

7 Information Technology Developments

7.1 Overview

The major areas that were focused during FY12 were Banking Operations, Finance, Human Resources and MIS, Real Time Gross Settlement and Credit Information Bureau. The technological services were provided not only to State Bank of Pakistan but to the financial institutions across the industry. During the year, several upgrade and enhancement projects were implemented to maintain and improve overall security and efficiency of IT services and business operations. A notable success was the transition of Disaster Recovery (DR) infrastructure from temporary arrangement to a purpose-built international standard data center that is built in the premises of SBP-BSC Hyderabad Office.

In the backdrop of global credit crunch, ISTD strengthened the banking surveillance efforts of SBP by enhancing the electronic Credit Information Bureau to enlarge the scope of the system. Another achievement was the automation of data collection related to Exit Control List that enabled the concerned agencies to use the data in a better and consolidated way. ISTD maintained SBP at international standards by upgrading its SWIFT infrastructure. Similarly, Directory Services - one of the foundations of IT Infrastructure - was upgraded to the latest technology.

Another important milestone achieved this year was the automation of Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System related support mechanism that centralized the process of technical and Business support to 44 RTGS member financial institutions. This year, ISTD augmented its role in the Project to Improve Financial Reporting and Auditing (PIFRA) and developed a solution to collect and disseminate the data regarding the payments & receipts on the basis of Accounts, i.e. Foreign /Domestic and other categories that added to the governmental efforts to add transparency to financial system of the country.

7.2 Globus Banking and Currency Solutions

FY12 was the seventh successive year of seamless annual closing of accounts at SBP and BSC through the Globus Banking application and Oracle ERP. In the outgoing financial year, various functionalities were added to the Globus system. Some of the developments in this area include: automation of Issue Department Statement of Affairs and development of Thin sheet (Consolidated Govt. Balances) for Finance Department, Addition of new Prize Bonds of Rs 25,000 denomination which was launched by BSC HOK in Dec 2011, Payment of 3rd prize of Rs.750/- denomination National Prize Bonds by all SBP BSC Offices at Cash side through one window operation and provision of bonded note facility to all other commercial banks.

7.3 Oracle ERP & Data Warehouse

ERP team took up various enhancements in the Oracle ERP system including enhancement of interface of direct payments to SBP vendors that resolved the cheque issuance delays issues, while implementation of system controls on budgetary expenses resulted in an assurance of due prudence, automation of BSC HOK Engineering store was also completed in order to streamline Engineering storekeeping errands while another system was brought in place for system generated tag numbers for BSC HOK and offices' Fixed Assets.

An interface was also developed for revaluation of all SBP buildings across Pakistan. A General Ledger was implemented for SBP Employees Welfare Trust. ERP team also completed the new time-sensitive enhancements in PMS as per the amendments in the policy.

On the Data Warehouse front, functionalities like Housing Finance Quarterly Reports, to collect and disseminate the data regarding the housing finance disbursement, recovery, outstanding and write-off by banks and by sector, were performed during FY12. Denomination wise Currency Balances System was developed for online collection of monthly bank level stock position of denomination wise banknotes/coins from scheduled /microfinance banks. Further, enhancements were completed in External Debt: Foreign Private Loans, External Debt: Foreign Public Loans, Weekly RCoA Migration to DAP4, and Quarterly RCoA Migration to DAP4.

7.4 Infrastructure

To secure the data on portable computers, strengthening of policies and security controls on Laptop computers used by officers in SBP- BID and SBP BSC – IAD were implemented.

As per ISTD's continuous improvement strategy, the data communication and network security setup has been continuously strengthened by constant monitoring and optimizing of the links and devices using the latest tools, placement of structured service level agreements and distribution of resources across the three data centers over the corporate network for optimal performance.

Active Directory Services, the foundation layer for SBP's Windows Systems infrastructure, was upgraded to the latest technology resulting in efficiency enhancement and strengthening of security controls. Additional Blade servers were procured and installed to improve the reliability of services hosted in ISTD

Software security patch management systems, that is used for managing entire population of computers on Bank's network was upgraded, hence expanding the scope of security updates to third party non Microsoft software on the computers.