Skilling for E–Government

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INTRODUCTION

Implementing e-government in local, regional, or central administration represents a far-reaching modernisation of governing the public affairs. Therefore, in training it is not sufficient to train users in new programs as in the case of f.i. further training in a new office application. To understand and actively influence the restructuring that, by necessity, goes along with the introduction of e-government a broader approach in e-skilling is needed.

For Grabow, Drüke, H., and Siegfried (2002), e-skilling is one of the ten factors for success in local e-government. Schelin (2004) goes into the same direction when she points out: "With the era of digital government upon us, Federal, state, and local governments need to prepare their elected officials and employees to handle the multitude of changes incorporated into digital government. However, the lack of training opportunities, as well as the lack of research dedicated to training for digital government, is ominous for successful digital government endeavour ..." (Schelin, 2004, p. 273).

Whereas Schelin in this encyclopaedia, presents the content and methods of an advanced training module this contribution focuses on the competencies that are required to enable the different user groups to be up-to-date for the new challenges that are ahead of them.

In accordance to that approach in the first chapter the basic challenges that different user groups have to face when being confronted with e-government as a comprehensive modernisation concept.

BACKGROUND: E-GOVERNMENT AS A COMPREHENSIVE MODERNISATION CONCEPT

In local e-government these secular developments of the last few decades are drawn together, e.g. the rapid progress of information and communication technology (Garson, 1999; Grönlund, 2000), globalization (Carnoeiro, 2000, Valenzuela, Vázquez, & Lorente, 2001), the declining importance of ideologies[1] (OECD, 2000), new opinions on the reasons for efficiency in organizations (Baldwin & Clark, 1997; Daft & Lewin, 1993; Harrison, 1994; Kogut & Bowman, 1995) and a changed understanding of the relationship between the state and society (Carnoeiro, 2000; United Nations, 2001)[2].

As the OECD (2003) phrases it, the main effect of e-government is "simply better government by enabling better policy outcomes, higher quality services, and greater engagement with citizens and by improving other key outputs identified. Governments and public administrations will, and should, continue to be judged against these established criteria for success" (p. 12).

E-government has a high global priority. The subject is regarded as a central national task: programs, strategies, and institutions are being established or adapted. This high awareness in itself encourages the development of local e-government. In a sense, e-government creates a second chance for administrative reform. This is partly because some of the same subjects are on the agenda and partly because the establishment of the virtual town hall, if it is done systematically, also involves modernizing the administration.

Strictly speaking, e-government even goes a step further, because it aims to restructure the internal processes from the customer's perspective to a far greater extent than was planned in the administrative reform. According to Hill (2002), e-government also goes beyond the previous administrative reform in its greater focus on services (e.g., its life episode approach with integrated services) process improvement by e-government and a "reinvention" of administrative action with new organizational forms and new methods of service to the public.

The use of information and communication technology lends great support to the administration in all reform processes. As a result, it will be possible to put the goals of administrative reform back on the agenda—goals such as increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration, citizen and customer orientation, a greater service quality and an increase in the transparency of the tasks, improved working conditions for the administrative staff, reminding staff of the goal of pooling subject and resource responsibility in a coherent e-government project and transforming this into fresh motivational impetus and renewed activity.

Figure 1. The e-government delivery framework
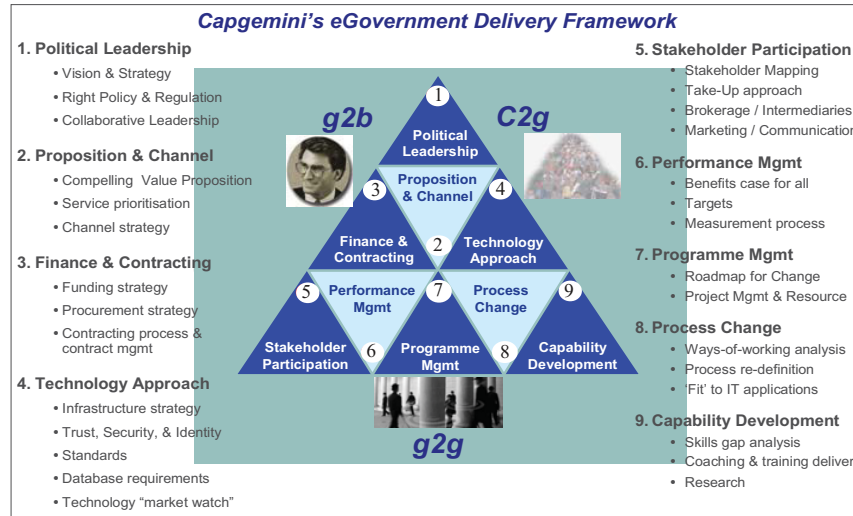
THE E-GOVERNMENT DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

A proven concept to understand the structural factors influencing e-government conceptualization and implementation on any level be it local, regional, national, or supragovernmental, is the Capgemini eGovernment Delivery Framework which will be explained in the following.

The "eGovernment Framework" captures the main building blocks of e-government with all in all 29 subcategories which cover the main aspects that have to be taken into consideration when building up e-government. The categorization starts from the fundamental assumption that e-government is more about organization than about technology. Only if perceived as a comprehensive modernisation concept e-government can generate the massive results it can have. Any of the aspects is indispensable when e-government is led to a success.

- **Political Leadership:** Comprehends the foundation of any e-government project on a solid and well-communicated vision and a clear strategy. Rules for all participants are made clear and the leaders execute a collaborative style of cooperation with internal and external process participants.
- **Proposition and Channel:** Deals with the processes to address the different user groups. The main questions here are: what is the value proposed to different user groups, which services are to be prioritized according to what criterion. A multi-channel strategy should be implemented.
- **Finance and Controlling:** Asks for the strategy and concepts to organize the supply chain in e-government (funding, procurement, contracting).
- **Technology Approach:** Assembles the aspects to use the right technology such as middleware, security, standards, interoperability.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Broaches the issue of the appropriate ways and concepts to involve the main stakeholders into e-government projects during the whole life cycle.
- **Performance Management:** Asks for the methods, instruments and tools to measure the economic, societal and political impacts of e-government.
- **Program Management:** Covers the classical project management issue.
- **Process Change:** Explores the central role that business process reorganization plays in e-government.
- **Capability Development:** Touches the issue of permanent further training of both the individuals and the organization to cope with the demanding challenges that e-government poses.

This cascade of features ensures a structured and comprehensive coverage of the topic and provides a basis for skilling. With the aspects laid out in the e-government delivery framework generic as well as specific require-

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