E-Government: Opportunities and Challenges

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Presentation Structure
- A definition that encompasses applications in developing countries
- E-Government: Delivery models used in developing countries
- Opportunities demonstrated by successful applications.
- Key challenges and how to move forward?

Concerns of the Task Managers
- Inadequate assessment of macro impact on key development goals such as MDGs, economic goals - should e-government be supported
- Experience of undelivered promise of ICT and wide talk of failed project-is there an unacceptable level of risk?
- Given the multiplicity of Bank products (sectoral/thematic) how to deal with a cross cutting approach like e-government

Essence of E-Government
E-Government has the following essential components:
- Involves process of reform in the way Governments work, share information and deliver services to external and internal clients
- Clear intent of greater transparency in functioning
- Achieving greater efficiency
- Online delivery of services to citizens/businesses targeting concrete benefits such as convenient access (time and place), less transaction time, and lower cost.

Harnesses information technologies such as Wide Area Networks (WAN), Internet, World Wide Web, and mobile computing to connect computerized back ends that enable process reform with front ends that service the citizens electronically. Online does NOT necessarily imply Internet. It implies that transactions access/update databases immediately to minimize errors and speed up processing. If applications are submitted electronically, the movement and processing of documents is also electronic.

The resulting benefits could be more transparency, empowerment, greater convenience, less corruption, revenue growth, and cost reduction.

Electronic Service Delivery Modes

- Internet access
- Licensed Kiosks
- Assisted One-stop Service Centers
- Rural/Urban Kiosk
- Computerized Front-end Web, Serial back end
- Agency-level Websites/Portals
- Data center and Communication
- Web Portal
- Agency-level Back-end Computerization Data Base of Customers
- Online delivery of Multiple services in a single agency
- Agency-level

How Do Delivery Channels Differ?
- Self use versus assisted by staff
- 24X7 operation versus restricted days and timings
- Services offered by single agency versus multiple agencies from different levels of Government
- Online delivery of one/few steps in a service versus the entire tasks or several steps done in one go
- Services handled—Receipts/Payout/Documents
- Location of access point
- Access equipment: PC, Cell Phone, ATM, Phone
Two Ways of Integrated Delivery
Low/High Internet Penetration Countries
• Conveniently located Community Service Centers
  – Assisted counters manned by public/private agencies
  – Services from single/multiple agencies under one roof: payment, licenses, certificates
  – Larger time window 10X7 but not 24X7
  – Difficult to deliver complete service from all departments—simple services like bill payments and issue of certificates are popular.
• Self Service through a Web Portal based one stop shop
  – 24X7, multiple agencies, partial service (submit applications)
  – Back end computerization and Integration needed for data sharing
  – High internet penetration; willingness and ability of citizen to use
  – Security and mutual trust (builds with successful outcome)
  – Usage builds up gradually. Adoption rate has to be driven.

Projects That Clients Label as E-Government
• Railway Reservation System in India—5 billion passengers/yr
  – 0.55 million bookings/day, 8520 trains, less than 10K on Internet
• Weigh and Pay in garbage collection and milk collection
• Web sites/CDs for printing Government forms
• Tax collection State Border Check Posts, Gujarat
• New Business Registration: Jamaica, Jordan, China
• E-procurement: Mexico, Philippines, Bulgaria, Chile, Korea
• Income Tax on-line in Mexico, Singapore, Brazil, Jordan
• Customs on-line: India, Philippines, Jamaica
• Municipal service delivery, OPEN, Seoul Municipality
• Rural Internet Kiosks, tele-centers in many countries
• Teachers Transfer in Karnataka, Paper less secretariat in AP
eLanka, eBharat (National E-Government Program)

Progress Can Be Measured On Many Dimensions
• Progress on implementing e-Government
  – Goals of transparency, corruption and efficiency
  – For interactivity and integration in service delivery
  – Horizontal (across agencies) and vertical (levels of Government) coverage and integration
  – Reach across geography and economic strata of citizens
• E-Government Readiness
  – Enabling policies
  – ICT Infrastructure
  – Human Capacity

Overall Assessment
• In many countries 3-4 country/state wide applications have delivered significant benefits with moderate investments
• Limited coverage: few agencies at Federal and State level some municipalities
• Focus on urban areas. Access points in rural areas is a key challenge
• Service delivery has become efficient but impact on transparency and corruption is limited. Web sites are not used. Citizens not ready to engage.
• Macro impact is not perceptible. Limited systematic and independent project level evaluation.
• High enthusiasm for implementing e-government across political spectrum. Lack of understanding of implementation difficulties
• Bulk of the applications are simple. Largely bottom-up. Limited integration. Data sharing, scalability, security not adequately addressed. Lack of central coordination.

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Successful e-delivery of Services
• Issue of land titles in Karnataka
  – 18 million titles issued earning a fee of Rs. 270 million (51% loans; 14% verify mutation; 16% courts). Small sample study quote reduction in corruption; Rs 700 million in bribes and Rs 66 million in wages
• Railway Reservation in India—5 billion passengers per yr
  – 0.55 million bookings/day, 8520 trains, less than 10K on Internet
• Property Registration in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh
  – Maharashtra, 2.2 million documents and annual collection of Rs. 29 billion. Only 8% said they paid bribes, only 40% relied on touts vs. to 94% elsewhere
  – In AP 400 offices at a cost of $5 million. 5.7 million documents, 3.6 million encumbrance certificates, 2 million market valuation slips
eSeva center in Andhra Pradesh at $7-8 million investment
  – Used by 3.5 million citizens Collection of Rs 3 billion per month
• OPEN—on line tracking in Seoul Municipality
• Citizen Service Center (mobile), Bahia, Brazil
  – 27 agencies, 550 services and 8 million transactions/year in 2002
  – Mobile unit for 417 townships and 250,000 transactions/year
Improvements in Satisfaction: Public Services in Bangalore.

Bangalore: Large Decline in Corruption

The Way Forward

Considerations
- For 2 decades client country investments in ICT were low
- Uptake of e-services takes several years
- Life of a project is 4-5 years given the rapid changes in ICTs
- There is an appropriate level of e-government which is worth supporting for every country – that balances the risk of doing with the risk of NOT doing.
- Agency specific applications focused on broader reforms, country-wide e-government programs, e-Country programs.
- The important issue is to determine the goal to set for a 4-5 year time frame and to find the ideal path to the proposed goal.

Key Elements of Strategy
- Enabling policies and ICT infrastructure
- Build human and ICT infrastructure
- Spread Best Practices across countries
- Help countries move to next stage of evolution
  - For Late Starters
    - Identify intended and shared goals - Develop Quick Strike Projects. Balance benefits and risk in implementation
  - For Early Movers
    - Help scale up and integrate
    - Help define a vision and co-ordination strategy
    - Expand scope and scale of successful projects
- Partner with all potential allies

Entry Points for Bank’s Intervention

Challenges in Moving Ahead
- Expanding the Coverage to More Agencies and Regions
- Providing Services in the Rural Areas
- Organizing for engineering change and scaling up balancing central coordination with agency ownership
- Designing Projects to Deliver Value
- Enhancing Impact on Transparency and Corruption
- Making Projects Sustainable
Role of ICTs in Making Governments Effective

- As a manager of Public Resources
- As a provider of services
- As a catalyst for development
- As a beacon of hope for a better future for all sections of the society
- Create TRUST in Citizens that expected outcomes will happen. Positive experience reinforces TRUST