Chapter 3
E-Government Initiatives:
Review Studies on Different Countries

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ABSTRACT

This study is an extension of the case studies presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 2) on mission, vision, objectives, and strategies of E-government (EG) initiatives adopted and implemented by different developed and developing countries in the local, regional, or national levels. This chapter has three sections. In the first section, an introductory note regarding the initiatives to develop EG is presented. The second section describes two instruments to reveal EG development capability empirically in the country-context. The third section illustrates the studies on EG initiatives of different countries.

INTRODUCTION

A government can use information and communication technology (ICT) for several internal and external purposes. Internal purposes include but not limited to electronic data storage; electronic communication among employees like E-mail, chat rooms; different types of web postings like hiring, organizational rules and regulations, salary, pension schemes, organizational activities; electronic data sharing horizontally and vertically among organizational members. External purposes include but not limited to web posting information, different kinds of forms, and policies for its all external stakeholders like citizens, business organizations, non-for-profit organizations, other government departments, other levels of governments inside country (local, provincial, and federal/national), and other governments globally to view those postings and download forms through online. External purposes may also include electronic communication of public organizations with its all stakeholders through e-mail, chat rooms to provide government services.

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External purposes are also aimed to facilitate its stakeholders, such as citizens and business organizations to perform different functions with governments like financial transactions with government; participating in bids, tenders, procurements etc.; sharing government information; participating in government decision making. As an extended external purpose, even citizens can vote electronically. For these purposes, different functions of government organizations might be integrated horizontally and vertically to provide services from one central web portal, organized based on stakeholders demand. Internal and external users of these services can get electronic access through Internet using PC and laptop or from mobile devices like mobile phone.

External users can view, search, and/or download forms from federal/provincial/local government websites to apply for jobs, file taxes, register to renew driving or other licenses, and register births and marriages registration. Government websites also yield information on educational, health care, human resource, justice, postal, and different types of government rules and regulations. In addition to the purposes mentioned here, other possible interactions with government websites include getting answers to further queries, e-mailing government departments for assistance, and registering for an appointment such as a driving license exam. Stakeholders might also use government websites for transactions such as paying taxes; renewing licenses; registering vehicles; and paying property taxes, hydro bills, and other federal/provincial/city fees. These interaction modes are backed by internal policy and systems of the departments.

Therefore, it is now possible to interact electronically via Internet using PC or laptop or via wireless device such as mobile phone, personal digital assistants (PDAs), smart phone, and other handheld devices with government departments/agencies such as Human Resources and Social Development, Justice, Revenue, National Defense, Public Works and Government Services, Education, Transport, Citizenship and Immigration (this is only a sample, not a complete listing) instead of going to physical government offices. We have called all these internal and external functions as Electronic-government or E-government (EG).

In this era of fierce competition, world-wide proliferation of private sectors, and globalization, it is important for all governments and public sectors to understand and conceptualize their own capability in terms of ICT management, resource availability and allocation, overall reengineering and transformation, and operation and maintenance knowledge necessary to implement EG using the proper ICT. Evidence suggests that particularly developed countries and developing countries with extensive ICT and financial capability are capable of adopting ICT, maintaining well-developed infrastructure, investing required capital in public service restructuring, and developing advance stage matured service through EG (Anderson and Narus, 1998). This raises the vulnerable question as to whether knowledge management and ICT advancement requires investment capability of enormous financial and ICT resources and, specifically, whether EG is largely a question of resources (Wagner et al., 2003). The answer to this issue, and thus the development of a framework regarding the plausible solutions of managing ICT and implementing EG, is important for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers (Madu, 1989; Madon, 2004). This research study is designed to provide researchers and policy makers to investigate fundamental capabilities of a government to manage ICT and implement EG. In this regard, this study, from extensive exploration of different measurement techniques, presents empirical instruments to reveal the status of ICT diffusion and EG development in any country. This chapter also addresses several studies on different issues of EG in country-context in either local, regional, or national levels to provide with references for future researchers who are keen to understand EG implementation strategies, development capabilities, service maturity,