Bangalore

Introduction

While ICT has made tremendous waves in the private sector, the scope of its applications is also being realized by the Public sector. ICT for governance can have a tremendous impact on enhancing speed, convenience, certainty and accountability in terms of Government services.

In light of this, the Government of Karnataka (GOK) was keen to provide integrated services to the citizens of Bangalore by deploying ICT to enhance speed, convenience, certainty and accountability in providing services to citizens. Accordingly, GoK decided to implement an e-Governance project called the Bangalore One or B1 Project.

The vision of the B1 Project is to provide the citizens of Karnataka with all the Government 2 Citizen (G2C) and Government 2 Business (G2B) services in an efficient, reliable, transparent and integrated manner on a sustained basis, with certainty, through easy access to a chain of computerized Integrated Citizen Service Centers (ICSC's) and through multiple delivery channels like Electronic Kiosks, mobile phones and the Internet

Through the Bidding process CMS Computers Ltd was selected as a potential bidder and awarded this project. The term of the contract was for 5 years from April 2005 to April 2010 but the contract was further extended for another five years due to the excellent service standards provided by CMS.

The project kicked off on April 2005 with 14 B1 centers and 11 services of 7 departments. Today the project boasts of having 95 B1 Centers across the city. While the system started with 39000 transactions per month, today it delivers 17 Lakh transactions per month.

The Solution

In order to serve the complex needs of the Bangalore One Project, CMS implemented a range of technologies to provide the service set defined by the government. Some of the key technical features of this project are listed below:

• In-built redundancy, load balancing, offline capability and disaster recovery to ensure 24×7 operations.

• Participating departments made the required data available at a central site for easy access by Bangalore One.

• The Internet portal has secure 128-bit SSL encryption with VeriSign for secure transactions.

• Transactions are digitally signed by the respective operators to maintain data integrity and for non-repudiation.

• Leased-line connectivity between the citizen centers, data center and the back-end participating departments, with dial-up connections as backup.

• Robust network management system to monitor the performance of the network; the LAN/WAN links connected to the citizen service centers and the back-end departments to ensure uninterrupted service availability to the citizens.

• Disaster recovery and business continuity sites in place to ensure continuity of services in the event of any disaster.

• Ajax-based application.

• The application is designed and implemented with a single interface for all services.

• Citizens' feedback handling and processing module to handle feedback from citizen.

• Electronic queue management system (EQMS) is adopted in all BangaloreOne centers to give service on first-come-first-serve basis, and also to minimize the waiting time for citizens.

• Robust web-based online management information system (MIS) reports are in place. Reports are customized as per the requirements of different departments. Partner departments and their subdivision offices have access

to their reports to monitor the transactions, amount collected, etc., in real-time basis. The management team has a comprehensive reporting system to monitor the entire project. Banking partners also use the MIS reports for financial management. A unique feature called Payment Grid is also in place to ensure timely and appropriate fund transfer to the departments.

While technology implementations at an enterprise level can get complex enough, those at a government level required to scale a city are at another level of complexity completely.

The immense scale and magnitude of the implementation certainly brought with it some key challenges.

One of the major challenges was convincing the various department stakeholders to participate in Bangalore One project. Given the scope of details required for this project, getting the right sign offs from these stakeholders was a key requirement. Another key emerging challenge was updating data at departments and monitoring data transfer up to the sub-division level.

CMS also had to work with a lot of dated IT infrastructure at the department level. Getting data from these systems to talk to the central node was indeed challenging. In addition to this this infrastructure was very poorly maintained which brought its own set of challenges.

In addition to the above-mentioned challenges, the following also brought with them their own set of issues.

- Closing of departmental service centers
- Challenges in getting the new centers: Commercial and mini centers
- Revenue model: Pay as you use
- Differences in the policies of departments VS Bangalore One centers

Benifits

CMS worked through the challenges that came its way and was able to get all the various nodes to talk to each other. Given that all the services were implemented, the Government and Citizens alike have benefitted from the services that were enabled through the Bangalore One Project.

At A Citizen Level

Citizens now have access to all Government services on anytime, anywhere, and round the clock without relation to the jurisdiction of a particular office of a particular department or agency. In addition, the quality of service is comparable to that in the private sector.

Additionally, citizens are now able to see the Government as a single service provider, through one-stop facilities with services accessible equally to one and all, irrespective of one's social or economic status.