1 INTRODUCTION

The Sevottam model has been developed with the overarching objective of improving the quality of public service delivery in the country. The model has three components, and in addition to this overarching objective, there are intermediate outcomes expected from compliance of conditions designed for each of these three components.

The first component of the model requires effective charter implementation thereby opening up a channel for receiving citizens' inputs into the way in which organizations determine service delivery requirements. Citizens' Charters publicly declare the information on citizens' entitlements; making citizens better informed and hence empowering them to demand better services.

The second component of the model, 'Public Grievance Redress' requires a good grievance redress system operating in a manner that leaves the citizen more satisfied with how the organization responds to complaints/grievances, irrespective of the final decision.

The third component 'Excellence in Service Delivery', postulates that an organization can have an excellent performance in service delivery only if it is managing the key ingredients for good service delivery well, and building its own capacity to continuously improve delivery.

The ability of such an assessment model in influencing service delivery quality will be a function of how tightly improvement actions are linked to assessment results. Further, any assessment model needs to be updated periodically to keep it abreast with emerging developments. Change Management as well as Research and Development have therefore, been identified as important focus areas for running this model, in addition to administration of the assessment process and its culmination in certification or awards.
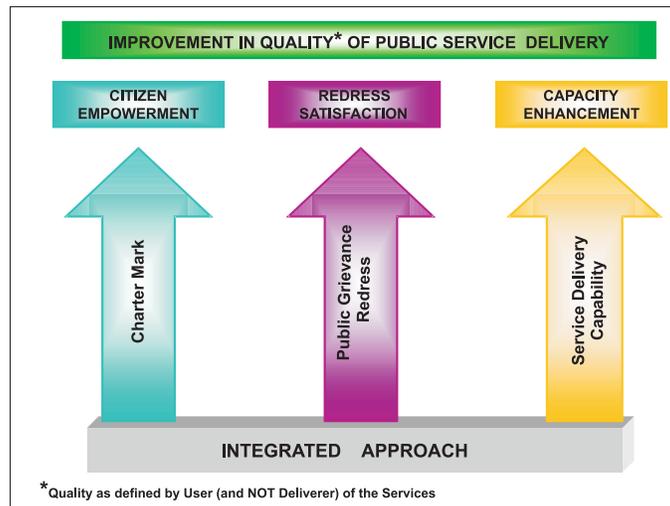

Figure 1: Intended Outcomes of Implementing Sevottam

2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT

2.1 Assessment Model Content

The main part of the model consists of criteria that ascertain how well the organization is tuned into the requirements of the three components that form the Sevottam model. However, before the organization undertakes a systematic assessment it needs to have some basics in place. The basic eligibility conditions as well as the next level of criteria are explained in the following sub sections.

2.1.1 Assessment Framework

The assessment framework takes into account two kinds of questions: to assess basic compliance, and to assess quality of processes through which compliance is achieved.

2.1.1.1 Compliance Assessment

This part of the assessment acts as a screening mechanism to filter out organizations that do not meet the basic requirements to even enter the assessment process. Currently it consists of 5 criteria that ascertain whether the organization has started applying some tools that can improve service delivery and is therefore likely to benefit from the assessment process. The criteria are articulated in the form of questions that offer binary choices ("Yes/No"). In case the organization does not clear these criteria, it indicates that building appreciation of the tools needs to be started in right earnest and gives pointers on what to do.

Compliance Criteria

1. **Published an approved Citizens' Charter**

2. **Circulated the Charter among service delivery units**

3. **Appointed a senior officer as Director of Public Grievances / Nodal officer for Citizens' Charter for the Department**

4. **Set up a task force for formulation, implementation and review of Citizens' Charter as per standards & for conducting self-assessment with involvement of representative citizen groups**

5. **Published grievance lodging and redress procedure, and timelines for redress**

