

# Subject outline

## Overview of the subject

This subject, the first in the EMPA, focuses on the essential management task of delivering value to the public. It is squarely based on the recognition that although it is possible to draw on concepts and methods from the private sector, public sector management is *different* in important respects. This involves neither rejection nor uncritical imitation of business techniques, but rather *adapting* them to take account of the differences.

The subject is loosely based on a strategic framework which conceptualises public sector management in terms of three different sets of factors, providing categories within which contending views of value, strategy and service delivery can be explored, drawing on a variety of theoretical perspectives. Each category is a public sector analogue of factors in play in the private sector:

1. the *value* created by the organisation (conceived more broadly than the products delivered by private companies, to include public as well as private value);
2. the *authorising environment* surrounding the organisation, that is, the political environment of formal and informal stakeholders who can give or withhold 'permission' and resources for what the organisation is doing, which is different from the market environment facing private firms;
3. the *operational capabilities* utilised in creating or delivering value, many of which are external to the organisation, with the manager having only shared or indirect authority over them. These capabilities can be analysed through the notion of the 'public value chain', encompassing all of the capabilities (both internal and external) available to managers for achieving outcomes in the public sector.

The first day and a half of the program (Sunday and Monday) canvas different ways of thinking about these issues in an overall strategic sense, then the following three days (Tuesday to Thursday) zero in on the operational capabilities, considering both internal and external ones. Here the aim is to provide an expansive view of the means for delivering public value. The subject goes beyond the assumptions of the traditional bureaucratic, managerialist and contractualist models of the last two decades, by positing a broader variety of ways of creating public value than simply internal production or external contractors, and a broader set of motivations for people to do so than simply money or punishment. The final morning (Friday) brings these concepts back together in a

specific application of the strategic model, while the afternoon canvasses a wider concept of public value-creation.

### **Subject objectives**

The objectives of this subject are that students will:

1. appreciate the different kinds of value created by public sector organisations for citizens and clients;
2. understand how the political environment affects organisational objectives;
3. be aware of the various kinds of operational capabilities available to public sector managers, and how they can be mobilised;
4. know how to recognise problems from symptoms, identify opportunities for action and manage risks in delivering value to the community;
5. enhance their skills in people and knowledge management, contracting, partnering and inter-organisational collaboration in the public sector;
6. be able to think strategically about delivering public value.

### **Educational format**

The subject will be taught intensively. It will utilise a variety of educational formats, including case study teaching, small group discussions, exercises and role plays, speaker panels and project team presentations. The program involves a lot of participation by students, which in turn means that it is important for students to read and prepare set cases and exercises.