

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

Steering Committee Meeting, Thursday 8 November 2007

*Washington (8.00 am), London (1.00 pm), Pretoria (3.00 pm),
Dar es Salaam (4.00 pm)*

The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for the project management team to report on progress and to seek guidance on current and future project activities. In particular, the Steering Committee is asked to provide input on the guidance materials to be prepared (see Paper C) and advise on the records management performance indicators to be developed (see Paper D).

Agenda

- 1 Welcome to Participants (*Paper A*)
- 2 Key Issues Arising from the Case Studies and Stakeholders' Meeting (*Paper B*)
- 3 Educators' Forum and the Development of the Guidance Material, Training Modules and Route Map (*Paper C*)
- 4 Records Management Performance Indicators (*Paper D*)
- 5 Plans for Remaining Activities (*Paper E*)
- 6 Conclusions and Date of Next Meeting

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**Steering Committee Meeting, Thursday 8 November 2007:
Participants and Site Times**

London: 1 pm

Stephen Sharples, Chair of the Steering Committee
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Anne Thurston, Project Director
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Pretoria: 3 pm

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Gert Van der Linde
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Dar es Salaam: 4 pm

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Washington DC: 8 am

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Key Issues Arising from the Case Studies and Stakeholders' Meeting

Case Studies

Case studies of electronic human resource information systems and payroll records have been undertaken in Lesotho, Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, a study on pay and personnel records along with comparative research on financial and land management systems was undertaken in Karnataka State in India. A case study is being developed for Sierra Leone, and possibilities for further case studies are being explored in Botswana (court records), Lesotho (financial records) and India (office system records). It may also be possible to commission a study drawing on material from Cameroon.

The following key issues have arisen from the studies:

- Governments are not planning for the management of records as evidence in the electronic environment.
- ICT is viewed as the solution to all problems without recognition of the need for records management functionality to be built into systems to ensure accountability and transparency.
- Legal and administrative requirements regarding the capture and maintenance of electronic records are generally not in place.
- Appropriate policies are not in place.
- Records created in a mixed media (electronic/paper) environment are not being managed in an integrated manner.
- Large volumes of paper records are being created without adequate records management controls. The introduction of ICT has often resulted in an increase in the quantity of paper produced. In some cases, manual systems and procedures have broken down to such a degree that they do not provide a reliable evidence base for ICT systems.
- In many cases, restructuring and data clean up is necessary, and there is a widespread need to take decisions regarding retention periods for different categories of records.
- There is little if any professional records management input to electronic systems design.

- System upgrades often do not take adequate account of the long-term integrity of the data and records being migrated.
- There is a dearth of well-qualified and experienced records managers, with almost no skills base for managing electronic records over time.
- National archival authorities are not in a position to influence the development of sound records management due to their lack of a mandate to do so and to the lack of appropriate skills.

A full report will be prepared outlining the key issues and lessons learned from the case studies.

Stakeholders' Video Conference

A video conference of stakeholders was held in June 2007. Representatives from Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia and Sierra Leone attended the meeting. Participants included accountants general, auditors, ICT specialists, human resources officers, financial managers as well as records and archives professionals. Officials from DFID and the World Bank were observers at the meeting.

The following key issues arose from the meeting:

- Appropriate regulatory environments and infrastructures for managing electronic records need to be introduced or updated for the participating governments.
- Changes in technology are creating new challenges for records managers without adequate training to support the skills needed to manage electronic records.
- There is a need to develop the skills required to plan, audit and certify electronic records systems and to ensure that they work together with paper-based records systems.
- Decentralisation introduces new difficulties in managing records in terms of sharing information between the centre and the districts.
- Change management and audit processes for records management need to be introduced.
- Paper-based records systems are continuing to deteriorate as the emphasis on electronic systems grows, and this is a significant factor contributing to the loss of control of data integrity for both manual and electronic systems.

