

**SECTION 5 MAKING MANAGEMENT MORE
EFFECTIVE**

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5.1 Improving management information systems

Typically, a government agency is involved in policy formulation, executive activities and management of resources. The vital input for these activities is information which has been rendered available and useful through organised information systems. Information systems (IS) are the IT (information technology) and non-IT-based systems which support business needs.

Readily available and up-to-date information is a vital resource and enables fast and good decision-making by managers in the public and private sectors. As an organisation becomes bigger and more complex, there is an increasing emphasis on computer-based information systems.

In the Civil Service, there has been a broadening in the scope of IT applications. Apart from traditional applications such as transaction processing and management information systems, government departments are beginning to implement new applications such as image processing, information retrieval systems, electronic data interchange, executive information systems, work-flow automation and others. Most government agencies possess a variety of information systems adapted to their requirements in carrying out their daily operations more efficiently and effectively.

In its continuing efforts to upgrade the Civil Service, the Government introduced the Civil Service Link (CSL) as an on-line information database system in June 1994. With the CSL, companies and individuals will be able to access information on government services at the touch of a button.

The context for change

The Civil Service Link (CSL) is an information centre that will be responsible for acquiring, organising and making available on request, information pertaining to various aspects of public sector administration. At this centre, the private sector and the general public can readily obtain information on how to deal with the public sector such as procedures in obtaining business licenses, taxation rates, etc.

As an information centre, the roles of the CSL will encompass the following:

- a. identifying the user community and their information requirements;
- b. operationalising the centre and providing information services efficiently to ensure its continuous existence; and
- c. ensuring that data are kept up to date.

The CSL has to carry out the following functions:

- a. create a repository or database containing information related to public sector administration and management;
- b. provide users with the facilities to access information, either on-line or off-line;
- c. act as a clearing-house for applications/requests for government information;
- d. act as the centre for documenting and disseminating government information;
- e. promote the creation of public domain databases in government departments;
- f. promote research and development in government information and its utilisation; and
- g. link up other such databases in government agencies to its computer system.

Some of the benefits that can be gained from the establishment of CSL are:

- a. users can obtain government information with relative ease;
- b. it can contribute towards making the Malaysian public service a more open civil service and one that is more accommodating to the requirements of the public;
- c. it can ensure that all efforts made in improving the public service are well documented and disseminated to government agencies, as well as to the general public;
- d. it can promote the practice of good information management among government agencies;
- e. it can create an agenda for the promotion of R&D in government information and its utilisation; and
- f. it can support efforts towards creating the Malaysian Civil Service as a world class civil service.

The main objectives in establishing the CSL is to facilitate users to gain access to information on the machinery and to standardise the formation of public domain databases and government departments' networking system.

Implementing change

The development of the CSL will be user-driven in approach in that the type, quantity and quality of information to be kept will be determined on the basis of users' needs. This will ensure that the CSL always fulfils user requirements and so gain the confidence and continuous support from them.

Initially, the CSL database will cover only information related to government organisations responsible for issuing licences, permits and approvals. Information to be provided includes:

- a. objectives, functions and organisation structure;
- b. services offered;
- c. address, telephone and facsimile numbers;
- d. activities which require licences and approvals;
- e. fees and methods of payment;
- f. acts/regulations/guidelines concerned;
- g. time taken to process applications; and
- h. list of publications.

Other types of information in great demand by the private sector and dynamic enough to ensure a high level of usage of the CSL will also be kept. Such information includes that related to tenders; economic data/major economic indicators; trade statistics – import and export; classification and rates of custom duties; information from the Statistics Department; population census; labour market and employment status; information from the Registrar of Companies and Registrar of Businesses; and business community information, such as creditworthiness of companies.

In addition, the successful establishment of CSL and its continuous existence require an effective implementation strategy, an appropriate organisational structure, adequate funding resources, and a management structure that can provide vision and direction to the CSL.

The CSL will provide the following types of services to users:

a. On-line search and retrieval

The on-line search and retrieval service will allow users to browse through, search and retrieve information required from the CSL. For this purpose, a user is only required to have at the minimum, a micro-computer or a terminal and software and the ability to communicate with the CSL using either existing telecommunication facilities provided by Telekom Malaysia Berhad such as MAYPAC, (dial-up, lease lines) or the Public Services Network (PSN).

b. Announcements/broadcasts

Announcements can be effected using media such as bulletin boards, periodicals and others to announce new titles or information to users.

c. Document delivery

Document delivery includes the process of preparing, copying, delivering or lending of documents to users upon request.

d. Referral services

For information not available in the CSL, referral services will be provided to link users with organisations or persons who can be contacted to obtain the desired information.

