

Knowledge Management in the Public Sector: A Guide to Good Practice

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Knowledge Management in the Public Sector: A Guide to Good Practice

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About RSM Robson Rhodes LLP:

RSM Robson Rhodes LLP is the UK member firm of RSM International, which provides accountancy and advisory services to the public and private sectors including specialism in public sector knowledge management.

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Foreword

This publication is one of a series which the British Standards Institution (BSI) has developed to address Knowledge Management and its links to other areas of management.

The authors were invited to produce this guide in accordance with a brief approved by BSI's KMS/1 panel of experts. This brief was "to be a practice-orientated document, that would enable readers to:

- Gain an effective overview on different KM approaches as practised in different public sector organizations;
- Develop insights into various purposes of public sector KM interventions and their usefulness for resolving organizational challenges;
- Learn how to categorize different public sector approaches to KM;
- Establish which KM approaches are appropriate in which situations;
- Understand the implications in terms of resources, competencies and organizational set-ups required for successful public sector KM interventions;
- Learn how KM can contribute to achieving the organizational objectives of public sector organizations."

Acknowledgement is given to representatives of the many public sector organizations who collaborated enthusiastically with the research required to produce this guide.

These organizations include the following:

- Department of Health
- Financial Ombudsman's Office
- Countryside Agency
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- New Deal for Communities (NDC)
- World Bank
- National College for School Leadership (NCSL)
- National Health Service (NHS)
- NHS Information Authority
- Cabinet Office e-Government Unit's Knowledge Network
- DTI (Dept of Trade and Industry), UK

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i to iii, pages 1 to 83 and a back cover.

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Executive Summary

Public servants and policy-makers do not need KM — they need to solve urgent, complex problems and contribute towards meeting the Government's and wider public sector's key strategic goals, both in terms of policy and in terms of delivery. Unless Knowledge Management can be seen to be contributing to those key strategic goals, it is unlikely to receive senior management support.

Two of the key challenges for public sector KM are, therefore

- i) demonstrating the benefits of KM; and thereby
- ii) securing senior management support.

The understanding and practice of Knowledge Management has been growing rapidly throughout the public sector over recent years. Yet a constant comment from existing and nascent public sector KM practitioners has been that, until now, most of the analytical literature concerning Knowledge Management has sought to understand and explain it within a mainly private-sector context. There has not been a single, easy-to-digest national study that objectively and specifically analysed the growth of KM in the public sector and thereby set out the evidence-based public sector context within which Knowledge Management can add value to the work of public servants.

The British Standards Institution, through this Guide to Good Practice, has sought to plug this important gap. It is based on the results of a comprehensive research programme carried out during 2004 on behalf of the British Standards Institution by the 'Knowledge and Innovation Network' (part of Warwick Business School, University of Warwick) and RSM Robson Rhodes LLP.

KM relevance to the public sector

Knowledge lies at the very heart of what Government does, arguably in a way that is centrally more so than many private sector companies. Not only is the relative importance of information and knowledge greater in the public sector, the sheer size and complexity of the public sector dwarfs most private sector companies.

So the significance of the challenge in the public sector is four-fold :

- Size;
- Range;
- Complexity;
- Centrality to the sector's activity.

The examples in this Guide show that, whether it is recognized explicitly or not as being 'Knowledge Management', there are a range of knowledge and learning based activities going on around the public sector today which are delivering real innovation and demonstrating tangible benefits, including:

- The UK Government's 'Knowledge Network' — owned and run by the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit;
- The National College for School Leadership's 'Networked Learning Communities' programme;
- The Department of Health's KM programme;
- The Countryside Agency's 'Learning Networks' initiative
- The ODPM New Deal for Communities' stakeholder involvement programme;
- The World Bank's 'Knowledge Bank';
- The Financial Ombudsman Service's KM strategy.

How is the public sector approaching KM?

Four main types of approaches to KM in the public sector can be distinguished:

- Knowledge Sharing;
- Knowledge Creation;
- Knowledge Distribution;
- Knowledge Capture.

Drawing on a wide range of examples of public sector KM resulting from the research carried out for this Guide, it is possible to describe the major approaches, tools and tactics being adopted by a wide variety of organizations in the public sector, showing links between tools and problems and describing the context and purpose for which they have been adopted.

The 2 key drivers for public sector KM are:

- **Internal:** Support and facilitate organizational change underpinning strategic goals.
- **External:** Improve policy implementation and outcomes.

Public sector organizations usually choose one out of two main overall approaches:

- **Task-force approach:** In some organizations, the KM team is a multi-disciplinary, versatile group that essentially acts as an internal consultancy unit specializing in knowledge issues.
- **System-centred approach:** In some of the surveyed cases, the implementation of a system — or an integrated set of systems — was at the core of KM initiatives.

Success can be achieved on two levels:

- **KM competence:** establishing KM as a permanent or at least stable competence and/or function within an organization.
- **KM impact:** improving knowledge behaviours and knowledge practices, resulting in more effective knowledge sharing and organizational learning within and across the organization.

KM teams need to make sure they maximize the impact of their — often moderately resourced — activities. The material presented in this report suggests the following guidelines:

- **Strategic relevance:** Whether it is improving policy outcomes via increased consultation or the sharing of best practice to maximize organizational effectiveness, successful KM initiatives tend to associate themselves with a concrete purpose that is directly or indirectly linked to stated strategic goals of public sector organizations.
- **Customer focus:** successful KM teams manage to enlist other functions and groups into their activities by identifying issues and possible solutions that are of actual relevance to them, as seen with the example of the EBRD in this report. Once initiated, projects need to be implemented in close collaboration with process owners in other functions, with the latter always retaining the ultimate responsibility for and ownership of KM projects. This means the successful KM team is a highly qualified service provider rather than a separate ‘function’.
- **Act as innovation agent:** Successful KM teams tend to operate as innovation agents that bring new solutions into an organization, pilot and test them on a small scale basis and finally roll them out in the broader organization.
- **Collaboration:** Given their rather flexible mandate, KM teams need to be good at integrating their activities with those of other functions. The adoption of modern KM principles can add considerable value to other, more traditional functions such as Learning and Training and HR, particularly in areas such as succession and talent management, personal development.

The potential benefits to the public sector of Knowledge Management

The authors have identified a range of core public sector challenges and activities that could draw distinct benefits from adopting KM approaches and techniques, including:

- The challenges of the Gershon Agenda;
- Implementation of the Lyons Review;
- Policy and delivery horizon scanning;
- Scenario planning and early warning systems;
- Joined-up policy analysis and implementation;
- Delivery of citizen-centred public services;
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection;
- Evidence-based policy making;
- Performance Management;
- The central/local interface;
- Crisis Management.

