

SUMMARY

BHUTAN INFO COMM AND MEDIA AUTHORITY

VALUE ALIGNMENT FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS AND DECISION MAKING

Sandwiched between India and China, tiny landlocked Bhutan with a population of 695,822 (in 2010) has managed to carve out an identity in the world by focusing on an indigenous value-based concept of happiness, Gross National Happiness or GNH to be more exact, as opposed to GNP (Gross National Product) based on financial values, production and consumption -- which every other country in the world follows.

The Bhutan 2020 Vision and the Eighth Five Year Plan laid foundations for ICT infrastructure and the media industry in the late 1990's with commitments of connecting rural inhabitants to electronic networks and allowing its populous engagement with the outside world.¹ The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) committed to reforming the ICT sector, enacted legislation in 1999 establishing the predecessor of BICMA. Television also came to Bhutan in 1999. The latter is recounted by Bhutanese as a pivotal change point in their lives.

Consultative communication and decision making have played an important role in the country's march from monarchy to democracy and growth of telecommunication and media sectors have supported Bhutan's entry into the 21st century. RGoB

through its legislation in 1999 and 2006 have supported the ICT and Media sector reform through reforming activities of its regulator BICMA.

A three week Rapid Response participatory exercise by LIRNEasia in 2010 focused on helping Bhutan improve its ICT&M sector performance by means of a value aligning exercise, which also included aligning physical facilities, to improve organisational performance of its regulator. The exercise yielded insights to support institutional and organisational (and even individual) transformation and suggestions on strategies for sector inputs to the RGoB's ICT&M outcomes for achieving GNH for all Bhutanese.

This document summarises some of the actionable results of the exercise which were initially shared with BICMA, then addressed in a recommendation report and revised after clarification with the organisation. This document follows the order of the report for ease of reference.

¹ Royal Government of Bhutan (1995). Eighth Five-Year Plan, Chapter 16, Section A and Royal Government of Bhutan (1999). Bhutan 2020: A vision for peace, prosperity and happiness, Part II.

UNDERSTANDING CRITICAL ISSUES

A

ACCOUNTABILITY IN A RGOB AUTONOMOUS AGENCY

Having defined outcomes is critical for an organisation's ability to plan, implement, monitor and achieve success.

Accountability

BICMA's delegated responsibilities stem from the Bhutan 2020 Vision, BICMA Act 2006, Tenth Plan document planning framework within the current objective of poverty reduction under;

1. Bhutan Information and communication technology Policy and Strategy (BIPS) and
2. Bhutan's Information and Media Policy

RGoB needs to collaboratively develop a strategy framework, similar to BIPS, for the Media sector as it doesn't have an overarching strategy framework with structured outcome objectives. This would delineate the Media sector responsibilities and assist BICMA to carry out its mandate without duplication of efforts.

Independence

Considering Bhutan's efforts to obtain FDI into its ICT sector; strengthening independence of the regulator; seen as an important element of stability and objectivity in markets to attract private investment; would seem of timely importance.

ITU papers indicate following considerations for independence of regulator operations;

- Independence is important as means to practice effective regulation. Measured by improvement of connectivity, value for money, and choice for users.
- Legitimacy being key to achieving and maintaining independence.
- The WTO Reference Paper call for separation of regulatory entity from a country's network operators.
- However there is no need for regulator to be separate from government ministries or departments.
- If while an incumbent operator remains a government concern and the regulator becomes independent of government, there may be a danger of regulatory 'capture'.
- In countries where privatisation of incumbent is not feasible, providing the regulator with an alternate reporting structure – to that of the incumbent operator's line Ministry -- makes it possible to meet the WTO requirement.
- That alternative reporting point it's worth mention should be superior to the previous line Ministry.

Autonomous Agency

Considering the BICMA Act 2006 and a definition of autonomy, Section 35 seems to suggest that the Authority *is subject to the governing statute only*, and section 15, 16, 17 and 18 indicates that the Director is free to *hire and fire staff* in consultation with RCSC, to *set Rules regarding payments to staff* in consultation with MoF and be financed *to exercise its functions and discharge responsibilities*.

