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Subject: The use of Embedded Indicators as a Means to Assess the Impact of E-government Systems on Good Governance

There is general agreement among the community of researchers in the area of e-Government/Governance that:

- eGov has a potential to enhance good governance;
- eGov alone does not "create" good governance and there is a need to carefully consider a number of other enabling elements/factors, including e-readiness, e-awareness, and, e-ownership.

There is also an agreement about the difficulty and complexity of assessing the impacts of eGovernment systems in relation to good governance. It is recommended to consider the outcomes of an eGovernment systems rather than their impact. The impact being a long term and sustainable behavioral change, which occurs over time, after the deployment of the system.

In order to better understand why it is difficult to assess the impacts of eGov systems on good governance one needs to look at the available e-Government/Governance assessment techniques and models. In order to illustrate our purpose, we present hereafter two typical models widely used over the world and which seriously impact the national ICT strategy of countries as well as the international development agenda.

For Governance assessment, the UNDP proposed a set of attributes (along with their definitions) of *good governance*, including participation, Rules of law, Transparency, Responisveness, Consensus, Equity, Effectiveness and efficiency, Accountability, Vision. Accordingly the ranking of countries around the world is based on their correlated performance/score with respect to these different attributes.

For eGovernment assessment, the EGDI, also commonly referred to as the "UN survey", is one of the most important models used to rank countries. The EGDI is a composite index based on the weighted average of three normalized indices where 1/3 is derived from a telecommunications infrastructure index, 1/3 from a human capital index, and 1/3 from the online service index. The combined EGDI score gives an indication of e-government development across countries relative to each other, as opposed to being an absolute measure with a finite goal.

Although these two models are extremely important and widely accepted, one easily can argue they do not serve the purpose of eGovernment impact assessment simply because:

1. there is no explicit framework linking between UNDP Good Governance attributes and the UNDESA EGDI index;
2. The 3 sub-indices of the EGDI do not refer to good governance at all!

In an attempt to the address these weaknesses and to follow in the footsteps of the WEF (world economic forum), it was suggested to add a "usage index" as a fourth component to EGDI. However, given the complexity of finding reliable statistics even in the most developed countries in this area, such addition appeared unfeasible.

Our proposition in this concept note is to have the statistics needed for the purpose of eGovernment Assessment embedded in the systems so that as we operate eGovernment we automatically get useful indications on the impacts on good governance such as time to service, gender issues, fluidity of operations, volume of work, traceability, etc.

Indeed, we all know (and possibly have used) systems that provide statistics in many areas including banks, insurance companies, sales, etc. **But what is striking is the lack of systems that provide statistics and indicators about for good Governance**. This lack is not due to technical difficulties **but, rather, to the inexistence of an explicit framework that directly links between eGovernment and good governance so that the provided statistics/indicators directly inform about good governance.**

The use Embedded eGov Indicators Systems in the field of eGovernment/ance might change the visage of the ICT Industry and the associated business, and **would greatly foster good governance and good practices in public administration**. The international ranking of countries would be more reflective of good governance centric visions and strategies and could then better serve the purpose of development funding and aids.

Through this brief note, we would like to invite CEPA experts to discuss the idea of using and including EEIS in eGovernment Systems. We would be delighted to provide more information and/or details if needed.