

# Developing Driving Licence Standard Operating Procedures

## The Case of Madibeng Local Municipality

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### ABSTRACT

Driving Licence Testing Centres located in local and metropolitan municipalities in South Africa generally lack standard operating procedures according to which driving licences are issued. This has serious implications for road safety in general and organisational efficiency in particular.

This article aims to design a framework for the development of standard operating procedures according to which driving licences should be issued. The Driving Licence Testing Centre of the Madibeng Local Municipality was used as case study for this purpose. Specific recommendations are presented to the Madibeng Local Municipality on how to effectively design and review standardised procedures.

The systems theory and the ADDIE (an acronym for *Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement* and *Evaluate*) instructional design model served as theoretical parameters to gain understanding of the nature and application of standard operating procedures in the public sector. A qualitative research design was followed and mixed methods were used to collect data. In addition to the robust literature review, the empirical findings validated the synergy between systems theory and the ADDIE instructional design model for the design of a standard operating procedures framework. The meticulous implementation of this framework could ensure that driving licences are issued as per statutory prescripts and road traffic specifications.

## INTRODUCTION

A multitude of information exists about the development and revision of standard operating procedures, and the use of standard operating procedures to guide, direct and streamline processes and actions of public servants and municipal employees, are often emphasised (Clark 2015; Ijeoma and Nzewi 2016:61–62; Nzewi 2017:2–3). However, frameworks for developing standard operating procedures are often roughly designed to cater for a wide audience in the public sector. For this reason, specific frameworks for the development of specialised standardised procedures are largely absent, particularly in the driving licence environment. Despite the significance and benefits of using standardised methods and procedures, the Madibeng Local Municipality (MLM) lacks contemporary and efficient standard operating procedures for the issuing of driving licences – impeding driver fitness. The need is evident to identify an appropriate framework for the development of driving licence standard operating procedures. The purpose of this article is two-fold: first to present a framework for the development of driving licence standard operating procedures and second, to make recommendations to the MLM on how to effectively develop and implement standardised methods and procedures.

Unique to this study is the link between standard operating procedures and the issuing of driving licences. Furthermore, the systems theory and the ADDIE instructional design model were used to develop a framework for the development of driving licence standard operating procedures. The study commenced with sketches of the nature and significance of standard operating procedures as well as conceptualising Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs) to pinpoint aspects to consider when developing standardised procedures of issuing driving licences.

The qualitative research design was followed, although mixed methods were used to collect data to comprehend the problem why the DLTC of the MLM lacks relevant standard operating procedures to issue driving licences. The empirical findings that follow complemented the literature review and enabled a holistic view of standardised procedures and the effect thereof on the issuing of driving licences. In conclusion, recommendations of how to develop and implement the framework for standard operating procedures of issuing driving licences are presented.

## NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

In simple terms, the concept “method” refers to the way or manner in which a task is performed, while the concept “procedure” refers to the actions or steps

to be taken in succession to complete a task. In any public institution, methods and procedures have the potential to offer every official involved in a specific step of a task, a bird's-eye view of the total actions, goals and objectives to gain a better understanding of any detailed activities. In this way, public officials can understand how their activities relate to those of their colleagues. It therefore ensures consistency, effectiveness and efficiency in the accomplishment of tasks. Written methods and procedures ensure that public officials are suitably informed as documented directive documents often serve as training material (Alvarez and Hall 2008:830; Nzewi 2013:15–16). It follows that standard operating procedures use methods and procedures to define step-by-step sequences of activities to be followed in the same order over a wide number of situations and over an open period of time to eventually correctly perform a task (De Treville, Antonakis and Edelson 2005:232). Barbosa, Zuliani Mauro, Bavaresco Cristóvão and Mangione (2011:132) concur that standard operating procedures comprise detailed instructions to attain uniformity when officials carry out a specific function. In the public sector, standard operating procedures derived from legislation and policy decisions to regulate actions and behaviour, to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory framework (Thornhill 2012:105). Nevertheless, where did standard operating procedures originate?

The idea of standard operating procedures was initially developed in the manufacturing industry when Frederick Taylor studied the deliberate slow-paced work of workers who believed that high efficiency would result in jobs. Taylor's analysis involved the use of scientific methods and standardising tools, such as procedures, formal structures and rules to re-design tasks for maximum productivity. Through the eyes of the workers' foremen, Taylor studied the relationship between the managers and the workers and the workplace processes, to establish methods and procedures to improve effectiveness (Taylor 1911:31).

The concept of standard operating procedures can directly be linked to Taylor's note that the workers received – in most cases – complete written instructions, describing in detail the task which they were to accomplish, as well as the means to be used in doing the work. Taylor believed that a scientific analysis would lead to the discovery of the best way of doing things. This could minimise unnecessary activities and help to save cost and time. Taylor believed that if standards were established and job processes and procedures controlled by management, individual workers would strive to outperform the group average. In this way, efficiency in the workplace would be maximised through standard procedures. In addition, Taylor emphasised that procedures should focus on realising an organisation's objectives (Taylor 1911:52).

