CEPA Members' Role in the Work of the E-Government Branch

The purpose of this brief note is to provide CEPA Members a better understanding on their potential roles to strengthen and support the substantive work of the e-Government Branch. The e-Government Branch needs the CEPA experts' inputs on developing holistic public administration through the greater use of e-government. In this aspect, the term e-government relates to the integrated approach to efficient implementation of government services, information and solution, coupled with a genuine approach to empowering citizens to play a greater role in developing strategies and policies.

This is particularly important for the enhancement of an online tool called METER, which assist emerging and developing countries to better identify the strengths and challenges that current exist in their respective countries and provides them with a roadmap to implement positive changes through effective use of both the countries financial and human resources.

Background

Government officials tend to think that e-Government and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are the same thing. In fact, most people use these terms inter-changeably. A fundamental condition for good e-Government is that good government and good governance are already being put in place. DPADM sees "e-Government" in a much broader term. E-government implies the use of ICT to enhance Government performance, particularly when applied to public administration frameworks and to institutional design and operations.

Therefore, e-Government strengthens government activities. E-Government is not a substitute for inefficient Government. If workflows, institutional coordination, human resources, corporate culture, capacity and overall public administration services are inefficient, having the latest equipment and software will not make much difference.

E-Government can add value whenever Governments are designed in a citizen-centric manner and operate seamlessly to deliver services, information and solutions. E-Government by itself would not deliver these changes. At the same time, the use of ICTs to expedite and promote Government functions is irreversible and continues to expand, representing a unique opportunity to improve the way in which all Governments facilitate delivery.

DPADM has seen through our analysis and research that in almost regions there is a gradual movement from having ICTs being handled by a technical Ministry, to a more central role handling all official functions related to the way in which a Government operates. Within the last ten years, the position of a Chief Information Officer (CIO) became more prevalent in many Governments.

METER and Public Administration

METER stands for **M**easurement and **E**valuation **T**ool for **E**-Government **R**eadiness. It is online evaluation tool enabling a country to self-assess its level of e-government readiness.

METER was conceived to serve as an advisory tool, it helps to identify the key areas of strength and challenges and it assist government to prioritize their importance. By uncovering the level of e-government awareness, both at the central government and agency levels, as well as within the civil society, it leads to a full understanding of the changes that e-government development entails.

Meter is based on a holistic and functional methodology for e-government readiness measurement, it has questions covering the following pillars: Commitment, Legal, Vision and Policy, Organization, Technology, and Marketing (being developed).

CEPA's Involvement

DPADM is requesting CEPA members' expertise in public administration to further develop METER into an integrated tool for Member States. CEPA Members will assist the e-Government Branch to fine tune the current pillars of METER as noted above and help a create a sixth pillar on marketing, as requested by Member States. This will provide emerging and developing countries excellent case studies and lessons learned that will enable them to implement effective strategies and policies.

CEPA members have a key role to play to assist UN Member States to strengthen the public sector in emerging and developing countries. We would welcome the engagement of CEPA experts, who have a strong public administration background to assist in developing and improving METER.

The analysis of the existing environment is crucial in order to appraise how ready a country is to embark in the significant processes of change inevitably associated with an e-government and overall governmental transformation.

Hence, the goal of **METER** is to arm governments with much of the information necessary to make changes and to define achievable implementation strategies and action plans in a tailored and effective way, to overcome internal and external obstacles and to support the overall objective of a fruitful e-Government development.