

iDEAS FOR GOVERNANCE

IDEAS FOR GOVERNANCE TRUST BELIEF

- Administrators and Practitioners in government bodies would welcome ideas that improve the quality of life for all citizens
- It is possible to empower government bodies by making freely available ideas that could work in their local environment
- If appropriate ideas are generically available, local government body CEOs and their team would adapt them suitably and take it forward under their leadership
- Ideas which take shape through this process in local bodies have a greater chance of success over those 'pushed' by external bodies
- The trust does not expect any acknowledgement for use of any of the ideas set out in its forum. It hopes that some of its ideas find form across government bodies.

IDEAS FOR GOVERNANCE TRUST OBJECTIVES

- To compile ideas for use by government bodies for improving quality of life for all citizens
- To make available these ideas as 'freeware' for use by anyone
- To disseminate these ideas by using suitable channels of communication
- To encourage others to contribute ideas for use as 'freeware'

ABOUT IDEAS FOR GOVERNANCE TRUST

Ideas for Governance Trust is a not for profit trust set up to assist government bodies in improving the quality of life for its citizens. This has been set up by V. Ravichandar, Chairman & CEO, [Feedback Business Consulting Services Pvt. Limited](#), India as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility of the firm.

Since 2000, Ravichandar has been serving as a Member of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) working with civic agencies in Bangalore on a pro bono basis. The idea of a Ideas for Governance Trust is based on the experience of working with urban local bodies in Bangalore, being part of Janaagraha, a citizen movement for participatory democracy, and carrying the message of public governance to many cities across India.

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City governance

MoUs , April 2, 2004

The Idea

Using Memorandum of Understandings between State Government and City Corporations to drive reform measures

The Rationale

State Governments are keen that local urban bodies are financially solvent and less dependant on Government grants. Local bodies need governments for legislative measures for charging levies and want the State Government to honour their grant commitments. An MoU is an appropriate instrument to ensure this compliance.

An Approach

- The City Corporation can draw up reform measures that it will put in place. For example this could set out financial metrics and shift to a fund based accounting system. Or metrics for improving health care, education, etc. This will be a time bound plan with metrics set out at every stage
- The State Government promises to enact requisite legislation and transfer of funds based on adherence to reform measures by the civic body
- A MoU is drawn up setting out the arrangements. This is signed by the political & administrative leadership of the two agencies
- The terms of the MoU becomes the basis for specific action by the State Government and the local body

Potential Partnership

Between different wings of government. These could belong to different political affiliations. The MoU works like a common minimum program between the agencies.

The Benefits

- Can accelerate the reforms process in urban local bodies
- Shift to a metrics driven, milestone focussed organization culture
- Clarity on core focus areas
- Greater likelihood of compliance

Public platform , April 5, 2004

The Idea

Setting up an accountability platform. Civic stakeholders publicly set out commitments and report at regular intervals on performance and revised/new commitments

The Rationale

Citizens would like to know what to expect from civic bodies in the short term. This is best done through an organized forum which meets at regular intervals where agencies that impact citizens come together and set out their planned targets.

An Approach

- There could be government order setting out a task force which brings together the requisite city agencies. Due to the government backing, there is likelihood of greater compliance.
- Alternately citizens / citizen forums could approach the agencies to come and share a platform. The challenge is to make out a compelling case for the agencies to come forward and share their targets / achievements
- Empowered individuals could work with agencies to discuss and help them prepare the presentation material. This has to be based on working in tandem as an extension of the agency - not a 'us' vs. 'them' stance
- The CEO of the government agency presents proposed plans for say the next 6 months. After 6 months the CEO (or his/her successor) comes back to report on progress and set out revised targets for the next 6 months
- Interested citizens attend the meet. Need for wide press coverage as instrument of visibility into the plans / achievements. Dissemination of presentations through a website

Potential Partnership

Private sector firms / professionals could be empowered by local government. They could act as the facilitators for the accountability platform and fund the platform related events

The Benefits

- Coordinates the activities of the individual agencies towards a common goal of taking city forward.
- The civic agencies take public ownership of their stated targets and by reporting on the progress a public accountability process is created.
- Citizens get visibility into normally opaque government bodies and feet drawn to the idea of citizen participation with civic agencies.
- Ensures continuity of civic agencies goals vis-à-vis the city irrespective of changes at the senior levels of the government body.
- Motivates the civic agencies to deliver on publicly stated commitments and allowed for recognition of public performance among the general populace.
- Brings in a climate of a hope of a better tomorrow through implementation focus.