With the provision of such services, users will be offered flexibility in choosing the method of obtaining information best suited to their own needs and means. Users who have computer facilities will be able to request information via electronic mail to the CSL operator, who will then retrieve the required information and have it sent to the user through electronic mail. Users who do not have their own computer facilities can request for information via normal mail, facsimile and other means.

The CSL will be conducted in three phases and will be fully implemented by January 1995.

Supporting material

The Civil Service of Malaysia – A Paradigm Shift (Chapter 6, pp 449 - 572)

5.2 Improving information technology support

The upward trend in the use of information technology and the widening of the types of computer applications implemented, show clearly that the use of information technology in the public sector is undergoing a transformation. With public sector personnel, including professionals (such as doctors, engineers, teachers), administrators, support staff and other government officers (police officers, agricultural officers and surveyors) becoming adept IT users, information technology is increasingly being looked on by various categories of public sector personnel as an enabling tool to upgrade the quality of their work and performance. This trend is expected to continue in the future with the commitment and concerted efforts of the Government to upgrade the performance, quality and productivity of public sector personnel.

The context for change

Rapid growth in the use of information technology is evident in all the government sectors, namely trade and industry, security, administration and finance, land and agriculture, education, social and support services at federal, state and local government levels. In general, the use of information technology in government falls under four categories:

- i) administrative modernisation, particularly in areas such as accounting, finance, project management, inventory control and counter services operations;
- ii) education and training in schools, colleges, and universities;
- iii) research and development (R&D) in R&D institutions for the processing and analysing of data; and
- iv) access by the general public, businessmen, researchers and other users to fulfil their information requirements in areas such as agriculture, business, research, health, education and recreation.

Public sector computerisation continues to receive significant government support. This is seen in the intensification of government efforts to strengthen the information technology base in the management of public service. For instance, the value of approvals given for computerisation in government agencies has increased from RM197 million in 1992 to RM243 million in 1993. In terms of sectors, the biggest approval in 1993 was for the administration and finance

(RM153.40 million) followed by education, social and support services (RM22.88 million) and land and agriculture (RM11.60 million). In the last five years, i.e. from 1989 to 1993, the Government has approved a total of RM851.49 million for computerisation projects.

The strong support by the Government in IT development in the public sector is in line with the efforts to achieve the objectives of an Information Technology programme which had been incorporated into the Sixth Malaysia Plan. The objectives of this programme are:

- a. to enhance the productivity of operational functions of government;
- b. to enhance managerial effectiveness;
- c. to promote availability and accessibility of information;
- d. to develop an information technology infrastructure; and
- e. to assist in the creation of an information-rich society.

To achieve the above objectives, the Government focused especially on areas such as standards development and implementation; database development; setting up of a government data network; computer security enhancement; human resource development; and IT awareness promotion.

Implementing change

IT planning takes place both at the macro level and the micro level. At the macro level, there is the National Committee On Data Processing (NCDP) which has been entrusted with the role to formulate national policies that will promote the usage of IT for administrative modernisation and national development. MAMPU is the secretariat to the NCDP. Thus all matters related to electronic data processing in the Government require the approval of the NCDP. These include:

- acquisition of Electronic Data Processing (EDP) equipment;
- upgrading of existing EDP equipment;
- replacement of existing EDP equipment;
- acquisition of micro-computers;
- acquisition of software;

- procurement of consultancy services for studies, development, design and implementation of computerised systems;
- acquisition of data processing services from EDP service bureaux or using facilities that are available in other government agencies;
- other aspects in advancement of computer technology usage that arise from time to time.

To assist the NCDP in carrying out its duties effectively, the following three Advisory Committees were established:

i) *The Administration and Implementation Committee (AIC)*

Its main function is to appraise and recommend for approval proposals for acquisition of computer equipment, software and consultancy services from government agencies which are funded by the federal and state governments. The AIC can also make recommendations to promote the development of the computer industry in the nation.

ii) *The Technical Operations Committee (TOC)*

Its main function is to determine standards for government computer installations, prepare guidelines and determination of criteria for selection of equipment, software and consultancy services.

iii) *The Education and Training Committee (ETC)*

Its main function is to plan and co-ordinate computer training programmes for all levels, in accordance with national requirements.

