

**7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government:
Building Trust in Government
26 – 29 June 2007
Vienna, Austria**

**AIDE MEMOIRE
MANAGING KNOWLEDGE
TO BUILD TRUST IN GOVERNMENT**



UNITED NATIONS

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**DIVISION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**



*Workshop organized by the United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
(UNDESA) in partnership with the Ministry
of Government Administration and Home
Affairs of the Republic of Korea (MOGAHA)
and the International Institute of
Administrative Sciences (IIAS).*



BACKGROUND

The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government will take place at United Nations Office in Vienna from 26 to 29 June 2007 on the theme of “Building Trust in Government.” It will offer plenary sessions and a series of parallel capacity development workshops on different aspects of revitalizing governance and public administration to build trust in Government. Participants will include ministers, senior government officials, parliamentarians, mayors, civil society representatives, and the private sector.

The event will be organized as part of a UN system wide partnership, led by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). While the United Nations will organize the plenary sessions, seven parallel capacity development workshops will be organized by the UN and members of the Institutional Partners Group (IPG). Consisting of UNDESA, other entities in the UN system, and external institutions, the IPG will take primary responsibility for the workshops.

This aide-memoire outlines the organization of the second workshop on *Managing Knowledge to Build Trust in Government*.

In a world where technological and social change are occurring at a rapid pace, public officials are becoming increasingly autonomous in taking and implementing decisions, and as a trade-off, they, as well as the agencies that they manage are supposed to be more accountable to the state organization and to society.

Increased accountability can be achieved through the combination of the classical mechanisms of administrative supervision and auditing, and the more recent methods of results-based management, through managed competition for excellence, and through the use of social accountability mechanisms. Increased accountability can also be additionally achieved through the adoption of a full transparency policy, which involves the extensive use of ICTs. Increased efficiency, as well as increased participation, can also be achieved through the adoption of ICTs.

Throughout the world today, however, including both in developed and developing countries, there has been a significant decline in public trust in government. Building trust is the foundation of good governance. It is therefore critical to find ways of alleviating this declining public trust in government. There are several governance and institutional components that promote trust. The effective management of knowledge is one such component.

RELEVANCE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Improved KM is essential to governmental agencies at the federal, regional or local levels, because governmental organizations are basically knowledge-based organizations. The authority of governments has often been based on a monopoly of production and knowledge. Governments are now required to systematically scan the environment for knowledge about tools and techniques used by the frontrunners in knowledge management. The public sector has traditionally had a capacity to bring together the public and private sectors, as well as different strata of society to share knowledge about policy issues or about service delivery. The question is thus not whether governments have ever managed knowledge or whether they should, but rather how they can improve their practices to better adapt to the new knowledge-intensive economy, in the process, building trust in government.

What should be the main objectives of KM in government?

There is little doubt that the increasing importance of knowledge in policy-making and service delivery can help improve governance in the public sector by increasing the knowledge base and transparency of public activities. Increased transparency of public activities can result in building trust in government. This will affect institutional arrangements as well as relations between providers of knowledge and decision-makers.

Knowledge must be managed effectively in an effort to ensure that the basic objectives of governmental organizations are attained to the greatest extent possible. Effective KM must ensure sufficient internal and external transparency and help individual governmental employees in an organization to locate what they need, while building public trust.

The ultimate objective of KM is to maximize productivity in the public sector, while enhancing public service delivery. More specific objectives of KM include:

- Reducing overall costs while providing a quick return on investments made to install KM systems;
- Reducing processing time;
- Reducing storage;
- Improving internal workflow;
- Improving service to the public and providing faster service through immediate online access to records;
- Enable sharing of recorder's information with other governmental agencies;
- Improving control and management of records, allowing for parallel processing and simultaneous access to documents;
- Providing better supervisory control tools to manage work;
- Providing advanced technology worker tools;

- Prioritizing work;
- Improving worker morale by eliminating or reducing backlogs while recognizing quality performance;
- Reducing training time;
- Improving document security.

What are the main challenges of KM in government?

