



BEST PRACTICES IN INNOVATION

UNITED NATIONS

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD WINNERS 2006

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Category 1: *Improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the public service.*

1. Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland – The Netherlands

Enlarging and deepening democracy by enabling all to participate in free, transparent elections by installing the Rijnland Internet Election (RIES)

The challenge: In the Netherlands, the authorities have been putting their efforts to organize efficient election systems within the tight budget allowance. In order to reduce the cost of elections and allow as many voters as possible to participate in the election, the Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland installed the Rijnland Internet Election System (RIES) in the fall of 2004.

The solution: RIES is designed to allow all the eligible voters to cast vote without changing their current internet systems. RIES does not require voters to install new hard/software or to have special equipments to cast vote through RIES. Rather, it is designed in a user friendly manner enabling it to be accessible by everyone, even those with the bare minimum computer knowledge and skills. The important purposes for the installation of RIES is to achieve cost efficiency and to gain flexibility in voters' participation and improve high participation rate in the election. The Public Water Board Elections have been the largest formal internet elections in the worlds so far.

There are many risks involved in installing the internet election method such as infection to computer viruses, complication of its utility, and confidentiality of voters' personal information. Questions and concerns have been raised when installing this new voting technological system: trustworthiness, confidentiality, and admissible for a large percent of the population. Also, the new voting system has to meet fundamental requirements of the election: no person should be allowed to vote more than once; the vote should be confidential; each correctly cast vote should be counted; and the voters should be able to trust that their vote is counted.

The mission for the authority was to resolve possible problems that might surface in the installation of RIES: how to install this complicated internet election system for all eligible voters without interfering in their right to vote, how all citizens could participate in the voting system flawlessly, and how to offer people who were unable to participate in this system, an alternate election method.

The RIES project was successful in meeting its goals. First of all, it is not a mandatory method of voting for citizens; therefore, eligible voters are able to choose their voting methods either by mail or internet. It also gives benefit to handicapped people and allows them to cast their votes from anywhere without getting any additional help. One of the special features if RIES is that it is transparent: voters are able to check how their votes are processed; voters can verify the tally process; and non- eligible voters can also check the updated results.

RIES has proven its utility satisfactorily. In 2004, Burger@Overheid.nl (e-Citizen Program) conducted a survey regarding the participants' reaction to e-voting system. The outcome of the survey after the voter's experienced e-voting system was that 79% of participants preferred to cast votes through internet, while 9% of voters still preferred the ballot box voting system. One of the major factors contributing towards the success of RIES was the multidisciplinary nature of the team who were not only extremely dedicated, possessed the right legal and technical expertise but also were flexible and open to new ideas.

The internet election system RIES allowed more than 99% of all voters to use the system without any change to their existing PC and internet environment. Any other formal government election can adapt RIES with little cost and little change, it is beneficial for both the voters and the government officials as it enables citizens to become a participant in policy-making and aids the government to deliver in a cost-effective, responsive, and transparent manner.

2. The Rwanda National Examinations Council (RNEC) – Rwanda

Promoting transparency and public accountability to bring justice and equity to all citizens of Rwanda

The Challenge: The Rwandan education system was riddled with corruptions and discriminations based on religion, ethnicity, nepotism, and regionalism. Depending on the family's status, their ethnicity, and religion, some children could not even attend secondary school. Even though they were accepted for school, they were sent to the school with low standard which was located far from their houses. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 was said to be a direct result of this failure of equity. The government of Rwanda faced the challenge to reduce injustice and corruption in the public service system, and bring equity to the community. The mission for the Rwandan government was to examine what could and should have been changed in education system in the community.

