

Approach Notes for the ASEAN Public Sector Community

I. Rationale

1. The adoption of both the “Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)” and the “Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015” by ASEAN Heads of State indicate that the member states acknowledge that an integrated, stable, knowledgeable and caring community will help ASEAN nations to strengthen their economic competitiveness and attractiveness to investors, in particular during an economic downturn. The three pillars of the ASEAN Community, namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), are vital to the future progress and evolution of ASEAN and its peoples. The Blueprints of these three communities have been carefully formulated to detail specific strategic objectives and actions that intend to achieve progress and positive development in the respective areas.
2. The importance of promoting good governance is explicitly stated in the objectives, strategies and actions of the Blueprints (article A.1.4. in APSC). One channel of achieving this is to conduct a platform for ASEAN Members to share experiences and best practices through workshops and seminars that emphasize good governance and developing norms or standard criteria on good governance.
3. What is currently lacking is a sustainable, continuous community of practice on Good Governance in the ASEAN region. There is thus broad interest in setting up a practitioners’ network where government officials can seek peer advice, learn other countries’ experiences, and share knowledge in Good Governance. Forming a peer-learning practitioners’ network would facilitate the exchange of ASEAN experiences and, thereby fill a gap among ASEAN Members. Ultimately, it is hypothesized that such knowledge sharing would lead to improved governance systems.

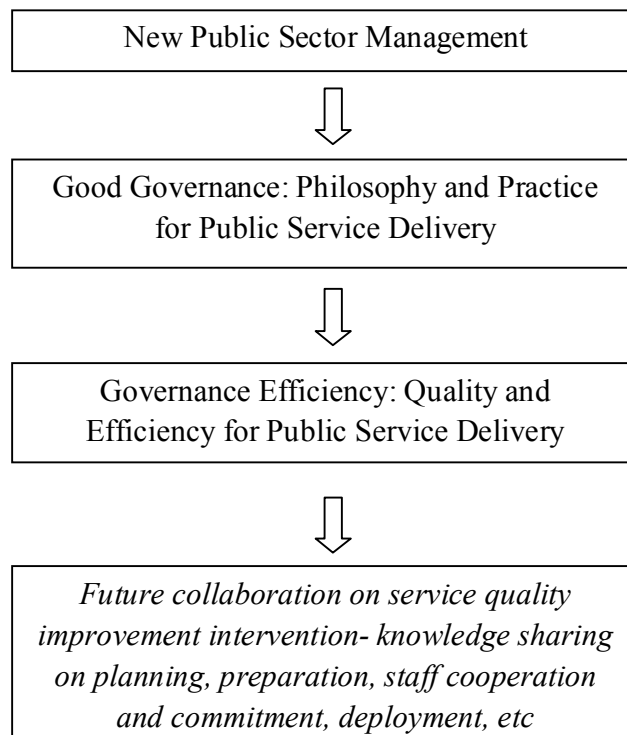
II. Background and Development

4. The seminar, organized and hosted together by Office of the Public Sector Development (OPDC) and the World Bank, has been organized three times since 2013. The gradual development has take place which continuously narrow the scope for the possibility of working together and forming a network of practitioners. For the first seminar, the broader perspective of new public sector management was the focal point. The consensus among ASEAN delegates

was to further examine this new management in the public sector within the context of good governance or GG. Then, the second seminar further refined the GG focus to service delivery which was thought to be a common area for future collaboration (and subsequently a creation of a practitioners’ community). The workshop-style seminar lasted for 4 days with two sites visits-highlighting service delivery improvement through the use of ICT and active public participation.

Afterwards, the third seminar dealt with service delivery from the viewpoints of quality and efficiency. In fact, the theme of this third gathering was Governance Efficiency. Many specific issues facing the need for quality and efficiency improvement across ASEAN were brought up such as how the ASEAN public sector would facilitate and support a free flow of skilled labor for talent mobility such as work permit, governmental service integration in the areas of security and trade promotion, collaboration on crisis or disaster management, etc.

During this third seminar, it was agreed that, despite the differences in policy aims and contents, sharing knowledge about planning and implementation would still be helpful for a reform(s) in individual ASEAN countries. Therefore, exchanging the lessons learned from planning and implementing an initiative and/or a scheme on service delivery improvement would be explored further. This exchange could focus on any specific approaches, techniques, and areas such as the use of the Service Level Agreement, the application of Integrity Pacts on public procurement, etc. The findings and summary on how these improvement interventions were initially planned, prepared, and implemented would provide useful knowledge for the emerging community of ASEAN practitioners. The series of progress and development on OPDC’s ASEAN Program can be shown as follows.