Financial / Accounting reforms , April 24, 2004

The Idea

Using accounting information for management decision making. Building a robust double entry book keeping system which factors in the different nature of activities of government bodies - for instance a Corporations' activities covers Enterprise (Commercial), Social (Roads, Hospitals, Education) and Fiduciary (Collection channel for State). These are different fund types and needs different accounting treatment - A Fund Based Accounting System

The Rationale

Accounts tend to be a terminal activity. The idea is to bring it centre stage by tracking the organizational activities through the money chain - a financial 'enterprise' management system. Further imperative to go beyond a traditional receipt and expenditure accounting system.

An Approach

- Need to study the existing documents, work flow and sanctioning system
- Reengineer the process wherever necessary
- Rationalise / Develop a coding system. For instance a works code should have clear definition for each type of activity which allows for subsequent tracking
- Set out clear documentation, data entry fields and guidelines at every stage
- Develop a policy for each type of fund - treatment of assets, inflows & outflows, etc.
- Computerisation will be essential. The system should be scalable - use a modular approach in designing the system
- Invest in staff training. Senior management needs to realize the potential of using the information from the system

Potential Partnership

Professional firms with expertise in rolling out financial accounting systems in government bodies. They could hand hold till internal capacities are built to take over the operations.

The Benefits

- Superior accounting systems geared to act as Management Information systems
- More granular tracking of inflows and outflows.
- Allows measurements of efficiencies / effectiveness of money spending on various activities
- Return on enterprise assets can be improved
- Access to market funds

Integrated view , April 14, 2004

The Idea

Need a 'CEO approach' to find solutions. The 'CEO' has to be empowered to get other agencies to comply with the overall solutions in the relevant civic space.

The Rationale

Typically there are multiple agencies involved in delivering the end to end service for citizens. The 'silo' view of each agency hinders the desired integrated view needed to address citizen concerns. Relevant officials need to be empowered sufficiently.

An Approach

- Take the case of transport in a city. Conservatively 4-5 agencies involved - bus transport (2-3 bodies), Road Transport Authority (RTO), Police, Corporation, Railways, etc. A 'land transit authority' needed if a comprehensive solution to public and private transportation is to be found. The authority can drive policy to meet the overall transportation needs including planning for multi modal transport
- There are many stretches of roads where traffic is chaotic. Normally the authorities involved - Infrastructure agencies responsible for say grade separators, local Corporation bodies which has to maintain the road network, other road authorities (PWD, NHAI) which might have jurisdiction in some areas, traffic police, bus transport agencies which have their bus stops, etc. Now to fix this requires all these and any others to work in tandem - this can be done only if there is an office concerned with the issues holistically and has the requisite authority to get others to fall in line.

Potential Partnership

Inter government agency cooperation

The Benefits

- Shift from a departmental view to a integrated problem solving approach
- Identify bottle necks and work on fixing it with a view to deliver superior citizen services
- Greater inter agency cooperation - focus on end outcomes

Third party audits , April 14, 2004

The Idea

Peer reviews and independent third party audits should become a main stream activity in urban local bodies for project planning and execution

The Rationale

Significant public spending happens on infrastructure projects. Typically contracts are awarded to design firms & contractors and monitored by the urban local body staff. In the interest of greater transparency & accountability, third party firms as peer reviewers / project monitors desirable

An Approach

- New projects should have peer reviews and third party audits built into the project plan. Accredited engineering firms with the local body should be encouraged to bid for audit engagements
- In respect of maintenance and repair work which involves access to civic assets, third party firms can certify whether the restoration work done well and within time - in these cases the cost of their services can be recovered through a fee from the utility wishing access to civic assets
- The practice of third party can be piloted in a few cases. Based on the experience, the urban local bodies can draft a suitable policy for engaging their services
- Professors from local engineering colleges are a good referral source for peer reviews

Potential Partnership

Engineering associations, Engineering colleges, Professional engineering firms & Urban local bodies

The Benefits

- Greater transparency in public contracts
- Additional expert opinions could result in safer features / better project engineering
- Will ensure better compliance on projects

Outsourcing select civic services , May 10, 2004

The Idea

Outsource services which result in cost savings, better services while allowing existing local body manpower to be redeployed elsewhere in the system. If VRS possible, plan for it.

