

# Success Factors for an E-Government Strategy: Austrian Experiences, Indonesian Challenges

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## ABSTRACT

Focus of this paper are success factors for the implementation of an E-Government strategy. While concepts for a sophisticated strategy process in Public Sector are delivered on a regular basis, the gap between ambitious planning and its implementation seems to get wider. Authors seek to define what makes a "good strategy" in order to enhance management capacity. Meanwhile some scholars from Political Science see limitation of Governments on announcements which are not followed up by sufficient action rather as systematic problems, challenging concept and rules of liberal western democracy, or owed to growing complexity of Governance under the conditions of globalization. In context of the introduction of New Public Management and its perception of citizens as customers and on the basis of new available technical options in Information Society, a key Governance reform project in European and other Countries over the last fifteen years has been the introduction of E-Government. European market leader in this field is Austria. The author reviews concept and implementation experiences of the Austrian E-Government strategy, analyzes key success factors and opens a discussion, under which conditions a successful implementation of E-Government can take place in Indonesia.

Keywords: Information Society, New Public Management, Complexity Management, E-Government, Austria

## ABSTRAK

Fokus tulisan ini adalah faktor-faktor keberhasilan dalam pelaksanaan strategi E-Gov-

ernment. Sementara konsep untuk proses strategis di Sektor Publik sudah disampaikan secara sistematis, kesenjangan antara perencanaan yang ambisius dan pelaksanaannya tampaknya semakin luas. Penulis berusaha untuk mendefinisikan apa yang membuat sebuah "strategi yang baik" untuk meningkatkan kapasitas manajemen. Sementara itu beberapa sarjana Ilmu Politik melihat keterbatasan Pemerintah pada pengumuman yang tidak diikuti dengan tindakan yang cukup sebagai masalah sistematis, menantang konsep dan aturan demokrasi liberal barat atau berutang kepada kompleksitas globalisasi. Dalam konteks pengenalan New Public Management dan persepsi warga sebagai pelanggan dan berdasarkan pilihan teknis baru tersedia dalam Masyarakat Informasi, reformasi proyek kunci dalam Tata Negara Eropa dan lainnya selama lima belas tahun terakhir telah menjadi mengenal E-Government. Penulis melakukan tinjauan konsep dan pengalaman pelaksanaan strategi e-Government di Austria, menganalisis faktor kunci sukses dan dalam kondisi apa keberhasilan bila diimplementasikan e-Government di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Masyarakat informasi, Manajemen Publik baru, Kompleksitas manajemen, E-government, Austria

## INTRODUCTION

Why are plans made, yet do not get executed? What sounds like a simple question causes broad discussions (Rumelt, 2011; 6) and obviously includes several dimensions such as unexpected changes in the environment of a project or incapacity of involved key persons to make successfully the step from setting the goals and describing the way to the concrete set of coherent actions. In a Government, under the logic of Politics, the tendency is strong to develop and announce ambitious programs, that require a sophisticated management process. In our complex and often complicated world, these programs are challenging, and they sometimes tend to be too complicated for those, who are in charge for their execution, particularly in countries who lack a professional Government Apparatus. For Indonesia I have shown in earlier publications some of the key problems in this context (Behrens, 2010).

Result is not only a huge, but a growing problem of execution in times of unprecedented global challenges. A prominent example for a too ambitious planning are the Millenium Development Goals ([www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)). With a short time left to go until the set deadline is reached, the analysis why the International Community will fail to reach the targets all nations agreed on, has started (Melamed, 2001). Some scholars meanwhile observe an increasing incapacity to solve problems and question in general the ability of liberal western democracies to handle

complex and urgent problems within their differentiated Governance systems (Kupchan, 2011).

The contribution of this article to the current debate shall be an exemplaric analysis on what makes complex modernization programs successful. The example is a quite young reform project with a huge impact on understanding and execution of Governance in general: the use of IT based communication and information technology, which has revolutionized our global society over the last twentyfive years. Applied in context of the introduction of New Public Management, which advocated a new understanding of relationship and interaction between government and citizens, the technical options lead to the set up of programs for E-Government. These programs intend to bring public services to the people where people (citizens, businesses, employees and other governments (Jeong, 2007) had to come to Government offices before. Where developed according to the principles of Good Governance<sup>1</sup>, E-Government intends to reach more effectivity and efficiency, to enhance transparency and to contribute to a more democratic form of Governance, where the Government is not the focal point of activities any more, but one equal actor among others.

