

Southeast Asian Ministry of Finance: Institutional Transformation and IT Strategy

Role: IT Strategy Workstream Lead

The Ministry of Finance of a large Southeast Asian nation, responsible for taxation, customs and excise, treasury, the national budget and state assets across twelve directorates and more than thirty regions, sought support to design its target operating model and blueprint the next stage of a long running reform programme.

Earlier reforms had delivered real progress, including modernised tax administration and a range of electronic services for taxpayers and importers. However, many initiatives across organisation, people and technology had not produced the results expected. Tax collection remained below potential, transparency was limited, the budgeting process was complex and lengthy, and customs processes were slow. A decentralised structure spread across an archipelago made consistent change especially difficult.

The transformation programme focused on the four key directorates of Tax, Customs and Excise, Budget and Treasury, with particular attention to talent and technology. I led the IT strategy component, which ran concurrently with the wider transformation and was designed to ensure technology became an enabler of reform rather than a constraint.

Key areas of focus included:

- A baseline of the existing IT environment across the Ministry and its four key directorates, covering applications, infrastructure, interfaces, projects and spend
- An IT health check across strategy, applications, information, infrastructure, process, organisation and people

- Alignment with major in flight programmes, including a new integrated treasury and budgeting system and tax administration reform
- A target IT architecture and operating model, including governance, organisation and sourcing options
- An investment strategy for IT assets based on their strategic value
- A prioritised portfolio of initiatives with a migration plan, milestones and risk mitigation

Throughout, the emphasis was on practical sequencing: identifying the initiatives most critical to the Ministry's strategic priorities, recognising the scarcity of senior leadership capacity, and building a plan that could be executed across a complex, multi agency environment.

The work provided the Ministry's leadership with a clear IT blueprint aligned to its transformation objectives and a realistic roadmap for implementation, forming the technology foundation for the execution phase that followed.

For more information about this case or to discuss how similar public sector transformation programmes could be applied in your organisation, please contact me at marco@marcociobo.com or visit www.marcociobo.com.