AN ASSESSMENT OF E-RECORDS READINESS AT THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS, GABORONE, BOTSWANA

Trevor M. Moatlhodi
Botswana Life Insurance Limited
tmoatlhodi@blil.co.bw

Trywell Kalusopa
Department of Information Studies (South Africa)
University of Zululand
KwaDlangezwa, South Africa
kalusopat@unizulu.ac.za

ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess electronic records (e-records) readiness at the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA), Gaborone, Botswana, within the purview of the implementation of an e-records management solution – the National Archives and Records Management System (NARMS). The assessment was done using tenets derived from the existing International Records Management Trust (IRMT) E-records Readiness Tool. The assessment examined the national legal and policy framework, compliance with policies, standards,

tools, procedures and responsibilities for records management, e-records management products and technologies, resource capacity and training for records management staff, internal awareness of records management programme and the level of management ownership on e-records management. The study largely adopted a qualitative approach, but used methodological triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, with a case study research design. Data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations. Respondents comprised records management staff, action officers (records users) and an Information Technology (IT) Manager. The study findings revealed that the level of e-records readiness at the MLHA included: inadequate legal and regulatory framework; average adherence to records management procedures, tools and standards; low awareness among staff of the records management programme and the national regulatory framework and on the NARMS pilot project; limited space for records management; slow progress in the implementation of NARMS and low capacity building as records management staff is rarely taken for training. The study also revealed that opportunities for increasing the depth of e-records readiness exist, such as: availability of financial resources for the NARMS pilot project; adequate Information Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure and high management commitment on the E-Records Management (NARMS pilot project). The study recommends: improvement of the national legal and policy framework by development of an e-records policy; development of a records management policy to provide an internal records management framework; regular training for records management staff, especially on e-records; regular internal records management awareness; and assigning senior management high-level responsibility for organisation-wide records and information management.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Electronic records (e-records) provide essential evidence of organisational activities, transactions and decisions. They also support business functions and are critical for the assessment of organisational performance (Mnjama and Wamukoya 2004). In the recent past, e-records readiness has been a topical issue as governments embark on providing their services online through their e-government initiatives (IRMT 2003; Kalusopa 2011; Moloi 2006). The IRMT (2003, 1) defines e-records readiness as:

> the capacity of a government or an organisation to create, manage, share and use electronic information (e-records) to improve governance as well as sustain international trade and innovation; improve global security and support other activities in the increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent world.

Kalusopa (2011, 8) agrees with the IRMT (2003) and defines e-records readiness as 'the depth and breadth or the capacity of organisations in having the required institutional, legal framework, ICT infrastructure anchored on a systematic records and information management programme'. Accordingly, as governments and businesses entities across the world adopt e-government strategies, the rapid rate of the creation and accumulation of e-records has become evident and necessitated the implementation of e-records management systems (Nengomasha 2009). This is so because electronic transactions carried out through e-government applications produce e-records whose quality and integrity need to be upheld (IRMT 2004a). Mnjama and Wamukoya (2004) concede that as governments implement e-government, proper management of e-records is critical as they are valuable assets that need to be protected. Therefore, this requires effective electronic documents and records management systems (EDRMS) that could capture accurate and reliable records, so as to maintain the quality and integrity of the data and records from the e-government transactions. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005a, 72) argue that 'there is need therefore to manage this information accurately and securely, and to preserve it over time as the basis for accountability, has become critical' in governance. Lipchak and McDonald (2003, 1) note that 'high quality information enables governments to make decisions and take action to improve education and health care, stimulate economic development, ensure justice, protect the environment, provide security and achieve other governance objectives'.

Therefore, the quality of records generated through e-government should not be over looked or compromised. The same cautious treatment applied to manual records should be afforded to e-records in terms of capture and overall management. However, before e-government initiatives are implemented, there is need for thorough assessment of capacity in terms of legislative and policy framework, human resources and ICT infrastructure in order to ascertain if organisations are e-records ready. The importance of e-records readiness assessment in e-government is that it helps organisations to be aware of the existing gaps, risks, and opportunities in the records management systems in use. The recommendations coming from the assessment form the basis for planning in terms of infrastructure, human resources and the legal framework in view of the transition to an e-environment (IRMT 2004a, 2). The study was conducted at the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA) in Gaborone, Botswana, to assess the level of e-records readiness with the scope of the implementation of the National Archives and Records Service (NARMS) project.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The aim of the project is to computerise all government records (Botswana Government 2010). A private company called Secure Data Content was awarded the contract to manage and implement NARMS with the HP TRIM (Hewlett-Packard – Total Records and Information Management) solution. The main objectives of the project were to ensure the efficient and systematic control of creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records through an electronic solution. Envisaged benefits of the project to Botswana Government included: improved productivity and customer service, quick retrieval of information, improved records security and these would be part of Government's e-government strategy.

This study was a case study of the MLHA within the Botswana Public Service. The Ministry was selected as one of the pilot sites of the NARMS project for Stage 2. The Ministry's mandate is 'to promote gender equality, provide labour, occupational health and safety, civil registration, migration, citizenship and coordinate graduate internship and vocational training' (Botswana Government 2013, 2). It carries out its mandate through departments of: Immigration and Citizenship; Civil and National Registration; Labour and Social Security; Gender Affairs; and the Department of Occupational Health and Safety. The rest of the Ministry Headquarters and Departments all fall under these three arms.

