

## Knowledge and Research Programme on Improving Efficiency of Pro-poor Public Services



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**Pakistan National Report  
November, 2005**

Transparency International, Pakistan  
5-C, Khyaban-e-Ittehad, Phase VII  
Defence Housing Authority - Karachi

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Department for International  
Development Knowledge and Research Programme  
on  
Improving Efficiency of  
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# Overview

## About the research:

Despite considerable investment, public services in most developing countries are widely perceived to be unsatisfactory and deteriorating. The poor and disadvantaged in developing countries suffer in relation to delivery of public services. Firstly, they lack access to those services due to physical, financial, informational, political and other barriers. Secondly, they lack effective mechanisms for feeding back their complaints, views and requests in relation to those services. As a result, public services to the poor lack transparency, accountability and quality. The poor and the disadvantaged are particularly vulnerable as they rely completely on the state for accessing critical services like drinking water, health and education.

To address this gap, OneWorld South Asia, representative office of OneWorld International (OWI) was entrusted by the Department for International Development (DFID) to conduct a KaR programme on improving quality, effectiveness and transparency of pro-poor public services through the use of ICTs

The study period was January 2004 – June 2005. Transparency International (TI) country chapters in Croatia, Pakistan and Nigeria and OneWorld South Asia in India were chosen as the four implementing agencies for this action research.

The project, focused largely on access to information and on identifying ways to improve the effectiveness of delivery of public services to the poor and vulnerable sections and the opportunities for ICTs to strengthen those mechanisms.

## Research objectives:

The research objective was to design and implement an appropriate ICT led model to improve the transparency, quality and effectiveness of pro-poor services and to identify an effective niche for integrating ICTs in the traditional public services domain.

It sought to use the appropriate ICT to disseminate information to service providers and users and provide an appropriate means by which the poor can provide feedback to governments on the service provided.

## Research methodology:

The common core of this project was to

combine ICT with participatory techniques. These were used to gather views from the poor about various public services. This bottom up approach is in contrast to traditional ICT approaches (and indeed public service provision) which tend to be top down and are unresponsive to user needs.

The research method used to address the problem was 'participatory action research' that involved an in-depth study of the system to comprehend the existing problems, and then, strove to change it towards a desirable direction in close association with community members. The distinguishing feature of this research was the use of ICTs to bring about positive changes in access to pro-poor public services. Most of the participatory action research techniques, such as surveys, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used in all stages of the project. These included the selection of the sector for research, the choice of the ICT tool/intervention and monitoring and evaluation of the intervention.

The project was designed to facilitate peer to peer learning among the participating country teams. These teams met at various stages of the project to share their learnings.

## Research outcomes:

The research has demonstrated that appropriate and relevant use of ICTs can help break the traditional wall of mistrust and apathy between the people and the service providers. The project has exhibited how ICTs can be neutral catalysts, acceptable to both sides as platforms for information exchange and communication. Production of pro-poor services improvement packs are an important factor in this respect. These information packs published by the three country teams and the international pack contain learnings from the project, would inform relevant interventions. These packs would provide specific guidance to government and civil society institutions on how to implement/improve ICT enabled-feedback/grievance redress systems for public services for the poor. Public sector organisations will benefit from this information with increased capacity in designing appropriate pro-poor programmes. This in turn, is hoped, would contribute substantially to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods.

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# 1. Executive Summary

Developing countries face great difficulties in the effective delivery of services to the poor sector of its population whether they be health, education water and sanitation. The majority of these people is generally illiterate, financially weak and lack confidence in approaching the service providers to look into the problems that they encounter daily.

This project of the Pakistan chapter of the group was to improve the Transparency, quality and effectiveness of the water supply and sewerage to Gulshan Town by the use of ICTs. Gulshan Town is one of 18 towns which form a part of the City District Government, Karachi (CDGK). It was assumed that after the successful implementation of the project, it would be replicated in the other towns of the CDGK.

The project focused largely on the access of information and inadequate state of grievance redressal and feedback mechanisms on services to poor women and men and the opportunities for ICT to strengthen them. The common core of this project was to combine ICT with the report card methodology and other participatory techniques such as the Focus Group Discussions. This provided an appropriate forum for the poor to voice their own demands for changes in public service provisions by reflecting their own experience in dealing with government services and the quality of those services. This bottom up approach is in contrast to traditional ICT ones which tend to be top down and are unresponsive to the user needs.

This action research project combines a direct action component to build pro poor public service feedback systems with a reflective analytical quality component to build knowledge about these systems. In addition to its value in delivering concrete project

outputs, action research has also been selected to develop mutual understanding between stakeholders through activity driven knowledge sharing.

The project area was selected keeping in view the commitment of the stakeholders. Gulshan Town selection was easy because of the cooperation of the administration. With the support already existing the implementation of the ICT programme would be ideal. The potential of success of the programme was high.

Interviews with the stakeholders were undertaken. Comprehensive Survey through independent expert was carried out to ascertain the requirements of the poor. The participatory approach was followed in the design of the ICT Tool Focus Group Discussions, held amongst the stakeholders.

After the compilation of the data from the interviews, surveys and the Focus Group Discussions, an ICT tool was developed. This tool took into consideration the different and at times conflicting views of the stakeholders. It was then handed over to the Gulshan Town Administration to be embedded in their system. The opening of the complaint centre was publicized through the media and through flyers and corner meetings. However, due to a paucity of funds, adequate propagation was not done and hence the usage of the centre is not as it could have been.