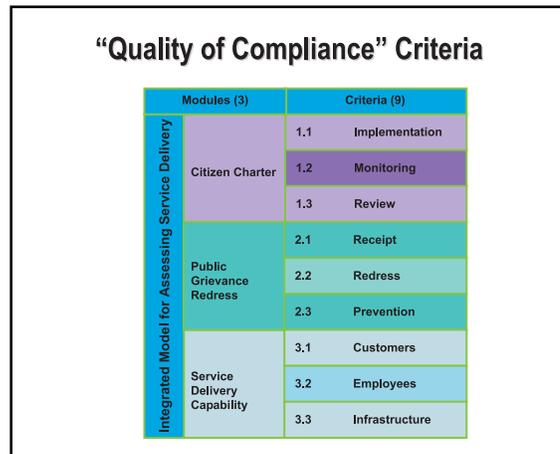**Figure 2: Basic Requirements**

2.1.1.2 Process Quality Assessment

This part of the assessment acts as a rating mechanism to assess the quality of tool application and its utilization for improved service delivery. It consists of 11 criteria for each of the three modules, viz. Citizens' Charter, Public Grievance Redress, and Service Delivery Capability thereby comprising 33 criteria in all. These criteria ascertain the extent to which the organization is applying service delivery improvement tools in a systematic manner and is able to learn from experience. The criteria are articulated in the form of questions that can invite rating on a five-point scale ranging from "ad hoc" to "systematic" action. The rating given in response to each question needs to be backed up by evidence attached with the application. An organization that scores well on these criteria deserves commendation for having understood the utility of service improvement tools and for putting this understanding to good use.

2.1.2 Component Modules

If an organization meets the basic eligibility conditions and goes through the next level of assessment, then at the first level there are three modules corresponding to each of the above components. At the next level, each module comprises three criteria to ascertain effectiveness of each tool in improving service delivery. These criteria are specific to the respective module and are explained in the succeeding sub sections. Each criterion is composed of a few (3 to 5) sub criteria. The following schematic shows the modular structure of this part of the model.

As shown in Figure 3 below, the proposed model consists of three main modules, each corresponding to the three concepts explained below. Performance for each module can be assessed separately on the basis of three criteria. Each criterion is further divided into elements, details of which are available in subsection 2.2.

"Quality of Compliance" Criteria		
Modules (3)	Criteria (9)	
Citizen Charter	1.1	Implementation
	1.2	Monitoring
	1.3	Review
Public Grievance Redress	2.1	Receipt
	2.2	Redress
	2.3	Prevention
Service Delivery Capability	3.1	Customers
	3.2	Employees
	3.3	Infrastructure

Figure 3: Structure of Component Modules

2.1.2.1 Charter Effectiveness

The Charter Mark (CM) is an award given by UK Government to agencies that are implementing Citizens' Charters and have demonstrated high standards of quality in delivering services as outlined in their respective charters. In the Indian context, an assessment will need to cover the entire range of processes right from charter design and formulation to implementation of charter commitments and periodic review of commitments based on stakeholder needs. In the Indian context, organizational readiness for receiving a CM will be assessed on the basis of a wider connotation of "Charter Effectiveness" consisting of three elements: how the contents of the charter are decided upon and disseminated, how far the contents reflect actual achievements, and how they are updated in accordance with citizen needs.

2.1.2.2 Public Grievance Redress

The objective of any Public Grievance Redress Mechanism is to resolve public grievances in an effective and speedy manner. In addition, complaints also provide vital feedback that indicates efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Based on such feedback, agencies can take remedial and preventive actions to reduce complaint-prone areas. In the Indian context, it is important to encourage an organizational approach that is focused on efficient handling of grievances received, as well as on taking suitable actions that eliminate chronic grievance prone areas. The assessment of Public Grievance Redress Mechanism needs to take into account the three aspects of grievance handling: how they are received, how they are resolved, and how they are prevented.

2.1.2.3 Service Delivery Capability

Organizational Performance Excellence the world over is assessed on two kinds of parameters: the results that the organization can show, and the manner in which the results are being achieved. This aspect essentially focuses on actions taken by the organization to enhance its delivery capability by strengthening the inputs that go into better delivery such as quality of strategic planning, human resources, information management, etc. In the Indian context, such assessments need to encourage

better resource utilization for improved infrastructure, technology usage and human resource management, which are key ingredients for improved service delivery.

