



National Audit Office

MEASURING UP

HOW GOOD ARE THE GOVERNMENT'S
DATA SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE
AGAINST PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS?

JUNE 2010

Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 covering the period 2008-2011

Review of the data systems for Public Service Agreement 22 led by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport:

'Deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport'

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Summary

Introduction

1. This report summarises the results of our examination of the data systems used by the Government in 2009 to monitor and report on progress against PSA 22.

The PSA and the Departments

2. PSAs are at the centre of Government's performance measurement system. They are usually three year agreements, set during the spending review process and negotiated between departments and the Treasury. They set the objectives for the priority areas of Government's work.
3. This PSA is led by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), with data obtained from a range of sources. Each PSA has a Senior Responsible Officer who is responsible for maintaining a sound system of control across Departmental boundaries that supports the achievement of the PSA. The underlying data systems are an important element in this framework of control.
4. The most recent public statement provided by the Department on progress against this PSA was in the 2009 Autumn Performance Report.

The purpose and scope of this review

5. The Government invited the Comptroller and Auditor General to validate the data systems used by Government to monitor and report its performance. During the period October to December 2009, the National Audit Office (NAO) carried out an examination of the data systems for all the indicators used to report performance against PSA 22. This involved a detailed review of the processes and controls governing:
 - The match between the indicators selected to measure performance and the PSA. The indicators should address all key elements of performance referred to in the PSA;
 - The match between indicators and their data systems. The data systems should produce data that allow the Department to accurately measure the relevant element of performance;
 - For each indicator, the selection, collection, processing and analysis of data. Control procedures should mitigate all known significant risks to data reliability. In addition, system processes and controls should be adequately documented to support consistent application over time; and
 - The reporting of results. Outturn data should be presented fairly for all key aspects of performance referred to in the target. Any significant limitations should be disclosed and the implications for interpreting progress explained.

6. Our conclusions are summarised in the form of traffic lights (see figure 1). The ratings are based on the extent to which departments have:
 - (i) put in place and operated internal controls over the data systems that are effective and proportionate to the risks involved; and
 - (ii) explained clearly any limitations in the quality of its data systems to Parliament and the public.
7. The remaining sections of this report provide an overview of the results of our assessment, followed by a brief description of the findings and conclusions for each individual data system. Our assessment does not provide a conclusion on the accuracy of the outturn figures included in the Department's public performance statements. This is because the existence of sound data systems reduces but does not eliminate the possibility of error in reported data.

Figure 1: Key to traffic light ratings

| Rating | Meaning ... |
|--------------------------------|---|
| GREEN (Fit for purpose) | The data system is fit for the purpose of measuring and reporting performance against the indicator. |
| GREEN (Disclosure) | The data system is appropriate for the indicator and the Department has explained fully the implications of limitations that cannot be cost-effectively controlled. |
| AMBER (Systems) | Broadly appropriate, but needs strengthening to ensure that remaining risks are adequately controlled. |
| AMBER (Disclosure) | Broadly appropriate, but includes limitations that cannot be cost-effectively controlled; the Department should explain the implications of these. |
| RED (Systems) | The data system does not permit reliable measurement and reporting of performance against the indicator. |
| RED (Not established) | The Department has not yet put in place a system to measure performance against the indicator. |

Overview of individual data system findings

8. The aim of PSA 22 is to deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport. This PSA is supported by five indicators which are defined in figure 2 below. For this PSA, we have concluded that the indicators selected to measure progress are consistent with the scope of the PSA and afford a reasonable view of progress.

9. The data systems to support indicators 22.1, 22.2 and 22.3 have been assessed as green, although the Department should document procedure notes explaining how each indicator is to be calculated and document the effectiveness of controls in place where third parties are relied upon, including methods of how the effectiveness of controls have been considered.
10. The data system to support indicator 22.4 is not fit for purpose as it does not reliably measure and report performance against the indicator. For one of the four elements of the indicator, baseline data has not been set.. The progress is not clearly reported for those elements of the indicator where data systems are in place. The data system to support indicator 2.5 has been assessed as amber as data is not yet available or established for two elements to enable progress reporting.
11. There is a named officer within the Department responsible for each of these indicators. This officer is supported by a lead analyst. Performance against the indicators are monitored within the Department as part of its internal PSA performance reporting.