First Seminar:

The inauguration event of the joint OPDC and World Bank’s ASEAN program was held during January 17-18, 2013. The theme was the “New Era for the Public Sector Reform in ASEAN Community.” For this seminar, the discussion focused on several issues as the basis for creating a network for future collaboration among the personnel from ASEAN’s public agencies. Especially, this network was expected to create a community for those who have involved in ongoing and future public-sector reforms.

The first seminar aims to: (1) conduct a platform to establish the baselines in various aspects of governance in the region, (2) promote the dialogue and good practice exchanges among ASEAN members on good governance, (3) develop practical recommendations for designing and building cooperative activities and a future network(s), and (4) discuss through the market place of ideas which would lead to the theme for the next seminar. Several prominent scholars from Finland and USA as well as the experts from international agencies such as Asian Development Bank participated in the discussion panel.



The “Market Place of Ideas” activity helped identify four key potential areas for future collaboration. They are as follows.

1. Public Management: GG, strategic management, risk management, and public management development program courses for joint training were among the key areas emerged from this area.
2. Service Delivery: Sharing the experiences across ASEAN should be conducted as a foundation for knowledge management. This sharing would help initiate potential ideas and projects to assist in quality improvement of service delivery.

3. Public Performance. Improving the performance level of the public sector through leadership, human resource development, and result-based management practice are part of potential cases in which future collaboration could take place. The roles of Public Sector Management Quality Award or similar recognition were also discussed in terms of creating awareness among public agencies, developing a quality management system, and understanding the general public’s expectation on service quality.
4. e-Government: This referred to the use of IT in enhancing service delivery and internal management within a public agency, especially financial management, project tracking, and document and data control.

During the seminar, OPDC and World Bank experts shared with the participants on the shape and form of future collaboration in which knowledge sharing (e.g., data and information, expertise and skills, and experiences) would be promoted. Some of the examples: (1) Peer-to-Peer Partnership established by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries, (2) Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation which represents an open platform for exchange of experience and good practice among European public development agencies and institutions, (3) Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme or UNDP as a platform to exchange knowledge and experience around crisis prevention and recovery issues through an online mechanism, the organization of seminars and training sessions, and the promotion of working groups and information portals.

At the event’s conclusion, it was agreed that the second seminar would examine the term GG and how GG could be incorporated into the public sector more effectively. GG was viewed as the critical component and practice for the public sector in all ASEAN members. The public sectors in ASEAN had undergone drastic changes during the past four decades. For many ASEAN countries, the uninterrupted period of economic growth in the 1970s to 1990s had increased the demands for public services which expanded its roles and responsibility. Infrastructure development and social services such as education and healthcare were the primary focus on public expenditures. Therefore, the public sector had grown in size and budget expenditures.

As the demands for public services were being fulfilled, coupled with the emerging importance of the private sector which could provide and compete for these services, the call for GG in the public sector grew louder. The interests in general public in the areas of efficiency, effective, value for money, transparency, and accountability became apparent in many countries. Together with the availability of many international assessment, GG was considered as the priority of the reforms. The GG consideration gradually led the public sector to shift its attention from continuous expansion to “rightsizing.”. Some of the indicators from international assessment included:

- Global Competitive Index (by World Economic Forum)

- Doing Business (by the World Bank)
- Global Innovation Index (by European Institute of Business Administration)
- Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)
- Human Development Index (UN Development Programme)
- Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA (by OECD)
- e-Government Readiness Survey (by the United Nations- Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA))

This conclusion was highlighted by the discussion on the Blueprints known as the Article A.1.4 in ASEAN Political-Security Community or APSC. APSC promotes the establishment of a platform for ASEAN Members to share experiences and best practices through workshops and seminars which highly emphasize on good governance and on developing norms or standard criteria on good governance.

Second Seminar:

The second seminar was held during August 26-29, 2013. The theme was the “Good Governance” for ASEAN. The seminar was organized as a workshop to ensure more active involvement from ASEAN delegates. For this seminar, the background and the importance of GG were overviewed by the experts from the World Bank and the specialists from OPDC. The importance of GG had taken place after the 1997 economic crisis in which the scrutiny of the size and efficiency of the public sector took place.

