Digital Government Strategies: Good Practices

Colombia: Development of E-Government Institutional Framework

The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat is developing a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Colombia to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

Description of the practice:

**Organisation:** Vice-Minister of Technology and Information Systems, National CIO, Ministry of Information Technology and Communications

**Name of the practice:** Development of E-Government Institutional Framework

**Principles implemented:**

- **Principle 5** – Secure leadership and political commitment to the strategy
- **Principle 6** – Ensure coherent use of digital technologies across policy areas and levels of government
- **Principle 7** – Establish effective organisational and governance frameworks to co-ordinate the implementation of the digital strategy within and across levels of government

**Description:** The Institutional Framework of Electronic Government is the main structure of the strategy that seeks to link public management with use of ICT.

The development of this framework is evidence of the evolution of e-government strategy and sets the institutional architecture to enable the ultimate goal of the strategy, national and local governments more open, efficient, transparent and participatory using ICTs.

This initiative compiles three strategic pillars: regulatory principles, policy guidelines and a monitoring and evaluation model. The articulation of these three elements allows advancing in the understanding and implementation of electronic government.
The E-government Office of Colombia is a branch of the Vice ministry of IT of the Ministry of ICT in Colombia. It was created by the decree 2618-2012. In terms of policy and regulatory framework definition, this Office has the following functions:

- Development of guidelines regarding e-government that supports policies, strategies, and practices for public administration.
- Defining policies for the rationalization and automation of procedures and promote e-government service delivery in coordination with agencies working for administrative efficiency.
- Designing and implementing the strategic plan for e-government strategy implementation at all levels of the State.
- Promote cooperation between national, regional and local authorities and relations with civil society organizations through e-government.

The e-Government office also monitors and evaluates the implementation of the strategy through a model composed of various tools, one of which is a unified report system of advances on all administrative policies in which e-government is evaluated as a transversal topic.

**Results**

One of the main results of the e-Government Framework has been the establishment of common guidelines related to the use ICT across all sectors and levels of government. This common conceptual and technical base has accelerated the usage and uptake of ICT in the Public Sector generating visible and measurable improvements in the citizen-government, business-government and government-government relationships.

In addition, this e-government institutional framework has become a public sector innovation driver and accelerator, as it challenges and encourages institutions for the use of latest technologies and trends for the achievement of governance and sustainable development goals.

Every year, public entities fill a questionnaire enabled in a web platform (the monitoring tool). This questionnaire asks whether public entities compliance with the guidelines defined in the Online Government Manual. The answers given by entities feeds the monitoring and evaluation model of the strategy, which is also composed by elements such as surveys, studies and an impact assess methodology that is being designed.

**Development**

**Design:** 2000/February

Different institutions and actors have been involved in the design, implementation and adjustment of the e-government institutional framework. For instance, the National Planning Department of
Colombia, the Public Service Bureau, the Presidency, the National Archive and the National Procurement Office, are constantly giving inputs to the e-government institutional framework and including in their policies and actions the principles and guidelines given by the framework. Is a double way process in which the stakeholders strengthen the framework both by construction and usage. There are several examples of this process related with involving stakeholders in the design process: for example, the construction of legal and technical instruments such as e-government decrees (2693) and e-government manuals counted with the participation of the mentioned institutions. On the other hand, the public policy of transparency and accountability (CONPES 3564) defined by the National Council on Economic and Social Policy constituted by all the institutions of the national level, included principles and guidelines of e-government.

**Testing:** 2008/March

The design of the institutional framework of e-government contemplate stages and processes of testing and validation with those responsible for implementation, in this case national and local governments, as well as beneficiaries, citizens and businesses.

This institutional framework was tested in two different ways in national and territorial entities. This was carried out simultaneously, ensuring that the results were contrasted between them:

- Consultations with external stakeholders, such as universities and research bodies, civil society organizations and other public entities that lead the process of accountability and State modernization programs, among others.
- Implementation accompanied by specialized consultants in the national and local governments, which allowed the Ministry of ICT to identify improvement opportunities, corrections and additional needs not covered by the initial design.

As a result of this testing and validations, the e-government strategy has made regulatory and policy adjustments, such as the Decree 1151 of 2008 and the guidelines and related toolkits.

