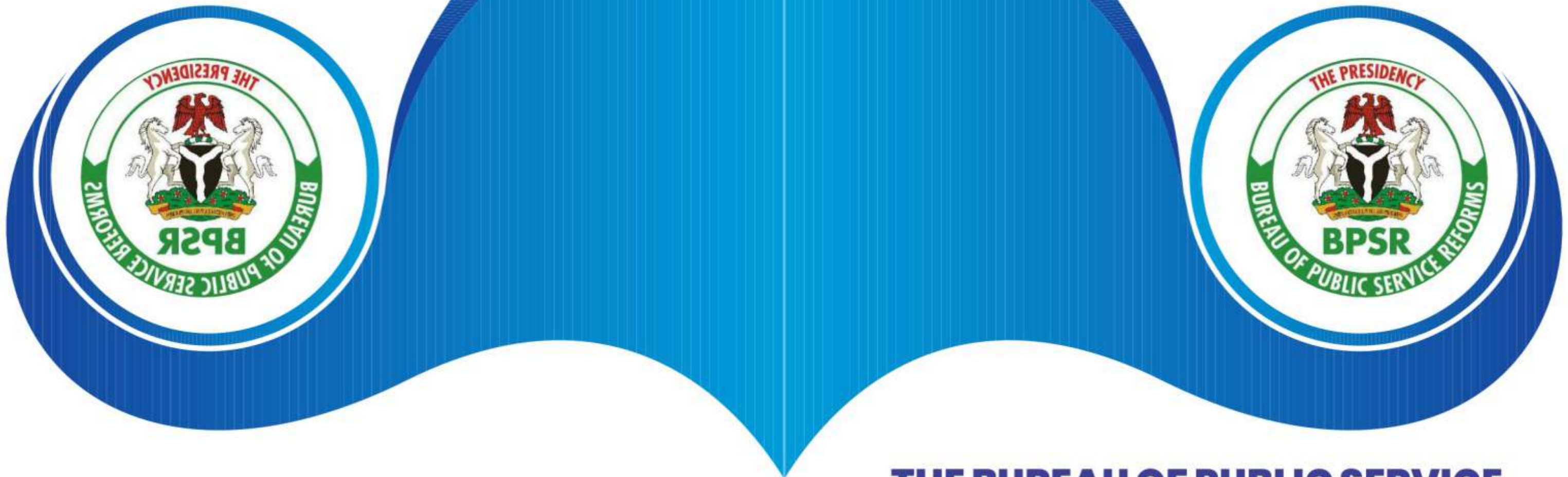


# CAPACITY BUILDING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL



**THE BUREAU OF PUBLIC SERVICE  
REFORMS (BPSR)**

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# Institutional Assessment and Capacity Building Program for MDAs on Reform Improvement and Change



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## Executive Summary

This report critically examines the state of public service reforms in Nigeria, structured in three main sections. The first section highlights the challenges and tensions resulting from ongoing reforms (Conundrum of Reforms). It identifies weak service charters, unclear mandates of public organizations, and the limited implementation of performance-based contracts as key obstacles. While initiatives like SERVICOM aim to enhance service delivery, their impact has been minimal due to vague commitments and lack of accountability structures.

The second section looks at the National Strategy for Public Service Reforms (NSPSR), which aspires to transform Nigeria's public service into a world-class system. This ambition reflects the government's broader strategy to align public services with global standards to meet rising citizen expectations. However, achieving this vision requires moving from underperformance to excellence, guided by benchmarks that compare both locally and internationally, including top private sector standards. Reforms must balance excellence with fairness, ensuring all citizens receive quality services while maximizing taxpayer value.

The final section explores reform challenges, advocating for a transformation rooted in the "5 C's" framework: Core, Control, Customers, Consequences, and Culture. These elements are essential for reshaping public service DNA and driving sustainable change. The report stresses that reform efforts must focus on outcomes, not just structures or processes. Key issues include bureaucratic inertia, lack of customer responsiveness, and inadequate performance measurement systems. For reforms to succeed, agencies must adopt clear mandates, meaningful service charters, and shared key performance indicators (KPIs) to track and enhance service delivery.

### **Characteristics of World-Class Public Services and Strategies for Reinventing Government**

World-class public services—particularly in sectors such as Education, Health, Crime, Safety, and Security—are characterized by excellent outcomes including high literacy, healthy populations, and low crime rates, underpinned by a commitment to continuous improvement. These services are personalized and inclusive, moving beyond uniform models to approaches that respect dignity, integrate citizen input, and prioritize accessibility.

A hallmark of such systems is their fairness and equity, ensuring equal standards regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, or gender. They also deliver **value for money** through efficient resource use and productivity. Citizens and public professionals are **empowered**, collaborating in service design and delivery while having access to clear performance information. Skilled public service professionals drive innovation, responsiveness, and improvement.