The monitoring and valuation of the tool was undertaken after a few months of operation. Detailed interviews were held with the current and former heads of the administration, the lady councilors and the staff manning and monitoring the complaint centre.

In the end, it is our mission to implement this ICT tool in the remaining towns of the district of Karachi and other districts of Pakistan.

# 2. Introduction

## 1. Background

In mid 2003, Transparency International Pakistan confirmed its interest to participate in a programme initiated by Transparency International Secretariat. Subsequently, we were then requested to complete the necessary documentation provided by DFID as a prerequisite to our participation.

Unfortunately, Transparency International Secretariat due to Management and logistical limitations decided to withdraw from the project but due to the continued earnestness and insistence of the participating National Chapters, TI-S decided to request DFID for handing over the Management of this project to One World International. Consequently, a request for this change of Management was made to DFID. The DFID considering the keenness of the participants and the importance of this programme decided to accept this request.

One World International (OWI) was then entrusted by the Department for International Development (DFID) to conduct the KaR programme on "improving quality, effectiveness and transparency of pro-poor public services' through the use of ICTs. The study period is for 18-months, commencing January 2004 and ending June 2005.

The Programme as per schedule commenced from January 2004, with the decision to hold a preparatory Orientation workshop to be organized by Transparency International, Croatia under the supervision of One World International (OWI).

This Workshop was held in Zagreb between February 7-9, 2004 whereby various decisions were made by the Participating national Chapters of TI, including the selection of Sector and Site for the project. Unfortunately, Nigeria could not attend this preparatory workshop. Minutes of this workshop are attached in Appendix # 1. The TI-Pakistan's participation is highlighted.

In this workshop, Transparency International decided to go ahead with the ICT project and chose the Sector for "improving delivery of Water Supply and Sewerage" to the poor living

in Shanty Towns and Low Income Areas in Gulshan Town, Karachi.

Transparency International Pakistan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gulshan Town Administration, to attempt to provide a Clean and Transparent Government and through this ICT programme benefit the Town in its endeavour to provide and improve the transparency, quality and effectiveness of its pro-poor delivery services.

## 2. Project justification

Despite considerable investment, public services in most developing countries are widely perceived to be facing several operational challenges in the effective delivery of their services. The poor and disadvantaged in developing countries suffer in relation to delivery of public services. Firstly, they lack access to those services due to physical, financial, informational, political and other barriers. Secondly, they lack effective mechanisms for feeding back their complaints, views and requests in relation to those services. The poor and the disadvantaged are thus particularly vulnerable as they rely completely on the state for accessing critical services like drinking water, health and education. There is no 'exit' option available to these users to seek an alternative provider in case of dissatisfaction with the service provided. (Gopakumar K et al 2002)

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consulted about their requirements. The planners have preconceived ideas on the needs of the people for whom the services are designed. At times, they are not even bothered about the needs and plan according to what they consider should be provided to the citizens or according to funds at their disposal. The end users are the losers in the bargain. This pro poor action research project was undertaken to transmit to the service providers, the requirements of the poor.

The project end-users are those poor women and men who do or could make use of services/e-services in those cases selected for the action research component of the project. The ultimate overall intended end-users of the project are those poor women and men who are, or require being, recipients of public services, including e-services.

The primary objective of this project was:

- a. To improve the services provided to the shanty towns in the city, where the poor section of the population dwelled.
- b. To find ways and means to achieve this task.
- c. To study the possibility of utilizing ICTs for this purpose.

Therefore, the project aims to find an ICT most suitable for the objectives outlined above. This information provided by the ICT should be easily retrievable by both the service providers and the end users. The views and needs of the poor should be communicated to the providers of the service through the ICT. It is however, important to recognise that certain applications of ICT may be relevant to particular local circumstances.

It is essential to develop criteria such that service providers should be able to learn the views and requirements of the population, especially the poor. This would result in better design of projects, ensuring that the needs of the users are met.

It was decided that various audio visual aids would be used in the ICT. These included telephone, internet, television, film and radio. Various means were used to ascertain the requirements of the poor. Focus group discussions, surveys, interviews were held with a wide variety of the population to get a feel of their views and experiences of the services provided to them. Their expectations of the improvement

sought were gauged. This participatory approach was done solely that service providers were made aware of what the poor section of their constituency expected in the services provided.

The public service providers including all those institutions in the chain of delivery to the poor from central ministry to local office level would comprise the target audience for the project. Providers will benefit from a better understanding of the views (both positive and negative) of the poor about the services/e-services that are being provided.

### 3. Objectives

To identify, design and implement an effective pro-poor ICT led Model programme to improve the delivery of Water Supply and Sewerage to Gulshan Town. It is expected that this programme will:

Help the community to overcome the cultural barriers to information and communication.

Enable the community to access locale-specific, demand-driven content through the use of appropriate technologies.

Help in the development of local applications in a participatory way.

Reiterate the need to be gender-friendly, inclusive and transparent, even if they find the new ICTs to be a threat to their corrupt practices. and

Sensitize the Gulshan Town Administration to the information age and to be more responsive and accountable to their citizens.

The poor and disadvantaged are often marginalized and remote from government processes and this project will provide a clear opportunity to feedback to service providers. Since the response of the Gulshan Town has been positive, this will reduce the skepticism on the part of the users of government's ability to provide effective services. It will have the important effect of increasing citizen participation and will represent a move towards empowering both the citizens including the poor and the CSOs to hold governments and public services to account.