Today, the development and implementation of standard operating procedures have changed fundamentally. Modern development and refinement of standard operating procedures, in contrast to Taylor's principles of scientific management,

call for the active involvement of the procedure end-users. Input from a multiplicity of role players, including the external environment, is sought, while thorough consideration of available resources is seldom neglected (De Treville, Antonakis and Edelson 2005:232). However, despite the shortcoming of Taylor's contribution, his lasting influence is embodied in putting the spotlight on directive documents in the workplace (LeMay 2006:117). Morgan, Green, Shinn and Robinson (2013:179) go so far as arguing that Taylor's contribution to improving efficiency via standard operating procedures, contributed towards the rise of the systems analysis from which modern managerial techniques emerged.

The foundation of the development and implementation of methods and procedures in the modern-day South African public sector would be to meet the needs of society by the provision of public services at all spheres of government (Wessels 2017:29). Unfortunately, standard operating procedures are often associated with bureaucracy, red tape and the excessive use of rules and regulations. To combat red tape, public institutions are trying to re-draft policies and procedures by considering the public's point of view. Procedure-writing in government entities should therefore break out of the dominant mode of working in silos. To prevent standard operating procedures being trapped in a rhetorical limbo, the notion of procedure- and policy-making taking place at high levels away from the complex realities of day-to-day implementation, should be resisted (Kaufmann and Tummers 2017:1311–1314).

Basu (2004:46) states that rule-bound and hierarchic public administration has outlived its usefulness for the modern age that is characterised by rapid change in technology and societal demands. In line with this argument, Nzewi (2013:15) wrote that the main disadvantage of methods and procedures is that standard procedures do not allow opportunities for extensive deviation as it prevents the use of individual judgement. Unfortunately, standard operating procedures encourage conformist behaviour and limited innovative thoughts and practices. De Treville, Antonakis and Edelson (2005:232) warn that the use of standard operating procedures causes a decrease in autonomy, which may reduce the sense of responsibility and originality. Another barrier is that humans tend to stagnate and become set in well-known and established ways. This phenomenon often results in public officials not initiating change and being unwilling to adapt to changing environments. Complicating this issue is resistance to change in the form of over-simplification of procedures that may result in deviations from legislation and policy goals.

Consequently, the question arises "How can innovative standard operating procedures that not only embrace the contemporary needs of society, but also cater for intricate officials confined in ever-changing public institutions, be developed?" A framework for the development of standard operating procedures can be set by revisiting the systems theory and the ADDIE instructional design model, as described in the following section.

## Developing standard operating procedures

When drafting standard operating procedures, cooperation between all relevant role players should be encouraged. Allowing the end-users to participate in the development of the procedures increases a feeling of ownership and a sense of being able to make a positive contribution towards the goals of the organisation (De Treville *et al.* 2005:236). Collaboration among the instructional designers, subject matter experts, officials at operational level and management indeed increases efficiency when developing the procedures (Barbosa *et al.* 2011:132–133).

Standard operating procedures should be clear and written in such a way that they can be interpreted by a wide audience. Overloaded and directionless standard operating procedures are difficult to interpret. For this reason, caution should be taken not to include an overwhelming amount of detail. However, a lack in critical information must also be avoided. It is also important that procedures are made readily available and do not contain information that will become outdated within a short period of time (Sinocruz, Hildebrand, Neuman and Branaghan 2011:803–806). Having a standard format also makes the developing and revision of standardised procedures easier (Ashbrook 2014:29).

It is evident that certain aspects need to be considered to produce standardised procedures. The systems theory embodies this process as it allows input, output, feedback and evaluation from various role players, and its potential role in developing standard operating procedures deserves further attention.

### **Systems theory**

The origin of the systems theory can be traced to the thinking of the biologist, Von Bertalanffy in the 1920s. Von Bertalanffy (1972:417) defined a system as a collection of interdependent and interrelated parts and processes which receives inputs, acts upon them in an organised manner while considering input and feedback from its environments, and in doing so, produces certain outputs. The systems theory accentuates an interactive and interrelated set of elements. Interdependent parts imply that the subsystems of a system are dependent on each other, and a change in one element influences the other parts and ultimately affects the entire system. Furthermore, a system has identifiable boundaries that distinguish it from its surrounding environment in which it is embedded, and with which it interacts. A system thus comprises of subsystems that all work together to form the whole system. A subsystem does not act in isolation, but subsystems increase efficiency, productivity and innovation through cooperation with the other elements of the system. The systems theory is particularly relevant to the study of complex organisations that have elaborate structures and are embedded in larger social, political and economic environments.



Inputs into any public system comprise demands as well as support. Demands are the claims for action that individuals and groups make to satisfy their interests and needs, while support is rendered when groups and individuals accept the decisions upheld by the system (Holtzhausen 2014:257–258). Outputs of the system include laws, rules, standardised procedures and judicial decisions; in other words, public policy that purportedly obeys the public interest. Feedback implies that public policies, or any outputs (including standard operating procedures), may change the environment, the demands as well as the character of the system itself (Von Bertalanffy 1972:417). As in the case with the elements in a system, methods and procedures also comprise of interrelated and interdependent components connected to the internal and external environments through regular input, feedback and revision. Instead of reducing the function of standard operating procedures to hierarchical structures and rigid processes, its nature might be perceived as a kind of system. In this sense, a system is the pattern that arises from the regular interactions of interdependent elements, such as the relevant role players, public needs and legislation. These relations and interactions involve a flow and transfer of information when methods and procedures are drafted and implemented. Information from the environments helps the system to adjust the procedures and take corrective actions to rectify deviations from its prescribed pattern.

