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HOW-TO NOTES

Citizen Service Centers:

Enhancing Access, Improving Service

Delivery, and Reducing Corruption

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GAC in PROJECTS

IMPROVING DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

We would like to become a model of excellence in our service to the citizens. We have to overcome the shortcomings of the past to offer a system of integrated services that will make citizens proud of their municipal administration.

Juan Carlos Rodríguez, leader of the Citizen Service Center program
in Bogotá, Colombia

CITIZEN SERVICE CENTERS

In many developing countries, citizens are often required to visit multiple locations to access government services, and they may receive little or no information about public services or service delivery standards. This lack of transparency reduces administrative efficiency, breeds corruption, and undermines trust between citizens and the state. Thus, enhancing citizens' access to basic government services is one of the most important undertakings a country can pursue.

Though individual government departments and agencies (e.g., water supply department, education department) have historically been tasked with providing government services, consolidating the delivery of these services into a single system can substantially improve efficiency and service quality. Citizen service centers (CSCs)[1]—which provide citizens with access to a variety of national, state, and municipal and/or private sector services in a single location—represent one way to achieve this objective. While individual service providers may maintain responsibility for back-office functions such as processing applications and verifying information, CSCs serve as a client's primary points for accessing services. Though CSCs vary widely in both scope and form, they are characterized by three main characteristics:

- Consolidated access to multiple public and private sector services at a single location through one or more service delivery channels.
- Transparently presented information about service delivery standards, fees, processes, and timetables at the point of service delivery.
- Systematically collected citizens' feedback on service delivery performance.

Most developed countries have implemented variations of CSCs at the national and local levels. CSCs are increasingly being used in Asia to improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery. Some of the benefits associated with CSCs are outlined in Box 1.

The purpose of this note is to introduce task teams to CSCs, present various types of CSCs, and highlight critical CSC design issues through good practice examples. The note also provides a stepwise process for CSC implementation and a checklist for CSC implementers (Annex). CSCs can range from the basic to the very complex

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1. CSCs can be described using a variety of labels, including one-stop shops, one-window systems, citizen facilitation centers, and service portals.

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- For citizens: CSCs improve access to government services; demystify procedures associated with obtaining services; provide outlets for complaints, queries, and suggestions; and decrease transaction costs by reducing the time required to access services.
- For government ministries and line departments: CSCs increase the efficiency of service delivery through restructuring business processes and utilizing technology; improve revenue collection; reduce opportunities for corrupt practices; decrease administrative costs because of economies of scale; and enhance the public's confidence and trust in government.
- For Bank task teams: CSCs improve transparency and accountability; mitigate reputational risks; and increase the sustainability and impact of service delivery improvements.

(which is usually technology-intensive).[2] While the specifics of a CSC program necessarily vary according to the operating context, the best practices outlined here are well suited for both basic and advanced CSC models across a wide range of sectors and projects.[3]

Designing a CSC

While all CSCs aim to integrate multiple services into a single location, CSCs systems can be differentiated along four primary dimensions that need to be considered during the design stage: channels, levels of service, financing, and the types and number of participating departments/organizations (see Box 2). The decisions made regarding these design issues determine CSC initiatives' final form.

Design Issue 1: CSC Channels

A channel refers to the delivery model a CSC uses to provide services. Table 1 lists some examples of service delivery channels. Whereas some initiatives primarily use one CSC channel, others integrate multiple channels into their CSC programs (see Box 3). Choices about which channel, or combination of channels, to adopt should be based on available resources and the characteristics and geographic distribution of beneficiaries. Table 1 shows a typology of CSC channels and their respective strengths and weaknesses.

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2. Establishing complex hi-tech CSCs may involve upgrading technologies and embracing an e-government infrastructure. This note does not discuss these technology-oriented issues in depth. Instead, it focuses on highlighting the organizational and logistical issues and challenges task teams and clients should consider in designing a CSC program.
3. This note assumes that clients have some level of interest and motivation in pursuing a CSC initiative and does not explore ways to generate the political will required to implement a CSC initiative effectively.

BOX 2
Menu of CSC
Design Options

Design Issue 1: Channels	Design Issue 3: Financing
• Stationary CSC with multiple windows • Stationary CSC with one window • Call center • Mobile CSC • Internet portal • Kiosk	• Rent and/or fees from participating organizations • User fees • Private-public partnership arrangement • Dedicated governmental funding
Design Issue 2: Levels of Service • Information only • Limited transactions • Complete transactions	**Design Issue 4:** **Organizations involved** • One department/ministry • Multiple departments/ministries • Blend of public and private sector service providers

Note: The options listed under the four design components can be mixed and matched. For example, a call center could provide information only for multiple departments using a fee for service model.

