Chapter 5

An Evaluation Framework for E-Government Projects

Panos Fitsilis
TEI Larissa, Greece

Leonidas Anthopoulos
TEI Larissa, Greece

Vassilis C. Gerogiannis
TEI Larissa, Greece

ABSTRACT

E-government progress is being evaluated by multiple surveys, carried out by international and supranational organizations national observatories and individual parties. All surveys evaluate e-government progress using different methods, indices and perspectives. E-government progress evaluation is complex, since e-government projects vary from infrastructural, to software and to political ones. In this chapter, an evaluation framework for e-government software projects’ progress and results is introduced. The framework consists of indices extracted from e-government related literature and from the project management field of knowledge. Major benchmarking approaches -from the Information Society Directorate General, United Nations, World Bank etc. - were analyzed for the purposes of this framework. The approach results in the development of an “e-government balanced scorecard”, able to measure facets such as product and process issues, as well as project management processes. Each facet of the scorecard has a set of objectives and utilizes a set of measurements to evaluate e-government projects from various perspectives, interrelated to strategic planning, such as product, process and project management as well as service quality management.

INTRODUCTION

Central Governments worldwide have developed strategic plans for e-government and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) investments. Major strategic plans such as the US Federal Government’s (US Federal Government, 2002), the European (European Commission, 2002), the UK’s Modernizing Government plan (UK Cabinet Office, 2000), the German Bund Online 2005 strategic plan (German Federal Government, 2003) and the Canadian “Government on-Line (GOL)” (Treasury
Board Secretariat, 2001) define common targets for e-government, such as “time and cost savings for citizens and Public Agencies” (Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, 2005) and “the development of a citizen centered, results oriented and market based Public Administration” (Federal Enterprise Architecture, 2002). Moreover, technological standards such as “openness, usability, customization and transparency for public portals” (Gant & Gant, 2002) and “interoperability between e-government systems” (UK Cabinet Office, 2002) guide the implementation of e-government projects. Table 1 summarizes the major targets of these strategic plans (Anthopoulos, Siozos & Tsoukalas, 2007).

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<tr>
<th>Strategic plan</th>
<th>Primary targets</th>
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| “Expanding e-government” (US)  | 1. Citizen centered, results-oriented, market-based Public Administration.  
2. Federal and State Agencies interconnected in a one-stop portal.  
3. Guidelines and standards for all unique initiatives, performed by state or local Agencies. |
| “Modernizing Government” (UK)  | 1. Knowledge economy revolution.  
3. Citizen-focused Government.  
4. Better services for citizens and businesses.  
6. All key services available online by 2008. |
| “Bund Online 2005” (Germany)   | 1. Define and deliver online Federal Public services.  
2. Client-orientation services.  
3. Transparency and faster processing for federal services.  
4. Quality and security of public services. |
| “eEurope 2005” (European Committee) | 1. Citizen centered Public Administration.  
2. Encourage participation.  
3. 25 primary digital public services for all European member countries.  
4. Multilingual one-stop shop.  
5. Telecommunication’s costs reduction.  
6. Pan-European network of Public Administrations (IDA) of member-countries. |

All above strategies are implemented by multiple programmes and projects, concerning investments on infrastructures (e.g. broadband networks and information systems); on software platforms (e.g. public portals, digital public services and back-office applications); on initiatives encouraging social participation (e.g. public access points, e-Democracy portals and campaigns).

The evaluation of the above projects’ progress indirectly measures e-government progress and it is a difficult and complex procedure, due to projects’ variety, scope and range. However, evaluation is necessary since significant financial resources have been invested. The evaluation results are used to support the reviewing procedure of the strategic plans. Further, the improvement of citizen satisfaction, which is measured systematically, from digital public services and e-government software products, establishes trust between citizens and political leadership, and can strengthen social participation.

Current evaluations are executed by multiple organizations and observatories, which use a variety of models and perspectives. The achievement of strategic goals and sources of the project funding are critical parameters for the definition of an e-government scoreboard. In European Commission, for instance, Information Society Directorate General (DG) offered e-Europe 2003, e-Europe 2005, i2010 action plans on which funding of ICT programmes and projects by Member Countries were based. The same organization,
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