To accommodate the magnitude of inputs, intricate conversion processes and demanding environments and role players, a complementary but simplified procedure development process is needed. The five phases in the ADDIE instructional design model, namely analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation, represent a dynamic and flexible guideline for developing standard operating procedures.

### ***ADDIE instructional design model***

Although a simplified model, the ADDIE instructional design offers an effective means to analyse any public institution's needs, design and develop content, implement and finally evaluate the efficacy of newly developed standard operating procedures. Continual feedback from all external and internal role players is considered and attended to. For that reason, the ADDIE model addresses concerns, while still simple, to find solutions.

#### ***Analysis***

During the initial procedure analysis phase, the legal framework in which the procedures will be developed is determined and defined by identifying and analysing the relevant policies, Acts and Regulations as well as the goals and vision of the organisation or institution. Job descriptions, legal contracts, the organisational culture, and the structure and hierarchy of the organisation also need to be consulted. In addition, information in existing directive documents is taken into

account (Ashbrook 2014:28). During this phase, internal and external role players are identified and then informed that their input and feedback on specific matters will be required (Evans 2011:71–80).

### *Design*

It follows from the above-identified analysis phase, that the designers of standardised procedures must have a holistic overview of the workflow and structure of the relevant institution. They need to measure the requirements and the steps necessary to complete a task against the existing practices and structures to avoid the excessive introduction of unfamiliar processes. The first draft of the procedures should be written and documented during the procedure design phase. Each task and step that forms part of the procedure should be specified. Elements such as quality control requirements, specific service or product specifications, time frames, alternative steps, safety and security considerations, relevant legislation, personnel requirements and internal control mechanisms must be incorporated into the procedure design (Roughton and Crutchfield 2008:372).

### *Development*

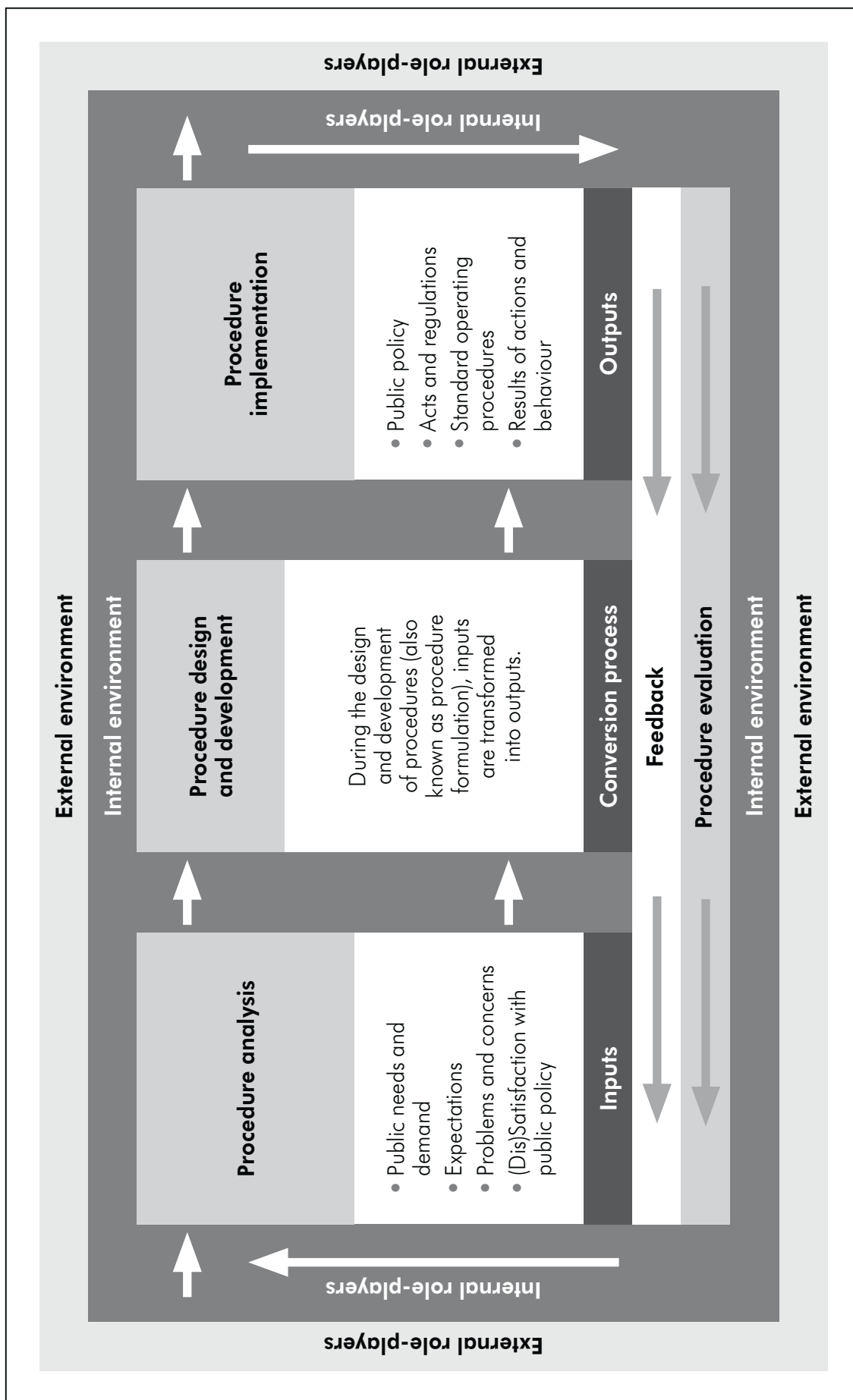
Developing and implementing new procedures, requires a mindset that embraces all the functions and processes of the institution's internal and external environment. Since standard operating procedures affect the behaviour and actions of employees at operational level, procedure writers need to involve key role players and stakeholders to acquire relevant and current advice. The writing of standard operating procedures is, therefore, a complex and contested process, and is not developed in a vacuum. Generally, feedback from external role players is requested after feedback from the internal role players has been received and considered. The draft procedures may only then be published for public participation (Cloete and De Coning 2011:126).

