Chapter 16

Thailand’s Transformation
to C-Government:
Core Challenges and Roadmap

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ABSTRACT

With the commitment to ASEAN Community integration by 2015 and the continuing advances in information and communication technologies, Thailand has been provided a golden opportunity to not only catch up on current trends and technologies, but also to leap over e-Government and go directly towards Connected Government, or c-Government. In so doing, the government needs to focus on strategic implementation rather than simply developing a conceptual framework of e-Government. This chapter presents the core challenges and co-cultivated roadmap to accelerate connected government and a connected ASEAN. Firstly, there is the Management Challenge in enabling the progression and accelerating the adoption of transformational services; secondly, the Governance Challenge in establishing the comprehensive guiding principles to shape the vision, enterprise structure, committed leadership, coordinated efforts, and strategic action plans; and thirdly, the Foundation Challenge for leveraging the interoperability and establishing a standardized evaluation system with human resources development and joint key performance indices. To overcome these challenges, this chapter proposes proactive strategies and a sustainable roadmap, starting with a SWOT analysis of the lessons learnt in order to understand the current state of e-Government, followed by a clear vision of the future and an action plan for proactively and sustainably implementing c-Government. Input has been gathered not only from the public by e-survey and an IT group of 200 who attended a workshop, but the collective perception of directly concerned CIOs through discussion at a seminar.

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INTRODUCTION: FUTURE VISION OF E-GOVERNMENT

With respect to e-government, there are two kinds of driving forces that need to be taken into account. There are discussed in the following sections.

Internal Pressures

e-Government is about transformation that helps citizens and business seek out new opportunities in the knowledge economy with information-intensive services. The most information-intensive governments are those with few or no requirements for physical and personal interactions, or where personal interactions are narrowly focused on the information exchange needed to make decisions and apply other information. The Thai government has also been encouraged by the internal acceptance and adoption of e-Government among government agencies, especially at the core service system level. In California, in August 2001, Thailand participated with countries from every region of the world - Brazil, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, India, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, Tanzania, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, in constructing its e-Government Roadmap. It was Thailand’s starting point in conducting and expanding our e-Government.

Thailand’s e-Government has targeted improving the quality of services in three areas: services to citizens (G2C), business services (G2B), and intergovernmental affairs, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal government administration (G2G). However, our e-Government has not moved forward as much as it could have, due to the fact that the development of e-Government cannot be achieved simply by drafting a law or issuing an order from political leaders, but that it requires a change of how officials think and act, how they view their jobs, how they share information between departments, with both business and citizens alike. As such, this requires a re-engineering of governmental service processes, both within individual agencies and across government.

Since 2006, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICIT) has maintained several facilities in support of government agencies in developing e-Government under the Project Initiative: TH-e-GIF, consisting of the following phases:

Phase 1: Starting from 2006, TH e-GIF 1.0 was designed to improve software system interoperability. It was developed as an interoperability framework and enterprise architecture to facilitate the interchange of information between departments when providing public services to citizens and business via the Internet. This consists of a collection of guidelines, methodology, technical policy, and specifications. In December 2006, a pilot project was started to build the first standardized data set for enabling data exchange of official letter-based correspondence on TH e-GIF. In 2007, a project called the Electronic Correspondence Letter Management System (e-CMS) began to standardize a data set in the domain of official electronic letters. In this project, 30 ministerial departments were involved in using and re-using the data set to achieve a seamless flow of electronic letters across those agencies. In 2008, a new project was begun to motivate more agencies to further build more standardized data sets from seven different domains: education, labour, health, agriculture (livestock), research, governmental human resource and Thai citizen registration.

Phase 2: Starting from 2009, it was found that to implement system interconnectability and integration successfully, the degree of contribution of data owner agencies and their personnel is one of the key success factors. The process, to standardize information entities, data types, exchange messages and business processes to be implemented, is