In preparation for the piloting of NARMS at MLHA, a due-diligence exercise was carried out. The primary aim of the exercise was to obtain information about the current status of MLHA ICT assets, resources, processes, documentation, regulatory compliance, and risk identification (Delak and Bajec 2013). The exercise was done to establish MLHA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in as far as implementation of NARMS is concerned, in line with the Statement of User Requirements (SOUR). This analysis of the pilot site was termed 'Initial Site Assessment' and its major objective was to get a clear understanding of what the MLHA Records Management Unit (RMU) needed to do to implement NARMS. The data collected was also intended to guide the primary project activities and serve as a basis for how the project was to be implemented. In the 'Initial Site Assessment' tool the following questions were asked:

1. Is there an organogram?
2. How many RMUs are there at the site?
3. Where are the RMUs located?
4. What is the staff compliment for each RMU?
5. How many RMU officers are computer literate?
6. What policies and procedures are available at the site?
7. Does the site have an up-to-date Records Classification Scheme?
8. Is the Records Classification Scheme approved by the BNARS?

9.   If the site has more than one RMU, are all records classified under one file plan?

10. Does the site have a Retention and Disposal Schedule in place?

11. How many files in total are there at the site?

12. How many action officers are computer literate?

As these questions were the basis for an e-records readiness assessment, the researcher felt that the analysis was not adequate to give a detailed picture in order to close existing gaps. A critical analysis was done on the above listed Initial Site Assessment variables against the IRMT e-records readiness tool and the following conclusions on the gaps were made:

● Though the assessment asked for the availability of records management policies, procedures and tools, it did not measure their level of utilisation and compliance at the site.

● It also did not adequately assess the skills gaps of records management staff, their qualifications and the frequency of their training on records management, with focus on e-records management.

● The assessment did not cover the level of internal awareness on records management.

● The adequacy of resources such as finance, office space and staff was also not assessed.

● The assessment also did not cover the level of management commitment and ownership to management of e-records and the NARMS pilot project.

● An assessment of existing technologies was also not covered.

It was against this background that the study sought to examine e-records readiness at the MLHA within the purview of the implementation of the NARMS project using tenets derived from the existing IRMT e-readiness assessment tool. To assess the level of e-records readiness, the IRMT e-record readiness tool was adapted to:

● establish the national legal and policy framework governing management of e-records at the MLHA;

● ascertain the level of compliance with policies, standards, tools, procedures and responsibilities for records management;

● establish the e-records management products and technologies existing;

● examine resource capacity and training for records management staff;

● examine the level of internal awareness of the records management programme at the MLHA; and

● establish the level of management ownership on e-records management and the pilot project.

Through the use of the IRMT tool, the study provides an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and risk areas of the implementation of EDRMS at the MLHA in the context of e-records management.

3.   METHODOLOGY

The study largely adopted a qualitative approach, but used methodological triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The research design employed in the study was a case study. The MLHA was the unit of study and comprised of 93 staff. At the time of the study there were seven officers at executive level, 15 at middle management and 71 at operational level. The sampling frame used was the MLHA Headquarters staff list (usually called establishment register). The study adopted a non-probability sampling strategy and employed purposive sampling. This choice of sampling was based on the argument that, information on the phenomenon being researched could only be gathered from some individuals, based on their areas of responsibility and depth understanding of the implementation of the e-records management solution – NARMS project. The approach of this sampling method was guided by the fact that since experts tend to be more familiar with the subject matter than non-experts, opinions from a sample of experts are more credible than non-experts. In that regard, only 26 respondents were purposely selected. Of these, 20 responded through the semi-structured questionnaires and interviews, namely: IT Manager (1); Records Manager (1); RMU supervisor (1); Records Officers (2); and Action Officers (15). This represented a response rate of 74 per cent. Babbie and Mouton (2001) posit that a response rate of 50 per cent is considered adequate for analysis, while 60 per cent is good and 70 per cent is considered very good. Therefore, it was concluded that the response rate for the study was adequate.

The IRMT e-records readiness tool was adapted in the study to provide a framework used for assessing e-records readiness at the MLHA. The tool's tenets were used to do an in-depth assessment by investigating the level of e-records readiness based on the following variables: (i) the national legal and policy framework; (ii) level of compliance with policies, standards, tools, procedures and responsibilities for records management; (iii) e-records management products and technologies; (iv) resource capacity and training for records management staff; (v) level of internal awareness of records management programme; and (vi) level of management ownership on e-records management.

Each of these e-records readiness components was described at three possible stages of capacity. After reading each component description, the respondents were asked to state whether the MLHA best fits the Stage 1, 2 or 3 description (IRMT 2004a). To get the rating of each component, the responses were thematically scored as per each component stage (where Stage 1 is the lowest with a score of 5 points,

Stage 2 is median with a score of 10 points and Stage 3 is the highest with a score of 20). All the thematic component scores were added to determine the final score in the range of scores provided (i.e. 30–60, 65–90, 95–120) to determine the corresponding level of e-records readiness risk (low, moderate, high).

