

## EVALUATION OF SCOTTISH POLICE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING SYSTEMS (PMRS)

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**Summary:** Scottish police need to develop a PMRS for the new single national force which comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2013. This research project evaluated PMRS of the current eight forces in Scotland, the SPPF, which is the national Scottish PMRS, the SPSA and four international forces, along with identifying their strengths and weakness to gain understanding and learn lessons from present practices. None of the evaluated organisations represents PMRS which can be directly implemented by the single force without need of modification. Lack of comprehensiveness, lack of understanding performance in monetary terms, and inadequate explanations in reporting are key areas of weaknesses, whereas considering stakeholder needs and prioritisation of objectives are key strengths of the PMRS's evaluated. The report suggests a comprehensive checklist of guiding principles for developing good PMRS and also highlights key recommendations mainly based on learning from evaluated PMRS's

### INTRODUCTION

The eight regional Scottish Police forces will be merged into a single national police force by April 2013 and in this context developing a performance measurement and reporting system (PMRS) for new single force is still under speculation. Whether the single force will initially adopt the current national performance framework (SPPF) or a new framework will be developed is still not clear. If a new framework is to be put in place, what will it look like? No answers are yet available to these questions. Considering the current need of informed decisions regarding development of PMRS for the Scottish single national force, this report was commissioned to evaluate current PMRS practices of

- The Scottish Policing Performance Framework (SPPF)
- The eight police forces in Scotland presently
- The Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA)
- International police forces: Northern Ireland, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Denmark

The international forces were chosen in light of their similarity with Scotland in terms of geography and size. These countries also operate a single national force or are in the process of doing so. Identifying strengths and weaknesses of these organisations was also done with the aim of recommending best practices/guiding principles checklist and things to be considered (based on learning from PMRS evaluation of these organisations) while developing PMRS for the new single police force in Scotland.

### METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using both secondary as well as primary research. In terms of secondary research, extensive literature review on best practices in PMRS was undertaken. Further, the current PMRS practices of the organisations under investigation were evaluated against what literature suggested on what good PMRS should look like. Besides this, information on current PMRS practices of organisations under investigation were found in terms of the type of PMRS used, the way performance measurement systems are

developed, and aspects such as what they report, who they report to, how they report and why they report are also examined.

Information was culled from websites of respective organisations, literature related to this topic and freely available reports. The information was also supplemented by views (collected through interviews) of managers or other senior officers from organisations that are key stakeholders in Scottish policing, such as the Police forces, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) and Audit Scotland.

## SCOTTISH POLICING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (SPPF)

SPPF is a national framework for assessing the performance of all eight Scottish police forces within a national strategic context. The framework is categorised into the following four broad areas, namely “*Service Response*”; “*Public Reassurance & Community Safety*”; “*Criminal Justice & Tackling Crime*”; and “*Sound Governance & Efficiency*” (Scottish Policing Performance Framework Annual Report 2010-11, page 1-2), that covers the wide range of activities of Scottish policing.

The strengths and weaknesses of SPPF based on our evaluation and data collected from interviews are shown in the table below.

SPPF – As performance Framework	
Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasized importance of performance measurement among Scottish police</li> <li>Provides overall performance picture of all Scottish police forces via common framework</li> <li>Serves as platform to identify best practices</li> <li>Includes minimum dimensions that should be considered for evaluation of police performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistency in its use and data reporting across the police forces</li> <li>Inflexibility in coping with changing priorities</li> <li>Not all areas or measures are useful or applicable to each force</li> <li>It cannot be used to compare the performance of the eight police forces across Scotland</li> </ul>
SPPF – Reporting Practices	
Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicators are clearly differentiated into inputs, activities and outcomes</li> <li>Influence of other organizations on specific measures is clearly highlighted</li> <li>Data risks and issues are mentioned in the report</li> <li>Report is understandable to non-technical readers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information missing on many parameters by one or more forces</li> <li>Targets are not available for majority of measures, and even when they exist, they are not mentioned</li> <li>Financial and Non-financial information is not related</li> <li>Refers to three reports to get a holistic view of national police performance</li> </ul>

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM (PMS) OF CURRENT EIGHT FORCES IN SCOTLAND AND SPSA

In order to measure performance, all the forces use their own set of performance indicators along with the SPPF. However, the relative importance of the SPPF varies from force to force. For instance, Dumfries & Galloway considers SPPF as the primary component of their PMS, whereas Strathclyde Police and Tayside Police consider their own set of indicators as primary PMS, and SPPF as more of a mandatory tool for measuring performance at the national level. In terms of local performance frameworks, the components or perspectives of local performance also vary from force to force, and /or area to area in a same force as the policing focus areas differ from force to force, or from area to area within the same force. Though performance

is measured for a breadth of activities of forces, the performance areas/objectives are, however, prioritized by forces. While developing PMS, consideration is given to the information needs of several stakeholders, potential risk areas, public concern areas, national as well as local priorities and community planning agreements. Strategic objectives decided by the forces are translated to actions and then measures.

Performance measurement in Scottish policing is focused on continuous development and forces do not have performance targets, with the exception of a few forces such as Strathclyde Police, which has a very target-driven PMS.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of PMS of current Scottish eight police forces and SPSA**

Some of the major strengths are: involving stakeholders and/or their priorities while developing PMS, having different aspects of policing in PMS, incorporating public feedback, helping to easily communicate performance to stakeholders, and using socially desirable outcomes. In contrast, lack of measures on prevention activities, lack of robustness and comprehensiveness, lack of comparisons with similar forces, and not relating performance to cost associated with it are major weaknesses.

