

Does the GTP really deserve a Grade A?
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It is astonishing that the Co-founder of Transparency International (TI), Michael Hershman, should have graded the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) with a straight 'A' for its achievements over the past year, adding that he does not do so "lightly" (Star 31/3).

Admittedly, his interview comments might seem necessarily sweeping, but this does not give him a blank cheque to credit the government with addressing wider structural questions such as "thinking out of the box" instead of "taking it upon themselves to dictate what the people want".

The fact of the matter is that the entire GTP was conceived and formulated by a newly created agency, to all intents and purposes outside the traditional and normal ministerial structure, that would have better represented the visions and aspirations of the people.

This is a serious limitation especially considering that the initial so called 'good results' of the GTP are now unlikely to be reflected fully on the ground at the grassroots level, further exasperating the weakness in the democratising of development institutions already inherent in the overall bureaucratic system.

Hershman has also failed to refer to the need for long term institutional reforms to ensure that the formulation and implementation of programs will be a continuing exercise and not merely ad hoc, as currently seems to be the case.

Perhaps his most surprising passing observation, being from TI, that "Malaysia has a culture of corruption" was not taken up at all.

The observation "why have political opposition when one can have the same result through corruption", might well have been examined further.

In this connection TI Malaysia is to be commended for taking up and publishing reports on aspects of this and other related problems, and perhaps Hershman may wish to take a look at these before venturing further broad generalisations on the GTP.