

**ONLINE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF
NAMIBIA: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

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ABSTRACT

The Public Service Information Online Website was introduced in 2003 to disseminate online information to government employees in the Public Service of Namibia. The way information was being disseminated earlier to government employees was ineffective. It was time consuming and cost-ineffective for the Office of the Prime Minister and Personnel Offices to disseminate information manually to government employees. However, no assessment was undertaken to determine the effectiveness and to ascertain whether the online dissemination of information to government employees has indeed improved service delivery.

This study intends to assess the effectiveness of online dissemination of information to government employees. In carrying out this study, interviews were conducted with Heads of Personnel Offices of government ministries as well as with senior managers of the Efficiency and Charter Unit, Department of Public Service Management and Department of Public Service Information Technology Management in the Office of the Prime Minister. Website hits, which refer to the number of times the website is accessed by users, were analysed to determine the number of government employees who are accessing the website. Documentary analysis included policy documents, reports as well as other literature.

The findings of this study show that challenges facing other public services such as limited ICT technological infrastructure, shortage of qualified ICT professionals, lack of ICT skills and lack of e-laws amongst others are also experienced in the Public Service of Namibia. Such issues have also affected the phasing in of online dissemination of information into the Public Service of Namibia, which is still in the interaction phase. The study demonstrates that aspects such as data systems, legal, institutional, human, technological infrastructure as well as issues of leadership and strategic thinking should be taken into account in the development and implementation of e-governance initiatives in public services to ensure success thereof.

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DEDICATION

To my late maternal grandparents: Kleopas Shoomeka Mupupa and Emilia Nuugonya yaShapopi shaNangolo dhAmutenya for the way they have brought me up, which has made me the person I am today. You will forever be my role models.

DECLARATIONS

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis “the Online Dissemination of Information to Government Employees in the Public Service of Namibia: A Preliminary Assessment” is my own independent work except where stated otherwise in the acknowledgement.

This thesis has not been submitted for a Master Degree at any other University.

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Rebekka Lenitti Kakololo

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Date

ABBREVIATIONS

ACL	Access Control List
DPSITM	Department Public Service Information Technology Management
DPSM	Department Public Service Management
ECU	Efficiency and Charter Unit
ELC	E-Learning Centre
G2B	Government to Businesses
G2C	Government to Citizens
G2G	Government to Government
HRIMS-	Human Resources Information Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IT	Information Technology
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PSRIs	Public Service Reform Initiatives

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.1 General Introduction

Over the past decade, Sub-Saharan Africa has been using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by means of telephones, email and internet to communicate, share information, collaborate and work. The private sector uses ICT to make online market transactions, capture trade opportunities as well as to reap productivity gains. Governments on the other hand, use ICT to streamline processes, reduce bureaucracy, which are supposed to lead to the efficient and effective delivery of public services (Guislain et al 2005:1).

Many Governments identified ICT as part of their public sector reforms and the Public Service of Namibia is not an exception. According to OPM (2005:7-9), the two overarching global declarations to which Namibia is a signatory and that form a compelling driving force in shaping the e-Governance in the Public Service of Namibia are the Millennium Declaration and the Declaration of the Principles of the Information Society and its Action Plan.

The Millennium Declaration was agreed by the United Nations Member States at the Millennium Summit held on September 2000 in New York. By the year 2015, all 191 UN Member states are required to meet the eight Millennium Development goals which are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality;

improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.

The specific challenges from the Millennium Declaration that compel the Namibian Government to develop an e-Governance Policy and which require special attention in terms of ICT are as the issue of making provision that ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence and other similar matters of public concern; as well as cooperating with the private sector in order to avail the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies to all.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals that are embedded in the Millennium Declaration, a World Summit on Information Society was convened in Geneva in December 2003. The Summit resolved to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and people to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life (OPM 2005:10).

The Plan of Action translates the common vision and guiding principles of the Information Society Declaration into concrete action lines by promoting the use of ICT-based products, networks, services, and applications as well as to help countries overcome the digital divide. The Plan of Action states four action lines, namely: the role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development; the development of information and communication infrastructure as an essential

foundation to the information society; widening access to information and knowledge; and capacity building. Since the first action line relates to the role of governments, therefore the Namibian Government is expected to amongst others:

- Develop and implement national e-strategies including the necessary human capacity building taking into account local, regional as well as national needs and concerns;
- Establish at least one functioning Public/Private Partnership (PPP) or Multi-Sector Partnership (MSP) by 2005; and
- Explore the viability of establishing multi-stakeholder portals for indigenous people at the national level (OPM, 2005:11).

The abovementioned challenges have led to the development of the Information and Communication Technology Policy for the Republic of Namibia, the Public Service Policy on Information Technology, e-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia as well as the Use of Electronic Communications and Transaction Draft Bill, as part of efforts to build an inclusive information society that will accelerate the attainment of the national development goals as well as those stated in the Millennium Declaration. Therefore, the Namibian Public Service carries out its ICT activities within the framework of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as e-Governance Policy, which are based on ICT Global declarations as mentioned before. These policies are discussed in chapter three. The benefit of ICT was noted by Heeks (2002:4-5) who stated that the usage of ICTs is meant to:

- improve internal workings of the public sector (eAdministration) by cutting process costs, managing process performance, making strategic connections in government and creating empowerment;
- connect citizens (eCitizens and eServices) by providing citizens with details of public sector activities, increasing input of citizens into public sector decisions and actions and by improving the services delivered to members of the public in terms of quality, convenience and cost;
- build external interactions (eSociety), thus focusing on the relationship between public agencies and other institutions such as other public agencies, private sector companies, non-profit and community organisations.

The benefits envisaged in the implementation of e-Governance policy for the Public Service of Namibia are in line with those mentioned above with emphasis on improving efficiency and effectiveness as well as saving costs (OPM 2005:31-35).

The Office of the Prime Minister through the Efficiency and Charter Unit launched the Public Service Information Online Website with the aim of disseminating online information to government employees in 2003, as one of the Public Service Reforms Initiatives (PSRIs). The Public Service Information Online website contains the relevant legislation such as Public Service Act, Public Service Commission Act, Labour Act, Affirmative Action Act and Treasury Instructions amongst others; human resources related information such as staff rules and circulars, downloadable forms as well as information on human resources development, information technology and Public Service Reform Initiatives amongst others. It is an intranet

facility, which serves as an interactive communication tool meant to allow government employees at different levels easy access to a comprehensive and up-to-date information, thus empowering government employees with information they require on a daily basis to make informed decisions and ultimately to enhance efficiency and service delivery. Although the Public Service Information Online Website has a variety of information, this study focuses on human resources related information.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The way information was being disseminated earlier to government employees was ineffective. It was time-consuming and cost-ineffective for the Office of the Prime Minister and Personnel Offices to disseminate information manually to government employees.

With the introduction of online dissemination of information to government employees in 2003, no assessment has been conducted to determine the effectiveness and to establish whether the initiative has indeed improved service delivery. This is important in light of the many challenges facing public services with regard to the implementation of e-governance initiatives in general and the Namibian Public Service in particular.

The challenges encountered in the implementation of e-governance initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia include: an issue of government employees not having skills to utilise ICT and recognise potential benefits of ICT, which can lead to those officials using their discretionary powers not to put recruitment or training of ICT staff among priority areas in the Public Service of Namibia (Shalyefu and Nakakuwa 2005:214-216). In addition, there is a shortage of skilled and experienced IT staff due to low remuneration and limited exposure to the latest developments in the field of IT in the Public Service; expensive ICT equipment and solutions; insufficient and ineffective local training of IT support staff; insufficient IT budget; obsolete equipment and ineffective antivirus control at some ministries, which affects network stability and performance; limited understanding of e-governance benefits and opportunities by some senior managers and policy makers, which can lead to lack of commitment and accountability on the importance of the contribution of ICTs to achieving development goals OPM (2004:32,203 & 208). Moreover, Shalyefu and Nakakuwa (2005:219) highlighted other constraints facing the implementation of e-governance activities in Namibia such as: lack of hardware manufactured or assembled in Namibia, making it expensive to import hardware and software mainly from South Africa; the high cost of introducing and establishing computer laboratories with internet connections accessible to the majority; lack of qualified ICT professionals to maintain equipments; lack of adept teachers, which affects the imparting of proper ICT knowledge and skills to contribute to the achievement of national goals; and fiber optics cabling and lack of telephone services affect access to technology in some areas.

The extent to which the above-mentioned challenges affect the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees has not been investigated. Therefore, since the introduction of the initiative in 2003, it is not clear whether government employees are accessing the website; if so, how many and the type of information they are accessing. The effect of the website especially on the work of personnel offices is not established since it was meant to reduce the workload of personnel offices with regard to issues of retrieving and providing manual information to government employees in their respective government ministries. Government ministries refer to Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) in the Public Service of Namibia.

Equally important it is not known if the initiative has achieved the intended benefits or not from the perspective of the drivers of the initiative, namely: the Department of Public Service Management (DPSM), Department of Public Service Information Technology (DPSITM) as well as the Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU); the three units are in OPM. Thus, these are perceived problems that the author has identified with the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees that are investigated in this study.

The author is aware of the fact that ICT addresses more issues than the ones covered by this piece of work such as (1) cost reduction in service delivery, (2) streamlining government procedures, (3) improving efficiency and (4) reducing corruption amongst others. However, for this study the author has decided to focus only on issues pertaining to the spread and use of information in the Public Service of

Namibia. Other issues pertaining to e-governance can be addressed in future research.

1.3 Research Questions

The key research question that guides this study is as follows:

- To what extent has online dissemination of information to government employees improved efficiency and service delivery in the Public Service of Namibia?

The sub-questions that complement the key research question are:

- How have ICT infrastructure and capacity building in the Public Service of Namibia affected online dissemination of information to government employees?
- How have the management systems, records and work processes been improved to support the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees?
- How have the institutional and leadership issues been addressed in the Public Service of Namibia to facilitate the implementation of e-governance initiatives?

The sub-questions are based on the e-readiness framework, which is elaborated in the Theoretical Conceptualisation of the study and the Literature Review. The draft interview questions to the interviewees are attached as Annexure A.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The aims and objectives of the study are to assess the effectiveness of the online provision of information and to determine the extent to which it has improved service delivery in the Public Service of Namibia by looking at personnel offices of government ministries and three Units in the Office of the Prime Minister, namely: Department of Public Service Management (DPSM), Department of Public Service Information Technology Management (DPSITM) and Efficiency and Charter Unit (ECU). To achieve this goal, the following specific objectives have been considered:

1. To examine the extent to which the implementation of e-governance initiatives meets the requirements of the e-readiness framework; and
2. To identify challenges experienced in the implementation of the online dissemination of information.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study would contribute to the academic knowledge, whereby the paper will serve as a source for further research in the area of e-governance. The study will also be used to enhance the performance of online dissemination of information in particular to the Government of Namibia. The study could also be of help to a certain degree to Governments around the world.

1.6 Research Methodology

The study has used both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The author has mostly used the qualitative approach with a focus on the case study tradition of enquiry to assess the effectiveness of online dissemination of information to government employees in the Public Service of Namibia. Qualitative research is defined as a method which describes events, persons and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data (Technikon SA 2001:10). According to Tellis (1997:1), a case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required. A view echoed by Welman and Kruger (1999:190) that a case study is directed towards understanding the uniqueness and the complexity of a particular case, in this case the online provision of information to government employees. A case study is appropriate for this research since it allows for an in-depth investigation of the initiative and has a combination of data collection methods such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artifacts. The author used Namibia as a case study to inform the research, as a result the performance of ministries and different players mentioned in the study are analysed before and after the implementation of ICT to see if public service delivery has been enhanced.