Figure 2: Summary of assessments for indicator data systems

| No | Indicator | Rating |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Meet critical milestones for venues and infrastructure up to 2011 within time and budget and applying effective change control. | GREEN Fit for purpose |
| 2 | Maximising the regeneration benefits of the 2012 Games: Plan for improving the physical, economic and social infrastructure of East London developed and agreed with key local authorities and regeneration agencies, and pre Games elements implemented by 2011. | GREEN Fit for purpose |
| 3 | The Olympic Park and venues are designed and built according to sustainable principles: Red Amber Green (RAG) Status of delivery of the ODA sustainability strategy to 2011. | GREEN Disclosure |
| 4 | Public Participation in cultural and community activities across the UK and participation in sporting activities both in the UK and in other countries, particularly those in development: Number of people across the Nations and Regions of the UK and in other countries taking part in Government supported programmes associated with the 2012 Games. | RED Not established |
| 5 | Creation of a world class system for Physical Education (PE) and Sport: Percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in at least 2 hours a week of high-quality PE and sport at school and the percentage of 5-19 year olds participating in at least 3 further hours a week of sporting opportunities. We note that the wording of this indicator has recently been amended to make the criteria clearer. | AMBER Systems |

Findings in respect of the Department's overall arrangements

12. The Department has worked to integrate the indicators within this PSA into its operational and performance management activities, for instance by integrating them into its business plan and performance reports, while Departmental Strategic Objective 4 mirrors PSA 22. The Department for Children, Schools and Families is jointly responsible for delivering Indicator 5, and the Department's systems are reinforced by reporting into the structure for PSA12 Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
13. The Department has formal mechanisms for identifying and assessing areas of risk and reporting these to the Board. The Department's risk management processes include consideration of issues related to the PSA indicators.
14. The Department has satisfactory processes and controls in place designed to ensure the effective operation of business critical IT systems, including those used to collect, analyse and present performance information in respect of the Department's PSAs.
15. Issues of data quality are considered on many levels within the Department. The Board has overall responsibility for data quality, each Director being responsible for arrangements in their programmes. The Chief Analyst who reports to the Director General - Partnerships and Programmes has day to day responsibility for data quality issues.
16. The Department has reviewed its risk management arrangements and has developed a risk management hierarchy with risks managed at a strategic, directorate and project level, although these new arrangements are not yet fully operational. Data quality risks will normally be managed at the project level and escalated to the Board for discussion, if required.
17. The Director General, Government Olympic Executive has responsibility for data quality and information reporting for the Olympics and the reporting of PSA 22. This role is supported by the Government Olympic Executive Senior Management Team which meet monthly and who report to the Olympic Board Steering Group on risks to its business plan and progress against the plan.
18. The Department undertakes internal monitoring and analysis in respect of its performance against its PSAs and the underlying indicators, including the preparation of detailed monthly reports setting out progress in key areas of activity, current performance against the relevant indicators, significant risks to performance and further action to be taken in order to mitigate the risks identified. Furthermore, the Department reports performance against its PSAs to the Board on a monthly basis.
19. Full performance is reported biannually in the Autumn Performance Report and Departmental Annual Report. Reporting is also supported with the Olympic Delivery Authority producing a Quarterly Report on progress with the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and key milestones.