The dangers of not adopting a KM approach

Just as there are benefits of adopting a KM approach to public sector challenges, there are also dangers in not adopting such an approach. Some of the dangers identified as part of the research for this Guide include:

- Duplication of effort and activity by officials working in similar fields;
- Inconsistency of approach or understanding of the same policy area;

- Lack of awareness of the whole ‘picture’ surrounding a particular policy challenge;
- Loss of knowledge and insight from experienced officials upon leaving or moving organization;
- Weakness in ability to share best practice and innovation;
- Lack of joined-up working by public sector teams in different organizations addressing a common issue or case;
- Inaccurate or out-of-date information being given to the general public;
- Failure to identify incidences of fraud.

The view from public sector KM practitioners

Some of the key messages that came out from KM practitioners through the research for this Guide were:

- Public sector organizations are not generally good at exploiting and sharing collective knowledge;
- KM should be seen as a tool to better enable knowledge sharing and learning and thus help public servants to work together more effectively;
- Although IT is essential for underpinning much of public sector KM, it has too often been the driver for KM rather than an enabler — it needs to become the enabler;
- The three major drivers for KM in the public sector are (i) ensuring quality and high standards of services to citizens; (ii) driving innovation and (iii) achieving cost savings;
- The major challenges involved in KM are (i) lack of KM acceptance and recognition by employees, (ii) time constraints on staff and (iii) lack of support from senior management;
- Knowledge Management has a role to play in personnel development which is not being fully exploited;
- Putting Knowledge sharing into personal competencies appraisals can aid the internal success of KM;
- The key factor of success for KM in the public sector is the degree to which the organization’s key business needs are understood, and the KM intervention designed around meeting that key business need;
- When trying to support knowledge communities, the ‘communities’ need to already exist for a core and important business purpose — KM will have very limited success if restricted to trying to ‘create’ communities;
- There is a balance of opinion as to whether ‘knowledge management’ as a distinct term helps or hinders its adoption in the public sector.

Top 10 lessons learned and tips for success

Throughout the research for this Guide, the authors were keen to collate from practitioners in the field lessons learned and tips for success. The 10 most common lessons and tips are:

- Make sure there is a business benefit and individual benefit for initiatives introduced to ensure buy-in both from senior management and staff.
- Focus early on delivering business case benefits and celebrate success early and continuously — success is infectious.
- Obtain senior management support and commitment, and ensure that senior managers lead by example.
- Treat staff and teams or groups as ‘customers’ — don’t be too prescriptive or rigid about what you provide — the customer is king.
- Ensure you have an evaluative capacity for the network, more for the celebration of success than for accountability.
- Do an audit of what people think they bring to the table. So that amongst the hundreds of people engaging with your work, you can bring together the right groupings.
- Embed KM in existing working practices and ensure the support of key process owners.
- Design systems in close consultation with users to meet their needs. Pilot projects on a small scale, and roll successful projects out to larger parts of the organization.
- Expand and promote team culture as it is one of the cornerstones in getting knowledge out of a one-man domain and putting it to institutional use.
- Be clear about the non-negotiable components of your strategy and then sanguine about the fact that the others take time. Have patience ... results can take time.

What this Guide contains

This Guide seeks to provide ‘informed clarity’ for practitioners and senior management around the potential and actual scope of activity and benefits of Knowledge Management in the public sector. It is intended for a range of groups within that sector including politicians and policy-makers, employees and managers, as well as wider stakeholders and the general public.

It is an evidence-based Guide to Good Practice, based on the results of a comprehensive research programme carried out during 2004 on behalf of the British Standards Institution by the ‘Knowledge and Innovation Network’ (part of Warwick Business School, University of Warwick) and RSM Robson Rhodes LLP.

The research programme consisted of:

- Interviews with a range of public sector Knowledge Management practitioners in central government, local government, agencies, NDPBs and supra-national bodies;
- Case Studies of a number of leading public sector KM programmes and projects;
- An online attitudinal survey of public sector KM practitioners;
- A web-based discussion portal for public sector professionals;
- A Community Brainstorm Day, facilitated by RSM Robson Rhodes and hosted by the Cabinet Office, and involving a wide range of public sector KM practitioners;
- Desk level research and review of relevant published material.

The Guide has the following structure:

- **Chapter 1** explains the rationale and context for the Guide and summarizes its key proposals and findings;
- **Chapter 2** outlines the relevance of KM to the public sector;
- **Chapter 3** analyses and categorizes the range of approaches to KM adopted in the public sector;
- **Chapter 4** contains case studies, outlining the real-life experience of a range of public sector organizations in seeking to develop and implement KM;
- **Chapter 5** draws out a number of high level conclusions from the study.

Throughout the Guide appear a series of ‘evidence boxes’, highlighting primary research findings gathered during the authors’ programme of research. These are:

- **“Our survey said”** — findings from the online survey;
- **“KM Participant view”** — comments gleaned during interviews;
- **“The Community said”** — comments made during Community Brainstorm Day and via a discussion portal;
- **“Case Study Insight”** — information gleaned from Case Studies;
- **“Literature Insight”** — information gleaned from a Literature review.

Detailed annexes are also included describing research methodology, analysis of survey findings, write-up of the Community Brainstorm Day as well as references and suggestions for further reading.

Notes and references guide the interested reader towards the primary and secondary sources used in the preparation of this guide.

Readers should also note that this guide is related to previous and future published documents produced by the BSI. The major previous work is *KM — a Guide to Good Practice*. This is an overall introduction to KM published by BSI in 2001 as a publicly available specification (document PAS 2001). This guide is also related to similarly specialized successor guides to PAS 2001, including:

- PD 7500 Knowledge Management Vocabulary
- PD 7501 Managing Culture and Knowledge.
- PD 7503 An introduction to Knowledge Management in construction.
- PD 7506 Making KM relevant — A guide to linking KM to other organizational functions and management processes.

1 Rationale and context of this Guide

1.1 The need for a public sector specific guide to knowledge management

The understanding and practice of Knowledge Management has been growing rapidly throughout the public sector over recent years. Yet a constant comment from existing and nascent public sector KM practitioners has been that, until now, most of the analytical literature concerning Knowledge Management has sought to understand and explain it within a mainly private-sector context. There has not been a single, easy-to-digest national study that objectively and specifically analysed the growth of KM in the public sector and thereby set out the evidence-based public sector context within which Knowledge Management can add value to the work of public servants.

As a result, as our survey research conducted for this Guide shows, whilst public sector KM practitioners strongly believe that Knowledge Management is relevant to the public sector, they have sometimes found it hard to explain to senior management and stakeholders both the actual and potential benefits of public sector knowledge management.

They have also sometimes found it hard to identify other areas of public sector KM good practice from which they can learn and from which they can share insights and ideas.

The British Standards Institution, through this Guide to Good Practice, has sought to plug this important gap.

“Our survey said ...”

Our survey respondents broadly agreed with the statements ...

“It is difficult to communicate the benefits of public sector KM to senior management” and

“It is hard to establish what best practice in public sector KM is”

but strongly disagreed with the statement

“Knowledge Management is not really relevant to the public sector.”