BOX 3
Using Multiple CSC
Channels

The government of the Brazilian state of São Paulo has implemented the Poupa Tempo (Time Saver) program as a way to enhance service delivery and improve the quality of public administration. Bringing together more than 400 kinds of services provided by 68 agencies, the program uses a variety of CSC channels including: 7 mobile CSCs, 10 stationary CSCs with multiple windows, a call center, an Internet portal, and free-standing service kiosks that citizens can access without talking to an agent. Providing an average of 75,000 services a day, the CSC system is able to deliver most services at a lower cost than is possible through traditional channels. In a testament to the initiative's effectiveness, 99% of the people surveyed approved of Poupa Tempo's approach.

Source: Annenberg.

Design Issue 2: Determining Levels of Service

In addition to assessing what channels to utilize, CSC designers also need to determine the ***level of service delivery*** that the CSC will provide for each service. CSCs can potentially provide three different levels of service delivery.[4]

- ***Information only:*** CSC channels can be used to distribute information on a given service. For example, the CSC could distribute a brochure or pamphlet outlining the steps, forms, and requirements necessary to obtain a drivers license.

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4. Adapted from Singh (2008).

CSC channel	Strengths	Weaknesses
Call center: Citizens can call a central phone bank to access government services.	Easily accessible to citizens with phones. Good for providing citizens with information about public services.	May not be appropriate for delivering some types of services.
Stationary CSC with multiple windows: A central location houses multiple service providers with different desks (e.g., utility companies, government departments).	People do not have to go to multiple offices for services. May be easier to incorporate both public and private sector (e.g., utilities) service providers. All back-office functions are under one roof.	Transaction time at each window can be long. Usually confined to urban areas.
Stationary CSC with one window: All front- and back-office functions are in one location; clients have to visit only one window for all of their needs.	Less costly to run than model with multiple windows. More convenient for users, who only have to visit one window. Easier for government to monitor activities and reduce corruption. All back-office functions under one roof.	Can require high set-up costs. May need to coordinate activities and responsibilities across multiple organizations and sectors. Usually confined to urban areas.
Mobile CSC: The government brings the services to the people through agents or by using specially outfitted trucks and buses.	Useful for serving populations in isolated or peripheral areas. Allows poor and vulnerable groups easier access to services.	Needs advanced technological infrastructure. Higher operating cost per beneficiary than stationary models.
Internet portal: This is a web-based delivery model that allows citizens to access a variety of services.	Low day-to-day costs. Convenient for users with Internet access. Can establish partnerships with private sector operators.	Needs advanced technological infrastructure. Many people in developing countries do not have Internet access.
Kiosk: Services are provided through integrated Internet kiosks.	Good for rural or difficult-to-reach areas where stationary CSCs might not be cost-effective Private sector can potentially roll out and operate kiosks. Good for services that don't require assistance by an agent.	More technologically advanced. High up-front costs.

Source: Adapted from Singh (2008).

- ***Limited transactions:*** CSC channels can be used to distribute and receive forms and documents for various services. However, since these documents may be processed at the relevant service provider's office, users have to go to a different location to complete the transaction. For example, CSCs could be used to distribute and receive driver's license applications, but customers would then be required to pick up their completed licenses at the office of the entity that processed the document.
- ***Complete transactions:*** CSC channels can be used as "single-stop" shops that support the dissemination of information and the distribution, receipt, and return of documents related to a given service. For example, CSCs could provide the complete range of services required for a person to obtain a completed driver's license, from the distribution of information to the delivery of the document.

Combining Channels and Levels of Services

Implementers should also determine the level of service delivery (for each service) that will be provided in the context of the various channels. Decisions related to combining different channels and levels of service should be made by assessing three interrelated issues.

First, implementers need to assess the level of service delivery that *service providers* are willing/able to devolve to the CSC.

- Establishing CSCs can require service providers to transfer staff and functions to the CSC system. For example, a ministry may need to assign a staff member to work in the back office of a one-window system processing documents.
- While service providers may readily devolve some resources and functions to CSCs, they may choose not to transfer others for bureaucratic, practical, or logistical reasons. For example, passport applications may need to be processed in a secure location for security reasons.

Second, implementers need to determine what services to provide through each channel.