20. Our main conclusions on the Department's overall arrangements with respect to the PSA and the indicators that it encompasses are as follows:
- The Department's governance arrangements in respect of its PSAs are satisfactory. The responsibilities for PSA indicators and data quality have been clearly assigned and the Department has processes in place to monitor and report performance against the majority of indicators.
 - The Department has agreed Measurement Annexes for the PSA indicators, setting out the definition of the indicator and the data sources to be used. It does not in all cases, however, have detailed written procedure notes in place, explaining how each indicator is to be calculated. In addition, the Department places reliance on third party data providers with limited knowledge in some cases of how data are obtained and the quality of data systems in place. The Department does not document processes which consider the operating effectiveness of those controls in place. However, this is mitigated some cases due to the involvement of Department's staff in specific areas such as with the Olympic Development Authority.
 - While the Department's current procedures are adequate, the fact that they are not all recorded formally may make it difficult for the Department to ensure the comparability of data over time, particularly if responsibility for the calculation of performance against a given indicator is passed to a different member of staff. Where this finding has implications for individual indicators, we explore it in the next section of this report.
 - From our review of the Department's performance indicators we note that, while some of these have quantitative targets attached (sustainability for example), a proportion of the indicator set report a direction of travel such as 'reducing' or 'improving' the specific area concerned, and as such make it difficult to ascertain the extent of achievement or effectiveness of performance, hence weakening the clarity of measurement.
 - In some cases the data streams which support the measurement of the indicators are not in place or only partially in operation, and baselines have not been established. This compromises the reporting of progress of elements of the indicators which support the PSA.
 - Details of how indicators are assessed and the limitations on the data systems used are not reported, and as such the reader of progress reports may be unable to fully understand and interpret the accuracy of the data reported.
21. Where these findings have implications for individual indicators, we explore them in the next section of this report.

Assessment of indicator set

22. In undertaking the validation we reviewed the documentation associated with the PSA and considered whether the indicators selected to measure progress are consistent with the scope of this PSA. We conclude that the objective selected is extensive and very wide ranging, however, the indicators assessed provide a broadly reasonable view of progress in terms of the main elements of the programme for example, achievement of milestone dates and budgets, sustainability and overall involvement of the population. The indicators assess progress up to 2011 in relation to delivery of the Games, however, they do not detail events post 2012 in relation to legacy issues. It is acknowledged that this is outside the current performance assessment period, however some consideration relating to post 2012 events would be beneficial.

Findings and conclusions for individual data systems

23. The following sections summarise the results of the NAO's examination of each data system.

Indicator 1: Meet critical milestones for venues and infrastructure up to 2011 within time and budget and applying effective change control

Conclusion: GREEN (Fit for purpose)

24. We have concluded that the data system underlying this indicator is broadly appropriate, but needs strengthening to ensure that risks over data quality are adequately controlled.

Characteristics of the data system

25. The indicator requires the Department to report performance against critical milestones for key Olympic venues and infrastructure projects, including progress with the Stadium, Aquatics Centre and general infrastructure (road, rail, power). Each project has been assigned a target date for completion and Departmental reports produced by both the Department and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) identify progress against the milestones.
26. This indicator is reported on the basis of project information received from the ODA. This data is scrutinised by Department staff and informs reporting of performance against key milestones. The ODA report progress externally via quarterly progress reports.

Findings

27. The data system is well-defined and although the Department places reliance upon the information provided by the ODA, the Department's staff are involved in monitoring key Olympic projects and have the expertise to provide scrutiny over the information received. The Director for the Government Olympic Executive (GOE) is a DCMS Board Member, providing a direct link to governance within DCMS at a senior level. Reporting by the ODA is clear and concise, with performance presented in context of the wider Olympic aims.
28. Data on progress for each project is based on reports by chartered Surveyors employed by the ODA, who assess completion of milestones for the purpose of making payments to contractors. The involvement of professionals provides assurance over the accuracy of data received.

29. Responsibility for the collation and reporting of data has been assigned to a named individual within the Department. Reporting is clear, with data provided in context and specific examples given to provide clarity. Reporting could be improved however, by disclosing the timescales to which the data relate.
30. The data system could be further strengthened through inclusion of data quality risks on the risk register, leading to formal consideration and effective management of these risks. Key controls such as internal meetings should be formally documented to provide an audit trail of discussions and decision making. Whilst data systems are appropriate it is important that documentation is retained to support the quality of systems in place.