The details within these components included: staff competencies in maintaining software and hardware; training programmes for information management staff; relevant ICT qualifications and experience; human resource strategies; ability of staff to recognise the importance of well managed information; availability of telecommunications infrastructure to support the growing volume of work; adequacy of electric power; formal records management practices; provision for the storage and retrieval of information; access to online/electronic information; information management policies and responsibilities; tools and procedures for information management; availability of information management products and technologies; internal and public awareness programmes of information management; compliance with information management procedures, that is, security, backup, confidentiality, and so on; guidelines for good practices in computer systems' security, backup and business continuity planning; adequacy of resources for e-records management; documentation standards and system engineering procedures for ICT; and ICT systems and formal requirements management processes.

4.   FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are based on the themes derived from the research objectives (guided by the IRMT e-records readiness framework), namely, the:

- national legal and policy framework governing management of e-records at the MLHA;
- level of compliance with policies, standards, tools, procedures and responsibilities for records management;
- e-records management products and technologies existing at the MLHA;
- resource capacity and training for records management staff;
- level of internal awareness of the records management programme; and
- level of management ownership on e-records management and the NARMS pilot project.

4.1. National legal and policy framework

The national legal and policy framework for records management provides the basis upon which all functions and activities are anchored (IRMT 2004a; ISO 15489-1:2001). As outlined by Kalusopa (2011, 228), these are normally 'statutes,

mandatory standard practice, codes of best practice and codes of conduct and ethics'. The study findings showed that there is lack of awareness among action officers. Kennedy and Schauder (1998) state that government entities and their employees have to be aware of their legal and regulatory obligations in order to be able to present sufficient proof of their fulfilment of the regulatory requirements in the records of their activities. However, the lack of awareness was a clear indication that there is lack of guidance on the requirement of the NARS Act in particular. This confirms several earlier studies that pointed out challenges related to effective legislative and regulatory framework for the management of records regardless of format in the ESARBICA member countries (IRMT 2008; Kalusopa 2011; Keakopa 2006; Nengomasha 2009). Mampe (2013, 69) agrees that 'the level of awareness of records management regulatory frameworks needs to be raised as literature has argued that records and information management is the fundamental activity of any public administration'.

However, it has also been found that Botswana has in place a relevant law (National Archives and Records Services (NARS) Act, 1978 (Revised 2007), which provides for the legal and policy framework for records management. According to Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011, 155):

> The amendments made to the Act in 2007 gave the BNARS an additional mandate for records management. However, it has been argued by most records managers in the country that the amendments still fall short in strengthening its role in the management of electronic record-keeping systems.

Even though the NARS Act provides for the legal and policy framework for records management in Botswana, the study has revealed that the law does not incorporate enough details on how e-records should be managed. The IRMT (2008) confirms that the revision of the NARS Act in 2007 was meant to accommodate e-records. However, the current study found that this inclusion is not enough, as it is only covered in a form of definition for the word 'record' as inclusive of records born digital and those that are converted from the physical to the electronic form. The IRMT (2007) is of the view that at times when some aspects are lacking in the law, a policy is normally developed to close the identified gap. The study has established that the legal framework for management of records in Botswana still lacks a national policy relating to the management of e-records. Mutula (2004) also argues that Botswana lacks the necessary policies fully backed by government and the stakeholders to facilitate ICT development and universal service. Similar sentiments were echoed in similar empirical studies by Moloi (2006) and Kalusopa (2011). Moloi (2006) opines that the absence of policy for e-records in Botswana may compromise the management and long-term preservation of, and access to e-records.

Nevertheless, there has been a recent improvement in the legal and policy framework in Botswana where a new law (Electronic Records Evidence Act, 2014),

which allows for admissibility of e-records as evidence in courts of laws. According to the IRMT (2004, 2007), governments should consider enacting relevant laws as they embark on implementing e-records management solutions. Though this improvement came some years after the NARMS project started, the law has closed the gap that has been lacking in the legal framework. It will also influence emergence of new e-records management projects as the law recognizes and allows digital signatures to instil authenticity and integrity of e-records. Kulcu (2008) affirms that digital signatures make e-records to have some characteristics of a record which give them legal validity.

Some related studies in the ESARBICA region by Mutiti (2001) and Nengomasha (2009) also reveal that lack of relevant legal and policy framework is a major challenge in the area of e-records management in the region. Ngulube (2004) also confirms that there is low policy development for e-records in the Sub-Saharan Africa. He concludes that it is not given priority and thereby not given the seriousness it deserves. It should also be noted that the mere existence of a law or policy is not enough evidence that the organisation is committed to managing its e-records. Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007, 280) citing Griffin (2003) came to the conclusion that 'in many governments, policies and guidance for managing the records of government are often non-existent and the legislative and regulatory framework is often weak or out-dated'. It should also be noted that the legal framework and policy framework in Botswana lacks the Freedom of Information (FOI) law, which empowers citizens by providing access to information generated from the governance process, thereby instilling accountability and transparency (IRMT 2004b).

4.2. Level of compliance with policies, standards, procedures, tools and responsibilities for records management

Records management policies, standards, procedures and tools provide a framework for the development and implementation of a records management programme together with commitment and buy in from all stakeholders (ISO 15489-1:2001). To enforce accountability for records management, all employees should be given responsibility for records management through the policy. Kalusopa (2011) affirms that 'specific leadership responsibility and accountability for records management should be assigned to a person with appropriate authority within the organisation'.

