



*African Training and Research Centre in  
Administration for Development*



*The International Development  
Research Centre*

## ***LOG-IN Africa Methodology Workshop***

***Background Paper for LOGIN Africa (Rev. 1)***

***Michael Gurstein, Ph.D.: Research Director  
Gianluca Misuraca: Project Leader***

*08 – 10 June 2006  
Tangier (Morocco)*

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

LOG-IN Africa is an emergent pan-African network of researchers and research institutions from nine countries funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)<sup>2</sup> to assess the current state and outcomes of e-local governance<sup>3</sup> initiatives in Africa, and in particular how ICTs are being used to realize good local governance<sup>4</sup> at four levels: a) the internal organizational processes of local governments; b) the provision of information and service delivery; c) the promotion of the principles of good governance; and d) public participation and consultation. As a network of research peers, it is being coordinated through the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), to ensure effective implementation; a pan-African outlook; and high-level policy dissemination of research results.

Through collaboration among the networked research partners, a modular “outcome assessment framework”, with specific indicators linked to a conceptual framing of the characteristics of “good governance”, is being developed. This will be adapted to local contexts in conjunction with training of local researchers. Specific data collection and analysis will be conducted at the local level in large part based on locally determined research priorities, strategies and methods broadly coordinated within the LOG-IN Africa research framework and research objectives. An integrative process will allow for comparative cross-national and regional assessment of the outcomes of current e-local governance activities.

The Network will generate research findings contributing to more effective policy making and implementation in e-local governance in Africa. National and regional guidelines and an implementation “Roadmap” for how to proceed in this area will also be developed.

### Conceptual Framing

Decentralization and locally controlled administration are increasingly recognized as basic components of democratic governance and provide an enabling environment in which decision-making and service delivery can be brought closer to the people, especially the poor and the marginalized. Community participation in decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and backed by appropriate institutions and resources; along with effective decentralization can, through ensuring greater accountability, responsiveness and participation, result in local services that are more efficient, equitable, sustainable and cost-effective.<sup>5</sup>

The integration of ICTs in these processes (which is part of what LOGIN is using as the working definition of e-Governance) can greatly enhance the delivery of public services to all citizens and thus promote the overall objective of improving the performance of governance systems at all levels, as well as contributing to the democratic governance framework of the society at large<sup>6</sup>. The potential for e-

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this is adapted from the LOGIN Africa Research Proposal to the IDRC (Gianluca Misuraca and Michael Gurstein)

<sup>2</sup> Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda.

<sup>3</sup> The application of ICTs to transform the business of government and to enable the broad inclusion of citizens in public management, public service delivery and democratic participation at the local level.

<sup>4</sup> The exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to better manage the affairs of a “locale”.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Workshop on Poverty Alleviation and Decentralization for Ten West African countries, organized jointly by UNDESA and the Government of Senegal, Dakar, July, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See Par. 5.1 Theoretical Framework.

Governance in developing countries, however, remains largely unexploited<sup>7</sup>, perhaps because of the difficulty in for example, redeveloping existing organizational/governance structures and skills; decentralizing decision-making;<sup>8</sup> developing new forms of leadership adapted to the new e-governance opportunities; transforming existing operational practices toward public-private partnerships; and realizing the effective involvement of stakeholders, as is required<sup>9,10</sup>. Moreover, local governance is, in general, given little attention within national e-Governance policies and strategies.

Further, the broad assumptions that decentralization policies can influence good local governance, and that the use of ICTs can greatly increase this influence have yet to be proven. To date there is little empirical evidence such as to for example, inform national e-Governance policies, of the “multidimensional” effects of ICTs on local governance.

While, there are some examples of linkages between ICTs and local governments, the causal connection between ICTs and innovation in local governance for socio-economic development is little understood. As well, the recognition of the potential of ICTs for local governance comes from a few successful pilot applications around the world. Attempts are currently underway to critically evaluate some of these projects so that the real extent of their impact can be understood and the factors inhibiting impact can be identified. However, there is no common assessment framework from which lessons can be drawn in examining the link between ICTs and “good local governance” defined as “the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to better manage the affairs of a locale”<sup>11</sup>.

The LOGIN Africa network will assess the current state and outcomes of e-local governance initiatives in Africa. E-local governance in this instance being defined as the application of ICTs to transform the business of government and to enable the broad inclusion of citizens in public management, public service delivery and democratic participation at the local level.