The project will also encourage increased dialogue between NGO's, government, the private sector and other actors/players which could contribute to the development of



strategies to tackle poverty in the target areas and could be used as a model for other countries\regions.

#### 4. The bottom up approach

The proposed project focuses largely on access to information and the inadequate state of grievance redress and feedback mechanisms on services to poor women and men and the opportunities for ICT to strengthen those mechanisms.

Certain applications of ICT may be relevant to particular local circumstances. However, the common core of this project will be to combine ICT with the Report Card Methodology and with other participatory techniques such as Focus Group Discussions 'FGD's, Individual Interviews, etc. The Participatory approach will provide an appropriate forum for the poor to voice their own demands for changes in public service provision by reflecting their own experiences in dealing with government services and the quality of those services. This bottom up approach is different to traditional ICT approaches which tend to be top down and do not take into account the demands of the poor. Results of such surveys carried out will be communicated to the Gulshan Town and other relevant government authorities and also publicised. This will provide a powerful tool for empowerment of the poor and for improved quality of public services (Water Supply and Sewerage) to the poor.

In particular, the development of the ICT component will be developed with the full participation of local actors/players including the poor to ensure that the solutions generated are applicable and appropriate to local circumstances and realities. The development of both existing and new information systems is part of this research and the project will aim to study the effectiveness of these systems. An inclusive approach will be adopted and concrete efforts will be made to ensure that women are consulted, as they constitute a significant proportion of those living in poverty.

Whilst external assessors have sometimes evaluated such initiatives, there has been little

or no attempt to date to build in ongoing feedback from poor service. Transparency International Pakistan predicts that such continuous and integrated feedback systems will be essential to ensuring that e-services do meet the real needs of the poor.

For the purposes of this project, the term ICT will be assumed to include a variety of different mediums including the telephone, internet, television, Cable TV, FM radio, Press, etc.

The project will be an action research project. It will combine a direct action component build pro-poor public service feedback systems with a reflective analytical quality component to build knowledge about these systems. In addition to its value in delivering concrete project outputs, action research has also been selected for its value to knowledge building and to the mutual development of understanding between stakeholders through activity driven knowledge sharing.

A detailed two-way chain of feedback between the authorities and the Poor will be developed at the early stage of the project, and implemented throughout the study. In addition, the analysis of citizen's feedback on an ongoing basis will be developed.

It is intended to produce Pro-Poor Services Improvement Packs and Pro-Poor eServices Improvement Packs. The purpose of each pack will be to give specific guidance to Gulshan Town, other towns and Union Councils, related government agencies and civil society, target institutions on how to implement/improve ICT enabled-feedback/grievance redress systems for public services for the poor. A generic pair of packs for use across all developing countries will also be produced. This will provide public sector organisations with increased capacity in this area and has the potential to contribute substantially to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods.

The project will have positive socio-economic impacts as it has the potential not only to enhance access to information on government schemes and welfare programmes but also (if the feedback is acted upon) to improve the provision of such services.

# 3. Approach to the Programme

## Area of research

Gulshan Town with a population of about 663,000 is centrally located among the 18 towns comprising Karachi City. It consists of 13 Union Councils and within its boundaries and on the peripheries, there exists in relation to the rest of the town a very high density of Shanty Towns and Lower Income Communities which is about 60% of the total population. Gulshan Town itself is well planned and has the basic infrastructure with regards to the Water Supply Distribution, but unfortunately the shortage and intermittent supply of clean potable water and the collection of Sewage to and from the Shanty Towns and Lower Income Communities leaves much to be desired.

The problems in addition to the shortage of water is the management itself, this includes tampering of valves, illegal water connections, excessive leakages in the outdated water distribution lines, penetration of the water lines by roots from trees, the faecal contamination of the water supplied and above all the political intervention and favoritism in giving connections impacts heavily on the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of water to the residents.

The Project site or Union Councils selected for our ICT programme is Union Council number One and Seven (UC # 1 and 7) where a greater majority of the population live in Shanty Towns and Low Income neighbourhoods.

## Beneficiaries

**The citizens:** The ultimate overall intended end-users and recipients who will benefit from this programme are those poor women and men of Gulshan Town who do and will make use of improvement in the delivery of services/e-services, in this case, water supply and sewerage selected for the action research component of the project.

**Civil society organisations:** Those civil society organisations that seek to represent the needs and views of the poor, will benefit through use/demonstration/knowledge of improved feedback/grievance redress systems.

It is through these organisations specifically that the poor are to be reached via this project dissemination strategy.

**The elected representatives:** One of the main beneficiaries of this programme will be elected representatives of the newly instituted devolution programme whereby in August 2001, the Government of Pakistan decided to hand over the reins of government through devolution of government to the elected representatives of the people. That the people were for the first time to be masters of their own destiny.

The elected representatives through this ICT programme would now be aware of the priorities of citizens who elected them. They would no longer go under the assumption that they knew what was good for the citizens within their constituencies but what the people within their constituencies really wanted. The feedback from the Survey, the Focus Group Discussions, the individual interviews and the Computerized Complaint centres established would keep them well informed. The Grievances when defined and looked into will bring the elected representatives closer to the citizens. It would help respond more positively to their grievances and with certain knowledge of the requirements of the people.

**The government authorities:** The Public Service Providers including all those institutions in the chain of delivery to the poor from the Karachi Water and Sewerage through the Union Councils, Gulshan Town, the City District Government to the Provisional Ministry for Local Government will benefit from a better understanding of the views (both positive and negative) of the poor and about the quality, transparency and effectiveness of services/e-services that are being provided.

