, is the policy endorsed by the Head of Department?

Yes	
No	

Are all staff members aware of the policy?

Yes	
No	

Is the policy reviewed at regular intervals?

Yes	
No	

Do staff members manage records according to this policy?

Yes	
No	

How are staff members made aware of the policy?

Intranet	
E-mail	
Circulars	
Other, specify	

6. Does the **dplg** have a designated/appointed records manager?

Yes	
No	

If no, who is responsible for records management in the **dplg**?
…………………………………

What is the level of the records manager within the **dplg**?

Director	
Deputy-Director	
Assistant Director	
Other, specify	

Are staff members outside RM programme aware of their RM roles/responsibilities?

Yes	
No	

7. Does the **dplg** have a records classification system/ file plan that is derived from analysis of business activity?

Yes	
No	

Is the file plan approved by the National Archivist?

Yes	
No	

Did you receive training on how to use the filing system/file plan?

Yes	
No	

Are you capable of allocating file reference numbers according to the file plan?

Yes	
No	

Do you file records according to the **dplg** file plan?

Yes	
No	

If not, why? …………………………………………………………………………….

Is the file plan known to all staff members?

Yes	
No	

Are there any other records classification system/file plans in use within the department, for example, within a Directorate?

Yes	
No	

If yes, are these file plans approved by the National Archivist?

Yes	
No	

How would you rate the effectiveness of the file plan within the **dplg** e.g. in terms of retrieval of records; accessibility; missing of files etc?

Very effective	
Ineffective	
Other, specify	

Appendix E: Letter of request to undertake research in the DPLG

<div align="right">

PO Box 56247
Arcadia
0007
14 July 2005

</div>

The Director-General
Department of Provincial and Local Government
Private Bag x 804
Pretoria
0001

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR DEPARTMENT FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1.   The purpose of this letter is to request your approval for me to undertake a survey on records management trends in your department.

2.   I am a Masters student in Information Science at the University of South Africa doing research on "*An exploration of records management trends at the Department of Provincial and Local Government: one side of the coin – head or tail?*" The main aim of this project is to acquire empirical data about current records management practices, programme and procedures in the **dplg** in order to provide basic and practical information needed to enable government employees to implement proper records management. I view this study as a worthwhile project that will serve as a guide for other government departments that are faced with challenges of managing records through their life cycle. Research into records management trends and practices can lead to a better understanding of records management problems and challenges facing government departments in South Africa as well as providing solutions to what is to be done, and how resources should be used. In this regard, the **dplg** will benefit a lot from the recommendations of this study.

3.   I may mention that all replies will be treated in the strictest confidence. Data will be presented in the aggregate and responses will not be attributed to particular respondents. I realise that there are many other demands on the time of your staff members, but believe me, the results will be beneficial to all those with responsibility for records management. It is worth mentioning that on completion of the study, a copy of the dissertation will be donated to the **dplg** library and the results would be shared and discussed with the staff of records management sub-directorate. Results of the survey may also be used to develop training programme.

4.   Thanking you in advance for your prompt positive response.

Mpho Ngoepe (Mr)
MIS student: Unisa
0834184688

Appendix F: Letter of approval to undertake research in the DPLG

dplg
Department of Provincial and Local Government

87 Hamilton Street, Arcadia, Pretoria
Private Bag X804, Pretoria 0001
South Africa
Tel: (+27 12) 334 0600
Fax: (+27 12) 334 0603
Website: www.dplg.gov.za

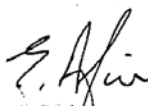**Your partner in service delivery and development**

Reference No.: 1/2/1/2

Mr M Ngoepe
P O Box 56247
Arcadia
0007

Dear Mr M Ngoepe

Request for Mr M Ngoepe to undertake Survey on Records Management trends in the dplg.

1. With reference to your letter dated 26 July 2006, I wish to inform you that approval has been granted to conduct survey in the **dplg** records management.

2. The Department will appreciate it if you could submit your report or results on the findings and recommendations of your survey so that we can improve the management of the information of the state.

3. I wish you all the best in your studies.

Mr E Africa
Acting Director-General
Date: 26/10/06

led | isrdp | urp | cmip | ndmc | pimss | CitiesNetwork

Appendix G: Memo of commitment on records management issued by the DPLG Director-General to members of staff

Department of Provincial and Local Government

Support Services Branch
Directorate: Administrative Support
Services

MEMORANDUM

Reference No.: 2/8/2/1

Enquiries: MG. Masakona
Extension: 0969
Office/Room No.: 124

All Employees

SOUND RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT STATEMENT

1. The **dplg** established a records management system to ensure the economical and efficient management of its records. The system provides for the application, on a continuing basis, of sound management practices and techniques in the creation, maintenance, retrieval, preservation, and disposal of records.

2. The **dplg** therefore commit itself to keep proper records of its business activities to meet the needs and protect the interest of the institution, its clients and others affected by its actions and decisions and capture and maintain its records in approved records management systems.

3. It is hereby made a standing requirement that staff members at all levels should support all records management activities and the implementation of the filing system thereof. All Senior Managers, Executive Managers and the rest of staff members who have not handed over their files should do so immediately on or before 5 May 2005 as the new file plan will be implemented with effect from 1 June 2005.

4. As a result of the above, no Section, Directorate, Chief Directorate or Branch should establish or create its own mini-registry or keep its current and closed files as this will be regarded as a misconduct and a disciplinary action will be instituted against the official concerned.

4. This will enhance the efficiency of the internal information resources significantly, and to facilitate the transition to the envisaged electronic records management system. It will also facilitates transparency, accountability, and democracy as envisaged in the pieces of legislations such as the Public Finance Management Act (No.1 of 1999), the Promotion of Access to information Act (No.2 of 2000), the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No.3 of 2000) and the National Archives and Records Service Act (No. 43 of 1996).

5. Your co-operation and support is appreciated.

Ms L Msengana-Ndlela
Director General
Date: 25 April 2005