



IN SEARCH OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS: ARE ALTERNATIVE REPORTING FORMATS THE ANSWER?

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Accountability..... For ever young!

- accountability: “being obliged to explain one’s action, to justify what one does” (par.56)
- “the paramount objective from which all other objectives must flow” (GASB, 1987, par.76-77)
- financial reporting is “only one source of information”
- to satisfy their information needs, users “combine the information provided by financial reporting with other pertinent information” (GASB, 1987, par.72).



A chameleonic concept



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Crisis in Public Accountability?

- .different and conflicting ideas about what public accountability is



Different reports published worldwide.

Are all suitable to ensure Accountability?



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Patton (1992)

- Report Only vs Explain/Justify
- Sanctions/rewards implied?
- Accountor and accountee relationship
- Accountable for what?
- Who is to be held accountable?

pressures

- NPM and NPG
- Post-financial crisis
- Changes in the political scenario
- Different control needs



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What about the financial report?

- **It is able to satisfy** external information needs by financial analysts, overarching bodies, people in charge of the audit function
- **Inside** the organisation may be seen as a **duty** to answer to the information needs of politicians, managers, financial directors and lenders
- it may not contain all the information required by stakeholders,
- the information may be presented in a format that is too complex



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Are all the same?





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Alternative reporting formats for PSO

Reports Facets of accountability	Sustainability reporting	Popular Report/ Report for citizens	Integrated Reporting	Popular Integrated Reporting
Report Only vs Explain/Justify	Explain/Justify	Explain/Justify	Explain/Justify	Explain/Justify
Sanctions/rewards implied?	In some countries	In some countries	No, except for SA	no
Accountor and accountee relationship	satisfy those interested in sustainability issues	satisfy those interested in financial issues	satisfy expert readers providing a whole picture of the PSO	satisfy all citizens' information needs
Accountable for what ?	sustainable policies and related results	financial issues	6 capital	6 capital
Who is held accountable?	the whole organisation	the whole organisation	the whole organisation	the whole organisation



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What next?



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