- Whereas stationary locations may be able to incorporate hundreds of different services, this may be neither possible nor feasible for mobile CSCs, which have space constraints and fewer staff members.[5] Similarly, it may be difficult to deliver a full range of services through a portal because of the technological integration requirements associated with this channel.
- Given that some services may be more important to citizens than others, implementers should take citizens' preferences into account when determining what services to offer through various channels.

5. This being the case, mobile CSCs often only provide the most popular types of services.

Third, implementers need to determine what level of service delivery each channel will provide (see Box 4).

- It may neither be feasible nor practical for all CSC channels to provide the same level of service. For example, whereas a single window CSC could feasibly provide complete support for the distribution and processing of passport applications, call centers are typically better suited for providing citizens with information about where to obtain a passport application.
- Even though it is preferable for CSCs to support a complete range of transactions, especially at stationary locations, providing information or limited transactions is better for users than nothing at all. Limited services can be scaled up to complete services in the future in response to demand or process improvements.

BOX 4
Channels and Levels of
Service Delivery

In 2003, the government of New Delhi launched a CSC program aimed at improving the quality of service delivery in the city. Different CSC channels in the system offer varying levels of service.

One-window stationary CSCs provide the following services: (a) registering births and deaths and issuing certificates; (b) accepting applications for all kinds of licenses and issuing licenses once the approval is received from the concerned office; (c) booking public parks for private functions; d) renewing licenses; and (e) receiving all kinds of payments.

An Internet portal provides citizens with access to a more limited range of services: (a) registering information relating to births and deaths; (b) applying for licenses; (c) booking parks for private functions; (d) registering complaints and checking on their status; and (e) paying municipal dues using a credit card.

Source: Kochar (2009).

Design Issue 3: Identifying Financing

To be sustainable, CSC initiatives must generate sufficient revenues to cover their expenses. This requires a well-thought-out financing strategy. For example, it is often difficult to bring stationary CSC models to scale in rural areas (see Box 5) and governments may not be well positioned to roll out solutions that include advanced technology (which often require high up-front investment costs). Thus, implementers may need to draw upon a variety of financing sources to establish a sustainable CSC program.

Potential financing models—which can be used individually or in combination with one another—include the following:

- Charging a per-transaction fee and/or monthly rent to ministries, agencies, and private sector organizations that use the CSCs to deliver services.
- Charging users an additional nominal per-transaction fee on each service to cover operating expenses.
- Establishing a partnership in which the private sector builds, runs, and/or operates the CSCs (or specific channels) on a for-profit basis (see Box 5 for an example).
- Using dedicated government funding to run the CSCs.

BOX 5
Taking CSC Systems to
Scale in Rural Areas

Given that many CSC models are typically financially viable only in urban areas, providing rural customers with enhanced access to services can be a challenge. While governments may have the capacity and resources to establish and operate CSCs in urban areas, taking CSC systems to scale in rural areas often requires the participation of the private sector.

For example, the Indian government is partnering with state governments and the private sector to create 100,000 IT-enabled rural CSCs that can act as the primary service delivery channel in rural areas. With oversight by a Service Center Agency, the government encourages NGOs and the private sector to operate the CSCs on a for-profit basis. In addition to providing consumers with access to information, the CSCs also provide services such as online bill payment and access to land records, birth certificates, and death certificates.

Similarly, the e-Seva program in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh partners with women's self help-groups to run service delivery kiosks in rural areas. In addition to empowering women from the poorest segments of society and providing them with livelihoods, the kiosks also provide citizens in rural areas with information on the price of crops (so they can get better prices from buyers), access to government services, and the ability to make tax and utility payments.

Source: Veldanda (2005).

Design Issue 4: Identifying Participating Organizations

Generally speaking, the level of complexity associated with CSCs initiatives increases with the number of organizations involved. Thus, decisions about the number and types of organizations that will participate in the initiative should be based not only on factors such as available resources, but also on the willingness of organizations to devolve functions to the CSCs. At the most basic level, a CSC can be a desk in a ministry or department that provides a single point of customer contact for all of the services that the entity is responsible for providing. At an intermediate level, CSC programs can involve multiple government agencies. Finally, CSCs can involve a blend of public and private sector service providers.

