Chapter 7

Integrating Electronic Government and Public Administration Reform Strategies:
Method and Experience

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ABSTRACT

Better integration of Electronic Government (EGOV) and Public Administration Reform (PAR) strategies has been identified by global EGOV benchmark reports as one of the contemporary issues to address in improving the outcomes of EGOV programs. This chapter presents a technique for aligning EGOV and PAR strategies based on the Strategic Alignment Model (SAM) of Henderson and Venkatraman. By treating EGOV and PAR strategies as two different alignment domains, similar to organizational and technological domains respectively, we re-frame the original SAM to address our specific alignment needs. Our model provides a procedure and metrics for analyzing: (1) alignment between a pair of EGOV and PAR strategies and (2) the internal coherency of an EGOV strategy. We discuss our experience in applying this approach in Macao and conclude with how it may be used in aligning EGOV with other strategies such as those related to governance and development.

INTRODUCTION

Improving coordination mechanisms between EGOV and related programs is one of the defining features of the new generation of EGOV programs - a response to the pressures for better governance and development outcomes, and for obtaining concrete value from technology-related investments in government (WASEDA, 2009) (UNDESA, 2009).

Technically, the challenge of aligning EGOV and other strategies, particularly those related to PAR, is being tackled by various complementary approaches spanning three perspectives:

- **Organizational:** In this perspective, EGOV initiatives are increasingly conceived by governments as part of their PAR programs. A major reason for integrating EGOV and PAR initiatives is to ensure that technology investments in government produce concrete value by supporting reform objectives. The alignment of EGOV and PAR goals is analogous to the traditional organization-IT alignment challenge faced by businesses and IT executives in the private sector and increasingly by the Chief Information Officers and managers in the public sector.
- **Institutional:** In this perspective, better outcomes from the EGOV programs rely on the integration of these programs with existing structures, politics and policies, as well as the roles and relationships of formal institutions embodied in laws, regulations, budget processes, and those of informal institutions comprising networks, norms and trust (Fountain, 2007).
- **Developmental:** In this perspective, EGOV is expected to explicitly consider governance outcomes such as strategic vision, transparency, responsiveness, political freedom and participation, as well as social outcomes of empowerment and

sustainable livelihood of citizens and other member of the society (Abrahams & Newton-Reid, 2008) (De, 2006).

Despite the availability of these approaches, policy makers, program managers and EGOV practitioners have found operationalizing the knowledge codified in analytical and conceptual frameworks difficult. For instance, in the case of development-oriented approaches, alignment is normally carried out a-posteriori as part of impact assessment exercises.

This chapter addresses this concern by providing an organization-oriented and model-based process, with supporting instruments and tools, to assist practitioners in aligning EGOV programs with PAR and other related programs. Our approach is based on the concept of strategic alignment; which is expected to assist any organization in three ways (Avison, Jones, Powell, & Wilson, 2004): maximizing return on IT investment, helping to achieve competitive advantage through Information Systems, and providing direction and flexibility to leverage new opportunities. Therefore, in the context of EGOV and PAR programs, strategic alignment will aim at ensuring that PAR goals are effectively supported by EGOV strategies and infrastructures, and that the PAR programs are flexible enough to exploit available EGOV strategies, infrastructures and IT processes available at government agencies.

Significant literature exists on strategic alignment and the Strategic Alignment Model (SAM) of Henderson and Venkatraman for analyzing and achieving organization-IT alignment (Avison, Jones, Powell, & Wilson, 2004) (Lines, 2005) (Luftman J. N., 1993) (Coleman & Papp, 2006) (Tallon, 2003) (Bleistein, Cox, & Verner, 2006) (Luftman, 1996). Most of the work on strategic alignment and SAM in particular is centered on surveys and investigating perceptions of business and IT managers on the relationships between organizational-IT alignment and organizational performance. Substantially less information is

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