Since quantitative research deals with things that can be counted (Technikon SA 2001:10), the author has used the approach in aspects that can be counted such as website hits to determine the number of government employees who are accessing the website.

The interviews, website counter and documentary analysis were used in the study to collect the required data. Given the unavailability of certain data and the confinement of time, the author used raw data derived from interviews with stakeholders. The author is aware of the fact that this may not capture all the information as some of the arguments would be based on perceptions. However the author is convinced that the first hand information provided by those who deal with the problem on a daily basis would be sufficient enough to reflect the situation on the ground. Therefore, the methods used in collecting the much-needed information for the study are discussed in the next sections:

- **Interviews:**

- Non-structured interviews were conducted with the Heads of Personnel Offices of nine of the 30 Government Ministries. The author identified the ministries based on the following criteria: ministries with offices in the regions and those without, as well as those with small and bigger establishments. These government ministries are the Office of the Prime Minister, National Assembly, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Safety and Security, Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Trade and Industry as well as the Ministry of Education. The aim was to find out how online provision of information has influenced the work of Personnel Offices.

- Non-structured interviews were also conducted with Senior Managers in the Department of Public Service Management, Department of Public Service Information Technology Management as well as the Efficiency and Charter Unit, both Units are in the Office of the Prime Minister. The author selected the three Units in OPM for the following reasons:
 - Department of Public Service Management since it is responsible for the development and monitoring the implementation of human resources management policies including staff rules and circulars in the Public Service of Namibia. Most information on the website are Human resources management related, therefore it is the Department that forward most information to the IT Department for posting on the web.
 - Department of Public Service Information Technology Management, which is referred to in this paper as IT Department, is responsible for the ICT infrastructure including ICT training in the Public Service. It is the Unit that put information on and maintains the Public Service Information Online Website; and

- Finally, Efficiency and Charter Unit is responsible for the development and monitoring of the implementation of Public Service Reforms Initiatives, hence the need to find out whether the online dissemination of information is achieving the intended results.
- The aims of interviews on the three Units in OPM were to determine how the online dissemination of information to government employees has affected the functions of those units; challenges encountered and assessing whether the objectives of the project have been achieved. The List of Interviewees is attached as Annexure B.
- **Website counter** on the Public Service Information Online website has also been used to determine the number of government employees that are accessing the website.
- **Documentary Analysis:** In addition to the literature that has been reviewed to develop the theoretical framework of the study, policy documents, annual reports, workshop reports and feedback received online have been analysed to establish how the e-readiness and/or lack of it has affected the implementation of the Online Dissemination of Information Project in the Public Service of Namibia.

The author has analysed the data of this study by categorizing research data into themes and sub-themes based on the e-readiness framework used in the study.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The author did not consult public servants to get their perspective on the implementation of the dissemination of online information due to time constraints and the size of the Namibian Public Service. The public service consists of about 80 000 public servants including uniformed personnel (prisons, police and defence). Because of the time constraint and sheer size of the public service, the author limited this study to Personnel Offices in government ministries and three Units in OPM. The study also excludes Regional Councils, although their conditions of employment and service benefits are the same as of those employed by the Central Government. Thus, the employees of the Regional Councils could also benefit from online dissemination of information to government employees initiative. However, the author strongly believes that a separate study on those matters is warranted.

1.8 Organisation of the Paper

The thesis has five chapters.

Chapter one provides an introduction as well as background to the study. It also includes the research problem, objectives and questions; significance of the study; research methodology; and limitations of the study.

Chapter two covers the theoretical conceptualization of the study using the e-readiness framework and the e-Governance Maturity Model. This chapter also looks at the literature that have been reviewed in terms of definitions, domains and benefits of e-governance as well as challenges that are hampering the implementation of e-governance initiatives in public services.

Chapter three gives the background to online dissemination of information by looking at policies that guides ICT activities in the Public Service of Namibia; other e-governance initiatives introduced as well as how ICT developments has affected Namibia's global e-government rankings.

Chapter four focuses on the research findings and the analysis of data.

Chapter five provides conclusions with regard to the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees in the Public Service of Namibia.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE STUDY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework covers the e-readiness framework as well as the e-governance maturity model.

2.1 E-Readiness Framework

Although there are many e-readiness assessment models available, most of these assessment models are too broad and are not ideal for assessing the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees in the Public Service of Namibia.

For the purpose of this study, the author has used the e-readiness for e-governance framework by Heeks (2001:17-19) to assess the implementation of the online dissemination of information to government employees, since it is comprehensive and it focuses on the key issues that should be addressed to ensure the successful implementation of e-governance initiatives. Gichoya (2005:181) also noted that the e-readiness framework helps one to understand the implementation of ICT and why it exists. It also explains problems associated with the implementation of ICT system. The e-readiness framework by Heeks (2001:17-19) covers the data systems, legal, institutional, human, technological as well as leadership and strategic thinking infrastructural aspects. These aspects are highlighted below:

- Data Systems infrastructure is about having management systems, records and work processes in place to provide the quantity and quality of data to support the move to e-governance. In many countries, data quality and security are very poor.
- Legal infrastructure is looking at whether laws and regulations are in place to allow the move to e-governance. Again, in many countries including Namibia, digital signatures are not accepted.
- Institutional infrastructure is assessing whether institutions exist to act as a focus for awareness and as a means for facilitation of e-governance, therefore the study will try to explore whether there are institutions in the Public Service of Namibia, which raises awareness and facilitate e-governance initiatives with a focus on online dissemination of information to government employees.
- Human infrastructure is focusing on the attitudes, knowledge and skills in place especially within the public sector in order to initiate, implement and sustain e-governance initiatives. It also looks at other issues such as the general resistance to change, lack of customer orientation and resistance to data sharing amongst others, which can hinder the implementation of e-governance activities.

- Technological infrastructure is looking at both computing and telecommunications infrastructure on which e-governance initiatives are and/or should be based.

- Leadership and Strategic Thinking are crucial for any e-governance initiative to succeed since leaders with vision put e-governance into the agenda and make it happen. Most importantly, all other e-readiness aspects are of limited value if there is no vision and leadership to give direction to e-governance, since that could lead to:
 - lack of awareness, knowledge, skills and confidence in ICT activities and/or e-governance initiatives, resulting in e-governance initiatives, which are driven from outside government by vendors or donors or by consultants. That will in turn lead to systems being imported from other sectors or countries and implemented without being adjusted to suit specific governments and/or sectors' unique circumstances; and
 - key stakeholders such as clerical operators and service users amongst others, being ignored in the planning of e-governance projects.

Therefore, the comprehensiveness of the e-readiness framework helped the author to identify gaps on the implementation of the online dissemination of information to government employees and future e-governance initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia.

2.2 E-Governance Maturity Model

Heeks (2001:8) also presented a chronology of ICT-enabled governance, which starts with publishing (delivering data to citizens), moving to the interaction (delivering data to citizens and receiving data from citizens); and finally, transactions (undertaking other government processes online). Backus (2001:4-7) shared the same view in the form of the e-governance maturity model. The e-Governance Maturity Model consists of four phases, namely: information, interaction, transaction and transformation. These phases are explained below:

- Phase One: Information is about providing information to the public, businesses and within government through the web. The case in point is the online dissemination of information through the Public Service Information Online website to government employees;
- Phase Two: Interaction between the government and public and businesses as well as within government through various applications such as email, search engines and downloading of all sorts of forms and documents;
- Phase Three: Transaction is where complete transactions are done electronically without service users going to an office; and
- Phase Four: Transformation is in which all information systems are integrated and service users can get services at one virtual counter.

The two chronologies of ICT enabled governance and e-governance maturity model are the same. The only distinction is that the e-Governance Maturity Model aims to go further to Phase Four Transformation while the chronology of ICT enabled e-governance ends with Phase Three Transaction.

Since the Namibian Public Service has adopted the e-Governance Maturity Model for the implementation of its e-governance initiatives/projects (OPM 2005:20-25), the author has used the said model as a reference to determine how e-readiness or lack of e-readiness has affected the phasing in of the online dissemination of information to government employees.

As previously stipulated under Section 1.2, other studies could focus on other areas of e-governance sociologically *inter alia* cost reduction in service delivery, streamlining government procedures, improving efficiency and reduction of corruption.

2.3 Literature Review

The literature review covers the definition of e-governance, the concepts, benefits, the domains of e-governance, challenges encountered in the implementation of e-governance projects and impact of e-governance on corruption.

Heeks (2001:2) defined e-governance as the ICT-enabled route to achieving good governance. According to Backus (2001:2-3), e-governance involves the use of electronic means (internet and other ICT tools) to facilitate interaction between government and the public (citizens and businesses) as well within government in order to improve the government's own internal operations to enhance its service delivery and democratic participation. In the Namibian context, the definition of e-governance concurs with that of Backus. In addition, Singh et al (undated manuscript) refer to e-governance as a means of providing e-solutions for the government processes by using ICT tools like internet, telecommunications and computers in order to provide convenient, economical and efficient governance. When it comes to e-governance versus e-government, the Mauritius Government refers to it as the delivery of government services using electronic means. Therefore, e-Government is also about the use of ICTs to promote more efficient government by allowing better access to information and making Government more accountable to citizens (MCA, 2005:17). It is crucial to note that the emphasis in all these definitions is on using ICT in government processes to ensure improved citizens' access to services; be more customer-focused; make governments more accountable to citizens and increase democratic participation amongst other things. It should also be noted that in this paper the terms e-governance and e-government have been used interchangeably, thus referring to the use of ICTs in delivering government services. However, Heeks (2002:6) cautioned that the use of ICT should not be seen as an end in itself but it should be seen as a mean to achieve the desired governance objectives.

According to Heeks (2001:4-15), there are three domains of e-governance, namely improving government process (e-Administration); connecting citizens (e-Citizens and e-Services); and building interactions with and within civil society. He further pointed out that e-governance excludes applications that focus solely or mainly on the private sector e.g. e-commerce and e-business. Backus (2001:4) highlights the main target groups of the concept of e-governance that interact with the government namely, the government, citizens and businesses or other interest groups. In the Namibian context, the interaction between government and citizens is abbreviated as G2C, between government and businesses as G2B, between government to government and/or within Government as G2G (OPM 2005:31-35). Therefore, for the purposes of this study the main thrust of work was geared towards the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees under the concept of G2G.

Heeks (2001:13) highlighted the efficiency and effectiveness gains, which could be derived from e-governance. The efficiency gains include: producing the same outputs at lower total cost (governance, which is cheaper); producing more outputs at the same total cost (governance, which does more); and producing the same outputs with the same total cost in less time (governance, which is quicker). The effectiveness gains on the other hand are concerned with governance that is quicker and that maintains outputs of higher quality standard and governance that is innovating (producing new outputs). These benefits can have both internal focus by proving benefits such as better staff motivation or greater political control or an

improved public image; as well as external focus by delivering cheaper, better services to the end users of government services. According to OPM (2005:31-35), these benefits are similar to those envisaged in the e-Governance policy for the Public Service of Namibia, namely: cost reduction in service delivery; improved efficiency; streamlined government procedures; and the creation of the choice for the public sector to do things differently to improve service delivery to citizens and businesses. By making use of the e-readiness framework, the author has been able to determine the extent to which e-readiness or lack of it has affected the realization of the e-governance benefits with regard to online provision of information to government employees.