Putting it All Together: Sample CSC Architectures

The decisions made regarding the design issues discussed above determine the CSC architecture. While some CSC initiatives require substantial financial and technological resources, they can also be relatively simple and low in cost (see Figure 1). For example, CSC architectures can range from a desk in a ministry that is staffed by one person (2 in Figure 1) who provides information only to mobile service delivery fairs (4 in Figure 1) that rotate between different neighborhoods and technologically advanced systems that incorporate multiple private and public service providers, numerous channels, and complete transactions (8 and 9 in Figure 1). Regardless of whether the CSC architecture is simple or complex, the service delivery standards, fees, processes, and timetables associated with different services need to be clearly outlined at the point of service to enhance transparency and accountability. Examples from Cambodia, India, and Australia illustrate how different CSC architectures are used in practice.

Example 1. Cambodia: Piloting a "One-Window" System		
Channels:	•	Stationary CSC with one window
Levels of service:	•	Limited transactions
	•	Complete transactions
Financing:	•	Dedicated government funding
Organizations involved:	•	Multiple departments/ministries

The Bank-supported Demand for Good Governance Project is helping the Cambodian government strengthen the capacity of existing one-window service delivery offices and expand the program to other parts of the country. The initiative provides government services from seven ministries to citizens and small businesses under a single roof in a speedy, transparent, and corruption-free manner. For example, the CSC enhances accountability by transparently listing fees and providing an on-the-spot grievance mechanism in the form of an elected District Ombudsman, located just outside the CSC, who is mandated to process complaints. This approach is markedly different from the old structures in these districts and other parts of Cambodia, where the majority of citizens and small businesses are paying hefty unofficial fees and waiting long periods to obtain licenses and registrations. In 2009, the CSC program delivered over 44,000 services (up from 9,200 in 2005).

FIGURE 1
Sample CSC Architectures
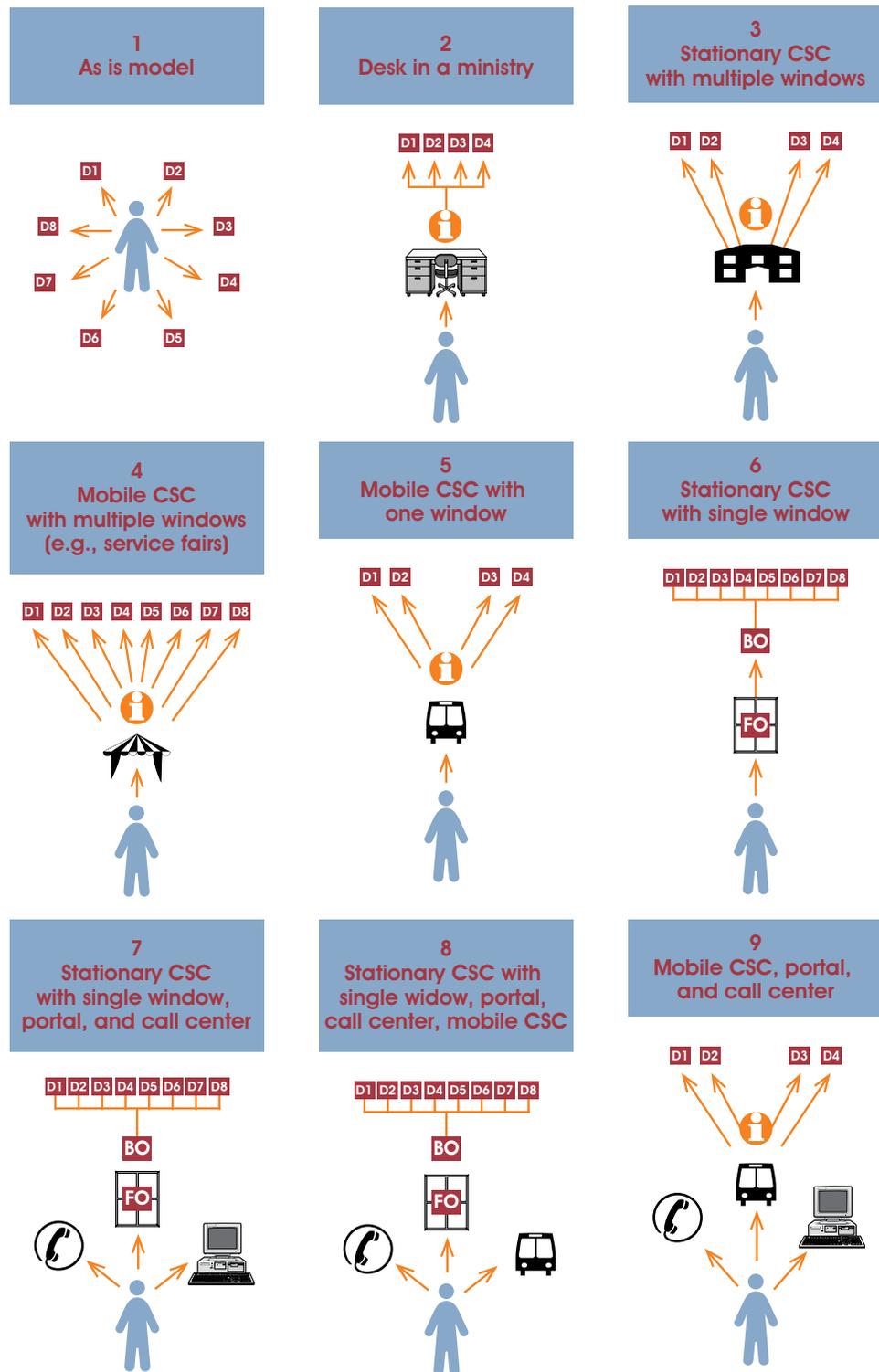
Source: Adapted from Singh (2008).
Note: FO = front office; BO = back office; D1, D2, etc. = Desk 1, Desk 2, etc.

