Chapter V
Towards an Organizationally
Enabled E-Government
Enterprise Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of e-government projects is growing both in scale and context across the world. While the implementation of such projects is increasing in terms of the number of e-government initiatives as well as the type of applications deployed. However, the success of different e-government initiatives continued to be challenged by a wide range of organizational, technological, cultural, and economic variables, among others. The increasing emphasis on the development of technological infrastructures and build-ups and underestimation of organizational dimensions has rendered many e-governments to be outright failures. The main focus of this chapter is made on the importance of enriching the entire e-government architecture with organizational dimensions in pursuit of improving the potentials of success of e-government initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The information and telecommunication revolution witnessed over the 21st century is affecting people as individuals, groups and organizations. While the life style of people around the world is changing, governments are reshaping their processes and interactions with their stakeholders (citizens, businesses, government agencies, employees, and other stakeholders). Many governments are adopting e-government initiatives in pursuit of reducing operating costs for both businesses and citizens; providing citizens and businesses with more convenient access to online government services; improving the quality of government services delivery; and increasing
effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector organisations (Fang, 2002; Nodou, 2004; Yousef Elsheikh, et al 2007). “The move and transformation to e-government phenomenon would help public employees become more productive, accountable, transparent, and helps in reducing duplication and manage data better” (UNDP, 2001). Different countries are using technology, particularly the Internet, to implement e-government initiatives with the aim of enhancing the access to and delivery of government information and services to citizens, businesses, government employees, and other agencies (Hernon, Reylea, Dugan & Cheverie, 2002; Jaeger & Thompson, 2004). In addition to the internet, other technologies such as electronic document interchange (EDI) and mobile technologies are gaining more popularity in e-government applications.

The implementation of many e-government projects continued to be challenges by infrastructural, managerial (sustaining committed executive leadership and building effective e-government business cases), participative (maintaining a citizen focus and ensuring uniform service to the public), technical (protecting personal privacy, implementing appropriate security controls, maintaining electronic records, maintaining a robust technical infrastructure, and addressing IT human capital concerns) considerations (General Accounting Office, 2001). Other significant issues, such as the parameters of e-government (Aldrich, Bertot, & McClure, 2002), e-government’s ultimate impact on the electoral process (Nugent, 2001), the impact of constitutional principles on the development of the e-government (Jaeger, 2002), the architectural dimensions of e-government development have received little attention from policymakers at the federal government level.

Because the concept of e-government represents a rich pool of organizational and technological issues (Traunmüller & Lenk, 2002), the implementation of e-government projects continued to be challenged by different organizational, institutional, technical, technological and societal considerations. The applications of e-government in different domains are characterized by their client orientation (focusing on the needs of clients), technology intensive and paperless environment, real-time processing, and emphasis on front office–back office integration, e-channels and automated processes (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2004).

Technologically, experience revealed that many developing counties continued to face serious problems with regards to the acquisition, infusion and diffusion of e-government technologies. The problems range from lack of know-how to lack of financial resources. Technically, developing countries tend to be unable to associate their initiatives’ tasks, programs, structures and objectives with the functionalities of the concerned e-government modules dedicated for their implementation. The failure to improve the learning curve of e-government related organizations and to fine-tune data applications are explicit technical limitations that characterize the implementation of e-government initiatives in developing countries.

Organizationally, many of them are characterized by their low capacity to manage technology intensive acquisitions develop and manage inter-organizational structures and networks of information, tasks and resources, maintain sustained committed executive leadership and build effective e-government business cases. In addition to the growing complexity of incorporating socio-economic dimensions in e-government applications, institutionally there is a considerable failure of government officials to develop and use appropriate decision making models to associate national priorities with e-government development stages on the one hand and to prepare contingency and recovery plans to address downside risks on the other hand. As a result of inappropriate planning, resources mis-utilization (mainly manpower and financial), ignorance of citizen interests, and “politicization” of organizational connections among service providing governmental units continued to escalate.