These adjustments have enabled more ambitious goals, attending international trends and responding to advances of the entities implementing the strategy. Additionally, it is important to note that the testing of the institutional framework designed not only helped to improve the strategy, but also allowed to refine the role of the participants and the relationship between them, including the responsibilities and duties of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies as leader of the policy.

**Implementation:** 2015/June

The institutional and legal development of the e-government policy in Colombia, began with the decree 1151-2008 which established as goals of the policy the construction of a more efficient, transparent and participative government which offers better services to citizens and businesses, through the intensive use of ICT’s. The implementation has been developed by different policy
instruments as the updated decrees (Decree 2693 of 2012 and Decree 2573 of 2014), national laws, guidelines, and the constant improvements in the monitoring and evaluation model.

E-Government Decrees

The e-Government decrees have primarily defined among others:

- Levels and scales for the implementation of the policy among different types of public entities

- The existence and duty of implementing the e-government manual that contains specific guidelines for public entities in topics related with ICT for services, ICT for open government, ICT for internal management, and security and privacy.

- The existence of an e-Government roadmap that prioritizes the strategic projects for public service delivery, internal management and open data.

- The existence of a seal of Excellence in e-Government that assures the quality of the e-Government solutions offered by the public entities.

Impact in national laws

The e-government strategy has been a transversal component of different national laws that develop public policies related with good governance. The strategy has been included in the laws that state the National Development Plans as well as in laws related with public information access, transparency and accountability, public service delivery improvement, among others.

E-government guidelines

Guidelines for implementing specific topics of the strategy have been formulated, such as the ones for open data, security models, users profiling, etc. In addition, guidelines have promoted a management model, aligned with national managing and planning model, which assigns responsibilities to the national and local public institutions, in order to establish leaders of implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation model

In Colombia, the implementation of the e-Government strategy is monitored, assessing the compliance of the entities of the guidelines given by the Ministry of ICT. This measurement provides information on the performance in the capabilities developed by public entities. This model is composed by:

- e-Government Index showing the progress in the implementation of each of the guidelines given by the strategy by the public entities.
- Citizen polls to determine elements as usage, preference and satisfaction with the e-government services

- And impact assessment model is being designed in order to be implemented from 2016

**Resources:** The team dedicated to develop the main elements that support the e-government strategy, which is composed of six professionals from different areas (law, international relations, political science, public administration, social communication) permanently interacting with the other teams of the E-government office and external stakeholders.

**Diffusion and scaling:** 2015/June

The methods used in order to promote the uptake and transfer of knowledge of the e-government institutional framework are diverse. Colombia’s E-government Direction year by year executes in classroom and online courses, diploma courses, *in situ* advisory and communication campaigns.

**Partnerships:** Civil Society, Academics and Research Bodies, Public Sector Organisations

**Academics and research bodies:**

Through agreements with institutions such as the Telecommunications Investigation Center (CINTEL), the E-government office of Colombia has been able to develop various tools that the public administration institutions are using for the implementation of the policy such as guides and manuals. In addition, with this kind of alliances, some investigations and documents to make easier the implementation of the e-government has been created.

**Public Sector Institutions**

The e-Government office has created different alliances with public sector institutions, in order to articulate the e-government policy with other State policies such as transparency, and procedures simplification. On the other hand, they have also been established alliances for the development of specific high impact e-government solutions such as the creation of One Stop Shops for international trade, environmental procedures and online sanitary registration.

**Civil society organizations**

The definition of the e-Government institutional framework has been discussed in each one of its stages with civil society organizations. They provide worthy and constant ideas for improving the strategy.
Lessons learned

- The development of an e-government institutional framework is not a static process but an iterative one. This is because it deals with two very variable factors: technology and the value that society finds in technology. As both factors are constantly changing, institutional frameworks should be permanently analysed, revised and adjusted.
- The early involvement of institutional partners that could take advantage of the framework for the achievement of their own goals is also a very important issue for the development of the institutional framework.
- The institutional framework must attend the need of public entities of different levels, taking into account their real needs and capabilities.
- The e-Government strategy must be seen as a transversal policy and its institutional framework should allow the interaction with other national public policies related with good governance.