1.2 Informed Clarity and the BSI definition of Knowledge Management

In line with the BSI KMS-1 Committee’s overall mission, the major aim of this Report is to provide ‘informed clarity’ for practitioners, policy-makers and stakeholders in the public sector who seek to understand the scope, potential and implications of Knowledge Management.

Although KM has been defined in a variety of ways by various organizations and writers over the years, for the purposes of this report, the existing BSI definition is used. This is:

‘Knowledge Management encompasses the creation and subsequent management of an environment which encourages knowledge to be created, shared, learned, enhanced, organized and utilized for the benefit of the organization and its customers.’ (See also PAS 2001.)

1.3 Our working definition of the public sector

The public sector is becoming increasingly difficult to define as new forms of governance and funding blur the conventional demarcations between organizations in the public and private sphere. Indeed, the scope of the public sector has shifted significantly since the 1980s, and is continuing to change in response to political demands and innovations in government.

The critical distinction which we are holding to in this Guide however, is to do with the governance applied to different kinds of public services. The public sector can be defined as the set of organizations and intermediaries which provide services to the public under direct or indirect control by national, regional or local branches of government. This list varies from one country to another. In the UK, however, it includes organizations providing services such as social security, health, education, defence, and policing as well as the central agencies (revenue collection, government ministries) which support and direct such services. It also includes multilateral organizations, notably development banks or other organizations involved in global or regional governance that have been established through international governmental co-operation.

1.4 Overall KM Origins and Perspectives

Like most organizational theories and practices, Knowledge Management has evolved over a period of time and from a variety of sources. The concept of a 'knowledge worker' and a 'knowledge economy' was first set out over 40 years ago by the management thinker Peter Drucker. The roots of one core tenet of Knowledge Management — the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge — can be traced back to the philosopher Michael Polanyi in the 1960s.

However, KM as an established and distinct corporate discipline has only emerged in force over the past decade. Some writers contend that in fact there has not been a single continuous development of Knowledge Management over this period, but instead a series of phases of understanding and approaches that can be separately identified and packaged. Others contend that Knowledge Management has changed in nature altogether from its original arguments.

Many different sectors of industry, commerce and private sector organizations — the IT industry, the consulting industry, communications professionals, Human Resources departments — have all at one time or another 'claimed' Knowledge Management for their own. To a certain extent, that need not be a problem. Indeed, it is testament to the strength and relevance of Knowledge Management and to a wide variety of core business activities in which organizations are engaged.

In this perspective, the development of KM signals a recognition amongst managers that knowledge and learning can represent a significant resource for the organization, not simply a cost or an unintentional spin-off from operations. Viewing and managing knowledge as a resource, however, can take many different forms — hence the variety of different approaches to KM. Importantly, in the recent period there has been a growing recognition that focusing on knowledge itself is independent of its role in addressing organizational challenges often leads to the development of expensive but ineffective systems, as well as failing to harness the full potential of staff.

1.5 Public sector KM origins and perspectives

It is a not uncommon trend for the public sector to lag behind the private sector in its adoption of new management theories or approaches. Quite often, this is a good thing, in that it allows management 'fads' to fade, whilst truly valuable approaches are adopted and adapted to bring real value to the public sector. Our survey shows that the jury is currently still out on public sector Knowledge Management.

Some public sector practitioners believe that what is currently termed 'knowledge management' is in actual fact what public servants have always done since time immemorial — objectively and collectively collating, analysing and deploying knowledge in an effort to inform, develop and enact the policies of the Government of the day. Others believe that KM is a fad.

What can be said is that the following examples contained in this Guide show that, whether it is recognized explicitly or not as being 'Knowledge Management', there are a range of knowledge and learning based activities going on around the public sector today which are delivering real innovation and demonstrating tangible benefits, including:

- The UK Government's 'Knowledge Network' — owned and run by the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit;
- The National College for School Leadership's 'Networked Learning Communities' programme;
- The Department of internal KM programme;
- The Countryside Agency's 'Learning Networks' initiative
- The ODPM New Deal for Communities' stakeholder involvement programme;
- The World Bank's 'Knowledge Bank';
- The Financial Ombudsman Service's KM strategy

One other point to bear in mind is that for the public sector, knowledge is a key component for providing services and developing policy, rather than a marketplace tool. Knowledge shared in much of the public sector does not mean private sector competitive advantage diminished. It is no surprise that many of the largest and most advanced examples of online 'Sharing Best Practice' are to be found amongst groups of public sector staff, often geographically or organizationally dispersed, but working in a common area (e.g. Local Authorities CPA, or Health Informatics, or development of public sector standards, such as e-GIF and e-GMF).

Our interviews and research have also identified a range of core public sector challenges and activities that could draw distinct benefits from adopting KM approaches and techniques, including:

- The challenges of the Gershon Agenda;
- Implementation of the Lyons Review;
- Policy and delivery horizon scanning;
- Scenario planning and early warning systems;
- Joined-up policy analysis and implementation;
- Delivery of citizen-centred public services;
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection;
- Evidence-based policy making;
- Performance Management;
- The central/local interface;
- Crisis Management.

The relevance of Knowledge Management to the public sector is discussed in more detail in Section 2 — “Why should the public sector care about KM?”

KM Participant view

“The 3 biggest challenges we face are Freedom of Information, the change programme/downsizing and performance management.”

“There are 17 reception teachers in Tunbridge Wells and most of them are the only reception teacher in their primary school. Last year, the network created an opportunity for them to have time together in a hotel. These 17 reception teachers planned a reception curriculum for Tunbridge Wells. This September, every child in Tunbridge Wells experienced a curriculum planned by every reception teacher in Tunbridge Wells. Powerful or what?”

“The Knowledge Network saves time for me and for policy officials in the Department. It is especially useful when working out of hours or to tight deadlines. I don’t know how I coped without it! Previously, much of this knowledge was available in different places or not at all. I no longer have to search an internal directory to find out who is responsible for a specific policy, and then phone them to ask for the latest state of play in their area. I can just look it up on the KN. It has transformed the way in which we respond to Ministers’ requests for policy briefing and enabled part time members of staff to respond far more effectively than would have been the case before.”

1.6 KM, Information Management and Human Experience

One of the key sources of confusion caused by KM initiatives in some business firms has been the tendency to equate KM solely with Information Management. This has partly been the result of the widespread use of the term KM to denote the implementation of IT systems such as Intranets, portals and databases.

There are some hugely significant Information Management challenges facing the public sector today, not least the implementation and operation of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included a Case Study from the DTI of its implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management system to look at this challenge.

Case Study Insight

“All organizations, whether private or public sector need to be able to demonstrate how and why they took key decisions and acted as they did. Years ago, officials worked ‘off the file’, everything was recorded on minutes, letters and memos, and an army of registry clerks controlled the public record. But e-mail and the speed of modern communications have destroyed this way of working — decisions are communicated electronically and may never reach a physical file. Over time the understanding of how to or even why the Department manages the record has faded. DTI, like most other organizations, has had its share of embarrassing incidents when important documents could not be produced to order. But information rights legislation ups the stakes, in particular the deadline of 20 working days to respond to a Freedom of Information request.”

