Chapter 9
Business/IT Alignment Framework within e-Government System Case Study:
E-Government in Syria

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to study the effect of Business Information Technology (BIT) alignment on e-Government success in developing countries and all factors affecting this alignment. Therefore, the chapter studies the multiple factors on BIT alignment, such as people, process, and organizational factors. This research discusses some of the possible factors in developing countries with the case study of Syria. Any e-Government project needs all government resources (IT, financial, and human) and not only a single organization resources in order to be able to harness the benefits from all resources to improve an organization work, and this may imply the existence of BIT alignment. Therefore, the gap between business and IT teams seems to be one of the most important factors negatively impacting the implementation of e-Government. Therefore, filling in this gap may help in avoiding the failure of e-Government projects in developing countries in general and in Syria in particular. This case study contains an analysis of related documents and involves 20 semi-structured interviews with senior managers,

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e-Government project team members, and independent experts from the academics field. This research shows the need for BIT alignment as one of the most important factors that should be considered for the success of any e-Government project. An e-Government implementation framework based on the BIT alignment was developed as a result of the case study of Syria.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries have now tried to build their own e-Government projects in order to offer better services to their citizens. In most of the cases, this has always started by building a strategy towards e-Government implementation. In order to do that, many resources (financial, people, ICT infrastructure, time) are devoted to achieve this success, but with failures in many cases especially in developing countries (Heeks, 2003). As a result, there is a lack of a globally accepted and satisfactory strategy that can be implemented everywhere to achieve robust e-Government development.

A greater part of the Information System (IS) literature tries to understand what the e-Government Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and Critical Failure Factors (CFFs) (Prananto, 2007). A few empirical studies discussing the CSFs/CFFs of e-Government projects implementation in developing countries exist despite the increasing interest in e-Government systems uptake and adoption, which can be reflected in a few contributions to international conferences and journals on this topic. Therefore, there is a need for more research in both academic and industry with a view of understanding what influences appropriate e-Government development. E-Government research is still in its infancy and in many of the cases driven by the technological (IT) push leaving out the business side. This makes debate on the integration of IT and business in the framework of e-Government impossible to achieve.

With reference to the above assertions, this chapter aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is e-Government, and what are the main factors that lead to its failure?
- What is the role of BIT alignment on e-Government project success?
- What are the factors affecting this alignment and their effect on e-Government projects?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Given the introduction and motivation of this research, the researchers utilised qualitative research methodology to:

- Investigate the key factors that affect the success/failure of e-Government development (adoption and usage) in the developing countries by discussing the case study of Syria.
- Investigate the role of BIT alignment in e-Government project success.
- Investigate the multiple factors affecting BIT alignment and their effect on e-Government projects.

From the onset, the researchers argue from their practical experience, there are multiple factors affecting the e-Government project success in a developing country like Syria. BIT alignment is one of the most important factors influencing the success of e-Government; this alignment depends on multiple factors like process, organizational and people factors using data, information, and knowledge of the government for success. Furthermore, the findings of this research can be consolidated into a framework to provide a comprehensive picture of BIT alignment use in an e-Government system, hence allowing government planners and decision makers to optimize their resources and