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# Implementing a web-based 'records and document management system' to enhance service delivery

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## Abstract

This case study provides an account on how the Royal Bafokeng Administration (RBA) implemented a web-based Records and Document Management System to improve service delivery in the community. Prior to the implementation of the aforesaid system, RBA was losing lot of critical business information and knowledge due to the lack of a proper centralized records and document database. RBA had also noted that the manual archiving of records and documents was mostly disintegrated and not reliable. On the other hand, RBA realised that like any other organisation in South Africa, it has to comply with the legal requirements to take a formal approach to records, correspondence, contracts, and document management. The organisation decided to implement a system that is web-based so that the relevant stakeholders could access any single records management component, document management component, workflow function, item and/or resolution repository via the Internet based on predefined permissions allocated to individual users. The accessing of the aforementioned data and information could be done anytime and anywhere because the system is web-based. After a very extensive tendering process, the RBA selected the Collaborator Foundation System as its Enterprise Content Management System. The Records Management Policy and Retention Schedules were established to ensure that the implementation was done within the organisational policy parameters and in line with the legislation of the South Africa.

**Keywords:** Records management, document management, web-based, improvement of service delivery, compliance with legislation

## 1. Introduction

In the Republic of South Africa all spheres of government (national, provincial and local) are responsible for service delivery - to meet the stated objectives of the current government and the ruling party of making "A better life for all". The one sphere of government which is closest to the people and that ensures that services are delivered to the communities is the local government. In the South African context, local government would either be a municipality or a traditional authority (Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act, 2003). The traditional authorities are under the jurisdiction of the traditional leaders (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

It is provided in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) that local government have a responsibility to make sure that all citizens are provided with services to satisfy their basic needs. The Constitution also emphasises the notion of

service delivery. The South African local governments are confronted with a particular challenge of improving the efficiency of their service delivery by creating new, citizen-centric delivery models that harness the power of new technologies available to them. They also need to improve processes in order to reach their goals and one such area in which to do this is the records and document management process in traditional authorities. The responsibility of records and document management in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act of 1996 needs to be assigned to all employees of governmental bodies and should be reflected in their job descriptions and their performance agreements. This is to ensure accountability of service delivery at all levels in governmental organisations.

This paper is based on a case study research conducted at the RBA. These include applications such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Records and Document Management System, and Contract Management System. This paper will only focus on Records and Document Management System.

## **2. Context of the research**

RBA is a traditional authority within the Royal Bafokeng Nation (RBN) (Bafokeng Holding, 2009) RBN is a traditional community which in Phokeng, Rustenburg, North West Province, in an area which is about 150km north-west of Johannesburg. The 350 000 strong community is led by *His Majesty, Kgosi Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi*. Bafokeng owns land which is endowed with rich mineral deposits, especially platinum. They are in partnership with the Anglo Platinum and are the biggest single shareholder in Impala. RBN community has three entities – RBA, Royal Bafokeng Holdings (RBH), and the Royal Bafokeng Institute (RBI). RBA is responsible for the infrastructure and social delivery entity. RBH is the primary investment vehicle of the RBN whilst RBI functions as private educational institute which oversees all facets of education throughout the Phokeng and the neighbouring villages. RBN operates within the parameters of its Vision 2020 and the Masterplan. Vision 2020 has been developed with the aim of enabling the RBN to become a self-sufficient community by the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will only be achieved if the development of the Bafokeng's communal assets and human capital are maximised. The Masterplan is the physical embodiment of the Vision 2020. It was launched in August 2006 and was devised with the Singapore-based urban design consultants, Surbana. The Masterplan is aimed at creating an environment in which people can live with dignity and have access to facilities – health, education, recreation, and employment. The 30 year Masterplan is based on a detailed assessment of the opportunities offered and constraints imposed by the 1,200KM<sup>2</sup> of the land owned and controlled by the Royal Bafokeng.

## **3. Framework of the study**

### **3.1 What is a record?**

Records are documents of a governmental body which are not transferred to the state

archives repositories for permanent preservation. According to ISO 15489-1 records can be defined as “information created, received and maintained as evidence. Records generally have 4 characteristics:

*Unique* – records are a unique sequence and are not isolated bits of unrelated information. They are only logical within the context of the overall function and activities of the organisation they were created in.

