CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN: INCREASING COMPUTER LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the challenges and prospects in implementing E-Government in Kazakhstan and increasing computer literacy among citizens.

Main problem of the project is to investigate the level of computer literacy among citizens and seeking the effective methods for increasing computer literacy among citizens.

For data collection the survey methods as interviewing, questioning, observation and document analysis have been used. The survey results have a dominant role to find out the reasons of low increasing computer literacy among citizens and to consider possible solution of this problem. Also, the purpose of the project is to find out the influence of digital divide on E-Government development. According to the E-Readiness rankings 2008 (Economist Intelligence Unit) and United Nations E-Government Survey 2008 Report the E-Government readiness of Kazakhstan have been studied. By investigating the "National E-Government Development Programme 2008-2010" the realized E-Government services and plans have been analyzed.

During implementing E-Government in Kazakhstan the experiences of such countries as Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea have been used, so this project includes studying these countries experiences. Also this study was carried out to determine the difficulties, risks and problems which can arise during implementing E-Government in Kazakhstan.

ABSTRAK

Projek ini mengkaji cabaran dan prospek yang terdapat dalam melaksanakan E-Kerajaan di Kazakhstan serta peningkatan celik computer di kalangan rakyat negara itu. Masalah utama projek ini adalah untuk menyelidik tahap kecelikan komputer di kalangan rakyatnya dan kaedah yang berkesan untuk meningkatkan tahap celik komputer mereka. Kaedah yang digunakan untuk mengutip data adalah melalui temuramah, soal-selidik, pemerhatian, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil soal-selidik bertujuan untuk mencari punca utama terhadap tahap literasi komputer yang rendah di kalangan rakyat dan seterusnya mencari penyelesaian yang munasabah untuk mengatasinya. Pada masa yang sama, tujuan projek juga adalah untuk mencari pengaruh jurang digital ke atas pembangunan E-Kerajaan. Kajian mengenai kesediaan Negara Kazakhstan untuk e-Kerajaan telah dikaji melalui dokumen *"E-Readiness rankings 2008 (Economist Intelligence Unit)"* dan *"United Nations E-Government Survey 2008 Report"*. Perkhidmatan dan perancangan e-Kerajaan telah dianalisis menggunakan dokumen *"National E-Government Development Programme 2008-2010"*. Projek ini juga mengambilkira pengalaman pelaksanaan E-Kerajaan daripada negara-negara Singapura, Malaysia dan Korea Selatan sebagai kajian kes. Kajian ini juga dilakukan untuk menentukan kesukaran, risiko dan masalah yang boleh timbul dalam melaksanakan e-Kerajaan di Kazakhstan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter is an overview of this project. It discusses about the background of the study. It presents the preview of the whole written project. It also contains the objective of the research and main questions for the project.

1.2   Background of the problem

The president of Kazakhstan delivers an ambitious mission of preparing the republic to be among the 50 most competitive countries in the world. This mission is conceivable through realization of powerful steps towards digital economy and information society, and formation of an information infrastructure of the electronic government.

In 2004, the E-Government Development Programme 2005-2007 according to the President's strategy "To competitive Kazakhstan, competitive economy, and the competitive nation!" has been accepted. It is one of the first serious steps on the way towards development of a hi-tech country.

For achievement of a maximum level of the advantages for the citizens it is necessary to realize the basic principle that the government should be accessible for everyone, anywhere and any time. E-Government should provide to citizens interaction with the state and access to the state services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, irrespective of geographical arrangement and season.

At present time information delivery to citizens is rather passive, irregular and especially is limited through mass-media. People learn about new laws and decrees of the government from newspapers, on the TV etc.

For example, when a person uses the services of the Passport Office, first of all, they face a problem of information search in rendering services (forms, and services). By far not always this information can be found on a bulletin board, and citizens have to address for consultation to the employees.

Due to Kazakhstan E-Government Development Programme many stages in realization of the electronic government have been done. Despite Kazakhstan's low e-readiness rankings, the country has done a big way towards realization of the electronic government and even today it is possible to see some results.

