The state of public information security in developing countries case study sampl...

An overview of the challenges faced in Zanzibar as well as in one other exemplar " developing country" as regards the evolution, and adoption of IT/Corporate Governance standards in the public sector

Whilst most developing countries are faced with similar challenges when it comes to the establishment of public information security, most have realized the significance of coming at par in this respect with their developed counterparts. The use of Zanzibar in this regard is therefore an exemplar to prevailing circumstance. The public sector in this respect is considered as lagging behind the private sector in the implementation of reputable standards in information security. From the study, there are several challenges that hinder the development of Information security in developing countries. A credible information security system will be dependent on a purposeful budget that is independent from the public ICT budget. Most developing countries similarly don't have training and awareness programmes in information security. Coupled with the low level of professionalism, it becomes difficult to lay down the basis of a credible system (Davison, 2005, p. 23).

The legal framework for the establishment of a credible system is lacking in most developing countries (Viscusi, et al., 2010, p. 121). While Zanzibar has a legal framework that recognizes intellectual property rights and interference with data, the Act does not recognize evidence collected electronically for the purpose of criminal prosecution. This situation leaves a lacuna in the law that can be manipulated to avert criminal liability after a breach of information security. Unlike in the more developed countries, there are no periodical assessments of the information systems, and development

of ways of mitigating the challenges. There are also some issues that arise such as poor business continuity management, impecunious web application security standards, and necessitous confidentiality mechanism.

The key differences faced by developing and developed countries in terms of data compliance are hinged on key specific issue areas. These areas are mostly dependent on the policy frameworks that the corresponding governments put in place. Achieving international standards requires a government to ensure that the infrastructure is for data compliance is put in place. This may require strong presence of Information Communication Technology, and Information Technology. There should also be laws to support the initiative. Policies will often work best if they are backed by sound legislations. Finally, data compliance will need trained and highly professional personnel. These can only be achieved if the country works towards ensuring that theirs is ample training in this field.

However, developing countries have to grapple with other pressing problems like healthand sanitation, poverty, and economic instability. These challenges may render the development of credible data governance as secondary considerations and not priorities. Coupled by the lack of innovation and the necessary skills, developing countries will not consider such ventures as necessary.

In coming up with data governance systems that meet the needs of their organizations, developing countries could start by ensuring that all the staffs in public offices are equipped with computer skills, and that all offices are provided with basic IT equipment. These measures will preempt the adoption of proper frameworks for data governance and eventually e-governance.

Corporate governance is a system of corporate direction that uses governance specific structures. In corporate governance, rights and responsibilities are assigned to different participants in the entity. E-governance on the other hand signifies the application ICT in the discharge of government services. Owing to the nature of corporate governance; the attendant structures, and their modus operandi, it is possible to employ such principles in e-governance. The concept of e-governance is likely to benefit from credible structures that will exist in ideal corporate governance (Dhameja, 2005, p. 67). In Zanzibar, the investigation showed that at least fifty percent of public entities surveyed were at an intermediate level of adopting e-government.

Most public entities in developing countries are known for a lack of initiative, mismanagement and poor delivery of services. A purposed attempt at privatising these entities has in the past mitigated such failures. Incorporation of principles of corporate governance will thus allow for the adoption of e-governance; where vices lack corruption can be mitigated. Through principles of corporate governance, the management of institutions that offer public services are able to commit to their mandate; which will in most cases go beyond mere service delivery (Dada, 2006, p. 6). A proper e-governanceframework works towards providing solutions based on a platform that seeks to lower the cost government initiatives, cost of development, and cost of deployment. Of significance in the realization of e-governance is the way resources are managed, how records are kept and how such records can be accessed. Such principles are no doubt established in corporate governance and borrowing a leaf for the purpose of public

entities will be ideal.

What role might International E-Governance standards have to play in the future evolution of E-Governance both in developed and in developing countries?

As early as 2001, many countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and the New Zealand had initiated steps to ensure that structured e-government programmes are established. These exemplar nations identified certain general advantages of e-governance such as better provision of services, cost effectiveness and efficiency, greater participation by the public in government, and providing better leadership (Finger & Sultana, 2012, p. 32).

The United Nations in 2008 released a five-stage evolution model that will determine the recognition of any developed or developing country as an implementer of e-governance. These include interconnection among government agencies, interconnection between any central and local government, proper infrastructure, connection between the government and the citizens, and the connection among all stakeholders; government, private sector, academic institutions, NGOs and the civil society (United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, p. 34). A government that is able to demonstrate all these levels of interconnectedness would be rightly regarded as at the epitome of e-governance. International standards of e-governance therefore has the role of providing a benchmark upon which countries, both developed and developing can gauge their systems in order to see if any improvements need to be made. The advantages posed by e-governance such as reduction

in the cost of running government projects will ultimately attract all countries (Alshehri & Drew, 2010, p. 15).

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