The following key issues were raised in terms of training and education:

- There is a widespread lack of knowledge about the requirements for managing electronically generated records, and there is a need to build a greater awareness of these issues among public servants.
- Training is essential for records professionals if they are to develop effective electronic recordkeeping infrastructures.
- Records professionals need ‘hands on’ training and training for trainers, as well as theoretical training, if they are to be able to develop effective electronic recordkeeping policies and practices.
- Public service training institutes could provide a valuable vehicle for extending training for public servants and records professionals.
- Directors of national archival institutions need to be equipped to direct and empower their staff.
- Training in managing electronic records will place records staff in a position to make a valuable contribution to public sector development and will raise the profile of the profession.

Conclusions

Governments are not planning for the management of records as evidence in the electronic environment, and this will have damaging consequences for their information base if not addressed. There is a pressing need to build appropriate theoretical and practical capacity and to raise government officials’ awareness of the issues involved in creating, capturing and preserving electronically generated records. Legal frameworks need to be established and strengthened if the evidence needed to hold governments accountable for their actions and to protect citizens’ rights is to be available over time.

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Educators' Forum and the Development of Guidance Material, Training Modules and a Route Map

Educators' Forum

Eight educators and senior records management professionals met in July at the University of Botswana in Gaborone for a week-long planning session. The contents of the educational modules and good practice guidance materials to be developed by the project were planned, taking account of the issues that have been identified by the research team; and a route map outlining steps towards establishing a successful electronic records management programme was developed.

Link to the Case Studies

The findings of the case studies have identified key issues for records management that should be addressed in the electronic working environment; the training modules and guidance materials are being planned to address these issues in a wide range of development environments. Information technology tends to be viewed as the solution to managing information; many managers do not recognise the need to build records management functionality into ICT systems or to plan for the long-term preservation of digital records. It is essential to develop tools that support governments in managing records as evidence. Policy, planning and advocacy for electronic records management are essential components of the transition to the electronic working environment.

In discussions carried out in the course of the case studies and during the video conference, officials made it clear that training and education in managing electronic records would be welcome. At present, there are very few well-qualified and experienced records professionals working in ministries, departments and agencies or in national archival authorities, who have the knowledge needed to manage electronic records. Building capacity in records management will make a significant contribution to national development.

Guidance Material

The project management team is considering the nature and form of guidance materials that are to be developed, and input from the Steering Committee will be appreciated. The guidance materials should be practically useful to key stakeholders in government, including senior public sector managers, data managers and systems personnel, auditors, legal representatives and their advisors and records staff.

Management guidance is likely to cover a number of topics including:

- requirements for legal and regulatory infrastructures
- components of records management policies
- definitions of roles and responsibilities
- significance of records as evidence for rights and entitlements, accountability and strategic asset management
- resource requirements
- change management strategies.

The project also will aim to provide functional requirements for capturing records in relation to ICT systems, and indicators for evaluating records management in the electronic environment (see also Paper D). Guidance is likely to cover:

- security and access
- metadata
- data integrity
- audit trail
- retention
- migration strategies
- paper/ electronic linkages.

Training Modules

The original goal was to create four educational modules with associated good practice guidance. It has been decided that a larger number of smaller modules will provide a more helpful and flexible basis for education and training. The plan now is to create eleven modules. Outlines have been developed, and the modules are grouped in four conceptual areas:

| CONTEXT OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT | PLANNING ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES | IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES | DEVELOPING PERSONNEL, ESTABLISHMENT AND PAYROLL INFORMATION SYSTEMS |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>1: Concepts and Social Context</p> <p>2: Business and Organisational Context</p> <p>3: Technological Context</p> | <p>4: Policy and Planning</p> <p>5: Advocating electronic records management</p> <p>10: Technological Issues and Solutions</p> | <p>6: Records Appraisal and Disposal</p> <p>7: Records Creation, Capture & Use</p> <p>8: Records Access</p> <p>9: Preservation</p> | <p>11: Personnel, Establishment and Payroll Information Systems</p> |

The primary audience for the modules are records and archives management practitioners, who will be empowered to offer education and training or to raise awareness, whether at the regional, national or institutional level.