Analysts mostly focus on the added value for citizens and have documented the positive impact of the approach. Shifting patterns of distribution of responsibility and power within the government structure are another dimension of E-Government, which is interesting particular for a country like Indonesia that is looking for a re-formation of its Public Sector, balancing traditions of Local Governance Culture and the imperatives of Modernization. This impact of E-Government Programs on Governance, related chances and challenges as well as a proposal for a concrete implementation strategy for Indonesia will be discussed detailed in a later article.

In this paper I want to focus on the process management: what are success factors for the implementation and execution of an E-Government concept? What makes the strategy processes sophisticated and thus contributes to overcome the tendency of Governments to announce programs without sufficient follow-up action?

For this analysis I have chosen the E-Government program auf Aus-

tria, which has not only reached the phase of successful execution but is currently ranked as market leader for Europe, covering a wide range of government services. The analysis will lead to key success factors, which are discussed then from an Indonesian perspective, and to key questions for a further debate, under which conditions a successful implementation of E-Government can take place in Indonesia.

### **THEORITICAL BACKGROUND**

This article provides an analysis on a running E-Government concept. E-Government here is understood as the (re-) organisation of activities and services of a Government focussed on the customers by using IT based information and communication technology. Since the late 1990s, basics of E-Government have been outlined and illustrated, such as in the paper from Deloitte Research (Deloitte Research, 2000), which takes a clear Management perspective. As two main components they see:

- An understanding of E-Government as a complex new Management program with impact on every aspect of the organisation (including work flows, used technology and staffing), requiring an approach integrating all components, and
- The necessary change of perspective in Government Organisation and related work culture: from the navel-gazing of departments working independently to meet their own goals to a customer centric approach, that requires working interdependently, and to coordinate customer interfaces and services.

This basic definition includes the two main challenges: changes in organisational structure and work standards, and a change of mindset of the people within it. The technical and the Human factor in focus, E-Government still is an approach targeting the Government itself. And it is a re-acting approach. Argumentation for its necessity refers to expected financial advantages – a successful rationale particularly in european countries on the back-ground of budget constraints and the overall target to reduce public expenditures -, or to the reorganisation of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962), observed since the middle of last century by scholars like Habermas. These changes were speeded up by introduction of IT-

based technologies (“Information Society”), changing patterns of communication and interaction of people, particularly in the economic sector, leading to a new cultural mainstream which also supports a more critical view of old practices and standards in the public sector. By implementing E-Government, the Government adapts logics based on economic thinking (effectivity, efficiency) and draws inevitable consequences out of inalterable technical progress and related social change. Driving force for innovation and reform are the other stakeholders in the Governance System, not the Government. The emergence of E-Government thus indicates dramatic changes in the understanding and execution of Governance, far beyond the implementation of an E-Government program. It is changing processes as well as the role of actors in it, sotosay exampleric towards a *Cooperative Democracy* (Nida-Ruemlin,1999).

This means a challenge particularly for countries who are in their Governance Culture still limited to a mere political logic and close to the dominance of patterns of traditional authority. Where driving force ought to be the Government (or “the leader”) before - in its own perception and in the perception of the citizens -, the energy of the political system and the innovative capacity is moving (Colin Crouch, *documented on Internet: <http://nonapartofthegame.eu/?p=3142>*).

Some ideas where this may lead to we have seen in the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in the United States, which was based on the new patterns of communication and interaction with voters and labeled as E-Democracy. Key aspects of Good Governance were underlying this strategy, particularly the idea of transparency, an open dialogue with civil society and a “clean government”. Consequently after the successful completion of the campaign, the ideas got developed ahead by the new US administration with the concept of an Open Government (Lathrop/Ruma, 2010), which has its technical basis in the fast development of Web 2.0 technology. With the doctrine of a right of citizens to access so far unaccessable information on government activities, a right that can be claimed by legal action, the current developments could lead to an unprecedented new Governance culture with potential for transformative opportunities regarding inter stakeholder communication, civic engagement, transparency and accountability - a new strong impulse for

development towards democratization. But it also leads to the question where authority is to be re-located in a time where solving complex problems require a mix of detailed knowledge, brought participation and executed authority.