In developing this report, however, we have been carefully to distinguish between knowledge as a quality of human action, and a capability of public sector organizations, and information in its raw form.

Consider the following worked example as a way of making the distinction between data, information and knowledge.

- A train timetable provides *data* — it should be interpreted to be useful.
- A platform announcement that the next train to the desired destination is leaving in five minutes provides *information* — this has meaning within a specific context.
- The passenger's realization that the next train will not be the best choice, because it is a stopping train not the imminent express train, depends on knowledge — a more generally applicable approach based on insight and prior experience. [1]

This highlights the importance of human experience as a crucial ingredient in making sense of information — knowledge emerging from human behaviour not from piling up stocks of information. Some important implications flow from this distinction:

- *First*, we recognize the primary importance of human behaviour as the medium through which knowledge is acquired, retained and shared. Knowledge is invariably associated with people, normally working in concert with others. Information exists independently of people;
- *Second*, given this view of knowledge as embedded in human behaviour, it makes little sense to equate it with information as something that can be easily transferred, captured or stockpiled independent of human behaviour and networks. When we want to understand how knowledge flows within and between public sector organizations, we are inevitably looking at different kinds of human interaction and social exchange amongst public servants;
- *Third*, the role of knowledge in making use of information, highlights the importance of the existing knowledge of individuals and organizations as both a gateway and a constraint upon their ability to acquire new knowledge. Transferring knowledge to individuals and groups without the capacity to use it makes little sense — yet this is often ignored in KM initiatives which concentrate simply on the broadcasting or supply of information through Intranets, databases and the like.

Literature Insight

“Most people have an intuitive sense that knowledge is broader, deeper and richer than data or information. People speak of a ‘knowledgeable’ individual, and mean someone with a thorough, informed and reliable grasp of a subject, someone both educated and intelligent. They are unlikely to talk about a ‘knowledgeable’ or even a ‘knowledge-full’ memo, handbook, or database, even though these might be produced by knowledgeable individuals or groups.”

“Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories, but also in organizations routines, processes, practices and norms. Knowledge derives from information as information derives from data. If information is to become knowledge, humans must do virtually all the work.” [2]

Many of the public sector Knowledge Management initiatives studied for this Guide explicitly recognize the importance of the human dimension in harnessing public sector knowledge, as well as the importance and power not just of collating information, but of fostering human and social networks of people (both between public sector bodies themselves and between public sector organizations and the people and communities whom they serve).

KM Participant View

“Networks are a powerful political voice. 10 schools speak louder than 1 school. 10 schools can be much stronger in taking risks and innovating than 1 school, especially when they’re 10 schools that haven’t take risks because they are competing with one another and now there are 10 schools that are collaborating. So a school that might have been timid to say ‘We’re going to close the school on a Wednesday lunchtime now and have a professional learning afternoon, but work half an hour later on all the other days’, and wouldn’t have dared do it in case it had a bad impact on parents and they went to other schools. But now all 10 schools are doing it together and saying, ‘If you live in this town, or this part of the town, your kids are going to go to a school where the teachers take their children’s learning seriously and we learn too.’ And 10 schools can do that and the parents will say ‘Absolutely’.”

Case Study Insights

“As the New Deal for Communities Programmes focuses on crime, education, employment, health and physical environment, the NDC have partnered with a range of local and national bodies, voluntary sector bodies and private businesses to draw on the knowledge and expertise of these groups. The engagement of several parties has meant that sound interaction methods are needed for effective communication. Meetings and workshops are held to capture the knowledge and expertise of NDC partners and in effect to co-ordinate and prioritise community needs in the most efficient and effective manner. An annual conference is held every year consisting of board members, partners, community representatives and government officers to discuss core issues and agree on good practice with the aim of establishing a consistent operating approach amongst all NDC Partnerships.”

“The Countryside Agency relies on co-operation with a large number of partners, such as local authorities and other organisations, to deliver its interventions. It is hence important that the lessons learned from these partnerships are then disseminated to other organisations as ‘good practice’. Given the large number of involvees, partners and stakeholders, the dissemination of good practice proved considerably resource-intensive. The CA sought therefore to find new ways that could help reduce the resources needed for this work, and at the time improve the effectiveness of these activities. As an alternative and complement to events such as conferences and workshops, the KM team developed a strategy of developing ‘peer-to-peer relationships’ within web-based communities, coined ‘learning networks’. These web-based communities are facilitated by their own staff and also with their own delivery specialists and not by the KM team. CA staff here have the role of facilitating knowledge transfer.”

1.7 The dangers of not adopting a KM approach

Just as there are benefits of adopting a KM approach to public sector challenges, there are also dangers in not adopting such an approach. Some of the dangers identified as part of the research for this Guide include:

- Duplication of effort and activity by officials working in similar fields;
- Inconsistency of approach or understanding of the same policy area ;
- Lack of awareness of the whole ‘picture’ surrounding a particular policy challenge;
- Loss of knowledge and insight from experienced officials upon leaving or moving organization;
- Weakness in ability to share best practice and innovation;
- Lack of joined-up working by public sector teams in different organizations addressing a common issue or case;
- Inaccurate or out-of-date information being given to the general public;
- Failure to identify incidences of fraud.

KM Practitioner Views

“We have technical experts who have valuable and very specialist knowledge and when they leave they take this with them. We introduced succession planning to capture their expertise for their successors. One of the senior specialists said to me ‘I have worked here for so long. My knowledge is a commodity. I have to pass it on.’”

“As we sit here talking today, there are teachers in the north of England performing miracles with children and how long will it be before teachers in the south of England learn about it? It’s that sort of metaphor of the non-management of knowledge which characterises the profession. If you ask how long will it be before other teachers in the north of England know or how long before the teacher in the classroom next door knows, you get a sense of how primitive our system is. So the education system in terms of knowledge management — that was one driver.”

Case Study Insight

“The availability of knowledge was not evident for staff working outside certain personal networks, as staff in HQ always turned to specific individuals for information, which left other staff or newcomers to the institution deprived from access to the existing knowledge pool. Lack of knowledge sharing between sector teams and country teams, as well as between different departments resulted in duplication of effort and the frequent ‘reinvention of the wheel’. A comment was made: ‘Sometimes we feel we are sitting on the Moon and talking to Planet Earth’.”

Case Study Insight

“Several previous initiatives had not produced the long-lasting change within the target communities that policy-makers had hoped for. A National Audit Office evaluation showed initiatives had worked better in communities that had fostered partnerships with the public services. Based on this insight, the new initiative had to develop mechanisms that promoted and facilitated the formation of such partnerships.”