In the early 2000s, ASEAN members reviewed the future roles of the public sector, and the need for organizational restructuring that would fit with the changing context in the society-demographic changes, urbanization, talent mobility, and globalized trades with less restrictions and more deregulations in all segments such as financial, healthcare, energy, telecommunication markets. In addition, the growth of the public-service industry (i.e., private firms delivering public services to the society such as waste treatment, garbage collection, audit and inspection, severe weather warnings, elder cares, libraries, etc.) resulted in more pressure to the public sector to prove that its services would remain cost effective. .

During this decade, due to the growing influence of the third sector (also known as the community or civic sector), the stronger check-and-balance in the society forced the public sector to explicitly integrate GG into practices from policy planning to program/ project implementation. The third sector reflected the social or civic-related activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations (or NGOs) which were operating as a not-for-profit organization. Given the above trend, the public sector in ASEAN started to apply GG as part of

the strategic objective of public-sector management practices and framework¹. Furthermore, due to ASEAN’s commitment towards an integrated market in 2015 as well as other pledges to harmonize many activities in public service deliveries GG became more crucial for the fulfillment. The harmonization aimed to ensure more convenience with less cost for businesses and citizens alike,

The workshop consisted of four phases and two site visits to help facilitate the discussion. These two site visits highlighted the impacts on service quality through the use of information and communication technology or ICT as well as the ability to raise the standard of living in one rural area as a result of local participation. The main findings from these four phases can be summarized as follows.

Phase 1: From defining GG to identifying the challenges for individual countries

- GG consists of Participation, Rule of Law, Strategic Vision, Responsiveness, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Accountability
- Good governance is much larger than good government as it helps sustain a country’s long-term social and economic development.
- Despite the decade long of public-sector reforms, the impacts and the benefits to the general public may not be tangible and immediately quantifiable. This underlines the importance of execution and implementation for achieving good governance.

Phase 2: From the challenges for individual countries to the common challenging areas for ASEAN

- From the realization of the GG importance², this phase focused on identifying the common areas in which the public sector in ASEAN would face in the near future.
- Common internal challenges for the public sector’s adaptability and capability:
 - Capacity building for staffs and management on the continuous basis
 - Organizational culture
 - Retirement and replacement through recruitment of top talents
- Common external challenges for the public sector’s adaptability and capability:

¹ For instance, Thailand initiated the Good Governance Act of 2003 in conjunction with several reforms relating to the public sector such as financial management practices, public participation, deregulations in telecommunication and electricity, decentralization through more empowerment to Sub-district and Provincial Administrative Organizations, service quality through more ICT applications, process reengineering and improvement, public accountability, and performance agreements. Public-private partnerships in expressway and mass transit systems highlighted the increasing roles of the private sector in investment and service delivery to the general public. Other practices adapted from the private sector include one-stop services and e-Payment (e.g., taxes and other fees).

² Importance of GG: effective government depends on good governance, contributions to economic development-sustainability and continuity, transparency’s roles in enhancing the service delivery of the public sector, and lesson from European Union on the essential impacts of GG on the integration of countries with diverse background

- Service delivery improvement on quality and efficiency (through better use of resources- budget and manpower)
- Ability to anticipate public needs, given a lack of understanding of Generation Y, unique needs in different regions, youth population, aging population, and lack of understanding citizens’ needs, etc.
- Continuous investment in economic infrastructures such as roads, mass transits, airports, and electricity generating plants through private investment and public-private partnership- how public interests are protected?
- Size and geography with different needs of public services such as service delivery for urban and rural populations
- Continuous engagement with the general public to ensure participation for consensus building in the development of public policies (and preventing disillusionment)
- Climate changes and disaster management- how the public sector provides needed services such as warning, evacuation, rescue, and reconstruction
- Decentralization and regionalization
- Accessibility and communication of performance information to the general public
- Check and balance mechanism through the legal means and the involvement of NGOs
- Corruption

