E-government

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1. Introduction

I would like to start from the question why is it that a government is required? What is the role of government in a country? A very simple answer could be, if we assume that a country as a human being, a government would be head of that human. Like a human without head, a country without government cannot exist. The government has a wide range of roles. Public policy needed to guide, correct and supplement it in certain respect.

The government regulation may be needed to secure the conditions of competitive factor and product markets. The contractual arrangements and exchanges needed for market operation, which cannot exist without the protection and enforcement of a governmentally provided legal structure. Government is needed to secure employment, price level stability and social welfare of their citizens. However, establishing an efficient and citizen oriented government is far from simple. Governments around the world have been seeking to reform and restructure themselves as they face the pressures of budget deficit, rising costs and increasing public expectations.

These demands made governments to find tools to serve their citizens and consumers of services more convenient, customer oriented and cost effective way. The spreading of new technology into everyday life is pushing governments towards application of advanced technology in every possible aspect of service delivery and governance. Thus many governments are developing a wide range of electronic government services.

What is the E-government then? There are several definitions of E government:

E-government is often defined as business of the state. In fact both E-government and E-business use the same infrastructure, hardware and software.

E-government is sometimes defined as Government activities that take place over electronic communications among all levels of government, citizens, and the business community, including: acquiring and providing products and services; placing and receiving orders; providing and obtaining information; and completing financial transactions.

E-government is in broadly defined the continuous optimization of service delivery, constituency participation and governance by transforming internal and external relationship through technology, the Internet and new media. This includes Government to Citizen, Government to Business and Government to Government.

Summarizing all these definitions E-government is the use of most innovative information, communications and technologies particularly web based Internet applications by governments in performing functions such as delivering public services, providing and sharing information involving both governments and citizens.

2. Drivers of E-government

The process of moving to E-government is not quick or simple process. It requires a coherent strategy with countries political will, resources, regulatory environment, and ability or literacy of the population to make use of planned technologies. The success of E-government depends on peoples view how fundamentally changed the ways in which government services and helps them. Although cost saving can be most primary motivation for E-government reforms, governments must develop a citizen-oriented model that involves all key players: government, firms and citizens.

There are many drivers for E-Government such as:
- Citizens expectations
- Cost-savings, efficiency and effectiveness
- Globalization and Technological Progress
- Facilitating economic development

Citizens' expectations. The internet is growing very rapidly. People all over the world using the internet in their daily life like ordering, buying and selling goods, finding information for their need, learning from the distance and communicating regardless of long distance by sending
E-mails to each other. Nowadays their demand is getting deeper. They say if they can buy air and theater tickets over the internet why not to send their tax return in the same way to tax office and why not to renew drivers license too. Thus public services are desirable to be instantly accessible any time and anywhere. In addition people want a single access point, which means rather than visiting several offices to obtain a government permission people can complete all transactions in the single point access.

Cost savings, efficiency and effectiveness. Every government aims to maintain and increase their level of services although they facing a budget deficit. To maintain that level of the service Governments tried to reduce cost by canceling some programs and activities and cutting some facilities for public officers which limits their rights and causes problems. With paper less electronic transactions, governments can save the costs of paper, printing and mailing and personnel. In addition, online transactions can eliminate some additional paper based works such as typing taxpayers data from their tax returns and typing mistakes, and minimize incorrect calculations etc. Thus by doing online transactions government will be able to work more effective and efficient.

Globalization and Technological Progress. The rapid development of new technology on a global scale provides a big opportunity for Governments to provide their services to citizens, sharing information, communicate between departments through network, sharing information. By using new technology Government will be able to design as a single window over a public network, offering a single source of information for citizens, optimizing resources of multiple organizations, achieving economies of scale for information producers and distributors.

Facilitating economic development. By creating online services governments creates a healthy business climate and provide more advantages to local firms. Firms are conducting business always aim to decrease their costs, improve inventory control and increase a revenue. The opportunity to conduct online transactions with government reduces and

simplifies regulatory processes, further helping business to become more competitive. Rather than come to a government office to fill in paper forms, a businessman, for example, will find it easier to apply for any kinds of permits and schedule inspections over the Internet.

The delivery of integrated, single-source public services creates opportunities for business and government to be partner. The accounting industry and tax office, for example, could build on their existing relationship and work together to provide added value services for citizens and businesses filing online tax returns.

3. Challenges in implementation of the E-government

Government faces a lot of challenges and barriers during its implementation of E government.

Infrastructure Development. Many countries particularly, developing countries do not have the infrastructure necessary to develop e-government services throughout their territory. To support E-governments development those country trying to build out their telecommunications and infrastructure. However, there are some successful cases that in the most rural area of the world could effectively utilize E-government through available and affordable technologies, benefiting those who are in dire need of government services.

Law and Public Policy. In some cases electronic documents and transactions not recognized by the law. There is no clear legal status for government s online publications, no regulations and laws for online fillings, online singings, and taxation on online transactions.

E-literacy and Accessibility. Despite rapid growth of the computerization there is group of the people, who do not know how to use personal computers. These groups usually involves women, elderly people, those who living in rural area.

Privacy and Security. Privacy and security is one of the most important issues of the E-government. E-government must ensure privacy for personal information that is submitted by individuals and firms and shared with state and local Governments. Many countries now have strong data protection law, which needs constant updating according to the new technologies.

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