The Solution: Before 1994, the primary school results and records had never been disclosed. According to Cooksey (1992), 85% of the entrants were selected based on their ethnic and regional quotas, 10% were selected by churches, and 5% were selected by the Minister of Education. Ethnic quotas were allocated based on a national population of 90% Hutu, 9% Tutsi, and only 1% Twa. There was no integration of human values in the education system. Since 1995, several meetings had been held to discuss changes and needs for the Rwandan community. In May 1996, the conference was held to harmonize notional curricula, and to draft the structure of the new national examinations system. In 1998, the cabinet set up the Rwanda National Examinations Council (RNEC) as a special national commission to resolve of for test development, administration of examination. The priorities and purpose of the RNEC has been to ensure the individual candidates are given the rights to select schools or institutions that have appropriate standard of learning systems. The RNEC is mandated by law to respond to public concerns and queries in an appropriate manner. By disclosing the information to the public, stakeholders gain satisfaction and acknowledge the RNEC's accountability.

In addition, the RNEC has a resident auditor who inspects whether the Council's activities are as planned, and are staying within the budget. The RNEC has been collaborating with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) that was established after the Rwandan genocide of 1994 to promote national unity and reconciliation among all Rwandans in order to improve equity, transparency, and accountability of the systems.

As a result, since its establishment, the RNEC has been improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the Rwanda public service. For the first time in Rwandan educational history, school records, and examination results have become available to the public as a sign of equity, and transparency. By doing so, parents, students and the community acknowledge their individual rights and equal treatments within the system. Also, the RNEC has been putting efforts to fill the gap between rich and poor, and urban and rural. This opportunity became more beneficial especially to children who lost their parents from the genocide of 1994, orphans, and children from

poor families. The seat for examination has become open for everyone, and has resulted in equity for all. Moreover, since the establishment of the RNEC, many Rwandans have completed their secondary education, and pursued higher education; thus it is contributing to the ministry of education's policy (education for all).

Category 2: Improving the delivery of services

1. Masaiti District Health Management Board – Zambia

Improving the public service delivery capacity and bringing better healthcare and Medicare to the community of Zambia through collaborative partnerships

The Challenge: HIV/AIDS has become one of the fastest growing killers in Zambia. HIV/AIDS takes away people's health, affecting their ability to work and maintain a decent standard of life. In 2000, UNAIDS stated that "sub-Saharan Africa has just over 10% of the world's population, but is home to more than 60% of all people living with HIV." Also, HIV/AIDS accounts for the major cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa. The Government of the Republic of Zambia is faced with the enormous challenge to combat the health crisis in the community by improving service delivery to all citizens.

The Solution: The primary objectives of Masaiti District Health Management Board (MDHMB) are to reduce the maternal mortality and infant mortality, and to reduce the high incidences of malaria, HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. This is also a reflection in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. In 1997, the Masaiti District Health Management Board was appointed by the Minister of Health to oversee the provision of health services after the enactment of the National Health Services Act of 1995.

In order to improve public service delivery system and enhance its quality, the Board built partnerships with other professional associations, collaborated with many organizations and enlisted support from the community.

The MDHMB's partners are as follows.

The Public Service Capacity Building Program (PSCAP) and the Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) are the initiatives of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) targeted to transform the public service into an effective and efficient institution to deliver quality services to the community of Zambia. The objectives of the programs were to improve Government capacity to formulate, implement and analyze national policies for social and economic development, enhance ministerial capacities to effectively manage public expenditure and meet fiscal stabilization objective, and make the public service more efficient and responsive to the needs of the country's population. The MDHMB and Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ) have been working together in the area of providing quality health services to the Masaiti community. The PPAZ has been in collaboration with stakeholders such as the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP), the Zambia Flying Doctor Services, the National Food and Nutrition Commission, the Tropical Disease Research Center, the University of Zambia, and the Ministry of Health to implement the integrated family planning, nutrition and parasite control project.

As a result, significant improvements took place resulting in the reduction of maternal mortality from 660 per 100,000 to 330 per 100,000, and the reduction of infant mortality

from 54% to 84%. As for health performance improvements are: the TB cure rate has increased from 63% to 74%; family planning new acceptors rate has increased from 46/1000 to 129.7/1000; and the antenatal coverage is from 50% in 2000 to 84% in 2005. Increasing the number of professional staff was also a contributing factor in the success of the project.