The study findings revealed that the MLHA has no records management policy in place. As other scholars have earlier observed, lack of a policy on records management contributes to lack of management commitment on records management, especially with regard to the development of e-records management programmes (IRMT 2004b, 2007; Mampe 2013; Moloi 2006; Tshotlo 2009). Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007, 280) echo the same sentiments that an organisation's level of commitment to

managing e-records can be gauged by the existence or non-existence of such things as records management policies and procedures. Nengomasha (2009) also found that a number of problems hampering e-government include among others outdated policies and an inadequate legal framework. Thus, the study findings clearly show that there is no internal framework at the MLHA in terms of a policy to anchor all records management activities. This leaves an opportunity for lack of management ownership, poor adherence and lack of accountability for records management among records users (IRMT 2004a).

With regard to compliance with standards, the study has established that no international standard has been adopted by the Botswana Public Service to guide records management practices and processes. Some of these international standards include:

- Module 3, Guidelines and Functional Requirements for Records in Business Systems, ICA:
- Functional Specifications. Business Information Systems Software, National Archives of Australia;
- MoReq 2, Model Requirements Specification for the Management of Electronic Records;
- ISO 15489: 2001: Information and Documentation – Records Management; and
- IRMT E-Records Readiness Tool.

It has also been found that there is no locally developed or adopted standard on records management. This implies that the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) as a coordinating body still lags behind in development of standards to be followed across the Botswana Public Service. Similarly, the MLHA is behind in doing the same. Earlier studies by Kalusopa (2011), Keakopa (2006) and Moloi (2006) have confirmed that the lack of standards in Botswana impedes uniformity of the records management practice. Though these studies were done in different sectors, it suggests that there is generally little development of standards in Botswana. Shepherd and Yeo (2003) argue that standards provide benchmarks against which records management programmes and systems could be measured. They also posit that these standards need to be well-known by records managers especially as organisations embark upon implementation of e-records management systems.

The study has revealed that there is average compliance with records management procedures and tools as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1:   General level of compliance with records management procedure and tools (N = 5) (Records Management Staff – Records Manager, RMU Supervisor and Records Officers)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Above average	2	50
Average	3	60
Total	5	100

The procedures that are in use were developed by the BNARS to guide records management activities throughout the public service. Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007) argue that records management must be supported by 'procedures and guidelines if they are to retain their evidential values that are needed for accountable and transparent governance'. The manual is meant to guide records management personnel, action officers, officers with records management responsibilities such as administration officers, supplies officers, accounts officers and secretaries across the Botswana Civil Service in carrying out their daily records management duties (Botswana Government 2009). Despite the availability of the procedures manual, it has been found out that it only caters for physical records in spite of the NARMS e-records project. This could be related to an observation note by Moloi (2006) that there is lack of capacity within the public service, especially at the BNARS in developing e-records management guidelines.

Though the manual is an operational tool emanating from the NARS Act, officers may choose to ignore the requirements of the manual just because they cannot be charged for an offence. Lack of awareness and poor monitoring of the implementation of the procedures and tools is also found to be another contributing factor to the average compliance levels. This has been confirmed by other studies in the ESARBICA region Mampe (2013), Ramokate and Moatlhodi (2010) and Nengomasha (2009). The average compliance with procedures and tools is also caused by the disconnect between efforts made by the BNARS in building capacity within the public service by developing guidelines and lack of implementation in ministries and departments. Some of these tools include, classification schemes, retention and disposal schedules and records policy. The intended benefits of these guidelines get compromised since they are not put to full use in ministries and departments. This was also confirmed by Mampe (2013) and Mosweu (2014).

Shepherd and Yeo (2003) note that records management is a complex multidisciplinary function that requires input and responsibility from records personnel, management, IT officers, quality assurance officers and the rest of staff in different organisational units. Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007) concur that there has to be capacity and responsibility for records management as organisations implement e-records. They argue that staff responsible for records has to be adequate in terms of

skill and numbers. The study has revealed that there are clear records management responsibilities given to officers who have been trained on records management. However, the responses from questionnaires show that there is a general feeling that the records management staff is not adequate for management of both electronic and manual records. Similar findings were gathered by Tshotlo (2009) where a records survey at the Gaborone City Council (GCC) revealed that the organisation does not have adequate staff and the capacity to manage e-records. Other studies done in Botswana by Kalusopa (2011), Moloi (2006), Mosweu (2012), Ramokate and Moatlhodi (2010) and Tshotlo (2009), have confirmed lack of capacity for records management. Some of these studies, particularly Kalusopa (2011) and Moloi (2006) have pointed to lack of capacity in terms of e-records management skills and competency among officers assigned records management responsibility.

4.3. E-records management products and technologies existing at the MLHA

The technologies and products include scanning and imaging, forms management, document management, records management, web content management, email archiving, workflow and business process management, collaboration tools, compression, encryption, digital signature systems, data warehousing, backup and archiving systems, storage platform systems and storage media solutions' (IRMT 2004a, 10). According to Kalusopa (2011), these technologies and product solutions are intended to provide the enterprise wide capability to capture, classify, store, retrieve and track e-records, regardless of the format (paper, email, web pages, digital documents, database transactions).