There are several well publicised instances of organizations having incurred serious consequences of damage and disruption; which might otherwise have been prevented had Knowledge Management been practised. The following are examples of where failures of duty of care may be attributable to lack of communication and information within organizations.

- The Huntley Case;
- Foot and Mouth Disease;
- Agricultural fraud (*Select Committee on Public Accounts Fifty-first report: Agricultural Fraud: The Case of Joseph Bowden*).

1.8 The practitioners’ view of the current state of KM in the public sector

As part of the research for this study, the authors conducted an Online Survey of public sector practitioners, whose findings were discussed via an online Discussion Portal and in a specially convened ‘Community Brainstorm Day’, facilitated by RSM Robson Rhodes LLP and hosted by the Cabinet Office.

Detailed analysis of the survey and Brainstorm Day are included in the annexes to this report, however some of the key messages that came out of the research were:

- Public sector organizations are not generally good at exploiting and sharing collective knowledge;
- KM should be seen as a tool to better enable knowledge sharing and learning and thus help public servants to work together more effectively;
- Although IT is essential for underpinning much of public sector KM, it has too often been the driver for KM rather than an enabler — it needs to become the enabler;
- The three major drivers for KM in the public sector are (i) ensuring quality and high standards of services to citizens; (ii) driving innovation and (iii) achieving cost savings;
- The major challenges involved in KM are (i) lack of KM acceptance and recognition by employees, (ii) time constraints on staff and (iii) lack of support from senior management;

- Knowledge Management has a role to play in personnel development which is not being fully exploited;
- Putting Knowledge sharing into personal competencies appraisals can aid the internal success of KM;
- The key factor in success in KM in the public sector is the degree to which the organization's key business needs are understood, and the KM intervention designed around meeting that key business need;
- When trying to support knowledge communities, the 'communities' need to already exist for a core and important business purpose — KM will have very limited success if restricted to trying to 'create' communities;
- There is a balance of opinion as to whether 'knowledge management' as a distinct term helps or hinders its adoption in the public sector.

The Community said

"There's a difference in the trajectory of energy in knowledge management between public and private sectors. The public sector is best set up to communicate to third parties (i.e. citizens) whereas the private sector is set up to be secretive to maintain competitive advantage. So what's happened in the private sector over the past decade is that organisations have learned how to communicate better within, so they don't have 2 teams competing for the same project. They are now looking at how to communicate with other organisations in commercial settings. Whereas on the other side of the coin, in the public sector, it's actually not very good at communicating internally, it's better at communicating externally, so the emphasis is now about better learning about what they do as departments or organisations internally."

"We were asked to develop a Community of Practice solution for 'e-communicators' as a favour to a member of senior management, who simply wished to announce something at a conference. But the community didn't exist and the solution died the death, because there wasn't a community of e-communicators that existed in real life. But out of that technical solution came the development of a Community of Practice for the Government lawyers, and that's been a great success. The lawyers got buy-in because there was a real business need, with them dispersed across 30 or 40 sites. But senior management also got buy-in by simply mandating the abolition of paper for transmitting information and knowledge, so people had to go to the solution because that was where they got their knowledge."

1.9 Top 10 lessons learned and tips for success

Throughout the research for this Guide, the authors were keen to collate from practitioners in the field lessons learned and tips for success. These are contained in full in the case studies in Chapter 4, but the ten most common lessons and tips are:

- Make sure there is a business benefit and individual benefit for initiatives introduced to ensure buy-in both from senior management and staff.
- Focus early on delivering business case benefits and celebrate success early and continuously — success is infectious.
- Obtain senior management support and commitment, and ensure that senior managers lead by example.
- Treat staff and teams or groups as 'customers' — don't be too prescriptive or rigid about what you provide — the customer is king.
- Ensure you have an evaluative capacity for the network, more for the celebration of success than for accountability.
- Do an audit of what people think they bring to the table. So that amongst the hundreds of people engaging with your work, you can bring together the right groupings.
- Embed KM in existing working practices and ensure the support of key process owners.
- Design systems in close consultation with users to meet their needs. Pilot projects on a small scale, and roll successful projects out to larger parts of the organization.
- Expand and promote team culture as it is one of the cornerstones in getting knowledge out of a one-man domain and putting it to institutional use.
- Be clear about the non-negotiable components of your strategy and then sanguine about the fact that the others take time. Have patience ... results can take time.

1.10 Summary

This Chapter has established the need for a specific study of Knowledge Management as practised in the public sector.

It shows that there are a range of innovative activities and projects currently taking place in the public sector which have adopted KM approaches and disciplines, and have thereby achieved tangible results.

It has identified some dangers of not adopting a KM approach to public sector challenges.

It has highlighted the difficulty experienced by some public sector KM practitioners in explaining the benefits of KM to senior management, but has confirmed their strong view of KM's relevance to the public sector.

It has confirmed that KM is still some way short of being a fully developed component of management practice in the public sector, and even the early adopters in the private sector have experienced problems in implementation. Many of these problems arise from a tendency to equate knowledge with information, and a consequent falling back on IT systems as solutions rather than enablers of KM.

It has highlighted how experience to date demonstrates the importance of knowledge as a capability developed by groups and individuals, and not as something which can be easily captured, stored or transmitted. KM is therefore more about people and processes than systems, though its implementation has often reversed this order.

It has outlined some of the main views of the current KM practitioner community and offered 10 common lessons learned and tips for success.

2 Why should the public sector care about KM?

2.1 The distinctiveness of the public sector

It is easy to overstate the differences between the private and public sectors. In many respects organizations in both sectors confront similar challenges. Issues of size, complexity, governance and multiple stakeholders beset many organizations, be they private or public. In this sense, as with private sector firms, the policy challenge of implementing modern methods and procedures for knowledge capture, transfer, management, diffusion and retention in a public-sector environment is very simple — good knowledge is central to how a good public sector organization, as much as a good business, operates.

Despite its origins mainly in highly competitive areas of the private sector, more and more it is becoming apparent that 'knowledge management' is a highly significant development for the public sector.

Literature Insight

"Much of the literature on knowledge management stresses the significance of the knowledge asset and the knowledge worker as a vital ingredient in differentiating competing firms and providing the potential for a sustainable competitive advantage in strategic development. Viewed in this way, there might seem to be no ground for the expectation that knowledge management would be significant for the public sector. Yet a little reflection would suggest that both central and local government, and many public agencies and other organisations, are repositories for heavy concentrations of knowledge workers. Quite apart from the Civil Service, the substructures of areas such as education and health is clearly knowledge-intensive, whether defined in terms of employment or functional activity." [3]

Public sector organizations are clearly a major part of modern knowledge economies. They are also highly diverse in their governance structures, functions, personnel and outputs. We aim to respect this diversity in the report by acknowledging the different experiences of a wide range of organizations. At the same time, it is important to recognize that organizations in the public sector do experience a set of challenges in implementing KM that are not experienced by large swathes of private sector business.

