Strengthening Public Administration and Governance

Background

India’s public administration system is the largest bureaucracy in the world with about 18 million employees. However, a changing environment, greater awareness among people about administration, and a rising demand for accountability and improved efficiency have made administrative reforms in the country necessary. Since independence, the Government of India has set up about 50 commissions and committees to study the nation’s public administration system and make recommendations for its improvement. These have resulted in some reforms, such as the creation of a separate department of administrative reforms at the Centre and in state governments; setting up of the Indian Institute of Public Administration and the Central Vigilance Commission; constitution of Lokayuktas in states; strengthening the citizens’ grievance redressal machinery; developing citizens’ charters; conducting training and capacity building exercises for civil servants, etc. In a recent initiative led by the Central Secretariat, several central ministries have adopted a Results Framework Document that provides a summary of the most important results that the concerned ministries expect to achieve in a year.

Despite these initiatives, there are challenges in implementation and effective service delivery. Administrative reforms need to keep pace with the rapid development of the country, particularly to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably distributed and reach the large numbers of marginalized people. There is also a need to simplify rules and procedures, and ensure greater...
convergence and integrated outcome-based policymaking, planning and management among divisions. Best practices in public service delivery by some states, such as use of ICT and e-governance, have not been documented in a systematic manner, nor are there mechanisms to support states in adapting and replicating such best practices. As a result, states are unable to learn from other states’ experiences, and often end up repeating the same processes.

**About the project**

In view of this, the project, in partnership with the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension, aims to:

- document and disseminate innovative solutions and best practices in public service delivery, governance and public administration at the national and sub-national levels in India;
- highlight inter-state differences and support multi-state studies that will help improve outcomes, as states learn best from examples of other states;
- promote initiatives that leverage e-governance and m-governance (mobile app based governance) to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public administration; and
- support the collation of best international practices in public administration and governance that are relevant to India in support of global and South-South collaboration.

**Developments so far**

- Provided e-governance roadmap to the government, particularly in the area of online citizen-centric services
- Documented and analysed national and international best practices of online citizen-centric service initiatives/models
- Prepared a report of the best practices in electronic public services in India based on the UN Public Services Award (UNPSA)
- Finalized the wireframe of the India National Portal to ensure easy access of information and feedback from citizens
- Developed terms of references for developing government process re-engineering tools, national resource group for replication of best practices, central and state e-governance officers and more

**Looking to the future**

- Support improved outcomes of government programmes in key social sectors such as health, education, employment and livelihoods through assessments of challenges across these sectors.
- Provide technical assistance to help improve governance initiatives and promote reforms related to accountability and improved efficiency of government.
- Identify, document and disseminate innovative policies and practices that demonstrate enhanced service delivery, transparency and accountability.
- Demonstrate and scale-up innovative e-governance initiatives in public administration and management.