

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

**Notes of a Steering Committee Meeting by Videoconference
19 December 2006**

Present

London (1 pm)

Stephen Sharples, Chair of the Steering Committee, Senior Governance Adviser, Africa Policy Department, DFID
Andrew Griffin, Project Research Officer and Deputy Director, International Records Management Trust

Pretoria (3 pm)

Cosmas Lamosai, Chief Executive Officer, East and Southern Association of Accountants General (ESAAG)
Kelebogile Kgabi, Chair, East and Southern African Branch, International Council on Archives (ESARBICA), and Director, Botswana National Archives and Records Services
Gert Van der Linde, Lead Financial Management Specialist, Africa Division, World Bank

Dar es Salaam (4 pm)

David Sawe, Director of Management Information Systems, Government of Tanzania

Washington (8 am)

Ranjana Mukherjee, Senior Public Sector Specialist, Asia Region, World Bank
Anne Thurston, Project Director, International Records Management Trust
Michael Hoyle, Project Manager, International Records Management Trust

Welcome and Introduction of Participants, *Paper A*

The meeting was chaired by Stephen Sharples, who invited the participants in each site to introduce themselves. All members of the Steering Committee were present with the exception of Nicola Smithers, Public Sector Specialist, Africa Region, World Bank, who was on assignment in Sierra Leone.

Discussion of *Paper B*, Overview of the Project

The Project Director and the Project Manager gave an overview of the project outlining the key focus of the research, the methodology and deliverables of the project, and the location of the case studies. Partly due to logistical difficulties, and with the agreement of the DFID Central Research Department, the number of study sites has been reduced from the original research proposal. This will enable the team to gather more in-depth information from the countries studied. It was agreed that this was a sensible decision, but it was noted that the reduced number of sites may limit information about the scope of the challenges being faced by the various governments, particularly in relation to software and system vendors.

All three of the countries where case studies have been carried out are reviewing current practices and are either introducing new computerised HRIS (Human Resources Information Systems) or significantly upgrading current software. At present, the situation is something of a 'moving target', as big changes are occurring in the computerisation of pay and human resources information. It is important that records management functionality should be included in the systems and that questions be asked about recordkeeping issues and migration strategies. It is noted that vendors will 'do what you want them to do', and that when introducing such systems, there is a need to consider all the important issues, including records, at the beginning of a project. It is agreed that it would be useful to engage with consultants involved in introducing HRIS computerised systems to gain an understanding of the big picture and current practice.

Discussion of *Paper C*, Case Study Summary Reports: Lesotho, Ghana and Tanzania

The Project Manager outlined the Lesotho case study and was asked whether paper records are being well managed. He noted that the situation varies from ministry to ministry; in most of the ministries visited, the records are relatively well kept, but in many instances filing is not up to date. Records in Lesotho are generally better kept than in the other case study countries. Andrew Griffin outlined the Ghana study, noting that there is no linkage between paper records and the computer systems. Picking up on the question of timeliness of filing, he said that paper filing systems are generally in a very poor state. He also outlined the findings in Tanzania, and the Director of Management Information Systems for Tanzania added supplementary information about the move to managing human resource information, data cleansing and migration strategies. At present the HRIS systems in all three case study countries are only running the payroll and are generally not managing information about staff, although the intention is to do so.

Discussion of *Paper D*, Key Issues Arising from the Case Studies

Discussion opened regarding the issues arising from the case studies. Steering Committee members made helpful suggestions, including:

- The issues as set out in *Paper D* could be structured systematically in future presentations. For instance, the discussion could be organised under headings to cover paper and electronic records management issues in relation to completeness, reliability and the ability to trace and audit the record.
- Consultation should be undertaken with system developers, software engineers and vendors. This could occur either on site (if available) in the case study countries, or through company head offices. Liaison with local and expatriate system implementers would also provide information on recordkeeping functionalities of the electronic systems.
- There also is an issue in terms of measuring the state of recordkeeping against standards to manage risks, and the project team should consider methods for achieving this.
- It could be helpful to trace the records and processes needed to support human resource management backwards from pensions. The payment of pensions has proved problematic, and these difficulties may provide a means of convincing governments that good information management is required.
- There is a need for clarification and agreement on what is meant by records in the context of this project. Is it the data in the file? Is it the information in the database? Is it the totality of paper and electronic data? What are the records and where are they held? Again, the project team can usefully provide guidance.
- Several cross-cutting matters have an impact on managing pay and human resources processes and records, and these should be addressed in the deliverables. These include decentralisation and the way in which responsibility is being moved away from central control to ministries, departments and agencies. In the future, public servants are likely to have more responsibility for managing their own records, and this needs to be seen alongside the responsibilities of records staff. The project team needs to think about how to articulate the impact of these developments and changes, and to provide useful guidance in the deliverables.

Discussion of *Paper E*, Making the Findings Meaningful (the ‘So What?’ factor)

Key discussion points included:

- It will be helpful, in presenting the findings of the case studies, to find means of quantifying the problems that are being observed. For instance, what are the implications of not managing the payroll properly and what is the impact of retired staff not getting their pensions?
- It will be important to mobilise stakeholders to support the objectives of the project. In particular, organised labour and trade unions should have an interest in this research.

- AFROSAI, the African Branch of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions, would be a valuable partner in the project, and there was general agreement that AFROSAI should be approached as a partner.
- Government stakeholders need to indicate what they would like to see achieved by the project. Obtaining their buy-in to the deliverables is essential. The forthcoming stakeholder's meeting will provide an opportunity to explore this.
- There is a further six months of case study research to be undertaken, and it will then be the right time to meet government stakeholders in order to present the findings, draw comparisons between countries and explore stakeholder concerns. The Committee agreed that the planning for such a meeting needs to begin early in 2007 and that the project team needs to put forward a proposed timeframe as soon as possible.
- It is hoped that it will be possible to invite as many countries as possible from the east and southern African region, in order to take account of a wide range of views, build ownership and ensure that the deliverables are relevant. The importance of inviting accountants general, auditors general, civil service reform managers and national archivists was agreed, and the project team will need to review what is possible within the exiting budget.
- It was suggested and agreed that a small preliminary stakeholders meeting could be convened by videoconference, involving representatives from the four case study countries. The meeting would also include members of the project team and representatives of regional partner organisations. The findings of this meeting should feed into the planning for the larger meeting. It would be helpful if the delegates could share specific experiences in order to engage the delegates and to draw on their experience. Again, the project team will examine the budget and make a recommendation.

Conclusions and Date of Next Meeting

The video link broke up just at the end of the meeting, so it was not possible to agree on the date of the next meeting, but dates will be proposed to the Steering Committee members.