The network will thus address the following overall research question:

What progress has been made and what are the outcomes in the provision of e-local governance in Africa; what are the challenges and threats; and what are the good practice strategies and solutions that are emerging?

At the national level, the LOG-IN Africa network is supporting research that is answering the following questions among others:

Egypt – what are the effective approaches to the development and application of “service modeling methodology” within the framework of e-local governance in Egypt? What standards and approaches to “service modeling methodology” are applicable regionally?

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<sup>7</sup> D.V. Ndou, “e-Government for Developing Countries: Opportunities and Challenges”, *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 18,1,1-24, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. A. Aliyu, “Nigerian Experience of Decentralization as a Means to Improve Governance and How It Contributes to Combating Poverty”, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Fifth African Governance Forum (AGFV), “Local Governance for Poverty Reduction in Africa”, Maputo, Mozambique, 23-25 May 2002.

<sup>10</sup> It might be noted that even the most advanced countries have difficulty in realizing many of these requirements cf. M. Gurstein, “From E-Government to E-Governance: An Approach from Effective Use”, Invited paper, Canadian Civil Society and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Conference “Paving the Road to Tunis”, Winnipeg, Canada, May 2005

<sup>11</sup> This is the UNDP definition cf. G. Shabbir Cheema (UNDP), Opening Remarks, Electoral Management Bodies as Institutions of Governance, Mexico City, Mexico, 26-29 May 1999

Ethiopia - What are the outcomes of deploying local e-government solutions for citizen-centric services at the “Municipal” and “Kebele” levels? What are the effective approaches to national rollout of similar services in Ethiopia?

Kenya - What are the outcomes of e-local governance implementation in Kenya? What are the legal and other enabling policy frameworks required for effective e-local governance implementation?

Mauritius – How are ICTs being used to enhance local government-to-citizen communication and participation at the municipal and district council levels? What are the likely inhibitors and facilitators of the rollout of e-services in Mauritius?

Morocco - What political, social and economic strategies will need to be adopted and what are the outcomes of deploying a local e-Government portal for a medium-sized city (Larache) offering citizen-oriented services? What are the differences and similarities to the IDRC-funded e-Fez project and what can be learnt from this that would be of interest for wider e-Governance implementations?

Mozambique - What are the outcomes of e-local governance implementation in Mozambique and specifically in such areas as gender and local empowerment? What broad changes to existing ICT project initiatives will be required to enhance good local governance?

Senegal - What ICT tools and strategies are effective in enhancing citizen participation in rural governance within the framework of decentralization in Senegal?

South Africa - What capacities and strategies are required to enable the successful use of ICTs by local authorities as a means to enhance local social and economic development?

Uganda - How is e-local governance (in the case of DistrictNet) affecting local authorities’ own internal relations as well as external relations with citizens, businesses and civil society? and with what outcomes?

By investigating the relationships between ICTs and local governance, the research will provide empirical evidence of the dynamics, outcomes and implications for policy and practice of the integration of ICTs in local governance systems in Africa. As well, key drivers for effective integration of ICTs into local governance systems will be identified.

## Indicators

The function of “indicators” is to “indicate” that is, to “point to” or to “identify” or to “document” some feature or element which is assumed to be necessarily (causally?) linked to that which is being used to “indicate” this.

In the case of social research “indicators” are usually used where there is the desire to use a relatively simple (and measurable) set of data as an index or surrogate for a more complex set of factors or variables.

In the case of LOGIN we are interested in developing and testing a set of indicators that will give us insight into the level of development in the area of e-local governance which in turn will allow us to compare e-local governance development over time and between countries or local areas within countries.

The challenge with indicators is first of all to identify what it is that one wants to “indicate” i.e. what are the factors or circumstances or elements that one is looking to identify and once having done that, the challenge becomes that of identifying appropriate “indicators” of those factors or circumstances or elements.

Ideally, the factors being identified (or indicated) would be linked together into some broader analytical or theoretical framework which in turn allows for a more in-depth interpretation/analysis/understanding of what the indicators are indicating and more significantly what the comparisons (either in time or in space) as between sets of indicators (indices) mean both theoretically and from the perspective of guiding policy or practice.

