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Effective and Efficient Services to the Public, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

Good Practice

New for 2002

Categories: Urban Governance:

- decentralization
- institutional reform
- management and information systems
- monitoring and evaluation
- public administration and management
- resource mobilization

Level of Activity: National

Ecosystem: Tropical/Sub-Tropical

Summary

An effective and efficient acts and documents registration service, promotes development by protecting persons and their property, allowing peaceful resolution of disputes, facilitating economic exchange and fostering the system of justice. The Addis Ababa City Government Acts and Documents Registration Office was a lead institution in translating the Government's policies and civil reform programmes of providing effective and efficient civil services to the public.

Re-organizing the office as autonomous public body, regular meetings with staff to evaluate performances, staff training on targeted programmes, improvements in systems and procedures, delegation of power, introduction of flexible work assignments, formation of a mobile notary team, the design of standardized application fronts, introduction of and publicizing of rule-based processes, and sensitizing the people on the importance of non-tolerance on corrupt practices and other offences, dramatically improved the performances of the Office.

The average number of persons served per day increased from 30 during the pre-initiative period to about 500 after the initiative began and the number of cases handled by each of the staff members. The average number of days required to complete a single case were slashed from at least three days to a few minutes. These were also accompanied by significant reductions in charges per case in the form of stamp duty and service charges.

Narrative

SITUATION BEFORE THE INITIATIVE BEGAN

Before the initiative began, the number of cases served per day were no more than thirty. A single case was settled in no less than three days. This was not only time-consuming and costly but also frustrating

to clients. Since at least two persons are involved in a given case and that every person involved must appear in person, the Office was usually highly crowded. The employees working in this place worked under a lot of stress due to the excess workload that they had.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

The Office, through the active involvement of its staff and also in consultation with the City Government as well as through interviews with clients, established the following priorities necessary for the success of this intervention:

- improving effectiveness and efficiency,
- reducing the service-time to clients,
- eliminate corrupt practices and other offences to clients.

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The following strategies were adopted in order to achieve our objectives. The strategies were identified in consultation with Staff and were discussed and approved by the City Government. The strategies adopted were:

- re-organization of the Office,
- employee involvement,
- targeting training programmes,
- improving systems and methods,
- publicity of rules and procedures,
- formation of mobile notary teams, and
- computerization of major processes.

1.Reorganization

The first initiative taken was the reorganization of the Documents Registration Division, formerly under the Ministry of Justice and then under the Courts as an autonomous public body Government in April 1996. The reorganization resulted in the creation of the following Positions:

- Registration of Business Organizations, Investors, Debts an Injunction Clearance Division,
- Contract Registration Division,
- Agency Registration division, and
- Administration and Finance Service

This changes would take place as a result of the reorganization of the office and the additional employees. Currently, the Office is staffed by a total of 64 employees.

2.Employee involvement

A major strategic initiative taken by management was to secure a shared commitment of employees for serving the public. The management realized that all employees have an impact on how the performance of the Office could be improved. Regular meetings were held with staff on how to bring about improvements in systems and to evaluate performances. It was also decided that a non-tolerance policy on any corrupt practices and other offences be put in place.

3.Targeted Training

In an effort to upgrade the technical and managerial skills of employees, training programmes were offered to a number of employees. These included basic management and computer applications.

4.Changes in systems and methods

Another major effort made was changes in systems and procedures designed to lead to performance

improvements. These included:

- Delegation of power,
- Elimination of unnecessary work-steps, Design of standard application forms, and
- Introduction of flexible job assignments.

Such changes in systems and methods led to cycle-time reduction as well as in incremental changes in performance.

5. Transparency and publicity of rules and procedures

Rules and procedures, describing what is expected of a client and the steps to be followed, depending on the nature of service requested, were clearly defined. These were then publicized in visible notice boards in the premises of the Office. Brochures were made available to clients free of charge.

In addition, clients were informed and highly encouraged to talk openly of any improper handling by staff members. Suggestion boxes were put in appropriate places to gather comments from clients. Suggestions from clients are discussed with staff members during meetings and are evaluated and adopted whenever necessary.

6. Formation of a Mobile Notary Team

Mobile notary teams were formed in order to serve clients at their offices. These were helpful especially in circumstances where hundreds of people are involved in a single case. This is the case in commercial banks, insurance companies and similar share companies. The formation of mobile teams enabled the Office to deliver timely services while at the same time significantly reducing the costs to clients.

