
Management reforms: review of progress

Report by the Secretariat

1. This document summarizes progress made since the Secretariat's report to the eleventh meeting of the Committee.¹ It focuses on the Global Management System (WHO's new enterprise resource planning system) and the Global Service Centre. Additionally, as requested by members of the Committee during its consideration at the same meeting of the report on implementation of external and internal audit recommendations,² this document gives an update on progress made in developing an enterprise risk management framework for WHO's General Management cluster.

THE GLOBAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND THE GLOBAL SERVICE CENTRE

2. The Global Management System began operating on 1 July 2008 at WHO headquarters and the Global Service Centre and in the Western Pacific Region. In addition, since January 2010 the System has been fully operational in the South-East Asia, European and Eastern Mediterranean regions. With the latter move, the Global Management System has become accessible to nearly 3000 new users. In total, some 6000 WHO staff members are now using the System.

3. Since January 2010, in introducing the System in the three regions mentioned above, the Organization has not encountered the same wide-ranging problems as those experienced initially during implementation at headquarters and in the Western Pacific Region. Some residual problems remain; these concern the following: difficulties stemming from the functioning of the System itself; inadequate quality of data; difficulties mapping accounting addresses and funding positions; and insufficient user knowledge. Nevertheless, the problems concerned have not prevented the three regions from implementing their technical programmes.

4. During the introduction of the Global Management System in the three additional regions in the first two months of 2010, processing of administrative actions in the Global Service Centre has continued to operate in accordance with the agreed service levels. However, the volume of transactions coming from the regions concerned has been relatively low as delays in preparing workplans for the biennium 2010–2011 meant that these could not be finalized. Nevertheless, all workplans are now operational, and the full impact of introduction in the additional locations will

¹ Document EBPBAC11/2.

² See document EB126/3.

become visible in the months to come as the complete range of transactions is processed through the System. In order to further enhance the service delivery of the Global Service Centre, a review of workflows, processes and organizational structures within the Centre and in other areas of the General Management cluster has begun.

5. During the coming months, the Global Service Centre will be working closely with its clients to improve the quality of data in incoming transactions. Training will be provided and reporting enhanced, in order to target problematic areas. Efforts will also be made to introduce improved measures for assuring quality in order to enhance the quality of transactions dealt with in the Centre and their compliance with the regulations and processes of the Organization. In the area of management reporting, it has been recognized that the Global Management System's reporting function needs to be enhanced and automated.

6. The Secretariat is committed to continuing the phased introduction of the System in the African Region. The target for preparatory work in that Region is to have the entire employee base on the System's Global Payroll by August 2010 and to enable the entire Region to benefit from the full functionality of the System by 1 January 2011 at the latest. For the Region of the Americas, PAHO's governing bodies requested the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (the PAHO secretariat) to present options for modernizing PAHO's Corporate Management System (CMS). To support this request, the Regional Director created the CMS Committee in August 2008. The Committee will present its analyses and recommendations to PAHO's governing bodies at different occasions during 2010. PAHO is committed to responding to requirements associated with the introduction of the Global Management System.

7. With three new regions joining the System, some of the System's key benefits are becoming more visible; these include access to detailed workplans for the countries across all the five major offices that have joined the system. Furthermore, the Secretariat is expecting that during the current biennium the System will begin to improve the monitoring and measuring of WHO's programme delivery against targets and goals across the Organization.

8. Efforts to develop the Global Management System further, make it more user-friendly and simplify its underlying processes will continue during the coming months in close cooperation with users from headquarters and all regions. In addition, work will need to continue on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of users, and this group should also receive training on a regular basis. The Secretariat is working on a role-based training programme that targets all new staff, together with those moving to a new function. As was the case for the initial training provided, this will be mandatory, thus ensuring that all those concerned attend their courses and develop the necessary skills for using the System effectively. All other staff members will have the opportunity to take refresher courses.

ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT

9. In response to proposals received and to the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Secretariat initiated a process to develop an enterprise risk management framework in early 2009. The first phase, conceptualizing the framework, was supported by external consultants and involved the development of a classification of types and degrees of risk and the definition of risk management processes. As part of this activity, a survey was conducted to identify the risk culture of the Organization.

10. This first phase permitted a number of risks to be identified. These were placed in four categories: financial risks, organizational risks, operational risks, and external agents and stakeholder risks. A group of “risk owners” was identified for each of these risks and given the responsibility of monitoring, analysing and evaluating the risks for which it was responsible. The groups concerned were also requested to provide advice on mitigation strategies and to coordinate their implementation. The suggestions and recommendations made by the risk owners are to be reviewed before being submitted to senior management for a final decision.

11. The first phase was followed by a pilot exercise and the implementation phase. A first complete review of the risk classification mentioned above has taken place in Geneva, March 2010. Additionally, it is intended to expand the risk framework to the regions and to undertake an associated pilot project during the course of this year.

UNITED NATIONS REFORMS

12. The Secretariat is following closely and supporting the efforts to harmonize business practices across the United Nations system. Senior management focal points are following and actively participating in the different functional networks of the High-Level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). They are thus able to collaborate with others in order to determine future policies to be agreed across the specialized agencies, and the funds and programmes of the United Nations.

13. The work carried out by the Secretariat in the networks of the High-Level Committee on Management is complemented by active participation in the working groups of the United Nations Development Group. These working groups, which are closely related to the networks of the High-Level Committee on Management, are intended to develop plans and guidelines for the implementation of the policies determined by the Committee’s networks.

14. This contribution by the Secretariat to the High-Level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group helps to ensure that the Organization’s views and interests are taken into consideration in the reform process and that work to shape future developments can benefit from WHO’s experience and best practices.

15. As the reform process continues, the frequent creation of subgroups and the difficulty of maintaining alignment between the different initiatives are causing the networks concerned to become increasingly complex. As a result, WHO and other agencies are incurring high and unnecessary transaction costs. The matter was raised at the recent meeting of the High-Level Committee on Management and it was agreed that CEB and the secretariat of the Committee would be asked to review the situation.

ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

16. The Committee is invited to note this report.

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