The assumption is that the practitioners already will understand basic records and archives management principles. It is anticipated that the materials will be used in formal educational settings, including academic institutions and training institutes, as well as in-house training programmes. The modules will begin by covering the basics of electronic records management and then move on to more complex technological and procedural issues, and they will be designed to be practical and relevant to developing country requirements.

Authors

Authors have been identified who are experts in the field. They have been drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds in academia, archival institutions, government and consultancies. They live and work in Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and the United Kingdom. Once the modules are complete they will be peer reviewed by a second group of international experts.

Route Map

A key piece of work developed at the planning meeting was a draft route map for making the transition to the electronic working environment. The map synthesises regional and international research and experience, and defines the way forward, showing the sequence of steps and milestones involved in strengthening and linking paper and electronic records systems, and moving safely to an increasingly electronic environment. The map will be refined in line with preparation of other deliverables.

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Records Management Performance Indicators

Background

Performance indicators are needed to help governments and organisations measure progress towards managing records effectively in the electronic environment. These indicators should be *robust* (not easily manipulated), *objective* (independent assessors would reach the same finding), *easily assessed* (for example, within existing performance measurement arrangements) and *relevant* (to government or organisational objectives). The availability of trustworthy information is an area that should lend itself to actionable accountability indicators. The indicators will be integrated with the training and educational modules and good practice guidance material, and will be presented in a format that is easy to apply. The project management team is considering how best records management improvements can be assessed in relation to the criteria set out in the guidance material, and guidance from the Steering Committee would be appreciated. In particular, the team is considering:

- How can records management indicators be linked to performance measures for good governance, e-government readiness and anti-corruption?
- What records management indicators can be used to measure the effective application of functional requirements for capturing complete and accurate records when ICT applications are being planned and developed, implemented and monitored?
- What measures can be developed to assess whether an effective legal and organisational infrastructure is in place?
- What measures can be developed to assess whether there are effective records management policies are in place?
- What specific indicators that can be introduced in relation to personnel, financial, health care and court information systems?
- How can indicators of manual and electronic systems be linked?

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Plans for Remaining Activities

Overview Report of the Case Study Findings

A report will be prepared outlining the key issues and lessons learned from the case studies. This will be made available to case study nations and key stakeholders and will be posted on the Trust's web site. It also will be presented at the stakeholders' meeting described below.

Regional Stakeholders' Meeting

The findings and deliverables for the project will be presented to a meeting including members of the two regional partner organisations, the East and Southern African Association of Accountants General and the East and Southern African Branch of the International Council on Archives. The meeting is being planned for May 2008 when up to thirty senior stakeholders will be invited to attend a two-day working session facilitated by the senior researchers (location to be decided).

The aim of the meeting will be to introduce the findings and deliverables and to relate them to national and regional development goals and in particular to aspirations for electronic government. The participants will be invited to explore and agree strategies for dissemination and uptake of the project deliverables.

National Workshops

Following the meeting for stakeholders, it is proposed that a series of one-day national workshops will be delivered to widen stakeholder involvement in the participating countries. It is anticipated that this will involve up to 20 senior government officials attending a one-day seminar in each of the participating African case study countries. One member of the research team will travel to each country to facilitate the workshops. Reports of the meetings will be made available to participants and on the Trust's web site.

Dissemination of Deliverables

The dissemination strategy will be finalised, and all products will be made available free of charge to a range of audiences.

The findings and outputs will be presented at the International Council on Archives (ICA) Congress, which is to be held in Malaysia in July 2008 and at the annual meeting of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM) to be held in conjunction with the ICA Congress.

In addition, copies will be available to:

- members of the East and Southern African Association of Accountants General and the East and Southern Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
- relevant divisions of DFID, including the Central Research Department and the Policy Department
- relevant divisions of the World Bank, including the World Bank Institute (WBI) Media Governance and Information Program and to the networks concerned with public sector governance, public financial management and information technology
- the Commonwealth Secretariat, Governance and Institutional Division Informatics Programme
- the E-Policy Resource Network, the Development Gateway; the African Information Society Initiative
- the UNDP Institutional Development Group and the UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management
- the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management
- Transparency International
- management institutes, training centres and universities in Africa and Asia.