

**Rethinking the e-Government Survey to serve the  
purpose of good governance**

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# Context and Motivation

- ▶ What is the objective of my presentation here?
- ▶ The e-Government Survey is important... It has an impact on countries...
- ▶ It shall continue with its mission in the upcoming years...
- ▶ But there are problems with the Survey, and there are competitors over there... Side effects are palpable and embarrassing...
- ▶ Enhancement/adjustment is necessary... This is just normal, and of a continual nature!
- ▶ No harm to making a jump, this is just the right time for it...

# Context and Motivation

What is the **rational** of the United-Nations measuring e-Government and rating/ranking 193 member states?

# Context and Motivation

It is somehow assumed that e-Government can **enhance the governance**, at different levels, including a direct impact on easing citizens life...

# Context and Motivation

Why shall a country **care** at all about  
its rate/ranking ?

# Context and Motivation

Countries with poor e-Government records have a questionable Governance process + They DO NOT want (or DO NOT KNOW HOW) to enhance it!

# Context and Motivation

These answers are the main constituents of the Government Survey **legitimacy**, and its outcomes, in compliance with members states expectations...

→ Make sure the Survey is **viable** and will never **produce unsound** results!

# Context and Motivation

- ▶ Both from the legitimacy and utilitarian perspectives, e-Government is all about good governance...
  - ▶ The rest (including connectivity, hardware, software, etc.) is simple artefacts...
  - ▶ The artefacts are, indeed, necessary but they are not the objective and/or the finality of e-Government...
  - ▶ **Strangely**, there is not a single question, in the MSQ, related to governance!
- The e-Government survey assesses **technology artefacts NOT governance facts...**

# What is the problem?

## TECHNOLOGY

Government portal(s) can be found on the first results page of any search engine typically used in that country | Search features | Sitemap/Index | Help feature/FAQs section | Contact us feature | National portal(s) utilize HTTPS | Responsive web design | Evidence of being updated in the past month | Advanced search options | Mark favorite/most used online services | Access to list of previous interactions/transactions | Availability of Tutorials or guidance to understand and use online services/Help link | Accessibility by citizens to own data | Possibility for citizens to modify own data | Accessibility by businesses to own data | Possibility for Businesses to modify own data | Save part of the transaction and access later | Availability of AI-chat-bot functionality | Compliant with W3C standards (CSS style sheet/markup validity) | Compliant with WCAG2.0

# What is the problem?

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Existence of national government portal (s) | Information available on the organizational structure and/or chart of the government | Names/titles of heads of government agencies/departments/ministries available on the national portal(s) | Links to any sub-national/local government institutions/agencies | Privacy statement(s) available | Digital ID to access online services | National e-Government/Digital Government strategy or equivalent available | Information on citizens' rights to access government information | Legislation/law/policy/regulation on personal data protection | Legislation/law/policy/regulation on cybersecurity | Information/contact about a national CIO or equivalent | Legislation/law/policy/regulation on e-participation | Legislation/law/policy/regulation on Open Government Data | Link to the sectoral or ministerial website on HEALTH /EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT AND-OR LABOR/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIROMENT/ JUSTICE | Information on policies related to HEALTH /EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT AND-OR LABOR/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIROMENT/ JUSTICE | Availability of National Data strategy or Policy.

# What is the problem?

## CONTENT PROVISION

National portal(s) available in more than ONE official language | Information available about payments for government services through channels other than online | Announcements of forthcoming procurement/bidding processes | Information about results of procurement/bidding processes online | Information about service provision in partnership with the private sector | Evidence of free access to services through kiosks, community centers, post offices, libraries, public spaces, or free Wi-Fi | Web statistics on usage of the online features/services | Information on available scholarships or other forms of government funding for EDUCATION | Links and references for EMPLOYMENT for youth | Information on how older persons can apply for long term care.