*Authentic* – authenticity refers to the integrity of a record, where a record is complete and unaltered. Records should be protected against unauthorised alterations. This can be achieved through strict access controls to documents.

*Reliable* – the contents of the record need to be fully trusted as a full and accurate presentation of the facts to which they attest to and should be produced soon after an event has taken place.

*Authority* – records provide official evidence of an activity or transaction and must therefore be reliable and trustworthy. Signatures, letterheads and office stamps are indicators of the official nature of records.

### **3.2 The regulatory environment and records/document management**

Proper record management helps any sphere of government to achieve accountable governance and transparency in reporting. There are 6 key pieces of legislation that govern document management in all government departments.

*The Constitution, 1996:* Section 195 of the Constitution provides for the following pertaining to record keeping and government bodies:

- Provision of timely, accessible and accurate information and requires that
- The public administration must be accountable – their transactions must be transparent to the general public they serve.

*The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996):* The South African National Archives is fully accredited member of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) under ISO 15489-1; 2001. ISO is the international body that provides the best practice guidelines for record management. The standard also sets the parameters within which a records management program should be established, regardless of the size, location or level of technology used by that particular organisation. The National Archives in turn have to audit all public service areas to make sure that they meet the set standards. Section 13 of the Act contains specific provisions for efficient records management in government bodies. It provides the National Archivist, the person appointed by the Minister of Arts and Culture to look after the National Archives of South Africa with the authority to:

- Determine which records keeping system should be used by government bodies.
- Authorise the disposal of public records or their transfer to the custody of the National Archives.

*The Public Finance Management Act (Act No.1 of 1999):* The purpose of the Public

Finance Management Act is to regulate financial management in the public service sector to prevent corruption, by ensuring that all government bodies manage their financial and other resources properly. This is transparency and accountability in document management become important.

*The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No.3 of 2000):* The purpose of this Act is to ensure that administrative actions are lawful, reasonable and are properly documented. Managers in the public sector need to ensure that their activities and functions are documented to provide adequate evidence of their compliance with legislation governing their areas of responsibility.

*The Electronic Communications and Transaction Act (Act No.25 of 2002):* The purpose of this Act is to legalise (recognise) electronic communications and transactions. Electronic or machine readable records and all components of electronic information systems, such as input documents print-outs and related documents can be classified as electronic documents. The exception is data that has been captured solely as a means of producing a hard copy, e.g. using word processing programs.

*The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No.2 of 200):* This Act aims to promote transparency, accountability and effective governance by empowering and educating the public;

- To understand and know how to exercise their rights;
- To understand the functions and operations of public bodies and
- To effectively scrutinise and to participate in decision-making by public bodies that affects their rights.

#### **4. Research methodology**

The nature of the case study, the impact of the various role players within the case and the participatory nature of data gathering lends itself well to the anti-positivist or qualitative approach to conduct research. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), *anti-positivists* question the applicability of the scientific method to phenomena in human behavioural studies.

As the researcher was an active member of the group for a period of approximately 10 months, over which time much of the data was collected, the context and participants experience of the phenomena is well understood. The researcher could therefore be said to have an insider view. As unstructured interviews would be conducted, the data is subjective and this should allow the design to be flexible and explorative. The sample size is small, as this single case form the basis of the research. All the above factors lend themselves well to the *phenomenological approach* according to Welman et al (2005).

As the purpose of this research is to add to theory on the subject, as well as to bridge the identical gap between academia and practice, the *ideographic methodology* of

studying all the intricacies of one case in context is applicable (Welman et al, 2005).

An interpretive case study method was chosen in direct response to a call for more interpretive studies in the field of Decision Making Systems (of which records and document management is a sub-category) by Arnnott and Pervan (2005). They, as well as other authors (Teubner, 2007; Kearns and Sabherwal, 2007) believe that there is a widening gap between theory and practice in the field and thus they believe that more interpretive research would enrich the theory in ways in which natural science studies cannot assist to focus research areas of importance.