For example:

- The public sector cannot pick and choose its ‘customers’, ‘markets’ or areas of activity — it provides services to every citizen by right and obligation, not solely by choice or commercial strategy;
- The public sector needs to co-operate internally and with a range of external but related organizations to meet complex policy goals — it cannot pick and choose its partners;
- The majority of the explicit knowledge held within public sector organizations should be capable of being accessed by organizations and citizens through Freedom of Information — fully retrospectively from January 2005 for all information held by public organizations, not just that created after Jan 2005;
- The evidence base for a particular policy or programme is constantly under the most intense scrutiny and challenge by politicians, parliaments, stakeholders, citizens and the media to a degree and depth that is not always present in the private sector;
- The development and implementation of policy is a highly public matter — often involving years of debate, consultation, policy analysis, policy development, design and enactment of legislation, and programme delivery and implementation — the majority of which is conducted in the glare of the public eye;
- The current drive for efficiency and ‘citizen centred’ services is putting an immense strain on already stretched public sector resources.

2.2 The size, range, complexity and centrality of the knowledge challenge

Knowledge lies at the very heart of what Government does, arguably in a way that is centrally more so than many private sector companies. Not only is the relative importance of information and knowledge greater in the public sector, the sheer size and complexity of the public sector dwarfs most private sector companies.

So the significance of the challenge in the public sector is four-fold :

- size;
- range;
- complexity;
- centrality to the sector’s activity.

To give just a few indicators of the size, range and complexity of the challenge, consider just the following facts:

- Latest figures published by the Cabinet Office show that, as of 1 April 2003, there were 512 000 (Full Time Equivalents) permanent Civil Servants;
- This does not include the over 1 million people who work for the National Health Service, which if it was a private company would be the biggest company in Europe;
- This does not include the hundreds of thousands of public servants who work day-in, day-out in our schools and universities, local government, the police force and emergency services;
- A recent copy of the “List of Ministerial Responsibilities” ran to 108 pages, covering the work of 111 Government Ministers, Government Whips and Spokespersons in the House of Lords, 19 Ministerial Departments, 90 Executive Agencies, 9 Government Offices for the Regions and 21 Non-ministerial Departments;
- Every month, over 647 gigabytes of e-mail is handled by the Government Secure Intranet, with over 12 million messages handled overall, 6 million of these messages are handled from the Internet. (only 7 years ago, it was virtually impossible to send an internal e-mail within Government);
- On average, The Stationery Office publishes 14 500 new titles per year for Her Majesty’s Government. There are 45 000 titles currently available from TSO stock, with a further 61 490 titles available on demand — the equivalent of 322 million pages.

Looking at the centrality of knowledge to the public sector, we can consider 2 classic aspects of Knowledge Management theory

- The relationship between data, information and knowledge.
- The inter-play between explicit and tacit knowledge.

The types of data that Government knowledge workers require and produce can be widespread and numerous. To give just a few examples:

- Official Statistical sets and publications produced by the Office for National Statistics;
- Scientific data underpinning major policy positions;
- Economic data assessing and analysing the state of the economy;
- Departmental statistical systems, databases and knowledge repositories;
- Financial, human resources and performance management information;
- Project and delivery reporting data;
- local and regional data on the implementation and effects of national policies;
- external information from commercial, academic and international sources.

That data begins to become information as it is contextualized and understood by policy makers and policy implementers in their day to day activities. Just a few examples include:

- within central government, policy option papers produced for discussion and debate of various policy options within policy units, across departments and at Ministerial and other Committee meetings;
- within local government, health or education, performance management information and analysis both as part of policy delivery and as part of external assessment;
- creation and responses to policy publications and proposals, such as Government Green Papers, White Papers and Policy and Delivery Frameworks;
- speeches, statements, presentations, press release and articles that have been produced to publicly explain a particular policy or practice;
- Regulatory Impact Statements and Explanatory Notes to Bills and Acts of Parliament explaining the intention and/or impact of items of primary and secondary legislation;
- e-mail discussions, postings, downloads etc available on departmental Intranets and/or web sites.

The data and information becomes transformed into knowledge through the application of policy and administrative expertise and experience. In other words, what a Knowledge Manager would recognize as the interplay of explicit and tacit knowledge. In the Literature Insight (see the following), we see what Larry Prusak and Tom Davenport have to say about the difference between data, information and knowledge.

Literature Insight

“Most people have an intuitive sense that knowledge is broader, deeper and richer than data or information. People speak of a ‘knowledgeable’ individual, and mean someone with a thorough, informed and reliable grasp of a subject, someone both educated and intelligent. They are unlikely to talk about a ‘knowledgeable’ or even a ‘knowledge-full’ memo, handbook, or database, even though these might be produced by knowledgeable individuals or groups.

What we offer is a pragmatic description that helps us communicate what we mean when we talk about knowledge in organisations. Our definition expresses the characteristics that make knowledge valuable and the characteristics — often the same ones — that make it difficult to manage well

Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organisations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories, but also in organisations routines, processes, practices and norms. Knowledge derives from information as information derives from data. If information is to become knowledge, humans must do virtually all the work.” (Davenport and Prusak) [4]

This brings us to the heart of our argument as to why the public sector should care about KM. The description by Davenport and Prusak of how knowledge is produced within organizations could be, for many civil servants, a description of many of their core activity, aptitudes and talents. This also explains why good knowledge is central to how good Government and a good public sector operates — many of the country’s key ‘knowledge workers’ are to be found in the public sector, although they may not see themselves as such.

2.3 Why should public servants and policy-makers care about KM?

2.3.1 General

Public servants and policy-makers do not need KM — they need to solve urgent, complex problems and contribute towards meeting the Government's and wider public sector's key strategic goals, both in terms of policy and in terms of delivery.

The authors found through our online survey and interviews that 2 of the key challenges for public sector KM are:

- a) demonstrating the benefits of KM; and
- b) securing senior management support.

Unless Knowledge Management can be seen to be contributing to those key strategic goals, it is unlikely to receive senior management support.

This is not a challenge restricted to the public sector. Significantly, many of the most successful KM initiatives in the private sector (at Buckman Labs and Shell, to name but two) began not from a wish to manage knowledge — many were not even labelled 'Knowledge Management' initially — but from a compelling need to solve a particular business problem. While there is a growing recognition in the private sector of knowledge as a resource, and not a cost, it is increasingly being seen only as a resource when it is applied to addressing specific organizational tasks. Gathering knowledge for its own sake is not a part of effective KM. Rather, KM like other supporting functions, such as HR, works best when it is aligned directly with organizational objectives — something that may be forgotten if it is treated as a professional specialism with its own tools and language.

There are signs that senior management commitment is being secured by aligning a number of public sector KM initiatives with key policy and delivery goals.