2.1.3   Participating Organizations

Organizations that come under this assessment will be assessed on both aspects: the macro part of creating an environment that enables better service delivery, and the micro part of making best use of the available environment and delivering better services. Therefore the model envisages assessment at two levels: parent and outlet.
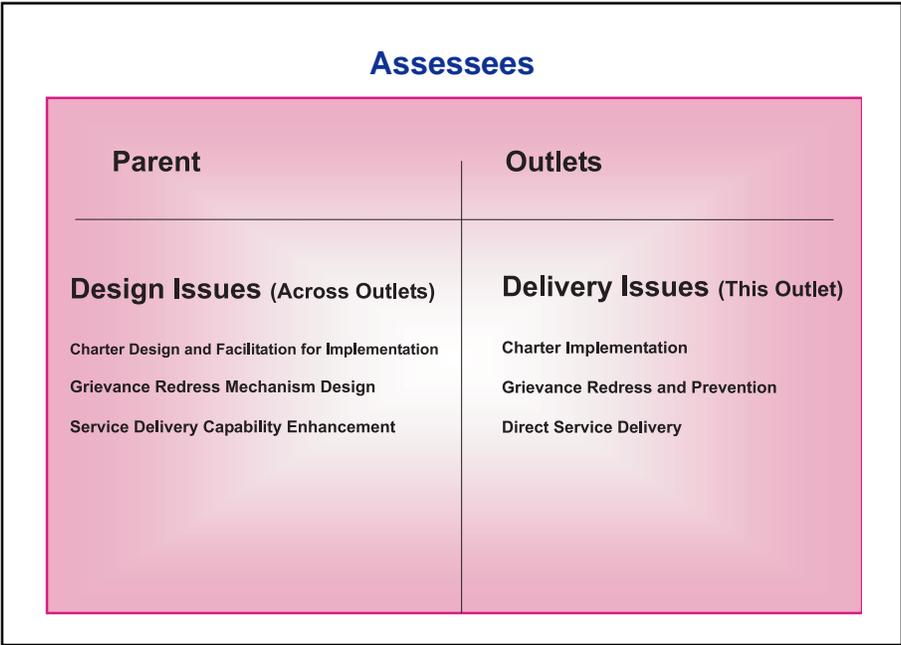
2.1.3.1 Parent Level

Primary responsibility for the macro aspect lies with the Ministry or Department that formulates policy and issues guidelines to delivery outlets or agencies to function in accordance with the do's and don'ts conveyed through those guidelines.

2.1.3.2 Outlet Level

Primary responsibility for the micro aspect lies with service delivery outlets or agencies under the Ministry or Department that are designated for direct interaction with citizens.

In the Indian context, the reality of this distinction is very pronounced and the assessment tool gives it due recognition by carrying out the assessment at both levels as shown below.

Assessees

Parent	Outlets
Design Issues (Across Outlets)	**Delivery Issues** (This Outlet)
Charter Design and Facilitation for Implementation	Charter Implementation
Grievance Redress Mechanism Design	Grievance Redress and Prevention
Service Delivery Capability Enhancement	Direct Service Delivery

Figure 4: Organization Levels for Assessment

Figure 4 shows that the assessment is to be carried out at both levels, first where policy for multiple outlets gets articulated, and second, at individual outlets where the policy is interpreted and applied. An organization can choose to define the boundaries of outlets to be covered by the assessment in terms of a geographical zone, or in terms of individual outlets. The assessment will be for the defined boundaries and the parent can replicate the good practices within the boundaries to other outlets.

2.2 Model Application

The model can be used in many ways depending on how far requirements go, how well prospective assessees are performing and how far they are ready to take on service delivery improvement initiatives. The extent to which an organization is meeting the criteria as above can be assessed through a set of 33 questions listed below. These questions can be used in various forms depending on the implementation approach, some alternatives for which are described in subsection 2.2.1.

No.	Module/Criteria/Element
1	**Citizens' Charter**
1.1	**Charter Implementation**
1.1.1	How do you determine and/or distinguish the citizen groups as also your stakeholders and what services do you offer to them?
1.1.2	How do you meet the service expectations of your citizen groups?
1.1.3	How do you ensure that services and their standards as described in the charter are in accordance with expectations of citizen groups identified above?
1.1.4	How do you ensure that preparation and/or review of the charter is participatory and inclusive of all your citizen groups?
1.1.5	How do you ensure that frontline staff and citizen groups are aware of the charter and can understand its contents easily for compliance?
1.2	**Charter Monitoring**
1.2.1	How do you measure and track service delivery performance of different outlets against charter contents?
1.2.2	How do you communicate the gaps in service delivery to officer/team responsible for charter monitoring and to the outlets concerned?
1.2.3	How do you fill the observed and/or reported gaps?
1.3	**Charter Review**
1.3.1	How do you find out whether your charter is serving its purpose and take measures to enhance its effectiveness?
1.3.2	How do you incorporate legislative changes (e.g. introduction of Right to Information Act, etc.) and other relevant provisions/developments in your charter revision process?
1.3.3	How do you ensure that frontline staff and the citizens are aware of the basis for making changes as above?
2	**Grievance Redress**
2.1	**Grievance Receipt**
2.1.1	How do you prepare and implement guidelines for spreading awareness on public grievance process and ensure that citizens get the information they need?
2.1.2	How do you prepare and implement guidelines for recording and classifying grievances?
2.1.3	How do you prepare and implement guidelines for multiple channels of grievance redress such as toll-free telephone lines, web site, etc.?
2.2	**Grievance Redress**
2.2.1	How do you determine time norms for acknowledgement, and redress of grievances/ complaints received?