The current operational realities contradict what the Act indicates. There seem to be contradictions between parts of the Act as well. These issues need resolution for the long term benefit of organisation and sector.

The strategic, institutional and administrative frameworks of BICMA are fully meshed within RGoB framework, making it less than autonomous, especially with regard to the most important aspect of deciding the quality, quantity and structure of its personnel.

However RGoB and BICMA must make a concerted effort to obtain sufficient organisational flexibility for staff recruitment. BICMA to be a successful regulator should also seek a stronger administrative framework and a different mode of financing, beyond that of current government appropriation, to attract and retain the best staff.

DIAGNOSING TO IMPROVE HRM PROCESSES, STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS TO GET RESULTS

B

BUILDING AN ORGANISATION

The People

Regulatory activities are consistent in spite of country size. For Bhutan, as a small nation whose regulator should not exceed 25-30 staff, the capacity and quality of staff is critical to the success of BICMA.

Its Authority members are Ministry appointed part-time individuals, paid to attend meetings, to authorise the decisions prepared by the BICMA staff. There have been intermittent changes in directors, with 2 current staff members deputising between appointments.

38% of BICMA staff have worked for two years or less and 41% have more than 5 years of service. 51 % have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and 62% are below 35 years. Degree relevance to post is not always there, but undoubtedly it's an office of intelligent people. Many of the staff seems capable of much higher levels of performance.

BICMA staff minds, perhaps even more than the Authority members (in current organisation structure), need to be engaged in reaching regulatory and RGoB outcomes or they are of little value to the organisation.

HRM Processes

As organisations (and their staff) grow older; routine jobs become faster, seniors have excess time, boredom sets in -- personal responsibilities often increase and need more attention. For small organisations with a mix of new and old staff, this can be a de-motivator, as examples are very potent and bad habits hard to break.

Balancing official and personal work should be encouraged so it doesn't affect productivity or effectiveness of the organisation and individual. These are common management issues organisations tackle and HRM processes need to acknowledge and addressing them equitably for all staff, even more so in a country attempting to achieve GNH for its entire population.

Low staff turnover also means addressing motivation to counter boredom and routine is a constant need. Regular staff rotation and secondment opportunities could become a saviour in this situation. ICT&M sector change is consistent and fast paced therefore BICMA investing in developing a continuous learning and evolving staff mindset is important.

Workshop attendance and staff training (especially international) should be prioritised based first on usefulness to organisation and second to individuals. Training staff for effective networking, promoting of BICMA and gathering business intelligence, is important for business and building personal brands for career progression. International attendance by rank and knowledgeable officers is compulsory to maintain national and organisation legitimacy.

RCSC and RGoB 'culture' precludes firing for lack of performance, though performance based policies are in place on paper. BICMA has a number of pro-active high performers with technical skills and experience based on industry legitimacy and goodwill, in general though staff exhibits a high level of passivity. There are members who don't seem to make any contribution to reaching the organisation goals.

After a period of organisation expansion and leadership change, some organisation tensions can be normally expected. Staff development plans need to address such normal occurrences. Staff training plans exist and specific mention of BICMA capacity development though within scope of sector strategies, has no MoF budget allocation for implementation.

Organisation success determines ones livelihood; a) understanding how best to motivate oneself and b) motivate others; to do the work that makes the organisation prosper is critical to both organisation and individual. The HRM process planning needed is beyond the capability of the junior human resource officer.

Structure is the most static part of established patterns of behaviour between systems (or sub-systems) of an organisation while processes are the more dynamic and relatively faster changing.

The Structures

A regulatory agency must effectively interact and communicate government policies and its own implementation decisions externally and internally (to maintain market forces and ensure services to people). This fundamentally requires an organisation to have alignment of purpose and structure along with staff understanding of this alignment and the soft skills to interact, communicate, and negotiate effectively.

