AUTOMATION OF COMMERCIAL TAX DEPARTMENT, UTTARAKHAND

The Commercial Tax Department of Uttarakhand is one of the major contributors to the state's revenue. It mainly interfaces with business community and is responsible for administering value added tax (VAT), central sales tax (CST), and State Tax on entry of goods into the local market. Its functioning and performance directly impacts the image of the state as a business destination. No wonder, there has been a strong demand for streamlining VAT administration.

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In its endeavor to replace the cumbersome manual systems with citizen-centric, service-oriented processes, and to establish a certain degree of standardization with respect to Commercial Tax (CT) administration, the department carried out a comprehensive automation drive as a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan of Government of India. Having a firm belief that Information and Communication Technology can serve as the most potent tool to usher in an era of electronic governance the state government initiated the task of simplifying procedures, making need based, good quality and timely information available to all dealers, and providing services in an efficient and cost-effective way. The State Centre of National Informatics Centre was appointed as the nodal agency for application software development and providing technical assistance in setting up the necessary infrastructure for launching the e-Services.

The first and the foremost service to be provided was an IT driven single window system for interaction that reduced the physical interaction between the citizens and the tax office. This was accomplished with launch of a web portal (http://comtax.uk.gov.in) that delivers comprehensive information with quick navigation. The remaining computerization can be divided into two broad categories –

■ Implementation of web based citizen centric e-Services , and

■ Back office automation of 71 section offices connected over SWAN. Role based modules for various activities have been developed and implemented successfully for administrators and officials.

The automation has resulted in transparency, convenience and cost effectiveness.

Ms RADHA RATURI
Secretary (Finance), Government of Uttarakhand

Information Technology has immense potential to transform delivery of government services. Use of ICT in Commercial Tax Department, Uttarakhand under Mission Mode Program (MMP) of Commercial Taxes by GoI not only helps us to bring services to the doorsteps of citizens, it also helps us to supervise working of Government machinery, thus making Government offices more accountable. The launch of e-Services like e-Registration, e-filing, e-Tax Declaration & e-Payment under technical supervision of NIC Uttarakhand helps Commercial Tax Department in delivering better and timely services to its stakeholders.

CITIZEN CENTRIC e-SERVICES

- e-Registration: Online submission and disposal of application for seeking registration of dealer under VAT and CST Acts. More than 21000 e-Registrations completed till date.
- e-Payments: Facility for online payment of taxes and other receipts by registered dealers. Electronic transactions already crossed 3000 ₹ crore mark.
- e-Filing: Online filing of periodical return comprising details of sales/purchase and other business information by registered dealers. 80% of the dealers are e-filing returns through the system.
- e-Forms: Online generation of Central Statutory Forms
- e-Tax Declaration: For monthly tax deposited by dealers
- e-TDAN : Online registration of TDAN for Government departments
- e-Vehicle & E-Tripsheet: The truck owners and transporters carrying goods into the state of Uttarakhand have to get their vehicles registered for the purpose of generating Trip sheet of goods being carried.
- Web-MIS for department officers: For use by Commercial Tax officers at different levels. Various kinds of statistical and informative reports can be generated based on data submitted online.

TRANSPARENCY

All information, mandatory to be disclosed under the RTI Act is now available online, and every citizen has access to information about registration, amendment in registration and its disposal etc. Details of return data along with sales & purchase details of dealers are available on click of a mouse. This helps in comparative analysis of growth, monitoring of Government revenue and in plugging tax leakages.

The application has been integrated with SMS and email facility. The alerts regarding application status, verification of authenticity of a dealer, confirmation of e-payment, submission of e-registration and e-filling are sent to different stakeholders automatically by the system.

CONVENIENCE

For the ease of users, manuals and instruction for most of the services are available on the website. Option for offline filling of data and submission to CTD web-site is made available where large amount of information is to be submitted by a dealer/applicant. This facility is available for both - submission of e-Registration application and filing of e-Return. Help desks have been established in all offices of the Commercial Tax Department and toll free numbers have been provided to address the queries of e-Service users.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

The web application has reduced the amount of money spent on paper and postal work as most of the information is available online and can be transferred electronically by just one click. Computer hardware and its maintenance costs have been reduced by replacing conventional desktops with thin clients.

EFFICIENCY ENHANCEMENT

The new workflow based system has revolutionized the department. Officials are free from repetitive, mundane work & unnecessary work pressure. It has also helped them in clearing the pending files quickly.

TECHNICAL DETAILS & ARCHITECTURE

The web portal and citizen-centric services are based on centralized architecture and hosted at National Data Centre, Shastri Park New Delhi. The intranet based back office automation servers are located at Finance Department Data Centre, Dehradun, while database mirroring is configured between web database servers at NDC and servers at NDC Pune for real time mirroring of data for the purpose of disaster recovery. Web services are developed in dot net framework and are referenced in the intranet application wherever it is required to get data from the web or real time synchronization of data is required. The offline form filling and uploading is done using MS Excel and XML.

The Commercial Tax automation in Uttarakhand by NIC is one of the major successful e-Governance projects in the state with implementation of various e-Services like e-Registration, e-Filing and e-Payments etc. The effort made by the department has widely been appreciated by all the stakeholders, specially the business community.

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