# What is the problem?

## PARTICIPATION

E-participation portal(s) | Availability of social networking feature(s) | Live chat support functionality | leave feedback option to improve useability and/or accessibility of e-services | Report corruption by public servants or institutions | Calendar or announcements about any upcoming public engagement or e-participation activities | Online tools to obtain raw (non-deliberative) inputs for policy deliberation | Evidence of any outcome of e-consultations resulted in new policy decisions/regulations/services | Open government data portal | In Open Data Portal availability of data dictionary or metadata repository | Guidance or toolkit on using Open Government datasets | Possibility to propose/request new open datasets be made available online | Information about the organization of competitions/hackathons/ events around the use of open government data | Open Government dataset(s) on national government expenditures (budget) | Availability of GIS or other geospatial data | Evidence of user satisfaction of online or mobile services | Information on government expenditures (budget) on HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE | Information about upcoming consultations intended to involve people in the past 12 months (HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE) | Information about having held online consultations via forums, polls, questionnaires etc. intended to involve people in the past 12 months (HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE) | Evidence that people's voices were included in the actual decision-making in the past 12 months (HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE) | Open Government dataset(s) on HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE | Report online a violation of labor laws | Availability of feature for participatory budgeting or similar mechanism | Evidence of open data license for open government datasets | Open Government dataset(s) on budget/expenditure in EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ ENVIRONMENT/ HEALTH/ JUSTICE /SOCIAL PROTECTION? | Evidence of real time open government dataset(s) | Evidence of any co-creation and/or co-production of e-service (HEALTH/ EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT/ SOCIAL PROTECTION/ ENVIRONMENT/ JUSTICE) | Evidence of e-petition or similar mechanism | Evidence that people's voices were included in the policy decision-making on issues related to vulnerable group in the past 12 months (for immigrants, older people, persons living

# What is the problem?

## SERVICE PROVISION

Evidence of One-Stop-Shop portal(s) | E-procurement platform for bidding processes/submission of tenders | Service provision on Income taxes | Online provision for: Value Added Tax (VAT), Goods & Services Tax (GST) or equivalent | Apply online for: Visa to enter or transit | Registration or renewal for a: Vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, and others) | Online declaration to the police | Notify of moving/changing an address online | Registration for a new company or business entity | Apply/request Birth certificates | Death certificates | Marriage certificates | Personal Identity Cards | Driver's license | Land title registration | Environment-related permits | Building permits | Business licenses | Apply for Government vacancy positions | Pay online for government fees or fines | Water utility | Energy(electricity/gas) utility | Digital invoices | provision of GIS or other geospatial related online services | Business tax filing | Mobile service provision available through i) smartphone apps; ii) SMS services; or iii) mobile browser (for HEALTH, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL PROTECTION, ENVIROMENT. JUSTICE) | Students can apply for government scholarships and fellowships programme | Users can apply for: Social protection programs | Services available to the following vulnerable groups: poor (below poverty line) /persons with disabilities /older persons / immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, and internally displaced persons / women /youth | Eligibility and/or procedure on applying for citizenship or residency | Apply for: Receiving an affidavit of criminal record/background clearance | Access to justice: retrieve information / file (open) online ; / manage of court cases | Services provided to people retiring from job | Apply for benefits due to illness and injury | Apply for child benefits | Apply for disability compensation benefits | Apply online for maternal or newborn benefits | Apply or file for unemployment benefits.

# What is the problem?

- ▶ **More importantly**, the fact that a feature is included (or exist) in the national portal does not mean that it is useable, used and effective...
- ▶ The e-Government assessment equation, to reflect the impact on Good governance, **becomes**:  
**f(exist + useable + used + effective ) = Good Governance Impact**
- ▶ **Without ALL 4 features**, it is impossible to establish a link between the artefacts and the governance process...