7. Computerization of Major Processes

As the workload increased, we felt that increased effectiveness and efficiency would be gained through the computerization of our system. A computerized Documents Registration Management System was then implemented under a contract with a private consulting firm and was funded by the International Development Association of The World Bank group.

The Acts Documents Registration Management System consists of attorney management system, agency management system, court injunction management system, documents registration management system, vehicle sales management system and signature management system.

MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES

The implementation of the initiative demanded considerable time and effort by existing staff, additional manpower and financial resources. Additional employees were then recruited. In addition, funding for the computerization of services was secured from the World Bank. The City Government also allocated fund towards the cost of the Project.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

A review of the performances of the Office indicates that over the last five years, the number of cases served increased dramatically, from 47,210 to 70,268 which translates to a 49 percent increase as illustrated in Table 1. The service, which was previously very lengthy and tiring, now requires only a few minutes for its completion. The charges for the services have also greatly reduced. The average stamp duty per case dropped from US\$ 44 in 1996 to US \$24 in 2001 . In other words it reduced by about 46 percent. Similarly, the average number of cases served by each staff member has increased from 1,349 in 1996/97 to 1,597 (18 percent increase).

SELECTED REMARKS AND COMMENTS BY CLIENTS

The following are sample remarks and comments made by some clients, and private and Government media.

"..Glimmers of light through the Darkness...": Eyeseswork Zafu, Managing Director, United Insurance Comapany, S. C.

"I heard many investors regarding the Office as 'the best public service institution where one can find prompt and fair treatment ... public institutions should follow the foot steps of Acts and Documents Registration Office... ": Taddese Haile, State Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry, the then General Manager of Ethiopia Investment Authority.

"The business community considers an efficient service rendered by public service giving institution as an immediate profit. This Office is really giving us an efficient service...": Roberto Gabrezi, Manager, Electro Commercial, S. C.

"The Most Prominent, the Most Popular, the Most Proficient government Office..": Capital, Ethiopia's Business Weekly, Volume 3, No. 144, September 9, 2001.

"a unique island in a country where we are fed up with many bureaucratic obstacles...": Addis Admas, Private Weekly Newspaper, June 9, 2001.

"Although the Office is badly situated and too small to entertain the huge mass of people flowing there every day it has managed to give adequate and satisfactory service to all within a period of time not more than half an hour.": A client interviewed by Ethiopian TV.

"You and your leadership team and employees have managed to do the impossible, i.e., get away from the usual and unproductive bureaucratic system to an efficient, transparent, non-corrupt operation performed inside a building which is not conducive to providing efficient services to your clients/customers. These conditions make your effort and success very unique and exemplary": Arega Yirdaw (Dr.), Chief Executive Officer, MIDROC Ethiopia, PLC.

SUSTAINABILITY

The activities of an authentic act indirectly promote security of transactions, improve investment conditions and therefore economic growth. The latter is a necessary condition for the eradication of poverty and improve the living conditions of the people. Clear and transparent procedures also facilitate a strong economy, needed to fight poverty and to channel resources towards nation building tasks. Capacity building efforts also ensure that performances are sustainable over the long-term.

LESSONS LEARNED

The most important lesson that we have drawn from the implementation of this initiative is that shared commitment by management and employees, good discipline and strong morals lead to enormous gains in speed, client satisfaction, and organizational competence. Also, publicity and transparency of procedures has significantly helped the Office towards achieving its objectives.

TRANSFERABILITY

The performance of this initiative has been cited by the City Government and the Federal Government, the business community, the media, international and bilateral organizations, and by the public as unique and exemplary.

The recently established Federal Ministry of Capacity Building has commended the Office's achievements in its Civil Service Reform Programme and National Capacity Building Policy and Strategy documents. The Ministry intends to replicate the initiative in the other Government offices.

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Type of Organization: Central Government

Nominating Organization

Ministry of Federal Affairs
Type of Organization: Central Government

Partners

Financial Profile

	1996/97	2000/01	% Change
Total number of cases handled	47,210	70,268	49
Total Revenue Collected, US \$	2,090,489	1,695,469	(19)
Number of Employees	35	44	-
Number of cases per employee	1,349	1,597	18
Average charge per case, US \$	44	24	(46)
Average number of cases per day	157	234	49



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