For e-governance and ICT initiatives to be successful and achieve the desired results there are challenges that public services need to overcome. According to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA 2003:26-27), African governments have fewer e-government initiatives; therefore they make less use of ICTs in their work than industrialised countries, and also use older generations of technology than industrialised countries. In addition, ECA points out problems facing African governments such as lack of resources for infrastructure to provide network access and for ICT to work; skills to keep all the technology working, to use ICT as well as literacy to read the content. Heeks (2002) also expressed concern that ICT is widening the gap between the rich and the poor since the majority of the world's poor are not using ICT and will not use it in a foreseeable future, mostly due to problems enumerated above. Shalyefu and Nakakuwa (2005:219) shares the same view that the disparity between those who have access to technology and those who

do not have is widening since lack of ICTs and associated skills promotes inequality and lack of equity as well as lack of inclusiveness, thus supporting the idea that the poor are excluded from the benefits of ICT. Heeks (2002) also stressed that while the usage of ICTs can lead to positive impacts, at the same time it can also lead to negative impacts such as unemployment and alienation. In addition, the social challenges facing developing countries in the implementation and maintenance of e-governance solutions include: poor basic education, which leads to low literacy rates, no IT literacy, resistance of people to use ICT, digital divide and brain drain of IT skilled people after training amongst others (Backus 2001:17-18). Moreover, according to (MCA 2005:22-25), the challenges that are hampering the implementation of e-governance in the Mauritius Government include: lack of infrastructure to immediately deploy e-governance services; solving issues of remote connectivity to support e-governance efforts; addressing the issue of digital divide in terms of race, ethnicity, class, geography and other factors that could result in groups of people being alienated (accessibility to internet facilities); e-illiteracy; as well as issues of security and privacy are crucial in building trust among service users both the government employees and the general public to use online services (MCA 2005:22-24).

With regard to security issues, West (2006:5) added that if ordinary citizens do not feel safe and secure in terms of their online information and service activities, then e-governance tend to move very slowly. West (2006:5) also stated that inability to use credit cards and digital signatures on financial transactions has slowed the development of online services offered by governments. He further pointed out that

of the government websites analysed on the annual update global e-government report, only 4% accept credit cards and 1% allowed digital signatures for online transactions. In contrast to this, Illa (2005:33) indicated that a country such as Uruguay has enacted the law that sets the creation of the electronic file and the legal acceptance of the electronic signatures. According to OPM (2005:4), only South Africa and Mauritius in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that have adopted e-laws on amongst others transactions, signatures, cyber crime, data management and e-privacy. With regard to Namibia, the Office of the Prime Minister has compiled the Bill on the Use of Electronic Communications and Transactions. However, the Bill has not yet been enacted.

With regard to the impact of e-governance in reducing corruption, Bhatnagar (undated manuscript), stated that the use of ICT has some impact on administrative corruption in terms of areas such as making forms available online; land records, property registration, railway reservation system and customs online in India; e-procurement in Mexico, Philippines, Bulgaria and Chile as well as tax collection at state/federal and local levels. Bhatnagar further indicated that the outcome of ICT interventions on corruption were observed on the automation and process reform with reduced delays, less discretion, less mistakes and minimized face to face contact while management information systems and its use by supervisors as well as audits allowed the detection of corruption, enhanced accountability and improved processes amongst others. Finally, Bhatnagar pointed out that for ICT to make a bigger impact on corruption, issues such as weak monitoring and supervision, processes not re-engineered, insufficient education and awareness of citizens as well as inadequate

handling mechanism should be addressed. The issue of e-governance and corruption is an area, which will require further research.

Besides these challenges experienced by other Public Services with regard to the implementation of e-governance initiatives, both the e-readiness framework and the e-governance maturity model, have assisted the author to identify challenges facing the Namibian Public Service with regard to the online provision of information to government employees as one of the e-governance initiatives.

CHAPTER THREE: BACKGROUND TO ONLINE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF NAMIBIA

This chapter will first, explore the policies guiding ICT activities in the Public Service of Namibia; second, it will look at other e-governance initiatives that have been introduced; third, determine how Namibia is featuring in terms of e-government global rankings; and finally, focus on the online dissemination of information to government employees initiative with the emphasis on its background, aims and the key components.

3.1 Policies Guiding ICT Activities in the Public Service of Namibia

In terms of Vision 2030, Namibia is expected to have fully developed and implemented a national ICT strategy with sufficient funds allocated to support local ICT production and ICT training and education, resulting in a significant increase in the use of ICTs throughout all the sectors of the economy in Namibia, therefore providing economic benefit for all members of the Namibian society (GRN 2004:82).

The Namibia's Second National Development Plan (NDPII) emphasises the need to introduce ICTs to rural areas through the envisaged establishment of multi-purpose community centres in the country's thirteen regions as well as the introduction of internet connectivity in schools. This will put national and world wide information at

the disposal of rural communities at the press of the button (GRN undated manuscript:666).

After Namibia realised the importance and usefulness of ICT to achieve social and economic goals, policies were developed to guide ICT activities in the Namibian Public Service. The policies are based on ICT Global Declarations such as the Millennium as well as the Information Society Declaration, Namibia's Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan. These policies are the Information and Communication Technology Policy for the Republic of Namibia, the Public Service Policy on Information Technology, the e-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia as well as the Use of Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill.

3.1.1 Information and Communication Technology Policy for the Republic of Namibia

This policy gives an overview of the country's information and communication infrastructure, and ICT users in the country, of which the Government is one. It also deals with the legal and regulatory framework required to make ICTs work, the issue of human resources development, which is critical in the successful application of ICTs. The policy further emphasises the need for investing financial resources in infrastructure, human resources capacities and for aligning existing legal and regulatory frameworks to meet the demands of the information age. Therefore, this policy guides ICT operations both in the public and private sectors of Namibia (GRN 2004: unnumbered manuscript).

3.1.2 Public Service Policy on Information Technology

The Cabinet adopted the Public Service Policy on Information Technology in 1993. The main objective of the policy is to ensure a co-ordinated approach towards the computerization of the Namibian Public Service in order to create an environment in which the benefits of information technology could be exploited to the fullest. The policy consists of seven modules, which are: institutional arrangement; open, cooperative information system architecture; development of ICT Infrastructure; Security Standards; IT personnel administration; Acquisition of hardware, software and services; and Human resource development (OPM 2003:126-128). These modules are briefly explained below:

- The Institutional Arrangement Module called for the setting up of:
 - A Cabinet Committee on Information Technology, whose main objective is to oversee all policy objectives and goals for ICT in the Public Service;
 - A Public Service Committee on Information Technology Management with the main objective of finding ways to increase the use of information technology for efficient decision-making service delivery and other management processes in the Public Service;
 - A Department of Public Service Information Technology Management, which serves as the technical arm for the Cabinet Committee on IT. The Department was mandated among other things, to coordinate ICT activities within the Public Service of Namibia; set-up standards and procedures on the development of systems; IT training to enable

government officials to become computer literate and acquire in-depth technical skills to render efficient and effective services to the public; provision of one-stop shop technical support to Ministries; development and maintenance of websites and ensure acquisition of appropriate hardware and software in the Namibian Public Service in order to enhance service delivery; and

- Ministerial Information Technology Units to coordinate ICT activities in the Ministries in line with the overall ICT policy for the Public Service.

- The Open Cooperative Information System Architecture Module sets out guidelines to ensure that ministries share data, information and communication systems easily amongst themselves.

- The Development of ICT Infrastructure Module recognizes that the backbone of IT is a network with transmission media that are able to transmit data and information far and near at reasonable speed and cost. This module outlines strategies to develop such network and media with the aid of Telecom Namibia LTD.

- The Security Standards Module outlines strategies to ensure that data, information, software and hardware are secure, and to guarantee the integrity and safekeeping of information.

- The IT Personnel Administration Module deals with policies that guide the responsibilities and conduct of IT professionals in the Public Service.

- The Acquisition of Hardware, Software and Services Module gives guidelines to ensure that the Public Service receives only up-to-date, high quality equipment and software.

- The Human Resources Development Module develops guidelines and strategies for recruiting, training and retaining a team of motivated IT professionals in the Public Service.

3.1.3 E-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia

The E-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia was approved by Cabinet in 2005. According to OPM (2005:1), the vision of e-governance in Namibia is “*To make Namibia a cyber country enabling all its citizens as e-citizens*”. The e-Governance Policy serves as a framework that is envisaged to allow the Namibian citizens access to information and government services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week; fulfilling the public’s needs and expectations by simplifying their interaction with Government; provision of speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective processes for performing government administration activities; and widening access to rural areas and other marginalised sectors of the Namibian community while increasing confidence of the public for online service delivery (OPM 2005:14).

As indicated in the conceptualisation of the study, the e-governance implementation strategy in the Public Service of Namibia follows the four phases namely:

- Phase I: Information, whereby the Government provides the public and businesses with relevant information on the web (websites);
- Phase 2: Interaction, which is about Government initiating interaction and exchanging data with the Public, through various applications such as e-mail, Government database search engines as well as downloading of forms or filling-in of forms online;
- Phase 3: Transaction is about entire transactions being completed electronically between government and businesses, the public and internally within the government; and

- Phase 4: Transformation is in which all information systems are integrated and service users can get services at one virtual counter.

The next section explores the implementation of e-Governance Policy in the Public Service of Namibia using the e-Governance Maturity Model.

As part of Phase One, where the government provides information to the various service users through websites, the Office of the Prime Minister established the Public Service Internet/Intranet Gateway in 1997. This Gateway is a multi-level network that links all computers in the various ministries with each other, and serves as the backbone of communication in the Public Service at one level: the Public Service Intranet. The other level of network links the entire Public Service communication system to the World Wide Web – the Internet. Intranet/Internet Gateway operates according to the Network Security Rules and Regulations, which was adopted in 1997 as well as the Acceptable Use Policy on IT Resources, which was adopted in 1998. The Network Security Rules and Regulations aim to ensure that the Internet/Intranet Gateway is secure since there are many risks involved with linking the Public Service intranet to the internet as a whole. The Acceptable Use Policy on IT Resources on the other hand aims to ensure that the Public Service Intranet and Internet resources are not misused or abused. The Acceptable Use Policy also intends to make all users of IT resources in the Public Service aware of their responsibilities (OPM 2003:128-129).

The IT Department has also implemented the Access Control List (ACL) on all gateway routers at all ministries. The aim of ACL is to deny unauthorized access to the ministries networks and block the mass mailing caused by Ssassers/Korgo viruses that hit hard the government network during March/April 2005. ACL and installation of antivirus software, Trend Micro Interscan Virus Wall for internet gateway have resulted in a decrease in the number of callouts to below 10%; porno sites were blocked as well as movies and video downloads at the firewall/proxy servers, leading to a big improvement on internet line speed; and ensuring that all incoming and outbound mails are screened for viruses before reaching the intended recipients (OPM 2006:31-34).