It is expected that in addition to the direct benefit to the poor of Gulshan Town and to its administration, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, the Public Service Provider will substantially benefit, in that it will help the Board improve its services to other Towns of Karachi City.

The Provincial Government of Sindh of which Karachi is just one city will be able to replicate this programme in other Cities and Towns of the province. There is a great possibility that if

success can be achieved, this programme can also be extended and replicated by the three other provinces of Pakistan. Becoming aware of this programme, we have already been approached by the Provincial government of the NWFP to make a presentation on the scope and benefits of this ICY programme.

### **Participants**

In anticipation that the ICT programme will not only be totally implemented by the Gulshan Town authorities, but that it will be a successful and sustainable programme, Transparency International Pakistan has taken a participatory approach in the involvement of the stakeholders within Gulshan Town i.e. its residents. We have selected for the Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) citizens from the community who represent different and varied disciplines. We hope to take the support of these FGD members whom we have called upon not only to understand the problems being faced by the them but hope that these same members will continue with the programme as monitors for its continued implementation and ultimate success through sustainability. The members of the Focus Group Discussions include:

The present elected Union and Town Council members

The Women citizens residing in the project area

Technocrats Engineers, Doctors, Teachers and lawyers.

Representatives from Civil Society and Welfare Associations.

The representatives of Union Council 1 & 7

### **Interface between various stakeholders**

It is hard to describe the interface between the beneficiaries especially those living in Shanty towns and Lower Income Communities and the authorities i.e. the Karachi Water & Sewerage Board which is basically a Public Agency. Public Officials as in other countries, are supposed to be Public Servants; unfortunately, this is not the case in a third world country such as Pakistan. And even though their salaries are paid by tax payers,

The attitude is one of condescendence. It may be the right of the citizens to get good and adequate services, but most public servants do not feel this way. It is more as a means of getting rich at the expense of the citizens.

Thus, illegal water connections are rampant, proper supply is at a cost. Much needed water is diverted as per the capacity of the briber. The Lineman/ Valve operator is king of the entire distribution network under him. He has given himself discretionary powers with regards to the control of Valves in his jurisdiction far beyond the allowable. His fairness in evenly distributing the water is commensurate with the payment of speed money greasing his palms. Official recoveries of water and sewerage tax is abysmally low. With existing conditions, it is difficult to put claim to any sort of interface between the beneficiaries and the authorities.

Fortunately, following the Local Government Elections of August 2001, the situation is changing. The elected representatives are more responsive to the need of the people and the ready acceptance of this ICT programme is proof of the cooperation of the local representatives to improve conditions within their constituencies. Interviews were also carried out with the representative of the Karachi Water & sewerage Board, who was not only very cooperative in giving us an interview but at the same time, gave us all the information on the GulshanTown that was available with him.

### **Selection of the sector**

The Third World is beset by problems galore, most of them with no solutions in sight. A lack of education and Health Care facilities, Environmental Pollution, Human Rights Poverty Alleviation, Lack of Access to Information, Child and Woman abuse, Governance, Corruption and above all, not providing the very basic life saving commodity to the Poor Water.

Transparency International Pakistan, understanding the importance of combating corruption, this being its cornerstone, and supporting programmes for Access to Information =\_ one of the main tools in combating corruption, felt that there was no better way than to take this opportunity provided to it by DFID whereby we could combine the two through this ICT programme. That is, to improve the quality, transparency and effectiveness of the delivery by the government to the poor, of one of the most crucial of amenities Water. One can write the story of man's growth in terms of his epic concerns with water. The concerns have not been underestimated or exaggerated by man but unfortunately, he

continues to abuse this life saving commodity. Water is not only essential to man, but for animals and the plants that are required to feed him. Thus a balance has to be there where water must be made available to satisfy the requirements not only to man, but of animal and plant life. The cycle is one of interdependence, an unbreakable chain that will always remain so.

### **Selection of the site**

The Site was as easy to select as was that of the sector. Transparency International Pakistan has been working very closely with the Administration of Gulshan Town, Karachi for nearly a year in a program to establish a Clean and Transparent Government "An Island of Integrity" within a corrupt system.

The Administration has not only been very cooperative, but has gone out of its way to maintain its original commitment to support the above programme with all its Financial and Human resources available to it. Thus, with the support already existing, we felt that this ICT programme to be implemented in Gulshan Town will be ideal under the circumstances. In addition, we felt that with an environment of cooperation such as we have, the potential for success is far greater than if we had to approach an unfamiliar authority. We envisage that not only will the programme be implemented but that it would to a great extent, a sustainable one. This sustainability, we feel is a basic requirement for any programme.

## 4. ICT Model

ICT programme envisaged by Transparency International Pakistan to improve the service delivery of Water and Sewerage facilities to the residents of the Shanty Towns and lower income Communities of Gulshan Town, shall not only be means by which the citizens can approach the authorities but that the authorities will be able to communicate with the citizens and in turn solve their grievances. It is anticipated that the ICT programme will help bring all the stakeholders closer, It is also envisaged that the programme will bring pressure on the authorities to perform more efficiently and help them put their act together towards a better management of the utilities. To do this, we shall try to provide the following facilities within the project area and shall include among other things:

Establishing an efficient Computerized Complaint Center.

Setting up a Website towards an OPEN system of government to reduce the possibility of Corruption.