Example 2. Madhya Pradesh, India:
Partnering with the Private Sector to Enhance Access

Channels:	• Internet portal
	• Kiosk
Levels of service:	• Information only
	• Limited transactions
	• Complete transactions
Financing:	• Private-public partnership arrangement
	• User fees
Organizations involved:	• Blend of public and private sector service providers

The Indian state of Madhya Pradesh has cooperated with the private sector to implement an online service delivery portal—MPOnline. From a financing perspective, the project was implemented through a public-private partnership in which private sector operators used a build-own-operate model: the state designed the portal and franchised out the kiosks and access points through which MPOnline services are delivered to private operators. All investments in infrastructure, personnel, and connectivity are borne by owners of the kiosk/access points, with no up-front costs for the state. The providers earn revenue through the fees users pay for the services accessed on the MPOnline portal. As of 2009, MPOnline services were being delivered in the state through more than 2,000 kiosks and 4,400 access points.[6]

Example 3. Australia's Centrelink: Enhancing Effectiveness
Through Centralization

Channels:	• Call center
	• Stationary CSC with one window
	• Internet portal
	• Kiosk
	• Mobile CSCs
Levels of service:	• Information only
	• Limited transactions
	• Complete transactions
Financing:	• Rent and/or fees from participating organizations
	• Dedicated government funding
Organizations involved:	• Multiple departments/ministries

6. Source: http://www.csinihilent-egovernanceawards.org/projects09_10/Section1/Sec1-Chapter5.pdf

In 1997, the Australian government enacted the legislation that established Centrelink to consolidate government services into one place and enhance the quality of service delivery. As of 2009–2010, the agency was delivering hundreds of services for approximately 35 governmental organizations at the national, state, and territorial levels. Primarily funded by transfers from the central government, Centrelink delivers services through a variety of channels including: 313 stationary CSCs, 3 mobile CSCs, kiosks, 25 call centers, and an Internet portal. In addition to receiving roughly 84 million hits on its website, Centrelink staff fielded nearly 33 million calls and sent out almost 114 million letters to customers. The initiative also has a substantive focus on self-service transactions—both online and through kiosks placed at stationary CSCs—and processed over 30 million transactions of this type. Despite its large scope, the program was able to obtain a client satisfaction rating of 90 percent. By centralizing services, the Centrelink program has successfully reduced costs while improving the quality of service delivery in Australia.[7]

Implementing a CSC Program

Implementing a CSC initiative involves seven steps (see Figure 2; see also the Annex, which provides a checklist for implementers).

FIGURE 2
Steps in Citizen Service
Center Implementation

1. Assess context
2. Hold consultations
3. Determine CSC channels and levels of service delivery
4. Plan logistics
5. Train staff
6. Publicize and launch the CSCs
7. Monitor, evaluate, improve

Step 1: Assess Context

Perhaps the biggest challenge associated with designing and implementing a CSC initiative is spurring cooperation between the myriad governmental departments that are typically involved in the process. As such, obtaining the support of high level officials (e.g., president/prime minister, governor, mayor, agency head,) and a commitment from them to serve in an oversight role during implementation is critical for the success of CSC initiatives; implementers should think twice before initiating a CSC program if this support does not materialize. At times, legislative changes may also be required to modify existing service delivery arrangements and route services through the CSC initiative.