The government internet/intranet gateway runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Internet connection and email access are facilitated through dial-on demand and dig icon lines throughout the country. Internet and email services are now provided to all ministries. Currently, all ministries have websites in place to provide their customers with relevant information. One can therefore say that the Public Service of Namibia has completed phase one of the e-Governance Maturity model. The IT Department has started to put database system infrastructure in place to prepare the Public Service for Phase two, which is interaction. According to OPM (2005:11-36) and OPM (2006:35), apart from the Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS), which is discussed in detail in chapter four, the following database systems are in place in the Public Service of Namibia:

- Voter Registration and Verification System, which is aimed at maintaining the Voters Role and verifying voters at polling stations during elections;

- System for the Administration of funds for under-aged children paid in at the Master of the High Court;
- Pol 6 System, a Crime Statistics Registration System for all crimes committed nation-wide;
- National Examination and Assessment System for the registration of students and students exam results for grades 10 and 12;
- Social Welfare System for the payment of Social and War Veteran Pensions as well as Maintenance and Disability Grants;
- Customs and Excise Administration System for processing and controlling import and export consignments;
- Funds Control System for expenditure control against budget on goods and services and for payment to suppliers for services rendered;
- Integrated Financial Management System, which will replace the Funds Control System;
- Subsistence and Travel System to process advance payments and claims for official trips;
- Payroll, which is a Salary Processing System;
- Bank Reconciliation, a system to maintain the Bank Account of Government;
- General Ledger, a system to maintain the General Ledger of Government;
- Inland Revenue System, a system to administer tax and tax returns;
- Border Control and Passport System for capturing and controlling border entries as well as administrating the registration and passport issuing process;

- National Population Registration System, a population registration and maintenance system for births, deaths, marriages, name change and identity documents;
- Integrated Communication System for registering job seekers, service providers, training providers, employers and employees;
- Cabinet Documents and Resolution Registration System for registering Cabinet documents submitted by ministries and resolutions taken by Cabinet;
- Maritime Information Management System, the registration and issuing system for boats, seafarers, boat builders and other sea going staff; and
- Offender Management System for administering inmates.

Therefore the Public Service of Namibia is busy with Phase two interaction, where the government is initiating the exchange of data with the public through various applications such as e-mail, government database systems (currently being worked on) as well as downloading of forms. Apart from the database systems, which are being worked on, the Public Service of Namibia will also not be able to move to the transaction phase, where the service users can conduct online transactions due to lack of e-laws.

3.1.4 Use of Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill

The Namibian ICT policy has recommended the creation of a legal and regulatory regime and framework on electronic transactions and use of ICTs. The e-Governance Policy which facilitates the provision of government services via ICTs, also

reaffirmed the need for a new legal framework. The policy stated that such a framework should provide for the recognition of electronic messages, electronic authentication, electronic payment system standards and interoperability, procurement, customs and taxation. The policy further indicated that there should be a regulation of consumer protection, protection of privacy and communication as well as security of electronic signatures (OPM 2005:45).

Therefore the Namibian ICT Policy as well as the E-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia made provisions for e-laws, which led to the drafting of the Use of Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill in Namibia. According to OPM (2005:1-2), the aim of the Bill is to provide the public with legal certainty on, and trust in, everyday electronic communication, transactions and information systems management in relation to the use of electronic signatures, records and archives. The Bill also provides for penalties for unauthorised use of internet and ICTs. The Bill further encourages the use of ICTs, e-governance and e-commerce services and protect the public, consumers and clients, from misuse and unauthorised use of ICTs.

The Bill covers aspects such as the removal of legal barriers to electronic transacting; the legal recognition of data messages and records, electronic signatures and secure electronic signatures; e-commerce; e-government services in terms of electronic filing as well as accepting and transmitting documents, issuing permits or licences in the form of data messages and to make or receive payment in electronic form; limitation of liability of service providers or intermediaries; statutory provision for

cyber crimes such as unauthorised access, interception and interference; misuse; electronic fraud; electronic extortion as well as attempting aid and abetting. Those who would be convicted of offences, are liable to a fine of N\$50 000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years (OPM 2005:8-9).

In the Namibian context, electronic signature is defined as data in electronic form, including electronic sound, symbol or process attached to or logically associated with a data message and executed or adopted by a person with intent to sign the data message. The secure electronic signature on the other hand, refers to an electronic signature duly recognised in terms of section 10 of the Bill, which is created and can be verified through the application of a security procedure or combination of security procedures that ensures that such electronic signature:

- Is unique to the signer for the purpose for which it is used;
- Can be used to identify objectively the signer of the data message;
- Was created and affixed to the data message by the signer or using a means under the sole control of the signer; and
- Was created and is linked to the data message to which it relates in a manner such that any changes in the data message would be revealed (OPM 2005:12-13). However, the Bill has not yet been enacted in Namibia.

3.2 Other E-Governance Initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia

3.2.1 Information and Communication Technology Policy for Education

The ICT Policy for Education was adopted in 2005. The purpose of the policy is to prepare all Namibia's learners, students, teachers and communities of today for the world economy of tomorrow (GRN, undated manuscript: 1). The overall policy goals are to: produce ICT literate citizens, who are capable of working and participating in the new economies and societies arising from ICT and related developments; leverage ICT to assist and facilitate learning for the benefit of all learners and teachers across the curriculum; improve the efficiency of educational administration and management at every level from the classroom, school library, through the school and on to the sector as a whole; broaden access to quality educational services for learners at all levels of the education system; as well as set specific criteria and targets to help classify and categorise the different development levels of using ICT in education (GRN undated manuscript: 4).

The policy is managed by the Executive Committee while the Steering Committee has been established to coordinate the implementation of the policy. The deployment of ICTs in the education sector is based on the following priorities:

1. Colleges of Education and related in-service programmes
2. Schools with secondary schools
3. Teacher education programmes at tertiary institutions
4. Vocational training
5. Primary Schools, Libraries and Community Centres, Adult Education Centres, and Special Needs Education (GRN undated script:9).

According to (GRN: undated manuscript: 13-14), staff training will take form of pre- and in-service training for teachers as well as training for pre-service lecturers, principals, school advisors and inspectors, administrative staff and ICT trainers.

The role for ICT in the curriculum consists of three aspects, namely: the curriculum for ICT skills and knowledge (ICT Literacy Skills), ICT as a curriculum subject (ICT as a Subject) and the curriculum for the usage of ICT within subjects other than ICT (Cross Curricular ICT) (GRN undated script:14).

It is expected that performance measures of the policy will be published in terms of:

- Levels of basic ICT literacy for Secondary School leavers;
- Levels of confidence in using ICT amongst teachers and other educational staff;
- Levels of access to ICT resources by students/learners (broken down by education level)
- Level of access to ICT resources by teachers (broken down by education level, which they teach);
- Usage of ICT to support teaching and learning (broken down by curriculum); and
- Availability and usage of electronic teaching support materials to support each curriculum (GRN undated manuscript:15).

A comprehensive Implementation Plan Guide has been developed to implement the ICT Policy for education. The plan is being implemented through an ICTs in Education Initiative called Tech/na!, which was launched by the Ministry of Education on 13 September 2006 at Safari Hotel in Windhoek, Namibia. Tech/na! is a Damara>Nama word meaning “technology is good”.

The preliminary cost estimate of Phase One of the Tech/na! Initiative is approximately N\$209,903,000 (approximately US\$30.8 million) over the next three years (2007/08-2009/10). The cost is calculated using the exchange rate of 31 July 2006, where US\$1.00 equals N\$6.81 (GRN 2006:74).

Since the Tech/na! initiative was just launched, no performance measures have been published to determine how the education sector is doing with regard to achieving its goals, priorities and development targets as per the ICT Policy for Education. More information on the Tech/na! Initiative is available at www.tech.na.

3.2.2 E-Learning Centre

According to GRN (2006:52-53), over the past few years, a number of different education initiatives/institutions have been involved in the training, development and provision of e-learning. In June 2005, all key education stakeholders in Namibia agreed to participate in the creation of an E-Learning Centre (ELC) to coordinate and support the technology-enhanced teaching and learning activities of all educational institutions. The ELC will ensure that e-learning is a recognized educational method which allows education and training to be accessible to learners at all levels.

Philander (2006:7) indicated that the e-Learning Centre will ensure that Namibia's educators have access to up-to-date educational content and training by facilitating online training programmes as well as regularly reviewing the mass of information available in electronic format.

The Namibian E-Learning Centre was launched in April 2006 through a partnership between the Namibian Open Learning Network (NOLNet) and InWent (Capacity Building International, Germany). The Namibian ELC is an autonomous, self-sustaining unit, offering a wide range of services to meet the partners' education and

training needs. Since its launching, the ELC has already carried out a number of local and international training courses in both online and face to face formats. These courses are: policy and decision makers, storyboard and production workshops, which took place in April 2006; as well as the technical workshop on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) that took place in May 2006. About 18 participants from the various educational institutions in Namibia have participated in the abovementioned courses. The ELC has also been contracted to offer a nine month course on E-Learning Development and Implementation for the 25 e-Learning specialists from the African countries such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania, Egypt and Rwanda. The course is being offered by two ELC facilitators and two external specialists from a company called InWent.

The ELC future activities include: delivering the e-learning and implementation course on a profit-making basis; establishing a physical centre for ELC with production facilities; establishing an ELC website for all appropriate learning and teaching materials; as well as the production and distribution of full course materials in e-learning format for Physical Science, Mathematics, English and Life Science subjects. The ELC is accessible at: <http://kewl.polytechnic.edu.na/>.

The next section looks at how these ICT policies and developments have affected Namibia's ranking globally in terms of e-Government.

3.3 Namibia and e-Government Global Rankings

Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, has been conducting global e-government analysis since 2001. According to West (2006:3), 1782 government websites in 198 different countries were analysed during June and July 2006 with a view of investigating electronic government. The investigation focused on the following features: online publications, online database, audio video clips, non-native languages or foreign language translation, disability access, privacy policy, security features, online services (defined as online services only if the entire transaction can occur online) and digital signatures amongst others. The key findings show that:

- 29% of government websites analysed, offer services that are fully executable online;
- 94 % of websites in 2006 provide access to publications while 72% have links to databases;
- 26% show privacy policies, while 14% have security policies; and
- 23% of government websites have some form of disability access, meaning such websites can be accessed by persons with disabilities.

Countries vary extremely in their overall performance based on the analysis. The most highly ranked nations include: South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, the United States, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Germany, Japan and Spain.

In terms of e-Government rankings as well as Government Sites offering Online Services by region of the world, North America scores the highest while Africa scores the lowest in the rankings.

Table 1: E-Government Ratings and Percentage of Government Sites offering Online Services by Region of the World in 2006

Region of the World	E-Government Ratings	Government Sites Offering Online Services
North America	43.1%	71%
Pacific Ocean Islands	32.4%	48%
Asia	35.9%	42%
Western Europe	35.2%	34%
Middle East	29.4	31%
South America	28.0%	30%
Eastern Europe	29.2%	12%
Central America	25.0%	11%
Russia/Central Asia	30.6%	11%
Africa	24.3%	9%

Source: West (2006: 4 & 8)

Namibia is ranked 169 out of 198 countries and its performance is as follows in terms of individual country profiles for selected features in 2006.

Table 2: Namibia's Profile on E-Government Selected Features

Selected Features	Online Services	Publications	Databases	Privacy Policy	Security Policy	Disability Accessibility
Percentage	8	75	50	17	0	0

Source: West (2006:16-20).

Although Namibia has made progress with regard to ICT policies and has put in place ICT infrastructure, Namibia still needs to put privacy, security policies as well as e-laws in place. This will allow the Public Service of Namibia to conduct online transactions, therefore moving from interaction to transaction phase in terms of e-Governance Maturity Model, which might improve Namibia's global ranking in e-Government.

3.4 The Online Dissemination of Information Initiative

The online dissemination of information to government officials was initiated by the Efficiency and Charter Unit together with the Department of Public Service Management and IT Department in 2003 as part of Public Service Reforms Initiatives, which are targeting public servants under the slogan “*Together we can make a difference*”. It was developed to supplement the Pocket Guide: Being a Public Servant in Namibia and was implemented through the website called Public Service Information Online (OPM 1999:3).

The aim of the initiative include: making information quickly accessible to public servants in a way that is very current and serves as record/history of documents that can be researched on; and making information available to public servants across all levels to have well informed public servants and empowered in the performance of their duties. Therefore the website was meant to disseminate information especially which was only accessible to Personnel Officers or through Personnel Offices to all government employees in an electronic format. The online dissemination of information to government employees was also meant to reduce the workload in the Personnel Offices in terms of manual distribution of human resources information to employees in their respective ministries.