Indicator 2: Maximising the regeneration benefits of the 2012 Games:

Plan for improving the physical, economic and social infrastructure of East London developed and agreed with key local authorities and regeneration agencies, and pre Games elements implemented by 2011

Conclusion: GREEN (Fit for purpose)

31. We have concluded that the data system underlying this indicator is broadly appropriate, but needs strengthening to ensure that risks over data quality are adequately controlled. Consistent with the current performance assessment period the indicator does not detail events post 2011. However, it is difficult to ascertain the match between the indicator and the eventual achievement of a sustainable legacy inherent within the PSA.

Characteristics of the data system

32. The indicator relates to the establishment of a plan to improve the infrastructure of the surrounding area in East London and its future use. This indicator sets out a number of milestones including the development of a Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF). The LMF is the overarching plan governing the delivery of regeneration, and sets out milestones including the agreement of the Olympic Park management structure, the transport and infrastructure, and the establishment of the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) which will be responsible for developing post Games use. Progress against key projects is measured against milestones and budget allocations for each project. The delivery of these infrastructure and regeneration objectives and improvements will also have longer term economic benefits for immediate and surrounding areas, allowing communities and businesses to flourish in what otherwise would have been potentially derelict areas of London.

33. Both the ODA and the London Development Agency report to the Olympic Park Regeneration Steering Group with regard to development and progress with the LMF. As with indicator 1, the Department provides scrutiny over the ODA and progress and places reliance upon the information provided by the ODA and LDA to the Olympic Park Regeneration Steering Group. In addition, the knowledge the Department's Sustainability Team has of the LMF enables further scrutiny of progress.

Findings

34. The required data streams are not complex, and comprise of information from ODA and LDA reports to the Olympic Park Regeneration Steering Group and knowledge of staff within the Department's Sustainability Team. The Department's staff leading on the indicator have a degree of involvement in the Olympic projects and are able to scrutinise the data being received and the progress relating to the Legacy Framework Masterplan (LMF). Data on progress for each project is based on reports provided by chartered Surveyors, who assess completion of milestones for the purpose of making contract payments. The involvement of professionals in this process provides assurance over the accuracy of data received.
35. Milestones have been set in order to enable the LMF to be completed to deadline. Within the PSA Delivery Agreement specific time bound targets have been set with all targets met up to December 2008 and relevant details were accurately reported within the Annual report. The following milestones are specified:
- a) the Olympic Park management structure is agreed by December 2008;
 - b) the LMF is agreed by 2009;
 - c) the LMF plan and programme has identified, and is addressing, the key opportunities which London 2012 Games present to East London; and
 - d) the LMF clearly incorporates measures to ensure that the ingredients necessary to create a successful 'legacy place' in the Lower Lea Valley/East London after 2012 are being put in place.
36. Responsibility for the collation and reporting of data has been assigned to a named individual within the Department. Reporting is clear, with data provided in context and specific examples given to provide clarity. Although the data system is well-defined, the Department has no documented process to evidence the effectiveness of the controls in place at the ODA or LDA. The data accuracy risks arising from the lack of monitoring of controls are mitigated in some cases through the involvement of the Department Sustainability Team.

37. As with indicator 1, the data systems for infrastructure data could be further strengthened through the inclusion of data quality risks on the risk register, which would lead to formal consideration and effective management of risks.

Indicator 3: The Olympic Park and venues are designed and built according to sustainable principles

Red Amber Green (RAG) Status of delivery of the ODA sustainability strategy to 2011

Conclusion: GREEN (Disclosure)

38. We have concluded that the data system underlying this indicator is broadly appropriate, but needs strengthening to ensure that risks over data quality are adequately controlled. In addition, reporting of performance could be enhanced through fuller disclosure of information supporting the Department's use of RAG ratings.