1.3   Statement of the problem

During the past few years a lot of works have been carried out in implementing E-Government in Kazakhstan and the first E-Government initiative in Kazakhstan started in the end of 2006 (www.e.gov.kz). It is now 2 years away. Nowadays the

various regions of the country have started of their own regional government portals for their inhabitants.

To date about 95% of the governmental bodies have their own Web-sites and provide information to citizens. These results show that the Internet infrastructure is already formulated.

Thirty-two (32) out of thirty four web-sites are governmental web-sites. At present time the legal framework already is ready. The number of Internet users increased from 6% to 8% since the beginning of the year. This index must be increased up to 20% in the next few years.

But for the realization of electronic government it is not enough just to develop the program of its implementation. It is also necessary to train people to be familiar with the ICT and interact with the electronic government from any geographical point of the country.

The first step of formation of an information society is towards decreasing of the information inequality. To overcome this problem, the Agency of Informatization and Communication (AIC) develops the "Digital Divide Decreasing Programme" for 2007-2009.

The program is directed for solving of the problems on decreasing of the country's information inequality characterized by different level of computer literacy of the population and unequal opportunities of access to modern communication technologies.

Number of the computer and Internet in Kazakhstan is very low. It shows that the computer literacy in the country is very weak. There are a lot of reasons. An information inequality can be a disincentive for using E-Government.

For implementation of the effective electronic government the qualified personnel potential is required. The IT experts in regulatory bodies are also necessary.

The professional qualities for developing of electronic government concern not only a technical aspect as the general management assumes also possession of skills of wider profile that allows participating actively at decision-making. Necessary professionalism should include as base technical competence (literacy in the field of an

information technology), and understanding of problems of a new information society. Therefore the regulatory bodies should take steps, allowing to define a level of qualification and to ensure its presence with a view of increase of efficiency of the electronic government.

Finally, it is necessary to remember the fact that the new technologies make the governments to be especially attentive to such category as time. Against other areas which are in sight of the government, the technologies evolve and obsolescence very fast. The decisions accepted by administrative bodies today are considered for the future which promptly varies and is not always accurately looked through.

Mistakes cost much in financial plan, but especially guard because of possible blasting of trust of citizens and business sphere.

For all countries transition to the electronic government gives the chance to politicians to show the abilities of adaptation in new conditions. At the same time the traditional government slowly gets over the Internet revolution, considering it as one of plural calls which is necessary to face.

To accept right decisions and to avoid destructive consequences, the governments should formulate and solve essential problems of a transition period when the traditional and electronic governments co-exist. Without concentrating exclusively on introduction of ICT, the governments need to make also a certain choice, to direct and supervise process of transformation of the usual government into electronic.

This radical change in forms and traditional methods of the government is possible only on the basis of adjustment of real cooperation between the governmental structures of various levels and a civil society.

1.4   Purpose of the research

In this research, the researcher analyzes the E-Government development programme of Kazakhstan, studies the experience of the different countries like Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea. Also, the researcher investigates and analyses Kazakhstan's E-Government readiness by comparing with other countries, as well as seeks the effective methods for solving the problem related to the digital divide.

1.5   Objectives of the research

The objectives of the study are:

1.   To investigate the influence of computer literacy among citizens on the E-Government development;

2.   To determine the issues pertaining to the challenges facing E-Government of Kazakhstan;

3.   To conduct a study on the perception of Kazakhstan on the citizen's initiative;

4.   Seeking the effective methods for increasing computer literacy among citizens.

1.6   Research questions

This research aims to answer the following research questions:

1.   How can be reflected a level of the computer illiteracy on E-Government demands?

2.   How to make people interested and have their attention to the E-Government's opportunities?

3.   What kind of benefits will the E-Government provide?

4.   What problems and risks we should expect from digital divide?

1.7   Significance of the research

The government of Kazakhstan has made a conscious decision to embark upon a journey to make its public services more efficient, effective, and accessible.

First of all, the given research will allow to develop methods and ways of solving problems during implementing E-Government Development Programme which can improve civil service performance, empowerment, improve government finances, reduce administrative corruption, increasing transparency and other goals in the future. This research includes the examples and comparisons of the country's digital inequality.

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