The following shows that various challenges are being tackled by public sector organizations:

Policy and Delivery challenge	Example
Rising to the Gershon and Lyons challenge	Department of Health
Evidence-based policy making and real-time learning	National College for School Leadership
Overcoming geographical and organizational boundaries to involve partners and stakeholders	Countryside Agency 'Learning Networks'
Changing culture from 'knowledge hoarding' to 'knowledge sharing'	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
Securing user and stakeholder involvement in service delivery	The New Deal for Communities Programme
Modernizing the core Machinery of Government	e-Government Unit Knowledge Network
Using EDRM to meet the Freedom of Information challenge	DTI
Achieving consistency in handling cases	Financial Ombudsman Service

These examples are examined in detail in 2.3.2 to 2.3.9:

2.3.2 *Rising to the challenge of the Gershon and Lyons Agenda*

In the Department of Health, senior management support for a KM-based approach was secured by demonstrating how it contributed to the successful delivery of the Department's aims at a time of massive downsizing, as part of the Gershon and Lyons reviews.

Case Study Insight

The Department of Health is in the middle of an 18 month programme to radically change the way it works, so that it can provide more effective leadership to the NHS and social care, and a better service to Ministers and the public.

The Change Programme — the first and largest of its type in Whitehall — is intended to help the Department stay at the forefront of a new wave of reform right across Government. In particular it will fulfil the Prime Minister's commitment to improving public services.

Some of the main changes to improve the ways of working include:

- introducing new flexible teams to help respond better to changing priorities
- centralizing handling enquiries and correspondence from the public and Parliament
- forming a new Strategy team to ensure better long-term planning
- introducing a new process to ensure every policy idea is properly considered at the outset and those agreed for action are then well resourced
- establishing a new Customer Intelligence Team to better understand the needs of patients, users and the public; and
- appointing a new National Director for Social Care and, in time, non-executives on our Board from local government and the private sector.

The radical Change Programme will reduce the size of the core Department by 1 400 — from over 3 600 posts to 2 200 — by October 2004. This represents a 38 % reduction at the centre. Half of those posts will not be replaced and will be achieved by efficiency savings, while the rest of the reduction will result from transferring posts to other national bodies.

The introduction of an effective Knowledge Management capacity is seen as crucial to the success of the change programme.

Interviewed as part of the BSI study, Linda Wishart and her colleague Karen Lewis explained:

“Now we're reducing our headcount, we need to ensure there's no duplication and that we get it right first time. For example, on a very simple level there are going to be less people available to do filing and tracking down information. The 3 biggest challenges we face are Freedom of Information, the change programme/downsizing and performance management. Knowledge management is an accepted part of our major change programme.

Ask us 5 years ago and we would have said that Knowledge Management was a fad, but now it's recognised as the be all and end all of the Department. They were going to create a new team, but they recognised that what we were doing was what they needed, but they didn't know it was called Knowledge Management.”

2.3.3 Evidence based policy-making and the practitioner perspective

From a policy-makers' point of view, one of the perennial and increasing challenges facing the public sector is the need to produce 'evidence-based policy making' and to bring ground-level reality as experienced amongst practitioners on the ground into the national policy-making perspective.

This has been one of the key aims of the National College for School Leadership's *Networked Learning Communities* initiatives. Interviewed as part of research for this Guide, the Head of the NCSL programme, David Jackson explained the benefits that a knowledge and learning-based approach can bring.

KM Participant Insight

“The policy process now cannot any longer work in tandem with the research models. It’s now patently obvious that to get a really fast piece of research you might get it in 18 months, after you’ve tendered for it for 2–3 months. But policy has now got to work far faster than that, so we need real time learning and real time knowledge strategies. So the issue about learning systems is really important. We have to trust the system and allow the system to educate itself and learn from itself and we have to orchestrate strategies for that, such that there is appropriate meta-learning from that. I think that policy makers understand that.

The principles underpinning the Networked Learning Communities (NCL) Programme, and the model to which they give rise, seems to have captured a moment in the tide of educational events. On the one hand, the government is seeking to develop practice-informed policy, to stimulate innovation, to foster diversity, to promote informed professional judgement and to utilize practitioner knowledge for school and system transformation. At the same time, the profession has become weary of a climate of competition, outside-in change programmes, normative improvement agendas and externally generated accountability systems. There is a growing synergy between government and practitioner views that we need to create space in the system for creativity, lateral learning and accountability, distributed leadership and the sharing of practice.”

2.3.4 Overcoming geographical and organizational boundaries to reach partners and stakeholders

A further perennial and increasing challenge in the public sector has been the challenge of developing policy and insight when participants in the policy and delivery arenas have been geographically dispersed, or even more challenging when they have been members of different public sector organizations, each with their own management structures and communications infrastructures. The further challenge of involving the general public in the policy debate has only added to the challenge.

The Countryside Agency has used a KM-based approach, called *Learning Networks* to help it address this challenge. Interviewed as part of the research for this Guide, Barney Smith, Head of KM at the Countryside Agency explained the approach.

KM Participant Insight

The CA relies on co-operation with a large number of partners, such as local authorities and other organizations, to deliver its interventions. It is hence important that the lessons learned from these partnerships are then disseminated to other organizations as 'good practice'.

Given the large number of involvees, partners and stakeholders, the dissemination of good practice proved considerably resource-intensive. The CA sought therefore to find new ways that could help reduce the resources needed for this work, and at the time improve the effectiveness of these activities. As an alternative and complement to events such as conferences and workshops, the KM team developed a strategy of developing 'peer-to-peer relationships' within web-based communities, coined 'learning networks'. These web-based communities are facilitated by their own staff, and also with their own delivery specialists, and not by the KM team. CA staff here have the role of facilitating knowledge transfer.

The KM team piloted the initiative with the active involvement of several senior managers who were supportive of the project. The three learning network groups established for the pilot study were very successful. *"Once it was successful, it was a 'no-brainer' for everyone else."* As the CEO and other directors had been involved, they were among the active advocates in favour of rolling the concept out to the rest of the organization. A needs analysis conducted by the KM team sought to identify the teams and groups that were interested in adopting this new 'system cum practice'.

After implementing the system, it was found that in approximately half of the groups the initiative failed to be adopted. Here the KM team played an active role in trying to identify the key barriers to the successful implementation. Lack of resource dedication and commitment were found to be the key barriers. By supporting various teams to foster active participation in the learning networks, the KM team was able to develop considerable expertise which was then passed on to people involved in the learning networks themselves. As a result, approximately 40 people in the organization were trained as 'experts' in facilitating and moderating learning networks. The KM team believes these moderators should not be KM specialists but rather members of their respective professional or subject-oriented communities.

2.3.5 Changing culture from knowledge-hoarding to knowledge-sharing

If senior managers in the public sector are to be able to carry out their functions effectively and deliver their strategic goals, they need to be able to harness the total knowledge and expertise in their departments and organizations. That is more easily said than done. Just as in the private sector, the notion that 'Knowledge is Power' often persists amongst junior and middle management, or between different sections of the organization, or even between partner organizations. Scratch beneath the surface, however, and often it can be found that 'knowledge-hoarding' in many cases is not an actively pursued strategy, but a lack of support for individuals to be able to share their knowledge.