2.2.2	How do you ensure that the time norms as above are adhered to?
2.2.3	How do you continuously improve the system and use forums like Jan Sunwai, Lok Adalats and other single window disposal systems to expedite grievance redress?
2.3	**Grievance Prevention**
2.3.1	How do you use grievance analysis while preparing annual action plans and strategy of the organization?
2.3.2	How do you find out grievance prone areas and communicate them to the officer/team responsible for service delivery improvement and to the Public Grievance Redress Officer?
2.3.3	How do you link grievance analysis to charter review and to other guidelines so that complaint prone areas are improved upon?
2.3.4	How do you measure and track the progress on improvements required to reduce complaint prone areas?
2.3.5	How do you ensure that frontline staff and the citizens are aware of improvements made in grievance redress mechanism?
3	**Service Delivery**
3.1	**Citizen Focus**
3.1.1	How do you determine citizen satisfaction levels and implement steps required for improving the same?
3.1.2	How do you measure citizen satisfaction across the organization and for particular service delivery outlets?
3.1.3	How do you link citizen satisfaction results to charter review and to other processes affecting service delivery?
3.1.4	How do you prepare and implement guidelines that encourage your outlets for creating a citizen focused organization?
3.1.5	How do you find out and distinguish among outlets on the basis of service delivery, and implement steps required to improve the same?
3.2	**Employee Motivation**
3.2.1	How do you encourage and ensure courteous, punctual, and prompt service delivery by your front line staff?
3.2.2	How do you prepare and implement guidelines to encourage the willingness of the frontline staff to accept responsibilities for service delivery as per citizen expectations?
3.2.3	How do you encourage healthy competition among your outlets for improved service delivery?
3.3	**Infrastructure Management**
3.3.1	How do you determine and implement minimum standards of service for convenience of citizens such as putting signage, placing waiting benches, drinking water and other needs?
3.3.2	How do you determine the resources that are required taking into account service delivery needs, current budgets, current channels of service delivery to ensure resource availability/ utilization as per plans/requirements and standards fixed for service delivery?
3.3.3	How do you prepare and implement guidelines that encourage outlets to continuously improve service delivery?

2.2.1 Usage Options

There are four broad ways in which this model can be used: (1) as a self-assessment tool by organizations already motivated to improve service delivery, (2) as a requirement standard, (3) as a benchmark assessment process to be established, (4) as a rating model to recognize and reward organizations that are doing commendable work in service delivery

2.2.1.1 Standardization and Certification

Currently there is no uniformity among government departments on implementation of Citizens' Charters, public grievance redress mechanisms, and how they link citizens' expectations with ongoing improvements by way of process re-engineering, infrastructure enhancement, IT upgradation, employee skill building, etc. An immediate use from this model has been the evolution of the requirement standard IS15700: 2005, to be followed by all government organizations. Government organizations are required to demonstrate conformance to the IS15700 standard in order to achieve Sevottam certification.

2.2.1.2 Voluntary Benchmarking

Upon wider dissemination of the model, government organizations keen to improve their delivery performance can voluntarily use it to compare notes with what others have been able to achieve and thereby identify focus areas of improvement for themselves. This will be a useful application if environmental pressures on government organizations to improve service delivery are very strong. These pressures could come from political will, executive action, or incentive systems that encourage service delivery improvements.

An assessee organization can opt to conduct only a self-assessment, or may go in for an external assessment. In the latter case, it will have to bear the costs of external assessment, in return for which it will have access to an outsider view and a professional analysis of its performance on service delivery parameters.