Phase 3: From the common challenging areas in ASEAN to future collaborations

- Service delivery was selected as it represented the common area that could be further facilitated and collaborated.
- Two-stage study, specifically on service delivery, was conducted by ASEAN delegates.
 - How service itself is delivered? This first area deals with the following GG issues
 - Equity and fairness
 - Service quality
 - Responsiveness
 - Participation and feedback
 - How a public agency performs during service delivery? This second area considered the following GG issues.
 - Rule of law
 - Effectiveness
 - Efficiency
 - Accountability
- Similar example in World Bank’s Public Expenditure Management Network in Asia (PEMNA)

- Site visits to help visualize the impacts from good GG practices on service delivery³

Phase 4: From future collaboration to plans for working together

- The consensus was emerged from the second seminar in the areas of sharing the success and lessons learned from service delivery improvement. Efficiency and quality in service delivery would become the future platform for the next seminar. In other words, the two GG components (i.e., efficiency and quality) would be the focal points of the next seminar.
- The next seminar would need to focus on the common areas that all public agencies needed to address such as the free flows of skilled labor and talent mobility.



III. Program Introduction

5. ASEAN countries are still going through a difficult period. Many of our ASEAN members are struggling to recover from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, while weak demand in the advanced economies is dampening growth around the world. In this challenging and unpredictable economic environment, institutions matter more than ever - for recovery, for growth, for well-being, for trust. Too often, we look only at “what” needs to be done without paying enough attention to “how” to reform, or “whom” to involve.

³ Responding to local community needs with public engagement and active participation with key success factors including Key success factors: consensus, check-and-balance among co-community groups, and roles of local/provincial and central governments in responding to the needs of communities for learning and development

6. The root causes of this crisis included serious weaknesses in governance and regulatory structures which often led to failures of judgment, implementation and coordination. As we take stock of these important lessons learnt, we need to help governments in strengthening their decision making processes upon which legitimate and decisive actions depend. It is not enough, however, to recognize the importance of good governance and to propose a theory of functioning institutions. Rather, we need to take active steps to improve public policies and services in response to the increasing needs and demands from citizens and businesses.

7. Indeed, while ASEAN countries may differ significantly in their institutional frameworks, their concerns are very much alike when it comes to advancing public sector innovation, productivity and transparency. For example, innovations related to accountable institutions, performance budgeting, results-based management and open government are advancing at equal speed in our ASEAN countries.

8. We can also learn from each other, however, we know that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution. Even though there are many different ways to strengthen institutions and to promote inclusive growth, there are common threads and good practices in building smart States, innovative government, and effective institutions.

9. Innovation in the public sector refers to significant improvements to public administration and/or services. And the goal of public sector innovation is to use new approaches, from policy design to service delivery, for a high performing, more responsive public sector. In a tight fiscal context, governments are being challenged to develop and deliver better public services. Innovation can reduce costs, improve public sector productivity and help to sustain trust in government.

10. As ASEAN becomes “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”, we need to heavily cultivate technology policies that support innovation. Innovation, particularly Public Sector innovation, has clearly been seen as a key driver for a national development. The public sector needs innovation in order to improve performance and efficiency over time, increase responsiveness to changing conditions, and collaborate across boundaries to solve social problems and bring about inclusive growth in the long run.

11. Hence, government action alone can facilitate the articulation and implementation of innovative initiatives. To this end, we need to learn from past experiences and good policy practices starting with global successes in specific environments and prepare the ground for ASEAN innovation.

12. In 2014, ASEAN Members and the OPDC have mutual agree to focus on how innovative government policies and strategies could contribute to promote a more effective public administration. To this, an ASEAN International Conference in 2014 was established in order to

promote regional attention and discussion on the importance of governance for the implementation of governance efficiency. This forum will provide you with a focus on the dynamics of innovation and stimulate how to institutionalise a culture of innovation among ASEAN members.

13. The ultimate goal is to build the capacity of government to anticipate and respond to the many challenges of our times and cultivate an environment that promote a culture of innovation in the public sector. The conference included four expert presentations, plenary sessions, a study visit, and ASEAN Governance Network Dialogue. More than 7 ASEAN Delegates attended the event.

IV. Objectives

14. The objectives of this conference have been to:

- 1) To establish dialogue between member states and follow the ASEAN Blueprint A.1.4 “Promote Good Governance” as specified in the ASEAN Political Security Community Pillar.
2. To provide a forum/platform for academicians, government officials, and practitioners from ASEAN delegates to discuss and exchange views on best practices and related issues in the current scenario of governance efficiency from global to regional practices.
3. To facilitate and enhance participants’ reflections about ASEAN governance efficiency from various perspectives.
4. To develop an applicable action plan for future collaborations among ASEAN Members in Good Governance.

