



New customs, new systems

AS the saying goes, Change is inevitable! And at customs, we can confirm that **TRUE, CHANGE IS IN THE AIR!**

The change in customs department as it is the entire Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) has been driven by need. This has in effect necessitated serious and thorough thought process of the intended changes of business processes and service delivery to our business partners and esteemed customers.

The change in customs hinged on two premises, Simplification and then Automation (figure 1). The need to simplify our process and automate them is also in conformity with the KRA adopted management approach of using the Balanced Score Card (BSC) management approach of looking at KRA globally in order to realize effective and sustainable change. To support the re-engineered process therefore, the infrastructure which is the back bone of the organization, the new organization structure, and the software system is under a surgeons scrutiny so to speak.

The software system being implemented known as GAINDE 2000 is an integrated suit of modules that brings all the players in customs process together in order to facilitate fast and efficient clearance of goods (see figure 2). It is composed of TERADDEX, ORBUS, LEUK and PAYBOX modules. A brief description of the modules will suffice.

TRADDEX - This is the core backend module that allows core users to lodge and process entries electronically. The users of this module include the customs officers, the shippers and brokers.

ORBUS - This is an electronic networking module that links all stakeholders that interact in the importation and exportation processes. The stakeholders include among others, the treasury, KEBS, KEPHIS, relevant government departments, KPA, KE, Banks, Insurance companies etc. It allows electronic issuance of the

necessary supporting documentation required for a clearance process.

LEUK - This module is the reference data warehouse for importers and exporters.

It allows for a search of information of any kind besides allowing for simulation of duties payable and the relevant laws relating to importation and exportation.

PAYBOX - This module facilitates electronic payment of taxes directly through the banks.

SHAPE V MERGEFORMAT
Implementation approach

It is true that the challenges of implementing a new customs system are enormous given the magnitude of the factors at play. It is against this background that piloting was scheduled to run from January to June 2005 to allow for thorough testing of the solution. These factors include:-

The processes being numerous and complex,

The infrastructure and technology challenges being amazingly overwhelming and not to mention,

The change and culture management facing both KRA and stakeholders.

The project was therefore phased in terms of functionality, sites, modules and stakeholders. The functionality was divided into Pack A, B and C. Trade X and Leuk applications were designed to be piloted first with a carefully selected group of stakeholder and at specific sites in order to provide a good test environment for the system. The achievements

The Project team spent January 1, 2005 festive season in Times Tower planning and developing a pilot strategy to ensure that pilot testing takes place in January. Yes, albeit teething problems, our efforts have paid off! What has happened then?

Technological requirements (hardware and communications) to support piloting was put in place

Two groups of trainees rolled out of the Training Center well equipped and rearing to commence work in the

new system both at KRA and stakeholder sites

The pilot shippers captured and submitted the manifest electronically at Ocean Freight

Two pilot clearing agents, Rapid Kate and Urgent Cargo Handling Ltd were able to submit corresponding declarations for customs processing

The customs officers at the pilot Site in Times tower successfully passed the entries and finally,

Inspection and verification officers at the release point, ICD Embakasi were able to clear the consignments

The team was able to demonstrate to the Commissioner General Mr. Michael Waweru and the Commissioner of Customs Mr. Francis Thurania the entire process from the pilot site in Times Tower. Well, to oil the engine, a little Champaign was in order on Friday 7th January 2005 on 5th floor Times Tower after successful processing of entries were through the new system. **CONGRATULATIONS to the GAINDE, CRM and PILOT stakeholders!**

In parallel with piloting mentioned above, other important activities that have been going on include:-

PAYBOX discussions by all stakeholders involved in customs payment process

ORBUS detailed system requirements by stakeholders involved in facilitation process

Procurement of infrastructure for production environment have been closed and opened for evaluation

Next.....

The battle has just begun. It where we are going that is more challenging and tougher. The next phase will see broadening of the project to cover more deliverables as planned. During one of the essential and ritual daily debriefing sessions of the pilot, one of the CRM team members said and I quote, "We can see a tunnel at the end of the light". Indeed, we are on the right track and the momentum has to be increased exponentially; **Aluta Continua.**