Organizing Regular "Meet the Citizens"

Public Meetings where the authorities will meet the Public to hear their grievances and where the authorities can discuss future development programmes.

Contacting TV Cable Operators to cooperate with the authorities as a means of communicating with the Citizens in informing them of the closure and/or change in timings of the distribution and delivery of water.

Put forward a proposal to the authorities to establish a local FM radio Station as a means of communicating with the Citizens with regards to problems of closure and/or change in timings in the distribution of and delivery of water

The authorities to Print and Distribute Flyers and Pamphlets informing citizens of various activities.

Arrange to set up small committees within each community to check inefficiency and mismanagement of the Water and Sewage collection and distribution.

## 5. ICT & Access to Information

The total ICT programme is envisaged as incorporating most of the following. The idea is to incorporate only those with a chance of successful implementation and sustainability. The ICT model will probably include:

### **Access to information.**

- E-Government - Computerized Complaint Centres.
- Internet accessibility for local information
- Public Information Counters
- OPEN system of government.
- V Government Voice Accessibility to Complaints/ Grievance
- Public Forums I Hearings / Meetings
- Public Notices in Town and Council Offices.

- Cyber Cafes for access to Complaint centers.

### **Dissemination of information**

- Press Media
- Electronic Media Radio & Television networks..
- Local FM Radio Station.
- Through Local Cable Networks - scrolling messages.
- Town Website (dual languages) for Information/
- Complaints
- Mobile Infotainment Units.
- Printed Material Programmes, Application Forms/
- Procedures/information

## 6. Development and Implementation of ICT Tool

The launch of the complaint centre and the ICT Tool was delayed due to unexpected problems between the town and city authorities. The latter had prevented the town govt. from buying any furniture or computers for the centre, which was ready to start working. It was finally launched on Feb 6, 2005.

As mentioned earlier, as per the agreement, the Gulshan town authorities took the responsibility of the construction, manpower and maintenance of the complaint centre. The e-complaint centre was housed in a new building set up specifically for this purpose.

TI Pakistan took the responsibility of providing the software for the complaint centre.

However, due to the late start, there were several aspects of the scheme that could not be implemented as planned, such as the incentives and rewards scheme for officers who solved the complaints in their department. Also, there were plans to decentralize the complaints registration mechanism by providing a mobile van that would go round the township and enable the people (who may not have access to internet, computers, phones) to file their complaints.

The ICT Tool, developed on the SQL, Open Source platform, was a web based, e-complaint centre that allowed people to log on from any location to register a complaint. The complaint would generate a token number or an id, with which the complainant could track the progress of his complaint as it went through various departments and officials.

The town Nazim, and the key officials /departments concerned also have access to this system whereby they can track the developments or delays and put the requisite pressure for their timely redressal. This transparency in the lodging, tracking and redressal of the complaints, through a web interface, brought in a considerable and hitherto non-existing transparency and accountability in the delivery of these key services to the people.

The e-complaint centre was conceived as an online complaint centre. However, due to the limited computer and internet penetration

levels, there were offline options as well. The three options for registering complaints were:

1. Online complaint registrations where the people could just log in to the Gulshan Town website from any location and register their complaint online.
2. Phone the Complaint centre to register their complaint over phone and get a ticket/tracking id on the phone to make it more timely .
3. Visit the complaint centre personally, register the complaint and generate a Ticket/tracking number.

The implementation of the tool over a period of eight months showed that almost 70 per cent of the complaints were registered using phones, 29 per cent through in person visits to the complaint centre. Only one percent, of these were online complaints. According to the staff manning the complaint centre, these online complaints were mainly made by youth who were internet savvy and had access to the computers.

There was a lot of interest generated in the complaint centre in the first few months and many complaints poured in initially. In the first month itself, though the tool was new, nearly 800 complaints were registered. The response from the departments concerned was good as well, mainly due to the initial hype and enthusiasm. The fact that the project was directly initiated by the Town Nazim, who took personal interest in the front and backend follow-ups of complaints, ensured good response time from the departments.

It is to be noted here that the elected town council of Gulshan Town was suspended suddenly in July and a caretaker government took over for two months to facilitate smooth conduct of elections for the 13 union councils of Karachi.

In July, 2005, after the agreement when the software company wound up its operations, TI Pakistan took over the software and data management support and maintenance of the e-complaint website. Another agreement to this effect was signed between the Gulshan Town Authorities and TI Pakistan. TI Pakistan



provided two full time staff at the complaint centre to help maintain the data and the software as well as the website.

### Nature of complaints:

The complaints could be filed on seven areas:

1. Roads
2. Land Encroachments
3. Mechanical, Electrical (Street Lights)
4. Sanitation
5. Sewerage
6. Water
7. Parks

However, the maximum number of complaints related to water and sewerage problems, with sewerage topping the list throughout the eight months of the registration of complaints.

### Analysis of complaints registered:

Interestingly, the highest number of complaints (1238) were registered in August and September (968) when the caretaker authorities were in charge of the registered in March and again in September, during the time of the caretaker regime.

The nature of complaints varied from lack of water supply, dirty water or intermittent supply. On the sewage side, the most common complaint was the sewage lines overflowing and the water threatening to enter the residents' homes.