## **5. Findings of the study**

The findings of this study emanates from interviews and document analysis.

### **5.1 Management and policy issues**

The management and policy issues are constituted by records management policy and the rationale for the implementation.

#### **5.1.1 Records management policy**

Before the Records and Document Management System was implemented; RBA established a Records Management Policy and a Retention Schedule. The information in the sub-sections below has been adapted from the aforesaid policy.

##### **5.1.1.1 Rationale for records and document management**

Sound records management is fundamental to good governance and effective and efficient administration. RBA must ensure that processes and procedures are in place for the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records throughout their lifecycle to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance. Further to the above, RBA must observe sound records management for one/ more of the following reasons: enable RBA to find the right information easily and comprehensively; enable RBA to perform its functions successfully and efficiently and in an accountable manner; support the business, legal and accountability requirements of RBA; ensure the conduct of business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner; ensure the consistent delivery of services; support and document policy formation and administrative decision-making; provide continuity in the event of a disaster; protect the interests of RBA and the rights of employees, and present and future stakeholders; to comply with records retention responsibilities specified in South African legislation; safeguarding of evidence for possible future legal action, mediation or disciplinary hearings; and processing public requests for information as outlined in the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000.

### **5.1.1.2 Implementation and management of records and document management activities**

RBA's Records Management Policy has set out roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation and management of the Records and Document Management activities. The policy has specifically outlined the responsibility of the Chief Information Officer, Heads of Departments, Senior Records Management Specialist, ICT Manager, Legal and Corporate Affairs Manager, and the all employees.

The policy also deals with the issues pertaining to the implementation and management of records and document storage, electronic records retention, disposal of records, storage and custody, access and security, legal admissibility and evidential weight for paper-based and electronic-based records, and definitions.

### **5.1.2 Selection of the records and document management system**

The selection of records and document management systems was constituted by the gathering and analysing information; approval and mandate from the top management; selection of the system;

#### **5.1.2.1 Gathering and analysing information**

Information in the sub-sections below emanates from the analysed transcripts of interviews and documents collected. The ICT & Knowledge Management staff did analysis pertaining to document and records management at RBA at the beginning of 2006. The analysis revealed that most departments in RBA were not complying with the South African legal requirements with regard to the document management. Other than the failure to conform with the legal framework, in terms of capturing, managing, storing, preserving, delivering and discarding information, they did not the RBA in the cutting-edge in terms of performance and professionalism. The manner in which records and documents were handled did not promote sharing and knowledge management.

*“The records and document archiving facility in the Bafokeng Civic centre was unused. It was on this premise that the Corporate Planning Executive commissioned the ICT & Knowledge staff to – firstly, establish a records management policy, and secondly to implement the policy. The selection of Records and Document Management System would constitute a step towards the implementation of the policy”<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist  
 Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications, Port Elizabeth,  
 2-4 September 2009 (<http://www.zaw3.co.za>)

### 5.1.2. Approval and mandate from the top management

During an Inaugural ICT & Knowledge Management Implementation Committees meeting that took place on 21 June 2006, the Manager: ICT & Knowledge Management requested the RBA and the executives to allow the Procurement Department to initiate and facilitate the selection of the Records and Document Management System. The request was approved without opposition. The executives further recommended that due to the technical nature of the envisaged project, a special Tender Evaluation Committee should be constituted for this purpose. The Corporate Planning Executive emphasised that the process should follow proper RBA procurement procedures. RBA also secured the services of the highly experienced Independent Advisor.

### 5.1.3 Selection of the system

After a very lengthy tendering process, both the Tender Evaluation and Tender Adjudication Committees recommended Collaborator Foundation System as the Records and Document Management System which RBA should implement. Collaborator is a system that has been developed in South Africa by a company called Business Engineering based in Pretoria. The Collaborator system was chosen because of the following reasons:

- The system has been approved by the State Information Technology Agency.
- Collaborator has strong electronic records management capabilities and content management.
- It operates in line with the requirements of the South African legislation.
- Low overhead on current ICT infrastructure.
- The system has strong workflow tools and high security.