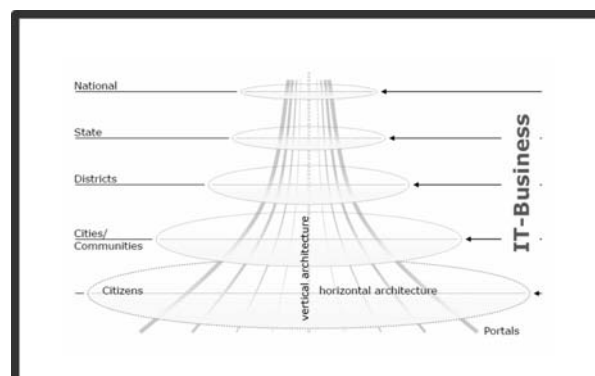
## RESEARCH METHOD

This research use literature review as method to make analysis more depth. Literature review needed because of an scientific analysis need an argumentation which is include a prove answer in analysis. This research use more than literarature, so that a prove answer can be made because it is proved by more than one scientific literarure.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### 1. Digital Austria – Program Design, Implementation, Execution<sup>2</sup>

Constituted as a federal state, the implementation of E-Government is for Austria an enormous challenge in terms of coordination and communication between the involved stakeholders. Key actors beside the thirteen ministries that form the national government are the regional governments in nine provinces, who are divided again in eighty districts, and the 2357 municipalities on the local level, each with their innergovernmental structure complementary to the national level. In addition to this vertical architecture, partners from private sector, academic sector and nongovernmental organisation form the horizontal architecture. A population of 8,4 million citizens is served, the majority of them living outside the capital Vienna in middle sized cities or in rural areas.



PICTURE 1. ARCHITECTURE OF DIGITAL AUSTRIA (RUPP, 2011)

The Government of Austria has set up Digital Austria as work platform for its E-Government program. Mission of the platform is to monitor cooperation between the participating administrations in order to ensure an optimal result. This includes both the coordination between ministries and other agencies on the national level – therefore the platform is located at the Federal Chancellory providing necessary authority, and between the national and subnational government levels. As seventy percent of the administration in Austria is located on local government level, this is particularly important to stay focussed on the overall goal of Digital Austria: citizen centricity. To guarantee the expected results, Digital Austria is not only equipped with top down authority, but also with the necessary technical and political know how, making it a resourceful steering unit for the overall project.

In 1997 Austria introduced a virtual guide on government authorities. Currently this web platform (“HELP”) is providing around two hundred live situations and is offering the management of more than 350 procedures online, using more than one thousand digital forms. Examples for the information and services provided are the option to declare taxes (“TaxOnline”, 6,5 million declarations per year), a special service portal for enterprises to support economic development (usp.gv.at, sixty situations in ten categories, saving companies around one billion Euros administrative costs per year), and eHealth Services, storing medical data, information on medication and insurance status. Information on laws, announcements, treaties is available and the legislative process itself has been transformed into an electronic workflow, beginning with the draft bill and ending with the ePublication of the Federal Law Gazette. This official publication is published Internet based since 1997, documenting decisions of the Administrative Court, the Constitutional Court, of the courts of ordinary jurisdiction from all levels and by commissions (e.g. Independent Federal Asylum Board, Environmental Senate, Data Protection Commission).

Around two hundred partners are contributing to content management, the majority of them on the level of municipalities. HELP is visited by more than fifteen thousand customers per day, who check and use

more than one hundred thousand documents. Aspiration of Digital Austria is to provide a One-Stop-Shop with personalised services, that is accessible for all citizens and focussed on their concrete needs. Services and design follow this principle of citizen centricity and are subject to continuous improvement, considering particularly questions and feedback from the users. The principle of a classical administration is turned around: citizens do not go to the Government any more, the Government is coming to the citizens. Administrations are ensuring access to information by translating bureaucratic affairs into common language, where necessary with individual guidance and support. Access is also guaranteed for the blind by providing special interfaces. This principle of inclusiveness leaves the responsibility for access to the portal with the government.