A government agency planning to computerise its operations has to have a five-year plan. The steps involved in the computerisation process are as follows:

- preparation of a draft five-year information system plan;
- approval of Ministry Steering Committee;
- approval of NCDP through AIC;
- preparation of a feasibility study of specific applications by Technical Committee;
- approval of Steering Committee;

- approval of computer acquisition by NCDP through AIC;
- submission by agency to Public Services Department for manpower and to the Treasury for funds.

Several guidelines have been prepared to assist MAMPU, as the central agency responsible for government computerisation, and all government agencies in their computerisation efforts. Two more sets of guidelines are still in the preparatory stages. They are the 'Guidelines on Technical Evaluation' and the 'Guidelines on Computer Security'. The guidelines available are:

- a. Guidelines for Preparation of Tender Specifications;
- b. Guidelines on the Appointment and Management of IT Consultants in Government;
- c. Guidelines for Post-Implementation Evaluation of Computerisation Projects in the Public Sector;
- d. Basic Technical Specifications for Open Systems;
- e. Guidelines on Computer Performance Evaluation;
- f. Guidelines on Benchmarking;
- g. Guidelines for Evaluation of Data Communication Services and Network;
- h. Guidelines For Migration To Open Systems;
- i. Guidelines For The Computerisation In the Public Sector.

Information technology infrastructure is essential in facilitating wider usage of computer and information resources. Availability of an appropriate and efficient information technology infrastructure will expedite and enable smooth and successful implementation of computer projects. Realising that information technology infrastructure is a basic necessity in promoting the development and greater usage of information technology, the Government has embarked on important information infrastructure development projects. These projects are associated with the two most critical components of information technology infrastructure, namely information sources such as databases and communication channels.

The Government is also aware that to develop an information technology infrastructure that supports a wide-range of information services to various

categories of users, a strategy is required to ensure that computer systems of various brands can communicate and inter-operate with one another. Open Systems presents such a strategy that can help deliver the required environment. The Public Sector Open Systems Programme consists of the following implementation strategies:

- a. publication of basic technical specifications for procurement of new computer systems;
- b. publication of open systems migration guidelines;
- c. conducting basic training programmes, seminars and awareness workshops;
- d. establishment of open systems training laboratory; and
- e. establishment of open systems technical expertise centre.

In the area of information technology, human resource development is not only critical to the development of the information technology industry but also significant in ensuring maximum utilisation of information technology in every aspect of life. For these reasons, the Government has focused its efforts in training and human resource development at all levels such as in schools, universities and institutes of higher learning as well as in the Civil Service.

Supporting material

- (i) The Civil Service of Malaysia – A Paradigm Shift (Chapter 6, pp 449 - 572)
- (ii) Guidelines for Preparation of Tender Specifications (BTM.GP 1/92)
- (iii) Guidelines on the Appointment and Management of IT Consultants in Government (BTM.GP 2/92)
- (iv) Guidelines for Post-Implementation Evaluation of Computerisation Projects in the Public Sector (in the national language) (BTM. GP 3/92)
- (v) Basic Technical Specifications for Open Systems (in the national language) (BTM.GP 8/92)
- (vi) Guidelines on Computer Performance Evaluation (in the national language) (BTM.GP 4/92)

- (vii) Guidelines on Benchmarking (BTM.GP 5/92)
- (viii) Guidelines for Evaluation of Data Communication Services and Network (in the national language) (BTM.GP 6/92)
- (ix) Guidelines For Migration To Open Systems (BTM.GP 7/92)
- (x) Guidelines for Computerisation in the Public Sector (in the national language)

5.3 Improving internal management advisory capacity

Management consultancy is one of the continuous efforts undertaken by the Government for the purpose of improving efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service. With a stable and capable public administration, the Government hopes that it will be able to discharge its duties with excellence in achieving its objectives. The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) in the Prime Minister's Department has been given the responsibility of being a management consultant to government agencies.

The management consultancy that is undertaken by MAMPU can be categorised into two types of services. First, MAMPU functions as a resource consultant where, based on its expertise and experience, it recommends methods and solutions or action programmes that are appropriate for an organisation. Secondly, MAMPU acts as a process consultant where its role is more of a facilitator. The focus of this type of consultancy is to introduce the client agency to suitable methods and approaches so as to increase the client agency's ability to identify, diagnose and solve the problems faced by it. In carrying out management consultancy studies, a combination of both these types is used.

