

Trans-sectoral IT projects - management and co-ordination of IT activities in the Norwegian justice sector

Lead Paper:

Why IT Projects Fail - United Kingdom

The audit revealed that there is no general IT strategy for the justice sector as a whole. A strategy of this nature would be able to help ensure that all the parts of the sector received the same management signals and gave priority to the same areas. This applies in particular to the forwarding of the signals regarding collaboration in order to achieve flow and reuse of information across the criminal justice chain. The IT strategies that have been developed for individual parts of the sector are approved on the departmental level in the Ministry. This can entail a risk of insufficient attention being paid to overall matters and inadequate connection to the first-order objectives for the sector.

Three selected Projects:

- i. *KOMPIS/SSP (The prison and probation services' productivity-promoting information system / the Central Penal Register)*
- ii. *KOMPIS-Kif (The prison and probation services' productivity promoting information system for the Probation Service)*
- iii. *LOCAL IT-BL (basic solutions)*

There has been inadequate co-ordination, unclear signals and poor overall management of IT activities on the part of the Ministry. The various departments in the justice sector were generally more interested in the results within their own sector and were less concerned with co-ordination across the sectors. The audit also demonstrated that the Norwegian Police Data Processing Service, which is the largest and most important IT unit in the justice sector, did not recognise the usefulness of co-ordination across the criminal justice chain. It can be queried whether the Ministry has managed to create sufficient acceptance for the first-order objectives for the IT investment programme and adequately illustrate the expected effects to the Norwegian Police Data Processing Service. There may be a risk that the Norwegian Police Data Processing Service does not work towards attainment of the goals regarding co-ordination. On the basis of the objective that co-ordination of the use of information technology will enhance cost-effectiveness and quality in the work processes, both within practical work processes in the criminal justice chain and within different IT functions, it can be queried whether the responsibilities and priorities have been sufficiently firmly anchored in the Ministry's top leadership.

The audit revealed that few of the decisions that were laid down in the Ministry of Justice's IT strategy for 1993 to 1996 were realised during this period and many resources were used for tasks that were not included in the strategy.

SAI of Norway: Summary of proposed country paper

The Office of the Auditor General's analyses showed that the objectives of cost-effectiveness and quality were not defined precisely or as concrete tasks in the form of pertinent performance requirements in the letters of allocation to the various agencies. The individual departments' IT strategies contained few targets regarding reuse and flow of information across the criminal justice chain. In light of this, it may appear that the Ministry has failed in its follow-up of the goals related to co-ordination in order to enhance cost-effectiveness and quality in the work processes.

The audit revealed that there is variation in the degree to which cost-benefit analyses were performed, profitability plans were compiled, evaluations were carried out and/or profits were reported in connection with the projects studied by the Office of the Auditor General. It is unfortunate that requirements are not laid down regarding the formulation of profitability plans that have clear targets for expected savings and plans for how the advantages gained shall be rendered visible and realised in practice at the start-up of these kinds of projects.

Inadequate clarification of issues related to data security and protection of privacy may pose a serious obstacle to reuse and flow of information – both within and between services. A long time has passed from the problem first being put on the agenda to work being started on the preparation of an application for a licence from the Data Inspectorate. This must also be regarded in the context of the lack of concrete projects in connection with which a licence could be applied for.

Key issues raised:

The UK Lead Paper demonstrates how decentralised approaches to government procurement, has not maximised the benefits of technology as a whole. As a result, government departments and other bodies delivering services, have systems that are not integrated. Senior management also seems to play a crucial role in successful development of trans-sectoral IT-projects:

- *Challenges in management and co-ordination of trans-sectoral IT projects*
- *The need for an organisation to promote co-ordination*
- *Management signals, schemes and use of resources in connection with cross-sectoral IT collaboration*

Key questions for discussion:

Review of IT projects versus review of overall business programmes, where IT is only one component:

- *Experiences with standard Audit programmes for review of IT projects*
- *Possible implications for the development of Performance Audit Methodology*