- Reformulation of current vision, mission, objectives and tag line to clearly communicate the values of 'brand' BICMA and its future direction are needed. The aligned value proposition must be simply defined, with 5/6 clearly understood prioritised values that staff can use daily.
- This should form the basis of everything from staff induction programs, decision evaluation to staff performance evaluations. Could be integrated down to individual staff level with process similar to "M.O.R.P.H." evaluation process.²

Referencing DfID's work culture model; BICMA displays a strong Task Culture with an undercurrent of a Power Culture.

- Maintaining an ongoing discussion on organisation culture, how it affects work, questioning and deciding on how values support everyday interactions will help inform decisions and improve the Structure and Systems of BICMA for the future.

BICMA has sector/industry experience, but, not its HRM planning and administrative structures supporting the core regulator business.

The Systems

Considering the tasks/processes of the organisation; if they 1. specifically deliver results to mission and clients, 2. align to corresponding measurable and attainable outputs, 3. have individual and team accountabilities leading to results and 4. are benchmarked for future improvements.

Though workloads from each license/permit activity are spread, consider increasing annual licenses to two years and staggering them to cut staff workload by half. While number of steps in most processes (4-6) seem minimal, reductions should be sought in number of interactions between client and BICMA officer for each licensing cycle.

The amount of information requested, collected and stored in the various application processes should be reduced.

Revision of licensing system should be considered after proper monitoring, revenue balancing and workload distribution in relation to larger organisation and RGoB objectives.

The licensing/monitoring of places of entertainment which have no relevance to ICT&M should be reconsidered as it's a resource intensive activity. This activity, not done by any other converged regulator should be reconsidered within the scope a revision of the BICMA 2006 Act. Local Government is a more natural authority under whose preview this could come under and to whom the licensing/monitoring task could be transferred or at least, delegated to.

Doing a service/sector matrix review for both BICMA services and for BICMA's direct /indirect clients should anticipate future trends and strategic directions for industry. Global trends in convergence, such as media integration, needs to be addressed while maintaining competitive market. Such an assessment should feed into a revision of the BICMA Act 2006.

BICMA's annual expenses constitute approximately 6% of their USF project expenses, indicative of the staffs' high financial responsibility to RGoB. Project or team based internal budget control and a financial management information system (MIS) needs to be established. Revenue and cash flow monitoring needs establishment to monitor changes to support future business direction decisions.

² David Sacks defines "MORPH" in NYT Corner Office interview as; M - Mission, one-sentence description of your mission at organisation? What do you have ownership of? O - Objectives are top three, maximum five, things that you want to achieve this quarter. R - Results are the metrics you're going to use to measure those objectives. How do you know if you've achieved them? P- People, changes we need to make in organisation for above? Do we need skills /people/create new teams? change team definition? H- "How'd you do?" at the end of the quarter check on progress. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/business/david-sacks-of-yammer-on-fostering-dissent-corner-office.html?pagewanted=all>

WORKING SPIRIT & SPACE ALIGNMENT

C

CONSTRUCTING AN OFFICE

A building reflects and promotes the values and culture of an organisation. Establishing the internal and external identity of a building should be given careful consideration since once built the building will influence the people in and around it for the rest of its lifetime.

The built environment can support or disrupt the function of an organisation and cause changes to systems, processes and more importantly peoples psychology by imposing physical constraints to cause harmony or friction, unity or separation/isolation, a sense of common purpose or individuality.

The Spirit of the office

BICMA in its office has the opportunity to construct a building for beyond Bhutan Vision 2020. A modern office incorporating ICT&M technology with a distinct Bhutanese identity, encouraging the boundary-less society promoted by these same technologies. The BICMA office design should be capable of bringing staff together, sharing scarce resources, promoting harmony and a common sense of purpose to provide the best service to the people of Bhutan which is the exemplar role promoted by BICMA as the ICT&M Regulator.

The Alignment

The spirit, aligning with the space and siting of the building are important decisions and an advisory note on the proposed location was provided prior to the report.