The effective implementation of procedures is closely linked to available equipment, resources and other related systems. All relevant input must thus be incorporated into the procedures before the development process continues to the implementation stage (Nzewi 2013:15–16).

### *Implementation*

Procedure implementation is ideally preceded by the adoption thereof. The new or updated standardised procedures should be submitted for acceptance by management. The approved procedures should then be published and made known to all staff for acknowledgement. Training on the new or updated standardised procedures should then take place to dismiss doubt of how to apply the procedures (Ashbrook 2014:29).

**Figure 1: Schematic illustration of the synergy between systems theory and ADDIE instructional design model**



**Source:** (Adapted from Von Bertalanffy 1972:410-417)



### *Evaluation*

Standard procedures must be revised continuously. The evaluation phase comprises of the evaluation of each phase of the procedures drafting process. Feedback on the accepted procedures should also be welcomed (Ashbrook 2014:30).

## **Theoretical parameters for standard operating procedure framework development**

The above-described literature review and the empirical findings of the study were used to validate the synergy between the systems theory and ADDIE instructional design model, as illustrated in Figure 1.

## **CONCEPTUALISING AND CONTEXTUALISING DRIVING LICENCE TESTING CENTRES**

The case under study is the MLM DLTC that is registered and graded in terms of Section 8 of the National Road Traffic Act 93 of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the NRTA of 1996) to examine and test applicants for learner's and driver's licences. The MLM DLTC is responsible for issuing driving licences and professional driving permits. Other responsibilities include managing facilities and test material for driver's and learner's licence tests (NRTA 1996:Section 8).

General problems experienced by the MLM DLTC are that the guidelines provided by the national Department of Transport, do not provide adequate detailed instructions on how to issue and renew driving licences. This is problematic because the processes, methods and procedures at DLTCs differ from one Centre to another. The issuing and renewal of driving licences is thus undertaken differently at individual DLTCs. The consequence is that each DLTC develops and implements its own practices and procedures on how to issue driving licences regardless of the general guidelines issued by the national Department of Transport. The latter Department's task of issuing instructions to DLTCs is complicated by the Centre's organisational structure which varies from one province to another. In certain instances, policies and procedures are deliberately personalised to suit the Centre. To a certain extent, the lack of standardised procedures implies that DLTC staff cannot be held accountable for not upholding directive documents and guidelines. These practices result in unique challenges experienced by individual Centres. For example, applicants at the MLM DLTC experience unjustifiable delays in the issuing of driving licences and lengthy queues are also a familiar sight. Furthermore, incorrect details on driving licence cards are often reported by the public. Moreover, internal control mechanisms, such as organisational structure, segregation of duties, written policies and procedures, physical and mechanical control, authorisation

and approval, accounting controls, training of staff, supervision, management, and information and communications technology, are not optimised to ensure effective and efficient issuing of driving licences. In addition, procedures are neither aligned nor updated according to the licensing and road traffic policy amendments. These outdated procedures might result in unlawful actions. The development and implementation of standard operating procedures offer a probable solution at operational level. A need for a framework to develop standard operating procedures to issue driving licences thus emanated as a result of challenges experienced by DLTCs across the nine provinces, especially the MLM DLTC.

The research design and methodology followed to determine how to develop standardised procedures are elaborated on in the following section.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research design was followed to determine the ideas and opinions of the employees about the development of standard operating procedures, although mixed methods, questionnaires and personal interviews, were used to collect the data for the case under study.

### **Case of the Madibeng Local Municipality**

As stated above, this study focuses on the MLM which is a Category B municipality, and one of five local municipalities within the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality in the North West Province (Local Government Handbook 2017:Online). The DLTC (unit of analysis) falls under the Directorate of Public Safety, Fleet and Facilities Management as one of eight directorates of the MLM. The MLM DLTC is registered and graded as a grade A Centre by the North West Provincial Government in terms of Section 24 of the NRTA of 1996 (Madibeng Local Municipality 2017:Online).

### **Sampling procedures**

Only officials directly involved with issuing driving licences were requested to complete the questionnaire and/or were interviewed. The research population comprised of employees from different levels within the organisational structure, which included management representatives, DLTC supervisors, front-line employees, electronic National Traffic Information System (eNaTIS) cashiers and driving licence examiners. The target population included the middle managers, employees who are responsible for receiving and capturing applications for driving licences on eNaTIS as well as driving licence examiners who test applicants

and issue driving licences. The participants were invited because of their extensive experience of the topic.