Even with high-level support, designing and implementing CSCs can be arduous, depending on the level of bureaucratic resistance, the number of agencies involved, and the scope of changes required. Therefore, from a logistical perspective, a significant amount of planning must go into determining which agencies and services should be included in the CSCs, selecting locations for the CSCs, hiring or transferring personnel, and so on.

7. http://www.dhs.gov.au/publications-policies-and-plans/annual-reports/centrelink/0910/chapter01/03.html

Given the complexity associated with these initiatives, a project team should be formed to manage the design and implementation of the CSC initiative. The project team should:

- Identify services and/or sectors that could potentially be integrated into the CSCs.
- Identify the barriers that different citizen groups face in effectively accessing services to determine the appropriate blend of CSC service delivery channels.
- Clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and relevant timelines for the implementation process.
- Survey government agencies and other service vendors to assess their barriers to participating in the CSC initiative (see Box 6) and devise measures to overcome these challenges.
- Determine whether/how CSCs can be used to reduce unnecessary steps in the delivery of different services and/or streamline processes (see Box 7).
- Assess the technological, human, and financial resources available and required to implement the CSC program. Evaluating the human dimension is particularly important as the process improvements produced by CSCs may necessitate

BOX 6
Barriers to the
Establishment of CSCs

Given the scope of changes inherent in organizing a CSC system, project management is likely to encounter a number of challenges in the process—challenges that will require the continuing commitment of the government and project leadership to overcome. Some of the most common barriers are:

- **Political barriers:** Because a CSC initiative can threaten access to informal revenues, line ministries and other service providers may resist devolving services and/or human and financial resources to CSCs. This problem may be particularly pronounced in decentralized systems. Moreover, people who benefit from the existing system (e.g., employees who may lose their jobs and touts/fixers) may attempt to derail the process by delaying the initiative.
- **Bureaucratic barriers:** Service providers may be skeptical that CSCs can be a more effective means of doing business than traditional approaches. Moreover, some service providers may be reluctant to share the information necessary to operate an integrated system or may resist establishing cross-sectoral partnerships.
- **Logistical barriers:** Service providers may use incompatible technologies or processes that will need to be streamlined to implement the CSC system.
- **Cultural barriers:** Service providers may have different financial and human resource policies that need to be streamlined during the CSC process. Moreover, government workers may not be familiar with the customer-centric principles required to ensure that the CSCs will function effectively.

Source: World Bank Institute and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

laying off some people or hiring others with new skills. Implementers may also decide to privatize or contract out the management of CSCs to enhance efficiency and reduce corruption.

- Analyze potential financing models and determine whether the CSCs should be run publicly, privately, through public-private partnerships, or using a combination of these models.
- Assess what the geographic coverage area of the CSCs should be.[8]
- Establish performance standards for the CSCs.
- Design an evidence-based communications strategy to "sell" the utility of CSCs to external and internal constituencies. It is particularly important to clearly explain the benefits of the initiative to staff to decrease the likelihood that they will attempt to undermine the reform process.

BOX 7
Using the CSC Initiative to Streamline Processes

The establishment of single-window "one-stop shops" for business and tax permitting is considered a best practice in the realm of private sector development. The advantage of establishing a one-stop shop is that new businesses can interact with only one office for all of their needs. Besides making it easier for businesses to interact with government, the process of establishing a one-stop shop also presents an opportunity to streamline and simplify internal business processes. For example, countries with a one-stop shop for business permitting not only require 30 percent fewer procedures for obtaining the permits, but also complete the process 40 percent faster on average than countries that do not use such a system.

Source: World Bank (2009).

Step 2: Hold Consultations

Once the project team has assessed the context for the CSC, it is important to hold consultations to solicit input from citizens, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant stakeholders. Since CSCs are intended for citizens' benefit, they need to be tailored to citizens' needs and priorities if they are to be successful (see Box 8). Input can be collected through a variety of methods, including surveys and public gatherings (e.g., town hall meetings). Consultations should target a wide range of stakeholders, including vulnerable groups and people living in different geographic areas, and focus on the following issues:

- What are the barriers that citizens face in accessing services?
- Which services are most important to citizens?
- Which services do citizens have particularly poor access to?
- How can government better deliver services to meet citizens' needs?

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8. The geographical distribution of stationary CSCs should balance the need to provide equitable access to services to a broad cross-section of the population with the need to place CSCs in high-demand areas.