Suggestions under the topics of environment, design, knowledge sharing and local capacity building, finance, procurement and approvals along with some special considerations, such as lifecycle costing, which should be calculated into the design process are listed in Section C. These need incorporation into procurement contracts for consultants, contractors and suppliers, so the building will meet high functional and environmental standards.

Consider if environmental and technology transfer value additions for building can obtain any form of pioneer status with extra funding, under Tenth Plan Urban Planning strategies.

MANAGING KNOWLEDGE TO SUPPORT CORE BUSINESS

D

DECISION MAKING FOR RESULTS AS THE CORE BUSINESS

In considering the generic functions of a regulator, the primary task of each function involves decisions (*Figure 12 in report*).

Within a country, it is government's responsibility to calibrate the regulatory regime based on its constituent needs and the regulatory authority's responsibility to support, make, communicate or implement decisions towards reaching these outcomes and needs.

Understanding decision making as the core business of regulation should help BICMA refine its structure, systems and its capacity development towards better decisions to deliver outcomes.

The type of decision defines the intelligence gathered and requires clarity regarding purpose and context. For BICMA decision making must have the essential Bhutanese 'filter' accounting for their 'GNH' holistic decision framework; considering interdependencies and the intention to do good for all (or at least to do no harm).

BICMA's Current knowledge management good practices are highlighted and should be improved and continued.

The highest value activity/ies individually identified, need re-assessment by team/organisation work priorities/accountabilities for achieving results.

Fifteen Knowledge types needed for regulatory decision making, combining technical and soft skills are listed here, under the Capacity Development requirements of the organisation. These are in the forms of documenting, training, continuous learning, building and using local and international Communities of Practice (CoP).

1. People /self management
2. Decision making and processes
3. Organisation administration
4. Data and information collection, research and validation
5. Communication management
 - Providing feedback and negotiation management
6. Risk assessment and change management
7. Customer service orientation
8. Historic experience related to context & clients
9. Future trends research
10. Regulatory specific knowledge
11. Law specific knowledge
12. Technical specific knowledge
13. Management of consultants
14. Bhutanese operations knowledge of regulatory/autonomous agencies
15. International operations knowledge from other countries

BICMA has made limited use of consultants at junctures needing specific skills not available in-house or in country. A lot of systems in Bhutan are in early stages of development, so there is a lack of experienced people. Even where Bhutanese expertise is available, seeking the current best practices through international networks would be best.

Cultivating trusted international advisors or obtaining international consultants through established selection processes ensures that the organisation gets the most appropriate help necessary. Establish processes by which a component of staff engagement and knowledge transfer are built-in to each consultancy process.

MAKING REGULATORY PERFORMANCE POSSIBLE

E

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

BICMA's enabling environments exist in three spheres; 1. sector performance enabled by BICMA's regulatory performance, 2. external institutional framework that enables BICMA to function and 3. BICMA's internal framework that enables its staff to function.

Sector performance

A 'good' regulatory environment is one that improves sector performance or in other words, improves the customer and the society result. This can be described as improvements in access (or connectivity), value for money (or price and quality of service, which are inter-related) and consumers having choice.

Practically this can be evaluated in terms of year-on-year growth rate or CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of access-paths in a period of assessment against the CAGR for the country category during that period. Having a CAGR higher than its peers is positive, though by itself not an indicator of a 'good' regulatory environment.

More involved indicators to assess regulatory performance 1. Using standard indicators and 2. Using informed observer assessments can also be established.

Institutional framework

The EFQM Excellence Model assessing performance of successful public sector organisations and can be used in assessing the enabling environment created by and for BICMA.

Some of the current Key Performance Results (KPR) for ICT sector work in BICMA are well articulated in BIPS and seem monitored. Once these are achieved, and for Media sector that lacks similar planning, proactive cyclical development of targets and monitoring indicators is critical.