This was one of the most powerful early rallying cries of the knowledge management movement — "If only we knew what we know". It is a rallying cry that remains as prescient today as ever, particularly in the public sector.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is an example the authors studied of how a public sector organization has addressed this challenge.

Case Study Insight

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is a publicly-owned development bank that promotes the transition towards open market economies and entrepreneurial initiative in 27 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia. This main task is accompanied by additional activities including policy dialogue, technical assistance, business advisory services, environmental assessments. The organization employs circa 1 300 people from over 60 countries at its London headquarters and regional offices. The EBRD is a geographically decentralized organization operating in a multi-country context. As similarities exist between projects in different countries and across functional areas there is a strong potential for sharing expertise across geographical and functional boundaries.

This was the strategic context in which a Knowledge Sharing initiative was launched in this organization in 2000. The KM team realized that although there was a large amount of information available in the organization, it was not clear where it was nor whether it was reliably assessed. A related problem was expressed as “knowledge is power” — basically referring to a certain unwillingness amongst staff to share information.

The EBRD’s executive committee formed a KM group, which included the Bank’s senior management and managers from every department. This group supervised the implementation of the assessment exercise, aimed at determining the value, function and utility of existing knowledge resources. As a result, the following issues were identified as the key problems affecting the way knowledge was shared at the EBRD:

- **Visibility of information** — It was not clear to staff what information was available or how it could be accessed. In particular, the availability of relevant information was not evident for the staff outside certain personal networks, as staff in HQ always turned to specific key individuals for particular information, which left EBRD’s staff in other countries or newcomers to the institution deprived from the access to the existing information pool. This situation had to be interpreted against a background of high turn-over at the bank at that time.
- **Poor communication** — Lack of knowledge sharing between Sector Teams and Country Teams as well as between different departments in the Bank resulted in duplication of effort and the frequent ‘re-invention of the wheel’.
- **‘Knowledge is Power’** — A certain lack of trust and unwillingness to freely share their expertise was the result of a largely individualist culture. Related to this, it was felt that there was no system of rewards and recognitions in place to proactively encourage staff to apply KS practices in their work.

Strategically speaking, the Knowledge Sharing initiative sought to insert itself organically into a broader vision of the EBRD developed in 2000, encompassing the organization’s mission, strategy, objectives and core values. Its general purpose was to encourage the move towards a ‘One Bank’ approach allowing business-related knowledge and expertise to be communicated and shared willingly across the Bank.

The KM team works on several levels to achieve the objectives of the ‘One Bank’ approach:

- **Culture** — The KM team aims to help create an organizational culture that places value on knowledge and information sharing and encourages innovation. This is facilitated through workshops and presentations aimed at creating knowledge ‘awareness’ and illustrating the link between knowledge and ‘business value’.
- **Processes** — With the introduction of schemes such as the internal mobility programme, the KM team aims to help create a context within which knowledge sharing activities become a natural part of the process repertoire of the organization. Another example is the scheduling of video conferencing sessions to enable the regional offices to attend presentations at the HQ.
- **Systems** — The team seeks to identify the need for and provide the tools and systems that enable and encourage knowledge sharing and creation. The objectives are to reduce information search time, avoid ‘blind alleys’ and avoid the frequent ‘re-invention of the wheel’. Systems introduced to enable efficient working include databases such as lessons learned database, project features database, experts listing and client relationship databases which provide best practices, lessons learned from previous projects and contact details of all employees in the organization.

2.3.6 *Securing user and stakeholder involvement in service delivery*

A common challenge facing both policy makers and service deliverers — at a national, regional and local context — is how to secure stakeholder and user involvement in the design and delivery of policy and service outcomes. This challenge is fast moving up the policy agenda as the Government seeks to introduce ‘citizen-centred’ services.

Knowledge Management tools and techniques can help address this challenge, as the following example from the New Deal for Communities shows.

Case Study Insight

The NDC Programme is an initiative by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to tackle deprivation in England. Its key objective is to narrow the gap between the communities and the national average in five main areas: employment, education, health, crime and the physical environment. The programme duration is 10 years and over £2bn will be invested in 39 of the most deprived communities in England.

The NDC Programme is based on community involvement and ownership, and represents ‘joined-up’ thinking whereby actions are based on evidence as to what works and what does not. It is clear that for both of these main features, i.e. involvement and good practice, knowledge sharing and creation constitute important underlying processes.

Its rationale for putting the emphasis on user involvement and joined-up thinking was that several previous initiatives had not produced the long-lasting change within the target communities policy-makers had hoped for. The National Audit Office evaluation showed initiatives had worked better in communities that had developed partnerships with the public services. Based on this insight, the new initiative had to develop mechanisms that promoted and facilitated the formation of such partnerships.

Consultative mechanisms: Different forms of consultative mechanisms ranging from a survey of residents, focus groups, newsletters, local seminars, board meetings and consultative workshops are used for understanding community needs and conditions of each neighbourhood for the NDC Program. Evaluation teams meet regularly with the communities to solicit feedback on the activities and identify improvement opportunities, partly against the background of lessons learned in other programme areas. The feedback loop generated through the evaluation teams helps programme officers prioritize issues and address emerging problems.

Programme guidance documentation: Community representatives as well as their public authority partners are provided with programme guidance materials that contain detailed yet easily accessible documentation on the procedural aspects of the initiatives as well as emerging good practice. Programme officers produce these documents in collaboration with people who have had exposure to the issues addressed across various programme areas.

Knowledge sharing: As the NDC Programme focuses on crime, education, employment, health and physical environment, the NDC have partnered with a range of local and national bodies, voluntary sector bodies, private businesses to draw on the knowledge and expertise of these groups. The engagement of several parties has meant that sound interaction methods are needed for effective communication. Meetings and workshops are held to capture the knowledge and expertise of NDC partners and in effect to co-ordinate and prioritize community needs in the most efficient and effective manner. An annual conference is held every year consisting of board members, partners, community representatives and government officers to discuss core issues and agree on good practice with the aim of establishing a consistent operating approach amongst all NDC Partnerships.

Using the web: The programme has adopted principles of ‘e-government’ to provide an infrastructure for effective knowledge sharing amongst the various stakeholder groups involved. The website www.renewal.net provides examples of good practice, information on all 39 communities and NDC partnerships and results from evaluations. Every partnership has its own site and all information is openly accessible. The website supports the communities in implementing effective measures by providing tools and guidance for reviewing and comparing their existing strategies. The website also provides detailed ‘how-to’ knowledge ‘bytes’ on issues such as defining the problem, selecting a project, implementing a project, building a partnership, monitoring and evaluation, and influencing mainstream programmes. The renewal site also has an online discussion forum which enables members to post questions and ask for advice from other members of the NDC partnership.