### Summary January to September

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	462	355	80	27
Land Encroach	232	223	5	4
Mech Blect	1150	602	511	37
Sanita-tion	56	39	16	1
Sewer-age	996	688	281	27
Water	3481	1621	1659	21
Park	871	715	135	21
	<b>7248</b>	<b>4243</b>	<b>2687</b>	<b>318</b>

**Usage of tool and changes over time:**  
There were certain operational issues that

**come to the fore during the implementation of the tool over a period of eight months.**

### These were:

- As against the envisioned online tool, the people preferred to use the phone line to register their complaints to the staff at the complaint centre, would manually key in the complaints and then give them a computer generated id. By September, only 1% of the complaints were coming in through the online channel.
- Though the people had the option to track the status of their complaint online, they still found it more convenient to call up and request speedy redressal and follow-ups.

### Gulshan Town Analysis Report: Summary

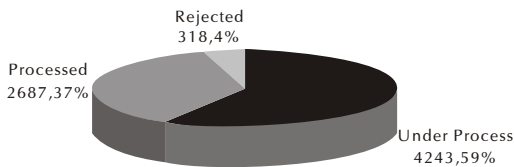
- Maximum number of complaints has been registered for water, almost 48% of all the complaints. Sewerage was the third highest after MechElect.
- Least number of complaints have been registered for sanitation, only 8% of all the complaints.
- Only 37% of the total complaints have been processed.
- Maximum number of complaints have been processed for water, almost 47%.
- Least number of complaints have been processed for Land Encroachment, only 2% of all the complaints registered for Land Encroachment.
- The rate of complaints registration was highest in the month of August, almost 17% of all the complaints registered.
- The rate was lowest in the month of June, only .87% of the complaints being registered.
- The rate of delays each month is much more than the number of complaints processed.
- Number of rejected queries is very low compared to the total number of complaints registered.

An average of 350 new complaints were registered each month except for the last two months when this number grew to between 700-900. (\* this was mainly due to the crisis set off in the sewage and other services, due to the monsoon season. Most of the sewage lines get clogged and water stagnates.) According to



the overall analysis of the complaints from January to September 2005, there were almost 7,000 complaints pending for redressal and only 2675 had been solved. This shows that the backend mechanism for the redressal of complaints was not as strong or streamlined.

**Complaint Analysis**



- Also, though an online system, the system would not function if Internet connectivity was not there. This meant that even complaints data could not be accessed. So the incoming complaints had to be registered manually in papers and later fed into the system.
- Though there was a front end fast track system that took down the complaints, the supporting backend system was not as good. As a result, though the complaints were registered, their redressal was slow, leading to the large number of delays and pile-ups.
- The software and database on an ISP server takes time in registering the online complaints. Also, the data access is not there, if there is any internet connectivity. Hence, an option was being considered for having the complaint centre on an intranet instead of internet to give control and access over data and to reduce the transaction time registering the complaints online.
- The amount spent in building the complaint centre and the software was not matched in the subsequent months with the same level of commitment from the authorities. This was partially due to wrangles between the city and town authorities and budgetary issues.
- The staff support for manning the complaint centre was not trained or skilled. Often, even welders and staff that did not know typing were manning the complaint centre, leading to problems in slow, wrong registrations. Also, the skills of handling the complainant were not adequate.
- There was a spurt in the complaints when the centre was advertised in the newspapers.
- There was not much awareness/promotion of the tool, on a sustained basis, except a few newspaper ads and general promos. So, only the few people who had access to this information were able to make use of it.
- The e-complaint centre needed to be made more people friendly or pro-poor. As per the initial design, it was only the educated and the informed that could make use of it.
- Women, it appears also used the phone to make complaints. Most of the complaints came from them in post lunch hours.
- The complaint centre had to work more or less like a call centre where the staff was also doing some counseling of the people angry or anxious over the problems plaguing them.

## 7. Project Evaluation

Given the participatory framework of the project, the evaluation exercise was held through Focus Group Discussions and face-to-face interviews with the stakeholders.

### These included:

1. The Town Municipal Officer of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town
2. Former Town Nazim (Mayor)
3. Officer in charge of the complaint centre
4. Complaint Centre Staff
5. Software support person for the complaint centre
6. TI Pakistan Team
7. Women councilors of Gulshan Town
8. Coordination Officer-in-charge of the Complaint Centre

### The main discussion points were on the choice, the development, deployment, usage and changes in the tool and its impact and current and future prospects:

The following points emerged from the meetings:

#### Strengths:

- 1) The concept of the e-complaint centre was very good and democratic and provided a high degree of transparency to the delivery of services to the citizens.
- 2) It had inbuilt accountability tools for all the departments and their personnel. So if an officer/department was not responsive, he could be held accountable and made to perform.
- 3) It gave the higher authorities an insight and 'at a glance' control over their departments. It gave them the reasons to praise/pull up their departments.
- 4) It made the government/municipal departments accountable to the people. People could track the development of their complaint and put timely pressure/demand on the authorities to redress their problems.

- 5) There was a scale up plan in place to take the concept of the complaint centre to the people through mobile vans and to have such complaint centres spread out over all localities in the town so that the people could find it easier to access the local complaint centres.
- 6) The concept was well received by the Karachi City Authorities, who had approached the project team to do a similar e-complaint centre for the entire city (Gulshan Town is one of the 13 towns of Karachi city)
- 7) It laid the foundation of an e-governance approach where strong buy-in from the top rung of the governance chain ensured the smooth running of the project. This taken care of, the next stages of the project could ensure stronger participation of the people, specially the poor, who are meant to be the primary beneficiaries of these initiatives.
- 8) The involvement of Transparency International Pakistan in the project, first through development of the software and then (in July) for maintenance of software and website, helped it play the role of a tool monitoring agency specially when there was a change in the administration. When the elected Gulshan Town Nazim and councilors were replaced suddenly by a caretaker authority, for two months before the elections, the TI with its role, helped ensure defacto monitoring and continuity of the project even under the new regime. This showed that NGOs can play the critical role of a neutral, monitoring authority to ensure the continuity of such projects.