The study has established that some of the technologies that are in place at MLHA include: fax, telephone, networked computers and photocopying services, internet, email and scanners. Some of these technologies seem to be common in many sectors as their use has been confirmed through other studies in Botswana by Kalusopa (2011), Mampe (2013) and Mutula and Van Brakel (2006). This similarity could be due to the same pace of technological developments in one country though the studies have been conducted in different sectors (trade unions, government and SMMEs). As noted by Moloi (2006), availability of these technologies is also made possible through a robust network of telephones and computers that are interlinked through the Government Data Network (GDN). This is a network managed by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) to allow connectivity of all government offices.

The study has also revealed that the identified EDRM solution for the NARMS pilot project is HP TRIM. The solution comes as part of the piloting of the NARMS project spearheaded by the BNARS (Botswana Government 2009). It has however been gathered that it's not all staff that is aware of the NARMS pilot project as 12

(60%) of respondents did not have a clue on the project. A similar situation has been observed by Mosweu (2012) where some of the staff lacked awareness of the Court Records Management System (CRMS) implemented at the Gaborone Magisterial District. The IRMT (2007) is of the view that there should be regular awareness raising as part of the change management process and most importantly to win staff buy-in when organisations implement e-records management initiatives. The study has also revealed that equipment that has been procured for the NARMS project include: scanners (flatbed and barcode), personal computers and laptops. It has been gathered that scanners are not being used.

4.4. Resource capacity and training for records management staff

Availability of resources is one of the key success factors in the implementation of a records management programme. The IRMT (2004) and Mampe (2013) concur that lack of these resources may result in failure for the organisation to achieve its goals in as far as records and information management is concerned. These resources come in a form of working and records storage space, equipment, qualified staff with adequate and regular financial support to implement and maintain a records management programme (IRMT 2004b). The study has established that the space allocated for the RMU is not enough. Similar findings were established by Mampe (2013), Ramokate (2010) and Tshotlo (2009), where it was found that the space allocated for both storage and working was not adequate. According to Shepherd and Yeo (2003), records management resources are a prerequisite for an effective records management service.

With regard to records management staff capacity, the study revealed that 10 (52.7%) of the respondents felt the capacity is low. Similarly, 10 (66.7%) of them rated records management staff competence to be average. The lack of capacity on records management at the MLHA is clearly confirmed by the finding that 80 per cent of the records personnel have never been taken on training, despite the need for new skills and expertise as the Ministry prepared for the NARMS project. It has also been confirmed that records personnel are never taken on long term training, despite the need. These findings suggest that there is a gap in terms of staff numbers and competence on records management. Shepherd and Yeo (2003) are of the view that it is imperative for organisations to train its staff and also try to employ officers who are trained in records management. The World Bank (2006) also noted that proper records management requires trained staff, adequate and continuous funding, appropriate environmental conditions and physical security among others. There seems to be lack of capacity building in Botswana, as other scholars like Kalusopa (2011), Mampe (2013), Mosweu (2014), Ramokate (2010) and, Ramokate and Moatlhodi (2010) have revealed in their studies. Ramokate and

Moatlhodi (2010) have pointed out that in the case of the BNARS lack of capacity is also heightened by exodus of experienced professional staff that look for greener pastures, leaving behind inexperienced graduates. Other scholars have found out that the lack of adequate skills, especially in e-records systems is a common challenge for developing countries, including the ESARBICA region (Keakopa 2007; Kemoni 2007; Ngulube 2004; Sejane 2004; Wato 2006).

Despite lack of capacity on human resources, the study has revealed a positive finding with regard to the allocation of financial resources for records management activities. The study also found that there are financial resources for the NARMS project. This has been shown as 56.2 per cent of the respondents who responded to the question confirmed it. Further confirmation was sought from the Records Manager and IT Manager through interviews. The interviews also confirmed that records management activities are budgeted for and allocated funds every financial year. Compared to findings from other studies, this is a positive factor for the NARMS project. On the contrary, some studies in Botswana by Mampe (2013), Moloi (2006) and Tshotlo (2009), found that records management activities are not put as a priority in terms of funding. Similarly, in Uganda, Luyombya (2010) found that few ministries had any budget allocation for ICT and records management activities. Kamatula (2008) also found that lack of adequate funding impeded progress on the records management agenda at the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania.

4.5. Level of internal awareness of records management programme

The implementation of a records management programme can only be successful if there are regular awareness campaigns among records management staff and records users (action officers). This helps records users to be aware of records management procedures and their responsibilities for records, therefore improving the uptake of the procedures (Shepherd and Yeo 2003). The findings of the study revealed that there is low awareness on records management at the MLHA. This was revealed as nine (45%) of the respondents reacted that sensitisation on records management is never done. Interviews also revealed that sensitisation is rarely done. This finding is also intertwined with the finding on 'level of compliance with procedures', where it was found out that there is average compliance with records management procedures. These findings showed that the average level of compliance at the MLHA emanates from lack of effort to conduct records management awareness campaigns. Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007) echo the same sentiments that awareness on records management in government institutions is a concern and, therefore, there is a need for capacity building through raising awareness and training.

