Good Practices in Social Security

Good practice in operation since: 2011

Electronic service delivery channels
A case of the National Social Security Fund

National Social Security Fund
Uganda

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Electronic service delivery channels

Summary

Previously, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) only provided services to its members when they visited its offices. Member statements showing their contribution balances were only issued in hard copy and follow up on claims necessitated visiting the NSSF offices, which was costly and inconvenient to both the members and the NSSF.

To make it more convenient for members to access NSSF’s services and to reduce the costs of its operations, the NSSF introduced electronic service delivery channels to enable members to view their contribution balances and follow up their claim processing on mobile phones, through the internet and via the toll free line managed through the call centre.

Since the introduction of these electronic channels, 46 per cent of statements are now issued electronically. Feedback from members indicates that services through the electronic channels are quicker, cheaper, customer friendly, convenient and have improved service delivery, positioning NSSF as being customer focused organization.

CRITERIA 1:

What was the issue/problem/challenge addressed by your good practice?

NSSF services could only be accessed through direct visits to its offices. Members would have to travel long distances to go to offices to access their contribution balances and process claims. Every day, there were long queues of members at different offices waiting to be served. This cost members time and transport simply to access NSSF’s services. There was therefore a need to overturn the situation and encourage the use of available electronic channels to serve our members.

CRITERIA 2:

What were the main objectives and the expected outcomes?

The main objectives were to:

- enable members to view their contribution balances on their mobile phones and via the NSSF’s website;
- enable members to blow the whistle on defaulting employers in a safe and secure way so that the NSSF could take action;
- enable NSSF members to process and follow up their claims online;
- reduce the number of clients attending NSSF’s offices;
- improve the customer experience for members;
- reduce the NSSF’s operating costs;
- make NSSF services easily accessible through already available electronic channels.
The expected outcomes were:

- fewer “walk-in” clients;
- members receive instant feedback;
- customers are able to monitor their contributions anytime from anywhere;
- members have improved access to statements through electronic channels;
- reduced staff costs;
- members regain confidence in the NSSF and change their perception that the contributions they make do not exist because of the past investment scandals the fund has had.

CRITERIA 3:

What is the innovative approach/strategy followed to achieve the objectives?

- The NSSF introduced an SMS intermediary through which members can access and view their contribution balances.
- The NSSF introduced the NSSF face book page where members’ views can be received and considered.
- The NSSF also introduced a call centre with a toll free line specifically to reply to member’s queries.
- The NSSF introduced e-statements so that members can access their contribution statements on the NSSF’s website.

CRITERIA 4:

Have the resources and inputs been used in an optimal way to implement the practice? Please specify what internal or external evaluations of the practice have taken place and what impact/results have been identified/achieved so far.

Management of the electronic channels is handled internally and did not require significant initial cash outflow. Existing resources were restructured for optimal use: the NSSF had a website in place, IPT phone network, the required staff and full time internet access. The only cash outflow involved procuring a service provider to host the SMS channel. The service provider is also required to provide continuous training and ongoing support for the service. The NSSF negotiated a discounted price for the Toll free calls.

NSSF also took advantage of the existing mobile phone and internet usage in Uganda, which now covers 11 per cent of the population and is growing at 21.2 per cent per annum.

An internal evaluation is done on a daily basis to track performance of these channels. A daily average of 4,041 clients is accessing their statements through our electronic channels. This has significantly reduced the number of clients walking into NSSF’s offices, which has freed
up staff time enabling them to offer more value added services to our members. Stationery costs have also significantly reduced.

CRITERIA 5:

What lessons have been learned? To what extent would your good practice be appropriate for replication by other social security institutions?

The use of electronic channels has taken our services closer to our members and is greatly improving our service delivery process. Through automation and use of electronic media, we have achieved cost savings on stationery, which has improved our efficiency and productivity.

Procedures have been harmonized and standardized, which has improved communication, information and knowledge sharing.

The electronic channels have exposed NSSF’s products and services to members while encouraging boundless accessibility: for example, our members can track their social security contributions anytime and from anywhere.

This good practice can be reproduced by any organization that needs to improve its service delivery process.