The website contains online information that is meant to be disseminated to all government employees. The information on the website includes:

- **What is new**, where new circulars are posted;
- **Acts** which employees at different levels require in the performance of their duties such as the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, Labour Act No. 6 of 1992, Public Service Act of No. 13 of 1995, Public Service Commission Act No. 2 of 1990 and the State Finance Act No. 31 of 1991;
- **Human resources development** contains the Training Policy for the Public Service of Namibia as well as procedures on how to attend training offered within and outside the Namibian Public Service;
- **Information Technology** policies, procedures and standards;
- **Medical Aid** part, which has the list of service providers as well as latest briefs, information and notices;
- **Public Service Reform Initiatives** part, which has a brief overview of the following: Vision 2030, National Development Plan, Medium-term Expenditure Framework, Performance and Effectiveness Management Programme, Public Service Charters, Performance Management System and the Policy on Decentralisation;
- **Vacancies** that are advertised within the Public Service of Namibia;
- **Information** regarding **Personnel Officer's Meetings**;
- **Forms** that are available for downloading such as application for employment, advertised post, participation in the Home Owner's Scheme for staff members, rent allowance and training; contract for employment for

persons who are not Namibian citizens recruited abroad; scheduling of candidates for advertised posts; study leave contract and vacation leave form;

- **Application systems** such as Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) and Integrated Communication System (ICS), which can only be accessed by authorised users;
- **Download page** that enable employees to download the required software to enable them to access the website and download documents;
- **Audit and financial** matters, which have not yet been activated; and
- **Human resources management** which covers information on the Prime Minister and Public Service Commission's delegations, Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), Staff Rules and Circulars. Human resources management information mostly focuses on the conditions of employment and service benefits. The conditions of employment include: appointments, probation, transfer, promotion, termination of service, daily subsistence allowance, use of official transport, misconduct, grievances, social security benefits and union membership. The service benefits on the other hand include aspects such as: remuneration, pension, retirement, medical aid scheme, official housing, rent allowance and housing scheme, service bonus and leave of absence.

The human resources information makes up most of the information on the website and is required by all employees on a daily basis. Therefore, the study has focused on human resources information to determine the extent to which the initiative has improved service delivery and efficiency in Personnel Offices since Personnel Officers spend a lot of time and resources in ensuring that information regarding conditions of employment and service benefits reach all the employees in their respective ministries. As indicated earlier, the focus of this study is the online dissemination of human resources management information to government employees and not all information that is featuring on the Public Service Information Online Website.

The Public Service Information Online Website is an intranet facility that means the website can only be accessed to government employees, whose ministries are connected to the government server. That was done because information on the website is more internal (public service) oriented and is not meant for external consumption by the general public. Therefore, the content is not for public consumption. The website address is: www.eservice.net.local. The Public Service Information Online Website Home Page is attached as Annexure C.

The research findings on the next chapter will show whether online dissemination of human resources management information has indeed improved service delivery and efficiency in the identified Units.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter focuses on the research findings, which are mainly based on the interviews conducted with the Heads of Personnel Offices of the selected ministries as well as with senior staff members in three Units in OPM, namely: Department of Public Service Management, IT Department as well as the Efficiency and Charter Unit. The chapter first looks at the benefits achieved as a result of the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees; second, it explores the accessibility of the website by the intended users, who are government employees; third, it identifies the challenges that have been encountered in the implementation of the online dissemination of information to government employees. These challenges are analysed using the six aspects of the e-readiness framework by Heeks (2001:17-19). Finally, the chapter assesses how the various e-readiness aspects have affected the phasing in of online dissemination of information to government employees.

4.1 Benefits of Online Dissemination of Information

From the drivers of the initiative perspective, the benefits of online dissemination of information to government employees include:

- Easy updating of staff codes electronically as compared to print media;
- Taking a few hours to make information instantly available through the website as compared to a number of days with the manual system of photocopying, using a lot of toners and paper to copy and send information to ministries;

- The Office of the Prime Minister has stopped the issuing of hard copies of staff rules, circulars and amendment notices to about 30 ministries. For the few ministries that are not connected to the government server and cannot get the staff rules and circulars electronically, such ministries are requested to come and collect the new staff rules/circulars electronically with their memory sticks instead of collecting hard copies from OPM;
- Information on the web is secure since government employees cannot change the content but can only access and download information;
- All human resources information such as staff rules that were previously withheld from government employees who are not personnel officers or human resources practitioners are now accessible by all government employees. Any government employee can access and download those staff rules and not only personnel officers or through personnel officers; and
- The key benefit of the initiative from the drivers' perspective is that it has at least introduced the e-culture in the Public Service of Namibia, especially in personnel offices.

All the personnel officers interviewed highlighted the following benefits realised as result of the introduction of online dissemination of information to government employees:

- It made work much easier to retrieve information online as compared to the past, where ministries use not to get all information timely or not at all;

- It has made it possible for employees, who have computers connected to the government server to access information. This has led to the reduction in the workload of personnel offices since there are no more making copies of circulars and amendment notices, especially for employees based in Windhoek who can access the website and download information on their own. The personnel offices just distribute such information manually to employees in the regions and missions abroad, since they are not connected to the government server;
- No more sending of drivers and messengers to collect the circulars from OPM;
- The downloading of online forms is appreciated because ministries can now download forms online instead of ordering the forms from the Government Stores, which is usually time-consuming;
- For those employees who can access online information, their enquiries are more about the interpretation of staff rules as opposed to merely getting information from personnel offices; and
- It is easy to find circulars online, it saves times and if a particular circular is not on the website, personnel officers request such information from the Department of Public Service Management.

The author has not consulted general government employees to get their perspective on how the initiative is doing since this study is limited to the personnel offices and the three Units in the Office of the Prime Minister.

About 80% of the interaction from the Department of Public Service Management to personnel offices is done online/electronically, via email and through the website where new circulars and amendment circulars are posted. Ministries that are not connected to the government server usually come to OPM and the required information is uploaded in their memory sticks. Personnel Offices on the other hand interact with DPSM via the monthly Personnel Officers Meetings (although the meetings have not been taking place regularly) and use emails, letters and faxes to provide the required information to DPSM. The main areas for interaction are on the interpretation of circulars and staff rules and provision of information. However, not all staff rules and Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) are available in the electronic format. Therefore the key challenge is for the Directorate Human Resources Management (DHRM) to get all staff rules and the public administrative measures in an electronic format by transforming the content of old staff rules in PDF format (Acrobat Reader). Most of the personnel officers interviewed also expressed dissatisfaction with regard to old circulars that are not yet on the website, which forces them to revert back to the manual system or request hard copies from DPSM if the personnel office does not have that particular circular on their files.

Although an assessment has not been done to determine the savings in monetary terms, most interviewees have indicated that the introduction of the initiative has led to savings in terms of printing and photocopying paper as well as cartridges; envelopes, phone calls to request ministries to collect information; petrol in terms of sending drivers and messengers to collect information from Office of the Prime Minister.

4.2 Accessibility of the website

In terms of website hits, the counting of website hits only started in 2005 due to the lack of the program for web count at the introduction of the online dissemination of information to government employees. However, the web count program installed does not indicate the number of people who are accessing the website per day; neither does it show the type of information, which is accessed on the website. The program only indicates the number of unique machines that are accessing the website. Currently, about 224 unique addresses (proxy servers) are accessing the website. In 2005, there were 27 824 hits with an average of 2320 hits per month and 76 hits per day. In 2006 by 24 October, there were 86 596 hits with an average of 7216 hits per month and 237 hits per day.

All the personnel officers interviewed are aware of the website and are accessing it. Most of the interviewees indicated that they are accessing human resources management information such as circulars, staff rules, downloads, vacancy circulars, what is new, medical aid, Acts, Personnel Officers' Meetings on the website. The least accessed information on the website is Reform Initiatives, Human Resources Development as well as Information Technology.

The interviews revealed that most government employees are not aware of the website and therefore are not accessing the website. The way an employee enquires about human resources issues usually informs the personnel officer as to whether

such an employee has accessed the website and has read that specific circular/staff rule or not. The author found that personnel officers are actually raising awareness about the website in their respective ministries to government employees with computers that are connected to the government server.

4.3 Major challenges in the implementation of online dissemination of information

The next sections explore the challenges encountered in the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees, using the six aspects of the e-readiness framework, which are data systems, legal, institutional, human and technological infrastructure as well as leadership and strategic thinking.

4.3.1 Data Systems Infrastructure

Heeks (2001:17) stated that management systems, records and work processes should be in place to provide the quantity and quality of data to support the move to e-governance. Interviewees indicated that the IT Department has started to put in place database systems to prepare the Public Service of Namibia to move from the Information Phase to an Interaction Phase as per the E-Governance Maturity Model.

With regard to the online dissemination of information to government employees, the Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) is a key database system that is in place and should be updated and functional. HRIMS is meant to

allow ministries to capture personnel data; enable government employees at various levels to conduct online transactions in terms of: application and approval of leave, housing subsidies, viewing of leave credits; application of medical aid membership and processing of claims electronically; and allow ministries to provide statistics much faster as compared to the manual systems amongst others. If HRIMS is up-to-date it will enable personnel offices to provide statistics faster instead of using manual system, which is very time consuming, thus enabling personnel offices to focus on their core business instead of routine activities.

The findings show that ministries are at different levels of progress with regard to the implementation of HRIMS. Most ministries are still busy capturing data on personnel records such as personal, appointment, experience, qualification and housing details for staff members. Only a few ministries have gone as far as the capturing of data on leave and probation aspects. Ministries that are ahead in terms of HRIMS are the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Finance as well as the Office of the Prime Minister.

However, interviewees highlighted the following challenges with regard to the implementation of HRIMS: the issue of only two people at IT Department who are assisting all ministries in terms of HRIMS; duplication of efforts where HRIMS a computerised system is running concurrently with the manual system, which creates extra work for personnel offices since instead of just preparing an electronic salary advice for the processing of the payment by the Finance Division, personnel officers still have to prepare a salary advice manually and forward it to Finance Divisions in

their respective ministries for the processing of payments; Lack of management support in addressing the backlog related to the capturing of data on HRIMS; Lack of computers, which is common in most ministries as well as ICT infrastructure in regions to enable ministerial regional offices especially in the Ministry of Education to capture data on the system; Non-assigning the responsibility of HRIMS to a specific person in some ministries; Delays in some ministries due to their approved establishments, which are not yet on HRIMS (OPM still needs to put such approved establishment on the system); as well as the issue of some post designations which are not the same in terms of HRIMS and Financial Integrated Management System such as referring to clerks in HRIMS while when it comes to the Financial Integrated Management System, clerks are referred to as control officers. These are some of the challenges facing HRIMS, which is a crucial database system for the successful implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees. However, it was emphasised that HRIMS can only be used to the maximum if it is linked to the payroll, which is not the case at the moment.

The interviewees suggested that the current problems experienced with HRIMS should be addressed especially the issue of HRIMS running parallel with the manual system and the linking of HRIMS to the payroll. The training of personnel officers both at the head office and in the regions for the capturing and maintenance of data on HRIMS was also emphasised.

These findings confirm that a strong, reliable, updated and linked databases as well as management systems should be in place to support the move towards e-governance. In this case HRIMS could only be beneficial and used for what it is intended for once those issues are addressed and play a critical role with regard to online dissemination of information to government employees. Hopefully, the problems associated with HRIMS would be addressed through the improvement(s) or acquisition of new system by the Office of the Prime Minister, which is envisaged for 2007.

