

***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  
10 July 2008**

**Present**

***London (1.30 pm)***

Stephen Sharples, Chair of the Steering Committee, Senior Governance Adviser, Africa Policy Department, Department for International Development

Andrew Griffin, Project Research Officer and UK Director, International Records Management Trust

Walter Mansfield, Project Research Officer and Project Manager, International Records Management Trust

***Washington (8.30 am)***

Ranjana Mukherjee, Senior Public Sector Specialist, Asia Region, World Bank

Nicola Smithers, Public Sector Specialist, Africa Region, World Bank

Anne Thurston, Project Director and International Director, International Records Management Trust

Michael Hoyle, Project Manager and Lead Researcher, International Records Management Trust

***Dar Es Salaam (3.30 pm)***

David Sawe, E-Government Adviser, Government of Tanzania

**Welcome and Introduction of Participants, *Paper A***

The meeting was chaired by Stephen Sharples. A number of members of the Steering Committee were unable to attend, including Cosmas Lamosai, Chief Executive Officer, East and Southern Association of Accountants General; Gert Van der Linde, Lead Financial Management Specialist, Africa Division, World Bank; and Peter Mlyansi, President, Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch, International Council on Archives and Director, Records and Archives Management Division, Government of Tanzania.

**Discussion of *Paper B*, Stakeholders Meeting, Pretoria, South Africa April 2008**

The Project Manager summarised key aspects of the meeting, with additional comments from the Project Director and Project Research Officer. A number of the senior officials indicated that the event had opened their eyes to the issues surrounding electronic records management. The meeting was a success, with officials and records professionals constructively addressing the issues and a dynamic interchange between a range of stakeholders who do not normally meet.

Key discussion points by members of the Steering Committee included:

- Stephen Sharples asked whether the stakeholders' discussed re-skilling records staff whose jobs might become redundant in the electronic environment. Observation 6 in the meeting's resolutions was queried and in particular what training was going to be required so that records managers can contribute to the streamlining of business processes as ICTs are introduced. Linked to this issue is the current low status and pay of records staff, which discourages career development. The Tanzania scheme of service for records management was noted, whereby registry assistants were retrained or phased out. It is now one of the most popular civil service streams, both within the Civil Service and beyond to employers in the private sector. There is a need to take a 'holistic view' of records management capacity building and the importance of maintaining a balancing act between status, pay and training.
- There is an urgent need to develop a regional Centre of Excellence if records management staff are going to be able to address electronic recordkeeping issues in the future. Training is the key. The establishment of an education programme or centre would help to meet the demand. David Sawe, Tanzania's E-Government, articulated the need clearly.
- Overall it was felt that records and archives staff have been sidelined in the past, but it is essential that they should now play a stronger role and that senior officials should pay more attention to records issues.

## **Discussion of *Paper C*, Development of the Training Modules**

The Project Manager and Project Director described the modules that have been developed through the project and outlined their focus. The modules will be available free of charge to developing countries and will be made available through the Trust's web site and in hard and soft copy.

Key discussion points included:

- There was a query as to who might use the modules. It was noted that during the meeting in South Africa, the Project Director and Project Manager met with various professional records trainers to discuss how the modules can be utilised. The aim is to make the modules flexible and adaptable to different environments, including university and management institute programmes and in the work place. A regional Centre of Excellence would be a good place to empower local trainers through use of the modules.

- Compact disks and DVD's were mentioned as a way of distributing the modules. It was suggested that video conferencing could be a useful way to present material. This would cut down on costs. A recent example of such an approach from South Korea was outlined.
- It is important to move from the 'why' to the 'how.' The Pretoria meeting had alerted officials to the issues. Now there is a need for action plans to address the challenges of electronic records management. Buy-in from the highest level is required.
- Piloting the modules in the judicial sector would be very useful. The Trust could, if the resources were available, undertake some 'back room' reengineering to make the materials relevant to the electronic records created and used in courts. The Trust has considerable experience working in the judicial sector, both to improve court recordkeeping and to specify requirements for case management systems.