*“It would be important to stress that the Independent Advisor raised concerns about poor physical management capabilities of Collaborator. However, this concern was mitigated by the fact that Business Engineering has good implementation history”<sup>2</sup>.*

## 6.1 Implementation of the system

The system that was selected by RBA for Records and Document Management is Collaborator which has been created by a South African company called Business Engineering. The implementation project started on the 1 June 2007 and went live on the 30 November 2007.

### 6.1.1 Project delivery methodology

From the outset of the project, a structured business process analysis was performed.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA  
 Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications, Port Elizabeth,  
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By using a structured methodology, the business processes (to be) were constructed using the structured IDEFØ methodology. IDEFØ is a method designed to model the decisions, actions, and activities of an organization or system. IDEFØ was derived from a well-established graphical language, the Structured Analysis and Design Technique (SADT). A Business Analyst concurred with the aforesaid claims *“The United States Air Force commissioned the developers of SADT to develop a function modeling method for analysing and communicating the functional perspective of a system. Effective IDEFØ models help to organize the analysis of a system and to promote good communication between the analyst and the customer”*<sup>3</sup>. IDEFØ is useful in establishing the scope of an analysis, especially for a functional analysis. As a communication tool, IDEFØ enhances domain expert involvement and consensus decision-making through simplified graphical devices. As an analyst tool, IDEFØ assists the modeler in identifying what functions are performed, what is needed to perform those functions, what the current system does right, and what the current system does wrong. Thus, according to the Executive Director: *“IDEFØ models are often created as one of the first tasks of a system development effort. In December 1993, the Computer Systems Laboratory of the national Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released IDEFØ as a standard for Function Modelling in FIPS Publication 183”*<sup>4</sup>.

Taking the IDEFØ model into account, the practical workflows were designed. Each workflow described the practical business response to each trigger as defined in this (workflow design) phase of the project. The total business response described included system as well as non system activities, the sequences of these activities and the people that would be involved in these activities.

## 6.1.2 Records and document management modelling

This phase included all the activities required to establish electronic support for the workflow processes designed in the previous phase.

### 6.1.2.1 Parameters

Collaborator has been designed and built to be able to adapt to the business processes of the RBA. *“We not allow collaborator to dictate or prescribe business process changes. Seeing our business processes have been documented during the Workflow Design Phase [Second Phase], the parameters in Collaborator were modelled to accommodate our specifications and unique processes”*<sup>5</sup>.

### 6.1.2.2 Proof of concept

Once the parameters in Collaborator have been populated to represent the desired

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the Senior Business Analyst of the Business Engineering

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the Executive Director of the Business Engineering

<sup>5</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

workflow design, “*we had a final walkthrough of a typical business transaction using the Collaborator system.*”<sup>6</sup> The Collaborator setup represented the business processes defined in the Analysis Phase and furthermore the workflows as was documented in the second phase (Workflow design).

### 6.1.2.3 Workflow improvement

During the Proof of Concept phase of the agreed workflow processes using the System, minor adjustments were made to accommodate the practical implementation of an electronic system during the execution of the business processes. “*These adjustments were noted during the final Proof of Concept and then incorporated into the parameters. Collaborator has the inherent advantage to allow us to continuously improve our business processes*”<sup>7</sup>.

### 6.1.3 Documentation

Procedure manuals were prepared which reflected the manual and computer assisted tasks in significant detail. Process specific training material was further developed for the computer assisted tasks in preparation of the end-user education process.

#### 6.1.3.1 Procedure manual

The workflow loaded into the Collaborator system reflected the tasks, the sequence of the tasks and the users that would perform those tasks. “*The procedure manual developed contained a bird’s eye view the workflows and also included any activities that were performed outside the operations of the system. This Procedure manual is the primary reference of how Royal Bafokeng Administration function*”<sup>8</sup>.

#### 6.1.3.2 Training material

Step-by-Step guides were developed to train the existing users and any new users on how to participate in the business processes (workflows) that have been setup in the system. “*A direct relationship exists between the procedure manual and the Step-by-Step guides so as to ensure that the training interventions are both comprehensive and effective*”<sup>9</sup>.