15. Thus, on November 27-28, ASEAN delegates had expected to explore methods for cultivating governance efficiency during the workshop; learn how best practices from both International and ASEAN perspectives have successfully implemented; and discuss with experts, professionals, and senior ASEAN government officers how to promote and reinforce governance efficiency for the future of ASEAN Public Service.

V. Program Milestones and Results

16. The Conference of 2014 (November 27-18, 2014) was a gather of ASEAN’s senior officials, professionals, policy makers in government, academics, and policy analysts to discuss and exchange the practices and the lessons learned on service delivery to the general public.

17. The key consideration into efficiency and quality was an integral part of the discussion. Common service delivery, considered as an essential part of ASEAN Economic Community or AEC was raised such as free movement and mobility of skilled labor.

18. Two factors were emerged from the discussion. The first factor focused on either public services (e.g., work permits) or key processes performed by a public agency (e.g., public procurement) as the subjects for future collaboration. The second factor would highlight the exchanges of new ideas, initiatives, and practices on service delivery’s improvement on quality and efficiency needed to be promoted. Such practices from combining the two factors included collaborative government, innovative government, Service Level Agreement, etc.

19. During the seminar, several examples from ASEAN delegates were explained. The roadmap and blueprint for better service delivery were exchanged. The focus included decentralization, use of ICT, training and skill development of bureaucrats, etc. One of the main tasks in this third seminar was the brainstorming session. This session concentrated on sharing the experiences on workforce mobility with the following theme- AEC and how the public sector should facilitate the “free” movement of labor.

It is important to note that Increasing and maintaining a high level of labor mobility has allowed a more efficient allocation of resources and to help foster the economic strength as a “whole” like in European Union. Labor mobility has proven to be a forceful driver of innovations. The term mobility has included the areas of education as it represents an essential part of social integration, given the diversity in history, culture, language, and religion.

The focus of this integration was explained during the brainstorming session. These seven components are as shown below:

- Free flow of goods
- Free flow of services
- Free flow of investment
- Free flow of capital
- Free flow of skilled labor
- Development of priority integration sectors
- Competitiveness of food, agriculture, and forestry sectors

There are also 11 priority integration sectors which consist of the following:

- Agro-based products
- Fisheries
- Wood-based products
- Rubber-based products
- Textiles & Apparels
- Automotive
- Electronics
- Air Travel
- Tourism

- Health care
- e-ASEAN (ICT)

The brainstorming session helped construct a preliminary framework in the future. Both efficiency and quality issues could be explicitly considered through the use of Service Level Agreement. This concept essentially showed the commitment of a public agency openly and clearly. The commitment needed to meet the expectation (i.e., quality) from the general public while maintaining or even reducing the resources needed (i.e., efficiency).

Due to the openness of the agreement, the feedback and participation from those to be affected by the service would be needed. Learning from each other on how to prepare this service agreement with the stakeholders, how to organize and mobilize the resources to ensure the fulfillment the agreement, and how to implement and monitor the agreement could represent the potential area for collaboration among ASEAN practitioners.

VI. Conclusion - A Suggested Way Forward/ Our Future Collaboration

20. Contributions from participants and the Social Networking and ASEAN Dialogue session mutually confirmed that a network of government official practitioners, called ASEAN Governance Network, fostering peer learning and experiences sharing on promoting Good Governance definitely benefits both the ASEAN members and individual nation. Participants were of the view that most exchanges of knowledge, best practices, and experiences among ASEAN member countries are usually conducted on an ad hoc basis, which is useful on its own, but a sustainable ASEAN Governance Network is a prerequisite and needed to foster greater ASEAN integration in the public sector and foster closer peer-to-peer learning ties within the Community.

22. It was therefore agreed among ASEAN Governance Network that the following sequential substances should be adopted and implemented:

- Efficiency in Tourism (Innovative Services for Tourist Management)
 - Visa and Work Permit – Workforce Mobility
 - Visa and Work Permit Application
 - Common Requirements for Moving Skilled Workers
 - etc.
- Security Brain Drain
- One Stop Shop: One Operating Center in Each Country
- Reducing the Burden; Enhancing the Ability to Shorten Processing Time

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