

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
8 November 2007**

Present

London (1 pm)

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

Washington (8 am)

Ranjana Mukherjee, Senior Public Sector Specialist, Asia Region, World Bank
Nicola Smithers, Public Sector Specialist, Africa Region, World Bank
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. 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 and Gert Van der Linde, Lead Financial Management Specialist, Africa Division, World Bank Both provided written comments to papers. In addition, David Sawe, Director of Management Information Systems, Government of Tanzania was unable to participate due to miscommunications regarding access to video facilities and Peter Mlyansi, President, East and Southern African Branch, International Council on Archives; Director, Records and Archives Management Division, Government of Tanzania could not be contacted prior to the meeting.

Discussion of *Paper D*, Records Management Performance Indicators

Due to time constraints the Records Management Performance Indicators were discussed first. The Project Director introduced the topic.

Key discussion points included:

- The Debt Management Improvement Indicators and Public Expenditure and Accountability (PEFA) Indicators were noted as examples. The Debt Management indicators provided a good example of a drill down assessment within the context of PEFA. It was suggested that a similar drill down model could be developed for personnel records.
- There is also a need for a generic approach to records management indicators: a simple set of indicators that could be built into larger assessment processes and be aimed at the higher level for senior management. There should be four or five such indicators at most, linked to PEFA indicators. Whatever indicators were developed they should not be too ambitious in their scope particularly if they are to be brought into the main stream.
- The small set of generic indicators could also be linked to the Government Anti Corruption Actionable Indicators (GATI) being developed by the World Bank. The Trust should get in touch with those responsible for this work. Feedback could be provided from a Sector Board meeting which was due to discuss GATI.
- Indicators should be pitched at the output and outcome level. They should measure the operational performance of systems and how they are functioning on the ground. For example, the indicators should not assess the existence of a legal and organisational infrastructure but the performance one would expect to see if the legal and organisational infrastructure was in place. It is important to avoid being prescriptive. There can be different infrastructure models with the same performance outcomes.
- Records management needs to be seen as a key component of e-government and e-services.
- Indicators should provide a snapshot of the records management situation. They needed to be presented in a way that is understood and they must be useable by non-specialist staff.
- Motivations and possible outcome statements are important consideration. For example, an indicator of whether employees can get information regarding their rights and entitlements would provide a motivation for improvement.
- While the indicators could be short and high level the guidance material could be more detailed.
- To develop meaningful indicators consideration could be given to what sort of things would one expect to find regarding recordkeeping in any nation. Examples would be particular outcomes of having a legal and organisational infrastructure for managing government records; placement of recordkeeping within government. The role of the national archives and local records management profession in achieving certain outcomes; and the existence and application of retention rules for records.

- Records management needs to be brought into the mainstream. It is hard to get an audience or to make officials focus on records management. Recordkeeping must be linked to the bigger picture. ‘Enforcing accountability/transparency through good records management’ makes the link. It is essential to find new ways of articulating the linkage between records management and the bigger picture. The Project Director reported on her discussions with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa and the proposals for work on the links between good governance, corruption and records.

Discussion of *Paper B*, Key Issues Arising from the Case Studies and Stakeholders’ Meeting

Key discussion points included:

- Case studies must move beyond the issues, many of which are obvious, and include recommendations and good practice guidance. Positive examples are needed as well as indications as to what can go wrong (disaster stories). ‘Do’s and don’ts’ would be useful. There is a need to articulate the ‘end vision.’ It was confirmed that recommendations and good practice guidance would be discussed with regional stakeholders in a meeting in May 2008.
- In the IFMIS context the question remains to what extent IFMIS systems and their implementation generally fall short of maintaining reliable audit trails (manual and or electronic). Do the conclusions and findings on HRIS and payroll equally relate to IFMIS implementations as well? Which of the IFMIS supported and or created processes, records and results are most at risk? What has been done in some countries to mitigate against these risks?
- Disaster recovery is a fundamental area when developing policies and plans for records management.
- There should be integrated Audit Programmes developed to enable auditors to conduct appropriate audits of the system. This alerts the need to involve the auditors in the trainings, etc. as one of the main stakeholders.
- Although there can be challenges with decentralisation it can also lead to opportunities. Records in decentralised environments are closer to people to whom they apply. Local government and district land issues in Bangladesh were discussed.

The Project Director confirmed that further case studies would be undertaken. Personnel and payroll systems in Sierra Leone and Cameroon are likely to be included. The possibility of case study using data from Congo was discussed. A study of office information systems in India was also under consideration, to be undertaken through the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in Delhi. If a further study is to be undertaken in India, it was suggested that the Trust needs to be certain what it was trying to achieve. For example, can the NIC learn from us? Further research on the land registration system *Bhoomi* should not be undertaken as it had already been

extensively studied. Working in South Asia is difficult at present due to the political situations in Pakistan and Bangladesh and the lack of records in Afghanistan. Foreign donors were also seen as needless intrusion.

Discussion of *Paper C*, Educators' Forum and the Development of the Guidance Material, Training Modules and Route Map

The Project Director introduced the paper. A larger number of modules than originally planned were being developed. These would be shorter and their use would be flexible. The Guidance Material would be aimed at a higher level.

Key discussion points included:

- The issue of the audience for the guidance material and modules was raised. Participants at the planning session for the training and guidance materials had spent some time on this issue. There is a need to get the right balance and that further work is required on getting a good level for the guidance material.
- The possibility of a 12th module on IFMIS was raised. Clearly there is a link to the current work on Human Resource Information Systems and personnel and payroll records.

Discussion of *Paper E*, Plans for Remaining Activities

The Project Manager outlined the paper. It is essential to link the planned National Workshops to other activities in the region, for example workshops being run by the IMF AFRITAC, SADC and anti corruption commissions. Without this link the audience for the workshops will be limited. The Trust is urged to look at other activities on accountability and good governance and determine whether it was possible to be part of these, thereby achieving higher visibility.

Date of Next Meeting

The next and final meeting was tentatively set for June or July 2008 following the development of the training and guidance materials and the May Regional Stakeholders meeting.