KM is essential to government at any level, federal, state, or local. It has become increasingly apparent that in order to enhance public satisfaction, in the effort to build trust in government, governmental organizations face a major challenge, not just in labour or capital management, but in the ability to manage effectively their employees' knowledge, based on ICT-led processes. The rapidly growing importance of knowledge is highlighted by the fact that many governmental organizations now attempt to organize and to make available the relevant collective knowledge of their employees by building an organizational knowledge repository. Governmental organizations face a number of other more specific challenges which demand effective and innovative KM, including the following:

- The sheer volume of records any governmental organization processes;
- The need to keep those records accessible over a long period of time;
- The need to provide for public access to records. A paper-based system poses a daunting challenge to public access of government records;
- The need to still deal with paper, since not everyone files their taxes online, or renews their driver's license over the Internet;
- The need to keep documents secure is paramount when dealing with government records.

Challenges and opportunities of using ICTs to manage knowledge in government

The world in the 21st century is witnessing a quantum leap in the development and exploitation of ICTs, with corresponding ramifications for social and economic organization, the environment, culture and the development of a global information infrastructure. The key issues of concern to policy-makers and international organizations are the extent to which this major transformation is helping to build and restore trust in government, whether this transformation is benefiting all aspects of society, as well as different groups within the society, and the ways and means of achieving a truly global information infrastructure.

Governments are struggling with how to manage the networked society, both from the point of view of putting in place structures and institutions that will help adjustments to change but also to increase the flow of this knowledge. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) becomes a critical investment as witnessed by the sums of funding now going into this transformational technology. But the investment in e-things is a necessary though not sufficient condition for ensuring effective use of knowledge for development. A challenge for many governments, and particularly those of the developing countries, given a willingness to connect, is to create the conditions that will ensure their participation in the global pool of knowledge production in order to strengthen their capacities for decision-making. Such an effort may entail institutional restructuring in many areas of the private and public sectors in order to ensure that policies and strategies are linked to broader development goals.

There are two basic levels that underlie the development of knowledge-based development – infrastructure, and skills. Infrastructure is basically the size and growth of the telecommunications network. Telephone networks provide a broad base for building other types of infrastructure, such as data communication networks. Skills are basically the literacy level of a country, and its stock of graduates with technical degrees in engineering, mathematics, and computer sciences.

Horizontal and vertical collaboration between agencies is critical in effective service delivery. One of the major problems in KM is connecting multiple agencies and making provisions for horizontal and vertical collaboration between agencies at all levels.

Institutional alignment is also critical in effective service delivery. Effective KM necessitates that bureaucratic divisions be opened up to promote horizontal knowledge-sharing, and the adaptation of organizational capital, i.e. databases, internets, intranets, and knowledge central coordinating units. The creation of organization wide “who knows what” directories, referred to as “yellow pages”, allows people who need information to locate and get in contact with those who have it.

Information quality is critical to service delivery. With the volumes of data and demands for information growing at an exponential rate, the information quality challenge is becoming an increasingly critical one for governments and businesses alike to address creatively. Vital information on citizens often exists in several locations, on different systems that evolved over time with little proactive management. The problem is compounded when processes and controls to ensure data is captured consistently and accurately at source are not defined, set up and enforced. Central versus local control is a related issue.

Creating “communities of practice” is equally critical to service delivery. One of the basic notions in KM is connecting the “silos”. Silo is used in KM as a metaphor for the self-contained organizational unit, into which stuff gets dumped in and taken out, but which has little or no communication with the other silos (products, regions, divisions, units, etc. that constitute the organization. The solution to the silo problem is to create “communities of practice” or ‘communities of learning’.

Confidentiality, integrity, and availability issues. The value of an organisation’s assets relies on three cornerstones: confidentiality, integrity, and availability. Confidentiality deals with the unintentional disclosure of information outside of a pertinent authority. Integrity assures the organization of the trustworthiness of the information. Availability ensures that the service or data product is accessible for requests from authenticated clients Security policies define the nature of what is considered to be a secure state. The ability of the internet to allow clients access to a wide variety of information has introduced a number of vulnerabilities to services offered via this mechanism. Mechanisms can be put into place to address security concerns.

Electronic Content Management issues. A subset of KM is ECM, Electronic Content Management, which is the realization that organizations typically have numerous and frequently non-interfacing and incompatible systems to manage electronic information.

New information requires innovation. Since new information often requires innovation, the management of innovation is important in governmental organisations. Innovation is an ongoing process in which organizations create problems, define them, and then develop new knowledge for their solutions. Successful governmental organizations are those that consistently create new knowledge as solutions to unfamiliar problems, disseminate it widely throughout the organization, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products.