# What is the problem?

- ▶ The current version of the e-Government Survey assesses the existence and, to some extent, the useability of a feature, but **Unfortunately:**
  - ▶ It does not/cannot provide any indication on the **actual use and effectiveness** of features...
  - ▶ It does **not provide any explanation** to justify (the why and the extent of) the specific features that were selected for the assessment...
- This is the **problem we wanted to address through a global rethinking of the e-Government Survey**, including the “what” and “how” of this Survey...

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

- ▶ The Design of the e-Gov Survey needs to be based on its original purpose and mission: **Good Governance...**
- ▶ This means that the e-Government Survey shall allow to **explicitly relate a country rate/rank to its governance performance/level...**
- ▶ Countries with good ranking in the Survey are countries with good governance process, and **vice-versa!**

**A Conceptual Framework on how e-Government impacts good governance is needed**

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

1. What do we mean by Good Governance?
2. What shall we measure? And how is this linked to good governance?
3. How do we measure what we measure to get “credible” information ?
4. How to rate countries and apply a ranking?
5. How to make sure the rating/ranking of a country reflects its good governance status?

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 1. What do we mean by Good Governance?

- ▶ Although there is no formal universally agreed upon definition of good governance, there are serious propositions by renown institutions, including the UN, WB, WEF, IMF, etc.
- ▶ For the United Nations, for example, good governance *is ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law; strengthening democracy; promoting transparency and capacity in public administration...*



- ▶ **Participation** – People should be able to voice their own opinions through legitimate immediate organizations or representatives.
- ▶ **Rule of Law** – Legal framework should be enforced impartially, especially on human right laws.
- ▶ **Consensus Oriented** – Mediates differing interests to meet the broad consensus on the best interests of a community.
- ▶ **Equity and Inclusiveness** – People should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.
- ▶ **Effectiveness and Efficiency** – Processes and institutions should be able to produce results that meet the needs of their community while making the best of their resources.
- ▶ **Accountability** – Governmental institutions, private sectors, and civil society organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.
- ▶ **Transparency** – Information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored.
- ▶ **Responsiveness** – Institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders.

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 2. What shall we measure? And how is this linked to good governance?

- ▶ The measurement extends to any e-Government system's effect contributing to any of the good governance global principles... Ex.: ...
- ▶ The measurements are all related to actual effects of the e-Government system, not to artefacts of technology... Ex.:
- ▶ In other words, the indicators are about the effects of technology, not its existence, accessibility, and the like...
- ▶ **Effects vs Outcomes ???**

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 2. What shall we measure? And how is this linked to good governance? Outcome vs Indicator :

- ▶ The numbers of distributed certificates?
- ▶ The numbers of processed requests?
- ▶ Time to service? Max? Min? Average?
- ▶ The total number of processed citizens in a particular day or hour? Vs Average Per hour, day or month?
- ▶ The numbers of mistakes? Category, Who, When, etc.
- ▶ Employees performance?
- ▶ The most frequent requests? And the opposite...
- ▶ Gender issues?
- ▶ Claims?
- ▶ Etc.

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 2. What shall we measure? And how is this linked to good governance?

- ▶ An outcomes-based approach **captures the impact of a system through its outcomes...**
- ▶ We measure, individually, the various outcomes of the system, and we use/manipulate them to feed different Indicators...
- ▶ Indicators or metrics or an **analytics...**
- ▶ **Aggregated indicators** (not outcomes!) inform about the **impact** on a particular good governance principle...
- ▶ To operate the measurement process, the outcomes of the e-Government System must first be **identified/listed, defined** w/r to the Good Governance principle/s they relate to, and **Categorized** accordingly...
- ▶ An Outcome can be associated with more than one indicator...