The participants were neither subjected to any form of intervention nor exposed to any harm or exploitation. It was accentuated that participation is voluntary, and the participants were under no obligation to consent to participate. Those who decided to participate received an information leaflet to keep and were requested to sign an informed consent form.

Applying two parallel sampling techniques was considered most appropriate for this study. The participants (in groups) in this study, as well as the site population, sample size and sampling technique, are summarised in Table 1:

**Table 1: Selected target population, sample size and sampling techniques**

MLM DLTC at the local sphere of government			
Data collection instrument	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Structured questionnaire	56 employees of the DLTC	56 respondents	Probability sampling (entire site, excluding security guards)
Personal interviews	1 management representative 3 supervisors	4 participants	Non-probability sampling

Concerning the research population and sampling techniques, the quantitative method places the key emphasis on generalisation by ensuring that the knowledge gained is representative of the population from which the sample was drawn, while the qualitative method places primary emphasis on saturation.

## Data collection instruments

Due to the relatively small number of respondents, the questionnaires were administered by the researcher. However, the self-administered questionnaire had an inherent limitation. The primary limitation was that it tended to de-contextualise human behaviour by removing the event from its real world setting (Prinsloo and Hanyane 2016:189–190). To mitigate the shortcoming, semi-structured personal interviews were utilised to gather additional detailed information apart from what was provided for in the questionnaires. The main reason for selecting personal interviews as follow-up data gathering instrument was that it is flexible and permits immediate clarification of unclear issues and to observe the interviewees' feelings and/or reactions towards the questions (Pollitt 2016:81–82).

The response rate to the questionnaire is tabulated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Response rate to questionnaire**

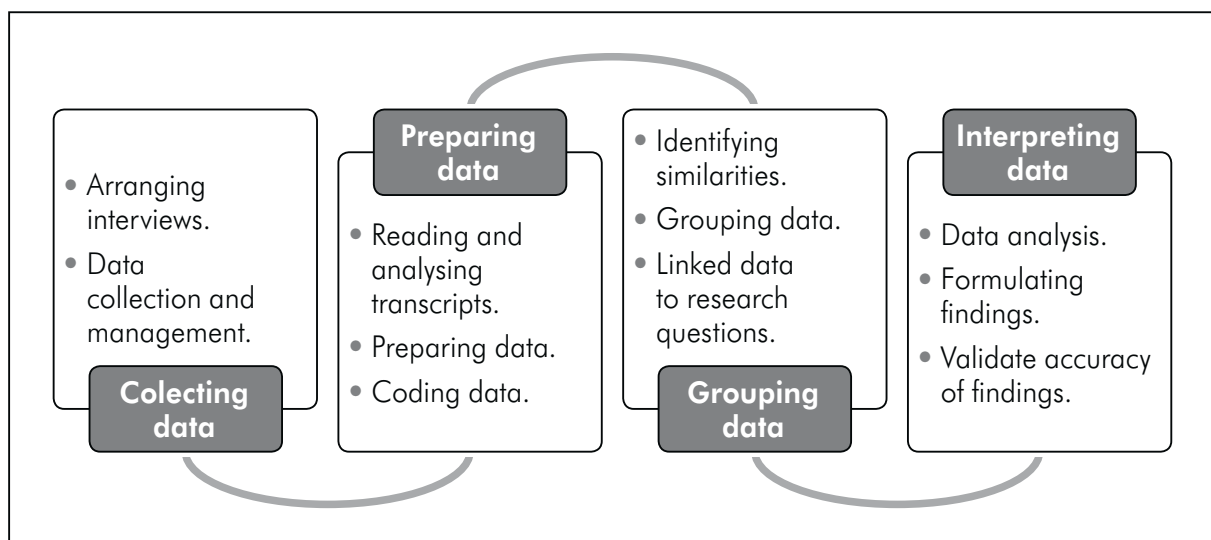
Occupational category	No. of questionnaires distributed	No. of questionnaires returned	Response rate
Management representatives	1	1	100%
DLTC supervisors	5	5	100%
DLTC front-line employees	15	13	87%
eNaTIS cashiers	15	11	73%
Examiners for driving licences	20	17	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>84%</b>

As opposed to the questionnaire that was distributed to all the staff at the Centre, the interviews were directed at one manager and three supervisors.

The next section describes the data analysis processes. The research findings are also presented.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The SPSS system was used to analyse the quantifiable data, including the demographic data of the respondents who completed the questionnaire. The gender distribution of the respondents comprises of 56% females and 43% males of the total sample ( $n=47$ ). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents ( $n=21$ ) have

**Figure 2: Process of validating qualitative data**

**Source:** (Adapted from Yin 2010: 177-179)

been employed at the MLM DLTC between 11 and 15 years. This confirms that the respondents had adequate experience to issue driving licences to provide valuable data for analysis and recommendations.

Concerning the interviewees, it is significant that the majority of the participants were male and most of the participants were between the ages of 40 to 49. The participants had the knowledge and skills to clarify the issues that were unclear from the responses provided to the questionnaire. A simplified overview of the process of validating the qualitative data is illustrated in Figure 2:

## Interpretations and findings of quantifiable data

The questionnaire dealt with the respondents' opinion of the significance of writing standard operating procedures for the MLM DLTC. The questionnaire presented five statements in response to which the respondents had to select a number between 1 and 5: 1 = *Not important at all*, 2 = *Of little importance*, 3 = *Somewhat important*, 4 = *Very important* and 5 = *Extremely important*.