2. Secretaria de Desenvolvimento Humano do Estado da Bahia – Brazil

Bringing efficient water supply to the community of Bahia

The Challenge: The majority population in Bahia consists of the low income households. Therefore, government's investment to service delivery has a significant influence on people's standard of living. Especially in the semi-arid region of the State of Bahia where rains are scarce, streams run temporarily dry and artesian wells are little productive; thus, water supply is a significant and necessity for the community. However, the local government that maintains water supply systems is less likely to be feasible due to high cost of operation and maintenance costs. Since 90% of the communities considered that the quality of water supply is sufficient, the simplification of water supply system benefits all citizens of Bahia. The government of Bahia challenge was to improve water supply system to enhance quality of services to people in Bahia.

The Solution: The Government of Bahia started the Self-Sustainable Systems Program to alleviate the community's concerns and problems. According to the study of Praxis Consultoria e Projetos S/C Ltda, 30% of communities within the study indicated that there were public reservoirs near by, out of which 17.8% run dry yearly while 82.2% are perennial.

The operation and maintenance of water supply and sewage systems was undertaken by the State of Bahia under the initiative of the Urban Development Secretariat (SEDUR) and the Water Resources Directorate (SRH). The project is sponsored by the Government of the Federative Republic of Germany through a loan agreement with Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau – KfW Bank. In 1995, during the installation of system, in the communities surrounding the Municipalities of Jacobina and Seabra in Bahia, two maintenance facilities were established by an organization called “Central,” a civil society organization formed by representatives of water users association of each community affiliated. The Central conducts the duties of organizing people to become knowledgeable to the system such as training for the operation and maintenance of the system and educating sanitary matters such as the possibility of spread of water-transmitted diseases. In order to improve the water supply and sanitary sewerage systems, the government also requires community's participation to manage and maintain the installation of systems. The contract of the project with the German Bank (KfW) was made in 1983; however, the operation of installation started in 1992. The total investment was R\$19.1 million, allocated between the KfW (R\$11.7 million), and the State Government (R\$ 7.4 million).

As a result, since the installation started, one hundred and eighty two simplified and conventional water supply systems with distribution networks were installed. Also, the new project improved the condition of 12,704 hygienic privies. This achievement benefited 76 thousand people in 15 thousand families. After ten years of operation, these communities of Bahia have been showing stable economic and financial situations.

In addition, after the first installation of the project, a new contract was made with the KfW Bank that contributed additional R2.2 million for training and capacity building of technicians. The State of Bahia invested the total amount of R\$700 thousand to the project.

3. The Provincial Court of Manitoba – Canada

Bringing justice to all citizens in an appropriate timely manner

The Challenge: It is always said that justice delay is justice denied. In 2002, in Manitoba, the Provincial Court System took an average 19 months from the time an accused person made a first court appearance until the date of the trial when the allegation involved domestic violence. Therefore, by 2003, there were huge backlogs of people waiting for court or bail appearance in the city of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba. The criminal justice of the Provincial Court System was ineffective, costly and overburdened. When the prosecution waits longer, the citizens have to shoulder heavier burden of taxation. Also, the delay of justice may benefit the accused person because memories of witnesses and their interest in seeing justice will fade away with time. The Provincial Court of Manitoba faced the challenge of innovating its systems in order to improve the quality of service delivery and increase efficiency.