RGoB and BICMA must establish clear performance indicators leading to benchmarking for improvements;

a) the customer results - for each customer segment and sector BICMA operates in

b) society results - current RGoB FYP and their resultant BIPS/Media plan objectives, indicators such as access-path CAGR.

c) people results - staff internal feedback process carried out every 2-3 years. These could be simple satisfaction survey questions (i.e. where do you hope to be working in 5 years time?)

Organisation framework

Enablers missing and hindering BICMA's work categorised from a list identified by staff; considered by organisation sub-system indicated 50% are Organisation System and People and HRM issues, considered by purpose for which item is required 64% indicated Processing Transactions and Decision Making, considered by their knowledge systems, the missing items/issues indicated 44% related to People, 36% to Process and 20% to Technology.

Structure of the organisation reflects lines of command, accountability, work and resource distribution. As a RGoB agency this structure also reflects outward to include the institutional structure within which BICMA operates.

CREATING STRUCTURE & NETWORKS FOR CHANGE & CAREER GROWTH

F

FUNCTIONING FLEXIBLY

Organisation Structure

Periodic restructuring should be done allowing; a) more efficient functioning and service delivery, b) better response to changing pace of industry and c) staff motivation with career progression and role changes. Done at intermittent points in the organisation's life-cycle, reflecting changes in government policy and industry, it can maintain organisation dynamism.

Structural conditions supporting regulatory independence are referenced as; 1) Flat hierarchy with interdisciplinary teams, 2) Breaks from command and control mindset, 3) Compact organisation, 4) Adequate compensation packages and training to attract persons with skills and potential, 5) Openness to and use of outsourcing and finally that 6) Leadership matters.

- BICMA has been very effective in some areas, but the whole of BICMA is not similarly effective.
- Important to consider different parts of organisation are at different points of evolutionary cycle.
- Similarly ICT&M client sectors being served are at different evolutionary stages, of different sizes and require different regulatory functional capacities.

Institutional Networks

The institutional networks are those within which the organisation; usually via its officers; function and wield influence. In small countries like Bhutan social and institutional networks are of significant importance in determining success of outcomes.

Internal and external repercussions of changes in BICMA (reporting) structure and network roles in a)enforcing or detracting from regulatory independence, b)efficiency and in c)RGoB achieving its objectives, needs careful consideration for determining future organisation direction.

Forming a Community of Practice (CoP) of the Autonomous/Independent Agencies or those with Regulatory functions within RGoB, as an alternative or even additional external support network might be helpful to organisation staff in improving work.

Flexibility and Career progress

The ICT&M sectors are among the fastest moving industries in the world and Regulators are most often reactive. However BICMA is at an advantage since the Bhutan's ICT&M are not on par with their counterparts in the rest of the world. This allows the possibility of achieving specialisation and regulatory excellence for those working within the organisation.

There are natural limits in scope for career advancement within the structure of the organisation. Progression within an organisation requires growth in managerial abilities, continuous learning, surmounting challenges and achieving results for the organisation. A flexible organisation structure would yield individuals with a high technical competence and a higher general transferable skill-set.

Progression within a career, beyond the limits of an organisation, requires the ability to build a personal brand and leverage networks. BICMA promoting and being an active node in the RGoB Regulatory Agency network or in other Bhutanese ICT&M sector networks, in regional and international industry networks, holds a key to the progression of BICMA and its staff careers.

These aspects should be considered carefully in deciding the organisation structure and networks for the future; allowing functional flexibility for the organisation and providing career progression for its staff.

MANAGING PROCESS & DOCUMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE

G

GETTING THINGS DONE EVERYDAY

Bhutan's practice of putting all government information on the web is a *superb* knowledge management and sharing practice. Keeping it up-dated is also equally important.

Considering BICMA's intelligence gathering and knowledge management the following form the current systems; A)Process; 1.Licenses & permits, 2.Administrative, B)Correspondence and C)Reporting; 1.external, 2.internal.