4.3.2 Legal Infrastructure

Although various ICT Policies and the e-Governance Policy have been developed to support ICT and the move towards e-governance, issues such security preparedness, electronic signatures, which are not acceptable in Namibia and lack of e-laws are the major challenges in the Public Service of Namibia. Lack of e-laws has impacted negatively on the online dissemination of information. Since electronic signatures are not allowed in the Public Service of Namibia, the Department of Public Service Management is forced to post circulars on the website without signatures. This has led to a situation where ministries are reluctant to act on unsigned circulars that are provided electronically. As a result ministries request DPSM to provide them with signed hard copies for authenticity and Permanent Secretaries' records. An issue that forces DPSM to revert back to the manual system, it has tried to change in order to save cost and time in terms printing papers, printing cartridges, making copies, phoning ministries to sending drivers or messengers to collect the signed circulars.

The usage of electronic signatures is also impacting negatively on the databases system. For example, even if HRIMS was updated and fully operational in all ministries, it would not have allowed government employees to conduct online transactions in terms of completing and approving of leave, housing subsidy/allowances, medical aid amongst other things due to non-acceptance of electronic signatures.

This confirms the view of the ECA (2003:55) that ICTs will not be effective if cyber laws (e-laws) are not in place and available to the public, to allow ICT system and information stored in the systems to have the same legal of validity as documents stored on paper. West (2006:5) echoed the same view that inability to use digital signatures has slowed the development of online services offered by governments as evident in the Public Service of Namibia.

It is essential to have e-laws in place since lack thereof will prevent the various e-governance initiatives to move to the transaction phase, where service users can conduct online transactions and the online dissemination of information initiative is no exception.

4.3.3 Institutional Infrastructure

Drivers of e-governance

While other countries might not have institutions in place to coordinate, lead, drive e-governance and raise awareness thereof, the e-Governance Policy for the Public Service of Namibia highlights the roles players and their responsibilities with regard to the implementation of e-Governance, which are as follows:

- e-Governance in Namibia is driven by Cabinet through the *Cabinet Committee on the Public Service (CCPS)*;
- Office of the Prime Minister through *IT Department* that advises the Prime Minister in the implementation of ICT programmes and e-governance;
- *Government e-Governance Coordinating Committee*, which comprises of representatives from Government Ministries, Government Institutions and other selected stakeholders to assist and advise OPM in assessing policies, standards and procedures, developing action plans as well as monitoring and evaluating the implementation of e-governance in the public service; and
- *Ministries' e-Governance Implementation Committees*, which adopt given policies and implement specific e-governance projects within their ministries.

However, the findings show that it is not clear in the Office of the Prime Minister, who or which Unit should or is driving e-governance in the Public Service of Namibia, whether it is the Efficiency and Charter Unit as part of the Public Service Reform Initiatives, IT Department or the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister. The interviewees indicated that ideally the Permanent Secretary of

the Office of the Prime Minister together with Under Secretary of IT Department are supposed to oversee and monitor the implementation of e-governance policy, which is currently not happening. As a result none is really taking the final responsibility. The implementation plan for e-governance on the other hand is just giving general guidelines, which has resulted in ministries implementing e-governance projects on a piece-meal basis. A clear indication of ministries implementing e-governance on a piece-meal basis was demonstrated in the implementation of ICT Policy in Education through the Tech/na! initiative where there is no representative from the Office of the Prime Minister as a driver and coordinator of e-governance in the Public Service of Namibia on its steering committee and vice-versa. Therefore, practically, the implementation of e-governance in the Public Service of Namibia is not coordinated from the centre, which is the Office of the Prime Minister.

Raising Awareness about e-governance

The Efficiency and Charter Unit has been raising awareness about e-governance as part of the Public Service Reform Initiatives' Public Awareness Campaign. Awareness is raised during the Trade Shows as well as on Africa Day of the Public Service and Administration, which is on 23rd June annually. The methods that are used to raise awareness include: newspaper inserts, posters, pamphlets and production of videos. For example a video on e-governance was produced for 23 June 2005. As a result, in general, there is no national awareness campaign to highlight the need for the Namibian people, including government employees to become ICT-literate.

Awareness about Online Dissemination of Information

Personnel Officers and Permanent Secretaries are 100% aware of the website that provides online information to government employees. All the personnel officers interviewed were making use of the website to access and download (new) staff rules and circulars in order to forward such information to employees, especially those in regional offices who are not connected to the government server.

Although no survey has been done to determine the awareness level of government employees on the online dissemination of information initiative, there is lack of awareness of the website. In general, employees at the head offices (usually based in Windhoek) can access the website and download information with the exception of those without computers. The main stumbling block however, is that government employees are not aware that the website exists.

Awareness among the general government employees is raised more by a way of mouth, especially by being referred to the website by their personnel officers when they enquire about the staff rules if they have computers which are connected to the government server. In such a case personnel officers first refer employees to the website if they have access to internet, because it is cost-effective for employees to retrieve and download information as compared to making copies for them. Otherwise such information is forwarded to employees electronically via email. The personnel office in the Office of the Prime Minister, for example, has stopped the practice of circulating new staff rules to the employees manually; it has instructed all supervisors to ensure that their subordinates get update/new circulars. The lack of the

website awareness is due to several reasons such as website not having been properly launched and the lack of a robust awareness campaign by IT Department in the form of workshops, road shows and /or soliciting of information for posting on the website.

4.3.4 Human Infrastructure

The human infrastructure focuses on issues of attitudes, knowledge and skills required within the Namibian Public Service in order to initiate, implement and sustain e-governance initiatives. It also takes into account aspects related to mindset gaps such as resistance to change, lack of customer orientation as well as resistance to data sharing (Heeks 2001:18). Therefore, the human infrastructure aspect in this paper will look at ICT training and e-culture in the Public Service of Namibia as well as resistance encountered with regard to the introduction and implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees.

ICT Training in the Public Service of Namibia

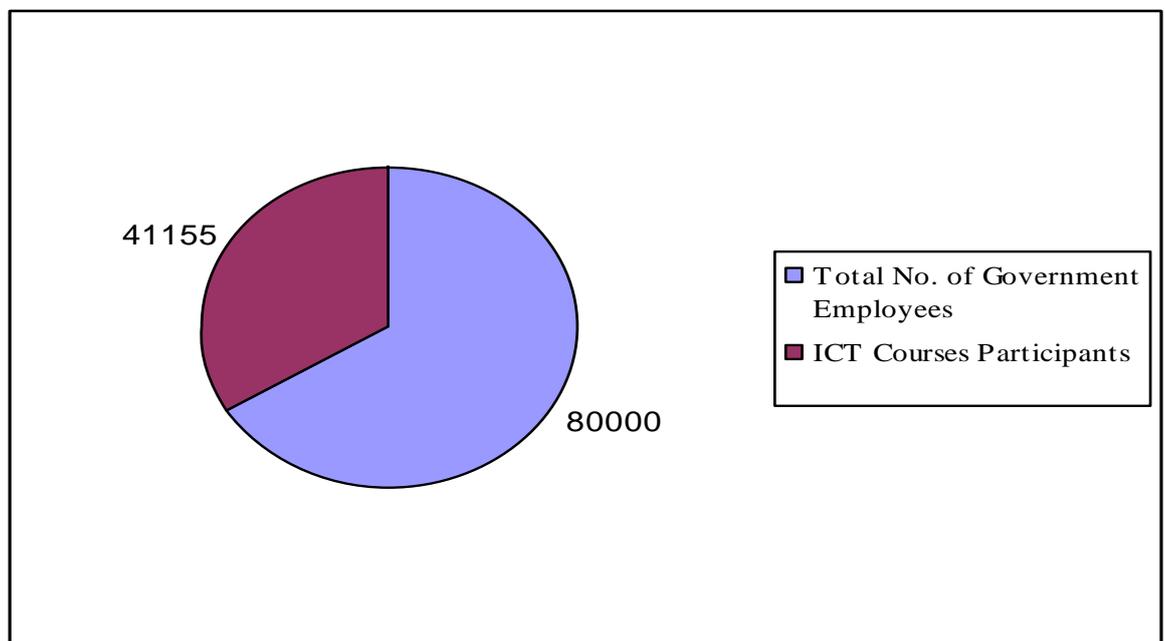
IT Department has an IT Virtual Learning Centre, which offers a wide range of end user courses such as how to use internet, email, excel, word, power point, access etc. and professional courses on demand such as server administration, databases, operating system administration and web development amongst others. The aim of ICT training is to enable government employees to master the computer skills needed in the performance of their duties.

TABLE 3: ICT COURSES OFFERED BY IT DEPARTMENT AND THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

COURSE	YEARS			2003/04	2004/05	
	2002/03 Female	Male	Total			
Networking Foundation 1 & 2	300	253	553	—	—	
LAN/WAN Integration	404	207	611	—	—	
Network Essentials 1, 2 & 3	605	803	1408	—	—	
Networking Technologies 1 & 3	701	110	811	—	—	
TCP/IP concepts and Architecture	244	586	930	—	—	
Supporting MS Windows NT 4.0 Core Tech 1-4	501	400	901	—	—	
MS SOL Server 6.5 System Administration 1-3	250	258	508	25	25	
MS SOL Server 6.5 DB Design & Implementation 1-3	126	258	384	—	—	
HTML 4.0 Fundamentals	480	622	1102	—	—	
HTML 4.0 Advanced Topics	480	622	1102	—	—	
MS Excel 2000 Fundamentals & Expert User	2400	1502	3902	174	174	
MS Power Point Fundamentals & Expert User	1500	1257	2757	25	25	
MS Word 2000 Fundamentals & Expert User	2501	2580	5081	182	182	
MS Windows 2000 User Fundamentals	2804	1200	4004			
MS Windows 2000 Administration 1-3	570	120	690	44	44	
MS Windows 2000 Advanced User	2905	2709	5614	—	—	
MS Windows 2000 Dir. Svcs. Infrastructure 1-3	589	432	1021	—	—	
Introduction to PC Application Software	3906	3807	7713	104	104	
MS Access 2000 Fundamentals & Expert User	596	397	903	22	22	
Netscape Communicator	—	—	—	4	4	
TOTAL	21862	18123	39995	580	580	41155

Source: OPM(2004:15); OPM(2003/04:25) and OPM (2006:35)

Table 1 shows that 41155 government employees have attended ICT courses in the last three years: 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05. 97% of those attended courses in 2002/03 with only 1.4% of the government employees attended ICT training in 2003/04 and 2004/05 respectively according to the data published in the OPM Annual Reports for those three years. If this figure is compared with the estimated number of government employees in the Public Service of Namibia, which is about 80 000, then one can conclude that it is only half of the public service that have attended ICT training.



*The **Pie Chart** above shows the total number of government employees in the Namibian Public Service in relation to the total number of government employees who have attended ICT training for the past three years.*

Again this information is not disaggregated by ministry and job categories to determine the number of government employees who have attended ICT training per ministry and their job categories. What is also interesting is that one government employee can enrol for more than one course per annum, therefore the number of government employees that have actually attended training in those three years might even be far less than the 41155. It is also very interesting that the same number of government employees have attended the exact same type of courses in 2003/04 and 2004/05. The author brought this issue to the attention of the Department responsible for ICT training but no alternate figures were provided. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the ICT literacy in the Public Service is low. As a result, Cabinet have decided that there should be literacy training for all public servants, which will be compulsory for all public servants. The implementation process of the compulsory course will start during the first half of 2007.