The Rationale

Often a comparison of current costs of providing a service (manpower salaries, variable material costs, overheads) vis-a-vis outsourcing the service will indicate huge savings possibilities while improving the delivery of services. The idea is to consider outsourcing wherever feasible

An Approach

- Take an example of street light maintenance
- In many cities they tend to be partly functional and often failed lights are not replaced
- Do a comparison of 'full' cost of doing it internally by the local body compared to outsourcing it. Chances are the savings would be of the order of 50-60%
- If significant savings are indicated, outsource the activity through a qualified bidding process - the city can be broken into zones and tendered
- Similarly other civic service delivery areas can be evaluated (garbage removal, debris removal, crematoria, etc.)

Potential Partnership

Private agencies and local bodies

The Benefits

- Savings in annual costs allowing for deployment of scarce resources elsewhere
- Better upkeep / maintenance
- Superior citizen services

Enforcement through monitoring , May 10, 2004

The Idea

It makes sense to invest in resources (manpower, technology) to enforce the law. The returns through the fines collected will more than pay for the investment apart from ensuring greater compliance

The Rationale

Often the argument is that there is insufficient resources for monitoring. A properly planned enforcement drive can be revenue surplus while achieving the objective of the civic body

An Approach

- Nuisance detection squads have been effective in some cities
- Possible for many public nuisance, offences - eg. littering, jumping traffic signal, relieving oneself in public, etc.
- A tender could be invited for detection agencies to be appointed
- The agency concerned needs to invest in surveillance equipment since proof of the offence would be necessary. Eg. Video camera for traffic offences; digital camera for littering, etc.
- A rate is fixed for various offences - this needs to act as a deterrent as well as cover the detection costs.
- The enforcement squads could be empowered to fine (or challan) on the spot. In cases of citizen complaints, they could be referred to a tribunal which examines the documented evidence.

Potential Partnership

Private agencies and Urban local bodies

The Benefits

- Greater compliance with the law
- Acts as a deterrent
- Could generate additional revenue

Make urban local bodies self reliant , May 18, 2004

The Idea

Plan for urban development in cities with own finances through systemic measures in augmenting resources. The idea is to conserve Government resources for investments for the rural populace and the economically challenged sections in urban areas.

The Rationale

Government needs to channel scarce resources to needy sectors - below poverty line, rural, education, health, etc. If major cities can stand on their own feet with no need for State Govt resources, the surplus can be diverted to more needy sectors.

An Approach

- Bangalore during 2000-04 is an example of the possibilities
- The Bangalore Development Authority spent around Rs. 300 crores on infrastructure (fly overs, roads), eco restoration (Lakes, Lalbagh) from own funds (sale of sites, recovery of govt property). No govt burden
- The Bangalore City Corporation reforms its property tax through Self Assessment - over Rs. 300 crores additional revenue over 4 years. Less burden for State grants
- The Bangalore Metropolitan Road Transport Corporation is a profitable enterprise. Less need to get State funds
- The Bangalore Police is empowered to retain its fine collections for traffic improvements (Over Rs. 20 crores in 4 years).
- The above measures are indicative of how a city can be more self reliant. The State can contemplate a MoU with the urban local bodies that say over a 10 year time frame State grants will be progressively reduced.

Potential Partnership

Urban local bodies with the State Government

The Benefits

- Urban local bodies are forced to think through creative solutions to raise own resources and deploy them for development activities
- State can use its scarce resources for the truly needy sections of society
- The myth that rural or urban development can only happen at the expense of the other can be broken