ABSTRACT

Information Technology (IT) governance is considered an integral part of corporate governance that is the accountability of the organization’s Board of Executive to ascertain that organization’s information technology assists to achieve the established goals and objectives of the organization, by applying different of well-defined methods, processes and procedures for communication and relationship. This study intends to analyse IT governance practices employed in Abu Dhabi public sector and its contexts. The study used a quantitative research approach which helps to reach the objectives of the study, primary data obtained by formulating a set of questionnaires and secondary data obtained by using the reviewed literature. The research found that most known and recommended international standards and IT frameworks and non IT frameworks are applied by Abu Dhabi public sector. These known frameworks and standards that being used are ISO 9001, ITILv3, ISO 27001, ISO 20000, PMBOK, BSC, and COBIT respectively. These non IT frameworks and IT frameworks are used based on public entities need and to increase the efficiency and the performance of public sector organizations as well to comply with governmental regulations and statute. The study proposes many arrangements and best practices that can be applied by both IT governance Board and IT practitioners to have better IT governance and more control on IT assets. These best practices and recommendations if are enforced in the organizations daily activities will help to improve the quality of delivered services, increase effectiveness of IT governance, lower operational cost, increase interoperability between government bodies and brought knowledge and best practices to organization.

Keywords: Abu Dhabi, Control Objectives for Information and Technology (COBIT), Frameworks, Information Technology (IT), Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), IT governance, IT Governance Institute (ITGI), Public Sector

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1. INTRODUCTION

Implementing information technology (IT) governance frameworks to public organizations is critically important for most of the countries as they need to consolidate infrastructure and IT operations, to get greater efficiencies, make technology more effective and improve information security. Also, it helps to improve the quality of the existing services to public and it assists to develop solutions to meet their needs more quickly, and cuts down on the costs of running and supporting technology.

IT has become crucial for the government agencies to serve and provide their constituents modernized services more effectively, capably, and sustainably, and making IT governance as a priority for the public organizations leaders to seek best practices of IT frameworks for their agencies. Furthermore, Lucas (2005, 5) mentioned that “the key to success with technology is not the technology per se, but the ability to manage it well”.

Moreover, IT is not just essential to a corporate business, but has become fundamental to public sector entities in order to deliver the necessary outcomes for the specific stakeholders. In fact IT has grown to be a vital element in the functioning of the public sector heightens the importance of proper governing of the IT environment and processes of the public sector entity (Nfuka & Rusu, 2009; Woods, 2010).

Implementing IT governance frameworks to the governmental sector help its agencies to share information and other resources as necessary to meet the needs of the citizens and the society (Pardo & Burke 2008). Addition to that, IT governance frameworks are considered to be mandatory for the public sector to create interoperability between agencies and improve the capabilities of government agencies to effectively serve the needs of the citizens and the society as a whole including the private sector and other agencies (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004). Due to the significance of IT systems to organizations, managing the IT risks is no more just a technical problem, but it has become a business problem that can adversely impact the whole business (Spremic, 2011; De Haes & Van Grembergen, 2010). Therefore, the strategic role of information technology in organizations has become a critical factor involving the IT governance and implementing widely applicable Information System (IS) frameworks, best practices, standards and methodologies that are reliable and ensuring smooth functioning of the information systems (ITGI, 2003).

The Government of Abu Dhabi is realizing the importance of IT systems in sustaining future growth, and economic development is investing considerable amount of money in IT systems that can help to transform its oil driven economy to a knowledge based economy (Shane, 2011). Over the last decade due to rapid economic development and to meet the growing IT needs, public sector organizations have adopted a number of different international standards, based on availability of expertise (Abu Talib, El Barachi, Khelifi, & Ormandjieve, 2012).

Recently, many public sector organizations in Abu Dhabi have increasingly become IT driven and initiatives such as e-Government and e-Services have transformed the traditional role of IT from a support tool to a strategic tool that is driving change and transformation (Datamonitor, 2009). Due to the strategic nature of IT, its effective governance has become extremely important and IT decisions makers have used several frameworks to meet their IT governance needs (Abu Talib, El Barachi, Khelifi and Ormandjieve, 2012). Directly related to the complexity inherited from various frameworks IT managers may face challenges in choosing the right framework to manage their IT assets (PWC, 2009; Abu Talib, El Barachi, Khelifi, & Ormandjieve, 2012).

The different standards used by government departments, pose added challenges in implementing the e-Government strategy of the Abu Dhabi Government. Towards this end Abu Dhabi Government is working to harmonize the standards since standards ensure a high level of quality, safety, reliability, and efficiency in the products and services used (Richards & Dar, 2009). Therefore Abu Dhabi government established Abu Dhabi Systems & Information...
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