Chapter 7
The Nexus Between Knowledge Management and Electronic Resources for Public Sector Reform in Botswana

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ABSTRACT

Public sector reforms have become the norm in many jurisdictions, especially in the African continent. In Botswana there have been a number of significant reform activities over the years, aimed at enhancing the public sectors capacity to deliver effective and efficient service to its population. The authors contend that the implementation of reforms result in significant documentation, knowledge and lessons learnt that need to be harvested and harnessed to improve future implementation of such programs. This can be done for as long as the relationship between electronic records and Knowledge Management in this era is recognized, and both are embedded in the public-sector reforms design and implementation. This paper shows that there is a nexus between the management of knowledge and electronic records in achieving the objectives of public sector reforms. It also explicates reasons the relationship is important. It assesses the implementation of KM in the public sector and the link with electronic records management, and concludes that there is room for both.

INTRODUCTION

Public sector reforms have become a trend in many developing countries and Botswana is no exception. As the population of Botswana and the public service grew over the years, the need for public sector reforms intensified to address the growing challenges of poor service delivery, inefficiency, weak imple-

mentation capacity, low productivity, corruption, etc. The key objectives of such reforms were aimed at providing increased access and equity to key public services by all citizens; speeding up service delivery and improved quality; improving performance in service delivery (effectiveness and efficiency); expanding scope of the national economy and sustainable growth of GDP and economic employment; developing a private sector led economy; consolidating a focused and efficient public sector; moving towards a modernized and effective lean public service; promoting social development, social inclusion and protection; consolidating democracy through peace, security, justice, improved accountability and transparency (Economic Commission for Africa, 2003; Kaunda, 2004; Public Sector Reforms Coordinating Office, 2014).

As a result, the last few years have seen a number of initiatives aimed at reforming the Botswana public sector. Included have been macro level activities such as decentralization, privatization and outsourcing of none-core public services. Micro level initiatives have comprised Organization and Method reviews, Job Evaluation, Work Improvement Teams; Strategic Planning through the Balanced Score Card, and Performance Management System (Kaunda, 2004; Mothusi, 2008). Most recent initiatives include the Integrated Results Based Management System (IRBMS) as well as the e-government project (Kaboyakgosi & Mookodi, 2004). In particular, it is worthy to note that e-government relies on a sound knowledge and information base, which can be provided if built on formalized government-wide knowledge and records management systems (Bwalya, Zulu, & Sebina, 2015).

Komanyane (2010) conducted a study to explore implementation of knowledge management in the public sector in Botswana. She found that whilst there was recognition of the importance of knowledge management in the public service, there was lack of agreement as to whether knowledge management is implemented throughout the public service. According to the study, the public service in Botswana had no knowledge management policy or strategy although there were expectations that staff should and would share knowledge. In other words, there was no intentional effort towards knowledge management as a strategy. Further, Mampe and Kalusopa (2012) concluded in their study that governments did not pay as much attention to reforming records management as they did in other areas, and yet it is understood that good records management strategies can lead to improved service delivery

This chapter seeks to show that there is a nexus between the management of knowledge and electronic records in achieving the objectives of public sector reforms. It also explicates reasons the relationship is important. It assesses the implementation of KM in the public sector and the link with electronic records management. The first part of the chapter looks at public sector reforms implementation in general, as well as focusing on reforms in Botswana. The problem statement is provided. The chapter further defines knowledge management, records management, information sharing and their relationship and link with public sector reforms. Finally the knowledge management processes of various organizations have been considered and an analysis of these has enabled the authors to make some recommendations on how knowledge management and e-records can be leveraged to facilitate better results of public sector reforms.

BACKGROUND

Public Sector Reforms

According to Mampe and Kalusopa, (2012) public sector reforms are aimed at enhancing the capacity of the public sector to carry out core functions that lead to better service delivery. Public sector reforms

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