

Job responsibilities and accountability are often vaguely defined. Job descriptions consist of little more than task lists. Program evaluations are non-existent. Frequent transfers of personnel make performance evaluations meaningless, despite the government's often-repeated commitment to use such managerial tools.

The situation is similar in semi-government organizations, such as public sector enterprises and so-called "autonomous" agencies. Management is characterized by political interference, lack of accountability and frequent transfers of senior personnel. However, the managers in public sector organizations appear to be open to new ideas, especially the young managers who have been educated abroad and who appreciate the need for managerial professionalism. However, like their counterparts in the government bureaucracy, their decision-making processes are long and slow.

Many public sector enterprises are a "one-person show" in which the chief executive has all the power and control. The chief executive must in addition cater to his/her political boss. Many employees of public sector enterprises perceive themselves as having less job security, status, power and prestige than their public service colleagues elsewhere.

Perspective of your partner

Generally, because the bureaucrats lack motivation and consider their work burdensome, they may be indifferent to your proposal. Working with foreigners is not, in itself, a great incentive. The bureaucrats will, however, be eager to help if they perceive the possibility of getting some fringe benefits.

They may find it difficult to comprehend what you want, so take whatever time is required to explain your purpose carefully. Politeness, patience and an occasional gesture of gratitude will help you and your project documentation move through the bureaucratic corridors.

Attitudes toward you

If public sector bureaucrats don't appear very helpful at first, it is because your project increases their workload. In addition, they face many constraints, such as a lack decision-making authority, which means that they must discuss even trivial matters with their superiors.

Be prepared for frequent work delays and late or postponed meetings. If your partners fail to show up at an appointed time, it is likely they have been summoned by their superiors, whom they cannot refuse.