The findings have also been confirmed by other several studies conducted in Botswana. Kalusopa (2011) echoed the lack of awareness of the records management

policies, standards and procedures in labour organisations. According to Kalusopa's interpretation, the results indicated that awareness was low but could be on the rise in labour organisations. Tshotlo (2009) also found that lack of awareness of internal records management regulatory frameworks was evident at the GCC. Other studies confirming lack of awareness on records management included those conducted by Keakopa (2008), Mampe (2013), Mosweu (2012) and Nengomasha (2009). These findings suggest that organisations need to come up with ways of sensitizing all internal stakeholders, so that the uptake and compliance with policies, standards and records management procedures can be improved.

4.6. Level of management ownership on e-records management and the NARMS pilot project

Management will and ownership of an e-records management project is one of the key success factors. As observed by the IRMT (2007), without management support, the chances of the projects failing are very high. The IRMT (1999) concedes that in developing a plan of action for implementing EDRMS, management buy-in should be sought. The buy-in from senior management is crucial in that it would help in terms of improved ownership, thereby making it easy to have access to resources.

The study findings have revealed that MLHA management was supportive of the NARMS Pilot Project. This has been revealed as 11 (55%) confirmed that management is indeed highly supportive of the project. Though six (30%) responded that the level of support is low, interviews with the IT Manager and Records Manager confirmed that MLHA management is highly supportive of the project. It has also been revealed that management supports the project financially and through purchasing of required ICT equipment. Shepherd and Yeo (2003) argue that implementing a records management system requires senior management so that adequate financial support can be made available. The IRMT (2007) asserts that there is need for senior managers to view records management as a function that plays a pivotal role in achieving organisational goals. Mzerah (2013) affirms that the senior management support is important for allocation of financial resources that are needed for recurrent costs of staff, accommodation, supplies, equipment and services purchased. Contrary to the findings of the current study, Mosweu (2014) established that there is lack of management support at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). His findings present one of the challenges in the implementation of an EDRMS dubbed the Document Management Workflow System (DWMS), at the MTI. Kemoni's (2007) study in Kenya also found out that some of the challenges in delivering good records management services are heightened by lack of senior management support. Other studies by Moloi (2006), Mosweu (2012) and Ramokate (2010) have also found that there is lack of management support and ownership for records management functions.

5.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations:

5.1. National legal and policy framework governing management of e-records at the MLHA

The study showed that there is a strong national legal and policy framework but there is need for more improvements and this study recommends the following:

- There is a need for the development of a national policy on e-records to provide a framework for the development and implementation of e-records management initiatives, especially the NARMS project. The policy should be spearheaded by the BNARS, which is mandated by law to develop and coordinate records and archives management activities across government. The policy should be rolled out to the rest of government institutions with a lot of awareness raising on the document for better uptake.

- As part of raising awareness on records management within the MLHA, records users (action officers) need to be regularly made aware of the national legal and policy framework for records management as it has direct implications on day to day use and management of records.

- There is a need to improve the national legal and policy framework by enacting FOI and Privacy laws to empower citizens by providing access to information emanating from the administrative process of government, while making sure that there is protection information of a personal nature and through other exemptions. These laws are important for Botswana as they will improve democracy and the growing need for improved access to current information. The BNARS, as the custodian of public records, should spearhead this intervention and make sure that all the relevant stakeholders are involved in the drafting of these laws.

5.2. Compliance with policies, standards, tools, procedures and responsibilities for records management

The study revealed that the internal records management policy framework at the MLHA is lacking and the following recommendations should be considered:

- There is need for the development of a records management policy that will provide a framework for the development and implementation of a records management programme for both manual and e-records. The policy will also

instil responsibility and accountability for records by management and staff. It will also provide an opportunity for management buy-in of records management issues.

- There has to be regular awareness raising on the records management procedures, tools and records classification scheme to improve the level of adherence. Awareness raising should be coupled with regular compliance audit carried by the RMU staff in order to detect areas that may need improvements.

- There is need for development of a records retention and disposal schedule, to act as authority on how long records should be kept and disposed. The development of this tool should be through a forum (records committee) that represents all divisions of MLHA Headquarters. The schedule should be updated regularly to comply with the relevant legal and policy requirements.

- There is also need to carry out a records management staff utilisation study at the MLHA to check if records management staffing levels are adequate. The study should be done in conjunction with Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) to thoroughly gauge staff capacity so that a solution can be sought.

5.3. E-records management products and technologies existing at the MLHA

It was established that ICTs facilitated most of the communication at the MLHA; therefore, the study recommends that:

- The BNARS should speed up the pilot process for NARMS. The MLHA management has to meet the BNARS management to find out the cause of delay. The delay has become costly as some of the equipment remain unused.

- Staff in general have to be made aware of the NARMS project and its aims. This would help as part of the change management process which may have positive impact on the uptake of the system by staff.

5.4. Resource capacity and training for records management staff

It was found that the working space and storage for records management activities is not adequate. It was also established that there is inadequate training for records management staff. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- There is a need to carry out a records management decongestion process to separate semi-current records from current ones. This process should be

followed by primary appraisal to select records that still have administrative, informational, legal and historical value for them to be transferred to a secondary storage facility (records centre). This process will help in creating space for current records.

