Chapter 10


Gianluca Misuraca
European Commission, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS), Spain

Gianluigi Viscusi
University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents and discusses the application of an analytical framework for managing digital innovation initiatives in the public sector. The chapter positions e-Government and digital innovation initiatives in the public sector within the broader framework of e-Governance (i.e., governance aided by ICT). It first introduces the conceptual framework on which the discussion is based, and then proposes a higher order conceptualization of the relationship between e-Governance and its underpinning value drivers of performance, openness and inclusion. In particular, the analysis focuses on the role that these value drivers play in the enactment of digital governance initiatives such as the ones related to open government and smart cities. To this end, the chapter discusses its application to initiatives carried out in Barcelona and Tallinn. A typology of e-Governance ‘attitudes’ is then identified to provide evidence of further specific interventions required for an appropriate management of similar initiatives in other countries. The chapter concludes by highlighting the policy implications for administrative reform and offering practical recommendations for implementing digital governance initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss an analytical framework for managing e-Governance issues in digital government initiatives. It positions e-Government and digital innovation initiatives in the public sector within the broader framework of e-Governance (i.e., governance with, and of, ICT) (Misuraca, 2007; Misuraca & Viscusi, 2010). Furthermore, the chapter considers e-Governance as strictly related to openness. Indeed, from a policy perspective,
the implementation of e-Governance requires that particular attention is paid to the governance dimension of interoperability (Misuraca, Alfano, & Viscusi, 2011a) in order to implement projects and initiatives that are not optimal but “satisficing” (Simon, 1996). For example, current interest in the implementation of open government calls for a representation of the complex configuration of policies, processes, human resource skills and training need to help policy makers and project managers. In addition, ICT infrastructure is needed for the adoption of innovative technologies and approaches. It is worth noting that though these issues may seem similar to previous e-Government initiatives, in fact they imply a change of perspective by Public Administrations (Di Maio, 2009; 2010; Harrison et al., 2011).

The chapter then discusses the application of a conceptual framework which resulted from the research activities of the authors and their experience in concrete projects. This framework proposes a higher order conceptualization of the relationship between e-Governance and openness. In particular, the analysis focuses on the role of e-Governance and its related dimensions as key factors for the enactment of digital governance initiatives (Dunleavy, Margetts, Simon, & Tinkler, 2006) such as the ones related to open government and smart cities. The relevance of the framework is demonstrated through a discussion of its application to case studies carried out in Barcelona and Tallinn in order to map their characteristics against this conceptual framework.

Then the chapter identifies a typology of e-Governance ‘attitudes,’ which results from the application of the framework. This typology aims to provide evidence of further specific interventions required for an appropriate management of similar initiatives and projects in other contexts. The main goal is to investigate the configuration of dimensions such as inclusion, transparency and accountability as necessary and sufficient conditions for mature e-Government and open government. The chapter concludes by highlighting the policy implications for governance and public administration reform and offers practical recommendations for strategy and project management of digital governance initiatives.

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The term “governance” originates from the need in economics and finance (as for corporate governance) and in political science (as for state governance), to convey diverse meanings not covered by the traditional term “government”, which is only one of the actors involved in governance. Thus, the concept of governance has been studied from different perspectives and in different disciplines with evolving definitions and interpretations. As for political science and sociology, Jacquier (2005) points out that the concept of governance may refer to different issues such as enforcement of local democracy in a participative way, improvement of public-private partnerships, encouragement of cooperation between local authorities and the promotion of multi-level co-operation.

As a consequence, governance can also be described as a “process of transforming and reformulating approaches to public affairs which involves developing systems for ordering the various players at local level in societies” (Jacquier, 2008). The United Nations (UN) defines governance as “a multifaceted compound situation of institutions, systems, structures, processes, procedures, practices, relationships, and leadership behaviour in the exercise of social, political, economic, and managerial/administrative authority in the running of public or private affairs” (UNDESA, 2003). Taking these definitions into account, we consider governance to be the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, monitored and evaluated (Misuraca, 2012). This process has multiple dimensions (the