### 6.1.4 Implementation

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

<sup>7</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

<sup>8</sup> Interview with the Executive Director of the Business Engineering

<sup>9</sup> Interview with the Business Analyst of the Business Engineering

### 6.1.4.1 Training of users

*“The employees of the organisation that participate in the business processes are generally referred to as end-users of the system”*<sup>10</sup>. Using the process specific Step-by-Step guides, relevant employees were trained, on one-to-one basis in the system functionality that they required to execute the tasks that are part of the daily work. Data relevant to the employees’ working activities was loaded to the system to make training more pragmatic.

### 6.1.4.2 Support and handholding

Due to the overall complexity of the business processes (workflows) activated within the system, *“some of our users require support than others”*<sup>11</sup>. Although the one-on-one training gave users basic understanding of the operational working elements of the system, required on-site support for an initial period and *“that is why we made arrangements with the Business Engineering consultants to ensure that they provide some handholding to our users”*<sup>12</sup>. The handholding (on-site support) was done for up to five weeks after “going live” with a new business process. The Business Analyst had observed that *“handholding very much depend on the computer literacy levels of the users and/or the complexity of the business processes”*<sup>13</sup>.

## 6.2 Benefits of the Records and Document Management System

Correspondence Management Business Process can be viewed in three sub-business processes. The first sub-business process relates to all incoming correspondence. The incoming correspondence process is triggered when unstructured information is delivered by post, facsimiles, telephone, or electronic mail (e-mail). The process contains all the activities that have to be performed in order to resolve the incoming correspondence (excluding the response if required). The second sub-business process relates to all internal correspondence (instructions, memos, etc). The internal correspondence is normally interdepartmental. The third and final sub-business process relates to all the outgoing correspondence. Although the official method to correspond may still be via post, the communication process is improved with the use of technology like e-mail, facsimiles, telephone, etc.

### 6.2.1 Incoming correspondence

Incoming correspondence is composed of the facsimile, paper-based correspondence, e-mail, and telephone-based correspondence. For the purpose of this paper, sections dealing with the facsimile and telephone-based correspondence will be discussed in the section dealing with the deficiencies of the project implementation.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with the Business Analyst of the Business Engineering

<sup>11</sup> Interview with the Records Management Officer of the RBA

<sup>12</sup> Interview with the Records Management Officer of the RBA

<sup>13</sup> Interview with the Business Analyst of the Business Engineering

### 6.2.1.1 Paper-based correspondence

Most of RBA's formal correspondence normally arrives via post. The Records Management Officer removes from letters from their envelopes. After registering the incoming post, the post is prepared for scanning. Using a certified scanner, large volumes of paper-based mail is imaged. *"The Records Management Officer performs a quality check on the scanned image before placing it on a designated network drive"*<sup>14</sup>. Collaborator continuously monitors the drive to automatically upload the digital copy of the correspondence into the repository where all the correspondence (active and completed) is kept. A predefined workflow process is automatically initiated when the post is successfully stored in the repository.

### 6.2.1.2 E-mail correspondence

*"Today, providing first-class citizen service is as important for government agencies as it is for corporate business. Government agencies are using a mix of technology, eCommerce, and electronic messaging to achieve this goal. These tools allow for personalised and self-administered services, increased efficiency, as well as improved communications with citizens, business communities, and other agencies"*<sup>15</sup>. In the RBA, Collaborator provides automated capture of all e-mails and stores them to a repository. This repository contains all the incoming correspondence for the organisation. The recipient of the e-mail may decide to submit a new e-mail to the repository. The newly received e-mail could trigger a predefined workflow that will ensure that the correspondence is resolved satisfactorily.

## 6.2.2 Internal and outgoing correspondence

The formal method of Collaboration system within the RBA is with the use of the paper memorandums. Registers are kept to record the distribution channel of each memorandum. E-mail has made the process easier but introduced less control over the management of correspondence and this is a problem; *"however collaborator has come in handy because it allows the user to submit a memorandum into a predefined workflow"*<sup>16</sup>. When it comes to the outgoing correspondence, Collaborator workflow engine facilitates the user to automatically submit a copy of the letter by way of e-mail to the relevant recipient. These activities take place after the outgoing correspondence has been approved by the authorised user.