Lack of suitably qualified ICT personnel in Government

According to GRN (2004:54), most ministries are understaffed when it comes to ICT. IT Department is running at about 50% of full complement. The skills shortage can be attributed to the slow and inefficient processing of employment applications, unless one is well acquainted with the processes and procedures involved; low remuneration for ICT skills as compared to neighbouring countries as well as lack of suitably defined salary scales. As a result, ministries take short-cuts whereby employees without sufficient training and/or aptitude are placed in ICT positions. There is also a situation where many ICT professionals accept to work in government simply as a stepping stone to other better paying offers.

Lack of ICT Skills

Most of the interviewees indicated that due to lack of ICT skills, employees who are having computers with access to internet and who are connected to the government server are unable to access information on the Public Service Information Online website and therefore the initiative is not really serving its purpose. The author also found out that there is also lack of ICT skills not only at operational levels but also at management levels, due to this ICT is not being utilised to its full capacity.

Moreover, the issue of a policy stating that only government employees whose work requires the use of internet would have their computers connected to internet is hampering the development of ICT skills of certain job categories in the Public Service, which were pointed out during the interviews such as teachers, nurses, cleaners, uniformed personnel, labourers and gardeners amongst others. Therefore the exclusion of certain job categories, which make up most of government employees, make it difficult for the majority of government employees to access information provided to them online. Such a policy is also contradictory to ICT Policy in Education, which is striving to improve ICT skills both of the teachers and learners and having ICT as a subject in the curriculum of the Namibian education system. This is again a clear indication of lack of coordination between the Office of the Prime Minister as the driver and coordinator of e-governance initiatives in the Public Service and line ministries.

Furthermore, there is also a lack of skills to download programs such as the Java software and Acrobat Reader amongst others that should be downloaded first to enable government employees to access online information. In such cases, personnel offices usually explain and show such staff members how to access and download information available to them online. Some personnel officers have even informed the IT Units in their respective ministries to assist the employees to download the required software.

Likewise, the issue of responding to online queries (interaction) did not work since employees were forwarding questions on complex issues that could not be answered immediately. The unit responding to these queries, which is the Directorate of Human Resources Management, was not yet prepared for that role and is heavily overloaded with phone calls on issues that could be handled by personnel officers in ministries.

Equally important, lack of ICT skills has led to the dependency of DPSM on the IT Department to post information on the website. The Department of Public Service Management currently updates and puts content on PDF format and forward to the IT Department for posting on the website. If the IT Department experts are not available or server is down then there are delays in putting such information on the web. This led to DPSM sometimes informing ministries that a certain circular has been released but due to delays from the IT Department, such information is not yet posted on the website; urgent circulars appearing on the website later than expected, which is not useful as well as instances of posting information on the wrong page.

The findings on human infrastructure tend to concur with the challenges identified earlier by OPM (2004:208) such as lack of skilled ICT staff and insufficient ICT training. If the issue of low ICT skills in the Public Service is not addressed, it will have negative effect on future e-governance initiatives.

Lack of e-culture

Most interviewees stated that government employees are slow to start using internet and senior managers are also taking long to buy-in e-governance initiatives due to the lack of e-culture. Due to lack of ICT culture in the Public Service, employees are still relying on manual documents in terms of staff rules and circulars.

Resistance to Change

On the introduction of online dissemination of information to government employees, a multi-disciplinary team was setup to ensure ownership and buy-in by the various stakeholders. As a result, no resistance was experienced with regard to the introduction of online dissemination of information since staff members in the three driving units in OPM namely ECU, DPSM and IT Department saw the benefits of the initiative. The same also applies to personnel offices in ministries as evidenced by the benefits or the advantages experienced as a result of the introduction of the initiative as indicated under 4.1. However, management in OPM had to be convinced that the introduction of online dissemination of information is the better way of providing information to employees and can be done in a secure way. Moreover, in some areas such as financial matters although there was high-level commitment from

the Permanent Secretary, at operational level, there was no cooperation hence the unavailability of financial information on the website. With regard to the implementation of online dissemination of information, staff members in DHRM were reluctant to respond to queries raised on the website since it increased their workload.

However, the resistance was encountered with regard to HRIMS, which is database system for the successful dissemination of online information to government employees. In terms of HRIMS, there was resistance in ministries since they did not see the immediate benefits of the system. Other factors that contributed to resistance include: the increased workload in capturing personnel data on the system; the issue of running HRIMS parallel with the manual system. There was also resistance from salary offices with regard to linking HRIMS to payroll due to fear that employees in salary offices could lose their jobs, a circular had to be issued by the Department of Public Service Management to this effect to reassure the affected employees that they will not lose their jobs. This confirms that ICT is not only good, but it could also be a threat and may lead to negative impacts such as unemployment and alienation as stated by Heeks (2002). Strategies need to be in place to deal with issues of redundancies due to the use of ICTs such as retraining and/or redeploying the affected employees.

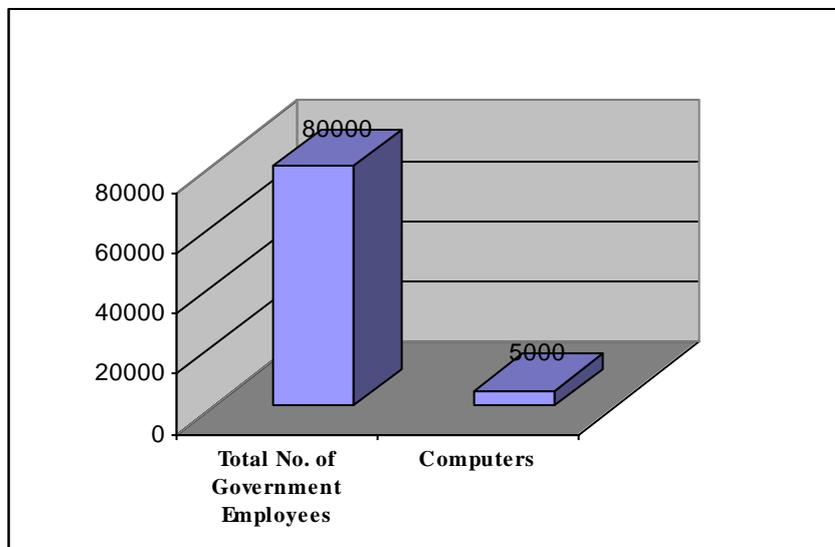
Apart from developing ICT skills, it is essential that mindset issues such as resistance to change are also taken into account to ensure the successful implementation of e-governance initiatives.

4.3.5 Technological Infrastructure

Lack of Computers

Lack of computers has been identified as a challenge. It came out during the interviews that computers in most cases are available to the selected few e.g. those in management positions, therefore people at operational level who are in need of such information cannot access it due to lack of equipments.

The author established that there are approximately 5 000 computers (including laptops) in the Public Service to serve about 80 000 government employees. However, no audit was conducted since 2001 to give the exact figure of computers in the Public Service of Namibia. The 2001 audit indicated that the number of computers were 3500 in the whole Public Service.



The **Bar Chart** above shows the number of computers in the Namibian Public Service in relation to the size of the Public Service.

The breakdown of computers by ministry was not available from IT Department. Therefore, without computers employees cannot access the online information, even if their ministries are connected to the government server.

Connectivity to the Government Server/Intranet Facility

Most of the 5000 computers have access to internet and most ministries in Windhoek are connected to internet via the government server. The connection of ministries to internet via government server is crucial since the Public Service Information Online Website is an intranet facility. The connection to the government server allows employees in the various ministries to access the information on the website. In contrast, very few ministries have some of their regional offices connected and these connections are rather functional driven and not necessarily connected to the general government server. Due to lack of connectivity, government employees in the regions are unable to access the website. The situation of employees in the regions is worsened by managers or supervisors, who do not forward information to their subordinates especially those in the regions. This issue also applies to the government employees employed in the missions abroad. For missions, the personnel office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have to make copies, put them in envelopes and send them with diplomatic bags, which causes delays since sometimes it takes a month for documents to reach the respective missions. If the documents are urgent, the ministry makes use of an international courier company, DHL, which is more expensive. Consequently, government employees in the regions and missions abroad have to rely on personnel offices in their ministries to provide them with manual

information especially on staff rules and circulars, which is time-consuming and cost-ineffective. It is not useful if only a handful of government employees can access information on the website.

Again, when the government server is down, it is problematic since both personnel offices and employees in general cannot access the website and as a result, they have to revert to manual system.

Another issue is that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) is supposed to forward circulars and amendment notices to Regional Councils since they also have the same benefits as the public servants at central government. However, MRLGHRD does not do that; therefore the Directorate of Human Resources Management is forwarding such information manually to the Regional Councils. Hopefully the situation will improve with the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development when all the 13 regions get connected to the government server, which will facilitate other ministries to connect their offices through the 13 political Regional Council Offices.

Finally, it was also stated that the issue of government server being off or down at times has a negative impact since employees cannot get timely information when required.

Low Bandwidth

The speed and bandwidth are very slow, which make the downloading of certain documents such as vacancy circulars to take very long. This negatively affects the timely accessing of information by government employees and can also discourage employees to make use the websites to download documents.

Firewall

One office was found to have a firewall that prevents employees from accessing the website with the exception of employees with access to HRIMS, provided the proxy on the server is deactivated (taken off). As result, employees are provided with information via emails.

Lack and/or limited ICT infrastructure in the Public Service of Namibia has confirmed a concern that has been raised by Heeks (2002) as well as by Shalyefu and Nakakuwa (2005:219) that ICT is widening the gap between those with and those without access to ICT (digital divide). An issue evidenced by the limited number of computers, connectivity to government server, low bandwidth and firewalls which restricts accessibility to online information by the majority of government employees in the Public Service of Namibia. All these technological challenges should be rectified to allow government employees to use the facility availed to them in the form of Public Service Information Online website to its full potential.

4.3.6 Leadership and Strategic Thinking

Although there is an e-governance vision in place for Namibia, which is “*To make Namibia a cyber country enabling all citizens as e-citizens*” (OPM 2005:1) and various ICT policies have been developed, the key challenge is to ensure that financial resources are available to implement such policies. Coordination across the Public Service is also another area, which is essential to ensure successful implementation of e-governance initiatives.

Limited understanding of e-governance benefits among senior managers and policy makers has led to lack of commitment in making use of ICT to achieve the national development goals. In the end, the e-governance vision will remain a dream if the Public Service of Namibia is not e-ready in terms of data systems, legal, institutional, human and technological infrastructure, which will ensure the successful implementation of e-governance initiatives of which the online dissemination of information is one.

4.4 Online Dissemination of Information and the e-Governance Maturity Model

In terms of the four phases of the e-Governance Maturity Model, the online dissemination of information to government employees initiative has completed phase one, which is information. In this case, it is the online provision of human resources related information through the Public Service Information Online Website.

The initiative is currently in phase two, whereby there is interaction via email between Department of Public Service Management and personnel officers as well as between government employees in general and other drivers of the initiative, such as the Efficiency and Charter Unit as well as IT Department through facilities such as post a question and feedback on the site amongst others. In the case of post a question, government employees post their queries via email (address: ecu@opm.gov.na) to the Efficiency and Charter Unit, which in return forward them to the Directorate of Human Resources Management for a response to that particular employee via email. However, it was stated by the interviewees that the process of responding to online queries needs to be streamlined since it is currently cumbersome.

The initiative has not yet moved to the transaction phase where government employees can conduct online transactions on issues such as the completion and approval of leave, housing subsidy and rent allowance as well as the processing and payment of medical aid claims amongst others. This is due to lack of e-laws in

Namibia that allows the usage of electronic signatures as well as the HRIMS, a database system, which is essential for the successful implementation of the initiative. Consequently, online dissemination of information to government employees has not moved to the transaction phase.