### **Discussion of *Paper D*, Recordkeeping Performance Indicators**

The Trust's UK Director introduced the paper. An assessment tool is under development which will provide a guide to integrating recordkeeping in ICT systems; describe good practices for managing records created and held in ICT systems and provide selective indicators that can be used to determine objectively whether or not good recordkeeping policies and practices are being followed.

Key discussion points included:

- There was a query about how the indicators would be used in practice. Reference was made to the benchmark used in Sierra Leone. It was stated that the Sierra Leone indicator was at the record level and was not realistic in that it did not take account of the realities of the history of document creation. The indicators that are being developed as part of the research project are at a higher level and aim to assess whether the required policies and practices are in place and whether they are used and monitored for compliance. The indicators are not intended to provide an audit at the transaction level.
- It was noted that the indicators should be capable of being used at the 'front end of the process' (ie, at the stage where ICT systems are being planned) and that they should be actionable. The assessment tool should outline what action needs to be taken and how to fix problems.
- The model of the PEFA Framework indicators has been studied carefully. It is essential to be clear about the actual aims of the recordkeeping indicators and about different kinds of users. Some users will use them for analysis purposes, while others may use them as guidance.

- The indicators will need to be used to assess recordkeeping integration periodically. However, they are not designed to be applied repeatedly, ie each month, to assess whether recordkeeping is being properly implemented.

## **Brief Update on the Sierra Leone and Botswana Case Studies**

The Project Director noted that case studies on personnel and payroll systems in Sierra Leone and land records in Botswana have been undertaken. Reports are being prepared and will be finalised by the end of the project.

## **IDRC Strategic Planning Meeting and Report Back**

The Project Director described a small strategic planning meeting funded by the IDRC and held in Ottawa in May 2008. Eight senior African professionals in the fields of public administration, law and records management were invited to explore the contribution that records management could make to public sector reform and the consequences if it does not do so. They considered the areas where records management could make the greatest contribution. The IDRC is interested in supporting further research in these areas, and this could feed into a programme of work at a centre of excellence that would focus on strengthening records management as an element of public sector reform, particularly in relation to e-government.

## **Next Steps and Conclusions**

The summing up took place largely between London and Dar es Salaam because the video link from Washington had to be severed since another meeting was scheduled. Key points included:

- The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) might provide an excellent base for a centre for excellence. ESAMI is located in Arusha, Tanzania, and is strategically placed for the whole of the eastern and southern Africa. It also was suggested that the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) might be interested in being involved in supporting the centre. The Trust will follow up on these suggestions. Stephen Sharples offered to follow up with Mark Smith, the link point at DFID for the ACBF and Anne Thurston offered to follow up with Sahr Kpundeh, the link point at the Bank.
- Areas of focus for future programmes could usefully include court/judicial records, land records and cyber laws in relation to information requirements in the public sector.
- There is a capacity issue to be addressed in relation to existing records staff: currently, they lack the skills and status to be involved more directly in ICT planning and e-government programmes. If they were to acquire these skills, they could make a very valuable contribution, but it would be more difficult to retain them as records managers in the public service.

- A Centre of Excellence should have a focus on sharing resources, skills, good practices and practical solutions. Governments would be able to look to the Centre for advice on how to protect data integrity in the electronic environment. David Sawe stressed again the urgency of achieving this.
- The Trust should bear in mind the need to regularly update the training modules and other products that it has produced as the electronic environment changes.
- Further consideration needs to be given to how governments and stakeholders can be persuaded of the critical importance of records and information management. There is a need to articulate the consequences of not doing so and to consider what role politicians, civil society and trade unions have to play and how FOI can work as a driver. The African Peer Review Mechanism was noted, and consideration should be given to whether it could have a records management component.