PICTURE 2. SCREEN SHOT OF THE ONLINE PLATFORM HELP (RUPP, 2011)

An effective back office to provide these services was installed on a strong legal basis and on a commitment for a continuous development of quality. The E-Government Act (2004, considering the already existing Data Protection Act), the General Administration Procedure Act and the Electronic Signature Act do set the main legal framework for E-Government in Austria. Austria was the first EU Member State to implement the EU directive 1999/93/EC on electronic signatures. The legal framework defines the principles for the Austrian E-Government strategy, the main tools (Citizen Card, Identification System) and thus gives a sufficient basis for implementation and execution, following guiding principles



of Good Governance (orientation on citizens, efficiency, trust and security, transparency, accessibility etc.) and operationalizing them for the E-Government policy.

Key aspect for development of quality is education and training of staff with functional assignments within the project as well as of top managers who have the overall executive responsibility. The program to develop necessary competencies is provided by the Austrian E-Government Academy. A key aspect here: the change of perspective from a focus on own targets and interests towards expectations on the side of customers. Respectively the perception of the own status within the Governance system has changed, following principles of New Public Management. Special expertise needed to optimize the performance is acquired by recruitment for civil service, or by integrating partners into the platform management.

Technically, the change from a traditional file system to an electronic file system (ELAC) is the basis for Digital Austria. Electronic documents have become originals, leading to a reduction of paper of around 40 %. The principle of electronic delivery, replacing the old form of issuing documents, has required introduction of new standard operational procedures and work places, replacing traditional administrative jobs. Computer literacy has become a standard qualification for civil servants. The Human Resources Management of the Austrian Government is working completely IT-based as well as the budget process. Related digital archives have been introduced as well in other fields: a central residence register, land, estate and company registers. This has led to standardization, more efficiency and transparency. Integration of electronic work flows made it possible to re-allocate personnel resources from data recording to operations with a higher value added.

Key Tool to use the services of Digital Austria is the Citizen Card. The Citizen Card is not a specific technology but a concept, combining Authentication (electronic signature) with Identification (unique electronic identity) and Representation (data on representation, mandates). Functions of the Citizen Card include access to E-Government (all functions as outlined before), to E-Business (Banking, Billing, Procurement) and within Administrations the option for E-Signature, E-File System and E-

Registers.

## 2. Key Success Factors

Digital Austria provides full online availability of all government services in a situation where 78 % of the country's population are active internet users (USA: 75 %). With this rate, Austria is among the countries with the highest number of internet users in Europe. 68 % of Austria's population with internet access use E-Government services, this is only topped by Sweden with 69 %. Of all E-Government users 47 % are very satisfied with the services provided, this is the top score in Europe (all data for the year 2011).

The Management of the Platform at the Federal Chancellery is emphasising on four key success factors for Digital Austria:

- An optimal organisational set up, which includes a strong top down management and monitoring system, based on the authority and commitment of the head of the government for the overall process, and an effective coordination and cooperation between the partners. The shared strong commitment is result of a broad interactive process in designing and further developing the program, that includes expertise and suggestions from all government levels and professional technical advisory from the private sector.
- A strong legal frame with the E-Government law, providing the basis for security, particularly in data protection and maintaining privacy, thus building trust among the users in the system.
- A high quality service with interoperability and clear standards to be followed by all contributing administrations, based on education and training at the E-Government Academy, This ensures high transparency and efficiency, thus better Governance, and can be experienced each time the system is used. Important aspects in this context are reduction of complexity, easy access to the technology and the visible advantage for users.
- A good communication strategy towards the users of the system, demonstrating citizen centricity, easy usability, inclusive features and the added value in a customer friendly language.

### 3. E-Government for Indonesia?

Several provinces in Indonesia have started to implement E-Government components while the National Government develops an electronic ID card. The experiences so far show limited success, and in contrast to the approach in Austria, an overall concept or a coordination between stakeholders on that basis is so far non-existent. There is also no priority for national policy on this issue (Behrens/Kholid, 2011); *The Jakarta Globe*, 01/09/2011; *The Jakarta Globe*, 20/04/2011; *Tempo Interaktif*, 30/10/2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 27/11/2008).