Management consultancy in the public sector focuses its attention on the following areas : corporate planning; organisational design; systems and work procedures; financial management; human resources management; information technology; and productivity and quality improvement.

Systematic studies on government agencies are conducted to identify and diagnose various management weaknesses as well as to make necessary recommendations. The objective is to create appropriate management systems so that client agencies are able to optimise the utilisation of resources in achieving organisational objectives.

Management consultancy studies undertaken by MAMPU are based on directives from the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Chief Secretary to the Government and also on requests by heads of federal ministries, departments, state authorities and statutory bodies. However, a preliminary survey is required to be carried out prior to a detailed discussion to determine the terms of reference agreeable to the clients before the commencement of the study proper.

The general approach used by MAMPU in management consultancy consists of six main steps : *situational analysis* or "where are we"; *desired goal* or "where do we want to go"; understanding of the demands of the *internal and external environment*; *identification of weaknesses/problems* by comparing the present

performance and desired goals; analyse the causes of problems and finally *recommend alternative actions* to solve the problems.

MAMPU also inspects, examines and assists government agencies in the implementation of Development Administration Circulars and other administrative procedures issued from time to time in the Government's efforts to improve the Civil Service. This function is undertaken by its Inspectorate Division established on 28 August 1991. Through visits by the Inspectorate teams, heads of departments are assisted in identifying problems encountered in the implementation of these Circulars and directives. Appropriate proposals and follow-up actions are then suggested to help the agencies overcome these implementation problems. In addition, consultancy and advisory services are also rendered during these visits.

Supporting material

- (i) Corporate booklet issued by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit
- (ii) Improvement and Development in the Public Service 1992 (Chapter 13, pp 603 - 623)
- (iii) Improvement and Development in the Public Service 1990 (Chapter 13, pp 261 - 284)

5.4 Improving the management of external consultants

This entry covers the appointment of external management consultants by government agencies of the Malaysian Public Service. One of the functions of the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), Prime Minister's Department is to provide management consultancy to government agencies. However, in cases where MAMPU is lacking in expertise and capability, agencies are permitted to engage external consultants to assist them in modernising their administration.

The context for change

Any appointment of an external consultant has to abide by the procedures as spelt out in the General Circular Letter No. 5 of 1980 issued by the Prime Minister's Department. That Circular on "The Committee On The Appointment Of Private Management Consultant In Administrative Modernisation", touches on matters relating to the appointment and the management of consultants as well as the payment of consultancy fees.

An agency approved to engage an external management consultant is required to:

- a. draw up a detailed term of reference;
- b. obtain the necessary funding;
- c. set up a Steering Committee;
- d. carry out the necessary procedures relating to procurement as laid down by the relevant Treasury Instructions; and
- e. submit regular progress reports on the works of the appointed consultants to MAMPU for a specified period.

The engagement of external consultants is similar to the procurement of goods, works and other services. Hence, the ruling requiring all government agencies to obtain prior approval from the Committee On The Appointment of Private Management Consultants. This is to regulate as well as to ensure better co-ordination regarding the appointment of private consultants by government agencies in order to avoid wastage of public funds.

Implementing change

All applications to appoint consultants from the private sector, particularly in the field of administrative modernisation, have to be approved by the Committee On The Appointment of Private Management Consultants. MAMPU is the secretariat to this Committee. This Committee studies the technical aspects of the proposal submitted by the consultants. Its decision is final. In addition, the consulting firms must be registered with the Ministry of Finance in order to qualify for consideration for appointment.

Before final approval by the Committee On The Appointment of Private Management Consultants is given, the agency wishing to engage a private consultant has to submit an application to the Committee giving the reasons for the need of a consultant as well as the scope of study. Once the Committee decides that the services of a private consultant are needed, the agency concerned has to set up a Steering Committee.

Among the functions of the Steering Committee set up by the agency concerned are:

- to invite proposals from registered consulting firms;
- to evaluate all the proposals received and prepare a report assessing the track records of the various consulting firms, their methodologies and the experiences of their consultants;
- to negotiate with the successful firm to determine the payment of consultancy fees and to co-ordinate other matters that may arise; and
- to monitor and implement the recommendations of the consultants.

The Steering Committee will then submit an assessment report to the Committee On The Appointment of Private Management Consultants for the final decision on the appointment of the consultant.

Supporting material

General Circular Letter No. 5 of 1980, "The Committee On The Appointment Of Private Management Consultant In Administrative Modernisation" (in the national language)