

Chapter 13

E-Government Developments in Turkey for Supporting Public Sector Transformation

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ABSTRACT

This work presents the specific case of Turkey for public sector transformation by e-Government services development. The Turkish case will be presented with an aim to provide interesting and useful information for practitioners as well as academicians in the field of e-government and public transformation, and a focus on central government examples and policy orientations affecting daily lives of citizens. The rationale and perspective of the paper reflects practitioners' viewpoint, and assumes that the experiences of Turkey case will have echoes on other places, as the experienced and discussed issues have common characteristics with other cases. This practitioner analysis chapter is then based on the co-authors' personal involvement in and reflections on the various aspects of the Turkish case, while the chapter is written mostly as a result on secondary research. These reflective analyses are embedded within background information about e-government development in Turkey, presented together with academic perspective of transformational government. E-Government Gateway, MERNIS, UYAP, e-tax projects in Turkey are specifically highlighted. A discussion of policy orientations that affect daily lives of citizens follows, and suggestions for future work and directions are also provided. The discussion especially underlines the shared service and citizen-oriented approach to e-government service development with implications for process integration and improvement, if not yet for thorough transformation. It is hoped that the reflections and directions with respect to Turkish case presented in this work provides useful guidelines for new e-government initiatives in Turkey and all around the world.

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INTRODUCTION

This work aims to provide a country specific case, that is, the Turkish case, for public sector transformation by e-Government services development and maturation (transformational government, or T-Government). The Turkish case will be presented, benefiting from central government examples, and policy orientations affecting daily lives of citizens. Examples of customer-centric and shared services will be underlined as important aspects of the public sector transformation in general and in Turkey.

The paper presents the practitioners' viewpoint that is based on the authors' personal involvement in and reflections on the various aspects of the Turkey case. This practitioner analysis chapter is then prepared, mainly based on secondary research on publicly available information on the Internet.

As the outline of the chapter, these reflective analyses will be embedded within background information about e-Government development in Turkey presented together with academic perspective of transformational government. E-Government Gateway, MERNIS, UYAP projects in Turkey will be specifically emphasized. A discussion of policy orientations that affect daily lives of citizens will follow, and suggestions for future work and directions will also be provided.

As hoped by the co-authors, the resulting work provides a good, reflective documentation of the recent e-government developments towards public transformation in Turkey. It is also hoped that the reflections and directions with respect to Turkish case presented in this work will provide useful guidelines for new e-Government initiatives all around the world.

TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Evolving from basic information provisioning towards more integrated, joined up and

citizen-centric service offerings, e-Government services are now working towards realising T-Government – as the highest level of maturity for e-Government development. T-government redefines the delivery of government services by providing a single point of contact to citizens', making the government transparent to citizens, businesses (and state). From a demand perspective, extensive efforts are also needed to increase citizens' awareness about the transformation of the delivery of government services. This awareness could result in increased e-participation, as well.¹ Development of new services and improvement of existing services may then be an area where citizen demand and government provision meet.

Research, yet, has shown that the e-government initiatives are mostly away from reaching the state of t-Government. For instance, West (2004) acknowledges that while e-government transformation and revolution has the possibility to enhance democratic responsiveness and boosts beliefs of effective government, it falls short of its potential to transform service delivery and public trust in government. Torres, Pina and Royo (2005) also discuss that e-government initiatives (at regional and local levels in EU) still reflect present service delivery patterns, not transform them.

The recent OECD report (2009) encourages rethinking e-Government services, considering user-centered approaches. Within these approaches improving, monitoring and evaluating user take-up are especially highlighted, representing the paradigm shift from government centrality to citizen centrality. Meanwhile UN (2008) underlines increased integration in service delivery based on commonality of infrastructures, data, and business processes, and service innovation achieved by multi-channel service delivery and *smaller and smarter* use of back-end processes and systems to support *bigger and better* front-end operations encourage more collaborative models of service delivery. These models of "connected or networked government" request government

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