Could E-Government also work in a country like Indonesia, and what would be possible benefits? To give an answer, it is important to recall some basic facts from our case study.

- First: Design, implementation and execution of an E-Government program are a complex matter, as the example from Austria shows. It is complex in terms of expectations of stakeholders, organisational setting, necessary management quality and professionalism of the people working on it. The question is: would Indonesia be able to design, implement and execute an E-Government program? Does it have the necessary capacity and resources?
- Second: Driving forces for E-Government are technical progress, globalization, changing social patterns of communication and interaction, the expectation to deliver better services in a shorter time with less financial resources and a growing pressure on the Government to adapt an economic paradigm as guiding principle into its thinking and acting. Are these circumstances similar in Indonesia, has Indonesia reached in its development this point?
- Third: An important basis for the Governance setting related to E-Government is a truly democratic culture; with a government dedicated to serve its citizens beyond so far taken for granted limitations (linked to fixed locations and fixed time) in a transparent manner, speedy, efficient and convenient; that is motivating the people actively to participate and to challenge its professionalism with clear and raising expectations; with different government levels (national, regional, local) willing and able to overcome fragmentation and to cooperate; with self-conscious active citizens, who identify themselves with the

role of a customer, who is receiving services from a public administration, and of an active stakeholder in the Governance system beyond elections (legislative process!); with a dynamic and innovative private sector; and with an understanding of and commitment towards basic principles of Good Governance (reliability, transparency, equality). So what is the status of the democratic culture in Indonesia?

Experiences with Administrative Reform in Indonesia are quite chestening and show a huge gap between ambitious goals and a widely unsatisfying reality. While the responsible national Ministry sees a major problem in so far limited technical professionalism of reform approaches, particularly in a “missing agenda trajectory” (Prasojo, Eko. *Jakarta Post* 08/03/2012), a key challenge seems to be more the concrete willingness of Bureaucracy to open its mind for a new understanding of professionalism and to follow a reform agenda (Behrens, 2012). Such an understanding of professionalism is based on history, culture and individual mindset, but also on the concrete working conditions. The current organisational setting, work standards and important structural components such as the system of remuneration and incentives are not supportive to build the necessary basis for a more professional, citizen centered and democratic Governance. And while complaints about the low performance of the government are clearly and often articulated, also the “self conscious, active citizen”, who would create necessary pressure towards change, is still more a vision for Indonesia than a reality. The orientation on traditional authority is strong and culturally embedded, and this not only among less educated people in rural areas, while legal authority as a basis for democratic Governance remains weak (Dina Agus In Behrens, 2012). Overall, democratic culture in Indonesia is at the beginning of its development, in the government, in parliament, in civil society. An E-Government program for Indonesia could not be started from a similar strong Governance basis as in Austria.

Driving force for such a program could be the Government, with a focal point on its own expectations and targets, supported by a private sector, that would see first of all business opportunities. The experiences so far with the electronic ID card support this presumption, the project

is criticized as highly prone to corruption (*The Jakarta Post*, 06/12/2011). A challenge for the national Government would be as well to provide the necessary steering capacity of the complex process. Given fragmentation of government policy – on the national level, but due to weaknesses in the policy on regional autonomy also between the Government levels – it is questionable if the necessary leadership could be realized.

Another important aspect to consider in terms of realizability is the *Digital Divide*, the important question how many people have access to Internet and use it actively or not. This includes a technical challenge: countrywide availability of High Speed Internet access as supporting technical system. And it includes a cultural aspect: the social patterns of communication and interaction, the reality of what is for a person the public sphere he or she has access to, and the active participation in it. Indonesia is here subject to fast development, but still also a highly fragmented society. It is far away from the reality in a developed country like Austria with its comparably homogenous social settings, particularly if the country as a whole is taken into consideration and not only the fast developing mega cities and economic hubs. The gap in living conditions between centers and remote areas, but even between the modern, international, digitalized business district of Jakarta and the neighboring *kampung* remains enormous.