The Solution: In 1993, the Winnipeg Police Service implemented a mandatory arrest order in the cases of domestic violence as a result of the policy which aimed at ending violence against women and others who found themselves in an abusive relationship. Therefore, the number of domestic violence cases in the Provincial Court dramatically increased, and the delay of these cases become significantly obvious problems. In 2003, the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court implemented the Domestic Violence Front End Project. The Chief Judge formed the consultation committee that crosses organizational borders to determine how the system could be run more efficiently and more effectively. The consultation committees that involved the project were followings: the judiciary, Crown, legal aid, defense bar, senior court personnel, victim services and the Winnipeg Police Services. This innovative project promotes public understanding of the system, reduces the number of court appearances and has reduced the time to deal with the charges. The first phase of the project focused on accused persons being held in custody on domestic violence charges. By March 2004, the project expanded to include accused persons who were out of custody.

Before the implementation of the project, files were transferred from one Crown attorney to another Crown attorney, and since there was no ownership of files, defense counsel was unable to know whom to discuss with regarding cases in advance of court date. This was ineffective process and wasted countless hours. Crown attorney (crown prosecutor) is the one who represents the Crown and act as prosecutor in proceeding under the Canadian Criminal Code and other federal offences. Criminal law is under federal jurisdiction in Canada; although, the administration of justice is constitutionally the responsibility of each provinces. Therefore, the vast majority of Crown Attorneys are employed by Canada's ten provinces.

As a result, the number of charges appearing in the front end courts has been cut in half even though the number of cases occurred has remained constant. In February 2004, there were 2,861 charges appearing in the domestic violence out of custody courts, and by the following year, that number was reduced to 1,263. Also, the time from first appearance to

trial was reduced within one year to an average 14 months from 19 months. The average trial delay for an accused person who is out of custody has been reduced to 11 months from 22 months. On average, an accused person in custody goes to trial 6 to 8 weeks earlier. Overtime costs for transporting accused persons in custody were reduced by \$158,000 during 2004 to 2005 fiscal year.

The project has also provided counseling at early stages in the prosecution to the accused people with domestic violence assaults in order to prevent further occurrences. In the meantime, the project ensures early contact between the prosecutor and the victim by the assignment of one Crown attorney.

The Front End Project has brought significant changes into the criminal justice system in the city of Winnipeg, the province of the Manitoba. The innovation has been successful and has been beneficial to both the government officials and the community.

Category 3: Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Governments: e-Government

1. Government of Karnataka, Revenue Department – India

Improving transparency and service delivery through e-Government by serving citizens on a “first-come-first-served” basis

The Challenge: Karnataka is the eight-largest state by area, and the ninth-largest by population in India. Two-thirds of population of 53 million people lives in rural area. In the last 15 years, rural literacy rates have increased; however, there are still many people are suffering from lack of electricity, and distance from services. The government of Karnataka faced the challenge of installing new technology to improve its transparency and service delivery system, and benefit all citizens in Karnataka.

The Solution: The government of Karnataka implemented a project, known as Bhoomi (meaning land in Hindi), for efficient online service delivery and accessible information for all citizens. Before the installation of Bhoomi, 20 million records were maintained by approximately 9,000 village accountants, and it had become hard to administer by senior officials in the revenue apartment. The primary objectives of the Bhoomi were to improve the quality of service delivery to the citizens, to ease the record administration, and to ensure self-sustainability of the project. Since a land record is an instrument of social justice, it is extremely important for citizens. There are two types of records that administrators maintain: the first record, which is the record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC) is used for various purpose such as for obtaining crop loans, hypothecation of land, government concession, and subsidies; and the second record, village maps which reflected the boundaries of land parcels.

In 1999, the Indian government planned a program to computerize the land records across the country. The purpose of this project was to improve transparency of the record administration, protect the records from manipulations, and increase the usefulness of data in the records. By doing so, the district administration would be able to use the records for complex planning and development activities. Also, the Indian government believed that mandating to disclose the information to the public and improving transparency would reduce corruption and wrongdoings at the lower level of government officials. Between 2001 and 2002, the state of Karnataka finally implemented the project.

The installation of the project Bhoomi was a great success and it has been proven its utility and efficiency. By March 2002, all 177 Bhoomi centers became operational and citizens were able to check their land record data. Thus, citizens enjoy fair “first-come-first-served” treatment by the e-government.