Characteristics of the data system

39. London's bid for the 2012 Games proposed that the designs, builds and proposals for long term use of the Olympic park and associated venues would be governed by sustainable principles. This indicator measures performance against a number of sustainability sub-indicators, which are based upon the five sustainability themes identified within the ODA Sustainable Development Strategy in line with the initial bid. These cover climate change, waste, biodiversity, health, and inclusion. An independent body which holds the Olympic partners to account, the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 (CSL), provides a scrutiny role for both the collection of quality data and the evaluation of performance against the sub-indicators.
40. Data relating to each of the themes is collated and processed by the ODA before being sent on to the Department, which assigns progress (Red/Amber/Green) ratings to each of the sub-measures and overall. The CSL is tasked to independently assure London's 2012 pledge to host the most sustainable Games to date. It provides a key role in ensuring the quality of data received from the ODA as well as providing input into the progress ratings decided by the Department. The ODA rely on scrutiny of information by the CSL.

Findings

41. The system is well-defined and has been designed with the involvement of key stakeholders. Assurance provided by the CSL ensures that the Department are given comfort over the quality of data being received from the ODA. The data

system for this indicator has been designed with input from key stakeholders, such as Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU), the ODA and the CSL. This has resulted in a system that matches the indicator requirements and provides useful and relevant data. The data system is fully operational with data streams providing information for all the five sustainability themes.

42. Although the data system is well-defined the Department has no documented review process to evidence the effectiveness of the controls in place at CSL or the ODA. The data accuracy risks arising from the lack of monitoring of controls are mitigated in some cases through the involvement of the Department in providing the final RAG ratings based upon progress reports received.
43. Data quality in relation to data collection and processing has not been included as a risk in the Department's Sustainability Risk Register. Although some of the risks are reduced through the involvement of the CSL, formal identification and analysis of the risks would help to clarify how the risks of inaccurate data are mitigated.
44. Reporting of performance is clear and contextualised, and inclusion of historic performance allows users to see the direction of travel. However, the Department's assessment of RAG ratings in the Annual Report is not supported by definitions or the actual data, making full analysis of performance by readers difficult. The Department should consider publishing outturn results and how the Department has assessed its RAG ratings so that clear links can be made between the ratings awarded and progress for each sustainability theme.

Indicator 4: Public Participation in cultural and community activities across the UK and participation in sporting activities both in the UK and in other countries, particularly those in development:

Number of people across the Nations and Regions of the UK and in other countries taking part in Government supported programmes associated with the 2012 Games

Conclusion: RED (Not established)

45. We have concluded that the data system to measure performance has yet to be fully established.

Characteristics of the data system

46. The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone, including those in hard to reach groups has the chance to take part in cultural, community and physical activities from 2008 until after the Games are over. The Department acknowledges that measuring this indicator is challenging and that it has not been possible to draw up a composite measure. Consequently, there are four

programmes that have been developed in order to address the commitment and these are what the indicator uses to measure performance against. The four elements that make up the indicator require participation levels to be recorded for the UK School Games, Specific Cultural Olympiad programmes, Personal Best and the International Sports Development Programmes (International Inspiration). The UK Schools Games data is sourced from Youth Sport, the Personal Best data from the London Development Agency (LDA) and the International Inspiration data from UK Sport via a number of sources abroad. The data source for Cultural Olympiad scheme has not been confirmed and is not as yet available.

47. The data source for each element is different. This increases the level of risk attached to the indicator.

Findings

48. There are several required data streams for this indicator and some data streams are not yet in place or only in partial operation. Baseline data has not been established for one of the four elements. For those streams that are operational, the Department has not sought assurances that the data is of sufficient quality.
49. Data is not yet available for the Cultural Olympiad scheme and is only partially available for Personal Best. For the former, no data stream is established. For the latter, while data is provided upon request, a consistent data stream needs to be implemented with the LDA to obtain data from other parts of the country (schemes in the North East and South East started in early 2009).
50. The Department needs to implement controls to ensure the data from external organisations is robust and reliable. Controls could include checking of a sample of figures to source documentation and/or specification of data quality requirements in contracts or Service Level Agreements with the data providers.
51. Data needs to be presented more clearly for elements of the indicator. It is not clear where data exists and where it is not yet available and referencing between text and graphs is not clear in the Annual Report. Furthermore, the key to Figure 5 in the Department's Annual Report (International Inspiration graph) does not fully describe what is being shown. To increase clarity, distinct sections should be created for each element of the indicator, with clear references to supporting data and explanations where data are not yet fully available.
52. References to the Measurement Annex or other sources of information should be made within the narrative of reports in order to allow users to obtain further details about the schemes should they wish.