- BICMA needs a comprehensive system of filing, access and confidentiality maintenance, back-up and archiving for information and data, in hard and soft forms.
- While proper systems are put in place, intermediate steps must ensure backing up of existing computer based information and ensuring regularity of the back-up process.

Document Management

- Documenting historical regulatory processes would be required to pass on tacit knowledge.
- Client file duplication within different departments is not ideal from a customer service point of view.
- Breaking down central, departmental and individual files, having an online index and designated storage locations are necessary.
- Setting up of an archival system so that information can be found for future use is also needed.
- Simplifying and rationalising filing to a single convention would be beneficial for information sharing and learning of whole organisation. This convention would be useful for future on-line and computer based document storage systems.
- Maintaining confidentiality and security with back-up system(s) for soft and hard copies of critical documents, both on and off-site, are crucial for the organisation and RGoB.
- Data entry and quality conventions need to be established for all databases in BICMA.
- Maintaining systematic backups for both e-mail and website are critical and can be done either with in-house or cloud-based service.
- Reducing amount of information requested for licence/permit to a minimum for researching, reporting and tracking customer satisfaction levels.
- Standardising paper sizes of documents and font types/sizes are need.
- Standardising communication documents in a courteous and customer oriented manner can be done since number of customers is small.
- A Data and Knowledge Management improvement plan which includes a project or department based financial MIS budget & expenditure monitoring should be developed.
- Developing a Quality Management System (QMS) Manual to streamline policies, processes and individual accountabilities allows BICMA's work to be measured and improved for core and support services.
- Pro-active media engagement informing public of decisions and decision making process needs to be carried out.
- Consider simplification of public communication/instructions/data collection from only written text to other media due to current population high illiteracy rates.
- Encourage inclusion of accessibility measures for all impairments (disability, age, etc)

DEVELOPING CAPACITY - EVERYDAY ATTITUDES & MOTIVATION

H

HUNTING FOR HAPPINESS

Capacity development requirements for the organisation are multi-fold and specified in the report. The following needs addressing in any HRD plan since they are critical to Bhutan and BICMA's work.

Attitudes

Bhutan's value based decisions; the emphasis on conformity, maintaining a unique international identity, gives its people a strong sense of community and identity.

- BICMA needs a similar decision culture to empower staff to make pro-active decisions benefitting sector development.

Changes taking place in the nation are causing anxiety, at least in the urban Thimphu environment I witnessed.

- ICT&M are fast moving sectors and its contrast in speed to Bhutan is something BICMA staff needs to acknowledge and manage.

Due to its unique nature and chosen direction, the potential for development alternative exists in Bhutan.

Curiosity

Lack of information is noted as hampering job performance; however the strange lack of curiosity within the Bhutanese culture needs addressing to perform as a successful regulator.

Communication

A regulator; required to exercise due process, build consensus, frame rules and regulations, give opinions and decisions based on legal documents, appropriate and effective communication is critical.

The Bhutanese society's oral tradition naturally allows a more consultative process.

- The challenge is managing conversations, to keep focus and to reach intended outcomes.
- The skill/ability to read and understand documents and write effectively must be developed in all regulatory staff.

The specific HR development plans depend on BICMA's future direction and securing finances; however some very specific capacity development trainings are identified for inclusion due to particular organisation context and industry and are listed in the report at the end of section H.

TAKING DECISIONS EVERYDAY TO SERVE THE TSAWA SUM & OWN HAPPINESS (OR NOT)

I

INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENCE

Accountability was BICMA staffs highest rated value. Staff members may not have the ability to choose many things but, each day, have the independence of choice in deciding the attitude they bring to the work they engage in. If accountability is wanted then first be accountable or as Mahatma Gandhi put it "Be the change you want to see in the world".

In essence this comes full circle - starting with understanding the meaning of being accountable as regulatory agency in RGoB, leading to building individual capacity to make good 'Bhutanese' decisions and reach sector outcomes, then the possibility of these independent regulatory decisions, supporting the collective goal of GNH and ultimately resulting in a job well done and one's own personal satisfaction and happiness as well.

--END--