In the initial LOGIN Africa proposal a number of analytical frameworks were identified as potentially providing the background for the indicators research which the LOGIN network would be undertaking. Three specifically were identified—the “Real Access/Real Impact” framework of Bridges.org<sup>12</sup>, Gurstein’s “Effective Use” framework<sup>13</sup>, and the “E–Government for Good Governance” framework developed through the e-Fez project<sup>14</sup>.

Additionally, the “Balanced Score Card”<sup>15</sup> approach has been suggested along with Epstein’s “Results that Matter” approach<sup>16</sup> might be of value.

Each of these has their advantages and disadvantages in the LOGIN context. The Real Access and Effective Use approaches are both focused on more general ICT implementations and leave aside the specific areas of concern from the “governance” perspective. The Balanced Scorecard is highly focused on management and institutional outputs and is perhaps of more value in an assessment of e-government rather than e-governance implementations. The Results that Matter is highly focused on citizen participation and outputs of specific interest to citizens however its current form is rather specific to Developed Country applications and has few references to the impacts or outcomes of ICTs/e-governance. E-Fez is perhaps the closest to what we are looking for in LOGIN particularly as it anchors its indicators in a well formulated analytical framework linked back to broader theoretical formulations concerning e-government, governance, good governance and e-governance. However, the limitation of the e-Fez approach is that the indicators identified while valuable and revealing in the specific context of local government in Morocco is rather too specific and localized for more general application either on a Pan-African basis or even to other areas of e-local governance implementation.

On the other hand both the Real Access and the Effective Use approaches highlight the range and depth of characteristics which provide the background for useful applications including those such as e-local governance—with the Effective Use approach being somewhat more directly translatable into measurable indicators, with the Real Access approach relying rather more on the judgment of those experienced in such implementations. The Balanced Scorecard benefits from being widely used in more conventional management environments and thus having the advantage of a large number of implementations and of having considerable research done on its validation. This approach is in most

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.bridges.org/Real\\_Access](http://www.bridges.org/Real_Access)

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8\\_12/gurstein/](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_12/gurstein/)

<sup>14</sup> Cf. D. Kettani, M. Gurstein, & A.El Mahdi, “Assessing the impact of E-Government on local governance based on real settings of developing countries” (under review)

<sup>15</sup> Cf. for example <http://www.balancedscorecard.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.resultsthatmatter.net>

applications highly focused on management and institutional outputs and is perhaps of more value in an assessment of e-government rather than e-governance implementations. “Results that Matter” provides a range of very practical characteristics which can directly into LOGIN’s analyses (once localized to an LDC environment) and e-Fez has a number of elements which are of immediate application in the LOGIN context.

The ultimate analytical/theoretical framework for LOGIN and the indicators which flow from this will benefit significantly from drawing from the range of possible complementary approaches but defining its own specific approach and analysis.

How the Indicators and the Outcome Assessment may be used

As we i.e. LOGIN Africa, move forward in our local, national and Pan-African research activities the indicators (and indices) will be of considerable and increasing value. Initially, the indicators may be useful in providing a means for creating comparative tables as between the levels of development within National contexts towards e-local governance. If we can establish a set of indicators which are usable across national contexts then the possibility of establishing a “league table” comparing countries, regions, local areas becomes possible.

Additionally, once the indicators have been agreed upon, they become useful as ways of measuring development/progress towards broad-based implementation of e-local governance practices and approaches. Thus they provide a basis for examination, re-examination and comparison over time which may be of considerable value as a basis for indicating the usefulness of various types of practices or investments as supportive of e-local governance development.

Finally, these indicators may in some instances be usable as part of evaluation, outcome assessment and monitoring for specific projects or implementations of various types of systems, organizational and community practices and so on. They provide project developers and implementers with a broad basis for comparison and baseline studies and ways of assessing change which is of considerable value in determining project or programme outcomes, benefits and even impacts.

#### Developing the Indicators

E-local governance is defined as the application of ICTs to transform the business of government and to enable the broad inclusion of citizens in public management, public service delivery and democratic participation at the local level.

E-Local Governance: Role and Outcome of ICTs in:

##### 1. Decentralization of decision making:

Indicators

##### 2. Popular (democratic) participation in local consultation and decision making

Indicators

##### 3. Inclusion of citizens in public management (organizational process) and service delivery

Indicators

4. Reinforcing accountability and system credibility

Indicators

5. Increased government transparency and the of reduction of corruption:

Indicators