#### Weaknesses and Suggestions:

- 1) As mentioned earlier, the e-complaint centre was conceived as an online tool to make complaints, these were more accessible for the middle class and the rich. The poor people were left out of this service-delivery chain. The project in its initial stages was more accessible to the middle-class and rich people of the town who had access to computer and internet for registering the complaints online.

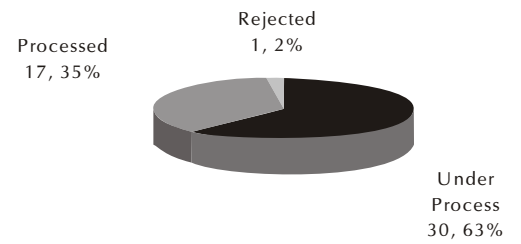
- 2) The concept and the tool were very good but its implementation was not up to the potential that it has. It required a change in the cultural and behavioural mindset of the staff which needs to be as committed and open to redressing the grievances. For this, sustained efforts and commitment from the town authorities and support from the city authorities was necessary.
- 3) There are the infrastructure issues such as availability of more machines to pump out the sewage water, giving more power and teeth to the union council over water and sewage departments. Unless the UC administration is empowered with more powers, it may not be able to strengthen the backend responses from the departments to address the grievances.
- 4) There was not enough promotion of the tool among the people, Specially in the poor localities. Only the middle class people were accessing the tool. According to senior town officers, "The tool was ideal for the middle class. The rich did not need this as they could pay to get their problems solved and the poor had their illegal water connections so did not need any government help."
- 5) An interface using the phone line should be preferred. More advocacy of the tool is required. Mobile vans equipped with the phone, complaint registering mechanisms, should be provided for the poor and specially those who cannot access computers.
- 6) The staff appointed for data entry was adhoc and not skilled and trained. As a result, the complaints were not being entered properly and these were long drawn processes. Some of the data entry, call centre people were totally unsuited to the job. One of them for instance was a welder, who found it difficult to handle the phone with one hand and to key in the complaints in slow speed on to keyboard., (He did not know typing)
- 7) Though the software made it possible to track the journey of a complaint without any paper work, after the first port of call, when the complaint is lodged and the tracking number generated, most of the work was done on paper.
- 8) There was limited awareness of the tool, mainly through two newspaper ads that led to a sporadic spurt in the number of complaints and then it petered down. Many people were still not aware and some, who had come to the centre, had come in personally to the old complaint centre and then learnt about the new one.
- 9) The fact that there was a sudden change of government and interim or new governments should also carry forward the initiative of their predecessors, was an evolving experience. In this context the role of TI Pakistan as a neutral player the (which offered to maintain the tool) and thereby provide a neutral checking and continuation and M&E role was an important thing to take note of.
- 10) It was not integrated with the elected representatives. That should have been done to increase effectiveness of the system. The town councilors, specially the women, too were not adequately informed or aware of the centre. If they were involved in the running of the centre, they could help create awareness of this tool in their constituency. Also, they could follow-up with the departments concerned to seek speedy redressal of the complaints of the people from their constituency.
- 11) The women councilors felt they could be involved in the running of the complaint centre to make it more accountable and effective.
- 12) They also felt the centre had the potential to include several problems/grievances specific to the women (domestic violence, sexual abuse) that could also be taken up by the centre.
- 13) In the latest stages, the complaint centre was acting more like a call centre and the internet facility was not of much use. One of the strong suggestions therefore was that the internal tracking could be done through intranet. The system could therefore be removed from the Internet to intranet.

# Annexure 1

## Data of complaints

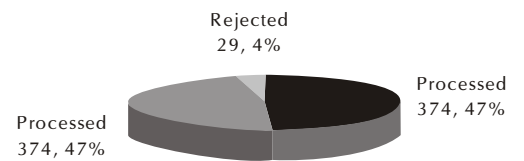
### January

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	1	1	0	0
Land Encroach	1	1	0	0
Mech Blect	7	7	0	0
Sanitation	18	2	16	0
Sewerage	9	8	0	1
Water	12	11	1	0
Park	0	0	0	0
	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>



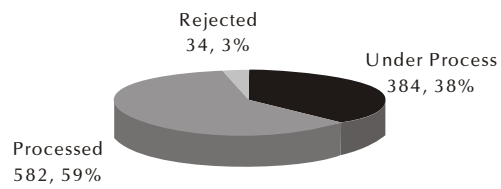
### February (2/1/2005 - 2/28/2005)

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	73	36	35	2
Land Encroach	31	30	1	0
Mech Blect	90	3	73	14
Sanitation	3	2	0	1
Sewerage	70	50	19	1
Water	454	217	227	10
Park	67	47	19	1
	<b>788</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>29</b>



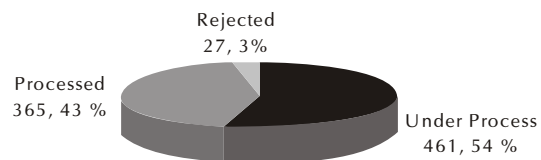
## March

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	62	27	33	2
Land Encroach	52	49	3	0
Mech Blect	192	53	134	5
Sanita-tion	3	3	0	0
Sewer-age	91	48	40	3
Water	502	123	358	21
Park	98	91	14	3
	<b>1000</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>34</b>