More importantly, deducing from the above, the main challenge of deploying efficiently ICTs for effective KM is how to develop human resource strategies that leverage human-intellectual capital within organizations, and for the dissemination and sharing of important information that promotes creativity and innovation within and between employees. If the repository for intellectual property is a patent or copyright, the repository for knowledge is the information worker.

Governmental organisations that spend millions implementing and integrating complex IT infrastructures should not forget the corresponding investments in people. Inability to change employee behaviour, internal resistance to changing business processes, or lack of adequate worker training are probably the most significant obstacles to improving productivity through IT applications. There is therefore an

overriding need for Governments at all levels to invest in organization and management so information workers can realize their potential.

The role of the public sector is very important in supporting new forms of market facilitation, introducing effective regulation, and providing public services appropriate to national or local conditions. Public sector strategies also need to focus on the difficulties of using ICTs to transform data and information into useful knowledge. Regulatory frameworks must ensure that understanding, sharing, and partnership-building are central components of national ICT strategies. The public sector needs to also recognize that opportunities for using ICTs creatively require technical and human capabilities that are built up through experience with the new technologies and services. The public sector can therefore identify and fill important gaps in the institutional frameworks in which learning occurs, never losing sight of the fact that benefiting from ICTs requires managerial quality and leadership, flexible and multi-skilled labour, and institutional learning and experimentation.

KM and trust in governments in lesser developed countries

The complex relationship between KM and building trust in government is aggravated by certain conditions that prevail specifically in lesser developed countries. These conditions include in the words of Yehezkel Dror, the fact that ... *“(n)ot only are many countries faced by momentous choices, but they do so under conditions of multiple adversity, such as uncertainty in respect to critical factors, overload with many pressing issues, hard-to-analyse interdependencies between different decision agenda items, harsh domestic political constraints, and overriding economic scarcity.”*. These aggravating conditions in many lesser developed nations sometimes require different approaches and strategies than would be appropriate in more developed countries. This is especially relevant in the context of the application of democratic principles and the technologies of the information society. Issues like democratization, the so-called digital divide, access to knowledge and knowledge instruments like ICTs, effectiveness of ICTs (basic reliable electricity supplies, networks, electronic literacy, broadband, etc), might differ significantly between these regions. Lesser developed nations have simultaneously more basic and more complex problems to deal with in this regard. More appropriate strategies to deal with these problems should be considered.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

In light of the issues raised above, the workshop intends to provide a platform for discussion and elaboration of these issues, and will be composed of three sessions.

Session 1 on Enabling Environment Issues will be devoted to overview concepts on KM, including enabling environment issues, such as leadership and managerial issues; institutional and regulatory framework issues; IT infrastructure connectivity and systems issues; human resources issues that leverage human-intellectual capital within governmental organizations, including the dissemination and sharing of important information that promotes creativity and innovation within and between employees; and funding and other financial issues.

Session 2 on Good Practices and Lessons Learned will be devoted to seeking good practices and common lessons learned from international and country experiences in setting up IT systems for e-government development, and drawing on case studies on the development of government integrated ICT led knowledge management.

Session 3 on UNDESA'S Role in KM in Government will outline the key issues that the future work of UNDESA should focus on in terms of assisting countries in the development of institutional and policy frameworks to enable countries to build and enhance existing ICT-led KM capacities in government. Such work may involve analytical tools, best practices, technical cooperation and specialized training frameworks.

The workshop will be broken into six 1.5 hour discussion sessions each of which will be punctuated by a short break. Each session will discuss a new sub-theme within the overall workshop theme. To kick off the discussions, short presentations and comments will be made by key resource people. Then, a moderated discussion will be opened to the floor. A rapporteur will be designated to record the discussions and he or she will have nine minutes to present the key policy messages to the 7th Global Forum Wrap-up Plenary Session.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

It is envisaged that the workshop will provide an arena for discussion among the individual key experts and practitioners from governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and business communities at the international, regional and local levels on the pertinent issues relating to the role of managing knowledge in government.

It is also envisaged that an international consultant/expert will be hired to work with UNDESA to prepare a concept background paper and a publication summarizing the proceedings and the main outcome of the workshop, which will contain policy options and training guidelines and strategies as the output of the meeting for interested member states.

PARTNERS

The workshop is organized jointly by UNDESA in partnership with the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) of the Republic of Korea and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS).

TIME AND VENUE

The workshop will be held at United Nations Office in Vienna from 26 to 29 June within the framework of the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government: Building Trust in Government.

WORKING LANGUAGE

English.

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http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/commonuser/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=2024

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