Most people in the low-income areas of Bogotá, Colombia, do not have a telephone, Internet access, a bank account, or the money and time to visit distant service locations. Though the city had previously set up service delivery locations in peripheral neighborhoods, the facilities could neither cope with demand nor provide quick service. Moreover, people often had to spend hours completing a transaction, only to be required to go somewhere else to finalize it.

To provide better services to the people, the city opened new CSCs that were located close to the subway stops in peripheral neighborhoods. The one-stop facilities process transactions in only five minutes on average, and they have led to significant improvements in customer satisfaction. As part of the innovative CSC program, the city also has service fairs every few weeks in different neighborhoods throughout the city. During the fairs, service providers set up tents where citizens are able to access such services as paying their taxes; consulting computerized land records; paying electricity, water, or service bills; and reporting problems with trash collection or street cleaning. In addition to transforming the city's relationship with the public, the program has allowed public agencies to collect significantly more revenue that they can reinvest to further enhance the quality of service delivery.

Source: Inter-American Development Bank.

Step 3: Determine CSC Channels and Levels of Service Delivery

The next task for implementers is to make decisions regarding channels and levels of service delivery. As mentioned previously, these decisions should be made based upon such factors as existing resources; customer requirements; the service providers participating in the CSC program; CSC channels; and the human, technological and financial resources available for the CSC initiative. After completing this step, implementers should have a good idea not only of what services will be included, but also the level of service that will be provided (for each service) through the various channels.

Step 4: Logistical Planning

After identifying CSC channels and service offerings, implementers need to make operational decisions: the hours and days that the CSCs will operate, the number of times per month that mobile units will visit a particular area, and so on. They should also identify physical locations for the CSCs (which will be based on the coverage strategy), purchase equipment, and assess technological requirements (see Box 9).

Implementers should also streamline and fine-tune internal processes, solidify workflow patterns, and determine staffing arrangements for delivering different types of

Recognizing the need to reform business registration in order to provide better ser-vice to new businesses, the government of Armenia decided to establish a one-stop shop (OSS) for business permitting. With assistance from the IFC, the government conducted a comprehensive assessment to inform the logistical planning process. First, the government assessed existing legal procedures to determine areas in which the permitting process could be simplified. Second, it explored which agency should be responsible for operating the OSS and identified a suitable location for the office. Third, it assessed the technological requirements, including the steps that would be required to implement an integrated computer system for the agencies involved in different stages of the permitting process. Finally, the government estimated the number of transactions that the office would be likely to process each day and es-tablished the procedures for staff to follow when working with customers. By conduct-ing this assessment, the government generated the insights necessary to proceed with implementation.

Source: World Bank (2009).

services through the CSC.[9] For example, it is particularly important to ensure that "back-end" functions such as the processing of documents and payments are func-tioning well prior to the launch.

Finally, implementers should design a grievance redress mechanism (GRM). Because of their customer-centric design, CSCs are ideal locations for citizens to lodge com-plaints and provide suggestions relating to service delivery. GRMs are useful because they not only help service providers be more responsive to citizens' needs, but also highlight areas where process improvements need to be made.[10]

Step 5: Train Staff

Given their customer-centric focus and technological requirements, CSCs may in-volve a much different way of doing business than many government employees are accustomed to. As such, it is important that staff at CSCs receive adequate training on technological and customer-service topics prior to the launch of the CSCs.[11] Staff will also need to be familiarized with the CSCs operating procedures. CSCs should not be launched until staff has the skills they need to adhere to the service standards outlined by service delivery providers. Staff should be provided with ongoing training opportunities as the CSC implementation process moves forward.

9. How these activities occur will depend on each individual operating environment, including the choices made about CSC channels and levels of service delivery.
10. Feedback Matters: Designing Effective Complaints Handling Mechanisms (Post and Agarwal 2010) covers this topic in greater depth.
11. CSCs often require employees with a different skill mix, especially if they use advanced technology, so exist-ing staff may need to be retrained. Implementers may also decide to privatize or contract out the management of CSCs to enhance customer service and reduce corruption

Step 6: Publicize and Launch the CSCs

Another critical component of launching CSCs is developing a comprehensive public relations strategy to make the public aware of the introduction of the CSCs. Clearly, the public cannot make use of CSCs unless they aware that CSCs exist and know where they can be accessed. Moreover, in the past, citizens may have had negative experiences with accessing services, and they may not use CSCs if they are not aware of how CSCs can enhance service delivery.