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 2. What shall we measure? And how is this linked to good governance? Example from e-Fes Project

Governance Attributes	Measured Indicator	Value before automated system deployment	Value after automated system deployment
Effectiveness and efficiency (as a citizen user)	Efficiency: optimal use of resources for citizens to request & obtain birth certificates (BC)	<b>No</b> , requesting & obtaining BC is costly for citizens: 1) extended waiting time; 2) several trips to BEC; 3) need to tip (or use social connections)	<b>Yes</b> : Citizens making time/money /effort savings in requesting and obtaining BC: (no waiting time, only one trip to BEC, no tip)
Effectiveness and efficiency (as tax payer)	Efficiency and effectiveness of using public scarce resources	<b>No</b> , 1) 3 employees needed to deliver BCs, BEC when demand on BC is low to moderate ; 2) When demand is high (from June to September), All 10 BEC employees only process BC requests	<b>Yes</b> : (casual calls on employee time with the elimination of 5 full time employees) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No full time employee is needed</li> <li>▪ With the kiosk: no employee is needed to process the requests</li> </ul>
Equity	citizens served with equity	<b>No</b> , Usually queuing/waiting creates motives and conditions for bribery incidents. Citizens find themselves obliged to tip the employee to be served,	<b>Yes</b> ; 1) ICT eliminated the need for citizens to tip; 2) All citizens are served on a timely and similar manner (regardless of social class)
Rule of law	Laws are applied impartially	<b>No</b> 1) Equity is violated; and violations are perceived as normal: 2) Many violations of law as people paid for privilege (queue jumping)	<b>Yes</b> ; 1) Unnecessary need to tip reinforces the law of equity; 2) Elimination of the need for violations of the law through tipping
Participation/empowerment (i.e. citizens are empowered to legally control the service delivery to their advantage) Process of elimination of middle person in service delivery	Citizens' active participation in BEC services	<b>No</b> ; Citizens were not participating actively in the service delivery	<b>Yes</b> ; Citizens through the kiosk/online service delivery: they actively participate in the service delivery,
	Dependence of citizens on employees' good will	<b>Yes</b> ; Citizens were at the mercy of employees to get served	<b>No</b> ; Citizens through the kiosk/online service delivery: they are not at the mercy of employees

Table 1: Citizen-related governance attributes measured before and after system deployment

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 3. How do we measure what we measure, to get “credible” information ?

- ▶ Very important and tough question!
- ▶ The only valid way, we see, is through the programming of the indicators, **embedded in the system**, and **generated/updated as/while the system runs...**
- ▶ This will enable capturing the necessary information, live from the system, **through APIs...**
- ▶ ***A major change in e-Government System development...***

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 4. How to rate countries and apply a ranking?

→ Is it possible (and relevant/sound) to rank world countries based on their governance level ?

- ▶ By definition, Governance is multi-folders and multi-perspectives → There is no objective/rational way to have one single global score for it!
- ▶ **This is neither necessary nor relevant to target a single score per country...**
- ▶ What is important, rather, is to describe the **state of e-Government situation** in/for each country...
- ▶ **Sub-groups** and **chunks** could be formed, based on thematic areas and/or specific purpose/sector...

# Redesigning the e-Gov Survey

## 5. How to make sure the rating/ranking of a country reflects its good governance status?

- ▶ **By design**, anything that the system measures is related to governance!
- ▶ A good performance in any specific embedded indicator **necessarily indicates** some aspect of good governance...
- ▶ **Broader conclusions** on governance at national, regional, local, sectoral, departmental, etc. levels shall imply a **combination and/or a composition of different indicators**, depending on what we wanted to assess...
- ▶ The ranking shall not be global! Rather, **it shall be thematic or sectoral...**

# Conclusion

- ▶ There is a need to rethink the e-Government survey, to serve its original purpose, and to avoid embarrassing side effects...
- ▶ The design of the new e-Government Survey should put governance in the heart of its presentation, structure and methodology...
- ▶ The objective shall be to inform each country on the state of e-Government (and, of governance, by ricochet)
- ▶ Embedding the outcomes measurement, in e-Government systems, shall strongly change the face of the IT industry specialized in the field...