## 6.2.3 Records management

The Records Management Module within Collaborator adds records management functions and capabilities to Collaboration and knowledge management software for the

<sup>14</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

<sup>15</sup> Interview with the Executive Director of the Business Engineering

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the Records Management Officer of the RBA

global enterprise. With the records management functionality provided, Collaborator became the first comprehensive full information life cycle document and records management solution for the entire RBA. *“Records management gives employees of RBA comprehensive, complete lifecycle management of all corporate records and information holdings, in paper or electronic formats. It empowers everyone in the organization to file all corporate records according to our organizational structure, thus reducing the risks associated with audit and litigation. The records interface has been integrated into Collaborator’s familiar web-based interface, allowing all users’ to access records management functions from a web browser”*<sup>17</sup>.

The Executive Director of the Business Engineering indicated that RBA is one of the first local government institutions to embrace records management: *“In this intense, ultra-competitive world, organisations today are driven by customer satisfaction and retention. In order to stay competitive, organizations must harvest their corporate records, manage them, control them, protect them, and make them accessible to knowledge workers within an efficient collaborative environment. Organisations should also implement a bullet-proof auditable process for handling records from creation to disposition”*. RBA has already realised the benefits of the records management. The Records and Document Management System provides a complete solution for the management of corporate records, from capturing of an e-mail and authoring of documents, to the analysis and interpretation of their content, to their processing, records management, archiving and final disposition. *“The system provides access to corporate records within a secure environment through its integration with our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and its support for existing information repositories for record storage”*<sup>18</sup>.

Some of the activities that the staff at the RBA can do through the Records and Document Management are managing records, implementing a file plan, filing e-mail messages, storing records, scheduling records, retrieving records, disposition processing, document imaging capability, and file plan component selection:

**Managing records:** Electronic records are stored in a repository (open architecture) and maintained in their original format. Authorised users have the ability add, change, and delete records in an auditable environment using predefined (workflow) process.

**Implementing a file plan:** Authorised users may create a file plan for the organisation or any part thereof. The properties for the file plan are customisable for each customer. Documents are organised in customisable hierarchical and visual business taxonomy. The auto classification engine classifies documents based on corporate rules. The folder series, folders and documents of this taxonomy have extensive, customisable and searchable files.

**Filing e-mail messages:** Users file e-mail messages by forwarding the email message to the archive e-mail address ([archieve@bafokeng.com](mailto:archieve@bafokeng.com)). The e-mail message with all

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with the Records Management Officer in the RBA

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

its attachments is stored and filed in the file plan according to the rules of the file plan.

**Storing records:** All records are stored in the RBA repository. Records are created and maintained using the workflow engine. The activities that results in the creation and maintenance of records have been defined for RBA. These workflow processes are maintained from time to time to ensure that a continuous improvement program is established for the organisation.

**Scheduling records:** Collaborator provides the capability to schedule records by maintaining retention schedules and disposition instructions, and associating them to the record folders under which records are filed.

**Retrieving records:** All records are stored in the RBA repository. The records can be accessed via the web. A rule based permission system allows only authorised access by users.

**Disposing processing:** The disposing process is performed by a predefined workflow process that is automatically triggered on the day the disposition instruction needs to be performed. The instructions issued by the workflow are then performed by the authorised users only. Some of the workflow actions may include the cutting off of records, transferring records, destroying records, access review, etc.

**Document imaging capability:** The system accepts images in any format. Images are imported into Collaborator in any of the mainstream imaging contribution components. Once the images are stored in Collaborator, the images are indexed (Optical Character Recognition) to ensure that a full text search can be performed to retrieve at a later stage.

**File plan component selection:** Records are retrieved by searching on any of the defined metadata fields defined as part of the file plan or the records. A file plan includes a number of different records each with their own defined metadata.

