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E-Aligning Africa

*Working with the private sector to implement innovative
e- government solutions to address Africa's developmental goals*

Executive Summary

by

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Executive Summary

E-Alignment is critical to achieving the maximum benefits of E-Government. E-Alignment is a phrase I coined to illustrate the need for a collaborative and framework based approach to the design and implementation of E-Government solutions. Partnering with the private sector and civil society enables governments to share the costs and the risks associated with the deployment of E-Government solutions. Each sector plays a pivotal role in leveraging resources - for desired and sustainable outcomes.

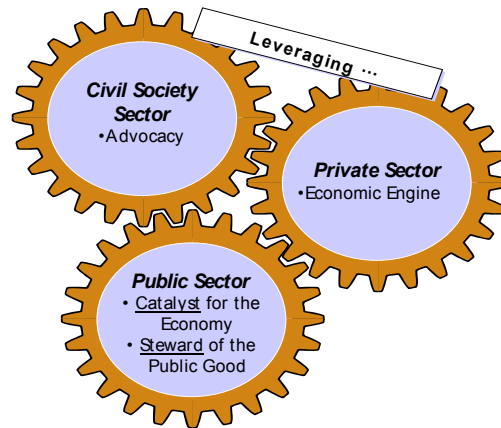


Figure 1.

E-Alignment recognizes successful implementation of E-Government solutions requires governments to:

- Partner with the private sector and civil society;
- Articulate a clear strategic direction;
- Develop an enterprise architecture (business and IT blueprint) and
- Map its strategic direction and enterprise architecture to its *capabilities* (human, financial and IT etc).

This paper discusses the concept of E-Alignment within the context of African E-government and explores the prospects and challenges associated with this approach. It also outlines a set of recommendations for enabling greater adoption and integration of E-Government solutions by African governments.

Key Findings

Current Environment

- Internet growth in Africa was 52.1 percent in 2000-2002, however usage was limited to 1.2 percent of users and 0.8 percent penetration for a population of 859 million. This illustrates a tremendous opportunity for greater adoption and usage.

Governments in their role as catalyst and steward of public good can shepherd their countries into the digital age by further utilizing E-government solutions to deliver services to their constituents.

- The missing link to increased and sustained E-Government development is the lack of *alignment* - strategies and architecture to capabilities and *leveraging* of partnerships with the private sector and civil society.

E-Government

- E-Government takes advantage of the possibilities offered by the intersection of society and technology to enhance economic activity and to improve the lives of citizens in the digital age.
- New trends in technology (pervasive, universal access (24/7/365) the creation of intelligent systems) require governments to increase service delivery to meet the growing needs of its constituents.
- Growing demand for E-Government solutions to have performance measures and metrics such as ROI – governments are being asked to demonstrate benefits of implementing costly solutions.
- Governments are developing enterprise architectures to build integrated and scaleable systems and applications - outcomes are streamlined processes and improved service delivery to constituents.
- African governments with the right tools and capabilities can move along the E-Government continuum from simply publishing content on the web to personalized transactions with its constituents.

E-Alignment

- The E-Alignment approach requires:
 - Identification of strategic direction,
 - Assessment of e-readiness,
 - Determination of the capability maturity
 - Development of a robust Enterprise Architecture mapped to
 - Prioritized E-Government solutions.

In other words, context is everything – understanding the issues, having a realistic assessment of one’s capabilities enables effective and efficient decision-making in the implementation E-Government solutions.

- E-Alignment utilizes a life –cycle framework – providing the opportunity for governments to continuously monitor and evaluate whether it’s current initiatives are mapped to its enterprise architecture and in alignment with it’s strategic direction.
- Employs capability maturity specific frameworks –resulting in appropriate and scalable and interoperable E-government solutions.
- *Prospects* – A key imperative of E-Alignment is partnership and coordination. Working in collaboration with the both the private sector and civil society governments in Africa can more effectively meet the needs of its’ constituents. The private sector brings not only access to capital but private sector management skills and best practices to bear on the development of E-government. Civil Society brings the voice of the people. It compels governments to provide greater access to information and services. This bodes well for efforts to improve governance and increase transparency.
- *Challenges* – It is well documented that E-Government initiatives are not sustainable if the “real world” (e.g. people, and processes) does not transform itself to meet the changes brought by greater automation. E-Alignment requires change in the real world first –making tough choices about the strategic direction of government, frank and candid discussion with stakeholders that result in accurate assessments of capabilities – enabling the selection of the “right” e-government solutions.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Currently African E-government initiatives are not E-Aligned

Despite the existence of National IT Plans and mechanisms such as NICI in Africa there needs to be the *means* (E-Alignment) to bring strategy, enterprise architecture and capabilities together to drive successful implementation of e-government solutions.

Conclusion 2: African governments are in the first wave (getting in the game) of delivering E-Government services to their constituents.

Governments throughout Africa have web sites and portals providing content, basic interaction and transactions to constituents. E-Alignment will assist governments to move beyond the first wave to delivering personalized and integrated for its constituents. Simply put, if African governments are to respond to the needs of their constituents they will have to continually innovate, resulting in movement along on the E-Government continuum.

Conclusion 3: Leveraging partners speeds the process of E-Government - not a panacea.

Leveraging brings the resources of all parties to the table. But African governments must ultimately make the tough decisions around de-regulation, privacy and security issues etc. Working collaboratively with key stakeholders also assists in “fixing” broken processes

prior to greater automation – if it's broken in the physical world it will won't be any more efficient in the virtual world.

High Level Recommendations

Recommendation One: Jointly Define the Strategic Direction

Defining strategy is critical to the choice of solutions governments will deploy in developing their E-governments. Consultation with key stakeholders enables development of strategies that effectively meet the needs of government's constituents. Creating a common vision reflecting the goals of the people is central to government's role as the steward of public good.

Recommendation Two: Build your Enterprise Architecture

Building a robust architecture provides African governments with a blueprint for constructing an effective design for implementing successful E-government solutions. The architecture lays the foundation for developing an appropriate set of processes, technologies, applications and a transition plan for implementation. The frameworks used to develop Enterprise Architecture - are dynamic. One doesn't simply add on new capabilities, or tools but looks to develop in a coordinated and structured fashion.

Recommendation Three: Formally Define the Governance Structure

E-Alignment requires a formal governance structure be in place. The right people need to provide oversight and approval for the development of the architecture. The governing body must have the requisite authority to make changes and provide guidance to the government on --- the way forward. Lastly, this group must be held accountability to government for its actions.