This *Cultural Divide*, which includes the aspect of using digital media, may be one of the huge challenges for Indonesia's future in general, as it has serious implications for the democratic culture of the country, particularly if it is seen together with the mentioned attitudes towards traditional authority. Yet here could also be a chance in using E-Government. Bridging gaps is the potential of the internet, and bridging gaps could be the mission for an E-Government project for Indonesia.

Understood as a tool to support the development of the country and particularly the development of a democratic culture, which is in its fledgling stages, an Indonesian E-Government project could link up to the Austrian approach, designed strictly citizen centered. This would require a substantial analysis about expectations and needs of Indonesian citizens and concrete added value that could be generated. Together with a complementing realistic view on available existing capacity, within the

Indonesian Government for the overall process management as well as from other involved stakeholders, the initial analysis could lead to a Grand Design for an E-Government project, that includes realistic goals, a road map that has a realistic chance for implementation, and a projection of an outcome situation, that would have the character of a vision for Indonesia's future democratic culture.

An E-Government project for Indonesia set up in such a way might have potential to give a huge impulse for the country's development beyond the aspect of technical modernization. It could contribute to develop a new *consensus* within society and political establishment on the roles of different stakeholders within the Governance setting. Reaching this consensus would support reform of the public sector, but also give impulses for civil society and private sector; it would lead to higher consistency and inclusiveness.

Overall: a professional strategic approach, using experiences from this and other case studies or even support in context of international cooperation, could make an E-Government project possible, that is matching the starting position of Indonesia and its political, social and cultural background. By including all relevant stakeholders under an overall management of the national government and sharing responsibilities, it could use the road towards E-Government as a collective learning process for Indonesia's democracy.

If an E-Government project is not going to be realized, is Indonesia then in serious risk to be on the wrong side of the digital divide, the gap between participants in the new patterns of communication and information, based on internet and other innovative technology? Will the country be left behind in key areas for economic and social development such as higher education, health, civic participation and access to information? In summary: will it become incompetent on a global scale due to the lack of investment in modern technology and insufficient progress regarding E-Government?

On a regular basis, leading mass media of the country lay a finger in open wounds, documenting problems in providing even necessary technical basics, particularly High Speed Internet connections. They are questioning insufficient consideration of the issues in the country's economic

Master Planning and reporting about the gap between political announcements and execution of plans (*The Jakarta Globe*, 22/09/2011). The discourse in Indonesia's public sphere supports the before outlined argumentation on the global situation: innovation is pushed by other actors while the government has significant problems to follow. For Indonesia this means that culturally deep rooted patterns of understanding Governance with the leading role clearly projected on political leaders, may lose their efficacy. That would be an encouraging argument for a further discussion on E-Government for Indonesia.

### SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

If the use of ICT and the implementation of an E-Government program strengthen key aspects of Good Governance and contribute to a more cooperative Democracy, they may give a boost to Indonesia's stuck reform process in the Public Sector. The so far positive assessment for Austria yet has to be seen in light of the technical dimensions as well as the political and cultural context. Critical analysis and exercising active citizenship for example are characteristics of a developed democratic culture, which is not existing yet on a comparable level in Indonesia. It can be expected, that the difficulties for Indonesia in implementing E-Government are likely to be incomparably bigger. The first experiences with the introduction of the identity card give an idea about technical, logistic and cultural challenges.

Nevertheless - an integration of modern technology into the Governance setting will be unavoidable: for political and economic reasons, particularly considering the ambitious goals for Indonesia's development and global position. Therefore, the analysis on success factors in Austria may be used as reference in set up, implementation and execution of E-Government in Indonesia. They give a direction as well for general success factors in the management of complex reform projects. Using professional standards of Strategic Management means to change patterns of logic in the Governance system and to allow more fact and knowledge based action instead of mere political calculations.

Such a new form of pragmatism - or technocratism - is gaining support where challenges we face require better - more efficient, quick, citi-



zen focussed – Governance. E-Government is a supportive technical approach in this context.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> I follow the definition of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and The Pacific (UNESCAP), for details see: <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>
- <sup>2</sup> Evaluated for this chapter were facts and figures, concept papers and presentations from Austrian Government officials, particularly: Rupp (2011) and Kustor (2011)

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