**Table 3: Writing standard operating procedures: Total responses and percentages**

SPSS custom table: Total responses and percentages							
N <sup>o</sup>	Statement	Not important at all	Of little importance	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important	Totals
1	Finding new and innovative methods and procedures of performing tasks.	9 (19%)	<b>14</b> <b>(30%)</b>	11 (23%)	8 (17%)	5 (11%)	47 (100%)
2	Having knowledge of the existing workflow and organisational structure.	2 (4%)	7 (15%)	11 (23%)	<b>14</b> <b>(30%)</b>	13 (28%)	47 (100%)
3	Identifying necessary equipment and resources to complete a task.	2 (4%)	5 (11%)	9 (19%)	14 (30%)	<b>17</b> <b>(36%)</b>	47 (100%)
4	Seeking teamwork during the development of standard operating procedures.	1 (2%)	7 (15%)	9 (19%)	<b>16</b> <b>(34%)</b>	14 (30%)	47 (100%)
5	Following approval processes when developing standard operating procedures.	4 (9%)	8 (17%)	11 (23%)	<b>14</b> <b>(30%)</b>	10 (21%)	47 (100%)

**Source:** (Authors' interpretation)



Based on the following empirical findings of the statements included in Table 3, a framework for developing standard operating procedures for DLTCs could be determined.

**Statement 1: Finding new and innovative procedures**

As previously hinted at, caution should be taken against rigid steps and instructions. Statement 1 thus endeavoured to establish whether the MLM DLTC procedures are sufficiently advanced and progressive to take into account aspects such as managing risks and streamlining supervision and management within the communication channels. Only 19% of the respondents were convinced that it is not important at all to find new and innovative methods when drafting standard operating procedures, while 30% reflected that it is of limited importance. This matter was addressed further during the follow-up interviews (see the below interpretations of the qualitative data).

**Statement 2: Having knowledge of the existing workflow**

Statement 2 sought to establish the significance of having knowledge of the workflow and organisational structure of DLTCs when developing standard procedures for the issuing of driving licences. Fortunately only 4% of the respondents revealed that knowledge of the workflow and organisational structure at the MLM DLTC is not adequately considered when drafting procedures to issue driving licences. A total of 30% of the respondents were convinced that prior knowledge of the workflow and organisational structure is very important, while 28% held that it is extremely important to know the workflow and organisational structure of an institution when developing standard operating procedures. Hence, the majority of the responses revealed that although the existing procedures are not innovative, the workflow and structure of the DLTC is successfully incorporated.

**Statement 3: Identifying necessary equipment and resources**

Employees who implement policy at the front-line need to be well aware of the capacity of the equipment and resources necessary to reach policy outcomes and to deliver services and goods in a consistent and effective way. Consequently, statement 3 endeavoured to establish to what extent equipment and resources are identified and included in the standard operating procedures of the MLM DLTC.

Concerning the data, the majority of the respondents, 36%, held that it is extremely important to identify the necessary equipment and resources to perform specific steps when writing standard operating procedures. It is deduced that required equipment and resources is indeed identified in the standard operating procedures.

The reason for the majority responses could be the critical role that the eNaTIS system and hardware plays in the DLTC environment. Concerning policymaking

in the DLTC and licensing milieu, the availability of physical facilities and equipment, such as office space, eye test facilities, learner's licence theory tests, image capturing systems, driving licence testing yards and the eNaTIS terminals and printers, need to be considered when formulating policy on operational level. If a DLTC does not have the minimum required equipment and resources, additional structures will have to be acquired which could have extra financial implications. It follows that the need for specialist facilities and equipment must be considered carefully in the procedure-writing process.

#### **Statement 4: Seeking teamwork**

Statement 4 sought to establish whether the relevant employees and role players are involved when developing procedures at the MLM DLTC. In brief, the researcher wanted to establish if a team approach is followed when writing procedures at the Centre. Of the respondents 34% were convinced that working together as a team at the MLM DLTC would promote the development of standard operating procedures. Another 30% of the respondents selected extremely important. Based on the majority of the responses, it is concluded that the employees at the Centre work collaboratively or as a team during the development of standard operating procedures. Key role players are thus consulted to acquire relevant and current advice (Lelaka 2017).

#### **Statement 5: Following approval processes**

Should procedures be reviewed or new ones developed it would require a thorough approval process which must be followed when submitting the final draft for acceptance and implementation. Statement 5 therefore, sought to determine if the prescribed processes at the MLM are followed to acquire approval for the implementation of newly developed standardised procedures to issue driving licences.

Of the number of responses received, 30% selected very important. The majority of the respondents held that it is very important to follow approval processes when developing standard operating procedures. After procedures are reviewed for quality and correctness to establish the degree to which they still meet planned objectives, proper approval processes are followed for the official acceptance thereof.

The qualitative data acquired through the follow-up interviews is now presented to complete the data analysis and findings.