Indicator 5: Creation of a world class system for Physical Education (PE) and sport:

Percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in at least 2 hours a week of high-quality PE and sport at school and the percentage of 5-19 year olds participating in at least 3 further hours a week of sporting opportunities

Conclusion: AMBER (Systems)

53. We have concluded that the data system underlying this indicator is broadly appropriate but further validation is necessary to confirm data accuracy.

Characteristics of the data system

54. The data system relies on a number of data streams to collate the necessary information. These streams are the PE and Sport Survey, Taking Part Survey (adults and children) and plans received from School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) and County Sports Partnerships (CSPs).

55. The indicator has three elements:

- The first is the proportion of SSP areas in which schools, community and sports clubs have in place satisfactory medium term plans to provide an offer of the required 5 hours of sport per week. This data is sourced from plans produced by SSPs and CSPs and is then analysed by two of the Department's delivery bodies, the Youth Sport Trust and Sport England.
- The second measures the percentage of children and young people doing five hours of sport a week (three hours for 16-19 year olds). This data is sourced from the PE and Sport Survey and the Taking Part Survey.
- The third element measures the percentage of SSPs with at least 80% of pupils engaging in at least three hours of school-led sport per week. This data is also sourced from the PE and Sport Survey.

Findings

56. The PE and Sport Survey and Taking Part Surveys are established data streams and their use for this indicator is based on the need to obtain relevant data at the lowest cost possible. Control requirements for both Surveys are clearly set out in contracts held with the respective contractors. These include risk assessments, requirements for data checking whilst entering into the central system, and data validation exercises.

57. A new data stream was required for the first element of the indicator, the proportion of SSP areas where the SSP and CSP have in place satisfactory

medium term plans to provide an offer of the required 5 hours of sport per week, and this has been set up in consultation with stakeholders such as the Youth Sport Trust and Sport England, who were responsible for collating the data. The creation of detailed guidance notes and validation procedures have helped to ensure that plans are appraised consistently. Although there is an agreed contract between the Department and the providers which states responsibilities and the quality assurance standards that must be complied with, the Department should also ensure that reviews of primary data take place to ensure data accuracy.

58. Although the data system and data streams are set up for this first element, there has not yet been sufficient analysis or reporting of data to determine whether the system is operating effectively, therefore we were unable to assess the robustness of data systems and data streams and consequently we have rated this indicator as Amber. Since the fieldwork was completed for this report, a validation exercise has been undertaken by the Youth Sport Trust and Sport England to ensure data accuracy and this addresses our recommendation above.
59. For the second element, the sample size for the interim year (2009-10) has since been found by the Department to be too low to report a statistically significant change in outturn data for that year, except where a very large difference is noted. The Department nevertheless is satisfied that this has no significant impact on the overall measurement as 'true' progress will be measured in the final year (2010-11) of the "Taking Part" Survey. However, the Department is required to report progress against DSOs annually, and the limited sample size in the 2009-10 year will not allow a robust outturn to be reported for that year.
60. In addition, for the third element, the Department commissioned an exercise to validate the Survey. This validation exercise selected four questions from the Survey including, 'what is the total number in each year group who participate in at least three hours of high quality PE and out of hours sports in a typical week'. The exercise identified that some schools were unsure of the definition of 'high quality' PE and sport, which could potentially result in inconsistencies between figures being reported by different schools. However, the Survey interviewers within the validation exercise felt that 99.7% of schools had interpreted the question correctly and 97.8% felt that schools had answered accurately. Therefore the risk is small and the definition of 'High quality PE and Sport' is set out in the PSA 22 Delivery Agreement which provides the reader with detailed sources of further guidance in this area. The Department should make sure that the definition of 'high quality' is clear going forward, so as to ensure consistency of responses within the Survey.