It is therefore essential that e-readiness aspects such as data systems, legal, institutional, human and technological as well as issues of leadership and strategic thinking are taken into account, since the success of any e-governance initiative depends on the extent to which the Public Service is e-ready in those areas.

In general, the findings of the study confirms that the challenges encountered in the Public Service of Namibia with regard to the implementation of e-governance initiatives are similar to those experienced by other public services as reflected in the literature review.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The online dissemination of information to government employees has to a certain extent improved service delivery and efficiency, especially in the provision of human resources related information from the Office of the Prime Minister to Personnel Offices of the 30 ministries. This is evidenced by the benefits of the initiative as noted earlier in Chapter Four such as the savings in terms of time and costs associated with copying and printing of staff rules and circulars as well as the collection of such circulars from OPM and distribution thereof in ministries. Therefore, the initiative has led to efficiency gains in terms of producing the same outputs at lower cost and in less time. It is much quicker now to access online information for both personnel officers and government employees in general. Hence when compared to manual distribution of human resources related information the initiative has led to savings as well as reduction in the workload of personnel officers. The initiative has also somehow introduced an e-culture in personnel offices although there is still a long way to go before an e-culture is internalised in the Public Service of Namibia. In the opinion of the author, given the limitations of the two frameworks, namely the e-readiness framework and e-Governance Maturity Model employed for this thesis, the author is still convinced that service delivery has improved as indicated above.

Results are mixed with regard to the accessibility of online information by government employees. The study clearly revealed that the majority of government employees who are working in the regions and missions abroad are unable to access the website due to lack of connectivity to government server, since the website is on intranet. In some ministries, employees have ICT facilities to access the website but do not do so due to lack of awareness about the website.

ICT infrastructure and capacity building has affected the implementation of online dissemination of information due to issues such as limited ICT facilities as only about 5000 computers serve approximately 80 000 government employees in the Public Service of Namibia; lack of connectivity to the government server by ministerial regional offices, thus excluding the majority of employees in accessing the website; shortage of qualified ICT personnel in the Namibian Public Service as well as lack of ICT skills amongst government employees to utilise the initiative to its full potential.

Issues of legal and data systems infrastructure have impacted on the phasing in of the online dissemination of information to government employees since the initiative is still in phase two of the e-Governance Maturity Model. The study shows that two issues affect the movement of the initiative to the transactional phase. The first issue is a lack of a reliable database system since HRIMS is not operating in the way that it should. The second issue is a lack of e-laws since, without the usage of electronic signatures the government employees are unable to conduct online transactions. The study demonstrates that the phasing in of e-governance initiatives using the e-

Governance Maturity model depends on how the Namibian Public Service is e-ready in terms of the six aspects of the e-readiness framework.

Lack of awareness about the online dissemination of information and e-governance in general as well as coordination of e-governance initiatives by the Office of the Prime Minister have been highlighted as key issues in terms of institutional infrastructure.

With regard to the aspects of leadership and strategic thinking, the commitment and buy-in of both senior managers and policy makers in the Government of Namibia have been identified as critical to ensure the successful implementation of e-governance initiatives.

Due to the above-mentioned issues, the online dissemination of information to government employees has not been fully utilised to its full potential.

In order to improve the implementation of the online dissemination of information and to ensure the success of future e-governance initiatives, the following strategies should be considered in the Public Service of Namibia:

- Enacting e-laws to ensure the successful phasing in of e-governance initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia;

- Providing incentives to all government employees to obtain ICT qualifications; those qualifying could be eligible for salary increases or promotions. This will enable the Public Service of Namibia to increase ICT skills base. Political office bearers and public service managers should show leadership by visibly enhancing their own basic ICT skills;
- Putting in place an integrated ICT strategy and ensuring coordination among the various stakeholders for the successful implementation of e-governance projects;
- Developing a national ICT awareness campaign, highlighting the need for the Namibian people to become ICT-literate; and
- Investing in the ICT infrastructure in the Namibian Public Service, taking into account the issue of regional connectivity to narrow the digital divide that currently exists between ministerial head-offices in Windhoek and the ministerial regional offices.

The author found both the e-readiness framework and e-Governance Maturity Model useful in assessing the implementation of online dissemination of information to government employees and can be used to assess the e-readiness and/or implementation of other e-governance initiatives. The e-readiness framework focuses on issues that should be considered to ensure successful implementation of e-governance projects in general. The e-Governance Maturity Model on the other hand is a strategy that could be adopted by organisations and governments to implement e-governance on a phased approach. The two frameworks complement each other. However, both frameworks do not explore the financial issues required to implement

e-governance initiatives. Therefore the author was unable to assess the financial implications of the implementation of current and future e-governance projects in the Public Service of Namibia and elsewhere.

Finally, if the various aspects of the e-readiness framework are taken into account in the introduction and implementation of e-governance initiatives, then e-governance benefits such as reduced costs of service delivery, improved efficiency streamlined government procedures as well as creating a choice for the public sector to do things differently could be achieved. This would enable the Public Service of Namibia to make use of ICT to improve service delivery to citizens as well as businesses and ultimately achieve the national development goals as well as the national Vision 2030.

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ANNEXURE A: LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS***Efficiency and Charter Unit***

1. What were the objectives of the online dissemination of information to government employees?
2. What are the major problems that faced the Unit during
 - a. the development; and
 - b. the implementation of this initiative?
3. Was there any resistance from other Units with regard to
 - a. the development; and
 - b. the implementation of the initiative?
4. Who is driving the e-governance initiative in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. What is the role of that/those driver(s)?
 - b. To what extent is that/those driver(s) carrying out that role?
5. Who is responsible for raising awareness of e-governance initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. How is such awareness being raised?
 - b. Is it effective? Motivate your answer
 - c. How can such awareness campaigns be strengthened?
6. How can future e-governance projects be improved?

Department Public Service Management

1. What are:
 - a. the advantages
 - b. the disadvantages of the online dissemination of information to government employees (e-service) initiative?
2. How does the introduction of online dissemination of information to public servants affect the interaction between the Department and personnel offices in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. How does the Department consult Personnel Officer/and government employees in terms of information provided on the Public Service Information Online Website?
3. Was there any resistance within the Department and from personnel officers with regard to the introduction of the Initiative? Motivate your answer
4. How does the introduction of online dissemination of information to public servants affect the interaction between the Department and IT Department?
5. How can the initiative be improved?
6. How would the Department respond to ICT developments?

Department Public Service Information Technology Management (IT Department)

1. What is the role of the Department on
 - a. the development ; and
 - b. the implementation of e-governance initiatives?
2. Who is driving the e-governance initiative in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. What is the role of that/those driver(s)?
 - b. To what extent is that/those driver(s) carrying out that role?
3. What are laws and/or policies guiding the e-governance activities in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. How have such laws affected the implementation of e-governance projects?
 - b. How far is DPSITM with the implementation of the e-governance policy?
 - c. What are the problems experienced with regard to the implementation of the e-governance policy?
 - d. What are the potential challenges the Department will face with regard to the implementation of future ICT projects envisaged in the e-Governance policy?
4. How does the ICT infrastructure affect the implementation of e-governance projects?
 - a. How many government employees have computers?
 - b. How many of those have computers with access to internet?

- c. How many government employees have access to computer with internet facility? Information can be disaggregated by OMA, Department, Directorate, Division, Sections and individual level
 - d. How many OMAs have regional offices that are not connected to the government server? Why is that?
 - e. Why is the Public Service Information Online Website an intranet facility?
5. How does capacity building affect the implementation of e-governance projects in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - a. Which institution is responsible for ICT training in the Public Service of Namibia?
 - b. What types of courses does such institution offer?
 - c. Who is attending those courses?
 - d. Which levels of government employees are attending those courses? – A breakdown of the type of courses and number of participants per annum will be useful.
 - e. What is the level of IT literacy in the Public Service of Namibia? What makes you say that?
6. How many government employees are accessing the Public Service Information Online?
 - a. What type of information such officials are accessing?
7. What are the challenges facing the Department with regard to the implementation of this Initiative?
8. How can the accessibility of the e-service website be improved?

Personnel Offices

1. How has the online provision of information affected the work of Personnel Office in your Ministry?
2. Do you know that employees in your Ministry are making use of the e-service website? Motivate your answer
3. Do you refer staff in your Ministry to the e-service website, when they are enquiring e.g. about staff rules? Motivate your answer
4. How has the online dissemination of information affected the interaction between Personnel Office and the Department Public Service Management in the Office of the Prime Minister?
5. Which type of information does Personnel Officers access on the Public Service Information Online Website?
 - a. What are the major problems your Personnel Office experiences in accessing the Public Service Information Online website in general?
 - b. How can such problems be addressed?

ANNEXURE B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

EFFICIENCY AND CHARTER UNIT (ECU)

1. Mr Etienne Maritz, Director: ECU
2. Ms Ingenesia Murangi, Deputy Director: ECU
3. Ms Yrika Manluco, Deputy Director: ECU

DEPARTMENT PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT (DPSM)

1. Mr Axel Kessler, Former Acting Under Secretary: DPSM and Director:
Human Resources Management
2. Ms Sabine Kownatzki-Pell, Director: Human Resources Development
3. Mr Deon Van Zyl, Deputy Director: Personnel Policy Division
4. Ms Valerie da Grass, Chief Human Resource Systems Analyst: Personnel
Policy Division

*DEPARTMENT PUBLIC SERVICE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
MANAGEMENT (DPSITM)*

1. Mr Stefanus Van Staden, Director: Systems Development and
Implementation Division
2. Ms Elizabeth Asino, Director: Quality Assurance Division

PERSONNEL OFFICERS (NOW HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS)

1. Ms Anné De Klerk, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Office of the Prime Minister
2. Ms M.M. Cook, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: National Assembly
3. Mr S. Morris, Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
4. Mr J. M. Kaveto, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Mr E. Ferris, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Safety and Security
6. Mr Simeon Amushelelo, Senior Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Lands and Resettlement
7. Ms Alta Strauss, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
8. Mr Isaak Fredericks, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
9. Ms K Du Plessis, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Trade and Industry
10. Mr Kondjeni Tjilale, Chief Human Resource Practitioner: Ministry of Education

ANNEXURE C: PUBLIC SERVICE INFORMATION ONLINE WEBSITE HOME PAGE

Government Services Online Home Page - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://www.eservice.net.local/> Go Links

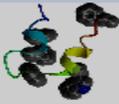
Public Service Information Online 16/11/2006

Home | [O/M/A List](#) | [FAQ's](#) | [Post a Question](#) | [Site Feedback](#) | [Site Search](#)

Site Search

- Whats New
- Acts
- Audit Matters
- Charters
- Financial Matters
- HR Management
- HR Development
- IT Technology
- Medical Aid
- Reform Initiatives
- Vacancies
- Pers Officers' Meeting
- Download Forms
- Application Systems

Foreword:



The eService web site was officially launched on June 23, 2003 by the Right Honorable Prime Minister, Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab. The focus of the web site being the providing of government information online, in order to facilitate the process of creating an informed government.

Public Service Charter Principle:

NON-DISCRIMINATION
Ensuring that services are available and applied equally to all.

Site Notes :

- The government proxy servers were reconfigured for use by eService. eService may now be accessed via www.eservice.net.local.

Required proxy server settings:
Address: 172.16.3.11 port 3128 or 172.16.5.44 port 3128

PMS Information

PS Pocket Guide

E-Governance Policy

Vacancies (October/November 2006)

Software Download Page

Inspirational Quote:
"Always forgive your enemies-nothing annoys them so much." Oscar Wilde

Useful Hints:
This web site is best viewed using a 800x600 pixel resolution or greater. Remember to update your virus protection software definition files.

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