### **Interpretations and findings of qualitative data**

The staff at the MLM DLTC is, almost daily, refining improved ways of service delivery to their customers. However, a particular set of skills and competencies, for example, diligent compliance with the *Batho Pele* principles, mindsets willing to

improve and renew any outdated internal controls as well as constantly growing knowledge of the NRTA of 1996 and the eNaTIS system, is required to drive innovative service delivery (Lelaka 2017). It is thus alarming that the majority of the respondents to Statement 1 (*Finding new and innovative methods and procedures of performing tasks*) of the questionnaire held that new and innovative methods and procedures of performing tasks is of limited significance. The matter was consequently further addressed during the personal interviews with the Centre's management and supervisors.

In response to the interview question '*How would you manage the writing and implementation of new and innovative ways of performing routine tasks at the Centre?*' Manager A implied that the implementation of innovative procedures at the DLTC is problematic as some officials are afraid to implement new and unknown procedures. To seek further clarity, the DLTC supervisors were asked '*Would it be possible to introduce and implement new and innovative ways of performing routine tasks at the Centre?*' Supervisor A reacted in the negative, and only focused on the eNaTIS system. Two of the three supervisors revealed that they would welcome new and innovative procedures to motivate the staff and to improve service delivery at the Centre. However, another supervisor indicated that new approaches to perform their routine tasks is pointless; suggesting that eNaTIS has built-in prescripts to be conformed to. Based on the above responses, it was revealed that there is indeed a need for modernised procedures at the MLM DLTC, but it requires consideration of the requirements of licensing and road traffic legislation that serves as the basis for the functioning of the eNaTIS system.

In summary, the findings revealed:

- The majority of the operational staff at the MLM DLTC were convinced that it is not important to find new and innovative methods when updating or developing standard operating procedures. However, management acknowledged that the gap between existing procedures and the expected procedures as per legislation need to be explored to identify any imbalances and needs for new updated procedures.
- The DLTC staff admitted that knowledge of the workflow and the organisational structure is important when developing standardised procedures.
- Required equipment and resources are listed in the available procedures.
- The employees at the MLM DLTC are willing to work collaboratively when developing standard operating procedures to issue driving licences.
- It is important for the DLTC staff to follow prescribed approved processes.

The recommendations presented in the following section build on the synergy between the systems theory and the ADDIE instructional design model as well as the empirical findings of the study.

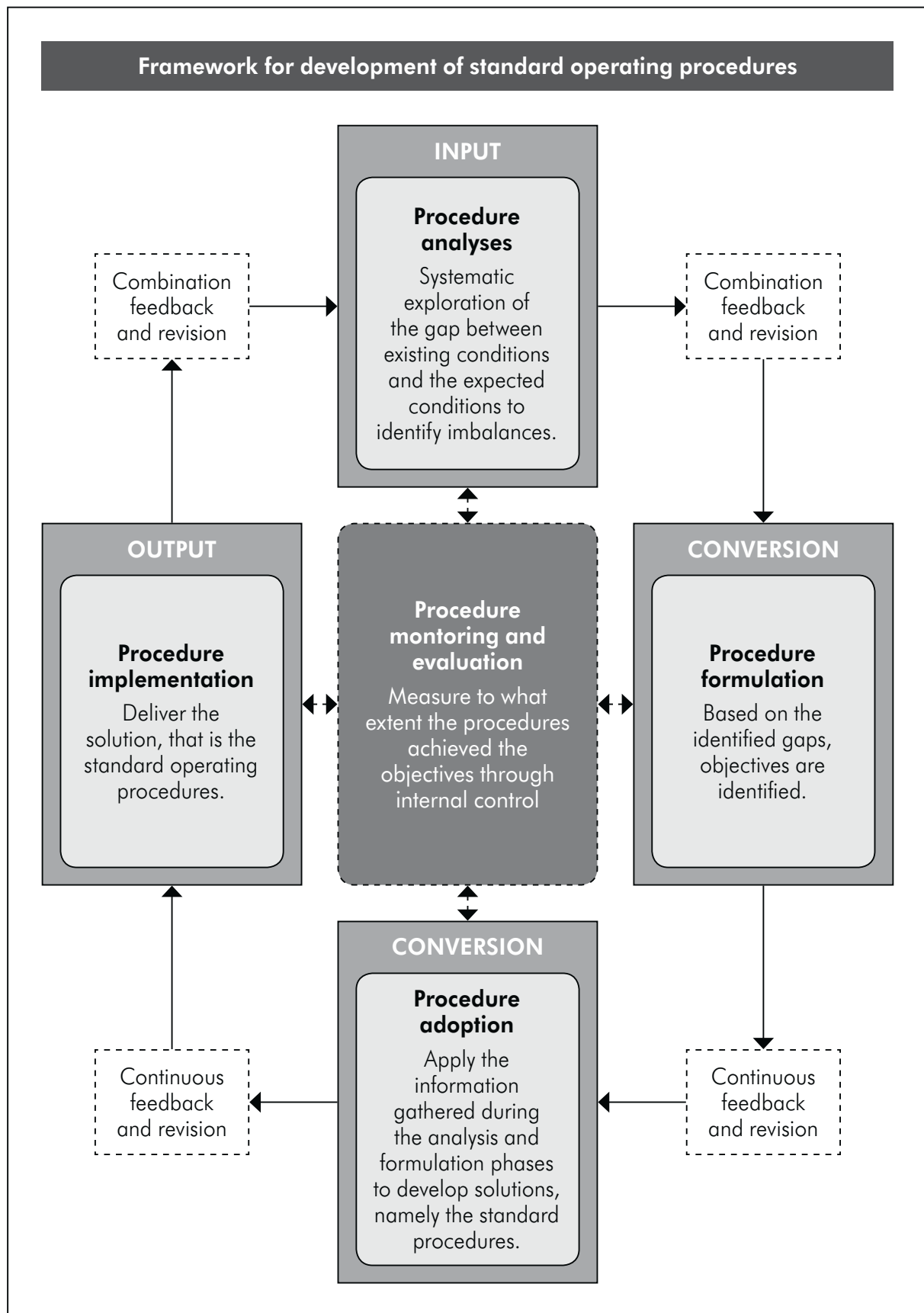
## RECOMMENDATIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The supervisors revealed that they would welcome new and innovative procedures to motivate the staff and to improve service delivery at the Centre. There is a need to update the procedures at the MLM DLTC, but with consideration of the requirements of licensing and road traffic legislation that serves as the basis for the functioning of the eNaTIS system. It is recommended that the Centre's employees work collaboratively and as a team to review, update and develop the standard operating procedures. Furthermore, key role players must be consulted to acquire relevant advice when needed. It is further recommended that the required equipment and resources be specified in the standard operating procedures due to the critical role of the eNaTIS system in the DLTC environment. The availability of physical facilities and equipment needs to be considered when formulating policy on operational level. Furthermore, after the procedures are reviewed for quality and accuracy, proper approval processes must be adhered to for the actual official acceptance thereof.