2. Australian Government Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources – Australia

Improving service quality for the business community by increasing access to information

The challenge: Unlike private sectors and non-profit organizations, government information is likely to lack transparency, and it is hard for community to access its services and resources to learn about government agencies they interact with. The main reason for this is that governments are extremely cautious about installing new technology to their systems. They have to wait until its practicality, accuracy and security are proven. The question is that how long do they have to wait? When is the time for them to utilize the new technology to their systems? It is a significant improvement for government to provide online information resources to their stakeholders and business communities.

The solution: In late 2003, the Australian Government Department of Industry improved its transparency by developing the Business Entry Point (BEP) Transaction Manager (www.business.gov.au) to allow business communities and stakeholders to deal with government easier, cheaper, and faster than ever. By using the BEP Transaction Manager, businesses can manage, find, and complete government forms, and access more than 5,500 transactions in federal, state, and local governments through on-line. Transaction Manager successfully brought together approximately 5900 forms from federal, state, and local governments for community to fill out online. The 2004 review indicated that since the installation of BEP, the total value of time and cost savings were approximately \$50 million a year, which represents fivefold more than current BEP annual investment of around \$9 million.

The initiative has been successful, and the Australian government has proved that the installation of the new technology is practical, efficient and accurate. Currently, approximately 120 organizations are representing 180 BEP websites on a daily basis. This exercise provides business communities and stakeholders significant benefits, and supports the service delivery to be efficient and effective.

The highest priority for government is to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses. BEP would not reduce regulation itself; however, by providing various information and resources online it would allow small businesses to fulfill their compliance obligations much easily and quickly than before. In 2004, the BEP website was reaching to 20% of the small business sector. The vast majorities of those users were in the early stage of businesses and were searching for information for the Australian Business Number (ABN) which is required by all businesses. Also, over 2 million users search for information for the Australian Business Register (ABR) per month. The use of new technology and e-government to deliver has added great value and benefits both the government and business community.

3. Crossroads Bank for Social Security – Belgium

Improving social security benefits with the use of information technology for citizens of Belgium

The Challenge: The organization of Social Security offices in Belgium implemented the e-Government system, and abolished the classical method of social security administration. In order to provide efficient and effective service delivery, the government of Belgium installed the e-government system.

The Solution: Belgian administrations were late actors in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) agenda of modernizing and reforming. Since 1980s, many of decisions were taken; however, none of them were actually implemented to the systems due to an enormous public debt, and federal competencies to other level of governments. In 1991, the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS) was created, and aimed to organize information efficiently and transparently. By doing so, it would be able to deliver consolidated statistical information to the politicians and other stakeholders in order to support the social policy.

The primary objectives of the e-government program of the Belgian social sector are to grant effective and efficient services with a minimum of administrative formalities and costs for all the involved, to improve and reorganize radically the service delivery processes amongst the actors in the social sector, and between those actors on the one hand and the citizens and the employers on the other hand, to promote information security and privacy protection by the actors so that all the involved actors, citizens and employers can have justified confidence in the system, and to deliver consolidated statistical information to the politicians and other stakeholders in order to support the social policy.

The CBSS manages all social security offices that are connected onto the network. All these networks have a legal obligation to make all information available in the secure network from each other based on the TCP/IP protocol. All the social data of citizens and companies are exchanged with unique identification keys that make process much faster, more efficient, and more effective than the classical method. Since 1998, each Belgian citizen has been holding a single identification number on a social identity card (so called SIS). By 2009, all citizens should be holding electronic identity card (EID) which is designed based on SIS. The EID contains private keys and certificates used for electronic authentication and the generation of electronic signature. This national project is initiated by the CBSS, and the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry for ICT (FEDICT). Also, since 1 January 2003, all companies have been provided a single identification number by the Company Register.