**Strategic government leadership** plays a vital role—setting clear visions, providing stable frameworks, enabling environments, and effective incentives to guide sustainable service transformation.

#### **Reinventing Government: Strategic Overview**

Efforts to achieve world-class status face several challenges, notably the low visibility and institutionalization of reform initiatives like the NSPSR, and the lack of cultural integration among civil servants and public stakeholders. The Compendium of Public Service Reforms highlights critical gaps in structural, cultural, and systemic reform, emphasizing the need to address both the "hard" infrastructure (structures, hierarchies, processes) and the "soft" enablers (incentives, governance, service delivery norms, and culture).

Key strategies for transforming the public sector focus on:

- **Clarifying Purpose (Core Strategy):** Establishing a clear vision, roles, and direction while realigning functions (policy, regulation, compliance, and service delivery) for effectiveness.
- **Redesigning Incentive Systems (Consequences Strategy):** Introducing accountability and rewards systems that prioritize performance and innovation over conformity.
- **Shifting Organizational Culture (Culture Strategy):** Replacing bureaucratic instincts with entrepreneurial thinking by influencing beliefs, norms, and routines within public institutions.
- **Reengineering Structures and Processes (Control Strategy):** Encouraging leaner, more responsive organizations (e.g., one-stop service centers) that eliminate inefficiencies and embrace user-centric design.

Being Strategic in Reinvention will require Leveraging small resources for large-scale change by identifying key levers that can ripple through systems to drive transformation.

The Federal Public Service is pivotal in formulating and implementing policies and programmes that drive national development and good governance. However, over the past 25 years, the Service has faced serious structural and operational challenges—including a weak performance management system, poor incentives, lack of meritocracy, and inadequate professionalization—undermining its capacity to deliver on its mandate. To address these persistent inefficiencies, a comprehensive reform agenda has been initiated. Central to this transformation is the implementation of a robust Performance Management System (PMS) aimed at motivating excellence, ensuring accountability, and aligning performance with national goals. The PMS incorporates both institutional and individual incentives, sanctions, and a renewed emphasis on merit, technical competence, and values-driven service delivery.

Recognizing that incentives—both financial and non-financial—are essential to driving performance, the system seeks to shift from a culture of absenteeism and economic rent-seeking towards a more result-oriented service. These reforms are guided by global best practices emphasizing professionalism, local accountability, innovation, and citizen empowerment.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The goal is to evolve a **World Class Civil Service** characterized by excellence, fairness, value-for-money, and responsiveness. By empowering service users, energizing professionals, and providing strategic government leadership, the Nigerian Civil Service is poised to deliver equitable, high-quality services that meet citizens' expectations and support national competitiveness in the global economy.

Ultimately, reinventing government requires dynamic, sustained efforts guided by strategic thinking, adaptive implementation, and a strong understanding of institutional DNA. The goal is not just reform, but the creation of a self-renewing, high-performance public service system responsive to citizens' needs and national development objectives.

Overall, this report calls for a strategic redefinition of public service delivery—one that is customer-focused, transparent, and driven by results. It urges a shift towards innovative, accountable, and high-performing public institutions that can truly meet the aspirations of a modern society.

## 1.0 Introduction

This Report is divided into three sections. The first section argues that the wave of reforms has led to some tensions and dilemmas. Starting with a review of the distinctiveness of public services and the several initiatives made to alter the relationship between the State Government and the providers of public services (the MDAs), making service providers customer focused (the establishment of servicom) has not been strongly pursued. Characterized by very weakly described 'service charter' making it difficult to evolve 'services level agreement' and hence performance contracts. In addition, the mandates of public organization in many cases have not been tightly defined and or properly articulated leading to conflicting obligation, are lack of clarity of roles, purpose and directions.

The second section is an X-ray of the NSPSR stated ambition for the public service to become World Class. Efficient and effective public services are at the core of the Government's strategy to transform Nigeria, stated succinctly, it means that if we are to compete effectively as a country in today's globalized economy and match people's ever rising aspirations, our public services must be able to bear comparison with the best in the world.

The successive waves of public service reforms over the past decades should therefore be geared towards ensuring that all of our public services are world class: Today's challenges are for public services to move from below average in the global league of effectiveness to the top. One yardstick for success should not only be whether services have improved compared to previous years but also whether they are among the best in the world. Another yardstick is simply not how public services compare against each other, but how they compare against the best provision available to those who can afford it in the very best private sector or any other private providers, and comparable to their peers in Africa.

The aspiration should be for genuinely World Class public services that contribute towards a fairer and more prosperous society while delivering value for money for the taxpayers. The reforms of public service to be world class should be based on the principles of excellence and fairness. Public service must provide excellent services for all individuals and communities in addition to facilitating the creation of a fairer and more equitable society. Government must provide overall direction and purpose to public services while guaranteeing minimum standards, investing heavily in outcomes, increased responsiveness to users and consistent quality.