



Fostering Trust and Transparency in Governance: Investigating and Addressing the Requirements for Building Integrity in Public Sector Information System in the ICT Environment

Key Issues Arising from the Case Studies

A number of themes that have recurred in the case studies should help to inform the nature of the guidance and training material required. These themes are summarised below.

The lack of complete and accurate documentation of the employment of public servants has been recognised as a significant problem in terms of:

- reporting within government
- tracking changes to the personnel establishment listing and to the payroll
- identifying ghost workers
- identifying employees who are due to retire
- devolution of responsibility of staff in the districts
- meeting national and international audit requirements
- reporting to donors and lenders.

IT is regarded as the solution to these information management problems. Often the Electronic Government Strategy is driving the development of electronic business and information systems without regard for electronic records management. There is little if any professional records management input to systems design and governments are not planning for the management of records as evidence in the electronic environment.

There is a move from central management of human resource information to devolution of the function to local agencies. The environment is dynamic and fluid, with a significant human resource system upgrade either planned or being undertaken to the systems of the countries being studied. Flexible next generation software, using web-based browser technologies, is being introduced so that agencies will have greater system access and control. Business process re-engineering is being driven by procurement considerations as much as by information requirements.

There is evidence that the studied countries are becoming 'locked into' particular applications, as change to another vendor application is disruptive and costly. As well as

improving functionality, system upgrades are necessary because hardware quickly becomes obsolete and older software versions are no longer supported by vendors. System upgrades do not adequately take into account the long term integrity of the data and records being migrated.

The interface between the payroll and human resource information systems needs to be strengthened. There is an element of silo development between the MDA responsible for the public service management and the Finance Ministry. These two MDAs need to work together in the development of systems in order to avoid incompatibility issues and streamline work processes.

Records are created in a mixed media (electronic/paper) environment, and they need to be managed in an integrated manner, regardless of format. This is not happening.

Manual personnel files in civil service departments and ministries often are poorly maintained. In many instances, hard copy files are incomplete or difficult to retrieve. Multiple files for public servants are common, and there is little or no agreement about which documents should be held where, and whether personnel records should follow officers when they transfer from one MDA to another. The result is a fragmentation of personnel records. One serious consequence is the delay in processing pension applications. Policies and procedures are needed to govern the creation, content and management of personnel files.

The lack of well managed, complete paper-based personnel records has implications for the accuracy of payroll data. Complete personnel records should provide a resource for payroll verification as well as for human resource management. The inability to verify the payroll against hard copy records represents a missed opportunity for strengthening payroll control and resolving errors and fraudulent entries.

While governments are eager to move away from paper-based systems, huge volumes of paper records continue to be created without being managed. Restructuring and data clean up is necessary and decisions regarding retention periods need to be taken.

Overall, the records management environment is poor. Registries are viewed as dumping grounds for and by staff, the calibre of records personnel is often low and remuneration is poor. The national archival authority often is unable to influence the development of sound records management due to mandate and capacity issues. There are few well qualified and experienced records managers and knowledge of the management of electronic records over time is virtually non-existent.

The infrastructure and regulatory environments needed to ensure the survival of reliable and accurate records as evidence is lacking and needs to be strengthened.