The public relations strategy, conducted in partnership with the media and NGOs, should involve the following:

- Running radio and television announcements, holding public consultations, and posting notices at service providers' offices, on community bulletin boards, and other appropriate places. Communication materials should be translated into as many local languages as possible to ensure that the campaign reaches all segments of the population.
- Conveying a number of important messages about CSCs:
  - The services that will be moving to the CSCs.
  - The reasons why the government is adopting CSCs.
  - The ways in which the CSCs will enhance access to, and the quality of, services.
  - Customer service standards and customers' rights at CSCs.
  - The location of the CSCs, including hours of operation.
  - The services offered through the various CSC channels.
- Targeting poor and vulnerable groups, which often have the most difficulty accessing government services.

Implementers should also ensure that the services offered, fees, and service delivery timetables are clearly outlined and presented at all CSC locations. In addition to enhancing transparency and decreasing opportunities for corruption, publicly outlined standards shape service delivery expectations for both staff and customers.

Step 7: Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement

As CSC implementation moves forward, it is vital to collect and evaluate data regarding how the initiative is affecting service delivery performance (see Box 10). Given that CSC programs are typically scaled up incrementally, management should continuously strive to identify areas for improvement or innovation. More specifically, management should:

BOX 10
The Impact of Online
Services on Corruption

The E-Seva initiative in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh is an integrated CSC pro-gram that blends web-based services with one-window stationary CSCs. Evidence indicates that, besides improving the quality of service delivery, E-Seva has signifi-cantly reduced corruption. For example, a study conducted by the Center for Media Studies showed that in areas where E-Seva centers were operating, the presence of middlemen and corruption declined from 63% in 2000 to 27% in 2004.

Source: http://www.napsipag.org/pdf/Tackling_Corruption.pdf.

- Establish an internal monitoring and evaluation system to assess whether CSCs (and individual service providers operating in them, if applicable) are achieving service delivery standards, track the number of services accessed at each location monthly and monitor the cost to provide each service.
- Survey users regularly to determine their satisfaction with the CSCs, and identify ways that CSCs could be improved.
- Engage NGOs and civil society organizations to help monitor the performance of CSCs.
- Identify opportunities for expanding the level of service provided, increasing the number/type of CSC channels, and/or incorporating new technology into the system.
- Enhance accountability by publicizing statistics on CSCs' success in meeting performance targets.

Conclusion

Increasing the quality of service delivery is a challenge in many developing coun-tries. CSCs—which enhance citizens' access to services, increase accountability, and minimize opportunities for corruption—represent an option that governments can draw upon to achieve this objective. Although the form and strategic approach of different CSCs varies widely, all effective CSCs need to have well-trained staff, ef-fective back-office internal processes, and clearly defined service standards. As with other government initiatives, it is important for implementers of CSC programs to be constantly looking for ways to refine and improve the system. When properly imple-mented, CSCs represent a step toward improved service delivery, and ultimately, more responsive government.

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Annex. CSC Checklist for Implementers

Participation

- Validate that high-level officials support the initiative.
- Identify project steering team.
- Hold consultations to determine customers' needs and obtain their input about the CSC initiative.
- Identify the barriers that different groups face in effectively accessing services in order to assess the appropriate blend of CSC service delivery channels.
- Survey government agencies and other service vendors to assess barriers to participating in the CSC initiative and willingness to devolve services to the CSC program.

Design

- Take stock of organizations that are likely to participate in the initiative and what services they are likely to devolve.
- Assess the technological, human, and financial resources required to implement the CSC program.
- Determine geographic coverage of the CSC program.
- Determine channels through which services will be offered.
- Identify services that will be integrated into the CSC program.
- For each service, determine the *level* of service that will be provided through different channels.
- Analyze potential financing models and determine whether the CSCs should be run publicly, privately, through public-private partnerships, or through a combination of models.
- Establish performance standards for the CSCs.
- Design a communications strategy to market the utility of CSCs to external and internal constituencies.

Implementation

- Clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and relevant timelines for implementation.
- Implement the communications strategy.
- Identify locations, acquire necessary equipment, make decisions about hours of service, and finalize other logistical issues.
- Streamline back-office functions, assess workflow arrangements, and solidify staffing model.
- Establish a grievance redress mechanism.
- Reassure and train staff so that they will be familiar with new business processes and customer service standards.
- Put in place an effective CSC monitoring and evaluation system.