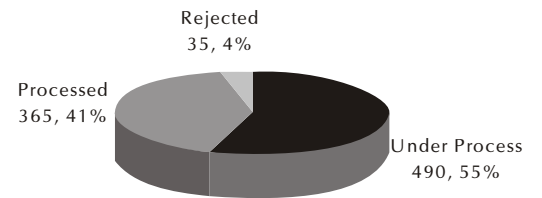
## April

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	44	35	6	3
Land Encroach	34	34	0	0
Mech Blect	146	56	86	4
Sanita-tion	8	8	0	0
Sewer-age	74	43	27	4
Water	388	138	238	12
Park	159	147	8	4
	<b>853</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>27</b>



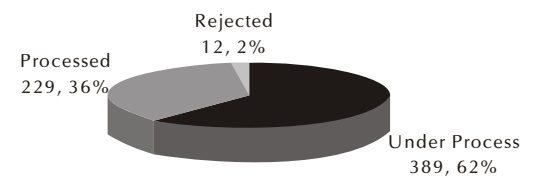
## May

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	54	36	4	14
Land Encroach	27	25	1	1
Mech Blect	126	92	32	2
Sanita-tion	3	3	0	0
Sewer-age	105	56	44	5
Water	400	115	276	9
Park	175	163	8	4
	<b>890</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>35</b>



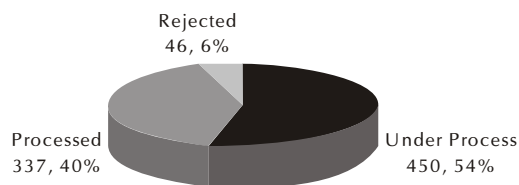
## June

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	43	40	0	3
Land Encroach	21	21	0	0
Mech Blect	104	98	5	1
Sanita-tion	2	2	0	0
Sewer-age	66	50	201	7
Water	294	86	201	7
Park	100	92	7	1
	<b>630</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>12</b>



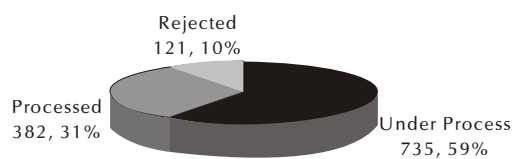
## July

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	48	47	1	0
Land Encroach	23	21	0	2
Mech Blect	125	59	61	5
Sanita-tion	8	8	0	0
Sewer-age	134	94	37	3
Water	389	169	190	30
Park	106	52	48	6
	<b>833</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>46</b>



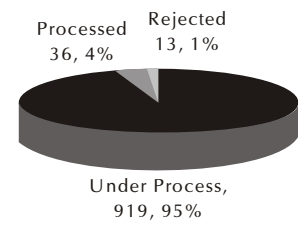
## August

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	80	76	1	3
Land Encroach	31	30	0	1
Mech Blect	225	125	96	4
Sanita-tion	7	7	0	0
Sewer-age	302	204	89	9
Water	504	234	167	103
Park	89	59	29	1
	<b>1238</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>121</b>



## September

Departments	Total	Under Process	Processed	Rejected
Build Roads	57	57	0	0
Land Encroach	12	12	0	0
Mech Blect	135	109	24	0
Sanitation	4	4	0	0
Sewerage	145	135	9	1
Water	538	528	1	9
Park	77	74	2	1
	968	919	36	13





# DFID KaR Pro-poor ICT Research - Project Team

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# Transparency International, Pakistan

TI-Pakistan is a National Chapter of Transparency International, a global organization that is spearheading a world-wide anti-corruption movement.

Transparency International (TI) today is the largest anti-corruption network acting globally. TI is an international Non-political, Non-partisan, Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization headquartered in Berlin, Germany, with nearly 90 National Chapters (NCs) around the globe.

Transparency International - Pakistan (in formation) was recognized in February 2001. It has been accredited as a full National Chapter by Transparency International Berlin on 25th October, 2005.

**For more details on the project, please visit,**

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## OneWorld South Asia

OneWorld South Asia (OWSA) – the South Asian Centre of OneWorld Network with independent and autonomous governance structure – works towards use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) for promoting sustainable development and human rights, in India and in all the five South Asian countries and a few other countries in the West and East Asian regions such as Myanmar, Maldives, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Cambodia. The core focus of OWSA activities is to strategically position ICT tools – ranging from the Internet, mobile telephones to community radio – enabling the poor to communicate on developmental issues and work towards realisation of Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

With a strong network of more than 700+ civil society organisations as partners, OWSA works symbiotically to achieve these goals through four major programme areas: "voice the voiceless" through grassroots communication; channelise knowledge for development efforts; advocate for inclusive and pro-poor ICT policy; and enhance partners' capacity to communicate and advocate for affirmative policy change and public action.

Two anchoring divisions – Partnerships and Programme Co-ordination (PPC) and Capacity Building and Technical Services (CBTS) actively support and feed into the outcome of these programme areas.



## **A development organisation working with poor and marginalised communities and facilitating processes for achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

- Advocating for inclusive and pro-poor ICT policy
- Enhancing partners' capacity to campaign for affirmative policy change and public action
- Giving a voice to the voiceless through grassroots communication
- Promoting communication for development



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