- The MLHA management should consider building capacity in the areas of records management by taking staff for both short and long-term training. This would help officers acquire new skills and use them upon return, and be generally aware of the latest trends in records and information management. Training will also empower and motivate staff to work harder. The Records Manager should be sent to do a master's degree in Archives and Records Management; junior officers with diplomas should be sent to do degrees; and those with no professional qualifications should at least be sent to do certificates and diplomas.

5.5. Internal awareness of records management programme

The study found that there is low awareness of the records management programme at the MLHA. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- There must be regular sensitisation workshops and seminars for raising awareness in different categories ranging from executive management, middle management, supervisors and the rest of staff. The sensitisation should be in line with the Records Management Procedures Manual, e-records management and also take into account different areas of responsibility for NARMS. These workshops should be done at least once a year.
- All new officers should be taken through records management orientation for them to appreciate their responsibilities for records management and to generally appreciate the records management framework they work within.

5.6. Level of management ownership on e-records management

The study has shown that the level of management ownership on e-records, specifically the NARMS project. is high. However, the level of responsibility and accountability for records management is low. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- Management and senior supervisors should be adequately assigned high-level responsibility and accountability for organisation-wide records and information management. Records and information management should therefore form part of these officers' regular reporting.

6.   CONCLUSION

The study sought to assess the level of e-records readiness at the MLHA. The study has revealed that the level of e-records readiness is not at the required level for implementation of an EDRMS solution. Based on different requirements stipulated in the IRMT E-records Readiness Tool, which was adopted as a framework in the study, it has been revealed that the organisation has strengths, weaknesses and risks. Therefore, the records management programme at the MLHA does not entirely meet standards for records management best practices.

Some of the weaknesses and risks at the MLHA include:

- lack of internal regulatory frameworks for records management as there is no records management policy in place;
- average adherence to records management procedures, tools and standards;
- low awareness among staff on the records management programme, the national regulatory framework and on the NARMS pilot project;
- limited space for records management; and
- low capacity building as records management staff is rarely taken for training.

Some of the strengths at the MHLA include:

- adequate national legal and policy framework;
- availability of financial resources for the NARMS project;
- adequate ICT infrastructure; and
- high management commitment on e-records management (NARMS pilot project).

REFERENCES

Babbie, E. and J. Mouton. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Botswana Government. 2009. *Records management procedures manual*. Gaborone: Impression House.

Botswana Government. 2010. Botswana's National E-Government Strategy 2011–2016. http://ohsweb.ohiohistory.org/ohioerc/images/c/c6/OhioERC-Guideline-Social-Media.pdf (accessed February 20, 2013).

Delak, B. and M. Bajec. 2013. Information system due-diligence data as an input for knowledge management. http://www.iiakm.org/ojakm/articles/2013/volume1_2/OJAKM_Volume1_2pp15-24.pdf (accessed July 15, 2014).

ICA *see* International Council on Archives.

International Records Management Trust. 2004a. E-records readiness tool. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/rmcas/documentation/eRecordsReadinessTool_v2_Dec2004.pdf (accessed February 20, 2014).

International Records Management Trust. 2004b. Evidence-based governance in the electronic age. http://www.irmt.org/documents/research_reports/project_reports/Final%20DGF%20Report%20Revised.pdf (accessed April 20, 2013).

International Records Management Trust. 2005. Records management capacity assessment system: User guide. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/rmcas/documentation/rmcas_user_guide.pdf (accessed February 20, 2013).

International Records Management Trust. 2007. Fostering trust and transparency in governance: Tanzania case study. www.irmt.org/documents/building.../IRMT_Case_Study_Tanzania.pdf (accessed February 11, 2013).

International Records Management Trust. 2008. Fostering trust and transparency in government: Botswana case study. London: International Records Management Trust.

International Records Management Trust. 2009. Understanding the context of electronic records management. London: IRMT.

International Records Management Trust and International Council on Archives. 1999a. Managing electronic records. www.irmt.org/documents/educ_training/.../IRMT_electronic_recs.doc (accessed February 20, 2014).

International Records Management Trust and International Council on Archives. 1999b. Managing legal records. www.irmt.org/documents/educ_training/public.../IRMT_legal_recs.doc(accessed October 17, 2014).

IRMT *see* International Records Management Trust.

Kalusopa, T. 2011. Developing an e-records readiness framework for labour organisations in Botswana. PhD thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Kamatula, G. 2008. Managing records at the University of Dar Es Salaam – Tanzania. MA thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Keakopa, S. M. 2006. Management of electronic records in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa: Opportunities and challenges. PhD thesis, University College London, London.

Keakopa, S. M. 2008. Management of electronic mail: A challenge for archivist and records managers in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. *ESARBICA Journal* 27: 73–83.

Kemoni, H. N. 2007. Records management practice and service delivery in Kenya. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Kennedy, J. and C. Schauder. 1998. *Records management: A guide to corporate record keeping*. 2nd ed. South Melbourne: Longman.

Kulcu, O. 2008. Evolution of e-records management practices in e-government: A Turkish perspective. http://www.interpares.org/display_file.cfm?doc=ip3_turkey_dissemination_jar_kulcu_e-library_27-6_2009.pdf (accessed March 20, 2013).