### **Performance Reporting (PR) of current eight forces in Scotland and SPSA**

The public sector includes various types of stakeholders, ranging from different government sectors, organisations, to the general public. Interest of these stakeholders in performance information varies based on their information needs. Chief Constable and other senior executives of the force are the most important persons to share the performance information with, followed by local community, Scottish Government and ACPOS as revealed from interviews. Accountability, transparency, meeting information needs of stakeholders and continuous improvement (by judging performance) and public feedback were found to be the major reasons for generating reports. PR is done to all stakeholders either through reports published on websites or specific reports (not publicized) sent to key stakeholders such as the Chief Constable. The Media and social media are some of other sources used; however, these sources do not provide as much depth as reports. Besides annual reports, performance statistics (mainly crime) is published by all the forces on a monthly or quarterly basis. Some forces also produce specific performance reports periodically.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of performance reporting of current Scottish eight police forces and SPSA**

Major strengths includes easy accessibility of reports, presenting performance on selective critical measures that are most important to public, comparing performance results with baseline figures to indicate direction of performance, including performance stories as well as impact of initiatives. On the other side, main weaknesses includes not linking performance results to the costs associated with them, lack or absence of appropriate explanations such as of performance results (reasons for increase or decrease), target setting (if present), process and data collection methodology; lack of robustness, inappropriate presentation of overall performance and imbalance in presenting good and bad performance.

## **INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO**

**Northern Ireland (NI)** uses performance metrics as PMRS and publishes performance information on monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Consulting stakeholders while developing PMS, having stringent rules for reporting and measuring performance and appropriately presenting bad along with good performance are some of the strengths of NI's PMRS; whereas, having statistics-driven reports with lack of explanation of results and not linking performance to the associate cost are main weaknesses.

**New Zealand (NZ)** PMS is driven by two main objectives and it reports performance report along with statistics on an annual basis. NZ PMRS is very comprehensive, well developed and shows clearly explicit context, government priorities, force capabilities, operational challenges and performance direction along with appropriate explanations and data collection sources. On the other side of these strengths, the long length of the report and not sharing target setting process are some of main weaknesses of its PMRS.

**Denmark** uses performance contracts to judge performance of District Commissioners and the National Commissioner and various crime statistics are published every year. Some major weaknesses of Denmark's PMRS includes not considering differences in districts while developing terms and targets of the district commissioners' contracts, no follow up on targets by most districts, existence of disparity between districts'

performance targets and commissioners' contract targets. In addition to this, details of whom to report to, what to report and frequency of reporting have not been defined.

**The Netherlands** uses performance targets based agreements with its 25 regional police divisions. National politics is considered to influence development of performance targets as performance measures are developed based on acceptance by key stakeholders rather than the most appropriate ones. Mixed opinions exist among senior executives of the Netherlands police regarding performance targets based agreements system. Losses of discretionary power by police officers and dissatisfaction among some policemen have been reported due to target based agreements system.

## WHAT SHOULD A SINGLE FORCE PMRS LOOK LIKE?

From interviews, it was found that SPPF is not viewed as sufficient enough to be adopted as PMRS for the single force. There is no standard format/framework of reporting used by all forces, each have different ways of presenting information. None of the organisations investigated has a PMRS which can be seen as a perfect system without flaws. However, some good features (on relative basis) from these organisations are worthy to be considered while developing PMRS of single force in Scotland. The table below highlights such examples.

Features/ Aspects of PMRS	Suggested Police Forces/Framework
Strategic Objectives and Focus areas	SPPF, Northern Ireland, Lothian and Borders
Explanation of details, Inclusion of methodology for data collection, analysis and so on	SPPF, New Zealand
Context setting and clear understandable statement of Intent framework	New Zealand
Comprehensiveness	Tayside and Central Scotland
Information Presentation	New Zealand, SPSA, Northern Constabulary, Tayside
Discussion of Strategic direction and performance presentation	Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Tayside
Targets use and presentation	New Zealand, Strathclyde
Depth and breadth of information in relatively more understandable manner	Dumfries and Galloway, SPSA, New Zealand, Northern Constabulary
PMRS as a whole (on relative basis)	Tayside, Northern Constabulary, New Zealand, Northern Ireland

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the learning from evaluating PMRS of organisations under investigation, literature, and general reports on this topic, we suggest that the points mentioned below are considered while developing new force PMRS.

- Consider quantitative mechanism to aid decision making
- Performance should be understood in relation to cost associated with it
- Exploit Information Technology potential to enhance efficiency of PMRS
- Prioritize stakeholders needs and management based on their power and interest
- Scrutinize strengths and weaknesses of current systems
- Techniques and ways to make PMRS more robust and dynamic should be identified
- Consider International Benchmarking to improve performance measurement, reporting and management
- Investigate prospects of developing collective performance measures for whole Criminal Justice System
- The use of Continuous Improvement as the tool for driving performance should be encouraged until all the issues with targets are investigated and sorted

- Uniform ways of counting and measuring indicators should be put in place
- Include local priorities in the national framework and local accountability
- Clearly indicate whom to report to, when to report and what to report from first day of new single force