

## Chapter 4

# Feasibility and Sustainability Model for Identity Management

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### ABSTRACT

*National identity projects in various countries around the globe, which manage unique identification of citizens, have captured attention of late. Although the perceived benefits in terms of public administration are numerous, the challenges and bottlenecks for a successful rollout are also many. The objective of this chapter is to identify the drivers and inhibitors for adopting a common identity management system across various organizations for public administration and to suggest a model for determining the feasibility and sustainability of such a system. We reveal the various factors affecting successful implementation of the system and the probable impact of these factors. The model suggested would allow public organizations and policy makers to determine the critical factors for the implementation of an identity management system on a large scale.*

### INTRODUCTION

Many countries have already implemented identity management by introducing national identity cards for their citizens, while others are still investigating the consequences of such an initiative from various angles, privacy and data security being the major concerns. There have been various mo-

tivators for governments to consider the option of issuing identification cards for citizens, ranging from protecting the country from terror attacks to achieving operational efficiency in providing services to citizens. However, there has been hardly any research on developing a model that could help a government analyze the feasibility and sustainability of an identity management system. This gap in the existing literature was the motivation for this study. We adopt case study

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based research methodology (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987) to design a model for determining the feasibility and sustainability of an identity management system.

Different countries have different perspectives on the various dimensions of identity management. The differences are visible in both motivators as well as inhibitors of the system. Considering these differences and the fact that the government of a country functions within an ecosystem of various organizations (namely, taxation department, electoral department, public distribution department etc.), similar differences would exist in the perspectives of these organizations as well. Hence, in determining the feasibility and sustainability of a common identity management system that could be used by each of these organizations, it is critical to understand and formulate the perspectives of each organization. Taking this into consideration, this study focuses on developing a model that would allow a government to understand the various factors acting as motivators and inhibitors for the adoption of an identity management system as perceived by the various organizations within the ecosystem.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Identity Management Initiatives by Various Nations**

Though not much work has been published on the factors affecting the implementation of an identity management system, there are reports on the issuing of unique national identity cards for citizens in various countries. Many countries like Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Portugal, Spain etc. have gone ahead with the implementation of national identity cards, some making the carrying of the cards mandatory for citizens, while countries like Australia and United States (US) have not (Beynon-Davies, 2006). Only after terror attacks

on the US and United Kingdom (UK) have these countries started to seriously look into the implementing a national identity management system. In a country like Australia, the major motivators for the implementation of national identity card are national security, prevention of government fraud, anti-money laundering, replacement of existing cards with a single multipurpose card and improvement of efficiency of government services. Factors acting as inhibitors are privacy issues, political opposition and public opposition (Jackson & Ligertwood, December 2006). Canada, currently looking toward implementing a national identity card system, recognizes concerns for national security as the major motivating factor. In contrast to Australia, Canada enjoys strong support from its citizens for implementing national identity cards. Other major concerns for Canada are privacy issues, data security, possibility of function creep, technology gaps, risk of single point of failure and threat of racial discrimination. Existence of weak seed documents on which the cards would be issued is also a concern for Canada (Fontana, October 2003).

The US, which faces strong opposition state-wide towards the implementation of national identity cards for its citizens, identifies national security as the only motivator for the implementation of such a system, with privacy issues, the possibility of function creep, technology gaps and high cost being the major inhibitors (Rotenberg & Ngo, May 2008). For countries like Belgium, Portugal and Spain, who have already implemented national identity cards for citizens, secured accessibility to e-government applications, social security, child safety, improvement of efficiency of government services, better accessibility to health care services and prevention of illegal immigration are the major motivators, while privacy issues, legal issues and data security are the major concerns (Fontana, October 2003; Mindrum, January 2008).

Most factors affecting identity management revealed in the existing literature are similar.

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