2.2.1.3 Mandatory Assessment

Government of India may take up a mandatory assessment of select organizations during a particular year based on its priorities and Annual Action Plan for that year. In this case also, assessee organizations will have to commit resources as mandated, in return for which they will have access to an outsider view and a professional analysis of their performance on service delivery parameters.

2.2.1.4 Assessment Based Awards

The results of external assessment can be used to give Awards to organizations that may have put in commendable performance. This will be a useful application when a large number of organizations achieve high levels of performance and creating healthy competition is expected to institute a culture of excellence among them. For such an award, all three components need to be assessed as part of an integrated model.

2.2.2 Further Directions for Development

When organizations are at the basic stage of learning, they need to be familiar with generic guidelines that underlie good performance in more developed organizations. Once these generic guidelines are applied to a significant extent and corresponding organizational development takes place, they can themselves start formulating guidelines for their specific sectors that will enhance service delivery quality. In the Indian context, as this model is rolled out on a larger scale, individual sectoral models can be developed further while maintaining their standards at levels that are consistent with best practice.

3 ASSUMPTIONS AND DEPENDENCIES

For the Sevottam model to be implemented on a large scale, appropriate institutional arrangements must be in place. It is expected that over a period of time, such assessments will actually help improve service delivery and not just remain academic scoring exercises. However, such outcomes require not just a robust assessment model, but several other enabling factors as shown below.
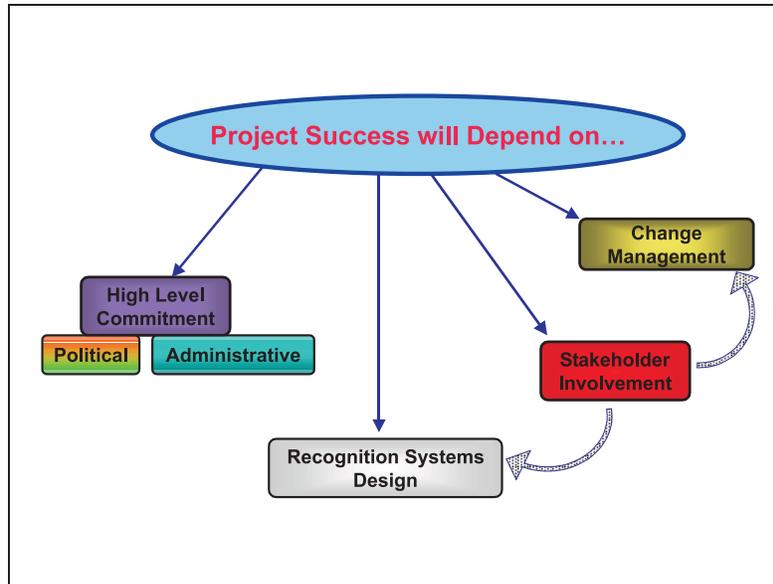

Figure 5: Critical Success Factors

The various assumptions and dependencies associated with model design and other critical success factors are explained below.

3.1 Model Design

The assessment model is designed after considering international best practice and examining the ground realities of our country, including the social and economic environment. The following sub sections describe international best practice inputs taken into account while designing the model.

3.1.1 International Best Practice

There are various models across the world that incorporate best practice as relevant for assessment of service delivery in the public sector. The two most prominent ones are Charter Mark of UK and Malcolm Baldrige of USA, salient features of which are described below. Several countries have instituted assessment-based awards, most of which are given by the Head of State, and in general the assessments are based on Malcolm Baldrige type models. Discussions about efficacy of such assessments in actually improving service delivery are reasonably well documented and can provide good insights useful for directing the course of evolution of this model. Original documentation on above models, as available on respective websites is self-explanatory. For the initial stages of assessment in India, some of these documents may not seem relevant. However, they constitute important references for evolving the model further as it stabilizes and starts showing results.

3.1.1.1 Charter Mark

This is specifically used by the Government of UK to publicly acknowledge effective implementation of Citizens' Charters by government agencies. The exercise is conducted by Cabinet Office and requires external assessment by accredited organizations. Participation is voluntary and suitable prestige is associated witht he Awards to encourage prospective assessees, and make the exercise worth the effort and expense.

