Chapter II
Towards T–Government by Increasing Process Maturity in Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

A successful e-government implementation cannot do without some kind of business process change, not only of the front-office parts of processes, but the entire processes, which often flow through several departmental units or even several government agencies. Further advances of e-government that lead to t-government, are not possible without an integration of business processes. The implementation of t-government requires a high level of business process orientation and typically involves a business process change project. Non-profit organisations have some specifics, which make process renovation projects considerably different. The purpose of this chapter is to present an approach that enables governmental institutions to move towards t-government. The general framework for business process change methodologies, techniques and tools is customised for their needs and extended with several other business process management elements, e.g. measurement of the level of business process orientation in an organisation. The relationship between business process orientation levels and the sophistication of online services is shown through a case study of one of the Slovene ministries, where the proposed adapted methodology has been successfully employed.
INTRODUCTION

Information technology has a potential to transform governmental structures and to improve the quality of governmental services. However, to be able to take advantage of those technologies, the organisations have to understand and overcome several challenges. Technological complexity and incompatibility are neither the only, nor the most difficult challenge to be overcome. T-government particularly demands a greater customer oriented focus of government agencies and is clearly tied to the improvement of performance and process integration. It requires an organisational change. Therefore, a successful t-government implementation cannot do without some kind of business process change, not only of the front-office parts of processes, but the entire processes, which often flow through several departmental units or even several government agencies.

Non-profit organisations such as public sector organisations have some specifics, which make renovation projects considerably different. Governmental organisations have a unique culture and face many challenges due to their social obligations and higher legislative and public accountability (Kumar et al., 2002). Some of the main e-government challenges are (Hendrick, 1994; Gil-Garcia & Pardo, 2005; Cats-Baril, W. & Thompson, R., 1995; Thompson, 2000): the objectives of the government are less clear, clients and stakeholders are more diverse and numerous, and concepts such as quality are more complex; the existence of multiple, sometimes conflicting, goals, and of individual interests and associated behaviours that cause reluctance to change and internal conflicts; the lack of alignment between organisational goals and the IT project; a higher level of interdependence across organisational boundaries; more constraints (compared to the private sector) imposed by red tape; a higher level of extra-organisational linkages; the turnover of top level administrators, a difficulty to implement a change is increased, and the management tends to have less authority than its private sector counterparts.

Several EU countries have made a significant progress in their online services sophistication. For example, Austria and Portugal have made major progresses since 2006. Malta, Slovenia and Estonia stand out as the countries that have embraced e-government and advanced online service delivery to levels in advance of many ‘old’ member states (Capgemini, 2007). However, further advances of e-government that lead to t-government are not possible without an integration of business processes, which are performed inside and between government agencies. Such approach requires a certain level of business process orientation and typically involves a business process change project.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the approach that enables public sector organisations to migrate towards t-government. The approach is based on the general framework for business process change (BPC) methodologies, techniques and tools (Kettinger et al., 1997) and is customised for governmental institutions due to their above-mentioned specifics. The methodology presented in (Indihar Štemberger & Jaklič, 2007) has been extended with several other business process management elements, e.g. measurement of the level of business process orientation in an organisation, which is extremely important for success of every process transformation initiative. It has been employed in some process improvement projects, e.g. in a BPC project in one of the Slovene ministries and this project has been used in the book chapter as a case study.

BACKGROUND

While t-government is a widely used term in public in the last few years, clear models for t-government benefit realisation and strategies for migration have not yet emerged. Public agencies and local authorities are left with practical prob-