As a result, in 2004, 380 million electronic messages were exchanged by the direct electronic data exchange between the actors in the social sector. It means that citizens and employers do not have to request from one social security office to pass to another social security office. According to the Belgian Federal Planning Bureau, the data exchange processes between the employers and the social security offices through e-government

lead to an annual saving of administrative costs of more than 1 billion euros a year for the employers. The use of technology simplified administrative duties for citizens and companies, increased efficiency of administrative procedures, and protected private information of users.

4. Dubai Municipality – the United Arab Emirates

Improving transparency and service delivery through technology

The Challenge: A majority of this city's revenue are generated from tourism and the Jabel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ) that offers an economic zone with profitable business and tax incentives to corporations. Therefore, the Dubai Municipality's improvement of service delivery and transparency reflects the growth of Dubai City. The challenge faced by the government was how to develop and improve service delivery to industries and businesses.

The Solution: Dubai City is one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, and is the second largest emirates with the population of approximately 1 million. The Dubai Municipality (DM) was established in 1940s and went into effect in 1965. The implementation of DM started in July 2001, and since the launch of e-services in October 2001, the Dubai Municipality IT Department has started offering e- services to improve a range of service delivery for the customers and clients. Currently, the Dubai Municipality e-services have over 24,000 registered user organizations and online businesses, and provides 186 transactional and 195 informational services with more than 1.4 million transactions. The e- services cover all aspects of the Dubai Municipality such as Demarcation, Zoning, NOCs, Laboratory, Health and Environment. These services can be provided through mobile phones as well.

The purpose of the Dubai Municipality e-services is to deliver quality of services to the residents, businesses, and government partners and clients. Also it emphasizes reducing internal operational overhead, enhance revenues and promote Dubai's image as a commercial and tourism centre in the Gulf region. The Dubai Municipality also improved assistance services for e-service users. According to ACNielsen's online customer satisfaction study in 2004, 42% of the users were strongly satisfied and 50% of the users were somewhat satisfied with the support facilities that were provided for using e-services. The study of overall evaluation indicated that 40% of the users were "very satisfied" and 50% of the users were "somewhat satisfied" with the e-services of Dubai Municipality. More than 75% of the e- services users commented that e-services of Dubai Municipality met their requirements. This Customer Satisfaction survey was conducted in order to improve the quality of future e- services and meet the user's demand.

Since Dubai City's major revenue comes from tourism and the JAFZ, it is significant for the Dubai Municipality to improve partnerships between government agencies and business communities. The Dubai Municipality has set high standards in achieving goals. In order to achieve a great efficiency and effectiveness for the users, the new objective is to deliver 90% of services through e-services by June 2007. Also, it is important for e-government to monitor transactions over the Internet in order to secure users' information and protect the system from computer viruses.

5. The Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs – Republic of Korea

Developing diagnostic tool to measure the level of innovation in the public sector

The Challenge: Innovation must be oriented to achieving measurable progress. Without a well-planned and managed approach, the routine of day-today operations takes over. One response to this may be developing benchmarks against which to judge the success of innovation efforts. The Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) realized it was necessary to develop a tool that comprehensively measures and diagnoses innovation capabilities and the overall progress of innovation for individual agencies.

The Solution: The Government Innovation Index(GII), developed MOGAHA, is a tool to measure the level of innovation achieved in the public sector. The GII is a compound index consisted of various elements that ascertain efforts for innovation and results by scientifically diagnosing numerous signs and evidence apparent in an organization undergoing innovation. The core components of the GII include "Foundation Readiness for Innovation", "Level of Active Innovation" and "Innovation Results." Each institution can use the web-based system to measure and diagnose their level of innovation in various standpoints. The web-based system is easy to use, enables the accumulation of data and is a superior method advantageous for statistical analysis.