### 6.3 Deficiencies of the project implementation

Although RBA is grateful about the implementation of the Records and Document Management System, the project implementation had certain shortcoming. These include poor project management and lack of resource commitment, and failure to implement facsimile and telephone based correspondence.

#### 6.3.1 Poor project management and lack of resource commitment

During the course of the implementation, project meetings were not held regularly. On the other hand, there was no Steering Committee which monitored the implementation

of the project: *“Unlike the ERP project wherein a strong team was constituted, the Records and Document Management did not have such kind of support. Meetings were held sporadically and RBA executives never attended such meetings”*<sup>19</sup>. In contrast, during the implementation of the ERP project all most all the RBA Heads of Departments were directly involved. This view is supported by Dagada (2008): “The Corporate Planning Executive in the Office of His Majesty, the King, was appointed as a **Project Sponsor**. When he left the employ of the RBA, the Acting Chief Executive Officer became the Project Sponsor. The Manager: ICT & Knowledge Management was appointed as a **Project Owner** and the ICT Specialist was given the responsibility of being a **Project Manager**. The following manager were appointed as **Functional Owners**: Finance Manager (all Financial Functions), Human Resources (HR) Manager (HR Function), Infrastructure and Planning Head of Department (Projects Function), and Corporate Communication and Marketing Manager (Customer Relationship Management). RBA also appointed about 30 staff members, mainly from the Finance Department, as “Super Users”. The Super Users are the main system users and are expected to guide other users. On the other hand, Bytes Systems Integration also appointed its own Project Manager and **consultants for various modules** (functions). The responsibilities of the above-mentioned positions were outlined in the Mandate Document”. The inadequate project management and lack of resource management cannot be blamed on RBA management: “Both RBA and Business Engineering teams should take some blame. Neither of these teams had initiated the formation of the Steering Committee nor invited RBA executives to participate in the project implementation.

### 6.3.2 Failure to implement facsimile-based correspondence

The agreement between RBA and Business Engineering was that facsimile-based correspondence would be implemented. Officially, the project was completed in November 2007 and went live in January 2008; but up till now the facsimile-based correspondence functionality has not yet been implemented. *“This has denied the user to enjoy the full benefits of the Records and Document Management System. Collaborator has the ability to integrate to industry standard facsimile servers. Once the fax is received by a digital copy of the incoming fax is placed on a network drive. Collaborator automatically uploads a digital copy of the correspondence into the repository where all correspondence is kept”*<sup>20</sup>.

### 6.3.3 Failure to implement telephone-based correspondence

RBA employees often communicate internally and externally using the telephone. In some instances the conversation may more than often require further action to be taken by a particular staff member. *“Collaborator allows an organisation to establish a dispersed call centre. In this call centre environment authorised employees participate in the registration of the correspondence. When the correspondence is registered in the organisation’s repository, a predefined workflow process can be initiated managing the correspondence from start to end. Unfortunately, this functionality has not been*

<sup>19</sup> Interview with the Senior Records Management Specialist of the RBA

<sup>20</sup> Interview with the Records Management Officer of the RBA

implemented in the RBA<sup>21</sup>”.

## 7. Conclusion

The findings of this study have revealed that documents have more value than just complying with legislation. Actually there are lots of economic benefits of managing your records and documents effectively. Records and documents show whether an organisation was able to fulfil its functions and the degree of success it was able to fulfil these functions. The value of documents can be broken down into the following 3 areas: primary or administrative value, secondary value, and practical value.

This paper reflects how a rural community has, through its Administration, employed a web-based Records and Document Management System to improve infrastructure and service delivery to its citizens. The paper also provides vital lessons how to implement an information systems related project. There are several factors that should be considered before the actual implementation of an Records and Document Management System. The Records and Document Management System had a strong business case for the Records and Document Management System project and thus the top management approved and supported the project throughout. This paper detailed how RBA dealt with several organisational issues and risks to ensure the success of the project. The benefits of the web-based Records and Document Management System are reflected in the paper. Lessons and experiences from RBA can be used in other rural communities in developing countries. This paper may also be used as a resource by policy formulators, provincial and local governments' officials, traditional authorities, and project managers.

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