3.1.1.2 Malcolm Baldrige

This is a more wholesome model and defines 'Excellence' as a combination of process and results. It has spawned the largest number of variants and most countries, including India, have instituted awards for business organizations based on this model. The model has been extended to assess service delivery by government organizations as well, and specific models for health and education sectors are also in use. The U.S. Department of Commerce is responsible for the Baldrige National Quality Program and the Award. External examiners are drawn from a pool of qualified assessors who volunteer every year when assessments are advertised. The incentive to participate in the process as examiner or assessee is created by the prestige associated with the award.

3.2 Other Enabling Factors

While model design is important to establish credibility of the assessment exercise, there are at least three critical issues that will impact realization of benefits in the form of actual service delivery improvements. These are briefly explained below.

- Commitment from the highest political and administrative levels

- Stakeholder involvement in scheme design

- Change Management interventions

The following sub sections explain current understanding on these critical issues.

3.2.1 Securing Mandate and Political Commitment

During the Chief Ministers' Conference in 1997, State Governments had agreed and undertaken measures to implement Citizens' Charters, but the success of this program leaves much to be desired. We all know that this success depends on the level of commitment, ownership and leadership drive by the implementing agencies.

For this model to be successful, commitment and enthusiasm on the part of organizations to use tools for service delivery improvements will be required. Part of the enthusiasm can come from better tool design. However, much more will need to come from leadership commitment.

3.2.2 Need for Stakeholder Involvement

In addition to the usual project delivery and review requirements, the success of this exercise will also depend on the involvement of stakeholders. As such, civil society representatives should be taken on board at appropriate stages like definition of service standards and assessment for Sevottam certification, etc.

3.2.3 Change Management

Change Management is at the heart of this assessment improvement initiative, particularly changing the culture and mindset of government officials from an 'administration' focus to 'performance management'. The response of public officials to adapt these new initiatives, which require greater transparency, accountability and openness, will be crucial to implementation success. Prototype test of this model was carried out purely as an assessment exercise, but eventually change management needs to be integrated with the assessment exercise.

4   CONCLUSION

This document recommends a model for assessing the quality of service delivery to by Public Service Organizations in India. While model design is important to establish credibility of any assessment exercise, real benefits will also depend on commitment from the highest political and administrative levels to drive this exercise.

The following figure summarizes the model criteria linkage with three specific benefits and shows at the core how organizations can move from meeting basic standards to healthy competition for bringing excellence in service delivery.
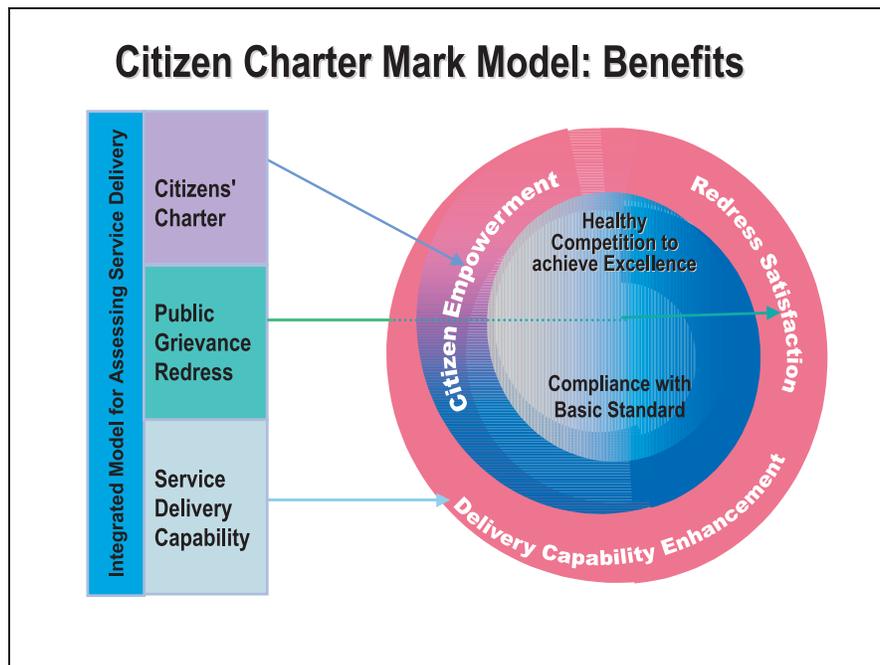
Figure 6: Model Criteria-Benefits Linkage

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