It is also recommended that established ways of completing tasks be reviewed, new and creative ideas be strengthened and appropriate behaviour among officials is encouraged within the legislated framework. It is recommended that the following fundamental elements be incorporated in the development processes:

- Licensing and road traffic legislation, demands and suggestions by the relevant role players as well as existing procedures are fed into the 'developing system' as **inputs**. Existing approaches to procedure development should be critically analysed and then compared to the framework to identify any needs or gaps.
- After the relevant information is collected and analysed, an orderly way of identifying, developing and evaluating strategies to develop the standardised procedures, should be set. All the information and strategies are then converted into possible solutions through the actual development and procedure formulation phase. This is also referred to as the **conversion** stage of procedure-making. The first draft of the procedures would then be developed. Further conversion would take place by transforming feedback on the first draft of the procedures into the final version thereof. This implies that various administrative processes have to be executed, for example, the individual steps needed to complete the task have to be specified.
- The **outputs** or the final set of procedures has to be approved and adopted by management before the implementation thereof. In addition, the end-users of the standardised procedure should be trained on how to utilise and implement the procedures. The approved procedures are fed back to the environment from where the need arose to ensure continuous **feedback and revision**. The

**Figure 3: Schematic illustration of the framework for the development of standard operating procedures**



**Source:** (Authors' own construction)



output of the development process, namely the standard operating procedures, has to be revised and refined for smooth implementation.

The ultimate responsibility lies with the top management (municipal council) to approve or reject the new set of procedures. The council has to take certain factors, such as operational, technical and financial feasibilities, as well as any organisational, personnel and legal implications into consideration when deliberating the procedures. Should the procedures be approved (known as procedure adoption), permission would be granted to utilise and implement the procedures.

- Generally, the **monitoring and evaluation** of the implementation of the procedures is the responsibility of the DLTC management. Internal control mechanisms may be used to monitor the implementation of the procedures. The procedures should also be **reviewed** regularly by the operational staff to ensure procedures are still relevant to manage the problems they were designed for.

Figure 3 presents the proposed framework and illustrates the critical phases and the fundamental elements of developing standard operating procedures.

It is envisaged that, should the framework be applied effectively, a decline in typical driving licence related problems would be experienced. The lack of relevant standard operating procedures to issue driving licences at the MLM DLTC will then be resolved. However, various complexities affect policy and procedure development and implementation. Challenges towards effective implementation of the framework for the development of standard operating procedures at the MLM DLTC, include officials being afraid of the element of uncertainty and may result in officials sticking to tried and trusted, but outdated, standard procedures.

A major limitation in this study was the use of only one case study. Since a range of cases is of critical importance to model fitting, confirmation or otherwise of the findings could be determined by undertaking similar research among larger DLTCs across all provinces.

## CONCLUSION

Given the significant findings reported above, it is important that the MLM DLTC implement the framework to ensure that driving licences are issued as per road traffic specifications. In this article, existing knowledge about methods and procedures of performing a task was extended to a blueprint for the development and review of standard operating procedures. The aim of developing a framework was to identify the critical phases and fundamental elements in the procedure development process so that managers at the MLM DLTC may apply the framework in their procedure formulation process. When setting the framework, it was revealed

that the systems theory and the ADDIE instructional design model could be applied to write new and innovative procedures to issue driving licences.

The qualitative research design was followed, although mixed methods were used to collect data to comprehend the problem of why the MLM DLTC lacks relevant standard operating procedures to issue driving licences. The practical relevance of the study may empower novice researchers with a better understanding of the way in which the development of standard operating procedures influence policy and procedure formulation and implementation at operational level.

## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Prof G M Ferreira and co-supervision of Prof D J Brynard, titled: Alers, C. 2018. *The Development and Implementation of Methods and Procedures of Issuing Drivers Licences in the Madibeng Municipality*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

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