The basic concept for the GII emerged in 2004 in response to a continuous demand, and in the first half of 2005, it was developed in earnest. A total of 496 public institutions, including the central government, local government agencies, local office of education, took part in the voluntary diagnosis to measure their innovation level. The first round of diagnosis resulted in comprehensive information on the level of innovation for each respective agency and the weakness in carrying out the innovation effort. It also provided statistical, narrative explanation on the innovation level according to specific areas and the innovation level in comparison to similar agencies. Furthermore, it helped the MOGAHA, an innovation-managing agency, to establish appropriate innovation strategies by understanding the public sector's overall innovation level and traits of the innovation efforts.

The GII is continuously improving its model and working hard to enhance users' convenience. By conducting a comparison with such other subjects as private companies, Asian countries and other countries, the future innovation index may be utilized to identify the characteristics and level of innovation not only between the public and private sector, but also between countries.

6. Work Pass Division, Ministry of Manpower (MOM) – Singapore

Using new technology to enhance the overall business environment

The Challenge: Increasing globalization in the marketplace in Singapore requires more comprehensive systems to process foreign workers' immigration statuses. The number of foreign workers in Singapore is increasing and it has become crucial for employers to submit all the required documents for their workers. Therefore, it is important for the government to respond promptly to business needs in the rapid changing economic environment accordingly.

The Solution: In October 2004, the Singapore Ministry Manpower (MOM) introduced the Work Permit Online (WPOL) system that allows business community to apply for work permits (WP) of their foreign workers and give result of the application within a day. This system allows employers to perform all the necessary work for their foreign workers online, and abolished the requirement to go through over-the-counter transactions.

The WPOL allows all the employers to submit renewal or cancellation of work permit for their foreign workers through internet and the procedure can be done by the next working day which is the desirable world standard. According to the manager director of the Nation Employment Pte Ltd that participated for the trial run for the WPOL system on August 2005, the online cancellation was very instantaneous, and they could print out the special social visit pass within 10 minutes. Also, they could even pay overstay fine with credit card payment through the WPOL system. They indicated that the system required a minimum adequate knowledge and supervision for use. The WPOL system also allows employers to check their foreign worker quota entitlements, and gives employers the reason of rejection of applications.

The WPOL system also works with other government agencies' systems to deliver efficient public services to the community. The WPOL supports these government agencies to run their systems faster and more efficiently than ever. The WPOL system's support for government agencies are included as follows: the Immigration and Customs Authority (ICA) to coordinate and manage the inbound and outbound movements of foreign workers; the Central Provident Fund (CPF) to automate the payment of the foreign workers levy; the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) to verify an individual's financial capability to support a Foreign Domestic worker; and the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) to integrate companies and business owners information.

According to the results of Customer Perception Survey for the period of December 4 to January 5, 16.2% of people were "very satisfied," 61.1% of people were "satisfied," and 17.9% of people were "slightly satisfied" with the Work Permit Online (WPOL) System that allows the completion of the process by the next working day.

As a result, the MOM has been one of the leading government agencies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in its systems, and brought great benefits to both business communities and government agencies in Singapore.

Since the installation of the WPOL system, on a regular basis, the MOM has conducted feedback sessions with employers and employment agencies for the purpose of better understanding of business requirements and collates ground feedback on how the system can be further improved. According to the usability survey that was conducted recently, 90% of respondents found the WPOL system was easy to use. From September 2004 to December 2005, 93% of total application transaction was made through the WPOL system, from January 2005 to December 2005, 96% of total issuance transaction, 83% of renewal transaction, and 89% of cancellation transaction was made through the WPOL system.

The WPOL system is a tangible effort of the Singapore Government to enhance the comprehensive business community. Before the installation of the WPOL, employers used to wait up to 7 days before getting results of their application of WP for their foreign workers. Also, employers had to go to MOM to submit their work permit application, renewal application, issuance application and work permit cancellation requests in person. Now, renewal and issuance processing through the WPOL can be completed within a day, and cancellations processes can be done within one hour of submission.

The WPOL has shortened the processing time of work permit applications and lowered volume of paper work, resulting in higher level of productivity and increased user satisfaction.