Lipchak, A. and J. McDonald. 2003. Electronic government and electronic records: e-records readiness and capacity building. http://www.irmt.org/documents/research_reports/e_discussions/IRMT_ediss_readiness.pdf (accessed February 11, 2013).

Luyombya, D. 2010. Framework for effective public digital records management in Uganda. http://www.telecomlaw.ru/eng/dissers/dis/dis_Luyombya.pdf (accessed October 15, 2014).

Mampe, G. 2013. The role of records management in service delivery in Botswana: Case study of the Department of Corporate Services in the Ministry of Health. MA thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Mnjama, N. and J. Wamukoya. 2004. E-government and records management: An assessment tool for e-records readiness in government. Paper presented at the SADC Workshop on E-government, Gaborone, April 14–16.

Mnjama, N. and J. Wamukoya. 2007. E-government and records management: An assessment tool for e-records e-readiness in government. *Electronic Library* 25(3): 274–284.

Moloi, J. 2006. An investigation of e-records management in government: Case study of Botswana. MA thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Mosweu, O. 2014. Factors influencing adoption of the document management workflow system by action officers and records officers at the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Botswana. Master's thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Mosweu, T. 2012. Assessment of the court records management system in the delivery of justice at the Gaborone Magisterial District. Master's thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Mutiti, N. 2001. The challenges of managing electronic records in the ESARBICA region. *ESARBICA Journal* 20(3): 57–61.

Mutula, S. M. 2004. IT diffusion in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for developing and managing digital libraries. *New Library World* 105(1202/1203) 281–289.

Mutula, S. M. 2010. Digital economies: SME and e-readiness. http://www.ekonomija.ac.me/sites/ekonomija.bild-studio.me/files/multimedia/fajlovi/obavjestenja/2013/02/digital-economija.pdf (accessed March 30, 2013).

Mutula, S. M. and P. van Brakel. 2006. E-readiness of SMEs in the ICT sector in Botswana with respect to information access. *Electronic Library* 24(3): 402–417.

Nengomasha, C. 2009. A study of electronic records management in the Namibian public service in the context of e-government. PhD thesis, University of Namibia, Windhoek.

Ngoepe, M. and S. M. Keakopa. 2011. An assessment of the state of national archival and records systems in the ESARBICA region: A South Africa-Botswana comparison. *Records Management Journal* 21(2): 145–160.

Ngulube, P. 2004. Implications of technological advances for access to the cultural heritage of selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Government Information Quarterly* 21: 143–155.

Ngulube, P. 2005. Research procedures used by master of information studies students at the University of Natal in the period 1982–2002 with special reference to their sampling techniques and survey response rates: A methodological discourse. *International Information and Library Review* 37: 127–143.

Ngulube, P. 2006. The nature and accessibility of e-government in Sub-Saharan Africa. http://www.africainfoethics.org/pdf/african_reader/23%20ICIE%20Chapter%2016%20page%20157-166.pdf (accessed March 20, 2013).

Ramokate, K. 2010. The management of land records: A case study of Kweneng land boards, Botswana. MA thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Ramokate, K. and T. Moatlhodi. 2010. Battling the appraisal backlog: A challenging professional obligation for Botswana National Archives and Records Services. *ESARBICA Journal* 29: 67–86.

Sejane, L. 2004. An investigation into the management of electronic records in the public sector in Lesotho. MIS thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Shepherd, E. and G. Yeo. 2003. *Managing records: A handbook for principles and practices*. London: Facet.

Tshotlo, K. 2009. Records management audit: Case of Gaborone City Council. MA thesis, University of Botswana, Gaborone.

Wamukoya, J. M. and S. M. Mutula. 2005a. Capacity-building requirements for e-records management: The case in East and Southern Africa. *Records Management Journal* 15(2): 71–79.   http://www.msu.ac.zw/elearning/material/1193855844Cap.%20bng%20-%20 e-recs%20in%20ESARBICA.pdf (accessed February 11, 2013).

Wamukoya, J. M. and S. M. Mutula. 2005b. E-records management and governance in East and Southern Africa. *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science* 10(2): 67–83. http:// majlis.fsktm.um.edu.my/document.aspx?FileName=331.pdf (accessed February 11, 2013).

Wato, R. 2006. E-records readiness in the ESARBICA Region: Challenges and the way forward. *ESARBICA Journal* 25(1): 52–63.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TREVOR M. MOATLHODI is currently working as a records manager at Botswana Life Insurance Limited. He has a 12 years' post-graduate experience in designing, developing and implementing both manual and electronic records management systems in government, parastatal and private sector. He has contributed a few articles on records appraisal to international journals in recent years. His main current research interests include, among others: records management, electronic records management, and information systems.

TRYWELL KALUSOPA (PhD) is currently working in the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa, South Africa. He previously served as associate professor at the University of Botswana and has also worked at the University of Zambia. He serves in various portfolios in the areas of information and records management as well as in labour relations in Africa. He has taught and done research and consultancy for close to 22 years and is credited with several articles in international journals as well as book chapters. His current research interests are: electronic records management, digital preservation, e-government, labour information systems and labour relations.